



# AGRI-FOOD POLICY ANALYSIS WORKSHOP

## FOR SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS

January 18-20, 2024

Faculty of Economics, Kasetsart University  
Bangkok, Thailand



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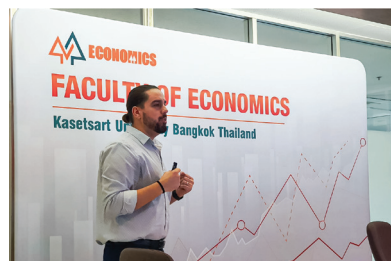
Like many regions of the world, policymakers in Southeast Asia are concerned that agri-food systems contribute to the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). To do so they need evidence on the most effective policies and strategies to deploy to take advantage of new opportunities (e.g., digital technologies, new plant breeding techniques) and meet evolving threats (e.g., climate change induced pest and disease challenges, international market price volatility). Yet there is currently no locally established and led network of policy analysts in Southeast Asia to facilitate cross-country learning on a common agrifood system policy research agenda.

An earlier multi-disciplinary symposium on Sustainable Food System in Southeast Asia Under and Beyond COVID-19: Policy Evidence and Call for Action<sup>1</sup> organized in May 2022, and an organized symposium on the Climate Change Policy System in Southeast Asia-From Research to Policy Actions towards Sustainable Food System<sup>2</sup> as part of the Asian Society of Agricultural Economists Meetings in Tokyo in March 2023, identified the need for understanding evidence to develop more effective policies and strategies and laid the foundation for regional collaboration on evidence-based policies to support sustainable food systems in Southeast Asia.



To address this gap, Kasetsart University's Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics organized the first in-person workshop of agrifood system researchers and policy analysts from countries across Southeast Asia since COVID-19. Three objectives guided the workshop agenda:

- 1) To gain understanding of the evidence-based research to policy process and recognition of its role in food system transformation;
- 2) To strengthen capacity of analysts to identify policy options, examine tradeoffs, and communicate them to policy makers; and
- 3) To create a network of agri-food policy analysts in the regional for information sharing and peer to peer learning.

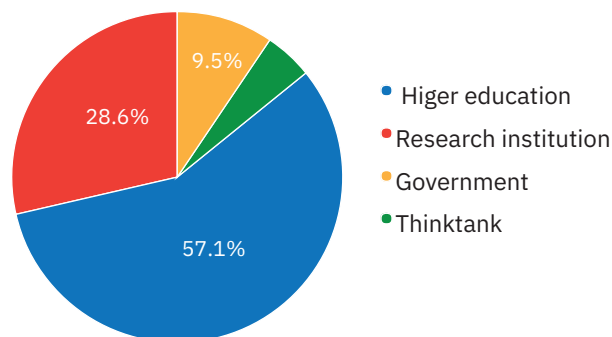
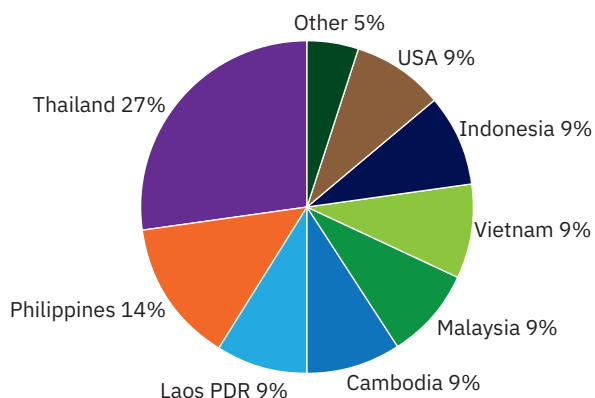


<sup>1</sup> <https://kasets.art/vyVYAY>

<sup>2</sup> <https://kasets.art/ijLcc2>



A total of 23 participants from Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos PDR, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam representing governmental entities, academic and research institutes provide a wide scope of agri-food policy expertise. Six resource persons from the Michigan State University and the International Food Policy Research Institute, as well as the FAO Asia Pacific regional office in Bangkok also participated.



The workshop agenda was constructed around four knowledge sharing pillars. The first pillar provided overviews of **agrifood policy analysis frameworks and analytical toolkits for evaluating policy options**. The second pillar involved knowledge **sharing by participants on “hot button” policy issues** in their respective countries, challenges to engaging with policy makers, and constraints to undertaking policy relevant research.

The third pillar involved **case studies of policy engagement on “hot button” issues** using different communication platforms. The fourth pillar reviewed **examples of innovative and cost-effective behavioral research methods** to understand consumer and producer decision making. Participants also made a field trip to Thailand’s largest deep sea port and Innovation Center of the largest producer and distributor of ready-to-eat food in Thailand.



Workshop participants identified priority research topics where multi-country collaboration would have high payoffs compared to working independently. Examples include:

- 1) Analysis of technology innovations and complementary policies to promote sustainable increases in productivity with ageing smallholder farm populations;
- 2) Analysis of persistent vulnerability to food and nutrition insecurity among remote and island populations;
- 3) Analysis of constraints to market competitiveness (domestic and regional) and value added processing; and
- 4) Managing climate and market price shocks.





In addition to identifying priority research topics, workshop participants also recognized a need for more “hands on” training in policy analysis tools and empirical cases. Topics include impact assessment, spatial analysis (GIS) techniques, digital support tools, and policy modeling to evaluate policy options. Alongside training in analytical tools, training in communication methods with policymakers would also be valuable.



In sum the workshop confirmed that collaboration among policy researchers in the Southeast Asia region on a locally developed and led research agenda targeted to achieve evidence-based policy change is an urgent and compelling priority. The workshop received technical and financial support from the USAID Feed The Future Innovation Lab for Policy Research, Capacity Building and Influence (PRCI).



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