



# BOC'S DEVELOPMENT ADVANCES COUNTRY'S MODERNIZATION

High-quality growth across nation supported by Bank of China's pioneering efforts in bolstering progress in major projects closely connected with socioeconomic improvement, people's well-being and renminbi internationalization

### By YUANSIENGGAO

**R**iding the wave of technological revolution and industrial transformation, Bank of China is ramping up its engagement in building China into a financial powerhouse and advancing Chinese modernization, with its own high-quality development. As a staunch advocate of reforms, the financial group, pragmatic and proactive, has been playing an active role in a myriad of major projects to assist the country in getting stronger and more sustainable.

**Extensive involvement**

In South China's Guangdong province, which has long been known as a pioneer and an experimental zone of the country's reform and opening-up, the new generation of financial professionals are working to make the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area a strategic pivot, a demonstration site of high-quality development, and a leading area of China's modernization.

At the Pearl River Estuary, a "super project" has emerged in the vast open sea — the Shenzhen-Zhongshan Link, spanning the east and west banks of the river.

Serving as a crucial link in the golden bay of the Pearl River Estuary, the approximately 24-kilometer-long Shenzhen-Zhongshan Link was officially opened to traffic on June 30, conducive to the coordinated development of the Bay Area.

Behind the strategic move is strong financial momentum. As one of the world's most complex cross-sea cluster projects, the Shenzhen-Zhongshan Link has required large-scale financing and a long construction period. From the very beginning of the project, BOC actively engaged in the project as a joint lead bank for the project consortium, providing financial support for the construction of the project, ensuring the smooth completion and operation of the Shenzhen-Zhongshan Link.

Supporting the construction of the Bay Area is just one example of how BOC has closely aligned itself with regional economic development in recent years, actively contributing to high-quality development and advancing the progress in Chinese-style modernization.

At Tianjin Port, rows of cranes stand tall, and modules resembling "flower ships" are under construction, which are soon to be installed on floating production storage and offloading facilities; at a demonstration zone for integrated ecological and

green development in the Yangtze River Delta, an array of solar panels lie facing the sun, and wind turbine blades rotate in the wind. The nation's first "near-zero carbon" innovation cluster was established there, serving as a vivid testimony to green development.

Thanks to financial support, the innovative vitality in various regions is fully unleashed, injecting strong momentum into accelerating the cultivation of new quality productive forces, constructing a regionally complementary economic layout, and promoting high-quality regional development.

Technological innovation is the key to developing new quality productive forces. In Shanghai, BOC integrates into the regional industrial layout, continuously scales up support for technology-based small and medium-sized enterprises, establishes a coordinated service mechanism, assists in technological innovation and the development of the real economy, and promotes the growth of new quality productive forces with technological finance.

Green development is the foundation for high-quality development. In Jiangsu province, BOC has launched an intellectual property-backed financing program to assist with the growth of the new energy vehicle industry, introducing the NEV industry chain service solution. The bank provides credit policies, green passage for approval, differentiated interest rate discounts, and other policy support to white list clients, injecting strong momentum into the development of new quality productive forces with green finance.

The deep integration of the digital economy and the real economy promotes the development of new quality productive forces. In Shenzhen, Guangdong province, BOC accelerates financial product integration and innovation, optimizes service processes using digital means, and expands service boundaries. From creating convenient online service platforms to upgrading intelligent approval systems and leveraging innovation achievements, the bank constructs a quantitative evaluation system based on comprehensive IP data. BOC uses digital finance as the driving engine to cultivate the development of new quality productive forces.

In Shanghai, the Shanghai Tower, the Shanghai World Financial Center and the Jinmao Tower rise into the sky, shaping the skyline of the city. The city's Pudong New Area has transformed from farmland into a modern urban area where skyscrapers

have sprung up. In September 2013, the China (Shanghai) Pilot Free Trade Zone was officially launched in Pudong, becoming the country's first FTZ.

**Global outreach**

Expanding high-level opening-up is inseparable from the strong support finance offers. BOC was one of the first banks to settle in the Shanghai FTZ, leveraging its cross-border professional advantages to help land a batch of pioneering businesses.

As the Lingang New Area of the Shanghai FTZ was approved for establishment in 2019, BOC immersed itself in the fervent construction wave of the Lingang New Area, serving as a pioneer in financial innovation in the free trade zone and witnessing the ever-expanding opening-up of China.

Opening-up expansion is a crucial driving force for deepening reforms. To advance reforms across the board with a broad global perspective, it is necessary to promote high-level opening-up, industry payments in advance, a subsidiary bank in Djibouti has processed the country's first cross-border RMB settlement transaction, assisting Chinese enterprises in going global.

In addition to focusing on RMB settlement, BOC is also establishing a sound cross-border financial service system, enabling the supply of financial products and services, closely following enterprises expanding overseas, and continuously providing businesses with convenient, efficient and inclusive cross-border financial products and services.

As of the 10th China Import and Export Fair, which ran from mid-April to early May, electric vehicles, lithium batteries and solar panels were favored by overseas buyers and the opening of a branch in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. The move has enabled BOC branches to achieve a presence in 64 countries and regions overseas, including 44 countries involved in the Belt and Road Initiative.

Relying on its extensive global network and comprehensive global financial services, BOC has been playing an active part in supporting and involving itself in the BRI. By providing diversified financial services such as project financing, cross-border settlements and risk management, the bank offers financial support for infrastructure construction, trade, and cultural exchanges in Belt and Road countries and regions.

As a result, landmark projects such as the Jakarta-Bandung High-Speed Railway,

opened in Xiong'an New Area, marking a new starting point for BOC to serve the Belt and Road Initiative and move toward a better future.

Initiatives like the "Xiong'an One Card Pass" and the "Beijing-Xiong'an Intercity Railway E-Card Pass" break regional barriers. Tailored personal financial service solutions enhance the sense of gain and happiness among local residents in Xiong'an. BOC is vigorously promoting the digital construction of Xiong'an, with the bank's innovation research base and the headquarters of BOC Fullerton Community Bank setting in Xiong'an, and the launch of the country's first "Blockchain plus digital RMB" scenario.

These financial practices are strengthening efforts in education, healthcare, housing, elder care, transportation and other livelihood areas, injecting strong momentum into the comprehensive development of the "people's city".

Financial assistance in improving livelihoods and promoting Chinese modernization has transformed into tangible and perceptible initiatives, becoming specific and detailed micro-projects.

For Liu Xiping, a farmer in Dezhou, Shandong province, it is a new type of wheat harvester. Thanks to the financial support from BOC's online collateral loans, small-scale farmers like him can upgrade their equipment. For He Jing in Qinghai province, it is lush green grass and inclusive cross-border financial products and services.

As of the end of June, BOC had provided more than 17 trillion yuan (2329.96 billion) in credit support to 83,200 tech companies, with comprehensive services exceeding 650 billion yuan.

**Green action plan**

BOC has also developed the Green Finance Action Plan and the 2024 Green Finance Work Plan, proposing dozens of detailed measures to ensure that green finance development is effectively realized.

The bank has built its global "BOC Green Plus" brand, participating in internationally influential benchmark environmentally friendly projects. BOC ranks first among Chinese banks in Bloomberg's lists of the Global Green Use of Proceeds Loans and Sustainability-Linked Loans. It also leads the market in green

bond underwriting, having pioneered the issuance of the world's first sustainable development bonds under the Belt and Road Initiative. For instance, the bank issued the country's first nature-based commercial ESG-linked loan and, in collaboration with the ChinaBond Pricing Center, launched the ChinaBond BOC Green Bond Index, providing high-quality green bond market-making services.

BOC is supporting the development of the national carbon market. It was among the first to open nationwide greenhouse gas voluntary emission reduction market trading and registration accounts, effectively supporting the green and low-carbon transformation of the economy and society.

By the end of June, BOC's green credit balance exceeded 3.5 trillion yuan, representing a year-on-year growth of over 35 percent.

**Inclusive finance**

BOC has been serving a wide range of inclusive customer groups. As of the end of June, its balance of inclusive loans to small and micro enterprises exceeded 2 trillion yuan, benefiting over 13 million small and micro market entities.

To support the growth of small and micro tech enterprises, the bank has extended credit balances of over 430 billion yuan to national and provincial "title giant" specialized and innovative SMEs, with over 26,000 such enterprises receiving credit. BOC leads the industry in the credit coverage rate for these specialized and innovative SMEs.

BOC has issued over 430 billion yuan in special loans for job retention and expansion to more than 26,000 companies recommended by human resources and social security departments.

The bank has further enriched the functions of its Huiruyuan inclusive finance service app, offering more products for diverse scenarios, specialized services, convenient customer experiences, smarter risk control, and efficient technology operations. The Huiruyuan app has over 700,000 registered users.

The bank has also built a global cross-border matchmaking ecosystem, hosting 124 matchmaking events and providing "financing plus intelligence" services to nearly 50,000 enterprises in 28 countries and regions.

The bank has continuously increased financial support in key agricultural sectors, contributing to food security, promoting the revitalization of rural cultural and tourism industries, and helping farmers increase their income and wealth.

The balance of agricultural-related loans stands at 2.28 trillion yuan, with the balance of inclusive agricultural loans exceeding 140 billion yuan, and loan growth in key counties exceeding the average growth rate of all loans.

**Pension services**

In the realm of pension finance, BOC continues to optimize a diversified and professional product and service system.

As one of the first national social security fund and basic pension insurance fund custodians, and one of the earliest commercial banks to offer corporate annuity services, BOC is a market leader in terms of the number of corporate annuity individual accounts and the scale of annuity custody assets, with over 200 billion yuan in annuity trust assets.

BOC also provides comprehensive personal pension services through its mobile banking app and offline services receiving credit. BOC leads the industry in the credit coverage rate for these specialized and innovative SMEs.

The bank supports the development of the pension insurance system and has built over 10,000 elderly-friendly service outlets and more than 1,000 model pension service outlets.

As part of the People's Bank of China's pilot program for special rebates for inclusive pensions, BOC has helped inclusive pension institutions reduce financing costs.

The bank has also hosted a silver-age matchmaking event at the China

**Digital transformation**

BOC continues to enhance the quality and efficiency of its financial services by fully advancing the digital transformation of the group, strengthening data governance, and steadily advancing 39 strategic technology projects.

The bank is accelerating the transformation of its technical architecture, with a total of 28,000 servers on its cloud platform, and is advancing the research and application of new technologies.

The bank's robotic process automation and optical character recognition technologies are applied in over 3,200 scenarios across channel operations, corporate finance, and personal finance.

BOC is also exploring the application of big data computing, the internet of things, and other technologies, and is piloting large model applications, including code assistance, focused on computing power, algorithms, and data.

In the field of personal finance, BOC has introduced new features to its domestic mobile banking app, including housing fund services and "Night Market" for wealth management products, with peak monthly active users exceeding 80 million. The bank is also promoting version 6.0 of its overseas mobile banking app, which includes key features such as soft tokens and online remittance salary direct transfers.

In the area of digital currency, BOC is accelerating the high-quality integration of digital RMB with traditional business strategies. The bank assisted the Central Bank of the United Arab Emirates in completing its first direct cross-border payment transaction in "digital dirhams" as part of the multilateral central bank digital currency bridge, or mBridge, project.

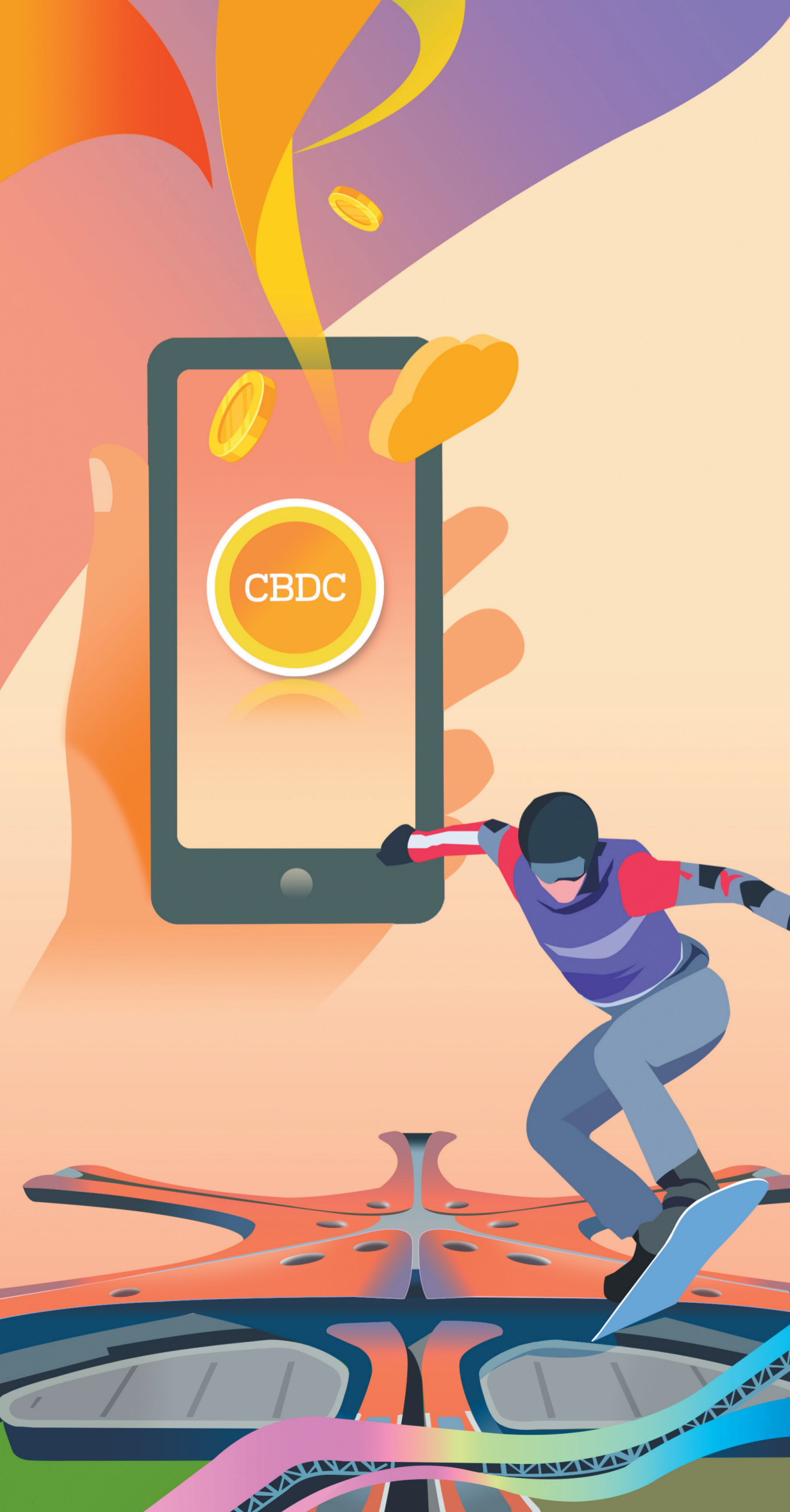


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