Financially supported by Sweden Sverige

SUMERNET Annual Research and Policy Forum

Leveraging Nexus for Transboundary Cooperation in the Lancang–Mekong Region

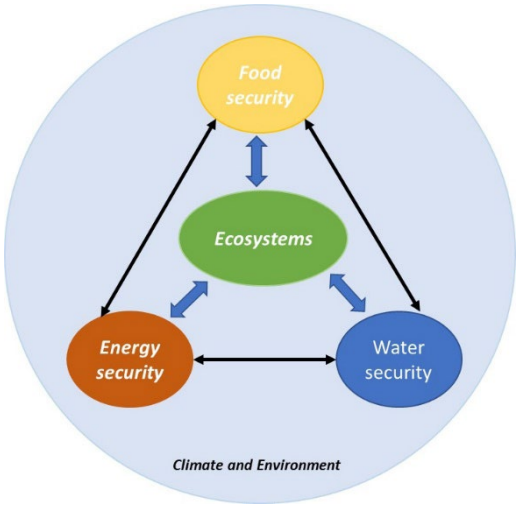
09:00-17:30 hr, 10th November 2022 (Bangkok time, ICT)

(31st October 2022)

Rationale:

Water, food, energy and ecosystems are essential for human wellbeing and securing access to these resources in a sustainable manner is fundamental to the continued development that is required to meet all of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Sectoral policies regarding water, food, energy and ecosystems have significant impacts on one another. Policies and actions of one sector often cause serious but overlooked externalities for other sectors at local, national, regional and global scales. This is especially the case in the context of increasing resource scarcity and associated competition for these vital resources.

Against the backdrop of increasing vulnerability due to climate change, it is even more urgent and imperative to coordinate among the water, food, energy and environment sectors. The **nexus approach** to managing interlinked resources seeks to enhance water, food and energy security by reducing trade-offs, building synergies and improving governance while protecting ecosystems. Such an approach helps reconcile different sectoral objectives and supports progress towards the closely interlinked SDGs at the national and regional levels.



In transboundary settings, such as the Lancang–Mekong region addressing trade-offs and externalities between countries can foster trust, be a lever for regional development and help mitigate potential conflicts. A nexus approach to managing common resources could greatly enhance water, food, energy and environment security in riparian countries, leveraging on regional complementarities, and improving natural resource governance.

Using the nexus approach, Sustainable Mekong Research Network (SUMERNET) Research and Policy Forum 2022 will highlight the competing demands within water, food, energy and ecosystems and identify pathways for deepening engagement on the interlinked issues for greater cooperation in the Mekong region. The forum will foster transboundary dialogue across the nexus sectors – water, food, energy and ecosystems.

SUMERNET is organizing an event *"Leveraging Nexus for Transboundary Cooperation in the Lancang–Mekong Region"* as part of the Annual Meeting 2022.

SUMERNET comprises of 500 network members (SNMs) from the countries within and outside the six Lancang–Mekong Region and the Steering Committee (SSC) representing network members with the technical support of the SUMERNET Secretariat hosted at Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI) Asia Centre, Bangkok.

Objectives of the Research and Policy Forum are:

1. To facilitate knowledge exchange among academics, practitioners, and policymakers in the Lancang–Mekong Region on the implementation of a nexus approach to tackling water, food, energy and ecosystems security in a changing climate.
2. To enhance understanding of nexus approaches to foster transboundary cooperation in the Lancang–Mekong Region.
3. To identify gaps in knowledge and devise strategies for collaborative research and actions across the domains of water, energy, food and ecosystems in the Lancang–Mekong Region.
4. To identify policy gaps and opportunities in the consideration of the nexus approach in the Lancang–Mekong region.

The Research and Policy Forum will provide a platform for both researchers and practitioners from the upper and lower countries of the Lancang–Mekong Region to exchange knowledge and experiences on various interconnected issues related to water, food, energy and ecosystems. The aim is to assess the current state of knowledge and the emerging lessons/learnings that can inform coherent policy making that takes into account the interconnectedness of the domains of water, food, energy and ecosystems for securing the sustainability and well-being of the Lancang–Mekong region.

This forum will facilitate a dialogue among policymakers, researchers, and practitioners to explore how regional policy priorities have taken or have not taken into consideration the criticalities emerging in the Lancang–Mekong area with regards to management of water, food, energy, and environment sectors, with the goal of reducing the negative consequences of development on overall food and water security in the region and providing livelihood sustenance. The discussion aims to identify gaps and opportunities in the current policy framework and bring together ideas from the networks how to cooperate to achieve water, food, energy and ecological security in the Lancang–Mekong region**.**

Date and time:

Research and Policy forum: 10th November 2022, 09:00 -17:30 hr (ICT)

Mode of participation:

All participants are encouraged to participate onsite but online participation is also possible.

- Onsite participation: Pullman Bangkok Hotel G, Bangkok, Thailand
- Online platform will be held through Zoom. Registration link for online participants: **https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYkc-6grD8iE93HztqzpCohFFrKq9ZTabjb**

Forum participants:

- Network members of SUMERNET and SUMERNET Youth Network (SYN)
- Representatives from the regional cooperation mechanisms e.g. LMC Water Centre, MRC, ADB GMS and ASEAN
- Representatives from the governmental agencies related to water, environment, energy, agriculture from the Lancang–Mekong Countries
- Representatives from Sida, other donors and development agencies
- Media
- Other researchers, practitioners and policymakers from the region who are working or have an interest on nexus approach to address the challenges spanning water, food, energy and ecosystems and wish to participate in the forum

About SUMERNET:

Since its founding in 2005, Sustainable Mekong Research Network (SUMERNET), a regional research network, has been supporting policy-relevant research and outreach activities to inform and engage decision-makers, planners and stakeholders, bringing together research partners engaged in sustainable development in the six countries of the Mekong Region: Cambodia, China (specifically Yunnan Province and Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region), Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam. Within this context, it pursues an evolving agenda in response to questions and policy issues that arise in the region. With continued funding support of the Embassy of Sweden through the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), SUMERNET 4 All (2018-2023), current phase of SUMERNET has the focus on reducing water insecurity for all in the region.

SUMERNET is guided by SUMERNET Network Members (SNMs), who collectively deliberate on strategic issues that have implications for the whole network. The SNMs delegate their authority in taking strategic decisions to SUMERNET Steering Committee (SSC). The SUMERNET Secretariat (SS) hosted at the Asia Centre of Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI) provides the day-to-day management, coordination, and technical support to the network under the direction of the SSC. The network currently consists of more than 500 members who are engaged with various activities under SUMERNET.

Draft agenda:

Time/Duration	**Agenda**	**Who**
Overall facilitators: Sushmita Mandal (SUMERNET Research for Policy and Practice Coordinator) & Hermes (Insight Pact) Rapporteur – SUMERNET Fellows/Representatives from SUMERNET Youth Network		
08:30 – 09:00	Registration	Unchulee, Bouanong
09:00 – 09:30	**Session 1:** Welcome remarks • Government of Thailand • The Embassy of Sweden, Thailand • SUMERNET Steering Committee (SSC) Introduction to SUMERNET, Research-Policy Forum and participants	 TBD Dr. Eren Zink, First Secretary, Senior Research Advisor, Development Cooperation Section Embassy of Sweden Prof. Dr. Chantana Wungaeo, SSC Chair & Chulalongkorn University Dr. Chayanis Krittasudthacheewa (SUMERNET Programme Director)
09:30 – 10:40	**Session 2:** **PANEL 1** *Revisiting the Nexus approach: Assessment of knowledge, opportunities and the ways forward* Setting the Context: What have been the achievements of the nexus approach in the region? (10 minutes)	Moderator: Sushmita Mandal Dr. Louis Lebel (USER Director, SUMERNET Water Insecurity Advisor)

Time/Duration	Agenda	Who
	Panelists – • Dr. Eren Zink, First Secretary, Senior Research Advisor, Development Cooperation Section Embassy of Sweden • Prof. Dr. Li Hao, Hubei Economics University, P.R. China (TBC) • Karen Delfau, IWCAN • Mr. Stefano Zenobi, MFF, WWF Mekong for the Futures Program (MFF) • Dr Wanida Khumnirdpetch, Director, Bureau of Foreign Agricultural Affairs (BOFAA), Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, Thailand (TBC)	
10:40 – 11:00	**Group photo followed by Coffee Break**	
11:00 – 12:15	**Session 3:** **PANEL 2** *Regional cooperation mechanisms that facilitate an effective nexus approach to address the water insecurity issues in the region* • Lancang-Mekong Water Resource Cooperation Centre (LMC Water Centre), P.R. China • Mekong Australia Partnership - Water, Energy and Climate Change (MAP-WEC), Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), Australian Embassy, Thailand • Mekong institute (MI) • Thai Environment Institute (TEI) • Representative from Thai Government • Department of Livestock and Fisheries, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Lao PDR	Moderator: Dr Chayanis Krittasudthacheewa Ms. Tong Yuchen, LMC Water Centre Dr. John Dore, Lead Advisor – MAP-WEC, DFAT Ms. Jian Wang (Tina), Program Manager of the Sustainable Energy & Environment Program Department, MI Dr. Wijarn Simachaya, TEI President (TBC) TBD Dr. Kaviphone Phouthavong, Deputy Director General, Department of Livestock and Fisheries & SSC Member (TBC)
12:15 – 13:15	Lunch Break	
Overall facilitators: Dr. Ridhi Saluja (SUMERNET Multi-stakeholder Engagement Coordinator) & Hermes (Insight Pact) Rapporteurs: SUMERNET Fellow/Youth Network		
13:15 – 14:30	**Session 4:** *Operationalizing the Nexus from the ground up* This will include two parallel breakout groups that will focus on specific themes as mentioned in the title of each session. The breakout rooms will be provided instructions on specific questions that they	Moderators: Sushmita & Ridhi

Time/Duration	Agenda	Who
	would discuss on the theme and share it back on the plenary **Group 1** Interconnections between ecosystems and food security Group Discussions, report back, and Q&A --- **Group 2** Interconnections between ecosystems and energy security; policy recommendations (regional) Group Discussions, report back, and Q&A	
14:15 – 14:45	Key messages from the group discussions	Dr. Ridhi Saluja
14:45 – 15:45	**Session 5:** **PANEL 3** *Research–Policy–Media Interface: Leveraging the Nexus to foster transboundary cooperation* Panelists: • Dr. Pichamon Yeophantong, Centre for Future Defence and National Security, Deakin University, Canberra • Dr. Francis X Johnson, Senior Research Fellow, SEI • Dr. Bach Tan Sinh, Institute of Policy and Management (IPAM), VNU Hanoi, University of Social Sciences and Humanities • Ms. Tipakson Manpati, Media expert Discussion and Q & A	Moderator: Dr. Pheakkdey Nguon (SSC member)
15:45 – 16:00	**Session 6:** Key Takeaways from the Research and Policy Forum	Sushmita & Hermes
16:00 – 16:10	**Session 7:** Vote of Thanks and Closing Remarks	Dr. Kittima Leeruttanawisut, SUMERNET Steering Committee (SSC) member
16:10 – 17:30	**Session 8:** Networking over Coffee Poster Presentation Session	All participants
End of SUMERNET Annual Research and Policy Forum 2022		