



**DOCTOR RAKSA CO., LTD.**

**“We aim to become a virtual hospital where all patient records are available in our application along with doctors, pharmacies, drugs, pharmacists, network hospitals and insurance. We expect that when people want to search for health information, they will turn to Raksa and not Google”**

Ms. Piyada Donchalernpak  
Chief Operating Officer

## Telemedicine for Thailand

A growing trend among patients who do not wish to or are unable to visit a local hospital or clinic, or are unwilling to wait the amount of time it sometimes can take to see a specialist, is to go online and get information about their issue, and then visit a local pharmacy to purchase their medicines. This bypasses the important step of a consultation with a doctor, who will be best qualified to diagnose a medical problem and recommend appropriate treatment. This trend has further accelerated with the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, which causes many potential patients to avoid going to hospitals altogether.



To better serve these patients, Ms. Piyada Donchalernpak, COO and co-founder of Doctor Raksa, together with her Singaporean co-founder, established their telemedicine startup company by creating a new mobile application named “Raksa”. This mobile app, which is available on both the App Store and Google Play, allows patients to enter their medical information and then consult with their choice of over 600 board certified physicians who can best evaluate their condition and recommend what medicines to use and in what dosage and duration, or what other follow up steps to take. Patients can also take their prescription to an online pharmacy and get it filled and delivered. The cost for a 15-minute consultation is a very affordable 200 baht. This also saves the patient time and travel costs. As a result, the usage of this service has been growing at a phenomenal rate, with about 70% of patients able to get a successful doctor's resolution through

the app. This also has the beneficial side effect of reducing crowds and congestion at hospitals, and freeing up the medical staff to focus more of their time and energy on the more critically ill patients who might need them. If for any reason a patient's problems can't be diagnosed or treated remotely, the doctors will then refer them go to their local hospital.

According to Ms. Piyada, the business model that the company is using is that of creating a “Business Platform”. It generates value by facilitating the communication between doctors and patients so they can provide and receive consultations via the platform. A major key to the success of this business model is the building of trust between the end users. The “Raksa” application creates credibility by displaying a full list of all doctors on call during the time of the patients’ access of the app. Patients can then view the doctors’ profiles, as well as see reviews and ratings from the doctor's previous patients. This feature helps create confidence that patients are getting consultation from qualified specialist doctors through the on-demand media, whether by chat, phone call or video call. *“One period of consultation is set at 15 minutes which is sufficient for most consultations”* Ms. Piyada said. Before consulting with a doctor, patients are first asked to provide their initial medical information to

the app. This practice is identical to a hospital visit where patients need to declare their medical history, and provide details of their symptoms before seeing a doctor.



### **Vision for the Future**

The spread of Covid-19 has not only accelerated the growth of the “Raksa” application's usage, but also created a demand for medical supply deliveries, because traveling to the pharmacy was no longer so convenient. This opened up a new opportunity to expand the services provided by “Raksa”. Said Ms. Piyada, “We have launched an e-Pharmacy service that connects consumers to pharmacy networks across Thailand. Patients can search for drugs/ medical devices/ test kits and other medical-related items as prescribed by their doctors and trust that the medications or products ordered in “Raksa” come from qualified pharmacists”.

The “Raksa” application targets to have 20 million patient users globally. The plan is to first build a strong foundation in Thailand before expanding to

other countries. Ms. Piyada explained that having a strong foundation means having a sufficient number of patients and doctors in the pool together with a scope of service that can support almost all of the potential needs of consumers in terms of healthcare, e.g. consultations, medications, hospitalizations, diagnosis and health insurance. It should take about 3-5 years to build such a foundation.

### **Attractive BOI Incentives**

Investment supports from BOI are an invaluable help for startup companies like Doctor Raksa Co., Ltd. For example, assisting in the shareholder registration process for foreigners and the employment process for hiring foreign laborers. Ms. Piyada highlighted that without support from BOI, the company would be unable to raise funds from abroad because the normal ratio of foreign ownership in Thai companies is limited to 49% versus Thai ownership of 51%. It also makes it possible to hire foreign engineers who have the work experience and knowledge that matches the company's business needs. Without the BOI's support, the employment process can be difficult. The BOI helps to simplify the immigration process by, for example, reducing the waiting time for acquiring work permits, and this helps in attracting foreign talent to work in the company.

The Thailand Board of Investment (BOI) offers a wide

range of tax and non-tax incentives for projects that meet national development objectives. Tax-based incentives include an exemption or reduction of import duties on machinery and raw materials, as well as corporate income tax exemptions of up to eight years. Non-tax incentives include permission to bring in expatriates, own land and take or remit foreign currency abroad.

In response to the ongoing COVID-19 health pandemic, on 13 April 2020 the Board of Investment announced a variety of additional measures to further support investment in Thailand's medical sector. These amendments for BOI-eligible businesses aim to accelerate investment in the production of crucial medical equipment and supplies. Amendments include a 50% corporate income tax reduction for an additional three years, supplementary import duty exemptions, and expanded timelines for income tax exemptions.

Additional information about specific activities relating to the digital technology industry can be found by clicking [here](#) or contacting the BOI's Investment Promotion Bureau 4.

Source: BOI e-Journal, 3 (6), 12-17

As of November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020