

# THAILAND



REDINESS LEVEL

LOW

With a tradition of giving influenced by Buddhist values, private giving in Thailand focuses on domestic religious causes even as the country has a thriving presence of international aid organisations, enabling regulations, and uncomplicated banking processes. The government's proposal for a new law governing NGOs indicates its intention to tighten oversight of the social sector in general, and effectively control cross-border transactions. The growth potential of the sector will largely depend on the success of ongoing advocacy efforts for lower regulatory barriers to cross-border philanthropy.



## CROSS BORDER GIVING INDEX

SCORE

1.00



## REGULATORY INDEX

SCORE

1.70

The majority of philanthropic giving in Thailand is personal and domestic focused. Giving is often conducted through traditional forms of charity and often tied to religious customs rather than through professional philanthropy.<sup>1</sup>

Substantial giving is driven by large family businesses through corporate social responsibility programmes or through small foundations established by high net-worth individuals. Private giving almost exclusively focuses on religious causes or domestic causes supported by the Government of Thailand or the Royal Family to foster relationships.<sup>2</sup>

Giving interests and motivations are changing among different generations. The next generation of donors have international mindsets and broader global experiences and sector actors observe that many younger donors are not as motivated to give to religious causes as generations before have.<sup>3</sup> Given a rise in international exposure, younger generations may be critical in expanding charitable giving beyond Thailand's national boundary in the near future.

The Government of Thailand imposes heavy oversight over cross-border transactions. Every cross-border donation is subject to an onerous approval process with the Ministry of Finance. Recipient charitable organisations are required to submit activity reports and share the signed donor agreement and Memoranda of Understanding with the Ministry. Taxes are often applied on cross-border transactions (both in-cash and in-kind donations) unless recipient organisations apply for a tax exemption.<sup>4</sup> In February 2021, the Social Development and Human Security Ministry proposed a bill to promote and develop NGOs. Under this bill, NGOs would be required to register with the state and a committee comprised of state and non-state agencies would oversee NGO affairs.<sup>5</sup> While the bill aims to better regulate NGOs' performance, many in the sector are concerned that tightening oversight on the use of funds and increased administrative burden to receive cross-border funding will limit the scope and scale of civic activities in the country. Advocacy efforts were underway against the passing of this law.



## INFRASTRUCTURE INDEX

SCORE

1.00

Philanthropic giving in Thailand is heavily relationship-based. Most philanthropists choose organisations to support based on personal preference or through referrals rather than through data. Strategic philanthropy remains in its infancy and there are limited support ecosystem players. Consequently, the sector lacks robust monitoring systems for transparency and accountability.<sup>6</sup>

Local NGOs sometimes lack the capacity to navigate administrative paperwork, particularly those in foreign languages, to access foreign funding. As a result, funding usually first goes to INGOs before disbursement to local organisations.<sup>7</sup> There is an opportunity and a strong need to build local NGOs' capacity to connect with potential donors from abroad.<sup>8</sup>

ECOSYSTEM SUPPORT ROLE	ORGANISATIONS
Research institutions	• Thailand Development Research Institute
Philanthropy advisory	• Giving Back Association
Grantmaking intermediaries	• Social Giver • Rockefeller Foundation Thailand
Networks and membership organisations	• Thai Young Philanthropist Network