



Prevention of micronutrient deficiencies in South East Asia

Kick-off meeting of the European Project "SMILING"

in Montpellier, from Tuesday 6 to Friday 9 March, 2012

Press release

March 2, 2012

Contributing to the nutrition security of vulnerable populations in Southeast Asia, is the ultimate objective of SMILING, a European project that started in January 2012.

Coordinated by the NUTRIPASS Research Unit on "Prevention of malnutrition and related diseases" of the Institute of Research for Development (IRD) in Montpellier, SMILING brings together eleven partners, six of which are from government agencies and universities of South-East Asian countries and five from European universities and research institutes specialized in research on nutrition in southern countries (see text box).

Relevance of the project

Deficiencies in essential micronutrients (iron, zinc, vitamin A, iodine ...) affect approximately two billion people worldwide especially women of childbearing age, infants and young children, mainly in developing countries. These deficiencies have various health consequences, especially on pregnancy, physical and cognitive development of infants and children, and are related to the development of chronic diseases in adulthood. Preventing these deficiencies will contribute to achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

The objectives of this Coordination and Support Action are:

- To Define a set of actions and interventions in countries of Southeast Asia, focusing on the population of women of childbearing age, infants and young children,
- To Raise awareness of stakeholders and decision makers to integrate these strategies into nutrition policies of governments and actions for nutrition of civil society (private sector, international organizations and NGOs).

The kick-off meeting in Montpellier, organized by the NUTRIPASS UMR, will bring together all partners to initiate the project and the planned activities. A panel of International experts (see text box), acting as Advisory Board of the project, will take part in this meeting.

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Learn more about SMILING

An acronym for:

“Sustainable Micronutrient Interventions to Control deficiencies and Improve Nutritional Status and General Health in Asia”

Funded by the European Commission, this project fits into the theme of FP7 'Food, Agriculture, Fisheries and Biotechnology'.

Partners:

- **Coordination:** IRD, UMR NUTRIPASS (IRD, the Universities of Montpellier 1 and 2)

- **European research centers**

The University of Copenhagen, Denmark, Wageningen University and the VU University Amsterdam in the Netherlands, the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine in England

- **South-East Asian national agencies and universities:**

the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries and the Ministry of Health of Cambodia, Mahidol University in Thailand, the Ministry of Health of Vietnam, the Ministry of Health of Laos and the Ministry of Education of Indonesia

- **An advisory committee** of six international experts: WHO, UNICEF, IFPRI * GAIN *, WPHNA *, INRA Rennes

A two year project

Budget: € 2.3 millions

* IFPRI: International Food Policy Research Institute, GAIN: Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition; WPHNA: World Public Health Nutrition Association