

DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FOR SLOVAK LIBRARIANSHIP 2015–2020

BASIS OF STRATEGY

Libraries provide irreplaceable services that help to satisfy the need for knowledge, education and culture not only of individuals but of society as a whole, and for this reason their all-round development is strongly in the public interest. The systematic collection, preservation, processing and making accessible of information stored on media of every kind is an important aspect, not only for the contemporary development of the modern knowledge society, but also a significant investment in the future development of the knowledge, culture and education of the country's population.

The Slovak Republic's library system is made up of 3,902 public, research, academic, school and special libraries, which made more than 23.6 million book loans to the general public in 2013 for more than 1.06 million users. The libraries organised more than 67,700 educational and cultural-social events attended by nearly 10 million visitors. The licensed electronic databases that libraries make available to their users were used for around 10.5 million queries. From these indicators it is possible to calculate that 19% of the population of the Slovak Republic were active/registered library users in 2013 and each active/registered user took out 4 loans per year and visited the library at least two times per year. These indicators make libraries one of the most widely used and most frequently visited organisations offering cultural services.

There has been a significant increase in the number of educational and cultural-social events that libraries organise for the public (from around 43,000 in 2007 to over 67,000 in 2013), which is connected with the necessary transformation of libraries into community centres providing space for free-time and educational activities, social events, culture and creativity.

In the previous period the library system has undergone a number of major changes – the number of libraries has fallen by 48%, from 7,485 in 2007 to 3,902 in 2013. This change is partly due to changes in the school library system (in 2010 pupils' and teachers' libraries were merged, including departmental libraries), which meant a reduction in numbers, on the one hand, but also the libraries' revival and development, but it also reflects stagnation and cancellations of public libraries and their branches, and also some specialised libraries. This trend is closely connected with the fact that in the past the public library system in particular was very generously dimensioned and the financial priorities of territorial self-government bodies have changed radically, resulting in a reduction in the funding that libraries receive for their activities from their controlling authorities – for example, between 2007 and 2013 the volume of funds that libraries used to renovate and develop their stock fell from EUR 6.89 million to EUR 5.24 million. These changes have had a direct impact on the quality of library-information services and to some extent explain the decrease in the number of loans (from 28 million in 2007 to just under 24 million

in 2013) and the related decrease in the number of active users (down from 1.24 million in 2007 to 1.06 million in 2013).

It is important to note that the trend towards a decrease in the number of working public libraries is not a uniquely Slovak trend but a phenomenon affecting the majority of developed countries in the world, partly as a result of the economic crisis that has shaken the world in recent years but also the changing environment characterised by the rapid development of modern information and communication technologies, which are becoming ever more accessible to broader and broader layers of the population and the rise of new types of library information services based specifically on the use of modern technology. It is natural that libraries need to respond and adapt to new conditions and expectations in order to remain competitive with the omnipresent online environment and digital content.

The availability of books and magazines in formats suitable for persons with disabilities is one of the key areas covered by Article 30 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on Participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport. The area is also covered by the National Programme for the Improvement of Living Conditions for Persons with Disabilities 2014–2020, in particular in Chapter 4.12, the main objective of which is to “create conditions enabling persons with disabilities to take part on an equal basis with others in cultural life, and to have the opportunity to develop and utilize their creative, artistic and intellectual potential, not only for their own benefit, but also for the enrichment of society”¹).

A shortage of up-to-date titles is a longstanding problem for persons with impaired vision, and there is a particular lack of study materials in accessible formats such as: Braille, audio recordings, relief graphics, electronic documents.

The new functions that libraries are taking on in response to the new situation include the development of library information services aimed at promoting media, information and digital literacy and providing access to relevant information including digital information. These functions are assisted by the trend towards improvements in libraries’ technical equipment and support for public access to the internet. It has become the norm for libraries to present their activities on their websites and to offer online access to their catalogues.

¹) One of the most important partners for the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is the Matej Hrebenda Slovak Library for the Blind in Levoča, which has become a major national cultural and information institution in the course of its 65-year history. It provides not only traditional library services but is also an important repository of electronic information sources for the disabled in Slovakia (annual production is approximately 110 titles are published in Braille, including text books, and around 150 audiobooks).

STRATEGIC VISION

In the future the libraries must continue their mission to provide the public with high-quality services supporting knowledge, education and culture that reach the broadest possible spectrum of users in an updated form that builds on their traditions functions but also conforms to the changed conditions of the 21st century. For library information services to remain competitive with other information platforms, they need to provide added value in the form of quality that users cannot find elsewhere, and they must be accessible for all. It must be possible to access them not only from library buildings but also the internet, which has become the most popular channel for finding information. The digitisation of parts of our cultural heritage, including written heritage and library stock and making them accessible to the public together with other high-quality sources of information will be of key importance for this. Another important function for libraries will be to seek out and process digital objects that have no physical form having been created in digital form. The significant changes that have taken place in the ways people communicate have changed the available data sources and libraries are best-placed to process and present information from a diverse range of sources in a single environment. When they compare free information of varying levels of quality with the knowledge contained in library collections, users realise that libraries should be their first choice for reliable and relevant information. If this information is available to anyone at any time anywhere without the need to leave the environment in which the user needs the information, libraries will be seen as an important public service by all stakeholders – both the users of the library service and the authorities that finance libraries' activities and development.

Moving a part of libraries' activities onto the internet requires an accompanying increase in the quality and the scope of the provided services. These must respond to users' needs and expectations and build on the activities of the service points in the libraries' physical premises. Library employees must be well-qualified and motivated professionals whose knowledge and ability to provide assistance and advice, or to locate requested information, will give users reason to make regular use of library services and visit the library. Librarians and information specialists are gradually becoming professional knowledge advisers who need to know how to answer specific questions and satisfy the needs of users and this is reflected in changing requirements for knowledge, skills and practical abilities.

Despite the need for transformation in libraries' provision of library information services, it needs to fully keep up its other basic function – preserving the country's written heritage, regardless of the medium on which information is stored. Part of this involves revitalising the buildings and technical infrastructure of depositories and enlarging their capacity by building new, modern premises to house written heritage while at the same time a technological solution needs to be put in place for the long-term preservation of born-digital materials, whose significance is continuously growing.

The priority actions for implementing our strategic vision for the development of the Slovak library system in the years 2015–2020 can be grouped into three areas:

- formation of information needs, support for information literacy, the management and development of human resources to ensure the sustainability and development of libraries' activities
- the construction, permanent preservation, development and protection of library information collections
- the optimisation and development of library information services and methods for managing knowledge and information

Priorities and measures have been defined within these strategic areas in order to achieve set objectives. These strategic arrangements are designed to make a good library the objective for everyone.

It must be underlined that the main strategic areas have been defined keeping in view the heterogeneity of the library system in Slovakia, the availability of resources (both material and financial²) and human), the capacity and readiness of libraries and the time period covered by the strategy. The main drivers of implementation of certain measures and their effect on the development of library information services will be the national libraries, the scientific libraries and academic libraries and the main axis of public librarianship on the regional level (i.e. the regional libraries). At the same time the strategic areas leave adequate space for development on the level of defined objectives and measures for other types of libraries. It will be up to each library and its controlling authorities to decide how far they will use the Development Strategy for Slovak Librarianship 2015–2020 (hereinafter only the “Strategy”) in the planning of their professional activity and follow-up evaluation of the library's activity.

²) The Ministry of Culture has prepared this strategy having regard for task C.8. of Government Resolution No 588/2013 proposing the public administration budget for the years 2014 to 2016 – ...not to present materials that increase expenditure approved in the state budget for the year 2014 with budgetary effects on the state budget or other budgets included in the state administration budget.

STRATEGIC AREA 1:

FORMATION OF INFORMATION NEEDS, SUPPORT FOR INFORMATION LITERACY, THE MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES TO ENSURE THE SUSTAINABILITY AND DEVELOPMENT OF LIBRARIES' ACTIVITIES.

Libraries ensure universal access to culture, knowledge and information in print and digital form, and make possible lifelong learning. They thus support individual formal and informal learning for all age-groups of users.

They contribute to the formation and reinforcement of the reading habits of children and young people, develop reading, media and information literacy, which can be characterised in simple terms as the ability to identify, locate, evaluate and make use of information.

They also contribute to multicultural education and the provision of public sector information to all.

The most important prerequisite for the development of services and resources is to have well-qualified, professional staff able to solve problems in the modernisation and upgrading of librarianship in the Slovak Republic.

PRIORITIES AND MEASURES

1.1 Support for the development of libraries to enable them to perform the function of education centres as specified in the Conception of Lifelong Learning³⁾ in the Slovak Republic, with an emphasis on information literacy

Objective

To support equality of opportunity in the implementation of the fundamental human right to lifelong learning and personal development

To support the integration of the young generation in social and labour relations by increasing information literacy in particular for students in secondary school and university as well as creating conditions for supporting the information literacy of other sections of the population

To provide training for library personnel in the areas of information and digital literacy

Measures

1.1.1 To create conditions for the public to have access to new skills in working with information and to restore and improve people's existing skills in order to ensure the sustainable development of a knowledge-based society

³⁾ <http://www.minedu.sk/9772-sk/dokumenty-a-predpisy/>

- 1.1.2 To make an active contribution to ensuring the information literacy of all sections of the population through permanent support for the educational activities of libraries, including support for the outputs of these activities
- 1.1.3 To support systematic training for library staff aimed at developing digital and media literacy and lifelong learning in the area of technologies for digital services, and for librarians who teach information subjects in higher education

1.2 Developing libraries as community, multicultural and information centres and venues for informal lifelong learning

Objective

To support library activities on the regional level connected with lifelong learning, art, culture, tourism and local business activity

To support the development of libraries as multifunctional and multicultural centres, as an information base, information centres and a part of the infrastructure of the creative industries, and to support cooperation and partnerships

To support the transformation of libraries into places for encounters of people and opinions

Measures

- 1.2.1 To provide public access to public sector information
- 1.2.2 To support the social functions and services of public libraries, to establish and operate in them cultural/community spaces for the informal meetings of members of the public, civil associations, advice centres and the like, and to support their activities
- 1.2.3 To create conditions for enlarging partnerships between libraries, cultural, interest and educational institutions, school establishments, clubs, civil associations, non-profit organisations, businesses, research institutions, cultural centres and establishments, as part of the lifelong learning system on the local and regional level and to support their activities
- 1.2.4 To support the development of academic libraries as information centres for the academic community
- 1.2.5 To create conditions and support the involvement of volunteers in library services
- 1.2.6 To support the development of school libraries as information and cultural centres in schools

1.3 Support and promotion of reading, the development of reading literacy, activities to eliminate secondary illiteracy

Objective

To help to eliminate secondary illiteracy and develop reading habits by supporting and promoting reading

To increase interest in literature and reading through targeted activities

Measures

- 1.3.1 To increase the professional standard and attractiveness of events intended to develop the reading literacy of the general public
- 1.3.2 To support activities that develop the reading skills of children and young people, e.g. reading with understanding
- 1.3.3 To support projects for family reading literacy and family reading as part of libraries' community activities.

1.4 Support for the education of selected target groups (Roma communities, long-term unemployed persons, women on maternity or parental leave, persons with disabilities, immigrants, persons in post-productive age and persons with low levels of education or low social status), particularly through public libraries Support for access to library information services for disadvantaged sections of the population

Objective

To implement activities aimed at selected groups of users

To give particular attention to the accessibility of library information services for disadvantaged sections of the population and to help make libraries accessible for all

Measures

- 1.4.1 To support the production and transposition of traditional and modern documents in forms suitable for persons with impaired vision and persons with impaired hearing and to promote compliance with standards that make it easier for persons with disabilities to access information
- 1.4.2 To support the implementation and use of equipment and technologies that can make information accessible for disadvantaged sections of the population
- 1.4.3 To support and develop direct cooperation between libraries and associations that assist disadvantaged sections of the population and minorities
- 1.4.4 To support projects aimed at improving library information services and education for persons with disadvantages (in particular persons with disabilities, senior citizens and groups belonging to socially disadvantaged communities)

1.5 Creating and supporting a system of lifelong learning for information professionals and librarians, improving the quality of the human resource management system

Objective

To provide for the acquisition and development of practical experience of librarians and information workers in the workplace

Measures

- 1.5.1 To support accredited training for library personnel in all professional categories, in particular for employees providing information education for children, young people and adults
- 1.5.2 To support the system of lifelong learning for librarians and information professionals

- 1.5.3 To update the catalogue of work activities for librarians and information specialists, to update the descriptions of activities for specific pay grades of librarians
- 1.5.4 To create conditions for the provision of motivational remuneration to the professional staff in libraries in order to encourage them to remain in their profession
- 1.5.5 To create conditions supporting the professional activities of librarians' professional organisations

STRATEGIC AREA 2:

THE CONSTRUCTION, PERMANENT STORAGE, DEVELOPMENT AND PROTECTION OF LIBRARY INFORMATION COLLECTIONS

Library information collections are an important part of cultural, intellectual and scientific heritage. Libraries provide for the systematic and long-term development of their collections and put in place management systems to ensure that from the moment of acquisition every item is registered, professionally handled, comprehensively protected and made available as appropriate.

An important part of comprehensive library services is the finding, processing and making available of other information sources.

PRIORITIES AND MEASURES

2.1 Building library information collections and providing information in line with the needs of members of the public and the interest of society as a whole

Objective

To establish, systematically build and provide access to library stock and information sources for the purposes of science, research, education, technical innovation and development of the business environment and to support personal development and leisure activities

To enrich and deliver useful information and library collections covering a comprehensive range of topics and a flexible approach ensuring up-to-date, high quality information for a wide range of users distributed via all types of media.

To optimise the system of legal deposits and update the current legislation, which does not address the issue of legal deposit for documents in electronic formats

Measures

- 2.1.1 To ensure resources and support for libraries' acquisition activities focussing in particular on building collections in line with each library's orientation and specialisation.
- 2.1.2 To promote instruments that can simplify the initial processing of documents – standardisation, cooperative cataloguing, and the development of union catalogues and databases of authorities.
- 2.1.3 To implement a system for coordinating the acquisition and making available of electronic information sources and databases for the purposes of science, research and education and the business sector on the national level.
- 2.1.4 To initiate an amendment of the law on legal deposits that implements in practice the provisions of the IFLA Statement on legal deposits. To set the number of legal deposits in a manner that ensures adequate technological availability and long-term future retention. To implement a legal deposit system for works published only electronically regardless of the format or technology. To consider introducing a rule that libraries shall be entitled to a discount for a paid legal deposit

2.2 Digitisation, long-term archiving and presentation of digital data and knowledge of cultural and scientific heritage

Objective

To provide direct access to digital and non-digital information sources in a transparent and reliable manner through digital libraries and to link together education and culture by means of information technology. The digitisation of cultural heritage documents facilitates the preservation of the original media while permitting effective, democratic public access to their content on a much broader scale.

To prepare and develop digital libraries and digital services in the area of digital culture and to implement systematic instruments and resources for the creative industries.

To expand, improve and optimise information, communication and technological resources for the systematic collection, administration, storage and long-term protection of library, information and knowledge collections in digital form.

Measures

- 2.2.1 To prepare a concept and methodology for the digitisation of library collections including making digital content available to a wide range of users. Arrangements for accessing digital content must comply with the standards laid down for public administration information systems
- 2.2.2 To integrate libraries in a standard platform for the preservation, long-term archiving and making accessible of cultural and intellectual heritage
- 2.2.3 To support partnerships between libraries and other cultural institutions and the private sector including the implementation of common standards and methodologies for supporting interoperability and improving conditions for connections between library collections, museum objects and archive documents.
- 2.2.4 To improve conditions for the digitisation of information sources and their accessibility through the creation of a list of orphan works, out-of-commerce works and works that are temporarily or permanently unavailable on the book market.
- 2.2.5 To install and connect institutional repositories for access to and the systematic preservation of locally significant and useful library, information and knowledge sources.
- 2.2.6 To build an information system to collect, process and manage the legal deposit of original electronic publications and digital works and content on the Slovak internet (www.sk).
- 2.2.7 To ensure the sustainable operation and development of the digitisation centre at the Slovak National Library in Martin.
- 2.2.8 To ensure the sustainable operation and development of the Central Data Archive (CDA) for the long-term protection of cultural heritage in digital form, to develop a network of partner institutions to contribute to the CDA.

2.3 Professional protection of library information collections and improvement of protection and security of the buildings and premises in which library stock is stored, preserved and accessed. Physical protection and permanent preservation of historic library collections

Objective

To prioritise in all construction, reconstruction or modernisation of libraries the creation of optimal climatic, lighting and security conditions for the protection of library collections in order to slow down or suspend the natural process of decay.

Historic library collections are an integral part of national heritage and represent priceless cultural and historical wealth. Historic library documents are not only important artefacts documenting book culture in different historical periods but also an important source of information which libraries must professionally manage, scientifically assess, make accessible and popularise as written cultural heritage for the professional community and the general public.

Measures

- 2.3.1 To improve the state of protection and security for library stock through the technical, technological, electronic and mechanical equipment of buildings and interior spaces
- 2.3.2 To continue the passporting and administration of historical libraries, implement record parameters that ensure the unique identification of every document in order prevent any unwanted interference with library stock (exchange, theft).
- 2.3.3 To create optimal conditions for the professional handling, scientific study, storage, protection, digitisation and making accessible of historic library documents, historic library collections and library written heritage
- 2.3.4 To intensify measures for the active protection of collections through conservation and restoration work depending on the collection's value, condition and degree of risk
- 2.3.5 To ensure the sustainable operation and development of the conservation centre for the protection of written cultural heritage
- 2.3.6 To improve the quality of existing depositories, in particular specialised storage equipment, air conditioning, hygiene, regulatory and measuring equipment
- 2.3.7 To prepare methods for dealing with extraordinary (crisis) situations in libraries

STRATEGIC AREA 3:

OPTIMISATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF LIBRARY INFORMATION SERVICES AND METHODS FOR MANAGING KNOWLEDGE AND INFORMATION

The services that libraries provide to their users guarantee equal access to information and support a knowledge-based society by various means – from general information through lifelong learning and knowledge dissemination to the creation of specific information products.

Libraries' activities and services contribute to and support personal development and permit an individual approach to a broad and diverse range of knowledge, thoughts and opinion. They contribute to the development of users' knowledge and skills. Library services must be accessible to all, without spatial, material and other restrictions, and must take account of new trends in development.

An essential condition for the operation of libraries and the provision of modern library and information services is to improve space and equipment with an emphasis on a high-quality, modern environment and equipment that meets the needs of all types of users in different age groups.

PRIORITIES AND MEASURES

3.1 A wider range of library and information services in libraries from the traditional to services making use of the latest information and communication technologies

Objective

To enable all libraries to provide hybrid services, combining traditional and electronic forms in the most user-friendly way

Measures

- 3.1.1 To create and make accessible a functional national authority file and a national monograph union catalogue with rich content (e.g. to enrich catalogues with the covers and contents of books, to link entries to external information sources) and advanced functions (e.g. the most frequent search terms, statistics) and further develop the periodicals union catalogue.
- 3.1.2 To create conditions supporting the provision of mobile library and information services (the library without walls) e.g. with the use of bookmobiles, delivery services and the like.
- 3.1.3 To develop electronic services (e.g. existing services such as Ask the library, electronic document ordering, loan extensions, reservations, pre-registration, document ordering, research requests etc.) and to support the introduction of more user-friendly services (self-service lending equipment, automated book return equipment etc.).
- 3.1.4 To promote library services and information products via marketing communications and social networks.

3.2 Implementation of instruments for virtual access to library stock and provision of personalised services and support for internet communication between libraries and users

Objective

To enlarge, improve and optimise information and communication technology for virtual access to libraries' stock, information and knowledge in digital form and for the provision of personalised services. To establish optimal internet communication with users and to provide as many services as possible via the internet

Measures

- 3.2.1 To upgrade, expand and build library information systems with an emphasis on providing personalised services, communication and access to information sources via mobile devices and technologies
- 3.2.2 To equip libraries with information technology and equipment for administration and the provision of personalised services including loans of e-documents, and instruments supporting e-learning and e-publishing
- 3.2.3 To support the implementation of integrated library systems providing a uniform interface for searching multiple sources
- 3.2.4 To develop interactive websites for libraries based on content management systems in accordance with the standards for public administration information systems, to implement technology supporting communication on social networks

3.3 Creation of legislative and methodological conditions for the provision of high quality and effective library and information services

Objective

To develop and improve library and information services through the use of standards for public libraries, the preparation of standards for academic libraries, and to use benchmarking in the evaluation of library services to ensure quality in the provision of library and information services and the optimal use of public funds

To use activities and recommendations to guide the library system in dealing with current problems in the provision of library and information services.

Measures

- 3.3.1 To monitor trends in the development of library and information processes (cataloguing rules, archiving etc.) and to prepare methodological materials, standards and commentaries necessary for their implementation in Slovakia.
- 3.3.2 To implement consistently the approved national standards in library activities and to prepare standards for other types of libraries
- 3.3.3 To define the legal action libraries should take in cases related to the provision of library information services (recovery of bad loans, handling situations involving unruly users etc.) and to provide methodological guidance to libraries in these areas.
- 3.3.4 To develop a legislative framework for loans of documents on media other than print
- 3.3.5 To establish a modern legal framework to facilitate e-reading by library users and the legal lending of e-documents, to develop innovative and attractive library information services

3.4 Expansion, improvement and optimisation of buildings and equipment for the provision of library and information services and access to library stock

Objective

To create conditions for the construction of new, purpose-built library buildings and the systematic reconstruction of existing library buildings to meet international standards, to provide high-quality services for the public in the Slovak Republic including support for the creative industries and the development of tourism in regions of Slovakia and to enable the libraries to act as universal centres for culture and education on the level of developed European states

Measures

- 3.4.1 To support the construction of new, modern purpose-built libraries, to systematically reconstruct library buildings and interiors with an emphasis on universal access and modernisation of the interiors and technological equipment in order to facilitate the provision of a wider range of higher quality library and information services
- 3.4.2 To increase capacity for storing library stock, looking twenty or more years ahead To build shared depositories for multiple libraries, to raise professional standards in the handling of library stock and rationalise operations

4 CONCLUSION

The Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic, as the central state administration body for cultural heritage and librarianship, will coordinate tasks implementing the strategy. **The Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic shall be the lead manager and supervisor for the implementation of all strategic areas, priorities and measures under the strategy.**

Libraries under the competence of the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic are able to fully implement selected measures and objectives and thereby benefit the whole library system of the Slovak Republic.

Implementation of the strategy will make it easier for territorial self-governing authorities and other legal entities that control libraries to plan and support the professional activities of their libraries in accordance with the medium-term government strategy for the development of the library system and this will eliminate isolated and uncoordinated activity and prevent the stagnation of libraries.

In order to implement the strategy the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic shall

- 4.1 renew and provide financing for the special item in the programming structure of the Ministry of Culture's budgetary chapter earmarked for implementation of individual strategic areas and measures
- 4.2 adapt priorities for support under the grant system of the Ministry of Culture to meet needs resulting from implementation of the Development Strategy for Slovak Librarianship 2015–2020
- 4.3 increase, as the availability of funds permits, financing in particular under Programme 2 Cultural activities in the area of heritage institutions, Sub-programme 2.1 Libraries and librarianship, 2.3 Protection of cultural heritage and 2.5 Library acquisitions.

As a central state administration body controlling two specialised academic libraries (the Slovak Centre of Scientific and Technical Information and the Slovak Pedagogical Library), which are important parts of the Library System of the Slovak Republic which will be involved in the implementation of the strategy, and also a ministry that has in the past and may in the future issue calls for applications for financial support for development projects in relevant areas, the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic **shall cooperate in the implementation of measures in the following strategic areas:**

<u>Strategic area 1:</u>	1.1.1, 1.1.2, 1.1.3, 1.2.1, 1.2.3, 1.2.4, 1.2.6, 1.3.2, 1.3.3, 1.4.2, 1.4.3, 1.4.4, 1.5.1, 1.5.2, 1.5.4,
<u>Strategic area 2:</u>	2.1.1, 2.1.2, 2.1.3, 2.2.3, 2.2.5, 2.3.1, 2.3.6,
<u>Strategic area 3:</u>	3.1.3, 3.1.4, 3.2.1, 3.2.2, 3.2.3, 3.2.4, 3.4.1, 3.4.2.