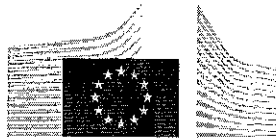


EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION
AND DEVELOPMENT

EUROPEAN EXTERNAL ACTION SERVICE



The Director-General



Secretary General

Gender Action Plan III – 2021-2025
Country Level Implementation Plan – CLIP - *Thailand*

1. Context for EU action gender equality and women's empowerment in the country

Thailand has a Gender Inequality Index (GII) value of 0.710, ranking it 79 out of 156 countries in the 2021 Index. This reflects that currently only 15.8 per cent of parliamentary seats are held by women, while 77.5 per cent of adult women have reached at least a secondary level of education compared to the 77 per cent of their male counterparts. What is striking in the case of Thailand, is that while there is a strong improvement in terms of health and survival, women's political empowerment has deteriorated. Women's economic participation and opportunities as well as educational attainment remain steady, with limited change since 2006.

In addition to underrepresentation in government, there are identified issues with discrimination in the workplace. A 2015 study¹ noted that while the gender wage gap had narrowed significantly between 1996 and 2013, active discrimination in the workplace has prevented it from closing entirely. In the 2021 Gender Gap Report, Thailand is ranked 14/156 on wage equality for similar work.

Thailand has advanced women's rights and gender equality through its ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1985, and its Optional Protocol in 2000. Thailand endorsed the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) in 1995 and has committed to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015. Thailand has made significant efforts to integrate the international principles and instruments into legislation and policies. Just as progress has been made on the domestic front with the adoption of the Gender Equality Act (2015) and the Women Development Strategy (2017-2021), developed by the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, which sets out goals, objectives and targets in the area of gender equality, as well as steering effective budget allocations. Since 2018 work has been initiated on a Gender Budgeting Action Plan which would reinforce many aspects of the existing official infrastructure (data-gathering, capacity-

¹ Gender Wage Inequality in Thailand: A Sectoral Perspective. International Journal of behavioural science 2015. Vol. 10 Issue 2 19-36

building, gender-responsive budgeting) and ensure that gender is mainstreamed across all sectors.

The COVID-19 pandemic has worsened the situation for many women in Thailand, with an acknowledged increased in gender based violence, larger risk of losing jobs, greater share of the burden of care and as a consequence 84% of women have reported, compared to 79% of men ², that their mental health have suffered during the pandemic.

For the priority areas of the GAP III, the prevalence of **Gender-Based Violence (GBV)** is very preoccupying, there is limited verifiable data on gender based violence in Thailand, but the gender gap report for 2021, estimates that 44% of all Thai women experience some form of gender based violence in their lifetime. This reflects deep underlying inequalities and tensions across all sectors. Perhaps because of its multi-sectoral, multi-level nature, GBV is not necessarily conceptualised as a common problem, there is currently no national strategy to address GBV overall; legislation is weakly enforced, and access to justice for victims is difficult and rare. Piecemeal responses across health, justice and other sectors need to be better integrated in order to prevent GBV.

Thailand has an impressive record in **Promoting Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights**. Thailand's Family Planning programme starting in the 60s has resulted in a population growth rate in 2020 of 0.25% which will result in a population of around 66.77 million by the end of 2021. Maternal Mortality has decreased steadily over the past two decades to 20 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2019, which is lower than the average for upper middle-income countries. The rate of adolescent pregnancy, once considered a serious problem, remains a challenge, yet on the decline thanks to the Prevention and Solution of the Adolescent Pregnancy Problem Act (2016) with a national target of 25 adolescent mothers per 1000 births by 2026. Thailand still has one of the highest HIV prevalence rates in Asia and the Pacific, accounting for an estimated 9% of the region's total population of people living with HIV, estimated by UNAIDS (2018) at 5.9 million. However, Thailand is the first country to effectively eliminate mother-to-child transmission with a transmission rate of less than 2 per cent.

Promoting Economic and Social Rights and Empowering Girls and Women, Gender parity has been achieved at the primary and secondary school levels in Thailand and more girls and women have gained higher levels of education. In fact, the country has seen a reverse gender gap in higher education with Thailand being ranked first in the world for superior numbers of women and girls in higher education. However, data released in October 2020 by the National Statistical Office and UNICEF revealed that while 96 percent of all children completed primary school, there was a significant drop in completion at the secondary and upper secondary levels. This trend showed up particularly among the poorer households, households headed by non-Thai speakers and among children whose mothers had little education. Moreover, it was reported that boys were more likely to drop out of school than girls.

Although the proportion of women researchers in science, technology and innovation is above the global average, they continue to be underrepresented in employment in the fields of

² Rapid gender analysis during covid 19 (Unicef.org)

engineering, manufacturing and construction at only 14.9 percent. Thailand's female population comprises 45.6 percent of the country's workforce³, they are employed predominantly in jobs requiring low Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematic (STEM) skills. Given the Thai government's emphasis on digital transformation – with 17 million jobs foreseen to be 'lost' due to automation, women are currently 50% more likely than men to lose their job because of automation. It is therefore critical that the gender-gap in STEM subjects is addressed at the earliest stages of education.

Thai women are still under-represented in the parliament, in the government, in the judiciary, and the administration both at national and local levels. Women account for only 23.9 % of high-ranking civil servants, and gender equality in senior leadership positions has risen by just 3% in the last fifteen years. However, in the economy overall, there are increasing numbers of women in senior positions in business and commercial enterprises though there remains a gap between men and women in formal labour force participation (65.7% vs. 60.3%) and women earn less than men for similar work.

Integrating the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda, the process of developing a National Strategy around UNSCR 1325 started in 2012. The Measures and the Guidelines on Women and the Promotion of Peace and Security (2016) were launched in 2018. A number of studies, focusing on the Deep South of Thailand have shown that women still have limited opportunities to voice and to advance their gender equality agenda in the peace process which continues to be dominated by men, and by patriarchal norms of behaviour. In general women and women's groups remain on the periphery of meaningful participation and rarely challenge the power dynamics inherent in these political processes.

Addressing the Challenges and Harnessing the Opportunities offered by the green transition and the digital transformation, Women's organisations in Thailand have been instrumental in pushing the green agenda, including on environmentally-friendly business development and at the grass-roots level.

An increasing number of programmes and projects have been established to enhance the digital literacy of the rural population, of which women home-based workers form an important part. Most women homeworkers use their homes for producing textiles, garments basketry, artificial flowers and jewellery on subcontract, or independently, usually as informal workers. Their work is greatly facilitated by enhanced ICT access and skills in terms of obtaining new contracts and of marketing their work, as well, if necessary, for up scaled production. A key priority for the Ministry of social development and human security is to support women in the bio-circular-green economy and to build digital and technology skills of women in this sector, especially those in small and medium size enterprises and agribusiness sector.

2. Selected thematic areas of engagement and objectives

There is no Multiannual Indicative Programme (MIP) for Thailand, which is an upper middle income country. However, a Cooperation Facility is being developed with a tentative budget of EUR 1 million from 2021-2024 for the implementation of the GAP III. Combined with thematic

³ World Bank's estimates of 2020

funding under EIDHR and CSO-LA programmes, these funds will contribute to a three-pronged approach: gender mainstreaming (in regional and thematic projects implemented in Thailand), targeted actions (under EIDHR and CSO-LA) and political dialogue (funded from the Cooperation Facility). Additional flagship initiatives such as for instance support to a national survey on gender based violence or support to the gender equality strategy could also be funded under the Cooperation Facility, with a view to strengthen cooperation with the Government of Thailand.

The overall objective of the EU action in Thailand for gender equality and women empowerment is to strengthen the partnership with Thailand on Gender equality through improved policy dialogues, capacity development and outreach on the GAP III with the Government of Thailand, the civil society, the private sector and other key stakeholders. This will be undertaken together with EU Member States.

The **selected areas** of engagement are:

1. Challenge gender norms and power inequalities;
2. Gender based violence, including targeting the LGBTI community;
3. Empowerment of women and advancing equal political participation and leadership;
4. Furthering the Women Peace and Security Agenda in Thailand;
5. Addressing the gender gap in the green and digital transitions (so that they can be just transitions).

For each of these areas, the specific thematic objectives which will be pursued are:

1) Challenge gender norms and power inequalities:

- Support to gender responsive budgeting (possibly through twinning TA);
- Advocate to change mind-sets and eliminate gender stereotypes for instance through work with the media and/or work at the ASEAN level on changing eliminating stereotypes in the education system (with the Ministry of Women);
- Work with the department of statistics to support the development of stronger data collection on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (SDG 5), in particular on all issues linked to LGBTIQ and Gender Based Violence;
- Continue support to women's rights organisations, social movements and CSOs working on Gender equality and Women empowerment;
- Promote the contribution of women to the Thai economy;
- Advocate for equal sharing of the burden of care.

2) Gender Based Violence, including targeting the LGBTI community:

- Advocacy on stronger implementation of sexual harassment policies in Thailand in particular for LGBTIQ people;
- Strengthen data collection on gender-based violence by supporting a national survey to assess extent of Gender Based Violence of all categories;
- Support the development of a National Plan to address Gender Based Violence;
- Strengthen Gender Based Violence prevention and response with a whole of society approach;
- Training for enforcement officers (police) and local volunteers in better managing Gender Based Violence cases (with the Ministry of Justice);

- Collaborate with the Ministry of Education to enhance teachers' attitudes, skills, and knowledge in reducing gender-based violence to children;
- Support the recognition and protection of all gender orientations.

3) Empowerment of women and advancing equal political participation and leadership:

- Support ongoing science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) initiatives in the public and private sector, especially as they relate to programmes ongoing in digitalisation and the green transition;
- Support public campaigns for stereotype modification relative to women's leadership;
- Advocacy for establishment of special measures to increase the numbers of women in political leadership at central, provincial, district, and community levels;
- Increase opportunities for LGBTIQ persons to participate in political decision making at all levels;
- Support the work of women human rights defenders across Thailand.

4) Furthering the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda in Thailand:

- Provide advocacy and support to the existing national WPS Agenda;
- Continue specific technical assistance to WPS issues at the local level through CSOs and community groups;
- Strengthen counselling support for women affected by conflicts and under legal process;
- Strengthen women participation in key decision making in the peace process in the Deep South;
- Create a safe space for women and youth to share their opinions and participate in solving conflicts at all levels across the country.

5) Addressing the gender gap in the green and digital transitions (so that they can be just transitions)/

- Collaborate with ongoing efforts of Thai government and CSOs and other donors in assisting women's groups to participate in decision-making processes at all levels relative to environment and climate change;
- Support capacity-building through information, education and training of women's groups to sustainably manage natural resources and biodiversity, drive projects on bio-circular green economy and innovation;
- Support improvements in connectivity and digital skills of key groups of women such as women homeworkers, and women in agribusinesses, who lacks digital skills and technology to grow their business;
- Focus on online harassment of women.

Policy Dialogue and advocacy activities will, as a rule, always be undertaken in close cooperation with EU Member States in Thailand. Civil Society will play numerous roles including as implementing partners, amplifiers of advocacy campaigns and partners in outreach campaigns. The European Union is in a strong position to strengthen the capacity of civil society in Thailand, where limited domestic resources is available for local CSOs and NGOs. The upper middle - income status of Thailand does not assure that government budget is allocated for

CSOs as the government has not recognised CSOs as development partners. That being said, domestic support is made available to some degree for organisations focusing on social welfare and economic development, but remains virtually impossible to access for advocacy/rights based organisations focusing on more sensitive issues.

3. Targeted action(s) supporting gender equality and women's empowerment

As Thailand will not benefit from any bilateral envelope, support to gender equality will be the focus of country specific calls for proposals under EIDHR and CSO-LA. Currently projects are focusing on minority and migrant women, women empowerment in their local communities and trafficking of women. Gender will be made a priority area in national calls in Thailand from 2021-2025. It is estimated that the overall amount available for these calls within the given period will amount to approximately EUR 12 Million, including the funds allocated for policy dialogue.

4. Engage in dialogue for gender equality and women empowerment

In Thailand, the main interlocutor for Gender Equality and Women Empowerment is the Thai Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, Department of Women's Affairs and Family Development. Another valuable entry point is the Ministry of Justice, Rights and Liberties Protection Department (RLPD), both ministries have been consulted and contributed to the finalisation of this CLIP. Enhancing the dialogue with other relevant Ministries, for instance the ministry of environment and natural resources or the Ministry of Finance could be relevant depending on the final selection of priorities.

A new roadmap for the EU to engage with civil society in Thailand for the period of 2021 – 2025 is being developed. In the consultations with Civil Society on the roadmap and the draft CLIP, it was noted that support is required to address gender mainstreaming in almost all areas, as the level of capacity among CSO's and their partners is perceived as low. Engagement of young people through schools and educational institutions for gender equality was highlighted. A need to maximise participation of young women, boys and men, particularly from marginalised groups, has to be promoted. In conclusion, the participants confirmed that gender equality is a key cross-cutting element for the Roadmap's priorities.

5. Outreach and other communication / public diplomacy activities

Gender equality is always on the agenda of the policy dialogue between the EU and Thailand, which takes place annually. If the discussions on the partnership and cooperation agreement (PCA) and/or the free trade talks intensify a more frequent and intense dialogue should be ensured on the topics of gender equality, challenging gender norms and power inequalities. At the same time there are regular regional dialogue opportunities which include the Government of Thailand at the ASEAN level. Thailand is an active member of the ASEAN committee on Women, work has focused on changing mind-sets and cultivating gender equality values and norms in the education system. Finally, several of the EU supported projects engage with government agencies and partners at the local level in the implementation of their activities, including advocacy for increased gender equality.

Public Diplomacy efforts are focused on the 8th of March, May 17th (IDAHOT Day) and the 25th of November (International Day for the elimination of violence against women), these key activities are foreseen to be continued in close cooperation with the EU member states. There

is a request from the Government of Thailand to engage with media on the elimination of gender stereotypes, which could be an interesting campaign to undertake.

6. Technical Facility and/or financial resources allocated to support GAP III implementation

EUR 1 million have been identified under the Cooperation Facility to support the implementation of GAP III at country level between 2021 and 2024. It will support in particular gender aspects of ongoing political dialogues, public diplomacy as outlined above, and improved data collection for SDG 5 in Thailand. Moreover, gender equality will be mainstreamed more prominently in the future CSOs and EIDHR projects.

Has any other specific allocation and/or technical assistance been earmarked under specific programmes by the EU and/or Member States in order to facilitate gender mainstreaming?

Belgium has implemented training of consular staff in dealing with cases of GBV, strengthening the support of survivors of GBV, supporting UN Women in outreach and advocacy. Belgium have also scheduled public diplomacy and outreach activities related to women's empowerment, LGBTIQ rights, 8 March.

France, during the first semester 2021, through the French Embassy in Thailand together with the UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific and the Mexican Embassy in Thailand held a series of advocacy events on gender equality with local partners in the lead-up to the Generation Equality Forum (Paris, 30 June – 2 July 2021). The various topics addressed included the contribution of women to building sustainable cities and to protecting environment, sexual reproductive health and rights, women in science, women economic empowerment as well as youth commitment to equality between men and women. Further advocacy efforts will be pursued.

Luxembourg supports various CSO projects on preventing GBV, access to SRHR services and empowering women and LGBTI.

Spain will continue to lobby for Thailand to join the Nexus group on sexual and reproductive health and rights, both bilaterally and with the other Nexus countries represented in Thailand. Spain will advocate for Thailand to support resolutions, declarations and/or any relevant initiatives on women and girls in multilateral fora. Spain has a strong cultural agenda focused on gender equality. In October 2021, Spain will host a Spanish Film Festival devoted to Pedro Almodóvar work in order to engage in a dialogue with relevant stakeholders in Thailand on gender equality. Strong mainstreaming and communication policies on gender quality are already being implemented.

Date: 25 June 2021

Signature by Head of Delegation: