

SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT SYSTEM FOR BANGKOK AND OTHER THAI CITIES: A DREAM COMES TRUE?

C. Poboorn

National Institute of Development Administration (NIDA), Bangkok, Thailand

Traffic congestion and related problems in Bangkok is notorious worldwide. Some serious consequences are air pollution and emission of greenhouse gases, substantial energy consumption and traffic accidents. Unfortunately, a number of large Thai cities are following this path. It is obvious that effective measures for tackling such problems are urgently needed. The Thai government has proposed several big projects to cope with traffic problems in Bangkok and other cities around Thailand. The purpose of this paper is to examine the Thai government's policies, plans and their implementation to see whether they are able to build a better and sustainable transport system for Bangkok and Thai cities. The analysis is done by applying the sustainable transport criteria. The criteria encompass five major elements: 1) economic factors; 2) environmental factors; 3) energy use; 4) human/social factors; and 5) land use integration potential. The result of the analysis indicates that some government's policy and plans such as the proposed mass transit projects are plausible and will render better services for Bangkok residents with some contributions to better environmental and social conditions. However, Bangkok and Thai cities are still very far from having the sustainable transportation system as the proposed comprehensive road and expressway projects will trigger adverse consequences and will outweigh the positive contributions of the transit projects. This paper then gives key suggestions and steps for moving towards a more sustainable transport system for Bangkok and Thai cities.