

DEVELOPMENT COORDINATION

A. Major Development Partners: Strategic Foci and Key Activities

1. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) was detected in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, People's Republic of China, and has since continued to expand. On 30 January 2020, the International Health Regulations Emergency Committee of the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the outbreak a “public health emergency of international concern”. The outbreak spreads by person-to-person contact and the potential public health threat posed is high.

2. On 4 March 2020, the Thai Prime Minister ordered the establishment of the Center for COVID-19 Situation Administration (CCSA) at the Government House to provide coordinated public messaging. This has improved the quality and consistency of information for the public.

3. On 25 March 2020, the government of Thailand issued the Declaration of Emergency Situation in all areas of the Kingdom of Thailand effective 26 March–30 April 2020, which was later extended to 30 June.¹ The emergency decree gives the Prime Minister authority over all decisions related to the management of the COVID-19 response in Thailand.² There is a temporary transfer of Ministerial powers under certain laws to the Prime Minister as far as it is necessary, for expediency and integrated management. The decree also gives provincial Governors the authority to order specific measures to be implemented within their provinces.

4. On 10 March, 24 March, and 7 April 2020, the government approved a series of relief and stimulus programs aiming to reduce the financial burdens and provide liquidity to those affected by business closures during the state of emergency.

- a. Package 1 (approved on 10 March 2020): totaling B207 billion for soft loans to MSMEs and employee credits;
- b. Package 2 (approved on 24 March 2020): totaling B148 billion, for cash handouts, emergency loans, and SME loans; and
- c. Package 3 (approved on 7 April 2020): totaling B1.9 trillion for cash handouts, support to social enterprises, and soft loans to SMEs.

5. **Development partners Support to Thailand's economic stimulus packages.** It is likely that government does not have enough internal resources to finance the stimulus packages. Government is in the process of tapping domestic loans from commercial banks. At present the Government has requested international financial support from only ADB and cofinancing from Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB). ADB has also been in discussion with the Agence Française de Développement (AFD), Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), and World Bank (WB) and learned that most have had preliminary discussion with Ministry of Finance's Public Debt Management Office (PDMO) and all have potential to provide financial support for economic stimulus packages if requested by the Government. ADB has been in contact with the IMF on the proposed program including the assessment of Thailand's macro and fiscal conditions. The IMF confirmed the sound macroeconomic management and prudent fiscal conditions of Thailand and endorsed the government's planned fiscal stimulus program.³

¹ Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA). 2020. <http://www.mfa.go.th/main/contents/files/news3-20200326-161207-994002.pdf>

² MFA. 2020. <http://www.mfa.go.th/main/contents/files/news3-20200326-161100-704953.pdf>

³ IMF Assessment Letter (accessible from the list of linked documents in Appendix 2).

6. **Development partner support to Thailand's health care system.** ADB provides secretariat support to the GMS Working Group on Health Cooperation⁴ which is a platform for multilateral and bilateral coordination among the six GMS countries. The secretariat is assisting the Ministry of Public Health (MOPH) in accessing technical assistance under the KSTA 9571 Strengthening Regional Health Cooperation in the Greater Mekong Subregion⁵. There are currently 4 activities totaling \$100,000 proposed by MOPH which includes: (i) Capacity Building Program for First Responder to Support COVID-19 Patient Transport; (ii) Publication of Responses of the Thailand Ministry of Public Health Against COVID-19; (iii) Development of a Deep-Learning Based COVID-19 remote monitoring application (CROMA); and (iv) Engagement of National Experts on Virology and Epidemiology to support the National Emergency Operation Center (EOC). ADB will be providing knowledge and consultancy services (indicatively \$500,000) under a COVID-19 specific technical assistance, KSTA 9950, most likely to be used for research and development of vaccines.

7. Most development partners ceased engagement with Thailand's health sector as its health institutions strengthened and the country moved into UMIC status. However, with the onset of COVID-19 several development partners are returning to Thailand to offer support.

Major Development Partners

Development Partner	Description of Support	Amount (\$ million)
Economic Stimulus Support		
AFD	PDMO may request support next fiscal year	TBD
AIIB	Requested by PDMO to co-finance with ADB	500
JICA	In discussions with PDMO	TBD
World Bank	PDMO may request support next fiscal year	TBD
Health Care Support		
Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, Government of Japan	Support to Thai Government on COVID-19 via WHO	7.53
Government of PRC	Surgical masks, PPE, COVID-19 test kits, Favipiravir	TBD
International Organization for Migration	Technical support and PPE	TBD
Private Organizations: Alibaba, Unilever	Surgical masks, PPE, COVID-19 test kits, hand sanitizer	TBD
United Nations Children's Fund	Risk communications and community engagement; critical supplies and logistics, secondary impacts on children and families.	TBD
United States Agency for International Development	Laboratory supplies, risk communication, IPC, surveillance, planning, training and community engagement.	2
WHO	Laboratory supplies, PPEs, mobilization of experts, training of trainers and planning workshops.	TBD

ADB = Asian Development Bank, AFD = Agence Française de Développement, AIIB = Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, COVID-19 = Coronavirus disease, IPC = Infection Prevention and Control, JICA = Japan International Cooperation Agency, PPE = personal protective equipment, PRC = People's Republic of China, TBD = to be determined, WHO = World Health Organization.

Source: Staff Estimates.

⁴ Greater Mekong Subregion. [Working Group on Health Cooperation.](#)

⁵ ADB. 2018. [Technical Assistance for Strengthening Regional Health Cooperation in the Greater Mekong Subregion.](#) Manila.

B. Institutional Arrangements and Processes for Development Coordination

8. There is no development partner coordination platform for health care in Thailand. At present, WHO-Thailand provides the needed guidance and support to Thailand's MOPH national action plan against COVID-19. The United States Agency for International Development and Japanese support are coursed through WHO-Thailand. Some donors directly deal with the Department of Disease Control or hospitals for immediate in-cash or in-kind contributions.

C. Achievements and Issues

9. The government has established its interagency system to address COVID-19 and MOPH through its website provides periodic update and press release on government efforts, related policies and national status (i.e. infection rate, confirmed cases, mortality, recovery, etc.). It has reportedly received domestic and international support in cash and in-kind. However, there is no regular donor coordination mechanism, which makes monitoring of support challenging.

10. MOPH recommends the use the current WHO-led Global Partners' Platform with two representatives from MOPH. However, a global mechanism is found to be broad and cumbersome for country-level coordination. Meanwhile, MOPH's Finance Division has recently been designated to manage domestic and global support, including receipt of financial contributions and some limited coordination of support.

11. WHO and ADB suggest a more focused coordination platform for development partners, with WHO taking the lead in coordinating with MOPH. The directive however should come from MOPH through a letter to WHO. ADB has informed MOPH that it is willing to assist in the establishment of the said platform. Further discussion with development partners operating in Thailand would enforce partners' interest and clarify coordination mechanisms. The results may be presented to CCSA or MOPH.

D. Summary and Recommendations

12. The government has been focusing on developing and implementing significant packages of support for economic stimulus and health care. To date the government has funded the economic stimulus packages from its own resources and through domestic commercial loans. However, it is likely that at some point during 2020–2022 that the government will need to borrow externally. As such, several development partners – including ADB – are in the process of considering financial support to Thailand's economic stimulus package.

13. A number of development partners have supported Thailand with its health response. This support is generally provided on an *ad hoc* basis and not well coordinated. There is opportunity to improve development partner coordination with WHO taking the lead. This needs to be requested by the government to WHO, as has been the case in other countries. ADB will continue to work with WHO and the government to help develop and implement a coordination platform for development partners.