



GREATER MEKONG
SUBREGION
**CORE ENVIRONMENT
PROGRAM**

Development Partners' Roundtable

31 January 2018 * Chiang Mai, Thailand

REPORT ON KEY MESSAGES

A Development Partners' Roundtable was held on 31 January 2018 as part of the 5th Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) Environment Ministers' Meeting (EMM-5). The roundtable discussed potential areas of cooperation and collaboration in the context of the GMS Core Environment Program (CEP) Strategic Framework and Action Plan 2018–2022, as well as potential linkages with the GMS Economic Cooperation Program through the GMS Regional Investment Framework 2022 (RIF 2022) and the Ha Noi Action Plan 2018–2022. The meeting was moderated by Ramesh Subramaniam, director general of the Southeast Asia Department, Asian Development Bank (ADB); and the participants included representatives of the GMS member countries and of the development and implementing partners, including key organizations operating in the region. The list of participants is attached as *Appendix 1*, and the roundtable program as *Appendix 2*.

Rhodora Concepcion, senior regional cooperation specialist, ADB, presented the emerging priorities of the GMS Program, as specified in the Ha Noi Action Plan. They are also contained in the RIF 2022, which provides support for the operationalization of the Ha Noi Action Plan through a pipeline of 226 investment and technical assistance projects totaling an estimated \$64 billion. A copy of her presentation is provided in *Appendix 3*.

Pavit Ramachandran, principal environment specialist at ADB and project officer for the CEP and the GMS Core Agriculture Support Program, gave a presentation on the key elements of the CEP's strategic framework that will guide the implementation and monitoring of the CEP during the next 5 years. He highlighted opportunities for development partners to integrate their interventions and leverage the CEP's track record, core competencies, and relationships in the GMS to maximize their footprints in the region. The strategic framework also provides opportunities to blend and leverage financing, particularly through its bankable pipeline of environment-related investment projects that have been developed as part of the strategic framework, consistent with national and regional plans and priorities. His full presentation is attached as *Appendix 4*.

During the facilitated discussion that followed the presentations, the development partners shared their views and experiences with regard to the expansion and strengthening of environmental cooperation among the GMS countries. The representatives of the GMS Working Group on Environment (WGE) and of the development partners commended the CEP, noting that they were encouraged by the considerable results of that program's work in the region. In particular, they recognized the CEP's "regionality" as the key strength of program, especially with regard to transboundary issues and regional collaboration. The WGE acknowledged with utmost thanks the steadfast and effective support it had received from the development partners, without which the achievements of the CEP and the wider GMS Economic Cooperation Program would not have been possible.

The meeting also validated and reinforced the strong alignment of the CEP strategic framework with existing development partner priorities, activities, investments, and plans for the future. This alignment presents considerable scope for collaboration and support, as well as opportunities to

build working relationships through cofinancing, the sharing of technical resources, and information and knowledge exchanges on various themes, including knowledge platforms, the utilization of geospatial tools, private sector engagement, the promotion of technological solutions, support for disaster readiness, the building of ecosystem resilience, etc.

The development partners also offered recommendations for enabling the CEP to more effectively address the environmental challenges in the region. They suggested that a priority for the CEP should be to scale up existing quality investments under the RIF 2022, building on the strengths and experience of the program and leveraging the “regionality” of the GMS a lot more. This would entail a concomitant leveraging of considerable resources through innovative financing options, as well as strengthening the monitoring and evaluation of the program as it moves to more scalable investments.

Although the CEP will focus on certain priority areas, its underlying thrust should encompass all aspects of sustainable development, including poverty alleviation, gender, human rights, natural capital, and climate change. CEP programming should be transparent and accommodate emerging priorities and challenges through a flexible funding window. Finally, the environmental sustainability of the region is of urgent concern. Waiting to take action to sustain the region’s natural capital base and protect the environment, including emergency-preparedness responses, is no longer an option. Action is needed now.

Additional resources of the EMM-5 is available at <http://www.gms-eoc.org/events/5th-gms-environment-ministers-meeting>.

Appendices

All appendices are hyperlinked, please click to access.

[Appendix 1: List of Participants](#) (PDF, 311 KB)

[Appendix 2: Program of Development Partners’ Roundtable](#) (PDF, 42 KB)

[Appendix 3: Emerging Priorities of the GMS Program](#) (PDF, 1 MB)

[Appendix 4: Highlighting Key Elements of the CEP Strategic Framework and Action Plan 2018-2022](#) (PDF, 2 MB)