



Concept Notes

2023 Mekong Research Symposium: Data into Action for a Resilient Mekong

Chiang Rai, Thailand
March 14-16, 2023

Synopsis

THE PEOPLE LIVING IN THE MEKONG RIVER BASIN are facing unprecedented challenges, including rapid population growth and infrastructure development, changes in river flow and land use conversion, increased frequency and intensity of floods and droughts, all resulting in accelerated changes to the basin's physical and ecological processes. However, the people living in the Mekong River Basin can also benefit from unprecedented opportunities to access, interpret, and apply data to prioritize climate change adaptation and resilience in sustainable natural resources management. Building from recent regional, technical, and political dialogues, the 2023 Mekong Research Symposium will explore how data can be put to action for Mekong-driven solutions, including nature-based, locally-led solutions and other climate-sensitive approaches that will provide long-term, equitable benefits across the Mekong sub-region.

The [Sustainable Infrastructure Partnership](#) (SIP), established in 2016 by the [Mekong-U.S. Partnership](#) (MUSP) [Friends of the Mekong](#) (FOM) is a multi-partner platform for regional dialogue, capacity building, knowledge sharing, and training. The goal of SIP is to strengthen the ability of Mekong stakeholders to better intersectional analysis, understand and manage shared natural resources, improve joint planning and more inclusive coordination, and deploy new technologies, approaches and methodologies to advance sustainable development planning and natural resources conservation and management.

Symposium Arrangements

The 2023 Mekong Research Symposium will take place on **March 14-16, 2023**, in **Chiang Rai, Thailand at Le Meridien Hotel**. Taking an inclusive approach, Mekong Implementers are invited to co-design sessions, leveraging both regional and international expertise while balancing gender, stakeholders' group, age ranges, ethnic background, and countries equality. The symposium's cross-cutting topics will expand shared knowledge, build the community of collaboration, and prioritize coordinated action on certain themes. Organization of the symposium will advance how data is communicated and used at all levels of decision making – from the household and community level, through local and national planning, and regional consensus building. Symposium activities will include breakout activities, an interactive poster session, partnership-building opportunities, and optional field trips. Participants will identify gaps, discuss solutions, make policy recommendations, and explore practical approaches and emerging technologies such as data for forecasting, impact assessment, and shared vision planning. A report of the Mekong Research Symposium, prepared by SIP, will be provided to the MUSP FOM group for the Senior Officials Meeting in April/May 2023.



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Mekong Research Symposium participants are also invited to join the *Mekong Implementing Partners Workshop*, on **March 16, 2023**, in **Chiang Rai, Thailand at Le Meridien Hotel**. The goal of the workshop is to incorporate lessons learned from the Mekong Research symposium into donor-funded programs, deconflict and coordinate activities, share best practices, and to leverage collective efforts to achieve a more resilient Mekong sub-region.

Inclusive Participation

Anticipated participants include natural resource managers, academics, students, as well as early career and senior professionals in the Mekong Region; including, private sector, CSOs, INGOs, and applied scientists (including global researchers engaged in the Mekong). The Symposium is expected to convene approximately 150 participants, and will be conducted in English, with simultaneous interpretation in Burmese, Khmer, Mandarin Chinese, Thai, Lao, and Vietnamese available. The event is mixed format and expected to be highly participatory. Safety and disability-friendly environment will be ensured for participants.

Important Details

Workshop sponsors: Sustainable Infrastructure Partnership (implemented by Pact Thailand)

Mekong Research Symposium Dates: **March 14 - 16, 2023 (Tuesday-Thursday)**

Location: **Le Meridien Chiang Rai, Chiang Rai, Thailand**

Notional Agenda

Day 1: Data availability and actionable information

Session 1: Data for Decision Making

Session 2: Innovation in Data and Decision Support in Frontlines

Session 3: Breaking Boundaries for Transboundary Cooperation

Day 2: Operationalizing information

Session 4: Nature Based Solutions

Session 5: Inclusive Data Principles and Approaches

Optional Field Trips

Day 3: Informed planning and proactive decision support

Session 6: Proposed Recommendation from Youth

Session 7: Capturing Recommendations from

Back-to-back events:

NexGen Professional Development Day: March 13, 2023 (Monday)

Mekong Implementing Partners Workshop: March 16, 2023 (Thursday afternoon)

Questions regarding this symposium may be addressed to:

Organizing Lead: Pinida Leelapanang Kamphaengthong (plkamphaengthong@pactworld.org).

Please consider contributing to, and participating in, this important community activity!