

**Country for the project**

Thailand

Degree programme

Degree Programme in Energy and Environment

Minor field studies in Thailand

Before departure

I applied for Minor Field Studies because it sounded like a fun and developing experience. I was still determining what I wanted to write my thesis about if I stayed in Sweden, so I also saw the scholarship as a great source of inspiration for the subject. Me and Mattias Malmberg, who I wrote the thesis with, ended up with Thailand as our host country because we had established contact with Prof. Thavatchai Tayjasanant, a professor at Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok. We then came up with a primary project idea that we wanted to proceed with, and after discussions with our supervisor Dilip Khatiwada, a final project plan was finished. My expectations were high because I had already visited Thailand twice and liked it both times.



Preparations included further planning of the project and research necessary for the thesis. We also had to get a few recommended vaccines for extended stays in Thailand.



Upon arrival

We arrived in Bangkok on the 22nd of March, and the actual field study started on the 2nd of April. First, however, we had to spend some time preparing ourselves for the interviews we would conduct during this field visit. So the project was ongoing when we arrived, but we decided to take the first few days off to get used to the heat and timezone. As a result, the field study was short and only lasted until the 6th of April. This is because we had spent so much time before the visit that we knew exactly what we had to do once we were there, making the workflow relatively smooth.

Financials

Thailand is very cheap compared to Sweden. It is as expensive to eat at a restaurant as it is to cook at home if you know where to eat. At our regular lunch restaurant, which we probably ate at half of the 71 days spent here, a lunch costs 79 THB (24 SEK), much cheaper than any other lunch I've had in Sweden. There are expensive places



also, but if these can be avoided, economics should be fine in Thailand. My best tip for saving money in Thailand is to not go with your instincts and eat at places even if they look cheap because these may be your regular, affordable lunch spots for the rest of your stay.



Accommodation

We found our accommodation on Airbnb by ourselves. Accommodation is also cheap in Thailand, so we got a lot for what we paid, which was 151 SEK per night. We stayed in an apartment on the 23rd floor in Bangkok, 20 min from the University. There were some complications with the air conditioners and doorlock, but our host was great.

Project

Our project focused on the energy system of a rural village in southern Thailand. We used an optimization program called HOMER Pro to simulate the energy system of the town to find the feasibility of different system configurations for future scenarios in the village. The purpose of the field study visit was to acquire data regarding electricity

use in the area as well as prices and specifications of the components. This was done by interviewing locals in the village using a questionnaire translated into Thai and interviewing officials at the subdistrict organization with a translator present. Our contact person helped us come in contact with the interviewees by calling the organization and setting up a meeting. The project was a success, and we got pretty good results. Our supervisor suggested that we continue working on the project to convert it into a publishable paper, so that is how we will continue working on the project in the future.



Country

When we arrived in Thailand, we tried to approach the culture with open arms by trying to experience it in its proper form. We saw that there were many malls located in Bangkok, containing many different modern restaurants.

However, in most cases, we ate at small street food restaurants with colored plastic chairs. We thought this was a fun way to experience the culture since we were already

quite used to eating at Sweden's regular mall food courts. We also partook in celebrating Songkran, the new year in Thailand. A nationwide water festival celebrates this. If you stepped outside during the Songkran weekend, you had

to expect to be soaked in water, which could be pretty uncomfortable if unexpected. Still, if you were prepared mentally, it was a great experience. In Thailand, people rarely shake hands or hug. Instead, you greet people by bowing and putting your hands together, this felt a little uncomfortable initially, but after a week or two, I got used to it.



Leisure and social activities

Bangkok has many tourist attractions during our spare time. Temples, museums, and markets are some of the attractions we visited. The accommodations also included a gym and a pool, so much time was spent in this area. We tried contacting other international students at the university, but the group was used more for accommodations, so there was no success. However, Bangkok has many internationals and friendly locals, so it was never a problem finding people to hang out with.



Sustainability

There were no trains for the field study area, so we had to take a minibus. Once there, we mostly moved around the village by walking between the houses. In Bangkok, the railway system is straightforward to use and accessible, so this was our primary way of transportation during our stay in the capital. The project we did was connected to the Global Sustainable Development Goals because the main objective was to minimize emissions while also increasing the reliability and resilience of the energy system in the village. These goals could be connected to several SDGs, such as 1, 7, 11, and 13.

Other recommendations and observations

I recommend Thailand as a place to do Minor Field Studies in. Primarily because of the price of living there but also because of the right culture and available travel options within the country. I had a wonderful time, and I am sure you would too.