



AHA Centre Review Final Report

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Executive Summary

Context

The ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance in disaster management (AHA Centre) is an intergovernmental organisation established in 2011 by the ten ASEAN Member States (AMS) with the aim to facilitate cooperation and coordination of disaster management amongst AMS. New Zealand (NZ) is a founding partner of the AHA Centre and has a history of partnering with the Centre on organisational capacity building. Since 2017, the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) has invested approximately NZ\$5.2 million in two initiatives due to close in 2025.

MFAT wishes to identify how New Zealand should partner with the AHA Centre over the next 5-10 years. This includes an examination of whether and how New Zealand's future cooperation with the AHA Centre can support ASEAN's ambitions under the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER), aligns with the New Zealand Government's foreign policy reset ambitions for Southeast Asia, and complements the intended elevation of the ASEAN-NZ relationship to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP) as well as delivering effective development outcomes. MFAT would also like to explore if, in the future, it could deliver humanitarian assistance in the region through the AHA Centre.

Effectiveness of the current modality/delivery model

New Zealand's support to the AHA Centre has clearly contributed to building disaster management capacity in the ASEAN region and improving cooperation and coordination among AMS for disaster management and emergency response. New Zealand's input to the AHA Centre Executive (ACE) programme and its successor, the AHA Centre Executive: Leadership in Emergency and Disaster Management for ASEAN Programme (ACE-LEDMP) is highly appreciated. The two-week residential course on critical incident leadership delivered pre-COVID contributed strongly to New Zealand's knowledge, expertise and experience being recognised and valued across the region.

However, this last phase of New Zealand's support to the AHA Centre has not achieved stronger connections and engagement between New Zealand and ASEAN disaster management leaders. This was exacerbated by ending of opportunities for ACE programme participants to undertake study visits to New Zealand which resulted in less visibility for New Zealand's disaster management capacity and reduced the linkages and relationships between ASEAN disaster management officials on the ACE programme and their New Zealand counterparts.

New Zealand's support to Strengthening the Institutional Capacity (SICAP) of the AHA Centre for ASEAN Disaster Capacity Building Programmes has achieved good results to date. The activity is expected to deliver short and medium term results and contribute positively to achieving the long term result of increased disaster management capacity in the AHA Centre and AMS.

Key learnings to increase positive impact in the future

The AHA Centre plays an important and coherent role in disaster management in the ASEAN region, particularly its efforts in disaster monitoring, and preparedness and response. Improving coherence across the Centre's capacity building efforts would strengthen the Centre's overall impact.

It is seen as arguably the best of the ASEAN Centres, with all AMS playing an active part in determining the Centre's operating framework, participating in and benefiting from its work. This is aided by the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) being a legally binding agreement. The Centre receives good support from its partners. It has been successful in building disaster management capacities internally and with AMS NDMOs, and the capacity building programmes it offers are considered to be effective, primarily because of their work-integrated learning approach. However, the training programmes' collective impact is difficult to measure due to lack of coherence between them, and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms that support an overall theory of change. The AHA Centre could improve effectiveness in this area by: developing an overall Theory of Change and a system enabling it to monitor, evaluate, learn from and report on its work; advancing localisation of disaster management in the ASEAN region to encourage a whole-of-society approach; promoting a cross-sectoral approach to disaster management in the ASEAN region; and operationalising the ASEAN Regional Framework for Protection, Gender and Inclusion (PGI) in Disaster Management.

The AHA Centre engages with its supporters, including New Zealand, on a project-by-project basis rather than a portfolio of activities contributing to core functions or its overall programme of work. This approach creates higher transaction costs for both parties. These could be addressed by taking a programme-based approach, focused on delivering outcomes in AADMER's current and future work programmes, enabling the Centre to adapt existing activities and add new initiatives as required. Reinstating opportunities for donor coordination meetings would also offer benefits for the Centre's work.

The AHA Centre can be considered to be sustainable. However, it could further enhance its support to AMS NDMOs and leadership of disaster management in the region and globally, including by exploring use of advanced science and information and communication technology in disaster management, adopting artificial intelligence and blockchain technologies and developing its ability to coordinate One ASEAN, One Response outside the region.

Opportunities for developing a more strategic engagement with the AHA Centre

The landscape of the AHA Centre's engagement with development partners is busy, reflecting the fact that disaster management is both needed and non-controversial. Japan is the Centre's major donor, with New Zealand as one of fifteen other supporters.

Given New Zealand's long track record of support to capacity building, it makes sense to fund a second phase of SICAP to: further enhance the e-Learning Management System; update knowledge management guidelines and standard operating procedures; and develop a monitoring, evaluation and learning system, a comprehensive learning intervention design and a capacity building strategy. New Zealand could continue to support delivery of ACE-LEDMP and help develop its monitoring, evaluation and learning. There are also opportunities to help the AHA Centre with its ambition to be a global leader

in disaster management and to sponsor region-wide events. This might be achieved through a partnership arrangement delivering a programme-based approach.

[A whole of government/NZ Inc approach to partnering with the AHA Centre](#)

AHA Centre initiatives align with New Zealand's strategies and policies, and New Zealand expertise. New Zealand's experience in disaster management and emergency response is valued by ASEAN, the AHA Centre and ASEAN NDMOs. Re-instituting a New Zealand field visit would contribute to the ASEAN-New Zealand relationship and to New Zealand being better connected and engaged with ASEAN disaster management leaders.

A range of options exist for New Zealand agency engagement with the AHA Centre, NDMOs and counterparts in the ASEAN region, including embedding technical support within the AHA Centre, mentoring AHA Centre leadership and supporting AMS NDMOs to achieve international certification in disaster management.

[The viability and steps required to use the AHA Centre for emergency response](#)

The AHA Centre's role in emergencies is to coordinate an ASEAN response when invited by the affected AMS. A disaster needs to be significant for the AHA Centre to be invited to do so. The Centre's two primary response mechanisms are delivery of non-food items through the Disaster Emergency Logistics System for ASEAN (DELSA) and deployment of ASEAN Emergency Response Assessment Teams (ASEAN-ERAT).

New Zealand might consider working with the AHA Centre when it engages in multi-country, transboundary, complex and compound disasters in the ASEAN region, using the Centre as its delivery partner and/or as a complement to other delivery channels. New Zealand might consider replenishing DELSA non-food items and, consider additional resourcing of ASEAN-ERAT should there be a number of emergencies requiring participation of ASEAN-ERAT in any one year.

[Recommendations to MFAT](#)

- Recommendation 1: Explore entering into a partnership arrangement with the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (the AHA Centre) enabling New Zealand to support a programme-based approach to disaster management in the ASEAN region.
- Recommendation 2: Support a second phase of Strengthening the Institutional Capacity of the AHA Centre for ASEAN Disaster Capacity Building Programme (SICAP) focused on further enhancing the AHA Centre's e-learning management system, updating its knowledge management guidelines and standard operating procedures and developing a monitoring, evaluation and learning system.
- Recommendation 3: Support ongoing delivery of AHA Centre Executive Leadership in Emergency and Disaster Management Programme (ACE-LEDMP), enhancing monitoring, evaluation and learning, and exploring the possibility of New Zealand experts delivering additional modules.

- Recommendation 4: Show-case New Zealand's knowledge, experience and expertise in disaster management and build engagement with Disaster Risk Management (DRM) professionals in the ASEAN region by reintroducing a study visit to New Zealand and/or providing short-term training in disaster management under the *Manaaki New Zealand Scholarships* programme.
- Recommendation 5: Partner with the AHA Centre when it engages in multi-country, transboundary, complex and compound disasters in the ASEAN region, offering to replenish Disaster Emergency Logistics System for ASEAN (DELSA) non-food items when required and provide additional resourcing for ASEAN Emergency Response Assessment Team (ASEAN-ERAT) should there be a number of emergencies requiring participation of ASEAN-ERAT in any one year.
- Recommendation 6: Support ASEAN to become a global leader in disaster management, offering technical support to the AHA Centre and National Disaster Management Organisations (NDMOs) in areas such as coordination beyond the ASEAN region, achieving international certification and sharing experience between the Pacific and ASEAN.

Recommendations to the AHA Centre

While the review aims to identify ways in which New Zealand might partner with the AHA Centre over the next 5-10 years, it has also identified a number of ways in which the AHA Centre might be more effective, efficient and sustainable.

- Recommendation 1: Develop an overall Theory of Change, articulating how the short, medium and long term outcomes of the AHA Centre's work will enable it to achieve the impact the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) strives for in the ASEAN region.
- Recommendation 2: Develop a system that enables the AHA Centre to monitor, evaluate, learn from and report on its work.
- Recommendation 3: Continue to advance localisation of disaster management in the ASEAN region to encourage a whole-of-society approach.
- Recommendation 4: Promote a cross-sectoral approach to disaster management in the ASEAN region in close cooperation with the ASEAN Secretariat.
- Recommendation 5: Operationalise the ASEAN Regional Framework for Protection, Gender and Inclusion (PGI) in Disaster Management through integrating PGI across the AHA Centre's work and encouraging ASEAN Member States National Disaster Management Organisations (AMS NDMOs) to do likewise.
- Recommendation 6: Consider a programme-based approach with New Zealand focused on delivering outcomes in AADMER's current and future work programmes.

Recommendation 7: Reintroduce donor coordination meetings.

Recommendation 8: Explore ways of providing support to AMS NDMOs and leadership of disaster management in the region and globally through use of advanced science and information and communication technology in disaster management, adopting artificial intelligence and blockchain technologies and developing the Centre's ability to coordinate One ASEAN, One Response outside the region.

1. Introduction

1.1. Background and context

The ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance in disaster management (AHA Centre) is an intergovernmental organisation established in 2011 by the ten ASEAN Member States (AMS) with the aim to facilitate cooperation and coordination of disaster management amongst AMS. New Zealand (NZ) is a founding partner of the AHA Centre and has a history of partnering with the Centre on organisational capacity building.

Since 2017, the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) has invested approximately NZ\$5.2 million in two initiatives which are due to close in 2025:

- Strengthening the Institutional Capacity (SICAP) of the AHA Centre for ASEAN Disaster Capacity Building Programmes, NZ\$3 million; and
- AHA Centre Executive - Leadership in Emergency and Disaster Management Programme (ACE LEDMP), NZ\$2.2 million.

Through this review, MFAT wishes to identify how New Zealand should partner with the AHA Centre over the next 5-10 years. This includes an examination of whether and how New Zealand's future cooperation with the AHA Centre can support ASEAN's ambitions under the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER), aligns with the New Zealand Government's foreign policy reset ambitions for Southeast Asia, and complements the intended elevation of the ASEAN-New Zealand relationship to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP), as well as delivering effective development outcomes. MFAT would also like to explore if in the future it could deliver humanitarian assistance in the region through the AHA Centre mechanisms.

1.2. Review purpose

The purpose of this review is to:

- Inform decision-making aimed at developing future strategic engagement with the AHA Centre, including NZ's ASEAN Regional International Development Cooperation (IDC) and global Humanitarian Aid Programmes,
- inform a Business Case for a new IDC initiative,
- contribute to the broader evidence base by informing future policy and practice within New Zealand's ASEAN Regional IDC and global Humanitarian Aid programmes.

The main audiences for this review are MFAT's Global Development and Scholarships (GDS) division, Partnerships, Humanitarian and Multilateral (PHM) division and Asia Regional Division (ARD).

1.3. Review objectives and questions

The objectives of the review are:

- To review the effectiveness of the current modality/delivery model;
- To identify the key learnings to increase positive impact in the future;
- To identify opportunities for developing a more strategic engagement framework with the AHA Centre that provides New Zealand with increased relevance and profile;

- To frame MFAT's engagement within a whole of government/NZ Inc approach towards partnering with the AHA Centre;
- To assess the viability and steps required to use the AHA Centre as a mechanism for New Zealand's emergency response in ASEAN region.

The key review questions are:

1. To what extent has New Zealand's support to AHA Centre initiatives to date been effective in delivering agreed objectives?
2. What are the key lessons learned in terms of coherence, effectiveness, efficiency and/or sustainability of the AHA Centre?
3. What is the AHA Centre's development partner landscape and how can New Zealand engage more strategically?
4. To what extent do the AHA Centre's initiatives align with New Zealand's strategies and policies, the ASEAN-New Zealand Plan of Action, and NZ Inc expertise in disaster management and emergency response?
5. To what extent does the AHA Centre offer a viable delivery model for New Zealand's emergency response in the ASEAN region?

1.4. Review design

The Review was conducted in two phases. Phase 1 (planning) commenced on Friday 22 November and ended on 3 December with the submission, appraisal and approval of the Review Plan. During the planning phase, the reviewer:

- Reviewed selected documentation to understand the current modality/delivery model used by MFAT in its engagement with the AHA Centre and to identify key learnings related to the current approach and opportunities for future impact.
- Engaged with MFAT staff in Wellington and at Jakarta Post to:
 - Understand the background to the Review and what they want it to achieve
 - Gain their inputs into the Review Plan, including the objectives, scope, design (including key questions to address), stakeholders and schedule, and
 - Discuss issues that will improve the utility of the Review to MFAT.

Phase 2 (implementation) involved gathering information from both primary and secondary sources (Annex B). Primary sources focused on qualitative information gained from key informant interviews undertaken in Wellington (3-6 December 2024) and Jakarta (9-13 December 2024) as well as additional online meetings on 17 and 18 December 2024 and 7 January 2025. The key secondary sources were MFAT, the AHA Centre and other partner documents, supplemented by documents from key informants and those that are publicly available. These enabled:

- An analysis of MFAT's engagement with the AHA Centre including the current modality and delivery model, and identification of key learnings to increase positive impact in the future
- An analysis of whether and how New Zealand might expand its partnership with the AHA Centre in future, including through a whole-of-government, NZ Inc approach, achieving increased

profile and engagement and supporting the New Zealand Government's foreign policy reset ambitions in Southeast Asia

- An analysis of whether and how MFAT might use the AHA Centre as a mechanism for New Zealand's emergency response in the ASEAN region.

2. The extent to which New Zealand's support to AHA Centre initiatives to date has been effective in delivering agreed objectives

2.1. AHA Centre Executive programme

The AHA Centre Executive (ACE) programme was established in 2014 with the aim of educating and connecting future ASEAN leaders in disaster management so they had the capability required to manage and lead disaster management and response activities in the ASEAN region. It trained 118 graduates in six annual batches from 2014 to 2019 and, following COVID-19, a seventh in 2021.

The programme was designed to deliver three goals:

- To produce ASEAN's future leaders with a mastery of disaster management tools and regional coordination mechanisms
- To strengthen solidarity and connectivity among ASEAN's disaster management professionals
- To provide a safe and engaging learning environment to foster a shared sense of regionalism and cooperation.

It emphasised building four ACE professional qualities:

- ACE graduates are sought as experts in humanitarian assistance, both nationally and in the wider ASEAN region;
- ACE graduates are committed to supporting ASEAN's coordination mechanisms and put the One ASEAN One Response vision into action;
- ACE graduates are results oriented;
- ACE graduates are effective leaders.

Core funding for the ACE six-month residential training and capacity building programme was provided by the Japan ASEAN Integration Fund (JAIF). Australia, New Zealand, the United States, United Nations (UN) agencies and International non-governmental organisations (NGO) supported different programme components.

2.1.1. New Zealand's support to the ACE Programme

New Zealand supported the University of Canterbury to deliver a Critical Incident Leadership (CIL) course to ACE programme participants in Jakarta (2014-2016). From 2017-2019 the University of Canterbury, in partnership with GNS Science, delivered an annual three-day Introduction to Hazards and CIL Concepts course in Jakarta. It also led and facilitated a two-week CIL residential course in New Zealand, drawing on inputs from academic, public, private sector and non-governmental organisations including Massey University, GNS Science and the Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Management (MCDEM). This support to the ACE programme was extended by a further year (2020).

2.1.2. Impact evaluation of the ACE Programme

An Impact Evaluation of the first six batches of the ACE Programme was commissioned in 2020 (Narayanan et al, 2021). The report's findings covered relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and impact, and also traversed synergy across AHA Centre capacity building programmes.

The ACE programme was considered relevant, contributing directly and indirectly to the seven programme objectives of the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) Work Programme, and the One ASEAN One Response (OAOR) aspiration.

Findings on effectiveness were mixed. Recruitment and selection of participants and pre-departure information for participants strengthened over time. Motivation and expectations increased over the six batches. The programme was very rigorous but at the same time highly comprehensive and relevant to graduates' roles, in particular those assigned in disaster management offices. The training design met the specific learning objectives related to participants' current and/or future needs. While training materials were of high quality and sequencing of modules was directly relevant to learning outcomes, graduates' ability to extend and cascade their learning was impacted by not being able to access materials after the programme ended. ACE programme delivery partners were unclear how their modules integrated into the overall curriculum. While assessment rubrics existed, they were not used effectively. An ACE programme monitoring and evaluation framework exists and is evolving and adapting to the needs and learning of participants. However, it is not contributing to an overall theory of change for the AHA Centre.

In relation to efficiency, the ACE programme was found to be well managed and implemented by the ACE programme team. Programme delivery partners considered that coordination with the AHA Centre team was smooth, clear and easy but felt that a greater level of technical knowledge, subject matter expertise and strategic knowledge amongst team members would assist in engaging delivery partners in higher level discussion of content and application of learning. In addition, delivery partners lack the "big picture" and coordination amongst them was a very recent occurrence.

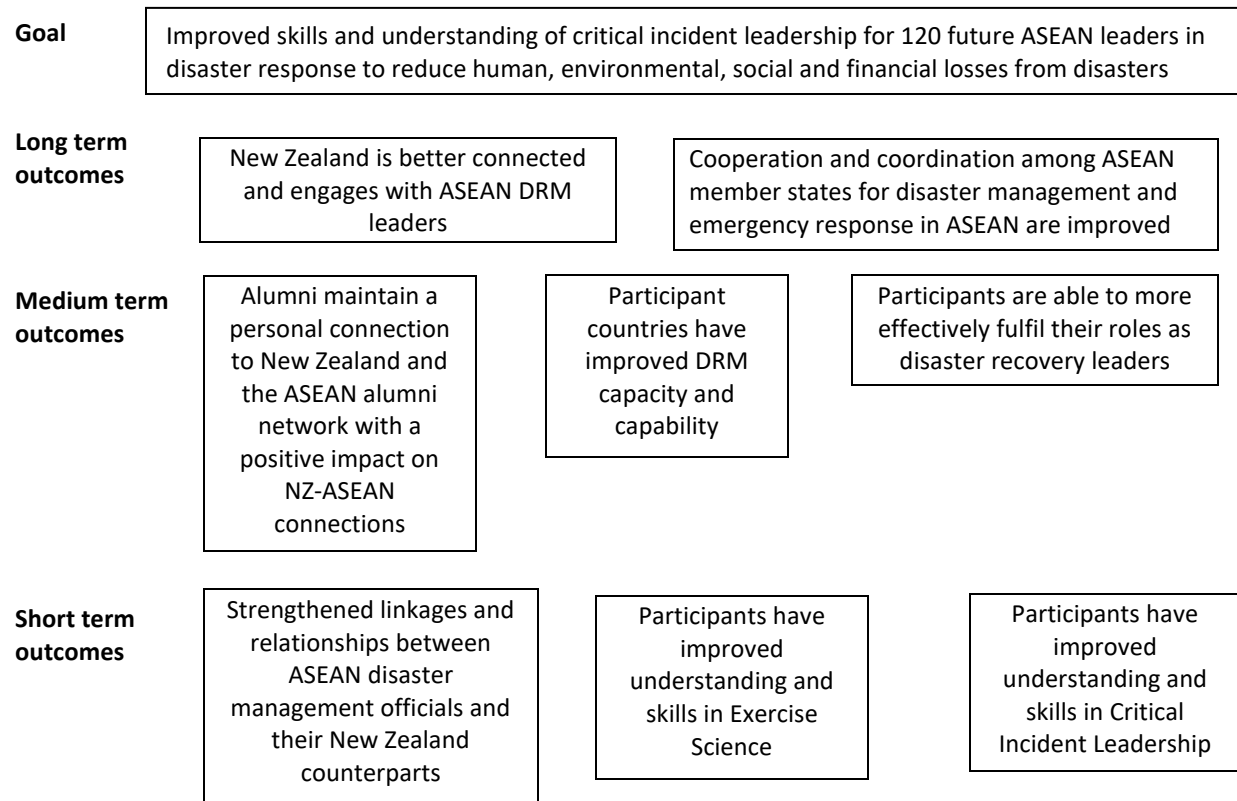
All graduates and partners felt that participation in the ACE programme resulted in an increase in participants' knowledge and skill levels and an attitudinal shift. Participants' professional and personal confidence increased, and they continued to build their expertise in their own countries. The majority (82%) of graduates have used learning and technical skills as disaster management experts – e.g. logistics and geographic information system (GIS). Since completing the ACE programme 61% of graduates had been promoted to a higher position or had a wider job scope. Half of graduates interviewed were pursuing higher-level academic qualifications – e.g. master's degrees and PhD. Connection and communications had increased between the AHA Centre and National Disaster Management Organisations (NDMO), and NDMOs and programme delivery partners at country level. NDMOs consider ACE programme alumni to be the 'cream of the crop' and the 'go to person' in disaster management. Positive impact was demonstrated across three result areas – applying humanitarian standard and principles; building collaboration; managing and communicating results – but graduates found it difficult to express where they have applied the qualities of a leader in disaster management.

An analysis of synergy across the AHA Centre's capacity building courses¹ found a clear interaction across these programmes. On the positive side, delivering courses in a similar manner was found to be effective and impactful, the cross-cutting themes were complementary and the way courses are constructed provided participants with a good learning pathway. However, the analysis found that training programmes are delivered in silos and recommended that to improve effectiveness, efficiency and impact, staff associated with each needed to have a good understanding of how the programmes connect with each other. A logic intervention model was proposed in order to more clearly demonstrate synergy across these programmes (Annex C).

2.1.3. Effectiveness of the ACE Programme in delivering agreed objectives

The results New Zealand hoped to achieve from its support for the ACE Programme (2017-2020) are outlined in the following logic diagram:

FIGURE 1: LOGIC DIAGRAM – ACE PROGRAMME (2017-2020)



Source: MFAT, 2019a

¹ The AHA Centre capacity building programmes analysed were ACE, Disaster Emergency Logistics System for ASEAN (DELSA), ASEAN Emergency Response Assessment Team (ASEAN-ERAT) and ASEAN Standards and Certification for Experts in Disaster Management (ASCEND).

The findings of the Impact Evaluation of the first six batches of the ACE Programme (Narayanan et al, 2021) and GNS Science's closing report following delivery of the seventh batch (Kelly S., 2024) indicate that the overall goal of the activity has been achieved. The skills and understanding of critical incident leadership for future ASEAN disaster response is likely to lead to reduced losses from disasters.

Outcomes related to graduates' improved understanding and skills, improved disaster risk management (DRM) capacity and capability, and ability to more effectively fulfil roles as disaster recovery leaders have been achieved.

Staff of Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Bencana (BNPB), the National Disaster Management Authority of Indonesia, spoken to for this review confirm that relationships formed during the ACE programme have been maintained and are utilised when NDMOs are called upon to respond to disasters in their own country and in the ASEAN region. This indicates that the outcomes related to establishment of linkages and relationships amongst ASEAN disaster management officials leading to improved cooperation and coordination among ASEAN member states for disaster management and emergency response in ASEAN have also been achieved.

It is more difficult to assess the extent to which support for the ACE Programme has strengthened linkages and relationships between ASEAN disaster management officials and their New Zealand counterparts, and to gauge improvements in New Zealand's connections and engagement with ASEAN DRM leaders. BNPB staff who participated in the New Zealand residential CIL course have fond memories of New Zealand. This personal connection is not dissimilar to that established as a result of participation in other forms of short term training in New Zealand such as the English Language Training for Officials (ELTO) programme.²

DRM officials spoken to clearly value New Zealand's knowledge, expertise and experience in disaster management. However, the nature of New Zealand's support to the ACE Programme – commissioning the University of Canterbury in partnership with GNS Science to deliver the Introduction to Hazards and CIL Concepts course in Jakarta and a two-week CIL residential course in Auckland – does not result in strong linkages between ASEAN disaster management officials and their New Zealand counterparts. While staff of MCDem, now the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), contributed inputs to the CIL residential course, given that programme participants are relatively junior staff, the linkages formed as a result of this would be at the working level and informal at best. Such linkages may contribute to New Zealand being better connected and engaged with ASEAN DRM leaders over time as graduates take on greater responsibility. However, achieving the desired long term outcome requires ongoing relationships between ASEAN member state NDMOs and the AHA Centre and staff of New Zealand agencies involved in emergency response – e.g. MFAT's humanitarian team, NEMA, Fire and Emergency New Zealand, New Zealand Police, the New Zealand Medical Assistance Team and Pasifika Medical Association.

² One of the BNPB staff interviewed had participated in ELTO prior to taking part in the first batch of ACE-LEDMP and as a result was familiar with the way emergency drills are used to train children in New Zealand to respond in the event of a tsunami.

2.1.4. New Zealand support to ACE-LEDMP

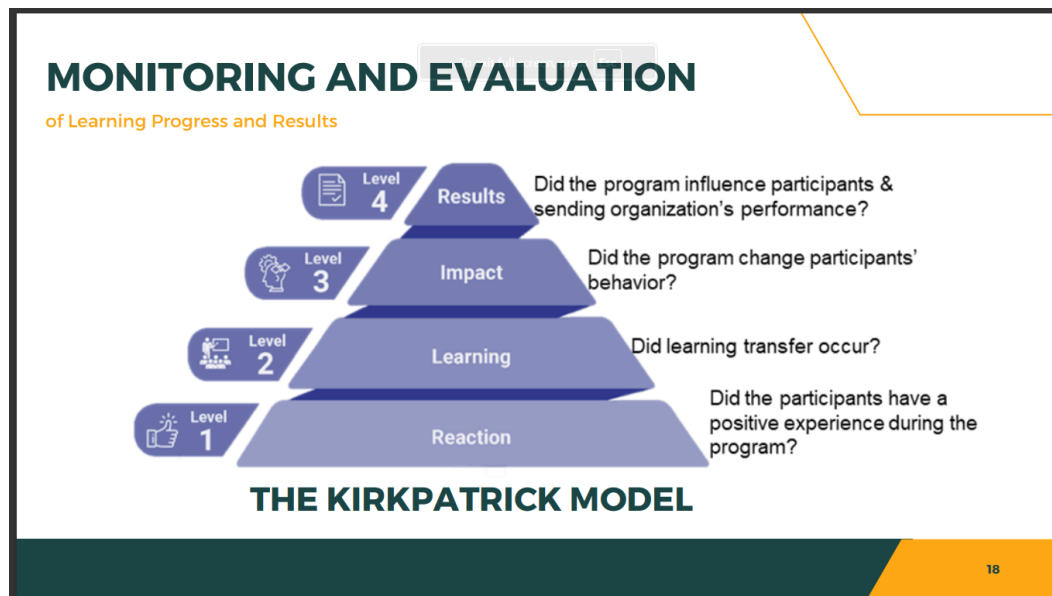
The AHA Centre Executive: Leadership in Emergency and Disaster Management for ASEAN Programme (ACE-LEDMP) commenced in 2023 following a re-design of the ACE programme. It targets two levels – the Executive level (NDMO staff with three to five years of work experience) and the Middle level (middle level managers in NDMOs with more than five years of work experience) – and aims to have 80 graduates from four batches (two at each level) by August 2025. ACE-LEDMP intends that graduates of the Executive level become informed professionals able to be independent leaders within their NDMO and in ASEAN. Middle level graduates will become independent achievers, ready to collaboratively ensure a resilient ASEAN and showcase ASEAN’s global leadership in disaster management. Resources permitting, graduates of a third Senior level will become interdependent collaborators.

ACE-LEDMP’s competency framework targets the four ACE professional qualities:

- Quality 1: Humanitarian & disaster management expert
- Quality 2: Collaboration builder
- Quality 3: Result-oriented
- Quality 4: Effective and transformational leader.

The Executive level develops the following competencies: strategic thinking; leading change; dealing with crisis in disaster management (DM) and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR); inclusion and working together. The Middle level further develops competencies in strategic thinking and dealing with crisis in DM and HADR, and develops competencies in leading change and leading across boundaries. This is aligned with the competency standards developed under the ASEAN Standards and Certification for Experts in Disaster Management (ASCEND) and other existing ASEAN capacity building programmes.

FIGURE 2: THE KIRKPATRICK MODEL



Source: AHA Centre, 2024d

ACE-LEDMP monitors and evaluates learning progress and results using the Kirkpatrick Model (Figure 2). Monitoring draws on reports from facilitators and supervisors, pre- and post-training tests, training reports, mini surveys of participants and a planned project evaluation.

Core funding for ACE-LEDMP continues to be provided by JAIF and DRM study visits are conducted to Japan as part of both levels. Modules are delivered by a range of partners. Grant funding from New Zealand enabled GNS Science to deliver the Critical Understanding of Systemic Risks, Incident, and Climate Nexus course for the first and second Executive level batches in 2023 and 2024.³ Enhancement of the AHA Centre's Learning Management System (LMS), funded through separate support from New Zealand for the SICAP project ([Strengthening the Institutional Capacity \(SICAP\) of the AHA Centre](#)), enabled a number of ACE-LEDMP modules to be delivered online. New Zealand also funded RedR Australia to deliver a Strategic Project Management course to the first Middle level batch in 2024. Further support has been requested for each course and was under consideration at time of writing.

New Zealand's direct involvement in ACE-LEDMP, delivered in two parts, comprises a small part of the overall programme. Part 1 covers two modules delivered through a facilitated on-line course in sessions of one hour, one hour fifteen minutes and one hour ten minutes; these are offered after the participants' working day has ended. Part 2 involves three days of in-person, action-based training. GNS Science's two course delivery reports (Kelly S, 2024; Lassa J, 2024) shed some light on how ACE-LEDMP is organised and implemented, and the extent to which it is delivering capacity.

Reflecting on delivery of modules to the first batch in August-November 2024, Kelly (2024) notes that the new ACE-LEDMP programme, which had been designed by Kobe University in Japan, was confirmed some ten weeks prior to the programme commencing and twelve weeks prior to delivery of the first module. There was limited consultation with GNS Science and a reduction in course duration, which did not allow sufficient time for participants to complete material and compromised both delivery of the material and achievement of learning outcomes. More time was needed to properly prepare.

Following delivery to the subsequent ACE-LEDMP batch, Lassa (2024) notes that it is challenging to deliver Part 1 online and after working hours. Participant feedback indicates a preference for a more participatory approach beyond instruction-based training delivered through lectures. External evaluation of the face-to-face training found that participants were able to apply content in their context, experienced a high level of engagement (90%) and felt the facilitator showed deep subject matter knowledge and a high level of real-world experience. Almost half (44.5%) considered the course well-paced and believed they understood the content with 38.9% believing they have a basic familiarity with the concepts taught in the course. Nevertheless, only 20% believed they could be successful in using or applying what they learned in the programme, the remainder believing that they still needed more guidance and experience in applying the content. Of participants, 20% did not have an adequate

³ The title of the course prior to 2024 was *Introduction to Natural Hazards*. In 2024 the course was re-named *Critical Understanding on Systemic Risk, Incident and Climate-Nexus*.

level of English for the course material; this was observed during group work from three countries (4 of 20 participants).

While it is too early to judge the effectiveness of ACE-LEDMP, improvements can certainly be made to ensure efficient planning, commissioning and delivery of the programme – its individual batches and the course modules that are delivered to each. This in turn should contribute to better learning outcomes.

Those consulted during this Review agree that New Zealand's support has been effective in building disaster management capacity within the ASEAN region. Training is highly appreciated by participants who value the technical skills gained and highlight the soft skills they have developed – communication, confidence, leadership – and the relationships they have built with staff of other NDMOs. As a long-term benefit of investing in capacity building, a new generation of skilled disaster management experts are participating in ASEAN bodies such as ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management (ACDM) Working Groups.

2.2. AHA Centre capacity building

2.2.1. Effectiveness of AHA Centre capacity building

An impact study of ASEAN disaster management capacity building programmes (AHA Centre 2024a), undertaken by SICAP, found that training programmes are relevant and effective, addressing specific knowledge and skills gaps. However, training programmes could be more consistent and coherent, building upon each other and contributing to a higher-level outcome. Furthermore, learning from capacity building programmes is not being captured, stored and shared to enhance the existing training and to support the ACDM Working Group's global leadership objective.

The practical and experiential work-integrated learning approach employed in these programmes responds to participants' preferred training method, enabling them to engage in the activity directly. However, it is uncertain how the knowledge participants gain can be systematically transferred to other NDMO staff or influence policy enhancements. Training programmes designed to make participants understand or remember are considered successful. Those targeting application, interpretation or creation of knowledge or skills are not yet considered a resounding success due to the absence of a well-designed theory of change. The suitability of participants is a recurring issue. If staff are chosen to participate in international conferences or training programmes because of the opportunity to travel abroad, this can be a source of demotivation within organisations.

The study was not able to measure impact due to the absence of a proper theory of change underpinning the design of the training and a lack of effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. It suggests that future evaluations should verify how organisations' human resources value the training obtained from the AHA Centre/ASEAN in order to understand the impact of training at the individual level. In addition, while programmes such as ACE are acknowledged for their relevance and effectiveness, their influence on women's leadership remains insufficiently documented. This underscores the need for a more inclusive and gender-oriented approach to data collection and analysis with training initiatives.

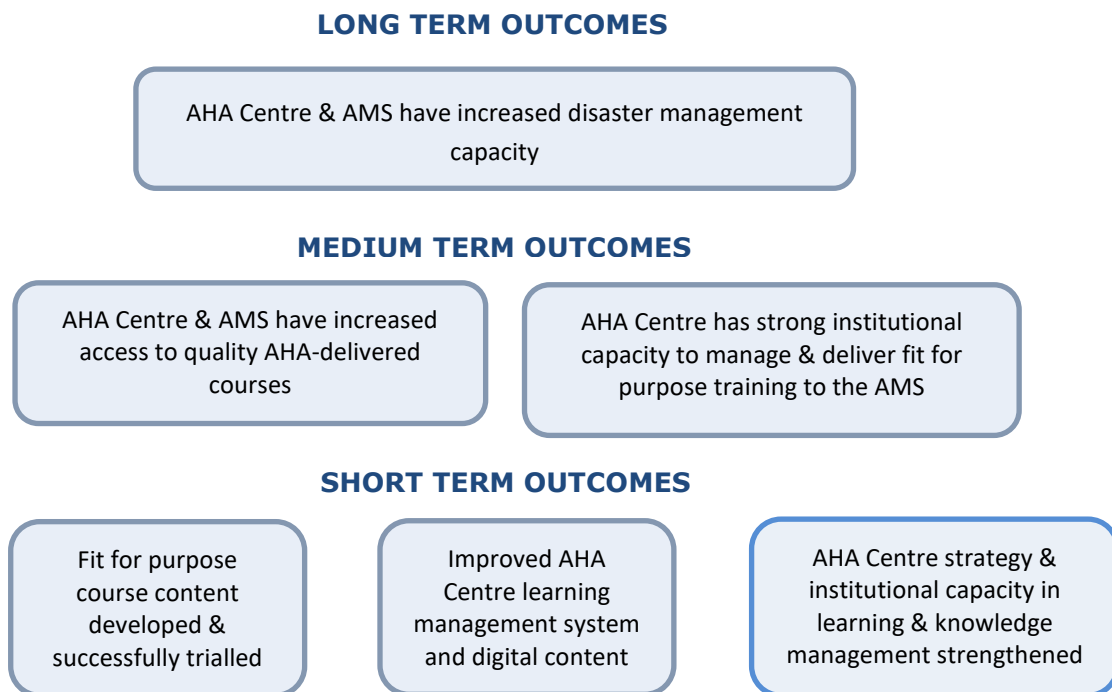
2.3. Strengthening the Institutional Capacity (SICAP) of the AHA Centre

2.3.1. New Zealand support to SICAP

In 2017 the AHA Centre identified a gap in its Work Plan 2016-2020 and approached New Zealand to support the development of an accredited disaster management e-learning system, targeting disaster management professionals within the AHA Centre and in AMS' NDMOs.

FIGURE 3: LOGIC DIAGRAM – SICAP PROGRAMME

GOAL: Increased resilience of AHA Centre and ASEAN Member States in responding to and recovering from disasters



Source: MFAT, 2021b

Following an unsuccessful attempt to design a learning management system (LMS), a needs assessment commissioned by MFAT in 2019 identified the need to update the AHA Centre's capacity building strategy and address the key gap, being content readiness. Initially conceived as AHA Centre Disaster Management E-learning System Development, this activity is now known as Strengthening the Institutional Capacity (SICAP) of the AHA Centre (MFAT, 2021b). The results New Zealand hopes to achieve from SICAP are outlined in Figure 3.

The AHA Centre commissioned a review of its e-learning platforms and content and has contracted a Malaysia-based IT company, *Pukunui*, to enhance the LMS. The Centre also commissioned work on the *ASEAN Capacity Building Roadmap 2025-2030 on Disaster Management* (AHA Centre, 2024c). An impact study of ASEAN disaster management capacity building programmes (AHA Centre, 2024a) was conducted to validate the key initiatives in the roadmap and ensure its viability. The roadmap aims to

guide the NDMOs of the ten AMS, the ASEAN Secretariat (ASEC) and the AHA Centre in developing more coherent, relevant and effective capacity building programmes based around four strategic pillars:

- Pillar 1 – Enhanced coordination of capacity building. The roadmap envisages establishing a sustainable Disaster Management Training Institute network serviced by the AHA Centre as its secretariat, setting up a regional capacity building coordination hub in the AHA Centre and extending capacity building to key stakeholders beyond NDMOs. It also envisages that the Centre’s e-learning management system hosts a database of training and resources.
- Pillar 2 – Enhanced access to knowledge and information. This envisages the AHA Centre e-LMS being optimised to host a database of information available on capacity building initiatives, programmes and resources to foster collaboration and exchange of best practices., providing information in the languages of the region.
- Pillar 3 – Enhanced professionalism through standardisation and certification. This envisages having a higher number of highly skilled disaster management professionals, recognised through a certification programme within and beyond the ASEAN region.
- Pillar 4 – Enhanced individual and organisation impact of capacity building. This envisages planning and systematising continuous evaluation. It also envisages learner-centred interventions that meet organisations’ needs, improve staff performance and contribute to the overall success of each organisation.

An AHA Centre Capacity Assessment identified critical areas for improvement – in leadership and people management, project management, communication and technical competencies related to disaster operations and ASEAN protocols. Training was subsequently provided to LMS Administrators and Course Creators. Communicating about the e-learning programme with AMS is planned as a major event for the ACDM Working Group on Global Learning in 2025 (AHA Centre, 2024b).

2.3.2. Effectiveness of New Zealand support to SICAP

AHA Centre management and staff consider that SICAP is working well. The development of the learning management system (LMS) and e-learning, and training for AHA Centre LMS administrators is laying the foundation for the AHA Centre to become a knowledge hub for disaster management in the ASEAN region. While AHA Centre course creators have been trained it remains to be seen whether this will lead to higher quality course content.

Acceptance of the Capacity Building Roadmap by the ACDM and its Working Group on Global Leadership provides a strong basis for the AHA Centre to provide deliver better coordinated capacity building in disaster management. The improved LMS and use of e-learning offers an opportunity to deliver improved courses to AHA Centre and AMS staff.

New Zealand’s support to SICAP has achieved good results to date. The activity is expected to deliver short and medium term results (Figure 3) and contribute positively to achieving the long term result of increased disaster management capacity in the AHA Centre and AMS.

The impact study and needs assessments undertaken under SICAP have generated valuable information about the AHA Centre’s efforts to build capacity across the ASEAN region and areas for improvement. Similar information emerged from the ACE Programme Impact Evaluation in 2021 (Narayanan et al, 2021). As AADMER plans its next five-year programme of work, using these findings will enable the AHA

Centre to develop a more strategic, integrated and successful programme of capacity building that further enhances disaster management capacity in AMS NDMOs and facilitates greater progress towards One ASEAN, One Response.

2.4. Extent to which New Zealand's support to the AHA Centre has delivered agreed objectives

New Zealand's support to the AHA Centre has clearly contributed to building disaster management capacity in the ASEAN region and improving cooperation and coordination among AMS for disaster management and emergency response. New Zealand's input to the critical incident leadership course and its successor is highly appreciated. The two-week residential course on CIL delivered pre-COVID contributed strongly to New Zealand's knowledge, expertise and experience being recognised and valued across the region.

New Zealand support has not achieved better connections and engagement between New Zealand and ASEAN DRM leaders. This was exacerbated by ending of opportunities for ACE programme participants to participate in study visits to New Zealand which resulted in less visibility for New Zealand's disaster management capacity and reduced the linkages and relationships between ASEAN DM officials on the ACE programme and their New Zealand counterparts. That said, offering opportunities to visit other AMS (e.g. Indonesia, Thailand) further enhances ASEAN-ASEAN connection and engagement and will ultimately contribute to One ASEAN, One Response.

3. The key lessons learned in terms of coherence, effectiveness, efficiency and/or sustainability of the AHA Centre

3.1. Coherence

Coherence considers the extent to which an intervention fits and its compatibility with other interventions in a country, sector or institution (OECD, 2019).

The AHA Centre plays an important and coherent role in disaster management in the ASEAN region, particularly its efforts in disaster monitoring and preparedness and response.⁴ However, as noted above improving coherence across the Centre's capacity building efforts would strengthen the Centre's overall impact ([AHA Centre capacity building](#)).

The Centre's Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) works with AMS NDMOs to identify risks and to monitor and share information about hazards and disasters in the ASEAN region. It also monitors early warning information from AMS hydro-meteorological and geological agencies. Information generated and disseminated by the Centre is provided to NDMOs, enabling them to strengthen coordination efforts when responding to potential and actual disasters.

⁴ <https://ahacentre.org/what-we-do/>

Preparedness and response efforts of the AHA Centre include tools and guidance enabling resources to be quickly mobilised between AMS and partners when disaster hits. In addition to the Disaster Emergency Logistics System for ASEAN (DELSA)⁵ and ASEAN Emergency Response Assessment Teams (ASEAN-ERAT)⁶, standard operating procedures guide regional standby arrangements for disaster relief and emergency (SASOP). Arrangements are in place for emergency response, the use of military assets and capacities, and coordination of emergency medical teams in the ASEAN region response (AHA Centre, 2022).

The ASEAN Joint Disaster Response Plan (AJDRP) provides a common framework to deliver a timely, at-scale, and joint response through mobilisation of required assets and capacities. It outlines roles and responsibilities of the AHA Centre/ASEAN in coordinating with the affected ASEAN member state and other assisting AMS, civil-military coordination, and coordination with civil society, the private sector, the United Nations, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and other international organisations. It also provides three disaster scenarios – for an earthquake, a tsunami and a cyclone – with plans to add a fourth scenario of flooding in the Mekong (AHA Centre, 2017). The ASEAN Regional Disaster Emergency Response Simulation Exercise (ARDEX) is conducted every two years to test, practice review and evaluate ASEAN’s emergency response and disaster management mechanisms.⁷

The AHA Centre has made huge strides in its capacity to coordinate an ASEAN-wide response to disasters in the region and is well on the way to realising the goal of One ASEAN, One Response. While this has not been tested by a transboundary mega-disaster of similar scale to the Indian Ocean Tsunami in 2004, the Centre has demonstrated its capacity to deliver in a number of significant, transboundary events. NDMOs from Lao PDR, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam have recently welcomed AHA Centre coordination of ASEAN regional efforts in the form of ASEAN-ERAT deployments – some actively undertaking on-the-ground assessment, others providing assistance at a national level in the capital and another providing remote assistance to the NDMO. The AHA Centre has also successfully used DELSA to deliver non-food items (NFI) from its warehouses in Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand.

In addition to its work coordinating with NDMOs, the AHA Centre collaborates with multilateral, international and regional bodies. It has negotiated an interoperability agreement with the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN-OCHA). The Centre works closely with the World Food Programme (WFP) in relation to procurement and management of pre-positioned supplies under DELSA, and it coordinates closely with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) when there is a need for additional supplies which it cannot provide (e.g.

⁵ Launched in December 2012, DELSA provides regional emergency stockpiles prepositioned in the World Food Programme (WFP) – United Nations Humanitarian Response Depot (UNHRD) warehouse in Subang, Malaysia, and satellite warehouses in Camp Aguinaldo, the Philippines and Chainat, Thailand. DELSA also provides institutional capacity building, and communication and awareness, <https://ahacentre.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/DELSA-Factsheet-2019.pdf>.

⁶ The first deployment of ASEAN-ERAT occurred in 2008 in response to Cyclone Nargis in Myanmar. Its core functions are assessment, facilitation of incoming relief assistance and on-site coordination, <https://ahacentre.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/DIGITAL-Version-FACTSHEETS-ASEAN-ERAT.pdf>.

⁷ Details related to ARDEX-23 can be found at <https://asean.org/asean-regional-disaster-emergency-response-simulation-exercise-tests-multi-sectoral-mechanisms/>.

mosquito nets required in Myanmar). United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) participates in ASEAN-ERAT training courses and ASEAN-ERAT members are able to join UNDAC training. In 2023, UNDAC participated in the ERAT Induction, Level 2 Information Management and Assessment, ERAT Refresher and ERAT Localisation Training for Trainers courses and ARDEX.⁸

3.2. Effectiveness

Effectiveness considers the extent to which an intervention is achieving its objectives and its results (OECD, 2019).

The AHA Centre is seen as arguably the best of the ASEAN Centres, with all AMS playing an active part in determining the Centre's operating framework, participating in and benefiting from its work. This is aided by the AADMER being a legally binding agreement. The Centre receives good support from dialogue partners, development partners and multilateral, regional and international partners (3.4).

The capabilities and experience of AMS NDMOs differ widely. By way of example, in 2008 the Singapore Civil Defence Force (SCDF) Operation Lionheart Contingent obtained International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG) External Classification as a Heavy Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) team – the first in Asia and to date the only AMS to do so.⁹ The Indonesian Search and Rescue Team was accredited as a Medium USAR Team in 2019. While two other Indonesian teams, two Filipino teams and USAR Thailand do not have INSARAG External Classification, they are nevertheless part of the INSARAG ASIA/Pacific regional group.¹⁰ The AHA Centre, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam participate in meetings of INSARAG Asia-Pacific.

The ASEAN Disaster Monitoring and Response System (DMRS) is operational at the AHA Centre's EOC, ASEAN-ERAT is being deployed when needed, DELSA is supplying NFIs as required, and the AHA Centre Information Management Network (AIM-NET) is coordinating and cooperating in strengthening EOC capacities, capabilities, and practices regarding disaster information management and information systems interoperability. Knowledge and outreach initiatives include the ASEAN Inter-regional Dialogue on Disaster Resilience (AIDDR) and the ASEAN Strategic Policy Dialogue on Disaster Management (SPDDM).

Those consulted during this Review agree that the AHA Centre is effective in preparing for and coordinating ASEAN region-wide responses. That said, not all AMS require such support. While Indonesia is able to manage most in-country disasters without recourse to international assistance or to the AHA Centre for a coordinated ASEAN response, the AHA Centre has recently coordinated ASEAN regional assistance to Lao PDR, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam.

The AHA Centre has been successful in building disaster management capacities internally and with AMS NDMOs, and the capacity building programmes it offers at national and regional levels are considered to be effective primarily because of their work-integrated learning approach (AHA Centre, 2024a). But as

⁸ <https://undac.un.org/en/article/undac-dispatch-december-2023-regional-highlight>.

⁹ For additional information see <https://www.scdf.gov.sg/home/about-scdf/international-engagement/international-co-operation>.

¹⁰ https://vosocc.unocha.org/usar_directory/USARTeamsByregion.asp.

noted above, the training programmes' collective impact is difficult to measure due to lack of coherence between them, and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms that support an overall theory of change. (AHA Centre, 2024a) ([AHA Centre capacity building](#)).

While NDMOs are responsible for disaster management and emergency response in each AMS, there are many other actors with critical roles to play. These include other national government agencies, sub-national government actors – variously at province, district and community levels – the private sector and a broad range of civil society actors.

The AHA Centre is conscious of the need to localise disaster management functions and to work with NDMOs to build capacity of all actors. SICAP is developing the LMS to make a range of e-learning – foundational, public/community and professional courses – available to a broad audience including humanitarian professionals and the public. Topics include climate change 101, early warning, nature-based adaptation, business continuity planning, family preparedness, safeguarding, school-based disaster risk reduction (DRR), empowering youth for DRR, gender mainstreaming and disability inclusion ([Annex C: AHA Centre Learning Management System](#)).

Coordination of preparedness and response by the AHA Centre currently focuses on the role of NDMOs. Yet disaster management requires cross-sectoral engagement. Building resilience to and responding to disasters – natural and human-induced – is the responsibility of a wide range of government actors. While challenging, there is an opportunity for the AHA Centre, in coordination with the ASEAN Secretariat's Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance Division, to encourage multi-sectoral approaches in preparedness and response. This could, over time, lead to the possibility of extending beyond response to recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction.

The AADMER Work Programme 2021-2025 has a dedicated outcome on gender and social inclusion through its five priority programmes. ACDM has led the way, establishing a Technical Working Group on Protection, Gender and Inclusion and tasking it to develop a gender and protection mainstreaming strategy. Adoption of the *ASEAN Regional Framework on Protection, Gender, and Inclusion in Disaster Management 2021-2025* (ASEC, 2021) is a good first step but it needs to be operationalised by NDMOs, including by ensuring that sex and age-disaggregated data are captured in assessments and that protection, gender and inclusion (PGI) are an integral part of disaster management across the ASEAN region.

There are number of ways in which the AHA Centre could be more effective.

First, develop an overall Theory of Change, articulating how the short, medium and long term outcomes of its work will enable it to achieve the impact AADMER strives for in the ASEAN region – i.e. to reduce disaster losses, in lives and in the social, economic and environmental assets of communities and ASEAN Member States, and to provide institutionalised joint regional disaster management and emergency response in the ASEAN region.¹¹ Doing so would enable the Centre to describe the contribution of the

¹¹ These impacts are described in *Table 10: AADMER Work Programme 2021 – 2025 Monitoring and Evaluation Impact and Outcome Level and Key Performance Indicators* (ASEC, 2020).

various components – or outputs – it delivers (its disaster monitoring, preparedness and response, and capacity building activities) to achieving these expected impacts, and the connections between them. It would enable the Centre to identify gaps in its own work, and that of AMS NDMOs, that constrain achievement of AADMER's expected impacts. It would also ensure a more integrated and coherent programme of work where the whole is truly greater than the sum of its parts.

Second, develop a system that enables the AHA Centre to monitor, evaluate, learn from and report on its work – whether individual activities, the portfolio of activities delivering core functions or the overall programme of work – adapting these as needed so they remain on track to achieving desired outcomes and impact. Such a system would in turn inform AADMER's monitoring and evaluation system. A functioning monitoring, evaluation and learning system requires skilled people who are able to support staff working on individual activities and track performance of portfolios delivering core functions and the overall work of the Centre.

Third, continue to advance localisation of disaster management in the ASEAN region to encourage a whole-of-society approach. Since 2019, the AHA Centre has been localising ASEAN-ERAT, with Training of Trainers currently being rolled out across AMS.¹² SICAP's use of the LMS to broaden the scope of training, including public access to e-learning is a good initiative. Enabling the LMS to deliver training in all ASEAN languages and working with NDMOs to increasingly make training available to local actors – including through the possibility of utilising the LMS to make available in-country training offered by others – might accelerate this. So, too, might the development of Train-NET as foreseen in the capacity building roadmap.

Fourth, promote a cross-sectoral approach to disaster management in the ASEAN region in close cooperation with the ASEAN Secretariat. At present, SASOP specifically addresses civil-military cooperation and coordination of emergency medical teams. However, in future there is a possibility of compound or complex disasters occurring.^{13 14} Preparing for and responding to such disasters will require a cross-sectoral approach.

Fifth, operationalise the ASEAN Regional Framework for Protection, Gender and Inclusion in Disaster Management through integrating PGI across the AHA Centre's work and encouraging AMS NDMOs to do likewise. For example, engaging with National Statistical Offices on the range of data captured in emergency response assessments – e.g. disaggregated by sex, age, disability status, ethnicity – provides the basis for a truly inclusive response.

¹² The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) is supporting this aspect of the Centre's work; see https://www.eda.admin.ch/content/dam/countries/countries-content/thailand/en/AHA_Centre_factsheet_2jan2023_final.pdf

¹³ Liu and Huang (2014) offer a typology of compound disasters involving multiple events, extensive loss of life and economic damage.

¹⁴ There is no clear definition of complex emergency. Humanitarian agencies use the designation to describe conflicts where the 'complexity' necessitates intervention by multiple agencies. These might involve political, economic, environmental and demographic instability. See <https://www.strausscenter.org/ccaps-research-areas/complex-emergencies/>.

3.3. Efficiency

Efficiency considers how well resources are being used and whether results are delivered in an economic and timely way (OECD, 2019).

While it is beyond the scope of this review to determine whether the AHA Centre is efficient, it is possible to make a judgment on elements of its work – including the capacity building initiatives that New Zealand supports – and its overall engagement with the Dialogue Partners and institutions which support it.

As noted in the Impact Study on capacity building, and confirmed by a number of people consulted during this review, AHA Centre capacity building is project-focused rather than focused on synergistic programmes that contribute to higher-level outcomes. The approach to ACE-LEDMP is a case in point. Two batches are trained each year, one targeting NDMO staff with three to five years of experience and a second targeting middle level NDMO staff with more than five years of experience. These batches are organised and contracted individually. It would be more efficient to manage an on-going training programme such as ACE-LEDMP by commissioning training inputs over the course of three to five years (the latter being the term of the AADMER Work Plan and the AHA Centre Work Plan). In addition, further efficiencies could be achieved through better use of the LMS and e-learning to deliver training. Such adaptations are being instituted by ACE-LEDMP as a result of progress achieved with the LMS and e-learning through SICAP.

The AHA Centre engages with its supporters – including Dialogue Partners such as New Zealand – on a project-by-project basis rather than a portfolio of activities contributing to core functions or, indeed, the Centre's overall programme of work. This approach creates higher transaction costs for both parties with funding arrangements required for each of the individual activities rather than using one funding instrument for a portfolio of activities or a programme of work.

The grant funding arrangement between MFAT and the AHA Centre for SICAP has proven to be sufficiently flexible as to allow adaptations to the original outputs and AHA Centre staff have certainly appreciated MFAT's willingness to consider and agree to changes. With the separate funding arrangements for ACE-LEDMP and SICAP due to finish shortly, MFAT and the AHA Centre might consider recasting their long-standing partnership. Rather than continuing support to individual capacity building activities, New Zealand and the AHA Centre could consider a programme-based approach focused on delivering outcomes in AADMER's current and future work programmes – e.g. Priority Programme 5 on Global Leadership. Committing to a programme-based approach would enable the Centre to adapt existing activities and add new initiatives as required.

Interviews undertaken for this review indicated that there is interest amongst the AHA Centre's supporters in coordinating better with the Centre and amongst themselves. The five original key supporters of the AHA Centre – Australia, the EU, Japan, New Zealand and the USA – put in place a coordination process. This process stopped after the then Executive Director of the Centre took over management of donor coordination in June 2012. To date the AHA Centre has not reintroduced donor coordination meetings. Donor coordination around AHA Centre workstreams offers benefits for the Centre's work – e.g. identifying response capabilities available to the ASEAN region and capacity building

resources that could contribute to the LMS, and encouraging better coherence and synergies across the Centre's supporters.

3.4. Sustainability

Sustainability considers whether benefits will last – the extent to which they will continue or are likely to continue (OECD, 2019).

It is beyond the scope of this review to determine whether the AHA Centre is sustainable. Nevertheless, it is possible to make a judgment about the AHA Centre's ability to continue its operations into the future.

AADMER is unique in that it is a legally binding agreement – this is rare globally and within the ASEAN region. This and the One ASEAN, One Response commitment means that ASEAN regional coordination is here to stay, as is the AHA Centre. While AMS NDMOs each provide around USD 90,000 per annum, their total contributions (USD 1.24m in 2023) do not support the AHA Centre's current operational expenses (USD 1.34m in 2023). Nevertheless, contributions from Dialogue Partners (USD 10.35m in 2023) and others (USD 0.36m in 2023) were sufficient to cover programme-related expenses and emergency operations in 2023, leaving a surplus for the year of USD 1.01m (AHA Centre 2023). It is possible to conclude that, with support from Dialogue Partners, the AHA Centre is a viable going concern.

Given the findings above on coherence and effectiveness, implementation of proposals for greater efficiency and the ongoing support from Dialogue and Development Partners, the AHA Centre can be considered to be sustainable. However, there is more that the Centre could do to enhance its support to AMS NDMOs and leadership of disaster management in the region and globally. In addition to suggestions above, additional examples raised during this review include exploring:

- *use of advanced science and information and communication technology in disaster management* – e.g. electronic data capture for assessments (moving from paper forms to mobile phones), using big data, looking at digitisation of disaster management practices
- *adoption of artificial intelligence (AI) in disaster management* – e.g. including advancing disaster risk knowledge, speeding up hazard detection and monitoring, speed up warning delivery and improve communication and dissemination, real-time simulations and establishing guidelines and frameworks for ethical use of AI¹⁵
- *use of blockchain frameworks* to detect and prevent disasters and manage supply chains¹⁶
- *more anticipatory approaches to disaster management*
- *end to end early warning systems* at regional and national levels
- *pre-disaster financing and disaster risk insurance*
- *coordination of One ASEAN, One Response outside the region.*

¹⁵ These ideas arose from a recent Bonn AI and Climate Expert meeting reported by the United Nations University Institute for Environment and Human Security, <https://unu.edu/ehs/series/5-ways-ai-can-strengthen-early-warning-systems>.

¹⁶ For more on this see Das et al, 2025, <https://doi.org/10.1016/C2022-0-02384-9>.

3.5. Recommendations to the AHA Centre

While the review aims to identify ways in which New Zealand might partner with the AHA Centre over the next 5-10 years, it has also identified a number of ways in which the AHA Centre might be more effective, efficient and sustainable.

- Recommendation 1: Develop an overall Theory of Change, articulating how the short, medium and long term outcomes of the AHA Centre's work will enable it to achieve the impact AADMER strives for in the ASEAN region.
- Recommendation 2: Develop a system that enables the AHA Centre to monitor, evaluate, learn from and report on its work.
- Recommendation 3: Continue to advance localisation of disaster management in the ASEAN region to encourage a whole-of-society approach.
- Recommendation 4: Promote a cross-sectoral approach to disaster management in the ASEAN region in close cooperation with the ASEAN Secretariat.
- Recommendation 5: Operationalise the ASEAN Regional Framework for Protection, Gender and Inclusion in Disaster Management through integrating PGI across the AHA Centre's work and encouraging AMS NDMOs to do likewise.
- Recommendation 6: Consider a programme-based approach with New Zealand focused on delivering outcomes in AADMER's current and future work programmes.
- Recommendation 7: Reintroduce donor coordination meetings.
- Recommendation 8: Explore ways of providing support to AMS NDMOs and leadership of disaster management in the region and globally through use of advanced science and information and communication technology in disaster management, adopting artificial intelligence and blockchain technologies and developing the Centre's ability to coordinate One ASEAN, One Response outside the region.

4. The AHA Centre's development partner landscape and how New Zealand might engage more strategically

4.1. A busy landscape

The landscape of the AHA Centre's engagement with development partners is crowded. Disaster management is attractive to ASEAN Dialogue Partners and others as it is both needed and non-controversial. The major donor for the AHA Centre is Japan through JAIF. In addition to New Zealand, other supporters include the Asian Development Bank (ADB), Australia, Canada, the European Union (EU), France, Germany, India, the People's Republic of China, the Republic of Korea, Romania, the Russian Federation, Switzerland (SDC), the United Kingdom and the United States of America (USA).

JAIF is the primary contributor to the ACE-LEDMP programme and the ACE study visit, which pre-COVID was hosted by New Zealand. The study visit is now undertaken in Japan lessening New Zealand's ability

to show-case its disaster management capabilities and build relationships with ACE-LEDMP participants and the NDMOs they represent. ACE-LEDMP is delivered by a range of partners¹⁷ including GNS Science with funding from MFAT, and RedR from Australia.¹⁸

While JAIF is the major contributor to DELSA and ASEAN-ERAT, the AHA Centre is looking to diversify support to both programmes in order to reduce its reliance on Japan. Others provide small grants to replenish DELSA supplies – e.g. France, Romania and Switzerland – and DHL Group has a Memorandum of Intent to assist the AHA Centre during disasters and be primarily responsible for airport ground handling of humanitarian relief cargo at airports, assisting with customs procedures as required.¹⁹

Canada supported a project on Humanitarian Assistance Capacity in Multi-Hazards (2023-24) and is currently funding an initiative integrating PGI, climate change adaptation, and environmental sustainability standards and measures into disaster management (2022-27).²⁰ European Union Support to the AHA Centre (EU SAHA) aims to strengthen the capacity and sustainability of the AHA Centre to achieve operational excellence in disaster monitoring and emergency response, and to enhance mechanisms for ASEAN Leadership to Respond-As-One, through excellence and innovation in disaster management.²¹ The EU's Leveraging ASEAN Capacities for Emergency Response (LACER) project ran from 2020-2023 and had similar objectives. The Korean National Fire Agency collaborates with the AHA Centre to implement ASCEND.²² China, Japan and Korea each have ACDM Plus arrangements on disaster management. In October 2024, the National Disaster Management Authority of India and the AHA Centre signed a Memorandum of Intent to enhance cooperation in disaster management. Romania provides small grants for disaster response. The Russian Federation has a Memorandum of Understanding with ASEAN on Cooperation in the Field of Disaster Management. The ASEAN Disaster Information Network (ADINET 3.0) is supported by the ADB's Technical Assistance for Strengthening Cooperation on Disaster Risk Management within ASEAN project.

4.2. New Zealand's track record of support to the AHA Centre and capacity building

New Zealand has supported the AHA Centre from the beginning and considers itself to be a founding partner.²³ New Zealand provided technical support to the Centre for an Establishment Work Plan guiding basic staffing and administrative systems and helping the Centre get started in its first year. New

¹⁷ Dialogue Partners supporting ACE/ACE-LEDMP – Japan, New Zealand, United States of America; the broad range of other partners are listed at <https://ahacentre.org/partners-of-the-ace-programme/>.

¹⁸ AHA Centre is seeking MFAT support to commission RedR to deliver the ACE-LEDMP project management course in 2025 given that the normal delivery partner is unavailable

¹⁹ In November 2024, DHL Group renewed its collaboration with the AHA Centre for a further five years, <https://www.dhl.com/nz-en/home/press/press-archive/2024/aha-centre-renews-its-collaboration-with-dhl-group-on-disaster-management.html>.

²⁰ ASEAN Protection, Resilience and Inclusion for Multi Hazard Emergencies (ASEAN-PRIME).

²¹ The official title is *Integrated Programme in Enhancing the Capacity of AHA Centre and ASEAN Emergency Response Mechanisms*, and the programme runs from December 2019 to October 2025.

²² ASCEND provides certification for rapid assessment, humanitarian logistics, information management, water sanitation and hygiene, and humanitarian shelter and settlements. For further information see <https://ascend.ahacentre.org/>.

²³ For details of the AHA Centre's founding and its progress over the years, see <https://ahacentre.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Digital-Format-8-Story-in-Pictures.pdf>.

Zealand also provided technical assistance and training, including strengthening pre-deployment training and support for information technology management.

Since 2014, New Zealand's support to the AHA Centre has focused on disaster management capacity building. The University of Canterbury delivered a Critical Incident Leadership (CIL) course in Jakarta (2014-2016) and, in partnership with GNS Science, delivered an annual three day Introduction to Hazards and CIL Concepts course; it also facilitated a two week CIL residential course in New Zealand until the COVID-19 pandemic put a stop to that in 2020 ([AHA Centre Executive programme](#)). GNS Science continues to provide input to ACE-LEDMP ([New Zealand support to ACE-LEDMP](#)).

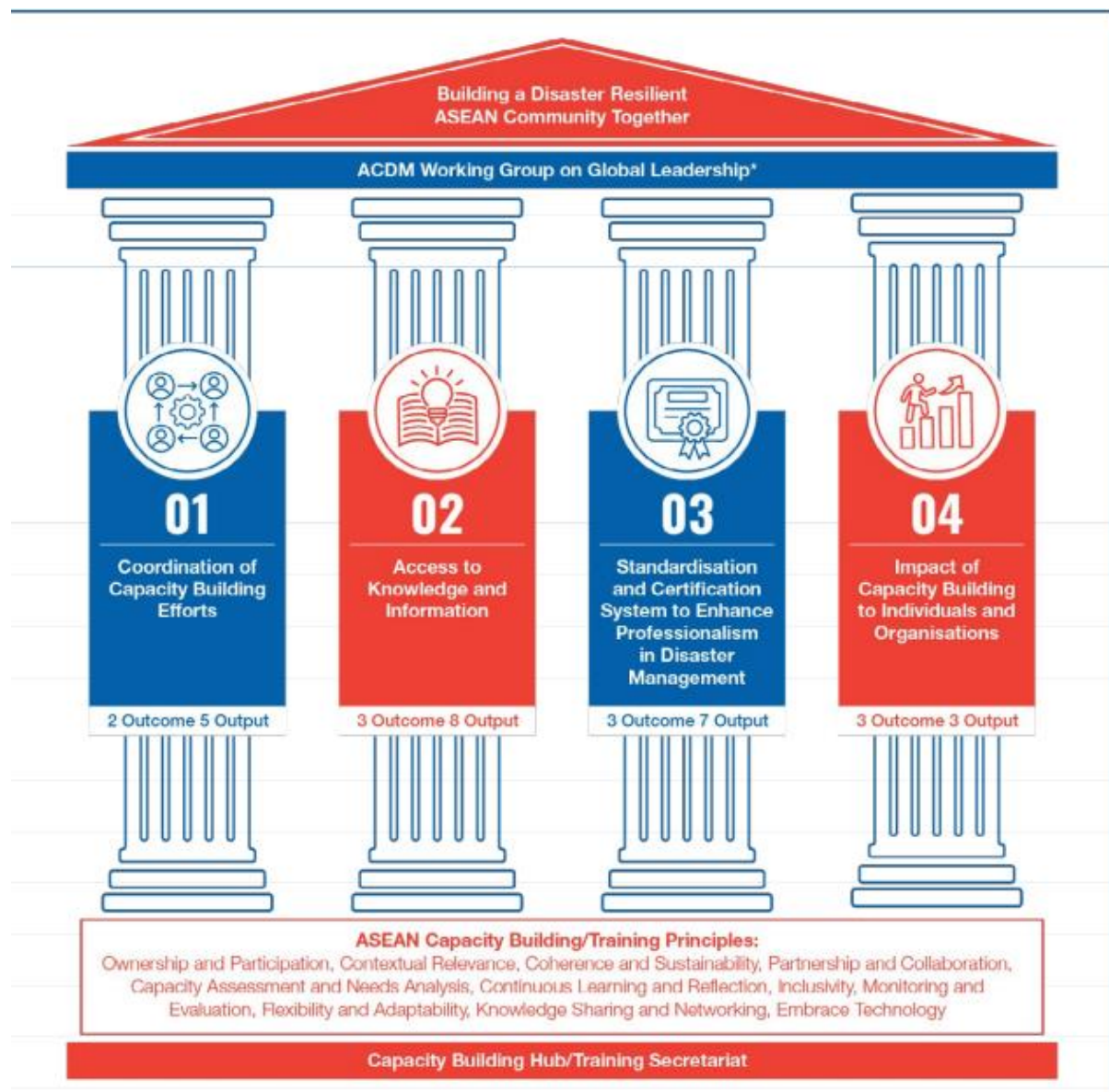
The SICAP programme continues this commitment to disaster management capacity building. It is building the institutional capacity that will enable the AHA Centre to manage and deliver fit for purpose training to AMS, and providing access to e-learning through an improved learning management system ([Strengthening the Institutional Capacity \(SICAP\) of the AHA Centre](#)).

With New Zealand's current support to ACE-LEDMP and SICAP coming to an end in 2025, there is an opportunity to consider a more strategic approach to supporting disaster management capacity building in the ASEAN region.

4.3. A strategic approach to capacity building on disaster management

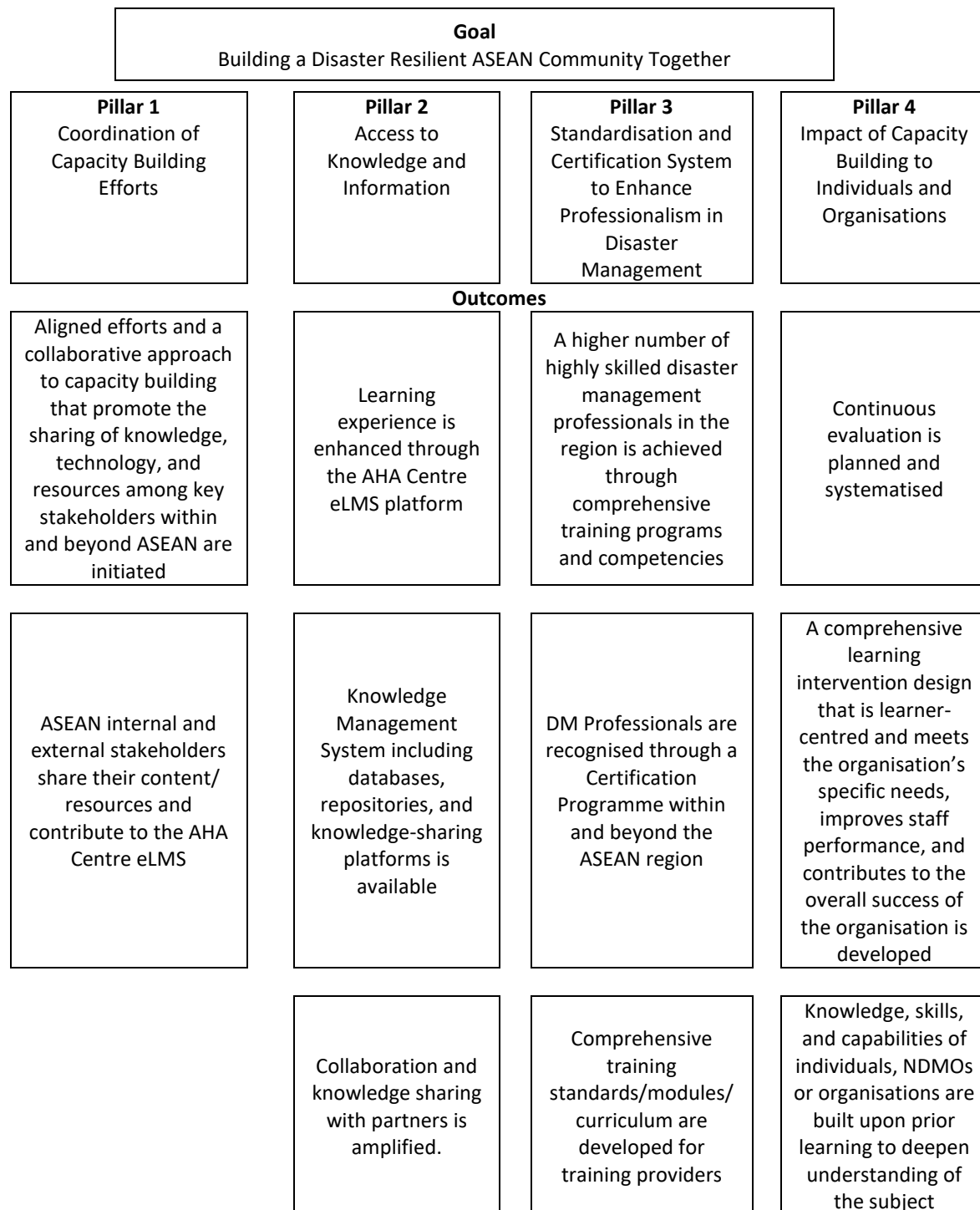
The *ASEAN Capacity Building Roadmap 2025-2030 on Disaster Management* (AHA Centre, 2024c) provides a strategic framework for enhancing the disaster management capabilities of AMS. It seeks to develop more coherent, relevant and effective capacity building programmes. The framework of the roadmap (Figure 4) outlines how each pillar and its respective outcomes (Figure 5) contribute to the objective of building a disaster resilient ASEAN community together. It also articulates the training principles that guide the roadmap. The four pillars are interconnected and complement each other.

FIGURE 4: FRAMEWORK OF ASEAN CAPACITY BUILDING ROADMAP 2025-2030



Source: AHA Centre, 2024c

FIGURE 5: LOGIC MODEL FOR ASEAN CAPACITY BUILDING ROADMAP 2025-2030



Source: AHA Centre, 2024c

5. AHA Centre initiatives' alignment with New Zealand's strategies and policies, and NZ Inc expertise

5.1. Alignment with New Zealand's strategies and policies

The AHA Centre's focus on disaster management and coordination of ASEAN emergency responses is well aligned with New Zealand's Four Year Plan for ASEAN²⁴ and Humanitarian Action Policy (MFAT, 2019a) which prioritises fast, effective and targeted contributions to emergencies outside the Pacific. In addition, support for disaster management in the ASEAN region has been an important dimension of New Zealand's strategic partnership with ASEAN and the three most recent Plans of Action supporting this partnership (MFAT, 2010; MFAT, 2016; MFAT, 2021a).

5.2. NZ Inc. expertise in disaster management

There are many natural hazards in New Zealand – earthquakes, floods, landslides, storms, tsunamis, volcanic activity and wildfires. New Zealand is also subject to a range of other hazards and challenges including pandemics, hazardous substance emergencies, droughts, outbreaks of animal and plant pests and diseases, accidents and incidents that threaten public safety – such as maritime disasters – and national security.

Responsibility for managing emergencies is shared across local, regional and national agencies. Most small emergencies are managed by the relevant emergency service – e.g. Fire and Emergency New Zealand (FENZ) and the two ambulance services respond to accidents, injury and medical incidents. Small to medium scale events caused by natural hazards are managed by the local city, district or regional Council or Civil Defence Emergency Management Group.²⁵

For very large domestic emergencies and when a state of national emergency is declared, the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) leads a whole of government response. Other agencies with roles and responsibilities include the Department of Conservation, FENZ which is INSARAG Heavy USAR accredited, Health New Zealand/Te Whatu Ora, Maritime New Zealand, the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, the Ministry for Primary Industries, the Ministry of Health, the New Zealand Defence Force, New Zealand Police and WorkSafe New Zealand.²⁶

Crown Research Institutes monitor and research the causes, risks and consequences of hazards – e.g. GNS Science on geological hazards, the National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research (NIWA) on coastal, weather and geological hazards, and Landcare Research on erosion and landslide hazards. New Zealand universities offer academic courses and undertake scientific research into a broad range of hazards and risks.

²⁴ For the current published version, see <https://www.mfat.govt.nz/assets/Aid/4YPs-2021-24/ASEAN-4YP.pdf>. At the time of writing, the Four Year Plan was being updated in line with the New Zealand Government's foreign policy reset.

²⁵ There are sixteen Civil Defence Emergency Management Groups in New Zealand. See, <https://www.civildefence.govt.nz/find-your-civil-defence-group>.

²⁶ In addition to NEMA, seventeen agencies are represented on the Coordinated Incident Management System (CIMS) Steering Group.

5.3. Sharing New Zealand's knowledge, experience and expertise in disaster management

New Zealand's experience in disaster management and emergency response is valued by ASEAN, the AHA Centre and ASEAN NDMOs. The ACE programme inputs by the University of Canterbury and GNS Science – in particular the pre-COVID two-week residential course offered in New Zealand – were highly valued by programme participants. The opportunity to visit and learn about New Zealand's approach to disaster management is sorely missed by staff of the AHA Centre, NDMOs spoken with and course participants. GNS Science's continued involvement in the ACE-LEDMP programme is highly appreciated.

Re-instituting a New Zealand field visit – either in its own right or as a complement to the ACE-LEDMP study visit to Japan – would contribute to the ASEAN-New Zealand relationship and to the original ACE programme long-term outcome of New Zealand being better connected and engaged with ASEAN DRM leaders and the short-term outcome of strengthened linkages and relationships between ASEAN disaster management officials and their New Zealand counterparts.

The AHA Centre faces a number of challenges achieving its One ASEAN, One Response goal, in particular the challenge of coordinating ASEAN response capabilities outside of the region ([Support to other initiatives](#)

[Global Leadership in Disaster Management](#)). New Zealand disaster management agencies and institutions are well-placed to support the Centre's ambition to become a global leader in disaster management. Interviews conducted for this review identified interest in engaging further with New Zealand agencies enabling sharing of their knowledge, expertise and experience.

The logical points of contact for engagement between the AHA Centre and New Zealand agencies are MFAT as New Zealand's lead on foreign policy, offshore humanitarian assistance and relationships with ASEAN, and NEMA which leads on emergency management and has an intimate knowledge of the skill sets available across New Zealand's disaster management landscape. NEMA is actively engaged in providing technical support to Pacific NDMOs – previously in the Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau, and currently in Samoa and Tonga – as part of MFAT's Pacific disaster preparedness planning and participates actively in New Zealand's emergency responses in the Pacific region. It has a Memorandum of Cooperation with Singapore's Civil Defence Force and there is potential for a similar Memorandum with Malaysia's National Disaster Management Agency. But as a relatively new institution – established on 1 December 2019 – NEMA has not yet developed a relationship with the AHA Centre and has limited resources with which to do so.

A range of options exist for New Zealand agency engagement with the AHA Centre, NDMOs and counterparts in the ASEAN region:

- *Embedding technical support within the AHA Centre* – where the AHA Centre has a particular need for technical support, NEMA could help to identify New Zealand experts with the required expertise²⁷

²⁷ For example, Fire and Emergency New Zealand (FENZ) has skilled personnel who engage with NDMOs in advance of the Pacific cyclone season and can be embedded in NDMOs during emergency responses.

- *Mentoring AHA Centre leadership* – as was done in the early years of the AHA Centre, New Zealand could offer the services of a senior disaster management expert to provide advice and act as a sounding board for AHA Centre leaders as they seek to position ASEAN as a global leader in disaster management.
- *Supporting AMS NDMOs to achieve international certification* – for example with INSARAG Heavy USAR and Medium USAR certification.

6. Viability of the AHA Centre as a delivery model for New Zealand's emergency response in the ASEAN region

6.1 New Zealand's approach to emergency response in Southeast Asia

Countries in Southeast Asia are part of New Zealand's wider region and the second geographic priority for emergency response. New Zealand provides rapid financial assistance to effective humanitarian partners and considers deploying targeted offshore humanitarian deployment capabilities to large-scale emergencies in the region (MFAT, 2019b).

New Zealand's emergency response is currently channelled through the United Nations, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and its national societies, New Zealand NGOs and their partners. The last substantive deployment to South East Asia was in response to Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines.

6.2 Using the AHA Centre to deliver emergency response

The AHA Centre's role in emergencies is to coordinate an ASEAN response when invited to do so by the affected AMS. A disaster needs to be significant for the AHA Centre to be invited to coordinate an ASEAN response. In addition to providing disaster information and situation updates, the Centre's two primary response mechanisms are delivery of non-food items through DELSA and deployment of assessment teams through ASEAN-ERAT. Both are well resourced through JAIF funding, with DELSA supplemented from time to time by funding from other development partners.

New Zealand might consider working with the AHA Centre when it engages in multi-country, transboundary, complex and compound disasters in the ASEAN region. In such instances, New Zealand might consider using the AHA Centre as its delivery vehicle and/or as a complement to other delivery channels. In other instances, such as a national emergency, support can be provided through the UN system, the ICRC, the national Red Cross or Red Crescent society and NGOs, as is currently the case.

New Zealand can confidently provide support to DELSA, given the AHA Centre's cooperation with WFP in managing and verifying the relevance of non-food items. When significant events across the region require substantial contributions, New Zealand might consider replenishing NFIs.²⁸ In addition, should

²⁸ The DELSA catalogue, managed in cooperation with WFP is found at <https://ahacentre.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Catalogue-and-Brochure-of-DELSA-Relief-Items.pdf>.

there be a number of emergencies requiring participation of ASEAN-ERAT in any one year, New Zealand might consider resourcing this mechanism through the AHA Centre.

Consideration could be given to entering into an arrangement with the AHA Centre to channel funding through the AHA Centre for DELSA and ASEAN-ERAT in response to major disasters (multi-country, transboundary, complex and/or compound) or should multiple disasters requiring the AHA Centre to coordinate a regional response significantly deplete the resources of DELSA and ASEAN-ERAT ([Partnership arrangement delivering a programme-based approach](#)).

7. Recommended approach for New Zealand to continue partnering with the AHA Centre

7.2.1. Further support to current programmes

7.2.1.1. SICAP phase 2

The first phase of SICAP produced a clear roadmap for the AHA Centre to follow as it continues to build capacity on disaster management in the ASEAN region. An improved e-learning management system will enable the AHA Centre to manage and deliver fit for purpose training to AMS and other stakeholders in the region. It makes good sense for New Zealand to follow up on this with a second phase of support to SICAP. Options that might be considered depending on the quantum of finance available include:

- *Further enhance the eLMS* so it can host a database of capacity-building initiatives, programmes and resources (Roadmap Output 1.2.1), integrate with other learning and knowledge platforms (Roadmap Output 2.1.1), providing a wide array of courses (Roadmap Output 2.1.2) in the spoken languages of the region (Roadmap Output 2.1.3)
- *Update knowledge management guidelines and SOPs* to enable knowledge to be captured, stored and disseminated (Roadmap Output 2.2.1) and transform information into knowledge products (Roadmap Output 2.2.2)
- *Develop a monitoring, evaluation and learning system* which not only provides standardised tools for continuous evaluation (Roadmap Output 4.1.1) but also enables the AHA Centre to monitor, evaluate, learn from and report on its activities, portfolios of activities delivering core functions and its overall programme of work
- *Develop a comprehensive learning intervention design* to enable learner-centred training (Roadmap Output 4.2.1)
- *Develop a capacity building strategy* that builds on previously learned concepts or skills and integrates with NDMOs' and other stakeholders' training initiatives (Roadmap Output 4.3.1).

7.2.2. ACE-LEDMP

Having continuously delivered modules to ACE programme and ACE-LEDMP batches since 2014 it makes good sense for New Zealand to continue to support this training of disaster management officials and leaders – in NDMOs and other actors across the ASEAN region. ACE-LEDMP intends to introduce a senior level component in 2025, complementing the executive and middle level courses already on offer.

Options that might be considered depending on the quantum of finance available include:

- *Support delivery of ACE-LEDMP* exploring with the AHA Centre whether there are additional modules which New Zealand experts could deliver, including to the senior level component

- *Support ACE-LEDMP monitoring, evaluation and learning* enabling the AHA Centre to adapt the programme's learning intervention design in response to the needs of learners and their organisations, ensure the programme is connected to and delivering higher level outcomes with other AHA Centre training programmes, and able to be transferred to other NDMO staff and influence policy enhancements.

7.2. Support to other initiatives

7.2.1. Global Leadership in Disaster Management

The fifth priority programme of the AADMER Work Programme 2021-2025 focuses on ASEAN becoming a global leader in disaster management. It identifies two challenges: continuous innovation through knowledge management, and; leveraging regional knowledge for continuing capacity building and manifesting global leadership (ASEC, 2020). The review identified a number of additional challenges to this ambition. These are listed below together with suggestions as to how New Zealand may be able to provide support, depending on the quantum of finance available:

- *Reintroduce a study visit to New Zealand* – the loss of the two-week residential course has constrained New Zealand's ability to show-case its knowledge, experience and expertise in disaster management and provide the opportunity for ASEAN and New Zealand disaster management leaders to learn from and support each other. At the time of writing consideration was being given to a new, four-week Disaster Risk Reduction training programme offered annually by New Zealand under the *Manaaki New Zealand Scholarships* programme.²⁹ To ensure effectiveness, it is important that the course design complements AHA Centre disaster management training and focuses on building strong linkages between ASEAN disaster management professionals – both NDMO officials and civil society professionals working in DRM – and their New Zealand counterparts.
- *Coordination beyond the ASEAN region* – while the AHA Centre has experience coordinating responses within the ASEAN region, it has not done so in other regions. New Zealand has experience coordinating national responses and responses in the Pacific region, including within the France Australia New Zealand (FRANZ) Arrangement³⁰ and with UNOCHA and other international humanitarian actors. This experience may be useful to the AHA Centre as it considers its role in coordinating responses beyond the ASEAN region.
- *Helping NDMOs to achieve international certification* – the SCDF is the only AMS to have achieved Heavy USAR accreditation with INSARAG. The Indonesian Search and Rescue Team is accredited as a Medium USAR Team with other Indonesian, Filipino and Thai USAR teams yet to achieve accreditation. Fire and Emergency New Zealand is a member of INSARAG and has Heavy USAR accreditation. New Zealand could explore helping AMS NDMOs to achieve INSARAG certification where appropriate.
- *Expanding from response to recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction* – the AHA Centre's focus is on coordinating an ASEAN regional response to disasters. Consideration might be given to

²⁹ For details of the opportunities, see <https://www.nzscholarships.govt.nz/types-of-manaaki-scholarships/>.

³⁰ For details of the FRANZ Arrangement see <https://www.mfat.govt.nz/assets/Aid-Prog-docs/NZDRP-docs/Franz-Arrangement-Brochure.pdf>.

promoting a cross-sectoral approach to disaster management in the ASEAN region, in close cooperation with the ASEAN Secretariat, with a view to broadening ASEAN's ability to engage in recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction, in particular as part of the Initiative for ASEAN Integration.³¹

7.2.2. Using the AHA Centre for emergency response in the ASEAN region

New Zealand might consider working with the AHA Centre when it engages in multi-country, transboundary, complex and compound disasters in the ASEAN region, using the Centre as its delivery vehicle and/or as a complement to other delivery channels. In order to do so, New Zealand might offer to replenish DELSA non-food items when required and provide additional resourcing for ASEAN-ERAT should there be a number of emergencies requiring participation of ASEAN-ERAT in any one year.

7.2.3. Additional areas of work

In addition to the above, the review identified other areas where New Zealand might offer support to or engage with the AHA Centre, NDMOs and counterparts in the ASEAN region:

- *Embedding technical support within the AHA Centre* – where the AHA Centre has a particular need for technical support, NEMA could help to identify New Zealand experts with the required expertise
- *Mentoring AHA Centre leadership* – as was done in the early years of the AHA Centre, New Zealand could offer the services of a senior disaster management expert to provide advice and act as a sounding board for AHA Centre leaders as they seek to position ASEAN as a global leader in disaster management.
- *Supporting AMS NDMOs to achieve international certification* – for example with INSARAG Heavy USAR and Medium USAR certification.
- *ASEAN Inter-regional Dialogue on Disaster Resilience* – ASEAN and the Pacific Islands Forum have developed a Memorandum of Understanding (ASEC, 2023) which envisages sharing best practices, experience and knowledge, and capacity building. New Zealand might consider sponsoring an inter-regional dialogue with a focus on sharing experience between the Pacific and ASEAN. Such an approach may complement work being done by Indonesia, Fiji and Australia under the SIAP SIAGA programme.³²
- *ASEAN Regional Disaster Emergency Response Simulation Exercise (ARDEX)* – to mark the 50th anniversary of relations with ASEAN, New Zealand might consider sponsoring ARDEX 2025 hosted by Cambodia, both participating in it at scale and proposing scenarios enabling the ASEAN region to work through protection, gender and inclusion challenges.³³

³¹ The Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI) helps ASEAN newer Member States (Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Viet Nam) implement ASEAN commitments and agreements. IAI Work Plan IV is based around five strategic areas - Food and Agriculture, Trade Facilitation, MSMEs, Education, and Health and Well-being. In addition, Industry 4.0, GESI and Environmental Sustainability are integrated as cross-cutting issues, <https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Initiative-for-ASEAN-Integration-IA-Work-Plan-IV-2021-2025.pdf>.

³² For details about the Australia-Indonesia Partnership on Disaster Risk Management, see <https://www.dfat.gov.au/about-us/business-opportunities/Pages/australia-indonesia-partnership-in-disaster-risk-management-aip-drm-design> and <https://siapsiaga.or.id/>.

³³ Cambodia will invite three non-ASEAN countries; New Zealand could participate, bringing its experience with protection, gender and inclusion – nationally and in the Pacific region.

- *Operationalising the ASEAN Regional Framework for Protection, Gender and Inclusion* – build on existing efforts to operationalise PGI, identifying and working with NDMOs interested and committed to integrating PGI approaches so they in turn might showcase this to other AMS NDMOs.

7.3. Partnership arrangement delivering a programme-based approach

While separate MFAT grant funding arrangements with the AHA Centre and New Zealand implementing partners (University of Canterbury, GNS Science) have served their purpose, engaging more strategically requires a joined up approach under a different modality. A partnership arrangement between New Zealand and the AHA Centre to support disaster management would seem appropriate.³⁴

A programme-based approach would enable New Zealand and the AHA Centre to lift from supporting individual interventions, to supporting a portfolio delivering medium and long term outcomes in line with the Theory of Change guiding the AADMER and the AHA Centre work plans.

While focused on New Zealand support to disaster management capacity building, a programme-based approach allows for additional areas of support to be integrated or added over time. For example, channelling funding through the AHA Centre when major disasters (transboundary, complex and/or compound) occur or should multiple disasters requiring the AHA Centre to coordinate a regional response occur in one year ([Viability of the AHA Centre as a delivery model for New Zealand's emergency response in the ASEAN region](#)).

7.4. Recommendations to MFAT

The sub-sections above outline a range of options that might be considered depending on the quantum of finance available. The following recommendations to MFAT propose specific ways in which New Zealand might partner with the AHA Centre over the next 5-10 years.

Recommendation 1: Explore entering into a partnership arrangement with the AHA Centre enabling New Zealand to support a programme-based approach to disaster management in the ASEAN region.

A programme-based approach would enable New Zealand to develop a portfolio of support to the AHA Centre's work in disaster management and emergency response. This portfolio might comprise the following elements.

Recommendation 2: Support a second phase of SICAP focused on further enhancing the AHA Centre's e-learning management system, updating its knowledge management guidelines and standard operating procedures and developing a monitoring, evaluation and learning system.

³⁴ MFAT enters into partnership arrangements with a range of international and regional organisations, NGOs and state sector agencies, <https://www.mfat.govt.nz/en/aid-and-development/our-approach-to-aid/our-partners>.

- Recommendation 3: Support ongoing delivery of ACE-LEDMP, enhancing monitoring, evaluation and learning, and exploring the possibility of New Zealand experts delivering additional modules.
- Recommendation 4: Show-case New Zealand's knowledge, experience and expertise in disaster management and build engagement with DRM professionals in the ASEAN region by reintroducing a study visit to New Zealand and/or providing short-term training in disaster management under the *Manaaki New Zealand Scholarships* programme.
- Recommendation 5: Partner with the AHA Centre when it engages in multi-country, transboundary, complex and compound disasters in the ASEAN region, offering to replenish DELSA non-food items when required and provide additional resourcing for ASEAN-ERAT should there be a number of emergencies requiring participation of ASEAN-ERAT in any one year.
- Recommendation 6: Support ASEAN to become a global leader in disaster management, offering technical support to the AHA Centre and NDMOs in areas such as coordination beyond the ASEAN region, achieving international certification and sharing experience between the Pacific and ASEAN.

Acronyms

AADMER	ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response
ACDM	ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management
ACE	AHA Centre Executive programme
ACE-LEDMP	AHA Centre Executive Leadership in Emergency and Disaster Management Programme
ADB	Asian Development Bank
ADINET	ASEAN Disaster Information Network
AHA Centre	ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management
AI	Artificial intelligence
AIDDR	ASEAN Inter-regional Dialogue on Disaster Resilience
AIM-NET	AHA Centre Information Management Network
AMS	ASEAN Member States
ARD	Asia Regional Division
ARDEX	ASEAN Regional Disaster Emergency Response Simulation Exercise
ASCEND	ASEAN Standards and Certification for Experts in Disaster Management
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASEAN-ERAT	ASEAN Emergency Response Assessment Team
ASEC	ASEAN Secretariat
BNPB	Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Bencana, the National Disaster Management Authority of Indonesia
CSP	Comprehensive Strategic Partnership
DELSA	Disaster Emergency Logistics System for ASEAN
DM	Disaster management
DP	Development partner
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
ELTO	English Language Training for Officials

EOC	Emergency Operations Centre
EU	European Union
EU SAHA	European Union Support to the AHA Centre
GDS	Global Development and Scholarships Division
GFA	Grant funding arrangement
GIS	Geographic information system
GNS	GNS Science (a New Zealand Crown Research Institute)
HADR	Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief
IDC	International Development Cooperation
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
INARAG	International Search and Rescue Advisory Group
LMS	Learning Management System
MCDEM	Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Management
MFAT	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of New Zealand
NDMO	National Disaster Management Organisation
NEMA	National Emergency Management Agency
NFI	Non food items
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NZ	New Zealand
NZ Inc	Refers to an inclusive approach by New Zealand government entities – ministries, agencies and crown research institutions
NZDF	New Zealand Defence Force
OAOR	One ASEAN, One Response
PHM	Partnerships, Humanitarian and Multilateral Division
SASOP	Standard Operating Procedure for Regional Standby Arrangements and Coordination of Joint Disaster Relief and Emergency Response Operations
SICAP	Strengthening the Institutional Capacity of the AHA Centre for ASEAN Disaster Capacity Building Programme
UN	United Nations

UNDAC	United Nations Disaster Assistance and Coordination
UN-OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
WFP	World Food Programme

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Annex B: Proposed Logic Intervention Model for AHA Programmes

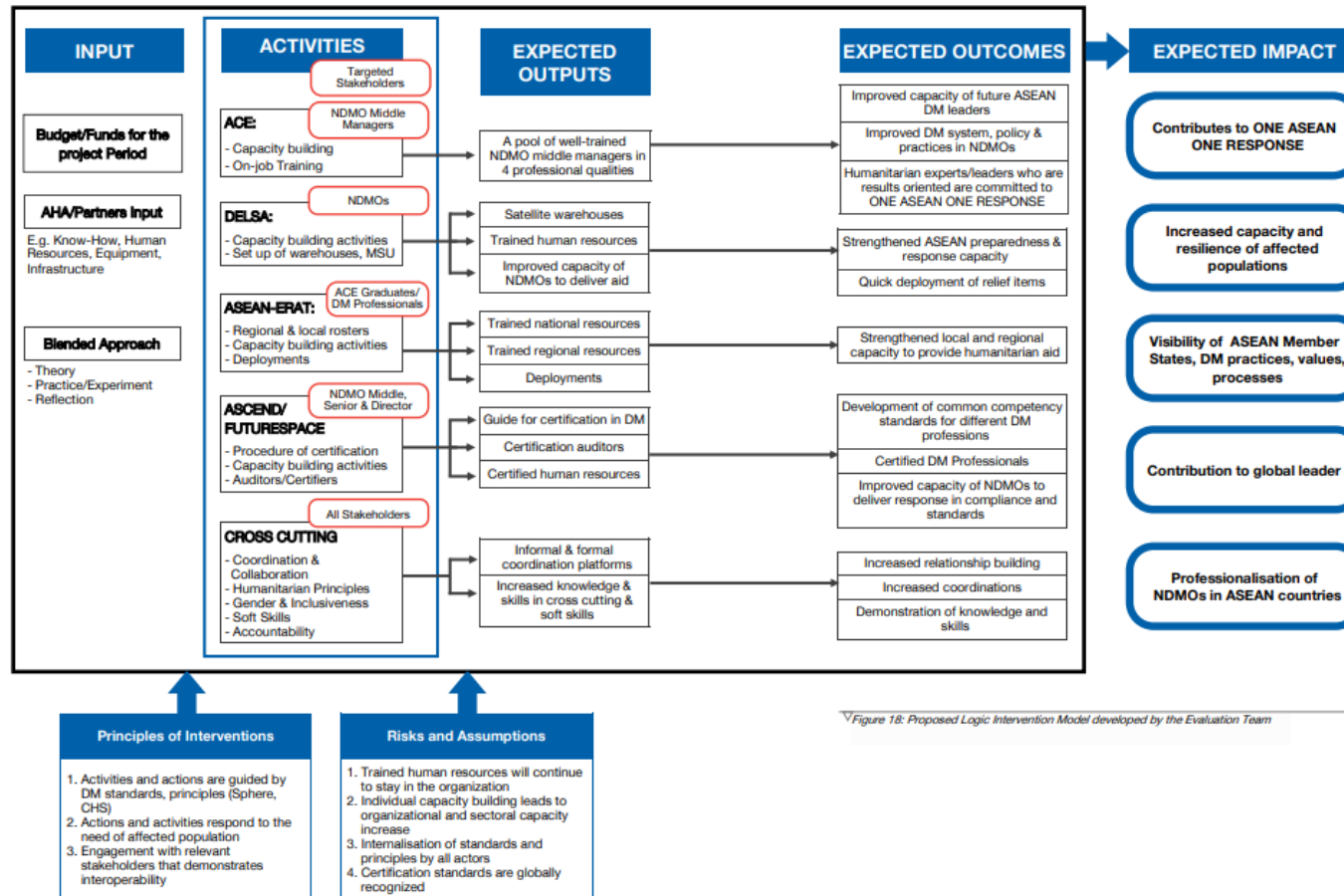


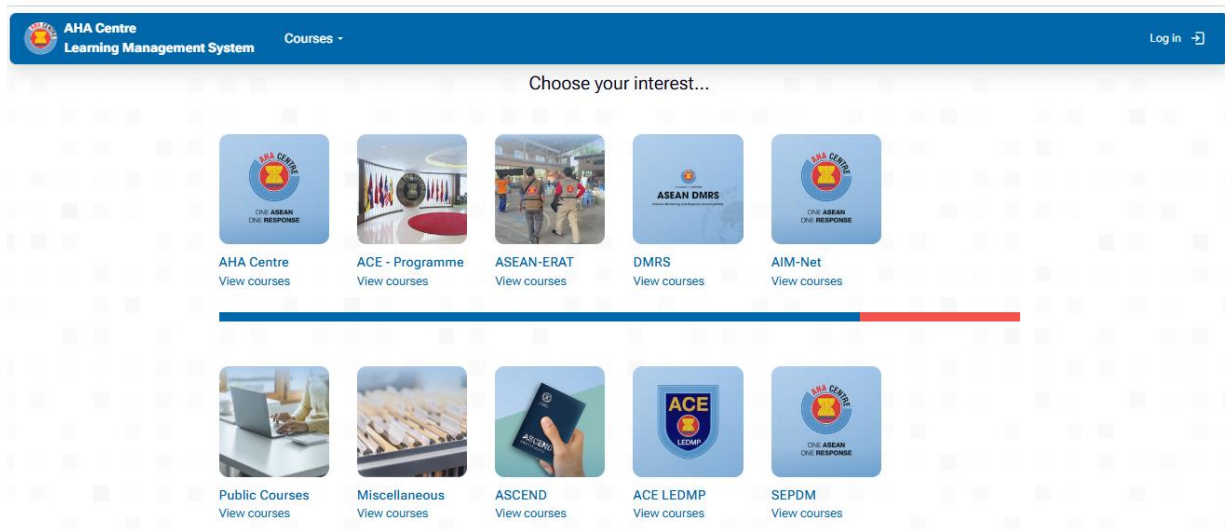
Figure 18: Proposed Logic Intervention Model developed by the Evaluation Team

Source: Narayanan et al, 2021

Annex C: AHA Centre Learning Management System

Current LMS Courses

The AHA Centre Learning Management System currently offers a range of courses. It has 700+ users and 80+ courses offered in a range of ASEAN languages <https://lms.ahacentre.org/index.php>.



Proposed SICAP e-learning courses

I. Foundational Courses

1. Optimising Effective Response for Maximum Input
2. Nationally-led Response and Global Mechanisms: Strategies for Effective International Disaster Management Engagement
3. Leadership in Disasters: An Interactive Crisis Simulation
4. Humanitarian Fundamentals Principles, Policies and Standards

II. Public/Community-level Courses

1. Climate Change 101
2. Early Warning for All
3. Nature-based Adaptation
4. Anticipatory Action
5. Business Continuity Planning
6. Private Sector Engagement
7. Technology in Disaster Management
8. AI in Disaster Management
9. Futures Thinking in Disaster Risk Management (DRM)

III. Professional Courses

1. Mastering Humanitarian Supply Chain Dynamics
2. EOC Management: Principles for Effective EOC Operations

3. Advanced Strategies for Disaster Risk Reduction and Management
4. Pre-Disaster Risk Assessment
5. Disaster Recovery 101
6. Safety and Security for Field Deployments

[Additional Public Courses for Humanitarian Professionals \(HP\) and the Public \(P\)](#)

1. Family Preparedness Planning for Disaster Resilience – P
2. Safeguarding in Humanitarian Action: Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH) – HP and P
3. Building Resilient Futures: School-Based Disaster Risk Reduction (SBDRR) and Safe Schools Programming – P
4. Empowering Youth for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR): Building Resilient Communities
5. Mainstreaming Gender in Humanitarian Programming – HP
6. Disability Inclusion in Disaster Management – HP