

SEI ASIA STRATEGY 2017–2019



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FOREWORD

For more than a decade, SEI has been contributing to the goals of socially and environmentally sustainable development in the region. Established in January 2004, the Asia Centre in Bangkok gave SEI a strong presence and identity in the region, which has since built a reputation for producing high-quality and credible scientific research, effective policy engagement and a growing media outreach.

In the coming decades, Asia is expected to continue on the path of economic development while grappling with complex environment and development challenges, including risks and uncertainties brought by climate change and natural resource competition.

However, the future offers new opportunities for positive change. Asia is a region of growth and innovation with extensive investments in infrastructure and urban development. Many of the decisions being made today will shape the future for decades to come. The opportunities to integrate sustainability into policy decisions have never been better.

SEI's research philosophy places humans at the centre, and emphasizes the necessity to strengthen alliances and collaborations among policy-makers, researchers, civil society, the private sector and the media. It is through such collaborations that relevant research questions can be asked and answered, policy options provided and our challenges met.

I am proud to introduce this new strategy document for SEI Asia that steers the direction and work of the Centre over the next three years 2017–2019. The strategy builds on SEI's Global Strategy, and sets specific goals for Asia's teams, charting a path to make our work more effective in scientific research, policy engagement, capacity development and communications.

The individual strategies – gender, environment and development; reducing disaster risk; water resources management; adaptation to climate change; agriculture in transition; Sustainable Mekong Research Network (SUMERNET); and urbanization – supported by enhanced communications and operations, provide a clear vision for us to deliver on and be accountable to. The strategies maximize the benefits of working with and supporting each other, enabling the Asia Centre to develop while contributing to SEI's global work.

I have great confidence in SEI Asia's new leadership and its diverse, young and experienced team, and I am excited to see the Asia Centre supporting societies in Asia, addressing the many urgent and complex sustainability challenges faced, while finding opportunities and solutions of benefit to the people of the region and beyond.

Johan L. Kuylenstierna
SEI Executive Director
Adjunct Professor, Stockholm University
Stockholm



Part 1

INTRODUCTION

SEI Global Strategy 2015–2019

SEI's Global Strategy is for 2015–2019 and builds on our strengths and supports innovation so that SEI can better respond to emerging challenges – and harness opportunities – to contribute to a better future for all.

*SEI's **vision** is: "A sustainable, prosperous future for all".*

*Our **mission** is: "To support decision-making and induce change towards sustainable development around the world by providing integrative knowledge that bridges science and policy in the field of environment and development."*

Consolidating and innovating – our new agenda

SEI has grown and changed with the world around it over the past 25 years. We've built a reputation as a source of rigorous and impartial research for sustainable development, delivering integrated knowledge, supporting policy- and decision-making, building capacity, and providing spaces for dialogue.

But now, more than ever, we must also challenge conventional wisdom and develop new ideas and approaches to tackle problems that appear increasingly intractable. We have formulated a new research agenda that takes a fresh look at what we do and how we do it, and uses new perspectives that 20 years ago we didn't know we needed, such as analysis of geopolitics, and of human psychology, behaviour and choice.

The 2015–2019 Strategy outlines SEI's strategic goals in seven areas with the following overarching objectives:

- **Scientific Research:** To enhance the quality and impact of our problem and solution driven scientific research
- **Policy Engagement:** To provide effective decision support and engage in key policy arenas
- **Capacity Development:** To strengthen the capacity of individuals, organizations and institutions to make decisions that promote sustainable development
- **Communications:** To produce and share knowledge more effectively, in partnership with decision-makers
- **Tools, Platforms, and ICT:** To advance the technical development, accessibility, and application of our tools, platforms, and ICT environment
- **Organization and Finance:** To be a diverse, attractive, and financially robust organization where the best researchers and professionals can thrive.
- **Monitoring and Learning:** To be a learning organization that – alongside our partners – continuously takes stock and learns from experience to deliver ever better results

Since 2015, SEI has invested significant institutional resources into research on specific issues of sustainable development that we are particularly well placed to address, and in which we have a particular niche and expertise. The SEI Initiatives – ten of which are underway as of January 2017 – function as hubs for research supported by both core and project funding.

SEI Asia Strategy

Building on SEI's Global Strategy 2015–2019, SEI Asia has developed a regionally focussed strategy, in line with, and working within, Asian realities and contexts. Our centre, with a team of 14 nationalities from the region and beyond, focuses on building and strengthening partnerships with government departments, academia, policy-makers, private sector and civil society, to ensure we are all working together, to stimulate discussions and debates on sustainable approaches to development and to catalyze solutions to the most pressing environment and development issues we face.

Integrating our participatory approaches with our technical expertise, we ensure that, while our work is evidence-based, it integrates broader social, cultural and political factors to benefit all. We work with partners to support, co-develop, and share knowledge and offer sustainable and evidence-based options, to support countries to develop on a more sustainable path, while incorporating the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), for a better future for all.

The SEI Asia Strategy seeks to address some of the critical challenges that require holistic yet focussed approaches, to set specific objectives and ensure capacity is available to deliver quality outcomes. Our work is divided into research clusters that focus on these critical areas: gender, environment and development; reducing disaster risk; water resources management; adaptation to climate change; agriculture in transition; Sustainable Mekong Research Network (SUMERNET) ; and urbanization. We aim to produce evidence-based science crucial for leaders in civil society, private sector and government, to positively influence policy decisions throughout Asia and beyond.

This strategy document outlines what SEI Asia will focus on over the coming three years to bring about lasting positive change. It sets the vision, objectives and desired outcomes of our research teams to ensure long-term clarity, internally and externally, on the role SEI aims to play. However, as we live and work in such a dynamic region, we must allow for growth to include new issues, but remain committed to delivering on the goals set.

Niall O'Connor
Centre Director, SEI Asia Centre
Bangkok

SEI in Asia: Our Added Advantage

Being located in Bangkok, while connected globally, SEI in Asia provides critical local insights to global issues, positioning to use our research to support our partners with global to local solutions in social, economic and environmental issues. With long established, extensive networks and partnerships, and forging new and innovative collaborations with state agencies, academics, think tanks, the private sector, media and civil society, SEI has the partnerships needed to drive positive change to support sustainable development.

Bridging science and policy

SEI is ranked as the world's most influential environment think tank in 2016 (http://repository.upenn.edu/think_tanks/12/). Our internationally recognized teams of experts develop peer-reviewed, evidence-based science, which when transformed into policy briefings get used extensively by key decision-makers across the region towards solving the most pressing environment and development problems we face.

SEI is renowned for building free-to-use natural science assessment methods and tools and systems for sharing knowledge and decision-support systems. These include LEAP (Long-range Energy Alternatives Planning) and WEAP (Water Evaluation & Planning). (Please see <https://www.sei-international.org/tools>.)

Combining scientific research with policy analysis, connecting our work to **boundary partners** that includes decision-makers and civil society in global governance, regional cooperation, local planning, and the private sector, we generate and share knowledge that catalyses action.

We emphasize a people-centred and participatory approach in all our work, where stakeholder involvement is at the heart of our efforts to build capacity, strengthen institutions, and equip partners for the long term.

This helps SEI maintain a reputation as an **impartial and honest research institute**, which can convene dialogues and knowledge events, that brings stakeholders together to learn, discuss and agree on solutions to difficult or sensitive topics of significant importance.

Our office is diverse by design, with a range of professionals across different ages, cultures and experiences, who offer complimentary expertise and skills that all come together to make SEI in Asia a vibrant and dynamic place of work.

Making scientific knowledge accessible is our priority. Publishing our own open-access reports and briefings, alongside articles in leading academic journals, we work creatively to ensure our research is available to those that need it. Convening seminars and conferences that bring together decision-makers, academics, and practitioners, we debate key issues, share knowledge, and engage stakeholders to offer policy options for a sustainable and prosperous future for all.

Boundary partners: *the individuals, groups, or organizations that we directly interact with and seek to influence through our projects. Depending on the project, they might represent public policy, academia, NGOs, civic groups, or industry and the private sector, from the local to global scales. For each project, we plan, monitor and evaluate the type of changes the project aims for.*

Part 2

SEI ASIA: RESEARCH AND POLICY



Gender, Environment and Development

The Gender, Environment and Development (GED) Cluster generates knowledge for applying and learning about best practices and principles for gender and social inclusion in sustainable development policies. Our gender-sensitive research in environment and development is envisaged to inform governance decisions and actions of policy-makers and practitioners throughout Asia.

Vision: *Policy decisions on people’s lives, economies and the environment are made to enhance and prioritize their well-being in gender- and socially-equitable, fair and sustainable ways.*

Contact: Dr. Bernadette (Babette) P. Resurrección (bernadette.resurreccion@sei-international.org)

Mission	To improve people’s well-being through gender- and socially-inclusive sustainable development.
Objective	To do research that influences and transforms policy- and decision-making on environment and development to improve people’s well-being in gender-responsive and socially-inclusive ways.
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender- and socially-inclusive policy framing in environment and development fields and programmes informed by GED research • New insights and innovative practices for gender and development research and learning communities • Networks of gender-sensitive partners and professionals in sustainable development in Asia
Impact areas Research for policy	<p>Applied research to produce innovative planning and decision-making for empowerment, and sustainable and inclusive development, and to address knowledge gaps in the following fields:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender, climate change adaptation, mitigation, and disaster risk reduction • Gender and integrated natural resource management • Gender professionals in environment and development fields
Policy engagement, capacity building and research tools	<p>With our research, we will engage both government and non-government agencies to ensure gender- and socially-inclusive policy framing and action. We will produce issue-based policy briefs, carry out assessments, and organize policy and multi-stakeholder dialogues and participatory learning events on gender analysis tools to address current issues in sustainable development, applying lessons from international agreements such as the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Platform for Action, Agenda 21, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to tackle critical perspectives on gender mainstreaming and national compliance practices.</p> <p>We will carry out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme evaluations • Regional and national reports on GED issues • Capacity building and learning events on gender and environment for specific groups

Reducing Disaster Risk

The Reducing Disaster Risk (RDR) Cluster aims to contribute to the reduction of disaster risk throughout Asia in support of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Vision: *Reduced disaster risk of all people across Asia.*

Contact: Dr. Frank Thomalla (frank.thomalla@sei-international.org)

Mission	To reduce vulnerability and enhance the resilience to disasters of individuals, communities, and countries in Asia through research, policy engagement and capacity building.
Objectives	To achieve our vision and mission, the RDR Cluster will target three different impact areas: research, policy engagement and capacity-building. Specific objectives have been set within each of the impact areas that are aligned with the priorities for action outlined in the Sendai Framework and the SEI global strategy for 2015–2019.
Outcomes	<p>The RDR Cluster seeks to reduce disaster risks in Asia and to support the implementation of the Sendai Framework and SDGs by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing a portfolio of innovative research on disaster risk, resilience, and vulnerability to inform transformative, risk-sensitive policies and practices • Strengthening partnerships for addressing disaster risk in Asia, particularly across different communities of practice • Developing tools and services to build the capacity of local and national stakeholders to effectively respond to risks
Impact areas Research for policy	<p>Research: Conduct innovative research that contributes to reducing disaster risk and building resilience, including addressing the links between development and disaster risk in theory and practice.</p> <p>The RDR Cluster’s work is at the local, national, regional and global levels. The cluster has developed a strategic focus on the following five thematic areas: 1. Influencing the DRR community of practice; 2. Building urban resilience; 3. Post-disaster recovery and resilience building 4. Empowering vulnerable groups; 5. The role of culture and behaviour in DRR.</p>
Policy engagement, capacity building and research tools	<p>Policy: Provide effective decision-making support in the implementation of the Sendai Framework to key DRR and development policy-makers and influencers.</p> <p>Capacity building: Strengthen the capacity of people at risk and key DRR and development actors to respond to risk by providing effective tools, guidance and services.</p> <p>We will work with key stakeholders and boundary partners including national and local governments, regional decision-making bodies, UN agencies, civil society organizations, research institutes, academics and local communities. We will publish our work through a combination of policy and discussion briefs, journal articles, toolkits and guidelines, and impact stories.</p>

Water Resources Management

The Water Resources Management Cluster aims to support government, people and the private sector in Asia to address and overcome key water challenges such as limited water availability, floods and droughts, resource degradation and pollution, and weak water institutions in the Asian region.

Vision: *Safe and secure water resources for present and future generations in Asia.*

Contact: Dr. Chusit Apirumanekul (chusit.apirumanekul@sei-international.org)

Mission	Enhance the capacity of households, industry, agriculture, energy and the environment in Asia to achieve water security and practise sustainable water resources management.
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To conduct evidence-based research to support and promote effective decision-making for achieving water security and sustainable water resources management To strengthen multi-stakeholder policy engagement in decision-making processes To enhance capacities of water users in Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM)
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open planning and decision making processes, for multi-stakeholder and inclusive participation, to cope with climate uncertainties in water management Strengthened links between local knowledge-science-policy and key knowledge gaps filled Strengthened institutions and enhanced capacity of local and national stakeholders for IWRM



Impact areas	1: Robust Decision Support (RDS) Framework
Research for policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addressing uncertainties in water resources planning Developing modelling and impact assessment system Utilizing remote sensing information and Geographic Information Systems
	2: Reducing risks from climate change and disasters
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving climate science and climate change projections Improving flood and drought management Developing forecasting and early warning systems
	3: Urban resilience
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water-Food-Energy Nexus and Urban Metabolism
	4: Integrated Water Resources Management
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving river basin management and planning through participatory approaches Improving both water quality and water quantity monitoring Supporting community-based water resources management Improving access to safe drinking water
	5: Institutional transformation and transboundary water resources management
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhancing institutional performance monitoring and assessment Establishing and strengthening River Basin Organizations Understanding trade-offs and benefit sharing
Policy engagement, capacity building and research tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivering high quality research for policy, practice and action at multiple scales including engaging and influencing decision-making processes and plans at different levels Focus on SDGs including Goals 6, 11, 13, 15 and 17 at various levels: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional: Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Strategic Plan on Environment, Lancang-Mekong Cooperation, and IWRM based Basin Development Strategy for the Lower Mekong Basin National: National strategies related to water resources management, such as master plans for water resources management, sectoral plans (domestic, industry, agriculture, energy and environment sectors) Local: Provincial and district action plans

Adaptation to Climate Change

As warming trends and increasing temperature extremes become the norm, the impacts of climate change will be increasingly felt in many areas in Asia, from scarce water resources to declining agricultural productivity and to stresses in coastal and marine ecosystems. Along with ongoing processes of rapid urbanization and industrialization, climate change is set to complicate existing social and environmental challenges especially for poor and at-risk groups and communities.

Vision: *Improved well-being of poor and at-risk groups and communities in Asia through production of actionable knowledge on important aspects of climate change adaptation and building the capacities of government and civil society actors for meaningful and inclusive response to the challenge of climate change.*

Contact: Dr. Albert Salamanca (albert.salamanca@sei-international.org)

Mission	Provide useable knowledge to government stakeholders and civil society actors to facilitate policy change and build capacities to leverage the capabilities of poor and at-risk communities for climate change adaptation.
Objectives	<p>To develop timely and responsive programmes of action that will help countries adapt to the impacts of climate change using the implementation of the nationally determined contributions (NDCs) as a vehicle for dialogue and engagement.</p> <p>Our specific objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To produce actionable knowledge that will enable poor and at-risk communities to anticipate, absorb and adapt to the impacts of climate change To identify options to manage residual risks To build the capacities of government and civil society actors for meaningful and inclusive response to the challenge of climate change
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understood how the adaptive capacities of poor and at-risk households can be strengthened so that they can anticipate, absorb and adapt to the consequences of climate change Built partnerships with relevant sectors and strategic partners to explore ways of enabling pro-poor social protection measures and risk transfer mechanisms Assisted countries in achieving their NDC commitments
Impact areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Producing accessible climate information and building capacities of users on using such information
Research for policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding the role of livelihood strategies in defining the adaptive capacities of households Understanding the role of climate finance institutions in enabling adaptive capacities of poor and at-risk households Providing options for managing slow onset events through agricultural insurance
Policy engagement, capacity building and research tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building the capacities of government and civil society actors for meaningful and inclusive response to the challenge of climate change Providing relevant climate information, accessible for all users Building productive partnerships with relevant forums to amplify the reach of the cluster

Agriculture in Transition

Agriculture is the primary livelihood activity across much of rural Asia. Millions of households rely on income from agriculture, either directly from crop and livestock production, or through employment in a supporting industry. Millions produce crops and raise livestock for home consumption. Agriculture is subject to notable variations in seasonal and annual output, due largely to risk and uncertainty involving weather, pests, input quality, and access to markets, storage, and transport. Smallholder farmers are particularly vulnerable to large swings in output and revenue, as they generally have little savings and inadequate access to agricultural insurance programmes. With changes in climate expected to occur in Asia during the next 20 years, rice production, in particular, might be negatively impacted by rising temperatures in some regions and to changes in rainfall patterns in others.

Vision: *Enhancing agriculture in Asia by improving the management of risk and uncertainty.*

Contact: Dr. Dennis Wichelns (dennis.wichelns@sei-international.org)

Mission	Enhance understanding among practitioners, donors, and policy-makers of the challenges facing agriculture in Asia.
Objective	Contribute to policy design and implementation by conducting inquiries regarding interactions involving agriculture, the environment, natural resources, livelihoods, and food security.
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research into investments and interventions to assist smallholder households in adapting to risk and uncertainty, particularly considering the increasing demand for land and water, and the likely changes in production conditions that will accompany climate change Policies and interventions to promote wise water use and allocation within and across countries in Asia, to ensure that agriculture can sustain the output levels required to achieve national food security objectives Understanding the implications for livelihoods and household welfare from regional and international markets for agricultural products and marketing opportunities
Impact areas	We will promote our research and policy analysis agenda by engaging with different audiences in academia, research organizations, and government ministries of agriculture, water resources, and rural development. Our primary geography is Southeast Asia, particularly the Mekong Region, but we will pursue projects in South Asia as well.
Research for policy	
Policy engagement, capacity building and research tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better understanding of the policies and investments needed to ensure that smallholders will retain affordable access to water for production agriculture Better understanding of the investments in agricultural education and extension needed to enhance the ability of smallholders to adapt to changes in production and marketing opportunities, the increasing competition for water, and the new and increasing risks that climate change will bring

Sustainable Mekong Research Network (SUMERNET)

After more than ten years of work, SUMERNET is now entering a new phase that aims to build on its previous research and policy engagement work. The proposed next phase “SUMERNET 4 ALL” focuses on “Reducing water insecurities in the Mekong Region.”

Vision: *Reducing water insecurities for all, in particular for the poor, marginalized and socially vulnerable women and men in the Mekong Region.*

Contact: Dr. Chayanis Krittasudthacheewa (chayanis.k@sei-international.org)

Mission	Improve the policies and practices in reducing water insecurities, by conducting collaborative research, engaging with the policy process, and promoting scientifically sound research and innovation, while considering gender, social equity, human rights, environmental integrity and poverty reduction in the Mekong Region.
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To engage with multi-stakeholders in guiding the design of research to ensure its relevancy to policy and practice including collaborative work with networks of local, national and regional researchers and various boundary partners To conduct scientific research for policy and practice that helps improve understanding of water systems and assesses the needs and interests of potential users of research To promote the application of research results and innovation through various communications related activities To ensure effective management, coordination, and monitoring and evaluation of the current and past SUMERNET programme



Outcomes	<p>Short-term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased capacities of researchers in the Mekong Region Increased quantity and quality of bottom up cross-border inclusive research Increased number of inclusive platforms for multi-stakeholder dialogues <p>Intermediate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased public awareness on water insecurities Increased joint actions on innovative and equitable policy and practice <p>Long-term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved policies and practices in reducing water insecurities for all
Impact areas	Water access, rights & allocation in times of scarcity:
Research for policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve understanding of how development policies, projects and practices influence water insecurities, livelihoods, agricultural water productivities, wastewater, and ecosystem integrity Seek alternative approaches likely to improve access, rights and allocation of water for poor, vulnerable or otherwise marginalized social groups <p>Governance and management of flood disaster risks: Improve understanding of the impacts of water-related disaster risk reduction measures and decisions on human insecurities and ecosystems</p> <p>Transboundary interactions with water systems: Improve understanding of the interactions among the water, energy and land systems at multiple scales including geopolitical relationships</p> <p>Critical security discourses and norms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve understanding of the water profession – water professionals and their water security discourses – and the implications of changes and resistances within the profession in creating alternative water security framings, discourses and norms for key dimensions of addressing water insecurity Suggest political strategies, including more socially- and gender-inclusive and rights-based re-framings, that would improve outcomes for more marginalized or vulnerable groups

Critical Challenges: Urbanization

Urbanization is a defining feature of human societies. Over half of the world's population lives in urban areas, and expected to reach two-thirds by mid-century. Efforts to improve human welfare, reduce poverty, and mitigate human impacts on the environment needs to focus on ways to effectively manage growing cities. Sustainable development over the next decades will largely be a story of sustainable urban development.

In rapidly urbanizing areas, the growth of informal settlements presents a particularly acute challenge for human health and well-being, urban governance and the achievement of SDGs, including making cities more inclusive, safe, resilient, and environmentally sustainable. Managing these trends will require governments to comprehensively address:

- *Environmental sustainability*, for energy, water, air quality, sanitation, waste management, pollution, and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions
- *Economic security and human well-being*. Understanding urban forms, infrastructure for ensuring economic productivity, sustaining livelihoods, and the welfare of urban residents
- *Equity and inclusion*, to generate benefits and enhance welfare for all members of society, while not creating a divide between those with/without social status or financial wealth
- *Adaptation and resilience*. Climate change risks and other vulnerabilities create unique challenges that need to be considered in achieving these goals.

In Asia, steering urbanization towards just, sustainable, productive, and resilient outcomes, will require substantial improvements to urban governance capacity. Key needs, to which SEI is well-positioned to contribute, include:

1. *Access to more and better information*. Solving problems related to public service provision, resource consumption, equity, and disaster risk reduction, requires detailed, spatially explicit data to inform decision-making. Cities need innovative and cost-effective ways to obtain data, and the right expertise to use it. SEI can help fill this gap.
2. *Comprehensive assessment capacities*. To understand and support synergies between SDGs for equity, resource consumption, reduced pollution, and economic growth. Local governments would benefit from better frameworks and tools for jointly considering multiple outcomes, and SEI's existing research in urban areas ideally positions us to collaboratively develop usable frameworks.
3. *Better prioritization, participatory planning and community engagement* for urban development goals and actions to help cities allocate scarce resources to different mitigation options. Options that make sense in one context may not be appropriate in others. Sourcing better information and frameworks for evaluating outcomes to

multiple objectives helps decision-makers in identifying the right actions. SEI's tools in scenario analysis and citizen science provide this kind of support to local governments and other stakeholders.

4. *Coordinated governance and policy coherence*. Local governments and urban communities do not operate in isolation. Policies and governance influence urban economies, rates of resource consumption, pollution, human well-being, and the financial capacities and regulatory authorities.

Contact: Niall O'Connor (niall.oconnor@sei-international.org)



Bridging Science and Policy: Our Policy Engagement in Asia

SEI is presently strengthening its policy engagement throughout Asia, to ensure solid evidence-based science is made available to key decision-makers, in a timely and professional manner. We aim to seize this window of opportunity and to drive the policy agenda forward, true to SEI's motto "bridging science and policy".

Vision: *To become the "go-to organization" in Asia on environment and development issues and to offer relevant policy advice to decision-makers on a regional, national and local level, to bring about a more sustainable future for all.*

Contact: Niall O'Connor (niall.oconnor@sei-international.org)

Mission	SEI Asia's research clusters will help develop high-quality policy options using evidence-based science. We will share our policy recommendations with key decision-makers from local to regional levels to bring about positive and sustainable policy outcomes.
Objectives	SEI Asia strives to improve its policy engagement process by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementing a detailed work plan to be more systematic when engaging with the policy environment and to better align research activities to policy developments • Increasing the visibility of SEI with a variety of key stakeholders to attract new high-level partners and donors



Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SEI will enhance our expertise in engaging with policy-making environments in the different areas of our work. Successful policy engagement is enhanced when it can cater to the needs of decision-makers • SEI will disseminate adapted research, leading to increased visibility of SEI in the region and the formation of new partnerships with key stakeholders from the public and private sector • SEI is seen as an essential knowledge partner for regional, national and local decision-makers who actively seek SEI's advice on issues related to our cluster activities and beyond
Impact areas:	In collaboration with the communications team, SEI researchers will use a variety of tools to convey their research findings and key messages. Well-established tools such as policy briefs or SEI models will be used, but novel forms of science communications, such as short films, photo series, social media messages or blog entries using the creative in-house capacity of SEI Asia will be increased. Moreover, tangible products such as guideline reports or fact sheets on relevant policy issues will facilitate the dissemination of SEI's research. Each cluster will produce key messages, and researchers are expected to increase their participation in key events such as conferences, expert seminars, round tables and workshops, and to strengthen partnerships with local media.
Outputs and targets	
Evaluation	Successful policy engagement crucially depends on a continuous monitoring of the efforts and building on best practice examples. The Clusters will incorporate lessons learnt from within by building on successful cases of policy engagement and by making use of internal knowledge and partnerships. In addition, SEI Asia also seeks to learn from other centres about where they have been successful in having a positive impact on decision-making and policy processes. The evaluation process and the elaboration of key performance indicators will strongly be linked to the work of SEI-wide policy engagement experiences.

Part 3

ENABLING DELIVERY



Communications

Vision: *Communications is the interface between science and policy.*

Contact: Rajesh Daniel (rajesh.daniel@sei-international.org)

Mission	Systematically communicate our research outcomes in high-quality, user-friendly and targeted approaches, to support effective policy engagement and influence.
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To communicate our scientific research and bring influence to bear on our key audiences: policy- and decision-makers, researchers and the media • To produce high-quality publications and media materials to increase the visibility of SEI in Asia and become the go-to organization, leaders in the field of scientific research and policy influence • To meet the needs of policy- and decision-makers and the media for credible and high-quality scientific knowledge on key environmental issues in Asia • To build strategic partnerships to raise awareness and bring influence to bear on environmental debates and policies • To enable employees to become better communicators: develop internal capacity in communications so employees become more strategic and effective in communications.
Key audiences	<p>Our research and policy work will be based on credibility, building relationships, and engaging in dialogue. It will focus on our key audiences of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy-makers including sub-national and national ministries/departments/offices as well as regional actors such as ASEAN • Researchers, think tanks and institutes • Media outlets and reporters in Asia including building non-English media connections, especially Thai and regional-language media
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer-reviewed output deployed more effectively to further develop the credibility and reach of SEI's communications • More targeted content and formats developed that better meet the needs of users from peer-reviewed journal articles and policy briefings, news pieces, blogs and multimedia/photo essays for SEI and other web outlets as well as target efforts in social media. We will produce compelling, short videos to showcase SEI Asia's work and reach out to policy-makers and media • SEI Asia employees enabled to be better communicators, to mobilize the authentic and diverse voices within the Centre

Monitoring and Evaluation

Vision: *To be a learning organization that continuously takes stock of past experience.*

One of the great challenges for an organization working at the intersection of science, policy and practice, is how to monitor and evaluate the quality and impact of its work and learn from past experience.

During this strategy period, we will set out to develop a systematic and formalized approach to monitor and evaluate projects. The result will build on SEI's custom-designed web-based Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Communication (PMEC) system, which has become integral to our project and organizational management, now embedded in a range of processes around proposal development, planning of projects, and monitoring and evaluation. All of our projects are now tracked in PMEC.

PMEC is based on a theory-of-change approach called outcome mapping. It has been adapted to our mode of working, and to allow integration with our systems for communication and budget management. PMEC encourages employees to think beyond a project's activities and outputs, and first ask what change they want to contribute to and which people and organizations could be directly influenced, informed, or empowered to bring about such change. This helps project teams to focus on outcomes and be realistic about the influence they can have in the complex realm of policy- and decision-making. It promotes adaptive management of project activities and outputs by monitoring progress towards the desired outcomes, and it provides a systematic way to share lessons learned across the organization.

PMEC is designed not only to track and evaluate individual projects, but also to feed into higher-level reporting, monitoring and evaluations. In this way we can monitor results across our seven performance areas using the information gathered in PMEC. (Please see introduction for more details on the seven areas).

The next step is to ensure that lessons from project implementation and management feed into institutional learning. We continue to work in a context of high complexity, with a wide range of partnerships, collaborations and links between issues and actors that change over time. This demands an ability to absorb complexity and a willingness to adapt to changing contexts. By investing in becoming a learning organization and further improving our monitoring and evaluation processes, we can better assess our policy impact and identify best practices for achieving it.

SEI Asia Publications

SEI Asia authors are set in bold.

Recent publications (2016 to early 2017)

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- Is Asia ready to transform disaster risk reduction? Insights from AMCDRR 2016* by Michael Boyland, 15 November 2016.
- Inclusive local planning is vital for successful climate adaptation in peri-urban areas* by Rajesh Daniel & Bernadette P. Resurrección, 24 October 2016.
- Bangkok's character under threat* by Rajesh Daniel, 16 October 2016. (Originally appeared as opinion-editorial in Bangkok Post newspaper, Bangkok, Thailand.)
- In the Mekong Region, climate change poses real threat to food security* by Rajesh Daniel, 23 July 2016.
- How can food systems become more sustainable?* by Rajesh Daniel, 25 May 2016.
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- Q&A with *Frank Thomalla: How can science and technology support the Sendai Framework?* by Marion Davis, 17 February 2016.

Multimedia

- Testing the waters: A Photo Essay about the Chindwin River* by May Aung and Rajesh Daniel. Photo Essay. Stockholm Environment Institute. August 2016.
- Chindwin perspectives* by Rajesh Daniel. 12 mins. in Myanmar language (with English subtitles). Short Film. Stockholm Environment Institute. March 2016.

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