

## **CEDAC Participated in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Regional Working Group Workshop**

The third meeting of the *Mekong Region Futures Working Group* was organized on November 14-15, 2011, at Sheraton Hanoi Hotel in Viet Nam. The Mekong Futures Working Group met first in March 2011 and consists of approximately 25 people from government, private sector, and academic and civil society backgrounds. The group comprises professionals from Cambodia, China, Lao PDR, Thailand and Vietnam. The purpose of the group was to create a space for creative knowledge exchange focusing on long-term sustainability of the region.

The initiative aim was to contribute to regional development, and associated infrastructure investment choices, by investigating relationships between the production, distribution, and use of energy, food and water across the Mekong region. The initiative focused on the dynamic interactions that occur with the management of food production, energy supply and water use at local and regional scales. Researchers in each country are working with governments and others to explore interdependencies and the possible subsequent effects of pending national decisions, which include:

- Exploring options and implications of responses to rising sea levels in the Mekong delta
- Exploring the future of farming in northeast Thailand
- Exploring the future of the Tonle Sap area, under diverse upstream conditions
- Exploring the future of rubber plantations in Yunnan
- Exploring development options for the Nam Ngum basin in Lao PDR
- Exploring the implications of major trans-boundary infrastructure, such as rail system

It is a key part of a policy research initiative called *Exploring Mekong Region Futures*, which is a collaboration between Mekong country institutes, supported by the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID), and CSIRO.

During this third workshop, research results were presented and opportunities to discuss the results and potential policy implications were provided. Six short presentations covered hydrological, agricultural and livelihood related questions from northeast Thailand, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Vietnam, and Yunnan/China. 27 participants (including 5 women) came mainly from Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand, Laos and China. Mr. Khim Sophanna, CEDAC's Senior Program Advisor, participated actively in the discussion and acted as the reporter of the break-away group discussion of all six presentations.

