

Consultation with the Local Government in the Northern Region of Thailand
World Bank Group Country Partnership Framework
Meeting Summary
June 14, 2017, Chiang Mai

As an important step in developing the Thailand-World Bank Group Country Partnership Framework (CPF), 11 rounds of public engagement meetings with diverse stakeholder groups are being organized aiming at gathering views, recommendations and priorities to feed into the strategy of support for Thailand’s long-term development. This meeting took place on June 14 with the local government representatives from Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai, Lamphoon, Lampang, and Payao.

Agenda

1. **Welcome remarks and introductions to the Country Partnership Framework**
2. **Thailand Systematic Country Diagnostic “Getting Back on Track: Reviving Growth and Securing Prosperity for All” presentation**
3. **Opportunities and Priorities for Northern Region of Thailand presentation**
4. **Group discussions and identified priorities for Thailand-World Bank Group engagement.**
 - a. What are the challenges and priorities for Thailand?
 - b. How can the World Bank Group partner with Thailand to advance its long-term development vision, either through financing, technical advice or policy dialogue?

Summary of inputs from participants

What are the challenges and priorities for Thailand / Northern Region?
<p>Infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of essential infrastructure such as dual track railway and high speed train. - Problems with transportation systems in Chiang Mai.
<p>Agriculture and the Environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Contract farming. - Forest encroachment. - Lack of standards for agricultural products. - High cost because of chemical use in farming. - Monoculture farming which leads to deforestation. - Low agricultural prices due to excessive focus on quantity of agricultural production rather than on quality. - High proportion of old generation of farmers to young farmers. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Older farmers are less likely to adopt research and innovation and change farming practices. o Need to improve the quality of the new generation of farmers. - Support safe and healthy agricultural production. - Link agriculture and tourism. - Farmers cannot find markets to sell their products.

Education and Social Development

- The majority of the grassroots population are in debt.
- People lack knowledge in financial management and planning, especially among Generation Y.
- Decentralization of education management
 - o Set up education curriculum that is suitable for the context of the region by allowing regional or local agencies to manage the curriculum.
- Educational performance indicators should be more than GPA and O-NET test.
- Child-centered education - allow students to study subjects that suit their interest.
- Replace seniority system with merit system for career promotion.
- Increase education opportunities for students who dropped out and follow up on this group of student.
- Include the teaching of ethics in the curriculum.
- Improve the standard of all educational institutions, especially those in the rural areas.
 - o Government subsidies should take into account location, accessibility, and needs of schools in each areas.
- Integrate knowledge of ICT in the learning process.
- Violation of the rights of minority groups, marginalized groups, and undocumented migrant.
- Encourage students to pay back education loans from the Student Loan Fund (SLF).

Trade

- Unclear Free Trade Zone (FTZ)
- Free trade and foreign investment leads to market domination by foreign companies.

Institutional Capability

- Unequal budget allocation, where Chiang Mai receives the highest share.
- Transparency.
- Policy inconsistency.

Economic Development

- Stagnation of private sector investment in the North.
 - o Consumption remains stagnant
- Tourism and border trade accounts for economic growth in the North
- There is a lack of skilled labor.

How can the World Bank Group partner with Thailand to advance its long-term development vision, either through financing, technical advice or policy dialogue?**Cooperation with the Public Sector**

- The World Bank can help government agencies streamline priorities of their projects.
- Help integrate plan and turn policy into action.

Regional Cooperation

- Connecting people to exchange knowledge between Greater Mekong Region (GMS) and Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, and Vietnam (CLMV), which will help create regional cooperation.

Agriculture

- The World Bank can cooperate with relevant agencies on research and development.
 - o For example, use research to add value to some agricultural products.

Education

- Share best practices on education management from other countries.
- The World Bank can gather comments from the consultations and propose to the government for practical implementation.

