

As China grows rapidly, Guangzhou – the capital of Guangdong province in southern China – is emerging as a significant economic powerhouse in the country. An economic report forecast that the city's GDP is poised to catch up with that of Hong Kong and Singapore by 2015, and Taiwan by 2024. In fact, Guangzhou's economic growth of 11 percent is in stark contrast to the sub-four percent figure seen in the other three jurisdictions.

Guangzhou's economy is fast developing as an important industrial base in China. The industrial output value of the three main industries – automobile manufacturing, electronic communications, and petrochemicals – accounts for about a third of the city's output value. Other sectors are heating up too, say lawyers, who observe intellectual property, joint ventures, and M&A as some areas of growth. Guangzhou's rise as an epicentre of activity has led to numerous foreign enterprises seeking to do business in the southern city. This has sparked several foreign law firms to set up shop, and spurred domestic law firms to bolster their existing practices in the region.

(Firms are arranged in alphabetical order)

DACHENG LAW OFFICES

One of the largest law firms in China, Dacheng Law Offices commands an impressive presence, sporting 35 offices on the mainland. In addition, the firm has seven overseas offices spanning the U.S. (New York, Los Angeles, Chicago), Paris, Hong Kong, Singapore and Taiwan. The outfit's specialties include corporate M&A, capital markets, foreign direct investment, energy and mining, real estate, intellectual property, criminal law, and litigation and arbitration.

The Guangzhou team consists of seven lawyers, and profits from the experience of senior partner Bin Jiang who focuses primarily on financial securities, real estate, corporate law, and criminal matters.

Dacheng Law Offices joined the World Services Group (WSG) in 2009 as its only China member. The WSG is a leading profes-



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sional service organisation encompassing members from law firms, accounting firms, and financial and investment companies.

GUANGDA LAW FIRM

One of China's prominent full-service law firms, Guangda Law Firm wields a team of more than 250 legal professionals who operate out of key cities including Beijing, Shanghai, Shenzhen, and Guangzhou. The firm has capabilities in capital markets, banking and finance, real estate and construction, and intellectual property, with a specialisation in corporate and securities, cross border investment, and dispute resolution.

The firm's Guangzhou office has benefited from an array of work over the last year, including advising on several cable, radio and television network reorganisations for Guangdong province, negotiating on behalf of Opplé Lighting with Apple on a global trademark registration of the mark Opplé, and acting as legal adviser to CITIC Bank International and the Guangdong branch of the Agricultural Bank of China. The team also advised Brightoil Petroleum on its HK\$1.5 billion (\$193 million) stock acquisition from another petroleum company.

Guangda is also a founding member of the Sino-Global Legal Alliance (SGLA), which includes Hogan Lovells and eight other leading PRC law firms.

HJM ASIA LAW & CO

A foreign law firm with a presence in Singapore and Guangzhou, HJM Asia Law & Co boasts over 15 years of experience in the region. The outfit offers a gamut of specialties including corporate M&A work, employment law, litigation and arbitration, and compliance. But its prowess lies in assisting foreign companies with establishing operations in China, and intellectual property matters. Managing partner Caroline Berube has been steadily growing the firm's practice in Guangzhou, which now comprises eight lawyers. The recent arrival of foreign attorney Brad Alexander has served as a further boost to the team.

Berube recently advised a German company on the setup of a wholly-owned for-

eign enterprise in Shanghai to expand its manufacturing in China. The team drafted required incorporation documents, resolved issues relating to the manufacturing facility, and liaised with authorities regarding the company's activities.

On the IP side, Berube advised a U.S. manufacturer on refiling its patent application in China, after the initial application and appeal – filed by the client's previous legal adviser – was rejected by the State Intellectual Property Office (SIPO). An amended application was drafted, and ultimately approved by SIPO.

MAYER BROWN JSM

Commanding a strong legal presence globally, Mayer Brown JSM has also tapped into the Guangzhou market. The firm has had a busy year working with blue chip clients on real estate, construction, and engineering matters.

The team is involved in real estate transactions that total over 11 million square feet in gross floor area in cities such as Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou. Advice is also given to numerous foreign companies building manufacturing facilities in China, particularly on issues including procurement models, drafting of contracts, and consultancy agreements for the projects.

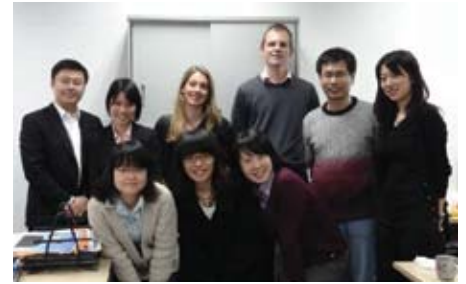
On the contentious side, the firm is acting for several developers and institutions on cross-border matters involving legal and arbitration proceedings in Hong Kong and China.

Mayer Brown's team has also advised several MNC clients on environmental law in China, including carbon credits, carbon emissions trading, and implementation models.

WRAGGE & CO

UK firm Wragge & Co's Guangzhou office, which opened in 2008, comprises eight legal professionals, headed by the experienced Tom Carver. Founded initially with a focus on intellectual property, the firm's office has grown substantially in the last few years to encompass corporate, employment, real estate, finance, and dispute resolution among others via its international network. The consistent quality of the firm's offering in Guangzhou has led it to acquire and retain clients including Aston Martin, Dyson, Triumph Motorcycles, Zaha Hadid, and several top UK and U.S. universities.

The Guangzhou office was further



WRAGGE & CO

strengthened by the arrival of Daniela Shaw in February 2012. A Chinese qualified lawyer and trademark attorney, Shaw has a wealth of experience on intellectual property strategy and IPR transactions.

The firm is assisting Aston Martin on its Chinese employment contracts, and advising the car maker on PRC intellectual property issues. The team also acted for Dyson in its successful civil action against Chinese home electrical appliances manufacturer Ninghai Wansheng. The issue surrounded the alleged design patent infringement by Ninghai of Dyson's bladeless fan, in which the latter was awarded 500,000 yuan (\$78,000) in damages.

Besides intellectual property work, the firm has had a busy year advising clients on international arbitrations, joint ventures, and general corporate M&A matters.

ZHONG LUN LAW FIRM

Headquartered in Beijing, Zhong Lun Law Firm also has offices in Shanghai, Shenzhen, Guangzhou, Wuhan, Chengdu, Hong Kong, Tokyo and London. The Guangzhou office covers a range of practice areas including, but not limited to, real estate and construction, corporate M&A, capital markets, foreign direct investment, and dispute resolution. The Guangzhou office alone boasts 14 partners, including real estate specialist Jianqing Ding, underlining the scope of the firm's operations in Guangdong province's capital city.

The size of the team, coupled with its reputation in the market, has led many blue chip companies to seek out Zhong Lun Law Firm for its expertise. ING Real Estate, Sun Hung Kai Properties, HSBC, General Electric, Sony China, and American Oil Company are just a few of its clients on an extensive list.

Other notable firms in the city include **GFE Law Office, Guangxin Lawyers, Jun He Law Offices, King & Wood Mallesons, Trust Law, and Yingke Law Firm.**



CAROLINE BERUBE