

Visit of the China Center for Cooperation on Special Economic Zones in BRICS Countries (BSCC)

A delegation of 5 officials from the China Center for Cooperation on Special Economic Zones in BRICS Countries (BSCC) visited SEZEPC at New Delhi on 10th September 2026. The delegation was received by the SEZEPC team. The visit formed part of BSCC's ongoing outreach to institutions/trade associations engaged with Special Economic Zones, free trade zones, comprehensive bonded zones, industrial parks and other comparable economic-zone frameworks across BRICS member and partner countries.

At the outset, the delegation outlined BSCC's objective of developing a structured cooperation network among institutions associated with special economic zones. It was clarified that BSCC's role is primarily international and facilitative: it seeks to connect zone authorities, business associations and enterprises; promote policy and institutional exchanges; facilitate investment and trade linkages; and build a broader BRICS-oriented platform for cooperation among economic zones. In this respect, BSCC's mandate is distinct from that of SEZEPC, whose principal focus remains representation, policy advocacy and member services for SEZs and EOUs in India.

SEZEPC Presentation and Discussion

SEZEPC made a presentation on the Indian SEZ and EOU framework. The delegation was apprised that India's SEZ ecosystem is governed by the SEZ Act and Rules, 2006, and is intended to provide an internationally competitive and facilitative environment for export-oriented operations. The presentation also covered the EOU Scheme, under which export-oriented manufacturing and service units may operate under a policy framework linked to positive net foreign exchange earnings and other prescribed conditions.

SEZEPC highlighted its role representing the interests of units and developers in SEZs and EOUs. Its functions include dissemination of policy and trade-related information, representation of industry issues before Government, analysis of member feedback, conduct of workshops and open-house sessions, publication of newsletters and trade bulletins, and assistance to members on matters relating to the SEZ Act and Rules, FTP, EOUs, GST and other taxation issues. The delegation particularly appreciated SEZEPC's regular member-connect initiatives, including its region-wise and scheme-wise WhatsApp groups, which enable prompt circulation of updates and resolution of operational queries. On the administration of SEZs in India, the delegation was informed that the SEZ framework is administered through seven zones under the respective Development Commissioners. The Board of Approval functions as the apex body, while Zonal Approval Committees deal with approvals and related matters at the zonal level. The EOU Scheme and its relationship with the broader export-promotion architecture were also explained.

The presentation gave special emphasis to recent reforms for semiconductor and electronics-component manufacturing. SEZEPC explained that the Government has made several policy and regulatory interventions to promote domestic manufacturing, attract investment and reduce India's import dependence in this strategically important sector. The amendments to the SEZ Rules provide greater flexibility for exclusive semiconductor and electronics-component SEZs, including reduced minimum land requirements, operational flexibility and domestic-market access on payment of applicable duties. The delegation showed particular interest in semiconductor investments in India, especially Micron's proposed facility at Sanand, Gujarat. Reference was also made to the electronics-component manufacturing proposal of Aequs at Dharwad, Karnataka.

The delegation also enquired about Reliance's Jamnagar refinery and was informed that it operates within a captive SEZ. It was noted during the discussion that Reliance accounts for around 40% of India's merchandise exports from SEZs. It was further indicated that SEZs constitute an important contributor to India's combined goods and services exports.

BSCC's Presentation - Mandate and Perspective

BSCC presented its background, institutional mandate and planned activities. The Centre was formally launched in Qiantang New Area, Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province, on 21st March 2025, following the BRICS framework for cooperation on special economic zones. Its Secretariat was subsequently inaugurated in June 2025. BSCC's stated objective is to serve as a cooperation platform for strengthening economic and trade engagement among BRICS countries through the SEZ ecosystem. The presentation noted that the BRICS grouping comprises 11 member countries and 10 partner countries.

BSCC outlined its work areas as policy dialogue, investment facilitation, trade promotion, capacity building, standards alignment, institutional innovation, research, development of an SEZ database, sharing of best practices and provision of integrated services to enterprises. It is also developing the Invest@BRICS and Buy@BRICS public-service initiatives, alongside investment-matching events, enterprise interactions and SEZ-focused dialogues. BSCC has positioned its facility at Qiantang as a hub for exhibitions, meetings, roadshows, training and overseas-investment support services.

The delegation explained that China's zone framework has evolved beyond the original SEZ model and now includes economic and technological development zones, high-tech industrial development zones and parks, pilot free trade zones, comprehensive bonded zones, industrial parks and other specialised zones. It was noted that the BRICS cooperation framework uses the term SEZ broadly, covering various nationally defined forms of preferential or specialised economic zones. The delegation indicated that China's comprehensive bonded zones may be regarded as broadly comparable to India's SEZs for the purpose of dialogue, while acknowledging that the legal, customs and operating frameworks of the two systems are distinct.

On investment matchmaking, BSCC clarified that it does not operate merely as a directory or information platform. Rather, it seeks to directly connect enterprises with identified zones and relevant institutions based on their investment requirements. On the issue of institutional innovation, the delegation explained that the expression relates to innovation in institutional arrangements, governance structures, administrative procedures, regulatory mechanisms and public-service delivery within zone ecosystems, rather than technological innovation undertaken by individual enterprises.

Key Questions asked by SEZEPC

1. The institutional factors, including the role of the government support, that enabled BSCC to become operational and organise a BRICS SEZ Dialogue within a relatively short period of its establishment that is just 1.5 years.
2. The relative progress made under BSCC's core work streams—investment facilitation, trade promotion, technology cooperation, institutional innovation and overseas/outbound business services—and the areas that remain challenging to operationalise.
3. The practical mechanism adopted by BSCC for investment matchmaking, including whether it facilitates direct enterprise-to-zone linkages or functions primarily through a platform, directory or information-sharing model.
4. The meaning and scope of "institutional innovation" in the context of Chinese and BRICS SEZs, particularly the potential for innovation in administrative systems, regulatory processes, governance arrangements and institutional service delivery.

5. The sectors in which BSCC sees near-term scope for India–China zone-to-zone cooperation, particularly electronics, semiconductors, renewable energy, electric vehicles, pharmaceuticals and chemicals.
6. The forms of cooperation that would make the SEZEPC–BSCC relationship mutually useful, including data and information exchange, policy dialogue, joint events, and concrete steps to establish a sustained cooperation b/w SEZEPC and BSCC over the coming months.
7. The Chinese terminology and classification of zone models broadly comparable to India’s SEZ framework, including comprehensive bonded zones, free trade zones, economic and technological development zones, high-tech industrial development zones etc.
8. The possibility of developing structured policy dialogues among BRICS and partner-country SEZ associations for sharing best practices, improving policy clarity, reducing information gaps and facilitating cross-border investment.
9. The scope for BSCC to sensitise relevant Chinese zones, enterprises and associations regarding recent Indian policy reforms supporting semiconductor and electronics-component manufacturing in SEZs.

Key Takeaways and Follow-up

The interaction indicated potential for a structured engagement between SEZEPC and BSCC, particularly in the areas of policy dialogue, institutional exchange and investment facilitation. SEZEPC suggested that BSCC may sensitise Chinese zones and enterprises about India’s recent reforms for semiconductor and electronics-component manufacturing, including the greater flexibility available under the SEZ framework.

Possible sectoral complementarities were discussed in electronics, semiconductors, EVs, renewable energy, pharmaceuticals and chemicals. SEZEPC emphasised that Chinese enterprises could explore investment opportunities in Indian SEZs in manufacturing segments where China has strong capabilities, while Indian enterprises could examine opportunities in sectors where India has established strengths, including pharmaceuticals and chemicals.

SEZEPC also suggested that future engagement should include focused policy dialogues on evolving SEZ frameworks and the sharing of regulatory best practices. Reference was made to ongoing policy discussions in India in response to industry requirements, including issues relating to duty foregone on Domestic Tariff Area sales. BSCC stated that it intends to organise policy dialogues among BRICS and other participating countries, facilitate links with counterpart institutions in China and elsewhere, and encourage greater policy clarity and information-sharing to reduce uncertainty for prospective investors.

The meeting concluded with lunch. SEZEPC presented the delegation with copies of the SEZ Act and Rules, the SEZEPC Newsletter and the Trade Bulletin. The delegation thanked SEZEPC for the interaction and appreciated its institutional role and member-service initiatives. SEZEPC was invited to participate in the BSCC-organised BRICS SEZ Dialogue proposed to be held in Hangzhou from 22nd to 25th September 2026.
