



6 Thailand
Rural Health Infrastructure Strengthening Project

Contributing to the improvement of rural health services
 By providing medical equipment to regional and provincial hospitals in Thailand

Loan Amount/Disbursed Amount 4.959 billion yen/3.255 billion yen
Loan Agreement September 1996
Terms & Conditions Interest rate 2.7% (2.3% on consulting services),
 Repayment period 25 year (grace period 7 years), General untied
 October 2002
Final Disbursement Date
Executing Agency Ministry of Public Health (<http://eng.moph.go.th>)



Project Objectives

This project aims to improve and expand public health and medical facilities in the provinces and enhance provincial medical services, thereby contributing to the public's health improvement.

Effectiveness & Impact

Rating **a**

Excluding ophthalmologic equipment, more than 70% of the medical equipment provided through this project is used everyday; over 90% is used one to five times or more per month. This high frequency of usage suggests that the medical equipment provided matched the medical needs of the hospitals and is being effectively utilized. Healthcare professionals have indicated that X-ray machines and infant respirators in particular are used heavily. About one third of the hospitals that responded to a beneficiary survey (given to 65 clinics) confirmed that provision of the medical equipment resulted in "effective diagnoses," "shorter hospitalization periods," and "improved community health." Moreover, healthcare professionals in northeast Thailand, where many patients suffering from calculi visit the clinics, indicated that the endoscopes are very useful in conducting that diagnosis. Therefore, this project has largely achieved its objectives, and effectiveness is highly satisfactory.

Relevance

Rating **a**

This project has been highly relevant with Thailand's national policies both at the time of the appraisal and at the time of the ex-post evaluation. At the time of appraisal, the National Health Development Plans pointed to the expansion of medical services to residents in remote areas and the poor as a challenge to be addressed. At the time of ex-post evaluation, the same medium-term plans designated nationwide access to high-quality medical care as a challenge to be addressed. This project, which provided medical equipment to clinics that shoulder rural medical services, was deemed to be in accordance with those medium-term plans.

Results of beneficiary survey regarding the impact of this project on the improvement of medical services

Impact (multiple responses possible)	Responses
Effective diagnoses	23
Shorter hospitalization periods	21
Improvement of community health services	17
Medical expense savings	11
Reduction of pain to patients	5
Other	15

Efficiency

Rating **b**

Although the project cost was lower than planned, the project period turned out to be much longer than planned (240% of planned time); therefore the evaluation for efficiency is moderate. The main factors behind the project delays were the time needed to prepare detailed lists of the medical equipment that reflected the needs of the hospitals and the time needed to procure the medical equipment.

Sustainability

Rating **a**

The great majority of respondents to the survey given to the hospitals indicated that the operation and maintenance of the medical equipment is "good" or "normal." Accordingly, it was deemed that there were no problems with the operation and maintenance status of the equipment. No major problem has been observed for capacity of neither the executing agency nor the operation nor its maintenance system, therefore, sustainability of this project is high.

Conclusion, Lessons Learned, Recommendation

In light of the above, this project is evaluated to be highly satisfactory. Hospital management is an important factor affecting whether the equipment provided is effectively utilized. Some of the hospitals that were provided with medical equipment through this project were identified as having insufficient management skills. Strengthening the management abilities of hospitals by supporting capacity building for personnel engaged in medical services could be an effective means of addressing this issue.

Third-Party Opinion

There is a shortage of high-level medical equipment in rural hospitals, so this project is in accordance with public needs. Since a health insurance system was introduced during this time, the delays in the project were in fact fortunate in terms of the effectiveness of the project.

Specialist: Dr. Som-arch Wongkhomthong (Public sector)
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