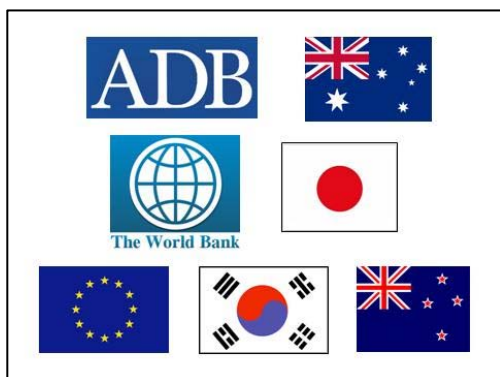


Lower Mekong Initiative: Friends of the Lower Mekong

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FLM encourages the integration of development activities towards inclusive, sustainable, and environmentally responsible growth

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BACKGROUND

The Lower Mekong Initiative (LMI), launched in July 2009, is a multinational effort intended to create integrated sub-regional cooperation between and among Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam, and the United States. Under the LMI, the Friends of the Lower Mekong (FLM) is an important convening platform and mechanism to improve donor coordination in programming development assistance in the Lower Mekong sub-region. Participating FLM members include Australia, Japan, S. Korea, New Zealand, the European Union, Asian Development Bank, and World Bank.

APPROACH

The FLM is carried out through two main tracks:

- 1. Annual Policy Dialogue** between foreign affairs ministries on non-traditional security issues, including development challenges facing the Mekong region, empowering women and improving gender equality in the sub-region.
- 2. Donor Dialogue** among partner country development agencies and multilateral development institutions in order to:
 - Expand information sharing;
 - Strengthen partner country ownership of programs; and
 - Support emerging donors in the lower Mekong sub-region.

FLM ACTIVITIES

Activities under FLM promote broad cooperation and coordination with donors, international financial institutions, and multilateral organizations to increase efficiency, identify and meet programmatic and resources gaps, and avoid redundancy and overlapping activities.

For example, the recently launched upgraded LMI website (lowermekong.org) shares best practices and information on development assistance programming in the Lower Mekong sub-region. In Washington DC, the Asia Donor Working Group meets monthly to update FLM partners and U.S. missions on the latest developments in programming in the Mekong sub-region.