



Terms of Reference (TOR)

SUMERNET Young Professionals Network Coordinator

SUMERNET PLUS Programme

(Version: 12 December 2025)

A. BACKGROUND:

In this phase **SUMERNET PLUS** (July 2025 to December 2029), the Sustainable Mekong Research Network (SUMERNET) will strive to improve policies and practices through scientifically robust, policy-relevant research and diverse and innovative means of outreach to support a just 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.

This will be realized through the following **programme 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 co-production, 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.

Programme 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 socio-ecological 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

SUMERNET PLUS will continue linking evidence-based research with policymakers, local communities, and vulnerable and marginalised groups across the region so that policy choices made will ensure socially inclusive, equitable, and sustainable development in the Mekong Region.

SUMERNET Young Professionals Network Coordinator

Recognizing the importance of future leaders, SUMERNET invests in capacity building through fellowships, workshops, and training programs. SUMERNET Young Professionals (SYP) and the Mekong Thought Leadership and Think Tanks Network (MTT) fellowships. For instance, we target entry- and mid-level professionals, equipping them with the skills and knowledge to be effective researchers and policy engagements, with a strong focus on the policy impact of their work.

As the strength of SUMERNET lies in its dynamic young professional members, SUMERNET's explicit support for the establishment of the SUMERNET Young Professionals Network (SYP)¹ in 2021 under the umbrella of SUMERNET (following a strong intention and leadership of SUMERNET fellows and other early career members within the network), the open election for additional SSC members representing young professionals within SUMERNET and active participation of the MTT fellows in the SYP activities have been the means to enhance the role of young professionals in contributing to the sustainable development in the Mekong Region.

The SYP Regional Coordinator will support the strengthening and active engagement of the SUMERNET partners, including Young Professionals Network members and upcoming granted projects across the Mekong Region, working closely with the Component 4 Coordinator to deliver capacity building, networking, and engagement activities. The position is responsible for coordinating program workplan related to SYP development and granted project capacity building activities, organizing programme events, facilitating communication across SUMERNET partners and grantees, producing visibility and knowledge products, and contributing to monitoring, evaluation, and learning. The SYP Regional Coordinator serves as the key focal point linking SYP with the SUMERNET Secretariat, SSC, advisors, partners, and regional initiatives to enhance the role of emerging researchers and practitioners in shaping sustainable development outcomes in the Mekong Region.

B. GENERAL TASKS:

- Support the strategic strengthening and institutionalization of the SUMERNET Young Professionals Network (SYP) under the SUMERNET umbrella.
- Facilitate meaningful engagement of young professionals, granted projects, other partners across SUMERNET and other existing initiatives associated with SUMERNET, and partner institutions in the Mekong Region.
- Coordinate regional knowledge-sharing, networking, capacity-building, and policy-engagement activities that enhance young professionals and granted projects' contributions to sustainable development.
- Serve as a focal point among partners, including SYP network members and granted project teams, with SUMERNET Secretariat, Steering Committee (including young professional representatives), advisors and partner organizations.

¹ SUMERNET Young Professional Network was rebranded in 2022 from the original name of SUMERNET Youth Network established in 2021.

- Ensure effective communication, visibility, and outreach of SUMERNET, including SYP activities across the Mekong countries.
- Support gender equality, disability, and social inclusion approach within SYP operations and activities.
- Contribute to monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) of SUMERNET PLUS, especially SYP and granted projects' activities and their outcomes.
- Coordinate with other SUMERNET PLUS components to align programme initiatives with network-wide strategies.

C. SPECIFIC TASKS:

Network Coordination & Engagement:

- Work closely with the Component 4 & Component 5 Coordinators to operationalize the SUMERNET PLUS workplan and ensure alignment with programme objectives.
- Maintain active communication channels (mailing lists, online groups, social media) for SYP members under guidance from the Component 4 Coordinator.
- Maintain and update a database of SYP network members, fellowship alumni, and other early/mid-career researchers in the Mekong region engaged in SUMERNET activities.
- Facilitate cross-country collaboration among SYP members and SYP country coordinators, support the Component 4 Coordinator as needed.
- Facilitate cross-granted project collaborations among the programme secretariat, steering committee and other relevant stakeholders.
- Support the organization of programme meetings, including scheduling, agendas, and notes.

Activity Planning & Delivery

- Assist the Component 4 Coordinator in delivering capacity-building programs focusing on research, communication, leadership, and policy engagement for young professionals and relevant granted projects under SUMERNET PLUS.
- Co-design and implement SUMERNET regional and national activities (workshops, webinars, peer-learning sessions) in coordination with the Component 4 and Component 5 Coordinators.
- Support the planning and implementation of SYP and granted projects contributions to SUMERNET key events.
- Assist the programme in coordinating youth-focused small grants, innovation challenges, or SYP-led initiatives.

Support for Policy and Research Engagement

- Work with the Component 4 and Component 5 Coordinators to facilitate meaningful boundary partners' participation in SUMERNET policy dialogues, consultations, and multi-stakeholder engagements.
- Support SYP members to produce and disseminate policy-relevant research outputs (briefs, blogs, knowledge pieces) aligned with Component 4 priorities.
- Maintain linkages with external partners, universities, and research networks in coordination with the Component 4 Coordinator.

Communications & Outreach

- Implement SYP communication plans as consulted by the Component 4 Coordinator.
- Prepare announcements, highlights, and success stories from SYP activities for dissemination through SUMERNET communication channels.
- Promote visibility of SUMERNET, including SYP initiatives and granted projects achievements in collaboration with the SUMERNET Secretariat and Component 4 and 5 teams.

Administration & MEL

- Assist with logistics, procurement, and administrative arrangements for programme events and activities.
- Support reporting activities relevant to the Component 4 to the Program Steering Committee (PSC) and Sida.
- Maintain records of participation, outputs, and progress related to SYP activities and granted projects for programme reporting.
- Document outcomes and Most Significant Change stories from SYP initiatives and granted projects as part of programme learning processes.

Partnership Building

- Assist the programme secretariat in expanding partnerships with universities, youth networks, training institutions, and development partners.
- Facilitate collaborative initiatives involving granted project teams, SYP members, MTT Fellows, alumni, and other SUMERNET networks under Component 4 & 5 guidance.
- Actively identify and seek other for funding sources and networking opportunities for SYP activities

D. Deliverables and Timeline

No.	Deliverables	Description	Timeline
1.	Develop program SYP annual workplan based on the programme workplan 2026-2029	The SYP regional coordinator to deliver SYP annual workplan based on SUMERNET PLUS programme workplan 2026-2029	March 2026 December 2026 December 2027 December 2028
2.	Support SUMERNET annual regional network meetings, Learning Forum and other key events delivered with strong focus on SYP.	Regional Coordinator will contribute to the design of the programme's key activities, develop and deliver materials for the relevant sessions.	August – November 2027 August – November 2028 January – May 2029
3.	Coordinate Regional SYP networking events	Coordination for Regional SYP networking events provided	August – November 2026 August – November 2027 August – November 2028 January – May 2029

No.	Deliverables	Description	Timeline
4.	Coordinate national networking events	Coordination for national networking events provided	June 2026-May 2029
	SYP Capacity-Building & other Networking Activities	Support to SYP Capacity-Building & other Networking Activities provided	June 2026-May 2029
5.	Provide coordination support to fellowship program and recruitment of SYP national coordinators	Coordination support for Fellowship program and recruitment of SYP national coordinators provided	March 2026-May 2029
6.	Provide coordination support to other program grants when relevant	coordination support to other program grants when relevant provided	February 2026-May 2029
7.	Coordinate SYP engagement at key program activities	Coordination of SYP engagement at key program activities provided	February 2026-May 2029
8.	Contribute to SYP network development and membership expansion	SYP network development and membership expansion contributed	February 2026-May 2029
9.	Provide support to monitoring & evaluation of SYP contributions and achievement under SUMERNET PLUS	Support to monitoring & evaluation of SYP contributions and achievement under SUMERNET PLUS provided	February 2026-May 2029
10.	Provide supports to other Component 4 tasks when relevant	Support to other Component 4 tasks provided	February 2026-May 2029
11.	Lead annual SYP progress reports that will be integrated to SUMERNET Annual Report	Annual SYP progress reports submitted and approved	December 2026 December 2027 December 2028 May 2029
12.	Lead Final SYP report that will be integrated to SUMERNET Completion Report	Final SYP report submitted and approved	May 2029

E. ESTIMATED TIME INPUTS:

The Thematic Advisor will contribute to SUMERNET PLUS programme activities on a part-time basis for a period of 39 months. The level of effort for this advisory depends on actual activities conducted and outputs to be delivered. Estimated time inputs for this contracted period will not exceed 84 working days in total. Following include indicative working days during service period. This could be adjusted based on the need of the programme.

Indicative time allocation (working days)	
February - Dec 2026	24
Jan – December 2027	20
Jan – December 2028	20
Jan – May 2029	20
Total	84

Additional notes:

- **Payments will be made based on actual outputs and actual working days per year**, not exceeding the maximum annual allocation.
- **Continuation each year is subject to annual programme workplan & annual performance assessment** conducted by the SUMERNET Secretariat.
- **The indicative time allocation** is subject for consensus during contracting process and annual performance assessment.

F. PERIOD:

This role is expected to perform tasks within the period of the SUMERNET PLUS Programme, currently from **1 February 2026 to 31 May 2029**.