

Still a land of opportunity

► Highly skilled foreigners are better off in China than elsewhere in the world. **Linda Yu** explains why

Many expats will not have any problems finding work despite the gloom and doom of the forecasted global recession. In fact, if your expertise lies in the pharmaceutical industry or in the field of research and development, you can write your own check. The same can be said for high-tech specialists and engineers.

While many firms around the world are laying off staff, or about to, recruitment experts say Chinese firms are actually hiring more expats.

Oily Riches, China manager for Michael Page, an international recruitment agency that hires mostly executive level positions for global companies, says despite difficult times, his company is still seeing a steady number of jobs come through.

With the exception of harder-hit areas, particularly property and the real estate sectors closely related to the banks, he says companies are still hiring, especially multinationals with Western headquarters.

Companies have to adapt their hiring strategies in response to the current market situation, he says.

"The majority of clients are not telling us of a 'recruitment freeze', but they are being more cautious and selective about the candidates they hire because no one can predict what is going on in the world," he says.

Riches also says companies are dropping "dead wood" as they see fit in order to keep a lid on the company headcount.

In good economic times, companies would be keen to refill these vacancies, but now, with tighter budgets, "they aren't really interested in replacing them".

Kelly Qian, executive partner of The Jace-Kelly, a local headhunting firm that primarily recruits executive positions for multinational companies in China, says she is seeing similar hiring behavior.

"At this time, most of our clients are still hiring, but they are slowing down the process," Qian says, also noting those with low job performance have an increased risk of being laid off.

So, while the Chinese job market is hardly immune to mounting market pressure these days, expatriates in China are still better off here than returning home, says Jill Malilla, Asia market development leader for Mercer China, a global provider of consulting, outsourcing and investment services.

"Job opportunities on this side of the world are greater than in North America or Europe, so expatriates will have greater opportunities here than in their home country," she says.

"Most companies still plan to increase or expand the number of expatriates in China [because] there still exists a shortage or imbalance in the demand and supply of key talent," she says.

"There is an interesting dimension in China, where more companies are bringing expatriates in at the professional level rather than management or senior levels, but for shorter periods of time."

The professional expatriate is increasingly brought over to accelerate the skills of local

staff through knowledge transfer, particularly for companies in the pharmaceutical, research and development, high-tech and engineering industries.

Malilla says the professional expatriate is gaining popularity as multinationals continue to localize costs structures at their China offices.

But localization coupled with a bad economy means more expatriates have to adjust expectations, according to industry insiders.

About 50 percent of the C-level hires made by The Jace-Kelly are expatriates, and these days, many are accepting a more localized compensation scheme, Qian says.

"They are being put on a local plus package. If you are a local plus, the company will probably help you bear some of your tax, or consider giving you some housing allowance," she says.

"Whereas for real expatriate hiring, they normally help you equalize tax to your hometown, give you housing and take care of your kids' education, and most of the time the whole family will be entitled to international benefits."

At Michael Page, expatriates are more inclined to accept less, Riches says.

"People are being less demanding about fringe benefits and salary within reason," he says. "Because expats know about localization and what's going on elsewhere in the world, they are being more flexible."

And while people are less likely to switch jobs at the moment, expatriates nowadays are more open about considering a bilateral move, in terms of compensation, if they see more long-term potential, says Qian.

"In a good market, some candidates will probably ask for a good 40 to 50 percent increment, but now they are more reasonable," she says.

"If the candidate leaves their current company, their major motivation won't be the package increment."

"Given the whole economy has been quite down at the moment, even if they are willing to stay with their current company, they know it is still possible their current company may want to, or have to reduce some of their current benefits, so the only thing they can compare is which job is more interesting," she says.

It appears that expatriates in China are recognizing the value of being here at this time, even if it means forgoing the perks they may be used to.

"Certainly, we have an emerging trend in the number of locally hired foreigners," Malilla says.

"That suggests more individuals are willing to be hired under local terms in order to stay in the China market."

One American expatriate working for a US financial services company in Shanghai says the credit crisis has jeopardized the long-term security of his job.

Still, he thinks he's much better off in China than on Wall Street.

"I think there are still jobs out there for people with advanced degrees and people who are bilingual," the English and Mandarin speaker says.

"But, if I cannot find jobs that I like, I would consider starting my own business. Returning to America is not yet an option I have considered."



While the Chinese job market is not immune to mounting pressure, expats in China are better off than returning home. **Quanjing**

港珠澳大桥主体工程初步设计阶段 勘察设计招标公告

港珠澳大桥工程可行性研究报告编制已完成，广东省交通厅已于2008年6月完成了该项目的行业初审。受港珠澳大桥前期工作协调小组的委托，港珠澳大桥前期工作协调小组办公室（以下简称“招标人”）拟开展港珠澳大桥主体工程初步设计阶段勘察设计工作，现就该项工作进行国际竞争性公开招标，并对投标人进行资格后审。

1、项目概况

拟建的港珠澳大桥跨越珠江口伶仃洋海域，是连接香港特别行政区、广东省珠海市、澳门特别行政区的大型跨海通道，是列入《国家高速公路网规划》的重要交通建设项目。建设内容包括：港珠澳大桥主体工程、香港口岸、珠海口岸、澳门口岸、香港侧接线以及珠海侧接线。其中，港珠澳大桥主体工程内容为：自港粤分界线起，西至拱北/明珠附近的海中填筑的珠海/澳门口岸人工岛止，采用桥隧组合方式，全长约29.6公里。

本项目初步设计费用由香港、广东、澳门三地政府共同承担。

2、招标内容及范围

本次招标内容为港珠澳大桥主体工程初步设计阶段勘察设计工作，包括港珠澳大桥主体工程全线初测、初勘，海中桥梁、隧道、人工岛、交通工程及沿线设施、景观、环境保护和其他工程的初步设计，编制初步设计概算，相关的配套专题研究工作以及后续服务。

3、投标方式

投标人可以中外合作设计联合体形式投标，联合体所有成员数量不得超过5家。联合体各方签订联合体协议后，不得再以联合体成员或分包人的名义参加另一联合体的投标。联合体主办方代表联合体全体成员完成投标的各项任务。

联合体主办方及联合体应满足本公告“4. 资质及经验要求”中的对应要求，联合体主办方应为中国境内设计企业，联合体境外设计、咨询企业可为多家，但至少应包括具有跨海特大桥梁、沉管/盾构隧道设计/设计咨询经验的咨询公司参与联合体。

4、资质及经验要求

投标人	资质	经验
联合体	1、工程设计资质：（1）工程设计综合资质甲级；或（2）公路行业（特大桥梁）甲级、以及公路行业（特大隧道）甲级； 以及 2、具有工程勘察综合类甲级资质； 3、工程咨询资质：公路专业甲级。	1、近10年内在境内和境外应至少成功完成过2座以上（含2座）海洋环境下桥梁（其中一座跨海长度要求超过10公里）的设计或设计咨询工作； 2、近10年内在境内和境外应至少成功完成过2座以上（含2座）主跨800m以上（含800m）悬索桥或400m以上（含400m）斜拉桥的设计或设计咨询工作； 3、近10年内在境内和境外应至少成功完成过2座以上（含2座）长度在2公里以上沉管/盾构隧道（双向四车道及以上，跨江或跨海，其中一座要求在海洋环境下）的设计或设计咨询工作； 4、拥有国际及内地桥梁和隧道设计经验。
联合体主办方	1、工程设计资质：（1）工程设计综合资质甲级；或（2）公路行业（特大桥梁）甲级；或（3）公路行业（特大隧道）甲级； 以及 2、工程咨询资质：公路专业甲级。	1、近10年内应至少成功完成过1座以上（含1座）海洋环境下、跨海长度超过10公里桥梁（按高速公路标准）的设计工作；同时近10年内应至少成功完成过1座以上（含1座）主跨800m以上（含800m）悬索桥或400m以上（含400m）斜拉桥的设计工作； 或者 2、近10年内应至少成功完成过1座以上（含1座）沉管/盾构隧道（双向四车道及以上）的设计工作。

注：“成功完成”是指项目初步设计已获得批复，或施工图设计通过审查。

5、报名及购买招标文件的时间和地点：

凡有兴趣成为联合体主办方的潜在投标人可于2008年12月8日9:30-16:30（北京时间），持企业法人营业执照副本原件、设计及咨询资质证书副本原件、单位介绍信或法人代表委托书（原件）和经办人身份证原件及复印件一套，以及能够证明其达到本公告最低经验要求的资料复印件（中标通知书或合同文本，需加盖单位公章）一套，到广州建设工程交易中心（广州市天河区天润路333号）购买招标文件。每套招标文件售价人民币1000元，售后不退。投标人须在报名前到广州建设工程交易中心办理IC卡，并下载填写《广州建设工程招标投标申请表》。凡无法提供经验证明材料或虽提供经验证明材料但未达到最低经验要求的潜在投标人，招标人有权拒绝。

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2008年12月1日

Hot on the paper trail

Winning the paperwork war in China is a challenge that can test an expat's temperament and I was pushed to the limit last week at the counter of a Beijing bank.

Frustrations began to boil over when my Chinese translator friend said to me: "Do you want me to fill out the form? Maybe I can do it better."

"What do you mean?" I moaned. "This form is in English."

After five attempts, I had failed to correctly fill out the Western Union money transfer form despite the fact it was in my native language.

My house back home needs major repairs and I was forced to send back \$7,000 — the maximum transfer amount Western Union allows — to pay Fast Eddie the Roofer from Ironbark, Australia.

But there were more holes in my application form than there were in my broken roof.

(One), I didn't use capital letters throughout, (two) I didn't include my father's middle name, (three), I didn't write down my middle name, (four) I kept writing outside the little boxes, and (five) I forgot what five was for.

My Chinese friend was right. She could have filled out the form better than me in her second language.

After mustering the concen-



PATRICK WHITELEY

tration of a brain surgeon, I completed the sixth form and passed the all-important paperwork under the bulletproof glass to the teller.

Tasks that take about 15 minutes back home, often take more than an hour in China.

Thank goodness for my Chinese friends who help me weave my way through the maze of banking bureaucracy, and other areas of daily life in the Middle Kingdom.

Sometimes I like being self-sufficient but there is a price to pay when dealing with a mountain of paper work.

Although many banks, and other institutions, now have English-speaking staff, most do not and as I now know the paperwork must be 100 percent correct.

I remember the drama when I applied for my Chinese driver's license. The checklist included a passport, residence permit, original driver's license, medical certificate, and five photographs.

I now know to get the pictures first. I had gone to the hospital for my medical certificate first only to be sent

away to get the photos.

Then I discovered the 2.5 cm by 2.5 cm pictures required white backgrounds. I had selected blue, because it was my favorite color, but this was a mistake.

I also selected the wrong photo size. I thought passport size was standard but the license photo needed to be smaller.

Paper work can be baffling, but it can also be used to your advantage, especially if you don't want to be bothered by the boss.

My Sydney buddy often decided by mid-afternoon he was done working for the day so he used paperwork as a cover for his shirking.

Barry would walk to the printer, take out whatever was in the in-tray then walk quickly past the managers, reading the thick wad of papers in his hand.

Sometimes he would take out a pen and write something on the blank papers, as if he was correcting something.

The bosses would look up and see busy Barry, and think: "That's what we like to see, someone who's doing the paperwork."

But Barry was letting the paper work for him.

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