

Summary of Proceedings

Introduction

1. The members and representatives of the GMS Urban Development Working Group (UDWG) from Cambodia, PRC, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, Viet Nam, and GMS Secretariat met on 21 June 2023 for the 6th meeting of the working group via web-based conferencing. The objectives of the meeting were to: (i) update UDWG members of ongoing GMS Program initiatives; (ii) discuss the assessment of the GMS Urban Strategic Framework 2015-2022 and proposed methodology and work plan for a new urban strategic framework; (iii) UDWG members to provide updates for RIF 2024-2026; and; (iv) agree on the next steps, including preparation of the next UDWG meeting in 2024. The meeting agenda is **attachment 1**.

2. The meeting was chaired by Mr. Aung Kyaw Soe, Director General, Department of Urban and Housing Development, Ministry of Construction, Myanmar. The list of participants is **attachment 2**.

3. The Chair welcomed the UDWG-6 meeting participants and invited Heads of delegations to introduce themselves and for some opening remarks. The GMS Secretariat was then requested by the Chair to run through the program agenda.

Session 1: Updates on GMS Program Initiatives

4. The GMS Secretariat updated the working group of ongoing GMS program initiatives especially relevant to the work of the Urban Development Working Group. The GMS initiatives reported on include:

- Deepening Private Sector Participation in the GMS Program;
- Digital Strategy for the GMS Program;
- Study on Strengthening Engagement of Local Governments in the GMS; and
- SEZs in Mekong Region for growing together.

A copy of the presentation is **attachment 3**.

Discussion

5. Following are UDWG members' comments and reactions on Session 1 presentation:

- **PRC** expressed active support to the GMS Secretariat lead in research and formulation of the framework documents regarding deepening private sector participation, strengthening local government participation, special economic zones, and digital

strategies. PRC is committed to cooperate with the GMS Secretariat in carrying out relevant work. In addition, combined with the practical experience of PRC's new urbanization construction, they proposed to select several cities with good foundation, great potential and high enthusiasm in the GMS, and focus on the construction of digital economy, public transportation, and health system to develop some demonstration pilots for a new type of urbanization construction.

- **Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam** all appreciated the GMS Program initiatives and expressed their full support and cooperation in undertaking the planned activities, including the consultative meetings.

Session 2: GMS Urban Development Strategic Framework and Regional Investment Framework

6. The GMS Secretariat gave a presentation on the new GMS Regional Investment Framework (RIF) and the list of Urban Development and Other Multisector projects included in RIF 2023-2025. The timeline for preparing this year's update for the period 2024-2026 was also shown and requested UDWG members to submit by 30 June their proposed new projects for inclusion in the RIF. A copy of the presentation is **attachment 5**.

7. The GMS Secretariat also presented on Urban Development Strategic Framework (UDSF) which covered a brief review of UDSF 2015-2022 and proposed steps towards developing a new GMS Urban Development Strategic Framework 2023-2030 as agreed in the Fifth Meeting of the working group. A copy of the presentation is **attachment 6**.

Discussion

8. UDWG members provided the following comments and suggestions re RIF 2024-2026:

- **PRC** informed that the PRC Urban Development and Multisector projects included in RIF 2023-2025 are making progress and proposed to be retained. They will coordinate with the GMS Secretariat to submit a new project inclusion in the RIF 2024-2026.
- **Lao PDR** will also submit new Urban development projects, among others, Namtha Urban Environment Improvement and Lak Sao Border Town Development Project.
- **Myanmar** will also submit new proposed projects that are urban planning and GMS Southern Corridor- related.
- **Thailand** is not expected to submit projects under this sector..
- **Cambodia** proposed to roll over their Urban Development projects in RIF 2023-2025 and may submit new ones for this year's update related to road improvement , logistics complex and railway technical assistance.

9. Re the proposed content/outline and timeline of preparing the next GMS Urban Development Strategy, UDWG members agreed in principle. Following are specific additional feedback received:

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GMS Urban Development Working Group

21 June 2023, Wednesday • Zoom

- **PRC** has three suggestions. First is to reflect lessons learned, good practices experienced under the UDSF 2015-2022. Second is to highlight key points such as major policies, fields, and projects for GMS urban development. Third, pay close attention to the changes in the development environment inside and outside the Greater Mekong Sub-region, to respond to the changing situation.
- **Thailand** emphasized to cover climate change solutions and digitalization that are also in line with ASEAN and other regional groupings' initiatives.

10. As other matters, the GMS Secretariat raised with Thailand its acceptance to host the next UDWG meeting to which Thailand welcomed.

11. The Chair noted to collectively take stock of the items raised in sessions 1 & 2 and with everyone's cooperation reach the relevant decisions in due course. He encouraged everyone to submit in the next two weeks written additional views, comments, RIF 2024-2026 projects and/or concerns, if any. He thanked everyone's active participation that made the meeting productive and successful. Having no other items to raise from the floor, the meeting was declared closed by the Chair.