Post doctoral Research Contract Starting 01/11/2022

Human Geography - Political Ecology - Hydrosocial Territories - Cambodia

Duration 18 months
Research Unit : G-EAU
City : Montpellier Country : France

The Team

The G-EAU Research Unit (https://www.g-eau.fr/index.php/en), located in Montpellier, France, is recognized internationally for its interdisciplinary research agenda on water governance in Europe and the global South.

The G-EAU Research Unit brings together 100 researchers, research engineers, technicians from six organisation (IRD, CIRAD, INRAE, BRGM, InstitutAgro et AgroParisTech) and around 50 PhD students and post-docs. We conduct research on the dynamics of hydrosocial territories in Europe, North, West and South Africa as well as South East Asia and Brazil and develop and evaluate methods to support the implementation of innovative water policies. We are also involved in interdisciplinary training on water in Montpellier and beyond.

The research unit provides a friendly and stimulating working environment.

Cambodia is one of the main research hubs of the Research Unit in the global South with staff being posted in the country. Over the last 6 years, researchers from G-EAU, together with partners from the Institut de Technologie du Cambodge (ITC) and the Royal University of Agriculture (RUA) are conducting interdisciplinary research on the socioenvironmental dynamics at play in the Cambodian Upper Mekong delta where the government is investing massively in the development of water control infrastructures.

You will join an interdisciplinary research team and will have the opportunity to spend a significant amount of time, in Cambodia, working with partners and colleagues of the G-EAU Research Unit posted in the country.

The Research Project

The Cambodian Upper Mekong Delta offers a striking contrast to the rest of the deltaic floodplain located in Vietnam.

In contrast to the 'Vietnamese delta' that has witnessed significant investments aimed at increasing water control for agricultural intensification and limiting floods, the landscapes of the Upper Mekong Delta change dramatically between the rainy season, when fields are under several meters of water as far as the eye can see, and the dry season, when farmers face water shortage to irrigate their rice fields. Further and unlike in the Vietnamese delta, where hydro-agricultural developments have been extensively studied, including their political dimensions (Biggs, 2008), little research has been conducted in the area.

Yet, the Cambodian Upper Mekong delta is undergoing extremely rapid and drastic transformations in relation to changes in the modes of access to and use of water resources: the construction and/or rehabilitation of irrigated schemes within the context of a highly geopolitical cooperation between Cambodia and China; the multiplication of deep tube wells to tap groundwater resources and adapt to surface water scarcity on the dry season...

This post-doctoral research will characterize the transformations at play in the socio-hydrological territory (Barreteau et al, 2016; Boelens et al., 2016) of the Cambodian Upper Mekong Delta - with a focus on the Prey Veng province. The post-doctoral research will pay specific attention to the complex links between development projects, public...
policies and the materiality of irrigation (Ivars and Venot, 2018). To do so, it will draw from the "socio-hydrology" approach developed by the G-EAU Research Unit (e.g. Massuel et al., 2018), and past research conducted in the context of the DOUBT (Venot and Jensen, 2021) and COSTEA projects.

You will conduct qualitative and/or ethnographic surveys with the actors who shape these territories (farmers, fishermen, local officials and elected representatives, staff from sectoral ministries and development agencies, private entrepreneurs) and study how and why changes in the modalities of access to and use of water for irrigation contributes to sociohydrological transformations and raise questions of environmental justice.

Drawing on past research conducted by researches from the Research Unit (Venot et al., 2022), you will also have the opportunity to propose participatory approaches aimed at supporting these sociohydrological transformations in a perspective of enhancing sustainability and justice - including in relation to the re-distribution of environmental and public health risks that some development projects implemented in the Cambodian upper Mekong delta entail.

References


Your Supervisor

You will work closely with Jean-Philippe Venot, human geographer and deputy director of UMR G-EAU and will join an interdisciplinary research team bringing natural and social scientists together. More information on the post-doctoral project can be obtained from jean-philippe.venot@ird.fr

Your Profile

You have a PHD degree in fields such as human or environmental geography, development studies, political ecology, sociology or anthropology applied to the environment.

You have acquired the following competencies:

- Field work experience in the Global South, preferably in South-East Asia
- Social science investigation methods: interviews, focus group discussions, participatory observation
- Proven publication record
- Fluency in English - Knowledge of French will be appreciated but is not discriminatory.
- Previous experience in participatory or transdisciplinary research will be appreciated

You have demonstrated the following skills

- Organizational skills
- Initiative and Autonomy
- Capacity and interest to work in an interdisciplinary context, notably in relation to water issues.

Contacts

Committed Science for Sustainable Development (In French): [L'IRD en 230 secondes](#)
Deadline: 30 September 2022
CV and Cover letter should be sent to [recrutement.dr-occitanie@ird.fr](mailto:recrutement.dr-occitanie@ird.fr)