



## LANCANG - MEKONG BUSINESS FORUM

### 1<sup>ST</sup> LANCANG-MEKONG BUSINESS FORUM SETS OUT TO DRIVE BUSINESS NETWORKING AMONG SMES IN REGION

“Food processing is an important sector in all the Lancang-Mekong countries, and it is vital for us to strengthen our connectivity in this region when it comes to this area. Business matching initiatives will open connections and discussions among food producers so they can learn more about each other, and trigger stronger collaboration among businesses in the region,” emphasized Dr. Watcharas Leelawath, Executive Director of Mekong Institute, as he welcomed over a hundred participants to the Lancang-Mekong Business Forum last November 15-16 in Bangkok, Thailand.

Organized by Mekong Institute (MI) in cooperation with the Ministry of Commerce, Royal Government of Thailand and funded by the Lancang-Mekong Cooperation Special Fund, the event gathered business enterprises from the food processing sector including processed food exporters and suppliers, as well as business associations, research institutions and relevant government agencies from Cambodia, P.R. China, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam (Lancang-Mekong countries) to the Forum, which offered back-to-back activities to encourage and facilitate business-to-business networking and collaborations.

This year’s event emphasized the processed food sector with the theme on **“Facilitating Agri-business and Investment through Innovations in Processed Food Sector in the Lancang-Mekong Region.”** The Forum opened with a seminar that brought together experts in the food processing industry especially in the region. Mr. Visit Limlurcha, President of the Thai Food Processors’ Association (TFPA) explained that the “Industry 4.0 revolution is changing the lifestyle of consumers. The industry must adapt their products and services to serve the requirements of the clients.”

Another highlight of the Forum was the business matching, which took place in the afternoon of November 15 with more than 89 participating enterprises holding individual meetings. Mr.

Madhurjya Kumar Dutta, Director of MI's Trade and Investment Facilitation (TIF) Department, emphasized that the event aims to “bring together the business owners from the Lancang-Mekong countries so that they can exchange information related to state-of-the-art technology and innovation activities, and put forward potential investment ideas.”

On November 16, a structured learning visit (SLV) was organized for selected participants to observe and learn best practices from key institutions in the processed food sector. Through the SLV, the participants learned about the importance of establishment and effective management of food associations and Thailand's initiative in the development of food sector as well as the laboratory services offered to the enterprises in the food sector including various testing, calibration and proficiency testing services.

For more information about the Lancang-Mekong Business Forum, please visit [www.lancangmekongforum.com](http://www.lancangmekongforum.com) or contact Mr. Ronnarit Chaiyo-Saeng, Project Officer at [ronnarit@mekonginstitute.org](mailto:ronnarit@mekonginstitute.org) (tel: + 66 43 202-411-2 ext. 2107).