

The 2017 Greater Mekong Forum on Water, Food and Energy



Session Design Guidelines

Introduction

The Greater Mekong Forum on Water, Food and Energy has been planned as an annual event, with the first occurring in 2011. It is the largest event of its kind in the Greater Mekong Region. It is a major, regional knowledge-sharing event, interfacing knowledge producers (e.g. researchers) with knowledge consumers (e.g. development agencies).

The purpose of the forum is to:

- Reduce tensions in water-related discussions between often opposing stakeholders.
- Create 'safe', non-political spaces for stakeholders to come together to informally discuss difficult and controversial water-related discussions.
- Promote cross-regional learning on nexus-related issues, and networking.
- Interface research-based solutions with a non-technical public, policy-makers and the private sector.
- Provide would-be users with an opportunity to deliberate and query potential solutions.

Forum orientation

This is **not a research forum**. The entire event is oriented towards knowledge consumers. We seek sessions designed with this group in mind, recognizing that most, if not all, knowledge consumers have no technical background. We emphasise *deliberation* and *listening*, whereby participants can query, debate, and (constructively) criticize the ideas or innovations presented. As a consequence, the Forum is also oriented towards participation.

In 2017, the Forum is projected to have 300 participants. Half of these are expected to be knowledge producers, and the other half, knowledge users.

Forum themes

All forum sessions must fall into one or more forum themes. In 2017, the themes are:

Theme 1: Water governance – The natural, economic and social environments are changing rapidly across the Greater Mekong, challenging existing governance structures in the region, and leading to the emergence of new governance forms. Sessions in this theme will explore these new governance forms, and the degree to which they contribute towards water sustainability across the region.

Theme 2: Healthy rivers - Monitoring the state of the region's rivers is a significant challenge, but nevertheless essential to their effective management. Across the region, there is little baseline information on the state and health of the region's rivers. Sessions in this theme will explore options available for the cost-effective monitoring of the health of the region's rivers.

Theme 3: River food systems - The impact of water development on regional food supplies and some of the world's most productive fisheries remains a pronounced source of concern across the region. Sessions under this theme will explore how reductions in food production as a result of water infrastructure can be addressed, and will consider how water infrastructure can be designed and operated to maximize food production potentials.

Theme 4: Healthy landscapes and ecosystems - Across the region, catchments are being altered by (land, mining and other) concessions, leading to changes in water quality and quantity. Sessions under this theme will consider these land use changes and their impacts, how they can be monitored, and the ways in which catchment management can be improved to address these changes.

Theme 5: Natural resources and peace - Globally, natural resources are frequently at the center of human conflicts. Sessions focusing on this theme will explore the ways in which this happens within the Greater Mekong Region. This theme will examine how natural resource mismanagement is contributing to conflict and propose ways in which these systems can be changed towards more equitable models that create and promote peace.

Forum ethics

The Forum welcomes:

- Solutions
- Active listening
- Constructive criticism
- Curiosity
- Diplomacy
- Diversity
- Empathy
- Energy
- Humour
- Intelligence
- Mutual Respect
- Open-mindedness
- Patience
- Query

Session rules

As emphasised elsewhere, the forum is not a research conference. The conveners have, therefore, developed a set of rules that structure individual sessions and make the knowledge shared within them as readily available as possible to a non-technical audience. For this to occur, then:

- If the session is to feature presentations then: (a) there may be no more than three per session; (b) there may be no more than five slides per presentation; and (c) the slides must use illustrations (photos, diagrams, etc.) and text only to the extent of key messages.
- All sessions must be co-developed between the session team and a forum facilitator.
- All sessions must be (co-)facilitated by a forum-provided facilitator unless, in the opinion of the Lead Forum Facilitator, this is unnecessary.

Applying to hold a session

To apply to hold a session, please fill in and submit the [Session Concept Note Submission Forum](#). While under some circumstances an organisation can hold more than one session, there must be

one concept note submitted per session (unless the Forum Convener has allowed a proponent to hold a long session (i.e. two session slots, back-to-back)).

Submissions will first be evaluated by the Forum Convener, and checked for relevance and congruence with forum themes. If satisfied with the concept note, the Forum Convener will notify the proponent, and will identify the facilitator the proponent will be working with. The facilitator will assess session design and sequence, and judge whether or not it maximises opportunities for deliberation and learning. The facilitator will then schedule a Skype discussion with the session proponent, which will likely lead to improvements in how the session is managed and implemented.

Proposals for sessions to be led by WLE projects must be received by October 1, 2017.

Session proponents must initially apply for one session, but can request two or more sessions. Whether or not more than one session is awarded depends on availability, and the suitability of the (additionally) proposed sessions.

Sessions vary in length from 1.5 to 2.5 hours. Proponents can propose a session that cuts across a 'block', to yield a three-hour (or more) session, with a coffee break in between. We would need, however, a rationale for why this should happen. A decision on whether or not to authorise this would, in part, be related to how much demand there is from other partners to run and implement sessions. The agenda framework can be viewed [here](#). For participants based in China, please contact wle-mekong@cgiar.org for a copy of the framework.

In considering which slot works for you, you may wish to consider the spaces on offer. See 'Venue and Session Spaces' below.

Sharefair and exhibition space

All WLE Greater Mekong projects are expected to contribute to the Sharefair. Agencies external to the programme are welcome to apply for space in the Sharefair. The 'basic' Sharefair package comprises a poster board and a display table. If you wish to display other permutations (whole cubicles, several tables/poster boards, etc) please let us know. **If you wish to participate in the Sharefair, please send an email to wle-mekong@cgiar.org.**

Venue and Session spaces

The forum will be held at the Inya Lake Hotel, Yangon, Myanmar.

We have booked three main spaces:

- Session Room 1: the Mingalar Ballroom meeting room, with a capacity of 300 pax seated at round tables.
- Session Room 2: the Jade Room, with a capacity of 140pax seated at round tables.
- Session Room 3: the Ruby Room, with a capacity for 100pax seated at round tables.

The Elephant Room, with a capacity for 30pax seated at round tables, has also been reserved for additional, special events.