

### Health Supplements: ASEAN Harmonization and AEC

**Chandrika Balachandrun**

Regulatory Manager Asia Pacific, Human Health and Nutrition, Chr. Hansen, Denmark

E-mail: MYCBA@chr-hansen.com

#### **Abstract**

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is a group of 10 member countries being Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. ASEAN Heads of State agreed to establish an ASEAN Community by 2020 but was later accelerated, bringing about establishment of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) early January 2016. The AEC is ultimately designed to create a single market and production base within ASEAN, pursuing something akin to what came to be known as the four freedoms in the context of European integration – freedom of movement of goods, services, capital and labor. This economic community is created through regional integration of priority sectors, namely agro-based products, automotive, electronics, fisheries and healthcare. The healthcare sector includes traditional medicines and health supplements where the output expected is the development of an ASEAN Regulatory Framework on Traditional Medicines and Health Supplements and transposition of the Framework into national laws of every ASEAN Member State. ASEAN has identified harmonization of national standards with international standards, practices and guides as one of the way to address technical barriers to trade in ASEAN. Considering the degree of diversity among members of the AEC, the challenges are numerous. The approach undertaken is intentionally slow and incremental, and the entire enterprise will remain a work in progress for years to come. Much progress has been made throughout the various policy areas leading to the launch of the AEC. The question remains as whether full harmonization will take place among AEC members and to what level of implementation be adopted into national regulatory frameworks.

#### **Biography**

Chandrika Balachandrun has more than 8 years of Regulatory Affairs experience in the healthcare and nutraceutical field in Complementary medicines, Dietary supplements, Functional food and infant milk nutrition. She joined Chr. Hansen since 2012, and has since specialized in the development and implementation of regulatory strategy for probiotics in the APAC region. Chandrika Balachandrun has in-depth knowledge of ASEAN Harmonization, pre- and post-market clearance and regulatory trends in emerging markets.