

SUMERNET PLUS

SUMERNET Partnership for a Long-term Climate-Resilient Mekong through Just and Sustainable Transitions

SUMERNET PLUS will work towards linking evidence-based research with policymakers, practitioners, private sectors, young professionals, local communities, and vulnerable and marginalized groups across the region so that choices made for policies and practices will ensure socially inclusive, equitable, and sustainable development in the Mekong Region.

Introduction

For the last two decades, the Sustainable Mekong Research Network (SUMERNET), a transboundary programme in the Mekong Region, has brought together researchers, policymakers, and communities across borders to address some of the region's most pressing environmental challenges.

In the just-concluded phase of work (2018- June 2025), SUMERNET 4 All, the network focused on reducing water insecurity (see more details in background below).

In this new phase, **SUMERNET PLUS (July 2025 to December 2029)**, the network will strive to improve policies and practices through scientifically robust, policy-relevant research and diverse and innovative means of outreach to support a just, inclusive and sustainable transition for enhanced climate resilience, while taking into account gender equality, disability and social inclusion and human rights-based approach in the Mekong Region.

Duration: July 2025-December 2029

Support: 54 million SEK from the Swedish Government through the Development Cooperation Section (Asia and Pacific Region), Embassy of Sweden, Thailand.

Coverage: SUMERNET PLUS, in general, will have a regional coverage including six countries in the Mekong Region: Cambodia, China (specifically Yunnan Province and Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region), Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam.



Objectives

- Enhanced capacities and inclusive collaborations of Mekong's knowledge producers, policy influencers, and young professionals** are needed to deliver credible research, solution-oriented knowledge coproduction, policy engagement, and communications that respond to the differentiated needs of local communities, women and other marginalised groups, and local leaders in addressing climate resilience challenges.
- Improved policy development and implementation by policymakers and practitioners** that are inclusive, gender-responsive and grounded in human rights-based approach to deliver equitable climate resilience solutions in the Mekong Region.
- Adoption of just, equitable and sustainable practices by the private sector and other stakeholders**, based on inclusive evidence from solution-oriented knowledge co-production, will contribute to climate resilience in the Mekong Region.

Key themes

 **Exploring nexus interactions and trade-offs in the Mekong Region.** This theme focuses on existing dependencies, synergies, and trade-offs among key sectors (e.g., water, energy, agriculture, and forests) with the overall purpose of designing innovative solutions that address the existential threats of climate and unsustainable development using a transdisciplinary and inclusive approach.

 **Building socio-ecological resilience across scales.** Through practical and innovative partnerships (including public-private partnerships), this thematic area will maintain and enhance the resilience of socioecological systems to development and climate change.

 **Just sustainable transitions.** This thematic area will support the development of innovative, scalable solutions and evidence in key sectors (e.g., water, energy, agriculture, and forests) on a just sustainable transition for climate resilience. It will focus on defining the problem and solutions along with marginalized and vulnerable communities, women, youth, and local and Indigenous peoples.

Priority areas of work

-  Climate change adaptation and mitigation
-  Water-energy-food nexus
-  Agriculture and food systems
-  Forests and environmental degradation
-  Women, youth, and climate action

Creating impact

SUMERNET PLUS will support a range of grants (from short-term rapid-response projects to multi-year innovations), dialogue and events, and research and policy outputs to deliver on the programme goals



Grants – A total of 34 grants will be provided ranging from SEK 150,000 to 2,000,000 (approx. US\$ 15,000-200,000).

- a. **Scoping study grants:** to identify existing innovative solutions and policy demands in the region.
- b. **Rapid response grants:** to respond to emerging issues and/or needs of regional, national or local policy or strategic partners.
- c. **Joint study grants:** to identify policy needs and entry points, which will be integrated in the call for joint study proposals that must address policy needs with relevant solutions.
- d. **Seed innovation grants:** that identify issues related to climate resilience and generate idea of innovative solutions.
- e. **Innovation grants:** The largest grant in terms of funding amount and duration under SUMERNET PLUS supports multi-year, multi-country action pilots addressing nexus issues to enhance climate resilience through innovative solutions.
- f. **Fellowship grants:** The grants for the individual early career professionals contributing to and learning from the programme that supports climate resilience in the region.

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SEI Asia, based in Bangkok, has a diverse team of multinational experts that integrates scientific research with participatory approaches to co-develop and share knowledge, build partnerships, and inform policy for resilient development. It focuses on gender equality and social equity, climate adaptation, reducing disaster risk, water insecurity and integrated water resources management, transitional agriculture, renewable energy and urbanisation.

SEI Asia is an affiliate of Chulalongkorn University (CU), Thailand. SEI and CU have inked a long-term agreement to foster innovative scientific research combined with effective policy engagement on development and environmental challenges in Asia. The key areas of collaboration are: intellectual engagement for joint research applications and fund mobilization; lecturing and seminars for CU's students; post-graduate supervision and examination; and, CU-SEI employee linkages.



Capacity Building

Training researchers, policymakers, practitioners, think tanks, young professionals, and communities in climate resilience, inclusive policy engagement, effective communications including media relationships, and financial management integrating ethics, monitoring and learning.



Policy Dialogues

Amplifying local voices at regional forums (e.g. Mekong River Commission, Lancang-Mekong Cooperation, ASEAN) to shape inclusive policies that take into account the needs of local, grassroots and Indigenous communities as well as gender equality, disability and social inclusion and human rights-based approaches in the Mekong Region.



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SUMERNET is open to organizations and individuals with an interest in contributing to sustainable development in the Mekong Region through knowledge-based policy engagement. We welcome partners to serve in different capacities and participate in various activities, e.g. research project implementation, knowledge exchange and sharing, capacity building and mentorship, joint publications, and contributing to policy debates and public forums.

To become a member of SUMERNET, interested parties can fill in the registration form using the link below:

Register to become a member: bit.ly/Sumernetplusforms

Or send an email to: secretariat@sumernet.org.

For more information about our work and partners, please visit our websites: sumernet.org and sei.org.



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