



SHARED SOLUTIONS: SAFEGUARDING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE MEKONG REGION

REGIONAL SYMPOSIUM

August 25-27, 2015

Eastin Grande Hotel Sathorn, Surasak Ballroom, 11th Floor
33/1 South Sathorn Road, Yan Nawa, Sathorn, Bangkok

Background

Food.... Water... Energy... Across the Mekong region, demand for these fundamental resources is growing rapidly. Linked to this – as both cause and effect – is the rapid pace of economic integration. These changes represent tremendous opportunities – but also huge challenges. Governments of the lower Mekong countries of Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam are grappling with how best to manage these changes: how to balance continued economic growth with the need for safeguarding the social and environmental systems that provide the foundation for long-term prosperity.

Billions of dollars of increased investments are expected to flow into the region for infrastructure and development over the next decade. These investments are increasingly regional in nature, in terms of origin of investment, location of project, and destination of impacts. This makes implementing effective safeguards policies and systems (such as Environmental Impact Assessment) an urgent priority and one which requires ever greater regional cooperation.

Momentum is building on this issue. Governments, companies and communities from across the region are aligning to prioritize this important work. The issues at hand are challenging and difficult to tackle. But there are examples of successes, “small wins,” that can be shared, discussed, and built from in order to move forward for larger, transformational changes. As this collective effort moves forward, this symposium offers a unique opportunity to provide an overview of the challenges which a range of partners - government, NGO, and private sector - have been tackling together and a stocktaking of approaches toward shared solutions for responsible development.

Objectives

1. **Share** approaches, research, action plans, and case studies around increasing regional cooperation and awareness on issues related to responsible investment and reducing social and environmental impacts of development;
2. **Network** with government, NGO, private sector, and academic experts and practitioners involved in addressing issues related to the social and environmental impacts of large-scale development in the lower Mekong countries and ASEAN more broadly;
3. **Strengthen** existing partnerships and identify potential new opportunities for national and regional collaboration; and
4. **Increase** the understanding of the role of integrated, regional development within the Mekong and the broader ASEAN region.



Outcomes

By the end of the Symposium, the following outcomes will have been achieved:

1. A **common understanding** of current trends and approaches for socially responsible investment and strengthening social and environmental safeguards in the Mekong region.
2. Increased **partnership and regional cooperation** opportunities among participants.
3. **Stronger network** across not only country boundaries but among stakeholder groups.
4. **Ideas for engagement strategies or approaches** based on existing lessons in the region.

Participants

Approximately 150 participants from Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam and China have been invited, representing government, NGOs, international and regional safeguards/EIA practitioners, private sector, academics, donors, and media.

Agenda

The event is intended to be a learning symposium, which will include both plenary presentations and discussions and concurrent thematic sessions. Significant time will be allocated during session periods and over breaks for discussion and dialogue among participants. A third day offers additional space to choose from and participate in mini-seminars, side meetings, networking, and/or short training events.

The agenda intends to address trends and approaches for social and environmental safeguards and responsible investment in the Mekong region, delving into the ASEAN community for a wider perspective on the trajectory of the region, as well as to frame the context of impacts of increased regional investment in large-scale development projects. Cutting across these two dominant themes are questions around how to increase regional cooperation among stakeholders and the efforts to increase access to information and data.



AGENDA

Day 1 – Tuesday, August 25	
8.15 – 8.45	<i>Registration</i>
8.45 – 9.00	<p>Opening Remarks: Dr. Raweewan Bhuridej, Secretary General, Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning, Royal Thai Government Mr. Alfred Nakatsuma, Director, Regional Environment Office, USAID / Regional Development Mission for Asia Ms. Anne-Charlotte Maim, First Secretary, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency - TBC</p>
9.00 – 9.15	<p>Welcome from the Organizers: Ms. Christy Owen, Chief of Party, Mekong Partnership for the Environment</p>
9.15 – 9.45	<p>Keynote Address: Dr. Vinod Thomas, Director General of Independent Evaluation at the Asian Development Bank <i>The Business Case for Social and Environmental Safeguards in Infrastructure Lending</i></p>
9:45 – 10.15	<i>Networking Break</i>
10.15 – 11.45	<p>Plenary Session 1: Strengthening EIA Policy and Practice in the Mekong Region: Implications for investments and sustainable development</p> <p>Speakers/Panelists:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mr. Matthew Baird, Environmental Counsel Asia 2. Mrs. Indhira Euamonlachatt, Environmental Expert, Office of Natural Resource and Environmental Policy and Planning, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, Thailand 3. Mr. Danh Serey, Director, Department of Environmental Impact Assessment, Ministry of Environment, Cambodia 4. Mr. Pham Anh Dung, Deputy Director, Department of Impact Assessment & Project Appraisal, Vietnam Environment Administration, Vietnam 5. Mr. Somvang Buttavong, Director of Environmental Assessment Centre for Energy Projects, Department of Environmental and Social Impact Assessment, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, Lao PDR 6. Mr. Kyaw San Naing, Deputy Director, Environmental Conservation Department, Ministry of Environmental Conservation and Forestry, Myanmar <p>Moderator: Ms. Veronica Pedrosa</p>



11.45 – 13.00	<i>Group Photo Lunch</i>		
	<i>Surasak I Room</i>	<i>Surasak II Room</i>	<i>Surasak III Room</i>
13.00 – 14.15	<p>Concurrent Session 1.1 Social Safeguards Systems: Lessons from Laos and Regional Implications</p> <p>Speakers/Panelists:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Ms. Mayvong Sayatham, Senior Project Coordinator, CGIAR Research Program on Water, Land and Ecosystems Mr. Hongthong Sirivath, National Program Officer, Village Focus International Ms. Damdouane Khouangvichit, Associate Professor, Department of History and Anthropology, Faculty of Social Sciences, National University of Laos <p>Moderator: Dr. Kim Geheb, Regional Coordinator, CGIAR Research Program on Water, Land and Ecosystems</p>	<p>Concurrent Session 2.1 Lessons Learned: EIA policy and implementation in the Mekong region</p> <p>Speakers/Panelists:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Dr. Ikuko Matsumoto, Researcher, Institute for Global Environmental Strategies, Japan Ms. Rosalind Amornpitakpun, Environmentalist, Senior Professional Level, Environmental Impact Evaluation Bureau, Office of Natural Resource and Environmental Policy and Planning, MONRE, Thailand Dr. Kyaw Nyein Aye, Environmental Management Specialist, Eco-Lab, , Advancing Life and Regenerating Motherland (ALARM), Myanmar Mr. Takanobu Shinoda, Deputy Director, Environmental & Social Consideration Review Division, Credit Risk Analysis and Environmental Review Department, JICA <p>Moderator: Dr. Peter King, Head of Asian Environmental Compliance and Enforcement Network Secretariat, IGES</p>	<p>Concurrent Session 3.1 Private Sector Perspectives: Why Effective Safeguards are Good for Business</p> <p>Speakers/Panelists:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Ms. Kate Lazarus, Senior Operations Officer, Environment, Social and Governance Department, International Finance Corporation Mr. Vorapong Vorasuntharsoth, Government Affairs Director - Southeast Asia, Dow Chemical Mr. Chanin Vongkusolkit , Director and Senior Executive Officer, Banpu Plc. <p>Moderator: Mr. Saumil Shah, General Electric</p>
14:15 – 14.45	<i>Networking Break</i>		

14:45 – 16.00	<p>Concurrent Session 1.2 Climate Change, Regional Integration and Safeguards in the Mekong</p> <p>Speakers/Panelists:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dr. Louis Lebel, Chiang Mai University 2. Dr. Chayanis Kritassudtacheewa, Ayerawady Futures Program and SUMERNET 3. Mr. James Tager, Satter Human Rights Fellow at International Commission of Jurists 4. Dr. Pakamas Thinphanga, Thailand Environment Institute and ISET 5. Mr. Ho Long Phi, Director, Center for Water Management & Climate Change 6. Ms. Khon Ja, Coordinator, Kachin Peace Network <p>Moderator: Dr. Eric Kemp-Benedict, SEI</p>	<p>Concurrent Session 2.2 Media Matters: The role of regional journalism</p> <p>Speakers/Panelists:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ms. Paritta Wangkiat, Reporter, Bangkok Post 2. Mr. Khine Lin Kyaw, Business Editor, Myanmar Eleven 3. Mr. May Tithara, National News Editor, The Phnom Penh Post 4. Mr. Jeff Rutherford, Independent Media Trainer and Consultant, Fair Earth Consulting Co. <p>Moderator: Mr. Adam Hunt, Internews</p>	<p>Concurrent Session 3.2 Promoting Quality and “Alternative” Investments</p> <p>Speakers/Panelists:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ms. Seon-mi Choi, UNDP-UNEP Poverty-Environment Initiative 2. Mr. Dan Potash, Chief of Party, Private Financing Advisory Network/Deloitte 3. Mr. Jim Gramberg, CEO, Solar Partners Asia, Cambodia 4. Dr. Akarin Suwannarat, President, Thai Wind Energy Association <p>Moderator: Ms. Christy Owen, Pact</p>
16.00 – 17.15	<p>Plenary Session 2: Refocus on Safeguards: Donor Priorities and Harmonization</p> <p>Speakers/Panelists:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mr. Peter Leonard, World Bank 2. Ms. Cherie Russell, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australia 3. Mr. Alfred Nakatsuma, Director, Regional Environment Office, United States Agency for International Development <p>Moderator: Ms. Veronica Pedrosa</p>		
17:15	Day 1 ends		

Day 2 - Wednesday, August 26			
8.15 – 8.45	<i>Registration</i>		
8.45 – 9.00	Welcome and Overview to Day 2		
9.00 - 10.30	<p>Plenary Session 3: Public Participation: Approaches for Effective Engagement</p> <p>Speakers/Panelists:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Ms. Joan Carling, Secretary-General, Asia Indigenous Peoples’ Pact Mr. Tek Vannara, Executive Director, NGO Forum on Cambodia, Cambodia Mr. Mam Sambath, Development and Partnership in Action, Cambodia Mr. John da Silva, Director of Corporate Engagement, Kenan Institute Asia <p>Moderator: Ms. Veronica Pedrosa</p>		
10.30 – 11.00	<i>Networking Break</i>		
	<i>Surasak I Room</i>	<i>Surasak II Room</i>	<i>Surasak III Room</i>
11.00 – 12.15	<p>Concurrent Session 1.3 AIIB and the Changing Landscape of Multi-lateral Banks</p> <p>Speakers/Panelists:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Dr. Vinod Thomas, Director General of Independent Evaluation at the Asian Development Bank Mr. Rayyan Hassan, Forum Executive Director, NGO Forum on ADB Dr. Yu Xiaogong, Director, Green Watershed <p>Moderator: Ms. Jessica Rosien, Advocacy</p>	<p>Concurrent Session 2.3 Using IFC Performance Standards to help Mekong Financial Institutions to Reduce Impacts and Achieve Sustainable Development</p> <p>Interactive Session Moderated by: Mr. Jim Tolisano, Sustainable Finance Lead, Wildlife Conservation Society</p> <p>With:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Ms. Courtney Lowrance, Environmental and Social Risk Management Director, Citibank Mr. Pran Siamwalla, ESMS Officer, Group Risk Management, Bank of Ayudhya, Thailand 	<p>Concurrent Session 3.3 Chinese Investments in the Mekong: Pathways to Engagement</p> <p>Speakers/Panelists:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Mr. Ren Peng, Program Coordinator, Global Environmental Institute Dr. Dong Zhanfeng, Associate Director, Department of Environmental Policy, Chinese Academy of Environmental Planning Ms. Stephanie Jensen-Cormier,

	Coordinator, Oxfam		China Program Director, International Rivers Moderator: Mr. BJ Schulte, Vermont Law School
12.15 – 13.45	<i>Lunch</i>		
13.45 – 15.00	<p>Concurrent Session 1.4 Open Data: Access to information and data analysis tools</p> <p>Speakers/Panelists:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Ms. Do Hai Linh, Communications Officer, Pan Nature, Vietnam Mr. Yang Naung Oak, Phandeeyar, Myanmar Mr. Klaikong Vaidhyakarn, Deputy Director, Change Fusion, Thailand Mr. Thy Try, Executive Director, Open Development Cambodia <p>Moderator: Ms. Terry Parnell, Open Development Institute, Cambodia</p>	<p>Concurrent Session 2.4 From Sustainability to Stewardship</p> <p>Speakers/Panelists:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Ms. Darain McBain, Group Director for Sustainable Development, Thai Union Frozen Ms. Suphawadee Wilamart, Forestry and Supply Specialist, IKEA Trading (Hongkong) Ltd. Mr. Thibault Ledecq, WWF Greater Mekong Forest Programme Coordinator Michelin - TBC <p>Moderator: Ms. Susan Roxas, WWF Greater Mekong</p>	<p>Concurrent Session 3.4 Including all Voices: Gender and Safeguards</p> <p>Speakers/Panelists:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Ms. Ly Nguyen, Director, Center for Environment and Community Research, Vietnam Ms. Jeannette Gurung, Executive Director, Women Organizing for Change in Agriculture and Natural Resource Management (WOCAN) Ms. Jessica Rosien, Advocacy Coordinator, Oxfam Ms. Titi Soentoro, Policy Advisor, Aksi! <p>Moderator: Dr. Babette Resurrección, Stockholm Environment Institute</p>
15.00 – 15.30	<i>Networking Break</i>		



15.30 – 16.45	<p>Plenary Session 4: ASEAN Open for Sustainable Business?: Integrating Safeguards into the ASEAN Economic Community</p> <p>Speakers/Panelists:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dr. Venkatachalam Anbumozhi, Senior Energy Economist, Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA) 2. Dr. Seree Nonthasoot, ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR), Institute of Research and Development for Public Enterprises 3. Mr. Matthew Baird, Environmental Counsel Asia 4. Ms. Vesna Kolar-Planinsic, Head of Strategic Environmental Assessment Department, Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning, Slovenija <p>Moderator: Ms. Veronica Pedrosa</p>
16:45 – 17.00	Symposium Conclusions
17.00	<i>Event ends</i>



Day 3 – Thursday, August 27 (optional ‘mini-seminars’ and training sessions, networking & side meetings)	
9.00 - 10.30	A1: Seminar on Indigenous Rights Impact Assessment of Large Dams – Dr. Yu Xiaogang, Green Watershed, China
	B1: Reviewing Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Reports training seminar – Mr. Matthew Baird, Environmental Counsel Asia
	C1: Open Development Mekong Tutorial – Ms. Terry Parnell, East-West Management Institute/Open Development Initiative
	D1: EU experiences with regional EIA in the context of economic integration – Ms. Vesna Kolar-Planinsic, Head of SEA Department, Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning, Slovenija
10.30 – 12.00	A2: Seminar on Indigenous Rights Impact Assessment of Large Dams – Dr. Yu Xiaogang, Green Watershed, China
	B2: Reviewing Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Reports training seminar – Mr. Matthew Baird, Environmental Counsel Asia
	C2: Open Development Mekong Tutorial – Ms. Terry Parnell, East-West Management Institute/Open Development Initiative
	D2: EU experiences with regional EIA in the context of economic integration – Ms. Vesna Kolar-Planinsic, Head of SEA Department, Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning, Slovenija
12:00 - 13.30	<i>Lunch</i>
13.30 –	Participants travel home Other side meetings (optional)



DESCRIPTION OF SESSIONS – DAY 1

Plenary Session 1: Strengthening EIA Policy and Practice in the Mekong Region: Implications for investments and sustainable development

A range of changes to EIA laws are happening across the region. What is the latest update on EIA laws in Cambodia and Myanmar? How and why are Thailand and Vietnam rethinking elements of their existing law? To what extent are these harmonized and what opportunities are there for greater regional collaboration?

Session 1.1: Social Safeguard Systems: Lessons from Laos and Regional Implications

Lessons will be drawn from the presentation of two projects in Laos supported by WLE-Mekong with regional implications for social safeguards. The goal is to help government and private sector think about social safeguard systems, particularly around resettlement issues.

Session 2.1: Lessons Learned: EIA policy and implementation in the Mekong region

Japan is a major player in the development of the Mekong region- both as an investor and as a project developer. Recently, Ministry of the Environment, Japan (MOEJ) has taken steps to better understand the role of Japanese investment and JICA's environmental and social considerations in order to strengthen social and environmental protection and stakeholder engagement through EIA process. This session will introduce identified common challenges and opportunities to strengthen EIA system and implementation in Asia, good practices regarding effective EIA policy and practice in the Mekong region, Thailand and Myanmar, and JICA's initiatives to strengthen EIA system and implementation followed by discussion among panelists and participants.

Session 3.1: Private Sector Perspectives: Why Effective Safeguards are Good for Business

Leading companies in the region will share their perspectives on the importance of effective safeguards to reduce social and environmental risks and strategies for multi-stakeholder engagement. Based on their experience, companies will provide examples of how these elements, when integrated into a business model, produce profitable and sustainable investments.

Session 1.2: Climate Change, Regional Integration and Safeguards in the Mekong

This roundtable discussion aims to discuss and think through some of the options that the region should explore in terms of its safeguards mechanisms to prepare for the impacts of climate change and to adjust to deepening regional and economic integration.

Session 2.2: Media Matters: The role of regional journalism

How is media, both traditional and social, shaping the way we think about development in the region? As project investors and impacts cross borders, how do journalists capture the full story?

Session 3.2: Promoting Quality and “Alternative” Investments

A number of tools and approaches are available to improve the quality of investment projects, reducing social and environmental impacts while enhancing their contributions to national development. Alongside enhancing the quality of investment projects and stronger safeguards for investments, “alternative” investment projects are also an emerging trend in response to traditional development models. This session aims to introduce a number of tools and approaches to enhance quality investments and to showcase some examples of “alternative” development opportunities, including renewable energy development.



Plenary Session 2: Refocus on Safeguards: Donor Priorities and Harmonization

The message from governments such as Japan, the US, and Australia is that sound safeguards for the Mekong region is crucial for sustainable development. Representatives from the bilateral and multi-lateral donor community will speak on what they see as the reasons and trends for a cohesive focus on safeguards and harmonizing their safeguard policies.

DESCRIPTION OF SESSIONS – DAY 2

Plenary Session 3: Public Participation: Approaches for Effective Engagement

It is increasingly being recognized that effective and meaningful public participation in development planning can lead to better decisions for governments as well as the private sector as it also makes good business sense. The involvement of the public is important to ensure that investment projects take into account the interest of local communities and use natural resources more sustainably. Engaging the public effectively can lead to decisions that better meet the needs of more people as well as reduce risks and eventually costs to developers. This session will explore elements of meaningful public engagement based on cases which led to better outcomes and lessons learned from experiences that posed difficulties to all parties.

Session 1.3: AIIB and the Changing Landscape of Multi-lateral Banks

This session will consider the impact of the AIIB on infrastructure financing in the Mekong. What might governments, private sector and civil society expect? How might this change the conversation around safeguards for the region?

Session 2.3: Using IFC Performance Standards to help Mekong Financial Institutions to Reduce Impacts and Achieve Sustainable Development

Participants will work in small breakout groups to develop a competitive proposal to finance a Mekong regional agriculture project on behalf of a hypothetical bank they represent. Each group will carry out an initial screening of the proposed project to determine the due diligence requirements and additional information that may be required for credit approval.

Session 3.3: Chinese Investments in the Mekong: Pathways to Engagement

Chinese investment continues to be a driving force in developing the Mekong region. There is also an increasing amount of pressure on China to be a more responsible partner in development. Is this message resonating? If so, how? This panel will explore not just the impact of Chinese investment, but more concretely how guidelines, interest in OECD, and other initiatives are opening up pathways for constructive engagement with Chinese stakeholders.

Session 1.4: Open Data: Access to information and data analysis tools

What are the trends in the region regarding freedom to information, and how does that impact the ability to stay informed on development and investment decisions? What are the tools available for government, academics, and CSOs to stay ahead of the curve? A session to look at Open Development Mekong and other perspectives on Open Data in the Mekong region.

Session 2.4: From Sustainability to Stewardship

Across the region, CSR is taking on a new dimension for Asian and multi-national companies. Business as usual is no longer possible for long term growth strategies. Thailand and Singapore stock exchanges are moving to put into place sustainability indexes. Impact investors are looking for integrated social and environmental business practices in the companies they support. How have companies started to change the way they do business in the Mekong?



Session 3.4: Including all Voices: Gender and Safeguards

The session aims to position the role of gender issues in discussions on environmental safeguards, and to explore whether and how these safeguards are sensitive to the gender-specific impacts of large-scale investments in the Lower Mekong Region. In particular, the session will: raise awareness on the social and cultural constraints in mainstreaming gender in EIA; present contrasting cases/stories on equal and unequal public participation of women and men in mitigating adverse and differentiated environmental impacts on their lives and livelihood; and identify tools and means with which to reduce gender gaps in environmental safeguards and impact assessments.

Plenary Session 4: ASEAN Open for Sustainable Business?: Integrating Safeguards into the ASEAN Economic Community

This session will explore the issue of regional safeguards for social and environmental systems in the context of regional economic integration. What is happening at the ASEAN regional level on this issue? What lessons might be shared from the European Union's regional economic integration, such as its regional EIA directive? Models of international frameworks for regional cooperation on safeguards will be highlighted, as well as discussing how a regional safeguard standard would benefit the long-term prosperity of the ASEAN region through exploring the link between economic performance and social and environmental safeguards.

DESCRIPTION OF SESSIONS – DAY 3

Day 3 presents an opportunity for additional space to choose from and participate in mini-seminars, side meetings, networking, and/or short training events, etc. Participants will have the option to select and participate in short (~1.5 hours) topical seminars, including:

A: Seminar on Indigenous Rights Impact Assessment of Large Dams – Dr. Yu Xiaogang, Green Watershed.

This 'mini-seminar' will include presentation and discussion on experiences with social impact assessment in the case of a large dam project in China, including some video clips and discussion.

B: Reviewing Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Reports training seminar – Mr. Matthew Baird, Environmental Counsel Asia

This session will build off of some of the discussions that occurred during the Symposium, by providing an overview of principles of EIA and tips for effective review of EIA reports. A real-world case study will be presented so participants will have a chance to understand better how to make sense of complex assessment reports using a real EIA as an example.

C: Open Development Mekong Tutorial – Ms. Terry Parnell, East-West Management Institute/Open Development Initiative

What is the Open Data movement and how can I contribute? This session builds off the introduction to Open Development Mekong presented in the Symposium by providing more in-depth orientation and guidance for contributing data and supporting open data development.

D: EU experiences with regional EIA in the context of economic integration – Ms. Vesna Kolar-Planinsic, Head of SEA Department, Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning, Slovenia

This session will provide an opportunity to dig deeper into the European experience with regional EIA development and implementation. Why did the EU do this; what were the benefits, and the challenges? Could a similar model be applied for ASEAN as it undergoes regional economic integration?

This Regional Symposium is co-organized by:



And funded by:

