

THAILAND 2026-2029



COUNTRY PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

“A better quality of life for all in an urbanizing world.”



UN-Habitat ROAP Country Programme Overview

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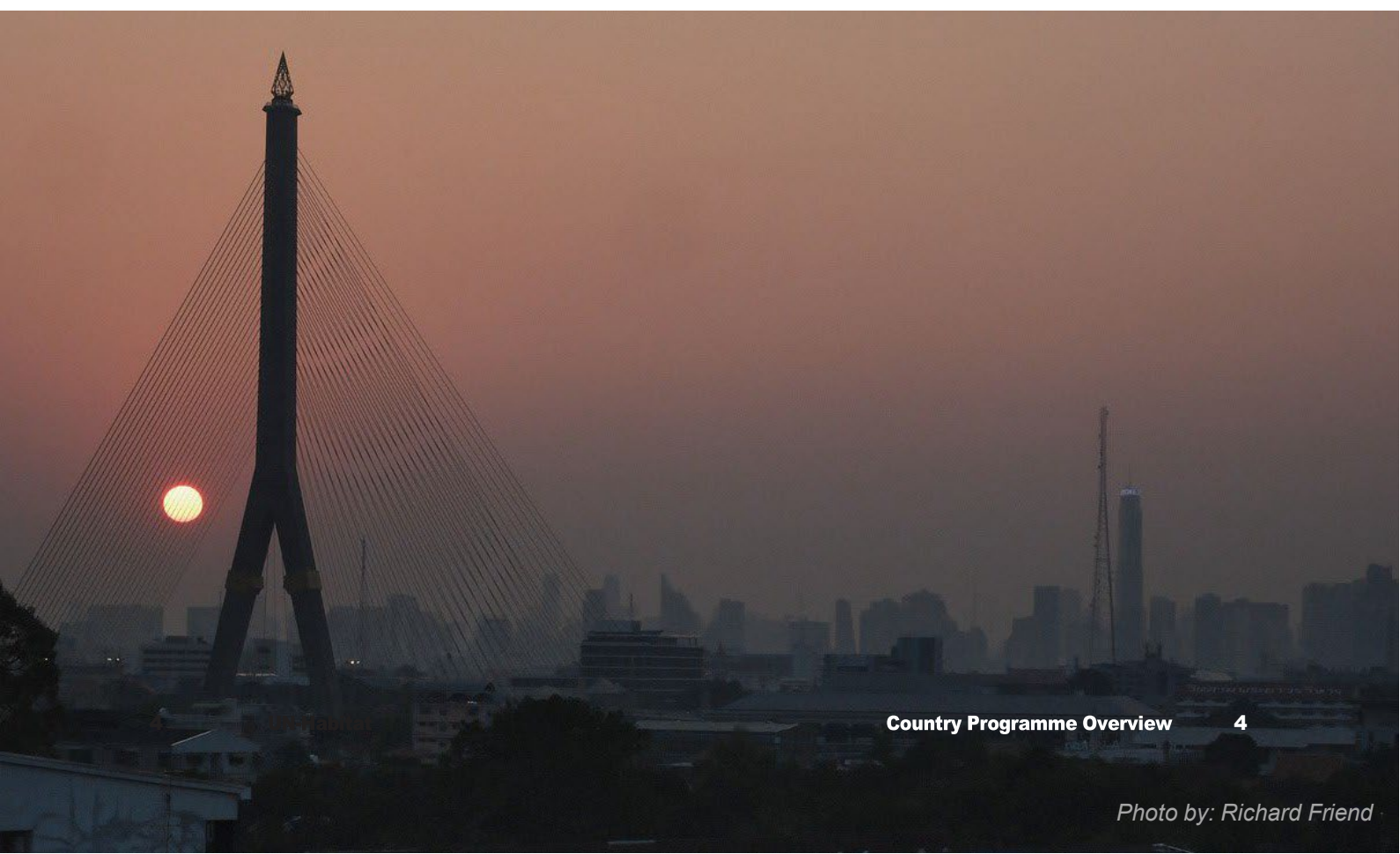
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OPENING

Thailand, an upper-middle-income country in Southeast Asia, has undergone significant structural transformation over recent decades, transitioning from an agriculture-based economy to one increasingly driven by urbanization, industry, and services. This transformation has been guided by national development frameworks, including the 20-Year National Strategy (2018–2037) and the 13th National Economic and Social Development Plan (2023–2027), which emphasize resilience, sustainability, and inclusive growth.

Thailand has also demonstrated strong commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, integrating SDGs into national planning and advancing localization through collaboration with local governments and stakeholders. The country has submitted multiple Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) and continues to strengthen mechanisms for monitoring, coordination, and implementation across sectors.

Against a backdrop of evolving demographic trends, climate risks, and socio-economic shifts, Thailand's human settlements are at a critical juncture. Cities and local governments are increasingly central to delivering inclusive, resilient, and sustainable development outcomes.



COUNTRY ANALYSIS

Thailand's human settlements are shaped by a moderate population of 65.8 million in 2025¹ and a declining trend in population growth rate of around -0.1% in 2023², indicating a demographic transition toward stability and aging. With 62%³ of the population living in urban areas (40.1 million people), Thailand is increasingly urban, though growth remains gradual.

Economic conditions, reflected in a GDP per capita of USD 7,3464 (2024), position Thailand as an upper-middle-income country; however, housing affordability remains a key constraint with housing affordability index of 0.55 (2025), highlighting disparities in access to adequate housing, particularly in urban areas.

Human development outcomes are relatively strong, with a Human Development Index (HDI) of 0.8036 (2022), yet structural challenges persist. The country is experiencing a rapid demographic shift toward an aging society, with 20% of the population aged over 60 in 2023 and projected to reach 31.37% in 2040⁷, with implications for urban planning, service delivery, and inclusive infrastructure.

At the same time, access to basic services stands at 72.9%⁸, indicating that a significant portion of the population still lacks adequate access to essential urban services, including water, sanitation, and infrastructure.

Overall, these trends suggest that Thailand's urban transition must focus on inclusive, age-responsive, and affordable human settlements, while strengthening service provision and addressing emerging demographic pressures.

¹ <https://stat.bora.dopa.go.th/stat/statnew/statMONTH/statmonth/#!/displayData>

² <https://ourworldindata.org/population-growth>

³ <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.URB.TOTL.IN.ZS?locations=TH>

⁴ <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD?locations=TH>

⁵ <https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/affordable-housing-by-country>

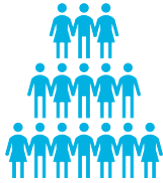
⁶ <https://countryeconomy.com/hdi/thailand>

⁷ https://www.statista.com/statistics/713667/thailand-forecast-aging-population/?srsltid=AfmBOopgOrZconYVJsYU5l7rrEazi8_KVPKOpwxTKIPQ4z2CZCV4e

⁸ Drinking water 99.6% (2022); sanitation 98.2% (2022); access to roads 95.54% (2023); public transport 65.02% (2023); waste management 58% (2023); health services 82% (2021); mobile network 98% (2020); landholders more than 2 rai 97.17% (2023); education SDG4.1-4.2 - 72.9%
[https://image.mfa.go.th/mfa/0/OznAy3tii2/E-bookings/VNR_2025_\(ENG\).pdf](https://image.mfa.go.th/mfa/0/OznAy3tii2/E-bookings/VNR_2025_(ENG).pdf)

02

FACTSHEET



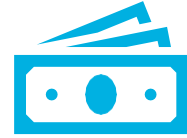
65.8 M

**POPULATION
(2025)**



-0.1 %

**POPULATION
GROWTH
(2023)**



7,346 USD

**GDP PER CAPITA
(2025)**



40.1 M

**URBAN
POPULATION
(2024)**



62 %

**URBANIZATION
RATE
(2024)**



0.5

**HOUSING
AFFORDABILITY
INDEX
(2025)**



0.803

**HDI INDEX
(2022)**



20 %

**AGING
RATE (2023)**



72.9 %

**ACCESS TO
BASIC SERVICES
RATE (2025)**

03

URBAN CONTEXT AND CHALLENGES

Thailand's urban system is characterized by a **highly centralized spatial structure**, with Bangkok functioning as the dominant economic and administrative hub. This has resulted in **uneven territorial development**, in which secondary cities face constraints in attracting investment and strengthening their economic base.

Urban growth is occurring alongside multiple structural pressures. Rapid urban expansion has outpaced infrastructure and service provision in many areas, while **fragmented coordination between national and local levels** and weak land-use enforcement limit effective urban management.

At the same time, demographic changes—particularly **population aging**—are reshaping urban needs, requiring cities to adapt infrastructure, services, and public spaces to be more inclusive and accessible.

Climate risks further compound these challenges. Many urban areas, particularly in coastal and river-basin regions, face **recurrent flooding, heat stress, and extreme weather events**, increasing the vulnerability of infrastructure and communities.

SPATIAL INEQUALITY

Thailand's urban system is highly centralized, with Bangkok dominating economic activities, infrastructure, and investment. This has resulted in uneven territorial development, in which secondary cities face constraints in attracting investment and strengthening their economic base, limiting their role as engines of inclusive growth.

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

Access to affordable and adequate housing remains a growing concern, especially in major urban centers. Rising land and housing costs, combined with income inequality, have widened housing affordability gaps and perpetuated informal or substandard housing, particularly among low-income populations.

BASIC SERVICES

Urban growth is outpacing the provision of basic infrastructure and services. Many cities, particularly peri-urban and rapidly expanding areas, face gaps in water supply, sanitation, waste management, and wastewater systems, reflecting disparities in local capacity, financing, and planning effectiveness.

CLIMATE VULNERABILITY

Urban expansion into flood-prone, coastal, and environmentally sensitive areas has increased exposure to climate hazard, including flooding, heat stress, and sea-level rise. Current approaches remain heavily reliant on grey infrastructure, with limited integration of risk-informed planning and NbS, reducing the resilience of urban systems.

04

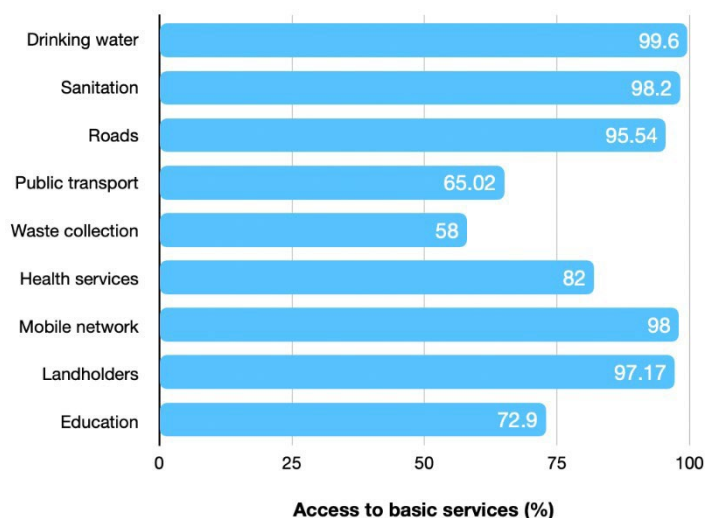
HOUSING, LAND, AND BASIC SERVICES

HOUSING AND BASIC SERVICES FOR ALL

Access to affordable housing and adequate basic services remains a critical issue in Thailand's urban development. Rapid urbanization has increased demand for housing, particularly among low-income populations, leading to growing affordability challenges and persistent informal or substandard housing conditions.

Urban expansion into flood-prone and coastal areas has further increased exposure to environmental risks, particularly for vulnerable communities.

At the same time, basic services such as waste management, wastewater systems, public transport, and education remain unevenly distributed, with gaps more pronounced in rural, peri-urban, and rapidly growing areas.



Source: [Thailand Voluntary National Review \(2025\)](#)

The reliance on conventional (grey) infrastructure alone is increasingly insufficient. There is a growing need to integrate nature-based solutions (NbS) and adopt more sustainable, resilient approaches to urban service provision.

05

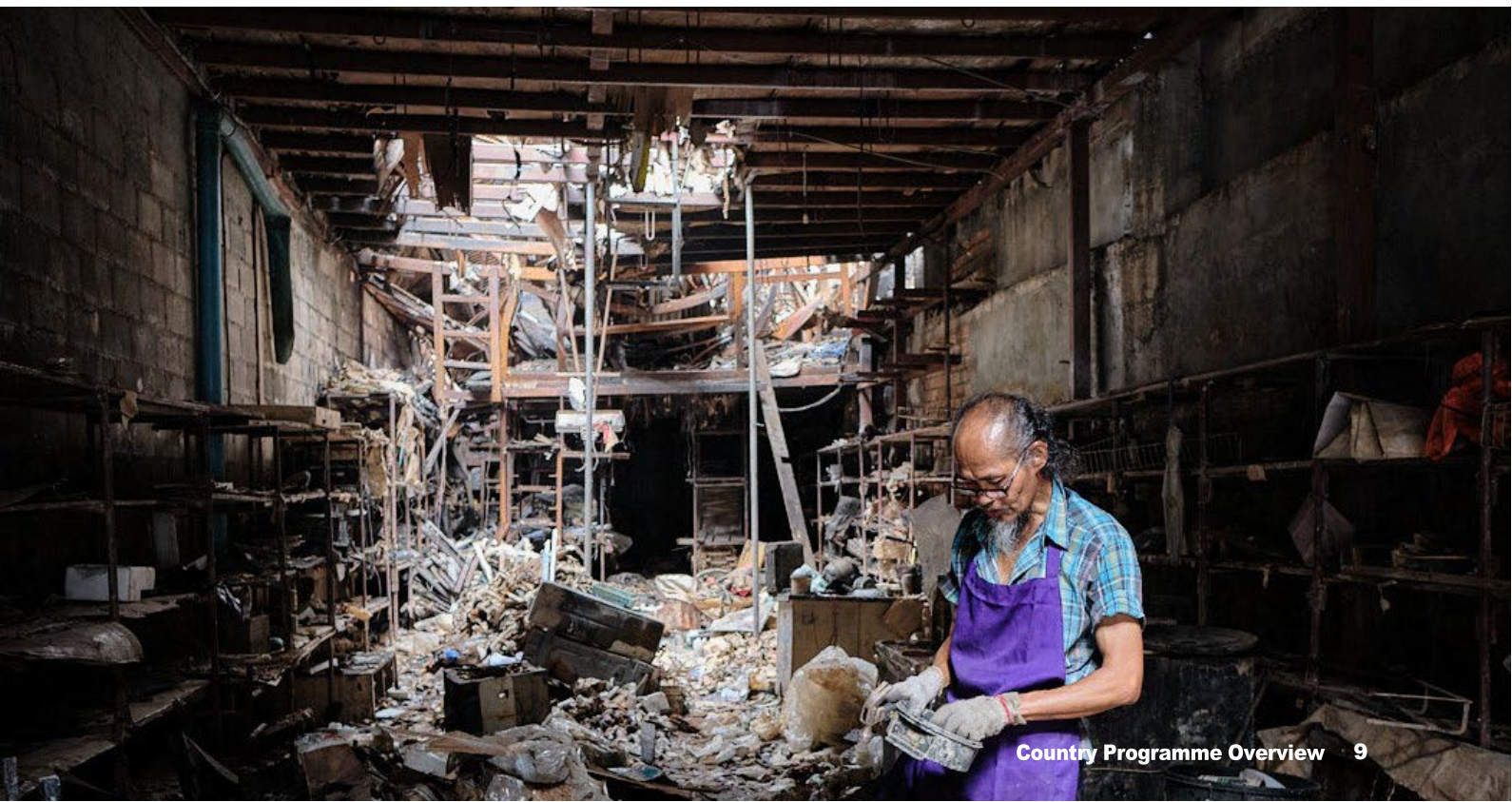
CLIMATE CHANGE

Thailand faces intensifying climate risks, with projections indicating significant changes in temperature, precipitation patterns, and sea levels over the coming decades. By 2100, the country's average **temperature** is expected to increase by 2-4 °C (Thailand National Adaptation Plan, 2023), leading to longer and more intense hot seasons, shorter cool periods, and more frequent extreme weather events. Southern regions are particularly at risk of experiencing the most severe temperature increases.

Climate variability is also expected to intensify. While total annual rainfall patterns may shift, extreme **heavy rain** is projected to become more frequent and intense, leading to greater variability. This will increase the occurrence of alternating droughts and severe flooding, placing additional stress on water resources, agriculture, and urban systems.

Sea-level rise presents a critical threat to Thailand's coastal and low-lying areas. Projections suggest that the sea-level rise rate will be 5 mm per year under the current scenario (Thailand National Adaptation Plan, 2023), exceeding the global average. This poses significant risks to coastal settlements, economic zones, and, in particular, Bangkok and the surrounding flood-prone areas.

A wooden shophouse damaged by the 2025 flood in Hat Yai City, Songkla Province, Thailand
Photo by [Richard Friend](#)



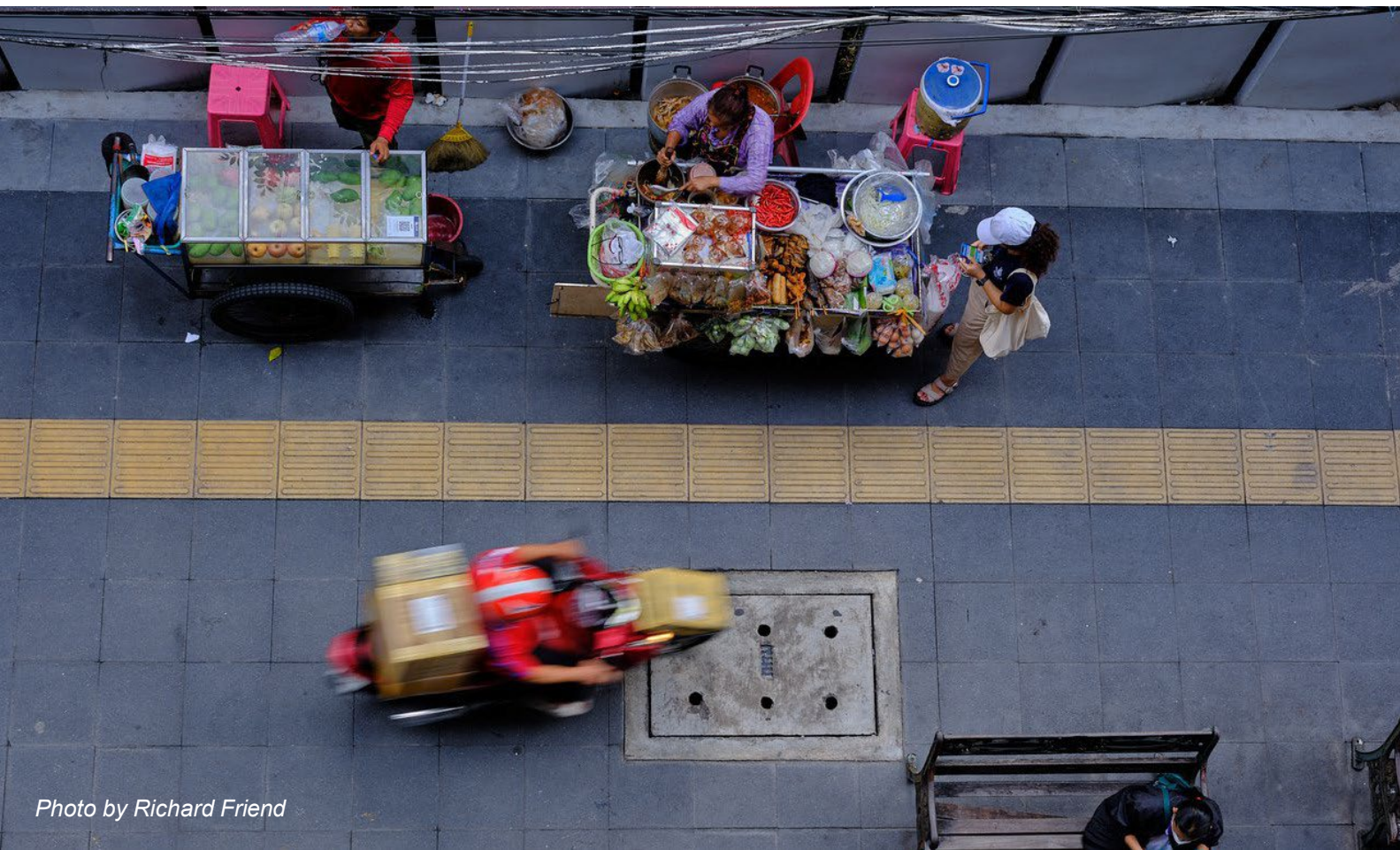


Photo by Richard Friend

ECONOMIC IMPLICATION

The economic implications of climate change are substantial. Without effective adaptation measures, Thailand is projected to be among the countries most severely affected economically, with potential GDP losses of up to 45% by 2048 under high-risk scenarios. These impacts will be driven by disruptions across key sectors, including agriculture, tourism, infrastructure, and public health.

VULNERABLE HOUSING

Increasing frequency and intensity of flooding and storms are exposing housing, particularly in low-lying, coastal, and river-basin areas. Informal and low-income settlements are disproportionately affected, often located in hazard-prone areas. Recurrent flooding leads to damage to housing, displacement, and long-term livelihood insecurity. Urban areas are experiencing intensified heat stress due to rising temperatures and the urban heat island effect. Many housing units, especially in dense and low-income communities, lack adequate ventilation, insulation, and cooling mechanisms. This increases health risks, reduces living comfort, and places additional pressure on energy systems.

URBAN MIGRATION

Climate change is also expected to reshape human settlement patterns. Declining and increasingly uncertain agricultural productivity, combined with rising temperatures, may accelerate rural-to-urban migration, placing additional pressure on urban infrastructure, housing, and services.

URBAN FLOODING

Rapid urbanization, combined with insufficient drainage infrastructure and poor land-use planning, has increased the frequency and severity of urban flooding. Impermeable surfaces and encroachment on natural waterways reduce cities' capacity to absorb and manage stormwater, resulting in frequent disruptions to housing, transport, and economic activities.

Rising sea levels and coastal erosion are threatening settlements along Thailand's coastlines. These processes lead to land loss, damage to housing and infrastructure, and increased salinity intrusion into freshwater systems. Coastal communities, particularly those dependent on natural resources, face growing risks of displacement and livelihood disruption.

RECENT AND ONGOING INTERVENTIONS

1

2024 - 2026

Accelerating the Implementation of the ASEAN Sustainable Urbanisation Strategy (ASUS) – Phase II

This regional project supports Thailand and other 7 ASEAN Member States aiming to strengthen city-level capacities to develop viable, investment-ready urban and infrastructural project proposals aligned with the ASEAN Sustainable Urbanisation Strategy (ASUS), while fostering stronger engagement with national governments and key regional stakeholders to facilitate implementation and scaling.



1.2 M USD (Thailand)

Aus4ASEAN Future

ASEAN Secretariat, Digital Economy Promotion Agency, Ministry of Transport, Hatyai City Municipality, Chiang Mai City Municipality, Nakhon Si Thammarat City Municipality



2

2023 - 2025

SDG implementation through local action in Asia-Pacific (Thailand)

The project aims to advance SDG localization by supporting the development of a Voluntary Local Review (VLR) in Udon Thani, strengthening the application of the Global Urban Monitoring Framework at both local and national levels to enhance data-driven decision-making, and promoting the city's engagement in national and international platforms to foster multi-level governance, peer learning, and knowledge exchange.



130k USD

Agenda 2030 Sub Fund

Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, NESDC, Udon Thani City Municipality



3

2024 - 2025

Partnership to Accelerate SDG Localization in Thailand

The project aims to strengthen SDG localization and urban resilience through multi-level government engagement to scaled waste management interventions, development of viable climate solutions, and institutionalization of action-oriented VLR frameworks and the enhanced Community Waste Bank Guidelines at the national and city levels.



117k USD

Joint SDG Fund

Ministry of Interior, Koh Samui City Municipality, Udon Thani City Municipality





2025 - 2026

Thailand Road User Safety through Technology Program (TRUST) Project

The project aims to enhance urban road safety systems through technical assistance, multi-level governance coordination, strategic partnerships, and capacity-building tools, including training modules and implementation toolkits.



113k USD



Toyota Mobility Foundation (TMF)

Bangkok Metropolitan Administration, Asia Institute of Technology (AIT)

Toyota Motors Thailand, Thai Road Victims Protection (RVP)



2025 - 2026

Accelerating Climate-Responsive Transit-Oriented Inclusive and Vibrant Areas for Everyone in the Bangkok Metropolitan Area (ACTIVATE) Bangkok

The project aims to strengthen the capacity of the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) and relevant national agencies to implement climate-resilient, people-centered transit-oriented development (TOD). Through the application of evidence-based planning tools, capacity development, and multi-stakeholder engagement, the project supports the transformation of Bangkok's urban mobility system toward a low-carbon, inclusive, and sustainable model.



1.3 M USD



Thailand - UK PACT

Bangkok Metropolitan Administration, Thailand Environment Institute, ICLEI



2025 - 2026

Regional Training Programme on Plastic Waste Management

The project supports the implementation of Action 10 of the ASEAN Regional Action Plan for Combating Marine Debris (2021–2025) through the development of a regional training programme on plastic waste management, aimed at building capacity, strengthening a shared knowledge base, and advancing more consistent approaches to marine plastics and the circular economy across ASEAN Member States.



800k USD



World Bank

ASEAN Secretariat, UNOPS, Asia Institute of Technology, UNOICT



07

IMPACT STORY

From Reporting to Action:

How Koh Samui Turned Voluntary Local Review (VLR) into a Decision-Making Tool



"BY CONDUCTING VLR, WE ARE ABLE TO SEE OUR CITY MORE CLEARLY – WHERE WE ARE STRONG, FALLING BEHIND, AND WHAT WE MUST DO NEXT TO IMPROVE QUALITY OF LIFE."

Supinya Srithongkul, Deputy Mayor of Koh Samui City Municipality, Surat Thani Province

Through the action-oriented Voluntary Local Review (VLR), Koh Samui City was able to systematically assess its development progress using data, stakeholder engagement, and the Urban Monitoring Framework. The process brought together municipal departments, communities, and national partners to reflect on real challenges—from infrastructure strain and environmental pressures to governance and service delivery gaps. More importantly, it transformed the VLR from a reporting exercise into a decision-making tool, enabling city leaders to better understand local priorities, identify gaps, and translate the SDGs into concrete, actionable strategies for improving quality of life.

08

COUNTRY FOCUS



RESILIENT HOUSING & INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES

As extreme events intensify, vulnerable communities face growing risks. Resilient housing and communities are key to addressing heat, floods, and storms.



CLIMATE-RESILIENT URBAN SERVICES & INFRASTRUCTURE

Climate shocks and rapid urbanization are intensifying pressure on cities—demanding resilient infrastructure and basic services.



INTEGRATED & SMART URBAN GOVERNANCE

Cities have the data—but not yet the systems—to translate it into investment, coordinated action, and sustainable urban growth.



UN-HABITAT'S STEPS TO ACHIEVE THE GOALS

THROUGH SDG LOCALIZATION PROJECTS

Advanced SDG localization through VLRs and a national framework, strengthened data systems (UMF and QoL Index), supported climate project development, and enhanced wastewater and waste management and global city engagement.

THROUGH ASEAN SUSTAINABLE URBAN STRATEGY PROJECT

Strengthened city-level planning and resilience under ASUS through diagnostics, stakeholder engagement, technical proposals, and policy recommendations.

THROUGH ROAD SAFETY AND MOBILITY PROJECT

Enhanced road safety and TOD through technical support, coordination, capacity building, and development of climate-resilient, high-impact urban interventions.

TARGETS

3.6M 

FUNDS SECURED
FOR PROJECTS IN
THE COUNTRY

18M 

BENEFICIARIES
ASSISTED BY THE
PROJECTS

5 

INVESTMENT-
READY
PROJECTS

6 

LOCAL
GOVERNMENTS
ENHANCED
CAPACITY



PLANNED INTERVENTIONS

1

Climate-Resilient Housing & Communities in Thailand

Project's Aim: To strengthen the climate adaptive capacity and resilience of housing and communities across Thailand through policies and guidelines, pilot initiatives, and capacity building. To address technical design, financing, nature-based solutions, climate-responsive building and architecture across different typologies of housing in Thailand.

Relevance to regional implementation plan: Resilient, risk-informed and climate-sensitive housing and community for all

Additional Priorities: Universal access to resilient, risk-informed and climate-sensitive basic services and infrastructures



TOTAL BUDGET:
10M USD



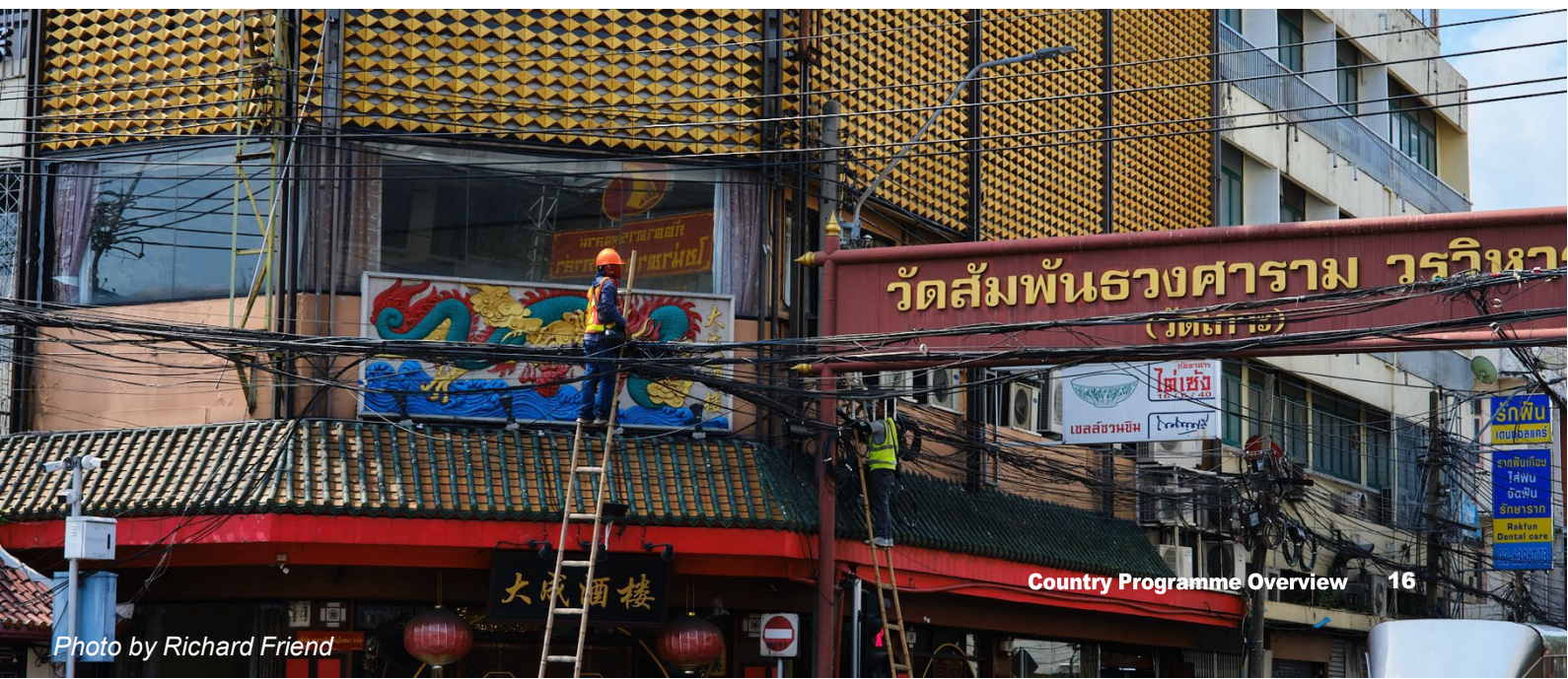
TIME FRAME:
2027 - 2030



LOCATION:
THAILAND

OUTPUT, OUTCOME AND IMPACT:

1. Develop a national guide on climate-resilient housing and communities with locally-specific techniques for reducing impact from extreme heat, flood and storm
2. Produce a strategic report on design and conceptual guidelines to promote climate-resilient housing and communities at a national and municipal level.
3. Deliver pilots, focusing on low-income housing areas to support climate adaptive housing equity.
4. Support training and capacity building and develop toolkits for private and public sector.



PLANNED INTERVENTIONS

2

Integrated Approaches for Multilevel and climate-responsive urban and territorial development to accelerate SDG implementation in Thailand

Project's Aim: To strengthen Thailand's multilevel and climate-responsive urban governance by institutionalizing integrated planning frameworks that link city-level diagnostics, climate risk data, and investment planning with national SDG, climate, and budgeting systems, enabling resilient, inclusive, and implementable urban development pathways.

Relevance to regional implementation plan: 3. Urban management transformation through integrated planning, participatory governance and advanced technology

Additional Priorities: Universal access to resilient, risk-informed and climate-sensitive basic services and infrastructures



TOTAL BUDGET:
1M USD



TIME FRAME:
2026 - 2029



LOCATION:
THAILAND

OUTPUT, OUTCOME AND IMPACT:

1. Selected Thai cities apply integrated City Development Roadmaps that align local priorities, climate risks, and SDG targets, using standardized diagnostics and data-driven planning tools.
2. Improved alignment between local urban plans, national development strategies, climate commitments, and public investment processes, strengthening coordination across national, provincial, and municipal levels.
3. Cities identify and prioritize catalytic, climate-resilient projects with clear implementation pathways, supporting access to public finance, climate funds, and development partner investment.



PLANNED INTERVENTIONS

3

Integrated Approaches for resilience development of coastal areas

Project's Aim: To apply integrated approaches linking science, policy, finance, and communities to deliver resilient housing and services; translate adaptation into implementable, investment-ready solutions using nature-based and hybrid approaches; and strengthen local capacity for inclusive, scalable climate action.

Relevance to regional implementation plan: Resilient, risk-informed and climate-sensitive housing and community for all

Additional Priorities: Universal access to resilient, risk-informed and climate-sensitive basic services and infrastructures



TOTAL BUDGET:
2M USD



TIME FRAME:
2026 - 2029



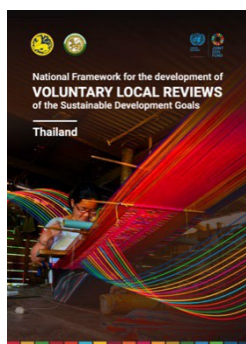
LOCATION:
THAILAND

OUTPUT, OUTCOME AND IMPACT:

1. Local governments and communities apply integrated approaches that combine scientific knowledge, policy priorities, financing considerations, and community input to address current and future climate risks in housing, infrastructure, and basic services.
2. Adaptation priorities are translated into practical policies, tested solutions, and clear, costed action plans, enabling cities to move from strategy to implementation and mobilize public and private finance.
3. Local institutions and communities have improved capacity to plan and manage climate risks in an inclusive and coordinated manner, while practical tools and lessons are generated to support replication in other locations.



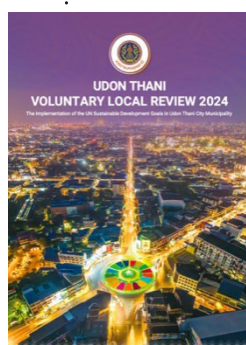
PUBLICITY AND OUTREACH



National Framework for the Development of Voluntary Local Reviews of the Sustainable Development Goals

HIGHLIGHTS:

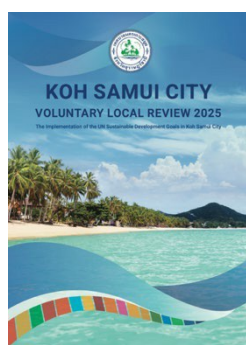
- Provides a national guideline for Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs) to support SDG localization in Thailand
- Positions local governments (LAOs) as key actors in translating SDGs into local action
- Aligns local planning with national strategies and the 2030 Agenda
- Promotes multilevel governance linking local–provincial–national levels



Udon Thani Voluntary Local Review 2024

HIGHLIGHTS:

- First Voluntary Local Review (VLR) of Udon Thani City Municipality to track SDG progress
- Focus on SDG 3, 4, 8, 11, 13, 16
- Engaged ~150 stakeholders (government, CSOs, private sector, citizens) with a strong focus on “Leave No One Behind”
- Strengthens data systems and evidence-based decisions



Koh Samui City Voluntary Local Review 2025

HIGHLIGHTS:

- First Voluntary Local Review of Koh Samui City Municipality
- Focus on SDG 6, 8, 11, 13, 15, 16, 17
- Developed using Urban Monitoring Framework (UMF) and Action-Oriented VLR approach for data-driven planning
- Identifies key challenges: waste management capacity, environmental degradation, and high GHG emissions



Recommendations for Strengthening the Implementation of Community Waste Bank Guidelines and Initiatives in Thailand

HIGHLIGHTS:

- National guideline to scale community waste banks as a key solution for Thailand's growing waste challenge and SDG localization
- Community-led model that reduces waste, generates income, and supports circular economy practices
- Key gaps include low public participation, limited digitalization, and reliance on recyclable sales
- Recommends stronger governance, digital systems, diversified financing, and partnerships to scale impact



UN-HABITAT

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