

AUSTRALIAN CONSULTANCY HELPS IMPROVE ROAD SAFETY IN THAILAND

EXPORT CASE STUDY | FEBRUARY 2020

Safe System Solutions Pty Ltd is working with Thai authorities to make roads safer for the country's motorists. Thanks in part to the company's bespoke courses and training programs, Thailand's Department of Rural Roads has reduced fatal crashes by 57 per cent and serious crash injuries by 60 per cent on roads where its newly gained knowledge from Australia has been implemented.

Australia has many decades of research, policy development, investment and public engagement in road safety, which has seen Australian road fatalities fall by 60 per cent over the past 30 years.

In an ongoing effort to reduce road-related injuries and fatalities across the country, many private and public sector organisations work together to implement comprehensive programs focused on improving driver education, vehicle standards and road design.

Safe System Solutions is one such organisation. Based in Melbourne, Safe System Solutions is a road and transport safety consulting company. It specialises in auditing, technical design, project development, traffic engineering and training.

The company has been exporting its road safety expertise since 2014. Key markets include Cambodia, Fiji, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, New Zealand, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam.



Safe System Solutions is helping Thai authorities to make roads safer for the country's motorists.

'In Thailand, trust is developed both in the office and over social occasions. As we don't have an office in Thailand, we had to find another way to build this trust. Austrade facilitated this by meeting regularly with the Department of Rural Roads, following the progress of their course delivery and growing the relationship between our two organisations.'

Kenn Beer, Principal Engineer, Safe System Solutions

Delivering bespoke courses

Thailand has one of the highest road fatality rates in the world. Thai authorities are continually looking for ways to improve road safety, including by learning from other countries such as Australia.

Safe System Solutions has been working in Thailand since 2017, when the company's Principal Engineer, Kenn Beer, was invited by Austrade to speak at the ASEAN Transport Research Society conference.



Australian Government

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At this conference, Austrade introduced Mr Beer to Dr. Chakree Bamrungwong, Director of Road Safety Auditing at Thailand's Department of Rural Roads (DRR), who was developing a road safety audit system at the time.

A few months later, Safe System Solutions delivered its first training program to the DRR in Bangkok. The program consisted of two bespoke courses: *Making Roads Motorcycle Friendly* and *Road Safety Auditing*. The former won the prestigious *Prince Michael International Road Safety Award* later that year.

Since 2017, the DRR has engaged Safe System Solutions to deliver three more courses, which were delivered in both Thailand and Australia including: *Austrads Guide to Road Safety*, *Advance Road Safety Auditing* and *Crash Investigation & Reconstruction*. The *Austrads Guide to Road Safety*, an 800-page document, has been translated into Thai and is being used as a resource by the DRR.

The knowledge and skills gained from these courses have been adapted by the DRR to suit the unique situations and conditions in Thailand.

Safe System Solutions' road safety auditing knowledge has been applied to over 900 sites across Thailand's road network, helping make roads safer for the country's motorists.

Recent policies and procedures implemented by the DRR have contributed to a 57 per cent reduction in fatal crashes and a 60 per cent reduction in serious injury crashes at the treated sites.

The importance of strong working relationships

Capacity building is a sustainable way to improve road safety. The collaboration between Safe System Solutions and the DRR is an example of success in this area. By understanding the unique circumstances of different jurisdictions, the company has established effective working relationships with Thai authorities over time.

'One of the key factors in working successfully with another country is being sensitive to their business etiquette, developing an understanding of their culture and understanding the client's aims, needs and values,' says Dr. Tana Tan, one of Safe System Solutions' training professionals.

'The building of trust occurs differently in various countries,' adds Beer. 'In Thailand, this trust is developed both in the office and over social occasions such as dinners. As we don't have an office in Thailand, we had to find another way to build this trust.'

'An Austrade representative in Thailand facilitated this by meeting regularly with the DRR, following the progress of their course delivery and growing the relationship between our two organisations.'

'We built our relationship with the DRR by travelling to Thailand, customising the course materials and anticipating our client's needs,' says Kathy Doukouris, Safe System Solutions' training manager. 'Austrade also facilitated this process by helping us understand the status quo of road safety in Thailand and putting us in contact with key individuals.'

Safe System Solutions and the DRR continue to work together to further the DRR's road safety capabilities and capacity.

The company is also playing an important role in reducing road injuries by exporting its road safety know-how to low- and middle-income countries around the world, where 90 per cent of the world's 1.35 million road fatalities occur.

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