



Standing Group of Experts on African Swine Fever for Asia and the Pacific (as of 6 October 2023, for circulation)

Introduction

The situation of African swine fever (ASF) has become of increasing concern globally. Since the first outbreak confirmed in China in August 2018, Asia and the Pacific region have been facing significant challenges in recent years due to ASF that has caused immense economic losses, disrupted the pork supply chain, and threatened food security in many countries in the region. In response to this crisis, regional collaboration and concerted efforts are crucial to combat ASF effectively. There are additional unique challenges for dealing with the disease in Asia where there is a high density of pigs, complex value chains and many other high impact endemic swine diseases. There is a need for experts with an understanding of ASF virus and knowledge of the swine industry and swine disease situation in Asia to work together with affected and at-risk countries to share information and develop strategies that will lead to greater understanding of how to mitigate the impact of ASF in Asia and the Pacific and contribute at a global level for better understanding of the disease. A standing group of experts on ASF for Asia and the Pacific has been formed since 2019 under the FAO/WOAH Global Framework for the Progressive Control of Transboundary Animal Diseases (GF-TADs) umbrella to promote regular exchange of information and best-practices among risk managers and international and national experts.

Objective

Strengthening regional cooperation and regional dialogue on ASF through the following:

- Identify the needs of the region, support the implementation of ASF prevention and control programmes and provide advice to manage ASF better;
- Focus on the regional specific parameters which need to be practical for the region;
- Identify and prioritize research topics and emerging issues on ASF;
- Develop a mechanism for the regular exchange of information on the ASF situation and control measures applied;
- Share resources and expertise via networks among regional reference laboratories and reference centers;
- Regular review of national, regional and global control strategies based on their experience and best practice, with a view to coordinate disease control policies and building a coordinated science-based regional control strategy;
- Engage with other sectors and stakeholders, such as private sectors, research institute and research funding agencies;
- Encourage members to advocate the outcome of SGE to be applied to the national policy and strategy.

Terms of Reference

- The Standing Group of Experts on African swine fever (SGE-ASF) for Asia and the Pacific was established under the umbrella of GF-TADs for Asia and the Pacific¹

[Members]

- Members of the SGE-ASF for Asia and the Pacific include members affected by ASF and at-risk;
- Representatives from sub-regional expert groups;
- Experts from ASF reference laboratories and collaborating centres in the region;
- Internationally recognised ASF or swine disease experts with experience working in Asia on an ad hoc basis on agreement of the SGE-ASF. Invitations will be handled by the secretariat on the request of the SGE-ASF;
- Additional internationally recognised experts on ASF or other technical ones, such as private sectors and/or related associations to be invited by the group to support the SGE-ASF on an ad hoc basis. Invitations will be handled by the secretariat at the request of the SGE-ASF.

[Report]

- The SGE-ASF for Asia and the Pacific reports to the Regional Steering Committee (RSC) of the GF-TADs
- The SGE-ASF for Asia and the Pacific contributes to the Global Coordination Committee (GCC) for ASF

[Secretariat]

- **Secretariat:** GF-TADs Asia Pacific Secretariat (WOAH RRAP) in coordination with FAO RAP acts as technical secretariat for the SGE-ASF for Asia and the Pacific

Funding mechanism

- Voluntary financial contributions from member countries to FAO and WOA
- External donors

Meeting Mechanism

- The SGE-ASF will meet in-person at least once a year; additional in-person, hybrid or virtual meetings may be organized depending on needs
- The meetings will take place and be hosted in the SGE-ASF member countries, on a rotating basis
- The next host country will be identified and informed at least one year in advance, preferably at the preceding SGE meeting. As far best, the tentative hosts should already be identified for the next three years to facilitate planning
- Where possible, the meeting will be organized back-to-back with other meetings for practicality and synergies with other relevant diseases
- Host country is expected to provide the logistics: meeting room, identification of a suitable hotel, transfer to and from the hotel and, if possible, dinner and field visits;
- Agenda and invitation to be sent by the SGE-ASF secretariat upon agreement with the hosting member of the SGE;
- Summary minutes of the meeting to be prepared by SGE-ASF secretariat, circulated to participants by e-mail and published on the website of the WOA Regional Representation for Asia and the Pacific. The summary should be also formally sent to CVOs/WOA Delegates and Regional Economic Communities.
- Exchange of expertise from our region to others when applicable

¹ Founding members: People's Republic of China, Japan, Republic of Korea

- Language: English with no interpretation;

Meeting attendees

- **Members:**
 - o A decision maker (CVO or nominated representative of CVO)
 - o Nominated focal points for ASF
- **Technical expert** nominated by CVO, e.g., reference lab
- **Subject-matter experts** selected from renowned international ASF experts and regional swine disease experts
- **Representatives of WOA and FAO**
- **Representatives of partner organisations:** Upon agreement of the members of the group
- **Meeting observers:** Upon agreement of the hosting member

Specific SGE-ASF Activities

The technical areas to be discussed would be decided by the SGE and may include:

- Monitoring changes in disease epidemiology, including molecular characteristics and pathogenicity of circulating strains;
- Early detection and use of point of care diagnostic tests - what, when, how and interpretation, use of non-traditional surveillance approaches (e.g. panic sales);
- Alternatives to whole-herd depopulation for ASF control, e.g. partial culling and carcass management;
- Approaches to prevention and control including zoning and compartmentalisation (lessons learnt and advice), identification and traceability systems and information management systems;
- The use of socio-economics in controlling ASF– monitoring impact through pigs/ pork prices/ trade flows, economic flows; leveraging on social sciences to guide risk management behaviors and design of risk communication;
- Vaccine manufacturing and authorization (safety and efficacy testing protocols) including regulatory frameworks, R&D and results of trials, key risks (e.g. shedding, potential to revert to virulence, generation of field recombinant strains);
- Vaccination strategies for ASF- objective, target sub-populations, DIVA tests, exit strategy, post-vaccination monitoring and impacts on surveillance;