

# The Pharma Legal Handbook

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# Thailand

Regulatory, Pricing and Reimbursement Overview · Preclinical and Clinical Trial Requirements · Marketing, Manufacturing, Packaging and Labeling Advertising · Traditional Medicines and OTC Products · Product Liability · Patents and Trademarks · Regulatory Reforms · Cannabinoid Drugs, Medicinal Cannabis and Opioid Drugs · Orphan Drugs and Rare Diseases · Biosimilars and Biologics

# Thailand

**The Pharma Legal Handbook answers essential questions about this environment for pharmaceuticals in Thailand. It is a must have for any company operating in the country or looking to enter the market.**

**Prepared in association with Tilleke & Gibbins, a full-service regional law firm in southeast asia, it should answer any questions linked to Regulation, Pricing, Clinical and Preclinical Trials, Marketing, Manufacturing, Trademarks and Patents.**

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Tilleke & Gibbins is a full-service regional law firm in Southeast Asia, with over 180 lawyers and consultants practicing in Bangkok, Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City, Jakarta, Phnom Penh, Vientiane, and Yangon, and a particularly strong presence in the life sciences sector. With cross-practice life sciences teams combining corporate and commercial attorneys with decades of government relations experience; patent experts from the IP group holding degrees in medicine, pharmacology, nutrition, chemistry, and biomedical engineering; and licensed pharmacists from the regulatory affairs group with industry experience drawn from decades of working for multinational life sciences companies, Tilleke & Gibbins paves the way for pharmaceutical industry clients to enter and excel in markets throughout Southeast Asia. From research and development, to clinical trials, to registration and market entry, to commercialization and technology transfer, to government relations, Tilleke & Gibbins assists leading and emerging companies through every stage of a product's life cycle, and is proud to be the pharmaceutical industry's go-to legal advisor for Southeast Asia.

Tilleke & Gibbins

Address: Supalai Grand Tower, 26th Floor, 1011 Rama 3 Road, Chongnonsi, Yannawa, Bangkok, 10120, Thailand  
Phone: +66 2056 5555

Fax: +66 2056 5678

Email: [bangkok@tilleke.com](mailto:bangkok@tilleke.com)

# THE AUTHORS

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## ALAN ADCOCK

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**PARTNER AND DEPUTY DIRECTOR,  
INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AND  
REGULATORY AFFAIRS**

E: alan.a@tilleke.com | P: +66 2056 5871

Alan Adcock is a partner and deputy director of the Tilleke & Gibbins intellectual property and regulatory affairs groups, helping to oversee the firm's client work in these areas across ASEAN. He is recognized as a leading intellectual property lawyer based on his handling of corporate IP matters, including licensing and acquisitions, and his knowledge in life sciences, fluency in Mandarin, and outstanding client service. Since 2005, Alan has received recognition by Asialaw Leading Lawyers Survey as one of Asia's leading business lawyers in the area of intellectual property, and he has been named a top IP lawyer in Thailand by Chambers Asia-Pacific, The Legal 500 Asia Pacific and WTR 1000. Alan is also recognized as a leading IP strategist by IAM Strategy 300, an expert on patents in IAM Patent 1000, one of the world's foremost life sciences practitioners by IAM Life Sciences 250, and a leading life sciences regulatory lawyer by Who's Who Legal. He also co-heads the firm's regional life sciences practice.

Alan represents diverse clients, from pioneers in the life sciences to the biggest IP owners in the world, and helps them achieve the dual goals of profit and protection. He has extensive experience in IP acquisitions, strategic structuring, technology transfer, and IP licensing and securitization agreements and he regularly handles various IP infringements and regulatory infractions involving labeling, advertising, clinical trials, product handling/warehousing, product registration, taxation, and import/export violations across most of Asia.



## SAN CHAITHIRAPHANT

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**ATTORNEY-AT-LAW**

E: san.c@tilleke.com | P: +66 2056 5640

San Chaithiraphant is an attorney-at-law in Tilleke & Gibbins' intellectual property group, specializing in patents for life sciences and technological products. Within the firm's Bangkok IP team, San advises clients on a range of complex patent issues, including specification drafting, registration procedures, portfolio management, and more.

In addition to patent work, San advises leading clients in the life sciences industry on a wide range of legal matters including regulatory



## DR. ATTHACHAI HOMHUAN

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**MANAGER, REGULATORY AFFAIRS**

E: atthachai.h@tilleke.com | P: +66 2056 5610

Dr. Atthachai Homhuan is a manager of regulatory affairs at Tilleke & Gibbins. He prepares healthcare product dossiers for registration and he helps international companies develop market entry strategies for countries in Southeast Asia. His broad experience allows him to evaluate the feasibility of product registrations, conduct plant audits, and coordinate pre-clinical and clinical trials in accordance with international guidelines and standards. Atthachai also reviews healthcare product labeling for food, cosmetics, medical devices, and drug products in Thailand and other Southeast Asian countries.

He also assists pharmaceutical, chemical, life sciences, and biotechnology companies to draft and review their patent claims and specifications, and advises patent agents on amending claims and providing responses to office actions. Atthachai frequently drafts counterstatements against opposing parties in trademark and patent applications. His practice also includes advising on pre-litigation and litigation matters involving the life sciences, medical devices, and pharmaceuticals. He has presented before the IP&IT Court as a witness in chemistry and life sciences patent litigation.

Prior to joining the firm, Atthachai was a postdoctoral researcher in Japan and Taiwan, focusing on stem cell therapies and vaccine development. He applied his technical expertise to the industry when he became a project manager for a Thai vaccine manufacturing company, where he led the firm's R&D efforts. His industry background also includes serving as a formulation manager at the subsidiary of a well-known American pharmaceutical innovator, where he was a group leader in charge of the company's R&D and production functions. Atthachai holds a PhD in Pharmaceutical Technology from Thailand's Mahidol University.

compliance, product registration with the Thai FDA, and securing intellectual property rights in Thailand.

San was ranked among the top of his batch in the Thai Bar Association examinations, and also graduated with distinction with an LLM, focused on intellectual property and digital economy, from the University of Glasgow. He has a multidisciplinary background with advanced degrees in engineering and chemical engineering.

# Tilleke & Gibbins



**Bangkok:**  
bangkok@tilleke.com

**Hanoi:**  
vietnam@tilleke.com

**Ho Chi Minh City:**  
vietnam@tilleke.com

**Jakarta:**  
indonesia@tilleke.com

**Phnom Penh**  
cambodia@tilleke.com

**Vientiane:**  
lao@tilleke.com

**Yangon:**  
myanmar@tilleke.com

## Tilleke & Gibbins is a leading regional law firm in Southeast Asia

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# 01

## **REGULATORY, PRICING, AND REIMBURSEMENT OVERVIEW**

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1. What are the regulatory authorities with jurisdiction over drugs, biologicals, and medical devices in your country?

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2. What is the regulatory framework for the authorization, pricing, and reimbursement of drugs, biologicals, and medical devices?

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3. What are the steps to obtaining authorization to develop, test, and market a product?

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4. What are the approximate fees for each authorization?

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5. For how long are marketing authorizations/registrations valid? How are marketing authorizations/registrations renewed?

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6. How does the authorization process differ between brand-name products and generic products? Are there differences for local manufacturers versus foreign-owned manufacturers?

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7. How are combination products (drug + drug, drug + biologic, drug + device, biologic + device, drug + biologic + device) regulated?

8. How is compliance with regulation monitored and evaluated? Is the regulatory regime comparable with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration or the European Medicines Agency expectations and requirements?

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9. What is the potential range of penalties for noncompliance?

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10. Is there a national healthcare system? If so, how is it administered and funded?

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11. How does the government (or public) healthcare system function with private sector healthcare?

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12. Are prices of drugs and devices regulated and, if so, how?

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13. How are drugs and devices used by patients paid for? What roles do public and private payers play?

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14. Who dispenses drugs and devices to patients and how are those dispensers compensated?

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15. What are the professional and legal responsibilities of those who dispense drugs and devices? What role do they play in providing patient care, information, and safety?

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# 01 REGULATORY, PRICING, AND REIMBURSEMENT OVERVIEW

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## 1. What are the regulatory authorities with jurisdiction over drugs, biologicals, and medical devices in your country?

In Thailand, drugs, biologics, and medical devices are regulated by the Thai Food and Drug Administration (Thai FDA), under the supervision of the Ministry of Public Health (MOPH).

## 2. What is the regulatory framework for the authorization, pricing, and reimbursement of drugs, biologicals, and medical devices?

The Drug Act, B.E. 2510 (1967), as amended, provides the regulatory framework for the marketing authorization and post-marketing surveillance of drugs and biologics in Thailand. The Medical Device Act, B.E. 2551 (2008), as amended, provides legislation governing the marketing authorization and post-marketing surveillance of medical devices in Thailand.

In general, there are no specific regulations related to pricing for drugs and medical devices. The prices of medicinal products are only controlled when they are listed in the National List of Essential Drugs (NLED), a list of medications used by public hospitals and public health services. Under the control of the Ministry of Commerce, drugs on the NLED are subject to a median price policy. However, these pricing regulations only apply to drugs that are listed on the NLED and are prescribed in public hospitals. Private hospitals and drug stores are free to set their own prices for the drugs they sell, but the price must not exceed the sticker price—the maximum price set by the distributor.

The cost of drugs and medical devices on the NLED can be reimbursed by the government. Government hospitals generally provide drugs and medical devices from the NLED to civil servants and other persons under the universal coverage (THB 30 Scheme). Civil servants are not required to pay anything to the hospital, and patients under the THB 30 Scheme will pay a maximum of THB 30 (approximately USD 1). Public hospitals will be reimbursed in full by the government for the cost of the drugs and medical devices used in these cases. Another reimbursement scheme available to Thais is the Social Security Scheme, which is available to employees of private companies. For more information on reimbursements, please see the answer to [question 10](#) below.

## 3. What are the steps to obtaining authorization to develop, test, and market a product?

Generally, there are three steps to obtaining market authorization. First, an established company in Thailand must obtain either a drug manufacturing license or a drug importation license from the Thai FDA. After obtaining one of these licenses, the company can submit a request to manufacture or import samples for various purposes (e.g., clinical trials, research and development, etc.). For research purposes, the clinical trial protocol must be approved by the



relevant ethics committee. Once those first two steps are complete, the company can apply for marketing authorization of the particular drug product.

#### 4. What are the approximate fees for each authorization?

The new fee schedule is designed to facilitate the government for levying fees by defining the actual cost for each type of registration. At present, to the best of our knowledge, the fee assessed will not exceed the maximum values provided in the table below.

Pharmaceutical Products		
(1) Modern Drug Manufacturing Licenses	THB 50,000	Each copy
(2) Modern Drug Selling Licenses (Retail)	THB 5,000	Each copy
(3) Modern Drug Selling Licenses (Wholesale)	THB 10,000	Each copy
(4) Modern Drug Import License	THB 100,000	Each copy
(5) Modern Drug Registration License	THB 25,000	Each copy
Medical Devices		
(1) Medical Device Manufacturing Licenses	THB 100,000	Per issue
(2) Medical Device Import License	THB 200,000	Per issue
(3) Medical Device Sale License	THB 10,000	Per issue
(4) Medical Device Advertising License	THB 10,000	Per issue
(5) License Application	THB 1,000	Per issue

#### 5. For how long are marketing authorizations/registrations valid? How are marketing authorizations/registrations renewed?

The modern drug manufacturing and modern drug import license are both valid for a period of one year (from January 1 to December 31). Each type of license must be renewed before December 31 each year in order to be carried over to the following year.

Currently, marketing authorization drug licenses are valid indefinitely, as long as the accompanying drug manufacturing or drug import license is still valid. Amendment No. 6 of the Drug Act, which will come into force on October 13, 2019, prescribes that marketing authorization drug licenses have a validity of seven years, and can be renewed.

#### 6. How does the authorization process differ between brand-name products and generic products? Are there differences for local manufacturers versus foreign-owned manufacturers?

There are no significant differences between local and foreign-owned manufacturers. Both types of companies are required to apply for marketing authorization licenses for each drug product they wish to manufacture.

There are, however, major differences between original and generic product registrations. Original drugs are classified as new drugs, meaning the registration dossier must include both non-clinical and clinical documentation. To register a generic product, companies can merely submit the bioequivalence study to prove pharmaceutical equivalence with the original product.

Further, after obtaining a market authorization license, new drugs (original products) must undergo a mandatory Safety Monitoring Program (SMP). During the SMP, new drugs can only be dispensed in hospitals. The company manufacturing the original drug must provide periodic safety updates to the Thai FDA for the first two years. After the committee evaluates these reports over the two-year period, the drug can be released from the SMP and re-classified. SMPs are not required for generic drugs.

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**7. How are combination products (drug + drug, drug + biologic, drug + device, biologic + device, drug + biologic + device) regulated?**

If the drug combination is new, the Thai FDA will classify it as a new drug.

For a combination between a drug and medical device, the classification will be based on the products intended use; therefore, it requires an evaluation by both the Drug Bureau and the Medical Device Control Division. However, the final classification decision will be at the Thai FDA's discretion.

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**8. How is compliance with regulations monitored and evaluated? Is the regulatory regime comparable with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration or the European Medicines Agency expectations and requirements?**

Thailand's regulatory regime is comparable to that in the U.S. because it is governed by a centralized process through the Thai FDA, and specific subdivisions of the Thai FDA, namely the Drug Bureau and the Medical Device Control Division, are responsible for supervising drugs and medical devices, respectively.

In order to comply with the Thailand's regulatory regime, pharmaceutical companies must follow the provisions laid out in the Drug Act, as amended, and medical device companies must follow the provisions laid out in the Medical Device Act, as amended.

In order to monitor pharmaceutical and medical device companies and ensure that there are no adverse effects regarding the safety or efficacy of drugs, the Thai FDA conducts consistent pre- and post-marketing inspections. These inspections can come in a variety of forms, including on-site inspections for GMP compliance, on-site inspections to explore any aspect of the manufacturing process, and general on-site visits on a yearly basis.

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**9. What is the potential range of penalties for noncompliance?**

Under the Drug Act and the Medical Device Act, penalties for noncompliance by a licensee include suspension of import licenses, revocation of the marketing authorization licenses, a financial penalty, and imprisonment.

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**10. Is there a national healthcare system? If so, how is it administered and funded?**

The national healthcare system is divided into three main schemes:

1. The Social Security Scheme (SSS): This scheme is administered by the Social Security Office and financed by tripartite contributions from the government, employers, and employees. It covers employees, and employers with one or more employees. This scheme is not applicable to those covered by the Civil Servant Medical Benefit Scheme (below) or to employees of foreign entities.