



**Terms of Reference (TOR) for
SUMERNET Fellowship under Component 1: Engendering solutions
SUMERNET PLUS Programme**

(Version: 6 March 2026)

A. BACKGROUND:

In this phase **SUMERNET PLUS** (July 2025 to December 2027), 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 Fellow under Component 1: Engendering solutions:

The Fellow will support the identification, design, and implementation of innovative, evidence-based solutions that address priority challenges identified by boundary partners, contributing to just and sustainable transitions and enhanced climate resilience in the Mekong Region. The role will also support the effective management and delivery of competitive grant mechanisms under the programme.

B. GENERAL TASKS:

The Fellow is expected to:

1. Support the **design and implementation of innovation and research grants** under Component 1
2. Contribute to identifying **priority thematic areas and solution opportunities** aligned with programme objectives and partner needs
3. Assist in ensuring **transparent, competitive, and high-quality grant processes**, including calls, review, and selection
4. Support **grantee engagement, coordination, and technical backstopping** to ensure timely and quality delivery of outputs
5. Facilitate **linkages between research, innovation, and policy engagement**, promoting uptake of solutions
6. Contribute to integration of **cross-cutting themes** (e.g., GEDSI, HRBA, conflict sensitivity, ethics) in grant design and implementation
7. Support **monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL)** related to funded projects and innovation processes
8. Ensure alignment with **programme compliance, accountability, and donor requirements**
9. Coordinate with other SUMERNET PLUS components to align programme initiatives with network-wide strategies.

C. SPECIFIC TASKS:

Grant Design and Call Development

- Support development of **concept notes, call for proposals, and application guidelines**
- Assist in defining **selection criteria, evaluation frameworks, and review processes**
- Contribute to outreach and communication to ensure **diverse and inclusive participation**

Proposal Review and Selection

- Support coordination of **technical review processes**, including reviewer engagement and scoring consolidation
- Assist in organising **selection meetings and documentation of decisions**
- Ensure **transparency, fairness, and documentation** of the selection process

Grant Management and Implementation Support

- Support onboarding of grantees, including **orientation sessions and clarification of requirements**
- Assist in monitoring **progress, deliverables, and financial utilisation** of grants
- Provide coordination and basic technical support to ensure **quality and timely implementation**
- Liaise with grantees to address challenges and support **adaptive management**

Knowledge and Solution Uptake

- Support documentation of **innovative solutions, approaches, and early outcomes**
- Facilitate connections between grantees and **policy actors, networks, and platforms**
- Contribute to development of **knowledge products** (e.g., briefs, summaries, solution showcases)

Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL)

- Support tracking of **grant outputs, outcomes, and contributions to programme objectives**
- Assist in compiling **grantee reports, synthesis findings, and learning reflections**
- Contribute to identifying **lessons learned and scaling opportunities**

Stakeholder Engagement and Coordination

- Coordinate with internal teams, partners, and advisors to ensure **coherence across programme components**
- Support organisation of **events, dialogues, or showcases** related to funded solutions
- Maintain communication with stakeholders to strengthen **collaboration and visibility**

D. DELIVERABLES AND TIMELINE

No.	Deliverables	Description	Timeline
1.	Inception Workplan and Learning Plan	Detailed workplan outlining support to grant mechanisms, priority themes, and coordination approach with Component 1 team.	Within Month 1 (May 2026)
2.	Call for Proposals Package	Support development of call for proposals , including guidelines, evaluation criteria, and communication materials.	By Month 2–3 (May–June 2026)
3.	Proposal Review and Selection Support	Support coordination and documentation of proposal review process, including reviewer inputs and selection outcomes.	By Month 2–9 (May–December 2026)

No.	Deliverables	Description	Timeline
4.	Grantee Onboarding and Orientation Materials	Support preparation and delivery of onboarding sessions and materials for selected grantees.	By Month 3–9 (June–December 2026)
5.	Grant Monitoring and Progress Tracking	Support tracking and reporting of grantee progress, deliverables, and challenges.	Ongoing (September 2026 – March 2027)
6.	Knowledge Products on Solutions	Develop or co-develop at least 1–2 knowledge products (e.g., solution briefs, innovation summaries, case highlights).	Draft by Month 9 (December 2026); Final by Month 11 (February 2027)
7.	Learning and Synthesis Notes	Compile lessons learned from grant implementation, including insights on granting implementation and progresses/achievements	By Month 10–11 (January–February 2027)
8.	Final Report and Outputs Compilation	Comprehensive report summarising grant processes, outputs, key achievements, lessons learned, and recommendations.	By End of Fellowship (March 2027)
9.	Support SUMERNET meetings, Learning Forum and other key events.	Support to SUMERNET annual regional network meetings, Learning Forum and other key events provided	By Month 2-11 (May 2025-February 2027)
10.	Coordinate Regional SYP networking events	Coordination for Regional SYP networking events provided	By Month 2-11 (May 2025-February 2027)
11.	SYP Capacity-Building & other Networking Activities	Support to SYP Capacity-Building & other Networking Activities provided	By Month 2-11 (May 2025-February 2027)
12.	Provide coordination support to other program grants when relevant	coordination support to other program grants when relevant provided	By Month 2-11 (May 2025-February 2027)
13.	Coordinate SYP engagement at key program activities	Coordination of SYP engagement at key program activities provided	By Month 2-11 (May 2025-February 2027)

No.	Deliverables	Description	Timeline
14.	Contribute to SYP network development and membership expansion	SYP network development and membership expansion contributed	By Month 2-11 (May 2025-February 2027)

E. PERIOD:

This role is expected to perform tasks within the period currently from **1 April 2026 to 31 March 2028**.