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OIE encouraged entrepreneurs to develop Meditech in hoping to pioneer new markets as well as ready to supports Medical hub

The Office of Industrial Economics promotes Thai textile businesses to Meditech, to increase value and create opportunities for new markets for the textile industry in support of targeted industries (S-Curve) and medical hub, to help reduce the cost of services and upgrade the production of medical devices.

OIE Director General Mr. Nattapol Rangsitpol reported that OIE had pushed Thai textile entrepreneurs to upgrade their business to production in "Meditech," to create opportunities for expanding new markets. The initiative is in cooperation with the Thailand Textile Institute to link all parties involved, including manufacturers, technology developers, distributors and users of Meditech to jointly develop products that meet market needs, add value to textiles using innovation and technology and reduce imports from abroad. It aims to improve the Thai textile industry into a comprehensive range of medical technology textile products in the style of modern textiles that are diverse, differ from competitors and made in Thailand.

The analysis study found that Meditech are products with high market potential and can be very profitable when compared to other types of technical textiles. Filtech Enterprise Public Co., Ltd, a leading importer and distributor of medical equipment, shared the direction of the expansion of medical textiles, especially disposable products such as disposable sterile surgical gowns, gloves, head covers, shoe covers, hygienic masks, and bags for disposable supplies, including products for the elderly.

At present, Thai entrepreneurs have invented various innovations to enhance textiles to Meditech such as Perma Corporation Co., Ltd., which develops innovative fibers that inhibit bacteria permanently by combining zinc nanotechnology, and extending the product into the medical textile market, such as patient gowns and antibacterial sheets. Another example is Kim Nguan Jhan Limited Partnership, which develops textiles with dust-proof and anti-seepage properties, which further extends to the production of nursing gowns in the operating room. In addition, the development in design is another way to upgrade the product into the market, such as designing gowns that are easy for patients to wear and move around in, especially for patients confined to their bed or with an arm splint, or gowns designed to fit the shape of the elderly.

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Mr. Nattapol further stated that the promotion of investment and development of Meditech not only help to reduce imports from abroad but also provide more options to people in the pharmaceutical industry to have uniforms and gear with a variety of uses, such as suits that can prevent bacteria, prevent liquid from penetrating and drain water and air well in one set. This includes benefits for patients who can access the body rejuvenation equipment that is produced locally at a much lower price than imported equipment, which will further benefit the country in terms of industry, public health and the aging society.

In this regard, the OIE has guidelines for forming a mechanism to develop the medical device industry platform, by piloting medical textile technology as a gear to drive the medical hub and S-Curve target industries under Thailand 4.0 road map, to lead to higher quality services and upgrade the production of modern medical equipment. In the future, investment in the Thai technical medical textile industry will be able to expand into export markets in many countries, following a global increase in demand from the elderly. The increased demand can be seen from the export of Thai Meditech in 2018, which valued 59.86 million USD, a growth of 7.0 percent from the same period last year. The top export products were gauze bandages, hygiene products made with cellulose fibers and stitches, respectively. In addition, the domestic market continued to grow, which is an excellent opportunity for textile and garment manufacturers to upgrade to the future industry, **Mr. Nattapol Rangsitpol** concluded.

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