

## CHAPTER 5.

### ASEAN-INDIA CONNECTIVITY: A THAILAND PERSPECTIVE

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#### Abstract

*Thailand places strong importance on its relationship with India. As observed, trade and investment between the two countries is on the increase even though the Thai-India Free Trade Area is not working properly. This growth is coupled with the increase in the number of visitors from both countries. The purpose of this chapter is to provide an understanding of the role that can be played by Thailand in enhancing ASEAN-India connectivity. However, this understanding will be based on a Thai perspective which may or may not fit within the overall ASEAN strategic direction. This chapter will first explain how Thailand looks at connectivity. The role of the Thai Ministry of Transport is then examined more closely to better understand its development strategy. A strength weakness opportunity and threat (SWOT) analysis is then further conducted followed by a discussion on Thai-India specific policies. The last section of the chapter will focus on a proposed connectivity framework and the findings derived.*

*Thailand has a clearly defined strategy to enhance its connectivity with India even though infrastructure links are still limited. Thailand is currently at the crossroads as from a Thai perspective the “official” priority is on the development of Pak Bara port on the Andaman Sea while a Thai private company has obtained a concession to develop Dawei port in Myanmar to act as a gateway with India, the Middle East and Europe. From a national security perspective, it is preferable for Thailand to focus its infrastructure development on Pak Bara as the location is in the country and not subject to external factors. However, if a regional perspective is taken, the option to develop Dawei port seems to be more interesting as it offers a shorter access route to the Andaman Sea for industries located in Thailand Eastern seaboard.*