

MI and GMS-BF sign trade program agreement

The Mekong Institute (MI) will work with the Greater Mekong Sub-region Business Forum (GMS-BF) to create a training program for trade and investment facilitation along the GMS Economic Corridors.



Mr. Oudet and Dr. Suchat shook hands after signing the MoU.

The two organizations will design the program to build capacity in regional development, cooperation and integration, using their individual strengths and expertise.

It will incorporate policy dialogues, strengthening business relationships, building a GMS-wide network, and research.

MI Director, Dr. Suchat Katima, said: "This is a very exciting project. The Economic Corridors provide enormous opportunities for communities across the GMS. We are looking forward to working with GMS-BF, and hope this will be the first of many joint programs."

The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed on August 8 at the GMS-BF Headquarters in Vientiane, Lao PDR, by Dr. Suchat and GMS-BF Secretary-General Mr. Oudet Souvannavong. Dr. Suchat was accompanied by Mr. Latsamy Keomany, the Lao PDR representative on MI's Steering Committee.

MI welcomes ADB visitors

ADB - MI collaboration has been assessed by and discussed with Mr. Arjun Thapan, Director-General of the Southeast Asian Department at the Asian Development Bank (ADB),



when he visited the Mekong Institute (MI) on July 3 to assess the Institute and its human resource capacity, and to discuss a closer working relationship between the two organizations.

Mr. Thapan, who is an MI Council Member, was accompanied by Ms. Lingling Ding, ADB's Senior Regional Economist. The guests were welcomed by Director Dr. Suchat Katima, MI's management and staff.

Dr. Suchat briefed the visitors on MI's activities and development partners. MI's thematic program areas - Effective Regional Cooperation, Trade and Investment Facilitation, Rural Development and Project Management, Public Sector Reform and Good Government, and Research and Learning Resources - were also discussed.

Dr. Suchat thanked Mr. Thapan for his visit and ADB's continuing interest in, and support of, MI.

MI's governing bodies welcome Guangxi to GMS



MI Council Chairman, Mr. Hoang Viet Khang, chaired the Council Meeting on July 8 at Mekong Institute in Khon Kaen, Thailand.

The governing bodies of the Mekong Institute (MI) have officially welcomed Guangxi Autonomous Region as a new member of the Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS).

The Institute's Council and Steering Committee assembled in Khon Kaen in July for their biannual meetings.

A number of matters were discussed, including the extension of MI's capacity building program to Guangxi Autonomous Region. It will share the representation of China PRC with Yunnan Province in the GMS.

The Council also adopted the proposal that MI provide training for provincial government officials who implement the GMS policies along the Economic Corridors. MI's research has shown that policy information needs to reach the grass-roots level for maximum effectiveness.

Council Chairman, Mr. Hoang Viet Khang, recognized the value of MI's research and its various publications, including the Annual Report, Tracer Study, policy documents and Mekong Connection newsletter.

Steering Committee Chairman, Dr. Narongchai Akrasanee, acknowledged the diverse and wide range of MI's learning programs in the first half of 2008, and congratulated the staff on its work.

Guangxi (or Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region) is located in southern China, along the border with Vietnam.

The Region's name can be shortened to Gui, which comes from Guilin, the former capital and center of much of Guangxi's culture, politics, and history. Guilin is now a major city in the region.

Its name means "expanse", reflecting its mountainous and wild terrain, and has been associated with the region since the creation of Guang Prefecture in 226 AD.

It was given provincial status during the Yuan Dynasty, and became one of China's five autonomous regions in 1949.

The next MI Council Meeting will be co hosted by the Lao Government, and held in Vientiane, on December 12.

MI discusses potential partnerships in Northern Thailand

Mekong Institute (MI) delegates led by Director Dr. Suchat Katima, visited Rajabhat University, Mae Fah Luang University, Provincial Chamber of Commerce and Industry Federation in Chiang Rai from September 15-21 to discuss future cooperation.



The first visit was the International College of Mekong Region Chiang Rai Rajabhat University where Dean Dr. Maka Kittasankka hosted the meeting with MI. The Chiang Rai Provincial Chapter of the Federation of Thai Industries was the second site where Chairman Mr. Charernchai Yamkaekai discussed potential cooperative options.

At Mae Fah Luang University, Vice President Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ted Tesprateep, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Sitanon Jesdapipat, Acting Director of the Center for Natural Resources and Environmental Management (CNREM), led the discussion. MI and CNREM are planning to co-host a regional policy dialogue on "Impacts of GMS Economic Integration on Upland Cultivation and Minorities" in December.

MI also held a meeting with the Chiang Rai Chamber of Commerce to plan for the upcoming structured learning visit of delegates from the six GMS countries to the newly opened North-South Economic Corridors – R3a.

Entrepreneurship course begins at MI

Ms. Veraya Jaru-ampornpun, Director of Human Resources Development Division, Thailand International Development Cooperation Agency (TICA), presided over the Opening Ceremony of the "Enhancing Entrepreneurship in SME Development and Export Consortia" Learning Program on August 4.



The participants attend the Entrepreneurship Course organized at MI Conference Room on August 4, 2008.

Twenty-two participants from 14 developing countries in the Asia-Pacific region, including Bangladesh, Papua New Guinea and Samoa, attended this course.

This three-week course, organized by TICA and MI, ran until August 22 at MI's Residential Facility.

It was aimed at developing the participants' appreciation of the significance and complexity of sustainable enterprise development in a national and regional context. It developed their capacity to assess effective enterprise and private sector development strategies and activities in their own countries. The course comprised four Modules: Essentials of Enterprise Development, Ensuring Business Survival and Sustainable Growth, Developing Clusters and Business-to-Business Networks and Structured Learning Visits.

GMS researchers review projects

More than 30 researchers met at the Mekong Institute (MI) recently for a midterm review of their GMS-focused research projects.

The one-week "Regional Research Implementation and Methodology" workshop brought together 21 GMS researchers and 13 MI staff to review the projects they began in March.

The purpose of this workshop was to improve the researchers' skills in key areas, such as survey development leading to field data collection, data cleaning and coding, data analysis and interpretation, and research report writing.

MI's Research Manager, Mr Bhoj Raj Khanal, said the main four projects cover contract farming, public health service delivery, impacts on upland minorities and SME tourism development.

"These are significant research projects, as each topic is divided into 11 sub-projects. MI is the coordinating body, and we want to ensure the researchers have the training and support they need to complete the task," he added.

The course was sponsored by New Zealand's International Aid and Development Agency, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, and the Rockefeller Foundation.



GMS researchers and MI staff participated in the regional research course for a midterm review.

MI hosts its first international leadership course

The Mekong Institute welcomed 22 participants from 16 countries for its first international training course on leadership in July.

Thailand's International Development Cooperation Agency (TICA) sponsored the three-week program, "Leadership in Competitive Enterprises", which was held from July 7 to 25.



A Thai factory Manager explained her production processes to the participants during their tour of an agriculture machinery factory in Khon Kaen.

The participants, from the Pacific Islands, Africa, South and Southeast Asia, underwent extensive training in leadership skills for emerging trends in managing enterprises in a competitive market. Practicum was emphasized with several study visits to Thai businesses.

Phnom Penh hosts entrepreneurship workshop

An international trade workshop, organized by the Cambodia - India Entrepreneurship Development Centre (CIEDC), Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India (EDII) and Mekong Institute (MI), was held in August in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.



The managements of MI, CIEDC, EDII, plus 35 entrepreneurs and government officials participated in the international trade workshop, organized from August 27-29, 2008 in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

Thirty-five entrepreneurs and government officials took part in the "Unleashing Entrepreneurship for Development & Trade" workshop, which ran from August 27 to 29.

The event was attended by His Excellency Mr. Pich Sophoan, Secretary of State, Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training of the Royal Government of Cambodia, and His Excellency, Mr Aloke Sen, India's Ambassador to Cambodia.

The workshop was commissioned by the Global Issues and Sustainable Development Division of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

It was part of the Trade and Investment Promotion Program in the GMS countries supported by SDC. The next regional event will be held in Kunming City, Yunnan Province of China, in December.

Professionals retool facilitation skills

From September 1-5, 26 technical personnel of public and private sectors participated in a Training-of-Trainer workshop to enhance their "Facilitation Skills".

The participants comprised 14 technical officers and managers of Metrology Centers involved in Mekong Metrology Project, nine alumni of InWent - German Capacity Building International, two MI Program personnel and one UNESCO trainer.

The workshop was co-sponsored by New Zealand International Development Agency (NZAID) and InWent - German Capacity Building International. The workshop was co-organized by the Mekong Institute and Mr. John Barker, Managing Director of Barker Metrology Consultants Ltd. Mr. Barker is also the Manager of Mekong Metrology Capacity Building Project.



The participants listen to the welcome remarks made by Dr. Suchat.

Dr. Suchat Katima, the Director of Mekong Institute said: "To enable managers to manage effectively in this global environment, facilitation skills are vital. Very often, managers are called to act as mentors, teachers, counselors, team leaders, and coordinators. Presentation, communication, counseling, teamwork, information literacy, multi-cultural competency, political recognition and participative management have become core competencies of modern managers."

UPCOMING TRAINING COURSES

MI Residential Training Center, Khon Kaen, Thailand

October - December 2008

Strategic Human Resource Development for Effective Regional Cooperation

27 October - 14 November

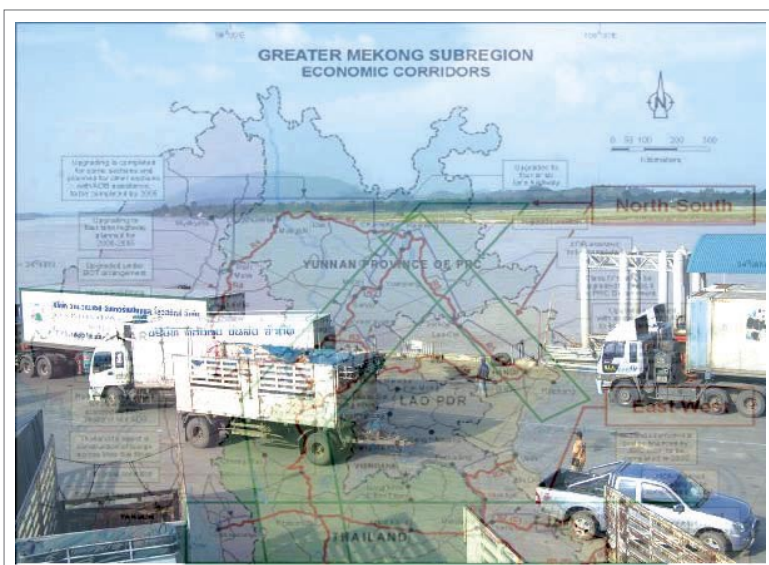
Co-sponsored by NZAID and the Yunnan Provincial Government, this regional training course provides an opportunity for Human Resource Development (HRD) planners to study systems and procedures used by national agencies in the GMS. The target audience is government officials, researchers and planners working in HRD.



Regional Workshop and Structured Learning Visit on Trade and Investment Opportunities along R3a North-South Economic Corridor

12 - 23 November

MI, the GMS Business Forum and the Yunnan Department of Commerce will host a regional workshop and mobile learning visit on the R3a Economic Corridor in November. This project is sponsored by the Yunnan Provincial Government to promote trade and investment for members of provincial Chambers of Commerce and concerned Government officials. The workshop will comprise a three-day information session at MI and a nine-day excursion from Chiang Rai to Vientiane.



The Impacts of Economic Integration on Up-land Cultivation and Ethnic Minorities in the GMS: Regional Policy Dialogue

17 - 19 December

MI has been conducting sub-regional research in Vietnam, Thailand, and Myanmar, Lao PDR and Cambodia to directly assess the impacts of GMS economic integration on upland cultivation and minorities. The project, which began in May, is supported by the Rockefeller Foundation. The findings and recommendations will be presented by the research teams at a Regional Policy Dialogue in December.



Labor Migration Management for Effective Regional Cooperation and Integration

10 - 28 November

MI and the Mekong Migration Network will conduct a regional training workshop to enhance the capacity of policy makers and implementers of concerned government agencies in labor migration management. The target participants are senior/middle level government officials from the Ministries of Labor, the Interior, Social Welfare and Foreign Affairs. The curriculum includes migration patterns, current regional and international responses, the contribution made by regional migration to GMS economic cooperation and integration, labor and social issues, and labor migration management. This course is sponsored by NZAID and the Rockefeller Foundation.



Enhancing Entrepreneurship in SME Development and Export Consortia

24 - 29 November

MI, the GMS Business Forum and the Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India will hold one workshop in November to improve the awareness of senior government officials of Small to Medium Enterprises (SMEs) along the GMS Economic Corridors. SMEs play an important and complex role in enterprise development at both regional and national levels. The workshop will also promote Business-to-Business Networks among entrepreneurs and SME promotional institutions.



Internal news

MI welcomes new staff



Ms Urinthorn Pheungsaengkeo

Ms Urinthorn Pheungsaengkeo (Thai) has been employed to work for MI as Associate Program Facilitator. She is from London, and will be joining the International Cooperation and Communication Department in November.



Mr Michael Jones

Mr Michael Ernest Jones, (American) has been employed as the new Coordinator for the International Cooperation and Communication Department. He is from New Orleans, and will join MI in November.



Mr. Marat Yu

Mr. Marat Yu (Chinese) has been appointed as MI's new Program Specialist. Marat will head the Rural Development and Project Management Department. He earned his Master's Degree in development studies from the London School of Economic and Political Science.



MI organized a three-day staff retreat at Chokchai Farm, near Khao Yai National Park in Pak Chong District, Nakhon Ratchasima Province in September.

Ms Yuko Shirai, (Japanese) has been contracted to work for the Mekong Institute as a Research Fellow. She is from Hokkaido, and will be joining MI's Research and Learning Resource Department in October.



Ms Yuko Shirai

Ms. Maria Medialdia, (Filipino) is MI's new Research Manager. Maria will head the Research and Learning Resource Department. She brings more than 23 years' experience in research and community development. Maria earned her Master's Degree in agricultural economics from the University of Kentucky.



Ms. Maria Medialdia,

Letter

Dear Sir,
I would like to offer my warmest congratulations to the Mekong Institute for its successful organization of the on "Enhancing Entrepreneurship in SME Development & Export Consortia" international training course (August 4-22, 2008). I personally appreciated the special efforts and professionalism of the Director and course associates. The resource persons were knowledgeable and made every effort to make the participants understand the subjects. The field visits were also very interesting, and a wonderful experience for me. I will not forget the sweet memories. The hospitality of the Mekong Institute was really wonderful. I wish the Mekong Institute every success in its effort to achieve its vision and mission for development and cooperation in the GMS. I think the Institute can be a model, and ask you to continue your good work in the future. I am grateful to TICA for providing me with the opportunity to participate in the program.

With warm regards,
Yours sincerely,

M.Abdur Rahman
Director
Export Promotion Bureau Bangladesh



(2002: **GTZ/NOSPA Economic Policy**): Theory and Practice in Thailand) **Mr. Soulinthone Leuangkhamasing** from Lao PDR, has joined the Asian Development Bank, Lao PDR Resident Mission, as Economics Officer. MI wishes him all the best for his new position.



(2003: **Towards Eliminating Poverty in the GMS**) **Mr. Chin Sosamphors** from Cambodia, took part in a six-week training course on an Ausaid-sponsored water resource management in Australia from 21 July to 29 August.

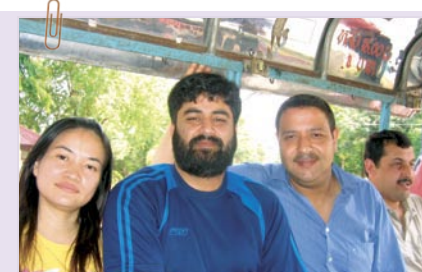


(2004: **Poverty Reduction**) **Mr. Mohammad Hussein Ali AL-Jawamees** from Jordan, will soon move to the UK to begin an MBA in developmental studies at the University of Leeds. MI wishes him all the best for student life.



"I attended MI's "Regional Cooperation in the GMS" course in 2006. It gave me the opportunity to explore my vision, and exchange knowledge and experiences with other countries. I will never forget the MI staff and all my fellow participants, who shared smiles and happiness during those three weeks. I look forward to seeing the continued positive cooperation among the GMS countries." **Mr. Anousone Sisa-ad** Lao PDR

(2007: **Project Monitoring and Evaluation**) **Ms. Waleerat Nampanya** (Thai) visited Pakistan in



July (pictured in the yellow shirt). Fellow alumni and local, **Mr. Ahmed Waseem Qureshi** (dark blue T-shirt), accompanied her in Islamabad. Both alumni enjoyed the visit, and reminisced about their time at MI. Mr. Waseem began a three-month visit to China for training on September 16.

On 12 July, Ms. Thanaporn (Jeay) Chaisirha, former MI course administrator married her French fiancé Mr. Benoit Michaud. A number of MI staff attended the wedding, including Mr. Graham Harper, former MI course manager and Mr. John Askwith, former MI Deputy Director (Academic). Two MI alumni were also among the guests, **Mr. Cherdchai Malai**, (left) from the Project Management for Infrastructure course in 2004, and **Mr Thanedchai Angwarawong**, from the Leadership for a Competitive Enterprise Course in 2004.



"I will always remember the time we spent in Thailand. I hope everybody has sweet memories of our program. It is with pleasure that I thank the MI Director and staff for giving us the opportunity to participate in such an interesting program. Also, thanks must go to the organizers, who provided the facilities and made us so comfortable." **Mr. Nandana Cooray** Sri Lanka (2008: **Income Generation and Poverty Reduction**)



The Mekong Institute (MI) is an independent Inter-Governmental Organization (IGO) working in the Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS). MI works closely with the governments of Cambodia, Myanmar, Lao PDR, Thailand, Vietnam and Yunnan Province of China to develop and deliver high quality, appropriate and timely human resource development (HRD) programs. Its clientele comprises middle to senior level governmental and private sector representatives and individuals involved in regional development.