CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

“Featuring green growth”
A training program on storytelling about natural resources and agriculture in Laos
May to December 2020

Locations:
Laos (Vientiane and potential field trips to provinces)
Languages: Lao and English

Mekong Sustainable News Project - Background

Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar are all predominantly rural countries; indeed, in the last three, more people work in the agricultural sector than any other. These four countries are among those that are most affected by climate change, especially in rural areas. They also have to cope with major challenges in terms of air and water pollution, food safety and new pandemics.

Faced with these threats, the work carried out by journalists is absolutely critical, as it makes it possible to raise people's awareness and inform them about the issues linked to sustainable development, so that they will be inspired to play their part in making the environmental changes needed in their respective countries.

Launched in 2019, the Mekong: Sustainable News project is helping to improve how scientific news topics are being processed in the Mekong region, especially by digital media organisations. It is encouraging journalists to cover environmental subjects in a positive and humane way, by highlighting tangible solutions. Journalists have to act as intermediaries between the scientific community and the general public, so that people can be informed about the most relevant points concerning the key challenges ahead.

The project is specifically financed by the Solidarity Fund for Innovative Projects, Civil Societies, French-Speaking Countries and Human Development, which is run by the French Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs.

Project expected results

1. Better capacity for journalists and media creators to produce digital content
2. Increased journalistic production valued by digital media on matters related to protecting the environment and climate change analysis
3. Pool of specialized journalism trainers at the regional level on issues related to sustainable development
4. Develop the network among scientists, journalists and media content developers to create educational and/or accessible content to the public

Training outline

- The training cycle will start in May in Vientiane, Laos, and will until December 2020

It will gather up to 15 participants from Laos, committing to attending at least 4 training sessions and being mentored once a month by a professional journalism trainer to publish at least 2 online multimedia stories linked to the notion of green growth

The following topics will be taught during the training sessions:

- Introduction to the National green growth strategy and climate change (definition, concepts etc)
- Introduction to the notion of agroecology and natural resources management
- Use of data, data analysis and data visualisation
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Storytelling techniques

To ensure the quality of the program, CFI is partnering with two leading French organizations GRET and CIRAD, to provide journalism training, scientific data and reliable expertise on these topics. Field trips will be organized to allow participants to work on visual stories.

The training will be accompanied by one CFI project staff and at least two trainers specialized in scientific reporting, environmental storytelling and data visualisation. The training sessions will be followed by individual mentored writing sessions on specific topics selected by the project team together with the participants. During these sessions the participants will have to develop at least two visual stories on an environmental related issue, which is in line with the overall and specific objectives and main communication messages of the project. The writing process will be fully supervised and mentored by the project team and experts in form of advice for literature, research methods, statistical data, writing style, etc. The project will apply an innovative approach to teaching with the inclusion of interactive tools on humanizing green growth related issues by showing to the socio-economic impacts as well as the misconceptions around these issues, using the expertise of French and professionals the Asia-Pacific region working in the field.

Stories will be published on national lao platforms and potentially international platforms. The participant who will have gained more audience engagement with his/her story will win coaching sessions with media professionals to continue telling stories and develop audience engagement.

Application instructions

Participation in the MEKONG SUSTAINABLE NEWS training cycle is awarded on a competitive basis. All training expenses will be covered by the project and experienced media experts will support the participants in the development of their articles on environment related issues. Thus, it is a unique opportunity to participate at this training.

Eligible candidates have to be citizens from Laos with preferably notions of English. They need to have some experience in working in media and some knowledge on environment and sustainable development. They must be available to participate in the full training cycle from May 4th, 2020 to December 2020 (each training will last maximum 2-3 days only). The 2 most successful participants will be invited to join the international scientific conference to be held in Vietnam (5-10 October 2020 in Quy Nhon)

The following people are eligible to apply:

- Junior or established journalists and media content producers from Laos. Freelance journalists are also encouraged to apply
- Journalists and media creators who already attended a training in the framework of the CFI Mekong Sustainable News project in 2019 are strongly encouraged to apply.
- Interest in environmental and scientific topics, especially agriculture.

A good level in English is recommended but not compulsory

Submissions shall include:

- Recent CV including contact information and a short biography (up to 100 words)
- Copies of up to three published stories/journalistic pieces related to environment in English or Lao language (in most common file format (MS Word – for text articles/blogs, etc; AVI, WMV – for video; PCM, WAV or MP3 – for audio stories. Please, contact the organisers, if there are questions related to the file format)
- Link to officially published narratives/stories related to environment done before 1st January 2020
- Short motivation explaining the wish to participate in the training
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All materials must be submitted in English language (except the copies of the articles to be submitted in their original published version).

Only selected participants will be contacted. The organisers reserve the right to contact journalists via email or phone before making the final selection. The training session will be held in English and Lao languages. Participation in the trainings is free of charge, meals and training materials will be covered.

Application and selection procedure:

- Questions on the procedure can be asked to bouhengs2005@gmail.com and clz@cfi.fr until 18 March 2020, 17:00 Lao Standard Time (GMT +7)
- Submission of complete applications: 31st March 2020, 17:00 Lao Standard Time (GMT +7) at clz@cfi.fr and mhx@cfi.fr
- Potential consultations with shortlisted candidates: 6 – 10 April 2020
- Notifications of acceptance: between April 13th and April 30th, 2020
- Launch of the training cycle: May 22nd, 2020 (international day for biodiversity)

Tentative program

Launch and Session 1: biodiversity and green growth: May 22nd – 24th (international day for biodiversity) / Compulsory

Session 2: introduction to natural resources management and data visualization : June 16th – 17th (international day to combat droughts and desertification on June 17th )

Session 3: Bringing your story to the next level - Storytelling bootcamp: July 15th - 17th (World Youth Skills Day on July 15th) / Compulsory

➢ publication of the first multimedia story is expected in August

Session 4: Understanding agroecology in the Lao context: September 14th-15th (September 29th is the World Day on Food Loss and Waste) / Compulsory

Session 5: The use of pesticides and the impact on health: Oct 12th -13th (world Food Day on Oct 16th)> publication of the 2nd multimedia story in expected in November.

In between sessions, participants will be required to follow mentoring sessions.

This project is supported by the French Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs. It is implemented by CFI, the French media development agency, in the Mekong region, with the valued support of GRET and the Lao Youth Union in Laos.