

Strategy of Scientific Activities of the National Library of Latvia, 2025–2028

What is the NLL?

The National Library of Latvia (NLL) is a universal scientific library in the Republic of Latvia open to the public and dedicated to supporting the intellectual development of the entire nation. The NLL holds all printed works published in the Republic of Latvia, creates national bibliographic resources, and serves as the centre for the development of the national library system. The NLL is considered a part of the national treasure of the Republic of Latvia.

Mission of the NLL as an academic institution:

To strengthen societal development, education and democratic processes through interdisciplinary and innovative research in the social sciences, humanities, arts and collection studies.

Vision: The NLL is the leading force in generating new knowledge in areas such as book studies, information circulation, library history and development, the history of reading, and the present and future of these fields. It also explores the concepts and values of the Enlightenment within contemporary contexts, and is also a significant partner in both national and international research projects in the social sciences and humanities, both within Latvia and globally. The NLL's comprehensive academic expertise and excellence in science communication ensure its contribution and presence in both national and international discourse, and also the NLL's role as a space for innovation and dialogue that responds to the challenges of contemporary society.

Current overview of NLL's scientific activities

The NLL has been an academic institution since 2007. Approximately 70 % of its readers are students and researchers. At the beginning of 2021 the Ministry of Education and Science conducted an international evaluation of the NLL as a scientific institution. The NLL received a high rating of 4 (very good) and the highest rating of 5 (excellent) for its development potential. The evaluation highlighted the institution's potential, its achieved interdisciplinarity and its ability to contextualise research within broader regional and European frameworks.

The NLL Development Strategy for 2024–2028 sets the goal of strengthening the NLL as a scientific institution, as well as improving the administrative management of research and the organisation of scholarly publishing within the NLL.

The achievements of the NLL to date and its prestige within the Latvian academic community are based on several key factors:

1. The NLL provides full or partial **research workloads** for its staff and promotes favourable conditions for scholarly work, including access to its collections.
2. The NLL actively promotes **academic freedom** by enabling researchers to independently define and plan their scientific topics, resulting in innovative research.
3. The NLL's strategic goals establish a **balance** between (1) data analysis, quantitative and statistical research, and (2) theoretical, historical and interpretive studies, with both approaches interacting in a mutually reinforcing way.
4. The NLL is both **a cultural and academic institution**, which enables a productive synthesis of scholarly work and public engagement and outreach. The NLL purposefully carries out science communication (via exhibitions, lectures, popular science publications) that is based on qualitative source studies, and the development of new research collections, simultaneously formulating scientific priorities in synergy with current societal issues and challenges. The creation of new collections is planned strategically (the diversity of special collection materials), to influence potential research directions.
5. The NLL is one of Latvia's **leading centres for digital humanities** and a creator of important Latvian e-resources for science and education (including large-scale digitisation projects for the NLL's and university collections).
6. The NLL has a rich tradition of research in the history of book studies and has developed a distinguished school of book studies history research since the 1960s. It is also a leading research centre in the study of memory institution collections and the discovery of new ideas.
7. The NLL has secured funding for scientific projects including success in competitions of the State Research Program of the Ministry of Education and Science as well as projects funded by the Fundamental and Applied Research Program of the Latvian Council of Science. It also regularly participates as a partner in both international and national scientific projects.

However, the scientific activities of the NLL have weaknesses related to both external and internal factors.

1. The NLL still does not receive **the basic financing** stipulated by the Law on Scientific Activity, as recommended in the 2019 international evaluation.

2. The NLL has **an insufficient number of full-time researchers**, due to obstacles in creating new positions and in ensuring the long-term employment of research staff in scientific projects.
3. **Fragmentation** can be observed in the NLL's research directions, which is partly related to the orientation of Latvian science policy toward short-term research projects. At the same time, it also results from insufficient internal communication and collaboration between departments. This creates risks of decentralisation and a lack of transparency.
4. The NLL **Scientific Council** is only partially involved in coordinating research activities, setting priorities, and advising research staff. This can be addressed by developing a new regulation for the Scientific Council.
5. The data collected, compiled and systematised in various NLL departments has so far been insufficiently **integrated into scientific work** due to information flow issues, and its visibility to researchers from other institutions remains limited.
6. A sustained lack of an integrated strategy for research activities.

Personnel

To make full use of researcher competencies and knowledge, personnel policy will continue to ensure a supportive environment for diverse approaches to work planning and methodology. We will promote independent decision-making and work organisation, and also encourage creative autonomy and a flexible approach to solving individual problems. Likewise, it is important for the NLL to support diversity within the research staff – in terms of their varying levels of ambition, their choice of scientific communication channels, and in how they plan publications and initiatives.

In the 2019 evaluation, it was recommended to **increase the number of full-time researchers**, while also acknowledging that the current mixed model (a combination of full-time and part-time positions) is effective to a certain extent. To achieve the goal of increasing number of scientific staff, we will first focus on developing support personnel for scientific project preparation (this includes both technical staff and science support staff, in accordance with the competencies described in the Law on Scientific Activity). Projects are one of the primary means of attracting new researchers. At the same time, we will also enhance the qualifications of the existing scientific personnel, to foster skills not only in project proposal development, but throughout all stages of project implementation. Furthermore, we will promote and support their international engagement.

We will continue to conduct scientific work in close collaboration with **NLL employees** who are not primarily engaged in research work but whose **competencies are important for**

conducting research projects. This will be achieved by promoting the academic growth of staff involved in bibliographic and library work and encouraging their participation in scientific activities at various levels. We will involve doctoral students in the work at the NLL to ensure generational succession. Alongside recruiting of full-time researchers, the NLL will also consider alternative forms such as appointing associate researchers for fixed terms, using various funding sources (including creative scholarships from the State Cultural Capital Foundation).

We will evaluate the need for a **strategy regarding the acceptance of student interns at the library**, granting them special status and access to the library collection in accordance with the established rules and usage policies of the NLL. We will support students by offering consultations or organising awards for academic work that is related to the scientific directions of the NLL.

We will take steps to foster a **positive psychological and intellectual climate** among research staff, provide the required support, and promote a culture of open discussion. In this context, initial measures include: closer collaboration between the Scientific Council and NLL department heads; support for interdepartmental projects or individual initiatives; organising of think tanks and seminars to promote knowledge and experience exchange. Where possible, we will support collaborative research projects, to encourage the formation of research groups.

We will **create a road map to ensure the accurate representation of research staff and scientific output** in national and international databases. This will include providing each researcher with a public researcher profile, an ORCID number, and accurate and comprehensive information in the National Scientific Activity Information System (NSAIS) etc.

Scientific research programme

The main lead body of the scientific research programme will be the **Scientific Council**. In order for it to fully perform this function, we will develop the Statutes of the Scientific Council and increase the number of Council members, involving representatives from all structural units engaged in scientific research as broadly as possible.

Collection research. The NLL is responsible for conducting research on the collection under its stewardship. The NLL collection represents a unique resource that enables a wide range of scholarly research topics, reflecting the diversity of the collection itself. Research carried out by the NLL will continue to provide up-to-date knowledge about the items preserved in the collection, their historical and cultural context, and their impact on culture, identity, and the development of society as a whole. Strengthening the link between research and cataloguing will be of particular importance. By conducting in-house research, the NLL will ensure access to information on its collection and promote diverse opportunities for further in-depth study

from the perspective of various academic disciplines—both within the scholarly community of Latvia and internationally. Therefore we will promote the visibility and discoverability of the library collection by highlighting those parts that meaningfully contribute not only to the current research interests of the academic community, but also to broader societal understandings of culture, identity and heritage – updating the collection within contexts that are relevant and meaningful to society. For this reason, our research will focus on directions that align with the values of the NLL and engage with contemporary issues – promoting a democratic and inclusive society, fostering critical thinking, and strengthening national identity. We will employ an interdisciplinary research approach to reveal the broad and diverse cultural, artistic and societal dimensions embedded in the NLL collection.

Scientific research also provides significant support to collection specialists, in formulating new acquisition directions and identifying gaps or underrepresented areas within the collection.

Research on the history and current state of book studies (including publishing statistics)

Book studies encompass the research of both past and contemporary developments within a unified framework. Consequently, unlike traditional historical research or contemporary sociological studies, this field most purposefully advances the relevance of heritage research in addressing current issues, adds depth to contemporary debates, and fosters openness and interdisciplinary exchange in the academic sphere. Book studies is a transdisciplinary field that brings together various methodologies and research subjects. We will realise the potential of this field through the involvement of NLL's research staff and scientific projects.

The key research priorities of the NLL in the field of book studies can be defined across multiple levels:

1. Foster closer synergy between the study of historical and contemporary processes—both by integrating these perspectives within individual research projects and by forming research groups focused on related subjects (publishing, reading, libraries, freedom of expression) across different time periods.
2. Promote source-based knowledge and reliability as essential foundations for the public communication of cultural heritage.
3. Establish a balance between theoretical and empirical research. The specific nature of research of Latvian cultural sources defines the tasks necessary to achieve this balance. In certain fields, there is still a lack of fundamental information on particular topics, which poses obstacles to rigorous theoretical discussion and the development of methodological

tools. At the same time, it is possible to identify themes (such as the legacy of Soviet culture) where productive source-based research requires the strengthening of researchers' theoretical foundations and prioritising of methodology alongside empirical inquiry. The NLL collection provides an excellent starting point to highlight and advance debates on the limits and significance of theory in heritage research.

4. Conceptualise the communications circuit approach in book studies. The communication model developed in the second half of the 20th century by Robert Darnton and other scholars enables the integration of various strands of book studies into a unified system, with particular emphasis on the history of libraries.
5. Define and strategically plan specific research themes within book studies, aligning them with the capacity of the sector to support cultural heritage preservation strategies, highlight marginalised or forgotten voices, historically excluded narratives or knowledge, and foster understanding and inspire reflection on the circulation of information, critical thinking, the evolution of communication systems, the genesis of social change, and media literacy.
6. Continue research in the field of book studies, which has been firmly established within the NLL's academic tradition over recent decades: the role of Baltic Germans in Latvian book culture; the history of book studies before 1918 (the Reformation, Baroque period, the Enlightenment, National Awakening); studies on censorship and libraries; research on the history of book studies during the first independence period of the Republic of Latvia, the era of Soviet occupation. The history of 20th-century Latvian diaspora book studies is a field that lacks comprehensive monographic overviews, the analysis and interpretation of which are crucial for understanding processes of contemporary book studies.
7. Recognise and integrate underexplored topics into the planning of scientific activities. These include, for example, the contribution of women to the history of book studies; the role of Latgalian, Livonian, Jewish, and Polish communities in Latvian book studies; the materiality of books; and children's and youth book studies, including the art of illustration.
8. Promote continuity between past research and contemporary scientific priorities. With academic traditions reaching back to the mid-20th century, the NLL will take steps to mitigate the risk of fragmentation by ensuring continuity between new initiatives and previous projects. Research themes will be framed within a broader strategic vision, supporting more effective public engagement and improved access to funding.
9. Develop research in the field of national bibliography, recognising its essential role in preserving the nation's publishing output and ensuring its long-term accessibility and sustainability. National bibliography serves as a vital means of sustaining cultural and linguistic expression, forming a foundation for future cultural research and public

education. These data will be managed systematically and purposefully to support scholarly analysis and cultural studies, fostering new insights and innovation within the cultural sector.

10. Continue regular analysis of library statistics, which provides a significant contribution to the development of the sector. These data offer both a quantitative and qualitative basis for evaluating and analysing library services, providing researchers and professionals in the field with information that helps identify trends, understand resource use, and assess the impact of the library sector.

Studies of historical and contemporary reading habits. According to researchers at the NLL, readers are the most dynamic and rapidly changing element in the chain of book studies (see the Ljubljana Manifesto, published in 2023). The circulation of information in electronic formats, abbreviated forms, quotes, and even language usage has altered societal habits. Reading habits and literacy skills have changed significantly. The NLL aims to study changes in reading habits and to promote the development of reading skills, including skills in information perception and comprehension. Changes in the locations, types, and volume of reading affect the services provided by libraries and create a need for in-depth study of the latest trends. Literacy plays a crucial role in the development of Latvia as a safe and democratic society. Therefore, we will place this topic at the centre of strategic research, while viewing other stages of the book studies chain integrally as phenomena directly influenced by changes in reading habits. This perspective reveals several key thematic clusters:

1. Turning points in the history of reading in Latvia and worldwide. While the central focus of such a study will likely relate to the “reading revolution” and “information overload” during the Enlightenment era, it is important to identify other critical periods of change. Understanding these breakpoints significantly reduces the risk of speculation in forecasts about reading in the 21st century and thereby supports the more purposeful development of policy documents and recommendations.
2. Research on children’s and youth reading habits from both historical and contemporary perspectives, fostering synergy with proactive efforts to guide current processes.
3. Highlighting of research questions that link different reading strategies with critical thinking and information literacy.
4. Contextualising of reading habits within the landscape of various media, cultural and entertainment products, and digital technologies.

Digital Humanities. Our goal is to develop digital resources for the humanities, reduce ecosystem fragmentation, and enhance the global competitiveness of these resources. As part of the NLL's research programme we aim to ensure that digital research is not isolated as a separate field within a single department but is horizontally integrated across various research themes. The NLL has already established itself as one of the leaders in the field of digital humanities in Latvia — as creator of the digitalhumanities.lv collaboration network and developer of digital text research infrastructure (pilot projects: *corpuss.lnb.lv*, *proza.lnb.lv*). In the next phase of our strategy, we will further develop our digital research capabilities to advance fundamental research.

We will integrate the potential of digital technologies, artificial intelligence and other computational methods into research within the humanities. Digital technology algorithms not only facilitate information retrieval but also optimise the creation of metadata. Tools developed within the field of digital humanities support the development of algorithms that help researchers identify sources, conduct large-scale image collection analyses, promote distant reading techniques and investigate reader reception using methods such as semantic shift and sentiment analysis. They also enable groundbreaking approaches to authorship attribution studies, enrich our understanding of the networks among actors of the book studies chain, and genre classification. In the foreseeable future, it is expected that metadata will gain increasing importance in humanities research, complementing primary sources, while panoramic studies spanning long time periods and general trends may come to dominate over narrowly focused microstudies. To fully harness these opportunities, researchers will acquire in-depth knowledge in the use of digital technologies. At the same time, we will promote awareness of the limitations of digital technologies in understanding and interpreting contextual problems.

In the context of the digital world, key topics for NLL researchers include information ethics, intellectual property research, and issues related to information accessibility.

Collaboration

Collaboration is a core value in the NLL's scholarly activities – both within the institution and in its partnerships in Latvia and abroad.

1. **Within the NLL's departments**, we will promote the exchange of ideas and identification of complementary research topics, fostering collaboration in their development and project implementation. Building on the success of past interdepartmental projects, we will leverage the expertise of senior researchers to support collection specialists in preparing scholarly publications and contextualising research topics within the academic field. At the same time, we will strategically apply the knowledge of collection experts to identify

sources, materials, and potential research themes. By organising seminars and think tanks, we will promote a culture of internal discussion and make use of the opportunities offered by interdisciplinary, intergenerational, and cross-level teamwork. We will support not only individual but also collaborative group research.

2. As an educational institution, the NLL successfully engages in a range of educational activities at various levels. However, we will place particular emphasis on deepening and systematically strengthening **collaboration with institutions of higher education** in the area of research. The NLL aims for regular, coordinated, and strategic cooperation with higher education institutions, involving its researchers both in student education and in partnerships with academic institutions. This includes assisting in formulating student research topics – especially those aligned with the Library’s collection-based research priorities – and providing guidance during the research process. Currently, these activities tend to occur either sporadically or informally alongside other work, without being fully integrated into the NLL’s scientific agenda. The same applies to the systematic familiarisation of students with the NLL’s collections – an initiative that has already begun and will continue to be actively supported.
3. In supporting research, the NLL academic staff regularly provides **consultations** to researchers from other institutions. Researchers employed at the library have specialised expertise resulting from in-depth knowledge of the collection, which can complement, for example, the perspective of university academic staff. We will continue to strengthen the library’s role not only as a support resource in scientific research but as an active partner in research projects with Latvian and international research institutions. As we consolidate the NLL’s niche within the academic community, we will highlight not only the Library’s unique research themes, but also its role as **a forum and platform** for researcher networking, ideas exchange, and strategic foresight. Our aim is for the NLL to strengthen its place as an interdisciplinary research centre and think tank in Latvia’s scientific ecosystem, serving as a bridge between academia and society. In our scientific activity, we will ensure suitable conditions for **citizen science opportunities and public engagement**.
4. One form of collaboration is **joint research projects**. We will continue to develop shared initiatives within the National Research Programmes and other scientific projects, acting both as a leading institution and as a partner in cooperation with academic institutions in Latvia and abroad.
5. International cooperation in the use of **national bibliography** data is important, as it enables metadata harmonisation and the sharing of management practices – particularly

important in the context of digital heritage. We will ensure the interoperability of cultural heritage data so that institutions can efficiently exchange information and improve the overall effectiveness of the knowledge infrastructure.

6. The aim of the NLL is to provide, within its resources, the opportunity to archive and preserve the results of research conducted at Latvian scientific institutions and to **develop infrastructure for data storage and accessibility**. In the future, as one of the NLL's key functions we envision the collection of scientific information, data management, long-term archiving, the provision of open access and the exchange of data with other national and university information systems.

Science communication

We will ensure that the results of scientific research, newly acquired facts, and conclusions are accessible, recognisable, and readily available to the public. This will be made possible by the following initiatives:

1. **Visibility in society**. We will continue our public communication efforts and support the development of popular science events and materials. In order to fully leverage the resources available to the NLL and its successful collaboration with the media, we will identify target audiences and their needs more clearly and precisely. Understanding specific target groups will also be useful in formulating research themes and priorities. We will ensure the full coverage of information about the NLL in the National Scientific Activity Information System (NSAIS) and promote the development of digital collections.
2. **Visibility of exhibitions, events and other popular scientific communication findings**. The NLL's resources and established tradition ensure that research is planned in parallel with its communication. We will ensure that articles, monographs, and conference presentations are accompanied by exhibitions or curated collection highlights, exhibition publications, public engagement events or articles, interviews, podcasts, educational programmes, virtual exhibitions, National Encyclopedia entries etc.
3. **International visibility**. The NLL has already established a foundation of successful international cooperation, and its infrastructure, researchers' academic experience abroad, and the relevance of research topics make the NLL an attractive partner for collaboration. We will work towards enhancing the NLL's recognition within the international academic community specifically as a scientific, and not only a cultural institution. Our collaboration and communication efforts will focus particularly on the Northeastern European region and Germany.

Publication strategy and plan for dissemination of findings

The guiding principle of the NLL's publication strategy for academic works is that **quality is more important than quantity**. One of the strengths of the NLL is diversity of formats in which research findings are published (collection or exhibition catalogues, library catalogues, bibliographies, scientific publications, journal articles, presentations at international academic events etc.), which we intend to maintain in the future. Academic publishing has become an important area of activity for the NLL, and its development, under favourable funding and staff support conditions, is expected to progress naturally towards a fully functional publishing house.

The main academic publication of the NLL is the ***Proceedings of the NLL***, an interdisciplinary journal published by the library since 1964 and indexed in the Scopus database. By purposefully planning the editorial policy, we have ensured that this edition becomes an important forum for the academic community in the Baltics.

A key priority of the publishing strategy is to maintain **a balance between national and international publications**. In planning the dissemination of scientific findings, we will support and encourage researchers to include both types of publications in their deliverables, minimising the risk of one becoming dominant. Planning documents will emphasise the responsibility of NLL researchers in safeguarding the status of the Latvian language in academic discourse and in cultivating academic terminology – both of which are at risk if the number of national publications falls significantly behind international publications. While promoting the increase in publications in journals indexed in Scopus or Web of Science databases – whose status is determined by national science policy – we will balance this with contributions to internationally recognised edited volumes and collective monographs that ensure the visibility of NLL researchers within the global academic community.

The NLL prioritises **open access** to research outputs. We will support open access publications, promote them in alignment with the EU Open Science Policy and Latvia's Open Science Strategy 2021–2027, which derives from it. To increase the international visibility of the NLL's academic publications, we will ensure their accessibility not only in Scopus but also in other international academic databases (*CEEOL* etc.).

In publishing cultural heritage data for research purposes, we will follow the principle of “open by default”, which assumes that data should be made publicly available in open data formats unless legal or other constraints apply. We will provide open data in a structured format with the most open license possible, thus facilitating the free use of data and its integration into the broader information ecosystem.

Task 4.4 of the NLL Development and Activity Strategy outlines the need to “develop and improve a science communication activities programme to ensure that the results of scientific research reach a broad audience”. In line with this, we will plan the following forms of dissemination and communication of research findings:

1. International scientific conferences.
2. Public lectures, academic readings, seminars, symposiums and forums.
3. Scientific and popular science publications in Latvia and abroad.
4. Science-based exhibitions, accompanied by extensive supporting programmes and exhibition publications.
5. Digital collections.
6. Recommendations for policymakers.
7. Open data sets.

Impact

Research conducted by the NLL influences the following sectors:

Education

Scientific activity makes a significant contribution to the education sector, especially **higher education**. The 2019 Evaluation of Scientific Activity included a recommendation to pay greater attention to the preparation of teaching materials and consultation on policy documents in the education sector. We have taken this recommendation into account and will prioritise its implementation in the next planning period. **The role of the NLL as a “Knowledge Mile” hub** among higher education institutions (such as the University of Latvia, Riga Technical University and Riga Stradiņš University) – not only in a spatial context within Pārdaugava but also as a vital link in enhancing the quality and capacity of scientific activity.

Culture

Scientific research influences the operation of libraries at various levels and also the development of the entire library sector. Communicating and interpreting research findings within the context of other cultures plays an important role in the international recognition and evaluation of the NLL, and has a significant impact on the development of **cultural diplomacy**. The promotion of **UNESCO’s “Memory of the World”** register nominations and exploration of new perspectives are key impact areas of NLL’s research activities. The NLL’s research findings are a valuable resource for the improvement of Latvian regulatory frameworks, national development strategies, policy documents and action plans. By regularly preparing recommendations for policymakers, the NLL ensures its research impacts **cultural policy**.

Economy

The implementation of scientific activities in collaboration with local history enthusiasts, **municipalities, regional museums, and NGOs** generates socio-economic impact. This is closely related to the recognition and use of **citizen science** opportunities in research, as well as the enrichment of **cultural tourism**. Research outcomes broaden knowledge and alter perceptions of the value of certain publications and artifacts, having a positive impact on **publishing, book sales** (including used and antiquarian markets), as well as the spheres of **intellectual property and copyright**. The development of a high-quality workforce is supported by studying today’s reading habits in the context of historical processes. The interpretation of these results, following behavioural science principles, contribute to the adoption of habit-changing recommendations, thereby enhancing overall quality of life, including work productivity.

The scientific strategy will be implemented through NLL's scholarly publishing, contributions to national and international publications and conferences, exhibitions, and diverse events. We will foster collaboration with other scientific institutions and actively participate in managing various projects at both national and international levels.

Related documents

[Latvijas Nacionālās bibliotēkas darbības stratēģija 2024.–2028. gadam](#)

[Latvijas Nacionālās bibliotēkas attīstības stratēģija 2024.–2028. gadam](#)

[International Evaluation of Scientific Institutions Activity Panel Report: Humanities](#)

[Nacionālās attīstības plāns NAP2027](#)

[Zinātnes, tehnoloģijas attīstības un inovācijas pamatnostādnes 2021.–2027.gadam](#)

[Zinātniskās darbības likums](#)

[Noteikumi par Latvijas zinātnes nozaru grupām, zinātnes nozarēm un apakšnozarēm](#)

[Izglītības attīstības pamatnostādnes 2021.–2027.gadam](#)

[Kultūrpolitikas pamatnostādnes 2021.–2027.gadam](#)

[Bibliotēku nozares stratēģija 2023.–2027. gadam](#)

[Literatūras un grāmatniecības nozares stratēģija 2021.–2027. gadam](#)

[Latvijas atvērtās zinātnes stratēģija 2021.–2027.gadam](#)