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ITS Canada Mission to Hong Kong and Shenzhen

June 2017

Background

Owing to improved standards of living and the associated traffic congestion in Asia in recent years, the demand for ITS products and services there have been increasing in an exponential fashion. ITS Canada believes that this represents a significant opportunity for its members who wish to export overseas. The International Business Development Committee developed a plan and obtained a Global Opportunity Assistance (GOA) subsidy from Global Affairs Canada for a mission to the cities of Shenzhen and Hong Kong. There were back to back ITS conferences in these two cities at the end of June and our group could use our travelling funds and marketing resources cost-effectively.

Compared to previous missions, the one to HK and SZ was relatively large, with nine people participating. There were six member companies as follows::

- GGI (Scott and Lisa Godfrey)
- Global Smart City Solutions (Masoud Tahmasebzadeh)
- IRD (Hong Fang)
- Miovision (Tao Sang)
- Parsons Canada (represented by Rex Lee)
- Transnomis (Connie Ko)

In addition, Son Thu Le of the City of Montreal also participated. His objective was to promote the upcoming ITS World Congress in Montreal this Fall.



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The mission was led by Joe Lam, the Chair of the IBD Committee of ITS Canada.

ITS Shenzhen Expo

Our first stop was Shenzhen, the southern most metropolis of China. It has an official population close to 12 millions and an industrial base of electrical and electronic manufacturing, including many ITS firms. We signed an MOU for cooperation with ITS SZ in 2015 and they did their utmost to make us feel welcome during this mission..

The ITS SZ Expo is an annual event, boasting an exhibition area of 15,000 square metres, with over 300 exhibitors and 30,000 professional delegates from some 20 countries. This year's event occurred on June 23 to 25 and the exhibition was huge and multi-faceted, with something for everyone.

We secured two booth units for the mission participants but our members could choose to exhibit their products in the booth or walk the floor to observe and learn from the other exhibitors. A large number of traffic signal equipment manufacturers were present and this boded well with the business of most of our participants.

A keynote speech was jointly presented by Joe and Son Thu in the Urban Traffic Management Forum, with Joe presenting on the various ITS strengths of Canada while Son Thu concentrated on promoting the Montreal event.

A very successful business matching session was held between members of ITS Canada and ITS SZ, with standing rooms only. Both sides exchanged information efficiently and much interest was generated. The next day some of us visited companies with manufacturing plants in Shenzhen, including Dianming, a variable message sign supplier and Kutuo, a signal equipment manufacturer. Follow up



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communications between the Canadian and Chinese firms have been taking place since we left Shenzhen.

A barbeque for foreign VIP delegates was held off site with an opportunity for the Canadian delegation to meet delegates from other countries. Our group was able to network with a number of international ITS experts while enjoying a fine cuisine in a warm summer evening in an outdoor venue.

Asia Pacific ITS Forum, Hong Kong

On Sunday, June 25, we travelled efficiently in cross-border vans to our hotel in Shatin, a satellite town of almost 1M people in the New Territories of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of China, just a few kilometres south of the Science Park, the venue for the Asia Pacific ITS Forum.

The Hong Kong Science Park is an adjunct to the Chinese University of Hong Kong with facilities for conferences, exhibitions, research and incubation of technology firms. It is situated on a hill overlooking the scenic Tolo Harbour in the northeastern part of the Kowloon Peninsula.

In the next morning, we first went to Central (downtown area in the Island of Hong Kong) to visit the Canadian Consulate, where we received briefing from Trade commissioner Endy Chung on the ITS market in the SAR. In summary, the market is busy and a number of major ITS-related tenders will be coming out either this fall or sometime next year.

We then hurried back to the conference venue to set up our booth and make ourselves ready for the Forum opening at 4PM. ITS Canada was invited to participate in the ribbon cutting ceremony to open the exhibition, to which we were able to invite a number of guests with the help of the local consulate.



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The exhibition area was not big compared to Shenzhen but the exhibitors were of high quality, consisting of notable firms from Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan, Japan and Canada of course. They covered traffic signals, tolling, ATMS/ATIS, detection technologies and traffic modelling. The Hong Kong Transport Department was exhibiting their various activities related to ITS, including the demonstration of an interesting concept of using a transit smartcard (called Octopus card) to actuate audible traffic signals for the visually impaired. In addition, a number of ITS Associations were busy promoting their upcoming conferences, including the next Asia Pacific ITS Forum in Fukuoka, Japan and the 2019 ITS World Congress in Singapore, while ITS Korea was vying for the right to hold the 2022 ITS World Congress. The exhibition was busy and effective networking was carried out in a very congenial atmosphere. Because of the variety of products covered by the exhibitors, the members of our delegation were able to learn a lot from the companies there.

The papers presented in the conference sessions covered a variety of interesting ITS topics but Big Data seemed to be featured the most. Several Canadians spoke at the conference. Hong Fang of IRD presented a paper on Weigh in Motion Systems, Joe Lam gave a keynote speech on Canadian ITS technologies and Son Thu Le presented on the Montreal ITS World Congress at the closing ceremony.

Despite their busy schedule, a good number of ITS HK council members were able to meet with us to discuss ways and means of further cooperation between the two organizations. One idea put forward is to organize bilateral workshops in HK in the near future for the benefit of the clientele there, both public and private.

Trade Commissioner Chung arranged a meeting for the Canadian delegation with the HK Transport Department on Thursday, June 29. The discussion centred around how a Canadian ITS SME can become engaged in the HK market. The senior TD officials present in the meeting indicated that they welcome Canadian firms to partner with local companies for ITS tenders and they are also open for



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presentations and demonstrations of Canadian ITS technologies. Follow up meetings can be arranged through either the local Canadian Consulate or ITS Canada.

In both SZ and HK, the Canadian delegation moved as a team, helping each other out whenever necessary, while tremendous support was provided by our local consulates. Our schedules in both events were very tight but they were flexible enough to allow for one on one side meetings between our companies and their counterparts. In the end, I believe that most, if not all, of our individual marketing objectives were met.

One thing that was made clear during the two events was that the ITS Canada delegation was well respected and our presence was very welcome by our counterparts. The good will between us and our hosts was enhanced significantly while we were able to network with and impress many potential partners and clients with our ITS technologies. Of course, follow ups with incremental efforts are the key to success in the long run.