

Monthly progress update

March 2021

Leveraging ASEAN Capacities for
Emergency Response (LACER)

EuropeAid/161170/DD/ACT/Multi

LACER



This publication was produced with the financial support of the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of the LACER Consortium and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.

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.

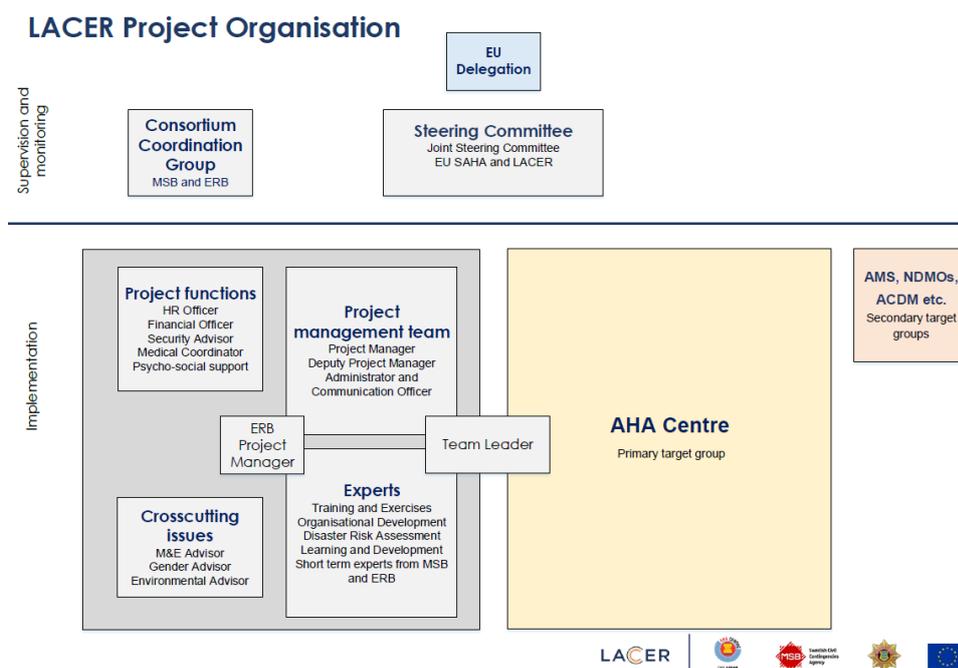
The project is implemented by a Consortium consisting of the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agencies (MSB), as lead, jointly with the Estonian Rescue Board (ERB). It is a component of the overall EU programme “*Integrated Programme in Enhancing the Capacity of AHA Centre and ASEAN Emergency Response Mechanisms (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 months lifespan and started on March 1, 2020.

Fig 1. Illustration of the LACER project organisation structure



Project progress update for the period April 2021

General update

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, with several parallel ongoing processes, illustrated in the updated activity plan for 2021. Given the current workload of the AHA Centre, (see below) some LACER activities have not been fully implemented during the project period, which has prompted a discussion on mutual expectations and prioritisation of outputs. This has also led to the postponement of some project activities.

ASEAN Leaders' Meeting about Myanmar and potential impact on LACER

On 24 April, the ASEAN leaders met Myanmar's junta chief in Jakarta and reached a five-point consensus on “facilitating a peaceful solution”. Under point 4, it was stated that “*ASEAN shall provide humanitarian assistance through the AHA Centre*”. What this means remains unclear but has had an immediate impact to the AHA Centre. The Operations Divisions has been tasked to come up with a response plan to deal with the complex humanitarian crisis. This has led the AHA Centre to set aside other tasks, which probably will affect implementation of LACER activities mainly involving the Operations Division. The project will offer assistance to the AHA Centre.

Disaster Risk Assessment Expert

The project has recruited a disaster risk assessment (DRA) expert who will work together with the DRA Expert from ERB, combining several perspectives. Essentially, the DRA expert will help the AHA Centre address regional risk awareness, develop gaps and needs and advice regarding international risk assessment methods and appropriate tools.

Strengthened capacity and sustainability of the AHA Centre to perform its operational mandate

Developing concept and content (curriculum) and rolling out induction training

The concept and content of the induction training is progressing, and AHA Centre subject matter experts have been identified. In line with the strategic approach, the induction training will be rolled out by the relevant AHA Centre staff. A need to train the experts who will carry out the training has been highlighted by the AHA Centre. Consequently, a new activity, ‘training of trainers’, has been added to address the need. The objective is to create a sustainable concept that easily may be reused for future induction courses. The first induction training was planned for May 2021. However, the roll out of the induction training has now been postponed and will be carried after the new Executive Director is in place in September.

Integration of Cross Cutting issues (CCI)

Strengthened incorporation of gender and human rights based approaches and environment on a strategic as well as operational level aim to strengthen the credibility of the AHA Centre as a modern and core value guided organisation. As mentioned in the previous update, the project is awaiting

feedback regarding the two reports that reviewed the *AHA Centre Staff Rules and Regulations (ACSSR)* from a Gender/Diversity and Environmental perspective.

Developing a strategic planning tool and donor coordination

The LACER organisational development expert has presented the generic framework/tool for analysing and strengthening Disaster Risk Management (DRM) systems, which can support inter- and intra-organisational communication, enhance oversight of donor support and the identification of gaps and opportunities for organisational development related to the AHA Centre's institutional framework (policies and standard operating procedures). The tool can be used to ease the planning, map gaps, as well as donor coordination processes, to define strategic priorities and develop a roadmap for the future, and support and lead the donor and partner dialogue. This will also lead to a more efficient use of internal resources.

Dates for three sessions for practical and strategical guidance on how to use the tool have now been set. Hopefully, it will be incorporated in the AHA Centre planning, starting with their midterm planning process in June.

ERCC exchange

For the purpose of sharing experiences, lessons learned and best practices from the ERCC, the project is planning to conduct workshops targeting EOC officers at the AHA Centre. Discussions have been ongoing regarding the WebEOC system and comparisons with CECIS. Implementation of these activities have now been halted due to the Operations Division tasks relating to the Myanmar crisis. Discussions on planning of these key activities are ongoing.

Increased preparedness and Respond-As-One capacities of ASEAN

ARDEX

LACER has been working to assist the AHA Centre with the review of the ARDEX referee handbook to see whether it meets the purpose – to be a valuable guide when planning and conducting evaluations connected to ARDEX exercises. Meetings have been held to discuss further needs and improvements of the upcoming exercise and more specifically where LACER may provide support. The Philippines, through the NDRRMC-OCD as host and co-organiser of ARDEX, has now decided to cancel the conduct of ARDEX 2022. The decision was made in view of the efforts and priorities in the fight against COVID-19. The project is now ascertaining the possible need for LACER support.

Meeting with stakeholders

Sharing Session on AADMER Work Programme 2021-2025, 28 April 2021

LACER attended the "*Sharing Session on AADMER Work Programme 2021-2025*" hosted by the ASEAN Secretariat. The aim was to socialise the AWP 2021-2025 with the ACDM's partners including other ASEAN sectoral bodies, ASEAN dialogue partners, international organisations, think tanks, and others. The programme included presentations and discussion centred on the priority programmes of the AWP. The comprehensive and informative session attracted some 130 participants. As LACER activities are aligned to the AWP 2021-2025, this meeting gave valuable input.

Communication and visibility

During the reporting period the following communication and visibility activities have been conducted.

Date	Target Group	Activity
April	The Column target audience	Discussions are ongoing regarding contribution from ERB to the AHA Centre publication "The Column".