



MEKONG INSTITUTE



CELEBRATING 20 YEARS
OF DEVELOPMENT & COOPERATION

A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dr. Watcharas Leelawath



**WE ARE DETERMINED
TO SERVE THE GMS
AND TO MAKE
TANGIBLE IMPACT
FOR A BETTER REGION.**

This year marks Mekong Institute's (MI) 20th anniversary. I am deeply grateful and honored to have been part of this event.

During the 20 years since MI was founded, we have positively contributed to the progress in the Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS). We have also consistently adapted and altered the institute's focus in development areas in response to not only to the dynamics in the region, but also to global dynamics.

Nowadays, in addition to the economic and environmental challenges that we face, we find ourselves once again adapting to new challenges. With our newly developed Mekong Institute Strategic Plan for 2016-2020, this will guide us accomplish our goals for the next five years, catering to the needs of the GMS.

We aim to provide quality service in conducting capacity building and development programs, as well as research that is useful to policy making in the region. To be responsive to change and contribute more to poverty alleviation in the region, the institute will continue to build its internal capacities and provide an environment that promotes quality human resource development.

I recognize that to attain sustainable institutional growth, we cannot operate alone. Guided by the six GMS countries, Cambodia, P.R. China, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam as well as our development and implementing partners, we will strive to continue serving the region to create real change for a better region.

Thank you very much for your ongoing support as we address the challenges ahead.

MI THEN & NOW

20 years of serving the
Greater Mekong Sub-region



An **MOU** between New Zealand and Thailand was signed, marking the establishment of MI

1996



The **Charter of Mekong Institute** was signed by the six GMS countries, establishing MI as a GMS training institute

2003



The Thai Government approved the MI Headquarters Agreement and recognized MI as an **IGO** under local law

2007



MI has broadened its reach by offering more regional events and private sector involvement. The **first ever Mekong Forum** was also held on July 11, 2011

2011



MI starts implementing its new **5-year strategic plan**

2016

MI's **first training course** on "Economies in Transition" was conducted from Feb 24 - March 14, 1997. The last day also coincided with the opening of the MI building



1997

MI **expanded its focus**, offering seminars, conferences, & workshops on GMS high priority issues to its existing courses on leadership, management, development, and tourism



2005

The '**Bill for the Protection of the Operation of the Mekong Institute**', legalizing MI as an autonomous international organization (IGO) in Thailand came into force



2009

To address the growing needs of the GMS, MI Annex was built. It was inaugurated on July 10, 2015



2015

THEN & NOW

OUR HISTORY

Mekong Institute was established essentially to assist the transition of the GMS countries into a market-economy with capable and committed human resources, while keeping its vision of an integrated, prosperous and harmonious GMS intact over the years. This concept was developed by Khon Kaen University, after the visit in 1994 of the then New Zealand Prime Minister, Mr. James B. Bolger.

MI began operations in August 28, 1996, with the signing of an MOU between the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Thai Department of Technical and Economic Cooperation. MI's initial focus was on the topics of Economies in Transition and Public Sector Reform; its first training course being "Economies in Transition" (February 24 - March 14, 1997). MI then started to offer other courses on Trade Policy and Tourism.

However, in 2003, recognizing the changing needs of the region, MI shed its development

assistance tag and signed the MI Charter, enabling it to develop into a non-profit autonomous organization. In 2009, with the Bill for the Protection of the Operation of the Mekong Institute and a royal decree signed by the King of Thailand, responding to the need to strengthen GMS countries' human resources, MI matured into the recognized intergovernmental organization (IGO) that it is today. It has become a GMS-based institute owned and supported by the six GMS governments: Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam, and Yunnan Province and Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region of P.R. China.

MI promotes the concept of the whole region growing together to achieve poverty alleviation. The institute works with a wide range of partners in all of its fields of competence. By collaborating with various institutions, MI leverages resources, expertise, and competencies to achieve all of its development goals.



MI TODAY

Today, MI stands as an autonomous international institution empowering the Greater Mekong Sub-region. It remains a GMS-based knowledge center of excellence. With hundreds of training programs organized and thousands of alumni produced in its first two decades of existence, MI has continued to evolve the modular training approach to build up the capacities of GMS people so that they can localize their knowledge and skills according to the needs of their respective countries, and bring about more equitable and inclusive economic growth in the region.

With the new Strategic Plan 2016-2020, this will enable MI to further establish its

position as a distinguished capacity development center in the GMS. MI's framework has been restructured to match with the goals of the region. Building on its strong program history and expertise, MI is working on capacity development in three major regional development themes that have considerable synergy and overlaps between them: Agricultural Development and Commercialization (ADC), Trade and Investment Facilitation (TIF), and Innovation and Technological Connectivity (ITC). Together, these three pillars will support MI to engage with the broad range of cross-cutting issues in regional development.

MEKONG INSTITUTE'S DEPARTMENTS



ADC Agricultural Development & Commercialization

- Move farmers from subsistence to commercial farming.
- Promote rural non-farm employment.
- Integrate small-scale producers and agriculture based SMEs to regional and global value chains.



TIF Trade & Investment Facilitation

- Expand trade and focus on the broader goal of sustainable and inclusive economic growth for regional cooperation and integration.
- Focus on establishing a fostering environment for SMEs by addressing the entire trade value chain through engaging with Business associations, Chamber of Commerce and Government agencies involved in Trade and SME development in the GMS countries.



ITC Innovation & Technological Connectivity

- Support innovation and technological connectivity as the basis for new programs that can link countries in the Mekong and with ASEAN.
- Maximize opportunities that enhance the work of ADC and TIF.
- Focus the following initiatives: digital marketing, power trading, telecommunications, and renewable energy.
- Focus on creating the right atmosphere and circumstances for the development of innovation and technology in the region.

WHAT TO LOOK FORWARD TO

MI ultimately aims to be a catalyst for a better GMS as it constantly adapts to the challenges the region is facing. While doing so, MI also aspires to be a GMS-based knowledge center of excellence with increased institutional capacities to perform policy research and recommendation advisory for economic integration and development.

MI is also increasingly expanding its creative and collaborative efforts, as well as its focus and programs. This is being accomplished through the invaluable assistance of MI's regional development partners from both local public and private sector organizations.

In the near future, apart from being known for capacity building, it will be one of the main resource centers for information and analysis on critical issues in the GMS that goes beyond academic research; bringing people together to exchange views, build expertise, and create and develop policy options. This will bring about greater social impact with better relations and understanding among the people in the GMS.

**MEKONG INSTITUTE
AIMS TO BE A
CATALYST FOR
A BETTER GMS.**



OUR WORK, THEIR VOICES

CHINA

“After the two-week training and field study, I learned how to do DMF planning, define the indicators, and gather and analyze data, and many other skills and knowledge. I learned much about project on monitoring and evaluation.”

MS. SHI JINGMIN, PROJECT OFFICER, FOREIGN AFFAIRS OFFICE OF THE PEOPLE'S GOVERNMENT OF YUNNAN PROVINCE



MYANMAR

“I think the training exceeded my expectations because there were more experts that came to explain the meaning of Cross-Border Trade Agreements, and we also learned in more detail about the ASEAN agreement.”

MS. HLA HLA YEE, SECRETARY GENERAL, MYANMAR INTERNATIONAL FREIGHT FORWARDER ASSOCIATION



THAILAND

“After the training, I applied the experience and knowledge I gained to my work in analyzing farmer latency (in coffee-growing) at Khoa Koe District, Petchabun Province and Lamtap District, Krabi Province. Farmers follow the GAP system now.”

MR. WISARUTE SANMAERRE, AGRICULTURAL RESEARCHER, DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, THAILAND



VIETNAM

“I lack background in post-harvest which I thought would be very difficult for me; but the resource person taught in a way that was easy to understand. The knowledge I gained from the course will be shared to my colleagues when I go back to my country.”

MS. NGUYEN THI QUYNH, HEAD, AGRONOMY DEPARTMENT, MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE & RURAL DEVELOPMENT



LAO PDR

“I am working for the Ministry of Industry and Commerce where the knowledge on trade data analysis is very useful to me in selecting markets for Lao products. I liked the lessons on trade data analysis, the diversity of products to meet market needs, and the lecture on trade and investment in GMS countries.”

MS. PHOMMALI SAYNORLATH, OFFICER, TRADE AND PRODUCTION PROMOTION DEPARTMENT, MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE



CAMBODIA

“The training course was very useful for Cambodian participants since I can learn the theories and the practical experiences from different resource persons. The things I learned for the course guided me to do the planning for development in Cambodia in the future.”

MR. HANG SUVIDDA, BUREAU CHIEF AND ASSISTANT TO SECRETARY GENERAL OF POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT



MEKONG INSTITUTE

is an intergovernmental organization (IGO) founded by members of the Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS). We serve the GMS countries, namely Cambodia, P.R. China (Yunnan Province and Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region), Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam by providing, implementing, and facilitating integrated human resource development (HRD), capacity building programs, and development projects related to regional cooperation and integration.

OUR VISION

Capable and committed human resources working together for a more integrated, prosperous and harmonious GMS.

OUR MISSION

To contribute through human resource development and capacity building to the acceleration of sustainable economic and social development and poverty alleviation in the Greater Mekong Sub-region and promote regional cooperation and integration.



**MEKONG
INSTITUTE**

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