



Smart Infrastructure for the Mekong

August 2013



U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry announced the Smart Infrastructure for the Mekong program at the Lower Mekong Initiative Meeting in Brunei, July 2013.

Lower Mekong Initiative governments and the U.S. government promote sustainable and socially equitable economic growth through smart infrastructure and land-use planning and management.

LOWER MEKONG PROSPERITY AND THE U.S. GOVERNMENT

The Lower Mekong Sub-region, with a population of 235 million, is increasingly prosperous, healthy, educated, and globally-competitive. The U.S. Government supports the security, economic development and integration that underpin this prosperity. Increasing regional connectivity means greater access to electricity, water, financial resources and traded goods. However, without proper analysis and planning, new investments—especially in large-scale infrastructure and land use—can have significant negative social, environmental, and economic impacts. “Smart, sustainable development should be our goal,” said U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry at the Lower Mekong Initiative (LMI) Ministerial Meeting in July 2013.

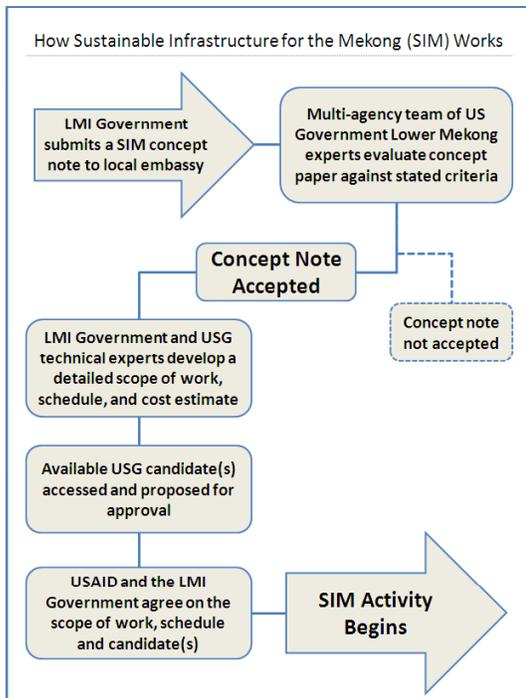
SMART AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Without sound social and environmental safeguards, infrastructure activities can irreversibly damage important natural resources, vital ecosystems, food production systems, and reduce jobs and livelihoods throughout the Mekong River Basin. The 60 million people whose lives rely directly on the Basin are the most vulnerable. Well-planned infrastructure and land-use management enables sustained and equitable economic growth for all including economically- and socially-disadvantaged groups. Sustaining broad-based economic growth in the Lower Mekong will depend on “smart” infrastructure that supports the region’s burgeoning human capital and protects the natural resources on which the growth is based.

SMART INFRASTRUCTURE FOR THE MEKONG (SIM)

Announced by Secretary Kerry in July 2013, SIM is a U.S. Government Inter-Agency program that provides the LMI partner countries with rapid, demand-driven technical and scientific assistance to support climate-smart, environmentally sound and socially equitable infrastructure, clean energy development, and land and/or water resources use. LMI partner countries can request SIM support for a range of activities, including:

- Engineering support to incorporate environmental impact mitigation measures into road, dam, land-use, or construction activities
- Technical support for hydrological modeling, climate change vulnerability modeling, geospatial land-use analysis, clean energy planning and other technical assessments
- Training for decision makers on environmental and social impact assessments and public participation processes
- Financial analyses of economic scenarios and innovative finance and design alternatives for smart infrastructure, clean energy, and land and/or water resources use decision-making



HOW DOES SIM WORK?

Interested LMI partner governments can obtain SIM assistance by developing a Concept Note and submitting it to the local U.S. Embassy for review. The flowchart on the left describes the process. To access SIM support, proposed activities must satisfy the following conditions.

- It is located within a LMI partner country or countries: Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam.
- It seeks technical assistance to support climate-smart, environmentally sound and socially equitable infrastructure, clean energy development, and land and/or water resources use.
- It is proposed by a relevant LMI partner government ministry, with written endorsement from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

SIM is a government-to-government mechanism, but does not include direct monetary transfer. LMI partner governments will receive technical assistance and capacity development services. SIM will be implemented in parallel with the Mekong Partnership for the Environment, which focuses on including civil society as a partner of the government in addressing these challenges, and a planned USAID-NASA program, which will provide LMI partner governments with geo-spatial information, capacity building and tools to strengthen regional capacity for improved land-use management. These three activities together constitute the U.S. Government's Sustainable Mekong program.

Through the implementation of these three activities, the U.S. Government will work hand-in-hand with LMI partner governments to promote green growth, and ensure that it is sustainable and benefits all citizens of the region.

PARTNER AGENCIES

U.S. Department of State; U.S. Department of the Interior; U.S. Army Corp of Engineers; U.S. Department of Energy; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; U.S. Forest Service; U.S. Geological Survey; Bureau of Land Management, as well as other agencies and technical entities

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Please go to the [LMI Coordination Hub](http://www.lowermekong.org) website for the following:

- A menu of illustrative technical services available through SIM
- The complete list of SIM conditions and criteria
- A list of illustrative technical assistance activities
- Detailed guidance for developing a concept note

*Please note: all assessments, studies, reports or other outputs that result from SIM technical assistance will be made publically available on the LMI Coordination Hub website www.lowermekong.org.

***“This year USAID is going to begin implementation of its Sustainable Mekong Program which supports the requests of your (LMI) governments to have technical assistance for...smart infrastructure”
—U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry***

For more information please go to the LMI Coordination Hub website:

www.lowermekong.org