

# Longevity Economy Thailand 2026: The \$43 Billion Figure, National Strategy, and Voices From Industry Leaders

A research brief compiling verified data, government strategy, industry leader commentary, and press perspectives on Thailand's wellness and longevity sector — with implications for operators and consumers.

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| <b>\$43B</b>               | <b>#7</b>                   | <b>\$14.05B</b>             | <b>#8</b>                          |
| WELLNESS ECONOMY<br>(2024) | FASTEST-GROWING<br>GLOBALLY | WELLNESS TOURISM<br>SEGMENT | GLOBAL HEALTHCARE<br>(NUMBEO 2026) |

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July 2026 | Compiled from Global Wellness Institute, The Nation, Bangkok Post, TTG Asia, TAT, and named government and industry sources | [healthplatz.co](https://healthplatz.co)

# Headline Numbers

| Metric                                       | Figure                                                                            | Source                             |
|----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Thailand wellness economy size (2024)        | US\$43 billion (24th largest globally)                                            | Global Wellness Institute (GWI)    |
| Growth rank                                  | #7 globally for market growth                                                     | GWI                                |
| Wellness tourism segment                     | US\$14.05 billion                                                                 | GWI, via The Nation (Jul 24, 2026) |
| Traditional & complementary medicine segment | US\$3.23 billion                                                                  | GWI, via The Nation                |
| Global wellness economy (context)            | US\$6.8 trillion (2024), +35% since 2019; ~4x the global pharma industry (\$1.8T) | GWI                                |
| Asia wellness economy                        | US\$2.03 trillion (2024), +9.3% — world's fastest-growing region                  | GWI                                |
| Asia vs. Europe wellness trips               | 563 million vs. 348 million — Asia overtook Europe for the first time             | GWI                                |
| Thailand healthcare system rank              | 8th globally (77.5 pts), 1st in ASEAN                                             | Numbeo Health Care Index 2026      |
| International medical tourists (2024)        | ~3 million                                                                        | Industry market reports / Statista |
| JCI-accredited Thai medical institutions     | 63 (as of Feb 2025)                                                               | Joint Commission International     |

*Note: the frequently cited "+36.4%" figure applies specifically to Thailand's wellness tourism segment, not the overall \$43B wellness economy, which grew roughly 10% year-on-year — a distinction often blurred in press coverage.*

## 1. The Macro Picture

The global wellness economy has grown 35% since 2019 to reach US\$6.8 trillion in 2024 — nearly four times the size of the global pharmaceutical industry (\$1.8 trillion) — and GWI projects continued growth of 7.6% annually to \$9.8 trillion by 2029.

Asia alone generated \$2.03 trillion of that total in 2024, growing 9.3% — the fastest of any region — and for the first time overtook Europe in total wellness trips (563 million versus 348 million). Within this, Thailand's wellness economy reached \$43 billion in 2024, the world's 24th largest but 7th-fastest growing, with wellness tourism (\$14.05B) as the leading domestic segment, followed by traditional and complementary medicine (\$3.23B).

## 2. Voices From Policymakers and Industry Leaders

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At a press briefing previewing the 20th-anniversary Global Wellness Summit (July 24, 2026), **Public Health Minister Patana Promphat** outlined Thailand's strategic shift toward exporting standardized, science-backed traditional remedies:

"For centuries, Thailand has embraced a holistic approach to health and well-being, one that harmonises the body, mind, spirit, community and nature. We aim to showcase Thailand's vision of becoming a leading global wellness hub where traditional knowledge is elevated through science, innovation and international standards."

— Patana Promphat, Public Health Minister, via The Nation, July 24, 2026

**Cathy Feliciano-Chon**, Global Wellness Summit Co-Chair and Managing Partner at FINN Partners APAC, explained why the summit chose Thailand for its milestone 20th edition:

"Asia will be the world's proving ground for an ageing planet... Thailand sits at the heart of that convergence" — combining heritage wellness brands born in the country with a fast-advancing medical-wellness infrastructure.

— Cathy Feliciano-Chon, GWS Co-Chair, via The Nation, July 24, 2026

**Susie Ellis**, Chair & CEO of the Global Wellness Summit, added:

"Our industry is at another pivotal moment, where advances in science, medicine and longevity are converging with a return to — but also a reinvention of — the timeless need for connection, creativity and purpose."

— Susie Ellis, GWS Chair & CEO, via The Nation, July 24, 2026

From the private-sector operator perspective, **Polakit Teekakirikul**, CEO of VitalLife (Bumrungrad's preventive-medicine arm), told TTG Asia:

"The biggest shift we see at VitalLife is 'health prevention' — busy, high-spending travellers aged between 40 and 60 increasingly prefer tailored longevity plans and thorough health screenings over isolated wellness treatments." The share of international and expatriate guests has risen to 65% of all clients.

— Polakit Teekakirikul, CEO, VitalLife, TTG Asia, June 26, 2026

## 3. Government Strategy in Motion

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- **Medical Hub Policy** — a 10-year, five-pillar national plan blending advanced medical technology with traditional Thai healing practices.

- **Genomics Thailand, Phase 2 (2025–2029)** — builds on Phase 1 (2020–2024, budget of over 4.47 billion baht), which sequenced 34,000+ genomes against a 50,000 target, laying groundwork for a future precision-medicine economy.
- **Thang Rath application & Digital Health Wallet** — developed with the WHO, giving doctors continuous access to patient records and reducing duplicated testing.
- **Traditional-medicine export strategy** — the Department of Thai Traditional and Alternative Medicine has identified seven priority industries for 2028–2032: functional foods, herbal biotechnology, cosmeceuticals, medical cannabis, and digital health among them.
- **BOI incentives & LTR Visa** — up to 8–13 years of corporate income tax exemption for wellness/medical New S-Curve businesses, plus a 10-year Long-Term Resident visa targeting wellness and medical tourism.

## 4. National and International Promotion

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- **Global Wellness Summit 2026, Phuket (Nov 10–13)** — 20th-anniversary edition, 600+ delegates from 30+ countries, launching GWI's 2026 Global Wellness Economy Monitor.
- **Phuket Health Expo 2026 (Jul 1–5)** — themed "Longevity: Wellness for a Long Life," expected to generate over 50 million baht in economic activity, showcasing AI- and VR-based health screening technology.
- **"Healing Is the New Luxury"** — TAT's global campaign launched at WTM 2025, targeting 600,000+ GCC visitors by end of 2026.
- **Thai Spa Association's five-year plan** — targets a top-five position among Asia's wellness markets.
- **"WellEra"** — a large-scale project combining world-class medical facilities with wellness residences, from Anantara and BDMS Wellness Group.

## 5. Perspectives From Press and Academia

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Alongside the positive momentum, Thai and international press have offered analytical perspectives worth noting for a complete picture.

The Nation reported (July 25, 2026) that while Thailand holds strong assets in medical tourism and genomics, it has not yet established a unified national longevity-economy strategy comparable to Singapore's Healthier SG programme or the UAE's Emirati Genome Programme — with longevity-related initiatives currently distributed across ministries and private companies rather than a single integrated framework.

Separately, Bangkok Post featured commentary from **Asst. Prof. Nattapat Sarobol, Faculty of Social Administration, Thammasat University**, who noted the widening gap between the lived experience of Thailand's current elderly generation and the demographic reality awaiting the next.

A joint study by the World Health Organization and Thailand's Ministry of Public Health estimated that non-communicable diseases (NCDs) cost the Thai economy approximately 1.6 trillion baht annually, or 9.7% of GDP (2019 data) — a figure that underlies the urgency behind the country's preventive-health pivot.

None of this undercuts the sector's momentum. It names the gap instead: coordination, not ambition, is what's missing — and it's a gap industry leaders themselves bring up when asked about deeper public-private collaboration.

## 6. Findings Worth Noting

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- **Thailand's healthcare system ranks 8th globally** (Numbeo Health Care Index 2026, 77.5 points) — the only ASEAN nation in the global top 10.
- **Nuad Thai is UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage** (inscribed 2019) — a heritage-backed soft-power asset few competing destinations can claim.
- **Wellness real estate is outgrowing wellness tourism** at +22.9% annual growth, suggesting structural, longer-term investment.
- **Asia overtook Europe in wellness trips for the first time** (563M vs. 348M) — signaling a regional center-of-gravity shift industry-wide, not unique to Thailand.

## 7. Healthplatz Summary

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The 10-year Medical Hub plan, Genomics Thailand's second funding phase, and the Global Wellness Summit's 20th-anniversary stop in Phuket didn't happen by coincidence in the same year. Together they read as structural investment, not a marketing cycle. What the data doesn't show yet is coordination: press and academic commentary keeps landing on the same point, that Thailand's longevity initiatives still sit in separate ministries and separate companies rather than one strategy — and that's the piece officials themselves are now discussing in public.

## 8. Recommendations

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### For B2B — Operators, Investors, and Wellness Businesses

#### 1. Shift from experiential to evidence-based positioning.

Invest in diagnostics-led offerings (metabolic screening, genomics, AI-based risk analysis) to meet demand from clients seeking measurable outcomes, not just relaxation.

#### 2. Build for the GCC and long-stay segments now.

TAT's 600,000-visitor GCC target and rising expatriate client shares at leading clinics point to a durable demand shift worth designing services and staffing around.

#### 3. Integrate with national data infrastructure early.

Businesses that connect with Thang Rath and the Digital Health Wallet ahead of standardization will hold a competitive edge once unified frameworks take shape.

#### 4. Evaluate BOI/LTR incentive windows before they shift.

Up to 13-year tax exemptions represent a time-limited opportunity for wellness-sector expansion or investment decisions.

### For B2C — Individual Consumers

#### 1. Choose providers with clear clinical backing.

Look for multidisciplinary medical teams interpreting results, not just marketing claims.

#### 2. Start with a baseline assessment.

Knowing your own biological age, inflammation markers, or NCD risk factors matters more than following the latest treatment trend.

#### 3. Treat longevity as an ongoing plan, not a one-time treatment.

The same shift the industry is making — from isolated services to continuous programmes — applies to how individuals should approach their own health planning.

#### Next Longevity Industry Insights issue — every quarter

This is issue one of Healthplatz's ongoing quarterly analysis of Thailand's longevity industry — tracking the figures, policy, and industry voices as they develop. Subscribe to get the next issue: [healthplatz.co/longevity-industry-insights](https://healthplatz.co/longevity-industry-insights)

## Frequently Asked Questions

#### Is Thailand already a global wellness hub?

Not yet as a fully integrated national strategy. Thailand has a \$43B wellness economy (24th largest globally, 7th-fastest growing), an 8th-ranked global healthcare system per Numbeo, and is hosting the Global Wellness Summit's 20th-anniversary edition in November 2026. The Nation has reported that policy coordination across ministries remains the next development area.

#### How large is Thailand's wellness economy today?

Per GWI, Thailand's wellness economy reached \$43 billion in 2024, with wellness tourism at \$14.05 billion and traditional/complementary medicine at \$3.23 billion.

#### Why does traditional Thai massage matter to Thailand's wellness positioning?

Nuad Thai was inscribed as UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2019, giving Thailand a heritage-backed soft-power asset few competing destinations can claim.

#### How should wellness businesses prepare for this opportunity?

Invest in diagnostics-led offerings, build for GCC and long-stay client segments, integrate early with national health-data infrastructure, and evaluate BOI/LTR incentive windows before they shift.

Read more: [Longevity Industry Insights — all industry research issues](#) · [Thailand Wellness & Longevity Insights Hub](#)

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