

Creative Climate Cities Profile
TAIPEI



GEOGRAPHICAL AREA

272 sq. km



POPULATION

2,683,257

CITY STRATEGY LINKS

Department of Environmental Protection

Climate Action Plan for the Municipality of New Taipei City

Department of Cultural Affairs



Welcome to Taipei



Culture Fact

'Refocusing on people and their lives' is the guiding principle of Taipei's Cultural Policy. This includes the provision of education and encouraging cultural participation through initiatives such as 'Citizen Café' and 'Idea Taipei'. These projects involve the public in the early stages of policy development, transforming their role from consumers to cultural producers and policymakers¹.



Climate Fact

Motor vehicles are the main air pollution source in Taipei City, producing 57% of air pollutants and 33% of greenhouse gas emissions; Taipei's air quality improvement plan was created to reduce air pollution and support a low-carbon city².

Introduction

Taipei is the capital of Taiwan and is proud of its reputation as an open and multicultural city. Heavily influenced by both Chinese and Western traditions, with additional cultural influence from Japan and South East Asia, Taipei has long been a diverse cultural meeting point.

Most of the city is located on the Taipei Basin, an ancient lakebed surrounded by the two valleys of the Keelung and Xindian rivers which unite to form the Tamsui River along the city's western border³. Taiwan's mountainous landscape, with over 200 peaks over 3,000 metres, makes the country geographically unique. It is also home to nine national parks which offer a variety of distinct topographic landscapes⁴.

Taipei is increasingly recognised as a city of design innovation and was named World Design Capital in 2016 by the International Council of Societies of Industrial Design. Building on this legacy, Taipei puts design-thinking and 'social design' at the core of its urban development and public participation strategies⁵. However, Taiwan's development has come at a cost to its natural environment, including the contamination of soil, water and air by heavy industries and it ranks seventh among nations most severely affected by climate change (Global Climate Risk Index 2018).

Environmental Ambition

Taipei is considered a hub for environmental innovation and has inspired many of Taiwan's environmental policies, for example, the banning of single-use plastics such as plastic bags and food containers. Environmental engagement and innovation is clearly present within Taipei's arts and culture communities; prior to the implementation of national environmental protections, artists had already started to address environmental issues within their work and as artist-activists⁶. Both Taiwan and Taipei are focused on a sustainable future, committing to global climate change targets and policy such as the Paris Agreement.

Highlights

1

Creative Programmes & Campaigns

Taipei Biennial 2018 was themed 'Post-Nature—A Museum as an Ecosystem', hosted by Taipei Fine Arts Museum (managed by the Department of Culture). Curated by Mali Wu and Francesco Manacorda, the exhibition investigates how systems theory can inform art-making and our reflections on the natural world.

2

Resources & Support

The Department of Culture Affairs provides grants to support different environmental activities and investment in the sustainability of Taipei's cultural infrastructure and heritage, e.g. Taipei Fine Arts Museum's energy efficiency measures.

3

Partnerships & Innovation

Taipei won World Design Capital 2016 under the theme of 'Adaptive City – Design in Motion', including Design for Sustainable Cities using creativity and innovation. It included a series of courses in design-thinking for city officials.

4

Policy & Strategy

In 2003, Taipei City Government created a new law to protect trees which conform to certain size and age criteria which are deemed rare, ecologically, biologically or geographically significant to the local community, history or culture.

Creative & Climate Action in Taipei

1. Creative Programmes & Campaigns

Creative content and activities that engage audiences on themes of climate and the environment

- The Department of Cultural Affairs of the Taipei City Government has been working with young designers to research and develop new and inclusive play equipment for five neighbourhood parks, all designed, produced and manufactured in Taiwan. The 'Inclusive Park' projects integrate social inclusivity with public art projects and the protection of nature, such as the forest playground which contains trees of an age rarely seen in other neighbourhood parks.
- Taipei Biennial 2018 was themed 'Post-Nature—A Museum as an Ecosystem' and hosted by Taipei Fine Arts Museum (managed by the Department of Culture). Curated by Mali Wu and Francesco Manacorda, the exhibition investigated how systems theory can inform art-making and allow us to reflect on our natural environment and human dependence on natural systems.
- **Bamboo Curtain Studio** is an independent art space and artist residency founded in 1995. It is a place for artists, writers, curators, policymakers, citizens and environmentalists both in Taiwan and internationally who are addressing social and environmental issues through their work. Bamboo Curtain Studio is planning a circular economy conference, engaging with Taipei's Business Development Department and Department of Cultural Affairs.
- **Taipei Artist Village** in Taipei City, is located in a previously vacant space, repurposed for cultural activities in 2001 by the Department of Cultural Affairs. Taipei Artist Village, in collaboration with Bamboo Curtain Studio, co-hosted a workshop focussed on climate leadership within the arts, culminating in a public event to showcase international good practice. This event focussed on how artists can adopt more ecological practices and influence audiences and public policy through their actions.
- **Zhishan Cultural and Ecological Garden** is a commission from the Department of Cultural Affairs to Taipei's Wild Bird Society. Zhishan is a listed heritage site (with evidence of prehistoric inhabitants) and the Cultural and Ecological Garden promotes environmental awareness and action to families and local citizens.
- The **Kishu An Forest of Literature** was launched by the Department of Cultural Affairs in an unprecedented attempt to dedicate a facility to literature and was inspired by Taipei's tree activist movement: protecting cultural assets such as historic houses by way of protecting the surrounding trees and landscape.

¹World Cities Culture Forum. <http://www.worldcitiescultureforum.com/cities/taipei>

²C40. <https://www.c40.org/profiles/2014-taipei>

³Taipei City Government: Home – I. Geographic Overview. Taipei City Government. 2006-10-23.

⁴Taiwan the Heart of Asia. <https://eng.taiwan.net.tw/m1.aspx?sNo=0002006>

⁵World Cities Culture Forum. <http://www.worldcitiescultureforum.com/cities/taipei>

⁶Artists and Climate Change. <https://artistsandclimatechange.com/2018/01/29/the-10-most-pioneering-art-sustainability-initiatives-in-taiwan/>

2. Resources & Support

Investment, training and materials that support environmental knowledge and practical action

- The Department of Culture Affairs is responsible for distributing public money granted by Taipei City Government to artists and arts organisations. A proportion of this money provides grants for environmental activities and investment in the sustainability of Taipei's cultural infrastructure and heritage. For example, cultural facilities such as the new Taipei Concert Hall and Public Library, have to acquire the **Green Building label** and achieve the highest “diamond” rating. The Green Building label of Taiwan was developed based on Taiwan's subtropical climate of high temperature and high humidity and designed to meet requirements within ecology, energy saving, waste reduction, and health.

3. Partnerships & Innovation

Diverse disciplines and communities sharing and co-developing ideas and resources that accelerate environmental action

- Taipei won World Design Capital 2016 under the theme of **Adaptive City – Design in Motion**. One of the four programme strands was ‘Design for Sustainable Cities’, inspired by the concept of creating a sustainable city for the 21st century using creativity and innovation. Design professionals were invited to take part in policy-making discussions and the city government designed a **series of courses** in design-thinking for city officials.

- The **Inclusive Park** projects, which brought together inclusive play, public art and the protection of nature, were developed through a series of workshops to canvas opinions and engage with parents. Designers, artists, architects and playground apparatus manufacturers were invited to work together in dialogue with the public, the government, and NGOs.

4. Policy & Strategy

Guiding policy and strategy frameworks that drive climate and environmental action, investment and accountability

- In 2003, Taipei City Government created a new law to protect trees based on certain size and age criteria, which are deemed rare, or ecologically, biologically or geographically significant to the local community, history or culture. The Taipei City Tree Protection Act (Article 6) acknowledges access to trees as a civic right and the trees are protected by the Department of Culture as natural and cultural heritage. Pioneered in Taipei, the policy for tree protection has been taken up by other cities across Taiwan. Taipei City Government is the only city government which assigns tree protection to the Department of Culture.
- It is policy in Taipei for cultural institutions not to sell bottled water. Instead they are encouraged to provide water fountains for staff and audiences. This policy has inspired a cultural shift and the use of reusable water containers is now expected in public and administrative buildings.

What Next?

Spotlight PLUM TREE CREEK

‘Art as Environment: A Cultural Action at the Plum Tree Creek’ was a two-year project on a polluted river in New Taipei City focussed on ‘artistic exploration of sustainable development, environmental protection and encouraging community participation’ (curated by Wu Mali in partnership with Bamboo Curtain Studio). It involved a series of collaborations and was designed to prompt a sense of care for and ownership of the river by connecting the local communities that rely on it.

A number of opportunities have been identified:

1. **Share good practice**

Research creative and cultural initiatives across the city which engage with environmental themes and practices, making them publicly available through an online resource. This will encourage new collaborations and good practice exchange and help build environmental knowledge, awareness and inspiration within the sector. Showcase activities particularly at the grassroots level to create greater visibility and support for this work.

2. **Implement environmental monitoring**

Improve understanding of Taipei’s cultural sector’s environmental impacts (e.g. energy, water, waste, carbon) by establishing environmental monitoring and reporting, potentially taking a networked approach e.g. a consortium of cultural sites committed to environmental improvement. This will build environmental literacy and evidenced-based understanding and planning.

3. **Build the business case**

Work with the Department for Environmental Protection to develop the business case for investing in cultural buildings and events to reduce their environmental impacts. This could include carbon and cost-saving projects such as building upgrades, low-carbon technologies and staff training etc. This would support the Department of Cultural Affairs which is responsible for the finance and management of Taipei’s cultural sector.

4. **Include environmental performance in cultural developments**

Taipei city government is currently engaged with several regeneration and capital development projects, for example, the Taipei Fine Arts Museum extension. Look for opportunities to integrate environmental sustainability in capital projects from building design to environmental performance and management.

5. **Collaborate**

Organise a regular meeting – or working group – to support ongoing collaboration between cultural and environmental departments and implementation of city strategy. Meeting topics could include: environmental management advice for cultural buildings and events; public art commissions and artist advocacy; and citizen outreach and engagement activities. Connecting with local creative and environmental businesses, academics, community leaders and other city stakeholders could produce new knowledge, partnerships and resources.

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台北市文化局
Department of Cultural Affairs



Julie's Bicycle
SUSTAINING CREATIVITY

BOP
Consulting