

MEKONG CONNECTION

The Newsletter of the Mekong Institute
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Towards Inclusive Economic & Social Equality

—Poverty Alleviation and Economic Development in the *GMS* through Agri-Interventions

Picture an archaic painting from the distant past: sober-faced “elites” sitting high on cushioned chairs take center stage, while a “commoner” in humble clothes stoops down low before them. These gestures practiced by people in the past – showing the explicit segregation among social classes – may seem alienating and out of place in the modern world. But the question is, have things really changed all that much?

We like to believe that today’s world is transitioning towards “equality”. While this may be true in some respects, statistics showing the disparity between rich and poor say the opposite.

The book “Poor Economics: a Radical Rethinking of the Way to Fight Global Poverty” by Esther Duflo and Abhijit V. Banerjee stated that in 2005, 13% of the world population, or as

many as 865 million global citizens, lived on less than a dollar a day. Such extreme poverty means limited access to basic necessities like food, water, sanitation, clothing, shelter, healthcare and education. Lack of food to feed the stomach, and exposure to unsanitary conditions, leads to



poor health and a greater likelihood of disability in later years that could disrupt employment, trapping individuals in an “endless cycle of scarcity”. In a more acute case, as described by Jeffrey D. Sachs in his book “The End of Poverty”, “more than 20,000 people perished of extreme poverty” each day.

Innumerable organizations around the world are attempting every day to fight the seemingly unconquerable beast that is poverty. Are there any results? Decreasing poverty rates are evident in some areas but, apparently, in most parts of the world poverty is still rampant.

How can this problem be dealt with and what are the lessons learned from the past?

...(Continued on page 4)

Increasing Competitiveness of Local and Regional Silk Businesses in the Global Market

—International Seminar-cum-Business Matching on Silk Development Enhances Cooperation

Mekong Institute (MI), with support from the Khon Kaen Provincial Government, organized an international Seminar-cum-Business Matching on Silk Development from 12-13 September 2014. This seminar was held following the success of the International Silk Seminar in 2013 entitled “Mekong Silk Road”, which aimed to promote business networks and cooperation in the silk sector. This year, the seminar focused on key issues related to silk supply chain management by bringing together silk companies and experts from over 11 Asian countries.



The International Seminar-cum-Business Matching on Silk Development was one of the largest gatherings of silk entrepreneurs and experts across Asia. Over 200 participants attended the event, including small silk production groups from Thailand (Roi-et, Khon Kaen, Mahasarakham and Kalasin provinces), medium-to-large silk manufacturers, producers, exporters and importers, designers and government agencies related to silk promotion from the Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS) countries and India. Participants included over 150 companies from Khon Kaen and other parts of Thailand, 16 companies from GMS countries (Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam and P. R. China), two from India, members of the press and event organizers.

The International Seminar-cum-Business Matching on Silk Development comprised three main activities: panel discussions, business-to-business (B2B) matching and a silk exhibition. The seminar on the first day of



the event provided a platform to discuss improvements in productivity, branding, marketing, export development, silk standards, certification and regulations. Fifteen silk experts shared their experiences and interacted with silk business owners.

... (Continued on page 2)

Increasing Competitiveness of Local and Regional Silk Businesses in the Global Market

(Continued from page 1)... It also offered opportunities for business partnerships and enabled entrepreneurs to learn from each other. As expressed by Mr. Ling Xiangchao, General Manager of Silk Road Group from China, "By attending this meeting, we gained more understanding and built friendships with each other. We got to know that our silk fellows in Southeast Asia are doing amazing work." During the sessions, the participating silk entrepreneurs and experts discussed strategies to improve market access in order to bring new silk products to the world market. Discussions were also held to promote silk business networks with a goal to facilitate business and trade among sellers, buyers and intermediaries within ASEAN.

As part of the event, an exhibition was organized to showcase innovative silk products and diversified goods representing new industry trends. Supporting Mr. Ling's statement, Dr. Pajaree Kewcharoenwong, Vice President of Spun Silk World Co. Ltd., Thailand, mentioned: "I am glad to meet with delegates from many countries. It was a great opportunity to exchange our ideas and learn about the silk business in other countries. I am certain that collaboration between us all will help raise the silk reputation and awareness worldwide. I look forward to working with you all in the near future!"



The two-day event also witnessed a business matching (B2B) session where buyers, sellers and intermediaries interacted to foster partnership and cooperation, with opportunities to discuss business collaboration prospects. To extend these linkages for ongoing business-matching, an e-networking platform (www.aseansilkbiz.com) was created for the silk business community. This e-platform comprises a directory of company profiles and product catalogs, providing an opportunity to learn about participating companies and their products. A number of business collaborations were initiated among the participating companies, mostly in spun silk fabric, silk processing (silk protein skincare), and silk pattern design. Mr. PAV Eang Khoing, Silk Production Director of Artisan Angkor Co. Ltd., Cambodia, said appreciatively: "I am proud to be a speaker in the seminar and it is a pleasure to meet you all. The delegation from P. R. China already visited our company and Silk Farm of Artisan Angkor welcomes your visit to our company."

Discussions were held to form an "ASEAN Silk Alliance" to continue business networking and enhance collaboration among members of the silk business community. This alliance aims to provide a platform for business owners to promote a regional silk network and facilitate industry information-sharing.

Editorial



AEC: BRINGING NEW CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES TO THE GMS

As most of you already know, the phenomenon of the ASEAN Economic Community is almost upon us. In fact, it can be seen looming just above the horizon. When it happens, all countries in the GMS region will be affected, especially economy-wise. Opportunities will arise, but so will challenges. Needless to say, change is inevitable; but how we respond to it is within our control.

There are five key components of economic liberalization that will be equally important in the context of the AEC: free trade in goods, free trade in services, mobility of skilled labor, free flows of investment, and freer flows of capital. Among these, some have progressed more than others, such as free trade in goods.

It is very important that the GMS region take advantage of the current regional integration in order to prepare for the AEC. Regional integration will greatly benefit the countries involved. It will expand markets and input sources, improving the distribution of resources across the region and spurring economic growth. It also has the potential to reduce inequality within and among ASEAN countries. With the upcoming AEC, there is great potential to reduce the gap between CLMV and other ASEAN countries. In order to be more inclusive, everyone should benefit from regional trade liberalization by reducing supply-side constraints and overcoming skill limitations.

The Mekong Institute

As a capacity-building institute that aims for regional integration, MI will unwaveringly continue to deliver its programs to promote the development of the region. Through capacity building, we are working side by side with the countries of the GMS to break free from the constraints brought on by poverty. We aim to improve the skills of people in the region so that they may enjoy the full benefits of the AEC.

For instance, non-tariff measures (NTMs) are of great concern to exporters and importers in the region as they are a major barrier to international trade and can prevent market access. MI can be part of the process to help them comply with the standards imposed, with such programs as the training on Good Agricultural Practices (GAP). This will also encourage competitiveness among farmers and agricultural exporters, which will have a preliminary positive impact on farmers' incomes.

Lately, MI is also focusing on building the capacity of SME suppliers to integrate them into local, regional and global value chains. SME cluster development has also been extensively studied and promoted as it is seen as a potential solution for reducing poverty in the region. The goal is to link the rural to the regional and global supply chains, thereby gaining access to a bigger market.

There will be plenty of other challenges, and so MI will take on the task to gradually overcome whatever they may be. Some may perceive threats in the changes that are about to come, but the most important thing is to prepare for these changes and to be well-equipped to handle the necessary tasks. As always, MI is ready and eager to collaborate with development partners for the growth of the region.

Showcasing Public-Private Partnerships through Youth Camp

Learning in another social, economic and cultural environment outside the boundaries of one's own country, even for a short period, can contribute immeasurably to professional and personal development. To realize this potential among young adults, through experiential learning, MI organized the 2014 Youth Camp on Modern Farming Systems from 7 July-1 August 2014. The Youth Camp is part of a three-year project titled "Capacity Development for Integrating CLMV Economies into the AEC", which began in 2012 with financial support from the New Zealand Aid Programme (NZAP).

To ensure success, MI implemented the Youth Camp project in partnership with local and multinational agribusiness companies in Thailand. It is considered the most advanced such project in the region. It provided an opportunity for these companies to share their knowledge and experiences in Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Vietnam. It also allowed companies to participate in capacity-building efforts in the region while promoting their products and activities widely. This project is part of the companies' Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) program and is a good avenue for establishing networks and links with academic institutions and governments in the GMS, fostering good relationships and developing a regional network among the youth of GMS countries.

In the spirit of regional cooperation and integration, the Youth Camp was conceived to bring together senior students from CLMV countries to learn about state-of-the-art technologies in the production, processing and marketing of agricultural commodities in Thailand. The focus on youth is strategic as they will constitute the CLMV countries' future labor force. Under this unique public-private partnership, the Youth Camp brought together 38 students in their final year of university. The participating students learned about supply chain management, new technologies, products, and agribusiness management, all of which was taught through short-term work placements in four local and multinational agribusinesses. Participating companies in this year's Youth Camp comprised a state enterprise (Dairy Farming Promotion Organization of Thailand), and three multinational agro-based companies (MitrPhol Group, Sriviroj Farm Khon Kaen, and Swift Company).

Accompanied by four teachers, these students came from the University of Battambang, Cambodia, Souphanouvong University, National University of Laos, and Hue University of Agriculture and Forestry, Vietnam.



The internship program at Thai companies and production facilities under the Youth Camp scheme enhanced the students' learning experience and broadened their perspectives. It provided a platform for the young adults to learn through knowledge-sharing, hands-on experience and cultural exchange, while getting a first-hand look at the participating companies' operations. Immersion in an active, multicultural learning environment also provided opportunities for professional and personal development. As shared by Mr. Nguyen Van Cong, a participating student from Hue University of Agriculture and Forestry, the "internship program in Thailand organized by MI was a useful experience for me. Besides learning professional skills, I also learned how to solve problems as a team, enhance my time management and improve my English communication and presentation skills." Moreover, this project helped to create networks among students from GMS countries, CLMV governments, academic institutions, and Thai agribusiness companies. Mr. Nguyen, for example, said he was happy with the internship because it taught him technical skills, while giving him opportunities to make friends with students from other GMS countries. This holistic approach to youth development is essential in helping today's young adults build networks in the GMS where closer regional cooperation and deeper economic integration will be vital for full participation in the AEC, launching in 2015.

Similarly, Mr. Saing Leng, a student from the University of Battambang, Cambodia, said the Youth Camp gave him an opportunity to apply theoretical knowledge in-the-field:

"This practicum fully met my expectations as it allowed me to study and try to practice as much as I wish." In the GMS, the majority of incomes in most member countries are derived primarily from the agricultural sector. This sector is expected to benefit from upcoming integration under the AEC, given the heavy dependence of most countries on agriculture and agriculture-related economic activities. By exposing students to modern farming systems in Thailand, MI contributed to reversing the lack of knowledge on recent technological advancements in agriculture. This is especially crucial in CLMV countries where the advantages of economic growth spurred by the AEC may be limited. Knowledge sharing and capacity building will prove particularly fruitful among the young adults expressing interest in agri-business.

The ultimate objective of this program is to help students optimize the benefits of this one-of-a-kind Youth Camp by sharing the knowledge, skills and experiences gained from the project with their fellow students and teachers at their universities. To encourage the students to apply their recently-acquired knowledge and skills toward improving the agriculture sector in their respective countries, MI requires participants to organize a one-day workshop or seminar for as many students as possible upon return to their respective countries. Mr. Saing Leng, who was impressed with his experience at the Youth Camp, was excited about doing so. He eagerly shared: "When we returned to our university, we had to conduct a seminar there. It was the best opportunity for us to share our new knowledge with other students." To ensure the effectiveness of the workshops organized by the students, the Project Coordinator of this year's Youth camp, Mr. Ekto Vongphakdy, joined the knowledge-sharing sessions at Lao National University and Souphanouvong University during the second week of October 2014.





Capacity Development for Regional Cooperation and Integration MEKONG CONNECTION

Mekong Institute Committed to Building Research Capacity of the Region's Young Researchers

The integration of regional and global economies requires the new members state of ASEAN to catch up with the old members. To do so, these countries need considerable commitment and capacity-building implemented at all levels.

Realizing the importance of human resources, MI is committed to building the research capacity of the youth in the GMS. The training on research methodologies provided to these young people is vital for not only enhancing their competencies but also to enrich the studies on regional issues from the perspectives of its people. Promoting research activity will create a supportive environment at both the micro-level (the personal and individual) and macro-level (the national and regional). It will then bring about greater changes for the benefit of regional development.

Today, when we look up regional development issues on search engines like Google, many foreign names appear in the search results that are not from the region. Therefore, there is a clear need for capacity-building for young researchers to change this status quo. By promoting the idea that "people from the region know best about their region", MI strives to raise the ability of regional researchers to conduct relevant and excellent research on GMS-related issues. The MI-New Zealand Ambassador's Scholarship (MINZAS) program is just one example of MI's efforts to promote GMS research by young people in the region.

Every year, twelve Master's degree students from CLMT are granted scholarships to conduct research through the MINZAS program, which encourages students to focus their research on

GMS social and economic development issues. Research topics from scholarship recipients range from grassroots rural development movements to human migration. They also cover regional trade and investment issues.

Beyond research scholarships and guidance from subject experts at MI, scholarship recipients



benefit from research training provided by the MINZAS program. As such, it enhances not only the implementation of research proposals but also students' facilitation skills in the classroom. The four-week training course offered under this program focuses on problem identification, defining research objectives, formulating research hypotheses, and developing sound conceptual/theoretical frameworks to anchor the student's research. In addition, it provides effective techniques for maximizing the validity and credibility of the research results. "The program helped [me to] develop my research proposal immensely. Actually, before coming here I had already developed my research proposal, but after undergoing the training modules and working with the resource persons, it became clear that I needed to review it. I found the section on developing conceptual frameworks particularly useful. As a result,

my research proposal is much stronger, and I am now more confident that I can complete my research successfully," said Mr. Kong Sopheak, MINZAS 2013 Scholar from Cambodia.

The program also provides a roundtable forum for scholarship recipients to present their research findings to a panel of experts, MI program staff, and academic advisors from around the region. This is a valuable opportunity for them to share fieldwork experience, enhance their research skills, and establish contact with seasoned field experts, which will help them in their future careers.

Most importantly, the most qualified research work from the program is published every year in the MI Working Paper Series, hard copies of which are distributed to GMS research institutions, universities, academic libraries, and other development stakeholders, with the aim of promoting regional studies.

The MINZAS (Bangkok) is a joint MI-NZ Embassy project which aims to develop the capacities of young, emerging researchers focusing on regional GMS development-related issues. For more information, please contact sopheak@mekonginstitute.org.



Flashback: RLED-EWEC Project Activities from July-September 2014



Joint Field Work with SNV
– Xaybouathong District, Khammouane, Lao PDR, 15 July



The second Project Working Group (PWG)
meeting at Myanmar Office
– Hpa-an, Kayin State, Myanmar, 24 July



The second Project Working Group (PWG)
meeting at Lao Office
– Khammouane, Lao PDR, 17 July



Advocacy Board Meeting in Khe Sanh Communes
– Quang Tri, Vietnam, 22 July



Workshop on Entrepreneurship Development
and SME Promotion in the Maize Sector
– Hpa-an, Myanmar, 2-8 August



Local Workshops on Farmer Formation and Strengthening
– Ma Lai and Tan Pun Village, Huong Phung Commune,
Quang Tri, Vietnam, 8-10 and 15-17 August



Towards Inclusive Economic & Social Equality *(Continued from page 1)*

Does Economic Development Help the Poor? —Economists and Social Activists to Go Hand-in-Hand

Does “economic development reduce poverty” per se? Not necessarily. According to an OECD report, although Vietnam is one of the countries experiencing great economic advancement, its income disparity is still widening, with the rich accumulating more wealth and the poor struggling to improve their situation.

The article “Economic Growth versus Poverty Reduction: A Hollow Debate?” by Ebba Dohlman and Mikael Soderback captures very well the evolution of economic development as it is used to tackle poverty reduction – what the plausible pitfalls are, and the crucial missing link that prevents development from improving the lives of the poor and reducing poverty rates in general.

It described how, in the past, two polar-opposite camps -- with ‘pro-growth’ development economists on one end, and ‘pro-poor’ advocates on the other -- attempted to tackle poverty by applying their disparate lenses to the issue.

The results were decidedly haphazard. The altruistic intent to wield economic advancement in fighting poverty became tarnished; the hope that economic progress would ease poverty remained wishful thinking.

It was suggested that aid should take the form of other interventions, focusing not only on economics but working directly on improving human welfare and human capital, to arm individuals with the knowledge and skills required to make a good living. From this thinking, the concept of ‘pro-poor growth’ – a hybrid between ‘pro-growth’ and ‘pro-poor’ – was born.

Poverty is a multi-faceted issue. It must be tackled from all sides, combining diverse approaches to reveal the chains of impact and how economic development and poverty reduction can contribute to a more holistic development of society. It is a must for all involved – from economists, to social workers and advocates – to collaborate hand-in-hand to defeat this behemoth.

RLED-EWEC Project: Giving Them the Net & Teaching Them How to Fish

—Mekong Institute’s Role in a Pro-Poor Growth Approach within the GMS through Agricultural Capacity-Building

The Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS) is home to a total population of 240 million, as reported by the Asian Development Bank (ADB). Much of the GDP in the region is generated by the agricultural sector; nearly 80% of GMS citizens live in rural areas where subsistence agriculture is the main economic activity. Even in the most modernized country in the region, Thailand, for example, a large share of the population remains in agricultural communities. As a result, 10-40% of the people in this country still live below the poverty line.

The Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC) and Mekong Institute (MI), therefore, officially entered into an agreement to implement a six-year project titled “Capacity Building for a More Inclusive and Equitable Growth – East-West Economic Corridor Regional and Local Economic Development (RLED-EWEC)” in early 2013. The objective of the project is to contribute to local economic development for inclusive, equitable growth along the EWEC. The intent is that this will, in turn, alleviate regional poverty by enabling rural populations to access the benefits of EWEC connectivity and agricultural development.

The project takes a ‘pro-poor growth’ approach, building individual capacity from the ground up – from the grassroots to the policy level (farmers, SME clusters/networks and government officials involved in local economic development). All actors are trained to improve their skills and knowledge, and equipped with the necessary resources. The project intends not only to provide for those in need but also teach them to become trainers, serving as a bridge through which

all stakeholders can come to a mutual understanding. It was created not just to teach people how to fish but to provide them with the tools to do so.

The project commenced in 2013 by identifying major crops and pilot sites for implementation: rice in Khammouane, Lao PDR; maize in Kayin State, Myanmar; and Catimor coffee in Quang Tri, Vietnam. These sites and crops were selected for their potential to not only improve the livelihood of the poor but to boost the local economy. By focusing on building capacity among farmers – who are the largest actors in the agricultural sector and most affected by poverty – the project expects to increase their income through better practices, as taught in various training sessions and workshops. Once farmers improve their productivity, the local economies are apt to grow as well.

At the same time, working closely with other actors along the production chains, e.g. rice millers, government staff, BDS (Business Development Services Providers) and organizations, will lead to more effective long-term improvements. Government officials are encouraged to offer inclusive public services in an accountable and transparent manner, and BDS providers to deliver targeted business-oriented development to those in need.

During the first phase, from 2013-2015, the project will work with the above-mentioned players at the chosen sites. If it proves successful, its implementation will be extended and scaled up to help reduce the poverty level of the region.

In the grand scheme of things, the project’s contribution to poverty reduction and economic development may well be just a drop in the ocean. Perhaps the frank reality is that poverty will never be totally eradicated, as we might have hoped in our visions of equality in an ideal world. However, thinking back to that painting at the beginning -- with the lowly “commoner” stooped at the feet of the elites -- perhaps this small drop of water could help to paint a happier picture for the humble citizen, who would appear in nicer clothes, with an air of contentment from living lives empowered by secure and productive livelihoods.

Disparities will always have their place in society, but the more important question to ask might not be how to completely abolish them but “Are we, as a society, willing to work on narrowing those gaps or not?”

(See project activities on page 4)

MI HIGHLIGHTS

MoU with the International College of NIDA (ICO NIDA)

– MI, Khon Kaen, Thailand, 9 September

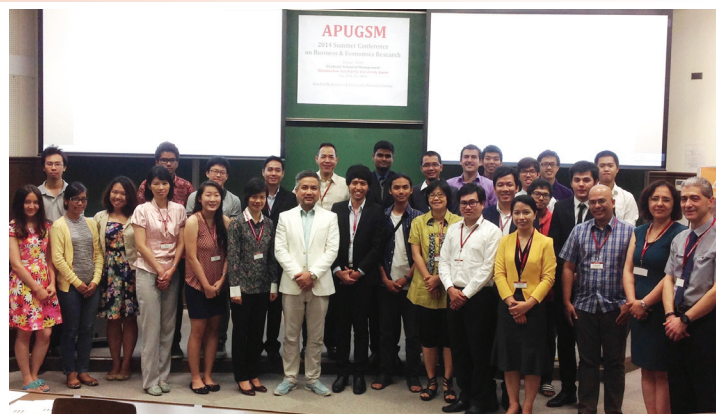


MI and ICO NIDA recently signed an MOU launching regular and wide-ranging cooperation in all areas of capacity building for regional development, cooperation and integration, GMS-focused research collaboration, development and resource- and information network-sharing, and exchanges of faculty members and graduate students. The MOU was signed during the opening ceremony of the MINZAS Roundtable Meeting.

APUGSM Conference - 2014 International Summer Conference on Business and Economic Research

– Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University, Oita, Japan, 25-26 July

Mr. Ra Thorng, MI Program Facilitator, attended the APUGSM Conference 2014 International Summer Conference on Business and Economic Research to present the findings of his research on “Cross-border Value Chain: An Assessment of Longan Value Chain in Pailin, Cambodia” at Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University, Oita, Japan. Twenty-three research studies were presented by scholars from Australia, Cambodia, Japan, Mongolia, Pakistan, Philippines, Thailand, Taiwan, Republic of China, and the United States. The two-day conference covered current research and development topics in the areas of corporate social responsibility and sustainability, supply chain management, economics, marketing and innovation in the context of internationalization, regionalization and globalization. The conference provided an opportunity to promote MI’s visibility in the academic community and establish networks with other scholars.



MI Director Attends Seminar on Aid for Trade and South-South Value Chains

– UNESCAP, Bangkok, 24 September



The seminar on Aid for Trade and South-South Value Chains aimed to disseminate recent research on the monitoring and evaluation of the impact of relevant Aid for Trade projects. The seminar explored the key factors in adjusting Aid for Trade towards achieving inclusive and sustainable development objectives. Representatives from international, regional and development organizations, such as GIZ, OECD, UNDP, ADB, etc., participated, as well as academic institutions from Southeast Asia. Recommendations and reports resulting from the event will be submitted to the Committee on Trade and Investment of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific in March 2015.

Dr. Watcharas Leelawath, MI Director, attended as a panelist in the session on the role of triangulated South-South cooperation in Aid for Trade. He addressed CLMV farmers’ and SMEs’ need for capacity building on agricultural products standards and trade finance. These activities will serve as effective tools to integrate local value chains into regional and global ones. Participants shared that the promotion of private-sector networking is critical as is the need to consider the value chain as a whole when formulating projects.



Visitors @ Mekong Institute



H.E. Mr. James Wise, Australian Ambassador to Thailand – 22 July



H.E. Mr. Reuben Levermore, Ambassador of New Zealand to Thailand – 2 September



H.E. Mr. Philip Calvert, the Canadian Ambassador to Thailand – 11 September



Lecturer and students from the Faculty of Social Sciences, Chiang Mai University – 10 September



Ms. Nichapa Yoswee, Director of MICE Capabilities Development Department, Thailand Convention & Exhibition Bureau (TCEB) – 10 September



H.E. Ngo Hongly, Secretary of State, the Office of the Council of Ministers and MI Council member for Cambodia



Department of Transport of Yunnan Province, P. R. China



H.E. Chhuon Chham, Advisor to the Office of the Council of Ministers and MI Steering Committee member for Cambodia

Director's Official Visits



Asia-Pacific Network for Sustainable Forest Management and Rehabilitation (APFNet)-Kunming Training Center (KTC)



Prof. D. Liu Ersi, Dean of International Business School, Yunnan University of Finance and Economics (IBS)



Dr. Sok Siphana, Advisor to the Royal Government of Cambodia and the Council for the Development of Cambodia



Mr. Si Shuming, Deputy General Manager, Yunnan Power Grid Co. Ltd. (YNPG)



Capacity Development for Regional Cooperation and Integration

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MI CALENDAR FROM OCTOBER TO DECEMBER 2014

No.	Course Title	Type of Program	Date	Donor	Dept
1	SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION between Regional and Local Economic Development (RLED)-EWEC Project and KATALYST Project	SLV	Oct-Nov	SDC	EWEC
2	National Workshop on Utilization of FTA by SMEs in Vietnam	Workshop	Oct 6-7	NZAP	TIF
3	Regional Multi-Stakeholder Forum on AEC and Regional Agreements: Opportunities and Challenges for SMEs	Forum	Oct 10	NZAP	TIF
4	GAP Training and S&E in Vietnam	Training	Oct 14-16	NZAP	RD
5	National Workshop on Utilization of FTA by SMEs in Lao PDR	Workshop	Oct 23-24	NZAP	TIF
6	GAP Annual Forum	Forum	Oct 28-29	NZAP	RD
7	GAP Training and S&E in Myanmar	Training	Nov 4-7	NZAP	RD
8	Training Program on Enhancing Trade Competitiveness on Goods and Services	Training	Nov 10-14	TICA	TIF
9	GAP Training and S&E in Lao PDR	Training	Nov 11-13	NZAP	RD
10	GAP Training and S&E in Cambodia	Training	Nov 11-13	NZAP	RD
11	The 3 rd Project Steering Committee Meeting of the Regional and Local Economic Development on East-West Economic Corridor Project-RLED-EWEC	Meeting	Nov 25-26	SDC	EWEC
12	GMS BIZ Network, Investor Forum (2)	Forum	Nov 27	NZAP-SDC	TIF
13	FRETA Consultative Meeting with the Technical Group to Review Curriculum Content	Meeting	Nov 28	Mekong ROK CF	TIF
14	Trade and Investment Promotion NSEC	Training	Dec 1-5	ACCF	TIF
15	Regional Multi-Stakeholder Workshop on Contract Farming	Workshop	Dec	NZAP	RD

JOB VACANCIES

Strategic Plan Consultant

Responsibilities:

- Review current Strategic Plan, 2011-2015
- Design the methodology to formulate the Next Strategic Plan, 2016-2020
- Facilitate the brainstorming workshop and meetings so as to acquire relevant information to be inputs for the formulation of the Next Strategic Plan 2016-2020
- Construct and narrate the Strategic Plan 2016-2020

Qualifications:

- Master's degree or higher in Development Studies or related fields. Minimum of five years' experience.
- Strong research and analytical skills with the ability to creatively translate and communicate the information
- Solid understanding of business or strategic planning
- Strong communication skills to effectively collaborate with senior management team and staff, present information, and write cohesive report for audiences with different backgrounds and areas of expertise
- Good facilitation and presentation skills including use of technology to communicate ideas and strategy
- Strong English proficiency and effective communication skills
- Experience in working with international organizations

MDP (Human Migration) Manager

Responsibilities:

- Robust MI Product Development and Implementation: Develop and field test MI products and services through research, modular training programs, field study, action research etc.
- Provide training, consultancy services and technical assistance to MI internal clients (projects) and external clients
- Design and deliver customized capacity development programs as requested by internal and external clients
- Demonstrate excellent Program Department leadership
- Demonstrate effective people management
- Willingness to live and work in Khon Kaen, which is a provincial capital with population of approximately 400,000
- Willingness to travel within the GMS and especially the EWEC

Qualifications:

- Ph.D. or Master's degree in Social Sciences with expertise on Human Migration or related field
- Proven ability to manage teams
- Proven experience in program planning and management
- High-level understanding of technical concepts related to program management such as logical frameworks, results-based management, evidence-based advocacy, research and survey methodology
- Minimum of eight years' experience in project or program management and coordination
- Experience in implementation of Capacity Development activities
- Experience in leading and conducting a variety of research works, studies and evaluations
- Experience in developing project proposals and project reports

Communication Specialist

Main Duties:

- Collect multimedia information on A&FS activities and work closely with focal points in Lower Mekong region to update the database
- Manage the geographical donor map website
- Design and produce A&FS snapshots
- Prepare monthly newsfeeds and bi-weekly networking tweets on relevant food security developments in the Lower Mekong region

- Develop and implement a communication, dissemination and marketing strategy for the project in cooperation with USAID and LMI Coordination Hub
- Document and disseminate good practices and innovative methodologies implemented within A&FS project
- Perform additional work as assigned by the RDD Manager

Qualifications

- Candidate must have a post-graduate degree in journalism, development communication or related social sciences
- Excellent English writing and communication skills are required
- Preferably with database management and website administration training or experience
- At least 5 years of working experience in the field of rural development, agriculture and food security, preferably in Lower Mekong countries
- Proven capacity to work in a complex institutional environment which involves dealing with government, international agencies, private sector and research centers

SME Specialist

Responsibilities:

- Plan, lead and coordinate learning programs, workshops, structured learning visits and seminars under his/her assigned thematic area
- Develop/formulate new SME development and trade facilitation program concept, proposals and budget
- Deputize Program Manager in all administrative matters and automatically become Officer-in-Charge of the T&I Department during the absence of the Manager
- Make continuous improvement of all training packages under trade facilitation program; design and coordinate program delivery specifications to ensure that high quality training contents and methodologies are delivered together with qualified resource persons (session planning, resource persons, field visits resource persons, field visits, facilitators, facilitators, online training packages, etc.)
- As team leader/lead facilitator, facilitate all training sessions under his/her thematic area. This includes working with resource persons in preparing session plans and training materials, facilitating learning activities and making synthesis/evaluation of each training session/module.
- In collaboration with MI local partners, conduct research on emerging issues related to his/her thematic area and develop case studies to be used in his/her training program
- In coordination with M&E officer, design evaluation form, administer pre-test, post-test and online evaluation system
- In coordination with Information and Knowledge Management Program, complete alumni database and consultant database
- Make project completion report, evaluation report and post-training follow up activities in accordance with MI standard and/or as required by development partners
- Establish and maintain good relationship with MI Coordinating Agents in the GMS countries and concerned development partners and collaborating agencies
- Write trade-related information for MI website and contribute to MI publication (Mekong Connection, Course Design Statement, Brochures, etc.)
- Other related tasks as assigned by T&I Program Manager or MI Director

Qualifications:

- Advanced Degree or Ph.D. in Economics, Business or Trade
- Minimum 8 years of experience preferably in capacity building and training and/or research in SME development and trade facilitation
- Good understanding of issues related to SME development, WTO, trade agreements, trade policy and GMS economy
- Proven experience in SME, trade capacity-building and research
- Excellent communication and presentation skills in written and verbal English
- Preference will be given to nationals of the GMS countries (Cambodia, China, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam)

If you have the skills and experience to succeed in these positions, and are passionate about equitable and inclusive economic growth in GMS, please send your CV and cover letter, to hr@mekonginstitute.org by **15 December 2014**

- Updated CV (max 3 pages) and cover letter (max 2 pages)
- Scanned copy of passport
- Scanned copy of latest academic certification (in English)

Please note that only applications qualifying for further evaluation will be responded to the next stage.