

# Institutional Frameworks relate to Mekong cooperation at a glance

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## Regional cooperation mechanisms

**Committee for Coordination of the Investigation of the Lower Mekong Basin (Mekong Committee)**  
Since 1957 to 1992/95, ceased from 1975-1977

Reactivated under name of **Interim Mekong Committee from 1978** (without Cambodia), suspended from 1992-1995

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## Mekong River Commission - New cooperation framework, since 5 April 1995.

Fields of cooperation: water resources and related resources



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## GMS (Greater Mekong Sub-region Initiative) since 1992

9 major fields of cooperation:

- Transport
- Energy
- Environment
- Tourism
- Post and telecommunication
- Trade
- Investment
- HRD
- Agriculture and rural development



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## Mekong-Ganga, since 2000

Fields of cooperation:

- Tourism
- Culture
- HRD
- Communication

(cont'd.)

### ACMECS (Ayeyawady-Chao Phraya-Mekong), since 2004

- Seven fields:
- Trade - investment (T)
  - Public Health (T)
  - HRD (V)
  - Industry-energy (V)
  - Tourism (C)
  - Transport (L)
  - Agriculture (MM)

MOFA is overall coordinator

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### CLMV, since 2003 (Cambodia – Lao PDR – Myanmar – Vietnam)

Agreed to set up in Dec. 2003, 1st meeting in 2004.

Fields of cooperation:

- Trade
- Investment
- Agriculture
- Industry
- Transport
- Tourism
- HRD

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### Development triangle of CLV, since 2004

- Includes 10 provinces *i.e.* Kon Tum, Gia Lai, Dak Lak, Dak Nong (Vietnam); Sekong, Attapeu, Saravan (Laos); Stung Treng, Rattanakiri, Mondulkiri (Cambodia). In 2009, added Binh Phuoc (of Vietnam), Kratie (Cambodia) and Champasak (Lao)
- Fields of cooperation: transport, trade, electricity, tourism, HRD, and public health

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### Mekong – Japan, since 2009

Three main pillars of cooperation:

- Strengthening the linkage amongst the Mekong Sub-region, and b/t the Mekong Sub-region with other regions and the world
- Cooperation for co-development b/t the Mekong countries and Japan,
- Environment protection and human security

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### LMI-Lower Mekong Initiative (Mekong - US), since 2009

#### FLI-Friends of Lower Mekong Initiative, 2011

includes LMI countries + Australia, Japan, Korea, EU, New Zealand, ADB, WB.

#### Mekong-Korea, since 2011

comprehensive cooperative relation for mutual prosperity between Mekong countries and Korea

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### LMC: Lancang-Mekong-Cooperation, since 2016

Five fields of cooperation:

- Water resources,
- Productive capacity integration,
- Trans-boundary economic cooperation,
- Agriculture,
- Poverty reduction



## Bilateral Cooperation Mechanisms

### Joint Committees for cooperation between Vietnam and:



- **Cambodia:** economy, culture, science-technology, education, met 15 times. In addition: meetings b/t boundary provinces
- **Lao PDR,** (economy, culture, science-technology, education met 39 times)
- **Myanmar:** economy, trade, culture, science-technology
- **Thailand:** met twice, emphasizing to water resource, especially on the Mekong, coordinating with relevant governments, (MRC)

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Several specific bilateral committees/bodies have also been set up, either under framework of the captioned Bilateral Joint Committees for Cooperation (Vietnam-.....), or outside.

*E.g. Sub-Committee on Water Regulation in Se San river, Joint Expert Group on Water Regulation along the Vietnam-Cambodia border*

## Some remarks

### Legal base:

- **Other regional/multilateral mechanisms**  
Cooperation based on declarations/statements, summits, relevant meetings....
- **Mekong River Commission:**  
The only cooperation based on the signed Agreement

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### Institutional Arrangements:

- **Other regional/multilateral mechanisms**  
No specific mechanisms  
Activities based on agreed minutes/resolutions of meeting...  
No provisions for dispute resolving
- **Mekong River Commission:**  
Three-hierarchy structure  
Several under-agreement instruments  
Provisions for dispute resolving stipulated

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### Emerging issues relating to Mekong cooperation:

- **Other regional/multilateral mechanisms**  
No specific
- **Mekong River Commission:**
  - Challenges on the environment impacts caused by hydropower development on the Mekong mainstream.
  - Enforcement of the 1995 Mekong Agreement → wanna not be bound by what have been agreed. Sovereign equality and territorial integrity >< national interest
  - Different understanding on “right to veto” and “unilateral right to ...without taking into account other riparian right”

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### Role of “relevant stakeholders”

- It is not clearly stipulated in relevant documents setting up the cooperation mechanism except general terms as riparians, people, community... and public participation relies on the interest of responsible authorities in each country in a case-by-case basis, not in coherent/systematic manner.
- *E.g: Information of some projects for consultation is not timely provided, access to the sources of information is not always easy*

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In the Mekong context, NGOs/CSOs need to be timely, sufficiently and transparently involved in the process of preparing, considering and approving of relevant projects, especially those project in the Mekong basin that cause trans-boundary environmental impacts.

Vice versa, NGOs/CSOs are very initial channel to early warn the relevant government agencies and public on the plans, proposed projects that are still not revealed by relevant agencies.

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Last but not the least, the active involvement of NGOs/CSOs in decision-making process should be considered in positive way rather than con-attitude to proposed projects.

Together we will find out best solution for sustainable development in the Mekong basin or win-win solution.

**Thank you for your attention!**

