

**PLANNING FOR A CULTURAL
RENAISSANCE: CHINA'S BLUEPRINT
FOR THE FUTURE**

ZHAO Litao & TAN Soon Heng

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Executive Summary

1. The concept of “cultural industry” reflects a new perception of culture as indispensable to the economy. Despite its rapid development, China’s nascent cultural industry is still not competitive enough to meet rising domestic demand and international competition. China is suffering a huge cultural trade deficit.
2. The Chinese government is determined to turn the situation around. The 11th five-year plan containing China’s first cultural development program in nearly six decades is an avant-garde endeavor where a cultural renaissance for China is planned.
3. Main aims of the blueprint include utilizing culture as a converging ideology to unite the Chinese citizens, foster a socialist well-off society, and equalize cultural opportunities for the masses. Its pragmatic principles include fostering a new cultural vision, promoting the uniqueness of its ethnic cultures, and integrating rural with urban cultural development.
4. Economically, the program embraces marketization to transform state-owned cultural institutions. It targets nine cultural industries and four cultural projects for preferential development, where much emphasis is placed on researching and capitalizing on the new trend of digitizing media products.
5. Three economic powerhouses of the eastern region – the Yangtze River Delta, Pearl River Delta and the Bohai Gulf – are expected to become three leading cultural clusters. They are encouraged to develop new cultural trends with a global orientation.
6. The blueprint also envisages the formation of two new infrastructures in the cultural sector. The first is to have public ownership as the core, while developing it together with other ownership types. The second is to have a national culture as the core, while incorporating desirable foreign cultural

elements into the structure. It also entails the promotion of China's culture to the world.

7. However, the program is still bounded by the limits of state ideology. It relies on state-controlled institutions such as schools and work units for the purpose of education and socialization, while other equally effective institutions were sidelined or denied a larger role.
8. When tied to their economic benefits, local governments are pro-active in promoting the cultural industry. This is especially true for central China, where provinces like Hunan and Hubei are taking advantage of the program to carve out their own niches.
9. As the reform dictates cultural enterprises to survive on their own, consumption pattern and market selection will play an increasingly larger role in shaping China's future cultural development.