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Client / Product : The Hong Kong Institute of Surveyors
Publication : South China Morning Post
Date : 19 May 2016 (Thursday)
Page : EDT4

Nepal work showcases 'unique strengths'

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As homes, buildings and entire villages crumbled to the ground across central Nepal in April last year, a one-building complex remained unscathed – an academy for the Nepalese armed police force 20km south of the capital.

The Hong Kong design and build consultancy in charge of supervising the project has emerged as a showcase of the strengths offered by the city's professional services sector, particularly under China's "One Belt, One Road" trade initiative.

The project was one of a few acclaimed by National People's Congress chairman Zhang Dejiang in a speech outlining the city's "multitude of unique strengths" and capabilities in the development of the economic and trade initiative.

"When the massive Nepal earthquake struck, a large

number of structures collapsed, but projects supervised by Hong Kong companies basically remained intact," Zhang said at a summit yesterday.

Veteran surveyor Ng Kin-siu's Fruit Design and Build (FDB) was the supervisory consultant behind the China-backed project, in charge of ensuring everything from safety to costs remained under control.

"We take on a project management role and that was to maintain time, cost and quality. We have been able to bring all our strong local experience and knowledge there," Ng told the *Post*. Ng said there were huge business opportunities to take advantage of under the initiative.

The company won the role as supervisory consultant through bidding with the mainland's Ministry of Commerce under a development and aid project.

Vincent Ho Kui-yip of the Institute of Surveyors, the group that helped connect the tenderers to



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ZHANG DEJIANG



A collapsed building in Nepal's capital Kathmandu. Photo: Reuters

the ministry, agreed that there were major commercial opportunities for local professional service providers – especially in surveying, architectural or supervisory roles – to venture into other markets under the "One Belt, One Road" initiative.

But Ho pointed out that the industry in Hong Kong was mostly comprised of small- and medium-sized businesses, which could not afford to take on the immense risks and uncertainties of foraying into markets engaged in the initiative. He called for more government support.

"We see a direction, but there is no platform for us to do this right now," Ho said.

"We will need local policy support and resources, such as financing schemes that can help lower the risks for small and medium enterprises.

"Hopefully after [Zhang's statements] the government will take the opportunity to come up with ... a strategy."