

**SUSTAINABLE MEKONG RESEARCH NETWORK (SUMERNET)**  
**Partnership for Long-term Climate-Resilient Mekong through Just and Sustainable**  
**Transitions (SUMERNE PLUS)**

**Terms of Reference (ToR)**

**Scoping Study No.1 “Best Practice, Innovation and Pathways to Climate Resilience”**

**A. Objectives**

This scoping study aims:

1. To assess positive impacts of SUMERNET over the past two decades (2005-2025) and highlight good practices and lessons learned that will inform future SUMERNET PLUS programming.
2. To generate actionable insights on technical, institutional and social innovations for constructing innovative pathways towards climate-resilient development in the Mekong Region.

**B. Scope of Work**

To achieve the above objectives, the scoping study will include the following tasks.

**1. Understanding SUMERNET’s positive impacts over the past 20 years :**

- Review existing literature related to SUMERNET (Phases 1-5) and past projects supported by SUMERNET (Phases 1-4)
- Interviews with selected SUMERNET researchers, think tanks, CSOs and other boundary partners involved in SUMERNET-supported projects and partnerships over the past 20 years to understand better good practices, lessons learned and any positive changes that happened beyond the project lifetime.
- Documenting impactful change stories that SUMERNET has contributed in the following categories.
  - Changing Agendas,
  - Enhancing Capacity
  - Improving Decisions
  - Accelerating Implementation
- Preparation of the inventory of key innovations and approaches (technical, institutional, and social) developed over the past 20 years by SUMERNET, highlighting their contribution to climate resilience in terms of knowledge, policy and practice in key sectors (water, energy, agriculture, forestry and climate).
- Identifying the current gaps in knowledge, capacity, policy, and practice in climate resilience that may potentially benefit from potential support and engagement with SUMERNET PLUS programme.

- Updating the list of SUMERNET researchers, think tanks, CSOs, and other boundary partners involved in the SUMERNET-supported projects that the scoping study has engaged for future contacts.

## **2. Mapping the private sector engaged in climate resilience**

- Map key actors from the private sector engaged in climate resilience innovation across Mekong countries.
- Highlight the role and interest of the private sector, especially small and medium enterprises (SMEs), in climate resilience.
- Identify potential SME actors and specific opportunities for SUMERNET to cooperate with them

## **3. Recommendations to SUMERNET PLUS:**

- Identify country-specific and multi-country (regional) entry points for supporting and scaling innovation in action research.
- Recommend strategic entry points for collaboration with the researchers, think tanks, private sector and regional networks.
- Provide recommendations on any special considerations in the design for future competitive calls for SUMERNET PLUS grants (e.g. rapid response grants, joint study grants, seed innovation grants, innovation fund) to support a just, inclusive, and sustainable transition towards enhanced climate resilience in relevant key sectors across different levels (at sub-national, national, and regional levels).

## **4. Communications and Dissemination:**

- Organization of the Regional Validation Workshop to present the findings and get feedback from the stakeholders.
- Preparation of workshop proceedings.
- Preparation of presentations, policy brief, and other outreach materials highlighting key findings from the scoping studies to the public

## **C. Methodology**

- The scoping study approach and findings must integrate a GEDSI lens.
- The study is expected to employ mixed methods, including but not limited to desk-based assessment of available literature, key informant interviews, and hybrid validation workshops.
- Main target groups that the scoping study team needs to engage in the interviews and consultations are selected researchers, think tanks, CSOs and other boundary partners involved with the projects supported by SUMERNET and relevant private sector in climate resilience innovation and actions.

- At least 40 people are expected to be interviewed under the present scoping study.

#### D. Deliverables and tentative timeline

| Deliverables                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Tentative timeline                                                      |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>1. Inception Report</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Within 2 weeks of contract start                                        |
| <b>2. Midterm Progress Report</b> including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Executive summary</li> <li>○ Introduction</li> <li>○ Brief methodology</li> <li>○ Initial findings and analysis for all topics highlighted in Section B: Scope of Work.</li> <li>○ Annexes</li> </ul> <b>3. Max. 30 pages excluding annexes</b>                | By 28 February 2026                                                     |
| <b>4. Final Scoping Study Report</b> , including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Executive summary</li> <li>○ Introduction</li> <li>○ Brief methodology</li> <li>○ Key findings and strategic recommendations for all topics highlighted in Section B: Scope of Work.</li> <li>○ Annexes</li> </ul> <b>Max. 30 pages excluding annexes</b> | Draft version by 31 March 2026<br><br>Final version by 25 May 2026      |
| <b>5. Workshop*</b> to validate the findings with the stakeholders<br><i>* This can be organized through a hybrid mode</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | By 20 April 2026                                                        |
| <b>6. Presentation files and workshop proceedings</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | By 30 April 2026                                                        |
| <b>7. Policy brief</b> (2-4 pages) and any other outreach materials                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | By 31 May 2026                                                          |
| <b>8. Financial reports</b> and other supporting documents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Midterm Report</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | By 31 March 2026                                                        |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Final/Completion Report</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | By 30 June 2026                                                         |
| <b>9. Scoping study completion</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Latest by 30 June 2026 (or 6 months from the date of contract signing). |

#### E. Documents to be provided by SUMERNET Secretariat upon selection

- SUMERNET PLUS programme design
- Information about past projects supported by SUMERNET
- Contact information of selected project teams.