



LEAFLET

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WWF-GREATER MEKONG

Greening economies in the Greater Mekong



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2020

BY 2020, NATURAL CAPITAL (LAND, WATER, BIODIVERSITY) IS MANAGED AS A FOUNDATION FOR THRIVING, RESILIENT AND EQUITABLE ECONOMIES, BUSINESSES AND COMMUNITIES IN THE GREATER MEKONG

The Greater Mekong is blessed with natural riches – from forests full of life to fertile floodplains and the world’s most valuable freshwater fishery. Around 80 per cent of the Greater Mekong’s 300 million people depend directly on the goods and services its ecosystems provide, like food, fibre and clean water.

But rapid development is depleting the region’s natural resources and degrading its landscapes, waters and biodiversity, leading to a loss of natural capital. As a result, the people of the Greater Mekong risk losing the many benefits that healthy ecosystems bring.

Shifting to a green economy that recognizes the value of nature is crucial for millions of people in the Greater Mekong, now and in the future. The region urgently needs to move away from an economic model that squanders natural capital for short-term financial gain to one that uses it as the foundation for inclusive, sustainable development.

All six countries of the Greater Mekong (Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam and the southern province of Yunnan in China) have pledged their support to “the development of a green, inclusive, and balanced economy” to reduce poverty, biodiversity loss and greenhouse-gas emissions. And each government’s national development plan talks about green growth.

But how do we put these ideas into practice and build a truly green economy in the Greater Mekong? That’s the challenge WWF is now addressing.

WHAT IS A GREEN ECONOMY?

Unlike conventional economic thinking, a green economy takes account of the value of nature and the services it provides. According to UNEP:

“A green economy results in improved human well-being and social equity, while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities.”

A green economy is one where:

- Natural capital is maintained and restored
- Renewable energy and low-carbon technologies replace fossil fuels
- Resources and energy are used as efficiently as possible
- Urban living is more sustainable
- People use low-carbon forms of transport
- Nature’s resources and benefits are shared more fairly



Encouraging the shift to a green economy

WWF-Greater Mekong’s green economies initiatives, supported by the MacArthur Foundation, will expand incentives for people, governments and businesses to maintain, enrich and restore the natural capital of the Greater Mekong Subregion. These initiatives began in January 2013.

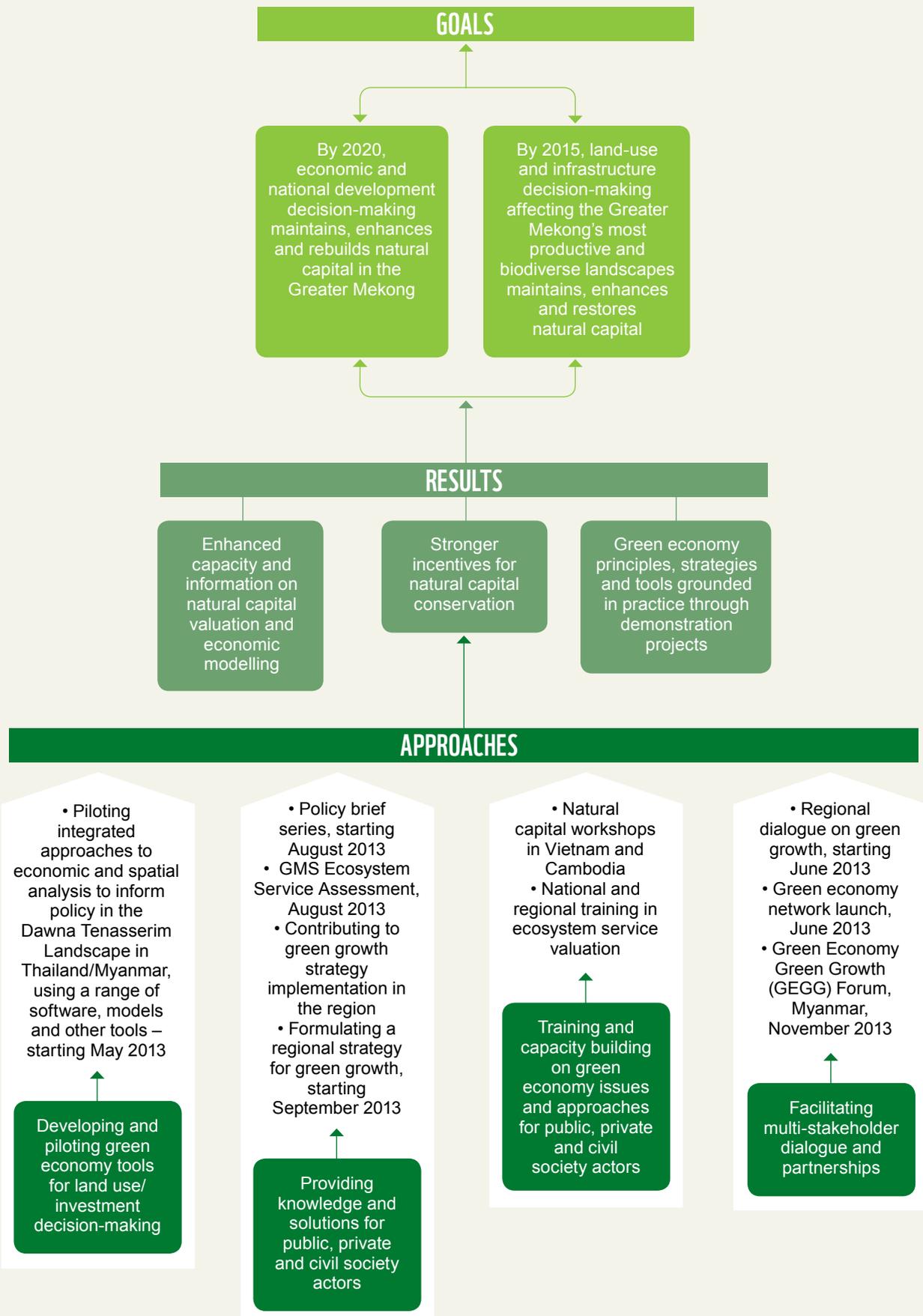
We aim for a transformation in the way natural resources are managed across the region by demonstrating the true value of the Greater Mekong’s natural capital. Wise stewardship of the region’s most productive and diverse landscapes will conserve biodiversity, enhance human well-being and promote sustainable economic development.

Our approach focuses on:

- Providing information on natural capital values to help key decision-makers meet their environmental, social and economic goals
- Mainstreaming natural capital in development planning and indicators of progress that go beyond traditional economic measurements like GDP
- Creating a level playing field for green business through economic instruments like eco-labelling, environmental taxes, and reforming subsidies that encourage environmentally damaging activities
- Securing financing for green development through, for example, overseas development assistance, national budgets, payments for ecosystem services, corporate investment in sustainable supply chains, and schemes for creating livelihoods and small businesses
- Bringing together public, private and civil society actors to form a green economy network and take action to transform economic policies and practices
- Supporting bottom-up realisation of green economies through sustainable production in forestry and fisheries, and community-based natural resource governance



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Greater Mekong green economy



US\$4 BILLION

Retail value of Mekong river fisheries estimated at more than US\$4 billion annually

60 MILLION

The Lower Mekong River provides the main source of food for 60 million people



US\$55 BILLION

The value that could be added cumulatively to the combined economies of Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and Vietnam by 2035 through implementing green economic growth policies that maintain natural capital over and above the value added by 'Business as Usual' economic development

80%

The Greater Mekong's natural capital directly supports 80 per cent of the region's population by providing vital ecosystem services

	<p>Why we are here To stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature. panda.org</p>
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The Greater Mekong region is one of the biologically richest places on the planet; its varied natural resources support the livelihoods and well-being of millions of people in mainland Southeast Asia. WWF-Greater Mekong – on the ground in Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam – is working to conserve the region's biodiversity and build a secure and sustainable future for people and wildlife.