Thailand and the OECD advance co-operation: Launch of the Integrity Review of Thailand Phase 2 and Capacity-Building Workshop on Public Ethics, Bangkok, 25-27 June 2019

While no country is stranger to the harms of corruption and bribery, international co-operation can help find solutions to strengthen public integrity systems. Take the example of Thailand’s partnership with the OECD. In Thailand, over 40% of surveyed citizens reported that they had to pay bribes, offer a gift, or perform a favour when accessing public services, according to a 2017 report of Transparency International. Tackling these problems requires solutions that go beyond mere rules, compliance and tougher enforcement. The key is a strong public integrity system, a culture of integrity across the whole of society. The Government of Thailand decided to partner with the OECD to work towards this goal, supporting ongoing reforms and using OECD benchmarks, standards and reviews. Results such as the OECD Integrity Review of Thailand, the first of its kind in the Asia-Pacific, show the way forward for OECD projects on public integrity in the region and beyond.

The first result of this partnership was the OECD Integrity Review of Thailand report, launched at the 2018 OECD Global Anti-Corruption and Integrity Forum by Deputy Prime Minister Wissanu Krea-ngam. The Review led to impactful reforms in the public sector, such as streamlined inter-agency co-ordination and the implementation of an electronic asset declaration system, which improves the quality of declarations, reduces the number of mistakes, and allows for better verification and analysis of the asset declaration data.

Three years after the start of the Integrity Review of Thailand, the Government of Thailand is continuing its commitment to strengthen public integrity policies with a series of activities. These include the launch of a second review phase under the OECD-Thai Country Programme, supported by the Office of the Public Sector Development Commission (OPDC), the Office of the Public Sector Anti-Corruption Commission (PACC) and the OECD on 25 June 2019.

The Integrity Review of Thailand Phase 2 builds on the success of the project’s first implementation aiming at enhancing the transparency of the public administration, identifying tools to increase its efficiency and developing policies that will ultimately restore citizens’ trust in government institutions. The scope of the second review will be covering corruption risk management, internal control and auditing, disciplinary and ethical measures, as well as integrity safeguards in decision-making processes and transparency in policy formulation. The review process will engage various government agencies, which will be working together to design and implement policies for a just and transparent Thai society. First findings, recommendations and results are expected in the course of 2020.
PIN Activities Update

To support the implementation of the recommendations from the first integrity review, the OPDC, the PACC and the OECD organised a two-day capacity-building workshop on public ethics on 26-27 June 2019. More than 70 public officials from Indonesia, Malaysia, Bangladesh, the Cook Islands, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines and Thailand gathered at OPDC headquarters in Bangkok to exchange experiences on how to manage conflicts of interest, resolve ethical dilemmas and nurture an open organisational culture. Participants benefitted from the expertise of Ms Susannah Luck-Cameron, Director of Integrity of the Australian Public Service Commission, as well as policy analysts of the OECD Public Sector Integrity Division. Ms Luck-Cameron shared her experiences on raising integrity awareness across the Australian public sector and developing bespoke training to agencies, offering Thai public officials insights on how to reinforce the ethics framework in their own organisations.

The workshop, which concluded successfully on 27 June 2019, allowed the Government of Thailand to engage in conversations that will help improve its public administration and share information about its experiences with regional participants and international peers. The representatives of both the Thai government and the OECD committed to continue their co-operation throughout the second review phase and share their findings with the member countries of the Public Integrity Network (PIN) of the Anti-Corruption Initiative for Asia Pacific to help build robust public integrity systems in the region, boosting economic growth and public sector efficiency.

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