



Beijing Road is a main thoroughfare in Zhongguancun lined by a string of hi-tech parks.

iBridge: 'One world, one science park'

► HSP developing new online model for sustained growth and business exchange

By ZHANG XIUYING

With economic globalization and the rapid development of network technology calling for a new solution to the sustainable development of hi-tech parks around the world, the Information Bridge – more colloquially known as iBridge – is an innovative bid to meet the challenges stemming from globalization and a “knowledge-based” society. The initiative attracted global attention due to its pioneering role in China's economic reform.

Based on Web 2.0 technology, the government-sponsored project provides a network platform for exchange and cooperation between companies in technological parks in China and around the world.

Initiated by the Zhongguancun Haidian Science Park (HSP) in 2003, iBridge offers the latest industrial information and helps companies find business opportunities. At the same time, it has also created an online community of participants through various web-based services.

With blogs, communities, recommendations, RSS and other web-based tools on the platform, iBridge is the first of its kind to be devised by any of the 54 national science parks in China to provide such a strong platform.

News releases, shared opinions, product marketing, social network-

ing, posting articles and comments as well as others means of communications have enabled registered users to access information and communicate with one another more successfully.

Han Yongfei, president of Onets Wireless & Internet Security Tech Co Ltd in Haidian, said: “I was very surprised when I first heard that HSP was to use Web 2.0, as many enterprises (even dot coms) at that time were not using this cutting-edge technology. iBridge is an ideal business platform, and has been especially useful for our company.”

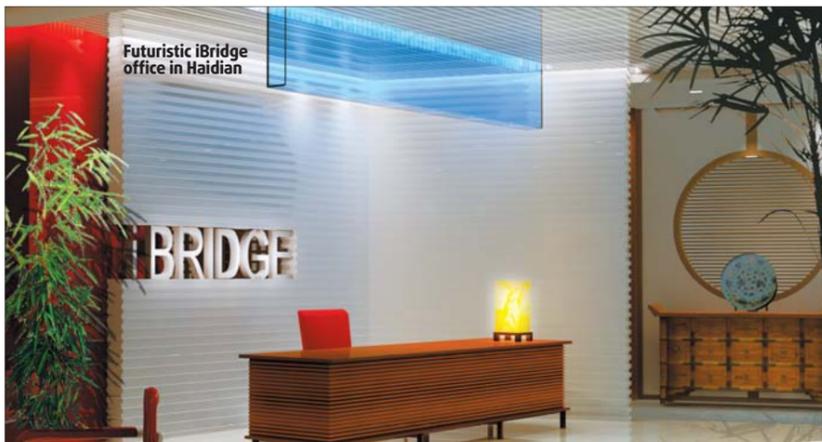
Theory application

By integrating all of HSP's resources as well as those around the world and using technology as a tool, iBridge can provide a practical solution to the problem of isolated product development and drastically expand the incubating service platform.

Take the International Association of Science Parks (IASP) as an example. Currently it has 350 members operating around the world, containing 110,000 hi-tech companies.

In China, there are a total of 54 hi-tech industry development zones. HSP is now home to 16,314 tech-based small and mid-size companies, with 513,500 people across various industries.

We can envision the power of a small number when it is multiplied by a very large number – it is a similar



model that has sustained the science parks.

Features and functions

Through the use of three major web-based tools – blogs, communities, and conferences, iBridge has been widely acknowledged as an ideal instrument for marketing China by providing an interactive service platform for businesses, organizations, experts and governmental departments to jointly participate in. It is also a bridge for Chinese businesses to operate internationally and for foreign businesses to enter China.

Managed by HSP authorities, the non-profit, one-stop platform provides membership services both in Chinese and English. There are four types of members – governmental organizations, businesses, institutions, and individuals.

With easy access to iBridge's resources, such as the latest research findings, up-to-date industrial developments, investment opportunities, products and conferences, users can exchange industrial information and share professional insights.

SME fund

In September 2006, the Fund for International Cooperation was launched by HSP, with the aim of supporting international cooperation by small and medium-size enterprises (SMEs) in the park. The fund is especially designed to finance tech-based enterprises that have prominent projects oriented towards international markets.

To date, the fund has financed more than 100 projects relating to intellectual property rights for some 100 enterprises, spurring the growth of the regional economy. The fund has not only received a positive response from the public in its funding of SMEs but also generated profits.

The Beijing Accet Corporation, a software solutions and service provider, is one of the beneficiaries that received capital from the fund. Sun Yong, president of the company, said: “When we heard about the fund, we began to integrate the company's development with international projects from HSP.”

“At present, we have begun working with SPI, an enterprise from Portugal,

to promote our Chinese teaching products and relevant services in Portugal and other parts of Europe.”

Strategic cooperation

The early 2007 saw a framework agreement for cooperation between HSP and SPI signed in the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, with Premier Wen Jiabao and the Portuguese Prime Minister, Jose Socrates, attending the signing ceremony.

HSP has maintained a close relationship with IASP for many years. In 1993, the predecessor of HSP – Beijing New Technology Industrial Development and Experimental Zone applied to host the annual IASP conference. In 1995, the fourth IASP International Conference was held in Beijing, the first time an international science park conference was held in China. In December 2008, a new framework agreement of strategic cooperation between IASP and HSP was signed in Beijing, marking a brand-new starting point of cooperation between the two parties. The need to further strength long-term cooperation between the two parties

HSP-A Global Technology Innovation Center

was fully recognized and supported by Lin Fusheng, director of HSP, Zhao Fengtong, deputy mayor of Beijing, and Joan Bellavista, president of IASP.

Partnerships were also set up with the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers, and Westchester county, New York.

In August 2008, HSP and Westchester county of the US signed an agreement to work together in a variety of fields such as training, business cooperation, information and technology exchanges. iBridge was selected as the platform and information carrier for both parties.

Future prospects

As enterprises in the park enhance their research and development strength and improve production capacity, HSP is looking to become a national demonstration park in terms of independent innovation, promoting internationalization, strengthening enterprises' international competitiveness, fostering an innovative environment and providing impetus for future development.

As more and more members from governments, institutions, associations, enterprises and experts at home and abroad enlist, iBridge will become a more attractive collaboration center, where people from different regions can communicate.

With “one world, one science park” in mind, we strongly believe that the iBridge will play a more important role in increasing connectivity and boosting the development of science parks in China and around the world.

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E-platform proves crucial in IT firms' bid to go global

By TING TING

With its self-appointed mission to link businesses across the world, the Information Bridge (iBridge), an Internet-based platform developed by the Haidian Science Park (HSP) to promote international cooperation and support the internationalization of businesses in China, has become indispensable as a means to push the resident companies in the HSP to go global.

The HSP authorities have consistently highlighted the importance of internationalization. The international aspirations of businesses at the park have received constant support from government agencies, enterprises, and other sectors of society as well as from their existing global partners.

After more than 20 years of development, the HSP is now established as one of the biggest and most respected science parks in Beijing. It is widely regarded as a famous brand name

among China's hi-tech industries, as well as a platform from which China's hi-tech enterprises can go overseas. It is at the forefront of the international competition to secure state-of-the-art technologies in

the world's hi-tech industries.

For China watchers, it also serves as a window on how the world's third largest economy interacts with the global market and related social forces – and a vital way of seeing just how it is turning to private resources to build its mooted innovation economy. It has also become an important platform for global corporations looking both to develop R&D resources and gain a foothold in the Chinese market.

Among the 15,000 hi-tech enterprises in the Haidian district, more than 2,000 are foreign-invested, including 42 Fortune 500 companies, such as Intel, IBM, HP, Honeywell, Microsoft and ABB. It is also home to many renowned Chinese hi-tech companies, such as Lenovo, Sina, Baidu, Sinosteel Corporation and the China National Chemical Corporation.

iBridge is a network platform that serves enterprises in science parks and around the world. Based on Web 2.0 technology, the network is designed to facilitate the participation of members and the coordination of governments. It also serves as a communication tool to promote international cooperation and support the internationalization of enterprises in China.

Members communicate with each other through a combination of tools such as blogs, communities, online

conferences. The network also provides recommendations for better services to its members. All these have resulted in breakthroughs in cooperation, management improvement and the upgrading of government functions.

International cooperation

Taking it as the ideal way of connecting with the rest of the world, HSP is the first among the 54 national hi-tech zones and science parks in China to adopt iBridge. Even the International Association of Science Parks (IASP) is trying to make use of this effective communications platform. The idea of creating such a platform was first conceived of by the Foreign Affairs Service Center of HSP, and the project has become a part of the internationalization program implemented by the Torch Center of the Ministry of Science and Technology.

In January 2007, a framework agreement for cooperation between HSP and Sociedade Portuguesa de

Insulated from the frenetic pace of modern Beijing, the eco-friendly Zhongguancun area is flourishing with hi-tech and modern service industries.



Inovacao (SPI) was signed in Beijing, with Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao and Prime Minister Jose Socrates of Portugal attending the signing ceremony. Both parties agreed to jointly promote the iBridge platform through their own networks.

In August 2008, HSP and the government of Westchester county, US, signed an agreement to work together to set up a science and technology innovation cooperation mechanism for long term cooperation in training, business cooperation, information and technology exchanges. iBridge has been chosen to be the platform and information carrier for both parties. Up till now, after one-year of trials, iBridge has over 300 registered member enterprises.

“With new members joining us and making contributions, we believe that

iBridge will become a platform capable of providing many services, where members can share information, promote dynamic and interactive communication, enhance exchanges and find business opportunities around the world,” an administrator of the iBridge network said.

Go global

Yang Yuanqing, CEO of Lenovo Group and a member of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), said Chinese enterprises must “go global”, make full use of their local advantages, possess proprietary intellectual property rights and technologies, persist in independent innovation, and build up their own core competitiveness.

Yang said that the government would introduce more strategic measures in support of both independent innovation and those Chinese enterprises, with proprietary brands, looking to go global. This is aimed at creating a better environment for independent innovation by businesses.

For Feng Jun, CEO of Beijing Huaqi Information Digital Tech-

nology Co, this is the perfect time for Chinese enterprises to venture into the international market.

Chinese companies have had to make the best use of the global economic recession, which has resulted in falling prices for assets and human resources. The financial crisis has also precipitated a change in the mentality of overseas consumers.

Feng said: “Enterprises should be eligible for concessions offered to ‘incubators’ after paying a certain amount of tax in China. This will not only increase the enthusiasm of enterprises to pay tax but will allow taxpayers to enjoy real benefits. After a full year of ‘incubation’, those enterprises that are strong enough and are growing well should leave the ‘incubator’ to make room for other enterprises.”

In line with this policy, the Indian expert Das Gupta was appointed as the chief advisor to HSP and this appointment is expected to promote Haidian's software outsourcing industry. The strategy has established a bridge for communication and exchange of ideas between Chinese enterprises and foreign experts.



Entrepreneurial startup center in Zhongguancun. Often likened to Silicon Valley, the area has a strong appeal to visionaries with ambition.