

**Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS)  
Working Group on Urban Development  
(Urban WG)**

**Terms of Reference**

**Background**

1. The Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) Economic Cooperation Program — comprising Cambodia, People’s Republic of China (PRC) (Yunnan and Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region), the Lao People’s Democratic Republic (Lao PDR), Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam — was established in 1992. With the GMS program on its third decade, the leaders of GMS countries adopted a new Strategic Framework 2012-22 at their 4<sup>th</sup> Summit meeting in Myanmar in December 2011.
2. To operationalize the GMS Strategic Framework, a comprehensive pipeline of new investment projects was developed with the help of the Asian Development Bank (ADB). As part of this initiative, ADB assisted the GMS countries in formulating an urban development strategic framework that would focus on widening and deepening GMS transport corridors. Any urban development strategic framework for GMS would need to have a multisector approach to integrate and inter-relate the development of other sectors such as transport, natural resources, agriculture, small and medium-sized enterprise development, water, and environment.
3. In December 2012, the 18<sup>th</sup> GMS Ministerial Conference held in Nanning endorsed the formation of a GMS Task Force for Urban Development (Urban Task Force). The endorsement in the Joint Ministerial Statement reflects recognition of the greater potential role of urban development, increased rural-urban links, and spatial prioritization along GMS transport corridors in the next decade.
4. The GMS Urban Task Force had its first meeting in Cambodia on 12 July 2013. Since then, the Task Force led and guided the preparation of the GMS Urban Development Strategic Framework 2015-2022 which was eventually endorsed by the GMS Ministers during the 20<sup>th</sup> GMS Ministerial Conference held in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar on 10 September 2015. The Urban Development Strategic Framework sets out a broad framework to encourage and facilitate a coordinated approach to the development of urban areas throughout the GMS. It covers, among others, as an outcome, the improved planning and development of border areas, including border zones developed as an output. The Framework also identified as a way forward the upgrading of the Urban Task Force into a working group on urban development and special economic zones.
5. In its 5<sup>th</sup> Meeting, the GMS Urban Task Force, agreed to propose to GMS Senior Officials the upgrading of the Task Force into a working group. The GMS Senior Officials carried the proposal and on 1 December 2016, the 21<sup>st</sup> GMS Ministerial Conference endorsed the upgrading of the Urban Task Force into a regular GMS sector working group to oversee urban and economic zones development.

## Functions/Tasks

6. The GMS Urban Development Working Group (Urban WG) will oversee and guide the implementation of subregional action plans, programs and projects emanating from the GMS Urban Development Strategic Framework. Specifically, it will

- Continue to be a platform and mechanism for the exchange of national and regional policies and strategies in the urban development with multisector approach<sup>1</sup>, particularly in relation to strengthening regional cooperation and integration, development of GMS corridors, special economic zones in border areas and urban development in general.
- Promote knowledge exchange, peer review, cross learning and experience exchange through organization of a regional conference on urban development, and conduct of national consultations on lessons from urban development.
- Develop and coordinate an annual work plan of the Urban WG.
- Oversee the preparation of further detailed plans for particular areas identified in the GMS Urban Development Strategic Framework.
- Monitor and update the GMS Urban Development Strategic Framework
- Monitor and update the Regional Investment Framework (RIF).
- Promote the alignment of regional programming and national programming for urban development projects.
- Coordinate with ADB in the preparations of projects for urban development in Country Partnership Strategies, and Country Business Operation Plans for GMS countries.
- Identify programs and mechanisms for regular exchange of ideas, data, plans and policies between GMS country-level urban support group and with other GMS working groups.
- Facilitate preparation of its regional meetings by providing feedback on conference agenda, content, participants and other preparatory steps, and help in organizing logistics as necessary in their respective country.
- Meet and prepare reports on the outputs and activities of the Urban WG for consideration at future meetings of the GMS Senior Officials, Economic Corridors Forum and the GMS Ministerial Conference.

## Membership

7. Each GMS country will appoint three persons to be Urban WG members, headed preferably by the GMS National Coordinator (NC+2). The suggested members of the Working Group are medium- and high-level officials (Director General and Deputy Director General) of relevant ministries and/or local government units (provinces/cities). It is also suggested that three persons from ADB also join the Working Group as members.

8. Within each country, the Urban WG may be supported by a GMS country –level urban support group (USG) to facilitate national consultations. Representatives in the

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<sup>1</sup> Multisector approach is to cover other sectors such as transport, natural resources, agriculture, small and medium-sized enterprise development, water, and environment.

USG may be drawn from relevant agencies such as Ministries (e.g. Public Works and Transport, Urban Planning and Construction, Land Management, Environment, Economics and Finance, and Planning and Investment, economic zones administration) and/or other relevant local government units of Cambodia, PRC, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam. The USG can also draw upon domestic academic or urban research institutions. The USG, if established, would: (i) support activities of the Working Group at the national level; (ii) conduct local studies on progress of GMS related urban projects; (iii) convene events locally; and (iv) arrange monitoring and assessment reporting of Working Group activities at the national level.

## **Resources**

9. To support the Urban WG, the following resources shall be allocated:
- Chair: Host country's Lead Urban WG member (Host is on rotation basis among GMS countries, in alphabetical order starting with Cambodia)
  - Co-Chair: Director, Urban Development and Water Division (SEUW) of the ADB Southeast Asia Department (SERD)
  - Secretariat: ADB SERD and East Asia Department (EARD)
    - SEUW and the Regional Cooperation and Operations Coordination Division (SERC) in coordination with Environment, Natural Resources & Agriculture Division (SEER) and Transport and Communications Division (SETC);
    - Public Management, Financial Sector and Regional Cooperation Division, EARD (EAPF) and Urban and Social Sectors Division, EARD (EASS).

## **Secretariat Support**

10. Coordination and support for the Working Group's activities from the ADB will be done through the SEUW and SERC of SERD in consultation with EARD.