



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

Thailand and FAO

Partnering to achieve sustainable agricultural development

Thailand became a member of FAO in 1947 and a year later Bangkok was designated the provisional location for the FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific – a decision that was formally approved in 1953. FAO has worked continuously with the Royal Thai Government through the Office of the National FAO Committee and the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives. Over the last six decades, the country has contributed significantly to the Organization's achievement of its mandate and has transitioned from being a recipient country to resource partner.

Fighting illegal, unregulated and unreported (IUU) fishing

In May 2016, Thailand signed the Agreement on Port State Measures (PSMA) to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing. In April 2017, Thailand presented the Instrument of Accession to the Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement (SIOFA) to help combat IUU fishing, implement the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, and meet the Sustainable Development Goal 14 to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources.

FAO has continued to support Thailand in combating IUU fishing and promoting inter-ministerial collaboration to promote better working conditions through the technical cooperation programmes IUU-PSMA programme and the Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem project. The programmes aim to strengthen regional coordination and cooperation to combat IUU and to implement the PSMA, as well as to build capacity of national authorities on ensuring decent working conditions and issues related to the fisheries sector.

Matching FAO's expertise to Thailand's development priorities

FAO assistance in Thailand is shaped by the 2018-2021 FAO Country Programming Framework (CPF), which is centred on three priority areas.

- Implementing food safety and standards for consumer health and trade promotion
- Enhancing the uptake of inclusive and efficient agricultural value chain opportunities
- Enhancing sustainable natural resources management

Jointly developed with the Government and other partners, the CPF reflects relevant priorities in key national development policies, including the food safety and standards, sustainable agriculture and natural resources management. The CPF is consistent with the 12th National Economic and Social Development Plan (2017-2021) and the United Nations Partnership Framework (2017-2021). It is also in line with the Sustainable Development Goals.

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Supporting rural livelihood security among Thai women through the development of Geographical Indications (GI)

Ban Sa in the Surin province in Northeastern Thailand is the first village, with its hand-extracted silk yarn, to comply with the specifications of the Isan Indigenous Thai Silk Yarn Geographical Indications (GI) thanks to the FAO Regional Project for the Promotion of Rural Development through the development of GIs. Isan Indigenous Thai Silk Yarn is an authentic traditional Northeastern Thai silk product registered at the Queen Sirikit Department of Sericulture (QSDS), Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives of Thailand.

"Food security and adequate nutrition for all is where sustainable development starts."

FAO Director-General

The FAO project, funded by the French Development Agency, promotes the GI system which offers protection through the registration of national and trans-national intellectual property rights to products that have specific qualities associated with their

areas of origin. GI also promotes the special qualities of local products and the local wisdom required for their production. Smallholder farmers and local producers are protected from foreign copycats and can improve their livelihoods through their engagement. In addition, the GI system pays close attention to products that support biodiversity and the key role of rural women in production.

So far, around 40 female villagers aged from 40 to 60 years old have joined the Ban Sa silk weaving group. Each woman can produce about 3–4 kg of GI-certified silk yarn per month, depending on their time availability. Buyers from nearby districts are in charge of taking all GI-certified silk yarn for producing the famous Surin Silk textile. The price of the textile can range from thousands to several millions Baht depending on the level of difficulty of the tie-dyeing, weaving patterns and techniques. All processes start with the high-quality fine silk threads.

By-products from silk yarn such as cocoons and silkworm pupa can also be changed into income. Silkworm pupa is edible and can be sold at 150 Baht per kg. The group of women also learns how to isolate the sericin protein, known for its medical and anti-aging effects, from the cocoon, to be used as a component of cosmetic products and daily essentials such as soap and lotion, which is then sold.

Sustainability starts at school

As a way to reduce malnutrition among children in rural areas, Thailand has for years been implementing the School Lunch Programme, which supplies lunch at no cost to the students. For the country's poorest provinces like Mae Hong Son, however, just lunch may not be sufficient for full-time life at school. Supported by the FAO Integrated School Farming Project, about 300 students of Baan Wanaluang School in Mae Hong Son receive three meals a day. The project aims to meet nutritional needs and boost food security among schoolchildren, mostly from the Karen, Lahu and Hmong ethnic communities.

Organic vegetable farming is carried out in the backyard of the school. Varieties of green leaves such as Chinese cabbage, kale, leek, coriander, morning glory and many more are grown on a rotational basis. Students from grades 1-9 have a chance to take care of their farms as an extracurricular activity. At first, schools could not run vegetable farms during drought season due to a lack of water systems. With the project fund, a water system has been installed to ensure that organic farms can be operated year round. This means students will have sufficient food for all three meals.

Additionally, boys living at the schools take care of poultry and pigs raised in the backyard, to ensure students derive protein from eggs and meat. All farm products are sold to the school's co-operatives and kept at the school kitchen for the preparation of meals.

Three years on, the once-deserted 2.08 hectares plot of red soil at Baan Wanaluang School has become green and abundant with organic foods. Although extra supplies and earnings from the project alone might not be enough for a total of 320 students and staff, it does help supplement food security, reducing the school's burden while creating opportunities for students to learn not only proper eating habits, but also moral values, general health and social well-being.

Global knowledge transfer

FAO-Thailand has collaborated with the Thailand International Cooperation Agency (TICA) in developing the South-South Cooperation and Partnership Programme. Several activities under the discussion are:

- FAO-TICA Partnerships for the Asia-Pacific Regional Initiative on Zero Hunger Challenge
- Assistance to strengthen emergency preparedness for Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI)
- Training Workshop on Rice Technology and experience in Asia of developing Capacity for a Sustainable Rice Value Chain through South-South Cooperation