

## **Mekong Connection**

### **Issue 01, March 2011 Newsletter**

## **Recent Programs**

### **Integrated Water Resources Management for the Mekong** **4-14 January 2011**

As part of its capacity building program to provide knowledge and skills related to GMS water resources management, the Mekong Institute conducted a training course on Integrated Water Resources Management for the Mekong which was held at the MI Residential Training Facility located in Khon Kaen University, Thailand. The program was sponsored by the Mekong River Commission (MRC).

The training program was delivered for 8 Junior Riparian Professionals (JRPs) of the Mekong River Commission (MRC) and 8 staff of Mekong Institute. It provided participants well understanding of water management principles, water resources management functions, basin planning and various key issues in water management. A participatory approach was used throughout the program with a strong focus on practical knowledge. Structured learning visits to a hydropower plant and wetlands enhanced the learning process.

### **Project Monitoring and Evaluation for the Greater Mekong Subregion** **16-28 January 2011**

Mekong Institute and the ADB-Phnom Penh Plan for Development Management conducted a two-week intensive learning program on Project Monitoring and Evaluation for the Greater Mekong Subregion at the Mekong Institute. The training course aimed to enhance the technical skills of targeted government officials in designing and conducting project monitoring and evaluation, and presenting the findings and recommendations to key project stakeholders. The participants were middle to senior level government officials who are involved in appraising, coordinating, controlling, monitoring and evaluating development projects.

### **Structured Learning Visit on Rice Production Value Chain in Northeastern Thailand** **26-29 January 2011**

The Mekong Institute conducted a structured learning visit on Rice Production Value Chain in Northeastern Thailand for 24 Lao government officials and farmers. The program was sponsored by the Smallholder Development Project which is a joint intervention between the National Agriculture and Forestry Extension Service under Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry and Department of Trade Promotion and the Product Development under the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, Lao PDR.

The main objective of the program was to study Thailand rice production in the Northeastern Region and the roles of Rice Seed Center, Central Market and Private/Cooperative Rice Mills in the rice value chain. The participants observed best practices in rice seed production, rice postharvest, farmer cooperatives and the operational aspects of a paddy central market.



**Effective Facilitation and Communication Skills Workshop**  
**31 January-04 February 2011**

The workshop on Effective Facilitation and Communication Skills was organized by the Mekong Institute in collaboration with the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ). The program was a “skills studio” workshop for fifteen junior and middle-level professionals from public sector and civil society and trainers, program facilitators and development practitioners who are involved in development work in Cambodia and Lao PDR. The program provided knowledge and skills on effective facilitation, communication, and presentation necessary for successful project implementation and promoting regional management and rural development. Eight staff of MI also joined the program.

**Actively Shaping Rural Development through Local Regional Economic Development and Regional Management**  
**07-12 February 2011**

The training series on Actively Shaping Rural Development through Local Regional Economic Development and Regional Management was organized by the Mekong Institute in collaboration with the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ) at the MI Residential Training Facility located in Khon Kaen University, Thailand.

The program aimed to provide participants with knowledge and skills related to regional rural development (RRD), regional management (RM), organizational structures for regional management, the role of different stakeholders in RRD and RM, local economic development and regional networking. The program was developed for local development partners in Cambodia and Lao PDR, including NGOs, development training firms and concerned government institutions supporting local stakeholders to implement Local Regional Economic Development (LRED).

**Business Research and Information Management for CCIs and BAs along the EWEC**  
**21-25 March 2011**

The Mekong Institute organized a five-day training course on Business Research and Information Management for CCIs and BAs along the EWEC. The participants were staff of CCIs, BAs and government agencies involved in trade and investment promotion activities in 11 provinces along the EWEC.

The training was conducted at the Mekong Institute in Khon Kaen, Thailand. The training course was a part of the two year project on "Enhancing Provincial and Local Chambers of Commerce Capacities in Trade and Investment Facilitation along East-West Economic Corridor" funded under the Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund.

The objective of the program is to develop basic business research skills so that business and trade databases for the 11 provinces along the EWEC in Laos, Thailand, Myanmar and Vietnam can be developed.



## **Official Guests/Visits**

### **Bank of Thailand, Northeastern Region Office**

**7 February 2011**

A delegation of eight officials from the Bank of Thailand, Northeastern Region Office, Khon Kaen, led by Mr. Permsuk Sutthinoon, Senior Director, visited the Mekong Institute on 7 February 2011. Welcomed by the MI Director, Dr. Suchat Katima, and MI Management Team, the delegates were given presentations on MI's background and activities in the Greater Mekong Subregion. Mr. Permsuk Sutthinoon expressed appreciation for the warm reception by MI and expressed his interest in cooperating with MI.

### **Betagro Group**

**11 February 2011**

A delegation led by Dr. Nopporn Vayuchote, Executive Vice-President of Betagro Group paid a visit to Mekong Institute on 11 February 2011 to discuss in detail the conduct of a Youth Camp for young agriculturists in the GMS countries on the Swine Production Chains. MI and Betagro have agreed in principle to organize the youth camp in the middle of 2011 to bring about 30 young agriculturists from Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam to Thailand to spend one month on practical training in different production facilities of Betagro in Thailand.

MI also took the visitors to a sufficiency economy village at Kham-Bong Village, Nam-Phong District, Khon Kaen Province which received His Majesty's trophy for outstanding achievement on sufficiency economy.

### **Prof Lee SUN-Jin from Hallym University, Korea**

**14 February 2011**

The former Ambassador of Korea to Indonesia, Prof Lee Sun-Jin, visited the Mekong Institute on February 14, 2011. Prof Lee, currently a lecturer at Hallym University, came after his visit to Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam via different economic corridors where he witnessed the development of border trade and people movement along the economic corridors. Prof. Lee expressed appreciation for the warm reception by MI and his interest in cooperating with MI in the areas of human resource development and policy coordination.

### **The Asia Foundation**

**23 March 2011**

Ms. Srabani Roy, Director of Environment Programs of TAF Headquarter, San Francisco, and Ms. Poonsook Pantitanonta, Director of Management, TAF Thailand, visited the Mekong Institute on March 23, 2011. The delegation met with MI Director, Dr. Suchat Katima, and members of the Rural Development for Sustainable Livelihoods Team to discuss TAF's interest in cooperating with MI in the areas of the environment and integrated water resources management. During the meeting consideration was also given to the:

- activities of TAF in the region;
- possibility of working together on a TAF program with a GMS focus;
- TAF LUCE scholarship program; and
- upcoming Annual Regional TAF Meeting to be held in Bangkok.



After the meeting, the delegation observed the MI's workshop on "Business Research and Information Management for Chamber of Commerce & Industries and Business Associations along East-West Economic Corridor (EWEC)" being conducted in MI's residential training center.

### **MI Director visits ASEAN Secretariat in Jakarta, Indonesia** **09 March 2011**

The MI Management Team led by Dr. Suchat Katima made an official visit to ASEAN Secretariat in Jakarta, Indonesia on 9 March 2011. The objective of the visit was to explore opportunities for collaboration between MI and relevant departments of ASEAN Secretariat (ASEC) in enhancing the capacity of Mekong member countries for ASEAN integration.

### **Programs in the next Three Months**

<b>Course/Workshop Title</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Duration</b>
<b>Rural Development and Project Management</b>		
Postharvest Practices: Experiences and Best Practices in Israel and Thailand	28 Mar-08 Apr	2 Weeks
Facilitation As Core Competency	04-08 Apr	1 Week
Advanced PCM and Logical Framework (in Lao Language)	25-29 Apr	1 Week
Structured Learning Visit for Sri Lankan Government Officials on "Good Governance Initiatives in Thailand"	25 Apr – 6 May	2 Weeks
Project Monitoring and Evaluation (in Lao Language)	04-06 May	1/2Week
Agriculture Value Chain Analysis and Promotion	20 Jun-01 Jul	2 Weeks
<b>Trade and Investment Facilitation</b>		
Training on Trade and Investment Promotion Activities	25-29 July	1 Week
Business Research and CCI Database System Development in NSEC	06-10 June	1 Week
Development of Clusters and Networks for SME Export consortia	04-23 July	1 Week



## Alumni Words



### 2011: Effective Facilitation and Communication Skills

Mr. Nim Sour, Local Expert, GIZ (former DED), Battambang Province, Cambodia

I was personally very happy to be with all of you in MI, Thailand. Frankly, I learned a lot from all of you during this training course.

Even though, we had only one week time of being together, but we have very good relationship, good time and we know each other well and this cannot be separated and forgotten easily. Though we are a way from each other but through the present-day technology one can easily see each other from a wide distance. I'm sure we will personally meet other again in the near future.

Again, thank so much for your concerns. We wish you and your family have good luck, healthy and wealthy. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank our resource persons, Dr. Bes and Dr. Suchat as well as MI staffs for their effort and support.



### 2011: Actively Shaping Rural Development through Local/Regional Economic Development and Regional Management

Mr. Ly Sophea, Deputy Chief of Land Management Urban Planning and Construction Office, Kampong Chhnang Province, Cambodia

I am very grateful to Mekong Institute, GIZ and the Federal Republic of Germany who have provided me a great opportunity to take part in the Training Series on LRED. Also, I would like to be thankful to MI's warm welcome and memorable reception during the training course. For the reflection to this course, I reported the main concepts of RRD and their key functions to my director and shared documents and the remarkable contentment and enjoyment from MI to my colleagues.

The enjoyable working group and noticeably enlightened techniques from Dr. Georg Bokeloh are perceptual and outstanding. Honestly, I have improved and experienced a lot from the training course – not only the concepts and key view points of RRD but also the training materials, group working and networking.

Hopefully, I expect that the second phase is going to express more detail in methods and instruments used in Local Economic Development and Regional Management. Please keep networking.

Once again, I would like to express thanks to your reliable and considerate efforts, nice collaboration and supports.





**2011: Actively Shaping Rural Development through Local/Regional Economic Development and Regional Management**

Mr. Sok Kimchhin, Administrative Assistant for FSP, Project (RUA-FSP),  
Principal member of RURAL Team, Cambodia

On behalf of Royal University of Agriculture (RUA) team Cambodia, I am honor to say thank you very much for your valuable time to share us your knowledge in the training series; and also overview of regional development in Germany, but also the context of Laos, Thailand and Cambodia. On sum of these, you also played a very important to facilitate in the training period.

Once again, I am pleased to say I have been gaining a new knowledge relevant to rural and regional management concept, which could be applied to my institution but also Cambodia as well. Hence, I do really enjoy my staying in MI; we got very good food and staying in a very good room. Indeed, I am pleasant to get warmly service from all program facilitators of MI.

Therefore, I am very proud and have a pride to see all of you. Especially, this participation assists me to have a lot of happiness, and enjoyable for a whole week.

Hopefully, there will be something more interesting in the next two phases. Many thanks for your supports and cooperation.



**2011: Actively Shaping Rural Development through Local/Regional Economic Development and Regional Management**

Mr. Sompheng Voravong, Area Based Planning Advisor, GIZ, Attapeu Province,  
Lao PDR

We would like to thank you very much for your kindly help and support since the beginning until end; we very appreciate on that. Hopefully, you will provide us such best facilitation to us again and see you in July.

