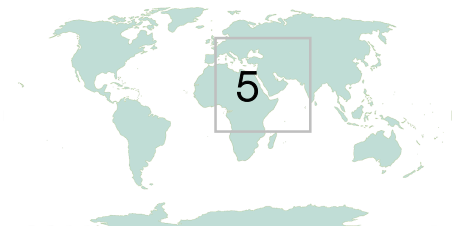


IN-Between Metropolitan Strategies Programme
Interview #5 | Bangkok, Thailand



Within the context of the activities of the Community of Competence on Metropolisation¹, INTA and Deltametropool Association joined forces to design the programme In-between Metropolitan Strategies pursuing earlier discussions and exchanges on metropolitan strategies ongoing in a worldwide spectrum.

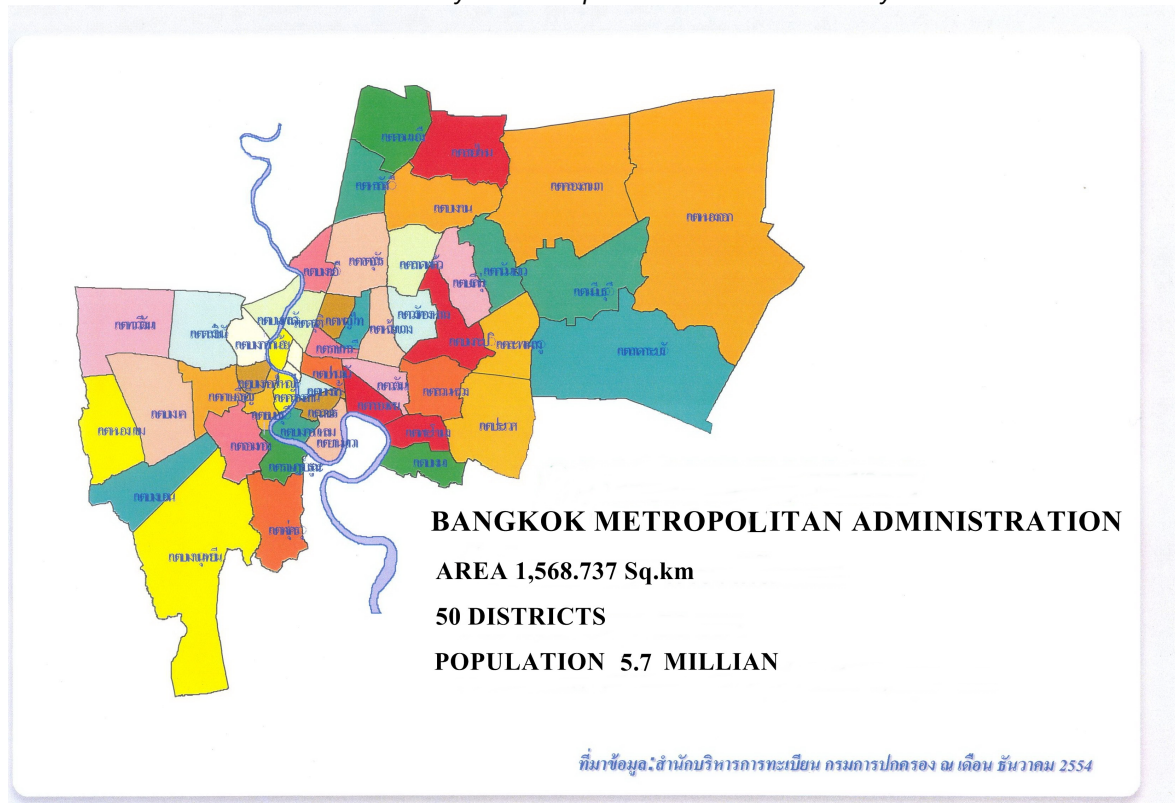
During the first phase, a series of interviews have been realised to several metropolitan cases covering various themes: the scale of the metropolitan area, the governance and cooperation, new forms of urbanity and metropolitan environments, the innovative economical sectors within the metropolitan area and how to develop the metropolis sustainably.

Bangkok Metropolitan area, Thailand

Interview with Ms. Pranee Nantasenamat, Senior Expert in town and country planning, Ministry of Interior Department of Town and Country Planning.

1. The metropolitan area

How extensive is the metropolitan area and how are the metropolitan values and identity formed for this the area? What makes your metropolitan area internationally attractive?



¹ <http://www.inta-aivn.org/en/communities-of-competence/metropolisation/metropolisation-home>

Let me introduce Thailand and Bangkok. Thailand has 77 provinces, nearly 2000 municipalities (divided in three levels: cities, towns and townships) and 878 districts. It has 2 large cities, one is Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA), the Metropolitan Area, and another one is Pattaya City. Thailand has a population of 65 million people and BMA a population of 5.7 million. This 10% of the population lives on 3% of the territory of country (BMA = 1,568 square kilometer) and producing 29% of Thailand's Gross National Product (Bt3.14 trillion in 2010).

Bangkok is located in the center of the country, along the Chao Phraya River, with a fertile land for agriculture, has a long history as a capital of Thailand since the Rattanakosin period for over 230 years. Bangkok is therefore very rich in architecture, history, touristic attractions and local business, like Thai massages and herb products. Bangkok wants to be a health capital in the future, an international health hub in the world. Bangkok is the centre of any activities, economic, politic, social, cultural and transportation and much bigger than any other cities of Thailand. This creates tensions and the government wants to decentralize economic activities to other regional cities. This together with other amenities of Bangkok. They try to delegate special functions to each province.

Bangkok is in the middle of Asia and located at the Chao Phraya River, which is the major river of the Thailand. At this river there is the main harbor of Thailand, making Bangkok the gateway for international and national trade.

As Bangkok sited in a strategic location, in the middle of the Asean countries, Bangkok becomes a gateway and a supply chain center for most of the final production provided to consumers around the world.

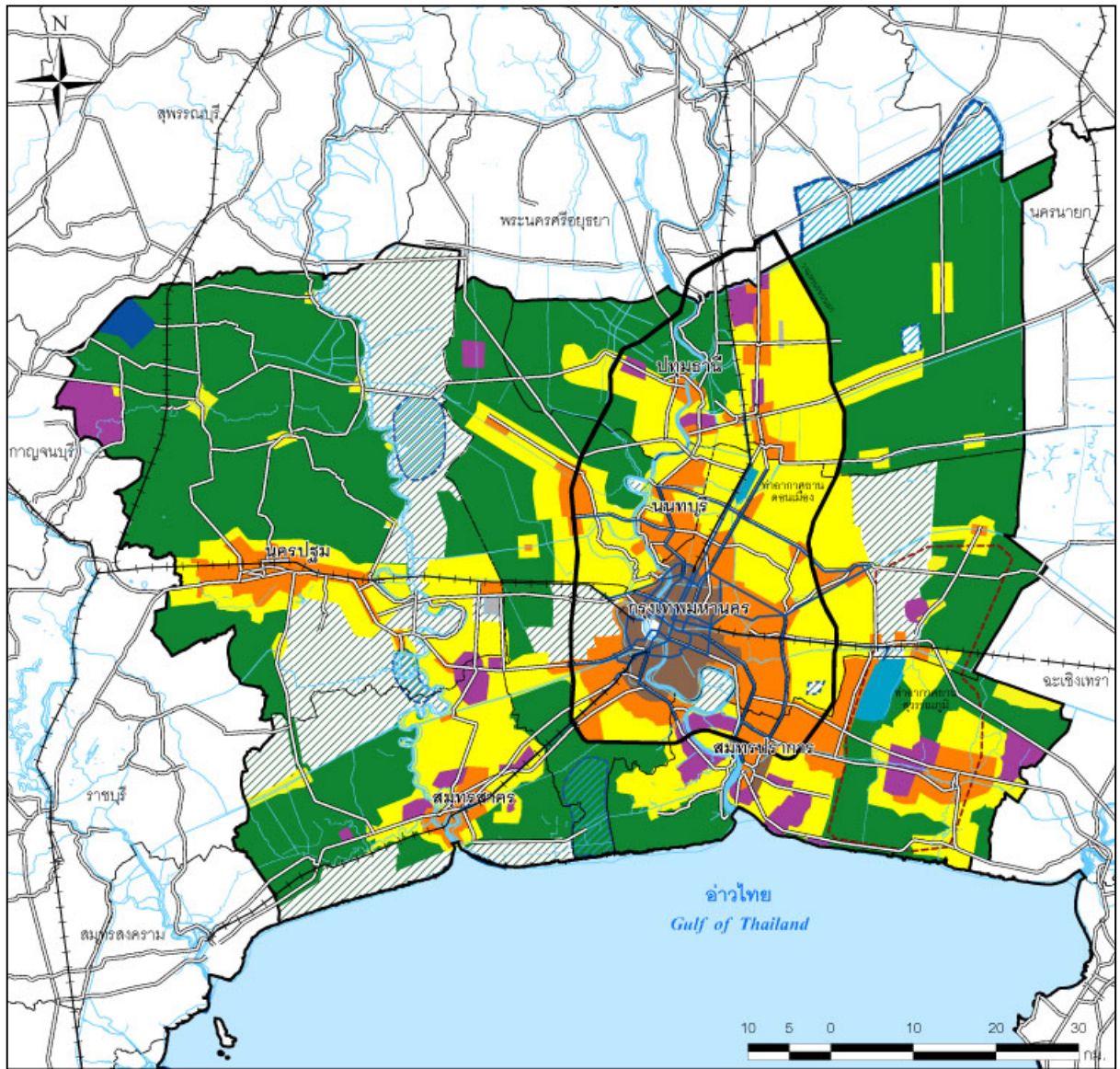
In Bangkok the cost of living is low, this makes it a shopping paradise and this attracts tourists from everywhere.

As a result, Bangkok has grown up and ever developed in several dimensions and become the center of economic, commerce, agriculture, industry and administration center of Thailand. Besides, Bangkok is a business and tourism center. There are many valuable historical sites, antiquities, arts and cultures including local wisdom. All these prestige values make Bangkok been voted as a best tourism destination of Asia in the year 2008 (from a survey of Travel and Leisure Magazine, USA)

2. Governance & Cooperation

Is there a form of metropolitan strategy in place and what fields of policy does it entail? Which stakeholders are involved and what is their role and responsibility in this metropolitan strategy? How are the different territorial levels associated to the metropolitan governance? And how is the cooperation of different territorial levels maintained in the planning process that is increasingly subject to a rapid changing economic, social and technological environment?

Bangkok Metropolitan Administration is a special local government organization comprised of 50 districts and 169 sub districts. Bangkok has become the center of several activities which have a supply chain and a connection with vicinities provinces known as Bangkok Metropolitan Region (BMR) which covered 5 provinces namely: Samutprakarn, Patumthani, Samutsakorn, Nakhonpatom and Nonthaburi by the total area of 7,761.5 sq.km which corresponds the Bangkok Metropolitan Regional Plan.



Since Bangkok has expanded in every direction and links closely to the neighbouring provinces in the context of a regional area, many people who live in the vicinities around the BMA daily commute to work there. Therefore new economic clusters are developed outside the city, like the high technology industry research centre in the north of Bangkok, changing the type of industry of Bangkok from manufacturing to more high-tech oriented.

Furthermore new transportation infrastructure (boats, busses, railway) was developed, especially to the facilities laying outside the BMA, making it easier for people to commute to Bangkok. This has resulted in a further densification of Bangkok instead of further spreading the programme over the region.

The BMA is a special province with a special administration area and an elected governor. Due to the importance of Bangkok for Thailand, every important development project (regional facility) in and around BMA has to be approved by the ministerial cabinet. The BMA council approves the developments in BMA. These developments have to go together with the Bangkok Metropolitan Regional plan.

The BMA plan was made by the National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB, responsible for economic and social development), the Ministry of Interior and the Department of Public Works and Town and Country Planning (DPWTCP, responsible for spatial planning of BMA).

At the district level has it own administration and they have a representative in the BMA council. The district makes a plan and the representative brings the plan into the BMA council where it is checked according the Regional Plan and then approved.

3. New forms of urbanity and metropolitan environments

What are the key development projects (flagships, major infrastructure, social or cultural equipment, etc.) and programs (information, incentives, investments), of your metropolitan strategy? How is the dialogue carried between the specific ambitions of local key projects and the ambition of the metropolitan territory?

If the DPWTCP initiates a project, like for example the railway that will connect Bangkok with other countries, then the national cabinet has to approve. The BMA is a part of the Cabinet. At the national level the rail line will be designed. In Bangkok, the planning of infrastructure and town planning takes place in one department.

4. Innovative economical sectors

Is the regional level competitive enough in a globalised economic and innovation-led system clusters and does it remove the obstacle of the vertical organisation of public policy?

The new high-tech industry cluster is located in a province next to the city of Bangkok, near the first Airport of Bangkok (Don Muang International Airport), so the material for the chips can be transported easily. Also there was a university. The cluster developed partly by the firms that were already there and by national planning. On national level it was decided to put the focus on high-tech industry, so other industries were relocated. The development is private organised; the public sector supports by developing the necessary infrastructure and provides a zoning plan so a specific cluster can develop.

5. Sustainable development

On which central themes and key policies is your metropolitan strategy set upon? How do these themes and policies overcome the short-term instability of any long-term vision and deliver a performing and resilient territorial development?

We have prepared a comprehensive plan and currently it is ongoing the process of preparing the third revision, BMA aiming to achieve the concept of a sustainable development. BMA has set up visions of the city in the year 2020 as follows:

- Develop to achieve the role of Asean Regional Center
- Progress to reach the leading metropolitan
- Having the good environment and being a sustainable metropolis.

These visions were set up on three levels. On the regional level, Bangkok should be the gateway of Asia, on the country level, Bangkok should be a green metropolis, on the community level, Bangkok should provide a good quality of live.

Five strategies are used to work out these visions are:

- Develop infrastructure (gateway)
- Develop a secure economy based on a knowledge based society
- Striving for a cleaner metropolis
- Upgrading for a better quality of live, together with a cultural identity of the city
- Mastering best services and efficient management for the city.

