

Call for Applications

The **Mekong Thought Leadership and Think Tanks Network (MTT) Program** invites qualified applicants to submit proposals for Midterm Evaluation (MTE) of MTT Program. For details, please consult the [Terms of Reference \(TOR\) of the MTE](#)

Date of call: 25 April 2024

Deadline for application: 15 May 2024

By online submission ONLY:

<https://sei.submittable.com/submit/294621/mekong-thought-leadership-and-think-tanks-network-program-midterm-evaluation-mt>

Key reference document:

<https://bit.ly/3xNO4em>

1. THE PROGRAM

The Mekong Thought Leadership and Think Tanks Network Program (MTT) supported by the Mekong-Australia Partnership: Water, Energy, and Climate (MAP-WEC) Program of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), Government of Australia, has the overall goal to work together with national and regional knowledge-based policy influence organizations (KBPIOs)¹, including think tanks, to enhance their effectiveness and inclusiveness in policy engagement. The core focus of the activities of the MTT is within the nexus of water, energy security and climate change mitigation and adaptation. For more information about the program, please visit: [link](#).

The immediate objectives of the MTT are:

- 1) Strengthen the role and effectiveness of national and regional KBPIOs in engaging with national and regional policy processes on water, energy security, and climate change mitigation and adaptation.
- 2) Strengthen the roles and capabilities of national and regional KBPIOs in inclusive knowledge co-production processes by engaging with stakeholders across sectors, locations and countries on water, energy and climate issues and their interlinkages.
- 3) Enhance the capacity of national and regional KBPIOs to network and build the capacity of young professionals to deliver research, communicate, and engage with policy processes.

The Program is implemented through five components that include:

- Component 1: Development of home-grown regional network/alliance of KBPIOs

¹ Wellstead, A.M. and Howlett, M. 2022. (Re)Thinking think tanks in the age of policy labs: The rise of knowledge-based policy influence organisations. Aust. J. Publ. Admin. 81: 224-232. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/1467-8500.12528>

- Component 2: Enhancing climate resilience of water and energy systems through policy research and collaboration among policy influencing organisations (PIOs)
- Component 3: Inclusive engagement with policy, practice and the public beyond dialogues for effective change
- Component 4: Professional development of agents of change
- Component 5: Effective project management monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) for long-term sustainability.

As MTT is well into its mid-term period and as scheduled within the Program Design Document, a Midterm Evaluation (MTE) is required as a systematic and objective assessment of the program. The MTE aims to provide credible evidence which can inform program management and highlight important lessons, including existing strengths and areas for improvement. MTE shall be conducted by independent external evaluator(s) to ensure the objectivity of the assessments. The total amount of the MTE will not exceed **AUD25,000.00 (~USD 16,300.00)**, including personnel costs, travel/site visit costs (if any), etc.

2. THE ASSIGNMENT

PURPOSE: The purpose of the MTE is to take stock of program progress and evaluate where the program stands against its set targets in terms of expected outcomes, outputs, and planned activities. The MTE serves as a guide for all parties concerned (DFAT, MTT Program Secretariat hosted in SEI Asia, MTT Program Steering Committee, and key partners) to help improve the implementation for the remaining period. The MTE shall include initial recommendations for enhancing the impact and sustainability of MTT Program outcomes, beyond its current period of implementation (2022-2025). Relevant stakeholders will consider these recommendations to conceptualise and design any follow-up investments and programs.

STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT: The main stakeholders in this review are DFAT, the MTT Program Secretariat, the Program Steering Committee, MTT grantees, and partners. The conclusions and recommendations from the MTE will be useful to all stakeholders. The conclusions and recommendations, therefore, to the extent deemed practical and useful, should :

- Comment on TORs, methodology and work plan
- Provide information and their views on programme progress and future perspective about the program
- Discuss and comment on preliminary findings of MTE
- Clearly articulate the conclusions and recommendations of the MTE

The MTE is to be designed, conducted, and reported to meet the needs of the program stakeholders. The applicants shall elaborate in the application how this will be ensured during the evaluation process. The evaluators and the main stakeholders will agree on who will be responsible for keeping the various stakeholders informed about the evaluation during the inception phase.

3. THE SCOPE AND CRITERIA OF EVALUATION

The evaluation scope is limited to the MTT Program during the period of **17 June 2022 until 31 May 2024**.

The scope of evaluation is focused on the principles detailed in the Terms of Reference (TOR), which defines the evaluation questions. These evaluation questions should aim to cover key aspects of the MTT Program and need to be narrow enough to be answered credibly given the timeframe and resources available. The evaluator may further elaborate on the scope of the MTE during the inception phase.

4. QUALIFICATION OF EVALUATOR

The evaluation team could be either an individual international/regional expert or a team of experts that could demonstrate the ability to perform the tasks assigned in consideration of the expected qualifications and preferred qualifications below.

Expected qualifications:

- 1) Consultant(s) with professional competencies in fields related to environmental sustainability, gender equality, disability, and social inclusion (GEDSI), preferably within the sectors of water, energy, and climate change;
- 2) At least 15 years of relevant experience of evaluating research to influence policy projects in Southeast Asia, especially in the Mekong Region;
- 3) Substantive experience in result-based project planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation, including project risk management and safeguards, “Value for Money” (VfM) analysis in the development context.
- 4) Excellent English writing, communication, and analytical skills. The reviewer must be equipped with their own computer equipment;
- 5) Demonstrate ability to succinctly distill critical issues and draw forward-looking conclusions and recommendations.
- 6) Willingness to travel within the Mekong Region.

Preferrable:

- 7) Substantive experience in reviewing and evaluating similar projects, preferably those involving DFAT, international development agencies, and other major donors;
- 8) Highly knowledgeable in participatory monitoring and evaluation processes;
- 9) Familiarity with the issues, challenges, and priorities of the developing countries and/or countries of the Mekong Region in the area of sustainable development and policy engagement, related to the sectors of Water, Energy, and Climate Change adaptation and mitigation;

The application shall include a CV for each team member. It should contain a full description of relevant qualifications and professional work experience. It is important that the competencies of the individual team members are complementary.

5. EVALUATION CRITERIA FOR APPLICATIONS

All members in the evaluation team must be independent from MTT Program and the evaluated activities under MTT Program, and have no stake in the evaluation outcome.

5.1. Technical criteria

5.1.1. Delivery Plan (maximum 50 points)

Based on the requirements in the Terms of Reference, the application must describe the approach and method intended to be used, with an elaboration of how this will ensure that the deliverables are satisfied. The following criteria will be assessed:

- *Whether the applicant has understood the assignments fully (15 points)*
- *Whether applicants' methodology and delivery plan cover all aspects required for the MTE in sound quality while considering the flexibility to travel for site visits/interviews (25 points)*
- *Whether the delivery plan for the assignment is precise, efficient, and flexible in relation to the Terms of Reference (10 points)*

5.1.2. Qualifications and competence (maximum 50 points)

The application must contain information regarding the qualifications and competence of the persons proposed. The key requirement at the applying phase is to demonstrate the competency and experience of the proposed team in relation to the assignment as specified in the Qualification of Evaluator within the [TOR document](#).

- *Expected qualifications (40 points)*
- *Preferable qualifications (10 points)*

¹ *Not addressed or not sufficient*

² *Sufficient in some aspects but not as a whole*

³ *Sufficient but lacks substantial advantages or has uneven quality*

⁴ *Adequate and well-suited to the purpose*

⁵ *Gives added value and shows high quality on the whole*

5.2. Pricing Criteria

Applications that achieve the minimum score for the technical criteria will proceed to a price evaluation.

5.3. Decision regarding the contract award

- The Application receiving the most points (technical + price criteria) will be awarded the contract.
- All consultants who have submitted an application will be informed by email of the decision regarding the contract awarded.
- The MTT Secretariat reserves the right to negotiate the price with the applicant, considering the needs of assigned tasks and the available budget, before the contract is awarded.

6. SUBMISSION OF APPLICATION

The applicants must submit the applications by the deadline of **15th May 2024 (Bangkok time)**. The application must contain an acknowledgment that the applicant has the technical, financial, and other knowledge requirements for performing the assignment within the timeframes specified in the TOR of the MTE. The application documents must include the following documents:

- **Technical proposal:**
 - The technical proposal (excluding appendixes) must describe how the assignment would be carried out and what competencies would be made available to the assignment in such detail as to enable an assessment against the application evaluation criteria as specified [in the TOR](#).
 - It should include not more than 5,000 words. The CV of each member in the evaluation team (not more than 3 pages each) should be included in the appendix.
 - The template for the technical proposal is [here](#).
- **Financial proposal:**
 - The assignment's total price must not exceed AUD25,000.00 (VAT and other taxes inclusive).
 - All costs must be given in Australian Dollars (AUD).
 - The application must include any and all costs for the assignment and state the total cost of the assignment, and be specified as:
 - Professional fee per day and person, and in total,
 - travel and all travel-associated costs, including accommodation and *per diem* compensations (to be reimbursed based on actual expenditures),
 - other costs (please specify).
 - The template for the financial proposal is [here](#).

The application documents are only accepted ONLY through our online submission platform at the address: <https://sei.submittable.com/submit/294621/mekong-thought-leadership-and-think-tanks-network-program-midterm-evaluation-mt>.

Application submission through other channels WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

7. IMPORTANT DATES

The following are important dates pertinent to this application process:

25 April 2024	Launch of the call for application
5 May 2024	Last day for submitting questions about application
10 May 2024	SEI response to applicant's questions
15 May 2024	Deadline of the application submission
15 -20 May 2024	Review and Selection
20-22 May 2024	Endorsement from MTT Steering Committee and DFAT
23 May 2024	Anticipated announcement of application results
24-27 May 2024	Expected kick-off meeting arranged with successful applicant
24-30 May 2024	Contracting process
1 June 2024	Anticipated assignment start date

8. CONTACT

For inquiries, please contact **Mr. Vo Tran Trung Nhan**, Program Manager, SEI Asia. Email: nhan.vo@sei.org.

9. LIST OF DOCUMENTS

- Terms of Reference for the Midterm Evaluation: [download here](#)
- Template of the technical proposal: [download here](#)
- Template of the financial proposal: [download here](#)