

RESILIENT URBAN CENTRES AND SURROUNDS

Nature-based solutions (NbS) for climate resilient investment in Mekong communities, environments and economies

PROGRAM BRIEF – 2024

THE CONTEXT

Conventional approaches relying on large scale ‘grey’ infrastructure solutions alone cannot deliver the social, environmental and economic outcomes Mekong region communities desire at a cost that they can afford.

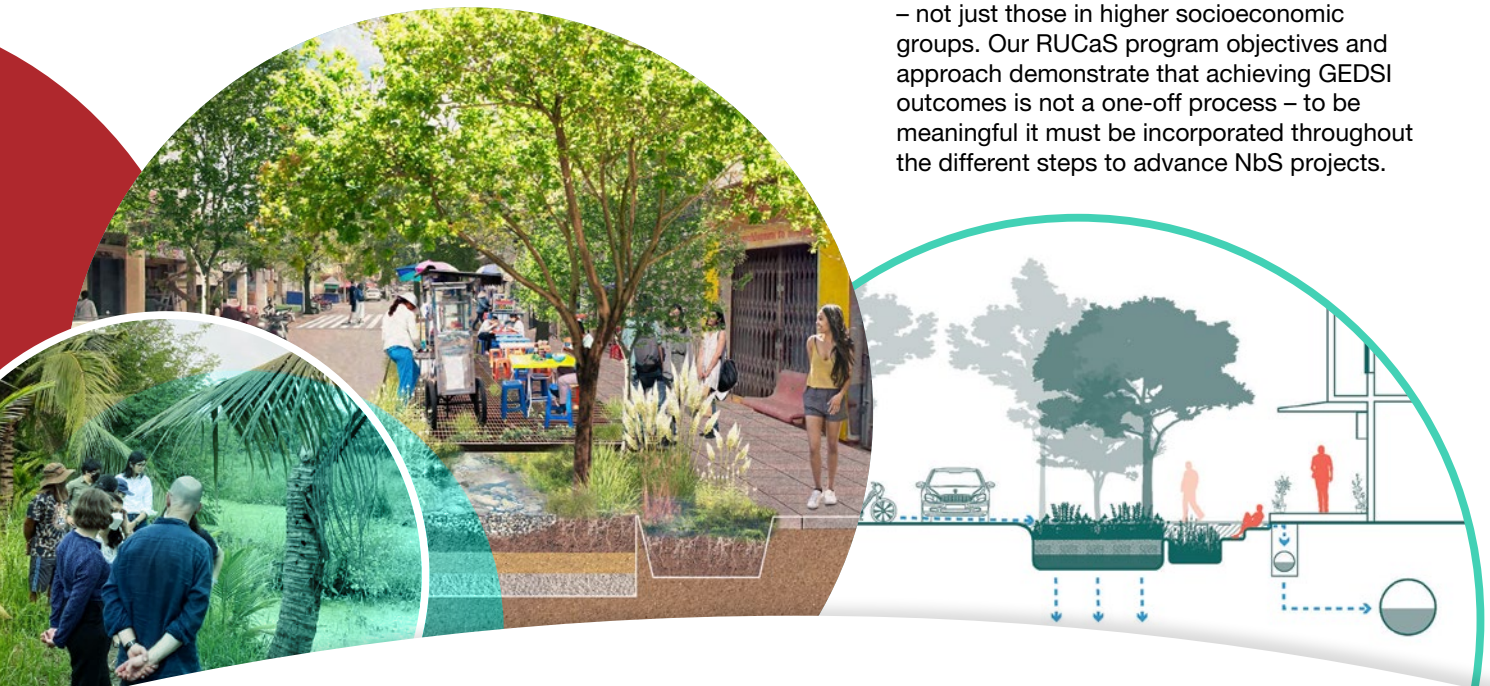
Creating resilient urban centres and surrounds requires a broader solution set. Nature-based solutions (NbS) are increasingly being integrated into urban planning to provide more cost-effective and flexible ‘green’ or ‘grey/green’ infrastructure to create resilient urban centres. Better integrated ‘green’ and ‘grey’ infrastructure supports scalable, flexible, cost effective and responsive solutions to the contextual features and priorities of the community and environment being considered. Along with community-based solutions, NbS can complement conventional approaches for hybrid investments that support climate resilient growth. They also support vulnerable communities by providing access to healthy environments that in turn improve quality of life.

THE PROGRAM

The Resilient Urban Centres and Surrounds program uses water management as a catalyst to promote urban climate resilience in 4 Mekong countries – **Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand and Viet Nam:**

1. Engaging Mekong country partners on the need for action and align the opportunities created by hybrid NbS investments
2. Demonstrating local application and the economic case for action
3. Supporting scaling hybrid NbS for wider impact
4. Leaving a lasting legacy of local partnerships and capacity.

Embedded in all activities are strategies to improve GEDSI (gender equality, disability and social inclusion). Poor and marginalised people are typically more affected by the negative impacts of climate change and rapid urbanisation. NbS deliver outcomes for these vulnerable communities – not just those in higher socioeconomic groups. Our RUCaS program objectives and approach demonstrate that achieving GEDSI outcomes is not a one-off process – to be meaningful it must be incorporated throughout the different steps to advance NbS projects.



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CASE STUDIES

Detailed case studies demonstrate how NbS can be applied and adapted to suit each context – geographical, environmental, economic and social:



On Nut Urban Forest Park

Bangkok, Thailand

An example of transforming former industrial or waste management sites for brownfield development.



Makkasan Zone C Departure Park

Bangkok, Thailand

An example of constructing NbS to enhance public green spaces while managing canal flows and water quality in heavily built up urban areas.



Can Tho University

Can Tho, Viet Nam

An example of using NbS to advance flood resilience and community activation with the university acting as an incubator of good practice and innovation.



Hanoi University of Civil Engineering

Hanoi, Vietnam

An example of using NbS to refurbish existing buildings in a built up area to mitigate heat and improve amenity and access for all.



Nong Loup Ian Marsh

Vientiane, Lao PDR

An example of protecting and maintaining existing NbS functions and enhancing them for communities, the environment and the wider city.



Ban Mano Wetland

Luang Prabang, Lao PDR

An example of protecting the heritage value of wetlands and ponds that support local households and economic development.



Street 2

Battambang, Cambodia

An example of integrating NbS into a busy city street to mitigate urban heat, create a cooling canyon and increase economic activity.



Akreiy Ksatr Wetland City

Phnom Penh, Cambodia

An example of using NbS to protect functioning wetlands in an area undergoing rapid urban development.



PILOTS AND UPSCALING STRATEGIES

Having demonstrated concepts and how NbS can be applied in a specific location via the case studies, the next step is to identify what's needed to apply NbS at scale – across a city and an entire country. By sharing experiences across the region, we identify barriers and opportunities to scaling NbS, and facilitate partners and stakeholders to understand how transitions can be achieved – making our urban centres more resilient to climate change and urban pressures.

To facilitate moving from demonstration to practice, RUCaS is developing pilot projects that provide tangible evidence of NbS working in an urban context. Our pilots are developed in cooperation with implementing government, non-government and private sector partners. Developing these strategies is central to building capacity and leaving a legacy of NbS champions in each country.

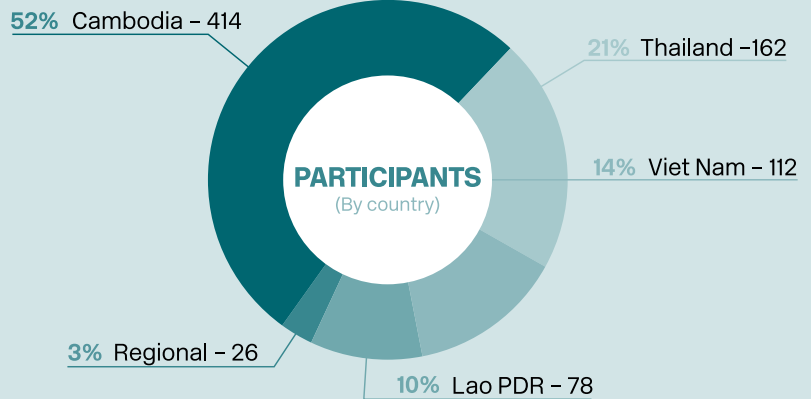


RUCaS ACTIVITIES TO DATE



42 Major outreach events

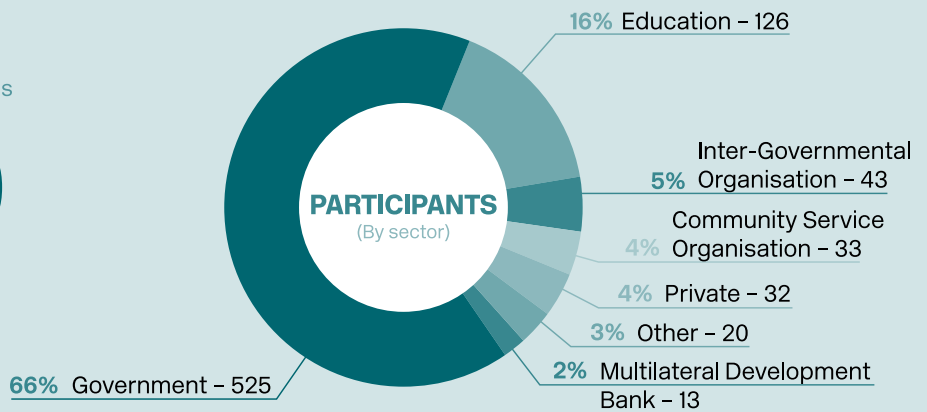
Regional Conference, national conferences and workshops, training events, field missions, governance and advisory meetings



792 unique participants from across



30 countries



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COLLABORATION PARTNERS

The RUCaS program was established by the Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) under the Mekong Australia Partnership for Water, Energy and Climate, and is being implemented by Water Sensitive Cities Australia.

Program delivery partner

ICEM (International Centre for Environmental Management)

Government agencies

Cambodia	Lao PDR	Thailand	Viet Nam
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction Ministry of Economy and Finance Ministry of Environment Akreiy Ksatr Municipality Battambang Provincial Office 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment Ministry of Planning and Investment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment Bangkok Metropolitan Administration Office of National Water Resources National Economic and Social Development Council State Railway Authority Expressway Authority 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment Ministry of Construction Ministry of Planning and Investment

Universities and other agencies

- Action to the Community Development Institute (ACDC)
- Australian Water Partnership (AWP)
- BoSL Water Monitoring and Control, Monash University
- Can Tho University
- Gender Development Agency (GDA)
- Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI)
- GRET
- Hanoi Association of Persons with Disabilities (DP Hanoi)
- Hanoi University of Civil Engineering
- International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)
- Kasetsart University
- Laos Disabled People's Association (LDPA)
- National University of Laos
- Oxfam
- Revitalising Informal Settlements and their Surrounds (RISE)
- Souphanouvong University
- Tours University
- UN Environment Programme (UNEP)
- WaterAid
- World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)

For more information, see our website



wscaustralia.org.au/rucas

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