MILAN URBAN FOOD POLICY PACT

FINAL PUBLICATION

SPREADING EXPERIENCES AND KNOWLEDGE ON SCHOOL MEALS PROGRAMMES IN ASEAN CITIES



Promoters

Comune di Milano

ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS

Funded by

Ministero degli Affari Esteri e della Cooperazione Internazionale

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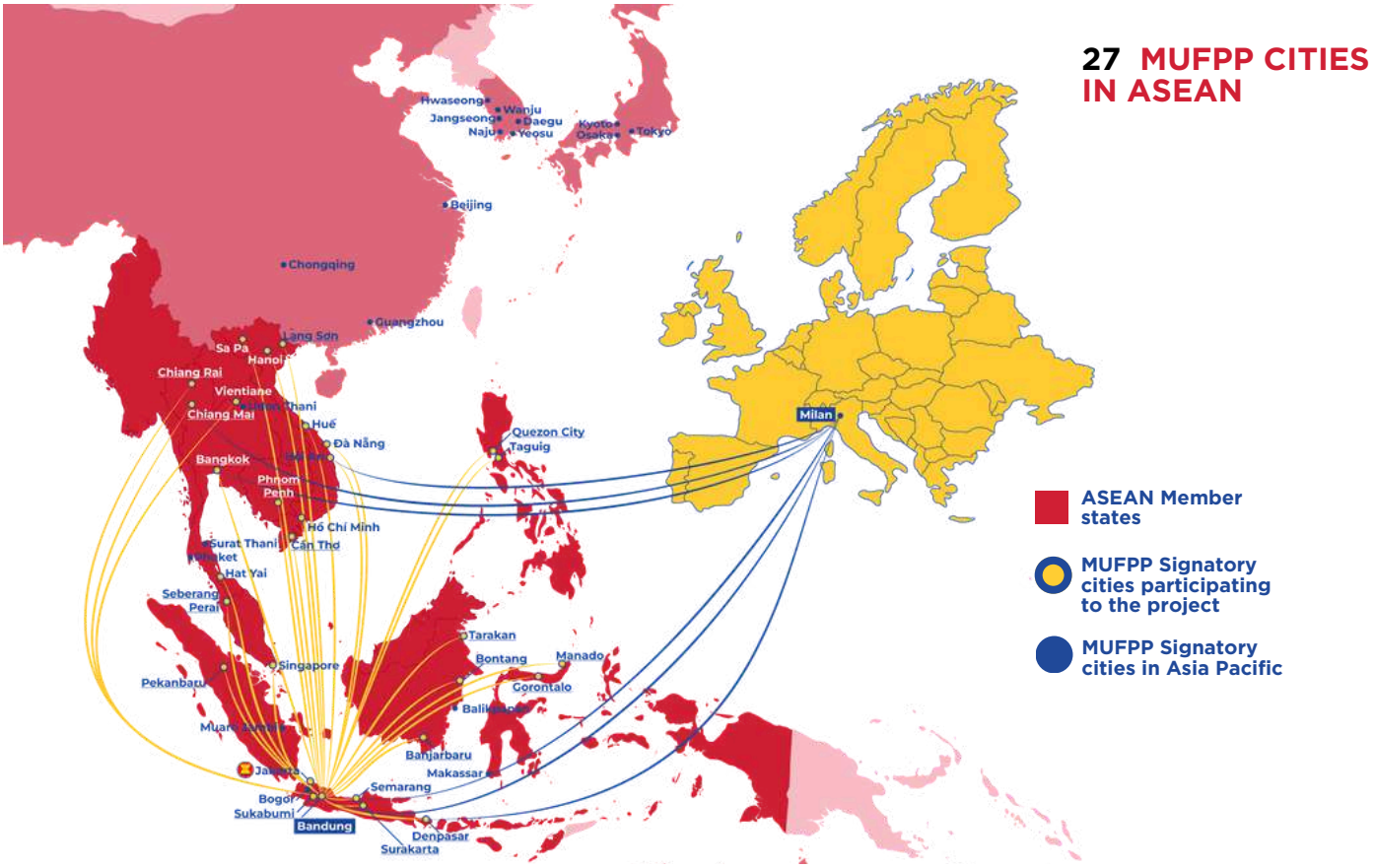
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BACKGROUND

Over the last years a strong interest in urban food systems has been observed in the ASEAN region. This trend has been confirmed by the growing participation of ASEAN cities in the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact (MUFPP), a global commitment of Mayors that consider food as an entry point for the sustainable development of their cities. The Milan Urban Food Policy Pact has been launched by the Mayor of Milan in 2015 and the MUFPP Secretariat is part of the Municipality of Milan. Following several activities already carried out in the region, in March 2023, the **MUFPP Secretariat** took a further step, initiating a collaboration with **ASEAN** with the aim to address the **most prominent challenges in urban food systems** within ASEAN Member States.

The project proposal titled "Urban Food Policy development in ASEAN" was presented and approved by **ASEAN Health Cluster 1**, which is responsible for promoting healthy and proper nutrition for the population. The first joint activity involved the development of a series of **webinars** on food and nutrition in ASEAN cities, with the aim of introducing the topic of **urban food policies** to ASEAN Member States and raising awareness of the work of the MUFPP Secretariat within the broader ASEAN Member States community.

Next, the partnership between the ASEAN and the MUFPP Secretariat culminated in 2024, with the approval by ASEAN of the ***Spreading Experiences and Knowledge on School Meals Programmes in ASEAN Cities*** project presented by the MUFPP Secretariat- City of Milan and funded by the **Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation**. This gave birth to a large set of concrete initiatives with ASEAN cities to strengthen school meals programmes with **capacity-building activities**, by capitalizing on the potential of the **MUFPP city network** in the region. The **mobilisation** of MUFPP cities in ASEAN for the above mentioned project is described in the following map.



THE PROJECT SCOPE

Given that in many countries school meals programmes are established and managed directly by **local governments**, mayors have direct contact with final users and have a **primary political responsibility** for realising **infrastructure and services** for school meals programmes. Cities are nodes which possess the most specific **knowledge and first-hand experiences** of the citizens' needs in terms of food systems and nutrition. Feedback from local communities is essential for turning **citizens' needs** into practical interventions. Therefore, cities and their governance structures should **play a central role** in designing strategies to improve school meals.
On this background, the project stands to increase the **capacity of city officers and member states from ASEAN countries to develop school meals programmes** and policies that can multiply positive health, environmental, economic and social outcomes in local communities. By building on the needs and priorities of ASEAN cities and member states, the project increases **opportunities for capacity building and city-to-city exchange** within the MUFPP community, that can support ASEAN mayors and city officers in maximising the transformative potential of school meals for local food systems transformation.
The project is promoted by the **Municipality of Milan - Milan Urban Food Policy Pact**, **ASEAN** and **funded by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation**. The project aligns with **ASEAN Post-2015 Health Development Agenda (2021-2025)**, and is developed in the framework of the **ASEAN-Italy Development Partnership: Practical Cooperation Areas (2022-2026)**, in particular with measure 18, measure 39 and measure 54.

By building on the sharing of best practices from other MUFPP signatory cities in ASEAN, the project is supported by a broad range of strategic partners and supporters of the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact, which include **Milano Ristorazione**, the **Parahyangan Catholic University** (UNPAR), the **School Meals Coalition**, and the **Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS)**.

Promoters

MILAN URBAN FOOD POLICY PACT

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Supporters

MILANO RISTORAZIONE S.R.L.

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Cities Feeding the Future
MILAN URBAN FOOD POLICY PACT

AGENZIA ITALIANA PER LA COOPERAZIONE ALLO SVILUPPO



PROMOTERS AND SUPPORTERS

Milan Urban Food Policy Pact

The Milan Urban Food Policy Pact is the main legacy of the Universal Exhibition "Expo Milan 2015" Feeding the Planet, Energy for Life. The Milan Pact is a global **commitment of mayors** from around the world who consider food as an entry point for the sustainable development of growing cities. It represents the main framework for cities and international stakeholders active in the definition of innovative urban food policies. With its **Framework of Actions** that consists of 37 recommended actions clustered in **6 categories**, the Milan Pact provides a holistic approach to urban food systems. Today, the Milan Pact gathers more than **300 cities**, representing a total of 500 million inhabitants over the 6 MUFPP regions.

City Of Milan

Food Policy Department

It has been established in 2022 within the Education Department.
It deals with all the food-related policies, from school meals programme to food waste, food poverty and agriculture.
School Meals Control Unit, it oversees the daily management of the relationship with Milano Ristorazione, monitoring and supervising their activities.

Milano Ristorazione

It is the in-house public company in charge of school meals provision since 2000. It is owned by the Municipality of Milan and supplies 80,000 meals daily to kindergartens, primary and secondary schools, residential care homes and elderly people with home service.

Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)

The ASEAN is a political and economic union of **10 member states** in Southeast Asia. It was established on 8 August 1967 in Bangkok, Thailand, with the signing of the ASEAN Declaration by the Founding Fathers of ASEAN: Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand. Today its main aim is to accelerate **economic growth, social progress and cultural development** in the region and to to promote **regional peace and stability**.

PROMOTERS AND SUPPORTERS

Parahyangan Catholic University of Bandung (UNPAR)

In 2023, a **letter of intent** was signed between the Municipality of Milan and UNPAR for developing a **centre of excellence** on urban food policy in Asia Pacific. Within this agreement, a variety of activities have been developed besides this project, such as the organisation of knowledge sharing activities, the support to Asia Pacific cities in the development of **urban food policies**, and the set up of workshops for cities.

Cities Feeding The Future Initiative

Led by the MUFPP, Cities Feeding the Future is one of the initiatives of the **School Meals Coalition** (SMC), launched in 2021 with the aim of driving actions to urgently improve and scale up school meal programs to **ensure that every child has the opportunity to receive a healthy, nutritious meal in school by 2030**. The Coalition gathers today more than **100 governments** keen to move forward on improving school meals programs around the world.

Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS)

AICS is the operative platform of the **Italian cooperation system**, and it is called to perform activities associated with the elaboration, development, financing, management and control of international cooperation initiatives. Among the **19 field offices**, a dedicated one is present in Hanoi, overseeing activities in the region. In 2022, AICS and the City of Milan signed a **3-year Agreement to strengthen MUFPP's action** to support the government policies of signatory cities, facilitate contacts and relations with AICS field offices to support urban/peri-urban food policies, and disseminate them in the Italian and international debate on development cooperation.

Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation

In September 2020, Italy was assigned by ASEAN the status of Development Partner. In order to substantiate the efforts of the two parties, potential **areas for cooperation** have been identified and have been included in the **ASEAN-Italy Development Partnership: Practical Cooperation Areas (2022-2026)**.

THE PROJECT TARGETS

As a testament to the shared intent between ASEAN and MUFPP, the project stands to directly contribute to the achievement of Measures No. 18, No. 39, and No. 54 of the **ASEAN-Italy Development Partnership: Practical Cooperation Areas (2022–2026)**.

In particular:

- **Measure n. 18**: Explore opportunities for cooperation within the area of sustainable food systems, including the implementation of the ASEAN Integrated Food Security Framework and Strategic Plan of Action in Food Security, 2021-2025
- **Measure n. 39**: Support the implementation of the ASEAN Post-2015 Health Development Agenda (2021-2025), where appropriate, including through capacity building and technical exchange of relevant information and good practices, in strengthening health systems and access to care with the aim of achieving universal health coverage, responding to all hazards and emerging threats, promoting healthy lifestyles including the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases, and promoting active ageing through cooperation with the ASEAN Centre for Active Ageing and Innovation (ACAI) and, ensuring food safety.
- **Measure n. 54**: Support the ASEAN Smart Cities Network (ASCN) in building communities that are resilient, innovative, and well-connected, including through partnerships and collaborations on areas of mutual interest.

ASEAN's commitment to improving the health and nutrition of various target groups has also taken shape through the definition of the **ASEAN Post-2015 Health Development Agenda (2021–2025)**, which aims to foster the development of a healthy and sustainable community.
The project directly contributes to ASEAN Health Cluster 1 on **Promoting Healthy Lifestyle**, and specifically to the **Priority 7 (Promotion of good nutrition and healthy diet)**, and to the:

- **Project activity 43.** Establishment of a Framework of Central Kitchen for childcare centres and kindergartens in ASEAN
- **Project activity 45**. Follow-up of the Development of ASEAN School Nutrition Package in AMS
- **Project activity 51**. Development of Model for Multi-sectoral Approach to Sustain Food System for Healthy Diets in Ensuring Food and Nutrition Security in ASEAN



THE ROADMAP OF ACTIVITIES

1

Survey

on school meals programmes in ASEAN cities

2

Webinar

on school meals programmes in ASEAN countries

3

Summer school

on School meals Programmes

4

Communication & dissemination

within the MUFPP community

5

Study visit and workshop in Milan

to share best practices on school meals programmes



Development of **targeted Feasibility studies** for cities on school meals programmes

6

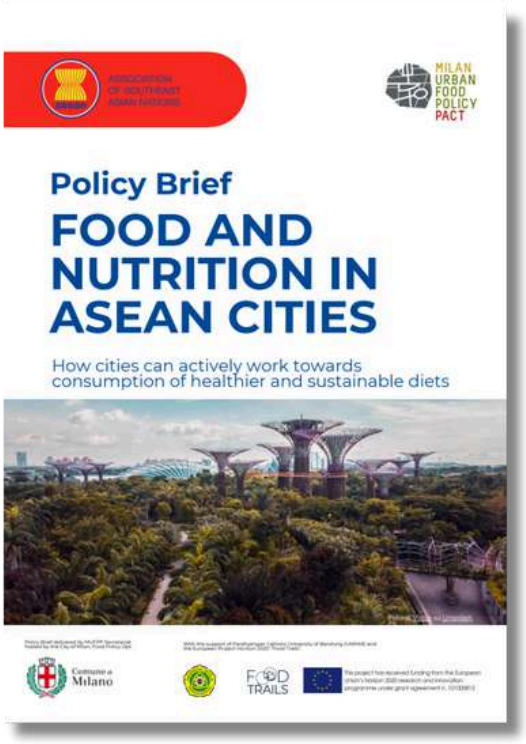
Tailored exchanges for 3 selected cities

to share best practices on school meals programmes

1 Survey

As part of the project, the first **international database** of urban food systems was developed, with a specific focus on **school meals programmes**. The database aims to map the urban food systems of MUFPP signatory cities, particularly in the **Asia Pacific region**, and to gain a better understanding of the specific needs cities wish to address.
The design of the questionnaire used for the database resulted from a **participatory process** coordinated by the MUFPP Secretariat to ensure that the relevant aspects of the different areas were properly taken into account.
The survey was submitted online to around **300 signatory cities** and complemented by interviews with responsible city officers to further investigate a sub-set of aspects. A total of **150+ cities** completed the survey. The emerging database is the first of its kind to synthetically describe the efforts of cities in governing the food system, and specifically school meals programmes, within urban boundaries. It will serve as a novel basis for **future research and practical actions** targeting experiences and lessons learnt on such a topic, and to facilitate the identification of MUFPP Champion Mayors.

2 Webinar



As part of the webinar series ***Food and Nutrition in ASEAN cities***, a specific webinar devoted to school meals programmes in ASEAN countries has been organised. The series engaged city officers and experts from international organisations working on the themes of nutrition, sharing best practices and lessons learned on food and nutrition programmes in global and ASEAN cities.

The webinar revolved around **one of the most important food and nutrition policy related public services**, school feeding programmes, highlighting how these can serve as a powerful driver of urban food and nutrition policies through which cities can achieve **multiple cascading objectives**.

3 Summer School

Summer school

The core of the project was a **summer school** organized together with Parahyangan Catholic University, and the Municipality of Bandung. The summer school's overall objective was to **offer extensive guidance and practical tools to city officers** on the sustainable implementation of school meals programmes. It took a multidisciplinary lens to the topic, acknowledging the complex networks of health, environmental and societal outcomes delivered from school canteens and recognising their dependency on the territories where schools are located and operate. The in-person summer school in **Bandung (Indonesia)** consisted of **4 days of training** to facilitate knowledge sharing, new cooperation activities and exchanges.

The summer school combined **learning modules, field visits, workshops and seminars** that delivered comprehensive insights into the challenges and opportunities of school meals programmes. For each theory-based content, a set of **interactive sessions** were envisaged both to consolidate learnings and to empower the network developments across participants.

Advocacy

The summer school was concluded with an advocacy document ***Summary Of Agreement and Ways Forward of the MUFPP & ASEAN Summer School*** in which key discussion points were accompanied by the **recommendations and next steps** that the cities committed to undertake. By endorsing the document, attendees also acknowledged the opportunity represented by the **Cities Feeding the Future Initiative** of the School Meals Coalition and the ASEAN-Italy Development Partnership: Practical Cooperation Areas (2022-2026) to improve policies in ASEAN cities and call upon support from national and International organizations **to better cooperate with local authorities** in developing and implementing school meals programmes. Furthermore, cities proposed to the ASEAN Health Sector to include in the next ASEAN Health Cluster 1 Work Programme 2021-2025, specific priorities on school meals programmes in ASEAN cities.

Project work proposals

As part of the summer school, participating city officers have developed a project work proposal to **design a project to be executed in their home cities** for school meals programmes. The development of the project work proposal was **based on the technical sessions of the summer schools as well as on the interactive sessions** during which the MUFPP Food Policy Tools developed within the **Horizon 2020 Food Trails projects** were used.

Advisory Committee

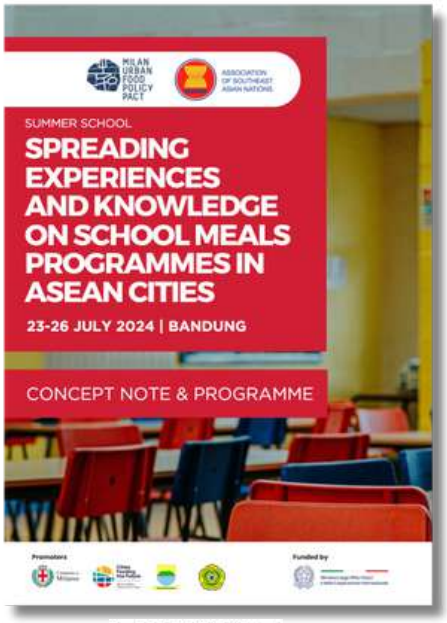
An international **Advisory Committee** evaluated the project work proposals and selected the ones to be **awarded**.
The Advisory Committee was composed of **experts from**:

- Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation
- City of Milan
- Parahyangan Catholic University
- Slow Food Vietnam
- Italian Agency for Development Cooperation
- Rikolto
- World Food Programme
- Rockefeller Foundation
- World Bank

Awards

Selected project work proposals and their respective cities have been awarded. Based on the **school meals programmes models** and the **aim of the project work proposals** that the cities wish to develop, the awarded cities have been paired either with **Milan or Bangkok** for additional learning opportunities. The **awarding ceremony** was held during the 2nd MUFPP Asia Pacific Regional Forum held in Bangkok in December 2024 and titled "Nourishing growing cities: enhancing school meals and supporting local communities". The exchanges with both cities are described in steps 5 (page 13) and 6 (page 17) of the present document.

Useful resources from the Summer School





Video

4 Communication & dissemination

Communication and dissemination activities were conducted through the entire project development to share through the **MUFPP community** the knowledge and good practices gathered, also **sensitizing mayors** on the importance of school meals programmes, exploiting regional ASEAN mayors meetings or other regional events.
The project was presented in multiple events within the MUFPP community. First, in October 2024, during the **6th MUFPP Regional Forum in Africa** in Addis Ababa under the leadership of the Champion Mayor Adanech Abiebie and of the African Union. Next it was also illustrated during the **2nd MUFPP Asia Pacific Regional Forum** held in Bangkok in December 2024 at the presence of Chadchart Sittipunt, Governor of Bangkok and local representatives from the World Food Programme (WFP) and the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO).
Secondly, outputs from the project were shared during the **advocacy event for mayors in the region** namely the **Southeast Asia School Meals Summit** 'Accelerating Collaboration and Commitments in Southeast Asian Countries to Advance Human Capital Development and Food Systems Transformation' attended in Siem Reap (Cambodia) in November 2024. The event has been conducted as part of the **School Meals Coalition regional event**, hosted by the Deputy Prime Minister of Cambodia.
Finally, a **dedicated page** inside the **MUFPP website** was designed to illustrate the project and provide the wider community with continuous updates on the project development.

Useful Resources







5 Study Visit and Workshop in Milan

Based on the school meals programme models and the aim of the project work proposals that the cities wish to develop, a set of cities have been **paired with Milan** for additional learning opportunities. This opportunity consisted in **a 3-day study visit and workshops** in Milan focusing on the Milan school meals system, plus a dedicated workshop on the development of tailored feasibility studies.

Two study visits in Milan were conducted with the different cities' delegations. The first one with the cities of **Chiang Mai** (Thailand) and **Hoi An** (Vietnam), together with the city of **Bangkok** which has served as a mentor in the project. The second one gathered the cities of **Denpasar, Bandung** and **Semarang** (Indonesia), along with a **Ministerial Delegation of the Indonesian Government**.

In their project work proposals, these cities are alternatively working to strengthen their school meals programmes through the creation of **new infrastructures and equipment**, the implementation of **training sessions**, and **awareness activities** for the design of better **school menus**.







Objective of the visit

Considering that the Milan Pact is strongly committed to **continue supporting school meals programmes**, the visit for awarded cities aimed at facilitating the sharing of best practices and improving the potential for learning exchanges across national, regional and urban actors to further place school meals as a central priority for action in the region.
Both visits were composed of **field trips, workshops and seminars** to deliver **comprehensive insights** into the Milan school meal system. Each study visit covered a set of context-specific interests from the two groups of cities, which guaranteed a **targeted learning programme**.
Specifically, dedicated **trainings** have been provided to cities in view of the implementation of their **project work proposal,** therefore covering their most relevant priority actions. From the definition of **learning needs**, cities have been guided until the development of a structured **feasibility study**, with technical guidance on the school meals programmes implementation.









Structure

Study Visit I

Cities of Bangkok, Chiang Mai, Hoi An

Day 1

- **Opening** and Insitutional remarks
- Presentation of the **MUFPP**, the **Milan Food Policy** and the **school meals service** in Milan
- Presentation of **cities project work proposals**
- Visit at the **school kitchen** and **educational workshop**

Day 2

- Visit at the **central kitchen**
- Workshop on **food safety** for school meals programmes
- Cultural Visit

Day 3

- Workshop for the **feasibility studies**
- Visit at the **educational hub**
- **Conclusions** and next steps

Study Visit II

Cities of Bandung, Denpasar, Semarang & Indonesian Government delegation

Day 1

- **Opening** and Insitutional remarks
- Presentation of the **MUFPP**, the **Milan Food Policy** and the **school meals service** in Milan
- Discussion on the plan of the **Indonesian government** on school meals
- Visit at the **school kitchen** and **cities presentations**

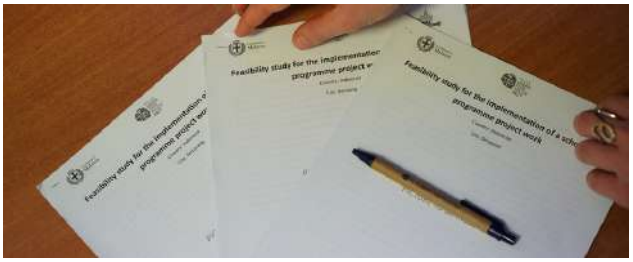
Day 2

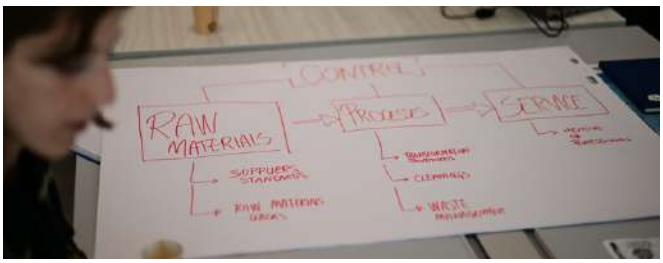
- Visit at the **central kitchen**
- Workshop on **food safety** for school meals programmes
- Workshop for the **feasibility studies**

Day 3

- Visit **to urban farm suppliers**
- Workshop for the **feasibility studies**
- Visit at the **educational hub**
- **Conclusions** and next steps









Feasibility studies

For each participating city of the Milan study visit, a **tailored feasibility study** has been developed. Feasibility studies are intended as technical documents guiding each city in the **evaluation and implementation** of a specific project on school meals programmes, which corresponds to the needs of the city context.
The feasibility studies have been developed in collaboration with **Milano Ristorazione**, the in-house public company in charge of school meals provision in Milan. Professionals from the company have supported the studies with their **on-field expertise** and extensive **technical knowledge** on school meals infrastructure, logistics, services and educational programmes.



Data and information useful for the feasibility studies have been collected in various forms. Namely via the:

- dissemination of the school meals programmes **survey** (see Project step 1)
- **interactive sessions** organised during the Summer School (see Project step 3)
- submitted **project work proposals** from cities (see Project step 3)
- **workshops** conducted during the Milan study visit
- **bilateral exchanges** with cities



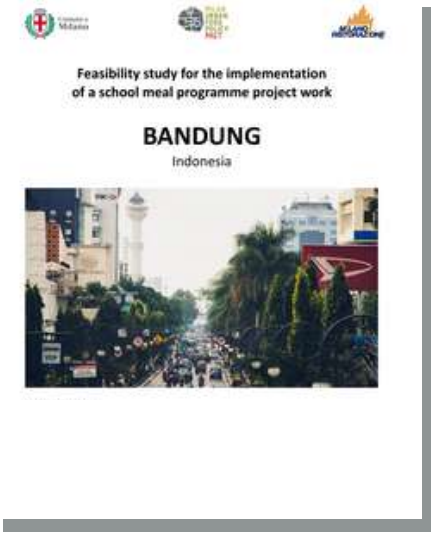
Each feasibility study is organised as follows. **Section 1** introduces the work, while **Section 2** describes the context of the city. In **Section 3**, the school meals programme of the city of Milan is described along with the one of the targeted city. **Section 4** details the feasibility study objective, while in **Section 5** the scenario for the feasibility study is illustrated.
Depending on the priorities of each city, the focus of the 6 feasibility studies developed include the **set up of kitchen units**, the creation of **educational materials** for school meals, and the definition of practical guidance on the **monitoring and evaluation of food safety** standards.



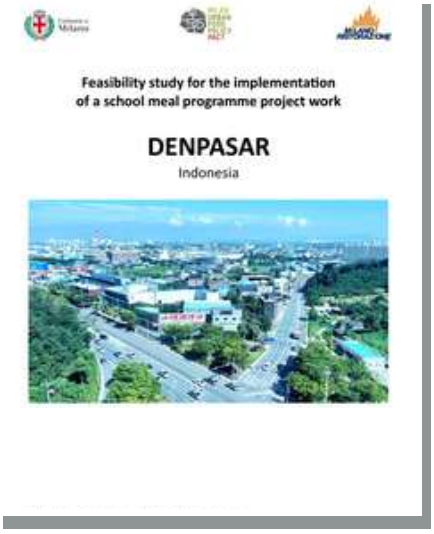
Feasibility studies

Indonesian cities

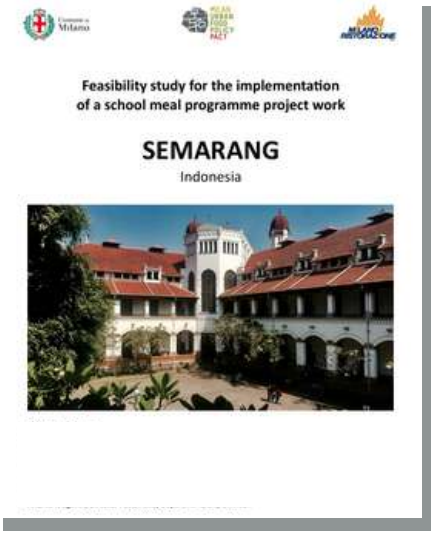
Bandung



Denpasar



Semarang

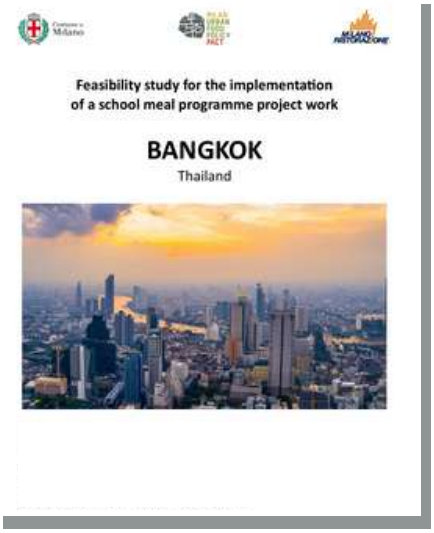


On January 6, 2025, the Indonesian government officially launched its ambitious **Free Nutritious Meals Program (MBG)**, a transformative initiative aims to **address malnutrition and stunting among children, pregnant women and breastfeeding mothers**. Objectives include reducing poverty, strengthening human resources, and fostering community economic development to achieve **Indonesia's Golden Vision 2045**. Its success relies on robust procurement practices, stringent food safety measures, balanced menu planning, adherence to guidelines, and active municipal involvement.

Today, the program is implemented across 38 provinces with a daily allocation of IDR 15,000 per meal. By the end of 2025, it aims to serve **82.9 million beneficiaries nationwide**, of which 78.3 million are school-aged children. The MBG is centrally managed by the National Nutrition Agency (BGN) and implemented through the **School Meals Service Units (SPPG)**.

Therefore, the feasibility studies for each of the three Indonesian cities aim to **set up kitchen units (SPGG) via a pilot project for school meals programmes**, located in two target districts with the highest food insecurity index. This approach is fully aligned with the MBG guidelines provided by the **National Nutrition Agency (BGN)** for the implementation of the Free Nutritious Meals Programme (MBG), ensuring that the pilot of kitchen units addresses both nutritional needs and local vulnerabilities in a strategic and scalable way.

Feasibility studies



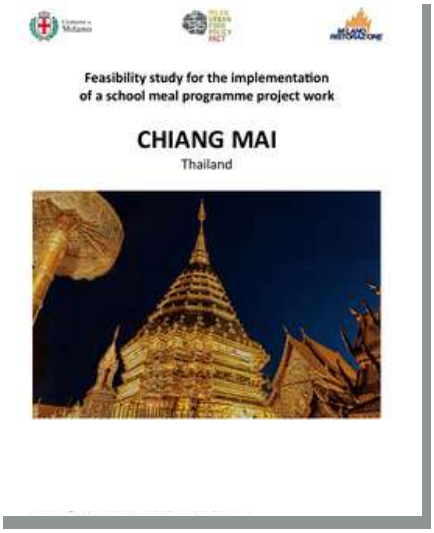
Bangkok (Thailand)

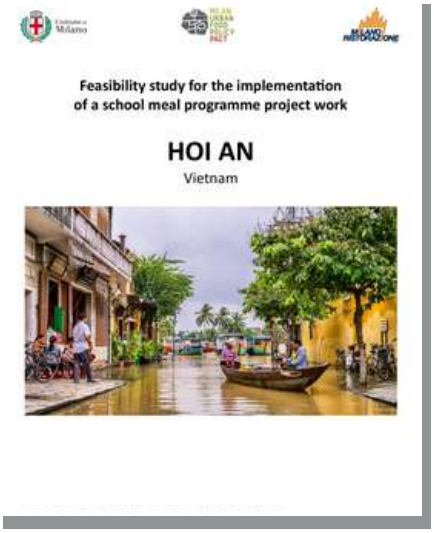
Since 1992, the **School Lunch Program (SLP)** in Thailand was established with the objective of "achieving nutritional well-being for all Thais". Today, about **1.8 million primary school children and nearly 700,000 kindergarten** children can rely on the School Lunch Program funding annually. Alongside the SLP, "The School Milk programme (SMP)" provides 200ml of milk for free to every child. The current **budget allocation** for school meals varies based on the number of students. The school meals programme operates under the **framework of Thailand's policy**.

The feasibility study for the city of Bangkok aims **to develop centralised kitchens for school meals programmes** in the **three selected city districts** of the city, namely the ones of Pathumwan, Bang Rak and Sathon.

Chiang Mai (Thailand)

The school meals programme of **Chiang Mai** was launched in 1992 to provide free school meals for every student, from pre-primary to primary education. It operates under the **guidelines of Thailand's policy,** which offers information on school lunch programme management, including the procurement and use of the **Thai School Lunch Programme**, as well as the KidDiary programme. As for the food safety, all procedures should comply with the Ministerial Regulation, which details how food should be prepared or cooked, sold, and consumed. Hence, the feasibility study for the city of Chiang Mai aims to provide **detailed checklists and guidelines** able to facilitate the monitoring and correct implementation of **food safety practices** throughout all school meals programmes steps, based on existing national and local guidelines.





Hoi An (Vietnam)

In the city of Hoi An the overall purpose of the **school meals system** is undoubtedly education. In this respect, school feeding programmes should not simply be about providing **adequate and healthy meals**, but should also demonstrate educational elements related to **healthy behaviour,** responsible consumption, the environment, and local cultural values.

Therefore, the feasibility study stands to **raise awareness** among teachers and school staff in Hoi An City to pursue a comprehensive educational nutritional programme. Within this scope, the feasibility study provides an **inventory of successful educational activities** implemented by the city of Milan on school meals programmes. This inventory can be used by Hoi An city with a **modular approach**, selecting the most applicable and useful ones Hoi An schools.

6 Tailored exchanges for 3 selected cities

Based on the school meals programme models and the aim of the project work proposals, the other awarded cities have been paired with **Bangkok Metropolitan Administration** (BMA), which oversees the school meals programmes in the city and is recognised in the MUFPP community as a **spotlight example**. Additionally, the city has made a strong contribution to the Milan Pact regionalisation process of urban food policies. It is building on this long collaboration, that the city has hosted the 2nd MUFPP Asia Pacific Regional Forum titled "***Nourishing growing cities: enhancing school meals and supporting local communities***".

The exchange with Bangkok consisted of three phases: first, cities awarded from the project work proposals have **presented their advancements** for inspiring participants to make good use of the network for building more sustainable school meals in the 2nd MUFPP Asia Pacific Regional Forum in Bangkok. Second, **a dedicated discussion** was organised to better understand the specific learning needs of each city and explore opportunities for reciprocal learning with peer cities. Next, **bilateral meetings** have been organised between each city and **Bangkok Metropolitan Administration** to address the identified learning needs.

The **learning needs** from Seberang Perai, Hue, and Surakarta included:

- How to implement **effective education and awareness activities** in school food environments to promote healthy and sustainable diets?
- How to foster **food waste reduction activities** in school food environments to promote healthy and sustainable diets?
- How to design an **effective monitoring system** to check the food safety and nutrition of school meals?

During each meeting, BMA presented targeted activities in school food environments based on the guiding questions. Next, for each city, there was an extensive dedicated time for diving into any **questions and answers** before moving to the conclusions and defining the next steps.



CONCLUSIONS & NEXT STEPS

The ***Spreading Experiences and Knowledge on School Meals Programmes in ASEAN Cities*** project starts from the premise that **school meals programmes** represent a driving force in achieving concrete goals in the transition towards a sustainable future. In particular, school meals programmes offer a highly **promising area for action** in cities, thanks to their potential to achieve multiple objectives by targeting specific elements of the food system—such as promoting healthy and sustainable consumption, combating food poverty and inequalities, improving health prevention, supporting education, raising children's awareness of food waste, and strengthening rural-urban linkages. Cities are **a primary entry point** for the effective and efficient implementation of school meals. As such, project initiatives such as the described one, where cities are the true protagonists, can have **very concrete impacts** for communities residing in urban boundaries. Cities are very direct beneficiaries of school meals, therefore they are also nodes where positive results can be concretely perceived by citizens.

Therefore, growing interest of **ASEAN member states** in school meals, if properly understood and harnessed, represents a **key opportunity for the region**. There is an increasingly evident need to implement a new technical, professional and infrastructural framework within ASEAN territories for supporting the **concrete implementation** of school meals programmes. This framework must address both the training of new professionals and the actual design and development of cooking centers, logistics hubs, meal distribution centers, and school dining facilities. Thanks to the project, the MUFPP has strengthened its **fruitful relationship with ASEAN**, with the region's **key stakeholders**, and with **signatory cities**. This relationship can be strategically leveraged to effectively facilitate the provision of new funding and the **design of new activities**. In this context, partnering ASEAN with MUFPP can support the concrete **set-up of projects** aimed at developing infrastructure, logistics, services, and educational programs for school meals programmes, in line with the ambitions of the **UN 2030 Agenda** and the **ASEAN policy targets**. In addition to capacity-building opportunities and multi-level advocacy activities, new joint project initiatives can be focused on the scouting of **funding opportunities**, including venture capitalists, development banks, international organisations, foundations, and other private entities to be engaged to provide capital for the implementation of project proposals related to school feeding programmes.

This should be done with a **multidisciplinary and multilevel governance** approach, recognising the interconnections between health, the environment, and the social implications for which school meal programmes are responsible. And **cities** can act as **key players** in this scenario, by programming adequate investments in school feeding services, supporting children's education, nutrition, and health, while reducing social and economic disparities.






WELCOMING REMARKS
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