



# Strategies for Developing a Strong Network of Grassroots Community Economy of Government Organizations in Nan Province

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## Abstract

**Background and objectives:** Poverty, inequality, and unequal access to resources, such as agricultural land and financial capital, are key contributors to structural economic problems that have far-reaching impacts from the national level down to local communities. As a result, the development of grassroots economies has become a critical priority for the government in enhancing community capacities to foster sustainable, community-based economic development. This study aims to examine the current level of development and the factors influencing strategic approaches to strengthening grassroots economic networks led by public sector organizations in Nan Province. Additionally, it seeks to propose viable strategies for enhancing the effectiveness of such networks within the province.

**Methodology:** this study employed a mixed-methods approach, integrating both quantitative and qualitative research methods. The quantitative component involved a sample of 400 participants, using a structured questionnaire as the primary research instrument. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics—mean and standard deviation—as well as stepwise multiple regression analysis. The qualitative component consisted of in-depth interviews with 35 key informants to gain deeper insights into the subject matter.

**Findings:** the findings of the study revealed that: (1) the overall level of development of grassroots economic networks led by public sector organizations in Nan Province was at a moderate level ( $\bar{x} = 3.27$ ); (2) factors influencing the strategies for developing such networks ( $y$ ) were found to be statistically significant at the 0.01 level; and (3) practical guidelines for strengthening grassroots economic networks indicated that the public sector should support the consolidation of community networks to enhance their development potential, improve competitiveness, and promote long-term, sustainable community strength.

**Conclusion:** The public sector should place emphasis on developing grassroots community economies through the strengthening of community networks. This approach fosters sustainability from the ground up, leading to more resilient, self-reliant communities. Such development would generate income and create opportunities within local areas, thereby reducing economic inequality and ultimately contributing to the nation's stable progression toward becoming a fully developed country.

**Keywords:** Development Strategies; Strong Networks; Grassroots Community Economy

## Introduction

The grassroots economy is an economic model that emphasizes community and local development, focusing on generating income within communities, fostering self-reliance, and promoting sustainable development at the local level. It prioritizes the optimal utilization of local resources, serving not only as a means of income generation but also as a mechanism for strengthening community resilience. This model enables communities to become self-sufficient without depending heavily on government assistance, while also reducing inequality and improving access to resources, thus narrowing the gap between urban and rural areas. Addressing social inequality has long been a central issue for successive governments, particularly concerning farmers and general laborers—populations that often experience low and unstable incomes and limited access to essential resources such as agricultural land, funding sources, and relevant knowledge necessary for development planning and product enhancement. Strengthening grassroots communities requires a return to the community's roots, encouraging self-reliance through participatory engagement, group formation, and network building within the community. From an economic perspective, the strength of a community can be assessed by its ability to organize its economic system and adapt its production to modern contexts. This involves collective mechanisms for undertaking various activities, with clearly structured systems encompassing upstream, midstream, and downstream processes (Sanglar et al., 2022). These efforts contribute to achieving social and economic justice and reducing national inequality by





fostering sustainable growth. This is accomplished through promoting and developing the potential of local communities to be strong, competitive, and self-sufficient (Khatasombun, 2020).

It can thus be concluded that the grassroots economy—or community-based economy—refers to economic activities across various dimensions, including production, consumption, distribution, and services, which are driven by the active participation of local community members. This includes shared decision-making, joint implementation, equitable benefit-sharing, and collective ownership. Community-based economies are rooted in the inherent potential of local communities, including indigenous knowledge, cultural heritage, local traditions, geographical characteristics, and the diversity of available natural resources (Juljarern, 2020). Strengthening and promoting a stable grassroots economy is a key developmental strategy that involves building mechanisms to support community livelihoods. This includes enhancing the competitiveness of grassroots enterprises through collaborative public-private mechanisms, developing value-added local products, expanding market access, and elevating community-based tourism under the “OTOP Nawatwithi” initiative. Moreover, it involves restructuring the management of community capital with good governance principles to enhance economic self-reliance. Another major objective is to address poverty and reduce inequality through proactive, household-level operational systems. The central goal is to ensure that grassroots economies are stable and that community members have access to employment, income-generating opportunities, and improved quality of life. This requires restructuring local economic mechanisms to enhance understanding, foster self-reliance, mutual support, and moral values. It also aims to establish a dynamic local economic system that contributes to development in other sectors, supports household-level and community-level employment, and promotes fair income distribution, ultimately reducing inequality and disparities within communities. The key objective is to sustainably increase the income of low-income and impoverished populations. The success of these initiatives depends on a core principle: every individual has equal dignity and the capacity to grow and change, if given the opportunity. This outlook encourages government officials to adopt a friendly and respectful approach toward all community members, treating them as if they were their own family. Public sector organizations play a vital role through their presence at the provincial, district, and subdistrict levels, including development officers stationed in local areas. This proximity allows for continuous grassroots economic mobilization. Additionally, local leadership is crucial in driving network development and actively participating in the community's advancement (Phattananiphakorn, 2020).

Today, there is growing interest in the concept of community culture, widely embraced by society and state agencies. Key ideas that have contributed to the widespread acceptance of community culture include: Buddhist philosophy, which integrates ethical principles into the community; community business, which connects the community economy with the broader economic system without being part of the capitalist framework; Marxism, which critiques capitalism but does not directly support community-based ideas; and the philosophy of sufficiency economy, which encourages self-reliance, community cooperation, and collaboration with external organizations. At the same time, the global social movement (New Social Movement) has contributed to the expansion of the community-based movement through environmental and community identity movements, highlighting issues that the government cannot address alone. This has necessitated reliance on social power and citizen networks for solutions. Thus, the researcher is interested in studying strategies for developing strong grassroots economic networks within government organizations in Nan province, to benefit the area by applying the research findings to enhance sustainability and effectiveness in the future.

## Research Objectives

1. To examine the level of development of the grassroots economic network in communities supported by government organizations in Nan province.
2. To identify the factors influencing the strategies for developing the grassroots economic network in these communities.
3. To propose practical guidelines for the development of the grassroots economic network in communities supported by government organizations in Nan province.





## Literature Review

### 1. Concepts of Network Development

Monkhlung et al (2016: 144) explain that the term "network" has different meanings depending on individual perspectives. However, when analyzing the various types of networks in Thailand, it is understood as a system in which individuals, organizations, agencies, or institutions agree to coordinate and connect under a common objective or agreement. The aim is to prevent and solve problems and achieve a unified goal. Each network has its origins and is created through different methods. This is in line with Chanyam et al (2023: 584), who describe that to strengthen networks, the government must promote community networks to be economically self-sufficient. The government must instill confidence within these groups to discover their potential, local wisdom, and available resources to apply them appropriately. Additionally, there should be independent management, enabling communities to learn how to manage and utilize local resources to produce outcomes based on local wisdom. Furthermore, communities must be able to build partnerships with external organizations.

Phramaha Suthit Aphakaro (2024) categorizes networks into two types: the first involves analyzing the components of a network, which can be identified through its tangible aspects such as members, objectives, rules, and activities. The second type involves analyzing the relationships within the network, focusing on the connections between network members or between network members and external groups, represented by the lines that link these entities together.

In summary, community development through the creation of a strong community network involves developing both individuals and groups. By forming a network and progressing with development collectively, it generates power to carry out various activities. This process involves a network of community members working together to identify and solve problems, with support from government agencies or external organizations. A successful network requires regular and continuous exchange of experiences between members.

### 2. Concepts of Community-Based Economy

The Community Development Department (CDD, 2022) explains that a grassroots economy, or community economy, refers to the various economic activities from production to consumption, with active participation from the community in planning, implementation, benefiting together, and shared ownership. The concept of community economy originates from the need to establish economic stability at the community level by integrating production based on the community's potential and strength in a balanced way. It focuses on production that meets the consumption needs within the community, ensuring sufficiency, and fostering collaboration with the private sector to invest in creating livelihoods and income with fair distribution of benefits to the community. This also includes promoting the role of networks or community organizations in driving the local economy and addressing poverty (Phothisarath et al., 2024). A strong community-based economy consists of several key components (Singmatr and Memana, 2023: 634), including: the formation of groups to empower collective work, the management of community finances and integration of community resources, a comprehensive system for managing community capital, revitalizing resources, culture, wisdom, and community identity, a modern and well-rounded information system both internally and externally for analyzing community systems, with economic knowledge related to external systems as a key foundation for community planning, community production systems that meet both basic and advanced standards, adding value and connecting to external economic systems, and the creation of collaboration at all levels and dimensions to achieve goals and establish good relationships, from group to group, group to community, sub-district, district, province, or even larger networks. In conclusion, a community-based economy involves engaging in various economic activities from production to consumption, with community participation in planning, implementation, sharing benefits, and joint ownership. It refers to the livelihoods of people in grassroots or local communities.

### 3. Community-Based Grassroots Economic Policy

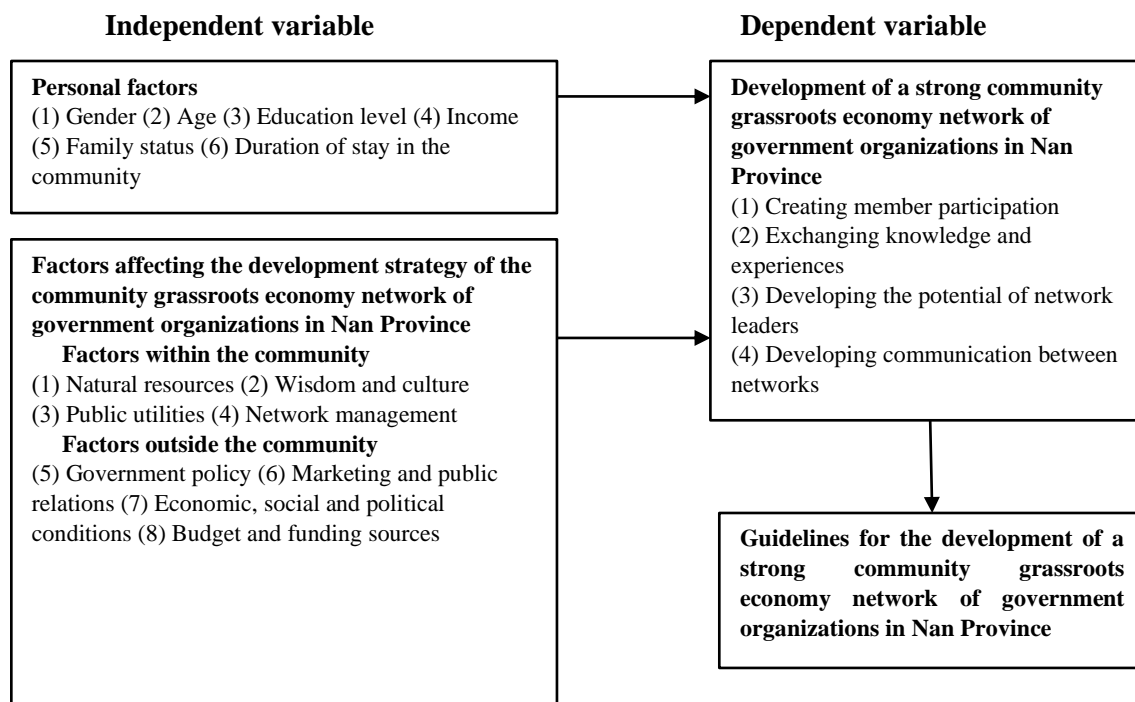
Amornratnamethekul et al. (2024: 75) explain that the policy of grassroots economic development emphasizes the role of government agencies in promoting and strengthening local communities across the country. The policy aims to enable communities to utilize their available resources to foster economic



growth, create employment opportunities, and generate income at the grassroots level. This initiative has been formulated as a master plan under the National Strategy, specifically under Strategy 16. It aligns with the principles of sustainable development, which aim for inclusive and enduring progress. It also supports the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly: the eradication of poverty (SDG 1), promotion of sustainable agriculture (SDG 2), the advancement of decent work and sustainable economic growth (SDG 8), and the reduction of inequality (SDG 10). Thus, grassroots economic development represents a key objective of government policy designed to address economic and social inequality. Its core aim is to empower communities to generate sustainable income through locally driven activities such as agriculture, community-based product processing, and community-based tourism (Sirisugandha et al., 2018: 54). Government initiatives reflect this direction through the implementation of key policies and mechanisms intended to drive the development and elevation of grassroots economies. One notable example is the "One Tambon One Product" (OTOP) program, which supports grassroots economic development and is embedded within the 20-Year National Strategy under Strategy 16. The main objective of this policy is to reduce inequality, strengthen local economies, and enhance community happiness and income (Jindarat & Tempthoemphoon, 2023: 175). Additionally, the Strategic Plan for Promoting the Economy and Enhancing Community Potential, which includes the "OTOP Nawatwithi Community-Based Tourism Program," aims to generate income at the local level, improve the quality and standard of OTOP products, prepare communities for market access, and enhance revenue generation. This strategy also seeks to establish effective tourism linkages based on the unique identities of each community (Sanpayao et al., 2023: 193).

### Research Conceptual Framework

The researcher conducted a review of the literature, concepts, and theories related to network development, management principles, sustainable development, and community-based grassroots economy. The review also encompassed previous studies relevant to strategies for strengthening grassroots economic networks in communities. This comprehensive review served as the foundation for developing the conceptual framework for this study, titled "Strategies for Developing Strong Community-Based Grassroots Economic Networks by Government Agencies in Nan Province," as outlined below:



**Figure 1** Research conceptual framework



## Research Methodology

This research adopts a mixed-methods approach, beginning with a literature review of relevant documents and prior research. The gathered information was used to develop qualitative research tools. Data were collected through interviews with 35 key informants, who were involved in the strategy for strengthening the community-based economic network. The selection of participants was purposive and consisted of: 1) 7 district officers in Nan province, responsible for developing the community-based economic network in the province; 2) 7 community development officers from various districts in Nan; 3) 7 local government leaders from Nan; 4) 7 local community leaders in Nan; and 5) 7 representatives from civil society networks involved in the community-based economic network in Nan. Once the interview data were collected, they were analyzed and used to create a questionnaire for quantitative research. Data were then gathered from a sample of 400 citizens in Nan province, determined by calculating the sample size using the Yamane formula (1973), based on a population of 472,518 people in the study area. The research tool used was a questionnaire consisting of four sections: personal factors of the respondents. This section surveyed demographic information. The level of development of the community-based economic network: This section assessed the current development status of the community-based economic network in Nan. Factors influencing the strategy for developing the community-based economic network: This section used a 5-point Likert scale to measure the influence of various factors. Practical recommendations for the development of the community-based economic network: This open-ended section invited respondents to propose strategies for enhancing the development of the community-based economic network in Nan. The collected data were analyzed using stepwise multiple regression analysis (Sriphrabu, 2022), which led to a discussion of the results and the formulation of conclusions.

### Data Collection and Quantitative Research Tools

**1. Research Tool:** The tool used in this study is a questionnaire developed by the researcher, based on a review of relevant concepts, theories, and prior research. The questionnaire was designed with the objectives of the study and consists of four sections:

**Section 1:** Questions regarding the personal factors of the respondents, including gender, age, education level, income, family status, and length of residence in the community.

**Section 2:** Questions regarding the level of development of the community-based economic network of public organizations in Nan province, including membership participation, experience-sharing, development of network leaders' capacities, and communication development within the network.

**Section 3:** Questions concerning factors influencing the strategy for developing the community-based economic network of public organizations, including internal community factors such as natural resources, local wisdom and culture, public utilities, and network management, as well as external factors such as government policies, marketing, economic and social conditions, and funding or budget sources.

**Section 4:** Questions regarding practical recommendations for the development of the community-based economic network of organizations in Nan province.

**2. Steps in Developing the Tool:** The steps in developing the research tool are as follows:

2.1 Study concepts, theories, documents, and research related to the development of community-based economic networks to guide the creation of the questionnaire.

2.2 Analyze the content and define the conceptual framework for constructing the questionnaire to ensure it aligns with the research objectives.

2.3 Develop the questionnaire to cover the research scope and submit it for review and revision based on suggestions from the research advisor.

2.4 Assess the tool's quality by evaluating its content validity for accuracy and completeness. The draft questionnaire was reviewed by 5 experts.

2.5 Validate the content of the questionnaire by calculating the Index of Item Objective Congruence (IOC) with questions that have an IOC value of 0.5 or higher, which were then selected for inclusion. The final IOC for the entire questionnaire was 1, calculated using the formula of Rovinelli and Hambleton (1977).



2.6 Test the reliability of the questionnaire using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient (Cronbach, 1970). The pre-test was conducted with 30 individuals from a disaster-affected area outside the study area, resulting in an Alpha coefficient of 0.996. The final version of the questionnaire was then used for the research sample.

### Data Collection and Qualitative Research Tools

**1. Research Tool:** The tool used for data collection is an in-depth interview guide developed by the researcher. The guide was created through a study of relevant concepts, theories, and research documents, which provided the framework for the study and identified the variables to be examined. The interview guide was then developed into a structured format, presented to the advisor for review, and revised according to suggestions to ensure it adequately addressed the research issues. The in-depth interview consists of three sections:

**Section 1:** Interview questions regarding the level of development of the community-based economic network of public organizations in Nan province.

**Section 2:** Interview questions regarding the factors affecting the strategy for developing the community-based economic network of public organizations in Nan province.

**Section 3:** Interview questions regarding practical recommendations for the development of the community-based economic network of public organizations in Nan province.

**2. Steps in Developing the Tool:** The process includes reviewing information related to the development of community-based economic networks and conducting in-depth interviews. The rationale and methodology for the research are as follows:

- **Data Review:** Reviewing secondary data from documents to analyze the effectiveness of disaster management in areas prone to recurrent flooding through an integrated approach.

- **In-depth Interviews:** Conducting in-depth interviews with 37 key informants using open-ended questions to gather relevant information on the effectiveness of disaster management in recurrent flood-prone areas. The data were then analyzed using content analysis to discuss and summarize the findings.

**3. In-depth Interview Procedure:** The interview process is structured and follows a set procedure. The researcher establishes the scope and issues to be addressed based on the objectives, operational definitions, and conceptual framework. The researcher checks the readiness of the equipment for conducting the interview and confirms the date, time, and location in advance. During the interview, the researcher delves into each issue, from the first to the last question, creating a relaxed atmosphere that allows for natural conversation and the exchange of knowledge and opinions on the interview topics.

**4. Summarizing Data and Interpretation:** After data collection, the researcher interprets the findings and validates the information using three forms of triangulation: data triangulation, theory triangulation, and methodological triangulation.

### Results of the Study

The study on the strategies for developing strong community-based economic networks by government organizations in Nan Province presents the following findings:

1. Results of the analysis on the level of Development of Strong Community-Based Economic Networks by Government Organizations in Nan Province: The overall findings, as well as a breakdown by individual areas, are as follows:



**Table 1** Mean (M) and Standard Deviation (S.D.) of the Level of Development of Strong Community-Based Economic Networks by Government Organizations in Nan Province, Overall and Categorized by Area

The development level of the community grassroots economy strengthens the network of government organizations in Nan Province	n = 400		level development
	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	
1. In terms of creating member participation	3.51	.85	more
2. Exchange of learning experiences	3.55	.87	more
3. Development of network leaders' potential	3.57	.95	more
4. Development of communication between networks	2.44	.96	little
Total	3.27	.88	middle

From Table 1, it was found that the overall level of development of strong community-based economic networks by government organizations in Nan Province was at a moderate level ( $\bar{x} = 3.27$ ). When categorized by individual areas, it was found that the development of these networks was at a high level in three areas: member participation ( $\bar{x} = 3.51$ ), exchange of Learning Experiences ( $\bar{x} = 3.55$ ), development of network leaders' potential ( $\bar{x} = 3.57$ ), And at a low level in one area: development of communication between networks ( $\bar{x} = 2.44$ ).

2. Results of the Analysis of Factors Affecting the Strategy for Developing Strong Community-Based Economic Networks by Government Organizations in Nan Province. The researcher collected data on 8 potential issues that could affect the strategy for developing strong community-based economic networks by government organizations in Nan Province. The data were analyzed using multiple linear regression analysis to create a prediction model for the dependent variable, which is the development of strong community-based economic networks by government organizations in Nan Province. The independent variables (or predictors) were 8 factors. The results of the data analysis are presented as follows:

**Table 2** Results of the analysis of factors affecting the strategy for developing the community grassroots economy strength network of government organizations in Nan Province (y)

Independent variable	B	S.E.	Beta	t	Sig.
a Constant	.309	.045		6.927	.000
X <sub>1</sub> Natural resources	.237	.046	.245	5.162	.000
X <sub>2</sub> In terms of local wisdom and local culture	.067	.057	.072	1.170	.243
X <sub>3</sub> Utilities system	.166	.042	.203	3.930	.000
X <sub>4</sub> Network management	.495	.071	.584	6.922	.000
X <sub>5</sub> Government policy	.222	.056	.262	3.974	.000
X <sub>6</sub> Marketing and public relations	.256	.068	.315	3.778	.000
X <sub>7</sub> In terms of economic, social, and political conditions	.081	.055	.098	1.466	.143
X <sub>8</sub> Budget and funding sources	.127	.042	.151	3.024	.003

R = .989 R<sup>2</sup> = .977

From Table 2, it can be seen that the results of the analysis of factors affecting the strategy for developing strong community-based economic networks by government organizations in Nan Province (y), using the inclusion of all variables in the equation, are as follows:



1. The 8 factors under study have a multiple correlation with the strategy for developing strong community-based economic networks by government organizations in Nan Province ( $y$ ) equal to 0.989 ( $R = .989$ ). This indicates that the 8 independent variables together have a strong relationship with the strategy for developing strong community-based economic networks by government organizations in Nan Province ( $y$ ).

2. The 8 factors under study affect the change or variation in the strategy for developing strong community-based economic networks by government organizations in Nan Province ( $y$ ) equal to 0.977 ( $R^2 = .977$ ). This indicates that the 8 independent variables can explain 97.70% of the variation in the strategy for developing strong community-based economic networks by government organizations in Nan Province ( $y$ ).

3. The factors that significantly affect the strategy for developing strong community-based economic networks by government organizations in Nan Province ( $y$ ) at the .01 significance level are 6 variables, according to the research hypothesis. The factors, ordered from the most to the least influential in explaining the dependent variable in terms of standardized scores, are as follows: network management ( $X_4$ , Beta = .584), marketing and public relations ( $X_6$ , Beta = .315), government policy ( $X_5$ , Beta = .262), natural resources ( $X_1$ , Beta = .245), public utilities ( $X_3$ , Beta = .203), and budget and financial resources ( $X_8$ , Beta = .151).

## Discussion

### Quantitative Research Results

From the research study on the strategy for developing strong community-based economic networks by government organizations in Nan Province, which utilized a questionnaire as the research tool, the following points are of interest for discussion to answer the research objectives:

1. The level of development of the community-based economic network in Nan Province: The overall result of the analysis indicated that the level of development of the community-based economic network by government organizations in Nan Province was moderate ( $\bar{x} = 3.27$ ). When categorized by individual factors, it was found that the development of the community-based economic network by government organizations in Nan Province was at a high level in 3 aspects: Member participation ( $\bar{x} = 3.51$ ), exchange of learning experiences ( $\bar{x} = 3.55$ ), development of network leadership capacity ( $\bar{x} = 3.57$ ). However, it was at a low level in one aspect: development of communication between networks ( $\bar{x} = 2.44$ ). This finding is consistent with the research by Dangcham and Naressenie (2022: 49), which studied the effectiveness of community strengthening management through people's participation to develop fundamental economics in the Huayang Subdistrict Administration Organization. The study found that the effectiveness of community strengthening management through people's participation for economic development was at a moderate level. The effectiveness differed significantly in terms of income and education.

Factors related to the effectiveness of community strengthening management through people's participation were positively correlated with the effectiveness of community development.

2. Factors affecting the strategy for developing community-based economic networks by government organizations in Nan Province: the study identified 6 significant predictor variables affecting the strategy for developing community-based economic networks by government organizations in Nan Province at the .01 statistical significance level, namely: network management, marketing and public relations, government policy, natural resources, and public utilities. Budget and financial resources are consistent with the study by Panyayong and Wichairam (2017: 265), which explored the factors affecting the implementation of economic development policies in Tombon Municipality in Buriram Province. The study combined qualitative and quantitative research methods to examine factors influencing the implementation of community economic development policies. The findings showed that the overall level of factors affecting the implementation of community economic development policies was high. When considered by individual factors, they were also at a high level, ranked as follows: resource allocation, promotion of participation, leadership, organizational structure, characteristics of the economic development policy structure, control, evaluation, and encouragement. The comparison analysis based on personal factors





showed no significant statistical differences in age and position at the .05 level, but significant differences were found based on gender and education level at the .05 level.

### Qualitative Research Results

From the study on the strategy for developing strong community-based economic networks by government organizations in Nan Province, which was conducted through in-depth interviews with key informants, the research revealed several interesting points that are discussed to answer the research objectives as follows:

1. The level of development of community-based economic networks in Nan Province: the overall finding showed that the community-based economic networks in Nan Province are relatively strong. This strength is supported by various government agencies at different levels. For example, the local government officials, such as the Governor of Nan Province, the Provincial Community Development Officer, the Provincial Industry Officer, the Provincial Agriculture Officer, and local administrative bodies, all actively support the implementation of government policies. This support reaches from the provincial level to the district level (15 districts) and further down to local communities with local administrative organizations. The local leaders, including village heads and sub-district heads, play a crucial role in providing assistance, consultation, and coordinating with different agencies. Furthermore, the development of leadership capacity within the community-based economic networks has helped in the management and coordination of various organizations or businesses in the community. These leaders are knowledgeable, skilled, and capable of managing networks and organizations effectively, including business operations, marketing, and public relations in the modern era. This has led to the creation of profitable outcomes, such as dividends for members, and has fostered increased member participation. Members have become more actively involved in decision-making, planning, executing activities, monitoring progress, and sharing benefits. This finding aligns with the study by Srichan (2017: 10), which analyzed the management guidelines for a community economy project in the Mueang District of Roi Et Province. The research found that: The factor analysis extracted five key components, accounting for 79.65% of the total variance, with factor weights ranging from 0.68 to 0.89. The guidelines for managing the community economy project are summarized by the 5 M model, which includes: man (human resources): the community project leader should have entrepreneurial qualities, money (finance): fundraising from members should be done to foster shared ownership, manufacturing (production): there should be technical knowledge of production processes, with the ability to transfer that knowledge. Management: A clear organizational structure and responsibilities should be defined. Marketing: members should be trained in sales skills, and strategies for product distribution and advertising through the internet should be implemented. This study emphasizes the importance of strong leadership, shared responsibility, and active participation in the successful development and management of community-based economic networks, which mirrors the findings in Nan Province.

2. Factors affecting the strategy for developing the community-based grassroots economic strength network of public organizations in Nan Province revealed that the strategy for developing the community-based grassroots economic strength network of public organizations in Nan Province is influenced by several factors, both internal and external to the community. The internal factors are those that the community can control or change to meet the expectations or needs of the network members within the community. These internal factors include natural resources, local wisdom and culture, public utilities, and network management. The results can be discussed in detail for each factor as follows:

2.1 Internal community factors – natural resources: It was found that the abundant environment in the area enables the community members to make use of various resources, such as using local resources to produce goods or developing them into community tourism attractions, thus creating a source of income for the community.

2.2 Internal community factors – local wisdom and culture: the community is rich in cultural diversity, traditions, and ethnicities. However, the most prominent culture that is tangible is the use of the Lanna language (both spoken and written), along with traditional clothing, especially the “sin tin jok” (a type of woven skirt), which has been passed down through generations.





2.3 Internal community factors – public utilities: Public utilities are a crucial element in improving the quality of life for both the local population and visiting tourists. This ensures convenience, safety, and leaves a positive impression on visitors.

2.4 Internal community factors – network management: this factor directly influences the strategy for developing the network. Network management is a key process in carrying out all network activities. It involves creating a clear system and structure, establishing rules and regulations that network members can follow effectively, and planning, setting goals, and objectives for operations with efficiency and effectiveness.

2.5 External factors – government policies: Various policies, such as the OTOP community, the "Saan Phalang Pracharat" (Strengthening the People's Power) program, and policies to promote tourism, are beneficial and linked to opportunities for developing the grassroots economic strength network of public organizations in Nan Province. Therefore, public organizations should prepare the network to support the implementation of these policies and should also monitor the progress continuously and seriously.

2.6 External community factors – marketing and public relations: It was found that this factor requires the support of public organizations to help drive development towards success. Marketing efforts to attract people to visit, explore, and decide to purchase products must be proactive. It is important to create interest in the products, services, or goods, in addition to self-marketing efforts.

2.7 External community factors – economic, social, and political conditions: This factor depends on the external environment, which is volatile and beyond the community's control. For example, fluctuating economic conditions, rising living costs, and increasing prices of goods and energy affect production costs and influence buyers' purchasing decisions. Additionally, imported goods with lower production costs compete in the market, affecting domestically produced goods overall.

2.8 External community factors – budget and funding sources: This external factor involves the need for support from relevant public organizations. Business operations require funds or capital to ensure smooth execution. This includes budget allocation for various development activities, such as hiring experts or trainers to provide knowledge, budgeting for product development research, or conducting market research. This aligns with the research by Nakruang et al (2017), which studied the factors influencing the business performance of Yala Community Enterprises. The study found that financial management, marketing management, and the characteristics of members influenced the business performance of community enterprises in Yala. Therefore, to drive community enterprises towards better performance, emphasis should be placed on financial management, such as regularly maintaining income and expense records, controlling production costs, and focusing on marketing to develop high-quality products that reflect the local identity. Thus, developing and promoting community enterprises should not only consider management factors but also focus on creating value for products, which is important for the continued success of community enterprises."

3. Guidelines for developing the community-based economic strengthening network of government organizations in Nan province: It was found that there should be an increased promotion of community participation in all dimensions. This includes providing knowledge on how to strengthen the network, such as transferring knowledge, enhancing management skills, securing funding sources, assisting in market adaptation to current trends, and improving product and service quality. This will enable the community network to become stronger and self-sustaining, benefiting the community in terms of income generation, employment, and the efficient use of local resources. This approach is in line with the research by Rajapongsa and Nakornthap (2019: 80), which studied guidelines for promoting community participatory processes in area development planning in Trat Special Economic Development Zone. The research findings were: (1) the people of Trat used the term "Trat the Green City" before Trat province was declared as a special economic zone, which became a key factor in enabling the people of Trat to coexist with the Trat Special Economic Development Zone; (2) representatives from the civil society sector acted as agents reflecting the general dispositions (habitus) or identity of Trat's people through historical and socio-structural forces. Therefore, the public sector should support identity-led area development; and (3) in the community participatory process, not only should representatives from the state, private, academic, and





civil society sectors be involved in the planning process, but all sectors should be encouraged to understand the identity of Trat's people.

## Conclusion

The government agencies that play a role in strengthening community-based economic networks are numerous, and they belong to different ministries. This often leads to overlapping responsibilities, causing confusion and a lack of clarity for the public. Therefore, the government, as the policymaker, should review and improve the existing structure, clarify the scope of responsibilities, and promote better inter-agency cooperation to enhance the efficiency of the community economic network development. This would ensure the success, sustainability, and highest effectiveness of such networks. In terms of the community's development towards a stronger community-based economic network, the involvement of a unified network is essential. The participating community organizations must prioritize the network organization, adhere to agreements for joint operations, and foster the participation of members in driving the community network forward effectively. This should be supported by the capacity of network leaders who possess the knowledge and skills to further develop the community network. Additionally, leaders should facilitate knowledge exchange and experience sharing among network members to pass on and build on existing knowledge. This includes the development of products or services that meet current demands, as well as expanding relationships with other community networks for communication, knowledge sharing, and mutual support. Such efforts will contribute to strengthening community networks through collaboration, underpinned by support from relevant government agencies. This support can include training to improve the community's business skills, assistance in marketing channels, public relations, product distribution, and budgeting for network development. Furthermore, low-interest funding opportunities should be made available to the community network to promote sustainable self-management and strengthen their networks for the long term.

## Recommendations

In the research on strategies for developing strong community-based economic networks of government organizations in Nan province, the following key points are beneficial for practical application:

### Policy Recommendations:

Government organizations should utilize the research findings as informational resources to plan and formulate policies for the development of community-based economic networks. These policies should be aligned with the changing environmental context and the decreasing resources in the community, ensuring that the development is both efficient and sustainable.

### Suggestions for Applying the Research Findings:

Further research should be conducted to identify other issues that influence the strategies for developing strong community-based economic networks in other dimensions of differing contexts, beyond the eight factors explored in this study. There should also be consistent monitoring and evaluation of the development of the community-based economic network to ensure the continuity of policies from all sectors, ultimately leading to effective outcomes and sustainable development.

### Suggestions for Future Research:

A comparative study should be conducted on the development of community-based economic networks of government organizations in other provinces. This would provide additional information that can be used to enhance and further develop the community-based economic networks of government organizations in Nan province.

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