

The background of the slide is a photograph of a riverbank. On the left, there is a small, rustic hut with a corrugated metal roof, partially obscured by lush green vegetation including banana trees. The hut is situated on a slight embankment. To the right of the hut, a wooden structure, possibly a pier or part of a bridge, extends into the water. The river is calm with gentle ripples on its surface. In the far distance, a small town or village is visible on the opposite bank under a clear sky.

Integrating Gender equality, disability and social inclusion (GEDSI) in research and policy: *sharing experiences from SUMERNET and MTT Programs in the Mekong Region*

Mekong Forum 31 July 2024

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Mekong Region is changing



PROBLEMS



MEKONG COMMUNITIES



VISION



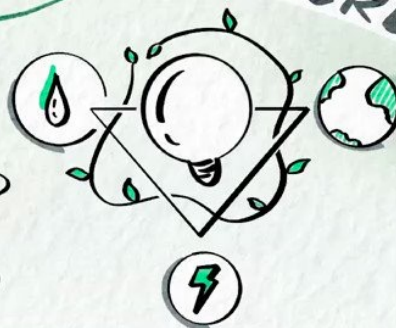
HOW DO WE GET THERE?



RESEARCH
PRACTICAL & ROBUST
POLICY-ORIENTED
SOLUTIONS ADDRESSING
PRIORITY ISSUES



PARTNERSHIPS
NETWORKS & ALLIANCES
AMONG POLICYMAKERS,
RESEARCHERS,
PRACTITIONERS &
COMMUNITIES



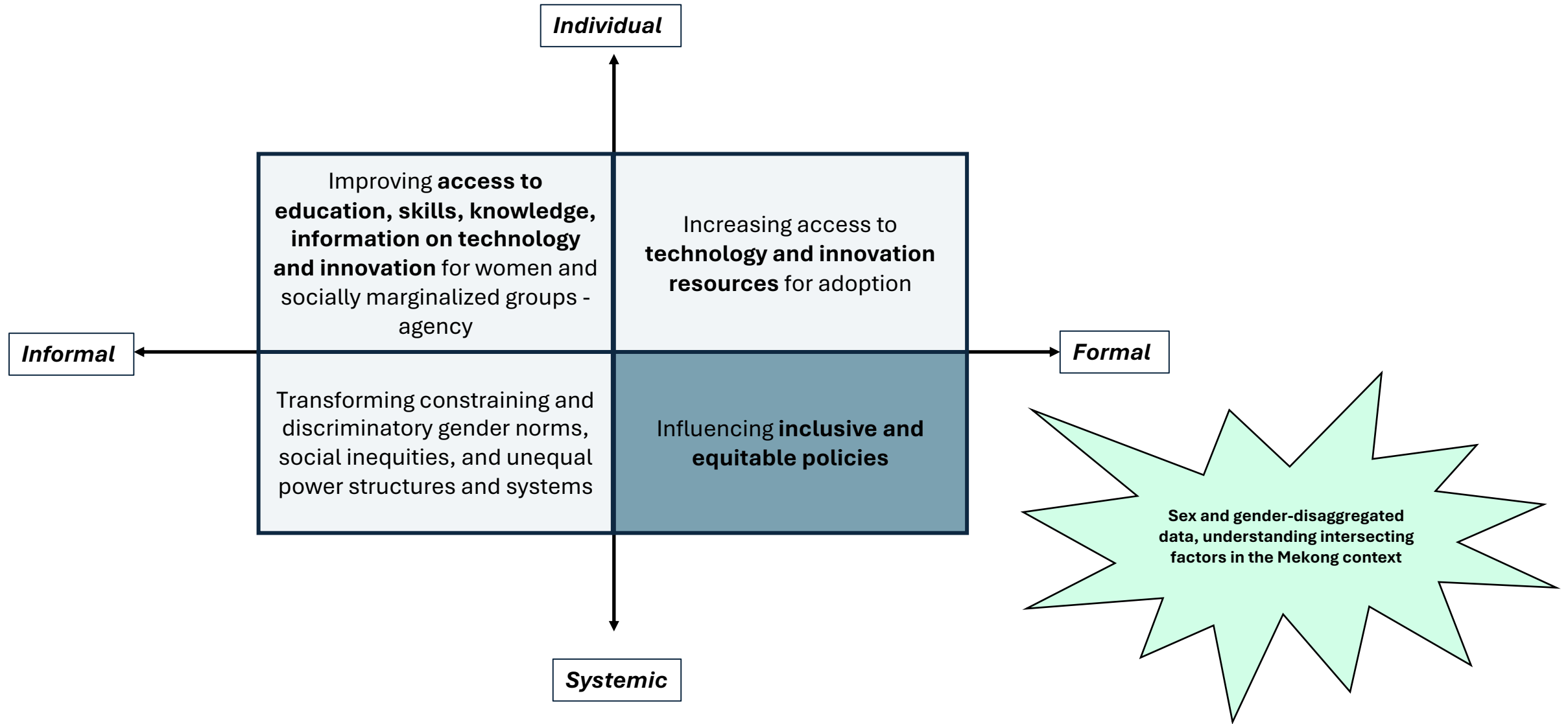
KNOWLEDGE
INCLUSIVE KNOWLEDGE
CO-PRODUCTION &
INTEGRATING PRACTICAL
SOLUTIONS ACROSS
WATER-ENERGY-CLIMATE
NEXUS



**CAPACITY
DEVELOPMENT**
TRAINING &
NETWORKING FOR
YOUNG PROFESSIONALS
& RESEARCHERS

A MORE PROSPEROUS, EQUITABLE, &
SUSTAINABLE MEKONG REGION
FOR ALL

With these changes, where do our solutions lie?



What does equitable and socially inclusive mean?

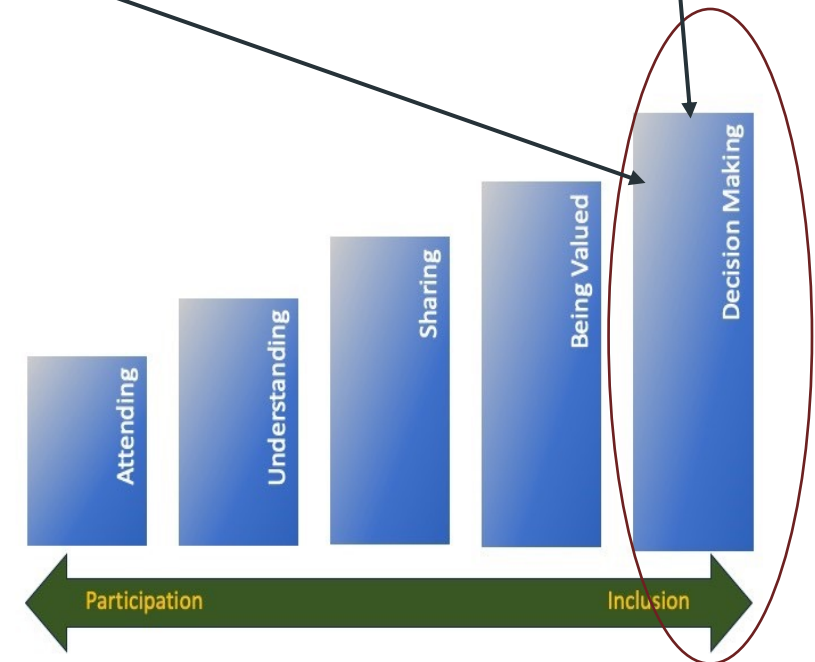


Source ASEAN (2022) <https://asean.org/book/training-module-on-gender-equality-and-social-inclusion-responsive-anticipatory-action/>

To do so, **policies** need to be grounded in an understanding of **how intersecting forms of discrimination and inequality**, based on gender, class, ethnicity, migration status, age, disability, and other factors, **create differentiated vulnerabilities and limit people's ability to influence and equally benefit** from technologies and innovations.

Enablers:

- Integrated institutional frameworks where GESI is integrated across institutions
- Data interoperability
- Gender-responsive budgeting to operationalize policies and plans
- Civic space for advocacy





Getting there...
**1. Sustainable Mekong Research
Network (SUMERNET)**
<https://www.sumernet.org>



Sustainable Mekong Research Network (SUMERNET)



Sweden
Sverige

A **regional research network** established in **2005** for sustainable development with funding support from the Swedish Government. The Secretariat is hosted by SEI.

Diverse memberships from wide-range of sectors relevant to environmental sustainability.

Activities: Research, policy engagement, promotion of cutting-edge research, **innovation**, and capacity development. Integrate **gender equality and social inclusion**, human rights, conflict sensitivity, environmental integrity and poverty reduction

SUMERNET 4 All (2018-2024) focuses on **reducing water insecurities for all**, in particular, the **poor, socially marginalized and vulnerable groups of women and men in the Region**.

SUMERNET expands to include

SUMERNET Network Members: **800 members**

SUMERNET Young Professional Network: 147 members

Mekong Thought Leadership and Think Tanks Network (MTT)

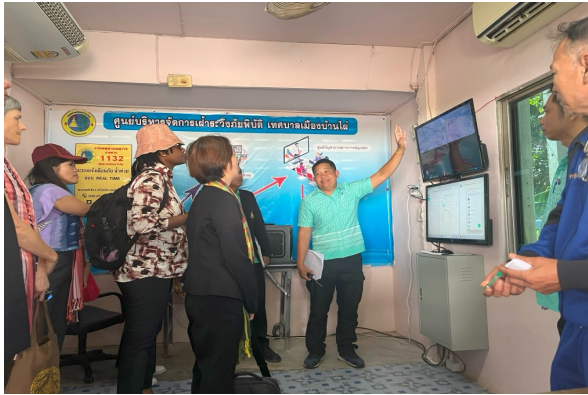
Mission

“To improve the policies and practices in reducing water insecurity by **conducting collaborative research, engaging in the policy process, and promoting scientifically sound research and innovation** while considering gender and social equality, human rights, conflict sensitivity, environmental integrity and poverty reduction in the Mekong Region.”

Impact

“Reduced water insecurities for all, in particular poor, marginalized and socially vulnerable men and women in the Mekong Region”





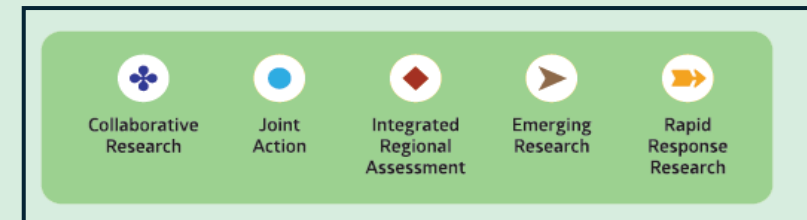
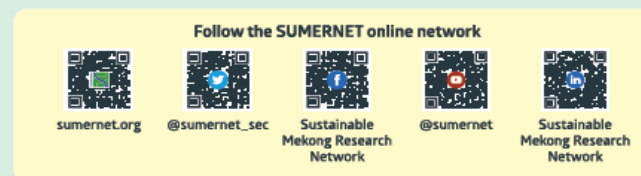
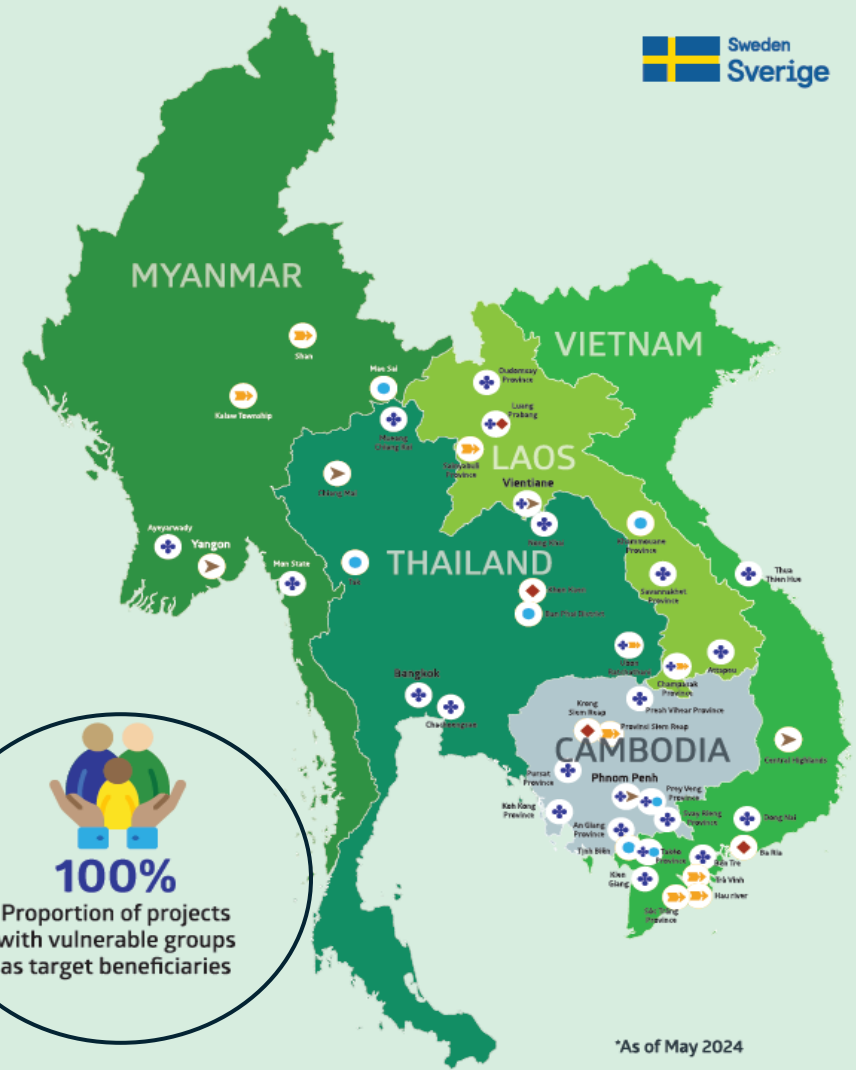
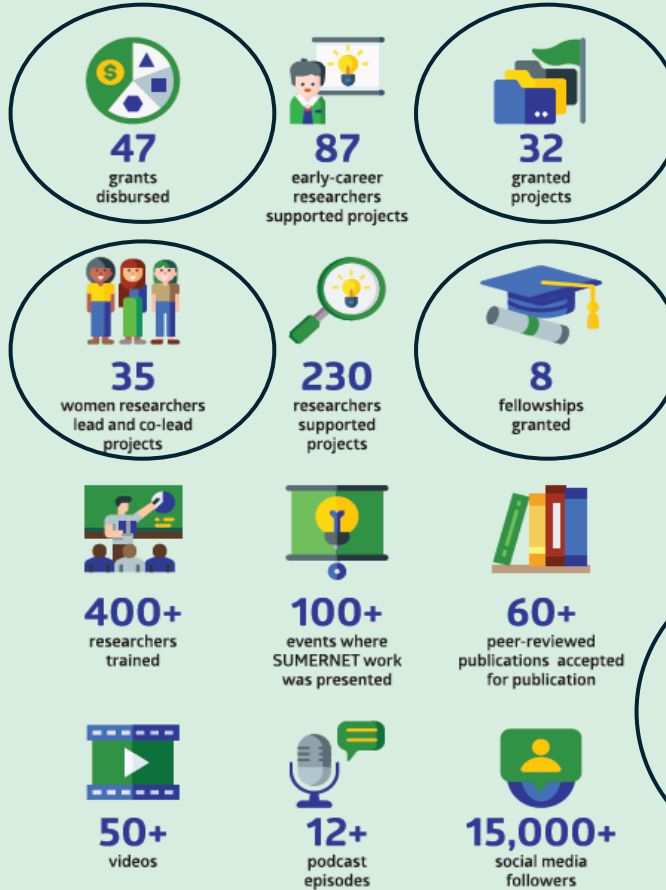
<https://www.sumernet.org/project/participatory-flood-risk-management-a-case-for-policy-implication-from-ban-phai-municipality-thailand>



<https://ait.ac.th/2023/09/regional-collaboration-and-insights-closing-workshop-of-the-gira-project-strengthening-groundwater-governance-in-the-lower-mekong-region/>



SUMERNET in Numbers*





SUMERNET Young Professionals (SYP)



SYP OBJECTIVES:

1. Build a **network of young professionals from the Mekong Region** in the field of environmental science.
2. **Strengthen research skills and capacity** of young professionals in the Mekong Region.
3. Provide a platform for young professionals to **exchange ideas about environmental challenges and solutions**.
4. **Facilitate cooperation** and friendship among young members in the network with other SUMERNET network members, partner organisations and beyond.

186

Number of SYP members

91%

SYP members with age under 35 years old

12

Number of nationalities in SYP



SYP was initially formalised as Youth Network in 2019 and Re-formalized as SUMERNET Young Professional in 2022.

Getting there...

2. Mekong Thought Leadership and Think Tanks Network Program (MTT)



Australian Government

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade



Mekong Thought Leadership and Think Tank Networks Program (MTT) 2022-2025

- **Initiated by a consortium of 25 organizations led by SEI**, with funding support from DFAT's Mekong-Australia Partnership (MAP) Water, Energy and Climate (MAP-WEC)
- **Building on the strength of SUMERNET** with more focus on strengthening **policy engagement & co-production of knowledge** for policy and practice
- **Further build a regional alliance of institutions** for effective policy engagement on water, energy and climate change.



Australian Government

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade



UNIVERSITY OF
CANBERRA



CDRI



TEI

THAILAND
ENVIRONMENT
INSTITUTE



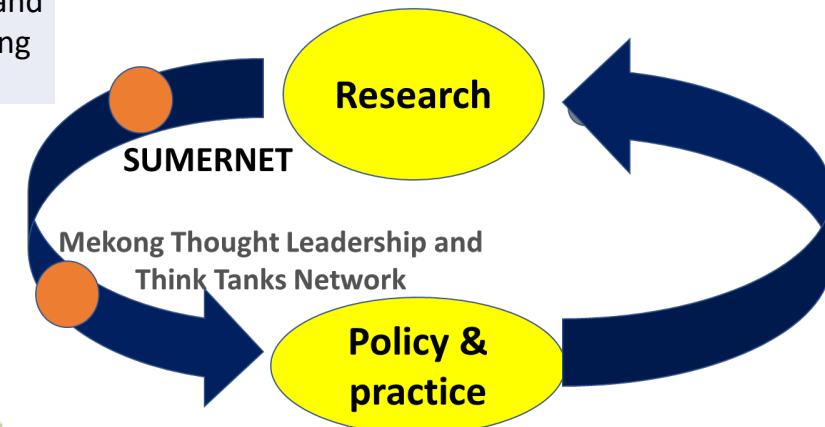
IPAM

IWCAN

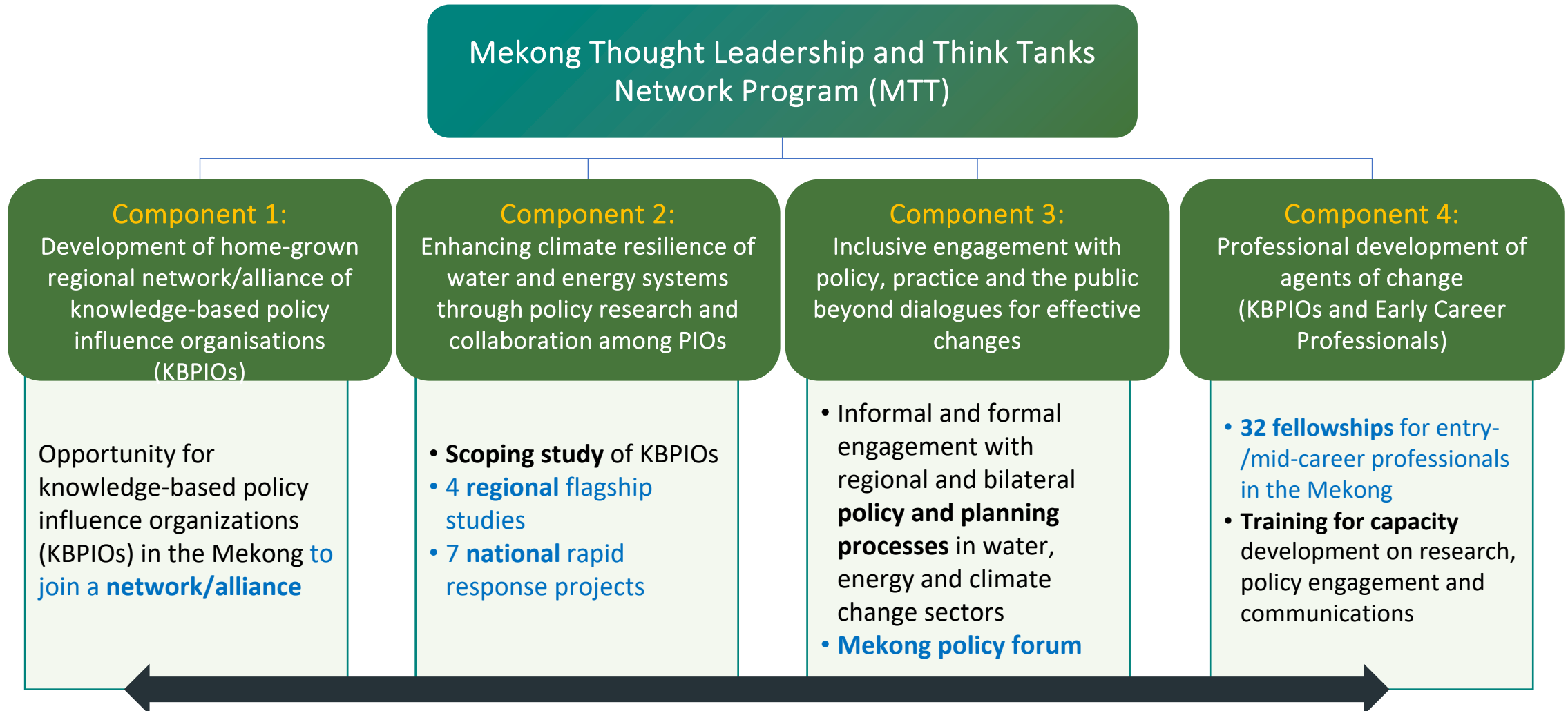
INTERNATIONAL WATER CLIMATE ALLIANCE NETWORK

MTT objectives and long-term goal

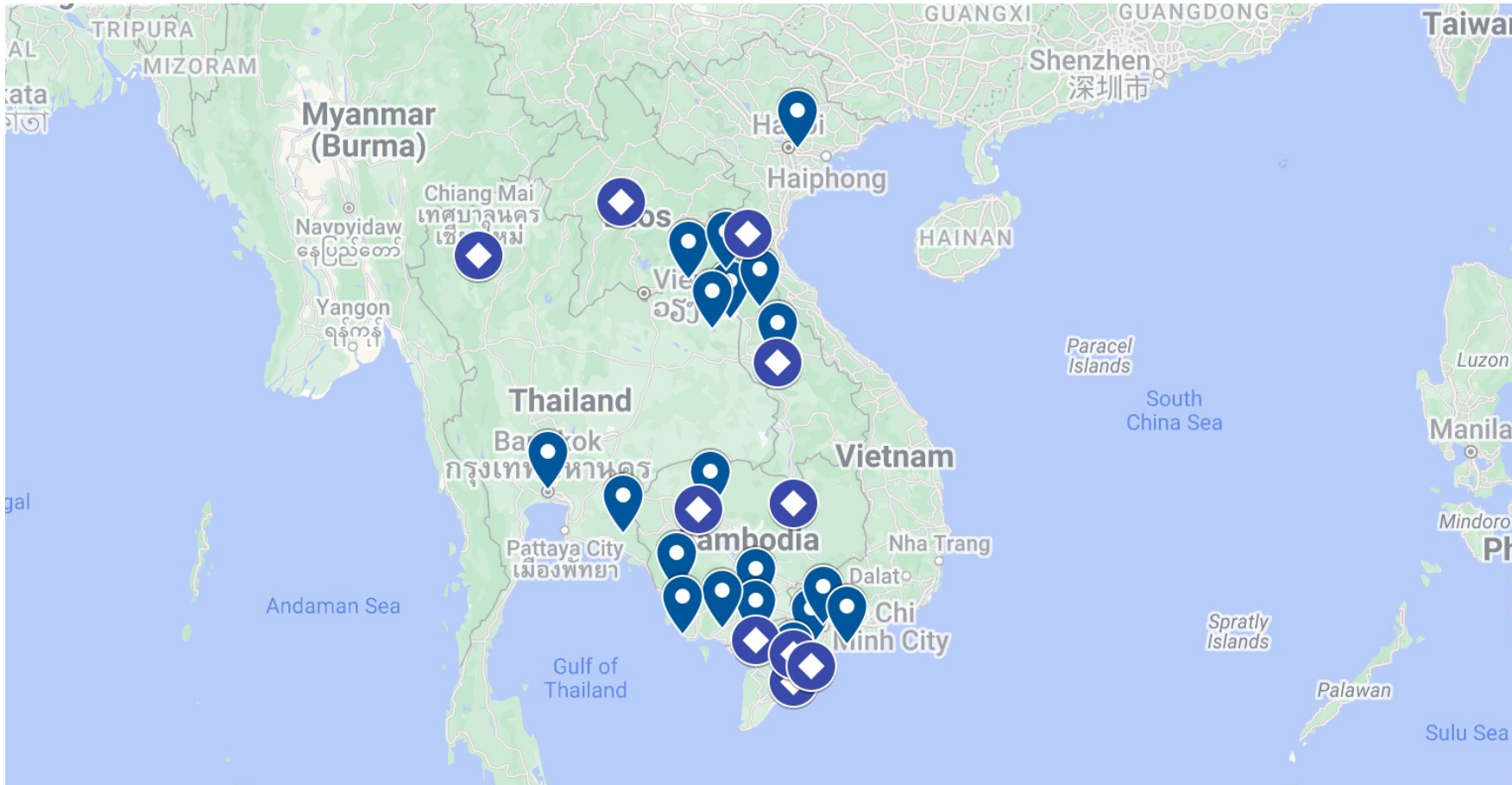
Long-term Goal	Contribute to improved and more equitable water and energy security, adaptation and mitigation to climate change in the Mekong Region for the benefit of all, especially the marginalized, vulnerable and at-risk communities.
End of Program Outcome	Water, energy and climate research and policy interfaces are robust and more inclusive , resulting in more effective and equitable policies , which are cross-sectoral, informed by evidence, and are responding to the needs of vulnerable groups.
Objective	The program intends to strengthen the role and effectiveness of national and regional KBPIOs in engaging with national and regional policy processes on water and energy security and climate change mitigation and adaptation.
Objective	The program intends to strengthen the role and capabilities of national and regional KBPIOs in inclusive knowledge co-production processes by engaging with stakeholders across sectors, locations and countries on water, climate and energy issues and their interlinkages.
Objective	The program intends to enhance the capacity for networking of national and regional KBPIOs and build the capacity of young professionals in delivering research and communicating and engaging with policy processes.



Program Activities



MTT Granted Projects



Gender equality, disability and social inclusion integrated in ALL the projects
- Projects started in 2024

Type of granted projects	
Flagship Study (FS)	4
Rapid Response (RR)	7
Total	11
Country Coverage	
Cambodia	4
Lao PDR	3
Thailand	4
Vietnam	6
Total	17
Project Team's Gender Ratio	
Man	Woman
40	41
49%	51%

THANK YOU!

