



FOUNDER & PUBLISHER Kowie Geldenhuys EDITOR-IN-CHIEF Paulo Coutinho Macau, Friday, February 06, 2026

HOME MACAU GREATER BAY BUSINESS CHINA ASIA WORLD SPORTS INTERVIEW EDITORIAL OPINION

📅 FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2026 - 7 HOURS AGO 💬 NO COMMENTS 👁 4,836 VIEWS



ANALYSIS

Hong Kong Talent Engage announced late last month that Asia's premier talent hub, the Global Talent Summit Week will be held in Hong Kong in March. This talent forum and career expo will run 18th and 19th March, followed by satellite events until the end of the month. The title, "Connecting Global Minds," offers more than a hint as to the intended reach, specified as cross-regional with an international flavour. "Global Minds" is not just pointing to geographic diversity, but encompasses a mindset of cross-sectoral collaboration, integrating education, technology and talent management of the kinds of people, government bodies and organisations with a global view and "forward-looking" perspectives. Continually reinforced in the promotional material are integration and collaboration in AI, Life & Health Tech, Robotics, Green Tech, and Microelectronics. Hong Kong, itself, is being presented on many platforms as having a super-connector role: at this summit it sits squarely in the GBA to "launch and accelerate" careers.

The GBA is a testbed for integration, innovation, and China's strategic future. For the 15th Five-Year Plan period, Guangdong is aiming for an annual GDP growth of 5%. The priorities are the development of the GBA, consolidating traditional trading markets (Europe, USA, Japan and South Korea) and expanding into the emerging markets of ASEAN, the Middle East and Africa. The nature and degree of such development and opening up of the GBA, an area of 86 million residents, will create a great demand for highly educated, globally sophisticated and talented workers in the high-tech innovative and hardware industries. This new workforce will support New Quality Productive Forces (a plan to replace resource-intensive manufacturing) and tech self-reliance, particularly in semiconductors, AI, biotech and life sciences and new energy sectors, as well as new finance, sustainable living, and tourism & leisure.

Some estimates suggest that an additional 3 to 4 million skilled workers will be needed to support GBA's integration and development over the next 5 years. This number has potential to rise to 6-8 million additional highly skilled workers 10 years out. The primary pipeline of talent will be top GBA universities such as the University of Hong Kong, Sun Yat-sen University and Shenzhen University followed by elite mainland universities further afield like Beijing, Tsinghua and Fudan universities. Returning Chinese students from overseas universities and the diaspora are also expected to be attracted by incentives and the globally minded work environment of the GBA where they can leverage from their international experience. Domestic transfers from large mainland cities are also expected to be driven by the excitement of the GBA project, the specialised areas such as cross-border e-commerce and the cluster effect, especially as the GBA's technology clusters rank among the world's top innovators.

Although much of this demand will be met from domestic and Chinese diaspora sources, initiatives such as the full-chain policy system for the examination, evaluation, and recognition of overseas qualifications – an initiative developed from Guangzhou's best practice and rolled out in other cities – acknowledges the need to entice talented individuals by easing entry into the market by removing unnecessary hurdles and streamlining visa procedures.

The 2026 Guangdong Provincial Government Work Report (which covers an impressive list of rankings and growth measures for the province in 2025) articulated arrangements for an international living environment

KEY TAKEAWAYS

The GBA is hiring at scale – and fast. The Greater Bay Area is gearing up for a once-in-a-generation talent surge, with 3–4 million skilled workers needed within five years, potentially double that within a decade. AI, semiconductors, biotech, green tech and advanced manufacturing aren't buzzwords here – they're the backbone of China's next growth phase.

Hong Kong is the gateway; Guangdong is the engine; Macau is the outlier. Hong Kong is being positioned as the GBA's global "super-connector" for international talent and career acceleration, while Guangdong rolls out aggressive incentives, streamlined qualification recognition and lifestyle upgrades to attract global professionals. Macau, by contrast, remains cautious – focused on exporting local talent rather than importing skills, which leaves it strategically misaligned with wider GBA momentum.

Policy is improving – perception and housing still lag. Visa easing, tax advantages and international-friendly living environments are advancing quickly, but awareness among Hong Kong and Macau youth remains low, and housing security is a real brake on mobility. Talent attraction is no longer just about jobs – it's about liveability, clarity and convincing young professionals that the GBA is worth the leap.

DAILY EDITION

8 HOURS AGO
Friday, February 6, 2026 – edition no. 4890

EXTRA

7 HOURS AGO
Sunday Roast

GBA Views Weekly



MDT MACAU GRAND PRIX SPECIAL



FEBRUARY 2026

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	

« Jan

covering lifestyle elements for newcomers: accommodation, dining, transportation, tourism, consumption and health care, down to even the improvement of multilingual signage and payment options. The work report states that “Guangdong is committed to spare no efforts to attract, cultivate, utilize, collaborate with and serve all kinds of talents [sic] without being restricted to geography and pedigree, or pattern.”

2025 YEAR OF THE SNAKE



1 YEAR AGO
KUNG HEI FAT CHOI! YEAR OF THE SNAKE – PREDICTIONS

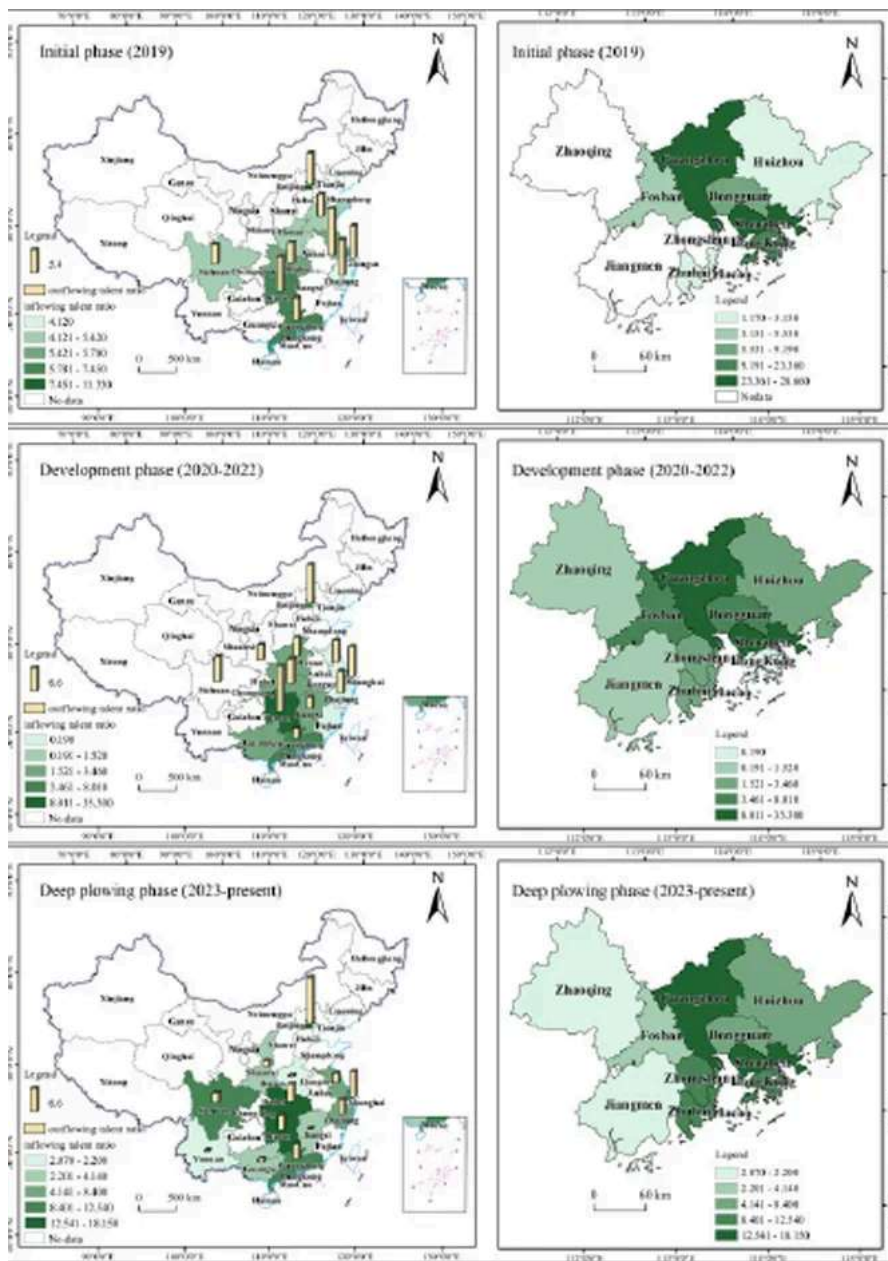
Evaluation dimension	very satisfied	satisfied	general	dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
Tax Incentives	40%	35%	15%	9%	1%
Housing Security	30%	25%	20%	20%	5%
Employment Support	33%	42%	15%	5%	5%
Entrepreneurship Support	35%	35%	15%	10%	5%

Policy Satisfaction Survey of high-end, young, skilled individuals in GBA [Source; Wen and Han, 2025.PLOS ONE]

Hong Kong has for eons been a beacon of welcome to skilled professionals and investment from abroad. Many of its current strengths as a global financial center and trading economy took root in this fertile environment and matured. The attractive individual- and corporate-level taxation regimes in Hong Kong and Macau have been strong incentives.

Macau, however, with its long history of protection of its local labour force – even under circumstances of one of the lowest rates of unemployment in the world for more than 20 years – retains a deliberately tight policy of controlled labour management. It continues to contrast with the rest of the GBA at this time. As stated in a December 2025 PLoS One research paper on the evaluation of talent policies in the GBA by Wen and Han from South China University of Technology, the priority for Macau appears to be integrating Macau’s skilled talent into mainland regions, rather than importing workers from other areas of the GBA into Macau. Guangdong’s establishment of innovation and entrepreneurship hubs for Hong Kong and Macau youth underpin this policy direction.

It remains a challenging task to promote mainland policies and the state of Guangzhou’s incubator and entrepreneurial eco-system to the youth of Macau and Hong Kong. This policy objective remains strong, and is realised through graduate subsidies, youth job offers (5,500 in 2024), and support for youth projects – nearly 4,000 in 2024 from Hong Kong and Macau alone. Yet, awareness and perceived utility value among these young people remain low, prompting further effort through events and programs exemplified in the GBA Development Office’s roving exhibition at universities in the first quarter of 2026 to further showcase GBA opportunities. The PLoS paper mentioned above also suggests that housing security is also a concern for young people, creating a potential barrier to engagement.



GBA Talent Flow Maps [Source; Wen and Han, 2025. PLOS ONE]

While university research enrolments remain lower than universities outside of the GBA, and skilled manufacturing personnel trained in advanced vocational institutions are insufficient in quantity and skill-level, in the short term it remains to attract highly skilled individuals from outside to improve the innovation capacity of enterprises, and thereby upgrade enterprise skills and the employees within them. Building the talent capacity and human capital of the GBA is a multi-pronged project – internal education and mobility, concerted PR, reinforcing the pull of high-tech and industry sector clusters, and then ensuring the tax incentives and harmonisation of legal, social security and other bureaucratic and administrative procedures and recognition of qualifications remove barriers to entry and enhance talent mobility. Not forgotten in this mix, are the livelihood services and living environment – safety, security, amenity, even urban beauty – that welcome sophisticated, educated and skilled contributors from all places to concentrate in the GBA. **By Leanda Lee**

POST TAGS GREATER BAY

CATEGORIES GBA VIEWS

Related Posts