

Taiwan community thrives in Brabant ecosystem

The future is designed
and made in Brabant



Celebrating 400 years of economic partnership

As we celebrate the 400th anniversary of the historic trade relationship between the Netherlands and Taiwan in 2024, it's an opportune moment to reflect on the thriving Taiwanese business community in Brabant. This milestone underscores the deep cultural exchange, innovation, and entrepreneurial spirit that define this vibrant collaboration, highlighting how both nations bring significant economic value to each other.

Emergence and growth

Taiwan's rapid economic growth in the late 20th century positioned it as a global player in technology and innovation, energizing its trade ties with the Netherlands. Today, the Netherlands stands as Taiwan's largest European source of foreign direct investment (FDI) and a key trading partner.

Taiwanese companies, particularly in technology and innovation, have found a strong foothold in the Netherlands, especially in Brabant's high-tech ecosystem. The substantial Taiwanese investments have forged a robust foundation for mutual growth and collaboration.

Technological accelerator

The Brabant region, home to the "smartest kilometer in Europe" at the High Tech Campus Eindhoven, is a hub for cutting-edge technology. Around 12,500 researchers work at over 300 high-tech companies here, including many Taiwanese firms. These companies, particularly in the semiconductor and electronics sectors, capitalize on Brabant's strengths in innovation and high-tech development.

Brabant's legacy in technology, spurred by global electronics giant Philips, has nurtured a culture of innovation that continues to thrive. Philips' early investment in Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company (TSMC) and the role of ASML, headquartered in Brabant, in developing the world's most advanced semiconductor manufacturing machines, have strengthened ties. The collaboration between ASML and TSMC has positioned both companies to the forefront of semiconductor technology, with ASML's machines responsible for producing 85% of the silicon chips used in everyday devices worldwide. This partnership has driven significant economic activity and innovation in the Brabant region.

Collaborative ecosystem

The exchange of technology and innovation between Taiwanese and Dutch companies drives Brabant's capacity for growth. This collaboration supports key industries such as energy, food production, high-tech systems and materials, biotech and pharma, addressing global challenges like climate resilience, smart mobility, sustainable food production, and public health. The emerged international ventures have created jobs and development opportunities in both Taiwan and Brabant, enhancing workforce skills and capabilities. The expansion of Taiwanese companies into Brabant contributes to Taiwan's economic growth through increased revenues and global influence. Taiwanese professionals, with their expertise in semiconductor manufacturing and related fields, have become valuable assets in Brabant's knowledge network. Their contributions to research and development initiatives with institutions such as the High Tech Campus Eindhoven and the Automotive Campus Helmond further fuel technological breakthroughs and economic growth.

Roots and Networks

Rex Chu, Chairman of the Taiwanese Business Association in the Netherlands, notes that Acer played a pioneering role in Taiwan's technology sector, with many Taiwanese companies tracing their roots back to the brand. "If you look at today's company family trees, almost all of them can trace their roots back to Acer. For example, the first employees of Qisda or BenQ came from Acer. Acer is, in effect, the training ground for the Taiwanese IT sector!" he quips. "I can also trace my roots back to Acer," he states proudly. Taiwanese firms like Qisda and BenQ, born from Acer's early talent pool, continue to shape Taiwan's high-tech landscape, paralleling Philips' influence in the Netherlands.

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The 1980s saw the Taiwanese government prioritize IT sector growth, investing in education and R&D, fostering a skilled workforce and technological innovation.

Today, companies like ASUS and Acer are global leaders in computer hardware, reinforcing Taiwan's reputation for technological excellence.

"Most Taiwanese tech brands originate from Taiwan's high-tech manufacturing environment. For example, I work for Alpha Networks, a subsidiary of Qisda – a holding company with around 200 subsidiaries. BenQ, one of the largest, is also located in the Netherlands. Qisda is the manufacturer, and BenQ is the brand. Virtually all Taiwanese tech companies started from a manufacturing base and then split into manufacturing and brand." says Rex Chu. It is easy to understand why Taiwanese companies see distinct parallels with Philips's legacy and sphere of influence in Brabant.

Helping Hands

The Brabant Development Agency (BOM) plays a key role in attracting innovative businesses to the region. It supports the transition to a sustainable regional economy and contributes to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. BOM's Bright Innovation Tours introduce newcomers and established companies to collaborative opportunities within Brabant's (tech) ecosystem, including visits to Brainport Eindhoven, Holst Centre, High Tech Campus Eindhoven, and many more relevant commercial entities. supported by organizations like the Netherlands Foreign Investment Agency (NFIA).

These initiatives provide crucial support for Taiwanese companies as they integrate into the region, contributing to their success. "They act as reliable bridges, explaining things and providing consistent support. Their stable platform helps Taiwanese companies establish long-term trust - we know exactly who to talk to if we need guidance or advice. This is one of the key success factors in Brabant". Rex Chu mentions.

The Taiwanese Association South Netherlands (TSN) supports the Taiwanese community, which includes many professionals and their families working for companies like ASML. TSN offers resources, educational support, and cultural programs that help Taiwanese newcomers settle and thrive in Brabant.

TNS states "We have many Taiwanese companies in the South of the Netherlands, it is quite a sizable community that includes the families around these companies. Additionally, ASML in Brabant, attracts many Taiwanese employees, bringing their families as well. We recognized the need to support this group over 10 years ago. This led to the creation of a separate entity within the association. Firstly, we have our own Chinese school for this community. Secondly, we act as a resource center, providing support and connections. Thirdly, we assist new Taiwanese companies looking to set up in North Brabant or Limburg."





fltr: Alex Chen, Senior Project Manager NFIA Taiwan – Hans Kuijpers, Director NFIA Headquarters – Justine Chen, Vice President Gigabyte Global – Victoria Vasjuta, Senior Project Manager Foreign Investments BOM – Mariëlle Lagers, Executive director NFIA Taiwan – Ian Chen, Senior Project Manager NFIA Taiwan – Heidi Lien, Marketing and Office Manager NFIA Taiwan

Victoria Vasjuta, Senior Project Manager Foreign Investments at BOM, clarifies: "The aim is to create closeness within the community. This is what TSN excels at in the South." In addition to practical support, the Taiwanese community celebrates cultural events like Lunar New Year and the Dragon Festival, and hosts open days at the Chinese School Eindhoven. Over the years, there have been numerous cultural and educational exchanges between Taiwan and Brabant, deepening mutual understanding and fostering closer relations at a people-to-people level.

Victoria, with more than 15 years of experience doing business with the Taiwanese in various high-tech domains, serves as the primary contact for any questions or issues and frequently travels to Taiwan to stay closely connected with company headquarters. She also fosters strong relationships with the NFIA and the Netherlands Office Taipei (NLOT) and collaborates closely with TSN and TBA to ensure community support.

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Soft landing in Brabant

Taiwanese companies find Brabant a reliable and fertile ground for growth, drawn by its reputation as "the Silicon Valley of Europe." The region's strong network of suppliers, combined with its strategic location and access to knowledge institutions in Belgium and Germany, makes it an ideal hub for innovation and collaboration.

Rex Chu claims, "It is easy to see why Taiwanese companies feel Brabant is a tried and trusted location where they can thrive. In Brabant, in particular, Taiwanese companies are aware of the tech legacy of Philips, and they want to be part of what they consider to be 'the Silicon Valley of Europe.' However, it is not solely the influence of Philips. There is an extensive network of Tier 1 and Tier 2 suppliers creating a fertile ecosystem for collaborators and co-creators to drive innovation."

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"The BOM and Brabant have a compelling success story, with Victoria playing a crucial role as the Taiwan community specialist. She knows many Taiwanese companies and coordinates their integration smoothly. When you have a success story and a good reference, you can attract new business," He asserts.

"Other critical factors include the widespread use and understanding of the English language within the Dutch population and being located in a key logistics hub at the heart of Europe. Another factor in Brabant's favor is access to talent and knowledge institutions in bordering countries." Within less than an hour's drive, there are technical universities across the borders of Belgium and Germany offering potential R&D collaborations and a stream of qualified employees after graduation. This is confirmed by many Taiwanese companies located here.

Tried and Trusted

This sentiment is echoed by Chien-Shan Yang, Finance Business Partner R&D Enterprise Informatics at Philips and Chairwoman of the TSN: "I think, generally speaking, Asian people really place a lot of value on building a good relationship. In business interactions especially, we depend on the relationship a lot. That is why the trust element and a strong network are crucial when entering new markets. They like to get to know you before doing more business with you."

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"We are fortunate to have such a close-knit Taiwanese community here in Brabant," asserts Chu. "Not just within the TBA but also the TSN organization, which focuses more on general life and social aspects. If you look at the Taiwanese companies here and the segments they operate in, they are, in fact, each other's competitors. Many of the companies are selling to the same customer, so it makes sense to work together and collaborate, which is very much a Dutch way of working. Sometimes, we need to think differently, and this is a valuable message for Taiwanese companies looking to set up here. If you can cooperate with your competitor or colleague, there are opportunities all around."

Bright Futures

In May, the European Taiwan Business Association celebrated its 30th anniversary, marking a milestone year for Dutch-Taiwanese relations. Brabant's High Tech Systems and Materials sector has provided fertile ground for Taiwanese companies to thrive, with partnerships that enhance the region's innovative capacity. "This was especially for the business network," asserts Chu. "We also had the NFIA as a speaker, discussing the investment climate in the Netherlands. Over the three days, there were many opportunities for social networking and new business."

By contributing to R&D efforts, funding academic programs, and collaborating with local institutions, Taiwanese firms are helping expand Brabant's economic diversity and resilience. Delta Electronics, for instance, funds PhD programs, and BenQ works closely with Fontys University of Applied Sciences. These efforts illustrate mutual economic growth and shared success.

Taiwanese investments have been a catalyst for job creation and economic growth in the Netherlands, establishing a thriving community we are proud of. This enduring partnership between Dutch and Taiwanese firms fosters a dynamic business ecosystem where innovation flourishes. Taiwanese companies, in turn, gain from Brabant's strategic advantages, such as market access, a supportive business environment, logistical expertise, and innovation opportunities within Europe's leading tech hub. With continuous cultural exchanges and a supportive environment, the relationship between the Netherlands and Taiwan remains a robust foundation for future growth, benefiting both economies and paving the way for a shared, prosperous future.

To commemorate the centuries-long connections between Taiwan and the Netherlands in the anniversary year 2024, a book has been written by a group of international authors. Read more info via since1624.info.

Get in touch with our expert for more information



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