



Media release

Regional Dialogue Event in Chiang Mai, Thailand: Inclusive and equitable climate resilience – Voices from the Mekong Region

There is an urgent need to reframe climate crisis faced by local communities, particularly marginalised and disadvantaged groups. Climatic drivers of change cannot be in isolation from the broader socio-environmental change. We need to rethink climate change not as an external threat to natural and human systems but as embedded in social structural and political infrastructures for better and more effective responses to climate impacts. To foster just, inclusive, and equitable responses to climate change, there is a pressing need to seek understandings of climate crisis as embedded within lived experiences, cultural memories, and the arts.

Co-hosted by the Mekong Climate Resilience Partnership (MCRP), climate dialogues involving representation and recognition of knowledges and experiences of different social groups and as interpreted through arts and photography will take place in Chiang Mai. A three-day event, from 21 to 23 August 2023, to be held in Chiang Mai, will bring together a regional consortium and diverse participants, including civil society, academics, practitioners, decision-makers, and the business and private sector. During the event, participants will engage in discussions to generate new knowledge and exchange of ideas across the Mekong countries, with a goal to advocate for more just, inclusive, and equitable climate resilience framework and actionable plans.

The MCRP seeks climate resilience solutions that are grounded in evidence-based knowledge and beyond technical fixes. Drawing on our analysis through multi-stakeholder engagement and site visits, local communities in Cambodia, Thailand and Vietnam are faced with complex issues of climate crisis, environmental degradation, losses of biodiversity and ecosystems, and unjust development policy and implementation. New forms of knowledge production and knowledges that are context-driven and problem-focused are urgently needed to foster socially just and sustainable pathways. Rethinking climate problems and solutions needs the engagement of diverse social groups and multiple disciplines to capture socio-environmental dynamics and uncertainties.

Different ways of knowing and understanding climate change through imaginations, experiences and social relations across scales are crucial. Recognising the importance of public communication and aspiration for creative and innovative climate approaches, the MCRP is co-hosting a Climate Change Arts Exhibition from the 21st of August to the 3rd of September. The exhibition will display visual arts in different forms and formats, produced by five local artists through their interpretation and observation of climate change.

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The upcoming dialogue and communication event, supported by the Stockholm Environment Institute's Strategic Collaborative Fund, will serve as a regional learning and engagement platform that fosters voices of vulnerable and marginalised community groups to enhance the knowledge-policy-practice interface. With an aim for long-term partnership, the dialogue event will facilitate knowledge co-production, cross-learning, and co-design of socially just climate solutions and ways forward.

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Mekong Climate Resilience Partnership (MCRP) is funded by SEI Strategic Collaborative Fund under the theme Partnerships for Climate Actions (Full project title: *Strengthening regional knowledge-policy-practice networks for inclusive and equitable climate resilience actions in the lower Mekong region*)

The MCRP is a regional consortium of academics and NGOs from Cambodia, Thailand, and Vietnam

- Thailand Environment Institute Foundation (TEI)
- Thai Climate Justice for All (TCJA)
- Chiang Mai University (CMU) – Department of Geography, Faculty of Social Sciences
- Institute for Policy and Management (IPAM), VNU Hanoi University Of Social Sciences and Humanities
- Royal University of Phnom Penh (RUPP) – Department of Sustainable Urban and Development, Faculty of Development Studies

The objective is to foster and strengthen regional collaborative partnerships to play an active role in driving inclusive and equitable climate resilience actions. The consortium will engage with marginalised and vulnerable community groups, grassroots organisations, multi-disciplinary academics, the business/private sector, and policy/decision makers in structured and facilitated dialogues.

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