

Unofficial translation



Lao People's Democratic Republic
Peace Independence Democracy Unity Prosperity

President

No.: 053/P
Vientiane Capital, dated 16 January 2012

DECREE

of the

PRESIDENT

of the

LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

On the Promulgation of the Law on Libraries

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- Pursuant to Item 1, Article 67, Chapter VI of the Constitution of the Lao People's Democratic Republic on the promulgation of the Constitution and laws adopted by the National Assembly;
 - Pursuant to Resolution No. 028/NA, dated 21 December 2011, of the National Assembly of the Lao People's Democratic Republic regarding the adoption of the Law on Libraries; and
 - Pursuant to the Request Letter of the National Assembly Standing Committee No. 028/NASC, dated 03 January 2012.

The President of

the Lao People's Democratic Republic hereby issues the Presidential Decree:

Article 1 The Law on Libraries is hereby promulgated.

Article 2 This Presidential Decree is effective from the date of signature.

The President of the Lao PDR

[Signature and seal]

Choummaly SAYASONE

Unofficial translation



Lao People's Democratic Republic
Peace Independence Democracy Unity Prosperity

National Assembly

No.: 028/NA

RESOLUTION

of the

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

of the

LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

On the Adoption of the Law on Libraries

Pursuant to Item 2, Article 53 of the Constitution and Item 1, Article 3 the Law on the National Assembly of the Lao People's Democratic Republic on the rights and duties of the National Assembly.

After the 2nd Ordinary National Assembly's Session of the VII Legislature have considerably and thoroughly considered the contents of the Law on Libraries in the agenda of the afternoon session of 21 December 2011.

The Session hereby decides:

Article 1 To adopt the Law on Libraries by majority vote.

Article 2 This Resolution is effective from date of signature.

Vientiane Capital, dated 21 December 2011

The President of the National Assembly

[Signature and seal]

Pany YATHOTOU

Unofficial translation



Lao People's Democratic Republic
Peace Independence Democracy Unity Prosperity

National Assembly

No.: 012/NA
Vientiane Capital, dated 21 December 2011

LAW ON LIBRARIES

Part I
General Provisions

Article 1 Objectives

This Law defines the principles, regulations, and measures related to the organization, operation, regulation, supervision, and development of libraries in order to promote reading, research, and the dissemination of concepts, policies, laws, regulations, and products of intellectual properties, and the provision of valuable knowledge, benefiting society and aiming to develop human resources and to contribute to the protection and the development of the nation.

Article 2 Libraries

Libraries are knowledge storage centers that gather, store, and collect books and printed materials that contain the knowledge and intelligence of the human race. Libraries are systemized in accordance with technical principles to allow information supply and services to the public at all levels in society.

Article 3 Definitions

The terms used in this Law have the following meanings:

1. **Library Science** means library subjects that are taught and learned;
2. **Librarian** means a person who has graduated from a Library Science course;
3. **National Bibliography** means a collection of book names of the nation;
4. **Rare Scripts** mean materials 50 years old and above;
5. **Audiovisual Materials** mean materials that record information, pictures, lights, colors, and sounds;
6. **Habitual Formation** means awareness formation that becomes habitual;
7. **Mobile Library** means books and printed materials organized on a shelf, bag, vehicle, or boat which moves from place to place under the supervision of a legitimate established library;
8. **Library Resource** means books, printed materials, and other materials;
9. **Electronic Library** means the use of modern electronic tools in library work.

Article 4 Government Policies on Library Activities

The Government promotes individuals, legal entities, and organizations, both public and domestic, and foreign private sectors to invest in and contribute to the establishment and development of libraries to provide information for education, research, and the improvement of the people's knowledge by laying down appropriate policies, regulations, and measures, mainly regarding the exemption or reduction of taxes and duties in accordance with laws and regulations.

The Government encourages and promotes individuals, legal entities, and organizations to raise awareness of reading by organizing library activities such as mobile libraries, research, writing, creative activities, printing of books, and technical library training by the provision of human resources, funds, vehicles, and necessary equipment.

Article 5 Principles for the Operation of Libraries

The operation of libraries shall follow the following main principles:

1. To ensure nationalism, scientific, historical, public, advancement and modernity;
2. To provide the public has access to useful knowledge for the development of human resources;
3. To ensure services which meet standards and provide a suitable social environment.

Article 6 Scope of Application of this Law

This Law applies to domestic and foreign individuals, legal entities, and organizations that operate and use libraries in the Lao PDR.

Article 7 International Cooperation

The Government promotes coordination and cooperation with other countries, and regional and international entities, related to library activities through technical encouragement, sharing lessons learnt, and new technological achievements in order to upgrade the knowledge and capacities of library staff, aiming to enhance and modernize library work, and to benefit from and implement international agreements and conventions which the Lao PDR is a party.

Part II Libraries Work

Chapter 1 Types of Libraries

Article 8 Types of Libraries

There are six types of libraries:

1. National libraries;
2. Local libraries;
3. University, college, institute, school, and vocational school libraries;
4. General school libraries;
5. Specific libraries; and
6. Reading rooms.

Each type of library has the same general objectives and duties with the differences in organizational structure, human resources, status, size, and use target.

Article 9 National Library

A national library is a library at national level established at the central level as a center of information and the technical center for other libraries under the Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism.

Article 10 Local Libraries

Local libraries are libraries established at provincial, district, and village levels for reading, and the collection and provision of information to the public.

Article 11 University, College, Institute, School, and Vocational School Libraries

University, college, institute, school, and vocational school libraries are libraries established for education, technical research, and learning/teaching, mainly for teachers, students, researchers, and technicians.

Article 12 General School Libraries

General school libraries are libraries established to provide data and information for reading, research, and learning/teaching, mainly for teachers and students.

Article 13 Specific Libraries

Specific libraries are libraries established for a specific use within a ministry, agency, organization, department, hospital, factory, company, or religious place for reading, research, and the improvement of knowledge, mainly for staff members, soldiers, police officers, workers, business people, clergy, etc. within their workplaces.

Article 14 Reading Rooms

Reading rooms are rooms arranged in an appropriate place such as a family or individual reading room where books and printed materials are placed differently from a library system for reading and research.

Chapter 2 Library Work

Article 15 Organization of Library Work

Library work organized according to a librarian methodology system as following:

1. Mobilization of library resources;
2. Provision of books, printed materials, and audiovisual materials;
3. Analyzing library resources;
4. Reading services;
5. Reading promotion; and
6. Protection of library resources.

Article 16 Mobilization of Library Resources

Mobilization of library resources is through procurement, donation, exchange, self-production, transfer of rights, provision of books and printed and audiovisual materials, equipment, and vehicles for conservation and the promotion of reading.

Article 17 Provision of Books and Printed and Audiovisual Materials

Individuals, legal entities, or organizations which are authorized to print books, other printed materials, and produce audiovisual materials must provide to the National Library at least three books or items for storage, dissemination of the author's works, and the promotion of reading.

Article 18 Analyzing Library Resources

Analyzing library resources is the grouping and identifying of subjects, the creation of a database, the making of record cards for items, the compilation of summaries, the creation of a national bibliography, the assignation of book numbers in line with international standards, and the organizing of library resources in order to provide services.

Article 19 Reading Services

Reading services are in-place reading services: borrowing and returning books, printed materials, and audiovisual material; provision of reference services, rare scripts, and internet services; answering questions; and locating research data.

Article 20 Reading Promotion

Reading promotion is the organization of events related to reading such as mobile library services, storytelling, quizzes, the reading of poems and idioms, singing, dancing, drawing, toy invention, internet usage, and acting.

Article 21 Protection of Library Resources

Library resources, especially valuable items in a library, must be protected in a sustainable manner. If damaged, torn, or not functional, they must be repaired to their original state or replicated by various means, and the original book, date, month and year must be recorded.

If a library requires a valuable book, item of printed material, or audiovisual material, appropriate compensation must be provided to the owner or custodian.

An individual who borrows books, printed materials, or audiovisual materials, and causes them to be damaged, torn, or to cease functioning, must compensate the library for such damage in accordance with specific regulations.

Part III Establishment and Administration of a Library

Chapter 1 Establishment of a Library

Article 22 Right to Establish a Library

Both domestic and foreign individuals, legal entities, or organizations have the right to establish their own libraries in the Lao PDR by following the steps and conditions as outlined in Articles 23 and 24 of this Law.

Article 23 Request to Establish a Library

Those intending to establish any types of library shall submit a request to the Library Administration Agency.

The Library Administration Agency shall study and consider the request within twenty working days from the date the request is received. In the event of non-approval, a notice shall be given to the requester together with written reasons.
A reading room can be established without requesting approval.

Article 24 Requirements for Establishing a Library

Requirements for establishing a library, other than a reading room, are as following:

1. The library must have a name, purpose, and goal;
2. Books, printed materials, and audiovisual materials which are appropriate for the type of library;
3. Infrastructure, mainly buildings, places and necessary equipment;
4. Librarians or staff who have been trained in library work;
5. Funds to ensure the regular operation of the library.

Article 25 Modification to or Dissolution of a Library

Modification to a library can be happened in the event of a change in name and/or relocation to another place; in this case, the owner of the library must request approval from the relevant administration agency that shall consider such request within ten working days from the date the request is received.

Dissolution of a library can happen in the event that the owner of the library cannot continue to provide services or its operation license is revoked due to a violation of the laws and regulations. In the event of dissolution due to lack of capability to continue to provide services, a written report must be submitted to the relevant administration agency within seven working days following the dissolution.

Chapter 2 Administration of a Library

Article 26 Structure of Library Human Resources

A library's human resources consists of:

1. Library owner;
2. Library director and deputy director;
3. Library staff;
4. Library partners.

For libraries of type 4 and below, human resources shall be as appropriate.

Article 27 Library Owners

A library owner is an individual, legal entity, or organization authorized to operate activities related to a library.

Library owners have the following main rights and duties:

1. To set up directions and plans to operate the library;
2. To organize, lead, supervise, inspect, and facilitate the operation of their own library;
3. To request the establishment, modification, and dissolution of their library;
4. To appoint, move, or remove library directors and deputy directors;
5. To encourage and promote the provision of valuable books, printed materials, and audiovisual materials, writing and creating stories that the library wants;

6. To coordinate with relevant domestic and foreign stakeholders in relation to library activities;
7. To issue internal library rules, and determine membership and other fees for library users;
8. To summarize and report on the performance of library activities to its in-line sector.

Article 28 Library Director and Deputy Director

Directors and deputy directors are persons appointed by library owners, except in the case of reading rooms.

A director is responsible for the supervision of overall library activities.

A deputy director is an assistant to the director, is responsible for technical work as assigned, and acts as acting director as assigned when the director is not able to perform his or her duties.

Article 29 Standards for Library Director and Deputy Director

Directors and deputy directors shall fulfill the following requirements:

1. Permanent residence in the Lao PDR;
2. Eighteen years old or above;
3. Having knowledge of library science or been trained in library work;
4. Capable of managing and administering the library, using computers, and fluent in a foreign language;
5. Having tertiary education or above;
6. Being in good health.

Article 30 Rights and Duties of a Library Director

Library directors shall have the following main rights and duties:

1. To develop and implement policies and plans related to the operation of the library, and report them to the library owner for consideration;
2. To set up plans and develop projects to procure books, printed materials, audiovisual materials, and equipment for the library;
3. To set up a mechanism for training and upgrading staff and for the administration of library assets;
4. To study and issue internal library rules for the consideration of the library owner;
5. To coordinate with relevant domestic and foreign stakeholders related to library activities. For coordination with foreign entities, the approval of the library owner is required;
6. To summarize and report about the performance of library activities to the library owner regularly.

Article 31 Rights and Duties of a Library Deputy Director

Library deputy directors have the right and duty to assist the director, are responsible for technical work, and carry out the functions of directors when directors are not able to perform their duties or when assigned to do so.

Article 32 Library Staff

Library staff are librarians and persons who carry out their work in a library.
The rights and duties of library staff are provided for in library-specific regulations.

Article 33 Library Partners

Library partners are persons who work part time, have experience in library work, and receive wages and other benefits from the library.

The rights and duties of library partners are provided for in library-specific rules.

Part IV Public Library Funding

Article 34 Public Library Sources of Funds

Sources of funding for public libraries come from:

- Government budget;
- Technical services;
- Contribution from society, individuals, legal entities, organizations, and international aid.

Article 35 Administration and Use of Public Library Funds

The administration and the use of public library funds must be in line with the purpose, goal, and rules regarding the Government budget.

Part V Prohibitions

Article 36 Prohibitions for Library Staff

Library staff are prohibited from:

1. Provide services for books, printed materials, or audiovisual materials with contents contrary to the national direction or policies, national defense, public security, the culture and solidarity of the multi-ethnic Lao people, or Lao laws and regulations, except for the special reading room of the National Library for specific purposes as assigned by the Government;
2. Destroy or damage library resources or libraries;
3. Take advantage of the library in a manner contrary to the laws and regulations;
4. Provide important information without prior approval;
5. Collect fees and service fees exceeding the rates as set out in the laws and regulations;
6. Take out library books, printed materials, or audiovisual materials for sale to, handing over to, or exchange with other people, or for their personal possession without approval;
7. Behave in a way that violates laws and regulations.

Article 37 Prohibitions for Library Users

Library users are prohibited from:

1. Hand in or take out books, printed materials, audiovisual materials, or other materials from the library without the approval of library staff;
2. Destroy or damage library resources or the library itself;
3. Take advantage of the library in an incorrect manner contrary to laws and regulations;
4. Slander library staff or misrepresent their performance;
5. Violate library rules;
6. Behave in a way that violates laws and regulations.

Article 38 Prohibitions for Individuals and Organizations

Individuals and organizations are prohibited from:

1. Destroy or damage library resources or libraries;
2. Establish a library without authorization;
3. Take improper advantage of the library contrary to laws and regulations;
4. Slander library staff or misrepresent their performance;
5. Threaten or prevent people from the use of the library and contributing to library development;
6. Behave in a way that violates laws and regulations.

Part VI

Administration and Inspection

Chapter 1

Administration of Libraries

Article 39 Library Administration Authorities

The Government centrally and equally administers libraries nationwide and assigns the Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism to be the focal point for this administration in coordination with other sectors and relevant local administrations.

The Library Administration Authorities consists of:

1. The Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism;
2. The Departments of Information, Culture and Tourism at the provincial and Vientiane Capital levels;
3. The Offices of Information, Culture and Tourism at the district and city levels;
4. Village administrations.

Article 40 Rights and Duties of the Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism

The Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism has the following rights and duties on the administration of library activities:

1. To research and draft strategies, plans, development plans, and legislation in respect of libraries for submission to the Government for its consideration, and for implementation following the Government's approval;
2. To publicize, disseminate, and educate in respect of policies, laws, and regulations regarding libraries;

3. To supervise, encourage, and monitor the work of the Departments of Information, Culture and Tourism at the provincial and Vientiane Capital levels in implementing laws, regulations, plans, and projects related to libraries;
4. To expand libraries, and to build, train, and upgrade the technical and professional capacity of library staff;
5. To approve the establishment, modification, or dissolution of the National Library, National University of Laos Library, and institute, college, and specific libraries which provide reading services to society;
6. To appoint, move, and remove directors and deputy directors, and to restructure National Library staff;
7. To collect and destroy improper books, printed materials, and audiovisual materials under its responsibility;
8. To coordinate with relevant sectors in the administration and implementation of library activities;
9. To coordinate and cooperate with foreign countries and international organizations in respect of library activities;
10. To summarize and report to the government regularly on the evaluation of the implementation of library activities ;
11. To exercise other rights and perform other duties as determined by laws and regulations.

Article 41 Rights and Duties of the Department of Information, Culture and Tourism at the provincial and Vientiane Capital levels

The Department of Information, Culture and Tourism at the provincial and Vientiane Capital levels has the following rights and duties on the administration of library activities:

1. To elaborate policies, strategy plans, laws, and regulations in respect of libraries into rules, plans, and projects, and to implement them;
2. To survey and collect data in respect of libraries under its responsibility;
3. To publicize, disseminate, and educate in respect of policies, laws, and regulations regarding libraries;
4. To approve the establishment, modification, or dissolution of provincial, university, college, and vocational school libraries;
5. To appoint, move, and remove directors and deputy directors, and to restructure provincial library staff;
6. To supervise and encourage the work of the Offices of Information, Culture and Tourism at district and municipal levels in implementing library activities;
7. To collect and destroy improper books, printed materials, and audiovisual materials in areas for which they are responsible;
8. To coordinate with relevant sectors in the administration and implementation of library activities;
9. To coordinate and cooperate with foreign entities as assigned by the Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism, and other stakeholders in respect of library activities;

10. To summarize and report to superior authorities on the evaluation of the implementation of library activities;
11. To exercise other rights and perform other duties as determined by laws and regulations.

Article 42 Rights and Duties of the Offices of Information, Culture and Tourism at district and municipal levels

The Offices of Information, Culture and Tourism at the district and municipal levels have the following rights and duties on the administration of library activities:

1. To implement laws, regulations, plans, and projects in respect of library activities;
2. To survey and collect data in respect of places for the construction and expansion of libraries within their areas of responsibility;
3. To disseminate and educate in respect of policies, laws, and regulations regarding libraries to staff under their authority;
4. To approve the establishment, modification, or dissolution of district and general school libraries;
5. To appoint, move, and remove directors and deputy directors, and to restructure the staff of district libraries;
6. To collect and destroy improper books, printed materials, and audiovisual materials in areas for which they are responsible;
7. To coordinate with relevant sectors in the administration and implementation of library activities in line with their duties;
8. To summarize and report to their superior authorities on the evaluation of the implementation of library activities;
9. To exercise other rights and perform other duties as determined by laws and regulations.

Article 43 Rights and Duties of Village Administrations

The village administrations have the following rights and duties on the administration of library activities:

1. To implement plans and projects in respect of library activities within villages;
2. To survey and collect data in respect of places for construction, and to mobilize funds for the expansion of reading rooms within villages;
3. To organize and disseminate rules regarding reading rooms to villagers;
4. To administer village reading rooms. For other reading rooms, it is the library owners who administer them and take responsibility for implementing laws and regulations;
5. To coordinate with relevant sectors in the administration and implementation of library activities within their villages;
6. To summarize and report to their superior authorities on the evaluation of the implementation of village reading rooms;
7. To exercise other rights and perform other duties as determined by laws and regulations.

Article 44 Rights and Duties of Other Sectors

Other sectors relevant to library activities have the right and duty to coordinate with the Information, Culture and Tourism sectors in the administration, promotion, and development of library activities within their areas of duty and responsibility.

Article 45 Library Association

The Library Association is a professional civil library organization whose establishment is authorized by the relevant government agency. Its duties are to be a center for contact, communication, and coordination in respect of the activities among libraries, as well as to educate, consolidate solidarity, and protect the lawful rights and benefits of its association members in the implementation of directions, policies, laws, and regulations related to library activities.

The rights and duties of the Library Association are provided for in the rules of the Library Association.

Chapter 2 Inspection of Libraries

Article 46 Library Inspection Authorities

The Library Inspection Authorities is the same agency as the Library Administration Authorities as stipulated in Article 39 of this Law.

Article 47 Inspection Guidelines

The inspection of libraries shall mainly include:

1. The contents of books, printed materials, and audiovisual materials in accordance with the technical principles of library science;
2. The making, maintenance, use, and application of policies toward library staff;
3. The procurement and use of basic materials, vehicles, equipment, funds, and budget for libraries;
4. The location, layout, and area for construction, and implementation of library plans and projects in each period;
5. The implementation of laws and regulations related to libraries.

Article 48 Types of Inspection

Library inspections consist of three types:

1. Regular inspection;
2. Inspection with advance notice;
3. Sudden inspection.

Regular inspection is an inspection in accordance with a regular plan and fixed schedule.

An inspection with advance notice is an inspection outside the plan when deemed necessary with advance notice being given to those being inspected.

A sudden inspection is an urgent inspection without advance notice to those being inspected.

In the inspection of libraries, the Inspection Agency shall perform their duties in strict compliance with laws and regulations.

PART VII

Establishment Day, Uniform, Symbol, and Seal

Article 49 Library Establishment Day

The establishment day of the National Library is the 9th April 1818. Every year, this is a day of celebration to remember history, achievements, and lessons learnt for the better improvement and development of library activities.

Article 50 Uniform

When performing their duties, library staff shall wear their specific uniforms as designed by the Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism.

Article 51 Library Symbol and Seal

Libraries have their own symbol with a picture of the scripture hall of Wat Sisaket.

To support the operation of their activities, each type of library shall have its own seal as provided for in separate rules. A seal is not required for reading rooms.

PART VIII

Awards for Good Performance and Measures Against Violators

Article 52 Awards for Good Performance

Individuals, legal entities, and organizations that have outstanding performance in the implementation of this Law such as provision of books, printed materials, and audiovisual materials, voluntarily or upon the request of a library, or has contributed to the protection of books, printed materials, and audiovisual materials in a library will receive awards or other appropriate policies based on regulations.

Article 53 Measures against Violators

Individuals, legal entities, and organizations that violate, especially Articles 36, 37, and 38 of this Law, will be educated, warned, punished, fined, sentenced to civil liability or criminal punishment depending on a light or serious case basis.

PART IX

Final Provisions

Article 54 Implementation

The Government of the Lao PDR implements this Law.

Article 55 Effectiveness

This Law is effective after sixty days from the date of the promulgation by the President of the Lao People's Democratic Republic.

Any regulations or provisions that contradict to this Law shall be canceled.

The President of the National Assembly

[Signature and seal]
Pany YATHOTOU