



A Passage Across Borders

ひとびとに国境をひらく道



Introduction

Ancient routes, such as the “Silk Road,” enhanced trade and contributed to the growth of civilization, the development of culture and the strengthening of connectivity among people and communities. Cross-border traffic of people and goods has grown apace with the widening of regional markets and the growth of cross-country labor. To support the growth of cross-border mobility, the development of cross-border transport infrastructure has never been more magnified and more urgently needed than now.

Cross-border transport infrastructure not only contributes to a freer regional trade and better investment climate between countries but also opens up border areas that have long been alienated from mainstream development activities. International aid agencies have been active in the development of such infrastructure. However, the current intensification of cross-border traffic has corresponding negative implications such as widening disparities between areas and countries. There remain many bottlenecks and inadequacies that must be attended to, such as the underutilization of existing roads and ports and the prevailing institutional bottlenecks.

In 2005 and 2006, JICA conducted a study titled “Research on Cross-border Transportation Infrastructure,” which examined the global progress of regionalization and the impacts of cross-border transport. Following the findings of the study, Phase 2 study was conducted in 2007, focusing on the Greater Mekong Subregion in Asia where the development of cross-border transport infrastructure has grown in recent years. The study analyzed the progress and problems of cross-border transport in the subregion and identified directions for future JICA assistance. This booklet summarizes the result of the Phase 2 study.

Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS)

The subregion covers a wide area along the Mekong River which originates from China and flows southward in the Indochinese Peninsula. It consists of Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam, and China's Yunnan Province and Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region.



Location of Greater Mekong Subregion

1. What is Cross-border Transport Infrastructure?

Under what circumstances does cross-border transport infrastructure, or CBTI, begin to build up? How is it related to local and regional social and economic conditions? This section outlines the salient factors that surround the development of CBTI and the impact it brings to societies and economies.

Factors Surrounding CBTI Development



Border of Vietnam and Cambodia at Bavet/ MocBai (top: Vietnam; above: Cambodia)

CBTI development begins when the process of globalization or regionalization takes hold in a given region under a prevailing climate of peace and development.

Regional peace and the presence of investors are indispensable factors in the process of regionalization. Likewise, the political will to strengthen regional cooperation, or the sharing of common development strategies among the countries in a given region, leads to a common commitment for CBTI development and the simplification of border-crossing procedures. The expansion of cross-border traffic encourages the opening of new logistics routes and stimulates the growth of regional economic activities, which in turn sustain the increase of investments. In addition to regional technology and investment capital, some countries might require external donors that are capable of accelerating this process. In the Greater Mekong Subregion, the Asian Development Bank has played a leading role in the provision of financial and technical assistance.

Factors Surrounding CBTI Development

