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## **The Development of Co-operative Movement in the 36 Provinces**

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### **Abstract**

*The objective focuses on the process of network building among groups/organizations and co-operatives. The result of the research project series were as expected, that is, the establishment of a network of researchers consisting of 300 researchers with common concept, skills and experiences for the “Value Network Connection”. These researchers has managed to build up participation process among more than 38,342 leaders of the groups/organizations and co-operatives in those 36 province area. There were 117 networks established consisting of networks for business, social/local and academic purposes. Some of these networks activities have resulted in fruitful business, decreasing of expenses, income addition, and actual opportunities expansion for network members. The recommendations are possible in 2 approaches. Involving a linkage of value networks is regarded as an important strategy for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Co-operative Development Plan (2007-2011). Also, extending the value network to connect supply chains of major economic crops and livestock should be developed into the fair-trade system.*

### **Introduction**

The Thailand Research Fund (TRF) supports researches on co-operative, under the co-ordination project. In 2002, a package of knowledge on development of the Co-operative Movement and a research project was applied to “The 1<sup>st</sup> Co-operative Development Plan, 2003-2006.” The plan prescribe a vision for co-operative development to motivate all parties concerned, **the mutual self-help socio-economic organizations, to strongly hold the co-operative values, co-operation and linkage of networks in order to develop corporate effectiveness and good governance, and to build**

**sustainably the strength of membership, communities, society and the nation.**

The strategies under the 1<sup>st</sup> Co-operative Development Plan underlines the importance of cooperation and **linkages of networks** aiming at developing a corporate capacity which will be favourable to the environment of co-operatives the members’ well-being . This is equivalent to the solving of poverty problems. In addition, the plan emphasizes a campaign on cooperation among registered co-operatives and groups or organizations which have not yet been registered under the Co-operative Society Act, 1999. These groups or organizations will be called “un-registered co-operatives” who believe in the co-operative values that link them together in a network or networks.

After the Board of National Co-operative Development approved in 2003 the 1<sup>st</sup> Co-operative Development Plan, TRF financially supported the project on co-ordination for co-operative research to carry on a set of research projects on guidelines for the development of mutual self-help groups or organizations in nine provinces. Its main purpose was to undertake the participatory action research for linking a network of registered and un-registered co-operatives in accordance with the visions of the co-operative development plan. The outcome of the research indicated best practices to form a network which was beneficial to cooperation among co-operatives and back to organizations of the network and their individual members.

A package of knowledge designed from the said research shows the power of cooperation in the form of partnership networks between the registered and non-registered co-operatives. This phenomenon is useful in terms of business and academic. Furthermore it generates a knowledge-based society for network members, which will be powerful in developing a frame of thought and visions of leaders of groups, organizations and co-operatives. This will