

University : Kasetsart University  
Country : Thailand  
Web Address : <http://www.ku.ac.th/>

### **“Universities’ Responsibilities for Sustainable Development Goals and World’s Complex Challenges.”**

Kasetsart University has seriously realized feasibility of sustainable development that will assist community within the university to properly live with surroundings. By concerning about possibility, the university has responsibilities to construct assistance to develop many campaigns that will transmit advanced knowledge to the community in Kasetsart University. Significantly, the role model that is brought to employ with sustainable policy of the university is **“Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy”**. The philosophy is the royal initiative concept of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulayadej the Great (Rama IX of Thailand) who had made a lifetime dedication to the improvement of his people’s livelihood and the sustainable development of his nation. His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulayadej was esteemed as the **“World’s most hard-working monarch”** and the **“Greatest Development King”**. The King’s vision is based on his own lifelong experiences and Buddhist inspiration and it has been called “Sufficiency Economy Philosophy (SEP)” framework. His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulayadej the Great had ever given his first statement involved with the Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy on commencement ceremony at Kasetsart University on 18th July 1974. The King stated to the graduates that:

*“Economic development must be done step by step. It should begin with the strengthening of our economic foundation, by assuring that the majority of our population has enough to live on...Once reasonable progress has been achieved, we should then embark on the next steps, by pursuing more advanced levels of economic development.”*

He systematically thought that modern development has caused changes in all aspects of Thai society. The positive impacts of the advancement are economic growth, progress of material and public utilities, modern communication systems, and improvement and expansion of education which can reach rural areas or the underprivileged in the society. Conversely, prompt economic growth and the increase of consumerism has led to a state of economic dependence and deterioration of natural resources as well as the dissolution of existing kinship and traditional groups to manage them. The traditional knowledge and wisdom that have been employed to solve problems and accumulated in the past are forgotten and have started to disappear. Importantly, what has dissipated is the people’s ability to rely on themselves and conduct their lives and pursue their destiny with dignity. The former Thai economic crisis served as a costly lesson of unbalanced and unstable growth, partly due to the improper economic and social development process, in which the

economy relied heavily on foreign capital inflows and external markets. **“Sufficiency Economy”** is a philosophy based on the fundamental principle of Thai culture. It is a methodical process of development based on moderation, prudence, and social immunity, one that uses knowledge and virtue as guidelines in living. Essentially, there must be intelligence and perseverance which will lead to real happiness in leading one’s life. On a personal level, the Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy can be adopted by adhering to the middle path. The awareness of virtue and honesty is likewise decisive for people as well as public officials. The Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy and its three pillars can be clarified as follows: **Moderation**, the sufficiency at a level of not doing something too little or too much at the expense of oneself or others, for example, producing and consuming at a moderate level. **Reasonableness**, the decision concerning the level of sufficiency must be made rationally with consideration of the factors involved and careful anticipation of the outcomes that may be expected from such action. And **Risk Management**, the preparation to cope with the likely impact and changes in various aspects by considering the probability of future situations.

Furthermore, decisions and activities must be carried out at a sufficient level depending on two conditions in the following sequence: **Knowledge**, comprising all-round knowledge in the relevant fields and prudence in bringing this knowledge into consideration to understand the relationship among the field so as to use them to aid in the planning and ensure carefulness in the operation. **Virtue**, being promoted, comprising the awareness of honesty, patience, perseverance, and intelligence in leading one’s life. The relationship between the Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy and National Development in His Majesty’s concept can be described hereafter: His Majesty’s concept emphasizes that the producers or consumers try to produce or consume within the limit or limitation of existing income or resources first. This is the principle in decreasing the dependence and increasing the ability to control the production themselves, thus decreasing the risk from not being able to efficiently control the market system. However, Sufficiency Economy does not mean that one must constantly be frugal. A person can indulge himself in luxury once in a while, provided that it is within his capacity to do so. But the majority of the country’s population often overspends beyond their means. Sufficiency Economy can lead to the goal of establishing economic stability. Fundamentally, Thailand is an agricultural country; therefore, the country’s economy should be keyed towards agro-economy and food stability in order to establish a stable economic system to a certain degree. This is an economic system that can help lessen the risk or economic instability in the long run. Sufficiency Economy can be applied to all levels, branches, and sectors of the economy. It is not necessarily limited to the agricultural or rural sectors, or even the financial, the real estate, and the international trade and investment sectors by using similar principles of emphasizing moderation in performance, reasonableness, and creating immunity for oneself and society. As previously mentioned, Kasetsart University has always brought this important framework of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulayadej the Great (Rama IX) to employ and apply in many policies and campaigns.

As describe above, the Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy has implicated the **“Sustainable Development Goals”**, or SDGs, also known as the global goals, were adopted by all united nation members. The SDGs are integrated, universal and transformative— that is, they recognize action in one area that will affect outcomes in others, and development must balance social, economic and environmental sustainability. The definition in term of **“ Sustainable Development”** is the frequent subject of international conferences everywhere and **“Sustainability”** is also a contemporary catchphrase for group across many sectors. The terms come up in everything by serving as modus operandi. One of the most enduring definitions comes from *Our Common Future*, or the Brundtland report, published in 1987 by the United Nations World Commission on Environmental and Development. It arrived at a time when increasing awareness about the limits of natural resources and the impact of human actions on the environment had begun to inspire calls for a new, more integrated model of development. The report stated that:

*“Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”*

Today, the growing popularity of sustainable development suggests paradigms shift may finally be underway. That is, the age of sustainable development, philosophy and mindset, which is a central concept for our age. It is both a way of understanding the world and a method for solving global problems. As previously mentioned, all of this is an increasing sense of urgency.

Simultaneously, UI GreenMetric World University Ranking is one of the most important organizations which believes that many universities around the world have strong efforts to implement environmentally friendly and sustainable policies and programs. In 2020, the UI GreenMetric World University Ranking has the major significant topic which involves **“Universities’ Responsibilities for Sustainable Development Goals and World’s Complex Challenges.”** At present, our world is facing with a most dangerous situation that we have never expected before with coronavirus pandemic. The COVID-19 is impacting institutions around the world including Kasetsart University, its scope and dimensions also mean that poses a major threat towards achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The coronavirus pandemic unavoidably influences the SDGs and affects their mplementation. The strong concerns in dealing with COVID-19 are disrupting many conservation programs. Thus, COVID-19 jeopardizes some process of the implementation of the SDGs. It sends a cautions warning about need to continue to put an emphasis on the implementation of the SDGs. While progress towards the goals had been slow, especially in Asia-Pacific countries where regression had been recorded even prior to the pandemic, the crisis is now undoing decades of advancement within just a few months. Nevertheless, Kasetsart University remains as optimistic as UN because during this tough time the university still follows a launching plan of the United Nations which aims to defeat the virus and build a better world. The plan calls for international solidarity and Kasetsart University still believes that assistance from educational institution can strongly provide many essentials for community.

The university always hold the principles of three transformative paradigms that have intentionally concerned in what the world has being faced and what the university have to necessarily do. Continuously, there are many university's policies that relate to enhance quality living and protect all people in the university and surrounding community from the coronavirus pandemic. The mentioned policies earlier, we are called **"Three Paradigms of Transformation"** which are the main concerns for developing the university to better improvement. The paradigms are the key elements to integrate people' s cooperation surroundings the community and in Kasetsart University. Firstly, the first paradigm is determined as **"Public Service"** which is a significant service intended to serve all members of the community. This tough year with the COVID-19 pandemic, many specialists deliberately construct modernized innovations for protecting people in the community. Latterly, the second paradigm relates to **"Social Engagement"** which includes activity, interaction, social exchange, and lack of compulsion. The university has built the continuum of community commitment to develop this paradigm such as transactional, transitional and transformational engagement. And the last paradigm is defined as **"Innovation for Agriculture"** which means carefully working process during the pandemic with leading agricultural researchers, businesses, landowners, and farmers to develop the knowledge and technologies that will make modern farming more sustainable, resilient, and productive. Through practical and interactive workshops, farm walks, and on-farm demonstrations, this will help the community to put knowledge into practice. Furthermore, Kasetsart University always realizes in constructing a happy, safety community, and also making strong social connections that create a sense of belonging. And along with belonging comes a sense of responsibility to support each other. With a strong sense of belonging and knowing other community members will take care of each other comes a sense of peace, security, and meaning. Consequently, the **"Three Paradigms of Transformation"** are still the major concepts that can clearly be seen in Kasetsart University's activities and policies.

Coronavirus outbreak (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered coronavirus. The best way to prevent and slow down transmission is well informed about the COVID-19 virus, the disease it causes, how it spreads and the way to prevent. Kasetsart University takes this concern seriously when the Thai government declares reported cases of COVID-19. Intentionally, paying close attention to community in Kasetsart University is what should be conducted by mandating policy. The significant policy that the university must seriously pay attention to the community is new normal approach which is applied to support operations in Kasetsart University. Kasetsart University Announcements are provided to urge community within the university following protocols intimately in order to protect the expansion of the COVID-19. Obviously, the university has proclaimed the eight issues of preventive measures to reduce the widespread jeopardy of COVID-19. Particularly, the operations in Kasersart University during coronavirus pandemic have changed to 100% online process, for instance, all faculties/ eapartments/ program of study must avoid in-person classes, and adopt alternative methods of pedagogy such

as online learning/ teaching, assignment-based and project-based learnings. Moreover, Kasetsart University encourages instructors to adjust their teaching plans, pedagogical contents, teaching formats, learning assessments or evaluation to appropriate and effective ways. They can work with the Office of Computer Services or Campus Offices in charge of information technology or relevant areas to help arrange their daily education and research activities. Consistently, providing propriate guidance is always brought to employ in many areas in the university. Then, according to the Thai government and the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research and Technology's Lockdown Easing Announcement, school and universities are allowed to resume normal classroom operations but complying with the standard health guidelines to prevent the spread of COVID-19 on campus.

SEP for SDGs@KU