

Lancang-Mekong Research and Policy Forum

*Strengthening research-policy cooperation and partnerships to address water security
in times of uncertainty in the Lancang-Mekong Region*

27-28 October, 1:00 pm to 4:30 pm (Bangkok time, ICT)

(Version: October 25, 2021)

Rationale:

Water politics and the tensions around water resource use and allocation between parties is a major issue in water insecurity within the Lancang-Mekong Region. This combined with contemporary socio-economic and political dynamics and climate change impacts bring additional burdens to the lives of the water insecure, particularly disrupting the lives of poor and other marginalized groups in the region.

There have been significant efforts from different stakeholders to use water diplomacy to address political factors around water insecurity. Regional platforms for water cooperation like the Mekong River Commission (MRC) and Lancang-Mekong Cooperation (LMC) cooperate beyond national borders to use dialogue, data sharing and joint projects to resolve these issues.

Additionally, to improve water diplomacy, researchers from different countries within the region have contributed to research on water insecurity to enhance decision making. However, there is often a disconnect between science and policy implementation: findings and recommendations of researchers are not always effectively disseminated to the wider public or meet the needs of the decision-makers for policy and practice.

Considering the COVID-19 pandemic and other challenges, it is now more necessary than ever to engage in multistakeholder dialogue to bridge science and policy to address water insecurity.

Sustainable Mekong Research Network (SUMERNET) is organizing this two-day event “**Lancang-Mekong Research and Policy Forum** on “*Strengthening research-policy cooperation and partnerships to address water security in times of uncertainty in the Lancang-Mekong Region*” as part of SUMERNET Annual Meeting in 2021.

SUMERNET comprises the network members (SNMs) from the six Lancang-Mekong countries 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 Lancang-Mekong Research and Policy Forum are:

1. To exchange knowledge and experiences among researchers, practitioners, and policymakers in the Lancang-Mekong Region on how they address water insecurity in times of political, social and economic uncertainty.
2. To enhance understanding of opportunities to engage with ongoing regional water cooperation mechanisms in the Lancang-Mekong Region.
3. To strengthen networks and partnerships amongst researchers, policymakers and practitioners from all six countries in the Lancang-Mekong Region.
4. To cooperate on joint research, actions or other practical activities to support decision making processes in the Lancang-Mekong Region.

The Research Forum on the first day will be an open space for senior and young researchers and practitioners from the upper and lower countries of the Lancang-Mekong Region to exchange knowledge



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and experiences on various issues related to water insecurity. The aim is to strengthen networks and partnerships in the region.

The Policy Forum on the second day will be an opportunity for policy dialogue among researchers, practitioners and policymakers associated with SUMERNET and friends of SUMERNET from the Embassy of Sweden, Thailand's Office of the National Water Resources (ONWR), the MRC Secretariat, LMC Water Centre, governmental agencies, universities and other stakeholders to understand their current efforts and policy needs for reducing water insecurity in times of uncertainty, especially with COVID-19 pandemic. The forum also seeks to identify common interests for further cooperation on joint research, actions or other activities that concerned parties consider as feasible.

Tentative dates:

- Research forum: 27th October 2021 - 1:00 pm to 4:30 pm (ICT)
- Policy forum: 28th October 2021- 1:00 pm to 4:30 pm (ICT)

(Note: The organizing team will organize final rehearsal/test for the speakers, panel members and moderators to participate as the optional during 1:00-3:00 pm on 26th October 2021 (ICT). The invitation will be sent to relevant persons directly).

Forum participants:

- All SUMERNET Network Members
- Representatives from Thailand's Office of the National Water Resources,
- Representatives from MRC Secretariat
- Representatives from LMC Water Centre
- Representatives from Sida and other donor agencies
- Media
- Other researchers, practitioners and policymakers who have a common interest in “reducing water insecurity for all” 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 390 members who are engaged with various activities under SUMERNET.

Draft agenda:

Lancang-Mekong Research Forum (Wednesday October 27, 2021)		
Time (ICT)	Activity	Who
		Overall moderator: Dr. Leonie Pearson (SUMERNET Research for policy and practice coordinator)
12:45-13:00	Registration	All
13:00-13:20 (20 min)	Welcome to Lancang-Mekong Research Forum <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Opening remarks - Objectives - Introduction to participants - Setting the context 	Dr. Lailai Li (SUMERNET Steering Committee, P.R.China) Dr. Louis Lebel, Director, Unit for Social and Environmental Research (USER), (SSC Co-chair, Thailand)
13:20-14:35 (75 min)	Panel discussions on contemporary dynamics of addressing water insecurity Session 1: Addressing water insecurity in times of COVID-19 <i>This session discusses how COVID-19 may or may not have exacerbated conditions of water insecurity. Participants also discuss additional burdens on certain communities and any recommendations to address them</i> Panelists (to be confirmed) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dr. Wu Yusong, Centre for Rural Development Studies, Yunnan University, P.R.China. 2. Dr. Apisom Intralawan, Mae Fah Luang University, Thailand 3. Prof. Nilar Aung, SUMERNET Steering Committee, Myanmar (VOICES Project). 4. Dr. Pham Huynh Thanh Van (Water Savings, Joint Action Project), Vietnam (tbc) 5. Mr. Chann Aun Tob (ENAHHA Project), Cambodia. Q&A- 25min	Session 1 moderator: Dr. Leonie Pearson
14:35-14:50 (15 min)	Group photos and short break	
14:50-16:05 (75 min)	Session 2: Navigating the politics of water security in times of uncertainty <i>This session discusses the political contexts within the region and how it has affected policy actions on water insecurity</i> Panelist (potential) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prof. Lyu Xing, Yunnan University, P.R.China. 	Session 2 moderator: Ms. May Thazin Aung (SUMERNET Multi-stakeholder engagement coordinator)

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Duration	Activity	Who
	2. Dr. Bach Tan Sinh, Viet Insight, Vietnam (SSC Co-chair) 3. Dr Carl Middleton, Chulalongkorn University, Thailand, Thailand. 4. Dr. Aung Tun Oo (Radanar Ayar Rural Development Association, Myanmar (AA-Adapt Project). 5. Dr. Diana Suhardiman, International Water Management Institute (IWMI), Lao PDR, (Pathways for rights-based approaches in Mekong hydropower Project). Q&A- 25 min	
16:05-16:20 (15 min)	Q&A But also ask some specific people to ask questions & have a poll ready	Dr. Leonie Pearson
16:20-16:30 (10 min)	Wrap up: Key messages from Lancang-Mekong Research Forum. (The participants will answer the poll)	Ms. May Thazin Aung
End of SUMERNET's Lancang-Mekong Research Forum 2021		

Time (ICT)	Lancang-Mekong Policy Forum (Thursday, October 28, 2021)	
Duration	Activity	Who
		Overall moderator: Ms. May Thazin Aung (Multi-stakeholder engagement coordinator)
12:45-13:00	Registration	All
13:00-13:15 (15 min)	Session 1 Welcoming and opening remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Thailand's Office of the National Water Resources (ONWR) - Embassy of Sweden, Thailand - SUMERNET Steering Committee Chair 	Dr. Surasri Kidtimonton The Secretary General, ONWR. Dr. Eren Zink, Embassy of Sweden Ms. Hap Navy, Inland Fisheries Research and Development Institute (IFReDI), Fisheries Administration, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Cambodia (SSC Chair)
13:15-13:25 (10 min)	Session 2: Setting the context for the Lancang-Mekong Policy Forum <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Objectives - Introduction to participants (through the poll) 	Dr. Chayanis Kittasudthacheewa, SUMERNET Programme Director

Time (ICT)	Lancang-Mekong Policy Forum (Thursday, October 28, 2021)	
Duration	Activity	Who
13:25-13:55 (30 min) (8 min for each presentation and follow by Q&A)	Session 3: Understanding transboundary water policy priorities on water security for all in Lancang-Mekong Region under two frameworks of MRC and LMC Water Resource Cooperation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Policy priorities of MRC - Policy priorities of LMC Water Resource Cooperation - Q&A (questions should be typed on the online chat) 	Moderator: Dr. Chayanis Krittasudthacheewa Mr. Sophearin Chea, Water Policy expert, MRC Secretariat Ms. Tong Yuchen, Officer/Engineer, LMC Water Centre, P.R.China.
13:55-14:55 (60 min)	Session 4: Panel discussion to identify policy needs and opportunities for cooperation Panel 1: Shifting policy priorities in water resources management in times of COVID19 <i>This session discusses how policy priorities have changed in times of COVID-19 and how this has affected water management and communities in the region. How can cooperation be enhanced to promote better links between research and decision-making processes?</i> Panelists (potential) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dr. Eren Zink, Embassy of Sweden/SIDA, Thailand 2. Ms. Chawee Wongprasittiporn, Expert of Strategy, ONWR, Thailand 3. Ms. Xu Jing, Deputy Director, The International Economic and Technical Cooperation and Exchange Center (INTCE), Ministry of Water Resources, P.R.China. 4. Mr. Sophearin Chea, Water Policy expert, MRC Secretariat, Lao PDR 5. Dr. Le Thi Van Hue, the Central Institute for Natural Resources and Environmental Studies (CRES), Vietnam National University, Vietnam. 6. Dr. Yanyong Inmuong, Mahasarakham University), Thailand (PFRM-Ban Phai Joint Action Project). 	Moderator: Prof. Dr. Chantana (Banpasirichote) Wungaeo, Chulalongkorn University (Co-chair of SUMERNET Steering Committee (SSC))
14:55-15:05 (10 min)	Group photos & short break	The moderator will explain how the speakers and participants can access to two parallel panels after the break.
15:05-16:05 (60 min)	Session 5: Water management through epidemics, political turmoil and development <i>In these two parallel panels (no. 2 and 3) focusing on floods and droughts, panelists discuss the tradeoffs in</i>	

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Duration	Activity	Who
	<p><i>managing floods and droughts in light of pressing environmental, social and political concerns. How can cooperation be enhanced to promote better links between research and decision-making processes?</i></p> <p>Panel 2: Floods</p> <p>Panelist (potential):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dr. Truong Hong Tien, Deputy Director General, Viet Nam National Mekong Committee (VNMC) 2. Ms. Kaing Khim, Deputy Director General of the Fisheries Administration (FiA), Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Cambodia. 3. Ms. Piyaporn Wongruang, Founder/ Editor Bangkok Tribune Online News Agency. 4. Dr. Fan Linlin, Changjiang River Scientific Research Institute (CRSRI), P.R.China. 5. Assoc. Prof. Seree Supratid, Director of Climate Change and Disaster Center, Rangsit University, Thailand. 	<p>Panel 2 moderator: Dr. Leonie Pearson.</p>
	<p>Panel 3: Drought</p> <p>Panelist (potential):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dr. Li Hao, Hubei University of Economics, P.R.China. 2. Mr Ix Hour, Drought Management Expert, MRC Secretariat, Cambodia. 3. Dr. Surin Worakijthamrong, Department of Groundwater Resources, Thailand. 4. Dr. Lam Vu Thanh Noi, Southern Institute of Water Resources Research (SIWRR), Vietnam. 5. Ms. Chau Thi Minh Long, Vice Head of Agricultural Systems Division, the Western Highlands Agriculture and Forestry Science Institute (WASI), SUMERNET Steering Committee, Vietnam. 	<p>Panel 3 moderator: Ms. May Thazin Aung</p>
16:05-16:15 (10 min)	<p>Plenary Summary</p> <p>Reporting back from panel discussions</p>	<p>(All participants will return to the plenary session)</p> <p>Representatives from two parallel panels</p>
16:15-16:20 (5 min)	<p>Wrap up: Key messages from the Lancang-Mekong Policy Forum</p>	<p>Dr. Louis Lebel, Director, USER, Chiang Mai University, Thailand (SSC Co-chair)</p>



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Duration	Activity	Who
16:20-16:30 (10 min)	Closing remarks - Representative from SUMERNET Steering Committee (The participants will answer the poll)	Dr. Bach Tan Sinh, SUMERNET Steering Committee Co-chair, Vietnam.
End of SUMERNET's Lancang-Mekong Policy Forum 2021		