



**Opening Speech for
“Bangkok Creative City”**

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Distinguished guests

It is an honor to see such great support and interest in “Bangkok Creative City” seminar organized by TCDC which will be held for two days, commencing today. The seminar is aimed to create understanding and awareness of the essence of a city as it is the main driving force of the creative economy.

You may have been familiar with the term ‘creative economy’ as it is a critical strategy for economic development in Thailand. The Government included the ‘Creative Thailand’ project as a vital part of the action plan named ‘The Strength of Thailand’ on 31 August 2009 at the Government House. In addition, the Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board has prepared the creative economy development plan to be included in the eleventh national economic and social development plan. An investment approach which will support the new economy is also underway in order to change the direction of the Thai economy.

Therefore, the creative economy is accepted at a strategy level as an important tool to strengthen the foundation of the economy. However, for Thailand to get to the point where creative products and services are the nation’s main income as in Europe or the USA, there are several factors to consider and we need to develop these factors in all aspects to build intellectual and business infrastructures such as

- Upgrading qualitative change
- Developing IT infrastructure to support creative business and industry
- Instilling thinking and creative capabilities in terms of learning
- Providing public learning spaces



- Launching investment promotions and taxing measurements to support the creative industry

However, there is a vital factor which also acts as a success index for the development of the creative economy; a creative city.

A creative city is not about improving a landscape or developing a city only in terms of tourism, it is a concept of developing a city that fosters economic activities based on creativity in order to become an attraction and a center for thinkers and creative operators locally and internationally. These thinkers are the city's important asset which is mobile and in search for a suitable place to live and operate a creative business. Thus, if we are to develop the creative economy, we must also develop a creative city in terms of landscape, business network and other infrastructures that facilitate the living condition. We firmly believe that if we attract "intellectual asset", it means we attract investment, employment and higher competitiveness for the city and, ultimately, the country's economy.

In summary, components leading to a creative city are:

- Places that allow learning and are equipped with facilities that foster creativity and innovation suitable for creating products or operating businesses, situated in the city and in the global network
- Environment that attracts creative operators and thinkers from various sources to come looking for inspiration for their ideas and work as well as a place to live and operate a business
- Vision of the city and the country's leader who understands the process of city making that fosters creativity, business operation and residency, as well as promotes local culture as a source for inspiration and creativity

Therefore, an approach to develop a creative city should comprise of state policies and investment plans in various aspects such as investment in infrastructures, amendment of rules and regulations, and financial support to facilitate



business operation and residency for creative operators. In addition, various activities held at a city level and a national level which reflect the city's characteristics creatively are also essential.

The concept of making a creative city has been accepted in several countries around the world. There are attempts by those countries to push their own cities to be accepted internationally, including Berlin, Seoul, Milan, Paris, and even Shenzhen. There was once a time when people went to Shenzhen to buy copycat products. However, today, Shenzhen proudly declares itself as the city of design, the first of its kind in China, beating Beijing and Shanghai which are the great cultural cities of China.

During this 2-day seminar, TCDC has invited experts and important figures who play major roles in making a creative city to share their knowledge, vision and experience relating to city making. However, the process does not end at this seminar. Under TCDC's creative city, we have initiated several projects on the basis of faith in the Thai's creativity. Thus, for the next full year, TCDC will develop the creative city project with the following topics:

First topic: building a new set of knowledge relating to making a creative city

This is done through a creative city research conducted in three pilot provinces: Bangkok, Chiang Mai and Nakhon Ratchasima, as well as academic seminars such as Bangkok Creative City and Skills Mapping. This afternoon, we will see a map of Bangkok talent treasure in six well-known areas:

1. Sukhumvit – a hub of service businesses and residency that meet the demand of urban living; it is the service skills that attract foreigners to live in Bangkok

2. Jatujak – a flea market that supply elements of the creative industry in every way, from raw materials to distribution channels at both retail and wholesale prices

3. Thonglor - a street filled with creative businesses



4. **Siam square** - a birthplace of Thai fashion products
5. **Town in Town** - a hub of Bangkok's multimedia editing studio
6. **RCA** – an area filled with music businesses and stages for night musical performances

These six areas are only a part of the various talent and skills that Bangkok has to offer. TCDC will discover and highlight talent in different branches located in Bangkok to create business connection and employment in the future.

Second topic: building a creative community

TCDC will discover and highlight hidden talent of the Thai and make it known and tangible through Ploy Saeng and Creative Studio, projects resulted from skill mapping. At the end of December, we will take the musical skill mapping and change it into Bangkok Music Expo in order to make it becomes well-known in the chain of musical industry in Bangkok. Also, in February, TCDC will hold Bangkok Food Expo as a preparation for Bangkok to apply for a member of UNESCO's network of creative cities, in the branch of the city of gastronomy.

TCDC is well aware that, in order for a creative city to succeed, support from state, private organizations, and education institutions is a must. On behalf of TCDC, I would like to thank BMA; Faculty of Architecture and Planning, Thammasat University, Thai Beverage Public Company Limited, Wallpaper* Magazine and other agencies who participated this seminar such as Office of Transport and Traffic Policy and Planning, True Corporation Public Company Limited, Tourism Authority of Thailand and TCC Capital Land Co., Ltd. I sincerely hope that this 2-day seminar will spark a small beginning of an effort to make Bangkok a creative city which will bring opportunity for a better life for everyone.