



Asian Partnership Readiness Scorecard

Essential assessment for European executive teams working with Asian partners

By InterCultra – Cross-Cultural Advisory for Asian Partnerships

How to use this scorecard

For each statement, select:

Yes

We handle this well

Not sure


We may not have a clear approach


No

This is likely a risk area

1. Start with Section 1 (Universal). This applies to most Asian partnerships.
2. Then complete ONLY the country section(s) that match your current or upcoming engagement (Korea, Japan, China, Hong Kong).
3. Scoring:
 - Universal readiness % = (Yes answers ÷ total answered in Section 1) × 100
 - Country readiness % = (Yes answers ÷ total answered in that country section) × 100

If you complete multiple countries, calculate a country % for each one.

 Be honest in your responses. This is about how you perform under real pressure rather than what you believe should happen in a perfect world.

 If "Not sure" appears more than 3 times across Section 1 plus your selected country section(s), treat it as a blind spot that can affect decision speed and relationship stability under pressure.



Universal Asian Partnership Principles

(10 questions)

These questions assess dynamics that commonly decide whether your European teams gain clarity, trust, and momentum. This applies to most Asian partnerships.

A) Hierarchy & decision-making

1. We can identify who actually influences decisions on the Asian side (not only who holds the title).

✓ Yes ⚠ Not sure ☒ No

2. We communicate through the expected hierarchy level for that market and situation.

✓ Yes ⚠ Not sure ☒ No

3. We understand how escalation is interpreted (e.g., "speeding things up") and we use it appropriately.

✓ Yes ⚠ Not sure ☒ No

4. We understand how long internal alignment typically takes before decisions are confirmed (and we plan for it).

✓ Yes ⚠ Not sure ☒ No

B) Communication & governance

5. We can interpret "silence" or "no questions" in meetings without assuming agreement.

✓ Yes ⚠ Not sure ☒ No



B) Communication & governance (continued)

6. We know when challenging questions require a direct response vs. when they require internal alignment first.

✓ Yes ⚠ Not sure ☒ No

7. We manage internal follow-up quickly enough that signals from the room are translated into action.

✓ Yes ⚠ Not sure ☒ No

8. We provide sufficient context so decision-makers and influencers can validate our logic and assumptions.

✓ Yes ⚠ Not sure ☒ No

C) General Etiquette

9. Meeting etiquette: We understand the "small behaviours" that signal respect: correct business attire, business card exchange protocols, seating arrangements, and formal greetings.

✓ Yes ⚠ Not sure ☒ No

10. Language & context: We can interpret different English usage effectively, looking past missing idioms or different phrases to understand the underlying cultural intent and background.

✓ Yes ⚠ Not sure ☒ No

i Complete Section 1 before moving to any country-specific section. Your Universal score forms the baseline for all partnership readiness.



Korea Partnership Readiness

(8 questions)

Korean partners often combine strong hierarchy with fast execution once internal alignment is achieved. The way authority and decision flow are handled in the room can risk the delay in forming internal alignment.

1. We know who the true point of contact for communication with the Korean side is.

✓ Yes ⚠ Not sure ☒ No

2. We know the correct escalation path if our main point of contact becomes unresponsive.

✓ Yes ⚠ Not sure ☒ No

3. We understand how decisions form internally within the Korean organisation we work with.

✓ Yes ⚠ Not sure ☒ No

4. We can respond to urgency or directive requests without triggering resistance or loss of face.

✓ Yes ⚠ Not sure ☒ No



Korea Partnership Readiness (continued)

5. We can handle direct language confidently while maintaining relationship stability.

✓ Yes ⚠ Not sure ☒ No

6. We recognise when a partner behaves traditionally within their organisation but "westernised" personally, and we know how to navigate these dual identities to our advantage.

✓ Yes ⚠ Not sure ☒ No

7. We handle "reconfirmation" efficiently: when new information appears, we correct course without sounding defensive.

✓ Yes ⚠ Not sure ☒ No

8. We keep authority respectful in meetings: titles, seating/role cues, and who speaks when, are correct.

✓ Yes ⚠ Not sure ☒ No



Japan Partnership Readiness

(8 questions)

Japanese partners often emphasise consensus-building, careful risk management, and timing. The common failure mode is not realising the "agreement that isn't real" until late.

1. If feedback appears late or minimal, we confirm whether alignment exists (not just whether activity happened).

✓ Yes ⚠ Not sure ☒ No

2. We build checkpoints into the timeline to validate agreement, not only progress.

✓ Yes ⚠ Not sure ☒ No

3. When presenting ideas, we create space for reflection rather than demanding immediate decisions.

✓ Yes ⚠ Not sure ☒ No

4. We respond professionally when replies are delayed without escalating pressure unnecessarily.

✓ Yes ⚠ Not sure ☒ No



Japan Partnership Readiness (continued)

5. We can detect "hidden disagreement" early enough to correct course.

Yes  Not sure No

6. We understand the internal approval chain (e.g., who needs to review, and how routing works).

Yes  Not sure No

7. We manage risk framing: we can raise concerns in a way that protects harmony.

Yes  Not sure No

8. We reconfirm commitments at key milestones so "consensus" becomes operational reality.

Yes  Not sure No



China Partnership Readiness

(8 questions)

Chinese partners often combine relationship confidence with pragmatic deal-making and negotiation flexibility. The risk is losing trust during negotiation cycles and term discussions.

1. Before commercial terms, we invest time in building credibility and trust.

✓ Yes ⚠ Not sure ☒ No

2. We present our track record and credibility in a way that is easy to validate.

✓ Yes ⚠ Not sure ☒ No

3. When terms are revisited repeatedly, we treat it as process, not personal friction.

✓ Yes ⚠ Not sure ☒ No

4. We can "read between the lines" to detect hidden reservations and know how to seek for clarification (especially when "Yes" might mean "No").

✓ Yes ⚠ Not sure ☒ No



China Partnership Readiness (continued)

5. We know when to raise concerns privately instead of publicly.

✓ Yes ⚠ Not sure ☒ No

6. We understand negotiation expectations: which concessions are incremental and which must be handled as final decisions.

✓ Yes ⚠ Not sure ☒ No

7. We translate oral alignment into operational commitments (clear owners, timelines, and evidence).

✓ Yes ⚠ Not sure ☒ No

8. We manage the expectations of senior leaders who expect counterparts to cater to their specific needs and status, particularly regarding appointments and scheduling.

✓ Yes ⚠ Not sure ☒ No



Hong Kong Partnership Readiness (8 questions)

Hong Kong blends global financial efficiency with Asian relationship awareness. Your advantage comes from combining speed with the right cultural framing in meetings and investor contexts.

1. When a Hong Kong counterpart signals "move forward," we can respond promptly without creating internal chaos.

✓ Yes ⚠ Not sure ☒ No

2. Our materials get to the point quickly (decision-relevant, not vague, not over-explained).

✓ Yes ⚠ Not sure ☒ No

3. We balance efficiency with relationship-building appropriately for the moment.

✓ Yes ⚠ Not sure ☒ No

4. We manage meeting dynamics with senior stakeholders without lowering trust through hierarchy or tone mistakes.

✓ Yes ⚠ Not sure ☒ No



Hong Kong Partnership Readiness (continued)

5. We understand how the counterpart expects follow-up to work (timing, channel, and level of detail).

✓ Yes ⚠ Not sure ☒ No

6. We keep internal decision-cycle speed aligned with external opportunity timing.

✓ Yes ⚠ Not sure ☒ No

7. We use board-ready framing: risks, assumptions, and decision points are explicit.

✓ Yes ⚠ Not sure ☒ No

8. We understand that local bluntness, directness, or personal questions are often signs of efficiency or genuine interest rather than rudeness.

✓ Yes ⚠ Not sure ☒ No



Your Readiness Scores

Use the same thresholds for Universal and for each completed country section.

80–100%


Low risk (but not risk-free)

60–79%

Moderate risk (common friction zone)

Below 60%

High cultural risk (hidden risks become visible late)

 If your country readiness % is lower than your universal readiness %, it usually means you have general cultural awareness, but execution in that market needs adjustment.

Now you have a clear diagnosis of where friction is likely being created through:

1. **hierarchy handling, meeting dynamics, and internal decision timing** (universal), and
2. **market-specific execution** (Korea / Japan / China / Hong Kong).



Next Steps: How InterCultra Can Help

Option 1: Free 30-minute executive strategy call

Best if you want a personal review of your scorecard results before your next engagement.

- Pinpoint the highest-risk gaps from your Universal + country score
- Translate them into executive actions you can implement immediately
- Protect outcomes by preserving trust and decision momentum in the room

[Book a free executive strategy call](#)

Option 2: Last-minute executive preparation

Best if you have an upcoming key meeting, negotiation, board update, or Asia engagement.

- Hierarchy and meeting dynamics in that moment
- How to handle directness, "silence," and sensitive clarification
- How to brief internally so follow-up lands cleanly

[Book an executive prep session](#)

Option 3: Country-specific executive briefing

Best if your immediate priority is preparing for a specific market engagement (Korea, Japan, China, or Hong Kong).

- Decision pace and follow-up expectations in that market
- The cultural framing that reduces hesitation and improves traction
- What to prepare before key appointments and senior interactions

[Book a country-specific briefing](#)



About InterCultra

InterCultra helps European companies develop cultural strategy when doing business in Asia – whether that's raising capital in Hong Kong, navigating a partnership with Korean counterparts, or building long-term relationships across the region.

We combine deep cultural fluency with 20+ years of real business experience across Hong Kong, London, Stockholm, Seoul and Tokyo. We are not here to teach you about cultural differences. We are here to help you close deals, build trust, and execute across cultures.

Founded by a Hong Kong-born, Stockholm-based advisor with nearly two decades of international business experience across Europe and Asia.

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