

# SEACanGrid

**Towards improving cancer care in  
WHO South-East Asia Region**



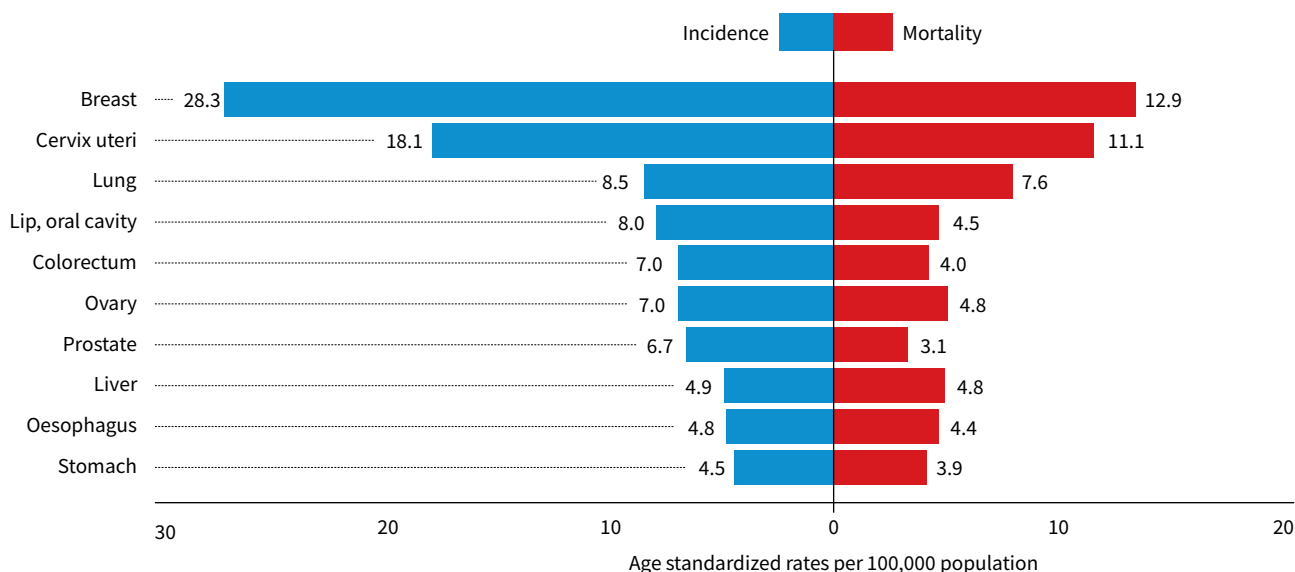
World Health  
Organization  
REGIONAL OFFICE FOR  
South-East Asia



HEALTH  
FOR ALL

Cancer is a group of diseases that occurs due to uncontrolled proliferation of cells in almost any organ or tissue of the body, thus invading adjoining parts of the body and/or spreading to distant sites. In 2020, there were an estimated 2.2 million new cases of cancer in South-East Asia Region. The estimated number of deaths due to cancer were 1.4 million in the same year, which is an increase by one third compared to the year 2010. The ratio of mortality to incidence is also significantly higher when compared with high income countries, indicating sub-optimal cancer management capacity. The burden of cancer in the Region is expected to rise further, reaching 3.6 million new cases and 2.4 million deaths by the year 2040.

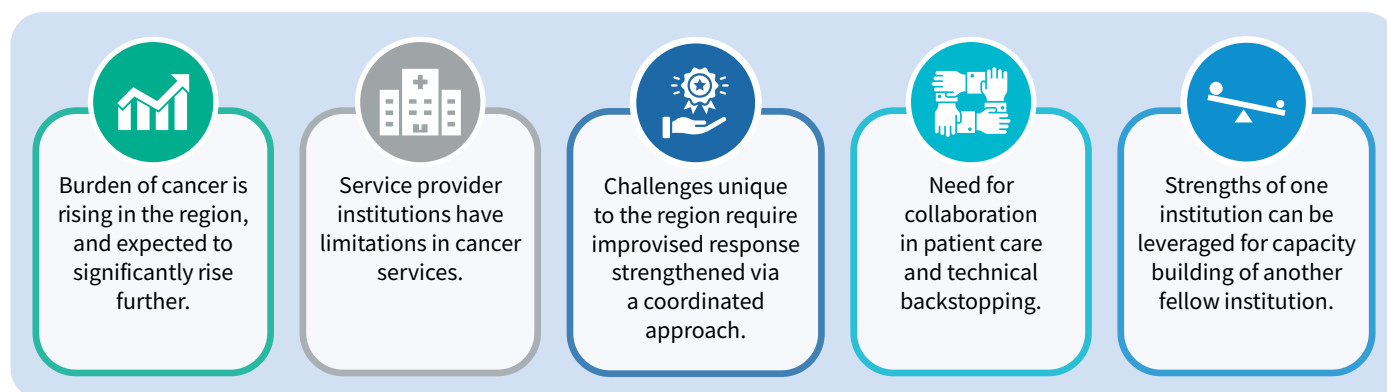
### Age standardized rates of incidence and mortality of leading cancers in South-East Asia Region in 2020



Source: <https://gco.iarc.fr/today/data/factsheets/populations/995-who-south-east-asia-searo-fact-sheets.pdf>

### The need for a grid of cancer institutions in South-East Asia Region

Given the limitation in infrastructure, expertise, equipment and other resources required for good quality care, sharing of known knowledge, skills and experiences among service providers becomes an important approach for improving quality. In some countries, there is also a need for continuous support for adapting standard treatment regimens to suit the available resources. Establishment of a grid of institutions is uniquely suited to facilitate in reducing these gaps in the South-East Asia Region.



### The two notable ongoing platforms within and across countries have demonstrated the effectiveness of the network approach.



The National Cancer Grid (NCG) of India currently has close to 300 institutions. NCG carries out joint activities including resource-stratified guidelines, virtual tumor boards (VTBs), web-based expert opinion service, quality assurance programmes, training in research methods, and collaborative multi-centric research to improve cancer care in India.

South-East Asia Childhood Cancer Network (SEAR-CCN), established by WHO SEAR in 2020, has connected some key institutions from ten countries in SEAR forming an effective platform for exchange of knowledge, fostering collaboration and workforce capacity building. The network has supported in providing improved care for over 4,000 children with cancer last year.



*“Cancer is a public health challenge, and we must dare to be bold and act now. SEACanGrid of WHO SEARO, will help to move towards equitable access to early detection, diagnosis, treatment, and palliative care of cancer through an institutional network”.*

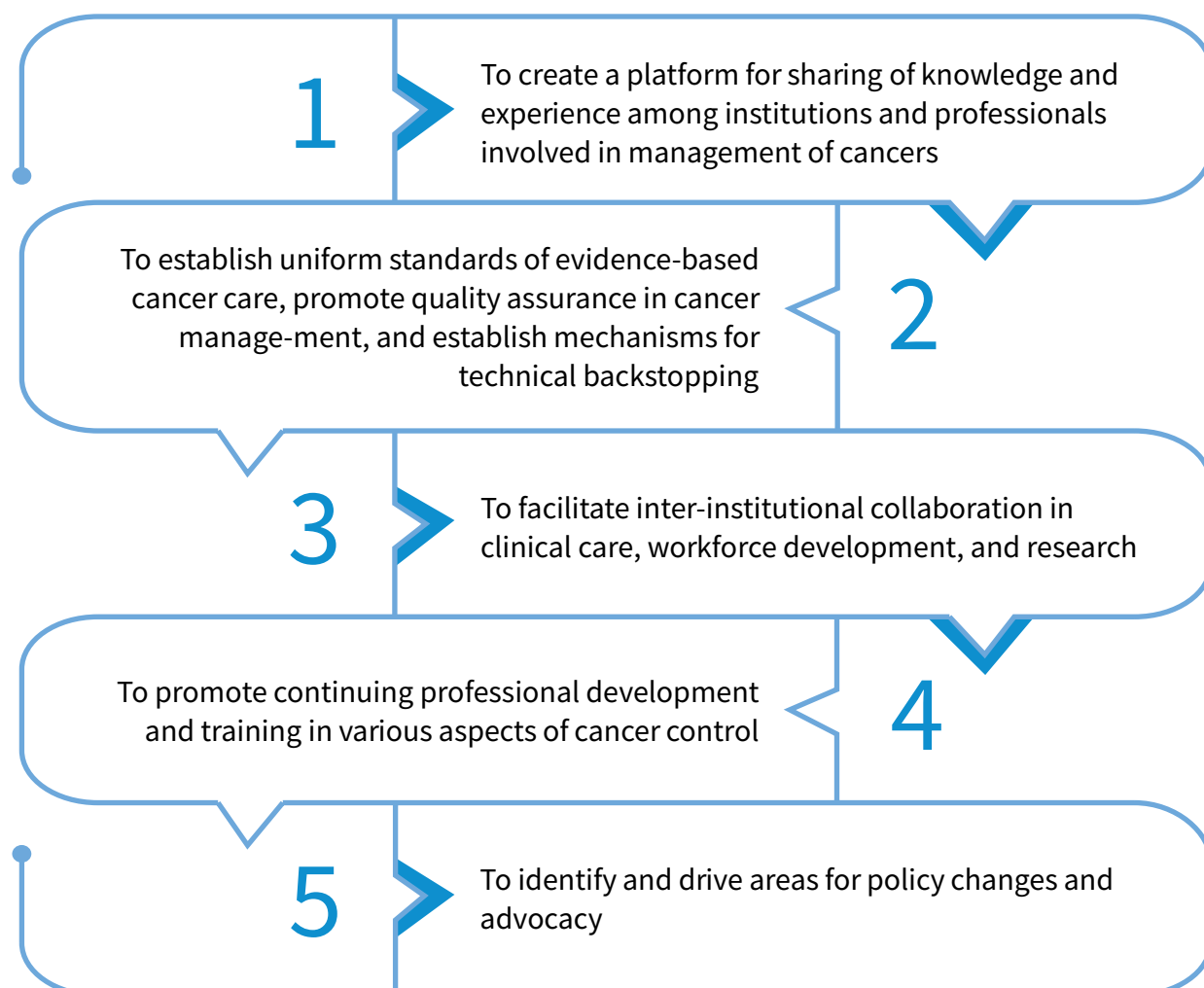
Dr. Poonam Khetrapal Singh  
Regional Director, WHO South-East Asia Region

## SEACanGrid: South-East Asia Cancer Grid

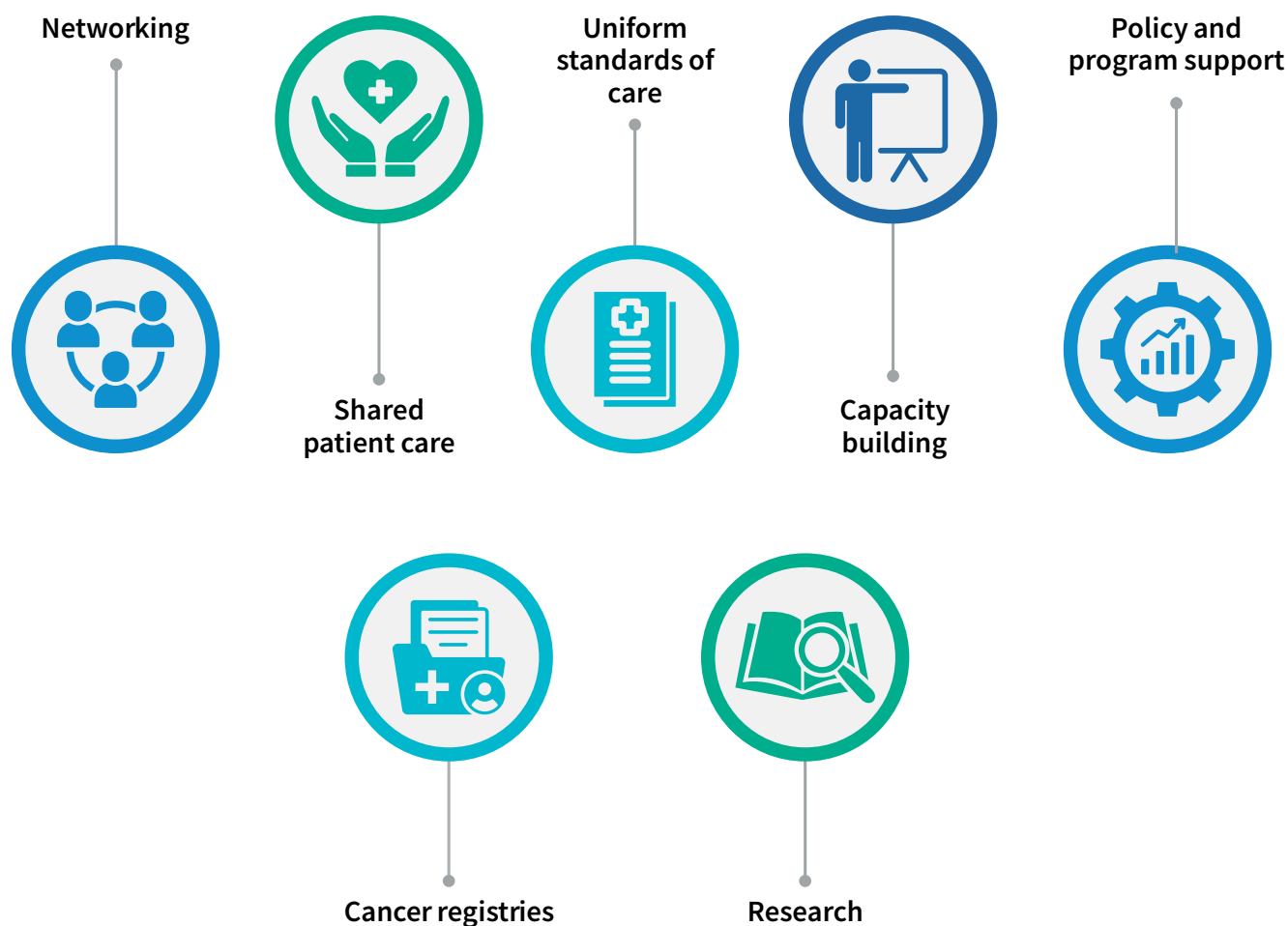
The ‘South-East Asia Cancer Grid’ or, SEACanGrid’ is a platform established in 2023 to facilitate collaboration in a broader spectrum of cancer care. SEACanGrid will serve to catalyze the efforts of Member States in providing good quality cancer care to their population. The objectives of SEACanGrid include creating a platform for sharing of experiences on best practices, establishing standards of care, professional development, and technical collaboration among institutions in the grid. It will also work in driving policy changes towards improving care.

SEACanGrid is constituted by key cancer service provider institutions nominated by the ministries of health as members of the grid. Domains of work range from screening and management of pre-cancers to treatment of cancers in advanced stage cancers, palliation and rehabilitation in all age groups. Contextual treatment regimens, technical dialogues, workforce development, virtual tumor boards, cancer information system strengthening, identification of areas for policy change etc. are some examples of activities SEACanGrid would carry out. SEACanGrid is an umbrella under which SEAR-CCN and other disease specific subnetworks such as cervical cancer network etc will function.

### Objectives



# Activities of SEACanGrid



SEACanGrid aligns well with the regional priorities and can contribute to achieving sustainable development goals (SDG) and universal health coverage (UHC).

Cancer control is part of the Regional Flagship Areas on Non-communicable diseases<sup>1</sup> and expanding access is a key element of the Implementation roadmap for accelerating the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases in South-East Asia 2022–2030.<sup>2</sup>

About two hundred thousand additional lives can be saved by 2030 with a substantial scaling up of cancer management capacity.<sup>3</sup>

Scaling up cancer control contributes to the achievement of SDG 3.4 - “By 2030 reduce by one-third pre-mature mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention and treatment” and achieving universal health coverage is not realistic without including cancer into UHC benefit packages.

<sup>1</sup> <https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/338722>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.who.int/southeastasia/publications-detail/9789290210054>

<sup>3</sup> <https://searncddashboard.searo.who.int/home>