

GMS UPDATE

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Report of the Inception Meeting of the Subregional Electric Power Forum

The Inception Meeting of the Subregional Electric Power Forum (EPF) was held at the International Business Center in Yangon, Myanmar on 24 April 1995. The Meeting was hosted by the Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development of the Union of Myanmar and organized by the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

Participants included delegations from Cambodia, the People's Republic of China (PRC), Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR), Myanmar, Thailand, and Viet Nam, and a representative from the Mekong River Commission Secretariat. Bank staff and consultants also attended.

In his opening address, H.E. Brig. Gen. David Abel, Minister, Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development, welcomed the participants and formally opened the Inception Meetings. Minister Abel emphasized that the Meetings are part of a series of conferences aimed at promoting economic cooperation in the Greater Mekong Subregion. Minister Abel further summarized the economic achievements of Myanmar in light of the globalization

of world economies and regional cooperation among countries in Asia and the Pacific. Mr. Noritada Morita, Director, Programs Department (West), ADB thanked the host country for the excellent arrangements made for the Meetings, and the six countries for their active participation in subregional cooperation activities. Mr. Morita briefed the participants on the progress of some of the priority subregional transport and energy projects achieved since the Fourth Conference on Subregional Economic Cooperation held in Chiang Mai, Thailand on 15-16 September 1994. He further explained the objectives of the Inception Meetings and their importance in the process of economic cooperation in the Greater Mekong Subregion.

PURPOSE OF MEETING

As agreed at the Fourth Conference, the Inception Meeting of the Subregional Electric Power Forum was held to maintain the momentum of cooperation in the power sector in the Greater Mekong Subregion,

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The first meeting of the Tourism Sector Working Group, jointly organized by ADB and ESCAP and hosted by the Tourism Authority of Thailand, was held in Bangkok on 3-5 April 1995.

advance subregional initiatives, and reinforce as well as focus the subregional consultative process. The specific objectives were to strengthen institutional cooperation among key units in the power sector, thus paving the ground for future collaborative undertakings; to discuss the terms of reference, including the initial work program and implementation and financing arrangements, of the EPF; and to agree on the next steps to be taken.

CONDUCT OF THE MEETING

Mr. Vladimir Bohun, Manager, Energy Division (West), ADB, acted as Moderator with assistance from Mr. Noritada Morita, Director, Programs Department (West), ADB; Mr. Cesar E.A. Virata, Special Adviser, ADB Consultant; and Mr. Asbjorn Vinjar, Team Leader of the ADB Subregional Energy Sector Study.

The Forum discussed the draft terms of reference (TOR) of the EPF; including the rationale and main objectives, tasks/work program, membership, position of Chairperson, frequency and venue of meetings, substructures, financing and other support, and reporting mechanism.

The Forum emphasized that EPF is an advisory and not a decision-making body, particularly with regard to commercial agreements,

which will submit recommendations to the Ministerial-level Conference. The Forum agreed that the position of Chairperson should rotate among the member countries and that the position should be linked to the venue of the EPF meetings. It was further agreed that during the initial period, ADB should act as Co-Chairperson and should provide the necessary technical support and, together with other donors, financial assistance, for EPF activities.

The Forum agreed to recommend to the Ministerial Conference the revised TOR of the EPF (see page 3).

NEW INITIATIVES/ OTHER MATTERS

The Forum agreed that the date and venue of the next meeting will be confirmed before the close of the Ministerial Conference. In addition, the Forum agreed to submit the names of the candidates for membership in the Forum to ADB by 30 May 1995.

The Forum further agreed that the agenda for the next meeting would include the following:

- (i) the three river basin studies under priority projects no. A1, A4, and A5 agreed to at the Third and Fourth Conferences on Subregional Economic Cooperation, as well as A3;

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- (ii) training and human resource development needs in the power sector; and
 - (iii) organizational and procedural matters.

The Moderator thanked the participants for their spirit of goodwill and cooperation which greatly facilitated the deliberations in the Forum.

(ed. note: The next meeting of the EPF will be held in Lao PDR in October 1995.)

Subregional Electric Power Forum

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Initiation:

The Subregional Electric Power Forum (EPF) was initiated under the Regional Technical Assistance program of the Asian Development Bank in cooperation with the Governments of Cambodia, the PRC, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, and Viet Nam. The EPF is an advisory and not a decision-making body, which will make recommendations on subregional power projects to the Ministerial-level Conference. The EPF is not a permanent body with a specific charter such as the Mekong River Commission or ASEAN, and agreements therein are not considered to have the character of treaties or protocols.

Rationale:

Establishment of EPF responds to the need to constitute a forum that will emphasize opportunities for extended economic cooperation in the field of electrical energy among the countries of Cambodia, the People's Republic of China (Yunnan Province), Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, and Viet Nam. The EPF is

expected to facilitate the implementation of priority subregional power projects. It is also expected to address issues affecting both hardware and software aspects of the subregional power systems, thereby promoting favorable conditions for cooperation in power system development so that future initiatives can be successfully implemented.

Main Objectives:

- Act as a cooperative link among government agencies and related institutions, such as power utilities that are directly involved in power supply and power system development in the subregion;
- Act as a promotional and advisory organization to emphasize the development of efficient power systems in the subregion;
- Identify and promote opportunities for mutually

beneficial cooperation projects in the power sector;

- Promote financing of priority projects related to the development of subregional power systems by the governments and power utilities concerned, donor agencies, and the private sector;

- Provide a venue for addressing software issues, such as planning tools and pricing principles related to cooperation power projects, and organize seminars and workshops to discuss studies dealing with these issues;

- Provide and disseminate information to participating countries and communicate and cooperate with regional and international organizations involved in the energy sector; and

- Facilitate training and other human resource development initiatives to support the development of power systems.

Tasks/Work Program:

The EPF will determine its own work program and schedule.

Membership:

Each government will appoint two persons to be members of the EPF core group. One appointee will be a senior official from the government organization dealing with policy and planning in the power sector and the other appointee will be the top-level officer of a key power utility.

Chairperson and Venue:

The position of Chairperson will rotate among the member countries and will be linked to the venue of the next EPF meeting. The Chairperson, who will be selected among the members of the core group, will provide the necessary logistical support for EPF activities. During the initial period, ADB will act as a Co-Chairperson and will provide the necessary technical support.

Frequency of EPF Meetings:

The EPF will meet at least once a year or more frequently, depending on its work program. The EPF meetings will be principally hosted in rotation by the participating countries.

Working Groups:

The EPF may establish working groups for cooperation power projects to deal with special issues related to such projects.

Financing and Other Support:

The cost of operating the EPF core group and working groups is expected to be covered by the power utilities, with each country arranging for the financing of the cost of their participation in EPF. However, during the initial period, there is a need to arrange external assistance, including that from ADB.

Reporting:

The EPF will work under the guidance of the Ministerial-level Conference that has been established in the Ministerial Meeting held in Yangon, Myanmar on 25 April 1995. It will report to the Ministerial-level Conference and the respective governments.

Report of the Inception Meeting of the Subregional Transport Forum

The Inception Meeting of the Subregional Transport Forum (STF) was held at the International Business Centre in Yangon, Myanmar on 24 April 1995. The Meeting was hosted by the Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development of the Union of Myanmar and organized by the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

Participants included delegations from Cambodia, the PRC, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, and Viet Nam, and a representative from the Mekong River Commission Secretariat. Bank staff and consultants also attended.

In his opening address, H.E. Brig. Gen. David Abel, Minister, Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development, welcomed the participants and formally opened the Inception Meetings. Minister Abel emphasized that the Meetings are part of a series of conferences aimed at promoting economic cooperation in the Greater Mekong Subregion. Minister Abel further summarized the economic achievements of Myanmar in light of the globalization of world economies and regional cooperation among countries in Asia and the Pacific. Mr. Noritada Morita,

Director, Programs Department (West), ADB thanked the host country for the excellent arrangements made for the Meetings, and the six countries for their active participation in subregional cooperation activities. Mr. Morita briefed the participants on the progress of some of the priority subregional transport and energy projects achieved since the Fourth Conference on Subregional Economic Cooperation held in Chiang Mai, Thailand on 15–16 September 1994 and explained the objectives of the Inception Meetings and their importance in the process of economic cooperation in the Greater Mekong Subregion.

PURPOSE OF THE MEETING

As agreed at the Fourth Conference, the Inception Meeting of the Subregional Transport Forum was held to maintain the momentum of cooperation in the Greater Mekong Subregion, advance subregional initiatives, and reinforce as well as focus the subregional consultative process. The specific objectives were to strengthen institutional cooperation among key units in the

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*Subregional
Economic
Cooperation:
Proceedings of
the Fourth
Conference*

and

*Proceedings of
the Inception
Meetings
of the
Subregional
Transport
Forum and the
Subregional
Electric Power
Forum*

Both volumes
will be ready for
distribution in
mid-July 1995.

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transport sectors, thus paving the ground for future collaborative undertakings; to discuss the terms of reference, including implementation and financing arrangements, of the STF; and to agree on the next steps to be taken.

CONDUCT OF THE MEETING

Dr. Günter Hecker, Manager, Transport and Communications Division (West), ADB, acted as Moderator with assistance from Mr. Bruce Winston, Team Leader of the ADB Subregional Transport Sector Study.

The Forum discussed a draft terms of reference (TOR) of the STF, including the rationale and objectives, tasks/work program, membership, position of Chairperson, frequency and venue of meetings, working groups, financing and other support, and reporting mechanisms.

It was emphasized that STF is an advisory and not a decision-making body which will submit recommendations to the Ministerial-level Conference. The STF is not a permanent body with a charter such as the Mekong River Commission or the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). With respect to the objectives of STF, it was clarified that the proposed objectives are not necessarily listed in the order of priority. On membership, it was proposed and agreed that, in the initial years, ADB should participate

in the deliberations of STF to assist in facilitating and coordinating its activities. With regard to the position of Chairperson, it was agreed that the Chairperson should come from the host country, and that the host country should be rotated in an alphabetical order. It was further agreed that ADB should assist in facilitating STF deliberations in the capacity of Associate or Co-Chairperson in the initial years of STF.

The Forum agreed to recommend to the Ministerial Conference the revised TOR of the STF.

NEW INITIATIVES/ OTHER MATTERS

The Forum further agreed on the following:

- a. A working group on air linkages – which would be composed of participating countries on a voluntary basis – will be constituted. The working group will promote the expansion of air linkages to support the growth of tourism and commercial exchanges in the subregion.
- b. The designated focal points as well as the core group members of STF in each of the participating countries will be transmitted to ADB and the Chairperson of the next meeting of STF within 30 days after the Forum.

c. The next meeting of the STF will be held in Phnom Penh, Cambodia in August 1995. The tentative agenda for that meeting will include: (i) establishment of working groups; (ii) determination of work program and schedule for the working groups; and (iii) preparation of report to the next Ministerial Meeting and respective governments. The agenda of the next meeting of the

Forum will be finalized by the designated Chairperson of the STF, in consultation with the participating countries with assistance from ADB.

The Moderator thanked the Forum participants for their spirit of goodwill and cooperation which greatly facilitated the deliberations in the Forum.

Subregional Transport Forum

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Initiation:

The Subregional Transport Forum (STF) was initiated under the Regional Technical Assistance Program of the Asian Development Bank in cooperation with the Governments of Cambodia, the PRC, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, and Viet Nam. The STF is an advisory and not a decision-making body which will make recommendations to the Ministerial-level Conference on subregional transport projects and issues. The STF is not a permanent body with a charter such as the Mekong River Commission or the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

Rationale:

Establishment of STF responds to the need to constitute a forum that will emphasize opportunities for extended cooperation in the transport sector

among Cambodia, People's Republic of China (Yunnan Province), Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, and Viet Nam. The STF is expected to facilitate the implementation of priority subregional transport projects. It is also expected to address issues affecting both hardware and software aspects of the subregional transport systems, thereby promoting favorable conditions for cooperation in the transport sector so that future initiatives can be successfully implemented.

Main Objectives:

- Provide a vehicle for the coordination of project planning at the macro level (e.g., studies covering multiple countries);
- Provide a mechanism for facilitating the implementation of priority subregional projects;

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- Provide a venue for addressing software issues (e.g., issues related to driver and vehicle registration, route licensing, axle load regulations, design standards);
 - Promote the financing of subregional projects by the governments concerned, the various donors, and the private sector;
 - Facilitate training projects and other human resource development initiatives in the transport sector; and
 - Provide a vehicle for dissemination and exchange of information on transport-related matters.

Tasks/Work Program:

The STF will determine its own work program and schedule.

Membership:

Each government will designate two officials at the senior operational level to be members of the STF core group. Additional officials may attend STF meetings, depending on the issues to be discussed. In the initial years, ADB will participate in the deliberations of STF to assist in facilitating and coordinating STF activities.

Chairperson and Venue:

The venue (host country) for STF meetings will be rotated among the participating countries in alphabetical order. A member of the STF core group from the

host country will serve as Chairperson of STF. The Chairperson will provide the necessary technical, administrative, and coordinating support for STF activities. In the initial years, ADB will assist in facilitating STF deliberations in the capacity of Associate or Co-Chairperson.

Frequency of STF Meetings:

The STF will meet at least once a year or more frequently depending on its work program.

Working Groups:

The STF may establish working groups to deal with projects and/or special issues.

Financing and Other Support:

The cost of operating STF and working groups is expected to be covered by the respective governments, with each country arranging for the financing of the cost of their participation in STF. However, during the initial period, there is a need to arrange external assistance, including that from ADB.

Reporting:

The STF will report to the Ministerial-level Conference and their respective governments. It will also inform other selected parties about its activities. The STF will work under the guidance of the Ministerial-level Conference that has been established in the Ministerial Meeting held in Yangon, Myanmar on 25 April 1995.