ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Animal Health and Zoonoses
Summary

Background

The region of Southeast Asia has a rapidly growing economy, underpinned by an established regional political organisation – ASEAN. However, the continuous spread of diseases, such as foot and mouth disease (FMD), African swine fever (ASF), lumpy skin disease (LSD) and highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI), threaten the viability of efforts for a progressive and sustainable animal industry sector in the region. Moreso, as economic integration and open borders, increase, animal, public and wildlife health become more important.

ASEAN cooperation in animal health has been ongoing for quite some time now. However, with the incursion and devastating socio-economic impacts of H5N1 HPAI in the early part of the 21st century, ASEAN experts and leaders recognised the need for each member state to build up the capacity and capability to deal with the threats and for a regionally driven and sustainable coordination mechanism, including multi-sectoral collaboration, to deal with Transboundary Animal Diseases (TADs), Emerging infectious diseases (EIDs) and zoonoses. Hence, in 2011, the ASEAN Ministers of Agriculture and Forestry (AMAF) endorsed the proposal to establish the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Animal Health and Zoonoses (ACCAHZ).

About Us

ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Animal Health and Zoonoses (ACCAHZ) was established to facilitate and provide a framework of cooperation and coordination among ASEAN Member States (AMS) with relevant Dialogue Partners, Development Partners, and other stakeholders to prevent, control, and eradicate Transboundary Animal Disesases, Emerging Infectious Diseases (EIDs) and zoonoses in ASEAN. The ACCAHZ also aims to contribute toward food security and safety, poverty alleviation, and the well-being and livelihood of the peoples of ASEAN.

ACCAHZ is an inter-governmental organisation; it shall be conferred with legal personality as may be required to exercise its functions, including, among other things, the capacity to enter into contracts, acquire and dispose of movable, immovable properties, and be a party to legal proceedings.

Progress and Significant Milestones

- The 32nd ASEAN Ministers on Agriculture and Forestry (AMAF) in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. unanimously agreed to declare their support and commitment to advancing the ASEAN cooperation on animal health and zoonoses in the AMAF Statement on “ASEAN Cooperation on Animal Health and Zoonoses: Avian Influenza and Beyond,”

- The 33rd AMAF Meeting in Jakarta, Indonesia, endorsed the Comprehensive Proposal for the Establishment of the Regional Coordination Mechanism on Animal Health and Zoonoses (RCM), hereafter named the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Animal Health and Zoonoses (ACCAHZ).

- The 37th AMAF Meeting held in Manila, the Philippines, in September 2015, endorsed the Agreement for the Establishment of ACCAHZ and agreed that the Establishment Agreement would be signed through the ad-referendum mechanism.

- The 19th ASEAN Sectoral Working Group on Livestock (ASWGL) established the ACCAHZ Preparatory Committee (ACCAHZ PrepCom) to establish ACCAHZ. It also endorsed the establishment of the ASEAN Regional Support Unit (RSU) based in the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (RAP) to support the work of ACCAHZ PrepCom for the implementation of the planned establishment of ACCAHZ and ensure its operationalisation.

- The complete signing of the Agreement on the Establishment of the ASEAN Coordinating Center for Animal Health and Zoonoses (ACCAHZ) was through an ad-referendum arrangement, and it was completed at the 38th AMAF Meeting in Singapore.

- The Special Meeting of the ASWGL on Streamlining Process, 2-3 November 2016, Siem Reap, Cambodia, discussed the structure of ASWGL once ACCAHZ is established. The meeting agreed to maintain the seven (7) ASWGL sub-working groups, namely ASEAN National Focal Point for Veterinary Product (ANFPVP), ASEAN Veterinary Epidemiology Group (AVEG), ASEAN Laboratory Directors' Forum (ALDF), ASEAN Communication Group on Livestock (ACGL), Avian Influenza Group of ASEAN (AIGA), and Expert Working Group on Good Animal Husbandry Practices (EWG-GAHP), during the interim period of ACCAHZ establishment. Once ACCAHZ is operational, it will be suggested to the ACCAHZ Governing Board that the four (4) sub-working groups, AVEG, ALDF, ACGL, and AIGA, be coordinated by ACCAHZ.

- The 10 ASEAN Member States have finalised their internal ratification process and have deposited their Instrument of Ratification (IR) to the ASEAN Secretariat, which resulted in the Agreement entering into force on the 8th of September 2021.

- As the first ACCAHZ host country, Malaysia has provided an office for ACCAHZ, including its furniture, located in Veterinary Public Health Laboratory in Sepang, Malaysia.

- The 20th ACCAHZ PrepCom Meeting was conducted as the final Preparatory Committee meeting. The meeting was conducted on 27 – 28 March 2023 in Bangkok, Thailand. The Meeting was organised by the Government of Thailand and with the support by the Strengthening Mechanism in Animal-health for a Resilient ASEAN (SMART-ASEAN) project through the LOA with the funding support of the Australian Government through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT). The Meeting discussed and agreed to submit the following documents to the ACCAHZ GB Meeting:

    - ACCAHZ Executive Director TOR
    - ACCAHZ 5-years strategic plan
    - ACCAHZ launching plan
    - ACCAHZ ROPs on Governing Board, Financial Management, Business Arrangement/Office, Human Resources Management, Physical Assets, Services and Equipment, Suspension, and Withdrawal.
    - ACCAHZ resource mobilisation.

- The 1st ACCAHZ Governing Board Meeting was conducted on 12 – 13 December 2023 in Sepang, Malaysia. The meeting welcomed FAO as an Associate Member of the ACCAHZ GB according to the Establishment Agreement of the ACCAHZ, to provide input and support for the ACCAHZ GB as needed, including attending and participating in future GB meetings.

- The 1st ACCAHZ GB Meeting discussed and agreed on the following:

    - To have an Interim ACCAHZ Coordinating Officer (IACO) to conduct day-to-day ACCAHZ Office activities, pending the recruitment and appointment of the ACCAHZ Executive Director (ED), and agreed with the terms of reference for the IACO developed with assistance from FAO.
    - The Meeting welcomed the final Host Country Agreement (HCA) that was developed by Malaysia. The HCA will be further submitted to SOM-AMAF and AMAF. ACCAHZ GB agreed that the HCA will be signed between Malaysia and the ACCAHZ GB Chair.
    - the terms of reference for the ACCAHZ Executive Director;
    - the transition plan for the ASEAN Veterinary Epidemiology Group (AVEG), ASEAN Laboratory Directors' Forum (ALDF), Avian Influenza Group for ASEAN (AIGA), and the ASEAN Communication Group on Livestock (ACGL) to ACCAHZ;
    - the ACCAHZ resources mobilization;
    - the ACCAHZ 5-year Strategic Plan;
    - to launch ACCAHZ in April/May 2024 back-to-back with the Special ACCAHZ Governing Board Meeting and Networking Sessions in the ACCAHZ office. The ACCAHZ fund will be utilized to support the events, including travel for ASEAN Member States (AMS).

Governance

A Governing Board governs ACCAHZ and comprises the following:

a. Directors-General (or equivalent in rank) or Chief Veterinary Officers (CVOs) of the Focal Agencies of the ASEAN Member States.
b. Representatives from the ASEAN Secretariat.
c. Executive Director of the ACCAHZ,
d. The current chair of ASWGL.
e. Representatives of ASEAN Dialogue and ASEAN Development Partners, relevant ASEAN bodies, regional organisations, non-ASEAN Member States, and relevant private sector and civil society organisations, as deemed necessary by the Directors-General (or its equivalent in rank), or CVOs of the ASEAN Member States.

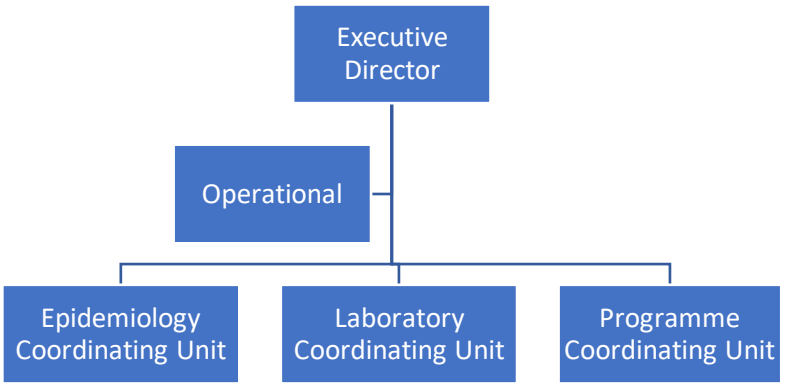
The Governing Board has decision-making power, on a consensus basis, among the Directors-General or CVOs, and is responsible for providing strategic directions in operation and sustainability of ACCAHZ. This includes approval of the annual work plan and operational budget of ACCAHZ, including projects to be funded with potential funding sources. The Governing Board annually reports its progress and activities to the Senior Officials Meeting of the ASEAN Ministers for Agriculture and Forestry (SOM-AMAF) of ASEAN.

ACCAHZ Office

The Office shall be in the territory of one of the ASEAN Member States. The hosting of the Office shall be on a rotational basis of four (4) years, with the following agreed arrangements:

a. Malaysia will serve as the Host Country for the first four (4) years, followed by Thailand for the next four (4) years.
b. Other interested ASEAN Member States are also eligible to host the Office after Thailand.

ACCAHZ Office structure is as follows:



The Executive director of ACCAHZ reports to the Governing Board annually or as needed.

ACCAHZ Funding Arrangement

A. ACCAHZ Operational Cost is generated from the following scheme:
- Annual contributions of the ASEAN Member States.
- Voluntary contributions from any ASEAN Member States.
- Other sources, as agreed upon by the Governing Board.

B. The Project Cost is generated from the following scheme:
- Voluntary contributions from any ASEAN Member States.
- Possible funding from ASEAN Animal Health Trust Fund (AAHTF) and any other ASEAN funding facilities; and
- Other sources, as agreed upon by the Governing Board.