

AGREED IN PRINCIPLE

Addendum to Annex I: Areas of Cooperation in Mekong-U.S. Partnership (MUSP) Plan of Action

Additional programs are hereby incorporated into the MUSP Plan of Action as follows:

Economic Connectivity:

1. Mekong Digital Transformation through Education Cooperation (DigiTEC)
 - a. Timeline: 2024-2026
 - b. Mekong DigiTEC is a multi-pronged initiative gathering leaders from higher education institutions and government education officials from countries across the Mekong sub-region to develop partnerships and promote cooperation, particularly in digital policy, digitalization, cyber security, and workforce development for emerging digital and high-tech industries. The initiative includes an online engagement forum, an in-person multiday symposium, and a follow-on small grants program to develop projects that bridge academia and industry.

Sustainable Water, Natural Resources Management, and Environmental Conservation and Protection:

1. Mekong Energy Harvest
 - a. Timeline: 2024-2027
 - b. Mekong Energy Harvest simultaneously addresses air quality and local livelihoods through the expanded availability of home biogas digester kits to farmers who have been identified as being from high agricultural burning villages—a key driver of transboundary air pollution. Using rice straw and maize husks, local farmers can

produce clean energy for their household, reducing the need for agricultural burning.

2. Riverbank Erosion Research Tools (RivERT)

- a. Timeline: 2024-2028
- b. RivERT provides a novel, sustainable model for calculating human impacts on the sediment transport of the Mekong River, including upstream hydroelectric dam construction, sand extraction, and riverside residential urbanization. The study combines field studies and computer modelling to understand sediment flows and calculate human impacts, with special attention to the effects of upstream dams. The data collected across all five Mekong sub-region countries will be used to develop machine learning tools that will better inform future infrastructure projects and their impact on sediment in the basin.

3. Mekong Basin Partnership

- a. Timeline: 2024-2029
- b. The Mekong Basin Partnership activity is a direct grant to support the Mekong River Commission (MRC) to improve transboundary coordination and management of water and related resources. The Activity supports MRC to improve data, data systems, technologies and tools for river basin management; establish and operationalize situation rooms for hydropower coordination; strengthen mechanisms for transboundary river basin management and coordination through the implementation of Transboundary Environmental Impact Assessments ; and engage with relevant stakeholders through regional and other relevant dialogues, such as regional stakeholder forums, Mekong Roundtables, MRC-CSO Informal Discussions, and Joint Studies.

4. USAID Southeast Asia Fisheries Partnership

- a. Timeline: 2023-2028
- b. The USAID Southeast Asia Fisheries Partnership improves the management of fisheries and aquaculture resources in the Indo-Pacific region. This activity strengthens the adoption and implementation of sustainable fisheries policies, promotes the adoption of sustainable fishing and aquaculture practices, and increases the technical capacity of fisheries agencies. Specifically, the activity will support the implementation of inland fisheries management plans for the Mekong sub-region and enhance the capacity of national fisheries agencies to collect and analyze inland fisheries data. This activity is a direct grant to the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center.

5. USAID Biodiversity Conservation Activity

- a. Timeline: 2020-2025
- b. Within Vietnam's high-conservation value provinces, the project aims to maintain and increase forest quality and quantity; and protect and stabilize wildlife populations in national parks and reserves. As forests and wildlife know no borders, the activity has engaged with neighboring Mekong governments to partner on shared commitments. The project also engages local communities to complement government efforts to protect forests and conserve wildlife through community-led patrol teams and public reporting and feedback mechanisms on forest and wildlife crimes. Finally, the project conducts public awareness campaigns about the legal and health risks caused by the illegal wildlife trade to reduce consumer demand.

Non-Traditional Security:

1. Mekong Food Security through Enhanced Seed Trade (Mekong FEST)
 - a. Timeline: 2024-2028
 - b. Implemented by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Mekong FEST promotes a unified vision among Mekong sub-region countries through capacity development to enhance seed innovation, technologies, and trade policies, thereby strengthening regional food security. The program addresses challenges like diminishing resources and unpredictable weather by fostering innovation in seed production and regional trade cooperation by collaborating across sectors, promoting new plant breeding techniques, and conducting workshops on plant variety protection, intellectual property rights, and seed health testing and certification.

2. USAID Asia Counter Trafficking In Persons (USAID Asia CTIP)
 - a. Timeline: 2016-2026
 - b. The USAID Asia CTIP activity focuses on transnational and regional challenges to trafficking in persons in Asia. USAID Asia CTIP enhances public awareness and understanding of human trafficking and effective responses; strengthens practical and effective cross-border collaboration between source, transit, and destination countries; and engages with the private sector to reduce trafficking and forced labor risks in high-risk industries. Specifically for the Mekong sub-region, the program addresses emerging TIP trends like scam centers and other cyber-enabled crimes through evidence-based interventions. Utilizing research and analyses, USAID Asia CTIP increases awareness of human trafficking into scam compounds and fosters cross-border coordination, enabling effective strategies to address this challenge.

3. USAID Anti-Malarial Drug Resistance Monitoring and Response Program

- a. Timeline: 2021-2026
- b. The USAID Anti-Malarial Drug Resistance Monitoring and Response Program aims to coordinate the regional drug-resistant malaria surveillance network in the Mekong sub-region and strengthens the malaria diagnostic capacity of National Malaria Programs to monitor antimalarial drug resistance and efficacy in support of malaria elimination in the region by 2030.

4. USAID Climate Resilient Agriculture in the Mekong Delta

- a. Timeline: 2023-2028
- b. The activity ensures that the Mekong Delta continues to play a crucial role in the food security of the broader Mekong sub-region. USAID is partnering with the Government of Vietnam, private sector companies, vulnerable communities, and non-governmental entities to build adaptive capacity and lessen the impacts of climate change to vulnerable communities through activities including the development of alternative livelihoods and improving farming practices. The project also helps strengthen conservation of the remaining mangroves, terrestrial forests, wetlands, and melaleuca forests, replant degraded forests, and restore natural wetland ecosystems in the Mekong Delta to increase the provision of ecosystem goods and services. Finally, USAID plans to support converting rice-producing lands to horticulture and aquaculture, transitioning to fertilizers that emit less greenhouse gas emissions, and improving water and straw management practices in rice fields.

Human Resource Development:

1. Mekong Youth for Ecotourism Futures (MY Futures)

- a. Timeline: 2024-2026

- b. Implemented by Kenan Foundation Asia and Michigan State University, MY Futures will provide an opportunity for 100 youth in the Mekong sub-region to receive capacity building on ecotourism business ventures, and a further opportunity for 10 participants to travel to the United States and receive advanced training at Michigan State University. A total of 10 seed grants will be provided through the program to kickstart new ecotourism ventures across all five Mekong sub-region countries, and a stipend will support mentorship within the program between the grant recipients and other youth participants.

2. USAID Okard

- a. Timeline: 2017-2027
- b. USAID Okard (meaning “Opportunity” in Lao), is a 10-year project (2017-2027) that promotes the independence and functional ability of persons with disabilities through equal access to health, rehabilitation and inclusive social services in Laos. USAID Okard partners with the Lao government and community organizations to develop and implement disability inclusive policies so that no one is left behind. USAID Okard partners with the public and private sectors to support persons with disabilities in the areas of health, economic empowerment, stakeholder engagement and Community Based Inclusive Development (CBID). A key part of these activities includes partnering with Thai higher education institutions to train Lao medical professionals to become core trainers and expand rehabilitation knowledge to their peers in all 18 Lao provinces.

3. Regional Inclusive Digital Ecosystem (RIDE)

- a. Timeline: 2024-2028
- b. USAID RIDE activity seeks to address common risks emerging from the rapid growth of the digital economy in Southeast Asia, particularly inadequate cybersecurity practices and a lack of common standards and policies governing the digital ecosystem. Activities will help close the development gap between the

Mekong sub-region and the rest of ASEAN by sharing knowledge to strengthen systems for an inclusive, open, interoperable, reliable, and secure digital ecosystem; working with the private sector to promote responsible uses of technology and business models; and promoting policies to increase equity and inclusion online in Southeast Asia and address barriers to equal participation by women and other marginalized groups.