

External and Internal Driving Factors in Development of Phitsanulok Province along the LIMEC: The Role of the Government and the Dynamics of Globalization¹

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Abstract

This study seeks to examine the external and internal factors that affect the opportunities and developmental pathways of Phitsanulok Province within the Luang Prabang-Indochina-Mawlamyine Economic Corridor (LIMEC). The study employed a qualitative research design, utilizing documentary research and conducting in-depth interviews. Five key informants were chosen using purposive sampling: The Governor of Phitsanulok Province, the Provincial Agriculture Officer, the Provincial Commerce Officer, the President of the Phitsanulok Provincial Administrative Organization (PAO), and the President of the Phitsanulok Chamber of Commerce. The process of data collection included a thorough literature review and semi-structured interviews, whereas data analysis utilized content analysis and methodological triangulation to improve validity. The findings indicate that external factors, including Thailand's involvement in regional frameworks such as ACMECS and BIMSTEC, infrastructure connectivity, and international collaboration, play a crucial role in influencing the growth prospects of Phitsanulok. Internally, the identification of economic digitization, human resource development, sustainable agriculture, environmental management, and political stability as essential elements is paramount. Additionally, the study emphasizes the importance of tackling non-traditional security threats such as pandemics, environmental degradation, and transnational crime through regional collaboration under LIMEC. It is recommended to establish a centralized coordination mechanism for LIMEC initiatives, enhance human capital development, foster cross-border health and disaster management

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cooperation, and create a regional logistics hub in Phitsanulok. Future research ought to concentrate on the significance of digital transformation, conduct comparative analyses among regional corridors, and examine community-level impacts to foster sustainable and inclusive regional development.

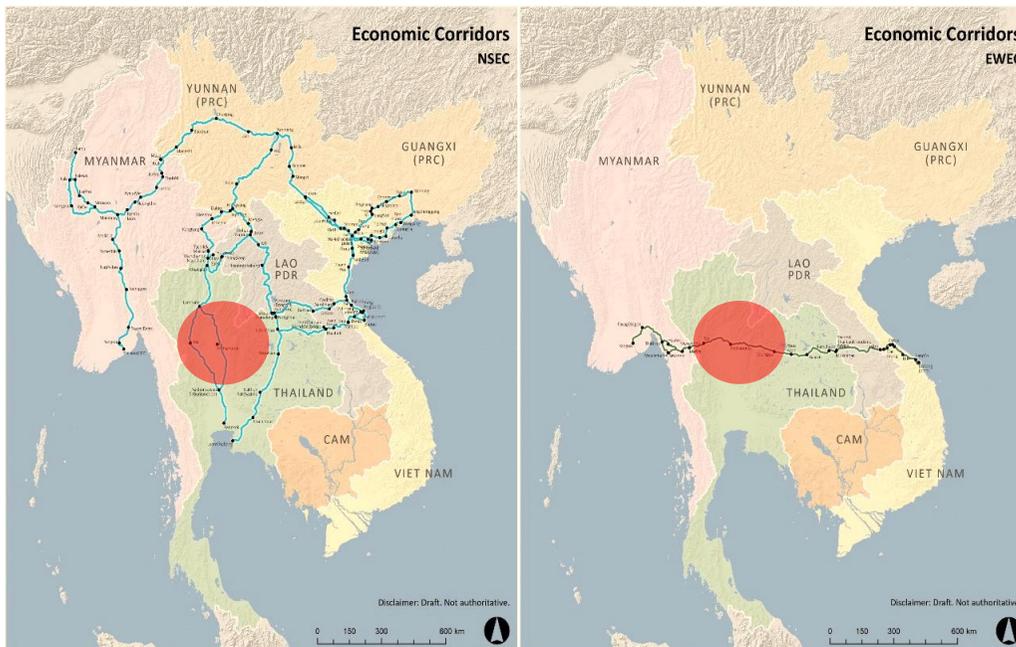
Keywords LIMEC, Phitsanulok Development, Regional Economic Integration, Infrastructure and Connectivity, Sustainable Development Strategies

1. Introduction

The Luang Prabang-Indochina-Mawlamyine Economic Corridor (LIMEC) serves as a regional collaboration framework designed to promote economic and social development across the interconnected regions of Thailand, Laos, and Myanmar (Chansombat, Panichakarn, Pongcharoen, Srisawat, Wichitphongsa, & Pochan, 2020). Specifically, LIMEC seeks to integrate the economies of Thailand's lower northern provinces Phitsanulok, Uttaradit, Sukhothai, Phetchabun, and Tak with key areas in neighboring countries, such as Xayaburi and Luang Prabang in Laos, and Mon State and Kayin State in Myanmar (Sukhotu, Panichakarn, Pongcharoen, & Patitad, 2018). Established in 2015 based on research supported by Thailand's Office of the Science, Research, and Innovation Promotion Commission (TSRI), LIMEC emphasizes five key dimensions: trade, investment, tourism, education, health, and logistics (Panihakarn, Pongcharoen, Semwilay, Chanrawangyot, & Chomborisut, 2018; LIMEC, 2024). These dimensions are essential for enhancing the competitiveness of Thailand's lower northern provinces and facilitating their integration into the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC).

Central to LIMEC's strategy is the development of both physical infrastructure and procedural mechanisms to promote the efficient cross-border movement of goods, services, people, and capital (Phitsanulok Provincial Commerce Office, 2024). Key border checkpoints, such as Mae Sot–Myawaddy (Thailand–Myanmar) and Phu Doo–Paklay (Thailand–Laos), play vital roles as commercial and transportation hubs (Ministry of Commerce, 2024). Within this framework, Phitsanulok emerges as a crucial economic center, linking the North-South Economic Corridor (NSEC) and the East-West Economic Corridor (EWEC). Its robust transportation networks, commercial airport, and modern logistics facilities underscore its pivotal role in fostering regional and sub-regional economic growth (The Office of Strategy Management: Lower Northern Provincial Cluster, 2023).

Figure 1: Phitsanulok within the context of the East-West Economic Corridor



Source: Thai-China One Belt One Road Investment Trade Association (n.d.)

Compared to neighboring provinces, Phitsanulok possesses a more diversified and resilient economic structure, greater infrastructural readiness, and stronger institutional capacities. While adjacent provinces often concentrate on specific sectors such as agriculture, tourism, or border trade, Phitsanulok demonstrates balanced growth across commerce, industry, services, education, and healthcare. Its superior multimodal connectivity by road, rail, and air, with Phitsanulok Airport as a major hub further cements its role as the region's logistics and service nucleus. These characteristics position Phitsanulok as an ideal case study to explore the opportunities and challenges associated with leveraging LIMEC for sustainable and inclusive regional development.

Despite LIMEC's long-term vision extending to 2028 and its emphasis on sustainable and collaborative practices in commerce, investment, tourism, and logistics, the initiative faces significant challenges. Chief among these is the lack of a centralized authority to coordinate and oversee its development effectively (Faculty of Logistics and Digital Supply Chain, Naresuan University, 2024; Phitsanulok Provincial Commerce Office, 2024). This governance gap has resulted in fragmented management and overreliance on private sector momentum, while public sector involvement remains limited to consultation and financial assistance (Wutthisak, 2019).

Figure 2: Luangprabang -Indochina-Mawlamyine Economic Corridor (LIMEC)



Source: Kositanon (2017)

Moreover, LIMEC has yet to attain a status comparable to other regional cooperation frameworks such as the Ayeyawady-Chao Phraya-Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy (ACMECS) or the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), leading to strategic uncertainties and limited tangible progress (Department of International Cooperation, 2022). Consequently, a comprehensive study of both external and internal dynamics is imperative to assess Phitsanulok’s development prospects within the LIMEC framework. External factors, including regional foreign policy directions, infrastructure linkages, and broader economic cooperation mechanisms, must be considered (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2023). Simultaneously, internal dimensions such as governance capacity, public participation, and the province’s economic and human resource potential warrant careful examination to align development strategies with LIMEC’s overarching goals.

Figure 3: The International Conference (Grand Meeting) on the Luang Prabang - Indochina - Mawlamyine Economic Corridor (LIMEC)



Source: Phitsanulok Provincial Office (2023)

This study, therefore, aims to identify viable development pathways and strategic recommendations for Phitsanulok by connecting it with ongoing regional and sub-regional initiatives under LIMEC. Furthermore, it endeavors to evaluate Phitsanulok’s capacity to serve as a catalyst for sustainable and inclusive growth, offering pragmatic insights applicable to both the province itself and the broader lower northern region of Thailand.

2. Research Objectives

To analyze the external and internal variables that influence the opportunities and developmental trajectories of Phitsanulok Province within the Luang Prabang-Indochina-Mawlamyine Economic Corridor.

3. Methodology

This research study employs a qualitative technique to examine the external and internal circumstances influencing the opportunities and developmental trajectories of Phitsanulok Province within the Luang Prabang-Indochina-Mawlamyine Economic Corridor. The study aims to elucidate the dynamics influencing regional growth and emphasize practical techniques for harnessing economic potential within this critical corridor. The research process consists of two primary components. Initially, data collecting was performed by an extensive examination of documents and literature pertinent to the research subject. The contents comprised books, research papers, academic articles, and journals that were properly published and peer-reviewed. This document analysis established a fundamental comprehension of the theoretical and practical frameworks relevant to the study. Secondly, field data were obtained via comprehensive in this study, interviews were conducted with key informants from pertinent government departments and influential economic groups. The

informants included the Governor of Phitsanulok Province, the Provincial Agriculture Officer, the Provincial Commerce Officer, the President of the Phitsanulok Provincial Administrative Organization (PAO), and the President of the Phitsanulok Chamber of Commerce. The selection of these individuals was based on purposive sampling criteria to ensure the incorporation of comprehensive and multi-dimensional perspectives regarding the development of the economic corridor and its effects on the province.

The criteria for selecting the key informants were carefully established to align with the research objectives, which focused on assessing provincial capacities, governance dynamics, and economic development strategies within the LIMEC framework. Specifically, the Governor and the PAO President represent the highest level of provincial policy-making and administrative authority, offering critical insights into strategic planning, resource allocation, and public sector engagement. The Provincial Agriculture Officer and the Provincial Commerce Officer were selected to provide sector-specific expertise, reflecting the importance of agriculture and commerce as primary economic drivers in the lower northern region. Meanwhile, the President of the Phitsanulok Chamber of Commerce contributed perspectives from the private sector, ensuring a balanced understanding of both governmental initiatives and business community responses.

By incorporating informants from both public administrative bodies and economic organizations, the study achieved a comprehensive and holistic view of the opportunities, constraints, and prospects for Phitsanulok under the LIMEC development framework. This purposive selection method strengthens the validity of the findings and guarantees that the data collected are directly relevant and sufficient to address the research questions and achieve the study's objectives.

The data gathering instrument employed was a semi-structured interview format, crafted to offer both organization and adaptability in examining the research aims. This methodology enabled the author to thoroughly investigate particular concerns while integrating new insights as they arose during the interviews. Data analysis was conducted by content analysis, which entailed synthesizing material from interviews, note-taking, and literature review. The study utilized a methodological triangulation approach to guarantee the reliability and validity of the findings. This procedure entailed the cross-verification of data from many sources, such as interviews, field observations, and document analyses. The triangulation method enabled the categorization, selection, and synthesis of the acquired data, allowing for a sophisticated comprehension of the research findings (Pounpunwong, 2018).

This research has received approval from the Human Research Ethics Committee of Pibulsongkram Rajabhat University, certified by number PSRU-EC No.: 2024/031. This ethical clearance emphasizes the rigor and integrity of the

research process, guaranteeing adherence to established ethical standards in qualitative research.

4. Findings

4.1 External Context: International Relations and Development Policies Relevant to the Study's Regional and Sub-regional Scope

The author articulates findings through an analysis of essential components drawn from Thailand's International Development Cooperation Strategy Plan for 2023–2027 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2023), highlighting Thailand's proactive efforts in influencing international relations and development policies pertinent to the regional and sub-regional context of this study. Located within the “Development in Transition” framework, the strategic plan highlights Thailand's changing role in meeting the varied needs of partner countries, emphasizing its dual identity as both a recipient and a contributor to international cooperation. The plan focuses on the objective of enhancing sustainable development, supporting the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and encouraging economic, social, and environmental advancement at regional and global scales (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2023).

The author systematically organizes the analysis into three key dimensions to elucidate how external factors influence development opportunities for Phitsanulok Province within the LIMEC framework: (1) Initiatives for Global Affairs and Regional Cooperation, (2) Harmonization of Thailand's International Development Policies with Regional and Sub-regional Growth, and (3) Tackling Regional Challenges and Opportunities. The dimensions outlined emphasize Thailand's strategic positioning and collaborative initiatives as essential factors in regional development, significantly impacting Phitsanulok's opportunities for economic and infrastructural integration within the wider sub-regional framework.

4.1.1 Initiatives for Global Affairs and Regional Cooperation

(1) Expected Developments and Changes in Thai Collaboration: Thailand highlights the importance of adapting to global changes, prioritizing the enhancement of cooperation within Southeast Asia and the expansion of partnerships through frameworks like ACMECS and BIMSTEC. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are incorporated into national programs, highlighting the importance of ecologically sustainable economic and social development, digital transformation, and the reduction of inequalities.

(2) Thailand's Contribution to Development Collaboration: Thailand is committed to enhancing the capabilities of its neighboring countries, especially in the Mekong region and South Asia. The nation spearheads regional development initiatives by backing infrastructure projects and fostering the spread of

sustainable technologies, encompassing agricultural and water management practices.

(3) Meeting the Needs of Thai Agencies: The strategy focuses on enhancing the capabilities of Thai governmental and private sector organizations to effectively participate in international cooperation initiatives. The emphasis on knowledge transfer in sectors like healthcare, agriculture, and education aims to bolster domestic development by leveraging experiences gained through international collaboration.

(4) Advancement of South-South Cooperation: Thailand advances collaboration among developing nations by cultivating networks for South-South Cooperation. This model emphasizes the importance of not only delivering assistance but also facilitating the exchange of knowledge and technology to tackle regional development challenges, including sustainable agriculture and resource management.

(5) Enhancement of Collaborative Efforts and Triangular Partnerships: Thailand is enhancing triangular cooperation by partnering with developed nations to provide support to developing countries. Collaborations with nations such as Germany and Japan seek to utilize technical expertise in fields such as sustainable agriculture and the advancement of healthcare systems in Cambodia and Myanmar, respectively.

(6) Thailand's Role in Sub-regional and Regional Integration: Thailand is instrumental in promoting economic and social integration within the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) and the BIMSTEC framework. Efforts are directed towards improving transportation infrastructure, broadening economic networks, and linking regional markets with South and East Asia.

(7) Tackling New Global Issues: The strategic plan addresses critical global challenges, including climate change, environmental degradation, and public health crises. Thailand seeks to position itself as a regional healthcare center by advancing sustainable healthcare systems and enhancing preparedness for future pandemics through the export of medical expertise and services.

4.1.2 Harmonization of Thailand's International Development Policies with Regional and Sub-regional Growth

(1) International Relations and the Enhancement of Regional Cooperation:

“Thailand implements a well-defined strategy to enhance partnerships within Asia and the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) through initiatives like ACMECS and BIMSTEC. These frameworks emphasize the integration of regional infrastructure, including transportation, logistics, and energy systems, to enhance economic connectivity and promote sustainable development, in alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Infrastructure advancements, especially the development of cross-border trade routes connecting

Thailand with Laos and Myanmar, significantly improve regional trade, investment, and employment prospects” (Phitsanulok Province Commerce, personal communication, October 2, 2024; Governor of Phitsanulok Province, personal communication, September 30, 2024)

(2) Harmonization of Global Development Strategies with Regional and Sub-regional Initiatives:

“Thailand's international development strategies emphasize the enhancement of collaborations with neighboring nations, particularly within the Greater Mekong Subregion. By utilizing its knowledge in agriculture, healthcare, and education, Thailand advances sustainable development and encourages regional integration. The nation prioritizes South-South Cooperation, concentrating on knowledge transfer and capacity building to empower developing countries and enhance access to modern technologies for economic progress” (Deputy Governor of Phitsanulok Province, personal communication, September 30, 2024).

(3) Progress in Connection with Local Challenges and Opportunities:

Thailand's proactive strategy towards regional collaboration effectively tackles emerging challenges while also seizing development opportunities. Through the enhancement of infrastructural linkages and the support of local economic development, Thailand fortifies its international relations while fostering comprehensive growth. Thailand plays a pivotal role in South-South Cooperation by facilitating the transfer of technological innovations and sustainable development practices to neighboring developing nations, thereby enhancing regional resilience and economic stability (Ministry of Industry, 2021).

4.1.3 Tackling Regional Challenges and Opportunities

The analysis highlights significant regional challenges affecting the development of Phitsanulok Province within the LIMEC framework. Every challenge is associated with its distinct impacts and the pertinent agencies tasked with addressing the issues. This organized analysis guarantees transparency in strategic planning and highlights the collaborative efforts required among stakeholders.

Table 1: Analysis: Tackling Regional Challenges and Opportunities

Important Regional Concerns	Influence on the Development of Phitsanulok	Appropriate Authorities
1) Constraints in Infrastructure and Connectivity Issues	<i>“The limitations of transportation and logistics infrastructure, especially at key checkpoints like Phu Doo, hinder the movement of goods, services, and individuals. This constraint hinders Phitsanulok’s ability to develop as a regional logistics hub within the LIMEC framework. Improved infrastructure is crucial for facilitating cross-border trade and unifying regional economies”</i> (Deputy Governor of Phitsanulok Province, personal communication, September 30, 2024).	1) Phitsanulok Provincial Commerce Office 2) Ministry of Transport, Department of Highways, Office of Transport and Traffic Policy and Planning
2) Discrepancies in Policy Alignment with Adjacent Nations	<i>“The absence of aligned regulations, customs procedures, and development priorities among Thailand and its neighboring countries hinders effective regional integration. In Phitsanulok, inconsistencies in policy undermine the province’s capacity to function as an effective channel for trade and investment within regional cooperation frameworks such as ACMECS and BIMSTEC”</i> (President of the Phitsanulok Chamber of Commerce, personal communication, September 30, 2024).	1) Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Commerce, Department of Trade Negotiations 2) Phitsanulok Provincial Office
3) Insufficient Availability of Skilled Workforce	<i>“The lack of a skilled workforce, particularly in the logistics, digital technology, and agricultural processing sectors, hinders Phitsanulok’s competitiveness. This impacts the capacity to draw investment, oversee sophisticated trade systems, and facilitate industrial diversification crucial for</i>	1) Phitsanulok Provincial Labor Office, Ministry of Labor, 2) Ministry of Education 3) Ministry of Higher Education, Science,

Important Regional Concerns	Influence on the Development of Phitsanulok	Appropriate Authorities
	<i>sustainable economic growth</i> ” (Governor of Phitsanulok Province, personal communication, September 30, 2024).	Research and Innovation.
4) Risks Associated with Environmental and Climate Factors	<i>“Increasing environmental degradation and climate variability threaten agricultural productivity, water resources, and sustainable development initiatives. Such risks undermine the economic stability of Phitsanulok and adjacent areas and necessitate the adoption of green growth strategies aligned with regional development goals”</i> (Deputy Governor of Phitsanulok Province, personal communication, September 30, 2024).	1) Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment 2) Phitsanulok Provincial Environmental Office 3) Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives
5) Variations in Political Landscapes of Adjacent Nations	The instability in neighboring countries, including Myanmar and certain regions of Laos, introduces uncertainty in trade and investment opportunities. The geopolitical volatility affecting Phitsanulok has significant implications for border trade flows, diminishes investor confidence, and complicates the regional cooperation efforts essential for realizing LIMEC’s objectives.	1) Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2) Ministry of Commerce

Source: Author

In conclusion, Phitsanulok Province exhibits significant potential to develop into a regional economic and logistics hub within the Luang Prabang–Indochina–Mawlamyine Economic Corridor (LIMEC). The strategic geographic location, robust infrastructure, and closeness to neighboring economies like Laos and Myanmar offer significant advantages for establishing a regional hub for trade, transportation, and investment.

“considerable challenges remain. Identified critical issues encompass infrastructural limitations, especially in logistics and transportation systems near strategic checkpoints like Phu Doo, policy misalignments with neighboring countries, a shortage of skilled labor, environmental

vulnerabilities stemming from climate variability, and political uncertainties in surrounding regions” (Deputy Governor of Phitsanulok Province, personal communication, September 30, 2024; President of the Phitsanulok Chamber of Commerce, personal communication, September 30, 2024)

Addressing these regional challenges is crucial for unlocking Phitsanulok's complete development potential. Achieving sustainable growth necessitates a collaborative effort at both the national and provincial levels, which includes: Expedited infrastructure enhancements to improve cross-border connectivity., Aligning policies and regulations with neighboring countries to enable smooth trade and investment., Investment in the development of human resources is essential to facilitate industrial diversification and promote technological advancement., Implementation of sustainable growth strategies to tackle environmental and climate-related challenges. And engaging in strategic diplomacy to address the effects of regional political instability.

Engagements with essential provincial stakeholder's underscore Phitsanulok's significance as a central logistics and economic center within the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS). The Deputy Governor

“emphasizes the critical necessity for extensive infrastructure improvements, encompassing roadways, railways, and border facilities, to facilitate regional trade and enhance commercial mobility” (Deputy Governor of Phitsanulok Province, personal communication, September 30, 2024).

In the meantime, the Provincial Commerce Office emphasizes the potential that LIMEC offers in drawing foreign investment, especially within the agricultural processing sector, which plays a vital role in the economy of Phitsanulok. The expansion of transportation networks will enhance Phitsanulok's capacity to access emerging markets in Laos, Myanmar, and India, solidifying its position as a connector between Southeast Asia and South Asia. While recognizing its strengths, both

“the Deputy Governor and the Provincial Commerce Office identify significant challenges, notably constrained fiscal resources and the necessity for enhanced national-level policy support for LIMEC initiatives. Addressing these gaps particularly through focused infrastructure financing and improved regional collaboration will be crucial for ensuring Phitsanulok's competitive standing within the sub-regional development framework” (Deputy Governor of Phitsanulok Province, personal communication, September 30, 2024; Phitsanulok Province Commerce, personal communication, October 2, 2024).

This analysis emphasizes Thailand's proactive approach to international development strategies, especially within the framework of the 2023–2027 plan, which aligns regional development policies with LIMEC to foster sustainable economic and social outcomes in Phitsanulok and surrounding areas.

4.2 Internal Context: International Relations and Development Policies Pertinent to the Study within Regional and Sub-regional Frameworks

This section examines the internal context that impacts Thailand's international development policies concerning regional and sub-regional frameworks, specifically highlighting their significance for the development of Phitsanulok Province within the LIMEC corridor. The analysis primarily relies on the Annual Operational Plan for Fiscal Year 2024 issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which details strategic initiatives aimed at fortifying Thailand's foreign relations and improving its standing both regionally and globally (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2023). The author has organized the subtopics for the presentation in the following manner.

4.2.1 Factors Within Thailand Affecting Its International Development Policies

(1) Domestic Economic Changes: The swift economic transformation, particularly through digitization, necessitates Thailand's adaptation to technical breakthroughs and global competitiveness. This transition compels Thailand to formulate international development plans that address regional requirements, encompassing digital infrastructure and the enhancement of e-commerce. Investments in special economic zones, like the Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC), are crucial for future economic development.

(2) Natural Resources and Environment: Issues such as resource depletion and climate change profoundly influence Thailand's foreign development policy. Thailand is modifying its development policy to emphasize clean energy and environmental conservation in alignment with sustainable development objectives. Thailand endorses renewable energy efforts and environmental protection through regional frameworks such as ACMECS and BIMSTEC, collaborating with neighboring countries to facilitate technology and innovation exchange.

(3) Social and Demographic Changes: The aging population of Thailand requires an emphasis on human capital development and social equity. Cooperation in healthcare and education, particularly within the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS), will be crucial for improving regional quality of life. Thailand plays a crucial role in the exchange of public health expertise with neighboring countries, especially in the aftermath of COVID-19.

(4) Political and Security Challenges: The political stability and disputes within the region affect Thailand's development policies. Collaborations within frameworks like ACMECS, BIMSTEC, and GMS are crucial for promoting

stability and political collaboration. Improved logistical and transportation connections with adjacent nations, such as Thailand, Laos, and Myanmar, foster regional stability.

The Ministry's 2024 strategy demonstrates a strategic alignment with Thailand's internal dynamics, highlighting reactions to swift economic, social, and environmental transformations. Critical strategic domains, including economic infrastructure connection, trade and investment collaboration, human capital advancement, South-South Cooperation, and political and security partnerships, are essential to Thailand's regional development and global prominence. Internal considerations such as Thailand's aging population, limitations in natural resources, and economic shifts need the formulation of adaptive international development plans that address regional requirements. These techniques enhance economic development while fostering sustainable social and environmental progress, as well as regional stability in the Mekong and Southeast Asian areas (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2023).

4.2.2 Internal Factors Contributing to the Advancement of Phitsanulok within LIMEC

(1) Economic and Investment Viability: The establishment of the Luang Prabang-Indochina-Mawlamyine Economic Corridor (LIMEC) presents Phitsanulok with the opportunity to emerge as a significant economic center in lower northern Thailand, connecting with adjacent nations such as Laos, Myanmar, and China. Infrastructure initiatives, including roads and railroads, will improve regional goods transportation, trade, and tourism, particularly reinforcing economic connections between Thailand and the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) nations, emphasizing cross-border trade and investment.

(2) Sustainable Agricultural Development: Phitsanulok, leveraging its agricultural knowledge, a vital sector in the local economy, can capitalize on Thailand's advantages in sustainable agriculture and agricultural technology. Collaborations under the LIMEC framework allow Phitsanulok to utilize contemporary agricultural technologies and sustainable practices, enhancing agricultural productivity and economic value while increasing exports to adjacent nations.

(3) Development of Transportation Infrastructure: Enhancements in transportation are a crucial element of Thailand's aim to strengthen international economic linkages. Situated along the LIMEC route, Phitsanulok is poised to gain from advancements in road, rail, and airport infrastructure, enhancing the efficiency of commodities transportation and travel. Improved connectivity with neighboring countries, including Laos, Myanmar, and India, will lower transportation expenses and augment Phitsanulok's competitiveness in global trade and investment.

(4) Enhancing Healthcare and Social Collaboration: Following the COVID-19 pandemic, the significance of healthcare and social welfare

advancement has intensified. Phitsanulok's location along LIMEC presents chances for healthcare collaboration with adjacent nations, particularly through the exchange of knowledge and the training of medical professionals, with enhancements to regional healthcare systems. This corresponds with Thailand's objective to enhance GMS cooperation to elevate quality of life and access to healthcare services.

(5) Collaboration on Energy and Environmental Issues: Phitsanulok can get advantages from energy and environmental collaboration with LIMEC nations. Thailand advocates for clean energy and environmental conservation legislation in response to natural resource and environmental challenges. Partnering with neighbors on renewable energy initiatives, including solar and hydropower, offers a prospect for sustainable regional economic development and mitigation of environmental impacts.

(6) Political Stability and Security The development of infrastructure and economic collaboration within LIMEC enhances political stability and security in the Mekong region and Southeast Asia. Economic cooperation and logistical links with adjacent nations, such as infrastructure initiatives connecting Thailand, Laos, and Myanmar, alleviate political risks and enhance economic and political relationships throughout the area.

The analysis concludes that Phitsanulok's development inside the Luang Prabang-Indochina-Mawlamyine Economic Corridor (LIMEC) is well aligned with Thailand's International Development Cooperation Strategy Plan (2023–2027) (Phitsanulok Provincial Office, 2023). This connection underscores regional economic development via infrastructure improvement, trade and investment facilitation, sustainable agriculture, renewable energy, and healthcare and social collaboration. Phitsanulok's strategic position is crucial in connecting worldwide economies, hence enhancing regional and sub-regional collaboration. LIMEC gives a significant chance for Phitsanulok to position itself as a regional economic center, particularly due to its favorable internal circumstances and potential.

Phitsanulok's strategic advantages encompass its connectivity to neighboring nations such as Laos, Myanmar, and China, bolstered by extensive infrastructure including highways, railroads, and airports, facilitating its emergence as a commercial and transit nexus within the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS). The province's robust agricultural industry, particularly in essential products such as rice, sugarcane, and cassava, presents prospects for the expansion of high-quality exports to global markets. Interviews with the Deputy Governor, Provincial Commerce Office, and the President of the Phitsanulok Chamber of Commerce indicate a congruence between foreign relations, development policies, and the aims of LIMEC across multiple domains

Moreover, the findings from in-depth interviews with key provincial stakeholders reveal crucial internal factors that contribute to Phitsanulok's

advancement within the Luang Prabang-Indochina-Mawlamyine Economic Corridor (LIMEC).

First, Phitsanulok demonstrates significant economic and investment viability.

“The Deputy Governor and the Provincial Commerce Office emphasize Phitsanulok’s role as a central logistics and transportation hub, connecting Thailand with Laos, Myanmar, and China. The LIMEC framework provides strategic infrastructure improvements such as roads, railways, and airports that enhance cross-border trade, support agricultural exports, and promote tourism. These developments strengthen Phitsanulok’s economic integration with the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS), facilitating opportunities for expanded trade and investment activities” (Deputy Governor of Phitsanulok Province, personal communication, September 30, 2024; Phitsanulok Province Commerce, personal communication, October 2, 2024).

Second, the potential for sustainable agricultural development is a key internal strength. Interviews with the President of the Phitsanulok Chamber of Commerce highlight

“the province’s capacity to leverage Thailand’s expertise in sustainable agriculture and agricultural technologies. Through LIMEC collaboration, Phitsanulok can enhance agricultural productivity and value, enabling the expansion of exports to neighboring countries and supporting sustainable rural economic development” (President of the Phitsanulok Chamber of Commerce, personal communication, September 30, 2024).

Third,

“the development of transportation infrastructure is critical. Stakeholders uniformly stress that improved connectivity through roadways, rail systems, and air transport will lower logistical costs, facilitate travel and goods movement, and bolster Phitsanulok’s competitiveness in regional and global markets. Infrastructure upgrades, particularly those enhancing linkages with Laos, Myanmar, and India, are viewed as essential to maximizing the province’s strategic location along the LIMEC route” (Governor of Phitsanulok Province, personal communication, September 30, 2024).

Fourth, human capital development and healthcare collaboration emerge as priorities.

“The Provincial Commerce Office underlines the importance of strengthening education and healthcare systems to build a resilient local

workforce capable of supporting economic growth. Cross-border collaboration in healthcare, including knowledge sharing and medical training programs, offers the potential to enhance social welfare and health security in the region, particularly in the post-pandemic context” (Phitsanulok Province Commerce, personal communication, October 2, 2024).

Fifth,

“energy and environmental collaboration is recognized as another internal factor supporting sustainable development. Thailand’s push for clean energy and environmental conservation aligns with regional priorities under LIMEC. Phitsanulok’s engagement in renewable energy initiatives, such as solar and hydropower projects, will contribute to sustainable economic growth while mitigating environmental degradation” (President of the Phitsanulok Provincial Administrative Organization, personal communication, September 7, 2024).

Lastly, interview findings stress the importance of political stability and security reinforcement. Economic integration initiatives under LIMEC, such as cross-border infrastructure development and regional trade facilitation, are perceived to promote political stability and reduce regional security risks. Strengthening economic interdependence among Thailand, Laos, and Myanmar enhances resilience against political and economic fluctuations in the Mekong region.

However, the interviews also reveal significant financial and administrative constraints.

“Budget limitations and inconsistent coordination between provincial and national levels are cited as barriers that hinder the full realization of LIMEC’s potential. Addressing these challenges, particularly through sustained financial support and streamlined administrative processes, is essential for ensuring continuity and maximizing the benefits of international development initiatives” (Governor of Phitsanulok Province, personal communication, September 30, 2024; President of the Phitsanulok Provincial Administrative Organization, personal communication, September 7, 2024).

Overall, the alignment between Phitsanulok’s internal strengths and Thailand’s International Development Cooperation Strategy Plan (2023–2027) reinforces the province’s strategic potential to emerge as a regional economic center within LIMEC. Through infrastructure enhancement, trade and investment facilitation, sustainable agricultural development, energy and environmental cooperation, and healthcare collaboration, Phitsanulok is well-positioned to play a pivotal role in advancing regional and sub-regional integration.

4.3 Enhancing Collaboration on Non-traditional Security Challenges within LIMEC

The interviews conducted with key provincial stakeholders underscore the growing importance of non-traditional security threats within the framework of regional development under LIMEC. Respondents highlight that, alongside conventional economic and infrastructural considerations, emerging security challenges such as environmental degradation, pandemics, transnational crime, and human trafficking are vital elements that could influence the economic and social sustainability of Phitsanulok Province.

“The Deputy Governor of Phitsanulok Province emphasized the significance of incorporating disaster risk reduction and emergency management into the province’s development agenda. The Deputy Governor emphasized the necessity for Phitsanulok to enhance regional collaboration with neighboring countries. This initiative aims to establish joint early warning systems, coordinate disaster responses, and improve local capacities to effectively manage natural disasters, including the rising occurrences of floods and droughts in the region” (Deputy Governor of Phitsanulok Province, personal communication, September 30, 2024).

The Provincial Commerce Office emphasized health security as a significant issue in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. The office emphasized the importance of collaboration across borders in the areas of infectious disease surveillance, information sharing, and outbreak management. Enhancing the resilience of the healthcare system through collaborations with Laos and Myanmar is deemed crucial for ensuring economic and social stability along the LIMEC corridor. In a similar vein, “the President of the Phitsanulok Chamber of Commerce highlighted that the expansion of cross-border trade routes could potentially increase the region's vulnerability to various transnational crimes, such as human trafficking, drug trafficking, and smuggling. He suggested improving collaboration among border security forces, establishing integrated intelligence systems, and executing joint operations to mitigate illegal activities that may threaten regional security” (Phitsanulok Province Commerce, personal communication, October 2, 2024).

Additionally, interviewees often highlighted environmental issues.

“The Deputy Governor, along with representatives from the Provincial Administrative Organization, underscored the necessity for enhanced initiatives in environmental cooperation. It was recommended to advance collaborative conservation initiatives, establish regional water management agreements, and embrace renewable energy technologies to address environmental challenges and secure long-term

sustainable development within LIMEC” (Deputy Governor of Phitsanulok Province, personal communication, September 30, 2024; President of the Phitsanulok Provincial Administrative Organization, personal communication, September 7, 2024).

The findings reveal a shared agreement among provincial leaders regarding the importance of Phitsanulok's involvement in tackling non-traditional security threats within the LIMEC framework. Active involvement in disaster management, health security, crime prevention, and environmental sustainability will significantly improve the province’s resilience and bolster its role as a vital contributor to comprehensive security and sustainable development in the Greater Mekong Subregion.

Figure 4: Activities and collaboration of the Indochina-Mawlamyine-Luang Prabang Economic Corridor (LIMEC)



Source: LIMEC (2024)

5. Discussion

The author employs the concepts of State, Market, and Globalization to examine and articulate the findings related to the development of Phitsanulok Province within the Luang Prabang–Indochina–Mawlamyine Economic Corridor (LIMEC). This analysis is organized into two primary contexts: external and internal. These contexts are closely linked to the theoretical framework, providing

insights into both the opportunities and challenges for Phitsanulok's advancement within the LIMEC corridor. Furthermore, the study highlights the critical importance of addressing non-traditional security threats through LIMEC cooperation, emphasizing the necessity of regional collaboration in managing emerging challenges such as environmental degradation, transnational crime, pandemics, and natural disasters to ensure sustainable and resilient development.

5.1 External Context: Regional Integration and Global Adaptation

The external setting of Phitsanulok Province's development is on its strategic incorporation into regional and sub-regional economic networks. The province serves as a crucial link in the Luang Prabang-Indochina-Mawlamyine Economic Corridor (LIMEC), connecting significant nations in the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) including Laos, Myanmar, China, and India, facilitated by economic cooperation frameworks such as ACMECS and BIMSTEC. This corridor serves as a crucial conduit for international trade, promoting economic cooperation and strengthening regional infrastructure. This trend illustrates the imperative for states to adjust to the exigencies of globalization within the State-Market paradigm (Samudavanija, 2001). To maintain competitiveness, states must develop strong economic and trade networks that cross borders, establishing themselves as active participants in the global market. (Strange, 1996) Susan Strange posits that globalization has transformed state power, necessitating that nations utilize global markets as vital instruments for wealth generation. Strange (1996) emphasizes that Phitsanulok's emphasis on infrastructure development, including cross-border transportation networks through LIMEC and strategic logistics investments, illustrates a state adapting to the demands of global competitiveness. The liberalization of trade within LIMEC and the broader GMS underscores the necessity for nations to adjust to global economic trends. The transnational movement of capital and labor, enabled by regional economic integration, is a defining characteristic of globalization. For Phitsanulok, this signifies potential to reshape its economic environment while enhancing its regional and international connectivity.

The discourse on globalization frequently highlights potential, however it is not devoid of critique. Ralph Miliband presents a persuasive counterargument, contending that states in capitalist systems often function under the sway of economic elites. This dynamic, he cautions, may lead to policies that favor the interests of capital groups at the expense of the general populace (Miliband, 1983). In Phitsanulok, the dependence on foreign investment and the liberalization of markets for international capital prompts critical inquiries: Are these tactics intended to really enhance the welfare of the majority of people, or do they primarily advantage elite economic interests? This contradiction is especially pertinent when evaluating the province's significant focus on infrastructure development and regional trade integration. Although these initiatives clearly

improve global competitiveness, they also pose a risk of creating economic dependency and exacerbating inequality if not meticulously handled (Poulantzas, 1969).

The developmental history of Phitsanulok highlights the evolving role of the state in a swiftly globalizing environment. Its investments in logistics, cross-border transportation, and trade systems signify a decisive move towards harmonizing with global market dynamics. The efficacy of these methods depends on achieving a delicate equilibrium between attracting foreign investment and guaranteeing equal advantages for local people (Polanyi, 2001). Policymakers must stay alert to ensure that development under LIMEC coincides with public welfare objectives and mitigates the hazards of economic dependency and elite dominance. By confronting these issues, Phitsanulok can establish itself as a paradigm for sustainable and inclusive regional integration in the era of globalization (Hayashi, 2010).

5.2 Internal Context: Addressing Domestic Obstacles for Regional Advancement

The internal context of Phitsanulok Province's growth emphasizes the economic, social, and political variables within Thailand that affect its trajectory, especially with the Luang Prabang-Indochina-Mawlamyine Economic Corridor (LIMEC). A primary obstacle is the scarcity of skilled workers and inadequate financial resources. The ambiguity and inconsistency in governmental strategies for regional economic development have occasionally impeded sustainable progress in the region. From the State-Market perspective (Strange, 1996), these problems highlight the imperative for the state to evolve, operating more akin to a "corporation" that adeptly allocates resources to satisfy the needs of its residents and the global market. Poulantzas (1969) offers a critical perspective on this dynamic, highlighting the necessity for the state to maintain social cohesiveness and equilibrate the interests of various groups, including labor and capital. The advancement of Phitsanulok as a regional economic center signifies a governmental endeavor to attain equilibrium, augmenting the province's competitiveness and assimilating it into wider regional structures. Martinussen (1997) contends that contemporary nations must have a direct role in the production of commodities and services and engage actively in economic activities. This viewpoint corresponds with Phitsanulok's development strategy, which prioritizes infrastructure developments, including transportation networks and logistics systems, to facilitate international trade and connection. These initiatives enhance the province's economic integration and establish it as a vital component in regional and global supply networks.

The evolution of Phitsanulok inside LIMEC illustrates Thailand's adjustment to global market systems, conforming to the State-Market paradigm that underscores the state's reliance on global markets (Strange, 1996) and

economic competitiveness for domestic advancement (Polanyi, 2001). Phitsanulok's geographical location positions it to become an economic hub that capitalizes on connectivity with neighboring nations to broaden markets and attract investment. This corresponds with globalization theory, which asserts that governments must improve their competitiveness in the global context (Strange, 1996). Polanyi (2001) presents a significant counterargument, asserting that state interference in liberal economic systems declines with time due to opposition from capital groupings and multinational firms. In Phitsanulok, dependence on market processes and external investment for local economic development indicates constraints on the state's capacity to directly regulate economic activities. This diminishment of state authority corresponds with Polanyi (2001) assertion that globalization limits the economic sovereignty of the state. In contrast, Martinussen (1997) presents a more hopeful viewpoint, asserting that the state can maintain a pivotal role in fostering economic advancement by functioning as a direct producer and facilitator. Thailand's investment in infrastructure to enhance logistics and transportation in Phitsanulok highlights the persistent significance of governmental participation in local economic development, despite reliance on global markets for growth sustenance.

The advancement of Phitsanulok along the LIMEC corridor illustrates a distinct congruence with the principles of State-Market and Globalization (Strange, 1996). The state is crucial in establishing economic networks and improving the province's competitiveness both regionally and globally (Yeung, 1998). Nonetheless, domestic problems, such resource limitations and shortages of skilled labor, require careful planning and consistent policy execution to ensure that development meets the requirements of globalization (Kaewthep, 1986). The equilibrium between capitalizing on global possibilities and mitigating internal restraints will dictate the efficacy of Phitsanulok's growth strategy. This necessitates a sophisticated strategy, wherein the state not only responds to external market dynamics but also guarantees that its policies emphasize sustainable and equitable development for the province and its populace (Baylis, Smith, & Owens, 2010).

5.3 Non-traditional Security Challenges and Globalization in the Context of LIMEC

The findings concerning non-traditional security threats within the LIMEC framework highlight an evolving aspect of regional development that is closely connected to the dynamics of globalization and the changing roles of the state and the market. Discussions with essential stakeholders in Phitsanulok Province, such as

“the Deputy Governor, the Provincial Commerce Office, and the President of the Chamber of Commerce, highlight the increasing significance of tackling environmental degradation, pandemics,

transnational crime, and human trafficking in conjunction with conventional economic development initiatives” (Deputy Governor of Phitsanulok Province, personal communication, September 30, 2024; President of the Phitsanulok Chamber of Commerce, personal communication, September 30, 2024).

From the viewpoint of globalization, these emerging security challenges demonstrate how the interconnection of economies, societies, and ecosystems surpasses national borders. Strange (1996) posits that globalization alters the functions of the state, necessitating its involvement in both economic liberalization and the management of cross-border risks that emerge from increased interdependence. The development of regional trade and transportation networks under LIMEC not only promotes economic growth but also heightens vulnerability to non-traditional threats that may disrupt economic and social systems. Phitsanulok’s proactive strategy in tackling these challenges such as improving disaster management cooperation, fostering cross-border healthcare collaboration, and coordinating efforts against transnational crime illustrates a significant evolution of state roles in a globalized context.

“The Deputy Governor’s focus on creating collaborative disaster response mechanisms highlights the importance of regional resilience strategies that surpass the capabilities of individual states” (Deputy Governor of Phitsanulok Province, personal communication, September 30, 2024), in accordance with Strange (1996) argument that states need to work together internationally to effectively address shared risks.

Moreover, the emphasis on regional collaboration in health security,

“as recognized by the Provincial Commerce Office, underscores an additional aspect of globalization. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the vulnerabilities of borders when confronted with biological threats, underscoring the interconnectedness of local health security and global health dynamics. In this context, Phitsanulok’s initiatives to collaborate with Laos and Myanmar on disease surveillance and public health preparedness represent a significant local response to the global need for health resilience” (Phitsanulok Province Commerce, personal communication, October 2, 2024).

The President of the Chamber of Commerce’s concerns regarding transnational crime align with Miliband (1983) critical analysis, which warns that economic liberalization may unintentionally enable criminal activities in the absence of strong regulatory frameworks. The liberalization of cross-border movement under LIMEC, while fostering economic integration, also requires enhanced governance and law enforcement collaboration to combat human trafficking and illicit trade. Neglecting to tackle these issues may worsen

inequalities and social vulnerabilities, supporting Miliband's assertion that globalization has the potential to intensify structural disadvantages in the absence of effective state intervention.

Furthermore, "*the environmental aspect*", as highlighted by the Deputy Governor and Provincial Administrative Organization (Deputy Governor of Phitsanulok Province, personal communication, September 30, 2024; President of the Phitsanulok Provincial Administrative Organization, personal communication, September 7, 2024), corresponds with Polanyi (2001) critique of market-driven development. In the absence of intentional governmental measures to emphasize environmental sustainability, economic growth via LIMEC may lead to ecological harm. Phitsanulok's emphasis on cross-border environmental conservation projects and renewable energy initiatives demonstrates a strategic approach where the state aims to harmonize market-driven growth with ecological stewardship, reflecting Polanyi's advocacy for integrating markets within wider social and environmental contexts.

In conclusion, the involvement of Phitsanulok Province in addressing non-traditional security threats within LIMEC demonstrates the changing responsibilities of the state in the context of globalization. The government should not only promote economic liberalization and regional integration but also take proactive measures to manage the related transnational risks, ensuring development that is both sustainable and inclusive. This requires advanced strategies that align market growth with security, health, and environmental priorities, ensuring that globalization benefits the wider society instead of just economic elites. By fostering proactive regional collaboration on non-traditional security challenges, Phitsanulok can bolster its resilience and elevate its position as a benchmark for sustainable regional integration within the Greater Mekong Subregion.

The author has examined data from both external and internal contexts that facilitate opportunities and developmental pathways for Phitsanulok Province within the Luang Prabang-Indochina-Mawlamyine Economic Corridor (LIMEC). The findings, analyzed alongside a survey of pertinent literature and research, indicate that both environments substantially impact the province's development across various dimensions. Furthermore, the study highlights the growing significance of addressing non-traditional security threats through LIMEC cooperation as an essential factor in ensuring sustainable and resilient regional development. The discourse is categorized into external and internal contexts as outlined below:

External Context: Regional Transnational Collaboration: An essential external aspect is Thailand's participation in regional economic cooperation frameworks, including BIMSTEC and ACMECS. These procedures enhance economic interconnectivity and infrastructure advancement with adjacent nations, including Laos, Myanmar, and China. Research findings, corroborated by the

work of Capannelli, Lee, and Petri (2009), demonstrate that connecting the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) with other areas, including South and East Asia, enhances potential for commerce and investment, especially in agricultural exports and tourism. Phitsanulok's advantageous position as a transportation nexus along this corridor establishes the province as a prospective center for commercial and logistical operations in the GMS. This report emphasizes that the development of dual-track railways and road networks linking adjacent nations will improve cross-border trade efficiency and attract international investment. Thailand's regional economic endeavors, especially with China and India, are essential in enhancing Phitsanulok's economic integration within the framework of international economic policy. The research of Wade (2018) and Bello (2009) highlights the state's function in promoting international economic ties. Within the framework of LIMEC, initiatives that strengthen regional economic connections offer Phitsanulok the potential to augment commerce with adjacent nations and entice international investment, especially in agricultural processing and several other sectors.

Internal Context: Infrastructure Advancement and Economic Assets: This report identifies important infrastructure projects in Phitsanulok, including dual-track trains, road networks, and airports, crucial for integrating the province's economy with the GMS. This supports Riain (2000) assertion that investments in local infrastructure are essential for improving local competitiveness and promoting cross-border economic cooperation. Moreover, Phitsanulok boasts robust economic assets, especially in agricultural output. Essential crops like rice, sugarcane, and cassava can be utilized to establish agro-processing companies, enhancing the value of local products. Developing logistical networks for exporting these items to overseas markets, including as China, India, and Myanmar, offers substantial economic prospects for the province. The study also emphasizes difficulties stemming from the shift to a digital and innovation-centric economy. Confronting these difficulties necessitates investments in digital infrastructure, including high-speed internet networks, and the advancement of digital firms. Helmsing (2001) underscores the significance of collaborative learning between the public and commercial sectors to stimulate innovation and improve local competitiveness.

Nonetheless, internal problems encompass disjointed national policies, fiscal limitations, and recurrent alterations in local leadership, which hinder the continuity of long-term strategic development initiatives for Phitsanulok. Although Wade (2018) does not explicitly tackle these concerns, his focus on constant central government assistance and well-defined objectives highlights the significance of ongoing national engagement in local development.

The interaction of external and internal factors illustrates Phitsanulok's considerable potential as a regional commercial and logistics center. Its advantageous location and robust economic resources enable it to effectively

leverage prospects offered by LIMEC. Nonetheless, these opportunities are mitigated by internal obstacles, like ambiguous policies and constrained finances. Effective coordination between the public and commercial sectors, together with continuous support from the national government, is important to surmount these challenges. These steps will be essential for aligning Phitsanulok's development with regional integration initiatives and global economic trends, so facilitating sustainable and inclusive growth in the future.

Addressing Non-traditional Security Threats through LIMEC Cooperation:

The research findings indicate that key stakeholders in Phitsanulok Province are increasingly acknowledging non-traditional security threats, including environmental degradation, pandemics, transnational crime, and human trafficking, as significant factors affecting regional development under LIMEC. The focus on incorporating disaster management, health security, and crime prevention into regional collaboration efforts is consistent with wider scholarly viewpoints in the region.

Keagle (2012) and Caballero-Anthony and Cook (2013) advocate for the perspective that unconventional security threats necessitate international cooperation, especially in the realms of disaster response and public health management. The emphasis of the Provincial Commerce Office on healthcare resilience, along with the Deputy Governor's support for collaborative disaster management, clearly aligns with these recommendations. Similarly, the President of the Chamber of Commerce's apprehension regarding the increase in transnational crime aligns with Wakkumbura (2021) assertion on the necessity for enhanced enforcement and intelligence sharing within ASEAN frameworks.

Arase (2010) highlights an important nuance, noting that although there is regional consensus on non-traditional security issues, the practical implementation frequently encounters political and sovereignty-related obstacles. This indicates that while Phitsanulok's proactive approach is praiseworthy, the implementation of regional cooperation goals may face institutional obstacles along the LIMEC corridor.

In summary, Phitsanulok's emphasis on tackling non-traditional security threats is closely aligned with the dynamics of globalization, where regional interdependence heightens vulnerabilities and requires collaborative security frameworks. Nonetheless, the province must adeptly manage institutional complexities to ensure that its initiatives under LIMEC not only promote economic growth but also enhance overall regional resilience and security.

6. Recommendations

6.1 Suggestions Derived from Research Outcomes

6.1.1 Policy Recommendations

(1) Implement a Centralized Coordination Mechanism for LIMEC Development: The national government ought to create a centralized entity or a senior committee tasked with the oversight, coordination, and integration of LIMEC-related initiatives across pertinent ministries and provincial authorities. This initiative will address existing governance gaps and promote consistency in infrastructure development, trade facilitation, and regional connectivity efforts.

(2) Strengthen regional cooperation frameworks to address non-traditional security challenges: Phitsanulok Province, in conjunction with national agencies, ought to prioritize the establishment of formal agreements with Laos and Myanmar that concentrate on disaster risk reduction, public health security, environmental management, and crime prevention. Enhancing these collaborative frameworks will promote holistic security, facilitating sustainable development throughout the LIMEC corridor.

(3) Emphasize the importance of investing in human resources and the development of innovative frameworks: The government ought to direct focused investments towards enhancing the capabilities of the local workforce in logistics, agricultural technology, and digital services. This entails fostering collaborations among educational institutions, industries, and the public sector to create training programs that correspond with the requirements of cross-border economic integration under LIMEC.

6.1.2 Implementation Recommendations

(1) Enhance infrastructure improvements along key transportation corridors. Prompt action is necessary to finalize essential infrastructure projects, including the dual-track railways, road networks, and cross-border facilities at significant checkpoints such as Phu Doo. Enhancing the efficiency of project approvals and budgeting procedures will facilitate Phitsanulok's integration into regional supply chains.

(2) Establish a Regional Logistics Hub in Phitsanulok. Provincial authorities ought to engage with private investors and regional partners to develop a cutting-edge logistics hub that enhances efficient trade flows among Thailand, Laos, Myanmar, and India. This will strengthen Phitsanulok's strategic position as a connectivity hub within the Greater Mekong Subregion.

(3) Encourage collaboration between public and private sectors through partnerships. Fostering collaboration among government agencies, private enterprises, and civil society organizations will improve resource mobilization and innovative project management in sectors such as renewable energy development, sustainable agriculture, and cross-border commerce.

6.2 Recommendations for Future Research

(1) Examine the Effects of Digital Transformation on Regional Economic Integration. Future research should explore the potential of digital technologies—such as e-commerce, digital logistics platforms, and smart border systems—to further enhance Phitsanulok’s integration within LIMEC and bolster its competitive advantage in the global market.

(2) Perform Comparative Analyses of LIMEC and Alternative Regional Corridors. A comparative analysis between LIMEC and other regional cooperation frameworks such as ACMECS and BIMSTEC will yield valuable insights into the strengths, weaknesses, and best practices relevant to the development strategies of Phitsanulok.

(3) Analyze the effects of regional integration at the community level. Future research should concentrate on evaluating the socio-economic impacts of LIMEC-driven development within communities, particularly for marginalized groups including rural farmers, migrant workers, and low-income populations. This will contribute to ensuring that regional growth is inclusive and equitable.

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