

## SEI in Lao PDR



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### Project Brief September 2019

### Background

Lao PDR faces significant challenges stemming from economic vulnerabilities, low adaptability to climate change and its dependence on climate-sensitive natural resources. It has one of the lowest population densities in the world, yet 23 percent of the population still lives below the national poverty line and face health and livelihood challenges.

### Areas of work

Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI) partners with a wide range of stakeholders in Laos and the surrounding Mekong Region, including government agencies, community-based organizations, and other NGOs to support informed decision-making that leverages the transition towards sustainable development. SEI's work in Laos aims to equip decision and policy makers with scientific knowledge that builds resilience into responses on issues related to natural resource management, climate-resilient development, sustainable agriculture and gender equality and social equity. SEI fosters an enabling and participatory environment at local, national and regional levels to promote dialogue and the co-creation of knowledge for more inclusive development pathways.

### Projects

1. **SUMERNET:** SEI engages with a wide group of research and knowledge producers in the Mekong region as host of the Secretariat for the Sustainable Mekong Research Network. SUMERNET supports research and policy engagement on critical sustainability issues in the region. Under this initiative, SEI's research in Laos has paid special attention to the impacts of economic development on natural resources and local livelihoods. SEI also uses a people-centred and participatory approach to empower communities and foster local knowledge in the context of socio-ecological systems. SUMERNET's new phase, entitled SUMERNET 4 All, focuses on water insecurity, and covers a ten-year period from 2018-2028.
2. **Mekong region transboundary cooperation on adaptation to climate change and on hydropower development:** SEI's regional policy platform in the Lancang-Mekong region, supported by the Lancang-Mekong Corporation, works to enhance communications and to provide technical solutions for issues related to climate change uncertainties, water resources management, and hydropower development through adaptation and mitigation. This collaborative partnership specifically aims to reduce climate change related risks faced by communities due to water-level fluctuations and extreme weather.

Photo (above): Laos, Luang Prabang  
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We connect science and decision-making to develop solutions for a sustainable future for all.

Our approach is highly collaborative: stakeholder involvement is at the heart of our efforts to build capacity, strengthen institutions, and equip partners for the long term.

Our work spans climate, water, air, and land-use issues, and integrates evidence and perspectives on governance, the economy, gender and human health.

Across our eight centres in Europe, Asia, Africa and the Americas, we engage with policy processes, development action and business practice throughout the world.



Laos, rural scene © MARTA SALVAGO / SEI

- 3. Capacity building for integrated solutions to build back better resilient agriculture systems and livelihoods in Laos' Savanakheth and Khammouane provinces:** SEI partners with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to increase community resilience for food and nutrition security in flood-affected agricultural areas. SEI's expertise focuses on delivering integrated solutions and strengthening the agricultural sector's capacity on disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation.
- 4. Embedding green and sustainable agriculture in the Laos Policy Agenda:** SEI researchers in Laos aimed to explore and generate knowledge on current sustainable agriculture practices throughout the country. This research provided policy and decision makers with an implementation mechanism to further clean and green agricultural production, and promote sustainable practices in Laos's Agriculture Development Strategy to 2025 and vision to 2030.
- 5. Sharing and learning from regional experiences to build effective and harmonized policy on sustainable agriculture in the Mekong Region: Regional Dialogue Workshop:** SEI, with support from the government of Sweden, is leading the Strategic Collaborative Fund Phase II programme that supports regional environmental and sustainable development events aimed at fostering regional cooperation and policy dialogue in Asia. Under this programme SEI will partner with the Laos government to organize a regional dialogue workshop on sustainable green agriculture. The dialogue will support the preparation of a both a national and a regional Strategic Framework for Green Sustainable Agriculture.
- 6. Connecting climate change, hydrology, and fisheries for energy and food security in the Lower Mekong Basin:** SEI, in partnership with the Asian Institute of Technology and the Inland Fisheries Research and Development Institute, works to assess climate change impacts on river flows, dam development and operations, and fish habitat in the Lower Mekong Basin in order to reduce future risks to energy production and food security. In the wake of a changing climate, SEI enhances the capacity of individuals and institutions to optimize hydropower production and fish harvesting in pursuit of sustainable livelihoods.