



澜沧江-湄公河环境合作中心
Lancang-Mekong Environmental Cooperation Center

Newsletter

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Green Lancang-Mekong Initiative: Synergies Between Climate-Resilient Infrastructure and Energy Transition Expert Views

On April 25, 2023, a symposium themed on “Synergies Between Climate-Resilient Infrastructure and Energy Transition” was held in Beijing in a hybrid online and offline modality as part of the “Green Lancang-Mekong Initiative: Roundtable Dialogue on Knowledge Sharing of Green, Low-carbon and Sustainable Infrastructure”. The symposium was guided by the Ministry of Ecology and Environment (MEE) and organized by the Lancang-Mekong Environmental Cooperation Center (LMEC)/Foreign Environmental Cooperation Center of the Ministry of Ecology and Environment of China, under the support of the World Resources Institute (WRI) and The Asia Foundation. Representatives from the Ministry of Ecology and Environment and local ecological and environmental departments, environment and climate departments of Mekong countries, UN agencies in China, relevant international organizations, research institutes and enterprises participated in the meetings offline. Expert views are excerpted as follows.



Liu Qing
Vice President and Senior Research Fellow,
China Institute of International Studies

Lancang-Mekong green development cooperation faces both opportunities and challenges. The challenges should be tackled jointly in four aspects. First, strengthening the exchange and dialogue on green cooperation to foster continuous growth in mutual trust and consensus-building. Second, establishing a knowledge system for green cooperation and enhancing knowledge sharing. Third, developing green financial instruments to promote green finance and green economy. Fourth, maximizing the synergy of multilateral cooperation mechanisms such as Lancang-Mekong, China-ASEAN and the Ayeyawady-Chao Phraya-Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy (ACMECS). In addition, Lancang-Mekong Countries should explore green cooperation in the third-party market in areas such as product services, engineering construction, infrastructure investment, and industry-financing integration under frameworks such as RCEP.



Wang Qian
Programme Management Officer, UNEP China Office

To foster sustainable infrastructure development, UNEP has established the Sustainable Infrastructure Partnership (SIP) to bring together experts from various fields and has set out ten guiding principles that policymakers can follow to help integrate sustainability into infrastructure planning and delivery. In addition, UNEP is focusing on addressing the challenges of nature-based infrastructure development, including policy mainstreaming, project financing, and data sharing. In the future, UNEP will advance nature-based infrastructure development in three ways. First, to promote conceptual recognition among member countries; second, to help member countries build nature-based infrastructure; and third, to support financing for nature-based infrastructure projects.



Zhang Jianxin
Country Representative of The Asia Foundation Beijing Office

In recent years, countries along the Mekong River Basin have faced the dual challenge of environmental protection and economic development amid rapid industrialization and urbanization. In this context, The Asia Foundation and the Lancang-Mekong Environmental Cooperation Center (LMEC) have jointly conducted a study on the comparison and mutual learning between industrial parks in the economic development belt of the Lancang-Mekong River Basin and the Yangtze River Economic Belt of China in search of more practical solutions for the green development of the Lancang-Mekong River Basin so as to promote the synergistic development of building climate-resilient infrastructure and energy transformation in the Lancang-Mekong region.

Huang Zhengxue
Research Fellow,
Institute of Land Development and Regional Economy,
National Development and Reform Commission, China



The construction of resilient cities in China focuses on six areas—infrastructure resilience, economic resilience, social resilience, spatial resilience, ecological resilience and governance resilience. In the future, the construction of resilient cities in Lancang-Mekong countries can draw on the Chinese experience. Firstly, mechanisms for urban meteorological disaster and public health monitoring, early warning and assessment should be established. Secondly, an emergency prevention and control system should be set up. Thirdly, a scientific system should be in place to safeguard the emergency space in cities. Fourthly, emergency material reserve systems should be improved. Fifthly, the construction of smart city management systems should be expedited.

Panel Speech and Discussion 1: Energy Transition Actions and Prospects in Lancang-Mekong Countries



Ly Sophanna
Director, Freshwater Wetlands Conservation
Department, Ministry of Environment, Cambodia

Cambodia has taken a number of climate actions in recent years in the country. It has proposed to reduce carbon emissions by 42% by 2030 and achieve carbon neutrality by 2050. It has implemented a national energy efficiency reform policy and planned to reduce energy consumption by 19% in 2030 compared to 2022. It has carried out natural infrastructure construction and conservation projects to foster the synergy between enhancing climate adaptation and guaranteeing community well-being. In the future, Cambodia hopes to carry out various types of cooperation on climate resilient infrastructure and energy transition through regional cooperation mechanisms such as the Lancang-Mekong Environmental Cooperation to accelerate the process of addressing climate change in the region.

Qian Zhaohui
Senior Project Manager,
Lancang-Mekong Environmental Cooperation Center



As climate change plays an increasingly important role in global environmental governance, it has become a global consensus to promote green recovery after the COVID-19 pandemic. Realizing low-carbon and sustainable infrastructure development as well as low-carbon energy transition is a common need for and the key to green cooperation in the region. Since its launch in 2021, the Lancang-Mekong Knowledge Hub for Low-Carbon, Green, and Sustainable Infrastructure has continued to provide knowledge products such as sustainable and good practices in low-carbon development to the policy-making departments of Lancang-Mekong countries, which fuels the development of regional knowledge sharing systems and the global dissemination of regional solutions.



Bounmany Soulideth
Deputy Director, Modeling Division,
Natural Resources and Environment Research Institute,
Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, Lao PDR

Climate change-induced floods have caused severe economic losses in Laos and have also affected the livelihoods of urban and rural communities. To achieve resilient recovery and sustainable development in the post-pandemic era, Laos actively explores low-carbon and sustainable development pathways in the country through specific actions such as carrying out forest vegetation recovery, building renewable energy transportation systems, and encouraging industries such as construction and livestock to take the lead in low-carbon transition, which contributes to the collective efforts in addressing climate change in the region.

Qin Yun

Director Assistant, Energy Development Research Institute
China Southern Power Grid Co., Ltd. (CSG)



At present, energy consumption and power consumption in the Lancang-Mekong region are growing rapidly. All Lancang-Mekong countries are blessed with sufficient natural resources and application experience in low-carbon power generation. Power interconnection and optimized layout of low-carbon energy industry in the region will be of great significance to the climate resilience of the region's energy system. In the future, it is hoped that through the Lancang-Mekong regional cooperation mechanism, the top-level design of regional power interconnection will be further strengthened. This involves exploring the establishment of a regional power market and promoting the sharing of regional green energy values.

Panel Speech and Discussion 2: Practices of Climate-Resilient Economic Development in Lancang-Mekong Countries



Marlar Aung
Director, Human Resources and International Relations
Division, Environmental Conservation Department, Ministry of
Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation, Myanmar

Myanmar is formulating a policy framework for the development of a green economy to foster green and low-carbon development as well as the efficient use of natural resources. The policy framework is based on the four principles of sustainability, efficiency, inclusiveness and resilience. It establishes goals such as stimulating green investments, managing brownfield investments, ensuring sustainable financing, and developing human capital. It also identifies 11 priority areas for sustainable development, including efficient and sustainable agriculture and livestock, clean air, clean and sufficient water, accessible and clean energy, healthy forests, biodiversity, sustainable fisheries, sustainable production and consumption, sustainable waste management, sustainable transportation infrastructure and services and sustainable tourism.

Song Jing

Research Fellow, The World Resources Institute (WRI)



The development and construction of China's overseas industrial parks follow the principles of government guidance, enterprise leadership, and market-oriented operation based on international rules. They promote the low-carbon development of overseas industrial parks according to their own positioning and choices. Research has found that the level of low-carbon development in China's overseas industrial parks is rising, while some of them have achieved a win-win situation with economic growth and green, low-carbon practices. However, despite the positive trend of the development of overseas industrial parks, there is still room for improvement compared to globally advanced levels, particularly in areas such as infrastructure development and awareness of energy transition.



Hongjun Li
Senior Underwriter, China Pacific Property Insurance Co., Ltd.

The insurance industry plays a crucial role in engineering construction. Firstly, it transfers risks that engineering companies are unable to mitigate to insurance companies, thus reducing uncertainties in construction projects. Secondly, through various risk management services such as safety and disaster prevention, it enhances the risk awareness and risk resilience of policyholders. In the field of climate change, the insurance industry has accumulated data on extreme weather disasters and losses caused by climate change and has developed models and methodologies to address climate change, which contributes to improved overall climate resilience in society.



Wang Yan
Senior Program Officer, WWF Beijing Office

In 2019, the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) initiated the REpowering Asia Initiative. The main objective of this initiative is to boost investments in renewable energy across the region by facilitating information sharing, engaging in policy dialogues, building capacity, and fostering practical collaborations with government agencies, investment firms, financial institutions, industry organizations, and stakeholders from various countries. Looking ahead, there is great anticipation for collaborations with the Lancang-Mekong Environmental Cooperation Center (LMEC) in the field of sustainable infrastructure development, particularly in areas like distributed photovoltaic (PV) systems, aimed at advancing equitable energy transition, facilitating energy transformation, and achieving sustainable development goals within the region.

Discussions and Comments



Li Fengting
Professor, College of Environmental Science
and Engineering, Tongji University

As climate change continues to impact Shanghai, China, the severity of disasters in the city such as urban heat island effect, typhoon storm surges, and coastal inundation has increased. In order to enhance the city's resilience to climate change, the Shanghai Meteorological Bureau and relevant research institutions have developed a prediction and early warning system for extreme weather events triggered by climate change. At present, this climate change assessment, prediction, and early warning system has been widely applied in six provinces and cities in the Yangtze River Delta region of China. We look forward to exchanging and sharing Shanghai's experience in climate resilience development with coastal cities in the Lancang-Mekong region.

Kang Aili

Director of China Global Investment and Impact Program,
Wildlife Conservation Society



While promoting investments in new and sustainable energy and accelerating the development of a climate-resilient economy, it is also important to recognize the crucial role of ecosystem and biodiversity conservation in sustainable and resilient development. In future regional cooperation efforts, it is hoped that the Lancang-Mekong Environmental Cooperation Center (LMEC) can focus on biodiversity conservation and climate-resilient infrastructure and explore ways to synergistically advance the mainstreaming of biodiversity conservation and climate change adaptation policies.

Topic Summary



Li Xia
Director and Professor,
Lancang-Mekong Environmental Cooperation Center

Energy decarbonization is one of the most critical issues in addressing climate change. However, achieving an equitable transition requires the consideration of multiple factors and dimensions. It is, in essence, a quest for better solutions to issues on equitable development in the region. Climate equity in the transition should be pursued based on each country's own climate goals. Against the backdrop of significant energy transition demands and investment gaps, countries in the Lancang-Mekong region need to set ambitious policy goals from a macro perspective while exploring feasible pathways at the implementation level. In the future, LMEC will continue to facilitate in-depth cooperation in climate change response and green development in the region, contributing to the harmonious development of people, communities, economies, and nature within the region.

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About LMEC: Lancang-Mekong Environmental Cooperation Center (LMEC), established in 2017 in Beijing, China, aims to boost the capacity of environmental governance of each country and achieve regional sustainable development through the promotion of environmental cooperation among the Lancang-Mekong Countries.