Talented Taipei & the Creative Imperative

Taipei has many opportunities to grasp its potential.
We Must Change

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Urban civilization has been facing strong waves of change over the past 20 years. These have created unprecedented and harsh challenges. They include: drastic climate change, the financial crisis, energy and food shortages, various infectious diseases, the aging population and the impact of increased foreign immigrants. These and frequent disasters and countless environmental impacts have constantly been challenging the achievements of industrial civilization over the last 200 years. Usually we address these new problems in the classic framework of thinking about urban development. This is insufficient and not able to handle the endless stream of issues arising in this century’s changing situation, especially the need for sustainable development and ability to cope with global competition. There is only one path: change. Change our architectural system, change our mode of operation and change our values and our thinking.

Past success does not mean repeatedly reproducing the same model will be successful. The times are changing. We were once a newly industrialized country of Asia, but in 2001, China and India became part of BRIC, the fastest growing developing economies in the world. In 2008, Hong Kong, New York, and London were hailed as the world’s three major hip cities. Seoul, South Korea became the world’s design capital in 2010. As the representation of Taiwan, Taipei is gradually fading on the world map. If we want a fresh start on this rapidly shifting world stage we need to re-assess our existing framework of operating to take our city towards a more desirable future. We must discard the traditional thinking of the past and face this new century with innovative and creative thinking. We have to make the most of limited resources and work in an integrated way to create a whole new city. Next we must see how we can break through the old framework to create an entirely new international situation.

Taipei’s asked creative city strategy consultant, Charles Landry to assess the city. He has an in-depth understanding of Taipei as part of the world urban system and in the context of its historical fate. Given this background, its complexity and the basic framework of how the city operates and specifically Taipei’s diverse assets, he directly reminds us that “talent” is fundamental for the sustainable development of Taipei. In seeking to retain and attract talent shaping the creative landscape and reconsidering the creative atmosphere is crucial as well as building a more creative administration. These factors of competition as well as external environmental challenges are issues all world cities face. We must discard the traditional thinking of the past and face this new century with innovative and creative thinking. We have to make the most of limited resources and work in an integrated way to create a whole new city.
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Taipei’s greatest assets are the skills, expertise and talents of its people and how energized, motivated and confident they are about the city’s future. This determines its success or failure. There is unfortunately in Taipei disquiet and a sense of unease, anxiety and frustration. This loss of confidence, based on our research, comes from business leaders, NGOs, universities, the creative sector and young people and even some within the administration itself. They would like a clearer direction and a more articulated vision for Taipei.

At the same time, there is a sense of satisfaction, comfort and pride with the city’s basic infrastructures, its overall liveability and achievements, its openness, accessibility and freedom of speech. Much of this is the result of past achievements, such as the fight for democracy.

We are now in a completely different situation. Global competition between cities has intensified at an expanding pace, and they are increasingly competing through their economic vigour, their quality of life and attractiveness, their buzz, their creativity, and their ability to appeal to highly skilled, entrepreneurial, and talented people.

Our current knowledge-intensive economy relies too much on deep sharing and collaborative working. It reminds us that every shift in how wealth is created requires a new social order, new ways of learning and things to learn, new skill sets, new physical settings and new kinds of facilities to maximize potential. It requires different cultural capabilities. The World Design Capital bidding process has been helpful in highlighting these issues.

The brain drain is Taipei’s urgent, overriding crisis, and Taipei’s younger talents and those that are more established are leaving in greater numbers. This must act as the catalyst to address the creativity agenda with vigour. To be perceived as a creative city is vital to reverse these difficult trends and to retain Taipei’s best people and to attract others from elsewhere.

There is awareness amongst Taipei’s urban leaders of this overall dynamic, but it has not been translated into institutional mechanisms to deal with it effectively. It needs to become Taipei’s overarching priority. Those concerned with economic vitality, learning, culture and city planning must together and in a cross-disciplinary way assess how to tackle it.

The central question is how you generate the urgency to act. Here the attitudes and attributes that made Taipei successful in the past, such as its somewhat structured, hierarchical and more inflexible approach, could be precisely those that cause you to have difficulties in the future. It is like having old machinery to deal with new circumstances, problems or opportunities and thus instruments which are not fit for purpose.
This short book highlights how Taipei might address this complex set of dilemmas and get itself more firmly onto the global radar screen and become known for its ‘civic creativity’. It outlines firstly, how and why talented people have become a city’s most important asset. Second, it links this agenda to creativity and describes why becoming a more creative city is crucial in moving forward. It stresses that creativity has multiple applications affecting every part of Taipei’s life and that design thinking plays a helpful role in fostering its growth. It explains how the physical environments to encourage creative ideas, projects and companies to emerge are different from those that launched the Taiwanese high-tech revolution. Creative clusters, hotspots and milieus now need to be much more embedded into Taipei’s denser urban fabric. And there needs to be a support structure to match.

So city planning must be sophisticated in rethinking how to foster spaces, places and quarters that are both compelling and interesting for those living in Taipei as well as the highly mobile from elsewhere. Taipei needs to project itself as a place with a creative citizenship whose skills and talents in innumerable ways make Taipei a ‘must be destination’. Third, it describes the results of a creativity assessment of Taipei. Of particular importance is the difference in how younger and older people perceive the communications in the city and its ability to achieve a strategic vision. It then outlines and compares the older thinking about how cities work with the more forward-looking views emerging globally before describing a series of steps to help Taipei become a more creative city. Part of this is an analysis of how Taipei’s administration could become more imaginative and creative. Finally the setting up of a ‘Creativity Platform’ as an orchestration device is recommended. This is a public private and third sector growth partnership and task force made up of cross disciplinary experts with the aim to enhance Taipei’s creative credentials so it is seen as a versatile, ambitious and imaginative Asian hub able to retain and attract its skilled, aspirational and talented people.

Taipei is aware that skills and talent are its major assets.
Setting the scene

The aim of ‘Talented Taipei & the Creative Imperative’ is threefold:

To explain why creativity is a crucial, life-enhancing and wealth generating resource and aptitude for cities in the new global context. To highlight the need to encourage a creative citizenry and to make the retention and attraction of talent a major priority;

To make a first attempt to assess Taipei’s creative capacity and potential and its ability to create a positive inflow and outflow of talent. This is presented for wide-ranging discussion and more formal debate;

To change the way Taipei thinks about itself, its potential and how it should operate to harness its assets to be more successful. This means embedding an understanding of the power and dynamics of creativity into the city’s genetic code. The goal is to foster a creative citizenship and a creative bureaucracy.

In the conclusions, a series of strategic recommendations are made to the city and more specifically the Urban Regeneration Organization.

This publication is intended to be a living document which should continue to be developed and refined, whereby those who read and work with the findings, can continue to take it forward into an evolving action plan.

The views expressed here are ‘the outsider looking in’ based on numerous conversations, workshops and site visits. This has strengths and weaknesses. I do not have the fine-grained understanding of Taipei that those who live there possess. Yet, the outsider perspective can provide a fresh uncluttered perspective. This is what Taipei said:

Looking at Taipei’s potential from an outsider perspective.
Creativity and talent at the heart of Taipei’s evolution

Why do we need creativity? Why a creative milieu? Why creative clusters? Why a creative city? Why creative individuals? Why creative organizations? Why do we need to develop and harness our talent resources? These are questions sceptics ask. They think creativity is fluffy, vague and unclear, a distraction, it is mere decoration, an embellishment, an optional extra.

Creativity is a matter of survival for Taipei; it is the oxygen that makes the whole system work, whether helping individuals to express themselves, for an organization to explore inventions to become more sustainable over time or for a city to figure out how to move forward. Interesting, creative places where people feel they can make a difference and fulfill their dreams, crucially, help retain and attract the talented people who are the lifeblood of a thriving city.

Taiwan is going through a hump and has lost competitive advantage even though Taiwan’s level of entrepreneurship is high as recognized in various international rankings.

Projects such as bidding for the World Design Capital are important in sending out a signal that Taipei takes creativity seriously, and in putting the bid together it shows the rich potential of Taipei’s creative forces. Events like these help retain talent.

The ability to foster a creative citizenship and to keep and attract the right people is the strategic advantage for cities in the 21st century. This is the creative capital of a city of more value than financial capital or physical resources.
Attracting talent is increasingly difficult. A city needs to offer an enticing set of conditions and must effectively communicate its credentials to the wider world to be on the global radar screen. Suddenly the atmosphere, feeling, liveliness, buzz, sense of possibility, aesthetic character and sensory power of a city is becoming far more important, as is their design. This helps economic performance, without it cities decline.

**The young and restless**

Many studies show more educated people are likely to choose the city first before the job, especially the 25 to 34-year-olds. A city needs to replenish its talent pool. Places that attract young people end up being the winners. This younger group has energy, ambition and are flexible and adventurous. They need a climate of openness, few barriers, good governance and a sense of vision for their city. Focusing on this group represents an investment in future wealth. Their collective energy is a major driving force.

The relative downturn in Taiwan’s economy has exacerbated a major problem -- the unemployment and under-employment of younger talented people, which is reaching crisis proportions. Successful cities understand the needs and desires of this young group and invest in it. For instance, they tend to prefer working more independently than as part of the corporate world. The role of SMEs is especially important, as is a strong supportive start-up culture. Here the banking system is not sufficiently aware of how many people now have portfolio jobs, which include a mix of time dated projects. They have not appropriately adapted their lending criteria to help. This might mean that government might need to step in to provide small loan funds.

The outflow signals an economy facing severe difficulties. Unfortunately, Taipei is in this situation. Taipei is well aware of this, but the situation has exacerbated recently. Mainland China or Singapore can offer salaries two to five times higher. Taipei’s record, by contrast, in attracting other foreigners to increase its diversity is poor and there are many obstacles for them when they arrive.

**Creative citizenship**

This overall dynamic means the world is changing dramatically. It is a paradigm shift. For the first time in history, people, their imaginations, their energy and capacities are the primary source of wealth creation. The presence of talented people with skills and expertise as well as open, flexible and responsive minds largely determines the success or failure of cities. People are becoming more important than companies in policy making. So far, the talent agenda has been narrowly discussed. Well-functioning cities need a creative citizenship with expertise in all fields from imaginative civil servants, clever entrepreneurs, versatile engineers, inventive product and service designers or far-sighted politicians.

These are strategically alert, with a willingness and capacity to lead, with emotional intelligence and the ability to communicate well and be mentally flexible. Younger talent has a different focus. It wants to explore, challenge itself, think out of the box, be unconventional and most importantly find its creative calling. It needs to be able to make mistakes and do wacky things. Do Taipei’s culture and the way people are educated encourage these attributes?
Today’s challenge is to bed down spatial and atmospheric conditions to attract interesting, high skilled people and to get them to stay and then, as they get older, to act as mentors for the new young. A creative city needs creative oldies too.

The few cities nearby that retain and attract talent, like Shanghai, Hong Kong or Singapore get stronger and more powerful in a virtuous cycle; those that lose talent get progressively weaker in a vicious cycle.

The brain drain and talent churn
Is Taipei making retention their first priority? Good people have choices and can move anywhere. The main reason people move overseas is economic. In a globalising world, the opportunity to work in more complex, challenging and varied contexts than is possible in Taipei is an important pull for young people and ambitious professionals. There is now an increasing culture of migration indeed a rite of passage, while family, lifestyle and cultural factors are the main reason to come back.

Many see this outflow negatively. An alternative approach accepts there will be significant inflow and outflow. It looks at emigrants as circulators who, after working overseas, if conditions are right, return more experienced bringing value back. Their overseas networks can help them penetrate outwards again. When overseas, they can act as bridgeheads in their destination nations. The point is to get them to return. The farsighted Taiwanese minister of state Lee Kuo-ting managed this with an array of incentives and infrastructural programmes that lured back the Taiwanese from Silicon Valley. This helped launch the Taiwanese high-tech revolution.

The talent churn is the most important issue. This is the balance between outgoing and incoming talent. In Taipei, it is negative rather than positive. Taipei is losing more talent than it is gaining, although it continuously gains from other Taiwanese cities. Nobody in Taipei is monitoring these movements systematically. There is double problem. Not only does Taiwan lose expertise, but it also pays for their education. In effect, it is exploited by the receiving city.

This brain drain is Taipei’s urgent crisis. It must act as the catalyst to confront the creativity agenda with vigour. Taipei is weakening even though it has achieved an immense amount. It has excellent infrastructure and services which are admired. Yet, in the new creative city paradigm this is not enough. They are baseline features, a platform on which more must be built. Taipei needs to ask what creative people want and what the physical, social, institutional and cultural conditions are needed to keep them. Economic development is as much driven by lifestyle factors, such as tolerance and diversity, good urban infrastructures and general vitality.

The connection between creativity and talent and the knowledge intensive economy has increasingly been highlighted as cities began to compete more intensely with each other from the late 1980’s onwards. Decision makers realized that to develop the innovations to survive and prosper a city first needs an enabling environment, which is a ‘creative milieu’. This place fosters an atmosphere of overall curiosity and exploration and facilitates the conditions for individuals and organizations to think, research, plan and act with imagination. This shifted the focus on the human resources needed to make the city competitive. This requires wide-ranging possibilities for face-to-face interaction among a critical mass of interesting people from all fields as well as attractive physical conditions and crucially an appropriate regulations and incentives regime.

‘The creative city’ idea has become a global movement. Its overall environment or milieu is different from the physical settings created to kick start the high-tech revolution. These were often focused on establishing somewhat isolated off-centre technology or science parks often connected to universities, where the ‘geeky techies’ invented the software and hardware that gave Taiwan its reputation. Now, around the world people are trying to retrofit these parks and to give them some sense of urbanity and stylishness like Mingsheng Community Area. Keeping talent now happens differently. A high-tech park on its own is not sufficient. It is a combination of interesting, imaginative learning options; a clear set of ladders of opportunities to lead into entrepreneurial activities, a globally connected city, physical environments with a strong urban design ethic within which to work, live and play and that provide rich experiences.

Creative credibility and competence
Taipei must develop creative credibility in global perceptions and its image. The perception is that Taipei values engineering-based professions more than internet creatives, designers, cultural observers, the media savvy or artists -- people at the forefront in creating intellectual property and fresh thinking. These creative professionals look for places ‘thick’ with people like themselves. They take more risks; failure is accepted so they need a
supportive investment and infrastructure environment, like incubators or spaces for experimentation. To breed more of them multidisciplinary degrees are needed to combine design, technology, the hard sciences, social sciences and the arts. Universities have a central role in becoming new talent factories stimulating graduates to stay. Taiwanese culture with its emphasis on hierarchy can find it difficult to work with this ethos.

Every shift in the means of wealth creation, like now, creates a new social order; it demands new ways of learning and things to learn, new skill sets. It requires new physical settings, new kinds of facilities and different cultural capabilities.

The culture of engineering
Taipei’s urban development has been dominated by a hardware focused ‘culture of engineering’. This was effective in building basic infrastructures and in pursuing the technological innovations for which Taiwan is known. Many of its qualities are admirable. Engineers make things work, bridges stand up, buildings do not fall down and solutions are found, usually in a step-by-step approach. They are logical, linear, rational, analytical and systematic. Incremental innovation often based on trial and error is a common feature. This encapsulates best what is good and yet potentially challenging for Taipei in the future. A strong engineering culture is somewhat different from a creativity driven culture which focuses software elements. Surveys show engineers need to pay greater attention to interpersonal skills, communicative abilities and cultural literacy.

There was a level of predictability about the foreseeable results of the former phases. The next raft of world beating innovations involves crossovers and interdisciplinary work in meeting challenges as diverse as creating carbon neutrality, personal well-being, or sensory products and services. This lack of integrated is perhaps a reason why, although Taiwan is one of the top 10 countries in producing, scientific papers in terms of being quoted its position is very low in the 90s.

Predicting exactly the ‘emerging advantage’ from creativity will be less easy. We are moving from ‘managing the known’ to a design and innovation approach, that is ‘building for the unknown’. Yet, we can
build capability and encourage the mindset for communities to have the foresight to identify and respond to the ‘advantage’ when it emerges. This requires a governance ethos, aware management and learning systems willing to adapt to these new demands.

These transitions are not smooth. There are winners and losers. So the scope of creativity must be comprehensive. Creativity is not only about the arts or sectors such as film, music or design, although they may have special contributions to make.

**Rethinking learning**

In a ‘new economy’ paradigm, older competency models relying on educational attainment or sector specific knowledge need to be reassessed. Aspects of how the old economy worked, such as hierarchical management systems are insufficiently effective; and rigid educational curricula do not prepare people for the demands of the ‘new’ world. To stereotype, we need less factories drilling in knowledge and rather more communities of enquiry; we need to be taught fewer specific things and more the capacity to acquire higher order skills such as learning how to learn, to create, to discover, to be creative, to problem solve and to self-assess. This is more likely to trigger and activate wider intelligence. It fosters the adaptability to transfer knowledge between different contexts and to understand the essence of arguments rather than recall out of context facts. This helps create opportunities and solve problems better, and cultural institutions reconceived as open places actively engaging with audiences could play an important part.

Given the brain drain, few cities have a comprehensive talent strategy. Singapore is an exception. It has a strategy to source, attract, select, train, develop, retain, and promote talent. Cities have managed to get the talent question central to the urban agenda in several ways. The trigger can be a university president, as in Philadelphia, who used his convening power and role of the institution to change the nature of the conversation about his city’s future. Equally it can be a business network as in the case of Pittsburgh or a mixed stakeholder group as in the case of Bilbao.

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**Permit experimentation at an early age.**
The spatial geography of creativity

Cities need to know how well they are doing and evaluating cities is becoming a phenomenon. Various measurement systems exist concerned with innovation, city performance, diversity, quality of life, and the creative economy amongst many. Here we assess the creative pulse of Taipei looking at the city as an integrated whole.

Hotspots, quarters and zones
Discussion on the creativity of places is frenzied with more than 80 cities calling themselves ‘creative cities’ to put themselves on the map. They include nearby to Taipei Yokohama, Seoul and Shanghai and smaller places like Kanazawa and Bandung. Mostly they refer to strong arts and cultural infrastructures rather than something more holistic. The words creative -- place, space, hub, hotspot, quarter, cluster, zone, district, milieu, environment and even creative city are often used interchangeably. This can be confusing. Let’s explore the differences. Some denote physical entities, others to an atmosphere, a buzz, a scene and others to all at the same time. At times the focus is on the people who shape the place, at others on how the place shapes the people. The words highlight distinctions in spatial scope, scale and possible impact. Clarity of use is important. ‘Creative place’ is the most generic. It can mean an interesting room, a point in space, a locality, a broader physical setting and at the extreme a whole city. ‘Creative space’ usually refers to a specific location within a physical structure, say a space well designed for brainstorming or that stimulates the mind. A ‘creative hub’ is a central location, such as a building, within a wider geographical setting, like a quarter or neighbourhood. It is one key element within a set of similar or connected buildings.
along a street or within a wider area. It can also be the key place within a converted factory complex or industrial park. A creative quarter is spatially larger consisting of many streets, a section of a city usually somewhat smaller than a neighbourhood. The latter implies a sense of a community that has lived together for some time. The word district usually implies an administrative division. A ‘creative zone’ is a bigger somewhat ill-defined area within a city. A ‘creative milieu’ can be a large physical place but emphasizes more the atmosphere or buzz associated with an area. A ‘creative cluster’ describes the collection of people and companies, who are densely and intensely networked. Normally this is in a tightly defined spatial area.

A living room, an office, a garage, a new or refurbished building, a street, a neighbourhood, a set of districts and sometimes a complete city are creative. Many great ideas and inventions were dreamt up in a room and even garages, but isolated lone inventors do not make a creative city. There needs to be interaction formally and informally in a social environment to exchange ideas, to gather inspiration and harness support. This helps mutual sharing of tacit knowledge.

A building adds crucial dimensions. There is an enormous variety in types of ‘creative buildings’. Some run purely commercially and targeted to a special business segment, others have hot desking or co-working opportunities, others link to government agencies or knowledge institutes, which may subsidize some tenants. Either can be a creative hub for a quarter since entrepreneurs in a multi-tenant building can meet by coincidence or bounce ideas and projects off each other in a confined space. Buildings generate energy when conceived as part of a support programme for start-ups with mentoring initiatives and structured forms of knowledge transfer.

Broadening out the geographic scope there is the ‘creative milieu’, where information exchange, links to a solid knowledge base of research centres, deep capabilities in certain fields and creativity act as the active agent or yeast that turns the other elements into new ideas, products, processes and services. Their focus initially was more scientific and technological enclaves like Sophia Antipolis near Nice or Oulu Technology Park in Northern Finland. Now ‘creative milieus’ are far more likely to be areas integrated into interesting parts of a city.

The creative industries

The phenomenal rise in interest in the creative industries popularized the ‘creative milieu’ concept. These economic activities generate content and experiences or exploit knowledge. They have three elements: arts and heritage, the media and entertainments industries and creative business services. Sectors include advertising, architecture, arts, heritage, museums, crafts, design, fashion, films, music, performing, publishing, R&D, software TV, radio and video games. It is sometimes called the ‘creative economy’ or ‘cultural industries’.

They need to be strong in Taipei helped by an appropriate supportive infrastructure, but crucially do not define the totality of creativity. It leaves out the creativity of vast fields from scientists, ordinary citizens, bureaucrats, shopkeepers, social activists, environmentalists, restaurateurs or health specialists.
Yet, the sectors have special qualities that help create the so-called Experience Economy\(^1\) by providing it with symbolic value and content. This content and the services deriving from them are potential export products. This is a union of everyday consumption, a sensory focus and spectacle. Commerce-recognized consuming increasingly provides insufficient meaning and satisfaction. It wraps the transaction of buying, selling and owning into a broader experience to give it greater purpose, so making out that products are more than they are merely functional goods. So stories are created around them to make them seem significant. The Apple iPhone is a prime example. The process is turning retailing into part of the entertainment industry, often blurring the boundaries between shopping, learning, art and the experience of culture involving all-embracing sensory events. Think of shopping, visiting a museum, going to a restaurant or providing any personalized service from haircutting to arranging travel. Shops can develop museum like features and, vice versa, museums can become more like extensions of entertainment venues. This dynamic has changed art facilities or cultural institutions often with ‘starchitects’ attempting to produce ever more daring features. They are far more outward facing with more active programming, more flexible opening hours and very audience focused. Design, multimedia, theatrics and soundscapes increasingly move to centre stage. They shape the physical environment around us, including the outside of buildings and the streetscape.

‘New ideas need old buildings’

So said famously Jane Jacobs. Creative industry types obviously make places look and feel more interesting, stimulating, artistic, edgy and especially attractive to ambitious younger entrepreneurs or visitors, who want to feel part of the scene. A special feature is that many work in the vast number of old warehouses, breweries; train, bus or fire stations; cement, coal, textile, tobacco or steel factories; old markets or military barracks that have been transformed into culture or experience centres, incubators and company breeding grounds and as hubs for wider urban regeneration. Strangely, those same places that had horrible working conditions are celebrated as places for the new and the hip. These structures resonate as they exude memory and a patina when novelty erases memory increasingly. Their spaces are usually large and allow for flexibility and interesting structures.

Most famously, they include Zeche Zollverein in Essen, the Distillery District in Toronto, the Cable Factory in Helsinki, Halles De Schaerbeek in Brussels, the Custard Factory in Birmingham, the refurbishment of old industrial buildings in Pyrmont Ultimo in Sydney, Metelkovo Ljubljana, the Truman Brewery area around Brick Lane in London and many more. Often like the ex-Nokia headquarters the Cable Factory in Helsinki, which is playing an active role in the World Design Capital year; they have a mix of small business and culture. The companies co-exist with independent cultural organizations. The various private and public organisations hold large and small, concerts, exhibitions, fairs and festivals. It is the home of three museums, galleries, dance theatres, ateliers, art schools, rehearsing studios, radio stations and offices for smaller creative companies, who

mostly operate in new economy activities like design, green products or software development. Finally, there are the usual hospitality facilities like cafes. This eclectic mix has strengths, yet its self-containment means it does not connect well enough to the adjacent new district Ruoholahti with its interesting mix of housing and a Nokia research centre. Importantly, the Cable Factory is conceived of part of a creative quarter acting as a hub point.

Taipei has a large amount of old industrial structures and other areas that have interesting potential. The danger is that the most interesting will be turned into high-end apartments or shopping centres. They include, The Tobacco Factory, a world class complex and attractive venue that could have an even more dynamic set of activities based there from SMEs to cultural organizations in order to enliven it 24/7 largely as a production base. The centrally located Railway Yards have a strong resonance and if developed in a non-traditional way could add to Taipei’s reputation. The Bottle Cap Company structure is intriguing. Huashan is already developed, but the balance between production, consumption and learning facilities is perhaps too focused on consumption. To create a hub feeling at the Flora site is difficult, but if imaginatively rethought the stadium could become an unusual creative place. The same is true for places like Dihua Street and Yongle Market.

**Networks and networking**

Many such buildings are part of the Trans Europe Halles network of 50 refurbished industrial buildings, which has an arts and cultural focus. It offers a dynamic forum for ideas, collaborations, and mutual support in Europe. The Dutch Creative Residency Network (DCR Network) is another. It is a cooperation between the oldest and biggest creative buildings in the Netherlands where over 750 companies are housed. They include Bink 36, Den Haag; the Creative Factory, Rotterdam; the Puddingfabriek, Groningen; the Strijp S, Eindhoven and the Westergasfabriek, Amsterdam. It aims to improve the conditions for creative entrepreneurship. A third network is the European Creative Business Network, an association of 14 members all which develop and support the creative industries including: Creativity Zentrum in Bilbao, the European Centre for Creative Economy (ecce) in Dortmund, the Creative Cities Amsterdam Area initiative and the City of Eindhoven’s ‘Brain-port’.

The ability to network, cross-fertilize and collaborate is central to a creative milieu. This may be within the dedicated institution or building, or more dispersed across the creative quarter or communities of practice across the globe. Formal and informal gathering places are crucial as are more structured activities like Pecha Kucha, regular seminars to ‘First Fridays’ or even ideas festivals whether this is in an invigorating university setting, a science park or trendy design oriented area. These opportunities create chance encounter and serendipity. Some argue that casual encounters are insufficient and emphasize the more formal triple helix-based networks. Here the private and public sectors connect with universities. It tends to lead to more official dialogues. There is no right answer; it depends on the vision of the city, the specific aims and context.

Ideally, the types of interaction between the networked partners should cut across the value chain, such as ideas generators, those developing original content, those who manufacture proto-types or deal with production as well as distributors and those who know about end-users and retailing.
Milieus and clusters

These processes help develop ‘creative clusters’. They require a physical concentration of diverse activities in the value chain, ideally in walking distance usually of dense urban settings. Proximity is crucial to reduce transaction costs. A fashion cluster typically has designers, makers, promoters and retail outlets. The cluster is fed by a critical mass of enterprises, which create a self-reinforcing virtuous cycle. Clusters may be planned or unplanned. Historical districts near water helped the leather trade grow as with Prada and Gucci. They may originate from a laboratory of a larger company or a higher education institute. A cluster maintains vitality by being socially and culturally open to newcomers.

Creative clusters need assessing with a broader lens. Ideally, they are a knowledge community united by common values, trust, perceptions and mentality, who together shape how innovations develop. These attributes are untraded assets.

They are not necessarily part of specific industry sectors, like design or fashion, or a segment like university research. They should be both production and consumption oriented. Their vibrancy comes from bringing different partners or activities together, such as a green enterprise, a designer and an Internet company. A well-functioning creative production milieu is more complex than merely co-locating a set of companies, say in the creative industries. It requires a diversity of organizations that co-exist with the aim of promoting the cluster, including individuals and companies, as well as centres of excellence, research, showcasing venues, training or financial support services plus good government relations.

Knowing each other too well can make clusters less creative, as they are not sufficiently challenging. With weaker connections, gathering information, garnering resources or generating innovations can be easier because being involved in many diverse circuits unusual insights and potential can be explored.

The European Union has initiated a series of initiatives and programmes to enhance knowledge about creative milieus. It includes the European Creative Industries Alliance, with its European Creative Cluster Lab, a think tank to support new approaches for creative cluster management in creative and traditional industries. Cluster 2020 is a European wide project ‘to help creative cluster excellence’. It is supporting five large-scale demonstration projects called ‘Creative Districts’. Similar initiatives are happening in Seoul and Shanghai.

Place matters

The connected knowledge pool can expand across the globe with virtual networks. So does place matter? Yes, as never before. The more mobile we are, the more places of anchorage we need.
To make a cluster work, cities need to be diverse; they need to encourage liveliness in key locations often creating problems with residents. Diversity demands tolerance for cultural differences, which is normally a citywide issue rather than the sole responsibility of a limited area.

It is more difficult to develop a creative cluster with completely new buildings or new neighbourhoods, as age gives places a richer, more layered quality. This resonates more strongly than sanitized new structures. However, some people and companies prefer the glitzy new both for personal and image reasons, such as high-tech engineering, consultancy firms or lawyers practices, who prefer gleaming towers and the corporate feel.

The social climate, liveliness and physical attributes at neighbourhood level are keys to a milieu and cluster. It feels part of a scene. This is a place where you can experience a shared set of sensibilities, excitement and expectations with like-minded people. You are in the in-crowd. This is why young creative talent prefer off city centre sites, which are cheaper and grungy before they gentrify and become too expensive for start-ups. This creates the buzz and the opportunities for face-to-face contact. Creating the conditions to influence a positive buzz means promoting social interaction through good urban design and generous pockets of public space as well as gathering places and multiple ‘third spaces’.

The city’s lay out is crucial and a creative cluster is more likely to develop in a dense, diverse urban environment with an intricate street pattern, with lower rise buildings amongst smaller blocks rather than imposing structures. See London’s Soho or that of New York, or Amsterdam’s Jordaan district among many. Creating these conditions is difficult in places like Shanghai, Beijing or Shenzhen. Being housed in interesting architecture also marks a point of difference and is used for image reasons, as it communicates symbolically. Old industrial or light industrial structures are often desirable because they appear to be authentic. Such an area requires amenities from pocket parks to cultural venues and accessible transport and housing at various price ranges, including affordable housing. The area may also feed off facilities that are nearby. It will feel like home from home.
To assess creativity we need to look at the hard and soft factors.

Taipei Creative City Assessment

Cities need to know how well they are doing and evaluating cities is becoming a phenomenon. Various measurement systems exist concerned with innovation, city performance, diversity, quality of life, and the creative economy amongst many. Here we assess the creative pulse of Taipei looking at the city as an integrated whole.

A Creative City Assessment Index was used to review the creative pulse of Taipei. It is summarized here. A more comprehensive version is available from the city government. It consists of two elements: an internal, subjective, insider perspective; and an external objective assessment. In total, 114 people were involved in a structured examination of Taipei’s creativity over several days. Separately, a wide range of interviews, group sessions and workshops were held with a diversity of people from different worlds, in total 200 people were consulted. Score ranges in the Creative Cities Index broadly have the following meaning:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score Range</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>90%+</td>
<td>Extraordinary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80%+</td>
<td>Exceptional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70%+</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60%+</td>
<td>Very Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50%+</td>
<td>Good but could improve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50%-</td>
<td>Below average, needs improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40%-</td>
<td>Poor, needs serious attention</td>
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<tr>
<td>30%-</td>
<td>Very poor</td>
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This evaluation has now been undertaken in 20 cities including Bilbao, with whose help it was invented, Canberra, Perth, Ghent, Freiburg, Oulu, San Sebastian and Cardiff.

The differing internal judgements are revealing. Not only the score is important, but also the conversation and differences of opinion leading to the score. It is helpful in strategic discussions in participating cities.

The main aim for cities is to punch above their expected weight. It is clear, for instance, that Taipei cannot be as powerful as Shanghai or Beijing. Many cities, like Taipei, have creative projects in them, but that does not mean that they are necessarily creative as a whole. Many cities start with similar assets and make the most of them others do not.

The creative dynamics of cities have been distilled into ten cross-cutting domains. The focus is on domains because of their broadness and depth. For instance, the public and political framework of a city is as germane to an educationalist as it is to the social worker or the business community.

The qualities measured are: motivation, tenacity, awareness, clarity of communication, broad thinking, inspiration, aspiration, adaptability, dynamism, openness, participation, design awareness, sensory appreciation, professional pride, leadership, and vision. These are preconditions of creativity.

It is clear that uncreative places decline and fail since they do not interrogate their past and present or reassess their resources, prospects and potential for the future.

A creative place is somewhere where people can express their talents and potential, which are harnessed, exploited and promoted for the common good. Things get done. These talents act as a catalyst and role model to develop and attract further talent. It is a place with myriad, high-quality learning opportunities, formal and informal, with a forward looking and adaptable curriculum. The physical environment functions well for its inhabitants, it is easy to move around and connect with each other. Its high-level urban design inspires, stimulates and generates pride and affection. The architecture, old and new, is well-assembled, and the street pattern is diverse and interesting. Webbed within the ordinary is the occasional extra-ordinary and remarkable. It is an environment in which creators of all kinds are content and motivated to create and where there are outlets and channels to exploit innovations. It is a natural market place, where people exchange ideas, develop joint projects, trade their products or work in its advanced industries. It communicates well both internally and to the external world. It offers rich, vibrant experiences through, for example gastronomy, the arts, heritage and its natural surroundings, including thriving mainstream and alternative scenes and a healthy network of third spaces. Opportunities abound: the place is welcoming and encouraging. Its dynamism makes it a magnet and so generates critical mass that guarantees longevity. Each of the ten domains evaluated has its characteristics.

The assessment was undertaken by four audiences. They were higher-level private sector and community stakeholders, younger professionals and officials, senior officials and my external assessment. The overall result was a score of 55.36%. The most important finding was the higher scores given by senior officials, who outscored the rest by 30%. This reason needs to be explored. It is perhaps, because senior bureaucrats are closer to the action in many fields. Unsurprisingly then, they feel things are going much better than citizens perceive. This means there is a strong communications and feedback problem should be addressed. On the other hand, they might have been worried about being critical. The lowest scores were given in assessing the political and public framework and the capacity to lead, have a vision and to be strategically agile.

The younger grouping has a similar score to other stakeholders, but there are significant differences. Their perception of communications in the city, the level of and ability to be entrepreneurial and the public framework are all score substantially lower. Most sharp senior administrators think communications are more than 100% better than young people think. The comparison in assessing the political and public framework is also sharp.

The external evaluation is a bit higher than that of the stakeholders, because in my perception Taipei has done very well in its global context. The main question is whether it can maintain its position in the new conditions, which requires a renewed compelling vision for the city and country based on a far less rigid and hierarchical approach to city development, a more open attitude to partnerships and a way of counteracting the brain drain to Mainland China.
Innovations often happen through collaboration. Here the famous Taiwanese calligrapher Tong Yang-tze collaborating with international designers.

Readers should ask themselves after each description: ‘how well is Taipei doing in this regard’. They can send their results to the Urban Regeneration Organization in the city government. The results are analyzed from the highest scores downwards.

1. Liveability and well-being
Here you will find an exceptional quality of life with good incomes. Services work well and are of a high standard. Community life is active and there are many opportunities to become engaged and to participate. It is an inclusive place. This had the highest score: 68.7%.

2. Openness, trust, accessibility and participation
Openness is the primary condition to have a creative milieu. Openness pervades the way society, institutions and organizations operate, creating an enabling environment where opportunities are facilitated and it is easier to get projects going. This attitude is echoed in the inviting way facilities work. It is also a well-connected gateway to and from the world. Its intercultural approach focuses on what people share across boundaries, recognizing difference but seeking out similarities. It encourages bridge-builders. It acknowledges conflicts and tries to embrace, manage and negotiate a way through. Score: 65.01.

3. Distinctiveness, diversity, vitality and expression
In a creative place, there is a clear identity and dynamism. Citizens are self-confident and proud, but open at the same time. They feel at ease in their city. The cultural offering is wide and welcomes debate and critical thinking. The arts are dynamic and high quality as well as experimental and groundbreaking. Heritage, gastronomy, attractions, parks and the natural environment all add to the vigour of the place. Here is a design-aware environment in which the creative industries flourish, where there are many independent shops, the chain-culture is in the minority. Score: 64.25%.
4. Entrepreneurship, exploration and innovation
This place is one where entrepreneurs feel very much at home, where an idea can become reality quite quickly. It is a place where you can make mistakes without being too severely judged. There are extensive support systems. Clusters, where appropriate, are encouraged to help force-feed innovation and generate critical mass. There is a higher than average level of innovation and R&D. Universities are keen to turn their insights and research ideas into useful products and services. The open innovation ethos based on sharing and connecting small enterprises and large corporate is well developed. The creative industries play a significant role and there is a reputation for design-led distinctive products and services. Score: 54.10.

5. The place and place-making
This place is physically special. Its urban design teams orchestrate and weave its elements together involving planners, highway engineers or developers, collaborating with others with soft skills who understand how the social, cultural and economic life of the city works as well as those who think artistically. The built environment is human centric. Human interaction and activity is encouraged by this physical environment rather than being blocked by physical barriers. It blends well with its natural environment. It knows how to combine old and new imaginatively. The public realm acts as the connective tissue within which the buildings, forecourts and streets form a pattern or mosaic. The urban design knits the parts of the city together into a more seamless whole. It has a magnetism which enables it to compete well with other places. Score: 51.70.

6. Talent development and the learning landscape
Here, learning and knowledge are highly valued. All talents are nurtured, fostered, promoted, rewarded and celebrated. There is a diversity of learning options with ladders of opportunity that take people up the levels. People of all ages enjoy the challenge of learning and want to self-improve. There is pride in teaching and the education institutions strive to be the best in their field. The constantly evolving curriculum is in tune with the needs of the modern world and business. Collaborative projects and interdisciplinary initiatives happen as a matter of course. Score: 51.15%.
7. **Professionalism and effectiveness**

The creative place works well, things happen and are achieved. There is pride in being professional and doing things with quality. Standards are high and benchmarks are frequently set here. Companies, organisations, individuals and products are often given awards. This is a centre of expertise in a range of specific areas – attributes such as reliability, punctuality, efficiency or accuracy are highly respected. Professionals are confident in their own ability and not afraid to work in partnership with others and to delegate authority, breaking with conventional rules of hierarchy. Score: 50.38.

8. **Communication, connectivity and networking**

A creative place is well connected internally and externally, physically and virtually. It is easy to get around and ghettos are rare. Social mobility is more possible; diverse cultures connect. There are high quality public transport systems. It has a sophisticated IT and communications infrastructure. The population travels at home and abroad taking advantage of the excellent rail and air services, which also make a gateway for receiving outsiders. Speaking foreign languages is commonplace. Business to business and cross-sectoral links work well. Score: 47.30.

9. **Strategic leadership, agility and vision**

In a creative place, there are dynamic and forward-looking people of quality in every sector providing a strong sense of vision for the place. Current trends and emerging developments are flagged early (currently, the green agenda would be a perfect example). Leadership style is noticeably inspiring, able to delegate and be empowering to others. Thinking is strategic and future-proofing. There are good mechanisms to bring people together from different disciplines as well as gather information on best practices and innovative solutions from around the globe. Score: 45.10%.

10. **The political and public framework**

This domain refers to the public institutions, to political life, to government and governance, and to public administration. In an ideal creative place, these institutions will be lean but pro-active, ethical, transparent, accessible and enabling. Structures will be horizontal and co-operative and departmental lines thinly drawn. Bureaucracy is kept to a minimum. Personnel in the public sector are highly motivated and there are strong links with the private and community sectors. A healthy community and voluntary sector are encouraged and the general attitude of politicians and officials is to be enabling. Score: 38.75%.
The Creative Bureaucracy

The question for Taipei is not ‘what is the value of a creative bureaucracy’; rather it is ‘what is the cost of not having a creative bureaucracy’. Could a new organizational ethos shape the characteristics and operating dynamics of the early 21st century public bureaucracy in Taipei? How is this different from the technocratic efficiency model associated with the late 20th century? Is being resourceful, strategically agile, responsive and creative at its core? We do not assume bureaucracies are inherently against innovation. Their rationale is partly to slow things down so issues can be thought through and not rushed. The question is whether slowing the system down becomes its reason for being.

The 20th century and 21st century organization

The symbol of 20th century organization is the pyramid. This reflects the thinking, assumptions and the operating conditions it fosters. It represents a hierarchy where everything feeds into the top with instructions cascade down from the top. It is compartmentalized, bounded and with strict divisions of labour. It leaves less room for initiative. It is formal so that communication internally and externally is controlled and only higher levels can speak on behalf of the organization.

The emblem of the 21st century organization is more characterized by a latticework or a network -- an interconnected system of things, people or relationships. It is an open organizational fabric woven and bound together by joint aims, a combined vision, a strategy, plans and initiatives and programmes. It is dispersed yet focused. It is more task group oriented. It leaves room for initiative and flexibility. It is strategically principled and tactically flexible. It communicates in all directions, up and down, inside and outside.
The synthesis of the best of the democratic impulse and the best of hierarchy creates enlightened leadership. The former helps nourish people’s development. When individuals take more responsibility for the good of all, they earn and are given commensurate hierarchical authority and power by inspiring people with vision or purpose, rather than bossing them around or by simply referring to their senior position. There is an encouragement of feedback, rather than curtailing it as this acknowledges that those who hatch ideas, and innovate can come from any level within the organization.

**Deep trends and organizational change**

All organizations have bureaucracies, whether in the public, private and community spheres, but their purposes, mission and values differ. Their precise characteristics vary according to their scope and size. Public bureaucracies have special features. They need to be accountable, fair and ethical. Private bureaucracies by contrast usually focus on profit maximizing.

Bureaucracies are structures of larger organizations with systematic procedures, protocols and regulations to manage activity. These dictate how to execute processes and formal division of powers, hierarchies, and relationships intended to anticipate needs and improve efficiency.

All organizations need to adapt to the new conditions and be more creative even though the words ‘creative’ and ‘bureaucracy’ do not seem to fit together. The first implies looking afresh, bringing unconnected things together in unusual ways and having initiative. It seems dynamic and flexible. It is multifaceted resourcefulness. The second triggers words like rules, routine, process. It seems mechanical and lifeless.

Changes are already afoot in the organisational practices of commercial companies and the public sector. Many external factors are pushing this agenda: Individuals want to feel more empowered, new business models enabled by web 2.0 are emerging, social media are flowering, traditional hierarchical structures are seen as weak. User involvement is co-creating policy, products or solutions; thinking is shifting from hierarchies to networks; we are moving towards flatter organizations and cross-fertilization; traditional disciplinary boundaries are breaking. The creative industries like design or new media especially which Taipei will increasingly rely on operate in this new way.

These have implications for bureaucracies. Once seen as benign and modern if technocratic, will they remain so in the context of user driven service innovation? Other pressures demand attention.

A range of new complex so-called wicked problems have emerged, including obesity that cuts across health and social issues or moving towards carbon neutrality that require difficult economic
shifts, new innovations and behaviour change. Seemingly intractable, they are made up of inter-related dilemmas and interweave political, economic and social questions. Wicked problems cannot be tackled by traditional approaches, where problems are simply defined, analysed and solved in sequential steps. Traditional hierarchical, top-down thinking is less adept at solving them. There is no “correct” view of formulating the problem; stakeholders see problems and solutions differently, often with deeply held ideological views. Data is often uncertain, difficult to acquire or missing. Connected to other problems, every solution reveals new problematic aspects that need adjusting. The problem is rarely solved. Solutions are merely better or worse. The response requires adaptability, agility and responsiveness.

There is an additional trend - the ‘cost disease’ and inexorable growth in demand for public services. Public expectations for more services and quality have risen over the last 60 years, as has the scope of services. Demands for health, social welfare, education or leisure services are nearly limitless with new needs evolving as with demands to help business entrepreneurialism or place making.

The ‘cost disease’ is the tendency for the cost of personal services to rise cumulatively faster than inflation. Thus, interest in social innovations is rising. IT improvements can increase productivity and justify salary increases in some sectors, but less in personalized services, largely the public sector domain. If a teacher increases productivity with larger classes, we consider this a loss of service.

Yet, skill levels and salary expectations are the same as those working in equivalent private sectors jobs where productivity increases are easier to achieve. This upward cost pressure is the cost disease from higher salary demands. A consequence is lower investment. So the public domain must be open to innovative ways of operating, imaginative in re-inventing services and smarter to make resources work harder especially with the financial crisis. If the public sector is making itself more effective, there will be less external pressure to make people redundant.

Taipei and its bureaucracy

Our focus is on Taipei’s public administration, yet the comments are relevant to Taipei’s large corporations. Public bureaucracies developed to solve the problems of their time and reflect the culture of their age. At their best, they sought systematic procedures to bring fairness to decision making. Yet, as they evolved, weaknesses appeared. The new philosophy proposed for Taipei’s bureaucracy needs to combine the best of the 20th century bureaucracy and evolving lessons about what makes good organizations work. These are challenges many cities around the world are already successfully addressing and consequently are more effective.

The bigger aim is to shift the negative perceptions of Taipei’s public bureaucracy and those working in them, where many people, as they revealed, are not expressing their full talents. The inflexible public administration laws in Taiwan and Taipei require people to make an extra effort to work around the constraints and often waste energy. This is inefficient.

People are an organization’s greatest asset. When they feel engaged in shaping the organization, they work more effectively, become more committed and are more innovative. Every individual has a vast storehouse of “discretionary” effort they either give or withhold on a daily basis. Discretionary effort is the difference between how well people actually perform and how they are capable of performing. It lies in the power of
employees. Our studies show people withhold around 30% to 50% of their efforts when they do not feel aligned to the organizational culture. This could be directed to performing more strongly, having ideas, solving problems, making the work environment better or helping others out. Discretionary effort is an unrealised resource that makes organizations more or less successful. Taipei needs this discretionary effort. Most studies say tapping this resource involves leadership rather than management. Systems are managed; people are led. What is required boils down to few things:

- Greater autonomy and control over the job and in achieving goals. Being subjected to outcomes and targets imposed from far away is the main problem.

- Enabling people to escape departmental constraints to solve problems, which require working across the organization without needing to escalate around the hierarchy.

- Respecting, valuing and rewarding under-acknowledged capacities, such as the ability to build relationships or networks internally and externally.

- Encouraging a culture of critical thinking so the organization becomes more of a ‘learning system’.

Organizational creativity plays a central role in allowing Taipei to flourish; increasingly it is seen as a growth engine to foster wealth creation. The ‘creative bureaucracy’ idea is not a plan, but a way of operating to help create better plans and better future ways of operating. It is an adaptive, responsive and collaborative organisational form that in principle can harness the initiative and full intelligences of its workers and respond to changing demands they seek to serve.

The central question for Taipei is whether the embedded Taiwanese culture creates the system and organizational form or does it depend on the character and attributes of individuals independent of that culture and system. A bureaucracy is not merely a structured organigramme with functional relationships and roles. It is a group of people with lives, emotions, aspirations, energy, passion and values. Those that work in Taipei government often have strong values, great intentions and good ideas. Yet, good intent can evaporate as the dynamic of the organizational ‘system’ unfolds. The need for effective organization, administration and management is not questioned, but what ethos and culture is encouraged by is organizational priorities and ways of thinking.

We recognize that organizations always reflect the character and frailty of human diversity. These include: the tendency to be tribal, the danger of groupthink and the use of hierarchy to exert power. There will be mavericks, rule benders and rule junkies. Yet, how can mavericks or creatives slot into organizations that traditionally see the benefits of caution?

In changing, Taipei is hampered by strong public administration or national laws and traditions which limit the scope to act. These laws, created in a different era, reflect their time and context. It forces rigidity upon the Taipei city government. This emerged as problematic in our surveys, for instance relating to procedures, employment flexibility and promotion, where seniority is key. This can hamper developing the talent pool by creating a glass ceiling for some who in other circumstances would be promoted, especially when new communication skills as in social media are needed more common in younger people, whereas the administrative law tends to favour those with legal or economic backgrounds.
Taipei city government needs to be innovation-oriented to survive, but also has to operate internally in relatively traditional ways. Clearly, improvements are possible within existing legal constraints. For instance, setting up task forces outside the existing structure, acting flexibly to create opportunities through partnerships or solve problems. Here, individuals can have greater responsibilities than in the formal administration. Mechanisms can provide more job mobility or create broader experiences, including internships in the private sector so public officials more deeply understand the surrounding world.

Taipei city should see its operating model as a lifelong learning organization. Here, Taipei city, its client groups and others would operate in more mutually interdependent ways, progressively co-learning and co-creating as each helps develop the other. Thus, staff and managers link more closely to the outside world and can fine tune their way of working and be more in touch. Ordinary people can make the extraordinary happen if given the chance. Any organization of substantial size needs not just one leader but many.

There is a vast body of literature on making organizations more competent, innovative and entrepreneurial; how to develop joint ‘visions’; the merits of different regulation and incentives regimes; the relationship between bureaucracy, power, politics, interests and effectiveness; and on the balance between certainty, predictability, standardisation, codes, fairness and their opposites. A plethora of new management techniques have been adopted to respond to and overcome perceived weaknesses and to harness the imagination and energy of staff, such as: ‘organizations as learning systems’, ‘excellence theories’, ‘motivation theory’, ‘cultural intelligence’, ‘strategic management’, ‘continuous improvement’ and a focus on ‘core competences’ to name a few.

Creative examples of bureaucracy
The examples and links below provide Taipei with the resources to keep abreast of bureaucratic creativity and to actively involve itself in the networks.

Ghent in Belgium punches above its weight. It has created new ways of horizontal working, strategic management and connecting with citizens. It has evolved its public framework and modus operandi on a trajectory from vertical to more horizontal working and to more task-oriented delivery systems. It is establishing an organizational ethos open to non-standard solutions, encourages self-regulation and is willing to re-assess processes. Ghent’s guiding mission is to be a pioneer in being creatively ‘an open, solidary and sustainable city’. This concerns not only the city
Amsterdam has a one stop shop to help foreigners settle. Taipei needs something similar.

Administration but also a wider ‘creative eco-system’. The connections between three main city organizations - the Council, the University and the Port - have been crucial. Ghent’s international connections strategy is one vital element. The aim is to be in networks of the best of the best, where they take responsible roles to accelerate learning.

Calgary in Canada has revised its rules system, focusing on the principles and intentions behind rules to create more flexible implementation. The Community Standards programme is an example. Working with the various communities and a blank sheet, they reached a consensus on acceptable/desirable activities in the community and what problematic issues need regulating or prohibiting. The outcome, a Community Standards by-law, is a baseline of minimum acceptable standards for Calgary based on citizens’ expectations. By taking ownership of their neighbourhood, the community participates in maintaining compliance. The local authority assists with resources. By moving to a flexible self-regulation model (rather than precise law or regulation), their experience shows a 90 – 95% success rate in resolving issues compared to 30% before.

Forum Virium in Helsinki (FVH) is part of the global open data movement, whose aim is to make public data more accessible and useful. FVH co-creates policies and solutions for the city and develops new types of digital services in collaborations between business, the public sector and citizens in areas such as healthcare and wellbeing, traffic and geographic information, learning and education. Its ‘R&D Flexible Services’ programme focuses on ubiquitous access, enabling new ways to use services and with users to design new user centric services. There is a further economic development aim, namely to incubate an ecosystem by bringing together Finnish and international companies, research organizations, public agencies and user communities. So far, 25 companies and 11 research parties have participated with the objective to create technological innovations, new user experiences, service concepts and new business models.

‘Gov. 2.0’ (see www.gov2summit.com/), a good source for US examples, shows how civic life can be reshaped through technology. Examples promote an alternative model of active citizenship, whereby citizens...
Civil servants can be creative too.

They become problem solvers, and the role of “public service” is reconsidered to imagine creative solutions to old, intractable problems. Active citizenship goes beyond voting and campaigning, but builds things or creates solutions. In this context, civic-minded technology buffs become key players in rethinking democracy and service delivery.

‘Civil Servant 2.0’ is a Dutch platform for civil servants and civilians to discuss the effects Web 2.0 has on government and the public sector and to support initiatives and experiments to improve the work of the Dutch government. Run voluntarily has over 2400 members.

On a broader, less technological basis, the British government organization NESTA (National Endowment for Science Technology and the Arts) has set up a ‘Public Services Lab’ to explore innovations in public service delivery. One project is called ‘Creative Councils’, where an astonishing number of councils applied showing how topical the issue has become. Of 120 who applied, 17 won awards to take projects forward:


An excellent knowledge base is the ‘innovations in public administration’ portal of the International Institute of Administrative Sciences:


**Lessons learnt**

Collectively, these examples show different ways of dealing with a vast array of issues city government is concerned with, from getting youngsters more engaged as citizens to rethinking health programmes, developing renewable energy, creating new social enterprises and inventing new financial models of social care, to encouraging self-build schemes and renewing neighbourhoods, and much more. Out of this some operational principles, patterns and lessons have emerged:

- **Sharing, co-creation, openness and empowerment.** A shift to empower citizens or users well beyond IT and initiatives, like open source. Yet, the far more interactive Web 3.0 will help deepen and reinvent democratic processes and the relationship of individuals to organizations.
Opportunities to showcase new ideas are vital to foster innovations.

- **Hierarchies to networks.** Traditional organizational thinking looked at boundaries, levels, precise functions and set responsibilities through which efficiency or product and policy innovation was to occur. It appeared neat and clear. Now, work is more fluid with new platforms for collaboration between citizens, corporations and public institutions developing, which help rethink the design and delivery of services as a network of relationships.

- **Discipline divisions breaking down.** Silo thinking and working increasingly shows its weakness. It lacks knowledge from interconnections. Specialist knowledge is acknowledged, but working across boundaries creates new or joint insights. Within organizations, the developmental, marketing and communications roles are more significant than before. These capacities do not sit easily with public sector organizations.

- **Expert rule versus multiple perspectives.** The acknowledged canon in many disciplines is being questioned as multiple perspectives emerge. Issues of trust emerge as the role of experts is being reconsidered.

- **Creativity as a resource.** Being imaginative and inventive is seen as an important asset. This requires organizations to allow individuals to be curious by fostering a culture of debate. Fluidity, suppleness, adaptability and responsiveness are the organizational watchwords.

- **The rise of the new generalist.** Jobs that never existed before are being invented, including crucially the ‘new generalist’. Generic softer skills will become more important including: grasping the essential arguments of specialist subjects, yet be able to rove across disciplines; thinking conceptually; learning the languages of different sectors; making connections and synergies to develop new insights or solutions; the capacity to build relationships and to broker; communicating; working in teams; delegating and giving up power for increased influence. This is not the stereotypical amateur who knows little about many subjects.
Special occasions like the Taipei Flora Expo allow experiments like the microfibers used for the sound system.

- **Energy and Passion.** Creating an environment where commitment to the organization lies beyond a contractual relationship and where deeper emotional bonds can be established both to the work itself and the organization. People feel they are able ‘to be our true selves’ and to have a ‘creative presence’ so working gives the sense of ‘pregnant possibilities’ and where they can develop ‘an intensity that feels and appears effortless’. Energy and passion come into alignment.

- **Strategically principled, tactically flexible.** The strongest organisations operate with strong publicly acknowledged principles. These act as a compass, guide and direction. They are not prescriptive in the detail. Mostly avoid rules, regulations and laws and foster self-regulation. Vision shaping rules not rules shaping vision. Innovation is often thwarted by institutional short-sightedness. Rules are rarely designed with a wider urban outcome in mind, such as creating a great neighbourhood or urban vitality. Instead, they are concerned with particular aspects – safety, road guidelines or traffic flow. The rules also try to be uniform across boundaries to demand standardised code frameworks. To achieve complex urban outcomes means rethinking guidelines and rules. Consider the rich concept of a ‘networked’ or ‘vibrant’ city. This is a place of hubs and nodes with centres of urbanity criss-crossing the city. A place where public transport is privileged over the private and people over cars, it is accessible and walkable; building a sense of place is a priority and creating distinctiveness is a common striving; a place of good streets and interesting public spaces; it is sustaining and sustainable, and thus inspires insiders and outsiders. Rules made for specific elements cannot achieve this on their own. The vision and its principled intent should determine the nature and application of rules.

- **Optimizing not maximizing.** Optimizing and maximizing an urban situation are different. Complex systems do the former. Maximising individual elements, like traffic flow, environmental protection or building densities in siloed organizations may not address an overarching problem and may indeed make it worse. The challenge is to optimize the balance between different aspects. A simple analogy is the body: if you maximize the function of every part, such as the lungs, heart, liver and kidneys, you collapse and die. Bodies try to optimize. With a kidney problem, your lungs adapt, your heartbeat might rise, whilst your liver functions slow. Elements communicate with each other adaptively to optimise the situation. Silo organizations privilege the individual discipline in isolation and can encourage a celebration of individual targets, and thus encourage linear maximisation.

- **Horizontal not vertical, devolved and less centralized.** Public institutions remain largely vertically integrated. You look upwards for instructions. To solve complex problems with multiple causes, several fronts need addressing simultaneously in an orchestrated way. You cannot effectively agglomerate responsibility in one place. Local authorities, for instance, have little traction over what hospitals or universities do in tackling obesity. Horizontal networked approaches which allow solutions to emerge with user communities are needed. This requires a decentralizing drive. With centralization, this remains very difficult, if not impossible, to achieve.
Interdisciplinary not multidisciplinary working. Projects should be run on interdisciplinary or trans-disciplinary lines, where skills intermesh, joint solutions emerge and perspectives change through working together. Multidisciplinary approaches cannot achieve this. Experts share information and knowledge, but usually feed in opinions without changing views. In interdisciplinary working, aims and intent – say making a great place or street – are central and continually in focus. Here, various experts jointly agree that the characteristics of such places with expert disciplines help that overall goal.

Aligning professional mindsets. We have more technical expertise to make neighbourhoods or buildings, but those insights do not create good places. Planners project, surveyors cost, engineers calculate and architects visualize. Professions have ways of achieving insight, some organizing attributes and dispositions – a mindset. No profession can claim, as many do, to understand the overarching complexity of places. We need to shift to ‘making places’ as distinct from ‘doing projects’ - the complex art of seeing, grasping and acting upon how the physical, social, economic, emotional, psychological and cultural dynamics work. Professional mindsets need aligning to understand the essence and languages of other disciplines.

Creative connector organizations. Successful places have creative connector organizations or individuals who bring ideas and interests together and stand above day-to-day issues to avoid getting involved in interest group politics. They take an eagle-eye view and see lines of possible alignment. They look for shared agendas, at times becoming the project champion for issues that talent organizations see as important but not their main reason for being. In most silo based organizations, many issues slip through under-acknowledged, yet they may be the most important task.

Reframing. ‘Reframing’ looks at something afresh to unleash potential. There is nothing radical in this, except that it is rarely done. The results can be powerful. By turning strength into weakness, the famous Emscher Park project in Germany’s industrial Ruhr area used its industrial degradation to its advantage. A new environmental protection sector transformed its degraded landscape and revitalised the economy. Taking a women’s perspective has highlighted facilities that traditional planning tends to forget: enhanced spaces for social interaction; greater emphasis on play areas; better attention to lighting and safety issues and rethinking the interiors of apartments with greater attention to kitchens as the central place in households.

The aim for Taipei is for the new bureaucracy to foster civic creativity as its ethos and to persuade citizen partners and others that problems and opportunities are better addressed in this way. Civic creativity is imaginative problem-solving applied to public good objectives. It involves public sector institutions being more entrepreneurial and responsive to its various audiences within accountability principles and the private sector being more aware of its responsibilities to the collective whole. Centralization does not encourage creative bureaucracies. Decentralization and more autonomy remain key drivers to generate innovation and are essential to build creativity into the system to harness more potential.
The global trends noted have changed how all disciplines linked to making cities work should think and operate. To simplify let us take the main issues, city makers are concerned with and contrast the predominant thinking with the newer thinking. This does not mean the old is unnecessary, but rather that issues should be conceived, planned, organized and implemented within the framework of the new. This is presented as a self-assessment exercise for the reader. After each section evaluates Taipei on a scale of 1 to 10, whereby 1 is very bad and 10 is exceptionally good.

Overview issues

(old) The overarching concept is urban planning and urban development, with the city seen more like a working machine and a set of projects
City making, place making and urbanism are the key concepts, and the city is seen as an integrated organism, where the city as a whole is the project

(new) Thinking within strict discipline boundaries and operating in linear ways
Using holistic, comprehensive and integrated approaches
Hardware thinking predominantly shapes the city
Thinking of the hardware and software simultaneously is key
The triple bottom considers environmental, economic and social issues as the best practice in sustainability
Culture is the fourth pillar of sustainability, as it drives a city’s differentiation and identity
Culture is a cost and an optional add-on that happens after the main urban elements are in place
Culture is an asset, it drives distinctive development and moves centre-stage
Best practice benchmarking is the apex of strategic thinking

Best practice benchmarking is taken as a positive given, but essentially involves being a follower not a leader. Redefining the playing field is considered to remain at the cutting edge.

Getting baseline facilities, such as roads, sewage or social services, right provides the platform for competitiveness

Baseline facilities are taken as a given. Competitiveness moves to a new level, such as the capacity to be innovative or to create an inspiring milieu.

Making the city attractive is key

Attractiveness is seen as too narrow, and liveability, quality of life and vibrancy issues move centre-stage.

The quantity and the growth in numbers is central

He focus is on the quality of growth.

Attracting companies and job numbers is key

Attracting specific types of people related to the city’s vision is more relevant.

Ever increasing size, for example the increasing size of Taipei, is everything

Achieving appropriate size or critical mass to achieve goals is key, indeed when necessary containing growth.

Behaviour is regulated to achieve aims

People are encouraged to take self-responsibility for the environment and health.

Comment: According to our research, Taipei remains somewhat old-fashioned in its approach to city making, management, organization and the assessment of possible resources. Departmental thinking is strong and the understanding that culture can help drive progress is not sufficiently widespread. Yet, at the same time an increasing number of individuals in the city administration understand the ‘new thinking’ very well and are trying to get the system to change. Within the private sector too, with the generational change in many family-owned companies, the mood is shifting with a recognition that Taipei must adapt to the new conditions. Reader evaluation between 1 and 10.
Management and organization

Efficiency is focused on inputs/outputs, resulting costs and profit management
Effectiveness is focused on outcomes and results by allocating resources to achieve goals

Subject specialists dominate
Cross-disciplinary thinkers are given higher status

Programmes and initiatives seek to achieve simple goals
The aim is to achieve complex objectives where a solution can solve a number of goals simultaneously, for instance wicked problems like obesity

Silo structures and departmentalism dominate
New integrated models of decision-making and trans-disciplinary team working emerge. Partnership and collaboration provides the platform for effectiveness

Civic participation and consultation in city making seen as a cost that takes time
Citizen empowerment seen as building long-term social resilience and effectiveness as well as generates new insights

Comment: There are many good ideas and initiatives to rethink public management and joined up working in Taipei. A number of leading officials realize that their effectiveness can dramatically increase in this way. The problem remains putting ideas into practice. There is a demand for more inclusive problem-solving mechanisms. One way forward is to set up problem-related empowered task forces with a clear structure of rights and responsibilities. Organizationally, arms-length from the public administration they will create a habit of working differently. Again, the private sector is beginning to shift in this direction, with ideas such as open innovation becoming more popular.

Reader evaluation of Taipei between 1 and 10.

Planning and design

Land uses and functions are separated. Urban components like housing or recreation are assessed in isolation
Planning communities, integrated place making, neighbourhoods and overall liveability becomes the central concern. Mixing uses like living, working, leisure and shopping are seen as the primary issue

Real estate development drives city making
Developers given freedom to operate within a set of big picture - public interest principles

Quality and aesthetics given smaller consideration
The sensory perspective becomes a central consideration for urban design and planning

Comment: The need for comprehensive urban design and place making is understood in Taipei in several quarters. Most planning programmes need to have more cross-disciplinary input at the outset. The tendency remains to bring in the softer skills and perspectives as an afterthought, rather than at the beginning, where initiatives are conceived and initially planned.

Reader evaluation of Taipei between 1 and 10.

Culture

The individual art forms and their intrinsic value have an overarching importance and in essence define culture
Culture has broader scope and relevance. Impacts include the significance of urban culture. The instrumental value and wider spin-offs from arts are seen as having merit and value

Arts and defined as high-art like opera largely focused on elites
High-art and everyday culture both have merit, as do having a wide range of audiences

Arts seen as a process of enlightenment
The best cultural policies combine a focus on enlightenment, empowerment, entertainment, employability and creating economic impact
The aims of artistic and cultural producers is the most important
The desires of audiences are equally important

The arts are largely subsidy driven
Multiple sources of income are possible and desirable

The commercial entertainments sector has little value
This sector may also be inspirational. What counts in all cultural activities is quality that may come from commercial or non-commercial domains

The creative industries are not yet taken seriously
This sector partly drives the new economy, which is a significant contributor to a city’s wealth, and as a consequence is well supported

The arts are essentially internalized within the institution
Arts and cultural activities also encourage outside performance and outreach programmes

The city as a producer of arts and cultural activities
The city acts as an enabler and less a controller of culture activities

Comment: There has been an important shift in the city and national government, where culture now has ministerial status. Both appreciate the wide-ranging roles that culture can play in developing Taipei. Specific issues remain as everywhere, such as whether sufficiently diverse content is expressed. In the future, links between non-commercial artistic activities and the creative industries will need to be stronger. This also means that budgets in other fields like economic development, planning or social affairs need to be more integrated with culture. Reader evaluation of Taipei between 1 and 10.
Transport and mobility

The movement system is seen as a transport and traffic concept
Mobility, accessibility, connectivity and networking defines how we see the system

Separate thinking about the physical and virtual
Seamless connectivity becomes the key concept, blending physical and virtual connections

The needs of the car and building roads is predominant
Public transport becomes the primary spine, building streets to encourage pedestrians and walkability is key

Efficient cities need seamless connectivity.

Disconnected travel options prevail within a fixed and rigid movement system
An integrated mobility hierarchy with levels and choices is created. It is scalable and flexible with the capacity to grow incrementally

Comment: Basic economics is getting more people to use public transport rather than eco-awareness, yet this trajectory is still positive. Whilst Taipei is famous for its subway system, the question remains whether the more fine-grained connections work, such as integrated public transport links from home to station and vice versa. Equally, while there are 500km of bicycle paths, these are seen more as recreational rather than transport to work. Hong Kong, Singapore and Tokyo have shown imagination in dealing with these issues. Reader evaluation of Taipei between 1 and 10.
Resources

Inputs and outputs are disconnected, leading to contamination, pollution and waste. It is inefficient and creates a problem elsewhere.

Circular, resource-flow thinking analyses issues in their full lifecycle and from cradle to cradle.

Waste exists — it is out of sight and out of mind.

Waste is a resource and an opportunity.

The environment is free, good and does not reflect market costs.

The true environmental cost is calculated in market costs.

Beyond simply targeting resource efficiency.

Aim to achieve eco-effectiveness.

The energy crisis is a problem.

The crisis opens the way for the 4th clean industrial revolution providing the most promising business opportunities.

Comment: Awareness of the environmental agenda has increased dramatically in Taipei, and the city is very good at issues like recycling where it is a leader in the region. Yet, our research suggests that much more can be achieved, especially in areas like water use or greater encouragement of solar energy. It is ironic that Taiwan makes and exports solar panels, but they are less visible. Taipei should show its green intent in how the physical environment is put together. Freiburg, perhaps the green city of Europe, is a good model of creating a new aesthetic so you know ‘this city wants to be green’. Malmo’s western harbour development is another good example. The ability for a city to make its higher ethical purposes visible is one of the challenges for the creative city. Reader evaluation of Taipei between 1 and 10.
An attempt to be artistic with infrastructure, are there other options too?

**Infrastructure**

Infrastructures are provided through centralized systems
Implement more decentralized systems to increase resilience and flexibility

Defined as an engineering driven output issue
**Provision embeds eco-arguments in planning and developments**

Seen as purely functional and not connected to urban design
Part of the city making panoply and aesthetic considerations come in as to how infrastructures are presented

**Comment:** There remains a strong emphasis on functionalism in Taipei, and there should be a more sophisticated discussion about embedding eco-arguments and new aesthetics in infrastructure initiatives from electricity pylons to bridges, roads and interchanges. There is more to this than simply painting pylons. Globally, the bar on what infrastructure looks and feels like has been dramatically raised. Reader evaluation of Taipei between 1 and 10.

**Conclusion:** The newer thinking is the baseline from which cities should operate.
Steps in becoming a more creative city

The main points below show a sequence of steps in raising awareness and becoming a more creative city. Taipei should assess its situation across all public sector departments, private interests (small and large) and the community sector:

**Awareness of need, a critical situation or crisis.**
Is there recognition across the board that ‘the talent crisis’ and the ‘creativity imperative’ should be a dramatic catalyst to honestly assess how well Taipei is doing and what its future prospects are? Do the political, university, economic, social and cultural forces fully understand that the current situation in Taipei is problematic and potentially dangerous for the city if not addressed, yet that there is equally potential? Is the issue addressed together and across disciplines? Do they grasp the connection between the talent retention problem and creativity agenda? Is the power of the creative industries and design understood?

Concern with issues of creativity and talent retention and attraction is growing in Taipei. Is it the highest priority of any department? Is there a project champion to promote these issues? Has there been a systematic assessment and analysis of where current and future talent gaps lie? Have the causes been evaluated? Are the causes more determined by the external global operating environment or with factors that can be internally addressed? **How well is Taipei doing?**

**Appreciating creativity can add value to city development**
To move creative approaches up the agenda, it is important to collect Taipei-related problems or opportunities across many fields, from physical interventions to soft initiatives, where imaginative approaches have helped and added value. Research shows that the most effective shifts in mindset and determination occur when people from a city, in joint
mixed teams, including crucially sceptics and supporters, visit projects successfully implemented elsewhere.

URS in its sphere has already developed a number of imaginative programmes, such as the ‘urban acupuncture’, local empowerment initiatives or the creative clusters proposals. There are equally other large numbers of opportunities for innovation in urban development that have and can come from within other departments like health, transport or sustainability. To build momentum, it is important to show how they are part of the way forward. Has Taipei gathered project examples?

**Persuade stakeholders of creativity by explanation, evidence and examples**

There will be pressure to provide solid evidence of the effectiveness and catalytic impact of creative programmes, the role of the creative industries or talent. Some of this is easy to do. It will be difficult in the short term to show deeper impact of URS type programmes. It is important, therefore, to promote other already established creative solutions in Taipei, such as the 7-Eleven one-stop shop or garbage collection procedures with their multiple impacts. The link between these and URS or other public sector projects or those fostered in the World Design Capital process need to be shown. At the right time, when the projects are strong enough they should be promoted, evaluated and discussed in order to encourage replication. Has Taipei undertaken these tasks?

Get involved in a number of imaginative programmes, such as the ‘urban acupuncture’, local empowerment initiatives or the creative clusters proposals. There are equally other large numbers of opportunities for innovation in urban development that can come from within other departments like health, transport or sustainability. To build momentum, it is important to show how they are part of the way forward.

Has Taipei gathered project examples?

**Undertake an asset and obstacle audit of Taipei**

The audit needs to look at creativity across the spectrum. First, in relation to the private sector, it should assess the creativity of new economy activities, like the green sector or creative industries and the creativity potential of traditional industries. A second assessment area should be social entrepreneurship – often a means of empowering people in local communities to take responsibility and to develop entrepreneurship and solve social problems at the same time. The third is exploring the creativity of public sector organizations, in both delivering services and enabling their communities to flourish. Fourth, it should assess levels of creativity in working across sectors and inter-organizational networking. This seeks to explore the extent to which value added is created through inventive partnering and networking. The fifth focus is boundary-busting creativity, such as between science and art. This collaborative activity has generated considerable momentum and become a powerful force for change and innovation in developing new products, processes and services. A sixth area of exploration is how the conditions for creativity are created. Has teaching at primary, secondary and the tertiary level been assessed in terms of creative learning approaches? Similar questions apply to business schools, the bureaucracy itself and the design or arts community. A seventh element is an audit of obstacles to creativity. Highlighting obstacles, which themselves become targets for creative action, are equally as important as highlighting best practices. The final area of the audit would be to look at how the physical context needs to develop to encourage creatives’ stay in the region or be attracted to it. Has this audit been undertaken?
The objective is to project Taipei as a versatile, ambitious and imaginative Asian hub so as to retain and attract its skilled, aspirational and talented people.

The Creativity Platform
The primary recommendation for Taipei is to set up a ‘Creativity Platform’ which is a public private and third sector growth partnership. The project needs to be seen as of relevance to all sectors and all parts of the region, including New Taipei. This mixed task force should be made up of cross disciplinary experts from the economic, educational, physical planning, design, social, cultural and technological fields. Its membership should contain a wider board and an executive committee supervising the day-to-day work of staff that should be led by someone of stature and reputation.

Its aim is to establish and nurture an integrated and orchestrated set of actions in Taipei that show creative thinking; imaginative problem solving and the ability to generate inventive new opportunities. Its goal is to foster openness about creative approaches to city visioning, managing the city itself by a greater focus on partnership and in developing Taipei’s physical infrastructure and attractiveness. The objective is to project Taipei as a versatile, ambitious and imaginative Asian hub so as to retain and attract its skilled, aspirational and talented people.

The Creativity Platform is an orchestration device. It needs a paced and purposeful timetabled project plan for the first three years to drive its process. Key ideas need to be chosen that can be catalytic, that communicate well and can be iconic in impact. Its programme should have a mix of easy, short-term low-cost projects and more difficult and expensive long-term ones. This makes it easier to create achievable staging posts...
along the way and to establish early winners that build confidence and momentum as well as generate the energy to do more difficult tasks.

A more thoroughgoing Creativity Assessment should be undertaken as described in the ‘Taipei asset and obstacle audit’ above. This will reveal gaps and potential as well as many good existing projects as the World Design Capital bidding process has uncovered. This will help clarify precise projects and targets. There needs to be a good mix of visible and less visible projects, such as establishing a model curriculum for schools or new methods of teaching at universities; supporting and celebrating projects that imaginatively deal with social issues; encouraging a start-up culture for smaller firms and creating a series of hotspots in the city. Repeating this creativity assessment on a biannual basis will help Taipei to monitor and evaluate its progress over time. One element is to measure Taipei’s ‘talent churn’ systematically, which is the inflow and outflow of talented people.

The Platform’s strategy of influence aims to give confidence, to raise aspirations and expectations and to unleash potential in the population, especially the young. Some of its activities will be high profile like a creativity summit, whereas others will be lower key.

Identifying catalytic projects is vital to help generate critical mass and visibility. Here, the role of URO can be important. Developing a series of creative hotspots as part of a creative quarter strategy can change perceptions of Taipei and the mood of the city and help provide a focal point.

To maximize Taipei’s potential, it will be necessary for the Platform to reassess Taipei’s regulations and incentives regime so that these are realigned to Taipei’s creative aims. This will help Taipei become known for its ‘civic creativity’
Turn the book upside down for Chinese version and more images.