

GMS E-updates provides information about key activities and major developments in the GMS as the six countries sharing the Mekong River strive to accelerate the region's development

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GMS Ministers Take Action for Inclusive, Sustainable Development



The 20th GMS Ministerial Conference (20th MC) was held on 9–10 September in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar. The 20th MC had four main events: a Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM) the morning of 9 September; a Development Partners' Meeting (DPM) the afternoon of 9 September; a plenary/formal Ministerial Meeting the morning of 10 September; and an informal, closed-door Ministerial Retreat the afternoon of 10 September.

Vice President of Myanmar H.E. U Nyan Tun (sixth from right) with VP Groff (second from right) together with GMS Ministers and Vice-Ministers attends the Opening Ceremony of the 20th Ministerial Conference

The Vice President of Myanmar, His Excellency U Nyan Tun, delivered an opening speech at the Ministerial Meeting, welcoming the Ministers and other 20th MC participants.

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Senior Officials' Meeting for the 20th GMS Ministerial Conference

9 September 2015, Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar

The 20th MC was preceded by the Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM) held in the morning of 9 September. The SOM conducted a final review of several deliverables for the 20th MC, either for endorsement or notation by the GMS Ministers.

The key deliverable for endorsement by the GMS Ministers, is the GMS Urban Development Strategic Framework 2015–2022, which sets out a broad framework aimed at encouraging and facilitating a coordinated approach to the development of urban areas throughout the GMS.

The first deliverable for notation is the First Progress Report on the GMS Regional Investment Framework Implementation Plan (RIF-IP), covering progress up to 30 June 2015. The GMS Ministers endorsed the RIF-IP (2014–2018) in 2014, which includes a pipeline of about 90 high priority projects. Other key deliverables for notation by the GMS Ministers included:

- (i) the GMS Projects Database, an online platform which enables countries, development partners, the private sector, and other interested stakeholders to access information about projects in the GMS Program;
- (ii) the Transport and Trade Facilitation Action Program for the GMS, an integrated program of advisory support and capacity building focused on enhancing cross-border transport and trade in the subregion;
- (iii) the GMS Tourism Marketing Strategy and Action Plan, 2015–2020, which sets out a concrete plan to cost-effectively promote multicountry travel, increase market awareness, and improve market linkages between the GMS countries; and
- (iv) the Framework on GMS Cross-border E-commerce

Cooperation Platform, initiated by the Ministry of Commerce of the People's Republic of China (PRC), with a view to keep abreast of the rapid development of global cross-border e-commerce, and accelerate the development of a GMS e-commerce commodity market.

The meeting also discussed the Final Joint Ministerial Statement and finalized the preparations for the 20th MC key events, the plenary Ministerial Meeting and the Ministers' Retreat, which took place on 10 September.

The SOM was attended by GMS Senior Officials of Cambodia, PRC, Lao Peoples' Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Thailand, and Viet Nam, and ADB representatives.

A SOM Summary report was presented to the GMS Ministers at the 20th MC on 10 September. ■



Development Partners' Meeting 9 September 2015, Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar

Development Partners' Meetings (DPMs) are integral events of GMS Ministerial Conferences, and serve as a platform for strengthening partnerships among GMS countries and development partners – including bilateral and multilateral donor organizations, the private sector, civil society and academia – in implementing the GMS Economic Cooperation Program. A DPM, organized in the afternoon of 9 September 2015 in conjunction with the 20th MC, represented another occasion to recognize Development Partners' (DPs) contribution to the GMS Program.

Under the ADB-assisted GMS Program, for instance, as of end 2014, ADB had extended loans totaling \$6.3 billion (37%) for 70 investment projects, with a total project cost of about \$17.1 billion. Other development partners provided co-financing of \$6.2 billion (36%), while GMS governments contributed \$4.6 billion (27%) for these projects. For the period 1992–2014, DPs contributed to technical assistance (TA) projects through knowledge sharing, capacity building, policy advice, and project preparation across all sectors of the GMS Program. ADB provided about \$122.4 million (34%) for 200 TA projects, with a total cost of \$353.5 million. GMS governments contributed \$20.0 million (6%), while other development partners provided co-financing of \$211.2 million (60%).

A key item discussed at the DPM was the updating of the Development Partners' Assistance Matrix – an inventory of DPs' ongoing and planned projects

in the GMS that was prepared for last year's 5th GMS Summit to help explore synergies and potential partnerships for the implementation of prioritized projects under the GMS Regional Investment Framework Implementation Plan (RIF-IP). The Matrix showed that as of 2014, DPs were providing more than \$42 billion in support for investment projects, and about \$930 million in technical assistance projects in the GMS – both ongoing and proposed projects. With the continued assistance of DPs, the matrix will be updated to serve as an important information resource to help monitor the progress in closing the financing gap for the GMS RIF-IP.

DPs also welcomed the GMS Projects Database, an information portal that captures geo-coded information about GMS projects and activities. They shared their views that the Database can contribute to improved planning, better coordination, and more comprehensive monitoring of development impacts.

DPs appreciated the first Progress Report of the RIF-IP, which highlights opportunities for further DP support to priority GMS projects. For their part, GMS countries emphasized the need for continued DP engagement to fill the financing gaps for investment (estimated at \$26 billion) and technical assistance (estimated at \$48 million) under the RIF-IP.

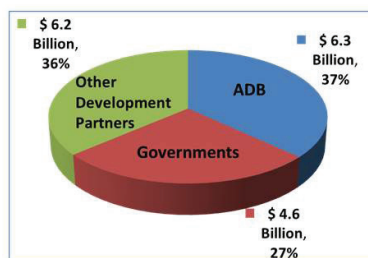
A unique feature of the DPM was a panel session featuring a diverse mix of 6 representatives from donor and intergovernmental organizations, the private sector, an international NGO, and academia who shared their perspectives on how DPs can contribute to "Taking Action for Inclusive and Sustainable Development in the GMS" as the global community prepared for the adoption by the UN of the post-2015 Development Agenda and its core Sustainable Development Goals.

A report on the DPM was presented to the GMS Ministers at their 20th Ministerial Meeting on 10 September 2015. ■

Development Partners and the GMS Program

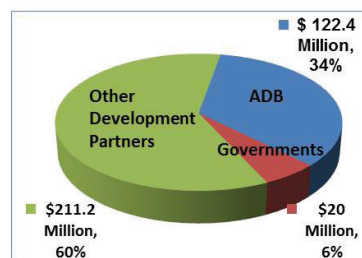
ADB-Assisted GMS Investment Projects

- DPs have contributed 36% of total investment costs of GMS Projects, 1994-2014



ADB-Assisted GMS TA Projects

- DPs have provided 60% of total grant funding for GMS TA Projects, 1992-2014



Source: ADB Staff estimates.

7th GMS Economic Corridors Forum: “Fostering Pragmatic Cooperation towards the Future of GMS Economic Corridors”

11 June 2015, Kunming, People’s Republic of China

The Seventh GMS Economic Corridors Forum (ECF-7) was held on 11 June 2015 in Kunming, PRC, where the very first Forum had been held. ECF-7’s theme was “*Fostering Pragmatic Cooperation towards the Future of GMS Economic Corridors*”, and the Forum was attended by over 200 participants including officials from key central government agencies in GMS countries, provincial authorities, private sector representatives, international development organizations, and other institutions.

ECF-7 focused on responding to the consensus reached at ECF-6, on the need to revisit the original purpose and focus of the ECF: promoting investment, trade, tourism, industrial development, and other economic activities along the GMS corridors. The Forum’s agenda and proceedings addressed the following objectives: (i) revisiting and reviewing the implementation of the GMS Economic Corridor Strategies and Action Plans, assessing the gaps, and considering measures to address remaining challenges moving forward; (ii) considering new approaches for a sharpened focus on economic corridor development including a pilot initiative on corridor section-specific concept plans as bases for preparing more detailed economic corridor development action plans and investment programs; (iii) discussing enhanced approaches to GMS Transport and Trade Facilitation;

and (iv) considering emerging areas and platforms for enhanced cross-border cooperation and private sector participation including urban development and development of Special Economic Zones and e-commerce.

The Forum also highlighted the need to reinvigorate efforts to initiate more concrete and specific undertakings that will

transform the GMS connectivity corridors into genuine economic corridors, which will bring a wide range of benefits, including new employment and livelihood opportunities for local populations, better access to markets and social services, and help small- and medium-size enterprises to better connect to consumers, suppliers, and financial services. A number of other important events were also held in Kunming in conjunction with ECF-7, including the GMS Governors’ Forum on 10 June, the GMS Economic Corridors Week on 10–13 June, and the GMS Commodities Trade Fair on 12–16 June. ■

GMS Ministers Take Action . . . continued from page 1

The overall theme of the 20th MC, “Taking Action for Inclusive and Sustainable Development”, built on the theme of the 5th GMS Summit held in Bangkok in December 2014, “Committed to Inclusive and Sustainable Development in the GMS”. The 20th MC focused on fulfilling the mandate of the GMS Leaders to find specific ways to achieve inclusive and sustainable development for the subregion. To this end, the Conference reviewed the progress of various GMS initiatives set forth in the GMS Regional Investment Framework Implementation Plan (RIF-IP). In addition to the first RIF-IP Progress Report, the other 20th MC deliverables included:

- (i) the GMS Urban Development Strategic Framework, 2015–2022, which the Ministers endorsed;
- (ii) the GMS Projects Database, initiated by ADB;

- (iii) the Transport and Trade Facilitation Action Program for the GMS;
- (iv) the GMS Tourism Marketing Strategy and Action Plan, 2015–2020; and
- (v) the Framework on GMS Cross-border E-commerce Cooperation Platform.

At the 20th MC, particularly the Ministerial Retreat, discussions focused on possible means by which the GMS Program can play an active role and contribute more significantly to the achievement of key regional and global goals, such as the realization of the ASEAN Economic Community and other regional cooperation and integration initiatives (e.g., the Belt and Road Initiative), and the Post-2015 Development Agenda and its core Sustainable Development Goals that were adopted and endorsed at the United Nations Summit in September 2015. ■

Sector Updates

TRANSPORT

19th Meeting of the GMS Subregional Transport Forum

3-4 August 2015,
Phnom Penh, Cambodia

The Nineteenth Meeting of the Subregional Transport Forum was held in Phnom Penh, Cambodia on 3-4 August 2015. The Meeting was jointly organized by the Ministry of Public Works and Transport of Cambodia and ADB.

The Meeting's key objectives were: (i) review progress in implementing high priority transport projects in the GMS Regional Investment Framework Implementation Plan (RIF-IP); (ii) discuss possible ways to support and improve the operation and maintenance of GMS road assets for better sustainability; (iii) discuss possibilities for establishing a system for insuring critical transport infrastructure against natural disasters; (iv) review the progress of work of the Greater Mekong Railway Association; and (v) discuss other topics relevant to the transport sector.

The progress report on priority transport projects, which made up about 90% of the RIF-IP pipeline in terms of estimated total cost, was prepared under the simple monitoring system under the RIF-IP, which was designed to provide an updated picture of the implementation progress of these projects. The progress report on transport projects was then consolidated into an overall progress report on the RIF-IP covering all sectors that was presented to the GMS Ministerial Conference on 9-10 September 2015. ■

Cambodia's 2.2 kilometer-long Tsubasa Bridge provides a new link for National Route 1 over the Mekong River



ENERGY

Eighteenth Meeting of the Regional Power Trade Coordination Committee

9–10 June 2015, Bagan, Myanmar

The 18th Meeting of the Regional Power Trade Coordination Committee (RPTCC-18) was held on 9–10 June 2015 in Bagan, Myanmar. RPTCC-18 was organized by Myanmar’s Ministry of Electric Power in cooperation with the ADB. It was attended by all members of the RPTCC from six GMS countries and representatives of ADB, Agence Française de Développement (AFD), and the World Bank.

The meeting provided updates on the GMS countries’ power development plans focusing on cross-border projects in line with updated and recent developments in the power sector from each GMS country.

The meeting discussed the implementation progress of the Regional Investment Framework of the energy sector, comprising four investment projects and four technical assistance (TA) projects.

At the meeting, ADB introduced the regional TA on Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA) Phase II which is co-financed by

AFD. Phase I study showed that current power development plans in the GMS present high environmental and social pressures as GMS economic growth has been stronger and demand for electricity is growing faster. Thus for Phase II, three component activities are proposed, namely; (i) developing integrated SEA approach considering potential benefits and impacts of renewable energy and energy efficiency as well as cross-border interconnections in Viet Nam, (ii) enhancing country capacity building in strengthening the sustainability of power sector development for all GMS countries, and (iii) developing knowledge products on selected topics and themes based on GMS countries’ needs and priorities.

The meeting also discussed the status of the Regional Power Coordination Center (RPCC) headquarters hosting issue and other regular matters. ■

Transmission lines in Kampong Speu province

AGRICULTURE

12th Meeting of GMS Working Group on Agriculture

25–26 June 2015, Bangkok, Thailand

The GMS Working Group on Agriculture held its 12th Meeting (WGA-12) on 25–26 June 2015 in Bangkok, Thailand, back-to-back with the 21st Meeting of the GMS Working Group on Environment (WGE-21). These meetings were preceded by the 3rd Joint WGA-WGE Knowledge Event on “Developing Inclusive and Sustainable Agriculture Value Chains in the GMS” held on 24 June 2015.

WGA-12 reviewed the 2014 accomplishments under the Core Agriculture Support Program Phase 2 (CASP 2). Major breakthroughs include (i) the establishment of National Secretariat Support Units in all 6 GMS countries to enhance cooperation between the WGA Secretariat and the national line ministries, and (ii) the adoption of the Letter of Agreement mechanism in each country in carrying out country-level activities that align with national agricultural development priorities and enhance country ownership of the program with strong collaboration with civil society, the private sector and other GMS working groups. Under CASP 2 Pillar 1 on food safety and trade modernization, national workshops on Participatory Guarantee System were successfully implemented in the 6 GMS countries and pilot sites have been selected in Thailand and Viet Nam. Under Pillar 2 on adoption of climate-



friendly agriculture, activities included the establishment of demonstration farms, formalization of Memorandum of Understanding with the private sector to promote market linkages, soil suitability mapping and nitrogen assessment as well as production of awareness-raising and knowledge products. Under Pillar 3 on bioenergy and biomass management, activities were focused on the promotion of clean energy (bioenergy) and cross-cutting policy and regional cooperation initiatives. The meeting also featured detailed presentations by country representatives and experts/consultants on related CASP 2 activities and discussed proposed activities in the 2015 work plan relating to livestock traceability, e-trade for agri-trade promotion through information, communication and technology, and further work on the GMS Agriculture Information Network System.

The Meeting discussed the Agriculture sector's inputs to the first progress report of the GMS RIF-IP that was presented at the 20th GMS Ministerial Conference in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar in September 2015. The Meeting agreed that on top of the two investment and two project preparatory technical assistance (TA) projects currently in the RIF-IP, three new TAs would be added and included in the sector progress report.

Plans for supporting CASP 2 including improved institutional mechanisms for better effectiveness and efficiency, an indicative framework for the mid-term review of the program, and the roles of countries in leading progress in the sector were also discussed. ■



JOINT AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

Joint Knowledge Event on “Developing Inclusive and Sustainable Agricultural Value Chains in the Greater Mekong Subregion”

24 June 2015, Bangkok, Thailand

The Third Joint Knowledge Event co-organized by the GMS Working Groups on Agriculture (WGA) and Environment (WGE), with the theme “*Developing Inclusive and Sustainable Agricultural Value Chains in the Greater Mekong Subregion*”, was held on 24 June 2015 in Bangkok, Thailand.

The event provided an opportunity to address some of the remaining challenges identified in the Joint Summit Declaration of the 5th GMS Summit in December 2014. It also aligned with commitments made by GMS Environment

Leaders in their Joint Statement at the 4th GMS Environment Ministers’ Meeting in January 2015 to work across all sectors to ensure that the sound management of natural capital is addressed at all levels of development planning and investment decision making.

The objectives of the event were to: (i) raise awareness on the importance of promoting inclusive and sustainable development of the subregion; (ii) share experiences and best practices on developing pro-poor value chains; (iii) highlight synergies and opportunities

for increasing investments in pro-poor agricultural value chain development and identify financing mechanisms; (iv) identify possible areas of collaboration among major agriculture and environment stakeholders; and (v) facilitate partners along value chains to better organize themselves and support growth of small and medium enterprises.

The session concluded with a consensus that there is a need to move from theory to actually applying good practice, in tandem with focused sharing and shoring efforts like this Joint Knowledge Event, in terms of inclusive and sustainable value chains and beyond. Some of the areas of which concrete actions are required, include

(i) positioning and synergizing the work undertaken by the Core Agriculture Support Program and Core Environment Program in the context of sustainable and inclusive agricultural value chains; (ii) identifying suitable financing models; (iii) promoting integrated land and water management strategies to minimize agricultural production impacts on the environment; and (iv) working with countries in restructuring rural development policies in the context of the ASEAN Economic Community and ASEAN economic integration.

The knowledge event followed the 21st Annual Meeting of the WGE held on 23 June and preceded the 12th Annual Meeting of the WGA held on 25 June, both

held in Bangkok, Thailand. It was attended by around 140 officials from the agriculture, environment, and other relevant ministries of Cambodia, PRC, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, and Viet Nam; GMS National Secretariats; development partners; ADB and GMS Environment Operations Center staff. ■

Read Summary of Proceedings and meeting documents:
<http://www.gms-eoc.org/events/developing-inclusive-and-sustainable-agricultural-value->

Participants from the Working Group on Agriculture, Working Group on Environment, co-financing partners, and ADB



ENVIRONMENT

21st Annual Meeting of the GMS Working Group on Environment

23 June 2015, Bangkok, Thailand

The GMS Working Group on Environment (WGE), hosted by Thailand's Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, was held on 23 June 2015 in Bangkok, Thailand. The meeting was attended by WGE members, ADB representatives, and development partners to (i) discuss the implementation progress of the Core Environment Program (CEP) in 2014; (ii) present the CEP strategic directions post Midterm Review; (iii) discuss institutional development of the WGE and Environment Operations Center; (iv) plan CEP engagement in the GMS Regional Investment Framework; and (v) further explore areas for regional environment collaboration.

The meeting had two key outcomes: (i) identifying the strategic directions and agreed to be implemented by all relevant stakeholders; and (ii) defining clear roles and functions for the countries to implement the strategic resolution and related activities.

The meeting was followed by the Joint Knowledge Event on “Developing Inclusive and

Sustainable Agricultural Value Chains in the Greater Mekong Subregion on 24 June 2015 and the GMS Core Environment Program Technical Workshop, on 25 June, both held in Bangkok, Thailand. ■

Read Summary of Proceedings and meeting documents:
<http://www.gms-eoc.org/events/working-group-on-environment-21st-annual-meeting>



CORE ENVIRONMENT PROGRAM INITIATIVES

Viet Nam tests green freight approaches for an economic and environment win-win

Viet Nam road freight stakeholders gathered in Ha Noi on 5 August to learn about the GMS Core Environment Program's Green Freight Initiative and early results from its efforts to improve the environmental and economic performance of the industry.

Since February, technologies to improve fuel efficiency have been tested on trucks from five freight companies, focusing on high performance tires, better tire pressure monitoring, and retrofit equipment for improved aerodynamic performance. An eco-driver training curriculum is also being developed and tested.

Small-medium truck companies dominate Viet Nam's road freight transport industry but are often inefficient, operating old truck fleets with weak logistics management and poorly trained drivers. Gas guzzling engines, low quality tires, and practices such as hauling empty loads mean fuel costs often cripple profit margins for smaller operators.

Meanwhile, a lack of capital is proving a major barrier for many companies to upgrade their truck fleets and invest in other efficiency measures.

The environmental consequences are considerable too with road freight transport—dominated by small-medium companies—a major contributor to the country’s energy related greenhouse gas emissions. Under the Green Freight Initiative, transport agencies and trucking companies

are working with international experts to improve the situation, targeting a 10% reduction in truck fuel use for small-medium freight companies.

The Green Freight Initiative is also operating in Lao PDR and Thailand, with all three countries linked by the East-West Economic Corridor, a key trade route in the GMS. The long-term aim of the initiative is to stimulate major investments in green freight along the corridor.

More than 60 representatives from truck companies, environment and transport ministries, and international organizations attended the event, which was hosted by the Directorate of Roads of Viet Nam. ■

See more at: <http://www.gms-eoc.org/news/viet-nam-tests-green-freight-approaches-for-an-economic-and-environment-win-win#sthash.zJToo8MV.dpuf>

Latest land use modeling software introduced to Viet Nam



Lecturers and researchers from universities and institutes in Viet Nam were trained on the latest land use change modeling software as part of a regional Core Environment Program (CEP) initiative aiming to improve land use planning in the GMS. A four day training of trainers course was held in Ha Noi on 3–6 August 2015 to provide participants with an intensive

rundown on how to apply the CLUMondo modeling software.

CLUMondo modeling helps land use planners project the type, scale, and location of future demand for land. When combined with other tools, such as Spatial Multicriteria Assessment, it enables land use decisions to better balance economic, social, and environmental considerations.

An improved version of the software was recently developed through CEP support.

Following the training, on 7 August, senior officials from key ministries were given an overview of how land use modeling can benefit policy making and discussed potential planning process into which CLUMondo could be applied.

The training course will be delivered to other five GMS countries in the coming months and the longer term aim is to establish a network of national academic institutions that provide modeling support to relevant government agencies.

The Viet Nam training workshop was co-organized by the Ho Chi Minh University of Natural Resources and Environment, the Free University of Amsterdam, and the GMS Environment Operations Center. ■

See more at: <http://www.gms-eoc.org/news/latest-land-use-modeling-software-introduced-to-viet-nam#sthash.EybTH3Zd.dpuf>

PRC shares biodiversity conservation lessons with the GMS

In late July, PRC hosted senior forestry and conservation officials from GMS countries to share nearly a decade of the country's experience piloting biodiversity conservation corridors.

In 2007, around 18,000 hectares of forested land in Yunnan's Xishuangbanna prefecture were demarcated as biodiversity corridors with the aim of protecting and enhancing forest connectivity between four protected areas near the Lao PDR and Myanmar borders. In 2009, Guangxi established its first corridors in Jingxi County. The corridors in both provinces contain important habitat for biodiversity but face immense pressure from agricultural expansion and

forest degradation. This poses considerable threats for flora and fauna.

With support from the GMS Core Environment Program (CEP) and NGO partners, the environment departments of Guangxi and Yunnan have piloted and combined a range of conservation and livelihood development interventions in the corridors in recent years. This integrated approach recognizes that local communities and government must work together to ensure that the corridors are managed sustainably for the long term.

Participants at the 2-day workshop, held in Tengchong, Yunnan on 28–29 July 2015, learned about the challenges and

successes of these interventions as well as ongoing work and future plans. Biodiversity corridor planning and management approaches were discussed, including how to involve different sectors in planning processes as well as specific interventions such as Village Development Funds, habitat recovery, and eco-compensation initiatives.

The workshop was organized by the Foreign Economic Cooperation Office of the Ministry of Environment, with support from CEP. ■

See more at: <http://www.gms-eoc.org/news/prc-shares-biodiversity-conservation-lessons-with-the-gms-#sthash.GWq7wui4.dpuf>

URBAN DEVELOPMENT

Fourth Meeting of the GMS Task Force on Urban Development

18–19 August 2015,
Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar

Myanmar Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development's Permanent Secretary U Tun Tun Naing and ADB Director for Urban Development and Water in Southeast Asia Tatiana Gallego-Lizon co-chaired the 4th Meeting of the GMS Task Force on Urban Development on 18–19 August 2015 in Nay Pyi Taw.

The meeting discussed the concept of city competitiveness

and illustrated the crosscutting nature of competitive cities as a way to enhance subregional cooperation and connectivity. In the GMS, manufacturing and commercial agglomerations are promoting city competitiveness, while cities (or urban centers) in trade corridors are connected into world economic networks as much as they are to their own economy. They are also magnets for people seeking a better quality of life and economic opportunities. With a growing free flow of goods and services, the importance of developing new and innovative ideas, improving logistics, knowledge exchange and sharing will be critical to the future competitiveness of cities, as they foster the growth of business development, investment and trade. Investment in infrastructure, institutional capacity building, and human resource development is however essential to support

the development of Asian cities, particularly in the GMS and specifically at the borders. Economic zones in border areas can therefore help unleash the potentials of intra-GMS trade and investment by creating more fluid and seamless border areas.

Discussions at the meeting moved beyond the preparation of a GMS urban development strategic framework, focusing on understanding the framework's concepts, and its application in the GMS. Transforming GMS transport corridors into economic corridors, including through the promotion of border economic zones and the development of economic corridor towns, are increasingly being recognized as important means to boosting subregional connectivity. ADB is working closely with Myanmar authorities to revitalize and promote growth along the East-

FOURTH MEETING GMS Urban Development Task Force

18-19 August 2015 • Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar



West Corridor in Kayin and Mon states through basic infrastructure, quality urban services, improved human resource development and cross-border economic cooperation.

The Urban Task Force members agreed to present the GMS Urban Development Strategic Framework, 2015–2022 at the 20th MC for endorsement, to pursue a capacity development technical assistance in the GMS

on economic zone in border areas, and to prepare a working paper on competitive cities and city cluster development in the GMS, and continue cooperation with other GMS sector initiatives. ■

Training on urban development in the PRC for GMS Senior Officials

11 May 2015, Tengchong, Yunnan, PRC

ADB East Asia Department Director Ying Qian, together with PRC co-organizers from the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development, opened a 5-day training on 11 May 2015 in Tengchong, Yunnan. Over 30 senior urban development and planning officials from the six GMS countries participated in the program, a high priority to the PRC as indicated at the 3rd GMS Urban Development Task Force meeting in September

2014. The Regional Knowledge Sharing Initiative sponsored the training. The Training Program offered a thorough exposure to the PRC's experience and a valuable opportunity to enhance knowledge and skills through in-depth discussion and application of urban planning knowledge and skills. In addition, it brought together policy makers and practitioners to share their own experiences and lessons learned.

In accordance with the three GMS Urban Development Strategic

Framework Pillars, the training comprehensively reviewed PRC's urban development experience in terms of: (i) multi-scale urban physical planning system, (ii) master planning, (iii) evolution of building & urban design, (iv) housing policy, (v) sustainability/resilience, (vi) heritage/cultural preservation, (vii) civil infrastructure, and (viii) special economic zones in the context of: (a) international best urban development practice, (b) ADB's competitive, inclusive, green paradigm, and (c) efficient energy conserving, pollution/GHG reducing urbanization. Participants also gave presentations on related urbanization experiences in their own countries. Site visits were part of the training curriculum. ■

TOURISM

35th Meeting of the GMS Tourism Working Group

16 June 2015, Da Nang, Viet Nam

The GMS Tourism Working Group held its 35th meeting (TWG-35) on 16 June 2015 in Da Nang, Viet Nam, back-to-back with the closed meeting of the Mekong Tourism Coordinating Office Board held on the same day, the First Meeting of the Project Steering Committee for the ADB-funded GMS Tourism Infrastructure for Inclusive Growth Project held on 17 June, and the 2015 Mekong Tourism Forum held on 15-19 June.

A key output of TWG-35 was TWG's endorsement of the GMS Tourism Marketing Strategy and Action Plan for 2015-2020 as a key deliverable for the 20th GMS Ministerial Conference in September 2015. The Tourism Marketing Strategy is expected to result in increased competitiveness of the GMS

tourism industry to be assessed by (i) increasing in the total number of international tourist arrivals in the GMS; and (ii) improving position of GMS countries in the World Economic Forum Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Index. Joint tourism marketing is a key activity under the ongoing GMS Tourism Sector Strategy and is also a priority area for the Tourism Sector under the approved GMS Strategic Framework and the Regional Investment Framework (RIF).

A key component in implementing the Tourism Marketing Strategy is a new website - MekongTourism.org - launched by the Mekong Tourism Coordinating Office (MTCO) based in Bangkok, Thailand. The website features a digital platform and common domain for social media and

includes a collective mosaic of country images that a user could click and lead to content about a particular country. Other features include an Experience Mekong Magazine that is social media-friendly, a Library containing documents that can be downloaded for free, a Mekong Tourism photo gallery, an events section linked to the country host's site, a Twitter account, and an interactive map that would plot multi-country journeys. MTCO is also working on a mobile application for the GMS and a monthly newsletter with content inputs from TWG members.

A closed meeting of the MTCO Board held immediately after TWG-35 on 16 June 2015 reviewed progress in implementing TWG's 2015 work plan, discussed administrative and financial aspects of MTCO operations - including the performance review of the MTCO Executive Director and next steps towards securing legal status for MTCO such as arrangements for having it registered as an intergovernmental organization



for which a draft agreement is now under consideration by the 6 GMS countries. The meeting also reviewed the Tourism sector's inputs to the first RIF-Implementation Plan progress report and the 20th Ministerial Conference Draft Joint Ministerial Declaration.

The 2015 Mekong Tourism Forum (MTF), held on 15-19 June 2015, was organized back-to-back with TWG-35, with the theme “*Unlocking the Potential of Mekong Tourism via Innovative Partnerships*”. The MTF was attended by tourism officials from the 6 GMS countries,

representatives from the private sector, and other tourism industry stakeholders. Other events held in conjunction with the MTF were Mekong Tourism Marketing Workshop, Mekong Tourism Social Media Boot Camp, Mekong Tourism Investment Summit, and Mekong Tourism Symposium. ■

ECONOMIC CORRIDOR DEVELOPMENT

GMS Economic Corridors Section Specific Concept Plans Incorporate National and Provincial Officials in Cross-Border Planning Workshops

In response to the GMS Leaders' and GMS countries' request for further focus on economic corridor development, a pilot initiative to prepare GMS Economic Corridors Section-Specific Concept Plans was launched in 2015. The pilot aimed to: (i) initiate planning processes for conceptual development plans focused on three prioritized subsections of the GMS Economic Corridors; and (ii) develop Section-Specific Concept Plans for these pilot economic corridor sections based on consultations

with key stakeholders, including government officials as well as representatives from the private sector and local communities. It is envisioned that the initial Section-Specific Corridor Concept Plans can serve as a basis for the preparation of more detailed economic development action plans and investment programs.

The **first workshop** which focused on the **Southern Economic Corridor**, was held on 7-8 May 2015, in the Moc Bai, Viet Nam - Bavet, Cambodia border area.

The **second workshop** focused on the **East-West Economic Corridor**, was held on 28-29 May 2015, in the Mae Sot, Thailand - Myawaddy, Myanmar border area.

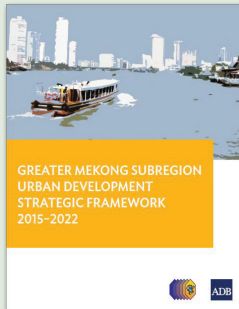
The **third workshop** focused on the **North-South Economic Corridor**, was held on 17-18 September 2015, in Vientiane, Lao PDR.

Workshop participants consisted of stakeholders from across provincial and central government ministries as well as the private sector. The workshops elicited cross-sectoral inputs through the use of small group discussions and multi-criteria assessments of the region's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and constraints.

The preliminary findings for the Southern Economic Corridor section concept plan were presented at the 7th GMS Economic Corridors Forum on 11 June 2015, in Kunming, PRC. GMS senior officials welcomed the pilot initiative for introducing spatial planning, multi-sector stakeholder discussions, and including local authorities and private sector entities in cross-border planning. ■



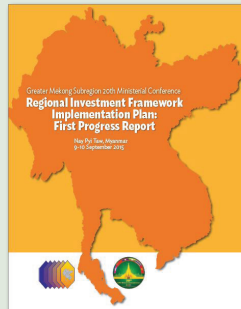
New Publications



10 SEP 2015
INSTITUTIONAL
DOCUMENT

Greater Mekong Subregion Urban Development Strategic Framework 2015-2022

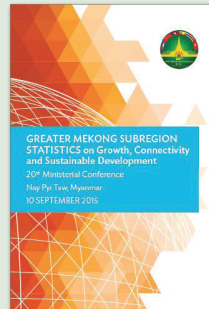
The Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) Urban Development Strategic Framework, sets out a broad framework to encourage and facilitate a coordinated approach to the development of urban areas throughout the GMS.



09 SEP 2015
INSTITUTIONAL
DOCUMENT

Regional Investment Framework Implementation Plan - First Progress Report

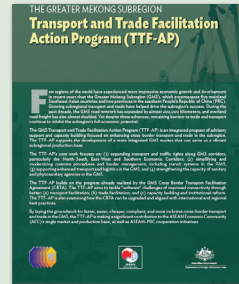
This report provides the status of the overall Regional Investment Framework Implementation Plan as of 30 June 2015, for all sectors, both investment and technical assistance projects.



09 SEP 2015
INSTITUTIONAL
DOCUMENT

Greater Mekong Subregion Statistics on Growth, Connectivity and Sustainable Development

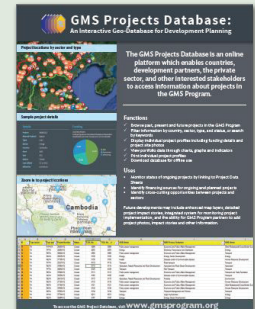
Timely availability of information, data, and indicators at the country and project levels allows for the measurement of progress – the achievement of policy objectives, as well as impacts and outcomes of target-driven projects.



09 SEP 2015
INSTITUTIONAL
DOCUMENT

The Greater Mekong Subregion Transport and Trade Facilitation Action Program (TTF-AP)

The Greater Mekong Subregion Transport and Trade Facilitation Action Program (TTF-AP) is an integrated program of advisory support and capacity building focused on enhancing cross-border transport and trade in the subregion.



09 SEP 2015

GMS Projects Database: An Interactive Geo-Database for Development Planning

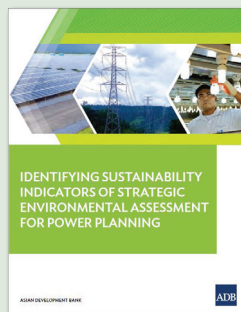
The GMS Projects Database is an online platform which enables countries, development partners, the private sector, and other interested stakeholders to access information about projects in the GMS Program.



09 SEP 2015

Experience Mekong Tourism Marketing Strategy & Action Plan 2015-2020

GMS Tourism Marketing Strategy and Action Plan, 2015-2020 sets out a concrete plan to cost-effectively promote multicountry travel, increase market awareness, and improve market linkages between the GMS countries.



24 JUL 2015
PUBLICATION

Identifying Sustainability Indicators of Strategic Environmental Assessment for Power Planning

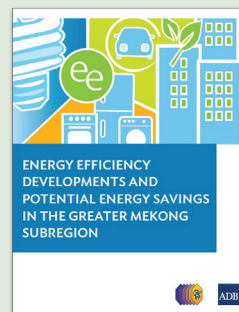
Sustainable development encompasses environment, social, and economic dimensions, and a wide range of possible indicators could measure the changes in the degree of protection against danger, damage, or loss.



23 JUL 2015
PUBLICATION

Integrating Strategic Environmental Assessment into Power Planning

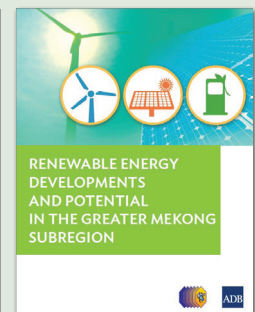
Major expansion in the Greater Mekong Subregion power sector will bring added environmental and social pressures, and more attention needs to be paid to incorporating greater sustainability into the power planning process.



16 JUL 2015
PUBLICATION

Energy Efficiency Developments and Potential Energy Savings in the Greater Mekong Subregion

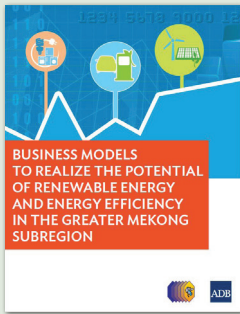
Greater gains in energy savings are possible from improved energy efficiency and conservation measures, both as a smart business investment, and an imperative for the global community.



16 JUL 2015
PUBLICATION

Renewable Energy Developments and Potential for the Greater Mekong Subregion

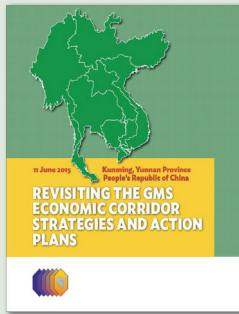
Renewable energy is a challenge, but also an opportunity for new industries, employment, and new ways to reduce dependency on fuel imports, provide electricity to poor remote areas, reduce air pollution, and provide a healthier environment.



16 JUL 2015
PUBLICATION

Business Models to Realize the Potential of Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency in the Greater Mekong Subregion

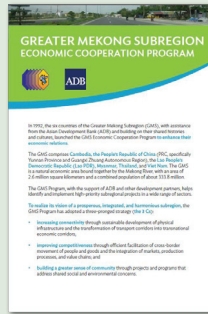
Investments in renewable energy and energy efficiency generate benefits to society as a whole that cannot be fully reflected in investment returns, thereby leading to underinvestment by the private sector.



11 JUNE 2015

Revisiting the GMS Economic Corridor Strategies and Action Plans

This paper revisits the rationale and key elements of the three SAPs, and broadly assesses the degree to which they were implemented. It indicates which sectors and initiatives have progressed well, and which are lagging behind. It also identifies lessons learned, and suggests possible directions for the future, with the aim of helping to strengthen economic corridor development approaches in the GMS.



18 MAY 2015
PUBLICATION

Greater Mekong Subregion Economic Cooperation Program: Overview

The GMS Program, with the support of ADB and other development partners, helps identify and implement high-priority subregional projects in a wide range of sectors.

Upcoming Events

- **10th Semi-Annual Meeting of the GMS Working Group on Environment, 11-12 November 2015, Chiang Mai, Thailand**

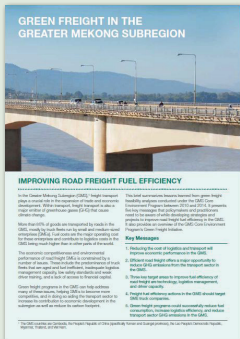
- **19th Meeting of the GMS Regional Power Trade Coordination Committee (RPTCC-19), 16-17 November 2015, Bangkok, Thailand**

- **14th Meeting of Working Group on HRD (WGHRD-14), 19-20 November 2015, Siem Reap, Cambodia**

- **36th Meeting of Tourism Working Group (TWG-36), November 2015, Thailand (TBC)**

- **Meeting of National Transport and Trade Facilitation Committee, November 2015 (TBC)**

- **Semi-Annual Meeting of the GMS Working Group on Agriculture, 2-3 December 2015, Kunming, PRC**



20 APR 2015
PUBLICATION

Green Freight in the Greater Mekong Subregion

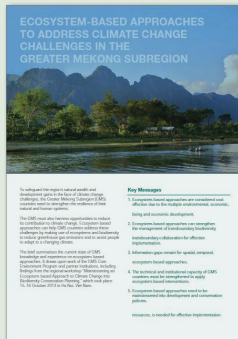
In the Greater Mekong Subregion, freight transport plays a crucial role in the expansion of trade and economic development.



17 APR 2015
PUBLICATION

Strategic Environmental Assessment in the Greater Mekong Subregion

The Greater Mekong Subregion is one of the world's fastest growing regions. However, the rapid pace of economic development, and reliance on natural resources, has been accompanied by considerable environmental damage.



17 APR 2015
PUBLICATION

Ecosystem Based Adaptation to Address Climate Change Challenges in the Greater Mekong Subregion

Greater Mekong Subregion countries need to strengthen the resilience of their natural and human systems to safeguard the region's natural wealth and development gains in the face of climate change challenges.