



# NESDC News

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## Thailand Social's Outlook of Q1/2022

Key social situations in Q1/2022 are elaborated as follows: In general, the employment situation has improved. The unemployment rate fell to 1.53 percent, the lowest level since the outbreak of COVID-19. Household debt continued to increase. However, the ability to repay the loan is still strong. Surveillance diseases has improved as well as crime and traffic accidents, while consumption of alcoholic beverages and cigarettes tended to rise. Consumer protection complaints through the NBTC also increased. In addition, this report also provides 2 interesting social situations including Learning loss, the opportunity to create a learning society, and Challenges of the Thai Carbon Market and issues to be considered, and the article “The problem of scamming in the digital age and its solutions”.

**Employment conditions improved. Both agricultural and non-agricultural employment grew substantially. The hours worked increased. The unemployment rate tends to decline. Similar to unemployment within the social security system**

In Q1/2022, A total of 38.7 million people were employed, a 3.0 percent rise from the same period last year. It was a rise in both the agricultural and non-agricultural sectors. The agricultural sector employed 11.4 million, a 3.0 percent increase due to increased production of agricultural products in key crops. The non-farm sector employed 27.3 million people, a 3.0 percent increase. Manufacturing saw a 2.6 percent increase in employment from the highest capacity utilization rate during COVID-19, and exports continued to expand gradually. The employment in the wholesale/retail and transportation/storage branches increased by 5.8 and 16.2 percent, respectively, while the construction and hotel/restaurant sectors decreased by 1.1 percent. Employment in the hotel/restaurant sector decreased due to the increase in COVID-19 epidemic and also a small number of foreign tourists, which are 0.5 million people comparing to 9-10 million before COVID-19. **Working hours increased** in both the public and private sectors, reaching 40.8 and 43.8 hours per week, respectively, compared to the same period last year. However, it remained lower than before COVID-19, due in part to the 3.8 million quasi-unemployment in the first quarter of 2022, while working hours of those working 50 hours or more per week or the overtime workers tended to improve but remained lower than normal. In the first

quarter of 2022, the number of overtime workers decreased to 5.7 million from the usual range of 6 - 7 million.

**Unemployment has decreased.** The number of unemployed people were 6.1 hundred thousand, a decrease from 7.6 hundred thousand in the same period last year and a decrease from 6.3 hundred thousand in the previous quarter, accounting for the unemployment rate of 1.53 percent, the lowest during COVID-19, as well as the formal sector's continuous decline in unemployment. The number of people receiving unemployment benefits was 305,765, representing a 2.7 percent unemployment rate in the formal sector. However, there are some issues that need to be monitored include 1) The number of unemployed people who had never worked before continued to rise, reaching 2.6 hundred thousand people, a 5.2 percent increase over the same period last year. The inverse of the unemployed with work experience who started to decline. 2) Long-term unemployment is expected to rise to 1.7 hundred thousand people; and 3) Unemployment among highly educated workers remained high, with tertiary graduates accounting for 3.10 percent of the workforce.

**Issues to be monitored in the next phase** are 1) The recovery of tourism sector employment. The number of foreign tourists remains low in comparison to before COVID-19, while Thai tourists continue to increase, despite the government's tourism stimulus program. However, the expenditure proportion is still insufficient to compensate for the loss of revenue from foreign tourists. As a result, it is critical to focus on opening up the country and attracting as many foreign tourists as possible. 2) The impact of rising commodity prices on labor costs and employment. Increased inflation since late 2021 due to oil prices and increases in production factors in some products, which will affect workers' cost of living. Higher fertilizer prices may also have an impact on agricultural employment and transportation sector employment as a result of rising oil prices. 3) Identifying solutions to long-term unemployment and rising unemployment among recent graduates.

**In Q4/2021, household debt slowed. Loan quality remained high. However, the impact of household income has not recovered and must be monitored. The financial vulnerability of the household has increased, as has the expense of living. This may have an impact on the ability to pay debt**

In Q4/2021, household debt was valued at 14.58 trillion baht, an increase of 3.9 percent from 4.2 percent of the previous quarter. Real estate loans expanded at a slower rate, increasing by 5.0 percent from 5.8 percent in the previous quarter. Business loans increased by 6.5 percent from

7.6 percent in the preceding quarter. Meanwhile, loans that increased included auto loans grew by 1.2 percent from 0.3 percent in the previous quarter. As a result of promotional efforts at the Motor Expo. Credit card loans increased by 1.6 percent, following a 0.5 percent contraction in the previous quarter, as a result of a modest recovery of economic activity. Personal loan under supervision which was the loan in the hire purchase and leasing segment, grew as much as 21.6 percent. **The ability to pay debt improved.** Non-performing consumer debt (NPLs) amounted to 1.43 billion baht, accounted for 2.73 percent of total loans. It was a decrease of 0.5 percent from the same period last year and decreased by 4.0 percent from the previous quarter. Although loan quality has improved across the board, auto loan NPLs must still be monitored. The ratio of special mention loans (loans with a delinquency of less than three months) to total loans rose to 11.08 percent, or 130 billion baht. However, **debt repayment capacity needs to be closely monitored** because 1) households' financial situation is more precarious after a long period of economic contraction. As a result, households, particularly those with low incomes, have limited liquidity. 2) Household earnings have not recovered. Even though employment has increased, working hours have not returned to normal and there are still many unemployed people, and 3) the cost of living has risen. This may result in households not having enough income to pay off debts.

**Surveillance diseases decreased. Mental health risks improved. However, it is also necessary to monitor people's vaccinations and to raise awareness and understanding of infectious waste management.**

The total number of patients with surveillance diseases fell from 70,287 to 43,670 in the same period last year, a 37.9 percent decrease across all diseases. The majority of pneumonia cases decreased by 16.7 percent due in part to the continuous use of face masks. Meanwhile, all aspects of mental health risks have improved. Specifically, the risk of suicide fell from 15.4 percent in the previous quarter to 8.7 percent, due in part to the relaxation of measures that allow people to engage in more normal activities. Currently, just 39.1 percent of people have received a booster shot, and 18.7 percent have never received one. Consequently, public immunizations must continue to be monitored. Moreover, it is necessary to raise awareness and comprehension of infectious waste management. According to the Pollution Control Department, the amount of infectious garbage in Thailand rose by 87 percent between 2020 and 2021.

**The consumption of alcohol and cigarettes has increased. However, it must be monitored alcohol consumption after the relaxation of measures, efforts to quit smoking at home, and the sale of e-cigarettes on online platforms, the sale of e-cigarettes has increased.**

Consumption of alcohol and cigarettes grew by 0.6 percent, with alcohol usage increasing 1.8 percent and tobacco consumption falling 1.3 percent. However, in the later phases, emphasis must be placed on 1) regulating alcohol consumption in restaurants. Due to the easing of restrictions on consuming alcoholic beverages in restaurants that meet SHA Plus or Thai Stop Covid 2 Plus standards, the consumption of alcoholic beverages may grow. And because there is a chance of COVID-19 spreading, the shop's service must be regularly and stringently regulated and checked. 2) a campaign to quit smoking at home. According to National Statistical Office survey data, 23.7 percent of the population aged 15 and older smoked in the home. This will expose members of the household to secondhand and thirdhand smoke which contains many toxins and carcinogens. 3) increasing the crackdown on the internet sale of electronic cigarettes. It is frequently advertised and sold on online marketplaces. enabling young people's access to the purchase and consumption.

**The criminal case as a whole was lowered. Nonetheless, the proportion of drug cases remains high. Therefore, it is necessary to improve suppression effectiveness, getting addicts into treatment and rehab, preventing relapse of addicts and reducing acts of violence against women.**

A total of 105,473 criminal cases were reported in Q1/2022, a decrease from the same quarter in 2021. Of which 26.9 percent were reported in 90,656 drug cases, a 29.1 percent decrease, and 3,572 cases of reported life and sex crimes, an 18.4 percent decrease. There were 11,245 reported cases of crimes against property, a 7.5 percent decrease. The issues that need to be monitored are 1) Giving priority to bringing drug users into treatment and rehabilitation; and preventing the relapse of addicts, particularly those with psychotic symptoms and violent conduct. 2) The tendency for acts of violence against women to rise. Therefore, it is essential to focus on the family when addressing the issue and increase an understanding of society by advocating against violence and refusing to remain silent about such activities.

**Road traffic accidents have reduced the number of deaths and injuries. However, the return of travel and economic activity could result in an increase in accidents. Therefore, surveillance and collaboration integration are required to ensure trip safety.**

Reports of traffic accidents were 21,463 cases, a 33.9 percent decrease from the same quarter in 2021. There were 1,541 deaths, a decrease of 26.5 percent, and a total of 10,953 injuries, a decrease of 43.2 percent. The reason for the drop in traffic accidents during the first quarter of 2022 is that the situation regarding the COVID-19 outbreak is still uncertain and the

number of infected individuals is anticipated to rise. As a result, people reduce traveling. During the Songkran holiday in 2022, there were 1,917 accidents, a decrease of 18.9 percent compared to the same time period in 2021, however 278 people died, an increase of 0.4 percent. The issues that need to be highlighted are as follows: 1) the potential for accidents to grow as travel and economic activities resume. 2) to ensure that road conditions are readily available and do not disrupt traffic; and 3) to integrate cooperation between relevant entities to generate travel safety. Especially during the celebration, which requires neighborhoods, village, subdistrict, district, and province participation in decreasing accidents and providing travellers with convenience

**The number of complaints received through the OCPB decreased, while the number of complaints received through the NBTC increased. Issues that need to be prioritized are call center scam and consumer protection from consuming toxic food and beverages, and also deceptive product labels to mislead consumers**

There were 2,540 complaints about goods and services sent to the OCPB in Q1/2022, a decrease of 33.3 percent from the same period last year. The most common issue was the misleading label, followed by advertisements, direct sales and marketing, and contracts respectively. Meanwhile, the total number of complaints received by the NBTC was 1,780 complaints, increased by 131.5 percent from the previous year. The most complaint issue was about deception through mobile phones, especially in the issue of receiving short SMS messages by 820 messages. There were follow-up and surveillance issues: 1) Call center scams, in 2021, there were a 270 percent increase in telephone scams and a 57 percent increase in SMS scams. 2) The problem of toxic contamination in food and the deceptive product labels to mislead consumers tend to increase. Therefore, More severe penalties and a monitoring system throughout the production chain should be consider in order to quickly find the root of the problem.

### **Learning loss : the opportunity to create a learning society**

Most learning declines or Learning losses are caused by discontinuities in education, dropouts, absenteeism, and ineffective teaching. The impact of the COVID-19 epidemic has severely resulted in long school closures and learning losses for children. The World Bank estimated that, in 2020, 3 – 9 months of school closure could cost a child 6,472 - 25,680 U.S. dollars in economic value. The total global loss was estimated at 10 - 17 trillion US dollars, or about 560 trillion Thai Baht. In Thailand, a study by the University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce found that 3-level kindergarten students whose schools were closed in January for a period of up to a month had significantly lower school readiness scores than those who were

able to go to school as usual, statistically. In addition, *the results of the educational situation survey of teachers and educational personnel from the Equitable Education Fund* found that most of the students' learning loss problem was at a moderate level. The lower elementary school students had the highest rate of learning losses, at 60.5 percent, which was caused by a shortage of equipment, lack of concentration in online learning, parents who did not have enough time to follow up on children's learning and homeworks Can't teach homework, and lastly, from poor economic status family. Currently, Thailand has an innovative tool to solve the learning gap, namely the Learning Box, designed to facilitate learning outside the classroom. It was used to alleviate the shortage of equipment and the Internet and to empower teachers to design learning based on context on each area. It is a tool to support the re-opening of the school when the pandemic situation is resolved. In addition, learning loss can cause adaptation of all involving groups by driving the wider learning method through technology and new educational models such as outshool.com and the knowledge base called BrainPOP, a new application that effectively helps to build knowledge and to develop skills in a variety of ways. *As a result, the fundamental learning from school will be less important. The paradigm adjustment of educational management in which the learner is the center may be necessary. Therefore, the government and people in society need to urgently build learning eco-system and improve the educational structure that supports the creation of a lifelong learning society.*

### **Challenges of the Thai Carbon Market and issues to be considered**

With Thailand's declaration of intent to fully address the climate problem to achieve the Carbon Neutrality goal by 2050 and Net zero emissions by 2065 at the COP26 Forum 2021, Thailand has focused on ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Carbon Market is one of the tools that the OECD and the World Economic Forum stated that it has the lowest operating costs and is the best tool to reduce emissions in term of value. In 2021, this measure was implemented in 45 countries worldwide, with more than 65 countries underway. Carbon credit turnover reached 851 billion U.S dollars. For Thailand, the carbon market is assigned in the drafted 13th National Economic and Social Development Plan and in the Climate Change Master Plan 2015-2050. However, there are challenges of establishing Thailand's carbon market to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions as follows: 1) The volume of carbon trading in Thailand is still low compared to the country's overall greenhouse gas emissions. 2) Lack of trading and exchange platforms. 3) The measurable, reportable and verifiable (MRV) costs in carbon credit certification (transaction costs) are high. 4) The carbon market has not yet set emission reduction targets that linked to the goals of the country. Hence, the gas reduction

may be slow. Therefore, if Thailand intends to reduce emissions to achieve the declaration by using the carbon market as an important tool, the issues that should be emphasized are as following: 1) Increasing the private sector's participation in the carbon market: by a survey of the Federation of Thai Industries, it was found that Thai entrepreneurs were interested in and agreed with the country's gas reduction goals. If additional support measures are available, it may incentivize more operators to join the carbon market. 2) Assigning the criteria for reducing greenhouse gas emissions in accordance with the country's greenhouse gas emission reduction goals, for example, setting the baseline level of emissions of each industry, as well as linked to other policies such as carbon taxation. 3) Establish a carbon credit trading database system that is transparent, reliable and also helps to monitor current situation. 4) Promoting investment in technology that can reduce emissions or investments to produce carbon credits, such as providing low-interest funding sources. 5) Building awareness and encouraging local and community participation in carbon credit trading that could reduce environmental impact and generate income for the community.

#### **The problem of scamming in the digital age and its solutions**

Scamming through modern communication tools is something that everyone can encounter in their daily lives. It is a detriment to the deceived, considered to be high value. In 2021, Thailand has over 6.4 million fraudulent phone calls, an increase of 270 percent and a 57 percent increase in fraudulent SMS messages. From the complaints in 2021, it was found that, there were more than 1,600 victims of call center gangs. Total damage cost was more than 1,000 million baht. There were also 48,513 online complaints, a double increase from the previous year. Therefore, in 2021, NESDB has conducted a study and survey on scams through the Internet and modern communication from January to March among people age of 17 - 77 years for the total of 5,798 people around the country. The following interesting issues were found: 1) *Nearly half of Thai people have experienced being scammed in one year and about two in five have been the victims of scamming.* 48.1 percent of the respondents experienced fraud. Of these, 42.6 percent were victims of fraud, with an average damage value of about 2,400 baht per person. 2) *Gen Y and Gen Z are more deceived than Gen X and Baby Boomers* due to spending time and activities on the Internet more than any other group. However, the Baby Boomers had the highest average damage value per time. 3) *Scams that claim to yield benefits are the biggest proportion.* The most common form of scam is phishing email/SMS. While the type of scam with the highest victimization rate is online sales scam and purchased online goods but did not receive product with the rate of 82.6 percent, but the damage value

is not much with an average of 600 - 700 baht per person. While phishing email/SMS, personal data scams, hacking or fraudulent requests for credit card information and investment scams has low victimization rate but the damage value is quite high. 4) *More than half of the victims take no action and believe that the government's prevention/management was not as effective as it should be.* 54.1 percent of the sample group did not take any action for the reason that damage has not occurred, difficulty, does not have time, believing that it didn't help anything, and the loss value is not much. In addition, most of them still do not know the appropriate notification channels.

For **factors affecting deception and survival**, it was found that 1) *Risk behavior in using modern communication technology and personal personality is an important factor that gives the opportunity to be a victim.* 2) *Knowledge of fraudulent information can reduce the chance of being a victim.* However, there are some forms in which news awareness may not be effective, including malware scams, bank account/social media hacking and fraud requesting for credit/debit card information. 3) *Scammers' technology and skills/strategies are key factors in reaching and becoming victims such as loan applications and online job applications, for deceptive tactics such as communication and persuasion, creation of credibility and victim selection.* However, **there are limitations in coping with the problem:** scams are constantly evolving in new forms, becoming more complex and harder to be aware of. Information about scams is sparse. The collection and storage of data is not systematic. These make it difficult to assess the situation and not see the overall of the problems. This included the management of fraud problems by government agencies is not as effective as it should be due to the lack of proactive work in terms of defense, creating learning for society to be up-to-date and developing investigations to keep up with the situation. Moreover, *many scams are transnational organized crime/criminals, making it unable to extend to the mastermind.*

**The proposal to solve the problem is as follows** 1) *Build immunity for living in the digital era by campaigning/public relations to educate people about various scam patterns that need to be aware including campaigning for the public sector to participate in providing information and reporting clues, whether there is damage or not in order to provide information for effective deterrence.* 2) *Establish partnerships with the private sector as a communication intermediary to help stop or curb the problem of scams before they spread to wider society.* For example, trading platform businesses have tight/strict subscription terms. Empowering mobile operators to suppress suspicious numbers. 3) *Consider setting up a specific agency with oversight duties to prevent and deter scams through the internet and modern communications*



by providing information center, coordinating, and developing of prevention tools and the investigation of wrongdoings together with other relevant agencies. 4) *Build international cooperation on the suppression of transnational cyber crimes* by coordinating information, news and facilitating investigations of relevant officials.

### Key Social Indicators

Components	2020	2021	2020				2021				2022		
	Year	Year	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1		
<b>1. Employment<sup>1/</sup></b>													
Workforce (Thousands)	38,544	38,700	38,193	38,173	38,726	39,086	38,750	38,778	38,641	38,631	39,623		
%YOY	1.0	0.4	-0.4	-0.6	2.0	2.9	1.5	1.6	-0.2	-1.2	2.3		
Employed Person (Thousands)	37,680	37,752	37,424	37,081	37,927	38,289	37,581	37,822	37,706	37,899	38,720		
%YOY	0.2	0.2	-0.7	-1.9	1.2	2.2	0.4	2.0	-0.6	-1.0	3.0		
Unemployed Person (Thousands)	651	748	395	745	738	727	758	732	871	632	608		
Unemployment Rate (%)	1.69	1.93	1.03	1.95	1.90	1.86	1.96	1.89	2.25	1.64	1.53		
Underemployed Person (Thousands)	485	584	284	704	442	510	651	469	778	438	319		
<b>2. Household debt<sup>2/</sup></b>													
household debt value (Trillion baht)	14.04	14.58	13.50	13.59	13.77	14.04	14.14	14.28	14.35	14.58	N.A.		
%YOY	4.0	3.9	4.1	3.8	3.9	4.0	4.7	5.1	4.2	3.9	N.A.		
Ratio to GDP (percent)	89.7	90.1	80.3	83.9	86.8	89.7	90.8	89.5	89.6	90.1	N.A.		
NPL (Billion baht)	144.4	143.7	156.2	152.5	144.3	144.4	148.7	150.4	149.7	143.7	N.A.		
%YOY	2.7	-0.5	23.6	19.7	8.3	2.7	-4.8	-1.4	3.7	-0.5	N.A.		
% NPL to Total loan	2.84	2.73	3.23	3.12	2.91	2.84	2.92	2.92	2.89	2.73	N.A.		
<b>3. Health and Illness</b>													
<b>Number of patients under disease surveillance<sup>3/</sup></b>													
- Measles	1,212	(-81.7)	227	(-81.3)	746	146	194	126	111	65	23	28	32
- Meningococcal fever	12	(-52)	13	(8.3)	5	3	2	5	3	3	2	2	2
- Encephalitis	908	(1.6)	663	(-27.0)	275	190	266	177	272	153	122	116	168
- Cholera	5	(-58.3)	1	(-80.0)	0	1	2	2	0	0	0	0	0
- Hands, feet and mouth	33,310	(-50.5)	19,008	(-42.9)	5,512	1,153	5,003	21,642	13,023	3,723	1,360	902	619
- Dysentery	2,234	(-12.6)	1,203	(-46.2)	679	573	586	396	469	351	214	169	322
- Pneumonia	196,403	(-23.4)	153,277	(-22.0)	77,549	29,430	35,389	54,035	47,665	32,500	46,461	26,651	39,727
- Leptospirosis	1,641	(-24.4)	1,150	(-29.9)	269	334	526	512	245	275	269	361	201
- Dengue fever	72,130	(-45.0)	9,956	(-86.2)	9,183	18,159	36,187	8,601	2,530	3,088	2,677	1,661	1,247
- Influenza	123,602	(-68.8)	10,698	(-91.3)	99,365	4,957	8,293	10,987	5,967	2,537	1,070	1,124	1,351
- Rabies	3	(-0.0)	3	(0.0)	0	2	1	0	0	2	1	0	1
<b>Rate per 100,000 population of death with major chronic non-communicable diseases</b>													
- High blood pressure	14.20	N.A.	No quarterly data available								N.A.		
- Ischaemic heart disease	32.60	N.A.	No quarterly data available								N.A.		
- Cerebrovascular disease	52.80	N.A.	No quarterly data available								N.A.		
- Diabetes	25.10	N.A.	No quarterly data available								N.A.		
- Cancer and tumors	129.50	N.A.	No quarterly data available								N.A.		
<b>4. Safety of life and property<sup>4/</sup></b>													
- Deaths from road accidents (cases)	7,303	6,555	2,054	1,456	1,784	2,009	2,097	1,538	1,316	1,677	1,541		
- Crimes against person (cases)	14,604	15,501	3,882	3,592	3,616	3,514	4,375	3,884	3,578	3,946	3,572		
- Property crimes (cases)	43,312	51,175	11,104	10,380	10,764	11,064	12,160	12,085	13,968	12,970	11,245		
- Narcotics (cases)	311,816	456,377	91,899	81,522	70,901	67,494	127,918	123,324	107,350	102,948	90,656		

5. Consumer Protection <sup>5/</sup>											
5.1 Number of complaints (cases)											
- Contract/Property	3,188	3,638	528	776	1,091	865	983	1,090	1,031	534	432
- Goods and service	2,138	2,368	547	429	537	625	585	622	633	528	830
- Advertisement	6,810	4,752	949	2,525	1,758	1,578	1,811	1,455	813	973	740
- Law	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
- Direct sales & marketing	3,828	3,619	534	1,189	975	1,130	731	762	1,190	936	538
<b>5.2 Hot line 1166 (cases)</b>	<b>51,185</b>	<b>38,736</b>	<b>15,258</b>	<b>13,737</b>	<b>13,278</b>	<b>8,912</b>	<b>10,749</b>	<b>8,578</b>	<b>10,005</b>	<b>9,404</b>	<b>9,334</b>

Source: 1/ Labor force survey report, National Statistical Office, Ministry of Digital Economy and Society

2/ Bank of Thailand

3/ Bureau of Epidemiology, Department of Disease Control, Ministry of Health

4/ Criminal Record Information, Royal Thai Police

5/ Office of the Consumer Protection Board, Office of the Prime Minister