



MEKONG
INSTITUTE



CREATIVE 4 MEKONG PROJECT

Impact Story

October 2024

Empowering Artisans to Preserve Cultural Heritage and Boost Heritage Tourism in Mekong Countries

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On September 13, 2024 – Mekong Institute (MI) successfully conducted a week-long "Training on Creative Industry Associations Management in the Mekong Region" from September 7-13, 2024. The training aimed to promote and strengthen creative industry associations across the region. This initiative was designed to equip participants with the necessary knowledge and skills to provide continuous support to creative enterprises and artisans in key project locations, fostering sustainable growth and development in the region's creative industries.

The training is part of the broader "Creative4Mekong" project (Promoting Creative Industry for Heritage Tourism Development in the Mekong Region), which runs from March 2024 to February 2027.

Funded by the Mekong-ROK Cooperation Fund (MKCF), the project seeks to strengthen creative industries, preserve cultural heritage, and boost tourism in five World Heritage Sites in the Mekong countries: Ayutthaya (Thailand), Siem Reap (Cambodia), Hue (Vietnam), Luang Prabang (Laos), and Bagan (Myanmar). The project provides support through capacity-building programs, technological support, knowledge exchanges, and research, with a focus on empowering Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), artisans, cultural practitioners, and government officials in the creative sector.

Training Outcomes

The 25 participants throughout the five days, participants engaged in learning and knowledge exchange sessions that emphasized how creative industries can drive local and regional economic development. One of the key outcomes of the training was the development of specific action plans where participants will work in the coming three months aim at preserving selected Cultural and Creative Industries (CCI) products and supporting skill development among artisans in participants' home countries.

These CCI are:

- **Angkuoch**, traditional jaw harp from Siem Reap, Cambodia
- **Sa paper**, hand-made from mulberry bark from Luang Prabang, Laos
- **Unique conical hat** from Hue, Vietnam
- **Lacquerware** from Myanmar
- **Pla Tapien Bilan**, palm leaf weaving form Ayutthaya, Thailand



A five-day training on Creative Industry Associations Management in the Mekong Region" at MI, Khon Kaen, Thailand.

Our impact so far

Overall, participants are implementing their interventions to support **skills development** of artisans for cultural and creative knowledge **preservation**. In order to protect the cultural knowledge, the history and production methods of the products will be **documented** in order to assess the potential for applying for **intellectual protection** (for instance branding, trademarks, GI and patents). To promote the production and sale of these products, a business plan will be developed and pilot a product launch by selected artisans and sale in the different platforms. The final activity will be to **share information** on product business plan with IP protection with key stakeholders.

Below are key actions are being implemented:

1

Identify and document

Identify artisans and document their profiles and their needs in project locations in five Mekong countries.

2

Protect the cultural knowledge

The history and production methods of the selected products will be documented.

3

Intellectual Property Protection

The documentation process will assess the potential for applying for intellectual property (IP) protection, such as branding, trademarks, geographical indicators (GI), and patents, to safeguard these products from misappropriation.

4

Business plan development

A business plan will be developed to promote the production and sale of these products. A pilot product launch will be carried out by selected artisans, with the products being sold across various platforms, including domestic and international tourism markets..

5

Knowledge sharing

The final activity will involve sharing the product business plan, including details on IP protection, with key stakeholders to enhance market opportunities and support the artisans.

**By the end of December 2024,
5 CCI products & more than 50 artisans
in Mekong countries will be protected and promoted.**

