

E-COMMERCE

Shenzhen sets up big data platform to boost trade

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Shenzhen has set up the country's first platform that uses big data collected by the government to support cross-border trade, as e-commerce becomes increasingly vital to China's export industry.

The pilot initiative, which is the first trade data platform approved by China's General Administration of Customs, will make its big data service available to companies, regulators and local governments, according to an announcement by the Qianhai economic zone.

The platform gathers data shared by various agencies – including the customs, tax, foreign exchange and port authorities – and connects to a network of trading firms, logistics service

providers and financial institutions to create a "cross-border trade service ecosystem", according to the announcement.

The platform has already been used by authorities in three areas, including the analysis of shipping data to strengthen customs surveillance in ports, provision of customs statistics to support local policymaking and development of a "smart tax rebate" system to help tax and customs officers crack down on fraud.

It has also helped accelerate the pricing, taxation and clearing processes for fruit consignment traders, according to the Qianhai government.

The new initiative is expected to boost Shenzhen's growing cross-border business, which is one of the core industry clusters that Qianhai aims to cultivate.

E-commerce imports and exports passing through Qianhai's

customs jumped by 49.6 per cent during the first 11 months of this year to 205.3 billion yuan (HK\$229 billion), according to official data.

As part of its efforts to promote growth of the industry, Qianhai has actively lobbied cross-border e-commerce platforms – including JD.com, Pinduoduo and Wish – as well as international shipping giants United Parcel Service and DHL

Express, to set up operations in the economic zone.

Qianhai, originally established in 2009 to enhance cooperation between businesses in Shenzhen and Hong Kong focused on the service industry, saw its status boosted last year when Beijing expanded the size of the zone by eight times to "deepen reforms and opening up".

As one of the beneficiaries of Beijing's policy, cross-border

e-commerce in Qianhai flourished in tandem with the national industry, which grew by tenfold in the past five years, according to official data. Imports and exports rose by 18.6 per cent last year, with exports accounting for more than 70 per cent of the 1.92 trillion yuan in trade, customs data showed.

Shenzhen has long been a major export hub. With the rise of e-commerce, local manufacturers took to selling goods directly through international platforms like Amazon.com. The city made up about 35 per cent of China's cross-border e-commerce industry last year, according to the Shenzhen Cross-Border E-commerce Association.

Ozon, the online shopping giant hailed as Russia's answer to Amazon, opened its first China office in Shenzhen last month, with the aim of signing up 100,000 local sellers by 2024.

