

WELCOME TO THAILAND

THAILAND
×
MONOCLE

LEADING THE WAY: BETTER LIVING

Thailand adopted a unique framework for sustainable development 40 years ago courtesy of the late King Bhumibol Adulyadej. This set of people-centred principles, known as **SEP** (Sufficiency Economy Philosophy), has been promoting well-managed growth and influencing government policies across the country since the 1997 financial crisis: individuals and institutions are advised to operate within their means and make informed decisions that take into account every potential repercussion. Moderation is the cornerstone of **SEP** and the proliferation of this “**SEP** mindset” across the world could prove a useful tool in achieving the UN’s list of 17 SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals) by 2030 (a selection of **SEP** examples are presented here).

Thailand shared its extensive experience when it chaired the G77 (Group of 77), consisting of 134 developing nations, in 2016. This followed a decade-long educational programme that saw representatives from 98 countries participating in **SEP** training courses funded by Tica (Thailand International Cooperation Agency). Tica has been cooperating in partnership with countries in Asia-Pacific, Africa, Latin America and beyond on the implementation of local **SEP**-based projects. It is now actively pursuing **SEP** for SDGs Partnership. Through this new partnership and trilateral cooperation, Thailand is playing its part in realising the SDGs and helping to strengthen the global partnership for sustainable development (SDG Goal 17).



01
AGRICULTURE
SDG2: ZERO HUNGER; SDG9: INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE; SDG 13: CLIMATE ACTION; SDG 15: LIFE ON LAND

Thailand has reduced its Global Hunger Index score from 28.4 in 1990 to 11.9 today (zero means no hunger). Thailand produces about a third of the world’s rice but the crop can fail in drought-prone areas. The New Theory farming, implemented in more than 40,000 villages, promotes crop diversification and allocates 30 per cent of farmland to reservoirs to ensure year-long water supply. Other innovations such as cloud seeding can also help solve water scarcity.

02
HEALTHCARE
SDG3: GOOD HEALTH AND WELLBEING; SDG 10: REDUCED INEQUALITIES

Thailand has more than one million community health workers and village doctors, a thriving infrastructure that helped lead to the adoption of the universal healthcare scheme in 2002. The goal is to make medical treatment accessible to all Thai citizens but applying **SEP** principles encourages healthier lifestyles and reduces recourse to costly procedures.

03
EDUCATION
SDG 4: QUALITY EDUCATION; SDG 10: REDUCED INEQUALITIES

Thailand’s literacy rate among 15 to 24-year-olds is about 98 per cent. Distance learning via satellite TV gives educational access to children even in the most remote areas. The majority of Thailand’s primary and secondary schools are **SEP**-certified. Teaching moderation at an early age fosters a sustainability mindset, forming lifelong habits. Research has found that graduates of **SEP**-certified schools are more aware of how their actions affect their community.

04
ENERGY
SDG 7: AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY; SDG 9: INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

More than one fifth of Thailand’s energy production comes from renewable resources such as wind, solar, hydropower and biomass. **SEP** is central in setting national energy policies. Thailand was one of the first Asian nations to offer private energy generators a financial incentive to supply renewable energy. By 2036 it aims to meet 30 per cent of domestic consumption with alternative energy.

05
BUSINESS
SDG 9: INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE; SDG 11: SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES; SDG 12: RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

Fourteen Thai-listed companies made the Dow Jones Sustainability Index in 2016, the highest number among Asean. Thailand has used food labelling and certification to promote responsible consumption for more than two decades. Green Label Thailand recognises products that cause the lowest environmental impact in their respective sectors and the Green Leaf Foundation certifies hotels that meet required standards in energy efficiency and the reduction of water use, waste and toxic chemicals.

EQUALITY: Almost two thirds of working-age women are in employment and currently occupy 38 per cent of executive positions, beating the global average of 24 per cent.

ENVIRONMENT: Thailand planted about 1.4 million hectares of trees between 1990 and 2010; the Thai government has set a goal to increase forest cover to 40 per cent over the next decade.

EMPLOYMENT: Unemployment in Thailand has averaged about 1 per cent over the past decade, earning it the tag of happiest place to live and work in Bloomberg’s Misery Index of 2016.

mfa.go.th/sep4sdgs
tica.thaigov.net
tsdf.or.th
thailandtoday.in.th