

Global delegates celebrate event's success

Chengdu fair provides deal, cooperation and exchange platforms

By LI YU and PENG CHAO
in Chengdu

The 2015 Chengdu Global Innovation and Entrepreneurship Fair, or GIEF, which is believed to be the first event of its kind in China focusing on entrepreneurship, finished on Nov 11.

Delegates from 30 countries and regions, including government officials, world-renowned innovation teams, investors, companies, universities and research institutes, reached a consensus at the fair, which was named the "Chengdu Consensus".

The consensus said that innovation and entrepreneurship is an eternal theme for the development of human society, is a powerful engine for economic development and is part of the development strategy of the world's major economies. It is the major force to stimulate the vitality of cities and promote their development and is a common language of all nations and an important bridge for international cooperation and exchanges.

Delegates said the GIEF promoted the gathering, integration and exchange of innovation and entrepreneurship resources and elements worldwide. Participants said they expect the platform to play a greater role in international cooperation and exchanges of innovation and entrepreneurship.

During the GIEF, Chengdu Center Promotion Productivity signed an agreement with three organizations and officially launched the Chengdu Global Innovation and Entrepreneurship Trading Platform. The platform will provide entrepreneurs with services, including



A view of the Tianfu New Area in Chengdu. State-level new areas have become the economic powerhouses of Chengdu, which has launched a range of public innovation projects. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



Young people participate in a color run in the Kuckoo entrepreneurship area in Pixian county, Chengdu.



Pioneering innovators take part in "Venture Tianfu-Jingronghui" — a brand event created by Chengdu to serve as a communication platform for innovators, investors and entrepreneurs.

transaction and exchanges of equity, products, talents and resources.

More than 150 investment organizations took part in the roadshow and trade fair that followed, which involved 2,686 entrepreneurship programs. Some 109 deals worth 5.32 billion yuan (\$830 million) were made.

Sixteen entrepreneurial teams, from the United States, the United Kingdom, South Korea, Israel and

China's Beijing, Shenzhen, Xi'an and Chengdu, joined the global finals of the Jingrong Cup-Global Innovation and Entrepreneurship Contest. They were chosen from 200 programs from around the world during the past two months.

A program called "Snail Sleep" from Beijing won first prize, while "Trendi" from Israel took second, followed by the "Finger Vein Recognition Technology" project from Chengdu in third.

A city of innovation

As host of the GIEF, Chengdu demonstrated its charm as a city of innovation and entrepreneurship and won praise from guests from home and abroad.

Zhang Zhihong, director of the Torch High Technology Industry Development Center of the Ministry of Science and Technology, said Chengdu was famous for its delicious food, rich culture and good lifestyle, and now it is also renowned

as an entrepreneurial city.

Carmen Cano de Lasala, deputy head of the EU delegation to China, said she has been to Chengdu nine times since 2006 and she is impressed by the dynamic, open city and the development it has gone through in past years.

"Chengdu is one of the most dynamic and fastest-growing cities in China. I'm glad to see so many European companies choose Chengdu as their top

investment destination and achieve great development here," she said.

Alvaro Simon De Blas is rotating president of EBN, a network of about 150 quality-certified EU business and innovation centers and other organizations that support innovative entrepreneurs, startups and SMEs. He said he believes Chengdu has a very bright future in terms of innovation and the development of SMEs.

"Chengdu is attractive to

our members, with its long and good relationship with the European Union and excellent environment for innovation and entrepreneurship," he said.

Zhu Min, founder and chairman of Cybernaut Investment Group, said Chengdu's innovation and entrepreneurship environment benefits from the government's strong support and good services, and the ecological and cultural environment.

Zhu said Cybernaut plans to invest 10 billion yuan in Chengdu to help local companies enter the world stage. The group aims to cultivate companies with sales of more than 10 billion yuan in three years.

The city has made great achievements in innovation and entrepreneurship this year.

The first nine months of this year saw an increase of more than 8,300 technology enterprises, according to the city's statistics bureau. During the first eight months, the city received more than 39,900 applications for patents, up 29.5 percent year-on-year.

Chengdu created a brand event titled "Venture Tianfu-Jingronghui", which serves as a communication platform for innovators, investors and entrepreneurs. More than 60 activities were held in the name of the event in the first three quarters of the year.

About 300 venture investment institutions, 6,000 startups and more than 10,000 university students and innovators participated in the events. Deals involving investment intentions worth 960 million yuan for 89 projects presented at the events were signed.

In August, the Chinese version of Fortune magazine listed Chengdu among the top 10 innovative Chinese cities.

In June, Chengdu was named as one of the 15 model cities for innovation and entrepreneurship of small and micro-enterprises by five central government departments.

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Innovation hub attracts international entrepreneurs

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Moziqiao Innovation and Entrepreneurship Area is becoming a landmark for grassroots entrepreneurs in Chengdu, the capital of Sichuan province.

The area was opened on Oct 21, after finishing construction on its first batch of office buildings and support facilities that occupy an area of about 20,000 square meters. It is expected to attract 20,000 people to start new businesses by 2025.

With Moziqiao Square as its center, the area covers several universities and research institutions and has dedicated sections for international businesses, startup incubation and innovation demonstration.

The area has established a strategic partnership with its Beijing counterpart, the Zhongguancun Science Park, to cooperate and exchange experiences on corporate management, service philosophies and operation models. It also encourages Zhongguancun startups to locate projects there.

Currently, the area is home to several global names, including Infinity Group, an Israel-headquartered firm dedicated to cross-border fund management.

"We chose Moziqiao because it has an obvious geographical superiority. The area has rich educational and human resources, as well as a profound entrepreneurial and innovation environment," said Zhang Xiaodong, the company's chief investment officer in Sichuan.

Infinity plans to build a 2,000-sq-m incubator in the area and



Representatives of universities and businesses in Chengdu attend the opening ceremony of the Moziqiao Innovation and Entrepreneurship Area.

set up an investment fund for strategic emerging industries in the city's Wisdom Valley, he said.

As another innovation and entrepreneurship cluster in Chengdu, the valley plays the role of an industrial accelerator to help science and technology companies further develop after incubation. Libraries of nearby colleges are open to the public and their labs will also be available for companies in the future.

The valley has signed coopera-

tion agreements with 16 universities and research institutes in the province.

Chengdu also boasts Jingrong town, an "entrepreneurial town", in Pixian county.

Deyuan town used to have agriculture as its pillar industry and last year there were 1.2 million sq m of empty buildings in the town.

To use some of the buildings and transform the local economic development model, the county government launched a series



Activities under the brand name of "Venture Tianfu-Jingronghui" are held in the city's Pixian county.



Chengdu is building Deyuan town in Pixian county into an "entrepreneurial town".

of preferential and supportive policies in March to transform Deyuan into an innovation and entrepreneurship town for local college and university students.

The town has three special bus lines serving 250,000 students in 19 higher education institutions in the county, such as colleges and training schools.

It also built a 240,000-sq-m industrial park, attracting 12 incubators and about 230 startups.

The Optics Valley Startup Café, founded by Xiaomi's CEO Lei Jun, opened in the town in April. It has become a gathering location for venture capital investors and young people who want to start their own businesses. The cafe provides professional services from venture capital firms for young entrepreneurs.

"Business incubation platforms like the cafe have brought in international visions, as well as capital and ideas from Bei-

jing, Shanghai and Guangzhou," said Wang Donglin, director of Sursen Corp, a leading information security product and service provider.

The county government set aside an annual fund of more than 50 million yuan (\$7.84 million) for startups.

Yang Xiangji, CEO of Tap4Fun, a mobile game company in Chengdu Tianfu Software Park, said although Chengdu could not be compared to the United States in terms of entrepreneurial environment, it has, in his opinion, already overtaken some of the best European cities such as London, Paris and Berlin.

"Europe now has high barriers to start a new business, so most of the young people are willing to find jobs in large and matured companies. In Chengdu, young entrepreneurs are very passionate," Yang said.

Charlie Moseley, a US game designer at Tap4Fun went to Chengdu nearly 10 years ago at the invitation of one of his friends. He initially planned to stay for a few months, but now he said he has no timetable for leaving.

Wang Tun, who returned from the US where he got his PhD, established a high-tech company dedicated to developing earthquake early warning products.

"The Chengdu high-tech zone provided me with 250 sq m of office space with very low rent, and also four times offered financial support when the company had a lack of money," Wang said.

"If you have good ideas, the government will help you to achieve them," he added.