

# Consumer Awareness Campaigns on Food Standards and Safety in Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Viet Nam

## ASEAN Regional Stocktaking





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## Abbreviations

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AADCP	ASEAN-Australia Development Cooperation Programme
ACCP	ASEAN Committee on Consumer Protection
ACEI	ASEAN Consumer Empowerment Index
ADB	Asian Development Bank
AMR	antimicrobial resistance
AMS	ASEAN Member States
ASEAN	Association of South East Asian Nations
AVA	Agrifood and Veterinary Authority
AWDO	Asian Water Development Outlook
BPOM	Badan Pengawas Obat dan Makanan
BPS	Bureau of Philippine Standards
CA	Competent Authorities
CADPA	Clean Agriculture Development & Food Processing Association
CCA	Cholangiocarcinoma
CCAD	Consumer Affairs Department
CCF	Consumer Protection Competition and Fraud Repression Directorate-General
CEAC	consumer education and awareness campaign
CHEIC	Center for Health Education, Information and Communication
CIRAD	French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development
CIRD	Cambodia Institute for Research and Rural Development
CLMV	Cambodia-Laos-Myanmar-Vietnam.
CLTS	community-led total sanitation
COMBI	Communication for Behavioural Impact
CPFTO	Consumer Protection (Fair Trading) Order,
DA	Department of Agriculture
DepEd	Department of Education
DOCA	Department of Consumer Affairs
DoH	Department of Health - Philippines
DOST	Department of Science and Technology
DTI	Department of Trade and Industry
ELM	Elaboration Likelihood Model
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization



FBD	Foodborne diseases
FDA	Food and Drug Administration
FDD	The Food and Drug Department
FOSTA Myanmar	Food Science and Technology Association – Myanmar
FSL	Food Safety Law – Viet Nam
FSQCD	Food Safety and Quality Control Division
FSQD	Food Safety & Quality Division
FSS	Food Sustainability Standards
GAP	Good Agricultural Practices
GDP	Gross domestic product
GFSI	Global Food Security Index
GKPD	Gerakan Keamanan Pangan Desa
GoL	Government of Lao PDR
HCL	Healthier Choice Logo
HPC	Health Promotion Centre
IEC	Information, education and communication (IEC)
IFOAM	International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements
ILSI Japan CHP	International Life Sciences Institute of Japan Center for Health Promotion
IPB University	Institute Pertanian Bogor
IPC	interpersonal communication
ISO	International Organization of Standardization
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
KAP	knowledge, attitude and practices
KAWP	Krom Aphiwat Phum
LWU	Lao Women’s Union
MAF	Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
MARD	Ministries of Agriculture and Rural Development
MARD	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
MCU	Myanmar Consumers Union
MoH	Ministry of Health
MoIC	Ministry of Industry and Commerce
MOIT	Ministries of Industry and Trade
MSMEs	micro, small and medium enterprises
NAFIQAD	National Agro-Forestry-Fisheries Quality Assurance Department
NCCP	National Committee for Consumer Protection



NCDs	Non-communicable diseases
NCHP	The National Center of Health Promotion
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NHL	National Health Laboratory
NIN	Viet Nam National Institute of Nutrition
NMCHC	National Maternal and Child Health Center
NNCC	National Nutrition Communication Campaign
OD	Operation District
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OIE	World Organisation for Animal Health
PHD	Provincial Health Department
PNS	Philippine National Standards
PSAs	public service announcements
PSAs	public service announcements
REI	Regional Economic Integration
SAEDA	Sustainable Agriculture & Environment Development Association
SC-WASH	community water, sanitation and hygiene
SFA	Singapore Food Agency
SM	sanitation marketing
SWAN	Safe Water, Nutrition and Health Environment
UNGCP	United Nations Guideline for Consumer Protection
WASH	water, sanitation and hygiene
WHO	World Health Organization
WPRO	WHO Regional Office for the Western Pacific



## Terms and definitions

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Organic agriculture	A holistic production management system which promotes and enhances agro-ecosystem health, including biodiversity, biological cycles and soil biological activity. It emphasises the use of management practices in preference to the use of off-farm inputs, taking into account that regional conditions require locally adapted systems. This is accomplished by using, where possible, agronomic, biological, and mechanical methods, as opposed to using synthetic materials, to fulfil any specific function within the system. (FAO/WHO Codex Alimentarius Commission, 1999).
Food sustainability standards	Standards specifying requirements about a product or a process that producers, traders or retailers need to meet in relation to sustainability indicators. This can include respect for basic human rights, workers' health and safety, the environmental impacts of production or land use planning <sup>1</sup> . (UNFSS, 2013)
Food control	A mandatory regulatory activity of enforcement by national or local authorities to provide consumer protection and ensure that all foods during production, handling, storage, processing, and distribution are safe, wholesome and fit for human consumption, conform to safety and quality requirements and are honestly and accurately labelled as prescribed by law (FAO/WHO, 2003)
Standards	Documents approved by a recognised body, providing for common and repeated use, rules, guidelines or characteristics for products or related processes <sup>2</sup> and production methods, with which compliance is not mandatory. It may also include or deal exclusively with terminology, symbols, packaging, marking or labelling requirements as they apply to a product, process or production method. (WTO ANALYTICAL INDEX TBT Agreement – Annex 1 (Jurisprudence), current as of December 2020).
Competent authority (CA)	Official government agency having jurisdiction (ASEAN, 2014).
Quality infrastructure (QI)	Ecosystem of public and private institutions as well as legal and regulatory frameworks and practices that establish and implement standardisation, accreditation, metrology and conformity assessments (testing, inspection and certification) (Kellermann, 2019).
Public awareness raising	The three main categories of awareness-raising activities related to development and global issues in donor countries are: i) development information/communication; ii) advocacy and campaigning; and iii) development and global education (OECD, 2008).

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<sup>1</sup> GLOBALG.A.P. (Good Agricultural Practices) is a farm management certification scheme pioneered by supermarkets. Another example is ISO26000 which provides guidance to businesses and other organisations on social responsibility to improve their impact on workers, natural environments and communities.

<sup>2</sup> Product and process standards can have several specific functions, including, for example:

- fostering commercial communication
- raising productive efficiency
- improving process management
- enhancing public welfare
- safety, health and environmental protection.



## 1. Background

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Food safety is a public health issue and food safety management is based on scientific evidence. Food safety hazards are classified as microbiological, chemical and physical. The purpose of food safety management is to ensure that food safety hazards do not cause consumers harm when food is prepared and/or eaten according to its intended use. The first report on the global burden of foodborne diseases (FBDs) published by WHO in 2015 revealed the scale of FBDs and their impact on public health. The report contributed one rationale for the UN General Assembly to declare 7 June as World Food Safety Day, which was observed for its second year in 2020.

In Asia, diarrheal disease and invasive infectious disease agents contributed to more than 80 per cent of the total disease burden, while helminths (parasites), chemicals, toxins and other causes are responsible for the rest (FAO, 2018).

Food safety issues affect food security and the food trade. Outbreaks of foodborne diseases have disrupted global food supply chains and livelihoods. A weak national food control system leads domestic consumers and trading partners to distrust the food supply chain. The cost of compliance with strict food control measures imposed by importing countries cannot be managed by the private sector in countries where the food control system is weak or inadequate.

A well-designed and implemented food control system provides an appropriate level of protection for consumers. Food standards provide public and private sectors alike with guidance on managing food safety along the supply chain. An important and popular Codex<sup>3</sup> standard for food safety are the General Principles of Food Hygiene (CAC 2003 rev 2020), which follow the food supply chain from primary production through to final consumption, highlighting the key hygiene controls at each stage.

The WTO Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS Agreement) identifies the joint FAO/WHO Codex Alimentarius Committee as the relevant standard-setting body for food safety. Other related measures considered under the SPS Agreement are those that deal with animal protection and plant health under the auspices, respectively, of the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) and the Secretariat of the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC). Each of these organisations acts as an intergovernmental (public) organisation for the development of standards that can be adopted by national governments (public) and implemented by private companies (FAO, 2014).

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<sup>3</sup> Codex Alimentarius, a collection of internationally recognised standards, codes of practice, guidelines and other recommendations relating to foods, food production and food safety. The Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC), which develops these standards, implements the joint food standards programme of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization and the World Health Organization.



Food safety standards at primary production level include Good Agricultural Practices or GAP. There are several versions of GAP standards: the GlobalGAP, ASEANGAP and national GAP.

FAO defines GAP as a ‘collection of principles to apply for on-farm production and post-production processes, resulting in safe and healthy food and non-food agricultural products, while taking into account economic, social and environmental sustainability.’

Standards remain voluntary until they are adopted by a national government, which determines how they will be enforced. If a country adopts a voluntary standard in its national food safety legislation, then it becomes a mandatory regulation with public assessments of conformity as well as enforcement of the standard (FAO, 2014).

Food safety standards aim to protect consumers or public health. Proof of compliance with standards is usually represented by food safety marks or logos such as an HACCP certification mark or a GAP certification mark on food product packaging, or a hygiene certification mark for food service premises.



Figure 1: Malaysian HACCP label



Figure 2: Viet Nam's GAP label (VietGAP)



Figure 3: Thailand's food hygiene certification mark for restaurants and street food

Proof of compliance (certification mark), the relevant standards, testing, inspections and audits are all parts of the quality infrastructure (QI). QI for food control includes the institutions and the legal and regulatory frameworks for standardisation, accreditation, metrology, conformity assessment, market surveillance and technical regulations (Lim, 2019). Standards and certification marks provide consumers with information and underpin their trust that a food product is safe for consumption. Consumers who are concerned about the impact of their consumption on the environment or on stakeholders in the food supply chain will also seek some form of attestation that the food they consume addresses those concerns.

An increased demand for food that is guaranteed as safe will increase the compliance with food safety standards among private-sector producers of agri-food. Such a guarantee is usually expressed in the form of certification marks and labels. In order to raise the demand for safer (and more sustainable) food, consumers need to be aware of the relevant certification marks and what they represent. Transforming to safer and more sustainable food consumption patterns is a continuous process that requires a conducive environment and policies.



## 1.1 Sustainable food systems

Food systems are threatened not only by food safety hazards but also climate uncertainties. The agriculture sector is among the biggest contributors to greenhouse gas emissions. FAO reports that more than 10 million hectares of agricultural land are being lost to degradation annually. Agro-chemicals have polluted rivers and natural water sources (FAO, 2016).

Agriculture is also among the economic sectors most vulnerable to climate uncertainties. It has been reported that climate change-induced animal and plant diseases and pest outbreaks have devastated food crops. Climate change-related disasters have damaged infrastructure and farmland, and disrupted national and global food supply chains. These events have a bigger impact on poor countries and poorer populations, further aggravating their situation of food security and food safety.

Climate mitigation and adaptation measures in the food system include the development and implementation of standards for a sustainable food system. A sustainable food system is a food system that delivers food security and nutrition for all in a way that does not compromise the economic, social and environmental bases for the food security and nutrition of future generations.

Food (sustainability) standards are developed to minimise the impacts of food production and processing on the environment and on people (farmers especially). Examples include the Rainforest Alliance standards and certification scheme, organic certification, Fair Trade labels, water efficiency labelling and the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO).

Drivers for sustainable food standards are generally based on two types of movement: professional lobbying institutions that influence political opinion, especially in developed countries; and producer groups willing and able to distinguish the social and environmental characteristics of their products and to position them in international markets (FAO, 2014). Both drivers are usually absent or weak in low and middle-income countries.

Example of a sustainable food system (SFS) policy – the European Union

*Among the important policy undertakings to support SFS is the EU's Farm to Fork Strategy. One of the means to advance SFS is to promote consumer information on eco-schemes and related standards. Europeans have a high level of awareness of food safety topics and most frequent reported concerns are related to antibiotics, hormones and steroids in meat, pesticides, environmental pollutants and food additives (EU Commission, 2019).*

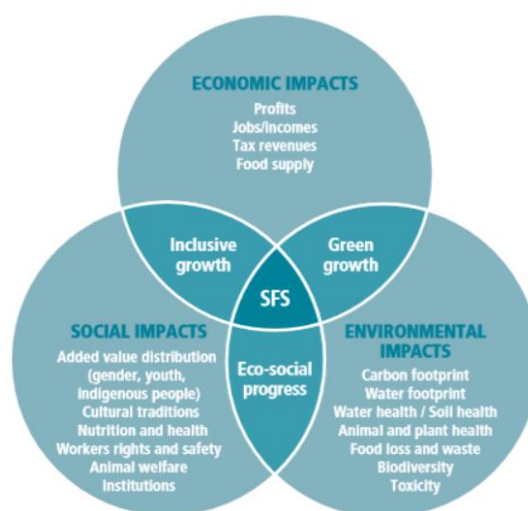


Figure 4: Dimensions of a sustainable food system



The EU Farm to Fork Strategy (F2F) aims to reduce the environmental and climate footprint of the EU food system and strengthen its resilience, ensure food security in the face of climate change and biodiversity loss and lead a global transition towards competitive sustainability from farm to fork and tapping into new opportunities (EU Commission, 2020). The EU’s action areas include efforts to address antimicrobial resistance (AMR) linked to the excessive and inappropriate use of antimicrobial medicines in animal and human healthcare. The EU also promotes, for example, animal welfare, alternatives to chemical pesticides, organic agriculture, eco-schemes and sustainable packaging solutions. To this end the EU will strive to promote international standards in the relevant international bodies and encourage the production of agri-food products that comply with high safety and sustainability standards.

The EU supports small-scale farmers in meeting these standards and in accessing markets. It also aims to boost cooperation to improve nutrition and to alleviate food insecurity by strengthening the resilience of food systems and reducing food waste (EU Commission, 2020). In order to provide consumers with information and increase the demand for sustainably produced food and sustainable food consumption, the EU will (EU Commission, 2020):

- promote schemes, including an EU sustainable food labelling framework
- lead the work on international sustainability standards and methods for calculating environmental footprints, doing so in multilateral forums to promote a higher uptake of sustainability standards
- support enforcement of rules on misleading information.

Characteristics	Food Safety Standards	Food Sustainability Standards
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Objectives	<input type="checkbox"/> appropriate level of protection for general public	<input type="checkbox"/> communication, compatibility, safety, health and environmental protection
<input type="checkbox"/> References	<input type="checkbox"/> Codex /OIE/IPPC	<input type="checkbox"/> private and NGO-led
<input type="checkbox"/> Development	<input type="checkbox"/> CAs/consensus/support for participation of developing and low income countries	<input type="checkbox"/> government and non-government nominated representatives. Limited support for developing or low income country participation
<input type="checkbox"/> WTO - reference	<input type="checkbox"/> specific mention of standards development organisations (FAO/Codex, OIE and IPPC)	<input type="checkbox"/> none - but use WTO reference to ISO/IEC Guide 2 on Standardisation and related activities
<input type="checkbox"/> Compliance	<input type="checkbox"/> mandatory under National Food safety laws, especially for high-risk foods such as dairy, meat and fishery	<input type="checkbox"/> usually voluntary

Figure 5: Characteristics of food safety and food sustainability standards

## 1.2 Food control systems and quality infrastructure

The objective of a national food safety control system is to reduce food safety risks and provide an appropriate level of protection to consumers or the general public. This risk-based approach is also reiterated in the WTO SPS Agreement<sup>4</sup> and in regional food safety policies

<sup>4</sup> Article 5 - Assessment of Risk and Determination of the Appropriate Level of Sanitary or Phytosanitary Protection





such as the ASEAN Principles of Food Safety (Principles 2 and 3)<sup>5</sup>. A food control system is defined according to FAO as:

*...a mandatory regulatory activity of enforcement by national or local authorities to provide consumer protection and ensure that all foods during production, handling, storage, processing, and distribution are safe, wholesome and fit for human consumption; conform to safety and quality requirements; and are honestly and accurately labelled as prescribed by law.*

The five elements of a national food control system are (FAO/WHO , 2003):

- ✓ Food laws and regulations: the necessary legal powers and prescriptions to ensure food safety, allow CAs to build preventive approaches into the system, and updated food standards
- ✓ Food control management: the development and implementation of an integrated national food control strategy; operation of a national food control programme; securing funds and allocating resources; setting standards and regulations; participation in international food control related activities; developing emergency response procedures; carrying out risk analyses; etc.
- ✓ Inspection services: day-to-day interaction with food businesses, collecting samples, inspecting food safety management systems such as HACCP and GMP, securing evidence of con-compliance, etc.
- ✓ Laboratory services: food monitoring and epidemiological data –
  - with equipment for physical, microbiological and chemical analyses
  - analytical quality assurance of the national food control system and accreditation of the laboratory by an appropriate accreditation agency
  - competencies for sampling, testing and ensuring the reliability, accuracy and repeatability of results.
- ✓ Information, education, communication and training (Codex Alimentarius states that *consumers also have a role in managing food safety risks under their control and where relevant should be provided with information on how to achieve this*):
  - for all stakeholders in the food supply chain and food control system
  - providing balanced factual information to consumers
  - provision of information packages and educational programmes; development of train-the-trainer programmes; reference literature<sup>6</sup>.

Standards and certification programmes for food safety and sustainability are usually governed by a national quality infrastructure, or NQI. Components of the NQI are:

- ✓ standards development (for example Codex, or ISO standards)
- ✓ testing (credible and accredited testing facilities, for example on pesticide residues)
- ✓ measurement (for example ensuring laboratory equipment is well-calibrated to provide credible testing results)
- ✓ certification (formal guarantee by an accredited certification body that products meet, for example, organic or GAP standards)
- ✓ accreditation (system to ensure testing, inspection and certification are credible)

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<sup>5</sup> Principle 2: Systematic Risk Analysis Framework and Principle 3: Science-based, Independent Risk Assessment Process

<sup>6</sup> CAs implement an established internal policy for food safety risk communication to consumers based on openness, transparency, timeliness and responsiveness (para 64 and 66 of CAC/GL 82-2013) and its effectiveness is monitored.



Together, these components increase people’s trust in the standards and in the certification mark, which further facilitates domestic and international trade.

### 1.3 Food control systems and management capacity in low-and middle-income countries (LMICs)

A raft of recent and older assessment reports and performance indices can be used to gauge the capacity of national, regional and global food control systems to meet public health objectives. These include the Global Food Security Index (GFSI), WHO’s Burden of Foodborne Illnesses, the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) Global Food Policy Report, and WHO’s International Health Regulations Joint External Evaluation report (IHR/JEE).

A 2018 World Bank report, *The Safe Food Imperative*, used these and many other sources to assess the food safety management capacities of low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). According to the report, the capacity of national food control systems to provide an appropriate level of protection varies according to countries’ level of economic development.

The World Bank categorises the food safety life cycle stages as follows:

- ✓ traditional
- ✓ transitioning
- ✓ modernising
- ✓ postmodern

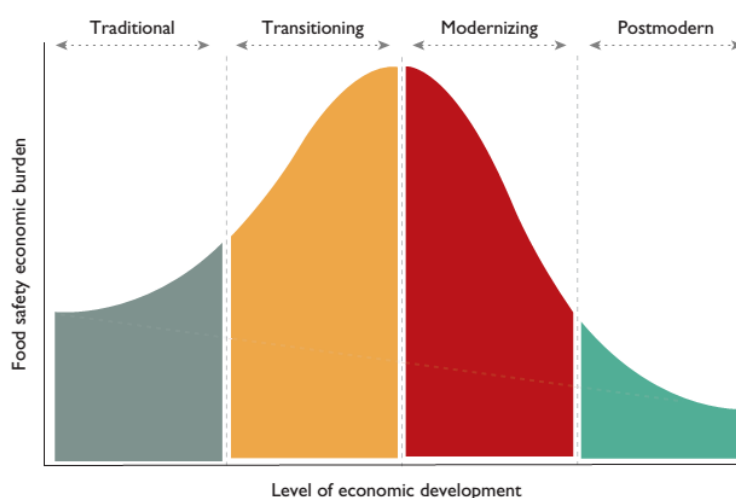


Figure 6: Food safety life cycle with level of economic development  
(Source: World Bank 2019)

These categories are determined according to the economic burden of foodborne diseases (FBDs) and the incentives for enhancing food safety management capacities, which vary with the country’s stage of economic development. Demand for safer food among domestic consumers increases with income, level of education, access to basic infrastructure (WASH, roads), access to information and education, livelihoods and the healthcare system. Demand for safer food is one of the incentives for the private and public sectors to continue investing in food safety control and management systems. The 2020 Global Food Policy Report of the International Food Policy Research Institute Invalid source specified. reiterates recommendations of the World Bank with respect to the importance of public education to improve the national food system: ‘Education is a major driver of inclusion, increasing lifelong income and improving nutrition, health, civic engagement and gender equality.’



## 1.4 The ASEAN food control system and food safety management capacity

ASEAN's agri-food supply chain is experiencing rapid growth and continuously evolving. Some of the major food crop exporters, such as Viet Nam, Thailand and Myanmar, are located in Southeast Asia. Trade in high-value crops is also rising (e.g. durian, mango and dragon fruit). Several ASEAN Member States (AMSs) have high exports in the category of unprocessed food.

In the light of the World Bank report, the WHO report on the burden of foodborne illness, the Global Food Security Index (GFSI 2020), agri-food trade, national quality infrastructure and the latest (pilot) ASEAN Consumer Empowerment Index (ACEI 2020), the food safety management capacities of AMSs can be categorised as follows:

- ❖ Transitioning stage (various levels):
  - Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Philippines and Viet Nam
- ❖ Modernising stage (various levels):
  - Brunei, Malaysia and Thailand, Singapore

*Education increases lifelong income, breaking the cycle of poverty. Education also improves nutrition, health, civic engagement, and gender equality. Education in the form of vocational training can also create a well-trained labor force that can seize opportunities in higher-productivity food-related sectors, a prospect that is especially beneficial for youth.*

*Facilitating the transfer of knowledge and reducing information asymmetries between the rich and poor, urban and rural people, men and women, and so on, is another key driver of inclusion. New technological innovations, including mobile technologies, are creating numerous opportunities for poor and vulnerable people, who now have at their fingertip's information on agriculture, markets, and nutrition. Up-to-date information about prevailing market prices, for example, can help rural farmers get the best price for their crops, and information about the budget of a local government can help citizens press for accountability on spending.*

*But for information to be useful, it must be easily understandable and relevant to citizens, and they must be able to act upon the information. Inclusive governance processes must be in place so that citizens can translate information into improved services.*

(International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), 2020)

## 1.5 Consumer awareness and food standards

A common issue that affects food safety and sustainability in LMICs (see World Bank, WHO, IFPRI and GFSI report) is consumer education and awareness, or the lack of it. Success in raising consumer awareness manifests itself as a shift in demand towards safer and sustainable food. That shift in consumption choices and behaviour requires time and a targeted approach.



Designing and implementing a successful consumer awareness programme must take into account the following considerations:

- What is the food safety problem?
- What has contributed to the food safety problem?
  - at personal, household and community levels: culture, income and livelihoods, literacy, patterns of food choice and consumption
  - environmental causes (pollution, parasites etc.)
  - infrastructure – WASH, waste management
  - policies – food safety, consumer protection, education
  - market – choices, price, availability, accessibility
- Who are the target audience: youth, women, men or students?
- Existing resources: channels, people

Education to raise awareness about the importance of food safety and standards is a way of empowering consumers. Education gives consumers the tools to raise their voices and increase the demand for quality and safer products and services in the market. A series of consumer education activities, planned for a period of time and targeting a large audience, constitutes a campaign.

The United Nations Guidelines for Consumer Protection (UNGCP) includes consumer education among the legitimate needs of consumers: ‘*Consumer education, including education on the environmental, social and economic consequences of consumer choice*’ (UNCTAD, 2016). The ASEAN Committee on Consumer Protection (ACCP) refers to the UNGCP and other best practices and guidelines to strengthen consumer protection mechanisms, both at the regional level and in the Member States.

A pilot ASEAN Consumer Empowerment Index (ACEI) was published in 2020<sup>7</sup>. This is intended to gauge the levels of awareness and knowledge among consumers in the AMS, as well as their perceptions of the issues, rights and concerns that affect consumers with respect to specific sectors and products. The regional initiatives and specific country reports on consumer protection reflect areas in which consumer education and awareness about specific issues are limited or lacking, especially related to safety and health<sup>8</sup>. However, consumers and consumption patterns in ASEAN are evolving as the level of economic development changes. Growing food safety concerns among consumers have in some instances compelled regulators to introduce hygiene standards and certification schemes, for example for restaurants. Hygiene rating and classification labels are now displayed in restaurants in Singapore (Restaurant Hygiene Rating), Thailand (Clean Food Good Taste) and Malaysia (*Pengredan Premis Makanan*). This raises consumer trust and reflects customers expectations of safe food handling practices.

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<sup>7</sup> The report was prepared with the support of the project Consumer Protection in ASEAN (PROTECT), implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH and funded by the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)

<sup>8</sup> A total of 7,185 respondents across all Member States took part in the survey, categorised according to four criteria: gender, location, age and education. The study acknowledged that, due to limited resources, it was not possible for the pilot project to secure a full representative sample.

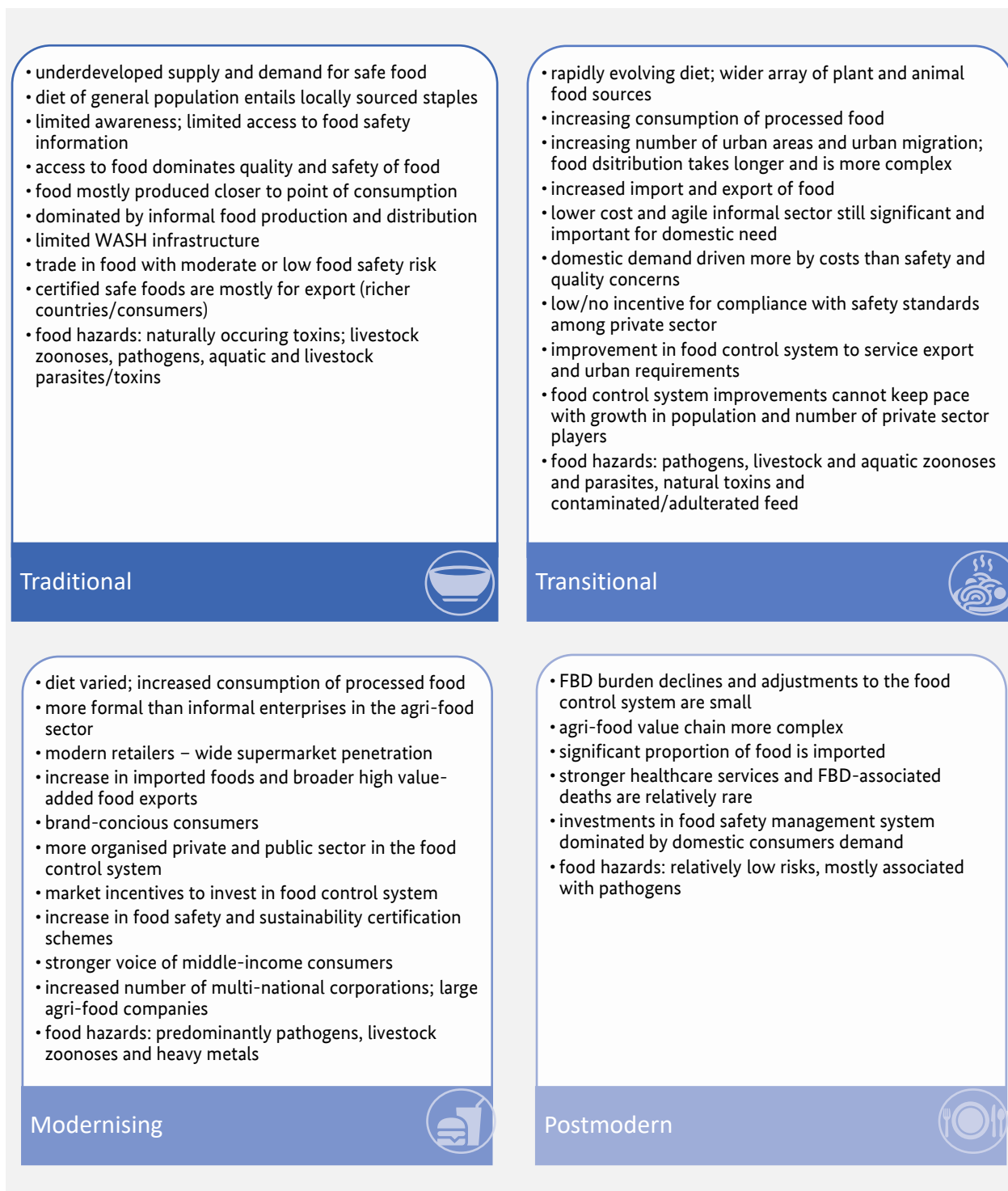


Figure 7: Food safety capacities in the life cycle according to economic development



Empowered consumers can identify unsafe food and food handling practices. They can avoid unsafe (and unsustainable) products and services, compelling businesses to increase their compliance with food safety requirements and standards.

## 1.6 Consumer education and awareness of food safety and standards

General and specific guidelines exist on consumer education and the awareness of food safety, such as, respectively, the UNGCP and the Food Control Assessment Tool of FAO. Section G of UNGCP, on consumer education programmes, says that member states should:

- ✓ encourage the development of general consumer education and information programmes, to enable people to act as discriminating consumers, capable of making an informed choice of goods and services, and conscious of their rights and responsibilities. Such programmes should be an integral part of the basic curriculum of the educational system, preferably as a component of existing subjects, and they should cover important aspects of consumer protection, such as foodborne diseases, food hazards and health services
- ✓ encourage consumer organisations and other interested groups, including the media, to undertake education and information programmes
- ✓ develop or encourage the development of consumer information programmes in the mass media or through other channels that reach consumers, especially for vulnerable and marginalised groups
- ✓ organise or encourage training programmes for educators, mass media professionals and consumer advisers to enable them to participate in carrying out consumer information and education programmes.

Consumer education and awareness of food safety is addressed in the Information, Education, Communication and Training section of FAO's Guidelines for Strengthening National Food Control Systems.

In 2019, FAO published a self-assessment tool for all the components of the national food control system. The assessment is based on systemic competencies, which are described as necessary characteristics for the food control system to strengthen its performance (FAO and WHO, 2019). Assessment criteria proposed for consumer education and awareness should be outcome-oriented, taking into account demography and evolving consumer needs and awareness (see Competency C.1.3 – Communication Flows and Involvement with Consumers). (FAO, 2019) See also Annex 1.



Overall outcome of C.1.3 – *The CAs implement an established internal policy for food safety risk communication to consumers based on openness, transparency, timeliness and responsiveness and its effectiveness is monitored (FAO, 2019). This is assessed against the following criteria:*

- ✓ *established internal policy of disseminating information to consumers, including special needs groups, on the importance of food safety, including safe food handling practices and critical quality issues*
- ✓ *decisions and information about official food controls are made available to consumers at all times and with particular attention during food safety crises*
- ✓ *use is made of the different methods and means of communication for food safety issues, supported by communication specialists*
- ✓ *risk communication plan exists for crises (food safety or fraud issues) to deliver relevant food safety messages to consumers*
- ✓ *a mechanism is in place for consumers' questions and complaints*

However, consumers' behavioural changes are not motivated by food safety information alone. Consumers need to have access to affordable and convenient alternatives – to say the least. For example:

- if there is a campaign to encourage hand washing and the campaign organisers have communicated all the relevant messages, consumers still need access to clean water and soap
- safer food certification schemes should not price out consumers, it should be affordable and easily available.

The ASEAN-Australia Development Cooperation Programme (AADCP) supported the development of various guidelines and guidance on consumer protection. One document that is relevant to consumer education and awareness is the Development of Public Awareness Models for Consumer Protection: Models and Guidelines (ASEAN Committee on Consumer Protection, 2013). This outlines the general components of public campaigns:

1. Planning
2. Development
3. Implementation
4. Evaluation

However, there are few studies or assessments of the effectiveness of such campaigns for improving consumers' food choices and consumption behaviour in the AMS. It is difficult, therefore, to identify best practices or success factors for multi-stakeholder consumer education and awareness campaigns or CEACs on food safety and standards that lead to safer and more sustainable choices and behaviour among consumers in ASEAN. Studies of effective CEACs on food safety will provide guidance on the most suitable approach to strengthen demand for safer and more sustainable food among ASEAN consumers.



## 1.7 Link between food safety management capacities and the effectiveness of CEACs

The objective of consumer education and awareness campaigns (CEACs) and programmes is to shift consumer behaviour and choices to safer and more sustainable food. This shift will contribute to raising the demand for safer and sustainably produced/processed food, thereby providing incentives to businesses and governments to invest in improved food safety management capacity.

In order to raise consumer awareness about the importance of safer and more sustainable food systems, stakeholders in that system (both public and private sector actors) need to identify and overcome the obstacles to behaviour change and facilitate the shift to safer and sustainable food consumption.

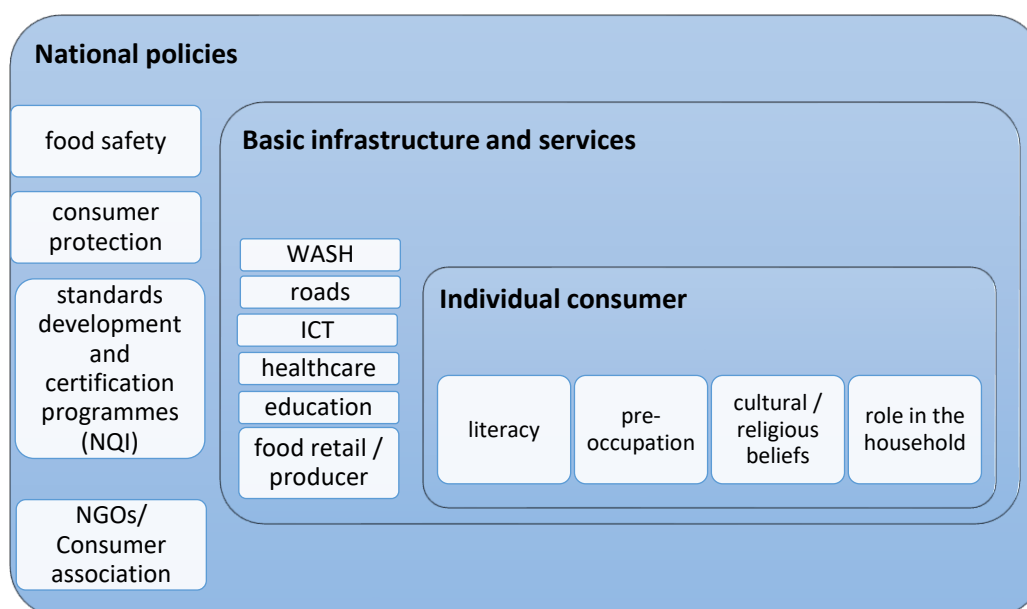


Figure 8: Ecosystem for CEACs on food safety/standards

Based on GFSI, ACEI, World Bank and WHO reports, obstacles often beyond the control of individual consumers and which pose challenges to efforts to change consumption patterns towards safer and sustainable food include:

1. Little or no infrastructure (roads, storage)
2. Poverty (food security) – little or no access to safe, affordable and nutritious food
3. Literacy, access to education and information – limited understanding of food hazards and foodborne illnesses
4. Consumer protection policies and implementation – few or no mechanisms for consumer complaints and redress, or for enforcing laws and regulations
5. Food safety quality infrastructure, policies and implementation – few or no standards, testing and certification schemes





In order for CEACs on food safety and standards to create behaviour changes, consumers must have access to:

- affordable basic infrastructure that supports safer food consumption:
  - WASH, waste management
- affordable and acceptable choices of safer alternatives
- responsive and effective feedback and complaints systems.

## 2. About the research

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The ASEAN-German cooperation project, Promotion of Sustainable Agricultural Value Chains in ASEAN (ASEAN AgriTrade), was commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) to improve the framework conditions for the implementation of sustainability standards in agricultural value chains within the ASEAN region. The project is being implemented at the regional/ASEAN level (with 10 ASEAN Member States) and at the national level in Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Viet Nam (collectively known as CLMV). In achieving the objectives, one of the project's outputs is to improve consumer awareness of the health and environmental benefits of sustainably produced agricultural products, particularly in CLMV.

At the same time, the project Consumer Protection in ASEAN (PROTECT), commissioned by BMZ to strengthen the consumer protection regimes in selected AMS, is also being implemented in ASEAN with CLMV as the countries of its primary focus, along with Indonesia and the Philippines. As one of its main outputs, PROTECT also aims to conduct awareness-raising activities and advocacy for some important consumer issues, including the topic of food safety.

To tap into their synergies and achieve a wider impact, in 2021 ASEAN AgriTrade and PROTECT plan to collaborate in running consumer awareness campaigns on food standards and safety. To this end, a joint regional desk study will be undertaken to map and assess good practices and effective consumer campaigns that have previously achieved behavioural changes among consumers in ASEAN. The results of the study will be used in the design, planning and implementation of future consumer awareness campaigns in CLMV.

At the same time, the study will screen each country – Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Viet Nam – for primary cooperation partners that could be engaged for future consumer campaigns. These might be stakeholders from the public sector (i.e. responsible ministries/state authorities), private sector (e.g. producer associations) or civil society (e.g. consumer associations, think tanks, etc.).

These potential cooperation partners shall then be ranked according to priority in each country, and recommendations made for their active involvement in leading and implementing consumer campaigns in the food sector.



## 2.1 Scope of the research

Before carrying out the desk research it is important to determine the scope of the research by first defining what is meant by consumer education and campaigns. Drawing on official sources, such as Japan's Act on Promotion of Consumer Education (Consumer Affairs Agency of the Government of Japan, 2013), consumer education aims to:

- guide consumers to acquire relevant knowledge and skills
- lead to appropriate behaviour for their general well-being
- encourage them to play a key role in society and contribute to its growth and responsible business environment.

Chapter IX, Article 56 of the Viet Nam Food Safety Law, 2010, says that information, education and communication on food safety should be:

*'aimed at improving the awareness of food safety, changes of backward behaviour, customs and practices in production, trading, living, eating and drinking that reduce food safety, in order to protect people's health and lives; trading morality, sense of responsibility of organisations and individuals producing and trading in respect to food consumers' health and lives.'* (Viet Nam Food Safety Law, 2010)

Campaigns are a way of reaching out to a wide consumer base with messages that promote certain consumption choices. It is a marketing term and describes:

*'an initiative usually designed to generate a specific outcome in a relatively large number of individuals within a specific time and through an organised set of communication activities.'* (Rogers, 1987)

The research will cover consumer education and awareness campaigns (CEACs) to nudge behavioural change towards safer and sustainable food choices among consumers in the AMSs.

The effectiveness of CEACs on food safety and standards will be assessed using the FAO Food Control System Assessment Tool for Dimension C 1.3 – Communication Flows and Involvement with Consumers (FAO, 2019). For this the assessment criteria are:

- Competent authorities (CAs) have an established internal policy of disseminating information to consumers, including special needs groups, on the importance of food safety, including safe food handling practices and critical quality issues.
- Decisions and information about official food control are made available to consumers at all times and with particular attention during food safety crises.
- CAs make use of the different methods and means of communication for food safety issues supported by communication specialists.
- The CAs have a risk communication plan for crises (on food safety or fraud issues) to deliver relevant food safety messages to consumers.
- CAs provide a mechanism for consumers' questions and complaints.



There are various studies on the effectiveness of consumer campaigns, especially those related to health. One assessment of such campaigns was published in 2002. Its conclusion reiterated the value of strategies in which communication on the importance of food safety and standards is part of a multi-component intervention (Institute of Medicine (US) Committee on Communication for Behavior Change in the 21st Century, 2002). For example, a campaign to encourage people to read labels and expiry dates can be reinforced by promoting and operating a responsive hotline for consumers to report instances of expired food products for sale.

Another example is reinforcing public service announcements (PSAs) in the media about the importance of handwashing by running extracurricular school activities, installing functional WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene) facilities in schools, and organising village committee programmes for women on the importance of WASH and hygienic meal preparation.

In summary, the report suggests that several common factors underpin successful campaigns:

- a strong science base for the recommended behaviours
- the realistic possibility that recommendations can be implemented by the target population
- coordination with other programmes addressing related issues
- the availability of enough resources for the development and, above all, the transmission of messages so that the intended audience sees them often enough
- sufficient resources to maintain the campaign over time if the pace of change is slow.

The desk research will identify best practices according to the success factors suggested above and prioritise them for further interventions and support by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) in the ASEAN PROTECT and Agri-Trade projects.

A 1990 report by Codex states that *in Asia and the Pacific, for example, about 42 to 89 per cent of overall resource allocations for food safety have been focused on regulatory enforcement, while only 10 per cent or less have gone to health and consumer education* (FAO, 1993). This may still be the case among low- and middle-income AMS.

The World Bank and FAO reports of 2018 and 1993 respectively concur that rudimentary or insufficient food laws and regulations reflect national food control systems that have a limited capacity to protect public (consumer) health. In such cases, it is expected that consumer representation or consumer education and awareness programmes will be limited in scope.

## 2.2 Research methodology and approach

A comprehensive assessment of the various CEACs on food safety and standards in the AMS will be conducted, drawing on extensive desk research and, where possible, interviews with representatives of CAs, NGOs and mass social movement organisations. The analysis will examine the focus and impacts of past and existing CEACs on food safety and standards, as well as the lessons learnt from them (e.g. challenges, success factors, specific food supply chain or target groups) and the opportunities to build on these efforts for effective CEACs in the future (e.g. potential collaboration opportunities).



The assessment framework for the effectiveness of CEACs on food safety and standards in ASEAN was developed based on the Information, Education and Communication element of the National Food Control System. Reference is also made to the 2002 study by the US Institute of Medicine Committee on Communication for Behavior Change in the 21st Century. The terms of reference for the research assignment required a focus on mapping and assessing good practices and on effective consumer campaigns on food standards and safety, leading to behavioural changes for safer food consumption. The desk research and stock-taking therefore focused on the following elements:

- national food control systems with respect to information education and communication
- stakeholders involved in the campaigns
- best practices
- challenges
- success factors

The selection of best practice examples drew on CEACs that:

- are evidence-based
- apply a structured approach – institutional mandate, goals, defined roles and responsibilities, monitoring and evaluation of impact.

The mapping activity is expected to identify potential cooperation partners, especially in CLMV (public and private sector, NGOs, research institutions/universities), which will then be prioritised based on the effectiveness of existing or past CEACs. The research report will include recommendations for the effective involvement of these partners in the CEACs on food safety and standards in the CLMV.

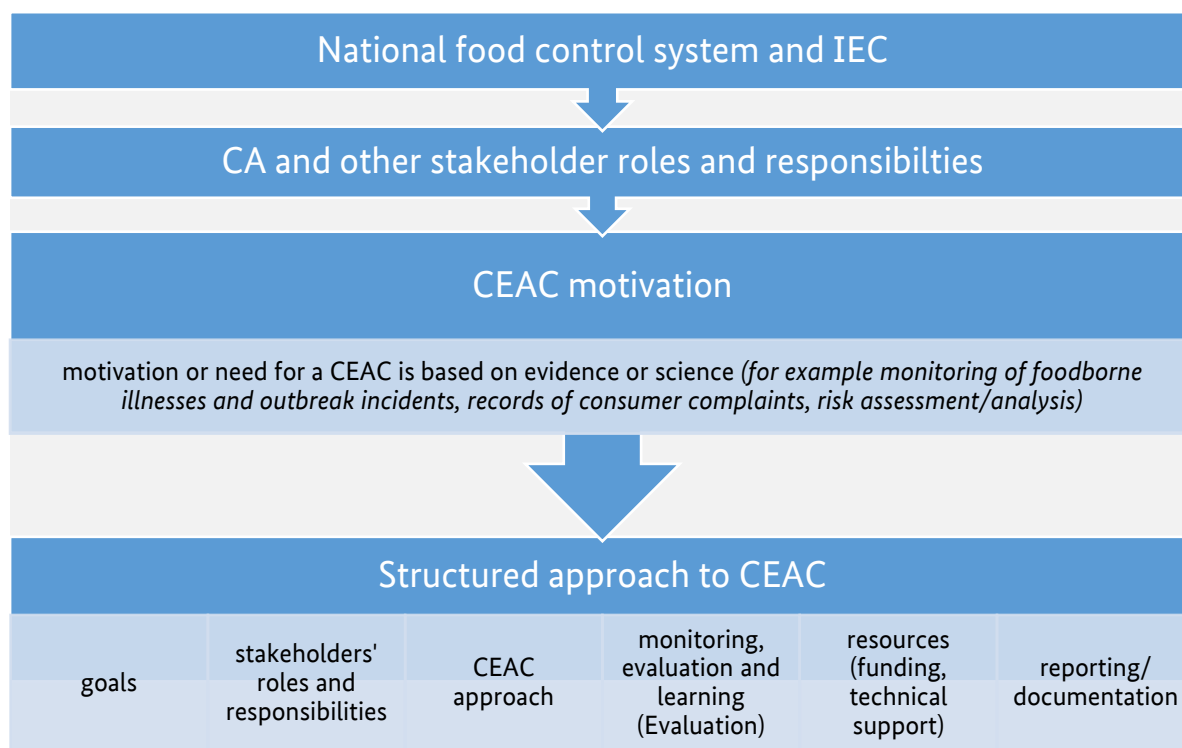


Figure 9: Framework for CEAC stocktaking



## 2.3 Scope and Limitations

The typical limitations of desk research apply. The research was undertaken by a consultant with expertise in consumer education, standards, and food safety. Authoritative secondary resources such as reports by CAs and country case studies were used as reference. The various secondary sources included the FAO/WHO National Food Control System and Assessment Tools, UN Guidelines for Consumer Protection, ASEAN's Public Awareness Models for Consumer Protection, the OECD Guide on Consumer Education, the Global Food Security Index, Global Food Policy Report, International Health Regulations Joint External Evaluation reports and the ASEAN Consumer Empowerment Index report.

A particular challenge that emerged in using this research methodology was that some of the cited national CEAC reports are not publicly available online, or they are available only in the national languages. During this research, Myanmar's domestic political uncertainty disrupted communication with CAs and other stakeholders.

The research is primarily a document-based analysis with limited validation by CAs and may not reflect countrywide situations. A fuller analysis of the national-level CEACs on food safety and standards would require consultations, interviews and focus group discussions, as well as the verification of reports in the national language. This was beyond the scope of the research TOR.

## 3. ASEAN Consumer education and awareness campaign (CEAC) on food safety and standards

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The CEAC on food safety and standards in ASEAN is intended to mainstream demand for safe and sustainable food among domestic consumers in the AMS. Consumers use certification marks or labels/logos to recognise food products that are safe and sustainably produced.

The certification programmes are governed by standards, and the food safety standards are developed and approved by competent authorities. WTO rules encourage inclusive systems and infrastructure for developing standards. Food certification programmes need sound testing and inspection facilities. Together these form the national quality infrastructure: standards, measurement, testing/inspection, certification and accreditation.

Understanding consumers' views about certification and the application of certification marks helps the CAs ensure that safety and sustainability issues are adequately addressed, further enhancing trust in the food product in domestic and international markets.

This section provides an overview and highlights of the CEAC stocktaking, after which the reader will be able to focus on the specific AMS for more information. It includes results, best practices, lessons learned, and measurement approaches.



### 3.1 Highlights of ASEAN CEACs on food safety and standards

Some AMS, such as Cambodia, Lao PDR and Myanmar, are among the lowest ranking countries in terms of the GFSI, water and sanitation coverage and the consumer empowerment index. It was reported that more than 100 million people live without access to safe water in Southeast Asia, especially in rural Cambodia, Lao PDR and Myanmar. The success of CEACs on food safety for rural consumers without adequate access to WASH facilities should perhaps focus on one key message: the importance of personal hygiene. There are clusters of success stories arising from CEACs on food safety and standards. As expected, the impacts of a CEAC take years to manifest themselves in behavioural changes, given that consumer protection and food control systems as well as infrastructure development are just in their infancy in some of the AMS.

In ASEAN, CEACs on food safety and standards are implemented mainly by CAs. In low- and middle-income AMS, such as Cambodia, Lao PDR and Myanmar, such campaigns are often implemented with the support of donors, international organisations and development agencies. In Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia, consumer associations play a significant role in CEACs on food safety and standards.

In Malaysia a strategic relationship between consumer associations and the media allows the relevant messages to reach a large number of consumers, which would otherwise not be possible given the limited funding.

Economic development, food security and socio-economic status influence the capacities of the food safety and consumer protection authorities in AMS to carry out their roles effectively. Some are dependent on donors for a variety of public education and awareness-raising projects, and have limited resources to continue the projects when the funding stops. AMS with closely connected consumers, access to information and a high per capita income are more empowered and receptive to CEACs on food safety and standards. Behavioural changes towards safer food choices and consumption practices depend to a great extent on the environment and infrastructure to support these choices. This means, for example, the existence of safer alternatives, responsive and effective feedback and complaints mechanisms, and credible certification schemes.

Although the CAs receive a budget allocation from the government for information, education and communication, these are often very limited or get used for other competing interests, such as capacity building and training in inspection and market surveillance skills for officials. In Lao PDR there are few CEACs on food safety and standards that are designed, funded and implemented by the CAs. Such campaigns are funded and implemented by donors, international organisations and development agencies. The WHO-funded, Community-Based Interventions project in 2007 was not continued after the funding period. In these situations, CEACs on food safety and standards can draw on the outreach potential of mass social organisations such as the Lao Women's Union (membership approximately 1.4 million) or the Lao Youth Union. Capacity building for these mass organisations could perhaps target a low-cost CEAC approach using existing resources and project interventions, for example



distributing information flyers and engaging with people face-to-face at events already planned for WASH, food security or school gardening.

Thailand and Viet Nam boast very good examples of government-led initiatives to support food safety CEACs. In these countries mechanisms are in place to gather data on foodborne illnesses to support monitoring and evaluation activities. This data can be used to justify the need for campaigns, identify target groups and campaign locations, and determine the duration.

Thailand and Viet Nam also have grassroots or structures (provincial, district and village health networks and unions) that are useful for reaching large groups of consumers. Indonesia has a similar approach at village level related to food safety and security called the *Gerakan Keamanan Pangan Desa* or GKPD.

The campaign against liver fluke and bile duct cancer in the Isan region of Thailand is a very good example of an evidence-based approach taken to justifying a CEAC.

CAs with effective mechanisms for monitoring the incidence of foodborne illnesses and for receiving consumer complaints can focus their limited resources on campaigns that target specific periods, locations or groups of consumers. Examples of such campaigns might include CEACs aimed at customers of bazaars during the fasting month of Ramadan in Malaysia and Indonesia, or during the Tet festival in Viet Nam.

CEACs are also organised around specific food groups or foods associated with a high incidence of foodborne illnesses. In Indonesia, the Dutch-Indonesian Ayam Dingin Segar is a campaign for safe poultry that encourage consumers to choose chilled or refrigerated poultry rather than birds sold in open fresh markets. In Singapore, a similar campaign for pork was launched in 2008, called the Frozen Meat Public Education Programme (SFA, 2019).

CEACs on food safety and standards are also integrated within larger projects related to food security, safety and nutrition. One strategy employed by CAs for a long-term impact and to establish a culture of safe food is to address school students. CAs in Viet Nam have used this approach (e.g. Da Lak provincial authority has organised food safety awareness activities in kindergartens). In Malaysia, food safety has been made part of the primary school curriculum, and Cambodia and Myanmar also plan to incorporate food safety and hygiene in their school curriculums.

AMS that enjoy more advanced internet connectivity (Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and increasingly Viet Nam) are using ICT and social media to expand their CEAC outreach capacity. The private sector in Viet Nam and Thailand (GrabFood and SCB, respectively) have signed up to food safety campaigns with CAs.



## 3.2 Drivers/motivation

In the AMS the drivers and motivation for CEACs on food safety and standards are based on records of:

- prevalence of foodborne illnesses in specific regions in the country:
  - Liver fluke (a foodborne parasite) is endemic to Northeast Thailand, where it contributes to 90 per cent of global bile duct cancer cases.
- increased seasonal incidence of food poisoning and hospitalisation (such as during Ramadan and Tet)
- higher incidence of food poisoning and hospitalisation associated with specific foods or food groups, such as fresh chicken, fresh pork, traditional wine and fermented raw fish
- national consumption data, morbidity studies and the burden on the healthcare system:
  - The focus of CEACs has shifted from food safety to address the rise in non-communicable diseases, such as cardiovascular diseases, diabetes and cancer associated with imbalanced diets and lifestyles, for example in Brunei and Malaysia.

## 3.3 Considerations

1. Evidence-based inputs to justify the need for, design and assessment of CEACs:
  - a. Consumer complaints hotline
  - b. Epidemiology data
  - c. Inspection, sampling and market surveillance data
  - d. Hospitalisation and mass fatalities associated with food
2. Multi-agency and multi-stakeholder collaboration
  - a. These usually involve consumer protection agencies, media, donors/development organisations and NGOs (including consumer associations), provincial health departments, village leaders and educational institutions.
  - b. Universities or research institutions can assist in monitoring and evaluating the CEACs on food safety and standards. Several universities in Indonesia, Brunei and Malaysia have conducted such studies.
3. Integration of CEACs on food safety into projects or interventions related to food security, nutrition and WASH.
4. Environment/infrastructure to underpin changes in behaviour (e.g. hotlines, alternatives, effective WASH facilities)





### 3.4 Best practices

The following best practices are highlighted as they fulfil most of the conditions for a successful CEAC on food safety and standards (see Table 1).

- Dutch-Indonesian programme on Food Security in the livestock sector (DIFS-live): poultry meat (*Ayam Dingin Segar*)
- Indonesia's Village Food Safety Movement (*Gerakan Keamanan Pangan Desa/GKPD*)
- Viet Nam's Safe Water, Nutrition and Health Environment (SWAN) project, the Action Month for Food Safety and the Tet Festival Food Safety Campaign
- Thailand's *Streptococcus suis* (S.Suis) Food Safety Campaign in Phayao Province
- WHO's Community-Based Intervention Study of Food Safety Practices in Rural Community Households of Cambodia and Lao PDR

### 3.5 Success factors

The following success factors provide guidance for the implementation of effective CEACs on food safety and standards.

1. Localisation of content/messages
  - a. translating technical issues into simple terms more easily understood by the general public
  - b. use of local languages
  - c. consideration paid to literacy rate
  - d. WASH infrastructure and system
  - e. food security and nutrition issues, such as access, affordability and availability
  - f. convenient, safer and affordable alternatives
2. High-level policy support and relevant resources – Thailand and Viet Nam place emphasis on the importance of consumer education and awareness of food safety in their Food Safety Law and strategies. They have allocated resources accordingly.
3. Engagement of local opinion leaders/influencers:
  - a. village leaders
  - b. women's groups
  - c. youth groups
  - d. local NGOs
  - e. religious groups/leaders
  - f. provincial/district health/agriculture extension offices
  - g. people's committees/mass organisations



The Lao Women's Union and Lao Youth Union remain largely untapped for involvement in CEACs on food safety and standards. The Lao Youth Radio occasionally hosts radio shows on food safety matters.

4. Existing projects/programmes related to agri-food supply chains – CEACs need adequate funding and technical human resources. For countries like Lao PDR, existing projects on food security and nutrition can be used to integrate food safety awareness-raising information or activities.
5. Channels, materials and technology
  - a. The SWAN project in Viet Nam used rudimentary, low-cost equipment to reach out to rural communities (such as village loudspeakers)
  - b. Social media is popular among young people
6. Multi-pronged IEC and training approach, specific to target groups in the food supply chain from farm to table:
  - a. Supply chain actors – compliance guidelines and training
  - b. Consumers – food safety hazards, risks and hygiene
  - c. CA officials – risk communication, outreach, CEAC skills; consumer protection authorities (hotline and complaints)
  - d. NGOs/civil society organisations – risk communication, outreach, CEAC skills
  - e. The media – food safety risk communication
7. Funding and human resources
  - a. Communication skills
  - b. Mobilisation of social and mainstream media for health and food safety promotion
  - c. Tax revenues from tobacco or alcohol (currently used for healthy lifestyle campaigns)
  - d. Private sector partnerships with food delivery companies (e.g. GrabFood, promoting food safety in Viet Nam in cooperation with VFA).
8. Duration and frequency – some culturally ingrained consumption behaviours are detrimental to health, such as in Thailand (raw cyprinoid fish), Lao PDR and Viet Nam. CEACs should allow adequate resources and time to achieve the intended behaviour change.



Table 1: Selected best practices in CEACs on food safety and standards

CEAC	Policies /IEC for consumers	CEAC stakeholders		CEAC motivation	CEAC structure/mechanism					
		Public Sector	Other stakeholders (NGOs, private)		Goals/aim	Target group/beneficiaries	Approach	Evaluation	Resources	Reporting
DIFS-Live	Yes	Ministry of Agriculture, Government of Indonesia	Government of Netherlands, WUR, Netherlands	Avian influenza, rising meat consumption and potential spread of foodborne diseases	Promote consumption of safe poultry (chilled/frozen) among consumers in Jakarta	Supermarkets; Media, fresh market to reach consumers	Evidence-based IEC material development, location, messaging	Engaged WUR to assess the effectiveness of the campaign	Government of Netherlands and Ministry of Agriculture	Full report published with recommendations and programme's effectiveness
GKPD	Yes	BPOM established village-level social movement	Donors/ Development partners/ NGOs	High food safety incidents and geographically challenging country for CEAC.	Initially for consumer empowerment on food safety issues	village leaders, volunteers, to reach out to general consumers, mothers	Face to face; flyers, banners, information materials, posters, public talks	Interviews, surveys. Evaluation forum held in 2020. Plan to expand to include sustainability issues	BPOM developed technical guidelines,	GKPD has an online reporting mechanism.
SWAN	NA (Viet Nam Food Safety Law not in use yet)	National Institute of Nutrition (NIN)	Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), ILSI-Japan; mass movement organisation – Women's Union	National Target - Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD); SWAN Phase 1 – water quality, food and E. coli	Specific goals with a timeline	MARD to reach out to rural population – women and children	Well-researched IEC materials, build local capacities to sustain awareness and hygiene food practices	Progress and full reports available with further recommendation	donor/development agencies budget and technical assistance and mass movement mobilisation	Full project report
S.suis/P hayao	Thai Food Law and relevant department	Ministry of Public Health	OSAKA University, volunteers' network	Record of the prevalence of sepsis and meningitis in Northern Thailand	Targeted to provide awareness and change behaviour in a given location	Target existing network of health volunteers, opinion leaders to reach out to consumers/communities	flyers, banners, information materials, posters, public talks, use of culturally relevant banners, flyers	Monitor hospital admittance, testing of pork samples, consumption of raw pork in public places	Governments of Thailand and Japan	Research on the effectiveness of the campaign



## 4. ASEAN stocktaking of consumer education and awareness campaigns on food safety and standards

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This section provides a more detailed report on the stocktaking exercise related to CEACs on food safety and standards in all 10 ASEAN Member States (AMS). The stocktaking was organised as follows:

1. Country profile based on (but not limited to): GFSI, ACEI, agri-food sector; socio-economic preoccupation; WASH-related profiles/status
2. National food control system and consumer protection
  - a. CEACs on food safety and standards
3. Best practices in CEACs on food safety and standards
4. Success factors and challenges

### 4.1 Brunei

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Brunei Darussalam is an Islamic country. Within ASEAN it has the smallest population but one of the highest average per capita incomes of any Member State. No GFSI data is available for Brunei, which is a net food importer. The ACEI shows consumers in Brunei as being moderately empowered (83/130), with a limited knowledge of the channels of redress and some understanding of labels. They have limited awareness of how to report issues or actively seek information. No Asian Water Development Outlook (AWDO) 2020 country assessment has been carried out for Brunei.

#### 4.1.1 National food safety control system and consumer protection

Brunei's Food Safety Act and policies are similar to those of Malaysia. Its food law is the Public Health (Food) Act (Cap.182) – 1 January 2001. This includes specific provisions to regulate public health with respect to food, including halal food. The Food Safety and Quality Control Division (FSQCD) of the Public Health Services, Ministry of Health, is the competent authority (CA) for food safety. Its objectives are to prevent and control foodborne diseases by monitoring and regulating the quality and safety of food and promoting public awareness of food-related issues.

To ensure that food in the country is safe for consumption, food vendors, importers, traders and establishments are required to comply with the Public Health (Food) Act, (Chapter 182) and Public Health (Food) Regulations, (R1 Chapter 182). Brunei's principal law on consumer protection is the Consumer Protection (Fair Trading) Order, 2011 (CPFTO).



The lead consumer protection agency is the Competition and Consumer Affairs Department (CCAD). Its roles include raising consumer awareness and promoting consumer education in Brunei through various media and business engagements.

At an ASEAN event in Malaysia in 2016, CCAD explained that its consumer education and awareness activities include (CCAD, Brunei, 2016):

- roadshows – Consumer Fair
- multi-stakeholder seminars, involving government, private sector, and educational institutions
- information on its website
- advertisements in local newspapers
- social media (Facebook page) on consumer protection
- publication of education and information materials for consumers: *booklet, leaflets, car stickers, fridge magnets, bookmarks, pens, sticky notes, recycled bags*
- consumer protection mascots



Figure 10: Brunei - samples of consumer education/information materials (CCAD, Brunei, 2016)

#### 4.1.2 CEAC on food safety and standards

Brunei's CEAC on food safety and standards is led by the Health Promotion Centre (HPC) of the country's Ministry of Health, as well as the media. The HPC was established in 2007 to spearhead healthy lifestyle activities and serve as a community outreach centre, with a focus on health education programmes and activities for young people, adults and the elderly around the country. HPC's roles include:

- raising levels of awareness, knowledge and understanding on health matters particularly lifestyle-related diseases
- a resource centre, enabling the public to acquire information, skills and tools to manage their health
- a community outreach centre with a special focus on health education programmes and activities for children and youth.



As in Malaysia, non-communicable diseases (NCDs) and lifestyle diseases (based on food consumption patterns) are more prevalent than foodborne diseases. NCDs impose a significant financial burden on the public health budget, which explains the focus of the CEAC on healthy lifestyles. It was estimated that in 2011 NCDs accounted for 82 per cent of all deaths in Brunei Darussalam. This upward trend in the burden of NCDs over time has led to the development of MOH strategies, policies and programmes aimed at the prevention and control of NCDs (Ministry of Health, Brunei Darussalam, 2012).

A Brunei Darussalam National Multisectoral Action Plan on the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases (BruMAP-NCD) 2013-2018 was developed, one of the key action areas of which was the promotion of a balanced and healthy diet, for example through sustained mass media campaigns to increase consumption of fruits and vegetables.

Brunei introduced its 'Healthier Choice' logo for food, to help consumers make informed healthier food choices. The guidelines and requirements for obtaining the logo do not include any food safety requirements. However, the food law does stipulate that *'All food products, whether sold or distributed, imported or manufactured, in Brunei Darussalam must comply with the standards set by the Public Health (Food) Act (Chapter 182) and its Regulations' (R1, Chapter 182)*. Other than the labelling requirements, this also covers the safety and appropriateness of the ingredients and requires that food is not contaminated with any substances harmful to health (Ministry of Health, Brunei Darussalam, n.d.)

The effectiveness of the CEAC on healthy lifestyles is discussed on the HPC website, and is also reflected in the number of participants at related activities (note: based on reports of 2015 and 2016).

The Health Promotion Centre is tasked with all CEACs on food in Brunei. There is little evidence of any multi-agency cooperation taking place for consumer education and awareness. In 2019, the *Universiti Brunei Darussalam* (University of Brunei Darussalam) carried out a study titled, *'Breakfast Intake Habits Among University students and Dietary Habits and Lifestyle Practices among University Students'*. The findings of this research can be used to gauge the effectiveness of HPC healthy lifestyle campaigns that have been running since 2007.

A 2018 Supermarket Intercept Survey on Nutrition Labelling & the Healthier Choice Logo (HCL) found that 30.3 per cent of consumers were aware of the Brunei Healthier Choice logo and 74.4 per cent of consumers used the logo as a guide to choosing healthier foods (Dr. Norhayati Kassim, 2019).



### 4.1.3 Best practices in CEACs on food safety and standards

In terms of Brunei's CEAC on food safety and standards, the best practice example is probably the HPC's Healthier Choice Logo and lifestyle campaign. This was motivated by the increasing burden of NCDs on the public health system. The campaign used a combination of channels and messages to promote healthier lifestyle food choices. While results are not yet available to demonstrate the impact of the campaign on the NCD burden, a recent survey did show that, with its logo and labelling, the HCL campaign has nudged consumers towards a healthier food choice.

*Table 2: Brunei CEAC success factors and challenges*

Policies on IEC for consumers	Not specified in the food law Indicated in consumer protection law
Institutional mandate	Health Promotion Centre (HPC) – food Competition and Consumer Affairs Department (CCAD) - general consumer education (including food safety)
CEAC stakeholders	HPC, CCAD
CEAC motivation	Health and morbidity reports
CEAC structure/mechanism:	
Goals/aims	Reduce NCDs associated with lifestyles and food consumption
Safer/sustainable alternatives: <i>available, convenient, affordable, suitable</i>	Healthier choice logo/labels on products – available (74.4 per cent surveyed use the logo as guide for purchasing decision)
Target group	general public and students
Approach	Target group dependent: general public: roadshows, business/public sector employees – seminars, all – newspaper advertisement, website, social media, collaterals
Evaluation	University of Brunei Darussalam research
Resources	Government-funded and implemented
Reporting	Health Promotion Centre website; Supermarket Intercept Survey 2018



## 4.2 Cambodia

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Although growth in the agriculture sector slowed down over the past decade, about 31 per cent of Cambodia's population are still employed in the sector. More than 75 per cent of the population lives in rural areas. Cambodia's increasing food exports consist largely of unprocessed produce (OpenDevelopmentCambodia, 2016). Cambodia is one of the lowest ranking Southeast Asian countries on the Global Food Security Index (affordability, availability and quality and safety). Its AWDO score dropped to 57.5 in 2020 from 58.6 in 2016. In terms of ACEI 2020, Cambodian consumers are categorised as least empowered (68.5/130).

### 4.2.1 Food safety control system and consumer protection

The Inter-Ministerial Prakas (Declaration) No. UATH.BRK 868<sup>9</sup> provides several agencies with guidance on farm-to-table food safety controls, namely:

1. Ministry of Health
2. Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery
3. Ministry of Commerce

The country's national food law is currently under deliberation.

Article 7 of Inter-Ministerial Prakas No. UATH.BRK 868 addresses the roles related to CEACs on food safety. The ministry and competent authority have a mandate to:

- i) **educate and advise consumers and food business operators on food safety**
- ii) monitor, inspect, investigate, undertake required corrective measures, apply recalls and provide systems as necessary to enhance food safety
- iii) in special circumstances and where unavoidable, take appropriate legal action, including corrective administrative measures and sanctions.

Chapters 3 to 5 of the Inter-Ministerial Prakas describe the roles and responsibilities of all three key ministries. However, there is no specification of their roles for consumer education and awareness-raising.

CEACs on food safety and standards take place on an ad-hoc basis as part of larger projects, if there have been recurring mass poisoning events, such as from methanol or traditional wine. The absence of consumer representation (consumer organisations) limits the pressure and motivation to improve the national food control system. As suggested in the World Bank Annual Report 2018, international trade requirements drive a government's food safety agenda, including sanitary and phytosanitary standards, as well as its International Organization of Standardization (ISO) certifications.

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<sup>9</sup> Implementation and Institutional Arrangements of Food Safety Based on the Farm to Table Approach (IMP868), of 22 October 2010.





The Cambodian Consumer Protection Law includes provisions for the establishment of, and engagement with consumer associations, including a role for them in the National Consumer Protection Committee. However, no national or provincial consumer associations yet exist. The principal law for general consumer protection in Cambodia is the Law on Consumer Protection, which was passed by the National Assembly on 8 October, 2019.

The law recognises consumers' economic rights, namely the rights:

- to access information and education to protect consumers from fraudulent commercial advertisements
- to choose goods and services with competitive prices and quality
- to be heard and obtain settlements through competent regulators
- to claim compensation

The Law on the Management of Quality and Safety of Products and Services (2000) still applies. This covers all commercial activities related to consumer products and services, including food from farm to table. The lead agency for implementing both the Law on Consumer Protection and the Law on the Management of Quality and Safety of Products and Services is the Consumer Protection Competition and Fraud Repression Directorate-General (CCF).

The new consumer protection law provides for the establishment of the National Committee for Consumer Protection (NCCP) that brings together representatives of CCF, the Ministries of Commerce; Economy and Finance; Interior; Industry, Science, Technology and Innovation; Justice; Posts and Telecommunications; Health; and Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries; as well as the National Bank of Cambodia and the Council of Ministers.

The National Centre for Health Promotion (NCHP) under the Ministry of Health was established in 1994 to manage community-based behavioural change communications. NCHP provides technical inputs and support for public health campaigns in Cambodia. Together with the National Maternal and Child Health Center (NMCHC) and with the support of development partners (UNICEF, Helen Keller Foundation etc.), it developed the Communication for Behavioural Impact (COMBI) Campaign to Promote Complementary Feeding in Cambodia in 2011-2013 (NCHP, 2011). The main elements of this campaign include hygiene and food safety. The NCHP campaign has since shifted its focus to the control of alcohol and tobacco consumption in Cambodia. The availability of campaign reports on the NCHP website has declined.

In 2007, NCHP ran a comprehensive campaign on the 'Five Keys to Safer Food', with technical advice and support from WHO. Called the Community-Based Intervention Study of Food Safety Practices in Rural Community Households of Cambodia, this campaign ran from July to November 2007. The effectiveness of the CEAC was evaluated by WHO and resulted in important recommendations that echo the calls for sustained and dedicated resources for CEACs on food safety, especially in LMICs (WPRO, 2007).



**NGOs in Cambodia** have also reported carrying out food safety campaigns, albeit on an ad-hoc basis. They apply little structure to their campaign design and approaches to achieve behavioural changes for safer and more sustainable food choices. The NGO Forum Cambodia organised a food safety campaign in 2018 in Battambang with funding support from OXFAM as part of the Right to Food Project.<sup>10</sup> The campaign gathered interest in other provinces and similar activities were subsequently organised in Siem Reap.

**Cambodia Institute for Research and Rural Development (CIRD)** performs a similar role to a consumer association. Its activities focus on capacity building for farmer groups, policy consultation and the improvement of rural livelihoods. According to a statement on its website, CIRD began addressing consumer protection issues in food safety in 2013. There is little mention of CIRD organising CEACs on food safety and standards in Cambodia.

**The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport** launched a food safety campaign in January 2020 at Preah Norodom Primary School, in the capital's Phnom Penh district. According to the Ministry, the campaign is aimed at raising awareness among school committees, headmasters, and cafeteria vendors, for example to encourage them to provide safe and healthy food to students. The launch also marked a ban on selling certain food items in schools, including expired and alcoholic drinks, tobacco products, food with unknown sources of origin, energy drinks, and food and beverages with high sugar content.

**CCF often holds food safety awareness** sessions and talks at schools in Cambodia. Communication with CCF staff in January 2021 showed that CCF designs, prints and posts flyers and posters about food hazards and food safety in public spaces in Cambodia. CCF is a lead authority for consumer protection and a key implementing agency under the IMP UATH.BRK 868 declaration. CCF also shared a 12-month report (in the Khmer language) on its latest food safety awareness sessions. This contains information on the numbers of posters printed and posted, of talks held and of participants who attended the sessions. No reports are available on behaviour changes resulting from these or other of CCF's campaigns on food safety (Virak, 2021).

Cambodia's CEACs on food safety and standards are multi-agency initiatives involving the following agencies and organisations:

- National Centre for Health Promotion
- Department of Consumer Protection of the Consumer Protection Competition and Fraud Repression Directorate-General (CCF), under the Ministry of Commerce
- Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport

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<sup>10</sup> Right to Food (R2F) in Cambodia supports women and men, especially indigenous people, in the field of land tenure security. It assists them in asserting their rights to control and benefit from Cambodian natural resources (land, water, mining, forest and fishery) and secure sustainable livelihoods.



- Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF)
- Provincial-level departments and governments
- Non-governmental organisations (NGOs), for example the NGO Forum, CIRD
- Development agencies and donors (such as WHO, UNICEF, OXFAM, USAID)
- Universities – Royal University of Agriculture (RUA)

#### 4.2.2 Best practices in CEACs on food safety and standards

Best practices in CEACs are described in more detail below. CEACs on food safety and standards are fragmented (in terms of frequency, target group and location) and related reports are not readily accessible.

##### 4.2.2.1 National Centre for Health Promotion (NCHP)

The National Centre for Health Promotion (NCHP) under the Ministry of Health (set up in 1994) is the main institution tasked with managing community-based behavioural change communications. NCHP has carried out the following CEACs on or related to food safety:

- developing curriculums and related publications
- managing the training of trainers for officials of the Provincial Health Department (PHD) and Operation District (OD), focusing on food hygiene for pregnant woman and general hygiene for the community (some 507 officials participated in these courses and NCHP delivered 420 hours of training)
- managing training courses on general hygiene: food hygiene, water and sanitation, environmental hygiene, arsenic, personal hygiene, the impact of poor hygiene and the five keys to food safety for children, school teachers and government officials: with 897 participants and 861 hours of training, as well as technical support and five monitoring interventions
- surveys, for example on five keys to food safety/good food hygiene practices among consumers in Kompong Chhnang and Kompong Thom Provinces
- developing a curriculum and organising training for officials of the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Rural Development and NGOs on community-led total sanitation (CLTS), school and community water, sanitation and hygiene (SC-WASH) and sanitation marketing (SM)
- training on corporal hygiene and sanitation at schools and for food handlers
- management of community-based campaigns on sanitation and hygiene and food handling

However, reports about these campaigns are limited.



#### 4.2.2.2 NGO Forum ‘Food Safety’ campaign

The NGO Forum on Cambodia (NGO Forum) is a membership organisation. In 2018, in collaboration with its network member, the Krom Aphiwat Phum (KAWP), and with funding support from Oxfam, it conducted the ‘Food Safety’ campaign. The campaign was intended to reduce the use of pesticides in Cambodia by raising awareness about food safety, in agricultural production, and by sensitising the general public on the food safety issues related to agri-chemicals. (NGO Forum, 2018).

In an online discussion in January 2021, an NGO-Forum representative stated that the campaign had led to an increase in dialogues food safety between NGOs and the public sector, for example in Siem Reap. The representative admitted that a one-off campaign might not be effective in achieving long-term impacts. Plans exist to develop the skills of the NGO Forum to design and organise online/social media campaigns. (Menghoin, 2021)



Photo credit: NGO Forum Cambodia

#### 4.2.2.3 Cambodia Institute for Research and Rural Development (CIRD)

CIRD has access to 15,000 farming families and their around 200 farmer organisations in approximately 300 villages in 14 provinces of Cambodia. CIRD’s roles include support for farmers and farmer groups to improve the quality of their produce, and interventions to help connect farmers to the market. CIRD has worked with Consumers International and has implemented a number of initiatives, including research on how to promote healthy food for consumers, and how to empower consumers to monitor the hygiene practices at markets. CIRD is increasingly engaged in consumer protection issues. It organises consumer education and consultation workshops, and provides inputs to policy consultations. In March 2020, CIRD collaborated with CCF to translate ASEAN infographics on consumer rights into the Khmer language (East-West Management Institute Inc., 2020).



#### 4.2.2.4 WHO Community-Based Intervention Study of Food Safety Practices in Rural Community Households of Cambodia

The World Health Organization (WHO) supported the Community-Based Intervention Study of Food Safety Practices in Rural Community Households of Cambodia between July and November 2007 (WPRO, 2007). WHO's local implementing partner was NCHP. WHO provided technical support for the development and implementation of CEACs on the Five Keys to Safer Food. The technical assistance focused on conducting a community-based food safety intervention study involving rural community households. WHO's messages on the Five Keys to Safer Food, and its information about safe pesticide use and the reduction of residues on fruit and vegetables were adapted for the rural community and formed the basis of training workshops.

A key feature of this project was the use of village health volunteers to acquire insights and knowledge of community household food safety practices. These were used as the basis to develop and implement an 'evidence-based approach to food safety education' to modify high-risk food safety behaviours. Two thousand copies of the new food safety educational tool were produced for community education and given to the 200 households participating in the study. A repeat observation of household food safety practices was carried out by the volunteers, which was then analysed by NCHP with WHO experts. The final assessment by WHO reported that nine out of ten food preparers were observed washing their hands with water before preparing food.

However, one in four did not wash their hands at all after handling raw ingredients, which has the potential to contaminate food. The report also states that one-third of households did not use clean, safe water for washing raw fruits and vegetables, or for cooking. Recognising the success factor of using and strengthening village health volunteers, the WHO report also said that food safety is a relatively technical subject that is new to rural populations (especially those with low literacy rates). WHO recommended that a dedicated allocation of resources is needed to expand CEACs on food safety, especially on the Five Keys to Safer Food.

*Table 3: Cambodia CEACs on food safety and standards*

Policies on IEC for consumers	Article 7 of IMP UATH.BRK 868 Cambodia Consumer Protection Law 2019
Institutional mandate	National Centre for Health Promotion (NCHP) Directorate General on Consumer Protection Competition and Fraud Repression – CCF Ministry of Education and Sports Cambodia Institute for Research and Rural Development (CIRD)
CEAC stakeholders	NGOs, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery, provincial governments, universities, donors and development agencies



CEAC motivation	Food safety incidents – poisoning, inspection reports, violation reports
CEAC structure/mechanism:	
Goals/aims	Reduce food poisoning; identify safe and unsafe products, report unsafe products to authorities
Safer/sustainable alternatives: <i>available, convenient, affordable, suitable</i>	Consumers have limited awareness of the importance of GAP (GMP/HACCP) certified or OA certified products; have limited access to these products due to lack of information
Target group	General public, women, students
Approach	Print and distribute posters. Talks and seminars at schools, markets and public areas
Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 12-monthly report; report on the number of sessions held and materials distributed</li><li>• No assessment of behaviour changes</li><li>• Limited coordination with NGOs which publish studies on consumer perceptions of GAP and organic certification</li></ul>
Resources	Government and donor funding; limited support from the private sector; NGOs limited funding
Reporting	12-monthly report by CCF
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Consumers cost motivated purchase, limited safer options / low awareness of safer options, limited report on the effectiveness of current CEAC.</li><li>• Government-led CEAC approach is not structured and systematic to monitor impact and to improve.</li><li>• Limited access to credible and responsive consumer complaints and feedback mechanism.</li></ul>



## 4.3 Indonesia

Indonesia is the most populous country in ASEAN (270 million). It is geographically diverse and spans more than 17,500 islands, which poses a logistical challenge to food safety interventions. It is also home to the largest Muslim population, which makes it an important market for halal foods. It ranks fifth among AMS on the GFSI and has one of the lowest scores in the Quality and Safety component, ahead of only Lao PDR and Cambodia. The ACEI score puts Indonesian consumers in the least empowered category (72.70/130). In its AWDO assessment, Indonesia ranks third among AMS. Agriculture contributes more than 12 per cent of the country's GDP and accounts for about 27 per cent of total employment. There is a growing demand for processed food (import and export) and a rising domestic per-capita income (pre-COVID 19).

### 4.3.1 National food control system and consumer protection

The food control system in Indonesia is governed by Law No. 18/2012 on Food (the Food Law). Government Regulation No. 28/2004 on Food Safety, Quality, and Nutrition (GR 28) provides administrative details to the CA. GR 28 regulates food sanitation, ingredients, genetically modified foods, food irradiation, food packaging, food guarantees, laboratory analysis, contaminated food, food quality, food quality certification, food nutrition, importation of food, exportation of food, supervision of food, and public participation in the supervision of food. Businesses that distribute food in Indonesia are also subject to Law No. 8 of 1999 on Consumer Protection (the Consumer Protection Law) and Law No.7 of 2014 on Trade (the Trade Law). Law No. 33, 2014 on Halal Assurance (Halal Assurance Law) requires halal certification for consumer products in general, including foods and beverages.

The lead food safety control agency or CA is the National Agency of Drug and Food Control (*Badan Pengawas Obat dan Makanan* or BPOM). Its key roles are:

- Preparing plans and programmes in the field of drug and food control
- Examining food and drug production facilities
- Examining drug and food distribution facilities and/or pharmaceutical service facilities
- Certification of products and production, and/or distribution facilities for drugs and food
- Sampling of drugs and food
- Food and drug testing
- Secure intelligence about and investigate violations of the laws and regulations in the field of drug and food control.
- Management of communication, information, education, and public complaints in the field of food and drug control
- Coordination and cooperation in the field of drug and food control
- Monitoring, evaluation and reporting in the field of drug and food control
- Administrative and household affairs
- Other functions assigned by the head of the agency



The lead consumer protection agency in Indonesia is the Directorate General of Consumer Protection and Trade Compliance. The 2017 National Strategy on Consumer Protection consists of three pillars, the third of which is about improving business compliance. This focuses on nine priority sectors for consumer protection: food and drugs, electricity and gas, e-commerce, financial services, housing, telecommunication services, electronics, telematics and motor vehicle transportation, and health services.

Indonesia is also home to some of the oldest consumer associations in Southeast Asia, including Yayasan Lembaga Konsumen Indonesia (YLKI). With respect to CEACs on food safety and standards, consumer education and awareness in the key economic sectors are led by the sector regulators, such as BPOM. BPOM and the Government of Indonesia have recruited village leaders and village units for the Village Food Safety Movement (*Gerakan Keamanan Pangan Desa, GKPD*). This makes both GKPD and BPOM key stakeholders in CEACs in Indonesia. YLKI is devoted rather to policy advocacy than carrying out CEACs on food safety and standards.

#### 4.3.2 Best practices in CEACs on food safety and standards

A key feature of Indonesia's CEAC on food safety and standards is the mobilisation of its village-level food safety movement. The empowerment and engagement of such community networks have proved successful in other AMS such as Thailand and Viet Nam.

##### 4.3.2.1 Village Food Safety Movement

###### *(Gerakan Keamanan Pangan Desa/GKPD)*

One of the efforts undertaken by BPOM to overcome food safety problems in Indonesia is the development of safe food villages through the Village Food Safety Movement (*Gerakan Keamanan Pangan Desa/GKPD*). Established in 2015, GKPD is a community empowerment movement intended to increase the independence of village communities while ensuring the fulfilment of their safe food needs at the individual level and strengthening the village economies. The motivation to address food safety issues derives from the rise in recorded cases of foodborne illnesses and a wish to support government strategies for scaling up the agri-food sector and creating trust in the food supply chain.

The purpose of community empowerment is to increase individual and community awareness of health issues, improving competences so the communities can independently improve their health status. The GKPD programme is running in 810 villages across 33 provinces of Indonesia, from where 9,249 trained village food safety cadres reach a total of 46,251 village communities.

The programme was designed according to the technical guidelines of BPOM, including the process of identifying the parties to be included. The involvement of health agencies in the programme is in line with Law Number 18 of 2012 concerning Food.





Section 68(1) states that ‘The Government and Regional Governments guarantee the realisation of integrated food safety in each food supply chain.’ The GKPD programme has its own Village Food Safety Movement Information System (*Sistem Informasi Gerakan Keamanan Pangan Desa*),<sup>11</sup> which will be used to assess the effectiveness of the programme. The IPB University (Institut Pertanian Bogor) has carried out several studies on the effectiveness of the GKPD.

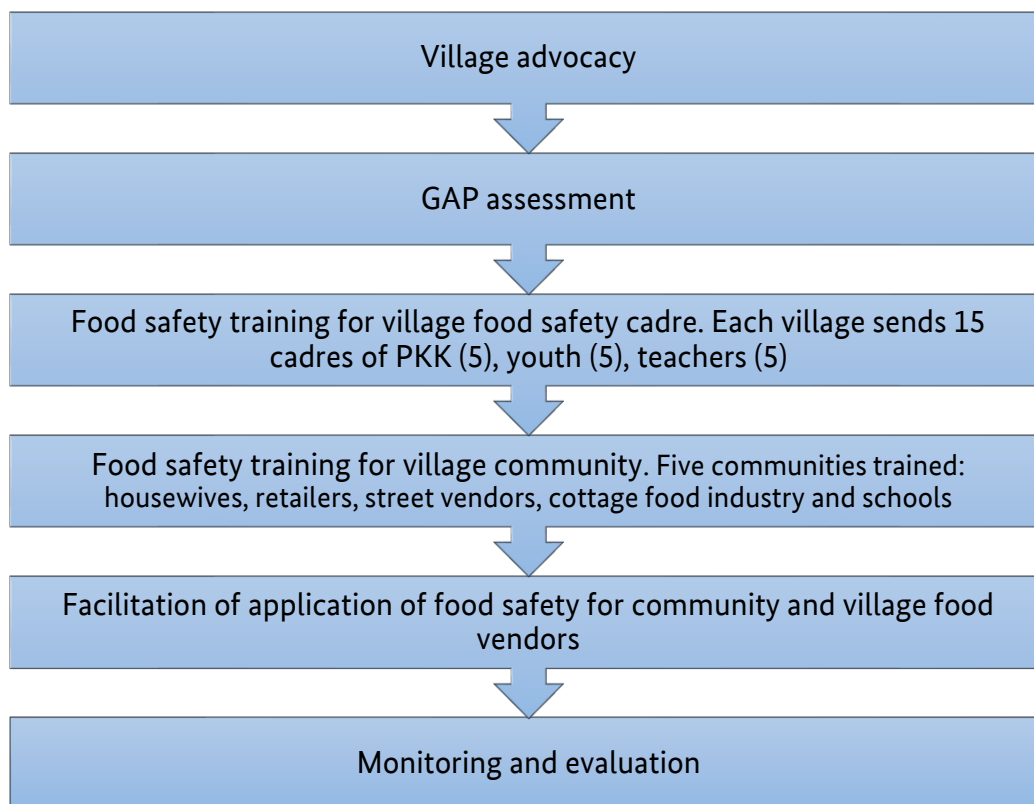


Figure 11: Stages of GKPD programme implementation

One such study resulted in the scaling down of the programme to focus on districts and provinces that face a higher risk of foodborne illnesses due to people’s attitudes and lack of awareness with respect to food hygiene and safety (Kusuma, 2018). There are plans to use the Village Food Safety Movement to advance other programmes for sustainable development, using the village as the core entity. A report by UNCTAD suggests that the government agencies in Indonesia should increase their engagement with NGOs, especially consumer associations such as YLKI, and should mobilise adequate resources for them to provide wider outreach support for CEACs on food safety and standards.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> <http://gkpd.pom.go.id/index.php/page/tentang.gkpd>

<sup>12</sup> ...engaging and empowering consumer associations for joint awareness-raising and consumer support efforts... (Virak, 2021). The same report also states that, ‘consumer associations face constraints in securing continuous funding and are often only engaged on an ad hoc basis.’



#### 4.3.2.2 Dutch-Indonesian programme on Food Security in the livestock sector (DIFS-live): poultry meat

This programme consisted of a consumer campaign to promote the trade in and consumption of chilled poultry. It was part of efforts by the governments of Indonesia and the Netherlands to strengthen food security in Indonesia. The bilateral food security programme centred on priority commodities identified by the Indonesian Government, including vegetables, fish, poultry meat and dairy products.

DIFS-Live focused on the development of the poultry meat and dairy sectors in West Java. West Java is the main production and sourcing area of poultry meat and dairy products for Greater Jakarta. The overall goal of the programme was to develop viable models for domestic production and supply of affordable, nutritious and safe animal-based products.

To carry out an effective and impactful CEAC on the safety of poultry meat, an assessment of consumption behaviour was carried out and the following factors were taken into account:

- In Indonesia, wet markets are by far the most popular place to buy poultry meat, the main Indonesian meat source, for household consumption.
- Next to wet markets, street vendors are also an important distribution channel for poultry meat.
- All income groups consume poultry meat from the wet market, while poultry from street vendors is bought relatively more by low-income groups.
- Two groups of consumers can be identified in wet market visitors:
  - o the first group chooses wet markets from a traditional cultural viewpoint (routine in the family)
  - o the second group prefers the wet market for the better product quality and freshness, the price and the guarantee of halal slaughtering.

Although health is an important factor when buying poultry meat, Tacken et al (2014) showed that consumers in the Jakarta region give food safety relatively low priority as a motive for their purchase. The assessment showed that quality, the price/quality relationship and price alone are the most important buying factors in choosing an outlet, closely followed by trust.

The design, implementation and impact assessment of the consumer campaign (*'Ayam Dingin Segar Campaign'*) is based on the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM, developed by Petty and Cacioppo, 1986). This posits that attitude change may occur along two routes of influence: the central route and the peripheral route.

The assessment report for the campaign at the end of 2013 showed that most consumers were satisfied with the food safety aspect of the poultry meat at their preferred outlets. This campaign was one of the better designed campaigns on food safety in the AMS, with clear goals, focus on a specific food group, location, messages, monitoring and evaluation.



#### 4.3.2.3 National Nutrition Communication Campaign (NNCC) – integrated food safety campaign

In 2014, a campaign was organised for social and behavioural change called the National Nutrition Communication Campaign in Indonesia (NNCC). This included mass media communications (television, radio and social media) as well as interpersonal communication (IPC) approaches (Curtis Hanson 1, May 2020). IPC strategies include face-to-face, two-way verbal communication, including listening, dialogue and other interactions. The IPC interventions included in the campaign involved health workers communicating with mothers in women's groups, maternal health classes, and Posyandu (integrated health post) services for women and children throughout rural Indonesia.

The objective of this campaign was to reduce stunting among children in Indonesia, also by improving the WASH behaviours of women and children using mass media efforts and IPC. Poor personal hygiene aggravates foodborne illnesses in malnourished and undernourished children. Open defecation as well as poor sanitation facilities and water supply are important WASH issues in these target communities. One study examining this campaign indicated that messages broadcast on television and radio or shared on social media platforms might have been the most effective way to address or promote knowledge and behaviour related to defecation. The report explained that this is because of the intimate nature of defecation and the relative social discomfort involved in discussing defecation with others face-to-face. It may also be that open defecation, although relatively common in rural Indonesia, is nonetheless stigmatised and something that both community health workers and mothers find uncomfortable to discuss in public. In this case, media interventions offer a potential level of privacy at the point of exposure which would otherwise be impossible.

Mass media has the potential to extend the reach of health messaging to populations distributed over a large area like Indonesia. The media approach used in the NNCC included social media, which helped reinforce the status of frontline health workers as educated, trusted and accessible to community members. Cambodia also has village-level volunteer health workers, but in that country they face challenges in providing the relevant services to villagers. Among the problems they face are a lack of trust in their ability to carry out their role. This campaign was successful in terms of considering cultural norms to ensure that the campaign message was communicated effectively and triggered the expected behaviour changes.

The project (IMA World Health, 2018):

- reached 40,688,900 people through the national television campaign
- trained 70 journalists about stunting in the targeted districts
- launched district-level campaigns to address stunting in three districts
- officially launched the project website, [www.gizitinggi.org](http://www.gizitinggi.org).



Similar conditions were taken into account for the CEAC on foodborne parasitic diseases in Northeastern Thailand, known as Cholangiocarcinoma or CCA.

*Table 4: Indonesia CEACs on food safety and standards*

Policies on IEC for consumers	Law No.18/2012 – Food Law Law No. 8/1999 – Consumer Protection Law No, 33/2014 – Law on Halal Assurance
Institutional mandate	National Agency of Drug and Food Control (BPOM) Directorate General of Consumer Protection and Trade Compliance
CEAC stakeholders	BPOM, CPTC, GPKD, YLKI
CEAC motivation	Food poisoning incidents; burden of FBD; rising agri-food trade, food security, food safety vulnerability and childhood stunting (nutrition)
CEAC structure/mechanism:	
Goals/aims	Minimise FBDs and increase trust in food supply chain for domestic and export market Reduce FBDs by improving WASH and community empowerment
Safer/sustainable alternatives: <i>available, convenient, affordable, suitable</i>	Certified safe alternatives, consumer hotline, registered vendors, cultural considerations
Target group	Community, village heads, women, media
Approach	Training of GPKD members, train the trainer. National television campaign
Evaluation	Measure outputs GPKD information system established
Resources	Government-funded; some donor/development agency funded
Reporting	GPKD online M&E report Project assessment reports
Challenges	Indonesia – large country / large populations scattered over 17000 islands; WASH facility coverage not complete, rural consumers difficult to reach



## 4.4 Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR)

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Lao PDR is the only landlocked country in ASEAN. Its economy is largely dependent on agriculture and more than 70 per cent of those employed in the sector are smallholders. The country is a net importer of food. In 2020 it had the lowest GFSI ranking of the AMS. The AWDO 2020 score dipped slightly to 55.2 (second to Myanmar) from 55.6 in 2016. The ACEI score for Lao PDR is 77.97/130) indicating that consumers are in the least empowered category.<sup>13</sup>

### 4.4.1 National food control system and consumer protection

Lao PDR's lead food safety agency is the Food and Drug Department under the Ministry of Health. The country applies a multi-agency approach to managing food safety from farm to table, with three main ministries involved: the Ministry of Health (MoH); the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF); and the Ministry of Industry and Commerce (MoIC).

Lao PDR's food control system is governed by its Law on Food, which was last amended in 2013. Key amendments reinforced its commitment to consumer protection in food safety. Sections in the Law on Food (2013) relevant to CEACs on food safety are articles 4, 19, 20, 51 and 70. The Food Safety Law includes provisions for consumer education similar to those in Viet Nam's Food Safety Law.

Article 70 of the Food Safety Law (Ministry of Health, Lao PDR, 2013) emphasises the role of village health centres in promoting awareness and empowering communities with knowledge about the importance of food safety and hygiene. Article 19 emphasises the importance of consumer education in the overall food safety control system.

Article 4 says that the state:

- emphasises the need to provide information to citizens about safe, high quality food with a good nutritional value, and will facilitate personnel, vehicles and budgets for appropriate food administration activities
- encourages social mobilisation and the participation of the general public in food activities.

The lead food safety agency or CA is the Food and Drug Department (FDD). This is also responsible for disseminating information and educating the general public and private sector about the law and regulations on food safety. Lao PDR's lead consumer protection agency is the Department of Internal (Domestic) Trade, and the main consumer protection law is Law on Consumer Protection 2010.

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<sup>13</sup> It should be pointed out that all respondents to the survey to derive the ACEI for Lao PDR were from Vientiane Capital.



The law designates the roles of the consumers in relevant sectors across four ministries:

1. Ministry of Industry and Commerce (leading role to coordinate and cooperate with the relevant sectors; responsibility for the industrial and commercial fields related to the manufacturing, marketing, prices and services, including but not limited to other fields that are under the responsibility of other sector agencies)
2. Ministry of Health (responsibility for health care and fields of treatment related to foods and medicines, medical equipment and services in health care and treatment)
3. Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF; forestry and agriculture fields related to the manufacture of fertilisers, the use of chemical substances in agriculture, use of chemical insecticides, animal medicines, foods, agricultural products, seeds, breeding, agricultural equipment and machinery)
4. Ministry of Science and Technology Administration (scientific activities, technology, quality, standards, weights and measures, and intellectual property).

Lao PDR has many NGOs but no consumer associations. Many of the NGOs implement projects aligned with the government's plans to eradicate poverty and address malnutrition and food insecurity. Lao PDR is still dependent on donors and development organisations to implement its policies on food safety and consumer protection. Its consumer complaints centre and a hotline were supported by USAID and GIZ. FAO and WHO have provided policy implementation support and technical assistance to FDD. MAF is among the key recipient of large grants and loans to develop the agriculture and primary food production sector to address food insecurity, malnutrition and climate vulnerabilities in the agriculture sector. Food safety is occasionally included as part of programmes and projects on agriculture, food security or water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH). Examples are:

- ***Sustainable Agriculture & Environment Development Association (SAEDA)***

*SAEDA works to support vulnerable communities by promoting sustainable agricultural practices and improving their capacity and awareness to safeguard the environment with projects that focus on three main areas of intervention:*

- *sustainable agriculture*
- *chemical pesticide risk reduction*
- *biodiversity conservation*

- ***Clean Agriculture Development & Food Processing Association (CADPA)***

*CADPA contributes to the creation of an enabling environment for clean agriculture in Lao PDR. It develops harvesting techniques and supports the processing of food from organic agriculture for the development of Lao farmers, targeting women in remote areas in particular, to reduce poverty.*

The mass movement organisations in Lao PDR, such as the Lao Women's Union (LWU) and Lao Youth Union (LYU) are as yet untapped as channels for reaching potentially more than a million consumers in the country.



LWU has more than one million members and the Lao Youth Union has more than 340,000 members. These constitute close to 14 per cent of the country's population of about 7.17 million. LYU operates a radio station and has broadcast discussions about food safety and personal hygiene. LWU's website publishes news and articles for its health section newsletter, some of which are related to food safety.

CEACs on food safety are limited to the publication of articles, news and brochures by the state-owned media companies, NGOs and Lao Women's Union. Lao PDR's Center for Health Education, Information and Communication (CHEIC) under the Ministry of Health was the local partner for the WHO-supported Community-Based Intervention Study of Food Safety Practices in Rural Community Households in the country in 2007. CHEIC is responsible for health promotion and is currently engaged in promotion and awareness of COVID-19 prevention measures. It carries out annual information campaigns and the themes change every year, ranging from specific diseases to personal behaviour change. Its current role is limited to public service announcements (PSAs) about health issues such as avian influenzas, dengue outbreaks and other non-foodborne diseases, on FDD websites and in the media. In September 2019, CIEH ran a series of workshops to teach risk communication skills. With the support of risk communicators from the WHO Country Office, they trained nearly a hundred provincial and district level officials to strengthen their preparedness for avian influenza outbreaks and human influenza pandemics.

MI's regional training programmes on Communicating Food Safety Risks and Raising Public Awareness on Food Safety Risks are also expected to further strengthen capacities for health risk communication among food safety stakeholders in Lao PDR. CIEH officials have spoken about the challenges they have faced in running CEACs on food safety and in other public health education initiatives. These include a lack of cooperation from some communities, a lack of appropriate communication materials, and limited time and budgets.

Since 2010, the Ministry of Education and Sports has implemented the National School Meals Programme<sup>14</sup> with the support of the World Bank, providing free nutritious lunches to primary school children in remote areas in order to encourage school enrolment. Besides the lunches, many schools also receive support to establish school gardens, for training and hardware for safe food storage, for literacy programmes and for improved water access and hygiene.

They also benefit from technical assistance provided for policy and advocacy work at national and sub-national levels (WFP, 2018). The World Food Programme reported that among the key benefits of the programme are increased awareness and practice of handwashing and personal hygiene.

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<sup>14</sup> Following the adoption of the Government's National Policy on Promoting School Lunches in May 2014, WFP started to shift its focus from implementing the school feeding programme to building the capacity of the Government and communities. The goal is to hand over the entire programme by 2021. <https://scalingupnutrition.org/news/wfp-starts-handover-of-school-feeding-to-the-government-of-lao-pdr/>



In collaboration with the French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development (CIRAD), the National University of Laos (NUOL) conducted a study on ‘Consumer perceptions of organic food in the Lao PDR’ in 2015. This is one of only a small number of studies on consumer awareness and attitudes towards food standards and safety in Lao PDR. FDD and the Department of Agriculture could engage NUOL for the monitoring and assessment of CEACs on food safety and standards.

The Lao Farmer Network (LFN) was established in 2014 with a membership comprising farmer groups and organisations from about 13 provinces. LFN focuses on farmers’ interests in commercialisation and market access for agri-food. Its activities therefore mainly focus on capacity building, policy consultations and technical support to improve farmers’ incomes and livelihoods. LFN could consider adapting strategies pursued by the Myanmar Fruit, Flower and Vegetable Producers and Exporters Association (MFVP) to the Lao PDR context, enabling farmers to address consumers directly and promote the benefits of safe and sustainable food.

#### 4.4.2 Best practices in CEACs

There are few examples of best practice from CEACs on food safety and standards in Lao PDR. Campaigns here are usually developed and implemented by donors and development organisations, together with Lao PDR’s competent authority for food safety, consumer protection agencies or NGOs.

CEACs on food safety and standards are often part a larger projects on food security, nutrition and WASH, funded and implemented by international donors and development organisations. In this case the CEACs on food safety and standards have already been developed, implemented and assessed for effectiveness. Two such programmes have been supported by WHO:

1. The Community-based Intervention Study of Food Safety Practices in Rural Community Households of Lao PDR by WHO in 2007
2. Local capacity building: training health staff to communicate with communities for the Lao PDR Center for Communication and Education on Health (CCEH) 2019 – to build the capacity of CCEH officials to design, implement and assess public education and awareness campaigns on health issues (beginning with awareness of avian and human influenza).

##### 4.4.2.1 Community-Based Intervention Study of Food Safety Practices in Rural Community Households of Lao PDR (WHO, 2007)

The objectives of the Community-Based Intervention Study of Food Safety Practices in Rural Community Households of Lao PDR were to: ‘establish a model process for rural community education on food safety to adapt the WHO Five Keys to Safer Food in Lao PDR.’





The project was implemented between July and December 2007 with the support of WHO. The Lao Women’s Union and FDD were its key local partners.

Specific activities included:

- training workshops
- observation of household food safety practices
- baseline assessment to develop key food safety messages
- dissemination of information materials to rural village households
- conducting small group education sessions
- a focus group feedback workshop to explore next steps for this activity.

According to an assessment carried out by a WHO expert, the involvement of the Lao Women’s Union as a key partner was a success factor. Among the recommendations coming from the assessment was that the collaborative approach should continue and be expanded to other provinces of Lao PDR. However, when the funding and technical support stopped so did the activities. The report also states that broad behavioural change requires years of consistent effort and corresponding financial resources from the government and even international agencies.

#### 4.4.2.2 WHO-USAID Health Risk Communication Capacity Building

In September 2019, WHO and the Ministry of Health’s Center for Communication and Education on Health (CCEH) organised workshops to teach risk communication skills to health officers. The WHO Country Office provided technical support on risk communication to about a hundred provincial and district level health officers in the provinces of Bokeo, Luang Namtha and Oudomxay.

The workshops were part of a programme funded by USAID to strengthen Lao PDR’s preparedness for avian influenza outbreaks and human influenza pandemics. However, they also contribute to the wider goal of strengthening the country’s risk communication capacity for all types of health threat.

*Table 5: Lao PDR CEACs on food safety and standards*

Policies on IEC for consumers	Law on Food 2013 Law on Consumer Protection 2010
Institutional mandate	FDD, MAF, DIT National Codex Committee Village health centres
CEAC stakeholders	FDD, CIEH, Village health centres, Ministry of Education and Sports, Lao Women’s Union, Lao Youth Union, NGOs, LFN, donors and development agencies
CEAC motivation	Food poisoning incidents and deaths, WASH, nutrition and food security



CEAC structure/mechanism:	
Goals/aims	Manage FBDs, improve food security and nutrition
Safer/sustainable alternatives: <i>available, convenient, affordable, suitable</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ GMP (good manufacturing practices) certification requirements for products in the high-risk category: bottled water, meat</li><li>○ Organic certified products in the capital and major cities</li><li>○ Consumers' hotline exists – 1510</li></ul>
Target group	General public, women, children LWU/LYU – more than one million members for wider outreach
Approach	training of trainers, observation of practices, interview, improve materials, address cultural norms/literacy rates, materials, media PSA, village talks, school gardens
Evaluation	Donor-funded project – evaluation report
Resources	Primarily donor-funded
Reporting	Donor-funded project
Challenges	Limited government funding for CEACs on food safety; no consumer complaints analysis; limited data to assess FBDs and consumption patterns; thriving informal sector; WASH coverage relatively low compared to other AMS.

## 4.5 Malaysia

Malaysia is a net food importer. The country has shown a progressive approach to food safety controls since independence. It has moved from agricultural production to a strong base in food processing. Its overall GFSI score is one of the best in the region, behind only Singapore. Malaysia's AWDO overall score is the highest in Southeast Asia. The ACEI overall score of 94.48/130 indicates that Malaysian consumers are moderately empowered. Malaysia one of the most obese populations in Southeast Asia, with NCDs related to lifestyle and unhealthy food choices surpassing FBDs. Spikes in the incidence of FBDs are seasonal during the fasting month of Ramadan or occur in residential schools.



Figure 12: Food safety campaign posters for the 2020 Ramadan month (left) and general tips (right)

#### 4.5.1 National food control system and consumer protection

Malaysia's food safety control system is among the best established in ASEAN. The primary roles and responsibilities fall under the Food Safety and Quality Division (FSQD) of the Ministry of Health, governed by the Food Act 1983 and Food Regulations 1985. The act and regulations do not specify CEAC roles in food safety, like the laws on food safety in Viet Nam and Lao PDR. FSQD represents Malaysia in the Codex Alimentarius, and the national Codex Committee is a multi-stakeholder body with the active participation of private sector and consumer association representatives. FSQD provides technical support and inputs for CEACs on food safety.

Besides FSQD, stakeholders involved in consumer protection and food safety are:

1. Ministry of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs
2. Departments of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries
3. Department of Standards Malaysia
4. Consumer associations

Malaysia's lead consumer protection agency is the Ministry of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs (MDTCA). The main consumer protection law is the Consumer Protection Act 1999. Economic sector regulators such as FSQD, the Department of Agriculture and the Department of



Fishery are responsible for consumer protection in the agri-food sector. The safety of general consumer products is under the jurisdiction of MDTCA.

One of the success stories of consumer education and awareness in Malaysia is the establishment of consumer clubs in secondary schools by the Ministry of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education. This initiative began in 1992. There are approximately 2,000 school consumer clubs with over 64,400 members. The three main activity areas are a balanced diet, financial literacy and environmental protection. Funding for the activities is shared between MDTCA, the Ministry of Education and club members (students). The school consumer clubs are target groups for many CEAC initiatives in addition to food safety. Consumer rights and food safety are also taught in secondary schools as part of various subjects such as Commerce, Economy, Science and Living Skills (*Kemahiran Hidup*). MDTCA also operates a consumer hotline which serves as a one-stop complaints hotline. Food safety complaints are referred to FSQD.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry (MAFI)'s Departments of Agriculture, of Fishery and of Veterinary Services manage the relevant food safety requirements in primary production. MyGAP (Malaysian GAP) – formerly the SALM certification (Malaysian Farm Accreditation Certificate or *Sijil Akreditasi Ladang Malaysia*) – is managed by the Department of Agriculture. The Department of Standards Malaysia, part of the Ministry of International Trade and Industry, manages the standards development activities (other than Codex) in Malaysia. The MyGAP certification is guided by the Malaysian Standard MS 1784:2005 Crop Commodities – Good Agricultural Practice (GAP).

The consumer associations in Malaysia are among the most active and effective in the ASEAN Member States. Given the fact that they face budgetary constraints to the organisation of nationwide campaigns, they use their strong network with the media as leverage to get key consumer protection messages out to the general public. One of the oldest consumer associations in Malaysia is the Federation of Malaysian Consumers Associations (FOMCA).

FOMCA represents consumers' interests in various national committees: e.g. National Codex Committee, Technical Committees on Malaysian Standards and the National Nutrition Advisory Council.

FOMCA's views are often sought during public consultations on policy reviews affecting consumers. FOMCA occasionally conducts comparative testing of consumer products. If the results indicate that consumers are potentially exposed to hazards by using certain products and no control measures exist in the current laws and regulations, FOMCA brings the test results to the attention of relevant sector regulators. This approach has prompted amendments to relevant regulations, such as the Food Regulations 1985 and Consumer Product Safety Regulations 2010.

FOMCA organises the annual National Consumer Day celebration in conjunction with World Consumer Rights Day (on March 15). The National Consumer Day celebration is organised with



the support of MDTCA, utility regulators and the private sector. Members of school consumer clubs look forward to this celebration as they collect prizes for the National Consumer Day Competition, which is usually organised several months before the celebration.

#### 4.5.2 Best practices in CEACs on food safety

The Malaysian Association of Standards Users<sup>15</sup> ran a nationwide social responsibility campaign called SPEAK UP. This targeted students between the ages of 13 and 20 at secondary schools and universities. One of its annual themes is awareness of food safety standards to strengthen a safe food culture and the awareness of young people of the importance of food safety and sustainability standards. The programme's key feature is its challenge grant. In Malaysia, mass food poisoning incidents in schools are almost an annual occurrence.

FSQD organises CEACs on food safety annually, mostly using social media channels. The campaigns include feedback tools to evaluate the performance of the campaign. The main objective of is to disseminate food safety information and improve the level of knowledge and awareness among social media users. Consumer associations like FOMCA and the Consumer Association of Penang (CAP)<sup>16</sup> often organise CEACs on food safety and standards as part of larger, nationwide consumer campaigns. In 2012, CAP held a three-day fair to introduce Malaysians to organic farming methods to use at home, for *'a greener, healthier and safer future'*. In addition to sustainable consumption and natural farming projects, farmers at the fair exhibited

and sold herbal plants, seedlings, organic vegetables, natural fertilisers, herbal pest repellents, compost, composting units, handicrafts made from natural raw materials and herbal drinks. In Ramadan in Malaysia, CEACs are organised that combine food safety with, for example, response to the seasonal increase in food safety incidents and food waste during the month of awareness raising about food waste and single-use plastics.

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<sup>15</sup> Malaysian Association of Standards Users (Standards Users) is a consumer association established to represent consumer interests in various area of standards development. It is a member of the consumer federation FOMCA.

<sup>16</sup> The Consumers' Association of Penang (CAP) is a grassroots non-profit, civil society organisation based in Malaysia. It was established in 1969 to promote critical awareness and action among consumers in order to uphold their rights and interests. CAP conducts its activities from its office in Penang, engaging in education, community mobilisation, research, advocacy, training and publishing. One of CAP's objectives is to educate consumers, balance consumer needs and degree of protection, and to provide relevant consumer rights and entitlements.



Figure 13: Malaysia social media CEAC on food safety



Figure 14: Food Safety Awareness, organised by the Melaka State Health Department at a Ramadan Bazaar (Malaysia)



Table 6: Malaysia CEACs on food safety and standards

Policies on IEC for consumers	Not specified in the food law 1983 Indicated in consumer protection act 1999
Institutional mandate	Food Safety and Quality Division Ministry of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs
CEAC stakeholders	Ministry of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Departments of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries Department of Standards Malaysia Consumer associations Students, women
CEAC motivation	Food incident records – seasonal spike in cases, consumer complaints analysis
CEAC structure/mechanism:	
Goals/aims	Reduce FBD incidents, raise demand for hygiene certified food services
Safer/sustainable alternatives: <i>available, convenient, affordable, suitable</i>	Certification schemes wider choice of hygiene certified food services, responsive hotlines
Target group	General public, students
Approach	Consumer club programmes, school curriculum, collaterals, competition, social media campaign, World and National Consumer Day Celebration
Evaluation	Annual consumer complaints analysis, monitor seasonal foodborne illness incidents
Resources	Government-funded, public-private sector contribution and support for consumer associations
Reporting	Annual consumer complaints report
Challenges	Not much funding for CEACs on food (sustainability) standard and certification schemes



## 4.6 Myanmar

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Myanmar ranks fourth lowest of the AMS in the 2020 Global Food Security Index. Over 70 per cent of its population still derive a major part of their livelihoods from agriculture. Similarly to Cambodia, Lao PDR and Viet Nam, Myanmar sees significant informal sector participation in its agri-food supply chain from farm to table. Its AWDO 2020 score is the lowest among the countries in Southeast Asia. An ACEI score of 80.95/130 shows consumers in Myanmar being moderately empowered.<sup>17</sup>

### 4.6.1 National food safety control system and consumer protection

Myanmar's national food law has been under revision for some time (since 2012) and the current reference is still the Food Law 1997. At present, the competent authority for food safety is the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) under the Ministry of Health and Sports. The Public Health Law and departmental directives (guided by Codex guidelines and standards) also apply. Compliance with food safety standards is motivated by export market requirements. FDA is tasked with:

- establishing the national guidelines for food standards and specifications based on the FAO/WHO Codex Alimentarius Commission standards and international code of conduct
- establishing working relationships with food industries and facilitating effective cost recovery systems for services delivered to the private sector
- participating in educational information activities in coordination with health departments
- strengthening coordination activities (analysis, standardisation, control and education) with other ministries and the private sector (MoAI, MoLF, MI, MoC, UMFCCI).

FDA makes recommendations:

- i. health recommendations for local food manufacturing plants
- ii. health recommendations for imported and exported food
- iii. post-market surveillance
- iv. education, training and workshops concerning food safety and quality.

The National Health Laboratory (NHL) was established to improve the effectiveness of supervision of food and drug controls. The NHL issues certificates of food safety which are compulsory for food manufacturers.

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<sup>17</sup> There was an indication of commitment from the Department of Consumer Affairs (DOCA) when the results of the ACEI survey were shared at the consultation sessions for the National Consumer Protection Programme, hoping to accelerate initiatives in consumer education and awareness.





In Myanmar, the Department of Consumer Affairs (DOCA), part of the Ministry of Commerce (MOC), is the lead government agency mandated to work on general consumer education and awareness. Established in April 2016, DOCA focuses on national initiatives for general product safety, consumer redress and consumer education.

The Consumer Information and Complaints Center (CICC) was launched in 2017 and is gaining traction among consumers in Myanmar who use the services for their complaints (MyanmarTimes, 2019). Technical and financial support from USAID has assisted DOCA to take part in programmes about socio-economic issues on the state-run MRTV television channel. After a pilot programme, several episodes were aired live:

- Episode 2: Consumer Rights Protection and the Role of CICC, first aired on 4 October, 2018
- Episode 3: The Job Opportunity and Challenges for PWDs in Myanmar, first aired on 1 November, 2018
- Episode 4: Regulation of the Rice Market: Setting Floor Prices, first aired on 6 December, 2018
- Episode 5: How to deal with counterfeit money issues, first aired on 3 January, 2019

Myanmar's Consumer Protection Law was first enacted in 2014 and revised in 2019. Among the new developments was the creation of the Myanmar Consumer Protection Commission, tasked with developing and implementing consumer protection policies in coordination with other government agencies, business representatives and civil society/consumer organisations.

As part of its national efforts to promote consumer education and awareness, the Consumer Affairs Division works on the following CEAC activities:

- Distributing manuals, posters, pamphlets and documents on consumer protection
- Sending public service announcements using mass media (newspaper, television, online and social media)
- Organising targeted training, workshops and seminars, as well as school or market visits
- Carrying out inspection activities
- Leading national consumer rights-related celebrations (e.g. Consumer Rights Day).

The FDA carries out consumer education and awareness programmes in collaboration with DOCA, other agencies, donors, NGOs and development organisations.

Participants from DOCA who attended the PROSAFE regional training programme on Raising Awareness on Food Safety, organised by Mekong Institute in 2018, reported that:

- in 2017, they carried out consumer education activities 7,544 times and market inspection activities 5,948 times
- in 2018 (January to July), there were 4,287 consumer education activities and 2,825 market inspection activities.



They also reported that DOCA handled food related complaints

- 27 cases mediated and eight cases enforced (2017)
- 23 cases mediated and seven cases enforced (to July 2018)

The Myanmar Consumers' Union (MCU) is a new consumer NGO established in 2012. Concerning food safety and standards MCU organises awareness-raising events, advocacy for different stakeholders and seminars for education on consumers' rights and responsibilities. These also address the issues of poor quality products, unsafe food and inferior services that have adverse effects on consumers and the natural environment.

MCU publishes an annual consumer report, the Myanmar Consumer Report, with support from donors such as USAID. In CLMV, only Myanmar produces a report of this kind. The Myanmar Consumer Report provides a summary of consumer complaints and issues faced by consumers in Myanmar in the various economic sectors, including agri-food.

Other NGOs which are involved in CEACs on food safety are the Food Science and Technology Association (FOSTA), also established in 2012. FOSTA has a Food Safety and Public Awareness Working Group, which has organised mobile campaigns for food safety awareness since 2013.

FOSTA also promotes food safety using the mass media with awareness talks and programmes. Myanmar Innovative Life Sciences (MILS) is a private company that provides food technology and technical services to the agri-food sector. It has taken the initiative to organise an annual forum on food safety. The first of these was held on 28 September 2019 at Yangon University. The forum was attended by over 500 participants from various stakeholder groups. One of the highlights was the launch of a multi-stakeholder PRINC platform (for producers, regulators, investors, NGOs and consumers) that will focus on creating a learning environment for producers to produce safer, higher-value products. MILS has published a report on the forum, including useful metrics to assist in the assessment of future events (MILS, 2019).

The Myanmar Fruit, Flower and Vegetable Producer and Exporter Association (MFVP) initiated the Safe Food from Safe Farms initiative in 2015 to increase consumers' access to natural and certified safe fruits and vegetables by linking producers of fresh produce directly to consumers. MFVP members believe the markets serves as a venue to promote the benefits of growing and consuming safe produce to nearby communities. With a membership base of over 30,000, MFVP has a strong outreach capacity through its farmers and the Safe Food from Safe Farm markets. MFVP runs about 34 stores in Myanmar (Ronan, 2020).



## 4.6.2 Best practices in CEACs on food safety and standards

In Myanmar, it is difficult to meet the conditions for an effective CEAC on food safety and standards, such as having adequate WASH facilities and infrastructure and low food insecurity. This poses various challenges to any sustained CEAC effort. However, there are clusters of best practices that can be used to leverage and scale up campaigns, further improving consumer behaviour and incentivising the domestic demand for safer and more sustainable food.

### 4.6.2.1 FDA's inspection, testing and reporting

In major cities and at provincial level, FDA conducts market inspections and tests food samples, especially of food sold to students and children. The inspection and testing results provide an evidence-based motivation to implement the appropriate CEACs and assess their effectiveness. The Mandalay branch of FDA and the Mandalay City Development Committee carried out campaigns to increase awareness of the dangers of food dyes among consumers in Mandalay. Following the inspections and fines for violations, FDA reported a reduction in the number of violations during subsequent testing and inspections, and claimed that this success was made possible by the campaign (Myanmar Times, 2017).

### 4.6.2.2 Private sector initiated campaigns (MILS and Tetra Pak)

Compared to Cambodia and Lao PDR, the private agri-food sector in Myanmar is more engaged in CEACs on food safety and standards. MILS organised the first Food Safety Forum in 2019, which led to the establishment of a multi-stakeholder network on research and education.

Tetra Pak expressed its commitment to raising awareness about the importance of adequate nutrition and food safety by initiating the campaign 'Protects What's Good with Tetra Pak' in 2018. It has since increased its engagement with consumers and the media in Myanmar and is organising campaigns online and on the ground. A key feature of the campaigns is the engagement of a Myanmar nutrition expert to share his expertise on healthy food and food safety (TetraPak, 2020).

### 4.6.2.3 Multi-agency collaboration on CEACs – Mandalay, Yangon and Naypyi Taw

DOCA collaborates with FDA, City Development Committees, the Department of Agriculture, Department of Health and Department of Education in CEACs on food safety and standards. Reports on the results of these CEACs are seldom available to provide insights on their effectiveness or identify areas for improvement in future campaigns. The sources and channels of information preferred by consumers are mass media and social media.



Table 7: Myanmar CEACs on food safety and standards

Policies on IEC for consumers	National food law under revision Consumer Protection Law (2019), Myanmar
Institutional mandate	Food and Drug Administration Department of Consumer Affairs
CEAC stakeholders	MFVP MCU Media Private sector FOSTA City Development Committees
CEAC motivation	Food law/regulations violations from inspections; improve agri-trade
CEAC structure/mechanism:	
Goals/aims	Reduce FBD incidents, improve compliance among vendors
Safer/sustainable alternatives: <i>available, convenient, affordable, suitable</i>	Hotline recently launched Consumers limited information on market for safe and sustainable food
Target group	General public, women, students
Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Media – television and print; inspections and fines</li><li>○ Collaterals – what are banned ingredients and risks</li><li>○ School curriculum</li></ul>
Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Annual consumer report (by MCU)</li><li>○ Monitor violations during inspections</li></ul>
Resources	Government-funded (inspections), development/donor agencies, public-private sector contribution
Reporting	Annual consumer report; reports on violations
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Funding</li><li>○ Food law under revision</li><li>○ WASH coverage limited in rural/urban informal housing areas</li><li>○ CA cannot inspect business operators in dense city locations to detect violations</li></ul>



## 4.7 Philippines

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The Philippines ranked third lowest of the AMS in the GFSI 2020 ranking. Its AWDO score places it second-highest among Southeast Asian countries. Consumers in the Philippines are ranked as moderately empowered, with an ACEI score of 93/130. They are reported to actively pursue accurate product and service information and adequate protection. The media-savvy consumers are quick to voice their dissatisfaction. The consumer movement in Southeast Asia reportedly began in the Philippines in 1963.

### 4.7.1 National food control system and consumer protection

The food control system in the Philippines is governed by the Food Safety Act of 2013 (Republic Act No. 10611) which primarily aims to strengthen the food safety regulatory system from farm to table. The law includes the development and implementation of regulations, food safety standards, inspection, testing, data collection, monitoring and other activities. The Food Safety Act 2013 stipulates the key government agencies tasked to ensure food safety. These include the Department of Agriculture (DA), Department of Health (DoH), the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), and local government units (FFTC-AP, 2014).

**Section 32** of this law requires the development and implementation of a consumer education programme, led by the assigned agencies with the assistance of the Department of Education. The roles of the various agencies under the Food Safety Act of 2013 are briefly described below. Department of Agriculture (DA) (and its agencies such as the Bureau of Agriculture and Fisheries Product Standards, the National Dairy Authority and the Bureau of Animal Industry)

- Responsible for food safety at the primary production stage (including post-harvest).
- Develops mandatory standards on food safety at this stage of the food supply chain, including imported primary produce

Department of Health (DOH)

- Responsible for processed and pre-packaged food (both domestically produced and imported) and food services (including airline catering services)
- Conducts studies on FBD with, for example, the National Epidemiology Center and National Center for Disease Prevention and Control
- Food safety awareness, information and education (Section 18.e of the Food Safety Act of 2013) is the responsibility of the National Center for Health Promotion (NCHP)

Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG)

- In coordination and collaboration with DA and DOH, supports enforcement activities of the food safety act and sanitation rules within the respective jurisdictional areas of the local governments.
- Local government units are also responsible for street food and ambulant vending (push-cart/food truck etc.)



The Food Safety Regulation Coordinating Board (FSRCB) was established to lead interagency coordination and implementation of national food safety initiatives. FSRCB (i) monitors and coordinates the performance of DA, DOH, DILG and local government units in the food safety control system; (ii) identifies relevant enforcement roles; (iii) coordinates food safety emergency responses; (iv) coordinates inter-agency policies and procedures; (v) assesses the effectiveness of the food safety control system; (vi) reports to the Congressional Committees on Health, Agriculture and Food and on Trade and Industry, regarding the food control system in the Philippines, and (vii) manages and receives grants from local and international agencies (FFTC-AP, 2014).

The Consumer Act of the Philippines (Republic Act No. 7394), published in 1992, is the principal consumer protection law. One of the key objectives of this law is to ensure ‘*provision of information and education to facilitate sound choice and the proper exercise of rights by the consumer*’. The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) is the lead consumer protection agency in the Philippines and often collaborates with sector regulators to implement or carry out consumer education and awareness activities and campaigns. DTI’s Bureau of Philippine Standards (BPS) is the national agency that formulates, implements and coordinates product standardisation, including food commodities. National food standards are published as Philippine National Standards (PNS) following a standard documentation format aligned with the ISO documentation format. Consumers in the Philippines can call the One-DTI (1-384) Hotline to lodge any kinds of consumer complaint.

Table 2: Philippine Food Safety Policies Established to Address Food Safety Concerns from Farm-to-Fork.

Food Safety Concern	Corresponding policies
<b>A. Fresh</b>	
Food security and trade	RA 8435: Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Act (1997)
<b>B. Processed</b>	
Pure and safe food supply	EO 175: Food, Drugs and Devices, and Cosmetics Act (1987)
Quality and safety of food products	AO 153: Revised Guidelines on Current Good Manufacturing Practice in Manufacturing, Packing, Repacking or Holding Food (2004)
Meat inspection and hygiene	RA 9296: Meat Inspection Code of the Philippines (2005)
Regulatory system for processed foods	RA 9711: Food and Drug Administration Act of 2009
Food safety and quality defect	FDA Bureau Circular 12: Guidelines on Product Recall (2016)
Safety of drinking water	AO 2017-0010: Philippine National Standards for Drinking Water of 2017
<b>C. Food Service</b>	
Sanitation requirements for food establishments	PD 856: The Code on Sanitation of the Philippines (1975)
Breastmilk substitutes, breastmilk supplements and Other Related Products	EO 51: National Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes, Breastmilk Supplements and Other Related Products (1986)
<b>D. Unified Food Safety Control System (Farm-to-Fork)</b>	
Food safety, fair trade, and global competitiveness of Philippine foods and food products (Unified law for food safety)	RA 10611: Food Safety Act of 2013

Figure 15: Philippines Food Safety Control from Farm to Table (Rustia A. S, 2021)

DTI plans to establish an online alternative dispute resolution (OADR) system in line with the ASEAN Committee on Consumer Protection direction and support from ASEAN-Australia Development Cooperation Programme Phase II (AADCP-II). The OADR system is expected to serve as a central hub for consumer complaints, linking relevant government agencies in a single system to effectively facilitate consumer redress. Among the key agencies in the Consumer Network (ConsumerNet) are DA and DOH (UNCTAD, 2018). The reports generated by the proposed OADR could serve as inputs in developing an evidence-based CEAC on food safety and standards or other measures to improve the food safety control system in the Philippines.



## 4.7.2 Best practices in CEACs on food safety and standards

CEACs on food safety in the Philippines currently use mass and social media to reach out to consumers. The Philippines was probably the first country in Southeast Asia to declare a Food Safety Week awareness campaign – in 1999. There is no visible food safety campaign organised by consumer associations in the Philippines. Consumer associations are engaged primarily to address consumers' commercial interests: addressing scams and frauds, and improving financial literacy.

### 4.7.2.1 National Food Safety Awareness Week

DTI, DOH and DA collaborate in the organisation of CEACs on food safety and standards in the Philippines. One of these campaigns is the Food Safety Awareness Week, run by the Department of Health, Department of Agriculture and the Food Safety & Hygiene Academy of the Philippines – or FoodSHAP®. The Food Safety Awareness Week is a campaign to raise public awareness of food safety and food quality in the Philippines. The activity was launched in 1999 with the Presidential Proclamation No. 160, s. 1999, which declared the last week of October to be the National Food Safety Awareness Week. FoodSHAP® has developed interesting content, namely videos on basic food safety messages.<sup>18</sup> Local government units, DA and DOH conduct a series of activities during the awareness week, for example:



Figure 16: Food Safety Week Media Forum - Philippines

- the food safety caravan in Metro Cebu, including a booth display with food safety programme
- global hand-washing day celebration in Mantatao Island in Calape, Boho
- media forum/talks and discussions

Reports on the effectiveness of the food safety week campaign are not accessible or available.

<sup>18</sup> The Food Safety & Hygiene Academy of the Philippines is the first dedicated school in the Philippines providing only DOH-recognised Food Safety Education & Examinations in Catering & Retail.  
[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCfaTa\\_5fyrAUcNhpGm0UhA](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCfaTa_5fyrAUcNhpGm0UhA)



Table 8: Philippines CEACs on food safety and standards

Policies on IEC for consumers	Food Safety Act 2013 Consumer Act of the Philippines 1992
Institutional mandate	Department of Health Department of Interior and Local Government Department of Trade and Industry
CEAC stakeholders	Food Safety Regulations Coordinating Body Local Governments Media Food Safety and Hygiene Academy of the Philippines
CEAC motivation	High incidents of FBD
CEAC structure/mechanism:	
Goals/aims	Raise awareness on FBDs
Safer/sustainable alternatives: <i>available, convenient, affordable, suitable</i>	NA
Target group	Consumers/general public
Approach	Media forum, food safety caravan, social media campaign
Evaluation	NA
Resources	Government-funded
Reporting	NA
Challenges	Limited/lack assessment of the effectiveness of the annual food safety week





## 4.8 Singapore

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Singapore, with the highest per capita income and being the smallest nation among the AMS, is also a net food importer. The government places importance on strengthening its food and water security. It is the no. 1 ranked AMS in the GFSI, outperforming all the others in terms of quality and safety. The ACEI score of Singapore consumers marks them as the least empowered, at 70.79/130. The metrics used for the pilot ACEI may need to take into account the unique demography of Singapore compared to the other AMS for future assessments. *(Note: perhaps due to their high level of awareness about consumer rights, they may not see a strong need to know about advocacy and education programmes or contribute to policymaking.)*

### 4.8.1 National food control system and consumer protection

Singapore's national food safety control system was revamped in April 2019 and the Agri-food and Veterinary Authority (AVA), established in 2000, was disbanded. It was replaced by the new Singapore Food Agency (SFA), which is a statutory board under the Ministry of the Environment and Water Resources (MEWR). SFA takes over the food-related roles and responsibilities previously performed by AVA, the National Environment Agency (NEA) and the Health Sciences Authority (HSA) (StraitTimes, 2018).

SFA will oversee Singapore's food safety and security from farm to fork. Its aim with respect to consumer education is to provide consumers with the relevant information and knowledge to make informed food choices. The consumer protection agency has also undergone some changes, and the Consumer Protection (Fair Trading) Act (CPFTA) 2003 (and 2016) is now administered by the Competition and Consumer Commission of Singapore (CCS).

Singapore's consumer association is the Consumers Association of Singapore or CASE. It works closely with regulators to further improve consumer protection in the country of 5.7 million people. CASE operates a consumer complaints centre and the annual analysis of complaints is taken into consideration during the revision of laws and policies on consumer protection (CASE, 2021) (The Strait Times, 2020).

### 4.8.2 Best practices in CEACs on food safety and standards

Prior to the establishment of SFA, AVA conducted CEACs on food safety and standards. SFA's current consumer education initiatives include:

1. Food safety supermarket learning (for school students)
2. Food safety talks



**The Singapore Food Story Campaign (2020)** aims to develop Singapore as a globally-recognised pioneer of sustainable urban food solutions and food safety, with an adequate supply of safe food, reaping economic benefits from the sector. The campaign contributes to Singapore's strategy to ensure a safe, diversified and secure food supply for itself.

**SG Clean (2020-2021)** aims to promote the adoption of good personal and environmental hygiene habits to help keep Singapore clean. It calls on organisations to adhere to sanitation and hygiene checklists by the authorities. These measures to elevate cleanliness and public hygiene in Singapore will help safeguard public health, especially during a health crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### 4.8.2.1 AVA's Frozen Meat Public Education Programme

Singapore's meat supply depends on its neighbour, Malaysia. In 1999 an outbreak of Nipah Virus in Malaysia resulted in the suspension of live pig imports. The ban remained in place for almost a decade due to the outbreak of other animal diseases, such as hand, foot, and mouth disease (HFMD). However, the trade in processed pork was not disrupted. Singapore consumers who were used to purchasing fresh pork rather than frozen pork had difficulties changing their behaviour (SFA, 2019).

The campaign aims to help consumers make informed decisions on safe pork consumption. AVA embarked on a public education programme to raise awareness on the availability of frozen meats, educate consumers on the proper handling of frozen meat products, and dispel the misconception that frozen meat is not fresh, tasty or wholesome (SFA, 2019). Reports from AVA indicate that as a result of the campaigns, consumers are willing to make adjustments to their preferences for basic food items.

#### 4.8.2.2 Other Campaigns

Like other rich nations, Singapore has the problem of growing food waste. The Clean Plate Campaign (2013- present) aims to reduce food waste by creating awareness of the environmental and social impacts of food waste, and instilling the habit of mindful eating.

The National Healthy Lifestyle Campaign (1992- present), run by Singapore's Health Promotion Board, aims to promote healthy eating habits and regular exercise.



Table 9: Singapore CEACs on food safety and standards

Policies on IEC for consumers	Singapore Food Agency Act 2019 (Part 2, Section 5(h)) Singapore Food Agency (Certification Marks) Regulations 2019 the Consumer Protection (Fair Trading) Act (CPFTA)
Institutional mandate	SFA CCS CASE
CEAC stakeholders	SFA CCS CASE
CEAC motivation	Foodborne illness outbreak, Testing and inspection results Food security resilience
CEAC structure/mechanism:	
Goals/aims	Minimise illnesses, prevent future recurrence
Safer/sustainable alternatives: <i>available, convenient, affordable, suitable</i>	SFA-certified
Target group	General public, students
Approach	Media PSAs, advertisements competitions, games
Evaluation	Monitor FBD, lifestyle diseases
Resources	Government-funded
Reporting	SFA annual report, CASE annual complaints report
Challenges	NA



## 4.9 Thailand

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Thailand's agri-food sector is quite advanced (compared to other countries in the Mekong sub-region) and the focus on an economic policy of sufficiency has improved food security and food safety in the country. Thai food culture is also one of the main tourist attractions. The Thai national food control system is designed to meet domestic, tourism and trade needs. Thailand's food security situation makes it the third placed AMS on the GFSI 2020, coming behind Singapore and Malaysia. It performs well in terms of affordability but has dipped slightly in terms of quality and safety. Its consumers are categorised in ACEI as empowered (107/130). The ACEI indicated that Thai consumers have low level of participation in consumer groups or programmes.

### 4.9.1 National food control system and consumer protection

Thailand's food control system underwent a reform in 2004, with the enactment of the Food Act B.E. 2522 and the adoption by the National Bureau of Agricultural Commodities and Food Standards (ACFS) of the national strategic plans 'Standards, Quality and Safety for Agricultural Commodities and Food Products (2010-2013)'. Mandatory standards were established for the maximum permissible pesticide residues, and the Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) standard was widely promoted. Thai producers can choose between Thai Q-GAP (public scheme) and Thai-GAP (private scheme) for compliance and certification (Wongprawmas, 2015).

In 2008, the National Food Committee Act 2008 came into effect, establishing the National Food Committee to serve as the main agency for national food management and to promote cooperation and the integration of budgetary and other resources during normal times as well as during emergencies. The committee's major roles are, among other things, to propose food quality standards, as well as policies and strategies for food security and food education. One of the four main strategies is Food Education with emphasis on research and developing knowledge and awareness on resource management for food production and distribution as well as desirable consumer behaviours (The Thailand Food Committee, 2012).

Consumer education and awareness campaigns on food safety are guided by research on consumption patterns. The role of village health volunteers to reach out to consumers is very important in the national strategy on CEACs on food safety and standards (The Thailand Food Committee, 2012).

The Thai food control system applies a multi-agency approach from farm to table, mainly involving agencies in the Ministry of Public Health (MPH) and Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives (MOAC).



A key division of FDA Thailand for CEACs is the Public Consumer Affairs Division. This includes sub-divisions that support national CEACs on food (and drug) safety:

- Corporate Affairs Sub-Division
- Consumer Behaviour Development Sub-Division
- Network Development Sub-Division
- System Development Sub-Division
- Information Technology Sub-Division
- Administrative Section

The consumer education activities of FDA through these sub-divisions aim to provide consumers with sufficient accurate information to enable them to choose products wisely. FDA Thailand provides consumer food safety information using many channels and media: television, radio, newspapers, leaflets, internet and other available media.

FDA Thailand has regularly conducted CEACs on priority topics for food safety in department stores, schools and villages around the country. FDA Thailand holds a national forum to facilitate exchanges and insights on consumer protection and to share public health-related experiences among various stakeholders and agencies. Such forums assist in identifying solutions for crucial problems related to consumer protection with respect to food (and drugs). This also helps build stronger multi-agency relationships and cooperation. In addition to consumer campaigns, FDA Thailand works with local health departments, networks and other agencies to organise food safety awareness campaigns targeting street food vendors and hospital staff.

The Office of Consumer Protection Board (OPCB) is the lead consumer protection agency. The consumer protection law of Thailand is the Consumer Protection Act 1979. Thailand's consumer education includes the integration of consumer protection in the core school curriculum, as several other AMS have done. Sectoral CEACs are carried out by the sector regulators, sometimes in collaboration with OPCB.

The mission of Thailand's Ministry of Commerce (MoC) includes promoting organic produce for domestic and international markets. MoC has developed networks for producers, traders and partners and provides relevant capacity building for entrepreneurs. It has developed a pilot model for an 'Organic Business Community'. Thailand has several food labels: Q-GAP for the safety of fresh produce for the domestic market; Thai-GAP for exports and Organic Thailand (Warunpun, 2016). GMP and HACCP certification marks also exist for processed/pre-packaged food.

Thailand has a large number of supermarkets and convenience stores where products certified as safe and organic are widely available to consumers. Surveys suggest that consumers usually associate organic or GAP-certified food with health and a low risk of pesticide residues (Warunpun, 2016).



## 4.9.2 Best practices in CEACs on food safety and standards

FDA Thailand and provincial/district health departments and universities have designed and implemented structured CEACs on food safety and standards. The following best practices from CEACs in Thailand are grounded on evidence and derive from research into food consumption behaviour and related foodborne illnesses, such as *Streptococcus suis* leading to sepsis and meningitis, and liver fluke causing bile duct cancer (Cholangiocarcinoma). Both these diseases are associated with the consumption of animal food sources: raw pork and raw fish respectively.

### 4.9.2.1 Raw pork and *Streptococcus suis* in Phayao Province, Thailand

This campaign was initiated by the Ministry of Health with Osaka University in Japan.<sup>19</sup> *Streptococcus suis* (S.suis) is a zoonotic pathogen in swine and humans. It causes sepsis and meningitis. Researchers studied the exposure and infection route and prevalence of the disease in the province. The S.suis campaign was designed, developed and organised by the Ministry of Public Health, the Bureau of Food Safety Extension and Support, the Department of Medical Sciences, and the Phayao Public Health Office (Takeuchi D, 2017, June).

The campaign's success factor was the localisation of campaign materials that created an emotional response among the consumers/general public (*'emotional driver to evoke disgust at the consumption of raw pork products'*) (Takeuchi D, 2017, June). Another success factor for the campaign was the record keeping of foodborne disease incidents by the local public health departments, which enabled the campaign organisers to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the campaign.

Campaign organisers recorded infections occurring between January 2010 and September 2013. The campaign objectives were:

- increase knowledge about the disease
- change people's behaviour.

Campaign activities included:

- lectures for health volunteers (the volunteers returned to their respective villages to conduct educational lectures for residents)
- pamphlets showing the transmission route of the pathogen and related risk behaviours
- methods to prevent infection, using humorous cartoon characters to make understanding easier

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<sup>19</sup> Japan Initiative for a Global Research Network on Infectious Diseases, launched by the Ministry of Education, Science, and Culture of Japan, provided the financial support for the study and the campaign.



- public banners (of a former Minister of Public Health explaining that the consumption of raw pork, which is also a common accompaniment for alcohol in Northern Thailand, is ultimately associated with hearing loss and death)
- posters showing the transmission route and symptoms of the disease.

Public awareness sessions were organised between January and December 2011 in Phayao province.



Figure 18: Intended behaviour for protection against *S.suis* in raw pork (Thailand - Phayao Province 2011)



Figure 17: *S.suis* CEAC banner, Phayao, Thailand - 2011



The CEAC organisers assessed the success of the campaign and reported that the number of *S. suis* infection cases in 2011 and 2012 had fallen to 13 and 10 cases respectively, compared to 31 in 2010. The organisers noticed a shift in behaviour in terms of locations where raw pork was consumed as a result of the campaign. They observed a reduction in raw pork consumption at restaurants and markets and an increase in consumption at home. The assessment also showed that women were more receptive to the campaign message and ready to change.

The organisers acknowledged there are challenges in changing consumers' behaviour in just one year of campaigning, if the food consumption behaviour is culturally ingrained. They recommended that education on the food safety risks associated with eating raw pork should begin at a very young age, and schools should play an important role.

#### 4.9.2.2 Cholangiocarcinoma or CCA eradication campaign

Cholangiocarcinoma or CCA is foodborne parasite-induced bile duct cancer. Over 90 per cent of global cases reported are from Northeastern Thailand and Lao PDR (namely Champasak and Savanakheth provinces). The popular tradition of consuming raw or partially cooked freshwater cyprinid fish leads to a high prevalence of infection with liver fluke (*O. viverrini*).

Public health sectors have been campaigning continuously for the prevention and control of liver fluke since 1950, usually with small, local consumer / public education efforts. In 2007 a locally restricted Lawa project (in Northeastern Thailand) was initiated by researchers in Khon Kaen University combining anthelmintic treatment, intensive health education in communities and schools, and ecosystem monitoring. These efforts resulted in the Cholangiocarcinoma Screening and Care Program or CASCAP, implemented by Khon Kaen University in collaboration with the National Health Security Office (NHSO) and the Ministry of Public Health. A key component of CASCAP is the continued public education campaign on safe food choices and preparation (CASCAP, 2016). Private sector stakeholders later joined the fight to eradicate CCA and liver fluke in Thailand in 2018. The Siam Commercial Bank (SCB) supported and launched the 'bile duct cancer prevention campaign in Northeastern Thailand' in December 2018.

The campaign materials and approach include a 'Pop 4.0 (Ogre 4.0)' short film, comic books, 'Stop Cancer by Eating Cooked Food' menus, and voice clips. Posters and learning kits in the form of games with warning messages ('Beware of Getting Flukes and Succumbing to Bile Cancer If You Eat Raw Freshwater Fish' and 'Stop Bile Cancer by Eating Cooked Food') were also produced. SCB jointly sponsored a 'CCA Run For Life' activity on 6 January, 2019, to raise funds for bile duct operations in cancer patients from low-income groups (SCB, 2019).

The CCA and liver fluke eradication programme in Thailand was hailed as a success and is now being considered for Lao PDR. WHO refers to CASCAP as a success story and best practice in foodborne parasite (helminths) eradication (CASCAP, 2016).





Table 10: Thailand CEACs on food safety and standards

Policies on IEC for consumers	Food Act B.E. 2522 Consumer Protection Act 1979
Institutional mandate	National Food Committee Office of Consumer Protection Board Public Consumers Affairs Division, FDA Ministry of Commerce
CEAC stakeholders	FDA OPCB National Bureau of Agricultural Commodity and Food Standards (ACFS) Village Health Centers Universities
CEAC motivation	Prevalence of certain foodborne disease Agri-food trade and tourism
CEAC structure/mechanism:	
Goals/aims	Minimise incidents of FBD Trust in agri-food supply chain
Safer/sustainable alternatives: <i>available, convenient, affordable, suitable</i>	Q-Gap certified fresh products; Clean Food Good Taster vendors / restaurants
Target group	Village health centres Women Students
Approach	talks, collaterals, testing and publication of reports, promotion at supermarkets, media outreach.
Evaluation	Report on pre, during and post intervention. Prevalence of certain foodborne diseases, sales/production of certified products
Resources	Government-funded; some donor funded
Reporting	Research reports, programme reports
Challenges	Some food consumption behaviour is culturally ingrained and very difficult to shift to safer consumption behaviour



## 4.10 Viet Nam

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Viet Nam's agri-food sector is a success story among the AMS. The reforms of the Doi Moi have lifted many out of poverty, leading to a robust economy with agri-food as an important economic sector. As the population grew and demand for food rose, in order to meet both domestic and international demand, the agri-food sector policies and private sector motivations focused on increasing yields and outputs. As a result, there was an increase in the indiscriminate use of agri-chemicals. More and more, the importing countries rejected produce due to violations of maximum residue levels (FAO, 2004).

Viet Nam has since increased its focus on improving the quality and safety of its agri-food to improve its trade. The progress in terms of GFSI 2020 and AWDO 2020 reflects the success of the reforms and subsequent economic growth in Viet Nam. The ACEI score of 82.96/130 categorises consumers as moderately empowered.

### 4.10.1 National food control system and consumer protection

In 2010, The Food Safety Law (FSL) was promulgated by the National Assembly of Viet Nam. The law aims to ensure that food safety management is conducted along the entire food supply chain, from farm to fork. Food safety management is assigned to three main ministries: the Ministry of Health (MOH), the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD), and the Ministry of Industry and Trade (MOIT). The FSL entered into force on July 1, 2011, and is the umbrella guidance on food safety.

It provides organisations and individuals with rights and obligations to ensure food safety; conditions for food safety; food production and trading; food import and export; food advertisement and labelling; food testing; food risk analysis; prevention of food safety incidents and how to deal with them; information, education and communication on food safety; and state management of food safety.

Viet Nam's Law on Protection of Consumers was enacted in 2010 and the protection agency is the Viet Nam Competition and Consumer Agency (VCCA). Consumer protection on food safety is assigned to its sectoral regulators under the Food Safety Law 2010.

Viet Nam's lead food safety competent authority is the Viet Nam Food Administration (VFA). The commitment to CEACS on food safety is reflected in the National Strategy for Food Safety, and Chapter IX of the Food Safety Law 2010. The Food Safety Law 2010 is designed according to the five elements of the FAO/WHO risk-based national food control system. Viet Nam is constantly reviewing and improving the national food control mechanism and has recently piloted the decentralisation of food safety controls to provincial authorities. The three locations are Ho Chi Minh, Bac Ninh and Da Nang (Hai Vu Phama, 2020).



#### 4.10.2 National Strategy for Food Safety (2011-2020) and Vision 2030

The National Strategy for Food Safety (2011-2020) and Vision 2030 (Decision No. 20/QD-TTg) seek to:

- (i) ensure the safety of food for consumers and emphasises the responsibilities and rights of the organisations and individuals producing and trading food, and of every citizen
- (ii) implement the provisions of the Food Safety Law in a synchronised way through inspection, testing and management of food safety
- (iii) strengthen information and communication on food safety.

Vietnam Television, Radio Voice of Vietnam, Vietnam News Agency and other media agencies at different levels have been assigned to provide useful information on food safety through regular broadcasts or special programmes about the food regulations.<sup>20</sup>

#### 4.10.3 Food Safety Law and information, education, communication and training

The Viet Nam Food Safety Law 2010 (FSL) addresses the FAO recommendations on the national food control system of the five components. The FSL provides extensive scope for food safety information, education and communication (IEC) as well as training. Below are some excerpts from the FSL related to IEC and training:

**Article 56.** Objectives and requirements of the information, education and communication on food safety

1. Information, education and communication on food safety is aimed at improving the awareness of food safety, changes of backward behaviour, customs and practices in production, trading, living, eating and drinking which cause harm to food safety to protect people's health and lives; trading morality, sense of responsibility of organisations and individuals producing and trading in respect to food consumers' health and lives.
2. The provision of information, education and communication on food safety shall have to meet the following requirements:
  - a) Accurate, prompt, clear, simple and useful;
  - b) Suitable to tradition, culture, national character, belief, social moral, religion, customs and habits;
  - c) Suitable to each category of entities to be propagandized.

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<sup>20</sup> FAO recommends that communication specialist are engaged to help design content and perhaps whole campaigns on safer food.



**Article 57.** Contents of information, education and communication on food safety

1. Providing information, propagandizing knowledge and laws on food safety.
2. Reasons, ways of identification of food poisoning risks, contagion via food and measures to prevent and fight food safety incidents.
3. Information on symbolic safe food producer or trader; recovering of unsafe food, dealing with establishments committing serious breach of the laws on food safety.

**Article 58.** Subjects accessing information, education and communication on food safety

1. Organizations and individuals may be entitled to the right to access information, education and communication on food safety.
2. A priority in accessing information, education and communication on food safety shall be given to the following subjects:
  - a) Food consumers
  - b) People managing and running food production and trading establishments; people directly involved in food production and trading
  - c) Organizations and individuals producing and trading raw and fresh food; producing and trading food at a small scale; people in special socio-economic difficult conditions.

**Article 59.** Forms of information, education and communication on food safety

1. Implementing through the competent State body in charge of food safety.
2. Via mass media.
3. Combining with teaching and studying programmes at educational establishments in the national education system.
4. Through cultural and community activities, activities of unions, social organisations and other forms of public cultures.
5. Through food safety inquiry locations in the Ministry managing the sector.

**Article 60.** Responsibilities for information, education and communication on food safety

1. **Bodies, organisations and units within the scope of their respective duties** and powers shall be responsible for information, education and communication on food safety.
2. **The Minister of Health**, and ministers managing the sector and heads of relevant ministerial-level bodies shall be responsible for directing the relevant bodies to provide accurate and scientific information on food safety; and promptly notify any inaccurate information on food safety.
3. **The Minister of Information and Communication** shall be responsible for directing mass media agencies to regularly provide information and communications on food safety, mainstreaming food safety issues with other communication and information programmes.
4. **The Minister of Education and Training** shall be responsible for presiding over and coordinating with Ministers of Health and minister of ministry managing the sector and relevant ministerial-level bodies in developing content for food safety education in combination with other issues.



5. **People's committees** of all levels shall be responsible for organising the provision of information, education and communication on food safety to the local people.
6. **Mass media agencies** shall be responsible for giving priority in terms 29 of timing and length of their broadcasts to provide information, educate and communicate on food safety on the radio and televisions; also in terms of the volume and the position on a printed, visual or electronic newspapers per the regulations of the Minister of Information and Communication. The information, education and communication on food safety on the mass media shall be free of charge except for the cases where the programme is broadcast made under a separate contract or programme or is sponsored by a domestic or foreign organisation or individual.
7. The **Fatherland Front**, associations and social organisations, within the scope of their respective duties, shall be responsible for providing information and communication on food safety.
8. **Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD)** established the Viet-GAP standard and certification programme in 2008 to provide guidelines for safe fruit and vegetable production to farmers in Viet Nam.

#### **NGOs and consumers associations**

There is a limited role for NGOs and consumer associations in CEACs on food safety and standards. The Vietnam Association of Science and Technology for Quality Standards (VINASTAQ)<sup>21</sup> and VICOPRO (established in 2018) are involved in policy consultations and represent consumers' interests in policy decisions. They also organise events bringing together various stakeholders to deliberate on consumer issues, the most recent being plastic pollution in conjunction with the 2021 World Consumer Rights Day. In November 2019, VINASTAQ organised a seminar on 'Standardisation to promote the development of organic agricultural products' in collaboration with the Directorate for Standards, Metrology and Quality (STAMEQ) and the Vietnam Union of Science and Technology Associations (VINASTAQ, 2019).

#### **4.10.4 Best practices in CEACs on food safety and standards**

The CEAC on food safety and standards in Viet Nam is spearheaded by the Viet Nam Food Administration (VFA) and city/local authorities. Involving the private sector as campaign partners opens up opportunities to engage more consumers. Universities and research institutions can also be engaged to provide support for monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of the CEAC. The M&E results could help CEAC organisers to make effective use of limited resources and have a long-term impact on food consumption behaviour and consumers' choices.

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<sup>21</sup> VINASTAS was formerly known as Viet Nam Standards and Consumers Association. Prior to 2018 about 28 province and city-based consumer associations were members of VINASTAS. In 2018 the consumers associations formed a new organisation called Vietnamese Consumers Protection Association or VICOPRO and VINASTAS was renamed Vietnam Association of Science and Technology for Quality Standards (VINASTAQ). <https://www.moit.gov.vn/tin-chi-tiet/-/chi-tiet/chinh-thuc-ra-mat-hoi-bao-ve-nguoi-tieu-dung-viet-nam-13410-16.html>



#### 4.10.4.1 The SWAN Project 2005-2008

A structured and systematic CEAC on food safety and hygiene was carried out from November 2005 to November 2008 by the Viet Nam National Institute of Nutrition (NIN). Funding and technical assistance were provided, respectively, by the Partnership Program of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), and the International Life Sciences Institute of the Japan Center for Health Promotion (ILSI Japan CHP).

The CEAC was part of the Safe Water, Nutrition and Health Environment (SWAN) programme (National Institute of Nutrition, 2012) in three rural communes of Viet Nam:

- (i) Tam Hiep Commune, Thanh Tri District, Hanoi
- (ii) Dai Mo Commune, Tu Liem District, Hanoi
- (iii) Quang Trung commune, Vu Ban District, Nam Dinh Province

The SWAN project, which aimed to promote consumer/community awareness on water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and WHO's Five Keys to Food Safety, consisted of two major components:

- Technical programme: Improve the water quantity and quality through a participatory approach for modification of water treatment facilities. Improve the current water supply system in pilot communes and optimise the operational procedure to maintain the water treatment facility for supplying clean and safe water.
- IEC programme: Develop IEC materials with a periodic assessment to enhance the IEC activities.

The consumer campaign on the Five Keys to Food Safety used mass media channels, such as television and the national radio station, Voice of Vietnam, as well as farmers associations, the Women's Union and Veterans Association. Those associations distributed the information to their members. To reach consumers in remote areas the message was shared by playing audio through village speaker systems.



Positive outcomes included a decline in the prevalence of diarrhoea among children and improvements in the community members' food hygiene behaviour and child feeding practices. These improvements have been sustained by enhancing the capability of local water management unions (ILSI Japan Center for Health Promotion (CHP), 2015).

The success factor lies in the existing network of mass movement organisations, such as the Women's Union and the Fatherland Front, which has proved effective in reaching out to the masses with the relevant food safety information. Viet Nam has carried out CEACs on food safety more often and more systematically than have Cambodia, Lao PDR and Myanmar.

Some of the various CEACs on food safety and standards are listed below:

- i. A million signatures for food safety, by the Ministry of Industry and Trade (MOIT)
- ii. Communication campaign for Highlights of Food Safety in Agriculture, by the National Agro-Forestry-Fisheries Quality Assurance Department (NAFIQAD)
- iii. Propaganda and mobilisation for safe agri-food production and trade for public health 2017-2020 (Program 526), by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD)
- iv. Action Month for Food Safety, Food Safety for the Lunar New Year (Tet Holiday) and Food Safety for the Mid-Autumn Festival, by the Ministry of Health (MOH)

The effectiveness of the campaigns is monitored in various ways:

- Penalties for organisations, individuals and businesses that violate the law on food safety
- Testing results of food samples (especially during Tet Festival)
- Analysis of food poisoning cases
- Outreach in terms of size of target population reached; distribution of materials; social media reach, website hits, etc.



Figure 19: The WHO 5-Keys to Food Safety



#### 4.10.4.2 Viet Nam Food Administration and GrabFood

The Viet Nam Food Administration and GrabFood<sup>22</sup> (a food delivery service provider) signed a cooperation agreement to implement its food safety promotion campaign targeting restaurants, food stalls, driving partners and consumers. The VFA/GrabFood campaign was launched in April 2019 before the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the agreement, over the next three years the two parties will organise training courses for restaurants to spread knowledge about food safety. GrabFood will cooperate with VFA to distribute 6,000 information flyers about food safety, in six cities and provinces, including Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City and Haiphong. With access to hundreds of thousands of users, GrabFood will use its platform to continue spreading food safety message to consumers.

#### 4.10.4.3 Food safety campaign in Ho Chi Minh City for Tet Festival

Viet Nam often experiences a rise in food poisoning incidents and hospitalisation cases during the Lunar New Year or Tet. In response, the government has established a standing board to monitor and report on the effectiveness of measures put in place to ensure a safer celebration of this important festival.



Figure 20: VFA -GrabFood Food Safety campaign launch banners

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.vir.com.vn/grab-accompanies-ministry-of-health-to-improve-food-safety-awareness-67333.html>





Among its key indicators is the report on food safety incidents (Hoa Binh Newspaper, 2019). Large cities such as Ho Chi Minh organise food safety campaigns to coincide with Tet, which usually include (Vietnam News Agency, 2017):

1. discussions on radio and television
  2. increased frequency of food hygiene inspections
  3. monitoring of consumer hotlines for food safety complaints from the general public, and more staff assigned to attend to the hotlines
- 4.10.4.4 Dak Lak Province food poisoning prevention model

The Food Safety and Hygiene Division in Dak Lak province established a food poisoning prevention model in 14 kindergartens and two tourism areas in Buon Ma Thuot city.

It was reported that this approach has contributed to mitigating food poisoning cases among children. The provincial representative stated that public awareness of food safety improved, citing the following statistics:

- The proportion of food traders with knowledge of food safety rose to 73 per cent in 2010 from 65 per cent in 2008.
- The proportion of consumers who are aware of the importance of food safety rose to 84.5 per cent in 2010 from 65.5 per cent in 2009.

Viet Nam one of the more successful members of the CLMV group with respect to CEACs on food safety and standards. It has made good use of donor and development organisation support to advance the implementation of its campaigns, integrating them into the national food control system and providing the relevant resources and tools. The food control system is continuously being improved and the CEACs on food safety are expected to evolve with changing consumption patterns and a developing agri-food sector.

*Table 11: Viet Nam CEACs on food safety and standards*

Policies on IEC for consumers	Food Safety Law 2010 Law on Consumer Protection 2010
Institutional mandate	Viet Nam Food Administration (VFA) Viet Nam Competition and Consumer Protection Agency (VCCA)
CEAC stakeholders	VFA VCCA Provincial/city food safety management Authority MARD Private sector
CEAC motivation	FBD incidents Agri-food trade



CEAC structure/mechanism:	
Goals/aims	Minimise FBD incidents Increase trust in agri-food
Safer/sustainable alternatives: <i>available, convenient, affordable, suitable</i>	VietGAP, Organic certification/claims Improved WASH Hotline
Target group	Mass movement organisations Media Public sector
Approach	Media talks, PSAs, Village audio system Social media Materials (brochures, flyers etc)
Evaluation	Quantity of materials produced and distributed Inspection results Complaints hotline monitoring
Resources	Government-funded
Reporting	No specific reports
Challenges	Limited role of consumer association/NGOs and farmer/vendor groups in CEACs on food safety and standards



## 5. Recommendations and the way forward

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*Consumer Education and Awareness Campaigns on Food Safety and Standards in ASEAN (focusing on CLMV)*

**CEACs** on food safety and standards in ASEAN should aim to strengthen the demand for safe and sustainable food among domestic consumers in the AMS. Consumers recognise food that is safe and sustainably produced thanks to certification marks. Governance and trust in the certification marks are dependent on the relevant standards developed and approved by competent authorities.

Based on the CEAC stocktaking in ASEAN and the detailed analysis of CLMV, the demand for safe and sustainable food can be strengthened by addressing the issues faced by consumers. In the context of ASEAN, the issues are:

- trust in the certification marks/programmes
- accessibility and availability of safe and sustainable food
- information about and promotion of certification marks and what they represent

The source of information is an important factor to gain consumers' trust and their support for safe and sustainable food products. CEACs on food safety and standards should be targeted in terms of period/ duration, consumer groups and locations, and the necessary resources.

### 5.1 Recommendations for CEACs on food safety and standards in ASEAN

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#### **Capacity building of community-level organisations, vendors/private sector and mass movement organisations**

1. Regional and national initiatives to improve the implementation of food safety and sustainability standards should include capacity building of community-level organisations, mass movement organisations (women and youth) and consumer associations aimed at enhancing their understanding of safe and sustainable food standards and certification. They should strengthen the knowledge of food safety and standards and of consumer hotline among mass movement organisations, staff and volunteers in village health centres, media personnel, consumer associations and NGOs.



2. The communication skills of vendors/farmer groups who are well-connected at community level should be further strengthened. This will ensure that they share accurate information about safe and sustainable food standards and certification. (*Consider including the module on business-to-consumer communication and marketing skills in GIZ's MOSA<sup>23</sup>*).
3. Wet markets, community market vendors and community health/ volunteer groups are the most likely spokespeople for the benefits of safe and sustainable food and produce. Associations representing these groups should be targeted for community level partnerships in CEACs on food safety and standards – for example the Myanmar Fruit, Flower and Vegetable Producer and Exporter Association (MFVP) and vendors at the That Luang Lake International Agricultural Wholesale Market, newly established in Lao PDR.

### Media engagement

4. Strengthening the engagement with media agencies and personnel by organising press briefings on specific topics of food safety and standards and events similar to those organised in Viet Nam during festivals, will contribute a greater reach to the general public. Consider media capacity building programmes similar to Mekong Institute's regional training programme on Communicating Food Safety.
5. A significant portion of the CLMV population consumes news and information through traditional media such as radio, television and newspapers. However, with increasing access to the internet, social media is growing as a channel, especially for young and urban consumers.
6. Understand inter-governmental media engagement strategies<sup>24</sup>: television, radio and newspapers, with increased engagement and collaboration in the field of food safety and standards education as well as awareness campaigns, for example during festivals and on World Food Safety Day.

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<sup>23</sup> Modules on Sustainable Agriculture (MOSA) was developed by GIZ and targets stakeholders in the food supply chain, promoting a holistic approach to sustainable agriculture based on the social, economic and ecological dimensions in the context of climate change and food security. <https://www.asean-agrifood.org/modules-on-sustainable-agriculture-mosa/>

<sup>24</sup> In the CLMV state-owned or -affiliated media platforms have a greater reach (Wagstaff, 2010).



## Products and consumer lifestyle

7. CEACs should promote fresh produce food groups (fresh vegetables and fruits) sold at community or wet markets, where the majority of consumers shop, especially in CLMV. Consider shoppers' interactions with vendors, and the inspection and market surveillance activities of competent authorities at these locations. CEACs should target women, who throughout CLMV are often the main decision makers for household food purchases. Consumers in CLMV usually associate certified produce with minimum use of pesticides and a healthier choice. Shoppers at community and wet markets prefer face-to-face communication and sharing of information about the benefits of safe and sustainable food.

## Strengthen consumer complaints and feedback systems

8. Regional and national initiatives on advocacy and awareness-raising in consumer priority areas should ensure that national consumer complaints and feedback mechanisms exist and are responsive, transparent and efficient in addressing consumer grievances and feedback.

Reports on consumers' complaints provide insights into the credibility of certification programmes and fraudulent practices which may harm consumers' trust in food safety and sustainability standards.

## Monitoring and assessment of effectiveness

9. Engage university and research institutions to develop/strengthen assessment mechanisms for CEACs (for example pre-campaign KAP or intercept surveys at markets, sales data and so on)
  - a. establish reporting mechanisms on CEACs and any other consumer education and awareness activities concerning food safety and standards (for example food safety and standards in the school curriculum). In countries like Viet Nam and Thailand, divisions or units tasked with IEC on food safety should develop CEAC strategies and share progress reports on related activities. Indonesia's GKPD<sup>25</sup> has established an online monitoring mechanism for reporting and assessment of CEACs on food safety.

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<sup>25</sup> Sistem Informasi Gerakan Keamanan Pangan Desa; <http://gkpd.pom.go.id/>



## Governance and resources

10. National multi-agency food safety committees (or councils, boards etc.) should establish funding strategies. The multi-agency/multi-stakeholder committees should include, for example, consumer associations, media, NGOs, young people, farmer groups and local authorities in the design, implementation and assessment of the CEACs.
11. Competent authorities should ensure that standards and certification programmes are governed according to established regional and international practices to avoid confusion among consumers and to address misleading claims about certification.
12. Ensure that foods that are certified as safe or which comply with sustainability standards are widely available and that their locations are widely shared using mass media and at public spaces (village health centres, schools, markets, government websites, hospitals, and so on).

## ASEAN working group collaboration on CEACs

13. Regional events and working groups on consumer protection and food safety should share and exchange information about CEACs on food safety and standards – for example between the ASEAN Committee on Consumer Protection, ASEAN Health Cluster 4 (Ensuring Food Safety: promote cross-sectoral collaboration); ACCSQ (Prepared Foodstuff Product Working Group, which published the ASEAN national food control guideline).
14. The outputs of collaboration should provide guidance and tools for national level consumer education and awareness campaigns on food safety and standards – for example press release templates, animations (in AMS languages), social media templates (similar to assets developed for the UN World Water Day event)<sup>26</sup>.

CEACs on food safety and standards should be organised frequently over a long period as they concern changes in behaviour and consumption choices. Ad-hoc campaigns are as good as ineffective and are an inefficient use of limited resources.

Specific factors need to be considered at national level, especially in Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Viet Nam. These are presented in the following table.

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<sup>26</sup> <https://www.worldwaterday.org/share>



Table 12: Key CEAC considerations for Way Forward

Country	Partnerships Priority	Product group /food supply chain	Channels	Content/messages
Brunei	Health Promotion Centre	General	- Mass media; roadshows	Benefits to health
Cambodia	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. NGO-Forum</li> <li>2. Cambodia Institute for Research and Rural Development (CIRD)</li> <li>3. Farmer groups / cooperatives</li> <li>4. Vendor (their associations)</li> <li>5. National Center for Health Promotion and Village Health Workers</li> <li>6. Competition, Consumer Protection and Fraud Repression (CCF)</li> <li>7. General Directorate of Agriculture (GDA)</li> </ol>	Locally produced vegetables and fruits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Wet markets / community market – posters, banners and public announcements;</li> <li>- Vendors and farmer groups at marketplace;</li> <li>- Mass media – talks and reports;</li> <li>- Testing and inspection by authorities at market locations (mobile-lab)</li> </ul>	Safe food minimises chemical and microbiological hazards; supports local farmers and reduce dependence on imported vegetables and fruits
Indonesia	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Village food safety movement (GKPD)</li> <li>2. National Agency for Drug and Food Control (BPOM)</li> <li>3. Media</li> <li>4. Yayasan Lembaga Konsumen Indonesia (YLKI)</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Meat and poultry at wet markets / roadside vendors</li> <li>- Vegetables</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Village food safety movement volunteers; media,</li> <li>- Posters and banners at marketplace</li> </ul>	Health and well-being, (safer celebration)



Specific CEAC considerations (cont.):

Country	Partnerships Priority	Product group /food supply chain	Channels	Content/messages
Lao PDR	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Lao Women’s Union (LWU)</li> <li>2. Lao Youth Union (LYU)</li> <li>3. Media</li> <li>4. Farmer/ vendor cooperatives (LFN)</li> <li>5. Village health workers</li> <li>6. Food and Drug Department (and Centre for Information and Education on Health – CIEH)</li> <li>7. Dept of Internal Trade</li> </ol>	Vegetables and fruits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Vendors and farmer groups at wet markets / community markets</li> <li>- LWU/LYU community level leaders organised events</li> <li>- Mass media</li> <li>- Posters, banners at marketplace, public areas</li> <li>- Testing and inspection by authorities at market locations (mobile-lab)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Health, family well-being</li> <li>- Minimise chemical and microbiological hazards</li> </ul>
Malaysia	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Consumer associations</li> <li>2. Media</li> <li>3. Food Safety and Quality Division (FSQD)</li> </ol>	General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Consumer club programmes</li> <li>- National consumer education competitions,</li> <li>- Social media campaign</li> <li>- National (World) Consumer Day Celebration</li> </ul>	Health and environmental well-being; safer celebration





Specific CEAC considerations (cont.):

Country	Partnerships Priority	Product group /food supply chain	Channels	Content/messages
Myanmar	1. Myanmar Consumers Union	- Vegetables - Fruits	- Vendors and farmer groups at marketplace	- Health benefits - Minimise chemical and microbiological hazards
	2. Myanmar Fruit, Flower and Vegetable Producer and Exporter Association (MFVP)	- Cooking oil	- Mass media; social media - Posters, banners at marketplace / public areas	
	3. Private sector (MILS) or private sector associations/network; farmer groups		- Testing and inspection by authorities at market locations (mobile-lab)	
	4. Media			
	5. Food Science and Technology Association (FOSTA)			
	6. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)			
	7. Department of Consumer Affairs (DOCA)			
Philippines	1. Media	General	- Mass media; social media	Health and environmental well-being
	2. Department of Trade and Industry (DTI)			
	3. Department of Health (DoH)			
Singapore	1. Consumer Association of Singapore (CASE)	General	- Mass media; social media	Sustainability, food security, health
	2. Singapore Food Authority (SFA)		- Posters, banners at marketplace	



Specific CEAC considerations (cont.):

Country	Partnerships Priority	Product group /food supply chain	Channels	Content/messages
Thailand	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)</li> <li>2. Village health centre volunteers and personnel</li> <li>3. Media</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Vegetables</li> <li>- Fruits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Village/community health centre talks (public service announcements)</li> <li>- Talks and activities at schools</li> <li>- Mass media, social media</li> <li>- Posters, banners at marketplace</li> </ul>	Health, minimise chemical and microbiological hazard in food and environmental well-being
Viet Nam	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Youth and Women's Union</li> <li>2. Media</li> <li>3. Vietnamese Consumers Protection Association (VICOPRO)/ Vietnam Standards &amp; Quality Association (VINASTAQ)</li> <li>4. Viet Nam Food Agency (IEC department)</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Vegetables</li> <li>- Fruits</li> <li>- Meat (pork)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mass Media: talks, public service announcements,</li> <li>- Village public audio/ information system</li> <li>- Social media</li> <li>- Collaterals (brochures, flyers etc.)</li> </ul>	Health benefits, safe food minimises chemical and microbiological hazards; support local produce; avoidable health care cost



## 5 ANNEX

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### A. United Nations Guidelines on Consumer Protection (UNGCP) - Section G. Education and Information Programs

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42. Member States should develop or encourage the development of general consumer education and information programmes, including information on the environmental impacts of consumer choices and behaviour and the possible implications, including benefits and costs, of changes in consumption, bearing in mind the cultural traditions of the people concerned. The aim of such programmes should be **to enable people to act as discriminating consumers, capable of making an informed choice of goods and services, and conscious of their rights and responsibilities.** In developing such programmes, special attention should be given to the needs of vulnerable and disadvantaged consumers, in both rural and urban areas, including low-income consumers and those with low or non-existent literacy levels. Consumer groups, business and other relevant organisations of civil society should be involved in these educational efforts.

43. Consumer education should, where appropriate, **become an integral part of the basic curriculum of the educational system, preferably as a component of existing subjects.**

44. Consumer education and information programmes should cover such important aspects of consumer protection as the following:

- (a) **Health, nutrition, prevention of food-borne diseases and food adulteration;**
- (b) **Product hazards;**
- (c) **Product labelling;**
- (d) Relevant legislation, how to access dispute resolution mechanisms and obtain redress and agencies and organisations for consumer protection;
- (e) Information on weights and measures, prices, quality, credit conditions and availability of basic necessities;
- (f) Environmental protection;
- (g) Electronic commerce;
- (h) Financial services
- (i) Efficient use of materials, energy and water.

45. Member States should **encourage consumer organisations and other interested groups, including the media,** to undertake education and information programmes, including on the environmental impacts of consumption patterns and on the possible implications, including benefits and costs, of changes in consumption, particularly for the benefit of low-income consumer groups in rural and urban areas.



46. Businesses should, where appropriate, undertake or participate in factual and relevant consumer education and information programmes.

47. Bearing in mind the need to reach rural consumers and illiterate consumers, Member States should, as appropriate, **develop or encourage the development of consumer information programmes in the mass media or through other delivery channels that reach such consumers.**

48. Member States should organise or **encourage training programmes for educators, mass media professionals and consumer advisers to enable them to participate in carrying out consumer information and education programmes.**

## B. Structure of the Food Control System Assessment Tool: C.1.3 on Communication Flows and Involvement with Consumers

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### C.1.3.1 Assessment Criterion:

The CAs have an established internal policy of disseminating information to consumers, including special needs groups, on the importance of food safety, including safe food handling practices and critical quality issues.

### Guidance

The general public can be supported and empowered by CAs to maintain their own health through the provision of best practices for handling food (e.g. handling high risk foods, general hygienic practices). As part of their control activities (as explained in Dimension B) CAs may be in a position to collect scientific information relating to public health profiles.

This could be for the entire country; for specific areas, such as regions or cities; or for specific populations (e.g. specific consumer groups such as children, pregnant women, the elderly, immunocompromised groups; or specific diets for regions or areas, which affect the exposure of such populations). Such information may be gathered from records kept by CAs or other national institutions as appropriate (e.g. for outbreaks of salmonellosis, campylobacteriosis, listeriosis, E. coli or other common public health issues).

This information is then used for different purposes, including for dissemination to consumers, with a capacity to target particular issues, groups, areas, etc. Critical quality issues (including fraud) can also be subject to important communication messages – for example, when these are likely to have an effect on nutritional status or to have an important economic impact for consumers. The information disseminated should be accurate and tailored to the needs of the targeted audience, which means that content, format and vehicle are considered. Depending on the topic at hand and the communication strategy, selected CAs can decide to communicate directly with consumers or through consumers' associations (Ref. para 14 of CAC/GL 82-2013).



### Possible Outcome

The general public is informed about general food safety issues and their impact on public health.

### Possible Indicators

- CAs provide information on best practices for handling food.
- CAs target specific audiences such as pregnant women, the elderly, immunocompromised, etc.
- CAs actively use public media for disseminating public health information (fact sheets, posters, radio transmissions, websites, etc.).
- CAs use information, education and communication (IEC) methods in schools, social media, newspapers, cinemas, etc.
- Meetings or consultations are held between consumer associations and officials or political representatives.

### Sources of Evidence

- Hard evidence of dissemination of information (fact sheets, posters, websites, etc.).
- Surveys of public opinion regarding the CAs' efforts to deliver risk communication and advice
- Any open correspondence or open meetings between consumer associations for food safety and CAs to discuss official controls for food safety and the government's achievements or policies



## C. WASH-related status for Southeast Asia (Asian Development Bank, 2020)

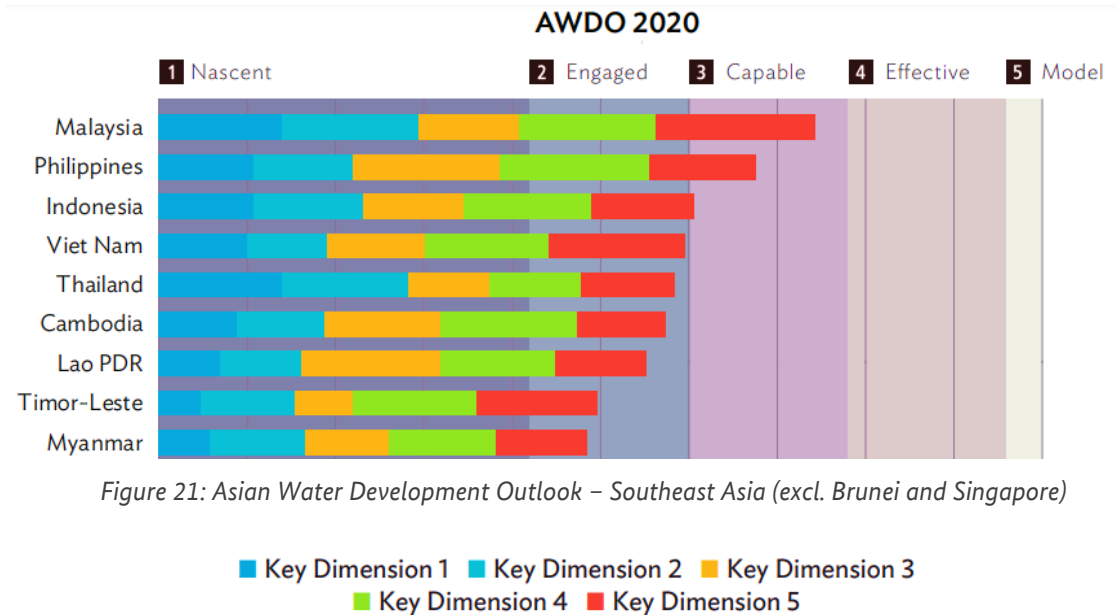
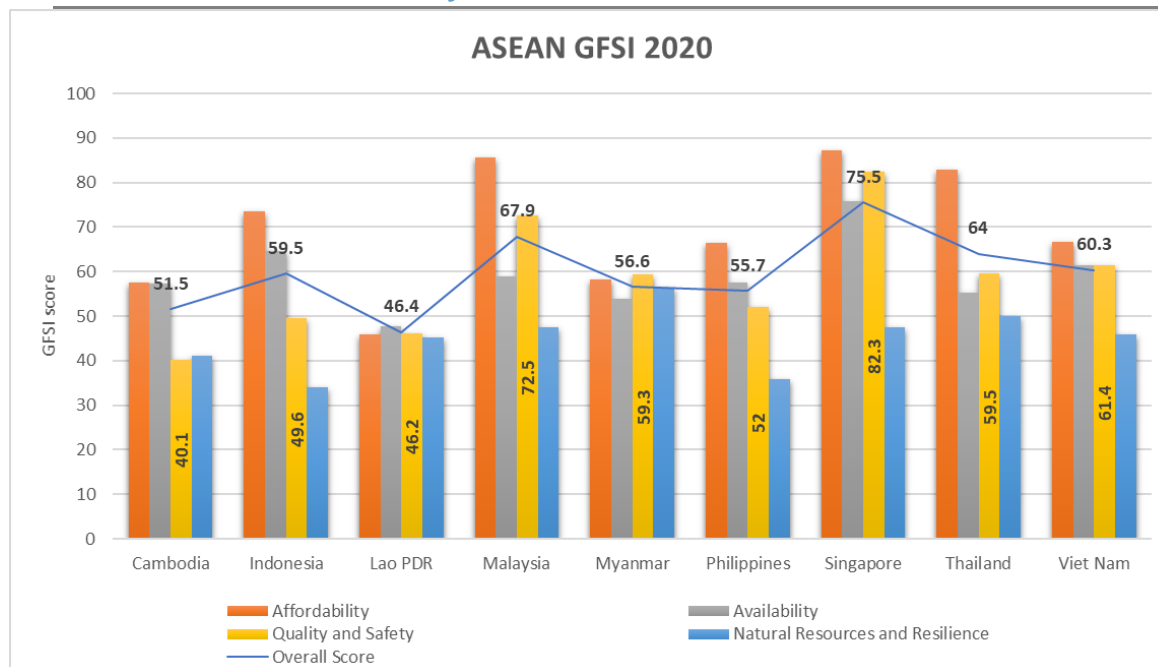


Figure 21: Asian Water Development Outlook – Southeast Asia (excl. Brunei and Singapore)

Key Development Dimensions	Composition	Measurement
1. Rural Household Water Security	Access to water supply Access to sanitation Health impacts affordability	The provision of sufficient, safe, physically accessible and affordable water and sanitation services for health and livelihoods, coupled with an acceptable level of water-related risk, in rural households
2. Economic Water Security	Broad economy agriculture Energy Industry	The assurance of adequate water to sustainably satisfy a country's economic growth and avoid economic losses due to water-induced disasters
3. Urban Water Security	Access to water supply Access to sanitation Affordability Drainage (flooding) Environment (water quality)	The extent Asian Development Bank members provide safely managed and affordable water and sanitation services for their urban communities to sustainably achieve desired outcomes
4. Environmental Water Security	Catchment and Aquatic System Condition Index Environmental Governance Index	The health of rivers, wetlands, and groundwater systems and measured progress on restoring aquatic ecosystems to health on a national and regional scale
5. Water-Related Disaster Security	Climate risk (drought) Hydrological risk (flood) Meteorological risk (storm)	A nation's recent exposure to water related disasters, their vulnerability to those disasters, and their capacity to resist and bounce back



## D. Global Food Security Index 2020 for AMS

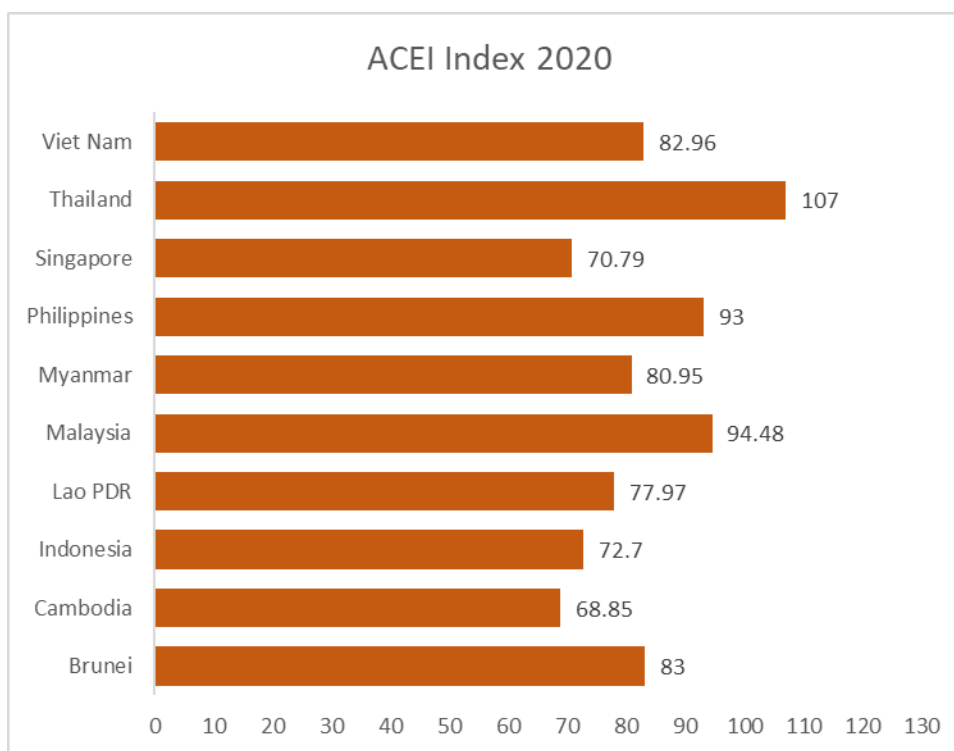


(Note: GFSI 2020 for Brunei – No Data)

	GFSI 2020 - ASEAN				
	Overall Score	Affordability	Availability	Quality and Safety	Natural Resources and Resilience
Country					
Cambodia	51.5	57.5	57.4	40.1	41.2
Indonesia	59.5	73.5	64.7	49.6	34.1
Lao PDR	46.4	45.8	47.8	46.2	45.1
Malaysia	67.9	85.5	58.8	72.5	47.5
Myanmar	56.6	58.1	53.9	59.3	56.3
Philippines	55.7	66.5	57.6	52	35.8
Singapore	75.5	87.3	75.8	82.3	47.4
Thailand	64	82.8	55.3	59.5	50
Viet Nam	60.3	66.7	61.3	61.4	45.9
Brunei	No Data				



## E. ASEAN Consumer Empowerment Index 2020



Country	ACEI Index (score / 130)
Cambodia	68.85
Indonesia	72.7
Lao PDR	77.97
Malaysia	94.48
Myanmar	80.95
Philippines	93
Singapore	70.79
Thailand	107
Viet Nam	82.96
Brunei	83.00





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