DEVELOPMENT

Anti-poverty projects set for FY2021

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The government is set to launch a number of projects in fiscal 2021, starting this month, to narrow income disparity in all provinces based on the Thai People Map and Analytics Platform (TPMAP), a data analytics tool.

Danucha Pichayanan, secretary-general of the National Economic and Social Development Council (NESDC), said the governor of each province will be tasked with handling the projects, aimed at poor and needy families first.

Developed two years ago by the NESDC in cooperation with the National Electronics and Computer Technology Center, the National Science and Technology Development Agency and the Science and Technology Ministry, TPMAP is Thailand's data analytics tool aimed at precision poverty alleviation.

As people who live in different areas may have different problems, policy-makers can use TPMAP to derive precision poverty alleviation programmes that are suitable for individuals in each province, district or subdistrict.

Starting as a pilot project from the Thai government's big data initiatives, TPMAP aims to integrate data sources from different government agencies. The idea is to compare different data sources for verification.

TPMAP uses data from two government agencies: a census-based basic minimum need data of 36 million individuals from the Community Development Department and a register-based data source of 11.4 million individuals from the Finance Ministry.

To identify the poor, TPMAP uses the Multidimensional Poverty Index developed by the Oxford Poverty & Human Development Initiative and the UN Development Programme.

Recommended by the NESDC, TPMAP uses five poverty dimensions: healthcare, education, income, living standard and access to public services. Government officials can use TPMAP to identify the problems of the poor based on these five dimensions.

"This is the first time the government has used TPMAP as a tool to tackle income disparity more efficiently and precisely," Mr Danucha said. "This method is applied by the Chinese government to formulate and implement policy to solve poverty."

Pilot projects were launched last year in six provinces: Samut Songkhram, Khon Kaen, Chiang Rai, Nakhon Phanom, Nakhon Si Thammarat and Uthai Thani. The results have been quite successful, Mr Danucha said.

He said TPMAP's latest information found 1.24 million households in need of urgent assistance.