

A Collaboration among Nutrition Societies in Southeast Asia Region

Promoting regional collaboration for community nutrition improvement

Annual Report Year 2022

Members











Associate Members









Message from the Chairman

In 2022, The Southeast Asia Public Health Nutrition (SEA-PHN) Network entered its 8th years of public-private collaboration in promoting public health nutrition in the SEA region. While we have yet to see the end of the COVID-19 pandemic and its impacts, the Network's effort to promote healthy nutrition continued, with the focus on creating more discussion opportunities in the SEA region and reaching a wider audience and stakeholders via virtual platform. Several activities had been conducted in year 2022, including the Network's general meeting, public health nutrition webinar series, leadership programme workshop, online survey on consumer awareness and understanding of the food-based dietary guidelines as well as completion of draft manuscript on review of recommended energy and nutrient intake values in Southeast Asian countries. More details of the Network's activities in Year 2021 are provided in this report.

Moving forward, for year 2023, The Network strives to continue to provide more opportunities for interaction and networking among nutritionists in the SEA region. Some activities that have been planned to be continued and completed in year 2023 include supplement publication on review of Recommended Nutrients Intakes (RNIs)/Recommended Dietary Allowances (RDAs) in SEA Countries, updating the Network's Monograph Publication on NPANs in Southeast Asian Countries, continuation of the Public Health Nutrition Webinar Series as well as exploring the organisation of the 2nd Southeast Asia Public Health Nutrition (SEA-PHN) Conference.

It is believed that the Network can continue to contribute greatly to more effective implementation of public health nutrition measures in the region and that the public-private collaboration among nutrition societies and corporate partners is a viable and useful approach towards promoting nutritional wellbeing of the population. The Network also places on record its appreciation to all participants for attending the webinar. I would like to place on record sincere appreciation to all societies and corporate partners. Your continued trust, long-standing support and commitment to be part of the Network since the Network establishment has enabled the Network to gain a strong footing in promoting public health nutrition in the region.

E Siong Tee, PhD Chairman Southeast Asia Nutrition Public Health Nutrition (SEA-PHN) Network 11 January 2023

Southeast Asia Public Health Nutrition (SEA-PHN) Network

Background

Established in June 2014, the Southeast Asia Public Health Nutrition (SEA-PHN) Network is a public-private partnership, namely nutrition societies and corporate companies in the SEA region, dedicated to promoting public health nutrition through maintaining an interactive network among nutritionists in the region and promoting periodic exchange of experiences and activities in all public health nutrition issues.

Network's Aims

- Facilitate more effective implementation of public health nutrition measures to improve nutritional wellbeing of populations in the region
- Share available information and documentation such as technical publications with all stakeholders involved in public health nutrition, including professional bodies, government agencies and private sector
- Conduct activities to promote public health nutrition to benefit the communities in SEA region while ensuring avoidance of potential conflicts of interest.
- Consolidate efforts among nutritionists, both in the public and private sector, for the advancement of public health nutrition

Members of the Network

The SEA-PHN Network is a not-for-profit professional organisation, managed by a Council elected every three years by the members. The conduct/running of the Network activities is facilitated by a Secretariat, with the Council overseeing all activities.

Member Societies/Associations

The member societies of the Network comprise Nutrition Societies/Associations affiliated to the Federation of Asian Nutrition Societies (FANS) and the International Union of Nutritional Sciences (IUNS). Current member societies include:











Food and Nutrition Society of Indonesia (Pergizi Pangan Indonesia) Nutrition Society of Malaysia (NSM)

Nutrition Foundation of the Philippines, Inc (NFP) Nutrition
Association of
Thailand
(NAT)

Vietnam Nutrition Association (VINUTAS)

The membership to the Network is confined to societies who are affiliates of FANS and IUNS.

Associate Members

Private sector companies are invited to participate in Network activities as Associate Members, including attend Network's meetings (represented by technical experts), discuss nutrition matters, provide technical expertise and contribute to planning of nutrition projects and activities of the Network. Private sector companies also provide financial support for the activities of the Network. Current Associate Members from the private sector companies and their respective technical representatives are:



BENEO-Institute

Technical representatives: Ms Anke Sentko Ms Goh Peen Ern



IFF

Technical representatives: Ms Cyndy Au



PepsiCo Services Asia Co., Ltd

Technical representatives: Dr Kit Phanvijhitsiri Mr Liu Feng



Malaysian Palm Oil Council

Technical representatives: *Ms* Vicky Chia Min Huei

3rd Council of the SEA-PHN Network (Year 2020 to 2023)



CHAIRMANDr Tee E Siong,
Nutrition Society of Malaysia



VICE-CHAIRMAN
Clin Prof Dr Nalinee Chongviriyapha,
Nutrition Association of Thailand



COUNCIL MEMBER
Prof Dr Ir. Hardinsyah Ridwan,
Food and Nutrition Society of Indonesia



COUNCIL MEMBERAssoc Prof Dr Mahenderan Appukutty,
Nutrition Society of Malaysia



COUNCIL MEMBER

Dr Rodolfo F. Florentino,

Nutrition Foundation of the Philippines, Inc



COUNCIL MEMBERAssoc Prof Dr Truong Tuyet Mai
Vietnam Nutrition Association

Key Activities of the Network

The activities of the Network have been expanding since its establishment, focus primarily on:

- Maintain regular contact among members of the Network through regular meetings and video conference meetings as and when needed to plan and implement projects/activities; and exchange experiences through updates on major nutrition activities
- Maintaining of dedicated website as a channel of communication & a repository of public health nutrition documents in the region: www.sea-phn.org
- Conduct collaborative projects among members of the Network, private sector and government agencies based on nutritional issues of common interest to the region (e.g. school nutrition promotion) for community nutrition improvement, in the spirit of publicprivate partnership.
- Organise scientific meetings, webinars or conferences
- Publication of monograph/review papers on food-based dietary guidelines, nutrition action plans in SEA countries
- Organise public health nutrition leadership programme for capacity building of young nutritionists in the region

More details of the Network and the materials and reports of the activities are available on the Network website: http://sea-phn.org.

Summary Report of Year 2022's Activities

1. SEA-PHN Network 11th General Meeting

The 11th General Meeting of the Network was conducted virtually via Zoom online platform on 7 April 2022. The meeting was attended by Council Members, representatives from Associate Members, invited guest and the Network's Secretariat, as follows:

Council Members	Chairman Dr Tee E Siong (Nutrition Society of Malaysia, NSM)
	Vice-chairman Clin Prof Dr Nalinee Chongviriyapha (Nutrition Association of Thailand, NAT) Council members Assoc Prof Dr Mahenderan Appukutty (Nutrition Society of Malaysia, NSM) Dr Rodolfo F. Florentino (Nutrition Foundation of the Philippines, Inc, NFP) Assoc Prof Dr Truong Tuyet Mai (Vietnam Nutrition Association, VINUTAS)
Associate Members	Ms Goh Peen Ern, BENEO-Institute Dr Kit Phanvijhitsiri, Pepsico Services Asia Ltd Ms Cyndy Au, IFF
Guest	Mrs Maria Lourdes Vega (Nutrition Foundation of the Philippines, Inc, NFP)
Secretariat (VersaComm Sdn Bhd)	Ms Muhaini Hussin Ms Voon Siok Hui Ms Presanna Arumugam

Council Members and Associate Members exchanged nutrition experiences by sharing a brief update on major nutrition activities and programmes from respective association or country in the past one year. Members also reviewed the main activities undertaken by the Network in Year 2021 and discussed activities direction for Year 2022.

2. Public Health Nutrition Webinar Series

Much of the Network's focus since the pandemic has been on organising series of virtual webinars in order to continue interaction/communication with the nutritionists and related public health nutrition stakeholders in the region. Webinars on two important topics i.e. (1). Use of Social Media in Nutrition & Physical Activity Promotion; and (2) Promotion and Consumers' Use of Food-Based Dietary Guidelines (FBDGs) in SEA Countries had been organised this year with encouraging number of participations.

Webinar 1/2022: Use of Social Media in Nutrition & Physical Activity Promotion

Social media platforms have evolved to be important sources of information for the community, especially in the era of COVID-19 pandemic. Such platforms provide great opportunities for nutrition professionals to promote healthy eating and share evidence-based nutrition and physical activity information with increased visibility and being able to reach out to more audiences.

However, the surge of misinformation and fake news circulation on social media following the COVID-19 pandemic also pose a challenge in nutrition and health communication via such platforms. Additionally, there are competing voices on the platforms from some influencers with misleading and unsubstantiated solutions to health and nutrition concerns. It is vital that nutrition professionals

adopt effective strategies to reach target audience while delivering consistent and accurate food and nutrition messages.

With the objectives of enabling nutritionists in the region to share respective country's experiences in promoting nutrition and physical activity through social media, and also to learn strategies for effective communication on social media platforms, the webinar on Use of Social Media in Nutrition and Physical Activity Promotion was organised by the SEA-PHN Network.

The webinar was attended by 210 participants including nutritionists, dietitians, members of academia, research organisations, policy makers, public health workers, nutrition graduates and postgraduate students, medical doctors as well as other healthcare professionals. In the first session of the webinar, invited speakers from four SEA countries shared their experiences in promoting nutrition to the community using various social media platforms. In session 2, two invited speakers shared hands-on experiences and tips for effective nutrition and physical activity communication on social media.

Webinar 2/2022: Promotion and Consumers' Use of Food-Based Dietary Guidelines (FBDGs) in SEA Countries

Food-based dietary guidelines (FBDGs) provide science-based, simple messages on healthy eating for the population for the purpose of promoting health and preventing nutrition-related deficiencies and excesses. FBDGs may also include advice on other food and health related issues, such as food safety, physical activity, and healthy lifestyle. As FBDGs are intended to be used by the general public to foster healthy eating habits and lifestyles, messages of FBDGs must be disseminated and communicated effectively to the public through various channels to ensure a good level of public awareness.

This will serve as a crucial step in getting people to follow the recommendations of the FBDGs messages. In this regard, understanding consumers' knowledge and use of these messages is equally important to provide feedback on the effectiveness of the messages and provide insights for FBDGs messages improvement in the future.

The webinar Promotion and Consumers' Use of FBDGs in SEA Countries was organised with the aims of enabling nutritionists in the region to share their experiences in approaches for FBDGs promotion and dissemination and discuss effective ways for the promotion of FBDGs messages to the public, as well as to explore the available data in SEA on consumers' awareness, understanding and use of FBDGs in SEA countries.

The webinar was attended by 263 participants including nutritionists, dietitians, members of academia, researchers, policy makers as well as other healthcare professionals. The Network also shared findings of an online survey on Consumer Awareness, Understanding and Use of Dietary Guidelines in SEA countries.

The reports for the webinars are available at the Network website.

3. Multi-country online survey on Consumer Awareness, Understanding and Use of Dietary Guidelines in SEA Countries

FBDG is a useful tool to encourage healthy food choices among public, decrease the risk of dietrelated chronic diseases and improve public health. It is recognised that a good level of public awareness on the FBDG is crucial in getting people to implement the guidelines' recommendations and that understanding consumers usage will help to identify any necessary changes to be made to the FBDG or their implementation. In SEA countries, there has been minimal research into whether consumers are aware/familiar with the FBDG messages, and whether FBDG are utilised by the public. In view of lack of such local data in several countries in SEA, a multi-country online survey was conducted by the SEA-PHN Network with the aim to understand the awareness and usage of the key messages by the public.

The survey was conducted online through Google Form from 17 October up to 7 November 2022 in Malaysia, Philippines and Thailand. The target respondents for the survey were adults aged 18 years and above living in the three countries. A common questionnaire covering short and simple questions on identifying FBDG messages of respective country (awareness), usage of FBDGs messages and pictorial food guides, and common sources of healthy eating information was developed and reviewed by the three nutrition bodies in SEA country. The questionnaire was then translated into respective language to be used in the three countries.

The findings of the survey were shared during the Network's webinar on Promotion and Consumers' Use of Food-Based Dietary Guidelines (FBDGs) in SEA Countries. The sharing of findings also provided the opportunity for the member societies/organisations and nutritionists in the region to further discuss and explore the needs for related research in this area. It was recommended that the FBDG messages need to be further simplified in the future. There is also a need for communication of FBDG information to consumers, and that the information should be increasingly communicated via internet. More works need to be done to increase the visibility of nutritionists and dietitians as reliable sources of nutrition information.

4. Compilation of Recommended Nutrient Intakes (RNIs)/Recommended Dietary Allowances (RDAs) in SEA Countries

The Network has worked on compiling and comparing the officially published energy and nutrient intake values in five SEA countries, with the aim to provide an understanding of the approaches undertaken by the countries in developing such recommendations, as well as the similarities and differences of these countries' recommendations. It is also hope that this work would serve as reference document for food and nutrition activities in SEA countries e.g. in updating/developing population nutrient intakes, in dietary studies and nutrition research in countries in the region, and for food regulatory authorities in nutrition labelling activities. The draft manuscript is being circulated among Council Members of the partner Societies/Associations for final review. This work is anticipated to be published as a supplement issue in Malaysian Journal of Nutrition, in first quarter of year 2023.

5. Southeast Asia Public Health Nutrition Leadership Programme Workshop

The Network had planned to conduct a training programme in Malaysia to enhance the leadership capabilities of young nutrition professionals in the SEA region in 2019 and envisaged that the programme could contribute to the development of future leaders in food and nutrition science particularly in public health and community nutrition. However, due to the lock-downs enforced by countries in the region in the past three years brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, the planned in-person nutrition leadership programme could not be conducted.

After witnessing the devastating effects, including ill health brought about by the pandemic, it becomes crucial that the planned programmes and activities of the National Plans of Action for Nutrition (NPANs) should be effectively implemented to ensure that the COVID-19 does not lead to malnutrition crisis, as well as to prevent non-communicable diseases that are risk factors for higher COVID-19 morbidity and mortality. The pandemic has also brought significant challenges to the implementation of the NPAN's programmes and activities, thus adjustments and alternatives are to be made in order to ensure successful implementation of the programmes and activities.

Recognising that it is challenging to organise an in-person nutrition leadership programme as the threat of COVID-19 remains, the Network and Malaysia Nutrition Leadership Programme (MyNLP) had therefore jointly organised the virtual Southeast Asia Public Health Nutrition Leadership Programme (SEA-PHN LP) Workshop on 26 October 2022.

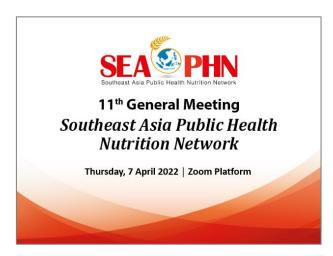
The workshop with the theme 'understanding and implementation of NPANs in SEA countries', aimed to contribute towards enhancing leadership competency among young nutritionists in the SEA region in the area of NPAN. Specifically, the workshop also aimed to provide a platform for nutritionists in the region to better understand the strategies and programmes adopted by NPAN within participants' country as well as those of countries in SEA in tackling specific nutritional problems; learn to communicate effectively and share their opinions among nutrition professionals from different sectors and different countries in SEA region; hone the application of soft-skills; as well as establish professional and social networks with public health nutrition workers within country as well as countries in the region.

A total of 23 Nutritionists from five SEA countries (Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam) participated the workshop. During the workshop, participants presented respective group assignment report on NPAN approaches in SEA countries in addressing selected nutrition problems such as iron deficiency anaemia, iodine deficiency disorder (IDD), stunting and wasting, obesity and non-communicable diseases. Participants also shared recommendations on future action at national/SEA level in addressing the nutritional problems assigned and shared views for future activities to enhance skills and training needs; strengthening networking and multisectoral approaches.

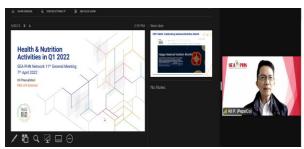
The workshop was also attended by resources persons i.e. council members of the SEA-PHN Network and members of the Technical Working Committee of MyNLP, to provide comments on group reports presented and shared more insights with participants regarding NPAN of respective country.

Year 2022 in Pictures

SEA-PHN Network 11th General Meeting

















Webinar: Use of Social Media in Nutrition & Physical Activity Promotion

















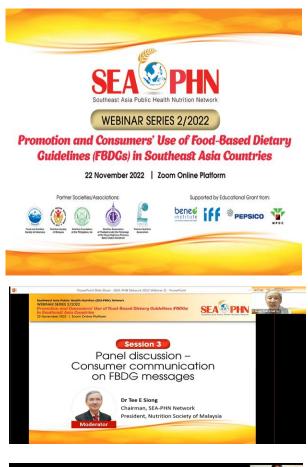








Webinar: Promotion and Consumers' Use of Food-Based Dietary Guidelines (FBDGs) in SEA Countries





FOOD BASED DIETARY GUIDELINES









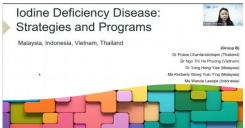
Southeast Asia Public Health Nutrition Leadership Programme (SEA-PHN LP) Workshop





















SEA-PHN Network Website – A Repository of Public Health Nutrition Documents in SEA

The Network's website www.sea-phn.org, continued to serve as a channel of communication and information sharing among members and public health nutrition professionals in the region. In addition to the scientific publications, reports of completed projects of the Network, relevant publications from the societies, government agencies as well as Associate Members, more materials such as the presentation slides (with speakers' consent) for all the webinars and workshop have been uploaded for sharing with the users.

The Network is progressing in enhancing its visibility regionally. The series of webinars conducted have encouraged more new visits to the Network's website. In year 2022, the total number of unique visitors were 3455, with 83% of them (3432) being new users. The total pageviews of the website has increased to 13774 in 2022 (11% increment from year 2021).

Figure below shows the breakdown of the website visitors for year 2022 by countries (top 10).

Country	Users	% Users
1. 🖳 Malaysia	906	26.01%
2. United States	579	16.62%
3. Philippines	289	8.30%
4. China	178	5.11%
5. Indonesia	145	4.16%
6. Thailand	98	2.81%
7. India	80	2.30%
8. Japan	78	2.24%
9. Canada	66	1.89%
10. Singapore	62	1.78%