

# Foreword

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and its global spread since 2019 have highlighted and aggravated deep-rooted inequalities worldwide and tested the capacity of governments to respond to health emergencies in a co-ordinated fashion. In this context, public sector digitalisation has gained political traction as a means of securing the continuity of government operations and the sustainable delivery of public services, increasing openness and stakeholder participation through digital means and supporting the accountability and integrity of policies in response to the pandemic.

This *Open and Connected Government Review of Thailand*, the first of its kind, assesses Thailand's efforts to build a government that is closer and more responsive to its citizens and draws upon digitalisation, data and stakeholder participation as drivers for national development. The review provides an in-depth analysis of the state of digital and open government in Thailand in line with OECD good practices, the provisions of the *OECD Recommendation of the Council on Digital Government Strategies (2014)* and *Recommendation of the Council on Open Government (2017)* as well as and the OECD Digital Government Policy Framework. Its purpose is to support the Thai government in advancing towards digital government maturity, building an open state and unlocking the mutually reinforcing benefits of digitalisation and openness for broader policy goals.

Thailand recognises the potential of open and digital government policies as a catalyst for improving public services, fostering socio-economic development, as well as engaging and collaborating with citizens. When appropriately designed and implemented, ambitious open government policies can also contribute to rebuilding trust between citizens and government and reinvigorating democracy. Instruments such as the 20-Year National Strategy (2018-2037), the National Economic and Social Development Plan, and the Thailand 4.0 economic model set the medium- and long-term development vision, including the creation of public value for citizens and businesses through digital and open government initiatives.

For this purpose, the Thai government has established initiatives, policies and institutional responsibilities for designing and delivering citizen-centric digital services and for engaging stakeholders in policy making. However, achieving such ambitious long-term goals will require further efforts to implement coherent and consistent policies and to strengthen the foundations for an open and connected government. These include: pursuing a proactive open government culture; stronger control, oversight and coherence in the financing of digital projects; developing and aligning digital standards; and establishing stronger data governance arrangements in the public sector.

This *Open and Connected Government Review of Thailand* forms an integral part of Phase I of the OECD-Thailand Country Programme. It builds on the close collaboration between the OECD and the Thai government, including in the context of the OECD Working Party on Open Government, the OECD Working Party of Senior Digital Government Officials (E-Leaders) and the OECD Network on Open and Innovative Government in Southeast Asia. It also contributes to the OECD Public Governance Directorate's broader engagement with Thailand, which currently includes policy reviews in the areas of regulatory policy and public integrity.



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