

NON-STATE ACTORS AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN DEVELOPMENT -  
ACTIONS IN PARTNER COUNTRIES (MULTI COUNTRY) FOR NON-STATE ACTORS

# Best Practice Prik: Governance through Partnership Between the Municipality and the Community

- short version -

Thematic Area: Institutional Governance

Country of Origin: Thailand

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DELGOSEA



This project is co-funded by the European Union.



A Project implemented by the consortium: Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V., Thailand Environment Institute (TEI), Local Government Development Foundation Inc. (LOGODEF), United Cities and Local Governments for Asia and Pacific (UCLG-ASPAC), Association of Indonesian Regency Governments (APKASI), Association of Cities of Vietnam (ACVN), and National League of Communes/Sangkats of the Kingdom of Cambodia (NLC/S).



## ABOUT DELGOSEA

The Partnership for Democratic Local Governance in Southeast-Asia (DELGOSEA) was launched in March 2010 and is co-funded by the European Commission and the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) of Germany through the German Ministry of Development Cooperation.

DELGOSEA aims to create a network of cities and municipalities to implement transnational local governance best practices replication across partner countries: Cambodia, Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam. It supports the role of Local Government Associations (LGAs) in providing and assisting the transfer and sustainability of local governance best practices replication by local governments. Most importantly, through the exchange of best practices in the region, DELGOSEA intends to contribute to the improvement of living conditions of disadvantaged groups in Southeast-Asia by helping increase their participation in local planning and decision-making.

In the first phase of project implementation, an intensive research was done to determine Best Practices (BP) in local governance in each of the five participating countries. A consortium of international local governance experts and representatives from the LGAs reviewed and selected 16 BPs out of the submitted 27 BPs.

The project concentrated on the following four thematic areas while selecting best practice examples from the five countries:

1. Peoples' participation in planning and decision-making;
2. Institutional governance;
3. Inclusive urban public services;
4. Fiscal management and investment planning.

The following short descriptions BP is one of the selected 16 BPs in the area of institutional governance, provided by Prik in Thailand.

Starting in January 2011 through August 2012, DELGOSEA will continue to collaborate with LGAs and local governments to transfer best practices replication. The pilot cities/municipalities could modify or improve the original best practice to their local context. The LGAs in the five participating countries will closely consult and guide the selected pilot local governments on the transfer and implementation of BP replication.



<b>Country</b>	Thailand
<b>Local Government:</b>	Prik
<b>Type:</b>	Municipality
<b>Best Practice:</b>	Governance through partnership between the municipality and the community
<b>Aspect of Governance:</b>	Institutional governance
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## Summary

The Prik Municipality experiences show collaboration between community people and government authorities, public organizations, and civil society institutions which let to an effective governance effort improving and sustaining people's livelihood. Its first pilot project on solid waste management showed that by involving people's participation in the activities, their knowledge and attitude towards waste management were improved and thus, developed positive consciousness and behavior to sort out waste prior to disposal. At the same time, the role of municipality officials has also become stronger as they got to know better the needs of their community and could develop appropriate policies.

To solidify their effort, Prik Municipality formed various Community Core Teams (consisting of municipal's officials and community leaders) and relevant learning centers where community people participate actively. The intention of the municipal authority is to provide the capacity building activity to the local people that consists of participatory process development and the sharing and learning-based activity.

Majority of learning centers for each theme were initiated and are operated by the Community Core Team and community people. From 2005 to 2008, the Municipality and its communities expanded their activities and developed the following systems:

1. The Tambon/local governance system
2. The environmental management and energy system
3. The community-based economy, welfare, and safety agriculture system
4. The learning and educational system
5. The voluntary healthcare system
6. The communication system



These systems have become a best practice for other municipalities/cities to learn how to ensure peoples' participation in many aspects of governance and to achieve sustainable development. In 2009, more than 50 public organizations conducted study tours to Prik Municipality's learning centers and systems. Based on these experiences, moreover, Prik Municipality became a pilot area for other programs, e.g. Healthy Tambon Network or the program on efficient economy - which later on shall be transferred to other municipalities in Thailand.

## **Background and Objectives**

Prik Municipality is a *tambon* (subdistrict) municipality located in Sadao district, Songkhla province in the southern part of Thailand. It is located 8 kilometers from the Thai-Malaysian border. Based on 2009 statistics, the population is 6,114 or 1,412 households. There are seven communities in the Prik municipal areas. About 90% of the population is Muslim. The rest are Buddhist. Most people in Prik work in the agricultural sector, particularly in rubber plantations and orchards. The rest of the population are wage labours or engage in commerce.

The goal of the Prik Municipality is to come up with a holistic approach to improving the municipality in all aspects--social, economic, environment, cultural, political, and administration. In 1999, the Mayor of Prik Municipality started mobilizing the municipal network, the academics, and external organizations, such as NGOs, Provincial Natural and Environmental Office, and Office of Regional Environmental 16<sup>th</sup> to work on this vision. Prik Municipality now also works with provincial and national organizations, such as the Thai Health Foundation.

### **A. Innovative Elements**

Below are several innovative approaches integrated in the Prik Municipality's partnership efforts:

- A shift from a "local government-based" to a "local governance-based" approach, and works via the partnerships.
- Addressing red tape concern, the usual problem of public sector. The municipality's administrative system has been more flexible, applying the ideas of adaptation, exchange, and dynamics. Municipal officials have disregarded the rigid "division-based" job requirements, and play a proactive role in facilitating the community's activities.
- New administrative style uses the coaching system: sharing, teaching, and supporting. Through the Bumiputra, indigenous people are also recruited to the municipal staff to assist in developing programs for



their localities. The mayor and other local officials act as coaches and mentors of the staff. The working style is not necessarily top-down.

- Promotes good governance through the following efforts:
  - (i) **Transparency:** The municipality provides one-way and two-way communication channels to link the stakeholders. Prik holds various meetings--the community forum, monthly meeting, and community core-team meeting. The Community Organization Council was formed in 2008 to work with other municipal councils to inspect and audit the performance of the municipal authority. This system allows community to access information and participate in policy-making.
  - (ii) **Accountability:** The municipality has set up a complaint system so that community people can express their thoughts on government programs.
  - (iii) **Participation:** Prik Municipality encourages participation through wider partnerships among all stakeholders.
- Employs the "Healthy Tambon (subdistrict)" concept. It refers to the implementation of the municipality's vision of "*sufficient economy, the community livelihoods' tie, human-centered development, and peaceful civil society*". Prik seeks to accomplish its vision through the following: (i) the tambon/local governance system; (ii) the environmental management and energy system; and (iii) the community-based economy, welfare, and agriculture system, with learning and education as core part of the system.

## **B. Involvement and Activities**

The municipal mayor initiated the best practice model. The goal is to work toward "human-centered development." Those involved in the program can be divided into two groups: (i) the community groups and (ii) the "outsiders" that have supported the activities of Prik. Among these outsiders are the academic institutions and NGOs that conducted the "Liveable City and Community Project" initiatives.

The civil society groups play important roles in realizing Prik's vision. The civil society groups consist of the following:

- Community's core-team members.
- Occupational groups, such as the Chilly Paste group, Coconut Milk group, and Thai Bakery group, among others. These groups, which were set up by the community people, have



turned into “learning centres,” where other municipalities can learn from.

- Community Organization Councils, which were organized in 2008 to work in parallel with the municipal councils to inspect and audit the performance of the municipal authority. School leaders, religious leaders, and “natural leaders” (i.e. headmen) have also been involved in monitoring and scrutinizing the municipality’s performance.

The local community formed their own groups to conduct following activities:

- Within the environmental management and energy system, the groups implement comprehensive waste management through zero-waste activities. They include production of E.M. (effective microorganism), biogas, and composting;
- Within the community-based economy, welfare, and safety agriculture system, the various groups have been organized (i.e. the occupation groups, the saving groups, and the safety agricultural groups);
- Within the healthcare volunteer system, a holistic approach has been adapted to deliver healthcare services for all (i.e. community-healthcare volunteers, mother volunteers, junior community-healthcare volunteers, elderly-people care volunteers, and emergency-medical service volunteers).

Several positive impacts on having community involvement are:

- The people, especially the core-team community members, have been empowered and encouraged to participate in the municipal tasks through the Participatory Process Development program. This continues to build up “civic culture” and the sense of “co-ownership.”
- The local communities have formed their own groups to work on the healthy tambon mission. This has resulted in better environmental management, better healthcare system, and good quality of life.
- Prik shares the model with other communities. Leaders of other communities visit the municipality to learn from its programs. An example is community-based enterprises like home stay, catering, and souvenirs.
- Since 2009, the Thai Health Foundation has promoted Prik Municipality as the “pilot area” for the “Healthy Tambon Network” project. This means that Prik also has to play as



“role model” to Tambon Administrative Organizations (TAOs) from southern Thailand. This project has supported 20 TAOs annually or a total of 60 TAOs from 2009-2011.

### **C. Sustainability and Replication**

The model shows that the municipality does not have a monopoly of good ideas. The donor-recipient” relationship between the municipality and the local people is not workable. The new approach toward good governance should encourage “partnership” between the municipality and the community people. The local community people should be empowered and provided space to share and learn in developing their locality. The model also highlights the necessity to integrate local communities in governance. For example, the mobilization toward being a healthy tambon was achieved through a multi-partnership approach. Although Prik Municipality is small compared to other city-municipalities, its best practice model shows the significant benefits of the “paradigm shift” from “local government” to “local governance.”

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