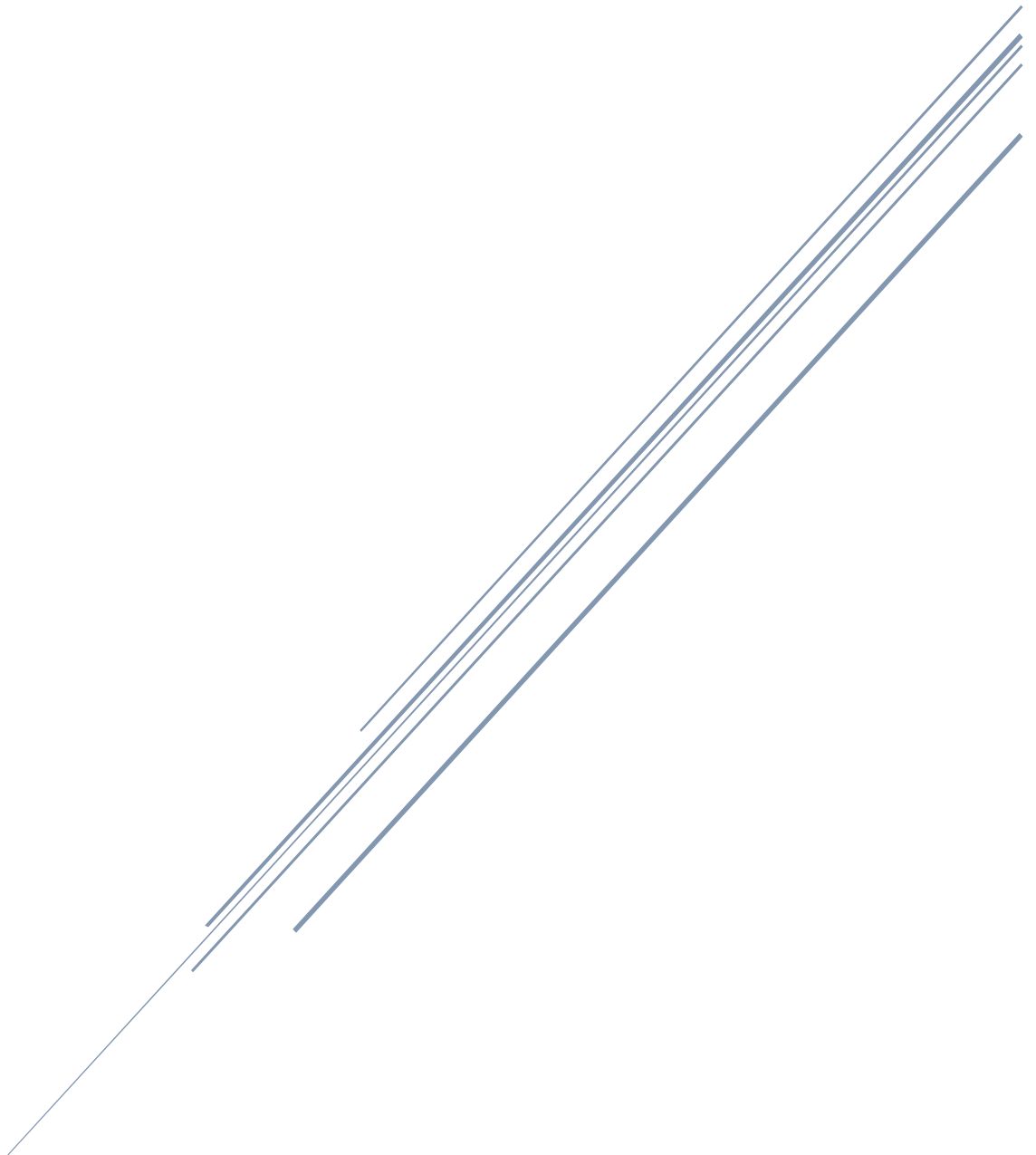


ACPA 7003

International Innovation Management

Global expansion of Griffiths & Hughes Ltd to three proposed locations, and the benefit of internationally defined innovation management standards, to this business



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1.0 Introduction

Griffiths & Hughes Ltd are a mid-Wales based company manufacturing security systems, looking to strategically position themselves to manage the manufacture, marketing and distribution of their products globally. The executive team has shortlisted 9 potential locations for this expansion – 3 in each ‘zone’. This report will critically evaluate which of the 3 locations – 1 in each zone – are determined most strategic for Griffiths & Hughes Ltd to consider further.

1.1 Proposed Location 1 – Montevideo, Uruguay

Various global companies have made FDI into Uruguay over the past two decades, demonstrating a level of confidence in the country’s suitability as an off-shoot location. Uruguay benefits heavily from its close proximity to the Rio de la Plata – allowing direct logistical access to a market of around 0.5 billion. It also sits strategically between Argentina and Brazil and benefits from free-trade areas and free movement (port and airport) policies, allowing it to run as a regional distribution hub for South America. According to the USA Department of Commerce (2023) ‘Due to the size of the country (3.4 million people – half in Montevideo) and the relatively high per capita GDP, Uruguay can function as a test market for those international companies that have no previous experience in the region’ which aligns perfectly with Griffiths & Hughes limited global experience.

The Argentine government recognises the importance of foreign investment to its economy and has introduced incentives to encourage this and to streamline the process e.g. the Sociedad de Acciones, the lifting of foreign exchange controls and the establishment of a more attractive and simplified legal framework for investors (BizLatinHub, 2017). Meanwhile, Uruguay attracts foreign investment with its parity in regulations between foreign corporations and national ones, along with unrestricted repatriation of capital to other nations and unlimited transfers of profits. The US International Trade Administration currently lists ‘Access Control Systems: smart cards, biometrics, controllers, local area network devices, readers, and digital processors.’ as being some of the best prospects for foreign investments in Uruguay which puts Griffiths and Hughes Ltd in a fortuitous position (USA Department of Commerce - International Trade Administration, 2023). According to the same source, ‘Uruguay’s electronic safety and security market relies heavily on imported products and services. In order to import security equipment and technology, local companies typically form joint ventures with international firms or become authorized dealers’ which suggests that Griffiths & Hughes Ltd could potentially develop another business avenue for itself by importing goods from its UK base – this also suggests that the market in Uruguay is not even close to being saturated.

Brazil has been besieged by political corruption for decades, including a scandal involving its then-president in 2016. Likewise, Argentina has been plagued by political instability and corruption, impacting its economic standing in recent years. By comparison, Uruguay is rated as the most politically stable and democratic country in South America, and has retained this title for a number of years. Uruguay has probably the strongest commitment to its own laws and to international standards, particularly OECD and global taxation standards, and policies of all South American countries, which would help to convince Griffiths & Hughes Ltd executive team that establishing a manufacturing and distribution hub there would be a safer strategy in the long term than elsewhere in South America. However, public procurement processes can be slow and formal competitor complaints are very common, although this does go some way to show that Uruguay is a democratic country and that there is a freedom and transparency that is not so readily available in the other South American

countries considered. Uruguay has a current International Peace and Security rating of 3 (far improved on Brazil at 37 and Argentina at 30).

Another consideration is that of the national language; for Brazil, this is Portuguese, while for Argentina and Uruguay, the population primarily speaks Spanish. Approximately 8% of the world's population speaks Spanish (Spain Cervantes Institute, 2023), double that speaking Portuguese globally – Latin America is predominantly Spanish-speaking; a manufacturing/disruption facility operating in one of the very few Portuguese-speaking countries may find this a barrier to effective service and trade with other countries in the geographic region. Argentina currently holds the highest English Proficiency Index of all Latin America countries, with Uruguay only slightly behind in 8th position and Brazil in 12th (Statista, 2021).

In a recent analysis, Uruguay was crowned the 'safest country in which to invest' in South America (Weltman, 2022), with Argentina and Brazil trailing far behind. Approximately 66% of the population of Uruguay are considered middle-class – around 33% more than in any other South American country, illustrating the increasing wealth and financial stability within the nation by comparison to its neighbours. In the years following 2013, Uruguay's economy grew at an unprecedented rate, declining only when the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic were felt (it weathered the recessions suffered by both Argentina and Brazil in the mid-2010s with comparative ease). All 3 countries due for consideration are founding members of Mercosur, the South American trade bloc, but Uruguay benefits from a strong economic partnership – and pending free trade agreement – with China that gives it an edge over Latin America economies, and which could be advantageous for Griffiths and Hughes Ltd in terms of onward distribution through Asia. By comparison, Brazil's economy is the 7th largest globally (GDP by PPP) (UK Government, 2017).

The 2020 World Bank 'Ease of Doing Business' report ranked Uruguay in 101st place, ahead of Brazil (124th) and Argentina (126th) (World Bank, 2020) demonstrating its suitability for consideration as a manufacturing and distribution hub for Griffiths and Hughes Ltd.

In particular, Uruguay is seeing an increase in the security market, especially around imported products – imports of security products were up by 30% YOY in 2021 (USA Department of Commerce - International Trade Administration, 2023). US and UK-made products in particular are highly-regarded due to a perception that they are longer lasting and of superior quality, giving Griffiths & Hughes Ltd a competitive advantage over local manufacturers.

Something to bear in mind is that labour laws in Uruguay can be inflexible e.g., wage restraints and strict recruitment/hiring/dismissal regulations (UK Government, 2022). However, this is clearly documented and adhered to by the Uruguay government, highlighting transparency over less restrictive but more corruptible practices elsewhere in South America. It also benefits from a more reasonable employment approach in some ways, for example Brazil has limited time non-compete clauses, the duration of which must be paid to the employee.

Another important factor for consideration is that of employment costs; the average annual salary for an Operations Manager in Brazil is £61,838, for Argentina it's £59,856 – by comparison, the average in Uruguay is £30,833. This highlights a clear economic advantage to Griffiths & Hughes Ltd to hiring in Uruguay.

Upon consideration of this information, therefore, it would be reasonable to give significant consideration to Montevideo as being a suitable location for the basing of an additional facility for company operations and this should be explored further by the executive team.

1.2 Proposed Location 2 – Taipei, Taiwan

Whilst Shenzhen, China, holds the world's fourth-largest container port and shares an important border with Hong Kong, and has a far greater geographical area than Taipei (2,050 km² compared to 278 km²), the latter sits at the centre of the Asia Pacific region, giving it a strategic geographical advantage over the former when it comes to logistics and transportation. As illustrated in appendix figure 1.2.1, it has established road and rail links to, and is within a five-hour flight from, all key APAC cities and is just over a six-hour flight from Sydney. Additionally, approximately a tenth of the global sea liner fleet is controlled by Taiwan, giving the country a key strength when it comes to cross-nation supply chain management (Templeton, 2022). It has been estimated (Maritime Executive, 2022) that in one year, \$3.4tr (21% of the world's trade) passed via the Taiwan Strait, giving Taipei direct access to one of the world's busiest shipping lanes. Its proximity to the primary raw material manufacturing base for Griffiths and Hughes Ltd.'s products – mostly factories in mainland China – would serve to drastically decrease logistics costs and delivery timeframes, allowing for a more economical and streamlined supply chain system. Taipei currently has 2 major industrial parks housing more than 5,600 companies, with a further 3 parks due for completion by 2025.

Taiwan currently controls more than two-thirds of the global market for semiconductor manufacturing, placing it in a unique and strategic light for Griffiths and Hughes Ltd in terms of industry knowledge and skills, market and industry establishment and availability of suitable facilities, established practices and supply chains and supporting industries. Additionally, Taiwan has very strong existing links with the Western manufacturing world, and is closely aligned with western manufacturing and operating principles; whilst both China and Taiwan ostensibly adhere to ISO standards, doubt has been raised on the legitimacy of both the claims and the auditing practices of mainland Chinese companies in relation to ISO (Technology Networks, 2019).

In terms of culture and brand perception, 'Made in China' has attracted negative connotations in recent years due to assumptions of cheap, mass produced and poor-quality goods. It could, therefore, be beneficial for Griffiths and Hughes Ltd.'s products to carry the more trusted (in popular culture, at least) 'Made in Taiwan' stamp, especially when considering that these goods are security products. However, as of the end of 2022, China customs have indicated that goods marked as being 'Made in Taiwan' will be refused entry to the mainland and may be confiscated and so separate labelling processes may be required from goods being sent elsewhere in the world.

Foreign investors to China can be deterred by the complex and ever-changing legal frameworks by which they need to abide and operate, which are often weighted heavily – and sometimes unrealistically – in favour of domestic manufacturers to protect home industry – 'State companies and "national flagships" are protected (discriminatory practises, non-independent judicial power, selective application of regulations) (Santander Trade, 2023). There are considerable bureaucratic and administrative hoops to jump through as a foreign investor which is time-consuming in project start-ups. Additionally, intellectual property rights are weak, and often poorly enforced, in mainland China, coupled with a lack of transparency around regulations. By comparison, Taiwan's IP laws are likely to be more favourable to Griffiths and Hughes Ltd as they are more closely aligned with US IP laws – 'Until a few months ago, the Chinese state required forced technology transfer and it's system of intellectual property protection was among the weakest in most industrialised countries.' (Santander Trade, 2023).

China, Taiwan and India all offer various subsidies and tax breaks for foreign investors; however, Taipei's are perhaps the most favourable to Griffiths & Hughes Ltd at the present time (appendix figure 1.2.2), as these are particularly targeted towards those businesses seeking to invest in the manufacturing and technology industries and their employees. Taiwan also ranks far higher on the World Bank's 2020 Doing Business report which analyses the various incentives and constraints on foreign investment operations in countries around the world, in 15th position in contrast to China in 32nd place and Mumbai at 63 (World Bank, 2020). This gives a clear incentive to Griffiths & Hughes to explore Taiwan as a potential additional site further.

The current political relationship between mainland China and the US, and indeed, China and Taiwan, is a cause for concern. The situation is volatile and new foreign investment in Shenzhen should be considered carefully in terms of the impact on existing working relationships with other parties around the world. Likewise, the potential for harsh, short-notice additional sanctions or trade restraints against China from the West help to sway the decision in Taiwan's favour.

One consideration is that, due to the aforementioned political issues, the import of goods into China from Taiwan, and vice versa, can be problematic, with enhanced labelling requirements and various import bans on products being sold into the former and produced by the latter. Whilst this is not insurmountable, consideration must be paid to this and there should be a clear and full understanding of the restrictions and requirements in order to prevent hold ups. Despite this, however, mainland China remains Taiwan's largest export market (42% in 2021), with over half that exported to the country being either electrical or mechanical goods (China Briefing, 2022) which indicates a strong market for Griffiths and Hughes Ltd (market saturation for scanners such as the company seeks to develop is unlikely at the present time). Additionally, China currently accounts for more than 60% of the demand for semiconductors from Taiwan, and so it would appear highly unlikely that the mainland would impose trade restrictions on these products for the foreseeable future.

In terms of culture and employees of the company, the cost of living in Shenzhen is far higher than in Taipei, although Mumbai remains the location with the lowest cost of living by far. Workers' rights in Shenzhen, although existing legally, are, in reality, unenforced due to the levels of bribery and corruption amongst officials seeking to meet their own targets of economic growth. Both personal and corporate tax regulations, and employment rights are far superior, and better and more reliably enforced in Taiwan than they are in mainland China which is more attractive for UK talent looking to move for employment (KPMG, 2021). Taipei is currently one of the cheapest cities in the world in terms of utilities costs. English is widely spoken, albeit to varying proficiencies, across mainland China, in Mumbai, but particularly in Taiwan.

1.3 Proposed Location 3 – Durban, South Africa

Durban sits in a geographically strategic location, holding Durban Harbour which is the 4th busiest port in the southern hemisphere and carries approximately 60% of the cargo destined to and from South Africa. The strategic importance of this port cannot be underestimated, in that it has significantly shorter holding times than others in the geographic region, far more in line with those in Europe and Asia. The longer goods are held in port, the worse the impact on onward trade and the supply chain, and the overall economy as a whole. This is likely to be important for Griffiths & Hughes Ltd in terms of its distribution of its goods. Durban's location also gives the company a direct access route for its

goods to South America and Asia, whilst the company's UK operations can distribute to Europe and North America.

According to Lloyds Bank Trade 'South Africa has large market potential, well developed infrastructure and a competitive domestic economy' (Lloyds Bank Trade, 2023). The country has its own active and strong stock exchange and the state governments financial capabilities and management are satisfactory.

Whilst in the World Banks 2020 Ease of Doing Business analysis, Tunisia sat in 78th position, ahead of both South Africa at 84th position, and Zimbabwe (140th) there is a narrow gap between Tunis and Durban when it comes to investment consideration. By comparison, the USA Department of Commerce notes that Zimbabwe is traditionally loyal to domestic brands, and reluctant to engage with companies new to the market (USA Department of Commerce, 2023).

Heavy financial incentives are offered by the South African government for investment in Durban and the surrounding areas, as outlined in appendix figure 1.3.1, alongside significant tax breaks, employment tax incentive, infrastructure allowances and technical funds, in addition to a range of non-financial assistance measures. Government approval is not required for FDI, and there are very few limits on the level of investments from foreign companies. The overriding sense when evaluating the Invest Durban literature is that Durban and its governing body are very receptive to FDI and actively embrace it – the administrative bodies could not be more helpful or transparent and have actively sought to remove red tape and make the process as smooth and rapid as possible for foreign investors, with the implementation of it's One Shop Stop policy (Invest Durban, 2020).

In recent years, Durban, along with the rest of South Africa, has seen a shift away from agriculture and other traditional industries in favour of financial services and manufacturing industries and 'it is the most industrialised, technologically advanced and diversified economy on the African continent' (Lloyds Bank Trade, 2023). The average annual salary for an Operations Manager in Durban is £20,254 compared to £22,000 (Bulawayo) again demonstrating a financial advantage to the company exploring this site further.

The primary language for over 50% of those residing in Durban is English, which is highly beneficial to a small company such as Griffiths & Hughes Ltd. Another valuable consideration is that of employment rights, and personal rights that are at the cornerstone of UK society such as anti-discrimination rights, which are at odds with those in place in both Zimbabwe and Tunisia. For this reason, Durban is again a strong contender for a secondary manufacturing and distribution site given its Western values and comparable employment rights.

2.0 The use and benefit of internationally defined innovation standards (namely ISO 56000, the Oslo Manual and the BSI series) to Griffiths & Hughes Ltd

ISO (International Organization for Standardization) is a non-governmental, internationally recognised independent organisation which develops and publishes specific frameworks of best practice. ISO standards allow for a standardised method of planning, completing, measuring and reporting processes across products, services, materials, industries and is applied globally.

Critically, the terminology agreed for use in the innovation ISO standards is the same as that used in the OECD-EUs Oslo Manual ('the international reference guide for collecting and using data on innovation') (Planbox, 2023) and so by implementing the ISO 56000 series the company will also be compliant with the Oslo Manual.

The implementation of recognised global innovation management systems promotes consumer confidence as it ensures a minimum standard of conformity for goods, services and practices, which will ensure that UK/EU customers feel the same level of trust and confidence in a product manufactured in Montevideo, Taipei or Durban as from a product manufactured in mid-Wales as at present, and vice versa. However, an important consideration here is that, in line with the comment made in section 1 previously, some countries e.g., mainland China, has a reputation for poor or false auditing of ISO compliance – it is therefore important that the company employs internationally-trusted and verifiable auditing companies and procedures. Additionally, given the market in which Griffiths and Hughes Ltd operates – manufacturing security devices – it is increasingly likely that their customers are required, by law or by their own adoption of ISO/BSI standards, to use only products conforming to equivalent and defined standards, particularly when considering such products as scanners to permit or restrict access to secure areas, and those determining entry based on a person's temperature for safety reasons (e.g., potential Covid-19 infection).

The adoption of such standards will improve Griffiths & Hughes Ltd.'s ability to keep up with competition, by capturing and harnessing the 'best ideas' from its team, giving it a competitive advantage over those companies who do not embrace the internationally recognised standards. Griffiths & Hughes Ltd will be more readily able to benchmark their operations against competitors or against industry best-practice through the use of a clear, standardised industry framework.

ISO standards, the Oslo Manual and BSI standards are applicable to all industries, regardless of their size or structure which will potentially assist Griffiths and Hughes Ltd with widening their market reach to companies many times larger than themselves. Carrying the mark of ISO 56000-compliant operation and other innovation standards ensures that the companies innovation management culture is both 'visible and credible' (ISO, 2020).

The adoption of the ISO 56000 standard, amongst others, is likely to be of significant benefit to Griffiths and Hughes Ltd at this critical moment of international expansion also as it will ensure a standardised conversation across the entire business. It will define, and ensure the use of, standardised language and terminology relating to innovation management and implementation within all areas of the company (ISO, 2020) which is crucial for a clear and coherent approach between staff working on opposing sides of the globe, a significant language barrier (primarily between operations/manufacturing staff 'on the ground') and different industrial cultures. It will ensure a level of operating consistency across all manufacturing facilities, ensuring that changes to process can be implemented swiftly and uniformly. It will permit easier, and more reliable, comparison of plans, concepts, diagrams etc. between varying cultures, abilities and languages and will facilitate the

implementation of standard operating procedures between global sites, improving quality management, improving efficiency and potentially cutting costs in the process. Importantly, the ISO series encompasses specifically the parameters around intellectual property.

The use of all and any internationally agreed innovation standards within an operation forces a level of continuous improvement, which can only be beneficial for Griffiths & Hughes Ltd as the company seeks to grow in a sustainable and positive manner.

Another consideration relating to the standardisation of manufacturing processes via ISO 56000 etc. implementation is that of safety. This is particularly relevant when considering operations across the world in countries with very different industry practices, opposing cultures and lower calibre (or non-existent) health and safety and labour laws. The ISO series etc set a minimum bar which allows for Griffiths & Hughes Ltd to reassure its customers and involved parties – in any country - that the company actively monitors and prioritises safety and labour matters as part of its ongoing innovative strategy, potentially over and above the legal requirements in that country.

By implementing internationally defined innovation standards such as BSI, the Oslo Manual and the ISO series, Griffiths and Hughes Ltd is able to define the innovation culture within the company; it promotes a widespread and deep-rooted culture of innovation encompassing every part of the business operation, from administration through to manufacturing, and all levels of people, from line operatives through to the executive management team. It defines exactly how, when and by whom each stage of the innovation process should happen (appendix figure 2.1) and outlines what each stage should encompass (appendix 2.2). It demonstrates that the company has a specific and intentional innovation strategy and provides a clear and known mechanism for employees at all levels to contribute to innovation; in doing so, the very existence of these standards within the business encourages the people within it to believe in innovation and be innovative. Such a framework also helps to define innovation as an ongoing, core function of the operation, rather than one-off, improvised, untargeted developments in response to singular specific problems (Pratt, 2020) and (Hello Future, 2023).

The process of investigating, planning and implementing the ISO 56000 series etc. will also shine a light on the company's current status and the level of investment (not only financial) that is required to get the company operating in a truly innovative manner; the parameters of the innovation management series will highlight what is required in order firstly meet the series standards, then to remain fully compliant on an ongoing basis in terms of both tangible assets e.g. financial investment and infrastructure (including hardware and software) and non-tangible requirements e.g. leadership requirements and specific skill sets. This will assist Griffiths & Hughes Ltd with its ongoing annual budgeting, its purchasing/CapEx policies, managing ongoing efficiency across its plant and, finally, its recruitment planning.

It should be remembered that to implement and remain compliant with any such series, there is likely to be a significant cost in terms of both financial investment and that of time investment from the workforce at all levels. However, the benefits are likely to be several-fold and will allow the business to move forward in a defined, strategic and cost-efficient manner.

Appendix

Fig. 1.2.1 (KPMG, 2021)

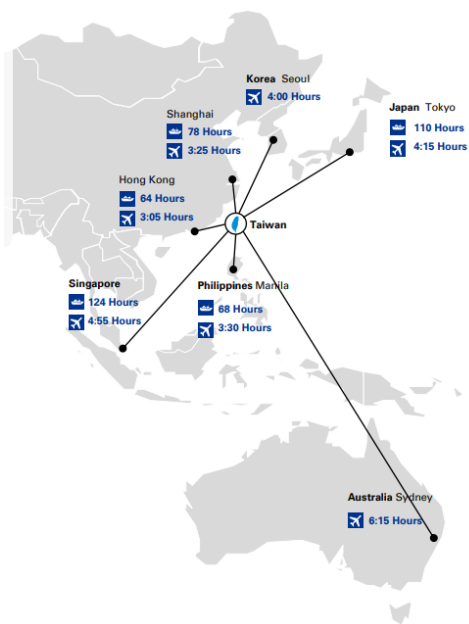


Fig. 1.2.2 (Invest Taipei, 2023)

Investment Subsidies	Related Subsidy Items
○ Creativity subsidies: 50% of the total amount with a maximum of NT\$1 million ○ R&D subsidies: 50% of the total amount with a maximum of NT\$5 million ○ Branding subsidies: 50% of the total amount with a maximum of NT\$5 million ○ Incubation subsidies and the "Angel Program": Maximum NT\$3 million for each project	○ Subsidy on Employee Training: Maximum NT\$1 million ○ Subsidy on Employee Salary: Maximum NT\$5 million ○ Subsidy on Loan Interest: Maximum NT\$50 million ○ Rent Subsidy: Maximum NT\$5 million ○ Subsidy on House Tax/Land Value Tax: Maximum NT\$50 million ○ Exemption or reduction of rent for two to five years against public-owned houses or land

Fig. 1.3.1 (Invest Durban, 2020)

Financial incentive is offered to the following categories of new investment in the City:

CATEGORY	CRITERIA	INVESTMENT VALUE	MAXIMUM % AGE REBATE
Investment Value	New investment in any industrial or commercial property development.	R0 - R299 million; or	10%
		>R300 million	20%
Jobs Created	FTE Jobs created post construction in new investment in any Sector for a fixed 3-year period.	All inclusive	
		• 50-250 jobs	5%
		• 251-500 jobs and above.	10%
	FTE jobs in new investment in the Targeted Sectors the 3-year period post construction:	All inclusive	15%
		• 50-250 jobs	
	• 251-500 and above jobs.		20%
Targeted Sectors	Investment in Targeted Sectors as defined in the eThekweni Inclusive Growth Strategy 2020-2025.	All inclusive	40%
Spatial Priority: Prime Investment Corridor, Special Inner City Incentives, Transit Oriented	Investment in Spatial Priority Area. As defined in the City's Spatial	All inclusive.	20%

Fig. 2.1 (Planbox, 2023)

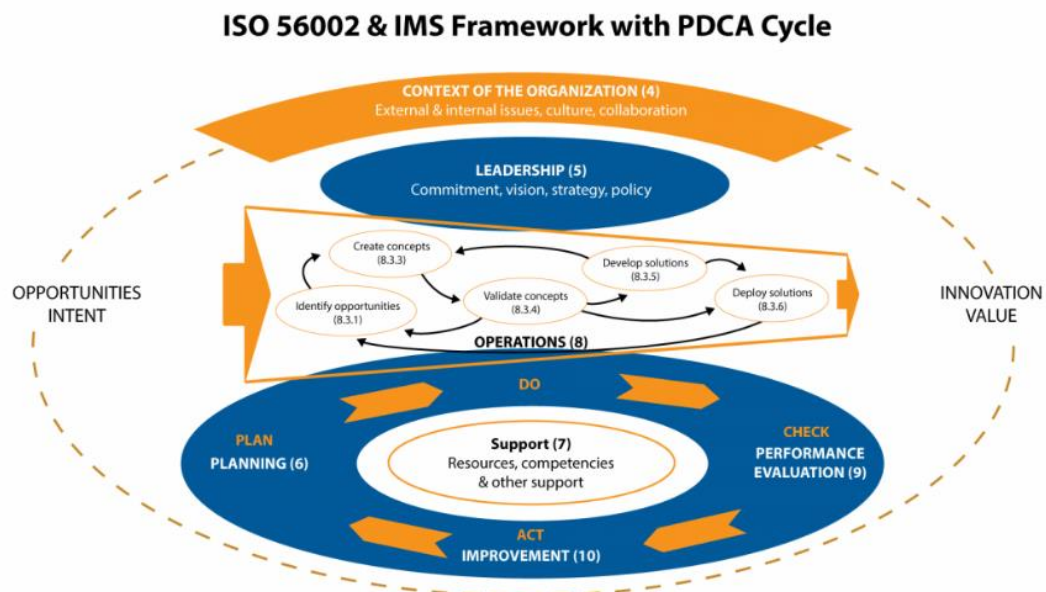
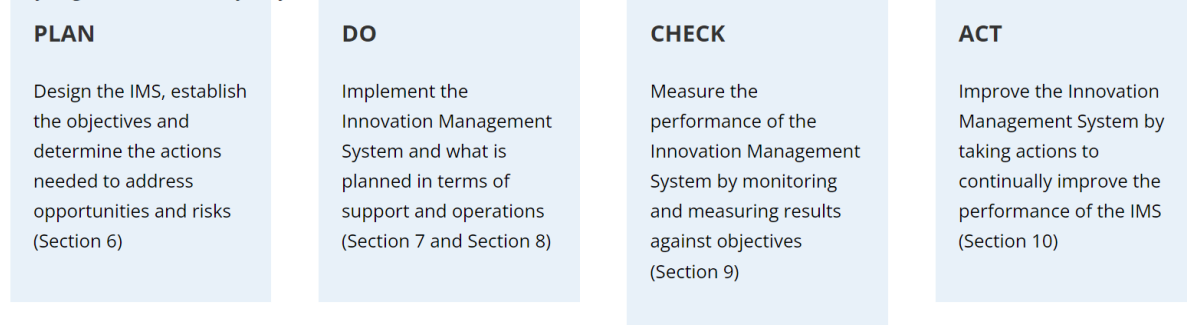


Fig. 2.2 (Planbox, 2023)

As you get into the PDCA cycle, you must:



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