

# Science Journalism Partnership Forum and Workshop Tokyo, Japan June 2-4, 2005



## Objectives

The Mekong River is the largest international river in Asia. From its source in China's Qinghai Province near the border with Tibet, the Mekong flows generally southeast to the South China Sea, a distance of 4,200 km (2,610 mi) and passes through P.R. China, Myanmar, Laos PDR, Thailand, Cambodia and Viet Nam. The river is important in the ecology and socio-economy of the sub-region. Exploitation of the river as a water supply and for energy and food production has significantly impacted all aspects of the river ecosystem, including its water quality and biodiversity.

Many organizations are actively involved in assessing the short-term impacts in order to protect and manage the Mekong River. However, the long term issues of ecosystem change have not yet been adequately addressed to ensure the sustainable development and management of the river for future generations. In 2004 an international network of riparian countries, in cooperation with Japan and GEMS/Water Programme, began a pilot project to implement long-term monitoring of the Mekong River ecosystem with the goal of understanding, predicting, preventing/managing/solving issues affecting the sustainable development of the river.

Creating long-term working relationships between countries is only part of the challenge. There are also communication and trust issues which have caused barriers between science and journalism in the region, in the individual countries, and in the professions themselves. The Global Carbon Project, JFEJ and MeREM have a mutual interest in building communication partnerships between the scientific and journalistic communities to better publicize and address pressing environmental issues. This Forum and Workshop create opportunities for scientists and journalists from eight countries to form long term relationships to begin to bridge the gap between journalism and science and which should result in the accurate reporting of environmental issues that affect millions of people in the countries through which the Mekong River flows.

## Sponsors

### [Global Carbon Project \(GCP\)](#)

The GCP was created as an Earth System Science Partnership by the International Human Dimensions Program, the International Geosphere-Biosphere Program, the World Climate Research Program, and DIVERSITAS, an international program of biodiversity science. The goal of the GCP is to develop comprehensive, policy-relevant understanding of the global carbon cycle, encompassing its natural and human dimensions and their interactions. The GCP office at the National Institute for Environmental Studies in Tsukuba, Japan aims to integrate the "Human Dimensions" into the integrated earth system science of the global carbon cycle; focus on carbon management; and support carbon cycle research throughout the world. High priority is development of the RC6 Initiative, a comparative and historical approach to urban, regional and global carbon footprints, their determinants, trajectories and management opportunities. RC6 stands for "Regions, Cities, Carbon, Culture, Climate, and Consequences." One of the institutional foci for the RC6 is to improve the relationship between science and journalism in order to foster greater public knowledge of the global carbon cycle and the importance of regional carbon management.

### [Mekong River Ecosystem Monitoring \(MeREM\)](#)

The project began in April 2004 under the financial support of Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT). The objective of this project is to establish an international research collaboration system for in-depth understanding of the many changes and challenges affecting the ecosystem of the Mekong River and to predict long-term ecological changes. The research collaboration resumes the GEMS/Water program in the Mekong River Basin. The project is being implemented by a core organization (National Institute for Environmental Studies), sub-organizations (Tohoku University and Yamanashi University), and the International Committee of MeREM composed of 10 members from Japan, P.R. China, Lao PDR, Cambodia, Thailand and Vietnam.

### [National Institute for Environmental Studies \(NIES\)](#)

Since its establishment in Tsukuba Science City in 1974, NIES has been the sole national institute for comprehensive research in environmental science in Japan. The mission of NIES is to use its flexibility as an independent administrative institution under the direction of the Ministry of the Environment to serve the public benefit. The International Committee for MeREM established in

2003 is only one of the diverse projects at NIES where researchers in areas such as physics, chemistry, biology, medicine, social sciences, engineering, agriculture, fisheries sciences, economics, work to understand and solve the issues facing the local, regional and global communities.

### [The Japanese Forum of Environmental Journalists \(JFEJ\)](#)

Founded in 1991, the JFEJ offers facilities for journalists interested in environmental issues to conduct research and exchange information. It also provides a point of contact between journalists and environmentalists, both Japanese and foreign. Its aim is to respond to the gravity of the present environmental situation and to improve the coverage of environmental activities in Japan. One of the main activities of the JFEJ is a monthly seminar at which guest speakers approach environmental issues from various aspects. Past speakers include government officials, environmental activists, journalists, university lecturers and business leaders. Although the JFEJ does not have its own journal or newsletter, it has some columns in the Global Net, a monthly journal of the Global Environmental Forum, a non-governmental organization which acts as a secretariat for the JFEJ. This allows members to report their activities, or express their ideas. At present the JFEJ has almost 100 members. In April 1994, the JFEJ joined the Asia-Pacific Forum of Environmental Journalists, as its fourteenth member.

### [The Japanese Association of Science and Technology Journalists \(JASTJ\)](#)

JASTJ is a non-profit, non-governmental organization created in 1994 by a group of science journalists working in Japan. The association has 150 members comprised of newspaper, television and magazine science reporters; freelance writers; editors; public relations officers from research facilities and business; as well as museum staff members and natural scientists. The JASTJ goals are to stimulate communication between members and other news sources, improve our roles as journalists and communicators, and deepen our insight and knowledge in the fields of science and technology. JASTJ holds meetings between scientists, engineers, manufacturers and politicians throughout the year and a general meeting once a year; organizes trips to research facilities; organizes public symposiums for non-members with the aim of stimulating interest in the group and publishes a quarterly newsletter. Since 2002, JASTJ has conducted a six-month training course in science journalism in order to help raise the standards of the next generation of science journalists.

## Schedule

<b>Wednesday June 1, 2005</b>
<b>JFEJ Seminar</b>
<b>Japan Press Center (Closed Session)</b>

<b>Thursday June 2, 2005</b>		
<b>Open Forum</b>		
<b>Shiba Park Hotel Conference Room (Open to the Public)</b>		
9:00- 9:30	Welcome Overview	<p>Dr. Ryutaro Ohtsuka, President National Institute for Environmental Studies</p> <p>Mr. TooruTakikawa President, Japanese Forum of Environmental Journalists</p> <p>Dr. Penelope Canan, Executive Director Global Carbon Project</p>
9:30-10:15	Report by Environmental Journalists from Asia (Journalists' Seminar on June 1st)	<p>Mr. TooruTakikawa President, Japanese Forum of Environmental Journalists</p>
10:15-11:15	The Mekong River Regional Environment in Political Economic Context	<p>Mr. Masao Imamura Coordinator, Mekong Program on Water, Environment and Resilience (M-POWER) Researcher, Unit for Social and Environmental Research (USER) Chiang Mai University</p>
11:15-11:45	The Role of Scientists in Promoting the Conservation of the Mekong River Region	<p>Dr. Makoto Watanabe, Chair Mekong River Ecosystem Monitoring National Institute for Environmental Studies</p>
<b>MeREM/GCP Workshop</b>		
<b>Tokyo NIES Offices (Afternoon Session Closed)</b>		

<b>Friday June 3, 2005</b>		
<b>MeREM/GCP Workshop</b>		
<b>Tokyo NIES Offices (Closed Session)</b>		

<b>Saturday June 4, 2005</b>		
<b>MeREM/GCP Workshop</b>		
<b>Tokyo NIES Offices (Morning Session Closed)</b>		
<b>JFEJ/JASTJ Symposium</b>		
<b>Japan Press Building (Open to the Public)</b>		
1:00-1:05	Opening Remarks	<p>Mr. TooruTakikawa President, Japanese Forum of Environmental Journalists</p>
1:05-2:00	Cross-Boundary Environmental Issues in Mekong River Basin – Uncertainty Between Politics and Science	<p>Mr. Satoru Matsumoto, Director Mekong Watch</p>
2:00-3:45	Science Journalism Cooperation Panel Discussion	<p>Coordinators Dr. Makoto Watanabe, MeREM Dr. Takeshi Hara, JFEJ Panelists 3 Scientists / 3 Journalists</p>
3:45-4:30	Global Warming & the POETICS of Regional Carbon Management	<p>Dr. Penelope Canan, Executive Director Global Carbon Project</p>
4:30-4:45	Concluding Remarks	<p>Dr. Makoto Watanabe, Chair Mekong River Ecosystem Monitoring National Institute for Environmental Studies</p>

## Guest Speakers

Dr. Ryutaro Ohtsuka	President, NIES
Mr. Tooru Takikawa	President, JFEJ
Dr. Penelope Canan	Executive Director, GCP
Mr. Masao Imamura	Coordinator, M-POWER Researcher, Chiang Mai University
Dr. Makoto Watanabe	Chair, MeREM Director of Environmental Biology Division, NIES
Mr. Satoru Matsumoto	Director, Mekong Watch
Dr. Takeshi Hara	Professor, Waseda University Editor, Editorial Department Mainichi Newspapers, JFEJ

## Scientist Journalist Partners

<b>Cambodia</b>	
Mr. Norong Uk On	Lecturer Royal University of Phnom Penh
Mr. Pov Savuth	Senior Reporter, The Ponleu Khmer Vice Chairman, CPEHO
<b>China</b>	
Dr. Yong-Ding Liu	Professor, Chinese Academy of Sciences
Ms. Jing Wang	Chief Journalist, Science Times
<b>China</b>	
Dr. Baisheng Ye	Researcher Chinese Academy of Sciences
Ms. Ma Xinping	China Environment News
<b>Japan</b>	
Dr. Kuniyoshi Takeuchi	Professor, University of Yamanashi
Ms. Asako Murakami	Freelance Journalist, Japanese Forum of Environmental Journalists
<b>Japan</b>	
Dr. Akio Imai	Project Leader, National Institute for Environmental Studies
Mr. Mitsuhiro Yoshida	Freelance Journalist, Japanese Forum of Environmental Journalists
<b>Japan</b>	
Dr. Kunimitsu Kaya	Professor, Tohoku University
Dr. Mitsutaka Fujita	Japanese Association of Science and Technology Journalists
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<b>Thailand</b>	
Dr. Aparat Mahakhant	Researcher, Thailand Institute of Scientific and Technological Research
Ms. Vimalee Vivatanakulpanit	Journalist, Thairath Newspaper
<b>Vietnam</b>	
Dr. Xuan Vo-Tong	Rector, An Giang University
Mr. Hoang Quoc Dung	Standing Vice-President, Vietnam Forum of Environmental Journalists

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<http://www-cger.nies.go.jp/cger-ij/project/GCP/GCPTSukubatop.html>

Japanese Association of Science & Technology Journalists (JASTJ)  
[www.jastj.jp/](http://www.jastj.jp/)

National Institute for Environmental Studies (NIES)  
[www.nies.go.jp](http://www.nies.go.jp)

Mekong Watch  
[www.mekongwatch.org](http://www.mekongwatch.org)

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**Please contact Tomoko Hamabata for  
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