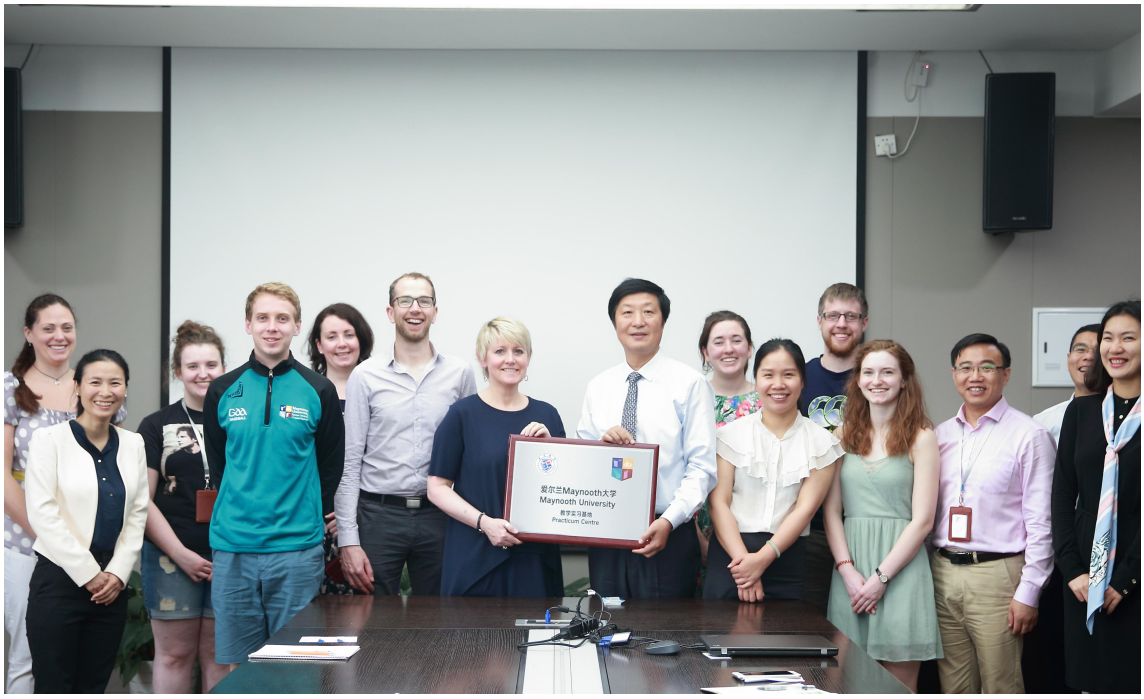


South Africa–China Business & Innovation Leadership Programme

Shenzhen & Hong Kong, China | A 7-Day Executive MBA Study Tour

Proposed for:

Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS), South Africa

Programme Focus:

Emerging Market Strategy | Innovation & Technology Commercialization |

Supply Chain Excellence | China–Africa Business Opportunities| AI & Robotics

Programme Overview

The **South Africa-China Business & Innovation Leadership Programme** is a proposed **seven-day** executive study tour designed for GIBS MBA participants.

Centred in Shenzhen, one of China's leading technology and advanced manufacturing hubs, this study tour enables participants to examine how Chinese firms build competitive advantage, bring innovation to market, and scale operations into global emerging markets.

Five targeted corporate case studies – **TRANSSION Holdings, SF Holding, BYD, DJI and UBTECH Robotics** – form the core of the programme, offering practical business insights covering emerging-market strategy, supply-chain management, innovation execution, international expansion and industrial transformation.

With deliberate focus on relevance for South Africa and broader African markets, participants will evaluate Chinese business practices, assess their transferability to alternative market contexts, and extract actionable insights applicable within their home organisations.

The programme combines structured corporate engagements across Shenzhen, hands-on urban-technology experiences including low-altitude logistics demonstrations, together with a strategic visit to Hong Kong. This delivers a rounded understanding of mainland China's commercial ecosystem and the dynamic cross-border business landscape of Greater China.





Programme Objectives

The programme aims to:

1. Examine real-world business strategy through structured engagement with Chinese enterprises operating within technology, mobility, logistics and robotics sectors.
2. Investigate emerging-market commercial opportunities by analysing how organisations adapt products, services and distribution models to satisfy local consumer requirements, with specific attention to African markets.
3. Explore the practical commercial deployment of technology, alongside the influence of innovation, digital systems and automation on business growth and operational performance.
4. Build critical management viewpoints via executive presentations, question-and-answer sessions and facilitated discussion of live-world business challenges.
5. Evaluate the applicability of selected Chinese business practices for South African contexts, to inform decision-making around market development, supply-chain configuration, technology investment and organisational transformation.
6. Foster cross-cultural business dialogue and identify priority areas for future collaborative exploration between Chinese and South African companies and institutions.

Corporate Visit Themes

Five corporate case studies have been selected to reflect core management challenges and commercial opportunities relevant for MBA learners, especially those operating or engaging with emerging-market economies.

Business Theme	Proposed Enterprise	Key Learning Focus
Emerging Market Strategy & Localisation	TRANSSION Holdings	Consumer-driven innovation, African-market localisation, market-entry frameworks and digital-ecosystem development
Smart Logistics & Supply Chain Excellence	SF Holding	Technology-enabled logistics operations, operational efficiency, service reliability and supply-chain resilience
New Energy Mobility & Global Expansion	BYD Company Limited	Vertical integration, innovation governance, industrial competitiveness and cross-border business growth
Technology Commercialisation & Enterprise Applications	DJI Technology	Product development cycles, hardware innovation, enterprise-grade drone solutions and sustainable business-model design
Industrial Transformation: AI & Robotics	UBTECH Robotics	Robotics commercialisation, intelligent automation, industrial-sector deployment and strategic technology investment

7-Day Itinerary

DAY 1	**Activity:** Arrival, airport welcome, hotel check-in. **Evening:** Welcome Dinner and programme orientation session.
DAY 2	**Corporate Visit: Transsion Holdings Headquarters** with **executive briefing.** **Cultural Excursion: Talent Park** Participants will observe panoramic views of Shenzhen's financial district, alongside a live demonstration of drone-delivery services to gain direct exposure to how urban low-altitude logistics reshapes consumer-facing services.
DAY 3	**Corporate Visit: SF Holding** with **executive briefing.** **Cultural Excursion: Huaqiangbei** Participants will experience the renowned hardware innovation hub, observing how a dense component marketplace supports fast-track prototyping for global hardware products, illustrating grassroots entrepreneurial agility and ecosystem speed.
DAY 4	**Corporate Visit: BYD** with **executive briefing.** **Cultural Excursion: Dongmen Pedestrian Street** Participants will engage with Shenzhen's historic commercial precinct and understand grassroots retail dynamics, consumer behaviour and early-stage commercial development in China.
DAY 5	**Corporate Visit: DJI Technology** (Shekou Experience Center) with **executive briefing.** **Cultural Excursion: Shekou Waterfront** Evening Pearl-River Delta cruise offering views across the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge, followed by dinner and evening sightseeing within Shekou and the K11 commercial district.
DAY 6	**Corporate Visit: UBTECH Robotics Headquarters** with **executive briefing.** **Cultural Excursion: Hong Kong** Participants have opportunity to explore key local landmarks including Victoria Peak and the Star Ferry, experiencing Hong Kong's distinct East-West cultural and commercial environment. Evening transfer to Hong Kong International Airport (HKG) for departure preparations.
DAY 7	Arrival back in South Africa.

**All corporate visits, institutional engagements and technology demonstrations are proposed and remain subject to formal coordination and confirmation by respective host organisations.*

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the programme, participants will be able to:

1. Emerging Market Strategy and Localisation

Evaluate how firms adapt product offerings, customer-engagement approaches and distribution strategies across diverse markets, with specific consideration for African consumer needs and commercial opportunities.

2. Innovation and Global Competitiveness

Analyse the contribution of product innovation, technology investment, vertical integration and strategic execution toward corporate expansion and international competitive positioning.

3. Supply Chain and Operational Excellence

Assess how logistics infrastructure, digital platforms and automation underpin operational effectiveness, service standards and supply-chain resilience.

4. Technology Commercialisation

Examine commercial considerations for converting technical capabilities into market-ready products and enterprise-level solutions, covering drones, artificial intelligence and robotics use-cases.

5. Entrepreneurship and Commercial Ecosystems

Derive context-rich insights into Shenzhen's hardware supply-chain, retail landscape, innovation ecosystem and technology-powered urban services via on-the-ground city-based learning experiences.

6. China–South Africa Business Perspectives

Identify actionable management insights and promising avenues for further cooperation within trade, technology, mobility, logistics and wider China-Africa commercial partnerships.

7. Strategic Reflection and Practical Application

Synthesise observations gathered throughout the programme with personal professional experience, and assess how relevant business practices may be adapted for participants' own organisational and market operating contexts.

Expected Output

Participants will complete a concise individual or group reflection exercise. This deliverable captures core management insights drawn from the tour and evaluates their practical applicability for South African and broader African business contexts.

Supplementary Background Note

Detailed enterprise case profiles are included within the Appendix for reference.

Appendix: Featured Enterprise Profiles

*Note: Site-visit access, facility tours and executive engagement sessions are subject to formal coordination and final-party confirmation.

Transsion Holdings

A Strategic Case Study in Deep Localization, Emerging Market Dominance and Digital Ecosystem Building

Executive Overview

Headquartered in Shenzhen, Transsion Holdings is a Fortune China 500 technology enterprise and a leading global supplier of mobile smart terminals for emerging markets. Widely recognised as the market leader across Africa's smartphone and feature-phone segments through its TECNO, Infinix and itel brands. Transsion's growth provides a powerful case study for market-entry strategy, consumer-centred innovation and building scalable digital ecosystems within fast-growing developing economies.





Proposed HQ Visit Highlights

The proposed visit to Transsion's global headquarters will offer behind-the-scenes visibility of global operations and locally-oriented R&D philosophy. Key areas for exploration include:

- **Hyper-Localised R&D & Product Engineering:** Review of consumer-tailored product innovations including skin-tone imaging algorithms, multi-SIM device functionality, extended-battery design and audio optimisation aligned to African user preferences.
- **Beyond Hardware — Mobile Internet Ecosystems:** Executive briefings covering Transsion's strategic expansion into mobile operating systems (HiOS, XOS, itel OS), digital fintech services (PalmPay), music streaming (Boomplay) and connected IoT ecosystems.
- **Agile Supply Chain & Local Operations:** Insights relating to global

supply-chain robustness, cross-border logistics and in-market manufacturing, sales and service networks across multiple emerging-market geographies.

S.F. Holding Co.,Ltd.

A Strategic Case Study in Smart Logistics, Low-Airspace Operations and Intelligent Supply Chain Integration

Executive Overview

Headquartered in Shenzhen, SF Holding ranks as Asia's largest and the world's fourth-largest integrated logistics service provider. Renowned for service speed, reliability and technology leadership, SF has evolved from express-delivery specialist to a global logistics-technology enterprise. By combining big-data analytics, artificial intelligence, automation and a dedicated cargo-airline fleet, SF demonstrates leading-edge practice for modern supply-chain orchestration and intelligent last-mile fulfillment.

Proposed Site Visit Highlights

The planned visit to SF's Shenzhen headquarters and smart-logistics hub will deliver first-hand exposure to automated supply-chain futures. Key focus areas include:

- **Autonomous & Low-Altitude Drone Logistics (Fengyi Tech):** Live demonstration of SF's commercial UAV logistics infrastructure; including autonomous drone landing stations, automated parcel transfer units and real-time flight-management systems supporting last-mile and intercity delivery.
- **Smart Supply Chain & AI Optimization:** Executive briefings covering proprietary logistics operating systems, AI-driven route planning, automated sorting facilities and cold-chain management enabling cross-border trade flows.
- **Integrated Ground-to-Air Network:** Examination of the multi-tiered "Air + Ground + Autonomous" delivery infrastructure built for high-density urban centres and complex regional geographies.





BYD Company Limited

A Strategic Case Study in Global Energy Transition and Emerging Market Innovation

Executive Overview

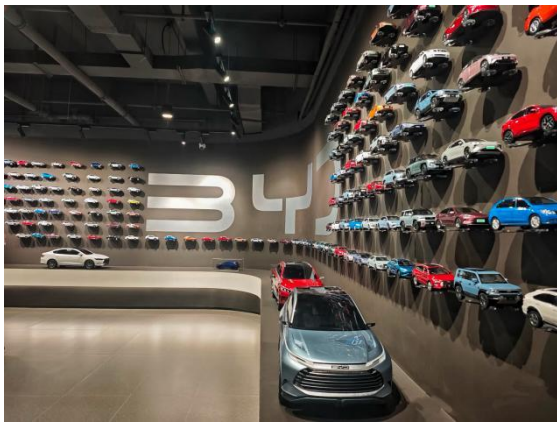
Headquartered in Shenzhen, BYD Company Limited is a Fortune Global 500 technology enterprise and front-runner within new-energy vehicles, power-battery production and sustainable-energy ecosystems. BYD's development illustrates how technological self-reliance, end-to-end vertical integration and agile international strategy drive industrial transformation and global market competitiveness.

Proposed HQ Visit Highlights

The delegation visit to BYD's Pingshan global headquarters provides immersive exposure to its innovation ecosystem. Focus on:

- **Advanced Clean-Tech Applications:** Insight into Blade-Battery safety innovations, grid-scale energy-storage systems (ESS) and zero-emission mobility solutions.
- **Vertical Integration & Resilience:** Executive briefings explaining how fully integrated industrial models strengthen supply-chain robustness, improve operational efficiency and enable global-market expansion.
- **Strategic Dialogue:** Opportunities for exchange with company representatives and industry experts covering corporate leadership and technology scaling pathways.





DJI (SZ DJI Technology Co., Ltd.)

A Strategic Case Study in Hardware Innovation, Global Brand Building and Industrial Autonomy

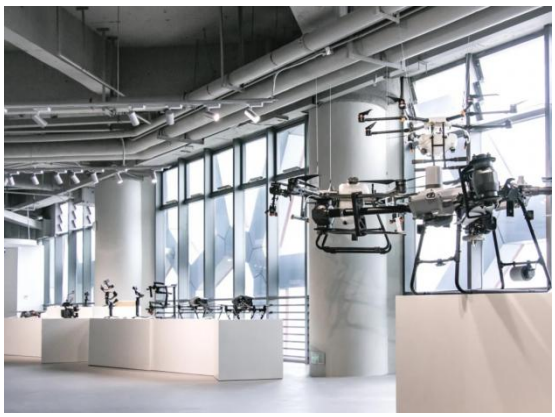
Executive Overview

Shenzhen-headquartered DJI holds dominant global market share within civilian-drone, aerial-imaging and smart-robotics sectors. Having grown from a university-founded start-up into an international technology leader, DJI offers a compelling case study for proprietary hardware-software integration, rapid product iteration and building premium global brand equity rooted within Shenzhen's hardware innovation cluster.

Proposed Site Visit Highlights

The proposed visit to DJI's Shekou Experience Centre delivers interactive multi-perspective exposure to advanced robotics and aerial-technology capability. Key learning themes:

- **Consumer to Enterprise Ecosystem:** Overview of DJI's full-range product portfolio across consumer aerial cinematography, handheld stabilisation and enterprise-grade platforms including thermal and LiDAR-enabled Matrice-series systems alongside smart-robotics solutions.
- **Smart Agriculture & Industrial Applications:** Demonstrations of enterprise-focused technology including the Agras agricultural-drone series deployed for precision farming, crop monitoring and infrastructure inspection and survey tasks.
- **Interactive Tech Immersion:** Hands-on flight simulator experiences and live flight demonstrations, showcasing human-machine interface design and user-centric product engineering.





UBTECH Robotics (UBTECH Robotics Corp Ltd)

A Strategic Case Study in Embodied AI, Humanoid Robotics & Industrial Automation

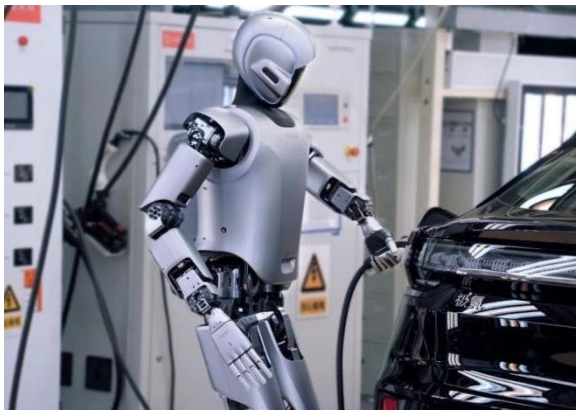
Executive Overview

Headquartered in Shenzhen and listed on the Hong Kong Stock Exchange (9880.HK), UBTECH Robotics is a global pioneer in artificial intelligence and humanoid robotics. The firm combines advanced environmental perception, bipedal locomotion, autonomous navigation and embodied-AI capability. Its development trajectory provides valuable case material on commercializing frontier-AI technology and advancing human-robot collaboration across smart-manufacturing, logistics and service-sector settings.

Proposed Site Visit Highlights

The proposed visit to UBTECH's global headquarters and AI robotics center enables hands-on engagement with next-generation robotic technology. Key highlights:

- **Industrial Humanoid Robotics (Walker S Series):** Live demonstrations of flagship industrial humanoid robots completing complex workflows within automotive and electronics-manufacturing environments, covering quality inspection, material handling and precision assembly work.
- **Embodied AI & Multimodal Intelligence:** Executive briefings exploring large-language-model integration with embodied-AI systems; enabling bipedal robots to interpret natural-language instructions, undertake autonomous reasoning and complete multi-step physical tasks.
- **Commercial & Healthcare Service Ecosystem:** Review of UBTECH's diversified service-robotics portfolio spanning smart-logistics platforms, AI educational tools and intelligent elder-care and healthcare-robotics applications.





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