

Proposal for a Regional Reference Centre (RRC) for Biorisk Management and Quality Assurance in Singapore

Objective

Establish a Regional Reference Centre for Biorisk Management and Quality Assurance in Singapore to facilitate harmonization of international standards and guidelines related to biorisk management and quality assurance within ASEAN member countries.

Background

The 7th ASEAN Laboratory Directors' Forum (ALDF) Meeting held in Viet Nam in November 2019 discussed and agreed on the importance of designated Regional Reference Laboratory (RRL) and Regional Reference Center (RRC) to support the ASEAN region in the prevention and control of animal diseases in ASEAN. Two RRCs were proposed, one on Bioinformatics, and the other on Biorisk Management and Quality Assurance. It was also proposed for Indonesia to lead the RRC for Bioinformatics, and for Singapore to lead the RRC for Biorisk Management & Quality Assurance.

Purpose

A Regional Reference Centre for Biorisk Management and Quality Assurance is important to facilitate harmonization of international standards and guidelines related to biorisk management and quality assurance within ASEAN member countries, by developing methods and procedures to facilitate harmonization of standards amongst ASEAN national veterinary laboratories, and to provide training support to ASEAN national veterinary laboratories.

The regional reference centre will build a network with ASEAN national veterinary laboratories for the purpose of exchanging technical information and promoting collaboration. It will also be the link between ASEAN and OIE Collaborating Centre for Assay Validation in Asia Pacific. Through such collaboration and communications, the Singapore RRC will serve and support the ASEAN laboratory community to further extend our regional capability.

Proposal

The Centre for Animal and Veterinary Sciences, under the National Parks Board (NParks), Singapore, is the national animal health laboratory overseeing animal health diagnostics and assay development. The facility is equipped to handle advanced diagnostic methods and emerging diseases. There is also a well-established quality and safety system with competent staff for the successful operation of the Regional Reference Centre for Biorisk Management and Quality Assurance.

Singapore will support the resource and funding of this RRC. Singapore will also work with ASEAN, FAO, OIE, technical institutes and aid agencies for technical support and funding for

activities, which are required to enhance the capability and capacity in the national veterinary laboratories of the ASEAN member countries.

Proposed Terms of Reference for the RRC

- i. To maintain a network of ASEAN national veterinary laboratories for the purpose of exchanging technical information and promoting collaboration;
- ii. To work with the ASEAN national veterinary laboratories to develop methods and procedures to facilitate harmonisation of standards;
- iii. To provide training support to ASEAN national veterinary laboratories;
- iv. To be the link between ASEAN and the OIE Collaborating Centre for Assay Validation in Asia Pacific.

Plan of activities

Singapore proposes to hold a workshop on biorisk management and quality assurance in 2021, back to back with the 13th Regional Animal Health Laboratory Technical Advisory Group (13th LabTAG) meeting, in partnership with FAO, and CSIRO's Australian Centre for Disease Preparedness, which is the OIE Collaborating Centre for Diagnostic Test Validation Science in the Asia-Pacific Region. In succeeding years, training workshops will be held back to back with LabTAG, on various aspects of assay validation, quality assurance and biorisk management.

Action line:

For ASEAN Secretariat to seek endorsement from ASWGL *ad referendum*, to recommend for SOM-AMAF and AMAF's approval, to establish the ASEAN Regional Reference Centre for Biorisk Management and Quality Assurance in the Centre for Animal and Veterinary Sciences, under NParks, Singapore.