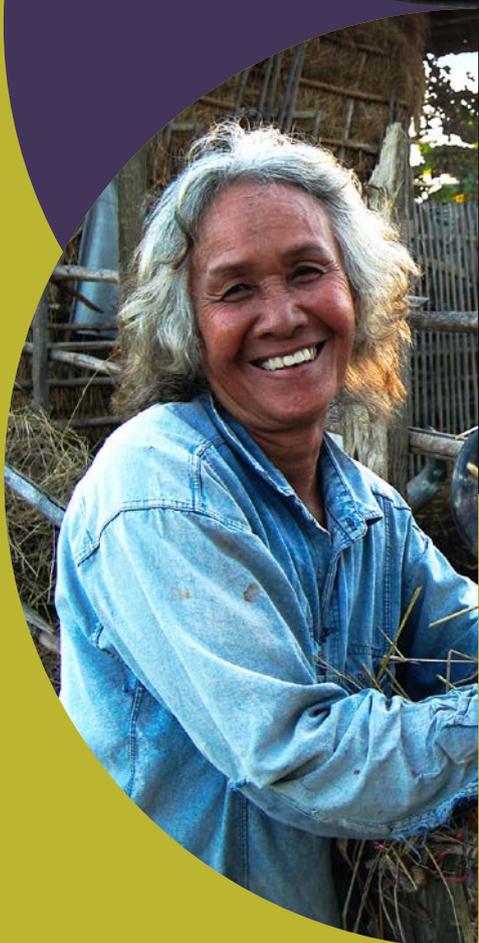




International
Labour
Organization



The ILO in Thailand

KEY FACTS AND FIGURES



Population
(2017)
69.5 million



GDP per capita (2017)
US\$5,960
(PPP US\$17,090)

	Total
Labour Force (2017)	40.1M
Unemployment (2018)	<1%
Youth unemployment (2017)	6%
Informal employment (Q2, 2018)	62.4%
Labour force participation rate (2017)	68%
Employment by sector (2017)	
• Agriculture	40%
• Industry	15%
• Services	45%

Source: NSO, NESDB, BOT, MOL & World Bank

Thailand is an upper middle-income country. Having experienced annual growth of between 3-4 percent since 2010, the poverty head count ratio has declined to less than 9 percent but inequality remains a major issue, and by some measures, a growing problem. Thailand has a very low official unemployment rate, but this reflects the prevalence of a relatively high incidence of informal and vulnerable work and disguises the low quality of much employment.

Thailand has a diverse economy with growth driven, in large part, by manufacturing and tourism, the latter being the major driver of the large current account surplus. Household debt remains high and serves as a brake on domestic spending. This implies the need to both reduce private debt and scale up public investments to spur domestic demand and make growth more inclusive. Given the level of development, Thailand's tax revenue as a percentage of GDP at around 15 percent, is relatively low.

Although agriculture remains a major source of employment its contribution to economic growth continues to diminish relative to other sectors of the economy and decent work deficits are often most pronounced in rural areas. The service sector continues to expand and the Government is actively promoting the digital revolution to increase productivity and competitiveness, including through the Thailand 4.0 development plan and the Twelfth National Economic and Social Development Plan (2017-21), in both of which enhanced labour productivity is fundamental.

This calls for the need to equip workers with skills and education, to enhance their employability and better embrace the future of work. It also calls for wages in Thailand to keep pace with productivity growth. The nation's wage setting and collective bargaining needs to be more effective to ensure equitable and sustainable growth. Social dialogue systems and institutions need strengthening as evidenced in the low collective bargaining coverage rate and the very low trade union density rate.

Thailand has made remarkable progress in human development over the last twenty years. Most indicators of social progress covering education and health have seen significant improvements. However, although statutory programmes exist covering all social security policy areas, the depth and breadth of coverage – especially for those working in the informal economy - is often limited and strengthening social protection floors remains a challenge, including in terms of pension reform.

The country is now transitioning into an ageing society as a result of a rapid decline in the birth rate and increased life expectancy. This has posed significant challenges and opportunities to the Thai labour market. As a consequence of these demographic changes, the dependency ratio of the young and the elderly population to the working age population is increasing and expected to escalate from about 56 per cent in 2020 to over 80 per cent in 2040.

The labour force participation rate declined from about 73 per cent to about 68 per cent between 2010 and 2017 due to a rise in the number of older persons and a decrease in the youth population. One consequence of this is the rise in the number of migrant workers from neighbouring countries. In 2018, there were around 3.2 million registered migrant workers in Thailand. Inevitably, the rise in the number of migrant workers has paralleled concerns about the effective protection of migrant workers' rights.

Although women's participation rates are relatively high, they are still lower than those of men. Increasing women's labour force participation would not only promote social justice but would also help to address the shrinking labour force.

THE ILO - WHO WE ARE

The International Labour Organization (ILO) is the United Nations agency for the world of work. Devoted to advancing social justice, it promotes a Decent Work Agenda based on four strategic pillars: rights at work, decent employment opportunities, social protection and social dialogue.

It is the only public international organisation which is tripartite, where workers and employers enjoy equal rights with governments in representation and decision making. Together they set labour standards, develop policies and devise programmes upholding decent and productive work, in conditions of freedom, equity, security and dignity for all.

Created in 1919 as part of the Treaty of Versailles that ended World War I, the ILO became the first specialized agency of the UN in 1946. It received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1969 and today is recognized as the world's authority on the world of work, offering over 100 years of knowledge, experience and achievements.

THE ILO IN THAILAND

Photos: © ILO.

In 1919 Thailand became a founding member of the ILO. Since 1966 the ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific has been located in Bangkok, which is currently also home to the Decent Work Technical Support Team for East and South East Asia and the Pacific and the Country Office for Thailand, Cambodia and Lao People's Democratic Republic.

Through extensive tripartite consultations, the ILO constituents have developed Thailand's first Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP) covering the period 2019-21, which provides the overall framework for collaboration. The DWCP is in line with Thailand's broader strategies and policies that are designed to enable the country to maintain strong and sustainable economic growth in line with realising social justice and decent work for all. As such, it supports Thailand's ambition to make the transition to a high-income country and support the realisation of the National Strategy (2018-2037).

Current Areas of Work

The DWCP is substantively aligned with the philosophy of the sufficiency economy, the Socio-Economic Development Strategy, the National Strategy (2018-2037), the Thailand 4.0 development plan, the Twelfth National Economic and Social Development Plan (2017-2021), the 5-year Labour Master Plan (2017 - 2021), and the United Nations Partnership Framework (UNPAF) (2017-2021). The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have also been taken into account and integrated into the DWCP.

The Thailand Decent Work Country Programme 2019-2021 covers three priority areas:

- (1) *Promoting an enabling environment for the growth of decent and productive employment* by supporting the development of sustainable enterprises in line with international labour standards and decent employment and skills to enhance the employability of men and women. This entails strengthening institutional capacities to support entrepreneurship, enterprise productivity and competitiveness, including through using effective demand-based and gender sensitive employment services and improving and expanding skills development and the promotion of technical/vocational skills for women and men with a particular focus on STEM subjects. Work under this priority also includes improving and expanding social protection by strengthening and expanding social protection systems, particularly in relation to workers in the informal economy and enhanced effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of social security systems, including strengthening actuarial capacities of public institutions.
- (2) *Strengthen labour protection, especially for vulnerable workers*: this area of work seeks to strengthen the benefits and minimise the risks of labour migration and to address labour exploitation issues by providing policy advice on improving migration management and mechanisms related to the prevention of forced labour, child labour and other unacceptable forms of work, including in the fishing and seafood processing sectors. The work also covers strengthening institutional frameworks, policies, and strategic compliance tools to protect vulnerable groups, including workers in the informal economy and with strengthening compliance with occupational safety and health standards and increased capacity of labour inspections to improve the enabling environments for decent work.
- (3) *Strengthen labour market governance in line with international labour standards*: this area focuses on improving workplace relations and rights at work through issues related to the ratification, application and governance of ILO Conventions (including fundamental conventions) and international labour standards as well as enhanced institutional, legal and tripartite mechanisms. It includes improving and enhancing constituents' capacities to make and influence policies and strengthening social dialogue.

Thailand and international labour standards

Thailand has ratified 19 Conventions and 1 Protocol (Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention 1930, ratified in June 2018). Of these, 16 are in force, 1 Convention has been denounced and 1 instrument abrogated.



Fundamental Conventions ratified: 6 of 8

Governance Conventions ratified: 1 of 4

C.29	Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29)
C.100	Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100)
C.105	Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105)
C.111	Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111)
C.138	Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138)
C.182	Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182)
C.122	Employment Policy Convention, 1964 (No. 122)
C.14	Weekly Rest (Industry) Convention, 1921 (No. 14)
C.19	Equality of Treatment (Accident Compensation) Convention, 1925 (No. 19)
C.80	Final Articles Revision Convention, 1946 (No. 80)
C.88	Employment Service Convention, 1948 (No. 88)
C.104	Abolition of Penal Sanctions (Indigenous Workers) Convention, 1955 (No. 104) 1/
C.116	Final Articles Revision Convention, 1961 (No. 116)
C.123	Minimum Age (Underground Work) Convention, 1965 (No. 123) 2/
C.127	Maximum Weight Convention, 1967 (No. 127)
C.159	Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) Convention, 1983 (No. 159)
MLC, 2006	Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 (MLC, 2006) Amendments of 2014 to the MLC, 2006 Amendments of 2016 to the MLC, 2006 Amendments of 2018 to the MLC, 2006
C.187	Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 2006 (No. 187)
C.188	Work in Fishing Convention, 2007 (No.188)

Source: ILO NORMLEX, Information System on International Labour Standards, as of 27 November 2018

Social Partners

The ILO works closely with the Ministry of Labour and other ministries of the Royal Thai Government. Currently, the ILO's principal social partners are the Employers' Confederation of Thailand (ECOT), the Labour Congress of Thailand (LCT), the Thai Trade Union Congress (TTUC), the National Congress of Private Industrial Employees (NCPE) and the State Enterprises Workers' Relations Confederation (SERC). The ILO also collaborates with civil society organisations, non-governmental organisations, think tanks, universities and academia. The ILO is committed to supporting and strengthening social dialogue and building the capacity of the constituents.

Decent work: a key to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals



“Decent work is not just a goal – it is a driver of sustainable development”

Guy Ryder, ILO Director General

By embracing the three dimensions of sustainability – economic, social and environmental, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development provides a once-in-a-generation chance to make a change and improve the lives of billions, leaving no one behind.

At its heart are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are an urgent call for action by all countries - developed and developing - in a global partnership. They recognize that ending poverty and other deprivations must go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth – all while working to preserve our planet.

The importance of decent work in achieving sustainable development is highlighted by Goal 8 which aims to “promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all”.

Putting decent work at the heart of economic policy-making and development plans will not only generate jobs but also lead to more robust, inclusive and poverty-reducing growth. It is a virtuous circle that is as good for the economy as it is for people, and one that drives sustainable development.

**ILO Country Office for Thailand, Cambodia
and Lao People’s Democratic Republic**

United Nations Building
Rajdamnern Nok Avenue
Bangkok 10200, Thailand

+66 2 288 1234

+66 2 288 3062

✉ bangkok@ilo.org

www www.ilo.org/asia

🌐 [iloasiapacific](https://iloasiapacific.org)

🐦 @ILO

f ILO.ORG

📷 iloinfo

📺 ILOTV

