



Capacity Building Program Report Scaling-Up Digital Connectivity for MSMEs in the Lancang-Mekong Countries for Post-Pandemic Resilience



SUPPORTED BY

The People's Republic of China

PREPARED BY Mekong Institute



Component 2: Capacity Building Program Report



Do to Learn

Participants develop action plans to apply the acquired knowledge in practice and pass it on to field practitioners.

Share to Learn

Participants share new ideas, best practices and lesson learned from the action plan implementation.

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Lastly, acknowledgments are due to the organizing team and supporting staff of Mekong Institute for ensuring the smooth implementation of this project.

> Mekong Institute June 2024

Executive Summary

The Mekong Institute (MI) successfully concluded the one-year project titled "Scaling-Up Digital Connectivity for MSMEs in the Lancang-Mekong Countries for Post-Pandemic Resilience." The project engaged 149 participants from Cambodia, China, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, and Viet Nam (CCLMTV) in its capacity-building program, which included one onsite regional training program and one virtual S&E workshop. Renowned experts from regional and national organizations shared their insights on advancing digital initiatives for MSMEs.

As a major outcome, participants developed and implemented six group action plans (APs), benefiting 421 individuals across the six countries by enhancing digital connectivity.

Post-event evaluations revealed high satisfaction levels among participants regarding workshop design, content, and administrative support from MI. Notably, the Action Plans were highlighted as effective tools, offering critical opportunities for MSMEs to embrace digital transformation in the wake of the pandemic.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

AI-OCR	Artificial Intelligence Optical Character Recognition
APs	Action Plans
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CCLMTV	Cambodia, China, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam
DEPA	Digital Economy Promotion Agency
GMS	The Greater Mekong Subregion
LM	Lancang-Mekong
LMC	Lancang-Mekong Cooperation

This report includes six parts.



Part I: Introduction

Part I introduces the program, contents designed, objectives and approach used under Component 2: capacity building program.



Part III: Program Evaluation

Part III provides, all evaluation approaches used during the program implementation.

02

Part II: Component 2

Part II provides learning activities under Modular training summarized of key modules, and themes.



Part IV: Component 2.4

Part IV provides lists of schedules, participants directory, resource persons, and organizing team along Component 2 learning events.



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Part I: Introduction

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Introduction

The rapid adoption of digital technologies has significantly transformed the MSME sector, becoming essential for maintaining relevance, competitiveness, and efficiency, particularly after the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite constituting over 90% of businesses in the Lancang-Mekong Countries (LM), many MSMEs struggle with digital adoption, impacting their resilience to economic shocks. However, digital connectivity offers these enterprises opportunities to shape economies and achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

With the support of the government of the People's Republic of China (China), Mekong Institute (MI) implemented a project on "Scaling-Up Digital Connectivity for MSMEs in the Lancang-Mekong Countries for Post-Pandemic Resilience". The objectives of the project aim to enhance the digital skills and competencies of MSME owners and employees, promote digital adoption, and strengthen economic resilience by leveraging digital technologies. It advocates for supportive policies, fosters public-private partnerships, aligns with regional and global initiatives, identifies scalable digital technologies, and facilitates quicker economic recovery, ultimately contributing to the overall stability and development of the Lancang-Mekong region. The components of the project were divided into three:

Component 1: Research Component 2: Capacity Building Program Component 3: Expert Dialogue



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Components Designed

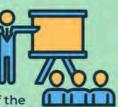
Preliminary Research

To fully leverage digitalized knowledge and scale up digital connectivity, this research aims to understanding capacity needs and spotlight on scalable digital technologies/ platforms for MSMEs digitalization to enhance capacity and sustainable digitalization in MSMEs.

Capacity Development Program

2

3



Based on the outputs of the preliminary research, the training will be tailored to equipping and scaling digital connectivity for MSMEs in Lancang-Mekong countries.

Phase 1: Regional training program on scaling-up digital connectivity for MSMEs in LM countries for postpandemic resilience

Phase 2: Action plan implementation

Phase 3: Synthesis and Evaluation Workshop

Webinar on Expert Dialogue

To deepen the understanding of key policy topics for MSMEs digitalization, share knowledge and perspectives from diverse communities, and bring visibility to the multi-stakeholder dialogue.

Component: 1

Research was conducted to utilized as the inputs to the designed modules in Capacity Development Program and Expert Dialogue components., which effectively respond to the needs of LM countries in the future.

Component: 2

The capacity building program components were designed based on recommendation areas suggested from research in component 1.

Component: 3

Serves as a platform to delve into the practical aspects of shaping the digital future of the Lancang-Mekong region. By exploring how technology and the digital economy can synergistically support the growth and development of MSMEs.

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Introduction

The module commenced with onsite training sessions incorporating case studies and best practices tailored to the LM context, emphasizing practical knowledge and adult learning principles. These activities were designed with a participatory approach, making learning a key method. The S & E workshop was conducted online via the Zoom application, featuring virtual facilitatorled classrooms throughout the program activities. The key features of this approach included the following:



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02

Introduction

Recognizing this background, MI supported by the China, implemented a regional training program titled "Scaling-Up Digital Connectivity for Micro, Small, and Medium-sized Enterprises in the Lancang-Mekong Countries for Post-Pandemic Resilience." The program was executed through three phases of a modular cycle:

1	REGIONAL TRAINING PROGRAM: Scaling up digital connectivity for MSMEs in LM countries for post-pandemic resilience (July 10-14, 2023)
2	ACTION PLAN IMPLEMENTATION: Action plan implementation Scaling up digital connectivity for MSMEs in LM countries for post- pandemic resilience (July-November 2023)
3	ONLINE SYNTHESIS AND EVALUATION WORKSHOP : Online synthesis and evaluation workshop (December 2023)

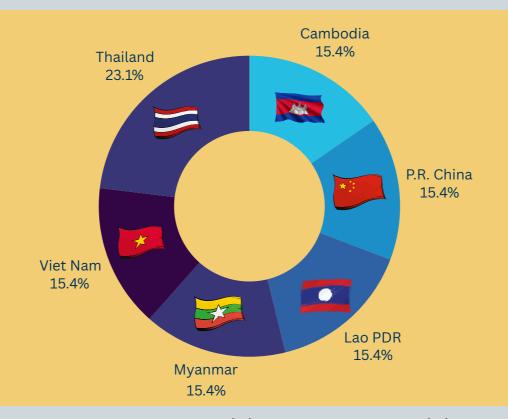


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To facilitate in scaling up digital technologies in the LM countries, the training brought about twenty-six participants from government officials, researchers and academia from Cambodia, China, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam.



The participants consisted of twelve (12) males and fourteen (14) females from Cambodia, China, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam participated in this training program.



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Part II: Component 2.1

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Component 2.1: Regional Training Program





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Welcome Remarks

Executive Director, Mekong Institute

Mr. Suriyan Vichitlekarn, the Executive Director, welcomed 26 participants from six countries to the training program in his opening remarks. He notably highlighted, "It is MI's honor to welcome the first batch of participants from Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, which is included in the membership of the Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS)." Mr. Vichitlekarn emphasized, "Digital technologies are no longer optional but essential for MSMEs to thrive in today's market. Despite challenges like infrastructure gaps, political barriers, and cybersecurity concerns, it is imperative that MSMEs adopt digital solutions to stay competitive and meet consumer demands."

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Digital technologies have played a key role in addressing the effects of the pandemic and opening up opportunities for MSMEs in Lancang-Mekong countries to build back better for post-pandemic resilience. To fully leverage digitalized knowledge and scale up digital connectivity, the training program was designed to provide participants with a comprehensive understanding of the content, focus on sharing practical knowledge among participants and resource persons, encourage the exchange of information and ideas through group discussions, adopt participative methods, and foster networking among participants.

Training Objectives

During this training, we:

Preliminary Research To fully leverage digitalized knowledge and scale up digital connectivity, this research aims to

understanding capacity needs and spotlight on scalable digital technologies/ platforms for MSMEs digitalization to enhance capacity and sustainable digitalization in

MSMEs.

2

Development Program

Based on the outputs of the preliminary research, the tra

be tailored to equipping and scal digital connectivity for MSMEs in Lancang-Mekong countries.

Phase 2: Action plan imp

3 Phase 3: Synthesis and Eval

Webinar on Expert Dialogue Te deepen the understanding of key policy topics for MSMEs digitalization, share knowledge and berspectives from diverse communities, and bring visibility to the multi-stakeholder dialogue.

Phase 1: Regional training program sading-up digital connectivity for MSMEs in LM countries for post-

Part A:

01 Current Issues and Challenges

To update on the current condition, issues, and challenges associated with scaling-up digital connectivity for MSMEs in LM countries 03 Explore Regional Cooperation

To identify potential future actions to be launched to scale up digital connectivity for post-pandemic resilience

02 Experiences and Good Practices Sharing

To spotlight on scalable digital technologies/ platforms for MSMEs digitalization to enhance capacity and sustainable digitalization for participants.



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This module encompassed a set of activities that are essential to facilitating inclusive engagement from the outset of the program.

Getting to Know Each Other:

Expectations

Check-ins and ice-breakers are always important to create a good training or workshop atmosphere. To kickstart our training program and establish a welcoming atmosphere, we initiated an introductory session that encouraged training participants and organizing team members to introduce themselves. During this icebreaker activity, individuals were invited to provide key information about themselves. Specifically, they shared their names, current positions, and organizational affiliations and provided a concise overview of their responsibilities or roles within their respective organizations. This session was instrumental in creating initial connections and setting a friendly tone for the training program.

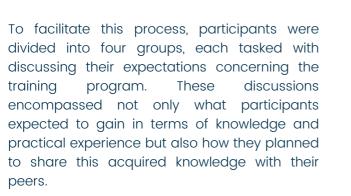


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EXPLORING EXPECTATIONS AND SETTING NORMS:

This session aimed to facilitate what participants anticipated from the training program, including their expectations regarding the training's content, methodology, fellow participants, resource persons, facilitators, and the overall program structure. Understanding these expectations was of paramount importance to our training team, as it allowed us to make necessary adjustments to enhance the training's effectiveness.





Furthermore, the session extended to the establishment of norms for the entire training course. These norms were proposed and discussed by participants to ensure the quality of the classes and the overall participation experience. Setting these norms aimed to create a conducive learning environment characterized by mutual respect, effective communication, and shared responsibility for the success of the training program.

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Part A:

Participant Expectations

All participants inputs were given due consideration throughout the training program. The questions and participants' expectations are summarized below:

What do you expect from this Training Course?	 Blockchain technology and its specific applications. Practical skills on digital marketing tools. Exploring innovative use cases and applications. Networking opportunities.
What do you expect from your co- participants?	 Actively engage in discussions. Sharing knowledge and experiences in scaling up digital tools. Supportive Environment. Collaboration and teamwork.
What are the	
methods you expect to use in this training course?	 Group discussion. Expert lectures and presentation. Video/ Case studies. Class Activities/ Exercise.
	 Punctuality.
What should be norms during the training program?	 Active and engaged in participation. Respect and inclusivity. constructive feedback Keep mobile phones on silent or vibrate mode during training sessions.

Table 2-1: Participant Expectations.



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Program Evaluation Methods

PRE AND POST-ASSESSMENTS

Part A:

At the commencement of the training, a pre-assessment is administered to gauge participants' baseline knowledge and understanding of the subject matter. After completing the training program, a postassessment is conducted to measure the knowledge enhancement and skill development achieved by participants.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS (BOD)

The Board of Directors (BOD), comprised of participants themselves, served as an instrumental tool in actively involving and engaging participants in facilitating and evaluating the training program on a daily basis.

MOOD METER

The "Mood Meter" was used throughout the course of the training program at the end of every day to gauge from all participants their level of satisfaction with the material covered and method of instruction.

AFTER-EVENT EVALUATION

After-event evaluation was carried out using an online survey methodology. This approach provided all participants with a platform for candid feedback and comments, free from instructor, facilitator, or program staff scrutiny. This survey was designed to provide participants with a confidential and open avenue to communicate their thoughts, assess the overall program, and contribute to its enhancement



TRAINING PHILOSOPHY

- Nobody knows everything but everybody knows something.
- The participant is a facilitator, the facilitator is participant.
- Learning is a self-directed process.

TRAINING APPROCHES



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This 5-day training program prioritized four key sections, identifying specific pathways for scaling up digital technologies for MSMEs in the Lancang-Mekong countries. These sections were designed to align with the broader goals of regional cooperation and sustainable development.

Modules	
MSMEs Digitalization Tech and Trend	
Gearing Up for MSMEs Resilience	
Emerging Digital Tools	
Action Plan Development	

About Modules:

- Module 1: introduces key concepts and discusses digital technology as an enabler for MSMEs in LM countries. Understanding emerging technologies is a prerequisite since technologies are rapidly evolving, and MSMEs must comprehend the trends to be effective.
- Module 2: provides a comprehensive overview of the digital technologies transforming how MSMEs operate. To help MSMEs take a quantum leap towards digitalization, this module will explore the present state of tech adoption across MSMEs and how they can leverage technology to drive business resilience.
- Module 3: explain key applications and/or platforms that will explore the current state of play for digital tools serving MSMEs sectors and smallholders in emerging markets and evaluate how the delivery of these services are working or failing.
- Module 4: expose participants to develop action plans which aim to disseminate the knowledge acquired from the training in their home countries.

Part B:

Module 1: Introduction of MSMEs Digitalization Tech and Trend

This module introduces the fundamental concepts and key digital technologies that serve as enablers for MSMEs in the Lancang-Mekong countries. Understanding emerging technologies is crucial, as these technologies are rapidly evolving, and MSMEs must stay abreast of these trends to remain effective and competitive.



Figure 2-1: Experts in Module 1

Prof. Dr. Liu Yun initiated the session by emphasizing the importance of digital transformation for MSMEs in the Lancang-Mekong region. He provided valuable insights into the current state of MSMEs and their perspectives toward adopting and leveraging digital technologies in the Lancang-Mekong region. His presentation emphasized the necessity of scalable digital technologies and solutions tailored to the unique challenges faced by MSMEs in this region. Dr. Liu outlined a structured approach, starting with diagnosing weaknesses and prioritizing improvements within businesses. He highlighted the importance of selecting appropriate service providers to facilitate digital transformation, ensuring the effectiveness of implemented projects through verification processes, and fostering a culture of continuous improvement. These insights underscored the critical role of digital transformation in enhancing the global value chain. Dr. Liu's comprehensive framework provided a clear roadmap for MSMEs to navigate their digital journey, addressing both technological and operational aspects to achieve long-term success.

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Module 2: Gearing Up for MSMEs Resilience

This module provides comprehensive a digital overview of the technologies transformina how MSMEs operate. This module aims to help MSMEs take a quantum leap towards digitalization by exploring the current state of tech adoption and how these technologies can be leveraged to drive business resilience.



Figure 2-2: Experts in Module 2

During the session, TJ Ooi, Founder and Principal Consultant of Curated Connectors, provided a comprehensive overview of MSMEs' perspectives towards adopting and leveraging digital technologies. He highlighted the critical role that digital transformation plays in enhancing the competitiveness and resilience of MSMEs. TJ outlined the abundant technological solutions available, such as cloud technology, AI, and digital platforms, which enable businesses to streamline operations, improve data analytics, and reach broader markets. Emphasizing the human aspect of digitalisation, TJ discussed the necessity for a mindset shift among business owners, accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, and the importance of upskilling employees to create internal value and enhance market competitiveness. Additionally, TJ underscored the significance of stakeholder engagement through increased dialogues and collaboration between public and private sectors, as well as cross-border engagements, to support MSMEs' digitalisation efforts.

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Module 3: Emerging Digital Tools

This module focuses on key applications and platforms that are pivotal in the current landscape of digital tools serving MSME sectors and smallholders in emerging This module markets. delves into the effectiveness of these digital solutions. evaluating how well they deliver services and identifying areas where they may be falling short.



Figure 2-3: Experts in Module 3

Mr. Pongsak Sanitwong Na Ayuthaya, President & Founder of Wiz Me Magic Ltd., presented on the transformative impact of emerging digital tools in building and branding SMEs in the era of Digital 4.0. His insights explored the current state of digital tools serving smallholders in emerging markets, emphasizing the importance of brand innovation in an era characterized by a multitude of choices and reduced uniqueness between products. Mr. Pongsak highlighted how digital innovation and the digital creative economy can inspire and link concepts similar to Airbnb, creating unique moments of truth in the retail sector. He discussed the rapid growth of digital technology and its role in enhancing business communication, especially through the booming social media landscape. The advancement of technology has enabled devices to communicate and work together automatically, significantly reducing human burden and increasing potential for creative ideas. Examples included the ability to control appliances through applications and the use of simulation technology for training purposes. Mr. Pongsak's presentation underscored the critical role of digital tools in empowering SMEs to enhance their brand and thrive in the Digital 4.0 era.



Module 4: Action Plan

This module participants in the process of drafting action plans that aim to disseminate the knowledge acquired from the training in their home countries. This module emphasizes the importance of collaboration and public-private partnerships (PPPs) for scaling up digital technologies in MSMEs.



Figure 2-4: Experts in Module 4

In this session, aimed to expose participants to successful case studies in scaling up through the use of emerging digital technology tools and applications. The module emphasized the importance of collaboration and public-private partnerships (PPPs) for scaling up digital technologies in MSMEs, drawing from DEPA's experiences. Two featured case studies illustrated these principles in action. The first, "KGO InfinitLand Token for SMEs," showcased a digital financial service platform that enhances financial inclusion and operational efficiency for small businesses. The second case study, AI-OCR, highlighted the use of artificial intelligence for optical character recognition to automate document processing, thereby accelerating the digitalization of MSMEs. These examples served as actionable plans for participants, demonstrating the tangible benefits and practical applications of digital technologies in business scaling.

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One featured case study, "KGO InfinitLand Token for SMEs," showcased a digital financial service platform that enhances financial inclusion and operational efficiency for small businesses. This platform leverages blockchain technology to provide secure, transparent, and efficient financial transactions, enabling SMEs to access financial services.

The KGO initiative aims to leverage digital tools and blockchain technology to create a robust ecosystem that supports MSMEs, enhances local economies, and fosters community development.

Feature of KGO provided as;

Inclusive Digital Ecosystem:

• KGO aims to democratize access to digital tools and create an inclusive ecosystem where SMEs can thrive

Token Functionality:

 The KGO Token serves as a utility token, designed for use within the KGO ecosystem. It functions as a point or reward system, which can be utilized across various partnered stores and enterprises. The token is earned through participation in activities organized by the city, government agencies, or educational institutions, rather than being traded for real money.

Support for MSMEs:

• KGO provides essential digital tools for marketing, data management, and voucher verification systems, which are tailored to enhance the operations of SMEs. These tools help businesses to create promotions, manage user data, and track voucher usage efficiently.

Blockchain as a Utility:

• KGO use blockchain technology as a utility to support various digital infrastructure needs. This includes decentralized applications (dApps), smart contracts, and a secure, immutable ledger for transactions.

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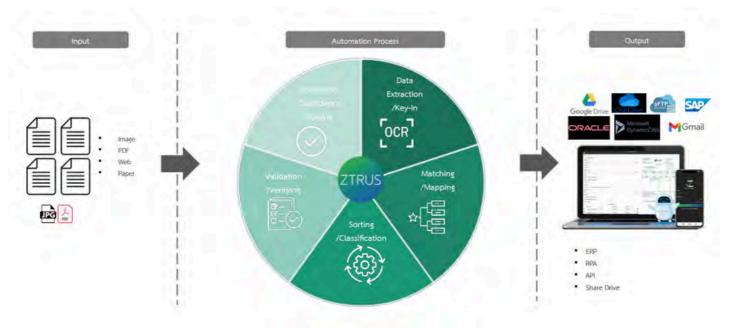


Figure 2-4: AI-OCR Document Process Automation for MSMEs Digitalization

Another case study highlighted AI-OCR (Artificial Intelligence Optical Character Recognition), an innovative solution for document process automation that accelerates the digitalization of MSMEs by using artificial intelligence to streamline and automate paperwork. These examples served as actionable plans for participants, demonstrating the tangible benefits and practical applications of digital technologies in business scaling.

Key aspects of the AI-OCR solution include:

Enhanced Efficiency:

• AI-OCR automates the extraction and processing of data from various document types, significantly reducing manual effort and improving operational efficiency.

Scalability:

• The solution is designed to handle large volumes of documents, making it suitable for growing businesses with increasing data processing needs.

Accuracy:

By leveraging advanced AI algorithms, AI-OCR ensures high accuracy in data recognition and extraction, minimizing errors and improving data quality.



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Part III: Component 2.2

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Component 2.2: Action Plan Implementation





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Action Plan Preparation and Implementation

The action plan preparation sessions were conducted with active participation from all attendees. Participants drafted group action plans based on the insights and knowledge gained throughout the training program.

The action plan preparation and implementation sessions were a critical component of the training program, providing participants with a structured and supportive framework to apply their learning in practical, impactful ways. The collaborative approach, ongoing guidance, and thorough evaluation ensured that participants were well-prepared to drive digital transformation within their MSMEs.

The country-wise action plans developed during the training program reflect a tailored approach to enhancing digital connectivity and financial services for MSMEs across the Lancang-Mekong region. These action plans are designed to address specific regional challenges and leverage local opportunities, ensuring practical and impactful digital tools.

These draft action plans were then reviewed and refined in collaboration with the Mekong Institute (MI) organizing team, ensuring they were practical, feasible, and aligned with the objectives of scaling up digital connectivity in MSMEs.





Key Activities for Action Plan Preparation

- Concept Development: Participants were guided through the process of developing concepts for their action plans. This included identifying specific digital tools and strategies that could be implemented in their SMEs.
- Collaborative Refinement: The MI organizing team worked closely with participants to refine their action plans. This collaborative effort ensured that each plan was well-thought-out and tailored to the unique needs of the respective SMEs.
- Agreement and Commitment: Once the action plans were finalized, they were agreed upon by both the participants and the MI organizing team. This mutual agreement was crucial for the successful implementation of the plans.



Implementation Phase

- Guidance and Monitoring: The MI team, along with industry experts, provided continuous guidance and support to participants during the implementation phase. This support was delivered through online methods and tools, ensuring that participants could effectively execute their action plans.
- Regular Check-ins: Participants were required to provide regular updates on the progress of their action plans. These check-ins allowed the MI team to monitor the implementation process and offer timely assistance where needed.
- Evaluation and Feedback: The progress and outcomes of the action plans were evaluated in a subsequent online synthesis and evaluation workshop. Participants received feedback on their implementation efforts, helping them to make any necessary adjustments and improvements.





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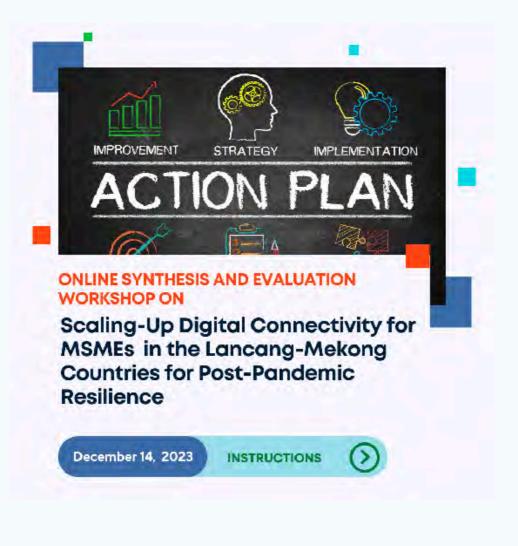
Part IV: Component 2.3

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Component 2.3: Synthesis and Evaluation Workshop





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Workshop Objectives

As part of the capacity-building program, participants developed Group Action Plans (APs) to "scale up digital connectivity in MSMEs in their countries" and transfer knowledge and experiences acquired through the regional training by concerned beneficiaries and stakeholders by conducting workshops/ training in their country.

The objectives of this workshop were as follows:

- To present results of APs implementation.
- To bring the participants back to reflect on their experiences on the action plan implementation.
- To discuss further steps to scaling up digital connectivity in the LM countries for post-pandemic for Post-Pandemic Resilience.



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Overview of the S&E Workshop

Ms. Yupaporn Siribut, program officer, SEE Department, MI, expressed MI's appreciation for participants' hard work implementing APs to foster digital connectivity for MSMEs in LM countries. Then discussed the approach MI adopts, which is 'Learn to Do,' 'Do to Learn,' and 'Share to Learn.' she also explained the objectives and expected outputs, and the program schedule of the workshop.



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Presentations of AP Implementation Results

This workshop prioritizes on presentation of AP implementation results. The representatives from each country group presented the results of their APs implementation with photos, PowerPoint presentations, and discussions in line with the topics and methods applied covered in six sessions:



01. Action Plan: KhmerSME and ASEANACESS Website: Digital Information Websites for Small and Medium Enterprises in Cambodia and ASEAN



02. Action Plan: Digital Literacy and Transformation- Easy Solutions for MSMEs in China



03. Action Plan: Scaling-Up Digital Marketing Tools for MSMEs in Lao PDR



04. Action Plan: Scaling-up Digital Connectivity for MSMEs **Resilience in Myanmar**



05. Action Plan: Scaling-up MSMEs in Thailand using Digital Transformation



06. Action Plan: The Twin Green and Digital Transition: From International Experience to Solutions for Viet Nam

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Capacity Building Program Report Summary of Participants' Action Plans

COMPONENT 2: ACTION PLANS



Action Plan-1: Cambodia



Department of Small and Medium Enterprises, Ministry of Industry Science Technology and Innovation



One day workshop Onsite November 2023



30 MSMEs Owners/ Managers

- Increase awareness and utilization of digital platforms like KhmerSME and ASEAN Access among MSMEs.
- Educate MSMEs on the functionalities and benefits of these digital platforms.
- Improve MSMEs' ability to access information on regulations, standards, supporting policies, training, and e-learning opportunities.
- Ø
- MSMEs will have a better understanding of how to use KhmerSME and ASEAN Access for business growth.
- Increase in the number of MSMEs using these platforms to enhance their digital presence and business operations.
- MSMEs will become more competitive in the digital economy, leveraging new technologies and strategies to grow their businesses.

KhmerSME and ASEANACESS Website: Digital Information Websites for Small and Medium Enterprises in Cambodia and ASEAN

Background:

In Cambodia, SMEs face significant challenges in digital literacy and technology adoption, impacting their ability to access lucrative markets and meet stringent requirements. These limitations hinder their capacity to compete internationally and adapt to market fluctuations. To address these issues, the Cambodian government, guided by the Prime Minister's digital advancement directives, has established a Digital Economy and Social Policy framework for 2021-2035. This framework focuses on six pillars: Digital Government, Digital Citizen, Digital Society, Smart City, Industry 4.0, and Digital Business & FinTech. Additionally, Cambodia's STI Roadmap 2030 aims to embed Technology DNA within MSMEs, promoting growth and adaptation to Industry 4.0.

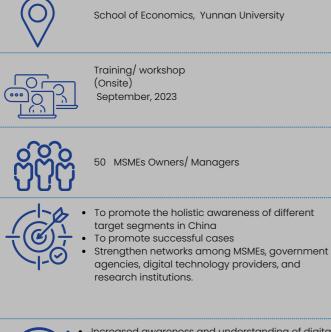
To enhance digital capabilities, Cambodia has developed national digital platforms such as KhmerSME and ASEAN Access. KhmerSME serves as a one-stop site for Cambodian business owners, providing practical business information, networking opportunities, and access to finance. ASEAN Access facilitates trade and export within and beyond ASEAN, offering international trade matchmaking and business opportunities.

The action plan aims to support existing digital platforms and promote MSMEs' digital transformation through workshops and business matchmaking events. By raising awareness, improving access to business information, and increasing marketing and networking opportunities, the plan seeks to strengthen MSMEs' digital presence and competitiveness in the global market.



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Action Plan-2: China



Increased awareness and understanding of digital transformation among MSMEs.

- Improvement in knowledge and skill digital transformation for MSMEs, primarily in Guangxi and Yunnan.
- Enhanced digital skills and strategic planning capabilities.
- Strengthened networks and collaborative opportunities among participants.

Digital Literacy and Transformation— Easy Solutions for MSMEs in China

Background:

Since 2016, China has prioritized the digital economy, integrating technologies like the Internet, big data, and AI into traditional sectors. Key policies, such as the 14th Five-Year Plan and the Data Security Law, have emphasized digital infrastructure and security. SMEs, which constitute 99% of China's market entities, are vital to the economy, contributing significantly to tax revenues, GDP, innovation, and employment. However, many face challenges in digital transformation, including limited knowledge, skills, and resources.

To address these challenges, the action plan aims to raise awareness and improve digital skills among MSMEs, government officials, students, and local communities, particularly in Guangxi and Yunnan. It promotes successful case studies and strengthens networks between MSMEs and digital technology providers. This comprehensive approach seeks to equip MSMEs with the tools and resources needed for successful digital transformation, enhancing their competitiveness and sustainable growth in the digital economy.



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Action Plan-3: Lao PDR



Department of SME Promotion, Ministry of Industry and Commerce Lao PDR.



Training Onsite November 01, 2023

30 MSME Owners/ Managers

- Increase awareness among Lao MSMEs about the importance and benefits of digital marketing.
- Equip MSMEs with the necessary skills and tools to effectively utilize digital marketing platforms and strategies.
- Disseminate information about government policies and plans for MSME development, particularly in digital marketing.
- \bigcirc

More MSMEs creating and managing their own digital marketing campaigns.

- MSMEs will implement effective digital marketing strategies, leading to increased online sales and revenue.
- MSMEs will stay competitive by adopting the latest digital marketing trends and technologies.
- Increased understanding and utilization of government policies and support for MSME digital development.

Scaling-Up Digital Marketing Tools for MSMEs in Lao PDR

Background:

The MSME sector is vital to the Lao economy, contributing significantly to employment, poverty reduction, and economic growth. The MSME sector, comprising over 99% of enterprises in Laos, is crucial for employment and economic growth but faces significant challenges in digital adoption. Only 17.5% of MSMEs use digital technologies, relying mainly on traditional sales methods.

To address this, the Lao government, supported by the People's Republic of China and the Mekong Institute, conducted a workshop on November 1, 2023, titled "Scaling-up Digital Marketing Tools for MSMEs in Lao PDR." The workshop aimed to equip 32 MSME participants with skills in website development, social media marketing, SEO, online advertising, and data analytics. This training aimed to enhance their digital presence, improve marketing strategies, and increase sales, ultimately fostering growth and economic development in Laos.



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Action Plan-4: Myanmar

\bigcirc	 Ministry of Cooperatives and Rural Development Ministry of Industry Ministry of Transport and Communications Central Bank of Myanmar 	Se Re
	Workshop Hybride September 19, 2023	Вс Му М3
ຕິຕິຕິ	243 (80 in person & 163 Online) 143 relevant government officials and 100 MSME entrepreneurs from 15 States and Regions)	Th
	Improve the knowledge and application of digital tools among MSMEs. Equip startups with the skills needed to scale their operations and integrate digital solutions. Encourage the use of digital platforms for marketing, financing, and communication. Leverage the ASEAN ACCESS MSME web portal to enhance market reach and collaboration.	ar of ok ne Or 24
	Enhanced digital literacy among MSME owners and managers, leading to better business practices. Improved ability of startups to identify and implement scalable digital solutions. Enhanced knowledge sharing and collaboration among MSMEs through the ASEAN ACCESS MSME web portal.	gc sk fo: str fa ot By

Scaling-up Digital Connectivity for MSMEs Resilience in Myanmar

Background:

Myanmar's action plan for digital literacy and transformation of MSMEs addresses critical challenges faced by small businesses in adapting to the digital economy. Recognizing the essential role of MSMEs in the nation's economic structure, the plan aims to bridge the digital divide that hampers their growth and competitiveness.

The Capacity Building Program on Scaling-up Digital Connectivity for MSMEs was launched with the support of the Mekong Institute and various Myanmar government ministries, including the Ministry of Cooperatives and Rural Development, the Ministry of Industry, and the Ministry of Transport and Communications. The initiative's objective is to provide MSMEs with the tools and knowledge necessary to thrive in the digital age.

On September 19, 2023, a hybrid event was conducted, involving 243 participants, including 100 MSME entrepreneurs and 143 government officials. The program focused on enhancing digital skills, introducing digital marketing and financing tools, and fostering a robust network of MSMEs through the ASEAN ACCESS web portal. Key topics covered included digital marketing strategies, digital security, and the creation of digital networks, facilitated by experts from the Myanmar Computer Federation and other technical advisors.

By improving digital literacy and connectivity, the action plan aims to increase the digital presence of MSMEs, promote the use of digital platforms for various business operations, and build stronger local, regional, and international networks. This initiative is a crucial step towards ensuring that Myanmar's MSMEs can compete effectively in the global digital economy, driving sustainable growth and development.



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Action Plan-5: Thailand

- the Institute and Community Enterprise Development Sub-bureau/Agricultural Land Reform Office, MOAC Digital Economy Promotion Agency B.P.Supakij Co., Ltd. Pracharat Raksamakki Pranchinburi Co., Ltd. Prachinburi Provincial Community Organization Council Workshop and Pitching Online August - November, 2023 30 MSMEs Owners/ Managers Raise awareness of digital technology transformation and its benefits for MSMEs and community enterprises in Thailand. Provide essential information and knowledge about digital technology to enhance business competitiveness.
 - Support the adoption of digital technology by allocating funds to participants who win the pitching competition.
 - (
- Participants will gain new knowledge and practical skills in digital technologies, particularly in areas such as digital marketing and value creation, enhancing their business operations.
- Winners of the pitching competition will receive financial support to implement digital technologies, leading to improved competitiveness and business effectiveness.

Scaling-up MSMEs in Thailand using Digital Transformation

Background:

Digital technology has significantly transformed various aspects of life and business over the past few decades, evolving through stages from Internet 1.0 to Smart Technology 4.0. This evolution has revolutionized business practices, particularly through Fintech, which exemplifies how digital technology can deliver financial services efficiently and seamlessly. The COVID-19 pandemic further accelerated the adoption of digital technologies, forcing businesses to adapt quickly to survive.

In Thailand, a member of the Lancang-Mekong region, the awareness of digital transformation is rising, especially among MSMEs. Digital transformation offers vast opportunities for businesses, enabling them to overcome previous limitations and access international markets more effectively. However, many small businesses, entrepreneurs, and community enterprises in Thailand still lack basic knowledge of digital technologies, such as digital marketing, data analysis, and using technology to reduce costs and labor.

To address these challenges, the action plan titled "Scaling-up MSMEs in Thailand using Digital Transformation" aims to enhance digital literacy and transformation among Thai MSMEs. This training program is designed to provide participants with a comprehensive understanding of digital transformation and its application in business. Emphasis is placed on practical knowledge, hands-on learning, and fostering networks among participants through participatory methods.

The program includes a competition where participants present their digital transformation strategies in a "Pitching" format to win prize money, which they can use to adopt digital technologies in their businesses. Additionally, cloud storage will be provided to help participants transition from physical to digital documentation.



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Action Plan-6: Viet Nam





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Part V: Program Evaluation





Program Evaluation



The modular training program employed various evaluation methods to assess the learning program's achievement against participants' expectations. The insights gathered through these evaluations informed the current program's success and laid the groundwork for iterative improvements in subsequent offerings.

The employed assessment methods include:

- Pre-Test & Post-Test, and assessment
- Daily assessment using Mood Meter and BOD
- Suggestion box
- After-event evaluation





Daily Assessment ~

The daily assessment approach integrated the Mood Meter, Board of Directors (BOD), and Suggestion Box, providing a comprehensive and participatory mechanism for evaluating the learning environment and facilitating continuous improvement.

Mood Meter

The Mood Meter served as a daily instrument for the subjective measurement of the learning atmosphere and participants' moods. At the conclusion of each day, participants rated their mood, reflecting their overall satisfaction as very happy, normal, or disappointed. This real-time feedback mechanism contributed to provide a more sophisticated understanding of participants' emotional experiences throughout the training program.

• Board of Directors (BOD)

The BOD, comprised of three participants selected on a rotational basis, played a pivotal role in providing valuable feedback to MI facilitators and resource persons at the end of each day. The BOD's insights focused on learning content, methodologies, and various activities related to the training. This collaborative feedback session proved instrumental in refining training delivery methods and strategies for the subsequent day. Furthermore, every morning commenced with a recapitulation session, during which the BOD reported to the class, sharing key takeaways and insights from the previous day's observations.

Suggestion Box

The Suggestion Box allowed participants to share anonymous feedback and recommendations.

The combination of real-time emotional feedback, participant observations, and anonymous suggestions enriched the overall training experience and facilitated continuous enhancement of the learning environment, ensured a comprehensive understanding of participants' experiences.

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Pre and Post Assessment $\,\,{f u}$

In evaluating the effectiveness of the training program, a comprehensive set of assessment methods was employed, pre- and post-self-assessment designed for the Modular training program introduced to measure individual comprehension improvements across different training topics.

• Pre-and Post Self-Assessment

Tailored questionnaires rated different topics on a scale of 1 to 5, with "5" representing the highest level of understanding and "1" the lowest. The consistent rise in average scores between pre- and post-self-assessments across both modules indicates a significant improvement in participants' understanding. These results underscore the effectiveness of the training program in facilitating knowledge acquisition and skill development in the areas covered by each Module. Table 5-1 provides a comprehensive overview of participants' pre- and post-self-assessment results for each training program module.



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How much do you know / understand the following topics?	Pre-Self Assessments Results	Post-Self Assessments Results
Module 1: Introduction of MSMEs Digitalization	Tech and Trend	
Ability to identify essential tools for digital connectivity in MSMEs	2.86	4.20
Ability to identify scalable digital technologies and solutions for MSMEs	2.85	4.50
Module 2: Gearing Up for MSMEs Resilience		
Abilty to identify digital branding and tools for SME in Digital 4.0	2.24	3.30
Ability to identify Platforms and Its Benefits for MSME Digitalization	2.14	4.4
Module 3: Emerging Digital Tools		
Understand mechanisms to collaboration and Public-Private-Partnerships for Scaling-Up Digital Technologies in MSMEs	2.45	3.4
Understand service of digital platform for MSME Digitalization	2.50	4.5
Average (26 participants)	2.51	4.05

Table 5-1: Total Average Result of Pre & Post Self Assessment.



The results indicated that the Regional Training on "Scaling-Up Digital Connectivity for Micro, Small, and Medium-sized Enterprises in the Lancang-Mekong Countries for Post-Pandemic Resilience", has successfully achieved its intended objectives and met the specified requirements. The self-assessment measures, validate the significant improvement in participants' knowledge and skills, affirming the overall success of the training program.

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The training employed after event evaluation method which aimed to assess the achievement of the program against participants' expectations. The organizer also aimed to get feedback and inputs for course improvement in the future. At the conclusion of the training, participants were given an online survey and asked to rate, on a scale of 1 to 5, how relevant they found the training improve their skills, how engaging they found the training, and how satisfied they are with what they learned. A standardized set of questionnaires comprised four parts: Part 1 Learning program objectives; Part 2 Program contents, Part 3 Training Resource Persons, and Part 4 Overall assessment of the training program, including both closed- and open-ended questions on four major indicators:

Key Indicator	Questions	Key measure
1- Overall level of satisfaction on the program objectives	How they found the program met their expectation.	How well the training program met its stated objectives.
2- Level of satisfaction on program contents	To capture participants' perspectives on the quality, relevance, and overall satisfaction with the content of the training program	Overall content covered in the trainng module and interaction among participants are appropriate
3- Level of satisfaction on services and administration support from MI	How satisfied participants are with what support, facilitation and coordination from MI.	Overall administration, facilitation and coordination are appropriate
4- Level of satisfaction on resource persons	How satisfied participants found knowledgeable and expertise about the training topics	The experts are knowledgeable about the topics and well prepared

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Level of Satisfactory

Here, the results from participants were given an online survey and asked to rate.

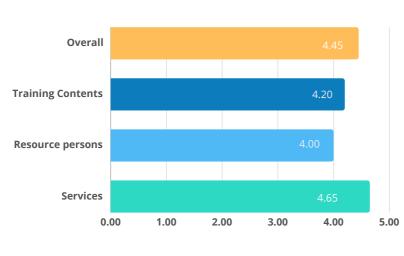


Figure 5-2: Level of Satisfaction on Regional Training on ""Scaling-Up Digital Connectivity for Micro, Small, and Medium-sized Enterprises in the Lancang-Mekong Countries for Post-Pandemic Resilience". on July 10-14, 2023.

Overall assessment of the training

how relevant participants found the workshop improve their skills and, and how satisfied participants are with what they learned.

Training contents

how satisfied participants are with program contents and modules.

Resource persons

how satisfied participants found knowledgeable and expertise about the workshop topics.

Services and administration support from MI

how satisfied participants are with what support, facilitation and coordination from MI.

Based on the results, the average rating for participants' overall level of satisfaction with the training program is 4.45 showing that the participants were satisfied with the overall course content and expressed more that the content is practical and relevant to scalable digital technology. In terms of services and administration support from MI, average rating is 4.65 showing that participants were keen satisfied with overall administration and coordination support in order to obtain new knowledge and skills. As well as levels of satisfaction on training design and contents, average rating is 4.20. Lastly, participants were asked to assess the resource persons in terms of technical qualifications, cooperation, and communication with participants, and the results showed that highly satisfied with resource person with average rating is 4.00.



"In total, eighty-t six percent of respondents said they were mostly satisfied with the overall training program."

Event Highlights



001

Opening session: Welcome Remarks



002

Session on "Getting to Know Each Other".



003

Module 1: Session on Introduction of MSMEs Digitalization Tech and Trend



004

Module 4: Session on "Closing Remarks".

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Part VI: Appendixes



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Appendixes:

Appendix list:

Appendix A: Program Agenda Appendix B: Participants Directory Appendix C: Resource Person Appendix D: Organiser Team

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APPENDIX A: PROGRAM AGENDA

Day-1: Monday (July 10, 2023)

Time (GMT+7)	Topics/ Event
08:30 – 09:00	Opening Remarks Mr. Suriyan Vichitlekarn Executive Director Mekong Institute
09:15 – 09:30	Group Photo MI Team
09:30 – 09:45	Mekong Institute Video Presentation MI Team
09:45 – 10:15	Coffee Break
10:15 – 10:45	Getting to Know Each Other Mr. Anan Ussanawarong Program Admin Assistant Sustainable Energy and Environment Department Mekong Institute
10:45 – 11:15	Exploring Expectations and Setting Norms Ms. Yupaporn Siribut Program Officer Sustainable Energy and Environment Department Mekong Institute
11:15 – 11:40	Program Overview and MI Facilities Ms. Yupaporn Siribut Mr. Anan Ussanawarong
11:40 – 12:00	Pre-assessment Participants
12:00 - 13.30	Lunch at GMS Hall, 1st Floor, MI Annex
odule 1: Introduction of M	SMEs Digitalization Tech and Trend
13:30 – 14:00	Overviews of MSMEs Perspective Towards Adopting and Leveraging Digital Technologies (online) Prof. Dr. Liu Yun Director Yunnan Digital Ecosystem Engineering Research Center Kunming University of Science and Technology, China
14:00 – 14: 30	Coffee Break
14:30 – 16:30	Scalable Digital Technologies and Solutions for MSMEs in Lancang- Mekong Countries (online) Prof. Dr. Liu Yun Director Yunnan Digital Ecosystem Engineering Research Center Kunming University of Science and Technology, China
16:30 – 16:45	BOD and MI Team
18:00 – 20:00	Welcome Dinner Smile Waterside Khonkaen
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Day-2: Tuesday (July 11, 2023)

Time (GMT+7)	Topics/ Event
Module 2: Gearing Up for MS	SMEs Resilience
08:30 – 09:00	Recap of Day-1 BOD
09:00 – 10:00	Overview on MSMEs Digitalization Tech and Trend Mr. Tiat Jin (TJ) OOI Founder & Principal Consultant Curated Connectors
10:00 - 10:30	Coffee Break
10:30 – 12:00	Exploring Platforms and Its Benefits for MSME Digitalization and Scaling – Part 1 Mr. Tiat Jin (TJ) OOI Founder & Principal Consultant Curated Connectors
12:00 – 13.30	Lunch at GMS Hall, 1st Floor, MI Annex
13:30 – 15:00	Exploring Platforms and Its Benefits for MSME Digitalization and Scaling – Part 2 (Includes Group Discussion) Mr. Tiat Jin (TJ) OOI Founder & Principal Consultant Curated Connectors
15:00 – 15: 30	Coffee Break
15:30 – 16:30	Closer Look at Platforms, Their Benefits and Opportunities for MSMEs -E-commerce Platforms -Food Delivery Platforms -Ride Hailing Platforms -Digital Financial Services Mr. Tiat Jin (TJ) OOI Founder & Principal Consultant Curated Connectors
16:30 - 16:45	BOD Meeting BOD and MI Team

Day-3: Wednesday (July 12, 2023)

Time (GMT+7)	Topics/ Event
1odule 3: Emerging Digital 1	Fools
08:30 – 09:00	Recap of Day-2 BOD
09:00 – 10:00	Branding for SME in Digital 4.0 Explore the Current State of Digital Tools Serving Smallholders in Emerging Markets-1 Mr. Pongsak Sanitwong Na Ayuthaya President & Founder Wiz Me Magic Ltd.
10:00 – 10:30	Coffee Break
10:30 – 12:00	Branding for SME in Digital 4.0 Explore the Current State of Digital Tools Serving Smallholders in Emerging Markets-2 Mr. Pongsak Sanitwong Na Ayuthaya President & Founder Wiz Me Magic Ltd.
12:00 – 13.30	Lunch at GMS Hall, 1st Floor, MI Annex
13:30 – 15:00	Digital Tools and Solutions in MSME Brand Building 4.0 Key Applications and tools for MSMEs -1 Mr. Pongsak Sanitwong Na Ayuthaya President & Founder Wiz Me Magic Ltd.
15:00 – 15: 30	Coffee Break
15:30 – 16:30	Digital Tools and Solutions in MSME Brand Building 4.0 Key Applications and tools for MSMEs -2 Mr. Pongsak Sanitwong Na Ayuthaya President & Founder Wiz Me Magic Ltd.
16:30 – 16:45	BOD Meeting BOD and MI Team

Day-4: Thursday (July 13, 2023)

Time (GMT+7)	Topics/ Event
dule 4: Emerging Digital T	ools and Action Plan Development
08:30 – 09:00	Recap of Day-3 BOD
09:00 – 10:00	Embraces Collaboration and PPPs for Scaling-Up Digital Technologies in MSMEs: DEPA experiences Mr. Din Suphawat Team Leader Digital Economy Promotion Agency (Central Northeastern Provincial Cluster Office)
10:00 – 10:30	Coffee Break
10:30 – 12:00	Feature Case Study-1: ANT Delivery "Connect the Local" Platform: Mission – Action – Success Mr. Ongkharak Inthongchuai Founder and CEO ANT Delivery
12:00 – 13.30	Lunch at GMS Hall, 1st Floor, MI Annex
13:30 – 14:00	Feature Case Study-2: Digital Tools and Platforms for SME Transformation Mr. Traitip Siriruang Senior Officer Digital Economy Promotion Agency (Central Northeastern Provincial Cluster Office)
14:00 – 14:45	Feature Case Study-3: "KGO InfinitLand Token for SMEs" Digital Financial Service Platform for Smart City Concept CEO InfinitLand Holding Co., Ltd KKTT Khonkaen
14:45 – 15:15	Coffee Break
15:15 – 16:00	Overviews on Action Plan Development MI Team
16:00 - 16:45	Action Plan Preparation Participants
16:45 – 17:00	BOD Meeting BOD and MI Team

Day-5: Friday (July 14, 2023)

Time (GMT+7)	Topics/ Event		
Module 4: Action Plan Deve	Module 4: Action Plan Development (Cont.)		
08:30 – 09:00	Recap of Day-4 BOD		
09:00 – 10:30	Structured Learning Visit KKU-innoprise: Support Mechanisms on Innovation and Enterprise for MSMEs Prof. Thidarut Boonmars Vice President for Innovation and Enterprise Khon Kaen University		
10:30 – 12:00	Action Plan Presentation Country-wise action plan		
12:00 – 13.30	Lunch at GMS Hall, 1st Floor, MI Annex		
13:30 – 15:00	Action Plan Presentation Country-wise action plan		
15:00 – 15:30	Coffee Break		
15:30 – 15:40	Post-Test and Evaluation		
15:40 – 17: 00	 Closing Ceremony (Business Attire) Course Report Speech from Participants Awarding of Certificates Closing Remarks 		
	MI Team and Participants		

Regional Training on Scaling-Up Digital Connectivity for MSMEs in the Lancang-Mekong Countries or Post-Pandemic Resilience July 10-14, 2023 | Mekong Institute

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APPENDIX C-3: RESOURCE PERSON



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APPENDIX C-3: RESOURCE PERSON (CONT.)





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APPENDIX D: ORGANIZER TEAM



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ABOUT MEKONG INSTITUTE

Mekong Institute (MI), an intergovernmental organization owned and operated by the six countries of the Greater Mekong Subregion (Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, Viet Nam and Yunnan province and Guangxi Autonomous Region of the People's Republic of China), promotes regional cooperation and integration through capacity development programs and projects in three thematic areas namely, Agricultural Development and Commercialization, Trade and Investment Facilitation and Sustainable Energy and Environment.



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