

# **ASEAN Centre for Active Ageing and Innovation**

## **5-Year Strategic Plan**

*“Toward Regional Excellence for Active and Inclusive  
Resilient Ageing Society”*

March 14<sup>th</sup>, 2025



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For more information, please contact:

**ASEAN Centre for Active Ageing and Innovation (ACAI)**

Phone number: (+66)8-7509-1879

Email address: [secretariat@asean-acai.org](mailto:secretariat@asean-acai.org)

Website: [www.asean-acai.org](http://www.asean-acai.org)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/acaicentre>

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/acai-centre/>

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## Abbreviations and acronyms

<b>ACAI</b>	ASEAN Centre for Active Ageing and Innovation
<b>AAI</b>	Active Ageing Index
<b>AMS</b>	ASEAN Member States
<b>APEC</b>	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
<b>APHDA</b>	ASEAN Post-2015 Health Development Agenda
<b>CBR</b>	Crude Birth Rate
<b>CDR</b>	Crude Death Rate
<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product
<b>GNI</b>	Gross National Income
<b>ICT</b>	Information and Communication Technology
<b>KPI</b>	Key Performance Indicator
<b>M&amp;E</b>	Monitoring and Evaluation
<b>MEL</b>	Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning
<b>NGO</b>	Non-governmental organization
<b>MIPAA</b>	Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing
<b>OADR</b>	Old-Age Dependency Ratio
<b>PPP</b>	Purchasing Power Parity
<b>SOMHD</b>	Senior Officials' Meeting on Health Development
<b>ToC</b>	Theory of Change

## Preface

### Message from the Chair of the Governing Board of the ASEAN Centre for Active Ageing and Innovation (ACAI)

***“Planning is a sweet dream. Implementation is hard works. Evaluation is being tortured”***

***“Action without planning is better than planning without action”***

*The ageing population in ASEAN is a social crisis. Crisis always presents both opportunities and challenges. As the region continues to experience demographic shifts, the opportunities for innovative and inclusive strategies have been widely opened.*

*The ACAI’s missions include policy Advocacy, Capacity building and networking, promote Active ageing and technological/social Innovations. ACAI aims to catalyse a coordinated approach that embraces the diverse needs and strengths of each member state, while also taking into account the broader regional and global context of geopolitical dynamics, digital transformation and pandemic threats.*

*The COVID-19 pandemic and rapid changing geopolitics have further underscored the need for resilience in our social and healthcare systems. By leveraging ASEAN’s collaborative framework, ACAI will support the creation of policies, programs, and partnerships that promote the active participation of older persons in society and ensure they enjoy a quality of life that is both fulfilling and sustainable.*

*This 5-Year Strategic Plan outlines an actionable framework that aligns with the priorities of ASEAN Member based on global and regional aspirations for a sustainable society.*

*This strategic plan is a **living** document that will evolve in response to changing circumstances, emerging trends, and new challenges. It is designed to guide ACAI’s work in the coming years. It is also the essential tools to collaborate with all relevant national, regional and global partners.*

*ACAI is an exciting journey for all of us to lead our countries and the region towards concrete achievements on the SDGs. Its success requires the trust-based coordination, cooperation and collaboration among all leaders of the member states and partners.*

***“We will definitely not only try to do our best. We will collectively get the necessary done to ensure that we will not be tortured when it comes to evaluation!”***



Dr. Suwit Wibulpolprasert  
Chair of the Governing Board  
ASEAN Centre for Active Ageing and Innovation (ACAI)

## Message from the Executive Director of the ASEAN Centre for Active Ageing and Innovation (ACAI)

*As the Executive Director of the ASEAN Centre for Active Ageing and Innovation (ACAI), I am delighted to introduce this 5-Year Strategic Plan, which marks a crucial step towards strengthening regional cooperation and advancing the well-being of older persons across ASEAN. At ACAI, we are deeply committed to supporting ASEAN Member States in their efforts to build inclusive, sustainable, and resilient systems that enhance the health and quality of life of older persons in the region.*

*This strategic plan is anchored in the recognition that regional collaboration is the cornerstone of success. By working together, ASEAN countries can share best practices, harmonize policies, and foster innovation in active ageing. Through ACAI's initiatives, we aim to ensure that the voices of older persons are heard, that they remain active contributors to society, and that they have access to the resources and opportunities needed to live full and meaningful lives.*

*Our approach will focus on addressing the specific needs of each Member State, taking into account the unique challenges and opportunities present within different national contexts. At the same time, we are committed to fostering collaboration across borders, leveraging expertise and resources, and building partnerships with regional and global stakeholders. In line with the SDGs, we will prioritize the health and well-being of older persons, with a particular focus on digital inclusion, social participation, and sustainable healthcare systems.*

*Most importantly, this strategic plan is not solely ACAI's. It belongs to all ASEAN Member States. It is designed as a collective roadmap that reflects the shared vision, priorities, and commitments of our Member States and partners. ACAI will serve as an open platform to facilitate dialogue, coordination, and knowledge exchange, ensuring that this strategy remains inclusive and responsive to the evolving needs of the region.*

*This 5-Year Strategic Plan outlines the key objectives, activities, and partnerships that will guide ACAI's work in the coming years. It is a roadmap that reflects our collective vision for a more age-friendly ASEAN, where older persons can thrive in a rapidly changing world.*

*We look forward to working together with all ASEAN Member States and partners to realize this vision and make meaningful progress in improving the lives of older persons across the region.*



Dr. Somsak Akksilp  
Executive Director  
ASEAN Centre for Active Ageing and Innovation (ACAI)

## **Part 1. ACAI 5-Year Strategy**

### **1.1 Introduction and Purposes of ACAI 5-Year Strategy**

Across Southeast Asia, the region is facing a significant demographic shift as ageing populations increasingly affect well-being, economic stability, and social protection systems. This evolving context presents both risks and opportunities. The risks include a rapidly growing ageing population amid economic downturns, widening disparities, and the escalating impacts of climate change, all of which many countries are not fully prepared to address. At the same time, this shift presents unique opportunities for innovation and progress. Advancements in healthcare, social innovation, and economic resilience can help mitigate the challenges of ageing. There is also immense potential to harness the contributions of older persons by promoting intergenerational equity and implementing inclusive policies. The digital transformation enables improved elder care services, streamlined operations, and expanded access to healthcare and social support. Additionally, ASEAN's dynamic collaboration and strong regional commitment to ageing issues, exemplified by the Kuala Lumpur Declaration on Ageing: Empowering Older Persons in ASEAN, provides a solid foundation for collaborative policy development and implementation.

Addressing these regional challenges requires coordinated action, concrete solutions, and innovative approaches. It necessitates increased demand for integrated health, social and economic policies supported by research, innovation, and multi-sectoral integration. ASEAN has recognized the importance of both risks and opportunities in preparing for an ageing society and the continuing need to promote the well-being of the older persons in the region. All 10 member states signed an agreement in 2020 for the establishment of the ASEAN Centre for Active Ageing and Innovation (ACAI), for Thailand to host the ACAI. The Royal Thai government supports the annual centre's operational budget for the next five years. The establishment of the ACAI is to serve as a knowledge centre on active ageing and innovation by supporting evidence-informed policies, strategies, and guidelines on active ageing, implementing capacity development programs, and conducting research and development and innovation on active ageing in ASEAN Member States (AMS). To facilitate collaboration and promote regional efforts and innovation for active ageing, the ACAI has developed a comprehensive 5-Year Strategic Plan. This strategic plan aims to unite all parties in pursuing common regional goals and commitments and delivering sustainable, long-term, equitable outcomes. It includes achieving self-financing of the institution and aligning efforts with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030, ensuring a resilient and inclusive future for the region's active ageing population.

**The purposes** of the strategy are summarized below:

- I. Set priorities and agendas to drive its mission of advancing active ageing across the Southeast Asian region.
- II. Contribute to the regional strategic vision by addressing diverse needs and challenges to promote healthy, active, and productive ageing.
- III. Emphasize the importance of collaboration with regional and global partners for effective program development, research and innovation, and financial mobilization.
- IV. Translate the regional common vision into actionable projects with a clear roadmap for the next five years.

## **1.2 Our Vision, Mission, and Goal**

### ***Vision***

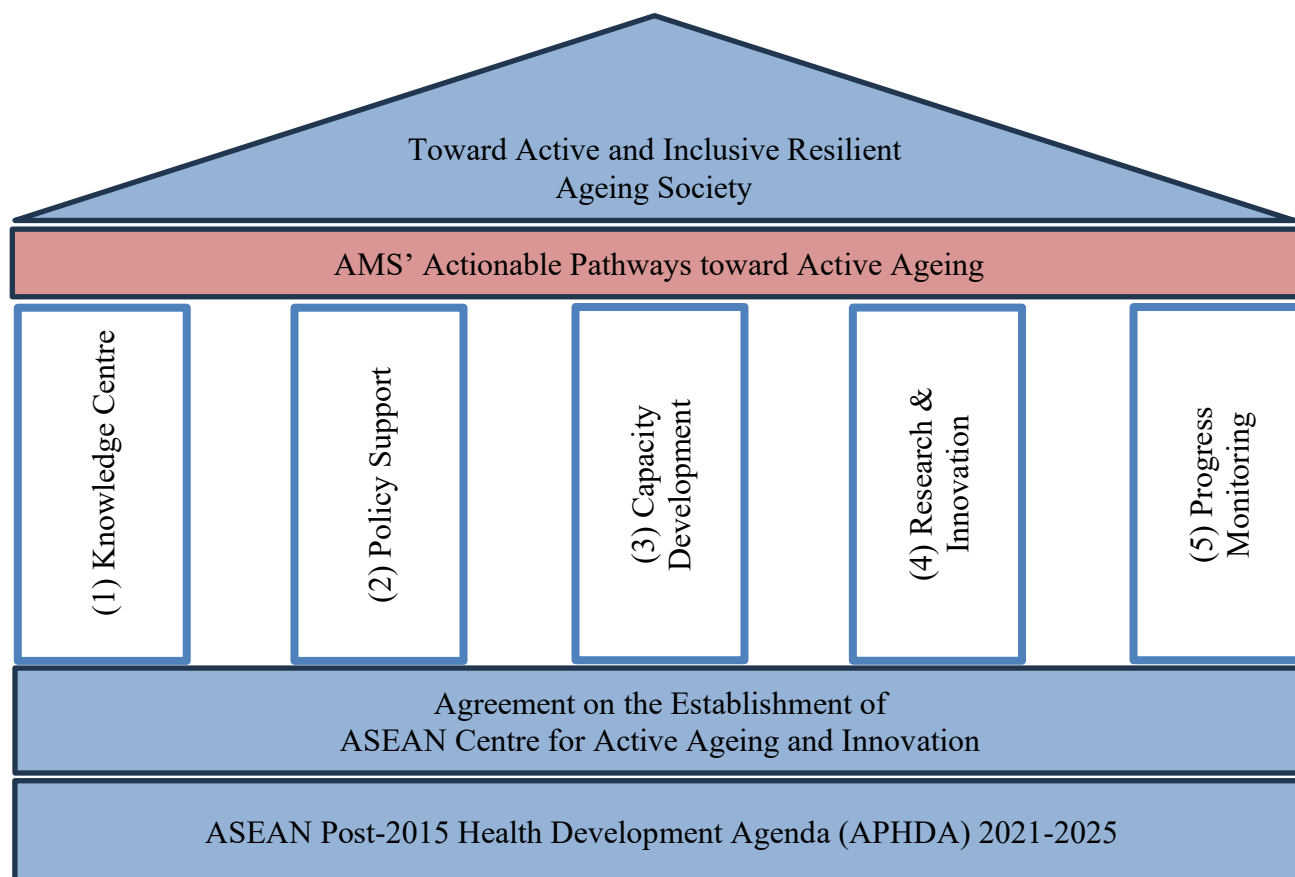
*“A leading regional platform and international think tank for fostering multi-level collaboration on ageing issues to create an age-friendly, supportive, and enabling environment, and an inclusively resilient future where older populations live happily, actively, and productively in our ASEAN community and across the globe.”*

### ***Mission***

- 1. Serve as a knowledge centre on active ageing.*
- 2. Support evidence-informed policies, strategies and guidelines on active ageing.*
- 3. Implement capacity development programmes in support of active ageing.*
- 4. Conduct research and development and innovation which support active ageing.*
- 5. Support the monitoring of the progress of active ageing in ASEAN.*

### ***Goal***

*“To empower ASEAN Member States with comprehensive knowledge, evidence-informed policies, and innovative strategies through actionable and multisectoral policies grounded in scientific research and innovation that foster active, productive, and healthy ageing, ensuring intergenerational resilient society.”*



**Figure 1.** ACAI's Vision and Mission at a Glance

### 1.3 Our Mandates in Supporting ASEAN Member States

ACAI was established based on the regional Agreement on the Establishment of ACAI. Following Article 14 of the agreement, it entered into force on 20 May 2020, after all 10 AMS had duly signed the agreement.

As per the established agreement, the ACAI shall play a critical role in supporting AMS to address the challenges and opportunities of an ageing society. Refers to that, **“Active ageing”** is a comprehensive and inclusive concept that encompasses the future development of **healthy and productive ageing**. The fundamental roles of ACAI include generating profound knowledge, developing actionable strategies and policies, fostering capacity building, and strengthening regional collaboration. Additionally, WHO defined active ageing as *“the process of optimizing opportunities for health, participation and security to enhance the quality of life as people age”*.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> World Health Organization. (2002). Active ageing: A policy framework (No. WHO/NMH/NPH/02.8). World Health Organization (p.6-7).

## ACAI 5-Year Strategic Plan

The term ‘active’ refers to continuing participation in social, economic, cultural, spiritual and civic affairs, not just the ability to be physically active or to participate in the labour force.

The centre is dedicated to generating knowledge and fostering innovation to support evidence-informed policies, strategies, guidelines, and pathways for promoting healthy and active ageing promotion in the region. It serves the purpose of being a regional hub for research and innovation, capacity development, and multi-sectoral collaboration, equipping AMS with the tools needed to promote active ageing. By driving innovation in comprehensive healthcare, social care, and supportive environments, ACAI enhances the well-being and independence of older persons while reinforcing family, social, and cultural institutions. In doing so, ACAI empowers them as active contributors to society, even in the face of evolving challenges.

This mission aligns with regional commitments such as the ASEAN Plus Three Statement on Active Ageing and key declarations, including the Brunei Darussalam Declaration on Strengthening Family Institution: Caring for the Elderly adopted in 2010, and the Kuala Lumpur Declaration on Ageing: Empowering Older Persons in ASEAN adopted in 2015, underscoring ACAI’s role as a catalyst for inclusive and sustainable ageing policies across ASEAN, underpinning the ASEAN Post-2015 Health Development Agenda (APHDA) 2021-2025. The mandates of the organization also align with the broader global development frameworks, World Health Organization (WHO) Global Strategy and Action Plan on Ageing and Health (2016-2030), Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA) (2002), and UN Decade of Healthy Ageing 2021-2030, and other climate and emergency response, such as the Declaration on Building a Resilient ASEAN through Inclusive and Sustainable Disaster Recover, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR), and the Paris Agreement, highlighting the urgency in global interconnected efforts for promoting active ageing and sustainable society at international, regional and local levels.

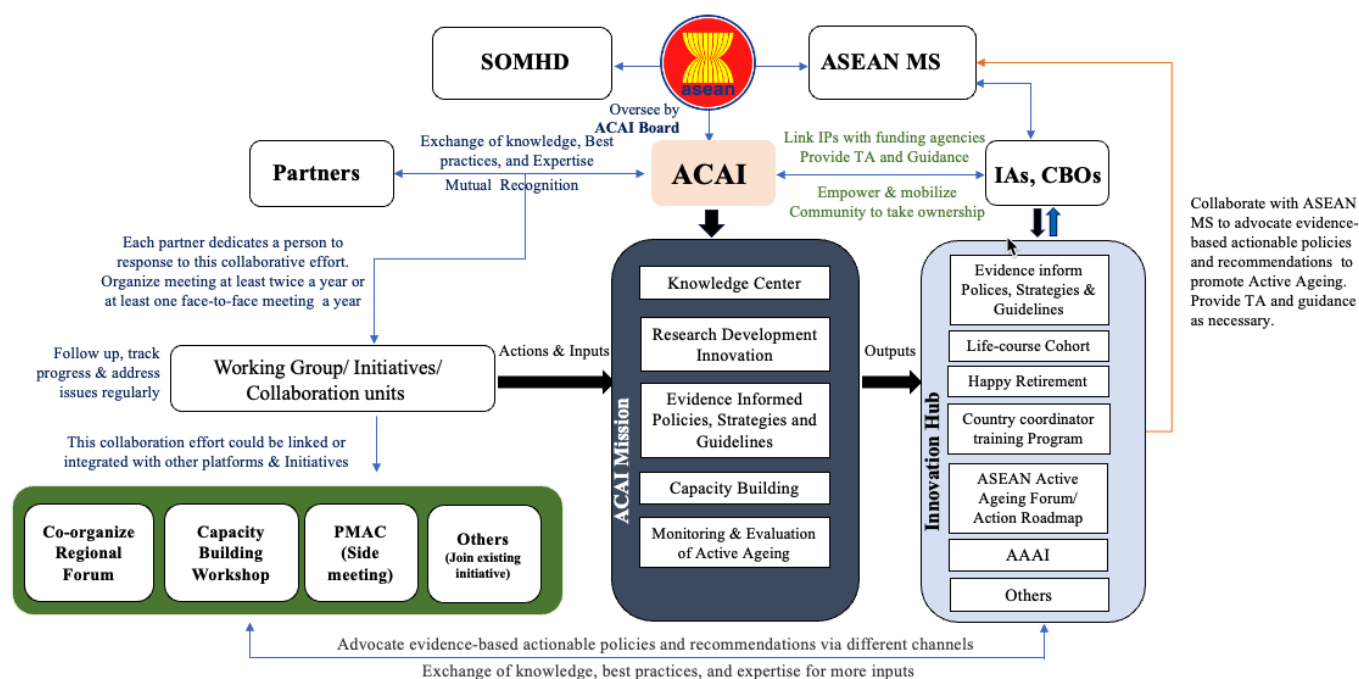


**Figure 2.** The 35<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit in Bangkok, Thailand, the Opening Ceremony of ACAI

Source: Department of Medical Services, Ministry of Public Health, Thailand

## ACAI 5-Year Strategic Plan

ACAI is an intergovernmental body under ASEAN, operating within the ASEAN Health Cluster and Social Welfare Cluster, with oversight from the ASEAN Senior Officials' Meeting on Health Development (SOMHD) and the ACAI's Governing Board. ASEAN provides technical support, strategic guidance, and institutional networks to help ACAI achieve its mission of collaborating with AMS to promote regional active ageing policies and innovation. ACAI works closely with various regional working groups and collaboration units to provide technical input, resources, and support, ensuring effective cooperation and implementation of its programs and initiatives.



**Figure 3.** Institutional Framework of the ACAI, ASEAN, and various partners

Source: ACAI (2025)

## Part 2. Moving Toward Active and Inclusive Resilient Ageing Society

### 2.1 Challenges Ahead: Population and Social Well-being at Risk

#### *Ageing demographic trends*

Globally, the population aged 60 years or over is expected to increase from 1.06 billion (13.5%) in 2020 to 2.13 billion (22.0%) in 2050, marking a 101% growth. In Europe, older persons already accounted for 25.6% of the population in 2020, projected to reach 35.9% by 2050, demonstrating a slower growth compared to Southeast Asia but starting from a higher baseline. Evidence in Table 1 shows that ASEAN countries are ageing at a much more rapid pace than developed regions. This table below describes that in 2020, individuals aged 60+ comprised 11.5% of the total population in Southeast Asia, totalling 77.4 million people. This figure is projected to more than double, reaching 173.3 million by 2050, when one in five individuals in the region will be aged 60+ (22.0%).<sup>2</sup>

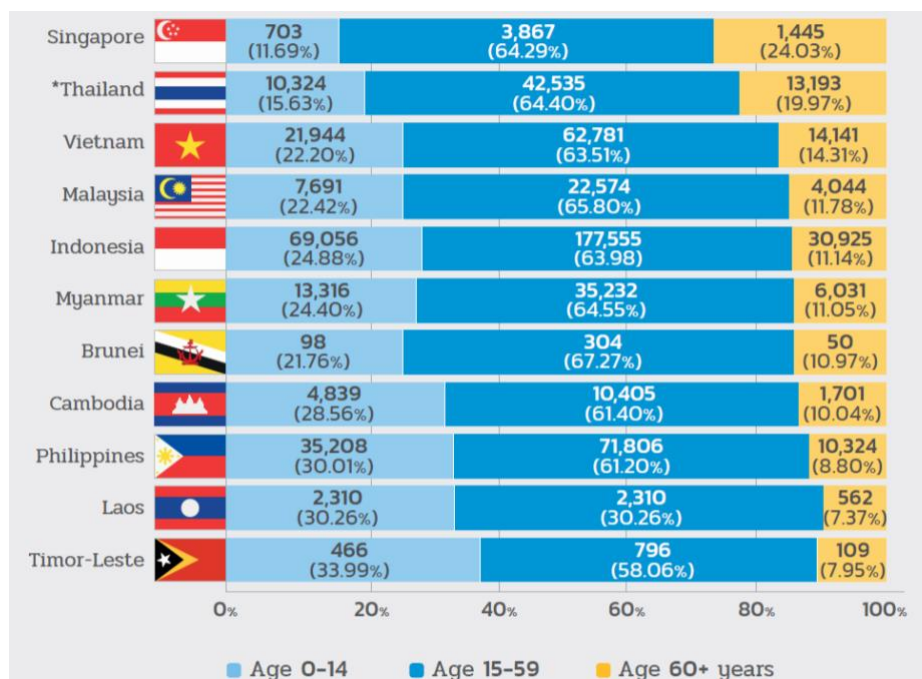
**Table 1.** Number and percentage of older persons (60+) of Southeast Asia and other regions.

Region/Sub-region	2020		2050	
	N <sub>60+</sub> ('000)	% <sub>60+</sub>	N <sub>60+</sub> ('000)	% <sub>60+</sub>
World	1,060,593	13.50	2,132,389	22.00
Africa	73,724	5.40	215,0686	8.70
Asia	619,139	13.30	1,337,587	25.30
<b>Southeast Asia</b>	<b>77,383</b>	<b>11.50</b>	<b>173,346</b>	<b>22.00</b>
Europe	191,351	25.60	252,054	35.90
Latin America & the Caribbean	83,799	12.90	188,111	25.14
Northern America	85,091	22.80	125,644	29.80
Oceania	7,489	17.00	13,925	24.10

**Source:** United Nations (2022). World Population Prospects 2022. (Retrieved from The ASEAN Secretariat (2023). Old Age Poverty and Active Ageing in ASEAN Trends and Opportunities)

<sup>2</sup> The ASEAN Secretariat (2023). Old Age Poverty and Active Ageing in ASEAN Trends and Opportunities Jakarta: ASEAN Secretariat.

Southeast Asia is undergoing a rapid demographic transition, marked by an unprecedented rise in the ageing population. Figure 4 illustrates the share of the ageing population in the region. Singapore has the highest proportion of older persons (24.03%), followed by Thailand (19.97%), Vietnam (14.31%), Malaysia (11.78%), and Indonesia (11.14%). The countries with the lowest proportions are Cambodia (10.04%), the Philippines (8.80%), and Lao PDR (7.37%). Recognizing the diverse ageing trends across Southeast Asia, ACAI acknowledges the varying needs and demographic challenges among AMS.



**Figure 4.** The age structure of the populations in ASEAN member states and Timor-Leste  
Source: United Nations, *World Population Prospects 2023* (retrieved from “Situation of the Thai Older Persons 2023”).

Table 2 shows the diverse stages of demographic transition and income classification across countries in the ASEAN region. This requires specific attention to the different stages of demographic challenges and socioeconomic statuses of these countries. While some countries face immediate pressures requiring urgent policy responses, others must focus on mid- to long-term preparation, including financial planning, regulatory frameworks, and resource allocation. This diversity presents a unique opportunity for regional collaboration, enabling countries to exchange lessons, share best practices, and develop collective and innovative solutions. This ensures that no AMS face the challenges of an ageing population alone.

**Table 2.** Demographic Transition, Ageing and Income Classification in the ASEAN region.

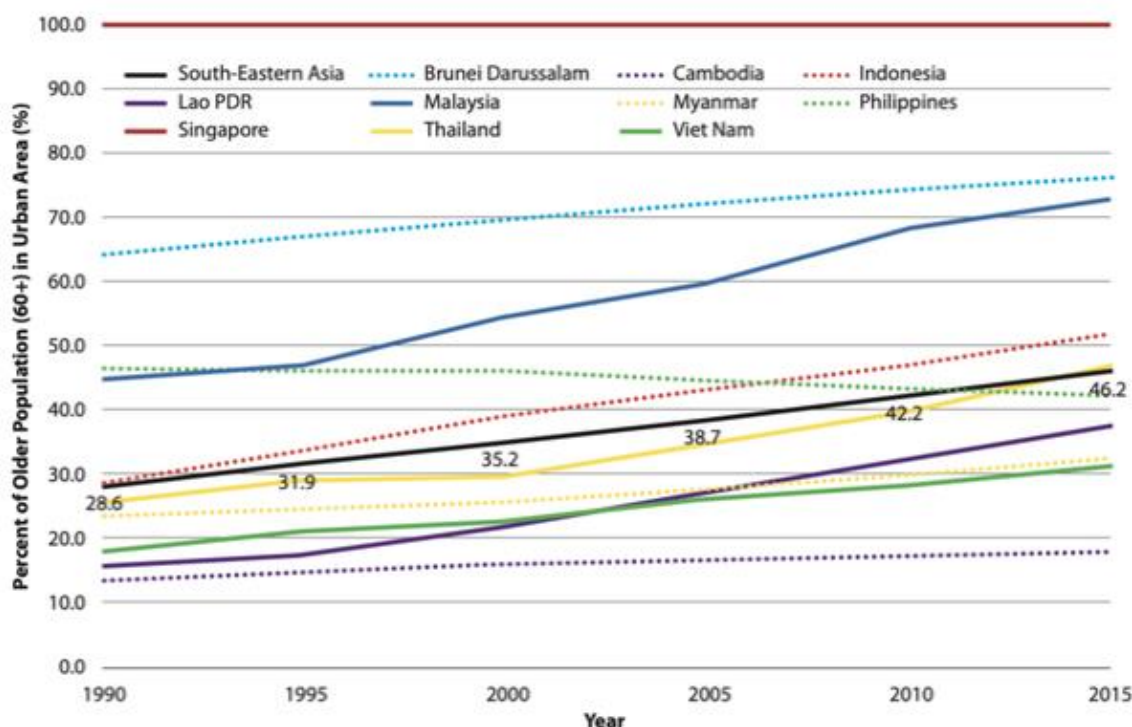
Stage of demographic transition	Status of ageing	Countries	% of older persons 60+	Income classification
Post-dividend	Aged	Singapore	24.03	High
		Thailand	19.97	Upper middle
Late dividend	Ageing	Vietnam	14.31	Lower middle
		Malaysia	11.78	Upper middle
		Indonesia	11.14	Upper middle
		Myanmar	11.05	Lower middle
		Brunei	10.97	High
Early dividend	Young	Cambodia	10.04	Lower middle
		Philippines	8.80	Lower middle
		Lao PDR	7.37	Lower middle
Note: Demographic transitions were defined by the Global Monitoring Report 2015/2016, ageing statuses were classified based on United Nations reports, and country income classifications were determined using World Bank data.				

**Source:** generated using data of UN DESA and World Bank.

(United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2022). World Population Prospects: The 2022 Revision; The World Bank. Fertility rate, total (births per woman). The World Bank <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.TFRT.IN> (2021)) and United Nations (2022). World Population Prospects 2022. (Retrieved from The ASEAN Secretariat (2023). Old Age Poverty and Active Ageing in ASEAN Trends and Opportunities)

## ***Social and Economic Implications***

The ageing population in the ASEAN region presents significant social challenges, particularly in healthcare, social inclusion, economic security, support systems, and the need for a safe and resilient environment. Healthcare systems across the region face increasing demand as 70% of older persons suffer from chronic illnesses, with more aged care needs expected to double within the next two decades. While Singapore and Thailand lead with robust healthcare services, many countries, such as Cambodia and Lao PDR, still lack sufficient infrastructure. Social isolation is another concern, as urbanization and smaller family sizes erode traditional family support structures, leaving older persons, particularly women, vulnerable.



**Figure 5.** Percentage of older persons (60+) living in urban areas

Source: ILO 2020 (Retrieved from The ASEAN Secretariat (2023). Old Age Poverty and Active Ageing in ASEAN Trends and Opportunities)

Access to social protection remains inadequate, with only 36% of ASEAN's older population covered by formal pension systems, and even in countries like Thailand, where coverage is high at 89.1%, pension amounts often fail to meet basic living costs. Additionally, older persons in Southeast Asia are disproportionately impacted by natural disasters and climate-related effects due to inadequate housing and limited disaster preparedness, further compounding their climate and physical vulnerability.<sup>3</sup> Figure 5 shows that a growing number of older persons in AMS will be living in urban areas. This trend suggests greater environmental and health risks among the older population. They may also face social disconnection and miss out on the community support compared to the traditional rural community setting.

Economically, ASEAN's ageing societies face labour force constraints, fiscal pressures, challenges in balancing economic growth with demographic changes, and rising dependency ratios. The ageing population in the ASEAN region has demonstrated significant growth, with substantial variations in economic development and sectoral contributions across AMS. For example, in the Philippines, the population aged 60+ more than doubled from 4 million (5.1%) in 2000 to 9.4 million (8.6%) in 2020, but the country remains a lower middle-income economy. This

<sup>3</sup> World Health Organization South-East Asia Regional Office (2024). 2021-2023 Progress report on the United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing: WHO South-East Asia Region. New Delhi: World Health Organization.

pattern is common in many AMS, where rising ageing demographics have not been accompanied by proportional increases in GNI per capita. In 2020, the GNI per capita in five lower middle-income AMS ranged between \$4,330 and \$8,630 (Purchasing Power Parity, current international \$), underscoring the challenge of getting old before getting rich—a worrying trend.

The economic structures vary widely in the region: Myanmar, Cambodia, and Lao PDR had the highest agricultural GDP shares at 22%, 17.3%, and 13.9%, respectively, while Brunei Darussalam's economy was dominated by industry at 64.2%, primarily oil and gas. In contrast, services contributed to 74.1% of Singapore's GDP, reflecting its advanced economic structure. These economic disparities, coupled with the recent ageing trends, highlight the diversity in social protection standards and family life course patterns across ASEAN, necessitating adaptive and country-specific approaches and recommendations to address the social and economic implications of population ageing.

The COVID-19 pandemic has underscored the critical need to enhance digital literacy among older populations in the ASEAN region, highlighting the importance of bridging the digital divide. As economies become increasingly digitalized, older persons need to be equipped with the necessary skills to participate in the workforce, access essential services, and stay socially connected. Digital literacy not only fosters economic resilience but also helps combat social isolation, promotes lifelong learning, and enhances access to social and long-term care. While countries like Malaysia and Singapore have implemented lifelong learning programs, including the lifelong academy and digital skill training for older adults. Singapore's Senior Go Digital programme<sup>4</sup> is an example of a government program to support older citizens to access public services and to support their daily life digitally. There remains a pressing need for comprehensive regional policies and innovative solutions to ensure inclusive digital transformation across all AMS.

### ***Human Security and Health Risks***

Studies have also highlighted the health risks of the older population in ASEAN, who are encountering significant well-being challenges influenced by behavioural and personal factors, with notable disparities across countries. In the Philippines and Vietnam, approximately 20% of older persons smoke, drink, and exhibit poor oral health, underscoring the prevalence of unhealthy behaviours.<sup>5</sup> Myanmar and Vietnam lack programs addressing behavioural determinants for active ageing, while Indonesia, Cambodia, and Thailand report low awareness of good health behaviours. In Cambodia and Thailand, smoking and drinking are common, and in all three countries, older persons often do not engage in regular physical activity. Over 60% of older persons in Indonesia and Cambodia perceive their health status as poor, with only 33% undergoing regular physical

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.imda.gov.sg/how-we-can-help/seniors-go-digital>

<sup>5</sup> The ASEAN Secretariat (2023). Old Age Poverty and Active Ageing in ASEAN Trends and Opportunities Jakarta: ASEAN Secretariat.

check-ups and just 5% attending regular dental check-ups in Thailand. Older persons are also at risk of violence and abuse. The abusive factors can include neglect, violation, deprivation, and lack of respect, which can cause illness, injury, isolation, and depression among older adults. This region needs to address the older adults' respect and protection from violence as the number of older populations is rising.

Across most of the ASEAN region, except for Singapore and Brunei Darussalam, regular exercise is uncommon, partly due to limited health education programs. Psychological health, however, is generally positive in most AMS, with surveys showing low depression rates and high life satisfaction among older persons. Yet, critical data gaps persist, particularly regarding behavioural and psychological health factors in countries like Lao PDR and Indonesia, which hinder comprehensive understanding and policy intervention. These trends underscore the urgent need for targeted programs and interventions to promote healthy behaviours, improve health education, and enhance access to preventive healthcare and long-term health and social services across ASEAN.

**The highlighted health risks** among older populations in ASEAN, based on the current studies<sup>6,7</sup> include:

- 1) Unhealthy habits: A high prevalence of smoking and alcohol consumption.
- 2) Lack of physical activity: Insufficient engagement in regular physical activity or exercise routines, contributing to poor health outcomes.
- 3) Non-communicable diseases: Chronic illnesses, including cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, and hypertension, are prevalent due to ageing and sedentary lifestyles.
- 4) Mental health issues: Depression and anxiety are common, with limited mental health services available in many countries.
- 5) Physical abuse and violence: there is a need for increasing awareness of the incidence of elder abuse, which directly leads to negative impacts on health, safety, and social participation.
- 6) Lack of comprehensive long-term care and preventive care: There are significant gaps in establishing a continuum comprehensive healthcare system.
- 7) Urban and rural disparities: While urbanization is increasing, access to age-friendly healthcare and localized services in rural areas remains inadequate.

Ensuring access to healthcare, social protection, and age-friendly environments is fundamental to upholding human rights and dignity for older persons. Neglecting these needs diminishes societal

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<sup>6</sup> Chomik, R., & Piggott, J. (2015). Population Ageing and Social Security in Asia. *Asian Economic Policy Review*, 10(2), 199-222.

<sup>7</sup> Kadariya, S., Gautam, R., & Aro, A. R. (2019). Physical activity, mental health, and wellbeing among older adults in South and Southeast Asia: a scoping review. *BioMed research international*, 2019(1), 6752182.

cohesion and violates the principle of ‘*leaving no one behind*’ and human dignity for all. It is therefore essential to integrate healthy ageing into AMS’s policy agendas by developing comprehensive policies that address the multi-faceted needs of ageing populations, including healthcare, social protection, economic security, and supportive urban planning, and essential to promote knowledge-sharing and collaboration across AMS to adopt best practices and scaling, prototyping and innovating effective programs.

## 2.2 Addressing Institutional Gaps and Enhancing Mechanisms

Establishing active ageing policies in the ASEAN region is challenging due to the region’s diverse ageing rates, economic disparities, and rapid demographic transition, leaving limited preparation time, institutional adaptation, and responsive policy design. Limited institutional coordination, resource and budgeting constraints, and insufficient focus and concrete intervention on preventive and continuum healthcare hinder policy development. The translation of global frameworks and regional to local contexts is complex and requires institutional support, capacity building, research, and innovation.

While significant data gaps and social and economic inequalities in access to services, particularly in rural areas, exacerbate the issue. Rapid urbanization further strains infrastructure, urban design, and social services, exacerbated by increasing urban health risks and climatic concerns such as air pollution and natural disasters.<sup>8</sup>

There is a need for a **transformative approach to policymaking**, considering:

- 1) The speed of ageing in the ASEAN region is accelerating, leaving limited time for AMS governments to develop and implement comprehensive strategies.
- 2) Institutions need to adopt creative and flexible approaches to translate global and regional frameworks and blueprints into locally relevant actions and implementation.
- 3) The diversity in ageing rates across AMS creates unequal levels of readiness and capacity to address ageing-related challenges, which require comprehensive review and systematic regional learning and collaboration.
- 4) Institutions should shift toward life-course planning to ensure that interventions are relevant and sustainable for future generations, rather than focusing on immediate issue-solving.
- 5) Institutions must build capacity for regular review, adjustment, and innovation in policy frameworks and mobilization of financial and intellectual capital in response to the constant changes in demographic and societal trends.

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<sup>8</sup> World Health Organization South-East Asia Regional Office (2024). 2021-2023 Progress report on the United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing: WHO South-East Asia Region. New Delhi: World Health Organization.

Mainstreaming population ageing relevancies into AMS's national policies requires integrating cross-cutting elements such as gender, culture, and technology, while also addressing climate change and natural disasters affecting older persons. Promoting healthy, sustainable social protection systems is essential.<sup>9</sup> Strengthening poverty alleviation for older persons through targeted interventions and harmonizing institutional mechanisms is crucial. Research capacity should be enhanced via initiatives like the ASEAN Interuniversity Consortium and the ASEAN Research Network on Ageing (ARNA), fostering cross-country comparisons and mutual learning. Collaborative knowledge sharing, monitoring, and evaluation can ensure continuous policy refinement and effective institutional adoption of active ageing policies; thereby, promoting a resilient and inclusive region.

### ***Key challenges and ways forward***

#### **1. Inadequate Healthcare, Social Protection, and Healthy Environment**

The ASEAN region faces challenges in providing comprehensive healthcare and social protection for older persons, with notable gaps in preventive care, mental health services, and long-term care, particularly in lower-income countries. There is a need to raise awareness and to address inequalities in access to health and social care services, tackle agism, elder abuse and violence, and to prevent neglect, violation, deprivation, and lack of respect for older persons. The AMS needs to ensure the safety and healthy environment to support active participation of older persons in the communities.

#### **2. Economic and Labour Market Pressures from Rapid Societal Change**

The rapid increase in the ageing population is creating labour force constraints, rising support ratios, and fiscal pressures on social welfare systems. Some ASEAN regions risk “growing old before getting rich,” as their economic structures and workforce policies have not been adequately adapted to demographic shifts. Only 36% of the older persons are covered by formal pension systems, leaving many vulnerable to financial insecurity. Barriers to technology adoption by older people and the digital literacy gap need to be addressed as technology and the digitalization of the economy and services can also divide society. This situation limits opportunities for older persons to contribute meaningfully to economic and social development, exacerbating inequality and financial insecurity.

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<sup>9</sup> Zaidi, A., & Um, J. (2021). The new Asian Active Ageing Index: A case study of gender differences between two ASEAN member countries, Indonesia and Thailand. *Asia-Pacific Sustainable Development Journal*, 28(1), 33-64

### 3. Environmental and Climate Vulnerabilities

Climate change poses a growing threat to older populations in the ASEAN region, particularly those living in disaster-prone areas and urban locations with poor urban planning and physical infrastructure. Rising temperatures, floods, and typhoons disproportionately impact older persons due to limited mobility, weaker health conditions, and inadequate access to disaster response services and supportive infrastructure. Sustainable urban planning and climate-resilient infrastructure are critical to ensuring a safe and liveable environment for older citizens.

### 4. Limited Capacity and Inclusion of older persons in Policy and Decision-Making

Older persons in the ASEAN region are often excluded from formal policy design and decision-making processes, despite their increasing population. There is a lack of structured engagement mechanisms to ensure their participation in shaping policies that affect their well-being, economic security, and social inclusion. It is crucial to ensure their voices are heard in national and regional policymaking to promote inclusive and sustainable development. The focus is to empower older citizens to take part in innovating policy solutions and essential programs and services.

To address these challenges, ACAI's mission must focus on strengthening national health priorities and social development policies of AMS by integrating active ageing policies, advocating for inclusive policy engagement, strengthening comprehensive healthcare and social protection, ensuring good health and a supportive living environment, promoting economic participation and civic engagement for older persons. To this end, the ASEAN region should strive to enhance standardized and harmonized institutional coordination and the adoption of innovative solutions to support healthy, active, and climate-resilient ageing across the region.

## 2.3 Strategic Focus: Research & Knowledge Sharing, Partnerships, and Participation

### *Holistic regional approach to active ageing, integrating innovation*

Active ageing in the ASEAN region is shaped by multiple interrelated determinants that influence the well-being and participation of older persons. The study<sup>10</sup> highlights the scope of social determinants of active ageing in Southeast Asia, which includes social engagement, encompassing labour, physical, learning, and community activities, along with access to healthcare services, financial security, work opportunities, safe living environments, and personal factors such as spirituality and lifestyle choices. Recognizing the diverse ageing trends and demographic impacts across ASEAN, it is essential to conduct a systematic review of the demographic situation and its

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<sup>10</sup> TYNG, C. S. (2023). A scoping review on determinants of active ageing in southeast Asian region. *Sains Malaysiana*, 52(5), 1523-1543.

social and economic implications. This initial step will help identify regional and country-specific needs, ensuring targeted and effective responses. The ACAI focuses on formulating a holistic regional approach to active ageing, integrating innovation and tailored support for AMS within their unique socio-economic and demographic contexts. This approach will establish a regional framework for research, knowledge sharing, and innovation, guiding scientific risk factor and burden analysis, systematic country reviews, economic assessments, and long-term financing projections to support robust and evidence-based policy development and recommendations.

The focus on research, knowledge sharing, and innovation should prioritize actionable and system-oriented learning, meaning that research is effectively translated into practical, action-driven strategies. By promoting action research and knowledge system development, ACAI aims to foster sustainable and integrated solutions that address ageing-related challenges.

A holistic approach to ageing policies must integrate these determinants. Integrating various expert stakeholder consultations, the strategy proposes the **focus of research, knowledge sharing, and innovation** of ACAI in the following areas.

- 1) Epidemiology and risk analysis
- 2) Demographic data collection, longitudinal analysis, and cohort studies
- 3) Systematic review of the development, monitoring, and evaluation of 'best buy' interventions for older populations
- 4) Comprehensive and continuum health approach, including but not limited to the prevention and promotion of health interventions, and the integration of Long-term Care and Integrated Care for Older Persons (ICOPE)
- 5) Built environment, climate impacts, and enabling infrastructure for age-friendly environments
- 6) Business and social innovation
- 7) Economic flow analysis for older populations using the National Transfer Accounts (NTA) and National Time Transfer Accounts (NTTA).
- 8) Open policy engagement platform for the older persons
- 9) Human Rights for older persons
- 10) Gender issues, requiring policies addressing women's poverty, caregiving burdens, and vulnerability to violence, while recognizing men's evolving roles.

To enhance knowledge sharing, policy development, and informed decision-making, ACAI will establish an interactive data platform as a centralized knowledge hub. This platform will serve as a dynamic resource for conducting policy reviews, facilitating interactive learning, and supporting evidence-based decision-making across the region. This platform will facilitate multi-sectoral research activities and promote technical collaboration with academic, NGOs and other partners to enhance technical capacity across the region. Efforts will include designing a robust research

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and knowledge-sharing framework, coordinating regional research and innovation exchange, and developing technical assessment and capacity-building tools modified for ASEAN-wide application.

The research and capacity-building will focus on establishing an integration platform for research and innovation for knowledge sharing among AMS dedicated to ageing studies and their regional and global implications. The initial framework will prioritize ASEAN-specific needs while incorporating global best practices to ensure a comprehensive and adaptable approach to proactively addressing regional ageing challenges and support the alignment of the active ageing and innovation solutions to AMS's national health priorities and social development agendas.

### ***Inclusive engagement and key programmatic areas of intervention***

The ACAI aims to empower and engage older persons in the ASEAN region by ensuring their active participation in policy design through an inclusive, bottom-up approach. ACAI will develop an innovative and inclusive policy engagement platform and collaborate with a broad spectrum of stakeholders to foster inclusive partnerships that prioritize the safety, health, and active livelihoods of older populations. Additionally, this policy engagement will explore opportunities to leverage the unique capacities of older persons to contribute to their country's economic and social development efforts.

The insights and contributions from research, knowledge sharing, and the active participation of older persons in the policy-making process should strengthen and foster innovative solutions and policy development in **four key programmatic areas and interventions** to guarantee AMS's actionable pathways, as achievable outcome areas, toward ASEAN's active ageing:

- 1) Advancing health and wellbeing
- 2) Enabling inclusive economy and digital opportunities
- 3) Supporting age-friendly environment and climate resiliency
- 4) Ensuring organizational sustainability and transformative change

The ACAI is committed to strengthening regional collaboration by facilitating knowledge sharing, research, innovative solutions, and practical policy interventions to support an active ageing society. Beyond fostering knowledge, ACAI emphasizes the utilization of research and innovation to drive societal and policy change. A key focus is policy transfer and lesson-sharing to enhance policy design and implementation across ASEAN. By applying best practices and insights from within and beyond the region, ACAI aims to accelerate policy adoption that addresses specific national ageing challenges in each AMS. While the ACAI's strategic priorities emphasize societal transformation and raising awareness at the regional level, it is also committed to aligning and harmonizing ageing-related policies with national development goals, considering each country's socio-political context. To achieve this, ACAI will drive development and innovation, foster social

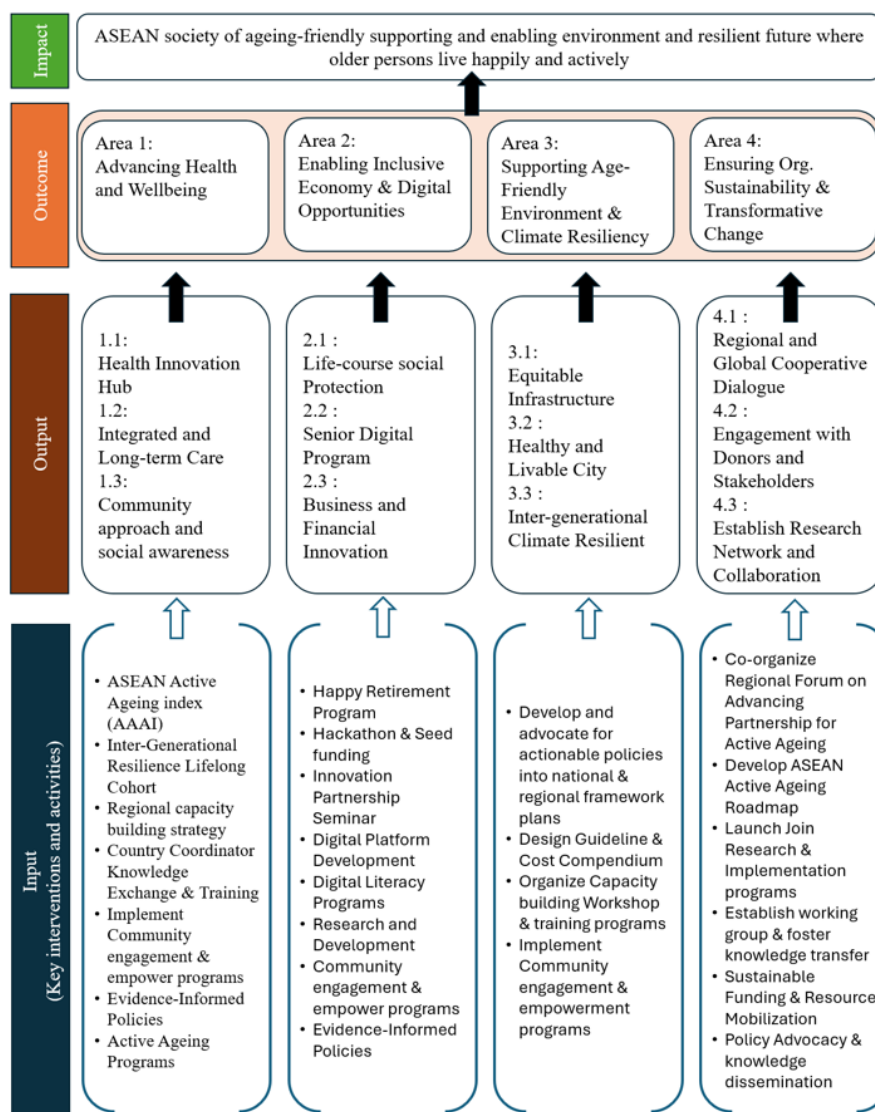
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mobilization, and advocate for policies that integrate ageing-related issues into national agendas and support their effective implementation.

## Part 3. Programmatic Approach Toward 2029

### 3.1 Strategic Programs and Work Plans

The result framework ensures that the strategic program and work plan have a Theory of Change (ToC) in outcome chain result management as well as monitors and evaluates the impacts of ACAI's key activities (see Figure 6). This strategy applies the Active Ageing Index (AAI)<sup>11</sup> to operationalize strategic outcome areas into outcome indicators.



**Figure 6.** ACAI's 5-Year Strategy for result chain management based on the Theory of Change.

<sup>11</sup> UNECE/ European Commission (2015) "Active Ageing Index 2014: Analytical Report", Report prepared by Asghar Zaidi of Centre for Research on Ageing, University of Southampton and David Stanton, under contract with United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (Geneva), co-funded by European Commission's Directorate General for Employment Social Affairs and Inclusion (Brussels).

### ***Outcome Area 1. Advancing Health and Wellbeing***

Advancing health and wellbeing requires a comprehensive approach encompassing physical, mental, and social well-being, aligning with the WHO definition of health. Policies and programs that promote mental health and social connections are equally important as those that enhance physical health status, ensuring a holistic approach to ageing. This strategic area focuses on addressing systemic determinants, awareness, and understanding of active ageing by fostering innovation, knowledge-sharing, and best practices in health and social services. Additionally, it aims to tackle behavioural determinants that impact the quality of life and long-term care for older persons. To mitigate key health risks—including poor health behaviours, mental health challenges, and limited access to integrated and long-term care—this initiative will prioritize innovative solutions, community-based care models, and expanded healthcare access and resources. This area also emphasizes a community and social awareness approach to combat ageism, violence, and abuse, while integrating gender and cultural sensitivity in program development, implementation, and evaluation.

#### Mid-term progress indicators for ***Outcome Area 1. Advancing Health and Wellbeing***

- Develop a revised and robust ASEAN Active Ageing Index (AAAI) tailored to AMS to assess monitor and evaluate active ageing progress across AMS.
- Conduct annual synthesis of global and regional best practices for active aging policies.
- Number of research and innovation projects implemented biennially across AMS, addressing key challenges such as disease burden, risk factors, and long-term care strengthening
- Number of country coordinators, researchers, policymakers, and practitioners across AMS trained in active ageing policy and implementation.
- Number of policy recommendations developed to promote happy retirement across AMS.
- Number of policy briefs and actionable recommendations on active ageing published and presented to ASEAN bodies.
- Number of local communities across AMS engaged in designing, implementing, and monitoring active ageing programs.

### ***Outcome Area 2. Enabling Inclusive Economy and Digital Opportunities***

To address the challenges of economic insecurity at old age, which significantly impact the social and economic well-being of older persons, this outcome area focuses on expanding economic opportunities and fostering an inclusive economy through digital technology and business innovation. The strategy aims to promote the silver economy by leveraging public and consumer expenditures and demands related to ageing populations and family care, ensuring that the growing demographic of individuals over 50 is actively included in economic activities. Additionally, this initiative will integrate the concepts of care economy and solidarity economy, including comprehensive social protection coverage while supporting older persons in identifying

sustainable financial avenues for longer life expectancy. Recognizing the potential of entrepreneurship in old age, the strategy will advocate for training programs to bridge knowledge and digital gaps, encourage private sector incentives for older workforce participation, and facilitate business matching and innovation-driven employment opportunities.

#### Mid-term progress indicators for ***Outcome Area 2. Enabling Inclusive Economy and Digital Opportunities***

- Number of evidence-informed policies, recommendations, and innovative solutions developed to promote an inclusive economy and digital opportunities for older persons.
- Number of implementing agencies, partners and CBOs equipped to implement, monitor and evaluate active ageing progress at local, national and regional levels.
- Number of capacity building workshops and training programs conducted to strengthen national social protection and their implementation.
- Number of online programs and activities implemented across AMS to support business development and enhance financial inclusion for older persons.
- Number of opportunities created for digital inclusion training programs of older persons.
- Number of older persons across AMS participating in rehiring and retaining programs.

#### ***Outcome Areas 3 Supporting Age-Friendly Environment and Climate Resiliency***

Older persons are among the most vulnerable populations to climate and environmental impacts, facing heightened risks from natural disasters such as flooding and heatwaves, as well as air and water pollution. To address these challenges, this outcome area focuses on integrating climate resilience into ageing policies by developing clear policy guidelines, mobilizing resources, and enhancing technical capacity for age-friendly infrastructure and sustainable urban planning. Creating an age-friendly environment is essential for promoting active ageing, ensuring that older persons can adapt to social and physical changes while maintaining their well-being and quality of life. By eliminating environmental barriers, this strategy will help reduce disability risks, enhance mobility, and support active participation in communities and the environment by integrating active ageing policy, finance and regulation with climate resilience, urban planning, and environmental protection.

#### Mid-term progress indicators for ***Outcome Areas 3 Supporting Age-Friendly Environment and Climate Resiliency***

- Number of evidence-informed policies, recommendations, and innovative solutions developed to promote age-friendly environments and climate resiliency.
- Number of programs and activities implemented across AMS focusing on age-friendly cities and climate resiliency
- Number of communities and stakeholders engaged in intergenerational climate resilience initiatives across AMS.

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- Number of programs implemented across AMS to enhance financial support and align national financial mechanisms to reduce older persons' vulnerability to disasters.
- Number of older persons participating in programs to increase awareness of climate and disaster resilience.
- Number of local communities across AMS involved in designing, implementing and monitoring active ageing programs that support age-friendly cities and climate resiliency.

### ***Outcome Areas 4 Ensuring Organizational Sustainability and Transformative Change***

As an overarching strategic outcome of ACAI's mission, this outcome area 4 focuses on strengthening regional collaboration, stakeholder engagement, and institutional capacity of ACAI and its partners to drive sustainable and transformative change in active ageing policies in ASEAN Member States. By establishing research, policy, and decision-making networks, mobilizing resources, and enhancing technical support, this strategy aims to ensure the self-financing of the centre for sustaining long-term and transformative outcomes on active ageing at the regional and national levels. Strengthening technical and institutional capacities at both national and regional levels is essential for ensuring that policies are not only developed but also effectively implemented. Additionally, the translation of global ageing frameworks into local contexts will require inclusive and participatory processes, fostering innovation and ensuring that the voices of older persons are represented in national and regional policymaking. Achieving long-term impact and sustainable change demands strategic direction for member states and strategic partners' contribution, partnership with private sectors, and supporting social and local entrepreneurs are important for ensuring that ACAI is equipped to serve as a regional catalyst and platform and long-term partners for active ageing policy development and implementation across Southeast Asia.

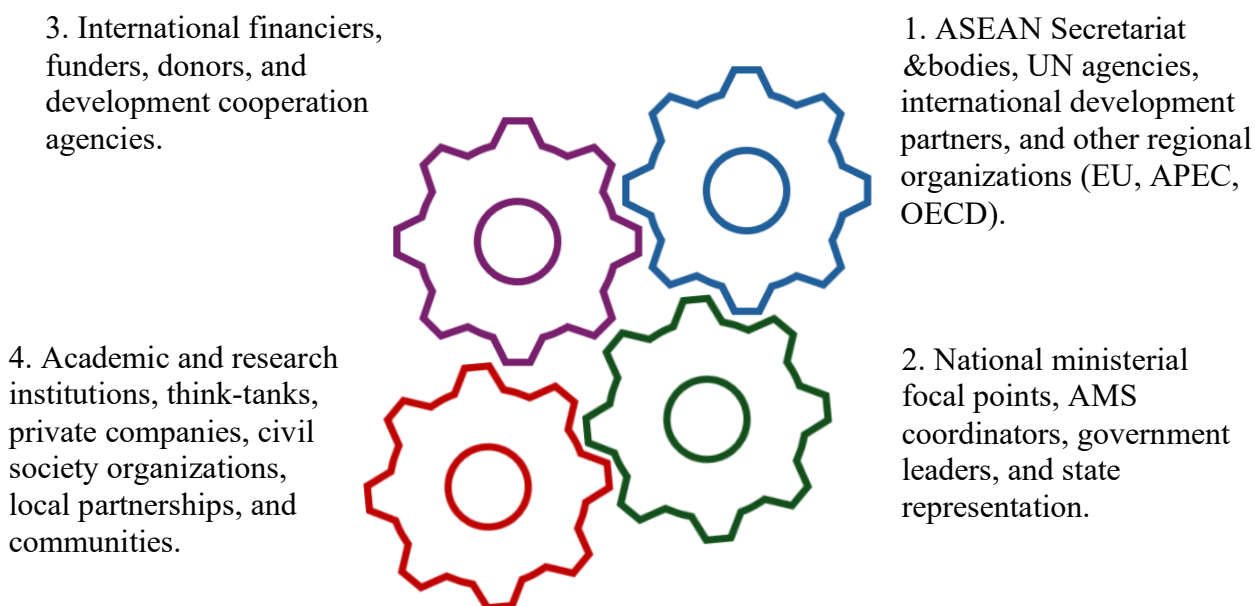
#### ***Mid-term progress indicators for Outcome Areas 4 Ensuring Organizational Sustainability and Transformative Change***

- Number of collaborations and partnerships established to diversify ACAI's funding sources, including government grants, private sector investments, and international donors.
- Number of active partnerships and stakeholder engagements across AMS to strengthen regional collaboration on active ageing.
- Number of policy recommendations, regional frameworks, and best practices adopted or influenced through ACAI's initiatives.
- Number of regional research initiatives and data platforms supporting evidence-based policy and innovation in active ageing.
- Number of joint initiatives and programs launched with partners to ensure ACAI's sustainability and transformative change.
- Number of global, regional, and national networks engaged in active ageing activities.

### 3.2 ACAI's Partnerships Framework

Overarching outcome:

Supporting AMS in developing pathways toward inclusive active ageing through research, partnerships, and innovation, in collaboration with local, regional, and global research and development partners, beneficiaries, donor organizations, financiers, and stakeholders.



**Figure 7.** ACAI's Partnerships Framework structuring stakeholders and partners

ACAI will implement a partnership framework (Figure 7) that promotes collaboration and encourages active participation across ASEAN. Acknowledging the varying ageing rates and policy landscapes in AMS, ACAI will develop a comprehensive regional approach to active ageing, ensuring inclusive collaboration that enhances opportunities for engaging government officials. By fostering constructive networks of policymakers, ACAI will facilitate policy dialogue, knowledge exchange, capacity building and coordinated action to drive transformative ageing-related policies.

The strategy focuses on policy advocacy and mobilization, strengthening political buy-in through targeted engagement that aligns ageing policies with national development priorities and financing mechanisms (see Table 4). Through this multi-level approach, ACAI promote policy coherence, accelerate the adoption of ageing-related solutions, and secure sustained commitment from governments and stakeholders to build a more inclusive, resilient, and active ageing society.

**Table 4.** Stakeholder and Partnership Engagement Plan.

Stakeholders	Significances	Activities (examples)
1. ASEAN Secretariat &bodies, UN agencies, international development partners, and other regional organizations (EU, APEC, OECD).	Engagement focuses on enhancing institutional capacity, program design, and implementation through expertise, resources, and technical support for sustainable active ageing policies. Key areas of focus include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mobilizing political support and financial resources.</li> <li>• Ensuring the effectiveness of initiatives.</li> <li>• Expanding the impact of ACAI's work.</li> <li>• Sustaining long-term development outcomes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Regional Action Plan Forum</li> <li>▪ ASEAN Ageing Forum</li> <li>▪ Expert/Working Group Meetings</li> <li>▪ Co-development of international proposals</li> <li>▪ ACAI Ageing Population Council</li> </ul>
2. National ministerial focal points, AMS coordinators, government leaders, and state representation.	The focus is on building strategic partnerships to drive awareness, advocacy, and policy buy-in. Key areas of focus include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborating with governments to provide strategic and technical guidance.</li> <li>• Enhancing knowledge and institutional capacity to support innovative solutions.</li> <li>• Fostering greater participation in ageing-related programs.</li> <li>• Increasing ACAI's organizational visibility.</li> <li>• Mobilizing resources to support active ageing initiatives.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Regional Action Plan Forum</li> <li>▪ ASEAN Ageing Forum</li> <li>▪ Country Coordinator Training</li> <li>▪ Co-development of international proposals</li> <li>▪ Multisectoral Meeting</li> <li>▪ Exchange of staffs and experts</li> </ul>
3. International financiers, funders, donors, and development cooperation agencies.	Engagement with donors aligns ACAI's programs with global and bilateral funding priorities to ensure sustainable support for active ageing. Key actions include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-developing ageing-related proposals aligned with funding priorities.</li> <li>• Providing technical support to donors to enhance ageing policy investments.</li> <li>• Forming strategic partnerships and alliances.</li> <li>• Driving program development to secure sustainable resources.</li> <li>• Strengthening implementation to maximize long-term impact on active ageing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Regional Action Plan Forum</li> <li>▪ ASEAN Ageing Forum</li> <li>▪ Donor and stakeholder engagement</li> <li>▪ Co-development of international proposals</li> <li>▪ Partnership and Seminar for Business Innovation</li> </ul>
4.1. Academic and research institutions, think-tanks and private companies.	Academic institutions and research organizations play a crucial role in providing evidence-based policy recommendations, driving innovation, and supporting capacity-building in ageing-related strategies across ASEAN.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Expert/Working Group Meetings</li> <li>▪ Produce evidence-based policy</li> <li>▪ Co-Hosting International Academic Seminar</li> <li>▪ Knowledge sharing platform</li> </ul>
4.2. Civil society organizations, local partnerships, and communities.	ACAI must engage with grassroots communities and implement policies that ensure inclusivity and represent diverse voices in policy discussions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Public awareness campaigns</li> <li>▪ Field visit for research engagement</li> <li>▪ Multisectoral Meeting</li> <li>▪ Capacity building of local government and NGOs</li> </ul>

## ACAI 5-Year Strategic Plan

ACAI plays a crucial role in fostering regional and international cooperation through four key functions:

### **Connector (or Catalyst):**

- Link donors, funding agencies, and stakeholders (e.g., UN agencies, INGOs) with implementing agencies and beneficiaries (e.g., community organizations, government agencies).
- Facilitate partnerships between academic institutions, research think tanks, and implementing agencies to bridge the gap between research and practice.

### **Knowledge Hub:**

- Collaborate with partners to curate and disseminate evidence-based research, policies, and best practices on active ageing.
- Showcase successful case studies and actionable policies to inspire replication and scaling across AMS.

### **Facilitator of Capacity Development:**

- Co-organize capacity-building programs (e.g., workshops, webinars, training) to equip stakeholders and implementing agencies with the tools and knowledge to implement active ageing initiatives.
- Provide technical assistance to AMS in developing and monitoring active ageing policies.

### **Monitor and Evaluator:**

- Work with partners to develop frameworks and tools to monitor the progress of active ageing initiatives across AMS.
- Share data and insights to inform future strategies and collaborations.

## Part 4. Strategic Vision and Implementation Roadmap

### 4.1 Implementation Roadmap 2025-2029

Implementation roadmap toward ASEAN regional excellence for an active and inclusive resilient ageing society.

Years	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
Strategic Organizational Focus (Positioning)	Regional Platform			Financially sustainable organization	
		Innovation Hub	Excellence centre		
Outputs (First deliverable(s))	1.1 Health Innovation Hub	2.1 Life-course Social Protection	2.2 Senior Digital Program	3.2 Healthy and Liveable City	
	1.2 Integrated and Long-term Care	2.2 Business and Financial Innovation	3.3 Intergenerational Climate Resilient		
	1.3 Community Approach and Social Awareness	3.1 Equitable Infrastructure			
		4.1 Regional and Global Cooperative Dialogue			
	4.2 Engagement with Donors and Stakeholders				
	4.3 Establish Research Network and Collaboration				

## ACAI 5-Year Strategic Plan

<p>Activities (Future integrated programs and projects)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Strategic Policy Mapping and Analysis</li> <li>2) ASEAN Active Ageing Index</li> <li>3) Regional Action Plan Forum</li> <li>4) Country Coordinator Training</li> <li>5) Donor and Stakeholder Engagement</li> <li>6) Expert/Working Group Meetings</li> <li>7) Co-development of International Proposals</li> <li>8) Capacity-building Workshop and Training</li> <li>9) Dissemination of Policy Guidelines and Framework</li> <li>10) Happy Retirement</li> <li>11) Life Course Cohort Study</li> <li>12) Development of Guidelines and Call for Proposals</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Regional and International Partnership Forum</li> <li>2) Research and Development for Business Innovation</li> <li>3) Partnership Seminar for Business Innovation</li> <li>4) Regional Hackathon</li> <li>5) Seed Funding for Pilot Business and Social Innovation</li> <li>6) Co-hosting International Academic Seminars</li> <li>7) Field Visits for Research Engagement</li> <li>8) Innovation Centre and Scientific Dissemination</li> <li>9) ASEAN Ageing Forum</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Development of Digital Platform for Senior Programs</li> <li>2) Training and Capacity Building for Local Governments and NGOs</li> <li>3) Design Guidelines and Cost Compendium for Equitable Structures</li> <li>4) Design Workshop and Stakeholder Consultations</li> <li>5) Disaster Preparedness Capacity Enhancement</li> <li>6) Multisectoral Meeting</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Policy Brief and Policy Report and Roadmap on Healthy Environment</li> <li>2) Exchange of Staffs and Experts</li> <li>3) Systematic policy and Innovation Platform</li> <li>4) Integration of Regional Knowledge</li> <li>5) Policy Sandbox</li> <li>6) Establishment and Strengthening MOU with Universities</li> <li>7) Development and Mobilization Financing</li> <li>8) ACAI Ageing Population Council</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) ASEAN Healthy Ageing Roadmap</li> <li>2) Updating Operational Systems and Institutional Structures</li> <li>3) Capacity Development Guidelines</li> <li>4) Cross-sharing Platforms and Programs with Development Partners and IGOs</li> <li>5) Transferring Lessons, Governance and Innovation to Other Regions</li> <li>6) Mainstreaming and Institutionalization</li> <li>7) Initiating the Global Intergovernmental Panel on Active Ageing</li> </ol>
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## 4.2 Performance Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL)

The objective of Performance Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) is to conduct internal evaluations to assess program effectiveness, budget adequacy, human resource performance, and beneficiary satisfaction. This process involves systematic monitoring, progress tracking, and identifying challenges in implementing key activities across strategic interventions and outcomes areas. By delivering assessment and evaluation reports to stakeholders, MEL promotes transparency and supports evidence-based evaluations, while ensuring inclusive feedback on project deliverables and outcomes.

To ensure alignment with regional goals, the MEL activities will be closely tied to the ASEAN Active Ageing Index (AAAI), providing a clear framework for monitoring and evaluating progress across AMS.

### *MEL Activities and Frameworks*

#### *1) Development of MEL framework and Matrices*

The development of the MEL framework involves creating metrics aligned with partnership and program expectations, including well-defined indicators, data collection methods, and reporting mechanisms. A collaborative approach ensures participatory evaluations, actively engaging stakeholders to effectively meet their needs and expectations. ACAI integrates a ToC approach into the MEL framework to ensure that all initiatives are strategically aligned, measurable, and impact-driven.

#### *2) Data collection and documentation*

Regular collection of both quantitative and qualitative data is essential for effectively tracking program progress and outcomes. This involves using diverse methods such as systematic reviews, scoping reviews, surveys, interviews, focus group discussions, and other participatory approaches to gather comprehensive insights. A secure and robust data management system will be established to ensure efficient organization, storage, and analysis of data, streamlining activity tracking and aligning progress with strategic goals. This integrated approach enhances transparency and accountability, supporting data-driven decision-making to optimize program impact.

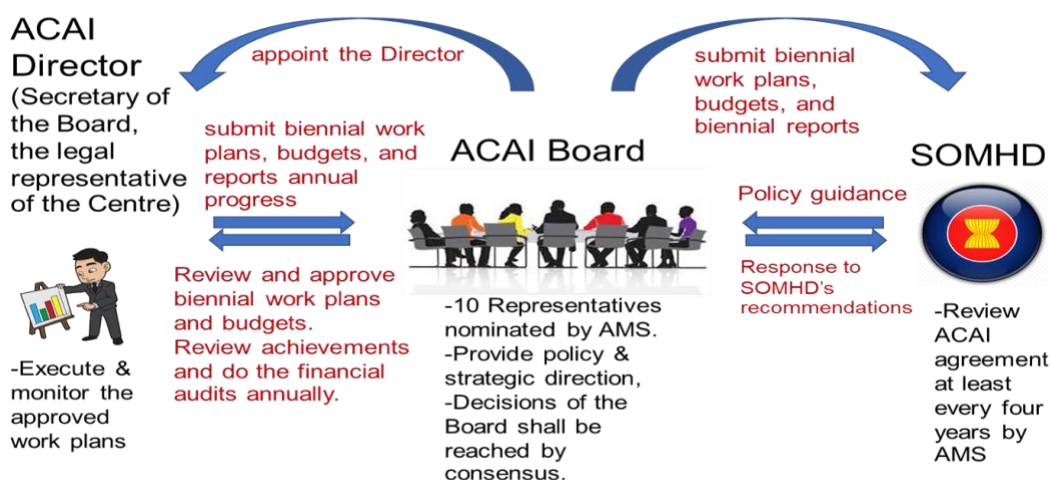
#### *3) Baseline analysis and track recording*

Maintaining comprehensive baseline data for all indicators before program implementation is crucial for accurately measuring progress and evaluating outcomes over time. Effective data management systems will enhance the efficiency and accuracy of data collection, storage, and

analysis, demonstrating measurable changes and program impacts. This includes tracking long-term impacts on the well-being of older persons. The evidence-based approach supports strategic decision-making, project financing, and management effectiveness, ensuring that programs remain aligned with organizational goals and deliver impactful, accountable results.

#### 4) Reporting and communication

ACAI produce quarterly, biannual, and annual reports to systematically monitor and assess progress, address challenges in a timely manner, and ensure effective activity implementation. Biennial progress reports and annual updates will be submitted to the ACAI Governing Board for review and strategic guidance, as illustrated in Figure 8. Additionally, comprehensive assessment reports will be shared with officials and development partners to monitor initiative success, gather feedback, and seek recommendations for continuous performance improvement. These reports will also be disseminated among key stakeholders, fostering feedback through consultation meetings to enhance program activities, refine strategic directions, and promote research and innovation—ensuring inclusive outcomes. A structured KPI tracking system will be established using digital tools and dashboards to monitor progress, assess outcomes, and enhance data-driven decision-making. To further highlight achievements, case studies, success stories, and narratives will be documented, showcasing best practices and the experiences of older persons, families, and communities, illustrating the impact and lessons learned from ACAI’s initiatives. The centre will also formulate a public relations strategy to raise social awareness about the risks of an aging population and the need for innovative solutions to promote active aging.



**Figure 8.** Reporting Mechanism for ACAI Board and the ASEAN Senior Officials' Meeting on Health Development

## **Part 5. Cross-Cutting Issues and Financial Sustainability**

### **5.1 Cross-cutting dimensions**

ACAI's strategy emphasizes policy advocacy and mobilization by strengthening political buy-in and advocacy efforts to ensure ageing policies are effectively implemented across ASEAN. This includes aligning strategic objectives with measurable outcomes and clear implementation timelines, reinforcing ACAI's role in advancing sustainable development under the ASEAN Post-2015 Health Development Agenda (APHDA) 2021-2025. To achieve these goals, ACAI will mobilize regional and international efforts by convening an Active Ageing Council that fosters multi-stakeholder engagement and facilitates the exchange of best practices. The strategy addresses both common and specific socio-economic challenges facing the region, linked to demographic shifts, social changes, and increasing risks. Furthermore, ACAI aims to serve as a regional and global model for policy mobilization in active ageing, actively transferring knowledge and best practices beyond Southeast Asia to contribute to global active ageing approach and practices and ultimately support global sustainable development goals. The strategy is to synergize and connect activities and programs, pooling resources, and integrating knowledge and capacities to drive actionable, practical, and impactful solutions. The strategy focuses on leveraging regional, national, and local expertise to maximize impact. ACAI emphasizes building strong networks for joint activities and diversified resource contributions while ensuring an efficient secretariat office management and operation. A key priority is to harness national and institutional contributions from within and beyond Southeast Asia, fostering collaboration for sustainable and scalable active ageing effectively.

### **5.2 Financial Sustainability for Building Long-term Impacts**

To ensure financial sustainability and long-term impact, ACAI aims to mobilize resources for self-financing, enabling continuous innovation and the long-term advancement of ageing-related policies and programs across the region. The centre will work to align its initiatives with broader public policies, ensuring that ageing-related concerns are embedded in national and regional policy frameworks.

To secure sustainable funding, ACAI will seek funding sources beyond country contributions by exploring innovative funding mechanisms, including public-private partnerships and multi-stakeholder collaborations. By leveraging a diversified range of financial support, ACAI will enhance its resilience and ability to continuously drive active ageing solutions across the region. In line with this, the centre will focus on keeping the ACAI Secretariat lean while strategically leveraging external research and technical support. This approach will maximize operational

efficiency, ensuring that resources are directed towards high-impact initiatives while maintaining flexibility and responsiveness to emerging challenges and opportunities in the ageing space. ACAI will also explore innovative funding mechanisms that go beyond traditional models, such as social impact bonds, venture philanthropy, and collaborative funding platforms. These will not only increase the financial capacity of ACAI but also strengthen the sustainability of its initiatives by attracting diverse investors who are committed to fostering positive social outcomes.

Strengthening networks of active national policy actors and forming strategic partnerships with international development agencies will be key to fostering a collaborative policy process and mobilizing political capital to ensure identification and alignment of funding mechanisms for our regional efforts. By building country networks with policy entrepreneurs and active social and expert partners, ACAI will facilitate stakeholder engagement and drive actionable change. A structured stakeholder mapping approach will be utilized to collect and manage data effectively, enabling evidence-based decision-making and reinforcing ACAI's role as a thought leader in the active ageing policy space. This integrated approach will not only support financial sustainability but also ensure long-term impact by embedding active ageing solutions within the economic and policy landscapes of ASEAN.

ACAI will collaborate with economic policy actors to develop comprehensive models that integrate ageing policies into sustainable economic strategies. By empowering local enterprises and social innovations, ACAI will support the creation of business models that combine social impact with economic activity. These models will focus on enhancing business products and services, creating new market opportunities, and generating both social and commercial co-benefits. ACAI will invest in building the capacities of social enterprises, helping them become more competitive and sustainable. As a mentor, ACAI will guide local entrepreneurs in transforming the challenges posed by an ageing demographic into opportunities for social solutions and innovation. Additionally, by leveraging digital and AI-enhanced solutions, ACAI aims to establish scalable, market-responsive models that align with both national and regional development priorities, ensuring long-term institutional impact.

To foster inclusive, active ageing solutions, ACAI will engage with the business sector through public-private partnerships, especially in low-income countries. By encouraging private sector contributions, ACAI will promote innovative, country-specific models that align with national priorities while ensuring scalability throughout the region. Key areas for collaboration include long-term care partnerships, business innovation grants, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives, and business matching for local social enterprises. ACAI will position itself as a regional hub for business sector engagement, addressing critical issues such as household-level care for older persons and developing business models tailored to diverse socio-economic contexts across ASEAN.

## ACAI 5-Year Strategic Plan

Long-term sustainability requires countries to take ownership of the priority-setting process and ensure that ageing policies align with their unique socio-economic and demographic contexts. ACAI will support this ownership by engaging experts in both broad and country-specific priority setting, ensuring that decisions are informed by research, best practices, and local needs. As ACAI continues to build on these opportunities, AMS will play a vital role in promoting the Centre's activities and advancing regional active ageing initiatives. Coordinated regional action will foster an active, inclusive, and resilient ageing future. Reporting mechanisms will be adapted to reflect region- and country-specific issues, enabling accurate tracking of progress and challenges. This approach will ensure the responsiveness and effectiveness of active ageing strategies, regionally and globally.

## ANNEX

### Annex 1. ACAI 5-Year Work Plan

**Table 1.** Five-Year ACAI's Strategic Program Management and Work Plan

ACAI 2025-2029 Outcome	ACAI 2025-2029 Outputs	Five-Year Plan Key Activities	Timeline (Year)					Funding /Partner
			2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	
1. Advancing Health and Wellbeing	1.1 Health Innovation Hub	1.1.1 ASEAN Active Ageing index (AAAI)	●	●				
		1.1.2 Policy and Innovation Platform		●				
		1.1.3 Intergenerational Resilience life-long Cohort	●	●				
		1.1.4 Country Coordinator Knowledge Exchange and Training	●	●				
		1.1.5 Capacity building workshop and training	●	●	●			
	1.2 Integrated and Long-term Care	1.2.1 Development of guideline framework and innovative solutions	●	●				
		1.2.2 Regional capacity building strategy	●	●				
		1.2.3 Evidenced-based policy and strategic recommendations	●	●				
	1.3 Community Approach and Social Awareness	1.3.1 Learning material and modules for community driven care	●	●				
		1.3.2 Local visit, community and civil society engagement	●	●				

## ACAI 5-Year Strategic Plan

ACAI 2025-2029 Outcome	ACAI 2025-2029 Outputs	Five-Year Plan Key Activities	Timeline (Year)					Funding /Partner
			2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	
		1.3.3 Community training program		●	●			
2. Enabling Inclusive Economy and Digital Opportunities	2.1 Life-course Social Protection	2.1.1 Happy Retirement Program	●	●				
		2.1.2 Life course cohort study	●	●				
	2.2 Business and Financial Innovation	2.2.1 Research and Development		●				
		2.2.2 Innovation Partnership Seminar		●				
		2.2.3 Hackathon and Seed funding		●				
	2.3 Senior Digital Program	2.3.1 Digital Platform Development			●	●		
3.Supporting Age-Friendly Environment and Climate Resiliency	3.1 Equitable Infrastructure	3.1.1 Training Local Government		●	●			
		3.1.2 Design Guideline and Cost Compendium		●	●			
		3.1.3 Design Workshop		●	●			
	3.2 Healthy and Liveable City	3.2.1 Policy Report and Roadmap		●	●			
	3.3 Intergenerational Climate Resilient	3.3.1 Capacity Enhancement Program			●			
4. Ensuring Organizational Sustainability and Transformative Change	4.1 Regional and Global Cooperative Dialogue	4.1.1 Regional Forum on Advancing Partnership for Sustainable Healthy Ageing		●	●	●	●	
		4.1.2 Field visit and local engagement		●	●	●	●	
		4.1.3 multi-sectorial meeting		●	●	●	●	
		4.1.4 Strategic Mapping of Ageing Policies and Plans		●	●	●	●	

## ACAI 5-Year Strategic Plan

ACAI 2025-2029 Outcome	ACAI 2025-2029 Outputs	Five-Year Plan Key Activities	Timeline (Year)					Funding /Partner
			2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	
		4.1.5 ASEAN Active Ageing Roadmap			●		●	
		4.1.6 ASEAN Ageing Forum		●		●		
	4.2 Engagement with Donor and Stakeholders	4.2.1 Proposal Co- development	●	●	●	●	●	
		4.2.2 Development and Finance Mobilization Plan	●	●	●	●	●	
	4.3 Establish Research Network and Collaboration	4.3.1 Co-hosting International Academic Seminar		●	●	●	●	
		4.3.2 Exchange of staffs and experts		●	●	●	●	
		4.3.3 Establishment of international working group and knowledge transfer		●	●	●	●	
		4.3.4 Regional Active Ageing Action Plan Formulation		●	●	●	●	
		4.3.5 Disseminate Policy Guideline and Framework	●	●				
		4.3.6 Develop Guideline and call for proposals	●					