

Cultivating the Essence of an Innovation and Entrepreneurship Rainforest Ecosystem

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The Taiwanese government's "Innovation and Entrepreneurship Rainforest Ecosystem" initiative plans to invest hundreds of billions in funding, aiming to create 20,000 jobs within five years, achieve 150 billion NTD in annual investment, and transform Taiwan into a net exporter of innovative solutions within a decade. Currently, Taiwan's innovation and entrepreneurship promotion strategy primarily follows a "plantation" approach, employing top-down methodologies that concentrate resources in specific industries (such as semiconductors and digital technology). This strategy fosters innovation through talent cultivation, international professional immigration, technological R&D funding, regulatory adaptation, and international cooperation. While this model offers advantages in efficiency and precise control, its concentrated resource allocation often lacks ecosystem diversity.

In contrast, the "rainforest ecosystem" does not presuppose the value of specific innovation directions but instead creates an open environment where talent from diverse backgrounds can overcome social barriers (such as geographic distance, trust deficits, and cultural differences) and engage in free exchange and collaboration. In such an environment, stakeholders gather through experimentation, iteration, and refinement, exploring a broader range of value combinations rather than merely establishing formal institutional cooperation agreements. As value relationships accumulate, cornerstone roles become filters for high-quality relationships and trusted relationship hubs, maintaining ecosystem trust and cooperation while promoting rainforest culture that enables rapid, widespread collaboration and joint experimentation among individuals.

Examining nations with outstanding innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystems (such as Singapore, South Korea, and Japan), their innovation policies thoroughly embody rainforest ecosystem principles, including: (1) fostering strategically significant industries without suppressing development in diverse fields; and (2) playing cornerstone roles in the ecosystem that facilitate substantive cooperation among diverse stakeholders across social barriers, forming a rainforest culture. Unlike traditional approaches that rely on committee or expert selection to screen technological innovation R&D projects with commercialization potential,

Singapore's Innovation Partner for impact, Japan's deeptech startup support program, and South Korea's Tech Incubator Program for startup require investment recommendations or corporate partners willing to co-experiment with the technology as prerequisites for applying to government-sponsored science and technology programs. This mechanism compels technology innovation teams to engage with investors or potential technology buyers before starting their ventures, continuously adjusting and iterating to align technological innovation more closely with market demands. Additionally, these countries build innovation platforms based on stakeholder networks accumulated through previous government programs, incorporating feedback mechanisms to attract more diverse participants. Through accumulated success stories, these platforms gradually evolve into technological innovation and entrepreneurship benchmarks embodying "rainforest culture."

In summary, the primary direction for innovation and entrepreneurship policy must clarify whether it aims to create an innovation and entrepreneurship rainforest or a plantation forest ecosystem. Current measures predominantly focus on the government-led "plantation" model. The successful experiences of South Korea's Tech Incubator Program for startup and Singapore's Innovation Partner for impact technology demonstrate that transitioning from a "plantation " to a "rainforest" model requires fostering strategically significant industries without suppressing development in diverse fields, while promoting substantive cross-domain collaboration among stakeholders with diverse backgrounds—key elements in building an innovation and entrepreneurship rainforest ecosystem.

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