

Session 10: CAREC Tourism Coordination Discussion

CAREC Tourism Working Group Meeting
Tashkent, Uzbekistan
9 to 11 September 2026



Mekong Tourism Coordination Office



- **Established:** 2006 at 16th GMS Tourism Working Group (TWG) Meeting in Siem Reap, Cambodia to coordinate regional tourism strategy implementation
- **Location:** Bangkok, Thailand, Ministry of Tourism and Sports provides permanent in-kind office space, work permits
- **Governance:** Board of Directors - Six GMS National Tourism Organization senior officials
- **Staff:** Executive Director, Operations Manager short-term marketing and administration contractors
- **Financing:** \$120,000 year—\$20,000 country contributions for core operations. Additional rotating host country and participant self-financing to join semi-annual TWG meetings and the annual Mekong Tourism Forum
- **Key roles:** GMS TWG Board Secretariat, development coordination (knowledge and investment projects) and destination marketing

Key Responsibilities



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• GMS TWG Secretariat

- Prepare TWG/Board meeting agendas with rotating Chair
- Organize meeting venue and invitations
- Co-chair TWG meetings, prepare minutes
- Prepare, coordinate TWG annual workplan
- Manage MTCO staff, digital, physical, and financial assets

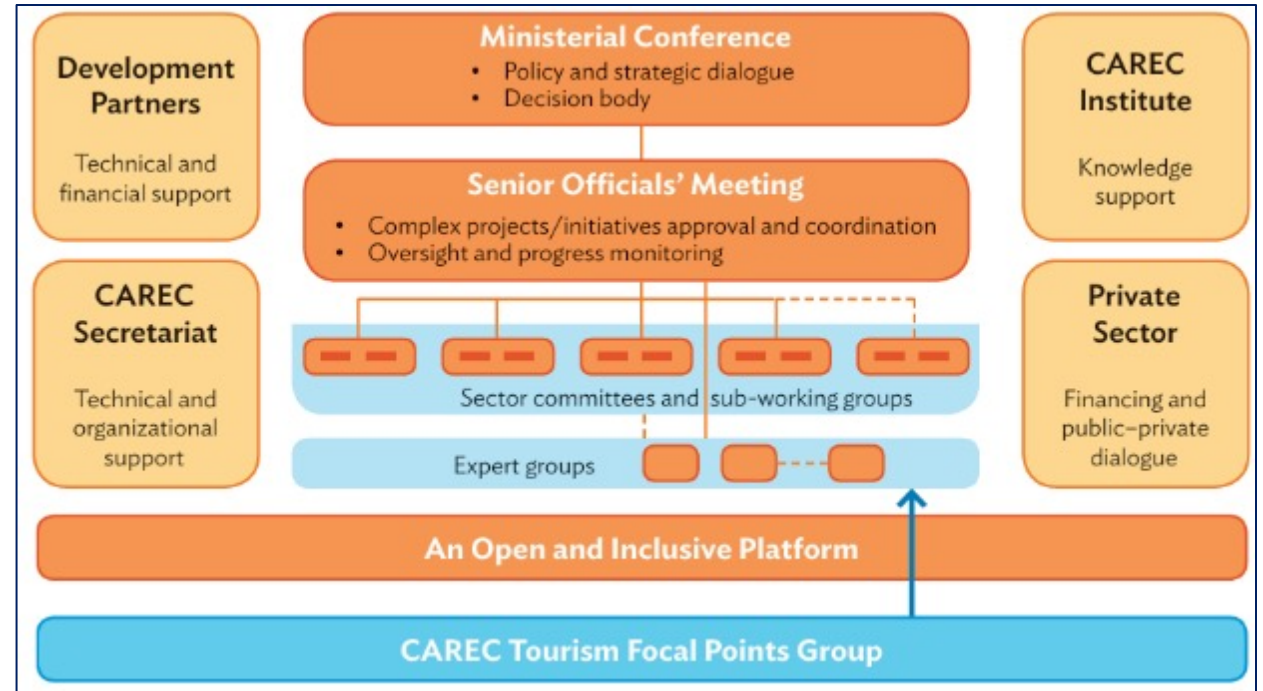
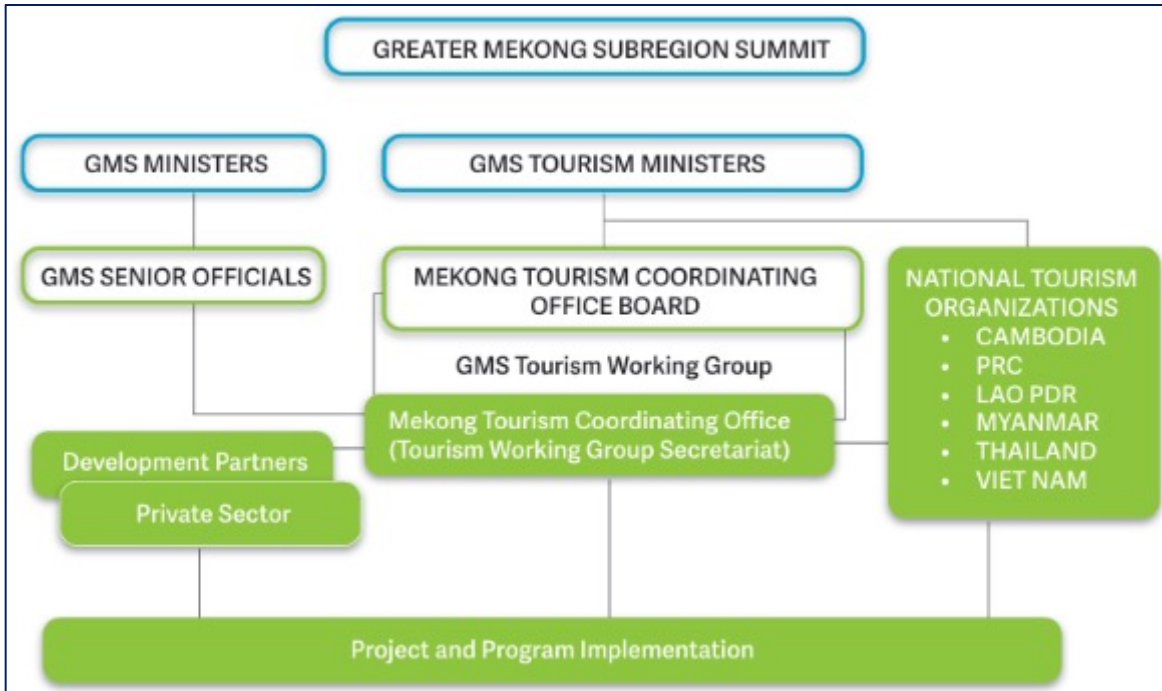
• Development Coordination

- Prepare regional tourism strategies
- Coordinate GMS Regional Investment Framework (tourism)
- Maintain relations with development partners and industry
- Convene annual Mekong Tourism Forum
- Mobilize resources for knowledge and investment projects, convene training programs

• Destination Marketing & Promotion

- Content creation & distribution (e.g. Mekong getaways, voices, hidden gems, travel tips, visa information)
- Representation at industry events/trade fairs
- Organize familiarization tours (media, agents)
- General communications (newsletters, crisis, etc.)

GMS & CAREC Institutional Arrangements



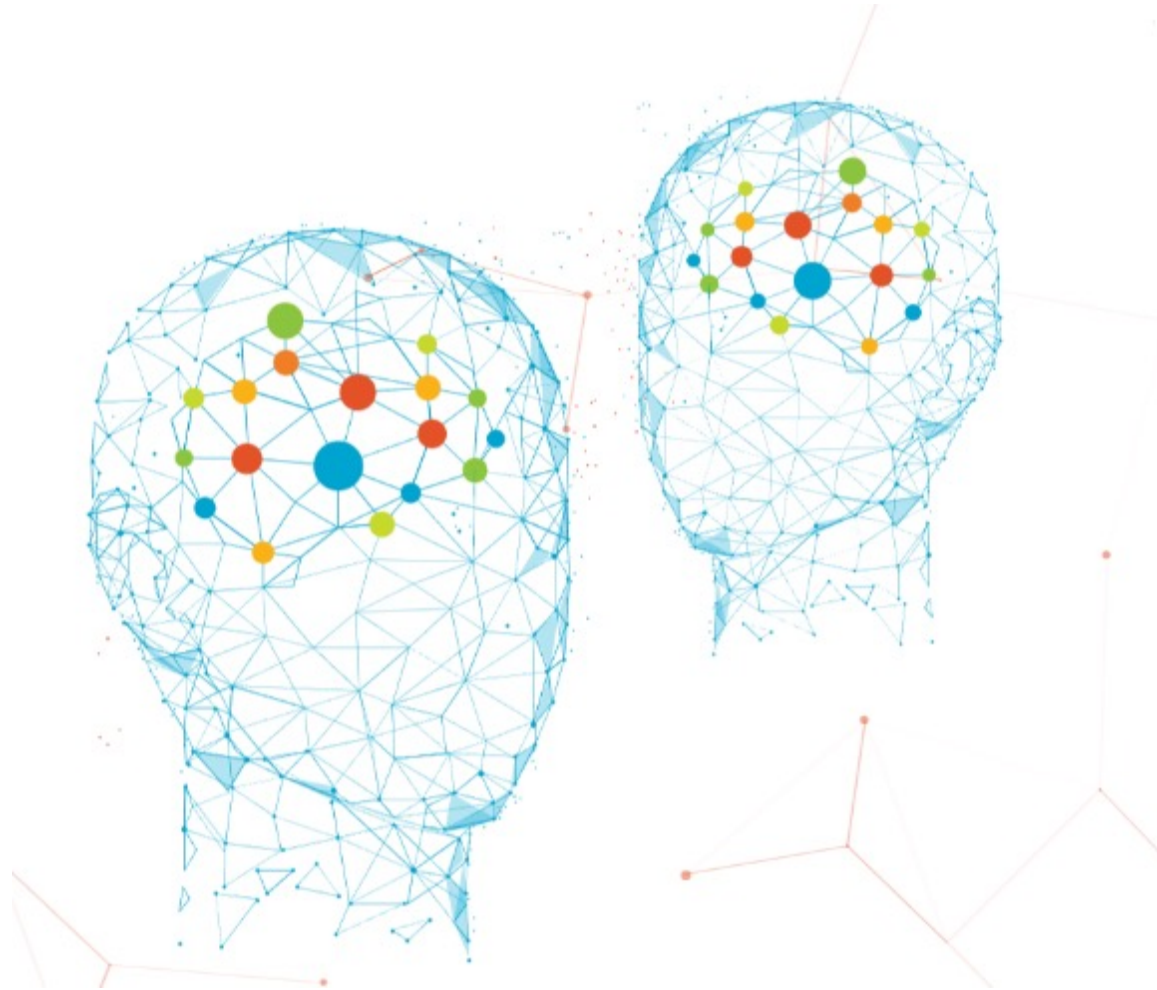
Lessons: Mekong Tourism Coordination Office Operations

- **Key roles:** Highly effective convening platform – consider selecting roles that build on this advantage
- **Location:** Select an internationally acclaimed tourism destination, convenient access to a strong tourism industry ecosystem (i.e. government, private sector, academia, media, development partners)
- **Staff:** Weigh options for open competitive recruitment and/or appointments for key positions, explore resource efficient contracting arrangements for non-core staff. Secondment of government officials may be an option
- **Financing:** Member country financial contributions critical to demonstrate ownership and attract additional private sector and development partner resources
- **Timeline:** Patient 10-year journey to agree Mekong Tourism Coordination Office Charter and transition to an international organization is ongoing
- **Institutional Set-up:** Adopted existing GMS Economic Cooperation Program structure and other high-level regional cooperation commitments, with streamlined operations manuals and administration procedures fit for purpose
- **Governance:** Having same official(s) as Mekong Tourism Coordination Office Board member and TWG Country Delegation Head fosters consistent policy-dialogue and timely operational decisions. TWG and Board meetings held consecutively

Overarching Lesson



Questions or Comments about the Greater Mekong Subregion



CAREC Tourism Coordination Office Discussion

- **Key roles:** To coordinate Tourism Strategy 2030 implementation and resource mobilization. What will CAREC Tourism Coordination Office core initial tasks be as TWG Secretariat (e.g. pertaining to project identification, knowledge work, joint marketing, organize meetings)?
- **Initial Location:** Silk Road Office of the Tourism Committee, Samarkand, Uzbekistan is proposed – status update?
- **Staff:** Identify key initial positions – open competitive recruitment, appointments, secondments?
- **Financing:** Current and future sources for core operating costs?
- **Timeline:** Consider refinements to the phased timeline in CAREC Tourism Strategy 2030?

- **Governance:** Representation and at which levels?
- **Institutional Set-up:** Structure, status, operational rules and procedures?
- **Others:**

Annex: CAREC Tourism Development Concept and Clusters

