

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

I am a policy analyst, and work at the Follow-up and Evaluation Section of the Technical Division of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). My background is pharmacist. My responsibilities are implementation of national drug policy and evaluation project of the FDA. I am also interested in surveillance of the quality of food. Every year, I report the analytical results of food, drugs, medical devices, narcotic substances and cosmetics to other divisions of the FDA and provincial health offices. I found that the standard of food quality in terms of hygiene was quite low. This is a big problem for the FDA which tried to solve this for many years. But the FDA could not get full coverage in all areas due to shortage of manpower. The question arises: What are the main factors that influence on this problem? The executives of the FDA considered that a possible solution for the problem could be if they used an alternative manpower strategy. Increasing the food inspection coverage seems to be the best way to raise the food quality standards. So, the Secretary General of the FDA and the Director of the Inspection Division of the FDA would like to know whether the project to appoint BMA health officers as food inspectors is appropriate or not, and if the training program on food inspection for the BMA Health Officers in this project is efficient or not. The follow up and evaluation section of the FDA is responsible for the evaluation of this project, especially concerning the training program on food inspection for BMA Health Officers. As I work in this section, I am also interested in the evaluation of this project. As a part of my learning process at the

College of Public Health, Chulalongkorn University, I thought that if I analyzed and worked on this project, my division would benefit of it, and I would also learn from it. I intended to find out various ways to improve the performance of the BMA Health Officer in the project, and ultimately the quality of food in terms of safety and hygiene.

This study was divided into different parts. I wrote an essay on problem solving for manpower shortage in the FDA. It is followed by a proposal to evaluate the project to appoint BMA Health Officers as food inspectors and to find out the ways on how to improve their activities. In the data exercise, the result of the pilot study and secondary data from the Inspection Division of the FDA are discussed. A presentation on the proposed study was done for the committee members.