



## Seminar on Political Finance in Thailand

Friday, 18 August 2023, 08:30 – 16:00

Venue: Grande Centrepoint Terminal 21, Bangkok

### Introduction

Thailand has made significant progress in economic and social development over the last four decades. At the same time, reform efforts have been made to key aspects of its political system to enable greater political participation and better representation. In particular, regulations about the funding of political parties and election campaigns in Thailand need improvements and innovation, as there are several persistent challenges, including weak political parties and systems of patronage where politicians accept bribes and distribute money to gain or remain in office.

A limited number of academic publications have examined the development and effectiveness of the existing political finance framework in Thailand. International IDEA's report 'Political Finance Assessment of Thailand' intends to fill this knowledge gap by undertaking a systematic analysis of the political finance regulatory framework in the country, the gaps and weaknesses, and challenges of implementation. The main findings and recommendations from the assessment will be shared with electoral stakeholders, policymakers, political parties, civil society actors, academia, International IDEA's member states, among others, during a launch event in Bangkok, Thailand on 18th of August.

In addition to discussing the report, the event will also bring together scholars and practitioners to exchange knowledge and lessons in addressing the challenges brought about by digitalization and online campaigning into the integrity of political and campaign finance in Thailand. While digital and online tools provide quicker and cheaper access to constituents and voters, online political and electoral campaigns have been marked by patterns of illegal and malicious methods of online disinformation and influence, including anonymous content, or illicit targeting of voters. These practices are enabled by a lack of transparency in political and electoral campaign finance and weak oversight systems that should ensure the integrity of these processes. Political finance oversight agencies and civil society actors across the globe face similar challenges in ensuring that online campaigns comply with democratic standards which ensure the equality of contestants, principles of free and fair voting, and transparency and accountability in the role of money in politics. During the seminar, participants will review the main trends and identify effective solutions and transferable practices in protecting the integrity of political and electoral campaign finance in the digital age.

## Agenda

8:30 – 9:00	Registration of participants
9:00 – 9:05	Welcome Remarks, Leena Rikkila Tamang, Director, Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, International IDEA
9:10 – 10:40	<b>Session I:</b> Report Launch-Political Finance Assessment of Thailand
10:40 – 11:00	Coffee break
11:00 – 12:30	<b>Session II:</b> The Neglected Nexus: Connecting Digital Campaigns to Money
12:30 – 13:30	Lunch break
13:30 – 15:00	<b>Session III:</b> Digital Campaigning and Political Finance: The Thailand Story
15:00 – 15:05	Closing remarks, Leena Rikkila Tamang, Director, Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, International IDEA
15:05 – 16:00	Coffee and departure