

Going Global along the Belt and Road to Forge a New Hub of Inland Open Economy

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Promoting reform and development through opening-up is a treasured key to China's modernization to achieve new success. Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC), the CPC Central Committee with Comrade Xi Jinping at its core has gained a profound insight into the fluid international landscape, and adopted a holistic approach to domestic and international dynamics. With the proposal of a series of new philosophy, thoughts and strategies for advancing open development, China's national agenda of opening up has consistently achieved remarkable successes.

With deep care for Guizhou's development, General Secretary Xi Jinping has provided guidance in-person for the development of Guizhou at key moments. During his inspection tour to Guizhou in February 2021, General Secretary Xi Jinping emphasized the necessity for Guizhou to pursue

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overall planning with a focus on high-quality development. He urged the province to actively engage in the building of the new western land-sea corridor, integrate into the development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, and further expand global outreach along the Belt and Road. General Secretary Xi Jinping also advocated for promoting reform and development through opening-up. In January 2022, just one year after General Secretary Xi Jinping's inspection, the State Council issued a document aimed at supporting Guizhou in forging a new path in the development of the western region in the new era, with the goal of positioning the province as a "new hub of inland open economy." General Secretary Xi Jinping's visionary instructions and the mission endowed by the state have offered fundamental principles and strong impetus for Guizhou's further openness.

Guizhou earnestly implements the important directives of General Secretary Xi Jinping and the decisions and arrangements of the CPC Central Committee. In November 2021, Guizhou convened a provincial conference on open economic development, systematically outlining plans to expand its opening-up. At the 13th CPC Guizhou Provincial Congress in April 2022, establishing Guizhou as a "new hub of inland open economy" was explicitly defined as a priority for the province. Through these intensified efforts, Guizhou has demonstrated its unwavering commitment to advancing its opening-up and integrating into the new development paradigm, thereby striving to promote high-quality development through high-level openness.

Identifying the major direction for opening up. Guizhou's opening up was historically hampered by its geographical challenges. As an inland province in southwestern China, Guizhou

lacks direct access to major rivers, national borders, or the sea. In 2013, General Secretary Xi Jinping, embracing the historical trend of economic globalization, creatively put forward the Initiative of the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, known as the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). This initiative has further expanded China's openness from the coastal regions to the inland areas. As a key land-sea juncture for the Belt and Road in western China, Guizhou has significantly restructured its approach to opening up by leveraging considerable potential for westward openness. Notably, the full operation of the China-Laos Railway in 2021 marked a significant milestone, which established a major land corridor from Guizhou to Southeast Asia and created unprecedented opportunities for Guizhou to engage more actively with the outside world.

In recent years, Guizhou has actively refined its opening-up policies. Aligning with the BRI, the province has been extending its outreach – particularly focusing on Southeast Asia and South Asia – to enhance its openness and better support the nation's overall diplomatic objectives. Significant progress has already been made. ASEAN has become Guizhou's largest trading partner, with the province's imports and exports volume to ASEAN member states comprising more than one-fifth of its total volume. In May of this year, a Guizhou provincial delegation visited Indonesia, Thailand, and Laos, establishing regular communication channels with political and business circles of these countries. This has resulted in practical cooperation achievements across various sectors, including economy and trade, mineral resource development, logistics, education, transportation infrastructure, agriculture, as well as culture and tourism. These achievements have created favorable conditions for enterprises in Guizhou to

global and deepen collaboration with Southeast Asian nations.

Unblocking the passageway for opening up. Guizhou stands as the only province in China lacking plains, which in the past has substantially hindered openness due to poor connectivity. Since the 18th CPC National Congress, under the strong leadership of the CPC Central Committee with General Secretary Xi Jinping at its core, Guizhou has achieved historic strides in upgrading its transportation infrastructure. The province now boasts over 8,700 km of expressways and over 1,800 km of high-speed railway lines. All counties are connected to expressways, and all cities and prefectures have gained access to high-speed rail and civil aviation. Additionally, water transport routes now link north to the Yangtze River and south to the Pearl River. A modern comprehensive transportation system has preliminarily taken shape.

Over the past few years, we have seized opportunities and actively participated in the construction of the new western land-sea corridor. The Guiyang-Nanning High-Speed Railway has been open to traffic. The Huangtong-Baise Railway has started construction, and the construction of new Chongqing-Guiyang High-Speed Railway is being paced up. All these projects have elevated Guizhou to an important hub in the new western land-sea corridor. Currently, several major railways, such as the China-Europe Freight Train, the Guizhou-Guangdong Freight Train, the New Western Land-Sea Corridor, and the China-Laos Railway, all converge in Guizhou. To the north, the New Eurasian Land Bridge provides access to Central Asia and Europe. To the west and south, the China-Laos Railway and Beibu Gulf Port connect to Southeast Asia and South Asia. To the east, Guizhou integrates into the Yangtze River Economic Belt and the Guangdong-Hong

Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, weaving an all-directional open passageway connecting east, south, west, and north.

Developing openness-oriented industries vigorously. Emphasizing industries as a pivotal element in its approach to opening up, Guizhou has prioritized industrial development, particularly in manufacturing. Leveraging its resource endowment, comparative advantages, and existing industrial foundations, Guizhou is accelerating the establishment of a modern industrial system that distinctly reflects the province's unique characteristics and enhances its role within the national industrial framework. At the provincial level, efforts are concentrated on establishing three industrial clusters, each valued at RMB 500 billion – refined and deep processing of resources, battery materials for new energy, and the modern energy sector. Another three clusters are also being planned, each valued at RMB 300 billion, focusing on sauce-flavored liquor, big data electronic information, and advanced equipment manufacturing. Furthermore, each city and county has identified its key sectors, bringing in leading enterprises such as Huawei Cloud, Contemporary Amperex Technology Co., Ltd. (CATL), and BYD to establish business. This strategic approach is stimulating the clustering of upstream and downstream companies, thereby fostering progress in the whole industrial chain.

In this process, Guizhou focus on bridging the domestic market while actively integrating into the international industrial, supply, and value chains. We have intensified our efforts in foreign trade by developing more export products tailored to the demands of target markets through comprehensive sector-specific research. We have, on one hand, consolidated the competitiveness of traditional export products, such as fertilizer, liquor, tire, tea,

and guitar; and on the other hand, expedited the introduction of emerging export products including electromechanical equipment and components, and new energy battery materials. These efforts have positioned Guizhou as one of the world's leading suppliers of ternary precursor materials, enabling more Made-in-Guizhou products to access the international market. Moreover, in response to industrial development and market demands, we are increasing efforts to import key products such as specialty goods, mineral resources, advanced technological equipment, and critical components. From 2021 to 2023, the province's total import and export trade volume grew at an average annual rate of 11.6%.

Enhancing the capability of major open platforms. Open platforms serve as pivotal carriers for developing open economy. Guizhou is focused on establishing provincial-level comprehensive open gateways. This includes the completion and operation of Guiyang International Land-Port, which has successfully integrated seven coastal ports including Beibu Gulf Port of Guangxi. The initiative has attracted world-famed companies like China Ocean Shipping Company (COSCO) Shipping and Sinotrans Shipping Limited among others from the Fortune Global 500 list. The import and export process has been streamlined to a “single declaration, single inspection, and single release” protocol. In 2023, Guiyang International Land-Port saw a remarkable increase of 107% in container throughput. Guizhou is speeding up the construction of aviation ports. Several major logistical centers have been completed and put into operation, including an international mail exchange bureau, an international express center, a bonded logistics center, an international freight center, and a customs supervision center. These developments have enabled “direct release for exports and direct clearance for imports,” substantially

enhancing the efficiency of cargo customs clearance.

Guizhou is accelerating the development of a “1+9” national-level open innovation platform, with the national-level Gui’an New Area at its core, supported by nine key areas: Guiyang National High-tech Industrial Development Zone (Guiyang HIDZ), Guiyang Economic & Technological Development Zone, Anshun High-tech Zone, Zunyi High-tech Zone, Zunyi Economic and Technological Development Zone, Guizhou Shuanglong Airport Economic Zone, Guiyang Comprehensive Bonded Zone, Gui’an Comprehensive Bonded Zone, and Zunyi Comprehensive Bonded Zone. In 2023, the total import and export volume of the three comprehensive bonded zones accounted for 26.31% of the province’s total, highlighting their critical bridgehead effect in the region. Guizhou has initiatively and creatively hosted major international events to boost openness, such as the Eco Forum Global Guiyang, the China-ASEAN Education Cooperation Week, the China International Big Data Industry Expo, the International Mountain Tourism and Outdoor Sports Conference, and the China (Guizhou) International Alcoholic Beverages Expo. By placing greater emphasis on engaging market entities through these events, Guizhou is showing its commitment to enriching and enhancing functions related to open cooperation and investment promotion, thereby better facilitating economy and trade cooperation, as well as cultural and people-to-people exchanges, with both domestic and international partners.

Cultivating and attracting openness-oriented business entities. The key to developing open economy lies in fostering vibrant and innovative business entities. Guizhou is launching comprehensive investment attraction initiatives, targeting key sectors identified at

provincial, city, and county levels. This includes the formulation of “one map and three lists,” namely a map illustrating the industrial chain, and three lists involving ongoing projects, projects under negotiation, and potential enterprises to be recruited. By leveraging its strengths in energy, minerals, ecology, biology, climatic conditions, and human resources, Guizhou aims to excel in undertaking industrial transfer, meticulously introducing foreign-trade enterprises and processing-trade enterprises in key sectors such as electronic information manufacturing, new energy, new materials, and textiles & apparel. Simultaneously, Guizhou is intensifying efforts to attract foreign investment by participating in various investment promotion activities, with a special focus on introducing advanced manufacturing and innovative projects from developed countries. While actively “bringing in” investments, we are vigorously nurturing business entities to “go global,” supporting Guizhou enterprises in pursuing overseas investments, undertaking foreign contracted projects, and outsourcing international technical services. We are guiding enterprises to develop abroad in group. In 2022 and 2023, the number of foreign-trade enterprises in the province increased by 16.8% and 11.5%, respectively.

Fostering a favorable environment for opening up. Expanding opening up requires not only solid “hard support” but also optimized “soft environment.” Guizhou is, thus, thoroughly improving the business environment through various measures, including implementing the *Regulations of Guizhou Province on Optimizing the Business Environment*, and executing a new three-year action plan for optimizing business environment. By benchmarking against the World Bank’s new assessment system of business environment and focusing on enhancing the sense of gain among entrepreneurs, we are precisely addressing and

rectifying related issues, accelerating to foster a world-class business environment that is market-oriented, law-based, and internationalized. Guizhou is unswervingly consolidating and developing the public sector while unswervingly encouraging, supporting, and guiding the development of the non-public sector. We have formulated 36 policies and measures to develop and expand the private sector, fully stimulating the intrinsic motivation and innovative vitality of various business entities.

We are comprehensively implementing the pre-establishment national treatment plus negative list management mechanism for foreign investment, continuously deepening the Single Window system for international trade, and enhancing investment and trade facilitation. Our online government services rank among the best in the country, and the overall customs clearance time for imports and exports at Guiyang Customs is among the fastest nationwide. The average tax refund time for Class I and II export enterprises is within three working days. In 2023, Guizhou's factor environment and administrative environment ranked 11th and 14th nationwide, respectively. Guizhou is accelerating the establishment of a new type of cordial and clean government-business relationship, striving to build the "Guizhou-People Service" brand, and establishing a sound and regular government-enterprise communication mechanism. We are committed to acting as dedicated stewards for businesses, allowing them to invest, grow, and thrive in Guizhou with peace of mind. Additionally, we are cultivating and attracting talent through multiple channels, focusing on training high-quality professionals in investment promotion and international trade. We are also specifically targeting the recruitment of experts in finance, logistics, and international trade, with the goal of comprehensively enhancing the internationalization level of our talent pool. 