

GREATER MEKONG SUBREGION ECONOMIC COOPERATION PROGRAM

DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS' MEETING

7 December 2022, 0830 AM – 1200 PM

Luang Prabang, Lao PDR

Concept Note

25th GMS Ministerial Conference (MC-25)

Background. The 25th GMS Ministerial Conference (MC-25) with the theme: *“Accelerating Economic Recovery to Expand 30 Years of GMS Achievements Toward Inclusive and Sustainable Development”* will be held on 8 December 2022 in Luang Prabang, Lao PDR. MC-25 aims to pursue the long-term directions set in the 7th **GMS Leaders’ Summit** (Summit-7) held in September 2021. At the Summit-7, GMS Leaders approved the [Greater Mekong Subregion Economic Cooperation Strategic Framework 2030](#) (GMS-2030) while reaffirming the importance of partnerships which GMS has promoted since the Program’s inception in 1992.¹ Moreover, Summit-7 mandated the GMS Program to “become an open platform promoting enhanced participation by development partners (DPs), local governments, academia, and civil society”. This would allow the GMS Program to draw upon a wider and deeper pool of financial, technical and knowledge resources as it seeks to meet the region’s expanding development needs, including by entering into new and complex areas if necessary.

Tackling emerging challenges and opportunities. GMS countries continue to seek the assistance of ADB and DPs to the GMS Program for financial, knowledge, and technical support. Such support covers not only financing of investment projects but also grants and technical assistance projects, knowledge and expertise. GMS-2030 has called for the Program to undertake work in new, innovative areas and to further emphasize themes cutting across its activities, such as migration, digitalization, gender, trade and investment. DPs can help the GMS Program in these areas with their knowledge, expertise, and experience. At the same time the financing needs in the GMS Program remain large and are likely to grow as the Program expands into new areas.

1. Prior to MC-25, the **Annual Development Partners’ Meeting** (DPM) is being organized to be held on 7 December 2022. This year’s DPM will endeavor to reach new ground for the GMS program, taking into account the results and recommendations of the Study “Deepening Development Partners’ Engagement in the GMS Program” (the “GMS DPs Study” is at Attachment A). The DPM will consider the DPs Study to solicit views of the DPs on efficacious implementation of, and concrete next steps on, the actions recommended by the Study.

Expected Outcome

2. The meeting outcomes are as follows:

- (i) DPs apprised of GMS DPs Study findings and recommended actions;
- (ii) Next steps, including priority activities identified to enable the DPs and GMS countries to efficiently implement Study’s recommended actions;

¹ Over the past 3 decades, DPs have contributed actively towards the Program mobilizing financing of over \$28 billion for GMS projects since 1992. Of this total, ADB, other DPs and the private sector contributed more than \$22 billion (78%) with remaining share of \$6 billion (22%) coming from the GMS Governments.

- (iii) Greater understanding by DPs of the use of the new GMS Regional Investment Framework (RIF) 2023-2025 as an instrument for their own RCI pipeline development, project identification and preparation.
- (iv) Shared perspectives by both DPs and countries on possible entry points for DPs in enhancing upstream engagement and programmatic approaches using the new RIF process.
- (v) DPs Knowledge sharing and exchange of ideas facilitated amongst Meeting participants on successful RCI projects in other regions.

Participants

3. GMS Senior Officials and representatives of development partner organizations will be invited to participate in this in-person meeting.

PROVISIONAL ANNOTATED PROGRAM AND AGENDA

Chair:	Lao PDR
Co-Chair:	Asian Development Bank (ADB)
0830 – 0840 (10 mins)	Welcome Remarks by Chair and Co-Chair
0840 – 0900 (20 mins)	Session 1: Development Partner Engagement: Moving from Recommendations to Implementation
	<i>The session will include (i) a brief presentation of the highlights of the GMS DPs Study and (ii) discussion of DPs' views efficient implementation of the actions for enhancing DP engagement.</i>
0900 – 0930 (30 mins)	Discussion DPs will be asked to shared their views on: 1. What are the DPs perspectives on implementation of the DP Study's actions for enhancing DP engagement? 2. How do DPs view their short- and medium-term engagement with the GMS program in the context of the differentiated roles (financing partner, institutional partner, knowledge partner, others) for DPs in the GMS DPs study? and 3. What sectors/thematic areas would DPs like to support or take the lead in?
0930 – 0950 20 mins)	Session 2: Regional Investment Framework (RIF) 2025: Development Partners Perspectives on Entry Points into the new RIF
	<i>The DPs will be briefed on the new Regional Investment Framework 2023-2025 (new RIF2025) which will support the strategic and operational priorities of GMS-2030. The new RIF 2025 (i) adopted new criteria for</i>

	<p><i>project pipeline, (ii) involved a process for proposing, reviewing, and approving RIF projects, and (iii) developed a list of new project pipeline.</i></p> <p><i>The session will engage development partners to identify potential entry points into the new RIF 2025 aligned to their own programming preferences.</i></p>
<p>0950 – 1020 (30 mins)</p>	<p>Discussion</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are the regional projects that DPs are supporting? How would the RIF process affect their proposing regional projects initiated and supported by them into the GMS RIF? 2. How could DPs contribute in project preparation and project financing? How would the RIF influence their willingness or feasibility towards more programmatic approaches at sector level?
<p>1020 – 1035 (15 mins)</p>	<p>Coffee Break</p>
<p>1035 – 1150 (75 mins)</p>	<p>Session 3: DP Perspectives on Improving Partnership Predictability, and Knowledge Sharing on Regional Projects</p>
	<p><i>This Session will invite DPs' perspectives on how to contribute to the MC-25's Theme, in general and suggest joint priorities for regional cooperation in the short to medium-term. DPs may draw upon their own action plans and commitments for GMS regional cooperation for 2023-25. (DPs will be requested to keep interventions brief and focused in this session but will be invited to submit longer transcripts of their interventions to the GMS Secretariat for inclusion in the proceedings of the DPM).</i></p> <p><i>Selected DPs will be requested to share examples of good regional projects they are supporting globally, highlighting good practices and lessons relevant for the GMS region.</i></p>
	<p>Discussion</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. GMS Senior Officials will be invited to remark on highlights of DPs action plans and commitments in contributing to Program achievements over 2023-25. 2. GMS Senior Officials and other participants will be invited to react to presentations on good projects and implications of good practices and lessons for future enhancements to the GMS Program.
<p>1150 – 1200 (10 min)</p>	<p>Wrap Up by Co-Chair and Closing Remarks by Chair</p>