

The Reflection of the AFACI RATE Project on the Thailand Agricultural Extension Policy

Department of Agricultural Extension (DOAE) is the agency assigned by the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives to formulate Thailand’s agricultural extension guidelines and policies. The Agricultural Learning Center for Increasing Production Efficiency (ALC) serves as one of the key mechanisms for transferring appropriated agricultural knowledge, technologies, and services to farmers in the area through budget support, agricultural inputs, and materials for developing learning plots and learning bases within the ALCs. Agricultural extension officers act as advisors and knowledge facilitators for farmers.

Under the AFACI-RATE project “**Value Addition Technologies Promotion for Agricultural Products in Agricultural Learning Center for Increasing Production Efficiency (ALC)**”, DOAE collaborated with researchers team from Kasetsart University to analyze the current agricultural extension system through ALCs by collecting data, interviewing all stakeholder, and develop the “**FARMS Lifelong Learning Model**”. This model represents a continuous learning framework for farmers, consisting of five steps:

- ✓ **F = Focus – Find Goal:** Set life and career goals
- ✓ **A = Adaptation – Analyze & Action:** Analyze situations, plan, and take action
- ✓ **R = Reinforcement – Reflect & Coaching:** Review outcomes and reinforce learning through experience
- ✓ **M = Management – Manage:** Sustain learning outcomes through proper management
- ✓ **S = Show & Share – Share & Scale:** Transfer and expand knowledge within the community



In the context of climate change, which severely impacts agricultural production in terms of yield, quality, and production costs, DOAE has set Thailand’s agricultural extension policy for 2026 as “The Turning Point of Thailand’s Agricultural Extension Work.” The vision is to build the foundation for climate smart agriculture and ALCs remains the core mechanism for transferring technologies and enhancing farmer’s capacity. However, DOAE will enhance ALCs from general learning centers to “Climate Smart Agriculture Hubs.” Which agricultural extension officers will act as Extension Change Agents with digital competencies, as shown below:

	Previous ALCs	New ALCs (2026)
Role	Technology transfer centers	Climate Smart Agriculture hubs
Operation approach	Knowledge transfer from the model farms	Driven by data–technology–market systems

Supporting technologies	Basic demonstration plots	Use of IoT, sensors, GIS, and digital warning systems
Management mechanism	Reliance on government budget	Integration with local authorities, private sector, and networks
Goal for farmers	Knowledgeable and skillful	Increased and sustainable income with competitiveness

The “Value Addition Technologies Promotion for Agricultural Products in Agricultural Learning Center (ALC)” Project has had policy-level reflections on Thailand in multiple dimensions, particularly in enhancing the country’s agricultural extension approaches through ALCs which serve as the core mechanism of DOAE. The impacts can be summarized as follows:

1. Development of a learning model aligned with the national policy

1.1 The project has led to the development of the **FARMS Lifelong Learning Model**, a framework for continuous learning among farmers that emphasizes participation, analytical thinking, experimentation, and knowledge sharing.

1.2 This model aligns with Thailand’s Agricultural Extension Policy for 2026, designated as “The Year of Transformation for Thai Agricultural Extension”, under the vision of “Building a Climate Smart Agriculture Foundation.”

1.3 DOAE plans to utilize the FARMS model to strengthen agricultural extension by positioning ALCs as central mechanisms for integrated learning that connect among farmers (learners), extension officers (learning facilitators), and network partners (research institutes, private sector, and educational institutions).

2. Enhancing the role of ALCs as policy implementation hubs

The project has contributed to the transformation of ALCs from traditional “Technology Transfer Centers” into “Smart Learning Centers,” where farmers and officers engage in analysis and adaptive learning to respond to real-world challenges, such as climate change adaptation. As a result, DOAE has introduced new operational directions emphasizing data-driven, technology-driven, and market-driven approaches, while promoting collaboration with local governments, private sectors, and academic networks.

3. Developing farmers and extension officers as change leaders

The project introduced a “Farmer Development Cycle” that focuses on lifelong learning and self-reliance among farmers. Consequently, DOAE has restructured its capacity-building programs for extension officers, enabling them to serve as facilitators and Smart Extensionists who utilize tools such as AAR (After Action Review), RBM (Results-Based Management), and Mentor Coaching to drive agricultural extension initiatives.

4. Supporting systemic policy formulation

The outcomes of the project have been incorporated into the development of Thailand’s future agricultural extension policies and systems. Notably, it led to the establishment of the F–A–R–M–S Level Assessment Framework to evaluate the readiness and plan the systematic development of ALCs across the country.

The “Value Addition Technologies Promotion for Agricultural Products in Agricultural Learning Center (ALC)” Project under AFACI does not only generate new knowledge but also play a pivotal role in evolving Thailand’s agricultural extension system into a lifelong learning system that sustainably connects farmers, extension officers, and partner networks. This represents an evolutionary development consistent with Thailand’s national policy direction on Smart Agriculture and Climate Change Adaptation.
