



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



Progress in the implementation of the Smart Association of Southeast Asian Nations project

July – December 2023

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Background

Strengthening the capacity of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) mechanisms to prevent, detect, and respond to zoonotic diseases with pandemic potential using the One Health approach is crucial to prevent future pandemics.

Establishing and operationalizing the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Animal Health and Zoonoses (ACCAHZ) and its networks.

To expedite the process, FAO, with the support of the Australian Government through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and in partnership with the ASEAN Secretariat, is implementing a regional project titled **“Strengthening Mechanisms in Animal-health for a Resilient ASEAN” (SMART-ASEAN)**. The project was launched at the 43rd ASEAN Ministers on Agriculture and Forestry Meeting in October 2021. The project also reinstated the ASEAN Regional Support Unit (ASEAN RSU) team as the implementor of the project.

The implementation of several project activities, including meetings and workshops that were conducted during the reporting period, was achieved through the lead country mechanism in ASEAN, where FAO, through the SMART ASEAN project, signed Letters of Agreement (LOA) with the Government of Thailand and the Government of the Philippines to support their commitment to ASEAN in animal health and zoonoses activities, also benefiting the delivery of the SMART ASEAN project outcomes.

The Australian Government, through DFAT, approved the no-cost extension (NCE) of the SMART ASEAN project until 31 May 2024 (12 months). The extension is crucial to give the project sufficient time to achieve the intended outputs and outcomes. Subsequently, the ASEAN Sectoral Working Group on Livestock (ASWGL) and Senior Officials Meeting of the ASEAN Ministers for Agriculture and Forestry (SOM-AMAF) approved the NCE of the SMART ASEAN project until 31 May 2024 on 17 April and 22 May 2023, respectively.

Key Achievements

Key achievements during the reporting period (January – June 2023) based on the outputs are as follows:

Output 1:

The project continued its strong collaboration with two quarterly meetings conducted between FAO, ASEC, and DFAT in the reporting period. The project also strengthens its cooperation with ASEC and DFAT through individual ongoing monthly meetings.

Output 2:

The project conducted the Strengthening Animal Health Cooperation and Coordination for the Prevention of Transboundary and Zoonotic Diseases in the Southeast Asia Region Workshop on 11 December 2023 in Sepang, Malaysia. Through the SMART ASEAN project, FAO was also invited by the ASEAN Member States to attend the 1st ACCAHZ Governing Board meeting and was welcomed as an ACCAHZ associate member. The 1st ACCAHZ Governing Board meeting approved the following documents:

- a. The terms of reference (TOR) for the ACCAHZ Executive Director.
- b. The transition plan for the ASEAN Veterinary Epidemiology Group (AVEG), ASEAN Laboratory Directors' Forum (ALDF), Avian Influenza Group for ASEAN (AIGA), and the ASEAN Communication Group on Livestock (ACGL) to ACCAHZ.
- c. The ACCAHZ resources mobilization.
- d. The ACCAHZ 5-year Strategic Plan.

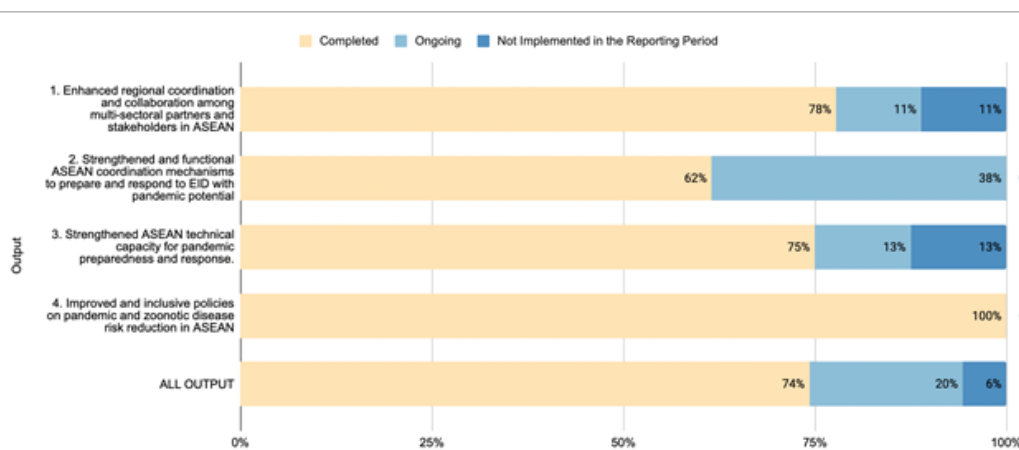
The project was also requested by the ACCAHZ Governing Board to provide voluntary contributions to the refurbishment of the ACCAHZ office and also to provide support for the ACCAHZ launching that is planned for May 2024 at the ACCAHZ office in Sepang, Malaysia.

Output 3:

The Monitoring & Evaluation tool for the Regional Strategic Framework for Veterinary Epidemiology was adopted by the 45th AMAF Meeting. The project also conducted back-to-back workshops of the Southeast Asia Veterinary Epidemiology Group Workshop and the Southeast Asia Laboratory Directors Forum Workshop on 20 – 23 November 2023, in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. The baseline data of the ASEAN Epi & Lab Frameworks was developed.

Output 4:

The policy brief on the systematic approach to mitigate the risk of zoonotic and emerging infectious diseases along the livestock value chain was noted by the 45th AMAF Meeting. The Gender Equality, Disability, and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) analysis report on implementing the SMART ASEAN project was endorsed by the 31st ASEAN Sectoral Working Group on Livestock (ASWGL). The recommendations from the GEDSI analysis were included in the ACCAHZ Rules of Procedure and TOR of the Executive Director, which was endorsed by the 1st ACCAHZ Governing Board meeting.



source: FAO (2023)

Table 1. Output progress table

Key activities

1. FAO through the SMART-ASEAN project was invited to participated at the open session of the 31st ASEAN Sectoral Working Group on Livestock Meeting (the 31st ASWGL Meeting), on 5 – 7 July 2023 in Manila, the Philippines. During the 31st ASWGL Meeting, FAO presented a brief background of FAO-ASEAN cooperation, a summary of activities under the Collaborative Plan of Action, the progress of the SMART ASEAN project, including the approval of the no-cost extension (NCE) until May 2024, recommended policy briefs, the progress to review ASEAN Animal Health EPI, Lab, and Communication Frameworks, and planned activities for 2023-2024 and the progress of SMART-ASEAN implementation. In result, the ASWGL endorsed the Post-2020 Prevention and Control of Avian Influenza Framework in ASEAN, and support the following:
 - a. The SMART ASEAN plan of activities in 2023 – 2024;
 - b. The ongoing FAO – ASEAN activities for 2023 and request for an update at the next ASWGL;
 - c. FAO will present the updated Collaborative Plan of Action between FAO and ASEAN for 2024 – 2027 at the 32nd ASWGL meeting.
2. Based on the outcomes of the 31st ASWGL meeting, the following documents were revised and endorsed by ASWGL:
 - a. The Monitoring & Evaluation tool for the Regional Strategic Framework for Veterinary Epidemiology Capacity Development and Networking in ASEAN (ASEAN Epi Framework);
 - b. The policy brief on the systematic approach to mitigate the risk of
 - b. The policy brief on the systematic approach to mitigate the risk of zoonotic and emerging infectious diseases along the livestock value chain;
 - c. The GEDSI analysis report for the SMART ASEAN project.
 - The 45th AMAF Meeting endorsed and noted the following documents:
 - a. The Post-2020 Prevention and Control of Avian Influenza Framework in ASEAN;
 - b. The ASEAN Epi Framework;
 - c. The policy brief on a systematic approach to mitigate the risk of zoonotic and emerging infectious diseases along the livestock value chain;
3. The SMART ASEAN project conducted the Strengthening Animal Health Cooperation and Coordination for the Prevention of Trans-boundary and Zoonotic Diseases in the South-east Asia Region Workshop on 11 December 2023 in Sepang, Malaysia. The workshop was hosted by Malaysia and, with support from the Government of Thailand through the LOA with DFAT—the workshop aimed to gather future directions for Southeast Asia animal health cooperation. Based on the feedback provided during the workshop, FAO will develop a theory of change (ToC) for ASEAN animal health cooperation, which will be presented to the ACCAHZ Governing Board for consideration. Chief Veterinary Officers (CVOs) from Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia,

Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam attended the workshop. The meeting participants consisted of 15 females and 11 males. The workshop outcomes were also discussed during the 1st ACCAHZ Governing Board meeting.

4. Through the SMART ASEAN project, FAO was invited to attend the 1st ACCAHZ Governing Board Meeting on 12 – 13 December 2023 in Sepang, Malaysia, which FAO was welcomed as an ACCAHZ associate member. By being the associate member, FAO shall provide inputs as and when needed and shall support the initiatives and activities of the ACCAHZ, including attending and participating in the Governing Board meetings upon invitation by the ACCAHZ members. CVOs/Director Generals from Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam attended the meeting.

5. Some key decisions made in the 1st ACCAHZ Governing Board meeting were as follows:

- a. The Department of Veterinary Services (DVS), Malaysia, with support from the ACCAHZ Governing Board, agreed to launch ACCAHZ in April/May 2024 back-to-back with the Special ACCAHZ Governing Board Meeting and Networking Sessions in the ACCAHZ office. The ACCAHZ fund will be utilized to support the events, including travel for ASEAN Member States (AMS).
- b. The meeting requested that FAO support the ACCAHZ launch and its associated events through the SMART ASEAN project while noting the United Nations policy regarding engagement with sensitive countries. The meeting also requested that Malaysia, with support from ASEAN RSU and ASEC, update the members on the launching plan.
- c. While waiting for the ACCAHZ Executive Director to be appointed, Malaysia has committed to second an officer to support the day-to-day operation of ACCAHZ.
- d. The meeting requested that ASEAN RSU develop the TOR of the Interim ACCAHZ Coordinating Officer (IACO), which was endorsed by the meeting. The meeting also requested ASEAN RSU and ASEC to continue supporting the officers in their duties and responsibilities to the TOR.

- e. The meeting approved the ACCAHZ video teaser developed by the SMART ASEAN project and encouraged AMS, ASEC, and FAO to distribute the video through their channel, including social media platforms. ACCAHZ Governing Board also noted that the SMART ASEAN project is developing an extended video version and planned to play it during the ACCAHZ launch.



Figure 1. The First ACCAHZ Governing Board Meeting in Malaysia

6. During the 1st ACCAHZ GB meeting, the following documents developed by ASEAN RSU during the last reporting period, were discussed and approved by the 1st ACCAHZ GB Meeting:

- a. the terms of reference for the ACCAHZ Executive Director;
- b. the transition plan for the ASEAN Veterinary Epidemiology Group (AVEG), ASEAN Laboratory Directors' Forum (ALDF), Avian Influenza Group for ASEAN (AIGA), and the ASEAN Communication Group on Livestock (ACGL) to ACCAHZ;
- c. the ACCAHZ resources mobilization;
- d. the ACCAHZ 5-year Strategic Plan;

7. The SMART ASEAN project provided funding and technical support to conduct the Southeast Asia Veterinary Epidemiology Group Workshop and Training in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, on 20 – 22 November 2023. The participants consisted of 10 females and 14 males. The workshop and training were hosted by Indonesia and funded by Thailand through the LOA with FAO on the SMART ASEAN project. Some key decisions of the workshop were:

- a. Participants were trained to utilize the Epi Framework M&E tool during the Southeast Asia Veterinary Epidemiology Group workshop and generate the baseline data. The participants agreed on the mid-term and end-line assessment timeline to review the EPI Framework, which is every 2-year interval for the regional objectives and a maximum 3-year interval for the national objectives
- b. To make SET an ASEAN tool and requested Indonesia as the host country of the workshop to submit the SET tool to AVEG and subsequently to ASWGL for endorsement.
- c. Agreed to assign a focal point for SET evaluation and the proposed timeline to implement the SET assessment in the country.
- d. Identified the focal point for the early warning and rumour tracking activities and also the timeline for the FAO-ASEAN stepwise approach for surveillance capacity building.
- e. To conduct FAO Virtual Learning Centre (VLC) One Health programme for ASEAN.
- f. To conduct an ASEAN One Health Zoonotic Diseases Prioritization (OHZDP) workshop among animal health, public health and environment sectors and request for FAO and other partners/donor agencies' support of the workshop.

which is every 2-year interval for the regional objectives and a maximum 3-year interval for the national objectives.

9. Based on the workshop outcomes and also member states internal discussion, FAO developed the regional baseline report. The report presents the result of the monitoring, evaluation and learning exercise conducted under the SMART-ASEAN project, and highlights the baseline results for the implementation of the ASEAN EPI and Lab framework.
10. The SMART ASEAN project participated in a coordination meeting with FAO and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on 6 December 2023 to discuss the preparation for the ASEAN OHZDP workshop.

8. The SMART-ASEAN project conducted the Southeast Asia Laboratory Directors Forum Workshop and Training in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, on 22 – 23 November 2023. The participants consisted of 17 females and nine males. The workshop and training are hosted by Indonesia and funded by Thailand through the LOA with FAO on the SMART-ASEAN project funded by the Australian Government through DFAT. Some key decisions of the workshop were:

- a. For FAO to develop a scientific publication using the FAO Lab Mapping Tool (LMT) results from 2012 to 2020.
- b. To conduct another LMT assessment, with a combined approach, where experts will come to support the assessment, and countries can also conduct self-assessment.
- c. Participants were trained to utilize the Lab Framework M&E tool during the workshop and generate the baseline data. The participants agreed on the mid-term and end-line assessment timeline to review the EPI Framework,

Priorities for the next reporting period

1. To conduct in-person quarterly coordination meeting between FAO, ASEAN Secretariat and DFAT and continue the regular monthly discussions with DFAT and ASEAN Secretariat.
2. To provide support for the launching of ACCAHZ in April/May 2024 back-to-back with the Special ACCAHZ GB meeting and Networking Sessions in the ACCAHZ Office.
3. To develop the full and longer video of ACCAHZ and to play it during the ACCAHZ launching.
4. To discuss and prepare with Malaysia on the voluntary contributions to the refurbishment of the ACCAHZ office.
5. To support the finalization of the LOA between FAO and ACB and ensure that the activities under the LOA are implemented.
6. To finalise the M&E tools to review ASEAN Animal Health Communication Framework and to conduct workshop to gathered the baseline data.
7. To continue the engagement with ACIAR, the Poverty and Eradication Gender Division and Food, Agriculture and Forestry Division of ASEC, and ASWGL on implementing GEDSI research and other GEDSI review actions for the SMART ASEAN project.

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