



Southeast Asia Public Health Nutrition Network

A Collaboration among Nutrition Societies in Southeast Asia Region

*Promoting regional collaboration
for community nutrition improvement*

Annual Report Year 2014

Members



Nutrition Foundation of the Philippines, Inc



Nutrition Society of Malaysia



Food and Nutrition Society of Indonesia



Nutrition Association of Thailand under the Patronage of Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn



Vietnam Nutrition Association

Associate Members



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Executive Summary

It is strongly believed that nutrition societies in the Southeast Asian region can play greater roles in supporting the government agencies' action plans in promoting public health nutrition and alleviating public health nutrition issues. The private sector too can contribute their expertise as well as resources in promoting public health nutrition. A network among nutrition societies in the region that focuses on promotion of public health nutrition, in partnership with government agencies and the private sector can contribute to the more effective implementation of public health nutrition measures. Recognising these, the Southeast Asia Public Health Nutrition (SEA-PHN) Network was established on June 2, 2014. Current Members include Food and Nutrition Society of Indonesia, Vietnam Nutrition Association, Nutrition Society of Malaysia, Nutrition Association of Thailand and Nutrition Foundation of the Philippines, Inc. Six corporate companies are collaborating in the Network as Associate Members: Beneo GmbH, Danone Asia Pacific Holdings Pte Ltd, DuPont Nutrition & Health, Dutch Lady Milk Industries Bhd, Nestle Products Sdn Bhd and PepsiCo Services Asia Ltd. A council has been established to manage the activities of the Network. The main activities of the Network are: 1. Conduct annual meetings amongst members of the Network; 2. Interaction through a dedicated website; 3. Conduct collaborative projects amongst members of the Network and its partners; 4. Organise scientific meetings or conferences.

It has been a busy and productive year. Several key milestones have been achieved by the Network since its establishment, less than a year after its official launch. A number of key activities planned during the meeting have been successfully implemented. Some are on-going activities, while others have been completed:

- SEA-PHN Network 1st Annual Meeting on 2 June and official launch on 3 June during which the operational framework of the Network was confirmed, and election of the first Council of the Network was held. Several activities were recommended for implementation by the Network
- Establishment of the SEA-PHN Network Website was completed. This serves as the main channel among Network members. It also serves as a portal for various health and nutrition reports and documents available in the member countries.
- Compilation and analysis of Southeast Asia Countries' Food-Based Dietary Guidelines (FBDGs) is near completion and a detailed report shall be uploaded on the Network website while a manuscript is being prepared for publication in an appropriate journal. It will serve as a useful resource for countries intending to update their FBDGs or for countries establishing a new FBDG.
- Compilation and analysis of Southeast Asia Countries' recommended nutrient intake (RNI)/recommended dietary allowances (RDA) is just commencing.

Plans are being made to organise the 2nd meeting of the Network in June 2015, in Jakarta. The meeting shall also review progress of current projects as well as plan for a collaborative child nutrition promotion project.

This report provides a recapitulation of the formation of the Network, its rationale and objectives, and operational framework. It also provides a summary of the completed activities of the Network till December 2014.

1.0 Background

The Southeast Asia Public Health Nutrition (SEA-PHN) Network is a collaboration of nutrition societies/associations in the region, and working in partnership with other key stakeholders namely government agencies and corporate companies, dedicated to promoting public health nutrition among the population and alleviating nutrition problems.

Rapid advances in the socio-economy atmosphere of Southeast Asian countries in the last four decades have resulted in significant changes to the lifestyle of communities, including food consumption patterns. This in turn resulted in marked changes to the nutrition scene, namely a decline in nutrient deficiencies and a rise in the prevalence of diet-related chronic diseases (NCDs) among the population in the region.

Governments have re-aligned food and nutrition policies and action plans to address the nutrition problems. Nevertheless, it is also imperative that all stakeholders, including government agencies, academia, professional bodies and the private sector work together in combating those nutritional problems. Public health nutrition measures, which focus on the application of food and nutrition knowledge, policy and research for the primary prevention of nutrition related disorder and the improvement of the health of the population, should remain as the key approaches.

It is strongly believed that nutrition societies in the Southeast Asian region can play greater roles in supporting the government agencies. The private sector too can contribute their expertise as well as resources in promoting public health nutrition. A network among nutrition societies in the region that focuses on promotion of public health nutrition, in partnership with government agencies and the private sector can contribute to the more effective implementation of public health nutrition measures.

Recognising these, the Southeast Asia Public Health Nutrition (SEA-PHN) Network was established on June 2, 2014.

1.1 Network's Objectives

1. Establish and maintain an interactive network among public health nutritionists in the Southeast Asia region
2. Promote the periodic exchange of experiences, activities in all public health nutrition issues, including nutrient deficiencies and diet-related chronic diseases
3. Consolidate efforts among nutritionists, both in the public and private sector, for the advancement of public health nutrition
4. Share available information and documentation with all stakeholders involved in public health nutrition, including professional bodies, government agencies and private sector
5. Conduct activities to promote public health nutrition to benefit the communities in Southeast Asia region while ensuring avoidance of potential conflicts of interest.
6. Promote and conduct collaborative projects amongst members of the SEA-PHN Network, government agencies and private sector for community nutrition improvement, in the spirit of public-private partnership.

1.2 Network's Operational Framework

The members of the Network comprise Nutrition Societies/Associations affiliated to the Federation of Asian Nutrition Societies (FANS). Current members include Food and Nutrition Society of Indonesia, Vietnam Nutrition Association, Nutrition Society of Malaysia, Nutrition Association of Thailand and Nutrition Foundation of the Philippines, Inc. As the Network grows, other nutrition societies shall be invited to be part of the Network.

Government ministries/agencies and private sector companies are invited to participate in Network activities as associate members, including attend annual Network meetings (represented by appropriate technical experts), collaborate in projects of the Network, and access to documents on the Network website. Private sector companies also provide financial support and technical expertise for the activities of the Network. Current associate members from the private sector companies and their respective technical representatives are :

- Beneo GmbH (Ms Anke Sentko)
- Danone Asia Pacific Holdings Pte Ltd (Dr Jacques G. Bindels)
- DuPont Nutrition & Health (Ms Cyndy Au)
- Dutch Lady Milk Industries Bhd (Ms Loo Mei Fong)
- Nestle Products Sdn Bhd (Ms Cher Siew Wei), and
- PepsiCo Services Asia Ltd. (Ms Yashna Harjani)

A council has been established to manage the activities of the Network. The council members shall be elected every three years by the members. The conduct/running of the Network activities is facilitated by a Secretariat, oversee by the Council. A third party in member's country may be appointed by the Council to help implement the local activities, should the need arise. The founding council members of the network (year 2014 – 2017) are (Fig 1):



Figure 1 Council Members of the SEA-PHN Network (year 2014 to 2017).

1.3 Key Network Activities

Regular contact among members to implement activities in pursuance of objectives of the Network:

I. Conduct annual meetings among members of the Network, preferably in conjunction with a scientific meeting.

- The organisation of annual meetings will be rotated among members of the Network. The annual meeting shall be attended by representatives from each member nutrition society and technical representatives from associate members. Several key subjects such as update on nutrition issues and activities by members of each country nutrition society/association as well as by associate members; discussion/review progress of collaborative projects undertaken by the Network; and discussion on administrative matters of the Network will be the focuses of the annual meeting.

II. Interaction through a dedicated website: www.sea-phn.org.

- The network website will serve as the main channel of communication among Network members in between annual physical meetings and teleconferences. The website also serves as a repository of public health nutrition documents and activities to be uploaded by Network members, including announcements of current and upcoming projects and meetings; reports/abstracts of completed projects and meetings; as well as relevant documents and publications from government agencies or member society/association.

III. Conduct collaborative projects among members of the Network and its partners.

- The SEA-PHN Network provides a platform and opportunities for collaboration among members of the SEA-PHN Network, government agencies and private sector in conducting community nutrition improvement programmes. Upon understanding the food and nutrition situation in countries in the region, identifying the needs of the communities and building on the available expertise among the stakeholders, collaboration projects can be identified. This includes the collaborative intervention projects that will benefit the communities.

IV. Teleconferences as and when needed.

- Teleconference system is installed to facilitate regular contacts and interactions among members and associate members. In between annual physical meetings, teleconferences among members and associate members will enable updates on issues and discussions on activities to be carried out.

V. Organise scientific meetings or conferences.

- Scientific meetings on public health topics may be organized to facilitate exchanges among nutritionists from the public and private sectors and the academia. Southeast Asia Public Health Nutrition Conferences on specific topics will provide a platform for interaction and development of potential collaborations.

2.0 SEA-PHN Network Launch

The inaugural meeting of the SEA-PHN Network was on 2 June 2014 and officially launched on 3 June 2014 in conjunction with 29th Scientific Conference of Nutrition Society of Malaysia at Kuala Lumpur (Fig 2). The Network was launched by YB Dato' Seri Dr Hilmi bin Haji Yahaya, Deputy Minister of Health, Malaysia. This historical launch signals the embarking of the journey of collaboration in public health nutrition matters among the SEA countries' nutrition society.



Figure 2 Launch of the Southeast Asia Public Health Nutrition (SEA-PHN) Network by YB Dato' Seri Dr Hilmi bin Haji Yahaya, Deputy Minister of Health, Malaysia, at The 29th Scientific Conference of the Nutrition Society of Malaysia, June 3, 2014, Kuala Lumpur.

3.0 Key Milestones Achieved

Several key milestones have been achieved by the Network since its establishment. The inaugural Meeting took place one day prior to the Network's launch. A number of key activities planned during the meeting have been successfully implemented. Some are on-going activities, while others have been completed:

- SEA-PHN Network 1st Annual Meeting
- Establishment of the SEA-PHN Network Website
- Compilation of Southeast Asia Countries' Food-Based Dietary Guidelines (FBDGs)
- Compilation of Southeast Asia Countries' recommended nutrient intake (RNI)/recommended dietary allowances (RDA).

3.1 SEA-PHN Network 1st Annual Meeting

Inaugural Meeting of SEA-PHN network was fruitfully held on 2 June 2014, attended by all 6 founding council of the network (from 5 member nutrition societies/associations), 6 corporate company representatives as Associate Members, and MOH representatives from Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam (Fig 3). The attendees are as follows:

Members (Nutrition Societies)	Chairman <i>Dr Tee E Siong (NSM)</i>
	Vice-chairman <i>Prof Dr Hardinsyah (PERGIZI PANGAN)</i>
	Council member <i>Prof Dr Mohd Ismail Noor (NSM)</i>
	Council member <i>Dr Rodolfo F. Florentino (NFP)</i>
	Council member <i>Assoc Prof Dr Umaporn Suthutvoravut (NAT)</i>
	Council member <i>Prof Dr Lee Thi Hop (VINUTAS)</i>
Representatives from Government Ministries	Malaysia <i>Ms Rokiah Bt Don</i>
	Thailand <i>Dr Napaphan Viriyautsahakul</i>
	Vietnam <i>Dr Phan Thi Ninh</i>
Associate Members (Corporate companies)	Beneo Asia Pacific Pte Ltd <i>Ms Anke Sentko</i>
	Danone Dumex (M) Sdn Bhd <i>Dr Jacques G. Bindels</i>
	DuPont Nutrition & Health <i>Ms Cyndy Au</i>
	Dutch Lady Malaysia Milk Industries <i>Ms Loo Mei Fong</i>
	Nestle Products Sdn Bhd <i>Ms Cher Siew Wei</i>
	PepsiCo Services Asia Ltd <i>Ms Yashna Harjani</i>
Secretariat (Versacomm Sdn Bhd)	Ms Melinda Chick Ms Muhaini Hussin Ms Jin Ng Ms Chun Shy Ling

The main public health nutrition issues in the respective member countries, national nutrition policies and programmes as well as the main intervention programmes conducted were presented by the member nutrition societies/associations of the Network. Director of Nutrition Division, Ministry of Health Malaysia also highlighted the nutrition policies and action plans as well as national intervention programmes to combat both under- and over nutrition problems in the country. Besides, recent public health nutrition initiatives by the 6 corporate company Associate Members were also shared by their respective representative.

Members also shared their views and expectations of the Network. Discussions were carried out and several recommendations were made for the future activities of the Network.

A formal minutes of this inaugural meeting has been prepared. The main discussions & recommendations related to proposed activities and potential collaboration are as summarised below:

- Overall, the meeting participants agreed to pursue multi stakeholder partnership among Network members (nutrition societies) and the government ministries or agencies and the corporate companies.

Documentation of nutrition information

The meeting agreed on several activities for immediate execution:

- Sharing of relevant nutrition guidelines, documents and publications (by members and associate members) on the Network website.
- Collate relevant reports/publications of research and intervention projects carried out by member societies and also associate member to share learnings.
- Compilation of the food-based dietary guidelines (FBDGs) available in countries in the region and identify commonalities and differences in recommendations.
- Compilation of the recommended nutrient intake (RNI)/recommended dietary allowances (RDA) available in the region.

Nutrition Intervention Programme

- Collaborative intervention projects among the member countries that will benefit the communities was one of the main item discussed. The Network recognized that there is an urgent need to carry out intervention programmes to improve the nutrition status of the communities in the region, afflicted with the double-burden of under- and over nutrition.
- The intervention programmes shall focus on nutrition promotion and education activities in empowering the communities in the region with unbiased information on health eating and active living. It was agreed to promote evidenced-based public health nutrition intervention, drawing upon the official dietary guidelines of the government. Maternal and child, school children especially from lower socioeconomic group with marginally poor and low to middle income are among the suggested target groups for the intervention.

- The meeting suggested several considerations when conducting nutrition education and promotion activities: conduct research on evaluating effectiveness of nutrition intervention, carried out intervention in multi-countries using similar protocols/strategies, begin with small-scale intervention study in the initial stage before rolling out to reach larger population using the developed strategies/activities.

Others

- National nutritional status and dietary pattern surveys are not systematically and periodically conducted in all countries in the region. More quality data on nutritional status and dietary pattern of communities should be made available so as to provide better understanding of the nutritional problems in region.
- Explore possibility of organizing Nutrition Month activities in all member countries with common approaches/strategies and possibly a common theme.



Figure 3 Group photo of SEA-PHN Network's Council Members, representatives from Associate Members (corporate companies) and representatives from Government Ministries after the 1st annual meeting on June 2, 2014 at Kuala Lumpur.

3.2 Establishment of the SEA-PHN Network Website

Recognizing the need of a channel to ease the communication among Network members from different countries and organizations, especially in between annual physical meetings and teleconferences, a dedicated website has been established for the Network: www.sea-phn.org. The set up preparation for the website had started in January 2014 and the website was successfully gone live in August 2014 (Fig 4).

The portal provides a platform for exchange of views and experiences on specific projects or topics. It is also a useful resource for food and nutrition scientists and students in the region sourcing for information for member SEA countries. Members of the national nutrition societies collaborating in the Network, Associate Members of the Network, health professional as well as public who would like to learn more on public health nutrition can get a free access to the website.

A 'Resource area' has been created on the website for the sharing of reports/abstracts of completed projects and scientific meetings by the members as well as relevant documents and publications from government agencies or national society. The information/documents available at the resources area are divided into 4 major sections, namely (Fig 5):

- National Nutrition Plans & Guidelines
- Nutrition Society Publications & Reports
- Journals Portals
- Professional Links

The resource area can only be accessed by the registered users who have created an account at the website. With a registered account, they can view and download all the documents at the resources area.

To date, several announcements of current and upcoming nutrition events/activities/scientific meetings according to member countries had been put on the website. Besides, members and associate members have been actively involved in sharing their respective scientific projects report and public health nutrition publications.

The maintenance and updating of the Network website will be an on-going process, so that any updates on public health nutrition related activities/projects/documentations by the member countries and associate members can be shared via this dedicated platform.



Figure 4 Southeast Asia Public Health Nutrition (SEA-PHN) Network website's home page

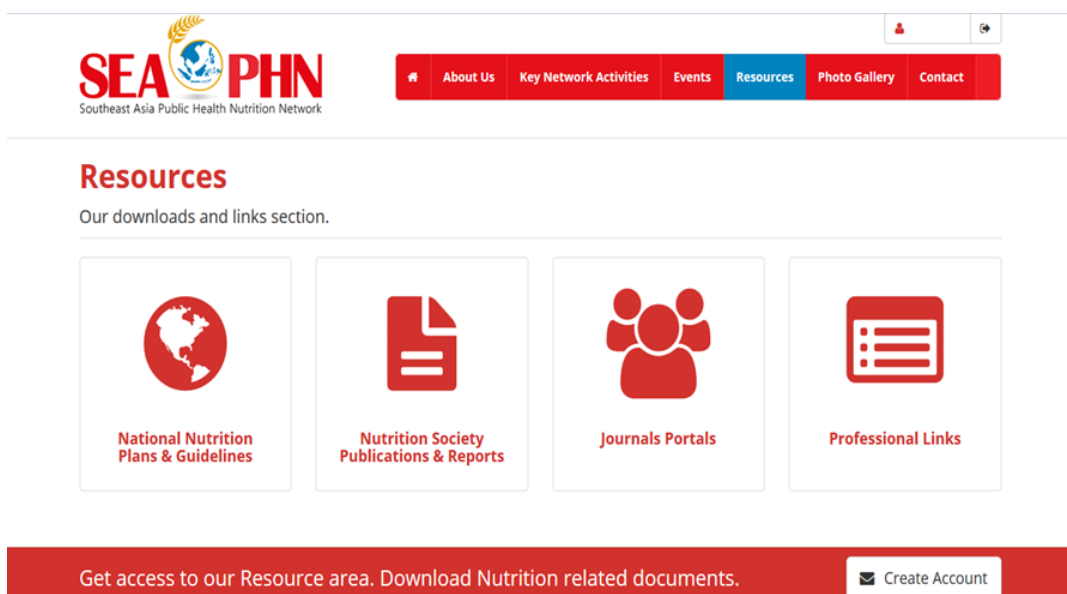


Figure 5 Southeast Asia Public Health Nutrition (SEA-PHN) Network website's Resources Area

3.3 Compilation of Southeast Asia Countries' Food-Based Dietary Guidelines (FBDGs)

As one of the activities of the SEA-PHN Network that could be implemented immediately, a compilation and analysis of the key messages and scientific rationale of the food-based dietary guidelines (FBDGs) of the region was carried out. This project serves as a kick start to promote closer collaboration among member countries in the area of public health nutrition to alleviate the nutrition problems in the region.

The project aims to share experiences and approaches in the development of FBDG among members of the Network. The key messages and scientific rationale of the FBDGs available in countries in the region were summarized; commonalities as well as differences in the key messages and scientific basis were also being identified.

The compilation work started in August 2014. The member societies of the network have provided the FBDGs of respective country - Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam. On the other hand, a search for FBDG of other countries in the region was carried out, but only FBDG from Singapore was obtained.

Key messages of each FBDG were compiled and analyzed. Similar key recommendations were grouped together by topics. For each topic identified, the exact wordings of expressing these messages and the adopted scientific were compared. Besides, the visual or pictorial guides adopted by these countries were also compared and analysed.

The compilation and analysing process were completed in early December 2014. Two useful documents have been produced in this project:

- A document tabulating the exact wordings of the key messages used by each countries as well as the scientific rationale adopted, together with the visual guide used in the countries. This document, when finalised, shall be uploaded on the Network website.
- A manuscript titled Food-Based Dietary Guidelines of Southeast Asia Countries: A Compilation and Analysis of Key Messages is under preparation for publication in an appropriate Journal.

In addition, the findings of this project will be presented by the Chairman of the Network at upcoming 12th Asian Congress of Nutrition in Yokohama in May 2015. Through this presentation, the findings can be shared with nutritionists in Asian countries.

3.4 Compilation of Southeast Asia Countries' Recommended Nutrient Intake (RNI)/ Recommended Dietary Allowances (RDA)

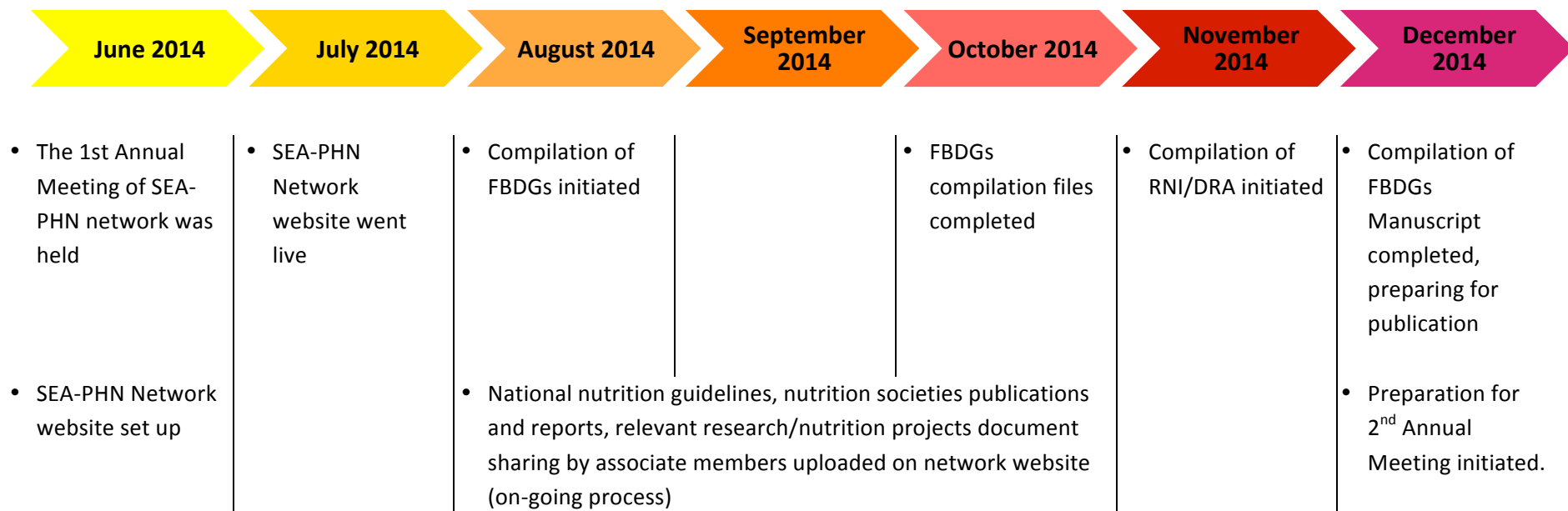
Compilation of the RNI/RDA available in the countries of the region is another activity identified by the Network for immediate implementation. Similar to the compilation of FBDGs, this project aims to compare the commonalities and differences in the nutrient intakes recommendation. Most importantly, this project aims to analyse and compare the scientific basis used by the respective countries in recommending the level of essentials nutrients needed to meet the nutrient requirements of practically all healthy persons in the respective country's population.

This project is a work in progress. The compilation has just started in November 2014. RNI or RDA of several countries has been collected, which include that from Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

The level of nutrient intakes recommended by each of the country has been tabulated based on the type of nutrients, gender and age groups. The macro- and micronutrients identified include energy, fat, carbohydrate, protein, thiamine, riboflavin, niacin, folate, vitamin C, vitamin A, vitamin D, vitamin E, calcium, iron, iodine, zinc and selenium. These data will be compared and analysed for commonalities and differences. Besides, the scientific rationale used for the recommendation of each macro- and micronutrient intake will also be compared and analysed.

3.5 Summary of Key Milestones Achieved

Milestones	Status
1 st Annual SEA-PHN Network Meeting	Successfully held on 2 June 2014
SEA-PHN Network website	Successfully went live
National Nutrition Guidelines & nutrition societies publications and reports sharing by member societies	Uploaded on network website
Relevant research/nutrition project documents sharing by member societies/associate members	Uploaded on network website
Compilation of FBDGs available in countries in the region	Completed
Compilation of RNI/RDA available in countries in the region	In progress



4.0 Next Steps

4.1 2nd SEA-PHN Annual Meeting

- **Agenda:**
 - Administrative matters of the Network, e.g. approval of minutes of 1st Meeting and financial report
 - Update of nutrition issues and activities by members of each country as well as by associate members
 - To discuss/review progress of Network activities

- **Venue:**
 - Jakarta, Indonesia

- **Date:**
 - Tentatively scheduled for June, 2015

4.2 Collaborative Child Nutrition Intervention Project

- **Nature of the project:**
 - A collaboration project among members of the SEA-PHN Network for community nutrition improvement.

- **Objectives:**
 - To conduct nutrition intervention programmes for school children to promote healthy eating and active living.

- **Priority target group:**
 - School children especially those from lower socioeconomic group (the marginally poor and low to middle income groups).