

# Safer Cities 17

Case studies on mitigating disasters in Asia and the Pacific

## Good Governance and Post-Tsunami Recovery in Patong

*The Indian Ocean disaster resulted in human losses, destruction and severe damage to the social fabric and economy of the affected countries, and has brought to light not only the vulnerabilities of communities in coastal areas but their diverse and complex nature. The event also suggested that this type of disaster event poses a serious challenge to existing governance structures, as it stressed the need for advocacy to promote good governance policies as an effective step in providing disaster management at the local level to ensure human security. No longer should it remain as a discretionary function of the central government where it may or may not be taken seriously. The tsunami stressed the need to recognize the discipline of disaster risk management as a mandatory responsibility of any level of government.*

### Introduction

In the 1980s Patong was a fishing village in Phuket, an island of Southern Thailand's Andaman coast, largely comprised of sea gypsy coastal hamlets and a sparsely populated inland rural agricultural community. The 4-kilometer beach was not known to outsiders except for the sea gypsies who were the sole user of the coast for their livelihood. However, the beach attracted 'Back Packers' and budget tourists, the momentum from which gathered rapidly attracting 'High end' tourists with large-scale investors opening the tourism trade towards the beginning of 1990s.

The growing tourism industry elevated the fishing village of Patong from its 'Tambon' status to Thesaban Tambon" (Town Municipality) in 1994. It was further elevated to a "Thesaban Muang" (City Municipality) in 2002.

Patong Municipality has an area of 16.4 km<sup>2</sup> with a 4 km-long beach front. It is located in Kathu District (Ampher) of Phuket Province. The population in the Municipality was 15,705 as of 22 February 2005, of which 7,966 (50.7%) are female. The population density is 957.62 per km<sup>2</sup>. The registered number of households with the Municipality was 3,288 in 2005. However, the municipality records a large migrant population as high as 35,000 to 45,000. In addition the Municipality attracts an average 20,000 tourists per day in the peak season running from November to March. This implies a population density of 4,311 per km<sup>2</sup> within the municipality during this period.

The conversion of Patong Municipality from a Thesaban Tambon to Thesaban Muang progressively enhanced the institutional capacity of the municipality. It acquired the necessary engineering and technical skills and competencies to manage its key services, particularly for wastewater treatment and civil works. The policy of the Municipality to attract highly skilled workers its administrative departments and units, and its concerted effort to retain educated citizens may have contributed to this achievement.



### Abstract

The Patong municipality in Phuket province of Thailand was devastated on 26 December 2004 by the Indian Ocean Tsunami event. This case study presents how the Municipality of Patong converted the tragedy into an opportunity and stood up to the challenges posed by the event in clearing the destruction and re-launching itself in less than two years. The underlying theme of this story is the execution of good urban governance policies by the Patong Municipality

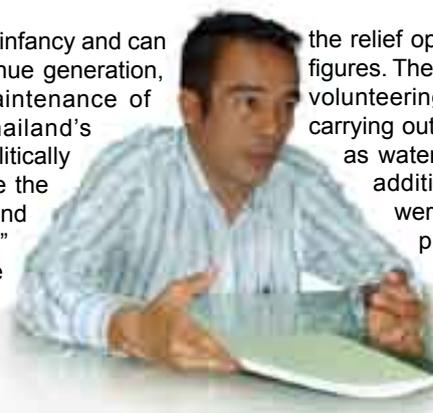
### What's inside

- 📁 Functions of Local Authorities for Emergency Response
- 📁 Policies and Strategies
- 📁 The tsunami and its impact on Patong Municipality
- 📁 Taking care of the future
- 📁 Ensuring the security of life and property
- 📁 Good governance attributes in the tsunami recovery
- 📁 Conclusions



## Functions of Local Authorities for Emergency Response

Local government system in Thailand is still in its infancy and can be improved in several key areas such as revenue generation, allocations for development expenditure, maintenance of fiscal discipline, etc. It is observed that "Thailand's decentralization process is both fiscally and politically asymmetrical. It is fiscally asymmetrical because the central government is devolving responsibility and authority for expenditure, but not for revenue," and it is politically asymmetrical because of the manner and the nature of the power and authority devolved (Kanakpan, 2002). These are the areas receiving the attention of government's legal and constitutional experts for improvements.



the relief operations, alongside national and international figures. The private sector took the lead role in most cases, volunteering for activities such as clearing debris and carrying out immediate repairs to essential services such as water supplies, electricity and communications. In addition, companies from the municipalities that were not affected by the tsunami came forward to provide machinery, tools, equipment and their service personnel to attend to immediate relief operations.

Two large NGOs, CARE and World Vision, had attended meetings and discussions when invited by the Thesaban authorities, but

The local authorities were assured of a predetermined portion of the central government revenue with no concern over how well or poorly this money is spent. This arrangement is an impediment for the local government gaining fiscal discipline. In general, municipalities lack the means to invest in city development and management in a planned and proactive manner due to shortcomings observed in regulations and a lack of trained staff for implementation.

they were not involved in the consultative process and there is no evidence of any such involvement in the decision-making. These meetings were principally held to inform the public on decisions taken at the National and Provincial levels, rather than consulting or involving a broader set of stakeholders in the decision making process. However, no major decisions were taken during these meetings other than providing solutions for immediate problems that occurred daily such as managing the clearance of debris, assistance to affected people, and so forth.

It is reported that following the approval of the Decentralization Master Plan, the local governments are yet to be informed formally of their roles and responsibilities. They are technically less competent to deliver the respective functions in a reasonably effective and efficient manner, constrained by required rules and regulations particularly those governing procurement, grant utilization and budgeting, and more importantly shortage of staff due to disincentives involved in transferring staff from central to local government (Wegelin, 2002). The time frame set for the gradual transfer of six categories of functions is by 2004, with full transfer to be achieved by 2010. "The experience in planning, programming and budgeting varies considerably while articulation of local economic planning is relatively poor" (Wegelin, August 2002).

It is noteworthy that this local level engagement is contrary to the inherent qualities in Thai society that advocates acceptance of decision-making by seniors/elders, as age, knowledge and wisdom

The involvement of the civil society in the affairs of local governments similar to other countries in the region is yet to emerge fully in Thailand. "Co-operation with civic groups in resolving specific issues and utilizing the capacity of the private sector and NGOs in a variety of ways seems accepted wisdom in theory, but practiced selectively" (Wegelin, 2002). This is mainly due to the lack of experience and clarity on the part of the municipal bodies to give practical shape to this principle. On the other hand NGOs are still generally interested in their own specific mandates, and therefore facilitating of public participation in decision making is not yet a priority in their agenda.

The tsunami changed this administrative structure. City Halls in the affected areas became the operation centers in the aftermath of the tsunami. The city leadership and officials participated in

### Urban Good Governance Principles



**Accountability** - The elected members as well as appointed public officials of the local authorities are held accountable to the citizens on all financial transactions made on behalf of them.

**Transparency** - The procedures and processes, on investment decisions such as formulating budget, collecting revenue, inviting bids, awarding contracts, making payments and also selecting, appointing, promoting and providing other opportunities to the staff. The access of the community to this type of information and the frequency with which the information is communicated is also considered under this principle.

**Participation** - The policies and programs that encourage the participation of citizens, private sector and civil society, the extent of the partnership among these three groups and the involvement and mobilization of participation in the decision making processes are the key concerns examined under this principle.

**Rule of Law** - The existence and adequacy of rules and regulations, fair and impartial enforcement of these rules and regulations, adherence and respect to rules and regulations by the citizens and actions taken on public grievances within the framework of the existing rules of the local authority are the main areas of focus under this principle.

**Predictability** - The long-term responsiveness of the local government to ascertain the needs and aspirations of the stakeholders of the city on safety, security, health and environment in addition to the lead economic activity, namely tourism and how these aspirations are met or planned to be met by the local government.

The above interpretation of the principles of good governance is the result of the attempt that was made to blend standard governance attributes with unique situation in Thailand in the post-tsunami context.

### General Information



The organizational structure of Thesaban Muang consists of three components. The legislative body known as the Municipal Council has 18 elected members. The head of the Municipal Council is known as the Council President. The Executive committee consists of a Mayor and three Committee members. The Municipal administration is under the supervision of the City Clerk. The Municipality administrative structure is given below. The services provided by the Patong Municipality are determined according to its municipal charter.

through accumulated experience is upheld as an authority and respected. Acceptance of decisions made by a person matching these criteria is high and the public does not demonstrate an active desire to be involved in the decision making process that affects their

lives; as observed first-hand by the study team. Many Thai seem to accept such decisions without complaint and are used to being passive recipients of services when delivered by others.



## Policies and Strategies

### *Social Policy*

The social development strategy of Patong Municipality promotes the concept of “Happy Family” through a united and happy family extending its strength to the community and then to the city. The Municipality has specially allocated one park, Loma, for family entertainment to encourage families to spend time together through entertainments, religion, sports and similar activities.

The municipality has special support programs for the disabled, elderly and homeless children. Prevention of drug addiction and enforcement of the law on drug trafficking is strictly adhered to by the Social welfare division of the Municipality. Propagating and sharing indigenous knowledge, traditions and culture, among the new generation is also actively encouraged by the Municipality. Every month the municipality organizes a cultural event to promote local cultural talents such as carnival, music and dancing performances, (e.g. Thai boxing) that also appeal to the tourists.

In order to maintain “Patong’s Healthy City,” the concept promoted and declared by the Mayor of Patong city, several activities are undertaken. These include pre- and post-natal health care for mothers, house visits by medical officials, a vaccination program for children, general health education, mobile health clinics, sterilization of dogs and cats are some of the key activities in this respect. The Municipality has developed a comprehensive health information and instruction brochure to educate people on their dietary habits, primary health care, and physical exercise and also to prevent home and road accidents. Furthermore, in order to maintain the standards of physical and mental health in the city population, sports activities including aerobics are being promoted and supported by the authorities with special attention being given to the physical well being of the elderly and the young.

Patong Municipality implements an efficient system to prevent pollution of the environment. The strategy is to involve the participation of people through a strong campaign on how to manage

garbage and how to deal with environmental issues. The city officials visit problematic sites regularly and supervise the operations of the municipality services.

### *Economic Policy*

Patong Municipality is implementing a program to develop its human resources emphasizing good attitudes, ‘correct vision,’ and professional and technical capacities among its officials in order to deliver quality service to its constituents. The policy of inviting and providing incentives to educated and professionally competent persons of the municipality to return to Patong after their studies is an innovative approach to minimize ‘brain drain’ in the community.

Tourist Information Booths have been established by the Municipality to provide information to tourists and also to solicit their views as to the development of the city in addition to complaints and grievances, if any, so that the Municipality can take prompt action to rectify the issues. This two-way communication process is working effectively as the municipality is committed to promoting and supporting its tourism.

Tourism is the lead sector that brings multiplier effects to the economy. The strategies of the municipal council are therefore designed to achieve the economic growth through tourism. The infrastructure and other facilities for tourists are the main components of this policy. The tsunami destroyed exactly this core resource base of the economy of Patong. The efforts in bringing back the lost resource base are highlighted separately.

The economic strategy of the municipality focuses on creating jobs for its people by organizing technical and vocational training programs and thereby opening more opportunities for job seekers, particularly in the jobs that serve tourism. The objective of enhancing the job skills required in the local tourism industry is to ensure sustainable economy through increased income of its citizens.



## The Tsunami and its Impact on Patong Municipality

The tsunami hit the economic, political, social and cultural center of the city on Sunday morning of 26 December 2006. The city was enjoying the peak period of the tourist season in Phuket Province with the highest number of tourists then in residence.

The waves that rose up at 9:30 am on 26 December 2006 were never experienced before in the recent history of this region. Patong beach and the road running parallel was teeming with children, adults, vendors, beach attendants, boat operators and traffic, were caught when the first wave hit killing and injuring large numbers. Of the 987 total deaths recorded in Phuket province, according to unpublished municipal data, the largest number occurred at Patong beach, where a total of 152 persons perished (79 Thai and 73 foreign nationals). No location specific data on death and injury is available, as these were only recorded at hospitals and mortuaries.

The immediate aftermath of the tsunami was a chaotic situation; people had never experienced any disaster of this magnitude previously and knew no standardized response procedures. Patong municipality’s infrastructure bore the brunt of the tsunami’s impact. The drainage and sewage systems were blocked with sand and debris, and the water storage ponds were similarly filled. The disruption to the wastewater treatment facility caused untreated and accumulated wastewater to flow freely into sea causing further damage to the already affected natural marine resources. Five water-pumping stations were damaged; the water treatment system and underground electrical grid was submerged with salt water. Surface telephone lines and the electricity distribution system were also destroyed and damaged structures; vehicles, equipment, furniture and debris were strewn throughout the inundated area of Patong beach.

The services disrupted, such as electricity, water, telecommunication, were not the services provided by the municipalities in Thailand. The respective corporate sector attended to the repairs with utmost efficiency and in many areas such services were operating normally four days after the tsunami. The telecommunications network was soon repaired though overloaded during the peak response phase immediately following the tsunami. Damaged telephone land lines were also repaired within a few days. Drinking water during this period was not a problem as the potable water was available in the area and supplied as required.



authority is exercised through the Ministry of the Interior and the National Defense Council. This structure is replicated at the provincial and district levels under the authority of the Governor and of the District Civil Defense Director. The Royal Thai Armed Forces under the command of National Defense Council were brought into the emergency response framework. The Prime Minister and the entire Cabinet of Ministers were in Phuket to command the disaster relief operations within a few hours of the tsunami.

The serious disruption to services in Patong Municipality was reported where the underground sensors of the central waste treatment plant stopped due to salt-water intrusion. The private sector replaced the sensors and the repairs were completed by 3 January 2005 according to officials of the Patong municipality.

The emergency search and rescue commenced almost immediately followed closely by institutional and spontaneous support from the military, volunteers, the private and public sectors. The city hall was converted into an emergency 24-hour coordinating center to receive and deliver services during this emergency period. According to Mr. Chairat Sukkaban, Deputy Mayor of Patong Municipality, 20 million baht available to them at the time of Tsunami was used on relief operations. "We did everything," said the Deputy Mayor, "carrying dead bodies, taking injured to hospitals, supplying food for the people who were hungry, consoling those who were crying etc. giving medicine to the sick. You name any kind of service that is arising from an event of this magnitude. We provided it."



Medical teams came to take care of injured persons. The massive emergency response operation was largely handled by the military. More than 5,000 soldiers and 20,000 local officials and volunteers joined in the rescue operations. The crisis coordination center set up in the Phuket City Hall was provided with a special communications system linking all affected areas covered the operations in the Patong Municipality.



The solidarity demonstrated during the immediate aftermath of the tsunami was unprecedented. There was no dearth of help and donations in material form to the victims of the tsunami in Thailand. The Royal family, military, local and foreign volunteers, NGOs and INGOs, Thai corporate sector and the entire nation spontaneously mobilized to help the victims of the tsunami. Forensic operations were led by the Thai authorities alongside specialists brought in by foreign governments to assist with the task of identifying over 5000 bodies across the affected region. The identification and repatriation of the large number of foreigners who were casualties was handled with extreme care in a joint effort by the Thai authorities and the foreign governments. Those foreigners who lost virtually everything including money, passports and clothing and who were stranded following the tsunami were given assistance and those able or willing to return home were repatriated within ten days.

The scope and performance of the local bodies during this period was beyond any existing mandate and therefore the study team was unable to gather comprehensive records on the activities that were conducted in this initial phase. However, the actions of the municipality administration reflect the genuine desire to be more responsive to the needs through public and private partnership, understanding its accountability and predicting the needs.

In the national government structure of Thailand, the Prime Minister is the responsible authority for national disaster management. His

Given the centralized configuration of the command structure in place after the tsunami, the role of the Patong Municipality was largely limited to cooperating with ongoing emergency operations within the Municipality in addition to conducting immediate repairs necessary to bring back the essential community services. The Patong Municipality provided their support to the relief operations and various compensation schemes offered by the agencies of the Thai government, though limited to support roles and facilitating cooperation wherever necessary to coordinate these activities.

## Taking Care of the Future



"After things began to get back to normal, the next mission was the recovery of the damage in the disaster area" (The Tsunami in Phuket, 2006). Within this objective, "A Recovery Plan for Economic, Social, Natural Resources and Basic Infrastructure of Phuket Province" was developed by the Provincial government. The vision of this Recovery Plan for Phuket Province is to develop an "international marine tourism center with high living quality, unique culture and sustainable development".

### The Recovery Phase

The Patong Municipality tirelessly devoted itself to the above mission by complying with the requirements of the intensive period of three months. Clearing off the debris took the longest time and was

assisted by private sector companies that volunteered to remove the debris with heavy equipment and machinery. The people, particularly volunteers, hotel and business owners, helped in clearing the debris to one side of the road clearing their own premises. This enabled the municipality to use heavy machinery to remove most debris within the first eight days, according to Mr. Claude Crissey, the owner of Panwadee Hotel in Patong. The cooperation between the private sector and the municipality was very high and all worked effectively to clear the debris in many areas. Fortunately, land suitable to dump the debris was available close to the area of destruction.

With the commencement of planning for recovery and reconstruction, Patong municipality focused on rebuilding its tourism industry

and its supporting infrastructure and facilities, this being the lead economic sector around which the rest of the city economy in Patong is dependant.

The tsunami failed to destroy the spirit of people in Patong and their solidarity. According to the Deputy-Mayor, Patong Municipality Administration worked day and night and side by side with their national leaders to remove the last scar of destruction within ten days of the tsunami. The City leaders realized the need to rebuild confidence in the safety and security of the city, this being of paramount importance alongside the provision of comfortable accommodation (ranging from budget to five-star accommodation), entertainment venues, and a natural relaxing environment. The city was ready to receive their visitors after one year. However, the visitors were still wary and less than 30% of the pre-tsunami tourists returned to Patong in 2005.

The hotel industry was provided with highly attractive incentives to 'build back better.' The banks provided loans at an annual rate of interest of 2% with a three-year grace period and no upper ceiling given for the hotel industry to renovate or reconstruct. The tax rebates and relief announced by the Thai government also enabled this sector to recover from the destruction. By the time of the study, the hotel occupancy rate was at 100%. This is the result of the cooperation between public and private sector partnership at all levels of the Thai government structure.

When Patong Municipality commemorated the second anniversary of the tsunami, there was no trace of the previous destruction. Information available from hotels in the city show that visitors are arriving in higher numbers demonstrating their renewed confidence

in a city that ensures safety and security in addition to the expected comforts. The case presented here reveals that courageous story of one city among many in Thailand, which raised its image within a record time from the rubble of destruction after the tsunami.

### *"Mai Pen Rai" ("Don't worry, be Happy")*

The spirit of the life style of Patong is demonstrated in the above words of the Deputy Mayor Sukkaban. Rising from the destruction of the tsunami, the City Authorities implemented projects assigned to the Municipality under the 'Economic, Social, Natural Resources and Environment and Infrastructure Development Plan Phuket Province' that contained a total of 44 projects. However, this case study focuses on several areas wherein the Patong Municipality has achieved significant progress with a high level of response, accountability, transparency and predictability.

The projects listed were conceived by the municipality through the needs expressed by the public and the private sector in particular the hotel industry and considered to be the most essential and important projects to make the city safer and environmentally friendly. The municipality implemented the projects through the collaboration and assistance of donor agencies, private sector and the public. The service charges collected by the municipality in future will be transferred to special fund to be used for future improvements. The interventions undertaken by the municipality are not mutually exclusive. They are interconnected and therefore integrated with area development plans designed to achieve the municipal vision of establishing an "international marine tourism center with high living quality, unique culture and sustainable development."



## Ensuring the Security of Life and Property

Patong Municipality in its commitment to provide a safe and secure environment for its people including visitors has embarked on a number of measures to ensure that city is a safe place for all. Joining the national efforts of disaster preparedness and risk reduction, the Municipality is working closely with the Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation (DDPM) and the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT).

Following the tsunami the TAT issued guidelines for the design and execution of tsunami mitigation initiatives within the coastal zone that will be integrated into urban land use and development plans initiated by the respective municipalities in Phuket. Patong municipality has undertaken to integrate such guidelines in their future city planning and encouraged the private sector investors to integrate some of the options into their designs as appropriate. For example, wooden beach benches were replaced with plastic benches by the municipality as the wooden items caused severe injuries to the people during the tsunami.

The idea is to integrate some of the essential aspects of structural and non-structural mitigation measures for the tsunami risk reduction as practical land use planning options. These include the development of beach and/or sea walls where appropriate to act as breakers to slow tsunami waves. Establishing evacuation sites on high ground adjacent to the beach and in unused or areas unsuitable for buildings such as rock outcrops has also been encouraged. One advantage of the plans is that most of the proposed structural modifications and installations can be managed by the private



sector and integrated into hotel designs or rehabilitation programs. The Patong Municipality has already undertaken the construction of some of the structures along the beachfront.

### *Setting up an Early Warning Mechanism*

Patong beach in Phuket, as one of the major tourist destinations in Phuket have considered the implications of and the need for providing secure environment, in order to minimize the risk of repeating this type of disaster in the future. Any visitor to Patong will see the fully functioning tsunami early warning tower on the beach. The warning tower will broadcast warnings in 5 languages - Thai, English, Chinese, Japanese & German - and more may follow.

In the event of any future tsunami incident, the most important aspect is that the volunteers are given in order to be able to respond during any emergency, not only in the case of tsunami. Sukkaban stated "We already have provided training for our volunteers, we have about 200 volunteers and also train them to use radio, walkie-talkie, so I think if anything happens, everybody knows about this and know how to help others." The Deputy Mayor emphasized the fact that the municipality aims to train a large number of volunteers.

Another innovative action that the Municipality has undertaken is the deployment of 160 youths as Volunteers to build a Search and Rescue team. The Royal Thai Navy has established a permanent rescue centre on the beach and together with the city authorities the Navy has trained local volunteers to enhance their capacity to act



as a team of search and rescue personnel so that they will be able to help others during any emergency. These volunteers are trained on Search and Rescue operations and maintaining law and order. Volunteers are provided with communication equipment and uniforms to identify and distinguish them from the public during an incident.

Seven early-warning sirens have been installed and evacuation routes are clearly marked. The Early Warning System (EWS) is regularly tested and evacuation drills conducted. The municipality has organized a tsunami drill that was executed under the observation of the Prime Minister and other local and foreign dignitaries in April 2005. The municipality is aware of the fact that to be more effective such public evacuation drills should be undertaken more frequently. Sukkaban stated "this time maybe we should organize the drill at night, to remind everyone what to do if it occurs during night. Also we invite managers of the hotels to assist us. I think since we are connected to emergency satellite link now, we have to make sure everything works well after getting the information through the communication channels."

#### *Landslide Risk Management*

Previous incidents of landslides and flash floods have accounted for considerable damage to social and economic assets, natural resources, and the environment in the Patong area. During the past few years, such events have had significant negative impact on the development initiatives, especially those connected with development of the tourism infrastructure. There were many complaints by residents concerning the landslide threat created by development within upslope areas, outside of the municipal borders. Landslides continued despite the measures by the municipality to rehabilitate the impacted areas, resulting in infrastructure damage, loss of property and incremental degradation of the slopes. Increasing human activities in the upslope mountain areas outside the Patong municipality disturb the slopes' stability and visibly add to the vulnerability of communities living in the area.

The municipal authorities have anticipated that more development will occur on mountainous slopes in the future, as many investors feel secure from tsunamis and flooding when they locate their tourism infrastructure on high ground. However, the information needed for granting approvals for these development initiatives, incorporating both the social and technical dimensions that can reduce levels of risk, are not yet available within the municipality. Accordingly, the Municipality intends to engage professionals in landslide studies to delineate the hazard and advise the municipality on future actions.

The municipality plans to integrate risk management interventions in future land use and other developmental planning interventions.

Moreover, the service sector involved in infrastructure development (such as water, power and road development) do not have adequate specialized knowledge in landslide mitigation work, and so planning decisions do not include considerations of landslide risks nor the issues related to the reduction of impacts in general. In most cases, the impact of landslides is visible when the services are disrupted, and again due to lack of provision of sufficient maintenance and repairs budget, the rehabilitation of the affected area(s) are impeded. The municipality plans to develop guidelines for the benefit of such institutions to be used in mountainous and upslope areas.

#### *Clean River, Protected Beach Project*



The sandy beach of Patong is its lifeline. The economy of Patong depends entirely on this sole commodity. The semi-circular beach hugs Patong Bay. Water entering the bay from the Pak Bang River serves as a channel for untreated wastewater. These pollutants remain in the shallow waters of the bay and the resulting pollution on the beach poses a severe threat to the economy.

The Municipality initiated the 'Clean River Program' to treat wastewater with funding and technical support from the Danish Government, including the construction of wetland to treat wastewater carried by the river and its tributary the Pak Lak canal. Additional funds have been provided to municipality to ensure maintenance during next three years. "Following design, public hearing and tendering among local companies the works related to the constructed wetland and systems were initiated in Patong" (Tsunami Thailand, One Year Later, UNDP 2006). "We have launched a Clean River Program for Patong, focusing not only expanding the capacity of our existing waste water treatment plant, but also on the ways we collect and treat waste water. And, it turns out, having a clean river that is a key factor in protecting our beach" said the Deputy Mayor.

The Municipal Waste Water Treatment Plant that commenced operations in December 2004 (construction began in 1999) has the capacity to treat 12,250 cubic meters per day. This enhanced capacity is, however, able to treat only 60 percent of the wastewater generated in the city. The rest continues to flow into the Bang Pak River and the bay.

## **Good Governance Attributes in the Tsunami Recovery**



Transparency, honesty and a higher professional standard of service are the values promulgated in the administrative strategy of the municipality. Annual reports, brochures, hand outs, information on all the projects undertaken by the municipality, and newsletters are some of the mediums which the municipality employs ensures full transparency of its functions. The King Prajadipok Institute of Thailand has recognized its efforts in maintaining high level of transparency and effective involvement of people's participation in the affairs of the municipality and awarded a certificate of recognition to the Patong Municipality in 2006.

#### *Increasing Accountability through Introduction of Environment Management Systems and ISO 14001*

Patong Municipality was successful in obtaining ISO 14001 on 17 April 2006 from the Management System Certification Institute (Thailand) having conformed to the requirements of the award. The scope of the award consisted of

- Activities and operations within the municipal building
- Activities for the environmental programs with the interested parties.



The Municipality cooperated with two parties, the Saimunyen School and the Royal Paradise Hotel in Patong City, to implement the Environment Management System (EMS) in order to qualify for ISO 14001 standards.

City officials were fully involved in the planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluation of these actions. The municipality's communities are involved in energy saving and conservation measures by the sharing of best practices through a local network recently established. Patong is the first municipality in southern Thailand to win ISO 14001 award and the third in the country. The success of this initiative through projects and programs the municipality have implemented are described below

#### *Private-Public Partnership for Tourism Promotion*

There exists a strong partnership between the Municipality and the private sector, particularly tourist hotels in Patong. The city authorities are concerned over its inhabitants and more importantly "more than one million visitors who come to enjoy the beauty of Patong each year" says Mayor Pian Keesin of Patong Municipality. "At the Municipality we strive to make a safe and clean environment

balanced with the income generating tourism" says Deputy Mayor Sukkaban.

In their thrust to promote tourism, the city authorities invited the participation of the private sector to play a substantial role in attracting tourists. During the tsunami recovery phase, the hoteliers were consulted and their views on reconstruction solicited. Their cooperation was particularly sought in the treatment of wastewater in the city. They remain closely involved in tourism promotion campaigns launched by the municipality.

Mr. Crissey of Panwadee Hotel expressed his gratitude to the Mayor and his team at the Municipality for their prompt and efficient action in clearing debris, removing waste and repairing the waste water system after the tsunami. Hotels are now compelled to install individual waste treatment facilities depending on the number of rooms they operate. The treated water can then be reused to water the plants and for gardening. In addition hotels pay a levy to the Municipality for the collection of solid waste generated in the hotels. "The system works very efficiently," according to the Manager of the Royal Paradise Hotel. Whilst the hoteliers comply with the rules and regulations, the Municipality too performs its functions to meet the expectations of the hoteliers, thus there is an effective co-existence of two parties to protect the environment and therefore tourism.



## Conclusions

The governance practices demonstrated by the Municipality during the post tsunami recovery period provide a good model for other city authorities. The Patong Municipality demonstrated a forward-looking approach in many areas. They have undertaken essential projects after the tsunami through the mobilization of external funds to serve their constituents in a better and more effective manner. The authorities have also upheld the value and right of the people to live safely, taking adequate measures to ensure human safety and security. All forms of media have been actively used to promote the image of the municipality by elaborating the services that it is entrusted with, increasing the accountability of the duty bearers and publicly demonstrating institutional transparency.

The municipal government has shown its responsiveness and demonstrated its dedication and commitment to ensure the safety

of its population. The provision of an early warning system and the establishment of a volunteer network provides clear evidence of this commitment. The government is taking measures to identify and mitigate future potential problems by undertaking a project on landslide risk management that also demonstrates its commitment to and identifying, anticipating and mitigating future problems.

The municipality has demonstrated that the tsunami failed to destroy the spirit of Thai people, nor their solidarity. They have worked tirelessly to bring the pre-the tsunami life back to Patong and the clear indication for that is the recovery of their main income source the tourism sector. The underlying theme of this success story is the principles of Good Urban Governance practiced and demonstrated by the Patong Municipality.

## Lessons Learned



- Good governance practices can be easily integrated into municipal administrative structure and it will improve the performance of the municipality. Most of the measures of good governance adopted by Patong municipality have increased the safety of population and infrastructure thus reducing the vulnerability to future disaster events.
- Municipalities are beginning to understand the importance of human safety and security as essential and priority issues that they should focus on. The areas affected by tsunami has provided a window of opportunity to demonstrate the ways that municipalities can fulfill the task of dealing with human safety through implementation of risk management interventions.
- The research on good governance should not be based merely on the global indicators. Indicators of good governance may have to be modified to suit the country situation. The cultural practices, religion, traditional wisdom so on have great influence in decision making process in any country. It is not easy to change such practices since the community respects them as values of the society.
- Disaster event will cause destruction and also provide opportunities for development. If the post disaster programs can be implemented with the participation of local authorities it can bring better results. The development of initiatives within local community is better understood by the local authorities than others.
- Disaster risk management has to be mainstreamed within the local government sector. The areas that need focus in future work are:
  - Emergency response and early warning
  - Land use planning at local level
  - Building by laws and approval process
  - Budget allocations through annual budgets



## Further References

Asian Disaster Preparedness Center, *The Economic Impact of the Tsunami in Thailand*, 2005.  
 Kanakpan, Lao-Araye. *Effects of Decentralization Strategy on Macroeconomic Stability in Thailand* Asian Development Bank, ERD Working Paper No.17, August 2002.  
 United Nations Development Programme, *Tsunami Thailand, One Year Later: National Response and Contribution of International Partners*, 2005.  
 UNCHS, UN-HABITAT, *Global Campaign on Urban Governance: Concept Paper*, 2002.  
 Wegelin, Emel A. *Thailand: Decentralization Capacity Assessment, Findings and Recommendations*, 2002.  
*The Tsunami in Phuket, December 2004*, Phuket Province

## GUGSA

This case study has been prepared under the support provided by the Good Urban Governance in South Asia (GUGSA) project of the USAID's Regional Urban Development Office for South Asia (RUDO/SA). The GUGSA is now managed by the Economic Growth office of USAID, India.

GUGSA was initiated by RUDO/SA in collaboration with the region's bilateral USAID Missions. GUGSA initiated a three-year, three-location (Bangladesh, Nepal, and Sri Lanka) activity in October 2001 to promote good urban governance in South Asia. GUGSA activities document, disseminate and demonstrate best practices from local government bodies to improve the response capacity of local urban governments within the country

and will culminate in a Regional Conference for dissemination. The five principles that define good governance are Transparency, Predictability, Accountability, Rule of Law and Participation.

In the aftermath of the Tsunami the GUGSA scope was modified to include Post-Tsunami initiatives in India, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Thailand. The study involves local institutions advocating/practicing Good Governance and Disaster Mitigation practices. It will also help to create relationships among cities for facilitating the exchange of information that can continue well beyond the tenure of the project. The ultimate outcome of the activities would be to publish literature in print and electronically so that the dissemination benefits are available globally. The scope is also extended to include India, Indonesia, and Thailand.

ADPC wishes to express its gratitude to USAID, India and the GUGSA project in particular for providing support that enabled the study. We hope the "Thailand" case study will add immense value to the overall Good Governance knowledge base and provide "Lessons-learnt" and opportunities to replicate.



## Editorial Board

Safer Cities 17 has been reviewed by:  
 Dr. Bhichit Rattakul, ADPC  
 Dr. Luis Jorge Perez-Calderon, ADPC  
 Mr. N.M.S.I. Arambepola, ADPC  
 Mr. Aloysius Rego, ADPC  
 Mr. Jonathan Abrahams, ADPC  
 Mr. A.R. Subbiah, ADPC

Author: **Mrs. Manel Jayamanna**  
 Designer: **Mr. Lowil Fred Espada**

## Acknowledgment

Dr. Suvit Yodmani, Honorable Minister for Tourism and Sports for the guidance.  
 Dr. Bhichit Rattakul, Executive Director a.i., ADPC Governor and Deputy Governor of Phuket Province  
 Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Patong Municipality Provincial Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation (DDPM)  
 TCG International (TCGI), Environmental Planning Collaborative (EPC), USAID-Regional Urban Development Office for South Asia (RUDO), Disaster Tracking Recovery Assistance Center (D-TRAC)

## Other Relevant Safer Cities Studies

Safer Cities 16. *Cooperation between Local Authority and Communities: Reducing Flood Disaster Risk in Dagupan City, Philippines*

**Safer Cities** is a series of case studies that illustrate how people, communities, cities, governments and businesses have been able to make cities safer before disasters strike. The series presents strategies and approaches to urban disaster mitigation derived from analyses of real-life experiences, good practices and lessons learned in Asia and the Pacific. This user-friendly resource is designed to provide decision-makers, planners, city and community leaders and trainers with an array of proven ideas, tools, policy options and strategies for urban disaster mitigation. The key principles emphasized throughout Safer Cities are broad-based participation, partnerships, sustainability and replication of success stories.

The contents here may be freely quoted with credit given to the implementing institution, Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC), and to the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). The opinions expressed herein are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of ADPC or USAID. The information in this series is provided for purposes of dissemination. For more details, please refer to contacts listed at the end of this material. Publication of this case study was made possible through the support provided by the OFDA, USAID, under the terms of Cooperative Agreement No. DFD-G-00-05-00232-00.

## PROMISE

During the implementation of the Asian Urban Disaster Mitigation Program (AUDMP), ADPC recognized the importance of interventions in urban areas and accordingly identified Urban Disaster Risk Management as one of its core thematic areas of work, experiences from which have also guided the selection of the target secondary cities. ADPC has developed 'Strategy 2020 for Urban Disaster Risk Mitigation in Asia' which aims to reach 200 cities by the year 2020.

The need to minimize the destructive impacts of these hydro-meteorological events on the vulnerable communities, particularly the urban communities and the economic infrastructure through enhanced preparedness and Mitigation is therefore the main thrust of the present intervention in implementation of the Program for Hydro-Meteorological Disaster Mitigation in Secondary Cities in Asia (PROMISE).

ADPC considers PROMISE program as an opportunity to associate with many communities living in Asian cities vulnerable to hydro-meteorological hazards with the aim of reducing the impacts of such events and demonstrate innovative applications for community preparedness and mitigation.

This case study documents the efforts under a specific program objective to *increase stakeholder involvement and further enhancement of strategies, tools and methodologies related to community preparedness and mitigation of hydro-meteorological disasters in urban communities.*



*The Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC) is a regional resource center dedicated to safer communities and sustainable development through disaster risk reduction in Asia and the Pacific. Established in 1986 in Bangkok, Thailand, ADPC is recognized as an important focal point for promoting disaster awareness and developing capabilities to foster institutionalized disaster management and mitigation policies.*

For more information, please get in touch with us at:

Asian Disaster Preparedness Center  
 P.O. Box 4, Klong Luang Pathumthani  
 12120 THAILAND

Tel: (66-2) 516-5900 to 10  
 Fax: (66-2) 524-5350  
 E-mail: [adpc@adpc.net](mailto:adpc@adpc.net)  
 URL: <http://www.adpc.net>