

THE REPORT OF THE FIRST ASEAN AD HOC LABORATORY GROUP MEETING

31 October -1 November 2013, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

INTRODUCTION

1. The First Meeting of the ASEAN Ad-Hoc Laboratory Group Meeting was held on 31 October – 1 November 2013 in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. The Meeting was supported and funded by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) through the EU-HPED and IDENTIFY projects, with support and coordination provided by ASEAN Secretariat.

2. Delegates from Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Thailand, and Viet Nam attended the Meeting with the apology of the representatives from Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, and Singapore. The Meeting welcomed the participation of representatives from the Sub-regional Representation of the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Australian Animal Health Laboratory (AAHL), World Health Organization Western Pacific Regional Office (WPRO), United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and regional leading and reference laboratories. The list of participants appears as **ANNEX 1**.

OPENING SESSION

3. Dr. Wantanee Kalpravidh, Regional Coordinator of FAO RAP, in her welcome remarks briefed the Meeting on the evolution of the Regional Laboratory Directors' Forum (LDF) as a platform for information exchange and networking in Southeast Asia, which was instigated since 2010. Dr. Kalpravidh highlighted the key achievement and engagement of ASEAN to recognise the LDF as an ASEAN laboratory group to ensure commitment and sustainability. Dr. Kalpravidh also brought to the attention of the Meeting on the endorsement of the Regional Strategic Framework for Laboratory Capacity Building and Networking (Lab Framework) by the 35th AMAF Meeting held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on 26 September 2013, which is the milestone for laboratory capacity development in ASEAN. Dr. Kalpravidh affirmed that FAO regional approach to develop laboratory capacity and networking was in line with ASEAN initiatives for regional laboratory capacity development.

4. Dr. Ronel Abila, Sub-regional Representative of the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE-SRR), delivered a welcome remark on behalf of OIE. Dr. Abila commended ASEAN in its initiative and engagement in laboratory capacity development to advance the work of the laboratory network envisaged in the Global Framework for the Progressive Control of Transboundary Animal Diseases (GF-TAD). This was evident in the organisation of the 1st ASEAN Laboratory Directors' Forum today. Dr. Abila expressed OIE's commitment to support ASEAN initiative in building laboratory capacity through the OIE PVS Pathway.

5. Dr. Abila also highlighted some activities conducted in support of the laboratory capacity strengthening, including laboratory strategic planning in 5 (five) countries in ASEAN and the twinning programme with OIE Reference Laboratories for specific diseases. OIE-SRR would also work with OIE Focal Points within ASEAN Member States (AMS) to engage them to be more active in the OIE standards setting processes. Through the tripartite collaboration with FAO and WHO, OIE would continue to strengthen collaboration and networking between animal and human health laboratories.

6. Dr. Fadjar Sumping Tjatur Rasa, Director of Disease Investigation Center Wates, conveyed the sincere apology from Mr. Syukur Iwantoro, Director-General of DGLAHS for being unable to preside the opening ceremony today. Dr. Fadjar, on behalf of Mr. Iwantoro, welcome all participants to the 1st Meeting of the ASEAN Laboratory Directors' Forum held in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. Dr. Fadjar emphasized the importance of laboratory diagnosis capacity of AMS as a pre-requisite for the effective and efficient responses to transboundary animal diseases (TADs) including zoonoses. In this context, Dr. Fadjar expressed Indonesia's concurrence on the engagement of ASEAN in this important endeavours to strengthen laboratory capacity in the region. Dr. Fadjar thanked the FAO, OIE, USAID-IDENTIFY and EU-HPED for continued support in improving the capacity and quality of the animal health laboratories among AMS. The full text of his Opening Speech appears as **ANNEX 2**.

AGENDA 1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

7. The Meeting elected Dr. Bagoes Poermadjadja, Director of Disease Investigation Center Maros, Directorate General of Livestock and Animal Health Services, Ministry of Agriculture, Indonesia, and Dr. Magdalena Sirios Cruz, Head of Philippine Animal Health Center (PAHC), Bureau of Animal Industry, Philippines as the Chairperson and Vice-chairperson of the Meeting.

AGENDA 2. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

8. The Meeting agenda was discussed and adopted as described in **ANNEX 3**.

AGENDA 3. BUSINESS ARRANGEMENTS

9. The Meeting was arranged in plenary.

AGENDA 4. INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTIVES

10. The Meeting noted the presentation made by the ASEAN Regional Support Unit (ASEAN RSU) entitled "Introduction and Objectives" (**ANNEX 4**), recalling the history and key significant milestones as well as achievements in the establishment of the ASEAN Ad-Hoc Laboratory Group. The Meeting also noted the expected outcomes of this Meeting.

11. The Meeting noted the presentation from Dr. Bagoes Poermadjadja, Director of Disease Investigation Center Maros, recalling the conclusion and recommendations from the 4th Laboratory Directors Forum, which appears as **ANNEX 5**.

AGENDA 5. UPDATES ON THE NATIONAL AND REGIONAL LABORATORY CAPACITY BUILDING AND NETWORKING PROGRAMME

12. Dr. Bagoes Poermadjadja in the capacity as the Chairperson of the Meeting requested Dr. Wantanee Kapravidh, Regional Project Coordinator of the FAORAP, to assist in facilitation of the Meeting.

5.1 Updates from the 2013 Regional Laboratory Technical Advisory Group Meeting (LAB TAG)

13. The Meeting noted the presentation (**ANNEX 6**) presented by Dr. Wantanee Kalpravidh on the outcome of the 2013 Regional Laboratory Technical Advisory Group (Lab TAG) Meeting. The key outcomes of the Meeting are as follow:

- a. Acknowledged the progress and support made by relevant international organizations (FAO, OIE and WHO) and their collaborating centers (AAHL, Harbin AI Reference Laboratory, St. Jude Children Hospital, Southeast Poultry Research Laboratory-SEPRL), as well as development partners such as USCDC and USAID.
- b. Development of a coordinated workplan and encourages partners to implement their activities collaboratively.

Detail conclusions and recommendations including other relevant documents of the meeting appear as **ANNEX 7**.

14. Noting the importance of regional collaboration in strengthening laboratory capacities, and recalling that linkages and partnerships is one of the strategic goals in the Lab Framework, the Meeting agreed and requested that the Lab TAG continues to provide updates of their activities for consideration and information at the next Meeting, and that the next Lab TAG meeting shall be held back-to-back with, and preceding the ASEAN Ad-Hoc Laboratory Group Meeting.

Action Line: Lab-TAG

5.2 European Union (EU) Regional Cooperation Programme on Highly Pathogenic and Emerging Diseases (HPED) in Asia and USAID IDENTIFY Programme

15. The Meeting noted the presentation made by Dr. Sanipa Suradhat, Regional Laboratory Network coordinator, FAORAP, which appear as **ANNEX 8**, summarising the activities under the Regional Laboratory Network (RLN) capacity building and networking programme, which has been implemented in the participating laboratories from 2010 to present. USAID-IDENTIFY and EU-HPED programmes have mostly financially supported the activities.

16. The Meeting noted that there were 31 laboratories from 11 countries in Southeast Asia and South Asia participating in RLN programme, including the national veterinary diagnostic laboratories, Regional Reference/Leading Diagnostic Laboratories (RRLs and RLLs), SEACFMD LabNet members, and partner

laboratories. The activities under RLN programme were in line and in complementary to the ASEAN Lab Framework.

17. The Meeting also noted that the technical scopes of the program included 1) strengthening of the laboratory diagnostic capacity, 2) laboratory quality assurance, 3) laboratory biosafety, and 4) networking at national and regional levels.

18. The Meeting appreciated the assistance provided by FAO on technical advisory support in the development of Lao PDR national laboratory. Along this line, the Meeting noted that similar assistance could be rendered to other AMS, through the country officials, upon request.

19. The Meeting also considered advocating the concept of regional laboratory network and the Lab Framework to the higher levels to obtain political commitments and supports from the AMS.

20. The Meeting noted the presentation made by Dr. Jarawan Kampa, which appears as **ANNEX 9**, highlighting the deliverables of the project and technical scope of the laboratory capacity which include i) Laboratory Detection ii) Disease Reporting, Policy and Guidance iii) Laboratory Networking iv) Laboratory Quality.

21. With the view to have a better communication with OIE Focal Points for laboratories, the Meeting noted that at the next OIE Regional Commission Meeting in Cebu, Philippines on 18-22 November 2013, OIE will convey the message to OIE Delegates or CVOs to provide the Laboratory Focal Points the documents/proposed standards from OIE for comments and inputs. The Meeting also noted the suggestion to ask OIE Delegates to provide the Laboratory Focal Points the access to the OIE Delegates website.

Action Line: OIE

22. The Meeting acknowledged with appreciation the activities conducted by FAO and OIE, both at the national and regional levels, in supporting the implementation of ASEAN Strategic Framework for Laboratory Capacity Building and Networking. Along this line, the Meeting requested FAO and OIE to update on the progress of their activities to the next Meeting.

23. In order to strengthen the collaboration, coordination and cooperation of the ASEAN regional laboratory network, the Meeting encouraged the countries to share resources, expertise and information in the implementation of the framework, which mechanism of sharing will be discussed further.

5.3 Progress from in-country Laboratory Strategic Planning

24. Dr. Magdalena Sirios-Cruz briefed the Meeting on the outcomes of the workshop and the progress of the laboratory strategic planning in the Philippines. During the workshop, the vision, strategic goals and strategies for Philippines Animal Health Center (PAHC) and RDDLS was determined. The outcome provided a clear direction to the laboratory capacity development in the Philippines. Dr. Sirios-Cruz's presentation appears as **ANNEX 10**.

5.4 Progress of key Regional Laboratory Network capacity building programs and related issues

25. The Meeting noted the presentations made by FAO, Australian Animal Health Laboratory (AAHL), and the Regional Reference Laboratory for FMD in South East Asia (RRL-FMD) on the progress of the Regional Biosafety Programme (RBP) and Regional Proficiency Testing Programme (RPT).

26. Dr. Sanipa Suradhat, Regional Laboratory Coordinator of the FAO, presented the scope of activities and finding from the 2012-2013 RBP, which emphasised the quality biosafety management and practices, as well as the well maintenance of the biosafety equipment and access to essential biosafety supplies. In 2013, 28 laboratories from 11 countries in Southeast Asia and South Asia participated the program, with 170 biosafety cabinets (BSCs) being serviced in 2013. The results indicated overall improvement among AMS laboratories. The presentation appears as **ANNEX 11**. Noting the importance of strengthening internal capacity of ASEAN in performing the RBP, the Meeting supported the organisation of the Biosafety Management Training of Trainers in Bangkok, Thailand between 9 – 20 December 2013 to strengthen capacities of AMS to sustain the RBP in the future; and encourage the AMS to nominate appropriate laboratory staff to attend the training.

Action Line: FAO and ASEAN Member States

27. Recognising the importance of good biosafety management in a laboratory, Member States expressed concerns due to issues of an appointment of staff directly responsible for management of laboratory biosafety. Recalling that laboratory biosafety is one of the strategic goals in the Lab Framework, the Meeting recommended to consider laboratory human resource management plan, including resources and personnel responsible for biosafety management, when develop / revise the national laboratory strategic plans.

28. Dr. Chris Morrissy from the Australian Animal Health Laboratories (AAHL) presented the progress of activities conducted under the 2013 Regional Quality Assurance (QA) Programme supported by FAO under IDENTIFY and EU HPED programmes. In 2013, 14 laboratories from 9 Southeast Asia countries participated the Regional PT program for Influenza A, ASF, CSF, PRRS, Rabies, and ND. The results showed that all laboratories continued to improve their performances in the PT rounds undertaken in 2012 and 2013. The improvements were in both quality and accuracy of diagnostic results. Dr. Morrissy's presentation, including planed activities of RPT Programme in 2014, appears as **ANNEX 12**.

29. Dr. Somjai Kamolsiripichaiporn, Director of the Regional Reference Laboratory for FMD in South East Asia (RRL-FMD) provided the update on the Regional Proficiency PT for FMDV. Fifteen laboratories including 8 laboratories in Thailand, and 7 ASEAN national laboratories, including Cambodia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Vietnam (NCVD, RAHO6), and Singapore participated the programme. The report from the inter-laboratory comparisons was scheduled be released in December 2013 to the participating laboratories. Dr. Kamolsiripichaiporn's presentation appears as **ANNEX 13**.

30. In order to advocate for support at policy level, the Meeting discussed on a certification program to properly recognise the quality of laboratory, both in terms of qualitative and quantitative. The standard recognition would also be useful to determine appropriate uses of laboratory services for specific purposes. In this connection, the Meeting requested that FAO, OIE, and AAHL explore the possibility to include a recognition mechanism in the future RBP and RPT Programmes.

31. The results of the RBP and RPT Programmes showed significant overall improvement in diagnostic capability, quality, and safety among the participating laboratories within AMS. The Programmes also identified gaps for future improvement. Recognising the value of the RBP and RPT programmes to ensure delivery of quality and safety laboratory services, and to support the realisation of the strategic goals envisioned in the Lab Framework, the Meeting requested the partners to provide an update on the progress to the next Meeting, as well as for AMS to continue to support the implementation of the Programmes in 2014.

Action Line: FAO, OIE, and ASEAN Member States

32. The Meeting noted the presentation made by Dr. Chantanee Buranathai on the outcomes of the OIE Biological Standards Commission Meeting in Paris between 11 – 12 September 2013. The Meeting further noted key changes concerning international standards related to laboratory diagnosis, as well as key changes in the Manual of Diagnostic Tests and Vaccines for Terrestrial Animals. Dr. Buranathai also informed on the on going twinning project between ASEAN Laboratories with OIE reference Laboratories and the new international standard or harmonisation. The list of twinning project, international standard/harmonisation and Dr. Buranathai's presentation appears as **ANNEX 14**.

AGENDA 6. EXPERIENCE AND SUCCESS: UP-SCALLING FROM NATIONAL TO REGIONAL LEVEL

33. The Meeting noted the presentation made by Indonesia entitled Veterinary Laboratory Network and National Reference Laboratories in Indonesia (**ANNEX 15**) that emphasised the coordination between central, provincial and district government components of the network. The Meeting also noted that Indonesia is in the process of developing an information system to integrate data from the laboratory network to the central database and to allow linkages between field and laboratory data.

34. The Meeting also noted that the OIE PVS Gap Analysis Report of Indonesia in 2011 recommended a review of the Indonesian veterinary services laboratory system as a priority. Comprehensive reviews of the Indonesian Veterinary Services Laboratory Network have been conducted to follow up the OIE recommendation.

35. The Meeting further noted that eight Disease Investigation Centers (DICs) have been designated by Minister of Agriculture as national reference laboratories for selected major animal diseases for Indonesia covering 15 diseases and operated with role and responsibilities similar to the OIE Terms of Reference for Reference Laboratory which are prepared to meet the ISO/IEC17043 standards.

36. Dr. Somjai Kamolsiripichaiporn, Director of the Regional Reference Laboratory for FMD in Southeast Asia (RRL SEA), shared the experience of RRL SEA in

providing laboratory services at national, regional, and international levels. Dr. Kamolsiripichaiporn briefed the Meeting on the laboratory network among sub-national laboratories in Thailand, laboratory activities among laboratories in ASEAN region, and linkages with international networks of reference laboratories for FMD diagnosis. The Meeting noted with appreciation the roles of RRL SEA and the government of Thailand in the provision of diagnostic services, quality assurance services, and capacity building for laboratories in AMS. Through samples submitted, RRL SEA was able to monitor the situation of FMD and the evolution of FMDV in the region; which emphasized the importance and encouraged the AMS to take advantage of RRL SEA services by submission of samples for confirmation. Dr. Kamolsiripichaiporn's presentation appears as **ANNEX 16**.

Closed Session

AGENDA 7. OTHER MATTERS

7.1 Matters Arising from ASEAN Meetings related to Laboratory Initiative

37. The Meeting noted the presentation made by Dr. Kachen Wongsathapornchai, ASEAN Regional Support Unit Coordinator, which appears as **ANNEX 17**. Dr. Wongsathapornchai briefed the Meeting on ASEAN laboratory capacity development and initiatives related to animal health laboratory diagnosis. His presentation highlighted the endorsement of the Regional Strategic Framework for Laboratory Capacity Building and Networking in ASEAN by the 35th AMAF Meeting held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on 25 September 2013.

38. Dr. Wongsathapornchai informed the Meeting on the support made by the 21st ASWGL Meeting, which was held on 22-24 May 2013 in the Philippines, for the establishment of the ASEAN Ad-hoc Laboratory Group to ensure the successful implementation of the Lab Framework. Noting the guidance provided by the 21st ASWGL Meeting, there was a need for the Meeting to discuss on the composition, to identify and discuss on key elements for the establishment, and to discuss on a roadmap for the establishment of a sustainable ASEAN Ad-hoc Laboratory Group.

39. Dr. Wongsathapornchai also briefed the Meeting on the ongoing establishment of the ASEAN Coordination Centre for Animal Health and Zoonosis (ACCAHZ). The presentation highlighted significant milestones and achievements in the ongoing initiative of establishing the Centre. The Meeting also noted the need to integrate ASEAN Ad-hoc Laboratory Group into ACCAHZ coordination once ACCAHZ becomes operational.

40. As a follow up from the updates on progresses of laboratory initiatives by development partners and reference/leading laboratories, the Meeting noted the summary of Regional Laboratory Network capacity building and networking programme, which appears as **ANNEX 18**. Considering the need to have a mechanism for implementing the Lab Framework, the Meeting noted the key elements of activities which consists of i) Policy and Strategy; ii) Budget; iii) Quality Assurance and Proficiency Testing; iv) Biosafety, Biosecurity and Program; v) Linkages; vi) Research and Development.

41. Along this line, the Meeting requested ASEAN RSU with the support from ASEAN Secretariat to coordinate with FAO and OIE to draft a detail implementation plan based on the above elements, and to circulate to the core group (Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam) for review and finalization prior to the 2nd ASEAN Ad-Hoc Laboratory Group Meeting.

Action Line: ASEAN RSU, ASEAN Secretariat and ASEAN Member States

42. Considering that the ACCAHZ is in the process of its establishment and the need to internalise its functional mechanisms, the Meeting noted the need to have a transitional plan describing integration process of the ASEAN Ad-hoc Laboratory Group into ACCAHZ mechanism. Noting that the ASEAN Ad-hoc Communication Group for Livestock (ACGL) and the ASEAN Ad-hoc Veterinary Epidemiology Group (AVEG) are also in the process of developing their transition plans, the Meeting agreed to maximize the existing plans once they are available as the basis in drafting Laboratory transition plan.

43. Recognising the need for the integration, the Meeting supported the organisation of the Preparatory Transition Meeting for ACCAHZ, which will be conducted in Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam between 25 and 26 November 2013. The Meeting recommended that the ALDF Focal Points of Viet Nam be invited to participate in the Preparatory Transition Meeting.

Action Line: ASEAN Secretariat, ASEAN RSU, Viet Nam, Indonesia, and Malaysia

7.2 Terms of Reference of ASEAN Ad-hoc Animal Health Laboratory Group

44. The Meeting also discussed and clarified the goal, objectives, scope of work, the role and responsibilities, as well as the composition and structure of the ASEAN Ad-hoc Veterinary Epidemiology Group.

45. The Meeting considered and agreed to maintain the title of the group as the ASEAN Laboratory Director's Forum.

46. In view of speeding up the preparatory process for its establishment, the Meeting agreed the draft TOR would be circulated for ad-referendum approval to the focal points prior submission to the 22nd ASWGL Meeting for consideration and approval. The final draft of the Term of Reference appears as **ANNEX 19**.

Action Line: ASEAN RSU, ASEAN Secretariat and ASEAN Member States

7.3 Finalisation of the ASEAN Ad-hoc Animal Health Laboratory Group Composition

47. The Meeting acknowledged on the submission of the ASEAN Ad-Hoc Laboratory Group Focal Points including its alternates, which appears as **ANNEX 20**. The Meeting also agreed that the minimum required criteria for the nomination of Focal Points should be set by country to ensure that the inputs and insights in the

implementation of the Laboratory Framework and guidance are accomplished. This is also to ensure continuity to the initiative at the regional and country level.

48. The Meeting also agreed to submit the updated list of Focal Points including its alternate to the ASEAN Secretariat by **14 November 2013**.

Action Line: ASEAN Member States and ASEAN Secretariat

7.4 ASEAN Ad-hoc Animal Health Laboratory Group's Plan of Action 2013-2014

49. The Meeting discussed and agreed on Plan of Actions for 2013-2014 to be implemented by the ASEAN Ad-hoc Laboratory Group. The Plan of Actions appears as **ANNEX 21**.

AGENDA 8. DATE AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING

50. The Meeting noted the kind offer of Lao PDR to host the 2nd Meeting of the ASEAN Ad-Hoc Laboratory Group tentatively in March 2014. However, Lao PDR will confirm to ASEAN Secretariat on the date and venue of the next meeting, pending internal clearance and approval.

Action Line: Lao PDR

AGENDA 9. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

51. The Meeting agreed that the Report of the First Meeting of the ASEAN Ad-Hoc Laboratory Group held on 31 October-1 November 2013 in Yogyakarta, Indonesia would be circulated for ad-referendum approval.

CLOSING

52. Dr. Fadjar Sumping Tjatur Rasa, on behalf of Mr. Syukur Iwantoro, Director-General of DGLAHS, officially closed the Meeting by thanking all participants for their active participation and valuable inputs in attaining the set objectives. Moreover, he also expressed his sincere thanks to the ASEAN-RSU and FAO for their kind support for the Meeting. Special appreciation was also conveyed by Malaysia, on behalf of ASEAN Member States, to the host country, Indonesia, for the efficient logistical support for the Meeting and warm hospitality extended to all participants.