



**2ND MEETING OF THE AIPA ADVISORY COUNCIL
ON DANGEROUS DRUGS (AIPACODD)
12-15 MARCH 2019, CHIANG MAI, THAILAND**

Alternative Development towards a Drug-Free ASEAN Community

THAILAND COUNTRY REPORT

Overview

Thailand as a transportation centre of South-East Asian region, and a part of the Golden Triangle area, is severely affected by the illicit drug flow in being both a widespread market and a transit point to other third countries. The most abused illicit drug in Thailand is tablet methamphetamine (Yaba) while crystallized methamphetamine (Ice), heroin, ketamine and cannabis are smuggled through Thailand to the third countries.

The main drug smuggling area is the northern border area especially in Chiang Rai and Chiang Mai Provinces and the situation tends to be dramatically worsened in the future. Moreover, the northern area is also used for sending drug money out of Thailand both in form of cash and underground banking which will be transferred via financial institutions or financial networks along border area.

Another major drug smuggling area is the northeastern Thailand, especially, in Loei, Nong Khai, Bueng Kan, and Nakhon Phanom Provinces where large amount of drug smuggling activities are reported. Yaba, Ice, heroin and dried cannabis are transported from drug production sites in the Golden Triangle to Lao PDR before being smuggled into the northeastern Thailand through the Mekong and land border. These northeastern smuggling routes also tend to be utilised more intensively.

Further significant drug smuggling areas are in Kanchanaburi Province in the West of Thailand, where a large amount of Yaba and Ice smuggling is reported, and the provinces in Deep South of Thailand, where smuggling of tons of kratom leaves from Malaysia to Satun and Songkhla Provinces is also reported. In addition, the most smuggled drugs through international airports are cocaine and Ice which are operated by West African gangs.

According to drug situation in Thailand in 2018, the seizures of illicit drugs were recorded as follows;

- Tablet methamphetamine (Yaba): 302 million tablets
- Crystalline methamphetamine (Ice): 18,526 kilograms
- Heroin: 903 kilograms
- Ketamine: 320 kilograms

In terms of drug users and addicts, 39 percent of them are children and youth (the age of 24 and under) while the 20-24 year-old groups are involved in the most. Among such groups, 78 percent are employed while other 14 percent are unemployed.

Yaba remains the most widely spread (75 percent), followed by Ice (7 percent) and cannabis (5 percent) respectively. However, heroin and ketamine are listed to be monitored for their increasing trend.

Trends of drug problem

1. The trend of synthetic drugs produced in the Golden Triangle area has been increasing which will lead to more illicit drug smuggling into Thailand in the future.
2. The northern border will remain the main area to smuggle illicit drugs into Thailand while the smuggling into the northeastern border tends to increase.
3. Heroin and ketamine should closely be monitored because of its increasing drug use trends among children and youth during the past 2 years.

Policy and Implementation Programme

According to the failure of drug abuse problem solving by employing only supply reduction and demand reduction approaches, Thailand has revised its strategy and promoted harm reduction approach in its national drug control policy. The approach aims to reduce drug-related harm, especially negative consequences from unsafe drug injection containing HIV/AIDS and HCV. The model starts from accessibility to harm reduction services and after care. For accessibility, target groups can access to the services provided by both government and civil society. Harm reduction services include addiction medical services, physical and mental health services and social services. For after care, target groups/patients are followed up by health professionals and civil society under a holistic approach.

Furthermore, appreciating the success of sustainable alternative development, Thailand has followed the late King's Philosophy to solve narcotic crop cultivation problem and also assisted other countries through several cooperation. Alternative development (AD) is commonly known as the human-centred development-led approach to solve the problem of opium poppy cultivation by introducing licit livelihood alternatives. This approach was initiated in the 1960s by His Majesty the late King Bhumibol who spearheaded efforts to improve the livelihood of the marginalised highland ethnic minority communities and introduce long-term alternatives to substitute the opium economy.

His Majesty's approach, the so-called "King's Philosophy", is centered on the belief in human potential--that once people are provided with opportunities, they will no longer have to pursue illicit income earning activities and can realize lives of dignity and legitimacy. In the following three decades, the Thai Government, in cooperation with the Mae Fah Luang Foundation (MFLF) and Royal Project Foundation (RPF), has continuously implemented AD projects across the northern Thailand which have resulted in the successful elimination of poppy cultivation and significantly improved livelihood of the highland ethnic minority communities.

The Thai Government has closely worked with its partner agencies in promoting the international recognition and implementation of Thailand's AD programme through various international arenas. With all of these efforts, Thailand's AD programme has successfully been recognised as the United Nations Guiding Principle on Alternative Development, as well as, extended to other countries facing rampant drug crop cultivation such as Myanmar, Afghanistan, and Indonesia. Thailand's AD projects in Myanmar are regarded as the flagship projects implemented beyond Thailand borders, since Myanmar is a very first country that the Thai Government introduced and offered AD assistance. In 2002, the very first cross-border AD project was implemented in Yongkha, Shan State followed by Yenanchaung, Magway. Thereafter, the 2012 - 2018 Thailand - Myanmar Cooperation on Sustainable Alternative Livelihood Development in Tachileik and Mong Hsat, Shan State has emerged.

The project's key activities covered the development of health, water system, agriculture, livestock, and education. Although the project was concluded one year earlier due to political conflicts in the area, its success was obvious and able to prove the applicability of the Thai AD approach beyond Thailand border.

With strong political will to sustainably solve drug problem, the Thai Government is working closely with agencies concerned and Myanmar Government in outreaching AD aids and activities to other drug-affected areas in Myanmar namely Naung Tayar Sub-District, Pinlaung District, Taunggyi Province and Mong Koe, Mong Hae and Mong Lin, Tachilek Province.

Alternative Development Project in Lao PDR

In 2009 – 2014, Thailand led by the Royal Project Foundation, Highland Research and Development Institute (Public Organization) or HRDI, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and Lao National Commission for Drug Control and Supervision (LCDC) agreed on the cooperation to develop 2 villages: Huoi Oun Village and Nasankham Village in Oudomxay Province following the alternative development approach of the Royal Project. Under this Thai - Lao technical cooperation programme, 57 households were developed as learning centres to create food security, local agriculturists and their families were introduced career with sufficient income, and community networks were strengthened. From May 2016, UNODC has operated an AD project in the new area in Huaphanh Province, Lao PDR and also invited the agricultural leaders from Huoi Oun Village in Oudomxay Province to share their knowledge and technology of the Royal Project approach in green house vegetable cultivation to Huaphanh agriculturists.

During the 17th Thailand - Lao PDR Bilateral Meeting on Drug Control Cooperation between 9 - 13 January 2019, Thailand led by the Office of the Narcotics Control Board (ONCB) and Lao PDR led by LCDC agreed to promote Oudomxay Village in Viengthong District, Borikhamxay Province to be an AD pilot project to reduce the illicit crop cultivation.

Thai Government in collaboration with HRDI has supported the project by providing agricultural knowledge and techniques, and marketing strategy to the target communities. According to the 2019 - 2022 project action plan, the expected results at the end of 2019 are that the leaders, villagers, and other relevant officers will gain knowledge and understanding in sustainable development principles as well as techniques and methods relating to an alternative cultivation. They will also be educated in agricultural management and can do the activities by themselves within their own area under the guidance of experts. The agricultural water system in the village will be set up with markets for local produce and goods from the project. The local people are planned to have sufficient income for their living without additional earning from illicit crops by 2022.

Alternative Development in Thailand

ONCB under the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) in collaboration with our partner and relevant agencies, has been implementing AD project in new area in northern Thailand since 2018. The area was vulnerable and influenced by illicit drug trafficking syndicates which directly affects national security. The project has adopted King's philosophy on AD as the core approach by prioritising human-centre methodology and integrating the work of both government and private sectors in order to improve local people's quality of life. The approach also

encourages people to participate in the development of their own community in all aspects and provides more job opportunities for every group of people for their well-being with legitimate alternative careers and secure income. The local community is considered to be able to manage and drive community development and sustainably conserve community's natural resources. The people will be sustainably immuned from any illicit activities, especially they will reduce, stop, or not re-engage in trade, smuggling, and abuse of illicit drugs. Furthermore, the project aims to maintain the communities' culture with respect for and support the rule of law, including being the model area in narcotic drug problem management for other areas with similar context. The project aims to begin with creating better understanding and accessing to target communities to collect geosocial data for planning and designing 10-year area-based development project. In the mean time, several area-based activities are implemented to solve urgent issues of the communities and eventually gain their trust in the project. Short-term income will be generated from employment and career support programmes, and preparation for the forthcoming development activities will be done.

Office of the Narcotics Control Board (ONCB)
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**THAILAND
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Overview

Being one of the most important transportation centres in Southeast Asia and a part of the Golden Triangle area where considered enormous drug production site, Thailand is severely affected by the illicit drug flow as both a significant market and a transit point to other third countries.

Thailand border faces several challenges from being smuggling routes. Through northern border, both illicit transportation of narcotic drugs and transfer of drug money have increased and tend to be worse. In northeastern area, a large amount of tablet methamphetamine (Yaba), crystalline methamphetamine (Ice), heroin, dried cannabis are being transported into the country from the Golden Triangle. Meanwhile, in southern Thailand, kratom leaves smuggling is reported in outstanding numbers. Additionally, cocaine and Ice are frequently seized at international airports from West African couriers.

According to 2018 drug situation in Thailand, groups of 20 - 24 year-olds and employed people show the highest exposure to illicit drugs. The seizures of significant illicit drugs were recorded as follows; Yaba 302 million tablets, Ice 18,526 kilograms, heroin 903 kilograms, and ketamine 320 kilograms

Trends of drug problem are mainly the increase in synthetic drugs production, illicit drug smuggling across northern and northeastern border, and use of heroin and ketamine among children and youth.

Policy and Implementation Programme

After drug policy revision, the failure in tackling drug abuse problems led to an inclusion of harm reduction approach into Thailand's national drug control policy. Such approach has been introduced to reduce harmful consequences from drug injections containing HIV/AIDS and HVC. Implemented by government and civil society, a variety of supported programmes have been arranged, namely addiction medical services, physical and mental health services, social services as well as holistic approach after care services by health professionals.

Alternative development (AD) is a substantial policy implementation of Thailand with successful outcomes and global recognition. AD has been developed from the late King's Philosophy which prioritises the human-centred development-led approach to solve the problem of opium poppy cultivation by introducing licit livelihood alternatives. For three decades, Thai government and its partner agencies have worked and implemented the AD concept not only domestically but also internationally to assist villagers to combat illicit crop cultivation. The first cross-border collaboration was Thailand - Myanmar Cooperation on Sustainable Alternative Livelihood Development in Shan State. At present, ongoing AD projects are the AD project in Oudomxay Province, Lao PDR, and 2018-initiated project in northern Thailand.