



THAILAND GLOBAL HEALTH ACTION PLAN • 2021-2027 •

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Global Health Division
Office of Permanent Secretary
Thailand Ministry of Public Health

July 2021

This book is an English language translation of Thailand Global Health Action Plan: แผนปฏิบัติการด้านสุขภาพโลก พ.ศ. ๒๕๖๔-๒๕๗๐

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Foreword

This Global Health Action Plan was developed by Thailand's Ministry of Public Health in collaboration with concerned agencies aiming to promote the synergy and coherence of Thailand's global health works, strengthen national health security, promote economic recovery in the post COVID-19 pandemic era and promote a positive national image that supports Thailand's role in international forums.

We thank all officials of the Ministry of Public Health and other key advisers from the concerned agencies, as well as experts and colleagues who were involved in the consultation process for their valuable comments and contributions to the successful development of this Global Health Action Plan year 2021 -2027. We also thank Mr. Charles F. Chicarelli for his assistance editing this English version.

This Action Plan can be an instrument to advance Thailand's global health works, including trade negotiations and national commitments to binding international agreements and to educate the public on global health.

Thailand Ministry of Public Health
July 2021

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Overview of the Global Health Action Plan 2021-2027

Ultimate Goal

To ensure that Thailand is health secure, safe from public health threats, and moving steadily forwards in socio economic sustainable development with a constructive role in global health cooperation

Strategic issues	1. Enhancing Health Security	2. Promoting Thailand's leading role in global health	3. Enhancing coherence between health and public policies	4. Strengthening resilient and equitable health systems	5. Enhancing individuals and institutional capacities
Key Programs	Public health emergency preparedness and response	Advancing universal health coverage	Enhancing Trade and health policy coherence	Strengthening health system resilience and health equity	Global health knowledge generation
	Enhancing national capacity of self reliance in medical supplies and vaccines	Strengthening health security capacity	Balancing health and economy	Research and development of vaccines, medicines and medical products in response to public health emergencies	Global health capability development
	Managing antimicrobial resistance	Advancing health promotion for all at all ages	Promoting the compliance with international commitments concerning health	Digital health and innovation to improve health-care services	Global health database development
	Mitigating health impacts of climate change	Promote Thailand's role in global health forums		Strengthening Primary Health Care	

Priority platforms

Multilateral: United Nations, World Health Organization, ASEAN, APEC, Mekong sub-region, Global Health Security Agenda , UNAIDS
Bilateral: Neighboring countries, strategic partner countries

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• 2021 – 2027 •



1

Introduction

Thailand's global health works have been continuously developed and reformed in response to the national development context in each era.¹

The 1.0 era (agriculture era: years 1855-1961) was about 'international health'. In this era, Thailand was a recipient country being supported by other developed countries and international organisations in the areas of both financial and technical assistance. With this assistance, Thailand was able to develop primary health care facilities, train village health volunteers and village health communicators nationwide.

In the 2.0 era (light industrialization era: years 1962-1986), Thailand had more capacities in developing its own health system and expanded health facilities in all districts and villages nationwide. This allowed Thai people to access to health services through these facilities. This health infrastructure was fundamental for Thailand to achieve universal health coverage in the subsequent eras.

In the 3.0 era (heavy and export oriented industrialization era: years 1987-2016), the Thai government heavily invested in the basic infrastructure to attract foreign tourists and import substitution industrial products. There was an influx of foreign investment, coupled with many Japanese manufacturers

¹ Suwit Wibulpolprasert. 2019. Keynote speech on "Outlooking of the new Thailand global health strategy: where we should stand?" Available at: http://www.bihmoph.net/news_pic/XVEgez9R9YUo.pdf

moving their production to bases in Thailand. As a result, national economic growth was double digit in this era. Thailand was considered as one of the newly industrialized countries (NIC) of Southeast Asia.² However, the country faced an economic crisis in 1997. It took more than ten years for Thailand to recover from this crisis. In 2008, Thailand's gross national income (GNI) per capital was equivalent to year 1997. In this era, Thailand was not only an aid recipient, but also an aid donor. The Thai government established an aid fund to provide official development assistance to developing countries and started to provide the assistance through a diplomatic channel. Thailand became a donor of Official Development Assistance (ODA) in this era. In the health areas, Thailand has been gradually recognized with increasing favorability in international forums, due to a success in disease prevention and control, especially HIV control, and universal health coverage (UHC).

In the 4.0 era (Economic driven by innovation: plan for years 2017-2036), Thailand has achieved universal health coverage implemented since 2001 while its GNI per capita was mere \$1,960.³ All Thai people can access to essential health services in an equitable manner, without a financial barrier. Thailand's success in achieving universal health coverage has inspired developing countries that had a similar level of GDP as Thailand's to set a goal towards UHC. In addition, Thailand had established the Thai Health Promotion Foundation Fund using the sin tax on tobacco products and alcohol beverages. The country further advocated for the Framework

² NICs include Hong Kong, Singapore, Republic of Korea and Taiwan

³ <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GNP.PCAP.CD>

Convention on Tobacco Control: FCTC) and was recognized by international community as a forefront country that has achieved control over tobacco consumption, a key risk of non-communicable diseases. Thailand also issued compulsory licenses which helped increase access to HIV medicines, as prices decreased. Access to benefit sharing of bird flu virus was also advocated by Thailand, especially on the clause stipulating that vaccine manufacturers have to contribute to the Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Fund.

In this era, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been involved in and supported global health works in a large extent. It can be seen in 2016 that the Thai Ministers of Foreign Affairs joined hands with the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Brazil, France, Indonesia, Norway, Senegal and South Africa establishing the Foreign Policy and Global Health (FPGH) Initiative aiming to address global health issues through a foreign policy lens and advocate for an annual United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) resolution on global health and foreign policy. The Permanent Mission of Thailand to the United Nations in New York and the Ministry of Public Health also strongly advocated for two UNGA resolutions on UHC. One was endorsed on 12 December 2012, urging countries to accelerate progress toward UHC. The second one was endorsed in 2017, with more than 100 countries support, proclaiming 12 December as International Universal Health Coverage Day (UHC Day).⁴ This exemplified how Thailand had advanced its health agenda through diplomacy.

⁴ UNGA resolution 72/138

Global health problems are increasingly complex and their impact is often beyond the health sector's ability to manage unassisted. Health has also been placed in a geopolitics context and served as a foreign policy instrument. A change in a demographic structure towards an aged society as well as an epidemiological transition further escalated a double burden of communicable and non-communicable diseases. In addition, there is an increasing role of non-state actors in a global health policy formulation process. The COVID-19 pandemic further deteriorated global health security in all aspects, including shortages of medical supplies and vaccines for which developing countries are depending on these supplies from producing countries. In particular, the powerful countries such as the Group of Seven (G7)⁵, European Union, the QUAD⁶ and China have rather provided COVID-19 vaccines as global public goods but used them as an instrument for diplomatic and geopolitical competition. In order for Thailand to effectively advance its global health agendas in response to the aforementioned context, it therefore needs to work in a proactive manner and enhance individuals and organizations' capabilities in order to use global health as a tool to foster national security, prosperity and sustainability.

⁵ Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, United Kingdom and United States

⁶ Australia, India, Japan, and United States

2

Factors and trends that affect global health development

2.1 A change in global health governance

There has been a significant change in global health government during the last three decades. The World Health Organization or other United Nations agencies are no longer the sole organizations in the state led governing mechanism. A change in economic and geopolitical trends has paved the way for various international organizations at all levels to engage in addressing global health issues with state agencies, including the World Bank, World Trade Organization, specialized United Nations agencies, philanthropic foundations, international non-governmental organizations, multi-national corporations and development funds established by the governments of rich countries. Some organizations have engaged with global health by establishing global health partnerships such as the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria which was able to mobilize financial resources exceeding one billion baht in the last decade.

In addition, countries in most regions also established regional economic integration or communities such as European Union, ASEAN community and economic cooperation or partnerships to advance health or integrate health aspects in their economic cooperation, for instance, Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM), ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), Bay of

Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC). This economic cooperation and its mechanism have the significant impact on the role of key health agencies at both global and national levels, especially the World Health Organization and Ministry of Health at a country level. Non-state actors have been more engaged with health through economic related health mechanisms. The health governing structure at all global, regional and national levels have been subsequently changed from state only to be participatory.

2.2 Geopolitics context: Look East Policy

Since a decade ago, powerful countries and their alliances have placed their high priority foreign policies on Asia, using health diplomacy as a tool to cultivate extensive economic and strategic relations with Asian countries and also to compete with their opponents. For instance, the United States in 2020 pledged to advance its health cooperation with ASEAN member states through the “U.S.-ASEAN Health Futures” initiative to strengthen the health system capacity of ASEAN to better respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.⁷ The United States also opened its regional Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Viet Nam in September 2020 and further increased its health cooperation with Mekong countries on emerging threats in health security and pandemic response through Mekong-U.S. Partnership – an expansion of the Lower Mekong Initiative.⁸

⁷ U.S.-ASEAN Health Futures | U.S. Embassy & Consulate in Thailand

⁸ About: Mekong - U.S. Partnership (mekonguspartnership.org)

China has provided its health assistance to countries involved in the Belt and Road Initiative, especially medical supplies for COVID-19 response.⁹ Japan has also provided assistance to Asian countries through the Asia Health and Wellbeing Initiative (AHWIN)¹⁰ and pledged to financially support the newly established ASEAN Center for Public Health Emergencies and Emerging Diseases (ACPHEED). Australia, an ASEAN strategic partner, has also provided financial support to the establishment of the ACPHEED.¹¹ The United Kingdom has advanced its health cooperation with some ASEAN countries through the Better Health Program.

There is a tendency for powerful countries to include health in their geopolitical competition. Their assistance given to developing countries would be hidden agendas behind health cooperation. Developing countries need to take into consideration the geopolitical aspect and agendas before arranging their health cooperation with the donor countries.

In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic has the effects on the geopolitical context. The National Security Council¹² is of the opinion that the world order is moving towards a multipolar power system. The United States would not be the only country to lead the world power, as China appears positioned to dominate world politics.

⁹ Southeast Asia: COVID-19 and China's Health Silk Road: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung in Asia (fes.de)

¹⁰ About AHWIN - Asia Health and Wellbeing Initiative

¹¹ The-ASEAN-Special-Edition-Nov-Dev-2020.pdf

¹² The international security situation after the COVID-19 outbreak. 2019. National Security Council.

The COVID-19 pandemic created a political tension between the United States and China, including capability of pandemic control, resources, legitimacy and recognition from the international community. In 2020, the United States (U.S.) government was strongly criticized on its ‘America First Policy’ and vaccine nationalism. The U.S. government also accused China of being the origin of COVID-19 pandemic. Their relationship and bilateral trade deteriorated and the global value chain was also affected from this conflict.

Although China was strongly criticized on concealing the COVID-19 outbreak in the early phase of this disease, the Chinese government, in a later stage, has improved its public health measures and responded to such outbreak in a timely manner, including self-isolation of infected cases, travel restrictions, lockdowns. These measures were praised as effective in response to the COVID-19 outbreak.

China has also positioned itself as a helper assisting many developing countries in fighting against COVID-19, including sending Chinese medical team and donating hygiene masks, surgical masks, medicines and other medical supplies. The Chinese President further announced to make Chinese COVID-19 vaccines a global public good and supported the “IP Waiver.”¹³ This suggests that China has attempted to lead the world power through providing international public goods and services in the public health emergency context which is an important step toward the world hegemonic power.

¹³ President Xi supports COVID-19 waiver (lifesciencesipreview.com)

However, the new elected President of the United States in January 2021 has a global health policy that is totally different from his predecessor. The US President has rejoined the Organization after its membership status was withdrawn in 2019 and expressed his support to strengthen the World Health Organization's works, especially the COVID-19 response.¹⁴ The US government also donated vaccines¹⁵ and granted 4 billion United States Dollars to the COVAX Facility.¹⁶ It further supports "IP Waiver"¹⁷ to increase vaccine production and accessibility in developing countries. This is a clear signal that the US is back on the world stage and ready to take a lead in "Building Back Better World" regarding economy, society and environment and in trade competition with China as well as protecting the world trade system.¹⁸

It is therefore crucial for Thailand to take into account the geopolitics context in the implementation of the global health action plan, ensuring its neutrality and national benefits at large.

¹⁴ Dr. Anthony S. Fauci Remarks at the World Health Organization Executive Board Meeting | HHS.gov

¹⁵ FACT SHEET: United States and G7+ Plan to Defeat the COVID-19 Pandemic in 2022 and Prevent the Next Pandemic | The White House

¹⁶ Initiated and directed by the Vaccine Alliance, World Health Organization, and Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovation (CEPI)

¹⁷ U.S. reverses stance, backs giving poorer countries access to COVID vaccine patents | Reuters

¹⁸ Remarks by President Biden at the 2021 Virtual Munich Security Conference | The White House

2.3 Expanding the scope of international trade agreements

Trade agreements of the 21st century are complex due to the inclusion of the provisions of the protection of intellectual property rights, labor and environment as well as the Investor– State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) mechanism that allows foreign investors to dispute the government on some certain conditions. These issues have both direct and indirect impact on population’s health and Thai health system, in particular access to medicines. There is a tendency that the scope of international trade and investment regimes would be expanded to stimulate the global economy and address climate change such as carbon trading, carbon tax and trade in environmental goods and services which are expensive and include the protection of intellectual property rights .

Thailand gives importance to stimulate domestic economy through expanding the scope of the new trade agreements to cover all key trading elements. The country is discussing with the potential countries and economic blocs for trade agreements to stimulate its economic growth, including revitalizing the Thai-European Union Free Trade Area and the Comprehensive and Progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (CPTPP). These two agreements are comprehensive and cover all trading dimensions, especially the protection of intellectual property rights and environment. If Thailand were to be a party of these agreements, it would need to amend the relevant laws that would have implications on Thailand’s global health works.

2.4 Global health threats

Increasing global health challenges stem from the aforementioned contributing factors. In 2019, the World Health Organization (WHO) listed ten issues that would demand attention from WHO and health partners.¹⁹ These issues include air pollution and climate change, non-communicable diseases, global influenza pandemic, fragile and vulnerable settings, antimicrobial resistance, Ebola and other high threats pathogens, weak primary healthcare, vaccine hesitancy, dengue and AIDs.

Thailand is also facing these health challenges, in particular diseases related to air pollution, non-communicable diseases and emerging and reemerging diseases because the country is located in the tropical region that is prone to infectious tropical diseases including zoonotic diseases. Connectivity and advances in transportation that facilitate travel and people mobility also accelerate the spread of diseases between countries.

2.5 COVID-19 pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted global health and socio-economic aspects. Since the outset of the outbreak, there have been more than 170 million people infected and over 3 million deaths worldwide (as of June 2021). The global economy is severely contracted from lockdown measures, travel restriction and banning social activities to prevent and control the spread of

¹⁹ Ten threats to global health in 2019 (who.int)

the virus. As a result, the economic growth rate is minus 4.5-6.0 percent and more than 100 million people have become unemployed or entered into poverty in 2020,²⁰ exacerbating inequalities across and within countries. This impact certainly affects the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals of developing countries in 2030.

In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic has the effects on the global governance of public health emergency response. The Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response (IPPPR), established by the WHO in 2020, stated in their second Report that if there were a rapid response to the outbreak of coronavirus 2019 in the early phase of a handful of cases, it could effectively limit the spread of the virus²¹. The Global Preparedness Monitoring Board also called for robust global governance of preparedness and health emergencies, including a proposal to amend the International Health Regulations, 2005 (IHR) to the World Health Assembly,²² which has been an important instrument in response to public health emergencies by WHO and its member states. However, the IHR, despite of being international law, has some limitations, especially compliance by its parties. Amending these Regulations would be time-consuming. This hurdle led WHO member states to discuss a possibility of having the “Pandemic Treaty” which can be in a form of the Framework Convention that is more reinforcing to complement the IHR in order to effectively contain the pandemic. This initiative is in line with

²⁰ Global Economic Effects of COVID-19 (fas.org)

²¹ Second report on progress by the Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response for the WHO Executive Board, January 2021

²² GPMB_2020_AR_EN_WEB.pdf (who.int)

the IPPPR's recommendation indicated in its main Report²³ presented to the 74th World Health Assembly in May 2021.

When considering the development process of the previous framework conventions, the negotiating process of the new one would be very challenging in terms of technical and geopolitical aspects, as the new Framework Convention is legally binding. In this respect, the 74th session of World Health Assembly in 2021 decided to “request the Director General to convene a special session of the World Health Assembly in November 2021, and... to considering the benefits of developing a WHO convention, agreement or other international instrument on pandemic preparedness and response...”²⁴ This Assembly will be very important as its resolution would change the global health direction towards the international law on pandemic preparedness and response.

It can be concluded that global health issues are increasingly complex attributed by many factors and variables, including an epidemiological transition, a change of social determinants of health as well as geopolitical tensions between powerful countries. Global health issues therefore cannot be solved by a single country alone, but by cooperation from all sectors within and across countries in the global community.

²³ COVID-19: Make it the Last Pandemic (theindependentpanel.org)

²⁴ WHA 74 (16). Special session of the World Health Assembly to consider developing a WHO convention, agreement or other international instrument on pandemic preparedness and response

3

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats analysis of Thailand global health

Thailand has invested in health infrastructure development since the 2.0 era. This investment paved the way for Thailand to achieve universal health coverage in 2001. Thailand's health system capabilities have also been admired by the World Health Organization and several leaders from many countries. According to the health security index, Thailand was ranked the 6th out of 195 countries in 2019 that was well prepared for the pandemic²⁵. A year later, the country was facing the COVID-19 outbreak, but was able to successfully manage such outbreak in a few months. With this performance, in July 2020 Thailand was ranked the top country of 80 countries that has recovered from the COVID-19 pandemic according to the Global COVID-19 Index.²⁶ The ranking method used the Global Health Security Index 2019 and also other indicators to gauge the performance and recoveries, in which Thailand was on the sixth rank of 195 countries that are capable to handle any epidemic.²⁷ In addition, Thailand is equipped with renowned public health experts that have been well recognized by the global health forums. Medical

²⁵ Global Health Security Index, 2019

²⁶ GCI report in July 2020

²⁷ GHS Index 2019

services have been accredited by the global institution making Thailand a destination of foreign medical tourists. In 2016, Thailand had the majority market share of medical tourism in Asia,²⁸ accounted for 38 percent. The Thai government has supported this tourism through a “Medical Hub of Asia” policy,²⁹ with a strong positive national image.

Having such strengths, there are opportunities for Thailand to build up global health knowledge and capabilities of its human resources to uplifting health system performance to better respond to public health emergencies including the COVID-19 pandemic. It is also crucial to take this opportunity to advance Thailand global health towards “Global Health 4.0” driving both health and economy, branding Thailand as the “Global Health Hub of Asia” in the post COVID-19 pandemic context.

However, Thailand has several weaknesses that need to be addressed, especially the capacity gap among the agencies implementing the global health works and the secretariat offices of such agencies in various levels. Global health knowledge development is conducted on an ad-hoc basis. There are also conflicts in institutional mandates and interests between agencies as well as the weakness of global health governance at a national level.^{30, 31}

²⁸ CMMU MS20 B, strategic health tourism management in Thailand, 2019

²⁹ Department of Health Service Support, 2016. Thailand Medical Hub Development Strategy.

³⁰ Suwit Wibulpolprasert.2019. Keynote speech on “Outlooking of the new Thailand global health strategy: where we should stand?” Available at: http://www.bihmoph.net/news_pic/XVEgez9R9YUo.pdf

³¹ Global Health Institute: the Proposal. 2016. Internal document

Strengths:

- Government policy supporting global health works
- Strong health security
- Achieved universal health coverage
- Being a popular destination of medical tourists
- Equipped with renowned global health scholars
- Strong multi-sectoral collaboration, including civil society organizations

Weaknesses:

- Capacity gaps between global health agencies
- Weak mechanism for global health governance
- Key responsible agencies have limited human resources for global health and received fragmented supports
- Reactive implementation of global health works

Opportunities:

- Sustainable development of global health knowledge and human resources
- Improvement of public health emergency response, including the COVID-19 pandemic
- Enhancing Thailand's role in health security, universal health coverage and health promotion for all at all ages
- Using health as an instrument to support national economic development and maximizing trade or economic agreements to support health development

Threats:

- Public health emergencies, including the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change
- Global economic crisis
- Geopolitical tension between powerful countries
- Political conflicts in neighboring countries
- Domestic political instability
- Scope of trade agreements encompassing the provisions potentially affecting public health measures

The key threats that need to take into account in implementing the Action Plan are the continued spread of COVID-19, contraction of global and national economic growth, geopolitical tension between powerful countries, domestic political conflicts in neighboring countries (leading to the influx of immigrants that have implications on health and welfare expenses borne by the Thai government), unstable internal politics, climate change, and comprehensive international trade agreements that would increase social determinants of health and have significant impact on the objectives of Thailand Global Health Action Plan.³²

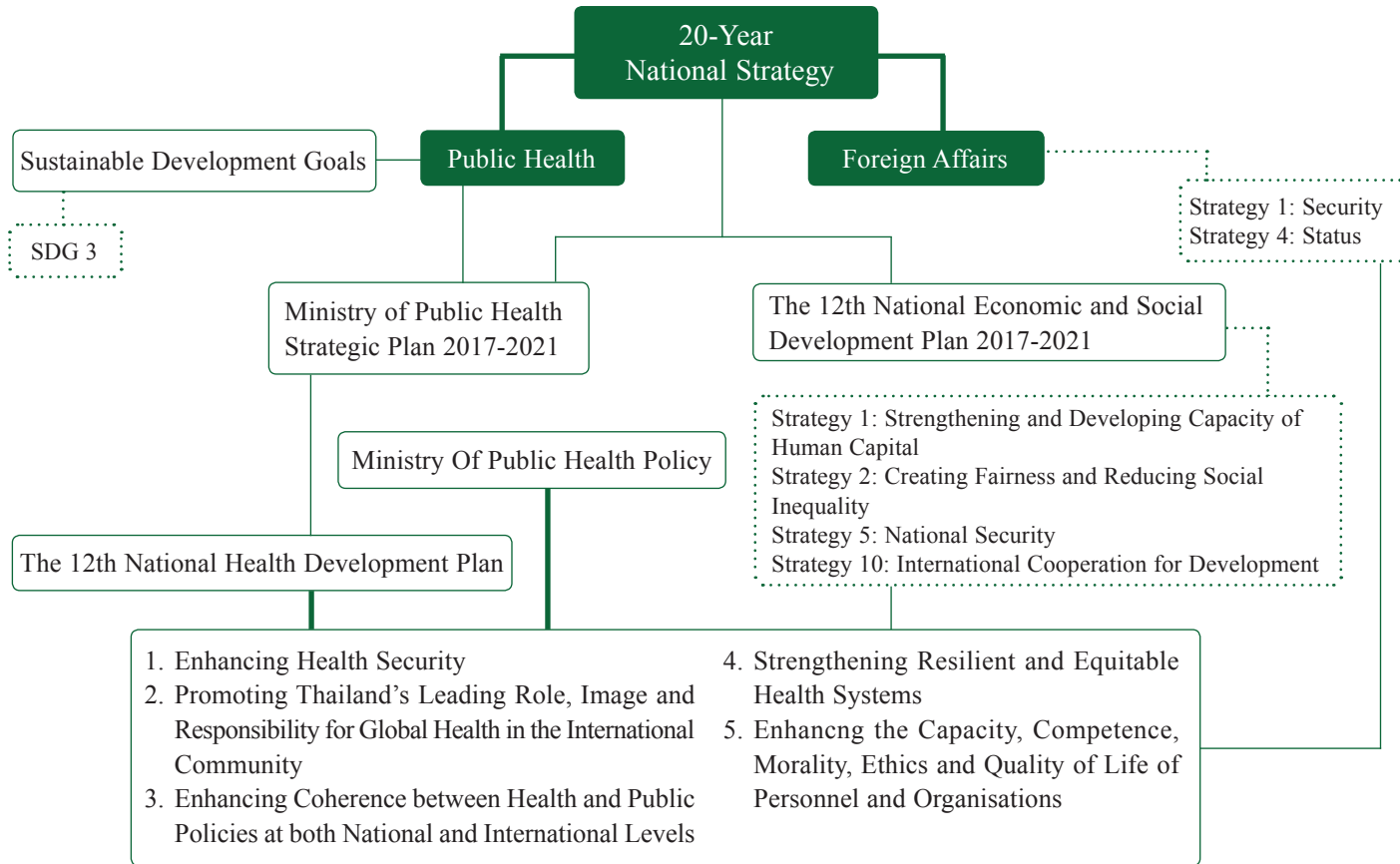
4

Linkage between the Global Health Action Plan and Sustainable Development Goals, Thailand National Strategy and other Master Plans associated with global health

The development of this Action Plan is based on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the 20-Year National Strategy and the National Development Plan at all levels related to global health implementation (Figure 1). This Action Plan focuses on building national health security, promoting the role of Thailand in the world community, strengthening coherence between policies, strengthening

³² CPTPP Working Group. 2019. Analysis of the impact of CPTPP on the Thai public health system.

Figure 1 Connectivity between Global Health Action Plan and Related Plans



health system and developing capacity of human capital. This will lay the foundation for strengthening the development of Thailand's health system, making Thai people healthy and driving Thailand towards stability, prosperity and sustainability.

5

The Need for a Global Health Action Plan

As the Global Health Strategic Framework of Thailand 2016-2020 has ended, in 2019-2020, the Global Health Division, Ministry of Public Health conducted a series of meetings to discuss with relevant agencies and interviews with executives of the Ministry of Public Health to explore opinions on the preparation of the new Global Health Strategic Plan. The meeting held in August 2020 approved the use of Global Health Strategic Framework of Thailand 2016-2020 for the implementation of Thailand's global health initiatives for another 7 years to be a general framework for Thailand's global health implementation. The goals have been set for balancing between health security and national economic development, enhancing a leading role in global health arena in which Thailand is capable in three areas (health security, universal health coverage and health promotion), as well as placing an emphasis on the strategy to develop human capacity in global health to promote Thailand as a global health hub.

The Global Health Action Plan 2021-2027 has been developed based on five areas of the Global Health Strategic

Framework 2016-2020, by prioritising plans of work under each strategy in response to changing contexts and supporting the recovery of the country's development after the COVID-19 pandemic.

6

Ultimate Goal

To ensure that Thailand is health secure, safe from public health threats and moving steadily forwards in socio-economic and sustainable development with a constructive role in global health cooperation .

7

Objectives

- 7.1 All people living in Thailand shall have health security.
- 7.2 Thailand shall have a role in setting the global health agenda and leading roles in global health in:
 - 7.2.1 Universal Health Coverage (UHC)
 - 7.2.2 Health Security
 - 7.2.3 Health Promotion
- 7.3 Public policies and health policies of Thailand shall be coherent with and balanced between trade and investment interests and population health.
- 7.4 The Thai health system is strong and able to adapt to external pressures, resilient and equitable.
- 7.5 The organisation has high performance. Personnel are professional, possess morals and ethics, and have a good quality of life, as well as capable of continuing to work on global health.

8 Strategic Issues



Strategic Issue 1

Enhancing Health Security

Health security generally means being healthy and safe from diseases and other illnesses, and having access to health services. An important example in the time period is the COVID-19 pandemic around the world since the beginning of 2020, significantly affecting health security, the economy and society of the global community. It has also created tensions over international relations and competition for access to limited COVID-19 vaccines. These consequences have reflected that a pandemic is a threat to global security. It is, therefore, necessary to build the capacity of the health system to prevent, detect and respond to such diseases rapidly and efficiently.

This strategy emphasises the development of health security. According to the World Health Organization, health security is defined as “the activities required, both proactive and reactive, to minimise the danger and impact of acute public health events that endanger people’s health across geographical regions and international boundaries”, with a particular emphasis on preparedness and response to public health emergencies and managing global health threats that could affect national security in all dimensions.

Goal

All people living on Thai soil shall have health security.

Key Performance Indicators (KPI)

1. International Health Regulations capacity and health emergency preparedness.³³
2. Number of deaths, missing persons and directly affected persons attributed to disasters per 100,000 population.³⁴

Strategies

1. Mitigating the impacts of health threats and risks on people by using innovative technologies such as artificial intelligence
2. Strengthening the capacity and efficiency of public health systems in preventing cross-border disease spread as defined by the International Health Regulations, 2005
3. Building the capacity of public health systems to prevent, detect and respond to public health emergencies
4. Developing capacity in research, development and production of vaccines, medicines, pharmaceuticals and medical devices within the country to raise the level of self-reliance, including providing assistance to neighbouring countries when necessary (health diplomacy)
5. Developing government policies and effective measures to manage environmental impacts and climate change affecting the health of Thai people

³³ SDG 3.d.1

³⁴ SDG 13.1.1

6. Promoting and integrating the capacity of national cooperation in all sectors to jointly drive public health agendas in response to climate change through international mechanisms
7. Promoting cooperation in One Health approach

Key Programs

1. Public health emergency preparedness and response
2. Enhancing national capacity of self-reliance in medical supplies and medical equipment in response to public health emergencies
3. Managing antimicrobial resistance (AMR)
4. Managing risks and mitigating of health impacts of climate change



Strategic Issue 2

Promoting Thailand's leading role, image and responsibility for global health in the international community

This strategy places an emphasis on promoting Thailand's role in successful public health agendas (i.e. lead by example) and is recognised in the international arenas in the following 3 areas:

1. **Universal Health Coverage (UHC):** Thailand has achieved its universal health coverage since 2001. "Creating health insurance for Thai people" is one of the policies that the government has always prioritised. As a result, everyone living on Thai soil has access to health services without financial burden. This achievement has earned Thailand the admiration of the World Health Organization and the World Bank for being one of the world's leading countries for achieving universal health coverage. Over the past two decades, Thailand has continuously exchanged its experiences in achieving UHC with other countries and is a learning resource for universal health coverage for other developing countries. In addition, the Thai government is committed to making the Thai UHC financially sustainable (SAFE Financing)³⁵ by promoting participation from all sectors in the development of a sustainable health insurance system.

2. **Health Security:** According to the 2019 Health Security Index, Thailand was ranked sixth in health security out of 195 countries. During the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, Thailand was ranked fourth out of 98 countries in the management of the

³⁵ SAFE Financing stands for Sustainable, Affordable, Fair and Efficient Financing

COVID-19 pandemic. In 2021, Thailand was appointed as the Chair of the Global Health Security Agenda. The Thai government has continued to place a great importance on investment and development of national capacity of the IHR core capacities.

3. **Health Promotion:** Thailand is recognised by the international community for using innovative financing for health promotion to manage the risk factors attributable to major noncommunicable diseases that have become a burden of disease of Thailand, particularly the mechanisms of the Office of the Health Promotion Fund (ThaiHealth).

From these achievements, this strategy, therefore, emphasises to promote UHC, health security and health promotion as the “branding” of public health of Thailand

Goals

Thailand has a role in global health agenda setting and policy formulation and plays a leading role in three areas of global health.

1. Advancing universal health coverage
2. Strengthening health security capacity
3. Innovative financing for promoting health for all people at all ages

Key Performance Indicators (KPI)

1. Thailand has a good image in the international arena
2. Average percentage of success in setting the global health agenda
3. Average percentage of success in promoting health cooperation with foreign countries

Strategies

1. Continuously promoting, driving and providing support to networks to enhance Thailand's leading role, image and responsibilities of Thai health in the international community
2. Enhancing and developing cooperation and utilising global health knowledge as a standard with other countries
3. Supporting public relations and promoting the use of Thailand's health innovations to be recognised internationally
4. Supporting public health assistance to developing countries (Health Diplomacy)

Key Programs

1. Advancing and strengthening universal health coverage
2. Strengthening health security capacity
3. Advancing health promoting for all ages



Strategic Issue 3

Enhancing Coherence between Health and Public Policies at both National and International levels

Policy coherence refers to the process that a state uses to design policies by taking into account other policies, with the least conflicts and the most complementarity, to avoid inconsistencies. Although a certain degree of inconsistency is inevitable at times, there are appropriate measures to mitigate the negative impacts.³⁶

This strategy focuses on improving public policy coherence and health policy, both domestically and internationally. It aims to maximise synergies of the implementation of public policy and global health policy in Thailand and minimise conflicts, with a focus on the following:

1. Coherence of Trade and Health Policies: Thailand may enter into negotiations to become a party to trade and investment agreements that are progressive and comprehensive, in terms of the economy, society and environment. This will present both an opportunity and a challenge to health and health system either directly or indirectly. Therefore, trade and health policies need to be designed to achieve mutual benefits.

2. Promoting the Balance between Health and Economic Policies: It emphasises the promotion of the health industry, the new S curve industry, that is environmentally friendly. As one of Thailand's strengths is health and wellness tourism, it will be

³⁶ Blouin C: Trade policy and health: from conflicting interests to policy coherence. Bulletin of the World Health Organization 2007, 85(3):169-173

an industry that could help boost Thailand's economy post-COVID-19.

3. Supporting the Implementation of International Conventions Related to Global Health: Thailand is a member of various international agreements that are related to global health implementation, particularly the conventions related to occupational and environmental diseases, e.g. Occupational Cancer Convention, Rotterdam Convention 1974, Stockholm Convention, Basel Convention, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Minamata Convention on Mercury, and the WTO Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS)

Goals

1. Public policies and health policies are coherent and balanced between trade and investment interests and population health.
2. Domestic implementations are consistent with international conventions related to global health.

Key Performance Indicators (KPI)

1. Percentage of success in presenting evidence-based policy recommendations to policy makers each year
2. Percentage of health-related agencies involved in the process of negotiating trade and/or investment agreements that affect health systems through various channels and mechanisms
3. Average percentage of success of the progress in the implementation of the relevant international obligations

Strategies

1. Driving and supporting decisions made on international trade and health policies using evidence-based approach
2. Enhancing the participation of all sectors in building policy coherence
3. Promoting and supporting the implementation of international obligations related to global health

Key Programs

1. Enhancing the coherence between trade and health policies in the development of policy recommendations
2. Balancing health and the economy
3. Promoting the compliance with international commitments concerning health



Strategic Issue 4

Strengthening Resilient and Equitable Health Systems

Health systems strengthening is a well-functioning health system with the potential to control and manage health threats during disease outbreaks and crises. It is built on “having trained and motivated health workers, a well-maintained infrastructure, and a reliable supply of medicines and technologies, backed by adequate funding, strong health plans and evidence-based policies”³⁷

This strategy focuses on health systems strengthening to be able to respond to public health emergencies and become resilient by utilising Information technology and innovation. This will help improve health systems and the quality of health services at all levels, particularly the primary care service, which is the frontline of the health service system

Goal

Thailand has a strong, resilient and equitable health system.

Key Performance Indicators (KPI)

1. Percentage of success of health systems and key processes in effective response to health threats
2. Percentage of success in applying technology and innovation to develop a health service system and disease control

³⁷ Health Systems Strengthening (who.int)

3. Percentage of people's satisfaction with accessing various and cost-effective health services

Strategies

1. Increasing the capacity and supporting the management of self-reliant, stable and sustainable health systems
2. Developing and improving mechanisms for effective management of information and information technology in the Thai health system
3. Integrating and developing innovative knowledge and research on Thai traditional and alternative medicine, including national herbs, seamlessly with high quality, standards and safety
4. Developing research and knowledge on vaccines, pharmaceuticals and medical devices to respond to disease outbreaks and public health emergencies

Key Programs

1. Health system strengthening to improve resiliency and equity
2. Research and development in vaccines, medicines, pharmaceuticals and medical devices necessary for the response to disease outbreaks and public health emergencies
3. Digital health and innovation to improve healthcare services
4. Strengthening primary health care



Strategic Issue 5

Enhancing the Capacity, Competence, Morality, Ethics and Quality of Life of Personnel and Organisations

Competence refers to a group of skills, knowledge, capabilities, behaviours, characteristics and attitudes that people possess to work efficiently and effectively to achieve organisational objectives and goals.³⁸

Organisational capabilities refer to the skills needed to manage personnel to achieve organisational vision, objectives and goals.

According to the above definitions, this strategy defines the core global health competencies for agencies to develop the abilities of their personnel in the following 3 areas: (1) **global health knowledge** (2) **essential global health skills** for policy development, analysis and management, and (3) **soft skills** such as negotiation skills, language and communication skills, advocacy skill, collaboration skills and political awareness for effective and efficient global health practice.

This strategy will provide the foundation for achieving the goals of this Action Plan. It emphasises the importance of the development of global health knowledge and the core competencies for global health of the workforce, in order to enhance the organisational capabilities to continuously and proactively drive global health implementation with moral, ethical and healthy

³⁸ Office of the Civil Service Commission 2010. Requirement of Competency in Civil Service Handbook: A Handbook of Core Competencies.

manners. It also aims to improve the quality of global health information by keeping it up-to-date and useful for planning national policies that will create health security for all people living on Thai soil.

Goal

Personnel are professional and accountable, and have a good quality of life

Key Performance Indicators (KPI)

1. Percentage of success of training improvement/optimisation
2. Percentage of Global Health Division personnel at all levels having the required core competencies for global health
3. Percentage of employees' satisfaction and commitment towards the organisations
4. Percentage of personnel satisfaction with an organisational leadership system³⁹

Strategies

1. Developing essential global health knowledge to support the implementation of the Global Health Strategy of Thailand
2. Increasing the capacity of personnel and organisations in global health with professionalism, a good quality of life,

³⁹ This system encompasses the vision and communication of the organization aiming to motivate individuals in the organization to successfully carry out the assignment in the services and is flexible for the individuals to make a decision independently. It is also meant a good leadership role model.

- transparent and accountable manners
3. Creating databases and managing global health information to be accessible and utilised continuously

Key Programs

1. Global health knowledge generation
2. Global health capability development for personnel and organisations
3. Global health database development

Monitoring and Evaluation

Thailand's Ministry of Public Health, by the Global Health Division, acts as the secretariat by collaborating with all relevant agencies in public, private and civil society sectors to drive the implementation of the Action Plan. There are monitoring and evaluation mechanisms as follows:

1. Appoint a Global Health Steering Committee, consisting of representatives from relevant agencies
2. Appoint a Global Health Advisory Group, consisting of experts in the fields of global health, international relations, public health diplomacy and International politics, to provide opinions and suggestions on global health operations
3. Establish a Global Health Strategy and Plan Development Working Group within the Global Health Division to develop Thailand's global health policies and strategies and acts as a secretariat to support the implementation of the Global Health Action Plan. It will also report on the progress of the implementation of the Action Plan to the Global Health Steering Committee
4. Establish a Global Health Focal Point Network, consisting of Offices of International Cooperation (OIC) of various agencies to drive the implementation of the Action Plan.
5. Designate the Global Health Action Plan as a Rolling Plan being revised, as appropriate, in response to changing contexts.

6. Conduct a mid term review to monitor the progress of the implementation of the Action Plan
7. Organise a Global Health Forum annually as a platform to exchange experiences of global health implementation among relevant agencies.
8. Conduct an end line evaluation to assess achievements and promote learning.

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Expected results

- 10.1 All people living on Thai soil will have health security.
- 10.2 Thailand will continue to play a key role in setting the global health agenda.
- 10.3 Public policies and health policies of Thailand will be coherent and balanced between commercial interests and public health.
- 10.4 The health system of Thailand will be strong, resilient and equitable.
- 10.5 The relevant organisations will have superior capabilities with personnel that are professional, moral and ethical, and have a good quality of life.

Annex 1

The Process of Drafting the Thailand Global Health Action Plan 2021-2027

July - August 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reviewed relevant literature• Interviewed executives of the Ministry of Public Health and related agencies• Developed the zero draft of the Global Health Action Plan 2021-2023
18 - 20 August 2020	<p>Presented a draft of the Global Health Action Plan 2021-2023 at the Global Health Strategic Plan 2021-2023 Development Seminar at Dusit Thani Hua Hin Hotel, Phetchaburi Province</p>
September - December 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Revised the draft Action Plan as per the recommendations of the Global Health Strategic Plan 2021-2023 Development Seminar• Reviewed relevant literature• Further discussions were held with executives of the Ministry of Public Health and related agencies.

<p>January - March 2021</p>	<p>Developed the zero draft of the Global Health Action Plan 2021-2027</p> <p>(Note: the Action Plan's time frame was changed to 7 years to be in line with the national strategy and new socio-economic development plan, according to a resolution of the Seminar in August 2020)</p>
<p>10 March 2021</p>	<p>Organised a Global Health Focus Group to seek opinions of experts in the field of global health on the draft of the Global Health Action Plan 2021-2027</p>
<p>22 April 2021</p>	<p>Organised a Global Health Core Group to seek opinions of relevant agencies on the draft of the Global Health Action Plan 2021-2027</p>
<p>April - May 2021</p>	<p>Total of 30 agencies have proposed their plans related to global health to integrate into and jointly drive the new Global Health Action Plan</p>
<p>May - June 2021</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revised the draft Action Plan as per the recommendations from the Global Health Focus Group and Core Group, as well as inputs from other relevant agencies and advisers • Three experts reviewed the draft Action Plan. • Revised and developed the final draft as per experts' recommendations
<p>7 July 2021</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presented the draft Action Plan to the Executive Meeting of the Ministry of Public Health • The Executive Meeting of the Ministry of Public Health resolved to acknowledge and support the implementation of the Action Plan.



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