



**PROGRESS ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE AQUATIC EMERGENCY  
PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE SYSTEMS FOR EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF  
TRANSBOUNDARY DISEASE OUTBREAK IN SOUTHEAST ASIA**

Aquaculture Department

**Executive Summary**

The most serious problems faced by the aquaculture sector are diseases spread and introduced through movements of hatchery produced stocks, new species for aquaculture, and development and enhancement of the ornamental fish trade. During the 2012 and 2013 meetings of the SEAFDEC Program Committee, member country representatives conveyed concern regarding the outbreaks of EMS/AHPND and other transboundary diseases in the region and recognized the need for concerted regional effort to address this. In response, the SEAFDEC Council, during its meeting in April 2014, suggested that aquatic animal health management, particularly the control and prevention of transboundary aquatic animal diseases, be included in the formulation of future programs of SEAFDEC and its partners in the region. Acknowledging the pressing need for sustained regional efforts to address disease problems in farmed aquatic animals, particularly on shrimps, SEAFDEC/AQD and the Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources of the Philippines, with financial support from the Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund, convened the Regional Technical Consultation on EMS/APHND and other Transboundary Diseases for Improved Aquatic Animal Health in Southeast Asia from 22 to 24 February 2016 in Makati City, Philippines. The Consultation assessed the status of EMS/AHPND and other emerging diseases in farmed shrimps in ASEAN Member States; identified gaps, priority areas for research and development and potential collaborative arrangements; and formulated regional policy recommendations that centered on emergency preparedness and response systems (early warning, detection and response) for an effective management of aquatic animal disease outbreaks in the region.

**An ASEAN Regional Technical Consultation on Aquatic Emergency Preparedness and Response Systems for Effective Management of Transboundary Disease Outbreaks in Southeast Asia** was proposed by SEAFDEC/AQD and the Government of Thailand (AAHRDD, Department of Fisheries) to address the recommendations of the RTC on AHPND and other transboundary diseases. The Consultation will tackle the pressing concern of the ASEAN Member States on how to systematically approach devastating outbreaks of transboundary diseases of aquatic animals in the region following a well-defined Aquatic Emergency Preparedness and Response Systems (EPRS). For the meeting arrangements, SEAFDEC/AQD and AAHRDD, DOF will coordinate with the ASEAN Network of Aquatic Animal Health Centres (ANAAHC), the existing ASEAN body on aquatic animal health which is mainly responsible for coordination of aquatic animal health projects and activities in the region.

**Progress to date:**

Considering the Government of Japan's strong commitment in supporting the initiatives related to enhancing food security and safety within ASEAN Member States, this consultation on aquatic emergency preparedness and response systems for effective management of transboundary disease outbreaks in Southeast Asia is approved for support by the Government of Japan through the Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund (JAIF). It will be held in Centara Grand Central Ladprao, Bangkok, Thailand on 28-30 June 2018. The drafting agenda, timetable and invitations are still in preparation.

**Required Consideration by the Council**

The Council is requested to support the ASEAN RTC on Aquatic Emergency Preparedness and Response Systems for Effective Management of Transboundary Disease Outbreaks in Southeast Asia.

## **Background/Rationale**

Aquaculture production in Southeast Asia has grown rapidly over the last two decades contributing approximately 10% of the annual world aquaculture production. However, unsustainable aquaculture practices including the irresponsible transfer of aquatic species, particularly farmed stocks that could potentially be carrying pathogens, has contributed to the emergence of a number of infectious diseases thereby posing serious threats to the sustainability of aquaculture in the region. One of the infectious diseases that recently impacted the shrimp industry in the region is the acute hepatopancreatic necrosis disease (AHPND) or popularly known as early mortality syndrome (EMS). AHPND outbreaks in cultured penaeids in Viet Nam, Thailand, Malaysia, and Philippines significantly led to low production and concomitant economic losses. The pressing situation on AHPND in cultured shrimp in the region at that time spurred the organization of a consultative meeting, i.e. *ASEAN Regional Technical Consultation (RTC) on EMS/AHPND and Other Transboundary Diseases for Improved Aquatic Animal Health Management in Southeast Asia*, funded by the Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund (JAIF). The RTC assessed the current status of EMS/AHPND and other emerging diseases in farmed shrimps in ASEAN Member States and identified gaps and priority areas for R&D collaboration. Another important output of the consultation is the formulation of *Regional Policy Recommendations*, which among others, focused on *Emergency Preparedness and Response Systems (EPRS)* for managing aquatic animal disease outbreaks in the region. EPRS are comprised of contingency planning arrangements that can minimize the impacts of serious aquatic animal disease outbreaks through containment (prevention of further spread) or eradication of disease outbreak whether at the regional, national, or farm level. Thus, establishing a harmonized aquatic EPRS among ASEAN member states should be a top priority and would certainly warrant a solid platform for an effective and prompt decision-making with clearly defined responsibilities and authority.

The approved **ASEAN Regional Technical Consultation on Aquatic Emergency Preparedness and Response Systems for Effective Management of Transboundary Disease Outbreaks in Southeast Asia** will discuss the status of and/or need for aquatic emergency preparedness and response systems for effective management of transboundary disease outbreaks in Southeast Asia. Issues will be addressed through country reports, technical presentations and a workshop. Assessment of the current status of aquatic EPRS is currently being practiced by the different countries in the Southeast Asian region from the country reports. The workshop will review the existing laws, legislations and standard operating procedures (SOPs), among others, pertinent to aquatic EPRS of each member country, identify gaps, policy recommendations and priority areas for R&D collaboration and, enhance the cooperation among member countries, regional/international organizations and other relevant stakeholders on initiatives that support aquatic EPRS for effective management of aquatic animal disease outbreaks.

The proceedings of the Consultation will be published. For a more efficient information dissemination of the outputs of the Consultation, e-copies of the proceedings as well as reports/updates on developments/advances in aquatic emergency preparedness and response system elements, i.e. early warning, early detection, and early response, will also be uploaded at the SEAFDEC/AQD website.

## **Objectives**

The main objective of the approved **ASEAN Regional Technical Consultation on Aquatic Emergency Preparedness and Response Systems for Effective Management of Transboundary Disease Outbreaks in Southeast Asia** is to bring together representatives of ASEAN Member States as well as technical experts to assess the status of emergency preparedness and response systems (EPRS) related to outbreaks of transboundary diseases currently being practiced in the region in order to identify gaps and other initiatives for regional cooperation. Specifically, the objectives are to:

- (i) Assess the existing laws, legislations, standard operating procedures (SOPs), national aquatic animal health management strategies and other initiatives pertinent to aquatic EPRS being practiced by each ASEAN Member State;
- (ii) Assess the need for a regional aquatic EPRS in the ASEAN;
- (iii) Identify gaps, priority areas for R&D collaboration to address these gaps and formulate policy recommendations; and
- (iv) Enhance cooperation among Member States, regional/international organizations and other relevant stakeholders on initiatives that support aquatic EPRS for effective management of aquatic animal disease outbreaks.

### **Description of Activities**

The Consultation will be comprised of 3 sessions: country reports, technical presentations and a workshop. Session 1 will comprise country presentations on the current status of aquatic EPRS including existing laws, legislations, SOPs, national aquatic animal health management strategies in the ASEAN member states. This session will address Objective 1 of the Consultation.

Session 2 will comprise presentations by invited experts on the status of aquatic EPRS for effective management of aquatic animal disease outbreaks in the ASEAN including emerging diseases, as well as other regional initiatives on EPRS. This session will address Objective 2 of the Consultation.

Session 3 will address Objectives 3 and 4 of the Consultation. Session 3 will comprise a workshop to identify the gaps and priority areas for R&D collaboration as well as formulate recommendations with policy implications. It is also expected that through identification of joint R&D undertakings, participants will have closer cooperation arrangements.

### **Expected Outputs**

Through the Consultation, there will be improved knowledge, awareness and understanding on the current status of aquatic EPRS in Southeast Asia, including developments/advances in early warning, early detection and early response system for effective management of aquatic animal disease outbreaks in the region.

Important outputs from the technical session and the workshop will include a list of research gaps and priority areas for R&D collaboration as well as policy recommendations to promote EPRS for effective prevention and management of transboundary disease outbreaks in the region.

Printed and e-copies of the proceedings of the RTC, as well as reports and updates on the current status of aquatic emergency preparedness and response systems being practiced by ASEAN member states, including the developments/advances in early warning, early detection and early response system will be uploaded/disseminated thru the SEAFDEC website.

It is envisioned that policy recommendations and priority areas for R&D collaboration are disseminated and translated into action plans by the Member States; cooperation arrangements/agreements between and among institutions on identified initiatives (particularly in addressing emergency preparedness and response systems for effective management of aquatic animal disease outbreaks) will be established; there will be stronger cooperation among member countries, regional/international organizations and other relevant stakeholders on initiatives that support emergency preparedness and response systems for effective management of aquatic animal disease outbreaks.