



**MEKONG
INSTITUTE**

Capacity Development for Regional Cooperation and Integration

MEKONG CONNECTION

The Newsletter of Mekong Institute
Issue: 4 Volume: October-December 2016

MI sends our sincere condolences on the passing of
His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej.
His contributions to the development of the GMS
will be forever remembered.



Year In Review 2016

2016 was a groundbreaking year for Mekong Institute (MI). As the primary capacity building and development organization in the region, MI forged new pathways with international development partners, opened doors for a more inclusive GMS and crossed major milestones toward future achievements.

MI celebrated its 20th Anniversary with stakeholders, development partners and participants who came from all over the region to express their support. In preparation for its next chapter, MI updated its logo to reflect the region's modernization, as well as its focus on the future and its mission to foster growth and prosperity.

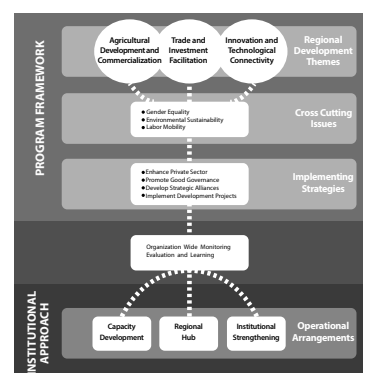
During the year, MI began implementing its Strategic Plan (2016-2020), which provides a framework and guidelines for its capacity building initiatives over the next five years.

MI organized 95 training sessions throughout the year for over 2,103 participants. This is a significant increase from previous years.

Renovations were made to the training facility to accommodate more participants and conduct multiple simultaneous training courses.

According to feedback from participants, 93% of direct participants and 92% of indirect participants increased their knowledge and skills. More than 93% of participants agreed that the training was relevant and applicable to their work.

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Editorial



As Thailand enters a period of mourning, MI would like to extend our deepest heartfelt condolences to the Thai people and Government in the passing of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej. King Bhumibol dedicated himself wholly to his country and to improving people's lives over the several decades of his reign. His wise leadership and enormous prestige binded the Kingdom together and will be remembered for generations to come.

His Majesty demonstrated a strong commitment to the development and prosperity of the GMS, as an advocate for poverty alleviation, by promoting inclusiveness for poor farmers and hard working rural populations. The development examples of many innovative projects under the royal patronage of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej are particularly valuable, and His Majesty's philosophy of a "Sufficiency Economy" has become a key principle in Thailand's national development plan and practices.

During the reign of His Majesty, as Thailand succeeded in its development sectors, through technical cooperation and human resource development, bolstering the development of neighboring countries became one of its top priorities. By sharing its knowledge and experiences with other developing countries, especially its neighbors in the Greater Mekong Sub-Region (GMS), the whole region can benefit from the economic growth and prosperity. This has led to Thailand becoming a training and resource center for development, especially for scholars and practitioners from other developing countries.

In honor of His Majesty's commitment and contribution to the development of the GMS, MI strives to maintain this initiative by cultivating inclusivity in the GMS region. Our goals and strategies support the GMS Cooperation Program and the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), emphasizing enhanced connectivity in the GMS economic corridors and the realization of the GMS/AEC target of a single market and production base, equitable growth, and sustainable resource management. We train government officials and affiliates to gain an understanding of good policy and practices, so they can implement change and create a better environment to benefit underprivileged peoples, ultimately enhancing regional economic growth.

MI is genuinely dedicated to creating a lasting impact by embracing the vision of His Majesty in a lifelong dedication to innovative growth by increasing developmental inclusivity. Looking forward at the challenges and changes to come, MI seeks to collectively build a successful pathway toward regional development and capacity building, codified under an integrated inclusiveness to champion economic growth, mutual prosperity and common well being in the GMS for years to come.

Fostering Innovation and Technological Connectivity in the GMS

Innovation and Technological Connectivity plays an important role in addressing the evolving need to integrate technological advances as the region adopts more modern methods and approaches. For MI, the aim would be to support innovation and technological connectivity as the basis for new programs which link countries in the Mekong with each other and with others in ASEAN. It has therefore been decided to establish a new Department called "Innovation and Technological Connectivity" (ITC). The newly established ITC will respond to the rapid modernization of the GMS, aiming to narrow the development gaps by strengthening technological connectivity.



Fast evolving technology, particularly information and communication technology, is now the norm of how the world works and an everyday reality for many people. Current economic development literature argues that the ability to engage in innovation through collaboration and connectivity is now essential for countries to participate in today's knowledge driven, technology-based economies. This type of connectivity and access not only provides information, but also attracts investment because it helps with the communication and networking now necessary to understand and respond to market needs.

In today's complex world, no challenge or opportunity can be addressed successfully through a one-dimensional approach. Technology is now integral to and essential for the development of both agriculture and trade. For MI, the aim is to support innovation and technological connectivity as the basis for new programs, which link countries in the Mekong with each other and with others in ASEAN and the global community. Establishing the new ITC Department addresses these issues and maximizes opportunities that enhance the work of the other two Departments in the institute. The focus will be on innovation and technological connectivity initiatives, in areas such as digital marketing, power trading, telecommunications, renewable energy, etc., and how these are interrelated to collectively support GMS integration and competitiveness. It will also focus on creating the right atmosphere and circumstances for the development of innovation and technology in the region as an effective pillar to support the advances in agriculture and trade.

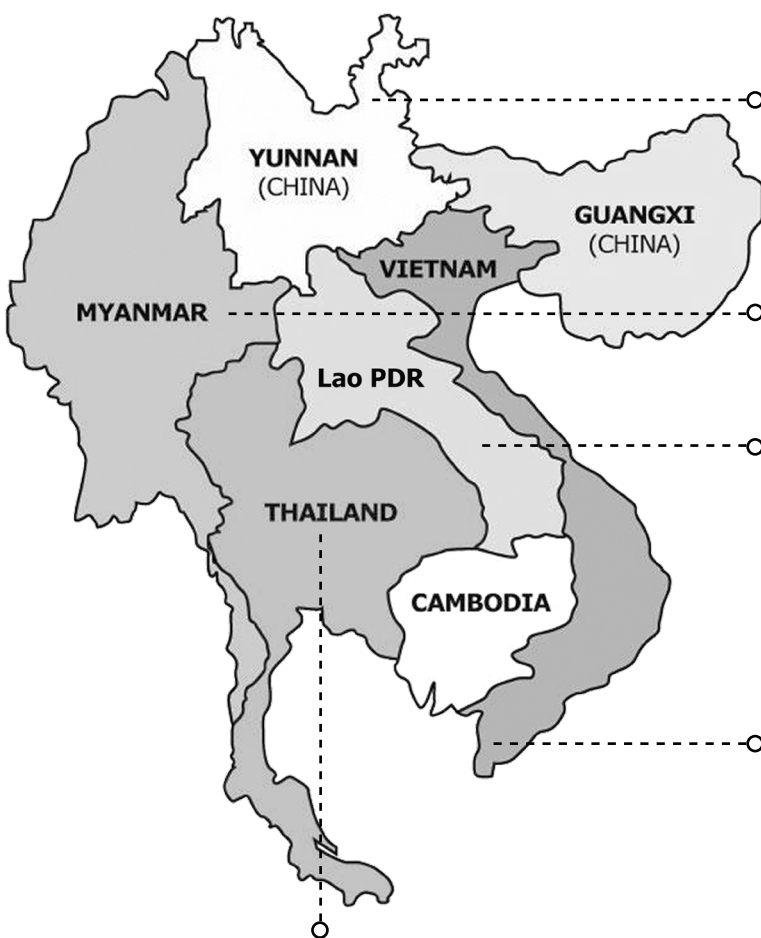
Mr. Sudam Pawar, Director of the ITC Department, says "The goal for the ITC Department is to contribute innovative management practices, effectiveness and provide linkages among the public and private stakeholders. It helps in developing the capacity and support for a technological environment for value chains and also contributes to the emergence and application of innovation and technological connectivity in the region."

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REGIONAL WORKS (October-December 2016)

Cross-Country Activities:

- Policy Dialogue on Cross-border Trade Facilitation between Savannakhet, Lao PDR and Quang Tri, Vietnam
- Provincial Consultation Workshop on Enabling Regulatory Environment for Facilitating Cross-Border Trade on EWEC for Bordering Provinces of Tak, Thailand and Kayin State, Myanmar
- Provincial Consultation Workshop on Enabling Regulatory Environment for Facilitating Cross-Border Trade on EWEC for Bordering Provinces of Khammouane, Lao PDR and Nakhon Phanom, Thailand
- Workshop on EWEC Database Update and E-commerce Promotion for Bordering Provinces of Khammouane, Lao PDR and Nakhon Phanom, Thailand
- Workshop on EWEC Database Update and E-commerce Promotion for Bordering Provinces of Tak, Thailand and Kayin State, Myanmar



China

Training

- Training on Bio-pharm and Health Industrial Innovation and Technology Transfer in the GMS

Myanmar

Structured Learning Visit

- Structured Learning Visit to Shan State with maize growing farmers

Other Activities

- Linking Feed Factory with Traders and Brokers
- Assisting maize farmers with selling the product

Lao PDR

Training

- Final Training on Integrated Pest Management
- Good Agricultural Practices Certification Processes
- Good Manufacturing Practice Standardization for Rice Mills

Other Activities

- Promoting Rice Seed Production, GAP and GMP Standard Application

Vietnam

Other Activities

- Official Approval of “Fertilizer Revolving Fund” Project
- Meeting on the Investment Promoting Portal in Quang Tri province

Thailand

Trainings

- 3rd Modular Training on Certified Logistics Master
- Water Resources Information System for Agricultural Development
- Commercial Banks’ Lessons on the Promotion of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
- Business Research and Database Development in the Southern Economic Corridor
- Promoting Cross-Border Trade through Value Chain Development
- Protection and Promoting of the Rights of Migrant Workers, Women and Children in the GMS

- Promoting Innovative Entrepreneurship
- Sustainable Transport and Logistics Planning and Management
- Development of Farmer’s Organization

Workshops

- Regional Consultation Workshop on Promoting Food Safety in CLMV
- Food Safety Management Tools in Food Manufacturing
- Synthesis and Evaluation Workshop: Poverty Alleviating and Sustainable Rural Development

Year In Review 2016

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In responding to the changing dynamics in the GMS region, MI restructured its Strategic Framework in line with three regional development themes. MI's Rural Department has been reconstituted as the Agricultural Development and Commercialization Department (ADC), acknowledging the substantial interdependencies between agriculture and trade. A new department, the Innovation and Technological Connectivity Department (ITC), was introduced to address the evolving need to integrate technology as the region adopts more modern methods and approaches. The Trade and Investment Facilitation Department (TIF) continues to carry out its important role in the region. Together, these three pillars will enable MI to engage with a broad range of interrelated issues in regional development, including gender equality, environmental sustainability and labor mobility.

Another major achievement in 2016 was the launch of the very first Mekong Development Report. The report highlights the impact MI makes in the GMS, showcasing MI's continued

initiative to serve as a regional hub for information, integration, capacity building and development. It provides a systematic summary and analysis of assessments and reports undertaken by different national researchers and the staff of MI. In the future, MI will publish the Mekong Development Report on a yearly basis with a focus on issues concerning the development of the GMS.



The pace of modernization in the GMS calls for continuous growth and adaptation, as well as innovative and imaginative methods to better serve the region and our partners. As MI looks forward to the challenges ahead in 2017 and beyond, we remain committed to working toward more inclusive development.

Fostering Innovation and Technological Connectivity in the GMS

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The capacity development program of the ITC Department revolves around the creation of learning opportunities for policy makers, entrepreneurs, researchers, professionals and people working in the development community. ITC provides a number of different programs, such as:



Training and Education activities aimed at increasing the knowledge and skills of member countries' government officials, policy makers, researchers, young professionals and other stakeholders, enabling them to engage more innovatively in sustainable development processes.



Policy Dialogue supports activities aimed to facilitate the exchange of new ideas and technology to develop effective communication channels between experts, government officials, senior policy makers, academics and other stakeholders, in order to ease the flow of research findings and solutions to development challenges.



Knowledge Sharing activities and dissemination of technologies, innovative concepts, and experiences to academics, industrial development policy makers, practitioners and other shareholders.

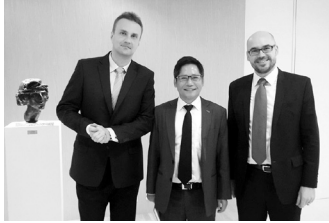


Strategic Networking and Partnership links activities with appropriate partner institutions (such as private organizations, universities, research centers, think-tanks, consulting companies) with an expertise in the field of sustainable development policy design and management, and to create a GMS community of practice on development issues.

The need for innovation that introduces and supports technological connectivity constitutes a new regional development theme, essential for the economic growth and prosperity of the GMS. MI proudly ushers in the new ITC Department to contribute to our overall impact and success in the region.

MI HIGHLIGHTS

Visit to Embassy of the Republic of Poland



MI Executive Director, Dr. Watcharas Leelawath, met with Mr. Tomasz Miklaszewski, Counsellor for Political-Economic Section and Mr. Robert T. Ambroziak, First Secretary at the Embassy of the

Republic of Poland in Bangkok on October 18, 2016 to discuss future collaborations.

Speech at Natonal University of Laos



MI Executive Director, Dr. Watcharas Leelawath, delivered a speech on “Strengthening Human Resources in GMS” on November 2, 2016 at the Faculty of Economics and Business Management

International Conference, National University of Laos.

ASEAN Korean Economic Partnership Forum



Mr. Madhurjya Kumar Dutta, Director of the Trade and Investment Facilitation Department, attended the ASEAN Korean Economic Partnership Forum at Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam on November

3, 2016, presenting on the topic “Exploring ASEAN Economic Community: Meeting Opportunities and Challenges”. The forum brought together over two hundred delegates comprised of senior officials, corporate leaders and think tanks from Korea and Vietnam to discuss the opportunities and challenges for economic collaboration between Korea and Vietnam.

Visit with the New Governor of Khon Kaen



MI Executive Director, Dr. Watcharas Leelawath, made a courtesy call to the newly appointed Governor of Khon Kaen, Mr. Pongsak Preechavith on November 7, 2016.

MOU Signing



An MOU was signed between MI and the Faculty of Economics and Business Management, National University of Laos on November 2, 2016 in Vientiane, Lao PDR.

Guest Visit from Thammasat University



On November 2, 2016, MI, led by External Relations Manager, Ms. Pornwilai Pumira, welcomed thirty-two officials from various universities in Thailand, led by Ajan Somsunee Duangkae,

Head of Dean Office, Research and Consultancy Institute, Thammasat University (TU). The officials were attendees of the training program on “Increasing Potential in Managerial Leading,” organized by the Institute for Continuing Education & Social Sciences, TU. They discussed major issues concerning the Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS), including the role of MI in the development of the GMS and ASEAN.

Meeting with IDRC



On November 26, 2016 MI’s Executive Director, Dr. Watcharas Leelawath, led a meeting at MI with IDRC (International Development Research Center), Canada, where the two sides updated

each other on their regional collaboration progresses and discussed the proposed project on promoting women entrepreneurship for export business in the GMS.

21st GMS Ministerial Conference



MI Executive Director, Dr. Watcharas Leelawath, was invited as a panelist to the 21st GMS Ministerial Conference held on November 30, 2016 in Chiang Rai, Thailand. He spoke about MI's current strategies and contributions to the GMS agenda under the Revised Regional Investment Framework Implementation Plan 2020.

Guest Visit from Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia



Ms. Maria Theresa Medialdia, Director of ADC of MI, welcomed Mr. Agustaviano Sofjan, Counsellor, Economic Affairs and UN-ESCAP from the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia on November 18, 2016.

Following a brief presentation on the GMS Economic Cooperation Program and the thematic background history of MI, Ms. Medialdia introduced the current and future activities of MI.

Guest Visit from New Zealand Embassy



Ms. Shannon Austin, Deputy Head of Mission, New Zealand Embassy; Dr. Anthony Smith, Assessments Manager for Asia, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet and

Ms. Nicola Braid, Analyst, National Assessments Bureau, visited MI on November 18, 2016. They were welcomed by Ms. Maria Theresa Medialdia, Director of ADC, who presented an overview of the GMS Economic Cooperation Program and MI's history, in addition to MI's future and ongoing programs.

Meeting with KGU and UGA



On December 6, 2016 MI's Executive Director, Dr. Watcharas Leelawath, met with Khon Kaen University (KKU) Deans and Dr. Amrit Bart, Vice Dean of International Affairs from the University of Georgia (UGA), Athens, USA. The meeting was held to discuss the theme and logistic arrangements for the 1st Mini-Symposium on Food Safety for Globalization that they will co-organize.

Launch of Mekong Development Report 2016



MI officially launched its very first Mekong Development Report 2016 on December 7, 2016. MI Executive Director, Dr. Watcharas Leelawath, gave an introduction speech to over thirty participants at MI.

Second Governing Board Meetings for 2016



MI held its second Governing Board Meetings on December 17 and 18, 2016 in Bangkok. Members from the six GMS countries reviewed MI's performance over the second half of 2016 and discussed plans for the year 2017. The meetings were chaired by Dr. Narongchai Akrasanee for the Steering Committee meeting and H.E. Mr. Tun Tun Naing for the Council meeting.



TESTIMONIALS



Activity: Business Research and Database Development in the Southern Economic Corridor (SEC)
Eng Samphors
Advisory Member of the Battambang Chamber of Commerce, Cambodia

"This training met my expectation and the knowledge I gained is very useful to me. I liked the lecture on e-commerce because it has become more and more important in the modern day. As my country is still a developing country, I think that there is lots of room for improvement with e-commerce. I also learned a lot from Alibaba and how to contact them for any future needs. The training allowed me to have a lot of interactions with friends from different countries and I hope we can stay friends and perhaps even become business partners someday."



Activity: Economies in Transition for Mid-Level Managers

Xu Hong

Director/Chief Engineer, Yunnan Academy of Science and Technology Development, China

“I am an old student that took part in an MI training workshop fifteen years ago and MI is a very good memory for me. I am so lucky to have been involved in a nine week training course and I feel this unforgettable memory during this period of workshops. I also remember there were several modules for learning, which, even now, these modules and learning cycles help me a lot and influence me in my life and my study. During that period of time, I felt a very exciting and colorful life, not only learning activities but also visiting programs, so it is a very good learning atmosphere.”



Activity: Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers, Women and Children

Phatphousam Lannguthumthong

Deputy Director of Woman Advanced Division, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, Lao PDR

“The topic and content in which we trained is very useful and important especially on the economy, population, labor market and migration into the GMS, as well as the right to access health and education. The Mekong Institute is a good facility with a warm and friendly welcome to all participants. After this training I will use my experience to improve my work because it is very important to Lao PDR. I would like to thank you for giving us good lessons and new experience. On behalf of myself and all Lao participants, I hope that you receive continued support in the future.”



Activity: Regional Consultation Workshop on Promoting Food Safety in CLMV

Dr. Pyei Phy

Deputy Director, Food and Drug Administration, Myanmar

“We try to plan for the training and participants who will later take the opportunity to get trained consigned on food safety in our country, as well as the CLMV countries. This workshop is great because they have given us the opportunity to set ourselves up for what we need and they are trying to facilitate by giving us the correct training.”



Activity: Promoting Innovative Entrepreneurship

Jantima Wattananond

Managing Director, Prozone Cosmetic Manufacturing and OEM, Thailand

“I am very happy to be in this course because I have many friends from other countries and we are trying to gather and brainstorm innovatively and creatively to put a good project together. This time I hope we can be creative for the product that can sustain to give us the best solution all around for our group and prolong and continue in the future.”



Activity: Promoting Innovative Entrepreneurship

Matana Leksomboon

Owner/Chairman, Rai Aromdee Organic Farm, Thailand

“I think the course provided me with the knowledge needed to become an innovative entrepreneur. Within the course, I had the chance to share experiences of being an entrepreneur and learn from others as well. I believe that I have learned from the course to benefit me and my business in the future. Also, I made many friends here. It was so nice to meet and learn from them.”



MI Calendar (January-March 2017)

No.	Name	Category	Department	Date
1	GMS Logistics Database Development	Other- Database	TIF	Jan - Feb
2	EWEC Business Database Upgrade	Co-learning projects	TIF	Jan - Feb
3	Workshop EWEC Business Database Upgrade and E-Commerce Promotion in Quang Tri, Vietnam	Workshop	TIF	January 19
4	Hydropower Project Construction and Power System Operation Management in the GMS	Training	ITC	February 6 - 10
5	Field Research on Cross – Border Value Chain Bottlenecks	Field Research	TIF	February 15 - March 15
6	Addressing the Challenge of Agrichemical Management Practices and ASEAN GAP	Training	ADC	February 20 - 24
7	TOT on Certified Logistics Master (Phase III) + AP+S&E	Modular Training	TIF	March 20 - 31
8	Media Training	Training	ADC	March 27 - 31
9	Workshop China GMS Transport Information Connectivity	Workshop	TIF	March 29 - 31
10	International Seminar on Logistics (KKCAO)	Seminar	TIF	March 31

Launch of Mekong Institute's New Logo!

MI is very proud to present our new logo! It has been redesigned to convey modernization in the Greater Mekong Sub-region and to reflect the new direction of MI as we look to the future. The new logo is more pronounced, contemporary and refined.

We hope you enjoy our fresh new look and continue to support MI as we move forward!



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