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Ministry of Industry Drives Hemp Processing Entrepreneurs to Support BCG Model.

The Ministry of Industry's Office of Industrial Economics (OIE) encourages hemp processing entrepreneurs to support the BCG Model. It organized a meeting for cooperation on the "Development and Promotion of the Hemp Processing Industry for Commercialization" in collaboration with three network institutions, including the National Food Institute (NFI), Institute for Small and Medium Enterprises Development (ISMED), and the Thailand Textile Institute (TTI). It aims to drive hemp to be used in the industry concretely, after the law allows production, import, and export, with hopes that Thailand will become a leader in the production and export of semi-raw materials, including hemp products that are important in the ASEAN region, within five years.

Advisor to the Minister of Industry Mr. Suchart Trisangruijira presided over the commencement of the conference and special lecture on "The Direction of the Development of the Hemp Processing Industry to Meet the Ministry of Industry's Bioeconomy" at the meeting for cooperation on the "Development and Promotion of the Hemp Processing Industry for Commercialization" under "The Project to Support the Hemp Processing Industry to Meet the Bioeconomy," at the Royal River Hotel. The event aims to build cooperation from relevant sectors in the hemp supply chain, to review and develop research on technology for processing hemp plants and its expansion into products such as food, cosmetics, health products, textile products from hemp yarn, composite products, and animal feed, along with linking cooperation from all sectors in upgrading processing technology and using all parts of the hemp plant for processing into semi-raw materials to supply the industry. The initiative was well received by the government sector, educational institutions, including upstream, midstream, and downstream businesses involved, which attended the meeting at the event, and many joined online virtually.

Mr. Suchart added that hemp plants could add a lot of added value to products. This can be seen from the global hemp industry market's value in 2019, which is estimated at 4,410 million USD, with an average growth rate of 16.21 percent per year expected within the next seven years (2026), increasing the value to over 14,670 million USD. Important factors include the fact that different hemp parts can be used for a wider range of processing, including paper, composite materials, bioplastics, and health and beauty products. Meanwhile, hemp seeds and oil can be used for consumption. The major markets include China, the United States, and Europe. For the global market value of CBD extracts, which helps the muscles to relax and alleviate illness, together with the various benefits of CBD in both food and non-food products, in 2019, the market valued 553.7 million USD, with an average

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growth rate of 33.5 percent per year. Within the next seven years (2026), the market value is expected to be worth over 4,268.3 million USD by unlocking more legislation in both manufacturing and distribution in different countries. In Thailand, hemp is exempt from being a harmful drug, except for the inflorescences that are still drugs, following the Ministry of Public Health Subject's announcement specifying the names of narcotics in five categories in 2020. If people or entrepreneurs are interested in producing or importing hemp, they must apply for a legal license as hemp can be used only for a limited group and for a limited purpose. However, hemp is a new economic crop that has played a role in the significant development of industrial upgrades. This is because Thailand's infrastructure has the potential to support the growth of the business sector. Entrepreneurs are ready to invest in value-added from different hemp parts, along with vacant agricultural spaces where hemp can be cultivated. In addition, the law allows businesses to develop a wider range of commercial products.

Deputy Director of the OIE Ms. Payouw Kummook, said that the NESDB recognizes the importance of driving the development of midstream and downstream industries to develop the complete range of hemp plants. Therefore, the said project was carried out to make use of all parts of the hemp plant. There has been research and development of seeds for use in healthy food and beverages. The dry cores have been used to make shoe soles and compound rubber to make chicken plucking rubber products. The outer shell has been used for textiles as a hemp yarn to produce anti-bacteria clothing and composite products such as car bumpers and skateboards. Its leaves are used to make cosmetics such as skincare and anti-aging products. The petioles and leaves are used as ingredients for animal feed. Moreover, the inflorescence is used to make an environmentally friendly insect repellent product that can create high added value through product research and development with technology and innovation, responding to the BCG Model policy that emphasizes sustainable growth and environmentally friendliness at the same time. The Ministry of Industry's Office of Industrial Economics has accelerated the preparation of industrial product standards related to hemp plants by establishing a product standard to support the production of three standard hemp products: hemp seed oil, hemp oil, and hemp CBD extract. The announcement is expected to in 2021. For these efforts, the Ministry of Industry expects to help farmers earn a stable and sustainable higher income, creating investment in the industrial sector and increasing Thai exports. The efforts also expect to generate income for related businesses, creating employment throughout the hemp supply chain, promoting Thailand as a leading manufacturer and exporter of semi-raw materials and products from hemp to enable the nation to become the center of ASEAN hemp processing within five years.

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