

# Connecting Community Preparedness and Business Resilience for Environmental Sustainability in Thailand

## Case Study



**Thailand** — Flooding is one of the reoccurring disasters which frequently impacts upon Thailand’s society with both communities and businesses impacted by flooding on an annual basis. In particular, the year 2011 saw the occurrence of some of the country’s worst flooding in living memory. 65 of the country’s 77 provinces were affected by the flooding between July and November 2011<sup>1</sup>. The economic impact was significant, with damage and losses totaling approximately 1.43 trillion Thai Baht or 46.5 billion US dollars<sup>2</sup>.

Marigot Jewellery (Thailand) Co., Ltd. a subsidiary of Swarovski, was one of the companies which was significantly affected by the 2011 floods. Recognizing the ongoing challenges posed by flooding, Swarovski, together with Marigot Thailand and Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC) launched a project on “Connecting Community Preparedness and Business Resilience for Environmental Sustainability” in July 2018.

<sup>1</sup> ThaiWater (2015). <http://www.thaiwater.net/current/flood54.html>

<sup>2</sup> World Bank (2012). Thai Flood 2011 Rapid Assessment for Resilient Recovery and Reconstruction Planning - Overview



The project comprised two key components, firstly, on Business Resilience to strengthen Marigot Thailand’s Flood Preparedness Plan for its business operations, and secondly to facilitate Marigot Thailand staff to support Community Resilience by undertaking Community Based Disaster Risk Management (CBDRM). The project engaged in two locations in central Thailand where Marigot Thailand has factory operations: Ayutthaya province as well as Bangpoo in Samut Prakan province.

**Enhancing multi-stakeholder cooperation for more effective flood preparedness planning**

Under the first component on business resilience, ADPC facilitated stakeholder meetings with local authorities, government, technical agencies and other relevant organizations to identify opportunities for Marigot Thailand to enhance coordination and partnerships for flood preparedness and response in Ayutthaya and Samut Prakan respectively.

In May 2019, a consultative meeting with around 30 key stakeholders was held in Ayutthaya. Key stakeholders including Department of Disaster Prevention & Mitigation Provincial Office, Office of Ban Wa Industrial Estate<sup>3</sup>, Office of Royal Irrigation Department, Provincial Office of Thai Meteorological Department, Provincial Labour Protection and Welfare and local authorities were consulted to gain a more holistic overview of local flood risk management in the vicinity of the Marigot plant in Ayutthaya.

In Samut Prakan, the stakeholder consultation meeting was combined with the Bangpoo Industrial Estate Annual Flood Exercise in June 2019. Marigot Thailand participated in the flood scenario based table top exercise with 40 other key stakeholders and tenant companies also observing. This platform enabled identification of practical inputs and recommendations towards the operationalization of the Marigot Thailand Flood Preparedness Plan in alignment with the Industrial Estate plan. Mr. Wutichai Vonghirundecha, Assistant Director of Bangpoo Industrial Estate noted the benefits of conducting the exercise together with its tenant companies for enhanced coordination in flood response.



Mr. Jeerasage Puranasamriddhi, Managing Director at Marigot Thailand described the benefits of engaging in the multi-stakeholder consultation meetings on flood preparedness planning: *“Involving the different stakeholders was a very good occasion...these stakeholders consist of various government officials from central and local offices both in Ayutthaya and Bangpoo. We were able to learn a lot from them, especially regarding the last big flood we had [in 2011]”. He continued: “the consultations gave us confidence that as a manufacturer and investor in those areas that they are making a lot of improvements in order to prevent those kinds of events again...their cooperation and motivation was very positive”.*



## Promoting business volunteerism for community disaster preparedness and environmental sustainability

Under the component two on Community Resilience, Marigot Thailand volunteers worked with local communities in both Ayutthaya and Samut Prakan to build resilience to disasters in the community. The communities of Moo 1 Tambon Ban Len, Bang Pa-in District, Ayutthaya and Moo 2 Tambon Bangpoo Mai, Mueang District, Samut Prakan collaborated in the initiative following consultations between ADPC, Marigot Thailand, community leaders and relevant local authorities and stakeholders.

A “Marigot Volunteer for Sustainability” campaign was launched to call for volunteers to participate in the initiative. Guided by the ADPC team, the volunteers followed a CBDRM process carried out together with community members in each of the target locations.



Firstly, the Marigot volunteers were familiarized with CBDRM, including facilitation techniques and learning about types of measures to address disaster risk. The volunteers utilized these skills during their first visits to the pilot communities by consulting community members to build up a better picture of the local profile in terms of exposure and vulnerability to hazards and stocktaking of existing capacities.



The next training sessions saw Marigot Thailand volunteers and ADPC facilitators raise the awareness and capacity of community members on disaster risk topics which were tailored to the specific context of each location based on the results of the participatory risk assessments. This included

training on disaster preparedness for elderly persons and demonstration of specialized evacuation procedures for persons with disabilities presented by the Bangkok Fire and Rescue Department and Community Learning Center. Marigot Thailand volunteers also ran interactive sessions to raise awareness of children on fire evacuation techniques, garbage management, preparing emergency survival kits and emergency patient lifting. In Bangpoo, the Bangkok Fire and Rescue Department and the Marigot Thailand safety team also delivered a session on fire prevention and response with community members of all ages and abilities able to experience using fire extinguishers and water to combat fires.

Ms. Kanittha Phongphan, Member of Prasat Thong Municipality Council, Ayutthaya highlighted that the activities had provided the community members with new information: *“The learning activities covered topics that we were not familiar with, such as patient rescue and evacuation procedures. This is the first time our community has learned about these skills so the assistance was valuable for us”.*

Mr. Thanawan Ratsameechay, Health Volunteer of Moo 2 Tambon Bangpoo Mai reflected on the project outcomes in his community: *“I am very happy because there has never been such an activity here before and I feel that our community has become more united as a result. The children have developed knowledge new skills like using fire extinguishers...so it was a great activity in our community”.*

## Marigot volunteer initiative for community resilience

Marigot Thailand and ADPC organized a Joint lessons learned and certificate ceremony in August 2019 to reflect on the “Marigot Volunteer for Sustainability” campaign and appreciate the efforts of the volunteers. A total of 38 MJT volunteers received certificates to recognize their participation in the initiative.

In reflecting on his motivations for joining the initiative and experience of completing the CBDRM training workshops, Mr. Jaroensak Aupamai, Operator, Marigot Ayutthaya remarked that: *“I believe that the communities can always improve in terms of coping with challenges like flooding. Through the volunteering activities I was able to work directly together with the community members to contribute to this improvement and to help them develop in the right way”.*

Ms. Ladda Chanthian, Production Supervisor, Marigot Bangpoo, revealed the benefits of having joined in the volunteer campaign from her perspective: *“With the knowledge I’ve gained through experience in the field and in the training sessions with ADPC I can also teach others what I have learned. Now, I can pass the knowledge I have to those who lack awareness on disaster issues...if I come across those kinds of incidents [related to hazards in the community], I am certain I can be of help”.*

Ms. Suwanna Hoengkhamkao Production Line Leader, Marigot Bangpoo, noted that she had forged better relationships with her colleagues as a result of volunteering: *“Although we are in the same organization, sometimes we would just pass each other by and rarely talk. But when working together as volunteers, we got to know each other more”*.

Going forward, the project demonstrated the potential for multi-stakeholder approaches to enhance coordination and alignment of flood preparedness planning between local authorities and businesses. Moreover, business engagement in community disaster preparedness can meaningfully contribute to reducing disaster risk facing both business and communities. It is hoped that this initiative can inspire other businesses as a model approach for connecting their own resilience with efforts to support community preparedness for disasters towards stronger societal resilience and sustainability in Thailand and beyond.



The “Connecting Community Preparedness and Business Resilience for Environmental Sustainability” project was implemented in partnership between Swarovski, Marigot Jewellery (Thailand) Co., Ltd. and Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC) from July 2018 to October 2019.

The initiative is part of Swarovski’s “Positive Production Program” for its owned production plants with the aim to work towards sustainability excellence in its manufacturing and production locations by 2020.

The collaboration sits under Stream 3 of the Program through which Swarovski aims to positively impact its employees, their communities and contribute to achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by addressing business relevant sustainability issues such as equality, wellbeing and environmental challenges.

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