

2013 IATSS Forum Alumni Report: Thailand

(1) Assessment of current performance of the Country Alumni Association,

Nature of the Alumni

In Thailand, IATSS Forum which has started in 1986, is under the support of the Department of Environmental Quality Promotion, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment.

We have established Thailand IATSS Forum Alumni Association (TIFAA) was established in order to proceed the journey of 'Thinking and learning together' for Thai participants who have joined IATSS Forum. There are more than 200 alumni members to date and most of them are from government sectors of various expertises.

Activities of the Alumni

We now have 3 main activities each year;

1. **Thailand IATSS Forum Alumni Night** (Twice a year) sponsored by the Department of Environmental Quality Promotion, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment.

This event is a great opportunity for the alumni members to get together and to follow-up the key learning of the latest batch who has just returned from



Japan as well as introduction of the new batch who would be joining IATSS Forum in that year.



2. **The new batch orientation** (once per a new batch) arranged by the Department of Environmental Quality Promotion, the Ministry of Natural Resources and

Environment and Thailand IATSS Forum Alumni. The latest batch would have an opportunity to hear from the former batches on how to prepare themselves before joining the IATSS Forum in Japan as well as receive useful information



and guidance on manuscript and self preparation at the Forum. Director General of the Department of Environmental Quality Promotion (or care taker) also chair the orientation. And this orientation will be continued as a tradition of Thailand IATSS Forum Alumni from batch to batch.



3. Yearly Social Charity Activity

At least once a year, the Alumni will get together for Social charity or Environmental promotion activities.

In 2012, TIFAA together with the Department of Environmental Quality Promotion have promoted a vertical gardening to Surao Khong Jan school, under the scheme to plant tree within a limited space, especially in Bangkok metropolitan. As well as introducing the re-use of plastic bottles as a planting container. In such event, an instructor from the Department of Environmental Quality Promotion were invited to guide 200 students to separate and recycle their school waste by having TIFAA members as the assistant instructors.





Current assessment of the Alumni network (TIFAA): SWOT analysis

Strengths

- A large number of members of high capability with wide variety of work profession.
- TIFAA members network provides potential to contribution to the social and economic development of the country in a large scale through their inventive activities.
- Most members are in Bangkok and adjacent, ease to a gathering upon calls for collaboration.
- Having the Department of Environmental Quality Promotion as a very supportive country secretariat.



Weaknesses

- The relationship between Alumni members is not strong, which most of the member meet only once or twice a year, except the member within the same batch.
- TIFA's existing activities are hardly to strengthen a close relationship between members
- Small number of enthusiastic members

Opportunities

- All country members are the ASEAN Community which in line of having same direction of social and economic development plan.
- Social network creates opportunities to enlarge and strengthen alumni network, especially by having mobile 3G system in Thailand to access the internet cheaper and easier through their mobile device.

Threats

- Short life data base of alumni network due to the frequent changes of their contact details; mobile number, home address, office address and email address. Recently, we have got a large number of returned emails when sending out the information about International IATSS Forum Alumni Meeting in 2013 despite the fact that the data base has been updated from less than 2 years.

- Key active alumni have moved up to the top level of their career consequences in a very busy schedule and TIFAA losing manpower to drive the Alumni forward

(2) Solutions for dealing with existing challenges faced by Country Alumni Association

2.1 Relationship building activities

The most important challenge is to build and maintain a closer relationship among members that could enhance activities among member and strengthen the unity which can result in greater activities and shining more active members.

The existing network of over 200 high caliber persons in Thailand are not put into a good use (so called 'Mottainai' in Japanese). Therefore, we need more activities that focus on building relationship rather than just charity activities. We can still have charity activities but more activities on team building among alumni must be added in the plan. E.g. Buddy game in Alumni night, Small group meetings, Quarterly Alumni Dinners, Short trips, Alumni family day at amusement park or tourist attractions around Bangkok or even creating on business network among them.

2.2 Alumni Database update

In order to achieve the goal of building and maintaining a closer relationship, a better alumni database is required. We are in an urgent need to update the Alumni database which TIFAA have been updating since March 2013 with a year plan to be completed. The alumni email account will be created in order to be a center of information and update all changed data, which the account will be taking care by the alumni committee that the term is changed every two years.

Questionnaire will be created and distributed to survey the need of the alumni's on the networking activities to meet their needs and to have more contribution and participation when the activities are complied.

2.3 The relaunch of Thailand IATSS Forum Alumni website and Facebook.

The up to date digital media e.g. TIFAA website and social media such as Facebook will be re-launch in July 2013.



2.4 The IATSS Forum Alumni eNewsletters

The eNewsletters will be created and quarterly distributed on-line to update the status of the Alumni activities, starting in July 2013.

2.5 The Alumni New Year Card

The New Year greeting card will be posted to all alumni base on their address on the existing database, starting at the end of 2013. This is to keep in touch with earlier batches those who do not communicate via online network. Another is to re-check the address of the alumni members and we would know immediately of most, if not all, the out-dated address from the returned mail.

(3) Recommendations to make IATSS Program abreast of new dynamics in alumni home country

TIFAA should focus more on alumni networking to overcome the weakness of communication and in order to develop the stronger association.

Recently TIFAA, has requested the latest participants from new batch to join the Alumni activities for at least two years as well as compulsory be appointed to be an alumni committee once they return. Those seem to results in positive improvement of the TIFAA's movement, therefore somehow more positive regulation should be set up e.g. the former batch must take care of the new batch as buddies, the new batch must organize one social event after they return to Thailand to enforce the dynamic activities regularly.