

CEPF Final Project Completion Report

Organization Legal Name:	International Rivers Network
Project Title:	Ensuring Accountability for Ecosystems and Biodiversity Protection from Hydropower Development in the Mekong River Basin
Grant Number:	65905
CEPF Region:	Indo-Burma II
Strategic Direction:	6 Engage key actors in mainstreaming biodiversity, communities and livelihoods into development planning in the priority corridors
Grant Amount:	\$200,000.00
Project Dates:	March 01, 2016 - December 31, 2018
Date of Report:	March 27, 2019

Implementation Partners

List each partner and explain how they were involved in the project

IR convenes Save the Mekong (STM) coalition to foster unified campaigns, expedite information and sharing, and facilitate connections between civil society groups with unique competencies and assets. Through our campaigns, we support millions of people whose livelihoods and wellbeing depend on the health of the river basin's unique ecosystem. Within STM, IR collaborates with national networks of local CSOs and community groups: Rivers Coalition of Cambodia, Vietnam Rivers Network and the Thai Network of Eight Mekong Provinces. We have collaborated extensively over the grant period with a range of other groups and networks, including members of the Lower Mekong Network and Oxfam Mekong Water Governance Program on activities and initiatives. We participated in regional policy forums such as events organised by WLE Greater Mekong, Stimson Center, Stockholm Environmental Institute, and the Lower Mekong Initiative.

Conservation Impacts

Summarize the overall impact of your project, describing how your project has contributed to the implementation of the CEPF ecosystem profile

Our campaigns prompted adoption of several national and regional-level reforms to improve governance of the Mekong basin as a shared resource. While Xayaburi and Don Sahong have

continued construction, the huge scrutiny placed on these projects has influenced the way subsequent projects have moved forward. As social, economic, and environmental impacts of Mekong dams became increasingly visible and known, IR has shifted the campaign from individual projects to basin-level. Drawing on networks and supporting campaigns locally and regionally, we are working to convince regional governments to change course, and to explore renewable energy and development alternatives to destructive Mekong dams. As a result of growing awareness of threats posed by current plans, we have witnessed gradual shifts in attitudes of relevant government agencies and decision makers. As the campaign moves forward, IR and our networks have at our disposal:

- A strong and coordinated network of actors united in opposition to destructive hydroower development;
- An arsenal of resources revealing how proponents and developers have made projects appear more cost-effective, downplayed the full scope of impacts and eluded accountability for harm;
- A range of scientific studies, regional initiatives, and policies to leverage for future advocacy;
- Increased space for campaigns and recognition by some national governments in relation to regulating adverse impacts of outbound investments.

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

Impact Description	Impact Summary
1. The Mainstream of the Mekong River remains largely free-flowing in part due to the advocacy efforts of grassroots, national, regional, and international civil society groups, because the environmental and social impacts of large hydropower projects are too great.	Construction of the Don Sahong and Xayaburi dams is nearing completion, with both dams expected to become operational this year and next. Subsequent proposed mainstream dams have, however, encountered obstacles and delayed schedules – driven in part by the concerted effort of civil-society groups to raise awareness about the adverse impacts of mainstream hydropower and ensure that project stakeholders are held accountable for harms.
2. Regional decision-makers understand the value of healthy, free-flowing rivers, which results in a commitment to keep the Mekong River's mainstream largely free of destructive hydropower dams.	Regional decision makers have begun to exhibit greater understanding of the immense scope of threats imposed by the damming of the Mekong River. Departments and agencies within Thailand have issued statements of concern about the impacts of the country's power purchases from proposed mainstream dams, and the Prime Minister of Vietnam has expressed worries about the impact of hydropower on the Mekong Delta.
3. The river's biodiversity and habitats are protected, as are the livelihoods of people dependent upon sustainable use of its natural resources because the river remains largely free of destructive hydropower dams.	Although two mainstream dams are nearing completion, subsequent dams have encountered formidable opposition, as evidenced by a delay in the development of the Pak Beng. Construction of the Don Sahong and Xayaburi dams has proceeded, with both dams expected to become operational this year. Subsequent proposed mainstream dams have, however, encountered obstacles and delayed

	schedules – driven in part by the concerted effort of civil-society groups to raise awareness about the adverse impacts of mainstream hydropower and ensure that project stakeholders are held accountable for harms.
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Planned Short-term Impacts - 1 to 3 years (as stated in the approved proposal)

Impact Description	Impact Summary
1. The environmental and social costs of mainstream Mekong dams and their threats to the Mekong River, its ecosystems, and communities become well known, particularly amongst the public, international donors and regional decision-makers.	IR and its partners in the STM coalition substantially increased knowledge about the risks of mainstream hydropower through the mobilization of impacted communities; the creation and dissemination of reports and studies; and the strategic use of national, regional, and international media and other platforms.
2a. Regarding projects on the Mekong mainstream: Don Sahong Dam is stopped through public pressure and accountability of its project developers and contractors	The Don Sahong dam’s construction is almost complete. The MRC has, however, begun to roll out a joint environmental monitoring initiative that will, in theory, enable the commission to identify harms and ensure some degree of accountability for impacts. We are pushing for public participation and independence in this mechanism and also continuing to engage project developers and investors on accountability for impacts.
2b. The developers of Xayaburi Dam are held to account for the social and environmental impacts of the project	Although the Xayaburi project developers bowed to significant public pressure regarding the dam’s negative impacts and pursued a \$400 million redesign of the project, which included a set of enhanced mitigation measures, the developers did not release the final designs until late 2018, giving civil society and impacted communities minimal time to advocate for further improvements to the project and adapt to the project’s inevitable impacts. Many of our concerns are reflected in the MRC review, we will use to highlight the flawed and non-transparent process of decision-making
2c. Public scrutiny over the project establishes new standards in project information transparency, impact assessment requirements and accountability.	Prompted by regional campaigning, the MRC revised the Preliminary Design Guidance (PDG) for Mainstream Dams, adopted higher standards for impact studies (including the completion of transboundary impact assessments), and began rolling out a joint-environmental monitoring initiative. Two community-filed administrative lawsuits have pressured Thai government entities, such as the Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand (EGAT), to adopt and enforce policies that improve the quality of public consultation and ensure the utilization of higher quality impact studies that include transboundary impacts.
3. A strong and informed coalition of civil society groups in Cambodia is formed to	IR collaborated with a local consultant in order to mobilize communities threatened by the two

<p>address proposals for lower Mekong mainstream dams such as Stung Treng and Sambor Dams.</p>	<p>hydropower dams. As community information and opposition to the dams has grown, IR aided the growth and implementation of the country's incipient campaigns by supporting the dissemination of information and providing networking support. It also supported the development of grassroots campaigning and country-wide networking through the awarding of strategic subgrants to local partners.</p>
<p>4a. Our partners (at least 10 local and regional CSOs) continue to grow and strengthen (as evidenced by the number of advocacy activities they commence including letter writing, meetings with decision-makers, reports and op-eds), as we provide support through technical, strategic and network coordination for their efforts to challenge the building of mainstream Mekong dams.</p>	<p>Through both the STM coalition and its various other networks, IR provided technical support, conducted capacity building trainings for campaigners and activists across the region, and provided its partners with vital resources and information. The members of our network have exhibited important growth over the grant period, with introduction of new members and others now assuming a greater role in maintaining the STM, sharing resources and information, and developing highly strategic and coordinated campaign efforts. Notably, our Thai partners have met in-person with the project developer for the Pak Beng dam, and our partners in Vietnam, Cambodia, and Thailand have participated in regional consultations and events for proposed mainstream dams (with the exception of the Pak Lay, of whose Prior Consultation the STM has organized a civil-society boycott).</p>
<p>4b. Our partners (at least 5 partners in Cambodia, Thailand and Vietnam) lead successful campaigns challenging the role of companies and investors in Mekong mainstream dams (at least 3 companies engage civil society responding to their concerns, 2 reverse their investment decision and/or involvement in Mekong mainstream dams), as well as regional decision-makers (at least 3 distinct bodies including national Mekong River Commission Council Members, MRC Secretariat or government ministries), underscoring the risks involved in developing these dams, resulting in the cancellation of projects.</p>	<p>In Thailand, our partners worked to document transboundary impacts from mainstream dams, filed lawsuits regarding the decision making surrounding the Pak Beng and Xayaburi dams, and engaged with the project stakeholders for the Pak Beng dam. Additionally, partners in Cambodia and Vietnam conducted extensive advocacy during Prior Consultation for the Pak Beng dam. Regional campaign helped prompt Thailand to delay the signing of a PPA for the Pak Beng dam, and the future of Pak Lay also remains uncertain. Datang, the project developer for Pak Beng, has exhibited an increasing willingness to engage with local civil-society groups. Engagement between Vietnamese academics and civil-society actors, on one hand, and Vietnamese decision makers, on the other, has resulted in Vietnamese policy makers, such as the prime minister, expressing grave concerns about the impact of hydropower on the Mekong Delta. Thai administrative lawsuits and concerns raised during the public consultation for Pak Beng have pushed government entities to improve their due diligence practices regarding Mekong hydropower.</p>
<p>5. Reforms at the regional level ensure</p>	<p>The MRC instituted several reforms in response to</p>

better decision-making and protection for the Mekong mainstream in response to public pressure and concern over existing and proposed dams.

advocacy surrounding the Prior Consultation processes and decision-making on Mekong dams. Reforms included updates to the PDG and review of the PNPCA, as well as increased efforts at public participation and stakeholder engagement. While not transformative in themselves, the reforms provided new opportunities for IR and its partners to highlight ongoing issues plaguing the MRC procedures, broadcast concerns about the consequences of mainstream hydropower to a wider audience, and urge national governments to take actions to thwart the development of proposed mainstream dams.

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

IR is aware of the many hurdles we confront in achieving our objectives. The diversity of planned activities enables us to assess the efficacy of different tactics, determine best-practice approaches, and capitalize on any emerging synergy between disparate actions. While we are aware of the MRC's limitations, many activities nonetheless leveraged its processes and initiatives to broadcast the threats of large hydropower development to both policymakers and the public and pressure regional decision makers to ingrate this knowledge into policy decisions. During the grant period, and in response to campaigning from IR and our networks, the MRC implemented a number of reforms, in particular aimed at improving stakeholder engagement in procedures and initiatives. Our MRC advocacy is embedded in a broader strategy of engaging regional and international platforms to raise the threat posed by Mekong dams and promote alternative development pathways. This includes regional policy forums and corporate accountability mechanisms, including national human rights institutions and the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, as well as national lawsuits. Some of these actions are ongoing, and while others did not yield the results desired in promoting divestment or compensation to affected communities, they have nonetheless proven successful strategies in highlighting the impacts of dams on local people and expectations of corporate and government actors with respect to accountability for harm.

Were there any unexpected impacts (positive or negative)?

The MRC release of the Council Study, which supported many of our arguments on impacts of dams has boosted the campaign message and allowed us to increase focus on promoting exploration and adoption of alternatives. With comprehensive and compelling information highlighting the risks of mainstream hydropower in the hands of national and regional decision makers, we can now shift our focus away from raising their awareness about potential harms and place a greater emphasis on encouraging them to make decisions and pursue actions in line with the findings of the study. The effectiveness of our campaigns around MRC processes and initiatives, including an organized and coordinated civil society boycott of the Pak Lay Prior Consultation process, prompted the MRC Secretariat and MRC Development Partners to increase efforts to engage civil society and community stakeholders in dialogues and key initiatives. Save the Mekong coalition has established a regular

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dialogue with MRC Development Partners and is in discusion with the MRC about potential ongoing platforms for engagement with civil society.

Project Components and Products/Deliverables

Describe the results from each product/deliverable:

Component		Deliverable		
#	Description	#	Description	Results for Deliverable
1	Keep the Lower Mekong mainstream largely free-flowing by campaigning for cancellation of Don Sahong dam, using Xayaburi Dam as an example of bad precedent in regional decision-making, and engaging Chinese dam builders looking to build on the Lower Mekong	1.1	Construction of the Don Sahong Dam is delayed as evidenced by the cessation of construction activity at the project site.	The construction of the Don Sahong is nearing completion, with the dam expected to become operational in 2020. Although IR and its partners were unsuccessful in halting its development, the campaign against the dam generated significant awareness among both government officials and the general public of the social, economic, and environmental impacts of large-scale hydropower. By shining a spotlight on the flawed decision-making process that enabled a project with such significant potential impacts to proceed, IR and its partners prompted the MRC to adjust its policies and guidelines and helped shape the planning process of subsequent projects (at both the national and regional levels). Though flawed, the impact studies for both the Pak Beng and Pak Lay dams included transboundary impact assessments - the performance of which was one of IR's key demands in its Xayaburi and Don Sahong campaign as well as a request by the other Mekong countries (mentioned in their country reply forms during the dam's Prior Consultation process).
1	Keep the Lower Mekong mainstream largely free-flowing by campaigning for cancellation of Don Sahong dam, using Xayaburi Dam as an example of bad precedent in regional decision-making, and engaging Chinese dam builders looking to build on the Lower Mekong	1.2	Cambodian, Thailand and Vietnam maintain public positions of concern towards the Don Sahong project as evidenced in statements made in the media and to the MRC.	During the Prior Consultation process, Vietnam, Thailand, and Cambodia all expressed concerns about the impacts of the Don Sahong Dam and requested additional studies, including a transboundary impact assessment. Although the MRC's member governments failed to reach regional agreement about whether and how the project would proceed, the Laos government made a unilateral decision in late 2015 to commence construction on the dam. The ability of Laos to disregard concerns expressed by the other MRC national governments and pursue development of a project with evident - yet not fully understood - transboundary impacts illustrated the inherent shortcomings of the MRC as an institution for balancing the four countries' competing demands of the transboundary river and facilitating the sustainable and equitable management of its resources. IR's advocacy concerning the Don Sahong Dam and the Xayaburi Dam prompted the MRC to update its policies and guidelines and require transboundary impact studies for subsequent

				proposed mainstream dams. Additionally, through our respective campaigns against the two dams, IR and its partners have cultivated a growing public awareness of the adverse consequences of Mekong hydropower.
1	Keep the Lower Mekong mainstream largely free-flowing by campaigning for cancellation of Don Sahong dam, using Xayaburi Dam as an example of bad precedent in regional decision-making, and engaging Chinese dam builders looking to build on the Lower Mekong	1.3	Increased awareness about the responsibility of the project developers, future financiers, and consultancy companies, and the risk involved in moving forward with the project, as evidenced by the blogs, public reports and letters to companies	We have pursued a strategy of identifying financial stakeholders, educating them about the reputational risk of involvement, and exhibiting a willingness to hold them publicly accountable. This engagement has yielded mixed results but these efforts are ongoing.
1	Keep the Lower Mekong mainstream largely free-flowing by campaigning for cancellation of Don Sahong dam, using Xayaburi Dam as an example of bad precedent in regional decision-making, and engaging Chinese dam builders looking to build on the Lower Mekong	1.4	Increased information and transparency around the environmental and social costs of Don Sahong Dam as evidenced reports and factsheets prepared and released, feature stories in the media on Don Sahong Dam, and release of key project documents.	The poor quality of project impact studies in conjunction with the project's lack of transparency remained a concern throughout the grant period. Although we were able to acquire some information on the Don Sahong, which we shared through various articles, blogs, op-eds, and factsheets (e.g. the June 2017 "A Dangerous Trajectory for the Mekong River: an update on mainstream Mekong dams" factsheet), the project's ongoing lack of transparency - and the precedent this set for subsequent mainstream dams - became a substantial focus of our advocacy on Don Sahong. Partly in response to concerns about the quality and implementation of the project's mitigation measures (which were developed with minimal transparency), the MRC has begun to roll out its joint environmental monitoring initiative, which will provide a focal point for upcoming advocacy.

1	Keep the Lower Mekong mainstream largely free-flowing by campaigning for cancellation of Don Sahong dam, using Xayaburi Dam as an example of bad precedent in regional decision-making, and engaging Chinese dam builders looking to build on the Lower Mekong	1.5	A strong people's movement aimed at stopping further consideration over the Stung Treng and Sambor dams, as evidenced by the number of NGOs and CSOs joining a movement to address these projects, the number of times they meet, and agreed joint activities	During the grant period, we worked to build a strong local to regional campaign on the Sambor and Stung Treng dams in Cambodia supporting research and engagement with communities and civil society groups.
3	Continue to be a key resource for partners, media, researchers and government in providing up-to-date information on hydropower development along the Mekong River.	3.1	The risks related to the mainstream dams, including impacts on fisheries and local livelihoods are covered widely in the local, regional and international media, as evidenced by the number of regular media outreach, press releases and media advisories.	Throughout the grant period, IR conducted an extensive media campaign to broadcast the adverse consequence of Mekong mainstream dams and foster greater awareness of the harm inflicted on communities by hydropower projects. Press releases, public statements, and op-eds discussed high-profile events (e.g. the 3rd MRC Summit), highlighted recent publications (e.g. the Council Study and IR factsheets), and evaluated MRC reforms and initiatives (e.g. revisions to the PDG). We also conducted media work around specific dams, including Xayaburi, Don Sahong, Pak Lay, Pak Beng, Nam Theun 2, and Xe Pian-Xe Namnoy. Our writings consistently situated each of the mainstream dam within a broader trend - the unsustainable and inequitable development of the Mekong's resources - and shone a spotlight on the shortcomings of the national and regional decision-making processes that have allowed the development of destructive hydropower projects to proceed. In many cases, our press releases and statements and those of partners were cited by national and regional media outlets.
3	Continue to be a key resource for	3.2	Increased awareness	IR has positioned itself in the region as a clearinghouse of information on the impacts and risks of Mekong

	partners, media, researchers and government in providing up-to-date information on hydropower development along the Mekong River.		among the public, international donors and decision-makers about the threat of Mekong mainstream dams, as shown by number of meetings, production and dissemination of materials, including blogs, fact-sheets, briefings and info-graphics	hydropower dams. In this role, it has substantially increased the knowledge of the various harms that mainstream Mekong dams will inflict both individually and collectively. In support of this aim, IR published the “Swindling the Mekong: Run of River Hydro” factsheet to address misconceptions surrounding the concept of run-of-the-river dams and highlight the risks and impacts of the proposed mainstream dams. It also published an independent review of the Pak Beng impact studies and hosted presentations by Thai academics about the economics of Mekong mainstream dams. IR participated in regular meetings with the MRC Development Partners, presented on a civil-society panel at the 3rd MRC Summit, and participated in the MRC regional consultations. Additionally, IR shared concerns and information regarding mainstream hydropower at various workshops and conferences. IR staff also engaged with the Thai National Human Rights Commission, including collaboration on a joint regional event, participating in civil society consultations and again in meetings to share information on specific projects.
3	Continue to be a key resource for partners, media, researchers and government in providing up-to-date information on hydropower development along the Mekong River.	3.3	The capacity of local journalists to cover Mekong dam issues is strengthened, and we encourage greater media coverage as evidenced through the organization of at least one press conference in Thailand, and one local media trip to a key dam site	Over the course of the grant period, we undertook a number of actions to improve the capacity of local, regional, and international journalists to report on the threats and risks of hydropower development in the Mekong River Basin. In pursuit of this aim, we coordinated multiple media trips to the site of the Pak Beng dam, supported a Mekong media exchange workshop for journalists from the five Mekong countries, organized a media trip for Burmese journalists to study the impacts of Mekong mainstream dams in the Mekong Delta in Vietnam, co-organized a media trip for Chinese journalists to Chiang Khong in Thailand, and held multiple press conferences (to generate buzz around the filing of lawsuits and release of public statements), developed factsheets about Mekong dams and the findings of the Council Study, presented information at conferences and workshops for regional journalists, and invited journalists to attend key events (such as our public forum on Mekong dams on the 2017 International Day of Action for Rivers). As a consequence of both the strengthened and increasingly frequent media coverage of Mekong dam issues, we are observing pushback against the damming of the Mekong River Basin among the general public as well as powerful decision makers throughout the region.

3	Continue to be a key resource for partners, media, researchers and government in providing up-to-date information on hydropower development along the Mekong River.	3.4	At least 6 international stories, 18 regional/national news stories and 4 opinion pieces regarding the Mekong mainstream dams will be published per year in respectable media publications.	Throughout the grant period, IR served as the primary source for journalists from regional and international media outlets seeking information on dams in the Mekong and beyond. During the second half of 2018, a major focus for our media engagement was the collapse of saddle dam D of the Xe-Pian Xe-Namnoy hydropower project in Laos. Following the dam collapse, we talked to scores of journalists, and our analysis of the tragedy and of the risks and impacts of hydropower in the region, more broadly, was cited by many international news publication, including the New York Times, BBC World, Al Jazeera, The Guardian, CNN, and Bloomberg, together regional outlets including Bangkok Post, the Nation, Asia Times, South China Morning Post, Radio Free Asia, and many others. We also published an op ed on the aftermath of the tragedy in the Bangkok Post and facilitated publication of stories of survivors in the Asia Times. In October 2018, we organized a public and media forum at the Foreign Correspondents Club of Thailand (FCCT) in Bangkok, examining the Lao dam collapse, Nam Theun 2, and broader development and issues surrounding hydropower development in the Mekong region. The event was attended by approx. one hundred people and prompted significant media coverage.
4	Sub-granting to support activities focused on Mekong mainstream dams by Save the Mekong network members and/or partners. We will solicit, award and monitor sub-grants. Prior to awarding any sub-grant, we will seek permission from the CEPF Secretariat.	4.1	At least two sub-grants to local CSOs and/or NGOs are made, that promise to be impactful in addressing the threat of Mekong mainstream dams. Prior to awarding any sub-grant, we will seek prior permission from the CEPF Secretariat.	Over the course of the grant period, IR issued a total of four subgrants, all of which supported grassroots campaigning around the health of the Mekong River Basin, in Thailand, Cambodia, and Vietnam.
4	Sub-granting to support activities focused on	4.2	Reporting demonstrating the impact	To date, we have received reports from all of the grantees.

	Mekong mainstream dams by Save the Mekong network members and/or partners. We will solicit, award and monitor sub-grants. Prior to awarding any sub-grant, we will seek permission from the CEPF Secretariat.		and activities supported by the sub-grants is received.	
4	Sub-granting to support activities focused on Mekong mainstream dams by Save the Mekong network members and/or partners. We will solicit, award and monitor sub-grants. Prior to awarding any sub-grant, we will seek permission from the CEPF Secretariat.	4.3	The sub-grants support activities that might not otherwise be funded and result in effective advocacy activities on mainstream dams, as evidenced by statements by key decision makers or changes in the way a dam is designed or developed	IR has sought to develop a number of strong grassroots campaigns collaborating across national borders to share information, leverage efforts, and exert greater pressure on regional decision makers.
1	Keep the Lower Mekong mainstream largely free-flowing by campaigning for cancellation of Don Sahong dam, using Xayaburi Dam as	1.6	The public campaign against the Xayaburi Dam highlights impacts of the project, gaps in studies and mitigation measures,	Throughout the grant period, IR continually shone a spotlight on the flawed decision-making process for the Xayaburi Dam - the MRC country governments' failure to reach regional agreement, the lack of adequate data on the project's impacts, and the project's severe lack of transparency (e.g. the refusal of the project developers to release the revised project designs until the project's construction was nearing completion). As the first of the proposed mainstream dams, the Xayaburi served as an important case study illustrating the flawed decision

	an example of bad precedent in regional decision-making, and engaging Chinese dam builders looking to build on the Lower Mekong		along with the problems associated with the project's decision-making process, as evidenced by the number of articles in the media.	making that enabled the development of hydropower projects with substantial adverse impacts to proceed and project stakeholders to elude accountability for harms. IR conducted extensive media advocacy surrounding Xayaburi, providing input to a CNA article exposing holes in the dam's decision making process and publishing an op-ed in the Bangkok Post discussing the poor decision-making precedent that the dam set. Additionally, the Xayaburi administrative lawsuit has been instrumental in bringing regional attention to flawed decision-making and the lack of mechanisms for addressing transboundary impacts and was referenced in the filing of the Pak Beng lawsuit.
1	Keep the Lower Mekong mainstream largely free-flowing by campaigning for cancellation of Don Sahong dam, using Xayaburi Dam as an example of bad precedent in regional decision-making, and engaging Chinese dam builders looking to build on the Lower Mekong	1.7	The final designs for the Xayaburi Dam are made public, and reviewed by independent experts as evidenced by their public release.	After sustained campaigning and advocacy, the MRC's evaluation of the Xayaburi redesign was released in part in January 2019, when the project's construction was nearing completion and impacted communities' ability to express their concerns and adapt to the dam's impacts in a timely manner were severely diminished. As the dam comes into operation this year, we are planning a renewed campaign to expose the ways in which the flawed process for Xayaburi cannot be drawn on as a model for subsequent projects. The MRC's review of the redesign documents supports this analysis and we will draw on it in our campaign activities.
1	Keep the Lower Mekong mainstream largely free-flowing by campaigning for cancellation of Don Sahong dam, using Xayaburi Dam as an example of bad precedent in regional decision-making,	1.8	Chinese dam building companies and government apply higher scrutiny to prospective projects on the Mekong mainstream before project tendering or entering	We have continued to develop our strategy of engagement with Chinese hydropower companies and indirect avenues for engaging the Chinese government. The results are mixed, however, overall we have seen an increased awareness among Chinese dam-builders of the reputational risks involved in mainstream dams and a greater concern among them in identifying and mitigating risks and conducting outreach with communities and civil society. Outreach by Datang, project developer for Pak Beng, to project-impacted communities in Thailand is likely attributable to the Thai government's decision to delay signing of the project PPA. Datang's actions nonetheless indicate potential for increased transparency. Since Datang made contact with the Thai

	and engaging Chinese dam builders looking to build on the Lower Mekong		negotiations, as evidenced by delay in projects and statements in one-on-one meetings.	Network, the two groups have met three times, most recently in November 2018. During this time, IR has collaborated with local groups to pressure Datang to conduct a new transboundary impact assessment and reconsider investment in the project.
1	Keep the Lower Mekong mainstream largely free-flowing by campaigning for cancellation of Don Sahong dam, using Xayaburi Dam as an example of bad precedent in regional decision-making, and engaging Chinese dam builders looking to build on the Lower Mekong	1.9	The Chinese government's commitment that Chinese companies will not be involved in hydropower projects on transboundary rivers that have neighboring government opposition is followed though, as evidenced by statements made at one-on-one meetings	We have recently developed collaboration with the Chinese Association of NGOs (CANGO), supporting research on the impacts of Chinese investment in hydropower projects on the Mekong tributaries, including sites visits and research and analysis on Mekong dams. In 2018, IR presented information and analysis on Mekong dams at a workshop hosted by CANGO in Beijing, which was attended by representatives from both Chinese hydropower companies and staff from Chinese NGOs focused on outbound investment.
1	Keep the Lower Mekong mainstream largely free-flowing by campaigning for cancellation of Don Sahong dam, using Xayaburi Dam as an example of bad precedent in regional decision-making, and engaging Chinese dam builders looking	1.10	Regional decisionmaking on mainstream dams with more transparency, public participation and use of best available information, as shown by the number of meetings with the MRC where process	In our campaigns against the Xayaburi and Don Sahong dams, we have been able to shine a spotlight on the various loopholes that facilitate the development of mainstream projects - the use of inadequate and heavily flawed impact studies; the failure of national governments to conduct adequate public consultation with project-affected communities; a lack of transparency in the design, construction, and operation of hydropower projects; and the inability of the MRC to effectively resolve disputes among the member countries about the river's development. Ongoing scrutiny of the MRC, in general, and the first two Prior Consultation processes, more specifically, prompted the MRC to launch a review of the PNPCA. The review resulted in a set of reforms that fell far short of producing meaningful change, as evidenced by the flawed impact studies for both the Pak Beng and Pak Lay dams. The commission has also

	to build on the Lower Mekong		issues are raised and best practice is canvassed, op-eds and blogs	responded to pressure from civil society by establishing a joint environmental monitoring system. We will continue to push for participation in this initiative, including by affected communities and for an independent monitoring system to be established.
1	Keep the Lower Mekong mainstream largely free-flowing by campaigning for cancellation of Don Sahong dam, using Xayaburi Dam as an example of bad precedent in regional decision-making, and engaging Chinese dam builders looking to build on the Lower Mekong	1.11	Continue to monitor all mainstream dams, to ensure that comprehensive alternative energy option assessments, including a no-build option, are considered. We will give priority to Pak Being dam in Laos, and Stung Treng and Sambor dams in Cambodia.	We have been building analysis on energy alternatives and building capacity among regional campaign groups and activists. In January 2018, we hosted a three-day training for Mekong and Myanmar energy policy advocates. The workshop, which focused on national and regional energy planning and trade and community-driven and community-driven energy alternatives, served as an opportunity for energy policy advocates from across the region to network and strategize. Additionally, we worked with partners to evaluate whether Thai and regional energy projections warranted growing investment in Mekong hydropower and shared public messaging over the flawed plans driving harmful investments. We also distributed national and regional energy analysis and information on the availability of alternatives to local and national partners to support campaigns against the two proposed Cambodian mainstream hydropower projects, we published an op-ed on energy alternatives for Cambodia. Given the rapid emergence of new energy technologies and falling price of renewables, together with a global energy revolution, we will continue to build our campaign around energy alternatives during the coming year.
2	Continue to strengthen our civil society partners' capacity, as we provide technical, strategic and coordination support for their efforts to effectively challenge the building of the Mekong mainstream dams.	2.1	Improved coordination and information sharing (shown by number of quarterly strategy meetings) contributes to more effective advocacy strategies being implemented in Cambodia, Thailand and	One of IR's greatest contributions over the course of the grant period was our ability to convene and connect partners from across the region. Our role in building and coordinating a network of civil-society actors resulted in the development and implementation of strategic campaigns that have leveraged the respective competencies of our partners - local, national, and regional. To facilitate the development, refinement, and implementation of national and regional-level campaigns, IR organized and led numerous meetings, including annual STM gatherings, small ad-hoc strategy meetings with key partners, as well as gatherings for other networks focused specific geographic or thematic areas. Collectively, these various meetings have given the regional movement the flexibility to undertake timely, coordinated, and unified responses to emerging developments.

			Vietnam by local groups (shown by number of successful campaigns)	
2	Continue to strengthen our civil society partners' capacity, as we provide technical, strategic and coordination support for their efforts to effectively challenge the building of the Mekong mainstream dams.	2.2	Support priority activities and advocacy actions arising from our quarterly strategy meetings with civil society groups as evidenced by the number of successful or effective actions completed by our partners.	As IR and its partners executed highly coordinated and strategic campaigns, IR positioned itself as a mentor and source of support for local and national groups. In addition to drafting and disseminating resources and factsheets, IR provided partners with technical support, helping community and national-level partners draft public statements and engage constructively with project stakeholders. The success of our capacity building can be seen in the numerous efforts and activities of local partners in Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam around Mekong dams.
2	Continue to strengthen our civil society partners' capacity, as we provide technical, strategic and coordination support for their efforts to effectively challenge the building of the Mekong mainstream dams.	2.3	At least six partner groups, within Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam, challenge the construction of Mekong mainstream dams using studies, data and evidence-based arguments.	Information collection, data and analysis we provide is critical in supporting partner actions undertaken at various levels. We supported local fact-finding and evidence collection of dam impacts along the Mekong in Thailand, around dam sites in Laos (including Don Sahong, Pak Beng, Nam Ou, Nam Theun 2 and Xe-Pian Xe-Namnoy) and Cambodia (including Lower Sesan 2 and Sambor). This on the ground information is invaluable to equip local campaigners with evidence of the real impacts of existing projects and the threats posed by planned dams and to share this in their engagement with communities as well as government and company representatives. Other analysis of scientific studies, such as the expert review of the Pak Beng project studies has proven particularly effective in our partners' advocacy, as evidenced by project's delay. Our partners in Thailand, Cambodia, and Vietnam utilized it to raise concerns during public consultation; and Thai community members submitted to the court in their administrative lawsuit challenging the Pak Beng's public consultation process.
2	Continue to	2.4	Communicatio	By conducting site visits, monitoring the websites of both

<p>strengthen our civil society partners' capacity, as we provide technical, strategic and coordination support for their efforts to effectively challenge the building of the Mekong mainstream dams.</p>	<p>and information sharing within the Save the Mekong Coalition, and external communication from the Coalition continue to grow, as shown by regular emails to member list-serve, sharing of news and posting to website and social media platforms.</p>	<p>the MRC and project developers, and communicating with our grassroots partners, we are able to maintain up-to-date information about the status of hydropower projects in the Mekong River Basin, which we share with our network through social media, STM coalition meetings, regional strategy meetings, and the publication of factsheets (e.g. "A Dangerous Trajectory for the Mekong River: an update on mainstream Mekong dams"). As the size and profile of the STM has increased, the coalition has served as an increasingly effective vehicle for disseminating information and resources to STM constituent members as well as other interested parties. While STM members benefit from frequent use of the coalition's listserve, as evidenced by a significant increase in the number of emails shared, community groups and civil society actors independent of the coalition are increasingly able to procure essential information and resources through the STM's social media platforms, as evidenced by a rise in the number of users following the STM's Facebook page.</p>
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Please describe and submit any tools, products, or methodologies that resulted from this project or contributed to the results.

IR published factsheets, reports, media releases, letters and statements, and media materials such as op eds and blogs throughout the grant period, with some translated into local languages to support our partners and raise awareness among the broader public, including extensive Thai language materials and analysis. We have discussed these materials in our six-month progress reports and throughout this report. Key materials published during the grant period include:

- **Factsheet: A Dangerous Trajectory for the Mekong River, an Update on the Status of Mekong Mainstream Dams**
- **Report: Independent Expert Review of the Pak Beng EIA and Project Documents**
- **Factsheet: Swindling the Mekong: Run-of-River Hydro**
- **Report: Nam Theun 2 Hydropower Project: Field Report, February 2018**

Upcoming publications and briefs that are nearing completion include a factsheet on the MRC Council Study findings, True Cost of Mekong dams infographic, report on the Xe-Pian Xe-Namnoy dam collapse and regional and national energy planning for intended publication during 2019.

A critical methodology is our support to community and civil society networks. We equip active and engaged networks with analysis, tools and financial resources needed to hold meetings and events, consult with constituents, undertake legal and complaint actions, and participate in dialogues and local and regional forums. The success of this strategy can be seen, eg., in the increasingly vocal and visible Thai community network activities to organize and campaign on the rapid blasting project and Mekong mainstream dams, employing a wide range of strategies, which has resulted in delays to proposed projects and outreach and invitations to dialogue with Chinese developers.



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:

- Project Design Process (*aspects of the project design that contributed to its success/shortcomings*)
- Project Implementation (*aspects of the project execution that contributed to its success/shortcomings*)
- Describe any other lessons learned relevant to the conservation community

Over the grant period, we have been working on ways to shift regional campaigning on Mekong dams away from a dam by dam approach and a focus around the Mekong River Commission, to a more basin-wide campaign focused on alternative energy, investment and development pathways for the region and addressing the increasingly important role of emerging institutions and frameworks, in particular the Lancang-Mekong Cooperation (LMC) framework, China's Belt and Road Initiative and new financiers such as the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. Alongside China-led actors and institutions, there are new regional institutions established in part to counter or balance China's influence, such as the Ayeyarwady, Chaophraya Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy (ACMECS). With these shifting regional dynamics and emerging opportunities, we recognize the need for better analysis of emerging trends and capacity-building for our partners to develop campaigns strategies that respond to and address emerging dynamics. We are already building region-wide messaging into campaigns, through analysis of the MRC Council Study, and trainings and exchanges on energy policy for anti-coal and hydropower advocates in the lower Mekong and Myanmar. We organized a session at the 2018 WLE Greater Mekong Forum targeting the LMC on lessons learned from civil society engagement with regional water governance institutions. At the same time, we are currently commissioning research and analysis on energy trends and opportunities and Chinese investment to inform capacity and advocacy of local partners. We plan to publish briefs and analysis on these topics during the coming year.

Sustainability / Replication

Summarize the success or challenges in ensuring the project will be sustained or replicated, including any unplanned activities that are likely to result in increased sustainability or replicability.

While building out a unified movement of local, national, and regional actors committed to the ecological health of the Mekong River Basin, IR gradually began to witness many of its partners become increasingly independent and perform advocacy actions, such as engaging with local and national media, with greater confidence. As capacity grew, local and national-level partners have taken more active leadership role in the STM coalition - shaping the coalition's strategy, organizing



meetings, and facilitating information-sharing through the network. In light of these changes, IR has gradually stepped back and devolved a degree of coordinating power to local and national CSOs. At the annual STM meeting in March 2016, the coalition established a Coordination Committee (CC), encompassing representatives from local and national CSOs in each of the Mekong countries. The CC, whose members are nominated to the committee by country-level working groups, has played an important role in organizing both annual meetings as well as key strategy meetings. Additionally, our partners have gradually assumed a greater responsibility for the sharing of information and resources to support the development and implementation of effective campaigning. To further boost participation in the coalition's various social media pages, in the latter half of 2017, we supported the formation of an STM communications working group. Going forward, we anticipate that our STM partners will continue to assume growing roles in the dissemination of information and resources to both STM and non-STM civil-society groups. As our partners take the lead on information sharing as well as developing and implementing campaign plans, we are exploring ways in which we can bridge local, national, and regional campaigning with international advocacy sharing knowledge, approaches and strategies across regions, especially in key areas such as Chinese investment and energy alternatives. At our annual organization wide planning meetings, for example, in 2017 and 2018, we have increasingly planned opportunities and strategies for synergy between activities and strategies of our regional programs, partners and networks. Going forward, IR will likely have more capacity to pursue collaboration between its various regional campaigns and connect movements for rivers across regions.

Safeguards

If not listed as a separate Project Component and described above, summarize the implementation of any required action related to social, environmental, or pest management safeguards

Not applicable.

Additional Comments/Recommendations

Use this space to provide any further comments or recommendations in relation to your project or CEPF

We are extremely grateful for the support from CEPF over the grant period. We appreciate the understanding and flexibility in allowing us to extend the grant period and to make some adjustments to planned activities and budget allocations in accordance with our needs and those of our partners. Effective advocacy and campaigning requires the flexibility to respond and adjust to changing conditions and the invaluable support provided by donors such as CEPF enables us to move nimbly and support our partners as they need it. While the Mekong continues to face immense challenges, it is a critical time to continue to leverage successes to date and push for a shift to the current plans and trajectory for the Mekong basin. New opportunities have opened up over the grant period, and we

are committed to taking these forward together with affected communities and civil society networks across the region during the coming period.

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 CEPF investment

Total additional funding (US\$)

\$755,000.00

Type of funding

Please provide a breakdown of additional funding (counterpart funding and in-kind) by source, categorizing each contribution into one of 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)*

The above amount approximates the additional funds supporting the program during the grant period (including the no-cost extension period).

These funds were available from project co-financing through the following grants:

- **MacArthur Foundation 500,000 (Dec 2014-Nov 2018)**
- **Oxfam Australia 140,000 (April 2016-Mar 2019)**
- **McKnight Foundation 350,000 (Dec 2015-Dec 2019)**
- **Open Society Foundation 200,000 (Oct 2018-Sept 2020)**
- **Arcadia Foundation (Organization-wide) 1,500,000 (June 2018-May 2020)**

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.

1. Please include your full contact details (Name, Organization, Mailing address, Telephone number, E-mail address) below

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