



Friends from Thailand - FFT **Under Thailand Development Cooperation Programme**

1. Background

Since 1990s, Thailand's development cooperation has expanded continuously in terms of both geographical coverage and modality of cooperation to strengthen bilateral relations, promote South-South and triangular cooperation and support regional integration, contributing to economic and social well-being and enhancing mutual understanding between Thailand and its partner countries.

Thailand International Cooperation Agency (TICA), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, has been designated as the focal agency responsible for the coordination and implementation of Thailand's development cooperation programmes with other countries. Forms of cooperation include technical cooperation projects, dispatching volunteers and experts, human resources development programmes such as fellowships, scholarship and short-term trainings, and are done through various modalities such as bilateral and triangular cooperation.

One of the forms of Thailand's development cooperation is Thai volunteers programme known as **"Friends from Thailand – FFT"**. The programme was launched in 2003 and has been part of Thailand's efforts to strengthen the impact of development cooperation by dispatching Thai youth age between 21 – 35 years old to provide technical advice and sharing knowledge with local communities in partner countries.

As the name implies, the Friends from Thailand Volunteer Programme also aims at building better understanding and forging people-to-people relationship at the grassroot level between Thailand and its partner countries. The volunteers not only contribute their knowledge and experience towards sustainable development on the ground, but they also promote understanding, cultural exchange and mutual trust between Thailand and the countries they serve. Through direct contact with beneficiaries, "Friends from Thailand" makes significant contribution toward achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

2. Areas of Cooperation

FFT volunteers take up a wide range of field work together with counterparts from partner agencies. The main areas of cooperation are as follows;

No.	Priority Areas	Fields
1	Agriculture	Soil, Fishery, Livestock, Irrigation
2	Education	Thai language instructor Vocational Education: E-commerce, Hospitality, Smart farmer, Retail business, Autonomous robots, Railway systems engineering
3	Public Health	Medical science, Disease control, Health care services, Health care promotion
4	Tourism	Hotel and tourism management, Cultural tourism, Tourism promotion for local area development

No.	Priority Areas	Fields
5	Skill Development	Digital media creation, Graphic design, Home economics, Electronics, Construction
6	Community Development	Community development, Women empowerment, Food preservation, Sewing
7	Thai Culture	Thai boxing, Thai food and desserts, Thai handicraft

3. Roles of FFT

FFT volunteers are assigned to work with partner Governments and agencies (central or local level) and communities to;

(1) Transfer and share knowledges, skills and experiences in the assigned areas of cooperation through activities and means as mutually agreed upon between TICA and the partner Governments and agencies for an agreed duration

(2) Promote understanding, mutual trust and friendship between FFT and people of the partner countries

4. Selection of Volunteers

TICA will be responsible for the recruitment and selection of appropriate volunteers based on the request from partner countries and agencies. Their final approval is subsequently required prior to dispatching the volunteers to the countries and agencies.

5. Duration of Service

The regular term of service of volunteers is the minimum of one year and the maximum of two years which can be extended upon mutual agreement between the two Governments.

6. Responsibilities of the Royal Thai Government

6.1 Coordinate with Partner Governments/Agencies

TICA will liaise with partner Governments and agencies in all aspects of the volunteers prior to, during and after their assignment to partner countries.

6.2 Financial Arrangement

TICA will bear all costs related to the dispatch of the volunteers as follows;

- (1) Round trip international air travel
- (2) Local travel
- (3) Monthly living allowance
- (4) Housing/accommodation
- (5) Life insurance and medical care
- (6) Other incidental expenses

6.3 Visits by Thai Officials

Officials or experts from the Royal Thai Government may visit the volunteers in their place of assignment with official advance notification to the partner Governments/agencies.

7. Responsibilities of the partner Government/Agency

7.1 Work assignment

The partner Government/Agency will make arrangement for the volunteers as follows;

- (1) Assign and approve work plan of the volunteers
- (2) Arrange counterpart to work with the volunteers
- (3) Assist in finding suitable accommodation
- (4) Assist in processing visa and work/travel permit
- (5) Provide adequate means of transportation and necessary equipment for the volunteers to fulfill their official assignment

7.2 Financial arrangement

The partner Government/Agency will provide financial support for the volunteers if deem necessary such as official travels, in accordance with the rate approved for volunteers.

8. Withdrawal of Volunteers

The Royal Thai Government may withdraw volunteers after consultation with the partner Government/Agency, and shall not be held liable if volunteers are repatriated due to illness or accident, on humanitarian grounds, or for any other reason. Likewise, after lodging a formal complaint, the partner Government/Agency may request the Royal Thai Government to withdraw volunteers if the personal or professional conduct is found to be detrimental to the national interest.

8. Liability under Laws

The volunteers shall at all times during their assignment in partner countries be subject to such laws, regulations and orders as are currently in force in the countries. In the event of a lawful arrest or detention of a volunteer or of a criminal proceeding being instituted against a volunteer, the partner Government/Agency shall notify the Royal Thai Government immediately. The partner Government/Agency shall take appropriate measures, in accordance with its respective laws and regulations, to ensure the safety of the volunteers.

Thailand International Cooperation Agency (TICA)
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