

Qualitative change of a policy as a turning point toward local-oriented policy development

-The case of OTOP in Rayong Province and Rayong Municipality-

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Introduction

Can local governments instead of the central governments lead the policy development in Thailand? The purpose of this chapter is to investigate the possibility of the transfer by probing into the conditions of OTOP policy development for regional revitalization. For the experience of such political development may encourage the local people to participate in their local government.

The OTOP policy as regional promotion policy is reaching its limits, due to two characteristics of the OTOP policy. The OTOP policy can be explained in two aspects. One is the way in which the system of OTOP is implemented, based on center-oriented top-down decision-making. The other is the content of OTOP implementation, that is, the central accumulation of products. The center-oriented top-down decision-making is shown in the organization of the system of OTOP implementation. Whereas, central accumulation of products means commercialization of locally made products to be consumed mainly in urban areas and overseas markets.

What would bring a breakthrough in the development of OTOP policy? One solution may be decentralization, which would change the top-down decision-making. However, it will be difficult for decentralization to influence the top-down decision-making system immediately. Another possible solution may be the idea of Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy (SEP). Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy has become a basic factor of government planning, through which local governments are trying to development OTOP policies as the core of "Quality of Life". This indicates that OTOP, which has been promoted for central accumulation of products, is now able to be deployed centering on the local society.

In the case of Rayong Province, OTOP has a possibility to lead to spontaneous local revitalization. We can see the change in central accumulation of products, which has been a major characteristic of OTOP in Thailand. In other words, product development led by central government is shifting to the development of products manufactured and consumed by the local residents.

I . Characteristics and Limits of OTOP Policies for Regional Revitalization

In this section, I will discuss the characteristics of OTOP implemented in Thailand as a policy for regional revitalization and how its characteristics are interfering with the development of policies.

I - 1 Characteristics and limitation of top-down decision-making system of OTOP

How did the OTOP start?

The Asian financial crisis in 1997, aggravated the problem of urban and rural gap in Thailand. According to Keomantamu, Thai economy was developing steadily through the investment of foreign capital after mid-1980s. However, foreign capital was invested only in urban areas and a certain kind of industries. As a result, it caused depopulation in rural areas and aggravation of urban and rural gap. When the Asian financial crisis occurred in Thailand in 1997, Thailand entered into a long recession. Economic crash occurred in rural areas and poverty came to the surface as a significant problem.

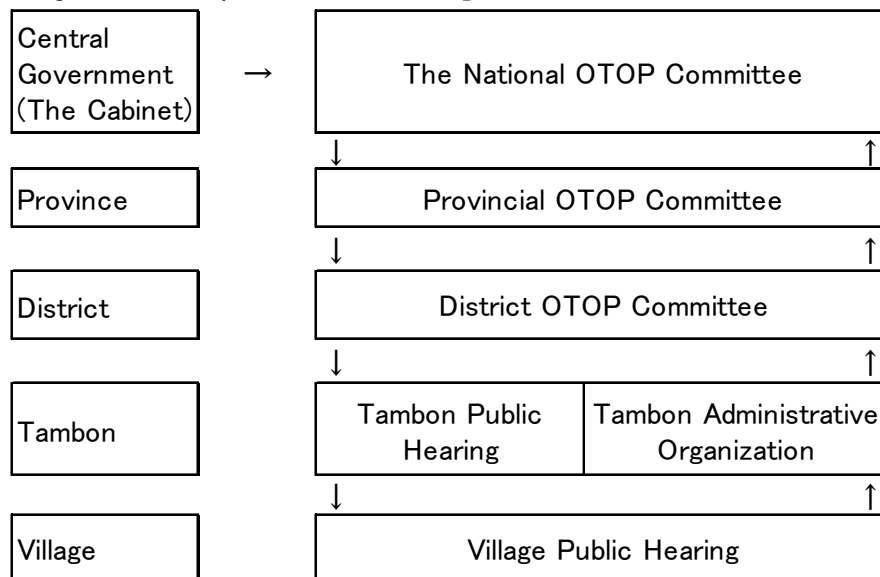
Thaksin, who made a large fortune in his lifetime by a communication company, formed Thai La Party based on his wealth and became prime minister. According to Fujioka (2006:155) Thai people had large expectations for Thaksin's economic policy skills, and that was the background for the landslide victory of his party and Thaksin's election as prime minister in the general election in 2001. After becoming prime minister, Thaksin set about the regional revitalization policy mainly for the rural areas. Takei (2007) and Watunyu (2010) point out that Thaksin had a political reason for this policy, that is, to win over supporters in rural areas, who account for eighty percent of the national population. OTOP was the feature policy to promote the regional revitalization by the Thaksin administration. According to Nagai (2003:303) the Thaksin administration started OTOP as a criticism of the Chuan regime's discarding of the rural areas and the socially weak. OTOP implementation was a performance of Thaksin to show the realization of campaign promise of "grass-root policies".

How was the OTOP promoted?

The Thaksin administration executed OTOP under the guidance of prime minister in order to promote OTOP as the symbol of the Thaksin regime. OTOP implementation was promoted under the master plan of the office of Prime Minister,

centering on the Community Development Section of Ministry of Public Management in cooperation with Ministries of Commerce, Agriculture and Education and TAT (Tourism Authority of Thailand). OTOP aimed to achieve a quick result, getting the full support of central government. In order to support OTOP implementation, a department to preside over OTOP was established in the central government. The system of OTOP implementation is shown in Figure 1.

Figure1 : The system of OTOP Implementation in Thailand



Source: Fujioka (2006)

OTOP was executed in a hierarchical order: the National OTOP Committee was at the top, followed by the Office for OTOP Promotion controlled by the Office of Prime Minister, Provincial OTOP Committee, District OTOP Committee, and Tambon Administrative Organization. The National OTOP Steering Committee under the direct control of the Office of Prime Minister was the center of multi-layered support system with both public and private organizations. This system was established in order to overview the supporting activities for producers by governmental organizations. The role of the National OTOP Committee was to decide on policies, strategies and master plans in order to efficiently carry out the projects and budgets of related ministries and government offices, to set up the standard to choose OTOP products, to make the list of OTOP products, and to advice the cabinet. In other words, one of the characteristics of OTOP is policy implementation based on top-down decision-making.

What happened to OTOP after the change of power?

OTOP has been continuously implemented even after the recent political changes. The Thaksin regime collapsed by a military coup d'état and an interim government was established by Surayud. The Surayud administration adopted the Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy advocated by the king, and aimed at a stable economy rather than economic growth. The Surayud administration was determined to continue the OTOP for stable economy. However, in order to get rid of the image of Thaksin's involvement, the name of OTOP was changed to "community regional industry projects" in November 2006. Under the Abhicit administration after the Suryud administration, continuation of OTOP policy was announced as well.

Table1: An outline of OTOP in each regime

Year	2004	2006	2010
Prime Minister	Thaksin	Surayud	Abhicit
Budget(baht)	131,815,056.47	24,422,718.34	97,185,080.10
Exective Committee and Department	The National One Tambon One Product committee	The National One Tabom One Product committee	Community Development Department
Entrepreneur Candidate	26,517 products	17,814 products	-

Source: <http://www.thaitambon.com>, <http://www.cep.cdd.go.th>, Community Development Department, Ministry of Interior <http://61.19.244.12/thaiotop/aboutus/aboutus.php> <http://www.kbootop.com>, [The Secretariat of the Cabinet](#) The Prime Minister's Office <http://spm.thaigov.go.th>

How was OTOP promoted under each regime?

Table 1 summarizes how OTOP was promoted by each administration. The OTOP policy was more thriving in the Thaksin regime than in other regimes, based on the budget and the number of merchandise. The Surayud administration announced to continue the OTOP, but the budget was smaller than that of the Thaksin administration. It means that the OTOP policy was gradually reduced. Under the Abhicit administration, the budget for OTOP came back to the peak level. The department in charge of OTOP changed from the National One Tambon One Product Committee to Community Development Department. In short, each regime has continued OTOP.

How is the OTOP implemented in Rayong province now?

I researched Rayong province in order to find out the situation of OTOP implementation. I asked Mr. Mannoorn Sornkord, who was Head of Community Development Division, Rayong Province, about the OTOP policy in Rayong Province. We can see from the interview below that the OTOP's development has been stagnated.

Q: What is the Future direction of OTOP movement?

A: (1) To emphasize each spot instead of spreading support over in the former way, (2) to let them support each other as a network and (3) to collaborate with other sectors (local government, private sectors and the academic) as Knowledge-Based OTOP (KBO) project. For example, we have got subsidy from private sector to promote our OTOP in Rayong brochure. Some universities put OTOP in one of their courses in order to collaborate with communities. Also municipality facilitates equipment, place, etc.

Q: Is the provincial government making a plan for OTOP? What kind of plan do they have in Rayong?

A: No plan; our action is mainly (1) implementation through the functions of central government and (2) expanded activities planned by ourselves for improvement of products capital support, marketing and promotion. Our work in community development has five dimensions (1) community capital (2) community economy (3) community plan (4) community leaders and (5) community learning center.

Interview date : 19th September 2010

What does the OTOP implementation case in Rayong mean?

As I pointed out, the OTOP was originally executed by top-down decision-making system. Although the present regime has announced the continuation of OTOP, there is no plan on OTOP development on the provincial level. This fact suggests that OTOP implementation system is not functioning fully. It means that top-down decision-making system has reached a limit concerning OTOP implementation.

I -2 Characteristics and limitation of the central product accumulation of OTOP

How were various OTOP products developed using regional resources?

Local products were graded and given the brand of OTOP. Table 2 shows the developmental process of OTOP policy from the beginning. 2001 was the year of preparatory stage for the OTOP policy, when strategies and plans to implement OTOP

were decided. OTOP started in 2002 when the government introduced “OTOP Project Champion” (OPC) to guarantee the quality system. In the OPC system, OPC products are registered in OTOP and given rank with three to five stars by the selection committee. Since 2003 OTOP has been developed further through the projects for strategies, sales, advertisement, and so on, to improve the quality of OTOP products. Another type of development of OTOP projects was OTOP Village Champion (OVC) system introduced in 2006. OVC is a way to commercialize a product, making use of the regional resources with an element of tourism, such as nature, agriculture, health, cultures, industrial arts, and so on.

Table2: Process of development of OTOP

Year	The developmental process of OTOP
2001	Launching OTOP Project at the National Level
2002	Setting up the management mechanism and organizing OTOP producers registration
2003	Grading products by initiating the first OTOP Product Champion(OPC)and organizing the first OTOP City Trade Fair in Bangkok
2004	Launching quality & standard campaign by initiating Local Products Standard, organizing the second OTOP Product Champion(OPC), building producers’ capabilities through Smart OTOP program and organizing the second OTOP City Trade Fair
2005	Launching Marketing OTOP campaign by extending marketing channels via OTOP outlets, department stores, TV shop channels, catalog magazines, and various trade fairs.
2006	In Search of Excellent OTOP through Provincial Star OTOP(PSO)and OTOP Village Champion(OVC)projects. Moreover we organize the third OTOP Product Champion and OTOP City international 2006 to glorify His Majesty the King
2007	Community Development Department, Ministry of Interior, operated OTOP village project in order to promote tourism

Source: Watunyu (2010)

The OTOP products were originally manufactured for consumption in the urban areas and foreign countries rather than in the region where the product was made. For this reason, OTOP products were managed and controlled for sales by the government. In brief, central accumulation of products was one of the main characteristics of OTOP. According to Fujioka(2007), such a system has little effect on the local economy, so manufacturing products is not leading to the local revitalization. For these reasons, the central accumulation of products in OTOP has not worked.

How was OTOP promoted in Rayong as a project with central accumulation of product?

Rayong had a provincial strategy plan, focusing on three sectors: industry, agriculture and tourism. Social promotion and sufficiency was added to Rayong policy in 2010. This change was the sign to shift from industry-based projects to balanced development of the region equally distributed and balanced among agriculture, tourism, and social promotion and sufficiency, as shown in Table 3. In the plan of Rayong (2005-2008) OTOP-related projects were deployed centering on agriculture and tourism. But we cannot find any OTOP projects in the sections of agriculture or tourism in the pan(2010-2013) after the abolishment of the Thaksin regime. It is likely that central accumulation of products in OTOP reached a deadlock, although the Surayud administration declared the continuation of OTOP policy.

Table 3: OTOP projects in Rayong development plan

	Plan(2005–2008)		Plan(2010–2013)	
	Number of All Projects	Relation to OTOP Project	Number of All Projects	Relation to OTOP Project
Industrial	154		25	○
Agriculture	78	○	43	
Tourism	58	○	35	
Social Promotion and Sufficiency		–	45	

Source: Rayong Province, Rayong Development Plan(2005-2008). Rayong Province, Rayong Development Plan(2010-2013)

II . Breakthroughs of the limits of OTOP policy development concerning its two characteristic

II - 1 . Decentralization to overcome the limitation of top-down decision-making system

Will decentralization bring any change in the promotion of OTOP based on center-oriented top-down decision-making system?

Although the Thaksin regime promoted centralization projects such as the encouragement of CEO type provincial governors in 2002, decentralization was in progress in Thailand. Delegation of projects from central government to local governments was one of the decentralization projects. As is shown in Table 4, 245 projects under six categories have been targeted for transfer, and the projects in the

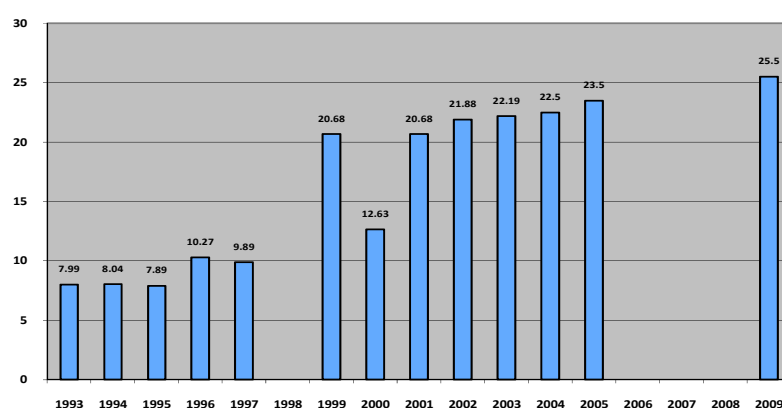
category of “quality of life” are targeted more than the projects in any other category. Also, more than half of the targeted projects in “quality of life” and “community and social organization” have already been transferred to local governments. These projects are more closely related to local residents’ lives than the projects of other categories, so the delegation of these projects can benefit from decentralization. The promotion of projects close to local residents and local governments are more likely to be shifted from center-oriented top-down decision-making system to the decision by local government.

Table 4: Projects transfer to local government

	Project	Transferred	Not Transferred
Infrastructure	87	71	16
Quality of life	103	69	34
Community and social organization	17	9	8
Investment promotion	19	14	5
Environment	17	15	1
Cultural	2	2	-
Total	245	180	64

Source: Office of Decentralization to Local Government Organization, *Committee Office of the Permanent Secretary*, February

Figure 2: Growth of local government budget share



Source: UNDP, *Department of local Administration and Thammasat University*, 2009. *Government Finance Statistic Year Book*, 1999.

Project delegation from central government to local government might task the local government if the projects are delegated to local government without the transfer of revenue resources. In Thai constitution 1997, grant of local government should be 35% of whole budget of central government in 2006. Figure 2 shows the progress of revenue delegation to local government. We can see from figure 2 that the budget delegation has not accomplished its goal of 35%. As for OTOP, each administration has announced its implementation at a bureau of the central government. The top-down decision-making system of OTOP is not easy to change at once and decentralization is not enough to solve the limitation of this system.

II - 2 From central accumulation of products to sufficiency economy in the region

What new direction did the Thai government take based on the philosophy of sufficiency economy?

The philosophy of sufficiency economy (SEP) was advocated by the King of Thailand after the economy crisis in 1997. The King said “Sufficiency does not mean every family has to produce their own food or weave their own clothes. That’s too much. However, there should be sufficiency in a village or in a district to a certain extent. The surplus of their products should be sold, but not in a place too far away to save transportation costs” (His Majesty the King’s speech on the auspicious occasion of his birthday on December 5, B.E.2540)

SEP has become a guideline for the strategy to advance the Thai society. The Ninth National Economic and Social Development Plan embraced SEP as a guiding philosophy of the development.

“Sufficiency Economy” is a philosophy that stresses the middle path as the overriding principle for appropriate conduct and way of life of the entire populace. It applies to conduct and way of life at individual, family, and community levels. At the national level, the philosophy is consistent with a balanced development strategy that would reduce the vulnerability of the nation to shocks and excesses that may arise as a result of globalization. “Sufficiency” means moderation and due consideration in all modes of conduct, and incorporates the need for sufficient protection from internal and external shocks. To achieve this, the prudent application of knowledge is essential. In particular, great care is needed in the application of theories and technical know-how and

in planning and implementation. At the same time, it is essential to strengthen the moral fiber of the nation so that everyone, particularly public officials, academics, business people, and financiers adhere first and foremost to the principles of honesty and integrity. A balanced approach combining patience, perseverance, diligence, wisdom, and prudence is indispensable to cope appropriately with critical challenges arising from extensive and rapid socio-economic, environmental, and cultural change occurring as a result of globalization.

(The Ninth National Economic and Social Development Plan:Pagei)

SEP became a definite guideline for the Ninth National Economic and Social Development plan (2002-2006). However, the Thaksin administration regarded global competitiveness and economic development as the most important in his policy development. Therefore, it was after the Thaksin regime collapsed in a coup d'état that SEP began to attract attention in policy development.

The Surayud administration emphasized the difference between his regime and Thaksin's regime by stressing SEP as the groundwork of his policy. The Surayud administration published a policy to aim at a society which does not only have a quantitative target but also values ethics and happiness, adopting the King's SEP as his slogan. The Tenth National Economic and Social Development Plan (2007-2011) followed this policy and said, "during the period of the Tenth Plan, Thailand will face major changes in many contexts that will present both opportunities and constraints of national development" and "both people and systems must be fully prepared to adapt to future changes and reap benefit by keeping up with globalization and building resilience in all sectors, in accordance with the SEP".

The Surayud administration adopted SEP in order to pursue a new path of sustainable economic development through a new economic policy with a moderate level of economic development and economic growth. In other words, Surayud administration thought that economic gaps could be eliminated by policy development based on SEP. Surayud was convinced that by utilizing SEP, enterprises could achieve cost reduction, risk management, and development of human resources, and then they could pass the know-hows to rural areas. It may be inferred from these that the Surayud administration thought it possible for each region to support itself by improving the value and quality of its products.

How did local government accept the new policy development of central government

with SEP?

As stated above, Rayong province had three strategies: industries, agriculture and tourism. Since the Surayud administration introduced SEP in its new policy development, Rayong Plan (2010-2013) incorporated SEP in policy development as is shown in Table 5. As we saw in Table 2, the previous plan had industries, agriculture and tourism as main strategies. Social promotion and sufficiency has been added to the new plan (2010-2013), and every strategy has adopted SEP for its project development. We may say that Rayong province has introduced the *chiikizukuri* (building up of the region) based on SEP.

Table 5: Reference to SEP in the plans of Rayong province

	Plan(2005–2008)	Plan(2010–2013)
	Reference to SEP	Reference to SEP
Industrial		○
Agriculture		○
Tourism		○
Social Promotion and Sufficiency	-	○

Source: Rayong Province, *Rayong Development Plan(2005-2008)*. Rayong Province, *Rayong Development Plan(2010-2013)*.

Table6: Rayong province plan with Quality of Life as its goal

Vision	Development Plan (strategic Issues)
Province of Good Quality of Life and Balanced Economic	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Develop, revitalize and manage tourism resources in order to improve its quality and standard and to develop sustainability 2) Support and develop Rayong as source products by producing safe agricultural products with standard quality so that producers can search and expand market places 3) Enhance Rayong society' s morality and knowledge which lead to live under the philosophy of sufficiency economics 4) Support and develop industrial areas by improving the safety standard of environment in order to stay with community and society under sustainable development

Rayong Province, *Rayong Development Plan(2010-2013)*.

What was the aim of Rayong province as it adopted SEP in its planning?

We can find the key to this question in Table 6. Rayong province is trying to gain “good quality of life and balanced economy”. They can be achieved by accomplishing four strategic issues. One of them is the formation of regional society based on SEP. That is to say, provincial government’s attempt to develop a policy for quality of life may probably give the regional society a chance to become an independent society. OTOP was once promoting central accumulation of products, but now is geared toward the sufficiency economy of the region. This shift may help overcome the limitation of OVOP implementation which relied on center-oriented product accumulation.

III. A possibility of development of OTOP into a region-based spontaneous regional promotion in Rayong

Here, I will discuss the possibility of new policy development of OTOP, which could solve the problems related to the center-oriented OTOP with top-down decision-making and central accumulation of products.

It has been recognized that OTOP needs to develop a new policy. Takei (2007) point out that construction of a resident-centered system of OTOP is desirable. According to Watunyū (2010), OTOP could not form the self-reliance of local communities, because politicians exploited OTOP in order to win an election. In other words, OTOP should find a different, new way of development.

Two main characteristics of OTOP were the center-oriented top-down decision-making and central accumulation of products. These two characteristics were preventing OTOP from moving to the next developmental stage. As we have seen, the center-oriented top-down decision-making system is difficult to change at once. However, we can see some change in the system of central accumulation of products. Both in Rayong province and Rayong municipality, the center-oriented accumulation of products has changed into the production for regional sufficiency based on SEP. Table 7 shows a comparison of strategic plans for agriculture between the former governor and the present governor. Under the former governor, products for OTOP were promoted, using the star system based on the method of central accumulation. However, the present governor puts stress on community products based on SEP. This suggests the possibility of change in OTOP from the development of “top” products led by the central government to development of products with an eye to “local production for local consumption.”

Table7: Comparing a Strategic Plan for Agriculture of Former and Present Governor

Former Governor (2008–2009)		Present Governor (2009–2010)	
Strategy	Indicator	Strategy	Indicator
Agriculture <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Center of safe agricultural products and Value-added Products (65 projects; reservoir, organic) Marketing channel (13 projects; OTOP expo, product) (total 78 projects) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> number of agricultural entrepreneurs weight scale of livable strategy percentage of cost and benefit of OTOP products <i>number of 4–5 star OTOP in year 2005</i> 	Agriculture <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promoting research for productivity technology (3 projects) Promoting value-added products & Quality of life of Infrastructure (15 projects) Marketing for community products (10 projects) (total 43 projects) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of standardized land plot Number of water resource for balancing industrial and agriculture Water resource management plan from both industrial and agricultural sector Percentage of standardized land plot Number of water resource for balancing industrial and agricultural sector Percentage of standardized land plot Number of water resource for balancing industrial and agricultural sector Water resource management plan from both industrial and agriculture sector Number of organic fertilizer producers and users <i>Percentage of agricultural academic service from government sector (bases on SEP)</i> Percentage of agriculturists who participate in government project and accessibility to source of fund Number of learning centers through SEP Level of successful through bird flu prevention Number of tourists in agricultural tourism places Number of improved agricultural tourism places Number of agricultural products centers Marketing for community products (10 projects) (total 43 projects)

Source: Rayong Province, *Rayong Development Plan(2005-2008)*. Rayong Province, *Rayong Development Plan(2010-013)*.

OTOP is a policy based on OVOP, which was introduced into Thailand for the advancement of regions, and the name was changed into OTOP. OVOP started in Oita prefecture in Japan and has been introduced into many countries. Governor Hiramatsu, who made OVOP, aimed to create a system in which regional people promote their regions by themselves, utilizing regional resources. Governor Hiramatsu thought that OVOP could solve the gap between urban and rural areas and create more job opportunities. OVOP advocated self-reliance and creativity as its principles and became a policy for regional promotion.

On the other hand, it was through center-oriented top-down decision-making and central accumulation of products that OTOP tried to solve the gap between urban and rural areas and improve job opportunities in short term. These methods of OTOP brought about the limitation for policy development. However, as SEP has become a policy in Thailand, local government can now develop a policy whose goal is quality of life. This means that there is a room for development of a region using OTOP, not by central leadership but by community leadership of regional people. Thus OTOP may

become able to promote the development of region like OVOP. This is the key for the qualitative change of policy contents of OTOP. OTOP has a possibility to promote spontaneous regional development based on the region.

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the possibility for central government-led policy development to become local government-led policy development by probing the conditions of the development of OTOP as a regional promotion policy. In this paper, I have focused on the case of Rayong.

First, it has become clear that although each government officially announced the continuation of OTOP policy, policy development seems to have reached its limit. OTOP had two characteristics, which were the causes of stagnation in policy development. One characteristic was the center-oriented top-down decision-making, and the other was the center-oriented central accumulation of products.

Second, I have discussed how to solve the problem of stagnation of OTOP development based on these characteristics. I examined decentralization as a solution for the center-oriented top-down decision-making, and considered the idea of “quality of life” based on SEP as a solution for the center-oriented central accumulation of products.

In conclusion, decentralization is not immediately effective to solve the center-oriented top-down decision-making, but the idea of “quality of life” based on SEP may be able to change the center-oriented central accumulation of products. These results lead us to the conclusion that qualitative change of OTOP policy is the requirement to change from central government-led policy development to local government-led policy development.

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