



TOP NEWS

Deutsche Bank: Still in doldrums
DFDL: Till Death Do Us Part
Contribution: Ban Oboun Foundation
Interview: Dr. Karl Schindler
School News: School assembly

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

DEAR FRIENDS AND MEMBERS OF THE STCC



LUZI A. MATZIG, PRESIDENT

During last month's Presidents' Council Meeting organized by the JFCCT (Joint Foreign Chambers of Commerce in Thailand) a few very interesting subjects were discussed, some of which I would like to bring to the attention of the members of STCC.

AEC

Regretfully it seems that Thailand has not really made much effort to be ready for the AEC which will come into effect by the End of 2015. Thailand was compared as having a similar status in the AEC as Portugal

has in the EC, meaning that Thailand's Contribution towards the AEC is indeed rather minimal.

Many of our members expected that Thailand would open its doors for Professionals in many fields from other ASEAN countries to be allowed to work in Thailand in a way similar to what is practiced in the EU where Managers and staff from any member countries are allowed to work in any other member country, without the need to apply for permits of any kind.

Regretfully – this is NOT what will happen here as Thailand has so far shown no intention to change its strict labor laws meaning that NOTHING will change with regard to conditions of employment after the start of AEC.

TOURISM

So far the year 2014 has been rather disappointing with re-

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STCC CALENDAR

Sat, 8th November 2014:

PIANO SEVEN Live in Aksra Theatre King Power @ 19:30

Thu, 13th November 2014:

Stamm at Amari Boulevard Hotel, 18:00

Tue, 18th November 2014:

Swiss Society Bangkok, Hoeck @ Grottino Rest, Suk 19

Thu, 27th November 2014:

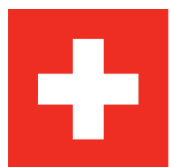
3-Nation Stamm (BRD, Austria, Switzerland) @ Rest. "Deutsches Eck", Sukhumvit Soi 20 (back side entrance Rembrandt Hotel)

Sat, 29th November 2014:

Traditional Swiss Society Raclette Evening @ Embassy of Switzerland.

20 November and 1 December: Invitation will follow a.s.a.p.

For above events please wait for the invitation-mail or get it from www.swissthai.com, click on "events".



THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

gard to foreign tourist arrivals into Thailand. While official numbers as published by the Ministry of Tourism and Sports claim that there was a decline of -10.47% for the January to July 2014 period, figures reported by ATTA (Association of Thai Travel Agents) based on numbers of foreign visitors handled by ATTA members at the two Bangkok Airports combined report a major decline of -41% up to end of September 2014!

The reasons for such drastic declines are manifold but include the never ending demonstrations on the streets of Bangkok during the early months of the year followed by the Military take-over and corresponding introduction of Martial Law in May.

Continued efforts by many Professional Associations and concerned groups urging General Prayuth to relax the Martial Law in order to revive Inbound Tourism into Thailand have proved fruitless so the outlook for the remaining months is not overly positive.

PRIME MINISTER'S ADDRESS

The JFCCT succeeded in convincing the Prime Minister to give an address to the members of the Joint Chambers of Commerce of Thailand. This is planned for 28. November and

will be announced by invitation e-mail. Therefore, please mark this date in your calendar. Thank you.

Progress on SME's

The good news today is the fact that JFCCT decided to set up the JFCCT SME committee for which interested members of all Chambers have been invited to join. It is the declared aim of such Committee, in co-operation with the Board of Trade, to secure Privileges similar to what is available for larger investors via the BOI (Board of Investment), to be made available to SME's in the future, via a yet to be named One-stop-center. More news on this worthwhile project as soon as we hear of it.

*Best wishes,
Luzi A. Matzig
(Lersan Misitsakul)
President
Swiss-Thai Chamber
of Commerce*

*Contact the president:
president@swissthai.com
Tel. +66 (0) 2626 2121*

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MEMBER DETAIL UPDATES

Do you have changes among your delegates or changes to your e-mail, mobile, telephone, or fax numbers?

Please send all updates to
secretary@swissthai.com



ECONOMY REPORT BY DEUTSCHE BANK

STILL IN DOLDRUMS

• Economic outlook:

Growth continues to weaken as attempts by the military regime to revive consumption and investment have yet to provide a discernible boost to the economy, while trade remains in contractionary territory.

• Main risks:

Markets remain resilient in expectation of greater policy efficacy and political stability. These assumptions could be tested if growth remains lackluster for a few more quarters and global market volatility hits Thailand.

Our core view, detailed in last month's special publication "Thailand: Is this time different?" remains unchanged. While the near-term outlook may have improved somewhat due to the

stabilization imposed by the military regime, the economy remains mired in a number of structural constraints. As the external environment becomes more challenging, we worry that Thailand's high public and private debt, worsening demographics, eroding competitiveness, and long-term political uncertainty may weigh in considerably.

Despite the authorities attempts to turn around the consumption and investment situation, latest data offer little constructive, putting at risk our 2014 economic growth forecast. Consider the following:

- Domestic demand continues to be weak, with the private consumption index for August declining by 0.8%yoy as consumer spending on non-du-

table goods such as food & beverages softened, on top of the continued decline in car sales.

- The private investment index slipped by 5.6%yoy. Capital spending related to machinery & equipment underwent further contraction, following sluggish exports. Related to this, the index of industrial shipment was down 7.3%yoy through August, and the index of inventory rose for the second consecutive month (only 5% below a record cyclical high).
- Trade continued to disappoint, with exports down 7.4%yoy through August and imports down 14.2%yoy.
- The indicator of consumer confidence, so far on an

Falling inflation has brought real rates in positive territory

Policy rate minus inflation

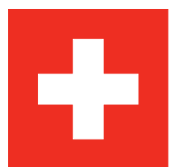


Source: CEIC, Deutsche Bank

Flattening business sentiments



Source: CEIC, Deutsche Bank



ECONOMY REPORT BY DEUTSCHE BANK

upward trend since the military takeover, declined in September, stalling at a level well below than what was seen in early 2013.

- With price controls firmly in place, inflation has eased to 1.8%yoy in September (core 1.7%), pushing up the real interest in positive territory for the first time since February. We think however that suppressed inflation and external risks will keep BoT on the sideline with its rates decision.
- The government's leading index of business cycle has remained flat (at around 120) since the beginning of this year.
- The Thai industries sentiment index has stalled lately after showing

These developments clearly put our 2014 GDP growth forecast of 1.5% is under some risk. Exports would need to pick up expeditiously for growth to exceed 1%, but that is still not an unrealistic expectation, in our view.

Provided the ongoing economic acceleration in US demand translates into higher orders and tourism turns around, the end of the calendar year could well be a tad better than the poor performance seen so far this year.

Budget blues

The government confirmed that despite a major shortfall in revenues (amounting to BHT276bn or 2.2% of GDP), the FY2014 budget managed to incur a deficit of BHT112bn, lower than projected (BHT250bn). This was accomplished by holding back spending, especially capital spending which fell short of the budgetary target by a third.

It is conceivable to make a bullish case for next year under the scenario that left-over cash from this year's budgetary savings would ease financ-

Thailand: Deutsche Bank Forecasts

	2012	2013	2014F	2015F
National Income				
Nominal GDP (USDbn)	370.5	367.8	384.1	407.4
Population (m)	64.5	64.8	65.1	65.4
GDP per capita (USD)	5749	5677	5900	6227
Real GDP (yoy %)				
Private consumption	6.7	0.3	0.8	2.5
Government consumption	7.5	4.9	2.8	3.5
Gross fixed investment	13.2	-2.0	-5.5	7.0
Exports	3.1	4.2	0.0	8.8
Imports	6.3	2.3	-3.8	11.5
Prices, Money and Banking				
CPI (yoy %) eop	3.6	1.7	1.8	2.7
CPI (yoy %) ann avg	3.0	2.2	2.1	2.4
Core CPI (yoy %) ann avg	2.1	1.0	1.5	1.3
Broad money	10.4	7.3	7.5	8.0
Bank credit ¹ (yoy %)	15.3	9.4	8.0	10.0
Fiscal Accounts² (% of GDP)				
Central government surplus	-2.6	-2.0	-2.8	-2.5
Government revenue	19.5	19.0	18.5	19.0
Government expenditure	22.1	21.0	21.3	21.5
Primary surplus	-1.3	-0.7	-1.5	-1.2
External Accounts (USDbn)				
Merchandise exports	225.9	225.4	230.0	245.0
Merchandise imports	219.9	218.7	210.4	229.4
Trade balance	6.0	6.7	19.5	15.6
% of GDP	1.6	1.8	5.1	3.8
Current account balance	-1.5	-2.5	7.0	5.0
% of GDP	-0.4	-0.7	1.8	1.2
FDI (net)	10.7	12.8	12.0	15.0
FX reserves (USDbn)	181.6	167.3	172.0	180.0
FX rate (eop) THB/USD	30.7	32.4	33.0	34.0
Debt Indicators (% of GDP)				
Government debt ^{2,3}	45.4	45.3	46.6	46.7
Domestic	43.3	43.4	45.6	45.7
External	2.2	1.9	1.0	1.0
Total external debt	35.3	36.7	36.4	35.6
in USDbn	130.7	135.0	140.0	145.0
Short-term (% of total)	44.5	45.0	45.0	45.5
General				
Industrial production (yoy %)	2.5	2.6	1.0	5.0
Unemployment (%)	0.8	0.8	0.9	1.0
Financial Markets				
	Current	14Q4	15Q1	15Q3
BoT o/n repo rate	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.25
3-month Bibor	2.18	2.20	2.25	2.50
10-year yield (%)	3.35	3.45	3.55	3.70
THB/USD (onshore)	32.6	33.0	33.3	34.0

Source: CEIC, Deutsche Bank Global Markets Research, National Sources
 Note: (1) Credit to the private sector & SOEs. (2) Consolidated central government accounts; fiscal year ending September. (3) excludes unguaranteed SOE debt



ECONOMY REPORT BY DEUTSCHE BANK

ing pressures and allow for a front-loaded boost to spending. It will be a test of the incumbent regime's administrative efficiency and sense of urgency for that scenario to pan out, but for now we will not build expedited spending in our forecast model.

We are also unimpressed with the much-anticipated stimulus package announced recently. Most of the measures contained in the THB365bn (nearly 3% of GDP) package should be considered as simply expedited spending of prevailing budgetary items. Interestingly, the military regime has opted to go along with a rice subsidy program to support rural income,

much like previous governments have done.

Infrastructure push continues

The authorities continue to try to galvanize investor sentiment by pushing for investment projects. In its latest iteration, the transportation ministry has announced the following:

- Expanding the Bangkok international airport. The project would be worth BHT62bn (USD2bn), featuring the expansion of the passenger terminal, a monorail train to link the old and new terminals, new runway, additional bays for planes, and a new car park.

- In anticipation of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), the authorities will conduct a study for building six more airports to link neighboring countries. Construction could begin as early as next year if the feasibility studies are endorsed by the government.

- The Board of Investment (BoI) approved investment applications worth BHT90bn recently, with a focus on supporting the auto industry

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Representatives:

Mr. Tanaphol Cheewarattanaporn, Managing Director, Thai, and Mr. Podchara Wisutttisang, Sales Executive, Thai

Activity:

Travel Agency



NEWS BY DFDL

MARRIAGE #2: TILL DEATH DO US PART

Last month we began looking at how a civil union between man and wife happens under Thai law. We discussed the various intricacies involved in the betrothal and the marriage itself; this week we endeavor to continue our journey into the marital laws of Thailand by examining how a divorce occurs in Thailand.

The phrase “till death do us part” is a worthy sentiment and if often used to signify the long-lasting journey a couple is about to commence; but in practice there are almost always other off-ramps. Thai law provides explicitly that a marriage can end in one of three ways: death, divorce or by being cancelled by the court (via an annulment). The first is self-explanatory; this

month we’ll look at the second. According to the statistics provided by the Thai Ministry of Social Development and Human Security and the National Statistical Office, 2012 saw 314,338 couples marry in Thailand and 111,377 divorces, giving a divorce rate of 2.03/1,000 people of marriageable age. Though the national divorce rate has been increasing, it remains much lower than in Latvia (3.6/1,000), Lithuania (3.5/1,000) and Denmark (2.8/1,000), the nations with the highest rates in Europe in 2012.

So how exactly is a divorce defined under Thai law? Under the Civil and Commercial Code, a divorce is defined as the dissolution of a marriage by (a) mutual

consent of the couple; or (b) the judgment of the court based on one of the grounds for divorce enumerated in the Civil and Commercial Code. The simplest of the two methods described above is the dissolution of a marriage by mutual consent of the spouses. This, in theory is the quickest and least expensive route for couples to take. Dissolution by mutual consent does not require the couple to seek legal representation, though it is recommended so that each of them fully understands their legal rights and so that a good divorce settlement agreement can be drawn up. The process involves paying a visit to the Amphur (district office) and submitted a joint request for dissolution of the marriage to the officer in charge.



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NEWS BY DFDL



Unlike contested divorces, a dissolution of a marriage by mutual consent does not require the couple to prove any of the grounds of divorce, but they must file an agreement in regards to (a) the division of any personal or marital property; (b) custody of the children of the marriage; and (c) alimony. To finalize the process, both parties are required to be present at the Amphur when registering the divorce so as to publically demonstrate their mutual consent.

Of course, in many cases divorce is unlikely to be achieved by mutual consent. A contested divorce requires the couple to appear in court, sometimes on multiple occasions, each with the

representation of a Thai lawyer. The cost, time and emotional toil can be considerable; it has been said that there are no winners in a divorce except the lawyers.

For a contested divorce the couple must file a petition to court based on one of the grounds of divorce set out in the Civil and Commercial Code. These grounds includes situations where (a) one spouse is guilty of adultery, or of misconduct which results in the other being ashamed, insulted, hated or injured; (b) one spouse has deserted the other for over a year; (c) one spouse is suffering from a communicable and dangerous disease which may cause injury to the other; (d) one spouse is permanently physically disadvantaged making the couple unable to cohabit; (e) one spouse has seriously insulted the other or his or her ascendants (be careful what you say about your mother-in-law) and (f) the

spouses having lived separately because of being unable to cohabit peacefully for more than three years.

The Thai grounds for divorce are predominantly based on "faults" committed by one of the spouses or impairments affecting a spouse. Thus if a marriage breaks down naturally, such as due to a divergence in the expectations or priorities of the spouses, under Thai law the only option, unless a divorce by mutual consent is pursued, is to file for a divorce after 3 years of living separately. These grounds for divorce in Thailand are similar to those seen in other jurisdictions. For example, Canada has a no-fault con-



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NEWS BY DFDL

cept of “permanent breakdown” of the marriage as a ground for divorce. To establish a “permanent breakdown” of a marriage the spouses must live separately for at least one year before considering a formal divorce. Unlike in many common law jurisdictions, Thai law does not require as a precondition to divorce that the couple go to marital counseling to try and salvage the marriage. Where a contested divorce occurs between the spouses, the Court will in detail examine the relationship of the spouses as a divorce can have multiple consequences for the couple in terms of their children and their assets. Expatriates beware, if you wish to get a divorce in Thailand, make sure your legal representative can

advise on whether the divorce in Thailand will be recognized in the country where the marriage was first registered. If you get this wrong it could lead to subsequent inadvertent bigamy, among other unpleasant consequences. Divorces do not always need to be fodder for dramatic Hollywood movies; they can be a relatively simple process where the couple’s relationship has broken down and they wish to end things amicably by mutual consent. Unfortunately, that may be the exception rather than the rule.

Now that we have discussed how divorces work under Thai law, we will look to conclude our three-month series on marriage by focusing on how annulments work

and briefly discuss what other issues arise when a marriage comes to an end. Stay tuned!

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"And if the time has come to consider other living creatures as citizens on this earth as we live in an interdependent world where the fate of every being, whatever it is, is intimately linked to that of other." And if the time has come to give more importance to the way we die than the way we enjoy life?"

This is in this context that the Ban ObOun Foundation (meaning "sweet home" in Thai language) was created in March 2008, in Uthai Thani province, 280km north of Bangkok, in a region surrounded by paddy fields. The purpose of the project is not only to give a safe home to 140 "stray" dogs, the majority of which coming from the streets of Bangkok, injured by car accidents or just saved from cruelties of their previous owners; but also to create an ideal type and sanctuary where dogs can live free from hunger, pain, disease and fear; where they can die ac-

companied and in dignity, not just alone with agony under the human being's indifference.

The idea and concept of the shelter were initiated by two women, Ms Michele Bise, a Swiss expat, and Mrs Sombut Singkaew, a Thai native teacher from Uthai Thani. With the financial support of some Swiss friends and true animal lovers, they started to build a well design and adapted infrastructure in August 2007. Since the work completion, the shelter has been in continuous expansion and improvement thanks to the help of two well known French Foundations: the Brigitte Bardot Foundation as well as "30 Millions d'amis" Foundation.

2 dogs caretakers live permanently there and are supervised by Mrs. Sombut. The monthly expenses (dried food, rice, medicine, veterinary treatments) are still mainly bear by Michele's salary with some casual help from

overseas friends. Beside this, the Association of Swiss Friends of Ban ObOun, was established in March 2013 to search for long term and sustainable financial support to the shelter, mainly in Switzerland and France. As a result and thanks to its board members and particularly to its Chairwoman, Mrs. Dominique Brustlein, a website and facebook page have been recently financed and designed to let the public known about this very special project.

For more information, please click on the below links:

www.facebook.com/association-banoboun

www.banoboun.org

Contact email:

michele.bise9@gmail.com

For Donation:

Ban ObOun Foundation, Account no. 396 075152 1, Bangkok Bank, Nongchang branch





MEMBER INTERVIEW

DR. KARL SCHINDLER

Name or Alias

Dr. Karl Schindler

Village and Pattaya Nuea.

Occupation / Employer

General Manager ADOC

Favorite destination in Thailand

The north and northeast

Languages

German, English, French

How do you spend your free time?

I like to travel, eat out, go to the movies, play VASL (Virtual Advanced Squad Leader). Strategy games on PC.

Family & Home

All relatives live in Switzerland/Germany. I live here with my Thai boyfriend. During the week I stay in BKK (Saphan Sung) and the weekends I usually stay in my condo in South Pattaya.

Which book or movie would you recommend to your friends and why?

Fantasy books: Stephen Donaldson: Thomas Covenant the Unbeliever. David Eddings: The Belgariad and The Malloreon and others. Movies: Lord of the Rings, Games of Thrones.

Years in Thailand

1.5

Favorite restaurants in Thailand

I do not have the favorite restaurant, there are a couple restaurants I like to go like AMP Saloon (best Hamburger in BKK), Swiss corner, I couple of Thai restaurants in Sammakon

If you had a million dollars, how would you spend it?

Build a roman villa, Invest in Equities.



If you had the power to change something in Thailand, what would it be?

Strategy and Problem solving, rather than learning books by heart. Remove the "cannot fail" education system / guaranteed diplomas and certificates. Political situation: Reduce the corruption, enforce the law and treat all equal.

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RIS SWISS SECTION DEUTSCHSPRACHIGE SCHULE BANGKOK

WILLKOMMENSFEST

Our school had the chance to present itself to the German speaking community at this event on 20th September 2014, organized by the German-speaking Protestant and Catholic Churches in Thailand.

– Deutschsprachige Schule Bangkok, Dominique Tellenbach and Fabian Ehrensberger, ran a small booth at this occasion to further establish awareness of our international school in the German speaking society in Thailand.

Visitors from different places, as far as Pattaya, travelled to the Protestant parish hall located in a surprisingly quiet neighbourhood right in the middle of the vibrant Sathorn district. The representatives of RIS Swiss Section

We were not just glad to welcome many new people, we were also very happy to see well-known friends of our school, such as the Swiss Ambassador H. E. Mrs. Christine Schraner Burgener, visiting our booth.



ONLINE INFORMATION ABOUT OUR SCHOOL

The second edition of our newsletter is out. It contains articles from all stakeholders of the school: parents, students, teachers, the school management team and the school board.

You can download it from our

website. To keep up with what's happening at RIS Swiss Section – Deutschsprachige Schule Bangkok, check out the "News" section of our homepage.


The most immediate way to

get photos and texts about the school life is to follow our Facebook page:


www.facebook.com/RISSwissSection has all the latest news.


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RIS SWISS SECTION DEUTSCHSPRACHIGE SCHULE BANGKOK

BLI - BILANZBESUCH

Since May 2011, German schools abroad that have been deemed worthy by a German government inspection team are awarded the "Excellent German School Abroad" quality seal in the form of a certificate signed by the German President. With these certificates, the German President reaffirms the excellent reputation German schools abroad enjoy as places of education and

inter-cultural exchange. This quality seal for schools abroad is also a tribute to the schools' efforts to raise standards with the aid of a comprehensive quality management process.

After the successful inspection by a Federal-State commission in March 2011, RIS Swiss Section Deutschsprachige Schule Bangkok fulfills the requirements to be

awarded the certificate of an "Excellent German School Abroad". The next evaluation for RIS Swiss Section - Deutschsprachige Schule Bangkok will take place from 24th to 26th November 2014. This evaluation will take the form of a "BLI - Bilanzbesuch". For more information - please visit our website and read the new edition of our newsletter.

SCHOOL ASSEMBLY FOR GRADES 7 – 12 AND AWARDING OF DIPLOMAS

On 2nd October 2014, RIS Swiss Section - Deutschsprachige Schule Bangkok held a school assembly for grades 7 to 12. Students and teachers were greeted with welcoming words from Monika Eberl, Head of Secondary. She explained to the students that more and more institutions of higher education and employers are requiring language certificates from their candidates as proof

of their language competencies. This is why RIS Swiss Section - Deutschsprachige Schule Bangkok is preparing their students for internationally recognized language exams.

The "Deutsches Sprachdiplom der Kultusministerkonferenz" (engl.: German Language Diploma of the Education Ministers' Conference) can be obtained by high school students abroad

as a certificate proving German language proficiency in two levels, in grades 8 and 11.

All students in these grades proudly received their diplomas on this occasion from Principal Dominique Tellenbach. Afterwards, the students of grade 12 who passed the exams for the Advanced or Proficiency English Certificate, issued by the University of Cambridge, also received their certificates.



At the end of the assembly the four interns from the Ludwig-Maximilians University of Munich who are leaving the school at the end of this week were bid farewell with flowers and a big round of applause from the students and teachers.



RIS SWISS SECTION DEUTSCHSPRACHIGE SCHULE BANGKOK

FARMERS' MARKET AT RIS SWISS SECTION

On the morning of the 3rd October 2014, our students from Kindergarten A, B and E organized a Farmers' Market. The students sold fresh produce and other merchandise. They were supported by their teachers and

teacher's assistants. Parents, visitors and older students had the chance to stock up on home-made bread, sweets, vegetables and many other delicacies for the weekend. The Farmers' Market marked the end of the study theme "On the Farm" which had accompanied the students since the beginning of this school year in August. The next theme will be "Halloween" and it will certainly again impart many pleasurable learning experiences to our Kindergarten students.



Important events in the first semester of the new school year:

- 06. 11. 2014 Loy Krathong Day
- 14. 11. 2014 Lantern Parade (KG - Grade 3 - evening)
- 09. 12. 2014 Sports Day
- 18. 12. 2014 Christmas Party

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EXPERIENCE OF SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT IN THAILAND

In 2013 I moved to Thailand to do Software Development with ADOC, having a background of almost 20 years in IBM as AIX specialist, Application Developer and the last 10 years or so as Certified IT Application Architect, Method Expert and being responsible for the education of the application developer apprentices. If you want to know more, the full details you can find here: <http://th.linkedin.com/pub/karl-schindler/53/419/841/> With this background I had certain expectation regarding software development standards and methods.

Education

Let me start with the education. Education comes first when you start a developer career. I say developer not programmer because a developer is more than a programmer. A developer must be able to analyze, design details of an application (a programmer cannot do that). Why? In Agile methods (especially true in Scrum) developers analyze, design and plan the sprints. This requires more than just programming knowledge in one or more programming languages. You might now argue in PHP you do not need that. I

disagree even there you need a minimum design and plan. But PHP induces so, into quick and dirty programming. E.g. accessing the database directly from the user interface. This makes me frown immediately as you get a huge security hole.

That said the Software Developer Education needs more than just acquiring programming skills. In fact analyzing and design skills depend a lot of strategy and problem solving.

Now let's have a look at the application developers education in Thailand. There are numerous universities teaching application development and handing out wonderful diplomas with grades. So the first thing when I hire a developer I look at his education and thus the diplomas. Soon I found out that the value of these diplomas vary depending on the university handing it out. Some are not even worth the paper they are written on. In Europe diplomas are quite a good indicator. So how comes here it is not? This is my thesis: Thai law enforces a minimum salary for university graduates. While minimum wages generally make sense for the lowest income, a minimum wage above

that does not make sense, especially not depending on a higher education. If you have a good education and according skills, you will get a better job and salary anyway. In my opinion the minimum wage just leads to a run for this higher level of education. Not everybody has the intelligence and skills to succeed. But success in Thailand seems to depend on money. Thus it seems to be that there are universities guaranteeing a no failure, maybe even just selling diplomas. This leads to worthless diplomas.

Of course diplomas are not the only thing in education. The CV also contains the experience a developer already has. This gives additional information of possible skills, but not of the quality of work and working moral. We come to that later. This could normally be found in the job references, but since there are usually none in Thailand (at least I did not see any here) you would have to call all former employers. And human memories are not always reliable.

So all I got is the education diplomas and CV's and an interview in English.



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Quality

Neither CV nor diplomas give you much information how the quality of work will be. And quality is not easy to measure in software development. Software methodology is a step to improve quality of work. If someone works methodological and structured the work is usually of better quality. So I ask for the methodological knowledge. Usually there is few taught, maybe RUP (Rational Unified Process) along with UML (Unified Modeling Language, a design standard).

How to assure quality? Through testing. Testing is not only code testing. There are 3 testing areas:

1. static testing

(early detection & Prevention:

- Deskchecks
- Checklist
- Reviews
- Mapping
- Prototype
- Walkthroughs (e.g. Sequence Diagrams, Use Cases)
- Inspections (e.g. Code)

1. Process Quality

- Metrics
- Root Cause Analysis
- Continuous Improvement
- Standards Compliance

1. Dynamic Testing

- unit tests
- integration tests

- system tests
- acceptance test
- operability tests

So what is my experience in software development quality in Thailand? It varies depending on the person, but basically is lower than in Europe, but higher than India (yes I got experience with offshore development, but that's another story).

The QA depends a lot on the IT Architect / Project Manager (me in this case). Dynamic testing is usually done and the application works as it should. Well that's the good news.

The bad news are: Most developers I saw here are hackers or say it nicer: programmers. The hack in the code without reflecting (analyzing) the problem and pondering for a solution (design), so the written code quality is often not very good and lead to increased costs in repairing and maintaining. So code review is a must (as Lenin said: trust is good, control is better). Now the cave at is that you cannot review every single line of code written as this would increase the cost of development dramatically. Since there were no designs nor documentation written by the developers, the code quality is accordingly low. So I started to enforce the analyze and design on the detail level done before implementation to improve the code and

the maintainability. This showed that UML maybe was taught but not understood. Furthermore after reviewing I often found that the implementation was not following the agreed design (this is possible, but then the design must be changed and the reason for the change given).

Writing documentation is an atrocity for most developers (not only in Thailand) so I required documentation (some experience regarding this: see next chapter). This comes to the language part. Software development is based on English (most programming languages are based on English anyway). There is spoken and written English. Most Thai developers speak English more or less good enough for technical discussions. As it is normal in foreign languages they have a higher passive than active vocabulary. Written English is a different story. I never found an English text written by a Thai developer completely error free. Spell checkers help here, even limited with grammar. They just do not use it. To be honest, this is also true for other non native English speaking "faranghs".

An example: In the worst case some documentation written was just unusable. There was not a single sentence grammatically and orthographically correct. In the best case there were some spelling or grammatical



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errors to correct. This much just for the formal content. The content of the documentation was usually quite good and comparable to what I experienced in Europe.

So let's have a look at the working habits in Thailand.

Working Habits/Moral

Software development today is team work. The time where the developer sits alone in his chamber and writes a piece of software are long gone. Team means everybody contributes and supports each other (and not the German interpretation of team as "Toll Ein Anderer Machts").

My experience with the team supporting each other was good quite equal to what I saw in Europe. Though there is something special I saw in Thailand (quite similar to India): There is an automatic hierarchy of age and social position. Let me give you an example: I had a Senior Architect (I come to this title story a bit later) and a Software Engineer who was younger. The younger one almost never gave his opinion or idea even when asked for. Always the older one spoke. After this older Thai left the company, the younger blossomed out and had many good ideas and good solutions. In fact he was the better developer than the one who left.

To be able to work in team it is mandatory that the working hours of each team member are overlapping to high level. I had one guy who refused to come to office more than twice a week and his work was not good and when I joined ADOC his project was in deep trouble. He simply refused to change (he was already given a higher salary to work in office every day, but still did not).

Another thing is overtime due delays based on bad / wrong implementation and a milestone to be hold: They simply refuse and keep working 5 days a week from 8 to 5 (if you are lucky).

Another thing is absences. At the beginning I often got a mail in the morning that a developer will not come to work that day (even when he had to deliver due to a milestone). Thrive for business seems not to be their liking.

I already mentioned that developers don't like to write documentation. This went that far that when I asked the senior architect to write some RUP based documentation the client wished, he just left and went home. End of story.

Thai love titles (well not only Thais, but they seem to be especially proud on them). This titles should based on the roles and skills. So if I see some one

has a title like "Senior IT Architect" I have some expectation, based on the Open Group definitions¹, According to TOG definitions the "Senior IT Architect" was a Senior Developer at best. Titles also influence the salaries.

Salary

Salary is another topic I got some experience here. I think I read about the salary topic in one of the Newsletter that Thais expect and ask above average salaries from foreign companies. I think that is true. Let me explain.

Based on my experience regarding salaries in Switzerland and the living standard there, I would say for having the same living standard as in Switzerland you need about one third of that what you get in Switzerland. So this is my estimation base. Now this Senior Architect I mentioned so many times in this paper got a salary I had in IBM Switzerland after about 15 years experience. And IBM does not pay above average any more in Switzerland. Well this guy did not even have 10 years of experience. I would have halved his salary...

In hiring Thai developers I did see salary expectations which are far beyond reasonability. The cave at is, that it is difficult for a foreign company to



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find well qualified developers. Furthermore this high salaries makes Thailand based software development companies not very competitive against other Asian countries. If the quality, language etc were higher than the competing countries Thailand could be quite competitive.

Conclusion

So summarizing my experiences and concluding, I would say:

- Education in Thailand must change from learning by heart to teaching problem solving strategies and reflection.
- For hiring software developers tests are needed, which do not allow standard (learnable) answers. E.g. describe a problem and ask for a solution, maybe even a partial implementation.
- Even with these entry tests, to achieve quality a high level of control is needed. I would propagate to hire cheap “programmers” and give them well defined tasks. Do the design yourself or at least verify them thoroughly and do a lot of inspections. I know this is costly. But quality has it’s price and the cheaper programmers could reduce the cost.
- A possibility would be hire university graduates for the minimum wage and educate them with what is needed. This of course requires a contract for several years, with a probation time and penalties for leaving early.
- Team building by encouraging the younger to express their opinion especially in front of their senior team mates.





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