



How to foster creative and dynamic societies?

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In the past few decades, Chinese Taipei's industries were well-known worldwide for their manufacturing capabilities. The Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) and Original Design Manufacturer (ODM) were the most common manufacturing modes. Under such a setting, innovation did not seem to play an important role. Lack of innovation has caused Chinese Taipei some troubles. Industry's research and development (R&D) capability was too shallow and lacking originality. This rendered Chinese Taipei's industry under rising pressure from a "razor-thin profit" situation, and caused the growth of Chinese Taipei's overall labor productivity and gross domestic product (GDP) per capita to stagnate.

We realize that in order to sustain competitiveness and growth, industries and society have to innovate and evolve. That is, Chinese Taipei ought to move away from just being a 'quick follower', and move to being an 'initiator' or 'new value creator'.

Innovation is vital to prosperity on a variety of contours of global society. However, we need also to be innovative in the area of innovation itself. The concept of open innovation deserves our special attention. The essence of the open innovation system is that many innovations intrinsically require collective efforts, involving different stakeholders to act cooperatively, to generate ideas and knowledge, and collectively move to a greater common goal.

On the basis of industrial networks, successful innovations often entail intensive interfaces between multiple actors with different knowledge and skill bases. By implication, not only does innovation often result from the collective efforts of inter-related firms, but it also demonstrates that the value chain does not need to be completely internalized within individual firms. Hence, the interface and mechanism to remove the boundaries among different actors should be considered.

A creative and dynamic social environment is also crucial for an open innovation system. A more creative and dynamic society shall contain at least such elements as openness, diverseness, smart learning, mutual trust, more communications and more actions. However, a solid science and technology foundation is also important.

Chinese Taipei is known for its enthusiastic, energetic, hard-working, diversified and friendly society, as well as abundance of technological and managerial talents. The outcome is due to the fact that Chinese Taipei's society takes investment in education seriously. We wish our children to be nurtured in an adventurous, creative, aesthetic and culturally-rich environment. We shall continue to stress quality education and domestic industrial capability to remain competitive.

In order to prepare for society to take a detour from the current manufacturing-based economy, we are also allocating a great part of resources to develop the "soft economy", and try to become a creation- and service-intensive economy. In the long-term, we wish to build Chinese Taipei as a "global-village" that is full of passion, enjoyment and business opportunities.

In order to achieve that goal, we have set short term and long term targets. From 2005 to 2015, our target is to become the hub of a global resource network and a new value initiator in industrial technologies. From 2015 towards 2025, we would focus on becoming a soft economy innovator and life style pioneer.

Innovation somehow means to try, to learn, to grow and to evolve. Of course, there are always risks involved in trying out new ways and things, but the important spirit is not to be afraid of failure. It's like making good wine. Only consistency and persistency in pursuing excellence will guarantee the best outcome.