



## The Practical Framework for an Integrative Urban Health System Development in Thailand

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### Abstract

The Royal Thai Government has accepted the UN SDGs 2030 to apply to multi – level strategic plans. For the Ministry of Public Health, the goals about health and wellbeing of the population, clean water and sanitation, sustainable cities and communities, and climate change are under its responsibility. Although the ministry has the framework and strategic plan for applying this goal in the multi – level health system development, the practical in the area is still mysterious. Because of this reason, this study aims to gather the various case studies about multi – level health system development that have been practiced in the operational areas. This study is based on the qualitative literature review on the document recording, experiencing, and summarization of the health system development that the Policy Research and Development Institute Foundation (PRI) has been developed, monitored, and evaluated. For the various case studies, they are mentioned on the case of Tuberculosis Screening, HIV/STI/Teenage Pregnant Prevention, Dengue fever Prevention, and Systematic Waste Management. At the end, this study could have identified the key components of the integrative urban health system development, which is the role and function of the public health staff has been shifted from practitioner to facilitator. Ultimately, this study has the recommendation on the public health policy under the decentralization in Thailand.

Key Words: Urban Health, Multi – Level Health System

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## 1. Introduction

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is accepted as the framework for the sustainable development policy design by the UN member countries, including Thailand. By this acceptance, the Royal Thai Government (RTG)'s National Strategic Plan and National Economic and Social Development Plan number 12<sup>th</sup> are based on these SDGs. That means the SDGs indicators have been already integrated on the national level. The accepted indicators that are related to health and wellbeing of the population (3<sup>rd</sup> indicator), clean water and sanitation (6<sup>th</sup> indicator), sustainable cities and communities (11<sup>th</sup> indicator), and climate change (13<sup>th</sup> indicator). These four indicators are categorized into two goals in the National Strategy Plan, which are human capacity development and eco - friendly growth. To achieve these long term goals, the 12<sup>th</sup> National Economic and Social Development has also set the 5 years' term goals, and distributed them to the government agencies to spend their effort to achieve these 5 years' goals. On the health and wellbeing, it is involved to multi - Ministries; such as the Ministry of Public Health, Ministry of Interior, and Ministry of Natural Resource and Environment. In these multi - ministries, the system that sounds explicit systematic policy and plan has been initiated by the Ministry of Public Health called "District Health System Development".

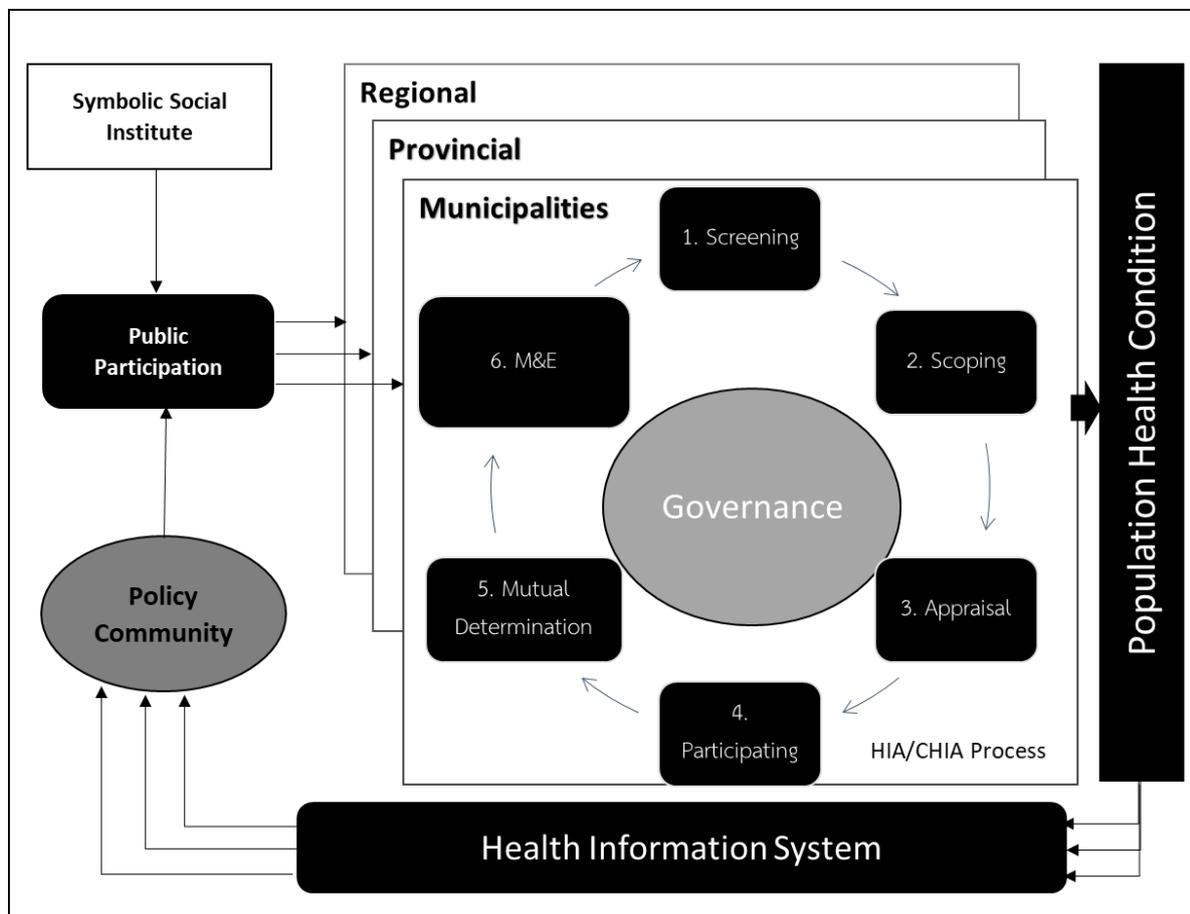
In fact, this initiation is not limited only to the district, but it expands to cover the local, provincial, and regional level of the system. Within this initiative, it does not concern only the primary health care services, but it includes the health promotion and the social determinant of health management. In the function of health promotion and control of health management, they are not the function of the public health staff, but it is under the responsibility of the local government and the other government agencies to design the urban and regional plan as the integrated health planning. The challenge for this development is the public health agencies in the multi - level have to facilitate, consult, and approach the local government to propose population health and wellbeing as the final goal of the local government strategic plan. Because of that, various research and development programs have been created by the various central and research funding public health agencies for supporting the development of this health system. These research and development result as the practical framework for facilitating and developing the strategic urban and regional planning.

For that reason, this essay has the main purpose of summarizing the practical framework from various research and development programs about the health system development. The various case studies from the Health System Development Research are going to be presented in this paper on the application to urban and regional planning. At the end, this paper is going to conclude on the integration framework between health system development and urban and regional planning, including the practical tools for integration operation.

## 2. Conceptual Framework and Methodology

### 1. Conceptual Framework

This study is initiated by two studies of the Policy Research and Development Foundation (PRI), which are supported by Global Fund and Department of Disease Control. It is combined with the Smart City's study of Rajabhat Ayuthaya University. In the PRI's research operation, it is based on Thurston et al (2006) study on Regional Health Governance in Canada. This Framework was adapted in the projects by Phoolcharoen et al. (2015) to study HIV/AIDS STI Teenage Pregnant Prevention and Resolution, Tuberculosis Screening in Migrants, Dengue Control, and Systematic Waste Management in various cities in Thailand. As figure 1, the framework was set to be the backbone on the mentioned operation research. However, the process of the health system cannot be standing along, so the Health Impact Assessment (HIA) or Community Health Impact Assessment (CHIA) is recommended as the system process (Health Impact Assessment Committee, 2017).



Adapted from Thurston et al. (2006) and Phoolcharoen et al (2015)

**Figure 1 The Conceptual Framework of Health System**



Based on the framework, the study provides the input, process, and output of the study. At first, the input of this study is the research projects that has been a joint operation between Policy Research and Development Institute Foundation and the public health in the various provinces in Thailand. The health issues are HIV/AIDS STI Teenage Pregnant Prevention and Resolution, Tuberculosis Screening in Migrants, Dengue Control, and Systematic Waste Management. Furthermore, the health system and urban policy in Thailand needs to be reviewed. In the process, each research project is reviewed on three points. First, the level of approaches is concerned to find the appropriate for each health issue. Second, the key components from the health system frameworks are indictable for driving the integrating process. Third, the guiding tool for integrating between the health system and urban planning. The outputs of the study are that the health issue appropriate approaches, the key component, and the guiding tool. At the end, this study will summarize the practical frame for integrating the health system and urban planning.

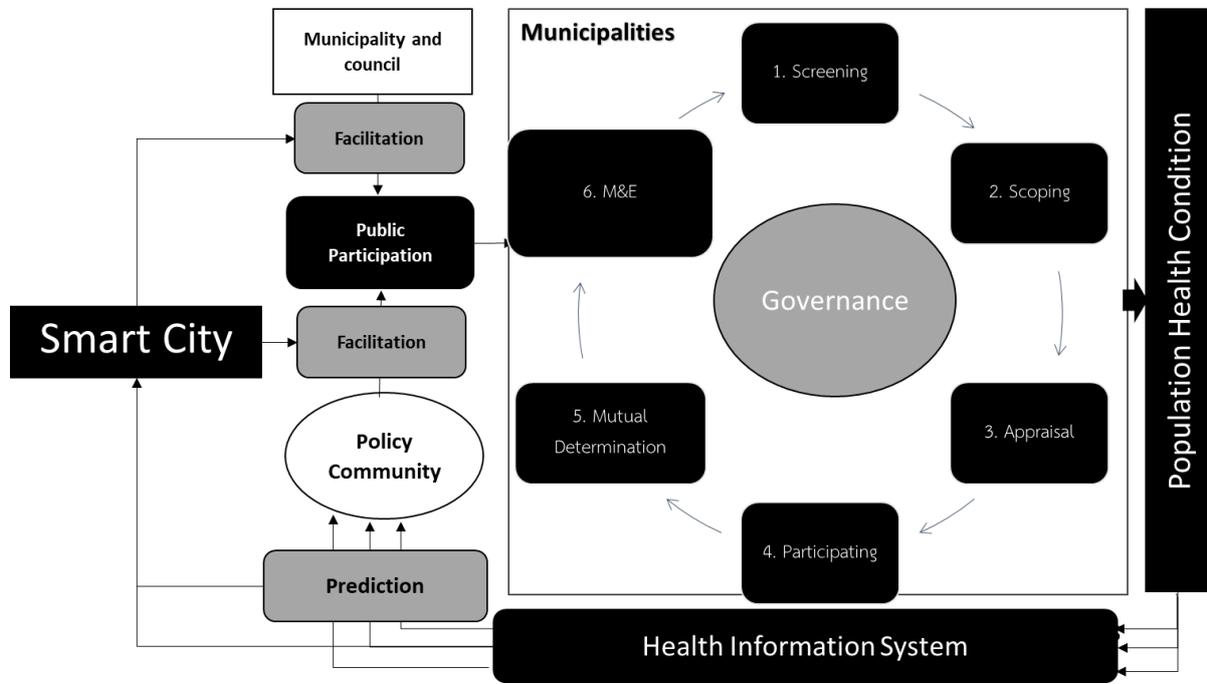
### **3. Result and Discussion**

After the analysis on each project, health system, and urban policy, this study found three key practical implementations for the health system. First, the different health issues have to be implemented in a different approach or the level of governance. In the list of the project, the waste management is the health issue that should be performed mainly in the provincial or regional levels of the governance. The reason is that waste management is not only the community participation, but it includes the high public investment for managing the whole system of waste. However, it is, of course, the micro approach is still concerned but it is not the main concern. The other three projects, which are HIV/AIDS STI Teenage Pregnant Prevention and Resolution, Tuberculosis Screening in Migrant, and Dengue Control, are based on the local approaches as the main concern. In case of HIV/AIDS STI Teenage Pregnant Prevention and Resolution, it is the most micro health issue that deals with the vulnerable group behavior. To resolve this health issue, smaller is better than larger. Similarly, the Tuberculosis Screening in Migrants should not be much dealing on the larger scale than community because the vulnerable group needs the trust of the outreach. However, Tuberculosis is important in Thailand, and it is much more complicated. The level of approach may be larger than a small group of communities. Dengue Control is not different from Tuberculosis in that it is a community-based approach. It is also in need of technical support.

The key component of the framework is the policy community that has to be looking at different levels of approaches. The systematic waste management has the type of policy community as the Public – Private Partnership (PPP). The engagement of the public organization and the private sectors is deeply on the financial investment. On the other hand, the policy community of the HIV/AIDS STI Teenage Pregnant Prevention and Resolution, Tuberculosis Screening in Migrant, and Dengue Control is the community that needs to emphasize on the vulnerable stakeholders for capacity strengthening. However, Tuberculosis Screening in Migrant and Dengue Control needs the high involvement of the technical organizations.

On the technical operation for the integration, the study needs the facilitation process, which includes personal and technique of integration. This result is from both research study and policy review. The personal issue is the need to develop the facilitator as the collaborator among the policy community. The collaborator can be called as the policy driver. The process in the framework for integration, the HIA/CHIA is recommended by the National Health Commissioner. This process can be performed by a multi – level of health governance. On the facilitating technique, at the present, the Smart City is highly referenced by the multi –

organizations in Thailand. The Smart City can provide the facilitation of the integration because it supports the technology to access the policy and plan in the city. This model is running in Khon Kaen province. In the end, this study can conclude that the integrating health system to urban planning is based on the level of approaches, policy community, and facilitation. The final practical framework can be concluded in the figure 2.



**Figure 2 The Practical Framework of the Integration of Health System and Urban Planning for the Urban Health System**

#### 4. Summary and Recommendation

In summary, the study can frame the practical integration between the health system and urban planning. The framework is based on Thurston et al. (2006) and Phoolcharoen et al. (2015) that the multi – level health system framework consists of six components. The components are symbolic institution, policy community, public participation action, policy and planning process, health information system, and population health monitoring and evaluation. However, in practice, the facilitation is needed. For that reason, additional tools are needed. The facilitator development is the need for capacity strengthening to the key stakeholder to drive policy and plan. The process of policy and plan, the HIA/CHIA is strongly recommended, and it is applied in the structure. The Smart City concept is an interesting tool to integrate facilitation. It is highly promoted and operated by some important province, such as Bangkok, Khon Kaen, and Phuket. At the end, this study aims to recommend applying this framework in these three provinces that are running the Smart City.



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