

REGIONAL AND SUBREGIONAL PROGRAM LINKS

Mapping the links between ASEAN and
the GMS, BIMP-EAGA, and IMT-GT

SUMMARY REPORT





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Foreword

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is central to economic integration among a diverse group of countries in Asia. ASEAN's aspirations are enshrined in ASEAN Vision 2020, which envisages the realization of an ASEAN Community by 2020 built on three interrelated pillars—economic, socio-cultural, and political-security. The ASEAN Member States have decided to accelerate the establishment of the ASEAN Community to 2015, with the signing of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) Blueprint.

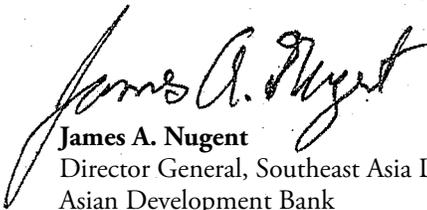
With 2015 fast approaching, the ASEAN Member States are taking concerted efforts to implement their commitments under the AEC Blueprint. Substantial progress has been achieved, but there are still many measures that need to be implemented up to and after 2015 to complement the “top-down” approach being taken by ASEAN with the “bottom-up” approaches exemplified by the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS), Brunei Darussalam–Indonesia–Malaysia–Philippines East ASEAN Growth Area (BIMP-EAGA), and Indonesia–Malaysia–Thailand Growth Triangle (IMT-GT).

This study explores the potential benefits of promoting closer links and improving coordination between ASEAN,

GMS, BIMP-EAGA, and IMT-GT in support of ASEAN's wide-ranging regional integration agenda under the AEC Blueprint. The study assessed the existing and potential links among ASEAN and the three subregional programs, as well as gaps in coordination mechanisms across the programs. This study was the first to review the strategic and institutional linkages among them, and its findings and recommended approaches can contribute to ongoing dialogue about enhanced coordination.

We gratefully thank the Government of Australia for the financial support that made the study possible. The preparation of the report greatly benefitted from a wide range of views and information gathered during consultations with government and other stakeholders in the ASEAN Member States, the secretariats of the three subregional programs, and the ASEAN Secretariat. Comments and suggestions on the findings and recommended approaches were also obtained at a regional workshop in November 2012.

We hope this study contributes to the discussion on closer coordination and cooperation between ASEAN and the GMS, BIMP-EAGA, and IMT-GT.



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Abbreviations

ADB	– Asian Development Bank
AEC	– ASEAN Economic Community
AHN	– ASEAN Highway Network
ASEAN	– Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASTP	– ASEAN Strategic Transport Plan
BIMP-EAGA	– Brunei Darussalam–Indonesia–Malaysia–Philippines East ASEAN Growth Area
CLMV	– Cambodia, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Myanmar, and Viet Nam
GMS	– Greater Mekong Subregion Economic Cooperation Program
IMT-GT	– Indonesia–Malaysia–Thailand Growth Triangle
Lao PDR	– Lao People’s Democratic Republic
MPAC	– Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity
SKRL	– Singapore–Kunming Rail Link
TA	– technical assistance

SUMMARY

Background

This report presents an assessment of the links among the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS), Brunei Darussalam–Indonesia–Malaysia–Philippines East ASEAN Growth Area (BIMP-EAGA), and Indonesia–Malaysia–Thailand Growth Triangle (IMT-GT). The report is the result of a study completed under a regional technical assistance project (TA) executed by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) with funding from the Government of Australia through the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID).¹ The TA project aimed to identify means to promote links and improve coordination among these three subregional programs, and between them and ASEAN. The project was conceived in the context of wide-ranging regional economic integration initiatives under the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC)² and heightened connectivity agenda through the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC).³

The report is based on desk reviews of official documents—such as strategic frameworks, blueprints, roadmaps,

connectivity-related sector strategies—and institutional reviews of the three subregional programs and ASEAN. Other sources used for the study included consultations with government and private stakeholders in the countries, and with the secretariats of the three subregional programs and ASEAN; studies commissioned by ADB and other international organizations; and independent assessments by academics, practitioners, and research institutions. A regional workshop was convened to obtain feedback on the report’s findings and recommended approaches.

ASEAN, GMS, BIMP-EAGA, and IMT-GT

Association of Southeast Asian Nations. ASEAN was established in 1967 with the signing of the ASEAN Declaration (Bangkok Declaration) by Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand. The ASEAN Secretariat was set up in February 1976. Based in Jakarta, it performs all secretariat functions for ASEAN. Brunei Darussalam joined in 1984, Viet Nam in 1995, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic (Lao PDR) and Myanmar in 1997, and Cambodia in 1999, making up what are today the 10 Member States of ASEAN. The ASEAN Declaration set out the aims and purposes of ASEAN to promote economic growth, social progress, cultural development, regional peace, and collaboration and partnership with the international community. These aims and purposes evolved through the years as ASEAN responded to new challenges that emerged across the regional and global landscape. In 2003, on the occasion of its 30th anniversary, the ASEAN leaders announced their vision of establishing an ASEAN Community by 2020. This signified commitment at the highest political levels to accelerate economic integration in response to dramatic changes in industrial production and trade in the region. The ASEAN Community has three pillars—the ASEAN Political-Security Community,

¹ ADB. 2010. *Promoting Links and Improving Coordination among the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS), the Brunei Darussalam–Indonesia–Malaysia–Philippines East ASEAN Growth Area (BIMP-EAGA), the Indonesia–Malaysia–Thailand Growth Triangle (IMT-GT), and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)*. Manila (TA 7718-REG, \$400,000, approved on 15 December, financed by the Government of Australia and administered by ADB).

² The AEC Blueprint was adopted at the 13th ASEAN Summit on 20 November 2007 in Singapore to serve as a coherent master plan guiding the establishment of the AEC. The AEC Blueprint is one of the three pillars of the Roadmap for an ASEAN Community (2009–2015)—signed on 1 March 2009 in Cha-am, Thailand by ASEAN leaders—in addition to political-security and socio-cultural community.

³ The MPAC was endorsed during the 17th ASEAN Summit in October 2010 in Jakarta.

AEC, and ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community—with its own blueprint. In 2007, ASEAN leaders advanced the target date for the realization of the ASEAN Community to 2015. The ASEAN Charter was signed the following year, in 2008, which provided the legal and institutional foundation for achieving the ASEAN Community.

Greater Mekong Subregion. The Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) Economic Cooperation Program was established in 1992 among six countries that share the Mekong River—Cambodia, the People’s Republic of China (PRC),⁴ the Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, and Viet Nam. Since its inception, the GMS Program has focused on promoting connectivity as a means of accelerating trade and investment, consequently stimulating economic growth, and ultimately helping to reduce poverty. At the onset, GMS cooperation took a pragmatic approach, recognizing the need to generate concrete results in order to build mutual trust and confidence eroded by decades of conflict. It was agreed that physical connectivity was a major development constraint to be overcome and, together with other nonphysical impediments, should be progressively addressed. In addition to focusing on physical connectivity, cooperation also extended to other areas where regional cooperation was perceived to contribute to harnessing the subregion’s collective potential. The GMS presently covers nine areas of cooperation: (i) agriculture, (ii) energy, (iii) environment, (iv) human resource development, (v) investment, (vi) telecommunications, (vii) tourism, (viii) trade, and (ix) transport.

Brunei Darussalam–Indonesia–Malaysia–Philippines East ASEAN Growth Area. The Brunei Darussalam–Indonesia–Malaysia–Philippines East ASEAN Growth Area (BIMP-EAGA) was established in 1994 to accelerate the socioeconomic development of less-developed, marginalized, and geographically remote areas in these four countries as part of a broader goal to narrow the development gaps, not only among ASEAN Member States, but also within them. The objective of BIMP-EAGA is reflected in its geographic focus on provinces and states that are relatively underdeveloped, instead of entire national territories. With the exception of the entire sultanate of Brunei Darussalam, the participating entities in the program include nine provinces in Kalimantan, Sulawesi, the island chain of Maluku, and Papua (Indonesia); the federal states of Sabah and Sarawak, and the federal territory of Labuan (Malaysia); and Mindanao (26 provinces) and the province of Palawan (the Philippines). The BIMP-EAGA program

of cooperation presently covers (i) cross-border trade and investment; (ii) customs, immigration, quarantine, and security; (iii) infrastructure development, which includes transport, energy, and information and communication technology; (iv) natural resources development, which consists of agriculture, fisheries, and environment; (v) small and medium-sized enterprises development; and (vi) tourism.

Indonesia–Malaysia–Thailand Growth Triangle. The Indonesia–Malaysia–Thailand Growth Triangle (IMT-GT) was established in 1993 with the objective of accelerating the economic transformation of the member states and provinces in the three member countries by exploiting their underlying complementarities and comparative advantages. The three countries, which are among the rapidly growing middle-income members of ASEAN, were motivated to embark on area-based cooperation in an effort to accelerate the growth of their lagging localities, especially in Sumatra and southern Thailand, at a sufficiently rapid pace. The goal is to allow them to catch up with the leading states and provinces, and thus benefit more evenly from economic integration. Since 1993, IMT-GT has expanded to its present geographic scope of 32 provinces and states—14 provinces in southern Thailand, 8 states in Peninsular Malaysia, and 10 provinces on the island of Sumatra in Indonesia. The IMT-GT program of cooperation presently covers (i) agriculture, (ii) *halal* products and services, (iii) human resource development, (iv) tourism, (v) trade and investment, and (vi) transport and infrastructure.

Rationale for Promoting Links and Enhancing Coordination

Asia successfully weathered the global financial crisis in 2008/09, demonstrating that sustainability requires stronger domestic consumption and increased investment demand within the region. This is part of the process of global rebalancing of savings and investments, which can be enhanced through financial and monetary integration, and trade and investment cooperation. The transition to rebalanced and more inclusive growth would benefit from an acceleration of regional economic integration in Asia.

The centrality of the ASEAN Community with its three pillars—economic, socio-cultural, and political-security—has made it necessary to more carefully and systematically examine how subregional programs are contributing toward each pillar. In particular, the AEC has important ramifications for the medium- to long-term strategic goals of the three subregional programs. Furthermore, the subregional programs can play an important role by testing

⁴ The GMS originally covered only Yunnan Province of the PRC. In December 2004, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region in the PRC was formally added as part of the GMS.

new ideas and approaches to support ASEAN's efforts to realize the AEC. This need has become more urgent with the proximity of the AEC's target date of 2015, and with many of the subregional programs increasingly taking conscious efforts to link their activities with wider ASEAN initiatives. This TA project was thus conceived to provide the means for assessing the actual and potential links between ASEAN and the GMS, BIMP-EAGA, and IMT-GT subregional programs, while considering their overlapping country memberships (with the exception of the PRC in the GMS). Identifying the points of convergence and complementarities is important for developing mutually supportive and beneficial relationships among these regional and subregional programs.

Institutional dimensions also weigh heavily on the need for better coordination among the regional and subregional programs. There are fundamental differences in the memberships, institutional structures, business processes, and levels of government and ministerial involvement in ASEAN and the three subregional programs. Yet, their overlapping memberships have the advantage of linking programs and projects toward shared visions and goals. Meanwhile, their convergence and complementarities are important for developing mutually supportive and beneficial relationships.

With respect to its geographic and sector focus, ASEAN involves entire countries and spans economic, social, political, and security concerns. The GMS Program covers its member countries in their entirety, while BIMP-EAGA (except for Brunei Darussalam) and IMT-GT involve only some provinces and states in their participating countries. While GMS is national in scope, it has initiatives covering specific areas requiring local government support. Conversely, BIMP-EAGA and IMT-GT have area-based membership, but their initiatives need support from their central governments. Thus, there is a common need to address the national-local divide issues in implementing initiatives.

The differences between the GMS, BIMP-EAGA, and IMT-GT can limit the benefits of developing closer links. However, these differences can also lead to specific geographic and sector foci, while remaining consistent with ASEAN goals. The adoption of coordination mechanisms that strengthen links and harness the best institutional features of ASEAN and the three subregional programs can facilitate the achievement of AEC objectives. Thus, ASEAN's top-down and policy-driven approach can be complemented by the bottom-up and project-driven approach of the subregional programs.

Approach

The report has two major components: a strategy component and an institutional component. The principal focus of the report is on the links between the three subregional programs and ASEAN, rather than among the three subregional programs, because of the differences in their coverage, rationale, and operational modalities. The institutional component of the study covers coordination mechanisms and arrangements within and across programs, and institutional connectivity under the MPAC, which includes policies, rules, regulations, standards, and systems and procedures (i.e., the software aspects of connectivity).

The mapping of links at the strategy level consisted of a two-tiered review at the program-wide strategy level and at the sector initiative or program level (also referred to as an operational review). The review of program strategies examined the contents of the subregional programs' strategic frameworks to assess references to ASEAN and their overarching frameworks, in particular, the AEC Blueprint and MPAC. Explicit references to ASEAN in the subregional programs' strategic frameworks are an indication of the intent to operationalize links with ASEAN. An endorsement of the strategy enables action at the operational level, shaping plans of action and implementation modalities for certain initiatives. Where there is evidence of a strong link at the strategy level, a strong link is likely to be found at the operational level. The review of operational strategy focused on connectivity initiatives in the transport and energy sectors, and in transport and trade facilitation. These sectors were given high priority for review among the bulk of projects in ASEAN and the three subregional programs. Since the assessment did not require a sector analysis, the operational level review served mainly to illustrate how links develop, or are manifested, and how they can be further expanded.

The mapping of institutional links reviewed the existing institutional mechanisms and arrangements for coordination in the subregional programs and ASEAN, including the issues and constraints they face. It examined in-country arrangements for coordinating and managing these programs and ASEAN, compared the institutional mechanisms and arrangements across programs, discussed issues and impediments to coordination among them, and identified approaches for enhancing institutional coordination and links between the subregional programs and ASEAN. Institutional assessments conducted in the past on ASEAN and the subregional programs dealt primarily with in-program improvements rather than inter-program coordination. These program-specific assessments were used in this study as the starting point for the review of coordination between ASEAN and the subregional

programs. It was complemented by a broad assessment of in-country institutional mechanisms and arrangements for coordinating activities involving ASEAN and the subregional programs.

Major Findings

Strategy and Program Links

The review of the program-wide strategies of the GMS, BIMP-EAGA, and IMT-GT showed that there is a strong recognition of the importance of ASEAN. The program-wide strategies of these three subregional programs view ASEAN integration as providing the opportunity for spurring economic growth and honing the competitive advantage of production units for the wider regional and global markets. At the same time, the subregional programs recognized the need to overcome development constraints to realize these opportunities. Regional cooperation is a potent means for subsets of the ASEAN Member States to work collectively in overcoming constraints that are unique to their particular settings.

The launch of the AEC in 2007, reinforced by the entry into force of the ASEAN Charter in 2008, has served as a galvanizing force in linking the strategies of the subregional programs more closely with the ASEAN agenda. The AEC provided greater clarity to the pillars of integration, as well as a blueprint of action that gave a more definitive anchor for the strategies of the subregional programs. Thus, a stronger link with the AEC agenda became more perceptible in the “second generation” strategic frameworks of the subregional programs. Moreover, across all of these second generation frameworks, the proximity of the AEC in 2015 seems to have spurred a greater sense of urgency to accelerate the economic integration process, as evidenced by the increasing use of specific ASEAN frameworks to guide subregional initiatives.

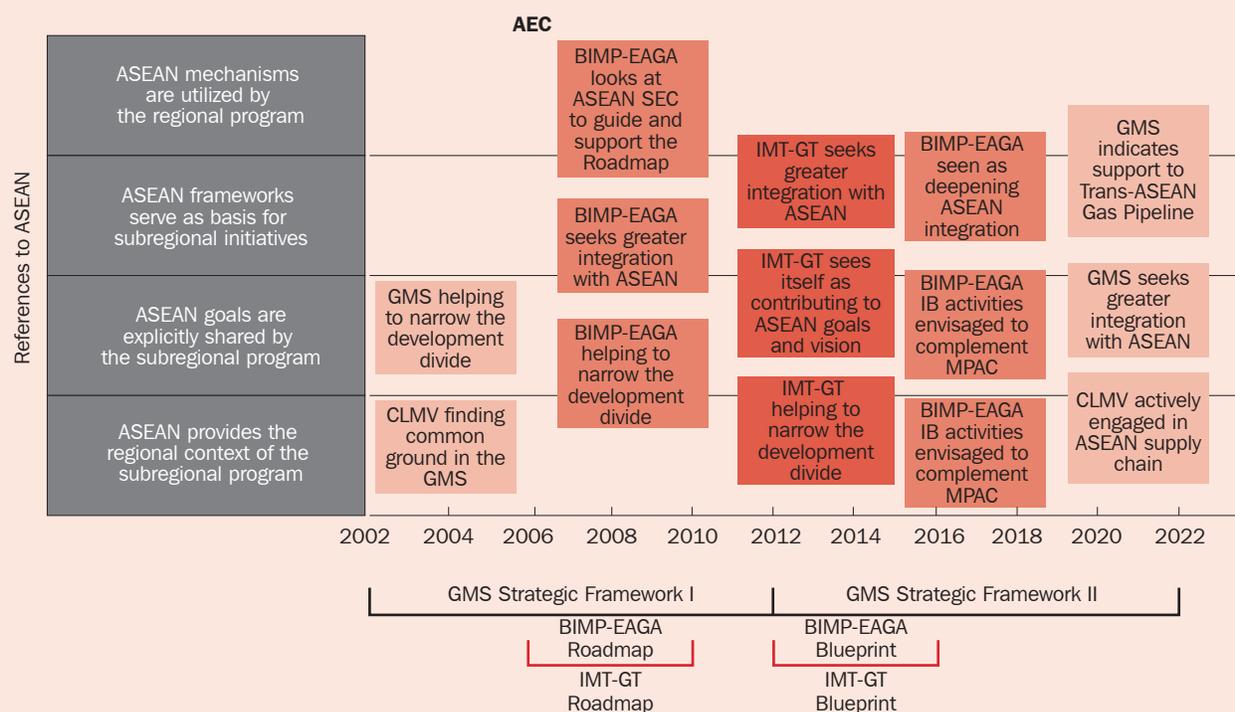
Among the subregional programs, BIMP-EAGA has manifested the strongest link with ASEAN. In fact, BIMP-EAGA has always considered itself to be a subset of ASEAN, and has brought this relationship to bear in the formulation of its various initiatives. The *BIMP-EAGA Roadmap to Development, 2006–2010* specified a role for the ASEAN Secretariat in refining the roadmap in the course of its implementation, and in guiding various EAGA initiatives through linkages with the appropriate ASEAN bodies. The ASEAN Secretariat, however, has not yet fully performed this role. **Figure S1** shows broadly how the strategic frameworks of the three subregional programs relate to ASEAN.

In the review of cooperation in transport and energy, and transport and trade facilitation, there was also evidence of links in various forms. Some links were purposive or intended, such as the BIMP-EAGA Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Transit and Interstate Transit of Goods as a test bed for the ASEAN Framework Agreement for the Facilitation of Goods in Transit. Others were random or unintended, such as segments of the ASEAN Highway Network (AHN) coinciding with segments of the subregional corridors. Links were also manifested in the form of physical connectivity expansion, such as the GMS plans to develop railway routes beyond the Singapore–Kunming Rail Link (SKRL). Similar to the pattern observed for the program-wide strategies, links at the operational level have tended to be more purposive since the AEC launch in 2007. This was evident especially in the area of transport and trade facilitation, where a number of ASEAN and subregional agreements and protocols began aligning with one another after 2007. **Table S1** shows the AHN routes identified for construction or upgrading in the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity and ASEAN Strategic Transport Plan, and the status of their inclusion in the GMS, BIMP-EAGA, and IMT-GT programs. **Table S2** shows the energy sector strategies of ASEAN, GMS, and BIMP-EAGA.

The review of selected sectors also indicates that ASEAN and the subregional programs have unique roles to play in pursuing shared goals. For one, the subregional corridors have played an important role in translating the goal of ASEAN physical connectivity into specific area contexts through the implementation of corridor-specific development strategies. Equally important, these corridors have provided a “land bridge” to connect ASEAN more intensively with markets in the PRC, and farther to the west, to India and the rest of South Asia. The subregional programs have also served as a platform where subsets of ASEAN countries can find common ground in addressing development constraints through strategies and actions that are more adaptable to their particular circumstances, while remaining consistent with ASEAN objectives. These programs have further allowed them to “test the waters,” participate gradually and incrementally in activities where capacities are still lacking, and allocate resources where national and regional priorities are aligned with each other.

ASEAN, on the other hand, has played a more effective role in institutional connectivity involving region-wide liberalization measures, standards and rules harmonization, and policy coordination, among other areas. It would be difficult for subregional programs to take the lead in these areas. A good case in point is the Customs Transit System (CTS) in the GMS Cross-Border Transport Agreement (CBTA) that will have to align eventually with that of ASEAN. However, as observed in the operational

Figure S1: Subregional Program Strategies with Reference to ASEAN



AEC = ASEAN Economic Community; ASEAN = Association of Southeast Asian Nations; BIMP-EAGA = Brunei Darussalam–Indonesia–Malaysia–Philippines East ASEAN Growth Area; CLMV = Cambodia, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Viet Nam; GMS = Greater Mekong Subregion; IB = implementation blueprint; IMT-GT = Indonesia–Malaysia–Thailand Growth Triangle; MPAC = Master Plan on ASEAN Community; SEC = secretariat; REG = regional; TA = technical assistance.
 Source: ADB TA 7718-REG Study Team.

level review, subregional programs can still play a role in software connectivity by implementing administrative improvements or building capacity (e.g., in selected border-crossing points) to facilitate the flow of goods and people for as long as these improvements are consistent with regional and/or global norms. The BIMP-EAGA and IMT-GT initiatives in customs, immigration, and quarantine systems are good examples of how the subregional programs can perform this role.

Table S3 shows existing operational links in selected connectivity areas covered by the operational review, including corridor development, the ASEAN Highway Network, Singapore–Kunming Rail Link, maritime transport, air transport, transport and trade facilitation, and energy. It also includes measures to promote or expand links in these connectivity areas.

Institutional Coordination and Links

ASEAN, GMS, BIMP-EAGA, and IMT-GT have similar governance structures consisting of four levels—summit, ministerial, senior officials, and sector working groups or bodies—in addition to their central secretariats. ASEAN has the most complex institutional arrangements involving several bodies and layers of organizations. Coordination with ASEAN is ideally pursued at the overall and the sector and subsector levels. **Table S4** summarizes the key institutional features of ASEAN and the subregional programs, while **Table S5** maps the principal bodies of ASEAN (the ASEAN Secretariat) and the three subregional programs.

Assessments of the institutional mechanisms and arrangements in ASEAN, GMS, BIMP-EAGA, and IMT-GT have been conducted at various times in the past. These reviews have led to certain changes in organizational structures and mandates of regional and/or subregional

Table S1: ASEAN Highway Network Routes in the MPAC and ASTP, 2011–2015 for Construction and Upgrading, and their Inclusion in the GMS, BIMP-EAGA, and IMT-GT Programs

AHN Routes in MPAC and ASTP	Inclusion in GMS, BIMP-EAGA, and IMT-GT
<p>Completion of missing links in Myanmar</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AH112: Thaton–Mawlamyine–Lehnya–Khong Loy (60 km) • AH123: Dawei–Maesameepass (141 km) 	Most sections for construction in Myanmar are not included in the GMS VPOA, 2008–2012.
<p>Upgrading of routes below Class III in transit transport routes in Lao PDR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AH12: Nateuy–Oudomxai–Luang Prabang (393 km) • AH 15: Ban Lao–Namphao (98 km) <p>Myanmar</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AH1: Tamu–Mandalay–Bago–Myawaddy (781 km) • AH2: Meiktila–Loilem–Kyaington–Tachilek (593 km) • AH3: Mongla–Kyaing Tong (93 km) <p>Indonesia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AH25: Banda Aceh–Medan–Pekanbaru–Jambi–Palembang–Lampung Bakauheni–Merak (141.55 km)^a 	Most sections for upgrading in Myanmar (AH1, AH2, and AH3), and in the Lao PDR (AH12 and AH15) are not included in the GMS VPOA, 2008–2012. Although AH12, Vientiane–Luang Prabang, is not included in the VPOA, this route is part of the Central Corridor in the GMS expanded nine-corridor network.
<p>Upgrading of other routes below Class III^a</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indonesia: AH150 (1,762.3 km) and AH151 (611.9 km) • Lao PDR: AH131 (96 km) and AH132 (126 km) • Malaysia: AH150 (40 km) • Myanmar: AH111 (239 km) and AH112 (1,085 km) • Viet Nam: AH13 (215.5 km) by 2011 and AH132 (160 km) by 2012 	<p>Most sections in Indonesia (AH150 and AH151) are in the <i>IMT-GT Implementation Blueprint, 2012–2016</i>.</p> <p>Most sections in the Lao PDR (AH131 and AH132), Myanmar (AH111 and AH112), and Viet Nam (AH13 and AH132) are not included in the VPOA, 2008–2012.</p> <p>The sections in Malaysia (AH150) are not included in the <i>BIMP-EAGA Implementation Blueprint, 2012–2016</i>.</p>

AH = ASEAN Highway, AHN = ASEAN Highway Network, ASEAN = Association of Southeast Asian Nations, ASTP = ASEAN Strategic Transport Plan, BIMP-EAGA = Brunei Darussalam–Indonesia–Malaysia–Philippines East ASEAN Growth Area, GMS = Greater Mekong Subregion, IMT-GT = Indonesia–Malaysia–Thailand Growth Triangle, km = kilometer, Lao PDR = Lao People’s Democratic Republic, MPAC = Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity, VPOA = Vientiane Plan of Action.

^a AHN routes listed in the MPAC are those for upgrading in Myanmar and routes below Class III standards in transit transport routes. These are also listed in the ASTP, 2011–2015, with an added set of routes below Class III.

Sources: ASEAN Secretariat. 2010. *Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity*. Jakarta; ASEAN Secretariat. 2011. *ASEAN Strategic Transport Plan, 2011–2105*. Jakarta.

bodies over time, with the latest being the adoption by BIMP-EAGA of a new organizational structure effective 1 January 2013. A review of the ASEAN Secretariat is ongoing. These periodic institutional assessments have been helpful in ensuring that existing structures and processes remain effective in supporting regional and/or subregional goals.

All ASEAN Member States are members of at least one other regional and/or subregional program (Table S6). These interlocking memberships in different but related subregional programs require close in-country coordination. While efforts to improve coordination at the regional and subregional levels are important, the first line of defense against a fragmented and uncoordinated approach to regional and subregional development is at the country level. Moreover, the effective implementation of specific regional and/or subregional initiatives requires that they be integrated into the national planning, policy, and budget processes. Good in-country coordination is critical

to achieving concrete results in regional and subregional cooperation.

The analysis of in-country mechanisms and arrangements for coordinating ASEAN, GMS, BIMP-EAGA, and IMT-GT show that except for ASEAN, for which in-country coordination resides uniformly with the foreign affairs ministries, there are wide variations in terms of the designated focal ministers and agencies that are responsible for coordinating each of the three subregional programs. There have also been changes over time involving focal ministries and ministers. The arrangements adopted by a member country at any one time have depended on the specific situation in each country. An organizational approach effective in one country may not necessarily be effective in another country due to different institutional settings. Table S7 shows the current focal ministries or agencies for ASEAN and related subregional programs.

Table S2: Energy Sector Strategies of ASEAN, GMS, and BIMP-EAGA

Goals or Subsector	Strategies ^a		
	ASEAN	GMS	BIMP-EAGA
Ensure energy supply security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop grid connectivity through the ASEAN Power Grid (APG) and Trans-ASEAN Gas Pipeline (TAGP) to optimize the region's energy resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop grid connectivity beyond the power sector into natural gas Integrate the energy market by reducing barriers to cross-border trade in electricity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce reserve margins in the power sector to optimize investments and increase the financial efficiency of new power projects
Improvement of policy regimes and harmonization of regulatory frameworks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Harmonize all aspects of technical standards and operating procedures, as well as regulatory frameworks among member states 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish the policy and regulatory framework for power trade in the GMS Prepare a time-bound plan to introduce competition to the power sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support power sector restructuring, reform, and operational efficiency improvement options
Power subsector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accelerate the development of APG interconnection projects Optimize the generation sector with available indigenous energy resources Encourage and optimize the utilization of ASEAN resources (funding, expertise, and products) to develop the generation, transmission, and distribution sectors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop grid interconnection infrastructure for cross-border trade in electricity Optimize use of available subregional energy resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement the ASEAN Interconnection Master Plan, and establish the policy framework for the electricity networks comprising the APG sources
Oil and gas subsector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement TAGP based on the approved pipeline projects Implement the Memorandum of Understanding on the TAGP, involving interconnection issues, gas transit principles, tax, and tariff issues Explore additional gas supply from both conventional and non-conventional sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote the development of identified GMS segments of the TAGP Develop other potential segments of the oil and gas sector (e.g., production distribution, logistics, facilitation of contractual arrangements for exploration, and interconnection policy) Formulate a GMS master plan for natural gas, and other related studies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase access to energy to all sectors and communities, even the poorest, in the subregion through interconnecting arrangements utilizing APG and TAGP
Coal subsector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen institutional and policy framework toward the promotion of a regional policy on coal trade Promote coal and clean coal technologies Promote intra-ASEAN coal trade and investment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote energy efficiency and clean coal technologies, and reduce carbon emissions from coal plants Strengthen policy and institutional framework to enhance GMS trade and private investments in the coal subsector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop cleaner fossil fuel options, including oil, gas, and coal Develop environmentally sound fossil fuels, including oil, gas, and coal in close association with clean production and consumption technologies that can reduce greenhouse gas emissions

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Table S2 continued

Goals or Subsector	Strategies ^a		
	ASEAN	GMS	BIMP-EAGA
Sustainable energy development, including the development of renewable energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the development and utilization of renewable energy sources to achieve the 15% target share of renewable energy in the ASEAN power generation mix • Strengthen renewable energy development, such as biofuels • Promote open trade, facilitation, and cooperation on renewable energy and related industries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop the utilization of indigenous low carbon and renewable resources • Promote the use of renewable energy resources, including biomass, biofuel, solar (photovoltaic), wind, micro-hydro, and other locally available energy sources by upscaling best practices in the GMS • Promote subregional engineering and manufacturing capacity for renewable energy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase utilization of renewable energy, including biomasses, biofuels, solar, wind, and other available resources
Access to energy, especially in the remote and rural areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote access to energy among the “energy poor,” especially in the rural areas where traditional sources of energy (fuelwood and charcoal) still dominate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote innovative, cost-effective rural electrification schemes for poverty reduction, utilizing regional grids • Promote best regional practices of off-grid and decentralized energy systems for accelerated development of isolated areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop off-grid decentralized and/or distributed energy systems for the integration of isolated areas, particularly for renewable energy • Develop effective rural electrification schemes
Energy efficiency and conservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote good energy management practices, especially for industrial and commercial sectors • Develop energy efficiency and conservation tools (e.g., database, technical directory, handbook, benchmarks, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve energy efficiency through demand side management and energy conservation, with a view to reducing energy consumption per unit of gross domestic product generated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase energy efficiency and conservation at both the demand and supply sides
Energy planning, implementation, and monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance energy policy and supply security information sharing network • Conduct capacity building in energy and environmental planning and supply security assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt performance targets to properly monitor and reflect the successes in realizing goals, in the countries and in the subregion, in various areas of the GMS Energy Roadmap 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen collaboration and cooperation among national and regional institutions in energy policy and planning, and supply security information sharing network • Enhance information sharing and networking, as well as capacity building activities
Private sector participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide opportunities for private sector involvement in terms of investment, including financing and technology transfer in the various subsectors and program components 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote public–private partnership and private sector participation, particularly through small and medium-sized enterprises • Enhance institutional and regulatory environment conducive to private sector • Prepare a strategy to market the GMS as an attractive market for energy investments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote private sector participation in sector restructuring and investment

ASEAN = Association of Southeast Asian Nations, BIMP-EAGA = Brunei Darussalam–Indonesia–Malaysia– Philippines East ASEAN Growth Area, GMS = Greater Mekong Subregion.

^a The IMT-GT program does not have an energy strategy.

Sources: ADB. 2007. Roadmap for the Development of the Energy Sector in the BIMP-EAGA Region, 2007–2010. Unpublished; ADB. 2009. *Building a Sustainable Energy Future: The Greater Mekong Subregion*. Manila; ADB. 2010. *Roadmap for Expanded Energy Cooperation in the GMS and Roadmap, 2010–2011*. Manila; ASEAN Secretariat. 2010. *ASEAN Plan of Action on Energy Cooperation, 2010–2015*. Jakarta.

Table S3: Operational Level Links between ASEAN, GMS, BIMP-EAGA, and IMT-GT in Selected Connectivity Areas

Connectivity Area	Existing Links	Measures to Promote or Expand Links
Corridor Development	<p>Subregional programs provide the geographic focus for physical connectivity in ASEAN.</p> <p>All subregions recognize the need to move toward an integrated multimodal transport system along ASEAN's trajectory.</p>	<p>ASEAN to take into account subregional corridors in prioritizing segments or components of various transport plans, e.g., the ASEAN Highway Network (AHN)</p> <p>Subregional programs to align the corridor development with the ASEAN efforts to develop multimodal transport systems; coordinate with ASEAN efforts on the setting of technical, safety, and security standards for multimodal transport</p>
ASEAN Highway Network	<p>About half of AHN routes are part of, or linked to, segments of subregional corridors; two-thirds of these routes are in the GMS.</p> <p>Cross-border links in the AHN are mostly found in Thailand (13) and the Lao People's Democratic Republic (11).</p> <p>Ferry links as part of the AHN are found in Cambodia, Indonesia, and the Philippines.</p>	<p>ASEAN to take into account the connectivity needs of subregional corridors in determining AHN priorities for construction and upgrading</p> <p>ASEAN to give priority to cross-border highway links in expanding and upgrading AHN routes</p> <p>BIMP-EAGA and IMT-GT to further develop and expand ferry links as part of the AHN</p>
Singapore–Kunming Rail Link	<p>The missing link in the Singapore–Kunming Rail Link (SKRL) from Poipet to Sisophon in Cambodia is included in the GMS Vientiane Plan of Action.</p> <p>The inclusion of the railway subsector in the GMS transport strategy holds prospects for expanding the railway network beyond the SKRL.</p> <p>IMT-GT is pursuing a number of railway projects between southern Thailand and northern Malaysia, and within Sumatra independently of SKRL.</p>	<p>GMS to implement this project successfully and link with ASEAN for interoperability with the rest of SKRL</p> <p>GMS to pursue further expansion of the railway routes and address the software components that are essential for interoperability, which must be coordinated with the ASEAN initiatives in this area</p> <p>Software components for interoperability of subregional rail routes to be aligned with region-wide efforts</p>
Maritime Transport	<p>More than half of the 47 ASEAN-designated ports are in the subregions, and mostly in the priority corridors.</p> <p>BIMP-EAGA hosts 16 of the ASEAN-designated ports. The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Sea Linkages is helping to improve the efficiency of the ASEAN Port system.</p> <p>The BIMP-EAGA initiative on nonconventional sized ships (NCSS) broadly supports the ASEAN maritime safety goals, and addresses the unique features of the subregion's trading environment.</p> <p>Development of roll-on/roll-off (RoRo) services in selected BIMP-EAGA and IMT-GT ports supports the goal of ASEAN RoRo Network in the Master Plan for ASEAN Connectivity.</p>	<p>BIMP-EAGA and IMT-GT to continue with port improvements, such as those prioritized under their implementation blueprints</p> <p>BIMP-EAGA to implement effectively the MOU on Sea Linkages; provide incentives to weak and unviable routes, and expand designated ports as appropriate; and further liberalize shipping services as building blocks to the ASEAN Single Shipping Market</p> <p>BIMP-EAGA NCSS initiative to consider possible extension to IMT-GT where the use of NCSS also dominates informal trade</p> <p>ASEAN to consider using BIMP-EAGA and IMT-GT as the hub of its RoRo network, building from pilot initiatives in the subregions</p>

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Table S3 continued

Connectivity Area	Existing Links	Measures to Promote or Expand Links
Air Transport	<p>The BIMP-EAGA MOU on Air Linkages (2007) paved the way for the Multilateral Agreement on Air Services (MAAS) (2009); it serves as a building block to ASEAN goal of air services liberalization.</p> <p>The MAAS specifically provides the lifting of restrictions of up to 5th freedom rights between ASEAN cities and ASEAN subregions, specifically referring to BIMP-EAGA and IMT-GT; and Cambodia, the Lao PDR, Myanmar, and Viet Nam (CLMV). It also provides a direct link to air transport initiatives of subregional programs. It consolidated earlier initiatives and broadened the scope of air services liberalization.</p>	<p>BIMP-EAGA to pursue further expansion in coverage of the MOU on Air Linkages, conduct assessment study, and rationalize airport incentives; ASEAN to encourage full ratification of the MAAS</p> <p>ASEAN to fully implement the MAAS toward the ASEAN Single Aviation Market, and move beyond 5th freedom rights</p> <p>BIMP-EAGA, IMT-GT, and CLMV to start moving to 6th freedom rights and beyond, but an ASEAN-wide agreement would be difficult on account of diverse views of the ASEAN Member States</p>
Energy	<p>There is broad convergence among ASEAN and the subregional programs in terms of the (i) development of grid connectivity for power and gas; (ii) harmonization of regulatory frameworks; (iii) promotion of clean coal technology; and (iv) sustainable energy development through renewable energy, among others.</p> <p>The BIMP-EAGA Sarawak–Kalimantan Interconnection and IMT-GT Melaka–Pekanbaru Interconnection are priority projects in the Master Plan for ASEAN Connectivity. Sarawak–West Kalimantan is also part of the ASEAN Power Grid (APG).</p> <p>The GMS projects in Mae–Moh 3–Nan Hong Sa and Udon Thani 3–Navong are part of the APG. Other projects are being planned; however, most power projects in the GMS are export-oriented power generation projects with little interconnection between the GMS countries. This is consistent with the GMS strategy focusing on the development of a regional power market.</p> <p>The GMS regional master plan for natural gas (2012–2015) is envisaged to address the likely increase in natural gas imports, which may have to be sourced from large reserves in Borneo, East Natuna, and Java.</p>	<p>ASEAN and subregional programs to coordinate efforts on various initiatives in these areas</p> <p>BIMP-EAGA and IMT-GT to ensure successful implementation of these projects</p> <p>GMS to ensure successful implementation of these projects, but at the same time to take steps to develop a regional proven market</p> <p>GMS to use the Trans-ASEAN Gas Pipeline to exploit economies of scale, enhance security of supply by sharing outputs of gas through the pipeline, and develop a more coordinated approach with ASEAN on policy and interconnection due to an increase in the use of natural gas in the GMS</p>

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Table S3 continued

Connectivity Area	Existing Links	Measures to Promote or Expand Links
Transport and Trade Facilitation	The GMS Cross-Border Transport Agreement (CBTA) (1998) broadly supported the ASEAN goals on trade facilitation and contained specific provisions on goods in transit along the lines embodied in the ASEAN Framework Agreement for the Facilitation of Goods in Transit (AFAFGIT) (1998), but CBTA was more comprehensive.	GMS to address CBTA implementation bottlenecks and the need for alignment with ASEAN frameworks, including elements of National Single Window (NSW) and ASEAN Single Window (ASW)
	The ASEAN Customs Transit System (CTS) under Protocol 7 of AFAFGIT (March 2012) consolidated transit procedures.	GMS to align CBTA CTS with that of ASEAN; and address the CTS of the People's Republic of China in relation to its plans to join the Transit International Routier Convention
	The BIMP-EAGA MOUs on commercial buses and coaches, sea linkages, and air linkages are contributing to overall ASEAN transport facilitation objectives; these draw significantly from the ASEAN framework agreements.	BIMP-EAGA to continue planned expansion and improved implementation of the MOUs, and conduct assessment study to guide expansion and improvements
	The BIMP-EAGA MOU on Transit and Interstate Transport of Goods (2009) will, among others, pilot test the AFAFGIT as the basis for formulating a region-wide agreement. The MOU is completely aligned with AFAFGIT provisions.	BIMP-EAGA to set clear parameters in pilot testing AFAFGIT toward region-wide implementation
	The BIMP-EAGA customs, immigration, quarantine, and security (CIQS) initiative links with the NSW and ASW in terms of information sharing, and builds on technical and human resource capacity for compliance with international standards.	BIMP-EAGA to use experience in informing inputs to ASEAN-wide initiatives, such as the NSW and ASW
	The IMT-GT CIQS initiative is starting along the same lines as that of BIMP-EAGA based on international standards plus ASEAN.	IMT-GT to use experience in informing inputs to ASEAN-wide initiatives, such as the NSW and ASW

ASEAN = Association of Southeast Asian Nations, AHN = ASEAN Highway Network, BIMP-EAGA = Brunei Darussalam–Indonesia–Malaysia–Philippines East ASEAN Growth Area, CBTA = Cross-Border Transport Agreement, GMS = Greater Mekong Subregion, IMT-GT = Indonesia–Malaysia–Thailand Growth Triangle, MAAS = Multilateral Agreement on Air Services, REG = regional, TA = technical assistance.

Source: ADB TA 7718-REG Study Team.

The national secretariats play a critical role in coordinating regional and subregional programs. Their functions range from maintaining liaisons with the subregional secretariats to arranging the participation of national agencies in subregional meetings, disseminating information on various subregional activities, coordinating the position of concerned agencies on matters to be taken up in senior officials and ministerial meetings, and interfacing with local authorities and the private sector. Although the need to have a strong national secretariat or coordinator is well-recognized, many of these offices lack the resources and capacity to perform their roles effectively. Moreover, not all sector ministries concerned have designated focal units or officials within their respective organizations, resulting in a lack of continuity and low levels of participation in

working group meetings and activities, as well as inadequate monitoring of subregional initiatives.

The mechanisms for intra-program coordination among concerned ministries and agencies (e.g., transport, energy, and environment) vary by country, with many convening interagency consultation meetings when necessary. There are more formal arrangements in some countries, such as the AEC national coordinating committees in Cambodia and Thailand chaired by their respective ministers of commerce. In addition, Cambodia organized the National Committee for ASEAN Affairs chaired by the Prime Minister, with the Deputy Prime Minister and minister of foreign affairs serving as vice chair.

Table S4: Key Institutional Features of ASEAN, GMS, BIMP-EAGA, and IMT-GT Programs

Key Features	ASEAN	GMS	BIMP-EAGA	IMT-GT	
Year established	1967	1992	1994	1993	
Membership or Coverage	Originally 5, currently 10 member states	6 member countries (1 province [Yunnan] and 1 autonomous region [Guangxi Zhuang] in the People's Republic of China)	Subnational areas of 4 member countries, except for Brunei Darussalam	Subnational areas of 3 member countries	
Geographical Characteristics	Widely dispersed with part in mainland Southeast Asia and others in archipelagic Southeast Asia	Contiguous	Dispersed	Contiguous, except for the Indonesian component	
Sectors and Areas of Cooperation	Political, security, socioeconomic, and cultural	Socioeconomic	Socioeconomic	Socioeconomic	
Summit Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year started • Frequency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1976 • Annually since 1995; twice a year since 2008 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2000 • Once every 3 years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2005 • Annually (on the sidelines of the ASEAN Summit) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2006 • Annually (on the sidelines of the ASEAN Summit)
Secretariat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year established • Location 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1976 • Jakarta, Indonesia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1992 • ADB headquarters, Manila 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2004 • Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2007 • Putrajaya, Malaysia
Core staff complement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 99 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Malaysian and Sabah governments (through TA projects: ADB as requested; GTZ completed)
Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribution from member states 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ADB technical assistance (TA) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Malaysian and Sabah governments (through TA projects: ADB as requested; GTZ completed) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Malaysian Government (through TA project: ADB as requested) 	
Decision-Making Rules and Processes	By consensus; moving to rules-based under the ASEAN Charter	By consensus	By consensus	By consensus	
National Secretariat	Ministries of foreign affairs	Economic ministries or agencies, except in the Lao People's Democratic Republic	Economic or planning ministries or agencies	Economic or planning ministries or agencies	
Projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coverage • Identification • Development and implementation • Monitoring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible (10-x) • As proposed in ASEAN sector bodies • Implementing agencies • Sector bodies and the ASEAN Secretariat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible (6-x) • Based on sector or subsector studies • Implementing agencies with ADB assistance • Working Groups and GMS Secretariat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible (4-x) • As proposed in clusters and working groups • Implementing agencies • Working groups and BIMP-EAGA Secretariat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible (3-x) • As proposed in working groups • Implementing agencies • Working groups and IMT-GT Secretariat
Private Sector Counterpart	Various business associations	GMS Business Forum	BIMP-EAGA Business Council	Joint Business Council	
Local Government Participation	No specific body	Economic Corridors Forum	Local Government Forum	Governors Forum	
Donor Coordination	Various; Initiative for ASEAN Integration Development Cooperation Forum	Development Partners' Meeting	Ad hoc meetings	Ad hoc meetings	

ADB = Asian Development Bank, ASEAN = Association of Southeast Asian Nations, BIMP-EAGA = Brunei Darussalam–Indonesia–Malaysia–Philippines East ASEAN Growth Area, GMS = Greater Mekong Subregion, IMT-GT = Indonesia–Malaysia–Thailand Growth Triangle, REG = regional, TA = technical assistance. Source: ADB TA 7718-REG Study Team.

Table S5: Mapping of Principal Bodies of ASEAN, GMS, BIMP-EAGA, and IMT-GT

Item	ASEAN	GMS	BIMP-EAGA	IMT-GT
Overall Direction and Coordination	ASEAN Summit AEC Council ASCC Council CPR AEM/SEOM AMBDC-SC/AEM-METI IAI Task Force ASEAN Secretariat (ASEC) ACC	Leaders Summit Ministerial Meeting (MM)/ Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM) GMS Secretariat	Leaders Summit MM/SOM BIMP-Facilitation Centre (BIMP-FC)	Leaders Summit MM/SOM Centre for IMT-GT Subregional Cooperation (CIMT)
Agriculture	AMAF and SOM-AMAF/ ASOF Agriculture, Industry and Natural Resources Division, ASEC	Working Group on Agriculture	Working Groups on Agro-industry and Fishery under the Natural Resources Development (NRD) Cluster	Working Group on <i>Halal</i> Products and Services
Energy	AMEM and SOME ASEAN Centre for Energy ASEAN Council on Petroleum Infrastructure Division, ASEC	Subregional Energy Forum	Working Group on Energy under the NRD Cluster	Transport and Infrastructure Working Group
Environment	AMME and ASOEN ASEAN Centre for Diversity Environment Division, ASEC	Working Group on Environment Environment Operations Center	Working Group on Environment and Forestry under the NRD Cluster	No specific body
Human Resource Development	ASED and SOM-ED AHMM and SOMHD ALMM and SLOM ASCC Department, ASEC	Working Group on Human Resource Development	No specific body	Working Group on Human Resource Development
Information and Communication Technology (ICT)	TELMIN and TELSOM Infrastructure Division, ASEC	Subregional Telecommunications Forum	Working Group on ICT under the Transport, Infrastructure, and ICT Development (TIICTD) Cluster	Transport and Infrastructure Working Group
Tourism	M-ATM ASEAN NTOs Meeting Services and Investment Division, ASEC	Tourism Working Group Mekong Tourism Coordination Office	Working Group on Tourism Cluster	Tourism Working Group
Trade, Transport Facilitation, and Logistics	AFTA Council ASEAN Directors-General of Customs Meeting ASEAN-TM and STOM Trade and Facilitation Division, ASEC	Subregional Transport Forum (STF) STF Working Group NTFC	CIQS Task Force	Trade and Investment Working Group
Transport	ASEAN-TM and STOM Infrastructure Division, ASEC	STF	Working Groups on Air, Land, and Sea Transport under the TIICTD Cluster	Transport and Infrastructure Working Group

ACC = ASEAN Connectivity Coordinating Committee; AEC = ASEAN Economic Community; AEM = ASEAN Economic Ministers Meeting; AFTA = ASEAN Free Trade Area; AHMM = ASEAN Health Ministers Meeting; ALMM = ASEAN Labor Ministers Meeting; AMAF = ASEAN Ministers Meeting on Agriculture and Forestry; AMBDC-SC = ASEAN–Mekong Basin Development Cooperation Steering Committee; AMEM = ASEAN Ministers on Energy Meeting; AMME = ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on the Environment; ASCC = ASEAN Socio-Cultural Council; ASEAN = Association of Southeast Asian Nations; ASED = ASEAN Education Ministers Meeting; ASOEN = ASEAN Senior Officials on the Environment; ASEAN-TM = ASEAN Transport Ministers Meeting; ASOF = ASEAN Senior Officials on Forestry; BIMP-EAGA = Brunei Darussalam–Indonesia–Malaysia–Philippines East ASEAN Growth Area; CPR = Committee of Permanent Representatives; CIQS = customs, immigration, quarantine, and security; GMS = Greater Mekong Subregion; IAI = Initiative for ASEAN Integration; IMT-GT = Indonesia–Malaysia–Thailand Growth Triangle; M-ATM = Meeting of the ASEAN Tourism Ministers; METI = Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry; NTFC = National Transport Facilitation Committee; NTOs = national tourism organizations; REG = regional; SEOM = Senior Economic Officials Meeting; SLOM = Senior Labor Officials Meeting; SOM-ED = Senior Officials Meeting on Education; SOME = Senior Officials Meeting on Energy; SOMHD = Senior Officials Meeting on Health Development; STOM = Senior Transport Officials Meeting; TELMIN = ASEAN Telecommunications and Information Technology Ministers Meeting; TELSOM = Telecommunications and Information Technology Senior Officials Meeting; TA = technical assistance.

Source: ADB TA 7718-REG Study Team.

Table S6: Country Membership in Selected Regional or Subregional Groupings

Country	ASEAN		GMS	ACMECS	BIMSTEC	MGC	MRC	IMT-GT	BIMP-EAGA
	ASEAN	+3							
No. of Members ^a	10	13	6	5	7	6	4	3	4
Brunei Darussalam									
Cambodia									
PRC									
Indonesia									
Lao PDR									
Malaysia									
Myanmar									
Philippines									
Singapore									
Thailand									
Viet Nam									

ACMECS = Ayeyawady–Chao Phraya–Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy; ASEAN = Association of Southeast Asian Nations; ASEAN+3 = ASEAN and the PRC, Japan, and the Republic of Korea; BIMP-EAGA = Brunei Darussalam–Indonesia–Malaysia–Philippines East ASEAN Growth Area; BIMSTEC = Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation; GMS = Greater Mekong Subregion Program; IMT-GT = Indonesia–Malaysia–Thailand Growth Triangle; Lao PDR = Lao People’s Democratic Republic; MGC = Mekong–Ganga Cooperation; MRC = Mekong River Commission; PRC = People’s Republic of China, REG = regional; TA = technical assistance.

^a India is the sixth member of MGC.

Source: ADB TA 7718-REG Study Team.

While in-country institutional arrangements for intra-program coordination are generally well-defined, the same is not true for in-country coordination (inter-program) among or across regional and subregional programs. This issue pertains not only to coordination among ministries involved in these programs, but also within ministries. Some of the factors constraining in-country coordination efforts include a lack of resources, limited technical capacity, historical antecedents and inertia from past practice, and the political factors and personalities involved at one time or another. Inter-program coordination has been addressed by member countries in various ways. Many member countries have taken an informal, ad hoc approach whereby interagency meetings are convened when an important issue comes up or when the need arises. Efforts have also been taken by some countries to institutionalize mechanisms for coordinating regional and subregional programs on a government-wide basis, such as the newly constituted Council for Regional Cooperation in the Philippines chaired by the secretary of foreign affairs, and the high-level coordinating committee for regional and subregional cooperation under the chair of the Prime Ministers of Cambodia, Thailand, and Viet Nam.

At the regional and subregional levels, inter-program coordination between ASEAN and the GMS, BIMP-EAGA, and IMT-GT has been inadequate, despite some steps that have been taken to improve coordination and the MPAC’s recognition of such need. Efforts that have

been initiated so far to strengthen the links have had limited results. For instance, BIMP-EAGA has invited the ASEAN Secretariat to its ministerial and senior officials meetings, but this has been confined to the exchange of general information. Although the GMS, BIMP-EAGA, and IMT-GT have been recognized as ASEAN subregions in a number of official documents, the ASEAN Secretariat has hesitated to be proactively involved in the subregional programs in the absence of a clear administrative mandate.

The study identified the following issues and concerns involving institutional mechanisms and arrangements that cut across regional and subregional programs:

- (i) Improved in-country coordination of the various initiatives in member countries—particularly for the GMS, BIMP-EAGA, and IMT-GT programs—can help ensure consistency and maximize the benefits of member countries’ participation in various regional and subregional programs.
- (ii) Issues and constraints confronting the central secretariats include capacity constraints in the ASEAN Secretariat, legal issues and capacity constraints in the BIMP-EAGA and IMT-GT secretariats, and the role of ADB in financing and managing the GMS Secretariat. The unevenness in the resource capacities and legal mandates of central secretariats affects the overall quality of coordination among them.

Table S7: Focal Ministries or Agencies for ASEAN and Related Subregional Groupings

Country	ASEAN	AEM	AEM-METI	AMBDC	IAI	CLMV	ACMECS	GMS	BIMP-EAGA	IMT-GT
Brunei Darussalam	MOFAT	MOFAT	MOFAT	MOFAT	---	---	---	---	MOFAT	---
Cambodia	MFAIC	MOC	MOC	MOC	MFAIC	MOC	MFAIC	CDC	---	---
PRC	---	---	---	MDDA	---	---	---	MOF	---	---
Indonesia	MOFA	MOT	MOT	MOT	---	---	---	---	CMEA	CMEA
Lao PDR	MOFA	MOIC	MOIC	MOIC	MOFA	MOIC	MOFA	PMO	---	---
Malaysia	MOFA	MITI	MITI	MITI	---	---	---	---	EPU	EPU
Myanmar										
MOFA	MNPED	MNPED	MNPED	MOFA	MNPED	MOFA	MNPED	---	---	---
Philippines	DFA	DTI	DTI	DTI	---	---	---	---	MINDA	---
Singapore	MOFA	MTI	MTI	MTI	---	---	---	---	---	---
Thailand	MOFA	MOC	MOC	MOC	---	---	MOFA	NESDB	---	NESDB
Viet Nam	MOFA	MOIT	MOC	MPI	MOFA	MOFA	MOFA	MPI	---	---

--- = not applicable.

ACMECS = Ayeyawady–Chao Phraya–Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy; AEM = ASEAN Economic Ministers; AMBDC = ASEAN–Mekong Basin Development Cooperation; ASEAN = Association of Southeast Asian Nations; BIMP-EAGA = Brunei Darussalam–Indonesia–Malaysia–Philippines East ASEAN Growth Area; CDC = Council for the Development Cambodia; CLMV = Cambodia, the Lao PDR, Myanmar, and Viet Nam; CMEA = Coordinating Ministry for Economic Affairs; DFA = Department of Foreign Affairs; DTI = Department of Trade and Industry; EPU = Economic Planning Unit; GMS = Greater Mekong Subregion Program; IAI = Initiative for ASEAN Integration; IMT-GT = Indonesia–Malaysia–Thailand Growth Triangle; Lao PDR = Lao People’s Democratic Republic; MDDA = Minister for Development of Disadvantaged Areas; METI = Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry; MFAIC = Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation; MINDA = Mindanao Development Authority; MITI = Ministry of International Trade and Industry; MNPED = Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development; MOC = Ministry of Commerce; MOF = Ministry of Finance; MOFA = Ministry of Foreign Affairs; MOFAT = Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade; MOIC = Ministry of Industry and Commerce; MOIT = Ministry of Industry and Trade; MOT = Ministry of Trade; MPI = Ministry of Planning and Investment; MTI = Ministry of Trade and Industry; NESDB = National Economic and Social Development Board; PMO = Prime Minister’s Office; PRC = People’s Republic of China; REG = regional; TA = technical assistance.

Source: ADB TA 7718-REG Study Team.

- (iii) There are significant challenges in project development and implementation, particularly in BIMP-EAGA and IMT-GT, which are partly being addressed by the preparation of their implementation blueprints. However, the capacity for dealing with these challenges is severely constrained.
- (iv) The need to improve monitoring systems is a common concern. Central secretariats differ in their monitoring systems and capacities. The ASEAN Secretariat uses a scorecard for monitoring the progress of measures and actions, which is largely based on process compliance. Meanwhile, the subregional programs have started to go beyond progress monitoring and have initiated steps toward a results-based framework.

coordination is a necessary condition for promoting effective links at the regional and subregional levels; and (ii) the competencies and mandates of national, regional, and subregional secretariats will impact their performance in promoting links.

The report’s key findings can be categorized as follows:

- (i) pursuing opportunities for strengthening and expanding links,
- (ii) strengthening organizational structures and coordination mechanisms at the in-country, subregional, and regional levels, and
- (iii) enhancing institutional capacity.

Strengthening Strategic and Institutional Links

While there are wide variations among in-country systems and subregional institutional structures and mechanisms, there are two universal factors for forging effective strategic and institutional links: (i) well-functioning in-country

Pursuing Opportunities for Strengthening and Expanding Links

Based on this study’s review of selected connectivity areas, a number of broad measures could be taken to further promote or expand links. For example, ASEAN might (i) take into account subregional corridor development plans in further prioritizing the ASEAN Highway Network

routes for upgrading and expansion, (ii) address gaps involving ferry links and cross-border highways links, (iii) strengthen coordination in the software elements of railway and energy grid connectivity, or (iv) consider lead roles for BIMP-EAGA and IMT-GT in pursuing the ASEAN roll-on/roll-off (RoRo) network. For their part, the subregional programs might (i) promote and deepen their roles in pilot testing transport and trade facilitation, (ii) expand railway connectivity beyond the Singapore–Kunming Rail Link, (iii) align the Cross-Border Transport Agreement to the new ASEAN Customs Transit System, or (iv) expand the BIMP-EAGA memorandum of understanding on nonconventional sized ships to IMT-GT.

Strengthening Organizational Structures and Coordination Mechanisms

Well-functioning in-country coordination mechanisms can help avoid fragmentation, promote better resource allocation, and ensure alignment of national priorities with regional and subregional commitments. Such mechanisms involve (i) an assessment of the adequacy of existing in-country arrangements and mechanisms within and among ministries for coordinating the initiatives of ASEAN and the three subregional programs, (ii) the identification of areas and actions for improvement, and (iii) the implementation of measures to strengthen arrangements and mechanisms on a sustained basis.

Focal points for overall coordination are already well-established. Additional focal points—such as a ministry or agency, department, or even specific official—for each regional or subregional initiative by sector of cooperation, where designations have not yet been made, could further strengthen coordination. A periodic coordination meeting including the secretariats of ASEAN, the GMS, BIMP-EAGA, and IMT-GT could serve as a forum to exchange information on recent developments, and identify areas or specific activities where links could be promoted. The secretariats would then convey to the mandated bodies the relevant information discussed at the coordination meeting. Furthermore, establishing regular links between the ASEAN Secretariat and the subregional program secretariats and/or their related sector groupings, particularly for BIMP-EAGA and IMT-GT, would involve the institutionalization of certain roles, on the part of both the ASEAN Secretariat and the subregional program secretariats, beyond conducting joint meetings.

Mechanisms for sharing and discussing regional and subregional master plans, roadmaps, and sector studies as planning and programming inputs could also be beneficial. The mechanism could be a forum for discussing plans for

specific sectors, issues, or themes, and may not necessarily be a formal structure or institutional link. A similar mechanism would be the regular conduct of workshops and seminars covering specific issues facing ASEAN, GMS, BIMP-EAGA, and IMT-GT to exchange experiences and lessons learned.

Enhancing Institutional Capacities

This study also identified the importance of strengthening the capacity of the national and subregional secretariats for coordinating regional and subregional programs based on the mandates given by members of the program. Specifically, this might include improving secretariats' (i) conduct of analytical work on common concerns and cross-cutting issues among the sectors of cooperation; (ii) preparation of technical reports, in coordination with concerned ministries to assist relevant bodies in making informed decisions; (iii) provision of updated information on developments in the region and on various regional cooperation programs; (iv) appraisal of projects; and (v) monitoring of progress and results.

Finally, a lack of resources for improving coordination within and across programs is a common constraint faced by ASEAN and the subregional programs. A concerted effort will be necessary to help mobilize resources for strengthening the capacity of national and central secretariats; improving mechanisms for inter-program coordination at the overall, sector, and subsector levels; and expanding operational links between ASEAN and the subregional programs.

Concluding Remarks

The promotion of strategic programs and institutional links between ASEAN and the three subregional programs is not an end in itself. Rather, it is a means that could benefit ASEAN and the subregional programs collectively as well as individually.

- (i) **For ASEAN**, the progress and achievements of the subregional programs related to the AEC targets could help improve its performance on the AEC scorecard. This approach is reasonable because ASEAN could (i) invoke the “minus X” principle for subregional projects, (ii) use the subregional programs as implementing partners in operationalizing ASEAN-wide agreements and initiatives, and (iii) pilot test new agreements and initiatives through the subregional programs. ASEAN’s strength in rules and policy-

based cooperation could also be complemented by concrete, action-oriented projects and programs at the subregional level.

- (ii) **For GMS, BIMP-EAGA, and IMT-GT**, stronger ties with ASEAN could strengthen the support of central governments to their respective programs and projects. Regularizing their links with ASEAN, operationally and technically, could also help increase their interaction with ASEAN development partners in the integration process and subregional activities. For the three subregional programs, using policies and rules agreed to by ASEAN Member States would provide a high degree of confidence about their reliability and sustainability. It would also save the subregional programs from “starting from scratch” and avoid inconsistencies that may eventually need correction. They could also tap the technical expertise and experience of the ASEAN sector bodies and network of learning institutions, and link up with ASEAN-wide private sector organizations in promoting investments.
- (iii) **For member countries**, improvements in in-country mechanisms and arrangements for coordination could ensure consistency and continuity in the positions being taken by country delegations, avoid unnecessary overlaps and duplication of activities, strengthen alignment between national and regional or subregional strategies and priorities, and enhance the impact of regional and subregional programs

and projects. Improved inter-program coordination could ultimately benefit member countries through increased efficiency and a better division of labor in the deployment of human and financial resources; by providing a clearer perspective of how the subregional frameworks fit into the larger ASEAN framework of cooperation; and by promoting more avenues for obtaining additional development assistance, especially for the CLMV countries—Cambodia, the Lao PDR, Myanmar, and Viet Nam—and other lagging areas, such as those in BIMP-EAGA and IMT-GT.

It is hoped that this study will serve as an entry point for ASEAN and the three subregional programs to come together and discuss how to better improve linkages among themselves. This study has identified areas in the connectivity sectors where potential links could be further developed, with the relevant national and regional secretariats taking the lead in initiating actions. Some actions may be easy to pursue (e.g., designation of focal points), while others may involve more complex decisions (e.g., regularizing links). A follow-up analysis, involving sector-specific or country-specific assessments, may also be warranted depending on the type and extent of coordination and convergence that is desired. The additional resources to support any follow-up actions, as well as those required for capacity building, also need to be identified. In this manner, improving links will be an ongoing process that underpins the larger efforts of accelerating economic integration in ASEAN.

Regional and Subregional Program Links

Mapping the Links Between ASEAN and the GMS, BIMP-EAGA, and IMT-GT

This report presents an assessment of the links among ASEAN and the three subregional programs (Greater Mekong Subregion [GMS], Brunei Darussalam–Indonesia–Malaysia–Philippines East ASEAN Growth Area [BIMP-EAGA], Indonesia–Malaysia–Thailand Growth Triangle [IMT-GT], and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations [ASEAN]) and is the first study that explicitly maps and analyzes the strategic program and institutional links among the three subregional programs and ASEAN. The report is based on desk reviews of official documents; national consultations with governments and private stakeholders; consultations with the secretariats of the three programs and ASEAN; commissioned studies by Asian Development Bank and other international organizations; and independent assessments by academics, practitioners, and research institutions by academics, practitioners, and research institutions.

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