

EU, GERMANY BACK MEKONG LOGISTICS PROJECT >> 3B

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AIMS TO UPGRADE TRANSPORT EFFICIENCY

SIRIVISH TOOMGUM
THE NATION

THE EUROPEAN Union and Deutsche Gesellschaft fuer Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) yesterday formally co-launched the "Sustainable Freight Transport and Logistics in the Mekong Region" project, aiming at increasing efficiency in energy consumption and improving environmental performance and occupational health and safety in the freight-transport and logistics sector.

The project is targeting 500 small and medium-sized enterprises in the freight-transport and logistics sector in Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam (CLMV) and also in Thailand over three years.

The project has received financial support of 2.4 million euros (Bt95 million) from the EU and the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, with GIZ in charge of implementing the project in cooperation with the GMS Freight Transport Association (GMS-FRETA) and the Mekong Institute (MI).

GIZ, the GMS-FRETA and the MI signed a memorandum of understanding yesterday to start the project. Other relevant associations have also been involved.

GIZ is owned by the German government and has operations around the globe. It provides services in the field of international cooperation for sustainable development and also works on behalf of clients in the public and private sectors both in Germany and overseas.

The three-year project supported

under the EU-funded SWITCH-Asia Programme will help CLMV and Thailand upgrade the quality and standards of their transport and logistics sectors to international levels and invest in technology that is more efficient, safe, and environmentally friendly.

It will also promote awareness and set up policy-support measures on the standards of labels, regulations and initiatives for modern transport systems.

Wilasinee Poonuchaphai, co-director of the project for GIZ Thailand, said it would improve the competitiveness of SMEs in the freight-transport and logistics sectors in Thailand and CLMV.

The project includes training the SMEs to help them operate their freight-transport and logistics businesses with greater energy efficiency. They will also be assisted in adopting international operating standards and certification.

"The project will scale up existing measures on greening and improving the safety of the freight and logistics sector," she said.

"It will reduce fuel consumption per transported volume and increase safe transport of dangerous goods, thus reducing [carbon-dioxide] emissions from the sector.

"Most of the activities will be built on successful past experiences and complement ongoing initiatives such as the Asian Development Bank's GMS Core Environment Programme, capacity-building of FRETA members, and the Asean-German project "Transport and Climate Change". These data will be part of a policy recommendation for the public and private sectors concerned.

"A study on the freight sector by the ADB indicates that goods transportation and exports in the Mekong region increased by 75 per cent [between] 2002 and 2011, resulting in higher fuel consumption."