

# Special Feature:

## Innovative Management for Asian Futures

### A Comparative Study of Cultural Industries in Thailand and Korea (Part 2 – Thailand)

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*This is the second installment of a two part feature article that was published in volume 5 of this journal.*

#### Abstract

In the recent years, following the boom of the cultural policies at the international level, Thailand has turned to place its emphasize on the idea of “cultural and creative industries” at the academic and policy-making level especially in its art and design institutions. Academic disciplines in arts management, information and technology, communication arts, media studies, and economics are developing into the world where they can be blended together into multiple levels of knowledge management. The policy development, and implementation plans are embracing these industries into its national platforms, integrating the culture and economics together.

Therefore, this two-part article aims to illustrate a comparative study of the cultural industries in Thailand and Korea at the level of their operational models and policies. It will demonstrate certain economic values and potential creative industries in Thailand as well as propose recommendations for their development and enhancement.

**Keywords:** Cultural Industries, Economic Development, Cultural Policy, Arts Management, Creative Economy, Thailand, Korea

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## What has Thailand done?

### The History of Thai Cultural Policy

The history of Thai cultural policy may be dated back to the time when Thailand was still under the absolute monarchy. At that time, arts and cultural heritages flourished under the royal patronage. “Palaces, public edifices, temples were places where all cultural activities took place and artists and learned men met. Several kings were themselves great artists and poets” (Raksasataya, 1997).

Then in 1932, the absolute monarchy was changed to a constitutional monarchy with 51 cabinets (Raksasataya, 1997). It was during the government of Plaek Phibunsongkhram (1938-1957) that the National Culture Act of 1942 was born. The Act defines culture as “that which characterizes progress, order, unity and moral of the citizens” (Institute for Cultural Democracy, 1996). The Cultural Council was expanded and became the Ministry of Culture which focused primarily on the patriotism through “the new name of the country (Thailand instead of Siam), honoring the national banner, consumption manners, nation-building effort, national anthem for the king, language and literature, national dress, daily chores, assistance to children, the elderly and the disabled” (Raksasataya, 1997).

In 1961 during the government of Sarit Thanarat (1959-1963) (Wikipedia; Raksasataya, 1997), the first five-year economic development plan was issued without addressing the cultural dimension. The succeeding government by Kriangsak Chomanan (1977-1979) attempted to include cultural policy into its national development. The Office of the National Culture Commission (ONCC) was established in 1979 as a department of the Ministry of Education to “coordinate, promote and develop cultural activities of both private and public sectors at national and international levels” (Institute for Cultural Democracy, 1996). However, most of the missions aimed at the cultural conservation and preservation programs (Institute for Cultural Democracy, 1996).

During the government of Prem Tinsulanonda (1980-1988), the national cultural policy was issued to promote Thai culture which said that “the State shall promote and preserve the national culture” through the following strategies (Culturelink, 1998):

- Support the preservation of the Thai culture in all aspects through education, research, animation and development in order that culture may serve as an important tool for solving problems encountered in the conduct of individual life, for the development of social, economic and political progress, and for the strengthening of the national sovereignty.
- Disseminate Thai culture to the Thai people at large enabling them to understand and realize the values of their own culture and to translate these values into action. This knowledge and appreciation of Thai culture should lead to the national unity, security, and mutual understanding among the people in the nation as well as among those of the world.

- Promote traditional local and ethnic culture in order to inculcate the appreciation of traditional and regional culture and at the same time stimulate adoption and harmonization of this diversity into a peaceful unity.
- Support and promote cultural exchange at regional and international levels with the aim of creating international understanding and facilitating selective modification and absorption of exogenous cultures into the main stream of Thai culture and cultural solidarity.
- Support and promote coordination and cooperation among the government agencies and private sectors engaged in cultural activities. All measures and devices shall be undertaken to mobilize national resources for the preservation, promotion and development of culture.

From the above strategies, it may be pointed out that this national cultural policy was drafted on a holistic approach. Instead of focusing on only the cultural heritage conservation, it also addressed the necessity of cultural promotion through curricular re-design, public awareness raising, and the coordination between different agencies and communities.

This induced the following governments of Chatichai Choonhavan (1988-1991), Anand Panyarachun (1991-1992), Suchinda Kraprayoon (1992), Chuan Leekpai (1992-1995) and (1997-2001), Banharn Silpa-archa (1995-1996), and Chavalit Yongchaiyudh (1996-1997) to pay more attention to the cultural sector as evident through the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> National Economic and Social Development Plans.

Back in history, Thailand focused on labor and agricultural products as the base for its national development. Since the eighth NESDP, it has begun to shift its focus to human and knowledge-based development. Six strategies were issued in the eighth NESDP to promote culture for development as follows (Office of National Cultural Commission):

1. Strengthening of family values – Encourage self-reliance and social bonds through human resource and community development based on traditional wisdom.
2. Recognition of the cultural dimension of development – Reorienting the national development plans to place more significance on the cultural aspects rather than just on the GDP and other economic indicators.
3. Dissemination of Thai cultural values in Thai society and the world – Spreading Thai culture to the wide public as well as to other countries in the world based on the recognition that culture is “an important tool for the transmission and exchanges of knowledge and experiences, and also a vital venue for creating bonds and mutual understanding amongst peoples leading to mutual respect between societies of different races and cultural traits, and pride in their own cultures and products of traditional wisdoms” (Office of National Cultural Commission).

4. Utilization of mass media for cultural dissemination and development – Using the information technology to spread Thai culture as well as to communicate and educate the public. One focus was on the propagation of correct Thai language among the younger generations.
5. Mobilization of cultural resources for cultural development – Raising the public awareness to promote more participation from both the public and private sectors in the cultural development by using their capabilities.
6. Promotion of cultural investment – Raising the awareness and educating the public and private sectors to recognize that culture has a great potential for the national and economic development in addition to its perceived function as a way of life.

The above strategies show that Thailand had paid considerable attention to the cultural promotion. However, it still focused on the dissemination and promotion of Thai culture as well as addressing it by a conservative rather than an innovative approach. The next part will discuss the movement from a conservative cultural policy to a creative economy.

#### **The Mobilization of the Thai Cultural Sector Towards a Creative Economy**

Thailand is aware of the creative economy movement around the world. It sees that cultural products and services will lead Thailand to become a country of thinkers and bring about sustainable development.

##### *Creative Knowledge Centers*

The first government that actively set policies and implementation plans to drive Thailand towards a creative economy nation was that of Former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra in 2001. His government believed that Thailand could step out of its economic downfall from the Asian economic crisis not through the conventional capital solutions but through the creativity of adding values to the cultural assets. This would lead Thailand towards a sustainable development.

Hence, to set the fundamental foundations and frameworks for the creative economy, several organizations have been established as follows:

- *Office of Knowledge Management and Development (OKMD)*  
OKMD was founded in 2004 with the objective to “trigger new ideas and inspire creativities” (Gurteen). It is a state organization under the Office of the Prime Minister based on the government’s fundamental approach of creating and promoting the public’s lifelong learning culture. To put this objective into action, the OKMD has established several knowledge centers in Thailand, hoping to create new young creative blood. Examples of the main knowledge resource centers under the supervision of OKMD are TK Park, TCDC, Museum Siam and TCELS.

- *Thai Knowledge Park (TK Park)*  
Established in 2005 under the supervision of the Prime Minister's Office, its vision is to contribute to the building of a learning society in Thailand by "cultivating a positive attitude towards the reading habit, creative thinking, and lifelong pursuit of knowledge among children and youth" (TK Park). Its three main missions are (TK Park):
  1. To replicate the prototype Knowledge Park and dissemination of the body of knowledge on the establishment and management of the Living Libraries.
  2. To develop a prototype online learning community or Digital TK at [www.tkpark.or.th](http://www.tkpark.or.th).
  3. To develop prototype activities for creative public learning.
  4. To help create a learning society in Thailand.

This Park is popular among the younger generation due to its creative learning environment, a wide array of books, both Thai and English, on various subjects, and its frequent activities such as workshops.

- *Thailand Creative and Design Center (TCDC)*  
TCDC was officially founded in 2004 under the Prime Minister's Office with the mission to provide Thai people "an opportunity to experience and absorb the new creativities by learning from success and achievement of all famous artists and designers worldwide" (TCDC). Many of its projects involve the collaboration with the private sectors whose aim is "to raise public awareness by using design to add value to their products along with helping Thai designers work again visibility in the local and global marketplace" (TCDC). Its work can be categorized into three main services: exhibitions, design materials archive and library which is one of the largest in Asia, and public education such as workshops, training sessions, seminars, and events for designers and entrepreneurs to meet.
- *Museum Siam*  
This museum is one of Thailand's first interactive museums, telling the stories of how Thai identity has developed over thousands of years. Open for service in 2008, its exhibitions encourage visitors to investigate and learn the facts through playing games and other interactive media (Museum Siam). Now this museum is part of the Institute of Discovery and Creative Learning (IDCL).
- *Thailand Centre of Excellence for Life Sciences (TCELS)*  
This organization was founded in 2004 with the objectives as follows (TCELS):
  1. Create, develop, improve, and increase efficiency to add value to Thai pharmaceutical and life sciences products and services.
  2. Create and expand a cooperative network for development and investment in life sciences for health.

3. Promote and support investment and joint investment in life sciences in Thailand.

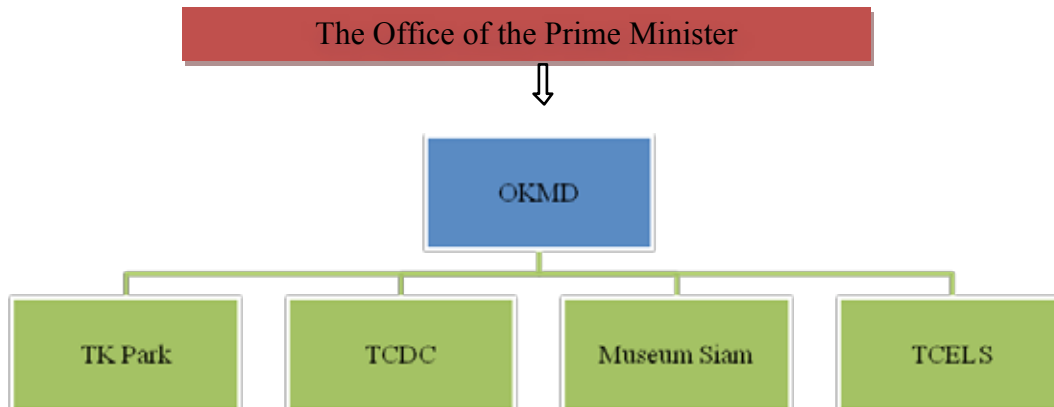


Figure 14. Organizations to support the creative economy. Source: Prepared for this paper.

Thaksin's government has won the heart of the rural people as his policies were developed to support the grassroot economy through microcredit development funds, low-interest agricultural loans, and the rural small and medium enterprise development program known as One Tambon One Product, or OTOP (Wikipedia). In OTOP project started since 2001 (Wikipedia), the villagers were encouraged to create new products using their existing cultural and natural resources to come up with innovative merchandise and services. The OTOP products were also promoted and sold at various fairs throughout the country. They were highly associated with "local wisdom" and "traditional crafts."

After his government was overthrown by the military coup in 2006, several of his projects were terminated. The seven organizations first set up to support the creative economy have been reduced down to only four main ones as discussed above. They have been continued by the following governments of Samak Sundaravej (2008) and Somchai Wongsawat (2008) but the political disruption could not fully support their operations since their role as the prime minister lasted less than a year (Parnpree, 2009).

#### *Creative Thailand Policy*

Under the government of Abhisit Vejjajiva, several projects have been drafted to implement the policy of "Creative Thailand" which aims to make Thailand the hub of creative industries in Southeast Asia and to raise the economic regenerations in the creative sector from 12% of GDP to 20% in 2012. In February 2011, the Creative Economy Fund has been set up to support operators in the creative industries. Subsequently in March, the prime minister chaired the first meeting of the National Creative Economy Policy Committee to discuss directions and measures for the implementation of the creative economy policy (Creative Thailand, 2012).

In 2008, a report has been produced to explore the potentials of Thailand's employment and development of creative economy. This report, "Creative Economy," issued by the *Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB)* describes how the 10<sup>th</sup> National Economic and Social Development Plan (2007-2011) could be translated into policies and projects to create value from knowledge, innovation, cultural and natural resources as well as the Thai ways of life. This study was part of the creative economy research conducted in collaboration with the *Thailand Creative and Design Center under the Office of Knowledge Management and Development*. The overall aims were to collect data about the existing cultural resources and management as well as brainstorm for the strategy formulation. (Inside Thailand, 2010).

Three main development policies have been issued as follows:

1. Education policy - Expanding the education system through organizations related to creative knowledge such as the Office of Knowledge Management and Development Thailand, TK Park, Museum Siam, Thailand Creative & Design Center (TCDC) etc.
2. Art and Culture policy - Restoring the conservation and study of arts and cultures in Thailand. Support the value-adding processes and activities for the cultural products by using the local wisdom.
3. Industry and service sector policy - Improving the cultural sector capacity and productivity by adding creativity in products and services.

In 2009, the government under the Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva attempted to boost the creative economy by launching the "Creative Thailand Policy" and "Creative Thailand Commitments" in August that year. They aimed to increase the value of Thai products and services from history, traditional wisdom, innovation, and culture through a sustainable and ecological development. In his speech given in June 2010, he picked Thai food and handicrafts as examples which contained high potential for further development in the creative sector (Inside Thailand, 2010).

His government's strategies started with the program, "Thailand: Investing from Strength to Strength" or known in Thai, "Thai Khem Khaeng," holding 20 creative economy projects worth 3.8 billion Baht to be carried out in 2010. A fund of 20 billion Baht has been set aside for the implementation of the "Creative Thailand Policy" from 2010 to 2012 (Inside Thailand, 2010).

Two clear goals for this policy were (Creative Thailand, 2012):

1. To make Thailand the hub for creative economy in the ASEAN, and
2. To increase the value of Thailand's creative industries from 12% to 20% in 2012.

The *Creative Thailand Commitments* consist of 12 points as summarized as follows (Creative Thailand, 2012; Inside Thailand, 2010):



*I. Creative infrastructure*

1. Establish the Creative Economy Agency within six months (from 31 August 2009).
2. Adjust the intellectual property and supervision management system within six months.
3. Develop information technology infrastructure (3G, broadband, WIMAX, and fiber optics).

*II. Creative Education & Human Resources*

1. Integrate the creative economies into the education system by producing subjects and textbooks related to such concept within year 2010.
2. Develop art design skills and support people with such skills to contribute to the creative economy.

*III. Creative Social and Inspiration*

1. Promote the creative economy at the local and regional levels to increase the value of Thai products and services made with Thai wisdom.
2. Support and showcase Thai people with commendable creative achievements.
3. Establish more creative activities and centers with open access for all Thais.

*IV. Creative Business Development & Investment*

1. Set up funds and supports for the creative economy, especially for the small and medium-sized enterprises.
2. Arrange investment promotion measures as well as introduce laws to promote and support the creative industries.
3. Develop the marketing tools to promote commercialization of the products and services in the creative industries.
4. Allocate a budget of 20 billion Baht under the “Thailand: Investing from Strength to Strength 2012” to lay the foundation for the creative economy projects.

To set up guidelines for the creative economy policy, the *National Creative Economy Policy Committee* was set up in September 2009. Its role is to ensure that the creative economy will be mobilized accordingly. Under this unit is a *subcommittee* responsible for implementing the Creative Thailand Commitments. Furthermore, the *Thailand Creative Economy Agency* was set up in 2010 under the Secretariat of the Prime Minister and supervised by the Executive Board of the Thailand Creative Economy Agency. It is responsible for making recommendations on the policies and strategies as well as promoting research and development on the creative economy. (Inside Thailand, 2010)



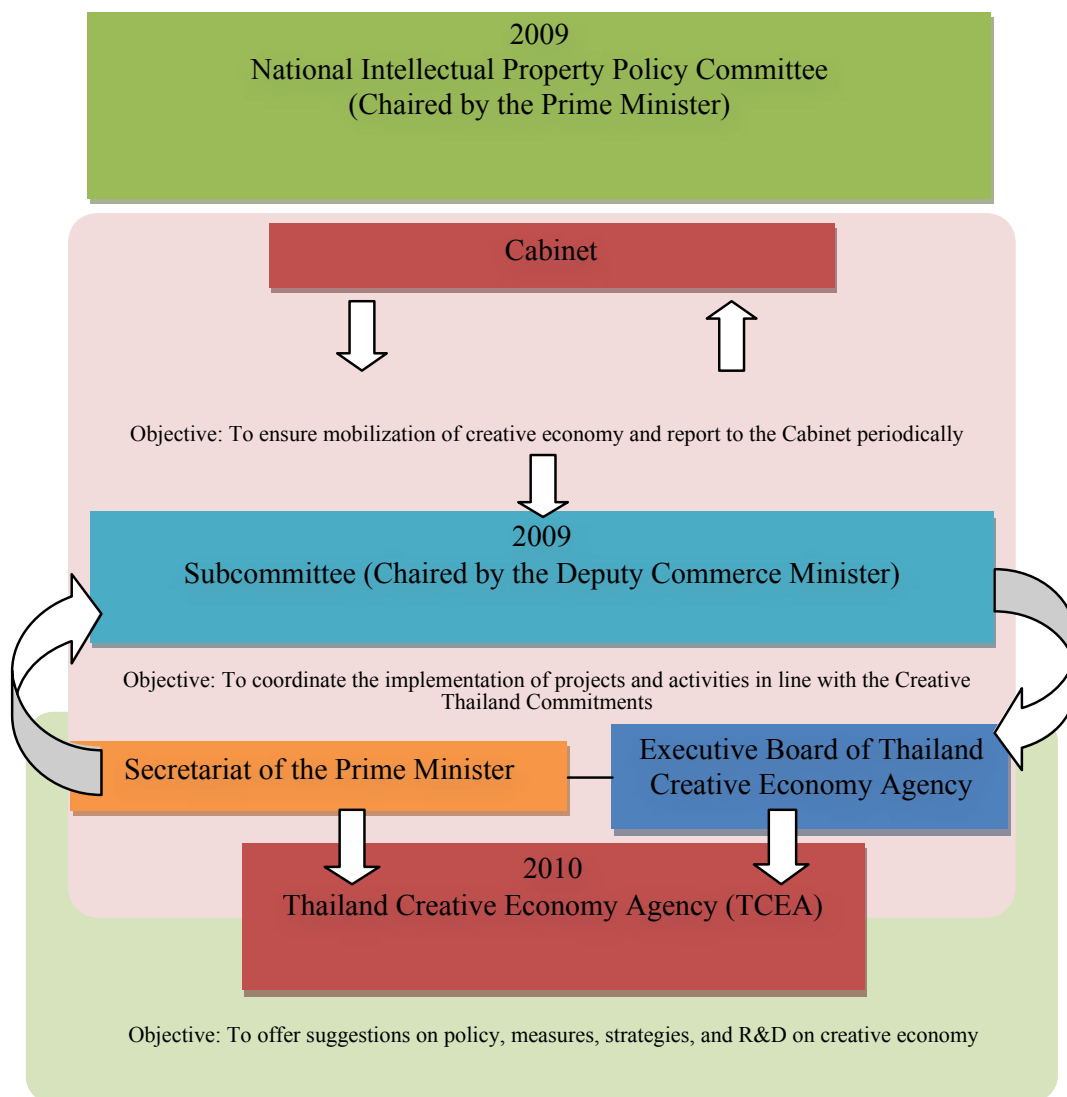


Figure 15. Organizations to support Thailand Creative Economy. Source: Prepared for this paper.

### Thai Creative Economy Classification, Value Chain and Elements Models

The Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board adopted the model of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development to categorize Thailand’s creative economy into four main types with the subdomains as shown in Figure 16 Thailand’s creative economy classification (National Economic and Social Development Board, 2009):

Generally, the procedures in the value chain of creative economy of Thailand include creativity, production and commercialization (Creative Thailand, 2012; Leopairote, 2010). In other words, ideas and market survey are first conducted to come up with an innovative product and service design. Then the cultural capitals are transformed into cultural products and services by human skills and investments. Then they must be marketable and sold to generate income. Refer to Figure 17 Value chain of creative economy of Thailand for illustration.

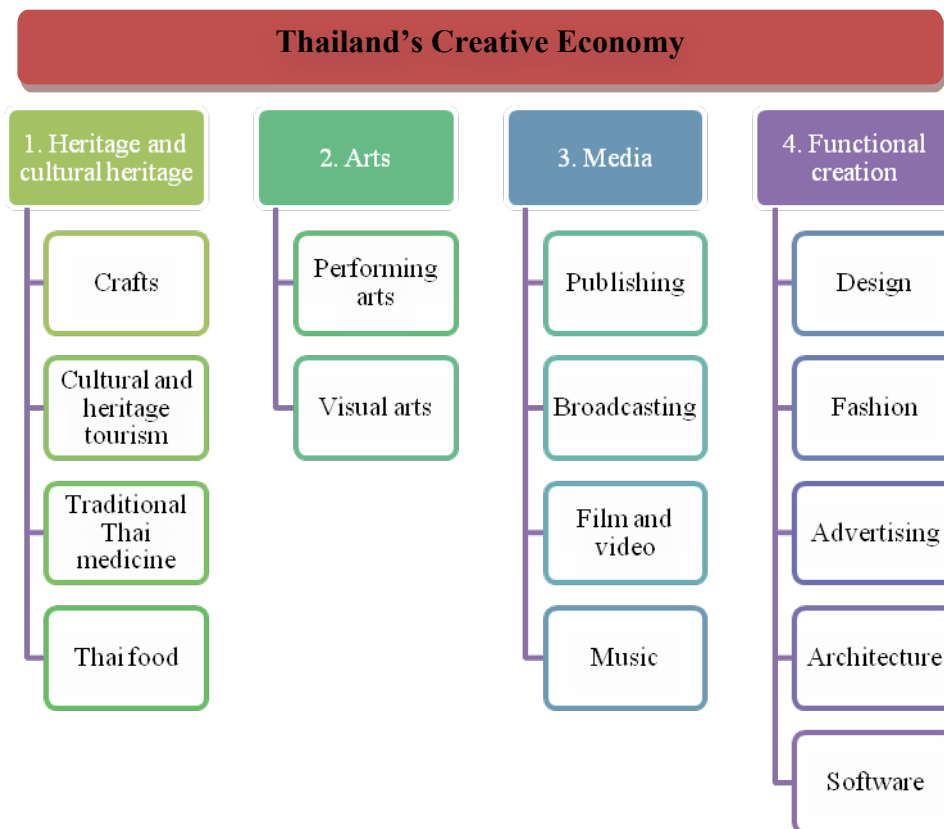


Figure 16. Thailand's Creative Economy Classification. Source: NESDB.

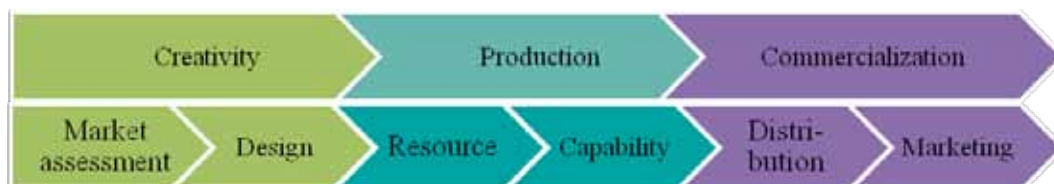


Figure 17. Value Chain of the Creative Economy of Thailand. Source: Adapted from Creative Thailand, 2012, and Leopairote, 2010.

Karndee Leopairote (2010) proposes that there are three elements that drive one another in the creative economy: location; people; and trade and business. Location consists of creative cities and creative clusters which are defined as “urban complex where cultural activities of various sorts are an integral component of the city’s economic and social functioning” (UNCTAD, 2008). People refer to creative classes and entrepreneurs who are talented, creative, original and innovative, capable of creative production, design, or marketing (Leopairote, 2010). Trade and business refer to creative industry and creative products and services which can be both tangible and intangible products that focus on creative contents with market objectives (UNCTAD, 2008). These three components are vital elements in Thailand’s creative economy. Therefore the government should focus its policy on facilitating them through various implementation strategies, which are discussed in the following sections of this paper.

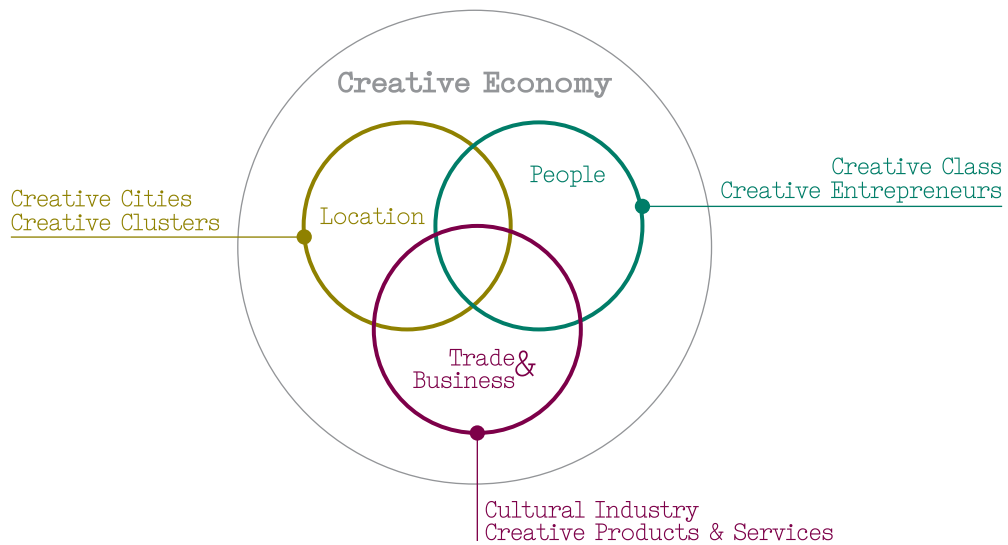


Figure 18. Three Elements of Thailand's Creative Economy. Source: Kamdee Leopairote, 2010.

**Thailand: Investing from Strength to Strength 2012 or “Thai Khem Khaeng”**

There are two main goals in the “Thailand: Investing from Strength to Strength” program. The first is to make Thailand the hub for creative industry in the ASEAN. The second is to boost up the creative sector’s regenerations from 12% of Thai GDP to 20% in 2012 (Inside Thailand, 2010)

To implement the above goals, the mission of Thai creative economy is divided into four areas as follows (Creative Thailand, 2012; Inside Thailand, 2010):

hailand, 2010):

1. Creative infrastructure – To upgrade the creative infrastructure to support the creative economy system.
2. Creative education and human resources – To instill the creativity and innovation thinking into the education system.
3. Creative society and inspiration – To promote the significance of the creative economy into the society.
4. Creative business development and investment – To support the business operators in the creative industries.

The initial stage of this policy implementation is to focus on the second and third area (creative education and human resources, and creative society and inspiration). The government aims to raise public awareness and education in the concept, emphasizing on the values of these creative products and services. (Inside Thailand, 2010)

One billion Baht will be allocated by the National Creative Economy Policy Committee to 16 projects for the program’s 2012 Operation Plan as follows: (Inside Thailand, 2010)

1. Thai People's Prototype "The King" and "Creation"
2. Creating Films on Thai History and Culture
3. Creating Creative City Prototypes
4. Creative Economy Promotion
5. Creating a Better Understanding of the Creative Economy
6. Thailand Northern Handicraft and Financial Expo 2010
7. New Image of Thai Products Going International
8. National Seminar and Workshop on Creative Economy
9. Learning Promotion on Creative Economy for Children and Youth
10. Enhancing Musical Talents for Excellence and Developing Potential for Competitiveness
11. Silpakorn Develops the Creative Economy
12. Enhancing Potential and Competitiveness in Product Designs for 15 Creative Industries
13. Promotion of Products for Health and Thai Herbs for Export
14. Development of Creative Skills and Potential for Lifestyle Product Business Group
15. Brand Development and Promotion of Gem and Jewelry Business in the International Market
16. Cultural Performances to Generate Income for People

In 2010, the Ministry of Finance, instructed by the National Creative Economy Committee, allocated a budget to the Thai Khem Khaeng program to produce and propagate the creative economy to the public, including the movie production, "Creative King." In this short film shown in cinemas in Thailand from February to April 2010, the ingenuity of the King is portrayed to stimulate awareness for the creative economy and set an exemplary model for the creative achievements to the Thai society. His Majesty the King is well known for his innovative creations which help improve the quality of the Thai people. He has been presented the WIPO Global Leaders Award in 2009 in recognition for his intellectual property that contributes to the economic development according to the principle of the World Intellectual Property Organization (World Intellectual Property Organization, 2007).

#### **Human Resource Development and Education**

As one of the initial focuses for the creative economy policy implementation, the

government places significance on the development of knowledge-based industries. Therefore, it aims to enhance the quality of knowledge and skills of people through several human resource and education programs which emphasize the excellent integration between science and technology, and local wisdom and resources. Several related study disciplines and courses are established in schools and universities to train young people how to be innovative and creative thinkers. Furthermore, the government tries to facilitate the commoditization of knowledge and encourage the private sector to be productive in the creative sector. As John Howkins advised Abhisit Vejjajiva, “the government should play a role in creating the environment conducive to creative economy activities, facilitating the creation of creativity, rather than directly initiating creativity itself” (Inside Thailand, 2010). Therefore, a foundation of creativity is first needed to stimulate and support people to be more creative. Infrastructure is needed as well as a reform in the education system to cut down 30% of study time in classroom so that children may have more time to explore creative thinking and learning outside (Inside Thailand, 2010).

### Use of Culture and Technology

Another model for the implementation of the Creative Economy Policy is the employment of technology to increase the value of cultural resources and promote innovation and creativity in the cultural sector. Different organizations and ministries are assigned the tasks to accomplish the creative economy.

*The National Electronics and Computer Technology Center (NECTEC) and the National Science and Technology Development Agency (NSTDA) were appointed to create a database that will help raise the awareness among the public for cultural conservation and development. The organizations will be working with the communities and agencies for data collection. Furthermore, they are responsible for the personnel training related to the use of information technology under the “Digital Thai” project (Inside Thailand, 2010)*

The *Ministry of Culture* has also been assigned to work on several projects in response to Creative Thailand Policy. Their responsibility is to inject the concept of creative economy into the people at all levels, including the local communities, so that together with Thailand’s rich cultural capitals, more creative economic productions may be achieved.

There are four main creative economy projects under the responsibilities of the Ministry of Culture (Inside Thailand, 2010):

1. Establishment of a Central Cultural Information Center

The main concept is to use the technology to create a database about the traditional wisdom and practices of various cultural communities. Thailand is a country with great cultural diversity. The objective of this project is to work with those cultural and ethnic groups in documenting and disseminating their traditions, wisdom, practices, craftsmanship, etc. This database will contain six areas, including “libraries and archives, archeology and museums, histori-

cal parks, local wisdom, contemporary arts and culture, and musical dramatic art” (Inside Thailand, 2010). Because the goal is to publish this information to as widest public as possible, the database will be in digital form for wide access.

2. The Creative Provinces Project

The concept of this project is to stimulate the local pride through their cultural identity, traditional way of life and local wisdom. The communities and villages are encouraged to share their cultural expressions at the cultural festivals and events promoted by the Ministry of Culture. At the festivals, the local performances, occupations and way of life are shown.

3. The Creative Arts and Cultural Festival

The Arts and Cultural Festival will host cultural performances by various communities in Thailand. One of Thailand’s traditional performing arts called “Khon masked drama” will also be one of the highlights. In addition to the shows, cultural products will also be sold at the fair. These kinds of festival are also great tourist attraction, earning them the income from tourist activities. Thus this is culture that may help the local people generate income for their cultural sustainability. Through such incentives, they may become creative thinkers to innovate new cultural products and services, which is in line with the nation’s creative economy policy. The heart of this project is to be open for all cultural groups and religion in Thailand to live in harmony as well.

4. Preservation of Cultural World Heritage Sites

The heritage sites are valuable not only because of the attached social, historical, architectural, and cultural values but they also bring pride and economic benefits to the source communities and Thailand through cultural tourism. Therefore, the aim of this project is to restore and renovate the Cultural World Heritage sites of Thailand to protect and enhance the overall integrity of Thailand’s priceless heritages. The plan includes light installation as well as documentation in film and videos.

The *Ministry of Science and Technology* also takes part in the creative economy policy implementation. The assignment from the government was to develop creative approaches to increase the value of the agricultural products. Based on this, the ministry started with the research and development plan to learn and hear more from the communities. The research and development fund was planned to increase from 0.25% of GDP to 1% (Inside Thailand, 2010). Secondly, “30 science and technology typology villages” has been developed with the objective to encourage the local people to utilize their local knowledge in the production of creative commodities and services that will help them generate more income and employment while reducing the costs the enhancing the overall quality of life.

*Inside Thailand* (2010) illustrated some of the project’s achievements as follows:

The Ministry has transferred farming techniques to the science and technology prototype village in Bo Kluea district of Nan province. As a result, this village is able

to increase rice production from 100 kilograms for an area of one rai, or .4 acres, and local people are able to earn more income. After their rice farming, local villagers have been urged to plant various crops, such as wheat, tomatoes, and mushrooms, in order to increase their earnings on top of rice cultivation. The Ministry has also promoted chicken-raising in the natural farm system, so that villagers have a revolving fund for use among themselves. In order for villagers to reduce expenditure, the Ministry has transferred to them the biomass technology to produce alternative fuel and the knowledge of improving cooking stoves for the efficient use of energy. Other activities involve introducing household accountancy and processing wheat into a new health product to bring down hypertension.

Furthermore, the Ministry of Science and Technology recognizes that rice, the staple food of Thai people, can be one of the products for creative development. Thailand has also been exporting rice, earning stable income for the country. Because of its significance, the *National Innovation Agency (under the Ministry of Science and Technology)* collaborated with the Thai Rice Foundation under the Patronage of His Majesty the King to create the “Rice Innovation Awards 2010” (Khon Kaen Rice Seed Center, 2010). To encourage more agricultural innovations, the program called “Creative Agriculture” is developed to apply science and technology onto the agricultural products for value-added benefits (Inside Thailand, 2010).

To raise the awareness and promote the public appreciation for the creative economy, the “National Innovation Day” has been proposed by the Ministry of Science and Technology to be on October 5 of every year to honor King Bhumibol Ayulyadej as the “Father of Thai Innovation.”

### **Creative City**

The aim of this project is to focus on educating the Thai public about the creative economy so they may be motivated to participate in the creative economy development. Mainly, it is in the responsibility of the Office of Knowledge Management and Development (OKMD). It is working on nine projects, five of which are serving the theme of “Creative City,” and four are the OKMD Creative Awards for creative entrepreneurs, Executive Creative Economy course, mobile information distribution, and the development and promotion of the creative economy website. (Inside Thailand, 2010)

The goal of the “Creative City” program is to increase the understanding of Bangkok residents about the function and value of the creative economy and that they may take part in the creative economy development by using their surrounding cultural resources as input to create innovative products and services as output. They can help create conducive environment for the creative activities to take place. They can help make Bangkok an impressive city in several dimensions such as lifestyle, arts and crafts, food and entertainment. (Inside Thailand, 2010)



### *Creative City Prototypes*

Similar to the “Creative City” program, the “Creative City Prototypes” project seeks to select ten different cities in Thailand as model cities which have successfully utilized the local wisdom and innovations to create activities and products that reflect its history, culture, and traditional practices. The selection was planned to complete in 2011.

### *Knowledge-based*

The government realizes the significance of knowledge and information that they are the foundation for innovation and creation. Therefore, it has increased its support on the research and development sector of Thailand as mentioned before. In 2010, there was also “Thailand Research Expo 2010” organized by the Office of the National Research Council of Thailand to “publicize research projects among researchers, academics, entrepreneurs, and the general public and also to develop new bodies of knowledge” (Inside Thailand, 2010).

### *Decentralization*

In order to foster a creative environment in Thailand, the government shall play a role in the supporting and motivating different sectors to contribute to the creative economy. Its goal is to empower the civil sector as much as possible through the decentralization which will allow a wider scope of activities and faster actions to implement the policy. To achieve this goal, the government of Abhisit Vejjajiva announced the four important points to focus on as summarized below (Inside Thailand, 2010):

1. Delegate the missions and implementation plans from the central government to the local level
2. Remove the financial and fiscal management constraints, for example, by giving subsidies to the local administrations and revising the property and land taxation
3. Work closely with the civil society
4. Promote good governance and enhance the administration transparency

### *Thailand’s Strengths and Opportunities*

Thailand holds its advantages in several areas, especially its cultural capitals. The traditional wisdom has been passed down from generations to generations in the craftsmanship, traditional medicinal practices, food preparation and performing arts. Complemented by the hospitality and service-minded of the Thai people, the services in the health sector especially spa, tourism, hotel and restaurants are well received by the consumers both domestic and international. Given the rich cultural diversity, Thailand is also one of the prominent cultural tourism destinations in the world. (Inside Thailand, 2010)

With the help of the information technology advances, Thailand has great opportunities to expand its market worldwide as well as benefit from the smaller

sizes of the businesses. The world's demand for the Oriental culture also propels Thailand forward to sharing its cultural resources with the world (Inside Thailand, 2010).

### *Weaknesses and Threats*

Many smaller business operators in Thailand are reluctant to jump into the creative sector due to the misconception that such business setup and expenses are high. Furthermore, sometimes consumers do not support the creative goods or services as they perceive their prices to be too high. This is because they do not realize nor understand the value of these creative productions. Thus an education or knowledge shall be passed to the public to enhance their perception towards these products and services.

Equally important, facilities to support the creative economy development, such as “scientific laboratories to check and certify the standards of certain commodities, such as food and cosmetics” are needed (Inside Thailand, 2010).

Another problem in Thailand's creative economy is due to the limitations in the personnel who possess creative or innovative skills and knowledge to contribute to the sector.

Intellectual property rights need more protection because piracy discourages business operators to invest in the creative economy. It can also pose danger on the consumers' health as in the case of fake medicines. (Inside Thailand, 2010)

Lastly, one of the greatest obstacles to the continuous development of the Thai economy is the political instability. In the recent years, Thailand was faced with several protests from different groups such as the United Front for Democracy against Dictatorship (UDD) and the People's Alliance for Democracy (PAD). These protests led to the destruction of several places in Bangkok, such as the fire on a section of Central World, the injuries and deaths of people, and closing down of Suvannabhumi Airport, etc. These incidents swayed the investors' confidence to invest in Thailand. They also disrupted and obstructed the implementation and continuation of the Creative Thailand Policy. Therefore, related governmental organizations and stakeholders need to come together to solve these issues in order for the creative economy to prosper.

### **Creative Industries in Thailand**

In 2008, the creative industries in Thailand contributed 9.53% or 1.067 trillion Baht (about 32 billion USD) to Thailand's GDP (Inside Thailand, 2010). Of all these industries, IT and jewelry show great economic regenerations. Revenue from the jewelry sector provided 4.7% of Thai GDP, and value-added contribution of 0.97% of GDP in 2008 (Inside Thailand, 2010). The jewelry exports amounted to 157.7 billion Baht, making it Thailand's fourth largest export earner (Pratruangkrai, 2009). About 876,000 people, or 2.4% of Thailand's workforce, were employed in this industry. (Inside Thailand, 2010)

The information and technology industry employed 1.2% of Thailand's workforce, and exported 192 billion Baht worth of products. (Inside Thailand, 2010)

According to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, Thailand's creative goods exports in 2008 totaled 13 billion USD, or 1.29% of world market share, ranking at 17<sup>th</sup> of the world. This means that Thailand is one of the top 20 world exporters of creative goods and is showing a positive trend at 5% annual growth. (Inside Thailand, 2010)

### **Fashion Industry**

The fashion industry has been a major creative industry and once major contributor to Thai's economy, accounting for approximately around 15-18 percent of total GDP. Even now under the unstable situation, it is the largest manufacturing industry in Thailand, with more than 4,000 factories employing more than one million people, roughly 20 % of total employment in manufacturing. The Thai fashion and textile industry is pursuing high quality, value-added strategies to succeed in the competitive environment. The quality of the fabrics in Thailand is generally high and continuously improving. The fast-growing Thai fashion industry, encompassing leather, jewelry and garment industries, contributes to Bangkok's creative and energetic ambiance. However, fashion is still a young industry in Thailand compared to Japan and European fashion houses, as its first brands appeared only some 25 years ago. Nevertheless, in terms of creative marketing range, Thai fashion industry has grown to cover near the whole sector: women's, men's, and children's fashions are all well-represented in Bangkok's shop windows. Thais are very fashion conscious which make a demanding home market. Moreover, (before political turmoil in March-May, 2010) the many tourists arriving in Thailand every year help spark new ideas and provide a ready supply of customers for Thailand's fashion industry. The ancient appreciation of beauty, a modern sense of style and decades of production experience make Thailand an obvious location for foreign fashion business. Unfortunately, for export, the full liberalization in textile quotas under World Trade Organization (WTO) commitments that came into effect on 2005, has caused tougher competition between WTO member states in global markets and Thailand is becoming less competitive against cheap labor countries such as China, Indonesia, India, Pakistan, and Vietnam. Thai manufacturers have to work out new strategies and create higher quality products in order to compete with higher quality product countries such as Hong Kong, Korea, and Taiwan.

The Thai fashion industry has been heavily promoted within the last previous years. The previous government had plan to secure 1.2 million jobs within the industry, as well as educating 'fashion people', consisting of designers, merchandisers, and production specialists. It involved the improvement of the overall quality of design, marketing and manufacturing. The project was designed to help achieve higher level of skilled labor. As a result, many universities in Thailand have developed fashion curriculums and offer degrees in Fashion design and apparels. The demands of these creative industries are still high. At present there are foreign fashion institutions present in Bangkok have expressed their interest in collaborative programs with Thai's Universities.

While Thai craftspeople are well respected for their artisanship, Thailand still do need foreign investments in order to bring in an augmentation of product design improvement and a more solid establishment of Thai brands and products. Research and development to upgrade design and branding, technology and machinery modernization are needed so that the industry can be transformed from labor intensive to highly innovative. Nevertheless, the latest few years have become tougher for Thailand in terms of competitiveness because the other countries that produce cheaper products, especially China have taken the position as market leader and hereby have the main market share in world markets. However, the exports of Thai's high quality fashion products still have a future to compete in the global market, by creating suitable policies and strategies wisely. For once, the Thai government by Thaksin Shinawatera pushed through the "Bangkok Fashion City" project in 2003. That project was designed to help increase the textile and clothing's trade competitiveness in developing the quality of Thai products to be well accepted and competitive with continual efforts to penetrate these new territories, but later many experts indicated that Thailand has lost opportunities for its fashion industry by previous government policies, because the policies created by previous government were developed in the wrong directions with poor structure and over-expenditures. Thus, if the present government would like to proceed promoting this creative industry it should refocus to develop people, technology and management as a whole with long term planning and implementation.

### Digital Content

Although Thailand's digital content industry is still small, Abhisit Vejjajiva believed that it has a great potential for rapid growth to become the forefront of Asia's creative sector.

The definition of "digital contents" may include the products and services that involve images and sound, such as "film, animated games, computer graphics, advertisements, software, websites, and social networks" (Inside Thailand, 2010).

### Film and Movies

The film and movie industry of Thailand has generated a lot of income for the country. In 2006, the movie industry earned 27.4 billion Baht. In 2007, it rose up to 33.7 billion Baht. The income generated by the post-production businesses amounted to 33 billion Baht. Thai movies and films' market share in Thailand increased from 36% in 2006 to 45% in 2007.

In terms of exports, Thailand's movie exports in 2005 amounted to 1.13% of world's movie exports while India exports accounted for 2.46%, Korea 1.47%, and Hong Kong 0.43%. In 2007, Thailand exported 49 movies (Wiwatsinudom, 2009) and 441 foreign film productions from feature films, TV series, music videos and commercials were shot in Thailand, with a total value of 1.13 billion Baht. The figures showed substantial growth from 1998 totaling 291 productions worth 400 million Baht (Wiwatsinudom, 2009).

For digital records, Thailand's exports were 0.21% of world's total digital records, India 1.93%, Korea 3.79%, and Taiwan 0.40% (Wiwatsinudom, 2009).

It can be seen from the above figures that Thailand's film industry has a potential for great development. Therefore, plans and strategies shall be developed to promote and support this sector.

Initially, the government of Abhisit Vejjajiva focused on the film industry, aiming for Thailand to become one of the top film production destinations. He believed that Thailand has many great cultural and natural landscapes ideal for film shooting locations. Thai people are also very hospitable and skillful. In addition, it has a good standard of equipment and infrastructure. All these components are appealing to foreign film production companies. Furthermore, the government injected 200 million Baht into Thailand's digital content industry for the development of its production base.

In 2009, the "Thailand Entertainment Expo 2009" was organized to expand Thailand's entertainment network globally and present itself as the destination for foreign movie shooting location. Thailand has a high capacity in entertainment media production process in pre-production, production, as well as post-production. This program presents great opportunity to generate business transactions and increase employment rate. It intends to increase the foreign investment in Thailand in the movie industry as well as other peripheral sectors such as services and tourism.

To push this strategy forward, Thailand has policies to support foreign film companies. Foreign film production companies wishing to film in Thailand can file an application and have it immediately reviewed by the Sub-Committee on the Review of the Request for Permission for Foreign Film Production. If approved, the benefits include a waiver of import tax on filming equipment, double taxation agreements with other countries, and access, granted on a case-by-case basis, to protected national parks, historical sites and temples.

In November 2010, the Thai Cabinet agreed to waive fees for shooting permits on government-owned properties including national parks supervised by the Wildlife and Plant Conservation Department; along with properties under the Royal Forestry Department, Royal Irrigation Department, Fine Arts Department, Treasury Department, State Railway of Thailand, and Suvarnabhumi International Airport. This fee waiver remained in effect until the end of December 2011, except for national parks, for which the fee waiver policy expired on 1 December, 2011.

In addition to the above, the government of Abhisit Vejjajiva was driving the establishment of a movie town for movie production in order to push Thailand as the movie industry hub of Asia (BOI, 2010). The Ministry of Culture has issued the Strategy for the Establishment of a Movie and Video Production Town in Thailand for 2009-2012 as illustrated in *Figure 19 Strategy for the Establishment of a Movie and Video Production Town in Thailand (2009-2012)* (Inside Thailand, 2010):



Figure 19. Strategy for the Establishment of a Movie and Video Production Town in Thailand (2009-2012).

In 2011, Thailand Tourist Authority, an agent responsible for Filming regulation expected to maintain 9% growth in income from foreign tourists, with the number of international arrivals expected to reach 16.5 million by the end of the year. With Thailand’s strong domestic and international appeal as a filming destination, the country should remain at the forefront in this region. It can be seen from the above figures that Thailand’s film industry has a potential for great development not just the film industry itself but related industries such as tourism, services and luxurious goods will also share the benefits, because “Film-Tourism” describes the effects that film and TV-productions can have on tourists decisions as they inspire people to experience the screened places firsthand. Not only is film tourism an excellent vehicle for destination marketing, it also presents new product development opportunities, such as location tours, film museums, exhibitions and the themes of existing tourist attractions with a film connection” (film-tourism.com). Therefore, plans and strategies shall be developed to promote and support this sector.

Foreign movies shot in Thailand included the Beach, the Deer Hunter, Around the World in Eighty Days, the Killing Fields, Bangkok Dangerous, etc.



To stimulate the foreign investors in Thailand's film industry, the Software Industry Promotion Agency (SIPA) and the Federation of the National Film Association of Thailand created the "Film Expo Asia 2010" event to promote Thailand as a favorable place for movie shooting as well as travelling destinations. This short film competition event aimed to promote, Thailand's strengths in the hospitality of the Thai people, the richness in its cultural and natural diversity, as well as the readiness in the equipment and infrastructure to support the foreign investment. (Inside Thailand, 2010)

The Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Master Plan for 2009-2013 seeks to increase the digital content industry value to 165 billion Baht by year 2013 (Inside Thailand, 2010).

In fact, Thailand's movie industry has been gaining more and more popularity since 2009 with several movies such as "Nang Nak" (1999) and "Tom Yum Kung" (2005) which integrated Thai culture and traditions into the movies. Tom Yum Kung hit 4<sup>th</sup> on the US Box Office in 2006, earning 9 million USD (Wiwatsinudom, Thailand Animated Film Industry Development Strategy for International Competition, 2010).

However, some policies and laws are not supportive of the growth of Thai movie industry. One of the most controversial issues is the movie censorship system of Thailand. The problem lies in the inconsistency of the censorship application on movies and TV contents. Scenes with nudity, alcohol, smoking, drugs, and weapons pointed at human beings including any inappropriate contents about the royal family are blurred or deleted. The committee board responsible for such censorship is constantly criticized for its unclear set of rules to make the censorship decisions. Some scenes, in the opinion of many viewers, are acceptable and yet they are censored or deleted. Some nudity scenes in other films are permitted to be shown. The problem with this inconsistency and so-dubbed "irrationality" has stirred the Thai movie makers and audience's negative feelings.

Apichatpong Weerasethakul is one of the Thai film directors and screenwriters whose work has been censored in Thailand. His films have received much attention from the wide public and especially the foreign movie industries. "Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives," "Tropical Malady," "Blissfully Yours," and "Syndromes and a Century" are examples of his famous work which have won prizes and awards at the prestigious international levels such as Cannes Film Festival, Venice Film Festival, Lotus du Meilleur Film-Grand Prix, and Hong Kong Asian Film Awards. However, in contrast to the international acclaim, "Syndromes and a Century" is censored in Thailand due the four following scenes (Apichatpong Bids to Unshackle Thai Cinema, 2007):

- A Thai Buddhist monk playing a guitar
- Two monks playing with a toy flying saucer
- Doctors drinking alcohol
- A doctor kissing his girlfriend



In response to this, Apichatpong chose not to show this film in Thailand if the four above scenes would be deleted.

This is one example of how the policy and regulations in Thailand may hinder the creativity in the creative industries. Producers and business operators may feel discouraged to come forth with new ideas due to the obstructive policies. Compared to Korea, Korea used to have very restricting rules and regulations on its media, but they were removed in the late 1990s – 2000s to encourage more freedom for creativity. Therefore, Thailand needs to revise its regulations on its media censorship.

### **Animation**

Thailand started to develop animation without any support from the government in 1945 – 1946 with a cartoon movie about a rice farmer. In 1946, the first color animation was called “Het Mahatsachan” or “Miracle” but was not very famous. In 1978 the animation called “Sut Sakhon” joined the film festival in Taiwan. After that there was no animation movie because of the high cost and lack of studio for production.

In 1987 Kantana Animation Company cooperated with a Japanese company to produce computer graphics, both 3D Animation and Special Effects for advertisements, commercials, movies and television media. In 2004, Kantana produced and broadcasted the first animation series named “Son Roi Percent.”

In 2006, the cost of animation production declined along with the cost of computers and programs but the quality enhanced due to the technological advances. This enabled Kantana to produce another animation movie named “Kan Kluay.” It is the first successful Thai animation movie which becomes well-known at international level as it was shown at the Cannes Festival and accepted in many countries, such as Spain, France, and Brazil, etc. The animation movie earned more than 100 million Baht of revenues in Thailand and more from its license show and products, such as iPod, Milk, Arrow T-shirts, etc. (Wiwatsinudom, 2010).

In 2008, Thailand animation industry has been supported by the Film and Digital Act 2008 with the vision of promoting Thailand to become a digital content industrial center. The objectives, mission and strategies are as follows (Wiwatsinudom, Thailand Animated Film Industry Development Strategy for International Competition, 2010):

Objectives:

1. To be the center of film and digital contents production, promotion, and marketing
2. To be the center of professional human resources development for film and digital contents industries
3. To be non-pirate film and digital content products zone
4. To establish a center to promote film and digital contents industry

## Mission:

1. To development the film and digital industries in Thailand to have competitive quality in world market
2. To develop human resources to support the expansion of film and digital contents industry and become the center of film production and digital design
3. To promote and develop education in film and digital contents
4. To develop policy and action plans to attract foreign investors to make investment in Thai film and digital contents
5. To set up organizations to support and develop film and digital contents in Thailand
6. To develop a film and digital contents center to become an international center
7. To set up campaign and measures to promote copyrights laws for film and digital contents

## Strategies:

1. To adjust film and digital contents management structure
2. To strengthen the competitiveness of Thai film and digital contents industry
3. To develop human resources in film and digital contents industry
4. To develop film and digital contents market
5. To reinforce Thailand to be non-pirate film and digital contents zone
6. To reinforce the popularity of Thai film and digital contents
7. To support and encourage foreign businesses to invest in Thailand

The performance of the animation industries in Thailand may be summarized by the following tables.

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
<b>Market value of Thai animation (million bath)</b>	4,993	5,572	6,800	7,540	12,086	10,200

Figure 20. Growth Rate of Thailand's Animation Market 2004 – 2007. Source: SIPA, 2009; Bangkok Post, 2010.

	2007	2008	Growth
<b>Import Value</b>	3,556	6,502	83%
<b>Export Value</b>	812	715	-12%

Figure 21. Import and Export Value of the Animation Industry 2007–8. Source: Wiwatsinudom, 2010.

The tables above show that the animation industry of Thailand shows a positive trend for Thai animation producers through its constant growth. However, the drop in year 2009 was due to the economic downturn. The animation exports also reduced in year 2008 from 2007 by 12%. Looking at the import versus export figures, it is shown that Thailand has significantly increased its foreign animation imports in year 2008, compared to 2007. The animation and games industries of Thailand have been growing from 12.9 billion Baht in 2006 to 15.1 billion Baht in 2007 (Wiwatsinudom, 2009).

For the past 5 years, the Thai animation and game industries have grown by at least 15% per year. Many companies have been showcased abroad and are well-recognized internationally.

Following the success of the animation movies “Kan Kluay” (2006) and “Kan Kluay 2” (2009), Thailand is seeing more animation movies both in TV series such as Bird Land (revolving around the hero named Bird McIntyre who is a famous singer in Thailand), the Four Angels, etc. In theater, Kantana is releasing a 3D animation movie named the “Echo Planet 3D” on August 2, 2012. Sahamongkhol Film is also showing its “Yak: the Giant King” animation in October 2012. Echo Planet 3D is special in its character design as the main characters are Thai kids who are from the Karen ethnic tribe, the first time that minorities in Thailand have been given a significant role in Thai animation. The plot is also designed to raise the audience’s awareness to save the natural environment.

According to reliable resource ([www.creativeclusters.com](http://www.creativeclusters.com)), Thailand has proposed that Asian countries should join hands together to build robust alliances. With this in mind, SIPA (Software Industry Promotion Agency) and DEP (Department of Export Promotion) organized the first ever ASEAN business matching for creative economy (ACE 2009) which was held in Phuket, Thailand in June 2009. That event aimed to support the Creative Economy Policy, and was considered as the first business matching event conducted in Thailand. This event was designed to help create networking among Creative businesses involved in animation, games and digital content. It was expected that this event will help Thailand in outsourcing service, as well as helping to revive the Thai economy through creativity.

Compared to Korea (summarized in figure 22 Korean Animation Policy), Thailand does not have a clear model of policy and implementation that will support the Thai animation industry.

Thai animations comprise of 8-13% of total animations which are broadcasted in Thailand. Though Thai animation industries possess skillful anime and manga designers, such as Jakraphan Huaypetch who won the top award for his manga at the International Manga Awards from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, the business requires a large amount of investment. The South Korean government spends 20 billion baht per year to support its animation industry, and China is investing 3 billion baht each year. Thailand’s budget in 2010, on the other hand, was only 178 million baht. (Bangkok Post, 2010)

Govt. Policy	Production	Marketing	Support	Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Setting quota for Korean animation broadcasting in free TV, cable TV, satellite stations, etc.</li> <li>• Networking synergy of TV animation producers</li> <li>• Business cooperation network</li> <li>• Enhance the international collaboration for movie production</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Planning and design</li> <li>2. Production</li> <li>3. Post-production</li> <li>4. Distribution</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3<sup>rd</sup> largest market share of the world</li> <li>• Animation exports lead to other cultural industries</li> <li>• License characters sold in many forms such as stationaries, comics, movies, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government organizations: KOCCA, KBC, SAC, GITCT, etc.</li> <li>• Set up many funds for animation support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Characters receive high popularity</li> <li>• Shows Korean culture</li> </ul>

Figure 22. The Korean Animation Policy. Source: (Wiwatsinudom, Thailand Animated Film Industry Development Strategy for International Competition, 2010).

The Thai government needs to inject more investment into the industry as well as facilitate the sector through its policies. In Korea, the government has set a policy to limit the level of international animation film broadcasting to less than 60% of the country's total animation broadcasting time. It also supports its domestic animations to be shown 45% of its free TV animation broadcasting time, and 35% on the cable TV (Wiwatsinudom, 2010).

In terms of supporting policy, Thailand does not have any concrete policy nor strategy to fully support the domestic producers. The smaller animation entrepreneurs had to find the financial sources themselves. However, the Software Industry Promotion Agency (SIPA) recently attempts to encourage more co-productions with other countries in Asia and has proposed that the Board of Investment (BOI) reduce its tax on animation and software from the minimum capital investment of 1 million baht to 500,000 baht (Bangkok Post, 2010).

SIPA has also collaborated with Thai Animations and Computer Graphics Association (TACGA) to launch the National Animation Pilot Project (NAPP) in 2010 to co-produce four animation movies under the theme "Silk" which explores the different concepts of love. The four companies joining in this project are Kantana Animation Studio, Imagimax Studio, Anya Animation, and Imagin Design. Together 200 employees from the four companies have been working on their movie which will be about 20-25 minute long. The total budget for this project is 100 million Baht, 10%

of which is supported by SIPA, 10% by the four companies, and the rest through fund raising from investors. The teasers of the four animations, “My Brother Turtle,” “Aood Man,” “The Lady of Badal,” and “The Crystal Orb” will be shown at the Cannes Festival to promote Thai animations at the international level (Daily News, 2010).

The expected results of this project are that Thai animation companies will gain a morale support as well as financial benefits from the synergistic collaboration to produce more quality animations. Thailand has been playing the role of producing animation for the foreign companies for years. Its skills are second to none. However, what it lacks is the contents and character design.

In order to promote Thai creative industries to meet with international standards, the local industries should strengthen their own creative economy, and in order to boost the creative industry in Thailand, more substantial supports from the government are needed such as financial and laws. On average, a world-class animation takes 3-5 years to complete and needs a financial fund of 800-3,000 million baht (Daily News, 2010). With the U.K. or Korean creative industries as a successful example models, Thais need to provide adequate evidences through systematic data collection to convince the government for providing more financial injection into its creative economy.

### Summary of Thailand’s Creative Economy

The following summarizes major events and developments related to the creative economy of Thailand from 2001-2010.

2001

- Project: One Tambon One Product (OTOP) to promote local creative cultural products

2003

- Project: Bangkok Fashion City to promote Bangkok as the world’s fashion center

2004

- Organization: *Office of Knowledge Management and Development (OKMD)* to trigger new ideas and inspire creativities.
- Organization: *Thailand Creative and Design Center (TCDC)* to provide Thai people “an opportunity to experience and absorb the new creativities by learning from success and achievement of all famous artists and designers worldwide” (TCDC).
- Organization: *Thailand Centre of Excellence for Life Sciences (TCELS)* to develop the Thai pharmaceutical and life sciences products and services

2005

- Organization: *Thai Knowledge Park (TK Park)* to contribute to the building of a learning society in Thailand by “cultivating a positive attitude towards the reading habit, creative thinking, and lifelong pursuit of knowledge among children and youth” (TK Park).

2008

- Organization: *Museum Siam* – an interactive museum which tells the stories of how Thai identity has developed over thousands of years.
- Report: “Creative Economy” issued by NESDB & TCDC, under the OKMD
- Act: Film and Digital Act to support Thailand digital contents industry

2009

- Policy: “Creative Thailand Policy” with two main goals – 1) To make Thailand the hub of creative economy in ASEAN, and 2) To increase the creative economy contributions from 12% to 20% in 2012
- Commitments: “Creative Thailand Commitments” with 12 points and 4 areas
- Organization : “National Creative Economy Policy Committee”
- Event: Thailand’s creative economy has been divided by the model of UNCTD
- Program: “Thailand’s ICT Master Plan for 2009-2013” to raise value of the digital content industry to 165 billion Baht by year 2013
- Program: “Thailand Entertainment Expo 2009” to expand Thailand’s entertainment network and position itself as the leading movie shooting location
- Strategy: “Strategy for the Establishment of a Movie and Video Production Town in Thailand” by the Ministry of Culture

2010

- Program: “Thai Khem Khaeng” by National Creative Economy Policy Committee; 16 projects including the launch of “Creative King” film program
- Organization and unit: “Thailand Creative Economy Agency” under the Secretariat of the Prime Minister, supervised by the “Executive Board of Thailand Creative Economy Agency”
- Programs: “Central Cultural Information Center,” “Creative Provinces,” “Creative Arts and Cultural Festivals,” and the preservation of the Cultural World Heritage sites (by the Ministry of Culture)
- Programs: 30 science and technology prototype villages, increase of research and development fund from 0.25% to 1% of GDP (by the MOST)
- Program: “Film Expo Asia 2010” by the Software Industry Promotion Agency (SIPA) and the Federation of the National Film Association of Thailand
- Funding: 200 million Baht for the digital content production base development
- Program: “Creative City” to raise the awareness of the public as well as to educate them about the creative economy by the Office of Knowledge Management and Development (OKMD) – breaks down into 5 sub-programs to encourage Bangkokians to make Bangkok a creative hub for food, design, and arts to attract more tourists
- Program: “OKMD Creative Awards,” “Executive Creative Economy” course, mobile knowledge dissemination, and website development and promotion by OKMD
- Program: emphasizing digital marketing, strengthening Thailand’s brand, promoting sustainable tourism, and working out an effective crisis management system by Tourism Authority of Thailand, as well as develop and enhance the online technology for tourism

- Program: “Rice Innovation Awards 2010” by National Innovation Agency (under the Ministry of Science and Technology) and the Thai Rice Foundation under the Patronage of His Majesty the King
- Program: “Creative Agriculture” by Ministry of Science and Technology
- Action: “National Innovation Day” every October 5 to honor King Bhumibol Adulyadej
- Program: “Creative City Prototypes” by the Government
- Program: “The Prime Minister’s Industry Award 2010” presented to 31 industrial operators
- Program: “The Prime Minister’s Export Award 2010”

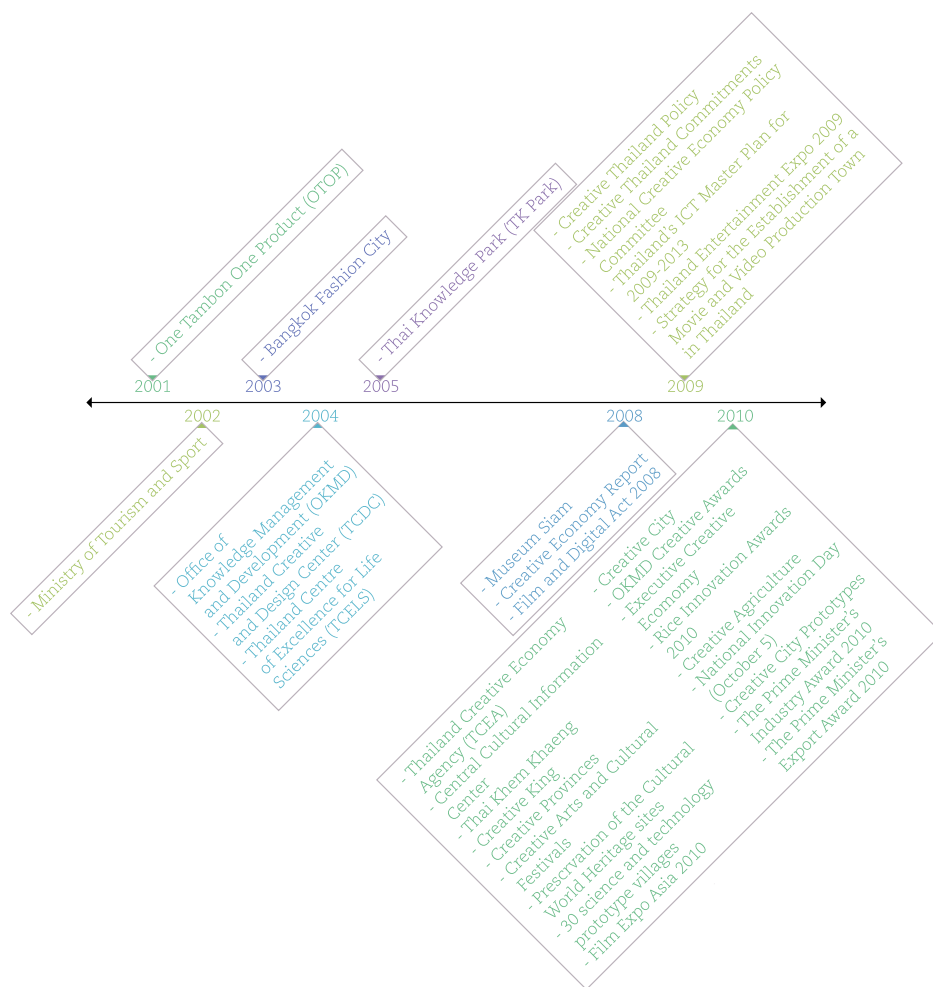


Figure 22. Development path of the Thai creative economy. Source: Prepared for this paper.

**General Future Creative Movement**

The cultural sector of Thailand had been receiving more attention from at the national policy level as reflected through the succeeding governments’ National Economic and Social Development Plans. The seventh National Economic and Social Development Plan for 1992-1996 focused on cultural heritages as it stated that culture should be emphasized “hand in hand with economic development” by encouraging “acquisition, application, and dissemination of local wisdom, and folk knowledge to ensure that the local wisdom and folk knowledge continue to



contribute to development of the local people’s quality of life in harmony with the changing social environment.”

The recognition for the public involvement in Thailand during the same period may be exemplified by the eighth and ninth National Economic and Social Development Plan for 1997-2001 and 2002-2006, respectively, as they shifted from a “growth orientation to people-centered development” and focusing on the strengthening of the communities as one of their goals (Phuttitarn, 2011). The tenth and eleventh plans are now focusing on “knowledge-based development” and “creativity.”



Figure 23. Direction of the 11th NESDP. Source: NESDB.

From the figure above, it may be seen that the 11<sup>th</sup> NESDP focuses on the creative industries development as one of its primary missions. Some of the main strategies to create the knowledge-based economy are as follows (Vimolsiri, 2011):

- Develop creative products so as to initiate new products and services based on creative ideas to generate jobs and income and be the pride of the country
- Develop science and technology, research, and innovation as driving forces to foster the Thai economy to grow sustainably
- Develop infrastructures and logistics systems by seeking support from the private sector participation based on Public-Private Partnership (PPP)
- Reform business laws as well as rules and regulations to yield fair business practice

Stated above, the 11<sup>th</sup> NESDP aims to develop infrastructures and tools for the creative producers to come up with creative assets. Certain rules and laws are planned to be revised to promote and support the conducive environment for more injections of both domestic and foreign investment.

Thailand is planning to move towards a green and sustainable national development based on value creation derived from the harmonious integration between its cultural heritages, local wisdom, creativity, technology, and natural resources. Its ultimate goal is to become a highly efficient country with quality citizens who will be the main factor for the sustainable and competitive national development, as illustrated in the figure 24.

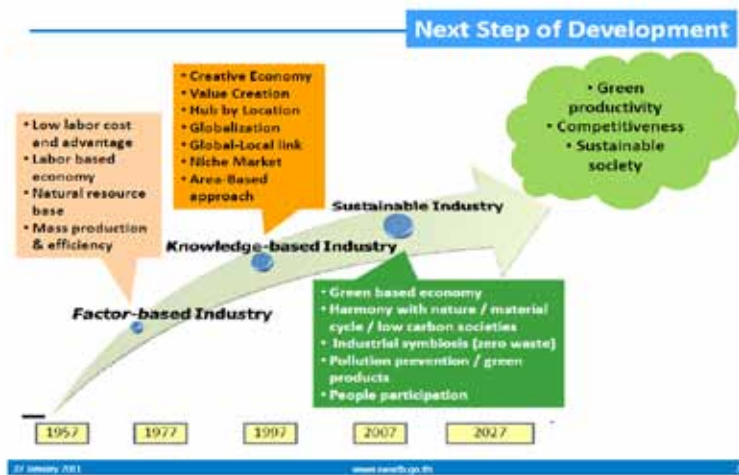


Figure 24. Next step of Thailand development. Source: NESDB.

### Conclusion

Thai’s creative industry has always been one of the more vibrant and creative in Southeast Asia and perhaps even Asia as a whole (even though, Korean is more dynamic), freed from some of more strict regulations that apply in the nearby States. Thai creative regulations and policies do add a few unique hurdles of their own, but the generally more tolerant nature of Thai society and the massive foreign investment of the 1980s and 1990s which introduced many new products and services nurtured a vibrant scene. However, things are now a bit less free-wheeling, and the industry has to cope with new economic realities and budgetary constraints. Large annual growth rates should not be realistically viewed as standard or the norm, as that was an accident of history. But the spirit of creativity and standards of creative direction that characterizes the Thailand scene lives on. Profits and salaries in the industry are way down compared to the past years, but having to struggle to survive is perhaps the greatest exercise in creativity. At the very last, Thailand truly realized that cultural industries are becoming increasingly important components of modern post-industrial knowledge-based economics.

It is going forward into the direction of positive movement towards mobilizing the knowledge and cultural resources to achieve competitive productions and innovations in the creative industries for its national development.

Compared to Korea, Thailand has set several models for the creative economy but their development and implementation may be inconsistent due to the political instability. Thailand also needs to revise its regulations to support the operators

in industry by removing the constraints on creativity as well as to promote both domestic and foreign investment through legal support. As John Howkins says, the role of the government should focus on facilitating the conducive environment to invite more creative ideas and achievements. The new era of Thailand's national development is shifting from labor-based development towards the direction of using knowledge, local wisdom, cultural heritages, sciences and technology for sustainable economic and social development.

Many positive signs are showing for Thailand. To achieve its goal of becoming a competitive creative economy, it needs to raise the awareness and educate the civil and business sectors in relation to the meaning and benefits of the creative economy. Then it needs to provide education through education system, both formal and informal. The people shall be encouraged to integrate their existing local knowledge with the new one to create cultural assets. The government shall play a more active role in outlining and continuously implement different supporting policies and laws to facilitate the creative industries, such as the tax privileges for creative entrepreneurs. It should provide resources in the form of infrastructure and financial funds to aid and enable the entrepreneurs to be actively engaged in the creative economy. Certain organizations shall be set up and regularly reevaluated to ensure the continuous implementation of plans and strategies. By addressing the above issues, the three elements of Thailand creative economy will be strengthened to propel the nation to the forefront of Asia's creative arena.

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