

MORE THAN 100 ISRAELI ENTREPRENEURS IN TALKS FOR CHINESE INVESTMENT

The large turnout is a sign of burgeoning east Asian interest in the “Start-Up Nation” – with 70 translators helping to grease the wheels between the two sides.

BY MAX SCHINDLER
JUNE 5, 2018 22:17



Israeli start-up founders and entrepreneurs met with hundreds of Chinese investors at the GoForIsrael Conference. (photo credit: Courtesy)

More than 100 Israeli start-up founders and entrepreneurs wined and dined with hundreds of Chinese investors at the GoForIsrael Conference in the Chinese city of Foshan last week.

The large turnout is a sign of burgeoning east Asian interest in the “Start-Up Nation” – with 70 translators helping to grease the wheels between the two sides.

“More than 800 one-on-one meetings were held between Chinese investors and Israeli companies, which continued well after the conference ended,” said Haggai Ravid, CEO of Cukierman & Co. Investment House. “All the Israeli companies have received a great deal of interest.”

The Israeli companies pitching themselves specialize in fields such as artificial intelligence, the “Internet of Things,” life sciences, cybersecurity and autonomous driving technologies.

“I was surprised by the amount of investors and their interest in Israeli technology... [for] our penetration into the Chinese market,” said Meron Leibovich, who runs global sales for Real Imaging, an Israeli startup developing tools for early detection of breast cancer.

So far this year, Chinese investment into Israel is showing mixed signs of success.

The number of Chinese investments in Israeli venture capital funds has declined since the banner year of 2014, dwindling from nine to three, according to an IVC Research Center report from February. Similarly, the total amount of money raised by funds with the participation of Chinese investors has also gone down, from \$1.3 billion in 2014 to \$360 million so far this year.

All of that can partly be explained by Chinese regulatory confusion that has since been resolved.

In August 2017, the Chinese government issued new rules on overseas investments – cracking down on acquisitions of real estate and sports teams while encouraging Chinese investors to buy up technology. That paves the way for Chinese investment in Israeli hi-tech once more.

In 2016 – prior to much of the regulatory confusion – Chinese money coming into Israel had surged more than tenfold to a record \$16.5 billion, putting the country on track to overtake the US as the number one source of foreign private investment in the Jewish state.

Chinese investors hailed from Alibaba, the e-commerce giant – whose CEO, Jack Ma, visited Israel in May – as well as from the country's largest insurer Ping An, Sailing Capital, GF Securities, Fosun, Haitong Securities and others.

For CuraLife, an Israeli nutritional supplement company which already operates in China, the conference provided additional exposure.

“Chinese investors and businessmen flew especially from across the country to meet us in Foshan,” said CuraLife CEO Ron Elul.

Sponsored by the Cukierman & Co. Investment House, Catalyst CEL Fund and Rits Leaguer Group, the Foshan conference comes on the heels of the annual GoForIsrael Conference in Tel Aviv held earlier this year.

Also attending were Israel's Ambassador to China, Zvi Heifetz, and Israel's Counsel General in Guangzhou, Nadav Cohen – who noted the city of Foshan's role in China's “One Belt, One Road” project, creating a vast metropolis of technological innovation.

This is the second time that the conference was held in China, following the inaugural one in Shanghai in September 2016.

<https://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/More-than-100-Israeli-entrepreneurs-in-talks-for-Chinese-investment-559246>