

SEI in Vietnam



Project Brief September 2019

Background

Vietnam is experiencing rapid economic growth and has risen to the status of a lower middle-income economy, with 3 million Vietnamese joining the global middle class between 2014 and 2016. These positive developments, however, have come with environmental costs, including depletion of natural resources, pollution and environmental degradation. The country's 2,000 miles (3,218 km) of coastline harbour large population centres and key agricultural sectors, all increasingly vulnerable to the effects of climate change. Though the overall poverty rate is decreasing, inequality still persists. This is particularly true for the ethnic minorities that make up 14 percent of the population, but account for 72 percent of Vietnam's poor.

Areas of Work

The Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI) in Vietnam works with communities, the government, civil society organizations and other NGOs to promote inclusiveness, equity, human development and well-being, bridging science and policy through field-tested and science-based research. SEI aims to foster dialogue around challenges and solutions related to climate change adaptation, food security, water management and hydropower development, community resilience, gender empowerment and social equality.

Projects

1. **SERVIR Mekong:** This project, supported by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the U.S. National Aeronautics and Space Agency (NASA) aims to harness space technology and geospatial data to help address development challenges related to a changing climate, especially in the context of disaster risk reduction, food security, and landscape management to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. SEI works in partnership with leading regional organizations to help the five countries in the Lower Mekong Region use this geospatial data to manage climate risks and enhance adaptation. SEI's current work in Vietnam through SERVIR Mekong applies gender-sensitive lenses that aim to underscore social roles and underlying inequalities in its mandate to promote social inclusion
2. **SUMERNET:** SEI engages with a wide group of research and knowledge producers in the Mekong region as host of the Secretariat for the Sustainable Mekong Research Network. SUMERNET supports research and policy engagement on critical sustainability issues in the region. SUMERNET's research agenda in Vietnam covers topics related to natural resource management, sustainable development, rural livelihoods and community resilience. SUMERNET work in the country focuses on empowering communities and fostering local knowledge in the context of socio-ecological systems following a people-centred and participatory approach.

Photo (above): © MARTA SALVAGO / SEI

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We connect science and decision-making to develop solutions for a sustainable future for all.

Our approach is highly collaborative: stakeholder involvement is at the heart of our efforts to build capacity, strengthen institutions, and equip partners for the long term.

Our work spans climate, water, air, and land-use issues, and integrates evidence and perspectives on governance, the economy, gender and human health.

Across our eight centres in Europe, Asia, Africa and the Americas, we engage with policy processes, development action and business practice throughout the world.



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3. **Connecting climate change, hydrology, and fisheries for energy and food security in the Lower Mekong Basin:** SEI, in partnership with the Asian Institute of Technology and the Inland Fisheries Research and Development Institute, works to assess climate change impacts on river flows, dam development and operations, and fish habitat in the Lower Mekong Basin in order to reduce future risks to energy production and food security. SEI enhances the capacity of individuals and institutions to optimize hydropower production and fish harvesting in the wake of a changing climate and in pursuit of sustainable livelihoods.
4. **Rice Cultivation and Value chains in Vietnam:** SEI and its partners promote women's economic empowerment in agricultural value chains in Vietnam. SEI collaborated with Oxfam under the GRAISEA programme (Gender Transformative and Responsible Agribusiness Investments in South East Asia), to provide technical support and scientific research on gender roles in rice production and marketing. The study includes best practices and a thorough assessment of rice value chain policies in Vietnam and ASEAN countries through specific gender and social equality lenses.
5. **Ethnic minorities and access to resources in the context of environmental change:** Under SEI's Gender and Social Equality Programme, SEI collaborates with Care International in Vietnam to examine and understand the changes in access, and rights to, the agricultural resources of ethnic minority communities in areas affected by environmental and climate change.
6. **Gender equality in fisheries and coastal resource management:** SEI collaborated with the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC) to explore drivers of gender inequality and constraints in the context of fisheries and coastal activities. The project examined national policy conditions in 12 countries, including Vietnam, that support gender equality in environment and natural resource management.