



Striving for Active and Healthy Longevity: ASEAN's Commitment to Successful Ageing

Meeting Summary Report
August 2025

Prepared by

ASEAN Centre for Active Ageing and Innovation (ACAI)

Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA)

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Foreword



On behalf of the ASEAN Centre for Active Ageing and Innovation (ACAI), I would like to express my deepest gratitude to all participants, partners, and contributors whose support made the consultative meeting in February 2025 a resounding success.

We are particularly grateful to the ACAI Governing Board members, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Secretariat, and representatives from the World Health Organization, United Nations (UN) agencies, academic institutions, civil society organisations, and development partners for their strategic insights and

unwavering commitment to advancing active ageing in the region. Our appreciation also goes to the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia for their invaluable collaboration in co-organising this pivotal event.

The active participation of key stakeholders, including Japan's National Institute of Population and Social Security Research, the Japan International Cooperation Agency, Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund, Asian Development Bank, United Nations Population Fund, Health Intervention and Technology Assessment Program, National University of Singapore, Thai academic institutions such as Mahidol University, Chulalongkorn University, Thammasat University, and private sector leaders, demonstrates the collective resolve to transform ageing policies into actionable solutions. Their expertise and feedback have been instrumental in shaping ACAI's 5-Year Strategic Plan (2025–2029), ensuring it aligns with ASEAN's priorities and global frameworks like the UN Decade of Healthy Ageing.

I also wish to acknowledge the dedication of the ACAI team for their meticulous planning. This meeting marks a critical milestone in our journey, and we look forward to sustaining this momentum through collaborative implementation.

Together, we are building a future where older persons in ASEAN thrive with dignity, opportunity, and resilience.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Somsak Akksilp'.

Dr Somsak Akksilp

Executive Director

ASEAN Centre for Active Ageing and Innovation

Foreword



On behalf of the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA), I would like to express my appreciation to all participants and speakers who actively contributed to the success of the meeting. I am grateful to the domestic and international partners and organisations who shared their knowledge on this important subject to help develop and guide the ASEAN Centre for Active Ageing and Innovation's (ACAI) strategies to achieve a successful ageing society in each Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Member State in the next five years. I also wish to acknowledge the hard work, dedication, and unwavering commitment of the ERIA Healthcare Unit team in making the ACAI Consultative Meeting on the 5-Year Strategic Plan and ACAI's Governing Board Meeting a significant accomplishment for the brighter future of ASEAN and the region.

This meeting marks a critical milestone in the partnership between ACAI, ERIA, ASEAN, and all other regional and global partners. We look forward to ongoing joint initiatives to improve the health and well-being of individuals and communities in ASEAN Member States in the coming years.

As the world we live in becomes increasingly more complex and precarious, functioning healthcare systems to protect the most vulnerable, including our older persons, are at risk. Today, more than ever, ERIA is firmly committed to fostering a vibrant network through multisectoral partnerships and collaborations amongst the member states, with the vision to deliver more accessible, equitable, effective, efficient, and safe healthcare services for all.

Dr Manami Uechi

Director

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List of Abbreviations

AAAI	ASEAN Active Aging Index
ACAI	ASEAN Centre for Active Ageing and Innovation
ADB	Asian Development Bank
AMS	ASEAN Member States
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ERIA	Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia
GB	ACAI Governing Board
HITAP	Health Intervention and Technology Assessment Program
IEC	Information, Education, and Communication
IPSR	Institute for Population and Social Research, Mahidol University
IPSS	Japan's National Institute of Population and Social Security Research
JAIF	Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MOH	Ministry of Health
MOPH	Ministry of Public Health
NCD	Non-communicable Disease
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NIDA	National Institute of Development Administration, Thailand
NUS	National University of Singapore
SCCT	Senior Citizen Council of Thailand
TA	Technical Assistance
TDRI	Thailand Development Research Institute Foundation
UN	United Nations
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
WHO	World Health Organization
WPRO	World Health Organization Regional Office for the Western Pacific

Executive Summary

This report summarises the key outcomes of the two-day consultative meeting co-organised by the ASEAN Centre for Active Ageing and Innovation (ACAI) and the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA), held in February 2025 in Bangkok, Thailand. It captures key presentations, including the 5-Year Strategic Framework, along with main discussion points, strategic insights, and proposed collaborative actions to advance active ageing across the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) region.

ACAI strives for 'Regional Excellence for an Active, Inclusive, and Resilient Ageing Society'. This vision aspires to create an environment where older persons can lead active, healthy, and fulfilling lives whilst continuing to contribute meaningfully to their communities and economies.

ERIA is an international research and policy think tank that works closely with the ASEAN Secretariat and ASEAN Member States (AMS) to deepen economic integration, narrow development gaps, and advance sustainable development. Through evidence-based research and comprehensive support in the health and social welfare sectors, ERIA's Healthcare Unit contributes to the development of actionable policies and practices aimed at building a healthier, happier, and more equitable future for the region.

The 5-Year Strategic Plan emphasises inclusivity and resilience, highlighting the importance of building societies that support the well-being and adaptability of older persons across the region. It promotes active ageing through a range of initiatives that foster physical, mental, and social well-being. Innovation and research are central to the strategy, with a focus on developing new solutions and approaches to support active ageing. Collaboration is also a key pillar, with efforts aimed at strengthening partnerships amongst AMS to facilitate knowledge exchange, resource sharing, and the dissemination of best practices.

Over the next five years, ACAI plans to implement a comprehensive programmatic approach for achieving its strategic goals by 2029. The plan outlines a clear roadmap with defined milestones and measurable targets. It also integrates cross-cutting priorities, such as gender equality, digital inclusion, and financial sustainability, to ensure long-term impact and relevance.

Key activities under the strategic plan include conducting training and capacity-building programmes for stakeholders to enhance their ability to support active ageing initiatives. ACAI will provide evidence-based policy recommendations to AMS to help create environments that are conducive to active ageing. Research projects will be undertaken to identify emerging opportunities and challenges and to develop innovative solutions tailored to the specific needs of older persons and the region. In addition, robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms will be established to track the progress and impact of active ageing initiatives across the region.

This strategic plan provides a strong foundation for ACAI to lead the region towards a more inclusive, resilient, and age-friendly society over the next five years.

I. Introduction

The number and proportion of people aged 60 years and older around the world are rapidly increasing.¹ Some of the most rapidly ageing countries in the world can be found in Southeast Asia.² Whilst many people in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) are enjoying longer lives, not all of them are able to lead and maintain healthy or active lives. This demographic shift reflects the achievements in healthcare. However, it also poses new developmental challenges for the ASEAN Community.^{1, 2}

ASEAN Leaders recognise the urgent need to address regional ageing challenges. At the 30th ASEAN Summit in Singapore (2018), leaders agreed to establish the ASEAN Centre for Active Ageing and Innovation (ACAI) in Thailand, serving as a knowledge hub for evidence-based healthy ageing policies.³

This regional effort aligns with key international frameworks, including the ASEAN+3 Statement on Active Ageing, the ASEAN-Japan Summit's Indo-Pacific Cooperation, the United Nations (UN) Decade of Healthy Ageing (2021–2030), and the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.^{4, 5}

ACAI's Establishment Agreement was signed by all 10 ASEAN Member States (AMS) in May 2020 in Ha Noi, Viet Nam, during the 36th ASEAN Summit. Following the signing, the agreement underwent the host country's legalisation process, enabling the Centre to officially operate under its established framework. Despite delays in legalisation processes and operational setup, ACAI initiated collaboration with its strategic partners in late 2024 to develop its 5-Year Strategic Plan. This marked one of the Centre's first key activities following its official launch. Thailand, as the host country, has committed to providing all necessary support for ACAI's establishment and functions.⁴ More information about ACAI can be found on its website (www.asean-acai.org).

The Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA) is an international research organisation and economic think tank that was established in 2007 by a formal agreement of the leaders of 16 East Asia Summit member states. ERIA works closely with the ASEAN Secretariat and research institutes from across East Asia and conducts in-depth research on pressing issues facing the people and governments of ASEAN and East Asia. ERIA's projects are organised under three research pillars: (1) Deepening Economic Integration; (2) Narrowing Development Gaps; and (3) Achieving Sustainable Development. Through evidence-based research and a wide range of projects in the health and social welfare sectors, ERIA's Healthcare Unit aims to support the development of actionable policy recommendations to build a healthier, happier, and more equitable future for the region.

¹ United Nations (2019), *World Population Ageing 2019*. <https://www.un.org>

² World Health Organization (2021), *Global Report on Ageing and Health*. <https://www.who.int>

³ ASEAN Secretariat (2018), 30th ASEAN Summit Documents. <https://asean.org>

⁴ ASEAN Secretariat (2020), *ASEAN+3 Statement on Active Ageing*. <https://asean.org>

⁵ United Nations (2021), *UN Decade of Healthy Ageing 2021-2030*. <https://www.un.org>

ACAI and its 5-Year Strategic Plan received strong support from ERIA's Healthcare Unit, given their mutual interest in promoting active ageing in ASEAN. Promoting active ageing is a priority for the Healthcare Unit. The Unit has been conducting Longitudinal Studies on Ageing and Health in the Philippines and Viet Nam, as well as the Healthy Ageing and Longevity Study in Indonesia. It has also been providing the Healthy Ageing Prize for Asian Innovations to recognise and amplify innovative policies, programmes, services, and products that address the challenges facing ageing societies in ASEAN and East Asia. The Unit has been reviewing rapid ageing and relevant policies in Southeast Asia. It supports the ASEAN Secretariat in various high-level meetings in the region to address rapid ageing. Currently, the Unit plans to expand to include nutrition, access to healthcare services, long-term care, and financing for active ageing of the older adult population.

II. Opening Remarks and Overview of the Consultative Meeting

Chair of the Governing Board, Dr Suwit Wibulpolprasert, emphasised the importance of collaboration and sharing of the commitment to advance the active ageing agenda across the region. Dr Sopon Iamsirithaworn, Head of Inspector-General, Thai Ministry of Public Health (MOPH), added that good health, economic security, and social protection are essential for ensuring dignity and quality of life for older people. These key points align with the ASEAN strategic vision, the Kuala Lumpur Declaration on Ageing: Empowering Older Persons in ASEAN, adopted in November 2015, and global initiatives such as the UN Decade of Healthy Ageing. World Health Organization (WHO) representative, Dr Jos Vandelaer, stated that the commitment to advance the challenges and opportunities, cooperation, and collaboration on the health and well-being of older people is important. Dr Sarah Krull Abe, Manager for Healthcare Services at ERIA, stressed that this consultative meeting will not only highlight the ongoing efforts to strengthen the enduring ties between ACAI and all AMS but also serve as a stepping stone towards an integrated and thriving Asia and beyond.



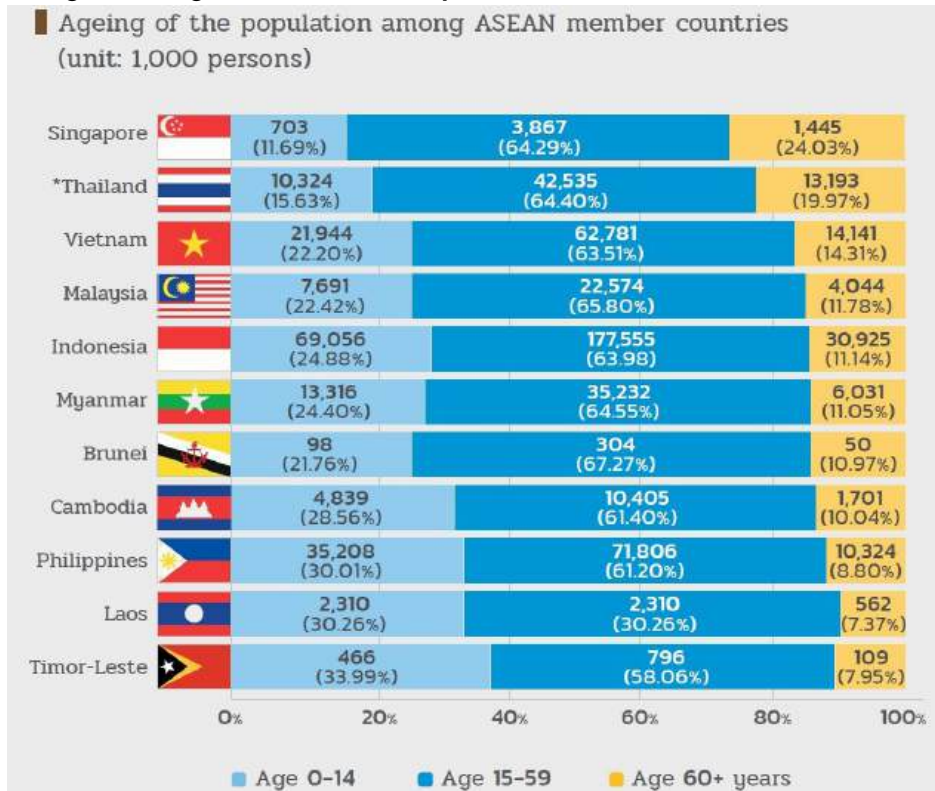
Photo: ACAI Board Chair and Members, ACAI Executive Director, Speakers

III. ACAI 5-Year Strategic Plan and Inputs from Key Stakeholders

1. Overview of ACAI 5-Year Strategic Plan⁶

Southeast Asia is undergoing a rapid demographic transition, marked by an unprecedented rise in the ageing population.⁷ Figure 1 illustrates the share of the ageing population in the region, ranging from Singapore with the highest proportion of older persons (24.03%) to the Lao PDR with the least (7.37%).⁸ Recognising the diverse ageing trends across Southeast Asia, ACAI acknowledges the varying needs and demographic challenges amongst AMS.

Figure 1. Age Structure of Populations in AMS and Timor-Leste



Source: Department of Older Persons, Ministry of Social Development and Human Security (Thailand) (2024), *Situation of the Thai Older Persons 2023*.
https://www.dop.go.th/download/statistics/th1738230377-2563_1.pdf

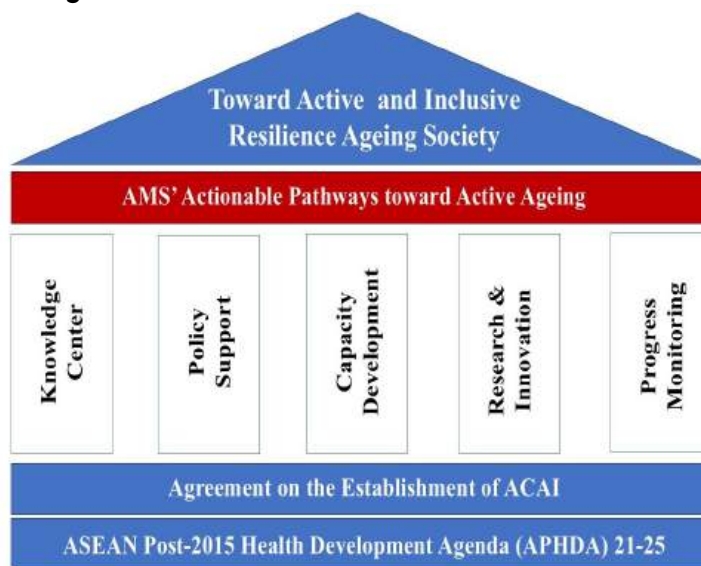
⁶ ASEAN Centre for Active Ageing and Innovation (ACAI) (2025), *ACAI 5-Year Strategic Plan: Toward Regional Excellence for Active and Inclusive Resilient Ageing Society*.

⁷ United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) (2023), *Ageing in Southeast Asia: A Demographic Transition*. <https://www.unfpa.org>

⁸ United Nations (2023), *World Population Prospects 2023*.

ACAI's Head of Strategy, Planning, and M&E, Mr Suguru Ito, introduced the first draft of ACAI 5-Year Strategic Plan. He emphasised that the Plan will be aligned with ACAI's mission to serve as a knowledge centre (Figure 2).

Figure 2. ACAI's Vision and Mission at a Glance



Source: ACAI (2025), *ACAI 5-Year Strategic Plan*.

<https://asean-acai.org/acai-5-year-strategic-plan-v2-0/>

Figure 3 outlines ACAI's Strategic Programs and the corresponding work plans. The framework incorporates a Theory of Change to guide outcome chain results management, ensuring systematic monitoring and evaluation of the impacts of ACAI's key initiatives. To achieve ACAI's ultimate goal, it emphasises four key outcome areas: (1) Advancing Health and Well-being, (2) Enabling an Inclusive Economy and Digital Opportunities, (3) Supporting Age-friendly Environments and Climate Resilience, and (4) Ensuring Organisational Sustainability and Transformative Change. The framework also outlines specific interventions and activities aligned with each outcome area, which ACAI will implement over its 5-Year strategic period (2025–2029).

Outcome Area 1: Advancing Health and Well-being

Advancing health and well-being requires a holistic approach that addresses physical, mental, and social dimensions, reflecting WHO's conceptualisation of healthy ageing as 'the process of developing and maintaining functional ability that enables well-being in older age'.⁹ This outcome area prioritises integrated policies and programmes that:

- Promote mental health and social connectedness as critical complements to physical health;

⁹ WHO (2015), *World Report on Ageing and Health*.

- Address systemic barriers (e.g. access to services) and behavioural determinants (e.g. health literacy) of active ageing; and
- Foster innovation in health and social care through knowledge-sharing and evidence-based practices.

By focusing on these levers, the initiative aims to enhance quality of life, functional ability, and equitable access to long-term care for older populations.

Outcome Area 2: Enabling an Inclusive Economy and Digital Opportunities

Economic insecurity in older age profoundly affects social and economic well-being, limiting opportunities for meaningful participation. To counter this, ACAI's strategy prioritises **inclusive economic growth** and **digital equity** by:

- Expanding access to dignified work, entrepreneurship, and lifelong learning for older adults;
- Harnessing digital innovation to reduce barriers to financial services, healthcare, and social connectivity; and
- Catalysing the **silver economy** by aligning public and private investments with the needs of ageing populations.¹⁰

This approach ensures older persons contribute to and benefit from emerging economic opportunities, in line with **WHO's emphasis on age-inclusive societies**.¹¹

Outcome Area 3: Supporting Age-friendly Environments and Climate Resilience

Older adults face disproportionate risks from climate change, including extreme heat, natural disasters, and pollution.¹² To mitigate these threats, this outcome area prioritises the following:

- **Climate-resilient policies:** Mainstreaming ageing considerations into climate adaptation plans and disaster risk reduction.
- **Age-friendly infrastructure:** Promoting accessible housing, transport, and urban design to reduce environmental barriers.
- **Systems integration:** Aligning active ageing policies with sustainable urban planning and environmental protection frameworks.

These efforts aim to safeguard well-being, enhance mobility, and foster inclusive participation – key pillars of the **WHO Global Network for Age-Friendly Cities**.¹³

¹⁰ UN (2023), *World Social Report: Leaving No One Behind in an Ageing World*.

¹¹ WHO (2022), *Global Report on Ageism*.

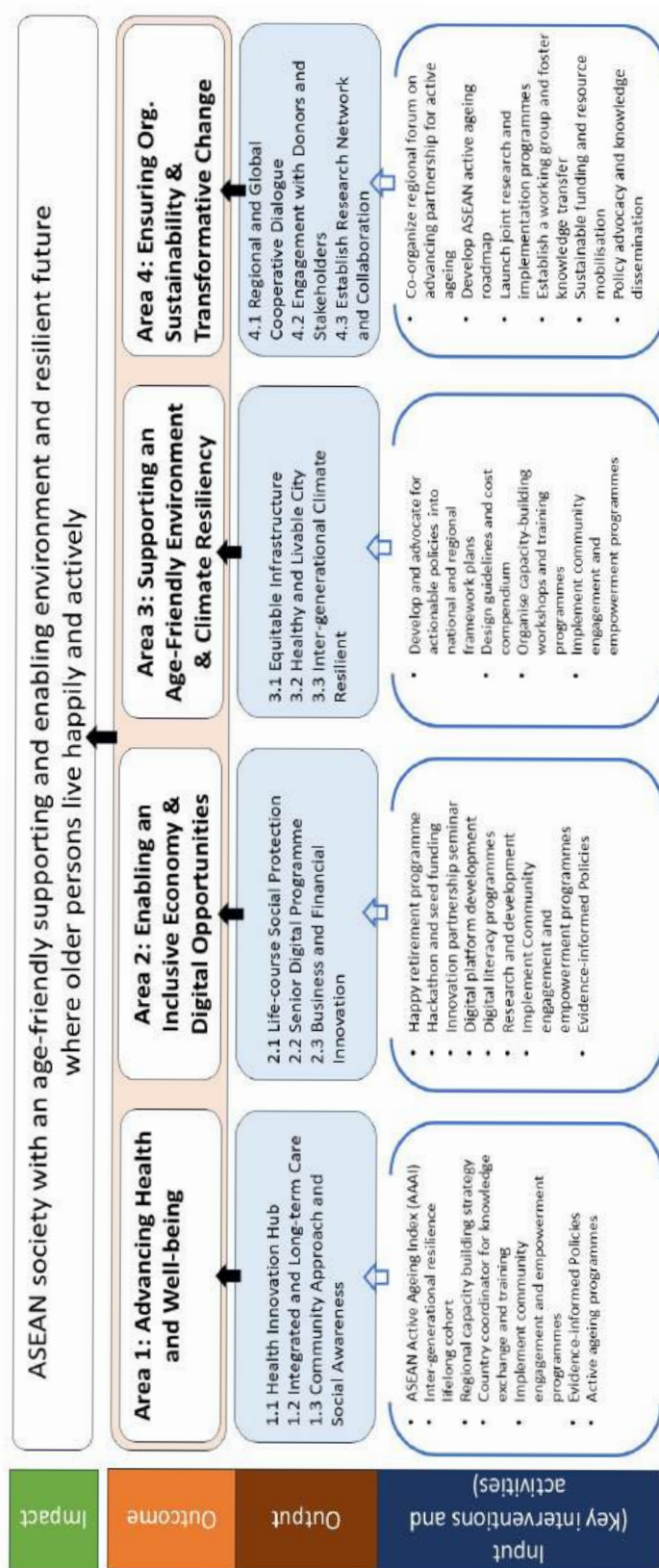
¹² WHO (2021), *Climate Change and Ageing*.

¹³ WHO (2020), *WHO Global Network for Age-Friendly Cities*.

Outcome Area 4: Ensuring Organisational Sustainability and Transformative Change

This strategic outcome aims to strengthen ACAI's role as ASEAN's catalyst for active ageing by enhancing regional collaboration, institutional capacity, and sustainable financing to drive policy transformation. It focuses on adapting global frameworks to local contexts through participatory processes, establishing research-policy networks, and amplifying older persons' voices in decision-making. By fostering multisector partnerships with governments, private entities, and social entrepreneurs, the initiative mobilises resources to scale solutions whilst positioning ACAI as a long-term partner for implementing measurable, innovative ageing policies across Southeast Asia.

Figure 3. ACAI's 5-Year Strategies and Key Activities Based on the Theory of Change



Source: ACAI (2025), ACAI 5-Year Strategic Plan. <https://asean-acai.org/acai-5-year-strategic-plan-v2-0/>

2. Inputs from Key Stakeholders and Partners

Key stakeholders and partners were invited to provide inputs on formalising ACAI 5-Year Strategic Plan prior to, during, and after this consultative meeting. These include ACAI Board members, the ASEAN Secretariat, UN agencies, ERIA, Japan's National Institute of Population and Social Security Research (IPSS), the Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund (JAIF), the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Health Intervention and Technology Assessment Program (HITAP), National University of Singapore (NUS), HelpAge, Asian Development Bank (ADB), National Institute of Development Administration, Thailand (NIDA), Thailand Development Research Institute Foundation (TDRI), Mahidol University, Chulalongkorn University, Thammasat University, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), WHO, Private Pension Administration, the Japanese Embassy in Thailand, Young Happy, Senior Citizen Council of Thailand (SCCT), and ABeam Consulting. Representatives of these organisations delivered 10 key presentations related to active ageing.

UNFPA representative, Dr Abhijit Visaria, shared UNFPA's macro- and micro-level population analyses. Both the macro-level national data on trends, workforce, and healthcare, and the micro-level data focusing on older individuals' well-being are crucial. UNFPA's life-cycle approach (Figure 4) highlights the impact of different life stages on health and workforce participation, emphasising demographic dividends, social inclusion, and digital access for older people.

Figure 4. Publications of UNFPA's Approach and Contributions to Active Ageing



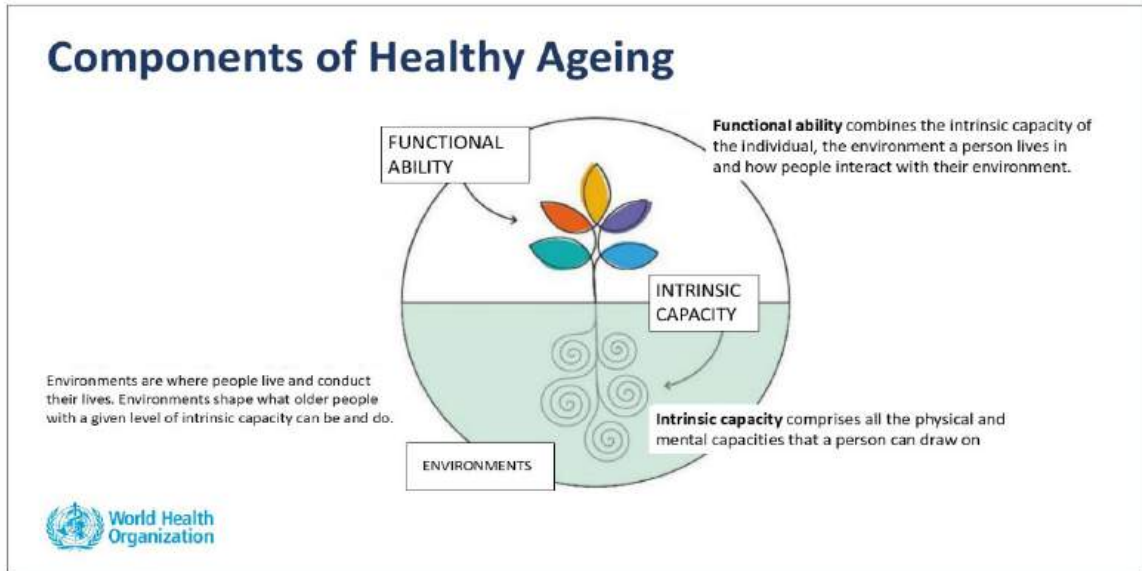
Note: According to UNFPA, demographic dividends refer to the economic growth potential that can arise from shifts in a population's age structure, particularly when the working-age population (15–64) grows larger relative to dependents (children and older people). This transition creates a window of opportunity for accelerated development if coupled with sound policies in education, employment, and governance.¹⁴

Source: UNFPA, Publications. <https://asiapacific.unfpa.org/en/publications>.

¹⁴ UNFPA (2021), *Demographic Dividend: A Window of Opportunity*.

The UN Decade of Healthy Ageing was outlined by Dr Olivia Nieveras, Medical Officer (Non-communicable Diseases/NCD) from WHO. WHO's Healthy Ageing framework focuses on combating ageism, promoting age-friendly environments, integrated and long-term care, and comprehensive assessments. The framework is related to life expectancy and happy life expectancy. Functional capacity includes physical and mental well-being, whilst intrinsic capacity includes the environment (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Components of Healthy Ageing by Olivia Nieveras

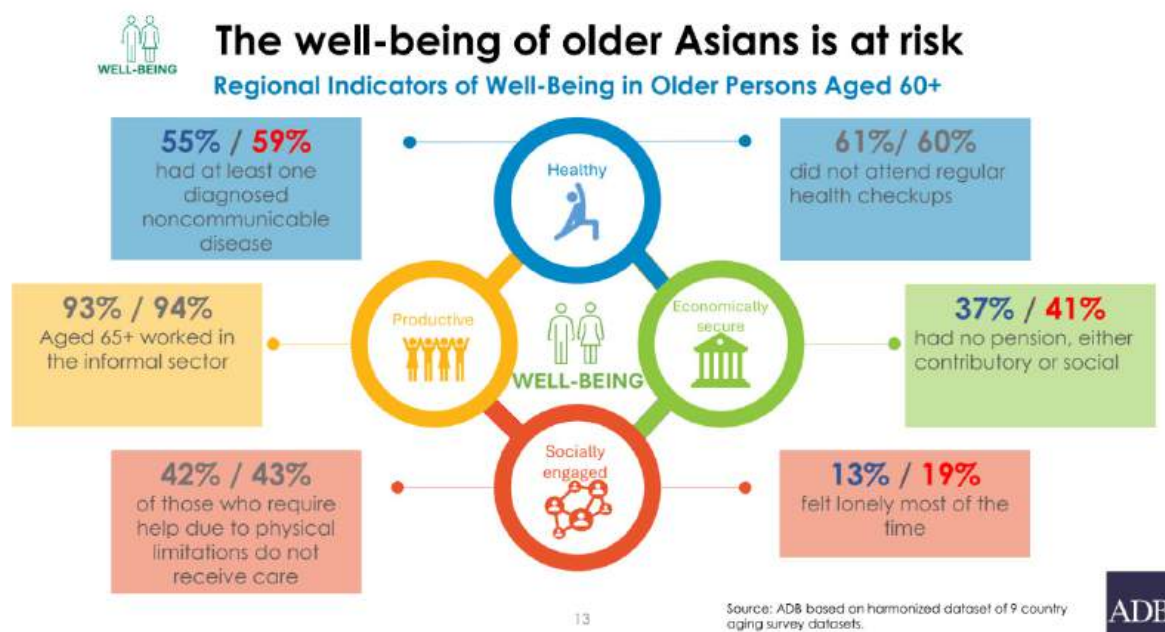


Source: WHO (2021), *WHO Decade of Healthy Ageing, Baseline Report*.
<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240017900>

ADB representative Ms Meredith Wyse emphasised ADB's efforts for building evidence, knowledge, and investment to support the ageing society in ASEAN. Some key initiatives implemented include the Aging, Health, and Retirement surveys, with longitudinal studies in Indonesia and Malaysia. The *Ageing Well in Asia* report highlights four key dimensions of well-being: health, productivity, economic security, and social engagement (Figure 6).¹⁵ Through pilot programs in China, Thailand, and other countries, ADB has supported the development of long-term care infrastructure, workforce training, and urban development tailored for ageing populations.

¹⁵ Asian Development Bank (2024), *Ageing Well in Asia: Asian Development Policy Report*. <https://www.adb.org/>

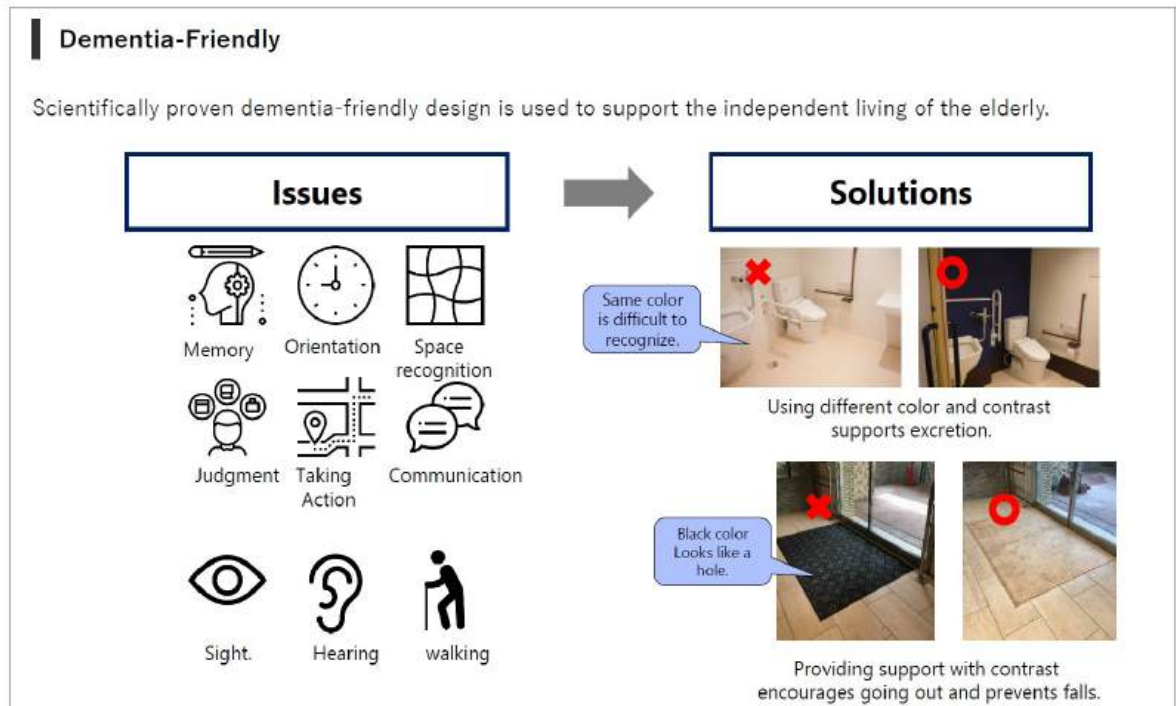
Figure 6. Regional Indicators of Well-being in Older Persons Aged 60+ by ADB



Source: Asian Development Bank (2024), *Ageing Well in Asia: Asian Development Policy Report*. <https://www.adb.org/adpr/editions/aging-well>

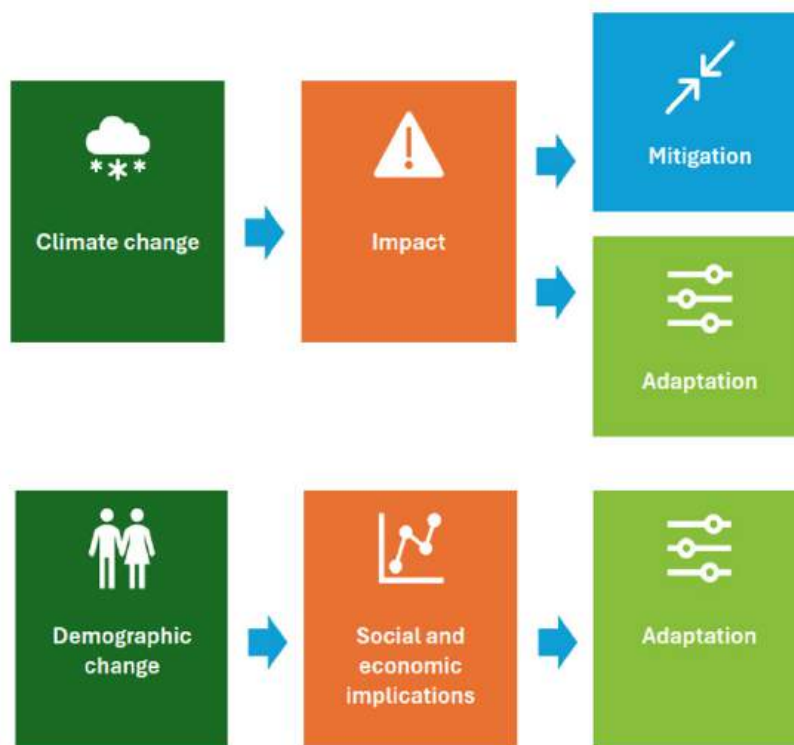
Mr Masashi Suzuki, Director of Healthcare Strategy at ABeam Consulting, shared a concept note on the 'Recent Trends and Future of Nursing Care Business in Asia'. The note highlighted the importance of future service assistance, cooperation, and the role of private sector involvement in inclusive ageing care. Figure 7 presents examples of dementia-friendly designs.

Figure 7. Examples of Dementia-friendly Design Used for the Continuous Support and Care of Older Persons



Source: Suzuki, M (2025), 'Recent Trends and Future of the Nursing Care Business in Asia', presentation, 24 February 2025, Bangkok, Thailand.

Mr Eduardo Klien, a representative from HelpAge International, shared his insights on the two major transformative processes of this century: climate change and demographic change (Figure 8). He discussed that whilst climate change requires both mitigation and adaptation, demographic ageing has only one path – adaptation. Every country has experienced a shift towards an ageing population, driven by declining fertility rates and increased longevity.

Figure 8. The Two Major Transformative Processes of the 21st Century

Source: Klien, E. (2025), 'Older People and Ageing Societies: The Imperative of Innovation', presentation, 24 February 2025, Bangkok, Thailand.

Every country in the region has undergone demographic shifts, with declining fertility rates and increased longevity leading to an ageing population. Understanding the implications of population ageing, the shift from a disease-oriented health system to one emphasising disease prevention, health promotion, and enabling environments is important. Dr Mikiko Kanda, a representative of the WHO Regional Office for the Western Pacific (WPRO), noted that the perception of older adults has shifted. In the past, this population was considered vulnerable, whilst the current trend is to recognise this group as active and engaged members of society. This shift emphasises prospective ageing, which focuses on years ahead rather than years lived (Figure 9).

Figure 9. WHO's Objectives in the Regional Action Plan on Healthy Ageing by Mikiko Kanda

Healthy Ageing as a **pathfinder** for future health and social systems

Objectives in Regional Action Plan on Healthy Ageing

- 1 Transform **societies** for healthy aging amid population ageing.
- 2 Transform **health systems** for lifelong health and non-health services.
- 3 Deliver tailored, **community-based** care for older adults.
- 4 Foster **technological and social innovation**.
- 5 Improve **monitoring and research** and inform programs and policies.



Source: Kanda, M. (2025), 'The Implications of Population Ageing, the Shift from Disease-oriented Health Systems to One Emphasising Disease Prevention, Health Promotion, and Enabling Environments', presentation, February 2025, Bangkok, Thailand.

Having a tailored Active Ageing Index will allow policymakers to identify gaps in ageing policies, allocate resources effectively, and promote inclusive societies where older adults contribute meaningfully. Therefore, developing a comprehensive ASEAN Active Aging Index (AAAI) as shown in Figure 10 and using it as a tool to monitor the trends in healthy and active ageing, whilst aligning with ACAL's 5-year strategic plan, is crucial for promoting active ageing across the region. Dr Reiko Hayashi, Director-General of the IPSS, suggested that ACAL provide a clear structure to build upon this work, proposing that AMS establish key performance indicators aligned with the strategic plan and collect and report data annually.

Figure 10. From the Healthy & Active Ageing Index (HAAI) to the ASEAN Active Aging Index (AAAI) for Monitoring Trends in Active Ageing

1 Policy & Statistics	2 Income & Livelihood Security	3 Health & Quality of Life	4 Social Capital	5 Capacity and Enabling Environment	6 COVID-19
1. Multi-sectorial healthy and active ageing policy (yes/no) 2. Policies for healthcare including NCD (yes/no) 3. Long-term care system (yes/no) 4. Statistics on older population 5. Vital statistics including cause of death 6. Statistics on living condition 7. Estimation of health care expenditure for older persons 8. Statistics on health and long-term care workforce 9. Statistics on capacity of long-term care facility 10. Total score	1. Absolute poverty rate 2. Relative poverty rate 3. Financial tools 4. Food insecurity 5. Employment 6. Coverage of income security 7. Home ownership	1. Life expectancy at age 60 2. Healthy life expectancy at age 60 3. NCD mortality 4. Suicide mortality 5. Disability/ADLs 6. Disability/WG 7. Disability/GALI 8. Prevalence of dementia 9. Subjective, self-rated health 10. Receiving long-term care 11. Unmet need for healthcare 12. Physical exercise	1. Loneliness/ social isolation 2. Engagement of social activities 3. Communication with family or friends 4. Trust in the community 5. Safety in the community 6. Care to children and/or grandchildren	1. Having a mobile phone 2. Access to the internet 3. Living in a house with safe drinking water 4. Living in a house with toilet 5. Education (completed at least primary level) 6. Free from physical, psychological, financial or sexual violence	1. Case fatality ratio of older persons 2. Vaccine coverage of older persons

Source: Reiko, H. (2025), 'ASEAN Active Ageing Index (AAAI) as a Tool to Monitor the Trend?', presentation, February 2025, Bangkok, Thailand.

Similarly, the life-course cohort approach can be used to track individuals over time to understand how health, behaviours, and social factors influence ageing. This approach is critical for active ageing because it identifies lifelong patterns and interventions that promote health, independence, and well-being in later life. According to Dr Jasper from NUS, it enables the tracking of participants through their life course, enabling identification of the best time to intervene. Cohort studies are logistically challenging and expensive due to the need for long-term follow-up and infrastructure. However, cohorts provide valuable insights for monitoring population health trends and evaluating policy impacts.

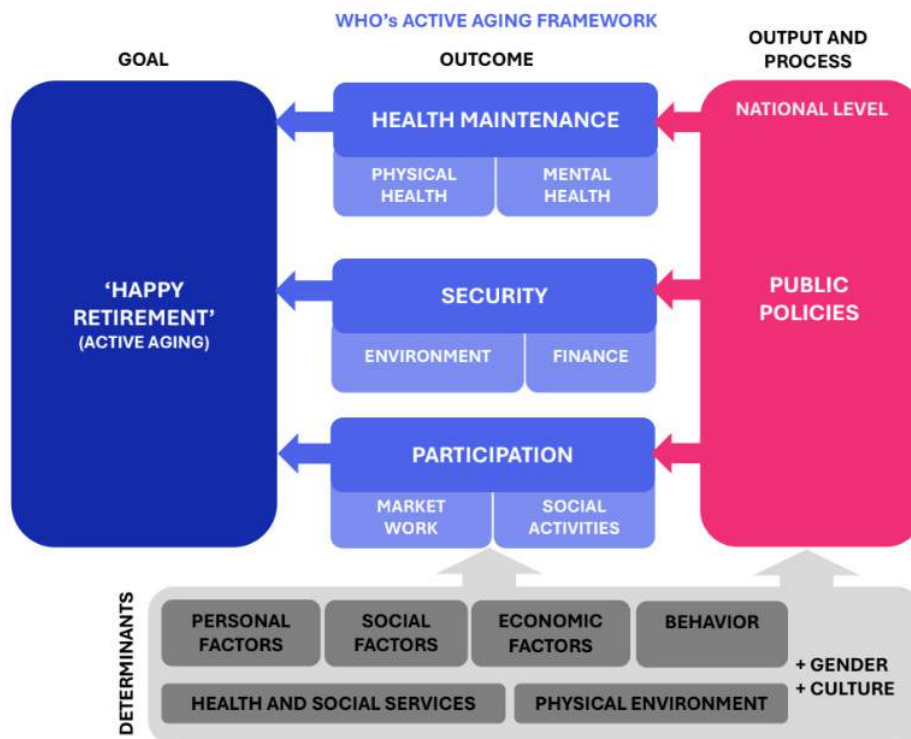
Prof. Yasuhiko Saito, Senior Research Fellow at ERIA and Research Project Professor at Nihon University's College of Economics in Japan, presented findings from longitudinal studies and suggested that ACAI could collaborate with AMS that have implemented longitudinal surveys. ACAI could support conducting similar surveys in Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, the Lao PDR, and Myanmar.



Photo: Prof. Yasuhiko Saito, Senior Research Fellow at ERIA

Whilst many AMS have implemented ageing-related policies, gaps remain in evaluation mechanisms and comprehensive coverage. In this regard, HITAP, with support from and collaboration with ACAI, plans to conduct a comprehensive public policy study addressing the key factors (Figure 11) that could promote healthier and more fulfilling retirement across ASEAN countries. According to Ms Vilawan Luankongsomchit, this exercise will include analysis of effective public policies from other regions and adapt them to ASEAN contexts. In addition, Prof. Saito noted that the working life expectancy (the expected number of working years) amongst older adults is gaining attention in recent years, so we need to consider the question of 'Who is able to retire?', taking into consideration that there are many informal workers amongst older adults in ASEAN countries. The social security system needs to be developed, with examination of how we can increase the working life expectancy amongst older adults.

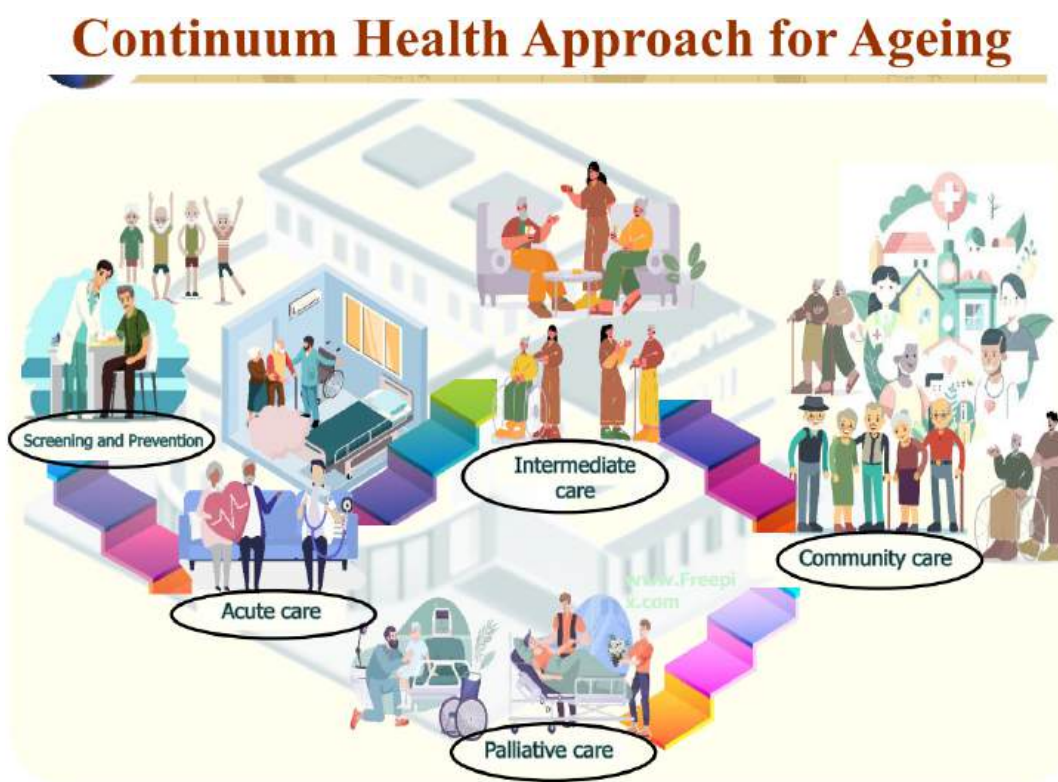
Figure 11. A Pathway towards Happy Retirement by HITAP
A Pathway to Happy Retirement



Source: Luankongsomchit (2025), 'Happy Retirement: Another Appropriate Intervention?', presentation, 24 February 2025, Bangkok, Thailand.

According to Prof. Dr Prasert Assantachai from Siriraj Hospital, Mahidol University, AMS need a comprehensive healthcare system, as shown in Figure 12, to support ageing populations, covering prevention, acute care, rehabilitation, long-term care, and policy integration. Preventive and promotional care should focus on increasing public awareness, encouraging older adults to remain in the workforce, and developing standardised screening tools to monitor health conditions.

Figure 12. Key Components of the Continuum Health Approach for Ageing



Source: Assantachai (2025), 'Comprehensive & Continuum Health Approach for Ageing', presentation, 24 February 2025, Bangkok, Thailand.

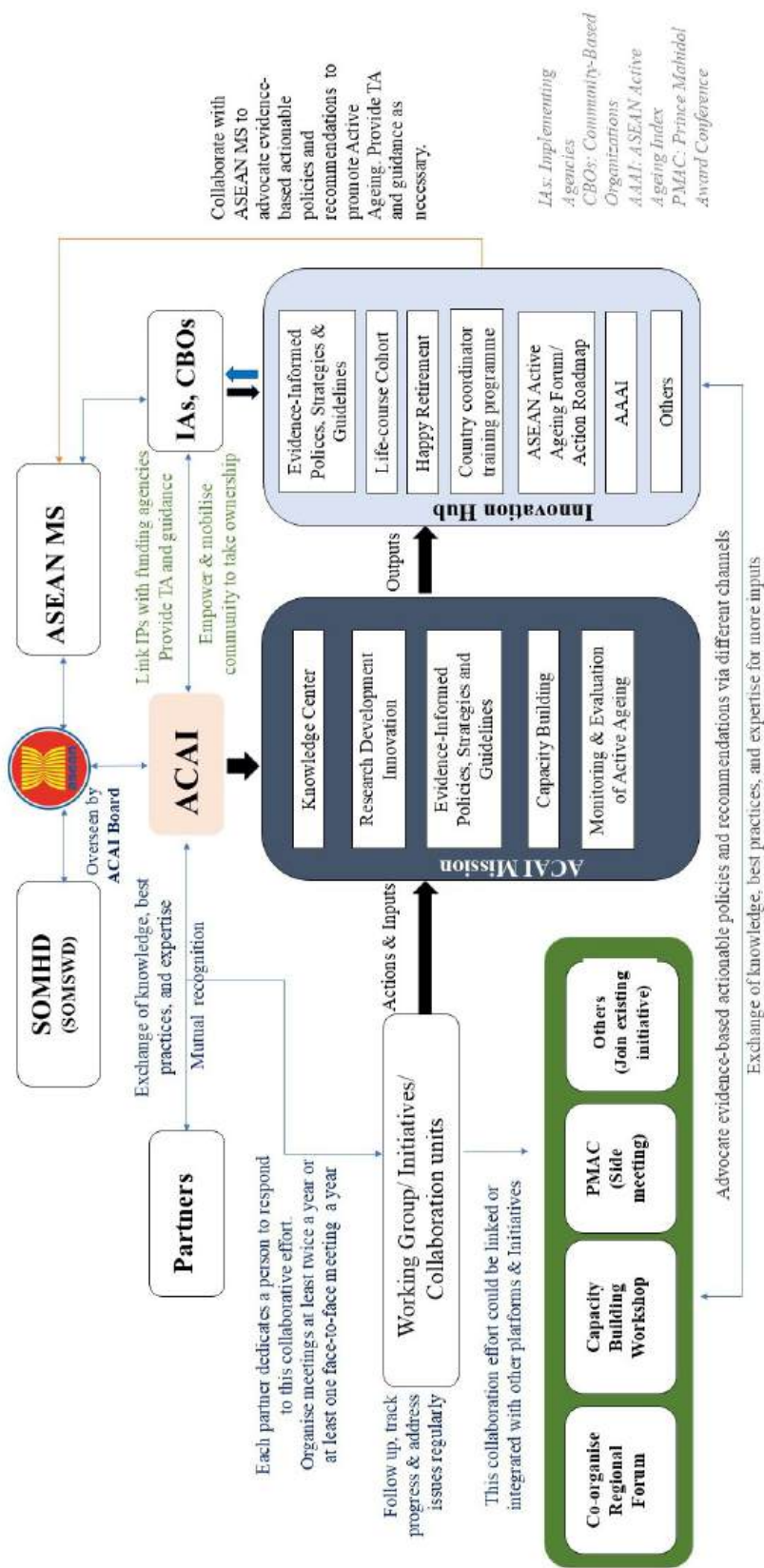
IV. Collaboration Mechanism and ACAI's Role as a Facilitator

The importance of strengthening cooperation between ACAI and partners was discussed. Dr Kyaw Min Soe, ACAI's Head of Policy Advocacy, IEC and Capacity Building, noted that ACAI will work as a connector (i.e. as a catalyst not as a direct implementer) to promote active ageing by connecting donors, funding agencies, and stakeholders (e.g. UN agencies, international donors, and international non-governmental organisations) with implementing agencies and beneficiaries (like community-based organisations and government agencies). ACAI will bring together academics, researchers, and implementers to turn research into action.

Furthermore, ACAI aims to establish a knowledge hub that will serve as an open platform by collaborating with partners to develop and share evidence-based research, policies, and best practices. The platform will highlight success stories and actionable policies to inspire scaling across AMS. ACAI will act as a facilitator to enhance capacity-building development, as well as a regional monitor and evaluator to track the progress and promote active ageing across AMS.

ACAI, as an intergovernmental body under ASEAN, will operate within the ASEAN Health Cluster and Social Welfare Cluster, with oversight from the ASEAN Senior Officials' Meeting on Health Development and ACAI's Governing Board. ACAI will receive technical support, strategic guidance, and institutional networks from different ASEAN sectoral bodies to help achieve ACAI's mission of promoting active ageing policies and innovation across AMS.

Figure 13. Framework of Collaboration between ACAI and Partners



Source: ACAI (2025), ACAI 5-Year Strategic Plan. <https://asean-acai.org/acai-5-year-strategic-plan-v2-0/>

V. Outcomes from the Governing Board Meeting

The 13th meeting of the ACAI Governing Board (GB) was held on 25 February 2025 during two days of consultative meetings in Bangkok, Thailand. The ASEAN Secretariat and ACAI's GB members and/or alternates from Brunei Darussalam, the Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, and Thailand attended the meeting on-site, whilst representatives from Cambodia, Indonesia, Singapore, and Viet Nam participated virtually.

Key administrative updates included the progress on ACAI's new permanent office, scheduled for occupancy in June 2025, the staff recruitment status, and financial reports detailing disbursements and future expenditures. Additionally, updates were provided on ACAI's approved projects, including the AAAI initiative, Happy Retirement, and the Life-course Cohort. The GB approved a structured framework for evaluating the Executive Director's performance, incorporating 360-degree feedback, key performance indicators, and self-assessment mechanisms.

Several governance matters were considered, including amendments to the Rules of Procedures, revisions to the Terms of Reference for Expert Groups and Country Coordinators, and refinements to the organisational structure. Notably, the GB agreed to limit financial support for travel expenses to representatives from middle- and low-income AMS, establish clear guidelines for research and innovation proposals, and authorise the Executive Director to manage staff allocations within ACAI. The meeting also approved banking and financial procedures to ensure efficient operations.

The GB concluded with key decisions, including the endorsement of the 5-Year Strategic Plan in principle, subject to further refinements, and that all programme implementations are in line with the four principles of ACAI's collaboration framework. The next GB meeting was proposed to take place before the 2026 Prince Mahidol Award Conference, with a possible field visit. The meeting reaffirmed ACAI's role in strengthening active ageing policies across ASEAN and aligning its initiatives with regional priorities.



Photo: ACAI Governing Board Meeting, 25 February 2025

IV. Conclusion

This report summarises the key activities and outcomes of the consultative meeting co-hosted by ACAI and ERIA. ACAI will incorporate stakeholder inputs from the meeting to finalise its 5-Year Strategic Plan (2025–2029), which will be published on the ACAI website and shared across its networks. In parallel, ACAI will launch several flagship programmes, including the ASEAN Active Ageing Index, Happy Retirement Program, Life-course Cohort Study, and Capacity Building for Country Coordinators, amongst others. These initiatives aim to accelerate the adoption of active ageing policies and practices across AMS through evidence-based interventions and strengthened regional collaboration.

To support knowledge exchange, ACAI will establish an open knowledge hub to disseminate research findings, their policy implications and recommendations, relevant policies, and best practices, showcasing scalable success stories from across the region. As an intergovernmental body under ASEAN, ACAI will serve as a facilitator, capacity builder, and regional monitor, aligned with the ASEAN Health and Social Welfare Clusters. Under the guidance of the ASEAN Senior Officials' Meeting on Health Development, the Senior Officials' Meeting on Social Welfare and Development, and their governing boards – and with technical support from ASEAN sectoral bodies – ACAI will drive innovation and policy implementation to promote active ageing across AMS.

Acknowledgements

ACAI Board members, the ASEAN Secretariat, the World Health Organization, United Nations agencies, academic and research institutions, non-governmental organisations, and civil society groups gathered to discuss key topics and develop a roadmap for promoting active ageing in ASEAN. Attendees included representatives from Japan's National Institute of Population and Social Security Research, the Japan–ASEAN Integration Fund, Japan International Cooperation Agency, Health Intervention and Technology Assessment Program, National University of Singapore, HelpAge, Asian Development Bank, Thailand's National Institute of Development Administration, the Thailand Development Research Institute Foundation, Mahidol University, Chulalongkorn University, Thammasat University, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand, United Nations Population Fund, Private Pension Administration, the Embassy of Japan in Thailand, YoungHappy, Senior Citizen Council of Thailand, and other partners.

Annex I. Meeting Agenda

23 Feb 2025	Arrival	International Participants
24 Feb 2025	13th Meeting of the ACAI Governing Board & Consultative Meeting on the 5-Year Strategic Plan	
Opening Session		
9.00–9.30	- Introduction - Opening address by ACAI GB Chair - Remarks by MOPH - Remarks by WHO - Remarks by ERIA - Photo session	Dr Suwit Wibulpolprasert, ACAI GB Chair MOPH: Dr Sopon Iamsirithaworn, Head of Inspector-General, Thai MOPH WHO: Dr Jos Vandelaer, WHO Representative to Thailand ERIA: Dr Sarah Krull Abe, Manager for Healthcare Services
Session I		
09:30–10:00	Active Ageing: UNFPA's Contributions to ASEAN Countries	Dr Abhijit Visaria, Technical Advisor on Population Dynamics, UNFPA Asia-Pacific Regional Office (APRO)
10:00–10:30	UN Decade of Healthy Ageing	Dr Olivia Nieveras, Medical Officer for Non-Communicable Diseases, WHO Thailand
10:30–11:00	Exercise & Coffee Break	
11:00–11:30	Building Evidence, Knowledge and Investment to Support ASEAN's Ageing Society	Ms Meredith Wyse, Senior Social Development Specialist – Aging and Care, Human and Social Development Sector, Sectors Group, Asian Development Bank (ADB)
11:30–12:00	Recent Trends and Future of the Nursing Care Business in Asia	Mr Masashi Suzuki, Director of Healthcare Strategy, ABeam Consulting
12:00–12:30	5-Year Strategic Plan of ACAI	Mr Suguru Ito, Head of Strategy, Planning, M&E, ACAI
12:30–13:30	Lunch Break	All participants
Session II		
13:30–14:00	Older People and Ageing Societies: the Imperative of Innovation	Mr Eduardo Klien, Regional Representative, Asia Pacific, HelpAge International

14:00–14:30	The Implications of Population Ageing, the Shift from Disease-oriented Health Systems to One Emphasising Disease Prevention, Health Promotion, and Enabling Environments	Dr Mikiko Kanda, Technical Lead, Healthy Ageing, Division of Healthy Environments and Populations (DHP), World Health Organization Regional Office for the Western Pacific (WPRO)
14:30–15:00	AAAI as a Tool to Monitor the Trend?	Dr Reiko Hayashi, Director-General of Japan's National Institute of Population and Social Security Research (IPSS)
15:00–15:30	From Longitudinal to Life-course Cohort for a n Intergenerational Approach	NUS: Asst. Prof. Jasper Tromp ERIA: Dr Yasuhiko Saito, Senior Research Fellow
15:30–16:00	Exercise & Coffee Break	
16:00–16:30	Happy Retirement: Another Appropriate Intervention?	HITAP: Ms Vilawan Luankongsomchit, Researcher ERIA: Dr Yasuhiko Saito, Senior Research Fellow
16:30–17:00	Comprehensive & Continuum Health Approach for Ageing	Dr Prasert Assantachai, Professor, Siriraj Hospital, Mahidol University
19:00–21:00	Welcome Dinner	All Participants
25 Feb 2025	13th Meeting of the ACAI Governing Board & Partners	
8:30–10:00	ACAI Governing Board Consultative meeting - Key Activities Plan for Next 5 Years - Discussion & Strengthening Cooperation between ACAI & Partners	ACAI GB and Partners Only
10:00–10:30	Exercise & Coffee Break	All Participants
10:30–13:00	Private ACAI Governing Board Meeting	ACAI GB Members and ACAI Staff
13:00–14:00	Lunch Time	All Participants

Annex II. Participant Organisations

ASEAN Centre for Active Ageing and Innovation (ACAI)

ASEAN Institute of Health Development

ASEAN Secretariat

Asian Development Bank (ADB)

Bureau of Elderly Health, Department of Health, MOPH Thailand College of Population Studies, Chulalongkorn University, Thailand

College of Economics, Nihon University, Japan

Department of Health Service Support, Thailand

Department of Health, Philippines

Department of Healthcare and Rehabilitation, MOPH Thailand

Department of Healthcare and Rehabilitation, Thailand

Department of International Cooperation, Thailand

Department of Mental Health, MOPH Thailand

Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA)

Embassy of Japan, Thailand

Faculty of Medicine Siriraj Hospital, Mahidol University

Faculty of Medicine, Ramathibodi Hospital, Mahidol University

Faculty of Medicine, Siriraj Hospital, Mahidol University

Faculty of Public Health, Thammasat University

Health Intervention and Technology Assessment Program (HITAP)

Health Promotion Centre, Brunei Darussalam

HelpAge International

Institute for Population and Social Research (IPSR), Mahidol University

Institute of Geriatric Medicine, MOPH Thailand

International Cooperation, Division of VNPA, Viet Nam

Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)

Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund (JAIF)

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Thailand

Ministry of Health, Brunei Darussalam
Ministry of Health, Cambodia
Ministry of Health, Indonesia
Ministry of Health, Malaysia
Ministry of Health, Singapore
Ministry of Public Health, Thailand
National Health Commission Office, Thailand
National Health Security Office, Thailand
National Institute of Development Administration, Thailand
National Institute of Population and Social Security Research (IPSS), Japan
National University of Singapore (NUS)
Private Pension Administration, Thailand
Ramathibodi Hospital, Mahidol University, Thailand
Saw Swee Hock School of Public Health, National University of Singapore (NUS)
Senior Citizen Council of Thailand (SCCT)
Siriraj Hospital, Mahidol University, Thailand
Thai Health Promotion Foundation
Thai Society of Gerontology and Geriatric Medicine
Thailand Development Research Institute, Khon Kaen University
Thammasat University
UNFPA Asia and the Pacific Regional Office
World Health Organization (Thailand)
World Health Organization Regional Office for the Western Pacific (WPRO)
Young Happy, Thailand

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This report presents the key outcomes of the 2-day consultative meeting co-hosted by the ASEAN Centre for Active Ageing and Innovation (ACAI) and the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA), held in February 2025 in Bangkok, Thailand. It highlights major presentations – most notably the launch of the ACAI 5-Year Strategic Framework – as well as the main discussion points, strategic insights, and proposed collaborative actions to advance active ageing across ASEAN.

The meeting showcased several flagship initiatives, including the ASEAN Active Ageing Index, Happy Retirement Program, Life-course Cohort Study, and Capacity Building for Country Coordinators. These programmes are designed to accelerate the adoption of active ageing policies and practices across ASEAN Member States through evidence-based approaches and strengthened regional collaboration.

Looking ahead, ACAI will implement a comprehensive strategy to achieve its 2029 goals. The roadmap includes defined milestones and measurable targets, while integrating cross-cutting priorities such as gender equality, digital inclusion, and financial sustainability to ensure long-term relevance and impact.

Further details on the ACAI 5-Year Strategic Plan (2025–2029) are available at the following link: <https://asean-acai.org/acai-5-year-strategic-plan-v2-0/#>

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