

## INSIDE

- Promoting Opportunities for Trade, Investment, and Tourism in the GMS
- Enhancing Cross-Border Trade Facilitation toward AEC 2015
- Energy Cooperation in the GMS
- Dissemination Meeting on the Benefit of Certified Rice Seed Usage

### Enhancing Cross-Border Trade Facilitation toward AEC 2015



The ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) was officially launched last December. Once the AEC blueprint is fully implemented, ASEAN will become a prosperous economic community with freer and more efficient flow of goods, trade, services, capital and investments, as well as skilled labor and human resources across the region. Despite the promising opportunities, AEC also poses many challenges. To address these challenges, MI organized a two-week Regional Training on “Enhancing Cross-Border Trade Facilitation toward AEC 2015” on March 14-25, 2016, with support from Thailand International Cooperation Agency (TICA). [More>>](#)

## ■ TRAINING/WORKSHOP/SLV ACTIVITIES

### Promoting Opportunities for Trade, Investment, and Tourism in the GMS

Mekong Institute (MI), in collaboration with the Commercial Affairs Office of Khon Kaen, organized a two-day international seminar on “Promoting Opportunities for Trade, Investment, and Tourism in the GMS” on March 3-4, 2016 at Centara Hotel & Convention Centre, Khon Kaen, Thailand. The seminar aimed to foster opportunities for the “One Tambol One Product (OTOP) – Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs)” in the agriculture and tourism sectors in Thailand.



[More >>](#)

### Energy Cooperation in the GMS

With support from Energy Policy Planning Office (EPPO), Ministry of Energy of Thailand, MI organized a seminar on “Energy Cooperation in the GMS” on March 17, 2016 in Khon Kaen, Thailand. The seminar was a platform for participants who shared success stories and lessons learned on energy cooperation in the GMS. [More>>](#)



### Inception Workshop on Project on Enhancing Competitiveness of SME in South Economic Corridor

Bangkok (March 18, 2016) - MI organized an Inception Workshop to formally launch the Project on “Enhancing Competitiveness of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises along the Southern Economic Corridor (SEC) of the ASEAN Mekong Subregion” (Project). The workshop aimed to introduce the project goals, objectives and activities together with an indicative work plan for the period 2016 – 2017 [More>>](#)



## ■ TRAINING/ WORKSHOP/ SLV ACTIVITIES

---

### Mekong Institute at the Vietnam – Asia Silk Culture Festival 2016



Hoi An, Vietnam (March 2016) – the Asia Silk Alliance (ASA) and the International Silk Union (ISU) organized the Vietnam – Asia Silk Culture Festival 2016 last March 28-29, 2016 through Hoi An Silk Village Joint Stock Company. The festival gathered over 70 representatives from the local traditional silk villages, fashion designers, silk traders, silk exporters, government officials, researchers, and other members from China, Japan, India, Myanmar, Thailand, France, Italy, and Spain. The event aimed to create an official

platform connecting and promoting activities of ASA and ISU members for business development and cooperation between silk centers in Asia and the world. [More>>](#)

## ■ EWEC (SDC) PROJECT ACTIVITIES

---

### Dissemination Meeting on the Benefit of Certified Rice Seed Usage



The dissemination meeting on the benefit of certified rice seeds usage was conducted in four districts of Khammouane province, Lao PDR, on March 17-22, 2016. 21 villages were involved and a total of 353 people participated. The objective of the meeting was to disseminate the information and knowledge of using certified seeds to farmers. This year, more topics were added, such as Integrated Pests Control (IPM), cultivation calendar, etc. In addition to the officers from PAFO and DAFO, Rice seed producers from each group also shared knowledge.

### 2nd Series Training on Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) to Rice Mills

The 2nd series training on GMP was conducted in Khammouane, Lao PDR, on March 22-29, 2016, attended by 24 selected rice millers including their staff, as well as seven representatives from DoSMEP and DIC. The objective of the training was to get updates from the 1st training implemented by rice mills as monitored by government staff. Another aim was to provide knowledge of different topics such as how to draw factories layout, machine layout, list of all processing equipment, etc. At the end of the training, all participants planned ahead for future trainings such as processing analysis and creating relevant forms.



### Post-Conflict Approaches towards Local Economic Development in Kayin State



The Synthesis and Evaluation Workshop on “Post-Conflict Approaches towards Local Economic Development (LED) in Kayin State, Myanmar” was organized at Gabbana Hotel, Hpa-an, Kayin State on March 5, 2016. The workshop aimed to recap the lessons acquired from the first phase of training, share the experiences of participants in implementing action plans, assess the feasibility and application of LED knowledge at their workplaces, and learn the recommendation for future LED training needs. The workshop was attended by 11 out of 15 participants who previously participated in the first training. It was found that most of the participants eagerly disseminated the knowledge

on LED through departmental meetings, trainings, and departmental LED promotion activities.

## ■ EWEC (SDC) PROJECT ACTIVITIES

### Buyer-seller Meeting at Mawlamyine

EWEC organized a buyer-seller meeting on March 9, 2016 for new maize growers, to start building relationships with existing buyers in Mawlamyine. The farmers from the new extended areas - Kyar Inn Seik Gyi, Paing Kyone, and Hpa-an also joined. They discussed about the buying mechanisms of maize and other crops and visited the warehouses. There were 10 farmers and four government staffs from DOA and DOTP.



### Training on Project Proposal Writing



A training of project proposal writing was conducted on March 14-19, 2016 for 15 members of the Khe Sanh Coffee Association (KCA), GOs and

enterprises including Quang Tri Center of Agricultural Extension, DARD, Division of Economy & Infrastructure of Huong Hoa, Department of Science and Technology, and Binh Dien Fertilizer Company. They all gained an overall understanding of project management and the steps of proposal writing to be able to develop and submit high quality project proposals.

### Workshop on Introduction and Replication of Successful Models

March 25, 2016, Fifty-eight representatives from different levels, including INGOs, staff of local authority and agencies, farmers, enterprises and representatives from the Agribank of Huong Hoa district were introduced to successful linkage models demonstrated by the RLED-EWEC to encourage potential roll-out in other communes in the upland district of Huong Hoa.



## ■ WHAT' S NEW

### Visit of Asian Institute of Technology



Delegates from the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT), led by Dr. Weerakorn Ongsakul, the GMSARN Secretary General, visited MI on March 9. Dr. Watcharas Leelawath, MI Executive Director, welcomed them and led a

discussion on potential collaboration in the areas of capacity building program and research. Both parties have agreed to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in the near future to implement the collaborative activities agreed upon.

### MI Executive Director Interviewed on NBT Channel

MI Executive Director, Dr. Watcharas Leelawath, was interviewed by the NBT channel



about the seminar on "Energy Cooperation in the GMS" last March 15, 2016.

### MI Staff Achievement



In recognition to the exemplary services for promoting entrepreneurship and skill development in Cambodia, Mr. Madhurjya Kumar Dutta, Director Trade and Investment Facilitation of Mekong Institute has been conferred the position of honorary Advisor (in the rank of Under Secretary) to the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training of the Royal Government of Cambodia through a Royal decree by the Prime Minister of Cambodia and His Majesty, the king of the Kingdom of Cambodia.

## ■ WHAT' S NEW

### MI Executive Director Visits ASEAN Secretariat in Jakarta, Indonesia

March 30 - 31, 2016, MI Executive Director, Dr. Watcharas Leelawath made an official visit to ASEAN Secretariat in Jakarta, Indonesia. The objectives were to explore possible collaborations with departments of the ASEAN Secretariat (ASEC) relevant to MI in enhancing the capacity of the Mekong member countries. He was also accompanied by Ms. Pornwilai Pumira, External Relations Manager of MI.



MI delegates were warmly welcomed by Dr. Suchat Katima, CTA/Project Manager, ARISE Programme and former MI Director. They were presented with an overview of ASEAN followed by a tour of the ASEAN facilities.



The MI delegates then met with the ASEC officials from JAIF Management Team (JMT), Ms. Setsuko Miyakawa, Director, and Ms. Miyuki

Ishikawa, Programme Coordinator.

MI Executive Director also met with Ms. Maryuni, Assistant Director, Programme Cooperaton & Project Management Division Community & Corporate Affairs Department. Ms. Maryuni oriented the MI team on ASEAN development partners and project appraisal process.



MI Executive Director then proceeded to the Permanent Mission of Lao PDR to ASEAN and met with H.E. Ambassador Latsamy Keomany (also former MI Council member for Lao PDR). The meeting focused on emerging issues related to AEC and areas where MI can work in partnership with ASEC to promote equitable economic development in ASEAN, especially the new ASEAN member countries.

On March 31, MI had a meeting with Mr. Paul Mandi, Team Leader of ASEAN Regional Integration Support from the EU (ARISE), and Mr. Rajinder Raj Sud, Standards and Conformance Expert.



The MI team then proceeded to EU-Indonesia Trade Cooperation Facility Office and met with Ms. Iva Hristova, Deputy Team Leader of a project funded by the EU and Implemented by GOPA Consultants.

MI Executive Director then proceeded back to ASEAN Secretariat and met with Mr. Tran Dong Phuong, Director of Sectoral Development Directorate, ASEAN Economic Community Department, and Ms. Zhenyi Ng, Senior Officer, Initiative for ASEAN Integrating & Narrowing the Development Gap



In the afternoon, the MI delegates were invited to a reception dinner at the residence of the Permanent Mission of Thailand to ASEAN. The reception was hosted by Ambassador Busadee Santipitaks, Permanent Mission of Thailand to ASEAN.



## ■ WHAT' S NEW

### ASEAN -New Zealand Regulatory Workshop and the ASEAN-OECD Good Regulatory Practice Network (GRPN)

Mr. Madhurjya Kumar Dutta, Director of Trade and Investment Facilitation, attended the ASEAN-New Zealand Regulatory Workshop and the ASEAN-OECD Good Regulatory Practice Network (GRPN) Meeting on March 15-16, 2016 at Vientiane, Lao PDR. The workshop was organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, New Zealand and Organisation for Economic Cooperation & Development (OECD). Mr. Dutta presented a paper on CLMV perspectives and highlighted the challenges and opportunities for SMEs and micro-enterprises in this area and how CLMV governments can support them. The paper generated keen interest among the participants and provided constructive comments and suggestions for the CLMV governments on improving SME regulations.

## ■ UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

Cross Border Trade Facilitation of Agricultural Commodities – East West Economic Corridor	April 8
2nd Training of Trainers on Trade Promotion	April 25-29
Training on SME Cluster and Export Consortia Formation	April 25-29
The International Training Program on Microfinance for SMEs Development in the Asia Pacific Region	April 25- May 6

## CONTACT



### MEKONG INSTITUTE

123 Mittraphap Rd., Muang District  
Khon Kaen 40002, THAILAND  
Tel. : +66(0) 43-202-411 to 2  
Fax.: +66(0) 43-343-131  
Email: [information@mekonginstitute.org](mailto:information@mekonginstitute.org)  
[www.mekonginstitute.org](http://www.mekonginstitute.org)