



A view of BASF's new Verbund site in Zhanjiang, Guangdong province. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Zhanjiang manufacturing boosted by new BASF site

Projects not only drive industrial growth but reshape region's role in coastal economic belt

By YUAN SHENGGAO

The inauguration on Thursday of German multinational chemical major BASF's new Verbund site in Zhanjiang, South China's Guangdong province, is bringing new opportunities for the city's industrial upgrade. It will become a model for intelligent and sustainable manufacturing, Zhanjiang officials said.

A memorandum of understanding for the project was signed in July 2018 and its construction was officially launched in November 2019, with a total investment of nearly 8.7 billion euros (\$10.1 billion). It is to date the third-largest production base of BASF worldwide.

The new Verbund site includes steam-cracking tech with an annual ethylene production capacity of 1 million metric tons. It also has some downstream production facilities serving consumer markets, in a bid to meet customer demand across industries in South China and throughout Asia.

The new Verbund site is a major manufacturing project following the other two in the city: the Baosteel Zhanjiang Iron and Steel, and the Zhongke (Guangdong) Refinery and Petrochemical project.

These projects not only drive industrial agglomeration in the region but are to reshape the city's role in China's coastal economic belt, officials said, adding that turning more raw materials into locally processed and value-added products is becoming a reality.

During the 14th Five-Year Plan period (2021-25), Zhanjiang set up a "four green and one blue" industrial system composed of green steel, green petrochemicals, green energy and green food, as well as a blue

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Yu Gang, Party secretary of Zhanjiang, said: "The 14th Five-Year Plan is a period for Zhanjiang to accelerate industrial upgrading and build momentum for economic development. Zhanjiang has established a system led by the 'four green and one blue' industries."

Among them, green petrochemicals as well as modern agriculture and green food industry clusters each exceeded 100 billion yuan (\$14.5 billion) in annual output value, becoming core engines of economic growth, Yu said.

According to Yu, Zhanjiang now ranks first in Guangdong province in the number of gravity-type net cages for marine ranching and large-

scale aquaculture platforms, and third in the province in the comprehensive evaluation of urban competitiveness in marine economy.

In 2022, the Zhongke (Guangdong) Refinery and Petrochemical project, with an investment of about 40 billion yuan, became the city's first enterprise with an annual output value exceeding 100 billion yuan. Subsequently, the city's modern agriculture and food industry cluster also surpassed 100 billion yuan in annual output value.

At present, the Baosteel Zhanjiang Iron and Steel project, with a total investment of about 86 billion yuan, has an annual output value of more than 60 billion yuan. Moreover, several industrial clusters with annual output value posting around 10 billion yuan each, such as green energy, are taking shape.

In 2025, Zhanjiang achieved a regional GDP of 395.29 billion yuan, growing by 4.5 percent year-on-year and ranking fourth in Guangdong in terms of growth rate.

The added value of industrial enterprises above designated size, or those with an annual revenue of 20 million yuan or above, increased by 10.7 percent year-on-year, ranking first in the province. The added value of the chemical raw materials and chemical products manufacturing industry rose by 24.9 percent. Currently, the industrial output value contributes 47 percent to regional GDP growth.

In 2025, Zhanjiang's 476 key projects fulfilled an investment of 80.17 billion yuan, of which 56.03 billion yuan went to those categorized as Guangdong provincial key projects, exceeding the annual investment target.

Industrial investment reached

56.46 billion yuan, accounting for 57.1 percent of total investment. In particular, investment in industrial technological transformation increased by 10.3 percent, maintaining positive growth for 28 consecutive months.

Viewing the high-quality business environment as a core driver of opening-up and development, Zhanjiang has taken improving the business environment as the key and has been deepening reforms and enhancing service efficiency.

When delivering this year's government work report at the end of February, Zhanjiang Mayor Li Yongyi said that the city will continue to construct development zones and various industrial parks to high standards. It will support the main platforms involved in industrial transfer to attract more than 40 new projects and start construction on more than 25 new projects.

The city will also support the Donghai Island Petrochemical Industrial Park to build itself into a grade-D facility and advance the standardized construction of provincial-level industrial parks, aiming to sign contracts for more than 60 projects, Li said.

Zhanjiang will also strengthen the operation mechanism driven by a group of high-profile players involved in the local industry chain, leverage leading enterprises to drive the agglomeration of upstream and downstream enterprises, and expand the "four green and one blue" industrial clusters. It will promote the development of industrial enterprises, targeting a 6 percent year-on-year increase in the added value of industrial enterprises above designated size, Li added.

Lianjiang appliances power city economy

By YUAN SHENGGAO

Exports of small household appliances from Lianjiang city jumped 28.6 percent year-on-year in the first two months of the year to reach 200 million yuan (\$29 million), according to Zhanjiang Customs. Among them, exports of electric coffee makers totaled 5.08 million yuan, surging 91.8 percent from a year earlier.

As a county-level city under Zhanjiang in Guangdong province, Lianjiang is home to more than 1,200 small household appliance enterprises. Known as "China's electric home appliance industry base", its main products include electric rice cookers, electric kettles, electric cooking pots, air fryers, audio and video equipment and electronic pianos.

The total output value of the city's full-chain home appliance industry has exceeded 25 billion yuan. Production and sales of electric rice cookers made in Lianjiang account for about 40 percent of the national total, while electric kettles make up around 80 percent.

Benefiting from strengths in its industry chain and market access, Lianjiang's small home appliance sector has seen steady gains in export competitiveness in recent years.

Lianjiang's home appliances are now exported to more than 100 countries and regions across Asia, Europe, the Americas, Africa and Oceania, with annual exports of about 1.3 billion yuan.

Lu Xizhang, president of the Lianjiang Household Appliance Industry Association, said 2024 marked a key turning point for the industry's push toward intelligentization and digital transformation.

That year, Lianjiang invested 130 million yuan to build a public service platform for the home appliance industry, bringing in resources such as national-level laboratories and the Huawei (Lianjiang) home appliance empowerment center. Taking electric rice cookers as an example, Lu said a

production line that once required 20 workers can now be maintained daily by just five after intelligent upgrades.

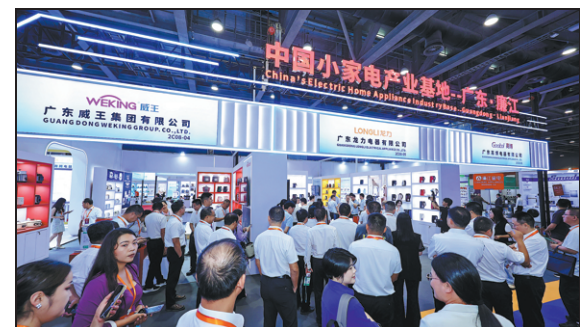
To improve product design capabilities, the city has strengthened ties with high-quality resources in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area. It has set up an industrial collaboration and innovation center in Guangzhou covering about 1,000 square meters.

The city has also enhanced overall design capacity by bringing in design experts, helping institutions and universities form the Lianjiang home appliance innovation alliance, organizing innovation and design competitions and promoting commercialization of winning works.

In 2025, Lianjiang attracted seven upstream projects in the industry chain, including thermostat and mold projects. It also encouraged leading enterprises to pursue differentiated competition and expand into six new product categories: air fryers, baby food makers, coffee machines, multifunction stoves, range hoods and gas stoves.

Li Yongyi, mayor of Zhanjiang, said in this year's government work report in February that while expanding five 100-billion-yuan industrial clusters led by "four green and one blue" industries, the city should also upgrade traditional sectors and support each county or district in developing its own specialty industries during the 15th Five-Year Plan period (2026-30), including Lianjiang's small home appliance industry.

At a conference in March highlighting Lianjiang's high-quality development, Zeng Pingzhi, Party secretary of Lianjiang, emphasized building a "2+N" system. The "2" refers to the two core categories of electric rice cookers and electric kettles, while "N" represents a range of emerging home appliance categories covering scenarios such as dining, home furnishings and beauty care.



The 2025 Lianjiang Home Appliances Autumn (Guangzhou) Expo draws many buyers from home and abroad.



Foreign buyers check in to participate in a matching event during the expo.

Business environment a key factor in opening-up

By HAO NAN

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Zhanjiang, a coastal city in Guangdong province, has achieved remarkable progress in enhancing its business environment in recent years.

In an enterprise survey that assessed business environment satisfaction, the city secured fourth spot in the province. Four key indicators — business establishment, and access to electricity, water and gas — all ranked first.

Also, the number of market entities in Zhanjiang rose from 325,000 in 2020 to more than 550,000 by the end of 2025, an increase of 69.5 percent.

This increase underscores the city's sustained institutional support, upgraded services and thorough reform.

Yu Gang, Party chief of Zhanjiang, emphasized that comprehensively



AI tools are used at an administrative service center in Zhanjiang to help residents with their affairs.

deepening reform is a critical task. He urged local officials to follow the city's action plan for the "year of reform deepening and enhance-

ment", fostering a systematic, complete, coordinated and efficient innovation environment, alongside a more dynamic and competitive

market environment.

Pro-business and enterprise-supporting services have become standard practice in Zhanjiang. Local government leaders have taken the lead in establishing regular communication mechanisms with enterprises to address their needs.

In 2025, Zhanjiang inaugurated an enterprise service center, offering "one-stop, instant approval and processing" for enterprise registration. Moreover, guided by the needs of market entities, the city has introduced 23 measures across five areas, refined into a task ledger of 209 work items, to advance comprehensive business environment reforms.

To optimize the business environment, boost investment promotion and accelerate the development of the real economy, the Zhanjiang development and reform bureau has improved its work coordination mechanism this year, focusing on the effective implementation of

reform measures in key areas such as land, finance, energy and logistics.

In land reform, for example, the bureau has delegated approval authority, streamlined procedures and directed land resources toward high-quality industries. It has also consolidated and reclaimed abandoned farmland. As of March 1, a total of 3,573 hectares of land had been restored, strengthening the foundation for agricultural development and securing land for urban-rural integration and industrial upgrading.

For fiscal and financial reforms, the bureau has addressed financing challenges for market entities by establishing a platform for government-bank-enterprise coordination.

It has implemented a regular mechanism for promoting financing of major projects, regularly releasing lists and information on high-quality projects eligible for financing, such as special bond projects and key provincial and city-level projects.

In terms of energy and logistics, the bureau has organized the Zhanjiang Economic and Technological Development Zone and Guangdong Xuwen Economic Development Zone to apply for the first batch of Guangdong zero-carbon industrial parks. It is also working to integrate more offshore wind power resources into official planning to lay the groundwork for a green power supply.

Meanwhile, the bureau is accelerating the construction of large-scale cold-chain infrastructure projects. This includes an international aquatic products park and the Leizhou comprehensive logistics park, enhancing infrastructure and reducing costs while increasing efficiency for enterprises.

Looking ahead, the bureau intends to maintain oversight and coordination of efforts, while enhancing the tracking and evaluation of their effectiveness. It aims to assist the seamless flow of various production factors, providing support for Zhanjiang's leapfrog and high-quality development.