

# Monthly progress update

May 2021

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.

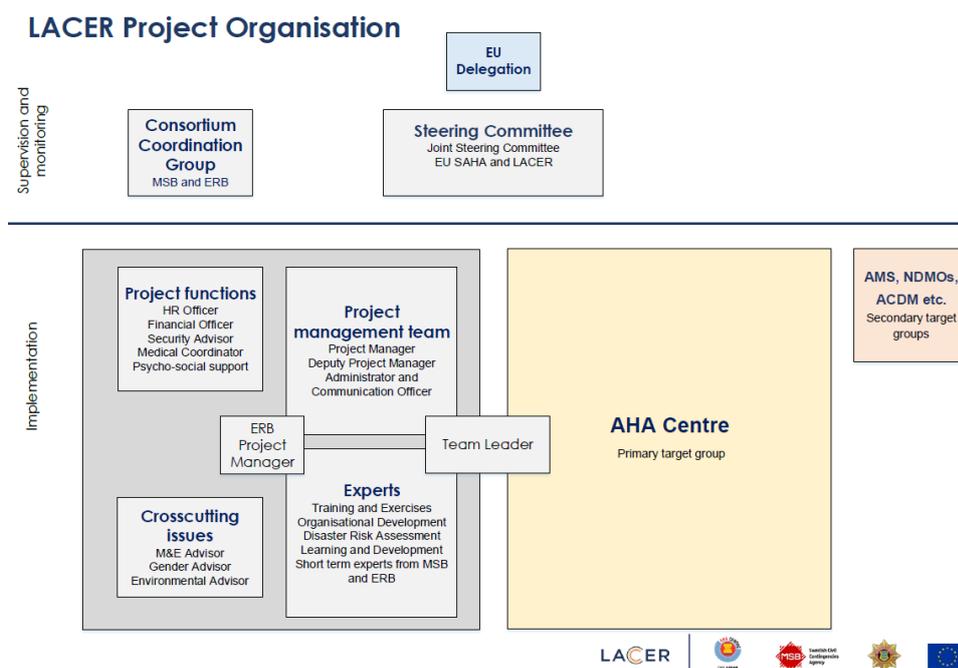
The project is implemented by a Consortium consisting of the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agencies (MSB), as lead, jointly with the Estonian Rescue Board (ERB). It is a component of the overall EU programme “*Integrated Programme in Enhancing the Capacity of AHA Centre and ASEAN Emergency Response Mechanisms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

Fig 1. Illustration of the LACER project organisation structure



# Project progress update for the period May 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.

## Strategic planning and donor coordination

Join us for strategic planning workshops!

**"Strategic planning as a means of achieving operational excellence in disaster monitoring, preparedness and emergency response"**

Workshops on how to use a DRM tool in practice for strategic planning and partner coordination. Sharing experiences from Europe (ERCC) planning tools and policy work.

Dates: 18 May, 15 June, 2 July 2021  
Time: 13.30-16.30 (WIB)

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LACER | AHA Centre | MSB Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency | European Union

On Tuesday 18 May, 18 employees from the AHA Centre participated in a session on strategic planning, together with the LACER organisational development expert and Team leader.

Dr. Peter Månsson, LACER Organisational Development Expert, lead the 3 hour session

where a Disaster Risk Management tool was discussed. This was the first out of three virtual workshops planned to enhance the strategic planning of the AHA Centre. The three-hour long workshop included staff from all divisions, including the Office of Executive Director and the Division of Operations.

Its purpose was to familiarise the AHA Centre staff with a DRM tool that has been developed at Lund University and expectantly can be used as an overarching framework for capacity development within the LACER project. The tool has been adjusted and customised to fit the needs of the AHA Centre. After an introduction the participants were divided into smaller groups and tasked to identify strengths and potential weaknesses/areas of improvement regarding the AHA Centre's ability to perform the five first sub-functions embraced by the DRM tool (the groups' analysed one function each). In addition, the participants were to identify existing interdependencies between the function they discussed with any of the other eight functions. The group sessions were followed by presentations of the findings in plenary and after a pause, this evaluative cycle was repeated for the remaining four functions of the DRM tool. The workshop was concluded by restating the purpose of the tool and how it will be applied in the following two strategic workshops. According to the AHA Centre, the tool and the method will be incorporated in the AHA Centre planning, starting with their midterm planning process.

As stated above, this workshop will be followed by two other workshops aimed to support the AHA Centre's strategic planning. The next workshop will be held on June 15 and focuses on mapping and the AHA Centre's institutional framework (e.g. policies/SOPs) against the nine functions of the DRM tool and compare the outcome with a similar mapping of the institutional framework of the UCPM/ERCC. The second workshop will be held on July 2 and aims to provide an overview of the support the AHA Centre receives from external donors/agencies (also by mapping this against the nine functions of the DRM tool).

### **Challenges regarding Operations Division**

The fact that the Operations Divisions has been tasked to come up with a response plan to deal with the complex humanitarian crisis in Myanmar<sup>1</sup> has had an immediate impact on LACER activities involving the Operations Division. To be able to support the strengthened capacity and sustainability of the AHA Centre to perform its operational mandate this communication link is essential for the progress of the project. It is also essential for the AHA Centre, on both short term and long term perspective, to be able to facilitate and coordinate regional disaster preparedness and response at the same time as the organisation is developing and annual working procedure is in progress. The following activities are awaiting green light from the Operations Division.

- D1.1 Internal evaluating workshop for EOC officers
- D2.1 Presentation and discussion on the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM) risk assessment guidelines
- D2.2 Virtual Study visit at the Joint Research Centre (JRC)

### **Induction programme for AHA Centre staff**

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 out after the new Executive Director is in place, in September 2021.

The concept and content of the induction training is progressing. The focus of the outcome is to strengthen the institutional capacity of the AHA Centre, to address the importance of core values and come together as “one” organisation. In line with the strategic approach, the induction training will be rolled out by selected AHA Centre staff and a mentorship scheme has been discussed to ease the process of introducing new staff and contributing to organisational belonging. The objective is to create a sustainable concept of the induction training as well as related Training of Trainers that easily can be reused for future induction courses.

### **First meeting with the reference group**

In the spirit of mutual learning and to elaborate on the strategic approach of LACER, a Reference group have been set up. The group had its first on 25 May. Six selected members from different agencies as well as Lund University met to discuss the project. The members gave valuable input on the project direction. The next meeting is plan to be held in mid-June 2021.

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<sup>1</sup> 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”.

# Communication and visibility

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

Date	Target Group	Activity
May		 <p>An article on LACER was included in the EU publication “EU ASEAN Strategic Partners – Blue Book 2021”.</p> <p>The LACER project is proud to be a part of that partnership. Carl-Johan Breitholtz, Project Manager for LACER at MSB, was quoted:</p> <p><i>“The first phase of the project was meant to lay the foundations of our work with the AHA Centre”, Carl Johan Breitholtz, Project Manager of LACER said. ‘It’s important to build our relationship with the AHA Centre on trust, and despite the pandemic we managed to do just that.’</i></p> <p><a href="https://euinasean.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Blue-Book-2021.pdf">https://euinasean.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Blue-Book-2021.pdf</a></p>
	The Column target audience	<p>An article entitled “The AHA Centre and ERCC, sharing the same values and DNA - Pooling regional resources essential in disaster management” will be published in the upcoming edition.</p> <p>An article on ERB “The turbulent year 2020” will be published in the Column.</p>
	The AHA Centre, EU, other partners and stakeholders	Biography written about Peter Månsson, Organisational Development Expert
	The AHA Centre, EU, other partners and stakeholders	“Meet the experts” an interview with Peter Månsson, Organisation Development Expert. Published on <a href="http://www.lacerproject.eu">www.lacerproject.eu</a> and will be published in the AHA Centre’s the column and possibly newsletter.