

# City Enabling Environment on Environmental and Climate Governance (CEE-ECG) in Thailand

## Executive Summary







## About the Urban-Act Project

The Integrated Urban Climate Action for Low-Carbon and Resilient Cities (Urban-Act) is a regional project funded by the International Climate Initiative (IKI) of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action (BMWK) over the period April 2022 to December 2027. This regional project aims to support the transformation towards low-carbon and resilient urban development in Asia and the Pacific while contributing to countries' Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Urban-Act is implemented in five pilot countries (China, India, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Thailand). Regional partners of Urban-Act Project are the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the United Cities and Local Governments Asia-Pacific (UCLG ASPAC), the TU Dortmund and the University of Stuttgart, as well as national consortium partners in each of the five (5) partner countries.

## What is the CEE-ECG?

The City Enabling Environment on Environmental and Climate Governance (CEE-ECG) is an attempt to understand which “enablers” and “actors” underpin the transformation of 21<sup>st</sup>-century cities and thereby attenuate, drive, or shape challenges to implement climate action in cities today. The ‘enablers’ that the assessment examines are ‘core enablers’ – policies, law, institutions, governance systems, fiscal autonomy, and levels of public engagement that hamper or unleash urbanisation’s potential for climate action. It assesses the “de jure” – national legislation and policies – that allow local governments to benchmark themselves against the minimum standards required for cities and local governments to contribute significantly to global climate action efforts. This assessment uses a country perspective of analysis to deliver a significant contextual review of the function of local governments. However, a national-wide overview is needed because their performance depends mainly on the country’s nature. This document serves as both a benchmark and a guide for improving urban climate governance, ensuring that cities are better equipped to contribute to national and global climate goals at five Urban-Act pilot countries.

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## DISCLAIMERS

This CEE-ECG is a preliminary result used as the baseline for the Urban-Act project that highlights key areas of focus including legal and regulatory frameworks, governance and policy support, bureaucratic capacity, climate financing, and public participation. The final assessment will be finalised by the end of the Urban-Act project implementation, and it is open to receive/gather feedback from various stakeholders.

# Environmental and Climate Change Governance

Thailand has implemented a comprehensive institutional framework to address climate change across national and sub-national levels, emphasising a whole-of-government approach. The Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning (ONEP), under the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE), coordinates climate initiatives as the National Focal Point for the UNFCCC. The establishment of the National Climate Change Committee (NCCC) in 2007 marked a significant step in defining national climate policies and fostering collaboration. Thailand's commitment to international climate goals is further reflected in the creation of the Department of Climate Change and Environment, tasked with overseeing the country's climate efforts and ensuring alignment with global protocols. This robust governance structure underscores Thailand's dedication to achieving carbon neutrality by 2050 and net-zero emissions by 2065.

## Political Structure and Organisation

Thailand's political structure is characterised by a unitary state with a constitutional monarchy. The government operates under a parliamentary system, with the King serving as the head of state and the Prime Minister as the head of government. The National Assembly, Thailand's legislative branch, comprises the House of Representatives and the Senate. The Prime Minister, elected from the House of Representatives, leads the executive branch, which includes various ministries and government agencies responsible for implementing national policies. The judiciary operates independently, ensuring the rule of law. Thailand's political organisation also emphasises the role of local governments, with a framework for decentralisation in place, allowing local entities to manage certain public services and local development initiatives.

## Local Government and Decentralisation System

Thailand's local governance system is dual, combining local administration and autonomous self-government. The national constitution outlines the structure, which includes Provincial Administrative Organisations (PAOs), municipalities, and Tambon Administrative Organisations (TAOs) in the general category, while Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) and Pattaya fall under specific local entities. Despite the decentralisation efforts, local governments in Thailand are often seen as highly centralised in authority but decentralised in function, with overlapping responsibilities between PAOs, municipalities, and TAOs. Local officials wield significant power, particularly in environmental management, where they regulate harmful businesses, enforce nuisance abatement, and ensure public places are maintained. This framework provides local governments with the authority to manage local affairs while aligning with national standards.

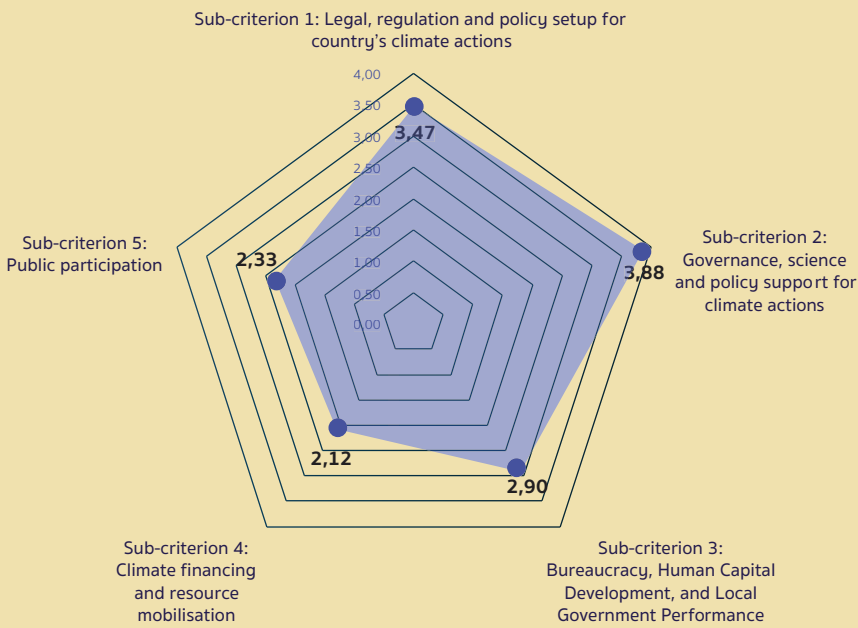
## Coordination Mechanism between State and Non-Governmental Actors

Thailand's approach to environmental and climate change governance is marked by active involvement from both state and non-governmental actors, fostering a collaborative decision-making process. The Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning (ONEP) leads this effort, engaging stakeholders from governmental agencies, the private sector, civil society, and academia at various levels. Prominent private sector entities, such as the CP Group and SCG, contribute to climate initiatives and are part of the National Climate Change Committee (NCCC). Civil society organisations, like the Thai Working Group for Climate Justice (TCJ), play a critical role in raising public awareness and advocating for climate justice. Additionally, academic institutions provide essential scientific knowledge, contributing to the formulation of national climate policies and strategies. This multi-stakeholder coordination ensures a holistic approach to addressing Thailand's climate challenges.

# The Results of CEE-ECG in Thailand

The Climate and Environmental Efficiency, Effectiveness, and Climate Governance (CEE-ECG) assessment for Thailand provides a comprehensive overview of the country's performance across various climate governance sub-criteria. Thailand achieved an overall score of 2.94 out of 4, demonstrating solid performance, particularly in the areas of legal, regulatory, and policy setup (sub-criterion 1) and governance, science, and policy support (sub-criterion 2). However, the assessment highlights room for improvement in climate financing and resource mobilisation (sub-criterion 4), which received the lowest score of 2.12, and public participation (sub-criterion 5), which scored 2.33. This suggests a need for enhanced efforts in mobilising resources and increasing public engagement in climate actions to achieve more robust climate governance.

CEE-ECG Score of Thailand by Sub-Criteria



## Sub-criterion 1: Legal, regulation and policy setup for country's climate actions

Thailand has made significant strides in establishing a robust legal and regulatory framework for climate actions. The country has ratified key international environmental agreements and developed several national plans, such as the Climate Change Act and the Climate Change Master Plan 2015-2030, which underscore the importance of urban areas and local governments in climate mitigation efforts. Although

the country has mechanisms in place for Monitoring, Reporting, and Verification (MRV) of national climate actions, the absence of a national framework for city-level MRV highlights an area that requires further development. Additionally, while several key documents are available, their accessibility is limited, with some only provided in Thai, which could hinder broader engagement and understanding.

<p><b>1.1</b></p> <p>Thailand has fulfilled the indicator by ratifying international environmental protection, National Disaster Management Plan 2015, and The Master Plan for Integrated Biodiversity Management (2015-2021).</p>	<p><b>1.2</b></p> <p>There is still limited evidence on the reporting of their GHG emissions.</p>
<p><b>1.3, 1.5, 1.6</b></p> <p>The role of local government in climate actions at the national and local levels has been considered in several national documents such as disaster risk management plan and Master Plan for Intergrated Biodiversity Management.</p>	<p><b>1.4</b></p> <p>They do not have a national regulation/framework for Monitoring, Reporting, and Verification (MRV) of city-level climate actions.</p>



Sub-criterion 2: Governance, science and policy support for climate actions

Thailand’s governance framework for climate actions is well-supported by national-level reports, digitalised databases, and mechanisms for integrating climate data into planning processes. The country has established research centres and frameworks that facilitate collaboration between national and local governments, civil society, businesses, and academic institutions, as outlined in the Climate Change Master

Plan 2015-2050. These collaborations are crucial for advancing climate actions and ensuring that both national and local governments are equipped with the necessary scientific knowledge and policy support. The existence of centralised digital platforms for climate data further enhances Thailand’s ability to monitor and implement climate strategies effectively.

<p><b>2.1</b></p> <p>Thailand climate action’s has report on periodical.</p>	<p><b>2.2</b></p> <p>Thailand has initiative/mechanism to conduct or support a national climate change risk assessment.</p>	<p><b>2.3 - 2.6</b></p> <p>Thailand has a mechanism/framework for local governments to leverage the digitalisation of climate data, information, and knowledge for planning purposes.</p>
<p><b>2.7 - 2.9</b></p> <p>Thailand has research centres focusing on climate actions, such as the Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning (ONEP) and the Climate Change Management Coordination Division (CCMC).</p>		<p><b>2.10 - 2.13</b></p> <p>The national and local governments of Thailand have collaborated with civil society, local businesses, and academics for climate actions indicated in the Climate Change Master Plan 2015-2050.</p>

Sub-criterion 3: Bureaucracy, Human Capital Development, and Local Government Performance

Thailand has instituted a strong bureaucratic framework to support climate action, including appointing national agencies and ministries to assist local governments in planning and implementing climate initiatives. The Local Government Act empowers local entities to establish dedicated agencies for climate action, further supported by existing networks and associations concerned with

environmental issues. However, the assessment reveals a gap in the institutional mechanisms needed for strengthening national governance on climate action, integrating bureaucracy, and implementing e-governance strategies. Addressing these gaps could significantly enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of Thailand’s climate governance.

<p><b>3.1 - 3.2</b></p> <p>Thailand climate action’s has report on periodical.</p>	<p><b>3.3 - 3.5</b></p> <p>Thailand has initiative/mechanism to conduct or support a national climate change risk assessment.</p>	<p><b>3.6 - 3.8</b></p> <p>Thailand has a mechanism/framework for local governments to leverage the digitalisation of climate data, information, and knowledge for planning purposes.</p>
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Sub-criterion 4: Climate financing and resource mobilisation

Thailand has allocated national budget resources towards climate action, although the funding mechanisms are still in a nascent stage, with no specific budget code dedicated to climate action as of yet. Environmental protection budgets have been outlined in national documents like the Thailand Budget in Brief for the fiscal year 2021, indicating some financial commitment.

Additionally, there are provisions allowing local governments to access and initiate various fiscal measures for climate actions. Despite these efforts, the assessment suggests that Thailand needs to strengthen its climate financing framework, particularly in ensuring that local government initiatives are sufficiently funded and aligned with national climate strategies.

4.1	4.2	4.3
Thailand had a national budget allocation for climate actions attached to the national strategy.	There is no budget code specifically for climate action but the budgets have been allocated for environmental protection.	Thailand's national regulation allowed local governments to access/initiate various fiscal measures for climate actions.

Sub-criterion 5: Public participation

Thailand recognises the importance of public participation in climate governance, as reflected in its national strategies and reports, including the Climate Change Master Plan and NDCs. Public education, gender perspectives, and the inclusion of vulnerable communities are also addressed within these frameworks. The availability of a national database on climate adaptation

and disaster risk, accessible to the public via an online portal, exemplifies Thailand's commitment to transparency and public engagement. However, the relatively low score in this sub-criterion indicates that there is still significant potential for increasing public involvement and ensuring that diverse voices are heard and considered in the country's climate actions.

5.1 - 5.4	5.2
Thailand has acknowledged the importance of public participation, gender perspective vulnerable communities, and public education in climate action, as indicated in the Climate Change Master Plan and NDC reports.	Thailand has a national database on climate adaptation/disaster risk maps and information accessible to the public.





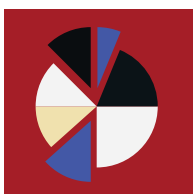
## Recommended Actions



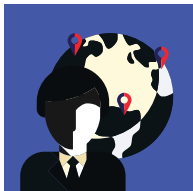
**Strengthen the role of local governments:** While Thailand has a decentralised system, local governments need more autonomy and capacity to implement climate policies effectively. The central government should consider devolving more decision-making powers and providing more resources and training to local officials.



**Formalise coordination mechanisms:** The current ad hoc nature of coordination mechanisms can lead to inefficiencies. Formalising these mechanisms and integrating climate goals into sectoral policymaking would ensure a more consistent and effective approach.



**Improve climate financing and resource mobilisation:** Thailand's performance in this area is relatively weak. The government should develop a more comprehensive and transparent system for climate financing and ensure that adequate resources are available to support climate action at all



**Strengthen public participation:** While Thailand has made progress in engaging non-state actors, public participation remains limited. The government should create more opportunities for public input and feedback on climate policy development and implementation.





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