

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF LAOS (NLL)

ສັງຄົມແຫ່ງການຮຽນຮູ້
Gateway to the Knowledge Society



COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY

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INTRODUCTION

NLL MISSION STATEMENT

“The National Library of Laos has a mission to preserve national cultural heritage; foster reading for development; and to promote organisational excellence in order to build a knowledge society for Lao people.”

- National Library of Laos Mission Statement, 2015

NLL COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

- Objective 1: Acquire, Preserve and Build Knowledge

Build NLL Collections which:

- i. reflect and preserve Lao history, culture and society
- ii. better inform Lao people and international visitors about Lao history, culture and society.
- iii. support social inclusion for all Lao people,
- iv. promote innovation and new forms of creativity; and
- v. incorporate local knowledge and wisdom.

- Objective 2: Improve Public Access to NLL

Improve public access to collections and services, including through the “Digital Library” to:

- i. enable more equitable and inclusive access to online information
- ii. improve the economic, educational, health and social livelihoods of Lao people, including all ethnic groups.
- iii. encourage deeper regional and international links
- iv. support lifelong learning and the development of a knowledge society

PURPOSE

The main purpose of this Collection Development Policy is to:

- Support the NLL’s mission statement and objectives as set out in the NLL’s Strategic Objectives
- Provide guidelines for NLL staff for the establishment of processes and procedures related to the development and management of the Library’s collections
- Provide key stakeholders and library clients with an overview of the principles behind decisions made by the NLL in relation to acquisitions, preservation, accessibility and the withdrawal of specific resources

SELECTION GUIDELINES

The National Library of Laos has a unique responsibility to collect the historical and cultural record of Laos. This includes monographic and periodical printed resources; sound and visual image media; microfilms, microfiches, manuscript, maps, music, realia, photographs, pictures, ephemera; as well as the paper archives and records of government ministries.

The Library also has a special duty to satisfy the information needs of its users in a number of areas not related to Laos and Lao language. As the amount of material published in Lao is still relatively small, the Library maintains a large collection of foreign language books including Vietnamese, Thai, French, English, Russian, Korean and Japanese. As the focus on English language as the world's "lingua franca" continues to grow, it is expected that the NLL will also focus on acquiring resources for its *English Language Collection* to better meet the needs of users.

Every physical item entails processing work and provision of storage space at the Library and can also involve conservation work. The National Library has a long history of accepting donations from a range of sources without any collection development policy in place. This has resulted in collections which are outdated, no longer relevant, do not meet the needs of users and are costly to maintain. It is expected that the NLL's move to the new library building in 2016 will provide an opportunity for the NLL to address these issues through the *Withdrawal of Material* section as set out in this policy document.

The NLL is committed to improving access to information for all. As a result, the format of the material is an important consideration of its acceptance with the focus on making resources more accessible to users through the "*Digital Library*".

SELECTION CRITERIA

Collections are acquired by the NLL mainly by legal deposit, donations (members of the public, businesses, organisations and cultural gifts) and purchases. The acquisition of duplicate non-essential resources will be avoided.

As a general principle new acquisitions are evaluated with consideration to:

- Relevance to the mission statement and strategic objectives of the National Library
- Addressing regional relationships and partnerships - ASEAN
- Accuracy and quality
- Appropriate level of content
- Expected usage
- Format
- Currency: recent edition preferred unless required for research
- Reasonable cost including administrative and maintenance costs

LEGAL DEPOSIT

The Legal Deposit Act in Laos has been in place since 2012 and is set out in Article 17 of the Lao Library Law (see Annex A). This requires all individuals, legal entities or organisations to provide 3 or more copies of printed material to National Library.

There are no plans at present to extend Legal Deposit legislation in this country to include digital resources published on the Internet.

DONATIONS

Donations to the NLL are now accepted on the basis of relevance to the objectives of the NLL and selection guidelines. The NLL reserves the right to decline or dispose of donated material that does not meet selection guidelines.

As the country's premier memory institution, the NLL also acts as an archive and repository for paper archives and records of government ministries. It is government policy for the National Library to act as an archive for every Government organisation. The Library receives books, publications, papers and documents from Government departments in its role as a government archive. The library reviews the material and retains a selection for historical purposes.

PURCHASES

The NLL is a government organisation so is funded by the Lao Government. It reports to the Department of Publishing which in turn, sits under the Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism.

The library's acquisitions budget is very limited and varies from year to year.

SENSITIVE MATERIAL

Article 36 of the Lao Library Law prohibits the acquisition of material containing content that is contrary to the direction, policy, peace and other public service laws. However, the NLL can retain authorized special items for research purposes in a special reading room.

WITHDRAWAL OF MATERIAL

Due to limited staffing, storage and funding resources, the National Library needs to ensure that resources are available for priority materials in its collections. These materials include those that reflect Lao's cultural heritage, its people and history.

It is also necessary for the NLL to maintain an active, ongoing withdrawal program for materials that have little or no residual information value to the Library and its users and or require significant storage and preservation costs.

The general reference collection contains many single issues or short runs of titles that were received as part of donation or exchange programs in the past and have little or no residual information value and occupy valuable storage space. These can be routinely withdrawn.

Donated material that has unmanageable storage and preservation requirements and is now clearly outside the scope of Collection Development Policy will be withdrawn.

MATERIAL NOT TO BE WITHDRAWN:

- All items that have been received through Legal Deposit
- All items on or about Laos, or are considered of significant importance to Lao people, its history and or cultural heritage
- Materials with significant ongoing information value, not readily accessible by other means, providing storage and preservation remain manageable
- Materials that are not held elsewhere in Laos, providing they have some ongoing information value and storage and preservation requirements are manageable.

MATERIALS THAT MAY BE WITHDRAWN:

- Duplicate copies
- Outdated non Lao newspapers when an easier to store and use alternative format is acquired
- Outdated non Lao journals/periodicals when an easier to store and use alternative format is acquired
- Foreign language books which are not considered as literature or of any informational value to that country or culture
- Superseded Reference Library material
- Regularly updated directories, handbooks, timetables and guides that contain information that is useful when current and where back issues are not required for historical information
- Material whose content is now readily accessible online
- Originals of reformatted material which is no longer accessible
- Material (including heritage material) that has been copied to another format may be disposed of if it has physically deteriorated to the point of being inaccessible
- Withdrawal without donor approval

METHOD OF DISPOSAL

Withdrawn donated material will be returned to the donor if the donor is known and this is the stated preference. If this option is not available, withdrawn materials will be offered to other collecting institutions that have an interest in acquiring them, if these can be identified.

Other surplus material may be sold with proceeds used for ongoing collection development and other core library programs. Withdrawn material will only be dumped if no other disposal method is practicable.

PHYSICAL COLLECTIONS

The National Library maintains a physical collection of books in a range of languages, journals, magazines, newspapers, music, music instruments, maps, manuscripts and unpublished works. Due to space constrictions in the current building, the library is unable to make all of these collections available to the public. It is expected that the move to the new building in 2016 will enable the National Library to make these collections more accessible to the public.

LAO LANGUAGE COLLECTION

The National Library has a small collection of Lao language books due to many factors. These relate to the relatively small size of the Publishing sector in Laos, the relatively recent introduction of Lao Library Law (2012) relating to Legal Deposit and the lack of an adequate acquisitions budget.

The development of the Lao language book collection is one of the highest priorities for the National Library.

REFERENCE COLLECTION

The National Library currently maintains a reference collection totaling more than 5000 monographs and serials. These publications are predominately in English with a small number in Lao language. It is expected that a significant number of the English language books will be withdrawn from the collection due to the dated nature of the information and, as access to digital information resources becomes more available.

FOREIGN LANGUAGE COLLECTION

The aim of the National Library is to collect, store, catalogue, and provide access to a representative collection of foreign literature. It currently maintains books collections in English, French, Thai, Vietnamese, Korean, Japanese and Russian.

The library has a history of accepting all donations of foreign books regardless of relevance, information value or literary standards. This has become unsustainable. It is expected that the contents of some of these collections will be withdrawn over time as they no longer meet the selection guidelines set out in this policy.

However, as the country's imperative to learn English continues, books and resources in English will be given preference over other languages. In addition, as a member of the ASEAN community, the Library will also focus on building its collections of information and literature books related to other ASEAN countries.

NEWSPAPER AND JOURNAL COLLECTION

The National Library maintains a broad collection of newspapers, journals, magazines and periodicals which is available to visitors and members in the Library's public reading room. These include all the Lao daily newspapers and periodicals as well as a selection of international daily newspapers and journals in English.

The Library also manages the archiving of the Lao language newspapers which is available for research purposes to visitors.

CHILDREN'S COLLECTION

For the past 25 years the National Library has actively worked with the community through its reading, storytelling and literacy programs to promote a love of reading in Lao children.

The Children's Collection aims to provide a creative learning environment for children to explore books, read for pleasure and participate in literacy related activities. In addition to the Children's Collection located in the Library, it also provides access to reading resources through the Library's mobile outreach services.

The Library maintains a collection of Lao Language picture books as well as a range of foreign language picture books in English, French, Thai and Japanese. The priority for the Library continues to be building the Children's Lao language collection but it is open to accepting donations of foreign language children's books, especially English language.

PALM LEAF MANUSCRIPT (BAILAN) COLLECTION

The National Library has a collection of more than 1500 palm leaf manuscripts with some almost 500 years old. These works appear in up to four scripts including Tham, and nine languages including Lao and Pali. These manuscripts provide a unique insight of Lao Traditional knowledge covering subjects ranging from law, medicine, philosophy and religion to folk tales.

The digitisation of the Palm Leaf manuscripts commenced in 2004 which has made more than 12,000 images available as part of the National Library's digital collection.

TRADITIONAL MUSIC COLLECTION

The National Library established the *Archives of Traditional Music in Laos (ATML)* in 1999. This project has created a collection of more than 3000 audio recordings, nearly 100 hours of video recordings as well as photographs, interviews, transcripts, drawings, music instruments and interviews from twenty five different ethnic groups across Laos.

In addition, the Library maintains a collection of more than 900 LP records of international contemporary music and speeches by public figures from Soviet era and a selection of contemporary Lao music in both analogue and digital formats.

INDOCHINA RARE BOOK COLLECTION

The National Library maintains a collection of more than 4000 rare books and journals from the French Indochina period (circa 1870s – 1954). These books and journals are predominantly in French and include a large number of photographs, lithographs and illustrations. This collection provides a rare and unique insight into life in Laos during the colonial period.

A selection of these illustrations can be found in the Library's Picture collection which will be exhibited when space becomes available in the new library building.

CARTOGRAPHIC (MAP) COLLECTION

The library has a collection of more than 200 maps, plans and diagrams relating to Laos, its provinces and the city of Vientiane with some dating back to French colonial period (pre 1955).

Due to current space restrictions, these maps are not currently available to the public. It is expected that the move to the new Library building in 2016 will allow these maps to be on permanent display to the public.

ASEAN COLLECTION

The National library of Laos is continuing to build strategic relationships with the National Libraries in each of the ASEAN countries. It aims to build a special ASEAN collection to reflect Laos' close historic, cultural and economic ties with other countries in the ASEAN community.

The Library has already amassed a collection of 300 books donated by the National Library Board of Singapore which showcase various aspects of Singapore which will be on display in the new library building in 2016. It is hoped that this special ASEAN Collection will provide different perspectives of the culture and history of other countries, fostering mutual understanding and respect.

DIGITAL COLLECTIONS

As set out in Objective 2, the National Library aims to improve access to its collection through the *Digital Library*.

Through the *Digital Library Access Initiative (DLAI)* Project the National Library will build a web portal that provides online access to the Library's collections and services. It is a key part of NLL's efforts to create an online Digital Library that makes information available for the benefit of all communities in Laos. The web portal will be available in Lao and English languages.

Stage One of the project will provide access to:

- NLL digitised collection of Lao palm leaf manuscripts
<http://www.laomanuscripts.net/en/index>
- NLL digitised collection of Lao traditional music <http://www.seasite.niu.edu/lao/>
- NLL digitised collection of Lao images from the French Indochina period

Stage Two of the project will expand to include:

- NLL's Open Public Access Catalogue (Library Catalogue)
- Link to the NLL National Bibliography http://kawinphong.com/show_data/
- Educational, economic, health and agricultural research databases (including HINARI, AGORA, OARE and ARDI) <http://www.research4life.org/>
- Lao English Agricultural Dictionary <http://dict.nafri.org.la/>
- Links to other ASEAN National Library collections
- Links to Lao resources in other library and information institutions
https://wayback.archive-it.org/1054/*/http://inlao.com.la/
- Links to partners and other stakeholders - <http://www.ifla.org/>
- Links to other EResources including eJournals, databases, eBooks, eLearning modules

DIGITAL LIBRARY OF LAO MANUSCRIPTS - DLLM

The National Library's Digital Library of Lao Manuscripts provides access to over 12,000 texts of palm leaf manuscripts from provinces across Laos. This database can be searched by title, ancillary term, language, script, category, material, location, date, and code number.

DLLM also provides information about the Lao literary tradition, the Preservation of Lao Manuscripts Programme, study resources, and a gallery of photographs showing the manuscript preservation work of the National Library. The DLLM Collection can be found at <http://www.laomanuscripts.net/en/about/project>

TRADITIONAL MUSIC

The Library's traditional Music Collection will be available online on the NLL's web portal as part of the DLAI Project.

Currently, a selection of music from the *Archives of Traditional Music in Laos (ATML)* collection is available online at http://www.seasite.niu.edu/lao/culture/traditional_music/music_collection.htm

INDOCHINA RARE BOOKS

As part of the Library's ongoing preservation and digitisation program, the National Library has a timetable for conserving and scanning every book and journal in the collection.

A selection of illustrations from these books and journals will be accessible online as part of the *Digital Library Access Initiative (DLAI)* Project.

FUTURE COLLECTION PRIORITIES

The National Library will be moving to a new building in 2016. The size and layout of the new library building presents an ideal opportunity for the Library to expand its collections to include items which the library has previously not been in a position to acquire, store maintain or exhibit.

In addition, this Collection Development policy has provided the NLL with the opportunity to identify gaps in the National Library's collection. In order for the NLL to achieve its strategic objectives and be recognised as the country's foremost memory institution, it is actively pursuing opportunities to build both its physical and digital collections in these areas:

- Pictures – illustrations, photographs, drawing, lithographs and paintings that reflect Lao history, ethnic diversity, traditional culture and society
- Oral History & Folklore – audio and audio-visual recordings focusing on traditional knowledge in Lao indigenous communities
- Manuscripts and other unpublished works – that relate to significant events or people in Lao history
- EResources – including EBooks, journals, databases and other online sources of information to improve access to information and promote lifelong learning

DOCUMENT HISTORY AND VERSION CONTROL

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