



Thailand
Policy
Lab



PRACTICAL KNOWLEDGES
FROM THAILAND POLICY
LAB'S EXPERIENCES

THAILAND POLICY

LAB

HANDBOOK

ENGLISH VERSION

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About Thailand Policy Lab

A policy lab, established by the Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council (NESDC) and the United Nations Development Program in Thailand (UNDP).

We create a space for policy innovation. We aim to develop Thailand's policymaking process to be more effective and efficient by exploring, listening, experimenting, and developing a set of solutions that arises from the inclusive participation of all sectors in the society. In order to push for a policy that meets the needs of the people in a comprehensive, timely manner and ready for the future.

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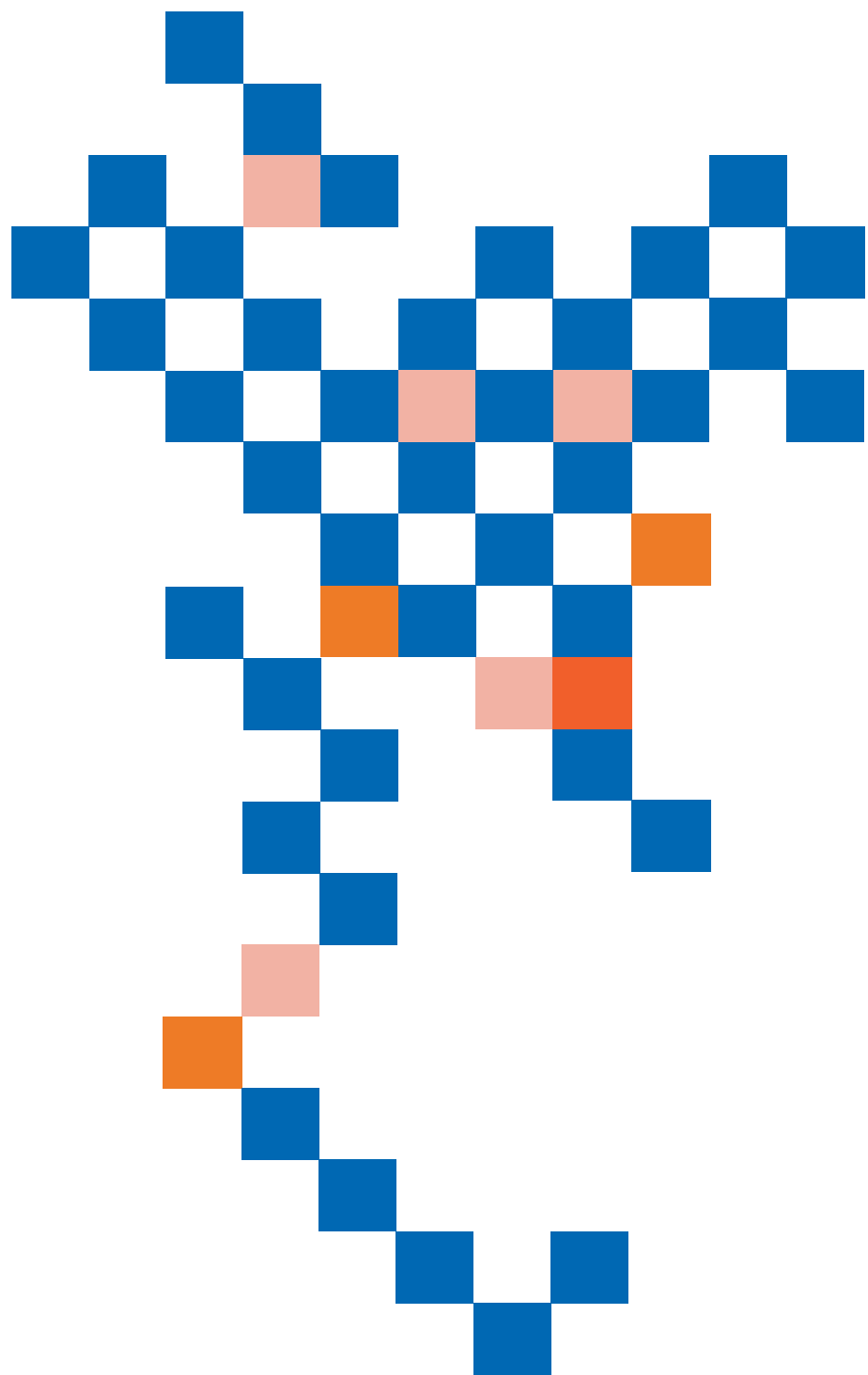
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Thomas Alva Edison, one of the world's greatest inventors and scientists, experimented over a thousand times before successfully inventing the light bulb. To him, those thousand trials were not failures but discoveries of ways that did not work, allowing him to refine his approach. This philosophy aligns with the mission of the Thailand Policy Lab (TPLab), which was established to explore, test, and study methods for improving Thailand's public policy process. The lab seeks to address long-standing policy challenges that have persisted for decades. While we cannot predict how many more trials or years it will take to achieve our goals, we remain hopeful that success and transformation are within reach. Our duty is to work diligently every day, innovating policy solutions to modernize Thailand's public policy framework, ensuring policies that are timely, relevant, responsive to public needs, and inclusive.

This manual is a compilation of the knowledge, skills, and lessons learned by the Thailand Policy Lab team over the past four years. It incorporates research, global policy lab collaborations, the adaptation of widely used analytical tools from other fields into policy design, the development of policy innovation tools tailored for policymakers, and the creation of TPLab-style policy innovations. More than just a record of knowledge and successes, this manual captures the real-world experiences and challenges encountered in policy experimentation—the successes, setbacks, and the lessons learned. It serves as a resource for policymakers, academics, government officials, and civil society actors involved in Thailand's public policy process, offering insights to help avoid common pitfalls and work together to improve the nation's policy framework.

The TPLab team believes that policy innovation, while challenging and requiring constant adaptation to rapid changes, is always possible. Success depends on openness, opportunities for participation, the integration of new tools to enhance efficiency, and, most importantly, fostering a culture of continuous learning and self-improvement within the system.

With four years of experience, we may no longer be newcomers, but we are not yet seasoned experts. The authors of this manual do not claim to provide a definitive guide but rather hope that the contents will serve as a map and a companion for those working in policy innovation. This manual encourages readers to experiment, initiate new ideas, learn from failures, and rise again, and be better informed from past experiences. Ultimately, we aim to inspire all stakeholders to recognize the potential for improving public policy processes to be more effective and truly responsive to the needs of the people.

We invite you to join us in transforming Thailand's public policy landscape.

Thailand Policy Lab Team



Background and Rationale

Public policy process in the VUCA world and the devils in the details

Over the past decade, the rapid growth and development of digital technology, communication, and the internet have caused unprecedented disruptions in personal lives, households, and private enterprises. These shifts have resulted in unforeseen collapses of businesses and significant societal impacts. At the same time, in the context of development, most scholars agree that the crises in policy advancement stem from economic and social changes shaped by the dynamics of the VUCA world—Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, and Ambiguity. Public policy development now faces greater levels of complexity and unpredictability than ever before.

Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic exposed long-standing systemic policy issues, forcing people to adapt to the digital world almost overnight. This phenomenon not only altered lifestyles but also underscored the critical need for flexible policy design capable of addressing unforeseen circumstances.

The English phrase “The Devil is in the details” aptly captures this complexity. While things may seem promising from afar, closer inspection often reveals hidden weaknesses or flaws that demand careful attention. Similarly, many public policies, though well-intentioned and seemingly ideal, fail because they overlook critical details. These hidden weaknesses hinder their ability to achieve intended outcomes and waste national resources. The issues may arise from a lack of contextual understanding during the design phase, neglecting the voices of the people, or implementation failures due to resource constraints or uncontrollable factors.

Weaknesses in the Policy Process: Flawed Thinking from the Start or Mistakes in Implementation?

- **Theoretical Flaws or Failures:** Some policies fail from the outset due to a lack of understanding or consideration of the true needs of target groups. Others are designed without accounting for the diverse contexts in which they will be implemented.
- **Implementation Flaws or Failures:** Even well-designed policies often fail during implementation. These failures can result from resource constraints, poor management, lack of continuity, or policy changes midway through the process.

As the world shifts away from stability to embrace uncertainty, and complexity grows each day, traditional policy processes—reliant on expertise and statistical analysis—are no longer sufficient to address these challenges. New tools and processes are required, ones that are flexible, inclusive, and human-centered.

Paradigm Shift

How can we ensure that public policy design keeps pace with global changes, remains modern, and resonates with the people it serves...?



From One-Size-Fits-All to Human-Centric Policy



Dimensions of the Paradigm Shift

Perspective

The new approach emphasizes the humanity of individuals, recognizing their inherent dignity and equal rights. It acknowledges the diverse needs of different societal groups and encourages greater participation in the policymaking process. This fosters a sense of ownership and self-responsibility, ultimately empowering individuals to take charge of their futures and develop into active citizens over the long term.

Data and Analytics

Greater emphasis is now placed on qualitative insights and data that reflect real-world human experiences, such as emotions, complaints, and observations gathered from social media (Social Listening) or personal narratives. Innovative participatory methods, like policy hackathons, create new avenues for involving stakeholders in a meaningful way.

Analytical Tools

Tools from other disciplines, such as Empathy Mapping, Foresight, Portfolio Approach, and Persona, have been adapted to gather deeper insights that go beyond surface-level statistical data. These tools enable a more nuanced understanding of human behaviors and needs.

Sciences

A broader range of disciplines is being incorporated more into policy development, including Design Thinking, anthropological analysis, public communication and design, the arts, spatial design, community participation processes, and effective communication strategies.

Traditionally, Thailand's public policy cycle has relied on an outdated paradigm, focusing heavily on designing and implementing programs based on expert opinions, statistical data, numerical analyses, and research. Little attention was given to insights that reflect the human experience of target groups or to the unique contexts of specific areas. As a result, policies were often "one-size-fits-all," addressing issues superficially without adequately tackling core problems.

However, global changes, coupled with public demands and advancements in knowledge, concepts, and innovative tools, have brought about a clear transformation in the policy landscape. This shift has led to a new paradigm—Human-Centric Policy. Policies now prioritize listening to and understanding the diverse needs of different groups within society. They recognize the human dimension, including emotions, hopes, and concerns, as central to the policy design process.



The increasing complexity of issues and the rapid pace of change have redefined the concept of "public policy." In the past, policy was seen as the domain of government and driven by statistical data. However, this approach is no longer sufficient. The modern world is embracing a broader perspective, where policymaking becomes a shared responsibility among governments, civil society organizations, and local communities.



These changes are reflected in four key dimensions:

1

From National to Local

Public policy is no longer confined to national-level initiatives. It now extends to local-level policies that are better suited to addressing issues within specific community contexts.

2

From Government-Driven to Inclusive Participation

Policy development has become a collaborative process where everyone can participate, and break free from the monopoly of state power.

3

From Statistical to Qualitative Data

New forms of data—such as emotions, narratives, and opinions—are increasingly recognized as critical sources of insight. These qualitative elements allow for a deeper understanding of issues and lead to more effective solutions.

4

From Paper-Based Policies to Real Outcomes

Policies are no longer just documents, measures, or plans. They must translate into actionable initiatives that deliver tangible, positive impacts on society.

In response to these transformative changes, *Policy Labs* have been established in various countries worldwide in diverse forms. Their primary objective is to develop policy innovations that effectively address public challenges. These labs focus on areas such as natural resource management, sustainable development, and fostering collaboration among all sectors, including vulnerable groups often overlooked by traditional policy processes.

In Thailand, *the Thailand Policy Lab (TPLab)* was established through a collaboration between the Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council (NESDC) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The TPLab aims to modernize and enhance the effectiveness of policy processes. It seeks to design policies that address structural issues, tackle complex challenges, and meet the diverse needs of all societal groups.



The Direction of Shifting Thought Foundation

1 PERSPECTIVE

CONVENTIONAL APPROACH

- Problem solving by logical thinking
- Knowledge, science, and expertise

HUMAN-CENTRIC APPROACH

- Inclusive & participation
- Non-linear problem solving
- Emphasizing human-centered approaches

2 DATA & ANALYTICS

- Empirical evidence
- Statistic/Quantitative
- Views of expert/Interview
- Research Methodology
- Big Data etc.

- Qualitative/Behavioral, anecdotal evidence, personal responses/interview
- Public, online, unsystematic data
- Narrative, storytelling, pattern finding
- Pitching and Hackathon, etc.

3 TOOLS

- Survey/SWOT analysis/PESTEL
- Diamond model/Comparative study/Financial analysis
- Economic model/theory
- Etc.

- Analytical tools that cover the complexity of phenomena and human dimensions, such as Foresight, Design Thinking, Social Listening, Hopes and Fears, Causal Layered Analysis, etc.

4 SCIENCES

- Economic thinking
- Public Administration thinking
- Other "hard" sciences

- Uses social sciences, anthropology, design and public communication, and other soft sciences

EXPECTED RESULTS

- Policy Effectiveness & Efficiency gain
- Inclusiveness and Public Engagement
- Individual-oriented
- People empowerment and Well-being
- Recognition of human-centered ideas, including soft power

What is Policy Innovation?

Policy innovation refers to "a creative and groundbreaking initiative that has never been implemented before. It may take the form of activities or inventions that can be practically applied to solve public issues and generate systemic impacts within a specific context." Such innovation may arise from brainstorming, the adoption of technology, the reapplication of existing tools in new ways, individual creativity, or a combination of various factors.

Characteristics of “Innovation”



Innovation is Temporary

Innovation remains "new" only during the initial stages of change. Once society becomes familiar with it and adopts it widely, its novelty fades. Examples include the shift from button-based to touchscreen phones or the transition from cash payments to online transactions.



Innovation is Context-Specific

The value of innovation depends on the geographical and social context. Something may qualify as innovative at the global, national, or even community level. Evaluating innovation requires assessing its application and novelty within the relevant context. For instance, a "local innovation" that addresses public challenges in a creative and impactful way within a small community can still be considered policy innovation in that specific setting.



Innovation is Multidimensional

A single policy innovation can encompass multiple dimensions, such as the content of the policy, the design process, or the method of implementation. Determining which aspects of a policy are innovative involves analyzing and defining the scope of its innovation. Consequently, one innovation can be considered groundbreaking across several dimensions.

In practice, the English term “Policy Innovation” broadly encompasses all creative aspects related to policymaking. However, in Thai, two distinct terms are used: “นวัตกรรมนโยบาย” (Policy Innovation) and “นวัตกรรมเชิงนโยบาย” (Policy Process Innovation). These terms were seemingly introduced to emphasize more specific meanings:

“นวัตกรรมนโยบาย” (Policy Innovation) refers to innovations related to content, such as new proposals for addressing specific policy issues, novel approaches to implementing policies, or the transformation of public services into new forms.

“นวัตกรรมเชิงนโยบาย” (Policy Process Innovation) refers to innovations in the working methods, processes, or frameworks used to formulate or design policies.

That said, in discussions or meetings where these terms are used interchangeably but with a shared understanding, there is no need to argue over semantics. What matters most is the ultimate goal—creating policies that effectively address issues and deliver sustainable outcomes.



Types of Public Policy Innovation

Innovation Type	Examples
Policy Product Innovation Innovations that focus on content-based solutions for addressing specific policy issues. These can take the form of plans, projects, or new measures that are actionable.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The “Co-Payment” policy to stimulate the economy during COVID-19. ● Via Bus app for accurate public bus arrival times. ● PromptPay system enabling online payments.
Policy Formation Process Innovation Innovations related to working methods in designing and developing policies, including data collection, analysis, participation, and evaluation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Using Social Listening to analyze qualitative data from online complaints and stories. ● Hosting Policy Hackathons for cross-sector participation in policy proposal development. ● Organizing the “Shrine of Hope of the People” (ศาลเจ้า ฟัง หวัง ทำ) exhibition during Bangkok Design Week to gather public feedback.
Implementing Model (Business Model) Innovation New approaches to implementing policies, encompassing work processes, resource management, financial strategies, and systemic administration.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The “30 Baht Universal Healthcare Scheme.” ● Telemedicine services. ● Health services starting with primary care at the community level before hospitals.
Government Service Innovation Innovations focused on improving government services to enhance efficiency and better meet public needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Issuing passports or ID cards in shopping malls. ● The Traffy Fondue platform for reporting issues like floods or power outages. ● The E-FILING system by the Revenue Department for online tax filing.

Thailand Policy Lab

The Thailand Policy Lab (TPLab), established in 2023, serves as a hub for creating policy innovation. It explores new possibilities to enhance the design process of Thailand's public policies, making them more effective and efficient. TPLab fosters inclusive and citizen-driven policymaking by delving into, listening to, experimenting with, and developing solutions shaped by input from all sectors of society. Its ultimate goal is to craft policies that are responsive to the needs of the people, inclusive, and prepared to meet future challenges.

Transforming Thailand's Public Policy Process

TPLab's mission is to reimagine the conventional public policy process, transforming it into one characterized by *co-creation* and *creativity and innovation*. This is achieved through:

- ✖ Engaging new players: Involving individuals and groups who have traditionally not been central to public policy processes—such as youth, civil society, and vulnerable groups—to share knowledge, define problems, and co-design solutions through diverse participatory formats.
- ✖ Applying innovative tools and activities: Leveraging new tools, innovations, and creative methods to collect, distill, and synthesize knowledge and input from all stakeholders. This is done with a human-centered approach, recognizing and addressing the unique needs and perspectives of every group in society.

Objectives of TPLab

- 1 To promote inclusive and citizen-driven policy design
- 2 To develop policy innovations for addressing present and future challenges
- 3 To enhance the capacity and capability of Thailand's public policy process

TPLab strives to strengthen Thailand's public policy framework while positioning the country as a leading hub for policy innovation in the region.

Principles, Models, and Tools for Policy Innovation by TPLab

Building on four years of collaboration with diverse partners, TPLab has developed a set of **five principles** for creating effective and sustainable policy innovations. These principles address the complexities of modern challenges and guide the design of public policies:

Learning-Oriented

Policy issues are often complex, and circumstances change rapidly. Existing data may be incomplete or outdated by the time a policy is designed. Thus, public policy processes must embrace continuous learning and adaptability, welcoming new perspectives, experimentation, and a willingness to learn from mistakes to enhance effectiveness.

System Thinking

Understanding problems and their contexts holistically is crucial. This involves examining the “ecosystem” of interconnected elements such as people, wildlife, forests, and natural elements. A systemic view considers the scope of the problem, mechanisms, processes, roles of stakeholders, impacts, system dynamics, and its trajectory. This helps create solutions that are integrated and aligned with shared goals.

Inclusive Participation

Policies should include diverse perspectives by encouraging participation from all groups, stakeholders and non-stakeholders alike. Listening to every voice fosters the identification of new angles on problems and solutions that are more likely to meet the needs of all groups effectively.

Action-Oriented

In a fast-changing world, waiting for perfect information may delay progress. Taking action and learning from real-world situations ensures that policy proposals are both practical and effective. However, it is crucial to thoroughly understand the context before acting, as overly risky actions may result in irreversible harm (Unacceptable Cost).

Humanistic Approach

People are at the center of policy development. Recognizing the dignity, equality, and rights of all individuals is essential. Policies should consider their hopes, fears, emotions, and lived experiences, ensuring that no one is left behind and that policies resonate with the realities of those they impact.

These principles form the foundation of modern policy design, shifting the focus from mere planning to addressing real-world issues. This approach upholds dignity, fosters equity, and ensures sustainability.



Public Policy Process Reimagined 8 Elements in Action Model

STEP 3

Intent development & Problem Reframing

To identify the developmental objectives for the desired change within the system and to redefine issues, establishing the scope for more effective and precise solutions.

STEP 2

Systems Mapping

To provide stakeholders with a holistic view and a systematic insight into every aspect of the issue, as well as to identify any additional data or knowledge that requires additional study.

STEP 1

Policy Journey Exploration

To understand the context of the issue, its progression over time, and past resolution efforts, while also taking into account the involved stakeholders and the surrounding context.

STEP 4

Monitoring & System Transformation Review

To review the system's dynamics and explore the most potential issues that could be leveraged to elevate the structural problem-solving capabilities.

STEP 8

Policy & Process Evaluation

To monitor and evaluate the impact, efficiency and effectiveness of policy in order to learn, improve and design the right policy.

STEP 7

Execution Planning & Policy Implementation

To extend the scale of plans, projects, or measures that have been refined into policy recommendations to achieve expected results and align with the geographical context effectively.

STEP 6

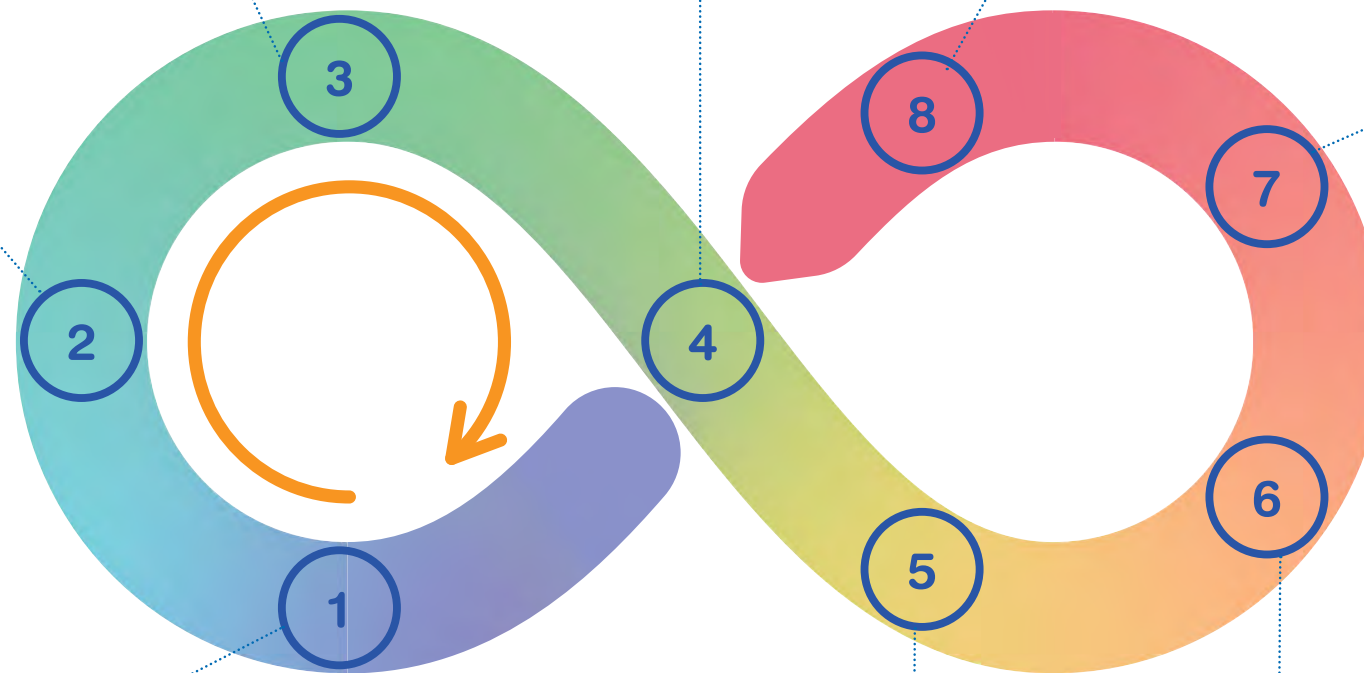
Policy Assessment, Testing & Experimentation

To extend the scale of plans, projects, or measures that have been refined into policy recommendations to achieve expected results and align with the geographical context effectively.

STEP 5

Solution & Policy Ideation

To ideate and design actionable ideas, and to establish plans, projects, or measures that are ready for implementation before developing them into policies.



The Policy Innovation Development Model:

“8 Elements in Action”

TPLab, in collaboration with its partners, developed the “8 Elements in Action” model to tackle highly complex public policy challenges. The model emerged from joint research with the Public Policy Institute of Chiang Mai University. TPLab applied this framework in partnership with its network, learning from practical experiences and refining the model for real-world use. Additionally, collaboration with the Faculty of Political Science at Thammasat University involved reviewing and critiquing the model through further research, culminating in a practical prototype. This model emphasizes hands-on practice, continuous learning, and solutions tailored to the complexities of modern policy challenges.

1 Policy Journey Exploration

- 1 This stage focuses on reviewing information to gain a comprehensive understanding of the root causes of the problem by examining two key aspects: First, understanding the Assignment Statement or Policy Agenda: Clarify the origin and scope of the assigned task or policy issue under consideration. Second, exploring Past Policies and Their Evolution: Analyze the development of the policy issue (Policy Journey), including its context, previous and current problem-solving efforts, contributing factors, and the expectations of policymakers, society, affected groups, and the public regarding desired outcomes.



Tools Used in This Stage:

Literature Review	Examining existing research and studies related to the issue.
Policy Journey Mapping	Visualizing the historical trajectory and development of policies related to the issue.
Social Listening	Collecting data from social media to understand public sentiment and discourse.
Stakeholder Analysis	Identifying and analyzing the roles, interests, and influence of stakeholders involved in the issue.
PESTEL Analysis	Analyzing external environmental

2 Systems Mapping

This stage focuses on unraveling the relationships between issues and stakeholders, analyzing their connections, and visualizing the bigger picture of the problem. The outcome is a systems map that identifies critical components and cause-effect relationships, providing a comprehensive view of how the system operates. This map helps to anticipate future trajectories of the system if left unaddressed and highlights key intervention points.

The systems map provides insights into:

- **Critical Issues:** Key factors that significantly influence the system.
- **Areas of Interest:** Zones of high data density, phenomena, or points of potential intervention to redirect the system toward desired outcomes.
- **Learning Spaces:** Topics or areas requiring further investigation to address information gaps that might impact system interventions.



Characteristics of an Effective Systems Map

1

Complete and Clearly Defined Components and Boundaries:

The map must encompass all critical elements and clearly define the system's boundaries to distinguish what lies inside and outside the system under review.

2

Logical Linkage:

The map should illustrate cause-and-effect relationships among components, such as activities, processes, impacts, and relevant factors, to create a coherent, logical overview.

3

Context and Feedback Loops:

It should reflect the external context influencing the system and include feedback loops to demonstrate the dynamic nature of the system—how it responds, impacts, and evolves in a cyclical manner.

4

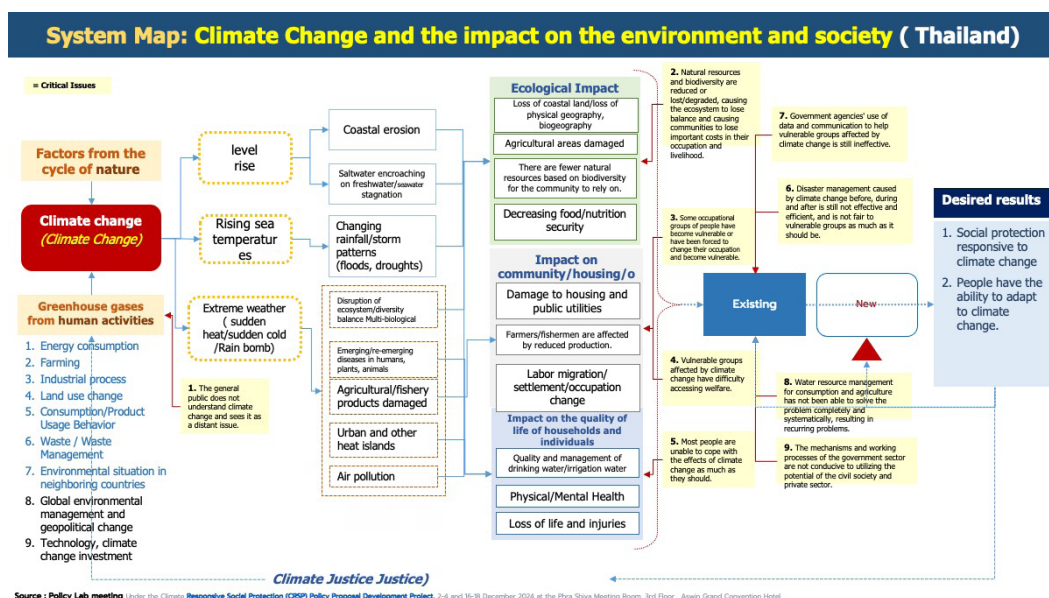
Purpose-Driven:

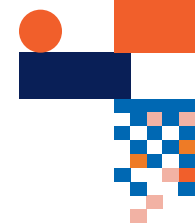
The map must clearly indicate the system's goals or intended outcomes, showing its direction and objectives.

5

Stakeholders/Key Players:

It will help identify all stakeholders involved and highlight who plays a significant role or has an impact at specific points within the system.





3 Intent Development & Problem Reframing

This stage focuses on defining the intent and desired direction of system development, envisioning a shared future, and setting the scope of tasks required to achieve those goals. The process may lead to redefining the original problem statement to align with more meaningful and impactful objectives. This step clarifies goals and solution pathways, emphasizing long-term value creation and positive outcomes for the system.

- ✳ **Key Activities: Drafting an Intent Statement:** Define the direction and purpose of the system, identifying what it should achieve and how it aligns with stakeholders' shared aspirations. Involve multiple sectors to collaborate on resolving the issue and ensure alignment with the envisioned future. **Reframing the Problem:** Use policy innovation tools to collect additional data collaboratively and shift the perspective from seeing a "problem" to identifying an "opportunity." This approach fosters new ways of understanding the issue and highlights the precise challenges that need to be addressed for effective solutions.

✳ Tools for this Stage:

- Headline of the Future
- Hopes and Fears:
- How Might We...?:
- Priority Matrix
- Causal Layered Analysis (CLA):

4 Monitoring & System Transformation Review

The core objective of this stage is to create a "review and evaluation space" to revisit insights, the systems map, and the reframed problem from previous steps. This involves verifying the accuracy, appropriateness, and feasibility of proposed solutions by gathering feedback from stakeholders or consulting experts.

In this step, participants collaboratively assess "leverage points" - specific areas within the system where targeted interventions can drive effective and meaningful changes aligned with the defined goals. This process ensures that the developed policies not only address the immediate issues but also hold the potential to induce sustainable systemic transformations.

✳ Tools for this Stage:

- Priority Matrix
- Future Triangle
- Backcasting
- Negative Space
- How Might We...?:

5 Solution & Policy Ideation

This stage focuses on generating creative, innovative, and actionable solutions to address identified problems. It utilizes insights from previous stages as a foundation for designing practical and effective policy proposals. Through various activities such as brainstorming, using the Ideation Flower, and applying the Six Thinking Hats method, participants develop policy innovations in the form of plans, measures, or projects that are implementable and capable of producing sustainable impacts.



Tools for this Stage:

How Might We...?

Brainstorm

Ideation Flower

Think the Unthinkable

Six Thinking Hats

Priority Matrix

Future Triangle

Backcasting

6 Policy Assessment, Testing & Experimentation

This stage focuses on evaluating and testing the feasibility of policy alternatives. With numerous potential solutions in hand, it is essential to prioritize, assess, and test their practicality and effectiveness. The impact and efficiency of each option must be measured through various experimental methods before implementation. This process also involves identifying weaknesses in the proposals, which can then be refined for future application or scaling.



Tools for this Stage:

Emotional Impact Assessment

Inclusive, Innovative and Transformative Tools

Sandbox

Simulation

Public Hearing

Project Evaluation



7 Execution Planning & Policy Implementation

This stage involves planning the development and implementation of programs, projects, or measures that have been refined into actionable policy proposals. The goal is to ensure that the policies are executed effectively and achieve the intended outcomes. The planning must consider the local context, including the target group's behavior and the operational dynamics of implementers, to ensure alignment and success.

Tools for this Stage:

Business Model Canvas
Policy Canvas

Operational and Managerial and Financial Model

Resource Management

Simulation

Public Hearing

Project Evaluation

8 Policy & Process Evaluation

This stage focuses on designing and conducting policy monitoring and evaluation to learn and improve policies to better address their objectives. It considers two key aspects:

- 1 Sources of Failure:** Assess whether failure stems from theoretical or conceptual flaws in policy design or from issues in implementation.
- 2 Evaluation Approach:** Emphasizes constructive evaluation aimed at development and improvement rather than criticism. "In essence, it involves evaluating both the content and process to develop policies that are more effective and aligned with practical needs. This also fosters a culture of continuous learning and self-improvement within the public policy process, from policy formulation to implementation, including the tools used."

Tools for this Stage:

CIPP Model

System with Joint KPI

OKR

SMART Goal

After Action Review

Social Listening

Public Hearing

Sentiment Analysis

Policy Innovation Tools

In its efforts to modernize Thailand's public policy process and address the diverse needs of the population without leaving anyone behind, TPLab has integrated learning, hands-on experimentation, and lessons learned to apply and develop policy innovation tools. These tools are built on four foundational principles:

- 1 **Strategic Thinking:** Viewing the bigger picture and planning with a strategic approach.
- 2 **System Thinking:** Analyzing problems holistically and understanding their interconnected components.
- 3 **Participatory Approach:** Creating opportunities for all stakeholders to participate meaningfully in the policymaking process.
- 4 **Creativity:** Leveraging creative thinking to develop innovative solutions to problems.

These principles empower policymakers to conduct holistic analysis, engage stakeholders inclusively, and implement integrated solutions through a systematic and portfolio-based approach.

Over the past 3–4 years, TPLab has experimented with and compiled examples of policy innovation tools designed to create practical solutions that deliver meaningful impacts to the public while addressing needs at every level.

Tool Category	Examples of Tools
Data Collection Tools	Social Listening
	Persona *
	Hopes and Fears *
	Headline of the Future *
Tools for Analyzing and Understanding Problems	User Journey Mapping *
	Stakeholder Analysis
	Casual Layer Analysis *
	System Mapping *
Tools for Generating Ideas	How Might We...? *
	Ideation Flower
Tools for Prioritization	Priority Matrix
Tools for Evaluation, Testing, and Experimentation	Sandbox *

* For detailed descriptions, guidelines, usage methods, and insights from applying these tools, please refer to the comprehensive handbook available at www.thailandpolicylab.com.

* Some tools can be applied across multiple stages of the policymaking process. For example: How Might We...?: Useful for both understanding problems and stimulating creative idea generation. User Journey Mapping: Can be used for both data collection and problem analysis.

Data Collection Tools

Hopes and Fears

Voices of the People: Reflections of Their Needs

Hopes and Fears

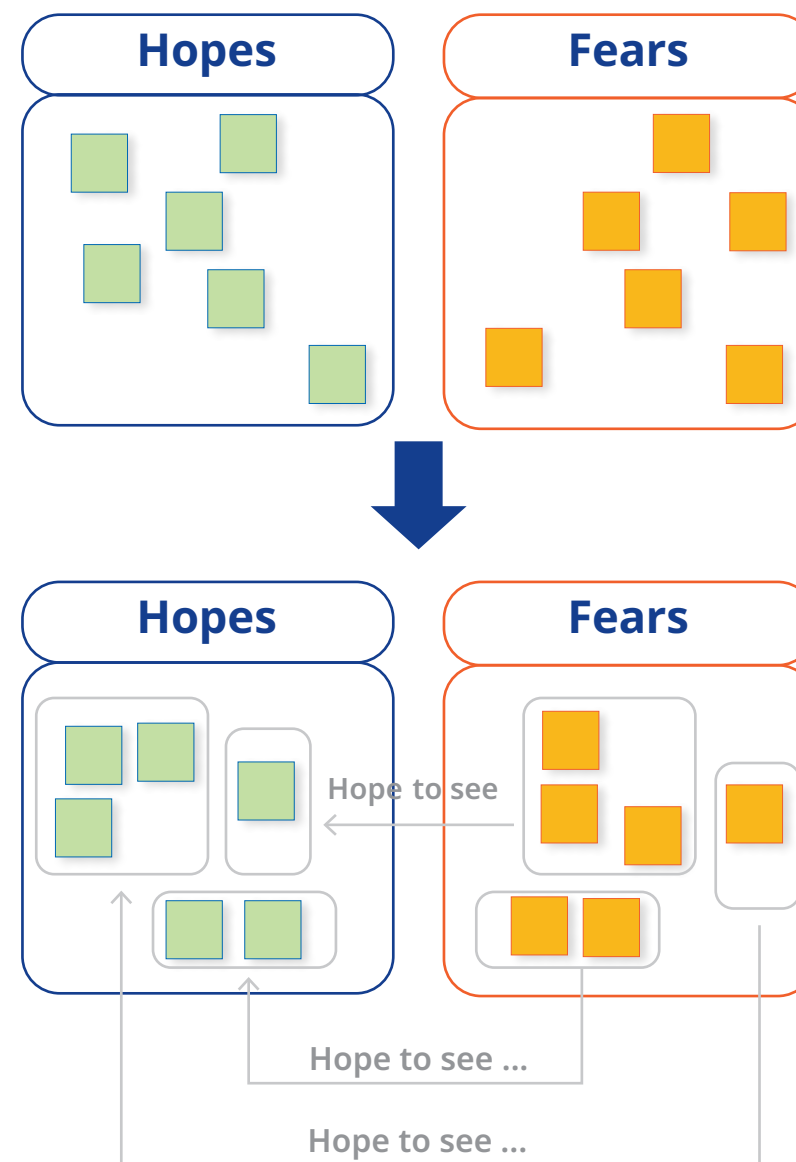
Hopes and Fears is a tool inspired by the principles of Design Thinking, emphasizing the emotional dimension in problem-solving processes. It enables policymakers to explore and understand the deeper feelings of stakeholders about a particular issue and its context.

This tool involves analyzing:

Hopes: Reflecting what people wish to see and the goals they aspire to achieve.

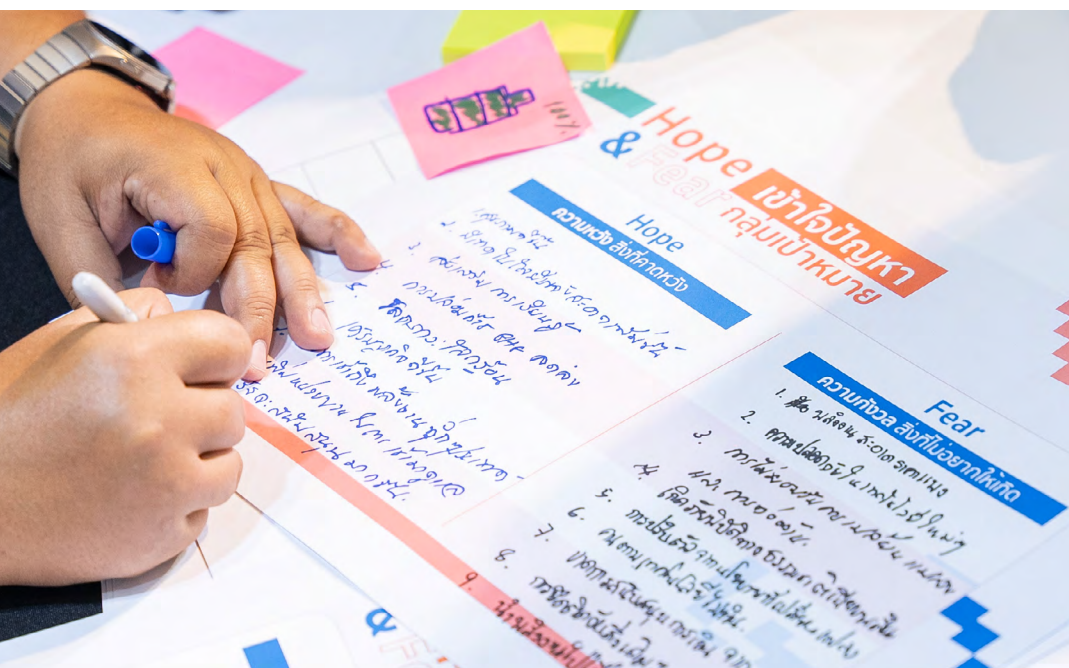
Fears: Highlighting the problems and obstacles people are concerned about or may encounter in the future.

By examining these dimensions, the tool helps create policies that are more nuanced, emotionally grounded, and aligned with real-world needs.



Steps to Implement Hopes and Fears

- 1 Divide the Paper into Two Sections:** One section is designated for Hopes and the other for Fears. These sections can be positioned on either side of the paper.
- 2 Write Down Hopes and Fears:** Document feelings about the issue at hand, which could include personal emotions, organizational perspectives, societal views, stakeholder-specific insights (from both policymakers and policy users).
- 3 Facilitate Group Discussions (if conducted in a group setting):** Use dialogue to encourage participants to articulate their hopes and fears. Exchange and discuss these perspectives to foster mutual understanding. Collaboratively identify collective hopes and fears for the issue being addressed.



Data Collection Tools

Persona

A persona is a model representing the characteristics of a target group, created using in-depth data on demographics, behaviors, and needs. It highlights the specific traits and context of individuals within that group. Widely used in business sectors such as market segmentation, personas help analyze customer needs and behaviors, enabling the development of products or services that accurately meet target group demands.

When applied to public policy design, persona creation allows policymakers to gain a deeper understanding of people's lives, challenges, and true needs. Personas enhance the relevance and effectiveness of policies by using detailed insights to refine services or policies, ensuring they align closely with target group expectations.

Know the Faces, Understand the Hearts
Gain Deep Insights into Policy Users

Steps for Developing a Persona

- 1 Design Comprehensive Questions:** Create questions that address all aspects of the issue you aim to understand. "Good questions should be thorough, detailed, and limited to what is necessary."
- 2 Data Collection:** Collect qualitative and quantitative data through methods such as: In-depth Interviews, Surveys, Shadowing (Observing and following individuals in their daily lives to understand their context).
- 3 Persona Creation:** Analyze patterns in the collected data to develop a persona that reflects the realities, facts, and conditions of the target group.



PERSONA

Non-marginal user



Data provider Data seeker

"Seeking health data, ready to care for the entire family."

"Accessing ready-made healthcare services, no need to remember, no need to wait."

Marginal user



The poor

"Seeking affordable healthcare, easy to access, not wasting time."



People with disabilities

"Having assistive devices to live a normal life."



Dependent individuals

"Do not wish to be dependent on others, unwilling to use crutches."



People with legal rights issues

"Seeking legal rights without relying on others for help."

Example: Key Data for Building a Persona

- **Persona Info:** Gender, age, education, residence, economic status, or other details relevant to policy design.
- **Daily Behaviors and Lifestyle:** Patterns such as commuting, consumption, use of public services, or other behaviors reflecting their way of life.
- **Challenges and Obstacles:** Issues faced by the persona related to the policy being analyzed, e.g., long wait times and limited access in public transportation services.
- **Needs and Aspirations:** Example: A need for adequate, affordable, and convenient public transportation, especially before 8 AM to reach work by 9 AM.

●● Opportunities:

- a. From the respondent's perspective: Direct insights provided by the individual.
- b. From the policymaker's perspective: Insights derived from the interviewer's experience or analysis.

For example, data may suggest the potential for investing in alternative energy-based transportation systems, which would be more cost-effective in the long term and environmentally friendly.

- **Other Relevant Information:** Additional data or insights that deepen understanding of the perspectives or challenges related to the policy issue, helping to create a more comprehensive and nuanced persona.

Data Collection Tools

Headline of the Future

Turning Today's challenges into
Tomorrow's Success Stories

This tool, rooted in Future Thinking, leverages the creative style of front-page newspaper headlines to help participants reflect their hopes and concerns for the future. Each headline expresses the future participants envision, helping policymakers design solutions that align with their aspirations while preparing for potential challenges.

The unique value of this tool, as demonstrated by TPLab, lies in its ability to create a safe and imaginative space. Participants step into the role of journalists, freely expressing their ideas. In this setting, participants are encouraged to dream, confront their fears, and share perspectives—whether about the successes they hope to see or the consequences they fear if action is not taken—all in a relaxed and fun environment.

Principles and Steps

1 Set a Time Frame

- Define the future period participants are asked to imagine, such as 5 or 10 years ahead.

2 Define Scenarios

- Assign participants to write headlines for two scenarios:
Scenario 1: “If we take action to solve the problem, what happens?”

Scenario 2: “If we do nothing, what happens?”

3 Establish Content Scope

- Headlines can cover multiple dimensions, including society, economy, politics, education, environment, technology, sports, and entertainment.
- Headlines may reflect either positive outcomes (hopes) or negative consequences (fears).

Examples of Headlines

- “Thais Celebrate! Thailand Achieves Net Zero 5 Years Ahead of Schedule with 100% Clean Energy”
- “Elderly Citizens Rejoice as Thai Parliament Passes Universal Welfare Law to Address Aging Society”
- “Plastic Waste Crisis Overwhelms Bangkok, City Drowning in Garbage”
- “Heartbreaking! 1 in 3 Thai Seniors Abandoned Without Care”

Tools for Analyzing and Understanding Problems

System Mapping

A System Map is akin to observing from a higher vantage point, providing a bird's-eye view of a complex system. It helps visualize the overall structure, including the interconnections and cause-and-effect relationships among various components within the system. This perspective allows policymakers to understand how small, targeted actions at key leverage points can create significant impacts, much like the Butterfly Effect, where a butterfly flapping its wings in one part of the world can set off far-reaching changes elsewhere.

At TPLab, System Mapping is applied in public policy design to identify critical connections that influence the entire system. It helps pinpoint:

- **Critical Issues or Leverage Points:** Key factors that significantly affect the system.
- **Areas of Interest:** Zones of high data density, phenomena, or focal points worth exploring further for their potential impact.
- **Learning Spaces:** Areas requiring additional data or research to fill gaps or clarify their importance within the system.

By identifying these components, System Mapping ensures greater precision and focus in subsequent policy design stages.

6 Core Components of a System Map

- 1 **Critical Elements:** All essential components of the system must be included.
- 2 **System Boundaries:** Clearly define what lies within and outside the system being analyzed.
- 3 **Processes and Logical Linkages:** Show the relationships, processes, and cause-and-effect connections among components.
- 4 **Context:** Reflect external factors and environmental influences that affect the system.
- 5 **Feedback Loops:** Illustrate how the system responds, interacts with, and adapts to its environment over time.
- 6 **Purpose and Stakeholders:** Indicate the system's goals or direction and identify the stakeholders/key players and their roles in influencing or being impacted by the system.

Steps to Create a System Map

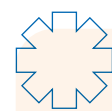
- 1 **Understand the Situation and Define Scope:** Review relevant documents and gather information to outline the issue and identify the system's critical components.
- 2 **Draw the System Map:** Use tools such as the General System Model or other conceptual frameworks to guide the mapping process. Depict the relationships among facts, phenomena, or issues, ensuring all six core components are included.
- 3 **Analyze Connections:** Identify key points of influence, such as areas where problems originate or where interventions could lead to improvements. Follow the logical flow of the system (e.g., input → process → output) to illustrate how components interact within the system.

Tools for Analyzing and Understanding Problems

Causal Layered Analysis (CLA)

Causal Layered Analysis (CLA) is an analytical tool that enables deeper exploration of issues beyond their surface level. Developed by Professor Sohail Inayatullah in the 1980s, drawing from Michel Foucault's post-structuralist ideas and futures studies, CLA uses the metaphor of an iceberg to represent complex and deeply rooted problems. The visible part of the iceberg symbolizes surface-level symptoms, while the massive, hidden portion beneath the water represents deeper systemic, worldview, and mythological layers.

At TPLab, CLA is utilized to gain a multidimensional understanding of issues. It helps uncover the root causes of problems and fosters sense-making, enabling the design of policies that address fundamental issues, not just surface symptoms. This ensures sustainable and effective solutions.



The 4 Layers of CLA

- 1 **Litany (Surface Level):** Visible issues in society, such as public discourse, headlines, events, trends, opinions, and statistical data.
- 2 **Systems and Structures:** Policies, laws, economic systems, societal structures, and political frameworks that contribute to the visible issues.
- 3 **Worldviews:** Attitudes, paradigms, and collective perceptions that influence societal thinking and understanding of issues (collective recognition).
- 4 **Myths/Metaphors:** Deeply ingrained beliefs, narratives, religious teachings, folklore, legends, or unconscious ideas that form the root of personal and societal perceptions (individual recognition).

Think Deeply! The Problems We See
May Be Greater Than They Appear



Steps to Use CLA

- 1 **Define the Problem or Phenomenon:** Identify the issue to be analyzed.
- 2 **Analyze Causes and Effects:** Participants analyze the origins and causes of the issue by progressively drilling down layer by layer. Write these insights on sticky notes and either arrange them hierarchically or place them in relevant layers of the iceberg.
- 3 **Connect Causes and Effects:** Draw connections between different elements within and across the layers to illustrate cause-and-effect relationships and systemic links.

The phenomenon or issue that needs analysis (Litany)

This may be in the form of the topics discussed in society, headlines, and statistical data that make people feel helplessness, apathy or projected action.

System and Structures

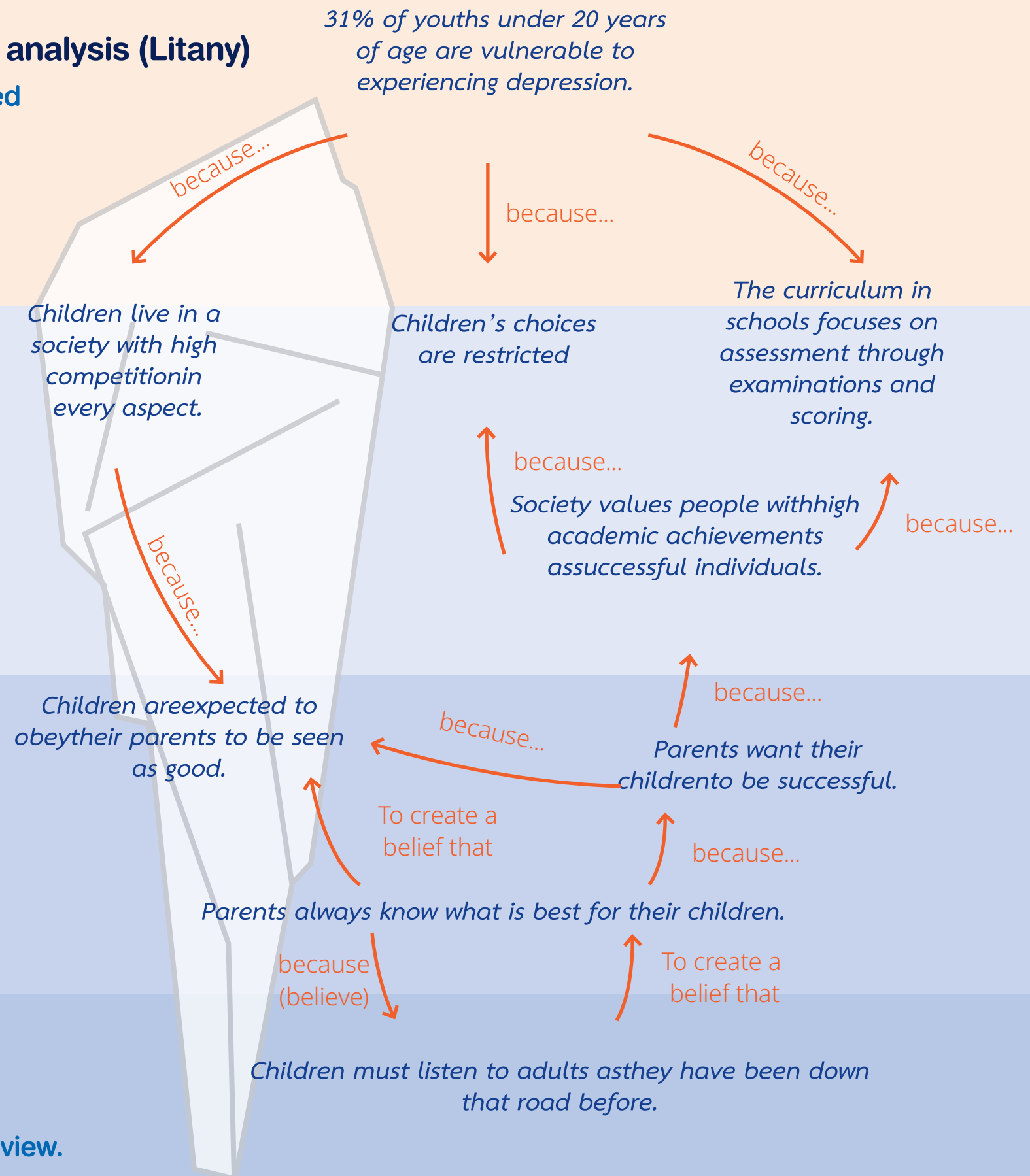
Structural and systemic causes, including social, technologies, economic, environmental political and historical factors.

Worldview

The collective worldview that leads to the above-mentioned structures and systems.

Deeply ingrained beliefs and social myth (metaphor)

A gut/emotional level experience to the worldview.



Tools for Analyzing and Understanding Problems

How might we...? (HMW)

How Might We...? (HMW) is a question framework that begins with "How might we...?" and is commonly used in Human-Centric Design processes. This approach stimulates creative thinking and opens up new perspectives for solving problems. It encourages participants to refocus on the problem and the true needs of the target group, helping them reframe challenges or initial assumptions (Assigned Statement). By doing so, it creates space for redefining the problem more clearly from a different angle, without rushing to premature solutions.

Using the HMW framework sparks creativity and promotes bold, out-of-the-box thinking. It simplifies complex problems, making them more approachable, and paves the way for diverse, inclusive, and innovative solutions that address the root causes effectively.

Steps for Using How Might We...?

- 1 **Start with a Problem Statement:** Clearly describe the situation or issue at hand.
- 2 **Understand Different Question Formats:** Explore nine starting formats for framing questions.
- 3 **Formulate Questions Based on the Nine Starting Formats:** Use these formats as a systematic guide to view the problem from various perspectives, then adapt or experiment further.
- 4 **Create Innovative Questions:** Good HMW questions are “innovative” and unconventional. Avoid obvious or generic questions that do not challenge the norm.
- 5 **Structure the Questions Around Four Key Points:**
 - Do what? (Action)
 - How? (Method)
 - For whom? (Beneficiary)
 - To achieve what? (Purpose)

Example of Using How Might We...?

Case Study: Long Waiting Times for Patients

Problem Statement:

“Patients often endure long waits, arriving early in the morning to queue. Some are seen by the afternoon, while others are given appointments for another day. Many wake up as early as 3 or 4 a.m., spending money on costly transportation, skipping meals, and sitting in uncomfortable conditions—some even on the floor. Relatives are frequently required to accompany them, adding to the burden. At times, unfriendly staff further heightens their anxiety and discomfort. Many patients are unclear about the benefits covered by the 30-baht Universal Health Coverage Card. It’s not uncommon to see shoes left in line as placeholders, with patients waiting all day only to spend less than five minutes with a doctor.”

How Might We...? Finding Solutions Through Multiple Possibilities

9 Question Approaches		Example Question
1	Amp up the good	How might we make waiting time entertaining for patients and their families?
2	Remove the bad	How might we streamline queuing to reduce waiting frustration?
3	Explore the opposite	How might we provide treatment without patients needing to travel, such as doctors visiting them?
4	Question an assumption	How might we make patients enjoy their visits to the hospital?
5	Identify unexpected resources	How might we engage neighbors or community members to help care for patients?
6	Create analogy from need of context	How might we design hospitals to feel like wellness centers or playgrounds?
7	Play against the challenge	How might we make waiting enjoyable instead of frustrating?
8	Change status quo	How might we have doctors, nurses, and staff follow up with patients like they are their boy/girlfriends?
9	Break point of view into pieces ...	How might we make the hospital experience more enjoyable? How might we reduce patients’ frustration, anxiety, or irritation?

Tools for Evaluation, Testing, and Experimentation

Sandbox

The concept of the sandbox originated in the early 1970s at Carnegie Mellon University, where researchers developed and tested AI frameworks within controlled, limited environments to prevent potential harm to larger systems. This idea was later widely adopted in software and application development as a means to test systems before full-scale implementation, minimizing risks and identifying issues that could be resolved prior to expansion.

At TPLab, the sandbox has been adapted as a tool for public policy processes, enabling testing, piloting, and managing innovation initiatives in controlled experimental environments. It also serves as a learning platform, allowing policymakers to experiment and refine approaches while learning from mistakes, understanding real-world situations, and adjusting recommendations accordingly. The insights gained through these trials are then applied to enhance and scale policies.

The sandbox is more than just a testing tool—it is a space for creativity and learning. It provides a safe, flexible environment for developers and policymakers to experiment with and refine ideas. By testing policies within a sandbox, risks are reduced, and opportunities are created for innovations that effectively address real-world needs.

Policy Innovation Testing Models within the Sandbox

- 1 **Feasibility Testing:** To determine whether policy proposals can be implemented effectively in real-world settings.
- 2 **Impact Testing:** To evaluate the reactions and effects of policies in experimental environments.
- 3 **Proposal Refinement:** To adjust the content and implementation methods based on test results.
- 4 **Comparative Analysis:** To analyze differences between tested and untested policy proposals.
- 5 **Prototype Improvement:** To develop and refine prototypes for further implementation or scaling.

Experimentation in the Sandbox
where failure is a learning





Shaping the Future with Policy Innovation – The Thailand Policy Lab Approach

Policy innovation is not limited to creating entirely new ideas; it also involves developing solutions tailored to specific contexts, such as policies that account for human behavior or measures designed for long-term sustainability. Policy innovation can take various forms:

- 1 Processes or Frameworks:** Adapting existing ideas and methodologies from other sectors to the policymaking process.
- 2 New Tools or Approaches:** Introducing innovative methods into policy design to foster participation and ensure solutions align with the unique needs of different groups.



Policy Innovation – TPLab Style

Product Innovation

1 Designing Policy Innovation Courses for University Students, Civil Servants, and Government Officials

Developing an "educational product" in the form of courses to enhance understanding and skills in policy innovation for universities and government agencies.

Service Innovation

2 Policy Innovation for Public Service Co-Design - To create a health insurance system that is inclusive, citizen-centered, sustainable, and transparent.

Utilizing tools like future scenario planning, social media listening, and service design to create healthcare services that leave no one behind.

Process Innovation

3 Creating Spaces for Inclusive Policy Co-Design and Sandbox Testing - Policies for youth, by youth.

Gathering data from surveys and online platforms, conducting Policy Hackathons, and testing youth-led policies in sandbox environments in Bangkok and Lampang.

4 Portfolio Approach for Innovative Public Engagement in Data Collection - Studying strategies to increase the proportion of quality youth populations to enhance the nation's competitiveness.

Transforming traditional surveys into creative initiatives, such as setting up shrines at design festivals and opening an ice cream café in a central mall, inviting people to design ice cream flavors representing their dream families.

5 Policy Hackathon Creating new spaces for all sectors to collaborate on problem-solving and policy development.

6 Building System Maps Through Participatory Processes To systematically understand problems and create policy innovations.

Business Model Innovation

7 Building a Network of Policy Lab Innovators with University Professors Nationwide - Establishing a university-based network as a new operational model for policy development.

8 Creating Local Innovator Networks - Developing local networks to support policy innovations tailored to local contexts.

9 Policy Innovation Exchange (PIX - Promoting the exchange of knowledge and collaboration across regions and nations.



Thailand Policy Lab HandBook



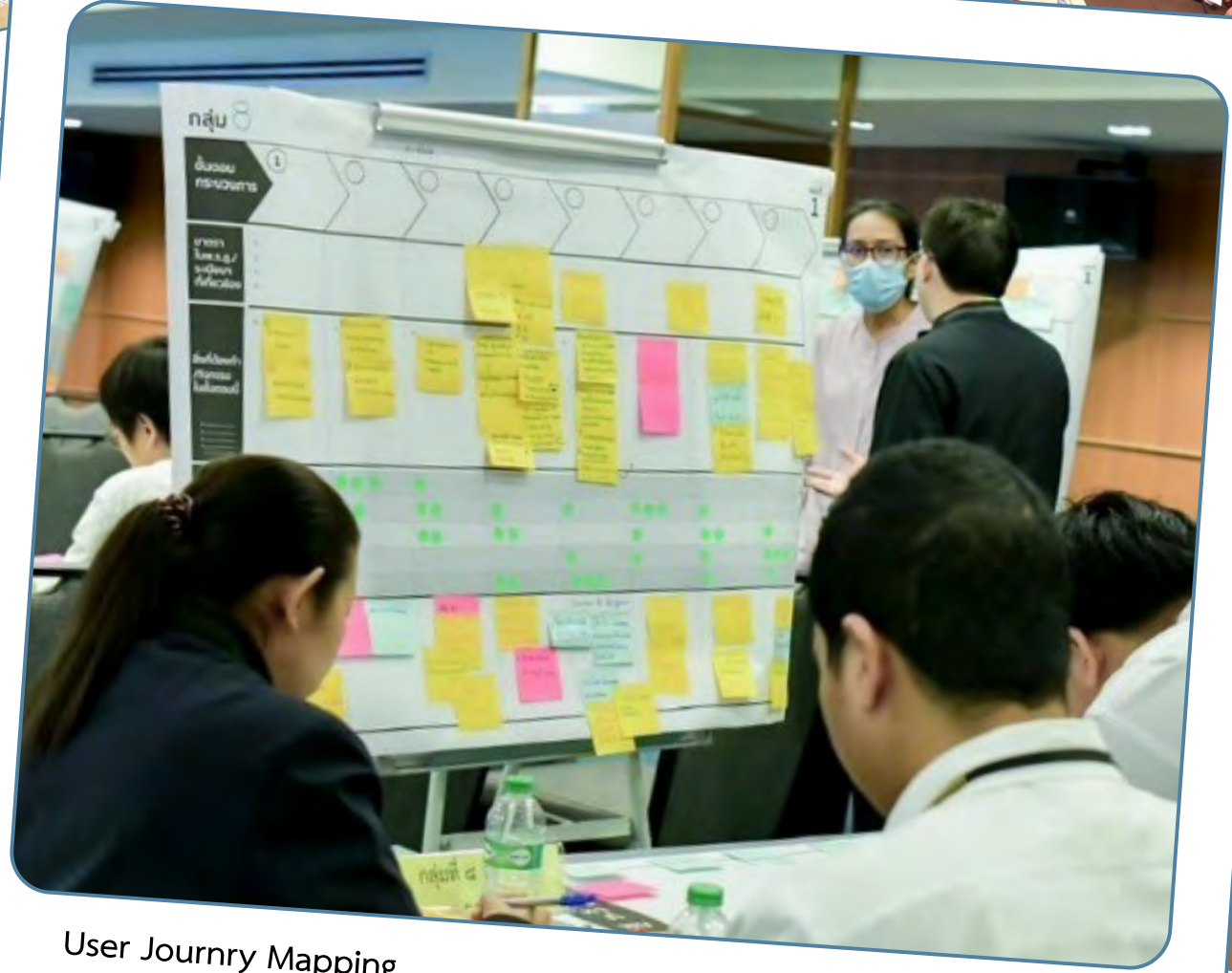
Training of Trainer Workshop



Policy Lab session - Climate Responsive Social Protection: CRSP



sandbox



User Journey Mapping



Diversity Cafe - Ice cream flavours that represent new form of family for the new generations



Youth Mental Health - Tools kit



Shrine of Hopes of the People

★ Product Innovation

1 Designing Policy Innovation Courses for University Students, Civil Servants, and Government Officials

The policy innovation courses developed by TPLab go beyond simply sharing knowledge about public policy processes and policy innovation. These courses are designed to build innovators, equipping civil servants, government officials, academics, and individuals interested in societal development with the skills and tools necessary for policy innovation. The curriculum emphasizes systems thinking, creative problem-solving, hands-on experience, and fostering a sense of ownership over key issues. This approach inspires responsibility toward society, producing high-quality public officials and global citizens.

The courses and training sessions extend beyond classroom learning, immersing participants in real-world situations through brainstorming sessions, fieldwork, and collaboration with experts from diverse disciplines. A key strength of TPLab's curriculum is its flexibility, allowing for tailored course design that meets the time constraints, group sizes, and specific needs of various organizations.

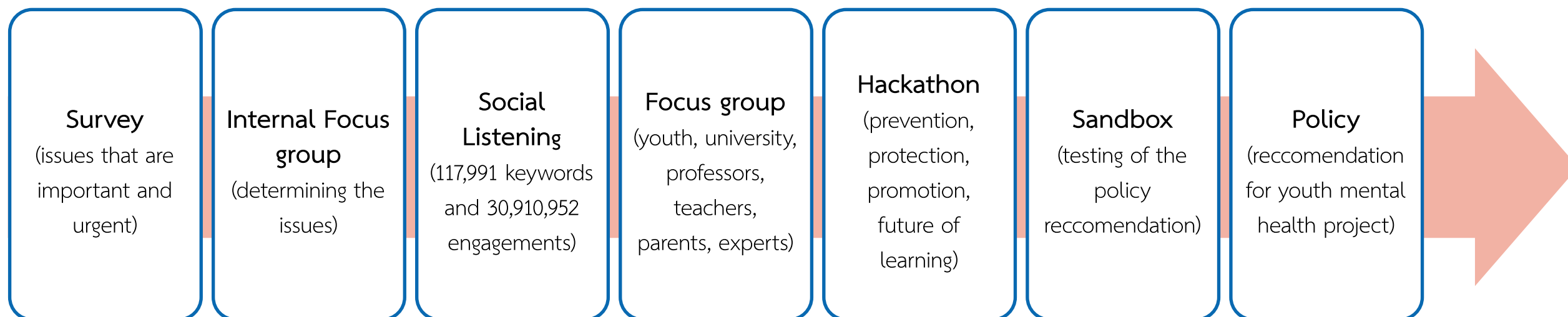
For more information, visit www.thailandpolicylab.com

★ Examples of Courses, Training, and Workshops

- 1 **Policy Innovation Curriculum Development**, designed for the 16th Cohort of the Public Service Agent for Change Development Program (PSAC). The program consisted of 12 sessions of lectures and activities on public policy innovation tools, totaling 72 hours. Participants also applied these tools in real-world settings during a 3-day, 2-night study trip to San Din Daeng Village, Chiang Mai.
- 2 **Selected Topics in Public Policy Course**, the course is designed for undergraduate students from the Faculty of Political Science, International Program in Politics and International Relations, Thammasat University.
- 3 **Policy Lab Activities** under the Climate Responsive Social Protection (CRSP) project were conducted in collaboration with the Thailand Environment Institute (TEI). These activities included three-day sessions utilizing seven policy innovation tools.
- 4 **Training of Trainers (ToT)** was organized in collaboration with the Public Policy Institute, Prince of Songkla University. This two-day program focused on applying five policy innovation tools.

★ Process Innovation

2 Policy Innovation: Creating Inclusive Spaces for Youth-Driven Policy Design and Sandbox Testing



We often hear the phrase, “Youth are the future of the nation.” However, when examining public policy processes, youth often have limited roles, despite being the group most affected by current and future policies. Recognizing this, TPLab initiated the Policy for Youths by Youths Project, a program where youth, as the primary stakeholders of these issues, take on a central role in proposing solutions. This process involves collaboration with multiple stakeholders from various sectors and has been conducted from 2021 to 2024 in partnership with institutions such as the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Rajanagarindra Institute, UNICEF Thailand, Inskru, Sam Sen Nok School, Bangkok Metropolitan Administration, Wor Kaew Wittaya School, the Lampang Provincial Administrative Organization, and other network partners.

What if we give the “future of the nation” the opportunity to become active participants in the public policy process? From defining the issues to designing the policies, this initiative empowers youth to take part in shaping the future of their country.

The project started with a policy issue survey through a survey to understand what the most pressing issues are that young people wanted to address. The top issues were poverty, education, mental health and well-being. The next step was an internal focus group that finalized the issue as mental health and wellbeing. The following step was to listen to young people using the Social Listening tool to detect signals of mental health from online media. The data from 117,991 keywords and 30,910,952 online engagements were collected on concerns about physical health, mental health, intellectual well-being, stress, loneliness, etc.

We then held in-depth focus group discussions with internal and external target groups, such as young people, teachers, parents, social activists, and mental health digital experts. The results of the discussions showed that the most relevant issues were “mental health” and “well-being” across multiple dimensions. These efforts underscored the urgency of addressing mental health issues, with the belief that those directly affected by the problems are best positioned to contribute solutions.

To empower youth as key stakeholders in these issues, the Youth Hackathon was launched. This initiative focused on developing mental health policies and collaborating with stakeholders and relevant agencies, resulting in seven youth-generated policy proposals.

These seven policy proposals were then reviewed with experts and relevant agencies before being tested through the sandbox model, which allowed pilot testing of youth-driven policy ideas in real settings. The sandbox testing was conducted in two locations: Sam Sen Nok School in Bangkok and Wor Kaew Wittaya School in Lampang. The process was co-designed with InsKru and

How might we enable the “future of the nation” the opportunity to be a part of the public policy process, from identifying issues to designing policies, in order to shape the future of their own country?

supported by the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Rajanagarindra Institute under the Department of Mental Health, Ministry of Public Health. The goal of this process was to test, implement, and scale up mental health policies, focusing on building teachers’ capacities and strengthening relationships with youth to better address mental health in schools. This was further developed into a community-level framework for child and youth mental health care involving relevant agencies. The project aimed to improve the overall mental health of young people and encourage active participation in the public policy process, exemplifying an inclusive policy-making approach where stakeholders are central.

This project demonstrates the power of participatory policymaking, empowering youth to play a key role as change-makers in shaping a better future for everyone.



This project was implemented from 2021 to 2024.

Year 1: Explored the progression of policy issues (Step 1) through surveys identifying the problems youth want to address. Focus group discussions were conducted to determine topics for experimentation, followed by Social Listening and additional focus groups to refine the findings.

Year 2: Developed systemic goals and reframed problems (Steps 3-4). Creative ideas were generated through a hackathon (Step 5).

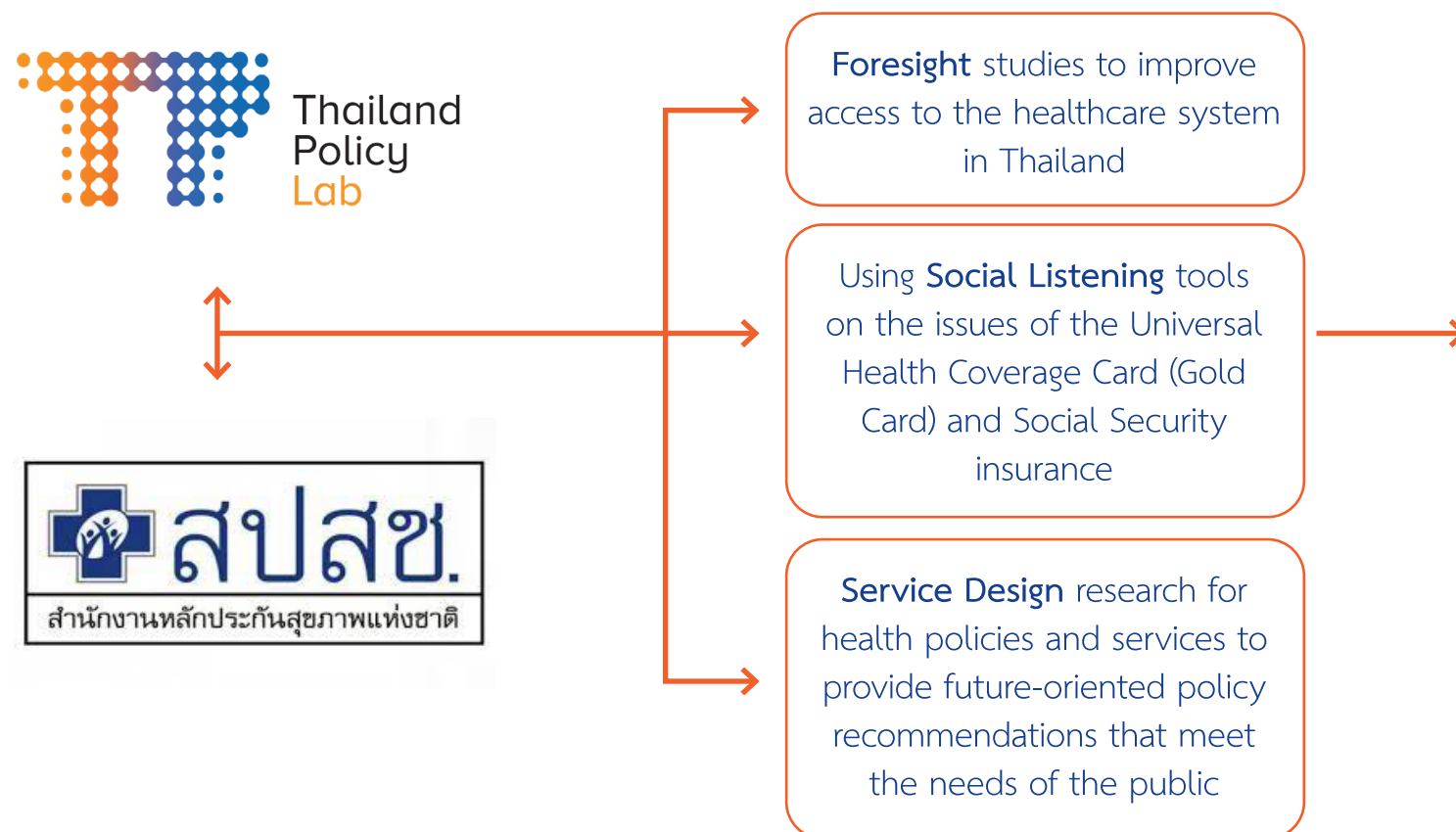
Years 3-4: Tested policies using the sandbox model.

For more details, visit www.thailandpolicylab.com.



★ Process Innovation

3 Process Innovation: Participatory Policy Innovation for an Inclusive, Citizen-Centered, Sustainable, and Transparent Health Insurance System



The National Health Security Office (NHSO) has incorporated the results of these three projects into the development of the 5th National Health Security Office operational plan (2023-2027), which was officially adopted in October 2022.



Source: National Health Security Office (NHSO)

The world is changing rapidly, with emerging diseases and increasingly complex and dynamic public health needs. The National Health Security Office (NHSO) recognizes the need to enhance Thailand’s universal health coverage (UHC) system to be sustainable, citizen-centered, and inclusive of all beneficiaries, particularly vulnerable groups. This led to a collaborative initiative between NHSO and Thailand Policy Lab (TPLab) from May 2022 to August 2023, conducting research on three projects using three policy innovation tools. The findings have been incorporated into the 5th National Health Security Operational Plan (2023–2027), aimed at advancing Thailand’s healthcare system to meet the needs of all citizens, both now and in the future.



Three Policy Innovation Tools Behind the 5th National Health Security Operational Plan (2023–2027), Putting People First

1 Foresight

The Foresight tool was used to study and identify key megatrends expected to impact Thailand’s healthcare system and universal health coverage in both the short and medium term. The tool was applied to identify opportunities and challenges using Horizon Scanning, analyzing high-impact factors across five dimensions:

- Social
- Technology
- Environment
- Economy
- Politics

This approach enables policies to effectively address both current and future challenges in a timely manner.

2 Social Listening

The Social Listening tool collected data from social media, identifying key terms related to the Gold Card scheme and social security system. The data was categorized and analyzed to provide a comprehensive overview, covering both problems and benefits experienced by beneficiaries. This research method enables policymakers to gain a deeper understanding of public sentiment, emotions, and needs, leading to policies that are more human-centered and aligned with real-world experiences.

3 Service Design

Design Thinking and Service Design methodologies were applied alongside data collection from beneficiaries, vulnerable groups, and relevant personnel in Nakhon Ratchasima, Ratchaburi, and Bangkok. This process involved:

- Developing personas to represent user groups.
- Creating Service Blueprints to refine and improve service delivery.

The findings and recommendations from this process were used to improve services, ensuring they are accessible and responsive to the needs of all population groups.

For more details:

Refer to the Summary Report on the Improvement of Universal Health Coverage Services for Inclusivity, Citizen-Centeredness, Sustainability, and Transparency, submitted to the National Health Security Office (NHSO) by the Thailand Policy Lab (TPLab), 2023.

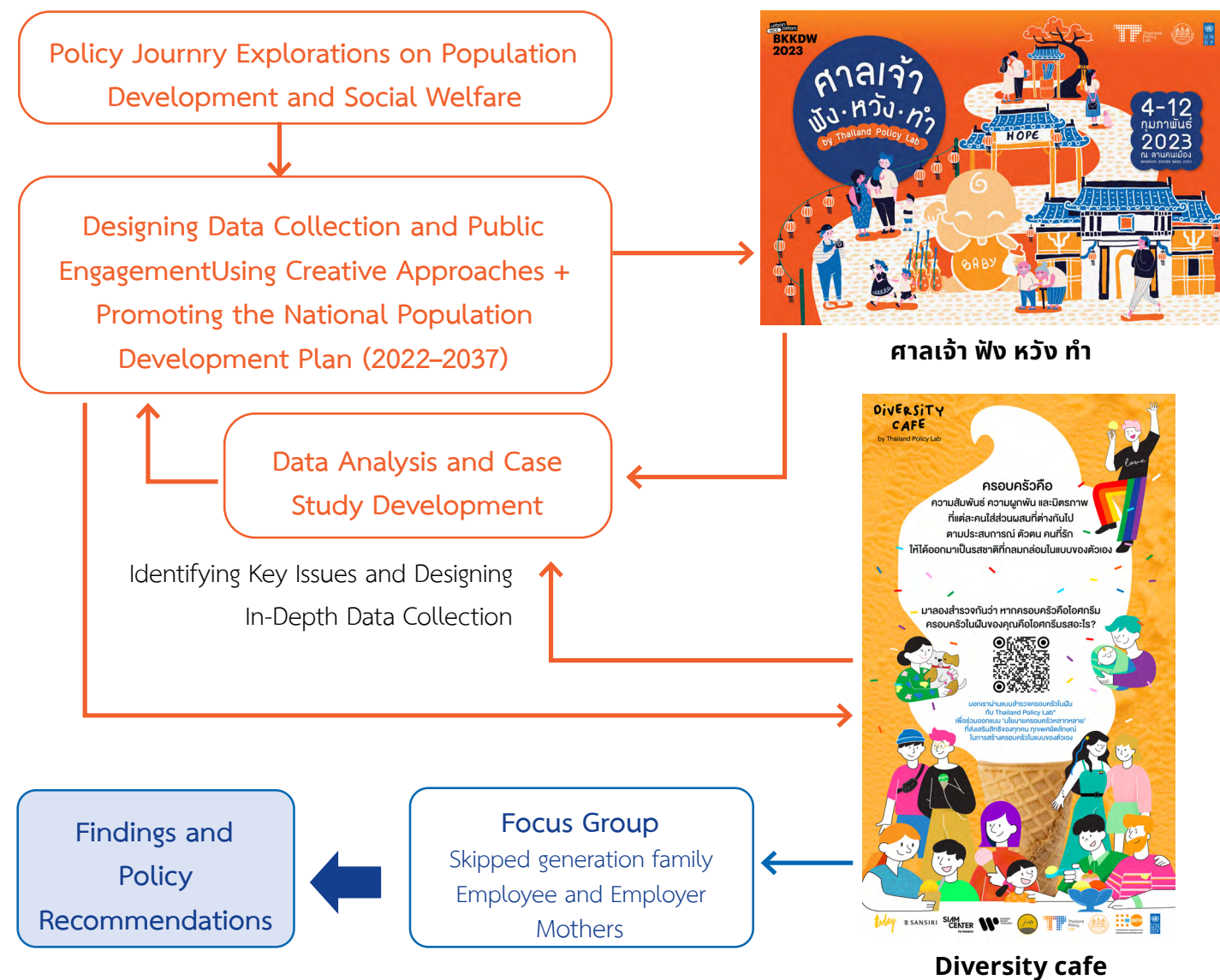
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★ Policy Innovation

4 Policy Innovation in Data Collection, Public Engagement, and Creative Listening - A Study on Increasing the Proportion of Quality Youth Population to Enhance National Competitiveness

Thailand is facing a declining birth rate and a rapidly aging society. In response, Thailand Policy Lab (TPLab) conducted a data-driven study to explore factors influencing family formation and childbearing decisions among younger generations. The study examined future possibilities, mapped systemic challenges (System Map), and formulated policy recommendations. The findings contributed to the development of the Long-Term Population Development Plan (2022–2037) to support national demographic strategies.



Young People Saying ‘No’ to Parenthood : An Iceberg of Social Concerns

When asked, “Do you want to have children?” most respondents aged 20–35 shook their heads. The more society emphasized the looming demographic crisis, the more resistance built up, leading to a counter-question: *“Why should we have children for the country? What support does this country provide for raising children?”*

This presents a major policy challenge: How can we truly listen to the people without making them shut down the conversation?

In 2022, the Office of National Economic and Social Development Council (NESDC) launched the Long-Term Population Development Plan (2022–2037) to promote policy awareness and collect data for its second phase. However, traditional outreach methods faced engagement barriers.

To address this, TPLab introduced innovative data collection and public listening approaches, organizing two interactive exhibitions that explored three key aspects of family formation and childbearing decisions among young people:

- Factors influencing decisions on family formation and childbearing
- Hopes and fears regarding starting a family
- Policies young people wish to see and support

1st Exhibition: “Shrine of Hope of the People” Held at Bangkok Design Week 2022 and the Isaan Creative Festival 2022 (Khon Kaen), this exhibition transformed the concept of “Mootelu” (spiritual belief rituals) into an interactive experience. Visitors were invited to pray to three deities—Hope, Listen, and Act—who symbolized the policy-making process: Hope represented aspirations for the future, Listen gathered people’s concerns and desires, Act reflected the policy changes needed to make those hopes a reality. Visitors received a “Mu-kit” (blessing kit), similar to traditional worship sets, and engaged in a fortune-telling ritual that translated demographic concerns into “fortune sticks” predicting their lives in 10 years. Other activities included: Placing flowers in the “Dream Family” vase to express their ideal family structure, Replacing traditional surveys with “wish slips” where visitors vented their concerns and desires, Donating symbolic coins to vote for the most-needed policy proposals from the Long-Term Population Development Plan.

The findings from the Shrine of Hope of the People exhibition revealed key insights: the concept of family among younger generations is no longer limited to the traditional father-mother-child structure. Their ideal family models reflect gender diversity. Beyond financial factors, young people also prioritize political issues, environmental concerns (such as PM2.5 pollution), and access to quality education. These factors contribute to uncertainty and anxiety about having children, which over time lead to the decision not to have children as they grow older.

This led to the creation of the “Diversity Café” exhibition, held during Pride Month at Siam Center, inviting



participants to design their own “ice cream flavors” that represent their ideal family model. This interactive concept encouraged participants to engage with a detailed 20-page questionnaire in a fun and enjoyable way. The exhibition also highlighted gender diversity issues, fostering public understanding and promoting equal family rights for LGBTQ+ individuals.

From these two activities, a total of 1,953 survey responses were collected. The data was synthesized to gain deeper insights into the key policy challenges, assess the feasibility of scaling up policy interventions, and develop policy recommendations for future implementation.

This project is being implemented from 2022 to 2024:

Year 1: Understanding key issues and examining policy development using the Portfolio Approach.

Year 2: Assessing the feasibility of scaling up policy interventions (Transformation Review) through innovative data collection and creative public engagement (Survey and Innovative Public Hearing).

Year 3: Conducting in-depth research with three target groups (Research Focus Group).



For detailed study findings, visit www.thailandpolicylab.com.



UNDP Accelerator Lab Thailand

The UNDP Accelerator Lab (AccLab) Thailand is at the forefront of tackling complex development challenges through innovation, experimentation, and data-driven insights. As part of a global network spanning 91 labs across 115 countries, the Lab serves as a testbed for new ideas, accelerating solutions toward the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

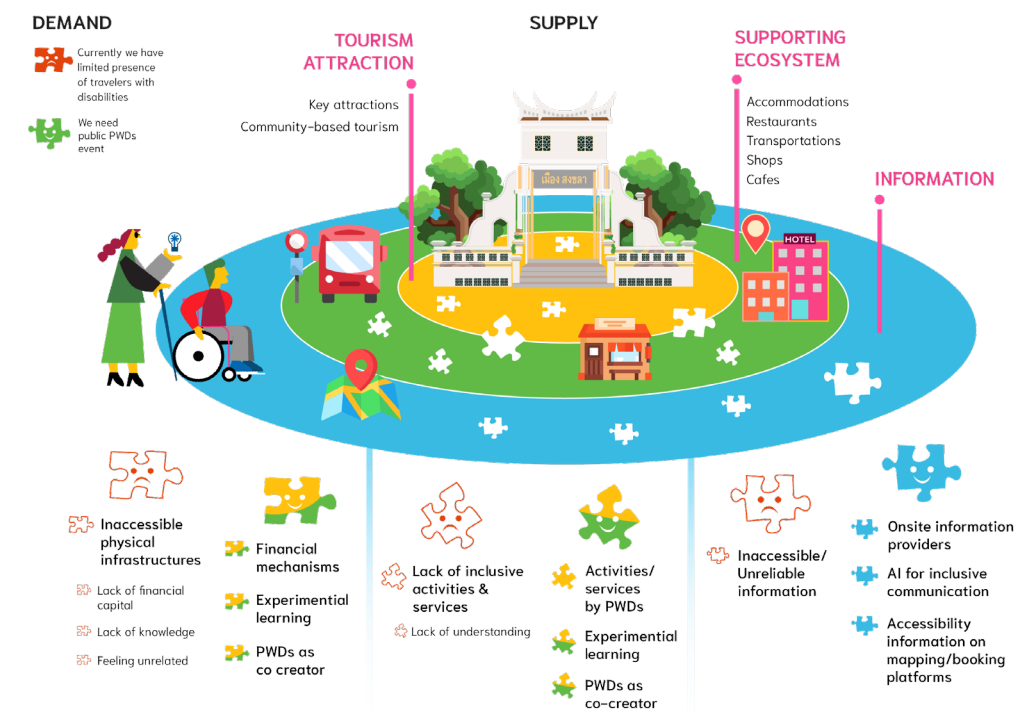
AccLab brings together grassroots innovations, behavioral insights, and emerging technologies to address key issues such as air pollution, digital transformation, and inclusion. By applying gamification, citizen science, and AI-driven analytics, we generate real-time insights to shape policies and drive impactful change.

- ✿ **Air Pollution:** Through ethnographic research, systems thinking, and sensemaking, we are developing a System Map and an integrated simulation tool to analyze key dynamics and guide policy interventions.
- ✿ **Digital Transformation & Inclusion:** Supporting the Thai Government in leveraging AI and data science, we work to improve the accessibility, efficiency, and effectiveness of public services, ensuring digital transformation leaves no one behind.
- ✿ **People with Disabilities & Social Innovation:** Our work extends to inclusive development, applying innovative methodologies to empower marginalized groups and foster social change.

Collaboration for Impact

We work closely with the Thailand Policy Lab—a partnership between UNDP and the Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council (NESDC)—to integrate experimentation and evidence-based policy-making. By bridging government, private sector, academia, and civil society, we accelerate the adoption of scalable, high-impact solutions for Thailand's most pressing challenges.

Learn more about Acc Lab: www.undp.org/acceleratorlabs/undp-thailand-accelerator-lab





Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council (NESDC)

The National Economic and Social Development Council (NESDC) is a central planning government agency, a kind of policy think tank to the government. Its main duty is to formulate national five-year socio-economic and social development plan and provide policy or strategic advice to the government or the cabinet on national development issues and directions suitable for the global and national contexts. This action will be carried is based on accurate and precise economic and social situation analysis. At the same time, NESDC acts as the main agency to support and provide guidelines for policy, strategy, or development plan formulation of other government agencies at the national, regional, provincial, and local levels.

NESDC's approach is based on the principle of considering the best benefits for the country's development. And its process for planning or making recommendations will be based on comprehensive and solid academic analysis, using the best knowledge and data available. Nevertheless, this includes also participation and listening to opinions and suggestions from all relevant parties, including government agencies, private sector, academic, and general people or NGOs. The NESDC's goal is to make sure that the country's public policy process will create quality policies, strategies, plans and development projects, as well as enhancing ability of the process to drive the development of the economy, society, natural resources and the environment that is effective, efficient, and foster sustainability for the country as a whole.

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United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Thailand

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) works with over 170 countries around the world to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It has been a trusted partner of the Thai government and the Thai people for over 50 years. The UNDP's work in Thailand focuses on supporting and driving development to create positive, comprehensive, and sustainable social change, following a human-centered approach. This is done through various collaborative projects, including those that promote human rights, enhance the capabilities and equality of both men and women, youth, and vulnerable groups.

In Thailand, the UNDP collaborates with government agencies, the private sector, educational institutions, and civil society to provide policy advice and expert-level consultations. The goal is to exchange knowledge and drive development in various areas such as sustainable natural resource and environmental management, biodiversity conservation, climate change adaptation, anti-corruption efforts, creating livable and sustainable communities, and the development of social innovations.

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