

# **Thailand Government Spending (GovSpending) Initiative: A Digital Innovation for a Transparent Government and Citizen Empowerment**<sup>1</sup>

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As Thai citizens are obliged to pay direct and indirect taxes to the Thai government, we always ask ourselves, “How does the government spend my taxes for my or the country’s benefits”? or in short “Where do our taxes go”?

Before 1997, it had been virtually impossible for ordinary Thai citizens, businesses or civil society organisations to acquire the details about more than a million procurement projects from numerous government agencies, which constitute a considerable proportion of Thailand’s government expenditure. Citizens who were interested in the data needed to find out first and foremost an agency responsible for each procurement project. Then, they needed to travel to that agency and request the data which could still be denied. Furthermore, government agencies could still charge fees to citizens at their discretion. Such complicated processes made access to government procurement data unaffordable for ordinary citizens, and they were excluded from political participation and anti-corruption missions.

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The situation was better when the Official Information Act B.E. 2540 (1997) came into force at the end of 1997. The Act requires government agencies to disclose their information to the general public including the information on their concession contracts, agreements of a monopolistic nature or joint venture agreements with private individuals for the provision of public services. It is considered as the significant milestone for the revelation of how the Thai government spent taxpayers' money in the modern era. In case a government agency refuses to provide the information for citizens, they can appeal to the Information Disclosure Tribunal. Since 1999, in which the Administrative Court was established, citizens who are denied access to government information can also bring the cases to the Administrative Court. Moreover, in 2011 the Cabinet required all government agencies to disclose their public information via their digital channels such as websites to make it easier for Thai people to access the information. Also, the Organic Act on Counter-Corruption (No. 2) B.E. 2554 (2011) requires all government agencies to reveal reference prices of government procurement projects and how they are calculated via electronic means.

Despite the regulations and efforts of many governments to enhance government's transparency, some major obstacles still exist. First, some government agencies still disclose their information in a paper-based format at their information centers. Citizens therefore still need to travel to each information center around the country to collect the information which is impossible. Second, each government agency discloses the information on their procurement projects separately on their own websites. It means that if citizens want the comprehensive information, it is necessary for them to visit more than thousands of websites of government agencies at the central, provincial and local levels which is extremely inconvenient and time-consuming. Third, the information

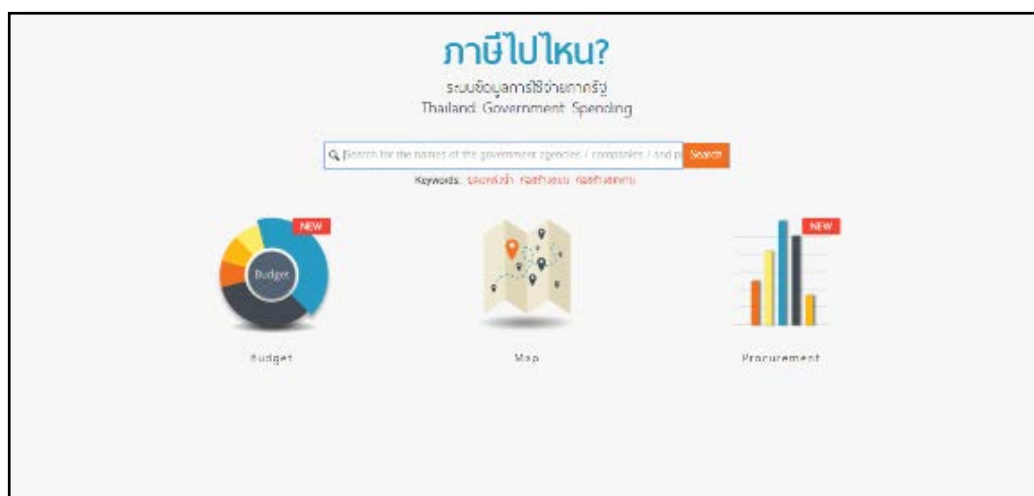
presented on each website is designed for government officials and academics who have profound knowledge of the government procurement regulations and processes or private enterprises which desire to offer their products and services to government agencies.

As a consequence of these major obstacles, not only are average Thai citizens prevented from easy and convenient access to government procurement information, they are also excluded from political participation and anti-corruption missions. Political inequality in Thailand was widened by the complicated processes of access to government procurement information.

### **Thailand Government Spending Initiative as a digital solution for ordinary citizens**

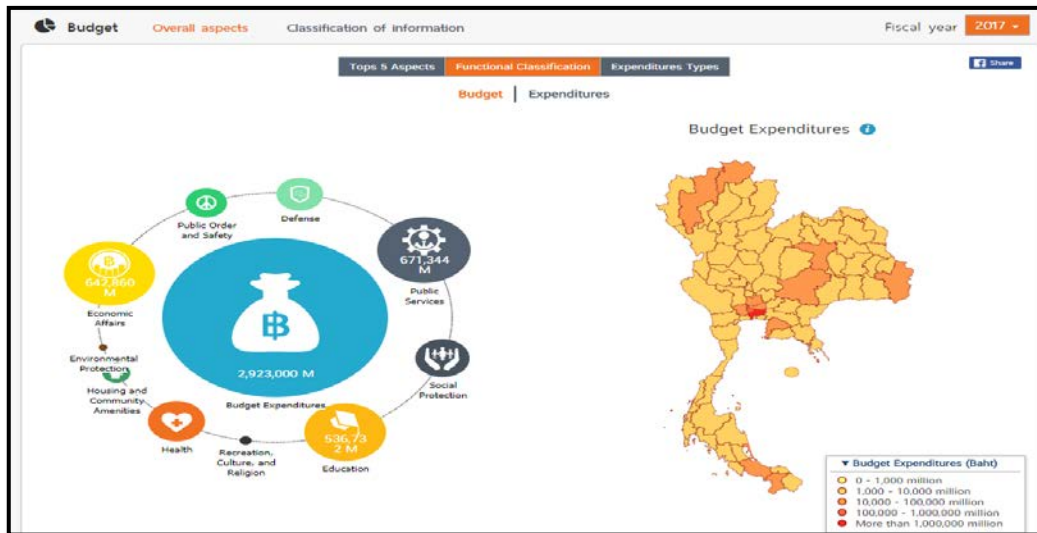
The current government led by Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha is strongly committed to corruption elimination. The first critical success factor is to enable ordinary citizens to access government procurement information with minimal limitations. The National Counter Corruption Commission set up by the government resolved in 2015 to push for opening data on government procurement to the general public via a single digital channel in an easy-to-understand format. To turn the resolution into reality, the Electronic Government Agency (EGA) has been working collaboratively with many related agencies responsible for government budget and procurement such as the Bureau of the Budget within the Prime Minister's Office portfolio and the Comptroller General's Department within the portfolio of the Ministry of Finance to develop the "Thailand Government Spending" Initiative, commonly known as "Where do our taxes go?". The website, <https://govspending.data.go.th/>, is therefore created as the single portal website

to reveal government procurement information in a format which ordinary citizens can access and understand with only their fingertips.

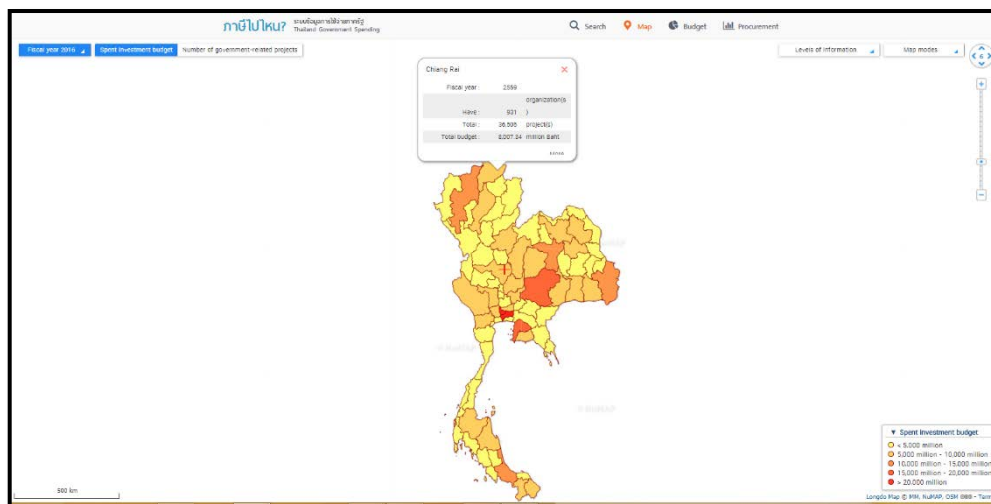


**Image 1:** Homepage of the Thailand Government Spending Website  
<https://govspending.data.go.th/>

The initiative utilises reliable primary data from the e-Budgeting of the Bureau of the Budget, the e-Government Procurement (e-GP) and the Government Fiscal Management Information System (GFMIS) of Comptroller General's Department, which are already revealed via a digital means, to perform data analytics and present it in easy-to-understand formats such as dashboards, maps and infographics. Citizens with only basic knowledge of government procurement processes and basic computer skills can visit the website and understand the information easily. The information is continuously updated when a contract between a business enterprise and a government agency is signed. Ordinary citizens can see an overview of the government budget allocation, government spending strategies and how the overall budget is actually spent with only few clicks.



**Image 2:** An overview of the Thailand's government budget Fiscal Year 2017 classified by expenditure strategies and provinces  
<https://govspending.data.go.th/dashboard/4#/hash/bb>



**Image 3:** Thailand's map which people can access government procurement project in each particular province  
<https://govspending.data.go.th/map>

Citizens can also access the details of government procurement projects in each province by clicking on the map. For example, in Chiang Rai Province in the northern part of Thailand, there were 36,505 government procurement projects in Fiscal Year 2016 from 931 government agencies with the total budget of 8,007.34 million baht.

ภาพเว็บไซต์: <https://govspending.data.go.th/budget?prov=57&year=2559&sort=DESC>

ระบบข้อมูลการใช้จ่ายภาครัฐ  
Thailand Government Spending

ค้นหาโครงการ

เลือกปีงบประมาณ: **ปี 59**

ผลการค้นหาโครงการจัดซื้อจัดจ้าง 36,505 โครงการ รวม 8,007.34 ล้านบาท

#	ชื่อหน่วยงานจัดซื้อ	ชื่อโครงการ	วงเงินงบประมาณ	วันที่ลงนามในสัญญา
1	มหาวิทยาลัยแม่ฟ้าหลวง	ประกวดราคาจ้างก่อสร้างอาคารศูนย์การแพทย์พร้อมระบบสาธารณูปการ มหาวิทยาลัยแม่ฟ้าหลวง ด้วยวิธีการทางอิเล็กทรอนิกส์	1,477.53 ลบ.	21 เม.ย. 59
2	สำนักงานปลัดกระทรวงสาธารณสุข	ประกวดราคาจ้างก่อสร้างอาคารผู้ป่วย 120 เตียง + หน่วยแพทย์เคลื่อนที่ไทย เป็นอาคาร	86.48 ลบ.	29 ม.ค. 59
3	โรงพยาบาลเชียงรายประชานุเคราะห์	ประกวดราคาจ้างก่อสร้างอาคารที่พักเจ้าหน้าที่ ข นั ๓๖ ห้อง (โครงสร้างผ่านแล้ว)	66.60 ลบ.	29 ม.ค. 59
4	มหาวิทยาลัยราชภัฏเชียงราย	ประกวดราคาจ้างก่อสร้างอาคารเรียนและสำนักงานคณะครูสตรัพร้อมครุภัณฑ์	65.79 ลบ.	28 ม.ค. 59
5	สำนักงานปลัดกระทรวงสาธารณสุข	ประกวดราคาจ้างก่อสร้างอาคารผู้ป่วยนอก เป็นอาคาร ๓๓.3 ชั้น พื้นที่ใช้สอย 3,060	44.88 ลบ.	28 ม.ค. 59
6	องค์การบริหารส่วนจังหวัดเชียงราย	จ้างโครงการปรับปรุงภูมิทัศน์และตกแต่งสวนในสวนสาธารณะภายในงานมหกรรมไฟ	37.94 ลบ.	17 พ.ย. 58
7	สำนักงานปลัดกระทรวงสาธารณสุข	ประกวดราคาจ้างก่อสร้างอาคารผู้ป่วยนอก - 10 เป็นอาคาร ๓๓.2 ชั้น พื้นที่ใช้สอย	37.50 ลบ.	14 มี.ค. 59
8	มหาวิทยาลัยแม่ฟ้าหลวง	ประกวดราคาจ้างงานขนานบริการรักษาความสะอาด ประจำปีงบประมาณ 2559	35.90 ลบ.	22 ต.ค. 58
9	กรมทางหลวงชนบท	ประกวดราคาจ้างก่อสร้างสะพานข้ามแม่น้ำพอง อ.บ้านดง จ.เชียงราย ความยาว ๖๐.๐๐	34.20 ลบ.	23 ธ.ค. 58
10	วิทยาลัยเทคนิคเวียงป่าเป้า	ประกวดราคาจ้างก่อสร้างอาคารโรงฝึกงาน พื้นที่ไม่ต่ำกว่า 4,000 ตารางเมตร โดยวิธี	31.89 ลบ.	27 ม.ค. 59
11	องค์การบริหารส่วนจังหวัดเชียงราย	ประกวดราคาจ้างก่อสร้างอาคาร ขนั ๓๐ ล้อ เครื่องยนต์ดีเซล สีกำลังไม่น้อยกว่า ๒๐๐	28.32 ลบ.	4 ก.ค. 59

โครงการประกวดราคาจ้างก่อสร้างอาคารศูนย์การแพทย์พร้อมระบบสาธารณูปการ มหาวิทยาลัยแม่ฟ้าหลวง ด้วยวิธีการทางอิเล็กทรอนิกส์

ชื่อหน่วยงานย่อย: มหาวิทยาลัยแม่ฟ้าหลวง (มฟล.) เชียงราย

ราคาที่ตั้งของซื้อ/จ้าง: 1,477,527,000 บาท

วันที่ลงนามในสัญญา: 21 เม.ย. 59

สถานะโครงการ: ระหว่างดำเนินการ

Share

แผนที่

500 km

**Image 4:** The details of government procurement projects in Chiang Rai Province Fiscal Year 2016

<https://govspending.data.go.th/budget?prov=57&year=2559&sort=DESC>

The significant details of each procurement project presented on the website include the responsible agency, the project title, the project number, the reference price, the budget allocated for the project, the agreed price, the procurement method, the details of the contractor, the date on which the contract is signed and terminated and the project status. Currently, a mobile application is available for citizens to be downloaded from both iOS and Android.

Moreover, people can also search for a specific perspective of the government procurement information from its smart search engine. They can type the names of government agencies, private enterprises or areas in which procurement projects take place. The information will appear in the blink of an eye.

With up to date details available for them in only few clicks, if citizens suspect or find delays, frauds or corruption in any projects, they can lodge formal complaints to the Office of the Public Sector Anti-Corruption Commission or the Office of the Prime Minister conveniently.

In the future, the Thai government plans to expand the information to be revealed on the Thailand Government Spending initiative to cover taxes and other sources of revenue collected by the government. When the next phase of the initiative is complete, it will become the most comprehensive reliable source of information for Thai citizens to scrutinise how the Thai government collects and spends people's taxes for the benefits of the country.

Not only notable features of the Thailand Government Spending initiative do help remove obstacles to government procurement information access, they also empower ordinary citizens of all socio-economic statuses to scrutinise the government with dignity leading to more inclusive and effective political participation in the country.

## **Conclusion**

Before the Thailand Government initiative was developed in 2015, it was extremely difficult for ordinary Thai citizens to obtain the comprehensive information on government procurement. The initiative revolutionises how the government reveals the information to the general public. Instead of waiting for the people to request the government procurement information, the initiative optimises and integrates reliable data from government agencies, performs data analytics and presents it in easy-to-understand formats including dashboards, maps and infographics via a single digital channel. The initiative becomes the digital innovation which enables ordinary citizens of all socio-economic statuses to access and understand the information with minimal limitations and therefore empowers them to scrutinise how the Thai government spends their taxes for their benefits.