## Mekong bloc forms finance plan

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内容：MANILA - The next phase of the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) investments will expand into newareas such as multisector investment for urban development, connecting remote areas with growth centres and extending existing corridors into Myanmar, according to a joint statement fromofficials in the subregion. -The new strategic framework has to be translated into a plan of action,- said Stephen Groff, vice president of operations for East Asia, Southeast Asia and the Pacific at the Asian Development Bank, which acts as Secretariat for the GMS Programme. Groff spoke at the 18th GMS Ministerial Conference in Nanning, China on Wednesday. Officials from Cambodia, China, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand and Vie-t Nam met to review past achievements and establish future priorities for investment, in line with recommendations coming from the Regional Investment Framework, which began to be developed after the December 2011 summit of the GMS. Development partners, including Australia, Japan, the US, International Organisation for Migration, Mekong River Commission and UNESCAP, also attended the meeting. A pipeline of projects are expected to take shape in early 2013, with a focus on increasing the growth potential of towns and cities with basic infrastructure such as water and sanitation, transport, power and telecommunications. The preliminary list of projects amounts to at least US$9 billion, which will increase substantially during the finalisation of the Regional Investment Framework in first quarter of 2013. The framework will be subject to further consultations between GMS countries and development partners prior to finalisation. The meeting endorsed a number of recent initiatives, including the establishment of a Regional Power Coordination Centre, action plans for human resources development and HIV reduction, the extension of an agriculture support program, and a decision to create a Greater Mekong Railway Association as a first step to boost crossborder rail connectivity, according to an ADB press release. The GMS Environment Atlas was also launched at the meeting, signaling the subregion-s commitment to environmental sustainability. Since its inception in 1992, the GMSprogrammehasinvested $15 billion in subregional roads, airports and railways, telecommunications, energy, urban development, tourism, environmental protection and the prevention of communicable diseases. Per capita income has risen tenfold or more in some countries, while poverty incidence has dropped by a third or more.-