



MEKONG CONNECTION

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DIRECTOR'S WORDS

Dear Readers,

The Mekong Institute (MI) has successfully transformed into an Inter Governmental Organization in 2009, and embarked on a participatory planning process for its Strategic Plan 2011-2015.

MI's role as a HRD provider is more relevant than ever. To enable the GMS to harness new opportunities and mitigate associated challenges, MI will design and deliver HRD programs that directly facilitate the process of GMS integration, and address cross-border cooperation on issues directly linked to GMS integration.

Moreover, MI programs will be based on national HRD priorities that are aligned with regional priorities in the next five years.

The relevance of MI's focus on sustainable rural development, trade and investment facilitation and human migration is affirmed in the new Plan, with good governance and regional cooperation and integration as cross cutting themes.

Looking forward to the realization of the ASEAN Community in 2015, MI will pay special attention to CLMV and encourage greater participation of the private sector as well as local partners in implementing programs at both regional and national levels.

We will continue to apply the triangular intervention modality of learning, research and policy dialogue. We will strengthen our organizational efficiency, enhance resource mobilization within member countries and build closer collaboration with key development partners.

On behalf of MI, I would like to thank for the support of all GMS government agencies, international organizations and civil society participated in the planning process of the new Strategic Plan. I would also appeal to all regional stakeholders to continue to support MI programs in the next five years.

Let's work together to build up our Mekong Connection.

Suchat Katima, Ed.D
MI Director

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From Editor

Welcome to the special edition of the Mekong Connection!

In this special edition of Mekong Connection, we will introduce to you the national and regional consultations MI conducted. The key features and thematic thrusts in the new plan, and a series of upcoming events in 2011.

MI has made many advances since our last published issue. We will continue to keep you abreast of latest development in the GMS and MI, and invite you to stay connected with us on our website and facebook (Mekong Institute).

Thank you for your long-term support. Let's stay connected.

Editor

Interview with Dr. Tej Bunnag

Mekong connection interviewed Dr. Tej Bunnag, Honorary Advisor to the MI Council, and asked about his vision of the GMS of MI.

Q: Dr. Tej, you have been steering MI since its inception, could you recount the significant moments of MI in its 14 years' history?

A: MI started off as a bilateral project between NZAID and the then Department of Technical and Economic Cooperation (DTEC, now TICA). Its

“Renewed interests of the United States and other countries such as Japan will bring more dynamics to the region, and what is good for the GMS is good for MI. The challenge for MI is to direct these new interests to benefit the Institute and the region as a whole.”

breakthrough came in 2003, when the governments of 6 GMS countries signed the symbolic MI Charter in Phnom Penh. More recently in 2009, a Thai law was passed to recognize the 6-party Charter and MI as an Intergovernmental Organization. GMS which was once a dream is now a reality.

Q: GMS is very different from back then. What are the major paradigm shifts in the region that are shaping MI's operating environment?

A: First of all, the GMS is no longer seen as an ADB-Thai design, but a common vision shared by all GMS countries. Integration initiatives such as economic corridors are bringing benefits to people on the ground, and other countries are beginning to see the fruits of collaboration.

There are also more players in the region now. Renewed interests of the United States and other countries such as Japan will bring more dynamics to the region, and what is good for the GMS is good for MI. The challenge for MI is to direct these new interests to benefit the Institute and the region as a whole. MI has to reach out to these new donors and establish itself as the designated centre for their training programs.



Dr. Tej Bunnag
MI Honorary Advisor to the MI Council

Q: What is your vision of GMS's future?

A: I envisage a peaceful and prosperous GMS, with countries collaborating with one another to facilitate free flow of goods and movement. This demands strong political will but I am hopeful of the future.

Q: How do you see MI five years from now?

A: MI is an institution I believe in. I trust that MI will be able to develop its own signature programs, and continue to nurture the spirit of partnership and cooperation among GMS stakeholders.



National and Regional Consultations

“Through national and regional consultations, MI not only collected important feedback and suggestions for MI’s strategic direction in the next five years, the process itself was also an opportunity to clarify the identity of MI and opened windows for collaboration.”

The new Strategic Plan is the result of months-long consultation and embodies a vision shared by GMS stakeholders.

In preparing the Plan, MI adopted a participatory approach and conducted national consultations in each GMS country from February to March 2010 to solicit inputs from various development players in the subregion. The consultation process employed individual



interviews and group meetings with government agencies, international development organizations, NGOs as well as business networks in member countries. The team not only collected important feedback and suggestions for MI’s strategic direction in the next five years, the process itself was also an opportunity to clarify the identity of MI and opened windows for collaboration.

The Yunnan Provincial Government hosted a regional consultation in Kunming in July to validate the findings of the national consultations.

More than 60 representatives from the GMS attended the event and deliberated on MI strategic focus and implementation strategies. Participants reaffirmed MI’s thematic areas and modalities, and gave valuable suggestions on partnership and resource mobilization.

Panel discussions were also held in Kunming to galvanize interest and commitment of stakeholders to MI programs.

The Plan has been refined based on these consultations and was subsequently adopted by the MI Governing Council in July 2010.



National Consultation Meeting
Vientiane, 2 March 2010



Regional Consultation Meeting
Kunming, 12 July 2010



Panel Discussion on Transnational
Rural Development
Kunming, 12 July 2010

Key Strategic Plan Features

The salient features of the MI Strategic Plan 2011-2015 include the followings:

- The new goals and strategies are framed within the context of the GMS Cooperation Program and the vision of an integrated ASEAN community by 2015. MI's innovative HRD programs will help building the capacities of GMS stakeholders to adapt and manage change at the local, national and regional levels.
- Programs will be expanded from stand alone training activities into multi-level programs that strengthen the HRD capacities of target client groups at the institutional level. Consultancy services will be provided to assist client organizations in HRD needs assessments, development of HRD plans and monitoring implementation results.
- Core programs will see learning, research and policy dialogue as linked components in pursuing common objectives and agendas. More attention will be given to participants from provincial organizations as well as the private sector.
- Access to GMS governments will be maximized by facilitating policy dialogue and information exchange. MI's capacities for research will be strengthened to produce quality references that will assist decision makers in policy formulation.
- Pro-active marketing and resource mobilization strategies will be implemented to ensure stable income for operations and program delivery. ODA and bilateral aid will be accessed through partnerships with line ministries; paying clients, particularly from the private sector, will be tapped through innovative customized courses.
- MI's organizational efficiencies and effectiveness will be enhanced by maintaining in-house specialists, upgrading operational systems to meet international standards, establishing MI satellites in selected GMS countries and establishing MI satellites in selected GMS countries and implementing organization-wide M&E systems.

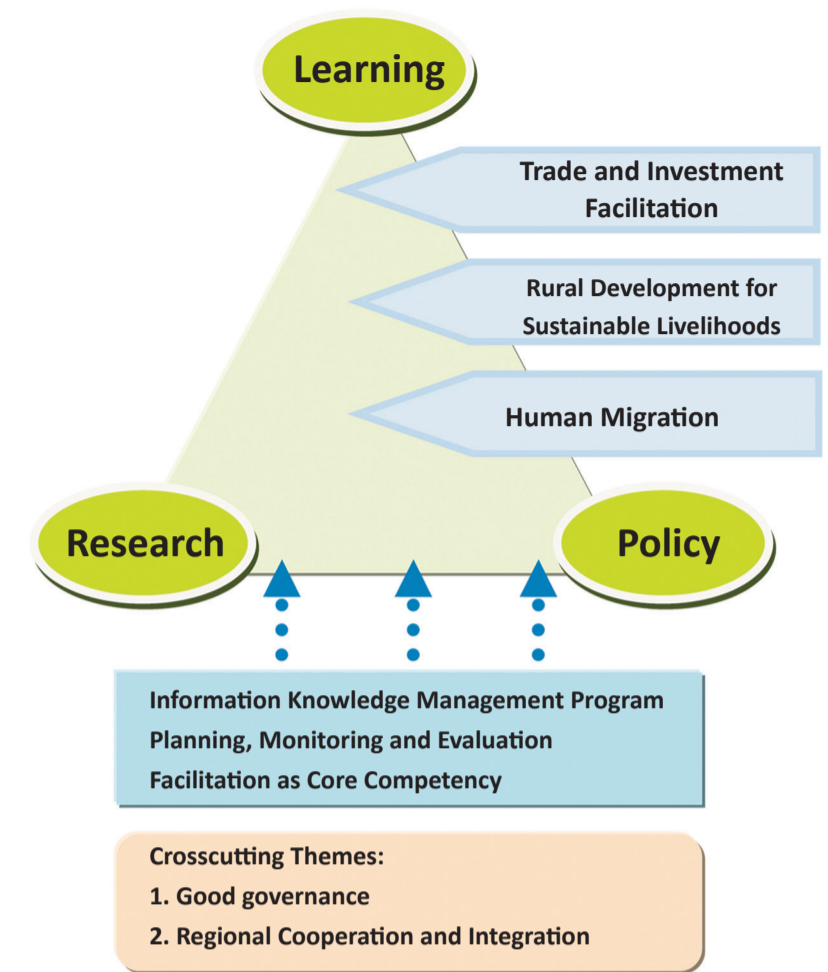
Thematic Thrusts

- I. **Trade and Investment Facilitation**
 - Trade and Investment Policies and Trade Negotiation
 - Promoting Agricultural Trade and Investment along Economic Corridors
 - ASEAN SME Regional Gate Way Initiatives
- II. **Rural Development for Sustainable Livelihoods**
 - Promoting Transnational Agricultural Value Chains
 - Promoting Rural Development through Local Economic Development Management
 - Pro-Poor Tourism
 - Integrated Water Resources Management
- III. **Human Migration**
 - Safe and Regular Migration
 - Mutual Recognition of Agreement
 - Freedom of Movement of Skilled Workers
 - Standardization of Skill Trainings and Certifications

MI Strategic Framework



Program Focus and Facilitation

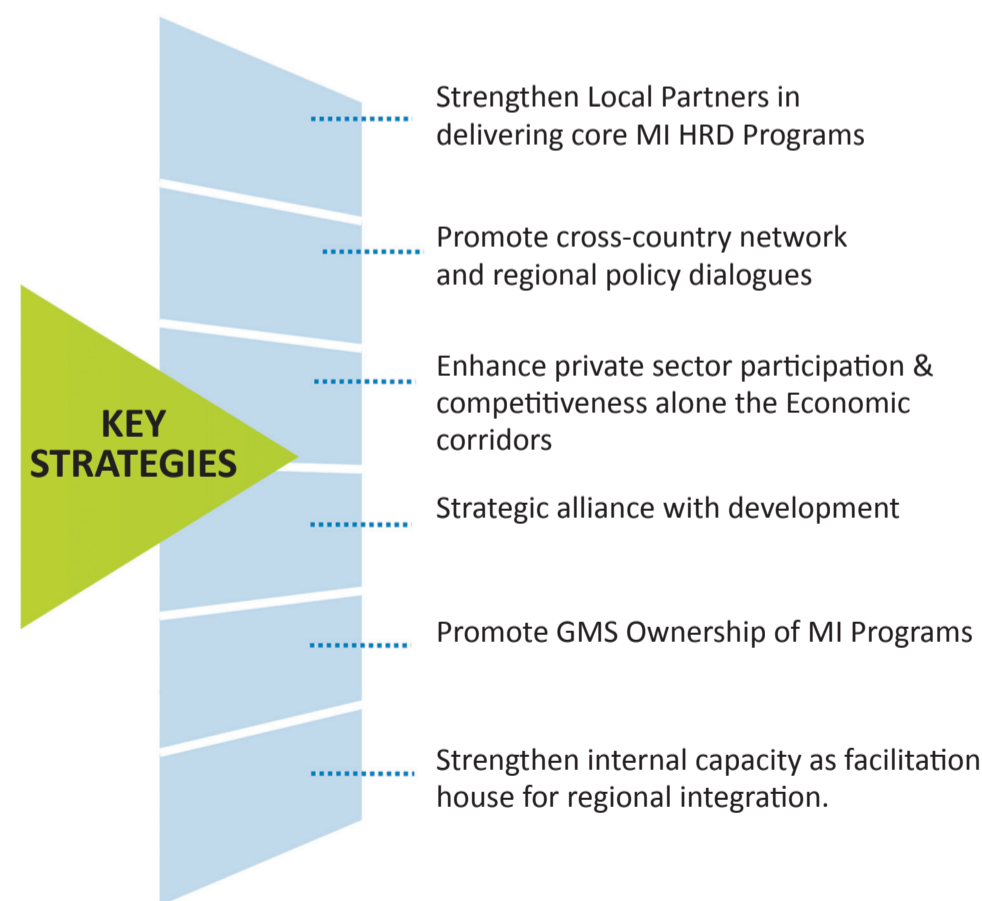


MI Core Themes and Modalities

Facilitation as MI Core Competency

In order to be effective in today's organizations, people must possess a combination of the following abilities: Leadership (a long term view which sets the tone and direction), Management (an immediate view which encompasses planning and getting things done) and Facilitation (a global view devoid of content which enables people to achieve their objective).

While emphasis was placed on developing individual knowledge and skills in the past, MI will now focus on developing facilitation as a core competency (FACC) in an organization. MI targets to become a regional facilitation house of learning and policy dialogues, to bring about structural and systematic improvements to both individuals and organizations working on GMS integration and cooperation.



Upcoming Events (Jan - Jul 2011)

MI will carry out over 30 training courses and workshops and a number of sub-regional research in 2011, out of which 10 courses/workshops are open to the public from Jan - Jul 2011.

* Normal Daily Subsistence Allowance for Khon Kaen is around \$65.

Please contact the
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Code	Course/Workshop Title	Date	Duration	Cost (in USD)
Rural Development for Sustainable Livelihoods				
RD01	Integrated Water Resource Management for the Mekong	4 – 14 Jan	2 weeks	\$ 900
RD02	Income Generation and Poverty Reduction for Development	28 Feb – 25 Mar	4 weeks	\$ 1,600
RD03	Postharvest Practices: Lessons learned and techniques from Israel and Thailand	25 Apr – 6 May	2 weeks	\$ 900
RD04	Agriculture Value Chains Analysis and Promotion	20 Jun – 1 Jul	2 weeks	\$ 900
RD05	Tourism – Regional Approach to Pro-poor Development	18 – 29 Jul	2 weeks	\$ 900
Trade and Investment Facilitation				
TF01	Business Research Development and Methodology	14 – 18 Feb	1 weeks	\$ 500
TF02	Enhancing Entrepreneurship in SME Development and Export Consortia	4 – 29 Jul 4	weeks	\$ 1,600
Project Management and Facilitation				
PM01	Effective Communication and Presentation Skills	31 Jan – 4 Feb	1 week	\$ 500
PM02	Facilitation as Core Competency	4 – 8 Apr	1 week	\$ 500
PM03	Transborder Project Management for Effective Regional Integration	9 – 27 May	3 weeks	\$ 1,300

About Mekong Connection

Mekong Connection is a biannual publication by the Mekong Institute. Most publications can be ordered from the MI's Resource Center or downloaded from www.mekonginstitute.org

Postage cost may apply for hard copies.

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