







## Abstract

This article aims to propose the strategic policy for a newly-built port at Jana district, Songkhla province in the southern part of Thailand, which is known as Songkhla Port 2. The objective of the policy is to enhance the role of this port in helping with the development of the country economy and to become an efficient gateway that will replace Penang Port, the current main gateway of the Thai southern part, in connecting with the world market.

The authors used both the primary data gathered from interviewing experts in the field of maritime transport and the secondary data, such as the southern economic and trade potential data, the trend of AEC, the data of transported cargo of the southern part of Thailand, and the tendency of the international trade development in ASEAN region which was analyzed using the Product Life Cycle theory. All of these data were analyzed to identify the current position of the Thai southern port when compared to Penang Port in Malaysia and to conduct a SWOT analysis. These results were finally input into a TOWS Matrix to generate all the policy measures for driving Songkhla Port 2 to have commercially superior position comparing to Penang Port in order to enhance the economic security and securing the country's economic development.

The policy measures proposed by this study can be summarized into 2 phases. In the first phase (short run), the government should aim to develop this new Songkhla Port 2 just to solve the shortage capacity and service limitation of the Songkhla Port 1, the existing one. For the second phase, the government should position the Songkhla Port 2 as the mediator to draw the advantage position of Laem Chabang Port in its proximity to the southern part of China to support the competitiveness of another newly-built deep sea port (so-called Pakbara Port) at Pakbara district, Satun province, on the west coast of the southern Thailand, which is located near Penang Port on the trade lane from the Middle East region (where all the vessels normally carry a huge number of empty containers due to the imbalance trade) in order to become an alternative choice for the big shipping lines to unload their empty containers which will enable Pakbara Port to be the cheap freight rate point replacing Penang Port. This Pakbara Port, the west coast port, would directly connect to Songkhla Port 2, the east coast port, through the cheap transport light rail system or truck train system before linking to Laem Chabang Port by cheap coastal shipping transport.

The authors believe that cheap freight rates offered by the big shipping lines at Pakbara Port together with the large volume of cargo from China through Laem Chabang Port and Shongkla Port 2 to Pakbara Port would enable Pakbara Port and Shongkla Port 2 to attract more port users and become more competitive than Penang Port in Malaysia.











































