



MEKONG  
INSTITUTE

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EVALUATION OF  
**STRATEGIC PLAN 2021-2025**  
AND FORMULATION OF  
**STRATEGIC PLAN 2026-2030**



**CONCEPT NOTE**

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MEKONG INSTITUTE, KHON KAEN, THAILAND

[www.mekonginstitute.org](http://www.mekonginstitute.org)

## CONCEPT NOTE

### EVALUATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN 2021-2025 AND FORMULATION OF MEKONG INSTITUTE STRATEGIC PLAN 2026-2030

#### I. About Mekong Institute

The Mekong Institute (MI) is an intergovernmental organization that contributes to 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, China, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, and Viet Nam, 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 (ADC), Trade and Investment Facilitation (TIF), and Sustainable Energy and Environment (SEE), while addressing issues of social inclusion and vulnerability, digital economy and innovation, and labor mobility to cement holistic and sustainable development impacts in the subregion and beyond.

#### II. Background and Strategic Plan Overview

The current MI Strategic Plan (2021-2025) built upon the achievements of the 2016-2020 Strategic Plan which outlined key objectives across regional development themes and institutional approaches, supported by MI's Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) system. As 2025 approaches, it is critical to evaluate the effectiveness, relevance, and sustainability of the 2021-2025 Strategic Plan and to utilize learning from the implementation of the 2021-2025 Strategic Plan to formulate a new Strategic Plan for 2026-2030 that aligns with emerging regional needs.

#### III. Purpose

The process to **Evaluation of Strategic Plan 2021-2025 and Formulation of Strategic Plan 2026-2030 for the Mekong Institute** serves two overarching purposes:

- **Phase 1:** Evaluation of Strategic Plan 2021-2025 - To assess the achievements, challenges, and overall relevance of the current strategic plan.
- **Phase 2:** Formulation of Strategic Plan 2026-2030 - To develop a comprehensive new strategic plan based on the evaluation findings, stakeholder inputs, and future opportunities in the GMS region.

#### IV. Expected Outputs

<b>Output 1</b>	Evaluation Strategy and Implementation (2021-2025)
<b>Output 2:</b>	Five-year Strategic Plan and Five-years Strategic Implementation 2026-2030

#### V. Role and Responsibilities

The MEL Unit of MI will lead the process with support from an external consultant for documentation and report writing. A committee will be formed to work collaboratively with the consultant and MEL unit.

- **MEL as Coordinator:** Provide self-review guidelines to all departments/units. The MEL Unit will coordinate consultations with selected staff to gather insights from national stakeholders and to provide overall coordination to achieve the mentioned outputs.
- **Department/Unit Self-Reviews:** Each department/unit will conduct self-reviews and report using specific formats.
- **External Consultant:** The consultant's primary role will be to assist with documentation, write final reports, and help develop the new strategic plan based on the input provided.
- **Committee for Evaluation of Strategic Plan 2021-2025 and Formulation of Strategic Plan 2026-2030:** Members of the committee will be confirmed.
- **Senior Management Team (SMT), Governing Board Members, MI Alumni and the development partners** will be engaged in the process to provide their guidance, feedback and other inputs into of Evaluation of Strategic Plan 2021-2025 and Formulation of Strategic Plan 2026-2030

#### VI. Overall, Scope of Work

Each Phase will be running in parallel with each other.

Phase 1: Evaluation of Strategic Plan 2021-2025	Phase 2: Formulation of Strategic Plan 2026-2030
Conduct a desk review of relevant MI documents, including the current Strategic Plan, monitoring and evaluation reports, and project completion reports, and internal M&E data.	Conduct literature review of global and regional development trends, development priorities of individual GMS countries as well as GMS related cooperation mechanisms as bases for determining the priorities and development context of GMS at the end of 2030.

	The review includes regional and national development strategies from GMS countries and key development partners (e.g., ADB, Mekong-Lancang Cooperation, ASEAN, MRC and ACMECS)
Develop and implement an online survey targeting MI's key stakeholders, including development partners and GMS government representatives, to gather feedback on the current strategic plan's performance.	Conduct national consultations in each GMS country to present the evaluation findings and gather inputs on the proposed strategic direction for 2026-2030.
Facilitate consultations and workshops with MI's SMT and other relevant departments.	Develop the Results Framework, Theory of Change, and MEL framework for the new strategic plan in collaboration with MI's MEL Unit, SMT and other relevant internal and external stakeholders.
Conduct interviews with key stakeholders to assess MI's capacity to achieve strategic goals.	Present initial concepts and findings to MI's Governing Board and Development Partners during dedicated meetings.
Summarize findings and provide recommendations for the formulation of the next strategic plan.	Draft the final version of the Strategic Plan 2026-2030, incorporating feedback from all stakeholders.

**VII. Key Deliverables**

**Phase 1: Evaluation of Strategic Plan 2021-2025**

1. Inception report, including methodology, survey tools, and work plan
2. Draft report on the evaluation of the Strategic Plan 2021-2025, with specific recommendations for the next strategic plan.
3. Final evaluation report.

**Phase 2: Formulation of Strategic Plan 2026-2030**

1. Inception report, including methodology, survey tools, and work plan
2. Draft Strategic Plan 2026-2030 (with Results Framework, Theory of Change, and MEL Framework).
3. Final Strategic Plan 2026-2030, incorporating feedback from stakeholders and MI's SMT.

## VIII. Methodology

The methodology for this process involves two interlinked phases: evaluating the effectiveness and relevance of MI's 2021-2025 Strategic Plan and using the insights gained to shape a forward-looking 2026-2030 Strategic Plan. Each phase builds upon the other to ensure that MI's future strategy reflects past achievements, learned lessons, and regional priorities.

### Phase 1: Evaluation of the Strategic Plan 2021-2025

**Objective:** This phase assesses the impact and relevance of MI's 2021-2025 Strategic Plan, focusing on what has been achieved, the challenges encountered, and the overall sustainability of the initiatives. The findings will directly inform the structure, goals, and priorities for the new 2026-2030 Strategic Plan.

1. **Inception Report and Planning:** The process begins with the creation of an Inception Report, which outlines the evaluation's methodology, survey tools, interview guides, and a detailed work plan. This initial step ensures clarity and coordination across MI's departments and sets the groundwork for systematic data collection and analysis. The SMT (Senior Management Team) is engaged early on to review and refine the approach, aligning the evaluation objectives with MI's strategic priorities.
2. **MI Self-Reviews:** A structured self-review, coordinated by the MEL Unit will conduct a structured self-review focusing on collecting qualitative and quantitative information from all departments and units to assess MI's contributions to the strategic goals, noting successes, challenges, and lessons learned. This step provides diverse, department-specific insights that will later contribute to a comprehensive evaluation of the organization's collective progress.
3. **SMT Plus Retreat:** A facilitated retreat with the SMT is designed to use the information from the self-assessment to develop a high-level strategic framework at the organizational level, to identify the Theory of Change and key stakeholder mapping, and to ensure that the strategic direction is mapped out at a high level.
4. **Data Collection and Analysis:**
  - **Document Review:** external consultant and MEL unit will conduct a desk review of key MI documents, including the Strategic Plan, monitoring and evaluation reports, project completion reports, and other internal data. This analysis contextualizes departmental self-reviews and identifies overarching trends and themes across MI's work areas.
  - **Stakeholder Surveys:** An online survey is implemented to gather feedback from external stakeholders, including MI's regional partners, GMS government representatives, and development partners. This step provides a broad view of the Strategic Plan's perceived effectiveness from MI's partners.

- **Key Informant Interviews:** In-depth interviews with key stakeholders offer qualitative insights into MI’s strategic performance, complementing the survey findings with more nuanced perspectives on MI’s achievements and areas needing improvement.

**5. National Consultations:** To ensure the Strategic Plan’s relevance to all GMS countries, MI will hold national consultations to collect input on regional development needs that will be the basis for the feedback for the strategic direction and theory of change as well as to provide input into the evaluation findings.

**Phase 2: Development of the Strategic Plan 2026-2030**

**Objective:** Building on the findings from Phase 1 and organized in a parallel fashion, this phase focuses on creating a forward-looking 2026-2030 Strategic Plan that addresses emerging regional challenges and aligns with GMS priorities. The development process is collaborative and iterative, engaging MI’s staff, stakeholders, and regional partners.

**1. Drafting Strategic Directions:** Based on the initial finding’s evaluation, initial strategic directions are drafted through the SMT-Plus Retreat and self-review findings. This draft reflects lessons learned from the previous plan, addressing areas of improvement while retaining successful elements. This drafting process ensures that the 2026-2030 Strategic Plan builds directly upon the foundation set by the evaluation, allowing MI to address existing challenges more effectively.

**2. Stakeholder Engagement and Consultations:**

- **Internal Consultations and Workshops:** MI’s departments and SMT engage in a series of workshops to refine the strategic directions and collaboratively design a Theory of Change, Results Framework, and MEL Framework.
- **National Consultations:** Building on feedback from Phase 1’s consultations, national-level workshops are held to gather feedback on the proposed strategy from stakeholders in selected GMS countries.

**3. Framework Development:** Using insights from the consultations, the strategic development team formulates a Theory of Change, MEL Framework, and Results Framework.

**IX. Evaluation Criteria**

Evaluation Component	Key Guiding Questions
Relevance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● How well does the organization’s strategic direction align with the evolving needs and priorities of its stakeholders?</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Is the focus of the organization on addressing the most pressing and strategic issues of the GMS region?</li> </ul>
Coherence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● To what extent does the organization’s strategy add value and complement the efforts of other actors within the region, including those of its partners?</li> </ul>
Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● How effectively does the organization integrate and coordinate its various programs and interventions to maximize impact?</li> <li>● To what degree has the organization achieved its strategic objectives?</li> <li>● What organizational changes (intended or unintended) have emerged from its strategic approach?</li> <li>● What internal and external factors have supported or hindered the achievement of objectives, and how has the organization’s approach (direct implementation, partnerships, advocacy) contributed to these outcomes? How might the organization strengthen its approaches to increase impact?</li> </ul>
Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What evidence indicates that the results achieved through the organization’s strategic initiatives will be sustainable over time?</li> </ul>
Integration of Safe Programming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● How well does the organization implement a safe programming approach and adhere to “do no harm” principles across its strategic initiatives?</li> <li>● How effectively are unintended consequences anticipated and managed?</li> <li>● To what extent are gender equality, disability, and social inclusion (GEDSI) integrated into the organization’s strategies, following best practices?</li> </ul>
Gaps and Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What strategic gaps remain unaddressed by the organization?</li> <li>● What are the challenges and opportunities for the organization to enhance its contributions in future programming?</li> </ul>

## X. Detailed Activities and Timeline

No.	Activity	Timeline	No. of Days	Lead
1	Develop concept note	October 2024	3	MEL unit
2	Develop TOR for external consultant recruitment and selection	November 2024	1	MEL unit
3	Create a key stakeholders list for online survey and key informant interviews, SMT Plus Retreat, Design National Consultation Workshop, the Steering Committee and Development Partners' Meeting	December 2024	20	MEL Unit with support from Partnership and Protocol Manager and CKM
4	Develop an inception report, including methodology, survey tools, key informant interview guide and work plan.	Week 3 December 2024	10	External consultant
5	Collect feedback and finalize methodology, survey tools, and work plan with SMT (Phase 1: Evaluation of Strategic Plan 2021-2025) (Phase 2: Formulation of Strategic Plan 2026-2030)	Week 2 January 2025	2	MEL unit
6	Develop data collection plan for the online data collection and key informant interviews	Week 4 January 2025	3	Consultant
7	Review and finalize data collection plan for the online data collection and key informant interviews	Week 4 January 2025	1	MEL
8	Deploy online data collection	Week 1 February 2025	1	MEL Unit
9	Conduct key informant interviews	February-March	10	Consultant and MEL Unit
10	Develop "SMT Plus Retreat and Self-Review" of the current strategic plan and initial concepts for the new plan	Week 1 of November 2024	3	MEL Unit
11	Collect feedback and finalize methodology, facilitation guide and documentation guide for "SMT Plus Retreat and Self-Review"	Week 2 of November 2024	1	MEL unit
12	Organize logistics for the SMT Plus Retreat and Self-Review	Week 1 January 2025	3	Operations



13	Conduct and documenting SMT Plus Retreat and Self-Review	Week 4 of January 2025	5	Consultant and MEL Unit
14	Compile findings (documentation) and data analysis and synthesis from the SMT Plus Retreat and Self-review	Week 1 February 2025	5	Consultant
15	Conduct Internal preliminary findings sharing and validation with MEL Unit and SMT	Week 2 March 2025	1	Consultant
16	Collection feedback and finalizing preliminary findings of the SMT Plus Retreat and Self-review from SMT	Week 3 March 2025	1	MEL Unit
17	Design National Consultation Workshop facilitation guide and documentation plan	Week 1 March 2025	3	Consultant and MEL unit
18	Collect feedback and finalize the National Consultation Workshop facilitation guide and documentation plan from SMT	Week 1 March 2025	1	MEL
19	Organize logistics for the National Consultation Workshop	Week 1 March 2025	3	Operations
20	Conduct the National Consultation Workshop	Week 2-3 March 2025	TBC	Consultant, MEL and SMT
21	Document and report of the National Consultation Workshop	Week 1-3 April 2025	5	Consultant
22	Synthesize key findings and inputs from the National Consultation Workshop into existing Preliminary Findings	Week 1 May 2025	2	Consultant
23	Internal presentation of the Preliminary Findings with SMT and key internal stakeholders	Week 2 May 2025	1	Consultant
24	Collect feedback and finalizing the refined preliminary findings and submit for ED finalization before sharing with the MI governing Board	Week 3 May 2025	1	MEL Unit
25	Preparing presentation content for the Preliminary findings to the MI Governing Board	Week 3 May 2025	1	MEL Unit
26	Presentation: Preliminary findings to the MI Governing Board	Week 1 July 2025	1	ED
27	Draft Evaluation of Strategic Plan 2021-2025 Report	Week 2 July- Week 2 August 2025	5	Consultant
27	Draft Strategic Plan and Results Framework	Week 2 July- Week 2 August 2025	10	Consultant
28	Prepare internal presentation of the Strategic Plan and Results Framework for SMT review	Week 3 Aug 2025	1	Consultant
29	Collect feedback from SMT and finalized Strategic Plan and Results Framework	Week 4 Aug 2025	1	MEL Unit

30	Prepare Content for the “Steering Committee and Development Partners” Meeting to review findings and providing additional inputs	Week 1 September 2025	2	Consultant and MEL Unit
31	Prepare logistics for Steering Committee and Development Partners	Week 1 September 2025	3	Operations
32	Conduct “Steering Committee and Development Partners” Meeting	Week 2 September 2025	1	Consultant, MEL unit, ED, SMT
33	Collect feedback and document the Steering Committee and Development Partners’ Meeting	Week 3 November 2025	2	Consultant
34	Submit the “Refine Strategic Plan and Results Framework” to SMT and MI key stakeholders for final review and approval of the executive director	Week 4 November 2025	5	Consultant
35	Submit the final draft Strategic Plan to the Governing Board.	Week 1 December 2025	1	ED