

Centers of Excellence: Thailand's Experience

Manat Pohmakotr

Center for Innovation in Chemistry (PERCH-CIC) and Department of Chemistry, Faculty of Science, Rama 6 Road, Bangkok 10400, Thailand.

E-mail: scmpk@mahidol.ac.th

The concept of centers of excellence was initiated by the Commission on Higher Education (CHE), Ministry of Education, since 1995 with the purpose of capability building as an instrument for enhancing capability building with regard to high quality research leading to innovation and human resources development. The program is administered by the Science and Technology Postgraduate Education and Research Development Office (PERDO). As an example, Center for Innovation of Chemistry (PERCH-CIC) which is one of the other Centers of Excellence will be presented.

Phase I of the Consortium of Postgraduate Education and Research Program in Chemistry (PERCH) was funded by the Royal Thai Government with a loan from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and government counterpart fund over the period of 1999-2006. The funding for Phase II of the program has been approved for the period 2006-2010. A new name, Center for Innovation in Chemistry (PERCH-CIC) has been adopted. The number of member universities has been expanded from the original five members to thirteen universities, strategically located in different parts of the country, offering postgraduate programs at M.Ed., M.Sc., and Ph.D. levels, with Mahidol University as the lead university. The objectives of PERCH-CIC are to strive for knowledge-based innovation, to do research work on the areas of analytical technology, innovation in bioactive natural products, and materials science and nanotechnology, to enhance the quality and number of postgraduate students in chemical sciences and related disciplines in order to fulfill the human resource needs of Thailand, and to establish research collaboration and innovation with relevant industries. Moreover, PERCH-CIC tries to strengthen regional cooperation and international recognition in the research and education programs in chemical sciences with vision of being the world-class chemistry consortium within Thailand.