

Lower Mekong Initiative: Connectivity Pillar

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The Connectivity Pillar seeks to strengthen capacity within and across LMI partner countries to help narrow the development gap in ASEAN

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BACKGROUND

The Lower Mekong Initiative (LMI), launched in 2009, is a multinational partnership among Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam, and the United States to create integrated sub-regional cooperation among the five Lower Mekong countries. Under the Connectivity Pillar, the United States works with partner countries to narrow the development gap in ASEAN through the delivery of trainings and technical assistance in trade facilitation, capacity building, and human development. The LMI Connectivity Pillar is designed to reflect the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity and promote the achievement of the ASEAN Community in 2015.

APPROACH

The LMI Connectivity Pillar leverages U.S. expertise in fostering trade, entrepreneurship, and innovation in order to promote physical, institutional, and people-to-people connectivity. This approach is reinforced by the “Connect Mekong” platform, which establishes formal channels of communication between LMI and ASEAN, accelerates LMI programs to support ASEAN connectivity, and initiates new efforts to generate grassroots entrepreneurship in the Mekong sub-region.

PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

The Connectivity Pillar has projects and activities in trade facilitation, capacity building, and human development including the following:

- Supporting Mekong countries in their commitments to the ASEAN Single Window mechanism;
- Providing technical assistance as well as platforms to exchange best practices in infrastructure development, such as information and communication technology (ICT), engineering, aviation, energy ports, and road management;
- Designing activities to accelerate human development efforts by using ICT for education and training, improving access to scientific knowledge, and promoting innovative partnerships; and
- Building strategic partnerships between the U.S. and Mekong private sectors to facilitate connectivity and foster innovative business models in the sub-region through Mekong Technology Innovation Generation and Entrepreneurship Resources (TIGERS).