

# **Regional Strategic Framework for Public Health Workforce Development and Systems Strengthening on Epidemiology (2016-2020)**

## **I. Purpose of this Strategic Framework**

- To facilitate human resource development and foster the national strategic plan on workforce development in the countries for regional and global health security
- To provide a general, harmonized framework to be adapted, adopted and used as appropriate in the regional and national context and implementation plans
- To provide a human health focused strategic framework to complement other relevant strategic frameworks
- The aim is developed for adoption, modification, as necessary, by interested regions and/or countries
- Served to support the implementation of the GHSA and relevant and related multi-sectoral platforms and frameworks

## **II. Background**

Concern on the human and economic transnational health threats has been escalating around the world. Rapid disease transmission has been seen through SARS, MERS-CoV, highly pathogenic avian influenza and Ebola in the past decades along with other public health emergencies. The geographical proximity of countries in the region offers higher opportunities for emerging and re-emerging disease outbreak as well.

Public health workforce is the major taskforce to prepare for, mitigate, respond to, and recover from public health threats. Shortage of skillful frontline epidemiologists has been a challenge for most of the countries in the region. Hence, the Global Health Security Agenda (GHSA) was launched on 13 February 2014 to accelerate progress towards a safe world and promote global health security as an international priority while leveraging the International Health Regulations 2005 (IHR) of the World Health Organization (WHO) and Performance of Veterinary Services (PVS) pathway of the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE).

The regional strategic framework for veterinary epidemiology capacity development and networking in ASEAN was developed in 2012 and endorsed by ASEAN Sectoral Working Group on Livestock (ASWGL) in May 2013. It is proposed to harmonize initiatives, activities, and policies of veterinary epidemiology at national levels and to promote sustainable development of institutional and human capacities, development of enabling systems, and sharing of information and expertise among the ASEAN Member States.

Aligning with the regional strategic framework for veterinary epidemiology capacity development and networking in ASEAN, the regional strategic framework for human health workforce development on epidemiology will be proposed among the

ASEAN+3 member countries to facilitate human resource development and foster the national strategic plan on workforce development in the countries for regional and global health security.

The draft regional strategic framework for human health workforce development on epidemiology is developed based on the survey results prior to the GHSA Meeting in Bangkok, Thailand which was conducted on 6-8 May 2015, the regional strategic framework for veterinary epidemiology capacity development and networking in ASEAN, the existing relevant regional frameworks, the 5-year action items in the GHSA Workforce Development Action Package, and the country roadmaps for pursuing and achieving the GHSA targets.

### **III. Vision**

The countries have sufficient and competent workforce development and systems strengthening in epidemiology in order to effectively and sustainably prevent, detect and respond to public health threats in the region.

### **IV. Target**

Public health workforce at all levels support the effective implementation of IHR (2005) through sustainable and functional public health surveillance and response.

The optimal target is one trained field epidemiologist (or equivalent) per 200,000 population, who can systematically cooperate to meet relevant IHR and PVS core competencies.

### **V. Desired Impact**

Prevention, detection, and response activities conducted effectively and sustainably by a fully competent, coordinated, evaluated and occupationally diverse multi-sectoral epidemiology workforce.

### **VI. Strategic Approach and Objectives**

#### **Strategy 1: Strengthen sustainable public health institutions, structures and systems to support functions of epidemiology**

Objective 1: To foster sharing of the existing regional and national strategies and plans on human resource capacity building

Objective 2: To provide assistance in developing the national plans on workforce development

Objective 3: To support in organizational development and institutional strengthening to address the epidemiological workforce needs

Objective 4: To integrate applied or field epidemiology training programs into appropriate detection and response activities

**Strategy 2: Expand the regional and national networks to promote collaboration and maximize efficient and sustainable uses of available resources**

Objective 1: To strengthen national and regional mechanisms to coordinate epidemiological policies and activities

Objective 2: To ensure sharing of epidemiological expertise, training materials and best practices at regional and global levels

Objective 3: To promote international partnership by conducting joint investigation, training and studies

Objective 4: To ensure availability and efficient use of resources at all levels

**Strategy 3: Expedite building field epidemiology capacity under Public v/s Human One Health approach**

Objective 1: To assist in development of new training programs

Objective 2: To aid in advancing the existing training programs according to country needs to be rigorous and sustainable

Objective 3: To incorporate diverse health professionals in the existing training programs to fulfill core competencies for public v/s human, One Health workforce

Objective 4: To support in expansion of basic and intermediate-level training to local levels in the country for timely and effective public health interventions

Objective 5: To standardize the training programs in the region

**Strategy 4: Enhance and promote in utilizing public health information for evidence-based decision making and resource mobilization at regional and national levels**

Objective 1: To promote publication and utilization of scientific epidemiological work

Objective 2: To foster engagement of scientifically-sound and practical epidemiology in decision-making processes

Objective 3: To advocate proper recognition of epidemiology to improve delivery of public health programs and their sustainability

**VII. Cross-cutting Strategy**

The successful commission of the framework requires multi-agency and multi-sectoral coordination and collaboration, including epidemiology, veterinary, laboratory and risk communication. Multi-sectoral collaboration is expected to be further supported by the growing acceptance of One Health approach, which allows for increased opportunities for interdisciplinary integration. Potential multi-sectoral collaborative activities include development and implementation of surveillance and response protocols; sharing of information and training resources; exchange of epidemiological expertise; and collaborative research and development. Through this

collaboration, benefit from activities related to the veterinary epidemiology development and networking can be shared among the One Health partners in a technically and financially efficient manner.

In the context of public health security, coordination across GHSA Action Packages is essential at the country level.

## **VIII. Implementation Arrangements**

Initial stewardship of this framework will fall to the GHSA mechanism, in particular the Workforce Action Package country teams.

## **IX. Monitoring and Evaluation**

- Monitoring tools
- Evaluation
- Quality and quantity of impact (indicators and timeframe for this framework in addition to IHR and JEE tools)