2024-2025
SEAMEO SPAFA ANNUAL REPORT

CONTENTS

2 Message from Chair (SEAMEO SPAFA Governing Board)

3 Message from Centre Director (SEAMEO SPAFA)

4 Executive Summary

6 Governing Board Members

7 Organisation Profile

10 Programmes and Activities

26 Financial Report Summary

MESSAGE FROM CHAIR

SEAMEO SPAFA GOVERNING BOARD

Mr Yeo Kirk Siang

It is my pleasure to share the SEAMEO SPAFA Centre's annual report for fiscal year 2024-2025. It has been a meaningful and fulfilling year at the Centre. Through its programmes and partnerships, the Centre has continued to strengthen its role as a regional platform for archaeology, fine arts, and cultural heritage. The wide range of programmes and platforms have contributed to building professional capacity, and advancing more sustainable approaches for the protection of cultural heritage and the fine arts in Southeast Asia.

A key highlight of the year was the successful implementation of the Curating Future: Museum for Sustainable Southeast Asia programme, which equipped museum professionals with innovative and sustainable approaches. In addition to capacity building, the programme also fostered regional networking among museum professionals.

The SEAMEO SPAFA Centre also expanded its global engagement through its participation in the 10th World Archaeological Congress in Australia, where it contributed to international dialogue and enhanced the understanding of Southeast Asian archaeology among the international audience. At the same time, strategic partnerships with international organisations such as UNESCO and ICCROM enabled the Centre to advance important work in various priority areas. These included the active partnership with ICCROM through projects on Heritage Impact Assessment, Urban Heritage for Sustainable Development, and initiatives which links heritage collections to the Sustainable Development Goals. In addition, the continued growth of the SPAFA Journal, now into its 9th year, reflects the Centre's commitment to strengthening regional scholarship and knowledge exchange.

These achievements underscore SEAMEO SPAFA's value as a trusted institution in sharing of expertise and encouraging regional collaboration. On behalf of the Governing Board, I extend my sincere appreciation to the Centre Director, staff, and partners for their dedication and contributions. Together, we remain committed to shaping a resilient, connected, and forward-looking future for cultural heritage in Southeast Asia.

MESSAGE FROM CENTRE DIRECTOR

SEAMEO SPAFA

Dr Hatthaya Siriphatthanakun

The past fiscal year has been an important period of transition for SEAMEO SPAFA. Across the region, the cultural heritage – including archaeology – sector is evolving rapidly, shaped by new challenges, changing expectations, and growing recognition of the role heritage plays in sustainable development and regional cooperation. As these changes unfold, the Centre is also evolving — not only in what we do, but in how we position ourselves for the future.

This past year reflected the beginning of a broader shift in perspective: from working in isolated disciplines towards building stronger connections between heritage, sustainability, and international efforts and communities. Increasingly, our role in helping create platforms for dialogue, collaboration, innovation, and shared regional growth has been sought by many partners.

What gives me confidence is the growing spirit of cooperation across Southeast Asia and beyond. The willingness of institutions, professionals, and young practitioners to work together demonstrates that the future of cultural growth in our region is both dynamic and promising. There is a stronger understanding today that cultural heritage is not only about the past — it is also a resource for resilience, identity, creativity, and future development.

As we move forward into a new planning phase, SEAMEO SPAFA remains committed to its responsibility as a trusted regional partner and facilitator. The opportunities ahead are significant: to deepen collaboration, broaden participation, embrace new ideas, and ensure that Southeast Asia's cultural heritage continues to remain relevant in a dramatically transforming world.

I would like to sincerely thank our colleagues, member countries, partners, and supporters for their continued trust and shared commitment. The progress we make as a Centre is only possible because of this collective effort, and I look forward with optimism to a challenging future ahead.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Fiscal Year 2024–2025 was a year of strong momentum for SEAMEO SPAFA. Through its programmes and partnerships, the Centre continued to strengthen its role as a regional platform for archaeology, fine arts, and cultural heritage in Southeast Asia – bringing people together, building professional capacity, and advancing more inclusive, sustainable, and forward-looking approaches to heritage.

Throughout the year, SEAMEO SPAFA expanded its impact across the region and beyond. From museum innovation and cultural learning to emergency heritage response, and World Heritage preparation, the Centre translated its mission into practical action while raising the visibility and relevance of Southeast Asia's cultural heritage in regional and global conversations.

A YEAR OF REGIONAL IMPACT

- **75** professionals engaged in museum innovation through the *Curating Future* workshop on museum and interpretation
- **35** participants joined SEAMEO SPAFA Cultural Tour
- **9th year** of the online *SPAFA Journal* as a growing regional research platform
- **26,775** global accesses to *SPAFA Journal* content
- **ICCROM** and **UNESCO** collaborations advanced regional heritage priorities
- **Phra That Phanom** World Heritage nomination progressed
- **WAC-10** (Australia) marked SEAMEO SPAFA's continued global engagement

More than a record of activities, the year's achievements reflect SEAMEO SPAFA's growing value as a trusted convener of resources and expertise, and a catalyst for collaboration. The Centre remains committed to shaping a cultural future for Southeast Asia that is resilient, connected, and rooted in shared heritage.

SEAMEO SPAFA: connecting people, knowledge, and heritage; strengthening Southeast Asia's cultural future through collaboration, innovation, and shared stewardship.

GOVERNING BOARD MEMBERS 2024-2025

MR YEO KIRK SIANG
Group Director
Policy & Community
National Heritage Board
Ministry of Culture,
Community, and Youth
Singapore

MR HAJI MOHAMMAD FADHILLAH HAJI ISMAIL
Principal
Awang Semaun Secondary School
Ministry of Education
Brunei Darussalam

DR HENG SOPHADY
Rector
Royal University of Fine Arts
Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts
Cambodia

DR. IR. ANUGERAH WIDIYANTO
Director
Human Development Policy, Population, and Culture
National Research and Innovation Agency
Indonesia

DR KHAMTANH SALIANKHAM
Deputy Director
Department of Heritage
Ministry of Information
Culture and Tourism
Lao PDR

MR MOHAMAD MUDA BIN BAHADIN
Director General
Department of National Heritage
Kuala Lumpur
Malaysia

DR PYIET PHYO KYAW
Professor
Department of Archaeology
University of Yangon
Myanmar

MR JEREMY R. BARNS
Director General
National Museum of the Philippines
Philippines

MR PHNOMBOOTRA CHANDRAJOTI
Director-General
The Fine Arts Department
Ministry of Culture
Thailand

DR ABILIO DA CONCEICAO SILVA
Head
Art and Culture
Ministry of Youth and Sport
Timor-Leste

PROF DR HOANG ANH TUAN
Rector
University of Social Sciences and Humanities
Vietnam National University - VNU
Vietnam

DATUK DR HABIBAH ABDUL RAHIM
Director
SEAMEO Secretariat
Thailand
Ex-Officio Member

MR KHEMCHAT THEPCHAI
Centre Director
SEAMEO SPAFA
Thailand
Ex-Officio Member
(Term ended
30 September 2025)

ORGANISATION PROFILE

The Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) consists of 26 Centres and Networks, across Southeast Asia, that are involved in a range of fields in education such as preventive health, culture and tradition, information and communication technology, languages, poverty alleviation, agriculture, natural resources, etc.

SEAMEO SPAFA, the Regional Centre for Archaeology and Fine Arts, is one of the SEAMEO regional centres. It is based in Bangkok, and promotes archaeology, fine arts, as well as skills, knowledge and the conservation of cultural heritage in Southeast Asia.

HISTORY

1971

Establishment of ARCAFA
(Applied Research Centre in Archaeology and Fine Arts) by SEAMEO

1981

Approval of SPAFA
as a permanent project

1993

Inauguration of the SPAFA Building
by HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn

1971 — 1978 — 1981 — 1985 — 1993 — 2024

1978

Launch of SPAFA
(SEAMEO Project in Archaeology and Fine Arts) in Bangkok, Thailand

1985

Establishment of SEAMEO SPAFA
as the SEAMEO Regional Centre in Archaeology and Fine Arts, retaining the SPAFA acronym

2024

Celebrating
the legacy of SEAMEO SPAFA's first Centre Director Prof MC Subhadradis Diskul

ORGANISATION'S CORE ACTIVITIES

SEAMEO SPAFA organises training, seminars, workshops, etc. for professionals and practitioners in archaeology, fine arts, and conservation. These activities highlight the cultural diversity and uniqueness of the Southeast Asian region, and promote mutual understanding and collaboration.

1 **TRAINING PROGRAMMES/WORKSHOPS**
expand knowledge and improve skills in Southeast Asia

2 **CONFERENCES/SEMINARS/FORUMS**
facilitate experts, practitioners, and the general public in sharing skills and knowledge, exploring new ideas and technologies

3 **PUBLICATION AND INFORMATION DISSEMINATION** increase knowledge and improve skills by sharing expertise, and contributing to discussions and good practices

4 **INTERNSHIPS** help interns gain experience, knowledge, and skills in practical work environments

5 **LIBRARY/DOCUMENTATION SERVICES** provide reference materials on archaeology and the arts

MISSION

PROMOTE
excellent practice and research in archaeology and fine arts in Southeast Asia

DEVELOP
SEAMEO SPAFA as a leading centre in communication, coordination, documentation and legal/ethics guidance for archaeologists, artists and experts

ESTABLISH
SEAMEO SPAFA as a training centre of excellence that advances new knowledge and technologies

MEMBER COUNTRIES

Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Vietnam

ASSOCIATE MEMBER COUNTRIES

Australia, Canada, Germany, France, Morocco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Spain, United Kingdom

SEAMEO SPAFA PERSONNEL / CONSULTANTS 2024-2025

STAFF

1.	Mr Khemchat Thepchai	Centre Director
2.	Dr Noel Hidalgo Tan Suwi Siang	Senior Specialist in Archaeology (until 22 July 2024)
3.	Dr Hatthaya Siriphatthanakun	Senior Specialist in Cultural Heritage Management (assumed position of Centre Director on 1 October 2025)
4.	Ms Vassana Kerdsupap	Administrative Officer
5.	Ms Michelle Laurice Aguas	Programme Officer
6.	Ms Ratchaporn Tesjeeb	Computer Manager
7.	Mr John Paul Nini Itao	Communications Officer
8.	Ms Sheleg Geva	Documentation Officer (until 03 January 2025)
9.	Mr Kanal Khiev	Assistant Documentation Officer
10.	Ms Wanpen Kongpool	Library Officer
11.	Ms Supitcha Sutthanonkul	Researcher
12.	Mr Chaiphruek Sasiwanapong	Researcher
13.	Ms Tan Yan Zhen, Melody	Researcher
14.	Ms Ohnmar Myo	Project Coordinator for Myanmar
15.	Ms Phanida Roekchaiyo	Secretary I
16.	Ms Nutchaya Chanla	Assistant Administrative Officer (until 16 November 2024)
17	Ms Waraporn Wachirathanit	Accountant
18.	Mr Nipon Sud-Ngam	Audio Visual Technician
19.	Ms Nawarat Saengwat	Library Clerk
20.	Ms Phakanong Wiboonwetwanit	Administrative Assistant
21.	Mr Prapai Meejit	Driver I
22.	Mr Surasee Jaiboon	Driver II

CONSULTANTS

23.	Ean Lee	Publication Manager
24.	Ian Tan Yuk Hong	Journal Editor
25.	Saw Tun Lin	Academic Service

PROGRAMMES AND ACTIVITIES
FY 2024-2025

OVERVIEW

Fiscal Year 2024–2025 marked a year of meaningful progress for SEAMEO SPAFA in advancing archaeology, fine arts, and cultural heritage across Southeast Asia. Through its programmes and partnerships, the Centre strengthened its role as a regional platform for knowledge exchange, professional collaboration, and sustainable heritage development.

YEAR IN FOCUS

BUILDING CAPACITY

SEAMEO SPAFA strengthened professional exchange and public engagement through the Curating Future: Museum for Sustainable Southeast Asia workshop, promoting innovative learning and wider appreciation of the region's cultural heritage.

REGIONAL AND GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT

The Centre expanded the visibility of Southeast Asia's cultural heritage through participation in the 10th World Archaeological Congress (WAC-10).

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

SEAMEO SPAFA deepened collaboration with the Fine Arts Department of Thailand, ICCROM, and UNESCO Bangkok, advancing work in emergency heritage response in Myanmar and supporting preparatory efforts for the proposed World Heritage nomination of Phra That Phanom.

SPAFA JOURNAL

Now in its ninth year, the SPAFA Journal continues to strengthen its standing as a respected platform for regional scholarship. The journal maintained solid international recognition, broadened its scholarly network across Asia, and recorded significant growth in readership, with 26,775 global accesses during the year. While submissions declined, a 12% acceptance rate reflected continued emphasis on quality and the journal's ongoing development.

COLLABORATIONS

Partnerships remained at the heart of SEAMEO SPAFA's work in Fiscal Year 2024–2025. Working with long-standing partners and new collaborators, the Centre advanced a wide range of initiatives in museum innovation, heritage conservation, emergency response, and World Heritage preparation.

The Fine Arts Department of Thailand continued to play a key supporting role, including collaboration on the Curating Future: Museum for Sustainable Southeast Asia workshop and the SEAMEO SPAFA Cultural Tour. SEAMEO SPAFA strengthened its active partnership with ICCROM through projects on Heritage Impact Assessment, Urban Heritage for Sustainable Development (together with Songkhla Toward World Heritage Foundation), and the Our Collections initiative which links heritage collections to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Centre collaborated with ICCROM in the Collections 2030 and Beyond conference (22-26 September 2025) dedicated to help leverage heritage collections worldwide as assets in support of the SDGs.

With the support of the Heritage Emergency Fund through UNESCO Bangkok, emergency response efforts for cultural heritage in Myanmar, including training, needs assessment, and post-disaster response were carried out. In Thailand, SEAMEO SPAFA also provided technical support on the preparation of the Preliminary Assessment for the potential nomination to the World Heritage List of Phra That Phanom Temple, its related historic buildings, and associated landscape. These cooperations reinforced the Centre's role as a trusted regional partner in facilitation and planning.

INTERNSHIPS

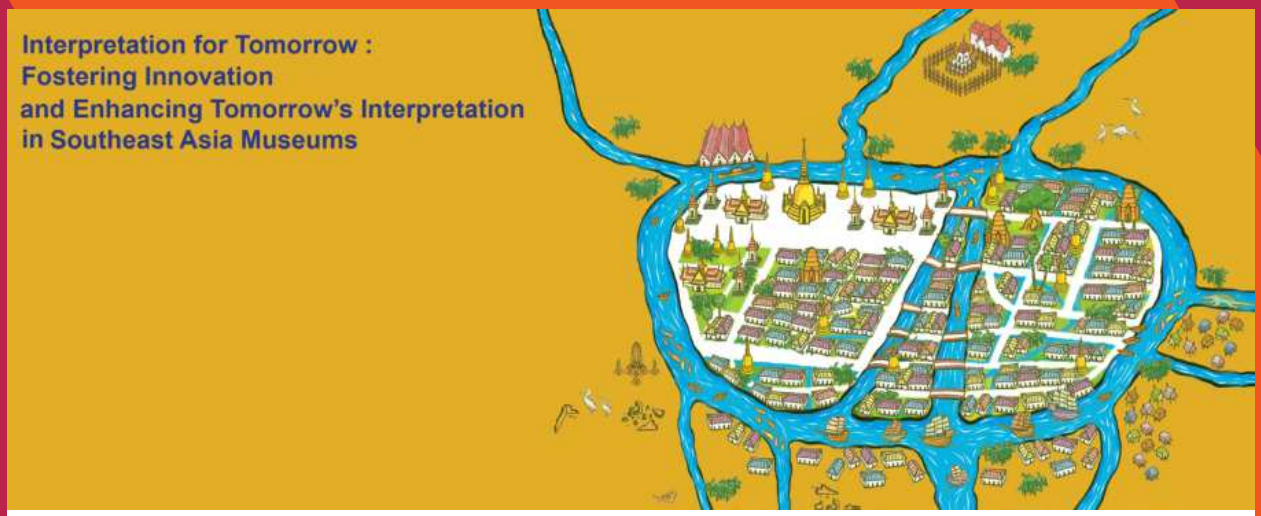
Three interns made significant contributions to the Centre's projects and initiatives. Zhenan Yu (Andrew) supported research and documentation efforts, particularly in relation to the Centre's publicity and promotional activities. Ankhanang Loetloephong assisted with tasks linked to the development of SEAMEO SPAFA's 9th Five-Year Development Plan, providing input towards its preparation and implementation framework. Lin Yihua contributed to the Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) project in Ayutthaya, Thailand, while also assisting with other related duties. Collectively, their work provided valuable support to the Centre's programmes and offered them practical, hands-on experience in heritage and cultural development.

SEAMEO SPAFA ANNUAL PROGRAMME

FY 2024-2025

NO	PROJECT	TYPE	STATUS
1	Urban Heritage for Sustainable Development for Southeast Asia	Consultative Meeting	Implemented
2	SEAMEO SPAFA Cultural Tour – Roots of Dvaravati Civilisation	Onsite Study	Implemented
3	Curating Future: Museum for Sustainable Southeast Asia	Lecture Series / Workshop	Implemented
4	SPAFA Forum: Why did XXX Cross the Southeast Asian Borders? The Tenth World Archaeological Congress	Conference / Forum	Implemented
5	Strengthening Disaster Risk Management for Cultural Heritage in Myanmar and Southeast Asia	Technical Support	Implemented
6	SPAFACON2024 (Updates to Final Report)	Conference Follow-up	Implemented

CURATING FUTURE: MUSEUM FOR SUSTAINABLE SOUTHEAST ASIA



SUMMARY

Held in June 2025, Curating Future: Museum for Sustainable Southeast Asia brought together museum professionals from across the region to explore fresh and more inclusive approaches to museum interpretation. Organised by SEAMEO SPAFA in partnership with Thailand's Fine Arts Department, the hybrid programme engaged 75 participants through four online lectures and 23 professionals in a four-day onsite workshop in Ayutthaya.

The programme combined expert talks, case studies, group work, site visits, and hands-on interaction with museum visitors, encouraging participants to rethink how museums can become more engaging, ethical, and community-centred spaces. Highlights included a special talk on decolonial interpretation at the Netherlands Embassy and stronger regional networking through digital exchange.

Type/Category: Lecture Series, Workshop/ Museum **Venue:** Online (Zoom) and Onsite in Ayutthaya, Thailand **Dates:** Online: 4-7 June 2025/Onsite: 17-20 June 2025 **Partners/Collaborators:** Fine Arts Department (Thailand)

The workshop laid important groundwork for future collaboration, with SEAMEO SPAFA looking to build on this momentum through a longer-term regional "interpretation lab" for innovative and sustainable museum practice in Southeast Asia.

OBJECTIVES

- Advance knowledge in museum management, conservation, interpretation, presentation, and dissemination including curatorial skills in response to sustainability for staff or relevant professionals in museum as lifelong learning institutions to contribute towards SDG #04: Quality Education and SDG #11: Sustainable Cities and Communities.

- Equip professionals with innovative tools for visitor-centred interpretation, integrating Human Centred Design and participatory storytelling.

- Strengthen the role of museums in Southeast Asia to meet ICOM's guideline that museums should be agents connecting audiences with SDGs and other sectors to help raise public awareness of their relevance and impact.

- Facilitate exchange among museum professionals on the new museum definition and its implementation in the Southeast Asian context.

OUTPUTS

Hybrid Workshop Implementation: Four online sessions covering museum interpretation, innovative interpretation models, decolonisation, and global trends of museums. A four-day onsite workshop in Ayutthaya, Thailand.

Special Talk: Unplanned but successful talk "Curating the Golden Coach: Decolonial Interpretation in Practice" by resource person Annemarie de Wildt. The event was co-hosted by SEAMEO SPAFA and the Netherlands Embassy in Bangkok. This unplanned event added value beyond the original scope.

Deliverables: Recorded expert lectures, slide decks, and a compilation of participant questions. Four visitor-tested interpretive prototypes developed by on-site participants.

Digital Platforms: Facebook and WhatsApp groups were established to facilitate ongoing professional exchange among participants.

OUTCOMES

Capacity Building: The workshop introduced new creative interpretive concepts and provided tools to participants. 67.2% of online participants reported readiness to implement innovative approaches, while on-site participants demonstrated their capability by applying these tools to develop prototypes that addressed interpretation, presentation, and public outreach activities.

Regional Networking: During the workshop, participants had opportunities to share institutional challenges and solutions – through breakout sessions during the online component and peer learning activities onsite. Post-workshop, Facebook and WhatsApp groups were established to facilitate ongoing professional exchange among participants, exceeding expectations by creating sustained engagement beyond the workshop.

IMPACTS

Adoption of Skillset/Tools: Participants acquired HCD tools, but long-term implementation is unverified. Follow-up evaluation will be distributed through Facebook and WhatsApp groups in December 2025 – 6 months post-workshop.

SEAMEO SPAFA Centre Visibility: The strong response to Curating Future reflected growing regional interest in innovative museum practice, with registration for both the online and onsite components exceeding expectations. Between 10 March and 30 June 2025, the programme webpage attracted 2,512 visits, while a series of 20 social media posts across platforms helped build momentum and sustain engagement before, during, and after the workshop.

SEAMEO SPAFA CULTURAL TOUR FIELD TRIP TO CULTURAL SITES IN NAKHON PATHOM AND SUPHANBURI – ROOTS OF DVARAVATI CIVILISATION

SUMMARY

The Cultural Tour was conducted on 25 January 2025, bringing together 35 participants from a wide range of professional backgrounds. The one-day programme featured visits to three museums and two cultural heritage sites across the Nakhon Pathom and Suphan Buri provinces in Thailand. In close collaboration with local museums, the onsite study was enriched by knowledgeable and well-prepared guides, making the experience educational and engaging. Participants gained valuable insights into the archaeology,

Type/Category: Study Tour **Venue:** Nakhon Pathom Province, Suphanburi Province **Date:** 25 January 2025
Partners/Collaborators: Phra Pathom Chedi National Museum, Suphan Buri National Museum, U Thong National Museum

history, fine arts, and cultural heritage of the two provinces, while the project also generated modest revenue.

OBJECTIVES

- To disseminate knowledge of archaeology, history, and fine arts in Nakhon Pathom and Suphanburi, with a focus on their connections to the wider Southeast Asian region.

- To enhance participants' awareness and understanding of culture, as well as to promote knowledge exchange.

- To raise funding for undertaking various activities related to the Centre's mandate and associated organisations.

OUTCOMES

- Participants developed a broader understanding and appreciation of the archaeology, history, fine arts, and cultural heritage of Nakhon Pathom and Suphan Buri through direct engagement with museums and heritage sites.

- The tour created an accessible learning environment that encouraged participants to connect historical knowledge with place-based cultural experience.

- Participants were observably attentive and engaged during site presentations and guided interpretation sessions at each museum, indicating strong interest in the content delivered.

- While participant engagement was positive, the absence of a structured feedback or post-tour evaluation mechanism limited the project's ability to measure learning retention, shifts in awareness, or longer-term interest in archaeology and history.

IMPACTS

- Increased public engagement with local heritage through an accessible and interactive learning experience.

- Demonstrated the effectiveness of experiential learning as an approach to heritage interpretation and outreach.

- Strengthened collaboration with local museums and cultural institutions, creating opportunities for continued public heritage education.

THE TENTH WORLD ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONGRESS (WAC-10)

'WHY DID XXX CROSS THE SOUTHEAST ASIAN BORDERS?' FORUM

SUMMARY

In June 2025, SEAMEO SPAFA participated in the 10th World Archaeological Congress (WAC-10) in Darwin, Australia, helping to raise the international profile of Southeast Asian archaeology. The Centre's Researchers presented original research on Phra That Phanom as a significant example of living heritage in Northeastern Thailand, highlighting the role of the Kha Okasa community in preserving its cultural and spiritual traditions.

SEAMEO SPAFA also organised the forum “Why Did XXX Cross the Southeast Asian Borders?” which brought together researchers, heritage professionals, and students from across Asia and beyond to exchange fieldwork experiences, discuss shared challenges, and strengthen professional networks.

Type/Category: Conference/Forum
Dates: 22-28 June 2025

Venue: Charles Darwin University, Darwin, Australia

These activities promoted Southeast Asian scholarship, increased visibility for community-based heritage practices, and supported outreach for the Centre's premier conference, SPAFACON 2027. Despite minor technical challenges with the hybrid format, both sessions were well received and created valuable opportunities for dialogue, collaboration, and global engagement.

OBJECTIVES

- **Present and share insights on a Southeast Asian related research**

Share insights into the historical, architectural, and spiritual significance of Phra That Phanom, a sacred Buddhist site in northeastern Thailand, while highlighting its role as a centre of cultural and spiritual interchange along the Mekong River that exemplifies the transmission of Buddhism from South Asia to Southeast Asia; also illustrate how living traditions and community-led custodianship by the Kha Okasa continue to preserve and sustain this heritage in both tangible and intangible forms.

- Organise a Southeast Asian Archaeology Forum providing a platform for archaeologists, heritage practitioners, emerging scholars and students to share current research, fieldwork experiences, and ongoing challenges

- **Strengthen Southeast Asia Archaeology's Visibility in International Archaeology**

Promote the relevance and richness of Southeast Asian archaeological research within a global setting often dominated by western narratives

- **Promote SEAMEO SPAFA and SPAFACON 2027**

Use the WAC_10 as a strategic platform to introduce and generate interest in SEAMEO SPAFA's work and the upcoming SPAFACON, an international conference scheduled for 2027

- **Build and Expand Networks**

Establish new connections with scholars, students and institutions working in related fields of archaeology, museology, religious studies, and heritage management, while engaging in cross-regional and cross-disciplinary collaborations that may lead to future opportunities in knowledge and/or academic exchanges

OUTPUTS

- Presented the paper “Living Traditions and Religious Heritage Places at Phra That Phanom: An Outstanding Representative of Northeastern Thailand”, highlighting the cultural, architectural, and spiritual significance of Phra That Phanom and the custodial role of the Kha Okasa community.

- Organised the regional forum “Why Did XXX Cross the Southeast Asian Borders?” which brought together archaeologists and heritage professionals to exchange perspectives on fieldwork, heritage challenges, and community engagement across Southeast Asia.

- Promoted SPAFACON 2027 to a wider professional audience.

- Established new connections with scholars, students, and institutions in archaeology, conservation, and heritage studies, laying the groundwork for future collaboration.

OUTCOMES

- Strengthened recognition of Southeast Asian archaeology within regional and international professional communities.

- Reinforced the academic value of research on Phra That Phanom and its wider cultural landscape in Northeastern Thailand and the Mekong region.

- Facilitated interdisciplinary knowledge exchange and generated insights into field methodologies, heritage management approaches, and emerging regional challenges.

- Expanded professional networks and created opportunities for future partnerships, academic exchange, and participation in SPAFACON 2027.

- Increased international visibility for Southeast Asian archaeological research.

IMPACTS

- Raised the global profile of Phra That Phanom as a significant example of living heritage in the region, strengthening its visibility and supporting future opportunities for international recognition and conservation cooperation.

- Strengthened archaeology (Southeast Asia) by expanding professional networks, increasing institutional visibility, and opening new pathways for collaboration, shared research, and future partnerships.

- Contributed to international dialogue; shaped heritage discourse; and built goodwill through cultural diplomacy.

URBAN HERITAGE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FOR SOUTHEAST ASIA

CONSULTATIVE MEETING

The consultative meeting on Developing Capacity-Building Activities, proposed under the title Creative Economy in Urban Areas of Southeast Asia, held in Songkhla, Thailand on 3-5 December 2024, was part of the Urban Heritage for Sustainable Development for Southeast Asia project. Throughout the meeting, participants actively engaged in collaborative dialogue, knowledge exchange, and strategic planning. These efforts laid the groundwork for future capacity-building initiatives and helped establish a robust regional network of institutions and experts focused on urban heritage. A key achievement was the development of a concept note and a draft programme for an upcoming training initiative, 2026 Integrated Territorial & Urban Conservation: Urban Heritage for Sustainable Development, specifically designed to address the unique contexts and needs of urban heritage in Southeast Asia.

Type/Category: Consultative Meeting **Venue:** Songkhla Province, Thailand **Dates**: 3-5 December 2024
Partners/Collaborators: ICCROM, Songkhla towards World Heritage Foundation

The meeting yielded several important outcomes: it deepened understanding of conservation principles relevant to the region, strengthened professional capacities through shared learning and identification of gaps, and raised awareness about the cultural and economic significance of urban heritage. These outcomes directly contribute to enhancing urban governance and promoting integrated heritage management aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

A central theme that emerged was the need to define and safeguard the distinct values and attributes of Southeast Asian urban heritage, which are increasingly at risk due to rapid regional transformations. Participants noted that unchecked urban development, mass tourism, and infrastructure expansion can lead to the erosion of urban identity, diminished community participation, and a decline in local economic vitality, particularly through the loss of heritage-related tourism, creative industries, and place-based livelihoods. The discussions highlighted the spiritual richness, multicultural coexistence, vibrant street life, and close relationship between cultural heritage and the natural environment that define the region's urban heritage. However, these distinctive values remain insufficiently recognized by both visitors and local stakeholders, limiting appreciation of their significance and undermining efforts toward their effective conservation.

A critical gap identified during the meeting was the lack of capacity to integrate culture–nature linkages into planning and to meaningfully involve communities across all stages – from design to monitoring – of heritage management. These

insights, which surpassed initial expectations, highlight the urgent need for cross-sectoral collaboration, inclusive policy frameworks, and community-centered strategies to ensure the long-term protection of urban heritage. In addition, participants underscored the importance of embedding sustainable urban heritage concepts into local education systems. This would help localize heritage values and ensure cultural continuity by raising awareness among younger generations and reinforcing the significance of local heritage within broader sustainability efforts.

STRENGTHENING DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT FOR CULTURAL HERITAGE IN MYANMAR AND SOUTHEAST ASIA

TECHNICAL SUPPORT

SEAMEO SPAFA has long supported the protection of cultural heritage in Southeast Asia from the impacts of natural and human-induced disasters through capacity-building, knowledge sharing, and regional collaboration. Between 2018 and 2022, the Centre partnered with ICCROM and Ritsumeikan University's Institute of Disaster Risk Management for Urban Cultural Heritage (R-DMUCH), Japan, to deliver a series of training workshops on disaster risk management for heritage professionals across the region. These initiatives enhanced regional capacities in disaster preparedness, risk assessment, and post-disaster recovery for cultural heritage.

Recognising the importance of engaging younger generations, SEAMEO SPAFA also implemented the School-based Approach in Promoting Disaster Risk Management in Southeast Asia project, which developed a teacher's toolkit on water-related heritage, disasters, climate action, and global citizenship. The toolkit features case studies, including Myanmar's Inle Lake, and has been translated into several Southeast Asian languages to broaden its accessibility and impact.

Building on these efforts, SEAMEO SPAFA launched the Technical Support to Heritage in Myanmar Programme (FY 2022/23–2025/26) to assist the safeguarding of Myanmar's cultural heritage following Cyclone Mocha in 2023 and in response to other emerging risks. A comprehensive needs assessment conducted between December 2023 and August 2024 brought together experts from Myanmar and other countries to evaluate damage and challenges affecting cultural heritage, cultural industries, and the livelihoods of artists and artisans in the most affected areas.

Findings from the assessment informed the development of an online training programme for civil society organisations in Myanmar, delivered from October to November 2024 using a community-based approach. Through self-paced learning modules, expert-led discussions, and interactive exchanges, participants strengthened their knowledge and skills in disaster preparedness, emergency response, and heritage recovery.

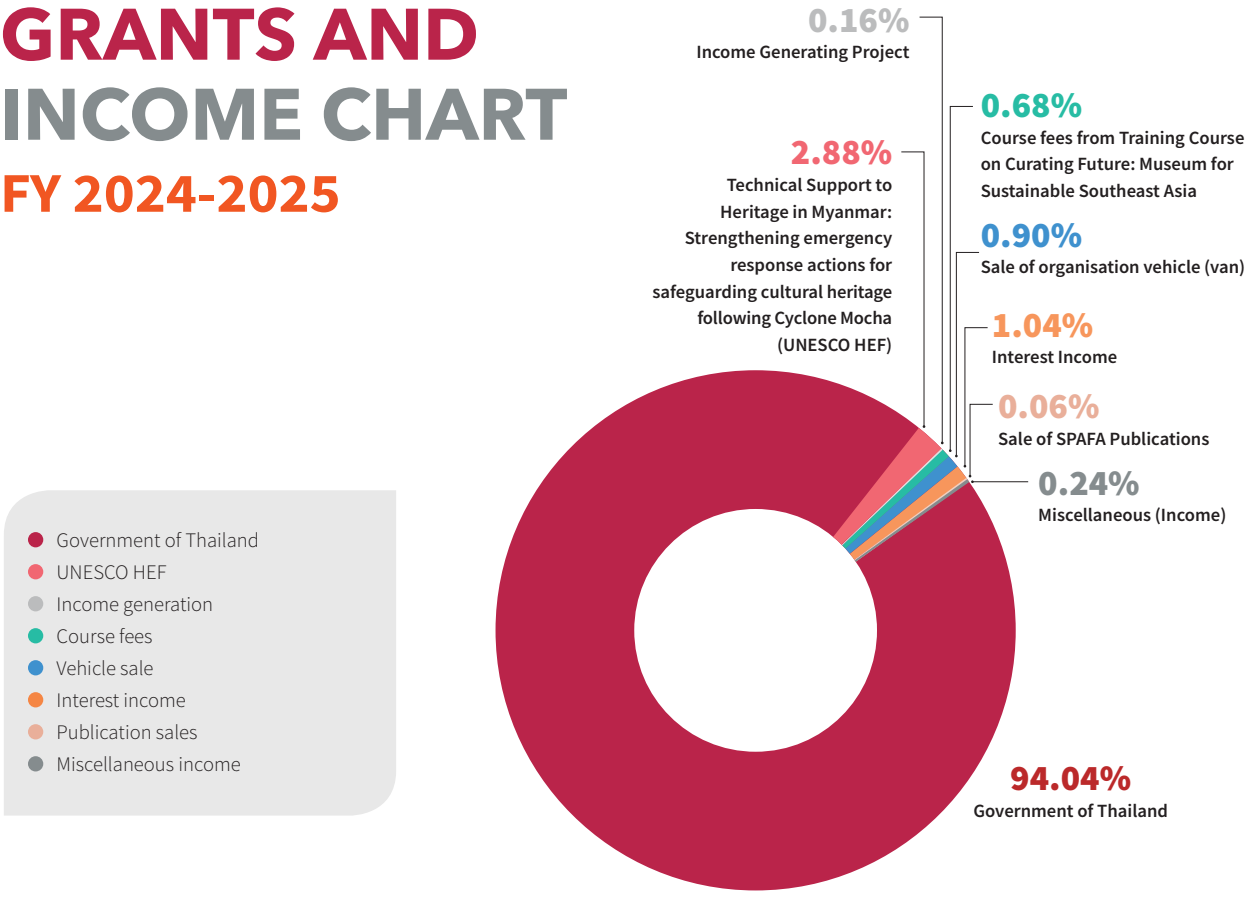
With the support of UNESCO Heritage Emergency Fund, the programme contributed to enhancing local capacities to safeguard cultural heritage, promoting collaborative approaches to disaster risk management, and strengthening networks among heritage practitioners and community stakeholders. It also supported broader sustainable development objectives by advancing the protection of cultural heritage and building resilience to climate-related risks, in line with Sustainable Development Goals 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) and 13 (Climate Action).

FINANCIAL REPORT SUMMARY
FY 2024-2025

SEAMEO SPAFA GRANTS AND INCOMES
FY 2024–2025

SOURCE	UNIT IN US$	%
Government of Thailand	858,786	94.04
Technical Support to Heritage in Myanmar: Strengthening emergency response actions for safeguarding cultural heritage following Cyclone Mocha (UNESCO HEF)	26,281	2.88
Income Generating Project	1,496	0.16
Course fees from Training Course on Curating Future: Museum for Sustainable Southeast Asia Sustainable Southeast Asia	6,167	0.68
Sale of organisation vehicle (van)	8,311	0.90
Interest Income	9,486	1.04
Sale of SPAFA Publications	530	0.06
Miscellaneous (income)	2,186	0.24
TOTAL	913,243	100

GRANTS AND INCOME CHART
FY 2024-2025



DETAILED EXPENDITURE
FY 2024–2025

CAPITAL FUNDS	US$
Furniture and Equipment	7,873
Library Materials	357
Leasehold Improvements	1,039
TOTAL	9,269
OPERATING FUNDS	**US$**
Salaries and Wages	489,239
Staff Benefits	37,173
Travel and Transportation	8,899
Operating Supplies	5,156
Communications	12,562
Utilities	9,435
Seminars and Conferences	538
Repairs and Maintenance	9,925
Representation and Entertainment	544
Professional Services (Audits)	4,155
Clearinghouse and Professional Publications	742
Insurance Premium	3,845
Miscellaneous	1,137
TOTAL	**583,350**
GRAND TOTAL	**592,619**

SUMMARY OF EXPENDITURE
IMPLEMENTED/ONGOING PROGRAMMES/ACTIVITIES
FY 2024–2025 (July 2024–June 2025)

No.	Project	Type	Funding Source	Expenditure (US$)
1	SPAFACON 2024 (accrued expenses)	Conference	Govt of Thailand	34,908
2	Curating Future: Museum for Sustainable Southeast Asia	Lecture Series/ Workshop	Govt of Thailand	7,885
3	Creative Economy in Urban Areas of Southeast Asia: Urban Heritage for Sustainable Development (Preparation Phase)	Consultative Meeting	Govt of Thailand	12,204
4	Advanced Training Workshop in Archaeology (Preparation Phase)	Training	Govt of Thailand	766
5	Heritage Impact Assessments in the Southeast Asian Context (Preparation Phase)	Training	Govt of Thailand	3,113
6	The Archaeologist Talk	Seminar / Special Talk	Govt of Thailand	380
7	Technical Support to Heritage in Myanmar : Strengthening emergency response actions for safeguarding cultural heritage following Cyclone Mocha [UNESCO HEF]	Online Training	UNESCO-HEF	31,183
8	Nakhon Phanom (World Heritage Nomination)	Collaboration	Wat Phrathat Phanom Woramahaviharn	17,108
9	SEAMEO SPAFA Cultural Tour: Field Trip to Cultural Sites in Nakhon Pathom and Suphanburi – Roots of Dvaravati Civilisation	Onsite Study	(Income Generating Project)	1,532
				Total: US$ 109,079

SEAMEO SPAFA FISCAL YEAR IS BETWEEN 1 JULY AND 30 JUNE

Participated in ICOMOS University Forum, “Advancements in the Discipline of Cultural Heritage”, at Tsinghua University, Beijing, China. The event was organised by ICOMOS (International), Tsinghua University’s School of Architecture, and ICOMOS China. SEAMEO SPAFA representative Ms Hattaya Siriphatthanakun delivered a presentation, “Sharing Experience in Developing Capacity-building Programme for Heritage Professionals in Southeast Asia: The Integration of Cultural Heritage Education and Practice”

Co-organised workshop on Heritage Impact Assessment in the Context of World Heritage Sites with the UNESCO Bangkok (represented at the event by Mr Feng Jing, Chief of Culture Unit), Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning, Fine Arts Department of Thailand, and Silpakorn University

Collaborated with the Fine Arts Department of Thailand (represented at the event by Mr Phnombootra Chandrajoti, Director-General) in organising the ‘Curating Future: Museum for Sustainable Southeast Asia’ workshop

Supported the Songkhla Toward World Heritage Foundation in conducting a consultative meeting for the ‘Urban Heritage for Sustainable Development’ project

SEAMEO SPAFA

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