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# GMS E-UPDATES

## Recent and Upcoming GMS Events and Initiatives

This GMS E-News is a regular publication to provide readers with an update on activities and major developments in pursuit of accelerated development of the countries sharing the Mekong River.

### Upcoming 2013 GMS Events

- **Working Group on Agriculture Retreat**  
*(Bangkok and Central Provinces, Thailand, 21-24 May)*
- **31<sup>st</sup> GMS Tourism Working Group Meeting** *(Guilin, PRC, 18-20 June)*
- **14<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Regional Power Trade Coordination Committee (RPTCC-14) back to back with the 16<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Subregional Energy Forum** *(Kunming, PRC, 18-20 June)*
- **1<sup>st</sup> GMS Urban Development Task Force Meeting**,  
*(Cambodia, 21 June)*
- **17<sup>th</sup> Subregional Transport Forum (STF-17)** *(Chiang Rai, Thailand, 31 Jul-1 Aug)*
- **GMS Senior Official's Meeting (SOM) back-to-back with GMS 5<sup>th</sup> Economic Corridors Forum (ECF-5)** *(Bangkok, Thailand, 6-7 August)*
- **GMS Investment Forum**  
*(Bangkok, Thailand, TBD)*
- **National Transport Facilitation Committee Senior Officials Meeting back-to-back with Subcommittee Meetings** *(Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar, 21-22 Aug)*

### Work on the GMS RIF Pipeline Goes Full Blast

Work on the preparation of the pipeline of new generation GMS projects under the GMS Regional Investment Framework (RIF) is now in full throttle.

Immediately after the endorsement of the new GMS Strategic Framework (2012-2022) (new SF) by the GMS Leaders at the 4<sup>th</sup> GMS Summit in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar in December 2011, the GMS countries, with the assistance of the Asian Development Bank, embarked on the formulation of the RIF, which will serve as the regional plan that will operationalize the new SF. At the Fourth Economic Corridors Forum (ECF-4) held in Mandalay, Myanmar in June 2012, the key findings of the initial set of sector assessments and other analytical work under the RIF were presented. Further results of the refined sector assessments were presented at a SOM-RIF Steering Committee Meeting in September 2012 (held back-to-back with the 20<sup>th</sup> GMS Anniversary celebrations in Manila). A Progress Report on the RIF was presented at the 18<sup>th</sup> GMS Ministerial Conference in Nanning, PRC in December 2012, including a preliminary pipeline of projects, but with the qualification that the pipeline was still work-in-progress and had not yet undergone prioritization and detailed consideration by the countries.

In early February 2013, ADB initiated consultations with country sector focal persons by circulating for their review a baseline pipeline of investment and TA projects, which were based on initial sector assessments undertaken for the RIF process and ADB's own preliminary pipeline of GMS projects in the next 3-5 years. The consultations on the proposed sector pipelines are still ongoing and they will be finalized in the respective sector working groups and forums that are slated for the rest of the year. The pipeline of new generation projects is based broadly on the following basic principles of the RIF:

- ensure investments for corridor development are demand driven;
- balance external and domestic connectivity and trade, and carefully assess regional dimensions of national projects;
- adopt a multi-sector approach, reflecting focus on urban development and increasing the role of software or institutional and policy reforms in cooperation;
- recognize new and emerging priority areas -- the so-called second generation investments such as urban development linked to corridors, special economic zones, logistics, and investments linking remote areas with trade gateways; and
- prioritize specific areas (spatial prioritization) based on sound criteria and careful design sequencing of projects

The final consolidated pipeline will be presented to and endorsed by the 19<sup>th</sup> GMS Ministerial Conference in Vientiane, Lao PDR in December 2013.

## GMS Senior Officials Set Milestones in the Lead Up to the 19<sup>th</sup> GMS Ministerial Conference

The GMS Senior Officials met on 22 April 2013 via videoconferencing (the video-SOM) to initiate the preparations for the 19<sup>th</sup> GMS Ministerial Conference (19<sup>th</sup> MC) and other related key GMS events. The meeting discussed the work program in the lead up to the 19<sup>th</sup> MC, the key result being the transformation of the new GMS Strategic Framework (SF) into the Regional Investment Framework (RIF) with a robust pipeline of projects.

The video-SOM set the milestone events and their respective objectives, as follows:

- A Senior Officials Meeting to be held back-to-back with the Fifth Economic Corridors Forum (ECF-5) in August in Bangkok Thailand, to discuss further details of the RIF pipeline and the remaining RIF outputs (such as spatial prioritization and multi-sector investments); review final arrangements for ECF-5; and discuss updates on the arrangements for the 19<sup>th</sup> MC.
- ECF-5 in August in Bangkok, to review and endorse in principle the RIF pipeline and monitor the progress on other corridor development-related initiatives.
- A proposed GMS Investment Forum to enhance development partners' and the private sector awareness on the RIF pipeline and possibly identify ways by which they can support its implementation, especially on the financing of the projects.
- One or two further SOMs, via videoconference or face-to-face, to review and finalize the RIF and finalize the arrangements for the 19<sup>th</sup> MC, including the Joint Ministerial Statement.
- The 19<sup>th</sup> GMS MC to endorse the final RIF and pipeline as well as the other MC deliverables.

## Facilitating Green Pro-Poor Value Chains in the GMS, (Xiengkhouang, Lao PDR, 2 April 2013)



The knowledge event was held in conjunction with the 10<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the GMS Working Group on Agriculture (WGA-10) and the 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the GMS Working Group on Environment (WGE-19) at Xiengkhouang, Lao PDR.

About 130 participants and technical experts from the public and private sectors of the six GMS countries, and representatives of development partners attended. The event, which was organized and sponsored by ADB, featured technical presentations and panel discussions that highlighted opportunities and barriers related to the development of green, pro-poor value chains within the context of the agriculture and ecosystem services in the GMS. This topic was deemed timely and significant in recognition of the significant contribution of agricultural growth to the GMS economies and rural livelihood, but which had also

created immense pressure on the subregion's natural environment. The discussions emphasized the imperative to strengthen the linkages between the goals and approaches to agricultural development and environmental conservation, with the public and private sectors, and smallholders working together in choosing the best governance options for least developed countries to adopt in the pro-poor value chain and increasing the capacity of the rural poor by way of sharing lessons learned. The discussions also identified constraints that needed to be addressed to increase productivity and ensure sustainability in the supply chain. These included providing access to low-interest loans and creating enabling environment to support producers and communities (through access to technology, training, extension service support for new farming practices, reducing transport costs, and adoption of post-production techniques), and providing incentives to the private sector. Examples/models of agri-food traceability systems to ensure food quality and safety were also discussed.

Participants likewise exchanged views on opportunities for increased coordination and collaboration between WGA and WGE to get the best value from cross-sector cooperation towards jointly addressing mutual concerns about growing water pollution and scarcity, climate variability and volatility, biodiversity loss, soil degradation, greenhouse gas emissions, and concomitant risks posed on food security and ecosystem service supply. A collaborative and synergistic approach between the agriculture and environment sectors in the GMS through the Core Agriculture Support Program and the Core Environment Program-Biodiversity Corridor Initiative could help increase the much needed investments to realize the visions of these programs. Such collaboration would definitely be in line with the emphasis given under the new GMS Strategic Framework for 2012-2022 to strengthen multi-sector collaboration, given the cross-cutting themes for competitiveness, private sector investment and involvement, and green development that are central to the effective implementation of the GMS Economic Cooperation Program.

Development partners including U.S. Agency for International Development, the German Agency for International Cooperation, and the International Conservation Union contributed to the discussions and shared information concerning their respective programs and initiatives related to sustainable natural resources management and food security.

### **10<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Working Group on Agriculture** (Xiengkhouang Province, Lao PDR, 2-4 April 2013)

The Meeting, held simultaneously with the 19<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the GMS Working Group on Environment (WGE-19), was organized and sponsored by the Asian Development Bank with the cooperation of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Lao DPR, and attended by participants from the six GMS countries, representatives of the public, private, and academic sectors, as well as development partners including ADB.

Major items in the agenda of WGA-10 included a review of the progress of implementation of the Core Agriculture Support Program Phase II (CASP II) under a regional technical assistance funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agenda (Sida), the proposed work plan for 2013, the proposed regional pipeline for CASP II under the Draft Regional Investment Framework (RIF) to implement the new GMS Strategic Framework for 2012-2022, and issues related to the strengthening of WGA cooperation and implementation of CASP II.

As of March 2013, a total of \$1.64 million has been contracted out of the total amount of \$7.5 million mobilized from Sweden to implement CASP II activities. These include recruitment and mobilization of staff for the Regional WGA Secretariat established at the ADB Resident Mission in Thailand to enhance coordination between the WGA and the WGE through the Environment Operations Center based in Bangkok, other working groups, and development partners, as well as national secretariat specialists in the 6 countries, and procurement of services to implement related activities. In the meantime, the work plan for 2013 would include preparatory work on the Participatory Guarantee System capacity building in the GMS countries; initiation of GIS-related pilots for e-Trade; conduct of baseline market survey on consumer preferences on agri-products; continued strengthening and expansion of the GMS Agriculture Information Network System as a subregional knowledge sharing and management platform; finalization of the results framework and WGA Standard Operating Procedures; consultation meetings with development partners; joint policy forum with the ADB Institute on seed industry in Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, and Viet Nam; and public-private partnership training program on agriculture sector management under the Phnom Penh Plan for Development Management, among others.

At the meeting, the representative of Sida noted that Sweden appreciated that CASP II had been designed to assist poor farmers to access a rapidly growing market segment and get premium prices for their products, and how the diversification and improvement of food production were also assisting farmers in building resilience against climate change and other threats.

WGA-10 endorsed in principle the proposed Regional Investment Framework agriculture pipeline, subject to appropriate adjustments and modifications, and rationalizing the pipeline to make it more focused, practical with clearly defined scope, and avoid duplication. The meeting also endorsed a proposal to seek additional financing from the Nordic Development Fund for the ongoing CASP II technical assistance to support a project on Improving Nitrogen Use Efficiency for Climate Mitigation and Adaptation in the GMS. Meantime, a follow-up WGA Retreat is planned to be held on 21-24 May 2013 in Bangkok, Thailand to finalize pending issues including the CASP II Results Framework, WGA Standard Operating Procedures, and the revised RIF agriculture pipeline.

### **19<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Working Group on Environment** (Xiengkhouang Province, Lao PDR, 2-4 April 2013)



WGE members visit a gold mine site in Xieng Khouang Province, Lao PDR as part of the joint WGE-WGA knowledge event.

The Meeting, held simultaneously with the 10<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the GMS Working Group on Agriculture (WGA-10) and following a joint WGE-WGA knowledge event on “Green Pro-Poor Value Chains in the GMS”, was co-organized by Lao PDR’s Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MoNRE) and the GMS Environment Operations Center (EOC). It was intended to report on progress made in 2012 by the Core Environment Program and Biodiversity Conservation Corridors Initiative (CEP-BCI); highlight major CEP-BCI activities; and discuss regional priorities for collaboration.

Thirty-three government delegates attended across six GMS member countries, comprising 22 representatives from the ministries of environment, and 11 from other ministries (e.g., energy, transport, and tourism). Other participants included representatives from the Asian Development Bank (ADB), EOC, and the Governments of Sweden and Finland as well as other CEP-BCI partners. WGE members from each country took turns chairing four sessions convened during the meeting.

Session I on “Progress Highlights and 2013 Priorities” summed 2012 as a year of transition for CEP-BCI, focused on closing Phase I and preparing for Phase II implementation, and characterized by significant progress amidst some challenges. Finance matters were likewise discussed, summarizing resource commitments from financing partners, the disbursements for 2012, and projected disbursements for 2013. Beyond disbursements, work priorities under each of the four CEP-BCI program components and other administrative matters for 2013 were discussed, including EOC staffing requirements, new administrative arrangements for Phase II and the new CEP-BCI results monitoring framework.

Session II on “Showcase of Key Program Activities” featured three initiatives spanning 2012 to early 2013, specifically: (i) landscape assessments, ecosystem services and biodiversity by the Ministry of Environmental Protection of the People’s Republic of China (PRC); (ii) the “green freight” initiative by Viet Nam’s Ministry of Transport; and (iii) EOC’s institutional capacity needs assessment exercise. These presentations raised discussions on capacity building, particularly of national support units (NSUs), and towards the establishment of a network of GMS country-based environmental centers in the long-term, housing expertise to be shared across the region.

Session III on “Country Priorities for Regional Cooperation on Environment” was the venue for member countries to discuss priorities for future environmental cooperation. Participants considered opportunities presented in the GMS Regional Investment Framework (RIF), the PRC Poverty Reduction Fund supporting green development, and programs introduced by other partner organizations during the session.



Mr. San Oo, Deputy Director of Environmental Conservation Department (Ministry of Environmental Conservation and Forestry, Myanmar) reads out the WGE resolution at the closing session of WGE AM-19.

WGE AM-19 concluded with the reading of the WGE resolution in Session IV which included statements on the (i) invaluable present and future collaboration between WGE and WGA; (ii) importance of active participation in the RIF process; (iii) proposal for a knowledge event during the 4<sup>th</sup> GMS Environment Ministers Meeting in 2014, (iv) appreciation for the support of the Governments of Finland, Norway and Sweden; (v) encouragement to fill the staffing requirements of CEP-BCI and the NSUs; and, (vi) appreciation for WGE AM-19’s host, Lao PDR. The 8<sup>th</sup> WGE Semi-Annual Meeting was tentatively scheduled on the third week of October 2013 at Lao PDR. Finally, ADB ended the meeting noting three operational priorities in its closing remarks – results-focused implementation and reporting, increased ownership by GMS countries, and established core capacity to accelerate program implementation.

#### **4<sup>th</sup> GMS Tourism Ministers’ Meeting (Vientiane, Lao PDR, 20 January 2013)**

The GMS Tourism Ministers held their fourth meeting on the sideline of the ASEAN Tourism Forum. In their Joint Ministerial Statement issued at the conclusion of their meeting, the Tourism Ministers recognized the tourism sector’s contribution for boosting socio-economic development, accelerating regional integration, and promoting friendship and cross-cultural understanding. They lauded the significant achievements in the tourism sector including the rise in international tourist arrivals in the GMS from about 10 million in 1995 to approximately 40 million in 2012. This positive development has resulted in corresponding increases in tourism revenues and job and livelihood opportunities for local communities. The movement of tourists within the subregion has been greatly facilitated by the continual easing of tourist visa requirements coupled with the opening of more intra-regional border crossings. At the same time, the Ministers emphasized the need to manage the large increases in tourism arrivals and revenues to ensure growth that is more equitable, environmentally sustainable, and sensitive to vulnerable groups –particularly women and ethnic communities.

The Ministers appreciated the support of many development partners in the implementation of subregional projects and programs to improve tourism related infrastructure, facilitate public-private partnerships, strengthen human resources in the tourism sector, and develop pro-poor tourism products and services. They renewed their support for the refocused GMS Tourism Sector Strategy 2011–2015 and their commitment to further strengthen cooperation to ensure that the GMS remains on track to transform itself into a single tourism destination, and to continue promoting tourism growth that is sustainable and socially responsible.

#### **Implementation Highlights from the Core Environment Program and Biodiversity Conservation Corridors Initiative (CEP-BCI)**

The GMS Environment Operations Center (EOC) is carrying out CEP-BCI component 1 interventions on *environmental planning, safeguards and monitoring* in Myanmar and Viet Nam. Specifically, activities surrounding Viet Nam’s Red River basin have been facilitated, including a report on the application of a strategic environmental assessment (SEA) framework, an ongoing assessment

on ecosystem services, and basin-specific projections as part of Viet Nam's national water demand modeling exercise. In Myanmar, EOC is assisting the Ministry of Environmental Conservation and Forestry (MOECAF) to finalize the country's Environmental Conservation Law framework rules and Foreign Investment Law; as well as draft environmental impact assessment procedures for new investments consistent with environmental regulations. This activity involved tapping the expertise of neighboring Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR) and its Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MoNRE). EOC is likewise collaborating with MOECAF on developing national environmental quality standards (EQS). These activities to support environmental safeguard strengthening in Myanmar are being undertaken in collaboration with partners including the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and European Union.



Vegetable farming in the Red River Delta, Viet Nam.

In promoting CEP-BCI component 2 on *biodiversity landscapes and livelihoods*, EOC participated in a review mission for the Biodiversity Conservation Corridor (BCC) project in Cambodia and Viet Nam, enabling the transfer of knowledge and lessons to the relatively new BCC project stakeholders. The mission identified performance monitoring, land-use planning and zoning, as well as climate change risk management for livelihood development, among the areas where CEP-BCI can provide technical support to the BCC project.

Regarding CEP-BCI component 3 on *climate change*, in March 2013, EOC hosted the "Roundtable Discussion on Climate Risk and Vulnerability Assessments and Design of Adaptation Options in the GMS". In April 2013, the 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the GMS Working Group on Environment (WGE AM-19) witnessed the soft launch of a participatory climate change vulnerability and adaptation assessment methodology synthesis report. By May 2013, scoping missions for climate change adaptation will be underway in Viet Nam and Lao PDR.

Finally, on component 4 on *institutions and financing*, the Nordic Development Fund approved co-financing amounting to \$5.3 million for climate change activities under CEP-BCI. Total secured funding for the Core Environment Program's second phase (2012–2016) now stands at \$28.4 million, with NDF joining ADB and the Governments of Finland and Sweden as co-financing partners

For more information on the above highlights, as well as other work under CEP-BCI, visit [www.gms-eoc.org](http://www.gms-eoc.org).

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## Featured Article

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### Updates on the GMS Program and the Urban Development Sector

The Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) has become more linked and increasingly integrated as its member economies have grown rapidly, through more trade, investment, and other ties with one another. While urbanization is about 30-35% only in most of the GMS countries, urban areas already contribute about 50-60% of national GDP. And it is predicted that most economic growth will be urban, while in the next decades till 2050, the GMS countries will urbanize to a level of about 65%. Since 1998, the GMS countries pursue the role of converting transport corridors into economic corridors. The deepening of development efforts has expanded from transport to involve agriculture and natural resources development, energy, tourism, and now urban development under the GMS corridor towns development initiative. To achieve more balanced subnational development, the cities, large or small, in the GMS countries will need to play their individual and collective roles more effectively in generating local growth, stimulating regional growth, contributing to national welfare, and fostering GMS-level integration. These projects will develop the competitiveness of towns along the economic corridors. These projects will transform the towns into economic hubs by improving urban-environmental infrastructure and strengthening institutional capacities of provincial and local authorities on urban infrastructure management. The productivity of economic enterprises in these towns will be significantly improved since there will be better infrastructure and increased climate resilience through flood control measures. The ten towns' environmental conditions will be improved through clean wastewater, disposal of solid waste with the provision of environmental infrastructure for wastewater treatment and solid waste management, which will, among others, help reduce the carbon footprint of these towns, making them cleaner and greener, and more livable. Mobility of people and goods will also be improved with the investments on upgrading and development of new urban roads.

### The GMS Countries, Basic Urbanization and Development Indicators

	Myanmar	Thailand	PRC (areas in GMS only)	Viet Nam	Lao PDR	Cambodia
Population (million)	54.0–60.0	69.5	91.7	87.9	6.3	14.7
Natural increase (%)	1.2	0.5	approx. 0.6	1.0	2.2	1.8
Projected population 2025	61.7	72.9	98.0	100.4	7.9	18
Urbanization (%)	30	31	40	30	22–25	20
Urbanization 2025	40–45	45	50–55	40–45	30–35	30
Present agriculture contribution GNI (%)	40–50	10	20	36	49	36
Poverty (%)	26	12	approx. 15	27	27	34
GNI (\$ PPP)	approx. 1,000	7,640	approx. 5,000	2,790	2,200	3,720
Economic development stage and dynamics (descriptive)	Opening up to new options	Within GMS, most advanced	Within PRC, intermediate, with lagging regions	Intermediate stage, fast growth	Early stage, fast growth	Early stage, fast growth

approx. = approximately, GMS = Greater Mekong Subregion, GNI = gross national income, Lao PDR = Lao People's Democratic Republic, PPP = purchasing power parity, PRC = People's Republic of China.

Source: Asian Development Bank, based on the following sources: WB, UNDP, and ADB statistics.

With the GMS program starting its third decade, the leaders of GMS countries adopted a new Strategic Framework 2012-22 at their 4<sup>th</sup> Summit meeting in Myanmar in December 2011. Maintaining the vision of a Mekong subregion that is more integrated, prosperous, and equitable, the new Framework provides a central role for the urban sector through its emphasis on corridor development and multisector investment projects. Corridor development and multisector investment projects can potentially connect cities within and across the member countries and may contribute to inclusive development or a more balanced subnational development.

To operationalize the new Strategic Framework, a comprehensive pipeline of new investment projects is being developed with the help of the Asian Development Bank. As part of this initiative, the ADB assisted the GMS countries in the formulation of an approach towards an urban development strategy<sup>1</sup> that would focus on development of GMS transport corridors through their widening and deepening. The paper concludes with inputs on a "roadmap" for the new GMS Urban Development initiative:

- Develop a GMS urban strategy document. Major concepts that may be helpful for a future urban development strategy to be launched in conjunction with the economic corridors are: (i) National (or multi-national regional) funds targeted for specific types of towns, for example, designated corridor towns and cross-border economic zones--funding to be coupled with specific design and performance criteria; (ii) National projects with supra-national, regional objectives; (iii) Adopting performance criteria for municipalities and their management capability; and (iv) Supra-national cooperation and the related forms of making joint agreements effective.
- Add urban development as a component to the Strategic Framework, 2012-2022
- Set up a Task Force for urban development matters
- Prepare for the second and third phases of urban projects in priority regions
- Explore realistic options for setting up an appropriate database
- Explore the most appropriate administrative solution for database and planning support measures in GMS
- Set up a realistic system of criteria and targets for a functional classification of urban centers in GMS49
- Promote small towns programs
- Explore suitable reference frameworks

<sup>1</sup>ADB.2012.The Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS): Towards a Strategy for Urban Development. Manila (TA8042-REG).

In December 2012, the 18<sup>th</sup> GMS Ministerial Conference held in Nanning endorsed the formation of a GMS Task Force for Urban Development (Urban TF). The endorsement in the Joint Ministerial Statement reflects the recognition of the greater potential role of urban development, increased rural-urban links, and spatial prioritization along GMS transport corridors in the next decade.

Towards this end, the GMS Secretariat proposed the following membership and Terms of Reference of the Urban TF. The Urban TF is proposed to comprise of 3 high-level members from each GMS member country, led by the GMS National Coordinator (NC+2) or NC's representative. Unless otherwise agreed by the GMS member countries, the term of the TF is until it submits its report to the 19<sup>th</sup> GMS Ministerial Conference in December 2013. The TF will provide an initial platform and mechanism for exchange of national and regional policies and strategies in the urban sector aimed at strengthening development of the GMS corridors. The key objective of the TF is to explore effective mechanisms to strengthen regional cooperation amongst member countries in issues related to urban development linked to GMS corridors. In addition to identifying the structure of specific mechanisms, the TF will need to also assess the scope of their activities, resource requirements and their mobilization, and links to the existing institutional structure of the GMS, including the Economic Corridors Forum. It is also expected that the TF will contribute to finalization of the RIF by reviewing and contributing to investment proposals related to urban development along GMS corridors, and facilitating sharing of related knowledge amongst member countries through workshops or conferences as feasible.

On 12 March 2013, the GMS Secretariat through ADB Southeast Asia Urban Development and Water Division, sought the concurrence and suggestions of the member countries on the composition of the TF membership and its Terms of Reference in a letter dated 12 March 2013. As of 30 April 2013, the GMS Secretariat received TF member nominees from Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam.

The Urban TF is expected to meet up to 2 times during 2013. The first meeting is planned to be held on 21 June 2013 mainly to review, refine and finalize the TF terms of reference including its work plan. The second meeting is proposed in July 2013 in preparation for its report to be approved by GMS Senior Officials' Meeting prior to presenting to the Economic Corridors Forum (ECF-5) tentatively scheduled 6-7 August 2013. A knowledge management event on fostering closer integration of urban strategies of GMS member countries is also being planned to be conducted prior the 19<sup>th</sup> GMS Ministerial Conference.

### Upcoming GMS Events

**Working Group on Agriculture Retreat** (*Bangkok and Central Provinces, Thailand, 21-24 May*)

The retreat aims to promote close working relationship and cooperation among the GMS WGA National Coordinators, their respective country focal points, and the WGA Secretariat towards successful implementation of the various projects under the Core Agriculture Support Program Phase II (CASP II). It will discuss issues pending from the 10<sup>th</sup> Meeting of WGA-10 held in April in Lao PDR, including the CASP II results-based Monitoring and Evaluation Framework, WGA Standard Operating Procedures, and the revised agriculture pipeline for the Regional Investment Framework. Field visits to agricultural farms located in the Central Provinces of Thailand at the cross-roads between the North-South and East-West Economic Corridors are included in the program.

**31<sup>st</sup> GMS Tourism Working Group Meeting** (back-to-back with Mekong Tourism Forum 2013 (*Guilin, PRC, 18-20 June*))

The meeting will review the status of the subregional tourism development and joint marketing programs under the refocused Tourism Sector Strategy. Being held back-to-back with TWG-31 are a closed meeting of the Mekong Tourism Coordinating Office (MTCO) Board, and the Mekong Tourism Forum 2013 with the theme "*The Rise of the Chinese Traveler: Optimizing the Impacts for the GMS*".

**14<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Regional Power Trade Coordination Committee (RPTCC-14) back to back with the 16<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Subregional Energy Forum**(*Kunming, PRC, 18-20 June*)

Senior GMS energy officials are expected to actively participate in the upcoming RPTCC-14 and final regional consultations on RETA 7764 of the Asian Development Bank (ADB). The agenda for RPTCC-14 includes discussions on (i) country power development plans on cross-border projects; (ii) the endorsement of the proposed project pipeline for the energy sector under the GMS Regional Investment Framework (RIF); (iii) the venue for the headquarters of the Regional Power Coordination Center (RPCC); (iv) the proposed RPCC Articles of Association for adoption; and (v) future assistance from the Governments of France and Sweden.

The regional technical assistance (RETA) 7764 entitled "Ensuring Sustainability of Greater Mekong Sub-region Regional Power Development", and implemented over February 2012 to July 2013. Its objective is to assist GMS countries in developing a reliable as well as environmentally and socially sustainable regional electricity supply system. The objectives of the final regional consultation on the RETA are to (i) present the results of the impact assessment phase of the study; (ii) provide an opportunity for GMS countries to respond to the findings of the study and contribute to its recommendations; as well as (iii) discuss the

implications and recommendations for greater sustainability associated with the different scenarios for power development.

**1<sup>st</sup> GMS Urban Development Task Force Meeting, (Cambodia, 21 June)**

The objective of the first meeting is to operationalize the recommendation of the 18<sup>th</sup> GMS Ministerial Meeting regarding the establishment of the GMS Task Force on Urban Development (Urban TF) by: (i) reviewing, refining and finalizing the Terms of Reference; and (ii) developing the Work Plan of the Urban TF. The expected members of the Task Force are three high-level members from each country, led by the GMS National Coordinator.

**GMS Senior Official's Meeting (SOM) back-to-back with GMS 5<sup>th</sup> Economic Corridors Forum (Bangkok, Thailand, 6-7 August)**

The GMS SOM to be held on 6 August will: (i) discuss further details of the RIF pipeline and the remaining RIF outputs (such as spatial prioritization and multi-sector investments); (ii) review final arrangements for ECF-5; and discuss updates on the arrangements for the 19<sup>th</sup> MC.

The ECF-5 objectives include: (i) to review the RIF/pipeline, particularly as regards its impact on GMS economic corridor development, and to obtain in-principle endorsement of the RIF pipeline from GMS countries; (ii) to review further RIF outputs, namely, spatial prioritization of corridor areas for development and multi-sector investments; and (iii) to present/discuss other initiatives that relate to corridor development. These include monitoring of the implementation of next generation GMS projects under RIF, results of Time Release Studies, and institutional arrangement for the ECF.

**GMS Investment Forum (Bangkok, Thailand, TBD)**

The Forum is proposed to enhance development partners' and the private sector awareness on the RIF pipeline and possibly identify ways by which they can support its implementation, especially on the financing of the projects.

**National Transport Facilitation Committee Senior Officials Meeting back-to-back with Subcommittee Meetings (Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar, 21-22 Aug)**

The Meeting will discuss the status of implementation of transport facilitation initiatives in the GMS, finalize preparations for the upcoming 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Joint Committee (JCM) of the GMS Cross-Border Transport Agreement (scheduled in November 2013), and conduct a stocktaking of the deliverables under the GMS Transport and Trade Facilitation Action Plan from the 3<sup>rd</sup> JCM in June 2010 in Vientiane, Lao PDR.

**Links:**

- [GMS Tourism Sector Strategy Midterm Review & Road Map 2011-2015](#)
- [Core Agriculture Support Program II 2011-2015](#)
- [Strategic Framework and Action Plan for HRD in the GMS 2013-2017](#)
- [Development of Economic Corridors](#)
- [GMS Road Map for Expanded Energy Cooperation](#)
- [GMS Core Environment Program](#)
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