



MEKONG DELTA DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP

Accelerating Sustainable Development through Community-Level Innovation

Can Tho University, 21-22 September 2020

Background

The Mekong Delta is classified as one of the world's most vulnerable deltas to climate change. Regarded as the “rice bowl” of Vietnam, agricultural strength in the Mekong Delta is affected by rising temperatures, salinity intrusion, land subsidence, upstream hydropower dams, and devastating droughts.

Despite these challenges, the agricultural region has made progress in terms of productivity, output and exports of both agricultural and aquaculture products. The Mekong Delta offers abundant potential and resources since it remains Vietnam's largest production zone, producing half of the country's rice and over 70 percent of its aquaculture. Yet, the climate change challenges will require the sector to innovate with climate-smart technologies and resilient strategies. The Mekong Delta is indeed at a turning point in which its economy needs to be far more productive, innovative and climate-resilient.

Recognizing this formidable challenge, the Vietnamese Government issued Resolution 120 on *Sustainable and Climate-Resilient Development of the Mekong Delta* in 2017, calling for a “new vision, strategic orientation, comprehensive, radical and synchronous solutions to attract participation of different stakeholders for sustainable development.”

Mekong Environment Forum (MEF) and *The Water Agency (TWA)* are joining forces in responding to this call by initiating an ambitious community-level innovation program in the Mekong Delta. This bottom-up approach, in which innovative and practical products and services can be piloted and demonstrated on-the-ground, provides valuable insights and best practices that make a tangible difference for local farming communities in the short-term, while also feeding into the longer-term vision and strategy development at the Mekong Delta (system) level.

To kick-start this program, MEF and TWA in association with Can Tho University and the Mekong Capital are organizing a 2-day workshop that offers a “big tent approach”, bringing together representatives from all relevant stakeholders, including local and international solution providers/suppliers, provincial authorities, local farmers, academia and investors. The workshop will create a platform for providers and suppliers of climate-smart solutions to learn about the Mekong Delta and community-level challenges, and meet with community representatives and authorities and discuss opportunities for concrete projects.

Mekong Environment Forum and The Water Agency aim for the workshop to drive concrete action that should lead result in first project(s) to be implemented within 6 months after the workshop.

Participants: 80 – 90 representatives from the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, local governments in the Mekong Delta, local and international providers/suppliers of climate-smart solutions, education and research institutes, export-processing manufacturers, foreign chambers for commerce in Vietnam, NGOs and diplomatic agencies.



Objectives: The workshop aims to

- Understand local (community) needs and supporting policies for sustainability;
- Introduce opportunities for collaboration and investment in light of the Government Resolution 120;
- Network local governments and economic stakeholders with foreign research and solution partners.

Themes: The workshop focuses on community-based solutions in the areas of

- Climate-smart and saline agriculture;
- Water conservation, collection, re-use, storage, treatment;
- Energy demands and opportunities for decentralized renewable energy development;
- Environmental solutions;
- The growth of high-tech agriculture, bio-technology, and climate-resilient aquaculture;
- Policy framework and distinct incentives in the Mekong Delta.

***Note:** Specific needs and solutions will be clarified after the field research

Workshop medium: English and Vietnamese. Foreigners who are unable to travel to Vietnam due to the pandemic can virtually participate and present in the workshop sessions.

Important dates:

24 – 28 August: Field research activities in at-risk communities

31 August: Deadline for Registration

14 September: Pre-workshop webinar (organizers, solution partners, and government)

21 September: Field visits to grassroots climate-resilient initiatives and exhibition set-ups

22 September: Workshop

October: Post-workshop activities

Preliminary Agenda

Time	Activities
Day 1: September 21	
7:00 – 12:00	Field visit to at-risk areas and climate-smart agricultural initiatives
14:00 – 17:00	Exhibition set-ups in workshop venue (Researchers, solution partners, local governments)
18:30	Welcome dinner
Day 2: September 22	
8:00 – 8:30	Registration
8:30 – 8:50	Welcome remarks - Rector of Can Tho University

	- Representatives of organizers
8:50 – 10:00	<p>Keynote addresses:</p> <p><i>Introduction to the Resolution 120</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Representative from Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE) <p><i>Identifying environmental challenges and local needs in light of the Resolution 120</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Experts, - Representative from the Ministry of Agriculture (MARD) <p>Open discussion</p>
10:00 – 10:20	Tea break
10:20 – 12:00	<p>Session 1: Water and Energy Security Issues and Solutions in the Mekong Delta</p> <p><i>Presentations from:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Representatives from provincial governments; - Senior experts; <p><i>Break-out session:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Representatives from MONRE and MARD; - Representatives from provincial governments; - Foreign participants and virtual participants.
12:00 – 13:30	Lunch break
13:30 – 14:30	<p>Session 2: Environmental Challenges and Technological Solutions</p> <p><i>Presentations from:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Representatives from provincial governments; - Senior experts; <p><i>Break-out session:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Representatives from the MONRE and MARD; - Representatives from provincial governments; - Foreign participants and virtual participants.
14:35 – 15:30	<p>Session 3: Climate-smart Agriculture</p> <p><i>Presentations from:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Representatives from provincial governments; - Senior experts; <p><i>Break-out session:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Representatives from the MONRE and MARD; - Representatives from provincial governments; - Foreign participants and virtual participants.
15:30 – 15:50	Tea break
15:50 – 17:00	Session 4: Climate policies and incentives in the Mekong Delta



	<p>Presentations from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Representatives from provincial governments; - Senior experts; <p>Break-out session:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Representatives from the MONRE and MARD; - Representatives from provincial governments; - Foreign participants and virtual participants.
17:00 – 17:10	Conclusion
18:30	Networking Dinner

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About the Organizers:

Mekong Environment Forum (MEF) is a non-profit and independent policy forum for environmental scientific information, news and studies of the Mekong-nurtured ecosystems and wetlands. MEF was formed in response to the public’s growing concern about the impacts that Mekong mainstream dams and climate change would pose on the Lower Mekong Delta’s water and food security, and the livelihoods of millions of people. For more details and our impacts, please visit <http://mekongenvironmentforum.org/>

Can Tho University (CTU), an important state higher education institution in the Mekong Delta, is the cultural, scientific and technical center of the Vietnam. CTU’s main missions are training, conducting scientific research, and transferring technology to serve the regional and national socio-economic development. In addition to its training responsibilities, CTU has actively taken part in scientific research projects, applying the advances in scientific and technological knowledge to solving problems related to science, technology, economics, culture and society in the region. Website: www.ctu.edu.vn

The Water Agency (TWA) is a true network organisation. We create impact by leveraging our network of local and international companies and organisations. The Water Agency's vision and mission are closely connected to this challenge. It is our vision for water to be a valued and shared force of life for all people in Asia Pacific. For more details, please visit <https://thewateragency.com/>

Mekong Capital is a Vietnam-focused Private Equity firm, specializing in consumer driven businesses. Mekong Capital’s investee companies are typically among the fastest growing and market leading companies in Vietnam’s consumer-driven sectors such as retail, restaurants, consumer products and education. Mekong Capital is available at <https://www.mekongcapital.com/>