



## **Mission Report**

### **Mekong Forum 2018**

Date: 2-3 August 2018  
Venue : Khon Kaen, Thailand

Prepared by  
Prasert Tepanart, Deputy Director of Administration and Communication

#### **A. Background, Description and Objectives of the Activity**

Mekong Institute, Khon Kaen organized the Mekong Forum 2018 with the theme “Turnarounds and Takeoffs: Speeding Up Competitiveness and Connectivity in the GMS” This event was co-organised by Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau (TCEB) and Thai Smile Airways Company limited.

The Forum built on the ideas that innovation and synergistic co-operation are integral mechanisms to initiate much-needed economic turnaround and drive the region’s forward development.

With the theme Turnarounds and Takeoffs: Speeding Up Competitiveness and Connectivity in the GMS, the Mekong Forum 2018 aimed to encourage a more coherent understanding of the factors and conditions that limit the region’s growth momentum; explore ideas by which innovation can strengthen competitiveness; and deliberate on how countries in the region and beyond can better come together under the banner of development co-operation to improve connectivity and work towards a common direction of regional prosperity.

#### Objectives:

1. To bring together opinion leaders to discuss the most pressing issues facing the GMS.
2. To engage multiple stakeholders in collaborative efforts to shape the development agenda of the region, and
3. To serve as a platform for interaction, dialogue and networking among scholars, business and government leaders, development experts, and practitioners.

#### **B. Organizer/s**

Mekong Institute, Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau (TCEB) and Thai Smile Airways Company limited

#### **C. Highlight of the Activity/Summary Points**

1. The forum offered discussions on topics such as narrowing development disparities between nations in the GMS and the ASEAN; modernizing the GMS in light of the

post-ASEAN Economic Integration; and the role of development partners in the region. It also brought into the spotlight the case of the new geo-economics, its challenges and more importantly, the mechanisms by which the GMS countries can best respond to emerging global political and economic shifts.

2. Action-oriented ideas and proposed programmes, including initiatives for the further development of the GMS were discussed.

#### **D. Role/Participation of SEAMEO**

1. SEAMEO Secretariat's DDAC asked questions regarding how the co-operation between GMS could improve the educational situation in the region.

#### **E. Side Meeting/s**

Meeting with Dr Kyriacos M. Koupparis, Regional Science, Technology and Innovation Advisor on future collaborations with SEAMEO.

#### **F. Follow-up Actions Needed**

N.A.

#### **G. Appendices/Related Conference Materials and Outputs**

- H. Photo and hard copies of the agenda



Networking session with the organisers of the Mekong Forum