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Legal Protection of Traditional Knowledge and Cultural Heritage: The Case of Thai Alcoholic Beverages

Traditional knowledge is a legacy from the past generations to present and future generations. Traditional knowledge plays a significant role in developing the national liquor industries of many countries. The well-known are Japanese sake, Chinese maotai, French wine, Scotch whisky, German beer, etc. Making local liquor by applying traditional knowledge is part of any society's cultural traditions. It is also an art that reflects local ingenuity and a way of life.

The paper examines the wide ranges of institutional barriers to the protection and commercialization of traditional knowledge concerning alcoholic beverage in Thailand. It examines economic policies of the Thai Government that are inimical to the direct use of traditional knowledge in this field. The non-recognition means the absence of incentives to develop and preserve the knowledge, with the consequence that the cultural heritage is disappearing. This can be seen in the case of Thailand's alcoholic beverage.