

Title: **Valuation of the Mekong River fisheries.**

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Abstract: The Lower Mekong Basin (LMB) is shared by Thailand, Lao PDR, Cambodia and Vietnam and provides a range of natural resources and services which are important to the national economies (e.g. water for hydro-electric power) and also to the livelihoods of the people (e.g. fishing and farming opportunities) in the basin. The fisheries resources of the LMB are significant. Recent estimates indicate annual catches above 2 million tons, however, the surveys on which the yield estimates are based differ between the countries in terms of methods, coverage and quality, making it difficult to compare and integrate the results to produce a set of global catch figures for the LMB. As there is only limited information available on the economic value of the fisheries in the Mekong River, they are potentially undervalued in planning scenarios in particular in comparison to the more formal economic sectors for which economic values can be more easily determined (e.g., hydropower and irrigation). The Fisheries Valuation programme was established by the Mekong River Commission in 2007 with the objective to provide politicians, natural resource planners and other stakeholders with accurate estimates of the total economic worth of fisheries, so that the fish resources of the Mekong can be compared with other river related assets/sectors during decision making processes. The presentation will focus on the political background for the Fisheries Valuation programme and give details about the programme structure and expected outputs.