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Special points of interest:

- *Sida/SENSA –IWMI Roundtable Meeting on Agriculture and Climate Change in the Greater Mekong Sub-Region (GMS)*
- *Regional Climate Change Adaptation Knowledge Platform Inauguration*

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Sida/SENSA - IWMI Roundtable Meeting on Agriculture and Climate Change in the Greater Mekong Sub-Region

In December 2008, Sida-SENSA commissioned the International Water Management Institute (IWMI) to conduct a review of issues related to food security and environment in the context of climate change in the Greater Mekong Sub-Region (GMS). The objective was to identify opportunities to develop the agricultural sector into a vehicle for ameliorating the negative effects of climate change and environmental degradation. IWMI delivered the report in September 2009 and it is available on IWMI's website, www.iwmi.cgiar.org. The report will also be available on Sida's website in the future.

The main findings in the report are that in next twenty to thirty years, agriculture will be shaped by a very complex mix-

ture of social, economic and environmental factors, with impacts of at least the same order of magnitude as the direct impacts of climate change. The challenge facing agriculture in the region is how to produce more food more sustainably in the context of rapid change. Agriculture must be transformed to deliver not only food security, but also environmental services (such as clean water and carbon sequestration) and economic security in rural areas. Global awareness of climate change has brought an enhanced awareness of the fragility of natural systems and a new, longer term perspective to national and regional planning, which presents an opportunity to radically rethink approaches to agricultural pro-

duction.

A great deal is already known about how agricultural systems need to change, and in many cases there are "win-win" solutions that deliver both increased production and environmental benefits. The difficulty lies not in what should be done, but in how to do it in a context where changes in land-use practice are sought from poor farmers whose livelihood options are limited. New mechanisms for promoting sustainable land-use are needed, drawing on the experience from emerging financial models based on mitigation payments through schemes such as REDD, payment for environmental services and harnessing global trade to promote change. Re-orienting

Regional Climate Change Adaptation Knowledge Platform Inauguration

Prime Minister of Thailand, H.E. Mr Abhisit Vejjajiva launched the Asia Pacific Climate Change Adaptation Network and the Regional Climate Change Adaptation Knowledge Platform for Asia in Bangkok on Saturday, 3 October 2009. More than 200 participants were present at

the launch and other high level participants included the Minister for Natural Resources and the Environment of Thailand, Vice Minister of the Environment of Japan, former Minister for Environment, Science and Technology of Nepal, the Ambassador of Sweden to Thailand and delegations from

a number of countries participating in the UNFCCC Bangkok Talks. The UNFCCC representative closed the launch commending this timely initiative and recognizing the potential contribution of the Asia Pacific Climate Change Adaptation Network as well as The Regional Climate Change Ad-



Prime Minister of Thailand, H.E. Mr. Abhisit Vejjajiva at inauguration ceremony with Anders Granlund, SENSA 3 October in Bangkok

Inauguration cont'd IWMI Roundtable cont'd

adaptation Knowledge Platform to meeting the needs expressed by the parties to the Convention, in particular, the need for “regional adaptation centres and networks” in enhancing adaptive capacity of developing countries.

agricultural production presents opportunities to work with rural producers to diversify and improve their livelihood options and to build adaptive, resilient communities that are better integrated and better able to meet both food security and new market demands.

Sida/SENSA organized in early December a roundtable meeting to discuss the findings of

the report and review options for future work on these issues. Around 50 participants spent a day in intensive discussions on the future direction of the development of sustainable agriculture and food production. A short meeting brief will be produced and will provide important input for Sida in its current review of its Regional Development Cooperation Strategy.

“This last meeting of the JCG marks the end of a successful cooperation..”

The Mekong River Commission (MRC) Joint Contact Group (JCG) where SENSA has been representing Sida, held its sixth and final meeting in Hua Hin in Thailand on the 26th of November. This last meeting marks the end of a successful cooperation between development partners and MRC member states in supporting the MRC organisational reform.

In 2006 an independent Organisational, Financial and Institutional Review of MRC Secretariat and the National Mekong Committees was initiated by the MRC member countries and the MRC development partners in order to support MRC to meet the organisational and strategic challenges of future developments in the Mekong River Basin. The review report was issued in January 2007 with 38 specific recommendations.

Since then the findings of the review have been subject to a rigorous and systematic follow-

up by the MRC member countries and the MRC Secretariat. The reform measures have also been followed by the JCG consisting of a representative from each of the four MRC Member Countries, two representatives from the MRC Secretariat, notably the CEO and Chief ICCS, and four development partners (Australia, Denmark, Germany and Sweden, through SENSA).

A total of six meetings of the JCG have been held from October 2007 to November 2009.

All of the recommendations have been seriously considered by the JCG and the MRC Secretariat, a majority having been considered in some detail by the MRC Joint Committee.

Following the 2006 Organisational Review, the MRC has thus established an Integrated Capacity Building Program; approved a Communication and Disclosure Policy; enhanced stakeholder engagement on hydropower, climate change

and basin develop plans and accelerated the “riparianisation” (member state ownership) process of this River Commission.

These and other achievements all point to a stronger organisation, better prepared to serve the needs of people in the Mekong region.



Karin Isaksson, SENSA, observing a hydropower installation in Lao PDR

World Water Week, August 16–22, 2009

During World Water Week 2009 SENSEA (Christer Holtsberg and Anders Granlund) participated and sponsored a workshop entitled “Securing Water in Coastal Zones”. The event was well-attended and the discussion that took place was about the increasing pressure on coastal zones from economic activities, both rural and urban, that ultimately impact surface and ground-waters. Floods and natural disasters as challenges to these areas was also addressed and discussions on how preventions, adaptation and early response could be used as principal counter-measure tools at hand.

SENSEA Mid-Term Review

In September SENSEA was under close monitoring of a Mid-Term-Review team studying SENSEA outcomes between 2006–2009, the aim being to provide Sida with an indication of the future path of SENSEA. The team presented a draft report by the end of October and the preliminary results show that SENSEA has carried out useful work in the region as a policy advocacy regional environment agent. The report will be further discussed at Sida HQ with the Sida reference group for SENSEA.

East Asian Seas (EAS) Congress 2009

During the last week of November The East Asian Seas Congress 2009, “Partnerships at Work: Local Implementation and Good Practices” held their third congress in Manila, Philippines. SENSEA, as a member of the EAS, sponsored the Congress by particular support to the EAS Youth Forum and to assist participants from least-developed countries to participate in the event.

SENSEA has carried out useful work in the region as a policy advocacy regional environment agent

The Second Mekong River Commission (MRC) Regional Stakeholder Forum

SENSEA participated, 15 - 16 October, in The Second Mekong River Commission Regional Stakeholder Forum on the Basin Development Plan, which took place in Chiang Rai, Thailand.

Among the questions up for discussion at the meeting was how do governments balance hydropower, irrigation, navigation, flood management, fishing and ecosystem services in the

Lower Mekong Basin? What are the needs of stakeholders and how can a fair Basin Development Strategy be developed? How can poor and marginalized groups be meaningfully included in the decision making process?

Through the Basin Development Program supported by, amongst others, Sida, the MRC is establishing processes for a meaningful stakeholder participation to ensure that water resource management helps to reduce poverty. In-

volving stakeholders provides a communication channel for the needs and interests of member states and their people to be reflected in decisions that affect them. The Forum outcomes will be used to improve the MRC’s Basin Development Strategy.

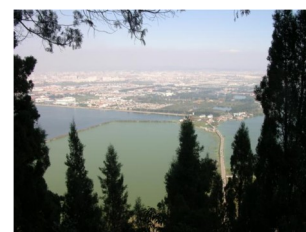
See http://www.mrcmekong.org/MRC_news/2nd-BDP-regional-stakeholder-forum.htm

Cambodia Climate Change Meeting

. An Environment and Climate Change workshop in Phnom Penh was held on October 12 – 16. The workshop was made up of three parts; the first day consisted of a seminar where the Commission on Climate Change and Development (CCD Commission) presented its report “Closing the Gaps”. The second day consisted of a field trip to Kompong Chhnang, near Phnom Penh,

where participants visited projects which had a climate change adaptation (and mitigation) focus. The third and fourth day were workshop days focusing on climate change from a more general perspective as well as for Cambodia specifically. The workshop participants put a lot of work into the discussions and their efforts resulted in a joint learning exercise with mutual

accountability for the future processes in the region where environment and climate change issues will be of high importance. The planning and implementation of this exercise emphasised the importance of good communication between the Country/Regional Teams, HQ and External Expert Advice units.



Dam constructions in Mekong region

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**“BE THE CHANGE YOU
WISH TO SEE IN THE
WORLD” (M. GANDHI)**



The *Swedish Environmental Secretariat for Asia (SENSA)* is a knowledge-based entity within the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) which

- promotes regional cooperation for an environmentally sustainable development in Southeast Asia
- strengthens cooperation between the region and Sweden for the benefit of the environment in the region
- serves as a platform for regional environmental dialogue on such matters as climate change

SENSA Spring 2010 some highlights...

Mangrove For the Future (MFF) is holding its steering committee meeting January 24-28 in Hua Hin, Thailand

Representatives of The Knowledge Platform meet with officials from Queensland University last week in January at SENSEA office in Bangkok to discuss further collaboration on the Climate Change Adaptation Knowledge Platform.

The Tsunami Trust Fund will hold its regular steering meeting on 3rd February at

UNESCAP. SENSEA represents Sweden.

In mid-March SENSEA plans to organize its 7th Annual Confe-

rence. This time we focus on “Poverty Alleviation in a Climate Change Perspective”. The meeting will take place in Thimphu, Bhutan.

In the first quarter of the year Team Regional Asia is planning a team meeting in Bangkok.

The ongoing process in developing the “Music and the Environment Initiative”, together with UNEP Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, will continue apace during the first part of the New Year.

