



Spar China to expand in southeast

Spar China and Yunnan Anning Jinfang Commercial Group have signed a partnership agreement authorising Jinfang to grow the Spar brand in the nation's southeast.

It covers Yunnan province, the cities of Bijie and Liu Pan Shui, Buyi and Miao autonomous prefecture, and Anshun in Guizhou province.

Jinfang will convert 32 stores to the Dutch brand in the coming months. The 2550 employees in the chain's hypermarkets, supermarkets and convenience stores will benefit from access to the retail training academy of Spar China.

Spar's sales in China last year grew by 6.7 per cent to RMB14.5 billion (US\$ billion), with Spar China continuing its expansion in a maturing food-retail sector. Store numbers increased by 14 per cent to 395.

Spar's first Chinese retail partner Jiayiyue Group launched a IPO on the Shanghai Stock Exchange in December. The funds raised will be used to strengthen and develop the business further through investment in technology and supply-chain infrastructure.

China now accounts for 14 per cent of Spar's global selling area with Spar China partners expanding in Shandong, Guangdong, Shanxi and Inner Mongolia, Beijing, Sichuan, Henan, Zhangjiakou – and now Yunnan.

Spar International says its China growth has been driven by investment in a multi-channel supply chain, the development of hypermarkets, the launch of convenience stores in tier-two and -three urban centres and a strategic emphasis on fresh food through initiatives like the development of a new bakery. Ongoing developments in retailing via online channels including WeChat and Weibo and online sales have also helped.

Spar China is working closely with Jinfang on the first Spar supermarket design and an international logistics team from Spar International and Spar China are supporting Jinfang in developing a warehouse.

Spar International MD Tobias Wasmuht says that since entering China in 2004, the company has worked closely with partners to accelerate the growth of their food retail business through its standardisation methods, latest store design, modern supply chain expertise and improved shopping experience.

“The strong growth figures demonstrate that the ‘Better Together’ strategy is delivering for our partners. The partnership with Jinfang represents a further, exciting development in the growth of Spar in China.”



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