

# Building a Southwest Cross-Border E-Commerce Hub: Research on Pathways to Enhance the Opening-Up Level of Meishan Tianfu New Area

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**Abstract:** Against the backdrop of accelerated global digital economic development and the full implementation of RCEP, cross-border e-commerce (CBEC) has become a crucial pathway for inland regions to overcome geographical limitations and participate in international competition. As a vital node within the Chengdu-Chongqing Economic Circle, Meishan Tianfu New Area (MTNA) only commenced CBEC operations in 2023, resulting in a significant transaction volume gap compared to Chengdu. Based on field research and comparative analysis, this study identifies three core contradictions in the new area: "high logistics dependency," "weak industrial synergy," and "inadequate institutional innovation." It proposes a breakthrough path along three dimensions: "Channel-Platform-Institution." This involves constructing a "Two Ports, One Park" logistics system, establishing a GUZEC

(Government-University-Zone-Enterprise-Chamber of Commerce) six-in-one collaborative innovation and talent cultivation platform, and implementing pilot initiatives like a "regulatory sandbox." The goal is to significantly increase CBEC transaction volume within three years and create a distinctive inland CBEC development paradigm. This research holds significant reference value for resolving the difficulties in developing an open economy faced by cities along the New Western Land-Sea Corridor.

**Keywords:** Cross-Border E-Commerce; Six-in-One Integration; Industrial Synergy; Inland Open Economy

## 1. Current Status of CBEC Development in Meishan Tianfu New Area

Cross-border e-commerce is a new model of global trade and a new type of online international business activity [1]. As a national-level new area, MTNA shoulders the strategic mission of building a "Southwest Open Gateway." Since the establishment of its CBEC Comprehensive Pilot Zone in October 2023, CBEC operations have made significant progress driven by policy support and multi-party collaboration. By June 2025, the park had attracted 71 enterprises and incubated 32 local enterprises to engage in CBEC, with cumulative transaction volume services exceeding 480 million RMB. According to data from the Ministry of Commerce, China's total cross-border e-commerce imports and exports reached 2.38 trillion yuan in 2023, a year-on-year increase of 15.6%. Against the backdrop of a sluggish global economy, cross-border e-commerce has bucked the trend and has become a new force in global trade. Behind this booming cross-border e-commerce sector, cross-border live streaming is becoming a key tool for some companies to secure orders, promote their brands overseas, and explore diverse international markets [2]. In talent cultivation, the new area innovatively established a "University + Seller + Park + Chamber of Commerce + Government" six-in-one model. It co-built talent training bases with over 20 universities, including Sichuan Technology and Business University, effectively alleviating enterprise talent shortages. Furthermore, through organizing numerous training sessions, salons, and exchange events, it has trained over 1,600 professionals, providing robust human resource support for the industry. Regarding enterprise services, the new area pioneered a "Startup Incubation Plan," offering "capital pool + supply chain resource package + traffic support" trifecta assistance to startups, alongside full-process services like registration,

qualification agency, and operational outsourcing. These initiatives have attracted international resource connections, such as the "Global Futures Institute International Leadership Program Delegation" and a Singaporean enterprise delegation, further enhancing the new area's international influence and promoting industrial chain resource integration.

## **2. Dilemmas Facing Inland New Areas in Developing CBEC**

Cross-border e-commerce will occupy a more important position in import and export trade. Economic globalization, increased Internet penetration, improved logistics, improved online payment environment, and standardized international trade will increase the proportion of cross-border e-commerce import business, and the demand for multi-batch and small-volume foreign trade orders will continue to increase [3]. However, MTNA's CBEC development still faces numerous challenges. Firstly, resource integration is insufficient. Key entities like the CBEC Industrial Park, Yuhu Cold Chain, and Meishan Port Investment Company lack effective functional synergy, leading to fragmented logistics, warehousing, and other resources, resulting in weak collaborative effects. Secondly, the functional potential of the Comprehensive Pilot Zone platform is underutilized, with low conversion of policy dividends. Enterprise access to facilitation services like customs clearance and tax rebates suffers from inadequate coverage. Additionally, park enterprises are predominantly small and medium-sized sellers (SMEs), lacking leading enterprise leadership. Enterprises with annual import-export volumes exceeding 100 million RMB are scarce, preventing the formation of industrial agglomeration effects. Bottlenecks also exist in carrier operations, such as inadequate overseas warehouse coverage in target markets, hindering further business expansion. Field research across 47 CBEC enterprises revealed core contradictions manifesting in the following areas:

### **2.1 The "Double Dependency" Dilemma of Logistics Channels**

The new area's international logistics heavily depend on the Chengdu hub, while local supporting facilities like warehousing and distribution lag. Cross-border logistics costs

exceed the national average, constraining enterprise competitiveness. High reliance on Chengdu Shuangliu Airport and Qingbaijiang Railway Port subjects enterprises to dual pressures of "high cost + low efficiency." For example, a bamboo products enterprise shipping goods to the US must first transport them by road to coastal ports (Shenzhen/Guangzhou/Shanghai, taking 2-3 days, costing ~12,000 RMB per 13.5m truck), followed by sea freight. Total logistics costs account for 25%-30% of the product selling price, 20-30 percentage points higher than in coastal regions. Although the Qinglong Railway Port is operational, Europe-bound freight train costs are typically double sea freight, with limited train frequency. Crucially, it lacks dedicated CBEC supervision facilities. In 2023, it processed only 12,000 CBEC shipments, less than 10% of design capacity.

### **2.2 The "Small, Fragmented, and Weak" Characteristic of the Industrial Ecosystem**

Currently, MTNA's CBEC industry exhibits a pronounced "small, fragmented, and weak" characteristic: Zero Top 10 CBEC enterprises have established operations; SMEs constitute 92% of enterprises, with an average staff size below 20. Survey data shows 78% of SMEs lack independent operational capabilities, and 73% rely entirely on third-party platforms, leading to commission costs consuming 15%-20% of revenue. A more prominent contradiction is the lack of specialized supporting services. Professional institutions for legal and intellectual property services are scarce. Coverage of cross-border payment and overseas warehousing services is <10%. The number of CBEC service providers is less than 1/5th of Chengdu's and far below the coastal average of 65%. This ecosystem weakness directly leads to high operational costs, insufficient risk resilience, high terminal delivery costs, and slow delivery times for CBEC enterprises in the new area.

### **2.3 Institutional Innovation "Lag" and Insufficient Policy Implementation**

Institutional innovation is "lagging," lacking a platform for regular cross-border cooperation, hindering two-way flows of foreign investment attraction and domestic enterprise "going global." The current regulatory system is notably disconnected from industry

development. For instance, few enterprises voluntarily adopt the CBEC B2B export model (9710 mode) for customs declaration, whereas cities like Guangzhou and Hangzhou have achieved fully electronic self-declaration for most enterprises.

Policy dividends from the CBEC Comprehensive Pilot Zone are underutilized. Supporting measures like customs clearance facilitation and tax incentives are imperfect, keeping enterprise operational costs high and constraining business scaling. More critically, the bonded inventory model (1210 business) cannot operate due to lacking supporting policies, causing enterprises to miss peak sales seasons like "618" and "Double 11." Questionnaires show only 48% of enterprises understand CBEC corporate income tax incentives, and 23% know about accelerated export rebate policies. Complex application processes requiring multi-departmental approvals hinder full policy benefit realization. Differing interpretations of the same policies by different tax bureaus increase compliance costs and difficulties.

## 2.4 Severe Talent Shortage

The cross-border e-commerce industry has high requirements for the practical application ability of talents. However, most universities do not pay attention to improving students' practical level during the training process. Students have a lot of theoretical knowledge, but they can't successfully apply it to the operation of overseas agricultural product platforms [4]. MTNA's CBEC industry faces a significant structural talent shortage. Survey data indicates a current gap of 300 versatile talents. Operational roles account for 42% of the gap, design roles for 28%, and supply chain management roles for 20%. More critically, annual turnover rates for core positions like operations and design reach 25%, far exceeding the industry average of 15%. This dilemma of "unable to attract, unable to retain" talent directly constrains the growth of CBEC enterprises in the new area. Primary reasons include: 1) University training systems misaligned with enterprise needs, with only 35% of CBEC-related graduates meeting practical skill requirements; 2) Blocked career development paths, with 78% of SMEs lacking sound promotion mechanisms; 3) Insufficient salary competitiveness, with average CBEC salaries in the new area 15-20% lower than

comparable positions in Chengdu; 4) Currently underdeveloped living and supporting facilities in the new area, reducing the appeal and retention rate for the core CBEC workforce.

## 3. Countermeasures for Inland New Areas to Develop CBEC

Pathways to Build a Southwest CBEC Hub and Enhance MTNA's Opening-Up Level: Based on New Structural Economics and Global Value Chain theory, developing CBEC in inland regions requires synergistic breakthroughs in "Channel-Platform-Institution." This model has been validated in practices in Chongqing, Zhengzhou, etc. Building on this theory and Meishan's context, the following tailored solutions are explored:

### 3.1 Channel Breakthrough: Reducing Physical Space Constraints

Chongqing's experience shows that a 10% reduction in international logistics costs leads to a 23% increase in CBEC enterprises. Meishan needs to construct a multi-modal channel of "Air-Rail Intermodal + Bonded Network":

1) Air Logistics Enhancement: Co-build an "Off-site Cargo Terminal" with Chengdu Shuangliu Airport to extend air logistics services locally, establishing an international logistics hub. Construct the "Two Ports, One Park" logistics system, integrating Chengdu's air port resources and establishing a Bonded Logistics Center (Type B). Launch an air-port linkage project, collaborating with Chengdu Shuangliu Airport to build a "Meishan Virtual Airport," enabling "local container loading - direct airport flight."

2) Rail Logistics Upgrade: Build a CBEC Supervision Center at Qinglong Railway Port and open a Sea-Rail Intermodal route to ASEAN. Invest in upgrading the railway port with a CBEC Supervision Center equipped with CT-type luggage inspection systems (processing 200 items/hour). Launch a weekly "Meishan-Qinzhou" Sea-Rail Intermodal train, reducing container costs by 1,800 RMB compared to pure road transport. Introduce policies to help enterprises reduce logistics costs and improve efficiency.

3) Supporting Logistics Park: Plan a 200-acre CBEC Logistics Industrial Park adjacent to Qinglong Railway Port. Introduce Cainiao Network's smart sorting center and build 50,000 sqm of bonded warehouse space to meet bonded

inventory (1210 model) needs.

### **3.2 Platform Empowerment: Resolving SMEs' Digital Dilemma and Building a Harmonious Cross-Border Ecosystem**

The main causes of the current situation are threefold: 1) Homogenized investment attraction strategies lacking tailored policies for leading enterprises; 2) Insufficient support for digital transformation, with SME digitalization rates at only 30%; 3) Lagging construction of supporting service systems, resulting in a severe shortage of professional service institutions. Addressing these issues, this paper proposes the following optimization paths:

1) Implement Differentiated Investment Strategies to Cultivate Leading Enterprises: Formulate the "Special Policy for Attracting CBEC Leading Enterprises," offering "one enterprise, one policy" customized services in land use, taxation, and talent. Focus on attracting 3-5 platform-type enterprises with industrial chain driving effects to form a "leading enterprise + supporting enterprises" ecosystem. Data shows attracting one leading enterprise can drive the agglomeration of 10-15 supporting enterprises.

2) Build a Digital Empowerment Platform: Shenzhen's CBEC integrated service platform, by consolidating customs, logistics, and financial services, reduced SME document processing time from 3 days to 2 hours. MTNA can learn from this model, building a "Cross-Border Digital Brain" based on Meishan City's CBEC Public Service Platform. Key features should include intelligent classification (HS code recognition accuracy 98.7%) and risk early warning (averaging 132 non-compliant orders intercepted monthly). Invest in constructing a CBEC digital public service platform, providing SaaS tools and data analysis services to SMEs. Through a "government subsidy + enterprise fee" model, assist enterprises in completing digital transformation within 12 months. Practice proves digital transformation can improve SME operational efficiency by over 40% and reduce costs by 15%-20%.

3) Improve the Supporting Service System: Establish a 50 million RMB industrial service fund to cultivate professional service providers in payment, logistics, law, etc. Build a "one-stop" service hall, introduce more than 5 third-party service platforms, and aim to

increase supporting service coverage to 50% within 2 years. Simultaneously, implement a "Service Provider Whitelist" system with regular service quality assessments.

### **3.3 Policy Support: Innovating Service Mechanisms**

The root causes of institutional innovation lag are: 1) Policy design lacks implementation rules (48% of enterprises report policies lack operability); 2) The regulatory system is disconnected from industry development (existing processes cannot meet the "small batch, multi-frequency" nature of CBEC); 3) Service mechanisms are unsound (cross-departmental coordination is inefficient). Addressing these, the paper proposes the following breakthrough paths:

1) Refine Policy Implementation Rules: Formulate the "CBEC Policy Operation Guide" within 3 months, clarifying declaration processes and document requirements for modes like 9710 and 9810. Establish a policy consultation specialist system to provide "one-on-one" declaration guidance. Data indicates clear policy rules can improve enterprise declaration efficiency by over 40%.

2) Optimize Service Mechanisms: Establish a "CBEC Regulatory Sandbox" for innovative supervision models. Accelerate the implementation of the 1210 bonded inventory model by constructing a 5,000 sqm bonded supervision warehouse equipped with intelligent inspection equipment. Drawing on Hangzhou's "Digital Customs Clearance" experience, implement an "advance declaration, intelligent inspection and release" model, aiming to compress clearance time to within 24 hours. Pilot projects show this model can reduce enterprise logistics costs by 25%.

3) Enhance Coordination: Establish a CBEC Service Joint Conference system for Commerce, Customs, Tax, and other departments to hold monthly joint sessions. Develop a policy intelligent matching system using big data for precise policy push. Set up a "one-stop" service window within the industrial park to provide full-process services like customs clearance and tax rebates. Practice shows this service model can reduce enterprise processing time by 60%.

### **3.4 Talent Support: Deepening Industry-Education Integration, Improving Training Systems, and Optimizing Talent**

## Development Environment

School-enterprise cooperation is an effective way to promote the integration of production and education [5].

1) Innovate Talent Cultivation Mechanisms, Deepen Industry-Education Integration: Further build the GUZEC six-in-one collaborative talent cultivation platform.

core mechanism of the cross-border e-commerce talent training system, the effective operation of collaborative education is crucial to improving the quality of talent supply and achieving in-depth integration between the education chain and the industrial chain [6]. Establish an industrial park governance structure of "Government Platform + Universities + Industrial Park + Operating Company + Chambers of Commerce." The Commerce Bureau and District Management Committee provide policy support and build the government platform. The park operating company imports real business scenarios. Schools and companies jointly invest in faculty and curriculum resources. Create a "CBEC Talent Bank": Enterprises deposit position requirements and training resources into the Meishan Import-Export Chamber of Commerce and CBEC Industrial Park; students withdraw practical credits and job opportunities. Propose establishing the GUZEC "Five Carriages" six-in-one collaborative innovation mechanism. Explore the G(Government) + U(University) + Z (Cross-border Zone) + E(Enterprise) + C (Chamber of Commerce) collaborative innovation mechanism. Deepen industry-education integration with a product mindset, continuously expand social cooperation, leverage the industrial park's proximity to industrial belts, and actively develop high-quality off-campus practice bases. Further promote industry-education integration with high-quality overseas enterprises through government and chamber platforms, co-developing industry-demand-driven courses and internship programs. Practice "real topics, real work" to provide authentic industry

experience, ensuring graduates are competent for core positions upon hiring.

In the context of new productivity, the significance and value of industry-education integration communities are becoming increasingly prominent. These communities not only help deepen educational reform and improve the quality of talent cultivation, but also promote industrial upgrading and development, as well as economic and social development [7].

2) Improve On-the-Job Training Systems:

These core competencies are common to all international business professionals and encompass five dimensions and 17 elements: cross-cultural communication, international market analysis, global strategic thinking, teamwork, and innovative thinking. International business professionals in the context of rural revitalization also need to possess these common competencies [8]. Allocate 5 million RMB for a CBEC talent training fund to conduct tiered training: For frontline staff: Monthly training on platform rules and operational skills; For middle managers: Quarterly courses on team management and data analysis; For senior executives: Two annual CBEC strategy workshops.

3) Optimize the Talent Development Environment: Formulate the "Special Support Policy for CBEC Talents," offering up to 50,000 RMB settling-in subsidies for key positions. Establish a talent apartment system with 3-year rental subsidies. Improve professional qualification certification, promoting the "academic certificate + vocational skill level certificate" system. Regularly hold CBEC skills competitions to discover and cultivate outstanding talent. As the following figures (table1) showing, the average salary for talents of operations, designs and supply chain in cross-border business reaches over 90,000 RMB per year while the shortage for such talents occupies 90% among all relevant fields.

**Table 1. Structure of CBEC Talent Demand in Meishan Tianfu New Area (2025)**

Position Category	Shortage for the talents (Persons)	Percentage (%)	Avg. Salary (10k RMB/Year)	Core Competency Requirements
Operations	126	42%	8-12	Platform Ops, Data Analysis
Design	84	28%	7-10	Visual Design, Copywriting
Supply Chain	60	20%	9-13	Logistics Mgmt, Procurement Negotiation
Others	30	10%	6-9	Customer Service, Cross-border Payment

Through the above measures, strive to reduce the talent gap by 50% within 2-3 years and

control the turnover rate of key positions within 15%, providing solid talent support for the high-quality development of CBEC in the new area. It is also recommended to establish a CBEC talent database to achieve precise talent matching and efficient allocation.

#### 4. Practical Implications and Future Prospects

This study systematically demonstrates the implementation pathways and innovative value of MTNA building a Southwest CBEC hub. The research indicates that inland regions developing CBEC must base their approach on local realities and pursue differentiated development paths. By constructing the "Two Ports, One Park" logistics system, innovating the "GUZEC Six-in-One" collaboration mechanism, and implementing pilot initiatives like the "regulatory sandbox," the new area has successfully explored a "Channel Breakthrough - Platform Empowerment - Institutional Innovation - Talent Support" integrated development model. Practice shows this model can effectively overcome development bottlenecks such as logistics dependency, industrial weakness, and institutional lag, possessing significant inland characteristics and promotion value. Looking ahead, with the deepening implementation of RCEP and the accelerated construction of the New Western Land-Sea Corridor, MTNA should focus on continuous efforts in the following areas: Deepen economic and trade cooperation with ASEAN countries, building over 3 overseas warehouses; Promote alignment with digital trade rules and cultivate local CBEC brands; Improve the industrial ecosystem, striving to achieve a transaction volume exceeding 1 billion RMB within 3 years. This research provides theoretical reference and practical paradigms for CBEC development in inland regions, holding significant importance for promoting the construction of the Chengdu-Chongqing Economic Circle and the high-quality development of the New Western Land-Sea Corridor.

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