



Ajuntament
de Barcelona

Asia Strategy of Barcelona City Council

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In collaboration with





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PRESENTATION
BY DEPUTY MAYOR
LAIA BONET

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Institutional presentation by Deputy Mayor Laia Bonet

Barcelona City Council presented its first Master Plan for International Relations just over two years ago. The plan was a pioneering tool for ordering and guiding municipal international policies. This is precisely why this is a cross-cutting document, paving the way for defining working areas in international relations as specific plans of action.

In the current global context, the City Council's international policy continues to address the city's relationship with Asia. Barcelona must be capable of positioning itself in the world's most dynamic economic region, with increasing geopolitical clout and a significant internal diversity (cultural, political, social, religious).

This first Barcelona - Asia strategy examines the state of the city's relationship with countries in the region and sets out the main focal points for the future at both a bilateral level (city to city) and in terms of priority themes. The process to formulate the strategy enjoys the support and guidance of the Casa Asia, the public diplomacy body tasked with building ties with the region.

Other city stakeholders that work with Asia on economic, social and institutional relations were also involved: Fira de Barcelona, Port de Barcelona, Barcelona Supercomputing Center, Consorci de la Zona Franca (Free Zone Consortium), Institut Ramon Llull, Cambra de Comerç de Barcelona (Barcelona Chamber of Commerce), Comitè de Desenvolupament de Rutes Aèries de Barcelona (Barcelona Air Route Development Committee) and others. This makes it a city strategy and not just a municipal one.

This document is organised into five sections. The first explains how important Asia is in the global context, and in particular for the city of Barcelona. The second offers an analysis of current ties between Barcelona and Asia. The third section sets out the strategic lines for projecting Barcelona towards Asia, while

the fourth identifies strategic cities for Barcelona in the region. Finally, the fifth section defines the mechanisms that will be used for monitoring and implementing this strategy.

The plan is basically a first step towards positioning Barcelona in Asia. For establishing and consolidating strategic ties in key areas for the future of the city, such as innovation, economic promotion, sustainable development, cultural exchange and the promotion of human rights. Obviously, this all builds on the work done in the past and the contacts established at both a bilateral level and within the framework of European programmes and multilateral networks.

We aim to go forward in the same way that this strategy was developed, the way we do things that work well in Barcelona: with everybody's input, with all the economic, social, cultural and institutional bodies involved.



Executive summary

A city as open to the world as Barcelona must adapt its international strategy to the great global transformations, many of which have their origins in Asia.

The projection towards this continent is an ongoing challenge because of its economic dynamism, demographic weight, diversity and cultural potential, and also because of its status as a new global **centre of power**.

Asia's weight measured in terms of purchasing power parity has been growing during the first two decades of the 21st century, approaching the economic weight of the rest of the world combined (45%). Asian countries have made a particularly remarkable effort in the field of innovation in recent decades. **Today, South Korea, Japan and China invest 4.3%, 3.14% and 2.5% of their GDP in research and development, exceeding the average of EU countries.**

Against this new global backdrop, it is essential to take into consideration the new European framework for relations with Asia. The EU has geared its **trade diplomacy towards Asian markets** through the signing of free trade agreements, and it has developed connectivity strategies, partnerships and other initiatives that have opened up a new field of cooperation opportunities.

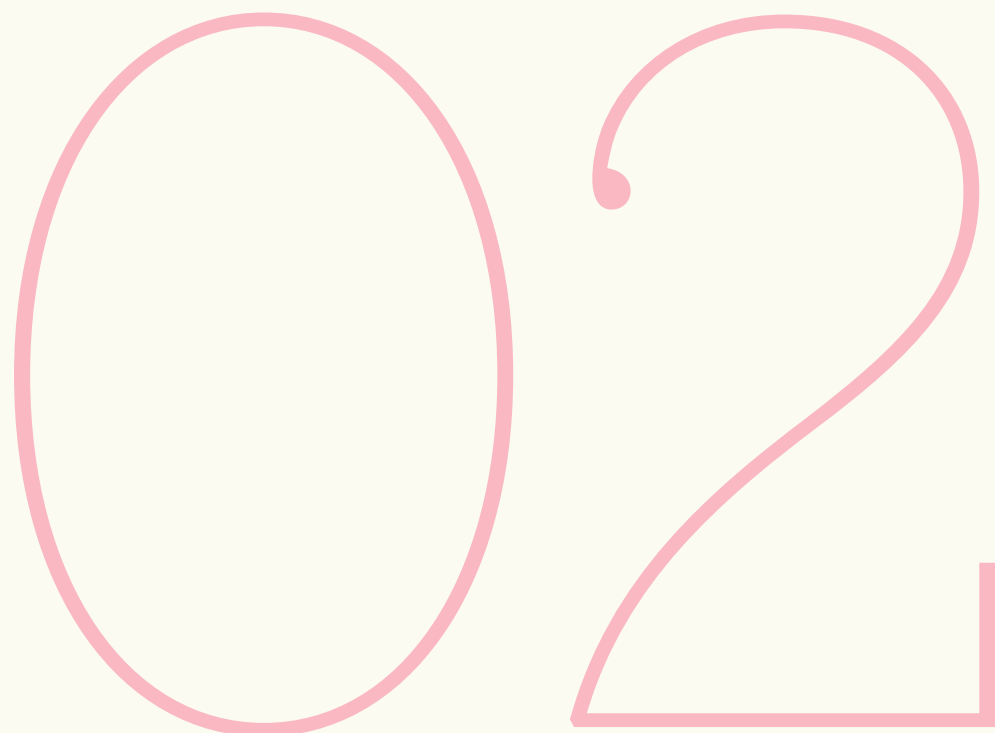
The EU also wants to strengthen its presence in Asia with a new strategy in the **Indo-Pacific**, presented in September 2021, which aims to contribute to stability and prosperity in line with the principles of democracy, rule of law, respect for human rights and international law, at a time when tensions are rising in the region

Another important transformation has been the level of urban diplomacy activity in Asian cities,

which, although reduced by the pandemic, is being revived to a greater or lesser extent depending on the country. Asian cities are seeking to boost their external projection through contacts with European cities and also to share solutions to achieve more sustainable development. These include measures to reduce CO₂ emissions, urban and territorial planning, energy efficiency, access to water, social inclusion, urban resilience, etc. In addition, there are important demographic and mobility challenges due to the fact that 35 of the 50 most populated cities in the world are in Asia, which can generate opportunities for collaboration.

In view of the evident importance of Asia, the city of Barcelona has been establishing relations with other Asian cities for years. Barcelona currently maintains **relatively balanced** relationships with Asian cities, however, logically, greater weight is given to East Asian countries (Japan, China and South Korea). The remaining challenges include India and certain Southeast Asian countries (with the exception of Singapore, with which relations already exist), as well as Australia and New Zealand.

In line with this strategy, Barcelona will focus its institutional actions on **strengthening existing relations with Asian cities** with which it has been working, as well as exploring potential future collaborations with new cities.



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There is also greater participation in the programmes of **international networks of cities** where there is also Asian participation, especially those with a presence in Barcelona, such as United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), Metropolis and the International Association of Educating Cities (IAEC).

Furthermore, as an instrument of public diplomacy and with its headquarters in the city, **Casa Asia** is also an important asset for the development of Barcelona's Asian strategy.

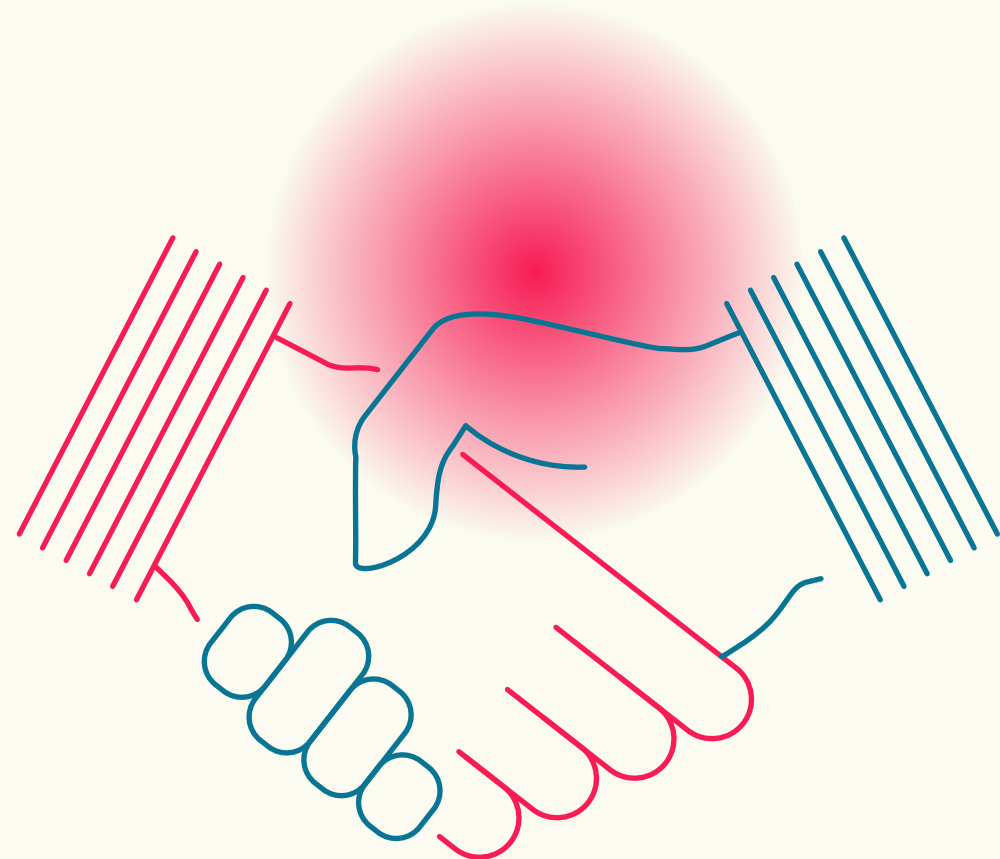
The Barcelona City Council is a member of the board of trustees of the **Spain-China, India and Japan Council Foundations**, public diplomacy institutions that aim to strengthen bilateral relations in all areas, as well as create a focus of attention towards these countries in our society.

Supporting Asian institutions in Barcelona, such as the **Confucius Institute** or the **Sejong Institute**, is also an excellent way of promoting the language and culture of the institutions' home countries.

It is also essential at an institutional level to maintain permanent contact with **Asian consular delegations** in the city and to encourage the opening of consulates general as a means of fostering relations in various fields. Support will also continue to be given to consulates to organise activities related to their respective countries.

Nevertheless, Barcelona will work to incorporate a **broader European dimension** in its relations with Asia, including the new geopolitical framework, the trade agreements that the EU is signing with certain Asian countries (Japan, South Korea, Singapore and Vietnam) and the geographical priorities established by the EU. Barcelona will also participate more actively in **European programmes** aimed at connecting European and Asian cities, especially in the field of sustainable urban development.

Beyond the institutional level, cooperation in the field of innovation with Asian cities is a key issue. **Barcelona is driving the debate and commitment to technological humanism**, which focuses primarily on promoting digital inclusion and the ethical use of new technologies. This vision coincides with that of many cities in Japan and South Korea, where exchanges of good practices and projects of common interest will continue, as will attending Asian delegations to continue to boost the exchange of good practices and position Barcelona in Asia. Furthermore, collaboration between Barcelona's **innovative ecosystem** and that of the Asian cities with which it has the greatest potential will be strengthened, both in terms of joint research programmes and in terms of attracting research talent.



Barcelona will develop its Asian strategy based on the principles set out in the **Barcelona Green Deal**. Collaboration with Asia is particularly appealing when it comes to the digital training of citizens, the transformation of the tourism model towards a more sustainable one or the green reindustrialisation of the city.

In terms of **promoting the city and attracting investment, missions to various Asian cities** will continue to be channelled with the participation of various players from the city's economic sphere. The priority objective will be to consolidate relationships with cities where one already exists (Shenzhen, Shanghai, Busan, Seoul and Singapore), but we will also try to encourage promotional activities with cities in Southeast Asian countries.

In the area of **logistics**, Asia is the world's production centre for goods, and its ports are key to global supply chains. Therefore, Barcelona hopes to consolidate the **Port of Barcelona** as one of the main logistics and goods distribution centres for goods coming from Asia in Southern Europe and North Africa.

With regards to **tourism**, Asian visitors are a major asset for the city of Barcelona when it comes to promoting quality, sustainable tourism that also helps to deseasonalise demand. In addition to the most consolidated markets in Asia, such as **Japan, China and South Korea**, promotional activities will be strengthened in countries such as **India, Australia, Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines**.

Another important area is **trade fairs and congresses**. It is important to boost the attraction for Asian visitors, sponsors and exhibitors, as well as to internationalise the trade fairs and congresses organised in Barcelona that are of greatest interest to the region.

In order to increase both Asian tourism and participation in trade fairs and congresses, it is important to develop **direct air links**. Asia is the **main geographical priority** for the development of direct air routes from Barcelona, even more so than the United States and Latin America, due to its growth and future potential.

Lastly, **Asian communities** (especially Chinese, Pakistani, Filipino and Bangladeshi) have a significant presence in the city. The general objective in this area is to reinforce the integration of Asian communities living in Barcelona and to take advantage of the contacts they have in their countries and cities of origin to establish mechanisms for ongoing collaboration with the city.

In consideration of the above, this plan will help to position Barcelona in Asia, as well as to establish and maintain strategic, lasting and effective relations with Asian cities and actors in all sectors of mutual interest, with the aim of generating tangible results for the city and its citizens.

THE IMPORTANCE OF ASIA IN A GLOBAL CONTEXT

03



This section analyses the main factors behind the rise of Asia, as well as the main challenges in the region. Asia is not only growing in scale, but is also integrating at an accelerated pace, leading to major changes in the structure of the global economy and geopolitics.



3.1 Change dynamics

The boom in Asia is forcing a re-examination of international relations, which are becoming increasingly multi-polar. Asia will be the most dynamic region on the planet in the coming decades. From a **macroeconomic weight perspective**, Asian GDP measured in terms of purchasing power parity (PPP) was roughly equal (45%) to that of the rest of the world combined at the end of 2021, according to the International Monetary Fund (IMF). By 2030, more than 50% of global economic growth is expected to occur in Asia.

By 2030, OECD figures show that approximately two-thirds of the world's middle class will reside on the Asian continent, so the world's largest consumer markets are shifting to this region, which is the **world's most populous region**, accounting for 60% of the world's population.

The projection towards this continent is an ongoing challenge due to its economic dynamism, its demographic weight, its diversity and cultural potential, as well as its status as a new centre of global power. Asia is a **continent of opportunities**, from which no city in the world can afford to be absent if it wants to play a leading role in today's global dynamics.

3.2 Asia and the SDGs

Issues related to education, environmental sustainability, gender equality, citizen participation in local governance and the reduction of inequalities, among many other areas linked to the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), require a sustained effort to foster

dialogue and cooperation with Asian partners. This work is in line with the city of Barcelona's objective of promoting the defence of citizens' rights, feminism and diversity through international action, as defined in the government measure "**Barcelona, global city**".

The role of Asian cities in achieving greater compliance with the SDGs at a global level will be crucial, so solutions are needed for Asian cities to achieve sustainable development, including measures relating to the reduction of CO₂ emissions, urban and territorial planning, energy efficiency, access to water, inclusiveness, urban resilience, etc.

3.3 Sustainable urban development

Asia is undergoing a **process of urbanisation that is unprecedented** in global history. While countries such as Japan and South Korea began this process during the decades following World War II, and today have urbanisation rates of over 80% and even 90% in the case of Japan, countries such as China, with an urbanisation rate of 60%, Indonesia (56%) and India (34%) have not yet reached this level, and the process of rural migration to cities will continue to increase over the coming decades. This rampant urbanisation process in Asia opens up many possibilities for cooperation with Barcelona on sustainable urban development.

There are also **challenges linked to the growth of some of its major metropolises**. The first challenge is demographic, as 35 of the 50 most populous cities in the world are in Asia (World Population Review); but there is also an important economic challenge, as the 10 cities that are expected to experience the

highest GDP growth in the world are in Asia (*Global Cities 2035*, Oxford Economics). Four of these cities will be in mainland China, four in India and the last two in Southeast Asia.

Economic growth is not benefiting all urban dwellers in the region equally, and in many cities there are significant differences in terms of income, access to health care, education, services, etc.

Despite the huge differences in scale, some of the **main issues are common** to both Asian and European cities, covering issues related to governance and the application of technology in city management, reducing pollution, improving sanitation, waste or water management, affordable housing, the inclusion of the most disadvantaged and sustainable urban mobility, to name but a few.

3.4 Urban mobility

Urban mobility is one of the main challenges facing most Asian cities. In fact, **some of the most congested cities in the world are in the region**, including Mumbai, Manila, Bangalore and Jakarta.

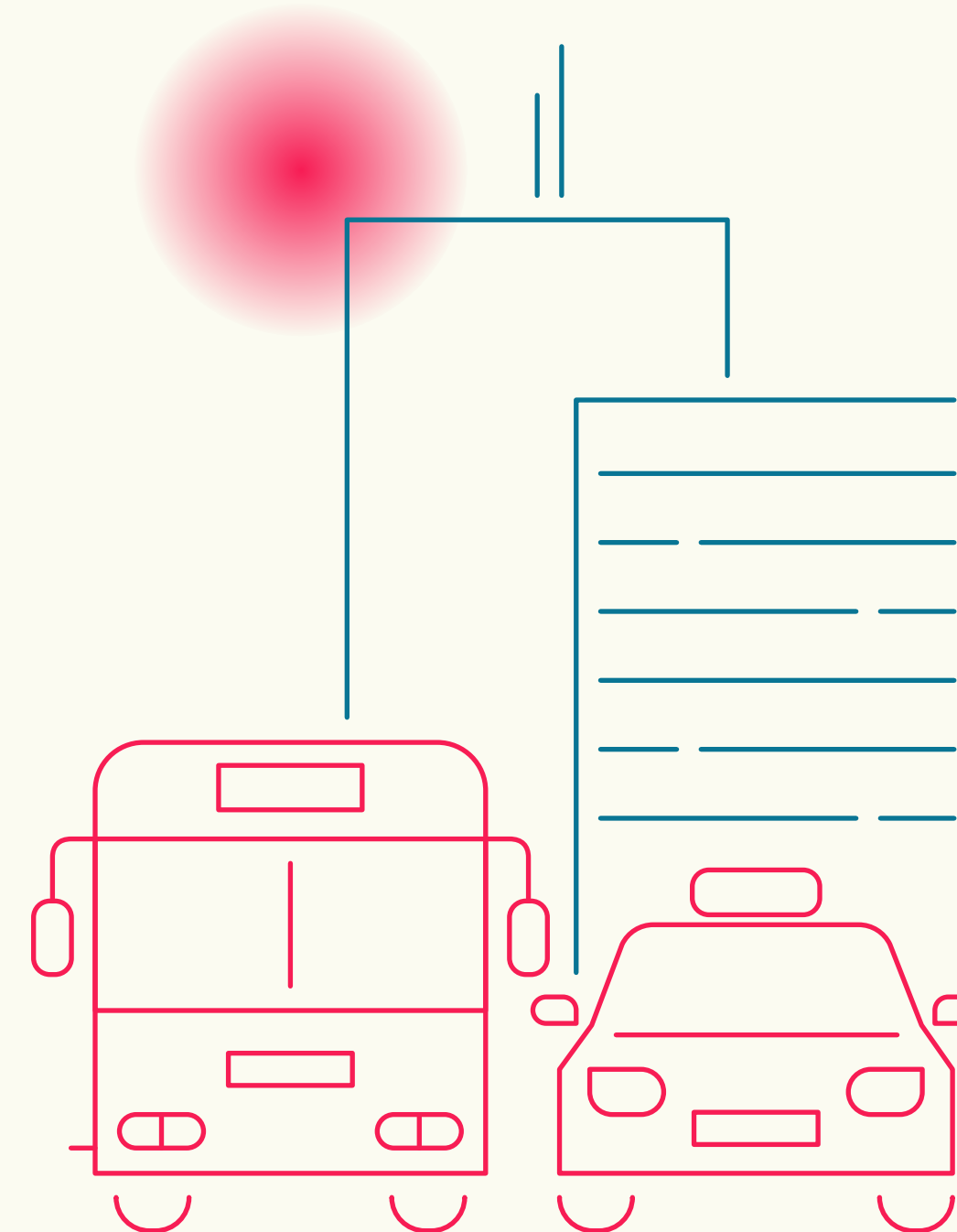
Despite differences in size in terms of population and territory, **Barcelona's urban mobility model is attracting the interest of many local governments in Asia**. According to the Deloitte City Mobility Index, Barcelona is in fifth place worldwide in the ranking of smart cities in mobility systems, standing out in aspects such as the use of public transport, accessibility, vision and strategy.

Among other aspects, the public transport management network or the superblocks model for the transformation of the city, the reduction of traffic and the promotion of local commerce, have helped to position the city of Barcelona as a reference for some Asian cities that also have to deal with traffic problems by increasing green hubs.

Furthermore, **the progress made in some Asian cities in the field of smart cities** is more than noteworthy. China leads the world in electric mobility, due to the strong commitment of the central and local governments to the electrification of public transport systems and a strong local subsidy policy. For example, Shenzhen is the first city in the world to have an all-electric fleet of buses, as well as 22,000 electric taxis.

Singapore, for example, is a world leader in mobility issues such as transport regulation, fare systems and autonomous vehicles, making it Asia's leading mobility laboratory.

“According to the Deloitte City Mobility Index, Barcelona is in the fifth place worldwide in the ranking of smart cities in mobility systems.”



3.5 Innovation

Asian countries have made an enormous effort in innovation over the last few decades. Japan currently invests 3.14% of its GDP in research and development, China 2.5% and South Korea 4.3%. The advanced degree of innovation that many Asian countries have achieved represents an important opportunity for Barcelona, given that the innovation ecosystem in the main Asian cities is not yet sufficiently globalised. This impetus also poses a major challenge in terms of putting citizens and digital rights at the centre of technological progress.

In **Japan**, in addition to the traditional sectors such as the automotive and electronics industries, some areas such as robotics, biotechnology and Industry 4.0 are of particular note. Japan has always relied on innovation as one of its best weapons to improve productivity and help address its socio-economic challenges, such as its ageing population. It is also now committed to **Society 5.0**, as will be discussed further on.

China particularly stands out in areas such as artificial intelligence, the development of 5G networks, robotics, Fintech, the aerospace industry and the development of e-commerce solutions (payment systems, etc.). China's 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-2025) emphasises the pursuit of technological independence, in line with the “Made in China 2025” strategy that the government published in 2015. The Plan specifies 7 areas in which China will seek to develop its technological capabilities in order to reduce its dependence on foreign countries: artificial intelligence, quantum information, integrated circuits (especially semiconductors), life sciences and health, neural sciences, biological breeding and aerospace



technology. The country will have to strike a balance between independence and international cooperation in these areas, so it is foreseeable that there will be some difficulties for collaboration with Europe.

Much of **South Korea's** innovation is produced by its large companies, known as chaebols. South Korea also stands out for its innovation capacity in areas such as automotive, information and communication technologies, semiconductors and Industry 4.0. These sectors will continue to be relevant, but the perspective of sustainability and digitalisation of the Korean economy will be strengthened, as highlighted in the Korean New Deal 2.0. Furthermore, it is a world pioneer in the introduction of social innovation mechanisms, applying effective and sustainable solutions to global social and environmental problems, such as poverty, disease and pollution.

In **Singapore**, a special effort is being made in advanced manufacturing, health and biomedical sciences, urban solutions and sustainability and the digital economy.

Meanwhile, in the countries in the region that depend more on industry (such as **Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam and the Philippines**), a major effort is being made in all aspects of Industry 4.0 and digitalisation, although these countries still have a long way to go to become innovation powerhouses.

Other countries such as **India** also need to make a substantial effort in this area. Even so, the presence of leading companies in sectors such as information technology and biotechnology is noteworthy, in addition to the remarkable progress the country has made in the digitalisation field in recent years. Furthermore, cities such as Hyderabad, Bangalore, Mumbai and Delhi have developed a very competitive start-up ecosystem.

3.6 European institutional framework

In recent years, the European Union (EU) has been creating a **new framework for EU cooperation with Asia**, which should serve as a reference for the various economic and institutional actors in the city of Barcelona when it comes to boosting its relations with Asia.

On the economic front, the EU has engaged in **commercial diplomacy towards Asian markets** through the signing of free trade agreements, negotiations and other initiatives with Asian countries that have opened up a new field of cooperation opportunities.

- **EU-Japan relations** include the entry into force of the EPA (EU-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement) in 2019, the implementation of which is being positively perceived by both sides. In addition to eliminating tariffs and non-tariff barriers, the agreement includes rules related to environmental sustainability, as well as the opening up the public procurement market (including cities) in both directions. An EU-Japan partnership agreement on sustainable connectivity and quality infrastructure was also signed in 2019, with the aim of improving connectivity not only in Japan but also in third countries in areas such as digitalisation, transport and energy.
- With regard to the **EU's relations with China**, the China Investment Agreement (CIA), which was announced in December 2020 and aims to establish a clearer regulatory framework and protect investments in both directions, is currently under review due to the difficulties encountered in EU-China relations. Furthermore, the EU has recently raised the need to reduce dependence

on China in sensitive products related to pharmaceuticals or technology products.

- **Relations between the EU and South Korea** have been developing considerably over the last decade since the free trade agreement between the two sides entered into force in 2011. A framework agreement linked to the free trade agreement has also been in force since 2014, dealing with cooperation on important political and global issues such as human rights, non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, counter-terrorism, climate change and energy security.
- Turning to **India**, the negotiation of the free trade agreement between the EU and India, which began in 2007, is currently at a standstill due to differing standpoints on both sides. However, it was recently announced that the EU intends to reopen the negotiations in view of the EU's interest in boosting its relations with the Indo-Pacific area.
- In 2017, the **EU and Australia** signed a Framework Agreement on cooperation in the areas of security, environment and economy, which will serve as advanced work in the run-up to negotiations on a comprehensive free trade agreement. Australia is therefore expected to be the next country in the region with which the EU will sign such an agreement.
- In the case of **ASEAN**, the EU has recently signed free trade agreements with Singapore and Vietnam, which could serve as a model for similar agreements with Thailand, Indonesia, or Malaysia in the future.

Two significant dynamics of change must be taken into account with regard to the new cooperation framework within which the EU is working to strengthen relations with Asia.

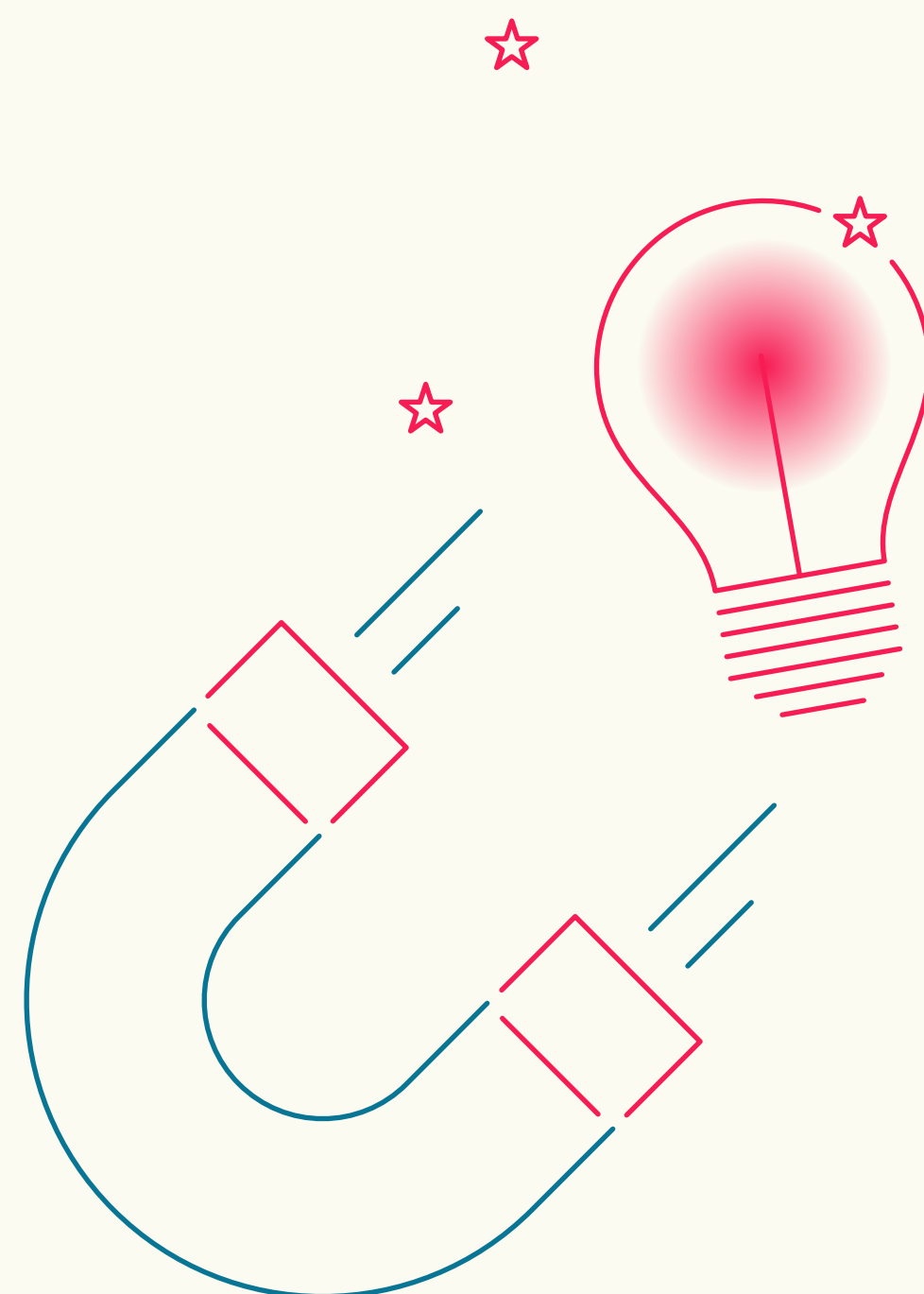
The first is the progress in the **economic integration processes in the region**, which have been bolstered by the signing of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), which encompasses the 10 ASEAN countries and China, Japan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand, and the Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), which includes Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore and Vietnam.

The second is **the emergence of a new strategic arena in the Indo-Pacific**, in which the EU wants to reinforce its presence and actions, with the aim of contributing to stability and prosperity following the principles of democracy, rule of law, respect for human rights and international law. This comes against the backdrop of rising tensions in the region, especially as regards the South China Sea and the new geopolitical scenario that is emerging as a result of the war in Ukraine. .

The EU is the main investor in the region, as well as a major contributor to cooperation and development.

The EU's main interests in the region focus on sustainable development, green transition, connectivity, security and defence, ocean governance, digital governance and human safety. It is of particular importance to ensure good connectivity with the Indo-Pacific since more than 40% of EU trade in goods passes through this area, where there are such strategic points as the Strait of Malacca, which links the entire South China Sea with the Indian Ocean and Europe.

“The growth of Asia continues to represent an excellent opportunity for Barcelona to bolster its economy by attracting investment and talent.”



3.7 Economic promotion and attracting investment

The growth of Asia continues to represent an excellent opportunity for Barcelona to bolster its economy by attracting investment and talent, boosting the growth of the main trade fairs held in the city, and promoting goods from Asia, the world's main manufacturing centre. These are areas of economic cooperation for the city, and they have been affected by the impact of the pandemic and the war in Ukraine.

Firstly, in terms of **attracting investment and talent**, the most advanced Asian countries have been developing a strategy for establishing themselves in Europe for several decades now, starting with Japan in the 1980s and continuing more recently with China and South Korea. This represents a great opportunity for Barcelona both for the creation of quality jobs and for attracting talent and technologically advanced companies from the region, especially considering that the city has traditionally been one of the main gateways for Asian companies in Spain and Southern Europe.

Logistics and distribution is one of the sectors in which relations with Asia have developed the most. China is the Port of Barcelona's leading customer, and compelling agreements and projects are underway with ports such as Busan (South Korea), Yokohama (Japan) and in other Southeast Asian countries. Barcelona's standing as a gateway for Asian goods in southern Europe is a key factor in ensuring the city's competitiveness.

Lastly, the consolidation of Barcelona as one of the main European cities for holding international trade fairs and congresses implies the need to develop an institutional support strategy to

boost the efforts already being made towards the Asian continent, due to the large group of participants, exhibitors and sponsors that the region can provide, especially at fairs with a higher technological content.

3.8 Tourism

The growth of the middle classes has been crucial in driving Asian outbound tourism to Europe. Every year, **more than 100 million people join the middle class in Asia**. For Asian tourists in general, Europe is known for its cultural heritage and its importance as a shopping destination, as well as for its gastronomy.

Over the last few years, the changes in how Asian tourists visit Europe have been enormous, including aspects such as the length of their trips, the way they book their trips, their preferences and main motivations for travelling, their level of spending, their age and their intensive use of technology.

It is also worth noting that tourism from Japan, China and Korea showed the highest growth of all international tourism in Barcelona from 2018 to 2019. It is also a type of tourism that tends to contribute to destabilisation and has a higher-than-average level of spending per day.

The COVID-19 crisis and the war in Ukraine have temporarily halted all this growth, however, and it seems that it will take some time for Asian outbound tourism levels to Europe to recover.

It is also expected that the lessons learned from the pandemic and environmental sustainability will introduce new elements to be taken into account

when receiving Asian tourists, once the flow of tourists from this area has been re-established, and this will be in line with the tourism sustainability that the city of Barcelona aims to achieve.

3.9 Asian communities

The concentration of **Asian diasporas** in the city of Barcelona represents an important opportunity to boost relations with their countries of origin in the spheres of tourism, education, trade, culture and health.

In addition to the Chinese and Pakistani diasporas, which are the most numerous and enterprising of the Asian communities in Barcelona, the Indian, Filipino and Bangladeshi diasporas have also grown considerably in recent years.

The Asian diasporas established in Barcelona and its metropolitan area can play an important and previously underestimated role in disseminating an image of the city as vibrant, innovative and open to the world. It is worth highlighting their strong involvement in the fight against the pandemic by acting as a bridge between actors in their country of origin for the purchase of material or donations, as well as their solidarity in aspects such as the distribution of food, the provision of taxi services for health workers during the pandemic, etc.





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ANALYSIS OF CURRENT RELATIONS
BETWEEN BARCELONA AND ASIA

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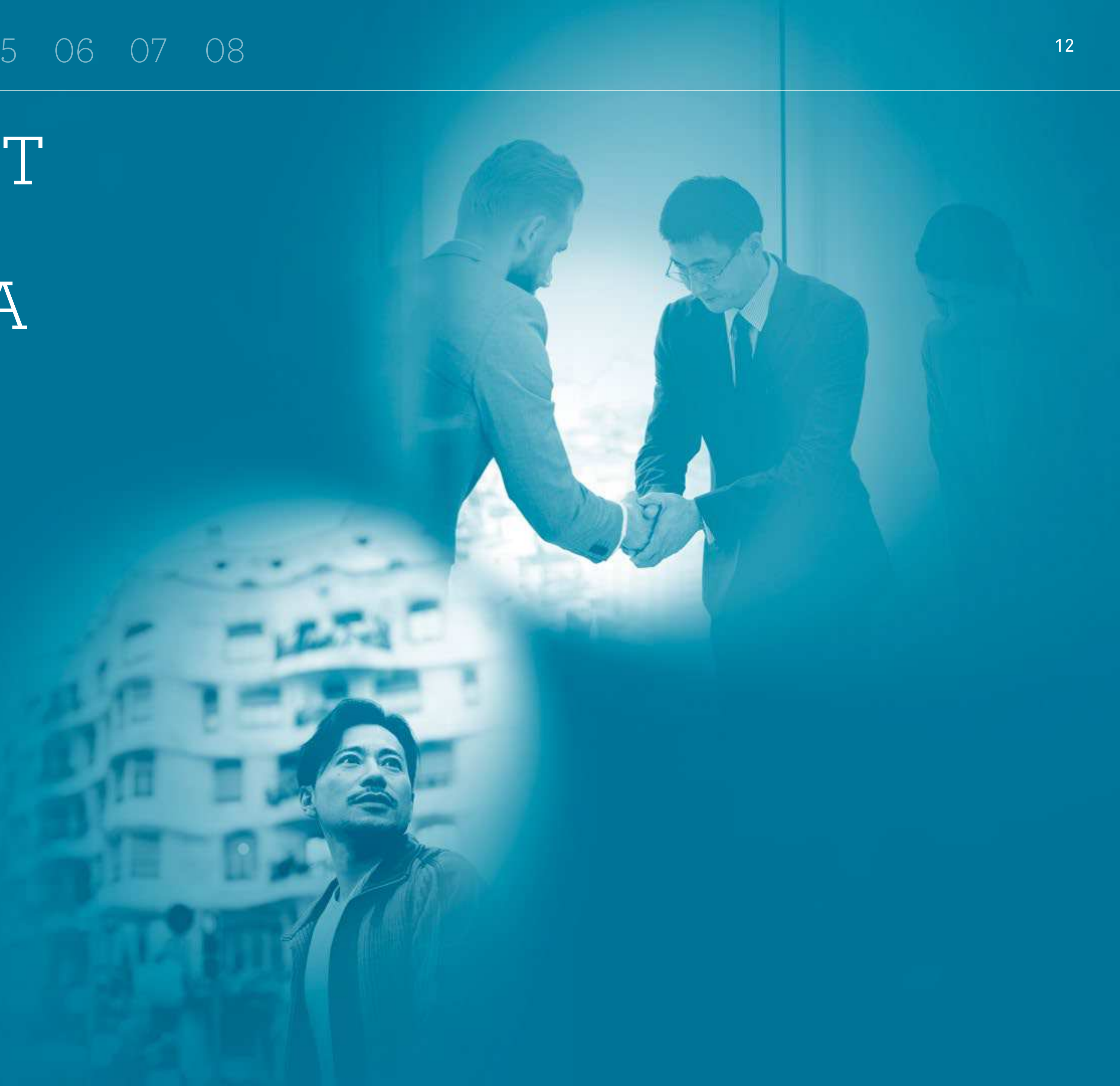
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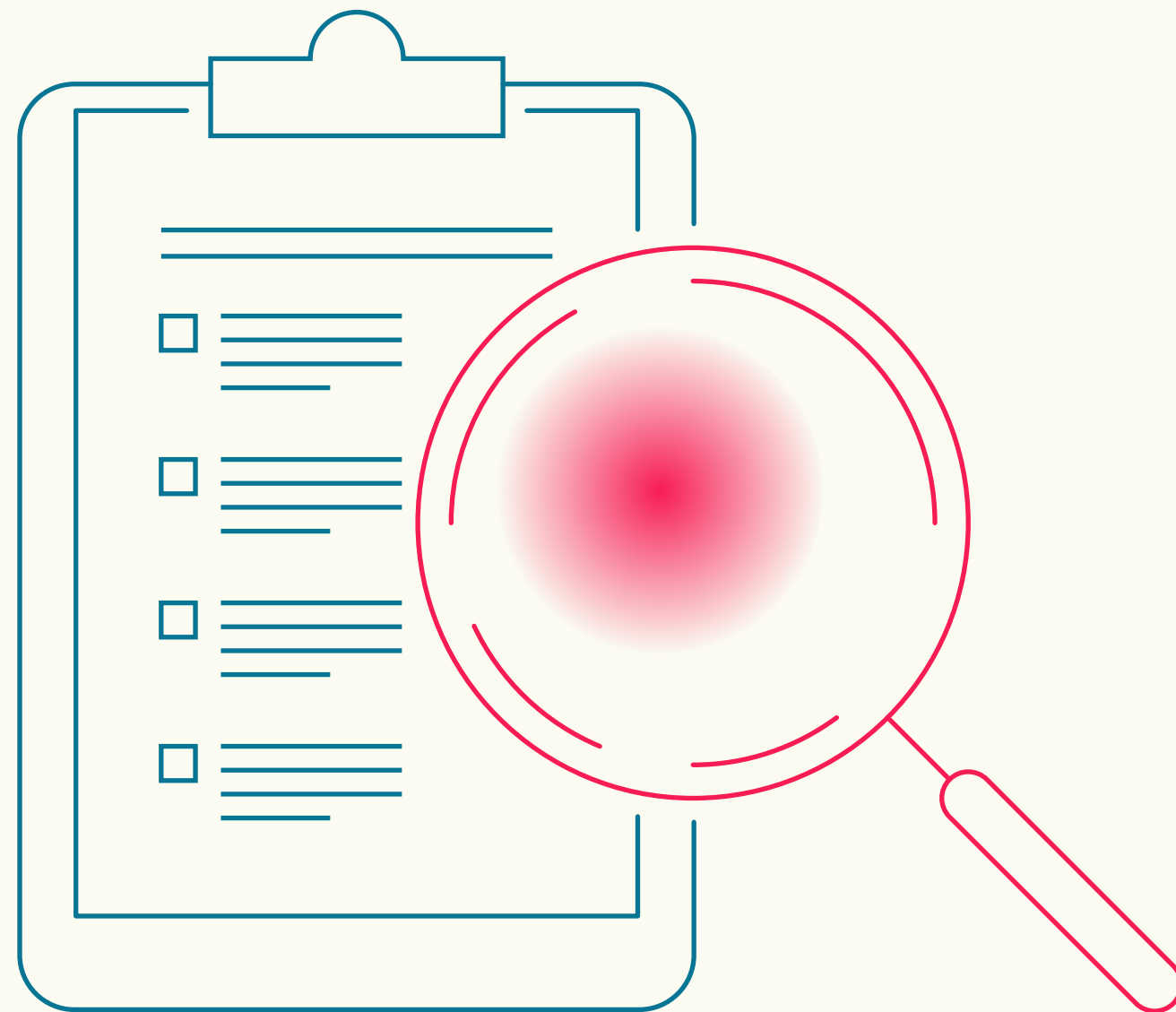
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ANALYSIS OF CURRENT RELATIONS BETWEEN BARCELONA AND ASIA

04



A study was conducted using surveys completed by representatives of 34 areas of the City Council and external institutions. This was used as a basis for the drafting of Barcelona's strategy towards Asia and to generate a snapshot of Barcelona's relations with the region and gather the opinions of different agents who have a special role to play in the development of Barcelona's relations with Asia.



A number of interviews were also conducted in parallel in cases where there was no response to the survey and to complete the information received.

The interviewees/respondents can be broadly categorised into two groups:

>> **Areas of the Barcelona City Council**

>> **Agencies and institutions external to the City Council**

A summary of the results obtained is presented below.

4.1 Relations with Asia

The first result that emerges from the study is that **most of the respondents** (9 out of 10), both in the City Council and in the external organisations surveyed, **maintain relations with Asia**, albeit with varying frequency, form, intensity and interest.

Within the City Council, there are areas that have a direct and proactive relationship with Asia, while other entities have a more reactive and isolated approach.

More than half of the external entities have an active or very active relationship with partners in Asia, and, in general, the region is among their priorities at an international level.

4.2 Main countries with which there are relations

With regard to the countries with which there is or has been some form of cooperation, the results show that East Asia is by far the main focus of Barcelona's relations with Asia, with **China, Japan and South Korea leading the way**. The weight of relations with Japan or South Korea is not usually so high in other Spanish and European cities. Therefore, there is a certain diversification of relations that is interpreted as positive, at least as far as East Asia is concerned.

Secondly, reference should be made to **India**, since although the country has significant demographic and economic weight in the region, the difficulties in establishing stable relations with entities in the country, mentioned by several of the interviewees, are the main reason why it appears far behind the East Asian countries. However, changes in the balance of power in Asia and the possible opening of an Indian Consulate General in Barcelona could be factors that help consolidate a more fruitful relationship with India.

The bilateral relations with **Pakistan** are of a smaller scale than those with other countries, although the sizeable Pakistani community in Barcelona is particularly relevant for the city.

The role of **Singapore** stands out among the countries of Southeast Asia, which is of great importance for Barcelona because of the city's strategic location and economic potential. Singapore's role as a gateway to ASEAN, the relations that have been established with some of the country's universities and research centres, and the excellent connectivity between Singapore and Barcelona through direct flights to Barcelona

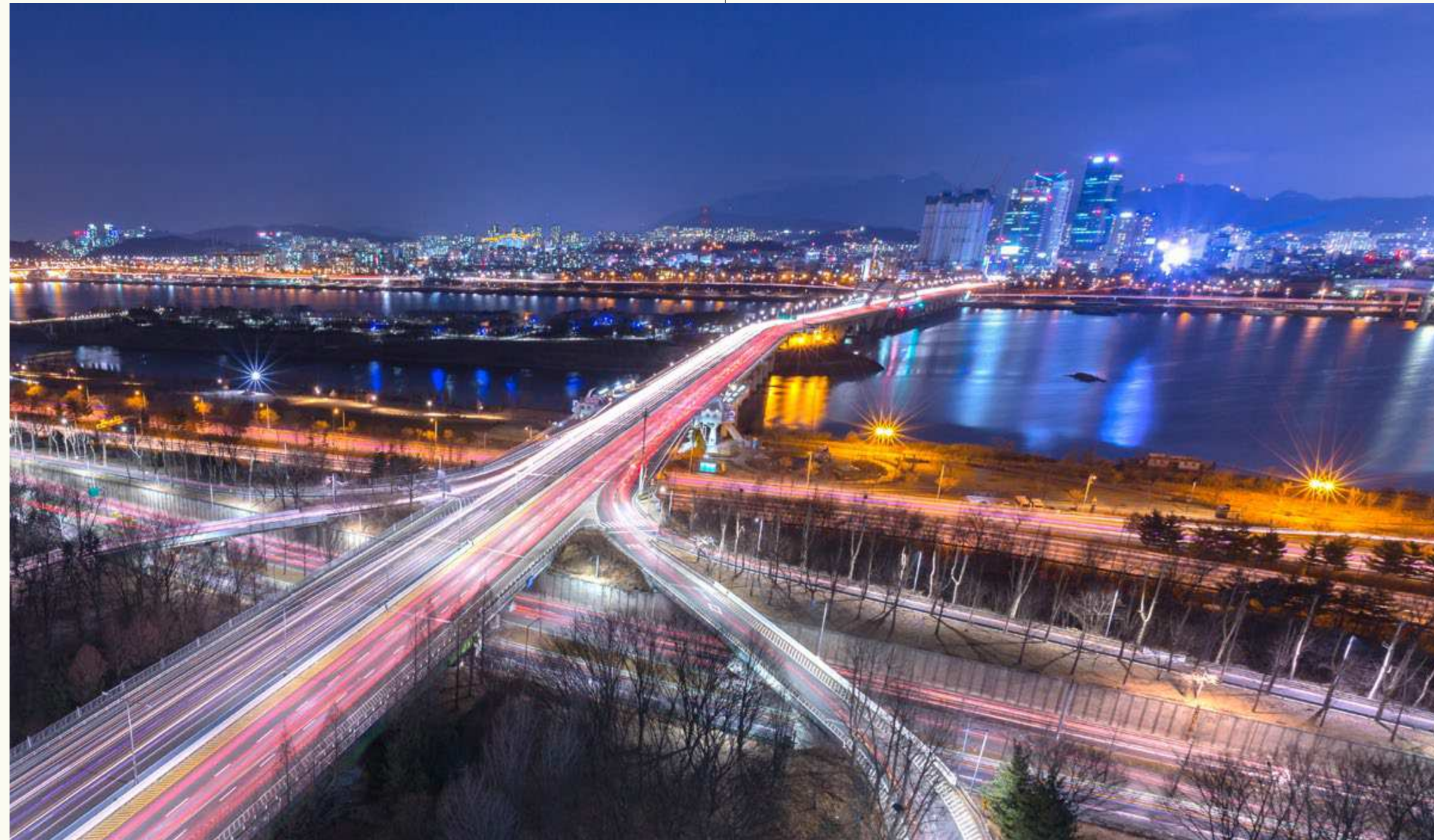
operated by Singapore Airlines, make Singapore a privileged partner for Barcelona in Asia.

Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand constitute a more sporadic relationship, but for some interviewees these are countries of great interest for attracting tourists and students or for exchanging of projects in the field of sustainable urban development.

Generally speaking, **Australia** is a country with which no major collaborations have been established, although it is true that the presence of the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) in Barcelona or the recent pairing between

Barcelona and Melbourne in the framework of the European programme International Urban and Regional Cooperation (IURC) could give rise to interesting cooperation projects in the coming years.

This first mapping allows us to conclude that Barcelona maintains relatively balanced relationships in Asia, however, logically, greater weight is given to East Asian countries. The challenges ahead include India and certain Southeast Asian countries, in addition to Australia and New Zealand. Lastly, there are virtually no relations with Central Asian countries.



4.3 Main areas of collaboration

The main areas of collaboration between the City Council and external agencies and institutions are tourism, innovation, economic and commercial promotion and attracting investment.

Within the scope of the City Council, other areas such as sustainable urban development, citizen participation or food stand out. Other agencies and institutions in the city are also working with Asia in the areas of transport and the promotion of trade fairs.

4.4 Participation in European projects

Only a few Barcelona City Council departments have participated in European projects with Asia, so there is still a long way to go in improving Barcelona City Council's participation in European projects related to Asia.

In many cases, the EU has a much greater capacity to engage with Asian cities and organisations than European cities do on a bilateral basis, making it more effective to participate in European projects to achieve concrete results. The EU also often provides funding to help achieve the project's objectives. There is a greater participation in European projects by institutions external to the City Council. However, based on the responses received, it can be concluded that the potential of EU initiatives to energise relations with Asia is also not being adequately exploited.

4.5 Countries and areas of interest for future collaboration

The East Asia region remains a priority for most institutions, with Japan standing out above China. Next we find South Korea, whose trade with the city of Barcelona has grown significantly in recent years. The interest in Singapore, India, and Australia is also noteworthy, followed by other Southeast Asian countries such as Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines.

With regard to areas of interest for collaboration in the medium to long term, innovation, sustainable urban development, the environment, economic and trade relations and tourism top the list.

Culture, education and food are other areas of medium- and long-term interest for cooperation with Asia.

4.6 Main difficulties

For the institutions and departments that rate relations as very active, the degree of satisfaction is medium or sometimes low. Therefore, existing expectations often fail to reflect reality.

Some of the difficulties shared include the following:

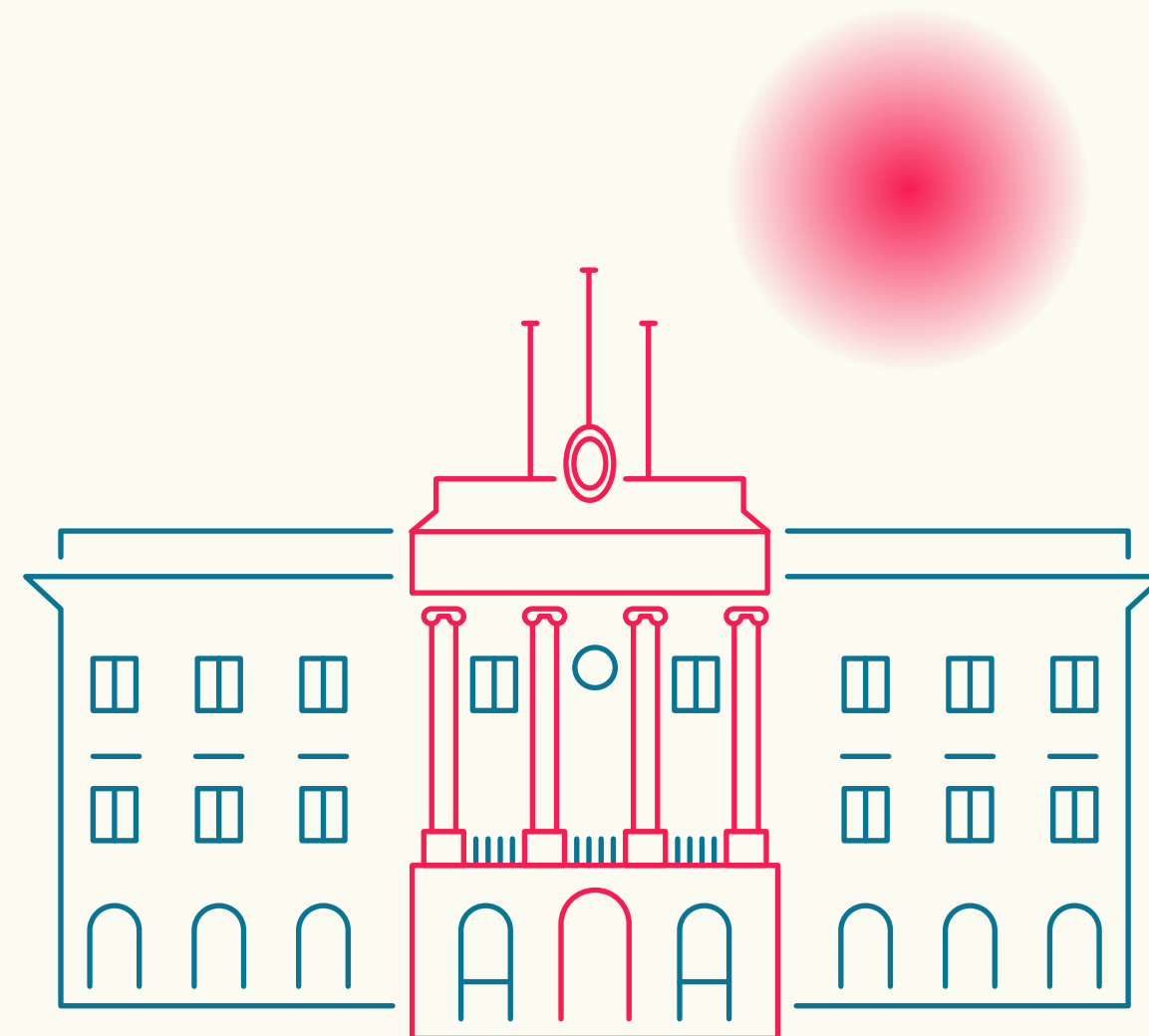
- There are significant cultural differences, and expectations are often different, so staff training needs to be improved to achieve better results.

- Discussions are complicated by the fact that staff changes on the Asian side can sometimes seriously affect the relationships that have been established.
- It is not possible to establish a fluid collaboration with Indian cities, therefore it will be necessary to explore alternative channels such as European projects or collaboration with institutes or other entities in order to pursue attractive projects.
- In the case of Japanese cities, their participation in generic networks is limited, so it is more effective to establish collaboration when the networks are thematic or have highly specific objectives.

4.7 Other points of interest

- Institutional activity is a priority when working in new areas, meaning that the City Council's support in developing relationships in Asia is of far greater importance than in any other region of the world.
- There is a need to intensify collaboration with institutions working with Asia to identify opportunities and generate relationships that have meaning and value, making alliances critically important.
- There is significant potential for Barcelona's Asian communities to contribute to the internationalisation of the city. However, the effort required for collaborative diplomacy must be borne in mind.

“Institutional activity is a priority when working in new areas, meaning that the City Council's support in developing relationships in Asia is of far greater importance than in any other region of the world.”





01

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OBJECTIVES
AND ACTIONS

06

07

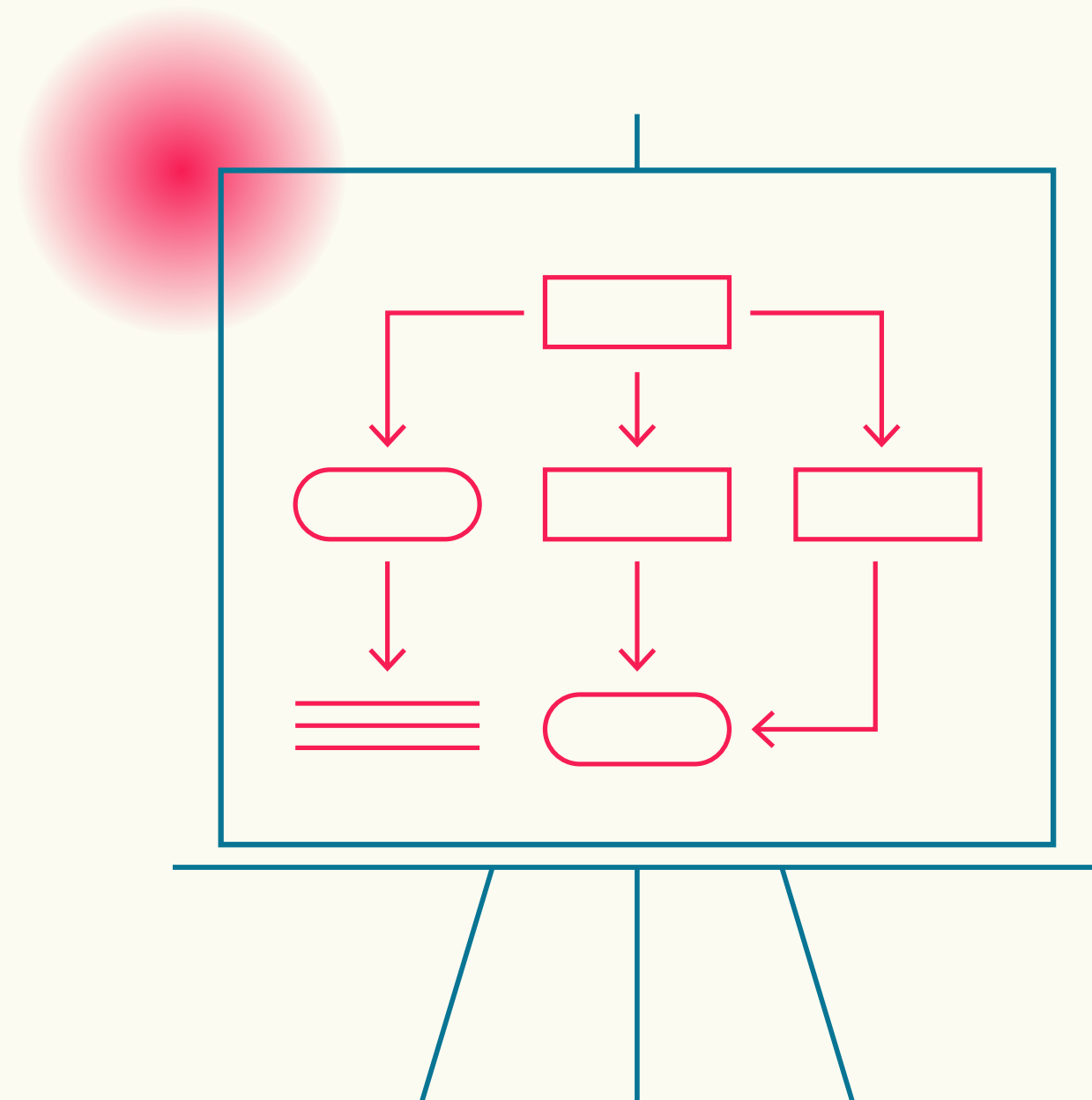
08

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS

05



This section presents the priority lines of Barcelona's strategy for Asia.



The main strategic lines, objectives and actions have been drawn up on the basis of the information provided by the different departments of the City Council and external institutions that have contributed to the strategy. These actions should serve to boost relations with Asia in the coming years and will receive institutional support from the Barcelona City Council's International Relations Department.

5.1 Networks of cities and institutional actors

5.1.1. BARCELONA'S PARTICIPATION IN THE MAIN NETWORKS OF CITIES WITH LINKS TO ASIA

City networks are an instrument of great potential for Barcelona to improve relations with Asian cities. Among the networks in which Barcelona participates, which are based in the city and have an important presence in Asia, are UCLG (United Cities and Local Governments), Metropolis and IAEC (International Association of Educating Cities).

UCLG is an organisation that brings together cities, local and regional governments and town associations from all over the world to defend their interests on a global level. It is a federation of federations, but also has direct links with many cities. In the case of Asia, the secretariat is located in Jakarta.

The association's work with Asia depends very much on the country and its structure. For instance, in the case of China, there is a direct relationship with certain cities (Beijing, Shanghai, Xian and Guangzhou), as well as with the Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries.

In South Korea it works directly with some cities (Seoul, Busan or Daejeon), but also through associations, while in India the counterparts are local institutes and not the cities directly.

Within Southeast Asia, of note are the relationships with Indonesia, Vietnam, Malaysia and Singapore, whose logic is more that of a state than that of a city.

Metropolis is a global network of major cities and metropolitan areas that provides a platform for cities to connect, share experiences and mobilise around a wide range of local and global issues. It is worth noting that Asian members have increased significantly over the last few years and now account for 40% of the total.

Some Asian cities are particularly active, such as Seoul or Guangzhou. That said, other Chinese cities such as Chengdu, Hangzhou or Fuzhou are developing a lot of international activity.

There is also a relationship of varying intensity with cities in Iran and in some Southeast Asian countries such as Indonesia and Malaysia.

IAEC is a non-profit association, constituted as a permanent structure of collaboration between local governments committed to the Charter of Educating Cities, which is the roadmap of the constituent cities. The association is made up of 500 cities in 34 countries. In the case of Asia, these are Australia, the Philippines, Nepal, South Korea and Thailand. The main objectives are the promotion of non-formal education and holistic personal development.

To date, the relationship with South Korea is strongest among all Asian countries, largely due to the interest in the country's cities in the democratisation of education, lifelong learning and the decentralisation of education to avoid educational exclusion.

IAEC is especially interested in increasing its presence in Asia, especially in countries such as Singapore, Japan or Australia, as it would be an attractive prospect to take advantage of the connections that the Barcelona City Council has with Asian cities to explain and share the association's work.

Of the associations that are not based in the city of Barcelona, **C40** is a network of mayors from almost 100 leading cities, 35 of which are cities in Asia, working together to take action to tackle the climate crisis through a collaborative and scientific approach. Barcelona currently holds one of the Vice-chairs for the European region and has been a member since 2005.

In June 2021, Barcelona joined the **World Innovative Cities Cooperation Organization (WICCO)**. The platform, spearheaded by Shenzhen, aims to enhance innovation exchange and cooperation in various areas between cities, boost sustainable urban development and improve life in general through the support and implementation of R&D.

Barcelona is also a member of the **CHANGE** network for gender equality, promoted by the cities of Los Angeles, Buenos Aires, Mexico City, Freetown, London, Tokyo and Barcelona. The CHANGE network was created in 2020 and aims to empower women in all their diversity.

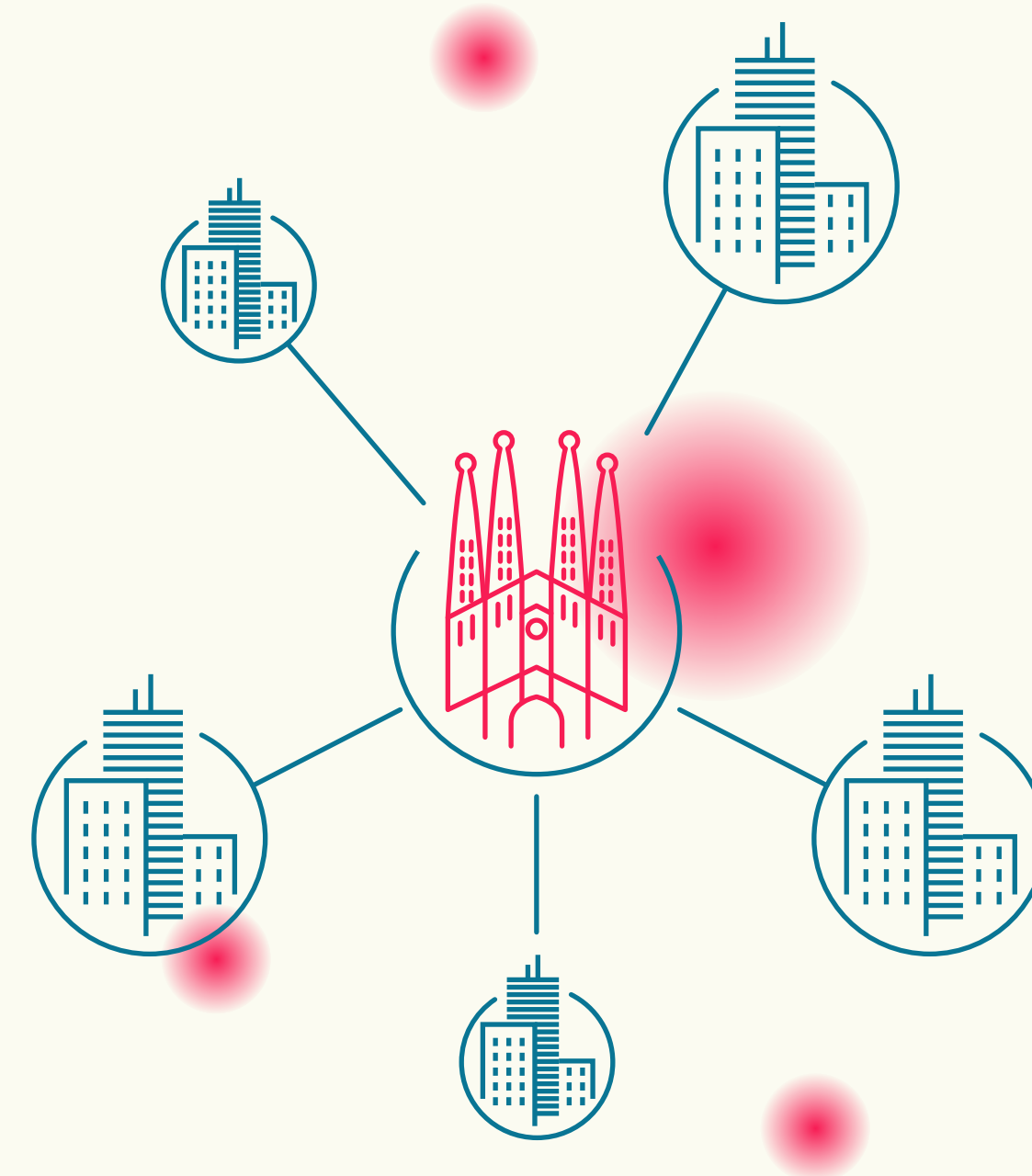
Barcelona is also part of the **"Pact of Free Cities"** network, an alliance of open and progressive cities launched by the mayors of Budapest, Bratislava, Warsaw and Prague in 2019. It currently numbers 26 cities, including Taipei and Taoyuan. The objectives of the network are to promote liberal democracy, pluralism, openness and cultural diversity; to join forces to access European funds; and to launch joint projects.

Barcelona will promote the development of work programmes with Asian cities through city networks in the following areas: urban planning, green development, environmental sustainability, migration and transport management, urban mobility and quality of life, urban innovation, waste and water management, mobility and gender topics.

Proposed actions

- Barcelona will participate on an ongoing basis in the **programmes organised by the city networks** of which it is a member and which include Asian cities to learn about urban management policies in the region, participate in pilot programmes, jointly organise workshops, etc.
- City networks are an important entry point for Barcelona to establish joint programmes not only with cities, but also with **local or national institutes** such as the Centre for Liveable Cities (Singapore), the National Institute of Urban Affairs (India) or the Guangzhou Institute for Urban Innovation (China).

"City networks are an important entry point for Barcelona to establish joint programmes."



Coordination Unit

Department of International Relations, Department of City Promotion

Actors

CHANGE; UCLG (United Cities and Local Governments); IAEC (International Association of Educating Cities); C-40; Metropolis; World Innovative Cities Cooperation Organisation (WICCO); Pact of Free Cities; international partners, etc.

5.1.2. CASA ASIA

As an institution of public diplomacy, Casa Asia has long played a particularly important role in the relations between Barcelona and Asia as a support mechanism for the internationalisation of the city and its agents in the region.

From an **economic perspective**, the institution has supported the internationalisation of the city's SMEs towards Asian markets while working to consolidate Barcelona as a gateway for Asian investment in Spain and Europe. In the field of innovation, it has also developed numerous programmes to connect the city's research centres, universities and start-ups with Asian counterparts.

From the **educational point of view**, the institution has been in permanent contact with the citizens of Barcelona, offering courses and seminars on different aspects of the Asian reality and Asian languages. Casa Asia is also a point of reference for Barcelona's universities looking to establish more beneficial relations with counterparts in the region.

On a **cultural** level, Casa Asia organises the annual Asian Film Festival Barcelona, in addition to other exhibitions, participates in fairs and supports other cultural events about Asia in the city.

Finally, the institution has worked since its beginnings to promote **interculturalism**, bringing together the Asian communities living in Barcelona. Proof of this is the activity of the Barcelona Coral Asia, whose members include representatives of the main Asian communities, and the Bamboo School programme, which was set up in 2003 with the aim of bringing the Asian continent closer to the Catalan school population.

The Barcelona City Council will give institutional support to Casa Asia's activities in Barcelona. In turn, Casa Asia will offer technical support for any Barcelona City Council projects with Asia that require it.

Proposed actions

- Casa Asia will continue to bring the economic and cultural reality of Asia closer to the citizens of Barcelona through an **annual programme** of festivals, conferences, courses, etc.
- Tailor-made programmes will be organised for Asian **Ambassadors** to Barcelona and other high-level institutional representatives to explore possible joint projects.
- Casa Asia will provide a boost to Barcelona's participation in new **European programmes** related to Asia, especially in the fields of sustainable urban development and innovation.

- Efforts will be made to integrate **Asian communities** in the city, with a special focus on young people.
- Casa Asia will collaborate with the city's **institutions and organisations** in areas such as tourism, universities, economic promotion, etc., to give the city of Barcelona a greater Asian perspective.
- There will be a push for the participation of representatives of the city of Barcelona (both from the City Council and from other organisations) in the Tribunes that Casa Asia organises with South Korea, the Philippines and Indonesia.

Coordination Unit

Department of International Relations, Department of City Promotion

Actor

Casa Asia

5.1.3. SPAIN-CHINA, INDIA AND JAPAN COUNCIL FOUNDATIONS

The Barcelona City Council is a member of the board of trustees of the **Spain-China, India and Japan Council Foundations**, public diplomacy institutions that aim to strengthen bilateral relations in all areas, as well as create a focus of attention towards these countries in our society. They have the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation, as well as the leading Spanish companies and other entities with interests in each of the countries.



The Barcelona City Council's participation in the Council Foundations is an opportunity to position the city in the different Asian countries in the medium to long term, as well as to consolidate relations between the different levels of the administration.

Proposed actions

- The Barcelona City Council will continue to participate in the main programmes of the Council Foundations, especially in the **Forums** organised with China and Japan. The Forums are public diplomacy meetings that are held annually and are intended to be the main meeting point between representatives of civil society and the administration of both countries.
- Barcelona will position itself as one of the cities of reference for hosting events and missions organised by the Council Foundations, such as the

Future Leaders Programmes, whose objective is to invite well-known personalities from different countries to Spain, fostering the possibilities of collaboration in various fields.

Coordination Unit

Department of International Relations

Actors

Spain-China Council Foundation; Spain-India Council Foundation; Spain-Japan Council Foundation

5.1.4. CITY CONSULAR CORPS

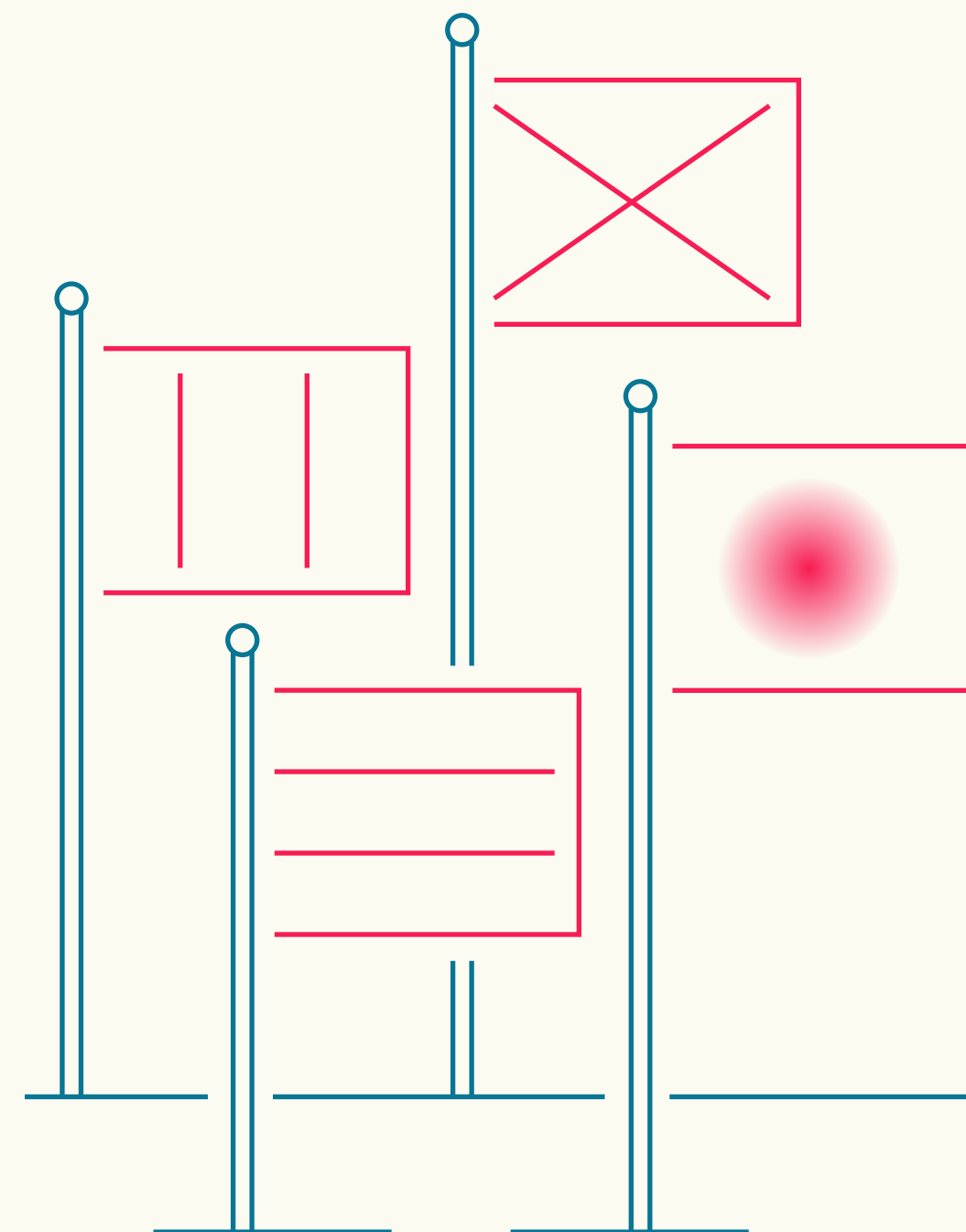
Barcelona is the **5th non-capital city in the world with the largest consular representation**, with more than 90 consular offices, including consulates general and honorary consulates. Consulates are key actors in supporting relations with Asian communities in the city as well as promoting

relations with Asian cities and governments, be it business, tourism, culture or education. This is an important area in its various forms of expression and allows us to share and bring our bilateral relations closer together.

The establishment of consulates general in Asian countries has increased considerably in recent years, especially due to the increase in the number of residents from Asian communities such as the Pakistani and Filipino communities, and also due to the increase in the number of tourists. This was one of the main reasons for the opening of the Korean Consulate General, which reopened its headquarters in Barcelona in 2019.

“Barcelona is the 5th non-capital city in the world with the largest consular representation, with more than 90 consular offices.”

COUNTRY	CONSULATE TYPE
Australia	Honorary consulate
Bangladesh	Honorary consulate
South Korea	Consulate general
China	Consulate general
The Philippines	Consulate general
India	Honorary consulate
Japan	Consulate general
Kazakhstan	Consulate general
Malaysia	Honorary consulate
Mongolia	Honorary consulate
Nepal	Honorary consulate
New Zealand	Honorary consulate
Pakistan	Consulate general
Singapore	Honorary consulate
Sri Lanka	Honorary consulate
Uzbekistan	Honorary consulate
Vietnam	Honorary consulate



As can be seen in the table above, South Korea, China, the Philippines, Japan, Kazakhstan and Pakistan have consulates general with career diplomats in Barcelona, while the rest of the countries have a presence in the city through honorary consulates. The establishment of consulates general is important because of their major impact on relations with the country in all areas (economy and business, tourism, culture, education, etc.). The Indian Ambassador to Spain recently announced his intention to open a Consulate General in Barcelona in the near future.

The aim is to maintain permanent contact with the Asian consular delegations in the city and to promote the opening of consulates general in the city as a means of fostering relations in various fields (communities, tourism, culture, education, business, etc.). The Barcelona City Council's International Relations Department will channel delegations and visits from diplomatic missions, whether consulates or embassies.

Proposed actions

- The Barcelona City Council will continue to collaborate with and provide institutional support to the **Asian consular corps** to strengthen relations with the countries they represent. The Department of International Relations will also continue to work on the establishment of Asian consulates in the city, as well as the opening of new consulates. The opening of an Indian Consulate General would be especially appealing.

- The **Mayor and Deputy Mayors** will prioritise the organisation of meetings with the consular corps, ambassadors and high-level political representatives from Asian countries.
- Collaboration and support will be provided to the consulates when organising activities related to their respective countries, such as gastronomic festivals, exhibitions, events and activities that are already part of the city's agenda (such as the Chinese New Year, El Grito, or the celebration of their national days).
- Barcelona will assist Asian countries in conducting **electoral processes** for their respective communities living in Barcelona.
- The Department of City Promotion will also work to ensure the continued presence of ambassadors from Asian countries in Barcelona by organising tailor-made programmes (such as the Barcelona Update Meeting, organised in conjunction with Casa Asia) so that they can learn more about the opportunities offered by the city and have direct interaction with agents in the city with interests in the region.

Coordination units

Department of International Relations, Department of City Promotion

Actors

Representation of the Asian Consular Corps in Barcelona and Asian Embassies in Madrid

5.1.5. ASIAN INSTITUTIONS IN BARCELONA

A number of Asian cultural and economic institutions have set up offices in Barcelona, where they carry out important activities to promote exchanges in their sphere of action. The following are particularly noteworthy:

The **Confucius Institute Foundation of Barcelona** is an institution that comprises Casa Asia, the University of Barcelona, the Autonomous University of Barcelona and the Beijing Foreign Studies University, whose main mission is to promote Chinese language teaching and culture in the country. The Confucius Institute has been firmly rooted in the city of Barcelona for many years. In addition to language teaching, the Confucius Institute Foundation of Barcelona offers a wide range of Chinese language courses and workshops, organises numerous seminars and conferences, disseminates traditional and contemporary Chinese culture and the performing arts through exhibitions, book presentations and Chinese film seasons both in Barcelona and in the rest of Catalonia and Andorra.

The **Sejong Institute**, an institution attached to the Korean Ministry of Culture with the aim of promoting Korean culture and language, was recently established on the campus of the Autonomous University of Barcelona in Bellaterra. In addition to language courses, the Institute complements its programme with cultural activities such as recitals, meetings with writers, film cycles, and other activities.

Trade institutions such as **Taitra** (Taiwan Trade Center) and the **Indonesia Trade Promotion Center** (ITPC) also have a presence in the city. These institutions serve as a bridge to foster a closer relationship at the business level.

Proposed actions

- Foster collaboration and provide the necessary institutional support to the main Asian institutions present in Barcelona in order to strengthen existing relations.
- The city of Barcelona will be promoted as a place to host the headquarters of organisations and entities from Asian countries.

Coordination Unit

Department of International Relations, Department of City Promotion

Actors

Casa Asia; Confucius Institute Foundation of Barcelona; Sejong Institute, etc.

5.2 The European framework and EU-Asia programmes

5.2.1. THE EUROPEAN ASPECT OF BARCELONA'S RELATIONS WITH ASIA

As summarised in the first section of the paper, the EU is developing a new framework for cooperation with Asia through free trade agreements and new strategies in areas such as connectivity, energy, digitalisation, innovation and investment.

The trade framework that the EU is establishing with Asian economies can serve to encourage a greater presence of companies from Barcelona and its metropolitan area (especially SMEs) in the region's main markets.

Moreover, the resources that the EU makes available to its members in Asia (offices, organisations, etc.) can also be used more extensively by Barcelona, its agents and companies to establish meaningful relations with key countries in the region.

The aim is to incorporate the European aspect of its relations with Asia into Barcelona's strategy, including the new geopolitical framework, trade and connectivity agreements and the geographical priorities established by the EU.

Proposed actions

- The City Council and the city's economic promotion organisations will prioritise programmes for SMEs in those Asian countries with which the EU has signed **free trade agreements** (Japan, South Korea, Singapore and Vietnam).
- Further collaboration will be pursued with entities such as the **EU-Japan Center for Industrial Cooperation** (an institution sponsored by the EU and the Japanese government to foster collaboration, especially in the industrial and innovation fields), or the **EU-China SME Center** (a similar entity for the Chinese market).
- When prioritising the sectors and companies where Barcelona will focus its strategy for attracting investment from Asia, decision-makers will also take into account the **screening mechanisms** that the EU is putting in place to protect strategic sectors.

- Changes in the EU-Asia partnership framework will be monitored in order to adapt actions to possible new criteria, provided these are in line with the City Council's priorities for action.

Coordination units

Department of International Relations, Department of City Promotion

Actors

Economic promotion organisations representing Barcelona and Catalonia

5.2.2. EUROPEAN PROGRAMMES IN THE FIELD OF SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT

In recent years, Barcelona has initiated a very productive collaborative relationship with cities in South Korea and China through European programmes such as **World Cities and International Urban and Regional Cooperation**.

Through the European programmes in which it has participated, it has become clear that the **22@ urban regeneration project** is attracting a great deal of interest among many Asian cities.

Many Asian cities are also engaged in a **green transformation** process, so there is a broad range of collaboration within European programmes in areas such as the sharing of best practices for reducing urban CO₂ emissions, the adoption of energy efficiency solutions at local level, sustainable buildings, recycling and the circular economy.

In the case of Southeast Asia's major cities, traffic congestion, pollution, water and electricity supply are challenges that the country's major cities face due to a lack of investment in infrastructure.

In 2017, the EU and India signed a partnership agreement to collaborate in the field of sustainable urban development (**EU-India Partnership on Smart and Sustainable Urbanisation**). Relations between Indian cities and the city of Barcelona in this field are still scarce, mainly due to the difficulties in finding suitable interlocutors. In this sense, the approach through European programmes or city networks can be useful for the city of Barcelona, as it offers a framework that has been proven to be effective in the case of other European cities.

Participation in European programmes makes it possible to strengthen strategic alliances with Asian cities and to project Barcelona towards the Asian continent through the exchange of good practices and the implementation of pilot projects.

Proposed actions

- Cooperation with cities in Australia (Melbourne) and China (several cities) in the field of sustainable urban development will be expanded through the **IURC** (International Urban and Regional Cooperation) programme.
- Barcelona’s participation in the different initiatives of the “**EU-India Partnership on the Smart and Sustainable urbanisation**” programme will be explored.

Coordination Unit

Department of International Relations

Actors

Municipal Institute of Urban Planning, IURC (International Urban and Regional Cooperation), etc.

5.3 Innovation and start-ups

5.3.1. TECHNOLOGICAL HUMANISM

Barcelona is driving the debate and commitment to technological humanism, which focuses primarily on promoting digital inclusion and the ethical use of new technologies. Digital inclusion is key to ensuring that technology does not increase social and territorial inequalities, and it is a tool to promote more equal opportunities. Barcelona is also promoting an ethical model for the use of new technologies in areas such as Artificial Intelligence and 5G to guarantee citizens’ digital rights.

This view is broadly shared by some Asian countries such as Japan and South Korea. In the case of Japan, the digital transformation is to be materialised on the basis of the vision known as “**Society 5.0**”, which aims to integrate the potential of digital technologies with human needs. It is a vision that is perfectly in keeping with Barcelona’s strategy, offering an unprecedented opportunity to improve the lives of urban residents.

In the field of digitalisation, South Korea is a leading global player, particularly in terms of the dynamism of its technology sectors and as a pioneer in the introduction of social innovation mechanisms. The recent **New Digital Deal** plan further supports the use of digitalisation with projects including the strengthening of data infrastructures, 5G network infrastructure or the development of artificial intelligence. In this case, the social perspective is introduced through investment in employment programmes and the extension of the social welfare model.

In other Asian countries, digitalisation involves a rampant transformation of the relationship



between government, business and civil society, as well as the development of regulatory frameworks, governance systems and business models based on the intensive use of new technologies.

The aim is to establish a cooperative framework with Asian cities in order to learn about different experiences and share the debate on technological humanism promoted by the city.

Proposed actions

- Barcelona will take advantage of its participation in international events in Asia, such as the Smart City Expo, to promote the city’s model of technological humanism in the **region**.

- Priority will be given to the exchange of experiences and projects with Asian cities that promote a digital transformation model in which the **citizen** is placed at the centre of technological advances.

Coordination Unit

Department of International Relations

Actors

Third Mayor’s Office for the 2030 Agenda, Digital Transition, Sports, Territorial and Metropolitan Coordination, Mobility and International Relations; Sixth Mayor’s Office for Culture, Education, Science and Community; IMI (Municipal Institute of Information Technology), OMD (Municipal Data Office).

5.3.2. START-UPS

The city of Barcelona has fostered a dynamic and international **entrepreneurship and start-up ecosystem**, which is clearly expanding towards Europe and the United States.

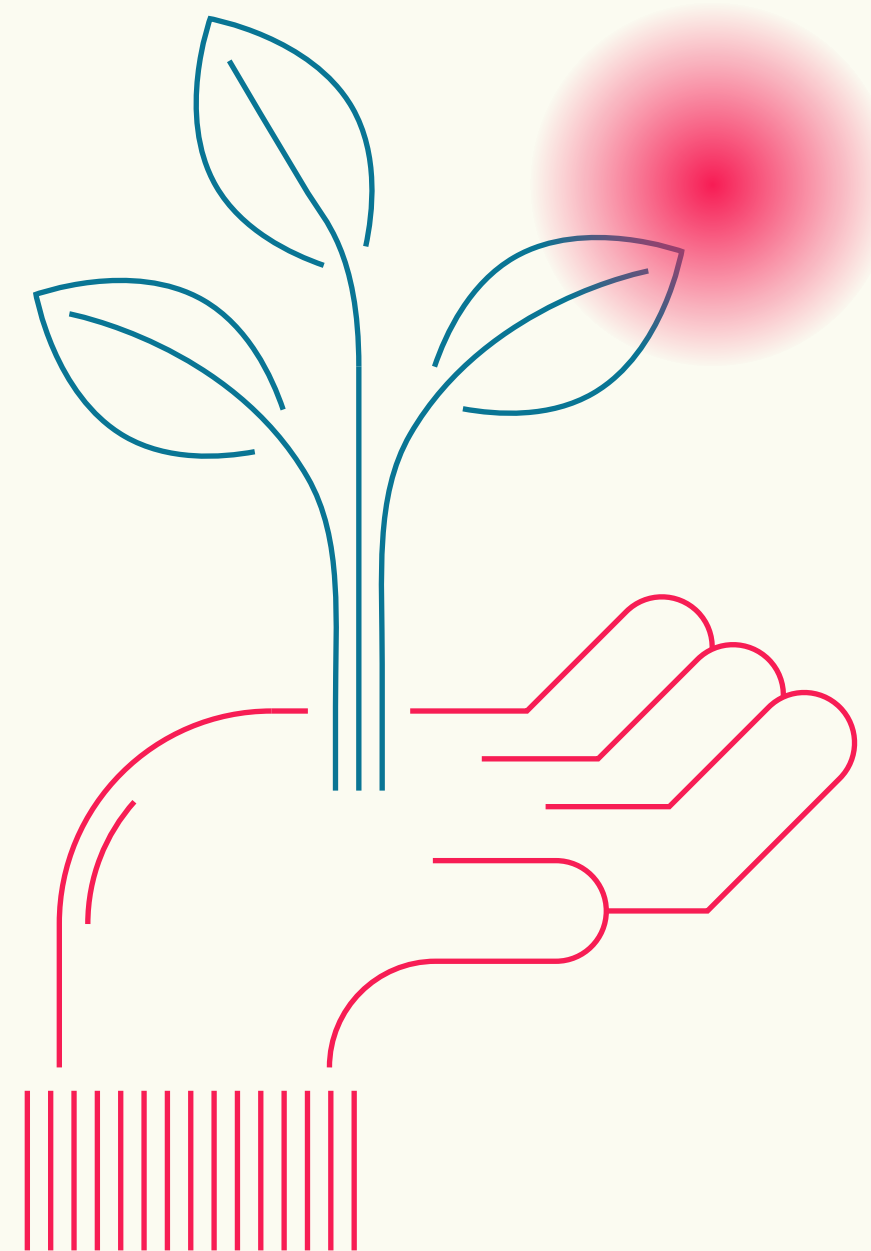
However, as far as Asia is concerned, the approach to city entrepreneurship ecosystems in the region is limited. Especially when considering that, according to The global ecosystem report (Startup Genome, 2020), approximately **30% of the world's best ecosystems for establishing start-ups are in Asia**, and there are excellent opportunities for obtaining funding and scaling solutions.

In the case of **China**, the number of new start-ups is growing exponentially, due to funding from the big tech giants such as Baidu, Alibaba and Tencent (BAT). Furthermore, cities such as Shenzhen have clearly committed to the development of a world-class innovation ecosystem in direct competition with the United States.

Similarly, in some **Southeast Asian** countries, especially Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia and the Philippines, the legal, cultural and financial framework favours the entrepreneurial culture and the creation of start-ups, providing an opportunity to establish synergies with Barcelona's entrepreneurial ecosystem.

In the case of **Japan**, contrary to what one might think, the capacity for start-up development is still limited due to the existence of a culture of large companies that stifles entrepreneurship. Even so, there are opportunities for cooperation, such as the participation of several Barcelona start-ups in the K-GAP Plus programme (Keihanna Global Acceleration Programme Plus) through Barcelona Activa.

“The city of Barcelona has fostered a dynamic and international entrepreneurship and start-up ecosystem.”



The aim is to support the presence of **technology-based start-ups from Barcelona in Asia, lending support to the scalability of their solutions in Asia and attracting potential investors, as well as establishing relationships with incubators, accelerators and other agents involved in innovation in the main Asian cities.**

Proposed actions

- Efforts will be made to promote **collaboration agreements** between incubators and accelerators in Barcelona and the most attractive Asian cities to connect the respective start-up ecosystems and set up cross-landing mechanisms, encourage the participation of Barcelona start-ups in international programmes, participate in trade fairs, etc.
- Moreover, Barcelona will promote **attracting talent and start-ups from Asia** in those areas in which it has a competitive advantage over other European cities, also taking advantage of other factors such as quality of life.
- The entrepreneurial capacity of the Asian community in Barcelona will be promoted for the creation of new start-ups.

Coordination Unit

Department of City Promotion

Actor

Barcelona Activa

5.3.3. RESEARCH PROJECTS, RESEARCHER AND STUDENT EXCHANGES

The main public universities in Barcelona (UB, UAB, UPF and UPC), as well as private universities, have bilateral agreements with Asian universities and exchange programmes involving local students and Asian students, especially from China.

However, the number of **Asian researchers** in Barcelona is still low, due to a lack of awareness of the existing possibilities and a preference for other European destinations.

By contrast, the networks of Spanish scientists in **China** (RCE), **Japan** (ACE) and **Australia** (SRAP-IREAP), which bring together the interests of Spanish researchers in each of these countries, show a growing number pursuing their careers in Asian universities and research centres.

Furthermore, there is a high proportion of Asian students in MBA programmes at Barcelona's **business schools** (especially IESE and ESADE), mainly due to their high position in international rankings.

In general, universities and research centres in Asia have a strong interest in researcher exchange programmes. One of the reasons for this is that their R&D centres are still not very globalised, and internationalisation programmes contribute to their better positioning in international rankings.

It should also be noted that the new Horizon Europe innovation framework for the years 2021-2027, with an overall budget of 95.5 billion euros, will have an important international component. The new programme will place special emphasis on aspects such as environmental protection, food safety, Smart Cities and health.



The main objective is to foster relations between research centres, universities and business schools in Barcelona and their Asian counterparts in areas where complementarities exist, supporting the presence of researchers and students from the region. Barcelona must position itself as a scientific and technological hub for Asia in Europe.

Proposed actions

- **Institutional support** will be boosted to foster collaboration between Barcelona’s innovative ecosystem and that of Asian cities where potential is greatest, both in terms of joint research programmes and attracting research talent.
- By country, in the case of **China**, the areas in which collaboration in innovation is beneficial for both parties must be defined, taking into account the strategic autonomy that the country is pursuing through the Made in China 2025 plan

or the 14th Five-Year Plan. With regard to **Japan, South Korea and Australia**, priority will be given to collaborating on innovation in areas where there are common challenges such as health, climate change, the digital transition and the ageing population, particularly in the case of Japan and its Society 5.0 policy and South Korea with the Korea New Green Deal 2.0. In the case of **Southeast Asia**, although the situation should be analysed on a country-by-country basis, priority will be given to collaboration on innovation in areas such as food security, climate change and sustainable urban development. Lastly, with regard to India, there are opportunities for collaboration in areas such as biotechnology, ICTs, food and renewable energies, among others.

- From the perspective of the innovation ecosystem of the city of Barcelona, the new framework of the **Horizon Europe** programme is a valuable tool for joint collaboration on research projects with its counterparts in Asian cities in those tenders that are of interest to both parties. A special link will be established with the **Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology** for joint collaboration with Australia. The possibilities for cooperation with the RMIT are numerous and include areas such as research, student exchange, business cooperation, sustainable urban development, circular economy and joint participation in European projects.
- Barcelona will leverage the prestige of its main **business schools** to promote the city in the main Asian countries.

Coordination units

Representative for Science and Universities of the Barcelona City Council

Actors

AGAUR (Agency for the Management of University and Research Grants), CERCA (Research Centres of Catalonia), CIC (Inter-University Council of Catalonia), Universities; business schools; RMIT Europe (Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology), etc.

5.4 Sustainable urban development and the Barcelona Green Deal

5.4.1. PROMOTING THE BARCELONA GREEN DEAL

The new BCN Green Deal agenda sets 10 priorities and 38 measures to strengthen the city through three key aspects: competitiveness, sustainability and equity. This new plan focuses on economic recovery, retaining and training talent, stimulating economic activity and attracting investment. The aim is to create 103,000 quality jobs in the digital and green sector. The 38 measures are closely aligned with the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals.

In parallel, specific actions are proposed in the field of sustainability, such as the promotion of the solar economy or the “Barcelona, get sustainable” programme, to improve the energy efficiency of housing and facilities and generate employment.

The priority sectors that have been identified are the digital sector, the creative sector, the local economy, the visitor economy, Industry 4.0, the bio-health sector and the green and circular economy.

The Barcelona Green Deal sets major priorities for the city, some of which are of a markedly global nature, such as expanding Barcelona’s international presence, becoming the digital and technological capital of Europe and being a hub for international talent. All these objectives must have an Asian component.

Proposed actions

- Barcelona will develop its Asian strategy based on the principles set out in the **Barcelona Green Deal**. Collaboration with Asia is particularly appealing when it comes to the digital training of citizens, the transformation of the tourism model towards value or incentives for the presence of Asian companies.
- **The Barcelona Green Deal will boost the digital ecosystem by training digital professionals to create a larger talent pool.** Both South Korea and Australia have implemented similar programmes for job creation through digitalisation involving local government, **therefore, links will be explored and experiences will be exchanged with cities in both countries participating in such programmes.**
- Special effort will be made to further technological collaboration with Asian cities in areas listed as priorities in the “**Barcelona Green Deal,**” such as deeptech, sport tech, food tech or the blue economy.

Coordination units

First Deputy Mayor’s Office for Economic Affairs, Employment, Competitiveness and the Treasury

Actors

Barcelona Activa, Department of City Promotion

5.5 City promotion, trade fairs and logistics

5.5.1. CITY PROMOTION AND ASIAN INVESTMENTS IN BARCELONA

The Department of City Promotion has been working continuously to **promote Barcelona in various Asian countries**, with the aim of increasing trade and investment relations and building loyalty among Asian companies established in Barcelona through the organisation of missions and delegations and participation in trade fairs.

With regard to **Asian investment** in Catalonia and Barcelona, it should be noted that the industrial tradition, infrastructures, geographical location, talent and creativity and appeal of the quality of life, among other aspects, have been factors that explain the greater presence of Asian companies in Barcelona and its metropolitan area than in other Spanish cities.

There is a strong presence of **Japanese companies** in the city of Barcelona and in Catalonia, dating back to the 1980s. Some of these companies in sectors such as consumer electronics or automotive have relocated their production sites for strategic reasons, but they have increased investments in sectors related to technology, video games or media. For example, Bandai Namco has established a centre for mobile game development and global marketing, while NTT has set up a global centre of excellence in artificial intelligence in Barcelona.

In the case of China, the investment of large **Chinese companies** in Barcelona and its metropolitan area is recent, particularly in sectors such as banking, logistics and the

automotive industry. The most outstanding case is that of Hutchinson, a company that operates the BEST container terminal (Barcelona Europe South Terminal), one of the most technologically advanced terminals in the Mediterranean.

In the case of **Korean companies**, in addition to the commercial presence of the large Korean chaebols, there have recently been significant investments in areas such as video games.

At present, it is difficult to attract greenfield projects in industrial sectors, so the aim is to attract new investments in sectors such as logistics and distribution and in areas related to the digital economy such as video games, telecommunications and other technology-related areas.

Proposed actions

- The Barcelona City Council’s Department of City Promotion will continue to channel **missions to various Asian cities**, with the participation of various actors from the city’s economic sphere. The priority objective will be to consolidate relationships with cities where one already exists (Shenzhen, Shanghai, Busan, Seoul and Singapore), but attempts will be made to boost **promotional activities with cities in Southeast Asian countries** (Vietnam, Malaysia, Thailand, the Philippines and Indonesia), depending on the opportunities that may arise.
- Mechanisms for permanent dialogue with Asian companies established in Barcelona will be formalised through **regular meetings with the main Asian companies** by country (meetings have already been arranged with Japanese and Chinese companies) or on an individual basis,

with the aim of solving existing problems, finding out about expansion plans and new projects and covering any needs they may have.

- Special effort will be made to **attract the research centres** of Asian organisations and companies to Barcelona.
- The “**Barcelona and Partners**” initiative, promoted by Barcelona Global and the Barcelona City Council, with the aim of attracting foreign investment and which includes a promotion, attraction and landing programme, will try to focus part of its efforts on Asia.
- Barcelona International Welcome will facilitate the arrival of international talent to the city.

Coordination units

Barcelona Activa, Department of City Promotion

Actors

Entities dedicated to promoting investment in Barcelona and Catalonia

5.5.2. LOGISTICS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

A significant part of the world’s industrial production is concentrated in Asia — also a key region in the global supply chain — which is why the Port of Barcelona’s strong relationship with the region takes on a strategic dimension.

Many Asian companies have distribution centres for Spain and Europe in Barcelona or Catalonia, taking advantage of their geographical enclave to turn it into a logistics hub for southern Europe. Furthermore, the Port of Barcelona has been developing an intense relationship with Asian

ports for decades, which is becoming increasingly important for the future of its activity.

The Barcelona area offers the possibility of hosting multi-country and multi-region warehouses for major Asian brands that want to market their products in Spain and its neighbouring countries, thus creating new jobs. In addition, it offers advanced technological services, high efficiency and intermodal connections, which can further contribute to attracting Asian investment in the logistics sector.

For example, Mazda imports vehicles from Japan through the Port of Barcelona for distribution in the Mediterranean countries, while Honda has a logistics centre in Santa Perpetua de Mogoda for the distribution of vehicles in Spain, Portugal and Morocco.

By country, China is the Port of Barcelona's main trading partner, due in large part to imports of electronic products. Other countries in the area such as India, South Korea and Japan also have important trade links with the Port.

Lastly, the Port of Barcelona organises an annual trade mission to a country in the world to promote the internationalisation of Catalan companies, and Asian countries have been a particularly important destination in recent years. Missions have been organised with Japan, South Korea and Vietnam, following the signing of free trade agreements between these countries and the EU.

Asia is the world's production centre for goods, and its ports are key to global supply chains. Therefore, Barcelona hopes to consolidate the Port as one of the main logistics and goods distribution centres for goods coming from Asia in Southern Europe and North Africa.

Proposed actions

- Barcelona will enhance its role as one of the **gateways for Asian goods in Southern Europe** through its relations with ports, terminal operators and logistics operators in Asia, in addition to the large Asian companies operating in Europe.
- Collaboration agreements, such as the one signed with **Busan**, which will create a logistics space for the distribution of goods from the Asian port to Europe, are an excellent opportunity to consolidate the importance of the Port of Barcelona in Asia.
- Furthermore, as established in the Port of Barcelona's Strategic Plan, Southeast Asia will be one of the main areas of global expansion over the next 4 years.

- The business mission that the Port organises annually to a country is also a highly important instrument for furthering trade relations (especially exports) with Asian countries.

Coordination Unit

Department of City Promotion

Actor

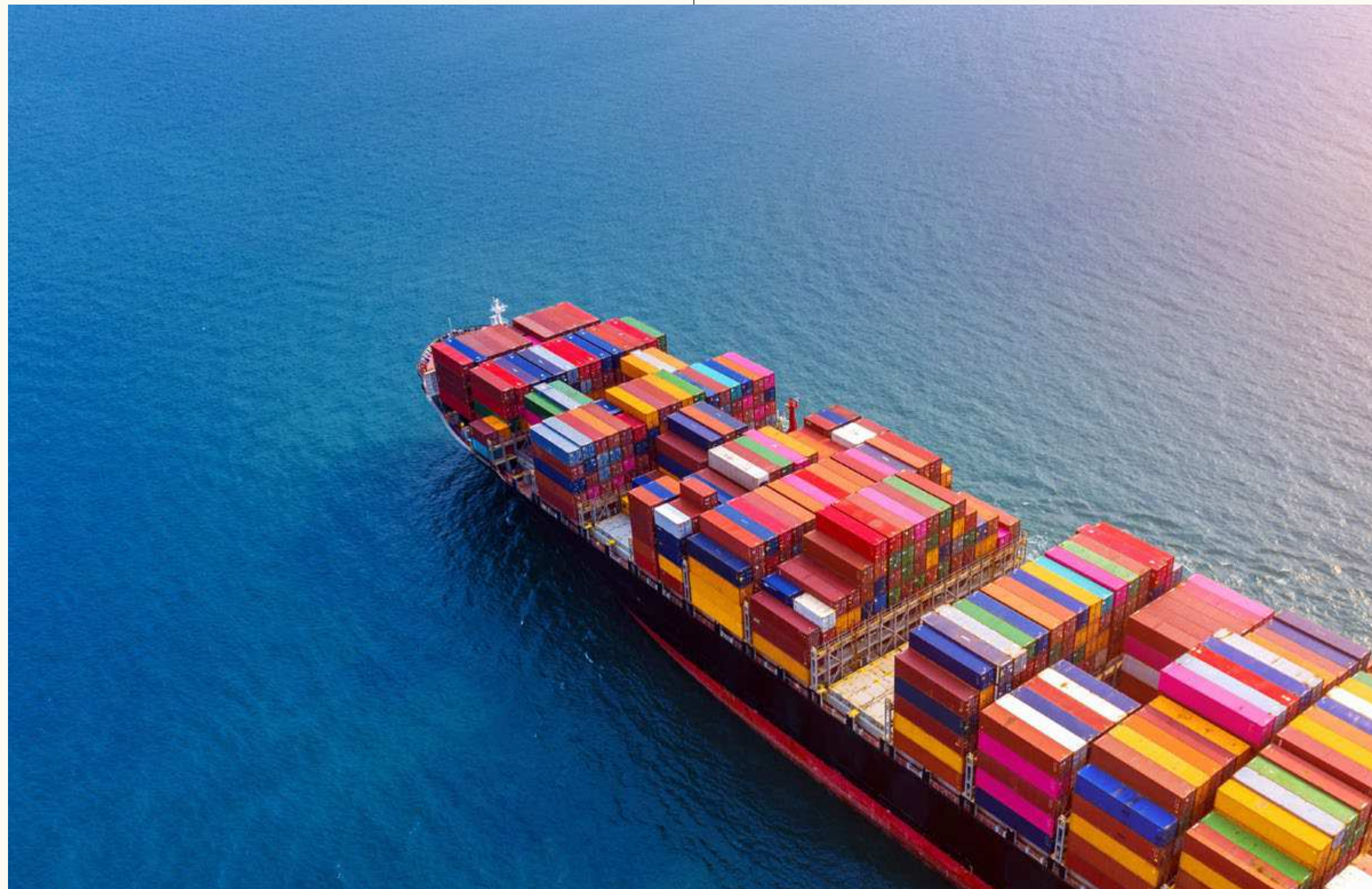
Port of Barcelona

5.5.3. TRADE FAIRS AND CONGRESSES

Asia is considered an absolute priority for Fira de Barcelona, both for trade fairs and congresses directly organised by Fira (Smart City Expo World Congress, Alimentaria, etc.) and in cases where the promoter of the event is a third party, such as the Mobile World Congress.

In recent years, there has been an increased Asian presence at the most emblematic trade fairs and congresses held in Barcelona, both in terms of exhibitors and visitors. In particular, the increase is considerable for those events with technology content, as a large part of the potential exhibitors and visitors to these types of fairs are located in Asia. Other fairs that stand out for their Asian presence include the Smart City Expo World Congress (SCEWC), IoT World Congress, HISPAC (packaging, process and logistics) and Foodtech, as well as the Mobile World Congress.

Consequently, Fira de Barcelona has set up its own office in China (Shanghai) to promote its trade fairs in the country, as well as an extensive network of external collaborators in the main countries in the region.



The organisation is also developing a strategy to hold its flagship events in Asia with the support of local partners. As a result, the SCEWC is being held in several Asian cities.

The main objective in this area is to boost the attraction for Asian visitors, sponsors and exhibitors, as well as to internationalise the trade fairs and congresses organised in Barcelona that are of greatest interest to the region.

Proposed actions

- Fira de Barcelona’s network of **offices and collaborators** in Asia will boost the participation of both exhibitors and Asian visitors to the fairs organised in Barcelona.
- The events organised by Fira de Barcelona with local partners in Asia are a great opportunity to **promote Barcelona** in the cities hosting the event.
- The **Mobile World Congress** has a major impact on Barcelona’s image in Asia, as a large number of visitors, exhibitors and sponsors at the event are from this region. In addition to consolidating and increasing Asian participation in the Congress, the celebration of the 4YFN (Four Years From Now) event in Shanghai is an excellent opportunity to promote the city of Barcelona and its start-ups in Asia.
- The institutional component is much more important in Asia than in other regions of the world when it comes to establishing links with Asian cities and organisations through trade fairs and congresses, which is why **close collaboration between the Barcelona City Council and Fira de**

Barcelona is essential for attracting delegations, visitors and exhibitors and for promoting the city of Barcelona in Asia.

Coordination units

Department of International Relations, Department of City Promotion

Actors

Fira de Barcelona, Turismo de Barcelona

5.6 Tourism

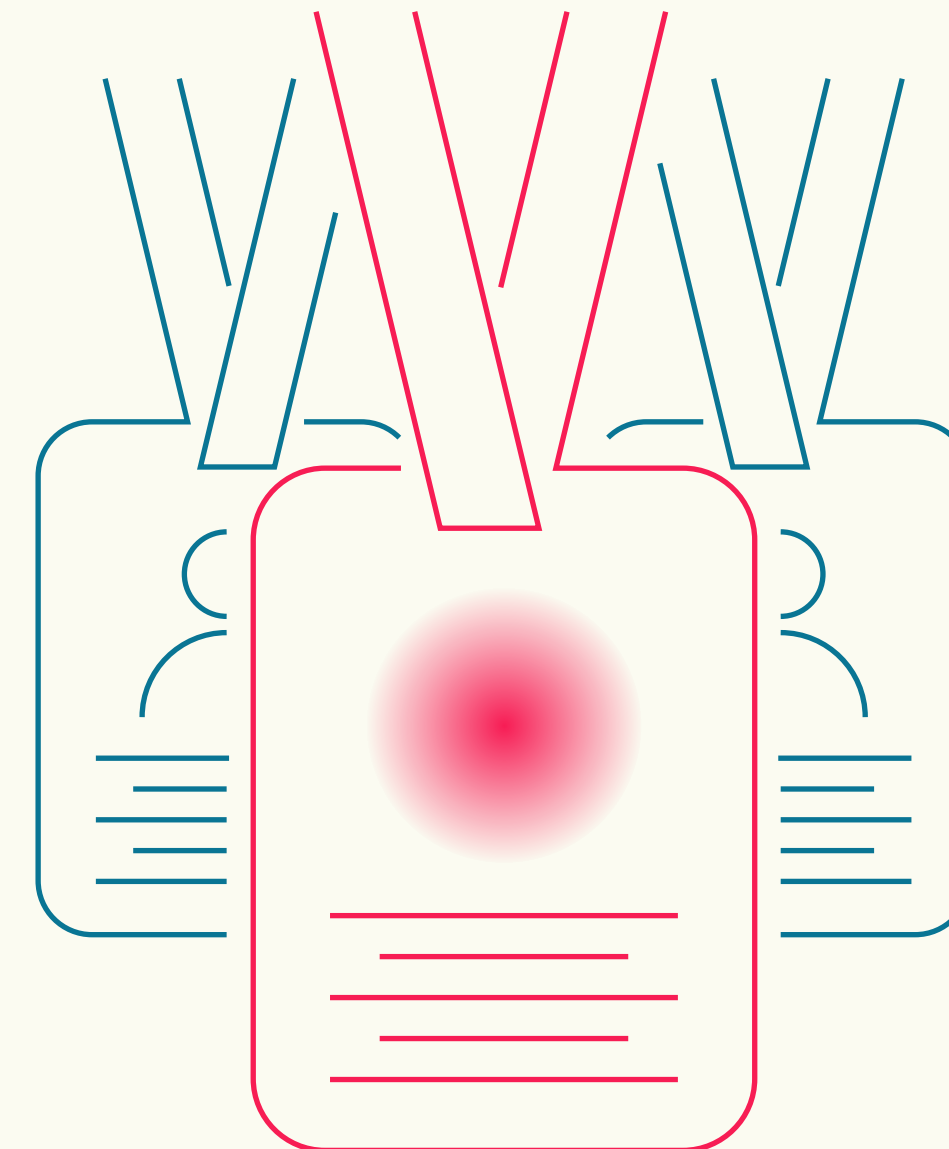
5.6.1. ATTRACTING ASIAN TOURISM

Asian visitors are a major asset for the city of Barcelona when it comes to promoting quality, sustainable tourism that also helps to deseasonalise demand.

Japanese tourists have maintained their interest in Barcelona over the last few years. While the number of independent travellers is growing, groups remain important, both for safety reasons and because of communication difficulties. Some attractive niche markets are the MICE segment or retirees, due to their high purchasing power.

Korean visitors have grown the most over the last few years. Barcelona is the most popular destination in Spain and one of the most popular in Europe for this nationality. As a general rule, Korean tourists are quite experienced and sophisticated, so they tend to travel more individually than other visitors from Asia.

“In recent years, there has been an increased Asian presence at the most emblematic trade fairs and congresses held in Barcelona.”



China’s outbound tourism to Europe has also been growing rapidly over the last decade or so. While a few years ago most of the country’s tourists travelled in organised groups on low-cost tours that combined a large number of countries and cities in the same trip, groups are becoming smaller and more and more Chinese are travelling individually. The Chinese millennial segment in particular is expected to grow over the next few years.

The aim is for Asian tourism to contribute to the transition towards a higher added value, higher quality and more sustainable tourism model.

Proposed actions

- Priority will be given to the use of technology in promotional activities, through **investment in digital services and strategies**. Turismo de Barcelona is already promoting Barcelona as a destination through Wechat, and it also collaborates with agencies such as C-trip, China’s leading online travel agency.
- **Training** programmes will be developed to adapt the destination (shops, hotels, monuments, restaurants, etc.) to the needs of Asian tourists.
- In addition to the most consolidated markets in Asia, promotional activities will be intensified in countries such as **India, Australia, Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines**.
- It is also important to have a proper B2B promotion strategy in place through training courses for travel agents, as is already happening with the **China Travel Academy**.

- Tourism from Asia linked to the **2030 Agenda** will be promoted, emphasising longer stays to reduce the carbon footprint, partnering with other cities, and encouraging rail travel for visitors.
- **The perception of safety in its broadest** sense is particularly important for Asians when choosing their destinations in Europe, so Barcelona will make a special effort to control thefts targeting tourists from the region and to convey a message of safety to potential visitors from Asia.
- **Close contact will be maintained with the tour operators** that make up the bulk of Asian groups travelling to Barcelona to find out their needs and monitor the level of satisfaction of Asian tourists visiting Barcelona in groups, as well as to monitor the **digital footprint of Asian travellers** through their social networks, due to the great influence this has on other potential visitors.

Coordination Unit

Department of Tourism

Actor

Turismo de Barcelona

5.6.2. AIR CONNECTIONS

Asia is the **main geographical priority** for the development of direct air routes from Barcelona, even more so than the United States and Latin America, due to its growth and future potential.

Direct air links are a vital factor in boosting tourism and business with Asia, as well as fostering relations with Asian cities. In the years leading up to the pandemic, a major effort was made to improve connections to Asia (existing connections to

Singapore and Pakistan were joined by connections to Beijing, Shanghai, Hong Kong, Seoul). Even so, **there is still a long way to go before Barcelona has connections equivalent to those of the main European capitals.**

The recovery of Barcelona’s direct flights to Asian destinations will not be an easy task, due to the precarious situation of many airlines and the slow recovery of international mobility, but it must be a priority over the next few years.

As can be seen in the table above, there is great potential for developing direct routes to the Asian cities at the top of the list, not only because of the number of indirect passengers flying to Barcelona, but also because many of them fly in business class, which is more profitable for the airlines.

Following the COVID-19 pandemic, only the direct flight from Singapore has been recovered.

However, the city’s tourist appeal, congresses and business are Barcelona’s main assets for attracting more direct routes.

The existence of a large Asian community (especially in the cases of China, Pakistan, the Philippines or India) is also an important factor in balancing passengers in both directions.

In addition to trying to recover the connections existing before the pandemic (Singapore, Pakistan, Beijing, Hong Kong, Shanghai, Seoul), efforts will be made to establish new routes to other Chinese cities such as Shenzhen and Guangzhou, as well as Tokyo, New Delhi, Mumbai, Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur and Vietnam (city to be determined).

ASIA-BARCELONA DIRECT AND INDIRECT PASSENGERS (2019), NON-DIRECTIONAL

CITY	TOTAL PAX	DIRECT PAX	INDIRECT PAX	% BUSINESS
Seoul	334,064	178,845	155,218	6%
Tokyo	237,040	-	237,040	8%
Beijing	164,772	98,637	66,135	4%
Shanghai	149,158	39,544	109,614	9%
Hong Kong	96,703	35,411	61,292	13%
Bangkok	88,055	-	88,055	6%
Delhi	77,929	-	77,929	6%
Singapore	75,128	31,993	43,135	14%
Manila	60,347	-	60,347	6%
Taipei	46,725	-	46,725	14%
Kuala Lumpur	27,905	-	27,905	9%
Guangzhou	24,761	-	24,761	10%
Others	663,268	31,057	632,212	6%
General total	2,045,854	415,487	1,630,368	7%

Proposed actions

- The **Air Route Development Committee (CDRA - Comité de Desarrollo de Rutas Aéreas)** maintains direct contact with the main Asian airlines to improve air connectivity between Barcelona and the main Asian destinations through meetings, missions, etc.
- Moreover, it will continue to participate in trade fairs such as **Routes Asia and World Routes** in order to maintain ongoing communication with the different airlines, promote Barcelona as a destination and keep abreast of developments in the sector. The CDRA has also organised the 1st Barcelona Air Route meeting week dedicated

exclusively to companies operating routes to Asia before the pandemic. This includes both those that have been recovered and the large hubs in the Gulf that are currently providing connectivity with Asia, such as Doha, Abu Dhabi and Dubai. The main objective of these virtual meetings is to learn about the situation of each operator and to try to obtain information on the recovery strategy for routes operating to and from Barcelona which have not been recovered or have only been partially recovered after the pandemic.

- Efforts will be made to remove certain obstacles such as visa restrictions, especially in the case of India.

- Institutional support is highly important when opening air routes and, although this has been the case to date, collaboration with the Barcelona City Council will be strengthened to support these efforts.

Coordination Unit

Department of City Promotion

Actor

CDRA (Barcelona Air Route Development Committee), Turismo de Barcelona

5.7 Asian communities in Barcelona

5.7.1. ENGAGEMENT WITH ASIAN COMMUNITIES IN BARCELONA

The largest Asian communities in Barcelona are Pakistani and Chinese, followed by the Indian and Filipino communities.

Recent years have seen the capacity of diasporas to mobilise and **involve private and public actors in their country of origin**, as well as their commitment to the city of Barcelona. One of the most recent examples has been the collaboration and mobilisation of the Chinese and Korean community to **provide protective equipment** during the early months of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Members of the Asian collectives have valuable links with private and public entities in their country of origin and also with the diaspora in Europe.

In addition, the importance and relevance of the diaspora's **means of communication** should be underlined by their repercussions throughout Europe and in their country of origin, especially thanks to virtual platforms. The **social networks** used by the Asian community, which are often different from those used in Europe, are a means of communication that the city of Barcelona should include in its internationalisation strategy to create an image and establish links.

Barcelona has media correspondents from Pakistan, the Philippines, China and Bangladesh, whose potential to convey an image of Barcelona as an open and inclusive city has not yet been fully exploited.

Asian communities, which are strongly present and involved in the city's business, social and cultural network, should be one of the important actors in the city's international strategy. Young Asians living in Barcelona, who have a more consolidated education, are proficient in both the local language and the language of origin, and represent both cultures in a natural way, have strong potential.

The general objective in this area is to promote the integration of Asian communities living in Barcelona and to take advantage of the contacts they have in their countries and cities of origin to establish mechanisms for ongoing collaboration with the city.



Proposed actions

- Through the **BCN Interculturality** programme, collaboration with Asian communities in the field of education is being promoted, as well as the learning of mother tongues. It would be particularly interesting to increase human resources with a diverse cultural background — Asian in particular — due to the scant representation of Asians among the staff of the City Council and the organisations in which it participates.
- Asian participation will be promoted as part of the **Barcelona International Community Day**, organised by the Barcelona City Council, which has become a key event for members of the international community living in the city. This event will maintain a presence on popular **social networks** among the international communities in Barcelona, including Asian communities, as well as in the means of communication of the diasporas in Barcelona.
- The Barcelona City Council will continue to support the festivals and cultural events organised by each community (Chinese New Year, Matsuri festival, exhibitions, film seasons, etc.). It will also link communities in the events it organises on a country-by-country basis.
- The **contacts** of the Asian diasporas in Barcelona with governments, companies, universities and other actors in their countries of origin will be used to establish greater cooperation with Barcelona.
- Awareness of Asia and Asian diasporas among the City Council's staff and its partners will also be strengthened through training mechanisms.

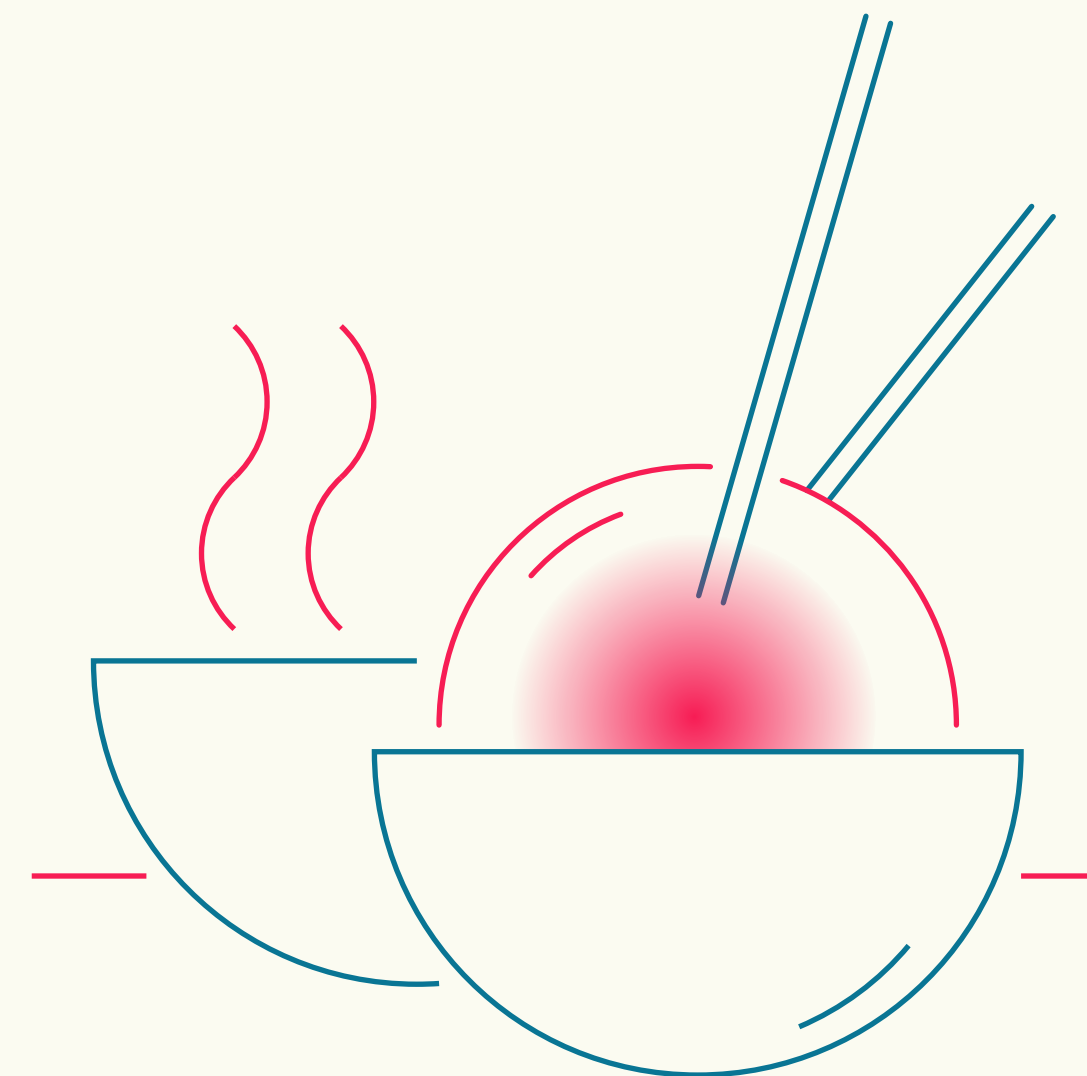
Coordination units

Commissioner for Intercultural Dialogue and Religious Pluralism; Casa Asia; Department of International Relations, Department of City Promotion

Actors

Associations representing the Asian community in Barcelona, Asian consulates in Barcelona

“Asian communities, which are strongly present and involved in the city’s business, social and cultural network, should be one of the important actors in the city’s international strategy.”

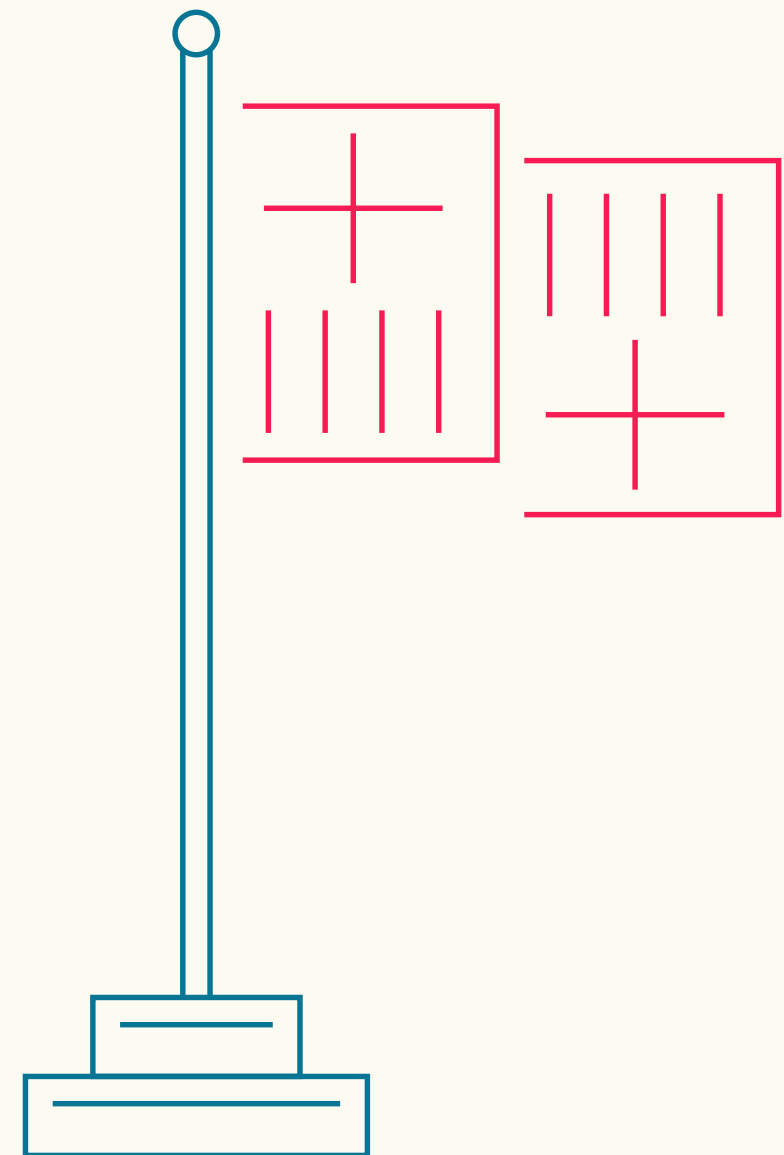


STRATEGIC ASIAN CITIES

06



This section lists the main Asian cities with which Barcelona currently has relations, as well as some of the cities with which there is significant potential for collaboration, either because projects have been initiated that are expected to come to fruition in the short/medium term, or because opportunities have been identified through the consultation of different rankings or other methods. Nevertheless, the list is not closed and should also take into account criteria of opportunity in the development of new relations with Asian cities.



6.1 Cities with which Barcelona has links

6.1.1. CHINA

Shenzhen



A **twinning agreement** between Barcelona and Shenzhen was signed in 2021. A collaboration agreement had previously been signed in 2012.

In 2021, Barcelona also joined the World Innovative Cities Cooperation Organisation (WICCO), led by Shenzhen, to collaborate on issues of global innovation.

The city donated EPI equipment to Barcelona following COVID-19, and a videoconference was organised with municipal and health representatives to share their experience in mitigating the pandemic.

In 2019, the Barcelona City Council signed a collaboration agreement with Shenzhen-based company Huawei in the fields of 5G and artificial intelligence applied to the digital transformation of cities.

In 2018, the ports of Shenzhen and Barcelona signed a collaboration agreement.

Shanghai



The mayors of Shanghai and Barcelona signed the **twinning agreement** between the two cities on 31 October 2001.

The cities maintain fluid and active relations and exchanges. Notable examples of these are the visit of the Mayor of Shanghai to Barcelona in 2008; the organisation of a business bridge to China led by the Mayor of Barcelona in 2008 that included a visit to Shanghai; and Barcelona's participation with a pavilion at the Shanghai World Expo in 2010.

Shanghai hosted the Barcelona Catalonia Culture Week in 2015, dedicated to promoting Catalan culture and the city of Barcelona. In 2020, Shanghai donated EPI equipment to Barcelona in the wake of COVID-19.

The 20th anniversary of the twinning was celebrated in 2021, and to mark the occasion an extensive programme of online and offline activities was organised under the title "Barcelona-Shanghai Bridge".

Guangzhou



Guangzhou and Barcelona signed a **friendship and cooperation agreement** on 29 October 2003.

Guangzhou donated medical supplies to Barcelona during the first months of the pandemic.

Both cities are also part of the Metropolis network of cities.

Ningbo



Ningbo and Barcelona have had a cooperation agreement in place since 1996.

It is also a priority city for the Port of Barcelona. The two ports signed a collaboration agreement in 2018.

6.1.2. JAPAN

Kobe



On 6 April 1993, the mayors of Kobe and Barcelona signed the **twinning agreement** between the two cities.

Within the framework of this agreement, institutional and business visits from Barcelona to Kobe and vice versa have been organised, as well as school and sporting exchanges. In 1995, Barcelona sent humanitarian aid to help alleviate the effects of the earthquake that struck the Japanese city.

More recently the partnership focused on collaboration in smart and open data initiatives, such as the World Data Viz Challenge Barcelona-Kobe competition.

Both cities are part of the Délice gastronomic network.

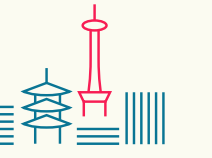
Yokohama



Barcelona and Yokohama signed a **collaboration agreement** on 25 March 2015, which was renewed in 2019. The main areas of collaboration are the exchange of experiences in Smart Cities, renewable energies, transport, city promotion, and so on.

Within the framework of this agreement, institutional visits have been made to both cities to learn about their respective policies in sectors such as sustainable transport and renewable energies. Barcelona and Yokohama are also participating in each city's respective Smart City events.

Kyoto



Barcelona and Kyoto signed a **collaboration agreement** on 15 November 2016, which was renewed in 2021. Agreements include the exchange of knowledge and best practices regarding entrepreneurship, technological innovation and public data management to improve urban policies as well as mutual support in the organisation of business and institutional missions. Barcelona Activa also signed an agreement in 2017 with the Advanced Telecommunications Research Institute International (ATR) to promote the start-up ecosystems of both cities.

Barcelona and Kyoto co-organised the Kyoto Smart City Expo and the cities participate in each other's Smart City events.

Tokyo



The collaboration with Tokyo has mainly focused on exchanging experiences in setting up city ICT departments. The Tokyo Metropolitan Government is setting up its ICT department and is building on the experience of the Municipal Institute of Information Technology (IMI - Instituto Municipal de Informática) in Barcelona. It also participates in events and webinars organised by Tokyo and the Shibuya district to present the IMI model and digital and citizen participation projects such as Decidim.

6.1.3. KOREA

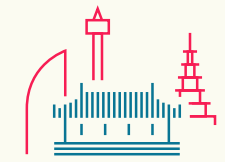
Seoul



In 2012, the mayors of Barcelona and Seoul signed a **friendship and collaboration agreement** that further consolidated the relationship between the two cities. This agreement was renewed in 2018 and a further renewal is planned for the near future.

Our cities have also actively collaborated on issues such as the collaborative economy and social innovation. Barcelona hosted the 2019 Sharing Cities Summit and passed the baton to Seoul as the venue for the next edition.

Busan



Barcelona and Busan signed a **twining agreement** on 25 October 1983.

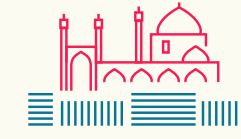
Both cities were selected to collaborate in the European World Cities 2017-2018 project on issues related to public transport, renewable energies, regeneration of urban spaces, collaboration between universities and research centres, culture and tourism.

The Port of Barcelona and the Busan Port Authority signed a cooperation agreement in 2020 to manage and operate the 50,000m2 logistics centre that both ports will develop in the Barcelona Logistics Activities Area (ZAL - Zona de Actividades Logísticas).

The Port of Barcelona held the Korea Port Summit Trade Mission in 2021, where the project between the ports of Barcelona and Busan was on display.

6.1.4. IRAN

Isfahan



Barcelona and Isfahan signed a **friendship and cooperation agreement** on 14 January 2000.

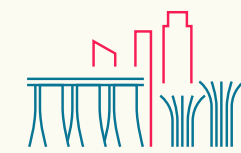
Teheran



As a result of the relationships established through the Metropolis network, cities have exchanged best practices on issues such as improving municipal control and management during the pandemic through innovative applications as well as strategies to improve internal and external municipal communication.

6.1.5. SINGAPORE

Singapore



Barcelona and Singapore maintain stable relations through technical and political visits and also through activities with the Centre of Liveable Cities in Singapore.

6.2 Potential cities for future collaboration

As can be seen in this report, Barcelona maintains relations with Asian cities, mainly in the three East Asian countries (Japan, China and South Korea).

Over the coming years, and taking into account the geopolitical changes brought about by the EU's Indo-Pacific strategy and the opportunities that exist in cities that have not had an ongoing relationship with Barcelona to date, it would be interesting to explore the possibility of collaborating with other cities in Asia, especially in Southeast Asia and Australia.

Furthermore, there are East Asian cities with which Barcelona has not yet established a fruitful relationship, but which are nevertheless interesting in terms of the relationships they already have with European cities.

Potential cities for future collaboration:

Melbourne and Brisbane: Partnership projects in sustainable urban development have recently been launched with these cities within the framework of the European programme for International Urban and Regional Cooperation. Experiences, technical visits and pilot projects will be exchanged over the coming years. In addition, according to the "Digital City Index", the city ranks 4th in the world in terms of talent, and also stands out in areas such as investment and tourism. In 2032 Brisbane will host the Olympic and Paralympic Games, a milestone which will accelerate city development in many spheres.

Osaka: This Japanese city is known for its role as an important business hub, and it is among the top Asian cities in the global index of innovative cities. Moreover, it has a long history of collaboration with European cities, especially in the commercial field. According to the rankings used in this report, Osaka stands out for its positioning as a tourist centre, as well as in the field of entrepreneurship and clusters.

Ho Chi Minh: Vietnam is one of the fastest growing countries in Southeast Asia. Within the country, Ho Chi Minh City has expressed interest in collaborating with European cities in areas such as sustainable construction, green transition and logistics. It ranks high (third) in rankings such as the "City Momentum Index."

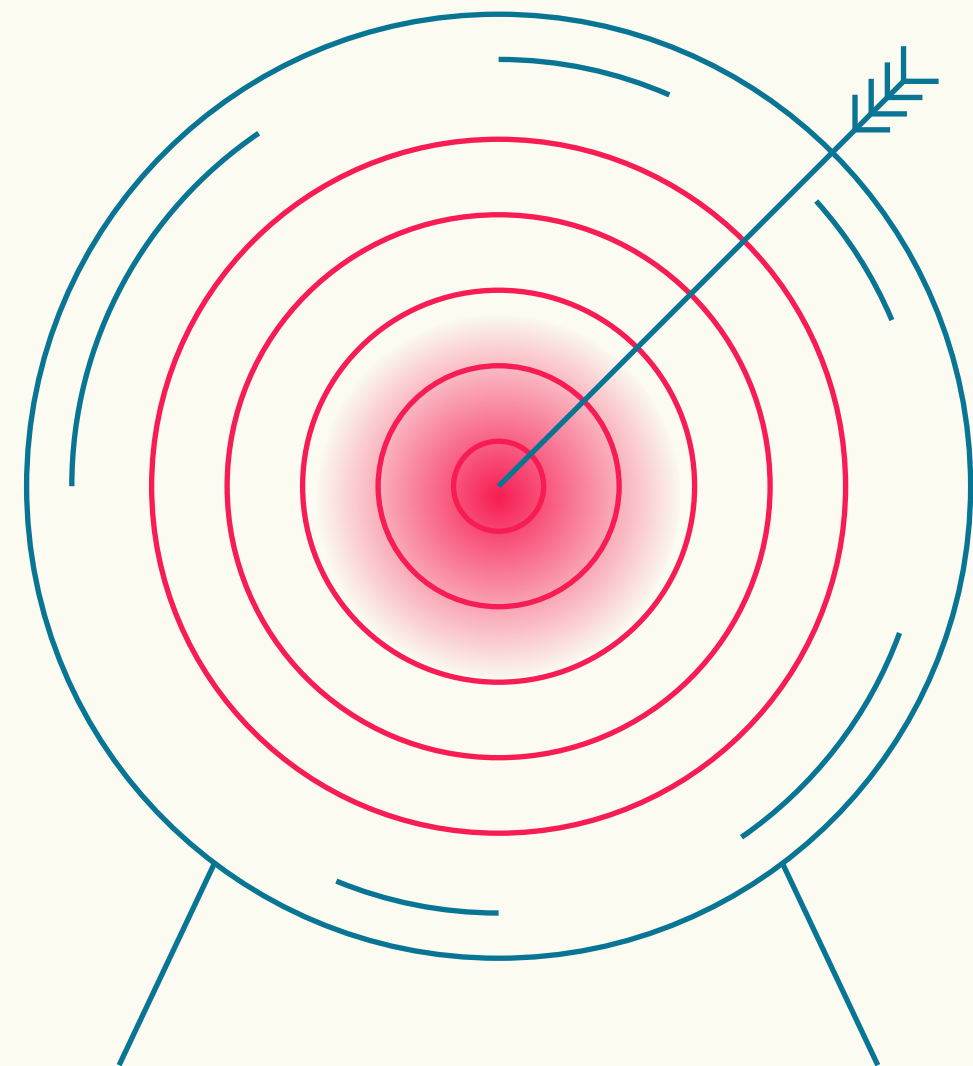
Bangkok: According to the "Digital Cities Index," published in 2018, Bangkok ranks 4th in tourism, 9th in talent and 13th in investment, and it is positioning itself as one of the top capital cities for entrepreneurship in Southeast Asia and Asia. In addition, the **Greener Bangkok 2030** Plan, which aims to reduce CO₂ emissions and create more green spaces in the city, offers a major opportunity for collaboration with the city of Barcelona to exchange experiences and pilot projects.

MONITORING AND FOLLOW-UP

07



In order to check the degree of compliance with the strategy and adapt it to future circumstances, a monitoring and follow-up plan has been established, which consists of the following actions:



» Action 1

Organisation of **an annual meeting** by the Department of International Relations and Casa Asia with the main actors involved in the strategy, both to evaluate the fulfilment of the objectives set and to share new initiatives and programmes.

» Action 2

Drawing up an **annual monitoring and evaluation report** that compiles all the actions carried out by Barcelona in Asia, which includes official and technical visits, the monitoring of twinning agreements, European projects, etc., with the aim of having an up-to-date view of the relations with Asia.

» Action 3

Reviewing the different rankings and other documents of interest to learn about the situation of the main Asian cities and propose new collaboration projects based on the opportunities detected.

» Action 4

Making the most of existing mechanisms such as the **international coordination table for the Promotion of the City** with economic promotion organisations in order to draw up an agenda of actions to be carried out in Asia over the coming months while seeking the maximum complicity and collaboration between all those involved.

APPENDIX: ENTITIES CONSULTED



Barcelona City Council

Area for Ecology, Urban Planning, Infrastructures and Mobility

Barcelona Institute of Technology for the Habitat (BIT Habitat)

Commissioner for Social Economy, Local Development and Food Policy

Commissioner for the 2030 Agenda

Councillor's Office for Citizens' Rights

Councillor's Office for Tourism and Creative Industries

Councillor's Office for Sport

Department of International Projects at Barcelona Activa

Department of City Promotion

Department of Democratic Innovation Services

Department of Tourism

Executive Department of Entrepreneurship, Business and Innovation

Manager's Office for Housing

Barcelona Institute of Culture

Barcelona Municipal Institute of Markets

Barcelona Municipal Institute of Education and Barcelona Education Consortium

Municipal ICT Department

Municipal Institute of Urban Planning

Municipal Data Office

External institutions

Catalan Tourism Agency

Barcelona Metropolitan Area (AMB - Àrea Metropolitana de Barcelona)

Barcelona Supercomputing Center

Official Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Services and Shipping of Barcelona

Barcelona Air Route Development Committee (CDRA - Comité de Desarrollo de Rutas Aéreas de Barcelona)

Free Zone Consortium

Department of Research and Universities (AGAUR, CERCA and CIC)

Fira de Barcelona - Barcelona Trade Fair

Foment del Treball (Employers' organization of Catalonia)

Ramon Llull Institute

Promoter of Catalan Food (Prodeca)

Port of Barcelona

Tech Barcelona

Transports Metropolitans de Barcelona (TMB)

Turismo de Barcelona

Networks and institutions of which the Barcelona City Council is a member or with which it has a relationship

International Association of Educating Cities (IAEC)

United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG)

Spain-Australia Council Foundation

Spain-China Council Foundation

Spain-India Council Foundation

Spain-Japan Council Foundation

Metropolis



**Ajuntament
de Barcelona**