

Empowering Public Participation in Urban Governance: The Role of the Traffy Fondue Digital Platform in Bangkok Metropolitan Administration, Thailand

Pobsook Chamchong¹

*School of Public Policy, Chiang Mai University
Thailand*

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Abstract

This paper investigates how the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) adopted the Traffy Fondu platform, a digital innovation accessed via LINE, i.e., a popular communication platform in everyday Thai life, to enhance public participation, transparency, and accountability in public service delivery. Using Kingdon's Multiple Streams Framework (MSF) as the theoretical lens, the study examines how the convergence of problem, policy, and political streams as well as the role of policy entrepreneurs enabled this policy innovation. Through qualitative case study methods, including document analysis and thematic data analysis, the paper explores how the platform has redefined public service delivery, fostering a participatory and transparent approach to managing city issues in Bangkok. It found that the implementation of this digital innovation platform has strengthened the BMA's accountability to the public and redefined the relationship between local authority and the people by empowering individuals to participate directly in public affairs and service provision.

Introduction

Shortly after Chadchart Sittipunt was elected as Governor of the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) with an unprecedented 1.38 million votes in May 2022 (Bangkok Post, 2022), the Traffy Fondu digital innovation platform was officially launched as his strategic initiative on 1 June 2022. This platform focuses on managing public complaints and improving local services for more effective city problem management. It is designed to enable the public to report and help solve urban issues through a mobile application, facilitating direct participation in addressing local public service concerns and urban problems. Although Traffy Fondu had been used in other local governments and public organizations in Thailand, its introduction and use in Bangkok garnered significant attention. Since its first day of operation, many people in Bangkok have utilized this digital platform and shared their experiences and impressions on various social media platforms. At present, over 600,000 complaints have been received by the BMA over the past two years (Wancharoen, 2024), highlighting how this digital solution could transform the way local governments operate. It is argued that this digital platform significantly alters the relationship between the government and its bureaucratic systems and the people. In essence, Traffy Fondu bridges a gap between administrative bodies and public participation, promoting transparency and accountability of the BMA.

From this perspective, it can be argued that the way in which the Traffy Fondu platform initiative has been advanced as a policy within the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration can be seen as a form of policy innovation. Although policy innovation is a

slippery concept with no singular definition, it often refers to the essential element of introducing new content and context in policy, marking a change in substance and form, which has not been previously utilized in that specific area of implementation (Sorensen, 2016). Thus, the novelty is focused on being unprecedented within the specific territory or context (Roberts and King, 1996, pp. 5-6, cited in Ansell and Torfing, 2014, p. 5). In essence, it can be described as “a policy that is new to the state adopting it” (Mintrom, 1997, p. 741). Furthermore, this policy produces a new outcome (Howlett, 2014) as it not only increases the administrative system’s capacity but also enhances public participation in public administration and local public services through user-friendly digital technology, which also improves transparency and accountability of the BMA to the public.

This study aims to investigate how and why this policy innovation, specifically the introduction of the digital innovation platform, i.e., Traffy Fondu, became a policy of the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration. Kingdon’s (1984) Multiple Streams Framework will be used as a lens to explore this policy making. Additionally, the study examines how the practice of this digital platform enhances public participation in Bangkok, as well as increases transparency and accountability of the BMA. The paper begins with a description of the research methodology. It will then discuss the theoretical framework. Next, the application of Traffy Fondu will be described. After that, a brief overview of the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration, a special local government unit within Thailand’s local government system, will be provided. The study will then discuss how Traffy Fondu was formed as a policy in the BMA. Finally, it will explore how this digital innovation contributes to increasing public participation, transparency, and accountability, which could serve as an example for other Thai local governments.

Research methodology

This study employs a qualitative case study approach, with the Traffy Fondu digital platform’s use in the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) selected as the case. In qualitative case studies, cases are strategically chosen based on purposive or theoretical reasons, rather than statistical ones, where the research question is main focus (Bryman, 2016; Eisenhardt, 1989; Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007; Yin, 2009). Purposive sampling allows researchers to address specific research questions posed (Eisenhardt, 1989; Bryman, 2016). In using this sampling approach, Yin (2009) also emphasizes that gaining access to cases and relevant data is crucial for case selection. Researchers must ensure they can obtain the necessary data through observations, interviews, and document analysis.

Using purposive sampling, the case of Traffy Fondu’s implementation in the BMA was selected for three primary reasons: its role in enhancing public participation, transparency, and accountability in local governance; its national recognition; and the availability of publicly reported data on its practices. While there is limited research and data regarding how other local governments implement this platform, the BMA’s practices have been publicly reported and widely recognized, making it a suitable case for

examining the platform's impact on local governance practices. In addition to the availability of documents pertaining to the case, the BMA has developed a webpage, <https://bangkok.traffy.in.th/>, which functions as an open data platform. This platform allows the public to access statistics and data related to the operation of the Traffy Fondue digital platform for urban development. Regarding data collection, documentary analysis was conducted, drawing upon policy documents, news reports, social media posts and research articles related to the case. Thematic analysis was then employed to analyze the qualitative data, with a theoretical framework used as the lens of analysis.

Theoretical framework

Kingdon's Multiple Streams Framework (MSF) (Kingdon, 1984) is a widely recognized theory for understanding the agenda-setting, policy formation, and policy change, and policy innovation. In this framework, it is suggested that in order that a policy can be successfully formed, it requires the three independent streams namely problem, policy and political streams to converge (Kingdon, 1984). The problem stream pertains to the problems that require attention. The policy stream refers to various possible solutions or potential proposal suggested by individuals or groups, either within or outside the governments. Following the concept of the garbage can model of decision-making (Cohen, March, & Olsen, 1972), solutions may emerge separately from defined problems and later be associated with relevant issues. The political stream covers factors such as changes in government, electoral outcomes, administrative changes and the mood of people in society. In Kingdon's perspective, the alignment of the three independent streams—problems, policies, and politics—represents a rare and fortunate event (Howlett, McConnell, and Perl, 2014). Moreover, this confluence creates a policy window, providing an opportunity for policy entrepreneurs to advance their preferred solutions to become policy (Kingdon, 1984). However, recent studies have utilized the MSF to explain policymaking, arguing that this policy window can be opened by policy entrepreneurs who exercise strategies within each stream to align them, thereby creating the window of opportunity for elevating their pet proposals to the status of official policy (Cairney, 2018; Chamchong, 2019; Mintrom, 2019; Mintrom and Norman, 2009; Winkel and Leipold, 2016).

Although this concept was originally occurred from examining a particular policy at the national level in the western world, as a prominent theory that has explanatory power on the formation of policy, it has been widely applied to various policy issues in various settings (Jones et al. 2016). Some studies were also advanced this theory to explain further the stage of decision making of a policy (Howlett, McConnell, and Perl, 2014; 2017). The utilisation of this theory also includes the studies on explaining the agenda-setting and policy changes of the cases in the Global South and non-democratic settings (Chann and Chamchong, 2024; Hammond, 2013; He, 2018; Mertha, 2009; van den Dool, 2022; Zhu, 2008). Among these, some studies utilized it to examine policy innovation occur at local level where the findings added essential aspects as a contribution to the theory (Chamchong, 2019).

The utilisation of this theory also includes the studies on explaining the agenda-setting and policy changes of the cases in the Global South and non-democratic settings (Chann and Chamchong, 2024; Hammond, 2013; He, 2018; Mertha, 2009; van den Dool, 2022; Zhu, 2008). Among these, some studies employed it to examine policy innovation at the local level, revealing that the socio-cultural aspects of a particular setting need to be considered when using the MSF (Chamchong, 2019).

To achieve the research objective of investigating how the policy for the adoption of digital innovation, i.e., the Traffy Fondu digital platform for complaint management, emerged in the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration, this theory be used as the theoretical framework where the result of analysis will be discussed in the following sections.

Traffy Fondu: A digital solution for public participation in city problem management

The Traffy Fondu platform is a digital innovative solution designed to facilitate public participation in city development while effectively addressing various city issues. It serves as a crucial platform for increasing effective communication between the public and local governments, enabling people to report city issues they encountered through an application on their mobile phone. Local governments receive comprehensive data for action, including photos and location details. Also, it allows authorities to provide status updates on resolution efforts (Leekrajang and Jensantikul, 2024). Its key features include automatic alerts for problem-solving status updates, which are sent to responsible parties and the individuals who reported the issue, as well as monitoring tools for officials. Moreover, local governments will have access to data and analytics to facilitate improved planning and resource allocation. Thus, this participatory, innovative digital platform enhances transparency and accountability in local governance (the National Electronics and Computer Technology Center, 2018).

In 2018, Traffy Fondu was developed by a team of researchers led by Dr. Wasan Pattara-atikon at the National Electronics and Computer Technology Center (NECTEC), part of the National Science and Technology Development Agency (NSTDA) in Thailand. This government agency supports research in science and technology and its application in the Thai economy. Originally, the platform started as 'Traffy Waste,' which was designed to support a municipality in Phuket by providing smart city solutions for better waste management, addressing issues of garbage accumulation on beaches and streets. The system later evolved into Traffy Fondu to broaden its scope and applications (Sithiruechai, 2022). At this early stage, since the system operated on the Cloud, it was easily accessible to other authorities. Additionally, as a trusted platform owned by NECTEC, it was freely available for government organizations. This accessibility contributed to the platform's expansion to other authorities, especially local governments. However, initially, the platform was a standalone mobile application, making it challenging for users to download and learn how to use the new application. Consequently, despite increased adoption by local governments, the number of problem reports re-

mained limited.

Considering the widespread use of the LINE application among Thais, the NECTEC research team decided to integrate Traffy Fondue with the LINE Official Account (Sithiruechai, 2022). This strategic move aimed to facilitate the platform's adoption by local governments as a city problem management tool. The integration allows for easier public access, enabling people to participate directly in reporting and resolving urban issues. This adjustment significantly enhanced the platform's user-friendliness, making it more appealing for authorities to implement as a participatory governance solution. In fact, it was reported that in 2022 the total number of internet users in Thailand was 54.50 million, accounting for 77.8% of the country's total population of 70.01 million. Among these internet users, 96.2% aged 16 to 64 accessed the internet via mobile phones, and 98.3% of those aged 16 to 63 owned a smartphone. Regarding social media platforms, LINE ranked first among mobile applications in terms of total consumer spending, boasting over 50 million active users. It was the second most-used social media platform, with 92.8% of internet users engaging with it monthly, following Facebook (DataReportal, 2022).

LINE's prominence extends far beyond its role as a messaging app. It has become an essential part of everyday life in Thailand, serving as a versatile platform that integrates communication, news, shopping, and financial services. Its widespread use across personal and professional domains highlights its significance in the Thai digital landscape. In 2024, the Global Digital Reports, published by DataReportal in partnership with We Are Social and Meltwater, revealed that LINE remained the second most-used social media platform among internet users aged 16 to 64 in Thailand, with a usage rate of 90.50%, just behind Facebook's 91.50%. Notably, LINE boasts 54 million monthly active users out of a population of 71.85 million, meaning 75.2% of the Thai population actively use the platform (DataReportal, 2024).

The integration of LINE into daily life in Thailand highlights its significant impact on shaping communication habits and improving digital interactions. Since the Traffy Fondue platform incorporated LINE, usage statistics have surged. From June 2022 to July 2024, Traffy Fondue handled a total of 947,769 complaints nationwide, including local governments and state agencies. Of these, the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) accounted for 641,340 city-related complaints, indicating substantial engagement through the platform's integration with LINE.

At present, it has been reported that 4,103 out of 7,849 local government units in Thailand, representing 52.27%, have adopted Traffy Fondue as a digital platform for public participation. These units comprise 1,916 municipalities, which are responsible for urban areas, and 2,186 Tambon Administrative Organizations (TAOs) (Traffy Team, 2024), which provide public services in rural areas with populations of around 7,000. Additionally, the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA), a special local government unit in the country, launched this initiative on 1 June 2022, covering over 6 million resi-

dents in Bangkok.

The Bangkok Metropolitan Administration in the Context of Thailand's Local Government System

Thailand operates as a unitary state under a parliamentary system, consisting of three levels of administration: central, regional or provincial, and local (i.e., local government). The central administration operates through a centralised framework, with authority held by the Prime Minister's Office and the Cabinet, which oversee multiple ministries and governmental bodies. The provincial or regional administration functions as an extension of the central government, spanning 76 provinces throughout the country. Provinces are administered by Provincial Governors, appointed by the Ministry of Interior, supported by provincial officials assigned from various ministries and departments. These officials are responsible for executing central government directives and operate under the oversight of the Provincial Governor (Chamchong, 2023; Haque, 2010).

Thailand's local government system operates on the principle of decentralisation. The significant reforms of the 1990s, particularly the 1997 Constitution and the 1999 Determining Plans and Process of Decentralisation Act, provided the legal foundation for decentralisation. Structurally, the reforms introduced a two-tier local government system nationwide. It comprises three types of local governments: Provincial Administrative Organizations (PAOs) with 76 units, municipalities (Thesaban) with 2,472 units, and Tambon Administrative Organizations (TAOs) with 5,300 units. Additionally, two special local government units—Bangkok Metropolitan Administration and Pattaya City—are authorised with unique governance structures to manage their metropolitan areas. In total, there are 7,849 local government units across the country (Department of Local Administration, Thailand, 2024).

Although these laws mandated the transfer of responsibilities and resources from the central government to local governments, the autonomy of Thai local governments remains limited, even after decades of reform. The reassertion of bureaucratic dominance through the regional administration, which co-exists with local administration, continues to hinder local policy development. Local government policies, including budget and expenditure plans, must align with provincial strategies and the national 20-year strategy and must be approved by the Chief District Officer and the Provincial Governor. Fiscal constraints, compounded by a lack of fiscal autonomy and capacity, as well as being bound by the ultra vires principle, meaning they can only act within statutory limits, make it challenging for local governments to develop and implement policy innovations and innovative public services (Chamchong, 2023).

The Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) is a special local government unit in Thailand. In addition to the BMA, Pattaya City is another special local government unit, authorised to govern its specific metropolitan area with a unique form and function. Notably, Bangkok is not classified as one of Thailand's provinces. While the 76 provinces across the country have governors appointed by the Ministry of Interior to

oversee their respective provincial administrative offices, Bangkok does not follow this model. Instead, it operates as a special local government unit with its own distinctive governance structure. Although the title of 'governor' is used for the heads of both Bangkok and the provinces, which may cause confusion for those unfamiliar with the Thai administrative system, the roles differ significantly. The Governor of Bangkok Metropolitan Administration is locally elected by the citizens, unlike the appointed governors in other provinces.

The structure of BMA is comprised of Executive and Legislative functions following the principle of balance of power. Regarding executive function, Governor of Bangkok is the chief executive of the Board of Executives (Political Officials) who is directly elected by local residents with 4-year term. Governor also appoints 4 deputies to be responsible to specific assigned tasks. Regarding legislative function, there is council which is comprised of 50 council members who are elected from each 50 districts in Bangkok. In terms of administrative function, there is Board of Executive, headed by the Secretary for the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration who is chief executive of administrative system of BMA and deputies who are government officials who responsible for administrative system of BMA. The administrative system is comprised of 50 districts where each has chief executive of district who is BMA government officials.

Regarding responsibilities, the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) is organised under the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration Act, B.E. 2528 (1985), which outlines its powers and duties according to Section 89 of the Act as follows: (1) Maintaining public safety (2) Registration services as prescribed by law (3) Prevention and mitigation of disasters (4) Maintaining cleanliness and public order in the city (5) Urban planning (6) Establishing and maintaining land, water, and drainage systems (7) Traffic management and traffic engineering (8) Promoting and supporting police stations and other agencies in performing duties under items (1) to (7) (9) Transportation management (10) Establishing and controlling markets, piers, ferries, and parking areas (11) Maintenance of public spaces (12) Building control (13) Improvement of slum areas and management of housing (14) Establishing and maintaining recreational facilities (15) Environmental development and conservation (16) Preservation of arts, traditions, local wisdom, and local culture (17) Public utilities management (18) Public health, family health, and medical services (19) Establishing and controlling cemeteries and crematoriums (20) Animal control (21) Establishing and controlling slaughterhouses (22) Ensuring safety, orderliness, and health standards in entertainment venues and other public places (23) Providing education in alignment with the national education plan, including promoting and supporting educational development (24) Public utility services (25) Social welfare services (26) Promotion of sports (27) Promotion of professional occupations (28) Commerce management of Bangkok, and (29) Other duties as specified by law, assigned to the provincial governor, district officials, municipal administrators, or as delegated by the Cabinet or the Minister of Interior, or as prescribed by law as the responsibility of the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (Bangkok Metropolitan Administration, 2024a).

To manage public administration and provide local services according to its specified authorities, the BMA divides its administrative structure into 19 departments and 50 district offices. As of 2024, the BMA employs 20,441 government officials (Office of the Bangkok Metropolitan Administrative Civil Service Commission, 2024), with a total staff count of approximately 80,000. This large number underscores the extensive nature of the administrative and bureaucratic system.

With its roles and responsibilities in providing public services to a metropolitan area, the BMA operates as a special local government unit without interference from co-existing regional administrations within its jurisdiction. Given this specific characteristic, the BMA appears to have a notable degree of autonomy in both managerial and policy development matters compared to other local governments across the country. Despite its vast structure, the introduction and implementation of the Traffy Fondue digital platform has started to transform the working process of BMA, enabling more streamlined management, greater responsiveness, and improved public service delivery through digital innovation.

The next section will examine the way in which the policy for adopting the Traffy Fondue digital platform, was developed. It will then discuss on how this policy has transformed the BMA's way of working, transformed relationship between the BMA and the public by increasing transparency, fostering innovative and inclusive participation, and enhancing the BMA's accountability to the public.

Launching Traffy Fondue: Policy innovation formulation in Bangkok Metropolitan Administration

Applying Kingdon's Multiple Streams Framework (MSF) (1984) to investigate this policy innovation development reveals that Traffy Fondue emerged as a strategic initiative of the BMA using a digital solution, resulting from the convergence of the three streams and the role of a policy entrepreneur.

Regarding *the problem stream*, the significance of small-scale urban problems requiring innovative solutions was brought to public and policy attention as a central issue in Chadchart Sittipunt's policy campaign a few years before the Bangkok governor election in 2022. In his public statement, it was noted that Bangkok, as a metropolitan area, faces numerous urban development challenges and public service issues. These range from large-scale infrastructure initiatives, such as roads and public transportation, to smaller-scale concerns, including street cleanliness, garbage in alleys, and damaged pavements. While large projects attract public attention, addressing minor problems cannot be neglected. It was mentioned that although Bangkok is considered a desirable travel destination, the city ranks low in terms of livability. Sittipunt used the metaphor of 'metabolism' to underscore the importance of small-scale issues, equating the city's infrastructure to a body's veins: major infrastructure being the arteries and smaller elements like sidewalks and waste management being the capillaries. To achieve a livable city, all aspects need care, especially these often-overlooked small-scale problems which

Sittipunt referred to as 'capillary problems'. The clear example particularly provides that although the BMA has invested heavily in large projects like wastewater pipelines, the ongoing micro-level issues, such as garbage disposal and blocked drains, continue to contribute to flooding during heavy rains (Sittipunt, 2019; 2021; 2022).

This kind of problem can be considered a wicked issue, meaning it cannot be resolved by a single actor working alone. Instead, public collaboration and co-production of services are necessary. However, it was pointed out that there was no existing platform to support such collaboration, particularly direct public participation, nor an effective communication channel to facilitate it. This situation called for an innovative solution to engage the public in local affairs and enhance administrative capacity for dealing with these problems to build a more liveable Bangkok. Effective management requires collaboration with citizens, as the BMA's resources alone are insufficient. Improving the city's liveability involves working closely with residents to report issues, a task previously hindered by the lack of effective communication tools (Sittipunt, 2021).

To draw attention to these issues, Sittipunt began posting about them on Facebook, Thailand's most popular social media platform (DataReportal, 2024), starting in 2019 and continuing throughout his election campaign until 2022. These posts not only attracted public attention but were also picked up by journalists and featured in various news outlets. For decades, these issues persisted, and people had grown accustomed to waiting for the BMA to act. Thus, the way these issues were highlighted, coupled with a willingness from a potential policy actor to address them, gained public concern momentum and sparked hope among Bangkok residents during his pre-election campaign.

The policy stream, which refers to as potential solutions created by various actors and floated in the policy environment for the problem to be attached, was the Traffy Fondu platform that availability as already created by the NECTEC researcher team. As previously mentioned in the above section, this digital innovative solution pertains significant characteristics that can be served as a potential solution for dealing with those 'capillary problems' in Bangkok. First, it was particularly created aimed for the use of local governments to increase city problem management. Second, it has been used in local governments and other public authorities before. Third, created by the government agency, i.e., NECTEC, it is free of charge for a government agency to use. Finally, and most importantly, the improvement of the platform's feature which is the integration in LINE Official Account, which most Thai people use, enable the easy use for people. These features captured attention of Chadchart Sittipunt and his team even before he was elected to be the Bangkok governor. Essentially, in December 2021, it was mentioned in his Facebook post that to deal with those 'capillary problems' in Bangkok, the technology is needed to empower people to directly participate in reportings the micro-level urban problems. Then, local governments can equip those data to use to seriously fix the problems. He clearly suggested that there was a digital innovation platform that can do this which was the Traffy Fondu. Then, he suggested the public to test it during that period prior to the election.

The policy stream in Kingdon's framework refers to the development of potential solutions proposed by various actors and presented in the policy environment to address specific problems. In this context, the Traffy Fondue platform emerged as a viable solution, having been developed by NECTEC and offering essential features for addressing 'capillary problems' in Bangkok. First, it was specifically designed for local governments to enhance city problem management. Second, its prior implementation in other public authorities demonstrated its practicality. Third, created by the government agency NECTEC, it is free of charge for government agencies. Most importantly, the platform's integration with the LINE Official Account, widely used in Thailand, makes it user-friendly for the public. These features attracted the attention of Chadchart Sittipunt and his team even before his election as Bangkok governor. Sittipunt (2021) highlighted on Facebook the necessity of empowering citizens to report urban issues through technology, thereby enabling local authorities to respond effectively as a solution to address 'capillary problems' in Bangkok. He identified Traffy Fondue as the suitable tool for this task and encouraged the public to test the platform in the lead-up to the election.

Winning with a record-breaking victory as Bangkok governor in May 2022 (Bangkok Post, 2022) demonstrated the remarkable support of Bangkok's citizens for Chadchart Sittipunt's policy campaign, which emphasized the importance of addressing capillary problems and utilizing digital technology to manage them effectively. This change in the government and administration of the BMA, along with local public support, could be considered factors within *the political stream*, which significantly influenced opening the policy window to push the proposal for using Traffy Fondue as the BMA's policy.

From the phenomena discussed above, it can be argued that Chadchart Sittipunt and his team acted as *the policy entrepreneurs* who created the policy window of opportunity to implement Traffy Fondue, his preferred innovative policy solution, as the BMA's strategic initiative once he became governor. He and his team used the narrative of 'capillary problems' to garner public concern long before the election, aligning with the argument that a policy problem is framed by policy entrepreneurs "by telling a persuasive story" (Chann and Chamchong, 2024, p. 4; Cairney, 2018). Several visits were made to the NECTEC research team to gain an in-depth understanding of the digital innovation platform and ensure its practicality for addressing the defined problem, aligning with the strategy of ensuring the suitability and feasibility of the solution (Cairney, 2018). Encouraging Bangkok residents to test the platform before the election to gain buy-in from citizens and BMA administrative officials aligns with the strategy of pitching the feasibility, necessity, and attractiveness of the proposed solution suggested by Cohen (2021) and Chann and Chamchong (2014).

As a result, the utilisation of Traffy Fondue was formed as an official policy of the BMA. Hence, the following section will discuss the way in which this initiative has equipped this local authority in a metropolitan area in Thailand to increase public participation, transparency, and its accountability to the public regarding the provision of

public services in Bangkok.

Digital Innovation in Governance: Enhancing Participation, Transparency, and Accountability in the BMA through Traffy Fondue

The policy that led to Chadchart's election as Governor of Bangkok is the "Bangkok Nine Goods Policy," which comprises nine core areas: Good Transportation, Good Safety, Good Transparency, Good Environment, Good Health, Good Education, Good Economy, Good Society, and Good Governance. "Reporting issues by the public, solving issues by the BMA through the Traffy Fondue digital platform" was officially launched on 1 June 2022 as a strategic project under the "Good Transparency" policy. The governor perceives transparency not merely as the absence of corruption but as the openness of public service delivery processes. The emphasis is on prioritising timely responses to public needs, particularly when people are awaiting action from the BMA to address their concerns about public services and are involved in the process. On its first day of operation, it was reported that over 20,000 city issues were submitted by citizens within a single day (Sittipunt, 2023). Currently, the Traffy Fondue system is being used by the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) for managing complaints, with over 500,000 issues reported so far (Wancharoen, 2024). It is a system that has been successful in building trust between the public and the BMA.

In the operation of the Traffy Fondue system, the process for people to report issues is simple and can be done via LINE. To begin, users need to add LINE Official Account Traffy Fondue by typing @TraffyFondue in the "add friend" feature, similar to how they would add a friend. The following steps are then required: first, type a description of the issue; second, take a photo of the incident; third, select the type of issue; fourth, share the location where the incident occurred; and finally, choose the relevant agency to report to. The accessibility of the system lies in its ability to allow users to report issues at any time, using LINE, a platform widely used and available on the mobile phones of most Thais, rather than being restricted to reporting problems during the official working hours of government agencies. The platform covers a wide range of public service-related issues, including traffic, safety, cleanliness, flooding, pollution, PM2.5 damaged infrastructure, and more. People can report problems such as broken manhole covers, damaged roads, faulty streetlights, noise disturbances, water stagnation, hazardous construction, obstructive signage, waste management, traffic congestion, unsafe traffic signals, tree maintenance needs, illegal parking, and obstructive communication cables, among others.

'Transforming the city into a livable place through an urban problem management platform' is the concept behind the use of Traffy Fondue as part of the digital revolution, aligning with the Smart City principle. This transformation aims to streamline the problem management processes of the city by moving away from the excessive hierarchies, unnecessary procedures, and reliance on directives from the Governor of Bangkok. Instead, it promotes horizontal collaboration, both in terms of interactions between the local government and citizens as well as within local governmental units them-

selves. The chief executives of Bangkok's 50 district offices are now directly accountable to the people, rather than to the Governor (Sittipunt, 2023). This approach aligns with the Smart City concept, as it offers a user-friendly system for both citizens and government officials. Moreover, it facilitates detailed data collection, ensuring transparency by displaying information about each reported issue, such as how long the problem has been pending, the time taken to resolve it, and people's satisfaction with the outcome. Additionally, the platform provides aggregate data that supports city planning, which could enable Bangkok Metropolitan Administration to be more responsive and citizen-centered solutions.

The use of Traffy Fondu by the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration is in line with a citizen-centric approach, which signifies that the Administration is becoming more accountable for the problems encountered by people and aims to enhance its responsiveness and management of city issues. This approach contrasts with the traditional bureaucratic model, which often focuses on unnecessary procedures. By empowering people to directly engage in addressing urban issues in Bangkok, they are able to report problems or offer suggestions at any time through a digital application, using LINE, a platform commonly utilized by Thais in their everyday lives. This approach can be characterised as an increase in public participation through innovative participation, illustrating that innovation does not always have to be complex or difficult. Rather, it introduces a new way of working, supported by digital technology, for more effective city problem management. Furthermore, the city's adoption of this digital platform facilitates the collection of substantial and critical data, which can be used for future urban planning and management. In addition, the platform fosters transparency by making administrative processes visible to the public.

By empowering people in public services, Traffy Fondu has transformed the relationship between citizens and local authorities, moving away from hierarchical and bureaucratic systems. People have become more empowered, gaining the ability not only to report problems relating to public services but also to receive timely updates about how and when issues will be addressed. The system mandates designated staff to provide ongoing progress reports and final outcomes. This simple, user-friendly process, accessible via a single chat in LINE, fosters closer ties between the public and local government, overcoming traditional bureaucratic barriers.

The phenomenon where many individuals share their experiences with Traffy Fondu across social media, particularly on Facebook and Twitter, reflects their excitement about being able to report city issues and receive updates from the BMA on how these issues were addressed. Although some problems cannot be resolved immediately, either due to limitations of the BMA's authority or the need for longer-term solutions, the BMA still informs the individuals who reported the issues about the status, ensuring transparency and reducing uncertainty rather than leaving them waiting without updates.

Moreover, the BMA has established the website “Bangkok.traffy.on.th” as an open data platform, accessible to the public for viewing real-time complaint reports and key statistics regarding the digital platform’s use. Reports show that complaints are typically addressed within four hours, and resolutions are achieved within one day. Additionally, the platform provides rankings of the top-performing districts in terms of public satisfaction, response speed, and problem resolution efficiency. This data aids BMA executives in decision-making, planning, and budget allocation by identifying prevalent issues across different areas.

Furthermore, the inclusive nature of this participatory platform reflects the metropolitan character of Bangkok, embodying the city’s diversity and accessibility. In the use of this platform, participation is not limited to registered residents; anyone, regardless of nationality, age, or status, can report city issues at any time. Traffy Fondue also offers an English-language interface for non-Thai speakers, enabling foreign residents and visitors to contribute. The platform ensures that its scope extends beyond just “citizens” and enhances the BMA’s accountability by facilitating broad-based public involvement in urban management to achieve a livable city of Bangkok.

The recent data highlights how the use of Traffy Fondue platform has significantly enhanced the BMA’s accountability to the public since its launch. After two years of operation, on 26 June 2024, the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (2024b) reported several key achievements. The digital platform allows a significant increase in issue reporting outside office hours, now 1.5 times higher, with 345,975 cases. The average time to resolve problems has decreased by 97%, from around 1,375 hours in June 2022 to just 45 hours in May 2024. Since its launch, Traffy Fondue has addressed 465,291 out of 588,842 reported issues, which accounts for 79% of all submissions, streamlining service processes and facilitating public transparency by enabling people to track progress and view complaint statistics (Bangkok Metropolitan Administration, 2024b; Wancharoen, 2024). This aligns with Supasak’s (2022) findings, which indicate that Traffy Fondue boosts public service efficiency in Bangkok by reducing resolution time and bureaucratic steps, while also enhancing transparency in monitoring city operations.

Conclusion

This paper reveals that the willingness, determination, and commitment of political leaders, as well as the change in administration resulting from an election, are crucial to initiating the use of digital innovation to transform administrative processes and public service provisions. This finding aligns with studies applying the Multiple Streams Framework, demonstrating that conditions within the political stream play a significant role (Kingdon, 1984; Chamchong, 2019). However, this aspect might raise the question of the longevity of this digital innovation, Traffy Fondue, and whether its use will continue in the long term. Specifically, as Ansell and Torfing (2014) argue, institutional and political requirements are crucial for maintaining public innovation. Applying this to the BMA’s case, it is essential for further study to assess how well Traffy Fondue has been embedded in the institutional framework and whether political commitment, particular-

ly after the current governor's 4-year term, will ensure its ongoing use and sustainability. However, it can also be argued that as these practices have become deeply integrated into the daily lives of both the public and administrative officials, the continuous use of Traffy Fondue from day one suggests a high level of public buy-in. The BMA's administrative system has come to see and operate Traffy Fondue as a routine part of their daily practices. In essence, the prevailing public mood, which reflects this strong endorsement and the embedding of the platform in everyday administrative operations, may contribute more to sustaining its use than formal legal or institutional frameworks. Further research is needed to explore the extent of this influence.

Notes

1 Dr. Pobsook Chamchong is an Assistant Professor and currently serves as the Deputy Director at the School of Public Policy, Chiang Mai University. In addition, she oversees the MA and PhD Public Policy programs at the school. Pobsook is also the coordinator of the Thailand Public Policy Network (TPPN). Her research interests include policy innovation, urban governance, collaborative governance, inclusive policy design, and the use of foresight in policy development. She has published research articles in journals such as the *Journal of Asian Public Policy*, *Journal of Critical Policy Studies*, *Policy Studies*, and the *Journal of Housing and the Built Environment*. Most recently, she contributed a chapter on "Policy Analysis in Thai Local Governments," published by Policy Press, Bristol.
 E-mail: pobsook.c@hotmail.com
 ORCiDs <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4630-9209>

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