

**Supporting Potential Women Exporters:
A Case Study of the Northern Homebased
Workers Network, Thailand**

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Executive Summary

This case study was commissioned by The North-South Institute, Ottawa, Canada, to profile initiatives that support export activities by potential women producers of goods and to make recommendations for follow-up activities with a particular focus on APEC's Committee on Trade and Investment (CTI). The case study was drawn from reviewing of various studies and reports, interviewing the supporting NGO and key leaders of the producer groups, field visits and focus group discussion. These groups are supported by local NGOs, the Sustainable Alternative Development Association (SADA), and Homenet Thailand.

The Asian financial crisis that struck Asia 1997 to 1999 severely affected the economy of Thailand, plunging its gross domestic product and constricting the employment opportunities for its labour force. It was believed that a huge number of retrenched workers turned to the informal sector as small scale traders in urban areas or as farm workers in rural areas. The government then tried to reinvigorate the economy by promoting small and medium scale enterprises through existing support channels such as the One Million Baht Loan Fund for Village and Urban People and the One Tambon One Product (OTOP) Project aimed at building capacity of small producer groups. This was also responsive to the King's Philosophy on a self sufficient economy at the family and community level. By the year 2000 until 2003, the Thai economy started to recover, with a steady rise in its GDP rate from 4.4% in 2000, 5.4% in 2002 and to 5.6% in 2003.

The case study of the NHWN presents the experiences of the largest network of self-help grassroots women's groups across the northern provinces of the country. These groups were organized to address economic and social problems of their members. The groups engage in cotton woven fabrics, woven cloth making, basketry and antique, woodcarving, mulberry paper production, food preservers and herbal products.

The group organization is viewed as a crucial tool to empower marginalized women producers for social and economic development. They have obtained resources and information and learned to move through collective action. They have gained self-confidence and recognition from their family and the public.

The women's groups adopted different strategies to overcome various problems confronted by their enterprises. A significant collaborative strategy that they set up was the Learning Center (LC). The Learning Center is a marketing unit that facilitates access to foreign markets as an overall strategy for economic sustainability. The LC also addresses social protection.

The LC was set up as a non-registered cooperative formed through mutual investment among its members. The Learning Center markets various products but specializes in naturally dyed woven fabrics. A website was launched to be a market channel. Presently, the Japanese market is likely to be its most extensive market. In the past, the LC experienced unsuccessful joint investment ventures with two exporting companies due to its weakness in business relations. With regards to its social protection agenda, it has been promoting gender sensitivity, health, and safety

awareness and strategies at work among the various women's groups, with support from the Sustainable Alternative Development Association (SADA).

The NHWN has successfully generated public recognition as a model of an outstanding membership-based organization. As an organization, it has improved the business management skills of its members. Their access to e-commerce has expanded their market and led to an increase in their sales during the last 2 years. They are now recognized by local authorities and concerned organizations as pioneers in the promotion of decent work for informal workers through establishing health and safety awareness and practices among grassroots entrepreneurs.

The NHWN faces a number of challenges. The approach of the LC as a formal marketing enterprise demands technical expertise to ensure its sustainability. The two pronged social and economic goals of the LC require dual programming and corresponding human resource capacities.

The business capacity of the LC is still limited particularly in its ability to learn and analyze new information. The inadequacy of their capital fund is a major constraint in expanding their marketing business. They have good opportunities to access foreign buyers but their skills on business negotiations and e-commerce still have to be improved. There is an enabling policy to promote small and micro-enterprises but the services tend to focus on educated entrepreneurs rather than marginalized and community based women producers.

The study forwards the following recommendations to APEC CTI:

1. **Support training of grassroots producers that will ensure their capacity to sustain and develop their business over the long-term.** Training needs analysis must be done to identify particular needs of and training strategies appropriate for non-literate/semi-literate and economically vulnerable grassroots producers. The needs analysis and the resulting training strategies should take into consideration the links between the marginalized producers and the rapidly advancing technologies.
2. **Address the gaps in access to financial resources among marginalized women who have the potential to become successful entrepreneurs.** Adequate start up funds for businesses is very important. The amount required to start the LC was above the accessible micro-finance loans to these women. They could not turn to financial institutions, however, due to a lack of collateral. With a limited number of women with capacity to contribute to its capital fund, the LC could not invest and expand further its marketing business.
3. **APEC could foster the organization of discussion forums aimed at creating partnerships between small producers and international markets including the larger trade organizations, fair trade organizations, and alternative trade organizations.** The forums could bring together various stakeholders including business, civil society, and grassroots organizations. These discussions must cover relevant concerns among marginalized producers. One could be a value chain analysis that will review stakeholders

and responsibilities along the chain. Another could be the promotion of corporate social responsibility. Promotion of niche markets for grassroots women's producers groups could be initiated by these forums.

4. **Improve the capacity of the LC on e-trade aimed at facilitating women's producers groups' access to foreign markets.** APEC-CTI can invest in training supporting NGOs who could eventually conduct training at local levels. Special training designed for small producers will enhance their appreciation of e-trade and their skill in utilizing e-trade technologies in the long term.

5. **Conduct research and studies to draw attention to the issue of intellectual property rights for handicraft products produced by marginalized exporting producers.** Most of the hand woven cotton fabrics of the network members show indigenous patterns and designs. Each region of Thailand has its own traditional style. Different names are assigned to these fabrics according to their patterns and designs as well as on the production process. The small women producers must be prepared and protected to tackle issues on intellectual property rights as they expand their marketing business.

Glossary

CHN	Chiangmai Homeworkers Network
CSP	Cotton and Silk Project
EOW	Expansion of Employment Opportunities for Women in Thailand
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNP	Gross National Product
HNT	Homenet Thailand
ILO	International Labour Organization
LFS	Labour Force Survey
MOLSW	Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare
NESDB	National Economic and Social Development Board
NHWN	Northern Home-based Workers Network
OSH	Occupational Safety and Health
SADA	Sustainable Alternative Development Association
SIF	Social Investment Fund
STEP	Strategies and Tools against Social Exclusion and Poverty
TAO	Tambon Administration Office
WISE	Work Improvement in Small Enterprises

Introduction

Methodology and Organization of the Paper

The case study adopted various approaches to obtain information. The literature review was made through various studies relating to macro context analysis and informal economy of Thailand. Several interviews were made with key informants, including representatives of SADA, the NGO that was instrumental in providing support to the marginalized women producers. These interviews were conducted in parallel with reviews of available reports. The group discussion among the key leaders of the producer groups was held during a visit to Chiangmai to get their insight. Informal observation was employed throughout the information gathering and interviewing.

The paper is divided into 4 parts. The methodology and organization of the paper are set out in the Introduction. Chapter 1 presents an overview of the macro level economy in Thailand, with emphasis on the financial crisis and its impact. A review of the criteria and statistics of informal economy is made. Various governmental programs to promote the informal economy under small and micro enterprises are described. Chapter 2 presents the case study, the Northern Home-based Workers Network (NHWN). The network promotes productivity and marketing development through the Learning Center (LC) to act as a marketing unit and provide other social services including skill training and e-trade. The joint investment of two exporting companies illustrates an unsuccessful effort and the lessons learned by the group members in trying to expand to wider markets. A key component of capacity-building for exporting included introducing mechanisms for social protection and health and safety at work, as well as gender awareness. Conclusions and recommendations are provided in Chapter 3.

Chapter 1. The Macro Level Context

In 2002, the population of Thailand was 63.46 million. Out of that number, 47.68 million persons over age 15 constituted 34.26 million of the working population and 13.42 million of the non-working population. Thailand has a steady upward movement in the sex ratio, at 100.5 females to 100 males (see Table 1).

Table 1 Age-specific female sex ratios in Thailand

Years	<i>(unit: per 100 males)</i>							
	All ages	0-4	5-14	15-24	25-34	35-49	50-64	65+
1985		99.5	95.9	96.2	96.5	100.0	101.3	106.9
128.5								
1990	99.7	96.4	96.4	96.3	98.6	100.9	108.4	127.6
1995	100.0	96.3	96.4	96.7	97.2	101.4	108.0	127.9
2000	100.5	96.4	96.6	96.7	97.1	101.4	107.4	130.7

Source: ESCAP, Statistics on Women in Asia and the Pacific 1999 (ST/ESCAP/1995)

The financial crisis and its impact

Thailand had several high-growth-rate years in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Between 1988 and 1990, it had double-digit growth; between 1991 and 1995, the average annual growth rate of GDP was 8.7 percent; the GNP grew by 7.2%. After the crisis outbreak in mid 1997, the real GDP growth rate of Thailand was -1.4% in 1997 and -10.8% in 1998. It expanded by 4.2% in 1999. From 2000 to 2003, the Thai economy continued growing at growth rates of 4.4%, 5.4% and 6.7% respectively.

The crisis resulted in heavy economic and employment contraction. Thailand suffered the greatest percentage of losses in jobs, and the increasing price of consumer goods (Suwannarat, 2002). There was a significant rise in unemployment from 2.2% to 4.6% between 1997-1998. The proportion of the female workers out of the total number of laid-off workers was 48.3 percent in the pre-crisis period. The ratio increased to 57.6 percent in the course of the crisis (ESCAP, 2003). The incidence of poverty increased from 11.5% in 1996 to 13.0% in 1998, to 15.9% in 1999, and to 15.0% in 2000 (FES, 2002). According to NESDB, the crisis contributed to a greater reduction in employment among males than females (FES, 2002). Some critics suggest that this fluctuation came about through the greater numbers of women who took on multiple jobs.

The total workforce (Table 2) increased from 33.81 million in 2001 to 34.26 million in 2002. The aftermath of the 1997 crisis resulted from the higher rates of higher open unemployment. During the crisis, it was believed that many of those retrenched sought work in the informal sector as small traders in urban areas, or as farm workers in rural areas.

Table 2 Employment and Unemployment in Whole Kingdom, 2001-2001

(Unit : 1,000,000 Persons)

Employment status	2001	2002
Total population	62.93	63.46
Total labour force	33.81	34.26
Employed persons	32.10	33.06
<i>Agriculture</i>	13.61	13.05
<i>Non-agriculture</i>	18.49	19.02
Unemployed	1.12	0.83
Seasonally inactive labour force	0.59	0.36
Not in labour force	13.24	13.42
Person under 15 years of age	15.88	15.79
Unemployment rate (%)	3.31	2.42

Source: NSO, Report of the Labour Force Survey Whole Kingdom, 2001-2002

Between 1997 and 1999, the number of private employees declined by 12.3%, while the number of government employees increased by 9.1% (see Table 3). The table also shows a shift from paid employment to self-employment with considerable increases for employers (22.1%) and own-account workers (8.5%). The rise in the number of employers means that the number of enterprises is rapidly growing.

Table 3 Employment by Status, February 1996-2001 (million)

Employment status	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Employers	0.84	0.77	0.78	0.94	0.96	0.97
Government employers	2.31	2.42	2.67	2.64	2.79	2.88
Private employees	11.61	11.58	10.63	10.16	11.00	11.56
Own-account workers	9.36	9.30	9.48	10.09	9.74	9.55
Unpaid family workers	5.80	6.03	5.71	6.04	5.81	5.45
Member of producers' cooperatives	-	-	-	-	-	0.04
Total	29.92	30.10	29.27	29.86	30.30	30.44

Source: NSO, Labour Force Survey, various years

Generally, the formal sector employees of private formal sector and public sector are covered by the social security system and government benefits. The informal sector employees are offered various social assistances and services. Based on the MOLSW's estimation (2002), approximately 23 million people do not have access to the social security system. The Ministry is extending social protection to this group. This population includes; home-workers and subcontracting workers, credit union cooperatives and groups, farmers and fishermen, public drivers, self-employments, seasonal workers, and other informal services.

The informal economy in Thailand

There are no clear and standardized definitions of the informal sector in Thailand. The NSO uses criteria based on qualitative characteristics of the sector, and the number of employees (less than ten) to categorize workers and establishments as part of the 'informal sector' (FES, 2002). Based on NSO definitions, the majority of employers (with less than ten employees) in Thailand engage in the informal economy.

One estimate in Thailand based on LFS found that the informal economy declined from 60 to 57 percent of total employment in Bangkok between 1980 and 1994 when there was an economic boom, but by 1999 it had climbed back to 60 percent as an after-effect of the economic recession in 1997, and reached 73 percent in 2001.

According to the third round of LFS in 2003, 69.8 percent of the total labour force engaged in informal economy, which is comprised of 56.4 percent in the farming sector and 73.3 percent of informal workers. The NESDB estimated that the informal economy in 2003 accounted for 45.6 percent of GDP worth 2.34 trillion baht. Of the total, 16.3 percent are engaged in agricultural activities and 83.7 percent in non-agricultural activities. The informal economy provided jobs for 23 million people, or around 70 percent of the labour force.

The workers in small-scale enterprises (with less than 50 workers) played an important role in the Thai economy. The effects of the crisis also hurt the self-employed and workers in small and informal enterprises, who found themselves perhaps more vulnerable than employees of large firms (Suwannarat, 2000). One critical problem of those engaged in informal economy was the lack of social protection. They failed to contribute to the social insurance or pay taxes due mainly to meager income. The self-employed workers in the informal sector were often unable to pay due to the irregularity of informal employment.

Women have been one of the most affected social groups, whose situation worsened with the onset of the crisis. The female layoffs exceeded male layoffs. The proportion of the female workers out of the total number of laid-off workers was 48.3 percent in the pre-crisis period. The ratio increased to 57.6 percent during the course of the crisis (ESCAP, 2003).

The women in the informal economy who were working long hours for very little pay faced difficulties in keeping their family's real income from falling sharply in the face of rising costs and declining earnings. They faced other significant problems related to their lack of legal rights and access to resources. Occupational safety and health, and other risks were of utmost concern due to unregulated and unprotected work. Apart from health hazards, the informal workers were often exposed to environmental hazards. The rising costs and declining demand had a serious effect on informal workers in addition to deteriorating conditions in local and regional markets. Those who were able to maintain customers were often forced to work under even more hazardous conditions and for much longer hours to compensate for the significant decline in their real incomes (FES, 2002).

Government programs to promote small and micro enterprises

At the onset of the crisis, the government of Thailand tried to reinvigorate the economy by promoting small and medium enterprises. Many of the support mechanisms were provided through existing support channels. In 2001, the public expenditures for community and social services were 42% of total expenditure. The government spent 58% of the fiscal budget to community and social services.

The government is currently promoting small and micro enterprises through various channels in accordance with the King's philosophy on 'sufficient economy' at family and community levels through certain community-based support programs. The role of civil society and community-based organizations has been recognized. Interventions are made through various economic activities.

Most of the programs involve micro-finance and small and micro enterprise promotion. Of those, the outstanding programs included: the Loan Fund for village and urban people, which has provided one million Bath (USD 25,000) to each village for use as a revolving loan fund to poor people. Many problems due to inefficient management of micro-finance management have occurred. The needy marginalized people have least benefited. The One Tambon One Product (OTOP) Project was aimed at building the capacity of grass roots producer groups in product development, business management, packaging and design, marketing channels, technical assistance and networking. The export promotion training has been provided to small and newly-started business entrepreneurs by the Department of Export Promotion. Based on their assessment, the project has successfully helped to increase total sales of the beneficiaries who are mostly the new-start business entrepreneurs, while many critics assert that the more vulnerable producer groups have benefited less.

The following case study illustrates an initiative of a large group of marginalized women producers from the northern region of Thailand. It is the largest network of mutual self-help women's groups across the northern provinces organized to address

economic and social problems. The group has adopted different strategies to overcome such problems, including the formation of the Learning Center (LC) as a marketing unit, and accessing foreign markets as an overall strategy for economic sustainability. The strategy of building social security through social protection, health and safety at work, and gender equality has also been adopted as an important component.

Chapter 2. The Northern Home-based Workers Network (NHWN)

The north of Thailand is a mountainous region made up of 17 provinces, having one third of the total area of the nation. Agriculture has long been the lifeblood of this region. Vegetables and fruit crops have increased in importance to the northern economy, with significant growth in revenues. The major industrial activities are focused on electronics, sugar processing, and cement, with large earning also made from the production of ceramics and handicrafts. In 1998, agriculture output increased by 2 percent, while industrial output jumped by 16.3 percent, led by the export production of electronic parts and sugar production. The service sector grew by 7 percent resulting from the increase in the number of tourists visiting the region.

The northern economy grew at an annual average rate of approximately 6 percent in 1992, and slowed to only 3-4 percent as the financial crisis froze new lending from the banks. Future growth in the northern economy is dependent on further stimulus for economic growth outside of Bangkok, and the improvements in the liquidity of small-medium enterprises in the region. Based on the survey of service and trade businesses of NSO (2002), 99.9 percent of the total establishments are micro and small enterprises with 1-50 employees. The revenue from small enterprises accounted for 79.6 percent of total revenue. As of 2003, access to information technology (computer) was quite low, as 92.4 percent of the total establishments in the north do not have a computer.

Northern Thailand is divided into two major parts: upper north, also called the 'Lanna Kingdom,' comprised of 9 provinces (Chiangrai, Chiangmai, Maehongson, Phayao, Nan, Lampang, Lamphun, Prael, Utraradit), and lower north, comprised of 8 provinces (Sukhothai, Tak, Phitsanulok, Kamphaengphet, Phichit, Petchabun, Nakhonsawan, Uthaithani). The North of Thailand is an important and prolific tourist destination, serving as a center of cultural traditions and religion for Thailand, and containing many ancient historical sites and monuments. Chiangmai is the hub of regional tourist activity, offering tourists numerous historical attractions along with shopping facilities for local and hill tribe handicrafts. Northern crafts and textiles are praised worldwide, both for their craftsmanship and for their originality of design. Woodcarving is another local craft that has lately enjoyed great popularity.

The Northern Home-based Worker Network (NHWN)

The Northern Home-based Worker Network (NHWN) is a network of 64 villager groups with over 2,400 marginalized home-based producers in 9 provinces from northern Thailand. The network's members engage in a wide array of production industries including; cotton weaving, woven cloth making, basketry and antique, woodcarving, mulberry paper production, food preservers, and herbal products. These

villagers agreed to formally organize as a network in 2000 with the purpose of facilitating productivity and marketing skills, expanding marketing channels, becoming a unit for negotiations and a forum to exchange experiences and information, and to promote social protection and safety and health among the members.

In 1992, under the support of ILO (DANIDA), a number of homebased producers in Chiangmai, NGO workers and governmental officers organized as a network called Chiangmai Homeworkers Network (CHN). The CHN's activities mainly focused on income-generating activities of craft and preserved food products and exchanged experiences and shared information. The awareness of the need for social protection was also raised among the members. After completion of the project in 1996, the CHN became inactive due to a lack of essential resources and the effect of the financial crisis. During that time, the CHN's group leaders participated in various occupational development activities under other projects of governmental organizations, academic institute, and NGOs in Chiangmai. At those forums, they met with home-based producer groups from other northern provinces to exchange experiences and information. The effort to form as a regional network among the home-based worker groups was initiated and tested several times. Until 2000, these villager groups successfully formed as a regional network, called the Northern Home-based Workers Network (NHWN). 52 villager groups from the other 6 provinces from the North joined the network. The NHWN thus became a forum for grass roots women to raise their concerns and problems, and mutually find solutions.

As a result of a self-evaluation in 1999, the members identified the priority needs to strengthen skills on group management and business management, with emphasis on product and marketing development so as to enhance a strong and efficient network. Co-funding from AusAID under the Australian Embassy and the ILO (STEP Project) was provided to the network through the Homenet North Project under the umbrella organization, the Sustainable Alternative Development Association (SADA). The project focused on strengthening group formation including leadership, group participation and negotiation. These activities helped to pave the way for the villager groups to become a strong and efficient network. During the project, the groups agreed to create a learning network of the specific product groups. As the cotton weaving group and cloth making group composed a large number of members, they formed into one learning network, and the rest, including basketry and antique, wood carving, mulberry paper production, food preservers, and herbal products production formed as another.

Objectives of the network

The overall objective of the network is to improve technical capacity of business management relating to productivity and marketing, as well as collective bargaining. Specifically, the network sought to strengthen the capacity of its members in relation to productivity and marketing skills, business management, and group organizing and leadership, in order to create a forum for exchanging experiences and disseminating information to the members, to expand the market channels particularly exporting market, to promote group saving fund; to prepare the establishment of the Learning Center (LC); to campaign on social protection and safety and health, and to serve as a coordination center for the members.

Profile of network members

In 2003, the number of network members increased to cover 64 villager groups with total members of 2,448 from 9 provinces in northern Thailand including Chiangmai, Chiangrai, Pha Yao, Nan, Lampang, Lamphun, Mae Hong Son, and Prae, and Uttradit. Most of the network members are women (90 percent female and 10 percent male) with ages ranging from 30-60 years. Farming remains the primary source of income, though handicrafts significantly contributed to household income. Based on the latest database of Homenet North, the household income of the members ranges from 3,000 baht (USD78.95) to 5,000 baht (USD131.58) a month. They have engaged in handicraft and cotton textile productions to earn supplementary income for 3 to 20 years. The network members have involved own-account workers and wage workers who have occasionally moved from one status to the other. The villagers have accumulated their local craft skills from generation to generation, particularly cotton textiles and woodcarving.

The central office of NHWN is located in the city of Chiangmai, sharing space with the office of SADA. The producers in each province are organized in groups known as sub-networks. The selected leaders then act as representatives of the sub-network at provincial levels. Most of the producer groups used to be an occupational group organized under the support of local governmental organizations and non-governmental organizations, but later became inactive once support projects ended. The group enterprises faced many problems, particularly a lack of access to markets and product improvement, and were not sustainable.

Most of the members' products are naturally dyed hand-woven cotton. The cotton fabrics are made into various types such as Sarongs (wrap around skirts), scarves, vests, garments and soft home furnishings. Many of them produce high quality cotton fabrics that appeal to both local and foreign buyers, particularly Japanese and European buyers. The features of each product would present native style and patterns from their local wisdom (traditional knowledge). The problems facing these small producers included a lack of a permanent market to sell their products, and little access to market information. Their products could not meet with market demand. The products are sold to subcontractors or middlemen who came to the village.

Management of the network

The network adopted a jointly-owned and democratic management. The 18 committee members were comprised of 2 representatives from each province. The working committee comprised of 12 members has also been selected to be responsible for 3 main tasks including: 1) general management of the network, 2) production and marketing, and 3) social protection and safety and health. The meeting of committee members would be held every three months to monitor planned activities, share experiences, and exchange information. The meeting venue would be rotated to each province.

The criteria for applying to the network were made. Apart from having a status as an occupational group, an application fee of 1,000 Baht (USD26.32) would be collected from each group as a contribution to the group's mutual fund. To ensure sustainability

of the network, a mutual group fund was set up to use for operation expenses of the network. In addition, the monthly membership fee of 200 Baht would be collected from the group members.

The profit earned from the total sales would be partly contributed to the fund. The home-based group in Chiangmai has played a crucial role in providing support to the network in general management. The network adopts specific strategies to empower their members including; 1) strengthening capacity of the members in relation to group organization, 2) enhancing productivity and marketing development, and 3) promoting social protection and health and safety at work. To strengthen group organization, the network provides leadership training, including how to plan and develop a proposal, financial management, and monitoring and evaluation for group leaders.

Promoting productivity and marketing development

In 2000, NHWN, under the auspices of the Sustainable Alternative Development Association (SADA), launched an 18 month project (2001 to 2003), named the “Strengthening the Coordination Center for Skill Development of the Northern Informal Women Workers’ Network” (SCCSD) with funding from the ILO (EOW Project). The total amount of funding was 1,564,500 Baht (USD 39,112.50). The specific objectives of the project include: (1) setting up the Learning Center (LC) as a marketing unit of the NHWN’s members, (2) improving business capacity of the group leaders through the provision of productivity and marketing skills training, (3) conducting the pilot action of social protection and occupational safety and health (OSH) among the members.

Under the project, various activities were conducted as a way to strengthen business capacity of the members as follows: (1) setting up the Learning Center (LC) to become a business unit of the network, (2) developing a database system of the members, (3) setting up a capital fund, (4) organizing product and marketing development training (5) expanding market channels, and, (6) conducting a pilot action on social protection.

The Learning Center (LC)

The Learning Center (LC) was set up with two main purposes: to be a learning center of the women producers, and to be a market channel for the member’s products. The LC was set up in the form of a cooperative by selling shares to the group members. The working committee of LC was comprised of the representatives of the sub-network who were appointed to provide overall management and marketing of the LC under close technical advice of SADA.

Products

The diversity of products of LC included local hand-woven cloth and naturally dyed woven fabrics to produce diversity of household accessories, wood carving, basketry, lacquer ware, mulberry paper from 64 producer groups (with 2,325 members).

Start-up funding

Start-up funding for the LC was obtained from 2 sources: (1) the investment of group members through the initial shares at 1,000 Baht (USD25) per share in total amount of 55,000 Baht (USD1,250), and (2) the initial capital fund of 78,711 Baht (USD 1,968) contributed under the SCCSD project. In 2003, the total capital fund of LC was 350,305.20 Baht (USD 7,633). The fund was divided for 3 parts: cash flow (40 percent), revolving loan fund (35 percent) for the members (shareholders), and operational expenses (25 percent). Due to a limited amount of cash flow, the LC could pay for the products from each group member at 3,000 Baht (USD75). The rest of the payment would be paid after selling the products. As of February 2003, the loan fund was offered for 2 rounds. A total of only 8 producer groups (3.84 percent out of the total 64 groups) benefited from the loan fund.

The management of LC

The working committee of LC, comprised of representatives of the sub-network from each province, was assigned to provide overall management and marketing of the LC under close technical advice of SADA. One manager was recruited to be responsible for accounting and administrative works under supervision of the working committee. Upon receiving of the orders, the manager would contact the group leaders who then place the order to their group members. The group leader would be responsible for quality control before sending the orders back to LC. The price would be marked up based on the quality. The stock of products could not be kept due to limited warehouse space and capital funding.

Skills and product development training

The skills and product development training were provided for network members under the SCCSD project, including; garment and cloth design, product diversity, colouring, and improving the sewing standard. The study trip to visit other small enterprise groups was organized. Due to limited funds, the 6 groups that produced quality products but lacked a market channel were selected as the pilot groups to benefit from the training. The marketing consultant was also contracted to provide marketing and product development skills to the pilot groups.

Market channels

Under funding from SCCSD, the e-commerce system was introduced to LC's members as a way to expand market channels to national and foreign buyers. A website www.homenetnorth.org was created for 2 years (June 2003 – June 2005) by a consultant company. The order form was designed for buyers in the website. The training for the members regarding the e-commerce system and its benefits was held. The producer members participated in selecting the quality products to demonstrate on the website. The brochures and product catalogue for advertising and distribution were made with funding from the project. Currently, the market channels of LC include direct sales and market linkage for the groups to sell their products at various trade fairs and bazaars. The LC has organized an exhibition and trade fair. The meetings between the producers and some exporting companies were held to discuss

design and productivity. The network members learned market analysis. The government provided market opportunities to small producers such as the OTOP promotion project through trade fairs and bazaars.

Currently, a number of Japanese customers have become the LC's major buyers. Most of these customers met with the producers at various trade fairs and began to contact the LC. Some of those buyers were the owners of local craft shops in Thailand and ordered the products for their shops. The major buyer of LC from Japan would periodically come to the LC to check on new products prior to placing the orders. Normally, the LC would be responsible for shipping the products to Japan. The LC would regularly contact the buyers upon releasing the new products. The shipping of products for export would be made through a cargo company.

Finance: the joint investment with two exporting companies

In 2001, the LC decided to enter a joint investment with 2 exporting companies, the Jomkham Co., Ltd., and the DD Nature Craft Co., Ltd., to be able to access a wider foreign market. The Jomkham Co., Ltd. is owned by a foreigner engaged in the marketing of handicraft products to local and foreign markets. He used to be a big buyer of the network members in past years. The business agreement was that the LC would get a 20 percent share of the profit earned every month. The prices of the products were marked up by the company anywhere from 200 percent to 300 percent, resulting in higher market product pricing. The producers were made to agree that they would only produce for that company and could not sell their products to other markets. The company expected to control production of producers in a manner of factory-line management, i.e. producing materials in parts and finally assembling the parts in one place. The unclear communication between the manager and the producers due to the lack of a written contract often led to management conflicts. The LC decided to call off the business agreement after 6 months of operation.

In mid 2002, SADA, as the umbrella organization of the NHWN, decided to invest with the DD Nature Craft Co., Ltd. in marketing handicraft products of the network members. They agreed to set up a joint investment company, named the Common Co. Ltd., supported by the registered fund of 500,000 Baht (approximately USD 12,000). The agreement was made that permanent market and product development would be granted to the network members. The DD Company had experience in exporting business of handicraft products for many years. The company agreed to pay 10 percent of the monthly profit to SADA as a consultant. Under the agreement, the orders of the products would be placed to SADA, who would manage the production. After 4 months operation, the company did not succeed in providing a clear business plan to SADA. The company also broke the contract agreement by trying to make a direct contact to the producers, which led to several conflicts with the network members due mainly to the lack of a written contract. SADA decided to withdraw its shares from the company after four months of operation.

At present, the LC is operated by a Chiangmai sub-network team, under close assistance of SADA. The working group has revised its marketing strategy aimed at increasing total sales of the products by providing commission to the sales person. To expand the business, the group has reinvested the capital by increasing shares in a

total amount of 80,000 Baht (approximately USD 2,0000) expecting to increase payment to the producers.

Promoting social protection, health and safety at work

Over the past years, the promotion of social protection, including occupational safety and health, was introduced to the members through a project of SADA. Under the Homenet North Project of SADA, these marginalized women realized the need for social protection, particularly the serious occupational safety and health hazards. The immediate priority was for health care. They were more inspired through exposure trips to visit various community-based funds. The group set up a mutual self-help fund in 2001, called Health Care Fund for the Northern Home-based Workers, to provide benefits to the members in case of accident and sickness, and also as an emergency loan fund for health care of the family members. The fund was financed from 3 sources: members' contributions of 100 Baht (USD 2.63) a month; donation from group members of 20,000 Baht (USD 526.32); and profit sharing of the LC.

The network initiated a pilot project to promote health and safety at work. It was implemented in the form of a cluster project through participation of various stakeholders at the community level including community leaders, local authorities, health officials, and OSH experts. 6 women groups were selected as the target group of the project. The promoting of health and safety at work was made by the OSH experts with the aim to improve the working conditions in the informal economy. Four types of occupational groups joined the activities. The training on WISE Technique and JSA were provided to the group leaders, local authorities, and community leaders who were expected to then become trainers themselves. The forums were created among the stakeholders to follow up with the experiment activities and to exchange information.

The introduction, which focused on the important connection between clean production technology and quality sustainable jobs was made to the members. The activities include the adaptation of appropriate technology in the production process, which would result in the improvement of working conditions, material management and waste reduction, and basic safety measures.

Gender sensitivity training

Gender analysis training was launched for the network members to promote gender sensitivity and gender planning. The project encouraged a strong collaboration of various stakeholders in local community through a forum to discuss gender involvement in the occupational promotion of the community. Several meetings with local authorities to discuss the role of TAO in promoting women's occupations were organized.

Impacts

Greater public recognition

NHWN is currently the largest regional network of grass root producers of handicraft products in northern Thailand. The network received greater recognition from public and private organizations. Over the past years, many invitations to join various exhibitions and bazaars, as well as seminars were issued to the network. It became a well-known exposure place, and an outstanding case of a grass-roots women's network among different organizations including governmental and non-governmental organizations, other community-based organizations, and foreign organizations. In 2003, over 30 groups came to visit the network.

A model of membership-based organization

The network created an effective membership-based organizational structure. It was jointly owned and democratically managed to carry out the economic activities of its members. It was quite successful in expanding its coverage to many groups in other provinces, making it the largest network of marginalized women in northern Thailand. In their view, the network became a valuable forum to exchange experiences and to learn new technology and information in addition to helping access a wider market. The strategy of training the group leaders who would further train their group members was a success. The mutual fund of each sub-network was setting up to ensure the sustainability of the activities. The group leaders gained better confidence and improved their leadership skills. They were able to convene at various meetings and express the interest of their members. The other community-based organizations came to visit the network and learned on the model of group organizing.

Learning to become an efficient marketing unit

The initiative of setting up the LC as a business unit benefited the members in various ways. Apart from access to wider local and foreign market channels, it served as a coordinating center to provide technical and information support to the members. The LC became a locomotive to strengthen the network as well as improving various entrepreneurial skills of the members.

Business management skills improved

The group leaders learned the necessary skills of business management. They were trained on costs and pricing. They gained knowledge of how to mark up the price of their products. A model of business units in the form of jointly owned input supply, credit, and marketing services was experimented with. The LC became a business unit owned by a group of marginalized women producers who promoted better working conditions, environmental consciousness, waste production and higher quality of goods.

Product development skills improved

The products of the members were improved in terms of colour, pattern, and size to meet the foreign market demand. They can create identities of their products. The group leaders harnessed the ability to create new designs resulting in diversity of the patterns. The products of the members were graded based on the quality. Recently, the products of 6 groups, including 3 groups from Chiangmai, 1 group from Nan, and 2 groups from Lamphoon were selected as the OTOP Project. The private enterprise assisted the LC on skill development to meet market demand.

Access to e-trade

The e-trade skills were introduced to the producer members, and a website developed to advertise and become a marketing channel. The database was made containing basic information about the producers as well as enterprise information. The basic information included: the name of the group, the number of the group members, contact person and address, the amount of capital fund of the group, and production capacity. The enterprise information contained: the order form, stock form, sale records, producer profiles, customers profile, and accounting and financial records. The database would help to keep the profile of the producer groups, their production capacity and limitation.

Market expansion

The market channels of LC have expanded. The members are aware of the need to use various media to present and advertise their products, including catalogues and brochures, as well as attending various exhibitions, trade fairs, and bazaars. They have gained some experience in market analysis from direct contact with the buyers. The group has been able access wider markets, particularly those of foreign buyers. Japanese buyers have become the main customers who buy the products for their local shops and the shops in Japan. The marketing experiences have been transferred to other group members during the regular learning forums of the network. The LC is able to obtain permanent buyers, both local and foreign, who would provide market information. Some members could access wider national markets and receive regular orders. The LC has been recognized among governmental organizations and invited to various trade fairs. The members now have more confidence and an organized trade fair to sell their products.

Total sales increased

The LC helped to increase total sales of the product at a certain level. In 2002, the total sales of 470,000 Baht (about USD 11,500) to foreign buyers were increased to 740,000 Baht (USD 18,000) in 2003. The target home-based women producers confirmed the increasing of their income of around 1,000 - 1,500 Baht (USD 25.00 – USD 36.00) a month. The average monthly income of these small producers is around 3,000 Baht (USD 73.00) to 5,000 Baht (USD 121.00).

Innovative practices of decent work for informal workers

The NHWN has not only created more jobs, but also improved job quality. The innovative approach to promote social protection and safety and health at work among the marginalized women has become a successful instrument to empower the marginalized female producers.

Mutual welfare fund set up

The mutual welfare fund was created to provide health care benefits to the members. It includes a yearly medical check up, the insurance for group leaders, medical benefit of 600 Baht a year, and 2,000 Baht of cremation assistance. In their view, the benefit of a welfare fund should be considered as an incentive factor for membership of the network.

Safety and health for informal enterprises promoted

The pilot activities to promote safety and health at work for the marginalized woman producers were launched. Through different implementation stages, the network could sensitize local authorities, academicians, and other community leaders about the basic idea and need of promoting safety and health for the informal sector. Group members have been informed about the risks from work and hazardous working conditions so as to improve their working equipment and operation. The local authorities and health officers have agreed to provide special services in relation to safety and health for these small producers.

Appreciation for gender sensitivity

An increasing number of male participants as group leaders and in the network activities is evident. The male involvement in the production process has increased, from the boiling of cotton thread and collecting of raw materials from trees, to being responsible for the preparation of sale venues in various trade fairs. Some of them attend the network activities in place of their wives. The local authorities have promoted the role of female participation in decision making processes, particularly in the planning and sharing of local resources. The network members have been able to access the financial resources of TAO to organize certain skill training.

Lessons learned, problems and constraints

Group organization is a crucial tool

The organization of homebased worker networks is a crucial tool to empower marginalized woman producers to move toward social and economic development. They now have a better understanding of their social and economic conditions. They obtain resources and information and learn to move through collective action, express their collective interests, and gain solidarity through different political forums. They have gained self-confidence and recognition from their family and public. As an efficient community-based women's network, they have been able to gain access to different government resources including skill training, and assistance in marketing their products.

The group members are at different stages of development. Some of them have created mutual interest of the market linkage and form as a sub-network. The other groups are a well-established sub-network with efficient management and have the ability to protect the interests of its members. Such sub-network would create its own fund as financial resources for the members. The strengthening of group organization should focus on what differentiates these different stages so as to provide the appropriate tools for them. As for this case study, for example, the sub-network of Nan province has been identified as one of the most efficient groups. They have been able to create the group fund and market linkages for their members.

Given the large size of the NHWN's members as compared to its limited amount of funding, the strengthening activities would not create much impact on many of the members. The NHWN's members have different quality levels of their products, which creates specific needs and requires special support. The continuous funding could become a constraint.

Learning Center vs. marketing unit

The operation of the LC could be viewed as an approach to becoming a formal marketing business, though the path to complete such formalization is still unclear. In Thailand, the appropriate body of an informal group enterprise does not exist. The potential structures of cooperative and business companies still have many limitations and are inappropriate with the business unit of such marginalized groups. To become a viable enterprise, the LC should require certain technical inputs, in particular the possibility of making a feasible business plan in addition to securing other essential resources.

The multiple approaches of the LC to reach both economic and social goals should require different paths. The idea was brought up in the recent self-assessment meeting of the network whether both objectives should be try to be achieved at the same time. The marketing unit should be independently operated to reach a business goal of profit making and become sustainable. The network members in cooperation with SADA have discussed the possibility of establishing a formal business unit. The operation of LC is still facing the challenge of surviving within the highly competitive markets at local and foreign levels. It certainly requires specific services and close experienced technical consultation on marginalized producers to make it sustainable in a competitive market.

The capacity of marginalized producers is still limited. As for this case, it includes their capacity in marketing, designing, and accessing information and communication technology which may aid in entry to broader foreign markets. It also relates to developing equity in trading relationships such as the LC's experience with the two exporting companies. The producers must also strengthen their ability to continually develop their skills to adapt to new situations, this including the ability to find and analyze information pertinent to the evolving situation. Most of the existing training, seminars held by private and public organizations, are not fitted to the needs and capabilities of the members. The training for community-based organizations may require different designs and delivery techniques tailored to meet the real needs of the

grass roots women. The training needs should be understood prior to conducting the training.

The ability to find, learn, and analyze new information pertinent to evolving situations and surroundings is essential. Adaptability is also crucial for these home-based working women. The training for these marginalized women should not focus only on specific occupational skills. Most of the available training tends to cater little to the vulnerable women. These women require specific types of training in both the curriculum and delivery technique. Those packages and human resources are lacking. Prior to skill training, need assessment should carefully determine the women's existing skills and their training potential.

Formal training systems primarily address the skill requirements of formal wage job markets. The design of a training curriculum should be made with full participation of women groups, and their social partners and trainers. The specific training of a trainer (TOT) is a crucial tool for further dissemination to other group members. The training should focus on this specific package of training.

Inadequate capital fund is a major constraint. So far, the size of the capital fund is still very small when compared to the need among the group members to lend money to buy the raw materials. Due to the limited amount of funding, only 8 groups were granted access to loan applications. The LC also needs to raise more funds for stock keeping and general cash flow.

The ability of LC to expand to wider exporting markets is limited. Although the network's members have realized the potential of their products to meet foreign market demand. They have expressed strong confidence about the quality of products with their slogan, "Environmental Friendly, Continuously Folk Wisdom Preserving," which has become a strength for social marketing. The certain business skills pertinent to the export market, particularly trade negotiation and legal compliance, are required.

Under the SCCSD project, The LC had access to e-trading, but experienced limitations. The website was designed as a public relations and marketing channel, but mostly failed to obtain new buyers. New training packages should include a portion dedicated to informing the producers on e-commerce.

The ability to negotiate equity within trade relations is still weak. The experience of joint-investing with the 2 exporting companies showcased the inability of the LC in negotiating for equitable trade relations. However, in their optimistic view, the producers learned valuable lessons, particularly the necessity of a written contract, and the need to improve product design and packaging to compete in the export market.

The business negotiations with foreign buyers and the issue of unfair wages was raised by the small producers. For new orders, the buyers would not allow the producers to show or produce for the others. For every new design of hand woven materials, the producers needed to adjust hand woven equipment and prepare new volume of cotton yarn which required more time to prepare and weave. More often, the new designs of hand-made products would not come out as expected resulted in

the breaking of verbal agreements with buyers. The women sometimes did not receive any payment since there was no written contract, and wages would not be increased received for making a new design. In addition, when the traditional design of these local producers was combined with new designs at the request of the buyer, sometimes the buyer claimed ownership of the intellectual property.

The approach to decent work

The promotion of income generating activity is likely to be the best intervention for empowerment of women, gender sensitivity, and better job promotion. Awareness of better working conditions, higher productivity, environmental consciousness and higher quality of goods and services has been raised. The members have recognized that job quality means better business.

The initiatives on social protection and occupational health and safety remain at an early stage of implementation. The innovative system of mutual welfare funding could provide health care benefits to the members to a certain degree, but still have a long way to go before becoming sustainable. The fund has not yet covered all the contingency needs of the members. It could provide for the members in case of illness, accident, or death. The members have agreed that the benefits of the welfare fund are an incentive for them to join the network.

The initiative on occupational health and safety only benefited certain groups of woman workers due to a lack of funding. Awareness of the risks associated with poor working environments, low safety and health standards and environmental hazards is still weak among the majority of members, in particular for the women members, who combine their work at home with child rearing and chores. The program has been successful in terms of drawing in participation by involved local public organizations. Technical knowledge is still inadequate among the local authorities. Financial and technical resources are limited resulting in a slower distribution of knowledge among the members. More study and surveys are needed. Advice on low-cost improvements at the micro-enterprise level to prevent injuries and diseases is required. The appropriate design of the program to help micro-enterprises to simultaneously improve their incomes, productivity, and working environment should be developed. The skill of group leaders is still limited.

Limited access to support mechanisms

As a result of various policies on community-based enterprise promotion, the NHWN was able access a number of existing mechanisms. The local government organizations, i.e. the Industrial Promotion Department, the Exporting Promotion Department, and the Board of Investment included the village's producers as one of their target groups. Many invitations to various skill training sessions, seminars, and exposure trips abroad were provided to the network. Feedback from participants suggests that these programs should, however, focus instead on the individual entrepreneurs who own the businesses. Most of the services provided were likely focused on educated entrepreneurs, not marginalized producers from the community. Some of the women members who used to attend various government sponsored skill training confirmed that they could not get much benefit due to their literacy level, and the inappropriate curriculum for small producers.

Support organizations play a crucial role

A number of support organizations played a crucial role in encouraging and strengthening the NHWN. In particular, the organizations including SADA, Homenet Thailand, and CSP have provided continuous support to the network. They have increased necessary resources, and facilitated forums that pass on necessary skills to ensure long term sustainability of these women groups. They are:

- ***Homenet Thailand (HNT)***

Established in June 1998, HNT is the coordinating center of the network of homebased producers and homeworkers as well as concerned NGOs in the country. HNT created a forum of regional network of NGOs and homebased workers in the Northeast, the North and in Bangkok. It is currently reaching to the South. HNT provides coordination at the national and international levels on policies and issues related to homeworkers. The national committee is comprised of a representative from each region and external consultants. The overall mission is to consolidate, support, protect, and strengthen the identity and role of the homebased workforce in Thailand. HNT has involved workers or piece-rated workers who have long been exploited through production chains under trade liberalization. After the financial crisis, HNT has helped to organize the retrenched workers. Apart from making voice for the members, HNT adopts 2 main strategic approaches: promoting economic security (capacity building) and social security (labour protection, social protection, occupational safety and health). Apart from campaigning on the issues of home workers, HNT has leveraged technical and financial resources to NHWN.

- ***The Sustainable Alternative Development Association (SADA)***

SADA was registered in 2000 as a Thai association with the objectives of: promoting occupational development with the concern on energy and environmental conservation; encouraging self-reliance of grassroots groups; supporting gender equality; promoting participation of people in improving their quality of life, and, cooperating with public and private organizations working on energy and sustainable environment. SADA adopts the following strategies to achieve these objectives: participation, gender equity, cooperation, networking and partnership through various approaches including: community-based enterprises, social protection, organizational development, facilitating forums to share experiences and information, and GO-NGO collaboration.

SADA develops its multiple approaches through different activities including: energy saving and environmental conservation, community-based enterprise development and social protection promotion, and encouraging collaboration among local partners. As the umbrella organization, SADA provides constant support to the NHWN in relation to technical and financial resources.

- ***The Cotton and Silk Project (CSP)***

CSP is a program initiated in 2000 under the Ministry of University Affairs to assist textile producer groups improve their local textiles to earn more income while addressing environmental conservation concerns; to promote the utilization of appropriate technology in production so as to meet market standards, and, to expand woven textile markets to local and international markets. The program covers 17 northern provinces. The activities under the project include provision of various training on raw materials, pattern design, production processes of naturally dyed cotton, including spinning, dyeing yarn, design, waste

water treatment, product development, as well as the introduction of appropriate technology and marketing of the fabrics.

A number of NHWN's members engaged in woven textiles production are also the direct beneficiaries of the project. They have regularly gained technical knowledge to improve their products through various training and seminars.

Chapter 3. Conclusions and Recommendations

The recommendations of the paper are directed mainly to the APEC Committee on Trade and Investment. Most of the recommendations are identified from problems and concerns of the small exporting producers and supporting organizations interviewed in the case study. The case is presenting an attempt of grassroots women producer groups to set up a business unit to market their products under the strong support of NGO, who have limited knowledge of business management. Much remains to be done in terms of developing the sustainable plan for their business.

1. Training to promote long-term sustainability of grassroots producers' businesses should be the goal of any enterprise promotion. **The training of grassroots producers that will ensure their capacity to sustain and develop their business for a long-term should be supported.** The training needs analysis must be done to identify particular needs of and training strategies appropriate for non-literate/semi-literate and economically vulnerable grassroots producers. The needs analysis and the resulting training strategies should take into consideration the links between the marginalized producers and rapidly advancing technologies. Various skill training has been offered to the NHWN members, but focused too much on increased productivity and not enough on the details of running a viable business. A more sensible training package on group enterprise should be developed. The design of a training package should be tailored to address the problems and needs of small producers. The full package on business training, including a business and marketing plan, should be created to ensure the sustainability of the business. It should promote skills in business negotiation with local and foreign buyers.

2. **The gaps in access to financial resources among marginalized women who have the potential to become successful entrepreneurs should be addressed.** The ability of the marginalized women workers to access financial resources needed to become potential entrepreneurs, particularly start-up capital, is the most important factor. The access to a formal financial institute seems unavailable due to an absence of collateral. The LC lacks adequate capital fund to expand the marketing business. The amount required to start the LC is above the accessible micro-finance loans these women. They could not turn to financial institutions however due to lack of collateral. With a limited number of women with capacity to contribute to its capital fund, the LC could not invest and expand further its marketing business.

3. A discussion forum aimed at creating partnerships between small producers, international markets including other alternative trade organizations and fair trade organizations, as well as larger trade organizations would help to analyze the relationships of stakeholders along value chains. **APEC could foster organization of discussion forums aimed at creating partnerships between small producers and**

the international markets including the larger trade organizations, fair trade organizations, and alternative trade organizations.

The promotion of corporate social responsibility through the Alternative Trade Organizations (ATO), and the International Federation for Alternative Trade (IFAT), or other similar organizations should be recognized. The forum could bring together various stakeholders including businesses, civil society organizations and grassroots organizations. One could be a value chain analysis that will review stakeholders and responsibilities along the chain. Another could be the promotion of corporate social responsibility. Promotion of niche markets for grassroots women's producers groups could be initiated by these forums.

4. **E-trade capacity-building aimed at facilitating the groups' access to foreign markets should be improved.** APEC-CTI can invest in training for supporting NGOs who could eventually conduct training at local levels. Special training designed for small producers will enhance their appreciation of e-trade and their skill in utilizing e-trade technologies in the long term.

5. **Research and studies to draw attention to the issue of intellectual property rights over handicraft products produced by marginalized exporting producers should be conducted.** Most of the hand woven cotton fabrics of the network members show indigenous pattern and design. Each region of Thailand has its own traditional style. Different names are assigned to these fabrics according to their patterns and designs as well as on the production process. The small women producers must be prepared and protected to tackle issues on intellectual property rights as they expand their marketing business. This study should be conducted in order to assign proper value to the exported goods, and to help retain Thailand's unique regional identities.

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Annex 1. List of NHCN members

Provinces	Groups	Members	Female/male	Types of products
Chiangmai	14	483		Basketry and antique, cotton woven materials and cloths, woodcarving, Mulberry paper products
Chiangrai	9	225		Naturally dyed hand-woven textiles, artificial flower
Nan	10	572		Naturally dyed textiles, woodcarving
Lamphang	11			
Mae Hong Son	8			Naturally dyed hand-woven textiles and materials
Prae				
Lamphun				
Pha Yao				

Annex 2. Tables

Table 1 Illiterate Population (age 15 years and over) by sex (percent)

Year	Female	Male	Total
1985	15.5	6.7	11.1
1990	8.8	4.4	6.7
1994	9.4	3.9	6.7
2000	9.0	4.6	6.9

Sources: NSO, 2001b; NSO, 1994; NSO, 1990; and NSO 1985.

Table 2 Labour Force Status, February 1996-2001 (thousand)

Labour force status	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Total population	59,750.4	60,350.6	60,949.0	61,551.2	62,192.1	62,741.1
Total labour force	31,702.6	31,809.9	31,978.2	32,623.0	32,856.7	33,211.9
Labour force participation rate (%)	73.1	72.2	71.4	71.7	71.0	70.9
Employed	29,919.9	30,101.8	29,271.0	29,864.9	30,299.8	30,444.7
Unemployed	634.7	684.0	1,470.2	1,700.6	1,411.1	1,582.4
<i>Looking for work</i>	119.4	176.8	401.9	473.8	354.7	443.5
<i>Not looking available for work</i>	515.3	507.3	1,068.4	1,226.7	1,056.4	1,139.0
Seasonally inactive	1,148.0	1,024.0	1,237.0	1,057.4	1,145.9	1,184.8
Unemployment rate (%)	2.0	2.2	4.6	5.2	4.3	4.8

Source: NSO, Labour Force Survey, various years

Table 3 Employment by Status, February 1996-2001 (million)

Employment status	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Employers	0.84	0.77	0.78	0.94	0.96	0.97
Government employers	2.31	2.42	2.67	2.64	2.79	2.88
Private employees	11.61	11.58	10.63	10.16	11.00	11.56
Own-account workers	9.36	9.30	9.48	10.09	9.74	9.55
Unpaid family workers	5.80	6.03	5.71	6.04	5.81	5.45
Member of producers' cooperatives	-	-	-	-	-	0.04
Total	29.92	30.10	29.27	29.86	30.30	30.44

Source: NSO, Labour Force Survey, various years

Table 4 Thailand's illiterate population by sex, 15 years and older, 1985-1995

Year	Females	Males	Total
1985	16.0	7.7	11.9
1990	8.8	4.4	6.6
1995	8.4	4.0	6.2

Source: ESCAP, Statistics on Women in Asia and the Pacific 1999 (ST/ESCAP/1995)

Table 5 Labour force and participation rates by sex in Thailand

(unit: percent)

Labour Force		Participation Rate		Proportion of Female
Female	Male	Female	Male	Labour Force
16,802	19,462	55.7	64.6	46

Source: ESCAP, Statistics on Women in Asia and the Pacific 1999 (ST/ESCAP/1995)

Table 6 Female sex ratios in the Asian region

(unit: per 100 males)

Subregion/country	1985	1990	1995	1998	2000
East and North-East Asia	95.2	95.0	95.2	95.3	95.4
South-East Asia	101.2	100.8	100.5	100.4	100.4
Republic of Korea	98.3	98.8	98.5	98.3	98.3
Indonesia	100.9	100.6	100.5	100.4	100.4
Thailand	99.5	99.7	100.0	100.2	100.5

Source: ESCAP, Statistics on Women in Asia and the Pacific 1999 (ST/ESCAP/1995)

Table 7 Age-specific female sex ratios in Thailand

(unit: per 100 males)

Years	All ages	0-4	5-14	15-24	25-34	35-49	50-64	65+
1986		99.5	95.9	96.2	96.5	100.0	101.3	106.9
128.5								
1990	99.7	96.4	96.4	96.3	98.6	100.9	108.4	127.6
1995	100.0	96.3	96.4	96.7	97.2	101.4	108.0	127.9
2000	100.5	96.4	96.6	96.7	97.1	101.4	107.4	130.7

Source: ESCAP, Statistics on Women in Asia and the Pacific 1999 (ST/ESCAP/1995)