

Mekong Thought Leadership and Think Tanks Network Program

Open: 6-Month Full-Time Fellowship | Call for Batch 5 Applications

The Mekong Thought Leadership and Think Tanks Network Program (MTT) is seeking entry- or mid-level professionals who is a Mekong citizen (Cambodia, Lao PDR, or Thailand) with research, policy, communication, and/or program management experience in water, energy, and climate, and communications sectors.

This call offers 5 full-time fellowship positions for a duration of 6 months. The host organization is SEI Asia in Bangkok, Thailand. Each fellowship grant is for a maximum of AUD 12,500. The fellowship must be completed by March 2026.

Women, individuals from diverse genders, Indigenous groups, people with diverse ethnicities, and persons with disabilities, from Cambodia, Lao PDR, or Thailand, are especially encouraged to apply.

Launch of the Call: 21 July 2025.

Application deadline: 3 August 2025, 23:59 (Bangkok/Indochina time).

Submissions of applications will only be accepted online via Submittable:

<https://sei.submittable.com/submit/332211/mtt-fellowship-program-call-for-fellows-batch-5>

1 Background

The Mekong Thought Leadership and Think Tanks Network Program (MTT), supported by Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), aims to work with national and regional Knowledge-based Policy Influence Organizations (KBPIOs)¹ in the Mekong Region to enhance their capacities to effectively engage stakeholders involved in policy processes. In particular, the program will work with KBPIOs to support strengthening policy and practice concerning equitable water security, energy security, as well as climate change mitigation and adaptation. This will be combined with communications based on high-quality research, practical advice generated by the program, and cross-learning among relevant regional organizations.

The program views that investing in diverse entry- or mid-level professionals of all genders working in research and policy engagement is essential to enhance their capacity to produce and promote practical and sustainable solutions. The program will spearhead capacity building through fellowships and trainings.

For more information about the MTT Program, please visit:

<https://www.sumernet.org/featuredproject/mekong-thought-leadership-and-think-tanks-network>

¹ Wellstead, A.M. and Howlett, M. 2022. (Re)Thinking think tanks in the age of policy labs: The rise of knowledge-based policy influence organisations. Aust. J. Publ. Admin. 81: 224-232.

2 Objectives

There are three main objectives for the fellowship program.

1. Strengthen knowledge, capacity, and skills of diverse Mekong entry- or mid-level professionals of all genders in policy research, engagement, and communication, as well as effectively integrate Gender Equality, Disability, and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) within each of these.
2. Support the program's implementation in enhancing effectiveness and inclusiveness of policy engagement at the intersections of water security, energy security, and climate change mitigation and adaptation, as well as in the crosscutting dimension of Gender Equality, Disability, and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) across these domains.
3. Provide opportunities for diverse entry- or mid-level professionals of all genders to increase their networking with other professionals across sectors, especially water, energy, climate change, as well as Gender Equality, Disability, and Social Inclusion (GEDSI), across the Mekong Region.

3 Fellow Criteria

This call seeks to award 5 entry- or mid-level professionals in the Mekong Region.

- Citizens of Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Thailand are strongly encouraged to apply.
- Individuals from diverse genders, Indigenous groups, people with diverse ethnicities, and persons with disabilities are especially encouraged to apply.

Note: The MTT Secretariat reserves the right to maintain a balanced portfolio for its fellowship grants, which may involve considering the countries of origin and gender diversity of grant beneficiaries.

4 Fellow Qualifications

4.1 Required

1. Entry- or mid-level professionals of all ages and genders.
2. Citizen of Cambodia, Lao PDR, or Thailand.
3. Education qualification as appropriate for the role, but generally considered to be:
 - a. Master's degree with at least two years experience; or
 - b. Bachelor's degree with at least five years experience.
4. Available to commit to a 6-month full-time fellowship based in SEI Asia's office in Bangkok.

4.2 Preferable

1. Experience in working in at least one of the thematic areas of the following:
 - a. Water security
 - b. Energy security
 - c. Climate change mitigation or adaptation
 - d. Gender Equality, Disability, and Social Inclusion (GEDSI)
 - e. Water, energy, and climate nexus
 - f. Communications

2. Consider being physically based with the host institution for at least half of the fellowship period, whereby stays/visits should add up to half of the fellowship period. For prospective fellows who are not able to physically relocate to the host institution, other arrangements can be negotiated upon request and subject to approval by the Program Secretariat (SEI Asia).
3. The fellow must be hosted by someone other than their existing employer.

5 Tasks

5.1 General Tasks

1. Attend meetings and relevant events organized by the program.
2. Engage with partners and other fellows in the program.
3. Report on the progress of the fellowship.
4. Actively engage with SUMERNET Young Professionals (SYP), a sub-network under the Sustainable Mekong Research Network (SUMERNET), working to inform and engage young professionals who are passionate about a just and sustainable Mekong future.
5. Engage in outreach activities of the program.
6. Engage in activities depending on available time and common interest of the fellow, mentor, and host institution.

5.2 Specific Tasks

The specific tasks of the fellowship will be agreed upon between the fellow, their respective mentor, and the host institution. It will include, but not be limited to, research, communications, and policy engagement.

6 Duration

The duration of this fellowship is 6 months full-time. Changes to the fellowship duration will be based on evaluating the fellow's work and with the agreement of all parties concerned: fellow, mentor, and host institution.

7 Fellow Positions

This call offers 5 fellowship positions hosted at SEI Asia in Bangkok, Thailand. The host institution will provide a mentor, who will guide and engage directly with the fellow and provide supporting links to the wider Program activities and opportunities. Applicants can choose the component or theme that align best with their interests from the options listed below.

7.1 Position 1: MTT Component 2 (Research)

The MTT Component 2 (Research) team is seeking a fellow to support a range of research and coordination activities aimed at deepening understanding of the interconnections between water, energy, and climate in the Mekong Region. These include collating scientific papers and reports, and conducting reviews to summarize knowledge and good co-production practices from MTT granted projects. The fellow may also be responsible for interviewing key experts, coordinating with other

program components, and preparing knowledge products such as reports or synthesis to disseminate findings. Learning opportunities include working with international and interdisciplinary teams; approach and methods to synthesize key findings/information from different research projects on Water-Energy-Climate (WEC) nexus; engagement with policymakers and local community; and communication and writing skills.

7.2 *Position 2: MTT Component 3 (Policy Engagement)*

The MTT Component 3 (Policy Engagement) team is seeking a fellow to undertake an assignment to synthesize policy influence strategies in water, energy, and climate (WEC) research sectors across Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand, and Vietnam. As MTT supports locally led, evidence-informed policy engagement in the Mekong Region, this synthesis aims to understand better how research institutions and think tanks have influenced and informed evidence-based policymaking in their contexts — what worked, where, and why. The fellow will undertake a desk-based review of literature and grey materials, map influence pathways and key actors, and document up to 6-8 illustrative cases from MTT grantees and partners. Key informant interviews and focus group discussions with researchers, policymakers, and civil society actors will be the key methodology to be used, in addition to reviewing existing reports/policy briefs and any other available grey literature. The fellow will analyse enabling and constraining factors influencing policy engagement efforts and generate recommendations to inform future strategic engagements on policy influencing that SEI may undertake. Deliverables include a short inception report, stakeholder map, case summaries, a synthesis report, and a presentation of findings at an MTT learning event. The study will apply a qualitative methodology, drawing on frameworks like Outcome Mapping, and involve iterative validation with MTT partners. Ideal candidates will have experience in research-to-policy engagement in Southeast Asia, strong qualitative research skills, and familiarity with WEC policy processes in the Mekong.

7.3 *Position 3: MTT Component 5 (Program Management and MEL)*

The MTT Component 5 (Program Management and MEL) team is seeking a fellow to support program implementation, data management, and strategic learning within a dynamic regional initiative focused on sustainable development in the Mekong Region. The fellow is expected to actively participate in program activities, including attending events, engaging with partners, including contributing to outreach efforts through the MTT Fellowship Program and the SUMERNET Young Professionals (SYP) network. A core part of the role involves supporting Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) tasks such as collecting and organizing data from program components and events, maintaining and analyzing MEL databases, and contributing to the preparation of progress reports and knowledge products. The fellow will also assist in documenting program outcomes, including drafting Most Significant Change (MSC) stories and supporting final reporting processes. In addition to MEL responsibilities, the fellow will help coordinate operational aspects of the program, such as organizing events, supporting financial and administrative processes, and contributing to internal coordination among program components.

7.4 *Position 4: MTT Communications*

The MTT Communications team is seeking a fellow to support the implementation of the MTT communications strategy, with the goal of enhancing the program's visibility among researchers, donors,

and think tanks across the Mekong Region. This includes providing communications support to MTT researchers and fellows, in close coordination with the SEI Asia/MTT communications team. The fellow is also expected to build their own knowledge of Mekong environmental issues and regional networks through active engagement and networking. Additionally, they will have the opportunity to strengthen their communications skills in specific areas identified in collaboration with the lead communications staff. Through mentorship and supervision, the fellow will learn about key themes and topics relevant to the MTT program and the host organization. They may also take on other tasks that contribute to their professional development and capacity building.

7.5 Position 5: MTT Gender Equality, Disability, and Social Inclusion (GEDSI)

The MTT Gender Equality, Disability, and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) team is seeking a fellow to support research, policy engagement, and GEDSI integration. Over the course of this fellowship, the fellow will work closely with the MTT GEDSI team and other program components to conduct literature reviews, carry out interviews, collect and analyze data, and co-develop training materials under MTT program and possible other relevant project(s). They will contribute to writing reports and producing policy research or communication outputs related to the fellowship's objectives. The fellow will also work closely with other colleagues in SEI and partners of MTT program, while supporting collaborative efforts across the program. Key activities include conducting research on GEDSI integration in policies and plans, producing knowledge products such as briefs or infographics, and supporting the GEDSI team's meetings and deliverables. The fellow will also engage in program-wide activities such as regional fora, trainings, and networking events.

8 Benefits and Allowance

8.1 Highlighted Benefits

1. Unique opportunity to be mentored by senior experts in various fields of research, policy, and practice relating to issues of water, energy, and climate, with a Gender Equality, Disability, and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) lens.
2. Be part of an interdisciplinary and international program that includes partners in Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand, Vietnam, Australia, and beyond.
3. Have access to capacity development activities within the program and those organized by partner organizations.
4. The opportunity to participate in program regional forums or other regional activities.
5. Receive an official certificate for successful completion of the fellowship.

8.2 Allowance Summary

A 6-month full-time fellowship grant is for a maximum of **AUD 12,500**. The grant covers the following expenditures.

1. One return flight, work permit, and visa for the fellow to be physically placed in the host organization.
2. Travel support for the fellow to join regional fora and other activities.

3. Health and travel insurance.
4. Monthly allowance for the fellow.
5. Accommodation support.
6. Overhead to the host organization.
7. Honorarium for the mentor of the fellow.

Detailed breakdown of the grant will be finalized between the fellow and host organization, according to the Fellowship Grant Guideline, before the start of the fellowship period. Arrangements are subject to approval by the Program Secretariat (SEI Asia).

9 Mandatory Documents for Submission of Application

One recent CV/resumé. Within the CV/resumé, it is recommended to include a one paragraph bio/summary.

10 Important Dates

Step	Date
Application submission deadline	3 August 2025
Interview of applicants	6-20 August 2025
Announcement of results	1-5 September 2025

Note: Dates may be subject to change.

Subject to restrictions related to the application process for visa and work permit and other considerations, fellows will start their activities with the host organization as soon as possible, ideally by **October 2025**.

The fellow may initially undertake activities online or remotely if necessary. The fellowship starting date will be determined considering the conditions listed above and will last for a period of 6 months from the starting date. The fellowship must be completed by March 2026.

11 Contact

Please contact MTT Program Coordinator, Mr. Boripat Lebel, for inquiries. Email: boripat@sea-user.org