

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.2 “Mapping Key Actors, Priority Needs, and Strategic
Engagement Opportunity for Climate Resilience”**

A. Objectives

This scoping study aims to generate databases, information, and recommendations on key policy actors (who), both at the national and regional levels, relevant to the SUMERNET PLUS programme, their priority needs in terms policy and practice for climate-resilient development (what and where), and entry points for engagement with the key policy actors (how).

B. Scope of Work

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

1. Review of SUMERNET projects over the past 20 years: Desk study

- 1.1 Review projects of SUMERNET Phases 1-4 and SUMERNET PLUS programme document.
- 1.2 Identify/screen relevant projects to climate-resilient development.
- 1.3 Identify government and development institutions at national and regional levels that have been engaged and influenced by project implementation, including analyzing relationships between policy actors, project implementors, and Secretariat hosted at SEI.
- 1.4 Develop a database on a list of government and development institutions.

2. Institutional Mapping: Desk study

- 2.1 Identify relevant government and development institutions at both national and regional levels (MRC, LMC, ASEAN, ADB, WB, etc.) in the water, energy, agriculture, and forests sectors, including research councils in the Mekong Countries with clear mandates in addressing climate resilience challenges.
- 2.2 Further develop a database in 1.4 on a list of policy actors and government and development institutions.
- 2.3 Set up criteria and map key government and development institutions that are highly relevant to the SUMERNET PLUS programme based on databases from 1.4 and 2.2.

- 2.4 In-depth review of the strategic plans and actions that contribute to building climate resilience of the selected government and development institutions in 2.3, and analyze planning processes and mechanisms for making decisions and negotiations.
- 2.5 Identify policy synergies and trade-offs among key sectors including water, energy, agriculture, and forests sectors of the selected government and development institutions.

3. Policy Needs and Engagement: Interview

- 3.1 Develop interview questions for policy makers/senior officers to collect the following information
 - Policy and solutions need to address climate-resilience challenges in the sector.
 - Integration of Gender Equality Disability and Social Inclusion into the policy and actions.
 - Priority actions for short-, medium-, and long-terms to fill the knowledge and capacity gaps with collaborative partners.
 - Identify hotspots in Mekong Countries/ Mekong River that SUMERNET PLUS programme can support the implementation.
 - Ways to engage with policy planning process and timing.
- 3.2 Identify contact people for the selected government and development institutions and develop workplan and approach for interviews.
- 3.3 Conduct policy interviews in consulting with SUMERNET Secretariat team at SEI. The interviews can be on-site or on-line, individual or groups.
- 3.4 Analyze interview information to highlight policy and solution needs, setting priorities and location of actions, and strategic entry points to engage policy for SUMERNET PLUS programme.

4. Validation and sharing information: Workshop

- 4.1 Develop a workplan to organize a regional workshop (1-2 days) to present key findings from the scoping study. The expected participants are about 60 people including national and regional policy actors.
- 4.2 Organize the validation workshop and collect feedback from participants. This could be in person or in a hybrid mode.
- 4.3 Prepare policy brief and proceedings of the workshop.

5. Reporting and outreach materials:

- 5.1 Prepare an inception report
- 5.2 Prepare midterm progress report
- 5.3 Prepare a scoping report presenting findings and a set of recommendations
- 5.4 Prepare the policy briefs, presentations and other outreach materials.

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 governmental agencies, development institutions and research councils relevant to climate resilience work.
- At least 40 people are expected to be interviewed under the present scoping study.

D. Deliverables and tentative timeline

Deliverables	Tentative timeline
1. Inception report	By 2 weeks after the contract starts
2. Policy interview questionnaire	By 20 January 2026
3. Database presenting a list of government, development institutions, and research councils, including key interventions	By 20 February 2026
4. Midterm Progress report with validation workshop workplan	By 31 March 2026
5. Validation workshop and presentations	By 20 April 2026
6. Workshop proceeding	By 30 April 2026
7. Scoping report: Draft outline of scoping report ○ Executive summary ○ Introduction ○ Brief methodology ○ Key findings 1. Institutional mapping 2. Understanding policy and solutions needs 3. Identification of priorities and hotspots 4. Synergy and trade-off of the policy insights among water, energy, agriculture, and forests to build climate-resilience development ○ Entry points for SUMERNET PLUS to engage with policy makers, development institutes and research councils at national and regional levels. ○ Recommendations for the design of SUMERNET PLUS grant competitive calls (e.g. rapid response grants, joint study grants, seed innovation grants and innovation fund) and other programme activities. Annexes	Draft version by 31 March 2026 Final version by 25 May 2026
8. Policy brief (2-4 pages) and other outreach materials	By 31 May 2026
9. Financial reports and other supporting documents: • Midterm Reports	By 31 March 2026
• Final/Completion Report	By 30 June 2026

10. Scoping study completion	Latest by 30 June 2026 or 6 months from the date of contract signing
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E. Documents to be provided by SUMERNET Secretariat upon selection

- SUMERNET PLUS programme design
- Information about past projects supported by SUMERNET