



PROJECT-BASED ACTION PLAN
FOR IMPLEMENTING THE
**STRATEGY FOR BASIN-WIDE
ENVIRONMENTAL
MANAGEMENT**
FOR ENVIRONMENTAL ASSETS
OF REGIONAL IMPORTANCE
2021–2025

JUNE 2021



Project-Based Action Plan for Implementing the Strategy for Basin-wide Environmental Management for Environmental Assets of Regional Importance 2021–2025

June 2021

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ADPC	Asian Disaster Preparedness Center
AF	United Nations Adaptation Fund
ARCC	Adaptation and Resilience to Climate Change
ASEAN	Association of South-East Asian Nations
BF	Basket Fund (of the Mekong River Commission)
BFMS	Basin-wide Fisheries Management Strategy
BDS	Basin Development Strategy
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CIFOR	Center for International Forestry Research
EGEM	Expert Group on Environmental Management
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FFI	Flora and Fauna International
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GEF	The Global Environment Facility
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
GMS	Greater Mekong Subregion
ICRAF	World Agroforestry
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
LMB	Lower Mekong River Basin
LMCWRCC	Lancang-Mekong Water Resources Cooperation Center
MC	Member Country (of the Mekong River Commission)
MLC	Mekong-Lancang Cooperation (also Lancang-Mekong Cooperation)
MRB-IF	Mekong River Basin Indicator Framework
MRC	Mekong River Commission
NTFP	Non-timber forest products
PBAP	Project-based Action Plan
PES	Payments for ecosystem services
REDD+	Reduction of Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation
SBEM	Strategy for Basin-wide Management for Environmental Assets of Regional Importance
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SEI	Stockholm Environment Institute
SMART	Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool
TBPA	Transboundary Protected Area
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WCS	World Conservation Society
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature

1. Introduction

1.1 Context and rationale for regional cooperation on the management of priority environmental assets of regional importance

The Mekong River Basin is one of the most biodiverse regions on earth. Its ecosystems and the services they provide are of immense importance to the 70 million people currently living in the basin and to future generations to come. The Basin comprises a wide range of environmental assets with a multitude of habitat types ranging from forested mountains to lowland swamps, plains, floodplains, and coastal areas among others. These different ecosystems provide extensive provisioning, regulating, supporting and cultural ecosystem services, especially for people in vulnerable situations who depend more directly on natural resources for their livelihoods and wellbeing.

The environmental assets of the Basin, and consequently the ecosystem services they provide, are under threat. The 2018 State of the Basin Report (SOBR 2018) identifies the changing flow regime, reduced sediment transport, loss and degradation of wetlands, pressure on fisheries, and the number of threatened and exotic species as particular cause for concern and requiring urgent attention. As a result, the Basin Development Strategy 2021–2030 (BDS 2021–2030) seeks to guide all actors working on water resources management and development in the Basin to contribute to *“Maintaining the ecological function of the Mekong River Basin”* (Strategic Priority 1).

The focus on maintaining the ecological function of the Mekong River Basin supports the commitment made by countries of the Lower Mekong River Basin (LMB) through the 1995 Mekong Agreement, *“To protect the environment, natural resources, aquatic life and conditions, and ecological balance of the Mekong River Basin from pollution or other harmful effects resulting from any development plans and uses of water and related resources in the Basin”* (Article 3). This commitment recognizes that the environment of the Basin is a shared resource, that actions in one part of the Basin have the potential to affect outcomes in other parts of the Basin, and that the social and economic development of the Basin and its people depend on the good functioning of the underlying environmental resource base.

Threats to environmental assets can be transboundary, just as are the ecosystem services derived from them. This requires cooperation between countries to achieve the objectives of the Mekong Agreement and deliver on the Strategic Priorities of the BDS 2021–2030, which are oriented towards the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The SDG that is most relevant to the protection and conservation of environmental assets is SDG 15: Life of Land. It aims to *protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat diversification and halt and reverse land degradation and biodiversity*. Its scope encompasses both freshwater areas (i.e. rivers and wetlands) and terrestrial areas, and brings together the commitments and joint efforts that countries are making under various international treaties, including the *Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)* and its *Nagoya Protocol* on access to genetic resources and their fair and equitable use, the *Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance* and the *Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species*. In addition to SDG 15, other SDGs such as *No Poverty (SDG 1)*, *Zero Hunger (SDG 2)*, *Good Health and Well-being (SDG 3)*, *Gender Equality (SDG 5)*, *Clean Water and Sanitation (Goal 6)*, *Reduced Inequalities (SDG 10)*, *Climate Action (Goal*

13), *Life Below Water* (SDG 14) and *Partnerships for the Goals* (SDG 17) are also supported through joint action to protect and conserve the environmental assets of the Mekong River Basin.



This need for joint action to leverage the benefits and mitigate the risks to environmental assets led Member Countries of the Mekong River Commission (MRC) to prepare the Strategy for Basin-wide Environmental Management (SBEM) for environmental assets of regional importance (REAs). Focusing initially on 12 priority environmental assets, the SBEM provides a strategic whole-of-basin focus to managing environmental assets that are important at a basin scale.

The need for effective regional action on environmental assets has only grown more urgent with the emergence of COVID-19 and the economic uncertainty resulting from the pandemic. The transfer of novel zoonotic diseases from animal to human hosts is only becoming more likely with habitat fragmentation, resource competition, the international trade in wildlife, and inequality pushing vulnerable people to bushmeat and hunting to meet their food and livelihood needs. Sustainable management of wetlands, watersheds and other environmental assets can help mitigate the risk of future disease outbreaks and support more resilient communities.

1.2 The Basin Development Strategy 2021–2030 and environmental protection

The Mekong Basin Development Strategy 2021–2030 recognizes that pressure on the environment is increasing and that the Basin’s climate is changing, and that there are significant inequalities between different groups in society. It guides all actors involved in Mekong water-related issues towards improvements in the environmental, social and economic state of the Mekong River Basin with a focus on:

- more proactive regional planning;
- coordination of basin operational management;
- modernization of data and information acquisition, processing and sharing;
- more integrated Mekong-Lancang management arrangements.

The BDS 2021–2030 is formulated in accordance with the Mekong River Basin Indicator Framework (MRB-IF), outlining five Strategic Priorities, 11 Outcomes and 30 Outputs to be achieved by 2030. While focused on Strategic Priority 1, implementation of the SBEM will support the achievement of Outcomes and Outputs in all dimensions (**Figure 1**).

For SP1, the focus of SBEM implementation is on improving the management of priority regional environmental assets (REAs) (both wetlands and watershed areas) by integrating their requirements and understanding trade-offs in water resource development and management decision-making while also mitigating the risks to riverine and wetland habitats from those developments. For SP2, supporting food security through the conservation of fish habitats and addressing gender and vulnerability concerns resulting from changes to the environment is critical. For SP3, facilitating investments in projects that support and leverage the economic benefits from ecosystem services including through nature-based

solutions and ecotourism will enhance optimal and sustainable development. For SP4, protecting wetlands and watersheds including through transboundary projects can play a key role in adapting to climate change. For SP5, significant joint investment projects on wetland restoration and watershed protection including those that help mitigate floods and droughts, and strengthening partnerships, including through sustainable funding mechanisms, underpin progress in the other dimensions.

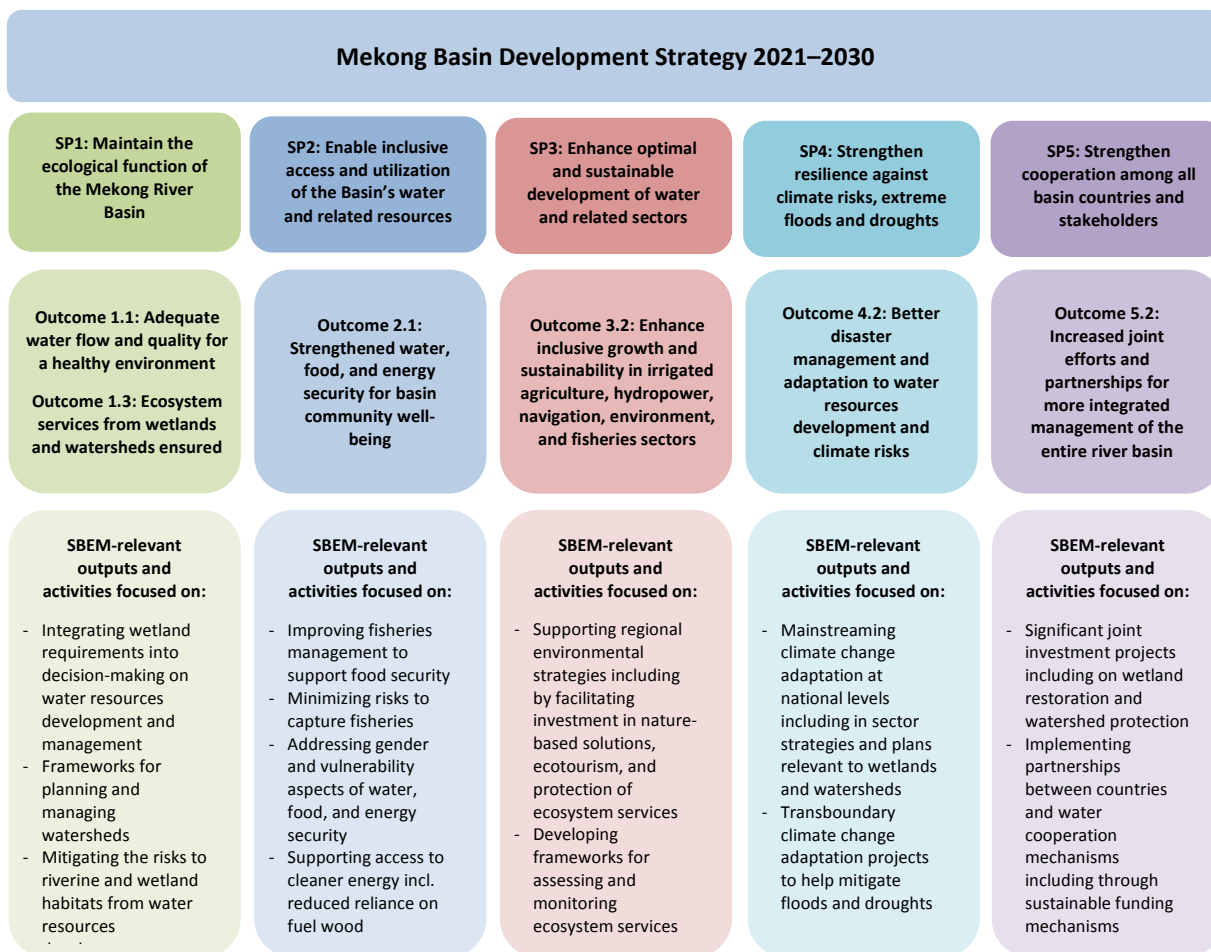


Figure 1. Key elements of the Basin Development Strategy 2021–2030 guiding implementation of the SBEM

1.3 Strategic intent and key components of the Strategy for Basin-wide Environmental Management

The objective of the SBEM is to: *identify strategic priorities and related priority actions for the protection, development, and management of the 12 prioritized REAs importance in the LMB for implementation at the national, transboundary, and regional levels.* This will allow to provide a common framework to support coordinated action by all relevant parties and takes an Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) and ecosystem services-based approach to environmental asset protection.

1.3.1 A common framework to support coordinated action by all relevant parties

The SBEM seeks to provide strategic direction to the management of priority environmental assets that are important for maintaining the ecological function and related ecosystem services of the Basin. To this end, it aims to help guide the actions of: government agencies at the national, provincial and local levels, regional organizations and cooperation initiatives, Development Partners, international and national environmental and research organizations, and other civil society organizations, research institutions, and

community groups. Aligning the work of all parties to common goals and outcomes through the Strategic Framework of the SBEM (**Figure 2**) will enable complementary action and minimize duplication and wasted efforts. A common strategic framework provides guidance for targeted project identification and supports the exploitation of synergies to leverage the complementary strengths of different actors.

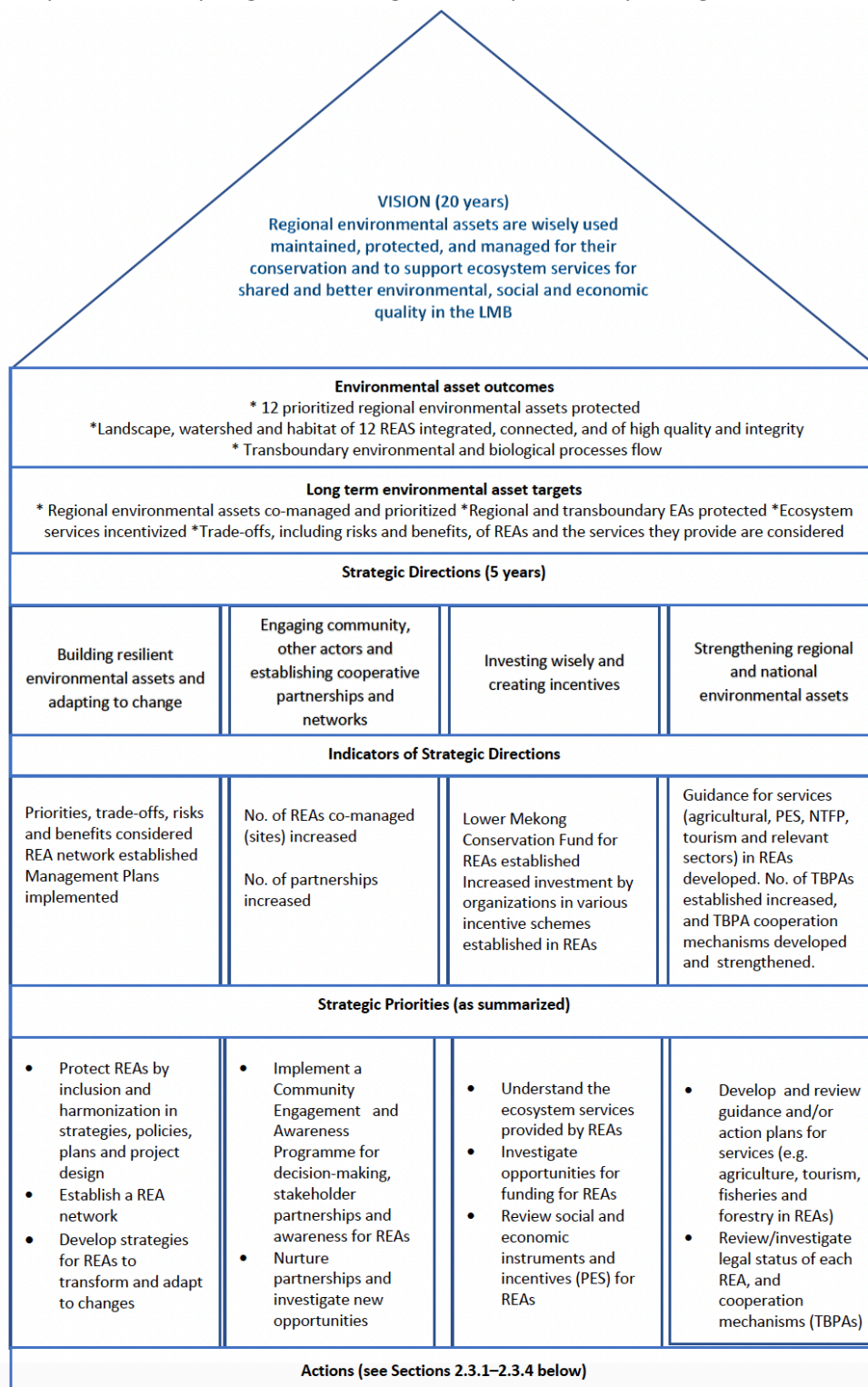


Figure 2. The Strategic Framework of the Strategy for Basin-wide Environmental Management for environmental assets of regional importance

The SBEM identifies a 20-year vision and four strategic directions covering 10 Strategic Priorities and 33 Strategic Actions. The strategic directions are:

- Building resilient environmental assets and adapting to change
- Engaging community, other actors and establishing cooperative partnerships and networks
- Investing widely and creating incentives;
- Strengthening regional and national environmental assets.

The first strategic direction is essentially about focusing the management of environmental assets on the priorities, risks, and benefits that matter most through the primary tool available to guide action for each asset (i.e. the asset management plan). The second strategic direction is about nurturing partnerships and facilitating cooperation at all levels. The third strategic direction focuses on identifying and accessing the resources and investment mechanisms necessary to undertake action, while the final strategic direction focuses on cooperation between regional and national levels, and developing and implementing guidance and capacity to support effective measures at all levels.

1.3.2 Guided by Strategic Priorities implemented through Strategic Actions

The 10 strategic priorities of the SBEM will be implemented through 33 strategic actions undertaken over the five-year period of the strategy: 2021–2025. The SBEM Strategic Actions (Annex I) can be categorized into several different types of activities:

- a) Conducting studies to review, assess, monitor, and evaluate (Strategic Actions: 1.1.1, 1.2.1, 1.2.3, 2.1.3, 2.2.2, 2.2.3, 2.2.4, 3.1.1, 3.3.1, 4.2.1, 4.2.2, 4.2.3)
- b) Identifying, planning, and prioritizing specific conservation or management measures (Strategic Actions: 1.1.2, 1.1.5, 1.2.2, 1.3.1, 1.3.2, 1.3.4, 2.1.2, 4.1.2)
- c) Providing guidance and building capacity (Strategic Actions: 1.1.3, 1.3.3, 2.1.4, 3.1.2, 4.1.1, 4.1.3)
- d) Promoting awareness and/or mainstreaming actions in sectoral plans (Strategic Actions: 1.1.4, 2.1.1)
- e) Fundraising, mobilizing resources, or implementing different economic models to support conservation measures (Strategic Actions: 2.2.1, 3.2.1, 3.2.2).

At a regional level, the strategy essentially coordinates, guides, supports, and facilitates in recognizing that the on-ground implementation is largely undertaken at national and local levels through the legal, institutional, governance, and policy mechanisms in each country. The SBEM also outlines that specific projects will be identified in a Project-based Action Plan (PBAP) to prioritize and bring together, where relevant, the strategic actions in a coherent and integrated programme of work in order to provide greater detail on actions needed to achieve the outcomes of the strategy.

1.3.3 A focus on 12 prioritized environmental assets of regional importance

The SBEM is focused on the environmental management of the priority REAs. Twelve assets have been prioritized (**Table 1** and **Figure 3**) from an initial list of more than 120 based on their ecological and hydrological importance, their rareness or uniqueness, the importance of the ecosystem services they provide, and their global, and regional or transboundary importance. The definition of environmental asset adopted in the SBEM is:

Naturally occurring areas that provide environmental 'functions' and 'services' for sustainable generations (current and future) of the Lower Mekong Basin.

The environmental assets selected were drawn from an extensive list that included wetlands of international importance (Ramsar sites), UNESCO Biosphere Reserves, United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage Sites, national protected areas (including terrestrial, aquatic and marine protected areas), national parks, wildlife sanctuaries, water-bird areas, Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) biodiversity conservation corridors,¹ Protected landscapes, and National Heritage Parks.

Table 1. List of agreed priority regional environmental assets

Cambodia	Lao PDR	Thailand	Viet Nam
1. Tonle Sap Multiple Use Area	1. Beung Kiat Ngong Ramsar Wetland	1. Lower Songkhram River	1. Yok Don National Park
2. Virachey National Park	2. Nam Et Phoulei National Park	2. Nong Bong Kai, Wiang Nong Lhom and mainstream Mekong of Chiang Rai	2. Mui Ca Mau National Park
3. Sre Pok Wildlife Sanctuary	3. Xe Champhone Ramsar Wetland	3. Khao Yai and Thap Lan National Park (Dong Phayayen-Khaoyai Forest Complex)	3. U Minh Thuong National Park

¹ GMS Biodiversity Conservation Corridors (www.gms-eoc.org/biodiversity-conservation-corridors-initiative)

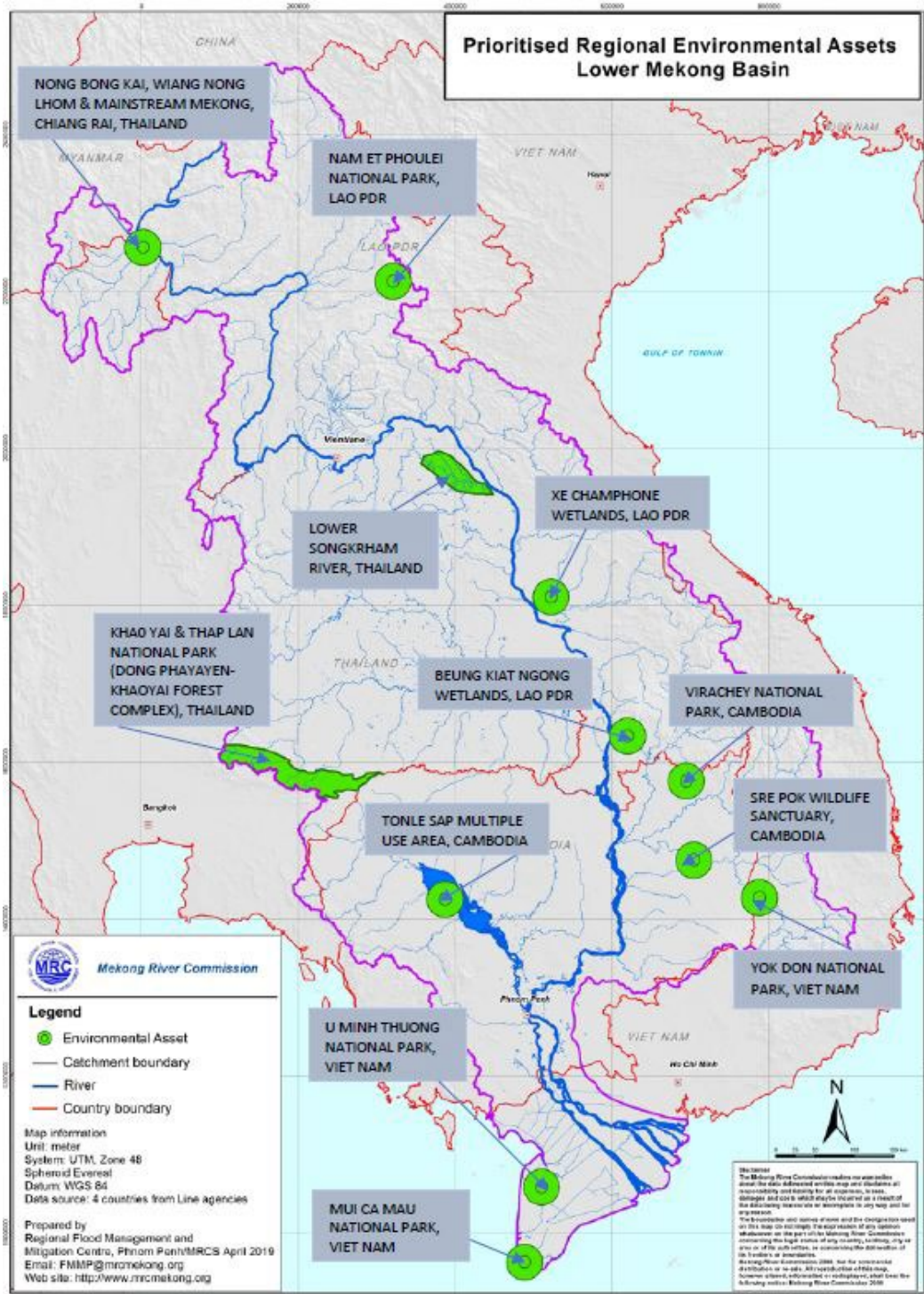


Figure 3. Map of the agreed priority regional environmental assets in the Lower Mekong River Basin. The list of 12 priority environmental assets consists of areas located in the upper parts of catchments (4 assets) and lower catchment areas, mostly rivers, streams, and wetlands (8 assets), some of which are more susceptible to transboundary threats than others due to their location. The 12 prioritized REAs encompass:

Nationally designated protected areas such as wildlife sanctuaries and national parks, generally in mountainous areas, that provide the last known habitat for important endangered species including tigers, cloud leopards, and elephants, as well as old growth forests and rare flora. These include areas

that are adjacent to protected areas in a neighbouring country, providing important biodiversity corridors and watershed protection in the tributaries of the Mekong River. These areas are often home to ethnic communities reliant on the forest for subsistence. Some are also listed as Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) Heritage Parks and/or United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Natural World Heritage Areas.

- **National parks, Ramsar wetlands and multi-use areas that include important floodplain, wetland and riverine habitats** that support a high diversity of fish species, water birds, and migratory species, and serve important hydrological functions for flood and drought protection, as well as other ecosystem services for local, national, and regional communities.

In total, the 12 prioritized REAs cover almost 6% (47,202 km²) of the total area of the Mekong River Basin (810,000 km²) and more than 7.5% of the LMB (624,814 km²). Although the scope of the SBEM covers these 12 mutually agreed environmental assets, it is expected that this list will be expanded over time, subject to review of the implementation of the strategy and availability of resources.

1.3.4 An integrated water resources management and ecosystem services approach

The SBEM emphasizes Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) and ecosystem service-based approaches to the protection and conservation of the Basin's priority REAs. Accordingly, conservation measures are designed and implemented taking into consideration the intersectoral nature of risks, threats and benefits, and the trade-offs inherent in water resources development decisions. Hence, policies, plans, and projects need to be designed to protect and conserve environmental assets from multiple threats and pressures arising in multiple sectors and at multiple scales. Measures should also include those that mitigate against the harmful effects of development activities while leveraging positive benefits, for example, from ecotourism. Landscape-scale approaches and those that adequately recognize and provide a means for the appropriate valuation of ecosystem services are to be encouraged and incorporated into decision-making.

An ecosystem services or natural capital approach recognizes that environmental systems play a fundamental role in a country's economic output and social well-being, and as reflected in the 20-year Vision of the SBEM, this approach supports shared and better environmental, social and economic quality in the LMB. This approach also supports consideration and development of economic incentives such as Payments for Ecosystem Services (PES)² and benefit sharing, because it improves the capacity to estimate appropriate values for those services and design mechanisms to facilitate an equitable distribution of gains. Other opportunities supported by this approach include the potential for carbon offsets, particularly from forest management and protection, and biodiversity offsets through public-private partnerships with developers.

² PES is a conservation tool whereby the beneficiaries of ecosystem services, from watershed protection and forest conservation to carbon sequestration, reward those whose land provides these services with subsidies or market payments.

Box 1. Ecosystem services provided by Lower Mekong River Basin wetlands and watersheds

Provisioning services – food from fish, other biota and agriculture, fuel wood, timber and non-timber forest products (including for construction, tools and handicrafts), medicines

Regulating services – water regulation (including flood control), groundwater recharge, removal of pollutants, waste treatment, erosion protection, natural hazard protection, carbon storage

Cultural services – spiritual, religious, cultural and historical values, aesthetic appreciation of natural features (including iconic wildlife), educational, training and recreational opportunities

Supporting services – habitat for resident and transient species, breeding, spawning and nursing grounds, soil formation and sediment retention, store of genetic material (biodiversity).

1.3.5 Links to the Basin-wide Fisheries Management Strategy

Implementing the SBEM will support the achievement of the Strategic Goal of the Basin-wide Fisheries Management Strategy (BFMS) for the *responsible and sustainable use of living aquatic resources*. The BFMS 2018–2022 consists of 10 Strategic Priorities and Actions encompassing monitoring, analysis, modelling and assessment, conservation of key habitats, fisheries enhancement, fisheries co-management and transboundary fisheries management, and the development of fish-friendly irrigation and sustainable aquaculture. The SBEM is closely aligned to the BFMS on all these priorities but especially on the conservation and enhancement of key fish habitats.

The priority REAs identified in the SBEM include some key fish habitats. Given the importance of fish to basin food security, the BDS 2021–2030 calls for other key fish habitats to be recognized as priority REAs, and the effectiveness of conservation measures at key habitats to be evaluated together with additional monitoring to inform fish stock assessments and improved understanding of socio-economic issues related to fisheries. To ensure efficiency and effectiveness, implementing the SBEM will need to be coordinated with activities conducted under the BFMS 2018–2022, and projects may be identified that serve the purposes of both basin-wide strategies.

1.4 The current situation, issues, and challenges

With the endorsement of the SBEM, for the first time, the Member Countries of the MRC have a regional strategy focused specifically on the priority environmental assets of the LMB. This strategy is in alignment with the broader GMS environment focus area with its integrated approach to strategic planning and its emphasis on the valuation of natural capital and ecosystem services. It seeks to address the decline in environmental conditions throughout the Basin as documented in the 2018 State of the Basin Report (SOBR 2018) and elsewhere, by bringing a coherent regional perspective that recognizes the interconnected nature of basin ecosystems and the transboundary benefits that arise from the ecosystem services they provide.

To date, management of the Basin's environmental assets under the framework of the MRC and *1995 Mekong Agreement* has been largely a national responsibility with limited regional coordination or focus on joint action, the identification of synergies, and the consideration of management actions within the context of both transboundary threats and benefits. Environmental assets have been essentially managed as individual entities, rather than as connected nodes in a broader basin network. Ecosystem services

provided by these assets have not necessarily been considered in relation to their contribution to basin-wide outcomes.

This national focus gives rise to a number of challenges. A review of legal and institutional frameworks for managing environmental assets at a national level identified the following limitations or challenges:

- the lack of supporting regulations and compliance activities. For example, regulations on environmental services and compensation are too general and unclear to be effective;
- difficulties in ensuring strong coordination between different ministries due to their competing interests and goals;
- insufficient data and information available and thus effective monitoring programmes, leading to a lack of accountability;
- the lack of clear boundaries for efficient management and regulation plans
- difficulties in managing invasive species;
- difficulties in controlling illegal activities such as logging, hunting, trapping and fishing;
- land encroachment and migration;
- land use conflicts;
- a lack of human and institutional capacity, funding, and a clear commitment to sustainable development.

These limitations or challenges are largely national issues to resolve. Nevertheless, a coordinated basin-scale approach to strengthening the institutional, governance, and regulatory landscape for environmental conservation can support national governments and other stakeholders to resolve them. Many of the issues are common to more than one country, and some countries have made more progress than others. This provides scope for regional capacity building, which can provide win-win outcomes for all parties, given the transboundary nature of the ecosystem services that these assets provide and the transboundary threats they face.

In addition to these national challenges, without an integrated framework at the basin scale to link changes in the conditions of priority environmental assets with the planning and decision-making processes for water resources development and management, it is difficult to make progress in discussions about trade-offs and benefit sharing, either between countries or between sectors. In part, this has been due to a lack of a previous official agreement on determining the highest priority REAs, and also because the systems, tools, and methodologies for identifying and assessing changes in environmental assets as a result of water resources management and development have not been available. The SBEM offers an opportunity to address these issues through the design and implementation of an integrated programme of work.

1.5 Need and rationale for a Project-based Action Plan to help implement the SBEM

The SBEM needs to be translated into some practical bodies of work that can be organized, planned, and implemented by a wide range of potential implementing parties. An Action Plan to undertake this work therefore needs to focus on identifying and describing the specific projects that will contribute most effectively to the Vision and Outcomes that the SBEM seeks to achieve.

Projects that are designed and implemented only at a local level for each environmental asset are unlikely to best meet the needs of the Basin as a whole. This is because they will focus more on local needs and threats, with less consideration of the functioning of the whole basin ecosystem, including of the importance of ecosystem services that contribute to basin-wide outcomes, and as the environmental assets affected by basin-scale and transboundary threats. A series of disconnected and uncoordinated site-based projects is also likely to lead to some duplication of effort, inefficiency and competition for resources between projects. The highest priority local needs may not be the highest priority basin needs.

This basin-wide PBAP seeks to help address these issues by providing a coordinated and coherent set of complementary projects that together help achieve more across all the high priority environmental assets as an integrated programme of work than would otherwise be possible through each separate project. To this end, the set of projects includes the following:

- the development and application of (or preferably the use of existing) tools, systems, and methodologies that are applicable to more than one environmental asset;
- monitoring and evaluation programmes to help fill regional knowledge gaps and inform management across more than one environmental asset;
- Integrated studies and assessments encompassing more than one environmental asset;
- the development of coherent and complementary management frameworks with minimum standards, criteria and governance arrangements to facilitate streamlined access to international finance and support regional planning;
- knowledge sharing and capacity building at a community level between groups with stewardship over different environmental assets and in different countries;
- coordinated management and implementation of on-ground works at more than one environmental asset;
- mitigation measures that address threats or risks to more than one environmental asset.

The projects in this PBAP are designed to support reform of the institutional, governance, and regulatory arrangements currently operating to protect and conserve the environmental assets in each country in order to address the national limitations and challenges identified in **Section 1.4**. The coordinated programme of work (i.e. the set of projects) that this PBAP describes will help ensure that the work of a range of different actors is complementary and that different projects are sequenced, taking into account interdependencies and the capacity for different projects to leverage the results of other projects. In addition to the 1995 Mekong Agreement, implementing the PBAP will support the Member Countries of the MRC to meet their international commitments under the *Convention on Biological Diversity*, the *United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change* (including the *Paris Agreement*), the *Convention to Combat Land Degradation, Desertification and Drought*, and the *Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance*. Most importantly, a coordinated programme of work provides access to larger-scale funding opportunities with the potential to make a material difference to basin-wide environmental outcomes, including by marketing the work to a broader range of potential donors and Development Partners such as private sector and philanthropic contributors.

1.6 The objective of the PBAP for implementing the SBEM

This PBAP for implementing the SBEM seeks to address the need for a coordinated programme of work aligned with the Strategic Directions of the SBEM. The objective of the programme of work described here is as follows:

Objective: *To improve the condition of priority environmental assets of regional importance within healthy and productive landscapes, supporting the provision of transboundary ecosystem services and the livelihoods and wellbeing of basin communities.*

To achieve this objective, the PBAP will:

- provide guidance to relevant parties working on environmental conservation in the Basin on an integrated programme of work that has the potential to enhance the conditions of the basin environment;
- facilitate partnerships between international, regional, and national organizations towards common objectives;
- encourage all parties to work together on areas of comparative advantage in a complementary way;
- emphasize an ecosystem services-based approach that focuses on environmental conservation and sustainable resource use to improve the livelihoods and wellbeing of current and future generations.

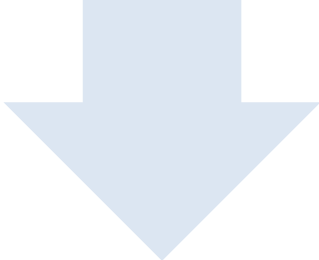
The programme of work described in this PBAP is clearly not exhaustive and is only a first step towards achieving Strategic Priority 1 of the Basin Development Strategy: *to maintain the ecological function of the Mekong River Basin*. Further complementary projects may be identified, developed and implemented and all parties are encouraged to do so consistent with the BDS 2021–2030. It is important to look for synergies and opportunities to leverage better outcomes by building on existing activities and initiatives. The projects identified in this PBAP will also be further developed in consultation with implementing partners, Development Partners and funding bodies.

2. Methodology and approach

PBAP was developed collaboratively through four main steps, where all relevant parties contributed their input to project identification, development and prioritization, which were designed to help achieve the Strategic Priorities of the SBEM and the BDS 2021–2030.


Step 1: Project identification

The core part of a PBAP are the projects that are identified and put forward for funding. To identify a list of potential projects, Member Countries and other key stakeholders were invited to nominate project ideas. A review of national, regional, and international examples of relevant projects was also undertaken by screening against the priorities and strategic direction of the BDS 2021–2030, the BFMS, Mekong Climate Change Adaptation Strategy and Action Plan (MASAP) and the SBEM.

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- (a) Review of national strategies and plans and Development Partner priorities
 - (b) Review of similar project types from other initiatives, e.g. the Global Environment Facility (GEF), Green Climate Fund (GCF) and the Adaptation Fund.
 - (c) Proposals received from Member Countries and others such as International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), World Wildlife Fund (WWF), Conservation International (CI) and Flora and Fauna International (FFI).

Step 2: Refinement and development of project descriptions

Once an initial list of projects was identified, it was reviewed and refined by the Expert Group on Environmental Management (EGEM) to ensure that it covered the most relevant areas and issues to basin countries. Project descriptions and key project data were developed for this list of 15 projects. The information was made available in a standard template or Project Information Note to a level of detail sufficient to support prioritization.

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- (a) Expert review and refinement of project proposals by Member Countries through the Expert Group on Environmental Management (EGEM)
 - (b) Project descriptions with key information prepared based on international experience/similar project examples

Step 3: Project prioritization

The initial list of projects was reduced to 13 projects grouped into three bundles of the highest regional priorities through a collaborative prioritization process at both national and regional levels. Projects were considered and scored using the process and criteria outlined in the Concept Note and based on the project descriptions prepared at the previous step. Input from a range of stakeholders helped inform the prioritization and final project development.

- Determination of the highest priority projects from a national perspective at national workshops
- Regional review and confirmation of priorities by EGEM
- Consultation with Development Partners, non-governmental organizations, and other key stakeholders.



Step 4: Finalization and endorsement

The final list of the highest priority projects was further developed based on consultation and Member Country feedback and incorporated into the draft PBAP for review and advice by the Expert Group for Environmental Management, prior to consideration by the Joint Committee of the MRC.

- Final development of project descriptions and key data based on consultation and Member Country feedback
- Review and advice by the Expert Group for Environmental Management.

3. Identified high priority projects

3.1 Scope of projects

This Action Plan outlines an initial set of projects as an integrated programme of work across the 12 priority REAs in order to enhance or maintain the environmental values of the assets as well as the flow of ecosystem services to other areas of the Basin and the population more broadly. The programme of work includes projects that:

- encompass all 12 of the priority REAs;
- address the key ecosystem service benefits and threats identified for each environmental asset;
- take a regional perspective including by emphasising a transboundary focus wherever possible (but not only in areas adjacent to national borders), enhancing regional cooperation mechanisms, and providing opportunities for country-to-country capacity building;
- build on and complement previous or existing projects implemented by the MRC, Member Countries, Development Partners and others including those supported by the Global Environment Facility and other global funds;
- are scalable to match the level of potential resource availability and enable the implementation of pilots in advance of full project roll-out;
- provide flexibility for further development in consultation with Member Countries and interested implementing partners.

This Action Plan includes a brief project description, the preliminary project results chain including outcomes, outputs and activities, the ecosystem services and environmental assets targeted by the project, and the threats that each project seeks to address. The scope of each project is not limited to the targeted environmental assets nor to actions within the boundaries of these assets. To adequately address the threats to the basin environment, it is necessary to take a broader landscape-scale approach, whereby the environmental asset is part of an integrated ecological, livelihood, and production system. The scope of the projects therefore encompasses:

- Protected areas, especially transboundary protected areas
- Surrounding landscapes
- Important connecting corridors especially those of transboundary importance
- Threatening processes, which may originate at some distance from the assets
- Communities that benefit (local, basin, global).

As a basis for discussion, potential partner organizations in the implementation of these projects are also identified. These organizations have not yet made any commitments to be involved in the further development and implementation of any of these projects. They have been identified based on an understanding of their relative comparative advantage, focus areas, and mandates, but this will be revised following discussion, negotiation, and agreement with relevant parties. As a guide (and only as a starting point for discussion), each organization was identified as being potentially most suitable in each of the following areas:

- Water resources – MRC, Lancang-Mekong Water Resources Cooperation Center (LMCWRCC), World Bank, International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN); World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI), Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC)

- Economic values and linkages – World Bank, GMS, Conservation International, SEI, ADPC, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
- Protected areas and biodiversity – IUCN, WWF, World Conservation Society (WCS), Conservation International, Flora and Fauna International (FFI)
- Legal, policy –UNEP, World Bank
- Agriculture and livelihoods – World Agroforestry–Center for International Forestry Research (ICRAF–CIFOR), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), World Bank.

3.2 List of projects

1. Valuing natural capital and ecosystem services provided by priority environmental assets of regional importance as part of a connected river basin

Objective: To provide a common basin-wide approach for incorporating the value of natural capital and ecosystem services in development planning and decisions, and for tracking change over time in the contribution of priority environmental assets to human wellbeing.

2. Limits of acceptable change and environmental flow and connectivity requirements for wetlands to inform water resources development and management

Objective: To provide a mechanism to identify critical impacts from water resources development and management on wetland health and extent, and inform a discussion on trade-offs and environmental flow mitigation.

3. Adaptation to climate change for vulnerable biodiversity through habitat protection, restoration, range extension, and transboundary movement

Objective: To understand the impacts and vulnerabilities from climate change on important biodiversity and identify and classify the habitats requiring further protection and rehabilitation to ensure sufficient range capacity and movement corridors for viable populations.

4. New or updated climate-resilient environmental asset management plans

Objective: To provide coherent and comprehensive direction to the effective management of priority environmental assets under a changing climate.

5. Regional ranger network and community capacity building

Objective: To enhance human capacities for environmental conservation and sustainable resource use in front-line staff and the communities they work in.

6. Biodiversity monitoring and data management and sharing

Objective: To support environmental conservation measures and investment decisions through improved accessibility and availability of time-series data on important biodiversity.

7. Fostering sustainable community resource use and management

Objective: To reduce overexploitation of natural resources through improved local community co-management.³

8. A basin-wide planning and management framework for watersheds

Objective: To enable improved basin-wide land-use planning and management of watersheds to support national and transboundary ecosystem services.

9. Mainstreaming conservation measures into national sector strategies and plans, and offsetting environmental impacts

Objective: To reduce the impact of economic development on the basin environment by integrating conservation measures into national, provincial and local development strategies and plans, and evaluating the potential for offsetting impacts when they cannot be avoided.

10. Conservation financing to support climate change mitigation and adaptation, and enhanced ecosystem services

Objective: To evaluate the potential use of payments for ecosystem services (PES) schemes to support environmental conservation and the continued flow of ecosystem services, and develop private sector partnerships for conservation financing and investment.

11. Generating and nurturing the enabling conditions and facilitating investment in sustainable ecotourism

Objective: To support the expansion of responsible and sustainable ecotourism throughout the Basin as an incentive for the conservation of natural capital and to provide alternative livelihoods for local communities.

12. Facilitating nature-based livelihood diversification through sustainable resource management and value chain creation in wetland, tree-based and non-timber forest product (NTFP) systems

Objective: To incentivize the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources by identifying and developing higher-value, nature-based livelihood opportunities for local communities.

13. Risk mitigation case studies from threatening processes, including invasive species, people-wildlife conflicts, fires, and water resources development

Objective: To identify, implement, and evaluate priority risk reduction measures for key threatening processes through case studies at several priority environmental assets.

Projects were identified from similar types of projects formulated and implemented both within the region and elsewhere considering the potential applicability of the project type to: (i) the primary threats faced by each of the 12 environmental assets (including threats resulting from water resources development and management); (ii) the nature of the ecosystem services that will benefit; and (iii) the effect on climate change adaptation (**Table 2**).

³ Co-management generally refers to a shared governance arrangement involving local authorities and communities in the management of environmental assets, with the degree of community participation appropriate to the local circumstances

Each project is potentially applicable to almost all priority REAs, as indicated in the tables for each project. However, due to potential budget and other resource limitations, most projects will be initially implemented as pilot projects at only a small number of environmental assets.

The proposed target environmental assets identified in **Table 3** have been identified based on consultation with partner organizations, prioritization by Member Countries, and resource availability. Project prioritization was undertaken by Member Countries considering the following criteria:

- Alignment with basin-wide strategic objectives and priorities
- Regional and basin-wide significance
- Significance and sustainability of the impact or response
- Feasibility and implementation capacity
- Demonstration utility and broader applicability.

Five to 13 projects were identified for each priority environmental asset with an equal distribution across each Member Country. This will be further considered based on resource availability during Phase I.

Table 2. Framework of benefits and threats identified in the SBEM 2021–2025 guiding project identification, development and implementation

Environmental Asset	Type	Ecosystem Service Benefits	Primary Threat Types		Specific Threats
Tonle Sap Multiple Use Area	Lower wetland area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Water and food provisioning - Culture and tourism - Nutrient supply and cycling - Important habitat/biodiversity 	Affected by local area and transboundary threats including from both the mainstream and tributaries	Climate change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Overuse of resources (fish, other aquatic animals and wood) - Illegal logging and hunting - Changes to sediment and flow regime and fish barriers due to water resources development projects - Invasive animal and plant species - Agricultural development (land conversion) and fires
Nong Bong Kai, Wiang Nong Lhom and mainstream Mekong of Chiang Rai	Lower wetland area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Culture and tourism - Food and other provisions - Important habitat/biodiversity 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dredging and rocky habitat destruction - Overuse of resources (fish and wildlife) - Changes to sediment & flow regime & fish barriers due to water resources development projects - Urban development (land conversion) - Agricultural development (land conversion)
U Minh Thuong National Park	Lower wetland area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Soil and water quality - Food, water, provisioning - Culture and tourism 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Overuse of resources (fish and other aquatic, Melaleuca forests and wildlife) - Illegal logging and hunting - Destructive fishing practices - Changes to sediment & flow regime & fish barriers due to water resources development projects - Agriculture and aquaculture development (land conversion)
Sre Pok Wildlife Sanctuary	Upper watershed area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Carbon storage - Flood and drought protection - Food provision - Culture and tourism 	Affected by local area and transboundary threats including from upstream tributaries		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Illegal logging and hunting, forest fires and invasive plants - Changes to sediment & flow regime & fish barriers due to water resources development projects - Agricultural development and mining
Beung Kiat Ngong Ramsar Wetland	Lower wetland area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Food and other provisions - Groundwater recharge - Flood mitigation - Sediment trapping - Important habitat/biodiversity 	Mostly affected by local area threats including from upstream tributaries		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Overuse of resources (fish and other aquatic animals) - Changes to sediment & flow regime & fish barriers due to water resources development projects - Agricultural development - Peat extraction
Xe Champhone Ramsar Wetland	Lower wetland area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Food and other provisions - Flood and drought mitigation - Groundwater recharge - Culture and tourism - Nutrient cycling - Sediment retention - Important habitat/biodiversity 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Overuse of resources (fish and other aquatic animals) - Changes to sediment & flow regime & fish barriers due to water resources development projects - Agricultural development (land conversion) - People-wildlife conflict
Lower Songkhram River	Lower wetland area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Food, water, other provisions - Important habitat/biodiversity 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Overuse of resources (fish) - Changes to sediment & flow regime & fish barriers due to water resources development projects - Agricultural development (land conversion) - Pollution

Environmental Asset	Type	Ecosystem Service Benefits	Primary Threat Types		Specific Threats
Mui Ca Mau National Park	Lower wetland area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Erosion protection - Food and other provisions - Culture and tourism - Carbon storage 	Mostly affected by local area threats		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Overuse of resources (fish and other aquatic animals) - Changes to sediment & flow regime & fish barriers due to water resources development projects - Agriculture and aquaculture development
Virachey National Park	Upper watershed area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Watershed/flood protection - Carbon storage - Habitat & cultural services 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Illegal logging and hunting and forest fires - Changes to sediment & flow regime & fish barriers due to water resources development projects - Agricultural development (land conversion)
Nam Et Phoulei National Park	Upper watershed area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Food and handicrafts provisioning - Culture and tourism - Headwaters of important tributaries/streams of the Mekong River - Carbon storage and climate services 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Overuse of resources (wildlife) - Changes to sediment & flow regime & fish barriers due to water resources development projects - Agricultural development and mining - People-wildlife conflict
Khao Yai and Thap Lan National Park (Dong Phayayen-Khaoyai Forest Complex)	Upper watershed area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Carbon storage - Important habitat/biodiversity - Flood and drought mitigation - Culture and tourism 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Overuse of resources (timber and wildlife) - Road construction and pollution - Illegal hunting - Invasive alien species
Yok Don National Park	Upper watershed area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Food, water, other provisions - Flood mitigation - Erosion protection - Culture and tourism - Climate regulation 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Overuse of resources (timber and wildlife) - Changes to sediment & flow regime & fish barriers due to water resources development projects - Illegal logging - Agriculture development

Project title:		1. Valuing natural capital and ecosystem services provided by priority environmental assets of regional importance (REAs) as part of a connected river basin					
Project description						Environmental Assets	
<p>Understanding the value of the stock of natural capital and the flow of ecosystem services provided by environmental assets as part of a broader connected river basin can play an important role in securing their protection. A rigorous and scientifically robust approach to valuing natural capital and ecosystem services in monetary terms helps ensure that the potential costs and trade-offs of development activities are factored into development decisions, and the return on investment from conservation measures can be justified in the allocation of scarce budgetary resources. Valuing ecosystem services also provides a basis for mechanisms to share the costs and benefits of their protection including through payments for ecosystem services (PES) schemes, and for guidance to setting acceptable limits of change for local, national and regional communities. Building on previous work of the Mekong Adaptation and Resilience to Climate Change (ARCC), this project will: (i) develop a methodology and toolbox for valuing natural capital and ecosystem services for wetland and watershed areas of the Mekong River Basin; (ii) apply the methodology to a baseline assessment of the value of natural capital and ecosystem services in the 12 priority environmental assets of regional importance (REAs) and surrounding landscapes; and (iii) operationalize the ongoing monitoring and periodic assessment of the value of natural capital and ecosystem services provided by the priority regional environmental assets (REAs) and basin processes. The methodology will encompass provisioning, regulating, supporting and cultural ecosystem services. However, it will prioritize the most significant ones based on overall value and contribution to a healthy connected river basin and supported by the most scientifically robust estimation techniques with tangible and easily understood metrics. The approach developed will need to establish unitary measures for marginal changes in natural capital stocks and ecosystem services as a basis for the formation and exchange of property rights (e.g. carbon credits based in tonnes of carbon sequestered per hectare of forest maintained; or tonnes of sediment runoff per hectare of watershed area rehabilitated) at market values. Methods for monitoring and valuing changes will need to be compatible with relevant international standards and best practice, and to be cost-effective to implement at multiple scales and sensitive to both development and climate change drivers.</p>						<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tonle Sap Multiple Use Area 2. Nong Bong Kai, Wiang Nong Lhom and mainstream Mekong of Chiang Rai 3. U Minh Thuong National Park 4. Sre Pok Wildlife Sanctuary 5. Beung Kiat Ngong Ramsar Wetland 6. Xe Champhone Ramsar Wetland 7. Lower Songkhram River 8. Mui Ca Mau National Park 9. Virachey National Park 10. Nam Et Phoulei National Park 11. Khao Yai and Thap Lan National Park (Dong Phrayayen-Khaoyai Forest Complex) 12. Yok Don National Park 	
Project Outcomes		Project Outputs		Key Activities		Ecosystem Services Targeted	
1.	Capacity to periodically estimate the economic value of natural capital and ecosystem services throughout the Lower Mekong River Basin (LMB)	a.	Valuation framework/ methodology for natural capital and ecosystem services for use in informing development and conservation investment decisions	i.	Review of best practice and relevant international standards	Carbon sequestration Flood regulation Sediment transport/erosion control Water quality and quantity Groundwater recharge Biological resources (provisioning and genetic resources) Amenity and use values (for current and future generations)	
		b.	Monitoring system to support periodic valuation of natural capital and ecosystem services	i.	Funding for ongoing monitoring	Threats Addressed Overuse of resources (fish, timber, wildlife) Changes to sediment & flow regime & fish barriers due to hydropower/irrigation Agriculture, aquaculture and urban development (land conversion); pollution	
2.	An understanding of the value of natural capital and ecosystem services provided by the 12 priority environmental assets	c.	Baseline valuation of natural capital and the key ecosystem services provided by each priority regional environmental asset	i.	Application of methodology and a toolbox based on national circumstances, incl. data collection, to 12 priority regional environmental assets	Potential Project Technical Lead	
				ii.	Preparation of a technical report based on four country reports	World Bank, MRC, LMCWRCC	
				iii.		Potential Partner/Executing Organizations	
						Phase I and II Timeframe	
						5 years	
						Indicative Budget	
						Phase I: \$0.5 million Phase II: \$3.0 million Phase III: \$8.0 million	

				Support of production and management of datasets for each environmental asset		
Building on Previous/Existing Work:		USAID Mekong Adaptation and Resilience to Climate Change (Project GEF-6 Natural capital Accounting Project Thailand WWF valuing rivers initiative)		Outputs Contribute to SBEM Projects:	2. Wetland limits of acceptable change 4. Management plans for environmental assets 8. Watershed management framework 10. Conservation finance and private sector partnerships 12. Nature-based livelihoods	
Project title:	2. Limits of acceptable change and environmental flow and connectivity requirements for wetlands to inform water resources development and management					
Project description						Environmental Assets
At present, there is no mechanism to consider the trade-offs on priority REAs such as wetlands as a result of water resources development and management decisions, and therefore there is a lack of information to discuss with stakeholders how much change is acceptable for wetlands and water-related resources that are potentially affected. This project involves a consultative process as well as the development and application of an integrated multi-disciplinary assessment framework to identify the potential limits of change that are acceptable at the national and local levels for the wetland areas of priority environmental assets. Limits will be identified beyond which the ecological character of priority regional river or wetland assets will be changed and the functions and services they provide as a connected basin network compromised under climate change. Limits may include the acceptable range in water level fluctuation at Tonle Sap, or the acceptable period of high flows in a priority river reach at different times of year to enable wetland connectivity. They could also relate to maintaining the area of a habitat type such as flooded forest above a minimum threshold. Under the Ramsar Convention, these limits are used to identify a potential change in the ecological character of a site (i.e. when it changes to a different kind of environment and therefore provides different ecosystem services). The limits will be based on systematic conservation planning principles, expert scientific advice, and gender- and vulnerability-responsive local community engagement, and then incorporated through an iterative approach into the assessment methodologies for proactive regional and national planning, so that trade-offs can be properly considered by national decision-makers. They will also inform the development and implementation of management plans for priority regional environmental assets and work to identify further monitoring and management thresholds for mainstream flows. Environmental flow requirements necessary to meet the limits will be described, management actions to meet the flow requirements and other limits identified, and trial flows negotiated with relevant parties, implemented and monitored.						1. Tonle Sap Multiple Use Area 2. Nong Bong Kai, Wiang Nong Lhom and mainstream Mekong of Chiang Rai 3. U Minh Thuong National Park 4. Sre Pok Wildlife Sanctuary 5. Beung Kiat Ngong Ramsar Wetland 6. Xe Champhone Ramsar Wetland 7. Lower Songkhram River 8. Mui Ca Mau National Park 9. Virachey National Park
Project Outcomes		Project Outputs		Key Activities		Ecosystem Services Targeted
1.	Limits of acceptable change for key river and connected wetland habitats inform regional and national planning	a.	Integrated monitoring and assessment framework for wetland ecosystem function	i.	Scientific review and development of integrated assessment methodology and tools incorporating ecosystem services and key water quality and quantity disciplines (incl. hydrology, sediment, fish, ecological health) with systematic conservation planning principles	Flood regulation Water quality and quantity Groundwater recharge Biological resources (provisioning and genetic resources) Amenity and use values (for current and future generations)
		b.	Agreed limits of acceptable change for wetlands based on scientific assessment and community views	ii.	Development and agreement to regional wetland area and habitat remote sensing monitoring approach	Threats Addressed Overuse of resources (fish, timber, wildlife) Changes to sediment & flow regime & fish barriers due to hydropower/ irrigation Agricultural and urban development (land conversion) Pollution
				iii.	Descriptions of ecological character of river/wetland sites	
2.	An understanding of the environmental	c.		i.	Identify and prioritize options for limits of change in ecological character using systematic conservation planning approach considering implications for ecosystem services	
				ii.	Gender-sensitive community consultation and engagement through workshops and meetings	
				iii.	Modelling alternative development scenarios [undertaken as part of another MRC SP 2021–2025 activity]	
				i.	Study on the environmental flow requirements of pilot assets	
				ii.		

flow requirements and other management actions necessary for acceptable limits at pilot sites to be met	Environmental flow requirements for at least two pilot sites (Tonle Sap Multiple Use Area; and Nong Bong Kai, Wiang Nong Lhom and Mainstream Mekong of Chiang Rai)	iii. iv. v. vi.	Management actions and options identified to meet flow requirements Negotiation and agreement Trial flows and monitoring of outcomes designed and implemented Revised or new management plans developed National consultation and inputs to Technical Guidelines of MRC Procedures	Potential Project Technical Lead	Phase I and II Timeframe
				World Bank, MRC, LMCWRCC	5 years
				Potential Partner/Executing Organizations	Indicative Budget
				National agencies, IUCN, WWF, Wetlands International, Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI), Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC)	Phase I: \$0.5 million Phase II: \$2.0 million Phase III: \$5.0 million
Building on Previous/Existing Work:		MRC BioRA and DRIFT Database MRC JEM programme; Wetland Inventory	Outputs Contribute to SBEM Projects:	4. Management plans for environmental assets 10. Conservation finance and private sector partnerships	

Project title:	3. Adaptation to climate change for vulnerable biodiversity through habitat protection, restoration, range extension and transboundary movement					
Project description	Climate change impacts on ecosystems and biodiversity are projected to be substantial under a range of future scenarios, with consequences for species survival and the provision of ecosystem services. By 2060, many ecoregions will face completely novel bioclimatic conditions, but projected impacts vary geographically with different ecoregions impacted to a greater or lesser extent under different scenarios. LMB species are highly vulnerable to the effects of climate change; large numbers of fish, amphibians, birds, mammals, reptiles, and plants are at risk due to their sensitivity to hydrological cues and habitat alterations. This project will downscale regional and national climate assessments to the environmental asset and watershed scale, providing information to asset managers and local communities for updating management plans and developing measures to conserve the biodiversity and natural capital of environmental assets under a changing climate. The project will involve developing and implementing a common zoning framework for highly sensitive and critical habitats both within priority environmental assets, with buffer zones and connected habitats outside the boundaries of priority environmental assets, and for transboundary biodiversity corridors between environmental assets of regional importance (including integrated agro-ecological landscapes). The project will also result in the identification of agreed policy measures and management actions including investment plans for transboundary biodiversity corridors that will inform the updating or development of new climate change-resilient management plans for each of the 12 environmental assets of regional importance.				Environmental Assets	
Project Outcomes	Project Outputs	Key Activities		Ecosystem Services Targeted	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tonle Sap Multiple Use Area 2. Nong Bong Kai, Wiang Nong Lhom and mainstream Mekong of Chiang Rai 3. U Minh Thuong National Park 4. Sre Pok Wildlife Sanctuary 5. Beung Kiat Ngong Ramsar Wetland 6. Xe Champhone Ramsar Wetland 7. Lower Songkhram River 8. Mui Ca Mau National Park 9. Virachey National Park 10. Nam Et Phoulei National Park 11. Khao Yai and Thap Lan National Park (Dong Phayayen-Khaoyai Forest Complex) 	
1.	Improved capacity to manage highly sensitive and critical habitats including transboundary wildlife corridors in response to climate change	a.	Climate change risk and vulnerability assessments for biodiversity of priority regional environmental assets	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Review and synthesis of basin-scale modelling and impact assessment at environmental asset scale ii. Biodiversity and habitat risk and vulnerability assessments iii. Mapping and classification of wildlife corridors and climate risks between priority environmental assets 		Biological resources (provisioning and supporting services including species, habitat and genetic resources)
		b.	Common zoning system/framework for priority regional environmental assets including surrounding landscapes and transboundary corridors	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Identification/alignment of management zones within environmental assets and important corridors between assets ii. Development of consistent management principles and actions for different zones 		Threats Addressed Climate change Overuse of resources (fish, timber, wildlife) Illegal logging, hunting and fishing Agricultural and urban development (land conversion)
2.	Common framework and agreed management actions	c.	Agreed policy measures, management actions, and transboundary governance	i.		Policy and management measures for transboundary biodiversity corridors and agreed asset zones

for transboundary corridors incorporated into updated national frameworks and management plans for environmental assets	including investment plan for transboundary wildlife corridors for input to new or updated climate-resilient management plans for environmental assets	ii. Regional investment plan for enhancing the biological integrity and connectivity of wildlife corridors iii. Technical assistance to national agencies Gender-sensitive community consultation and engagement iv. Management actions/options for assets v. Establishment of transboundary governance and cooperation mechanisms		12. Yok Don National Park
			Potential Project Technical Lead	Phase I and II Timeframe
			Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), IUCN	4 years
			Potential Partner/Executing Organizations	Indicative Budget
			National agencies, MRC, GMS, WWF, UNEP, SEI, ADPC	Phase I: \$0.5 million Phase II: \$3.0 million Phase III: \$10.0 million
Building on Previous/Existing Work:	MRC CCAI climate change impact assessments USAID Mekong Adaptation and Resilience to Climate Change (Project GEF-6 Natural capital Accounting Project Thailand WWF Valuing Rivers initiative GMS Biodiversity Corridors GEF7 REDD+ and forest degradation in Thailand WWF River Dolphins initiative and Flyways for migratory birds	Outputs Contribute to SBEM Projects:	2. Wetland limits of acceptable change 4. Management plans for environmental assets 7. Sustainable community resource use and co-management 8. Watershed management framework 10. Conservation finance and private sector partnerships	

Project title:	4. New or updated climate change-resilient environmental asset management plans			
Project description	Management plans for the priority environmental assets are either project-specific, non-existent, or out-of-date and in need of updating. This project will produce new management plans for an initial four priority environmental assets. The plans will focus on maintaining or enhancing natural capital and ecosystem services and target actions on the key local and transboundary threats, ensuring resilience to climate change and integrated landscape management with surrounding areas (supporting biodiversity corridors and agroforestry activities). The plans will adaptive to changing circumstances, evaluation, and lessons learned, and will include mechanisms to facilitate gender-sensitive livelihood development and community co-management and promote the concept of a regional network of high value environmental assets to support investment in ecotourism initiatives, including through a gap analysis and agreed measures to meet the IUCN Green List standard for protected and conservation areas. The management plans will be developed in a participatory manner with regional guidance, using a common regional template and branding, and will inform the detailed design and targeting of activities under other SBEM projects. Plans should encompass the assets and the broader connected landscape, and they need to identify clearly demarcated management zones encompassing core areas, buffer zones, sustainable use and corridors, and should have accompanying policies and management measures. Each management plan will be accompanied by a sustainable resource mobilization strategy integrated with national budgetary processes, policies and systems and include establishing appropriate governance mechanisms such as transboundary committees, working groups, and similar approaches, where appropriate.			Environmental Assets
Project Outcomes	Project Outputs	Key Activities	Ecosystem Services Targeted	1. Tonle Sap Multiple Use Area 2. Nong Bong Kai, Wiang Nong Lhom and mainstream Mekong of Chiang Rai 3. U Minh Thuong National Park 4. Sre Pok Wildlife Sanctuary 5. Beung Kiat Ngong Ramsar Wetland

1.	Common understanding of the coordinated actions that will be taken by a range of parties to improve environmental outcomes in and around priority environmental assets	a.	High quality pilot management plans for 4 priority regional environmental assets	i.	Developing regional guidance on plan formulation and output and assistance to adoption at the national level	Carbon sequestration Flood regulation Erosion control Water quality Groundwater recharge Biological resources (provisioning and genetic resources) Amenity and use values (for current and future generations)	6. Xe Champhone Ramsar Wetland 7. Lower Songkhram River 8. Mui Ca Mau National Park 9. Virachey National Park 10. Nam Et Phoulei National Park 11. Khao Yai and Thap Lan National Park (Dong Phrayayen-Khaoyai Forest Complex) 12. Yok Don National Park
				ii.	Carrying out a gap analysis and feasibility assessment in relation to meeting the IUCN Green List standard		
2.	Management plans funded and being implemented	b.	Resource mobilization and initial implementation of plans including establishment of transboundary governance and cooperation mechanisms, where appropriate	iii.	Carrying out a gender-sensitive community consultation and engagement	Threats Addressed Overuse of resources (fish, timber, wildlife) Changes to flow regime from hydropower Agricultural and urban development (land conversion) Pollution	
				iv.	Revising the threat assessment and prioritization of actions		
				v.	Management plan formulation		
				vi.	Design of inputs to refine and target implementation phases of other SBEM projects		
				vii.	Approval and awareness raising		
				i.	Resource mobilization strategic action plan		
				ii.	Initial plan implementation with a focus on meeting IUCN Green List standards across the four themes (good governance, sound design and planning, effective management and positive conservation outcomes)		
				iii.	Training and capacity building local managers and engaged community members		
				iv.	Establishment of transboundary governance and cooperation mechanisms, where appropriate		
Building on Previous/Existing Work:		Previous or current management plans and strategies for each asset		Outputs Contribute to SBEM Projects:		7. Sustainable community resource use and co-management 10. Conservation finance and private sector partnerships 11. Facilitating sustainable ecotourism 12. Facilitating nature-based livelihood diversification	

Project title:	5. Regional ranger network and community capacity building	
Project description	Environmental Assets	
The capacity and resourcing of national protected area management varies between countries of the Lower Mekong River Basin. This provides opportunities for greater use of country-country capacity building and support, including among front-line staff working in environmental and natural resource conservation and rehabilitation. Investment in human resources responsible for overseeing and managing protected areas and surrounding landscapes will improve the capacity to protect priority regional environmental assets including as a coherent regional network supporting ecotourism initiatives. This project will establish and operate a pilot regional ranger network aimed at building capacity among rangers, illegal wildlife and logging inspectors and other frontline environmental conservation staff. The network will consist of a senior cohort of rangers that will be supported to: (i) share knowledge and experience with members of the network in other countries including through an annual forum, transboundary cooperation (e.g. joint patrols) and exchange visits within and between countries; (ii) help train and disseminate experience to more junior rangers; (iii) engage with and support local community management governance and management activities; (iv) engage with local ecotourism operators and guides to share knowledge and information on environmental features, history, and values, and promote REA branding. The network will	1. Tonle Sap Multiple Use Area 2. Nong Bong Kai, Wiang Nong Lhom and mainstream Mekong of Chiang Rai 3. U Minh Thuong National Park	

support the use of tools developed and piloted at particular sites in the basin to be applied elsewhere. For example, the Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool (SMART) for measuring and evaluating enforcement and site-based conservation measures.				4. Sre Pok Wildlife Sanctuary	
Project Outcomes		Project Outputs		Key Activities	
1.	Improved capacity of front-line environmental conservation staff	a.	Regional network for exchange of knowledge and learning established, and integrated at the national level	i.	Programme design and national consultation
				ii.	Feasibility study
				iii.	Identification of initial cohort
				iv.	Preparation of first annual plan
				v.	Design and development of support measures
		b.	Cadre of highly trained, professional front-line environmental conservation staff sharing knowledge and experience, and supporting community resource management	i.	Implementation of events and initiatives identified in annual plan
				ii.	Development of educational materials
				iii.	Coordination, management and communication support
				iv.	Language translation at the regional level
				v.	Trained agroforestry extension workers
				Ecosystem Services Targeted	
				Carbon sequestration	
				Flood regulation	
				Erosion control	
				Water quality	
				Groundwater recharge	
				Biological resources (provisioning and genetic resources)	
				Amenity and use values (for current and future generations)	
				Threats Addressed	
				Overuse of resources (fish, timber, wildlife)	
				Changes to flow regime from hydropower	
				Agricultural and urban development (land conversion)	
				Pollution	
2.	Improved capacity of communities to manage natural resource use	c.	Support provided by regional network to communities involved in co-management arrangements	i.	Targeted community support plan
				ii.	Development of materials, and engagement in events and management meetings
				iii.	Technical assistance, information and knowledge sharing
				Potential Project Technical Lead	
				IUCN	
				Potential Partner/Executing Organizations	
				National agencies, MRC, WWF, WCS, FFI	
				Phase I and II Timeframe	
				5 years	
				Indicative Budget	
				Phase I: \$0.5 million	
				Phase II: \$2.5 million	
				Phase III: \$6.0 million	
Building on Previous/Existing Work:		Piloting the Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool (SMART) patrol system		Outputs contribute to SBEM projects:	
				4. Management plans for environmental assets	
				7. Sustainable community resource use and co-management	
				11. Facilitating sustainable ecotourism	
				12. Facilitating nature-based livelihood diversification	

Project title:	6. Biodiversity Monitoring and Data Management and Sharing	
Project description	Priority REAs	
Biodiversity monitoring throughout the Lower Mekong River Basin is fragmented, inconsistent and dispersed, and provides only partial support to decision-makers in understanding the condition and trends of flora and fauna (including due to development and climate change drivers) and the effectiveness of management interventions. This project will establish a pilot biodiversity monitoring system to: (i) integrate existing biodiversity monitoring data into a common database and portal; and (ii) design and implement additional complementary population monitoring on a select set of target species at four priority regional environmental assets (REAs). A central data portal will be established to pull-in existing time-series monitoring data on recorded observations, population numbers and range extent held by participating organizations. This will be supplemented by the design and implementation of a pilot biodiversity monitoring programme at four priority REAs targeting a select number of key/umbrella species most relevant to either (i) ecotourism or (ii) sustainable community resource use, in accordance with agreed	1. Tonle Sap Multiple Use Area	
	2. Nong Bong Kai, Wiang Nong Lhom and mainstream Mekong of Chiang Rai	

biodiversity monitoring guidelines. The monitoring approach will draw on both scientific monitoring methods from trained officials as well as citizen science and community observation and record keeping, integrated with sustainable resource use and community co-management under Project 7. Based on the pilot, a baseline assessment will then be conducted at 9 priority regional environmental assets.					3. U Minh Thuong National Park	
Project Outcomes					4. Sre Pok Wildlife Sanctuary	
Project Outputs		Key Activities		Ecosystem Services Targeted		
1.	Common source of accessible data and information on biodiversity conditions and trends throughout the LMB	a.	Common tools and methodologies for achieving synergy among national institutions and stakeholders to update, validate, and share data and monitor biodiversity trends in the LMB	i.	Review and collation of existing time-series monitoring data and data attributes of geo-referenced observations and population numbers	Biological resources (provisioning and genetic resources)
				ii.	Agreements with responsible national institutions and participating organizations on data sharing, ownership and linked databases	Amenity and use values (for current and future generations)
				iii.	Central data portal design and build	Threats Addressed Overuse of resources (fish, timber, wildlife) Changes to flow regime from hydropower Agricultural and urban development (land conversion) Pollution
				iv.	Data linkages established between participating organization databases	
				v.	Identified target species and other indicators for supplementary monitoring and scientific methodologies for estimating population and range	
				vi.	Common biodiversity monitoring guidelines and regional guidance (incl. species identification) and framework developed	
				vii.	Guidance on citizen science and community participation in monitoring	
				viii.	Resource requirements and survey plans	
2.	An understanding of the current condition and trends in biodiversity throughout the LMB	b.	Baseline assessment of biodiversity in priority regional environmental assets	i.	Trained local staff, rangers and community resource managers	Potential Project Technical Lead
				ii.	Consolidation of existing data	Phase I and II Timeframe
				iii.	Monitoring data from field surveys	IUCN, FFI, MRC
				iv.	Data processing, updating and analysis	Potential Partner/Executing Organizations
				v.	Technical report and local community awareness raising	GMS, WCS, Birdlife International, WWF, FAO, UNEP
						Indicative Budget
						Phase I: \$0.5 million Phase II: \$4.0 million Phase III: \$6.0 million
Building on Previous/Existing Work:		FFI projects in Virachey and tri-border area with International Climate Initiative (IKI) funding IUCN Red List studies/national monitoring WWF River Dolphins initiative		Outputs Contribute to SBEM Projects:		1. Valuing natural capital and ecosystem services 4. Management plans for environmental assets 7. Community resource use and co-management 9. Mainstreaming conservation in sector strategies

Project title:		7. Fostering sustainable community resource use and management through improved local community co-management					
Project description					Environmental Assets		
Overuse of natural resources and illegal resource use are identified as key threats to environmental assets throughout the Mekong River Basin. Initiatives to increase the role of local communities in the sustainable management of natural resources are being piloted, including in collaborative multi-stakeholder institutional arrangements with governments and industry, is being developed and piloted in various parts of the LMB. These partnerships are aimed at fostering better stewardship of forests and biodiversity including to help address illegal logging, poaching and land conversion activities. This project will develop a framework approach to successful community co-management arrangements that can be applied throughout the basin, building on successes and lessons learned from existing activities. The project will foster sustainable resource use by supporting the establishment of community co-management and governance mechanisms, the setting of community extraction or harvest limits within a system of permitting, monitoring and reporting appropriately aligned with ecologically sustainable limits including consideration of climate change impacts, and the role of community groups in working with government and industry to address illegal activities. Community management and governance arrangements will support the empowerment of women and local indigenous people in natural resource management. Capacity building may include training and development of toolkits, monitoring and management tools and standard operating procedures.					<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tonle Sap Multiple Use Area 2. Nong Bong Kai, Wiang Nong Lhom and mainstream Mekong of Chiang Rai 3. U Minh Thuong National Park 4. Sre Pok Wildlife Sanctuary 5. Beung Kiat Ngong Ramsar Wetland 6. Xe Champhone Ramsar Wetland 7. Lower Songkhram River 8. Mui Ca Mau National Park 9. Virachey National Park 10. Nam Et Phoulei National Park 11. Khao Yai and Thap Lan National Park (Dong Phrayayen-Khaoyai Forest Complex) 12. Yok Don National Park 		
Project Outcomes		Project Outputs		Key Activities		Ecosystem Services Targeted	
1.	Increased awareness and capacity to support community co-management arrangements	a.	Framework model approach to community co-management based on best practice and lessons learned	i.	Review of best practice collaborative community-government-industry resource management partnerships in the region	Biological resources (provisioning and genetic resources)	
				ii.	Development of framework model approach to community co-management applicable to environmental assets of regional importance	Groundwater recharge	
				iii.	Gap analysis and technical assistance on enabling conditions for potential pilot sites		
2.	Enhanced community management of natural resources in pilot areas	b.	Pilot implementation to support setting and management (incl. identification of incentive mechanisms) of sustainable resource use (incl. groundwater, where relevant)	i.	Community-industry-government engagement on needs and potential framework application	Threats Addressed	
				ii.	Community management and governance structures enhanced or established for setting and managing sustainable use limits	Overuse of resources (fish, timber, wildlife)	
				iii.	Scientific assessment of key biological resources	Illegal logging, hunting and fishing	
				iv.	Technical assistance to community groups to support management and compliance actions		
				v.	Building of trust and partnerships between government, industry and community stakeholders		
		c.	Knowledge sharing and community capacity building	i.	Demonstration and knowledge exchange between community groups	Potential Project Technical Lead	
				ii.	Training and support for application of tools, methods, technology	World Bank, IUCN, WWF	
						Potential Partner/Executing Organizations	
						National agencies, GMS, UNEP, FAO, MRC, WCS, FFI	
						Phase I and II Timeframe	
						4 years	
						Indicative Budget	
						Phase I: \$0.5 million Phase II: \$3.5 million Phase III: \$10 million	

Building on Previous/Existing Work:	The Protection and Sustainable Use of Forest Ecosystems and Biodiversity in Laos” (ProFEB) project with GIZ in Lao PDR GEF-6 Partnerships to protect endangered wildlife in Vietnam Piloting SMART patrol system FFI projects in Virachey and tri-border area with International Climate Initiative (IKI) funding	Outputs Contribute to SBEM Projects:	4. Management plans for environmental assets 10. Conservation finance and private sector partnerships
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Project title:	8. A basin-wide planning and management framework for watersheds		
Project description			Environmental Assets
Sustainable watershed management is based on effective land-use planning and sound regulatory management and institutions. A regional planning and management framework for watersheds based initially on the areas containing upper catchment priority regional environmental assets and other key areas identified by basin countries will facilitate implementation of improved climate change adaptive land-use planning, institutional development and governance, effective policy, laws or regulations, and enforcement mechanisms. This framework will support the regulation of groundwater depletion and dry season flows, erosion and sediment and nutrient transport, thus mitigating flash floods, biodiversity, and adaptation to climate change. Guidance and capacity building for countries to improve watershed management will support implementation of the framework. A review of current institutional, governance and regulatory arrangements for the management of watersheds in the Basin will be undertaken based on the previous MRC Watershed project and updated information provided by basin countries. Recommendations for good practice will be developed based on the information assembled and international experience from other transboundary river basins, and opportunities for the harmonization of arrangements (e.g. policies, rules, procedures, cooperation mechanisms) between countries will be identified. Based on the good practice identified this project involves the development of a consistent framework to guide the basin-wide planning and management of watersheds that provide important transboundary ecosystem services such as groundwater recharge, water quality and biodiversity protection, and carbon storage. The scope of the framework and its application could include principles, minimum standards, mechanisms for country-to-country capacity building, and criteria that need to be met in order to attract international carbon finance and other payments for ecosystem services to support forest conservation and sustainable land management practices.			<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tonle Sap Multiple Use Area 2. Nong Bong Kai, Wiang Nong Lhom and mainstream Mekong of Chiang Rai 3. U Minh Thuong National Park 4. Sre Pok Wildlife Sanctuary 5. Beung Kiat Ngong Ramsar Wetland 6. Xe Champhone Ramsar Wetland 7. Lower Songkhram River 8. Mui Ca Mau National Park 9. Virachey National Park 10. Nam Et Phoulei National Park 11. Khao Yai and Thap Lan National Park (Dong Phrayayen-Khaoyai Forest Complex 12. Yok Don National Park
Project Outcomes	Project Outputs	Key Activities	Ecosystem Services Targeted
1. A common regional approach to managing watersheds for regional benefits	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. A synthesis and gap analysis of good practice institutional, governance and regulatory arrangements in each basin country including opportunities to harmonize arrangements in a consistent framework b. Agreed basin-wide framework with identified issues for climate change adaptive land-use planning and management of watersheds at the national level 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Good practice institutional, governance and regulatory arrangements identified and synthesized for policy makers ii. Gap analysis and needs assessment of basin countries relative to good practice iii. Opportunities for harmonization in standards, rules and regulations between basin countries i. Gender-sensitive community and stakeholder consultation and engagement ii. Watershed characterization and priority areas based on contribution of ecosystem services to the Mekong River iii. Development of a basin-wide framework for watershed planning and management at the national level, including updated national ‘blueprints’ 	<p>Carbon sequestration Flood regulation Sediment transport/erosion control Groundwater recharge Biological resources (provisioning and genetic resources) Amenity and use values (for current and future generations)</p> <p>Threats Addressed</p> <p>Overuse of resources (fish, timber, wildlife) Illegal logging, hunting and fishing Agricultural and urban development (land conversion)</p> <p>Potential Project Technical Lead</p>
			Phase I and II Timeframe

					MRC, LMCWRCC	3 years	
2.	Understanding of practical implementation needs and challenges and lessons learned	c.	Pilot implementation of watershed framework in upper catchment areas of priority environmental assets	i.	Technical assistance and capacity building support to national agencies and local authorities	Potential Partner/Executing Organizations National agencies, GMS, IUCN, WWF, WCS, CIFOR-ICRAF, SEI, ADPC	Indicative Budget Phase I: \$0.5 million Phase II: \$0.5 million Phase III: \$2.0 million
				ii.	National changes and attention to institutional, governance and regulatory arrangements for watersheds		
Building on Previous/Existing Work:		MRC Watershed Management Project with GIZ and the German Development Bank (KfW)		Outputs Contribute to SBEM Projects:		4. Management plans for environmental assets 9. Mainstreaming conservation in sector strategies	

Project title:	9. Mainstreaming conservation measures into national sector strategies and plans and offsetting environmental impacts					
Project description						Environmental Assets
<p>The most significant impacts on environmental assets and biodiversity result from planning, decisions and activities implemented in economic sectors. This project seeks to support environmental and biodiversity protection by integrating conservation measures and environmental planning considerations into national, provincial and local development strategies and plans. This includes encouraging the identification and investment in more ‘green infrastructure’, rather than damaging alternatives. This will be achieved by ensuring that the value of natural capital and ecosystem services is incorporated into development plans and decision making, at both a project and strategic level, and that plans for any new developments should: (i) avoid sensitive environmental, ecosystem and habitat areas in and around the protected area estate, including in important biodiversity corridors; (ii) ensure environmentally sensitive design of new projects drawing on international, regional and national frameworks, guidelines and best practice. In addition, where unavoidable, environmental damage occurs, it should be offset by developer funding, with encouragement and compliance from the regulatory authorities of the developers, to rehabilitate and protect an area of equivalent or greater environmental value in a connected or similar ecosystem. The biodiversity offset component will be piloted in one or two countries and potentially encompass both national and transboundary offsets. These offsets may include the purchase and or set-aside of land and gifting it to the national protected area estate, a contribution to the financing of conservation operations at a regional or national level, and the provision of in-kind or financial resources to dedicated environmental conservation projects. The project will target national economic sectors that have significant area-based footprints that involve destruction of habitat and fragile ecosystem areas including agriculture, forestry, and mining and energy.</p>						<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tonle Sap Multiple Use Area 2. Nong Bong Kai, Wiang Nong Lhom and mainstream Mekong of Chiang Rai 3. U Minh Thuong National Park 4. Sre Pok Wildlife Sanctuary 5. Beung Kiat Ngong Ramsar Wetland 6. Xe Champhone Ramsar Wetland 7. Lower Songkham River 8. Mui Ca Mau National Park 9. Virachey National Park 10. Nam Et Phoulei National Park 11. Khao Yai and Thap Lan National Park (Dong Phrayayen-
Project Outcomes	Project Outputs	Key Activities		Ecosystem Services Targeted		
1.	Sector strategies and development plans are more environmentally sustainable	a.	Regional guidance and capacity building to strengthen institutional and community planning and management	i.	Development of regional guidance and framework	Carbon sequestration Flood regulation Erosion control Water quality Groundwater recharge Biological resources (provisioning and genetic resources) Amenity and use values (for current and future generations)
				ii.	Provision of technical assistance on integrating conservation measures to key economic sector strategies and plans	
		b.	Revised, promoted and supported sector strategies and plans with conservation principles and measures including nature-based solutions mainstreamed including for climate change adaptation	i.	Gap analysis of national sector strategies and plans and evaluation of stakeholder objectives	
				ii.	Engagement, facilitation, and technical support to planning and decision-making	
				iii.	Revisions to national strategies and plans	
2.		c.		i.		Threats Addressed

Reduced loss of biodiversity and habitat in participating pilot areas	Pilot regional biodiversity offset scheme design	ii.	Review, revision, and adoption of best practices and lessons learned from similar schemes elsewhere Design of pilot scheme including measurement classes and units and offset rules and requirements (based on valuation of natural capital and ecosystem services)	Agricultural and urban development (land conversion) Pollution	Khaoyai Forest Complex 12.Yok Don National Park
		iii.	Guidance on national legal, regulatory and administrative changes required	Potential Project Technical Lead	Phase I and II Timeframe
				GMS, Conservation International	5 years
	d.	Pilot regional, national and local biodiversity offset scheme(s) operational	i.	Legal, regulatory and administrative implementation mechanisms put in place in participating countries	Potential Partner/Executing Organizations
		ii.	Technical assistance to country pilot implementation	National agencies, MRC, UNEP, IUCN, WWF	Phase I: \$0.5 million Phase II: \$2.0 million Phase III: \$12.0 million
Building on Previous/Existing Work:		GEF-6 Mainstreaming biodiversity conservation objectives Viet Nam		Outputs Contribute to SBEM Projects:	4. Management plans for environmental assets 10. Conservation finance and private sector partnerships

Project title:	10. Conservation financing to support climate change mitigation and adaptation and enhanced ecosystem services				
Project description:	Addressing the critical environmental challenges in the Mekong River Basin requires the engagement of all sectors of society. Private sector investments and philanthropic donations is a growing source of finance globally as actors at all levels of society galvanise around helping meet the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. The biggest challenge in attracting private investments is identifying and developing projects that can generate a financial return such as from the sale of carbon offsets or as coupled with payments for ecosystem services, and establishing the mechanisms to develop and facilitate these transactions, for example through the issuance of green bonds and other non-grant investments. Payments for Ecosystem Services (PES) schemes enable the transfer of financial support from the people and industries that benefit from ecosystem services to the people and communities that ensure those ecosystem services are protected, restored or maintained. This project involves: (i) the design, development, and implementation of trial PES schemes in and around the priority regional environmental assets in the LMB; (ii) the development of non-grant conservation financing instruments; and (iii) the strategic engagement of private sector partners/investors in Mekong River Basin conservation. The trial PES schemes will be designed based on good practice elsewhere (e.g. as already applied in Viet Nam), informed by the quantification and valuation of ecosystem services under Project 1 and consider both local and transboundary beneficiaries. In partnership with one or more financial institutions, potential non-grant financing mechanisms will be identified and evaluated for feasibility in relation to critical ecosystem services, and then designed and implemented. Engagement of public and private sector investors and companies will be pursued with the backing of PES schemes and utilising new financing mechanisms to generate sustainable funding of conservation in the Basin including for more 'green infrastructure'.				Environmental Assets
Project Outcomes	Project Outputs	Key Activities		Ecosystem Services Targeted	
1. Increased awareness and understanding of the potential for PES schemes and innovative financial instruments to support conservation and livelihoods and	a. Regional guidance and capacity building on options and potential for PES and new financial mechanisms	i.	Guidance and options analysis on potential design, approach and implementation mechanism requirements	Carbon sequestration Flood regulation Sediment transport/erosion control Water quality Groundwater recharge Biological resources	1. Tonle Sap Multiple Use Area 2. Nong Bong Kai, Wiang Nong Lhom and mainstream Mekong of Chiang Rai 3. U Minh Thuong National Park 4. Sre Pok Wildlife Sanctuary 5. Beung Kiat Ngong Ramsar Wetland 6. Xe Champhone Ramsar Wetland 7. Lower Songkhrum River 8. Mui Ca Mau National Park 9. Virachey National Park
	b. Strategy for expanded coverage of forest carbon payments for climate	ii.	Awareness-raising and capacity building at a national level		
		iii.	Feasibility study of financing mechanisms in partnership with identified financial institution(s)		
		i.	Feasibility study on the potential expansion of REDD+ readiness and implementation, PES and PES-like schemes in watersheds for selected ecosystem services		

	higher levels of trust between parties		change mitigation in areas in and around priority environmental assets	ii. iii.	Gender-sensitive community consultation and engagement Enabling activities to support readiness, institutional capacity and implementation consistent with national REDD+ strategies, PES, and GCF projects	Amenity and use values (for current and future generations)	10.Nam Et Phoulei National Park 11.Khao Yai and Thap Lan National Park (Dong Phayayen-Khaoyai Forest Complex 12.Yok Don National Park
2.	Substantial increase in public and private sector finance for Mekong Basin environmental conservation and livelihoods	c.	Pilot transfer payments from identified local, regional and international beneficiaries to communities for biodiversity conservation and critical ecosystem services	i.	Pilot scheme design including means of quantification, payment collection and governance, exchange, monitoring and reporting (based on international standards, where relevant)	Threats Addressed Agricultural and urban development (land conversion)	Phase I and II Timeframe 5 years
				ii. iii.	Enabling conditions, baseline measurements and trial implementation over defined period Monitoring, evaluation, assessment and reporting	Potential Project Technical Lead World Bank; WWF	
		d.	Strategy for private sector engagement in conservation financing and partnership agreements in place	i. ii.	Financial instrument design and development Investor engagement strategy development and implementation	Potential Partner/Executing Organizations National agencies, UNEP, FAO, CIFOR-ICRAF, IUCN, MRC, LMCWRCC	Indicative Budget Phase I: \$0.5 million Phase II: \$2.0 million Phase III: \$2.0 million
				iii.	Partnership agreements prepared and negotiated		
Building on Previous/Existing Work:			REDD+ readiness and implementation in Lao PDR with GIZ and GCF/Asian Development Bank/JICA/IFAD WWF landscape financing solutions	Outputs Contribute to SBEM Projects:	4. Management plans for environmental assets		

Project title:	11. Generating and nurturing the enabling conditions and facilitating investment in sustainable ecotourism						
Project description							Environmental Assets
Natural capital is an important source of national and local revenue if conserved and managed sustainably, supporting sectors such as tourism and recreation (including agro-tourism), and providing ecosystem services for a range of industries including agriculture, power generation, various handicraft and other industries. This project aims to strengthen the enabling environment and capacity for ecotourism development and promotion in the LMB and includes the development of a regional ecotourism strategy linking the priority regional environmental assets and their surrounding agroecological landscapes, investments in critical supporting infrastructure (e.g. visitor centres, waste management, walking tracks, viewing points) as part of a trial across four assets identified as having the highest potential for further tourism development by basin countries, and promotion and development activities. The project will include an exploration and evaluation of potential ecotourism business models, common branding and promotional products, training and awareness raising among tourism operators, identification of a sustainable funding model to support management and infrastructure development and maintenance, and a site master investment plan aligned with potential ecotourism business models.							1. Tonle Sap Multiple Use Area 2. Nong Bong Kai, Wiang Nong Lhom and mainstream Mekong of Chiang Rai 3. U Minh Thuong National Park 4. Sre Pok Wildlife Sanctuary 5. Beung Kiat Ngong Ramsar Wetland 6. Xe Champhone Ramsar Wetland 7. Lower Songkhrum River
Project Outcomes	Project Outputs	Key Activities			Ecosystem Services Targeted		
1.	Enhanced enabling environment for responsible ecotourism based on a network of regional environmental assets	a.	Support within government and business for regional ecotourism promotion based on the regional network of priority environmental assets	i. ii. iii.	Framework document and strategy (including for global recognition – e.g. under IUCN Green List protected areas and Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems) Sustainable funding model for supporting management and infrastructure	Amenity and use values (for current and future generations)	

			iv. Identification and evaluation of potential ecotourism business models v. Guidelines and regulatory requirements for responsible and sustainable ecotourism Branding and investment attraction strategy including plan for global recognition		8. Mui Ca Mau National Park 9. Virachey National Park 10. Nam Et Phoulei National Park 11. Khao Yai and Thap Lan National Park (Dong Phrayayen-Khaoyai Forest Complex) 12. Yok Don National Park
		b. Improved access and facilities to support increased visitor numbers and ecotourism business viability in trial assets	i. Environmentally sensitive infrastructure project identification and prioritization across four trial environmental assets ii. Business and community engagement iii. Environmental and social impact assessments iv. Procurement and implementation of infrastructure and other projects v. Evaluation and reporting and ongoing maintenance plan	Threats Addressed Overuse of resources (fish, timber, plants, wildlife) Agricultural and urban development (land conversion)	
				Potential Project Technical Lead World Bank; GMS	Phase I and II Timeframe 5 years
2.	Increased visitors to environmental assets of regional importance	c. Tourism operators and personnel identify opportunities and promote activities within regional ecotourism network	i. Development and publication of promotional material, brand development and marketing ii. Awareness raising and training of staff including guides, park officials and tourism operators	Potential Partner/Executing organizations National agencies, UNEP, IUCN, WWF, WCS	Indicative Budget Phase I: \$0.5 million Phase II: \$4.0 million Phase III: \$20.0 million
Building on Previous/Existing Work:		German Development Bank (KfW) Wetland Project GEF-7 Sustainable landscapes and ecotourism – Cambodia GEF-7 Mainstreaming biodiversity-based tourism – Thailand Tourism and water resources in southern Thailand (Krabi)	Outputs Contribute to SBEM Projects:	4. Management plans for environmental assets 12. Facilitating nature-based livelihood diversification	

Project title:	12. Facilitating nature-based livelihood diversification through sustainable resource management and value chain creation in wetland, tree-based and non-timber forest products systems	
Project description:	Forest products and wetland resources play a significant role in the livelihoods of vulnerable people, especially women and ethnic minorities. Improved livelihood opportunities for communities living in and around national parks, wildlife sanctuaries and important wetlands, in buffer, corridor and riparian zones, and in other protected areas can reduce pressure on sensitive biodiversity from overharvesting, unsustainable use, and habitat destruction. This can be achieved by providing alternative avenues for sustenance and income generation, thereby securing critical ecosystems services vital to the long-term health of the Mekong River Basin. This project will work with responsible agencies and local communities to build capacity and evaluate and implement market-oriented, nature-based livelihood portfolios and business models including in wetland, tree-based (including farm forestry) and non-timber forest product systems such as understory mushroom production and medicine plants, and sustainable harvest, production and distribution of aquatic resources. The main advantage of a portfolio approach is that farmers can evaluate the consequences of different options, thereby making informed choices, leading to better risk management and increased resilience. The project will strengthen connectivity between protected areas and surrounding production landscapes based on agroecology principles, and provide support for value chain initiatives that enhance income generation and empower women and indigenous people while reducing forest fragmentation and land degradation. The project will be implemented through three, inter-connected phases/components: (i) participatory spatial analysis and assessment of socio-economic and ecological characteristics of target environmental assets and surrounding areas, prioritization and nuanced design of market-oriented nature-based livelihood portfolios taking into account existing ones; (ii) piloting priority market-based nature-based livelihood portfolios or specific options for demonstration, knowledge generation and	Environmental Assets 1. Tonle Sap Multiple Use Area 2. Nong Bong Kai, Wiang Nong Lhom and mainstream Mekong of Chiang Rai 3. U Minh Thuong National Park 4. Sre Pok Wildlife Sanctuary

capacity-building; and (iii) expansion or full-scale implementation of nature-based livelihood options/portfolios based on supply-demand dynamics and acceptable limits of change in target environmental assets.				5. Beung Kiat Ngong Ramsar Wetland	
Project Outcomes		Project Outputs		Key Activities	
1. An understanding of spatially-explicit development of market-oriented nature-based livelihood portfolios		a. Baseline assessment and opportunities report and market-oriented nature-based livelihood portfolios		i. Community engagement and consultation on innovative options ii. Spatial analysis and mapping including existing systems, land-use change analysis and community preferences iii. Socio-economic suitability assessments (incl. carrying capacity) for various wetland, tree-based (incl. farm forestry), and on-timber forest product (NTFP) systems iv. Market and value chain opportunities assessment v. Participatory design of nature-based livelihood portfolios that match local context and market opportunities vi. Ecological and landscape restoration assessment of options vii. Prioritization landscape mapping of nature-based solutions livelihood portfolios	
2. An understanding of potentially successful, market-oriented nature-based livelihood portfolios for scaling-up in other areas		b. Case studies from pilot implementation involving community adoption of priority market-oriented nature-based livelihood portfolios and recommended domains and design options for scaling up		i. Procurement and implementation of pilot nature-based livelihood portfolios at several strategic points/locations in target environmental assets ii. Case study design and implementation iii. Documentation and M&E to develop recommendation domains for scaling up iv. Developing business plans for specific nature-based livelihood options or whole portfolio v. Engage business investors/funders and enhance market links vi. Design of direct and indirect incentive schemes for sustainability	
3. Improved community capacity to exploit nature-based livelihood opportunities/consider landscape benefits		c. Knowledge sharing and community capacity building including technical guide for exemplar systems		i. Community awareness raising and capacity building including training and support for purchasing inputs/tools/technology ii. Establishment of exemplar nature-based solutions landscapes iii. Learning exchanges across environmental assets in Mekong iv. Development of production and marketing tools, and capacity building	
Building on Previous/Existing Work:		GEF-7 Resilience using natural infrastructure and diversified livelihoods in Cambodia FAO wetland agriculture and water initiative USAID-funded project in Central Annamites with ICRAF and others in Viet Nam		Outputs Contribute to SBEM Projects:	
				4. Management plans for environmental assets 5. Ranger network and community capacity 10. Conservation finance and private sector partnerships	
Project title:		13. Risk mitigation case studies from threatening processes including invasive species, people-wildlife conflicts, fires and water resources development			
Project description				Environmental Assets	
Priority environmental assets of the Mekong River Basin face a wide range of threats. For instance, habitat destruction and encroachment of human activities into natural environments can increase the potential for conflict between wildlife and people and lead to habitat fragmentation. This conflict can result in damage to crops, loss of livestock and infrastructure, or physical danger to people, as well as the population loss of endangered wildlife of economic value for tourism and with an important functional role in basin ecosystems. Fire is identified as a key threat in at least one priority environmental asset, the Tonle Sap Multiple Use Area, and can have a destructive impact on habitat and associated livelihoods. Water resources development, including cascading hydropower and irrigation abstraction in				1. Tonle Sap Multiple Use Area 2. Nong Bong Kai, Wiang Nong Lhom and mainstream	

<p>environmental assets, can also have damaging effects on the physical and hydrological environment, with subsequent impacts on fish, fisheries and livelihoods, and exacerbate community conflicts over water use. Invasive alien species have resource competition, predation, and disease impacts on native biodiversity including on natural and agricultural ecosystems. This project will undertake risk identification and vulnerability assessments, and identify opportunities for risk mitigation measures to help reduce impacts of the identified threatening processes in and around selected protected areas, including in buffer zones and biodiversity corridors. Opportunities may include improved and more targeted land-use controls in conjunction with a sustainable basin-wide watershed management framework, investment in wildlife movement control infrastructure at critical locations, habitat restoration, increased habitat protections, and management of illegal hunting in areas close to farming communities, and livelihood diversification for affected communities in relation to ecotourism or other nature-based livelihood systems. Case studies will be undertaken (including for invasive species in Tonle Sap) in selected assets to inform regional approaches.</p>				<p>Mekong of Chiang Rai 3. Sre Pok Wildlife Sanctuary 4. Lower Songkhram River 5. Virachey National Park 6. Nam Et Phoulei National Park 7. Khao Yai and Thap Lan National Park (Dong Phrayayen-Khaoyai Forest Complex) 8. Yok Don National Park</p>			
Project Outcomes		Project Outputs		Key Activities		Ecosystem Services Targeted	
1.	Clear understanding of the most significant threats and opportunities to address them in transboundary areas	a.	Risk and vulnerability assessments with identified control options for: (i) invasive species (ii) people-wildlife conflict (iii) fires (iv) water resources development	i.	Identification and mapping of current extent and severity of threatening processes in border areas ii. Risk and vulnerability assessments of selected areas iii. Evaluation of current control measures and their success and opportunities for improvement iv. Review of best practices internationally and regionally Community engagement and consultation	Carbon sequestration Biological resources (provisioning and genetic resources)	
2.	Reduced transboundary impacts from threatening processes	b.	Risk reduction plans developed and implemented for key threatening processes	i.	Community engagement and consultation ii. Prioritization of actions and development of risk reduction action plan for threatening processes in and around pilot assets iii. Implementation of pilot projects iv. Monitoring, evaluation, and reporting	Threats Addressed Illegal logging, hunting and fishing Agricultural and urban development (land conversion) Fires Invasive alien species	
3.	Enhanced regional awareness and knowledge of successful actions and activities to reduce identified threats	c.	Pilot asset implementation of risk reduction plans	i.	Data collection, monitoring and surveys ii. Initial risk reduction plan implementation actions	Potential Project Technical Lead IUCN; WWF	
		d.	Communication, awareness-raising and knowledge sharing	i.	Demonstration workshops and training of rangers, farmers, asset managers, and communities	Potential Partner/Executing Organizations National agencies; FAO, CIFOR-ICRAF, IUCN, WCS	
Building on Previous/Existing Work:			Outputs Contribute to SBEM Projects:			4. Management plans for environmental asset 11. Enabling regional ecotourism 12. Facilitating nature-based livelihood activities	
						Phase I and II Timeframe 4 years	
						Indicative Budget Phase I: \$0.5 million Phase II: \$2.5 million Phase III: \$4.0 million	

Table 3: Proposed project coverage across priority environmental assets of regional importance

Projects:	1. Ecosystem services valuation	2. Wetland limits and e-flows	3. Climate adaptation biodiversity corridors	4. New or updated management plans	5. Regional ranger network	6. Biodiversity monitoring	7. Community co-management	8. Watershed management	9. Mainstream in sector strategies	10. Conservation finance and PES	11. Ecotourism	12. Nature-based livelihoods	13. Threat management
Tonle Sap Multiple Use Area	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑
Nong Bong Kai, Wiang Nong Lhom and mainstream Mekong of Chiang Rai	☑	☑	☑	☑		☑			☑		☑		☑
U Minh Thuong National Park	☑		☑			☑	☑					☑	☑
Sre Pok Wildlife Sanctuary	☑					☑				☑			
Beung Kiat Ngong Ramsar Wetland	☑		☑		☑	☑	☑				☑	☑	
Xe Champhone Ramsar Wetland	☑	☑	☑					☑	☑			☑	
Lower Songkhram River	☑	☑	☑			☑	☑		☑	☑	☑	☑	☑
Mũi Ca Mau National Park	☑		☑	☑		☑	☑					☑	☑
Virachey National Park			☑								☑		
Nam Et Phoulei National Park	☑					☑	☑				☑		☑
Khao Yai and Thap Lan National Park (Dong Phrayayen-Khaoyai Forest Complex)	x		x			x	x			x		x	x
Yok Don National Park	☑		☑			☑	☑						☑
Indicative funding:	3.5	2.5	3.5	2.0	3.0	4.5	4.0	1.0	2.5	2.5	4.5	3.5	3.0
Project bundle:	A	A	C	C	B	A	B	C	C	A	B	B	C

x = Conservation projects at this environmental asset will be implemented through Thailand's National Indicative Plan, in coordination rather than through, the PBAP for the SBEM 2021-2025. As a result, additional projects are proposed for Thailand's two other environmental assets of regional importance. An average of 5–7 projects are proposed at each environmental asset for Phase I and II implementation with a total of 18 project components across each Member Country.

Total indicative Phase I and Phase II budget estimate: **USD 35–40 million** over five years.

Total indicative Phase III budget estimate: **USD 115 million** over approximately 10 years following Phases I and II.

3.3 Project types

The set of projects described above encompass several types of projects (**Figure 4**): projects designed to provide additional knowledge and information, including inputs for other projects or related processes; projects that address the regional and national institutional, regulatory, and policy environment; projects exploring opportunities for different financial incentives for environmental conservation; projects that target livelihood support for local communities; projects that address specific threats to the environmental values or ecosystem services of the assets; and projects that provide supporting, capacity building or other tools and mechanisms to improve management across the network of environmental assets.

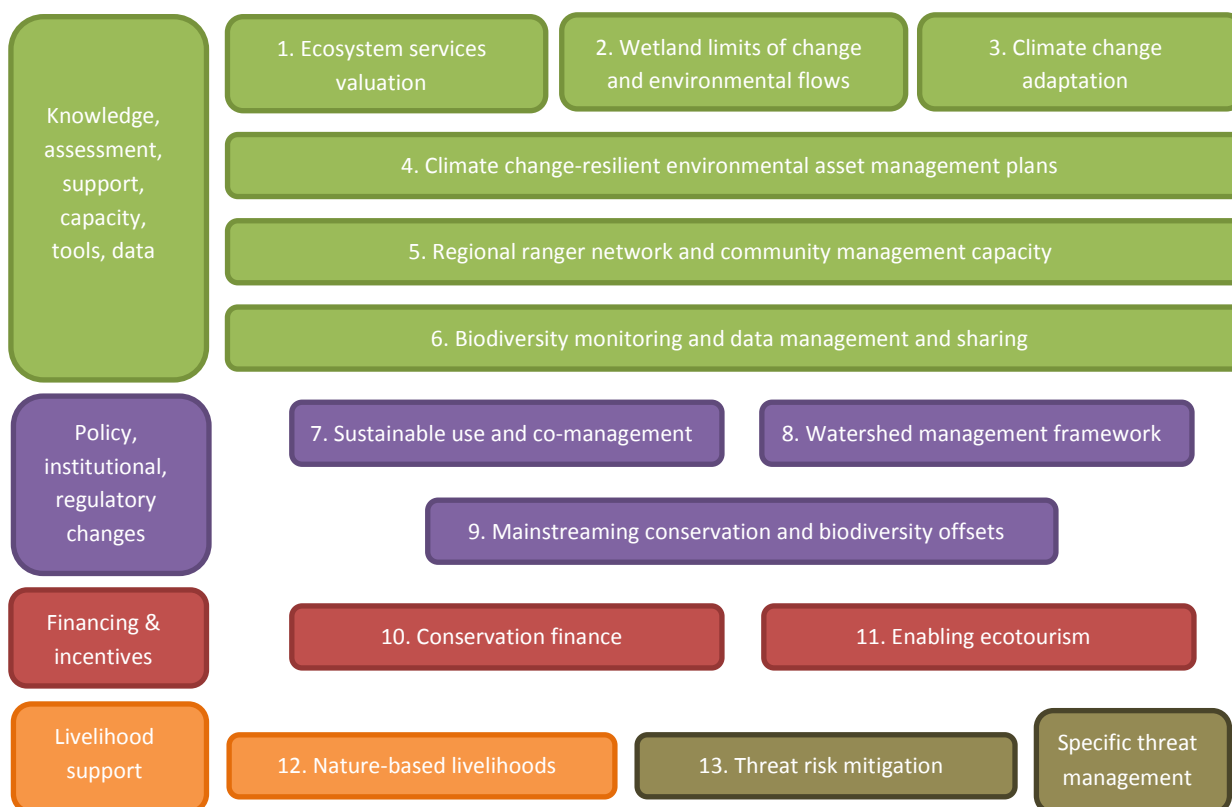


Figure 4. Categorization of the 13 proposed projects

A key strategic direction of the SBEM is the establishment of Regional Network of priority environmental assets. The programme of work in this PBAP seeks to support the development of this network through three main channels:

1. the development and implementation of common frameworks, standards and processes for assessment, monitoring, and management (Projects 1, 2, 3, 4, 6 and 8);
2. consistent and integrated branding and coordination of development opportunities and management planning to support responsible ecotourism, including with an agreed approach to achieving global recognition (Projects 4 and 11);
3. a regional mechanism for building capacity to a common high standard (Project 5).

A Regional Network of the highest priority environmental assets should be managed to the highest standards such as those established under the IUCN's Green List by the best trained and highest quality staff in cooperation with local communities, and with sustainable funding mechanisms to enable long-term and enduring investments.

4. The implementation approach

4.1 Delivery phases

Recognizing the relatively significant scale of the integrated programme of work presented in this Action Plan, the resource mobilization challenges that this presents, and the coordinated partnership approach, which is integral to success, the delivery of the projects outlined here shall occur over three phases. The phased approach enables adaptive management and the efficient targeting of activities based on participatory planning and activity implementation, which is flexible to the needs of beneficiaries at regional, national, and local levels. A corresponding resource mobilization strategy outlined in **Section 6** aligns with this phased approach with different funding mechanisms to be applied at each phase.

Phase I: Planning and design (1 to 2 years)

The first phase of implementation involves initial project preparation. This includes negotiating agreements among participating organizations, full projects proposal development and preparation of funding applications, engagement of Development Partners and other donors for co-financing, stakeholder identification and consultation, and the preliminary design, development, and testing of methodological approaches based on existing strategic priorities, work-plans and complementary projects of participating organizations, and where funding is available.

Phase II: Development and pilot implementation (2–5 years)

The second phase of delivery involves the development of approaches, tools, guidelines, and frameworks that will be implemented at the environmental assets identified for initial project delivery, as reflected in Table 3. This includes, where relevant, detailed location-specific design, monitoring, modelling and assessment, capacity building and knowledge sharing, the establishment of participatory mechanisms and other governance structures, initial on-ground delivery at pilot sites, and evaluation and reporting of pilot implementation, as reflected in the Outcomes and Outputs for each of the 13 projects. A plan for full-scale roll-out and/or ongoing implementation in Phase III will also be prepared, based on agreement by Member Countries to the finalized approaches, tools, guidelines and frameworks implemented in Phase II.

Phase III: Full-scale and ongoing implementation (5–10 years)

The third phase of delivery involves the full-scale implementation of projects, based on lessons learned and evaluation of Outcomes from phase II and updates to the SBEM for the period beyond 2025. This may include embedding of systems and practices in project areas, expansion of the geographic scope of projects across the 12 priority environmental assets, further on-ground activities requiring significant public or private investment and/or sustained practice change within government, the private sector or communities, and ongoing activities that require regular or periodic implementation to ensure an enduring impact.

4.2 General mechanisms

This PBAB describes an integrated programme of work that can only be implemented through the collective and coordinated effort of multiple parties and stakeholders. Implementation needs to occur at both national and regional levels through the actions of regional organizations and cooperation platforms, Development Partners, government agencies at national, provincial and local levels, community organizations and groups working on conservation and livelihood development, and individuals living and working in communities in

and around the 12 priority environmental assets of regional importance, including women, indigenous people, and others in vulnerable situations.

While developed under the auspices of the MRC, the PBAP is a plan for collaboration that goes beyond the MRC to encompass all actors working to improve conservation and livelihood outcomes throughout the Mekong River Basin. Given the integrated and multi-disciplinary nature of the challenges and the scale of the response required, leadership by a range of actors through an inclusive, partnership approach is essential. At the core of this approach is a focus on: (i) maximizing the interlinkages between different projects and components of projects; (ii) building on and leveraging the results and lessons learned of previous projects, rather than duplicating or repeating work; and (iii) national and community engagement that goes beyond informing and consulting to encompass involvement, collaboration, and where possible, the empowerment of affected people.⁴

To ensure a coordinated partnership approach, the following implementation mechanisms will be put in place:

- 1) **Partnership agreements** between the different lead agencies responsible for each project and between the lead agency and partner agencies within each project. Thus, there will be written agreements (memoranda of understanding, or MoUs) between the lead agencies of each of the 13 projects to support the integration and coherence, where necessary, of different project components in different projects, ensuring seamless alignment between the outputs of one project and the inputs of another. There will also be written agreements between the project lead for each project and the other partners involved in that project. These partnership agreements may be existing agreements (e.g. MoUs that MRC has with some partners), bespoke agreements developed specifically for implementing the PBAP, or standard arrangements required by the relevant source of funding, as appropriate.
- 2) **A project implementation plan** will be prepared for each project to guide the management of project inputs, the delivery of results, and the monitoring, evaluation and reporting of results. Plans will be developed by each project team and in consultation with project teams from other projects. The template for these plans will be subject to the requirements of the relevant funding body.
- 3) **A project-specific stakeholder participation plan.** Each project team will undertake a stakeholder analysis at the commencement of the project and identify when and how relevant stakeholders will participate in the project design and implementation. The level of participation needs to be appropriate to the context and circumstances of each project, and should emphasize as much as possible the involvement of directly affected people in the implementation of projects and collaboration on key decisions including on the development of alternatives and preferred solutions. Opportunities for devolved decision-making within the constraints of the project and broader programme of work should also be explored.
- 4) **A knowledge sharing component at regional, national and local levels.** The implementation of PBAP needs to support regional environmental outcomes and thus needs to identify and implement opportunities for cross-border knowledge sharing, education and awareness-raising as part of the project. An emphasis will be placed on identifying opportunities for further improvement and refinement of project outputs and on replication of successful projects or project components at other environmental assets throughout the LMB. Capacity-building of local communities and

⁴ Based on the International Association for Public Participation's (IAP2) Public Participation Spectrum, available at: <https://iap2.org.au/resources/spectrum>

government officials must also be identified and implemented either through the project or through a complementary project, such as Project 14.

- 5) **A PBAP Coordination Group** encompassing representatives from each project team will meet periodically in association with meetings of the MRC Expert Group on Environmental Management (EGEM) to review progress, plan next steps, and coordinate and ensure synergy between different projects. The Group will include the lead agency and the national implementing agencies for each project and will be organized by the MRC Secretariat. The Coordination Group will report to the EGEM, which has oversight of SBEM implementation on matters of regional significance, and to the National Mekong Committee Secretariats on matters of national significance in each Member Country.

At a national level, a lead line/implementing agency in each country where the project will be implemented will be identified. This agency will need to make personnel and other resources available for project implementation, and coordinate the necessary involvement of other national agencies at each level of government. The work programme should be reflected in **National Indicative Plans** of each country in support of the sustainable development opportunities identified in the BDS 2021–2030, and should be implemented in coordination with projects identified in the MRC Strategic Plan 2021–2025 (Annex II) and the PBAP for the Basin-wide Fisheries Management Strategy (Annex III).

4.3 Stakeholder participation

An important aim of the PBAP is to engage through partnerships with a wide range of actors and with local communities in the improved management of the Basin’s environmental assets. Engagement with stakeholders will occur at a whole of programme level and through specific projects which target the involvement of particular groups (**Table 4**).

Table 4. Stakeholders and mechanisms to enable participation

Stakeholder group	Reasons for engagement	Mechanisms for participation and approach
Agencies and partners in other project teams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring alignment of methods and outputs between projects Leveraging outputs from other projects in implementation Enhancing project impact and overall PBAP outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MRC to coordinate and facilitate communication between project teams PBAP Coordination Group to be established and operated with the oversight of the Expert Group on Environmental Management (EGEM) Project Plans to detail dependencies and links with other projects and be reviewed by other teams
Funding bodies including Development Partners and Global Fund Secretariats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring high quality funding applications and delivery of projects that achieve environmental outcomes consistent with the strategic objectives of funders and international conventions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project proposal preparation and application review process Project Plans developed in accordance with funding decisions and conditions Monitoring, evaluation and reporting for individual projects and PBAP as a whole
National agencies responsible for sectoral planning and policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring that opportunities are identified and exploited to support green growth and more sustainable economic development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus of Project 9 on mainstreaming conservation measures in sectoral strategies and plans Participation of sector agencies in the EGEM and coordinated by National Mekong Committee Secretariats
MRC Dialogue Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential involvement of China and Myanmar in project funding and implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement in project design and preparation including through the Lancang-Mekong Water Resources Cooperation Center (LMCWRCC)

	Whole-of-basin and connectivity outcomes	Potential partners in implementing projects Potential funding applications for the Mekong-Lancang Cooperation (MLC) Special Fund
Provincial and local authorities	Support to engagement of local community groups and representatives Ensuring that opportunities are identified and exploited to support green growth and more sustainable economic development	Focus of Project 9 on mainstreaming conservation measures in sectoral strategies and plans (including at provincial and local level) Identified national lead agency to coordinate engagement between project teams and sub-national authorities
Private sector entities	Source of potential future funding and investment Ensuring that opportunities are identified and exploited to support green growth and more sustainable economic development	Focus of Project 9 on piloting a biodiversity offsets scheme Focus of Project 10 as potential contributors to pilot payments for ecosystem services schemes and partners in conservation finance Focus of Project 11 as potential investors in ecotourism businesses
Civil society organizations	Support for socio-economic benefits and avoiding negative impacts	Each project team to develop a project participation plan including involvement and collaboration of civil society organizations
Local communities, including women, indigenous people and other people in vulnerable situations	Ensure improved livelihood opportunities and wellbeing for all Build capacity for community co-management and empowerment of women and others in vulnerable situations	Each project team to develop a project participation plan including gender-sensitive involvement, collaboration and empowerment Focus of Project 7 on sustainable community resource management Focus of Project 5 on capacity building of local communities with support of a regional network

4.4 Risk management

The main risk to the implementation of the PBAP and achievement of its objectives is a lack of resourcing. Without sufficient funding it will be difficult to design and deliver projects at a scale that can make a material difference to basin environmental outcomes. This risk is rated as high due to the likely challenging fundraising environment resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, the scale of the issues that need to be addressed, and competing priorities. A broad coalition of actors will need to work together to manage this and other key risks faced in the implementation of the PBAP.

PBAP risks will be overseen and managed at a programme level by the PBAP Coordination Group and reported at least annually to the EGEM. The risk matrix in **Table 5** will be reviewed and updated periodically to ensure that all key risks are identified, and mitigation measures are being appropriately implemented. Project teams have responsibility for managing specific project risks and will be expected to regularly identify, assess and report on risks and risk management to the PBAP Coordination Group.

Table 5. Risk matrix and mitigation measures for periodic review and updating by the EGEM

Risk	Rating	Mitigation measures
1. The risk is that a set of projects or key projects that produce outputs that other projects are dependent on cannot be implemented because of a lack of project funding due to unsuccessful funding applications or	H	- The scaling up or down of projects (e.g. through number of environmental assets targeted), according to resourcing and specific funding priorities of Development Partners and Global Funds. - A three-stage fund mobilization strategy to target multiple funding sources and a wide range of partners.

insufficient Development Partner interest.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Engagement with partners in PBAP development to ensure broad support for the approach and the scale and scope of identified projects. - The MRC Secretariat and Member Countries to investigate options and progress sustainable funding mechanisms including potentially establishing a Mekong Fund dedicated to environmental project funding.
2. The risk is that project outputs cannot be delivered by 2025 because of delays in the implementation of the PBAP due to processes for detailed design and resource mobilization for global funds.	M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Projects with the same lead agency to be bundled together for funding applications. - Projects to be led by agencies with application experience, with potential co-financing capacity and according to areas of competitive advantage.
3. The risk is an insufficient basin-wide impact as a result of the focus on only a small number of priority environmental assets, the external drivers of environmental degradation not being sufficiently addressed, or the cause of the problems being too entrenched in broader national and regional development challenges.	M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Basin countries and Development Partners to support implementation of BDS 2021–2030 in relation to more sustainable and optimal economic development. - Project outputs involving pilots or case studies to include guidance on repeating project implementation (where successful) at other environmental assets or expanding to basin-wide coverage. - EGEM to implement process for identifying and prioritizing additional environmental assets of regional importance - All project concept notes and proposals will need to identify existing or past similar projects and how they will build on rather than duplicate earlier activities.
4. Ongoing needs not met by the time-limited, project-based approach since problems require more systemic change and repeated rounds of investment to materially affect outcomes.	M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - EGEM to establish a process for identifying and implementing project pipeline in line with sustainable funding mechanism. - All projects to have national capacity-building components such as knowledge sharing, technical assistance, training and awareness-raising, and guidance material or toolkit development. - Where ongoing implementation actions are required, the project will include links to financial incentive mechanisms or the development of sustainable funding models.
5. PBAP does not deliver expected outcomes due to lack of coordination between projects or insufficient buy-in by national, provincial and local decision-makers and communities	M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All projects to be country-driven with at least two basin countries to champion each project, committing at least some in-kind resources to project implementation. - Oversight by EGEM and participation by EGEM members in the PBAP coordination group. - Establishment and operation of PBAP coordination group involving all project lead agencies. - Project stakeholder participation plan for each project to emphasize involvement, collaboration, and empowerment wherever possible. - Project plans to outline impact pathway requirements and enabling activities consistent with BDS 2021–2030

5. Governance arrangements, roles, and responsibilities

This PBAP will be implemented by a range of organizations at regional and national levels. Each project will be undertaken by a lead implementing organization and one or more partner organizations. Together these organizations form the project team. There will be a project team for each project, although depending on the agreement of relevant parties, one project team may be responsible for more than one project if it is deemed more efficient and effective to manage the projects in that way. This may be the case where a lead organization is responsible for several projects that have been approved for funding as a project bundle under one of the global funds or through a bilateral agreement with a Development Partner.

Lead implementing organizations are responsible for preparing project funding proposals and managing projects on the ground. They provide technical oversight and assist government agencies and non-government organizations to develop, implement and execute their projects. Where funding is provided by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), lead organizations need to be approved GEF Partner Agencies. GEF Partner Agencies are determined by the national GEF country focal point. Under the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and the Adaptation Fund, lead organizations need to be approved as accredited entities of the respective funds.

Project partner or executing organizations are the implementing or executing agencies responsible for delivering project components under the overall guidance and support of the lead organization. Partner organizations may include international or regional agencies and non-governmental organizations and must include the national agencies with policy and/or management responsibility relevant to the project in each country it is implemented. Project partner organizations undertake technical, coordination and engagement roles as relevant for each individual project.

As an integrated programme of work with a potentially large number of projects requires extensive coordination between project teams.

The PBAP Coordination Group consists of the lead agencies for each project as well as relevant national agency members of the Expert Group on Environmental Management. The Coordination Group is responsible for ensuring that all projects are implemented as an integrated and coherent body of work with an alignment of methodologies (where relevant), coordination of scheduling and delivery of outputs from projects that are necessary inputs for other projects, and identification of opportunities for exploiting synergies etc. The Group also serves as a mechanism for peer review, knowledge sharing and technical support between each project team. It is anticipated that not all 13 projects will be running concurrently.

This PBAP has been developed under the auspices of the MRC and although it aims to facilitate a broader stakeholder approach, its implementation will also be supported through MRC governance structures, which provide basin countries with the opportunity for regional oversight, alignment with national priorities, and information exchange and knowledge sharing (**Figure 5**).

The MRC Joint Committee has overall responsibility for overseeing the implementation of this PBAP and ensuring its objective and goals are achieved.

The MRC Secretariat is responsible for coordinating the implementation of the PBAP including the convening and supporting of EGEM meetings and Coordination Group meetings and advising the Joint

Committee. The MRC Secretariat must also ensure alignment of the implementation of the PBAP with the other regional strategies and action plans of the MRC.

The **EGEM** has operational oversight of the implementation of this PBAP through the participation of representatives of relevant national agencies in the PBAP Coordination Group at a regional level.

National Mekong Committee Secretariats are responsible for coordinating the involvement of national line or implementing agencies at the national level, both within and between projects. These Secretariats must also ensure alignment of the implementation of the PBAP with that of other regional strategies and action plans at the national level. This includes regional strategies prepared by the MRC and by other regional cooperation mechanisms, including ASEAN, GMS, and Mekong-Lancang Cooperation (MLC) Water.

At the national level, projects will be implemented by national line or implementing agencies in partnership with international or national organizations, provincial and local authorities and community groups.

National line or implementing agencies are responsible for ensuring that project development, implementation and execution aligns with national strategies and plans. They also organize engagement with sub-national authorities and help facilitate engagement with communities.

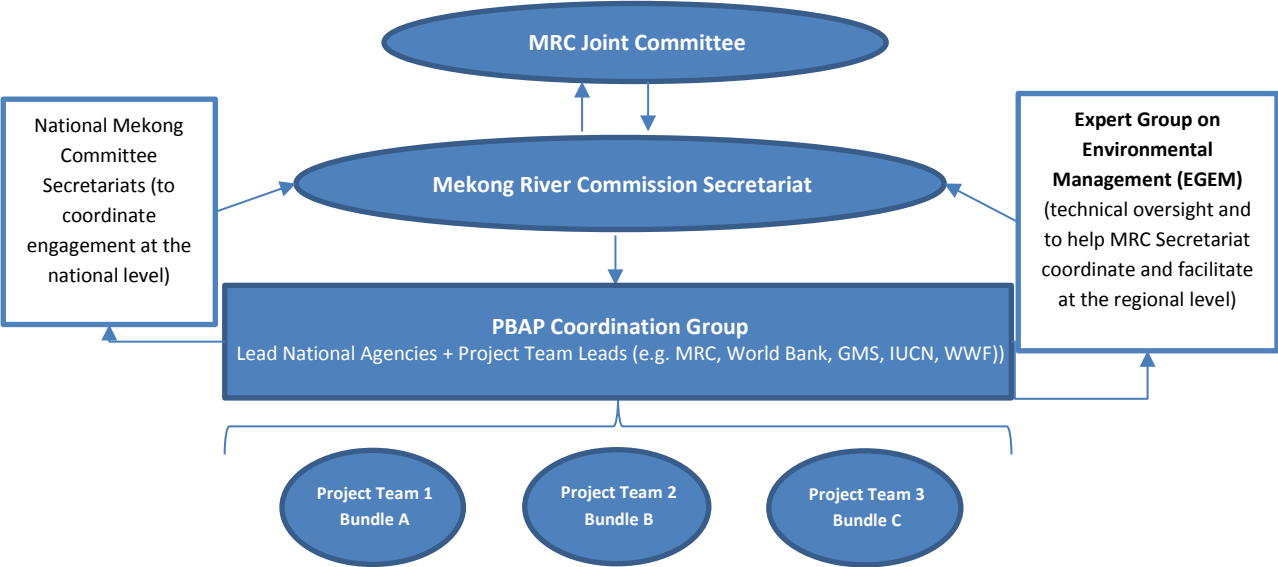


Figure 5. Governance structure for implementation of the PBAP

6. Financial resources and fund mobilization strategy

6.1 Sources of funding and general approach

To implement this PBAP will require substantial funding. Sources of funding include: (i) national budgets of basin countries; (ii) Development Partners (either directly to countries or through the MRC); (iii) global funds such as the Global Environment Facility (GEF), Green Climate Fund (GCF), and United Nations Adaptation Fund (AF); and/or (iv) private sector contributions, (either as investments, philanthropic (voluntary) contributions, or as mandated by national governments.

National budgets

Member Countries are responsible for the management of environmental assets within their territory and have the option to provide funding for the implementation of SBEM and projects identified in the PBAP, subject to competing national priorities. It is likely to prove difficult for countries to identify additional funding beyond current commitments due to competing claims for a range of development needs across sectors. Indeed, resource capacity is frequently cited as a barrier to improved management of environmental asset in all countries. The economic impact of COVID-19 and the budget challenges that countries are facing due to social distancing requirements and reduced tourism expenditure make national resource mobilization for the SBEM more difficult.

Development Partners

Development Partners, including current developed country contributors to the MRC budget and the multilateral development banks, often have environmental management as a key strategic objective given the importance of the environment to sustainable economic growth, social wellbeing and livelihoods throughout the region. Development Partners have the option of supporting projects directly through arrangements with each national government, channelling contributions through regional organizations like the MRC, or working with other parties including international and local non-government organizations and the private sector. Successful implementation of the SBEM and PBAP is likely to rely substantially on Development Partner contributions at least in the short term. The question is how best to enable these contributions in a way which achieves the best outcomes for the minimum cost. The economic impact of COVID-19 also makes for a challenging fund-raising environment given the range of competing priorities.

Global and regional funds

There are several global funds established under Multilateral Environment Agreements (MEAs) to support developing country implementation of those agreements and which have objectives that align with the strategic directions of the SBEM. These funds generally operate on a project-by-project approval process with rigorous planning and vetting of project proposals, which support the achievement of the objectives of the relevant international treaty. The most relevant international Trust Funds for SBEM implementation are: the GEF, which supports biodiversity, climate change and land degradation projects; the GCF, which supports climate change mitigation and adaption projects; and the AF, which supports climate change adaptation projects.

Project proposals are normally prepared by, or in partnership with, approved implementing agencies or accredited regional or national entities. In addition to these funds, other trust funds of relevance could include the Special Climate Change Fund (for adaptation and technology transfer), the Least Developed

Countries Fund (for adaptation in especially vulnerable countries), and the Nagoya Protocol Implementation Fund (for access and benefit sharing in relation to genetic resources).

In addition to the global funds, there may also be an opportunity for funding under the Mekong-Lancang Cooperation (MLC) mechanism. In 2016, China established a Special Fund under the MLC to support small and medium-sized cooperation projects in the Mekong River Basin Countries. This option would have the added value of facilitating engagement with the Upper Mekong River Basin countries in the protection of priority regional environmental assets.

The MLC Environmental Cooperation Strategy (2018–2022) identifies the following priority areas that align with the SBEM and this PBAP: (i) Mainstreaming environmental policies (aligned with Project 9); (ii) Environmental capacity building (aligned with Project 5); (iii) Ecosystem management and biodiversity conservation (aligned with all projects); (iv) Climate change mitigation and adaptation (aligned with all projects); and (v) Management of environmental data and information (aligned with Project 6). The strategy also emphasizes environmental valuation approaches (aligned with Project 1) and the identification and management of biodiversity corridors (aligned with Project 3).

The private sector

Private sector investments and philanthropic donations are a growing source of finance globally as actors at all levels of society galvanize to meet the SDGs and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. There is increasing interest from investors and consumers for environmentally sustainable products and services, and for companies to demonstrate environmental and social commitments.

The biggest challenge in attracting private investments is identifying and developing projects that can generate a financial return such as from the sale of carbon offsets or as coupled with a payments for ecosystem services scheme, and establishing the mechanisms to develop and facilitate these transactions, for example through the issuance of green bonds. To fully develop capacities in this area, the implementation of the SBEM and the PBAP needs to be fully aligned with the SDGs, to facilitate projects that have the capacity to generate a return for investors, and have a fund trustee that has the legal and financial management expertise to establish and operate different financial instruments. Project 10 of the PBAP seeks to develop opportunities for private sector partners and investors in the conservation of environmental assets and development of sustainable livelihoods.

Sources of private sector funding could include institutional investors and other asset owners and managers focused on sustainability and environmental, social and corporate governance (ESG) investments, private foundations such as the Leonardo DiCaprio Foundation, for example, and wealthy individuals. National governments may also choose to require private sector developers or operators to contribute to funding environmentally or socially benefits projects through fees, levies and export or consumer price surcharges.

Funding requirements and approach

The total indicative budget required to implement the PBAP over 2021–2025 is around **USD 35–40 million** for Phases I and II of all 13 projects. However, funding of the implementation of SBEM and environmental conservation measures in line with the BDS 2021–2030 more broadly needs to consider resource mobilization for both the agreed initial set of projects in this PBAP and an ongoing pipeline of project identification, development, planning and implementation. Many of the projects in this PBAP consist of pilots, case studies, and trials in relation to only one or a few priority environmental assets. Where successful, these projects will need to be replicated at other priority environmental assets or scaled up to a basin-wide approach over time.

The full implementation roll-out of projects under Phase III of the PBAP is anticipated to require more than **USD 115 million** over a 10-year period, but this is subject to successful delivery of Phases I and II, and further design and development in response to lessons learned and an evaluation of earlier phases. Additional priority environmental assets may also be identified and added to the SBEM in the future and will also need to be the subject of further project work. Given these short- and longer-term needs, the fund mobilization strategy for this PBAP consists of three phases, which align with the implementation phases outlined in **Section 4.1**

Phase I: Utilizing existing funding sources as agreed and available under current organizational work plans and continuing development partner support, and apply for project preparation grants from global funds, where necessary.

Phase II: Utilizing traditional funding mechanisms and sources to finance the implementation of the initial set of 13 projects. Sources of funding include MRC Development Partners, Member Countries, multi-lateral development banks, the Mekong-Lancang Cooperation (MLC) Special Fund, and applications to the environment and climate-related global funds.

Phase III: Exploring the development and establishment of a ‘Mekong Fund’ with an initial focus on environmental conservation projects. The Mekong Fund would be a dedicated vehicle for attracting and allocating resources to environmentally beneficially projects of regional importance and support the full basin-wide implementation of projects under this Action Plan with both public and private sector contributions.

In time, a further phase of work may include the expansion of the proposed Mekong Fund to a broader range of project types including those identified in relation to the MRC’s Procedures for Notification Prior Consultation and Agreement (PNPCA) process and proactive basin-wide planning relating to alternative livelihoods, significant joint projects and disaster management and response. The third phase may also consider a broader range of potential contributors and funding sources associated with water resource development and management.

6.2 Phase I and II implementation

The implementation of phases I and II of the resource mobilization strategy first involves identifying the partner agencies with the relevant technical and management expertise, who are willing to participate in the development and implementation of projects in accordance with this PBAP and help mobilize resources for those projects. These agencies will further elaborate project proposals and may also have sources of funding available to contribute to high priority needs. Although not mandatory, applications for funding to the global environment and climate change-related funds generally encourage co-financing from other parties, such as developed country participants. MRC will take the lead in identifying interested partner organizations and facilitating discussions around the participation and organization of various parties into project teams.

Identification of funding opportunities

Once the project team is established, funding will be sought from Development Partners through existing channels and by putting together applications to the GEF, the GCF or the United Nations Adaptation Fund or another global fund, as appropriate, through an approved Partner Agency of the GEF (**Annex V**) or Accredited

Entity under the GCF or AF (as selected by Member Countries).⁵ These applications need to consider both the overall objectives and focus of each of these funds, and also the priorities for funding in the current funding round, where relevant. A review of current priority areas for funding indicates that some of the projects identified in this plan are more suitable for some funding sources than others (**Table 6**). For instance, with respect to biodiversity, the Seventh Replenishment of the Global Environment Facility Trust Fund (GEF-7: 2018–2022) funding round is focused on the following objectives:

- Mainstream biodiversity across sectors as well as landscapes and seascapes.
- Address direct drivers to protect habitats and species.
- Further develop biodiversity policy and institutional frameworks.

For each of these objectives, a focal area strategy guides the kinds of interventions GEF-7 funding is potentially available for. Although a project may align with the overall objectives of the GEF, the focus of a particular funding round will make a successful application more or less likely. For example, invasive species is identified as a direct driver of biodiversity loss and is a key area of focus of the GEF, including under objective (ii) above; however, GEF-7 funding for invasive species control and management is focused on island states, hence is not applicable to the Mekong River Basin. Similarly, with respect to ecotourism development, GEF funding of global wildlife conservation including through tourism development is a priority area. However, the focus of GEF-7 funding for wildlife tourism development is on Africa.

For the GCF, relevant focus areas for adaptation-related project proposals are:

- Ecosystems and ecosystem services
- Health, food and water security
- Livelihoods of vulnerable communities.

In the case of the United Nations Adaptation Fund, proposals for concrete adaptation projects and programmes must align with the Fund’s Results Framework. The following are the outcomes in the AF results framework that are most relevant to the PBAP projects, and other outcomes may be partially relevant:

- Outcome 5: Increased ecosystem resilience in response to climate change and variability-induced stress
- Outcome 6: Diversified and strengthened livelihoods and sources of income for vulnerable people in targeted areas.

Table 6. Potential alignment of projects with funding sources, including the MRC BF, the MRC EF, the GEF, GCF, AF, direct BA to implementing entities and basin countries, and the MLC mechanism

 = Full alignment  = Partial alignment

PBAP Project	BF	EF	GEF	GCF	AF	BA	MLC
1. Valuing natural capital and ecosystem services (MRC SP)							
2. Environmental flows and wetland limits of acceptable change (MRC SP)							
3. Biodiversity adaptation to climate change							
4. New or updated climate-resilient asset management plans							
5. Regional ranger network							
6. Biodiversity monitoring and data management							
7. Community resource use and co-management							

⁵ The full list of approved implementing agencies under the GEF (18 agencies) is available at: www.thegef.org/partners/gef-agencies; accredited entities under the Green Climate Fund (97 approved entities) are listed at: www.greenclimate.fund/about/partners/ae; and under the United Nations Adaptation Fund (51 entities) listed at: www.adaptation-fund.org/apply-funding/implementing-entities

8. Watershed planning and management framework (MRC SP)							
9. Mainstreaming conservation into sector strategies and plans							
10. Conservation finance and private sector partnerships							
11. Sustainable ecotourism							
12. Nature-based livelihoods							
13. Threat management							

Note: Basket Fund (BF), Earmarked Fund (EF), Global Environment Facility (GEF), Green Climate Fund (GCF), Adaptation Fund (AF), Bilateral Donor Assistance (BA), Mekong-Lancang Cooperation (MLC), MRC Strategic Plan (MRC SP)

Funding opportunities for each of the sources identified in Table 6 may be either fully aligned with the priorities of those sources, or only partially aligned. For instance, MRC-earmarked funds could be made available only regarding aspects of each project (as agreed with contributors) for activities that relate to implementing the MRC SP 2021–2025 and the performance of the MRC’s core functions. Funding from either GCF or AF needs to target climate change adaptation (or mitigation for GCF), and in the case of the AF, is not generally available for capacity-building activities. Direct bilateral assistance from Development Partners and other donors can be made for any of the projects or groups of projects as agreed between the parties.

For funding applications to the global funds, for reasons of efficiency PBAP projects will be bundled together in groups under a single GEF Partner Agency or a GCF/AF-accredited entity. The partner agency or accredited entity needs to be decided at a national level by the relevant authority in each country and in agreement with that agency. The proposed project bundles and potential partner agencies or accredited entities are outlined in **Table 7**.

Table 7. Indicative project bundles for funding application and administrative purposes

Project bundles and themes	PBAP Projects	Potential key technical assistance agencies	Potential fund partner agency or accredited entity	Indicative Phase I and II budget estimate	Potential Global Fund application process
Bundle A – economic valuation, instruments, monitoring and assessment, conservation finance	1, 2, 6, 10	MRC, LMCWRCC, SEI/ADPC, WWF, World Bank, UNEP	World Bank, WWF	USD 13 million	GEF International Waters/GEF Programme/LMC Special Fund
Bundle B – resource use, livelihoods, ecotourism, community management	5, 7, 11, 12	FAO, CIFOR-ICRAF, FFI, International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), World Bank	World Bank, Asian Development Bank (ADB), FAO, WWF	USD 15 million	GEF multi-modal/GEF Programme/ GCF regional programme/AF
Bundle C – policies, plans, strategies including watershed management, adaptation and sector mainstreaming	3, 4, 8, 9, 13	WWF, FFI, IUCN, FAO, World Bank	FAO, ADB, IUCN, WWF	USD 12 million	GCF regional programme

For funding applications, these project bundles could be submitted for funding as a ‘programme’ with each of the projects in **Section 3.2** as the associated ‘child projects’, or they could be formulated as a single project with the projects in **Section 3.2** becoming the various ‘project components’. The preferred approach in each case will be determined in consultation with the participating agencies and the funding body during project

development. Further draft iterations of this PBAP may seek to consolidate the initial list of projects into a smaller number of larger projects, following review and prioritization by Member Countries.

The budget estimates provided are only indicative and are premised on the application of most projects being implemented as pilots or case studies at only one or a few priority environmental assets. Following prioritization of projects, it may be necessary to expand the scale of budgetary resources in order to broaden the scope of project proposals and include a wider range of priority environmental assets of regional importance in each one.

Proposal preparation and submission

Following agreement to the scale and scope of projects outlined in this PBAP, the key next steps are:

1. identification and agreement between partner organizations and member countries on which project proposals to pursue, including the preferred project bundles, the target funding source, and the designated partner agency or accredited entity;
2. identification and commitments of co-financing from within the project organizations and/or from multi-lateral or bilateral donors;
3. project preparation including consultation with affected stakeholders at regional, national and local levels and completion of funding application documents;
4. submission of funding applications and provision of further information, as requested.

Some of the key steps involved and the project development cycle for each of the GEF, GCF and AF are documented below (**Table 8**). Since the development of applications to the Global Funds can take some time, opportunities to implement pilot projects with commitments from bilateral or multi-lateral Development Partners and regional funds such as the MLC Special Fund will also be explored.

Table 8. General approach to funding applications under the Global Environment Facility, Green Climate Fund and Adaptation Fund

	Global Environment Facility	Green Climate Fund	Adaptation Fund
1	Applications for funding are accepted on a rolling basis through Global Environment Facility (GEF) partner agencies. Submissions are made through the GEF Online Portal.	Applications for funding are accepted from Accredited Entities on a rolling basis and from others in response to specific requests for proposals (together with application for accreditation).	Applications are accepted three times per year, in January, April and August. Submissions must be made through approved national, regional or multilateral implementing entities.
2	The Operational Focal Point (OFP) in each country decides which GEF Partner Agency should develop and implement the project.	A Concept Note can be submitted for feedback from the Secretariat but is not necessary.	Proposals must be consistent with priorities in country national determined contributions (NDCs) and endorsed by the designated authority in the implementation country.
3	Determine the appropriate project documentation based on the type of project: (i) Full-sized Project (>\$2.0 million); (ii) Medium-sized Project; (iii) Enabling Activity; or (iv) Programme	Prepare a Funding Proposal including an Impact Assessment based on extensive consultation with affected people. The National Designated Authority must submit a 'no-objection letter' within 30-days of the funding proposal	Determine the appropriate funding application as either (i) a concept proposal; (ii) a full-project proposal; or (iii) a programme funding application
4	Completion and submission of the following templates: Either: - Project Identification Form; or - CEO Endorsement Request Form; or	Completion and submission of the following templates: - Funding Proposal - No Objection Letter - Detailed Budget Plan - Implementation Timetable	Completion and submission of the following templates, as appropriate: - Request for project/programme funding - Project Concept - Full Project Proposal

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Programme Framework Document (and Child Project Concept form) <p>And:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Core Indicators Worksheet - Taxonomy Worksheet - Budget Template - OFP Endorsement Letter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ESS disclosure report - Gender Assessment and Action Plan - Procurement Plan - Monitoring and Evaluation Plan - Accredited Entity Fee Request <p>Budget</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Co-financing commitment letter - Evidence of internal approval - Multi-country project/programme information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Results framework alignment table - Disbursement schedule - Regional Project Proposal - Government Endorsement Letter
5	Letter of Endorsement from OFP	Revision and strengthening of the proposal based on the Initial Assessment for completeness by the Secretariat.	Letter of Endorsement from the Government
Project Development Cycle			

6.3 Phase III implementation

Phase III implementation of the resource mobilization strategy involves the design, establishment and operation of a Mekong Fund, which includes funding of environmental conservation projects consistent with the Basin Development Strategy 2021–2030 and the SBEM. An exploration of the potential for establishing a Mekong Fund will be progressed separately through the MRC Joint Platform, with a view to the Fund encompassing not only environmental conservation projects, but also livelihoods for vulnerable people affected by water resources development and potentially disaster-related needs. A Mekong Fund could be used to fund both national and regional implementation activities. As with any trust fund, the primary benefit would be providing assurance to donors about the effective allocation of resources. The main rationale for establishing a Mekong Fund is that it would:

- enable a simple message and branding of an ongoing programme of work to maintain the ecological function of the Mekong River Basin and support inclusive access and utilization of the basin’s water and related resources in the face of numerous and wide-ranging threats;
- enable a broader range of financing options for project implementation currently available including grants, loans, and guarantees that could be backed by PES, international carbon finance, and so on;
- facilitate a partnership approach by pooling project funding and engaging a wider range of implementing entities in achieving the basin-wide objectives of the 1995 Mekong Agreement, the BDS 2021–2030, and SBEM, beyond those currently working directly with MRC;
- broaden the source funding options, including for private sector and philanthropic contributions to the continued ecological function and social wellbeing of the Mekong River Basin;

- e) provide an avenue for the receipt of voluntary contributions as well as contributions mandated by national governments in accordance with sovereign decision-making for improving the condition of the Basin's environmental assets and mitigating the impacts of water resources development.

Design options for a sustainable funding strategy that includes a Mekong Fund prepared in parallel to this PBAP will be subject to review and consultation through MRC processes.

7. Monitoring, evaluation, and reporting

The MRC's Results-based M&E Framework will be applied to track progress and evaluate outcomes associated with the implementation of this Action Plan. This involves monitoring and evaluation in accordance with the Mekong River Basin Indicator Framework to understand the change in basin conditions and trends across five dimensions (environment, social, economic, climate change, and cooperation), as well as organizational monitoring and evaluation of project activities, outputs, and outcomes consistent with the results chain of each project in this plan. In addition, the funding body for each project or bundle of projects will have monitoring, evaluation, and reporting requirements that will need to be addressed by each project team. The monitoring and evaluation framework for the PBAP is outlined in Table 9.

Table 9. Monitoring and evaluation framework for the PBAP, highlighting PBAP-specific elements

Issues of interest	Methodology and Reporting	Parameters	Function
Contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	Updating of the <i>State of Basin Report</i> every five years (next update in 2023)	The SDG targets relevant to environmental assets of the Mekong River Basin	SDG monitoring
BDS Outcomes and Outputs (Basin conditions and trends)	<i>Dashboard</i> which tracks progress towards Outcomes and Outputs 5-yearly updated <i>State of Basin Report</i>	Strategic and assessment indicators of the Mekong River Basin Indicator Framework (MRB-IF)	Mekong River Basin monitoring
Condition of priority environmental assets of regional importance - Ecosystem services - Habitat integrity - Biodiversity	As defined in Project 1 (ecosystem services) and Project 6 (biodiversity) of this PBAP and through application of the MRB-IF at the environmental asset scale 5-yearly updated <i>State of Basin Report</i>	To be defined through the implementation of PBAP projects	Monitoring and evaluation of the Regional Environmental Asset network
SBEM/PBAP contribution to changes in the condition of environmental assets (Results, interim outcomes)	Assessment of the quality of the PBAP Outputs produced and the level of change achieved based on reports from project partners <i>MRC Annual Report, Project Evaluation Reports</i>	Indicators of SBEM Strategic Directions and Indicative project indicators identified in Annex VI (subject to further refinement in project design) Project deliverables	Project Monitoring and Evaluation (internal and external)
MRC and Partner Organization activities, budgets, and expenditures	In accordance with the requirements of funding bodies and internal processes and systems <i>MRC Annual Report, Project Evaluation Reports External audit</i>	Rolling project work plans with budgets and cash flow planning by each lead implementing agency	Organizational and Project Budget and Expenditure Monitoring (internal and external)

Implemented projects are expected to contribute to changes in one or more of the Strategic Indicators and one or more of the Assessment Indicators of the MRB-IF. The contribution from individual projects will nevertheless be small due to the time and scale limitations of the projects, and it will only be by implementing the full set of projects that improvements in these indicators may occur. Different projects will contribute to changes in different indicators to a greater or lesser extent (**Table 9**), but at least 9 of the 15 Strategic Indicators, and 23 of the 53 Assessment Indicators of the MRB-IF should be affected by the implementation of this PBAP. This includes indicators in all five dimensions with the indicator for the *Status of environmental assets* the one most affected.

Table 9. Key strategic and assessment indicators from the Mekong River Basin Indicator Framework that will be affected by this PBAP, and the most relevant projects to affect change and provide data and information to support assessment

Relevant Mekong River Basin Indicator Framework Strategic Indicators	Relevant Mekong River Basin Indicator Framework Assessment Indicators	Contributing PBAP projects
1. Living conditions and wellbeing	- Food security - Water security	Project 7 (Community resource use and co-management) Project 12 (Nature-based livelihoods)
2. Livelihoods and employment in LMB water-related sectors	- Employment in LMB water-related sectors - Economic security - Gender equality in employment and economic engagement	Project 7 (Community resource use and co-management) Project 10 (Conservation finance and partnerships) Project 11 (Facilitating ecotourism) Project 12 (Nature-based livelihoods)
3. Water quality and sediment conditions	- Ecological health, and compliance of water quality with the Procedures for Water Quality (PWQ) - Changes in sediment transport	Project 2 (Limits of acceptable change to wetlands) Project 8 (Watershed management framework) Project 12 (Nature-based livelihoods)
4. Status of environmental assets	- Extent of wetland area - Condition of riverine, estuarine and coastal habitats - Condition and status of fisheries and other aquatic resources - Condition and status of ecologically significant areas	Project 2 (Limits of acceptable change to wetlands) Project 4 (Climate-resilient management plans) Project 6 (Biodiversity monitoring and data sharing) Project 8 (Watershed management framework) Project 13 (Risk mitigation from threatening processes)
5. Economic performance of LMB water-related sectors	- Economic value of wetlands - Economic value of tourism and recreation	Project 1 (Valuing natural capital and ecosystem services) Project 2 (Limits of acceptable change to wetlands) Project 11 (Facilitating ecotourism)
6. Greenhouse gas emissions	- Greenhouse gas emissions from LMB water-related sectors - Relative contribution to global emissions	Project 8 (Watershed management framework) Project 10 (Conservation finance and partnerships)
7. Adaptation to climate change	- Institutional response to the effects of climate change - Flood protection measures - Drought protection measures - Vulnerability to floods, droughts, and storms	Project 3 (Climate change and biodiversity) Project 4 (Climate-resilient management plans) Project 8 (Watershed management framework)
8. Equity of benefits derived from the Mekong River System	- Overall environment benefits derived in each country's part of the basin	All projects with data and information from Project 1 (Valuing natural capital and ecosystem services)
9. Benefits derived from cooperation	- Joint efforts on projects of basin-wide significance and with potential trans-boundary impacts - Extent of knowledge-sharing activities	All projects Project 5 (Regional ranger network)

The implementation of the MRB-IF through the collection, assembly, and transmission of data from regional and national monitoring programmes is outlined in the MRC's *Data Acquisition and Generation Action Plan*, which will be implemented in accordance with the BDS 2021–2030 and MRC SP 2021–2025. Project 1 (Economic valuation of natural capital and ecosystem services) and Project 15 (Biodiversity monitoring and data sharing) will also directly contribute data to the assessment of the conditions in basin environmental assets. These assessments will be reflected in regular *State of the Basin* reports; the next one is due in 2023.

The implementation of this PBAP will also contribute to changes in the *Indicators of Strategic Directions* outlined in the SBEM. These indicators generally relate either to specific project outputs as identified for each project, or outcomes that specific projects will contribute to. The projects that contribute directly to each of these strategic directions are as follows:

- Priorities, trade-offs, risks and benefits considered [Projects 1, 2, 4]
- Regional Environmental Asset network established [All projects]
- Climate change-resilient management plans implemented [Project 4]
- Number of regional environmental assets co-managed [Project 7]
- Number of partnerships increased [All projects]
- Lower Mekong Conservation Fund for Regional Environmental Assets established [MRC supporting activity in accordance with the BDS 2021–2030 and MRC SP 2021–2025 with input from Project 10]
- Increased investment by organizations in various incentive schemes established in Regional Environmental Assets [Projects 9; 10]
- Guidance for services (agriculture, PES, NTFP, tourism and relevant sectors) in regional environmental assets developed [Projects 9; 10]
- Number of Transboundary Protected Areas (TBPAs) established and TBPA cooperation mechanisms developed and strengthened [Projects 3; 8].

Monitoring of project outcomes and outputs, and tracking of activities, budgets and expenditures will also be conducted. This will be coordinated by the MRC with reporting by project teams in accordance with the requirements of each funding body.

This PBAP aims to deliver on the Strategic Directions and Priorities of the SBEM 2021–2025. Achieving the vision, outcomes and targets of the SBEM will, however, require further collective action beyond this initial five-year period. To support the planning and implementation of further work, at the conclusion of the delivery of the PBAP, an independent assessment will be commissioned by the MRC to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency in achieving the objective of this PBAP. The questions that it will consider include:

1. To what extent has the condition of the 12 priority regional environmental assets improved since 2020?
2. Are the priority regional environmental assets better protected and managed than they were in 2020?
3. Has a project-based approach been effective in contributing to better protection and management?
4. Which projects have been most effective, and what were the critical success factors?
5. Are communities more empowered in the protection and sustainable use of environmental assets?
6. Have pressures or threats to the condition of priority environmental assets been reduced?

Annex I: Strategic actions of the SBEM, and PBAP projects that address them

Building resilient regional environmental assets and adapting to change: Strategic Priorities and Actions	Projects
1.1 Identify and explicitly define regional policy drivers that are currently or will in the future significantly impact (positive and negative) on regional environmental assets and develop a process for these regional environmental assets to be considered in terms of trade-offs, risks and synergy benefits in project design.	
1.1.1 Review all 12 prioritised environmental assets of regional importance in the LMB to understand their characteristics and the 'limits of acceptable change' at the regional level to assist in regional planning decisions, such as the Basin Development Strategy, to identify where there are potential impacts.	2
1.1.2 Annually identify regional and national priorities for sectoral and national development (including budgetary considerations) and develop an approach to ensure the strategic priorities for the 12 prioritised environmental assets of regional importance in the LMB are included in these processes.	9
1.1.3 Develop a guidance document for the 12 prioritised environmental assets of regional importance in the LMB to be considered in project planning and design processes in terms of trade-offs, risks and benefits.	9
1.1.4 Promote the protection and management of the 12 prioritised environmental assets of regional importance in the LMB in the development of sector-based strategies and national planning processes.	9
1.1.5 Implement the priority actions in the BFMS with respect to upstream and downstream influences on the conservation of key habitats.	-
1:2 Identify and establish an integrated permanent regional environmental asset network across the whole of the LMB landscape.	
1.2.1 Review the need for a "permanent regional environmental asset network" in each country and throughout the Lower Mekong region and consider ways to legitimise this formally.	4, 11
1.2.2 Contribute to regional planning to ensure it is improved so that the 12 prioritised environmental assets of regional importance in the LMB are considered for their biodiversity and watershed protection values and retained as an essential part of the surrounding development landscape.	1, 2, 8, 9
1.2.3 Introduce appropriate monitoring systems for relevant management objectives for the 12 prioritised environmental assets of regional importance in the LMB (e.g. biodiversity protection, watershed protection and ecosystem services) supported by appropriate indicators to measure such changes. The special monitoring and reporting systems should be set in place to oversee the condition and trends in the permanent regional environmental asset network and act as a basis for cooperative bilateral/multilateral action.	1, 6
1.3 Identify actions to improve or maintain REAs so that they are well-functioning and develop strategies for them to adapt (and transform if necessary) to mounting pressures	
1.3.1 Develop or update management plans for all 12 prioritised environmental assets of regional importance in the LMB, which include actions to protect and enhance ecosystem condition, strengthen habitat connectivity, control invasive species, and introduce breeding programs.	4
1.3.2 Review and develop spatial planning and zoning mechanisms for all 12 prioritised environmental assets of regional importance in the LMB to manage the consequence of changes resulting in a shifting habitat and introduce long term planning of buffer zones and corridors, for shifting habitats ecosystems. This includes extensive scientific research for best place management actions to balance conservation and development around the 12 REAs. The zones in each country may differ according to national legislation.	3, 4, 8,
1.3.3 Provide suggestions to guide and direct regional and national policies, plans and actions to ensure effective protection and enhanced ecosystem condition within habitat patches, and strengthen habitat	8

connectivity across landscapes to enhance the capacity of ecosystems to naturally respond and adapt to a changing environment.	
1.3.4 Investigate and implement priority restoration activities of the 12 prioritised environmental assets of regional importance in the LMB including reforestation, e.g. of flooded forests, and the regeneration of endemic species.	11, 12, 13

Community Engagement and Cooperative Partnerships: Strategic Priorities and Actions	Projects
2.1 Ensure community engagement and awareness programs are central to the protection and management of regional environmental assets	
2.1.1 Introduce a regional, national and local communication education program to raise awareness about the importance of 12 prioritised environmental assets of regional importance in the LMB, the ecosystem services they provide and the need for sustainable management practices to ensure the ongoing resilience of these areas and their ability to adapt to change.	4, 5, 7, 11
2.1.2 Ensure adequate public consultation and input into the development of management and zoning plans for the 12 prioritised environmental assets of regional importance.	4, 11
2.1.3 Review examples of REAs currently implementing co-management practices with local communities and investigate opportunities to enter into co-management arrangements in other REAs where applicable, feasible and beneficial.	7
2.1.4 Build capacity at the national and local level to implement the conservation policies for the 12 prioritised environmental assets of regional importance in the LMB, including the promotion of gender equity and equality in EA management.	5, 7
2.2 Nurture existing partnerships and investigate new opportunities	
2.2.1 Identify new opportunities for the management of the 12 prioritised environmental assets of regional importance in the LMB through philanthropic and private industry sponsorship.	10
2.2.2 Produce a report identifying and legitimising past, current and future partnerships and recommending where improvements are necessary (as appropriate).	10
2.2.3 Review and identify opportunities for stakeholder participation in the implementation of the SBEM and for management of the 12 prioritised environmental assets of regional importance in the LMB including, planning, funding and monitoring, evaluation and reporting issues.	All
2.2.4 Undertake community-based monitoring and mapping of the 12 prioritised environmental assets of regional importance in the LMB, where appropriate.	6, 7
Investing Wisely and Creating Incentives: Strategic Priorities and Actions	
3.1 Assess the ecosystem services provided by the 12 prioritised environmental assets of regional importance and adopt a ES approach in relevant regional and national strategies	
3.1.1 Evaluate all 12 REAs in terms of the food security and sustainable livelihoods they provide within the Mekong watershed to enable informed management decisions and trade-offs to be made.	1
3.1.2 Drawing from the existing work already undertaken by the Member Countries, with UNEP and other organisations, develop a guidance document on how an ES approach could be integrated into the next strategic planning cycle, including the BDS, and considering new information, such as the findings of the Council Study.	-
	12

3.1.3 Implement conservation-based economic development models in buffer zones or in zones provided for development according to the national law such as community-based enterprises, NTFP, projects to cope with climate change.	
3.2 Identify opportunities for regional funding	
3.2.1 Identify and pursue organisation's looking for 'green' or sustainable branding as a source of potential funding for managing the 12 prioritised environmental assets of regional importance in the LMB.	-
3.2.2 Investigate options to establish a Lower Mekong Conservation Fund to protect and manage the 12 prioritised environmental assets of regional importance in the LMB.	-
3.3 Review social and economic instruments and other incentive mechanisms to manage regional environmental assets	
3.3.1 Assess social and economic instruments, such as Payment for Ecosystem Services, and other incentive mechanisms for adoption in the 12 prioritised REAs and develop guidance for consideration by each country.	10
3.3.2 Implement a number of pilot projects to test the user pays approach where groups and individuals benefit from EA hydrological and other services. Three main groups of users should be considered in targeting economic instruments; (a) local communities and subsistence uses; b) private sector commercial operations; and (c) government operations. Special attention would need to be given to concession holders in, forestry and agriculture, industrial facilities, energy facilities, and irrigation and water supply systems.	9, 10

Strengthening Regional and National Environmental Assets of Importance in the LMB: Strategic Priorities and Actions	Projects
4.1 Develop guidance and regional action plans for agriculture, tourism, fisheries and forestry, and other activities in REAs	
4.1.1 Prepare regional guidance for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, and other activities inside the 12 REAs to improve the sustainability of practices.	9
4.1.2 Develop a regional action plan for tourism for the 12 REAs: to help attract different segments of the tourist market to the most appropriate locations, at the most appropriate times and in accordance with the best management practices for sustainable ecotourism.	11
4.1.3 Prepare guidance for 'green' tourism infrastructure development and tourist behaviour to reduce the negative impacts of tourism development; including further research on how management decisions for the 12 REAs impact on tourism activity so to maintain natural and tourism values; and develop monitoring protocols to ensure that the integrity of the environmental and cultural assets is maintained.	11
4.2 Develop complementary legal frameworks to enhance cross-border collaboration in the management of REAs	
4.2.1 Review the national legal frameworks of each MC to simplify existing legal frameworks and make them more complementary to enhance the opportunity for great collaboration in the management of the 12 REAs in the LMB.	8
4.2.2 Assess and identify where there are likely opportunities to establish Transboundary Protected Areas or Transboundary Conservation Landscapes or Seascapes between the 12 prioritised environmental assets of regional importance and/or with other environmental assets in the LMB.	3, 8
4.2.3 Assess and identify opportunities to set up green corridors between the 12 REAs or other environmental assets (transboundary) in the LMB.	3, 8

Annex II: MRC-SP Activities relevant to the implementation of the Strategy for Basin-wide Environmental Management for environmental assets of regional importance

1.1.1.1 Revisit PMFM and identify and evaluate potential new implementable flow thresholds (and methodologies) for guiding the monitoring and management of flow conditions in the mainstream (incl. for rapid river level fluctuations, minimum flood season, maximum dry season flows and to enable adequate reverse flow and other important functions of Tonle Sap)

1.3.1.1 Identify and assess limits to adequately protect key regional environmental assets (i.e. wetlands) including consideration of early and quick flow into the Tonle Sap Lake and gradual flow out of the lake and other ecosystem functions and services, through engagement of scientific expertise, national agencies, and local communities

1.3.1.2 Support Member Countries in updating, developing and implementing management plans for priority regional environmental assets identified in the Strategy for Basin-wide Environmental Management (SBEM) and other regional environmental strategies

1.3.2.1 Identify good practice institutional, governance and regulatory arrangements for the management of watersheds with opportunities for harmonization and capacity building between countries

1.3.2.2 Develop a basin-wide planning and management framework for watersheds that include key regional environmental assets due to their role in providing regionally significant ecosystem services

2.1.2.1 Review and incorporate important fish habitats into the network of key regional environmental assets and their management plans, and evaluate the effectiveness of conservation measures, including those for vulnerability to climate change

2.1.2.2 Support enhanced institutional, governance and regulatory arrangements within national and provincial fisheries management frameworks, including socio-economic monitoring and research on fisheries related issues such as fish stock assessments

2.1.2.3 Support agreed transboundary fisheries management projects

3.2.4.1 Support the implementation of the SBEM and investment projects and associated measures for the conservation and promotion of wetlands and watersheds, including for climate resilience

3.2.4.2 Raise awareness, and build knowledge and capacity in leveraging ecosystem services from wetlands and watersheds through alternative financial mechanisms, including for carbon offsets and ecotourism

4.2.2.1 Support mainstreaming of climate change adaptation to increased climate risks, floods, and droughts into regional and national strategies, plans, and projects

4.2.2.2 Coordinate enhanced access to international climate finance through climate fund accreditation for the MRC

4.2.2.5 Further identify and facilitate implementation of transboundary projects on climate change adaptation and water resources management (including pilot projects to improve knowledge, management, systems, and cooperation in response to increased floods and droughts)

5.2.2.1 Facilitate consideration of proposed joint investment projects and measures and national projects of basin-wide significance including trade-off and benefit sharing discussions, and the comparison with benefits and costs of existing national water-related development plans

5.2.2.2 Support the preparation of agreed significant joint investment projects and national projects of basin-wide significance

5.2.3.4 Explore the options for establishing a Mekong Fund through multiple partnerships and financing sources for the benefit of environmental assets, disaster response and vulnerable social groups

5.2.3.2 Implement and enhance partnerships between MRC and other Mekong water-related programmes of regional cooperation mechanisms (including Association of South-East Asian Nations, Greater Mekong Subregion, Ayeyawady-Chao Phraya-Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy [ACMECS], Lower Mekong Initiative, Mekong-Japan and Mekong-Republic of Korea)

Annex III. Alignment of SBEM-PBAP projects with Basin-wide Fisheries Management Strategy PBAP

Basin-wide Fisheries Management Strategy PBAP objectives, outcomes and outputs	Key SBEM PBAP project alignment with BFMS PBAP objectives, outcomes and outputs
Specific Objective 1: Key indicators are monitored	
Outcome 1: Fisheries Monitoring Improved	
Output 1.1: Implement the fisheries, ecological health and water quality monitoring programmes according to the MRC Decentralization Roadmap (2016–2020) and revised action plan (2021-2025)	Project 1 – Fisheries and ecological health data are necessary to inform ecosystem services valuation Project 6 – Regional and national fisheries monitoring will inform an understanding of biodiversity conditions and trends
Output 1.2: Capacity for monitoring improved	Project 6 – Alignment of fisheries databases and improved data management capabilities will support biodiversity monitoring and data management systems
Specific Objective 2: Fisheries of the LMB are managed sustainability	
Outcome 1: Key habitats of the LMB conserved, protected and enhanced	
Output 1.1: Regional identification, mapping and demarcation of key habitats of the LMB, conducted.	Project 2 – Identification, mapping and demarcation of key fish habitats will support the identification of wetland limits and environmental flow requirements Project 3 – Identification, mapping and demarcation of key fish habitats will support the zoning of environmental assets and management of transboundary biodiversity corridors
Output 1.2: A regional methodology to assess economic and social cost of habitat degradation or loss developed and agreed	Project 1 – The assessment of the economic and social cost of habitat degradation will inform ecosystem services valuation
Outcome 2: Fishers co-management arrangements supported bilaterally and regionally	
Output 2.1: Lessons learned (including positive and negative experiences) from implementing fisheries co-management in the LMB documented	Project 5 – Documenting and sharing of lessons learned can be facilitated through a regional ranger network
Output 2.2: Regional guidelines for fisheries co-management in the LMB considering the interface between traditional knowledge and co-management developed	Project 7 – Regional guidelines for fisheries co-management will support the establishment and capacity building for co-management of environmental assets more broadly
Outcome 3: Transboundary issues as shared fish stocks managed regionally	
Output 3.1: The implementation of the two existing transboundary fisheries management projects – (i) Cambodia-Viet Nam; and (ii) Bokeo, Lao PDR-Thailand continued and completed.	
Output 3.2: Transboundary fisheries management guidelines (in the context of fisheries co-management) developed	Project 7 – Regional guidelines for transboundary fisheries management will support the establishment and capacity building for community co-management of environmental assets more broadly
Output 3.3: Capacity of technical personnel on transboundary management of shared stocks for the Member Countries enhanced	Project 5 – Building capacities of technical personnel will be supported through a regional network for rangers and other front-line conservation staff
Specific Objective 3: Fisheries of the LMB are developed responsibly	
Outcome 1: Responsible aquaculture supported on regional and transboundary level	
Output 1.1: Strategy for Sustainable Aquaculture Development in the LMB	n/a

Output 1.2: MRC technical guidelines for environmentally friendly aquaculture development developed	n/a
Outcome 2: Interaction and interdependencies of water development and fisheries identified and addressed	
Output 2.1: Assistance of Development Partners for transboundary and cumulative impact assessment of different water development scenarios improved/enhanced	Project 1 – Impact assessment will be supported through the valuation of natural capital and ecosystem services Project 2 – Impact assessment will be improved by the identification and agreement of wetland limits of change, particularly as they relate to fish habitats Project 6 – Impact assessment will be informed by improved biodiversity data management Project 9 – Assessment of the impacts of development on fisheries will inform the integration of mitigation measures into sector strategies, policies and action plans
Output 2.2: Guidelines for fish passage for Mekong migratory fish species developed	Project 3 – Guidelines for fish passage will inform the management of transboundary biodiversity corridors including for climate change adaptation
Output 2.3: Key fish habitats impacted by water development projects restored to enhance fish productivity	Project 4 – Development and implementation of environmental asset management plans will include measures to protect and restore fish habitats, where relevant All projects – improved environmental asset condition will support the protection and restoration of key fish habitats
Outcome 3: Fisheries and fish-friendly irrigated agriculture regionally supported	
Output 3.1: Linkages with other national and regional organizations, fish-friendly irrigation and agriculture regionally support fostered	Project 4 – Development and implementation of environmental asset management plans will support fish-friendly irrigated agriculture, where relevant
Specific objective 4: Crosscutting issues are considered adequately	
Outcome 1: Gender equality improved	
Output 1.1: The existing gender platforms (i.e. the NGF) institutionalized and strengthened	All projects – Existing gender platforms can inform design and appropriate, gender-sensitive participation mechanisms in all projects
Output 1.2 Basin-wide lessons learnt and gender need analysis from national implementation of gender strategies understood and accepted	All projects – Gender-sensitive engagement, consultation and participation will support implementation of gender strategies
Output 1.3: Opportunities to build capacity on gender equity of Member Country implementing agencies improved	Project 5 – Capacity building support through a regional ranger network to consider the needs of women and others in vulnerable situations Project 7 – Community co-management will be conducted so as to support improved gender equity
Outcome 2: Support Member Countries in considering climate change as a cross-cutting issue to be incorporated into holistic fisheries management strategies	
Output 2.1: Impacts of climate change on fisheries in the LMB identified and addressed	Project 3 – Climate change impact and vulnerability assessments will include consideration of the impacts on fish All projects – An understanding of the impact of climate change on fisheries will support the design of intervention measures under all projects
Output 2.2: Guidelines for the identification of climate-change related vulnerability of fisheries relevant habitats and species in the LMB developed	Project 3 – Guidelines on climate change vulnerabilities will inform the identification of adaptation measures for biodiversity Project 4 – Guidelines on climate change vulnerabilities will inform the identification of adaptation measures for biodiversity

Annex IV. Alignment of PBAP projects with initial proposals from Member Countries and some MRC partners

Project	Cambodia	Lao PDR	Thailand	Viet Nam	ICRAF-CIFOR	UNEP
1. Valuing natural capital and ecosystem services	Developing, piloting and implementing the methodology for valuing ecosystem services	Studies on significant contribution of prioritized Environmental Assets (EAs) to the Mekong mainstream		Ecosystem Services Assessment in Mui Ca Mau National Park	Building Sustainable PES scheme	Ecosystem Services Assessment
2. Wetland limits of acceptable change	MRC SP	MRC SP	MRC SP	MRC SP		
3. Biodiversity adaptation to climate change	Protecting and managing transboundary protected area of Srepok Wildlife Sanctuary and Yok Don Park Conserving transboundary endangered species		Fisheries resource management in Lower Songkram River Khao Yai and Thap Lan National Park transboundary cooperation		Integrated Landscape Management in the Central Indochina Dry Forests	Climate risk and impact assessment Ecosystem-based adaptation projects
4. New or updated asset management plans	Developing, updating and implementing management plans	Management plan of protection of endangered species in the EAs sites				
5. Regional ranger network	Institutional capacity building to set up national system	Capacity building on conservation to the local authorities and communities				
6. Biodiversity monitoring and data management	Enhancing the existing data collection and management. Promoting national awareness on conservation and other benefits	Data and information management and exchange Public awareness through information and communications technology (ICT)		Establishment of Biodiversity database and monitoring system for sustainable conservation in the Mekong Basin (pilot study at Yok Don and Sre Pok Wildlife Sanctuary)		Integrated monitoring and decision support systems Citizen science for water monitoring
7. Community resource use and management	Strengthening engagement of local communities and authorities in protecting and managing REAs	Sustainable utilization of EA's resources Women, indigenous people empowerment and gender development projects	Fisheries resource management in Lower Songkram, Khao Yai and Thap Lan National Park community education, awareness and management	Introduction of co-management approach in conservation and sustainable exploitation of fisheries in U Minh Thuong National Park	Integrated Landscape Management in the Central Indochina Dry Forests	
8. Watershed planning and management framework	MRC SP	MRC SP	MRC SP	MRC SP	Integrated Landscape Management in the	

					Central Indochina Dry Forests	
9. Mainstreaming conservation into sector strategies and plans	Promoting agriculture, tourism development and traditional healthcare					
10. Payments for Ecosystem Services	Developing guidance/mechanisms for piloting and implementing PES on selection ecosystem services (water supply and biodiversity beauty)		PES in Khao Yai and Thap Lan National Park buffer zones		Building Sustainable PES scheme	
11. Sustainable ecotourism	Promoting tourism development Alternative livelihoods	Promotion of eco-tourism such as setting regional/national tourism calendar Recognition of the Mekong EAs in global communities				
12. Nature-based livelihoods	Alternative livelihoods Restoration and prevention of land degradation Alternative livelihoods focusing on added value chain from plant species and ecosystem services	Livelihood development and promotion of sustainable employment Women, indigenous people empowerment and gender development projects			Nature-based solutions for the northern Sub-Tropical Forests Nature-based solutions for the Mekong Indochina Mangroves and swamps	Nature-based solutions and sustainable livelihoods
13. Threat management (invasive species, fire, animal conflict, water resources development)	Pilot to evaluate pros and cons of invasive presentation to take further action Risk assessment to develop action plan for harmonizing between humans and wildlife	Risk reduction and prevention plans of environmental asset resources (threatening animals) from damaging properties and lives of local people	Study on sustainable fisheries in Nong Bong Kai, Wiang Nong Lom and mainstream Mekong	Assessment of resilience of fish fauna and fisheries in the Yok Don National Park under construction and operation of hydropower on Srepok River		
Other ideas identified					Farms and Forests: Boosting biodiversity and livelihoods Save Our Soils for Sustainability Traditional local knowledge on sustainable landscape management	Framework for Freshwater Ecosystems Management Detailed assessment of trends in water quality Use of satellite data for water quality

Annex V. The 18 Partner Agencies of the Global Environment Facility

	<p><u>Asian Development Bank's (ADB)</u> comparative advantage for the Global Environmental Fund (GEF) includes investment projects at the country and multi-country levels in Asia as well as the ability to incorporate capacity building and technical assistance into its projects. The ADB has strong experience in the fields of energy efficiency, renewable energy, adaptation to climate change, and natural resources management, including water and sustainable land management.</p>
	<p><u>African Development Bank's (AfDB)</u> comparative advantage for the GEF lies in its capacity as a regional development bank. The AfDB will focus on establishing a track record for environmental projects related to the GEF focal areas of climate change (adaptation, renewable energy and energy efficiency), land degradation (deforestation, desertification), and international waters (water management and fisheries).</p>
	<p><u>European Bank for Reconstruction and Development's (EBRD)</u> comparative advantage for the GEF lies in its experience and track record in market creation and transformation; and ensuring sustainability through private sector and municipal environmental infrastructure projects at the country and regional level in the countries of Eastern and Central Europe and Central Asia, particularly in the fields of energy efficiency, biodiversity, and water management.</p>
	<p><u>Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations' (FAO)</u> comparative advantage for the GEF is its technical capacity and experience in fisheries, forestry, agriculture, and natural resources management. FAO has strong experience in sustainable use of agricultural biodiversity, bioenergy, biosafety, sustainable development in production landscapes, and integrated pest and pesticides management.</p>
	<p><u>Inter-American Development Bank's (IDB)</u> comparative advantage for the GEF includes investment projects in Latin America and the Caribbean. IDB finances operations related to the following GEF focal areas: biodiversity (protected areas, marine resources, forestry biotechnology), climate change (including biofuels), international waters (watershed management), land degradation (erosion control), and persistent organic pollutants (pest management).</p>
	<p><u>International Fund for Agricultural Development's (IFAD)</u> comparative advantage for the GEF lies in its work related to land degradation, rural sustainable development and integrated land management, and its role in the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. IFAD has been working intensively in marginal lands, degraded ecosystems and in post-conflict situations.</p>

	<p><u>United Nations Development Programme’s (UNDP)</u> comparative advantage for the GEF lies in its global network of country offices, its experience in integrated policy development, human resources development, institutional strengthening, and non-governmental and community participation. UNDP assists countries in designing and implementing activities consistent with both the GEF mandate and national sustainable development plans.</p>
	<p><u>United Nations Environment Programme’s (UNEP)</u> comparative advantage for the GEF is related to it being the only United Nations organization with a mandate to coordinate the work of the United Nations in the area of the environment and its core business is the field of environment. UNEP also provides the GEF with a range of relevant experiences, proof of concept, testing of ideas, and the best available science and knowledge upon which it can base its investments. It also serves as the Secretariat to three of the multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), for which the GEF is the/a financial mechanism.</p>
	<p><u>United Nations Industrial Development Organization’s (UNIDO)</u> comparative advantage for the GEF is that it can involve the industrial sector in GEF projects in the following areas: industrial energy efficiency, renewable energy services, water management, chemicals management (including persistent organic pollutants and ozone depleting substances), and biotechnology. UNIDO also has extensive knowledge of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in developing and transition economy countries.</p>
	<p><u>The World Bank Group’s (World Bank)</u> comparative advantage for the GEF is as a leading international financial institution at the global scale in a number of sectors, similar to the comparative advantage of the regional development banks. The World Bank has strong experience in investment lending, focusing on institution building, infrastructure development and policy reform across all the focal areas of the GEF.</p>
	<p><u>Conservation International (CI)</u> works globally with governments and engages with all sectors of society to achieve the ultimate goal of improved human well-being, particularly focusing on the essential services that nature provides. As a GEF project agency, it leverages its science, experience in innovative finance and community-based solutions as well as its network of partnerships to implement effectively in the focal areas of biodiversity, climate change adaptation and mitigation, land degradation, and international waters.</p>
	<p>The <u>Development Bank of Latin America (CAF)</u> promotes a sustainable development model through credit operations, non-reimbursable resources, and support in the technical and financial structuring of projects in the public and private sectors of Latin America. It provides sustainable development and regional integration through an efficient mobilization of resources for a timely provision of multiple financial services to clients in the public and private sectors of the shareholder countries.</p>

	<p>The Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA) provides sustainable infrastructure project preparation, finance, and implementation support in selected African markets to improve the quality of life of people, accelerating the sustainable reduction of poverty and inequity, and promoting broad-based economic growth and regional economic integration. The primary sectors of focus to the DBSA are water, energy, ICT, and transport. The DBSA offers secondary services at the local level, in the health, education, and housing sectors.</p>
	<p>The Foreign Economic Cooperation Office, Ministry of Environmental Protection of China (FECO) coordinates and manages project funds in cooperation with international financial organizations for the implementation of multilateral environmental agreements and bilateral assistance, as well as other foreign cooperation activities in the field of environmental protection. FECO's mission is to protect the environment by introducing and exporting knowledge, technologies, and funds.</p>
	<p>Brazilian Biodiversity Fund (FUNBIO) promotes the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), with the mission of providing strategic resources for biodiversity conservation. As a pioneer financial mechanism in Brazil, it creates solutions to the sustainability of conservation and climate change initiatives. FUNBIO has extensive experience in supporting protected areas and in the design and management of funds, programmes, networks and environmental projects, in partnership with both public and private sectors and civil society.</p>
	<p>International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) is a membership union composed of both government and civil society organizations. It harnesses the experience, resources, and reach of its more than 1,300 member organizations and the input of more than 10,000 experts. IUCN is the global authority on the status of the natural world and the measures needed to safeguard it.</p>
	<p>The West African Development Bank (BOAD) promotes the balanced development of its member states and contributes to the achievement of economic integration in West Africa. It has funded public development projects in infrastructure to support production, rural development, and food security, as well as operations including projects promoted by the private sector. Its areas of intervention are rural development, food security and environment, industry and agro-industry, infrastructure, transport, hospitality, finance, and other services.</p>
	<p>World Wildlife Fund (WWF-US) is a leading international conservation organization, and was an active participant in the international negotiations to establish the GEF at the first United Nations Earth Summit in Rio in 1992. WWF has since been a supporter of the GEF's policies and operations, participating in the design or execution of more than 100 GEF programmes and projects.</p>

Annex VI. Indicators for outcomes and outputs of each PBAP project

PBAP Project	Project Outcomes	Project Outputs	Project Indicators
1. Valuing natural capital and ecosystem services	Capacity to periodically estimate the economic value of natural capital and ecosystem services throughout the Lower Mekong River Basin	Valuation framework/methodology for natural capital and ecosystem services for use in informing development and conservation investment decisions	- Methods, tools and guidance available to Member Countries with demonstrated implementation capacity
	An understanding of the value of natural capital and ecosystem services provided by the 12 priority environmental assets	Monitoring system to support periodic valuation of natural capital and ecosystem services	- New and existing data inform the valuation of natural capital and ecosystem services
2. Wetland limits of acceptable change	Limits of acceptable change for key river and connected wetland habitats inform regional and national planning	Baseline valuation of natural capital and the key ecosystem services provided by each priority regional environmental asset	- Value of natural capital and ecosystem services is documented and agreed by MRC Member Countries
	An understanding of the environmental flow requirements and other management actions necessary for acceptable limits at pilot sites to be met	Integrated monitoring and assessment framework for wetland ecosystem function	- Integrated assessment framework implemented at regional level
		Agreed limits of acceptable change for wetlands based on scientific assessment and community views	- Limits of acceptable change and environmental flow requirements for trial sites agreed by Member Countries
3. Biodiversity adaptation to climate change	Improved capacity to manage highly sensitive and critical habitats including transboundary wildlife corridors in response to climate change	Environmental flow requirements for at least two pilot sites	- Trial environmental flows delivered at pilot sites and evaluation results reported
		Climate change risk and vulnerability assessments for biodiversity of priority regional environmental assets (REAs)	- Risk and vulnerability assessments delivered for identified priority assets and inform environmental asset management plans
	Common zoning system/framework for priority regional environmental assets including surrounding landscapes and transboundary corridors	- Zoning system integrated into national planning and regulatory systems	
Common framework and agreed management actions for transboundary corridors incorporated into updated national frameworks and management plans for environmental assets	Agreed policy measures and management actions including investment plan for transboundary wildlife corridors for input to new or updated climate-resilient management plans for environmental assets	- Biodiversity corridors identified and integrated into national planning and regulatory systems	
4. New or updated climate change-resilient asset management plans	Common understanding of the coordinated actions that will be taken by a range of parties to improve environmental outcomes in and around priority environmental assets	High quality pilot management plans for 4 priority regional environmental assets	- Environmental asset management plans delivered with community ownership based on climate change risk and vulnerability assessments and documented threats
	Management plans funded and being implemented	Resource mobilization and initial plan implementation of plans including establishment of transboundary governance and cooperation mechanisms, where appropriate	- Funding committed to implement environmental asset management plans

5. Regional ranger network	Improved capacity of front-line environmental conservation staff	Regional network for exchange of knowledge and learning established, and integrated at the national level	- Regional ranger network established and operating with identified members and plan
		Cadre of highly trained, professional front-line environmental conservation staff sharing knowledge and experience and supporting community resource management	- Number of activities delivered and engagement between members and with communities documented
	Improved capacity of communities to manage natural resource use	Support provided by regional network to communities involved in co-management arrangements	- Activities implemented by rangers to improve community co-management capacity
6. Biodiversity monitoring and data management	Common source of accessible data and information on biodiversity conditions and trends throughout the Lower Mekong River Basin	Common tools and methodologies for achieving synergy among national institutions and stakeholders to update, validate and share data and monitor biodiversity trends in the Lower Mekong River Basin	- Methods, tools and guidance available to Member Countries with demonstrated implementation capacity
	An understanding of the current condition and trends in biodiversity throughout the Lower Mekong River Basin	Baseline assessment of biodiversity in priority regional environmental assets	- Baseline evaluation report on biodiversity delivered for participating environmental assets - funding for ongoing implementation committed
7. Community resource use and management	Increased awareness and capacity to support community co-management arrangements	Framework model approach to community co-management based on best practice and lessons learned	- Framework model agreed by Member Countries for roll-out across the basin
	Enhanced community management of natural resources in pilot areas	Pilot implementation to support setting and management of sustainable resource use (incl. groundwater, where relevant)	- Action plan delivered, governance mechanisms in place
		Knowledge sharing and community capacity building	- Engagement mechanisms in place and documented activities between participating groups
8. Watershed planning and management framework	A common regional approach to managing watersheds for regional benefits	Synthesis and gap analysis of good practice institutional, governance and regulatory arrangements in each basin country including opportunities to harmonize arrangements in a consistent framework	- Report delivered with recommendations on potential harmonized arrangements and proposed framework
		Agreed basin-wide framework with identified issues for climate change adaptive land-use planning and management of watersheds	- Watershed management framework agreed by Member Countries
	Understanding of practical implementation needs and challenges and lessons learned	Pilot implementation of watershed framework in upper catchment areas of priority environmental assets	- Watershed management framework integrated into national policy and regulatory systems relating to pilot areas
9. Mainstreaming conservation into	More environmentally sustainable sector strategies and development plans	Regional guidance and capacity building to strengthen institutional and community planning and management	- Regional guidance report delivered and demonstrated understanding of

sector strategies and plans			implementation actions by Member Countries
		Revised, promoted and supported sector strategies and plans with conservation principles and measures including nature-based solutions mainstreamed, including for climate change adaptation	- Changes made to sector strategies and plans consistent with regional guidance
	Reduced loss of biodiversity and habitat in participating pilot areas	Pilot regional biodiversity offset scheme design	- Offset scheme design delivered and agreed by Member Countries
		Pilot regional, national and local biodiversity offset scheme(s) operational	- Number and area of offsets agreed and implemented
10. Conservation finance and partnerships	Increased awareness and understanding of the potential for PES schemes, and innovative financial instruments to support conservation and livelihoods and higher levels of trust between parties	Regional guidance and capacity building on options and potential for PES and new financial mechanisms	- Documented interest within Member Countries in pursuing PES and new financial mechanisms for conservation finance
		Strategy for expanded coverage of forest carbon payments for climate change mitigation in areas in and around priority environmental assets	- Strategy delivered and agreed by participating Member Countries
	Substantial increase in public and private sector finance for Mekong Basin environmental conservation and livelihoods	Pilot transfer payments from identified local, regional and international beneficiaries to communities for critical ecosystem services	- Number and value of transactions agreed on and area of habitat covered
		Strategy for private sector engagement in conservation financing and partnership agreements in place	- Strategy delivered and number and value of partnerships agreed on
11. Sustainable ecotourism	An enhanced enabling environment for responsible ecotourism based on a network of regional environmental assets	Support within government and business for regional ecotourism promotion based on the regional network of priority environmental assets	- Strategy agreed on by Member Countries and with tourism business operators
		Improved access and facilities to support increased visitor numbers and ecotourism business viability in trial assets	- New or upgraded facilities available - investment plans developed and being implemented
	An increased number of visitors to environmental assets of regional importance	Tourism operators and personnel identify opportunities and promote activities within regional ecotourism network	- Visitor numbers and ecotourism businesses operating
12. Nature-based livelihoods	An understanding of the spatially explicit development of market-oriented nature-based livelihood portfolios	Baseline assessment and opportunities report and market-oriented nature-based livelihood portfolios	- Assessment report delivered with stakeholder buy-in and agreement to recommendations
	An understanding of potentially successful market-oriented nature-based livelihood portfolios for scaling-up in other areas	Case studies from pilot implementation of priority market-oriented nature-based livelihood portfolios and recommended domains and design options for scaling up	- Improved financial situation of participating communities - number and scale of business opportunities in place and market agreements with partners
	Improved community capacity to exploit nature-based livelihood opportunities/understand landscape benefits	Knowledge sharing and community capacity building including technical guide for exemplar systems	- Level of interest in new portfolio opportunities and uptake of activities in participating communities

13. Threat management (invasive species, fire, animal conflict, water resources management)	Clear understanding of the most significant threats and opportunities to address them in transboundary areas	Risk and vulnerability assessments with identified control options for: (i) invasive species (ii) people-wildlife conflict (iii) fires (iv) water resources development	- Risk and vulnerability assessments delivered for identified threats and recommendations agreed by Member Countries and local communities
	Reduced transboundary impacts from threatening processes	Risk reduction plans developed and implemented for key threatening processes	- risk reduction plans delivered, and funding committed to implementation with initial measures in place
	Enhanced regional awareness and knowledge of successful actions and activities to reduce identified threats	Pilot asset implementation of risk reduction plans	- evaluation report in plan implementation
		Communication, awareness-raising and knowledge sharing	- knowledge-sharing and -awareness activities delivered and similar plans developed in other areas

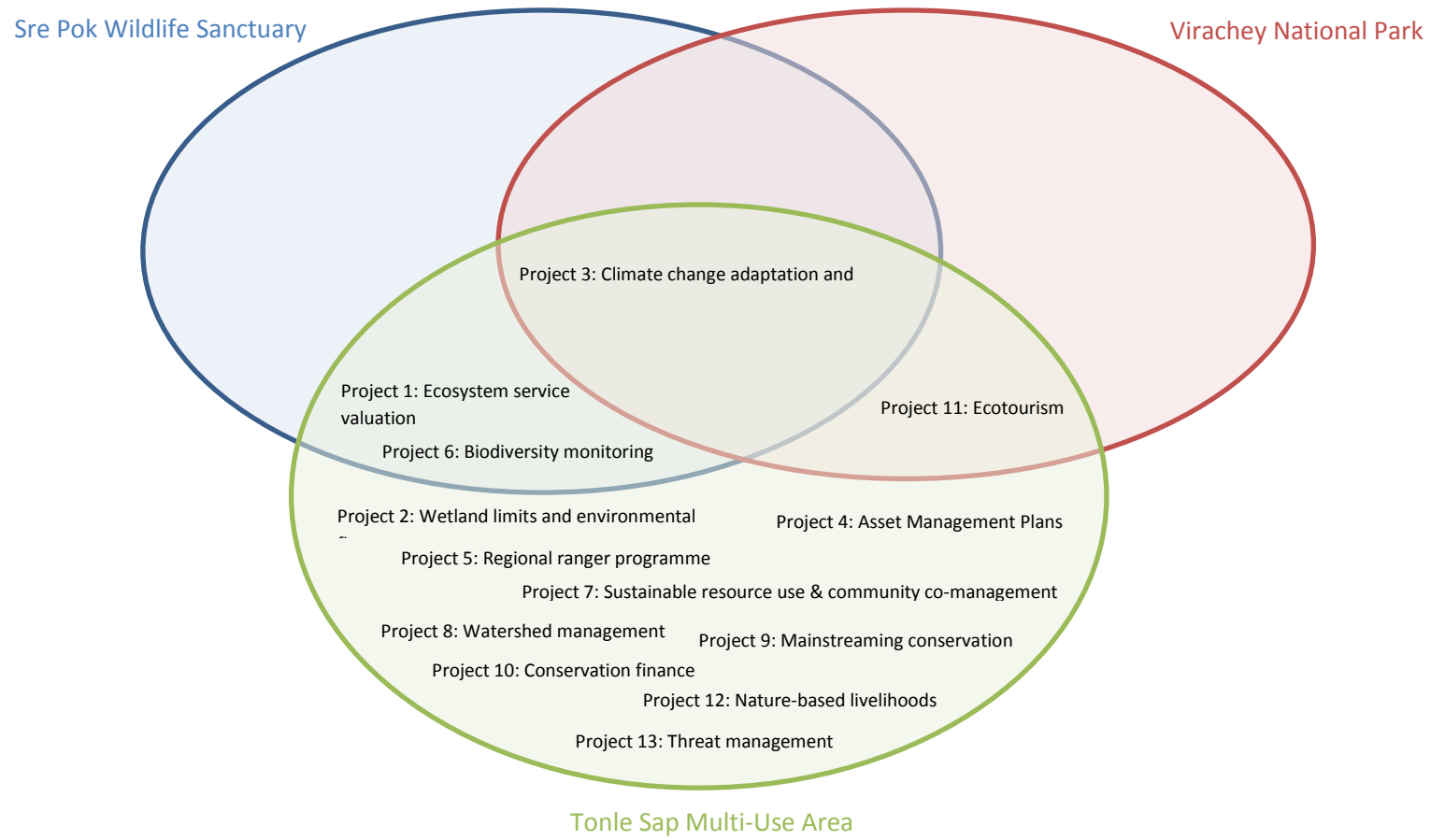
Annex VII. Alignment between each PBAP project and each environmental asset in each Member Country

Country	Environmental Asset	Project Bundles	PBAP Projects
Cambodia	Tonle Sap Multi-Use Area	Bundle A – economic valuation, instruments, monitoring and assessment, conservation finance	1. Valuing natural capital and ecosystem services 2. Wetland limits of acceptable change 6. Biodiversity monitoring and data management 10. Conservation finance and partnerships
		Bundle B – resource use, livelihoods, ecotourism, community management	5. Regional ranger network 7. Community resource use and management 11. Sustainable ecotourism 12. Nature-based livelihoods
		Bundle C – policies, plans, strategies including watershed management, adaptation and sector mainstreaming	3. Biodiversity adaptation to climate change 4. New or updated climate change-resilient asset management plans 8. Watershed planning and management framework 9. Mainstreaming conservation into sector strategies and plans 13. Threat management (invasive species, fire, animal conflict, water resources management)
	Sre Pok Wildlife Sanctuary	Bundle A – economic valuation, instruments, monitoring and assessment, conservation finance	1. Valuing natural capital and ecosystem services 6. Biodiversity monitoring and data management 10. Conservation finance and partnerships
	Virachey National Park	Bundle B – resource use, livelihoods, ecotourism, community management	11. Sustainable ecotourism
		Bundle C – policies, plans, strategies including watershed management, adaptation and sector mainstreaming	3. Biodiversity adaptation to climate change
Lao PDR	Beung Kiat Ngong Ramsar Wetland	Bundle A – economic valuation, instruments, monitoring and assessment, conservation finance	1. Valuing natural capital and ecosystem services 6. Biodiversity monitoring and data management
		Bundle B – resource use, livelihoods, ecotourism, community management	5. Regional ranger network 7. Community resource use and management 11. Sustainable ecotourism 12. Nature-based livelihoods
		Bundle C – policies, plans, strategies including watershed management, adaptation and sector mainstreaming	3. Biodiversity adaptation to climate change
	Xe Champhone	Bundle A – economic valuation, instruments, monitoring and assessment, conservation finance	1. Valuing natural capital and ecosystem services 2. Wetland limits of acceptable change
		Bundle B – resource use, livelihoods, ecotourism, community management	12. Nature-based livelihoods
		Bundle C – policies, plans, strategies including watershed management, adaptation and sector mainstreaming	3. Biodiversity adaptation to climate change 8. Watershed planning and management framework 9. Mainstreaming conservation into sector strategies and plans
	Nam Et Phoulei National Park	Bundle A – economic valuation, instruments, monitoring and assessment, conservation finance	1. Valuing natural capital and ecosystem services 6. Biodiversity monitoring and data management

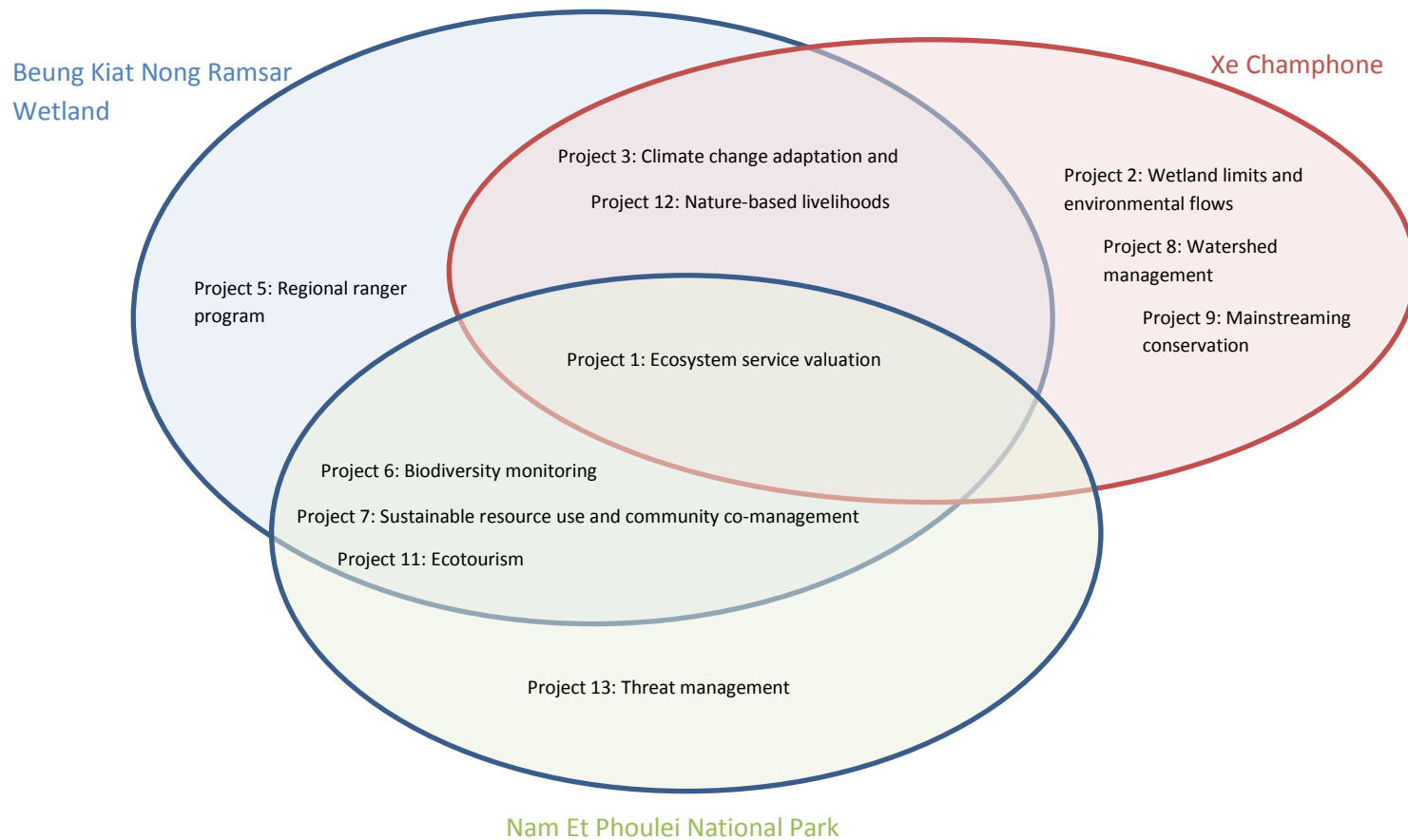
		Bundle B – resource use, livelihoods, ecotourism, community management	7. Community resource use and management 11. Sustainable ecotourism
		Bundle C – policies, plans, strategies including watershed management, adaptation and sector mainstreaming	13. Threat management (invasive species, fire, animal conflict, water resources management)
Thailand	Nong Bong Kai, Wiang Nong Lhom and mainstream Mekong of Chiang Rai	Bundle A – economic valuation, instruments, monitoring and assessment, conservation finance	1. Valuing natural capital and ecosystem services 2. Wetland limits of acceptable change 6. Biodiversity monitoring and data management
		Bundle B – resource use, livelihoods, ecotourism, community management	11. Sustainable ecotourism
		Bundle C – policies, plans, strategies including watershed management, adaptation and sector mainstreaming	3. Biodiversity adaptation to climate change 4. New or updated climate change-resilient asset management plans 9. Mainstreaming conservation into sector strategies and plans 13. Threat management (invasive species, fire, animal conflict, water resources management)
	Lower Songkhram River	Bundle A – economic valuation, instruments, monitoring and assessment, conservation finance	1. Valuing natural capital and ecosystem services 2. Wetland limits of acceptable change 6. Biodiversity monitoring and data management 10. Conservation finance and partnerships
		Bundle B – resource use, livelihoods, ecotourism, community management	7. Community resource use and management 11. Sustainable ecotourism 12. Nature-based livelihoods
		Bundle C – policies, plans, strategies including watershed management, adaptation and sector mainstreaming	3. Biodiversity adaptation to climate change 9. Mainstreaming conservation into sector strategies and plans 13. Threat management (invasive species, fire, animal conflict, water resources management)
Khao Yai and Thap Lan National Park (Dong Phrayayen-Khaoyai Forest Complex)	-	-	
Viet Nam	U Minh Thuong National Park	Bundle A – economic valuation, instruments, monitoring and assessment, conservation finance	1. Valuing natural capital and ecosystem services 6. Biodiversity monitoring and data management
		Bundle B – resource use, livelihoods, ecotourism, community management	7. Community resource use and management 12. Nature-based livelihoods
		Bundle C – policies, plans, strategies including watershed management, adaptation and sector mainstreaming	3. Biodiversity adaptation to climate change 13. Threat management (invasive species, fire, animal conflict, water resources management)
	Mui Ca Mau National Park	Bundle A – economic valuation, instruments, monitoring and assessment, conservation finance	1. Valuing natural capital and ecosystem services 6. Biodiversity monitoring and data management
		Bundle B – resource use, livelihoods, ecotourism, community management	7. Community resource use and management 12. Nature-based livelihoods
		Bundle C – policies, plans, strategies including watershed management, adaptation and sector mainstreaming	3. Biodiversity adaptation to climate change 4. New or updated climate change-resilient asset management plans 13. Threat management (invasive species, fire, animal conflict, water resources management)

	Yok Don National Park	Bundle A – economic valuation, instruments, monitoring and assessment, conservation finance	1. Valuing natural capital and ecosystem services 6. Biodiversity monitoring and data management
		Bundle B – resource use, livelihoods, ecotourism, community management	7. Community resource use and management
		Bundle C – policies, plans, strategies including watershed management, adaptation and sector mainstreaming	3. Biodiversity adaptation to climate change 13. Threat management (invasive species, fire, animal conflict, water resources management)

Cambodia



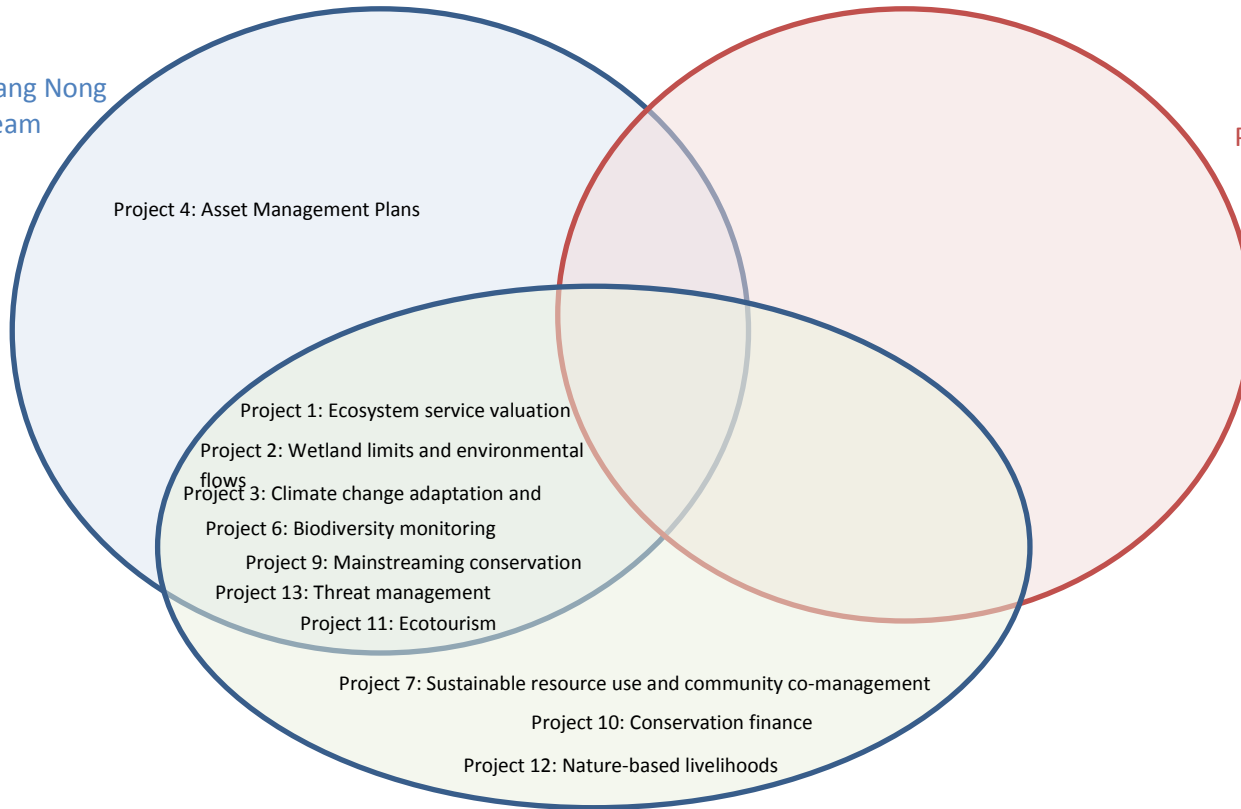
Lao PDR



Thailand

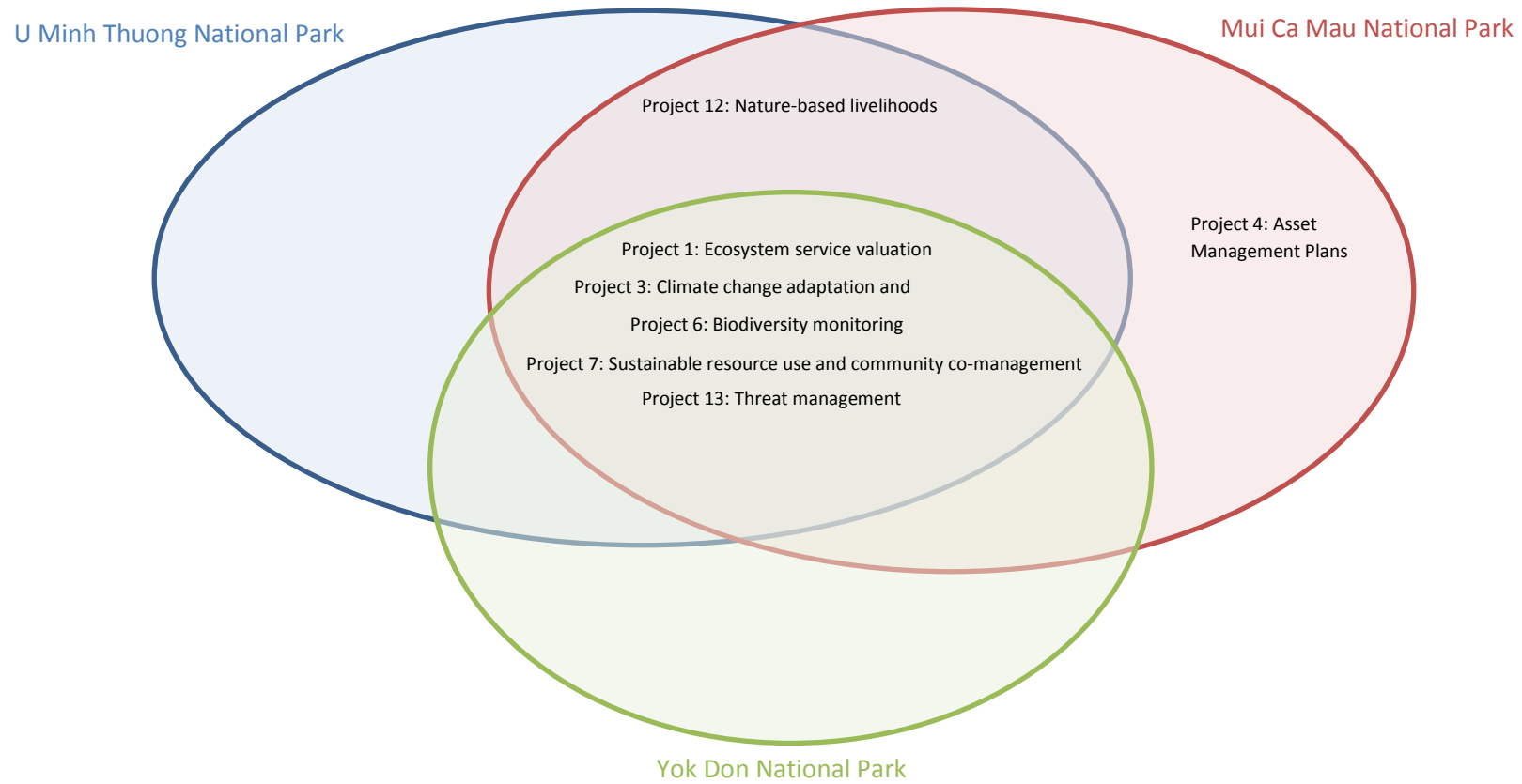
Nong Bong Kai, Wiang Nong Lhom and mainstream

Khao Yai and Thap Lan National Park (Dong Phrayayen-Khaoyai Forest Complex)



Lower Songkhram River

Viet Nam





Mekong River Commission Secretariat

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