



FACTSHEET

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WWF-GREATER MEKONG

Greening economies in practice

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WWF-Greater Mekong is bringing together governments, businesses, investors and development agencies in the six countries of the Greater Mekong to promote dialogue and cooperation on green economy issues.

Partnering for green economies

In June 2013, WWF joined the Offering Sustainable Land-use Options (OSLO) Consortium and partners from the United Nations and the Asian Development Bank to host “New Opportunities for Natural Wealth Management”. The four-day event in Bangkok, Thailand brought together high-level government officials and business leaders to explore ideas around green growth in the region, to discover what’s already happening and the future possibilities. It also marked the launch of a regional green economy dialogue, which will provide an ongoing forum for exchanging ideas and information. As well as helping to spread the vision of a green and prosperous Greater Mekong, regional dialogue will help to identify tangible opportunities and practical measures that can make it a reality, including:

- Methods and tools for valuing natural capital
- Successful projects that can be replicated and scaled up
- Innovations in sustainable production methods, supply chains and business models
- Policies that offer incentives for companies to go green
- Financial mechanisms to encourage investment in natural capital and green business
- Green business opportunities in sectors such as agriculture, energy, tourism, and transport

Ecosystem services valuation and spatial planning

We want governments, businesses and investors in the Greater Mekong to put conserving natural capital at the heart of their decision-making. But for that to happen, they need credible, specific evidence of the value of the services natural ecosystems provide – and at the moment, this information is mostly lacking.

To fill this gap, we’ve compiled an ambitious Economic Analysis of Ecosystem Services in the Lower Mekong Region. This comprehensive report draws on the best available data and techniques to quantify the economic value of ecosystems in Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and Vietnam at local, national and regional levels, and the costs and benefits of managing them sustainably now and in the future.

This builds on a previous report, *Ecosystems in the Greater Mekong: past trends, current status, possible futures*, which compares the implications

of continuing on an unsustainable development path with a green economy scenario. At a more local level, we’re compiling information on the value of a variety of unique ecosystems: by showing the benefits they bring to people, we’ll be better able to influence planning and development within crucial landscapes.

Of course, simply putting a value on ecosystem services is only a first step. By using economic modelling, we aim to demonstrate how they can support economic growth and human development in the Greater Mekong.

We’re currently piloting this approach in the Dawna Tenasserim Landscape in Thailand, where the new “Road to Dawei” is being built. Our study shows that careful planning of the road’s design and construction and investment in restoring natural capital and sustainable development in the area will have a positive impact on society and the economy.



80%

THE GREATER MEKONG’S NATURAL CAPITAL DIRECTLY SUPPORTS 80 PER CENT OF THE REGION’S POPULATION BY PROVIDING VITAL ECOSYSTEM SERVICES

Government engagement on the green economy in Vietnam

With Vietnam's economy and resource use growing rapidly, it's crucial that the value of natural capital is built into its development, economic and land-use planning. Since 2011, we've worked closely with the Institute of Strategy and Policy on Natural Resources and Environment (ISPONRE) in the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE) to bring this into Vietnam's national policies.

Our contributions helped ensure that the concept of maintaining and managing the nation's natural capital is fully integrated throughout Vietnam's green growth strategy, which was launched in October 2012. This led directly to a Party Resolution on "Responding to climate change, Protection of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection" in May 2013. A Party Resolution is the highest-level directive in Vietnam and informs the policies and actions of all government ministries and agencies.

Ecosystems in the economy

Engaging business and civil society is crucial to moving to a green economy. We're working with corporations and communities to:

- Manage the risks of unsustainable resource use and degrading natural ecosystems
- Improve understanding of the opportunities of investing in natural capital and sustainably managing resources
- Develop and encourage better production practices that reduce negative environmental impacts and bring positive social benefits

Providing fresh water is perhaps the most vital service ecosystems perform, and water stewardship will be an essential component in a green economy in the Greater Mekong. The WWF Water Stewardship Programme helps corporations to reduce their own water footprint and to invest in better water management and conservation of freshwater resources in the Mekong river basin.

Through the WWF Market Transformation Initiative (MTI), we're aiming to shift the market for key commodities, including

As well as helping to influence the green growth strategy and Party Resolution through consultation meetings and by suggesting language, we've worked with ISPONRE to run workshops and forums to build understanding of green economy issues and help put policies into practice. We've also run projects demonstrating natural capital investment and green growth in practice:

- With ISPONRE and MONRE, we've run projects that put ecosystems at the heart of climate change adaptation strategies
- We've worked with private sector partners to promote sustainable commodity production, including pangasius and shrimp aquaculture in the Mekong Delta and rattan in the Central Annamites
- In the forests of the Southern Annamites, we're promoting ecotourism, valuing eco-system services and contributing to land-use planning

several that are produced in the Greater Mekong. To raise standards and create value across supply chains in the Greater Mekong, we're promoting internationally recognized certification schemes:

- **Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)** – Our flagship partnership with IKEA on sustainable rattan production is securing livelihoods while reducing forest degradation by establishing a more sustainable, credibly certified rattan production supply chain in Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam.
- **Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC)** – We're working to improve standards for farmed shrimp and pangasius in the Mekong Delta.
- **Marine Stewardship Council (MSC)** – We're promoting and supporting responsible management of the Mekong's tuna, hard clam and blue swimming crab fisheries.

We're also working with the finance sector to promote responsible investment that helps to protect, restore and enhance ecosystem services.



Above: WWF is working with communities in Vietnam on sustainable rattan production. Rattan is one of the most valuable non-timber forest products, and its economic and socio-cultural importance is increasingly being recognized all over the world. Below: WWF is also working with pangasius producers in the Mekong Delta to achieve certification under the Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC). More than 90 per cent of world exports of pangasius is sourced from Vietnam.

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