



GREATER MEKONG SUBREGION URBAN DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK 2015–2022



**GREATER MEKONG SUBREGION
URBAN DEVELOPMENT
STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK
2015–2022**





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ABBREVIATIONS

- ADB – Asian Development Bank
- DRM – disaster risk management
- GMS – Greater Mekong Subregion
- Lao PDR – Lao People’s Democratic Republic
- PRC – People’s Republic of China
- RIF – Regional Investment Framework
- SEA – strategic environmental assessment
- SEZ – special economic zone





INTRODUCTION

The Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) Economic Cooperation Program—comprising Cambodia, Yunnan Province and Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region in the People’s Republic of China (PRC), the Lao People’s Democratic Republic (Lao PDR), Myanmar, Thailand, and Viet Nam—was established in 1992. With the GMS Program starting its third decade, the leaders of the GMS countries adopted a new strategic framework at their Fourth Summit in Myanmar in December 2011.¹

The GMS Strategic Framework, 2012–2022 provides the background policy and rationale for this GMS Urban Development Strategic Framework, 2015–2022. The GMS Strategic Framework comprises five strategic thrusts:

- Strengthening infrastructure linkages
- Facilitating cross-border trade and investment, and tourism
- Enhancing private sector participation and competitiveness
- Developing human resources
- Protecting the environment and promoting the sustainable use of shared natural resources

Since the adoption of the GMS Strategic Framework, the importance of urban centers in the subregion’s future has been increasingly recognized. In December 2012, the 18th GMS Ministerial Conference in Nanning endorsed the formation of a GMS Task Force on Urban Development (Urban Task Force). The endorsement in the Joint Ministerial Statement reflects recognition of the huge potential for urban development, increased rural–urban links, and spatial prioritization along GMS transport corridors in the next decade.

This document sets out the scope of the GMS Urban Development Strategic Framework, including its role and proposals for taking it forward. The appendixes comprise an investment program, a results framework, terms of reference, and previous work undertaken by the GMS Urban Task Force (Appendixes A, B, C, and D).

The GMS Urban Development Strategic Framework is not a prescriptive or mandatory framework, but rather, a tool by which urban development in GMS countries can be supported, which will in turn, aid the transformation of GMS transport corridors into GMS economic corridors.

¹ Asian Development Bank (ADB). 2011. *The Greater Mekong Subregion Economic Cooperation Program Strategic Framework, 2012–2022*. Manila.

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BACKGROUND

The proposal for a GMS urban development strategy (subsequently renamed the GMS Urban Development Strategic Framework) was first aired at the Fourth GMS Economic Corridors Forum in June 2012. It was further elaborated in the background work undertaken for the GMS Regional Investment Framework, 2013–2022 (RIF), and was then put forward in an urban development sector report prepared for the 18th GMS Ministerial Conference in Nanning, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, PRC in December 2012.² Further work was undertaken and presented in an urban development sector report that was discussed at the Second Meeting of the GMS Urban Task Force in November 2013 in Kunming, Yunnan, PRC.³ Those two reports, the GMS Strategic Framework itself, and the discussions at the Urban Task Force meetings provide the background for this document.

An initial draft of this document was prepared following country consultations in July 2014 and incorporating information gathered in the PRC in April 2014.⁴

A second draft was prepared following the receipt of comments on the first draft circulated in August 2014 for discussion at the Third Meeting of the GMS Task Force on Urban Development in Vientiane, Lao PDR on 11–12 September 2014. At that meeting,

Urban Task Force participants agreed that the term “urban development strategic framework” was preferred to “strategy,” and the time period of the document was extended to 2022 in line with the GMS Strategic Framework.

A third draft of the document incorporated comments from the Third Meeting of the GMS Task Force on Urban Development in Vientiane for the GMS Senior Officials’ Meeting in Bangkok, Thailand on 9 October 2014. The final draft incorporates comments from the GMS Senior Officials’ Meeting and feedback from individual GMS countries and from additional consultations completed in 2015.

The GMS Urban Development Strategic Framework responds to the strategic thrusts of the GMS Strategic Framework by planning and managing urban centers, economic corridors, and border areas. The intention is to put forward a pragmatic document that will be helpful and easy to use.

Urban and Spatial Planning

It is useful to clarify the scope of “urban” in the context of the Urban Task Force and the GMS Urban Development Strategic Framework. While the focus is on cities and other urban areas, the analysis

² ADB. Regional Investment Framework Sector Report, Urban Development. Unpublished.

³ A. Gulbrandson and D. Webster. 2014. *Urban Development in the Greater Mekong Subregion: The Role of Cities in Promoting GMS Sustainability and Competitiveness*. Consultant’s report. Manila (TA 8042-REG).

⁴ D. Webster and C. Jianming. 2014. *Urban Investment Priorities in Yunnan Province and Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region in Support of Enhanced GMS Integration*. Consultant’s report. Manila.

and planning of urban centers require a broader perspective than just the urban areas themselves. Urban centers are drivers of economic change and have close links with the rural areas around them (hinterlands). Equally, transport hubs are located in urban centers, which are jumping-off points for tourism (if not tourist destinations themselves). Cities and towns are fundamentally important nodes along any transport or economic corridor. Inevitably, the Urban Task Force will need to collaborate with other sectors and GMS working groups on tourism, transport, and human resources development.

The work of agencies and professionals tasked with urban planning may not be well understood in the GMS countries. In most of the countries, the majority of the plans prepared are master plans for urban areas, which contain information on spatial planning, economic activities, land use planning, and infrastructure development. This largely reflects the agencies' mandates, as the concepts of subregional and national spatial planning are not enshrined in the relevant legislation or are not given high priority in the agencies' workloads. The situation is perpetuated by the perception in other sectors that urban planning agencies have no role in strategic economic planning.

There is a potential role for the Urban Task Force in each GMS country to promote better understanding of the key role of spatial planning at the urban, provincial, subregional, and national levels. Well-coordinated planning across all sectors is important for the sustainable development of GMS countries, and is best achieved through the preparation of comprehensive spatial plans.

At the same time, understanding the limitations of spatial planning is important. In centrally planned economies, particularly in the past, planning often

meant predetermining the roles and functions of urban areas. This worked to some extent when the government implemented most of the construction. However, as these countries moved toward more market-led economies, with a greater role for the private sector, such deterministic planning became less successful. Simply designating a town or a zone of land for a particular function or activity may not be enough to attract the expected land uses. Spatial planning must be in tune with the demands of the private sector, and be flexible to changes in the dynamics of economic growth.

Urban and strategic planning are also key mechanisms to promote policies on sustainable development. The plans and the programs emanating from them can lay the foundation, for instance, for green growth and inclusive development.

Task Force Findings and Approach

In finding a way forward for the GMS Urban Development Strategic Framework, it is important to look at what has been undertaken and the lessons learned (see Appendix D for more details). Much of the previous work of the GMS Urban Task Force focused on the analysis of urban systems and approaches to planning and development in member countries. The GMS Urban Task Force has carried out the following activities:

- Preparation of the initial GMS Urban Development Strategic Framework
- Preparation of the urban development sector report for the RIF⁵
- Held the First Meeting of the GMS Task Force on Urban Development in Phnom Penh, Cambodia in July 2013

⁵ ADB. Regional Investment Framework Sector Report, Urban Development. Unpublished.

- Preparation of the report outlining the GMS Urban Development Strategy⁶
- Held the Second Meeting of the GMS Task Force on Urban Development in Kunming, Yunnan, PRC in November 2013
- Consultation meetings in GMS countries in July 2014 and March 2015
- Held the Third Meeting of the GMS Task Force on Urban Development in Vientiane, Lao PDR in September 2014

Based on earlier Urban Task Force meetings and country consultations, task force members are interested to have a strategic plan that provides cohesion to the various urban development planning activities across the subregion, rather than an overarching plan or development strategy for the GMS to which their national strategies would have to adhere. In particular, members have expressed a wish for

- assistance with providing and upgrading infrastructure in key urban areas;
- assistance with preparation of urgent development plans and spatial plans;
- capacity development in urban planning and management;
- capacity development in engaging the private sector to provide infrastructure, especially public–private partnerships;
- assistance with further development of economic zones in border areas;
- improved institutional coordination at the national level;
- peer-to-peer exchanges of ideas, approaches, and techniques; and
- cooperation on cross-border issues (e.g., investments along corridors).

Economic Corridors and Special Economic Zones

Economic corridors and special economic zones (SEZs) have figured prominently in the work thus far undertaken by the GMS Urban Task Force. Both of these will be features of GMS urban development, and it is important to understand their place and usage in economic and spatial development planning.

Economic corridors are an efficient way to focus limited investment resources to maximize their effectiveness. Economic corridors also help to identify areas that are likely to experience development pressures and that consequently require urgent attention in the form of land-use planning and development control. They are, therefore, an appropriate and logical focal point for national planners, ADB, and other development partners to coordinate spending. However, corridors are not an optimum spatial planning approach, and should not be seen as the primary rationale for development.

From discussions with the GMS countries, it is apparent that strategic planners recognize the value of economic corridors and will make use of the concept where it has synergies with their own plans. They also may prioritize development proposals for cities or urban areas that are not within the corridor, but may be strategically located to contribute to overall corridor development or to strengthening urban–rural linkages. This reflects the reality of national strategies. At the same time, economic corridors should continue to be seen as a network of important routes that link most of the major urban centers in the GMS. For the foreseeable future, GMS economic corridors will be the cornerstone of ADB’s investment planning, and corridor towns will be given priority for infrastructure and environmental improvements.

⁶ A. Gulbrandson and D. Webster. 2014. *Urban Development in the Greater Mekong Subregion: The Role of Cities in Promoting GMS Sustainability and Competitiveness*. Consultant’s report. Manila (TA 8042-REG).

SEZs are essentially an economic tool rather than an urban or regional planning measure. From the spatial planning point of view, they are industrial land-use zonings with supporting infrastructure and are components of local development plans for urban areas and borders. From the perspective of sustainable development planning, the industrial and commercial use of the land might be more important than the tax or other incentives that are associated with its special status. Land-use planning must take a long-term view, as the impacts of urban development will be long-lasting. Fiscal incentives are likely to be relatively short-lived.

SEZs should follow broader spatial planning objectives. Strategic planning should outweigh the desire to stimulate development at border points and cross-border activities. The question to ask might be: Is this a good location for industry, transport interchanges, and other large and small commercial operations? This should be evaluated in terms of the environmental and social impacts, and the costs and efficiency of putting infrastructure in place. Ideally, SEZs and border economic zones should be subjected to strategic environmental assessments (SEAs), which would consider environmental and social impacts of economic zone development. This is particularly important when the initiative behind new SEZs comes from the private sector, which is an increasing tendency in several GMS countries.

A Technical Note was prepared reviewing SEZs and was discussed at the Sixth Economic Corridors Forum in Ha Noi, Viet Nam in August 2014.⁷ The Technical Note revealed that SEZs work well in some locations, such as border points and near major urban centers, and in these locations they will be important features. But they are generally not critical to the growth of these areas. They are economic tools designed to attract investment, and their identification, planning, and implementation will be driven by the private sector.

Used correctly, economic corridors and SEZs play a role in national and urban development in the GMS countries to promote border area cooperation. However, the readiness to engage in economic zone development in border areas or SEZ activities, as discussed in the Technical Note and in this document, may vary from country to country. Inevitably, economic zone development will be incorporated into border area planning. Corridor towns may be prominent among the priority urban centers, and the development of other urban centers should take account of their relationship with major corridors. However, both economic corridors and SEZs should be seen as components of an overall approach rather than primary planning tools.

⁷ ADB. 2014. *Technical Note: Special Economic Zones in the GMS*. Consultant's report. Manila (TA 8042-REG).

GMS URBAN DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK, 2015–2022

Strategic Framework Context

The background context for the GMS Urban Development Strategic Framework is the GMS Strategic Framework. In accordance with the conclusions of the Third Meeting of the GMS Task Force on Urban Development in Vientiane, Lao PDR, the time frame for the GMS Urban Development Strategic Framework is aligned with that of the period remaining under the GMS Strategic Framework.

The GMS Urban Development Strategic Framework is a vehicle for coordination between member countries (in particular their national urban strategies) and between the various sectors involved in urban development.⁸ The activities of the GMS working groups for transport, tourism, environment, and human resources development have direct implications for the Urban Task Force, and vice versa. The role of the Urban Task Force in this respect is included in the terms of reference in Appendix C. Figure 1 shows the linkages between the key GMS initiatives and activities, and national planning.

Strategic Framework Vision and Role

The primary purpose of the GMS Urban Development Strategic Framework is to provide a vehicle for cooperation on urban development issues across the subregion. This was confirmed in consultations

with Urban Task Force members during country visits and at the meeting of the Urban Task Force in Vientiane. It is also clear that the framework is not expected to be an overarching plan that determines national strategies. Further details on the framework's expected role are discussed below.

Collective Vision

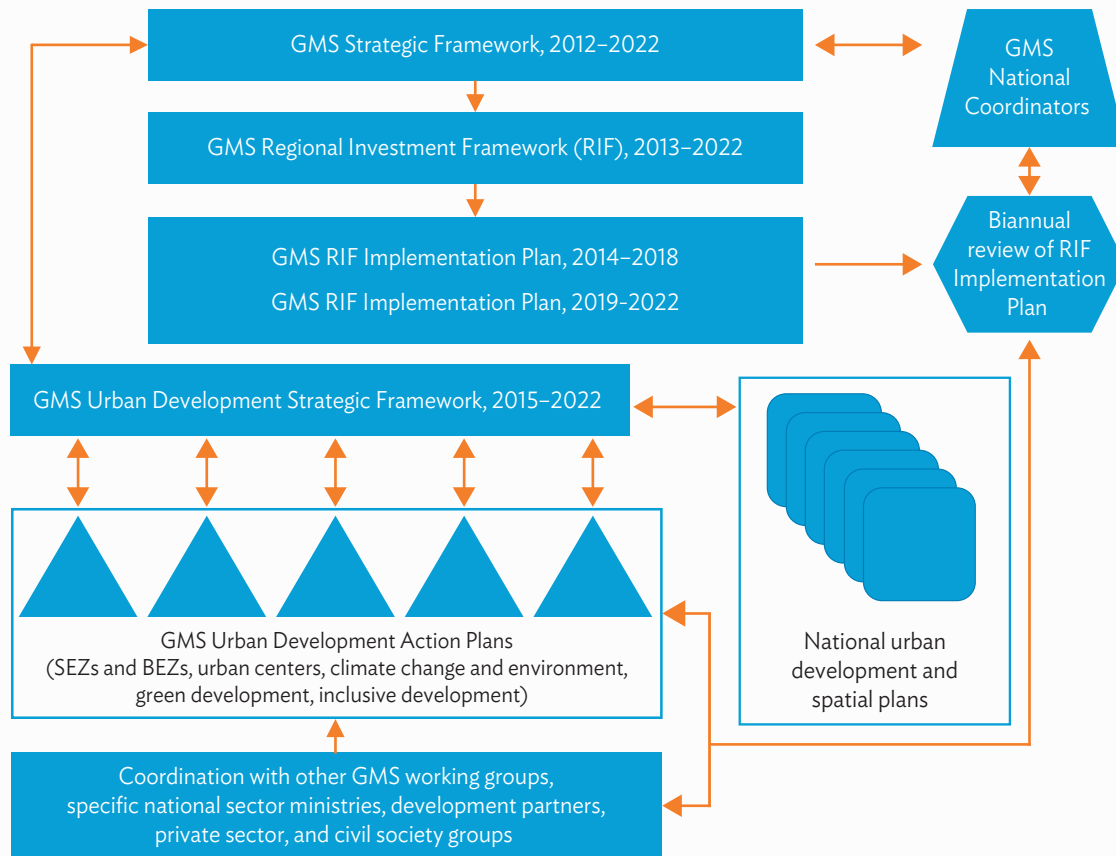
The GMS Urban Development Strategic Framework represents the collective aims of the GMS member countries. In Vientiane, the GMS Urban Task Force members discussed a vision statement for the GMS Urban Development Strategic Framework and agreed on the following statement:

“Sustainable urban development in the Greater Mekong Subregion”

The GMS countries differ significantly in many aspects, such as in their patterns and levels of urbanization, total population, systems of urban planning, and national political systems. Nevertheless, they all have a common interest in seeing the GMS develop in a sustainable manner.

The short vision statement therefore includes the term “sustainable.” When the term “sustainable development” first came into common usage, it was defined as “development that meets the needs of the

⁸ The GMS sectors include agriculture, energy, environment, human resources development, information and communication technology, transport and trade facilitation, transport, and tourism.

Figure 1: Context and Linkages for the GMS Urban Development Strategic Framework, 2015–2022

BEZs = border economic zones, GMS = Greater Mekong Subregion, SEZs = special economic zones.

Sources: ADB and discussions at the Third Meeting of the Task Force on Urban Development, Vientiane, Lao People's Democratic Republic (11–12 September 2014).

present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.⁹ Since then, it has generally been accepted that sustainable development calls for a convergence between the three pillars of economic development, social equity,

and environmental protection.¹⁰ On this basis, the short vision statement covers the objectives of the GMS Strategic Framework and drives the implementation of the RIF.¹¹

⁹ United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development. 1987. *Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our Common Future*. UK: Oxford University Press. <http://www.un-documents.net/our-common-future.pdf>

¹⁰ J. Drexhage and D. Murphy. 2010. *Sustainable Development: From Brundtland to Rio 2012*. Background Paper. Background paper for the High Level Panel on Global Sustainability, United Nations Headquarters, New York. 19 September.

¹¹ ADB. 2014. *Greater Mekong Subregion Economic Cooperation Program: Joint Summit Declaration: 5th GMS Summit of Leaders*. <http://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/page/42450/5th-summit-joint-declaration-greater-mekong-subregion-gms.pdf>

Role of the Strategic Framework

Within its overall role of facilitating the coordination of urban development in the subregion, the GMS Urban Development Strategic Framework will

- identify priority areas for major investments in urban infrastructure;
- identify priority areas for transport infrastructure to ensure connectivity within the GMS;
- identify priority areas in need of spatial development plans;
- identify opportunities for neighboring countries to cooperate on development schemes and explore further opportunities for cooperation;
- provide a basis for GMS countries to develop and coordinate their national strategies on urban development;
- provide a context for the application of SEAs and other social development strategies to major development proposals, such as border-point urban areas and SEZs;
- provide a context for developing a clear understanding and definition of competitive cities and economic zone development in border areas;
- provide a basis for urban areas to attract investment and create jobs that will help to reduce poverty and unemployment;
- provide a basis for developing technical capacities in urban planning and management;
- provide a mechanism for the exchange of knowledge, data, and training across the GMS; and
- provide a basis for monitoring and reviewing urban development progress across the GMS.

The GMS Urban Development Strategic Framework is envisaged to be viewed and used in many ways. It can work as background policy on urban development, as a checklist for urban planning and management procedures, or as an indicator of investment priorities, among other uses.

The Strategic Framework

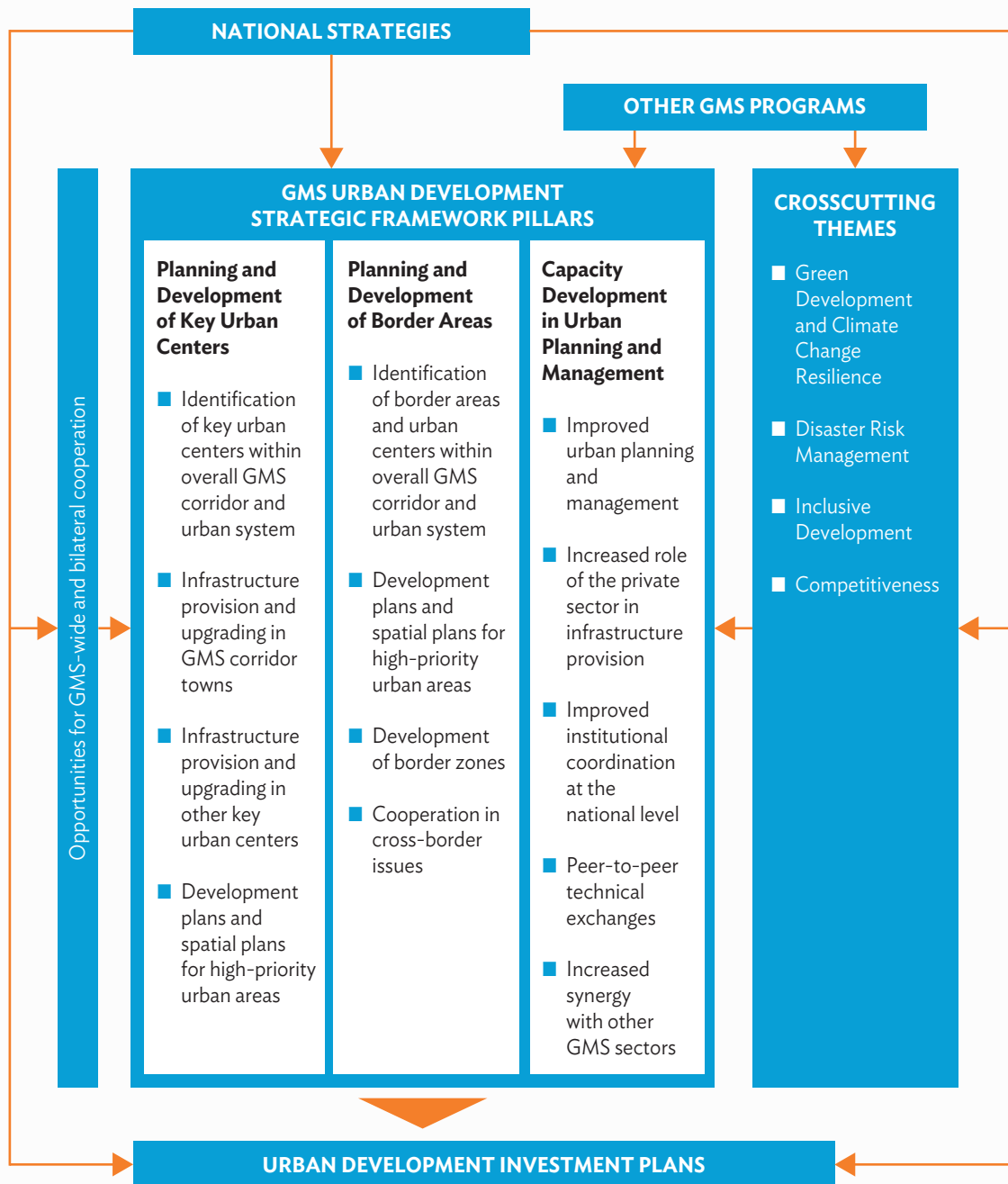
The GMS Urban Development Strategic Framework aims to achieve a general consensus across member countries. It provides a broad basis for identifying more detailed areas that will be developed in due course. Figure 2 gives a summary of the GMS Urban Development Strategic Framework.

There are two principal elements to the GMS Urban Development Strategic Framework—the Strategic Framework Pillars and the Crosscutting Themes. These effectively combine the needs of the member countries with the preferred approach of the development partners. The Strategic Framework Pillars are based on the GMS countries' priorities as identified in country consultations in July 2014 and March 2015 and the proceedings of the Third Meeting of the GMS Task Force on Urban Development in Vientiane in September 2014. The Crosscutting Themes are drawn from best practices in urban planning and management.

Pillars of the Strategic Framework

- Strategic Framework Pillar 1—Planning and Development of Key Urban Centers
- Strategic Framework Pillar 2—Planning and Development of Border Areas
- Strategic Framework Pillar 3—Capacity Development in Urban Planning and Management

Table 1 outlines the possible components of the three pillars.

Figure 2: GMS Urban Development Strategic Framework, 2015–2022

GMS = Greater Mekong Subregion.

Sources: ADB Southeast Asia Department, technical assistance (TA) consultants (TA 8042-REG); discussions at the Third Meeting of the GMS Task Force on Urban Development in Vientiane, Lao People's Democratic Republic (11–12 September 2014); and via videoconference (22 May 2015).

Table 1: GMS Urban Development Strategic Framework, 2015–2022—Pillars, Elements, and Possible Components

Strategic Framework Pillars and Elements	Possible Components
Strategic Pillar 1—Planning and Development of Key Urban Centers	
Identification of key urban centers within overall GMS corridor and urban system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key urban centers identified according to an agreed selection criteria
Infrastructure provision and upgrading in GMS corridor towns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrated urban environmental improvement projects in towns and cities, particularly those experiencing development pressures or in strategic locations along economic corridors or near borders, ports, or inland waterways Urban water supply and sanitation improvements Road and other transport infrastructure improvements
Infrastructure provision and upgrading in other key urban areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As above
Development plans and spatial plans for high-priority urban areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Urban area development plans with urban–rural linkages
Strategic Pillar 2—Planning and Development of Border Areas	
Identification of key border areas within overall GMS corridor and urban system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key border areas identified according to an agreed selection criteria
Development plans and spatial plans for high-priority border areas, especially those within economic corridors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Border area development plans
Development of border zones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technical assistance projects for specific border-zone development Technical assistance projects for multi-zone development
Cooperation in cross-border issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitation and mediation of two-country border development discussions, such as development of economic zones in border areas
Strategic Pillar 3—Capacity Development in Urban Planning and Management	
Improved urban planning and management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preparation of national strategic development plans Preparation of subnational spatial development plans Preparation of national urban data books Capacity development technical assistance projects GMS training courses within region or elsewhere in Southeast Asia National training courses in-country Capacity development within other integrated projects
Increased role of the private sector in infrastructure provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PPP capacity development technical assistance projects Capacity development within other urban integrated projects PPP training courses Urban development investment forums
Improved institutional coordination in urban development at national level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Program for promoting the GMS Urban Development Strategic Framework with national governments GMS workshops for multisector decision makers
Peer-to-peer exchanges of ideas, approaches, and techniques	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitation for frequent GMS seminars and workshops Establishment of GMS knowledge center Twinning or exchange programs in the GMS, especially in urban services and management
Increased synergy with other GMS sectors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishment of mechanisms and activities for coordination with GMS working groups for environment, human resources development, transport, and tourism

GMS = Greater Mekong Subregion, PPP = public–private partnership.

Sources: ADB Southeast Asia Department, technical assistance (TA) consultants (TA 8042-REG); discussions at the Third Meeting of the GMS Task Force on Urban Development in Vientiane, Lao People's Democratic Republic (11–12 September 2014); and via videoconference (22 May 2015).

Crosscutting Themes

Underlying the principal Strategic Framework Pillars are a number of Crosscutting Themes that will be integral to the GMS Urban Development Strategic Framework. These are founded on the principles of integrated urban planning and current practices.¹² The Crosscutting Themes represent different aspects of good practice in urban planning and development, and will guide the approach to implementing the GMS Urban Development Strategic Framework whenever possible.

Green development and climate change resilience.

This theme includes the principles of environmental and ecological protection; green growth; and climate change adaptation, preparedness, and mitigation. Strategic and urban planning can address climate change in many ways and these efforts should be weaved in to the implementation of the GMS Urban Development Strategic Framework and its components at every opportunity. These include the following:

- **Strategic planning:** plan urban settlements and urban expansion to optimize efficiency of transport and infrastructure provision and operation, ensure adequate open space in city and regional development.
- **Local planning:** better design and control of development in new urban areas to retain open spaces and natural resources, and ensure efficient local access.
- **Protection of open spaces and natural resources:** retention and improvement of open spaces, trees, and vegetation to help maintain and improve urban microclimates, in particular air and water quality.
- **Urban transport policy and planning:** more efficient road layouts, facilitate the introduction

of public transport and promotion of nonmotorized transport. Other urban transport policies might be needed to help reduce congestion and emissions.

- **Improving living environments of the poor:** improve livelihood opportunities for the poor and enable them to choose more environmentally friendly living options (e.g., heating and waste disposal).

To some extent, the GMS countries are still developing their understanding of the opportunities and challenges in protecting the ecology, mitigating climate change impacts, and in adapting plans and infrastructure design for climate change. Part of the process of taking forward the GMS Urban Development Strategic Framework should involve building a knowledge base of appropriate solutions.

Green development is based on maintaining a balance between the three Es: environment, economy, and equity. In particular, towns and cities should be designed and developed with consideration of environmental impacts such as the designation and preservation of green belts and green space, and spatial planning and urban compaction to avoid sprawl and loss of agricultural lands. Improved environmental infrastructure is essential to reduce the impact of urban centers on their natural surroundings. Urban planning, building design, construction, and operation should aim to improve resource-use efficiency, particularly for energy and water.

The green development approach is already being applied in projects in Viet Nam, Myanmar, and the PRC, and is reflected in the preparation of the GMS Urban Development Strategic Framework. Lessons from projects in the GMS countries and perhaps other Southeast Asian countries should be

¹² ADB. 2013. *Urban Operational Plan 2012–2022*. Manila.

shared with all GMS members, and the methodology can then be developed into a menu of options that countries can incorporate into future projects and programs. Some principles and tools of the green development approach involve

- the coordination of vision, goals, and a time-based investment plan;
- alignment of spatial development plans, socioeconomic plans, and environmental policies;
- use of performance monitoring indicators for green targets;
- citizen feedback and monitoring systems for accountability;
- peer-to-peer learning for urban transformation, improving efficiency in area of performance, and institutional change;
- sharing knowledge, practices, and processes of change;
- improving competency in integrated urban and environmental planning, climate resilience, energy efficiency, and project management;
- skills development and vocational training; and
- innovative financing mechanisms for urban infrastructure.

Adhering to green development principles is also important in monitoring the impact of the GMS Urban Development Strategic Framework, such as environmental indicators that can demonstrate incremental change in the “greenness” of urban development.

Disaster risk management. There is a direct correlation between the rise in occurrence of multiple large disasters and the increases in population and density of urban areas.¹³ Consequently, there is

worldwide demand for the introduction of risk-based development planning processes. It is also evident that disaster risk management (DRM) needs to be conducted through a combination of local, national, and regional actions. The GMS Urban Development Strategic Framework should play a role in coordinating efforts across the subregion by

- conducting a vulnerability study of key urban areas;
- developing effective land use and development regulations and enforcement;
- mainstreaming DRM into national and local strategies, plans, and programs;
- strengthening linkages for regional cooperation for DRM and risk reduction;
- integrating DRM with climate change adaptation, both technically and institutionally; and
- raising awareness at the community level of the issues of DRM and of local actions that can reduce risks.

Inclusive development.¹⁴ In planning urban development, providing infrastructure, and upgrading existing urban centers, there is always a possibility that certain groups of society do not benefit equally with other groups. These disadvantaged or vulnerable segments include the poor, women and children, smaller ethnic groups, migrant workers, students, and the disabled. In implementing the GMS Urban Development Strategic Framework and its components, measures should be put in place to identify potentially vulnerable groups and ensure that they benefit from the framework’s initiatives. These benefits include cleaner urban environments, reduced health impacts from poor infrastructure, reduced social and health risks from

¹³ ADB and the ADB Institute. 2013. *Disaster Risk Management in Asia and the Pacific Issues Paper*. Manila.

¹⁴ The term “inclusive development” is not widely understood, as discussed at the Third Meeting of the GMS Task Force on Urban Development in Vientiane, Lao People’s Democratic Republic. Appropriate terms are identified in the languages of the GMS countries to capture this concept, rather than trying to find the perfect expression in English.

large infrastructure projects and the movement of people across borders, improved access to markets, and improved access to jobs and skills development.

Improving living conditions for the urban poor should be a specific target of urban development plans, particularly in border areas. This might include components such as affordable housing, shelter upgrading, urban environment upgrading, improving access to basic urban and social services, and developing livelihood and skills sets. In the border areas, particular attention should be paid to the needs of the labor force and migrant population. Women and ethnic groups, for instance, tend to feature prominently among cross-border migrant workers in both the formal and informal sectors.

Achieving inclusive development will also require considerable capacity development among national, provincial, and local authorities, and coordination with the GMS Working Group on Human Resource Development.

Competitiveness. The towns and cities in the GMS are developing within an increasingly competitive global marketplace. It is essential that these urban areas are given every opportunity to benefit from the economic growth throughout the GMS and Southeast Asia. This means maximizing inherent advantages and addressing weaknesses by increasing the efficiency of urban areas, including

- effectively aligning economic land use and infrastructure planning;
- providing priority infrastructure and services that contribute most effectively to sustainable, inclusive growth in urban regions and corridors;
- support for special industrial zones, particularly at border points;
- support for exploring the applicability of new concepts in the GMS (e.g., smart city development, city cluster economic development, safe cities development);

- fostering employment opportunities, particularly with respect to logistics and major infrastructure for industry;
- targeting investments in technical and vocational education and training, and skills development; and
- technical assistance for institutional and systems development.

Action Plans

Various aspects of the GMS Urban Development Strategic Framework will be developed in more detail through action planning. These action or implementation plans could include plans directed at specific locations, programs for building capacity, technical studies to apply methodologies or principles across the GMS, or specific tools developed to implement the GMS Urban Development Strategic Framework. Some of the potential areas for action plans or implementation plans are described below.

Priority urban centers. The GMS Urban Development Strategic Framework does not attempt to prioritize the urban centers across the GMS. However, GMS Urban Task Force members agreed at the meeting in Vientiane in September 2014 that a system of prioritization should be explored. This is likely to be based on some form of multi-criteria analysis, an approach that ADB and other development partners have used successfully on other investment projects in the subregion.

This process must recognize the national strategies of each country, and prioritization will not be as straightforward as doing so within a single country. Nevertheless, using lessons from earlier examples, and through the comparison of specific strategies and programs, the member countries should be able to identify and mutually agree on criteria.

Figure 3: GMS Economic Corridors and Priority Border Areas



Sources: ADB Southeast Asia Department, technical assistance (TA) consultants (TA 8042-REG); discussions at the Third Meeting of the GMS Task Force on Urban Development in Vientiane, Lao People’s Democratic Republic (11–12 September 2014); and via videoconference (22 May 2015).

It is anticipated that the priority urban centers will include those along the economic corridors and some that are not immediately within the established corridors.

Priority border areas. The prioritization of border points will require a different approach from that for urban centers as several criteria will be specific to international border crossings.

The priority border areas that emerged from consultations are shown in Figure 3 and listed in Table 2. These border areas are critical points along GMS economic corridors and important links between countries. This is a preliminary list, which may be updated and amended from time to time. A number of planning activities will be required to facilitate the efficient development of the border areas. One proposal is for the urgent preparation of area development plans covering both sides of a border. These would be similar to urban development spatial frameworks, but developed bilaterally in the border area to guide further urban planning and capacity development. Many border areas are located in environmentally important and/or fragile areas and must be planned and designed to minimize their adverse environmental impacts. Specifically, they should be subjected to SEAs.

Capacity development programs. The GMS countries need to identify their own national priorities for improvements in various aspects of urban planning and management, and infrastructure provision. Then, by comparing notes with other GMS countries, skills across the subregion can be transferred and acquired, and the opportunities to use these skills for subregional cooperation can be identified.

Development of a data resource. The call for a centralized GMS urban data resource has been part of Urban Task Force discussions since its first meeting in 2013. Such a data resource may include

Table 2: Priority Border Points for Area Plans

Countries	Border Points
1. PRC–Myanmar	Ruili–Muse
2. PRC–Viet Nam	Hekou–Lao Cai
3. PRC–Viet Nam	Pingxiang–Dong Dang
4. PRC–Viet Nam	Dongxing–Mong Cai
5. Myanmar–Thailand	Tachileik–Mae Sai
6. PRC–Lao PDR	Mohan–Boten
7. Thailand–Lao PDR	Chiang Kong–Houayxay
8. Myanmar–Thailand	Myawaddy–Mae Sot
9. Thailand–Lao PDR	Nakhom Panom–Thakhek
10. Thailand–Lao PDR	Mukdahan–Kaysone Phomvihane
11. Lao PDR–Viet Nam	Dansavanh–Lao Bao
12. Myanmar–Thailand	Htikhi–Ban Phu Nam Ron
13. Thailand–Cambodia	Aranyaprathet–Poipet
14. Thailand–Cambodia	Hat Lek–Cham Yeam
15. Thailand–Lao PDR	Nong Khai–Vientiane
16. Cambodia–Viet Nam	Bavet–Moc Bai
17. Cambodia–Lao PDR	Dong Kralor–Veun Kham

Lao PDR = Lao People's Democratic Republic, PRC = People's Republic of China.

Note: The numbers do not represent a ranking of border points.

Sources: GMS country consultations and discussions at the Third Meeting of the GMS Task Force on Urban Development in Vientiane, Lao PDR (11–12 September 2014); and via videoconference (22 May 2015).

a database or a data book that would be available through various types of media. It is a prerequisite for the use of detailed indicators to measure urban development and progress to achieve GMS Urban Development Strategic Framework objectives.

While there is widespread support for the idea, there is also concern that the task may be too complex and it is therefore difficult to justify the time and expense it might involve. The differences between datasets held by the various countries would be a challenge to standardize. Further work is required to establish the feasibility of assembling a central database, including

a review of existing resources; and notable among these is the GMS Environmental Operations Center in Bangkok, Thailand.¹⁵

A potential alternative to an online digital database would be an urban data book. In most countries, data (particularly census data) are collected by administrative area, and are not always easy to match with urban areas. Previous experience in the Lao PDR shows that it is possible, using a combination of aggregation and disaggregation, to assemble data by urban areas.¹⁶ The methodology does rely on the input

of local knowledge and the use of detailed maps, so the feasibility of applying this approach across six countries will need to be explored.

Responding to the GMS Strategic Framework

The GMS Urban Development Strategic Framework must reflect the overall goals of the GMS Strategic Framework. Table 3 shows the ways in which urban development will contribute to the five strategic thrusts of the GMS Strategic Framework.

Table 3: GMS Strategic Framework, 2012–2022—Urban Development Response to the Five Strategic Thrusts

Strategic Thrust	Urban Development Response
Strengthening infrastructure linkages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highlighting and planning major infrastructure to ensure good linkages and removal of bottlenecks in key urban centers
Facilitating cross-border trade and investment, and tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning border areas to ensure efficient land-use arrangements and synergy with development on the other side of the border
Enhancing private sector participation and competitiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating efficient urban environments in which the private sector can operate • Identifying specific locations for industrial operations
Developing human resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating clean, efficient, and healthy urban areas in which individuals can maintain their well-being and health, and develop their skills
Protecting the environment and promoting the sustainable use of shared natural resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning urban and rural areas to prevent urban sprawl and protect the landscape and natural resources

Sources: ADB Southeast Asia Department, technical assistance (TA) consultants (TA 8042-REG); discussions and at the Third Meeting of the GMS Task Force on Urban Development in Vientiane, Lao People's Democratic Republic (11–12 September 2014); and via videoconference (22 May 2015).

¹⁵ Greater Mekong Subregion Core Environment Program. <http://www.gms-eoc.org/GMS-eoc>

¹⁶ ADB. 2005. *Lao People's Democratic Republic Urban Data Book*. Manila.

4

TAKING FORWARD THE GMS URBAN DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK, 2015–2022

Building and Using the Strategic Framework

The GMS Urban Development Strategic Framework is a flexible guide within which various aspects of urban development will be implemented. It should be seen as a living document to be adapted and refined as circumstances and priorities change.

The implementation of projects and other actions stemming from the framework will take place through a combination of regional and national projects and other initiatives. Several of the regional and multi-country projects are in the RIF, and are thereby part of the Investment Program for this framework. National projects fall outside the RIF, but are nonetheless part of the overall program of urban development investment throughout the region.

Investment Program for Regional and Multi-Country Projects

The Investment Program for this framework comprises ongoing, committed, proposed, and possible projects for 2015–2022 (see Appendix A). This list includes ongoing and planned regional and multi-country projects already in the RIF

(Table A.1), ongoing and planned projects not in the RIF (Table A.2), and possible additional projects and initiatives that have arisen during preparation of this framework (Table A.3). The regional and multi-country projects will harness cooperation between two or more of the member countries. These projects will also serve as demonstration projects of sustainable urban development to be replicated in each of the countries involved.

National Projects

The majority of project activities in the urban sector will be at the local, provincial, and national levels. Although these are not an integral part of the GMS Urban Development Strategic Framework, it is useful to see how national projects will contribute to urban development in the subregion. Table 4 lists the known national projects and indicates how they address the three Strategic Framework Pillars and other parameters—the scope for applying green development principles, the potential for multi-country cooperation, and location within GMS economic corridors. This illustrates one way in which the GMS Urban Development Strategic Framework could be used as a checklist for national project programs.

Table 4: Contribution of National Projects to Strategic Framework Objectives

Key:		Urban Centers	Border Area	Capacity Development	Green Development	Multi-Country	GMS Corridor
<input type="checkbox"/>	Moderate contribution						
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Strong contribution						
Project or Activity (ADB, unless stated otherwise)	Location						
Approved and Forthcoming Projects							
Cambodia							
Urban Water Supply	Countrywide	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>					
Capacity Development for Urban Management	Countrywide			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Integrated Urban Environmental Management in the Tonle Sap Basin	Pursat, Kampong Chhnang, Tonle Sap	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Urban Water Supply Systems (JICA)	Battambang, Kampong Cham, Kampong Thom, Kampot, Pursat, Siem Reap, Sihanoukville, Svay Rieng	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>					<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
National Road No. 5 Improvement Project (JICA)	Battambang to Serei Saophoan	<input type="checkbox"/>					<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Greater Phnom Penh Water Supply System (AFD)	Phnom Penh	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
PRC							
Yunnan Chuxiong Urban Environment Improvement	Chuxiong	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Guangxi Beibu Gulf Cities Development	Gulf of Beibu	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Guangxi Southwestern Cities Development Project		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Kunming Urban Rail Project	Kunming	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Guangxi Baise Integrated Urban Environment Improvement	Baise	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Lao PDR							
Water Supply and Sanitation Sector	Countrywide	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>			
Pakse Urban Environmental Improvement	Pakse	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Small Towns Water Supply and Sanitation Sector	Countrywide	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
Myanmar							
Pro-Poor Community Infrastructure and Basic Services		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>					
Transformation of Urban Management		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Mandalay City Urban Services Improvement Project	Mandalay	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Yangon Master Plan and Infrastructure Upgrading (JICA)	Yangon	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		

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Table 4: *continued*

Key:		Urban Centers	Border Area	Capacity Development	Green Development	Multi-Country	GMS Corridor
□ Moderate contribution							
■ Strong contribution							
Project or Activity (ADB, unless stated otherwise)	Location						
Viet Nam							
Ha Noi Metro Rail System Project	Nhon Station section	■			■		■
Ha Noi Metro Rail System Line 3	Hoang Mai Station section	■			■		■
Secondary Cities Development Program	Ha Giang, Hue, Vinh Yen	■		□	□		
Secondary Cities Development Project	Ha Tinh, Tam Ky, Buon Ma Thuot	■		□	□		
Urban Environment and Climate Change Adaptation	Countrywide				■	■	
Results-Based National Urban Development Program—Northern Mountains	Northern mountains		□	□			
Sustainable City Development Project	Da Nang	■			■		■
Mekong Delta Region Urban Upgrading Project	Mekong Delta	□		□	□		
Medium Cities Development Project	Lao Cai, Phu Ly, Vinh	■		■	■		□
Urban Water Supply and Wastewater	Countrywide	■		■	□		
Can Tho and Da Nang Urban Project	Can Tho, Da Nang	■			■		■
Environmentally and Climate Friendly Urban Development in Da Nang	Da Nang	■		■	■		■

ADB = Asian Development Bank, AFD = Agence Française de Développement, JICA = Japan International Cooperation Agency, Lao PDR = Lao People's Democratic Republic, PRC = People's Republic of China.

Note: The above list is illustrative rather than exhaustive.

Source: ADB Southeast Asia Department, technical assistance (TA) consultants (TA 8042-REG).

Timing

The detailed timetable for implementing the GMS Urban Development Strategic Framework will depend on many factors. Appendix A shows the proposed timing of the committed regional projects to be financed by ADB and other development partners. Other aspects are less certain as timing will depend on the approval processes and implementation of national projects and projects funded by other development partners.

The Way Forward

The GMS countries have adopted the GMS Urban Development Strategic Framework as a vehicle for coordinating urban planning and development at all levels. It is not a prescriptive or mandatory framework, but rather, a tool by which urban development in GMS countries can be supported, which will in turn, aid the transformation of GMS transport corridors into GMS economic corridors.

The GMS Urban Development Strategic Framework is an important tool for highlighting synergies and opportunities for active cooperation, particularly in border areas. While implementation will vary from country to country, the framework will fulfill an important role through regular monitoring, updating, and sharing lessons at meetings of the GMS Task Force on Urban Development.

The Third Meeting of the Task Force on Urban Development in Vientiane discussed the next steps for the GMS Urban Development Framework. It was generally agreed that the next steps involve the development of certain aspects of the framework in more detail through action or implementation plans. These could include

- developing more detailed aspects of the GMS Urban Development Strategic Framework (e.g., preparation of guidelines for border area planning, definition, and scoping of economic zone development in border areas) as it relates to urban development;
- identifying priority urban centers, possibly through multi-criteria analysis;
- preparing action plans for urgent items such as priority border areas;
- identifying potential pilot projects;
- scoping for a regional training program in urban planning and management, possibly using existing knowledge hubs in the subregion;
- developing national implications of the GMS Urban Development Strategic Framework on a country-by-country basis;
- preparing a GMS Urban Data Book;
- formalizing a GMS databank; and
- reviewing the possibility of upgrading the GMS Task Force on Urban Development to a Working Group on Urban Development and Special Economic Zones.

Measuring Progress: Results Framework and Indicators for GMS Urban Development

Regular Review

The GMS Urban Development Strategic Framework will be reviewed and updated regularly in line with the GMS Strategic Framework. Reviews should be undertaken, especially of the investment and technical assistance projects listed in the Investment Program. The triggers for this consist of

- changes in the GMS Urban Development Strategic Framework and/or RIF Implementation Plans for 2015–2018 and 2019–2022,
- major amendments to national strategies,
- publication of new sector or subsector plans,
- significant changes in development partner programs, and
- identification of major new projects.

Results Framework and Indicators

The results framework for the GMS Urban Development Strategic Framework (Appendix B) contains high-level indicators rather than data-based indicators. A more data-oriented set of indicators may be developed at a later stage once a comprehensive, centralized GMS urban database has been established.

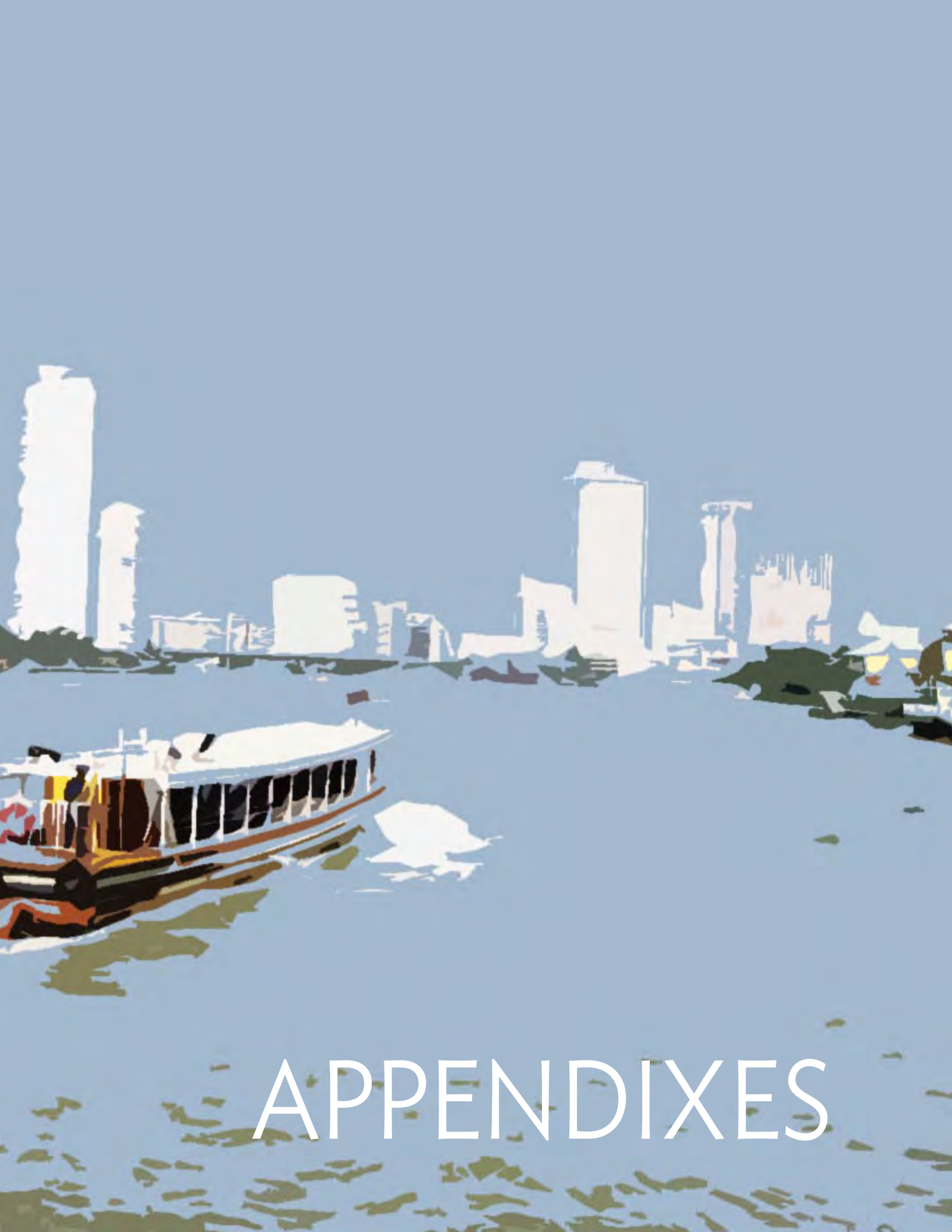
Monitoring Framework Progress

As well as measuring the impact of the GMS Urban Development Strategic Framework in outputs and results, it is important to monitor the framework itself. Suggested indicators are shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Monitoring the GMS Urban Development Strategic Framework, 2015–2022

Indicator	Target	Source and Responsibility
Strategic Framework is widely available in printed form	Available on ADB GMS website and from GMS Urban Task Force members	GMS Secretariat, GMS Urban Task Force members
Strategic Framework is available online	Available on ADB GMS and national government websites	GMS Secretariat
Annual review of Strategic Framework	Completed (in line with the annual GMS Urban Task Force meeting)	GMS Secretariat
Annual review of investments and technical assistance projects listed in the Strategic Framework and Investment Program	Completed (in line with the annual GMS Urban Task Force meeting)	GMS Secretariat
Full update of Strategic Framework every 3 years	Completed (in line with the RIF Implementation Plan)	GMS Secretariat

ADB = Asian Development Bank, GMS = Greater Mekong Subregion, RIF = Regional Investment Framework.
 Source: ADB Southeast Asia Department, technical assistance (TA) consultants (TA 8042-REG).



APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

GMS Urban Development Strategic Framework, 2015–2022— Investment Program

Table A.1: Ongoing and Planned Projects (GMS Regional Investment Framework, 2013–2022)

No.	Project	Funding Agency	Project Type	Scope and Location	Status	Participating Countries	Estimated Project Period	Estimated Cost (\$ million)	RIF Ranking	RIF Implementation Period		
										2012–2013	2014–2018	2019–2022
Investment												
1.1	Corridor Towns Development Project II	ADB	Loan	Integrated urban development in seven towns	Planned	Cambodia, Lao PDR, Viet Nam	2015–2022	250.0–300.0 38.0 (Cambodia) 52.0 (Lao PDR) 122.0 (Viet Nam)	1		■	
1.2	Corridor Towns Development Project III	ADB	Loan	Development of corridor towns in three towns in Myanmar	Planned	Myanmar	2017–2023	80.0	2		■	
1.3	Corridor Towns Development Project IV	ADB	Loan	Integrated urban development in several towns	Planned	Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Viet Nam	2018–2025	250.0–300.0	3		■	
Technical Assistance												
1.1	Corridor Towns Development Project II	ADB	TA	Prepare feasibility studies for proposed urban development investment in selected towns	Ongoing	Cambodia, Lao PDR	2013–2015	2.0	1	■		
1.2	Corridor Towns Development Project III	ADB	TA	Prepare feasibility studies for proposed urban development investment in selected towns	Ongoing	Myanmar	2014–2015	1.35	2		■	
1.3	Corridor Towns Development Project IV	ADB	TA	Prepare feasibility studies for proposed urban development investment in selected towns	Planned	Cambodia, Lao PDR, Viet Nam	2016–2018	1.4	3		■	
1.4	Cross-Border Economic Zones Development	ADB	TA	Piloting economic zone development in border areas, particularly those involving urban infrastructure	Planned	Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, PRC, Viet Nam	2015–2017	1.5	4		■	
1.5	Strengthening Urban Planning in the GMS Corridor Towns Development Project	ADB	TA	Capacity development to support countries in developing strategic urban development plans	Planned	Cambodia, Lao PDR, Viet Nam, Myanmar	2015–2017	1.5	4		■	

ADB = Asian Development Bank, GMS = Greater Mekong Subregion, Lao PDR = Lao People's Democratic Republic, PRC = People's Republic of China, RIF = Regional Investment Framework, TA = technical assistance.

Sources: Discussions at the Third Meeting of the GMS Task Force on Urban Development, Vientiane, Lao PDR (11–12 September 2014); via videoconference (22 May 2015).

Table A.2: Ongoing Projects (Not Listed in the GMS Regional Investment Plan)

No.	Project	Funding Agency	Project Type	Scope and Location	Status	Participating Countries	Project Period	Cost and Counterpart Funding (\$ million)	RIF Implementation Period/Year of Approval		
									2012-2013	2014-2018	2019-2022
2.1	GMS: Corridor Towns Development Project I										
2.2	Southern Economic Corridor Towns Development Project	ADB, ADB Strategic Climate Fund, ADB Urban Environmental Infrastructure Fund-UFPF	Loan and Grant	Develop four towns along the SEC in Cambodia to be centers of trade and development (Battambang, Bavet, Neak Loeung, and Poipet)	Ongoing	Cambodia	2019-2019	47.9 (ADB and cofinanciers) 6.9 (government)	■		
2.3	East-West Economic Corridor (EWEC) Towns Development Project	ADB, ADB Urban Environmental Infrastructure Fund-UFPF	Loan and Grant	Develop three towns along the EWEC in the Lao PDR to be centers of trade and development (Kaysone Phomvihane, Phine, and Dansavanh)	Ongoing	Lao PDR	2012-2019	41.5 (ADB and cofinanciers) 6.3 (government)	■		
2.4	Corridors Towns Development Project	ADB, ADB Urban Environmental Infrastructure Fund-UFPF	Loan and Grant	Develop three towns in the provinces of Quang Tri and Tay Ninh to be centers of trade and development	Ongoing	Viet Nam	2012-2019	131.0 (ADB and cofinanciers) 16.2 (government)	■		
2.5	GMS: Climate Resilience in Cities	ADB	TA	Capacity development for small and medium-sized towns on climate change adaptation— Battambang, Cambodia; Kaysone Phomvihane, the Lao PDR; and Dong Ha, Viet Nam	Ongoing	Cambodia, Lao PDR, Viet Nam	2012-2015	0.7	■		
2.6	GMS: Livelihood Support for Corridor Towns	ADB, JFPR	Grant	Develop market facilities and microfinance access in the towns of Battambang, Cambodia; Kaysone Phomvihane, the Lao PDR; and Dong Ha, Viet Nam	Ongoing	Cambodia, Lao PDR, Viet Nam	2013-2017	2.5	■		
2.7	Harnessing Climate Change Mitigation Initiatives to Benefit Women	ADB, NDF	TA	Support multistakeholder policy dialogue and pilot projects demonstrating more gender-equitable climate change responses	Ongoing	Cambodia, Lao PDR, Viet Nam	2011-2015	3.3	■		

ADB = Asian Development Bank, GMS = Greater Mekong Subregion, JFPR = Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction, Lao PDR = Lao People's Democratic Republic, NDF = Nordic Development Fund, RIF = Regional Investment Framework, SEC = Southern Economic Corridor, TA = technical assistance, UFPF = Urban Financing Partnership Facility.

Source: ADB Southeast Asia Department, technical assistance (TA) consultants (TA 8042-REG).

Table A.3: List of Possible Future Investments

No.	Project	Scope and Location	Potential Country Cooperation (Lead country in bold if appropriate)	Estimated Cost (\$ million)	RIF Implementation Period/Year of Approval	
					2014–2018	2019–2022
3.1	Capacity development in urban planning and management	Targeted technical assistance (to be based on needs assessment) to improve national and provincial urban-planning capacities	Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Viet Nam	2.0 (TA)	■	
3.2	Regional plans for border areas	Technical assistance for development plans for areas around key border points covering both sides of the border	Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand, Viet Nam, Myanmar, PRC	1.5 (TA)	■	
3.3	Border area environmental improvements	Urban investments stemming from the development plans in no. 2.2 above	Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand, Viet Nam, Myanmar, PRC	100.0		■
3.4	Exchange of good practices forum	Mechanism for regular exchange of urban data and techniques	Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand, Viet Nam, Myanmar, PRC	0.2 (TA)	■	
3.5	Strategic and urban planning	Long-term placement of expert(s) in ministries to undertake national strategic plans and key regional plans	Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand, Viet Nam, Myanmar	1.6 (TA)	■	
3.6	Study to aid the development of border checkpoints	Good practice review of design and management of border checkpoints	Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand, Viet Nam, Myanmar	0.2 (TA)	■	
3.7	TA on economic cluster formation: Pingxiang and Dongxing	Assistance in better understanding the economic potential of the Pingxiang and Dongxing economic zones	PRC , Viet Nam	0.4 (TA)	■	
3.8	Implement the Ruili/Muse Cross-Border Environmental Monitoring/Infrastructure Sharing Initiative	Capacity building for the Environment Bureau in Yunnan to undertake environmental impact assessments; exploring the possibility of joint monitoring the cross-border environment and cross-border learning	PRC , Myanmar	0.6 (TA)	■	
3.9	Explore the economic potential of the Lincang Highway shortcut	Potential for a road shortcut between Kunming and Mandalay	PRC, Myanmar	1.0 (TA)		■
3.10	Border economic zone development at Boten	Development of the SEZ on the border with the PRC	PRC, Lao PDR	0.2 (TA)	■	■
3.11	Assistance with public-private partnerships	Technical assistance for dealing with the private sector	Myanmar (jointly with other countries)	0.3 (TA)	■	
3.12	Establishing green cities in cross-border zones	Provision of assistance in establishing and managing green cities in cross-border zones	Cambodia, PRC, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, Viet Nam	1.0 (TA)	■	
3.13	Green Cities Urban Environmental Improvements	Investments stemming from no. 2.12 above	Cambodia, PRC, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, Viet Nam,	50.0		■

Lao PDR = Lao People's Democratic Republic, PRC = People's Republic of China, RIF = Regional Investment Framework, SEZ = special economic zone, TA = technical assistance.

Notes: 1. The projects and technical assistance projects mentioned above form a long list of potential investments, as expressed during GMS country consultations and the Third Meeting of the GMS Task Force on Urban Development in Vientiane (11–12 September 2014). These may be further explored by the GMS countries for possible investments by either ADB or other development partners. They do not necessarily reflect ADB's country operations and business plans in the GMS countries.

2. The above list is illustrative rather than exhaustive.

Sources: List of future investments based on GMS country consultations, and D. Webster and C. Jianming. 2014. *Urban Investment Priorities in Yunnan Province and Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region in Support of Enhanced GMS Integration*. Consultant's report. Manila. This table was further discussed at the Third Meeting of the GMS Task Force on Urban Development in Vientiane (11–12 September 2014).

GMS Urban Development Strategic Framework, 2015–2022—Results Framework

Table B.1: GMS Urban Development Strategic Framework—Results Framework

GMS Urban Development Impact		Sustainable urban development of the GMS achieved through cooperation and partnership to lift people from poverty and spread the benefits of economic growth to all groups and individuals													
GMS Urban Development Outcomes ^a	Improved planning and development of key urban centers (i, ii, iii, iv, a, c, d, e)			Improved planning and development of border areas (i, iv, a, b, d, e)			Enhanced capacity development in urban planning and management (ii, iii, iv, b, d, e)								
	Key urban centers within overall GMS corridor and urban system identified	Plans and spatial plans for high-priority urban areas developed	Border areas within overall GMS corridor and urban system identified	Plans and spatial plans developed for high-priority border areas, particularly those within economic corridors	Border zones developed	Cooperation in cross-border issues	Improved urban planning and management	Increased role of the private sector in infrastructure provision	Improved institutional coordination at national level	Peer-to-peer exchanges of ideas, approaches, and techniques	Increased synergy with other GMS sectors				
GMS Urban Development Interventions	Identify key urban centers according to an agreed selection criteria	Integrate urban environmental improvement projects in towns and cities, particularly those experiencing development pressures or in strategic locations such as near borders	Urban area development plans with urban-rural linkages	Identify key border areas according to an agreed selection criteria	Urban area development plans	Develop technical assistance projects for specific border zones	Facilitate and mediate discussions on two-country border development	Prepare national strategic development plans	Prepare subnational spatial development plans	Prepare national urban data books	Capacity development technical assistance projects	Promote program of GMS Urban Strategic Framework to national governments	Facilitate frequent GMS seminars and workshops	Establish GMS knowledge center	Establish mechanisms and activities to coordinate with GMS working groups on environment, human resources development, transport, and tourism
		Improve road and other transport infrastructure			Develop technical assistance projects for multi-zones		Conduct national training courses within region or elsewhere in Southeast Asia	Conduct GMS training courses within subregion or elsewhere in Southeast Asia	Conduct national training courses in-country	Capacity development within other integrated projects	Conduct PPP training courses	GMS workshops for multisector decision makers			

GMS = Greater Mekong Subregion, PPP = public-private partnership.

^a Numbers and letters refer to GMS Sector Outcomes and Outputs to which the strategy outcomes will contribute (see Table B.1 Annex on next page for corresponding numbers and letters).

Sources: ADB Southeast Asia Department, technical assistance (TA) consultants (TA 8042-REG), discussions at the Third Meeting of the GMS Task Force on Urban Development in Vientiane, Lao People's Democratic Republic (11–12 September 2014); and via videoconference (22 May 2015).

Table B.1 (Annex): GMS Strategic Framework, 2012–2022

GMS Regional Impacts	Increased economic growth, reduced poverty, and environmental sustainability across the GMS
GMS Sector Outcomes^a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Increased cross-border flows: investment, traffic, and labor migration with reduced human trafficking ii. Increased use of energy by all sectors and communities, particularly the poor iii. Increased tourism with reduced negative impacts iv. Increased conservation of nature
GMS Sector Outputs^b	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Economic corridors established b. Enhanced labor migration management systems and social protection for migrant workers c. Increased generation of energy from indigenous, low-carbon, and renewable sources d. Improved tourism infrastructure (pro-poor, pro-women, and environmentally friendly) e. Strengthened protected area networks
GMS Interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion of development of economic corridors and trade facilitation institutions • Subregional transport infrastructure and systems planning • Promotion of regional cooperation in education and skills development • Promotion of environmentally sustainable regional power trade planning • Capacity building and training of government officials, and tourism and hospitality enterprises • Strengthening Working Group on Environment and national support units

GMS = Greater Mekong Subregion.

^a Numbering of GMS Sector Outcomes included to cross-reference them in the GMS Urban Development Strategy Results Framework.

^b Numbering of GMS Sector Outputs included to cross-reference them in the GMS Urban Development Strategy Results Framework.

Source: ADB. 2011. *The Greater Mekong Subregion Economic Cooperation Program Strategic Framework, 2012–2022*. Manila.

APPENDIX C

Terms of Reference of the GMS Task Force on Urban Development

Terms of Reference

BACKGROUND

1. The Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) Economic Cooperation Program—comprising Cambodia, the People’s Republic of China (PRC) (Yunnan Province and Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region), the Lao People’s Democratic Republic (Lao PDR), Myanmar, Thailand, and Viet Nam—was established in 1992. As of 2013, the GMS Program has financed 69 public investment projects in the GMS countries totaling about \$16.8 billion. With the program on its third decade, the leaders of the GMS countries adopted the GMS Strategic Framework, 2012–2022 at their Fourth Summit in Myanmar in December 2011.

2. To operationalize the GMS Strategic Framework, a comprehensive pipeline of new investment projects were developed with the help of the Asian Development Bank (ADB). As part of this initiative, ADB assisted the GMS countries in formulating an urban development strategic framework that would focus on widening and deepening GMS transport corridors. Any urban development strategic framework for GMS would need to have a multisector approach to integrate and interrelate the development of other sectors such as transport, tourism, natural resources, agriculture, small and medium-sized enterprise development, water, and environment.

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

4. Since 2012, ADB has approved several projects on developing GMS corridor towns. These projects aim to improve environmental infrastructure and enhance competitiveness of the participating towns. These projects mark only the start for urban development under GMS. It is expected that more projects will be undertaken as part of operationalizing the GMS Strategic Framework in the medium term.

OBJECTIVES

5. The GMS Urban Task Force aims to be

- a platform and mechanism for the exchange of national and regional policies and strategies in the urban sector, particularly in relation to strengthening regional cooperation and integration, development of GMS corridors, and urban development generally; and
- promoter of knowledge exchange, peer review, cross-learning and experience exchange by organizing a regional conference on urban development, and conducting national consultations on lessons from urban sector efforts.

ACTIVITIES

6. To achieve the abovementioned objectives, the GMS Urban Task Force has updated its terms of reference¹ and has prepared the GMS Urban Development Strategic Framework, 2015–2022. It will initiate and coordinate the following activities:

- (i) Develop and coordinate a work plan (frequency to be determined).
- (ii) Oversee the preparation of further detailed plans for particular areas identified in the GMS Urban Development Strategic Framework.
- (iii) Monitor and update the GMS Urban Development Strategic Framework; this should include an annual review and additional reviews triggered by major events, such as new versions of GMS and national policy documents.
- (iv) Identify programs and mechanisms for the regular exchange of ideas, data, plans, and policies between GMS country-level urban task forces and with other GMS working groups.
- (v) Explore and scope out options (for possible funding by ADB or other development partners) to assemble a GMS urban database; this could be a printed urban data book, a digital data record, or an online database.
- (vi) Identify and/or review urban development projects with regional implications (cross-border activities, development of regional hubs, benchmarking of urban environmental targets, city marketing) for inclusion in future reviews of the GMS Regional Investment Framework (RIF) implementation plan.
- (vii) Facilitate preparation of regional meetings of the GMS Task Force on Urban Development by providing feedback on conference agenda, content, participants and other preparatory steps, and help in organizing logistics as necessary in their respective country.

- (viii) Contribute to the development of a website that will serve as a virtual venue for cross-learning, information sharing, and networking of practitioners.
- (ix) Meet and prepare reports on the outputs and activities of the Urban Task Force for consideration at future meetings of the Economic Corridors Forum and the GMS Ministerial Conference.
- (x) Assess the desirability and viability of establishing a GMS Working Group on Urban Development and Special Economic Zones or other suitable subregional platforms for addressing regional and national issues in urban development; if necessary, prepare terms of reference for the working group, proposed participants, organization, and other institutional arrangements.

TASK FORCE MEMBERSHIP

7. Each GMS country will nominate three persons to be Urban Task Force members, headed preferably by the GMS National Coordinator (NC+2). The suggested members of the Urban Task Force are medium- and high-level officials (Director General and Deputy Director General) of relevant ministries. It is also suggested that three persons from ADB also join the Urban Task Force.

8. Within each country, the Urban Task Force may be supported by a GMS country-level Urban Task Force or an urban support group (USG) to facilitate national consultations. Representatives in the USG may be drawn from relevant agencies such as ministries (e.g., Public Works and Transport, Urban Planning and Construction, Land Management, Environment, Economics and Finance, and Planning and Investment) or other

¹ These terms of reference were reviewed and discussed during the Third Meeting of the GMS Urban Task Force in Vientiane, Lao People's Democratic Republic on 11–12 September 2014.

national agencies of Cambodia, the PRC, the Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, and Viet Nam. The USG can also draw upon domestic academic or urban research institutions. The USG, if established, would (i) support activities of the Urban Task Force at the national level, (ii) conduct local studies on progress of GMS-related urban projects, (iii) convene events locally, and (iv) arrange monitoring and assessment reporting of Urban Task Force activities at the national level.

REGIONAL RESOURCES

9. To support the Urban Task Force, the following resources shall be allocated:

- Chair: Host country's lead Urban Task Force member (Host is on rotation basis among GMS countries, in alphabetical order starting with Cambodia)

- Co-Chair: Director, Urban Development and Water Division (SEUW) of the ADB Southeast Asia Department (SERD)
- Secretariat: ADB SERD and East Asia Department (EARD)
 - Regional Cooperation and Operations Coordination Division (SERC) and SEUW in coordination with Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture Division and Transport and Communications Division;
 - Public Management, Financial Sector and Regional Cooperation Division, EARD and Urban and Social Sectors Division, EARD.

COORDINATION AND SUPPORT

10. Coordination and support for the Urban Task Force's activities from ADB will be done through the SEUW and SERC divisions of SERD in consultation with EARD.

APPENDIX D

Summary of Previous Reports and Meetings of the GMS Task Force on Urban Development

Regional Investment Framework Sector Report, Urban Development (December 2012)

This report¹ was presented at the 18th Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) Ministerial Conference in Nanning, the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region in the People's Republic of China (PRC) in December 2012. It was the first attempt to scope out an urban development strategy for the GMS. It included some analyses of existing urban systems, explored options for the strategic approach, and put forward some proposals for the next steps. It provides a useful starting point and some good background information, but the rationale put forward for developing the strategy is not really substantiated. The report suggests that “urban development in the countries of an increasingly interconnected region cannot be undertaken successfully at the national level only.” Much of the report is therefore based on the premise that strategic planning across the GMS is essential for successful development of urban areas in all six countries.

On the basis of the work undertaken for this report, including the consultations with the national Urban Task Force members, it is apparent that any urban strategic framework for the whole GMS should be seen as complementary to national strategic planning, and not an essential prerequisite.

The December 2012 report also suggests that all significant urban growth will take place within the identified economic corridors. This seems to be post-rationalizing the corridors concept and probably puts too much emphasis on them in terms of national planning. The report should therefore be read with these limitations in mind. Nevertheless, it identifies a number of proposals for action, some of which can still be considered, and these are summarized below:

- Set up central GMS database.
- Prepare for second and third phases of urban projects in priority regions.
- Incorporate urban development into the GMS Strategic Framework, 2012–2022.
- Set up system of criteria and targets for a functional classification of urban areas.
- Promote small town programs based on urban–rural linkages.

The report also identifies possible initiatives to be managed at the national level:

- national (or multinational regional) funds targeted for specific types of towns, for example, designated corridor towns and border economic zones
- national projects with supranational, and regional objectives
- adopting performance criteria for municipalities and their management capability

¹ ADB. Regional Investment Framework Sector Report, Urban Development. Unpublished.

- supranational cooperation and the related forms of making joint agreements effective (using the European Union as a possible model)

First Meeting of the GMS Task Force on Urban Development in Phnom Penh (July 2013)

The First Meeting of the Task Force on Urban Development in Phnom Penh, Cambodia included broad discussion about the role of the Urban Task Force and the proposal for preparing an urban development strategy (now Strategic Framework) for the GMS. Key issues raised were as follows:

- Urbanization is a complex issue and there is no single approach.
- The planning response to flooding in Bangkok is a combination of urban compaction and green belt enforcement.
- Community-led planning is not established in some countries and sharing experiences and knowledge would be useful.
- Less-developed GMS countries can learn from the more developed countries about engaging the private sector.
- There is concern that a policy focusing on larger urban areas could put less-developed countries at a disadvantage.
- Other sectors should be invited to the next GMS meeting.
- Development of some cities could benefit the GMS as a whole.
- Common themes in national strategies include urban-rural integration, border towns, and economic poles.
- Urban strategy should clearly identify priority projects.
- National strategies should be used to identify the best locations for GMS support.

Second Meeting of the GMS Task Force on Urban Development in Kunming (November 2013)

The focus of the second meeting was the draft report described above—*Urban Development in the Greater Mekong Subregion: The Role of Cities in Promoting GMS Sustainability and Competitiveness* (January 2014). Each country's Urban Task Force was asked to give presentations on their national urban systems, and to comment on the report.

The key points raised are summarized in Table D.1.

Urban Development in the Greater Mekong Subregion: The Role of Cities in Promoting GMS Sustainability and Competitiveness (January 2014)

This report was initially prepared before the Second Meeting of the GMS Task Force on Urban Development in Kunming, Yunnan, PRC in November 2013. It was circulated to Urban Task Force members and was discussed at the meeting. It was subsequently revised in January 2014.²

The report builds on the work previously undertaken and examines in some depth (two-thirds of the report) the urban systems of the five GMS countries and two provinces in the PRC, and identifies spatial and economic trends in the GMS. The report provides useful background and illustrates the dissimilarities between the various countries in terms of their stages of development, urban hierarchies, capacities in urban planning, and institutional arrangements.

The revised report was adjusted to reflect the discussions at the Kunming meeting, but the general recommendations remained largely unchanged.

³ A. Gulbrandson and D. Webster. 2014. *Urban Development in the Greater Mekong Subregion: The Role of Cities in Promoting GMS Sustainability and Competitiveness*. Consultant's report. Manila (TA 8042-REG).

Table D.1: Summary of Issues Raised at Kunming Meeting

Country	Key Points	
Cambodia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Until recently, development partners have focused more on rural areas, urban sector has been somewhat overlooked Urban growth rate over 1.5% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need road infrastructure connecting urban centers and rural areas—market linkages
People's Republic of China	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Constellation-based not corridor-based City groups and clusters Three world-class metropolitan centers and 10 regional city groups Investment should be based on principle of efficiency Intraregional trade not satisfactory—Greater Mekong Subregion countries still competing for investment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreed to involving private sector through public-private partnerships Investment should be based on market principle Also look at poverty alleviation, balanced regional development, ethnic minorities
Lao People's Democratic Republic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investments have targeted Vientiane, four secondary cities, and then small towns Most urban centers now have master plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Competitiveness and sustainability are the key for future urban planning and investment
Myanmar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Three urban centers will be key: Mawlamyine, Mandalay, and Bago Three important border points: Muse, Tachileik, and Myawaddy Policy is concentrated decentralization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major cities to be green cities Connectivity and functional integration (complement and not compete)
Thailand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Urban planning decentralized National planning based on functional categorization of urban centers Sister cities concept could be considered 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Should be more interaction between planners and others between countries Define roles of cities but in mutually supportive manner
Viet Nam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Urban development not just in corridors—midland and mountainous areas as well Strategic Framework for Mekong Delta will focus on infrastructure development to mitigate adverse impact of climate change Not many urban centers (250,000–1,000,000) Urban systems significantly different in various countries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Speed up the development of cities with competitive advantage Build up tourism in urban centers In the Eastern Corridor, climate change will be paramount Tourism strategy should also include northern and highland regions
Plenary Session	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emphasis should be on demand-driven urbanization through consultation National urban policies should be primary guides Use “anchor towns” as basis for corridor development in each country Need for capacity development in urban planning and management—especially green cities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issue of cross jurisdiction needs to be addressed Develop technical standards for inclusive sustainable development Need for more knowledge sharing Peer-to-peer relationships under green cities

Source: ADB Southeast Asia Department, technical assistance (TA) consultants (TA 8042-REG).

These were encapsulated in the following proposed measures:

- comprehensive urban database and spatial framework for the region
- transport and seamless borders
- multimodal corridors
- strengthened intermediate-sized cities
- green cities
- assess urban economic functions, structure, and dynamics
- catalyze private sector involvement in GMS cities
- better incorporate agriculture into corridor development
- rationalize logistics centers
- prioritize corridors
- recognize tourism and amenity as a major driver of GMS development

Third Meeting of the GMS Task Force on Urban Development in Vientiane (September 2014)

The Third Meeting of the Task Force on Urban Development in Vientiane, Lao People's Democratic Republic included discussions on the draft urban development strategic framework. Key recommendations that emerged from this meeting were as follows:

- Participants agreed that the term “urban development strategic framework” was preferred to “strategy.”
- The time period of the document was to be extended to 2022 to keep in line with the GMS Strategic Framework.
- The draft strategic framework should incorporate strategic urban centers that may fall outside the economic corridor, but could contribute significantly to GMS corridor development.
- The inclusion of discussions on special economic zones (SEZs) and economic zone development in border areas is important within the urban planning and development context; however, other forums are necessary

to realize the potential of these SEZs and economic zones in border areas. A reference is particularly important to include in the draft urban development strategic framework as a way forward.

- The strategic pillars (or focus areas) and the crosscutting themes were agreed and participants expressed support for the proposed border area planning.

The meeting endorsed, in principle, the following:

- the draft GMS urban development strategic framework with further refinement;
- prioritized list of urban development investments and technical assistances projects in the Regional Investment Framework (RIF);
- top-ranked urban development investments and technical assistance projects included in the RIF Implementation Plan 2014–2018;
- the proposed revision of the terms of reference for the Urban Task Force was reviewed and adopted with some minor edits;
- timing and location of the next meeting of the Task Force on Urban Development; and
- submission of the confirmed list of Urban Task Force members.

Greater Mekong Subregion Urban Development Strategic Framework 2015–2022

This Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) Urban Development Strategic Framework, 2015–2022 sets out a broad framework to encourage and facilitate a coordinated approach to the development of urban areas throughout the GMS. The framework includes three pillars: (i) planning and development of key urban areas, (ii) planning and development of border areas, and (iii) capacity development in urban planning and management. Underlying these are four crosscutting themes—green development and climate change resilience, disaster risk management, inclusive development, and competitiveness. The GMS Urban Development Strategic Framework also provides the context for ongoing and planned projects in the six GMS member countries.

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