

**Consultation with Civil Society in North Eastern Region of Thailand**  
**World Bank Group Country Partnership Framework**  
**Meeting Summary**  
**24 May 2017, Khon Kaen**

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 World Bank support to Thailand’s long-term development. This meeting took place on May 24 with civil society representatives from Khon Kaen, Udon Thani, Chaiyapom and Mahasarakam.

**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 Northeastern Region 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?
  - c. How can World Bank Group partner with Thailand to support development in Northeastern Thailand?

**Summary of inputs from participants**

<b>What are the challenges and priorities for Thailand / Northeastern Region?</b>
<p><b>Environment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Support land management for food security in the regional and national level.</li> <li>- Support the development of locally produced food products for export.</li> <li>- Encourage business owners and households to use solar roof.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Water Resource Management</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Support water management for farming at the local level.</li> <li>- Build pipeline connecting Mekong River to the Northeastern provinces.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Agriculture</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improve productivity and sales of agricultural products.</li> <li>- Set up fund to support a just and stable pricing mechanism for agricultural projects.</li> <li>- Agricultural zoning</li> <li>- Encourage the growth of smart farmers.</li> <li>- Terminate the use of chemicals in farming.</li> <li>- Support energy-crops farming and the development of renewable energy for people to be self-sufficient.</li> <li>- Farmers in the Northeastern region lack knowledge on what the market demands, so they cannot sell their products.           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o The government needs to evaluate market demands before they encourage farmers to produce certain agricultural products.</li> <li>o Provide information on market demands to reduce price volatility.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

**Education and Social Development**

- Social development
  - o Education quality, unequal access to education between urban and rural children affect the quality of life, wealth, and health of people in the community.
  - o Decentralization and distribution of power to the community.
  - o Establish cooperation between the private sector and the people on social development projects which go beyond Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).
  - o Eradicate drug problems.
  - o Teenage pregnancy problems.
  - o The government's vision for the Northeast, which is to promote self-reliance, might limit the development of this diverse region.
- Education development
  - o Develop education system which encourage graduates to become business owners.
  - o Support local education which is related to way of living and the environment of the community.
  - o Include local history in school curriculum.
  - o Improve quality and access to education.

**Inequality**

- Large multinational companies overshadow local businesses.
- Wealthy individuals and multinational companies engage in tax avoidance.

**Business, Economic Development, and the Labor Market**

- The government should support business at the household level.
- The creation of community enterprise and cooperatives was done sloppily just to be eligible for funding or for borrowing from financial institutions. Ultimately the management of these entities lacks unity to achieve their objectives.
- Job creation has to be relevant to the changing labor market structure, where there are more migrant workers and foreign investors.
- Promote cultural tourism and knowledge exchange between different cultures.
- There is huge potential for tourism in the Northeastern region but it is currently underdeveloped
- Progressive land tax and inheritance and asset tax will reduce the gap between people of different socio-economic status.
- Lack of good jobs, most people move to Bangkok for work.

**Institutional Capability**

- Strengthen institutional capability of the public sector. The government can cooperate with non-governmental agencies for policy implementation.
- Empower more communities in decision-making and project implementations.

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

- Promote waste-power factories in major provinces.

**Social Protection**

- The World Bank can be the link between different government agencies to drive key policies forward e.g. health care services

**Good Governance**

- Improve the quality of the bureaucracy and solve corruption.

**Business and Trade**

- Establish cooperation between the private sector and civil society on social development projects which go beyond Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)
  - o The social development projects should cover health, education, and environment protection.
  - o There needs to be an integration between civil society's work, funding resources, and other resources in the region.

**Education and Social Development**

- The World Bank can support wealth distribution.
- The World Bank can conduct field study to figure out problems and challenges in the region more specifically as follow-up to the Systematic Country Diagnostic (SCD).
- The World Bank can finance participatory action research (PAR) which leads to model development and to define activities in the area
- Establish fund to support research and development, which should welcome contributions from agencies (NGO, educational institutions, etc.) interested in developing projects in the Northeast.

**Finance**

- The World Bank should follow up on and evaluate mega-infrastructure projects.
- The World Bank can increase efficiency in social investment e.g. Social Investment Fund (SIF).

**Knowledge Exchange**

- The World Bank can hold meetings which bring together different stakeholders to exchange ideas and discuss key issues, especially in education, and turn ideas into real actions.
  - o Share international best practices in solving education and water management issues.