

# Mekong Environmental Resilience Week

13 September 2023

Regional Water, Energy, and Climate Alliance Meeting:

## Key Findings of the Review of Existing Networks

Mekong Thought Leadership and Think Tanks Network Program

Eastin Grand Hotel Sathorn  
Bangkok, Thailand



# The Review Team



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4. Suggested design of Alliance

# 1. Background



- **What is the role of Program Component 1 ?**
  - Facilitate the development home-grown regional network/alliance of knowledge-based policy influence organizations (KBPIOs)
- **What are the activities of the Component?**
  - Review existing networks/alliance and best practice
  - Design and plan to establish/strengthen regional network/alliance KBPIOs
  - Develop criteria and recruit members
  - Organize meetings among regional/alliance members
  - Explore options for continued support to the alliance.

## 2. What has been achieved?



**A review of existing networks/programs in the region and internationally that align with focus of the alliance.**

- Used a limited qualitative survey of 15 organizations/networks
- Assessed experience, lessons learnt, best practices, processes
- Developed a report
- Complementary to quantitative survey undertaken under Component 2 Research

**Development of concept note on design of the Alliance**

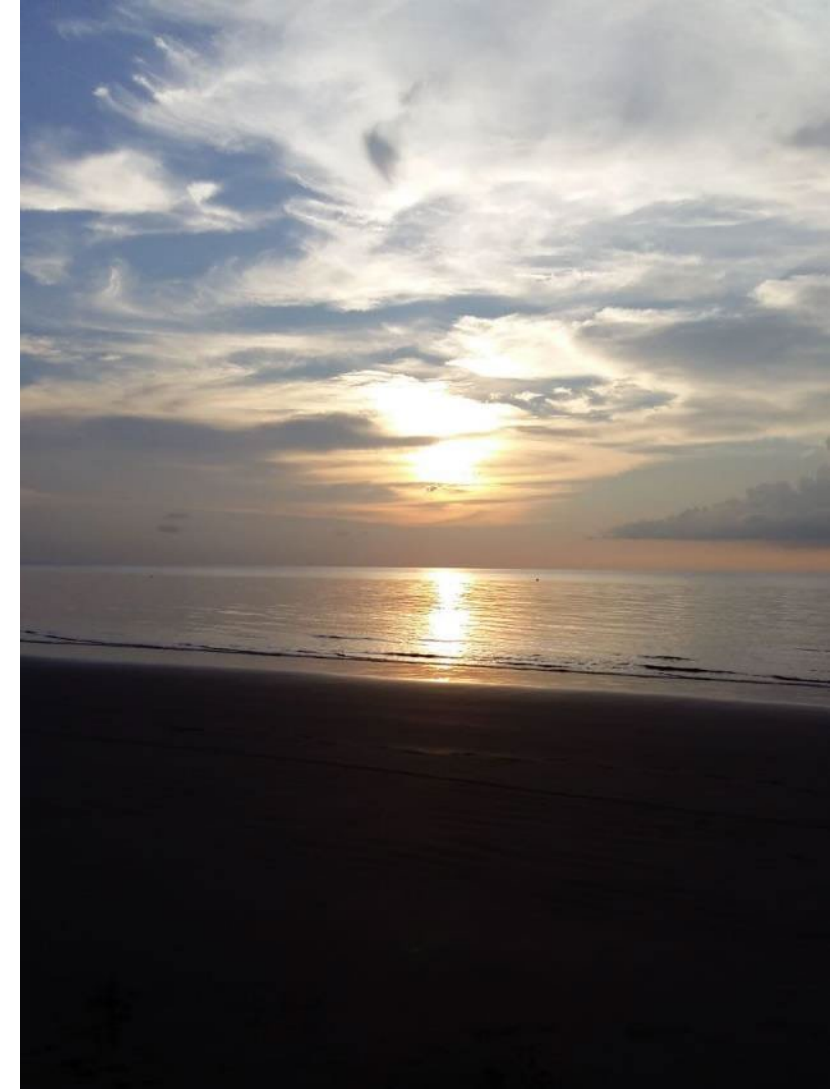
- Options in the design of the Alliance submitted to PSC to begin a dialogue



# 3. What did we find - Survey Results



- **A diversity of networks/programs that align with the core elements of the program (Water, Energy and Climate Nexus)**
  - Focus of respondents on water resources sector - limited representation of energy sector
  - Core activities, generation of new knowledge - support evidence-based decision making
  - Interest groups or service providers - ‘lobbying’ group
  - Statutory organizations that provide policy advice - think tanks
  - Advocacy groups.



# 3. What did we find - Survey Results



- **Governance structures differ between entities**
  - Highly structured – Council Board, Executive Committee etc.
  - Simplified structures of a Steering Committee and Secretariat
  - Funding to support networks/programs - membership fees, through donors, governments, and philanthropic sources.
  - In-kind support



# 3. What did we find - Survey Results



- **Strategies used to inform the policy arena varied**
  - Range of approaches and strategies used
  - Well articulate strategy in policy engagement
  - Importance of face-to-face meetings - rather than virtual
  - Convening of dialogues and forums
  - Co-design of research activities with the end user
  - Development of joint responses to issues as a network – providing a united voice and approach





# 3. What did we find - Survey Results



- **There are challenges and hurdles that face networks/programs**
  - Maintaining membership active participation, and interest
  - High transaction costs – sustained fund raising
  - Times when members may hold strong and adversarial views - need to be managed sensitively
  - Need strategic partners that are policy actors to inform policy domain
  - Trust building
  - Freedom of expression differs across Mekong countries - need to be acknowledged.



# 3. What did we find - Survey Results



- **To ensure the long-term sustainability.....**
  - Cooperate with key PIO partners to identify strategic issues of nexus
  - Ensure effective communications as part of branding alliance, build trust and confidence with stakeholders
  - Develop comprehensive policy engagement strategy
  - Seek multiple financing options – reduce dependence on single donor.

**Overwhelming support for having the Alliance addressing water, energy and climate related issues in the region**



# 4. Design of the Alliance



- **Why do we need an Alliance?**
  - Surveys under Components 1 and 2, show strong interest for a water-energy-climate (WEC) alliance in the Mekong.
  - Few institutions that work on WEC nexus issues and its associated policies in the Mekong Region.
  - Often countries rely on policy ideas coming from abroad.
- **Concept Note developed on possible designs for the Alliance**
  - Submitted to the Program Steering Committee (PSC) to begin the dialogue on possible governance and organizational structures.



# 4. Design of the Alliance – Benefits to Members



The direct benefits of membership of the Program Alliance are opportunities to participate in alliance activities, including but not limited to the following:

- Annual meetings of the Alliance to exchange knowledge and experiences
- Capacity building events
- Granting applications
- Policy fora and engagement
- Knowledge exchange and sharing

We look forward to cooperate more with knowledge-based policy influence organizations (KBPIOs) who have interest in the future.



Thank you!



# Recommendations: Alliance Establishment and Operation Phases



**Phase 1 (establishment)** of the Program Alliance could be implemented in 2024 with the following activities:

- Invite Program associated organizations and other interested parties to join the alliance.
- Organize the 1<sup>st</sup> annual meeting of the alliance.
- Capacity building events.

**Phase 2 (operation)** of the Program Alliance could be implemented in 2025 before the end of current program with the following activities:

- Policy engagement opportunities.
- Organize the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual meeting of the alliance.

**Phase 3 (continuation)** of the Program Alliance could be planned 6-12 months in advance prior the end of current phase of Program (as donor's consideration process for future support will take time):