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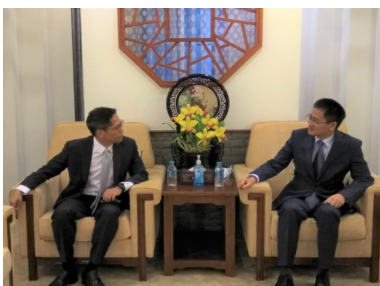


TRAININGS/WORKSHOPS/SLV ACTIVITIES



Supporting Economic Recovery After Covid-19

With Thailand's Ministry of Commerce and support from the Lancang-Mekong Cooperation Special Fund, MI implemented an e-training course on "Enhancing Trade Competitiveness for Goods and Services: Issues in the Post-Pandemic World." The training, which ran from August 3 to 20, 2020, helped strengthen capacities of 27 officials from government ministries, business associations, academic institutions, and the private sector to enhance the movement of goods and services between Lancang-Mekong countries in a post-pandemic era. [Read more.](#)



MI Welcomes P.R. China Envoy

Dr. Watcharas Leelawath, MI Executive Director, paid a courtesy call to Mr. Ke Yousheng, the newly appointed Permanent Representative of the People's Republic of China (P.R. China) to UNESCAP and MI Steering Committee member on August 7, 2020. The two officials discussed the progress of the eight MI-implemented projects under the Lancang-Mekong Cooperation Special Fund, as well as other programs supported by the Central Government of P.R. China and the Yunnan Provincial Government. [Read more.](#)



Strengthening MLC Project Delivery and Impacts

MI, in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand, completed the "Web-Based Monitoring and Evaluation System for Mekong-Lancang Cooperation (MLC) Funded Projects" training from August 10 to 17, 2020. Around 36 government and MLC Secretariat representatives were trained to develop and manage a country-based regional Monitoring and Evaluation system to better track and assess the progress and delivery of MLC projects. [Read more.](#)



MI Governing Board Partners Pledge Joint Support for Post-COVID 19



High-level government officials from Cambodia, P.R. China, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam, as well as representatives from the New Zealand Aid Programme, Asian Development Bank, Hue University, and Khon Kaen University committed deeper synergy in development efforts to help revive economies of Mekong countries at the first MI Council and Steering Committee meetings last August 27 and 28, 2020. The meeting also included discussions on MI’s Strategic Plan 2021-2025, which will see the intergovernmental organization reinforce human resource development investments and expand its portfolio of services to support regional priorities in a post-pandemic setting. [Read more.](#)



UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

SEPTEMBER

14 - 25

Online Training on Enhancing Negotiation Skills of
the Mekong-Lancang Cooperation (MLC) Coordinating Agencies

22

Food Safety Forum on Challenges and Coping Strategies
for Food Enterprises in the Time of COVID-19

A LOOK BACK

IN GRATITUDE AND APPRECIATION

Dr. Watcharas Leelawath is the fifth Executive Director of Mekong Institute (MI) since its formation in 1996. Under his watch from 2014 to 2020, MI has upgraded internal systems, expanded development services, and increased the number of international and regional partners. Read more about his thoughts as he reflects on six years of service to the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS).

How was your experience as Executive Director of MI?

The last six years has been a unique, learning, and rewarding experience in my career. MI is comprised of individuals who are dedicated to truly bring about lasting change in the GMS. Such commitment fostered growth and camaraderie as we navigated through the highs and lows of the last six years. In all those times, the MI team has consistently displayed adaptability and fortitude in reinforcing gains and delivering practical solutions to challenges so we can deliver our development commitments.

What is unique about Mekong Institute?

MI holds a unique mandate as a “thinker and doer.” Over the years, MI has expanded its scope beyond capacity building to include research development, monitoring and evaluation services, among others. We develop evidence-based studies and act on these findings to promote positive change. An example would be our RLED-EWEC project, wherein our findings to enhance cross-border trade facilitation were utilized by government partners.



In addition, the very nature of MI as an organization that represents and serves Cambodia, P.R. China, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam speak of our solidarity in diversity. MI's multiculturalism goes beyond GMS countries. We have colleagues from the Philippines, India, Pakistan, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Bangladesh. This brings forth various perspectives and approaches to development work, which are displayed in the innovative and inclusive manner MI designs, implements, and manages programs and projects.

What are MI's strongest achievements?

MI's current achievements are borne from the vision, hard work, and perseverance of previous executive directors. In my term, the expansion of MI's portfolio of services and increased number of international and regional partners were made easier because of the credibility and legitimacy built by my predecessors. It is because of them and the support of the MI Council and Steering Committee to take on new types of programs that MI was able to elevate its areas of support to the region.

Where do you see MI five years from now?

Being the longest-running and one of the most established development institutions in the GMS, MI will remain a pivotal actor in the region. It will continue to value and contribute to the strengthening of the region's human resource development. More importantly, MI will remain an advocate for more effective and advanced agricultural development and commercialization; trade and investment facilitation; and soon energy and environment. Under the leadership and highly qualified hands of Khun Suriyan, I am confident that MI will take on a larger role in research and advisory services. He will certainly scale MI's development niche to higher levels.

What is your message to MI staff?

Thank you. It has truly been a privilege to be part of the MI family. I have always said that that while our professional partnership may have ended, our personal relationship—which was built on respect and a common purpose to serve—will always remain no matter where the road of life takes us.

