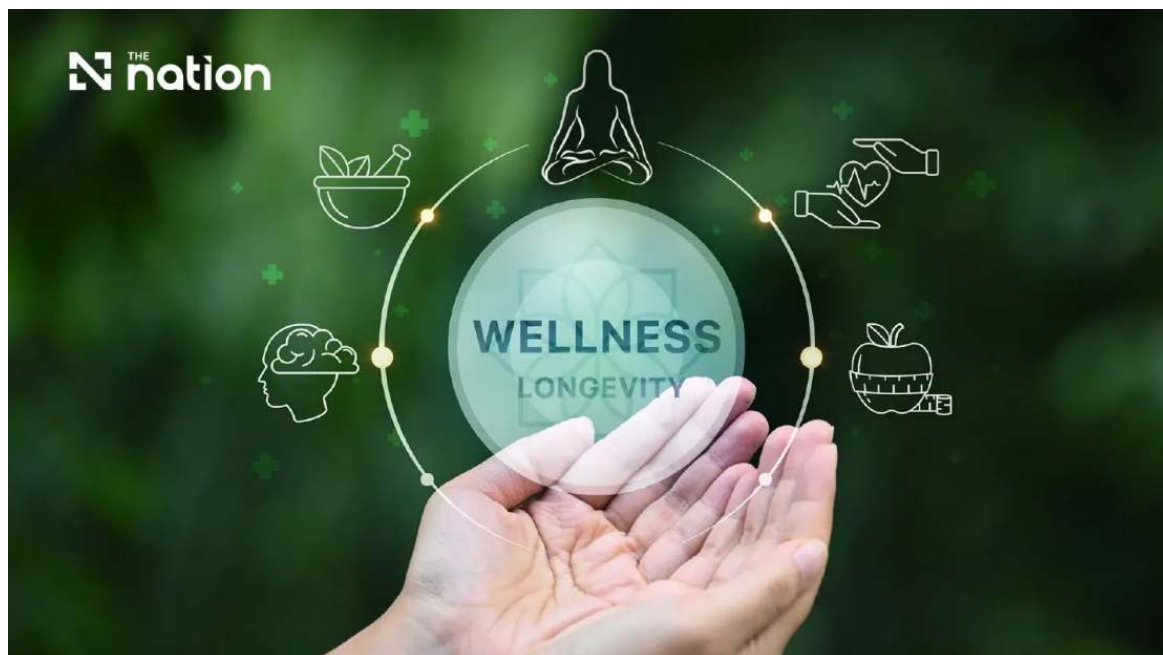


Thailand urged to turn herbs into high-value health products

Thailand's Trade Policy and Strategy Office (TPSO) is urging the agricultural sector to move beyond competing on commodity prices and develop higher-value wellness products, with investment in research and clinical testing of herbal extracts among four proposed priorities.



Nantapong Chiralerspong, director-general of TPSO under the Commerce Ministry, said the office's monitoring of global health trends showed a shift towards wellness and longevity. Consumers were increasingly investing in prevention and long-term health rather than waiting until they became ill before seeking treatment, driving demand for related products and services.

Thailand's herbal products retail market was worth US\$1.3575 billion in 2025, up 5.2% from the previous year and ranking 11th globally, according to TPSO. The market is projected to reach US\$1.8364 billion by 2030.

Consumers' emphasis on scientifically supported results was bringing food, beauty, technology and medicine closer together, Nantapong said. The office also cited a projection that global consumer spending on medical products and services would reach US\$6.7 trillion by 2040, more than double the level 15 years earlier.

Euromonitor International's report, "Business of Wellness and Longevity: Key Expansion and Growth Levers", projected that more than 50% of fast-moving consumer goods sold online in 2025 would emphasise health benefits. It also said consumers were willing to pay at least 20% more for products whose effectiveness was supported by scientific testing.

1. Medical-grade herbal extracts

TPSO described its four priorities as urgent, starting with investment in research and clinical testing to raise the standard of active compounds extracted from Thai herbs.

The office highlighted gotu kola for skin healing and anti-wrinkle properties, turmeric for anti-inflammatory properties and black ginger in relation to metabolism. It also identified herbs used for stress reduction, sleep support and brain health.

The aim is to develop extracts that deliver results supported by scientific evidence and to establish internationally recognised standards, allowing Thai producers to sell higher-value ingredients rather than raw materials alone.

TPSO pointed to bakuchiol as an example of the market's potential, citing growth of 19.1% in online sales between 2021 and 2025.

2. Functional foods and personalised nutrition

The second recommendation is to develop agricultural extracts and ingredients, including plant-based protein and rice-derived peptides, for everyday consumption through functional foods and drinks.

TPSO also identified people using glucagon-like peptide-1 (GLP-1) weight-loss medicines as a potential market, citing their high protein and other nutrient requirements.

Developing products for these consumers would respond to growing interest in personalised nutrition, the office said.

3. Technology for personalised healthcare

The office cited figures showing that 52% of digital consumers use generative artificial intelligence (AI) to search for health information. It also highlighted the use of smart mirrors to analyse facial characteristics and recommend combinations of dietary supplements.

Greater access to health information is helping consumers choose products suited to their individual needs, TPSO said.

Its third recommendation is for Thai businesses to connect their products with health-analysis systems and related technologies. The office said such integration could improve precision and credibility while allowing businesses to offer more personalised consumer experiences.

4. Products linked to wellness tourism

The market for experience-based luxury goods and services is projected to grow 52% between 2025 and 2030, offering another route for Thai producers to increase the value of their products, according to TPSO.

The fourth proposal would connect high-value agricultural products, herbs and health products with wellness tourism, spas, medical services and longevity clinics. The intention is to create comprehensive experiences that combine products with services.

Data from the Global Wellness Summit 2026 cited by the office put Thailand's wellness economy at about US\$43 billion, or around 1.4 trillion baht, in 2024, ranking 24th worldwide. Annual growth of approximately 10% placed Thailand seventh among the fastest-growing wellness economies.

The office also cited figures putting the Asia-Pacific wellness market at more than US\$2 trillion in 2024, an increase of 74% from 2019, making it the fastest-growing region. That expansion offered Thailand an opportunity to combine its strengths in agriculture, herbal products, healthcare and tourism, TPSO said.

Nantapong said developing medical-grade agricultural extracts alongside technology and health services could generate higher-value products and services for global markets. He described the sector as a potential new economic growth engine that could strengthen Thailand's long-term competitiveness.

He said future policy should follow an "Agri-Wellness Synergy" approach, combining functional agricultural innovation with opportunities in the global health market. The objective is to move agriculture beyond food production and make it part of the wider health economy.

Source: The Nation on 6 September 2026

<https://www.nationthailand.com/health-wellness/40070704>