

NATIONAL INNOVATION AGENCY (NIA)

Foundation

- 2003

Turnover

- 328 million THB

Employees

- 35

Branches

- Bioplastics industry
- Energy and Environment
- Design and Branding

Key materials

- Bioplastics
- Food and herbs

Key products

- Stimulation of Innovation in Thailand
- Implementation of Bioplastic Road Map



Agency

The National Innovation Agency (NIA) was established by the Ministry of Science and Technology on October 1st, 2003. From September 1, 2009 onwards, NIA became a public organization under the umbrella of the Ministry of Science and Technology and operates under the supervision and policy guidance of the National Innovation Board. NIA has the national mandate to undertake a broad-based and systematic approach in building up the national innovation system, by fostering strategic innovation, which enhances national productivity, impacting the economic restructure and social development as well as and increasing national competitiveness. NIA recognizes Bioplastics as one of the most important strategic innovation.

In 2006, the Thai government declared the bioplastics industry as one of the “New Wave Industries” that was strategically important to the development of the country.

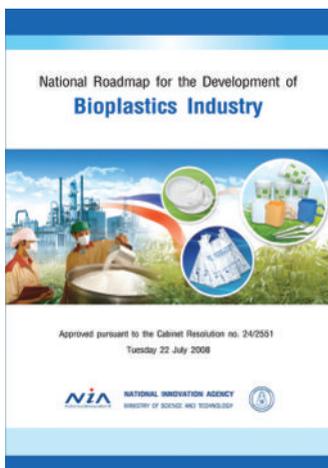
Thailand’s emerging bioplastics industry has great potential because the local sector has a number of strong comparative advantages. First and foremost, Thailand has abundant supply biomass and raw materials that can be used as feedstock for bioplastics production, in particular, cassava. It is the world’s largest cassava exporter, producing 27 million tons of fresh cassava roots in as well as the world leading sugar producer, producing 70 million tons of sugar cane in 2009. This abundance translates into lower costs and higher availability of raw materials for the bioplastics industry. In addition, Thailand already has a well established plastics industry – with 3,000 factories producing a wide range of products for overseas customers. It is the number one plastics exporter in ASEAN and the eight largest plastics exporter in the world. The bioplastics sector can tap on the capabilities, network and resources of this existing industry to rapidly grow and develop.

The national roadmap was drawn up and subsequently approved by the Thai Cabinet in July 2008. The Cabinet also assigned the National Innovation Board of the NIA to oversee the implementation of the roadmap and allocated a budget of 1.8 billion baht for its five-year plan (2008–2012). It outlines four major strategies, namely:

- Creating sufficient supply of agricultural raw materials as bioplastic feedstock
- Developing new technologies through supporting the strategic research and development
- Building new and innovative businesses
- Establishing a robust supportive infrastructure including supportive policy and standard and testing

NIA’s Role in Development of Bioplastics Industry in Thailand

The Bioplastics roadmap also calls for the integration and close cooperation of the government, the private sector and the research community.



National Roadmap for the Development of Bioplastics Industry.



Since the implementation of the roadmap, various support programs, incentives, initiatives and infrastructure have been put in place in order to create a conducive environment that encourages investment, commerce creation and innovation. The end goal is to enable Thailand to establish a commercially viable and sustainable bioplastics industry which can compete on the international stage. Some of the implementation activities include:

- Creation of the Research and Innovation Helix Program for Bioplastics which provides funding for 89 industrially targeted research projects
- Establishment of the Thai Bioplastics Industry Association (TBIA) which has now 50 members
- Provision of technical and financial support to Thai companies to undertake 22 innovation projects in bioplastics
- Development of Thai industrial standards for compostable plastics and bio-based plastics by the Thai Industrial Standards Institute
- Establishment of testing laboratories for biodegradable plastics by the National Metal and Materials Technology Center and the Thailand Institute of Scientific and Technological Research
- Introduction of the highest tax incentives for the bioplastics industry by the Board of Investment
- Close cooperation with other international bioplastic organizations including German Technical Cooperation (GTZ), European Bioplastics (EuBP), Japan BioPlastics Association (JBPA), Korean BioPlastics Association (KBPA) and Environmentally Biodegradable Polymer Association Taiwan (EBPA)
- Organization of the 3 international bioplastic conferences and exhibitions for every 2 years as InnoBioPlast 2006 to 2010

NIA as Thailand's Bioplastics Focal Point

In order to create the global market and business opportunities for bioplastics in Thailand, NIA is ready to support local and international partners from both industry and academic followings:

- Provide information of suppliers of bioplastic products from TBIA members
- Introduce potential business and research partners
- Facilitate essential guidelines on investment incentives, market opportunities and regulatory framework
- Update the progress of Thailand's Bioplastics Roadmap

The importance Bioplastics web sites in Thailand:

- www.nia.or.th/bioplastics
- www.tbia.or.th/home.php
- www.bioplasticthailand.com



Tappy – The mascot of innoBioPlast event, inspired from tapioca.

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