

INSIDE

Mekong Forum 2017

Regional Training Program on Food Safety Risk Analysis

Structured Learning Visit at Mae Sot Plant Quarantine Station

Seoul National University Partners with MI on Research Efforts in the GMS

TRAINING/WORKSHOP/SLV ACTIVITIES

Regional Training Program on Promoting Women Entrepreneurship for Export Business

MI, with the support from the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), organized the Regional Training Program on *Promoting Women Entrepreneurship for Export Business* on July 3-14, 2017, at the MI Residential Training Center in Khon Kaen, Thailand.



Dr. Watcharas Leelawath together with the members of the Trade and Investment Facilitation (TIF) Department and the 24 women entrepreneurs during the launch of the workshop.



Ms. Hao Wen (leftmost), TIF Program Coordinator, as she assists two participants during the introduction session at the launch of the program.

Female entrepreneurs from Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Vietnam (CLMV), attended the training, which aimed to help them develop and strengthen entrepreneurial qualities and motivation to expand their businesses for the regional and global markets. The training also provided necessary knowledge and information on business management, finance, marketing, source of assistance, incentives, subsidies, rules and regulations to help them set up business ventures. [Read more here.](#)



MI alumni's initiatives resonate the Institute's advocacies. Seen in this picture is an MI alumnus sharing his knowledge and learning to fellow agricultural practitioners.

MI Co-organizes GAP Training for Kandal Vegetable Farmers

MI, together with the Provincial Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (PDAFF), Kandal Province, Cambodia conducted the localized training on *Good Agricultural Practices (GAP)* on July 4-5, 2017.

Twenty-four vegetable producers and extension workers from Sa-Ang District participated in the training course, which aimed to enhance the participants' knowledge and technical capacity on GAP principles, as well as introduce to them appropriate agrichemical and pest management practices to ensure the quality and safety of their fresh produce. The training was spearheaded by an MI alumnus who attended the Regional Training Program on Assuring Food Safety through

Pest and Agrichemical Management held last May 2017, together with an expert from the Department of Plant Protection, Sanitary and Phyto sanitary under the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries in Cambodia. [Read more here.](#)

■ TRAINING/WORKSHOP/SLV ACTIVITIES



Mr. Thorng Ra, ADC Program Coordinator (leftmost), as he facilitates the start of the regional training.

Regional Training Program on Food Safety Risk Analysis

MI, with support from the New Zealand Aid Programme (NZAP), conducted the nine-day *Regional Training Program on Mainstreaming Food Safety Risk Analysis* from July 10 until 21, 2017, at the MI Residential Training Center. The program was the fifth in a series of food safety training programs organized under the MI-Food Safety Project (MI-FSP).

This training program aimed to enhance the knowledge and technical capacity of 25 participants from relevant government agencies, academic and research institutions, and consumer associations in Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, and

Vietnam (CLMV) in assessing, managing, and communicating food safety risks. In addition, the training introduced the basic concepts in preliminary risk management activities, identification and selection of risk management options, implementation and control measures, and monitoring and review. [Read more here.](#)

Workshop on GMS Power Equipment Operation

MI continuously emphasizes on furthering energy cooperation in the region. Consequently, in partnership with China Power Southern Grid, MI launched the two-day workshop on *GMS Power Equipment Operation and Maintenance and Safety Management Standard Code* on July 20-21, 2017, at the MI Residential Training Center. Thirty-one CLMV government officials joined the workshop, which aimed to enhance their understanding of the field. The initiative also explored the field's standards and code for GMS power interconnection.



CLMV government officials and the MI team as they officially launched the workshop at the Mekong River Conference Room.



Ms. Maria Theresa Medialdia, ADC Director, encouraging the participants to further strengthen their skills to reinforce food safety in the GMS region.

Regional Training Workshop on Promoting Consumer Awareness on Food Safety

Following the series of workshops that MI has been conducting in partnership with NZAP, the weeklong *Regional Training Program on Raising Public Awareness for Safe Food Consumption* was conducted at the MI Residential Training Center. The sixth course under the MI-FSP ran from July 24–28, 2017.

Twenty-seven representatives from government agencies, academic institutes, and the private sector in Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Vietnam attended the training, which aimed to introduce effective strategies in engaging consumers to be aware of the importance of food safety and, in turn, push for safer fresh produce. The course also intended to strengthen the capacity of the participants to develop and implement practical strategies in developing consumer messages and communication strategies on food safety hazards and risks. [Read more here.](#)

■ EWEC (SDC) PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Deputy Minister of Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry Commends Project's Outputs

On July 15, 2017, H.E. Phuangpralisack Pravongviengkham, Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry and a delegate from the ministry and provincial level visited the rice production and manufacturing sites. The visit took place after the cooperative members visited Xuanye (Lao PDR) Sole Co., Ltd. in June 2017. **(continued on page 3)**



(continued from page 2)

The objectives were to see the operation of the Cooperative, to note the improvements of rice production and manufacturing through GAP and GMP, and to explore the potentials of exporting rice. The president of the cooperative presented the establishment and business operation, and explained the plans of the cooperative. The Deputy Minister recognized and commended the plan and activities, citing that these will be on the same path as the plans of the Agriculture Development Strategy to Central Government. Moreover, he stressed on providing the benefit allocation and enhancing social welfare among shareholders and beneficiaries. Afterwards, he visited a GAP rice paddy field as well as rice mills, which are implementing GMP application.

It was the first significant event that showed satisfactory improvements as attested by an eminent government official. It also demonstrated that projects are running on track and the advices will be taken into account for significant improvements in the future. In addition, this served as an important step in preparation for the visit of a Chinese company for rice exporting.

EWEC SLVs Promote Cooperation Between Plant Quarantine Stations

As a follow-up activity to improve cross-border trade between Thailand and Myanmar, the project organized Structured Learning Visits (SLVs) to Mae Sot Plant Quarantine Station along with Myawaddy Plant Quarantine on July 25, 2017.

The primary objective of the SLVs were to build partnerships between organizations; to exchange the application procedure in inspecting plant and plant products; to observe the mechanism of inspection; and to further cooperation initiatives and potentials between the two organizations for trading agri-products crossing the borders. Four participants from the Myawaddy Plant Quarantine Section, led by supervisor U Hla Wai, joined the SLV to Mae Sot. The Chief of Mae Sot Plant Quarantine welcomed the SLV group and provided information regarding the plant quarantine system in Thailand, mechanism of inspection on export/import of agri-products, and rules and regulations.

The visit group discussed the restriction and permission codes of each country and clarified the necessary documents for the export/import of agri-products. They also explored the possibility of making the process simpler and applicable between the two countries, and shared the governments' policies regarding plant quarantine.



The study tour group visited the border check point No. 13 located beside a river to observe mechanism of inspection on agri-products imported from Myanmar. The group also met a Thai agri-product trader, who shared the challenges of importing agri-products from Myanmar particularly the long delay of issuing documents from Thailand.

The recent process of issuing SPS certificate in Yangon, Myanmar facilitates an easier system for traders to collect their documents. This was the very first meeting between the Plant Quarantine Sections of the two border provinces, particularly Myawaddy - Mae Sot, which is supported by the Myanmar Field Office of EWEC. Representatives discussed future cooperation initiatives such as sharing new quarantine policies between the two countries, official visits of Mae Sot Plant Quarantine in Myawaddy, and information and technology sharing for the new checking point when bridge 2 will be fully operational.



Dr. Thet Thet Mar (second from the left), Project Team Leader of the Myanmar EWEC Field Office facilitating a meeting during the SLV.

EWEC (SDC) PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Coffee Nursery Matching Market Demand

On July 26, 2017, representatives of Quang Tri Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) and its line agencies, local authority and project team paid a joint visit to the coffee nursery at Huong Do village of Huong Phung commune, Quang Tri Province. This was part of the commitment of DARD to carry out technical monitoring and support on a regular basis after the project ended its support to the model.

During the visit, DARD staff worked closely with the nursery owner to conduct technical analysis and all the participants discussed about marketing. The young trees were assessed as having good health and rapid growth. On an area of 250 square meters, the owner has successfully nursed more than 15,000 young trees of new variety (THA1), occupying over 100% of the expected targets. Out of this, more than half were bought mostly by Huong Do quality coffee producing farmer group in which the owner is a member. The trees were sold to Huong Do farmer group for a lower rate, as committed by the possessor, in order to commend great efforts of his group members in participating in the successful linkage models in the past years under the support of the project.

The setting up of this nursery ushers in a significant opportunity for smallholder coffee farmers in the context of the growing need for replantation. Most importantly, the Quang Tri Provincial People's Committee issued the Decision No.837/QD-UBND on April 24, 2017 to approve the "Replantation of and sustainable development of coffee trees in Quang Tri province during the period of 2017 to 2020" proposal submitted by DARD.

The objectives of the proposal are to improve the quality and productivity of coffee trees, thus improving the competitiveness of the coffee sector in the province. According to the proposal, around 41% of the total coffee plantation area in the province needs replantation. In addition, the local authorities were committed in providing a 50% financial subsidy to acquire seedlings for farmers participating in this replantation plan.



Vietnamese coffee farmers reach progressive and significant results after participating in the project's initiatives.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

NECTEC Visits MI, Explores Partnerships

MI warmly welcomed the NECTEC Delegates, headed by Dr. Kanokvate Tungpimolrut - NECTEC Deputy Executive Director, on July 5, 2017, at the MI Headquarters in Khon Kaen, Thailand.

Dr. Watcharas Leelawath, MI Executive Director, together with the MI-Innovation and Technological Connectivity (ITC) Department, headed by Mr. Sudam Pawar, presented MI's initiatives and actions on energy cooperation and adoption of technology to improve lives. The visit aimed to promote engagement from both parties in advocating new technologies that support various stakeholders, particularly SMEs in the region.



Dr. Kanokvate Tungpimolrut (fifth from left) and the NECTEC delegates with Dr. Watcharas Leelawath and the MI-ITC Department team after the discussions.



Mr. Madhurjya Kumar Dutta (leftmost) and Mr. Quan Anh Nguyen (second to the left) - TIF Program Specialist, as they discuss the project details with the consultants.

SEC Project's Mid-term Review

MI organized the Technical Consultation Meeting on the Mid-Term Review of the *Enhancing Competitiveness of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises in the Southern Economic Corridor (SEC) of the ASEAN-Mekong Subregion Project* on July 7, 2017, at the MI Headquarters, Khon Kaen, Thailand.

Mr. Takehiro Iwaki and Ms. Warapan Jantapoon of IC Net Asia discussed the Project details and expected outputs with the Trade and Investment Facilitation (TIF) Department, headed by Mr. Madhurjya Kumar Dutta, TIF Director. MI implements this initiative in partnership with Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund.

Mekong Forum 2017

The Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) takes the limelight as it proactively puts forward a competitive pace and place in the global arena to promote its capacities and resources. Since global events have evident impacts to the Region's development particularly in enhancing cooperative ties, this year's Mekong Forum raised the challenges that these events will cause in the GMS.



Keynote and session speakers as they gather to officially launch the Mekong Forum 2017. Fifteen distinguished speakers contributed in providing useful and invaluable insights for the three sessions covering the Forum's theme topic.



Mr. Tun Tun Naing, MI Council Chairman, together with Datuk M. Suppermaniam and Dr. Narongchai Akrasanee at the start of the Forum.

It aimed to look more closely at the future of the GMS particularly the promotion of inclusive development and progress.

More than 200 national and international development practitioners, senior policymakers, business and civic leader, and academics attended and shared their expertise on geo-economics and how it shapes and affects the society, which in turn, have effects to the GMS region.

The Mekong Forum 2017 was conducted in partnership with Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau (TCEB) and the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) on July 14, 2017, in Khon Kaen, Thailand.

Read more [here](#).



Ms. Xiong Bin (third from left) as she elaborates her research in the GMS.

Policy Paper Promoting Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SME) Development in Lao PDR

Mr. Madhurjya Kumar Dutta, Director of the Trade and Investment Facilitation Department of MI, prepared and presented a policy paper and policy brief on Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SME) Development in Lao PDR on July 11, 2017, in Vientiane, Lao PDR. Read more [here](#).



Seoul National University Partners with MI

Dr. Watcharas Leelawath, MI Executive Director, together with the team of Trade and Investment Facilitation Department, organized a meeting with the representatives of Seoul National University. The meeting was held on July 19, 2017, at the MI Headquarters to advance the parties' collaborative efforts.

Several points have been considered, such as supporting the research work on Mekong countries being conducted by Prof. Taeyoon Kim from Seoul National University.



Dr. Watcharas Leelawath (seated in the middle) together with the TIF Department members and representatives of Seoul National University.

■ OTHER ACTIVITIES

Thailand Research Fund-ASEAN Policy Forum

As part of the ASEAN Watch Project, the Thailand Research Fund (TRF) - ASEAN Policy Forum was conducted on July 26, 2017, in Bangkok, Thailand. Thirty-five government officials, civic leaders, representatives from the public and private sectors as well as academics, attended the event. Dr. Watcharas Leelawath, MI Executive Director, represented the Institute at the Forum, where the primary objectives were to analyze issues and challenges of Thailand in line with pursuing cooperation initiatives in the Mekong region. Such should lead to pooling of policies, suggestions and addressing research problems geared towards introducing policy networks essential to strengthen the Mekong cooperation initiatives.



■ UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

National Knowledge Sharing Forum on Food Safety in Cambodia	August 1
Regional Capacity Building Program on Energy Cooperation in the GMS	August 7 - 18
National Knowledge Sharing Forum on Food Safety in Myanmar	August 8
Regional Training Program on Food Safety Management Tools in Food Manufacturing	August 14 - 18
Effective and Coordinated Information Management System to Facilitate Investment and Business in the GMS	August 21 - September 1
National Knowledge Sharing Forum on Food Safety in Lao PDR	August 24
TICA: International Training Program on Green Freight and Logistics Development	August
SLV for BDS Providers and Export-Oriented SMEs	August



MEKONG INSTITUTE

123 Mittraphap Road,
Muang District Khon Kaen,
40002 THAILAND
Tel. : +66(0) 43-202-268 to 270
Email: information@mekonginstitute.org