

RESILIENT URBAN CENTRES AND SURROUNDS

Nature-based Solutions for climate resilient communities, environments and economies in the Greater Mekong region



KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE – THAILAND (5 AUGUST 2024)

Background

RUCaS aims to improve the value generated by investment in urban infrastructure by better integrating conventional large 'grey' infrastructure (e.g. levee banks, pipelines, treatment plants, roads, railways) with nature-based solutions (e.g. wetlands, mangroves, catchment protection, green walls, multifunctional parks and transport corridors). RUCaS program outputs include case studies demonstrating application in different urban contexts and scales, as well as training in the tools and principles applied, and strategies to upscale nature-based solutions (NbS). RUCaS is being implemented across the 4 countries of the Lower Mekong sub-region and is supported by the Australian Government through the Mekong Australia Partnership regional program.

Purpose

The Knowledge Exchange convened stakeholders and experts from throughout Thailand and from overseas to engage in a dialogue about using nature-based solutions to manage the impacts of urban development and climate change.

The event included the following activities:

- Review of NbS case studies, considering lessons learned on potential for application, and opportunities and challenges in upscaling
- Workshop to develop upscaling strategies and identify priorities and next steps for generating enabling conditions for NbS implementation.

Guest speakers included:

- Mr Pavich Kesavawong, Deputy Director General, Department of Climate Change and Environment
- Mr John Francis, Development Counsellor, Australian Embassy in Thailand
- Ms Rosalin Amornpitakpan, Department of Climate Change and Environment
- Mr Anouj Mehta, Country Director, Asian Development Bank
- Ms Kotchakorn Voraakhom, Chief Executive Office, Porous City Network
- Mr Ignacio Ortinez, Cofounder and Director, estudioOCA
- Mr Pakkasem Tongchai, Programme Officer Water and Wetlands, International Union for Conservation of Nature.

The event attracted 55 participants from 32 organisations across government, education, civil society organisations (CSOs), the private sector, intergovernmental organisations (IGOs) and other sectors:

- 32 participants identified as female (58%), with 1 participant identified as other.
- 28 participants were from government (51%), 8 from education (15%), 7 from CSOs (13%), 6 from the private sector (11%), 5 from IGOs (9%) and 1 from other (2%).
- None of the participants required accessibility assistance.



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Outcomes

The knowledge exchange workshop discussed challenges and opportunities for implementing NbS.

Visioning

- Champions for visioning include the Ministry of Public Health, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation, Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation, Department of Public Works and Town and Country Planning.
- Government and private sector bodies with net-zero aspirations are potential supporters.
- Platforms for visioning include NAP, NDC, digital platforms, curriculum training and national committees.
- Knowledge can be captured through knowledge exchanges, big data, Indigenous knowledge, local wisdom, innovation and technology for adaptation and GEO design.
- Tools and instruments to support visioning include Monitoring and Evaluation, Risk Mapping, integrated law and policy, incentives (e.g. tax), local regulations, government budgeting and Thailand taxonomy.

Enabling laws

- City governments could revise procurement guidelines to include NbS. There is also an opportunity to implement and include NbS in local ordinance (zoning).
- Require infrastructure programs to have hybrid/green bids that are evaluated together (e.g. as in Germany).
- Tax incentives for NbS/green space should be monitored. This activity needs tools and manpower to be successful, and should include a link to water monitoring. And urban planning departments should link/integrate with water monitoring.
- Planning Act 2019 requires every city to have a water plan, public open space etc.
- The Draft Climate Change Act includes provisions for climate finance; NAP (which includes NbS) can access national climate funds.

Choosing options

- It is important to understand and prioritise the urgency, critical needs, willingness and suitability of options.
- Option evaluation should consider the engineering feasibility of options as well as the BCA.
- Tangible impacts should include impact on life, biodiversity and pollution; legacy; social impact; and carbon sequestration.
- The maintenance requirement should be added to costs.
- Pilots can lead to social acceptance of NbS concepts and consequently funding.
- Community working groups can form a useful platform for assessing options.

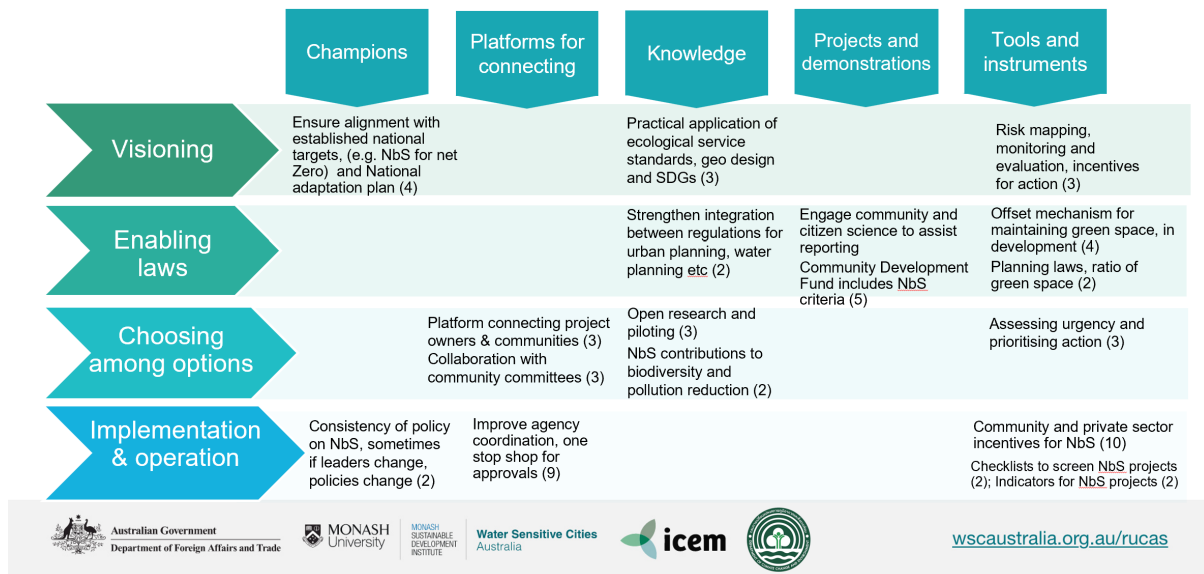


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Implementation and operation

- There must be a clear owner and responsibility to operate and maintain NbS interventions.
- The budget should clearly show what is included, from which sources and what will be received in return. It should include the BCA and give examples.
- Use of NbS should be promoted, monitored and evaluated.
- Coordinating local government agencies and related agencies such as provincial administrative organisations, BMA and the Land Department will aid implementation.
- A mechanism to engage all stakeholders, including private sector actors, is required.
- Checklists and apps could be used to screen NbS projects and help to identify good/best local NbS practice.
- Financing mechanisms – e.g. Payment for Ecosystem Services approach, Carbon Credits – can be utilised.

Scaling Strategy priorities arising from Knowledge Exchange discussion included:



Next steps in Thailand

The next steps are summarised below:

Action	Timing
RUCaS team to complete and publish the On Nut and Makkasan case studies	October 2024
RUCaS team to prepare the upscaling strategy to be shared with Thai stakeholders	November 2024
Upscaling strategies to be shared and discussed at the Regional Conference	March 2025

Photos



Participants at the Thai event



Panel on planned next steps for case studies



Participants discussing upscaling priorities



Participants discussing upscaling priorities



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