



Thailand's Voluntary National Review on

The Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development the 2020 Edition

Volunteerism and Sustainable Development

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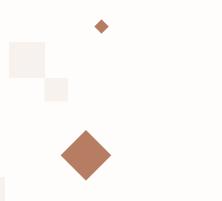


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Message from the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs

2020 has been a challenging year for all countries due to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, which has affected economies and societies, as well as people's way of life, everywhere. Everything has been transformed through the lens of the "New Normal". However, the COVID-19 pandemic also presents an opportunity, namely to stress the importance of pursuing sustainable development through the realisation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which provides a balance between economic and social development, and environmental protection. Thailand has embraced His Majesty the Late King Bhumibol Adulyadej the Great's Sufficiency Economy Philosophy as a means to strengthen local communities with strong communities come resilience, which will help elevate the country's ability to deal with uncertainties that may occur in the future.

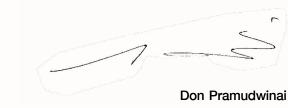
Thailand is determined to accelerate the achievement of the SDGs by 2030 under the context of the COVID-19 situation and the Decade of Action, fully cognizant that we have only 10 years left to realise the SDGs.

At the macro level, the Royal Thai Government emphasises the country's economic restructuring, whereby priority is given to strengthening the local economy, elevating the country's capacity to prepare for sustainable growth in the long term. This entails developing human capital and living standards to drive forward national development, as well as improving and enhancing other basic public services which will enable national recovery and development.

The Royal Thai Government fully recognises that sustainable development cannot be achieved through the work of government alone. Indeed, each sector at every level has a part to play in the drive to achieve the SDGs and sustainable development. For this reason, the Government has attached great importance to raising awareness on the SDGs nationally, as well as supporting people's participation at every stage of the country's development, including through "volunteers" and "volunteerism", which is a vital means to drive forward the SDGs. Volunteer work has people at its core, thereby ensuring that no one is left behind, while empowering communities.

Therefore, the 2020 edition of Thailand's Voluntary National Review on the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has been developed under the theme "Volunteerism and Sustainable Development". It aims to present the progress achieved and challenges that remain for Thailand in its SDGs implementation, as well as to highlight good examples of how volunteer work can play a role in driving each of the SDGs.

I truly admire the contribution of all volunteers who have worked selflessly and have gained international acclaim for their work amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, including those countless persons who continue to dedicate their time and efforts for the well-being of others without any public recognition. I thank them all for their great work in promoting people's quality of life and sustainable development. I sincerely hope that this report will help raise awareness on the role and contribution of volunteers in realising sustainable development, thereby serving to further inspire all of us, whether volunteers or the general population, to drive forward the SDGs. Truly, all can contibute to the achievement of Thailand's sustainable development.



Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand

Introduction Volunteerism and Sustainable Development

Thailand is determined to realise its vision of becoming "a developed country with security, prosperity and sustainability in line with the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy," as stated in the 20-Year National Strategy Framework (2018–2037). The Royal Thai Government has embraced His Majesty the Late King Bhumibol Adulyadej the Great's Sufficiency Economy Philosophy as the guiding pathway for the nation's development. The Government has also integrated the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) a set of global goals at the heart of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development - into the 12th National Economic and Social Development Plan (2017-2021) and other frameworks under the 20-Year National Strategy, to ensure government policies and budget allocations advance sustainable development.

To advance Thailand towards SDG achievement with a clear course of action that is consistent with the national strategy, the National Committee for Sustainable Development (CSD), chaired by the Prime Minister, established Thailand's SDGs Roadmap, which consists of six actions, as follows:

1) Raising awareness in order that all stakeholders at both the national and local levels understand the principles behind the SDGs;

2) Integrating the SDGs into the three levels of the national plans, so that efforts towards national development, in accordance with the National Strategy and the Master Plans under the National Strategy, could also simultaneously count towards achieving the SDGs;





3) Establishing mechanisms to propel sustainable development at both policy-making and operational levels, to ensure government agencies are assigned clear responsibilities in working towards the SDGs;

4) Initiating projects and development plans to achieve the SDGs, with appropriate prioritisation for each area;

5) Encouraging cooperation from development partners, including the private sector, academia, civil society, and international development partners, so that all sectors play a part in driving Thailand towards the SDGs; and

6) Monitoring progress towards achieving the SDGs through the Electronic Monitoring and Evaluation System of National Strategy and Country Reform (eMENSCR), which collects progress data from all relevant agencies.

The years 2020–2030 mark the Decade of Action on the SDGs, during which Thailand became a member of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) for the term 2020–2022 amid the outbreak of the Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) which has adversely affected the economies and societies of all countries, as well as their progress towards the SDGs by the 2030 timeline. All countries must come together to seek new ways of driving sustainable development and to meet the challenges of the "New Normal" in the post-pandemic world, in order to enhance sustainability, increase resilience against changes and crises, strengthen human security, as well as significantly accelerate progress towards the SDGs.

Despite the Royal Thai Government's strong commitment to advance sustainable development, sustainable development cannot be achieved by the Government acting alone. Every sector can play a part in this effort. Therefore, the Government attaches great importance to supporting mechanisms that enable and expand public participation in the process to advance sustainable development. The general public is especially encouraged to take part in the development process via different channels, including volunteerism.

The Ministry of Social Development and Human Security is the main agency that promotes and supports Thailand's volunteerism. In 2011, the Cabinet endorsed "Giving and Volunteerism" as a national agenda, aiming to encourage and cultivate good conscience among Thai people. Campaigns were set up to inspire people to become volunteers in government projects and in their respective communities. School curricula were also developed to mould students' consciences to be givers and volunteers for social causes.

At present, it is estimated that there are over 13.15 million official and unofficial volunteers in Thailand. This reflects the great interest of the Thai people in promoting and advancing various sustainable development causes in the country.

The Thailand International Cooperation Agency (TICA), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, is the main government agency promoting transnational volunteering under the "Friends from Thailand" (FFT) project. Since 2003, TICA has deployed Thai volunteers to various causes in different countries, including Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Vietnam, Bhutan, Timor-Leste, Benin, Mozambique, and Lesotho. The Agency works with the Puey Ungphakorn School of Development Studies, Thammasat University, or a local host agency and a host country to select volunteers for each assignment. Moreover, Thailand continues to donate 50,000 baht annually to the United Nations Volunteers (UNV), which set up its Asia-Pacific regional office in Bangkok in 2014. In 2019, the Department of International Organisations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, made an additional one-time contribution of 40,000 U.S. dollars to UNV to help fund its volunteer activities in Thailand.

Besides deploying volunteers to overseas missions and offering financial support to UNV, Thailand also plays a creative role in the exchange of views and experiences for the improvement of regional and international volunteer work. Thailand conducts workshops that incorporate the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy, and regularly co-hosts international meetings with UNV to exchange knowledge and determine frameworks for international volunteerism. Such an expansion of public participation towards the SDGs, especially the role of volunteerism in sustainable development, is one of the main areas Thailand prioritises during its ECOSOC membership for the term 2020–2022.

Thailand has attached great importance to producing the Voluntary National Review (VNR) on its progress towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The review provides an opportunity for Thailand to share its experiences and lessons learned in its path towards SDG achievement. Thailand formally presented its VNR during the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) on 18 July,



2017. Although such formal annual submissions are not mandatory, Thailand, through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, has continued to produce an unofficial VNR every year since 2017, as an internal means for stocktaking on progress achieved and challenges that remain.

Thailand highly values the promotion of volunteerism as one of the mechanisms to accelerate the achievement of the SDGs at the national level in line with the international context. Therefore, the 2020 edition of Thailand's VNR focuses primarily on volunteerism and its potential for SDG acceleration, in order to present Thailand's experiences in the area of volunteerism for the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Not only does volunteerism provide space for the general public to participate in the development process, but it also has a role in linking government policies to field work at the community level—from planning to working, collecting of community data, and following up on SDGs progress. The participation of volunteers will lead to widespread social mobilisation and foster discussions, helping to reflect the voices of the general public in government policies. It will also create a sense of ownership and participation in the drive to achieve the SDGs at the individual and community levels, helping to strengthen the communities from the bottom up and create unity at the same time.

The authors of this VNR sincerely hope that it will shed light on how everyone can play a role in bringing about sustainable and transformative change together. We hope it will inspire all sectors and people in society to realise the value and importance of volunteerism in driving sustainable development, and motivate them to participate in advancing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs together.





End poverty in all its forms everywhere

One of the Sustainable Development Goals is to eradicate extreme poverty, which is defined by the international poverty line currently set at \$1.90 per person per day, and to minimise the proportion of people living in poverty in all forms and dimensions according to each country's respective threshold by 2030.

However, poverty is defined not only in monetary terms, as signified by low income, but also other aspects of quality of life, such as a lack of educational and healthcare opportunities, lack of access to utilities and modern technology, as well as economic, social, and environmental risks and other disasters. Poverty is therefore a fundamental problem that hinders the achievement of other SDGs.

The Royal Thai Government is aware of the various dimensions of poverty. The 20-Year National Strategy Framework (2018–2037) and four National Economic and Social Development Plans, from the 9th to the current 12th (2017–2021), have been dedicated to policymaking with an aim to end poverty in all dimensions, while embracing the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy as the guiding pathway to eradicate poverty in all forms everywhere. Over 30 years, Thailand successfully reduced the percentage of the population living in poverty from 65.75 per cent in 1988 to only 7.9 per cent in 2017.

However, the development progress achieved over many decades may be set back by the COVID-19 pandemic. Thais who already live under vulnerable conditions or are in poverty could face worsening hardships due to economic regression and unemployment, leading to the inability to make ends meet. In this context, sustainability-focused rehabilitation is essential. The Sufficiency Economy Philosophy, which seeks to strengthen local communities, can go a long way towards this effort.



Poverty can be sustainably eradicated only when communities are empowered and enjoy inclusive access to development opportunities, as well as economic resources and basic public services. The Royal Thai Government is determined to restructure and strengthen the grassroots economy in line with its key "Pracharath" policy, which entails cooperation across the board from the public, private, academic, civil and people sectors. The policy embraces the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy as it seeks to solve problems and steer the economy towards SDG achievement and sustainable development in every community and area. It aims to prepare them for changes that can arise from economic, social, and environmental factors or natural disasters.

To advance sustainable development, the Government has launched the "Sarn Palang Pracharath" initiative, led by a working group on grassroots economic development and public-private partnerships (also known as "E3"), which comprises representatives from the public and private sectors in a drive to generate income for local communities and to create happiness for the people. To develop the grassroots economy, the working group makes use of mechanisms in the government's "Pracharath" policy and receives across-the-board cooperation, especially from volunteers in the public, private, academic, civil, and people sectors. The working group puts emphasis on mutual understanding and reaching out to local people to ensure that development efforts truly meet the needs of the communities and the people.

This has led to the launch of the "Pracharath Rak Samakkee Social Enterprise (Thailand) Company Limited", which relies on all hands being put on deck in efforts to make local communities self-reliant through the development of each community's own goods and services, as well as products befitting each area's social geography. This social enterprise also supports the expansion of the grassroots economy by increasing manufacturing and entrepreneurial capacity and knowledge-driven product development.

Pracharath Rak Samakkee Social Enterprise (Thailand) Co., Ltd.

The Pracharath Rak Samakkee Social Enterprise Company was born in 2016 from the idea that social enterprises can be a creative driving force for local economic developments. As the main agency, the E3 committee has made a push to set up various social enterprises in every province under the "Pracharath Rak Samakkee" banner, with the Pracharath Rak Samakkee Company as the central body to coordinate between all sectors. The initiative helps to promote knowledge and improve resources, and helps boost communities' income from agricultural businesses, processing, and local tourism—strengthening Thailand's grassroots economy and driving sustainable development in the communities. The development and capacity building process for local enterprises can be broken down into the following five aspects:

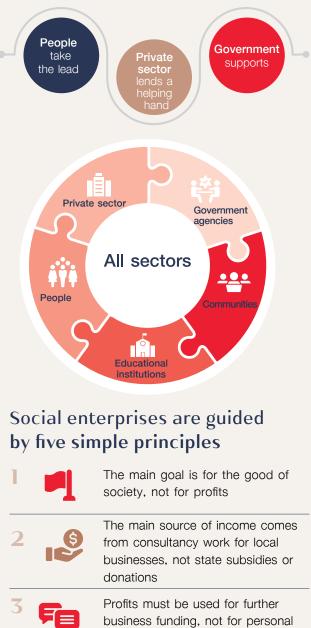
- Supporting community access to means of production both in terms of resources and capital, such as by helping draft an effective business plan, helping source quality seeds, and matching communities with suitable financial institutions;
- Generating income from community knowledge by developing storytelling for products and local tourism spots to make them stand out, supporting local research, and encouraging product certifications, including patent registrations;
- **3.** Holistic marketing efforts starting from market analysis, to product and packaging development, and new sales channels;
- 4. Creating sustainable awareness through support in brand building and public relations campaigns via local and national media affiliates; and
- 5. Establishing a basic management system for capital, accounting, and risks.

Besides local enterprises initiated by the public or the private sector or the locals themselves, part of the Pracharath Rak Samakkee company's success also includes a group of volunteers known as the "community business developers", who act as one of the mechanisms to drive key development efforts. In the company's first national-level programme, "Sarn Palang Peua Bankerd", one community business developer was selected from each province to develop different skills and work with the company for two years. The volunteers would earn income as they learned about social enterprise work, worked on the ground to develop communities in their respective home provinces, and gained leadership skills in management and communications through collaboration with the Pracharath Rak Samakkee Board of Directors and senior executives from major Thai corporations. The programme also provided good opportunities to network with a new generation of community leaders from across the country.

Throughout the first programme, which started on 15 June 2016, the first batch of Sarn Palang Peua Bankerd volunteers carried out over 800 community development projects nationwide, generating more than 300 million baht in income for the communities and benefiting more than 50,000 households. After the first two-year programme was completed, the Pracharath Rak Samakkee Company selected more potential business developers to join a district-level social enterprise programme to further advance community developments. The "Chumchon Dee Mee Roi Yim" programme saw a new generation of local business developers pitch their district-level development proposals to win grants, all with an eye to "generating income for the communities, creating happiness for the people."

Principles for a Sustainable Foundation

Generate income for communities, create happiness for the people



Must comply with the principle of good governance

gains

5

Must be registered as limited companies



THAILAND MODEL

l goal Generate income for communities, create happiness for the people

3 categories







Marketing

Agriculture

Processing Local tourism (SME/OTOP)

5 procedures

Access to means of production

Knowledge building

Communication

Management for sustainability

Structure

Pracharath Rak Samakkee (Thailand) Co., Ltd. and local subsidiaries in 76 provinces

Principle

Sufficiency Economy

One successful example to come out of the programme was the Chumchon Dee Mee Roi Yim project in Mae Chaem, Chiang Mai Province, which was led by Manyika Maneepong, a young woman determined to return to develop to her remote hometown through practices in line with the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy. She tackled poverty by examining the basic needs of each community first as a starting point. For Mae Chaem, the majority of the population is made up of ethnic groups and the Paganyaw hill tribe. When not farming, the women would weave fabrics for additional income, while the elderly people enjoy making wickerwork, a form of folk art that carries unique characteristics.

The project supported the communities by helping elevate the products, adding value and promoting more awareness of ethnic cultural products among urban residents with purchasing power. It also emphasised capacity-building for people and connected the communities with outside agencies, such as the Creative Economy Agency and Chiang Mai University, so that the villagers could have access to skills development training and achieve sustainable self-reliance.

This success highlights the critical role of the young business developers in driving the local economy. They comprise local people who know best what their communities still lack and what specific support they still require. When young people in the communities participate in the development of their hometowns with the support of the government or relevant agencies, only then can poverty be tackled at the core and across the board.

Goal

End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture

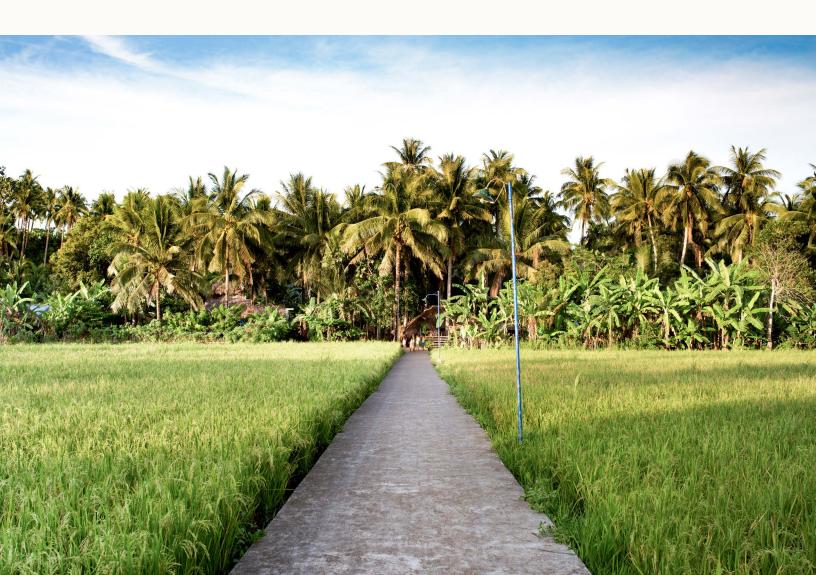
When crises such as the coronavirus pandemic arise, people are often faced with food scarcity, and in many countries even suffer from famine and starvation. Food security is therefore an issue that every country must emphasise in parallel with crisis management and economic recovery efforts.

Although Thailand may be known as the world's rice bowl, the Royal Thai Government still placed importance on food security during the COVID-19 crisis. An initiative called "90 Days of Homegrown Vegetables to Strengthen Food Security" was launched by the Department of Community Development under the Ministry of Interior, and promoted on social media to encourage Thai people to grow vegetables at home in order to guard against risks of food shortages during the crisis, thereby implementing the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy in strengthening household food security in the long run. As of May 2020, a total of 10,137,648 Thai households started growing vegetables at home, accounting for more than 85 per cent of a target 11,811,124 households.

Moreover, the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives also rolled out measures to support farmers during the COVID-19 pandemic, including agricultural information services, a three-month financial aid scheme of 5,000 baht per month, and expansion of sales channels, given that the well-being of farmers is an essential factor in achieving food security. The COVID-19 crisis has underlined the importance of food as a basic need for human well-being. Therefore, achieving food security—a state in which everyone has access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their preferences and dietary needs for an active and healthy life—is vital to every country's crisis recovery. For this reason, every sector should accelerate collective efforts to end hunger, increase agricultural productivity, improve nutrition, and support sustainable agriculture.

According to a survey on Thailand's progress towards achieving SDG 2, the prevalence of stunting among Thai children under 5 years of age declined from 16.3 per cent in 2012 to 10.5 per cent in 2016. During the same period, the proportion of undernourished children dropped slightly from 6.7 per cent to 5.4 per cent, as did the percentage of overweight children from 10.9 per cent to 8.2 per cent. These positive signs indicated Thailand's advancement in driving the national nutrition agenda. To achieve food security and improve nutrition even more effectively, the National Food Committee has formulated a draft 5-Year National Nutrition Action Plan (2019–2023), with an aim to support research and improve nutrition knowledge, as well as raise awareness about appropriate food consumption behaviours.

Source: the 5-Year National Nutrition Action Plan (2019-2023) https://bit.ly/3hFxgtp





VOLUNTEERISM FOR THE SDGS

Furthermore, the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives and the Ministry of Public Health has also collaborated on an effort to promote food consumption in compliance with dietary recommendations. The initiative to develop and promote the use of a simplified nutritional logo, which would help consumers make informed decisions about food products, is aimed at curbing the consumption of sugar, sodium, and fat. Used to certify products that comply with relevant laws, the "Healthier Choice" nutritional logo is expected to not only make people aware of the choices of nutritious food products, but also encourage food producers to develop more such products to sell in the market.

Source: http://healthierlogo.com/

To ensure sustainable food production systems, the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives has developed the Strategic Framework on Food Security (2017-2021), which includes a tactic to increase local agricultural productivity through farming and livestock in educational institutions (such as in the Agriculture for School Lunch program) in order to curb reliance on external food products. The framework's other tactics include: promoting farming practices in line with the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy alongside folk wisdom to conserve diverse food sources and ensure food security in various dimensions; supporting food safety in the supply chain and motivating farmers and entrepreneurs to produce quality agricultural and food products; promoting product research and development; and overseeing that food production systems comply with safety, consumer protection and international trade standards.

Promoting farming practices in line with the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy alongside folk wisdom to conserve diverse food sources



The agricultural sector is essential to the Thai economy and society, employing as much as 30.9 per cent of the entire country's workforce and supporting as many as 6.4 million households. However, only 0.64 per cent of Thailand's total agricultural land in 2016 was dedicated to sustainable agriculture, making the extension of sustainable agricultural land an important target. To reach it, the Government has been promoting organic farming and the New Theory agricultural practices of the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy. Its framework for sustainable agriculture (2017–2021), which aims to increase sustainable agricultural land by 500,000 rais (80,000 hectares) per year, relies on efforts by agencies or working committees at the provincial, district, sub-district and village levels, and involves a process to improve human capital by educating high-potential farmers to develop skills and expertise, so they can pass on knowledge to the communities efficiently.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives has also set up a network of "village agricultural volunteers", who have played an important role in connecting government agencies with local communities. As people on the ground who truly understand the problems faced by local farmers, the volunteers are provided with the opportunity to participate in the brainstorming, decision-making, and problem-solving processes. They also help smallholder farmers in the communities get access to resources, knowledge, and self-improvement opportunities to advance towards sustainability, overall making their agricultural production systems more secure. The village agricultural volunteers survey, collect, and report agricultural data to relevant agencies; develop agricultural development plans with village leaders and relevant agencies; coordinate and share knowledge with other farmers; monitor and report agricultural situations in villages such as floods and pest infestations to relevant agencies; and perform other duties in the interests of other farmers and the communities.

Additionally, the village agricultural volunteers also coordinate with a larger network of 238,993 agricultural volunteers across every region in Thailand, who are categorised by their designated fields of expertise into 16 different types: accounting teachers; soil doctors; fishery volunteers; agricultural economists; natural rubber teachers; agricultural land reform volunteers; agriculture and cooperatives volunteers; livestock volunteers; artificial rain volunteers; cooperatives volunteers; irrigation volunteers; farmers; agricultural inspectors; silkworm farmers; Good Agricultural Practice (GAP) advisors; and the previously-discussed village agricultural volunteers.

Source: https://asa-center.doae.go.th/public/report-1

Prasit Buengklang, a 60-year-old farmer in a village called Baan Mu Si in Nakhon Ratchasima Province, is one of the many agricultural volunteers who has consistently worked with the Government. He was first approached by a community leader to join a training programme to become a "soil doctor volunteer", owing to his enthusiasm for agricultural innovations and new techniques, such as rice combine harvesters, parachute rice planting, and integrated farming. Although he receives no monetary compensation for his volunteerism, Prasit has been given basic training in soil inspection and soil development techniques as a village representative, after which he became a representative for the Department of Land Development, helping fellow farmers manage soil properly and disseminating land development information. Prasit also compiles lists of problems faced by farmers in the communities and reports them to the Department for further guidance on solutions.

Once the villagers have learned sustainable soil development techniques, they will help maintain and improve soil quality, conserve ecosystems, and become farmers who are resilient to climate change, drought, floods, and also more self-reliant in the long run.

At present, Prasit wears many hats as an agricultural volunteer: he is not only a soil doctor, agricultural economist, livestock volunteer, and accounting teacher, but also the president of a local Agricultural Productivity Efficiency Increasing Learning Centre and an agricultural lecturer for the people in the communities. He also reports local crop prices to relevant agencies and takes the lead in proposing different agricultural projects that truly reflect the voice of the local people.

Agricultural volunteers make up an important cog in the wheel that drives various initiatives under the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, which are aimed at sharing knowledge, connecting and creating collaboration between the public, private, and people sectors, and ensuring safe and sustainable agricultural and food production systems, all in all advancing towards the goal of food security and nutrition improvement for each and every Thai.

Source: http://www.ldd.go.th/WEB_WorldSoilDay/Data/Knowledge/Mordin_TH.pdf







Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

Promoting well-being for all is fundamental to the development of human resources and capacity building, which lies at the heart of the drive towards sustainable development. The COVID-19 crisis has shed light on the severe damage that public health threats can cause to many countries' societies and economies, thus making it necessary for the international community to make a collective and serious push to achieve SDG 3 in order to strengthen people's immunity and preparedness for future public health challenges.

Overall, Thailand has made progress towards SDG 3, with the Ministry of Public Health continuously carrying out policies that emphasise health promotion and disease control and prevention efforts in parallel with improving the universal health coverage scheme. The National Health Security Act B.E. 2545 (2002) was the first complete and inclusive law to ensure universal health coverage and enable Thai citizens without medical benefits to access health services as needed without concerns over costs. Now covering 99.88% of the Thai population, the scheme has helped to continually cut household medical expenditures from an average of 3.5 per cent of household income in the period before 1995 and 2.5 between 1997 and 1998, to less than 1.5 per cent at present. From fiscal year 2008, the universal health coverage scheme has consistently covered over 99 per cent of all Thais.

Source: https://www.nhso.go.th/FrontEnd/page-contentdetail.aspx?CatID=MTAzMg== https://www.hfocus.org/content/2019/12/18182



According to the Ministry of Public Health's 2018 data, Thailand's maternal mortality ratio was only 19.9 deaths per 100,000 live births, while the infant mortality rate was 3.3 deaths per 1,000 live births. The country's malaria incidence rate has also continuously declined since 2012, standing at only 0.22 per 1,000 population in 2016. The decline in maternal and preventable infant mortality rates as well as the control of communicable diseases, which all correspond with SDG 3, have reflected Thailand's advancement on public health issues.

Source: http://sdgs.nic.go.th/SDG3_3_3.html

Thailand has made progress in tackling malaria, an endemic disease that affects the health and well-being of people, especially those who live in forest areas or near water sources. According to data from the Ministry of Public Health, Thailand's malaria incidence rate dropped from 0.82 per 1,000 population in 2013 to 0.27 in 2016. Between the fiscal years of 2017 and 2021, Thailand also aims to reduce the rate to less than 0.20 per 1,000 population, escalating efforts from malaria control to malaria elimination, in line with the National Malaria Elimination Strategy.

Source: http://malaria.ddc.moph.go.th/malariaR10/page_malaria_home_new.php http://sdgs.nic.go.th/SDG3_3_3.html In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic, which has been declared a public health emergency of international concern by the World Health Organisation (WHO), has been a great public health challenge faced by all countries in the world. Since the first case was discovered in the country, the Royal Thai Government has pursued a proactive strategy to monitor, prevent and control the spread of the disease. Following the designation of COVID-19 as a dangerous communicable disease under the Communicable Disease Act B.E. 2558 (2015), the Government has taken actions to prepare budgets, personnel and medical equipment in order to prevent a shortage of resources, which could happen if hospitals across the country were to be overwhelmed by the number of patients at a time when a vaccine was still not available.

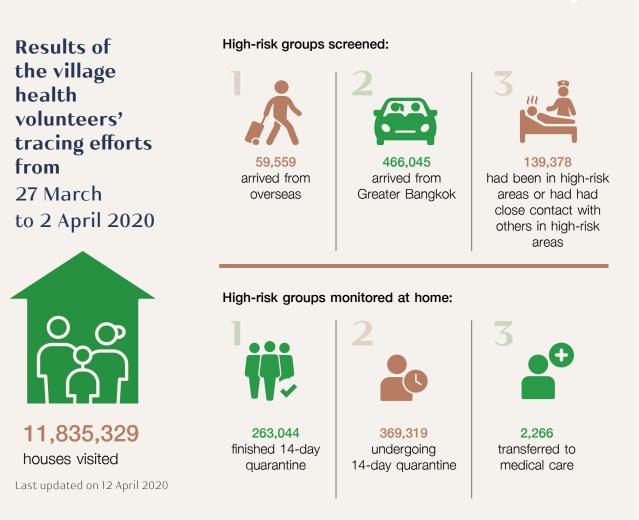
A key measure in controlling the spread of COVID-19 has been the cooperation from every sector, especially the people, who collectively changed their behaviour and looked after their own health and the health of their family members. They also strictly complied with official measures and medical advice to stay at home to curb the spread of the virus and to illustrate social responsibility.

Amidst the COVID-19 challenges, a group of people known as the "Village Health Volunteers" have played a critical role. They are part of a network that has been in operation since 1978, following Thailand's policy to improve the health system for the health and well-being of all Thais, for which the Ministry of Public Health would select a handful of villagers with volunteer spirits to train and educate them on health promotion efforts. After the training, the village health volunteers would play an important role in converting central policies into local implementation by disseminating accurate and simplified public health information and giving advice on diseases and proper health guidelines for other villagers. Over the past 40 years, the Ministry of Public Health has continously sought to improve the work of the village health volunteers.

In 2019, the Government initiated a plan to further develop the programme and elevate the volunteers to be "household doctors". Network presidents from each village were selected to attend a special training session to learn about endemics and epidemics, prevention methods, physical and mental health issues, and using Thai folk wisdom and traditional herbs for medicinal purposes. The Government also supported the village health volunteers to use modern technology for more efficient health promotion efforts in the communities.



At present, there are about 1,040,000 village health volunteers in Thailand and 15,000 public health volunteers in Bangkok. During a period when people travelled back to their hometowns, many were afraid of a greater wave of COVID-19 transmission in Thailand. District Health Promoting Hospitals in each area then tasked the village health volunteers and health authorities with proactive campaigns to raise awareness, urge newly-arrived travellers to stay at home and refrain from social gatherings, and give self-care advice. They also formed the first line of defence in their efforts to collect travel information of households under their responsibility, collect health records of people in the communities for relevant agencies, give knowledge about COVID-19, and screen high-risk groups for public health authorities to monitor. The village-level screening effort has proven efficient and produced concrete results.



Source: https://www.hfocus.org/content/2020/04/18973

The village health volunteers programme also saw greater efficiency with the help of an online network made specifically for them and primary healthcare units. As the main telecommunications sponsor, Advanced Info Service Public Company Limited, or AIS, created an application called "Village Health Volunteers Online" to facilitate communications among the volunteers or between the volunteers and the District Health Hospitals that they report to. The application allowed them to set up chat rooms, organise meetings, and file reports 24 hours a day; it was also a source of correct and up-to-date information that could be used in their field work. For example, the volunteers could record screening information of the households under their responsibility on their mobile phones-in the forms of images, videos and geolocations-and quickly send it to the District Health Hospitals, making it easy to come back to check in case infected cases were found or high-risk groups were nearby.

Moreover, the "Village Health Volunteer Online" application can also be used during the rainy season as the volunteers survey various areas for mosquito larvae in an effort to monitor, prevent and control the spread of Dengue Fever, the mosquito-borne disease that causes tens of thousands of infections and even deaths every year. Such use of modern technology in elevating the proactive public health efforts has allowed the village health volunteers to look after the quality of life of villagers in remote communities, becoming a part of public health work that ensures the well-being and health of all Thais at all ages. The village health volunteers can look after the quality of life of villagers in remote communities





Goal

Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

Education lies at the heart of human development, which in turn is key to a country's efforts towards sustainability. The Royal Thai Government values the promotion of equitable opportunities for quality education for every Thai at all ages, particularly for children who risk dropping out of school due to their families' financial situation. Unless the Government offers a helping hand, this group of vulnerable children could miss opportunities to gain knowledge that could benefit them in the future. Moreover, out-of-school children can also affect a country's economic development, whether directly and indirectly. A 2013 study by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) found that out-of-school children can cost as high as 1.3 per cent of the country's GDP, or around 200 billion baht per year, becoming a major obstacle to human development and the achievement of SDG 4 and other goals.

Believing that "inequality" can be solved by "equity", the Ministry of Education puts great importance on addressing this problem. It has set up the "Equitable Education Fund" (EEF) per the recommendations of the Independent Committee for Education Reform in 2018. It aims to not only create equity in education, help children who lack funds to achieve basic education and develop their potential, promote the conduciveness of educational institutions' curricula to children's development, but also improve teachers' capacity, and support research and development in order to reduce educational inequality.

In 2019, EEF was allocated a budget of 2,537,365,000 baht,

which was spent on driving educational development in these four areas:



Helping children and youth who lack funds or are disadvantaged, whether they are in or out of school



Promoting educational opportunities in the form of scholarships, alongside supporting initiatives to develop the quality and skills of the working-age population



Researching innovation; developing databases and technology to improve knowledge, new guidelines and measures; and supporting different sectors that help create educational equity



Funding the operation of EEF's fund management committee, office management, and relevant operational systems

EEF has allocated the following scholarships for youth and other people:



- Equity Scholarships: for students who lack funds for educational expenses, transportation and lunch
- Vocational Innovation Scholarships: for youth at the bottom 20 percent of the country's low-income population to pursue education towards occupations that are in high demand in the market
- Homegrown Teachers Scholarships: for students in remote areas to develop to become a new generation of teachers who can improve the quality of education in local schools

- Community-based Vocational Development Scholarships: to drive those who lack funds to become new entrepreneurs and skilled workers in 50 pilot villages across the country
- True Potential Scholarships: for the underprivileged to fully pursue bachelor's to doctoral degrees in fields that correspond to the country's human resource development plans

Following EEF's methodical work and a scholarship selection process for personnel and participating schools in the first semester of 2019, it was found that more than 711,536 students from over 27,805 educational institutions across the country had received aid and were able to enroll in schools normally. The EEF also worked with 20 provinces in Thailand to actively help more than 20,000 primary-aged children in disadvantaged families, improved over 300 child development model centres, and created an operational network with 11 universities in the country to develop the first class of Homegrown Teachers in the fields of elementary education and early childhood education, as well as helped to develop education reform models in more than 291 schools.

Source: https://www.eef.or.th/about/

Recent data by the National Statistical Office revealed 93.9 per cent of Thai children aged 6 years and over are literate, with female and male literacy rates at 92.7 per cent and 95.2 per cent respectively. Enrollment rates in 2017 were reported at 99.58 per cent for secondary schools; 91.13 per cent for high schools or vocational schools; and 55.53 per cent for the first year of university. In 2019, the Government's expenditure on education was over 507 billion baht, accounting for 16 per cent of the total budget for the fiscal year.





Thailand Collaboration for Education (TCFE)

Besides government efforts, a number of volunteers also helped push for equitable education and equal opportunities in Thailand. One example is the Thailand Collaboration for Education (TCFE) project, which brings together organisations focusing on different aspects of educational development to solve problems in various underprivileged schools across the country. The program promotes three opportunities for all children:

- The opportunity to access scholarships
- The opportunity to study in quality classrooms
- The opportunity to learn and understand life skills

These three elements will help children gain knowledge and expand it to live a good life in the future, enabling them to chase their dream careers and learn to pass on these opportunities. No matter how big, problems can be eased and eventually solved if everyone in society pitches in to help—such is the core belief of the Thailand Collaboration for Change project, which relies not only on either the public or the private sector alone but also the "human capital", or the volunteers, and the "financial resources", or the sponsors, from across the country to create maximum benefits.





According to a clearly defined set of selection criteria, those schools wishing to join the project must include a proportion of underprivileged students or students whose household earns less than 3,000 baht per month that account for more than 30% of their total enrollments. This is to ensure that the funds will go directly towards addressing educational inequality for vulnerable children in the Thai society.

Data collected by EEF in April 2019 showed that TCFE's network comprises a total of 82 schools in over 30 provinces, with 21 of them located in the northern region, 18 in the central region, and 22 in the northeastern region. More than 15,000 students have benefited from the scholarships.

Besides academic knowledge and career path finding, TCFE has also expanded its efforts over the past year with the new "Schools of Morality" project, which aims to: tighten relationships between children, parents, and schools; adjust children's behaviour to focus on learning and curb inappropriate behaviours; help put more children in schools; and find new activities that can make careers, meet cultural demands, and suit the living conditions of each child.

No problem in society can be sustainably solved without cooperation from different sectors and continuous efforts to do so. The projects and the dedicated volunteers make up great social capital, bringing hope that the Thai education system will see further improvement in the future, that soon every child will have equitable opportunities for education, and that education will be available for all at all ages, so that everyone can become valuable human resources and participate in the country's drive towards sustainable development.



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GENDER EQUALITY

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Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

Communities at all levels can achieve strength and happiness due to many factors, but an indispensable one is "equality" in society. Thailand places importance on promoting gender equality, and protects and champions women's rights on the basis of human value and dignity, in line with international standards such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Thailand strives for the advancement of women and aims to create gender equality and empower all women and girls, as enshrined in the Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand, which echoes the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in its stipulation that "all persons are equal before the law, and shall have rights and liberties and be protected equally under the law."

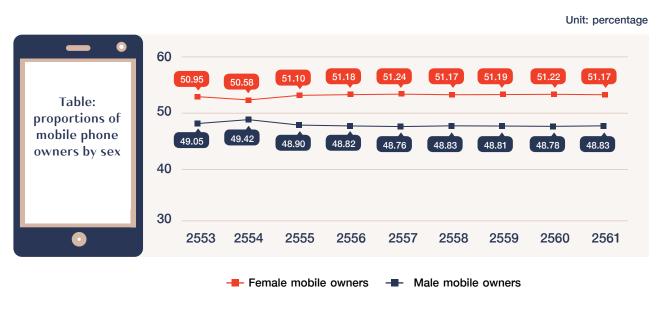
These principles have been integrated into the Women's Development Strategy 2017–2021. An action plan has also been drafted to implement the strategy and achieve concrete results, as well as to link with other development goals, into which the gender dimension is also woven.

To ensure that the efforts towards SDG 5 cover important issues, especially the protection of women from all forms of violence including domestic violence, the Royal Thai Government has set up a working committee comprising the public, private, and civil society sectors to address significant issues, such as the Domestic Violence Victim Protection project and the draft Plan of Action on the Elimination of Violence Against Women. The committee also seeks to mould attitudes to ensure that every sector recognises the importance of addressing violence in society, promote gender equality, and create safe spaces to protect women and children in six pilot communities from violence by organising activities to promote family relationships and providing assistance for those affected by violence. Realising that the COVID-19 crisis could see a rise in violence against women and domestic violence, the Government rolled out financial aid measures for women who lacked income. Under the "Leave No One Behind" initiative, the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security also launched eight more Women and Family Development Centres across the country, to be a refuge for unemployed and homeless women and single mothers and provide them with accommodation and three meals a day. The centres also offer free-of-charge occupational training for anyone interested, provide counseling, and coordinate help for female victims of violence 24 hours a day via hotline number 1300.

Besides ending all forms of violence against women and children everywhere, the Government also attaches great importance to the target of promoting women to play a more active role in decision making and driving development agendas in order to achieve gender equality. This way, women's potential will benefit various aspects of development and earn them acceptance and the same treatment as their male counterparts, whether in economics, culture, environment, or politics. By playing more prominent roles in communities, women are able to share knowledge, inspire others, and create the right attitudes and understanding about gender equality in each local area.

As a result of ongoing efforts in addressing the issue, data from the National Statistical Office showed the ratio of women to men in paid employment in 2019 at 85.7:100. Although the ratio of women in paid employment was 15 per cent less than their male counterparts, they earned an average of 1.3 per cent more. Moreover, women in Thailand have also consistently used more mobile phones than men since 2010. In 2018, 51.17 per cent of mobile phone owners were women, signifying how telecommunications technology was being increasingly used to empower women.

The growing proportion of women mobile phone owners to men between 2007 and 2019 can be demonstrated as follows:



Source: the National Statistical Office



VOLUNTEERISM FOR THE SDGS

The female to male proportion was also similar for civil servants, with 770,666 women making up 57.73 per cent of all civil servants, up from 56.76 per cent in 2017.

Women also held 19.51 per cent of senior civilian positions in the government, higher than 17.85 per cent in 2017.

In the corporate sector, women have enjoyed much more visible roles in Thailand's capital market, occupying 36.4 per cent of the board of governors of the Stock Exchange of Thailand (SET). Overall, the ratio of female to male team leaders was 7:6. Women also held 42 per cent of executive positions in business enterprises, more than 31 per cent in 2017, making Thailand rank third globally among countries with the most female executives.





The role of communities in women's development

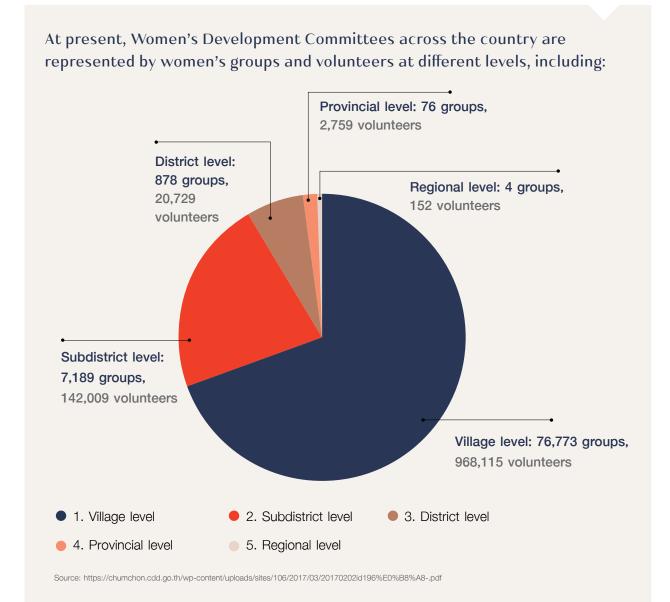
The Department of Community Development started women's development efforts in local communities, in line with the National Economic and Social Development Plan to improve women's quality of life in the context of family and society. Chapters of the Women's Development Committees were set up at various levels—namely, village, subdistrict, district, provincial, and regional levels—to encourage women to have creativity, enthusiasm, and self-confidence; stand on their own feet and help their families; have occupational knowledge; take responsibility in community development; and take the lead in thinking, decision-making and planning, in order to solve problems and develop women in the communities.

From 1962 to now, the Women's Development Committees, a volunteer-based mechanism under the Community Development Department, the Ministry of Interior, have moulded and created positive



attitudes for women at all levels by adhering to the National Economic and Social Development Plan, encouraging them to have good attitudes and confidence in their own abilities, make their own decisions about their personal lives and careers, and play a role in different aspects of society. The committees also aim to help every woman to be able to support themselves and to help society, without being confined by traditional beliefs or falling victim to gender inequality.

Besides individual-oriented development work, the Women's Development Committees also tackle inequality and violence against women and children in society. While carrying out development work and solving problems, volunteers in the committees will promote activities that are beneficial to women, emphasising root cause analysis and data collection to help shed further light on the work. This will be followed by management tasks, media production, and public relations campaigns to disseminate knowledge that is in women's best interest.







Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

Although Thailand has relatively abundant water resources and has long embraced water in its way of life, one of the challenges to achieving SDG 6 is having adequate water for consumption and agricultural use. Therefore, the Royal Thai Government attaches importance to water management and sanitation, aiming to ensure access to clean water for consumption for all even in difficult situations such as the COVID-19 crisis, as is in line with SDG 6. It also aims to emphasise participation of the private sector and civil society in decision making at the policy level through integrated collaboration, as outlined in the Water Resources Act 2018, on issues such as measures to prevent drought and flood, early warning systems, weather forecasts, rainfall data, and the formulation of measures from short-term to long-term.

The challenge of planning and racing against time is key to water management, as different forms of natural disasters could affect waterways and soil surface and become a major problem for people in communities, including farmers.



The Government established the Office of National Water Resources in October 2017 to be the main regulating body for nationwide water management policies. Its main missions are to make policy recommendations, and formulate strategic plans and water management master plans for each area. It also implements the plans, integrates information and project plans, manages budgets, follow ups, and evaluates the results of the entire water management system, and promotes and supports people's participation in the form of a River Basin Committee. It is hoped that people will participate in the work of the public sector, voice their opinions, take action, and monitor and evaluate results to come to accept that the Government's plans, projects, and activities can solve local water problems efficiently and sustainably.

At present, the latest nationwide water consumption data from the National Statistical Office show that 98 per cent of people are able to access and drink from clean water sources, while 81.2 per cent have a designated hand-washing area complete with soap or other cleaning products, and more than 97.2 per cent of the population dispose of faeces according to hygiene standards, without sharing a body-washing area with other households.

Recently, the Bangkok Metropolitan Area has been able to improve the supply of tap water to meet the needs of the people. In 2019, the Metropolitan Waterworks Authority was able to produce consistently more tap water than previous years, amounting to more than 2.075 billion cubic metres, to be allocated for household consumption and uses in businesses, state-owned enterprises and as other public water facilities.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department of Health prepared the following water quality supervision guidelines for local administrations to control, regulate and monitor the quality of tap water to ensure safe household consumption:

- Maintain cleanliness of raw water sources, and take more stringent measures to prevent contamination from waste, especially used face masks that may be discarded nearby. If found, the masks must be disposed of properly.
- 2. Water production: control the production process according to normal guidelines to meet water quality according to specified standards. Strictly control the water's turbidity to less than 1 NTU, and make sure the pH value meets the standard but is not more than 8.0 to maintain disinfection efficiency. More importantly, increase the concentration of chlorine in the disinfection process to no less than 1 milligram per litre (ppm.) of free residual chlorine at the source of the tap water.
- 3. Water supply system: maintain the water piping system to prevent problems. If problems are found, then repairs must be carried out immediately. Strictly drain water after repairs to maintain consistent quality of water in the supply system. Increase monitoring of free residual chlorine in the water supply system and keep it at no less than 0.5 milligrammes per litre (ppm) until it reaches households.
- 4. Concerned officials supervising the water production process must follow instructions from the Ministry of Public Health, such as eat hot food, use personal utensils, wash hands regularly, wear a mask, and maintain at least one to two metres of social distance. Screen and monitor concerned officials for symptoms, by measuring body temperature before duty and monitoring symptoms. If the body temperature reaches 37.5 degrees Celsius or higher, or symptoms such as fever, cough, runny nose, sore throat, breathing difficulty, or shivering are found, it is imperative to stop working, notify relevant agencies, and see a doctor immediately.
- 5. Water supply production facility: keep the facility constantly clean in accordance with the "5S" measure, especially the common risk points, such as doorknobs, handrails, bathrooms, tables and chairs. Local administrations can use the Department of Health's free chlorine test kit, which is easy to use and cost-effective, to detect the amount of free chlorine in the water supply.

^{*5}S measures comprise sort, set in order, shine, standardise, and sustain

In addition to water management by the Government, volunteers from different projects, including the River Basin Committees, have also been an essential driving force for sustainable water solutions in local communities.

"Problems can be solved directly if the person who pushes for the solution is one of the people who have to live with the problems," said Naree Wiangkham of the Yom River Basin Committee, explaining how she came to work on tackling water and drought problems in the area. A representative from the agricultural sector of Phayao province and president of a Village Natural Resource and Environment Protection Volunteer Network in the province, Naree was one of the villagers and farmers facing water shortage, which led to her decision to represent farmers and the community in water management.

For the people of Phayao, water problems have long been persistent. As the province has suffered such severe drought that no water is available for consumption, water resources are treasured all the more by communities to sustain lives and livelihoods. During periods of severe drought, the communities would fight among themselves for water in the fields. Adequate water allocation and water transport planning are thus important issues that the Yom River Basin Committee has to work on year by year, relying on updated weather and water conditions.

The Yom River Basin Committee volunteers focus their work on serving as a

Problems can be solved directly if the person who pushes for the solution is one of the people who have to live with the problems



voice and coordinating between the community that uses the water, the villagers in a Weir Committee who are experiencing problems, and local administrative officials, so that everyone is aware of the problems and can share practical solutions. The Yom River Basin committee also strives to have different parties find solutions together to solve problems and to study various water systems that can potentially be adapted for the area, such as building concrete weirs so they are stronger than natural weirs, improving mechanisms of tools, and building strong weir gates.

One of the projects that the Yom River Basin Committee has created as an extension of its knowledge about water retention, tackling drought, preserving river basin ecosystems, and work experience, is the "Living Weir Project", which Naree first got involved with in 2015 as a coordinator working alongside the village chief in the Don Ngoen Village, through the support of the Department of Water Resources. In the project, volunteers from all sectors, including students, youth, general public, the public and private sectors, would help build a weir to conserve water.

Having a clear centralised policy, a thorough understanding of local problems and a strong collaboration between all sectors, including the government, volunteers and communities, will pave the way for sustainable solutions to water resources problems in all areas.

Sources: http://www.onwr.go.th/ https://multimedia.anamai.moph.go.th/news/news030463/



Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all

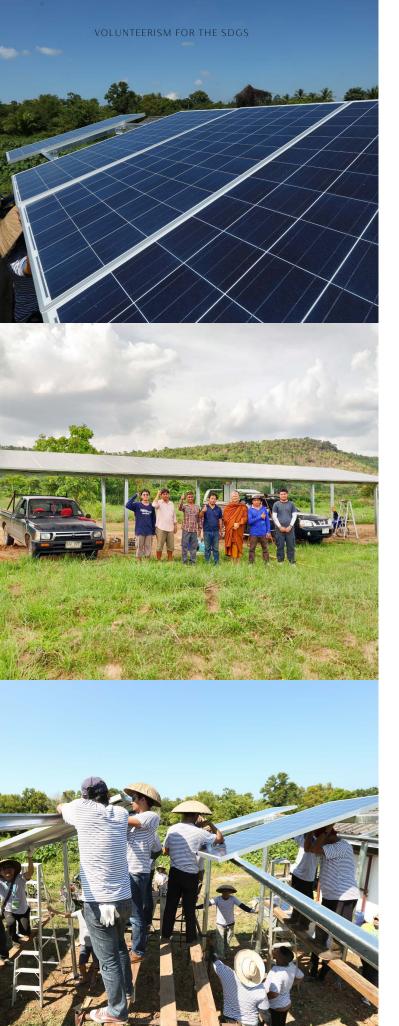
Thailand's energy policy has been formulated in line with the actions to achieve SDG 7, in that it focuses on enhancing energy security along with promoting energy efficiency and renewable energy at fair prices. In this regard, Thailand's Energy Reform Plan has determined a framework for reform encompassing the following three dimensions.

The first dimension is energy efficiency and energy procurement to add value to the country's economy. Thailand is determined to promote responsible energy consumption, boost the consumption ratio of environmentally friendly fuel, and improve energy efficiency of various machinery and equipment to reduce carbon dioxide emissions, which is in line with the SDGs and Thailand's intended nationally determined contribution under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

The second dimension focuses on enhancing the country's energy security by promoting continuous petroleum exploration and production efforts in the country, procuring renewable energy supply, developing different technologies to source energy efficiently and with lower costs, and preparing energy infrastructure to support energy supply procurement in the future.

The third dimension emphasises efficient energy management and improved governance in energy businesses to create balance between consumption and production, increase efficiency in regulating the energy sector, promote competition with good governance, and establish a reliable national energy information centre.

Source: Ministry of Energy



To illustrate Thailand's progress in achieving SDG 7, 99.8 per cent of Thai households in 2018 had access to electricity. The rest, however, did not because the growing expansion of households into more remote areas each year has outpaced the expansion of electrical systems. Thai people's reliance on clean energy also increased in 2017, with households using clean energy (or non-polluting fuels) accounting for 82.9 per cent of total households, up from 81.1 per cent in 2016. This trend also corresponded with the share of renewable energy in gross final energy consumption, which increased to 15.2 per cent in 2018, from 14.5 per cent in 2017.

However, energy sustainability in Thai society cannot be achieved by the Government alone—some remote communities still lack total access to basic energy services, while others get partial access but not enough to sustainably improve their quality of life. This gap requires cooperation from the private sector and volunteers with knowledge about renewable energy management at the community level to bridge it, which can be done by supporting renewable energy technologies that are suitable for each area, as well as sharing management knowledge to increase renewable energy efficiency and promote quality of life in the community.

An example of such cooperation is the Power for Sustainable Future Foundation, a social enterprise sponsored by PTT Public Company Limited. The foundation's main objectives are to support communities to be strong and self-reliant, transfer knowledge to communities, and promote education, research and development of energy technology, alternative energy, as well as conservation of natural resources and the environment—all key factors in driving change and development, so that communities, society and the country can be strong and grow sustainably.



The Foundation has the mission to act as an intermediary to mobilise aid and promote renewable energy management at the community level through the use of renewable energy technology suitable for that area. Instead of just delivering aid, the mission involves activities including field trips and training sessions to cultivate the concept of volunteerism in the minds of young people and local villagers, which will lead to long-term energy and environmental sustainability in the area.

Before starting each development project, the Foundation's development team will travel to explore the area and organise a forum with the villagers in the community to formulate solutions to energy problems together, while taking into account the benefits and true needs of the villagers, as it wants people in the community to be involved in the project since its inception.

Between 2014 and 2019, the Power for Sustainable Future Foundation focused on developing clean energy suitable for communities in remote areas with projects to install the solar power generation systems. Thanks to its location near the equator, Thailand receives sunlight with the range of intensity suitable for power generation. To do this, PTT collaborated with various agencies to design and develop power generation systems that were both efficient and safe and could be used in different ways, including as a lighting system in the village, a school electrical system, or a solar water pump for agricultural use.

The Power for Sustainable Future Foundation has carried out renewable energy projects in 23 areas, generating 472,342 units of electricity per year, saving 1,889,371 baht in annual electricity costs, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 161.57 ton CO2 per year. The projects have benefited around 4,000 people in rural and disadvantaged areas. The Foundation has also organised workshops to educate children and youth, volunteers, community leaders, and representatives about energy. A total of 977 participants, divided into 347 volunteers and 630 interested people, attended such workshops between 2014 and 2019.

Source: Power For Sustainable Future Foundation



Moreover, PTT also developed the Community Energy Management Program (CEMP) to disseminate knowledge and propose guidelines for community-level energy management. The programme aims to promote people from various sectors—whether community leaders, social and environmental developers, media, youth, civil servants, or government or state enterprise employees—to become "community energy management transformation leaders" who can properly disseminate knowledge about energy, have the skills to apply knowledge and experiences in their work, and can efficiently manage community energy, in order to drive the community towards sustainable energy security.

This programme provides an opportunity for participants to exchange knowledge and learn together with others from all over the country. They can practice thinking, analysing, and drafting energy plans for the community, learn how to write project proposals to apply for grants, and join field trips and operational workshops on community energy technology. The participants are also encouraged to apply their knowledge and transform it into a practical project that will yield real benefits.

Source: cemp.pttplc.com



Many past participants of the community energy programme have played a key role in community development since their graduation. When the Foundation traveled to local areas to start a development project, this group of volunteers would be the local leaders in formulating the plan to solve energy problems, which might differ in each community. They would also persuade villagers to work with PTT Group's social enterprise team, and recruit other volunteers to help carry the project to the finish line without expecting any compensation.

PTT's campaign to promote clean and sustainable energy strives to communicate and enhance understanding about energy for people in the community, and advocates for people's participation in every process to create "community technicians" who can manage energy problems and develop their own communities in the long run, without waiting around for help from outside agencies. This is to ensure that communities will be strong and self-reliant, and can enjoy sustainable access to clean energy.





Promote sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

The Royal Thai Government has determined in the 20-Year National Strategy (2018-2037) that Thailand will become a developed country by 2037 through development efforts in accordance with the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy. This target entails transitioning from a middle-income economy to a high-income economy, reducing development disparities, and promoting more equitable development benefits for all - which require continuous economic expansion and investment. Thus, the Government recognises the importance of measures to support and promote sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all, including large corporations or smallholder entrepreneurs, in tandem with infrastructure investments to facilitate the economic expansion which will lead to more employment.

Reference: https://www.nesdc.go.th/ewt_news.php?nid=7118&filename=index



However, the Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) outbreak had an inevitable negative impact on the global economy, causing businesses and workers to adjust themselves urgently. Virtually all economic activities were temporarily suspended, and tourism-related business, including airlines, hotels, restaurants, transportation, and retail, were hit especially hard, as the number of foreign tourists contracted 100 per cent during Thailand's travel ban measures aimed at controlling the spread of COVID-19.

Reference: https://www.krungsri.com/bank/th/plearn-plearn/economic-covid-impact.html

Without the availability of vaccines or treatment options, the global COVID-19 pandemic posed great challenges to economic confidence, resulting in low global economic growth, and affecting employment, particularly informal workers living in poverty and without welfare support. As preliminary remedial measures, the Government approved a monthly compensation of 5,000 baht per person for three months for labourers, temporary workers, and freelancers who were not registered in the social security system. In addition, the Ministry of Labour also issued measures to help workers, including reducing the rate of contributions for employers and insured persons for a period of three months and extending the time period to submit the contributions; adding benefits in case of unemployment; and requiring employers of temporarily suspended businesses to pay their employees no less than 75 per cent of normal wages during the period the employees had to be off work.

Reference: https://counterservice.mol.go.th/faq https://www.sso.go.th/wpr/assets/upload/files_storage/sso_th/65631a68db73bead55cf380c6da3b7f3.pdf

As of April 2020, there were a total of 2,589,353 migrant workers permitted to work in the Kingdom of Thailand, according to data from the Foreign Workers Administration Office of the Department of Employment. As a relief measure, the Government allowed them to stay and work in the Kingdom until 30 November 2020. The Government also screened and monitored migrant workers at the Port In and Port Out (PIPO) Control Centres, as well as requested cooperation from establishments nationwide to inform and educate their employees about COVID-19 and the Ministry of Public Health guidelines. With the help of the Thai Red Cross Society and the Health Service Support Department, Ministry of Public Health, the Government published pamphlets in the native language of migrant workers to help them understand the remedial measures, the screening procedures, and the 14-day self-quarantine rule as established by the Ministry of Public Health.

The coronavirus outbreak had an inevitable negative impact on the global economy, causing businesses and workers to adjust themselves urgently.



Reference: https://www.doe.go.th/prd/assets/upload/files/alien_ th/7050600de4b6bf9404ae725614521081.pdf , https://www.thaigov.go.th/infographic/contents/details/3233



At the same time, legal loopholes and budget constraints caused illegal undocumented migrant workers to attempt to avoid contact with government officials, rendering the Government's sole efforts to provide relief inadequate. Cooperation was therefore required from all sectors, including the public, private, academic, civil society, and the people sectors. Since the Government enforced the Emergency Decree to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and suspended admission approvals of migrant workers on 23 March 2020, some migrant workers returned to their homeland, while others decided to stay in Thailand, either expecting to return to work in the near future or unable to pay for the transport back to their respective homelands.



For this reason, Mae Fah Luang University's Area-based-Social Innovation Research Centre (Ab-SIRC)—which is located in the border area and plays an important role in building knowledge through research and producing academic works that serve society—carried out a survey on the ground and found that most of the migrant workers who remained in Chiang Rai faced a shortage of basic needs and lacked opportunities to access information on health care as well as social security benefits. This was especially true for workers in small and medium enterprises that did not have standard remedial schemes for employees.

To solve this problem, Ab-SIRC requested cooperation from various civil society networks to set up the Aid Coordination Centre for Migrants Workers in Chiang Rai during COVID-19 to mobilise and distribute aid to migrant workers who were affected during their stay in Thailand. The aid came in different forms, including disease prevention and control training for representatives of each migrant worker group, delivery of initial care packages of consumer goods, and coordination with relevant agencies for migrant workers to receive monetary compensation according to the law.

Another organisation that continuously works to promote quality of life and protect equal rights for workers is the Labour Rights Promotion Network Foundation (LPN). During the COVID-19 pandemic, the foundation served as a voice calling for migrant workers' equal access to aid and ran a humanitarian action aid programme called "Hand to Hand: LPN Humanitarian Operations". The foundation worked with its networks of affiliates to accept donations and mobilise aid to deliver consumer goods and COVID-19 protective equipment to migrant workers without discrimination, while receiving cooperation from various sectors, such as government agencies, the Mirror Foundation, companies, business associations, and the general public.

Migrant workers are the linchpin that fills the gap in domestic labour shortages. Policies that promote quality of life and humanitarian treatment of migrant workers are thus important issues that the Royal Thai Government values no less than the protection of Thai workers themselves. As the COVID-19 outbreak reflected the complexity of poverty and inequality facing those workers, the Government is committed to cooperating with various sectors to continuously manage and enhance equality in migrant workers' rights, duties, and social opportunities.

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Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and foster innovation

The Royal Thai Government considers infrastructure development and industrial advancement to be crucial agendas. The 12th National Economic and Social Development Plan (2017–2021) sets out guidelines for infrastructure and industrial development based on the equilibrium between the economy, society, and environment. The Government also aims to use science, technology and innovation to increase competitiveness and efficiency in all manufacturing processes, and develop environmentally friendly industries along with transport infrastructures to create connectivity between road, rail, and air transport networks to cover the whole country and also link with neighbouring countries.

One of Thailand's key policies for developing industrial infrastructure is the promotion of Bio-Circular-Green (BCG) Economy. BCG Economy is an economic model that will lead to sustainable development with its focus on the use of science, technology, and innovation to sustainably enhance the competitiveness of the industry sector, particularly in the four main target industries: agriculture and food, energy and materials, health and medicine, and tourism and service industries. Science, technology, and innovation will help to increase the efficiency of producers in the traditional supply chain, especially farmers and communities, and encourage entrepreneurs to produce value-added products and services.



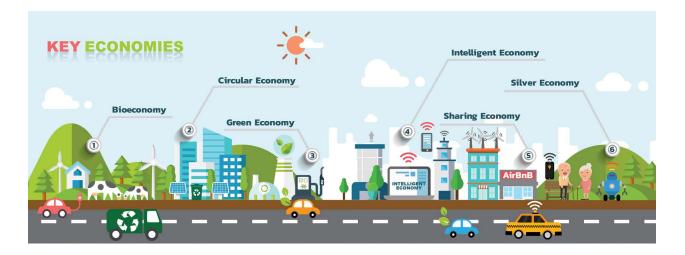
BCG Economy supports Thailand in its endeavour to use its biodiversity and culture to its advantage. If broadly used from large industrial sectors to medium, small, and community-level industries, the BCG Economy will result in income distribution, reduced inequalities, and the development of environmentally friendly industries in all areas.

Furthermore, the Ministry of Industry also strives to promote industrial factories to be safe and able to sustainably co-exist with communities and society. It carries out the "Corporate Social Responsibility, Department of Industrial Works" (CSR-DIW) project to promote factories nationwide to implement corporate social responsibility standards in their operations, which cover the following seven key principles:

- 1. Organisational Governance
- 2. Human Rights
- 3. Labour Practices
- 4. Environment
- 5. Fair Operating Practices
- 6. Consumer Issues
- 7. Community Involvement and Development

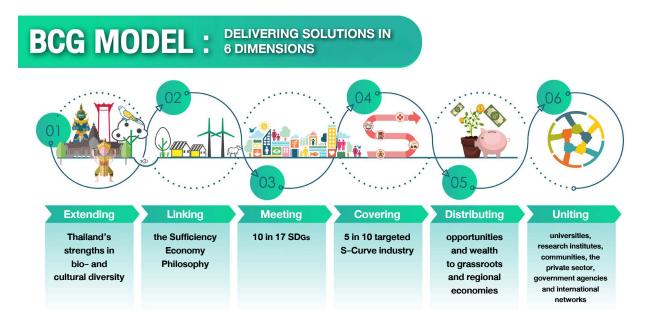
From 2008 to 2019, a total of 999 factories participated in the CSR-DIW project.

Reference: http://ecocenter.diw.go.th/csr/index.php/th/home-10



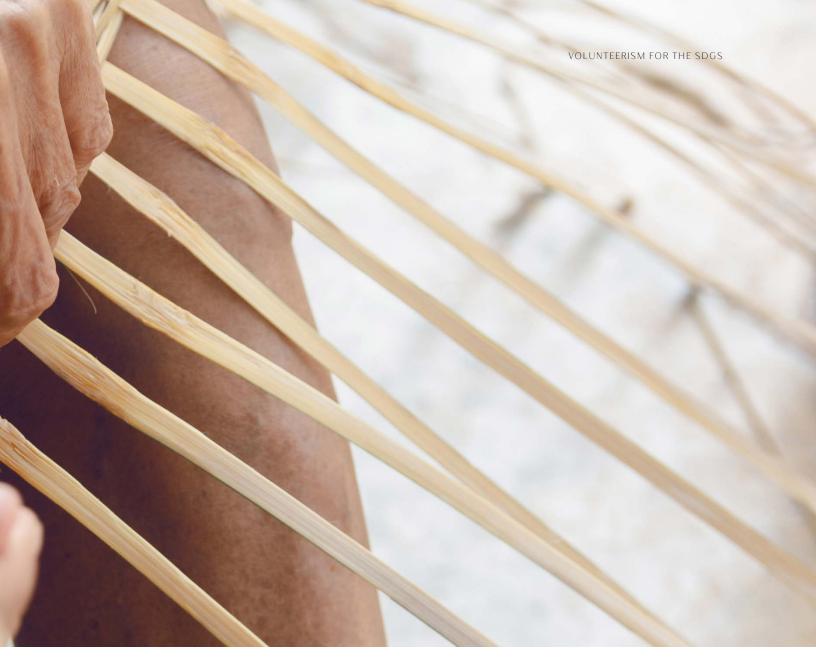
One example of factories that give importance to research and innovation development, and adopt modern technology to increase productivity and add value to products—in line with the BCG Economy business model—while caring for the environment and promoting community participation is Doi Kham Food Products Company Limited. The company's Second Royal Factory in Mae Chan, Chiang Rai province, participated in the CSR-DIW project and later received the CSR-DIW Continuous Award 2019 from the Department of Industrial Works, Ministry of Industry, for its outstanding performance.

Doi Kham Food Products Co., Ltd. is a social enterprise that seeks to analyse and improve the organisation according to corporate social responsibility standards in a bid to strive for sustainable development. It also values promoting knowledge for farmers on modern agriculture and intensive farming to be the source of good and quality products that meet international standards at realistic prices. The company also has an environmentally-friendly production process and takes care to develop communities in the vicinity of the factory to enable them to live well under the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy.



Source : National Science and Technology Development Agency (NSTDA)

Between 2017 and 2018, the Second Royal Factory in Mae Chan organised activities to engage with local communities and society in various aspects, including art, culture, education, economy, health and safety, and environment. The activities celebrated traditional culture and knowledge, educated youths and farmers from communities in the factory area, and promoted health programmes for employees and communities. Bamboo basket weaving workshops for housewives and the elderly also encouraged communities to earn more income from the products. While community relations staff were the main co-ordinators between the company and communities, the factory sought out lecturers to give knowledge about basketwork, marketing channels, and bookkeeping. It also helped coordinate the purchase of products from housewives and elderly groups to sell in the Doi Kham Shop in Mae Chan, as well as facilitated with other things to smoothen the workflow.



Reflecting on the work with local communities, Mr. Thanapon Sitti, a community relations officer at the Second Royal Factory in Mae Chan, said the heart of community development work is that each activity must be born out of the real needs of the villagers. He added that the activity must also be aligned with the company's capabilities for it to achieve its full potential, and for both parties to fully participate and bring about concrete changes in the community.

Reduce inequality within and among countries

The Royal Thai Government attaches importance to reducing inequality within and among countries. Although income inequality among Thais has declined over the past ten years, the Government remains committed to reducing inequality sustainably, including in terms of access to opportunities, promoting social and economic participation, and reducing income disparity between the country's top and bottom groups.

The Government's actions to reduce inequality within and among countries comprise various dimensions, such as: creating jobs and opportunities; providing secure income for every group of the Thai population to decrease disparities in income and guality of life; and forming networks with various organisations in order to make necessary knowledge and skill-building more accessible, targeting and giving importance to all labour groups of all ages so that every worker enjoys equal legal protection by regulating authorised establishments and promoting skilled labour according to the Labour Protection Act. The Government also ensures that those registered in the Social Security System and eligible beneficiaries receive inclusive coverage according to the social security and compensation laws, ensures that people's minimum wage is sufficient for a quality life, and conducts the labour standards skill test to assist qualified workers with skills and aptitude to access the labour market with growth and sustainability.



Besides issues concerning local labour, the Government also prioritises the issue of informal migrant workers whose status it is trying to legalise in order to prevent and address human trafficking, maltreatment, and illegal immigration. This is aimed at preparing Thailand for a transition into a society of diversity and providing protection for all in the labour market, equipping them with capacity and mobility.

In 2019, upon overseeing the labour market and appraising 35,628 establishments and 1,611,860 employees, the Ministry of Labour found that workers in the Social Security System received benefits according to the social security and compensation laws, with 794,066 new registrants to be insured and 420,973 under Section 33 and Section 39 of the Social Security Act (116 per cent of the annual target of 396,000 registrants). Insured persons were paid compensation benefits from the Social Security Fund 38,595,817 times, totalling 66,408,600,000 baht. There were 373,093 informal workers (freelancers) registered to be insured under Section 40. They received compensation benefits 99,617 times, amounting to 445,970,000 baht.

Meanwhile, people who require special care and assistance such as people with disabilities and the elderly were given support from the Government in terms of employment and self-development in order to alleviate income shortfalls and raise their quality of life. Findings from a 2017 survey conducted among people with disabilities showed 98.5 per cent had received the state-funded primary medical benefits.

In 2019, the Government promoted employment for 181,966 elderly persons and improved life quality and promoted work opportunities for 128,646 persons with disabilities under the Sub-Committee on Promotion and Development of Life Quality of Disabled Persons. These actions were aimed at promoting equal opportunities and access to decent work for all.

Beyond monitoring and providing support in the labour market, in order to ensure inclusive support and address people's concerns, the Government in 2014 set up the Social Assistance Centre Hotline 1300, under the motto "Friendly, Fair, and Empowering", to give social assistance to Thais in the country and abroad. The hotline is available 24 hours daily so people can promptly access the services of the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security and relevant government agencies and receive pertinent support from specialists.

Social Development and Human Security Volunteers (SDHSVs)

In addition to government agencies present, there is a network of volunteers who are engaged in preventing and tackling issues of inequality at a community level. The Social Development and Human Security Volunteers (SDHSVs) support the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security's operations in local development and providing aid for target groups in communities. Their work ranges from presenting data on social problems happening in communities, coordinating with networks at all levels to assist those impacted, to developing long-term support schemes. The Government has launched a programme for the volunteers' specialised training according to the target group under their care or those who need support, namely the SDHSV Training Programme for Specialised Disability Support and Elderly Support. The training programme focuses on: providing basic knowledge on the responsibility of the SDHSVs; sharing practical experiences and lessons learned; report writing; and deepen understanding about rights, disability support, and elderly support. The programme would improve the SDHSVs' skills, build their confidence, and allow them to gain various proficiencies in keeping a social watch and caring for people with disabilities and the elderly.

The number of SDHSVs around the country as of May 2020:

88,871 SDHSVs in total



(28,363 male / 60,454 female / 54 did not specify gender)



2,907 SDHSVs specialised in elderly support (734 male / 2,173 female)



2,111 SDHSVs specialised in support for people with disabilities

(580 male / 1,528 female / 3 did not specify gender)

* Each volunteer could support more than one target group

The SDHSVs have played an important role in supporting the target groups within a village or community so that they enjoy their rights, welfare, and access to government services equally as other communities. The volunteers' reports show most people in communities cannot access government services due to limited use of technology, remoteness of location, physical factors such as disabilities and old age, and a lack of resolve to demand or seek help from relevant services. On account of this, the SDHSVs serve as coordinators for the target groups in each community. As they tend to be acquainted or know each other, when problems occur, community members can report to the SDHSVs, who will coordinate with relevant government agencies to provide support, especially urgent response through emergency relief funds and facilitating access to welfare of people in remote communities.

The SDHSVs provide multifaceted forms of support. For instance, in the case of a child with disability living with an elderly relative with low income, the SDHSVs would support them from the beginning as they relocate to a new village, making arrangements for accommodation as it is one of the first basic needs. Additionally, the SDHSVs would attend to the family's livelihood, plan and seek child support options, and arrange for a guardian in the long term. They work with Village Health Volunteers (VHV) in various capacities such The volunteers play a significant role in identifying issues and objectives and coordinating with the target groups and the government to provide pertinent and inclusive support for all target groups without leaving anyone and any community behind.



as physical rehabilitation, so that the child could restore their functions to the fullest so as to resume as normal a life as possible, and planning for the child's education in the future. Beyond basic support, the SDHSVs can assist with Person with Disability Registration in order that the child would receive basic welfare from the Government. Besides a disability welfare premium, which is a basic aid, the child would gain their rights, namely the right to education, the right to earn a living in the future, the right to welfare and necessities, and the right to be protected from discrimination. In addition, in cases where the accommodation of the target groups is in a dilapidated state, the SDHSVs would help inspect the site and encourage them to consider joining the Accessibility Improvement for People with Disabilities Programme, which is a way to enhance the target groups' quality of life towards sustainability.

These instances show that without the mechanism of volunteering, support to the target groups in communities nationwide may not be comprehensive and inclusive. Thus, the volunteers play a significant role in identifying issues and objectives and coordinating with the target groups and the government to provide pertinent and inclusive support for all target groups without leaving anyone and any community behind.

Reference: Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, Ministry of Labour, and Bank of Thailand





Thailand attaches great importance to achieving SDG 11, which covers various issues such as ensuring access to housing for all, building safe and accessible transport systems for all, enhancing sustainable urbanisation, managing disaster risks, and providing universal access to green and public spaces, in line with the New Urban Agenda (NUA) and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015–2030).

The Town Planning Act B.E. 2562 (2019), which came into effect on 25 November 2019, lays out a policy framework for the best use of space and land as regards the economy, society, and natural resources and environment. It emphasises people's participation in formulating overall urban planning policies, which will facilitate the development of areas and people's quality of life.



Thailand has also made the development of smart cities a national agenda, aiming to use technology and modern innovation to improve quality of urban life. On 15 October 2017, the Royal Thai Government appointed a committee consisting of representatives from various agencies to drive the smart city agenda, with the goal of fully implementing the Smart City Development Masterplan. The Thailand Smart City Office was set up on 8 May 2019 to drive smart city development to be in line with the country's overall development efforts. At present, Thailand's seven pilot smart cities are Bangkok, Chiang Mai, Phuket, Khon Kaen, Chonburi, Rayong, and Chachoengsao.

In the case of Phuket, its smart city development is a collaboration between the central government, the local administration, and the private sector. The Ministry of Digital Economy and Society installed 1,000 public WiFi hotspots across the province, while CAT Telecom Public Company Limited set up LoRaWAN, a low-power wireless data transmission network, at 35 stations, covering a total area of 543 square kilometres. Advanced Info Service Public Company Limited also installed Narrowband Internet of Things (NB-IoT), a low-power network radio technology, covering an area of 543 square kilometres.

The Phuket Smart City project is primarily driven by the private sector. Phuket City Development Company Limited was established as a consortium bringing together about 50 businesses to drive the smart city agenda in various aspects, including wastewater management, PM 2.5 measurement, digital enterprises, and smart buses.

For Bangkok, state agencies have cooperated with PTT Public Company Limited and other affiliates and announced the "Green Bangkok 2030" project on 15 December 2019, aiming to drive Bangkok to become a green city by increasing green spaces and encouraging various sectors, especially Bangkok residents, to take part in building a sustainable green city. Increasing green spaces in Bangkok is expected to ease the PM 2.5 pollution problem and make it a more pleasant and liveable city, promoting quality of urban life. Through implementing the 10-Year Housing Development Strategy (2016–2025), the Government has solved housing problems for more than 100,000 low-income households. It continues to expand results by launching the 20-Year Housing Development Strategy (2017–2036) to provide housing and promote good quality of life for all by 2036.

One of the projects that spoke for the Government's success was the "Baan Mankong" (Stable Housing) project, which was created to systematically support slum communities in each city across the country using information systems and the overall slum community development plan. The project aimed to improve, develop and construct buildings where urban low-income citizens could have stable housing—in line with physical, economic, and social development dimensions—to build preparedness and capabilities, as well as knowledge and a learning process for each local community.

Between 2003 and 2015, the Community Organisations Development Institute approved budgets and developed housing and utility systems for over 1,651 Baan Mankong projects in 293 cities across 73 provinces.



For systematic disaster risk management, the Government established the "Civilian Defence Volunteer" unit, aiming to empower people to manage disasters and maintain safe communities and reduce losses. In 2019, when Thailand was hit by three typhoons—namely, Pabuk, Podul, and Kajiki—the Civilian Defence Volunteers and rescue volunteers played an essential role in assisting the Government. More importantly, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Civilian Defence Volunteer unit, which has close networks with communities across the country, was also very helpful in supporting government agencies and officials in tasks such as measuring temperature and staffing screening points and state quarantine facilities to facilitate citizens and working officers.

Aside from the Government, a network of communities or independent organisations are also involved in urban and housing development, including the Urban Design and Development Center (UddC-CEUS), which was established in 2012 through collaboration between the Health Promotion Foundation and Chulalongkorn University. It serves as a centre that coordinates knowledge and aid from various organisations related to urban development, in order to restore and develop Bangkok's inner areas, which will lead to more sustainable urban development.



Since its founding, UddC-CEUS has worked with the Government, the private, education, and civil society sectors in implementing several urban regeneration projects, such as Yannawa Riverfront, GoodWalk, Bangkok 250, Chulalongkorn University's 2nd Centennial Masterplan (CU2040), Chula Smart City, Active River Station, Bangkok Under-utilised Space, and Urban Observatary and Engagement. It also created a website dedicated to urban development at www.theurbanis.com.

Most recently, UddC-CEUS completed the Chao Phraya Sky Park project, a pedestrian bridge across the Chao Phraya River and the first sky park in Thailand. Officially opened on 16 June 2020 by Bangkok's City Planning Department, the project regenerated the old unfinished structure of the Lavalin Skytrain that was left unused for more than 30 years, transforming it into a new public space. Its construction was completed under several of the city's constraints, including those of public management and expansion of green spaces. One of the pilot projects under the masterplan for the preservation and revitalisation of the Kadi Chin-Khlong San area, Chao Phraya Sky Park was achieved through multilateral cooperation—between Bangkok's City Planning Department, the Department of Rural Roads, the Marine Department, and the Ministry of Transport, with UddC-CEUS in the centre—to become a walkway and bicycle path across the Chao Phraya River, and connect the transportation systems between Thonburi and Rattanakosin banks.



Goal

Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

There are limited resources in the world, and unsustainable consumption patterns can cause detrimental damage to the environment. It is thus a mission for many countries around the world to raise public awareness of environmentally friendly consumption that recognises the value of limited natural resources.

The Royal Thai Government recognises the importance of striking a balance between conservation and utilisation of natural resources and the environment for sustainable development. Therefore, the 20-Year Sustainable Consumption and Production Roadmap (2017–2036) has been formulated to encourage different agencies and the general public to implement sustainable consumption and production patterns in a corresponding and cohesive manner and in line with international standards.

The 20-Year Sustainable Consumption and Production Roadmap covers six areas:



The manufacturing sector



The agriculture and food sector



The service industry, including tourism



friendly goods and services and green labels



Urban and local government administration



Awareness raising and education

Since 2017, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment has collaborated with the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Education, and other relevant agencies and sectors to drive the "Green City" development agenda. This collaboration has also involved local administrations at all levels in brainstorming, planning, and making decisions on solving problems. More importantly, lessons have been learned and results closely monitored in various areas, especially on the issue of resource and environmental conservation alongside economic and social development. Sustainable development principles and the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy have been used to develop communities across the country, with an aim to achieve the idea of good cities with happy people and sustainable environment in all provinces by 2020. All these efforts have been towards the goals of enabling communities to co-exist with nature in a friendly way and understand the sustainable use of natural resources and self-reliance; and empowering their conservation and rehabilitation capabilities.

One of the government measures started out as a campaign that has led people to change their lifestyle towards more environmentally friendly and sustainable consumption. For over a year, Thailand's measures to curb plastic bags has been promoted and publicised to the people and various organisations in the country, with an aim to reduce the use of single-use plastic bags and foam. From 4 December 2018 to 31 August 2019, the "No Foam No Plastic" initiative was able to reduce the use of plastic bags by more than 2 billion bags.

The success of this campaign has led to its expansion it into a larger campaign, "Every day Say No to Plastic Bags", in which the public and private sectors jointly implement the National Solid Waste Management Masterplan (2016–2021). The campaign has resulted in a drive to reduce and eliminate single-use plastics in department stores and convenience stores nationwide. An important goal has also been set to ban all four types of single-use plastics in Thailand—plastic bags, plastic straws, plastic cups and foam boxes—by the end of 2021.

In addition, the Government has also tried to control the waste problem, whether solid or food waste, by educating people on the importance of waste separation and recycling with the 3R principle (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle). This has resulted in exciting projects and activities that help cultivate a culture of conscious consumption for all, such as the recyclable waste bank, an activity that teaches youth to understand the value of resources by letting them exchange recyclable materials for cash, or alternatively record the income in a school or community book that allows for the same deposits or withdrawals as with any other commercial bank. The Government will then sell the collected waste to buyers. This method gives children the opportunity to learn about the waste problem in society and solve it through hands-on practices.





To tackle food waste, which is a major cause of global environmental problems, both the public and the private sectors and other parties are eager to raise awareness among the general public about effective food production and consumption, in order to reduce the amount of food that goes to waste. They are also keen to provide relevant knowledge and aim for people to make use of food waste to further support agriculture.

The Scholars of Sustenance Foundation, also known as SOS, is a non-profit foundation focused on food waste and the creation of a sustainable consumption culture in Thailand. It receives donations of excess food from hotels, supermarkets, tourist attractions, and other places and agencies, before distributing it to people in need. The Foundation's Bangkok chapter was founded by Bo H. Holmgreen in 2015 and makes up a part of the global SOS network.

The daily mission of the Foundation's staff is to collect excess food or edible good quality food products from sources and volunteers who are willing to donate. They inspect the quality and suitability of the food before passing it on as complete meals, both in terms of taste and nutrition, to people who need food support. Their hard work helps feed more than 6,000 people in need every day. In February 2020, SOS launched another chapter in Phuket, a province rich in food businesses and tourism, leading to the creation of a volunteer network in nearby neighbourhoods that provided additional capacity to help more people in need. During the COVID-19 crisis, the Foundation also assisted dairy co-operatives producing high-quality raw milk under the brand "KU Milk" as well as its network, which were suffering significant losses, by campaigning for people to buy the milk for others in need. The campaign was a great success, and the Foundation was able to provide more than 10,000 bags of excellent-quality milk to people in need at the time.

In an interview, Bo H. Holmgreen discussed the great connection that allows the Foundation to act as a bridge that delivers problematic excess food to many people who could use it.

"We call it 'the SOS magic', because we turn something useless or food that would otherwise be wasted into millions of great, nutritious meals for nurseries and aid organisations, and help them save money on food for the disadvantaged. This extraordinary process is only possible through the cooperation of many generous food donors, whether leading hotels or supermarkets, with minimal impact on the work of their staff. This makes doing good easy for everyone."

References: https://www.scholarsofsustenance.org/



Goa

Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

Thailand attaches great importance to climate action, as it is among the countries facing the highest risks of long-term effects of climate change. The Government has incorporated climate change into national policies and strategies, such as the 20-Year National Strategy (2018–2037) and the 12th National Economic and Social Development Plan (2017–2021), with the determination to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, build a low-carbon society and increase the capacity of citizens to cope with and adapt to climate change, while promoting investment in climate-friendly infrastructure. The Government has worked vigorously to reduce the country's greenhouse gas emissions. In 2017, Thailand was able to reduce emissions in the energy sector by a total of 51.72 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (Mt-CO2e), accounting for 14.09 per cent of business-as-usual (BAU) emissions. This was in line with Thailand's target under the Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMAs), which was a 7% reduction in greenhouse gas compared to BAU levels by 2020. In addition, the Government has also formulated Thailand's Nationally Determined Contribution Roadmap on Mitigation (2021–2030) and accompanying greenhouse gas reduction action plans in four sectors—energy, transport, municipal waste management, and industrial process and product use—to promote the country's climate action for maximum efficiency and work towards achieving its Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) target of a 20–25 per cent reduction from projected BAU levels by 2030.

On climate change adaptation, the Government has also developed the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) as a framework and guideline for immunisation and adaptation to the impact of climate change for all sectors, covering six areas: water management, agriculture and food security, tourism, public health, natural resources management, and human settlement and security. The plan also gives importance to the extension of folk wisdom, Community-Based Adaptation (CBA), Ecosystem-Based Adaptation (EBA), and governance and participation from all sectors, as well as human rights and gender responsiveness.



Moreover, the Government also formulated the National Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Plan (2015) as a framework to reduce disaster risks and prevent and mitigate disasters in all provinces.

The Government realises that addressing climate change requires cooperation and understanding from all sectors. Therefore, it seeks to raise awareness and increase capacities, so that different sectors, communities and people can play a part in solving the problem and become part of the drive towards an effective policy implementation.

Thailand believes that the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has an important role to play in supporting the international community on climate action. In 2019, Thailand, as ASEAN Chair, initiated and pushed for ASEAN to issue the ASEAN Joint Statement on Climate Change at the United Nations Climate Action Summit 2019, which was happening in parallel to the 74th UN General Assembly on 23 September 2019 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. The statement was to declare the region's key climate goals in the energy and transport sectors and stress ASEAN's readiness to develop partnerships with the international community on climate action to ensure sustainability for present and future generations.



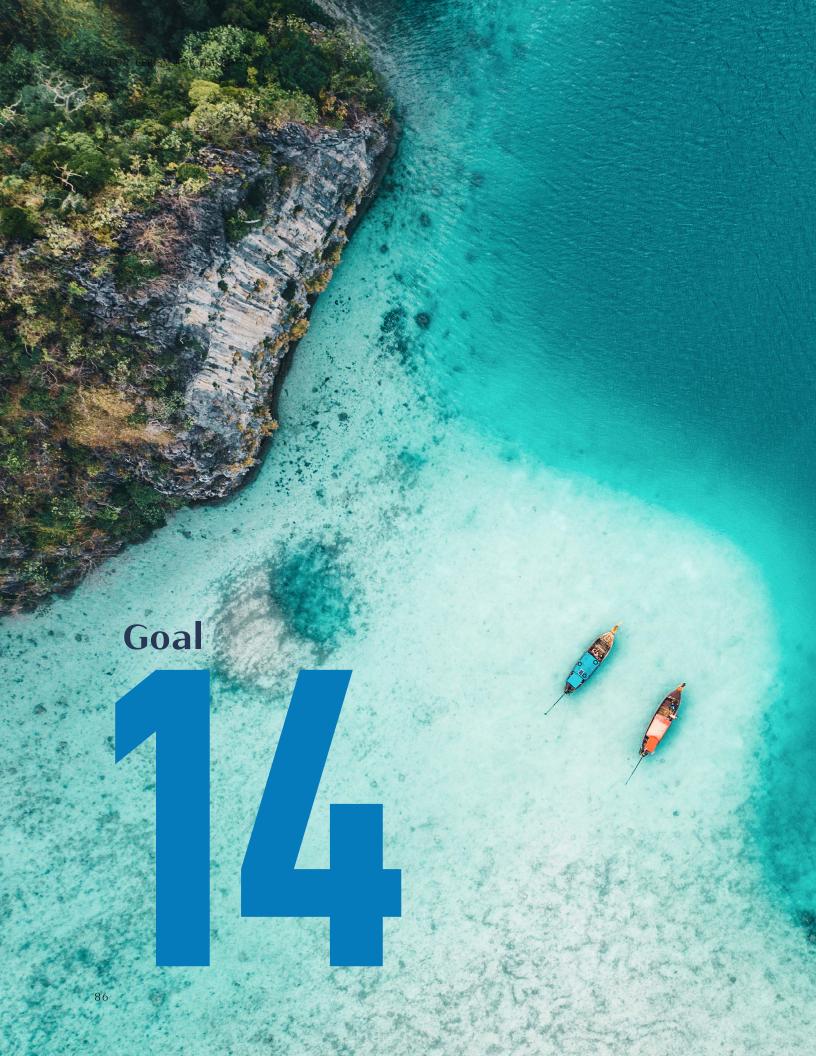


The role of volunteers in tackling climate change

Since 1993, the Thailand Environment Institute (TEI), a non-governmental organisation operating as an independent and non-profit academic think tank, has contributed to environmental knowledge research and pushed for coordination across different sectors on the conservation and development of natural resources and the environment. TEI has worked on climate change adaptation for over 10 years, with a focus on promoting actions and building networks both within the country and with neighbouring countries. It worked out some important projects in 2019, as follows.

- 1. The "Strengthening Urban Climate Governance for Inclusive, Resilient, and Sustainable Societies in Thailand (SUCCESS)" project focuses on strengthening academic skills and knowledge in climate change responses and governance management for civil societies, non-governmental organisations and community organisations in six provinces. The project encourages various sectors to play a role and take part in the planning of local policies on climate change, disaster management, and risk assessment; and strengthens action mechanisms for sustainable urban development with considerations to climate change response.
- 2. The "Stop Global Warming" project is a collaboration between TEI, the National Nanotechnology Centre, the National Science and Technology Development Agency and Toyota Motor Thailand Co., Ltd., by extension of the original project that has been in operation since 2005 and reduced greenhouse gas emissions by 23,000 MT CO2e. The project aims to promote awareness about climate change and pollution issues, and encourage the participation of communities and local government organisations in tackling pollution problems in respective local areas. This is done through a competition for communities that have taken action to reduce pollution emissions towards sustainable mitigation of climate change in their own areas. TEI plays a role in promoting environmental knowledge, providing advice and analysis of greenhouse gas emissions and pollution, and monitoring and evaluating the communities' performances. The project also emphasises the application of knowledge in science, technology, and innovation to manage environmental problems, which is consistent with the Sustainable Development Goals and also the country's development policies.





Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas, and marine resources for sustainable development

Thailand has coastlines that stretch 3,151 kilometres, from which it benefits in various aspects as regards the economy, society, environment and security. Thus, the Government attaches great importance to balancing conservation efforts and the sustainable and fair use of the oceans, seas, and marine resources. The Government has incorporated marine and coastal resources in the 20-Year National Strategy (2018–2037), the 12th National Economic and Social Development Plan (2017–2021), and the 11-point National Reform Plan, and formulated the Marine and Coastal Resource Management Promotion Act (2015), which emphasises participation from all sectors.

Thailand recognises that marine debris is an important common concern for the international community and that urgent action needs to be taken to address it. In 2019, Thailand, as ASEAN Chair, proposed a special initiative to tackle marine debris, and pushed for the Bangkok Declaration on Combating Marine Debris in the ASEAN Region and the ASEAN Framework of Action on Marine Debris to be adopted at the 34th ASEAN Summit in June. The Declaration and the Framework conveyed the ASEAN Member States' common determination to tackle the problem of marine debris in the region and served as a common action plan in terms of policies, management, and the transfer of knowledge and technology. Furthermore, Thailand also formulated the Roadmap on Plastic Waste Management (2018-2030), which aims to reduce and eliminate single-use plastics by turning to alternative materials that are environmentally friendly, and to make other uses of plastic waste. In 2019, Thailand phased out plastic bottle cap seals, oxo plastics and microbeads; it also banned single-use plastic bags in department stores and supermarkets from 1 January 2020. Thailand also promoted the collection of trash in the marine ecosystem, campaigned for waste management, banned smoking on beaches, and installed floating litter traps in estuaries. In 2019, Thailand was able to remove as much as 105,791 kilogrammes of litter from important ecosystems.

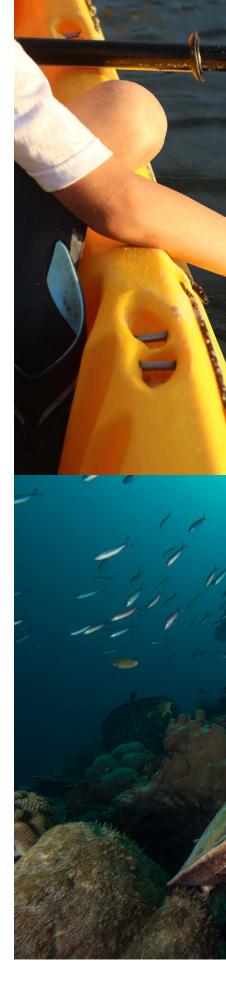




The Government has taken measures to promote the management and protection of marine and coastal ecosystems and resources, such as coral restoration by propagating 20,000 cuttings, transplanting coral larvae in three settlement areas, measuring microclimate in 10 mangrove areas, restoring fish stock, and measuring eutrophication as well as monitoring ocean acidification. The average pH value from the Gulf of Thailand and the Andaman coast was more neutral in 2019 than in 2018. In addition, the Government has established four guidelines for the prevention and mitigation of coastal erosion, namely coastal equilibrium by natural processes, coastal erosion protection, coastal erosion solution, and coastal rehabilitation. It also came up with measures including planting mangrove and beach forests, to complement the development of infrastructure for coastal protection.

To promote the conservation of coastal and inland areas, Thailand has designated important Marine and Coastal Protected Areas, which include 23 marine national parks, three non-hunting areas, six environmental protection areas, one biosphere reserve, 56 marine sanctuaries, and nine wetlands, accounting for a total area of 15,336 square kilometres. To add to the list, Thailand will also name three environmental protection areas, three marine national parks and 21 marine and coastal resources protection areas which include islands, coastlines, seas, and shelf break fronts.

The Government has also taken serious actions to tackle illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing (IUU Fishing) problems. In January 2019, the European Union lifted Thailand's yellow card, showing acceptance of Thailand's progress in solving IUU Fishing problems in terms of the legal framework, fisheries and fleet management, Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS efforts), traceability, and law enforcement. Thailand has also improved internal structures and mechanisms to promote future actions, including the Thai Maritime Enforcement Command Centre (Thai-MECC), the Fisheries Monitoring Centre (FMC), 19 Forward Inspection Points (FIP), 19 Port In-Port Out Controlling Centres, and the Vessel Monitoring System (VMS). Besides sustainable fishing, Thailand also attaches importance to ethical fishing, aiming to ensure that workers in the fisheries sector are protected in accordance with the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention. In fact, Thailand became the first country in Asia to ratify the ILO's Work in Fishing Convention No. 188 in January 2019.



The role of volunteers in the conservation and sustainable use of oceans, seas, and marine resources

The network of local Marine Rangers currently totals more than 15,200 volunteers in 24 coastal provinces. The Marine Rangers play an important role in carrying out marine and coastal resources conservation efforts with government agencies and monitoring any situations that may affect marine and coastal resources. They also take part in raising awareness for people to understand problems afflicting local marine and coastal resources and can formulate plans to address the problems as suitable for each area.

In addition to the Marine Rangers, other volunteer groups also help drive the implementation of SDG 14, such as the Crab Bank group, which has members in more than 532 communities and plays an important role in the restoration and conservation of blue crab resources. There are also special volunteer groups which come together to carry out specific activities, such as dives to collect marine debris, beach clean-ups, and waste collection and sorting. All in all, at least 80,000 volunteers play a key role in conserving and sustainably using the oceans, seas, and marine resources in Thailand.







Protect, restore, and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss

Flora and fauna as well as people's way of life are all key components of biodiversity. Thus, promoting the conservation of ecosystems, wildlife, forests, soil, and biodiversity as well as the sustainable use of limited natural resources is Thailand's important approach to achieve SDG 15.

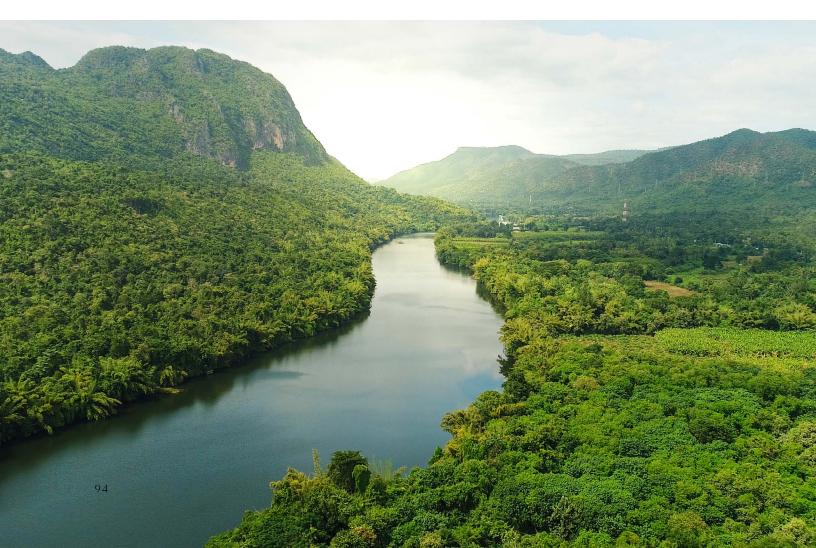
Population growth and economic development naturally lead to increasing demand to tap limited resources. They are also the primary reasons forests in many areas in Thailand have been destroyed. The Royal Forest Department, which has archived data on forest conditions in Thailand since 1973, found that in that year forests covered as much as 43.21 per cent of the country. However, following the concessions granted to private companies for beneficial developments, the country's forest area dwindled to 25.28 per cent in 1998.

Source: http://forestinfo.forest.go.th/Content.aspx?id=72

The Royal Thai Government is fully aware that losses of forest area not only disrupt the ecological balance but also create direct and indirect impacts on socioeconomic systems. Thus, the Government has established a guideline on natural resource protection and revitalisation in the 12th National Economic and Social Development Plan, which aims to increase the proportion of forest area in Thailand to 40% – made up of 25 per cent conserved forest and 15 per cent commercial forest – and sets the target of mangrove forest restoration from 1.53 million rai to 1.58 million rai while enlisting cooperation from every sector.

As a result of collective efforts between the Government and other sectors, in 2018, Thailand saw an increase of forest area to 31.6 per cent, or 102,488,302 rai, a growth from 2017 of over 330,000 rai. This was considered a positive sign and partly attributed to the Government's policy that promotes a balance between forest conservation and fair and sustainable forest utilisation, coupled with the royal idea of "Forestation, Fostering People". The idea was derived from the success of a Mae Fah Luang Foundation project that attaches importance to both forestation and improving quality of life in communities, promotes forest corridors, shares knowledge about community and household forest management with villagers, and grows a far-reaching network of participation for forest protection and revitalisation.

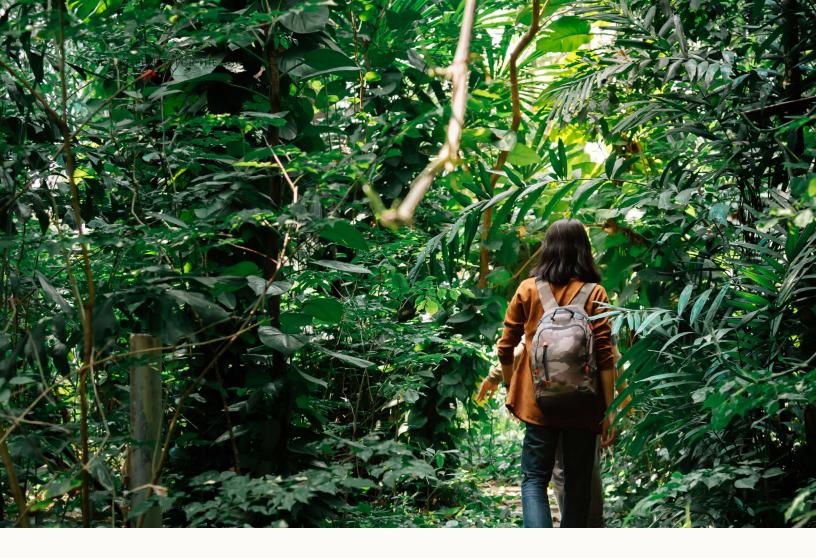
Source: https://www.nesdc.go.th/ewt_news.php?nid=6420&filename=develop_issue





In addition, the Government introduced the Community Forest Act in 2019. As a result, a total of 11,322 community forests established by the Royal Forest Department before it took effect became community forests according to the new law. The Community Forest Act covers 13,016 villages and a total forest area of 6.29 million rai. Community forests provide various benefits in terms of water sources, preventing soil erosion, absorbing groundwater, conserving biodiversity, creating jobs according to community capacity, and concretely generating income. For this reason, the Royal Forest Department aims to reach 15,000 community forests in five years, engaging 18,000 villages and covering a total forest area of 10 million rai. Reaching such a target requires a participatory forest protection strategy that involves cooperation with every sector, especially people in the areas who play a very crucial part in forest protection alongside government officials. At the same time, the private sector can be involved by supporting and strengthening local communities, for example "People for Forests, Forests for Communities", an environmental corporate responsibility project of Ratch Group Public Company Limited that has been supporting the Royal Forest Department community forest initiative since 2008. The project focuses on the protection, restoration, and sustainable utilisation of terrestrial ecosystems. It promotes communities' participation in forest management by organising a national-level competition to select a community forest with a sturdy conservation and development plan and method to become a model and knowledge sharing hub. This has sparked the drive for forest conservation, built a new generation of leaders, and expanded the network of community forest allies.

Source: https://bit.ly/3eBZnbb "Royal Forest Department and Ratch Group partner up to find model community forest"



Another project that promotes people's participation in forest protection is the "Citizen Volunteers for Forest Protection (CVFP)" project, which is a continuation of the "Hearts Unite for the Environment" project honouring His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej the Great on the 50th Anniversary of His Majesty's Accession to the Throne in 1994. The name was later changed to "Citizen Volunteers for Forest Protection (CVFP)" and Her Majesty the Queen Mother Sirikit has dedicated Her Majesty's private funds to support the training of volunteers and expressed Her Majesty's thought on the launch of the project: "If those who live nearby the forest understand that protecting the forest is protecting their own lives, they would do it with all their heart. When the forest is well protected, it will give back immeasurably to those people. And when they have benefited from the forest in tangible ways, they will have will power to care for the forest. This is a testament to the fact that humans and the forest can co-exist by relying on each other." Sharing his experience, Mr. Sayan Sooksa-ngat, Country President of the Citizen Volunteers for Forest Protection Network and Former Chief Executive of the Hoay Luek Subdistrict Administrative Organisation, Ban Lat District, Phetchaburi Province, said that in the past, since he and other Hoay Luek villagers had limited opportunity to access education and no knowledge about conservation, they made a living with illegal logging for charcoal production until the point the forest was damaged and the mountains had no green cover. It was then that the villagers began to face the lack of resources. Subsequently, the Royal Thai Army, the Royal Forest Department, the Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation, and PTT Public Company Limited undertook the "Citizen Volunteers for Forest Protection (CVFP)" project and conducted training for the villagers to raise awareness about the importance of forest conservation and encourage them to be part of the process. The restored abundance of the forest was conductive to the overall ecological revitalisation. It allows the villagers to grow and earn a living with seasonal crops such as mushrooms and phak wan (melientha suavis). Forest protection, farming and preserving the tradition of palmyra palm sugar making have created jobs and sustainable sources of income and improved the quality of life of people in the community.

Reference: www.dnp.go.th



Goal



Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

SDG16 is important and closely linked to other goals, as an effective justice and legal system is at the heart of all efforts to achieve any SDGs. Determined to drive all aspects of the justice system with efficiency, fairness, and without discrimination, the Ministry of Justice has established a work model that allows people to access the justice process with ease, speed, and without undue cost, and also sought to provide necessary and appropriate legal assistance to the poor or the disadvantaged in order to reduce inequality and create an inclusive society that leaves no one behind.



In the 2020 fiscal year, the Ministry of Justice established the "Happy Justice Centre" to proactively deliver and provide justice services to all. While people in distress can lodge a complaint at any Happy Justice Centre or Provincial Justice Offices nationwide, the centre will coordinate information with all other agencies under the Ministry of Justice in order to provide answers and clear timeframes for all ongoing cases. Moreover, 7,783 Community Justice Offices have also been set up at every local government office nationwide.

To eliminate barriers to justice for low-income citizens, the Ministry of Justice established the "Justice Fund" in 2006 to support costs associated with legal aid; assistance in litigation, prosecution or enforcement; and the protection of rights and liberties for people who are in distress or have suffered injustice. Regulations governing the Justice Fund have also been upgraded with the enforcement of the Justice Fund Act (2015) to cover more aid and create agility in justice work.

As for human rights efforts, the Ministry of Justice is committed to linking human rights with business competitiveness, by encouraging private businesses and state enterprises to take part in developing, commenting on, and solving human rights issues alongside the Government through the formulation of the National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights (NAP). Furthermore, to advance human rights and gender diversity, the Ministry of Justice has pushed for a civil union bill to allow LGBT people to live together as a family and enjoy partnership rights, such as the rights to jointly manage assets, inheritance rights, and rights to give consent to medical care.





The Royal Thai Government also attaches great importance to establishing good standards to promote the well-being of prison inmates, which will enable the process of punishment, therapy, rehabilitation, and behaviour correction, as well as the preparation for a return to society, to be more efficient. The Government initiated the "Good Health Good Heart" project on 28 December 2019 and established the Prisoner Health Volunteer (PHV) programme to strengthen the spirit of volunteerism. For the programme, the Ministry of Public Health and the Department of Corrections, under the Ministry of Justice, collaborated to provide trainings and educate inmates in various courses, such as health and environmental health promotion; communicable diseases prevention and control and major health hazards; first aid and basic life support; caring for people with mental illnesses and drug users; caring for the elderly and disabled persons; and primary maternal and child health. The first PHV programme was joined by a batch of 50 inmates.

Cultivating ideas, values and attitudes in children and youth is yet another important activity to strengthen the justice system in the long term. The Ministry of Justice has created the "Justice Foster School" project to educate children on justice, create values and the right attitudes about the justice system, and guard against crime and drugs with media and school activities. A total of 881 schools participated in the program in 2018, followed by 860 schools in 2019.

Cooperation with volunteers from the people sector

It is critical to promote cooperation with volunteers to create a mechanism for people to have easier access to the justice system and participate in solving problems within communities, as the Government is unable to track the problems that arise in the communities as well as the local people themselves. Mr. Subin Suwan, president of the Ban Kam Moei community in Sisaket province, is one such "Community Justice Counsellor" who has served pro bono as a legal advisor to the villagers inside his community as well as outside ever since he retired from the civil service as a teacher. He is also an advisor to the Community Justice Office and works with the Provincial Justice Office. Mr. Subin has reflected some interesting ideas that the civil society should adopt a community-level constitution to establish co-existence agreements and prioritise the role of people in the community over that of leaders, using the village council as a mechanism to enable villagers and volunteers to take part in community management and lay the foundation to sustainable development by themselves. He also emphasises that it is important to educate rural villagers in law and the justice process, which will make them more aware of their rights and duties as citizens. This awareness will lead them to engage in dialogues about problems within the community, which is one way to strengthen communities and create a sustainable local justice system.

Prioritise the role of people in the community over that of leaders to enable villagers and volunteers to take part in community management and lay the foundation to sustainable development by themselves.



Goal

Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development

Strengthening of the means of implementation and revitalising the global partnership for sustainable development according to SDG 17 is the cornerstone of all actions to achieve any of the SDGs. Thailand gives importance to implementation efforts in all dimensions, whether the mobilisation of funds and resources for development; capacity building in science, technology and innovation; or domestic and international partnerships.

Realising the importance of internet access in reducing inequalities, the Royal Thai Government has implemented the Village Broadband Internet project, also known as "Net Pracharat", to support the expansion of the high-speed internet network into remote communities, aiming to enable people to access knowledge sources and run online businesses to increase competitiveness and improve quality of life. Moreover, the volunteers in the "Net Pracharat Volunteer Network" also coordinate between communities and the Ministry of Digital Economy and Society and create economic and social benefits for the villages, using digital technology in knowledge transfers, information dissemination, and public relations. They also conduct surveys on the needs of the communities in order to propose activities or workshops that meet those needs, while using the Net Pracharat Volunteer Network application as a tool to carry out their work.

According to data from the Office of the National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission (NBTC), there were 50 million internet users in Thailand in 2019. The number did not account for the Net Pracharat project, which reached approximately 20 million people.

Of all 74,987 villages in Thailand, 30,635 villages, or 40.85 per cent, had internet infrastructure built by private companies, while investments in the other 44,352 villages, or 59.15 per cent, came from the Government. Among the latter were 24,700 villages in the Net Pracharat project; while the NBTC operated projects in the other 15,723 and 3,920 villages in remote and marginalised areas, respectively. These projects were implemented in accordance with the policies to reduce inequalities, spread prosperity to rural areas, and promote the access to technology for people in remote and marginalised areas, so that they can use the internet to educate and prepare themselves for various changes in today's world.

References: https://npcr.netpracharat.com





In 2019, Thailand was the Chair of ASEAN under the theme of "Advancing Partnership for Sustainability" and promoted an emphasis on the Sustainability of Things throughout the 34th ASEAN Summit and related meetings and later the 35th ASEAN Summit, which took place between 2–4 November in Bangkok. At the 34th Summit in June, ASEAN leaders jointly adopted the ASEAN Leaders' Vision Statement on Partnership for Sustainability and expressed a shared determination to drive a people-centred ASEAN Community that leaves no one behind and is prepared for the future—reflecting Thailand's important agenda of promoting sustainability in all dimensions.

The 10th ASEAN-UN Summit, chaired by the Prime Minister of Thailand, was attended by other ASEAN leaders, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, and the Secretary-General of ASEAN. According to the Chairman's Statement, the meeting reaffirmed the commitment to strengthen the ASEAN-UN Comprehensive Partnership, and noted the Complementarities Roadmap (2020–2025), which was adopted at the 52nd ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting in August 2019 in Bangkok and aims to promote complementarities between the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The meeting reviewed progress in the implementation of the ASEAN-UN Plan of Action to implement the Joint Declaration on Comprehensive Partnership between ASEAN and the United Nations (2016–2020). Moreover, external parties also expressed their readiness to cooperate with ASEAN to strengthen sustainability through the Complementarities Roadmap. This was confirmed by the East Asia Summit Leaders' Statement on Partnership for Sustainability, which was adopted at the 14th East Asia Summit (EAS) on 4 November 2019.

On 4 November 2019, the Prime Minister of Thailand hosted a Special Luncheon on Sustainable Development to discuss sustainable development and guidelines for expanding sustainability partnerships between ASEAN and external parties. The event was attended by leaders of ASEAN Member States, ASEAN dialogue partners, and the Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) as the Chairman's guest. At the luncheon, the Thai Prime Minister reiterated that sustainable development is a key component in driving a people-centred ASEAN Community and strengthening societies to be ready for changes. He also invited external partners to cooperate with ASEAN through the ASEAN Centre for Sustainable Development Studies and Dialogue (ACSDSD), which was previously launched during the 35th ASEAN Summit.

As a member of the United Nations Economic and Social Council, Thailand deems it essential to expand the drivers of sustainable development to cover all sectors, including through the volunteer mechanism. Previously, the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security has encouraged related agencies, including the public and private sectors, volunteers, communities, and businesses, to participate in driving social welfare by supporting social welfare organisations and strengthening local communities and civil societies. As of June 2020, a total of 877 organisations and 896 projects, which benefited 130,173 people including those in target groups, have received support from the Social Welfare Promotion Fund.

Furthermore, the Action Plan for the Promotion and Development of Civil Society Organisations: Phase 1 (2018–2021) was formulated to strengthen and develop volunteer mechanisms and networks of civil societies, and to support and incentivise the private sector and civil societies. For this purpose, a budget of 60 million baht has been allocated for 55 organisations and 55 projects.

In addition, the Office of Social Enterprise Promotion was also set up according to the Social Enterprise Promotion Act (2019) to promote social cooperation along with efforts to strengthen and build capacity for Social Development and Human Security Volunteers (SDHSVs). The Government published handbooks as implementation guidelines for SDHSVs, and in 2020 started to compensate the SDHSVs for their work in looking after their target groups. Skill and capacity building workshops were also organised to train the SDHSVs on standards and to help them gain expertise in caring for specific target groups such as the disabled and the elderly. To promote their work, SDHSV Coordination Centres were expanded to now include 901 provincial centres and 88 sub-district-level centres nationwide, data as of June 2020 showed.

Playing the role of a development partner to transfer and exchange knowledge and experience with other developing countries on the basis of mutual benefits, Thailand promotes and drives the "Sufficiency Economy Philosophy" (SEP) to support sustainable development cooperation through the South-South Cooperation and multilateral frameworks. Previously, Thailand International Cooperation Agency (TICA), under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, has incorporated SEP in its development partnerships. To date, TICA has established SEP Learning Centres in nine countries, namely Lao PDR, Myanmar, Vietnam, Timor-Leste, Brunei, Tonga, Fiji, Lesotho, and Mozambique; and also SEP Model Communities in 12 countries, namely Cambodia, Myanmar, Vietnam, Philippines, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Benin, Nepal, and Senegal.

The Friends from Thailand (FFT) volunteer project was initiated by TICA to deploy Thai volunteers to overseas missions to expand academic cooperation and promote good foreign relations. Through on-the-ground experiences, the project also helps Thai volunteers develop their potential and increase their capabilities for social work. Target destinations for such deployments include neighbouring countries in the Greater Mekong Sub-region, such as Lao PDR, Vietnam, Cambodia, and Myanmar, and countries with which the Government values economic and academic cooperation, including Bhutan, Timor-Leste, and African countries such as Benin, Lesotho, and Mozambique.



In 2020, the FFT project collaborated with the Puey Ungphakorn School of Development Studies, Thammasat University, to select volunteers to go work in various areas in many countries. One of them was Ms. Sureeporn Nontachaiyapoom, who is now working at the Royal Botanical Garden of the National Biodiversity Centre in Bhutan as a technician and plant tissue culture supervisor. Her main duties are to design and provide consultation to build a plant tissue culture laboratory; breed orchids, particularly endangered or economically important species; and train botanical garden staff on plant tissue culture techniques. Prior to joining the project, Ms. Sureeporn was a Biological Science lecturer at the School of Science, Mae Fah Luang University, where she taught plant tissue culture, conducted research on orchids, and published many research papers and academic articles on the subject. The volunteer project in Bhutan gives her an opportunity to pass on her experience and expertise to local researchers. She has also helped write the project proposal to build a new tissue culture laboratory that would meet international standards, which won a budget from the European Union's Rural Development and Climate Change Response Programme (EU-RDCCRP). It is an important foundation to carry on the work previously initiated and will pave the way for the conservation and sustainable use of biological resources in Bhutan; and could well lead to an academic cooperation between Thai and Bhutanese researchers in the future.

Another example is Ms. Nittayaporn Nipatsarn, a second-generation Thai volunteer now based in Benin, a country on the west coast of Africa. There, the first batch of volunteers already helped elevate village farming practices to be in line with the New Theory Agriculture-formulating cultivation plans, managing land to suit the land conditions, and focusing on using local resources for maximum value and benefits - and had previously brought together a group of interested farmers who were keen to try new practices. Later, in 2020, Ms. Nittayaporn and fellow volunteer Ms. Sakulkan Liblab, continued their efforts with activities under the Strong Community Development Project that is in line with the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy, using the principles of "Understanding, Connecting, Developing" and "Social Geography" as a guideline for implementation. They have encouraged women to play more roles and participate more in agricultural activities by teaching them creative agricultural processing methods to make products such as orange jam, dried candied orange, dried tomato, and cured banana. They have also brought a solar dryer designed by a first-generation volunteer for the farmers in the area to use for preserving food and processing new products, and transferred basic agricultural knowledge such as how to make bio-fermented water, biological insecticides, and compost using natural materials found locally. These activities allow the farmers to engage in a learning experience and develop existing knowledge into a new set of knowledge suitable for their area, which also forms a guideline to bring about sustainable development in the area.



Conclusion

In 2021, Thailand will be entering its sixth year of action towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030, as agreed by countries under the United Nations' framework. As we are now in the Decade of Action, we have less than 10 years to achieve the SDGs within the timeframe. As Thailand focuses its efforts on recovering from the COVID-19 crisis, it also realises the importance of achieving the SDGs, which will help the country keep pace with change, reduce risks from various situations, and promote sustainability and development potential by taking advantage of tangible opportunities available.

On the economy and society, Thailand is determined to overcome the COVID-19 crisis to return swiftly to normalcy—and better than it was before. Thailand has seized this opportunity as a "turning point" to restructure the country to support sustainable growth in ways consistent with the SDGs. In this regard, the Royal Thai Government has formulated the "Ad Hoc Master Plan under the National Strategy due to the COVID-19 Situation 2021–2022", which outlines four development aspects that the Government will attach special importance to over the next two years.

- 1. Local Economy: Strengthening the local economy by focusing on diversifying economic opportunities to the local level along with aiding and developing the potential of small and medium enterprises
- 2. Future Growth: Increasing the country's capacity to support long-term sustainable growth by enhancing the capabilities of high-potential Thai industries, such as the service and medical hub industries, creative tourism, high-value agriculture, the food industry, and modern automotive industry
- 3. Human Capital: Developing the potential and quality of life of people to promote them to be the main driving force for national development, by elevating and adjusting labour skills in accordance with the changing economic structure and allocating appropriate social welfare to meet people's living necessities
- 4. Enabling Factors: Improving and developing fundamental factors to promote the country's rehabilitation and development to be in line with changing global trends, such as digital infrastructure, modernisation of laws and government functions, and risk management; and promoting participation from all development partners

VOLUNTEERISM FOR THE SDGS

The Government prioritises the expansion of the network of development partners to help speed up the country's drive towards the SDGs. This effort includes integrating cooperation towards the same goals and raising awareness about the SDGs so that the public can participate in the development process thoroughly and effectively. The effort will be in tandem with the restructuring of the economy and society from its foundations to accommodate risk factors and long-term sustainable growth.

"Volunteerism" is an essential social innovation of Thailand. It serves as a key engine in driving the SDGs, especially on the issues of "people-centered services" and "community empowerment", as can be seen from the examples mentioned in this review. Thailand has volunteers working to drive all 17 SDGs, and the work of Thai volunteers during the COVID-19 crisis has also been evident to the world.

Despite comprehensive policies to promote volunteer work, the Government has been able to take further action on issues such as:

1. Establishing a database of volunteer work and the use of volunteers as a mechanism to collect in-depth local data, which not only gives the Government insights into the area but can also be used as a basis for research on development that best meets the needs of the community

2. Establishing standards for volunteer work, welfare protection, and capacity building for volunteers both formally and informally

3. Providing opportunities for volunteers to be involved in all development processes, especially project planning and monitoring and evaluation

4. Supporting new kinds of volunteer work such as online volunteering, which turns the elderly, the disabled and the disadvantaged in society into a force in the volunteer sector

5. Promotion of cooperation with the private sector to drive sustainable business, including supporting volunteer work in the private sector

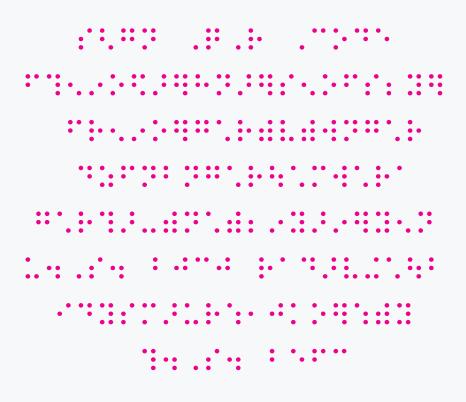
6. Establishing the National Volunteer Centre to coordinate and integrate volunteer work towards achieving the SDGs for the country as a whole



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