

# Monthly progress update

February 2022

Leveraging ASEAN Capacities for  
Emergency Response (LACER)

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## Background

“Leveraging ASEAN Capacities for Emergency Response (LACER)” is a project funded by the European Union. The overall objective is strengthened resilience in ASEAN region through improved disaster risk management. The specific objectives consists of strengthened capacity and sustainability of the AHA Centre to achieve operational excellence in disaster monitoring, preparedness and emergency response, and enhanced mechanism for ASEAN Leadership to Respond-As-One through excellence and innovation in disaster management.

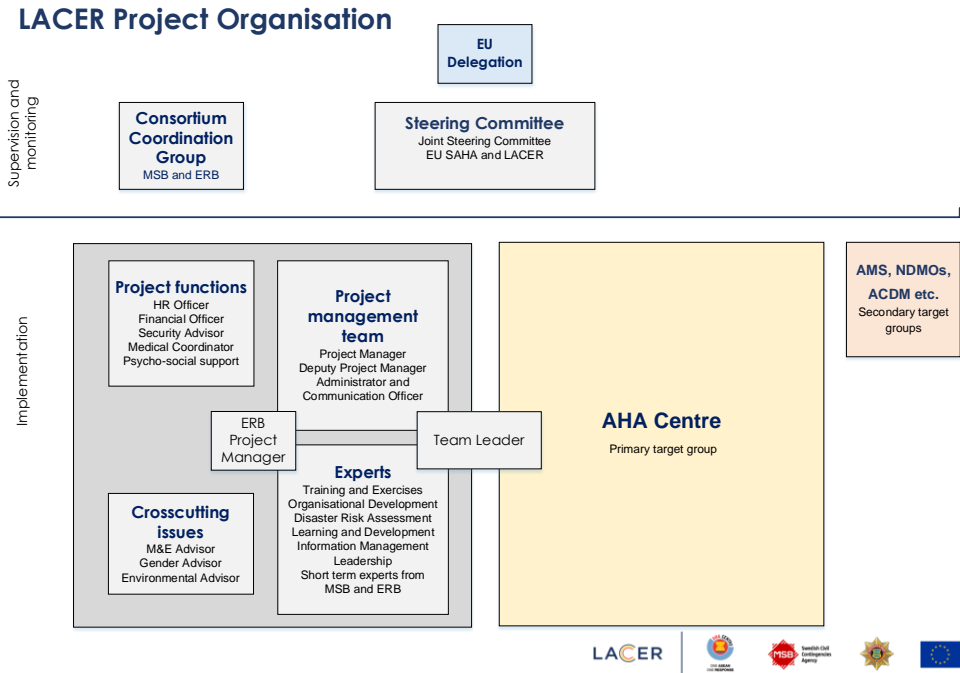
The project is implemented by a Consortium consisting of the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agencies (MSB), as lead, jointly with the Estonian Rescue Board (ERB). It is a component of the overall EU programme “Integrated Programme in Enhancing the Capacity of AHA Centre and ASEAN Emergency Response Mechanisms (EU Support to AHA Centre)”.

The project consists of the following four outcomes organised as components.

- Component 1  
Strengthened institutional capacity, corporate policies and management of the AHA Centre
- Component 2  
Enhanced operational capacity of the AHA Centre in monitoring, preparing and responding to disasters
- Component 3  
Increased preparedness and Respond-As-One capacities of ASEAN
- Component 4  
Enhanced professionalism through standards and certification

The project has a 43 month lifespan and started on March 1, 2020.

Fig 1. Illustration of the LACER project organisation structure



## **Project progress update for the period February 2022**

Essentially, the LACER project aims to strengthen the institutional capacity of the AHA Centre to become a highly professional and trusted organisation that effectively carries out its operational mandate in facilitating and coordinating regional disaster preparedness and response, sharing European best practices and facilitating and building sustained institutional ASEAN – EU exchange. The project aims to plan for, implement and sustain organisational development using a comprehensive strategic approach. In real terms, this means that the project will not independently deliver ready products to the AHA Centre, but is committed to building sustained capacities over time.

The project is in implementation phase. Some LACER activities have not been fully implemented during the project period, which has prompted a discussion on mutual expectations and prioritisation of outputs.

### **Management and Leadership**

During the reporting period, AHA Centre has faced renewed challenges with staff retention. Early in February, the LACER team was informed that the long-serving Programme Coordinator for ACE and DELSA was planning to leave her position. Toward the end of the month, LACER received unexpected notice that the HR and Admin Officer, recruited a mere five months back in the wake of the sudden resignation of her predecessor, will be immediately leaving her role at AHA Centre. Both positions hold key functions in their respective units and the resignations are thus likely to impact AHA Centre activities; regarding LACER programming, the impact will be felt greater in the case of HR, as the HR and Admin Officer serves as focal point for implementing multiple LACER activities in Component 1 on institutional change.

### **Cross-Cutting Gender Equality and Environment Perspectives**

During the reporting period, LACER experts completed the gender and environmental review of the AHA Centre Procurement Rules and Procedures (ACPRR). This effort included three documents in total – one separate report on environmental sustainability and a second on the gender perspective as well as a third report which recommended changes to the actual text of the ACPRR.

During the reporting period, LACER also received the Financial Rules and Regulations, which will undergo a two-part review similar to that done for the Procurement Policy.

### **Information Management Officer (IMO)**

LACER leadership recently held a dialogue with the AHA Centre Head of Resource Mobilization and agreed at that point to delay further work on the information management activities. The main reason is that there is an apparent difficulty with carrying out the task without having an expert on site at the AHA Centre to observe the flow of information between staff and identify current problems with information management that could be addressed through transparency and improved exchange. The AHA Centre team have expressed the desire to reformulate the IMO tasks and conduct them as a live, hands-on exercise involving daily meetings and conversations with staff, followed by the design of proposals closely linked to staff experiences. LACER, noting the importance of listening to partner's views, plans to restart the IMO activity following an on-site review of the situation after the arrival of the Team Leader in Jakarta.

## **Mutual Exchange and Learning between EU and AHA Centre**

This workstream seeks to develop exchanges of experts between the ERCC and AHA Centre, building up mutual learning in DRM and facilitating institutionalised ASEAN-EU interaction in this important area where the two organisations share many commonalities.

The activity was launched during the reporting period, following a request by the AHA Centre for LACER team to identify an ERCC expert to present as part of an ASEAN-OCHA led side panel during the United Nations Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (GPDRR) in May 2022 in Bali. Following the request, MSB extended a formal invitation to the ERCC, inviting 1-2 experts to present at the side event on the topic of Standby Arrangements within UCPM; in addition the event would be attended by a number of other regional response organisations, including the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) and The Pacific Community (SPC). The ERCC experts would moreover be expected to participate in a LACER-organised event at the AHA Centre in Jakarta involving AHA staff and relevant colleagues from ASEAN member states. Among other things, the event provides an opportunity to discuss and share experience in areas of mutual interest, including best practice regarding monitoring and analysis, regional risk understanding, scenario development, anticipation and foresight activities, capacity modules standardisation, duty officer systems/arrangements, training and exercises. DG ECHO and the EU Delegation in Jakarta have also been informed separately on the GPDRR invitation, although it may be noted that the side event has not yet been approved by the conference organisers.

During the reporting period, the LACER team has also taken advantage of a second potential occasion for exchange of experts, proposing that the AHA Centre present on one of their success stories during the European Union Civil Protection Forum, 28 – 29 June 2022, in Brussels. Following discussions with AHA Centre colleagues, LACER leadership and MSB submitted a workshop proposal to the event organisers, putting forth AHA Centre as a presenter on the topic of “Sharing experiences and follow up from the response to the Central Sulawesi disaster in Indonesia 2018”. If the proposal is approved, it is anticipated that 1-2 experts from AHA Centre will travel to Brussels to take part in this event. The LACER team is also considering other activities which can be run while the visiting experts are in Europe.

## **Launch of Component 3 Activities targeting Operational Capacity**

Activities have been launched to support development of AHA Centre’s operational capacity, in line with Activity Plan F3.1-F3.4 on improving the routines of the ERAT roster and training.

During the reporting period, LACER experts continued to collaborate with the AHA Centre ERAT Project Management Team looking at support to improving the current functioning of ASEAN-ERAT. As a first step, LACER has agreed to review and develop the training courses planned for 2022 which include the Level 2 Advanced Training on Rapid Needs Assessment and secondly on Information Management. In addition LACER experts will support development of an online version of the ERAT Induction Course at Level 1.

Regarding development of the roster, the LACER team awaits an update from the AHA Centre on their selection of an evaluator for the broad evaluation of ERAT functions expected to be completed by summer 2022. LACER has offered to participate and/or lead the evaluation, aiming at reviewing the roster and developing its functions in line with the overall objectives of ASEAN-ERAT.

# Communication and visibility

On February 11, the LACER leadership was provided with a preview of the draft EU-ASEAN Blue Book 2022. Several pages highlighted EU support to the AHA Centre including the role of LACER role in capacity development strategy:

**Reducing the impact of natural disasters**

**EU SUPPORT TO AHA CENTRE**

Integrated Programme in Enhancing the Capacity of AHA Centre and ASEAN Emergency Response Mechanisms

**€10 MILLION** 2019-2022

LAUNCHED IN JANUARY 2020

- Supports the goals of the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER)
- Implemented through a combination of a direct grant to the AHA Centre, as well as capacity building by EU Member States' Civil Protection Agencies
- Aims to strengthen the capacity of the AHA Centre, to achieve operational excellence in disaster monitoring and emergency response

**EU SAHA**

**MAPPING ASEAN'S RESOURCES TO RESPOND TO DISASTERS**

As Resource Mobilisation Manager of the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (AHA Centre), one of Dipo Summa's jobs is to coordinate the mobilisation of resources in times of disaster.

The AHA Centre was established on 17 November 2011, to facilitate cooperation and coordination of disaster management amongst ASEAN Member States. The coordinating agency is supported by ASEAN Member States as well as external organisations.

"It is crucial for the AHA Centre to have a tool to map its resources", Peter Mansson, disaster management expert from the Leveraging ASEAN Capacities for Emergency Response (LACER project) said. "It is important to identify gaps and assets of each ASEAN Member State to allow effective response in times of disaster".

Funded by the EU and implemented by the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB) and the Estonian Rescue Board (ERB), the LACER project is designed to support the AHA Centre in improving its operational capacity and capability in disaster preparedness and management as well as strengthening its institutional capacity.

The project introduced the Disaster Management (DM) Framework developed by Lund University to assess the disaster management capabilities of ASEAN Member States in different areas, as well as that of the AHA Centre. "This framework can facilitate decisions on the allocation of scarce resources as well as cross border and peer-to-peer learning between the different National Disaster Management Organisations in ASEAN", added Mansson.

"We found this tool to be very useful and can be applied in other areas as well", Summa said. The AHA Centre plans to also use the DM framework to develop an online coordination platform and conduct a donor coordination assessment exercise.

**LACER**

**Leveraging ASEAN Capacities for Emergency Response**

**€2.2 MILLION** 2020-2022

**CAPACITY ASSESSMENT FOR DM FUNCTIONS**

The Disaster Management Framework has been adapted to enable aggregation, comparisons, and visualisations of the capabilities of different disaster management actors in ASEAN.

**THE PROJECT IS SUPPORTING AHA CENTRE ACROSS FOUR TECHNICAL COMPONENTS:**

- Strengthen the institutional capacity, corporate policies and management of the AHA Centre
- Increase ASEAN's preparedness and Respond-As-One capacities.
- Enhance the operational capacity of the AHA Centre in monitoring, preparing and responding to disasters
- Enhance AHA Centre's professionalism through standards and certification

On February 1, Communications Officer Johanna Rixer published an article on the LACER website describing the successful brown bag webinar on Host Nation Support, with guest speakers from ERCC and LACER experts. For further details, please see:

<https://www.lacerproject.eu/sv/news/brown-bag-webinar-on-host-nation-support/>

## Brown bag webinar on Host Nation Support

**On January 27th, LACER hosted the fourth webinar in the brown bag series of mutual exchange and learning. The theme of the discussion was Host Nation Support (HNS) in ASEAN and the EU. The webinar included a presentation by ERCC Liaison Officer Simon Stermann on the EU role in HNS and use of the EU Guidelines, followed by a facilitated discussion with the AHA Centre on HNS in ASEAN. Thereafter, LACER experts Martin Sjöholm and Peter Månsson briefed participants on the Swedish national experiences with HNS relative to support from other EU countries.**

"For emergency planning, we have identified especially training of liaison officers, sending liaison officers, and having specified HNS cells in country as most important within our institutions", Mr Stermann states, explaining that it is crucial to have proper administration processes for the response capacities. "The time from a disaster happening to the time when we as the EU send assistance through the UCPM mechanism is of utmost importance to the success of the response. The administrative part is the most important because it really saves time, and thereby saves lives", Mr Stermann says.



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