

Chapter 22

International Soft Landings of Wetland Entrepreneurship in Asia

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ABSTRACT

International soft landings, originally developed by the International Business Innovation Association, is a process to help a company from one country land softly – without crashing – into the market of another country through a designated incubator. In this chapter, we discuss how wetland entrepreneurship, developed in Louisiana to maintain healthy wetland ecology and protect land losses, can be introduced in Asia through international soft landings. Specifically, we propose a “Flying High, Landing Soft” platform to help cultivate wetland entrepreneurs and bring local solutions in Louisiana abroad for global impact in Asia. This platform is grounded in the theories of strategic entrepreneurship and docility-based distributed cognition. With rising seas as a global phenomenon, developing such a platform is timely and significant.

INTRODUCTION

International soft landings, originally developed by the International Business Innovation Association (InBIA, 2016), is a process to help a company from one country land softly – without crashing – into the market of another country through a designated incubator. The purpose is to help the international soft landings company access local market opportunities, succeed in the new foreign country with least risks and costs, and manage talent recruiting and retention (Chen, et al., 2010, 2011, 2013). Other organizations servicing international soft landings include EBN Innovation Network International Hub (EBN, 2016) and Reciprocal Soft Landings Network (RSLN, 2016). Out of thirty incubators currently designated by the International Business Innovation Association (InBIA, 2016), there are six incubators in Asia. They are ITRI Incubator, Nan Kang Biotech Incubation Center, Nan Kang Biotech Incubation Center, and

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Si-Soft Business Center in Taiwan; Incu-App/Incu-Tech/Incu-Bio in Hong Kong; and ATP Innovations Pty Ltd in Sydney, Australia. Interestingly, they are all located in or near coastal cities.

With rising seas as a global phenomenon (Pilkey & Young, 2011) and the new, legal framework of climate change agreement supported by 150 Head of State and Government (UNFCCC, 2015), developing sustainable coastal cities with interdisciplinary cooperation of science, engineering, architecture, technology, socio-economics, etc. is becoming a research agenda of high priority (Rodriguez & Brebbia, 2015). Consider the state of Louisiana as an example. Before Hurricane Katrina hit Louisiana gulf coast in 2005, Louisiana already had its coastal wetlands restoration plan (LCWRP, 1993).

Ten years after the devastating flood (Rivlin, 2015), several significant projects for protecting the Louisiana coastal cities were implemented which includes learning from Netherlands to design barriers to protect New Orleans from high storm surge (Folger, 2013) and the establishment of the Water Institute of the Gulf to develop innovative science and engineering in the realms of coasts & deltas, communities, and water resources (WIotG, 2015). The Gulf of Mexico Research Initiative (GoMRI, 2015), established after the disastrous oil spill in 2010 (Freudenburg & Gramling, 2012), adds another stream of research efforts to restore and improve the long-term environmental health of the coastal cities in the Gulf of Mexico.

One of the effective sustainable developments of coastal cities is creating and restoring wetlands to maintain healthy ecology (Keddy, 2010) and protect land losses (Craft, 2015). In responding to the two catastrophic crises of Hurricane Katrina and oil spill (Miller, et. al., 2014), Louisiana people have risen up to develop wetland entrepreneurship businesses to provide solutions to help address the issues of wetland losses and maintain healthy wetland ecosystems. For example, Louisiana coastal wetlands have been significantly damaged by nutria (LDWF, 2007). Marsh Dog (Sternberg, 2014) turns nutria meat into dog treats and Righteous Fur (Pfefferle, 2014) designs clothing for the contemporary fashion market using nutria fur. Both businesses help save the wetlands. Martin Ecosystems (ME, 2015) is another Louisiana startup that developed floating islands to clean polluted lakes, support a wildlife habitat, protect wetland erosion, and facilitate wetland restoration.

In this chapter we address three questions on international soft landings of wetland entrepreneurship in Asia. First, we answer the question of how the entrepreneurs in Louisiana can participate in providing solutions to wetland losses in Louisiana. This is discussed in the section entitled “Wetland Entrepreneurship: The Louisiana Experiences.” Second, we answer the question of how to cultivate the entrepreneurs in Louisiana to provide effective solutions to maintain sustainable wetland ecology. In addition, how can we prepare the wetland entrepreneurs to go global with their businesses? This is discussed in the section entitled “The “Flying High” platform for Wetland Entrepreneurs to Go Abroad.” Third, we answer the question of how to help wetland entrepreneurs with local solutions and global impact in Asia through collaborations with the six international soft landings incubators mentioned above? This is discussed in the section entitled “The “Landing Soft” platform for Wetland Entrepreneurs to Go Abroad in Asia.” We conclude the chapter with some future research directions.

WETLAND ENTREPRENEURSHIP: THE LOUISIANA EXPERIENCES

In this section, we show how the entrepreneurs in Louisiana participate in providing sustainable solutions to wetland losses and help save Louisiana’s coastal wetlands. Specifically, four examples are provided: (1) how Alligators help save Louisiana’s coastal wetlands; (2) how oyster reefs help protect Louisiana’s

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