

18. Country Report of Chinese Taipei ¹

18.1 Current Status of the ICT Sector of Chinese Taipei

The development of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is extensively and profoundly affecting every single facet of the society. At the micro level, ICT has affected people's daily life and modes of interaction. At the macro level, ICT has greatly changed many economic, industrial and social institutions. As a result, promotion of digital construction is a vital task assumed by governments in the world.

Since 1990, the focus of Chinese Taipei's industrial development has gradually shifted towards ICT industry. The government announced policy incentives and allocated government funds to establish "Board of Science and Technology" and "National Information and Communications Initiative Committee" as the designated agencies together with other initiatives to promote ICT policy. "E-Taiwan Project" launched in 2002, "M-Taiwan Project" launched in 2005, and the following "I-Taiwan" all established a solid basis of Chinese Taipei's ICT infrastructure. In 2008, Chinese Taipei was ranked in Top 10 by the World Economic Forum in terms of IT readiness and industrial competitiveness.

According to the case study suggested by "The Global Information Technology Report 2005-2006," Chinese Taipei achieved another economic miracle from 1990 to 2000. Due to large-scale investment in ICT industry 20 years ago, the per capita GDP in Chinese Taipei grew from US\$8,000 to US\$14,000. Moreover, measures such as bountiful human capital and the establishment of specialized research think tanks, etc. were the key factors building Chinese Taipei into a tech island. Since 2010, Chinese Taipei has been well-established as a major procurement center for global ICT companies and buyers, ranking top 3 in market share for major ICT products worldwide.

Environment and Readiness

In terms of ICT infrastructure, Chinese Taipei ranked 19th worldwide and 9th in the APEC region according to 2016 Networked Readiness Index (NRI). NRI is measured based on different pillars of Environment, Readiness, Usage and Impact. Chinese Taipei ranked 2nd in Readiness and 1st worldwide in terms of mobile network coverage and accessibility. However, Chinese Taipei still needs to strengthen its environmental pillar, ranking 40th according to Political and Regular Environment Indicator. As for enterprises, Chinese Taipei ranked 25th and 31st worldwide in terms

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of “ICT usage for B2B transactions” and “B2C internet usage,” indicating that there is still room for improvement for ICT usage ratio among enterprises. Furthermore, another study report shows that the digitalization of small and medium-sized enterprises in Chinese Taipei had been drastically risen from 2001 to 2006. And with a higher level of digitalization in e-commerce of business, the productivity is enhanced.

Usage and Gender

In terms of ICT utilization rate, according to 2016 Digital Opportunity Survey Report disclosed by National Development Council, percentage of individuals above 12 years of age that have gone online has risen from 62.7% in 2005 to 79.7% in 2016, and the number of internet users is 16.77 million. In particular, mobile internet has become the mainstream.

In terms of gender differences, 80.3% of men go online, compared with 79.2% of women who go online, making online access rate between men and women to be on par with each other. Moreover, the survey indicates that women are more dependent on the internet, and a higher ratio of women accessing the internet through mobile phones or tablets is disclosed as well. In terms of internet browsing, women spend more time on lifestyle, arts and culture or social media websites, while men tend to engage in gaming and various online discussion forums.

However, in terms of employees in ICT industry, the number of women employees in ICT lags far behind men. In the ICT field, about 70% of the employees are male. The extremely low women participation ratio in ICT industry is a warning sign for future development. It is because ICT industry is currently undergoing the transition of R&D and branding. The male-dominant ICT industry may not fully meet the needs of women users; as a result, it cannot effectively make profits for this potential market. On the other hand, women’s remoteness from ICT industry may also cause harm by losing an opportunity to participate in future economic development.