



Kingdom of the Netherlands

The Maritime Sector in Thailand

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Thailand has a coastline of 3,219 km, more than 250 islands, and over 4,000 km of inland waterways. Although Thailand meets most preconditions for becoming a thriving maritime market, the Thai maritime sector is relatively small compared to other countries in the region. Nonetheless, interesting business opportunities exist.

Thailand has multiple strategically located ports and a comparatively good port infrastructure and efficiency. Its largest port is ranked 22nd globally and there are approximately 260 companies running shipbuilding and repairing dockyards. Moreover, thanks to Thailand's location, tropical climate, and beautiful beaches, the country is an ideal place for pleasure boating. This all makes it an attractive playground for the maritime industry. Furthermore, through major investments in infrastructure and the development of the Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC), a strategically located economic zone, Thailand hopes to become the gateway to Asia. Positive and stable economic forecasts for the Southeast Asian region, combined with Thailand's ambitious plans, have created interesting business opportunities for Dutch enterprises. Within the maritime sector, most opportunities for Dutch companies involve port development, inland waterways, shipbuilding and repairing, and leisure boats.

Priority Sectors

Port Development

The Port Authority of Thailand (PAT) is responsible for the development and management of Thailand's major deep-sea ports.

The state entity controls and/or owns many of the maritime assets of Thailand. The PAT often calls for tenders for vessel building projects and/or port-related assets. Recent years, the PAT has started to transform its ports into green ports in accordance with the International Maritime Organization (IMO) standards.

Laem Chabang Port is the largest port of Thailand, the 4th largest in the ASEAN region, and the 22nd in the world (2015). It is located in the EEC and handles 54% of Thailand's total import and export. Construction to increase the capacity of the port is ongoing.

The second largest port is Bangkok Port. To increase Thailand's competitiveness, the PAT has invested in modernizing ICT and reporting systems, creating a one-stop shop service center, and increasing the port's capacity.

Other ports include Chiang Saen and Chiang Khong in the north of Thailand. Chiang Saen is located on the bank of the Mekong River close to the border with Myanmar and Laos. It functions as a mid-point depot for shipments from south China to Laem Chabang. Due to its strategic location, the port is important for Thailand's future growth. Chiang Khong mainly serves small ships from Laos and is less important for Thailand's economy.



Courtesy of Port Authority Thailand

Thailand's main port at the Andaman Sea and major link in trade routes from South Asia, the Middle East, Europe, and Africa is Ranong Port.

Opportunities for Dutch organizations can be found in the area of technology exchange with respect to port development and improvement, and in the area of port services.

Inland Waterways

The Chao Phraya, Pa Sak, Tha Chin, and the Mae Khlong rivers are used for domestic transport, while the Mekong River is the most important river for international transport within the Greater Mekong Region (GMR).

With a mere 9% of total freight transport, inland shipping is the second most important type of freight transport in Thailand. The Thai government will further develop river transport by focusing on dredging, building and maintenance of vessels, and port related work. Most of the work will be outsourced to external contractors.

Opportunities for Dutch companies include the construction and maintenance of smaller vessels, barges, tugs, and passenger vessels. Although the use of tugboats for inland shipping is the status quo, they might be replaced with self-propelled boats in the future because of safety concerns. This could be an opportunity for Dutch businesses. Additional opportunities concern the plans to construct a freight station in the Angthon province and the Bang Ban-Bang Sai flood diversion canal.

Shipbuilding and Repairing

Leading Thai shipyards include Unithai, Marsun, ItalThai Marine, Bangkok Dock, Seacrest, and Asimar. Thai shipyards mainly focus on repairing and conversion activities, which represent about 70% of their revenues. The remaining 30% comes from shipbuilding activities.

Tenders for new vessels are issued by government agencies such as the PAT, the Royal Thai Navy (RTN), and the Marine Department. Only local shipyards can participate in the bidding process. However, local shipyards often cooperate with foreign shipyards

to increase their capacity and expertise, especially regarding design, equipment, and management.

Even though the Thai shipbuilding and repairing industry is relatively small, Thailand has the manpower, craftsmanship, and capacity to construct specialized vessels up to 20,000 dwt. Additionally, the Thai fleet is rather old and in need of modernization. This will likely result in opportunities concerning the construction of tug boats, dredging vessels, ferries, patrol and supply boats, oil tankers, and the fishing fleet.

Yachts and Leisure Boats

Recent years, the maritime leisure market of Thailand has grown significantly. The continuously rising tourism sector in combination with Thailand's duty free policy on imported yachts have led to an increasing demand for leisure vessels. Over 70% of the larger yachts in Thailand are imported from abroad, while 60% of the smaller speedboats are locally constructed.

Moreover, Thailand has 11 certified marinas. To address the growing demand, the Marine Department has identified eight potential areas that could be developed in the future.

With regard to opportunities for Dutch companies, a few can be identified such as export of yachts to Thailand, cooperation with local yacht builders to repair and maintain yachts or to build (super) yachts, and involvement in the new marina development.

We Support Your Business

The Netherlands Embassy in Bangkok offers active support to Dutch companies already present in Thailand, Laos, and Cambodia, and Dutch companies interested in doing business in these countries. Our main services include the following:

- Providing information on sectors and rules and regulations
- Supporting trade missions and visits to Thailand
- Organizing meetings with relevant authorities at local, provincial, and/or governmental level
- Monitoring business opportunities
- Troubleshooting and advising on resolving disputes



Courtesy of Maasvlakte Area Rotterdam

- Advising on available instruments and services
- Promoting Dutch businesses in Thailand

Business Support Instruments

The Netherlands government has developed multiple instruments to support Dutch companies in Thailand. Please visit the website of the Netherlands Enterprise Agency (www.rvo.nl/thailand) for more information. Atradius Dutch State Business may help you with your export insurance (www.atradiusdutchstate-business.nl).

Market Analysis

The Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Bangkok has recently commissioned a full market analysis on the Thai maritime sector. A copy is available for interested Dutch companies. If you would like to receive a copy, please send an email to ban-ea@minbuza.nl.

Trade Fairs and Events

A wide variety of trade fairs is organized in Thailand and the region throughout the year. At several of these exhibitions, Netherlands Embassies organize events, such as Holland pavilions, matchmaking, and networking opportunities. Please contact us for more information on relevant trade fairs and our support.

- Top of the Gulf Regatta: www.topofthegulfregatta.com
- Thailand Marine & Offshore Expo: www.thai-marine.com
- ASEAN International Fleet Review: www.aseanifr2017.com
- ShipTech: www.shiptech4.com
- Ocean Marina Pattaya Boat Show: www.oceanmarinapattaya-boatshow.com
- Thailand Yacht Show: www.thailandyachtshow.com
- Phuket King's Cup Regatta: www.kingscup.com
- PIMEX: www.phuketboatshow.com

Professional Associations

- Thai Shipbuilding and Repairing Associations (TSBA): www.tsba.or.th
- Thai Marine Business Association (TMBA): www.thaimarineassociation.com
- Thai Shipowners Association (TSA): www.thaishipowners.com
- Bangkok Shipowners and Agents Association (BSAA): www.thaibsaa.com

Relevant Contacts

- Netherlands Enterprise Agency (RVO): www.rvo.nl
- The Netherlands-Thai Chamber of Commerce (NTCC): www.ntccthailand.org
- MKB Thailand: www.mkbthailand.com
- Netherlands Maritime Technology (NMT): www.maritimetechnology.nl



Courtesy of Port Authority Thailand

'NL Exporteert' App

This app provides up-to-date information necessary for doing business internationally. It contains an events calendar, economic and financial data, a country comparator, information on business opportunities, and relevant contacts. Download the app in the [App Store](#) or [Google Play](#).

Published by:

Netherlands Embassy in Bangkok

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