

CEPF FINAL PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT

Organization Legal Name:	International Rivers Network
Project Title:	Protecting the Biological Diversity of the Mekong River
Date of Report:	21 August 2013
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CEPF Region: Indo-Burma

Strategic Direction: 3. Engage key actors in reconciling biodiversity conservation and development objectives, with a particular emphasis on the Northern Limestone Highlands and Mekong River and its major tributaries.

Grant Amount: US\$206,000

Project Dates: 1 April, 2010 to 30 June, 2013

Implementation Partners for this Project (please explain the level of involvement for each partner):

International Rivers is a founding member and key coordinator of the Save the Mekong Coalition. The Coalition's members include the Rivers Coalition in Cambodia, the 3S Protection Network (Cambodia), NGO Forum on Cambodia, Fisheries Action Coalition Team (Cambodia), Cultural and Environmental Protection Association (Cambodia), Towards Ecological Recovery and Regional Alliance (Thailand), Oxfam Australia, the Center for Water Resources and Community Development (Vietnam), Green ID (Vietnam), PanNature (Vietnam), Mekong Watch Japan, Living Rivers Siam (Thailand), the Network of Thai People in 8 Mekong Provinces and the Vietnam Rivers Network, amongst many other individuals, academics, and national and international NGOs who are part of the coalition. International Rivers has worked closely with all member organizations in developing the work plans and strategies carried out in this grant through regular consultation and coordination, meetings, updates, strategy discussions and occasional re-granting opportunities.

Additionally, our work has closely involved stakeholders at various levels within the regional governments, Mekong River Commission and its development partners. We have sought to ground-truth all of our work through visits to dam sites and dam-affected communities. Throughout the period, our partners have also built relationships with government officials, and we have provided support in messaging and sharing information about the current status of projects. We have also made an increased effort to reach out to larger conservation groups, whose messages and goals remain closely aligned with our own, even if our approaches differ.

Conservation Impacts

Please explain/describe how your project has contributed to the implementation of the CEPF ecosystem profile.

International Rivers contributed to the implementation of CEPF's Indo-Burma ecosystem profile (components 3.1 and 3.3) by supporting civil society efforts in the region to raise awareness regarding the need to protect the Mekong River's biological diversity and the threat that a cascade of eleven mainstream hydropower dams pose to the ecological integrity of the river's ecosystem by blocking the major fish migrations that feed and provide income to millions of people in the region. Over the three years, we have provided technical support, capacity-building, research and strategic analysis to civil society groups in the region, in order to support their efforts in analyzing the Mekong mainstream dam plans. We have also helped raise concerns over the Mekong mainstream dams' impacts on the river's fisheries and the other ecosystem services provided by the Mekong River and tributaries, and have developed arguments for less environmentally destructive alternative energy options for Thailand, which is set to import the most electricity from the planned cascade. This led to the Xayaburi Dam, the first Mekong mainstream project, to not receive regional agreement due to the concerns over the projects transboundary impacts raised by Vietnam and Cambodia.

Please summarize the overall results/impact of your project.

The Mekong River is central to the lives and culture of mainland Southeast Asia. As the world's largest inland freshwater fishery, the Mekong River feeds millions of people throughout the region, and the river's extraordinary aquatic biodiversity is second only to the Amazon. Since mid-2006, Thai, Malaysian, Vietnamese and Chinese companies have been preparing detailed studies for a cascade of eleven large hydropower dams on the Mekong River's mainstream. Seven of the dam sites are in Laos, two are in Cambodia, and two are on the Thai-Lao border. Most of the power generated would be sent to cities in Thailand and Vietnam.

The Xayaburi Dam, located in Northern Lao PDR, is the Mekong mainstream dam at the most advanced stage of development. In September 2010, it was the first mainstream dam to be submitted for approval by the region's governments through a regional decision-making process called the Procedures for Notification, Prior Consultation and Agreement (PNPCA), facilitated by the Mekong River Commission (MRC). If built, the Xayaburi Dam would create serious ecological damage to the river's aquatic resources and fisheries both locally and basin-wide, forcibly resettle over 2,100 people and directly affect over 202,000 people.

International Rivers has used the CEPF grant to engage with regional governments to raise concern over the environmental and social impacts of the proposed Xayaburi Dam and the need to protect the free-flowing Mekong River. Our major accomplishment over this period has been in helping to secure widespread opposition and concern against the Xayaburi Dam and other Mekong mainstream dams. International Rivers worked closely with the Save the Mekong Coalition and NGOs in the region to help build a high profile and effective campaign, which helped strengthen resistance to the dam amongst regional

governments, international donors and the public. This work has been done by sharing information, providing analytical and strategic advice, giving technical support, and through re-granting opportunities, amongst other activities.

Despite our accomplishment in getting the governments of Cambodia and Vietnam to repeatedly raise concerns over the dam's transboundary impacts and seek a halt to construction, we also saw a major setback as Laos has continued to construct the project despite a lack of regional agreement. In November 2012, Laos announced the dam's groundbreaking ceremony on the sidelines of the Asia Europe Summit in Vientiane. During this event, Thailand openly supported the project for the first time. Despite this setback, Cambodia and Vietnam have maintained their opposition to the project due to our work, citing concerns regarding the transboundary impacts of the Xayaburi Dam and the need to protect the Mekong River. During a heated debate at the last MRC Council Meeting in January 2013, Vietnam requested a halt to construction on the Xayaburi Dam, while Cambodia stated that Laos had misinterpreted the Mekong Agreement and had no right to start construction on the project. During this meeting, the four governments also approved the concept note for a joint study into the transboundary impacts of the Mekong mainstream dams, which had originally been agreed upon at the 2012 MRC Council meeting. Vietnam has since requested that this study first be completed before deciding upon the mainstream dams and has also recently initiated its own study in partnership with Cambodia exploring the impacts of the Mekong mainstream dams on the Mekong Delta.

The delays in the approval process for the Xayaburi Dam and the increased awareness of the threat that the Mekong mainstream dams pose to the river's natural resources and the livelihoods it supports have been the biggest achievements of this project. Additionally, civil society is now stronger and better coordinated to continue to play a role in raising concerns over these projects in the coming years. As a result, we hope the achievements made thus far has laid the groundwork for enabling the campaign to have greater success in the future by continuing to demonstrate how the Xayaburi Dam has created a bad precedent for decision-making and that construction should be immediately halted before it opens up the river to great risk. Environmental governance in the region is likely to strengthen as a result of this campaign and other mainstream projects are unlikely to move forward without demands for public scrutiny, transparency and accountability. For this reason, we expect that this work will also influence future decisions that will be made on the other Mekong mainstream dams, some of which pose an even greater threat to the Mekong River's fisheries and biodiversity, which could easily be avoided through the use of more sustainable energy options in the region.

Planned Long-term Impacts - 3+ years (as stated in the approved proposal):

Recognition by regional decision-makers of the value of healthy, free-flowing rivers results in a commitment to keep the Mekong River's mainstream free of destructive mainstream dams, thus protecting the river's biodiversity and habitats, and the livelihoods of people dependent upon the sustainable use of the river's natural resources.

Actual Progress Toward Long-term Impacts at Completion:

Although the political climate in Southeast Asia remains challenging, this project has helped contribute to improved environmental governance and biodiversity conservation in the Mekong region by demonstrating the threat the Lower Mekong mainstream dams pose to the biological diversity of the Mekong River and its people. Our work was successful in ensuring that no regional agreement was ever made to build the Xayaburi Dam, the first of the Mekong mainstream dams. Due to increased awareness of the transboundary impacts, Vietnam and Cambodia have repeatedly voiced concerns over the project to the Lao government and requested that a transboundary impact assessment be carried out. By helping to raise the voices of affected communities and civil society, and by providing technical and legal evaluation of the project, our work has also helped pressure Laos to be more accountable for the project, which has led to the redesign of some of the project's proposed mitigation measures. In addition, by raising the importance of the issue, more scientific research has been carried out by academia and institutions, which has increased knowledge on the issue and highlighted the importance of the Mekong River and its ecological functions. While construction on the Xayaburi Dam unfortunately continues, we believe our work has led to increased recognition of the importance of the Mekong River and will help lead us to success in the future as we tackle the other Mekong mainstream dams once they enter the regional decision-making process.

Planned Short-term Impacts - 1 to 3 years (as stated in the approved proposal):

- A greater number and diversity of civil society groups from all countries in the region, as well as internationally, are working to keep the mainstream Mekong flowing freely.
- There is greater awareness regionally and internationally of the threats to the Mekong's aquatic biodiversity and people's livelihoods from mainstream dams.
- The outcome of the decision-making process on proposed Mekong mainstream dams concludes that the environmental and social costs of the projects outweigh the economic benefits.
- Plans for high-impact dam projects are delayed, and hopefully cancelled, and alternative means of meeting the region's energy needs are pursued.

Actual Progress Toward Short-term Impacts at Completion:

Significant progress was made during the grant period. Our work has helped to expand the network and strengthen the capacity and inter-country linkages between civil society groups across the Mekong region, largely through the members of the Save the Mekong coalition. Civil society groups have built stronger trust over several years of working together and are regularly sharing information with one another, leading to a more coordinated effort and shared goals. We have also closely coordinated with key national networks, including the Rivers Coalition in Cambodia and the Vietnam Rivers Network. While the work that the Save the Mekong coalition has been doing at the regional and international level has been very important, national civil society networks have also been very active in taking the lead to organize events and engaging with their own governments to raise concerns over the Xayaburi Dam. In return, the national groups have been very effective in helping to ensure that strong public opposition to the Xayaburi Dam came out of the MRC-organized public consultation meetings held around the Xayaburi Dam in January and February 2011 in Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam. This helped lead the three countries to request for further public consultation before

making a decision on whether to proceed with the project. Furthermore, we have worked closely with civil society to continue to organize actions around the mainstream dams so that the issue remains a regional priority.

As a result, civil society strengthening is increasingly respected and recognized in the region by other stakeholders as a valuable part of development. For example, donor governments in the Mekong region now explicitly and regularly call for strengthened civil society and public participation as a priority for their interventions in the region. Scientists are working closely with civil society to document and spread awareness of the risks and benefits of various development approaches in the Mekong River Basin. Ultimately, we are confident that these efforts will lead to more transparency, accountability, and public participation, which leads to decision-making that places greater value on biodiversity conservation.

We have also continued to play a lead role in circulating information to the Save the Mekong coalition and others through email, the maintenance of the www.savethemekong.org website and the publishing of information on our website. Some of the information that was distributed included activity suggestions for the coalition, fact sheets on the Strategic Environmental Assessment and Xayaburi Dam, and critiques of the PNPCA consultation process and other project documents. This information has been circulated widely and has helped increase understanding amongst partners of the transboundary impacts of the project and the flaws of the regional decision-making process, in order to strengthen local advocacy work on the Xayaburi Dam. The key findings and recommendations of the MRC's Strategic Environment Impact Assessment report have also been widely disseminated and have continued to be brought up by the public, media and decision-makers.

Through the regular production of materials regarding the key issues of the Mekong mainstream dams and media outreach activities, there has been widespread and regular media coverage over the Xayaburi Dam and the Mekong mainstream dams at the national, regional and international levels over the past few years. Over the last year, International Rivers has also helped apply pressure on regional governments and international donors by increasing awareness of the Xayaburi Dam's environmental and social impacts to the Mekong region and bringing scientific research and critiques to the forefront of decision-making.

We also maintained regular communication with MRC donors in the region, in order to encourage them to take a strong stance against the Xayaburi Dam by calling for further study and consultation. As a result, donors have released strong statements more than six times calling for caution by regional governments in any decision related to the Xayaburi Project, and urging comprehensive analyses of the project's transboundary impacts before taking a decision.

International Rivers has also helped apply pressure on regional governments and international donors by increasing awareness of the Xayaburi Dam's environmental and social impacts to the Mekong region and bringing scientific research and critiques to the

forefront of decision-making. In the lead-up to the April 19, 2011 meeting of the MRC Joint Committee and the Council meetings that followed in 2011 and 2013, International Rivers worked intensively with the Save the Mekong coalition and NGOs in the region, who pressured regional governments to reject the project. As a result of our work, the Thai, Cambodian and Vietnamese governments all initially called for a delay in the decision-making process and it was agreed that the decision would be pushed to a future Ministerial-level meeting. In a major victory, the Vietnamese government came out in support of a 10-year moratorium on mainstream dam construction. After this meeting, Cambodia and Vietnam have regularly expressed their concerns over the dam and have requested that construction on the project halt until a transboundary impact assessment was carried out.

We have also worked to discredit the PNPCA process due to its lack of transparency and public participation, as well as highlighting the legal responsibilities of the Government of Laos in terms of their commitments to the 1995 Mekong Agreement and other key international environmental laws, through reviews, legal memos, and awareness-raising activities with regional governments and the donors. This has helped to ensure wide recognition of the need for reform at the Mekong River Commission and its procedures, which has resulted in the establishment of a Joint Platform of the four governments, which will begin reviewing the MRC's procedures. Furthermore, the four Mekong governments agreed in 2011 to study the cumulative impacts of the Mekong mainstream dams and Vietnam has recently initiated a study looking at the impacts of the Mekong dams on the Mekong Delta. While this has not stopped construction on the dam, it has secured a commitment by regional governments to further study the impacts of mainstream dams and demonstrates increased concern over the need to protect the river's natural resources and biodiversity.

Lastly, while seeking the cancellation of the Mekong mainstream dams, we have taken initiative to put forward alternative energy solutions for the region. As Thailand hopes to import electricity from most of the mainstream dams, we commissioned Palang Thai to carry out an alternative power development plan for Thailand. This plan was then endorsed by 140 civil society groups in Thailand and calls for more realistic energy forecasting, improved energy efficiency measures and increased usage of more sustainable energy technologies, which will mean that the electricity from the Mekong mainstream dams and some of the most destructive projects in the region will not be needed. While the Thai government has incorporated a few of the recommendations in the country's 2010 Power Development Plan, version 3, more coordination amongst the civil society groups and continued pressure will hopefully lead the government to adopt more of the recommendations while the Thai government now work's on drafting the 2013 Power Development, so that some of the most destructive hydropower dams in the Mekong River Basin can be avoided and the river's aquatic biodiversity can be maintained for future generations.

Please provide the following information where relevant:

Hectares Protected: NA

Species Conserved: NA

Corridors Created: NA

Describe the success or challenges of the project toward achieving its short-term and long-term impact objectives.

The project had many successes in terms of obtaining delays in decisions over the Xayaburi Dam, which have been detailed above. We also faced some challenges that were beyond our control. The biggest challenge faced is that Laos is apparently continuing construction on the project despite its commitment to suspend the project until a regional decision has been made. Decisions such as this are ultimately political, and it remains to be seen whether our work can create sufficient pressure through the Mekong Mainstream Dams Impact Study and other venues so as to ensure that either Laos withdraws from the project or other regional governments stay firm in their positions on the project.

While Cambodia and Vietnam have voiced their concerns with the Xayaburi Dam on numerous occasions, the ASEAN principle of non-interference in member country affairs presents an additional problem for getting neighboring governments to take a strong stance on Laos. A key factor is Vietnam, since it has such a large influence on Laos, and whether the Government remains firm in its position or not. Our Vietnamese partners have been doing an excellent job in keeping the issue current in Vietnam through their evidence-based advocacy work, but have also stated that they lack resources to do everything they would like to do. Another factor is that we must find more ways to influence the Thai government to place increased pressure on its companies and banks investing in the project.

Were there any unexpected impacts (positive or negative)?

None to report.

Project Components

Project Components: *Please report on results by project component. Reporting should reference specific products/deliverables from the approved project design and other relevant information.*

Component 1 Planned:

A strong and engaged regional/ international network of civil society groups in the region exists that is working to keep the Mekong mainstream flowing freely and that are viewed as credible and valuable commentators on project risks and alternatives

Component 1 Actual at Completion:

By helping to coordinate annual meetings of the Save the Mekong coalition, as well as regular strategy meetings, civil society groups regionally and internationally have been able to better share information and coordinate more effective advocacy actions aimed at keeping the Mekong mainstream flowing. As a result, numerous actions have been held over the years, including protests, flotillas, petition campaigns and peace walks, amongst others.

Through active outreach with more than 30 new conservation groups, international NGOs, scientists and local networks, the movement has expanded and strengthened through activity coordination. While most of this work has been behind the scenes, it has resulted in published opinion letters, expert letters and reviews, petitions, and engagement.

Component 2 Planned:

Civil society groups and the wider public are well informed about plans for hydropower development in the Mekong Region, its impacts and alternatives.

Component 2 Actual at Completion:

There is increased awareness amongst civil society and the public about the plans to build the Mekong mainstream dams and the threat it poses to the river's ecosystem and people due to the development of increased popular education materials. We published five factsheets related to the Mekong mainstream dams, many of which are available in local languages.

We worked closely with partners in Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam, in order to provide more than 10 civil society groups capacity building trainings and support each year. This included trainings on the Xayaburi and Mekong mainstream dams, energy planning processes, science published on the importance of the Mekong River. We also helped provide comments and feedback on national level strategies aimed at influencing decision-making processes within their respective countries. As a result, partners have become more savvy in their ability to analyze and strategize future actions and more confident in addressing the issue with regional government officials.

Component 3 Planned:

High quality research informs policy makers, decision makers, and opinion formers on the environmental, ecological and social impacts of Mekong Mainstream dams and the availability/ viability of better energy and water management solutions.

Component 3 Actual at Completion:

More than six reports were published, along with numerous other materials on the fisheries, food security and other impacts of the Mekong mainstream dams, as well as on better energy and water solutions. These reports are posted on our website and were distributed, and at times presented, to decision-makers in the region, as well as the Mekong River Commission, international donors, experts and civil society. Through press releases, the research often was reported in regional and international media.

Technical reviews were carried out, which provided analysis of the Xayaburi Dam's environmental impact assessment report (EIA), Pöyry's Compliance Review of the Xayaburi Dam, and the Xayaburi Dam's power purchase agreement, amongst others. These reviews have helped inform policy and decision-makers of the shortfalls and risks of these reports, which helped provide the basis for many repeated calls for the Xayaburi Dam's EIA to be redone and for Cambodia and Vietnam to raise concerns over the poor quality of work carried out by Pöyry.

Component 4 Planned:

The Mekong River Commission's (MRC's) Sustainable Hydropower Initiative acts in a transparent and accountable manner and fully recognizes the social and environmental costs of the proposed mainstream dams.

Component 4 Actual at Completion:

Through information sharing meetings and engagement efforts with many of the MRC Development Partners, bilateral donors in the region – including Australia, European Commission, Finland, Germany, Japan and the USA – have publically expressed concerns over the plans to build the Xayaburi and other Mekong mainstream dams. MRC Development Partners are now meeting on a quarterly basis given their concerns with these projects and have put out more than four joint statements raising concern over the dams and the need for further study.

Numerous meetings were held between the MRC and its National Mekong Committees with International Rivers and/or partners in the region that we provided supported for. Through these meetings we have continued to demand improved public consultation and transparency within the MRC processes.

The MRC's Prior Notification and Prior Consultation Agreement (PNPCA)'s credibility was significantly weakened due to regular public challenges of the Xayaburi Dam's prior consultation process. Through advocacy efforts, civil society organizations were able to ensure that there was some NGO representation in each of the consultations that were held over the Xayaburi Dam in Cambodia, Thailand and Vietnam, while also ensuring that all comments regarding the project were recorded by the National Mekong Committees and subsequently helped form their decisions of concern at the April 2011 Joint Committee Meeting on the Xayaburi Dam. Given the problems of the Xayaburi Dam and the lack of agreement, there is now agreement amongst the MRC member countries, development partners and the public that the PNPCA must be reviewed and amended due to its ambiguities and lack of public consultation. As a result a joint platform was established by the MRC in 2013 to review this issue.

Component 5 Planned:

There is greater public awareness in the Mekong region and internationally about the value of a free-flowing Mekong River and the likely impacts of the Mekong mainstream dams.

Component 5 Actual at Completion:

Over the past few years, there has been extensive regional and international media coverage of the Xayaburi Dam and other mainstream dams, and of the value of the ecosystem services a healthy Mekong provides to millions of people in the basin. This came as a result of nearly 20 press releases put out on the Xayaburi Dam, nearly 15 blogs, and nearly 10 opinion pieces published by International Rivers, which has resulted in hundreds of articles, radio and TV interviews, and documentaries being made on the issue.

In Thailand, we helped to organize media trips for Thai journalists to visit the Xayaburi and Don Sahong dam sites, in order to better understand the issue. Press conferences

were regularly held with various Thai Senators and civil society groups, to help report on important issues occurring in Thailand related to the dam, such as the lawsuit against five Thai agencies for signing the Xayaburi Dam's power purchase agreement, senate committee/Thai National Human Rights Committee hearings with the dam companies and banks involved, and numerous other events. This led to coverage in The Nation, Bangkok Post, Prachathai, TCIJ, Thai Journalists Association, Post Today, Thai PBS, Isra News and the Thai post.

Component 6 Planned:

Project developers, financiers, electricity buyer, and host governments are pressured into withdrawing support for those Mekong mainstream dam projects that are found to have high social and environmental costs. (Projects selected according to priority)

Component 6 Actual at Completion:

Through coordinated advocacy efforts at the national, regional and international levels, we have pressured project developers, financiers and MRC member countries to not support dam building on the Mekong River. By continuing to focus on the Xayaburi Dam, we have demonstrated that it has set a bad precedent for how future dams are proposed. We have reported on how the Lao government has violated the 1995 Mekong Agreement and international law with the unilateral construction of the dam. We have made calls demanding that the dam's designs be publically disclosed and undergo technical review by the MRC Secretariat, in order to ensure that its mitigation measures undergo public scrutiny.

In Thailand, we worked with partners and local communities to file a complaint in Thai administrative court in August 2012. The launch of the complaint included the participation of the ASEAN human rights commission. The lawsuit is still pending.

In Finland, we have worked closely with civil society partners to place pressure on Pöyry, the company that is Laos' engineer for the Xayaburi project. In June 2012, 15 civil society groups including International Rivers, filed a complaint against Pöyry at the Finland government's OECD National Contact Point. The complaint has successfully generated scrutiny in Finland of the company's practices, although the final verdict, which stated that Pöyry did not violate the OECD guidelines, is currently being questioned by partners in Finland.

Through our work, in coordination with members of the Save the Mekong coalition, we have called upon MRC development partners and member countries to endorse the MRC's 2010 Strategic Environmental Assessment and its recommendation for a ten year deferment. The World Bank and Vietnamese governments have publically endorsed the report. Additionally, development partners have raised some of its findings in their statements. Over the past three years, we have continued to conduct outreach on the report and have encouraged journalists and policymakers to reference its findings. Continuing to keep the report in the public eye, this has helped maintain its credibility as the leading report on this topic.

Component 7 Planned:

The Thai utility EGAT is convinced to not purchase power from Mekong Mainstream dams that are found to have high social and environmental costs.

Component 7 Actual at Completion:

An alternative energy development plan was developed for Thai utility EGAT that demonstrates why Thailand does not need electricity from any of the Mekong mainstream dams or other forms of destructive energy, through more realistic energy forecasting, improved energy efficiency measures and the use of more sustainable energy technologies. This report was commissioned by International Rivers and endorsed by more than 140 civil society groups in the region. The report has since been presented to the Thai government and a few of its recommendations were incorporated into Thailand's Power Development Plan 2010, version 3, which was drafted in 2012.

Were any components unrealized? If so, how has this affected the overall impact of the project?

All of the core components were realized. However, one activity (5.3), which was to translate the documentary film into the four regional languages and be aired on TV, has not yet been fully completed due to time restrictions of the main film-maker and difficulty finding narrators that can easily access the project's main studio. We are still working with the film-maker on this and hope that this activity will be realized in the near future.

Please describe and submit (electronically if possible) any tools, products, or methodologies that resulted from this project or contributed to the results.

The following are some of the key products, which were achieved through the support of CEPF:

- *Xayaburi Media Kit* - which provides some key press releases, blogs and opinion pieces put out by International Rivers on the Xayaburi Dam, as well as some international media coverage. www.internationalrivers.org/node/3412
- *Xayaburi Dam- How Laos Violated the 1995 Mekong Agreement*, a legal analysis report. www.internationalrivers.org/node/7810
- *Sidestepping Science: Review of the Pöyry Report on the Xayaburi Dam*- a report on the work of Pöyry Energy. www.internationalrivers.org/node/3372
- *Xayaburi on the Edge of Change* - Photography and video by Thai photojournalist Suthep Kritsanavarin on the Xayaburi Dam and people's livelihoods commissioned by International Rivers. www.internationalrivers.org/node/7763
- *The Xayaburi Dam: Threatening Food Security in the Mekong* - a report looking at resettlement and food security concerns caused by the Xayaburi Dam. www.internationalrivers.org/node/7675
- *The Xayaburi Dam: A looming threat to the Mekong River* - a factsheet on Xayaburi. www.internationalrivers.org/node/2635
- *Foretelling the Mekong River's Fate: Key Findings of the MRC's Strategic Environmental Impact Assessment on Mekong Mainstream Dams* - a factsheet on the SEA report. www.internationalrivers.org/node/2634

- *The Lower Mekong Mainstream Dams: A Transboundary Water Crisis* - a factsheet on the Lower Mekong mainstream dams. www.internationalrivers.org/node/7900
- *Technical Review of the Xayaburi Environmental Impact Assessment* - a report commissioned by International Rivers in which five experts provide a review of the project's EIA. www.internationalrivers.org/node/3930
- *A Proposed Power Development Plan for Thailand* - a report commissioned by International Rivers and endorsed by more than 140 Thai civil society groups providing a more sustainable energy plan for Thailand. www.internationalrivers.org/node/7693
- *The Mekong: Grounds of Plenty* - a documentary film on the Mekong River's wild capture fisheries and how it supports livelihoods in the region. www.internationalrivers.org/node/7701

Lessons Learned

Describe any lessons learned during the design and implementation of the project, as well as any related to organizational development and capacity building. Consider lessons that would inform projects designed or implemented by your organization or others, as well as lessons that might be considered by the global conservation community.

Project Design Process: (aspects of the project design that contributed to its success/shortcomings)

Given the ever changing political situations and changing space for civil society engagement on sensitive issues such as hydropower in the region, flexibility throughout the project design process has been essential. In this regard, we found the project design to be appropriate to this situation and that minor changes to the design made could be easily made through the performance tracking reports submitted to CEPF.

Project Implementation: (aspects of the project execution that contributed to its success/shortcomings)

By regularly evaluating our work and adjusting strategies according to the changing political and democratic space, our project implementation was highly effective and helped lead to many successes. However, due to limitations in human and financial resources, campaign priorities were often made towards ensuring that the MRC and its regional decision-making process were following international standard, which meant that not enough attention was devoted to the companies and banks engaged in hydropower development, which were pushing forward with the Xayaburi Dam's development outside of the MRC framework.

Other lessons learned relevant to conservation community:

The risks that the Mekong mainstream dams pose to the Lower Mekong River's biological diversity are significant as evidenced by the Mekong River Commission's Strategic Environmental Impact Assessment and other studies that have emerged over the

years. However, the full impacts have yet to be fully understood, as significant knowledge gaps remain and the research that has been published is rarely well-disseminated to the region's government officials and public, impeding informed decision-making over the future of the river. As a result, it's imperative that the conservation community help to communicate their own research, as well as the research of others, with decision-makers regarding the risks posed by the dams and the importance of protecting the Mekong River.

Additionally, more work is needed to promote energy solutions in the region, in order to show that there are better options than large dams for meeting the region's energy and development needs.

Additional Funding

Provide details of any additional funding that supported this project and any funding secured for the project, organization, or the region, as a result of the CEPF investment in this project.

Donor	Type of Funding*	Amount	Notes
International Rivers Network	In-Kind - A	\$53,000	
Open Society Institute	Co-financing - A	\$15,000	
Oxfam Australia	Co-financing - A	\$32,000	
Richard & Rhoda Goldman Fund	Co-financing - A	\$24,000	
The McKnight Foundation	Co-financing - A	\$84,000	
John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation	Grantee and Partner leveraging - B	\$200,000	For the Xayaburi campaign

***Additional funding should be reported using the following categories:**

- A** *Project co-financing (Other donors or your organization contribute to the direct costs of this project)*
- B** *Grantee and Partner leveraging (Other donors contribute to your organization or a partner organization as a direct result of successes with this CEPF funded project.)*
- C** *Regional/Portfolio leveraging (Other donors make large investments in a region because of CEPF investment or successes related to this project.)*

Sustainability/Replicability

Summarize the success or challenge in achieving planned sustainability or replicability of project components or results.

Through funding from CEPF, this project has helped advance the campaign to protect the Mekong River during one of its most crucial period of time. By working in close collaboration with the Save the Mekong coalition and civil society regionally and internationally and providing technical support and strategic advice as needed, we have seen the campaign grow stronger over the years as civil society becomes more sophisticated in their strategies and feel empowered to engage in debates over these issues. However, we did face challenges with the kidnapping of Lao activist Sombath Somphone in December 2012, which has meant safety for activists working on sensitive issues, such as the Mekong mainstream dams, has become a serious issue for NGOs working in Laos and has resulted in increasingly constricted space for civil society to challenge the Lao government's plans and work on this issue. By investing our time to work closely with civil society throughout the region, we believe this campaign will be sustained over the long-term, although the work taking place within Laos may remain restricted.

We remain committed to working on this important issue and believe that through continued investment, partnership and sustained advocacy efforts, this important work will be sustained and will continue to make advances towards keeping large sections of the Mekong River free-flowing.

Summarize any unplanned sustainability or replicability achieved.

The increased public awareness regarding the need to protect the Mekong River has led to increased funding opportunities towards the protection of biodiversity and the development of civil society in the region. We have used these opportunities to help provide input into the needs of the region and help promote the work of our partners, in order to help secure increased sustainability of their work. An example of this is the Margaret A. Cargill Foundation, which is now involved in the region and has funded some of our partners.

Safeguard Policy Assessment

Provide a summary of the implementation of any required action toward the environmental and social safeguard policies within the project.

N/A

Additional Comments/Recommendations

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to CEPF for supporting our work to protect the biodiversity of the Mekong River. Through your generous support at a very critical time, we were able to designate a significant amount of our human and financial resources towards this work. As a result of the concentrated and collective effort, we have been able to achieve greater success in meeting our campaign goals and hope to be able to continue this important work over the upcoming years, as decisions over whether or not to build the mainstream dams continue to take place within the region. We continue to hope that our efforts will lead to increased recognition in the region of the importance of healthy rivers, so that future decisions over hydropower projects will adhere to a more precautionary approach and the most destructive projects will not proceed.

Information Sharing and CEPF Policy

CEPF is committed to transparent operations and to helping civil society groups share experiences, lessons learned, and results. Final project completion reports are made available on our Web site, www.cepf.net, and publicized in our newsletter and other communications.

Please include your full contact details below:

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*****If your grant has an end date other than JUNE 30, please
complete the tables on the following pages*****



Performance Tracking Report Addendum

CEPF Global Targets

(Enter Grant Term)

Provide a numerical amount and brief description of the results achieved by your grant.
Please respond to only those questions that are relevant to your project.

Project Results	Is this question relevant?	If yes, provide your numerical response for results achieved during the annual period.	Provide your numerical response for project from inception of CEPF support to date.	Describe the principal results achieved from July 1, 2012 to May 30, 2013. (Attach annexes if necessary)
1. Did your project strengthen management of a protected area guided by a sustainable management plan? Please indicate number of hectares improved.				Please also include name of the protected area(s). If more than one, please include the number of hectares strengthened for each one.
2. How many hectares of new and/or expanded protected areas did your project help establish through a legal declaration or community agreement?				Please also include name of the protected area. If more than one, please include the number of hectares strengthened for each one.
3. Did your project strengthen biodiversity conservation and/or natural resources management inside a key biodiversity area identified in the CEPF ecosystem profile? If so, please indicate how many hectares.				
4. Did your project effectively introduce or strengthen biodiversity conservation in management practices outside protected areas? If so, please indicate how many hectares.				
5. If your project promotes the sustainable use of natural resources, how many local communities accrued tangible socioeconomic benefits? Please complete Table 1 below.				

If you answered yes to question 5, please complete the following table

