Mission

Working together to achieve the tobacco endgame by denormalizing the tobacco industry and advancing effective tobacco control policies and their enforcement

Vision

A healthy, tobacco-free world
The tobacco and nicotine industry has always shown itself to be cunning in its effort to stay relevant and protect its profits. In recent years, the prevalence of cigarette smoking has declined across the world, a result of hard-fought and sustained global tobacco control achievements.

But alongside this decline came the rise of electronic smoking devices. The industry claims that these devices are necessary for current smokers to quit, yet it is often young people (who have never smoked) using, promoting and glamorizing these products online. These devices are stylish, cute, colorful, flavored, and trendy. They are easily accessible - at corner shops, in exclusive boutiques, and online. And they have found their way into the hands of children and teenagers, who become easily addicted.

Any way we look at it, we are repeating history. It was not all that long ago when cigarettes were believed to be relatively harmless, even sophisticated, and smoking was an inescapable part of everyday life. We have come a long way since those times. We know so much more now about the harms of tobacco and nicotine, and about the ruthlessness of the industry. And yet here we are, on the threshold of another rapidly expanding smoking pandemic.

But civil society organizations like SEATCA are chipping away at the industry’s influence and undoing the damage inflicted by the industry. Organizations like SEATCA work hard to keep the world informed about the industry’s tactics, to push for strong tobacco control policies, to support governments to implement and enforce these policies, and to build alliances for a strong and coordinated response.

The battle rages on, and SEATCA will continue to stand as a global frontrunner in the fight for a tobacco- and nicotine-free world.

Dr Siriwat Tiptaradol
Chair, SEATCA Board
Our Board

As an organization registered in Thailand, SEATCA’s board of directors consists of ten Thai individuals who meet twice a year in Bangkok to offer SEATCA advice and guidance on programmatic and administrative matters.

Dr Siriwat Tiptaradol, Chairperson
Dr Tiptaradol is a former Deputy Permanent Secretary for public health and was a civil servant with the Thailand Ministry of Public Health for over 3 decades. He is currently Senior Advisor to the National Health Commission and Secretary General of the Heart to Heart Foundation.

Prof Dr Prakit Vathesatogkit, Vice Chairperson
Prof Dr Vathesatogkit has served as executive secretary of the Action on Smoking and Health Foundation, Thailand since 1986. He played a crucial role in supporting the Thai Government in the establishment of the Thai Health Promotion Foundation and currently serves as its senior advisor. Dr Prakit is also Special Advisor to the International Network of Health Promotion Foundations.

Ms Bungon Ritthiphakdee, Secretary General
Ms Ritthiphakdee founded SEATCA in 2001 and currently serves as senior advisor. She also serves as executive director of the Global Center for Good Governance in Tobacco Control (GGTC) founded by SEATCA in 2017.

Dr Somsak Chunharas, Board Member
Dr Chunharas formerly served as Deputy Minister of Health for Thailand and is currently President of National Health Foundation in Thailand, an NGO promoting and coordinating evidence-based health policy and system development.

Assoc Prof Dr Roengrudee Patanavanich, Board Member
Prof Dr Patanavanich is an Associate Professor in the Department of Community Medicine at Ramathibodi Hospital, Mahidol University. She is also Deputy Director of the WHO FCTC Knowledge Hub for Article 5.3.

Prof Dr Isra Sarntisart, Board Member
Prof Dr Sarntisart is a Professor of Economics at Chulalongkorn University. His research on tobacco focuses on tobacco taxes and demand for tobacco. He has also been a consultant on tobacco taxation in many countries including Lao PDR, the Maldives, and Nepal.

Prof Dr Lakkhana Termsirikulchai, Board Member
Prof Dr Termsirikulchai founded the Research and Knowledge Management Center for Tobacco Control in 2005 and served as its Director. She now is the Director of the Thai Health Academy Programme, Capacity Development Center for Health Promotion.

Prof Dr Nuntavarn Vichit-Vadakarn, Board Member
Prof Dr Vichit-Vadakarn is the founding Dean of the Faculty of Public Health and the School of Global Studies at Thammasat University where she served for over 13 years. She has served as the lead negotiator for Thailand at the Conference of the Parties (COP) for the WHO FCTC for several years.

Prof Dr Surichai Wankeaw, Board Member
Dr Wankeaw has been the Director of the Center for Peace and Conflict Studies at Chulalongkorn University since 2010 and a professor of Sociology at the university since 2009.

Ms Accharawan Wongsatithkul, Treasurer
Ms Wongsatithkul has been with SEATCA since 2006 as Chief Operations Officer.
The COVID-19 pandemic was far from a pause for SEATCA, particularly given the way the tobacco industry used it as a golden opportunity to maximize its own interests and profits while the world was looking the other way. Throughout the start and the height of the pandemic, SEATCA had continued and intensified our work in a manner already familiar to us - virtually. We provided our expertise to governments; generated evidence-based publications and advocacy tools; built tobacco control capacity within governments and civil society; facilitated knowledge-sharing in our region and beyond; strengthened national- and regional-level tobacco industry monitoring; and stepped up efforts to counter and denormalize the industry.

The prevailing sentiment in 2023 was “onwards and upwards” as we found a balance between staying safe and forging ahead with our work to achieve the endgame for tobacco. In January, the entire SEATCA team met in person for the first time in three years after an extended pandemic-enforced travel hiatus. The following month, the team reconvened in Bangkok, this time with our core group of partners from our six focal countries - Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, the Philippines, and Vietnam - to map out country-level and regional goals and plans for the year.

In 2023, SEATCA became an officially accredited entity of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), a testament to our longstanding and enduring relationship with ASEAN Member States and the ASEAN Secretariat. In October, we also received recognition from the Philippines Department of Health in the form of a Silver Healthy Pilipinas Award for Partners.

Our work is as critical as ever. SEATCA remains committed to standing tall and strong alongside our allies against the tobacco and nicotine industries. The health and wellbeing of our world depends on our collective success.

Dr Ulysses Dorotheo
Executive Director, SEATCA
Meet the SEATCA Team

Chris Ann Mel Bugnot
Media & Communications Manager

Supaporn Chiamchit
Accountant

Anisa Ismail
Sustainability Manager

Dr Anton Oliver Javier
FCTC Program Officer

Dr Mary Assunta Kolandai
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Nontalee Laohavisit
Administrative Officer

Tan Yen Lian
Knowledge & Information Manager

Irene Patricia Reyes
Tobacco Industry Denormalization Program Officer

Bungon Ritthiphakdee
Founder & Senior Advisor

Pikasit Sitta
Information Systems Manager

Dr Domilyn Villarreiz
Smoke-Free Program Manager
Making Progress on the

F | C | T | C

WHO FRAMEWORK CONVENTION
ON TOBACCO CONTROL

SEATCA team and core group members in Bangkok, Thailand - February 2023
The heart of SEATCA’s work lies in consistently and proactively supporting ASEAN countries to accelerate and effectively implement tobacco control measures outlined in the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC), in particular:

- **Article 5.1:** Comprehensive multisectoral national tobacco control strategies, plans and programmes
- **Article 5.2:** A national coordinating mechanism or focal points for tobacco control; effective legislative, executive, administrative and/or other measures; cooperation with other Parties in developing appropriate policies for preventing and reducing tobacco consumption, nicotine addiction and exposure to tobacco smoke
- **Article 5.3:** Protection of tobacco control policies from the commercial and vested interests of the tobacco industry
- **Article 6:** Price and tax measures to reduce demand for tobacco
- **Article 8:** Protection from exposure to tobacco smoke
- **Article 11:** Packaging and labeling of tobacco products
- **Article 13:** Comprehensive ban on tobacco advertising, promotions, and sponsorship
- **Article 26:** Financial resources to achieve the objectives of the Convention

Cambodia is poised to shift to a mixed system from an *ad valorem* system within the next few years. SEATCA supported our country partners - **Cambodia Movement for Health (CMH)** and **WHO Cambodia** - with a policy briefer on how tobacco companies are benefiting from increasing retail prices ahead of a public lighting tax increase. We also supported Kampot City - Cambodia’s first smoke-free tourism city - to strengthen the enforcement of its smoke-free regulation.

SEATCA provided support to CMH, which advocated for the issuance of a policy to prohibit partnership with the tobacco industry in sporting events and venues with the National Olympic Committee of Cambodia (NOCC). The chair of NOCC endorsed the concept note submitted by CMH on this proposal and formed a working group, which drafted this policy.

*SEATCA’s Smoke-free Program Manager Domilyn Villarreiz presenting an award - recognizing Krong Kampot as Cambodia's first smoke-free tourism city - to the governor*
SEATCA’s longtime consultants in Indonesia established Ruang Kebijakan Kesehatan Indonesia (RUKKI, known in English as the Indonesian Health Policy Forum) in September 2023.

SEATCA provided technical support and invited resource persons to a smoke-free workshop organized by the Ministry of Tourism and WHO Indonesia. SEATCA was invited to speak on smoke-free tourist destinations in ASEAN at a December workshop co-organized by RUKKI - Development of Green and Sustainable Tourism Standards in Indonesia. SEATCA also met with the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy and with Eco-Tourism Bali to discuss the inclusion of smoke-free indicators and standards for green/sustainable tourism.

SEATCA provided technical support to the Ministry of Health for an exit strategy for Lao PDR’s Investment Licence Agreement (ILA) that created Lao Tobacco Ltd. The ILA is due to be renewed in 2026, even as it has completely stalled tobacco tax enforcement and tobacco control fund utilization in the country.

SEATCA also supported the MOH to strengthen its 2024-2028 National Tobacco Control Strategy and to develop and implement its action plans to strengthen enforcement of the country’s ESD ban. In addition, we provided the MOH with support to review and propose pictorial health warnings for tobacco packages and prepared a set of 10 mock-ups of standardized tobacco packaging to support the development of a Ministerial Regulation on Standardized Tobacco Packaging.

SEATCA coordinated with the Ministry of Tourism to revise its smoke-free regulation, which currently allows designated outdoor smoking areas.
Myanmar

The political crisis in Myanmar has been an obstacle to tobacco control progress, including tobacco taxation; however, SEATCA supported our country partner, People’s Health Foundation, to run a simulation for forgone tax revenues from delayed implementation of tax reforms, supporting a medium-term goal of tax reforms in the country.

In the Ancient Town of Bagan, SEATCA provided technical assistance on the implementation of its smoke-free law; Bagan currently has 102 smoke-free sites within its cultural zone.

SEATCA issued a press release denouncing the third extension granted by the Ministry of Health to the tobacco industry to comply with standardized tobacco packaging (another 12-month extension until 31 December 2024, effectively a 38-month compliance period).

Philippines

In the Philippines, SEATCA and the Philippine chapter of SEATCA’s Smoke-Free Cities Asia-Pacific Network (SCAN) - worked with the Philippine Smoke-Free Movement and local youth councils on grassroots advocacy and mobilization for the inclusion of e-cigarettes in city-level smoke-free ordinances. The Philippines’ national technical working group for tobacco control was given technical input on the development of the National Tobacco Prevention and Control Strategy 2030, and guidance on the selection of an updated set of pictorial health warnings for tobacco products in 2024.

SEATCA and its country partners (HealthJustice Philippines and Action on Smoking and Health Philippines) closely monitored a corporate social responsibility bill in the Philippine Congress that could be leveraged by the tobacco industry and other health-harming industries to exert undue influence in governance for public health. If passed, this bill will undermine the Civil Service Commission and Department of Health’s 2010 Joint Memorandum Circular, which prohibits government officials from interacting with any tobacco company, except “when strictly necessary for the latter’s effective regulation, supervision, or control.”
In Vietnam, SEATCA supported our partner **HealthBridge Vietnam** to strengthen the implementation of the WHO FCTC, particularly to support tobacco tax reform (from ad valorem to a mixed tobacco tax system), expand smoke-free places, and strengthen smoke-free policies through collaboration with the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism (MOCST). We also worked together to raise awareness on the harmful effects of ESDs (e.g. via this [article](#)). SEATCA provided technical support to the Ministry of Health to share ASEAN country experiences in regulating ESDs for government officers and the tobacco control community in Vietnam.

**Brunei, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand**

While Brunei, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand are not focal countries, SEATCA maintains relationships with government and civil society in each of these countries, engaging and offering technical support as needed.
Regional

SEATCA began working with WHO HQ’s economics department (which is collaborating with the Asian Development Bank to study tobacco, alcohol, and sugar-sweetened beverage taxes) to examine the impact of tobacco taxes in ASEAN and provide policy information relevant to the region. SEATCA facilitated a meeting between the ASEAN Health Cluster and WHO to help move the initiative forward and has reviewed a preliminary draft of the WHO report.

SEATCA worked with the WHO Western Pacific Regional Office (WPRO) to develop a regional publication on smoke-free enforcement based on consultations with various countries and cities with good smoke-free policies and enforcement. The publication will be launched in the second half of 2024 along with a SEATCA-led training for enforcers.

With the support of the ASEAN secretariat, SEATCA together with the lead country Lao PDR, launched the ASEAN Smoke-Free Award to acknowledge and recognize cities, municipalities, provinces, states, and districts that are effectively implementing Article 8 of the WHO FCTC (protection from exposure to tobacco smoke). Five countries (Indonesia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Philippines, and Thailand) submitted nominations for the inaugural Award. In October, SEATCA formed the Regional Assessment Smoke-Free Team (RAST) to provide technical support to ASEAN Smoke-Free Award nominees, and to review and evaluate award nominations. The RAST is made up of members from SEATCA and WHO WPRO. The inaugural Award ceremony will be scheduled during the ASEAN Health Ministers Meeting in August 2024.

Within the ASEAN Health Cluster, SEATCA participated in a virtual meeting and committed to support ASEAN Member States on tobacco industry interference, smoke-free, standardized packaging of tobacco products, and ESDs. We reviewed and revised the WNTD Message prepared by Lao PDR on behalf of all ASEAN Member States and provided technical support to review draft concept notes for One ASEAN Member States Voice Commitments on 1) tobacco industry interference, 2) standardized tobacco packaging, and 3) banning e-cigarettes and heated tobacco products.

SEATCA prepared pack display kits, containing standardized cigarette packs from Australia, France, New Zealand, Singapore, Thailand, and United Kingdom, for advocacy to support standardized tobacco packaging initiatives in even more ASEAN countries.

SEATCA continued to document, solicit, compile, and disseminate regional and global tobacco industry monitoring developments to country partners via fortnightly Tobacco Industry Monitoring (TIM) updates and quarterly TIM bulletins. We also worked on improving the design and content of our Tobacco Watch and TI Monitor websites.
Media Fellowship

Capacity building is a cornerstone of SEATCA’s work. Our second 2023 fellowship engaged journalists from Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Philippines, and Vietnam for a year-long media fellowship. The program brought all fellows, the SEATCA team, and country partners together for an orientation and workshop (focusing on ESDs) in May 2023 in Chiang Mai, Thailand. The workshop included a visit to Kaomai Lanna Resort, formerly a tobacco leaf curing facility and currently a sustainable resort and event venue. This visit showcased one of the ways a Thai entity has successfully shifted away from tobacco as a business model.

![Media fellows and mentors at the Kaomai Lanna Resort in Chiang Mai - May 2023](image-url)
The media fellows have since supported SEATCA’s advocacy by writing and publishing tobacco control stories in their respective countries, especially around World No Tobacco Day. These stories are:

**Cambodia**
Van Kimsal, Aspara Media Services
Ministry of Education receives World No Tobacco Day 2023 award from the World Health Organization
World Health Organization: 1.3 million children worldwide are involved in tobacco cultivation

**Indonesia**
Imam Hamdi, Koran Tempo
Hijrah Season: The First Victim of Tobacco Industry
Kristi Dwi Utami, Koran Kompas
- The Happy End Behind the Bankruptcy of Chiang Mai Tobacco Industry
- Various Efforts and Challenges to Crush E-Cigarettes in Southeast Asia
- Misguided "Security" of E-Cigarettes

**Lao PDR**
Senglathsamy Souvath, Lao Youth Radio
- Lao Youth Radio Facebook post on WNTD 2023
- SEATCA raises awareness of journalists on tobacco control issues in Southeast Asia

**Philippines**
Rhodina Villanueva, PhilStar
Group wants phaseout of tobacco farming
Jee Geronimo, Rappler
[WATCH] From tobacco processing to tourism: Thailand’s Kaomai Estate 1955

**Vietnam**
Nguyen Hong Hanh, Tin Tuc Newspaper
- World No Tobacco Day 2023: 'Need food, no tobacco' to create sustainable livelihoods
- Transforming a tobacco processing farm into a sustainable resort
Nguyen Thi Hiep, Health and Life Newspaper
Step by step eliminate tobacco plants, towards the goal of food security
New Publications

SEATCA launched its fourth (2023) FCTC Scorecard, a report based on WHO FCTC implementation guidelines that assesses and ranks ASEAN governments for their implementation of specific articles in the WHO FCTC.

The ASEAN (9 countries) and Asian (19 countries) editions of the Tobacco Industry Interference Index were released in November. Several country-level launches took place, including Indonesia (organized by RUKKI) and the Philippines (organized by HealthJustice). These launches received good local media coverage describing the ranking of the country in question, and how the industry undermined their tobacco control policies.
SEATCA launched its first Innovative Financing for Health Promotion Fellowship in March - supported by our longtime partners, the Thai Health Promotion Foundation (ThaiHealth) and the WHO Western Pacific Regional Office. This fellowship is a policy-focused program targeted at governments, to support the development, legislation, and implementation of a national sustainable financing mechanism for health promotion.

19 countries applied for the fellowship, and ten were selected to join the 2023 cohort - two fellows each from Bangladesh, Cambodia, Gabon, Georgia, Kenya, Niger, Senegal, Sri Lanka, Vanuatu, and Vietnam. The African Tobacco Control Alliance (ATCA) has played a critical mentorship and facilitation role during this fellowship, in particular with the four African countries.

In March, SEATCA brought the 20 fellows to Bangkok for a workshop and study visit to ThaiHealth. At the workshop, ThaiHealth’s pioneers and other mentors from SEATCA and ATCA came together to share their experiences, offer guidance, and support fellows to develop their own policy objectives. SEATCA completed the development of a complementary e-learning platform in December, which is housed in the Health Promotion Fund Resource Hub.
At the Philip Morris International Shareholders Meeting in May, SEATCA, pointed out the contradictory actions of PMI’s stated goal of moving away from selling cigarettes as part of their company’s strategy to focus on “smoke-free products” by highlighting the company’s aggressive cigarette promotions in the Philippines. We published a TobaccoWatch article on this issue and disseminated it to our partners.

In June, SEATCA was invited to Geneva to participate in WHO’s global workshop on flavors and global consultation on new and emerging nicotine and tobacco products.

SEATCA was invited to the International Network of Health Promotion Foundations (INHPF) annual meeting in Bangkok in November. SEATCA was invited to deliver a presentation on challenges and opportunities to advocate/support other countries to set up a health promotion fund. Our two Innovative Financing fellows from Georgia were invited to attend the meeting as observers. SEATCA’s involvement with INHPF (and the involvement of its innovative financing fellows) will increase, especially as we continue to expand the geographic scope of our innovative financing for health promotion work.

SEATCA leveraged its three smoke-free networks - Smoke-free Cities Asia Pacific Network (SCAN, 343 members), Smoke-free Heritage Sites and Cities Alliance (SHA, 87 members), and Global Alliance for Smoke-free Tourism (GAST) - to support national smoke-free policy development and enforcement in specific countries and to reclaim the spirit of smoke-free, which had been hijacked by the industry for its own gains. SHA takes a leading role within GAST. In 2023, SEATCA continued to sustain and grow these networks within and beyond the ASEAN region. In particular, SEATCA worked on building up our newest network, GAST, by sending out membership registration forms to nearly 200 smoke-free tourist destinations, with a kick-off activity planned for 2024.
SEATCA provides weekly updates to SCAN members via email with a SCAN In Focus Bulletin, and regular updates through the SCAN Asia Pacific Facebook Page. The SCAN Philippines chapter is also regularly updated via its own Facebook page.

The 10th session of the Conference of Parties (COP10) to the WHO FCTC was scheduled to take place in Panama in November 2023 but was postponed to February 2024 as a result of local tensions in Panama. SEATCA participated in the WHO WPRO and South East Asia Regional Office (SEARO) pre-COP meetings in September and October as observers or temporary advisors to WHO. As a member of the Global Alliance for Tobacco Control (GATC), SEATCA played an active role in task forces to determine joint NGO policy positions on various COP10 agenda items. SEATCA also prepared materials for SEATCA’s exhibition booth and conducted orientations for all members of the SEATCA delegation to COP10. More details will be provided in SEATCA’s 2024 annual report, but a snapshot of SEATCA’s participation at COP10 is available online.
SEATCA is a key player in the movement to bring about the tobacco endgame. Central to this goal is SEATCA’s ongoing media campaign - *Make Tobacco History* - to denormalize the tobacco industry, its various front groups, and all tobacco and nicotine products (combustible and electronic versions). SEATCA’s sub-campaign on electronic smoking devices highlighted the harmfulness of these devices and the tactics used by the tobacco and nicotine industries to glamorize the devices in order to capture the youth market. SEATCA produced informational materials for policymakers and advocates, with recommended actions for governments to take, including imposing a complete ban on electronic smoking devices. These materials include a policy paper on ESDs, a fact sheet on nicotine as a poison, and an op-ed.

In September, SEATCA organized an electronic smoking device (ESD) regional workshop (Strengthening E-Cigarette Laws and Policies to Protect Public Health) in collaboration with the Malaysia Ministry of Health and the WHO Western Pacific Regional Office. Delegates from government and non-government organizations from ASEAN and Western Pacific nations attended. The workshop provided evidence updates on ESDs, shared regulatory practices, and discussed countering tobacco industry interference at COP10. The workshop was held immediately after the WHO WPRO pre-COP meetings in Malaysia.
SEATCA in the Media

SEATCA published 12 articles in 2023 - highlighting tobacco industry interference, calling out government inaction on public health, and amplifying tobacco control wins:

- Myanmar Bows to Industry, Postpones Life-Saving Standardized Tobacco Packaging for Third Time
- WHO wake-up call: children hooked as governments sleepwalk in e-cigarette epidemic
- Malaysia misses golden opportunity to protect future generations from addiction and disease
- Tobacco industry intensely lobbied Asia to undermine public health measures
- Building back better: Smoke-free tourism across the Asia Pacific
- Concordia Summit rejects Philip Morris International hypocrisy
- Rehashed ‘Safer Tobacco Products’ Gimmick Masquerading as Public Health Benefit
- ASEAN cannot afford a new generation of nicotine addicts
- World No Tobacco Day 2023: Asians need food, not tobacco
- To achieve food security, phase out tobacco farming
- Mr Prime Minister, please do not hand the Malaysian youth over to a harmful industry
- Stop Tobacco Pollution Alliance: Making Tobacco Polluters Pay Campaign Launches in The New York Times

SEATCA also actively created organic content and shared important tobacco control updates across the following digital channels:

- facebook.com/SEATCA
- @seatca
- @SEATCAdotOrg
- seatca.org
- @SEATCA

2023 Annual Report

Southeast Asia Tobacco Control Alliance
Copies of SEATCA’s audited financial statements are available for legitimate purposes and upon written request to info@seatca.org.

SEATCA relies on philanthropic grants and contributions to fund our work. In alignment with Article 5.3 of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, we are committed to safeguarding tobacco control initiatives and policies against tobacco industry interference. To that end, SEATCA does not and will not hire, partner with, or receive funding from any organization or individual that represents or works to promote the interests of the tobacco and nicotine industry.

Our work would not be possible without those who invest in us. We are deeply grateful for the continued support of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (our primary funder), Bloomberg Philanthropies, the Thai Health Promotion Foundation, and the WHO Western Pacific Regional Office, and to private individuals who have donated to our cause via our online fundraising efforts.