

GREATER MEKONG SUBREGION ECONOMIC COOPERATION PROGRAM

Development Partners' Meeting

20 October 2020



**GMS Program and ADB
Responses to COVID-19**



| Outline of this presentation

- 1. COVID-19 in the GMS Countries**
- 2. GMS Cooperation responses to COVID-19**
 - Health Cooperation
 - Tourism
 - Transport and Trade Facilitation
 - Agriculture
 - Environment
 - Urban Development
 - Way forward
- 3. ADB Responses to COVID-19**



1 | COVID-19 in the GMS Countries



	People infected	Deaths	Projected contraction
Globally	38 million	More than 1 million	6.4% - 9.7% loss in global GDP.
GMS countries	40,464 ¹ (0.03% of world population).	936 deaths ¹	4.1% in 2020. Rebound to 5.2% GDP growth in 2021 ² .

¹ As of 18 October 2020. ² Excluding Yunnan and Guianxi provinces in PRC

Prompt actions were taken to contain the virus:

- travel restrictions;
- testing, contact tracing, isolation, treating, and monitoring;
- community quarantining;
- promoting/requiring mask-wearing, personal hygiene, and social distancing; and
- preparing the public health and medical systems.

Actions taken to mitigate the pandemic impact:

- Economic stimulus and support programs for vulnerable sectors.
- Revision of socio-economic plans to accelerate recovery.



2 | GMS Cooperation responses to COVID-19

+ Health Cooperation

GMS Health Cooperation Strategy 2019-2023:

Pillar 1: Health security as a regional public good

Improved GMS health system performance in responding to acute public health threats.

Pillar 2: Health impacts of connectivity and mobility

Strengthened protection for vulnerable communities from the health impacts of regional integration.

Pillar 3: Health workforce development

Enhanced leadership and human resource capacity for responding to priority health issues in the GMS.





2 | GMS Cooperation responses to COVID-19

Health Cooperation



GMS Immediate Response

- **GMS Working Group on Health Cooperation** organized an extraordinary meeting to strengthen regional collaboration and response to COVID-19.
- **Over \$60 million assistance**, \$50 million additional financing for the **GMS Health Security Project**; and \$2 million additional grant for ongoing TA on Strengthening Regional Health Cooperation in the GMS.
- Significant **additional funds allocated by the GMS governments** for pandemic response and the health sector. The **GMS Development Partners** mobilized a sizeable support.
 - Procurement of various equipment and materials for diagnosis and protection, such as thermal scanners, PCR test machines, diagnostic and laboratory equipment, ventilators, PPEs.
 - Training and capacity building for surveillance, contact tracing, prevention, and management of the disease.
 - Pandemic preparedness and resiliency.



2 | GMS Cooperation responses to COVID-19

+ Health Cooperation



Projects planned

- **GMS Healthy Border SEZs** project for Myanmar, Cambodia, and Lao PDR, \$72 million, (2021).
- **Improving the Quality of Healthcare project** in Lao PDR, \$45 million, (2020).
- **Continue to align with WHO's** International Health Regulations and ASEAN commitments on COVID-19 response.





2 | GMS Cooperation responses to COVID-19

Tourism

The GMS Tourism Working Group (TWG) and the Mekong Tourism Coordinating Office are responding to the pandemic by implementing mitigating measures :



- **Disseminating timely and clear information** on travel regulations and health advisories.
- **Implementing social protection programs** to safeguard formal and informal tourism workers' income and livelihoods.
- **Enacting stringent health and safety regulations** for key tourism subsectors.
- **Providing monetary incentives** to energize domestic tourism ahead of reopening to international visitors.
- **Organizing knowledge events** to share tourism recovery planning experiences and policies to build back more sustainable & resilient tourism in the wake of COVID-19
- **Providing fiscal, monetary, and training support** for a broad range of travel and tourism enterprises, including micro and small to medium sized enterprises





2 | GMS Cooperation responses to COVID-19



Transport and Trade Facilitation

- Held **virtual meeting of National Transportation Facilitation Committee** in June 2020
- **Exchanged information on border closures** and coordinated actions for possible reopening.
- Agreed to prepare a **draft COVID-19 trade and transport facilitation action plan**.
- Identified actions to strengthen **future resilience**:
 - i. Accelerate implementation of GMS CBTA Early Harvest Program, minimizing risks brought by COVID-19.
 - ii. Implement electronic customs clearance.
 - iii. Use of ICTs to apply digital tracking.
 - iv. Improve border crossing infrastructure and promote common standards.





2 | GMS Cooperation responses to COVID-19

Agriculture

GMS Working Group on Agriculture (WGA) are helping in **ensuring food safety and security**:

- **Harmonization** of food safety and quality standards.
- Support for **livelihoods and job creation** in the rural areas.
- **Improved sanitary and phytosanitary systems**.
- **Prevention and control** of transboundary **animal diseases** and antimicrobial resistance.
- Development and access to **green agribusiness supply chains**.

- The WGA held a **virtual policy dialogue on Priorities for Post-Pandemic Food Security and Response and Recovery in the GMS in June 2020**, which discussed opportunities for COVID-19-responsive green agribusiness supply chains, livestock health and safety measures, and digital technologies.
- **GMS Cross-border Livestock Health and Value Chains Improvement Project (2021-2027)** will help the GMS countries – CAM, LAO and MYA – better prepare for and prevent future outbreaks of transboundary animal diseases, zoonoses and antimicrobial resistance, as well as improve livestock value chains and COVID-19 responses.



2 | GMS Cooperation responses to COVID-19



Environment

GMS Working Group on Environment (WGE)

Held a virtual dialogue in June 2020 to discuss ways of integrating climate and disaster resilience considerations and low carbon transitions of key sectors into the GMS COVID-19 recovery efforts. It identified three areas of focus in a post-pandemic scenario:

- i. Ensuring green, climate-smart and resilient, and pro-poor post-COVID economic recovery programs
- ii. Alignment with sustainable waste management
- iii. Accord with priorities and opportunities for biodiversity and wildlife management.

- WGE is also supporting GMS countries' individual environment COVID-19 response programs and priority themes for support



Urban development

Focused on the provision of essential water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) services, ranging from hand washing stations in public spaces to the provision of water supply in urban areas with high population density and nonexistent basic infrastructure





2 | GMS Cooperation responses to COVID-19

Way forward

Proposed **GMS COVID-19 Response and Recovery Plan (2021-2023)** for consideration by GMS Ministers

Pillar 1: Protecting lives: A One Health approach.

Pillar 2: Protecting the vulnerable and poor.

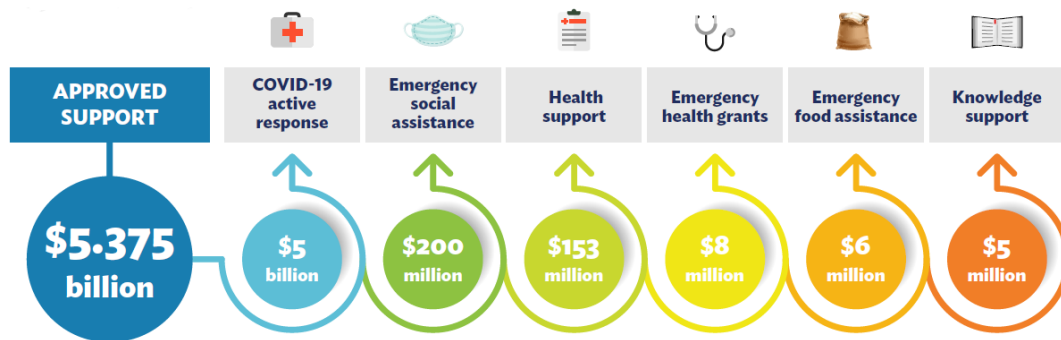
Pillar 3: Keeping borders open & accelerating economic activity.





3 | ADB Responses to COVID-19

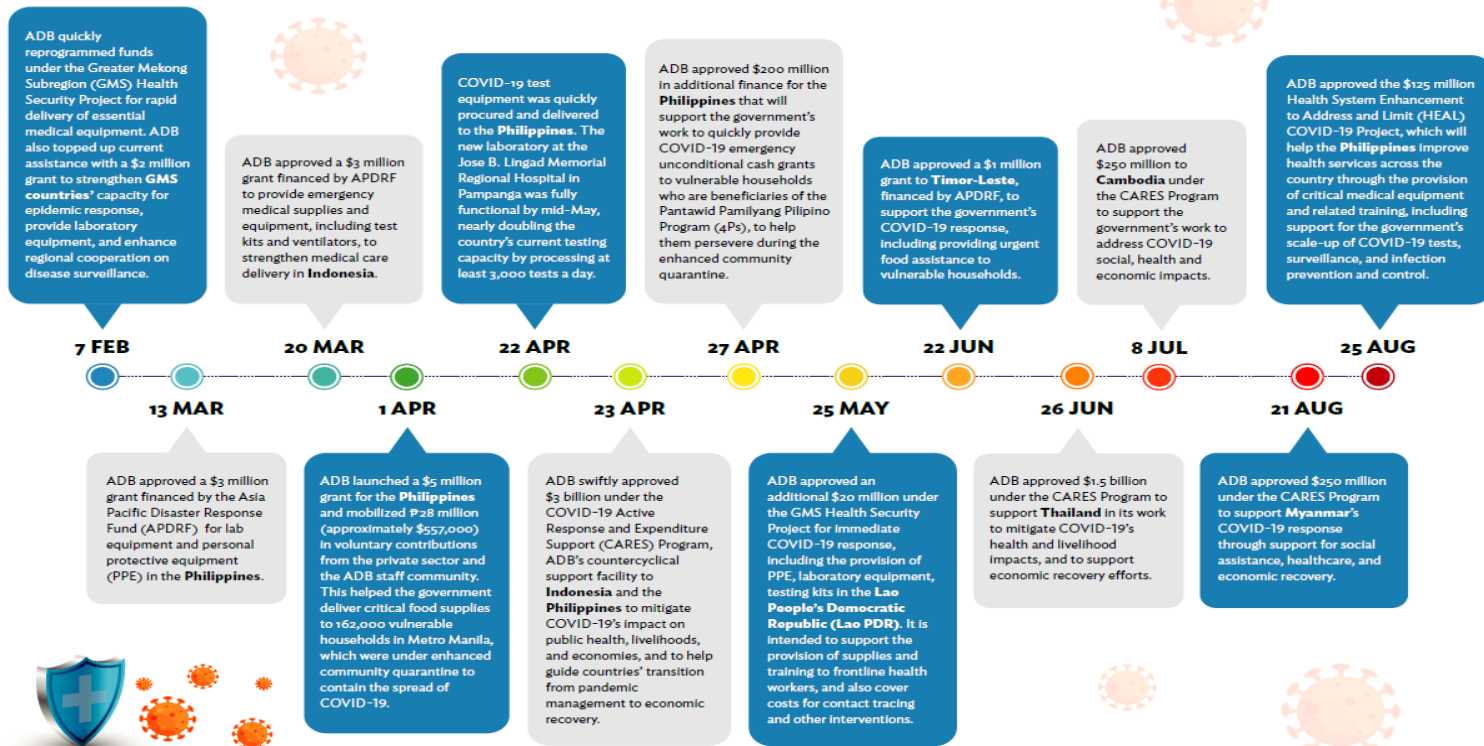
- The COVID-19 has had **devastating impacts** in Southeast Asia.
- ADB has responded rapidly** with an assistance package and its support in the region focuses on **three crucial areas**:
 - (i) supporting **healthcare responses** to save lives.
 - (ii) supporting the **poorest and most vulnerable** suffering dire economic hardship.
 - (iii) addressing **impacts of COVID on businesses and economies** to help countries rebound after the crisis.
- ADB is working with all its member countries, including the GMS countries on **COVID-19 vaccine issues**.
- ADB will be happy to collaborate with the **development partners** further in these areas.





3 | ADB Responses to COVID-19

• ADB IN ACTION •





3 | ADB Responses to COVID-19

Over **\$8 million** under the GMS Health Security project to support :

- **Rapid delivery of essential medical equipment** for health providers: thermal scanners, PPEs, PCR kits, infrared thermometers, laboratory equipment, and ICU respiratory ventilators.
- **Capacity building** for infectious disease outbreak prevention and response.

Cambodia	Lao PDR
\$270,000	\$860,000
Myanmar	Viet Nam
\$6.6 million	\$500,000

Future actions will include:

- **Lao PDR:** \$45 million project to improve quality of health care services and facilities, and COVID-19 related responses.
- **Myanmar:** Additional \$30 million in assistance under the GMS Health Security project is being explored.
- **GMS:** \$72 million under the **GMS Healthy Border Project** for Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Myanmar, which will improve access to health services for migrant workers and will support COVID-19 related responses. A cofinancing and knowledge partnership with Thailand is also being explored.



3 | ADB Responses to COVID-19

ADB CARES

The COVID-19 Active Response and Expenditure Support (CARES) Program

Cambodia

\$250 million to support government efforts to strengthen the country's healthcare system, increase social assistance to the poor and vulnerable, and provide economic stimulus to businesses, including SMEs.

Myanmar

\$250 million to support the government's COVID-19 response through social assistance to poor, disadvantaged and at-risk groups, the strengthening of healthcare systems, and support for MSMEs.

People's Republic of China

130 million CNY (\$19.4 USD) private sector loan to Jointown Pharmaceutical Group Co. Ltd. to support efforts to ensure continued supply of essential medicines and personal protective equipment, and respirators.

Thailand

\$1.5 billion to reinforce the government's efforts to mitigate COVID-19 health and economic impacts, including measures to mitigate impacts on the poor and vulnerable, and to support businesses, including SMEs



Policy Actions for COVID-19 Economic Recovery (PACER) Dialogues

The PACER Dialogues is a series of weekly discussions for senior government officials exploring policy measures and actionable initiatives that can help their countries “bounce back” from the COVID-19 pandemic and accelerate economic recovery. The dialogues feature expert presentations on a range of issues and supported by ADB’s BIG Program on capacity building involving the GMS and other subregional programs. To date, the sessions have featured the following topics and experts:

PACER DIALOGUES	3 JUNE	Tackling COVID-19: Economic and Financial Measures of the Republic of Korea	Kwangchul Ji Director Ministry of Economy and Finance Republic of Korea
	17 JUNE	Experience and Lessons from New Zealand in Responding to COVID-19	Mark Blackmore , Senior Treasury Representative Mario Di Majo , Principal Advisor, COVID-19 Response Policy and Strategy New Zealand Treasury
	24 JUNE	Helping the Tourism Industry Bounce Back from COVID-19: Broad Policy Responses	Tiffany Mirzahi , Vice-President World Travel and Tourism Council Mario Hardy , Chief Executive Officer Pacific Asia Travel Association Jess Thraenhart , Executive Director Mekong Tourism Coordinating Office
	1 JULY	Sustainable Social Distancing – Harmonizing Guidelines on Minimum Health Standards for Post-quarantine COVID-19	Jeremy Lim National University of Singapore Former Ministry of Health official
	8 JULY	Bouncing Back Support to SMEs for COVID-19 Recovery	Paul Vandenberg , Senior Economist ADB Foo Ngee Kee , Co-founder and President Sabah SMEs Association
	15 JULY	Migration and Health: Implications of COVID-19 and Achieving Universal Health Coverage	Patrick Duigan , Regional Health Migration Advisor International Organization for Migration Jade Thammacharee , Deputy Secretary General National Health Security Office, Thailand Heather Canon , Vice President, Capacity Building, ELEVATE
	22 JULY	Harnessing Digital Technologies for Education amid COVID-19	Ashish Dhawan , Co-founder, Ashoka University Chad Pasha , Head of APAC for Global Government Partnerships Coursera
	4 AUGUST	Post-COVID-19 New Normal: Implications for Startup Ecosystems	Stephan Kuestner , Head, Global Ecosystem Strategy Startup Genome, LLC Seow Hui Lim , Director, Startup Development Division Enterprise Singapore Christian Kaptein , Partner, Integra Partners
	12 AUGUST	Accelerating Digital Financial Services and Infrastructure	David Lee Kuo Chuen , Professor Singapore University of Social Sciences Hae-Rok Ko , General Manager Center for International Cooperation Korea Financial Telecommunications and Clearings Institute
	19 AUGUST	Enhancing Readiness for Large-Scale Vaccine Distribution amid COVID-19	Farzana Muhib , Asia Team Lead, Vaccine Implementation Hannah Kettler , Director for Vaccine Financing and Partnership Huong Minh Vu , Regional Technical Advisor, Vaccine Implementation PATH Eduardo P. Banzon , Principal Health Specialist, ADB
	26 AUGUST	Social Protection Interventions as Medium- and Long-Term Responses amid COVID-19	Valentina Barca Edward Archibald Independent Social Protection Experts



**THE GREATER MEKONG SUBREGION
Economic Cooperation Program**
www.greatermekong.org

Thank you!