# FORGING REGIONAL ENERGY CONNECTIVITY

The six Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) countries—who enjoy cultural similarities and economic complementarities—stand at a crossroads concerning their shared energy future and heavy reliance on fossil fuels for transport and electricity. They have high potentials for sustainable energy sources, particularly the People's Republic of China (P.R. China) who leads in renewable energy generation. However, these countries struggle to meet global renewable energy deployment standards as energy resources are unevenly distributed among them and the quality of their power transmission infrastructures are varied.

By balancing climate change opportunities and challenges, GMS countries have taken on the gargantuan task of sharply reducing their dependence on carbon-based energy sources. Since 1992, Cambodia, P.R. China, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Vietnam, and Thailand have been working towards regional electric power system inter-connectivity to boost energy security, bring down electric costs, and enable greater amounts of renewable energy to be integrated into power grids, while also opening wider investments for companies in the power sector.

In support of this, Mekong Institute (MI) and the China Southern Power Grid Co., Ltd. (CSG) rolled out the **Capacity Building on GMS Power Grid Interconnection** project from 2015 to 2020. Implemented by MI with the Yunnan Power Grid Co., Ltd., the project advances energy efficiency and renewable energy by promoting power connectivity across the subregion.

> **MI and CSG's "power fellows," are strengthening cleaner power connectivity in the GMS.**

In parallel with national energy plans of the six countries, MI's implementation strategies includes pro-active identification of challenges, problems, potential energy infrastructure areas, and mobilization support; design of tailored activities through stakeholders' consultations; coordination with line ministries; and the creation of knowledge networks to develop solutions by tapping on each country's technical strengths and linking GMS energy policy officials with global experts.

Through MI's facilitation of trainings and workshops, conduct of research studies, formation of a communication platform at the managerial and technical levels for GMS officials in the power sector, and bridging of bilateral agreements on technology transfer, MI has been supporting the comprehensive use of renewable energy; clean technology development; power supply security; and sustainable power interconnection in the subregion.

The project's 410 training and workshop participants, referred to as MI and CSG's "power fellows," are strengthening cleaner power connectivity in the GMS. They are part of an extensive interdisciplinary and multi-institutional web of change drivers that propel synergies of strengths among partners and the development of scalable energy innovation tools. This is so GMS countries can ultimately deliver efficient devices and systems to meet global renewable energy benchmarks and achieve technological readiness to sustain clean energy. ▪

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