

## Nutrition security - Southeast Asia

### **Phnom Penh hosts the Final Meeting of the European project SMILING<sup>1</sup>**

Phnom Penh, Cambodia - Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> of April

**Press Release** | Marseille, France | March 29, 2014

From the 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> of April 2014, the outcomes of the European research project SMILING will be presented in Phnom-Penh. Coordinated by the Institute of Research for Development (IRD) since 2012, this North-South-South cooperation program aims at identifying effective strategies to prevent vitamins and minerals deficiencies in women and young children in South-East Asia.



#### **Prevent micronutrient deficiencies in South-East Asia**

Micronutrient deficiencies (iron, zinc, vitamin A and iodine mainly) affect billions of people worldwide. They are responsible for more than one million child deaths per year and prevent a third of children to reach their physical and intellectual potential. Improvement of the nutritional status of vulnerable populations is essential for achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

#### **The SMILING project**

Funded by the European Commission under the 7<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme for Research and Development, the project is coordinated by IRD in partnership with six Asian organizations and four research centers in Europe. The project targets population specifically affected by malnutrition: women of childbearing age (non-pregnant, pregnant and lactating) and young children under two years.

SMILING has several objectives:

- Identify appropriate, feasible, sustainable interventions adapted to each country: Laos, Vietnam, Thailand, Cambodia and Indonesia.
- Raise awareness and mobilize policy makers and stakeholders (private sector, international organizations and non-governmental organizations) to incorporate such strategies in nutrition and public health policy plans for the benefit of civil society, especially the most vulnerable populations.

#### **Final outcomes of the project: dissemination day in Phnom-Penh, 3<sup>rd</sup> April**

For over two years, European researchers and representatives of Ministries of Health and Nutrition Institutes of the five Asian countries involved in the project have worked together to propose action plans tailored to each country. For the first time, an advocacy project on nutrition interventions of this magnitude has been implemented at the regional level. The results are eagerly awaited, especially by the European Commission, international organizations<sup>2</sup> and government bodies.

The IRD in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries and the Ministry of Health of Cambodia, organizes a public dissemination of the SMILING project outcomes, the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 3<sup>rd</sup> April in Phnom Penh. April 3 will be a landmark day in which the five South-East Asian countries involved will present the action plans developed under the project SMILING to key representatives of Ministries, as well as those of international organizations. This conference will be critical to achieving the recommended interventions of the project.



**Information day on EU funding opportunities for research and innovation:  
Horizon 2020**

In addition, IRD organizes the 4<sup>th</sup> of April in Phnom Penh, in the framework of INCONTACT 2020 project, an information day on the new funding program for research and innovation in the European Union, Horizon 2020. The event aims at informing Cambodian researchers about funding opportunities in Horizon 2020 and to facilitate their participation in European collaborative projects. Discussions will focus on the following themes: food security, bio-economy, socio-economic sciences and humanities, innovation in small and medium enterprises.

Free entry for journalists

For registration please contact [Gentiane Blanchard](#) (SMILING) and [Flavia Mariani](#) (Infoday on Horizon 2020)

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**For more information**

→ Project SMILING: [www.nutrition-smiling.eu](http://www.nutrition-smiling.eu)

→ Project INCONTACT 2020: official network of National Contact Points (NCPs) for International Cooperation (INCO), funded by the European Commission under the FP7.  
[http://www.ncp-incontact.eu/nkswiki/index.php?title=Main\\_Page](http://www.ncp-incontact.eu/nkswiki/index.php?title=Main_Page)

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<sup>1</sup> Sustainable Micronutrient Interventions to control deficiencies and Improved Nutritional status and General health in Asia

<sup>2</sup> World Health Organization, World Food Programme, United Nations Fund for Children (UNICEF), Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition, International Life Sciences Institute, French Development Agency ...