

The 2018 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, and 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 2018, 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 address the forum theme, and fall into one of five sub-themes.:

The over-arching 2018 Forum theme is: *Economic Development and the Rivers of the Greater Mekong*: The rivers of the Greater Mekong hold great economic value in terms of their hydropower, fisheries, transport and agricultural potential. So too, these rivers are economic and ecological corridors generating immense economic growth for the countries through which they pass. But this economic growth comes with its own social, economic and environmental challenges. The 2018 Greater Mekong Forum on Water, Food and Energy will focus on ways in which these challenges can be addressed through tried-and-tested solutions, new knowledge generated by research and through a regional, multi-sectoral, multi-stakeholder dialogue.

The 2018 Forum sub-themes are:

Sub-theme 1: Economic Corridors: Throughout the Greater Mekong, conduits have been created through which trade and exchange can pass, such as the Belt-Road Initiative, or the GMS Sub-region. What are the implications of these initiatives for the region's rivers and the livelihoods that depend on them? What steps can be taken to ensure that these initiatives can support regional livelihoods and environmental sustainability?

Sub-theme 2: Diversity, Rivers and Development: Development initiatives across the region have significant implications at local scales, and can generate significant impacts on women and ethnic minorities. Session under this sub-theme will consider how gender and diversity are impacted, and how women and ethnic minorities can seize the opportunities created by large-scale development.

Sub-theme 3: The Entwined Predicaments of Water, Food and Energy: Although the so-called WFE Nexus has been around for some time, its use as an analytical tool in the Greater Mekong has been relatively limited. Nevertheless, exploring the inter-relationships between its facets is highly relevant in the Greater Mekong. This session aims to attract discussions around WFE research, and the discovery of ways in which we can operationalize the idea in analytical and managerial ways.

Sub-theme 4: Transforming Energy: Regional electricity production is changing, with moves to source stable supplies from sources other than hydropower. Sessions under this sub-theme will respond to the questions: what are the changes in electricity supply across the region? What do they mean for those regional countries for whom hydropower is central to national development plans? And what are the implications of these changes to the region's rivers?

Sub-theme 5: Innovative Governance: What are the region's promising water governance opportunities? Sessions in this theme will draw inspiration from promising examples at local, national, transboundary and regional levels, and explore the value of cross border cooperation, at state or local level, for the joint management of water resources.

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-appointed 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](#). Proposals for sessions to be led by WLE projects must be received by **October 30, 2018**.

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.

Once approved, session proponents will work together with a Forum-assigned facilitator to develop their sessions to maximise opportunities for deliberation and learning.

Once approved, the Session plan and other details must be entered into the Forum Planning Book, and link to which will be provided on approval.

Amongst details requested are logos for all organisations associated with the session; and a bio of the session lead(ers). These are needed for use in the Forum agenda.

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. Justification for a session block is required, and blocks will be awarded depending on demand for sessions and the strength of the justification submitted.

Sharefair and exhibition space

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.
- Session Room 4: the Elephant Room, with a capacity for 30pax seated in rows; intended for side meetings and events.