

## ACCELERATING POST COVID-19 RECOVERY

and Building Resilience in the Greater Mekong Subregion

October 18-19, 2022

Pullman Raja Orchid, Khon Kaen, Thailand



### Background

Since its establishment in 1992, the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) has increasingly cooperated and integrated to promote the flow of goods and services through the GMS Economic Corridor, as well as in tourism and hospitality, food security, and energy resources. However, in the last two years, the GMS countries have been adversely impacted by COVID-19 to varying degrees depending on the resilience of their economies and the capacity of the public health system. At the regional level, challenges exist in building back socioeconomic stability, especially among the poor and vulnerable groups where opportunities to generate new progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are limited.

After taking immediate actions in response to the pandemic, the world is now moving toward COVID-19 recovery. It is an opportune time for countries to redefine prosperity and facilitate socioeconomic reconstruction. Consequently, several initiatives have been implemented focusing on recovery plans which emphasize more integrated, inclusive, green, resilient, sustainable, and stronger reforms. These include smart agriculture, sustainable tourism, green economy and finance, and food-energy-water nexus. Furthermore, as GMS is an integral part of ASEAN, the GMS COVID-19 Response and Recovery Plan 2021–2023 is aptly in line with ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework (ACRF) which is the consolidated exit strategy from the COVID-19 crisis. The GMS COVID-19 Response and Recovery Plan 2021–2023 highlights balancing health, economic, environmental, and social priorities as well as communicating with and engaging local governments, private sectors, and communities. One distinctive feature of the plan is its emphasis on greater regional cooperation and integration (RCI), such as the Building Back Better initiative. RCI has proven to be a powerful instrument during the pandemic response, particularly in cross-border management and vaccination roll-outs. Likewise, during the transition period to 2030, a more proactive stance of RCI should be taken to enhance synergy and complement existing cooperation frameworks to ensure a strong recovery, region-wide solidity, and preparation for future crises.

Given this context, Mekong Institute (MI) as an intergovernmental organization owned by the GMS, with the aim of strengthening the capacities of human resources for regional cooperation and integration, has initiated a flagship program together with its partners. The program seeks to promote post COVID-19 resilient economies by providing various proactive events such as GMS City Nodes Network and GMS Knowledge Network. Initiated by MI, the Mekong Forum has been identified as one of the activities to provide an interactive platform for the discussion and sharing of visions of stakeholders to build synergy and address challenges to ensure a successful recovery of the GMS as well as the attainment of long-term sustainability across the subregion.

This year's Mekong Forum will highlight the importance of increasing long-term resilience and building back better. With all the policies and action plans on COVID-19 already in place, the forum will also discuss how existing cooperation frameworks can be synergized and conducted successfully in real situations. Using this opportunity, the forum shall create common understanding among stakeholders and underline the importance of capacity development, making future implementation complementary

and effective, and in turn, helping to revitalize GMS economies for greater and lasting impact in the post COVID-19 world.

## Overall objective

The Mekong Forum 2022 aims to:

- **bring together** opinion leaders to discuss tools, instruments, experience and practical solutions which have been implemented to accelerate recovery and resilience of the GMS
- **demonstrate** the linkages between recovery and transition towards building resilience and capacity building and countries' development agenda
- **serve** as a regional platform for building trust and synergies among businesses, government leaders, development experts, and practitioners

## Participants

Members of the GMS countries, development practitioners, stakeholders, and executives or senior officials of development organizations, particularly those working at the regional (GMS/ASEAN) level are strongly encouraged to join. The forum also welcomes participants from government/intergovernmental, non-government/civil society, private and non-profit development organizations, research institutes, academia, as well as support agencies within the region.

## Registration



Admission to the event is free. Scan the QR code or click here to register: <https://cutt.ly/4Bpr21E>

## Highlights

The forum offers:

- action-oriented ideas and proposed programs, including initiatives for the further development of the GMS;
- a network of participants engaged in and/or knowledgeable about development cooperation, policy dialogues, and post COVID-19 recovery
- a platform for organizations and individuals who are seeking synergy complementary to existing cooperation frameworks in the GMS

## Format

The Mekong Forum 2022 will be a hybrid event to be held on **19 October** in Khon Kaen, Thailand while online attendance is also made available for those who cannot make it physically. Expected number of onsite participants is approximately 100.

## Forum Structure

### I. Plenary sessions

The day will start in plenary with the official welcome and opening remarks followed by keynote speeches from distinguished speakers who are experts, practitioners working in the field of development cooperation or at the regional (GMS/ASEAN) levels.

### II. Parallel breakout sessions

Parallel breakout sessions are thematic workshops which are directly related to the theme of the conference: **“Accelerating Post COVID-19 Recovery and Building Resilience in the Greater Mekong Subregion”**. Depending on the interests, participants are to pre-select the breakout sessions before the conference. In total, there are two rounds of rotation (morning and afternoon) with 3 sessions on offer for each round. The topics are:

- A. Inclusive and Resilient Society
- B. Seamless Connectivity
- C. GMS' Priority Sectors

### **Objectives of the session**

- Create opportunities for participants to share knowledge and experiences and discuss interesting projects, approaches, initiatives, and solutions related to Post COVID-19 recovery and resilience building as well as other topics
- Catalyse peer learning for collaborative reflection and developing ideas to address questions and challenges
- Promote networking among participants – enabling the exploration of new emerging topics

### **III. Panel Discussion on “Accelerating Recovery from COVID-19”**

Panelists will include representatives from the thematic workshop speakers and one additional speaker to discuss practical implementation issues related to accelerating recovery and building resilience in the GMS. At the same time, the session will seek to harness the power of leveraging resources, including finance, technology, knowledge, and human resources, and explore how to converge COVID-19-related efforts initiated by governments, private sectors and development organizations.

For session panelists, MI will identify experts from the field to join each session by considering the future/potential collaboration with MI in specific areas.

### **Exhibition**

The exhibition will showcase how MI's Strategic Plan 2021 - 2025 complements the GMS COVID-19 Recovery Action Plan and the other regional and global development cooperation frameworks. In line with addressing the challenges and opportunities of the 'new normal,' MI programs and other related activities on agriculture, trade and investment facilitations as well as social inclusion and vulnerability, digital economy and innovation, and labor mobility will be featured.

### **Digital media**

For more information, visit Mekong Forum page at: <https://www.mekonginstitute.org/mekong-forum-2022/agenda/>.

### **Event organization**

The event is organised by Mekong Institute, co-hosted by Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau (TCEB), and is held in partnership with Khon Kaen Chamber of Commerce (COC) and Thailand Creative Design Center (TCDC) Khon Kaen.

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## MEKONG FORUM 2022 AGENDA

### Accelerating Post COVID-19 Recovery and Building Resilience in the Greater Mekong Subregion

Pullman Khon Kaen Raja Orchid, Khon Kaen, Thailand

#### Tue 18 October 2022 (Reception Dinner)

Time	Activity
18.00 – 18.30	<b>Registration</b>
18.30 – 18.35	<b>Greetings and introduction by the emcee</b> Ms. Anusara Tanpitak, Manager, Mekong Institute (MI)
18.35 – 18.45	<b>Welcome remarks</b> Mr. Sutep Maneechot, Vice Governor, Khon Kaen Province
18.45 – 18.55	<b>Video presentation and welcome remarks</b> Mr. Joomphol Phongnailert, Senior Manager - Northeastern Regional Office, Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau (TCEB)
18.55 – 19.05	<b>Video presentation and opening remarks</b> Mr. Suriyan Vichitlekarn, Executive Director, MI
19.05 – 20.30	<b>Networking dinner, live music and cocktail</b>

#### Wed 19 October 2022 (Forum Day)

Wed 19 October 2022 (Program Day)		
Time	Activity	Zoom Links
08:30 – 09:00	<b>Registration</b>	<b><u>Plenary Session</u></b>  (Same link also for the afternoon plenary session)
09:00 – 09:10	<b>Greetings by the emcee</b> Ms. Hao Wen, Program Coordinator, MI	
09:10 – 09:20	<b>Introductory remark</b> Mr. Suriyan Vichitlekarn, Executive Director, MI	
<b>Block I: Plenary Session: Opening and Keynote Addresses</b>		
09:20 – 09:40	<b>Welcome and keynote address I</b> Dr. Narongchai Akrasanee, Chairman of MI Steering Committee	
09:40 – 09:50	<b>Keynote address II: “COVID-19 Recovery as a Transition Towards GMS 2030”</b> Mr. Ramesh Subramaniam, Director General, Southeast Asia Department (SERD), Asian Development Bank (ADB), Metro Manila, Philippines	
09:50 – 10:10	<b>Overview of thematic breakout session</b>	
10:10 – 10:30	<b>Group photo</b>	
10:30 – 11:00	<b>Coffee/ tea break (and Media Interview)</b>	
<b>Block II: Round I of Parallel Breakout Session</b>		

11:00 – 12:30	<b>A. Inclusive and Resilient Society</b>	<b>B. Seamless Connectivity</b>	<b>C. GMS' Priority Sectors</b>	
	<p><b>A1. Strengthening Health and Society Resilience</b></p> <p>The COVID-19 pandemic has brought to light significant inequities and vulnerabilities within and across countries that have existed in the GMS for decades. It created a reset moment for the leaders to reimagine more holistic solutions to build the resilient health and social security systems to mitigate domino effects from any future large-scale outbreaks. The session will explore pathways toward One Health underscoring the need for innovative solutions as well as multisectoral, and transdisciplinary collaboration and cooperation at different levels to achieve health equity in the GMS context.</p> <p><b>Speakers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Strengthening Innovation, Coordination Work and Information Management for One Health Implementation in the GMS” by Dr. Wongs Laohasiriwong, Professor, Faculty of Public Health, Khon Kaen University</li> <li>• “Prospects towards Accessible and Affordable Digital Health Solutions in Southeast Asia” by Dr. Raymond Francis Sarmiento, eHealth Information Network (AeHIN)</li> <li>• “Bridging the Gaps in Promoting Health Equity” by Dr. Viengmany Bounkham, Deputy Director General of Department of Planning and</li> </ul>	<p><b>B1. Boosting Logistics and Cross-Border Trade</b></p> <p>The session will focus on facilitating cross-border trade and investment through the strengthening of intra-regional infrastructure linkages. Economic Zones (EZs) and Cross Border Economic Zones (CBEZs) will also be discussed.</p> <p><b>Speakers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Linkage of SEZ to the cross-border trade and investment in Mekong countries” By Dr. Julian Latimer Clarke, Program Specialist, Trade and Investment Facilitation Department, MI</li> <li>• “Cross-border Logistics Trade and Boosting Logistics Technologies in Mekong countries” by Mr. Sathaporn Larkanpan, Managing Director, Stevia Technew Thailand, Bangkok, Thailand</li> <li>• “Impacts of Electric Vehicles on logistics Industry” by Jelena (Yelena) Kremenjas, General Manager Sustainability, DHL SUPPLY CHAIN (THAILAND) Ltd., Head Office, Bangkok, Thailand</li> <li>• “Sharing experiences on Royal Group Phnom Penh SEZ to boost cross-border logistics” by Ms. Michelle Zhao, General Manager for Operation, Royal Group Phnom Penh SEZ Plc., Phnom Penh, Cambodia</li> </ul>	<p><b>C1. Inclusive, Climate and Economic Resilient Agriculture Sector in the GMS</b></p> <p>The agri-food sector in the GMS is characterized by smallholders and informal sector players who are the most vulnerable to the impact of climate change which was aggravated by the pandemic. This session focuses on looking forward to strengthening the inclusive climate and economic resilience of small farmers in the GMS by addressing gaps to minimize food losses, and improve the productivity, quality, safety and market access for agri-food in and from the Mekong region.</p> <p><b>Speakers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Impact of COVID-19 on the Agri-food Sector in the GMS” by Dr. Rico Ancog, Dean of the School of Environmental Science and Management at the University of the Philippines Los Baños and the Head of the Ecosystem Services and Environmental Policy (ESEP) Research Laboratory of SESAM</li> <li>• “Food loss and small farmers in the Mekong Region” by Dr. Jun Acedo</li> <li>• “Productivity for small farmers and sustainable agriculture in the Mekong Region” by Mr. Sianghee Tan, Croplife Asia</li> <li>• “Practical consideration and success factors in</li> </ul>	<p>Zoom Links for Online Participants</p> <p><b><u>A1. Strengthening Health and Regional Resilience</u></b></p> <p><b><u>B1. Boosting Logistics and Cross-Border Trade</u></b></p> <p><b><u>C1. Inclusive, Climate and Economic Resilient Agriculture Sector in the GMS</u></b></p>



	Cooperation, Ministry of Health, Lao PDR •“Collaboration toward One Health Capacity Building in the Mekong Region” by Dr. Vipat Kuruchittham, Executive Director of Southeast Asia One Health University Network (SEAOHUN)		building the resilience of small farmers” by NAFRI, Lao PDR	
12:30 – 14:00	Lunch			
Block III: Round II of Parallel Breakout Session				
14:00 – 15:30	<b>A. Inclusive and Resilient Society</b>  <b>A2. Strengthening Creative Economy and the COVID-19 Recovery</b>  The prolonged Covid-19 pandemic has affected all aspects of life and posed challenges to countries all over the world, especially the creative industries where more than 30 million people are working globally, mostly young people. Fostering creative industries strategically for an inclusive and sustainable recovery will have long-term benefits, including, but not limited to, an increase in quality of life, the stimulation of innovation and thus a more resilient economy with improved ability to adapt in the face of challenges.  The session will explore how creative economy contribute to livelihoods and income generating opportunities as part of subregional cooperation and integration as well as in accelerating COVID-19 recovery. Examples and agenda for near future cooperation could be discussed.  <b>Speakers</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ms. Montinee Yongvikul, Director of Creative City Development,</li></ul>	<b>B. Seamless Connectivity</b>  <b>B2. Staying Ahead in Digital Acceleration</b>  The session will highlight the importance of digital acceleration in the region to achieve economic recovery. It will look ahead and take a step towards emerging digital technologies and e-commerce which will be the engine driving Post COVID-19 recovery.  <b>Speakers</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• “Shaping Digital Futures Pathways to Post-COVID-19 Recovery” by Mr. Sajib Azad, Policy Expert, The United Nations Capital Development Fund, UNCDF</li><li>• “Perspective of Cross-border e-commerce development in GMS” by Prof. Mr. Jian Wang, Chair Professor of International Business and E-Business, Center for International Business Studies, University of International Business and Economics (UIBE)</li><li>• “Rural E-Commerce Model- case of Pinduoduo” by Ms. Xin Yi Lim, Executive Director of Sustainability and</li></ul>	<b>C. GMS’ Priority Sectors</b>  <b>C2. Delivering Sustainable Growth in the Tourism Sector</b>  Tourism development to advance trade and facilitation, especially in meeting the fast-rising and highly competitive tourism inbound market, remains ever more relevant in the Post COVID-19 world. Smart tourism tools, techniques, and technologies through learning exchanges, structured learning visits, information-sharing, and adaption of best practices will be discussed. Such investments are geared to expand small entrepreneurial businesses and deepen cultural interconnectedness and appreciation among and between cities in the Republic of Korea and the Mekong region countries.  <b>Speakers</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• ‘Brief Overview on Sustainable Tourism’ by Mr. Sa-nga Sattanun, Program Manager, MI</li><li>• “Reflecting Tourism in the Mekong Region for the Post-Pandemic Recovery and Sustainability” by Ms. Catherine Germier-Hamel,</li></ul>	Zoom Links for Online Participants  <u><b>A2. Strengthening Creative Economy and the COVID-19 Recovery</b></u>  <u><b>B2. Staying Ahead in Digital Acceleration</b></u>  <u><b>C2. Delivering Sustainable Growth in the Tourism Sector</b></u>

	<p>Creative Economy Agency, Thailand</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• “An ASEAN-Korea Approach to Arts Sector Development” by Mr. Benjamin Milton Hampe, Project Director of KONNECT ASEAN, ASEAN Foundation</li><li>• Ms. Katalin Bokor, Economic Affairs Officer, Trade and Creative Economy, Division on International Trade and Commodities, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development</li></ul>	<p>Agricultural Impact Pinduoduo Inc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• “The Rise of Fintech and Digital Payments- Emerging Technologies for Post COVID-19 Recovery” by Mr. Chonladet Khemarattana, Chairman, Thai Fintech Association</li><li>• “Shaping ASEAN’s Digital Startup Ecosystem Pathways to Post COVID-19 Recovery” by Mr. Tiat Jin (TJ) OOI, Lead Consultant, ERIA E-S-I Knowledge</li></ul>	<p>CEO, Destination Mekong</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• “MICE tourism industry to multi-dimensionally benefit and attract foreign visitors to Thailand” by Mrs. Supawan Teerarat, Senior Vice President, Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau (TCEB), Thailand</li><li>• “Smart Tourism Policies to Monitor Destination’s Sustainability towards a Challenging Future” by Dr. Michail Toanoglou, Professor of Hospitality &amp; Tourism Management, Expert in Sustainable Destination Management &amp; Branding, Jeonju University School of Tourism &amp; Culture, South Korea</li><li>• “Comprehensive Technologies and Innovation Utilized to Support Sustainable and Resilient Tourism” by Mr. Gerrit Kruger, Chief Marketing Office, Destination Mekong</li></ul>	
15:30 – 15:45	Coffee/Tea Break			
Block IV: Plenary Session				
15:45 – 16:40	<p><b>Panel Discussion on “Accelerating Recovery from COVID-19”</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Moderator from thematic workshop: Topic A</li><li>• Moderator from thematic workshop: Topic B</li><li>• Moderator from thematic workshop: Topic C1 and C2</li></ul> <p>Moderated by Mr. Suriyan Vichitlekarn, Executive Director, MI</p>			<p><b><u>Plenary Session</u></b></p> <p>(Same link with the morning plenary session)</p>
16:40 – 17:00	<b>Wrap-up and closing by the moderator.</b>			

*Note: The event will be conducted in English. However, simultaneous translation from English to Thai is available.*