

Thailand Country Report 2008

Part 1: Natural Disaster Situation in Thailand

1.1 Geographical Characteristics of Thailand

Thailand is located between 5° and 21° N latitude and between 97° and 106° E longitude, bordering to the North by Laos and Myanmar, to the East by Laos and Cambodia, to the South by the Gulf of Thailand and Malaysia, and to the west by the Andaman Sea and Myanmar, and covering the area of 513,115 square kilometres. The weather is warm and rather humid with an average high temperature of 34°C and the low of 23 °C. As of December 2008, the total population stood at 65 millions.

1.2 Administrative system

Conventional long form: Kingdom of Thailand

Conventional short form: Thailand

Government type: Constitutional monarchy

Capital: Bangkok

Administrative divisions: 76 provinces (changwat) three types of government administration: central, provincial and local.

1.3 Typical natural disaster in Thailand

Similar to neighboring countries, Thailand has been affected by natural disaster including flood, landslides, urban fire, bush fire, windstorm, drought, thunderbolt-induced disaster, hail storm and epidemic. Only in 2004, the country faced for the first time in history the tsunami generated by the giant earthquake near Indonesia.

1.4 The Past Disaster Statistics

Year	Disaster types	Frequency (time)	People Killed	Total affected people	Damaged Value (USD)
2007	Flood	13 (54 provinces)	36	2,326,179	48,224,742
2007	Fire	1901 (71 provinces)	45	9,761	25,022,623
2006	Flood	6	446	6,050,674	275,069,103
2006	Fire	1731 (66 provinces)	37	9,708	30,967,018
2005	Drought	1 (71 provinces)	-	11,147,627	216,167,461
2005	Flood	12 (57 provinces)	75	2,874,673	1,692,238

Source: Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation

Part 2: Disaster Management System

2.1 The Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Act 2007:

The Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Act 2007 (DPM Act) has replaced the old and outdated 1979 Civil Defence Act and the 1999 Fire Prevention and Suppression Act. Entering into force on 6 November 2007, the new Act has 4

prominent features, including 1) Introducing 3 main policy- making and planning bodies including National, Provincial and Bangkok Metropolitan, 2) Having Prime Minister or an designated Deputy Minister as the National Commander, 3) Empowering Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation (DDPM) as the core government department in handling national disaster management work, and 4) Authorizing local governments to take responsibility of disaster management in their respective areas, in line with the Provincial Plan.

According to the new DPM Act, disaster can be classified into 3 categories namely: 1) Man-made and natural disasters; 2) Disaster resulted from air raid during wartime; and 3) Disaster resulted from sabotage or terrorist attack.

In terms of policy making, there are 3 levels: National, Provincial and Bangkok Metropolitan Administration level, which are chaired by the Prime Minister or an designated Deputy Minister, Provincial Governor, and the Bangkok Governor respectively. Each of three- policy- making organ is composed of the committee as follows:

(1) The National Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Committee (NDPMC)

Members of the committee come from various Ministries relevant to disaster management, i.e. Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, Ministry of Transportation and Communications, Ministry of National Resources and Environment, Ministry of Information, Communication and Technology, Ministry of Public Health, Ministry of Finance, and so on. The Prime Minister or designated Deputy Prime Minister is a chairperson, and Director-General of Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation (DDPM) is the secretariat of the committee. The Committee has prominent tasks and responsibilities for proposing the policy to formulate the National Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Plan, and effectively integrating the development on disaster prevention and mitigation mechanism among government agencies, local administrations, and other relevant private sectors.

(2) The Provincial Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Committee

The Provincial Governor as the Provincial Director will be the person responsible for disaster prevention and mitigation in his or her own province including appointment of the Provincial Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Committee, which come from representatives from other provincial disaster management agencies. The Secretariat of the provincial committee is the Chief of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Provincial Office. Their main duty of the provincial committee is to formulate the provincial disaster management plan under the guideline of national plan.

(3) The Bangkok Metropolitan Committee

Just the same as Provincial Director, Bangkok Metropolitan Governor as the Bangkok Director is responsible for disaster prevention and mitigation in Bangkok and to be the person to appoint the Bangkok Metropolitan Committee composing of delegates from government agencies including Bangkok Metropolitan, DDPM, Universities, and public charities and communities in Bangkok. The Committee has powers in drafting the Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Plan for Bangkok which shall be consistence to the National Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Plan, and other handling the disaster management related activities.

2.2 Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Plan

Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation, as the Secretariat of the National Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Committee, has the responsibility to devise the National Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Plan. This is to be done by conferring with relevant government agencies, local administrations, and private sectors. Once the National Plan is approved, it will be used as a master plan, upon which the provincial and Bangkok Metropolitan Administration will be based. The national plan will be in service for the period of 3 years. DDPM is to make sure that the new plan for the next 3 years is ready for use accordingly.

According to the National Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Act 2007, the three-level plan shall have substantial parts as shown in the table below.

National plan	Provincial Plan	Bangkok Metropolitan Plan
(1) Guide lines, measures and adequate budget to support disaster prevention and mitigation operations systemically and continuously	(1) The setting up of Special Command Center when ever disasters strike, that center shall be constructed and has authorities to command and oversee disaster prevention and mitigation operations and activities	(1) establishment of command center where disaster occurred for construction and authorization for disaster prevention and mitigation operation
(2) Guide lines and methods for providing aids and mitigate the impacts of disasters in both short and long term, together with evacuation procedures of effected people, government services, and other local administrations, supports effected people on their public health, public utilities and communication system	(2) Plan and procedures for local administrations for procuring tools, equipments, materials, hardware and vehicles in disaster prevention and mitigation operations	(2) plan and process to procure materials , tools , equipment, and vehicle for disaster prevention and mitigation
(3) Relevant government agencies and local administrations shall proceed all operations under (1) and (2), and shall seek for availability and mobility of fund	(3) Plan and procedures for local administrations for procuring an early warning system and other equipments to inform people and communities on incoming disasters	(3) plan and process to procure signaling devices or others for notifying the occurrence and expectation of a disaster
(4) Preparedness perspectives on support personnel, equipments and other materials to deploy upon disaster prevention and mitigation operations, and capacity building of those personnel and other people shall be included	(4) Operation plan for disaster prevention and mitigation at local administrations	(4) Bangkok Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Action Operation Plan
(5) Guide line on fixing, recovery and restoration to community right after disaster	(5) Cooperation plan to other relevant public charities.	(5) Coordination Plan with Public Charity Organizations in Bangkok

2.3 National Civil Defence Plan B.E. 2548 (2005)

The National Civil Defence Plan 2005 has been developed from the same plan yearly 2002 by the National Civil Defence Sub-committee authorized to improve plan. It still serves as the master plan for agencies responsible in disaster management in providing guidelines or formulating their operational plans. The plan will be reviewed and updated by DDPM every three year before proposed for approval by the National Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Committee. The plan has two parts: the first is of disaster prevention and mitigation, and the other is Civil Defence for Security (Rear-Area Protection).

2.4 Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation

Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation (DDPM), according to the Bureaucrat Reform Act 2002, has been formed by different organizations responsible for disaster prevention and mitigation as follows:

- (1) Civil Defence Division of Department of Provincial Administration;
- (2) Department of Accelerated Rural Development;
- (3) Department of Social Welfare, Department of Community Development;

and

- (4) Office of National Safety Council

In 2008, DDPM has 4,220 staffs. Among this number, 1,940 are civil servants and the rest are permanent and temporary employees.

According to Article 11 of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Act B.E.2550, DDPM is mandated to be central government agency under the umbrella of Ministry of Interior to undertake the work on disaster prevention and mitigation at a national level. Aside its Head Office in Bangkok, DDPM also has 18 Regional Operation Centers and 75 Provincial Offices across the country.

2.5 National Safety Council of Thailand

The National Safety Council of Thailand (NSCT) is the other disaster management policy making body at a national level. Unlike the National Committee on Disaster Prevention and Mitigation, the main focus of NSCT is man-made and technological disaster management. The council has been established in 1982 on the ground of the problem of road traffic accidents in Thailand which annually resulted in the tremendous loss of lives, properties and national economy. Later on, its responsibilities have been extended to cover the prevention of chemical accident, occupational accident, accident in home and public venues, considering preventive measure of fire in high-rise building, accident prevention in subway tunnel construction, providing education of safety etc. The NSCT is chaired by the Prime Minister and the committee comprises high level government officials from concerned government agencies, president of some charitable foundations and a few scholars. The Director General of Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation is a member and the Secretariat of the NSCT.

2.6 Disaster Management Approaches

To cope with the disastrous events, Thailand has prominently formulated the Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Act 2007 to be the national disaster management mechanism which is overseen by DDPM as the national coordinating organization on disaster prevention and mitigation. Moreover, DDPM in collaboration with other related organizations has dealt effectively with disaster

management underlining the concept of Total Disaster Risk Management (TDRM)- comprising preparedness, response, recovery, and prevention and mitigation, and according to the Civil Defence Plan 2005.

Recently, DDPM has developed the effective mechanism of preparedness perspective through the following approaches:

1) Establish the Ministerial Integrated Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Action Plan on Disaster Management focusing on participation of all involved agencies at provincial and ministerial, private and government sectors, and foundation and NGOs.

2) Devise the Strategic National Action Plan (SNAP) to provide direction of the country in understanding disaster risk reduction over the next decade in line with the context of HFA.

3) Contribute the concept of Community Based Disaster Risk Management (CBDRM) to sustainable development: As the local authorities and community are direct victims of disaster and are capable to reduce the existing risks, DDPM has continuously implemented CBDRM Project together with among governmental , non-governmental, private, civil defense , and international organizations.

4) Establish Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Academy (DPMA) to be the principal training venue in the field of disaster prevention and mitigation for government and private sector staffs and for the general public.

5) Enhance the capacity of local authorities in disaster management via the following activities:

- Training course of technical and technological know – how development
- Equipping local authorities with disaster management related equipments and tools
- Allocating annual central budget to local authorities for disaster management
- Increasing the numbers of community – based civil defence volunteers. (government official assistant). Currently, there are approximately 1,087,690 CDVs throughout the country to assist government officials in disaster prevention and mitigation undertaking.
- Providing efficient One Tambon One Search and Rescue Team (OTOS), each SAR team comprises of 10 members, in every Thailand's *tambon* all over the country (7,255 tambons).

6) Set up Emergency Response Team (ERT) for each type of large-scale hazards or incidents to operationally coordinate with Director at the provincial level and officers of the Ad-Hoc Directing Center in case of disaster occurring. Each ERT will consist of 10 members, including one (1) team leader, three (3) for planning, and six (6) for operation.

7) Formulate Evacuation Plan, and Drill, in accordance with the Provincial Civil Defence Plan, every province in Thailand will have to formulate "Provincial Evacuation Plan" which is corresponding to types of threatening disaster within the provinces, and have to conduct evacuation drill at least twice a year.

8) Provide the updated information on disaster risk areas for disaster risk reduction strategy planning.