



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

The Southeast Asia Veterinary Epidemiology Group Workshop and Training (OSRO/RAS/100/AUL) Meeting Report



20 – 22 November 2023 | Yogyakarta, Indonesia

With the financial and technical support of



The Southeast Asia Veterinary Epidemiology Group and the Southeast Asia Laboratory Directors' Forum

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INDONESIA



WORKSHOPS &
TRAINING

MEETING REPORT

The Southeast Asia Veterinary Epidemiology Group Workshop and Training Monday – Wednesday, 20 – 22 November 2023 Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Introduction

1. The Southeast Asia Veterinary Epidemiology Group Workshop and Training was conducted in Yogyakarta, Indonesia on 20 – 22 November 2023.
2. The ASEAN Veterinary Epidemiology Group Focal Points from Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand attended the Meeting. Representatives from the FAO Emergency Centre for Transboundary Animal Disease (ECTAD) Indonesia and Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (RAP), Australian Indonesia Health Security Partnership (AIHSP) and the United States Agency for International Development Regional Development Mission for Asia (USAID RDMA) were also in attendance.
3. The Southeast Asia Veterinary Epidemiology Group Workshop and Training were hosted by Indonesia and funded by Thailand through the Letter of Agreement with FAO on the Strengthening Mechanisms in Animal-health for a Resilient ASEAN (SMART-ASEAN) project funded by the Australian government through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT).

4. The workshop and training are part of the SMART-ASEAN project implementation in response to output 3, which is Strengthened ASEAN technical capacity for pandemic preparedness, specifically activity 3.1 'support the implementation of relevant ASEAN frameworks to strengthen regional capacity for EID and TAD prevention and control and also activity' and activity 3.3 'strengthen ASEAN's institutional and multi-disciplinary workforce capacity on laboratory and epidemiology'. The objective is to support the Southeast Asia countries in strengthening their epidemiology, surveillance and early warning capacities.

Introduction

5. Dr Asfri W. Rangkuti, ASEAN Regional Support Unit (ASEAN RSU) Coordinator, Emergency Centre for Transboundary Animal Diseases of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations at the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (FAO ECTAD RAP), welcomed participants to the Southeast Asia Veterinary Epidemiology Group Workshop and Training. He opened his remarks by explaining the background of the workshop, which is part of the implementation of the SMART-ASEAN project. He briefly informed the participants about the long and strong collaboration between FAO and ASEAN in animal health cooperation. He expressed FAO's commitment to continue providing support to strengthen animal health cooperation and zoonotic diseases-related activities, including the establishment of the ASEAN Coordinating Centre of Animal Health and Zoonoses (ACCAHZ). He wishes the meeting to achieve its objective and to be fruitful.
6. Dr Hendra Wibawa, Head of the Disease Investigation Centre of Wates Yogyakarta, Indonesia, represented the Directorate General of Livestock and Animal Health Services Indonesia and provided opening remarks. Dr Hendra expressed his gratitude to all delegates who could attend the workshop. He also appreciated the FAO ECTAD SMART-ASEAN project funded by the Government of Australia through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) to help organise the workshop and training. He also thanked the Government of Thailand, which provided the funding through the Letter of Agreement (LOA) with the FAO. He wished that the three days of workshop and training could help the region to strengthen its animal health cooperation and to improve the networking between the Southeast Asia countries. He was also eager to share Indonesia's experience in building epidemiology and laboratory capacities. He closed his remarks by welcoming everyone to Yogyakarta, Indonesia and wished the meeting success.

AGENDA 1: Introduction of the SET Workshop & Background of SET

7. Dr Mugyeon Moon, Veterinary Epidemiologist (Early Warning), ECTAD RAP, presented the introduction of the Surveillance Evaluation Tools (SET).
8. The workshop noted that FAO developed SET in 2017 to help countries develop the capacity for systematic animal disease surveillance at all levels. The meeting further noted that SET is not a disease-specific tool. However, it focuses on the country's overall capacities for surveillance.
9. The meeting noted SET objectives, which are as follows:
 - A. Provide a standardized, comprehensive and repeatable methodology to evaluate national animal health surveillance systems.
 - B. Develop feasible and relevant recommendations to address gaps identified during the evaluation and draft an action plan for improvement.
 - C. Work in close collaboration with national veterinary services throughout all aspects of the evaluation.
10. The workshop agreed to implement the SET assessment in their countries to evaluate their national animal health surveillance system.
11. During the workshop, it was further agreed to make the SET tool an ASEAN tool. Therefore, the meeting requested Indonesia as the host country of the workshop to submit the SET tool to the ASEAN Veterinary Epidemiology Group (AVEG) and subsequently to the ASEAN Sectoral Working Group on Livestock (ASWGL) for endorsement as an ASEAN tool.

Action Line: Indonesia
12. The workshop agreed to assign a focal point for SET evaluation.
 - a. The proposed SET focal points are as below.
 - Brunei Darussalam:
Dr Ak Zharief Ahzha Al-Moushaffa
 - Cambodia
Dr Bun Chan
 - Indonesia
Drh. Ratna Vitta Ekowati, M.Sc.
 - Lao People's Democratic Republic
 - Malaysia
Dr Nazri
 - The Philippines

- Dr Joanna Marie David
 - Dr Ermyn Ermitanio
 - Singapore
 - Dr Kelvin Lim
 - Thailand
 - Dr Sith Premasthira
 - b. Agreed on the role of the SET focal point in implementing SET evaluation and coordination with the government and stakeholders.
 - c. Agreed to have SET training for the identified SET focal points to facilitate SET evaluation and build capacity for future self-assessment.
- 13. Upon discussion, countries submitted their proposed timeline to implement the SET Assessment; the proposed SET timeline is indicated in **Table 2**. Participants also sought potential support from FAO and other partners/donor agencies to support SET assessment in ASEAN member states. The participants also identified the focal point for the early warning and rumour tracking activities as below.
 - Brunei Darussalam:
 - Dr Yanti Puasa Pg. Hamron
 - Cambodia
 - Indonesia
 - Drh. Ratna Vitta Ekowati, M.Sc.
 - Lao People’s Democratic Republic
 - Malaysia
 - Dr Nazri
 - The Philippines
 - Dr Joanna Marie David
 - Singapore
 - Dr Kelvin Lim
 - Thailand
 - Dr Sith Premasthira
- 14. Participants agreed on the scope and scale of the SET evaluation team:
 - a. Agreed that the SET evaluation team would include the FAO experts and national focal points who would visit stakeholders from the central to the local level.
 - b. The involvement of CVO, decision-makers, government officers, and all stakeholders in the surveillance system is essential as they are part of the evaluation team in a broader picture. Yet, their involvement should be limited to the SET preparation phase, the beginning and the end of the implementation phase (launching and debriefing meetings), and the follow-up phase on publishing the SET result report to ensure the observation of

the evaluation team can be fully interpreted during the scoring and developing recommendation sessions.

- c. A list of stakeholders in the surveillance system besides government institutions should include those who might be directly/indirectly involved in the systems, including private sector entities, donors, NGOs, farmer associations, etc.
15. Participants agreed to share the results of the SET within ASEAN Member States with the following considerations:
 - a. Participants expressed the need to receive authorization from their CVO before sharing the SET result.
 - b. Participants agreed to share the SET result with relevant stakeholders such as FAO, WOHAI and selected donor agencies.
 - c. Participants suggested the result of SET could be submitted to ACCAHZ for further coordination and support.
 16. Participants agreed to set minimal requirements for surveillance capacity as a part of a stepwise approach to surveillance capacity building to contribute to the ASEAN epidemiology framework. Participants also pointed out that establishing ASEAN minimal requirements on surveillance capacity is necessary to explore practical comparative methods rather than relying on the percentage scores derived from SET evaluations. At the present stage, it is acknowledged that baseline data is needed to determine the method to set minimal requirements in ASEAN, and consensus is achieved on conducting SET for this purpose.
 17. Participants agreed on the approaches and action plans below for surveillance and early warning capacity building and to submit for ASEAN endorsement:
 - a. SET Focal points will serve as a focal point for the implementation of stepwise approaches for surveillance and early warning capacity building
 - b. Timeline for FAO-ASEAN Stepwise approach for surveillance Capacity building (Table 1)
 - c. SET Action Plan (Table 2).
 - d. Timeline for FAO-ASEAN Stepwise approach for Early Warning Capacity building (Table 3).
 - e. Action plan – rumour tracking training – Part of Early Warning Stepwise approach (Phase I) (Table 4).

Table 1. Timeline for FAO-ASEAN Stepwise approach for surveillance Capacity building

<i>Step</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
1. ASEAN adopts SET as a reference tool for surveillance capacity development	Nov 2023
2. Nominate ASEAN focal points to be trained in using SET in the region	Dec 2023
3. Conduct regional training of ASEAN focal points	Apr-May 2024
4. Obtain baseline of surveillance capacities in ASEAN Member States using SET & identify ASEAN regional approach to surveillance capacity-building	May-Dec 2024
5. Identify ASEAN minimum requirements for animal disease surveillance, based on baseline SET conducted in countries	2025
6. Leverage partnerships to support AMS' improvement of surveillance capacities to meet ASEAN minimum requirements	2025 – 2027
7. Update ASEAN minimum surveillance requirements	2027
8. Conduct follow-up SET assessment	2027-2028

Table 2. Action Plan – Surveillance Evaluation Tool (SET)

Action	Brunei	Cambodia	Indonesia	Lao Peop le’s Dem ocrat ic Repu blic	Malaysia	Philippines	Singapore	Thailand
Prepar ation	2026 (Q2)		2025 (Q3)	2026 (Q2)	2025 (Q1)	2025 (Q2)	2026 (Q1)	2024 (Q4)
Imple menta tion	2026 (Q3)		2025 (Q4)	2026 (Q3)	2025 (Q2)	2025 (Q3)	2026 (Q2)	2025 (Q1)
Follow -up	2026 (Q4)	2024 (Q3)	2026 (Q1)	2026 (Q4)	2025 (Q3)	2025 (Q4)	2026 (Q3)	2025 (Q2)

Table 3. Timeline for FAO-ASEAN Stepwise approach for Early Warning Capacity building

Step	Timeline
<p>Phase I – Enhancing basic information-sharing using rumour tracking</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Introduce rumour tracking activity to AMS, including:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Benefits of tracking rumours/news -> success stories/examples - What are the priority diseases in ASEAN for rumour tracking 2. <i>Initiate rumour tracking activity in AMS</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify AMS focal points to conduct early warning/rumour tracking work in their countries. - Identify AMS focal points to coordinate early warning activities with AMS focal points and also with FAO. - Develop and deliver training materials (tutored vs own learning/refresher) on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o How to use EIOS to track news/rumours within the country o How to use rumour tracking outcome – report to supervisor o How to do data management of EIOS results to have a coordinated approach to rumour tracking/analysis within ASEAN (i.e. data that can be collated and analysed at the regional level) o How to share data within ASEAN for regional analysis - Provide rumour tracking training for AMS EW focal points <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Training focal points from each AMS to collect & review information using EIOS (~10 focal points) o Training 1-2 from ACCAHZ to support coordination of the rumour tracking including data management and communication 3. <i>Set up the protocol for rumour sharing</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide an initial idea and adapt it to the AMS context with the agreement of AMS - Define ACCAHZ’s role in the coordination - Identify a data-sharing platform. 4. <i>Follow-up on rumour tracking activities of AMS after training</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monitoring of AMS focal points’ rumour tracking activities to ensure all goes well and protocols are followed. - Regular coordination calls with AMS EW focal points 	2024-2025
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. <i>Evaluation and review AMS EW focal points’ rumour tracking</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is the benefit of rumour tracking? - Findings and success stories of each country (i.e. early recognition, info used for national plan/policy, etc)? 	2025

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What was the missing info during rumour tracking? How to do rumour info sharing better? - Review the protocol as needed, confidential issue?, How can it be done better? 	
<p>Phase II – advanced info sharing for EW beyond rumour tracking</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Identify minimum data for sharing within AMS.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Look back gap data from rumour tracking – is the information sharable? - What is the expectation with additional info? 2. <i>Define the extended scope of info for sharing within AMS.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How much expand info sharing scope? Rumour, outbreak info, detailed info (Sequencing -> vaccine) 3. <i>Revise the info-sharing protocol as needed.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Includes rapid sharing, platform, confidentiality. 	2025
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. <i>Evaluate and review AMS EW focal points' info-sharing activity.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How does it work? Sharing findings and success stories of each country (i.e. early recognition, info used for national plan/policy, etc)? - What was the missing info during info sharing activity? How to do info sharing better? - Review the protocol, confidential issue?, How can it be done better? 	2026-2027
<p>Phase III – next step of info sharing for EW</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Implement real-time diagnostic and reporting tools – to rapidly identify and share animal health threats at national and international levels are available.</i> 2. <i>Strengthen national data management mechanisms.</i> 	2027-2028
<p>Phase IV – EW capacity strengthened with utilization of collated information</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Develop national capacities to rapidly assess risk factors for animal health threats.</i> 2. <i>Develop integrated disease forecasting capacities at a regional level</i> 	2027-2028

Table 4. Action plan – rumour tracking training – Part of EW Stepwise approach (Phase I)

Action	Brunei	Cambodia	Indonesia	Lao People's Democratic Republic	Malaysia	Philippines	Singapore	Thailand
Preparation	2025 (Q2)		2024 (Q1)		2024 (Q1)	2024 (Q3)	2025 (Q1)	2023 (Q4)
Implementation	2025 (Q3)		2024 (Q1)		2024 (Q2)	2024 (Q4)	2025 (Q2)	2023 (Q4)
Follow-up	2025 (Q4)		2024 (Q2)		2024 (Q3)	2025 (Q1)	2025 (Q3)	2024 (Q1)

AGENDA 2: ASEAN Veterinary Epidemiology Framework M&E Tool

18. The participants were informed that the SMART-ASEAN project, with support from the ASEAN Secretariat, developed the Assessment tool for the Regional Strategic Framework for Veterinary Epidemiology Capacity Development and Networking in Southeast Asia to support ASEAN in generating a baseline understanding of countries and regional current progress on implementing the Strategic Framework for Epidemiology Capacity Building and Networking (ASEAN Epi Framework). Participants further noted that the 45th AMAF Meeting has endorsed the tool.
19. Ms. Idil Yaman, Consultant, ECTAD RAP, trained the participants to fill out the tool and generate the data. Further, the participants were given time to complete it by themselves through consultation with the SMART-ASEAN team. Noting that some information in the assessment tool required internal country discussion, participants agreed to conduct internal consultation and submit the fill-out baseline data to the SMART-ASEAN team on **Friday, 1 December 2023**.

Action line: AVEG Focal Points
20. The participants further agreed on the mid-term and end-line assessment timeline, which is every 2-year interval for the regional objectives and a maximum 3-year interval for the national objectives.

21. The participants also agreed to share the result of the assessment tool with ASEAN countries, current partners and donors (FAO, WOAHA USAID and DFAT) and by request for interested universities, potential donors and partners.
22. The Participants agreed that the result of the regional baseline data would be discussed at the next AVEG meeting to identify follow-up action and the possibility of revising the framework to ensure the relevance of the current situation.
23. The participants also discussed the regional baseline together during the workshop, and some recommendations from the meeting are in the following.
 - a. Maintain and continue training activities to improve human resource capacity.
 - b. Enhance information sharing by making current resources accessible.
 - c. Aggregate available resources/materials into one platform.
 - d. Share existing national activities and tool results and ensure follow-up on recommendations.

AGENDA 3: Other matters

24. Dr Hao Tang, Regional Animal Health Workforce Development Specialist, ECTAD RAP, presented the FAO's initiatives to support Workforce Development in Veterinary Epidemiology and One Health. The Participants noted the presentation and the development of the **E**pidemiology **N**etwork for **T** raining, **U**tilizing the **V**eterinary workforce and evidence, and the **S**haring for **T**rust (ENTRVST) network, which aims to strengthen veterinary epidemiology capacities through peer-to-peer networks in the region. Participants requested that FAO regularly update the initiative at the AVEG meeting.
25. The participants agreed that the AVEG focal points should be part of the ENTRVST and support the internal dissemination of information on ENTRVST activities.
26. The meeting noted the development of ACCAHZ and agreed to revise the AVEG TOR, awaiting the decisions from the 1st ACCAHZ GB meeting. Therefore, pending the decision from the 1st ACCAHZ GB Meeting, the participants requested Brunei Darussalam to become the lead country, with support from FAO, to revise the AVEG TOR and share it with AVEG on 24 December 2023. The revised TOR will be submitted to the ASWGL meeting in 2024.

Action Line: Brunei Darussalam
27. The Participants noted the One Health Zoonotic Disease Prioritization (OHZDP) workshop conducted in Indonesia, Thailand, and Malaysia. The meeting further agreed to have an

ASEAN OHZDP workshop with the public health and environment sectors and requested that FAO and other partners/donor agencies support the activities.

28. The meeting noted the endorsement of the 45th AMAF for the Avian Influenza Post 2020 Framework, which was developed with support from the SMART-ASEAN team. The Participants agreed to support the development of the AI framework implementation plan and will identify the potential support from AVEG in implementing the framework.
29. The meeting supported FAO Virtual Learning Centre (VLC) to conduct the One Health online course for ASEAN member states and agreed to have the workshop participants as the contact point to coordinate the nomination of participants from the animal health, public health, and environment sectors to be submitted to FAO. Therefore, the participants requested that FAO share the concept note and invitation for the training course once it is available.
Action Line: FAO
30. The meeting agreed to request that the Philippines submit the Southeast Asia Veterinary Epidemiology Group result to the AVEG meeting and ASWGL for consideration and adoption.
31. The participants appreciated the support provided by FAO, Indonesia, Thailand and the Australian government for the successful event.