

The 6th phase of the co-operative development and fair-trade research series

This research is an extended study of 5th Phase in the series, in order to elevate the commercial development (resulting from previous researches) to “Social Economy Enterprise” by following the desirable 5 recommendations. Research procedures will be conducted within Value Network and Fair Trade Platform: VN&F Platform. Strategic direction is set as shown in “Strategy Map”. Our destination vision is to have “a happy community with equal opportunity and fairness, also robust to all future changes” The main purposes of this research project comprises of 4 objectives. Firstly, it intends to build a knowledge base and innovation to the development of a strong Social Economy Enterprise. Secondly, it tries to develop assisting systems to the Social Economy Enterprise and, thirdly, extending benefits from the Social Economy Enterprise to communities. Lastly, it develops the ‘commercial flow’ to all Partnerships, in–outside the country.

Six models were selected for this study. They are Moral Rice Value Network, Co–operative Hom Mali Rice Value Network, Fruit Value Network, Rubber Value Network, Value Network of Sampran Group and Business Model of Farmer Shop. The results from these studies show the growing trend of Social Economy Enterprise (SEE) as the common platform for the Value Network which is the key focus of our research and development. In practice, these value networks have produced the ‘Value Creation’ to the local community and wider society in 3 principle ways. The networks have increased the competitive growth by encouraging learning and competitions among partnerships. They are 596 government sectors, 1,818 farmers and 236 small businesses. The value networks have also transformed the production to Green Growth and encourage the GAP – Good Agricultural Practice. There are 3,008 farmers cover the area of 120,320 rai. Finally, the networks have created opportunity and reduce Inclusive Growth in buy–and–sell environment for 234 farmers, 40 Agricultural institutes and 303 small businesses which resulting to 10–50% increase in profit and 10–25% decrease in marketing cost.

Research results are gathered to build a knowledge base and innovation for the Social Economy Enterprise. The example of documents created using this information are the Moral Rice Learning Centre Toolkit and 3 Living Learning Centre consists of the Suk–Jai Market, the Orchardist Groups and the Farmer Shop. Moreover, the project has produced the Value Network and Fair Trade Platform and the SEE Strategy Map knowledge toolkit for using in the value networks.

The key results from this research show that the evolution of Social Economy Enterprise in form of New Business Model using 5 GAP recommendations can be used upon the farmer-side to generate “Growth and Competitiveness”, “Inclusive Growth”, “Green Growth” and eventually “Sustainable Development. However, limitations and obstacles in Social Economy Enterprise development are identified as the knowledge in such development does not spread wide enough. There is insufficient “Coaching” in communities, hence the learning, support and feedback mechanism has not been implemented properly. More importantly, there is an “Outside in Development Policy” which currently encourages the communities in opposite direction.

The policy recommendation from this research project is to distribute the wisdom of Social Economy Enterprise to community leaders, related government sectors and any Agricultural developers so that it can be used to advance the development of local cooperatives and related institutions. This SEE wisdom can also be used to “Moving Up Supply Chain” which means to improve the supply chain of the cooperatives and related institutions to maintain its market share of local agricultural products in the market as well as to extend their trade to the international level by linking to the regional and global supply chain in the future.

The recommendation for the next phase of the research is extending the Social Economy Enterprise into partnership relations and Moving Up Supply Chain. This is to introduce an opportunity in new market and protect the current market shares of Thai products. The future research can also utilize this SEE knowledge to develop local economic and social development plan in accordance to the Country Strategy as well as developing the Learning Community Network models at the local and regional levels for the sustainable development of the competitiveness for local community and citizens.