



Public Briefing

ASEF-ASAP (Accurate Scenarios Active Preparedness) scenarios for Pandemic Preparedness and Response

Background

Despite the sense of crisis receding in public memory, the H1N1 pandemic influenza had serious consequences for both health and non-health sectors. For the former, the immediate costs included an increasing demand across the spectrum of health care – from general practice for milder cases to intensive care for the most sick and shortage of medical supplies such as hospitals beds, antivirals and/or vaccines. For the latter, the impact is linked to economic and social disruption including travel bans, closure of schools and businesses, cancellations of events and productivity loss due to fear of exposure or care of sick family members.

To minimise or anticipate disease burden due to pandemics, better planning and response strategies need to be developed. One methodology for strategy development is the utilisation of scenarios.

Scenarios are composed a set of several relevant and plausible descriptions of diverging future developments based on driving factors and key uncertainties, as well as discontinuities or 'shocks' to the system. The scenarios integrate both qualitative and quantitative information in various forms. A particular scenario draws a picture of a possible future in the medium- and long- term when the magnitude of different variables makes it impossible to predict with reasonable probability. Scenarios outline multiple uncertainties (given difficulty to predict one "certain" outcome) and complexity (considering many different but relevant factors/actors), and provide the means to grasp what the future can bring – as a basis for strategy-making.

The ASEF Public Health Network Accurate Scenarios Active Preparedness (ASEF-ASAP)

In the midst of pandemic outbreak and its foreseeable impact on various sectors of society, the notion of multi-sector pandemic preparedness becomes the target of the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) Public Health Network. In order to achieve this, the Network took a scenario development approach to formulate strategies for pandemic preparedness and response.

Through a series of workshops entitled **the ASEF Public Health Network Accurate Scenarios Active Preparedness (ASEF-ASAP)** organised in 2010, the Network convened a panel of experts from Asia and Europe with different backgrounds and expertise in order to address driving factors, key uncertainties as well as the sensitivity against different future settings. ASEF-ASAP Scenarios are long-term scenarios with a 30-year time perspective. The Scenarios cater for possibilities of the future: different governance

settings; a variety of pandemic threats; varying trade patterns with an impact on access to medicine; possible changes in intellectual property rights' mechanisms vis-à-vis the health system; and an evolving media role in health system emergencies.

Three scenarios were developed as follows:

Grey paradise

The development of Asia and Europe is characterised by sustainable development, economic control by government and global political structures.

GloCal blocs

Asia and Europe are characterised by blocs' collective economic interest, environmental resource abuse and political structures along regional lines.

MosaInc.

Asia and Europe are characterised by economic self-interest, environmental resource abuse and politically weak and market-dominated structures.

A storyline was formulated for each scenario to better communicate its logic. The scenarios were launched in June 2011 in Bangkok, Thailand and are also ready for taking up by any institutions as inputs to strengthen their responses to any public health emergencies in the future. The scenarios since have been applied to develop multi-sectoral strategies, as well as for specific sectors such as by major airlines, airport hubs and transportation authorities.