

Monthly progress update

July-August 2021

Leveraging ASEAN Capacities for
Emergency Response (LACER)

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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.

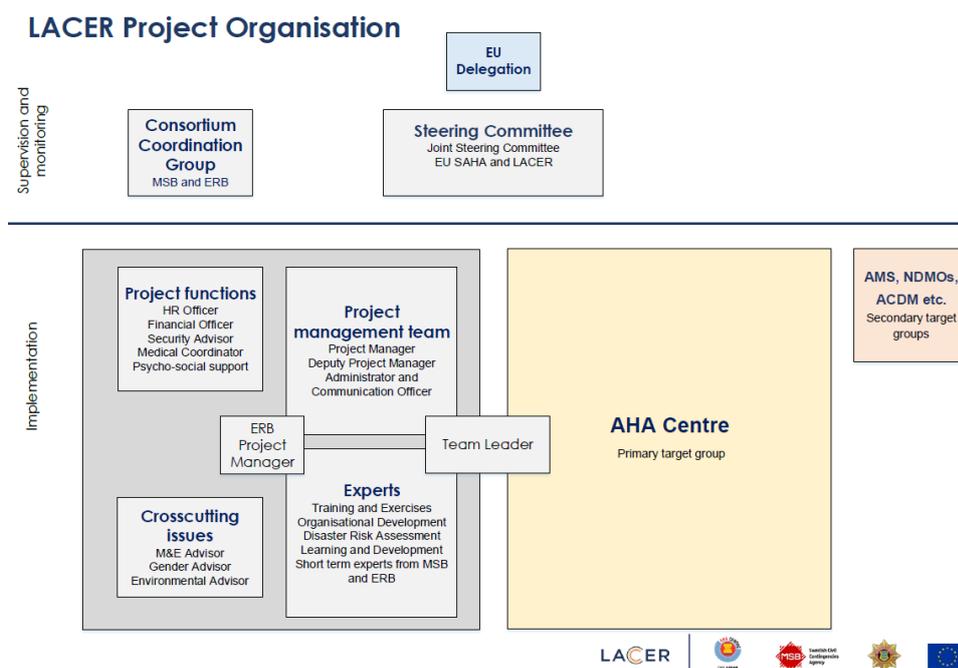
The project is implemented by a Consortium consisting of the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agencies (MSB), as lead, jointly with the Estonian Rescue Board (ERB). It is a component of the overall EU programme “*Integrated Programme in Enhancing the Capacity of AHA Centre and ASEAN Emergency Response Mechanisms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

Fig 1. Illustration of the LACER project organisation structure



Project progress update for the period July-August 2021

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.

Strategic planning and donor coordination – final workshop conducted

The third and final workshop on strategic planning was conducted on 2 July. The purpose of the workshop was twofold. First, it aimed to provide an overview of the support that the AHA Centre receives from external donors as a basis for decisions on which functional areas should be prioritised moving forward. Second, it comprised discussions on which aspects that are important for well-functioning partnerships with external agencies.

The workshop was planned and facilitated by LACER Organisational Development Expert Peter Månsson and assembled 18 participants from different parts of the AHA Centre. Using the previously introduced DRM tool as a basis, the AHA Centre delivered a presentation on the support it currently receives from external agencies. This was followed by smaller group discussions centred on the following questions:

- 1) Which functions have been well covered/not so well covered?
- 2) Which functions do you think should be prioritized when developing future capacities and why?

The second half of the workshop centred on identifying and discussing which aspects (e.g. methods, approaches, resources) that are important for establishing conducive collaboration between agencies that deliver and receive support. Returning to the group constellation, each group got to focus on one “theme” covering what the 1) supporting (external) agency should do, 2) should avoid, 3) what the supported (internal) agency should do, 4) should avoid.

The AHA Centre presented on its current support from external agencies. Altogether, the number of external support agencies currently amounts to 34, which primarily support the functions of preparedness and response. No support is currently provided to enhance the capacities for impact assessment or prevention and mitigation and only one project each for developing evaluation and forecasting. As pointed out by one of the participants, the AHA Centre has received support and developed capacity for impact assessments (i.e. the development of ERAT) in recent years. Hence, a snapshot of the current provision of external support does not provide a complete picture as a basis for strategic decisions on what functions/capacities need to be developed. For this reason, the AHA Centre was recommended to complement the current mapping with capacity development projects that have been completed in recent years and thus can be assumed to affect the current ability to perform the functions. When studying the output of the mapping, one also needs to consider the mandate of the AHA Centre, which is centred on response and preparedness (explaining the dominance of external support for these functions).

Noteworthy is the lack of focus on the function of evaluation, as this is crucial for learning and thus for continuous improvement of the ability to perform all the other functions. Aside from evaluation,

the functions of prevention and mitigation as well as recovery were highlighted as important for the AHA Centre to develop further.

Moving from *doing the right things* to *doing things right* (i.e. the second part of the workshop), the participants identified a number of aspects that the supporting and receiving partners should/should not do in order to ensure that capacity development projects meet their intended objectives.

After the series of workshops the AHA Centre staff have used the tool when proceeding with their midterm review. As highlighted by the management of the AHA Centre, the DRM tool has been useful to understand better the needs of AHA Centre as well as to improve ownership of internal and external processes.

The next step in the workstream strategic planning is to deepen the partner coordination and to conduct a partner/donor coordination forum. To further support strategic planning and increase clarity on capacity development priorities, the process of developing a capacity development strategy will also start in the near future.

Regional risks and emergency centre evaluation

To strengthen the operational capacity of the AHA Centre in monitoring, preparing and responding to disasters as well as strengthening AHA Centre's role and position as the main regional coordination agency, LACER has planned, in close cooperation with the OPS division of AHA Centre and EU Joint Research Centre (JRC), to roll out two activities in the near future. One activity concerns a presentation and discussion on European Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM) risk assessment guidelines, while the second is built around a study visit at JRC itself. The activities are planned to take place on 8-9 September 2021.

Regarding emergency coordination and the evaluation of the Emergency Operations Centre, a concept note was accepted by the AHA Centre OPS division in July. The AHA Centre OPS Division/Monitor and assessment function (focal point Lawrence Dimailig), have recently replied and wished to postpone this activity and instead focus on information management (that was planned during spring 2021 but postponed due to the AHA Centre involvement in Myanmar humanitarian response). The activity regarding information management is currently planned together with ERCC to roll out in September – October 2021.

Induction training

With multiple purposes in mind – to strength the AHA Centre organisation; to offer all staff the same basic information about AHA Centres frameworks, working methods and cultural values, and; to create a motivated and committed organisation – the Induction Training facilitated by AHA Centre personnel is seen as a very important process. After several months of planning the induction package will soon be ready for roll out. In the same period, the new ED of the AHA Centre, Mr Lee Yam Ming from Singapore, will start his position.

The planned Training of Trainers (ToT) was successfully launched on 20 August with 21 participants from the AHA Centre. All divisions were represented during a 3.5 hour training facilitated by HR Officer, Metta Anggraini, together with LACER Learning and Development Expert, Olivia Setkic. The purpose was to prepare AHA Centre personnel to enable them to act as facilitators and teachers in the upcoming Induction Training. The specific learning objectives set for ToT participants included the following:

- **Express** commitment to facilitate learning towards agreed learning objectives
- **Identify** a learner-centred method to use

- **Explain** how to assess to what extent learners reached the learning objectives

Due to the fact that AHA Centre HR Officer Metta Anggraini, who has been the focal point for LACER cross cutting activities as well as the induction training package, will end her position shortly there is a risk that the Induction Training itself may need to be rescheduled. The new focal point for LACER team is the head of CAD division, Mr Somsanith Ninthavong, and the plan is still to roll out on schedule.

Establishment of a “LACER Core Team” within the AHA Centre

To ease the implementation of activities and processes within LACER it was decided at the bi-weekly meeting 20 July to set up a LACER Core Team within the AHA Centre. This consists of the OPS Director, CAD Director, Deputy Executive Director, Resource and Mobilisation Manager, and a Change and Knowledge Officer. The Core Team will henceforth be present at all bi-weekly meetings as well as responsible for follow up on LACER related implementation within AHA Centre.

Recruitment of new Team Leader for LACER

The recruitment of the new Team Leader has been finalised with the selection of the candidate, Charles Silva, who started his position on 16 August. Charles has extensive experience working across Asia (including the ASEAN region), Africa and Europe implementing DRM/DRR activities and developing capacities. His primary task has been to design and scale up humanitarian and development programmes in different contexts, while building resilience and capacity among municipal and local authorities to respond in future. Charles has led successful programming in a large number of countries. AHA Centre had an interview/conversation with Charles on 8 July and Charles participated in the bi-weekly meeting on 17 August. Kajsa Sjösvärd and Charles will have a one month overlap before the final handover and transfer of functions in September.

Communication and visibility

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

Date	Target Group	Activity
July	The Column target audience	A “Meet the experts” interview with Martin Sjöholm, Training and Exercise Expert in LACER
August	LACER partners and stakeholders	Training of trainers Induction course: Website news/article
August	LACER partners and stakeholders	Presentation of new Team Leader Charles Silva: Website: biography, interview and contact details