



Accelerating Development of Regional Logistics Channels and Transportation Infrastructure for the Lancang-Mekong Region in the Context of the China-Lao PDR-Thailand Railway

Workshop cum Structured Learning Visit

October 22-29, 2023



Thailand: Khon Kaen, Udon Thani and Nong Khai
Lao PDR: Vientiane, Luang Prabang and Boten

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CONCEPT NOTE

**Workshop cum Structured Learning Visit on
Accelerating Development of Regional Logistics Channels and
Transportation Infrastructure for the Lancang-Mekong Region
in the Context of the China-Lao PDR-Thailand Railway**

October 22-29, 2023

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INTRODUCTION

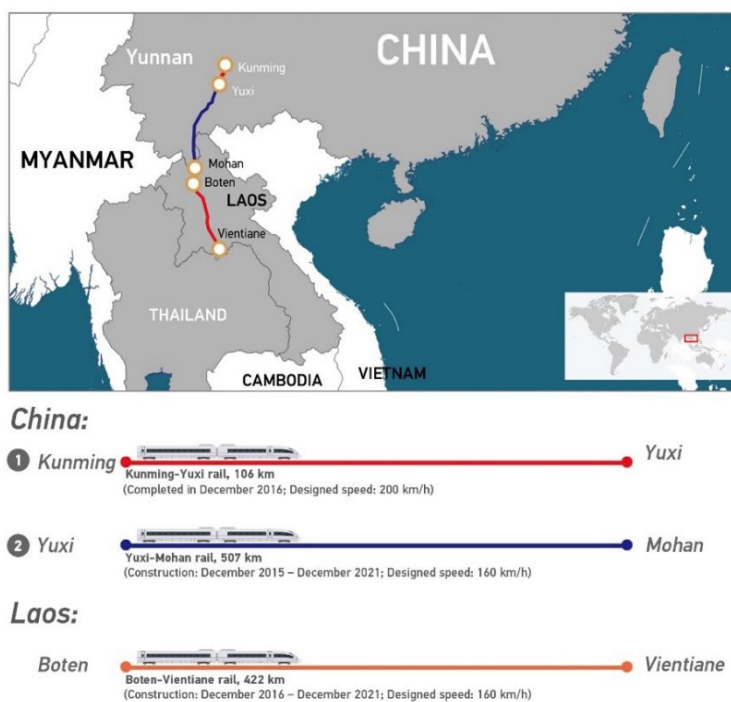
On December 3, 2021, a 422-km standard-gauge Boten-Vientiane Railway, the Lao section of the China-Lao PDR Railway, was officially opened, which connected the China section through a 613-km standard-gauge railway running from Mohan, Yuxi to Kunming (see Figure 1). As part of this railway connection, an extension of Lao PDR-Thailand railway is expected to operate between Vientiane, Lao PDR and Nongkhai, Thailand¹ in 2023. It will be linked to the China-Lao PDR Railway at the Thanaleng Dry Port in Vientiane, where the freight will be transloaded from one track to another. By 2030, the China-Lao PDR-Thailand Railway will be extended from Nongkhai to Bangkok through Nakhon Ratchasima in Thailand, which is also expected to link to the Thailand's Laem Chabang Sea port.

With the fully operational China-Lao segment of China-Lao PDR-Thailand Railway network, it is likely to push the international transport and trade among the Lancang-Mekong and ASEAN member states and beyond. The railway has paved the path to transform Lao PDR from a landlocked to a land-linked state. Eventually, the railway will link China to Singapore through Lao PDR, Thailand and Malaysia (Figure 2).

Currently, maritime trade dominates the industry, but incorporating railways could provide additional opportunities for growth. In addition, the railway system originating from Kunming, China would create additional connections between LM countries and ASEAN member states to markets located in other parts of the world, including Russia, Europe, Africa, Central Asia, and other parts of Asia. These connections would be made possible through the use of wider railway corridors and various modes of transportation, such as air travel, maritime transportation, and road networks. This is part of the Belt Road Initiative (BRI) economic corridors, as illustrated in Figure 3.

As per a recent World Bank report², the China-Lao PDR-Thailand Railway is expected to lower transport costs by 30-50% and significantly increase the trade volume and passenger traffic along the railway line supported by the trade corridor. However, to benefit from the railway network, several challenges need to be addressed. For instance, the transport cost may vary due to the capacity and efficiency of transport and logistics services, furthermore transloading freight between different track gauge of China-Lao PDR and Lao-Thailand Railway sections may be problematic. Moreover, in Lao PDR, Cambodia, Myanmar,

Figure 1: China-Lao Railway



Source: CGTN, December 3, 2022

¹ The Laotian Times: Laos-China Railway to Link with Thanaleng Dry Port, May 26, 2022. <https://laotiantimes.com/2022/05/26/laos-china-railway-to-link-with-thanaleng-dry-port/>

² World Bank: From Landlocked to Land-Linked: Unlocking the Potential of Lao-China Rail Connectivity, 2020. <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/648271591174002567/pdf/Main-Report.pdf>

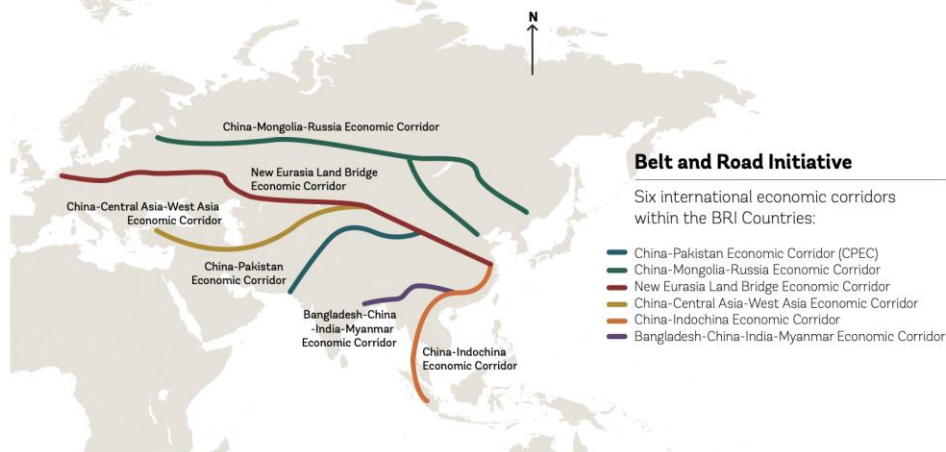
Vietnam and most of the border areas between LM countries, the lack of developed infrastructure and logistical services connecting train stations to other modes of transportation, as well as production and consumption centers, may have a negative impact on the effectiveness of trade facilitation and tourism between LM countries and other regions.

Figure 2: China-Lao-Thailand (proposed) Railway



Source: Logistics Manager, December 26, 2022, and Nikkei April 2, 2022³

Figure 3: Economic Corridors of Belt and Road Initiative



Source: World Bank 2020

Therefore, to take full advantage of the China-Lao PDR-Thailand railway, with the support of Yunnan government, MI would like to propose a capacity building project by assessing the current infrastructure and logistics, development issues, challenges and required facilitation measures for trade, investment, and tourism along the railway network. Based on the assessment, a training course will be designed to enhance the capacities of the key public and private sector stakeholders that will allow them to share information on the opportunities, challenges and the need for a coordinated approach to overcoming constraints in the promotion of LM trade and investment.

³ Logistics Manager: DB Schenker leverages China-Laos Railway to expand Cross-border Logistics Services, by Ryan Finn, December 26, 2022, <https://logistics-manager.com/db-schenker-china-laos-railway-cross-border-logistics-services/>, and Nikkei: Laos' logistics vision for ASEAN: All rails lead to Vientiane - Government eyes capital as link from Southeast Asia to China, April 2, 2022, <https://asia.nikkei.com/Business/Transportation/Laos-logistics-vision-for-ASEAN-All-rails-lead-to-Vientiane>

OBJECTIVES

The project is designed to optimize the benefits of the China-Lao PDR–Thailand railway in the following ways:

- Identify the current state of development, challenges, and opportunities related to the transit of goods and passengers through the railway and connected multimodal transport channels.
- Develop a country road map that outlines strategies for developing railway infrastructure development and corresponding logistics channels in anticipation of the upcoming China-Lao PDR-Thailand Railways.
- Promote coordination among LM countries to establish seamless trade facilitation measures through the railway-multimodal transport and logistics channels.
- Gain knowledge through interaction and visits to key transport and logistics infrastructure development project in specific rail transport corridor.
- Recommend practical options, policy measures and institutional arrangement to financing, managing and promoting the development of logistics channels.

The following objectives will be achieved by the end of project: participants will be able to,

- Assess development potential of utilizing the China-Lao PDR-Thailand railway.
- Identify the needs for the transit of goods and passengers along the railway.
- Design feasible country strategies by determining opportunities for trade and investments in multimodal transport and logistics channels.

TARGET PARTICIPANTS

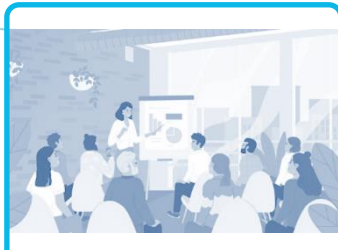
The target participants for the workshop will be middle-senior level / director level officials from government, trade, and investment associations, think tanks and research institutions in the public and private sector involved in trade, investment and planning, transport and logistics in the Lancang-Mekong (LM) region, which includes Cambodia, P.R. China, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam.

The workshop will be organized in a hybrid format, which includes both on-site and online participation. A total of 24 participants from six LM countries are expected to attend 1) the introductory workshop on-site at Mekong Institute, Khon Kaen, Thailand on October 23, 2023, 2) the Structured Learning Visit from Khon Kaen, Thailand to Boten, Lao PDR on October 24-28, 2023 and 3) the Synthesis and Evaluation Workshop on October 29, 2023 in Boten.

Qualification of Applicants

- ✓ Be able to communicate in English;
- ✓ Involved in trade, tourism, transport and logistics and related to the China-Lao railway development and operation in the Lancang-Mekong (LM) region;
- ✓ Have sufficient professional capacity to actively participate in cross-culturally at regional and international level;
- ✓ Be able to commit to attend all activities

ACTIVITIES & AGENDA



Introductory Workshop

October 23, 2023

Mekong Institute,
Khon Kaen, Thailand



Structured Learning Visits

October 24-28, 2023

Thailand: Khon Kaen-Udon Thani- Nong Khai
Lao PDR: Vientiane-Luang Prabang-Boten



Synthesis & Evaluation Workshop

October 29, 2023

Boten, Lao PDR

1. Introductory Workshop

A one-day introductory workshop will be organized on October 23, 2023 at Mekong Institute, Khon Kaen, Thailand. 24 participants representing the key stakeholders of transport, logistics and trade will be invited to attend the workshop.

The objectives of the workshop are to:

- Share key findings of the China-Lao PDR-Thailand railway assessment report developed by MI;
- Update and exchange the information of China-Lao PDR-Thailand railway development status, challenges, opportunities and strategies and corresponding multi-model transportation infrastructure and logistics services development plan by stakeholders of Lancang-Mekong countries;
- Facilitate the discussion on future cooperation on regional railway-multimodal transport and logistics channels.
- Recommend practical options, policy measures and institutional arrangement to financing, managing and promoting the development of logistics channels.



Introductory Workshop

October 23, 2023

Mekong Institute,
Khon Kaen, Thailand

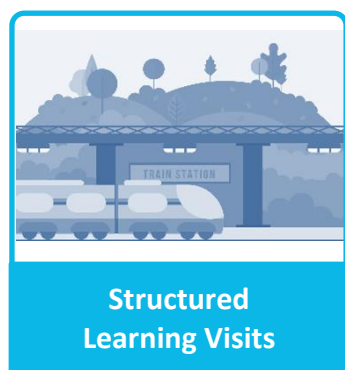
Workshop Sessions

- Opening and introduction of the workshop
- Guideline for preparing the Structured Learning Visits and group discussion
- Share key findings of the China-Lao PDR-Thailand railway assessment report developed by MI;
- Update and exchange the information of China-Lao PDR-Thailand railway development status, challenges, opportunities and strategies and corresponding multi-model transportation infrastructure and logistics services development plan by stakeholders of Lancang-Mekong countries.

[Pre-Event Preparation by participants]

The invited participants are requested to prepare **country report** in the PowerPoint format, to share information of China-Lao PDR-Thailand railway development status, challenges, opportunities and strategies and corresponding multi-model transportation infrastructure and logistics services development plan by stakeholders of Lancang-Mekong countries.

2. Structured Learning Visits



October 24-28, 2023

Thailand: Khon Kaen-Udon Thani-Nong Khai



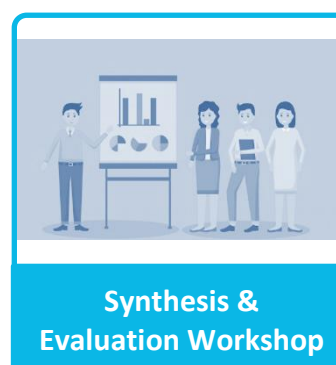
During October 24-28, 2023, the participants will be guided to visit several cities or towns along the Thailand-Lao PDR-China Railway from Khon Kaen Thailand to Boten in Lao PDR.

The tentative visiting sites include:

October 24, 2023 Khon Kaen-Udon Thani, Thailand	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Group work to prepare visiting questions• Visit Udon Thani Industrial Estate
October 25, 2023 Nong Khai, Thailand	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Travel from Udon Thani to Nong Khai, Thailand, by van• Visit Nong Khai Train Station and Logistics Facilities, and Ta Sadet (Border) Market
October 26, 2023 Vientiane, Lao PDR	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Visit Vientiane Saysettha Development Zone• Visit Thanaleng Train Station, the Thanaleng Dry Port (TDP) and Vientiane Logistics Park (VLP)
October 27, 2023 Luang Prabang, Lao PDR	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Travel from Vientiane to Luang Prabang by train• Visit Luang Prabang Train Station and Special Economic Zone•
October 28, 2023 Boten, Lao PDR:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Travel from Luang Prabang to Boten by train• Visit Boten Special Economic Zone and Logistics Park

3. Synthesis and Evaluation Workshop

A synthesis and evaluation workshop will be conducted in Boten, Lao PDR on the last day of the event. According to the assigned group work, all participants will provide group presentation in Power Point format to share the collected information during the workshop and visits as well as to discuss the way forward.



October 29, 2023
Boten, Lao PDR

Workshop Sessions

- Group presentation on collected information during the workshop and visits
- Facilitate the discussion on future cooperation on regional railway-multimodal transport and logistics channels.
- Recommend practical options, policy measures and institutional arrangement to financing, managing and promoting the development of logistics channels.

4. Tentative Agenda

Date	Activities	Remarks
October 22, 2023 Sunday	Arrival Travel from home cities to Khon Kaen, Thailand by air or van	Stay overnight at Mekong Institute residential building, Khon Kaen, Thailand (Same as below)
October 23, 2023 Monday	Introductory Workshop 08:30-09:00 Registration 09:00-09:30 Opening Session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opening Remark, by Ms. Liu Hongmei, Consulate General of P.R.China in Khon Kaen, Thailand • Welcome Remark, by Mr. Madhurjya Kumar Dutta, Director of Trade and Investment Facilitation (TIF) Department, Mekong Institute (MI) • Activity Introduction, by Ms. Wen Hao, Senior Program Coordinator, TIF, MI • 09:30-10:10 Key findings of the China-Lao PDR-Thailand railway assessment report developed by MI, by MI team 10:10-10:30 Coffee Break 10:30-12:00 Business Experience Sharing: Transportation and Logistics Channels along the China-Lao-Thailand Railway , by MI consultant 12:00-13:30 Lunch 13:30-17:00 Country Report: Update and exchange the information of China-Lao PDR-Thailand railway development status, challenges, opportunities and strategies and corresponding multi-model transportation infrastructure and logistics services development plan, by participants of Cambodia, China, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam (20 mins per presentation)	Workshop at Mekong River Conference Room , 2 nd floor, MI Annex Building, Khon Kaen, Thailand *Stay overnight at Mekong Institute Residential Building Address: 123 Mittrapap Road, Khon Kaen, 40002 Thailand Tel: +66 (0) 43 202 411

	17:30-20:30 City tour and self-paid dinner in Central Plaza Khon Kaen or Ton Tann Night Market (by van)	
October 24, 2023 Tuesday	<p>Group work and Structured Learning Visits in Udon Thani</p> <p>09:00-11:00 Group work to preparing visiting questions 11:00-12:00 Lunch 12:00-14:00 Travel from Khon Kaen to Udon Thani 14:00-15:30 Udon Thani Industrial Estate 15:30-18:00</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel to Udon Thani Railway Station • Udon Thani outlet and • Check in @ Centara Hotel Udon Thani <p>18:00 - Self-paid dinner in Centre Point Night Market / Udon Thani Central Plaza Shopping Mall (by walk)</p>	<p>Stay overnight in Centara Hotel Udon Thani, Thailand</p> <p>Address: 277/1 ถนน Prajak Sillapakom, Mak Khaeng Sub-district, Mueang Udon Thani District, Udon Thani 41000, Thailand</p> <p>Tel: +66 42 343 555</p>
October 25, 2023 Wednesday	<p>Structured Learning Visits in Nong Khai</p> <p>08:30-09:40 Travel from Udon Thani to Nong Khai, Thailand 10:00-12:00 Visit Nong Khai Customs Office</p> <p>12:00-13:00 Lunch 13:30-14:30 Visit Nong Khai Railway Station 14:30-16:00 Visit Ta Sadet (Border) Market</p> <p>16:00-17:00 Cross border from Nong Khai, Thailand - Vientiane, Lao PDR 17:00-18:00 Check in at hotel 18:00-20:30 Free time (self-paid dinner at Vientiane night market areas, van will be provided)</p>	<p>Stay overnight in Landmark Mekong Riverside Hotel, Vientiane, Lao PDR</p> <p>Address: Donchan Road, Thatkhao Village, Sisattanak District, Vientiane, Lao PDR</p> <p>Tel: +856 21 266 888</p>
October 26, 2023 Thursday	<p>Structured Learning Visits in Vientiane</p> <p>09:30-12:00 Visit Thanaleng Train Station, the Thanaleng Dry Port (TDP) and Vientiane Logistics Park (VLP) 12:00-13:30 Lunch 14:30-16:30 Visit Vientiane Saysettha Development Zone 17:00: Back to hotel and free time (self-paid dinner at Vientiane night market areas, van will be provided)</p>	<p>Stay overnight in Landmark Mekong Riverside Hotel, Vientiane, Lao PDR (Same as above)</p>
October 27, 2023 Friday	<p>Structured Learning Visits in Luang Prabang</p> <p>06:30-07:30 Travel from hotel to Vientiane Railway station 08:08-09:53 Vientiane – Luang Prabang (LCT D888 International Trai, 1h 45m) 10:00-12:00 Visit Luang Prabang Train Station 12:00-13:30 Hotel check in and lunch 14:30-17:00 Luang Prabang Special Economic Zone 17:00 Back to hotel and free time (self-paid dinner in old town night market area)</p>	<p>Stay overnight in Luang Prabang, Lao PDR</p> <p>Group 1 (18 peoples): Sanctuary Hotel, Address: Ban Aham, Kitsalat Road, Luang Prabang, Laos Tel: +856 71 213 777</p> <p>Group 2 (10 peoples): V Maison Boutique Hotel Address: Kounxoa Road, Luang Prabang 06000, Laos Tel: +856 71 211 254</p>

October 28, 2023 Saturday	Structured Learning Visits in Boten	Stay overnight in BODHI Hotel (Huilan Hotel磨丁慧兰酒) Boten, Lao PDR Address: Boten Special Economic Zone, 03000, Laos Phone: +856 86 218 666
	<p>08:30-09:00 Travel from hotel to Luang Prabang Railway station</p> <p>09:57-11:07 Luang Prabang-Boten (LCT D888 International Train 1h10m)</p> <p>11:07-12:00 Boten station- Hotel check in</p> <p>12:00-13:00 Lunch at Hotel</p> <p>14:00-17:00 Visit Boten Special Economic Zone and Logistics Park</p> <p>17:00 Farewell dinner in town</p>	
October 29, 2023 Sunday	Synthesis and Evaluation Workshop in Boten	Partially stay overnight in Landmark Mekong Riverside Hotel, Vientiane (for 2 Cambodia, 1 Myanmar delegates and 3 MI Team only)
	<p>08:00-11:00</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group presentation on collected information • Facilitate the discussion on future cooperation on regional railway-multimodal transport and logistics channels: supply chain management, by participants • Recommend practical options, policy measures and institutional arrangement to financing, managing and promoting the development of logistics channels, by Participants <p>11:00-12:00 Lunch at hotel</p>	
	Departure	
	<p>Group A: CLMVT delegates and MI team (16 peoples): 12:00-13:00 Travel to train station 13:35 -16:34 Boten-Vientiane (D887 LTC Train, 2h 59m)</p>	
	<p>Group B: China Group (12 peoples) 14:00 (Vientiane time)/15:00 (Beijing time) Depart from Boten Hotel 16:30 (Beijing time) Arrival at the Mohan Railway Station</p>	
	<p>17:00-21:43 (Beijing time) Mohan-Kunming (Train C386 复兴号, 4h43m)</p>	
	<p>Group A-1: Thailand and Vietnam Group (5 peoples) 16:34-17:30 Vientiane Railway Station – Vientiane Airport and Fly to Bangkok / Hanoi</p>	
October 30, 2023 Monday	Departure	
	<p>Group A-2: Cambodia, Myanmar Group and MI Team (8 peoples) Vientiane Railway Station- Vientiane Airport and fly/travel to Phnom Penh / Yangon / Khon Kean</p>	

Time zone: Vientiane time

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MEKONG INSTITUTE

Capacity Development for Regional Cooperation and Integration.

Mekong Institute (MI) deepens regional cooperation and integration through capacity development, dialogue, and advocacy for the acceleration of sustainable socioeconomic development and poverty alleviation in the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS).

Founded and represented by Cambodia, P.R. China, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam, MI's strategies are aligned with the core tenets of the GMS Cooperation Program Strategic Framework 2030, ASEAN Economic Community, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

MI supports these frameworks through the implementation of projects across the areas of Agricultural Development and Commercialization, Trade and Investment Facilitation, and Sustainable Energy and Environment, while addressing issues of social inclusion and vulnerability, digital economy and innovation, and labor mobility to cement holistic and sustainable development impacts.

Overall, MI's ability to build, generate, curate, and transfer knowledge, as it leverages its regional network deliver effective project implementation, sound policy coherence, and dynamic development programming through capacity-building investments, evidence-based studies, and knowledge exchange platforms. These services bridge cross-sectoral and multi-country synergies and engagement, as well as help instill efficient resource mobilization to aid governments and regional cooperation mechanisms in responding to current and future priority needs of people in the GMS.