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ANNUAL WORKPLAN

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

| | |
|---------|--|
| ADC | Agricultural Development and Commercialization |
| ACMECS | Ayeyawady-Chao Phraya Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy |
| ASEAN | The Association of Southeast Asian Nations |
| APPRACA | Asia-Pacific Rural and Agricultural Credit Association |
| BGCF | Broader GMS Cooperation Frameworks |
| CD | Capacity Development |
| CKM | Communication and Knowledge Management |
| CLMV | Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, and Vietnam |
| CLMVT | Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Vietnam, and Thailand |
| DFAT | Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade |
| EOP | End of Project |
| FAOYN | Foreign Affairs Office of the People's Government of Yunnan Province |
| GMCA | Greater Mekong Community Affairs |
| GMS | Greater Mekong Sub-region |
| GS | General Services |
| HR | Human Resources |
| HRD | Human Resource Development |
| ICT | Information and Communication Technology |
| IGO | Intergovernmental Organization |
| IT | Information Technology |
| LM | Lancang-Mekong |
| LMCSF | Lancang-Mekong Cooperation Special Fund |
| MEL | Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning |
| MI | Mekong Institute |
| MI-CDM | MI Capacity Development Model |
| MKCF | Mekong – Korea Cooperation Fund |
| NZAP | New Zealand Aid Programme |
| PROSAFE | Promoting Safe Food for Everyone |
| RF | Results Framework |
| ROK | Republic of Korea |
| SEE | Sustainable Energy and Environment |
| SP | Strategic Plan |
| SMT | Senior Management Team |
| TICA | Thailand International Cooperation Agency |

Executive Summary

The Mekong Institute (MI) is in the process of reviewing its Strategic Plan 2021–2025, as 2025 is the last year of its implementation. Preparations have been made to design a new Strategic Plan for 2026–2030, along with the implementation plan and identification of opportunities for business development. To realize the highly ambitious strategic plan for the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) region, MI will seek appropriate contributions from GMS countries. To ensure that these conversations are conducted smoothly, MI will utilize the opportunity of the review of the Strategic Plan 2021–2025 and the development of the new Strategic Plan to have robust consultation processes with GMS countries and other development partners.

In 2025, 14 projects are planned for implementation, including 11 long-term projects, 2 short-term projects, and 1 one-off project. These projects are distributed as follows: Sustainable Energy and Environment (SEE) with 3 projects (2 long-term, 1 short-term), Agricultural Development and Commercialization (ADC) with 2 projects (1 long-term, 1 short-term), Trade and Investment Facilitation (TIF) with 8 projects (7 long-term, 1 one-off), and Office of Executive Director (OED) with 1 long-term project.

In 2026, a total of 7 long-term projects are planned across MI's departments. TIF leads with 3 projects, SEE follows with 2 projects, and both ADC and OED have 1 project each.

Following an internal review, the SMT will submit the 2025 annual budget plan for Council approval. Projected revenue is US\$5,010,851, with estimated expenditures of US\$4,806,152, resulting in a surplus of US\$204,699, or about 4% of total revenue.

Background

The Mekong Institute (MI) has played a crucial role in advancing sustainable development and cooperation within the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) since its founding. By aligning with the strategic priorities of Cambodia, China, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, and Viet Nam, MI fosters regional connectivity, environmental sustainability, and socio-economic resilience. Through multi-year strategic plans, MI sets out to address evolving regional challenges and opportunities, focusing on capacity building, knowledge sharing, and collaborative project implementation.

As MI approaches the final year of its Strategic Plan 2021–2025, it has initiated the review and design of its next phase, the Strategic Plan 2026–2030. This new plan will build upon the achievements of previous years, incorporating insights from stakeholders and lessons learned to refine its approach to regional development. To support this transition, MI will engage in robust consultations with GMS member countries and development partners, identifying opportunities for collaborative growth and enhanced impact. Additionally, MI's current work plan for 2024–2025 will serve as a foundation for these efforts, aligning annual initiatives with long-term goals to ensure continuity and sustained progress.

MI's contributions to GMS development are centered on three strategic goals: strengthening institutional capacities to adapt to change, fostering an enabling environment for multi-stakeholder partnerships, and enhancing regional integration. Through targeted interventions in areas like sustainable energy, agricultural commercialization, trade facilitation, and public health, MI works closely with government agencies, international organizations, and private sector partners. By prioritizing capacity development, policy alignment, and innovation, MI supports GMS countries in addressing critical issues such as climate resilience, food security, and inclusive economic growth. As MI prepares for its next strategic cycle, it remains dedicated to advancing its mission of sustainable, inclusive development across the Mekong region.

Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) Contexts

Agricultural Development and Commercialization

Agriculture plays an important role in the GMS, particularly in economies like Laos and Myanmar, where it contributes significantly to employment despite its limited contribution to gross domestic product (GDP). The modernization of agriculture is essential for enhancing productivity, increasing value-added production, and ensuring food security in the face of climate change (Asian Development Bank, 2021). Technological upgrades, such as precision agriculture tools and mobile applications for crop management, are seen as viable solutions for smallholders to boost efficiency and access wider markets (ADB, 2024). MI supports agricultural development by focusing on value-chain improvements, capacity building, and regional knowledge sharing. Through training on sustainable agricultural practices and food safety, MI has been equipping farmers with the skills to meet international standards, thereby enhancing their competitiveness in global markets. Furthermore, MI also focuses on empowering women and marginalized communities with entrepreneurial skills, which aligns with GMS priorities for modernization and commercialization.

Trade and Investment Facilitation

Improving trade facilitation is essential for the GMS to enhance cross-border economic integration and to remain competitive in global supply chains. According to the World Bank's Logistics Performance Index (LPI), economies like Thailand and China, which score higher on logistics efficiency, exhibit more robust trade flows (ADB, 2021). Efficient customs procedures, upgraded infrastructure, and streamlined logistics services are necessary to reduce trade costs and support regional economic growth (Asian Development Outlook, 2024).¹ MI has been instrumental in advancing trade facilitation across the GMS through initiatives such as its Regional Training Program on Trade Facilitation, which strengthen capacities of customs officials and logistics professionals on international best practices. MI also has been working in policy harmonization and supports cross-border trade by organizing forums and workshops, where stakeholders can collaborate on reducing trade barriers and enhancing regional economic integration. Additionally,

¹ Asian Development Bank. (2024). Asian Development Outlook: Steady growth, slowing inflation. Manila: ADB.

MI’s investment facilitation work aligns with the region’s economic goals by identifying high-potential sectors, such as agro-processing and electronics, to diversify exports and reduce vulnerability to global economic shifts.

Sustainable Energy and Environment

The GMS' rapid industrialization and urbanization demands a shift towards sustainable energy practices to mitigate environmental degradation. Countries like Thailand and Vietnam have made substantial investments in renewable energy sources, particularly solar and wind, but broader regional cooperation is necessary to address transboundary environmental challenges. The GMS has abundant renewable energy potential, and maximizing this requires comprehensive policies that integrate green technologies across sectors (Asian Development Outlook, 2024).²

MI’s initiatives in sustainable energy are focused on enhancing community resilience and supporting renewable energy solutions. For instance, MI facilitates capacity-building programs that train local governments and energy providers on sustainable energy practices, such as small-scale solar systems that reduce dependency on fossil fuels. Additionally, MI addresses transboundary water resource management—a critical area for environmental sustainability in the GMS—by fostering cooperation among member countries to mitigate river pollution and ecosystem degradation, which aligns with the GMS' sustainability goals.

MI Work Plan 2025-2026

Plan for MI’s Contribution to GMS Development

Strategic Goal 1: Strengthened human and institutional capacities to continuously adapt and respond to changing context in the GMS

Strategic Goal 2: Enhanced enabling environment for multi-stakeholder partnerships and synergy to support sustainable development in the GMS

Strategic Goal 3: Fostered regional connectivity to strengthen regional cooperation and integration in the GMS

| 2025 | | | | |
|------------|----------------------|-------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| Department | Total Number Project | Long-term project | Short-term project | One-Off Activity |
| SEE | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| ADC | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 |

² Asian Development Bank. (2021). The Greater Mekong Subregion 2030 and beyond: Integration, upgrading, cities, and connectivity. Manila: ADB.

| | | | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| TIF | 8 | 7 | 0 | 1 |
| OED | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 14 | 11 | 2 | 1 |
| 2026 | | | | |
| Department | Total Number Project | Long-term project | Short-term project | One-Off Activity |
| SEE | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| ADC | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| TIF | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| OED | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 7 | 7 | 0 | 0 |

Agricultural Development and Commercialization

Long-term Outcome 1: Increased agricultural commercial production and strengthen sustainable food systems

In 2025, the ADC Department planned to build on its ongoing projects and initiatives to drive sustainable socio-economic growth, alleviate poverty, and promote environmental sustainability across the GMS. The Department will focus on strengthening value chain development, promoting climate-smart agriculture (CSA), enhancing postharvest management, and improving food safety standards. The department aimed to improve agricultural resilience and expand market access for smallholder farmers and MSMEs, equipping them with the tools, knowledge, and support needed to adopt sustainable practices. This work will ultimately contribute to a climate-resilient, economically viable food system that supports stable incomes, improved productivity, and secure market access across the region.

Safe and Climate-Resilient Food Sector for Enhanced Market Access and Sustainable Food Systems in CLMV

The project aims to strengthen food safety and resilience across agricultural value chains in Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, and Viet Nam (CLMV). With a focus on sustainable, climate-smart practices, this initiative seeks to improve market access and support post-pandemic recovery. The project's core objectives include building technical capacities, promoting resilient agricultural practices, and raising policy and public awareness. These efforts target diverse stakeholders, including government officials, farmers, food processors, and private-sector partners, empowering

them to adopt safer and more sustainable approaches that align with international food safety standards.

In 2025, the project will begin with two comprehensive stocktaking studies to map current policies and identify climate-smart technologies suitable for the region. These studies will inform six training sessions, involving approximately 168 stakeholders from across the agri-food sector. Key topics will include safe food production, climate-smart practices, and postharvest management. To extend the project's impact, Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) materials will be distributed to about 1,000 additional stakeholders, strengthening the broader understanding of climate-resilient practices. The project will also explore the economic advantages of climate-resilient approaches for smallholder farmers, offering data to support policy recommendations and further adoption. Through workshops and forums like the Mekong Forum 2025, the project will enable over 200 stakeholders to collaborate on policy solutions specific to CLMV's needs, supporting the long-term adoption of climate-smart agricultural systems.

The Promotion of Crop Insurance in ASEAN through the Public and Private Partnership

This project addresses climate risks in agriculture by developing sustainable crop insurance frameworks across ASEAN countries. Utilizing a public-private partnership (PPP) approach, it reduces reliance on government funding while expanding access to crop insurance, particularly through private sector engagement. The initiative supports regional categorization, tailoring support to each ASEAN country's insurance development stage: from foundational development for "No-program" countries (e.g., Brunei, Lao PDR, and Singapore) to testing insurance models in "Pilot" countries (e.g., Cambodia, Malaysia, and Myanmar) and broad-scale implementation in "Scaled-up" countries (e.g., Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Viet Nam).

In 2025, the project's final activity will be a Wrap-Up Workshop in March, with an estimated 60 participants from ASEAN member states, including representatives from government, private insurance providers, and key stakeholders in agriculture. This event will summarize project outcomes, present key findings from stock-taking surveys, and showcase insights gained from pilot activities, allowing participants to discuss best practices and next steps. A key outcome of this workshop will be exploring pathways for integrating crop insurance and climate risk financing into the ASEAN Post-2025 Vision. By embedding crop insurance in ASEAN's long-term climate resilience and risk mitigation strategies, this project aims to bolster food security, stabilize farmer incomes, and foster sustainable agriculture practices across the region.

The Strengthening Digital Platforms that Provide Information on Agricultural Practices, Markets, and Pricing to Smallholder Farmers

This project enhances digital platforms to increase smallholder farmers' access to essential agricultural information, including best practices, market trends, and pricing data, in CLMV. By addressing the critical need for accurate and accessible information, the initiative enables

smallholder farmers to make informed decisions, ultimately improving productivity and stabilizing incomes.

In 2025, the project's main activities include a regional workshop in Cambodia to present findings from a detailed assessment of digital platforms currently used by smallholders. This workshop will bring together stakeholders from government, NGOs, and the private sector to assess platform accessibility and effectiveness, identify gaps, and prioritize relevant agricultural content, such as crop-specific practices for rice, maize, and vegetables. Following this, a final assessment report will be published, summarizing the challenges faced—such as language barriers and limited digital literacy—and recommending improvements for greater inclusivity and usability. Supported by the Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund (JAIF), this project aligns with the ASEAN Initiative for ASEAN Integration Work Plan IV (2021-2025) and contributes to sustainable development by reducing information gaps, enhancing resilience, and supporting economic stability in the CLMV region.

Mekong CONNECT: Facilitating Agricultural Resilience and Modernization in Mekong Countries through Collaboration, Networking, Empowerment, Capacity-building, and Technology

The Mekong CONNECT project promotes sustainable and resilient agriculture in Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, and Viet Nam (CLMTV) through climate-smart agriculture (CSA) practices, public-private partnerships, and regional collaboration. Supported by the Mekong-ROK Cooperation Fund (MKCF), the project combines training, networking, and pilot initiatives to strengthen the technical skills of local farmers and stakeholders, enabling them to adopt advanced, sustainable practices tailored to regional agricultural needs.

For 2025, Mekong CONNECT will establish foundational structures for CSA adoption, engaging around 215 participants from various sectors, including government, academia, and agribusiness through capacity-building activities, including a regional inception workshop, five national coordination events, and three CSA-focused trainings. Knowledge resources, such as curriculum materials, will be developed to enable regional stakeholders to independently promote CSA practices. Knowledge resources, such as curriculum materials, will be developed to enable regional stakeholders to independently promote CSA practices.

To demonstrate CSA's practical benefits, two pilot sites will be established in select CLMTV countries, offering hands-on experience and showcasing CSA technologies. With ongoing coaching and technical support, farmers and agribusinesses involved in these pilots will gain insights into CSA's potential to improve productivity and resilience to climate challenges. Each pilot is anticipated to increase crop yield and resource efficiency by at least 10%, providing a replicable model for future adoption across the Mekong region.

With a focus on building resilient agricultural foundations and fostering cross-sector collaboration, Mekong CONNECT aspires to create a sustainable, scalable model for climate-smart agriculture. This project aims not only to enhance regional food security and economic stability but also to

strengthen CLMTV's position in the ASEAN market by embedding resilient, technology-driven practices within its agricultural sector.

Scaling Low-Emission Rice Cultivation Technologies and Practices in South and Southeast Asia: Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Nepal, Cambodia, Thailand, and Viet Nam

Supported by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, the project aims to tackle the rice sector's significant contribution to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. The initiative will promote the scaling up of low-emission rice technologies through South-South knowledge exchanges and the creation of knowledge products to support sustainable agrifood systems and enhance climate resilience.

Trade and Investment Facilitation

Long-term Outcome 2: Increased access to international markets and cross-border trade

Sustainable Energy and Environment

Long-term Outcome 3: Increased adoption of power grid connectivity, renewable energy, energy efficiency, and climate-smart technologies in agriculture and trade initiatives

Triangular Cooperation Project on Sustainable Development in the Lower Mekong Basin based on the Water-Energy-Food (WEF) Nexus (2025)

With the financial Support of the Republic of Korea (RoK) 's Ministry of Science and ICT (MSIT), in collaboration with the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC), and the Science and Technology Policy Institute (STEPI), the Mekong River Commission (MRC) and MI are implementing a five-year project on Triangular Cooperation on Sustainable Development in the Lower Mekong Basin based on the Water-Energy-Food (WEF) Nexus (RoK-UNOSSC Facility Phase 3) from September 15, 2021, to December 31, 2025. The project is intended to strengthen access to water, food, and energy for vulnerable communities living in the Lower Mekong Basin (Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand, and Viet Nam) through strengthening development approaches and management in these sectors. It will take integrative and multi-sectoral approaches in the application of highly demanded technologies on water, energy and food to improve the livelihoods of the people based on South-South and triangular cooperation (S.S. & TrC) modalities. In 2025, the project includes annual implementation of Project Quality Assurance through participation in the Steering Committee (1) and additional review/planning meetings with UNOSSC and other implementation partners (IPs) and Training of Trainers (ToT) workshops.

Lancang-Mekong Energy Clean Development Forum

A one-day “Lancang-Mekong Energy Clean Development Forum” will be organized in Bangkok in February 2025 with the participation of government officials responsible for energy and electricity, representatives from major energy and electricity enterprises, members from think tanks and research institutions, as well as representatives from relevant media outlets.

Promoting Effective Corporate Governance for Power Enterprises in the Lancang-Mekong Region

The online consultation meeting will be organized in January 2025. It aims to collect information and formulate effective strategies and actionable recommendations for enhancing corporate governance within power enterprises. Additionally, the consultation meeting will identify capacity-building requirements necessary for implementation.

Cross-Cutting Themes

Digital Economy

Project Name: Enhancing Digital Innovation Ecosystems for Accelerating Sustainable Development in the Lancang-Mekong Countries

Supported by the Chinese government, MI will implement the two-year project, with a high-level consultation as its first component. MI will co-host this High-level Consultation, titled “Lancang-Mekong Digital Innovation: A Future of Collaborative Growth,” on December 9, 2024, as a side event to the Senior Officials’ Meeting on the Construction of the Lancang-Mekong Innovation Corridor. This event aims to deepen policy dialogues on digital innovation among Lancang-Mekong countries, assess the current landscape, identify key challenges, and explore strategic pathways for future collaboration. In 2025, two additional project components will be implemented, including mutual learning and exchanges among innovation hubs, sectoral training, and structured learning visits, to further enhance collaborative development in this field.

Decent Work, Upskilling and Reskilling, Social Inclusion

Project Name Annual International Training Course on Promoting Employability for Decent Work and Economic Growth: Sharing Thailand’s Good Practices and Lessons-learned (2025)

MI will organize a two-week international online training program on “Promoting Employability for Decent Work and Economic Growth: Sharing Thailand’s Good Practices and Lessons-learned” around September 2025. The ultimate goal of the training is to contribute towards an agile workforce education system which will in turn promote their employability and access to decent work. It will showcase the knowledge-and-innovation driven skilling system driven by the BCG economic model of Thailand that could accelerate inclusive socio-economic development.

Key Initiatives under the MI's Flagship Programs

Plan for MI Contribution to Broader Mekong Cooperation Frameworks

Mekong-Republic of Korea Cooperation Fund (MKCF) Management (2024-2025)

The Mekong-Republic of Korea Cooperation Fund (MKCF) is one of the cooperation mechanisms between the five Mekong countries (Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, and Viet Nam) and the Republic of Korea (ROK). MKCF was established in 2013 to encourage and support cooperation among five Mekong countries through an annual contribution from the ROK. MKCF provides grants to support catalytic and innovative activities in the seven priority sectors: (a) Culture and Tourism, (b) Human Resources Development, (c) Agriculture and Rural Development, (d) Infrastructure, (e) Information and Communication Technology, (f) Environment, and (g) Non-Traditional Security Challenges.

MI is assigned as the Fund Coordinator with the major responsibilities for coordination and implementation of the fund, including assisting in the areas of project management, financial management, monitoring and evaluation, and quality assurance of activities undertaken by In 2025, MI will continue to coordinate with Project Implementing Agencies (PIAs) to support project launches, process agreements, and manage administrative costs.

Capacity Building on Regional Project Design, Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation of MKCF projects (2025)

MI is implementing this 3-year project to strengthen the capacity of MKCF implementing agencies through training, experience sharing, and enhanced regional cooperation. By working closely with these agencies, MI ensures projects are properly identified, designed, and executed according to MKCF guidelines.

Regional Public Health Laboratory (RPHL) Network

In 2025, MI's key plans for the RPHL project funded by the Global Fund include strengthening the network through a structured orientation for Secretariat staff, enhancing financial management, and developing comprehensive internal guidelines. Training will be prioritized in areas such as partnerships, resource mobilization, communication, and project management. A major event, the Annual Partnership Forum, is scheduled for February 2026 in Siem Reap, where MI will engage Network members in discussions on governance frameworks and strategic roadmaps. MI will also focus on continuous capacity-building through on-the-job training, mentorship programs, and refining operational systems to support the RPHL Network's long-term sustainability and effectiveness

Plan for Institutional Strengthening

Strategic Goal (SG) 4: MI Transitions to a more Sustainable and Dynamic Organization

Strategic Leadership and Management

Leadership

Goal: To strengthen strategic management for MI's growth and effective implementation of the MI Strategic Plan 2021-2025, while preparing for the transition to a new strategic phase, informed by insights from the Mid-Term Review (MTR) and emerging regional needs.

Outcome 1: Strengthened Accountability and Transparency

MI will enhance engagement with the Council Chair and members, Steering Committee Chair and members, Coordinating Agencies, and SMT members, emphasizing results-based management (RBM) to drive informed decision-making. A structured approach will be implemented for Governing Board (GB) meetings, Quarterly Executive Meetings (QEMs), and regular consultation sessions, enhancing accountability across MI. These initiatives will be coupled with clear, measurable monitoring and evaluation frameworks, including the development of a five-year performance report, 2021-2025 Strategic Plan evaluation, and the formulation of MI 2026-2030 Strategic Plan.

Outcome 2: Enhanced Collaborative Leadership

Building on the leadership progress made in 2024, the Secretariat will continue taking major decisions in close consultation with SMT members. Executive Orders, internal memos, and staff announcements circulated promptly, will ensure swift communication to staff regarding important decisions, aligning all levels of the organization.

Outcome 3: Unified MI Culture ("One MI")

The Executive Director will continue organizing bi-monthly all-staff meetings to reinforce MI's shared values and collective vision. In 2025, these meetings will emphasize input from program and operational leads, instilling a stronger sense of ownership and inclusion among staff. MI's 30th-anniversary preparations will further unite staff and showcase MI's achievements to regional stakeholders.

Outcome 4: Recruitment and Transition Planning for Executive Director (ED)

Preparations for the recruitment and transition of the Executive Director will commence in 2025, with clear succession planning, including defined selection criteria and transition protocols, to ensure continuity in MI's leadership and strategic direction.

Organizational Structure and Culture

Goal: To support a culture of accountability, creativity, and innovation by fully operationalizing MI's updated organizational structure and governance mechanisms and by enhancing compliance and operational effectiveness.

Outcome 1: Complete Operationalization of the New Organizational Structure and Operation Manual.

MI will continue implementing the revised organizational structure, filling essential positions and enhancing governance mechanisms by compliance with the Operations Manual to ensure alignment with strategic priorities. Regular consultations between SMT and the Governing Board (GB) will provide ongoing evaluations of the structure's efficiency, along with possible revisions to the Operations Manual to maintain compliance and flexibility.

Outcome 2: Promote Inclusive Decision-Making and Cross-Departmental Collaboration. MI will institutionalize quarterly meetings involving both SMT and Extended SMT members, fostering more inclusive, cross-departmental decision-making processes. This will ensure better collaboration across all teams, driving greater cohesion in implementing MI's goals.

Outcome 3: Foster Internal Synergy and Communication.

MI will enhance its internal knowledge-sharing workshops and expand the use of e-briefings, enabling seamless information exchange. To improve internal communication, MI will focus on digital integration with tools such as an upgraded MEL and financial management applications and transition to MS-based e-office platforms to streamline the process, procedure, and operational communication.

Outcome 4: Enhanced Recruitment and Performance Assessment.

MI will introduce updated recruitment protocols and performance assessment criteria, aligning with international best practices to attract and retain high-caliber talent. Special emphasis will be placed on recruiting staff with expertise in emerging sectors.

Business Model

Goal: To increase and diversify funding sources to ensure MI's financial sustainability and strengthen its role in driving sustainable development and cooperation in the GMS.

Outcome 1: Expand Partnerships for Program Implementation.

MI will continue expanding partnerships and collaboration, particularly with embassies, private sectors, and other international technical partners, along with philanthropic organizations focused on MI key thematic areas and cross-cutting themes. The MTR recommendations will guide MI's efforts to secure long-term partners, with private sector engagement with firms.

In 2025, MI Development Partners' Consultation sessions will be introduced, offering a structured channel for partner feedback and strategic alignment, while regular consultations will enable MI to stay aligned with donor expectations.

Outcome 2: Diversify Products, Services, and Funding Sources

MI will leverage Mekong Forum 2025 as a platform to attract new sponsors, enhancing its service offerings. By introducing consultancy services and technical advisory roles, MI will expand its portfolio, generating additional revenue streams to secure financial stability.

Outcome 3: Increase Contributions from GMS Member Countries

In 2025, MI will present a comprehensive proposal to GMS governments, showcasing the strategic value and impact of MI's work. This will be accompanied by a financial plan illustrating the need for increased member contributions to support sustainable, long-term operations aligned with regional goals.

Outcome 4: Shift to Long-Term, Impact-Driven Projects

MI will prioritize multi-year, program-based projects that align with the Results Framework of the Strategic Plan, ensuring long-term sustainability and deepened impact across GMS. This approach will reduce reliance on short-term donor-driven projects, building a more resilient and impactful program model.

Capacity Building and Knowledge Management

Goal: To enhance MI's role as a center of excellence in capacity development, thought leadership, and knowledge dissemination across the GMS region.

Outcome 1: Enhanced Research and Knowledge Sharing

MI will expand its research agenda to include policy-relevant studies, partnering with national and international academic institutions. The GMS Knowledge Network will be launched, providing a collaborative platform for policy research, and GMS Working Papers will be published, focusing on regional development challenges and opportunities.

Outcome 2: Expanded Capacity Development Programs

In 2025, MI will expand its Capacity Development Model (CDM), introducing country-specific programs tailored to the unique needs of GMS member countries. Training courses targeting the private sector, with a mix of fully and partially self-funded models, will support MI's revenue generation efforts and build skills in critical areas such as climate resilience, digital trade, and inclusive growth.

Finance and Operations

Goal: To establish an accountable, transparent, effective, and efficient finance and operations system for better planning and management in delivering best services to bring the optimum results in the GMS.

Financial Management

Goal: To establish an accountable, transparent, effective, and efficient finance and operations system for better planning and management in delivering the best services to bring the optimum results in the GMS and ensure MI's healthy financial performance and sustainable fund, support each department/unit to operate most efficiently in achieving their goals.

Outcome 1: Increased burn rate of the projects' budget against the approved budget for both MI and PIAs.

Finance has planned activities to minimize disruptions from unforeseen circumstances, while establishing a transparent and accountable mechanism to support the SMT in planning and program execution.

Goal: To ensure MI's healthy financial performance and sustainable funding, support each department/unit to operate most efficiently in achieving their goals

Outcome 2: Improved financial liquidity of MI throughout the year.

Finance monitors planned versus achieved deliverables to ensure timely execution. This includes processing daily payments for staff and stakeholders, donor reporting, managing bank and cash transactions, monitoring PIAs, verifying PIA documents, ensuring regulatory compliance, recording transactions in accounting software, coordinating with auditors, and providing timely data for audit review and account finalization.

Outcome 3: Developed and operationalized organization-wide effective and efficient financial and accounting system.

An online system will be developed to enable real-time monitoring of project financial performance, alongside the creation of a tool designed to ensure effective oversight of cash flow operations.

Outcome 4: Minimized the risks of financial management for MI

An external audit will support reconciliation and flag noncompliance issues to minimize risk. Finance will continue to monitor the organizational budget, project budgets, and actual spending to prevent overspending or underspending. Timely financial updates are circulated to the SMT, ensuring informed, data-driven financial decisions.

Outcome 5: Strengthen and improve MI internal financial control Provide orientation and support to programs and SMT with the updated finance policy and internal guidelines to ensure that all costs are eligible according to the procedures and donors' requirements.

Finance planned to establish an internal finance committee to review and spot-check transactions and the finance system annually, prior to the external audit. Additionally, Finance will hold biannual finance forums and orientation sessions for all staff to enhance financial literacy and awareness across the organization. To expand support and consultancy services to secretariats and development partners in Thailand and GMS countries, Finance will oversee and monitor partner funding, conduct thorough assessments before allocating funds, and provide responsive financial management and operational support as needed.

General Services Management

Goal: To optimize MI's internal facilities and efficiently deliver excellent services to the staff, participants, and visitors to MI.

Outcome 1: Enhanced general services for MI participants, visitors, and staff

General Services (GS) plans to inspect and renovate accommodation facilities and supplies to enhance guest and participant experience. Room bookings will be managed via Appsheet, and GS will prepare a daily plan outlining clear roles and responsibilities for each staff member.

Outcome 2: Ensured efficient operation and optimum use of MI assets and equipment

MI's fixed assets will be prepared, verified, and physically counted to ensure they are orderly and up to date. Disposable assets will be proposed for removal from the inventory if broken. Additionally, GS will manage and monitor internal income from accommodations, conference rooms, transport, training material packages, and other services.

Outcome 3: Increased safety and security of people and assets in MI

GS will work with the security company to ensure 24/7 safety in MI. Additionally, GS will manage daily needs, including office supplies, stationery, kitchen items, souvenirs, and transportation arrangements.

Outcome 4: Renovate and keep MI office hygiene and a good environment

GS will maintain a clean, fresh office environment, update office layouts for SMT decision-making, and create shared spaces and a relaxation area for staff and participants.

Outcome 5: Expand the service support to our program outside and GMS countries for big events in terms of logistics, hospitality and administration.

Human Resources Management

Goal: To optimize the productivity of the human resources of MI by attracting skilled and efficient professionals and further enhancing their capacity to deliver the expected outputs and services. The revised Operations Manual is to be ensured and implemented from 2025.

Outcome 1: Strengthened and transparent recruitment strategies and procedures

A 2025 recruitment plan will be implemented. This includes forming a recruitment panel, posting announcements, updating job descriptions, shortlisting candidates, arranging interview logistics, conducting reference checks, extending offers, and preparing employment contracts. The recruitment team will ensure evaluations align with job requirements, using a consistent evaluation grid based on set criteria. Selection Committee members will be briefed on internal procedures, particularly the Operations Manual, at the time of appointment.

Outcome 2: Enhanced capacity of staff for better productivity and performance

The recently approved staff career progression guidelines will be implemented, regularly screening and submitting eligible staff lists to SMT for decision-making. To support staff effectively, HR will consolidate the 2025 development plan based on annual performance appraisals, aiming to strengthen skills and career paths. HR will also identify relevant training and workshop opportunities and inform appropriate staff members.

Outcome 5: Promote and increase the staff well-being in the workplace.

HR will enhance MI's salary payment schedule, including payroll slips, to ensure timely delivery of benefits, fostering an open and positive work environment. Regular staff engagement activities will continue, such as team-building events, staff retreats, Thai language classes for non-Thai staff, annual health check-ups, and insurance, aligning with MI's practices. Performance appraisals will be conducted twice a year, allowing staff to reflect on their strengths and areas for growth while receiving constructive feedback from supervisors for skill development. For the new staff orientation, HR will organize and facilitate the schedule, handling all logistical arrangements to ensure a welcoming start at MI. HR will also remain available to address any queries or concerns from new staff beyond the orientation period. Additional support includes coordinating visa arrangements for both new and existing staff and maintaining accurate leave records.

Procurement Services Management

Goal: To optimize procurement processes, enhance supplier relationships, and drive cost savings while ensuring compliance with organizational standards and regulatory requirements.

Outcome 1: Effectively managed the procurement of goods and services for MI.

In 2025, MI will strengthen procurement planning and execution by implementing annual plans. To streamline processes, MI will focus on automation, standardization, and continuous improvement. Our goal is to reduce procurement costs through effective negotiation, competitive bidding, and targeted cost-saving strategies. Additionally, MI will ensure full compliance with regulatory requirements and organizational policies, reinforcing our commitment to excellence in all procurement activities.

Outcome 2: Establishment and Maintenance of the Consultant and Supplier Database.

MI will establish and maintain a centralized consultant database using Appsheet.

Outcome 3: Expanded Procurement Services in Thailand and GMS Countries for all MI activities

The procurement unit will expand MI's services by identifying suppliers for accommodation, transportation, and other essential needs within Thailand and the GMS. We will establish cooperation agreements with these suppliers to secure competitive rates and special pricing, streamlining the process for securing venues and services for events held outside Thailand.

Through optimized procurement practices, MI aims to save time, reduce costs, and enhance support for activities across the region.

Information Technology Management

Goal: To enhance operational efficiency and improve MI and stakeholder engagement through the strategic implementation of digital tools and systems. By leveraging technology, we aim to streamline our internal processes, facilitate seamless communication among team members and volunteers, and optimize our outreach efforts to better serve our internal and external entities.

Outcome 1: To optimize MI's information technology capacity and provide excellent services with secure, reliable, and updated technologies for effective and efficient implementation of programs and operations of MI.

IT will update software, including Windows, Microsoft Office, VPN, Zoom, Studio Production Application, and Auto Interface, to ensure smooth functionality of staff laptops and desktops. IT will monitor cloud storage to maintain adequate space for all files, including large video files, and will expand capacity as needed. Additionally, IT will regularly check and maintain shared drives, LCD projectors in conference rooms, telephones, CCTV, email systems, password protocols, and Google Workspace to support MI's operational needs.

Proposed Annual Budget for 2025

Following MI's internal review of annual budget proposals from various departments, the SMT has approved the 2024 budget plan for Council submission. Total revenue is projected at US\$3,695,595, with estimated expenditures of US\$3,622,300, including non-cash expenses. This results in a net revenue surplus of US\$73,295, or about 1% of total revenue. Excluding non-cash expenses, gross earnings are expected to reach US\$157,295, approximately 4% of total revenue. Detailed figures are provided in Annex 5.6.

Statement of Revenue and Expenses (Budget Estimated)

For the period of 12 months as of December 31, 2025

Following MI's internal review of the annual budget proposals from various departments, the SMT has agreed to submit the annual budget plan for 2025 for Council approval. Total revenue is projected to be US\$5,010,851, while total expenditure is estimated at US\$4,806,152. This results in an estimated revenue surplus of US\$204,699, which is approximately four percent of the total revenue.

Greater Mekong Community Affairs

Goal: To strengthen strategic leadership and results-based management towards enhanced development synergies, regional cooperation, and GMS development.

Monitoring Evaluation and Learning

Goal: To facilitate the development and implementation of Results-Based Management (RBM) system by MI Secretariat, its GMS member countries and development partners towards evidence-based decision-making.

Outcome 1: Developed and operationalized transparent and accountable Results-Based Management (RBM) system

Output1.1: Internal MEL system and processes including planning, monitoring, evaluation and learning are in place and operationalized to produce Semi-Annual Performance Report, Annual Performance Report, Annual Work Plan Narrative.

Activity 1.1.1: Design, facilitate and document Semi-Annual and Annual Performance and Planning Workshop.

Activity 1.1.2: Manage and Analyze data collected from departments for reporting purposes.

Activity 1.1.3: Select and utilize appropriate IT tools for information management, internal collaboration and research.

Output 1.2: MI Strategic Plan Evaluation and Development completed.

Activity 1.2.1: Design and Facilitate MI Strategic Plan Evaluation and Development with consultation with senior management team.

Activity 1.2.2: Recruit and select consultant to document the process and write MI Strategic Plan Evaluation report and write New Strategic Plan based on the inputs from the process.

Output 1.3: Internal MEL unit gained higher capacity in Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning and research

Activity 1.3.1: MEL unit team members attend regional and international conferences, workshops and training on MEL best practices to update their skills and knowledge.

Outputs 1.4: The Stocktake Report completed with synthesized plans and development strategies from across the Mekong sub-region, identified key synergies, gaps, and opportunities for coordination which will be utilized in the Mekong Institute's new five-year strategic plan development.

Activity 1.4.1: research design developed, data collection completed, and report finalized.

Outcome 2: Enhanced capacity of staff in MI's Results-Based Management (RBM) system

Outputs 2.1: MI staff gained access to MEL tools and support necessary to capture outcome level changes and are enabled to generate evidence for proposal development and regional policy influencing.

Activity 2.1.1: Develop internal MEL tools for capturing outcome level change indicators and programmatic learning.

Activity 2.1.2: Utilize office 365 system and develop internal SharePoint Site for MEL unit to rollout and promote the use of MEL tools for outcome harvesting and improve internal documentation and evidence generation.

Activity 2.1.3: Design and Conduct MEL tools orientation.

Activity 2.1.4: Provide advisory support in the development of evidence briefs, impact stories, outcome harvesting, project evaluation etc to the programme department.

Activity 2.1.5: provide advisory support for project MEL systems and processes including during proposal development stages.

Outcome 4: Enhanced capacity of GMS member countries/development partners on Results-Based Management (RBM)

Output 4.1: Projects containing MEL components are supported and improvement of GMS participant's knowledge documented.

Activity 4.1: Provide advisory support to the program team on MEL components including MEL related capacity building activities design and implementation.

Communications and Knowledge Management

Goal: To increase international and regional awareness of MI services and impacts, and to engage and empower GMS stakeholders and champions for effective knowledge building and sharing

Outcome 1: Broadened Public and Internal Awareness of MI's Expanded Portfolio of Services

Action Items:

Develop Comprehensive Marketing Materials: Update brochures, flyers, and digital content to reflect MI's current services and projects.

Training Sessions for Staff: Conduct workshops to ensure all staff are knowledgeable about MI's offerings and can effectively communicate with them at events.

Showcase at Key Events: Actively participate in regional conferences to present MI's portfolio.

Outcome 2: Increased Impact Visibility of MI's Capacity Development, Research Advocacy, and Advisory Services

Action Items:

Create Impact Reports: Regularly publish reports highlighting the outcomes of capacity development initiatives.

Utilize Social Media Campaigns: Launch targeted campaigns on platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn to share success stories and research findings.

Outcome 3: Enhanced Support in Wider GMS Stakeholder Engagement and Collaboration through Appropriate Tools, Channels, and Platforms

Action Items:

Expand Media Contact Database: Continuously update a comprehensive list of media contacts for broader outreach.

Host Collaborative Workshops: Organize workshops with stakeholders to identify common goals and strategies for collaboration.

Leverage Digital Platforms: Utilize webinars and online forums to engage stakeholders across the GMS.

Outcome 4: Fostered Engagement of GMS Stakeholders and MI Staff for Effective Knowledge Building and Sharing

Action Items:

Establish Knowledge Sharing Platforms: Create platforms or online portals where stakeholders can share insights, resources, and best practices.

Regular Feedback Mechanisms: Implement surveys and feedback sessions to gather input from stakeholders on their needs and preferences.

Performance Metrics:

Track engagement metrics on social media platforms (followers, shares, comments).

Measure attendance and participation rates at events.

Analyze feedback from stakeholder surveys to assess satisfaction with communication efforts.

Partnership and Resource Mobilization

Goal: To advance synergy across cooperation frameworks through partnership with GMS governments and development partners for cohesive and holistic impacts for GMS

Outcome 1: MI recognized as a regional convener across GMS-related cooperation frameworks; Strengthened partnerships with regional cooperation frameworks; Strengthened partnerships with development partners

Action Items:

Strengthening Regional Convener Role: Organize and facilitate regular Development Partners Meeting/dialogue that bring together MI's Development Partners who play key roles in the GMS to discuss collaboration opportunities and share their current strategic plan and focus on the regional thematic areas

Enhance Partnerships with Regional Cooperation Frameworks:

Activity 1: Revisit the strategic plan or master plan of the key regional cooperation frameworks to seek opportunity for potential collaborative projects and initiatives for Mekong Institute.

Activity 2: Perform as a Focal Point for Back-Office Support to the ACMECS Interim Secretariat.

Foster Development Partner Engagement: Develop a comprehensive database of current and potential development partners, including contact information, areas of interest, and previous collaborations.

Establish Formal Partnerships: Draft and negotiate new MOUs with identified development partners and implementing partners that outline collaborative projects aligned with MI's strategic objectives.

Promote Visibility and Engagement: ERPU collaborates with CKM to develop a communication plan that highlights MI's role as a regional convener and showcases successful partnerships, including press releases and social media campaigns.

Monitor and Evaluate Partnership Outcomes: Establish a monitoring and evaluation framework to assess the effectiveness of partnerships and collaborations, including feedback mechanisms from partners.

Outcome 2: Sustained and strengthened partnerships with existing and potential development and resource partners, including private sectors through innovative partnership and collaboration model.

Action Items:

Develop a Partnership Engagement Strategy: Create a comprehensive strategy that outlines targeted approaches for engaging existing and potential partners, including private sector entities.

Utilize Existing MoUs: Review and assess the existing MoUs to identify opportunities for deeper collaboration with current partners, as well as considering extending the MOU or not extending.

Engage Private Sector Partners: Identify key private sector stakeholders and initiate discussions on potential collaboration opportunities that align with their corporate social responsibility (CSR) objectives.

Measuring Results: establish a framework for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of partnerships, including metrics for success and areas for improvement.

Outcome 3: Effective and optimum utilization of resources (financial, manpower, and other resources) required for the implementation of MI Strategic Plan 2021-2025

Action Items:

Resource Mobilization Strategy: Create a resource mobilization strategy that outlines specific funding opportunities, grants, and potential partners for MI's strategic projects.

Enhance Collaboration with Partners: Engage existing and potential partners to identify opportunities for shared resources and joint initiatives.

Explore Innovative Funding Models: Research and propose innovative funding models, such as public-private partnerships, to diversify funding sources to identify potential grant opportunities and develop proposals to secure additional financial support.

4. Annex

4.1. Proposed Annual Budget for 2025

| Code | Project Title | Donors | Dept. | Budget 2025 |
|---------------------------|---|--------------|------------|-------------|
| A. Project revenue | | | | |
| A3 | MKCF Fund Management | <i>MKCF</i> | <i>TIF</i> | 176,559 |
| A15 | ROK-ACMECS Regional Branding Project - Facilitating Cross Border Trade through Synchronization of Rules and Regulation in the ACMECS | <i>MKCF</i> | <i>TIF</i> | 44,518 |
| A18 | The Triangular Cooperation Project on Sustainable Development in the Lower Mekong Basin based on the Water-Energy-Food (WEF) Nexus (Phase3) | <i>MKCF</i> | <i>SEE</i> | 46,333 |
| A19 | Capacity Building on Regional Project Design, Implementation, Monitoring & Evaluation of MKCF Projects | <i>MKCF</i> | <i>TIF</i> | 329,558 |
| A21 | Consultancy and technical assistant for ASEAN Cooperation Project for Crop Insurance Workshop | <i>ASEAN</i> | <i>ADC</i> | 23,355 |
| A22 | Transportation and Logistics Information System in Lancang-Mekong Region | <i>LMCSF</i> | <i>TIF</i> | 182,061 |

| | | | | |
|------------------------------|---|-------------|-----|------------------|
| A23 | Special Economic Zones (SEZs) Promotion for intra-regional Trade in the Lancang-Mekong Region (LMC) | LMCSF | TIF | 181,951 |
| A24 | Promoting Creative Industry for Heritage Tourism development in the Mekong Region (Creative4Mekong) | MKCF | TIF | 123,499 |
| A25 | GC7 Integrated Laboratory Systems Strengthening Strategic Initiative Regional Initiative – Asia Pacific | Global Fund | OED | 115,207 |
| A25 | GC7 Integrated Laboratory Systems Strengthening Strategic Initiative Regional Initiative – Asia Pacific | Global Fund | OED | 1,231,863 |
| A26 | Enhancing Digital Innovation Ecosystems for Accelerating Sustainable Development in the Lancang-Mekong Countries | China | SEE | 140,703 |
| A28 | Project on Mekong Sustainable Supply Chains Transformation and Advancement | AOTS | TIF | 165,000 |
| | Subtotal from long-term project revenue | | | 2,760,607 |
| B. Short-term project | | | | |
| B17 | Knowledge Management in Agricultural Development | APRACA | ADC | 3,300 |
| B53 | Promoting Effective Corporate Governance for Power Enterprises in the Lancang-Mekong Region | China | SEE | 7,948 |
| | | | | |
| | Subtotal short-term project revenue | | | 11,248 |
| C. One-off Activity | | | | |
| C59 | Socialization Workshop on the Implementation Plan for the Framework for CLMV Development (Based on approved revised budget) | AKCF-MOC | TIF | 20,070 |
| | | | | |
| | Subtotal one-off activities | | | 20,070 |
| | Total project revenue | | | 2,791,925 |

| | | | | |
|--|---|--|------------|------------------|
| D. Country contribution | | | | |
| D01 | Cambodia | | GMS | 20,000 |
| D02 | China | | GMS | 150,000 |
| D03 | Lao PDR | | GMS | 20,000 |
| D04 | Myanmar | | GMS | 20,000 |
| D05 | Thailand | | GMS | 300,000 |
| D06 | Viet Nam | | GMS | 20,000 |
| | Subtotal country contribution revenue | | | 530,000 |
| E. Other revenue | | | | |
| E01 | Other revenue | | Other | 10,000 |
| E02 | Interest | | Other | 5,000 |
| | Subtotal Other Revenue | | | 15,000 |
| | | | | |
| | Total Revenue | | | 3,336,925 |
| Projected Opportunities funds in Year | | | | |
| C99 | Projected Opportunities funds for NZAP | | <i>OPP</i> | 598,000 |
| C99 | Projected Opportunities funds for China | | <i>OPP</i> | 350,000 |
| C99 | Projected Opportunities funds for MKCF | | <i>OPP</i> | 205,983 |
| C99 | Projected Opportunities funds for General | | <i>OPP</i> | 519,943 |
| | Subtotal Projected Opportunities funds in Year | | | 1,673,926 |
| | Total Revenue including the opportunity fund | | | 5,010,851 |
| | | | | |
| EXPENSES | | | | |
| F. Projects and MI Programs Delivery | | | | |
| F01 | Long term Project | | | 1,518,334 |
| F02 | Short term project | | | 11,248 |

| | | | | |
|-----------------------------|--|--|--|------------------|
| F03 | One off activity | | | 12,042 |
| | | | | |
| C99 | Projected Opportunities funds for NZAP | | | 299,000 |
| C99 | Projected Opportunities funds for China | | | 210,000 |
| C99 | Projected Opportunities funds for MKCF | | | 144,188 |
| C99 | Projected Opportunities funds for General | | | 311,966 |
| | Subtotal project delivery cost | | | 2,506,778 |
| | Cross profit | | | |
| | | | | |
| F4 | Program administration (Personnel cost, travel, cost sharing and supplies) | | | 938,514 |
| F5 | Business Development | | | 87,481 |
| | Subtotal program administration and Organization development | | | 1,025,995 |
| | Subtotal for program expenses | | | 3,532,773 |
| G. Operating Expense | | | | |
| G1 | Salary and common staff benefit | | | 872,279 |
| G2 | HRD and organization activities | | | 83,746 |
| G3 | Business traveling | | | 25,818 |
| G4 | General operation expenses | | | 146,461 |
| G5 | Contractual service | | | 10,333 |
| G6 | Repair and maintenance | | | 36,364 |
| G7 | IT improvement | | | 69,544 |
| G8 | Communication and knowledge management | | | 4,572 |
| G9 | Official functions (Governing Board and CA Meeting) | | | 24,262 |
| | Subtotal operating expenses | | | 1,273,379 |

| | | | | |
|--|-----------------------------|--|--|-----------|
| | Total expenses | | | 4,806,152 |
| | Earning or (Deficit) | | | 204,699 |