

## **Sustainable Development of the Mekong Delta International Forum SDMD 2022**

**CSIRO Talking Points:** *Strategic solutions to enhance innovation and sustainable development of the Mekong Delta.*

### **Australia is committed to supporting inclusive and sustainable growth in Vietnam**

- In 2018, we established the Australia-Vietnam Strategic Partnership to work together on areas of common opportunity and concern including trade, investment and security.
- Last year, we finalised the Australia-Vietnam Enhanced Economic Engagement Strategy to realise our joint goal of becoming top ten trading partners and doubling two-way investment.
- Our two countries have science, technology and innovation as central elements of our national plans to improve productivity, quality, efficiency and competitiveness of our economies.
- When our Prime Ministers met at COP26 last year, they committed to explore opportunities to deepen practical cooperation to support climate action, energy transition, resilience and nature-based solutions.
- Next year we celebrate our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of bi-lateral relationships.

### **The Mekong Delta region plays an important role in our collaboration.**

- Since 2000, Australia has contributed over AUD650 million to strengthen the Delta's infrastructure, enhance productivity and competitiveness, strengthen public services, build human capital, and boost innovation.
- in 2020, Australia announced the AUD232 million Mekong-Australia Partnership
- the partnership is being implemented in each Mekong country to support activities in human capacity building; water, energy and climate; economic resilience; cyber and critical technology; and trade and investment.

### **Innovation is a key pillar of Australia and Vietnam's Strategic Bi-lateral partnership.**

- Aus4Innovation is the flagship program to deliver on this partnership, a collaboration between Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs, Australia's National Science Agency – CSIRO and Vietnam's Ministry of Science and Technology
- Aus4Innovation is about creating and using science and technology for innovation, for the inclusive and sustainable development of Vietnam's Innovation System
- This is to support Vietnam to become an innovation-led economy and a high-income country by 2045

**Can Tho University have been a key collaborator in Aus4Innovation and a longstanding partner for Australia in agricultural research for development and impact**

- Together, we are using innovative models to bring research, business and other stakeholders together to work on agri-food challenges.
- Innovation can boost agricultural productivity and value, build resilience to external shocks (such as market or climate pressures) and strengthen competitiveness and international standing.
- Innovation is about bringing the best national and international practices, technologies and knowledge to the region.
- Innovation is also about looking at new ways to approach challenges, creating new alliances and building synergies for positive outcomes.
- Diversity and inclusion are a source of innovation and opportunity.

**The Mekong Aquaculture Innovation Cluster – part of SDMD initiative - is a great example of how we work together**

- MAIC was officially launched in June this year
- To build collaboration between regional aquaculture stakeholders on innovation needs to meet social, environmental and economic development goals for the industry.
- It connects diverse stakeholders who are interested in contributing to high-quality, sustainable aquaculture, regional brand-building and enhanced livelihoods.
- It is using innovation to build a more sustainable shrimp industry, initially focusing on new and novel technology and practices in circular economy, digital transformation, green growth and climate action.

**For us, an important point is that transforming the Mekong delta to achieve its sustainable development goals is a team effort**

- No one organisation or group or agency can do this on their own
- We need to work together, and to innovate for everyone.