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The Global Innovation Centre for Hong Kong: A strategic vision and site assessment

Executive summary

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Rev 2

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The Global Innovation Centre for Hong Kong

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Overview - A strategic vision and site assessment

This study sets out a strategic vision for the Global Innovation Centre (GIC) and a comparative evaluation of potential sites. The GIC is framed as a research platform that focuses on scientific discovery and cross-disciplinary collaboration, ensuring that breakthrough research is effectively transformed into practical innovation, tangible social and economic impact, to address grand humanity challenges.

Hong Kong's academic achievements and global connectivity make it an ideal hub for innovation and research. To remain competitive, the city must attract and retain top local and international STEM talent through fellowships and supportive policies. Despite challenges like high living costs and relatively low R&D investments, Hong Kong excels in international research collaborations, high-quality publications, and strategic positioning as a gateway to Chinese Mainland. The government's support, a growing tech ecosystem, and Smart City initiatives further bolster its innovation capacity. Investing in world-class facilities and fostering cross-institutional collaborations will help bridge academic excellence and real-world impact.

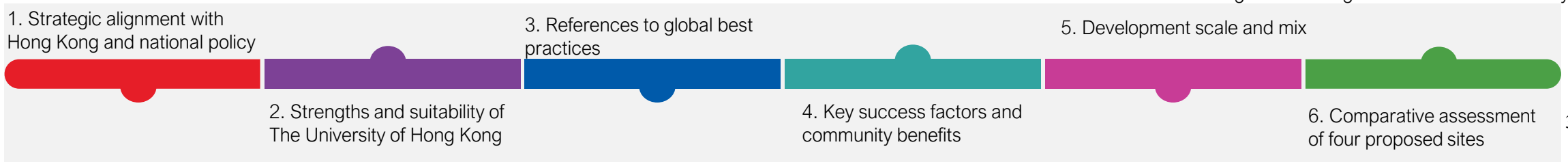
The University of Hong Kong (HKU) is the ideal candidate to operate a GIC due to its academic excellence, strategic location, and strong existing international collaboration. With notable achievements in deep tech fields like quantum technology, physical sciences and health technology, and a commitment to interdisciplinary innovation, HKU fosters a vibrant intellectual community. Its strategic position in Hong Kong allows it to leverage connections with Chinese Mainland and other Asian cities and markets, further enhancing its global reach and impact.

Through international benchmarking and consultative design and collaborative process, the schedule of accommodation reflects a rigorous, user-centric justification of specialized needs across the GIC's research pillars. Laboratories constitute the architectural anchor at 65.4% GFA, engineered for the modularity required for equipment accommodation by cutting-edge deep tech. To ensure a holistic research environment, the remaining floor plate is strategically programmed: 18.2% for knowledge exchange and conference facilities to catalyze collaboration, complemented by essential research support (6.4%), communal amenities (8.0%), and a short-term hostel (1.9%) to ensure 24/7 operational continuity and researcher well-being.

Compared to other proposed sites such as Mt. Davis, site North of ISF, or Northern Metropolis, Pok Fu Lam site offers an unparalleled convergence of academic, healthcare, financial, and lifestyle amenities, which makes it the premier choice for the GIC. Its proximity to HKU, known for its research excellence, and to Queen Mary Hospital and Gleneagles Hospitals' clinical innovation, offers a vibrant interdisciplinary environment. The nearby Cyberport fosters an entrepreneurial ecosystem. This strategic location not only enhances the GIC's credibility and global appeal but also facilitates operational synergies through shared resources and streamlined collaboration. Beyond its strategic positioning, rigorous assessments of urban planning, traffic logistics, and geotechnical viability confirm that Pok Fu Lam is the most technically feasible and operationally efficient location.

Establishing the GIC at Pok Fu Lam represents a strategic alignment of reputation, infrastructure, and geography. The GIC has the potential to deliver community-wide benefits by driving jobs, investments, enhancing neighborhood quality and desirability, and establishing the area as a prestigious hub for high-skilled talent, research, and innovation. By leveraging HKU's robust academic networks and the site's mature urban fabric, the GIC will serve as a globally recognized beacon for discovery, ensuring Hong Kong remains at the vanguard of the global innovation economy.

The Executive summary addresses the following areas:



1. Strategic alignment with Hong Kong and national policy (1/2)

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Why Hong Kong

Innovation ambitions are unfolding at a time when national policy and regional economic trends place greater emphasis on research, technology, and advanced industries. This study outlines how existing strengths, institutional reforms, and strategic initiatives respond to local development needs while aligning with the broader science and innovation national agenda, including the 14th Five-Year Plan, the Sci-Tech Innovation 2030 programme, and long-term objectives under Vision 2035. Taken together, these conditions support Hong Kong to take up a role as a connector between global expertise and national priorities, and as a competitive innovation node within the Greater Bay Area (GBA).

A strong academic foundation underpins this position. Universities, in particular, HKU is internationally recognised, with established education and research capabilities across medicine, engineering, social sciences, and emerging disciplines such as artificial intelligence and health technology. This capacity translates into substantial research output, extensive international linkages, and a tradition of interdisciplinary collaboration. Rankings and accolades are referenced here only as supporting evidence, as core ingredients for a more ambitious innovation vision are already in place.

Within this context, the GIC is the strategic and sensible solution. Weak business investment in R&D, coupled with modest GDP growth, points to structural challenges in translating research strength into economic impact. At the same time, strong research capacity and high per-capita GDP indicate significant untapped potential that is not yet being fully realised. The GIC is positioned as a physical and institutional connector intended to accelerate the translation of research into innovation-led economic growth.

More than a research laboratory, the GIC is also a hub bringing together upstream scientific discovery, cross-disciplinary exchange. Its purpose is to convert existing academic strengths into a platform that supports world-leading research and stimulates innovative solutions. In effect, the GIC is conceived as a source of new knowledge, a convening space, and an accelerator for translating ideas into technologies with the potential to scale across the world . This integrated model is in line with national strategies that seek stronger linkages between basic research, applied research, and industrialisation.

These ambitions are bolstered by a supportive policy environment. A broad suite of government initiatives has been introduced to attract global talent, support startups, expand incubation capacity, foster emerging industrial clusters, and set out a ten-year innovation and technology blueprint. Measures include Top Talent Pass Scheme, continued investment in Science Parks, and a renewed focus on smart-city development signal a coherent direction of travel. This momentum builds upon a bedrock of established advantages, including a business-friendly environment, a strong rule-of-law tradition, world-class transport and digital infrastructure, and a multilingual, highly educated workforce.

This study also situates local developments within the national policy context. The 14th Five-Year Plan and the Sci-Tech Innovation 2030 Strategy set out China's ambition to build global leadership across frontier domains, including quantum technologies, artificial intelligence, neuroscience, advanced robotics, new materials, biomedicine, integrated circuits, and marine and space exploration. Many of these priorities correspond to areas where established capability already exists or targeted investment is underway. This creates a convergence between research directions, priority industries, and talent strategies, reinforcing the relevance of innovation-driven development.

Against this backdrop, the GIC's proposed research scope reflects prevailing regional trajectories. The six areas—quantum science, artificial intelligence, life sciences, molecular sciences, energy technology, and financial technology—mirror the thematic emphasis across leading East Asian innovation economies. Quantum science and AI are widely recognised as foundational technologies, while life and molecular sciences underpin regional health and biotechnology agendas. Energy technology reflects the growing emphasis on sustainability and climate resilience in economies such as Korea and Japan.

In parallel, neighbouring countries have introduced targeted funding mechanisms and regulatory sandboxes to support fintech and deep-tech financial applications. Taken together, these patterns indicate that the proposed focus areas are broadly consistent with regional direction, while building on existing strengths.

1. Strategic alignment with Hong Kong and national policy (2/2)

ARUP

Why Hong Kong

National policy also places emphasis on openness, collaboration, and global integration. Recent measures encouraging foreign R&D centres, facilitating visas and residence permits for international researchers, and supporting foreign-funded scientific institutions create robust channels for international engagement. International networks, a bilingual professional environment, and a reputation as a neutral and trusted platform provide strategic means to support these objectives, particularly in attracting and integrating global talent and technology.

The GBA is where this convergence becomes most tangible. With a population exceeding 80 million and a high concentration of manufacturing capability, talent, and capital, the GBA represents one of Asia's most dynamic innovation ecosystems. Location and institutional arrangements enable a dual role: providing access to the Chinese Mainland market while linking regional strengths with global opportunities. The study highlights seamless cross-border collaborative potential across Shenzhen, Guangzhou, and the wider Pearl River Delta, including shared laboratories, joint industrial zones, integrated fintech pilots, and cross-border talent mobility.

In this context, the city is best understood not as a standalone innovation hub, but as a critical node within a regional network where competitiveness is shaped by strategic cooperation.

At the same time, structural constraints are acknowledged, including high living costs, limited land supply, and historically modest levels of business investment in research. These challenges are addressed without detracting from the central finding: that sustained public-sector commitment, strategic facilities such as the GIC, and deeper integration with regional and national innovation frameworks provide a viable pathway to addressing barriers and unlocking greater potential.

Overall, the research frames the innovation agenda as a pivotal element within a broader national trajectory. As China places greater emphasis on scientific excellence, technological self-reliance, and continued openness to global collaboration, the role of an international city with strong academic capacity and well-established institutional safeguards becomes increasingly vital. Contribution is realised by reinforcing regional competitiveness while simultaneously supporting national ambitions for long-term innovation leadership.

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2. Strength and suitability of HKU to lead GIC (1/2)

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Why HKU

HKU is well placed to lead the GIC. Its exceptional academic performance, global standing, and a sustained commitment to interdisciplinary research provide a robust foundation for a centre intended to drive innovation, attract global talent, and address complex challenges. Across its research activity, international partnerships, and institutional resources, HKU demonstrates the capacity and momentum required to anchor an initiative of this scale.

Global rankings reinforce this positioning. In the latest QS World University Rankings, HKU maintains its status within the global top tier, at or near the top ten in Asia, and among the region's strongest performers. In the THE World University Rankings 2025, HKU ranks 35th globally and 6th in Asia, with particularly distinguished performance in Medical and Health Sciences (21st), Engineering (39th), Law (30th), Social Sciences (29th), and Education (3rd), indicating breadth across key disciplines.

Research output is substantial and impact-oriented. In a single academic year, scholars produced several thousand publications, received nearly 200 research awards, and built a patent portfolio exceeding one thousand entries. Almost 200 academics rank among the top one percent of scientists globally, with dozens recognised as Highly Cited Researchers. Together, these indicators point to an institution where knowledge creation is both prolific and internationally visible.

Institutional capability extends beyond academic metrics. A human capital base that is international in composition and multidisciplinary in strength creates the essential conditions for innovation. The university attracts premier faculty and students from across the world, creating an environment where different ideas and disciplines interact productively. This diversity, supported by an inclusive intellectual culture, strengthens the capacity for cross-fertilisation and problem solving that a major innovation hub depends on.

Strategic location further reinforces this suitability. As a global crossroads, Hong Kong offers unparalleled connectivity in geographic, economic, and cultural terms. HKU leverages this position effectively through deep-rooted links with Chinese Mainland, particularly within the GBA, alongside long-standing partnerships across Asia, Europe, and North America. This dual connectivity enables a bridging role between innovation communities, enabling the GIC to harness the scale of national technology landscape while tapping into the breadth of global research networks.

Institutional infrastructure also reflects sustained and long-term investment in innovation. State-of-the-art laboratories, research centres, and purpose-built facilities support interdisciplinary work across data science, medicine, computing, and advanced engineering, alongside specialised laboratories in areas such as liver research, new materials, pharmaceutical science, and cognition.

These assets are specially designed to catalyse collaboration across disciplines rather than work in isolation.

Recent infrastructure developments, including new research complexes dedicated to science, engineering, and human health, reinforce HKU's operational readiness to support large scale scientific programmes, most notably the proposed GIC.

A defining characteristic of HKU's approach is its strategic focus on deep technology development. Research excellence spans artificial intelligence, health technology, robotics, smart manufacturing, quantum science, and other frontier fields. Beyond academic research, the university provides dynamic ecosystems that support innovation across traditional disciplinary boundaries, including hackathons, accelerators, and joint laboratories developed with industry partners. These initiatives accelerate the translation of research outcomes into market-ready applications, bridging the gap between scientific inquiry and entrepreneurial activity.

This momentum is further amplified by an extensive and expanding partnership network. Between 2021 and 2025, HKU collaborated with more than 7,000 premier institutions worldwide, a level of international connectivity that surpasses any other university in Hong Kong.

2. Strength and suitability of HKU to lead the GIC(2/2)

ARUP

Why HKU

Such connectivity represents a significant asset for the GIC, which is designed to operate as a central node within a global research and innovation ecosystem. Collaboration with partners across the GBA, Chinese Mainland, and other regional innovation hubs also demonstrates proven expertise in navigating diverse regulatory, cultural, and market environments.

Recent initiatives underscore this proactive role of HKU in shaping the future of innovation. These include the establishment of joint artificial intelligence laboratories with industry partners, inauguration of Shanghai headquarter to foster integrated research ecosystems, innovation and commercial collaboration, and the co-hosting of major health technology hackathons that draw talent from across Asia. Together, these examples underscore a unique capacity to convene diverse stakeholders and support collaborative activity beyond institutional boundaries.

The broader innovation policy environment provides additional support for these efforts, and hence making available favourable conditions for the GIC's evolution. HKU's established strengths and its precise alignment with policy priorities in advanced technologies, cross boundary collaboration, and talent development position the university to engage transformatively within this supportive environment.

With HKU as the catalyst for change, the evidence clearly points to a university with the capability, networks, and experience required to lead the GIC. Its research strength, international connectivity, and a strong interdisciplinary culture provide a solid foundation for this role. The ability to attract local and international talent, link different innovation ecosystems, and translate advanced research into tangible outcomes positions HKU as more than a mere institutional host.

In this leadership capacity, collaboration across borders can be strengthened, new ideas developed, and engagement across scientific, entrepreneurial, and policy communities supported. A strategic location, state-of-the-art facilities, and deep-rooted engagement with both the GBA and global partners further reinforce this capacity. Taken together, these factors confirm that HKU is ideally placed to guide the development of the GIC as a long-term platform for research collaboration and high-impact innovation activity, with the potential to deliver sustained impact.

3. References to global best practices (1/2)

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What have we learned from international cases?

Our research draws lessons from eight internationally recognised leading innovation precincts across North America, Europe and Asia to identify global best practice in **People**, **Space**, and **Operation**. Through examining MaRS (Canada), Biopolis (Singapore), Lawrence-Berkeley National Laboratory (USA), Zhangjiang-Fudan International Innovation Centre (China), RIKEN Yokohama (Japan), the Cambridge Biomedical Campus (UK), Kendall Square at MIT (USA), and the Francis Crick Institute (UK), it shows how successful research districts systematically align talent, physical environment and operational systems to be mutually reinforcing.

At its core, our research is anchored in human capital. Each example begins with stories of discovery and breakthrough—ranging from foundational medical advances and life-saving technologies to new frontiers in genetics, quantum science and artificial intelligence. These achievements are not attributed to technology alone, but to the concentration of diverse, highly skilled individuals working together over long periods. Across all eight precincts, thousands of researchers, clinicians, engineers, students and entrepreneurs are brought together in environments that value curiosity, collaboration and persistence.

A defining feature of best practice is the international nature of talent. Many of the benchmark precincts actively recruit researchers and innovators from around the world and support them through fellowships, visiting scholar programmes and strong links to universities.

This global diversity of perspectives is consistently shown to accelerate discovery and strengthen resilience. At the same time, these precincts invest heavily in local talent pipelines, engaging students from primary education through to post-doctoral level, ensuring that innovation ecosystems are both globally connected and locally rooted.

The second major theme is spatial strategy. Our research highlights how physical environments are intentionally designed to catalyze interaction, openness and adaptability. The benchmark precincts are typically embedded within mature knowledge districts, located close to universities, hospitals, industry and urban centres. This proximity shortens the distance between ideation and application, enabling researchers, clinicians, start-ups and investors to operate side by side.

Architecturally, global best practice is characterised by flexible, modular buildings that can evolve as scientific priorities change. Shared laboratories, core facilities and communal areas are central features that optimise resource utilisation while encouraging collaboration across disciplines. Cafés, meeting spaces, landscaped courtyards and public areas are not treated as optional extras, but as essential infrastructure that supports informal encounters and the exchange of ideas.

The consistent message is that well-designed, purpose-built space can actively shape behaviour, breaking down silos and creating opportunities for serendipity that structured meetings alone cannot achieve.

Sustainability and community integration are also integral to spatial best practice. Many of the leading precincts incorporate green building standards, energy-efficient systems and open public access. Rather than isolating research behind closed doors, they actively invite surrounding communities in through public lectures, exhibitions and shared amenities. This openness reinforces public trust in science and ensures that innovation precincts are seen as vital contributors to civic life, not enclaves removed from it.

The third pillar of global best practice lies in operations—the less visible but equally critical systems that enable people and space to perform at their best. Our study illustrates a range of operational models, from centrally coordinated platforms to more federated arrangements, but all share a focus on clarity, efficiency and alignment with long-term goals. Successful precincts provide shared and seamless access to expensive equipment, advanced data infrastructure and specialist support services, empowering researchers and start-ups to prioritise discovery over administration.

Funding and governance models are another recurring theme. Leading precincts operate through multifaceted partnerships between universities, governments, hospitals, charities and industry. By pooling resources and mitigating risk, these arrangements enable initiatives of a scale that no single organisation could achieve alone.

3. References to global best practices (2/2)

ARUP

What have we learned from international cases?

Importantly, these governance structures are designed to support collaboration rather than competition, with clear decision-making frameworks that balance academic freedom with strategic focus.

Operational best practice also includes strong pathways from research to real-world impact. Accelerator programmes, venture funding, industry partnerships and commercialisation support are deeply embedded within many precincts, ensuring that ideas can move efficiently from laboratory to the marketplace. At the same time, comprehensive outreach and engagement activities—such as internships, open days and school partnerships—help build broad societal support and ensure that the benefits of innovation are widely shared.

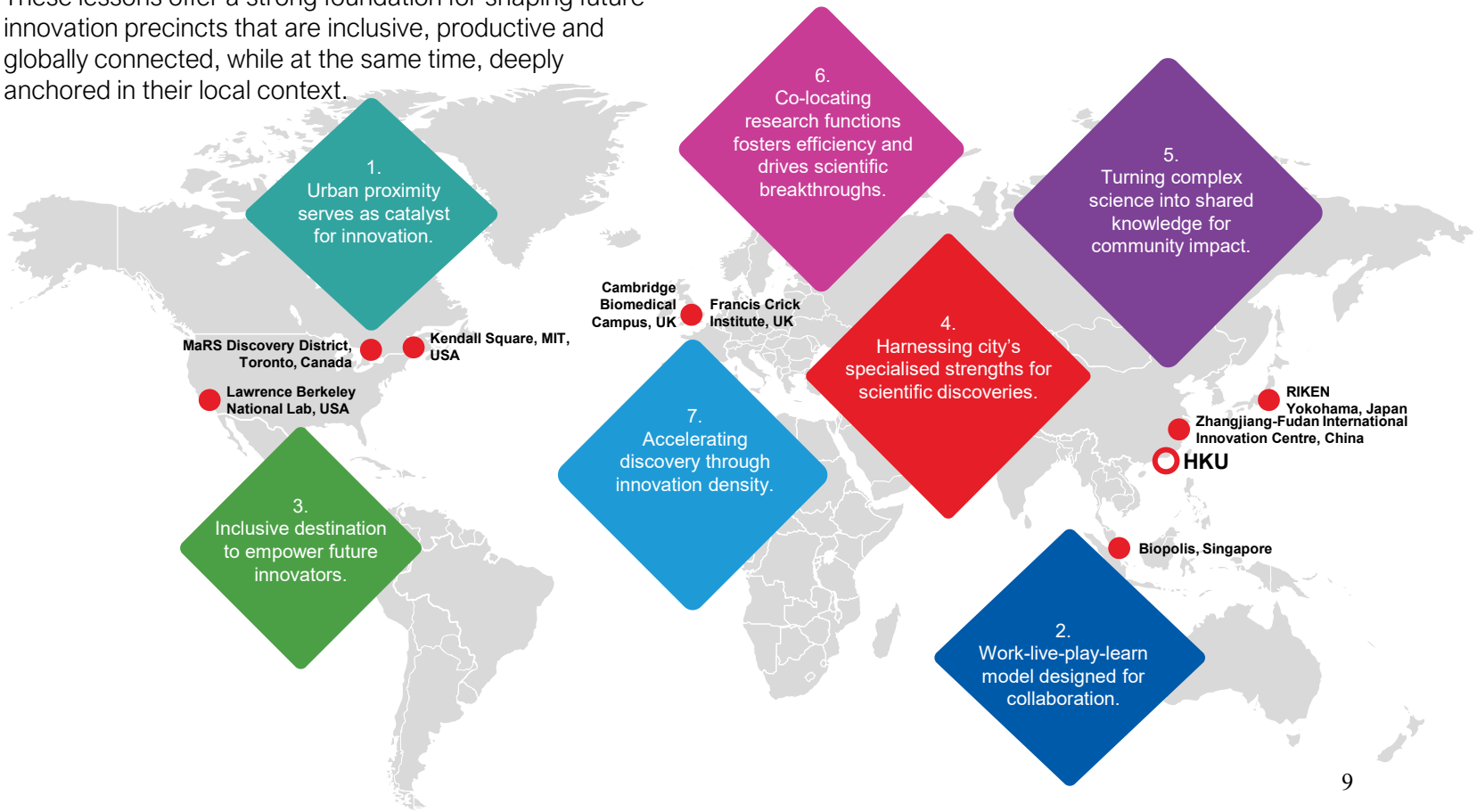
Taken together, the eight case studies offer compelling evidence that world-class innovation precincts succeed by strategic design, not by chance. They show that people thrive when supported by spaces and environments that encourage connection, and when operations are structured to remove barriers and enable action.

Economic outcomes—such as job creation, investment attraction and industry growth—are consistently linked to social outcomes, including skills development, community engagement and improved quality of life.
Overall, this study provides a clear and accessible blueprint of global best practice in action.

It demonstrates that aligning people, space and operations creates an ecosystem where discovery flourishes, innovation accelerates and enduring benefits are delivered to the wider community.

These lessons offer a strong foundation for shaping future innovation precincts that are inclusive, productive and globally connected, while at the same time, deeply anchored in their local context.

Key takeaways from evidence:



4. Key success factors and community benefits (1/2)

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What have we learned from international cases?

Across a series of core themes, our research shows that successful innovation hubs are not defined by buildings alone, but by how people, institutions, and the surrounding community are brought together in purposeful ways.

A first and fundamental success factor is strategic location. Global best practice shows that innovation flourishes when research centres are embedded within a dense ecosystem of universities, hospitals, start-ups, investors, and public agencies. Physical proximity lowers barriers between disciplines and sectors, allowing ideas to move more quickly from research to real-world application. The example of Toronto's MaRS District illustrates how walkable distances, shared spaces, and everyday encounters between researchers, clinicians, entrepreneurs, and policy-makers accelerate discovery and commercialisation. For the surrounding community, this concentration of activity generates tangible dividends: job creation, new businesses, inward investment, and a strong sense of shared identity and purpose. It elevates the overall quality and reputation of the surrounding residential environment, enhances desirability and attractiveness of the neighbourhood, creates sustained demand for high-skilled professionals and research institutions, and strengthens the area's positioning as a prestigious knowledge and innovation district.

Closely related is the design of physical space and infrastructure. Successful precincts are intentionally designed to encourage collaboration rather than isolation. The Biopolis precinct in Singapore demonstrates the value of integrating laboratories, teaching spaces, housing, dining, and leisure facilities within one environment. When people work, learn, and socialise in close proximity, informal conversations often spark formal partnerships. Locating such precincts next to major universities strengthens the institution's ability to set research priorities, attract global talent and investors, and embed innovation into the social and economic fabric of the city. These design choices deliver tangible community benefits, including economic growth, upgraded amenities, and improved quality of life for local residents and workers.

A third success factor is a sustained investment in human capital. The research emphasises the importance of programmes that engage students, early-career researchers, and the broader public. Examples such as Berkeley National Laboratory show how internships, mentoring, workshops, school partnerships, and public events help create accessible pathways into science and innovation for individuals from diverse backgrounds.

By actively involving scholars, industry partners, and community organisations, innovation precincts can build inclusive ecosystems that create skilled jobs, attract global talent, and foster a local culture of curiosity, aspiration, and entrepreneurship. Importantly, these initiatives help demystify science, making it both relevant and accessible to the wider community.

Our research further highlights the strategic necessity of leveraging existing strengths. Rather than adopting an overly broad approach, successful hubs prioritize sectors where the region already possesses a competitive advantage—such as medicine, finance, or the life sciences—to ensure long-term viability and global impact. Drawing on examples from Shanghai, the study shows how targeted investment in core disciplines, combined with shared access to data, equipment, and facilities, creates fertile conditions for breakthrough discoveries. This "upstream" approach enables innovation to emerge organically, while reinforcing the city's competitive advantages and long-term economic resilience.

Alongside this, environmental sustainability and ecological responsibility are presented as increasingly important success factors. The experience of RIKEN Yokohama demonstrates how green building design, clean energy research, and circular production practices can be embedded into innovation precincts. These sites serve as living laboratories for sustainable urban development, combining cutting-edge research with education and outreach to local schools and residents. Community benefits include increased environmental awareness, access to open days and learning programmes, as well as healthier, more sustainable local environment.

Another recurring theme is the value of multi-stakeholder collaboration. The Cambridge Biomedical Campus exemplifies how universities, healthcare providers, industry, and government can work side by side within a single precinct.

4. Key success factors and community benefits (2/2)

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What have we learned from international cases?

Close proximity enables real-time collaboration between researchers, clinicians, and companies, while shared infrastructure reduces costs and duplication.

The economic and social impact is significant, with large-scale employment, substantial contributions to the wider economy, and direct benefits for patients and service users. Beyond headline economic figures, local businesses such as cafés, shops, and service providers also benefit from the daily presence of a large, diverse workforce.

Our study further notes the advantage of regulatory proximity and streamlined pathways to impact. In world-leading hubs like Boston's Kendall Square, having regulators and approval bodies located nearby shortens the timeline between discovery and delivery, particularly in healthcare and life sciences sectors. Thoughtful urban design, including certified green buildings and generous public spaces, enhances liveability and ensures that the precinct contributes positively to the broader urban fabric.

Finally, this report synthesizes the success factors through the mode of the Francis Crick Institute in London. As a centralised biomedical hub, it combines strategic partnerships, interdisciplinary co-location, open laboratory design, and strong public engagement. Facilities such as exhibition spaces, cafés, apprenticeships, and school outreach programmes ensure that the institute is not an isolated research centre, but an active participant in civic life.

The resulting benefits include local employment opportunities, skills development for young people, enhanced public scientific literacy, and accelerated translation of research into better health outcomes.

In summary, the study presents a coherent picture of how innovation precincts succeed when they are people-centred, well-connected, and open to their communities.

Key success factors—such as strategic proximity, cross-sector collaboration, talent development, sustainability, and multi-stakeholder partnership—work together to deliver not only scientific and economic returns, but also enduring social and community benefits. By learning from global best practice, such precincts serves as engines of discovery while improving quality of life for their surrounding communities.

Image courtesy of Florian Wehde, Aerial photography of city, body of water, and forest photo – Free City Image on Unsplash

For the Community

The GIC will be a vibrant and inclusive neighbourhood—offering accessible green spaces, shared amenities, and diverse cultural engagement. It will improve access to opportunity, promote well-being, and foster a sense of belonging through public programs, walkable design, and integration with the surrounding urban fabric. Positioning the area as a prestigious knowledge and innovation district, it will create sustainable demand from highly-skilled professionals for accommodation, and hence positively affecting the rental market.

For Science & Innovation in HK

The GIC will be the launchpad for Hong Kong's deep tech future—supporting upstream research, enabling IP ownership and accelerating commercialisation, while attracting a premier tier of global talent. Positioning the area as a prestigious district, it will create sustainable demand from highly-skilled professionals for accommodation, and hence positively affecting the rental market.

For the World

The GIC will contribute to global progress by enabling open, inclusive, and sustainable innovation. It will generate ideas, technologies, and partnerships that address humanity's most pressing challenges, while setting a new standard for how research ecosystems can be designed for impact, equity, and resilience.

5. Development scale and mix (1/2)

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Schedule of Accommodation

A Schedule of Accommodation (SoA) was developed based on benchmarking of prominent research facilities and standards globally, engagement with professors, background information provided by HKU, supplemented by insights gathered through targeted interviews and stakeholder workshops. This collaborative process ensures that the spatial strategy reflects user needs, is validated against global benchmarks and global best practices, and will support the GIC's mission as a world-class innovation hub.

Laboratories

The 65.4% GFA allocation reflects GIC's commitment to core research infrastructure. This proportion is consistent with more aggressive allocations seen in leading R&D hubs, particularly the Zhangjiang-Fudan International Innovation Centre, which similarly prioritizes lab-intensive workflows to support both upstream and downstream innovation.

Learning & Conference Facilities

Research Support Offices

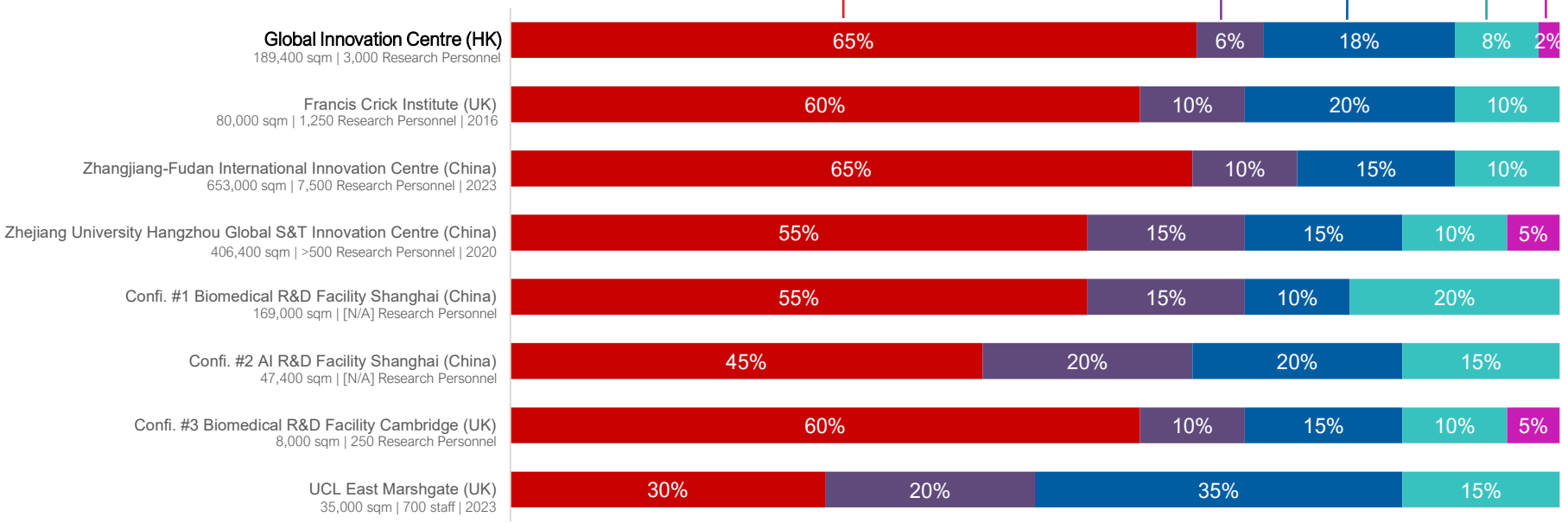
These usage categories broadly align with most benchmarked institutions, reinforcing GIC's role in enabling commercialization, strategic engagement, and talent development.

Amenities

This allocation sits at the lower end of the benchmark range. It is a deliberate choice to prioritize research and collaboration spaces, with lifestyle and wellness functions integrated efficiently to support daily operational needs.

Researcher's Short-Term Hostel

Comparatively modest, this reflects GIC's emphasis on flexible, short-term stay for time-sensitive experiments, while longer-term and less critical accommodation needs can be met through other facilities in the city.



5. Development scale and mix (2/2)

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How the Schedule of Accommodation supports the vision of the GIC

Laboratories

65.4%

123,900 sqm

Incorporate Cutting-Edge Provisions:

Benchmarking from some of the top R&D institutions globally, the SoA embeds advanced infrastructure and the required supporting facilities needed to ensure readiness for high-spec research activities and global competitiveness.

Future-Proofs and Provides Flexibility:

Use modular planning and scalable space standards to accommodate evolving research directions and technologies. Allows for reconfiguration of space depending on future user needs.

Reflects R&D Workflows:

Align spatial planning with the specific user requirements from all Six Pillars, ensuring that lab types and Advanced User Facilities can cater for actual operational requirements.

Attract and Develop Talent:

State-of-the-art labs and shared facilities serve as a magnet for global researchers, startups, and industry partners, supporting talent attraction, retention and development.

Foster Transdisciplinary Research:

Diverse lab environments and shared facilities enable collaboration across a variety of research areas.

Research Support Offices

6.4%

12,200 sqm

Support Research Excellence and Impact:

Support full-stack innovation, resource accessibility and further technology transfer through building strategic partnerships and IP management.

L&C Facilities

18.2%

34,500 sqm

Innovation Ecosystem:

Promote cross-sector knowledge exchange and ideation through collaboration spaces and sciences libraries.

Public Engagement & Visibility:

Promote public engagement and visibility of the R&D at GIC.

Amenities

8.0%

15,200 sqm

Researcher Community:

Enhance researcher well-being and community vibrancy, supporting talent retention and informal collaboration in a world-class innovation environment.

Short-term Hostels

1.9%

3,600 sqm

Support Critical Research:

On-site accommodation ensures proximity to critical equipment for time-sensitive or continuous experiments.

6. Comparative assessment of the four proposed sites (1/3)

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With reference to global best practices, the location is the key and fundamental component of success for GIC. This section compares the assessment of four potential sites for the GIC.

Sites	Planning Assessment	Traffic Assessment	Geotechnical Assessment	Other Considerations
Pok Fu Lam (between Pokfulam rd. & Victoria rd.) 	☑☑☑ • About 75% previously / currently zoned "R(C)6". • About 25% previously zoned "GB" • **No Grade 1,2, 3** Heritage Sites/Buildings. • Rezoning application required • Presence of watercourses.	☑☑☑ • **Two independent approach routes** to enable higher road network resilience. • Relatively close to future Cyberport MTR Station. • Direct & close connection to the HKU Sassoon Road Campus – approx. 800m to the north side via Pok Fu Lam Road & approx. 300m to the south side via Victoria Road.	☑☑☑ • Relatively **gentle topography** with Slope Angle generally within 0° to 20° at major portion of the Site. • Natural terrain hazard study is not anticipated. • Relatively **less, 5 nos**. in total, existing man-made feature will be affecting / be affected by the site.	☑☑☑ **Community & People Talent** • Adjacent to well established community and proximity to city core. • Adjacent to HKU campus to synergize and integrate talent pipeline. **Site Availability** • 75% of site zoned R(C)6 ready for development.
Mt. Davis (on Victoria rd.) 	☑☑ • Most of the site is zoned as "GB" and "GB(2)". • A small portion zoned as 'Road' and overlapping with a planned underground public mortuary. • **Overlaps with 1 Heritage Sites**, including Mount Davis Battery (Grade II Historical Building). • **Presence of ruins** imposes uncertainty and implications to the development timeline for further studies, investigation and relocation. • Rezoning application required.	☑ • Victoria Road (single 2-lane District Distributor) as the only vehicular access. • **Low road network resilience** due to single access to the road network. • Far from any metro provisions. • Relatively direct connection to the HKU Sassoon Road Campus – approx. 2.8km via Victoria Road & Sassoon Road.	☑☑ • Relatively **steep topography** with Slope Angle generally within 20° to 35°. • Natural terrain catchment of 60,000m^2 to be studied for the site. • Flexible & Rigid barrier and soil nailing may be required to mitigate the open hillslope landslide and debris flow hazard. • Relatively **more, 18 nos**. in total, existing man-made feature will be affecting / be affected by the site.	☑☑ **Community & People Talent** • Close to established community and proximity to city core. • Relatively close to HKU campus to synergize and integrate talent pipeline. **Site Availability** • Government land currently zoned as Green Belt.

6. Comparative assessment of the four proposed sites (2/3)

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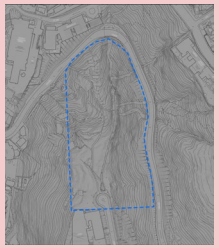
Sites	Planning Assessment	Traffic Assessment	Geotechnical Assessment	Other Considerations
Site North of ISF (between Victoria rd. & Cyberport) 	☑ ☑ • About 25% zoned "R(C)". • About 75% zoned "GB". • **No Overlapping with Heritage** Sites/Buildings. • **Close proximity of ruins** imposes uncertainty and implications to the development timeline for further studies, investigation and relocation. • Presence of watercourse • Site not under any current studies. • Rezoning application required.	☑ ☑ • Victoria Road (single 2-lane District Distributor) as the only vehicular access. • **Low road network resilience** due to single access to the road network (Kong Sin Wan Road with heavy flows and parking chaos during school hours – too weak as relief). • Closer to future Cyberport MTR Station. • Right next to the HKU Sassoon Road Campus.	☑ • Relatively **steep topography** with Slope Angle generally within 20° to 40°. • Natural terrain catchment of 35,000m^2 to be studied for the site. • Flexible & Rigid barrier and soil nailing may be required to mitigate the open hillslope landslide and debris flow hazard. • Relatively **more, 18 nos.** in total, existing man-made feature will be affecting / be affected by the site.	☑ ☑ **Community & People Talent** • Adjacent to well established community and proximity to city core. • Adjacent to HKU campus to synergize and integrate talent pipeline. **Site Availability** • Majority zoned as Green Belt.
Northern Metropolis • New Territories North New Town (NTN) • Ngau Tam Mei (NTM) • Hung Shui Kiu / Ha Tsuen (HSK / HT) These sites were selected as part of the Northern Metropolis University Town and are reserved for industry-led higher and future education development.	☑ • Site is subject to Government allocation. • NTM: under Statutory Rezoning Procedures. • NTN: under Planning & Engineering Study. • HSK/HT under Site Formation & Engineering Infrastructure Works.	? • Site is subject to Government allocation.	? • Site is subject to Government allocation.	☑ **Community & People Talent** • Established community has yet to be formed and infrastructure still under development. **Site Availability** • Land formation is expected to complete in: - NTM: 2028 - NTN: 2030 - HSK/HT: 2026

6. Comparative assessment of the four proposed sites (3/3)

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Conclusion of the site assessments

In summary, a comparative assessment of potential locations identifies Pok Fu Lam as the optimal site for the GIC. This is due to its unparalleled proximity to HKU and key innovation partners, its integration into a vibrant urban and academic ecosystem, strong government support, and its alignment with global best practices for innovation hubs. Establishing the GIC at this location will maximize Hong Kong's potential as a global leader in frontier research, innovation, and talent development.

Planning Assessment

As the Northern Metropolis is undergoing land formation and awaits government site allocation, the current timeframe is less than ideal for the GIC to achieve immediate results. From a land-use planning perspective, the Pok Fu Lam site mainly consists of a large parcel of R(C)6 site (approx. 3 hectare), implying that the land is available and compatible for development. Compared to the sites in Mt. Davis and site North of ISF, Pok Fu lam would have the least impact to Green Belt zone. In addition, the presence of ruins at Mt. Davis and site North of ISF are subject to further investigation and potential relocation, significantly extending the project development timeline.

Traffic Assessment

The Pok Fu Lam site is the only location with dual vehicular approaches (for public vehicles upon operation and for construction vehicles during construction), which substantially enhances network resilience. A direct vehicular connection with the HKU Main Campus could be feasible and it is close to the HKU Sassoon Road Campus and the Queen Mary Hospital – pedestrian connections are already available with possible enhancements to improve the connectivity. Besides, its proximity to the future Cyberport MTR Station ensures long-term transit connectivity, while the site geometry supports construction logistics and uni-directional delivery flow.

Geotechnical Assessment

Constructing and developing a building on a slope presents increasing challenges as the gradient increases. Additional engineering considerations such as retaining walls, erosion control measures and substantial earthworks will add additional time and cost to the development as slope angle increases. Man-made features can include existing retaining walls, cut slopes and fill slopes. Challenges arise when man-made features are present within the development site boundary due to potential ownership changes for responsibility and maintenance.

At a high-level, the geotechnical assessments identifies the Pok Fu Lam site is considered as more ideal than the Mt. Davis and site North of ISF.

Unmatched Strategic Proximity and Synergy

Academic synergy: The Pok Fu Lam site is adjacent to HKU's main and medical campus, enabling seamless, high-frequency collaboration between the GIC and HKU's world-class faculty, students, and research infrastructure. This proximity facilitates interdisciplinary research, mentorship, and real-time knowledge exchange, positioning the GIC as a premier launchpad for nurturing globally competitive STEM talent.

Healthcare and Innovation Ecosystem: Pok Fu Lam is at the intersection of HKU's research excellence, the clinical expertise of Queen Mary Hospital, Cyberport's entrepreneurial ecosystem, and the Central financial district. This convergence creates a vibrant and interdisciplinary environment that is ideal for deep tech research and innovation.

Operational and Community Advantages

Existing infrastructure: The Pok Fu Lam site already benefits from mature, established infrastructure, including HKU, major hospitals and Cyberport, which can be leveraged to accelerate the GIC's development and ensuring rapid operational integration and the delivery of early-stage breakthroughs.

Community integration: The Pok Fu Lam area is a well-established community, making the GIC not just a research hub but a vibrant neighbourhood destination that can engage and inspire the public, students, and visiting scholars.

Lifestyle and talent attraction: The Pok Fu Lam site's proximity to diverse dining, leisure, and green spaces makes it highly attractive to both local and international talent, supporting work-life balance and fostering creative interactions. This is essential for attracting and retaining top researchers and innovators. While the Northern Metropolis offers a visionary future for innovation and technology, Pok Fu Lam provides an established, high-quality community that is ready to support global talent today, whereas the Northern Metropolis's social and residential fabric is still in the early stages of development.

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