

EUROSEAS2021 PANEL PROPOSAL

Panel Title

Pathways to Sustainable Food Systems in Southeast Asia

Panel Abstract

The multidimensional agrarian crisis in the SE-Asian region requires urgent attention. The dimensions of this crisis include rising ecological problems (soil loss, water shortage and pollution, climate change etc), to many of which agriculture is both a contributor as well as detrimentally affected. Socially, an aging labour force, low profitability, unregulated markets, predatory actors, competition for land and issues of food distribution (and hence security) as well as public health (diet) implications are all contributing to a politically and economically complex and contested policy landscape. The COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated food insecurity among these communities.

This panel explores solutions ranging from community action and innovative business ventures to government-led initiatives, as well as intersectoral partnerships. The future of Asia (and the world) will depend on the ability of people, businesses and governments across the region to handle these food system challenges in a sensible and integral manner. In Asia family farms and villages are still the most important productive and social units within long-established and relatively sustainable human ecologies. These traditional ecologies have been deeply affected and (mostly) weakened by a techno-capitalist approach to agri-food systems over the past half-century. Ironically most of the worst in Asia is among farming communities in rural villages and the urban poor with recent farming background who can no longer support themselves by farming, unless new approaches are found. Presentations are invited that focus on how small farmers and communities have responded, and begun to rebuild equitable, sustainable and culturally appropriate agri-food systems, sometimes in partnership with other sectors.

Convenor and Presenter 1

Professor Thomas Retuer

Asia Institute, The University of Melbourne

Email: treuter@unimelb.edu.au

Convenor and Presenter 2

Dr Graeme Macrae

Anthropology, Massey University, Auckland, New Zealand

G.S.Macrae@massey.ac.nz

We will recruit other speakers but are also happy to welcome speakers who wish to submit a paper to this panel. Please let us know how you would like to proceed.