

ARVO International Advocacy Toolkit: Thailand

1. Which organization(s) are significant sources of research funding? (e.g., national/local governments; private funding/foundations/charity groups; large non-governmental organizations (NGOs); industry/pharmaceutical companies)

Local organizations are the most significant sources of research funding.

2. What does the normal science funding/policy decision-making process look like?

Which groups/committee/person within the funding/policy-decision making process look like?

Local research committee at the university or hospital level and occasionally national committee, though it is difficult to get funding. At each level, there is an additional committee separate of the Ethics Committee.

What are the criteria the funding/policy organization(s) use to make their decisions?

Research that has the potential and relevancy to answer a national unmet need.

3. Which patient advocacy groups, if any, are active in the area?

There are some Thai NGOs that act as patient advocacy groups, however they are not specific to ophthalmology and instead focus on patients' rights and benefits in general.

4. Are there existing national/regional organizations that work towards improving research funding/policy?

Yes, there are national organizations for this purpose, however it takes a very long time—sometimes over a year—for the organizations to approve a project even given the higher funding than provided by other sources.

5. How do scientists currently contribute to the existing funding/policymaking/advocacy process, if at all?

They can be presented at a meeting to defend their budget proposal.

6. When are science funding/policy decisions made?

If the funding is from the government (which is usually the case), the budgets provided will be according to a Fiscal Year, beginning in October and ground through September of the following year. The decision on the budget is made no later than the second quarter of the same year.

7. What kinds of opportunities exist for scientists to interact with funders and policymakers?

Can scientists invite decision makers to their lab/institution to see their work firsthand?

They can, though I haven't heard of this happening.

Do the funding/policy organizations hold open meetings or solicit comments from the public that researchers can participate in?

There is occasionally a public hearing for larger research projects, but this usually is not the case.

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