Call for Fellowships

Sustainable Mekong Research Network (SUMERNET)

(www.sumernet.org)

The new phase of SUMERNET (2019-2023) focusing on water insecurity in the Mekong Region called “SUMERNET 4 All” (S4A) is seeking young and early-career Mekong Region citizens with researcher and/or practitioner backgrounds to apply for a 6-12-month fellowship at the SUMERNET Secretariat in Bangkok, Thailand. Young people (not older than 35 years) from the countries of Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam are eligible to apply to this fellowship.

The application deadline is Tuesday, 15 October 2019, 11:59 (Bangkok time).

A. Background

SUMERNET is a regional research network focused on the six countries of the Mekong region. Its overall focus is to undertake research that influences and informs policy on sustainable development in the region thereby bridging the science to policy continuum. The new phase, SUMERNET 4 All (S4A), will have a strategic focus on “reducing water insecurities for all in the Mekong Region”. The network takes a participatory approach in identifying and finding ways to meet the strategic focus of the new phase S4A and utilize the rich research and policy engagement experiences of our partners. Through this approach the network aspires to transform the lives of communities affected by water insecurity in the Mekong Region. To know more about SUMERNET 4 All, details are available here: https://www.sei.org/projects-and-tools/projects/sumernet-4-all-engaging-with-water-insecurity-in-the-mekong-region/#sumernet-4-all

One of the S4A’s outcomes is to enhance the knowledge, attitude, and skills of knowledge producers so that they can deliver credible, gender inclusive, human rights-based, conflict-sensitive, and poverty-reduction focused research on key water insecurity challenges in the Mekong Region. The knowledge producers can improve their research practice and contribute to enhancing the discourse on water insecurities in the region. In S4A, among others, the programme focuses its interventions to improve capacity of young and early career professionals in the fields relevant to SUMERNET 4 All programme.

Besides providing grants for individual research projects, S4A is also supporting “fellowships” for young and early-career Mekong citizens of researcher and practitioner backgrounds, those involved or interested in communications and media work, or graduate students for hands-on learning under the four work components of SUMERNET 4 All.

B. Objective

1. To strengthen knowledge, capacity and skill of young Mekong citizen researchers, development practitioners, those interested in communications and media work, and graduate students.
2. To help deliver credible, gender inclusive, human rights-based, conflict-sensitive, and poverty-reducing research, practice and communications related to water insecurity in the Mekong Region.
3. To strengthen the partnership and networking opportunities between their institutions of origin with the SUMERNET Steering Committee, SUMERNET Secretariat and other SUMERNET member institutes. Young professionals or graduate students from the member institutes of SUMERNET will be given higher priority for this grant.

4. To enhance a sense of ownership of the early career researchers, development practitioners, communication or media people, or graduate students towards SUMERNET as a regional research network.

C. Allowance

The SUMERNET 4 All Fellow will receive a monthly allowance of SEK 7,500 (approximately USD 750) to cover basic living costs and accommodation while residing in Bangkok, Thailand plus basic health/travel insurance and relevant direct costs (return flight, Thai visa and work permit fees).

D. Duration

The duration of this grant is 6-12 months. This can be extended for another term of 6-12 months upon evaluation of the candidate’s work and with the agreement of all parties concerned (SUMERNET fellow, SUMERNET Steering Committee, SUMERNET Secretariat, and also if relevant, the candidate’s home institution).

E. Specific Tasks

1. Contribute to SUMERNET relevant work, specifically related to programme-wide activities (organized in Components) within SUMERNET 4 All. The applicants need to identify one main component that they would like to be involved with and possibly other component(s) that they would like to support. Please refer below the expected role of fellow in each component:

   a) **For multi-stakeholder engagement**, learn from and support this Component 1 in supervision, monitoring and capacity building activities of joint action projects, small grants and other policy and stakeholder engagement activities. Your role under this component is potentially to support SUMERNET Secretariat in advising grantee partners planning and implementing their policy engagement activities, analyzing policy impacts at research project and at SUMERNET 4 All programme levels, and in planning policy forum for SUMERNET which is organized annually.

   b) **For research**, learn from and support this Component 2 in supervision, monitoring and capacity building activities of research projects and integrated regional assessments and other research activities. Your role will be to carve out a project that adds value to your career and to S4A while helping grantee researchers deliver their work. Examples of fellowship projects could include how to share research outputs that make policy change, identifying and sharing insights for local community action addressing water insecurity or even how to enhance research impact across the Mekong.

   c) **For communications**, learn from and support this Component 3 in supervision, monitoring and capacity building activities of research partners in website or multimedia outputs, publications, media outreach (especially local language media) and other communications
activities relevant to the S4A communications strategy. Should you choose to focus on communications under S4A Fellowship, your role will be to support development of SUMERNET communications products, help update the SUMERNET website with interesting content such as blogs and short films, and support related events involving capacity building and media outreach for communications.

d) **For project management**, learn from and support coordination and monitoring, evaluation and learning activities of S4A. Your role will be to support the daily operations of the management of S4A which includes grant administration, project financial management, planning and budgeting, and support MEL activities such as MEL data collection, analysis and reporting, in the purpose of measuring the achievement of S4A programme outcomes.

F. Requirements

1. Candidate is a citizen of one of the Mekong countries (Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam) and is not older than 35 years at the start of fellowship.
2. Holds at least a bachelor’s degree and/or is in the process of obtaining Master’s or PhD degree in the subjects relevant to the S4A programme of work.
3. At least 2 years work experience in a field related to the S4A programme of work.
4. Able to commit 6-12 months full-time stay at the SUMERNET Secretariat in SEI’s Asia Centre in Bangkok, Thailand
5. Proficiency in English language along with their native language in the Mekong Region.
6. Candidates who submit the letter or proof of previous work showing that they are known to, or recommended by, an institution that is a member of SUMERNET will be given priority in the selection process.

G. Application and Selection Process

1. **Application submission (deadline: 15 October 2019)**
   Applicants submit application through online form available at this link: [https://sei.submittable.com/submit/148242/sumernet-call-for-fellowships](https://sei.submittable.com/submit/148242/sumernet-call-for-fellowships). The following documents will be required to be uploaded:
   - Motivation letter;
   - Recent Curriculum Vitae (CV);
   - At least 3 reference contacts (current or former work/academic supervisors);
   - At least one letter of recommendation from current home institution or previous institution (optional);
   - Letter from home institution, guaranteeing that the applicant will still be working at home institution after finishing SUMERNET 4 All fellowship (optional)

2. **Panel interview (tentatively 21 – 25 October 2019)**
   Only shortlisted applicants will be called for the interview with SUMERNET selection panel. The interview stage will result recommendation of selected applicant(s) for approval by the SUMERNET Steering Committee (SSC).
3. **Endorsement by SSC and announcement (28 October – 15 November 2019)**
   The recommendation from SUMERNET panel will be considered by the SSC. The endorsement of the SSC will be the final decision for the selection of SUMERNET 4 All Fellow(s). This final decision will be announced in **by 15th November 2019**.

4. **Start date of S4A fellowship**
   Subject to the application process of visa and work permit for staying in Thailand, the S4A fellows will start their duty at SUMERNET Secretariat as soon as possible and not later than January 2020.

H. **Contact**

For inquiries, please contact:

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