

ESC Subcommittee on Making Singapore a Leading Global City

COMMITTEE CO-CHAIR BY:

MR. LUI TUCK YEW

ACTING MINISTER FOR
INFORMATION, COMMUNICATIONS
AND THE ARTS

MR. GAUTAM BANERJEE

EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN,
PRICEWATERHOUSE COOPERS LLP

SINGAPORE: THE GLOBAL CITY IN ASIA

1. The vision of “**Singapore: The Global City in Asia**” is for Singapore to be an endearing home and leading global city in the heart of Asia. As one of the world’s most liveable cities, Singapore will continue to be an endearing home to which we attach a deep sense of pride and commitment. Our home is also a leading global city that offers our people high value-adding jobs and opportunities to stretch their potential. In addition, Singapore’s cosmopolitan identity will be distinguished from other global cities by our multiculturalism and unique microcosm of Asian diversity.

2. Over the years, Singapore has also established a strong reputation for innovative policies and effective policy implementation, as evidenced by our high standards of living in areas such as healthcare and education, which we have achieved with great cost-effectiveness. As the Global City in Asia, we will be the thought leader in governance, policy making and implementation, with the intellectual capital for governments, businesses and academia to access information and knowledge on regional and global trends. With Asia’s rapid urbanisation, Singapore is also well-placed to serve as a pan-Asian model for economically-vibrant and sustainable high-density development in Asia.

3. Three strategies are proposed to fulfil the vision of “**Singapore: The Global City in Asia**”:

- a. Establishing Singapore as Asia’s most liveable city;
- b. Developing Singapore into New Asia’s hub for innovation and creative enterprise; and
- c. Making Singapore the best home for talent.

How these strategies achieve “The Global City in Asia” vision synergistically

4. People are rooted and drawn to a place where they have the best conditions and opportunities to live, work and grow. If we are to retain our core competitive advantage in retaining and attracting talent amidst intensifying competition from other cities, we must be the best home for talent – a vibrant global city that embraces a rich diversity of talent

and ideas. This will be achieved by offering the best career and developmental opportunities for Singaporeans and diverse talents, fostering a deep sense of inclusion, connection and commitment to Singapore, and building extensive talent networks between Singapore and the rest of the world.

5. Capitalising on Singapore's competitive edge in liveability and cultural diversity, Singapore's position as Asia's most liveable city will be critical in providing Singaporeans with high standards of living, while retaining and attracting talent for sustained economic and social progress. Singapore has the hardware and software to offer a leading quality of life; with sustainable city development leveraging our excellent infrastructure, and our emergence as a distinctive cultural and lifestyle capital, building on our multicultural diversity and cosmopolitan connections.

6. Besides improvements to city liveability, efforts to grow our human capital have to be complemented by the creation of high value-adding and productive jobs. Leading economies of the future will be innovation-intensive and ideas-driven. Through design and the commercial application of our rich cultural content, complementing our strengths in science and technology, Singapore could be New Asia's hub for design innovation and creative enterprise. By instilling design as a core competency in our workforce and enterprises, Singapore has the potential to spearhead intellectual property, innovative products and services that capture new consumer demand arising from Asia's urbanisation and growing affluence.

STRATEGY 1: ASIA'S MOST LIVEABLE CITY

7. Singapore should capitalise on its competitive edge in liveability and cultural diversity to secure its future as Asia's Most Liveable City. First, we have to become **an endearing home offering the best quality of life and vibrant lifestyles** in Asia to both citizens and global talents. Second, Singapore should position itself as **a leading cultural capital in Asia** to complement its economic dynamism.

Be an Endearing Home for All

8. The desired outcomes of an endearing home and vibrant destination are as follows:
- a. An **endearing home** that offers Asia's **best quality of life** and with which citizens and global talents forge **strong emotional ties**;
 - b. Asia's **lifestyle and leisure hub**, with a diverse range of quality sports, leisure, arts, entertainment, media, retail and food offerings, supported by a thriving ecosystem of lifestyle businesses and talent; and
 - c. Asia's leader **in thought and practice for sustainable urban development and place management**, with distinctive districts that are economically- and socially-vibrant.

9. The key recommendations to achieve the above are:
- a. **Make Singapore a Lifestyle Hub by enhancing and diversifying our lifestyle offerings.** We can enhance the quality of life in our city and its attractiveness as a great place to live and visit by diversifying our sports, leisure, arts, entertainment, media, retail, culinary and events offerings. As a lifestyle hub, Singapore could be the leading city in Asia for pinnacle international events in sports, culture and cuisine. This could be supported by infrastructure such as facilities for sporting events, sports academies, and a culinary institution to spearhead culinary innovation. The variety of lifestyle experiences could also be enhanced by developing Bras Basah-Bugis into a new concept retail and creative precinct of weekend markets, outdoor arts events and vibrant local community activity. In addition, we should support the creation of distinctive content with a unique fusion of arts, business and technology, and compelling story telling, that is founded on our multi-cultural heritage and our position at the crossroads of East and West. The events industry could also be supported by platforms to synergise brands and grow these events on an international scale.
 - b. **Develop economically- and socially-vibrant districts through place management.** Beyond upgrading the physical infrastructure of the key districts (Marina Bay, Singapore River, Orchard Road, Civic District/Bras Basah-Bugis) and historic areas in our city, we need to develop and manage the trades and activities of these places to create authentic and memorable experiences for our local residents and foreign visitors. This will be achieved through place management, which involves a coordinated approach by the people, public and private sectors to brand and market distinctive districts through events and activities, supported by appropriate legislation and incentives. These efforts will generate more economic activity and a stronger sense of identity among stakeholders, local and international communities. Although not yet widely applied, place management by cities around the world is gaining momentum. Investing in capability building for the fledgling place management industry will create new jobs, and potentially develop a new export industry for Singapore as cities around Asia mature and the demand for place management skills grows.
 - c. **Facilitate lifestyle, creative and arts businesses.** We should review policies, such as our tax regime, to enhance Singapore's competitiveness as a hub for the trading of art and collectibles, and boost the vibrancy of our arts, media and entertainment marketplace. We could look into providing affordable spaces for business clusters, such as Gillman Village, and appointing agency champions like JTC Corporation (JTC) to develop or manage the infrastructure needs of emerging arts and creative sectors.

d. **Develop thought and practice leadership in urban planning and solutions** by investing in cutting-edge sustainable development strategies, technologies and R&D projects in new growth precincts like Marina Bay, Jurong Lake District and Punggol. This will help Singapore maintain our thought leadership in urban planning and urban solutions. Developing these projects will further our professional expertise as we leverage Singapore's advantage in comprehensive process management and the integration of ideas across multiple disciplines.

Some new ideas that could be test-bedded include developing a balanced sustainable development framework to steer our growth; building dedicated cycling networks; using computational fluid dynamics modelling to find ways to channel wind flows to cool the city; introducing biodiversity in urban areas and introducing water-sensitive urban design solutions, such as bio-retention swales, to purify water before it enters reservoirs.

Singapore is also in a strong position to develop a new economic sector in urban planning and solutions. We are gaining international recognition as a very well-planned and highly liveable city, and are already exporting our consultancy service in urban planning and development to other cities. These projects are highly strategic as they could create follow-up investment opportunities for Singaporean companies and strengthen G-to-G engagement with other countries and cities.

Leading Cultural Capital in Asia

10. As a leading cultural capital in Asia, Singapore could be:

- a. The **cultural gateway between the East and the West** – gathering and distilling the best of Asia's cultures and ideas for our residents and international visitors, and bringing the best of the world's cultures to Asia;
- b. The **centre of cross-cultural artistic creation in Asia**, producing and showcasing content inspired by the diversity, depth and fusion of Asian and world cultures; and
- c. A **major marketplace for the visual arts, performing arts and collectibles** in Asia, complementing other established and emerging centres in a pan-Asian arts circuit.

11. To be a leading global city is to be part of an elite community of world cultural capitals. Singapore ranks highly in various business and liveability indices for our first-world business and city infrastructure and networks. While we have attained first-world standards in business and liveability, we are still lagging global city standards for culture³⁰. Our cultural sector falls behind that of global cities like London, Paris, New York and Tokyo in terms of scale, diversity and demand. On the other hand, there has been a major shift of focus in the global cultural

³⁰ In a recent Global Cities report, Singapore ranked seventh overall and within the top ten in terms of business activity and human capital, but it ranked 37th in cultural experience.

landscape towards Asia, as evidenced by the booming Asian contemporary art market and massive investments in cultural infrastructure by competing Asian³¹ cities. To be a player in the league of top global cities, we need to make significant investments in our cultural capital and landscape, specifically to:

- a. **Strengthen Singapore’s competitiveness as a hub for the arts** by enhancing our national collection, boosting content development and increasing the depth of professional expertise, including the development of reputable degree programmes in a range of disciplines in the arts, and by encouraging greater discourse and research in our heritage and traditional arts. Singapore could also be the global centre in Asia for cultural scholarship and content development, such as the curation of world-class exhibitions drawing on our multicultural heritage, and the heritage content and collections of leading institutions around the world. Through international collaborations of experts and scholars, Singapore could be an influential originator of distinctive cultural experiences with global appeal.
- b. **Propel growth in cultural philanthropy and sponsorship** by developing or expanding related incentives.
- c. **Develop the cultural tourism sector** by strengthening the promotion of Singapore as a gateway to experiencing the cultures of Asia, and developing more cultural products and services that appeal to target tourist segments.
- d. **Rejuvenate and position the Civic District as a premier arts and cultural destination.** With the opening of the National Art Gallery (NAG) at the former Supreme Court and City Hall buildings alongside Empress Place, the Esplanade and Fort Canning, the Singapore Civic District will be the major civic and cultural heart of the city, containing Singapore’s highest concentration of museums, theatres, historical sites and public spaces. We should build on the prominence of the NAG to enhance visitor experience in the precinct, strengthen linkages above- and below-ground between institutions in the precinct, enhance the vibrancy of public spaces with programming, and complete a Phase II development of mid-sized theatres at the Esplanade. The aim is to make the Civic District one of Asia’s premier cultural destinations – an iconic public commons that captures the imagination of Singaporeans and visitors, while reaping substantial benefits in nation-building and tourism.

³¹ Hong Kong will develop a US\$2.4 billion West Kowloon Cultural District Project with 15 performing spaces and a “Museum Plus”, while Seoul recently released in 2006, a “Vision 2015, Cultural City Seoul” Masterplan investing S\$11.9 billion over 10 years in culture. Further west, Abu Dhabi also recently announced a US\$27 billion mixed-use development project Saadiyat Island Cultural District which will feature the Louvre Abu Dhabi and the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi, amidst other cultural institutions.

STRATEGY 2: NEW ASIA'S HUB FOR DESIGN INNOVATION AND CREATIVE ENTERPRISE

12. Singapore's continued growth and prosperity will rest on our ability to create innovative and differentiated products and services that the world demands. To enhance our competitiveness, Singapore should strive to be a global innovation centre in Asia where consumer insights are gathered, analysed and applied to the creation of IP, products, services and killer applications that penetrate new and growing markets worldwide, taking advantage of Asia's rising affluence and urbanisation.

13. To become the hub for design innovation and creative enterprise, we need to develop an innovative workforce, attract the best creative talents and help existing enterprises diversify into new growth sectors (e.g., lifestyle, media and entertainment industries, health, urban and green solutions) while anchoring the best global enterprises in these industries to develop, test-bed, create and launch world-class niche products and services in Singapore. Capitalising on the rising affluence of Asian consumers and Asia's unique tastes, aesthetics and consumer needs, Singapore could be positioned as New Asia's hub for design innovation and creative enterprise by:

- a. Leveraging Singapore's Global-Asia position to become a trend-setting centre of product and service innovation in Asia. By synergising our access to multicultural content, understanding of Asian consumer tastes and needs, technology R & D and know-how, and capabilities in design, Singapore could be New Asia's hub for design innovation and creative enterprises; and
- b. Developing sophisticated design capabilities and cultivating an innovation mindset in our workforce as core enablers that complement and harness science and technology to innovate commercially-viable products and services that lead global consumer demand.

14. Key recommendations are to:

- a. **Develop design capabilities in our workforce** by accelerating the introduction of design thinking programmes and modules (from pre-tertiary to post-graduate level), at local educational institutions and in partnership with leading foreign design institutions, as well as targeted industrial attachments. The design capabilities of professionals in different sectors could also be enhanced through broad-based design literacy training.
- b. **Grow a critical mass of innovative and creative enterprises** by accelerating the adoption of design as a core innovation enabler across local enterprises by providing an integrated package of business incentives for investments in design, design-driven IP creation, experimentation and commercialisation.
- c. **Enhance physical infrastructure to increase industry collaboration and design innovation.** Collaborative spaces for design innovation by creative and other industries (e.g., interactive and digital media, consumer-centric and urban solutions) could be made

affordable to encourage ground-up entrepreneurship and experimentation by individual talents, promising start-ups, SMEs and innovative enterprises. This could be achieved by converting old buildings and industrial zones into low-cost incubators for creative enterprises (like the Beijing 798 Art Zone and 22@Barcelona³²) and by co-locating a diverse range of creative enterprises within existing or new creative clusters (e.g., at Bras Basah, Gillman Village or Mediapolis, like InnoCentre in Hong Kong, and Treehouse in New York).

d. **Facilitate new industry collaborations and forge strategic linkages between industry players through open innovation platforms and knowledge exchange among enterprises to harness Asian insights for new business opportunities.** This could be achieved by establishing design innovation platforms under an enhanced Design Connect Framework to make Singapore the living lab for at least 3-5 new industry clusters. New cluster developments harnessing Asian insights for design innovation could also be supported by the crowd-sourcing of new ideas, research, development and test-bedding of innovative solutions by enterprises.

e. **Establish an accreditation system to raise professional design standards and encourage pro-design practices, as well as a ‘Designed in Singapore’ mark for enterprises** to strengthen Singapore’s position as a leading and distinctive design capital in New Asia.

STRATEGY 3: THE BEST HOME FOR TALENT

15. The Best Home for Talent starts with Singapore being for Singaporeans. Our strategies to develop and engage talent must serve to stretch the potential of Singaporeans, and attract top quality people from around the world. While the largest Chinese and Indian cities gather deep pools of talent from their respective hinterlands, our advantage lies in our ability to attract diverse and quality people from Asia and around the world, who work alongside their Singaporean peers and add to our capabilities. To do this, Singapore will offer education and development opportunities in world-class institutions, a rich eco-system of career opportunities, and extensive personal and professional networks. These will help our talent stretch their potential and equip them to succeed in the new global economy.

16. At the same time, we will be an endearing home which fosters a deep sense of connection and commitment. Our talent will be passionate about Singapore and our shared future together, even as they seek opportunities and extend Singapore’s economic presence overseas. Wherever they may be, in Singapore or abroad, we need to engage our people, so Singapore remains the home and country they feel emotionally rooted to.

³² Beijing 798 Art Zone is a ground-up creative cluster that houses a thriving artist community, among 50-year old decommissioned military factory buildings of unique architectural style. It is often compared with New York’s Greenwich Village or SoHo. Other zoning for creative enterprises and startups include Spain’s 22@Barcelona which expects to house more than 2,000 companies and Seoul’s Digital Media City targets to house 1,000 media, IT and other creative companies by 2015.

17. Key strategic shifts to become a best home for talent are:

a. **Complementing firm-centric strategies with a talent-centric approach** – For an economy driven by knowledge and innovation, we need an environment that is centred on people and ideas. Our economic development strategy must be complemented by a talent agenda that equips talent to create and capitalise on opportunities.

b. **Towards greater diversity in our definition of talent** – We need to optimise the potential of our talent across diverse fields so that multiple peaks of excellence can emerge. This diversity will serve to generate new areas of innovation and growth, while contributing to Singapore’s vibrancy as a global city.

c. **Going beyond the ‘hard’ environmental factors to the ‘soft’ engagement factors** – A best home for talent must offer more than a comfortable environment that meets their material needs. We must engage talent on a deeper social and emotional level, so Singapore can be where talent feel connected, committed and rooted.

18. Key recommendations to equip talent to succeed in the new global economy are as follows:

a. **Enable a broader spectrum of talent to grow by attracting or developing at least 5 world-class institutions or programmes by 2020 to provide talent development pathways in a wider range of disciplines and to support developments in new areas.** For instance, Singapore could:

i) Become the premier arts education centre of Asia and raise the level of professionalism in the cultural sectors with tertiary and post-tertiary programmes in areas ranging from arts management, conservation, curation and research, to the performing arts, such as dance, theatre and music;

ii) Propel design-driven innovation by developing design thinking programmes and modules in our institutions (e.g., the Singapore University of Technology and Design); and

iii) Build peaks of excellence in new lifestyle areas, including sports, fashion, and niche areas such as culinary skills and sommelier training.

Our economic agencies could also support these new niche institutions through calibrated grants to make these opportunities accessible for a designated number of Singaporeans. More opportunities could also be provided by allowing students outside of the polytechnics to enrol in programmes offered by foreign universities brought in by the Singapore Institute of Technology (e.g., via a bridging course into their programmes).

b. **Support Singaporeans as they venture overseas to capture growth opportunities.** We could support and encourage Singaporeans to venture overseas for new growth opportunities by (i) providing support to Overseas Singapore schools, especially in key Asian cities, so they can better meet the educational needs of Overseas Singaporean children, and (ii) improving re-integration of these Overseas Singaporeans into the national education system upon their return.

c. **Develop talent to reach the apex of their careers by creating a talent eco-system of top jobs and professional networks.** Economic agencies should complement industry development plans with a talent-centric agenda that is focused on (i) bringing in key jobs, which will give our people the opportunities to develop to the apex of their careers, and (ii) attracting top global talent who contribute to the vibrancy of our talent eco-system.

Professional associations and marquee industry events could also be developed to facilitate efforts by talent to connect and network with like-minded talent, as well as to build linkages with key counterpart organisations in other cities within the constellation of global talent hubs.

d. **Complement our firm-centric strategies with a talent-centric approach** by according a 'personalised pass' quota to relevant agencies, which would be responsible for validating the entry of talent into Singapore based on criteria relevant to the particular industry/sector, and adopting a facilitative policy stance towards spouses of talent, who are often talent in their own right (e.g., in seeking employment, be it part-time, full-time or project work in Singapore).

e. **Accelerate the development of critical soft skills for the new economy through platforms for human capital leadership development,** which will:

i) Enable local talent to acquire strategic human resource capabilities (e.g., critical soft skills, leadership, talent management) and equip them with intercultural intelligence for success in Asia and the global business environment; and

ii) Make Singapore the focal point where top executives from around the world can develop corporate leadership, business thinking and networks to operate effectively in Asia.

f. **Leverage schools as a platform to build intercultural skills and foster integration from a young age.** Schools should continue to foster cross-cultural skills and a global perspective as part of the curriculum and school experience. Opportunities for interaction between local and international students in our education system could be strengthened through the efforts of the National Integration Working Group for Schools. For instance, students in national and foreign system schools could participate in more sustained student exchanges in areas of common interest and in joint community involvement projects.

g. **Build greater engagement and connection with our talent by:**

- i) Developing a comprehensive and targeted engagement programme for local talent. Besides efforts to attract global talent to Singapore, there should be a programme to engage talent in Singapore. This could take the form of regular townhall dialogues and symposia to engage local talent on their needs and aspirations, and strategic issues such as the future of the Singapore economy and how Singapore could be the best home for talent;
- ii) Seeding a community-based one-stop welcome centre to provide support and referral services (e.g., job search for spouses, navigation of the school system, community networks and support) for newcomers and returnees, so as to ease their (re)settlement into Singapore; and
- iii) Setting up a programme office to better organise and strengthen networks with our fans, friends and family outside Singapore.

CONCLUSION: TELL OUR STORY WELL

19. While the recommendations above are substantive proposals to improve Singapore's hardware and software as a Global City in Asia, efforts should also be made to **promote Singapore's dynamism as a leading global city through a targeted and coordinated marketing programme**. Singapore has focused largely on the 'making' of the city and less on the 'telling'. Consistent feedback from overseas business professionals and visitors has been that liveability in Singapore, in terms of culture and lifestyle, is much better in reality than general international perceptions. We could be more sophisticated and targeted in marketing our city to align international perceptions with reality. This would also help to attract talents and companies to relocate to Singapore. We also need to instil pride in our city among our citizens, who are Singapore's everyday ambassadors. The role of the media industry in this effort is crucial.