

**The 30th General Conference of Directors of National Libraries in Asia and Oceania
15-17 November 2024
Dubai, United Arab Emirates**

COUNTRY REPORT

Period covered by this report: 1 January – 31 December 2023

Name of country: Thailand

Name of library: National Library of Thailand (NLT)

Name(s) of National Librarian, Director-General and/or Director, President:

Ms. Bubphar Chuchat, Acting Director of the National Library of Thailand

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1. Facts and Figures

- a. Budget: Fiscal year 2023: 1,013,014 USD (36,912,200 THB)
- b. Total Staff:
 - i. Graduate or Post Graduate with library qualifications: 81 staff
 - ii. Other qualifications: 54 staff
- c. Total Collections:
 - i. Physical collection: 5,368,998 Items
 - ii. Digital collection preserved: 435,072 items
- d. Visitorship: 2023
 - i. Physical visits to reading rooms: 216,685 persons
 - ii. Digital visits: 1,357,293 persons (via Website, Youtube, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Line and Tiktok)
- e. Inter Library Loans provided (Annual): -

2. Overview of Major or New Developments in Library Buildings, Collections, Access or Services

1) The Reader Project

The Reader Project, initiated by the National Library of Thailand, aims to expand access to library resources for library users unable to visit the library in person. Recognising the physical barriers some individuals face, the project delivers books directly to users' homes via mail, completely free of charge. This initiative not only bridges the gap for those with physical limitations but also

broadens the opportunity for all users to comfortably engage with the library's resources from their homes.

2) Co-Working Spaces

The National Library of Thailand has introduced a newly built co-working space, open for free use by the communities. This effort reflects the library's commitment to transforming its space into a versatile and functional environment, catering to the needs of the communities. By offering this resource, the library aims to foster a collaborative atmosphere that supports learning, creativity, and connection within the community.

3) The NLT Café

The NLT Café is a space deliberately designed to enhance the overall comfort of the library by providing a relaxed environment where users can enjoy a drink while reading. The aim is to create a more inviting atmosphere, allowing visitors to unwind and spend their free time in a comfortable, cozy setting, making the library experience even more enjoyable.

4) The NLT Theatre

The National Library of Thailand had renovated the NLT theatre which was designed for showcasing Thai films. This theatre features classic Thai films provided by the Film Archive, allowing users to enjoy screens for free. This aims to enhance cultural appreciation and promote the significance of Thai cinemas, while also supporting the local movie industry.

5) Expanding the digital collections

In 2023, the library expanded its digital collection by digitizing approximately 56,000 items, including manuscripts, rare books, old newspapers, old journals, microfilms, microjackets, and phonograph records.

3. Collaborations with Libraries, Archives and Museums

1) Working collaboratively with the National Archive of Thailand and SEAMEO SPAFA to have Thailand's National Collection of Palm-Leaf Manuscripts of Phra That Phanom Chronicle inscribed on the Memory of the World International Register in 2023

The National Library of Thailand, in collaboration with the National Archive and SEAMEO SPAFA (The SEAMEO Regional Centre for Archaeology and Fine Arts), had actively worked to have the Palm-Leaf manuscripts of Phra That Phanom Chronicle registered as a UNESCO's Memory of the World. This initiative aims to recognise and preserve the cultural and historical significance of these manuscripts, which reflect the rich heritage of Thailand. Notably, the Palm-Leaf

manuscripts of Phra That Phanom Chronicle were registered as World Memory Heritage on May 18, 2023, sparking widespread interest in understanding the importance of the Nation's cultural heritage. By pursuing this prestigious designation, the project seeks to ensure that the Plam-Leaf manuscripts of Phra That Phanom Chronicle are safeguarded for future awareness and appreciation of Thailand's cultural legacy on a global scale.

2) Collaborative effort to Enhance the Environment of a school library in a remote area

The National Library of Thailand collaborated with Bejaratana-Suvadhana Foundation, and Petcharatrachasuda Library School which located in a remote area in Sa Kaew Province, with underprivileged students, to enhance their library facilities. This partnership aims to create a more inviting and resources-rich environment for students, encouraging them to develop their reading habits and love for learning. By improving library resources and environment, The NLT seeks to foster a supportive atmosphere that empowers these students, making reading more accessible and enjoyable.

3) Collaborated with the Film Archive to offer Classic Thai films to the library users

The NLT is set to collaborate with the Film Archive to make classic Thai films available to the public free of charge. This initiative aims to enhance access to vintage cinema, allowing library users to appreciate and engage with the rich cultural heritage reflected in these films. The project supported by the Film Archive ensures that this collaboration does not breach or infringe copyright laws. By providing this resource, the National Library of Thailand seeks to promote a deeper understanding and appreciation of Thai culture through the art of filmmaking and enrich the community's cultural experience.

4. International Collaborations such as Formal Arrangements for Cooperation with National Libraries:

1) Working collaboratively with Southeast Asian National Libraries to organise the CONSAL Conference

We work in close collaboration with the National Libraries across Southeast Asia to organise the CONSAL (Congress of Southeast Asian Librarians) conference, which is held every three years. This international cooperation involves each member country taking turns to host the event, fostering regional cooperation and knowledge exchange among library professionals. Through this

collaborative effort, the National Library of Thailand contributes to strengthening the regional library network and enhancing the development of library services across Southeast Asia. To ensure the success of the event, an online meeting among the national libraries in the region is held annually, bringing together the organising team to prepare for the conference in 2025.

2) National Library of Thailand's Children's Librarian Participating in AKRCC Program

The NLT's executive, as a working-level Committee, has cooperatively engaged in a library and training program called the AKRCC General Meeting (ASEAN-ROK Children's Reading Culture Development Committee) organised by The National Library for Children and Young Adults of Korea (NLCY). Additionally, 2 children's librarians from The NLT also participate in the AKRCC General Meeting which will held during 2023 -2024. This participation aims to strengthen the reading skills of children through targeted training initiatives. By sending our librarians to participate in this program, we have established a strong partnership that fosters the exchange of knowledge and best practices in library services. The effort not only improves the capabilities of our librarians but also ultimately benefits the children, encouraging a great love for reading and learning.

3) Participated in the Mekong-Lancang Cooperation Seminar on Building Network on Preservation and Conservation of Literary Heritage among Mekong-Lancang Area

The Library actively participated in Mekong-Lancang Cooperation Seminar organized by the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture, Department of Historical Research, and the National Library of Myanmar. The director of the National Library of Thailand contributed as a keynote speaker, presenting insights on the topic of "Safeguarding Literary Heritage: Preservation Management, Disaster Preparation and Digital Preservation - The National Library of Thailand's case" and also authored an article focused on the preservation and protection of cultural and literacy treasures. The seminar was attended by representatives from Mekong-Lancang regional countries, including China, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Vietnam, and Thailand which had 10 participants who attended the program sharing valuable strategies and experiences to promote the preservation of heritage across the Mekong region.
