



**STUDY ON LANCANG-MEKONG COOPERATION MECHANISM BASED ON A  
COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE**

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**AN INDEPENDENT STUDY SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT  
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**STUDY ON LANCANG-MEKONG COOPERATION MECHANISM BASED ON A  
COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE**

**Thematic Certificate**


**To  
LU ZHIQIAN**

This Independent Study has been approved as a Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement of  
International Master of Business Administration in International Business Management

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## Declaration

*I, LU ZHIQIAN, hereby certify that the work embodied in this independent study entitled "STUDY ON LANCANG-MEKONG COOPERATION MECHANISM BASED ON A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE" is result of original research and has not been submitted for a higher degree to any other university or institution.*

*Lu Zhiqian*

(Lu Zhiqian)

Mar 15, 2023



## ABSTRACT

**Title:** A Study on Lancang-Mekong Cooperation Mechanism Based on a Comparative Perspective

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**Degree:** Master of Business Administration

**Major:** International Business Administration

**Advisor:**

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The Lancang-Mekong Cooperation (LMC) mechanism is a cooperation joint mechanism between countries in the Lancang-Mekong River region. The cooperation among countries in the Lancang-Mekong river region covers a wide range of area, participation has increased, and is progressing smoothly. Local governments that act as sub-governmental actors in the international community play an important role in the international cooperation. However, through literature studies, it was found that there was a serious mechanism overlap in the Lancang-Mekong Region. Most studies on the Lancang-Mekong mechanism put forward countermeasures for internal and external relations between countries, and show specific projects of the mechanism from a macro perspective without a systematic and complete investigation and understanding of the behavior of local governments. Therefore, this paper analyzed the LMC, US-Mekong, Japan-Mekong and other cooperation mechanisms along with the international behaviors of Jiangsu province regarding participation in ASEAN from a comparative perspective, compares the participants and the differences in empowerment and influence from outside the region. It found that the development of the LMC mechanism was restricted by historical and practical factors. Finally, it proposed to weaken the influence of other mechanisms on personnel training, cultural and people-to-people exchanges, and cooperation between social organizations and local governments, in order to improve the LMC mechanism, promote common development of LMC countries, and further benefit the people in the region.

**Keywords:** Lancang-Mekong, cooperation mechanism, social organization, Local government

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## 摘要

题目： 基于比较视野的澜湄合作机制研究

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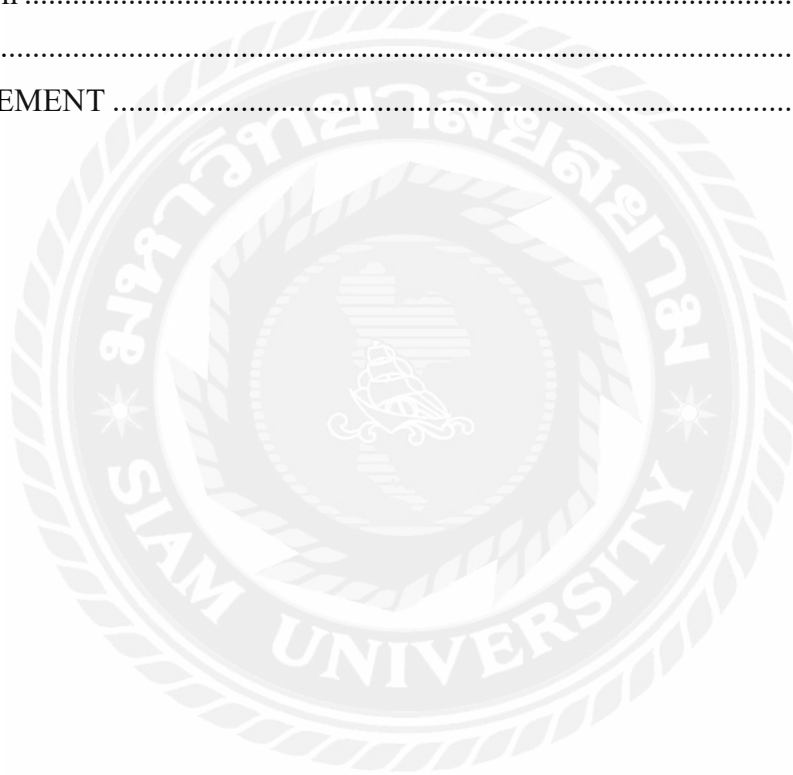
澜沧江-湄公河合作机制是澜沧江-湄公河地区国家共同参与的合作机制。当前，澜沧江-湄公河地区国家间合作涉及广泛领域，各方的参与有所增加，进展顺利。地方政府作为国际社会中的次政府行为者，在国际合作中发挥着重要作用。但是，通过文献研究发现，澜沧江-湄公河地区存在严重的机制重叠，对澜沧江-湄公河机制的研究大多针对国家之间的内外关系和机制的具体方案提出了对策。宏观角度，没有对地方政府的行进行为进行系统、完整的调查研究。因此，本文主要从比较的角度分析了LMC，美湄公河，日本湄公河等合作机制以及江苏省参加东盟的国际行为，并比较了参与者，赋权差异和外部影响该区域。研究发现，LMC机制的发展受到历史和现实因素的制约。最后，建议削弱其他机制对人员培训，文化和人文交流以及社会组织与地方政府之间合作的影响，以改善LMC机制，促进LMC国家的共同发展，并进一步使该地区的人民受益。

**关键词：**澜湄合作机制 社会组织 地方政府；

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Research Background

The Lancang-Mekong cooperation mechanism is a cooperation mechanism jointly participated by the neighboring countries of the Lancang-Mekong River Basin. It is a unique cross-border sub-regional cooperation mechanism. It is a mechanism built by countries in this region relying on rivers. The incomparable advantages also have good reasons for cultural exchanges in education, culture, youth, and women.

As early as 2012, Thailand proposed the Lancang-Mekong Sustainable Development Initiative. China did not officially respond to this mechanism until the 17th China-ASEAN Leaders' Meeting. Until the official establishment of the Lancang-Mekong Cooperation in Sanya in 2016, the main goal of mechanism construction under this cooperation mechanism was to build a 3+5 cooperation framework, high-level meetings and a joint working group on priority areas to integrate political security, economics, and sustainable development. As the three pillars of society and humanities, the five areas of interconnection, agriculture and poverty reduction, production capacity, cross-border economy and water resources are the priority cooperation directions.

In 2018, the Lancang-Mekong River Basin countries formulated the "Lanmei Cooperation Five-Year Action Plan" (2018-2022), which has now reached the middle of the project, and the application and approval of special fund projects can be seen in the annual progress report. As a result, we can also see that the special fund projects and the Lancang-Mekong Week activities have achieved concrete results. The six Lancang-Mekong countries have maintained a momentum of rapid development and have continued to advance in various fields. The political mutual trust of the six countries has continued to increase, and the common interests have continued to expand. The goal of diplomatic acquaintance is further deepened.

The Lancang-Mekong cooperation plays an important role in deepening the good-neighborly and friendly cooperation between the six countries and promoting cross-border economic and social development. It is conducive to assisting the integration of ASEAN and the process of regional integration, and contributes to promoting South-South cooperation and implementing the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Well laid out. The sustainable project cooperation of the six Lancang-Mekong countries is also conducive to

the establishment of a community of shared future for the Lancang-Mekong countries, making Lancang-Mekong cooperation a well-known brand of the Asian community of shared future for mankind and an important platform for promoting the “Belt and Road” initiative.

## **1.2 Research significance**

Actively researching local government behavior improvement measures under the Lancang-Mekong cooperation mechanism has the following significance.

In theory, this research can arouse everyone's attention to the Lancang-Mekong cooperation mechanism, and through the comparison of mechanisms in the same region, think about and put forward countermeasures on the ways in which governments under the Lancang-Mekong mechanism overlap in the regional mechanism to participate in international behavior; At the same time, drawing on the advantages of other mechanisms is conducive to mobilizing social organizations to actively participate in the community, providing more complete public products for the region, allowing multiple forces to participate together, and providing local governments with a better mode of international participation.

In reality, compared with Japan-Mekong and U.S.-Mekong cooperation mechanisms, there are some historical problems and practical obstacles in the Lancang-Mekong cooperation mechanism. We can improve the Lan-Mekong cooperation mechanism and promote the Lan-Mekong cooperation mechanism by learning from the new behavior concepts of other mechanisms. The common development of the country will further promote the construction of the "Belt and Road". Since the establishment of the Lancang-Mekong cooperation mechanism in 2016, thanks to the joint efforts of the six member states, it has become one of the most dynamic and potential development mechanisms in the subregion. It aims to promote good-neighborly and friendly cooperation among the six countries, sustainable development of the regional economy, and reduce the size of the region.

The development gap has played an important role. In the past three years, China-Myanmar Lancang-Mekong cooperation has achieved remarkable results, which has effectively promoted local people's livelihood and social and economic development. It is

believed that the Lancang-Mekong cooperation will also make due contributions to the building of a China-Myanmar community with a shared future. The third Lancang-Mekong cooperation leaders' meeting will be held soon, and Myanmar will play a more important role in the Lancang-Mekong mechanism. China will continue to uphold the concept of win-win cooperation, connect with the development strategies of all countries, and promote the common development of all countries.

### **1.3 Research questions**

1. What is the development of Lancang-Mekong cooperation?
2. Compared with the US-Mekong mechanism, the Japan-Mekong mechanism, and the international actions of Jiangsu Province, can the Lancang-Mekong mechanism learn from the advantages of other mechanisms?
3. How to improve government participation in the Lancang-Mekong cooperation mechanism?

### **1.4 Research objective**

The Greater Mekong Regional Economic Cooperation Program (GMS Program) established in 1992 and the Lancang-Mekong cooperation framework established at the 17th ASEAN-China Summit. The Lancang-Mekong cooperation follows the spirit of openness and tolerance, conforms to the ASEAN community building and the priority areas of ASEAN-China cooperation, and complements and promotes the existing sub-regional cooperation mechanisms. Lancang-Mekong cooperation has always been committed to promoting the development of the region, and holding Lancang-Mekong Week activities can help raise the awareness of Lancang-Mekong countries to strengthen mutual cooperation.

Since the launch of the Lancang-Mekong Cooperation Mechanism (hereinafter referred to as the “Lancang-Mekong Cooperation Mechanism”) in 2016, it has entered the “growth phase” from the “cultivation period” and is moving rapidly towards a community of shared future for the Lancang-Mekong countries. The special nature of the Lancang-Mekong River connecting the six countries makes the Lancang-Mekong cooperation unique among many regional cooperations around the world. From the 1980s to 2018, the water resources cooperation between China and the Mekong countries (Myanmar, Laos,

Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam) has gone from "limited contact" to "active cooperation", and from "active cooperation" to "active cooperation". The three stages of comprehensive advancement have been realized from the "pre-Lancang-Mekong community of shared future era" (1980s-2015) water resources cooperation at the "periphery" to "the era of building a community of shared future for Lancang-Mekong countries" (2016 to present) Water resources cooperation is at the "center" of the transformation.

## **1.5 Research content**

The technical route of this article is as follows:

The first step is to put forward the research questions, research goals and research significance of this article through the analysis of the realistic and theoretical backgrounds. Through a necessary understanding of the Lancang-Mekong cooperation mechanism and a brief introduction to the significance of the promotion of the Lancang-Mekong cooperation, through the discovery of research entry points in domestic and foreign documents, and theoretical combing, a review of the current situation of the Lancang-Mekong cooperation document research.

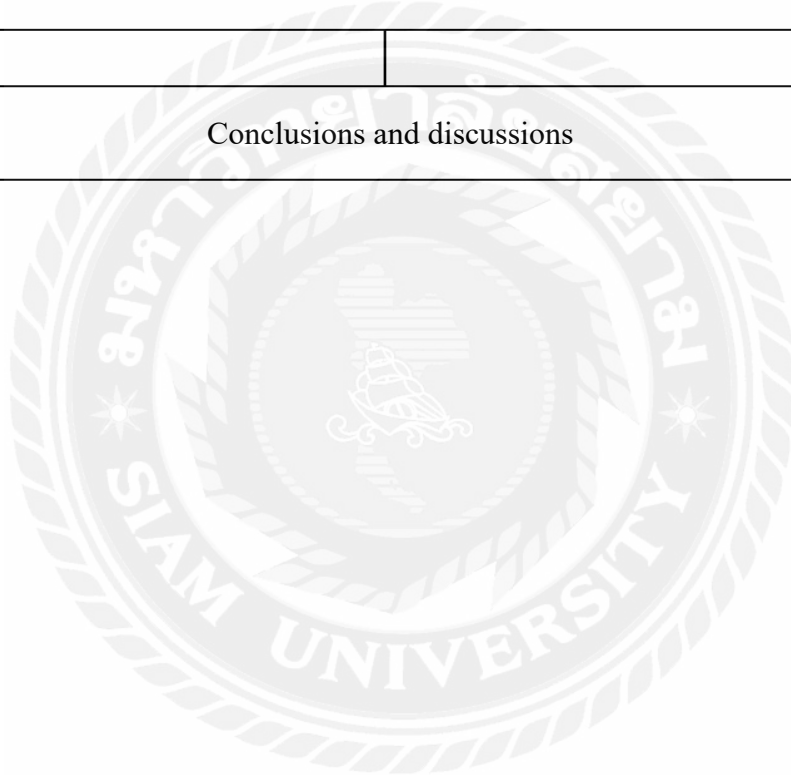
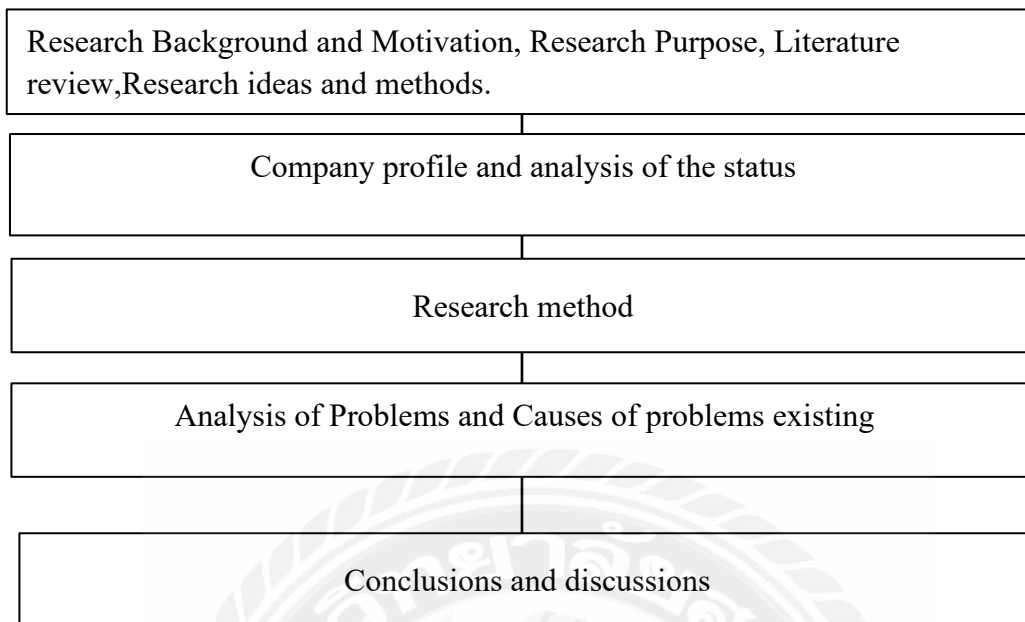
Chapter 2 will involve this article based on government failure, intergovernmental relations, cross-border sub-regional cooperation theories, and the definition of the United States-Mekong, Japan-Mekong, Lancang-Mekong concepts.

Chapter 3 will organize and analyze the participating behaviors of the three major mechanisms and the international behavior of Jiangsu Province, and find out their different advantages and positioning.

Chapter 4 compares the three aspects of participants, system advantages, and extraterritorial influence based on the characteristics of the previous article, and analyzes that under similar mechanisms, the Lancang-Mekong cooperation mechanism is affected by differences in nationalist perceptions, influences from extraterritorial interventions, and local government power distribution. The constraints of sustainable development.

Chapter 5 puts forward suggestions on historical and practical factors. Then combine the analysis results to draw conclusions and fully verify the research model. Finally, combine the analysis results to draw research conclusions, summarize the enlightenment of this research,

the existing research deficiencies and future research directions.



## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Research literature review

Chayodom, Sabhasri, Piti, etc. (2014) analyzed the transition from a "trust crisis" to a "sustainable trust construction" in the Lancang-Mekong cooperation, starting from the construction of political trust between China and Thailand, and emphasizing the completeness of natural resource development and economic cooperation. The process requires a certain degree of national trust to maintain the stable progress of the project. However, the participation of countries outside the region and the differences in cognition of immigrants have caused a trust crisis in this region. It is advocated to build trust in terms of deepening trade and eliminating differences in identity recognition. It also requires long-term consideration by both parties.

Pichamon Yeophantong (2014) in "China's Cascade Dam Construction and Transnational Action in the Lancang-Mekong Region: Who Has Gained Power? The article briefly introduced China's construction of water conservancy dams and water resources development projects on the Lancang River, and successively pointed out that the countries of the lower Mekong River do have errors in understanding China's water resources development on the Lancang River.

FengY, WangW, SumanD, YuS, HeD. (2019) counted 87 water cooperation projects from 1995 to 2015, and comprehensively sorted out the formation, objectives, scale and methods of cooperation projects, indicating that under the influence of economic conditions, the Bilateral or multilateral cooperation makes comprehensive cooperation more difficult, and hydropower development is also the most controversial project in this region, and the goal can only be achieved through bilateral cooperation.

Wei Lihua and Yu Zhen (2017) conducted a new study on Vietnam's new diplomacy, showing that the entry of India and South Korea will make the situation in the Lancang-Mekong region more severe and the continued advancement of the Lancang-Mekong cooperation mechanism will also be more affected. Luo Yifu (2018) mentioned in the literature the similarities and differences between the Indochina Peninsula system under the Greater Mekong Mechanism and the Lancang-Mekong Cooperation Mechanism, and analyzed the effects of the two major mechanisms on the five countries, thereby analyzing the two major mechanisms. The potential interests of China and Japan play a role in suggesting China's diplomacy.

Luo Shengrong and Yang Fei (2018) took the phenomenon of mechanism overlap in the Lancang-Mekong region as an example to analyze the impact and enlightenment of this phenomenon on the world. The full text analyzes the advantages and obstacles of the mechanism overlap in the Lancang-Mekong region from the overlapping of subjects, functions and problems.

Li Wei and Zhang Yuhuan (2019) elaborated and analyzed the economic and trade, investment,

infrastructure construction and other cooperation processes between China in the Lancang-Mekong region and some ASEAN countries in Southeast Asia, and discussed the South China Sea issues in this region, the Sino-US game, and India's intervention. Made new research.

Guan Zhaoyu and Zhang Tingting (2019) focused on analyzing the situation of China-Myanmar cooperation, exploring the possibility of linkage between the "Belt and Road" initiative and the "Lanmei cooperation", and proposed that China and Myanmar should handle the "whole and individual" "new and old" The mechanism relationship.

Lu Guangsheng (2019) regarded the Lancang-Mekong cooperation mechanism as a new example of China's neighboring diplomacy, and analyzed the impact of new changes in diplomatic thinking in the Lancang-Mekong region on the Lancang-Mekong cooperation mechanism.

Chang Liu (2018) analyzed the status quo of social and cultural cooperation in Lancang-Mekong society and put forward the problems of good communication between the two countries, but the underlying infrastructure is not sound, and social organizations and government organizations have not played the greatest role, and proposed to bridge these problems. Differences, perfect top-level design, highlight key areas and other ways to improve.

Weiss (2019) focused on the pillar of capacity cooperation and analyzed the effectiveness of capacity cooperation projects through the scale and quality of capacity cooperation and the establishment of international relations mechanisms. At the same time, he pointed out that the current difficulties and challenges are the poor foundation of capacity cooperation, insufficient planning and coordination, and political mutual trust. However, there are also opportunities. China-Cambodia has great potential in infrastructure facilities, in-depth cooperation in infrastructure construction between China and Laos, and the construction of the China-Myanmar Economic Corridor. China should seize the opportunities and face the challenges.

Zhang Changzheng and Zhan Pingting (2020) believe that in the process of taking water resources in the Lancang-Mekong basin, which has the attributes of transboundary rivers, the Lancang-Mekong cooperation mechanism is based on the height of the government of international cooperation and plays an important role in the balance of interests of the main bodies of the basin. In view of the unreasonable problems of the countries in the river basin that there may be excessive use of water resources in cross-border rivers without a unified supervision mechanism, based on the perspective of the Lancang-Mekong cooperation mechanism, the game behavior of the two main bodies of "Laos Shawan-Thailand Modahan" is taken as an example. From the theoretical level, analyze the factors that affect the selection and use of strategies by each game player, establish an evolutionary game model between local governments, analyze the strategic choices and evolutionary stability strategies of local governments, use Matlab software to conduct simulation research, and analyze the changes of various parameters to local governments. The influence of the government's



strategic choice and its effect. The results of the study found that: the Lancang-Mekong cooperation mechanism increases the supervision and penalty limits, and improves the feedback efficiency of spot check results, which can prompt local governments to choose reasonable use, and the differential penalty coefficient that can be set by it has a "catalytic effect" on the game convergence cycle. For local governments, reducing development costs, enhancing effects, attaching great importance to the losses caused by unreasonable selection, and being weakened by external spillover effects from the other side of the game, all make them more inclined to use water resources in the Lancang-Mekong River Basin. Choose a reasonable acquisition strategy in international regional cooperation.

Bao Ligang (2020) believes that the operation of human capital can bring about the multiplier effect of real economy growth, and the deepening of regional real economy cooperation will produce "spillover" effects. The institutional framework of multi-topic cooperation under the "Lanmei Cooperation Mechanism of the Real Economy and Human Resources Coordination Development" can not only satisfy the urgent desire of the Lancang-Mekong countries to develop their economies, but also dilute their conflicts of interest and provide more options for conflict mediation. Human resources, the bond of deep-rooted exchanges of people's hearts and deep-rooted Lancang-Mekong culture as the second guarantee. Through the practice of the "three pairs" collaborative approach, the goal of "three links" can be achieved for the interconnection of human resources, people-to-people bonds in Lancang-Mekong countries, and harmonious communication among employees.

Wang Rui (2020) wrote about the link between the Lancang-Mekong cooperation and the "New International Land-Sea Trade Corridor: Basics, Challenges and Paths". He believes that the "New International Land-Sea Trade Corridor" will be effective in the Lancang-Mekong region as the realization of the "Belt and Road". The strategic channel of convergence has a broad space and foundation for docking with the Lancang-Mekong cooperation, but it also faces many challenges such as differences in strategic demands, interference from major countries outside the region, insufficient customs clearance facilitation, restrictions on infrastructure interconnection levels, and industrial coordination issues. To this end, it is necessary to increase the effectiveness and accuracy of docking in terms of building consensus on cooperation among countries, promoting cross-border facility connectivity, improving customs clearance facilitation, and improving institutional international mechanisms to promote high-quality and sustainable development in the Lancang-Mekong region. Create a community of shared future for Lancang-Mekong countries.

Jiang Shui (2020) believes that the Lancang-Mekong Comprehensive Law Enforcement and Security Cooperation Center is the first inter-governmental law enforcement and security cooperation international organization co-founded by the Lancang-Mekong River Basin countries under the Lancang-Mekong cooperation framework, effectively filling the relatively lagging gap in law enforcement and security cooperation in the region. It is an effective platform for the cooperative

management of the "depression effect" of crime in the Lancang-Mekong River Basin. Since its official operation, the center has achieved tangible results in establishing a long-term mechanism for law enforcement and security cooperation between Lancang-Mekong countries, sharing criminal intelligence information, coordinating transnational criminal cases, and improving the capacity of law enforcement personnel. It has played a unique role and has broad development prospects.

## **2.2 Research concept**

The research concepts involved in this article mainly include the US-Mekong mechanism, the Lancang-Mekong mechanism and the Japan-Mekong mechanism, which are explained separately below.

### **2.2.1 Concept of Lanmei Mechanism**

The "Lan-Mekong Mechanism" is a new content proposed based on the Greater Mekong Subregional Economic Cooperation (GMS). However, unlike the GMS mechanism, this Lan-Mekong mechanism includes more areas, involving politics, economy, society, Multiple levels of cooperation such as culture. In the 2018 Asian Basic Investment Bank's board meeting minutes, the following three levels are defined; at the level of political security, the "Lanmei Mechanism" cooperation is mainly through mutual multi-level and multi-angle exchanges to continuously deepen mutual trust, including strengthening the system High-level leadership exchanges on governance and administration, and opposes external forces interfering in the internal affairs of countries in the region; at the socio-cultural level, the "Lanmei Mechanism" mainly strengthens people-to-people exchanges and cooperation, and the main form of cooperation is to carry out a variety of cultural activities, including education policies, vocational training, etc Financial support will promote cultural exchanges between the two parties in media, art, customs, women and youth, and jointly promote the development of the sub-regional tourism industry. At the cross-border economic level, it is mainly "upgraded cooperation" and "green sustainable development". The cooperation content involves strengthening the communication between software and hardware technologies, actively implementing economic and trade investment, rationally and effectively using existing water resources and energy production, and promoting cross-border Economic and trade cooperation between borders and the "Belt and Road" initiative develop in coordination.

### **2.2.2 The concept of Japan-Mekong mechanism**

The "Japan-Mekong Mechanism" is a Japan-led cooperation mechanism with high-level officials meetings and trade and investment as the main forms of exchanges. It is the key to cooperation between Japan and the Mekong River basin after the end of the Cold War. In 1993, Japan

hosted the "Forum for Comprehensive Development of Indochina", emphasizing economic assistance and regional development in the Mekong region. In 2015, Japan adopted government development assistance projects such as infrastructure, technology, and environmental protection in the Mekong area to help build railway systems, hydropower stations and other infrastructure for this region. In October 2018, Japan and the Mekong River Basin countries held a summit in Tokyo. Japan proposed to strengthen the ties between Japan and the Mekong River countries through infrastructure construction, realize a "people-oriented society" that has reduced poverty, and build a "green Mekong River Basin". It is proposed to work together in infrastructure construction, youth training, and global countermeasures.

### **2.2.3 The concept of the US-Mekong mechanism**

The US-Mekong cooperation is a mechanism similar to the Japan-Mekong cooperation mechanism. After the United States issued the "return to the Asia-Pacific" and "Asia-Pacific rebalancing" strategies, in order to once again expand its international influence and counterbalance China's international power, it proposed the US-Mekong cooperation. The main content of its cooperation is concentrated in the fields of environmental protection, medical care, personnel training and infrastructure construction. In 2009, after the "U.S.-Mekong Ministerial Meeting" was held with five countries in the Mekong River Basin, the United States launched the "Mekong River Downstream Action Plan". On August 3, 2018, according to the "Eleventh Lower Mekong Ministerial Meeting" of the US State Department, the United States and Mekong countries held the 11th Lower Mekong Initiative (LMI) Ministerial Meeting in Singapore, emphasizing the Lower Mekong Initiative. The importance of the driving force for information interconnection, economic integration, ecological sustainable development and good environmental governance in the basin of the Mekong River.

## **2.3 Basic theory**

This section summarizes the intergovernmental relations, cross-border sub-regional cooperation and government failure theories involved in this article, and elaborates their applications in this article one by one.

### **2.3.1 Theory of intergovernmental relations**

It was originally proposed and defined by American scholar Anderson as a series of activities and interactions between various government agencies at all levels. Intergovernmental relations are composed of three aspects: power distribution, fiscal control, and public administration relations (Zhu

Guilong et al. 2019). The current inter-government relationship is generally considered to refer to the relationship between different levels of government. The relationship can be divided into the relationship between the central and local governments, the horizontal and vertical relationship between local governments, and the division of labor between different departments within the government. .

This article puts more emphasis on vertical intergovernmental relations. The dominant country in the Lancang-Mekong cooperation mechanism is China, and the relationship between the central and local governments is unique. The game between the interests of the central and local governments and the interpretation of policies will become the Lanmei The limiting factors of cooperation advancement, the following article will combine this theory to analyze the problem and propose countermeasures.

### **2.3.2 Cross-border sub-regional cooperation theory**

The theory of cross-border sub regional cooperation was invented in the 1990s. It is a new theory based on Krugman's new economic geography, and there is no accurate and unified international definition. The reason for the formation of cross-border sub-regional cooperation is that countries or regions have a certain basis for exchanges and cooperation due to their geographical proximity. As the cooperation deepens to a certain extent, a cross-border sub-regional scale has been formed, and the support of the central government has been obtained. With the promotion of local governments, cooperation in cross-border sub-regions has been formed (Qu Wang, 2019). Domestic scholar Hu Zhiding et al. (2010) put forward in the article "The Causes of Sub-regional Cooperation and Its Development-An Interdisciplinary Perspective Analysis": Cross-border sub-regional cooperation refers to border provinces or border cities between neighboring countries and regions. The cooperation in economic and non-economic fields is carried out in areas that are carefully defined and cross-border in a small area to achieve economic development and maintain social stability in border areas. This article will use this theory to study the local governments under the Lancang-Mekong cooperation. The Lancang-Mekong region itself is a cross-border cooperation area. This article will involve many local governments and cooperation projects. Through the study of local government cooperation in sub-regional cooperation Questions to propose sustainable development strategies.

### **2.3.3 Government failure theory**

The theory of government failure was first produced in 1974. The American economist Burton A. Webisode pioneered the use of residual analysis strategies. He used the methods used in economics

to explain the existence of non-profit organizations. Reason. Government departments are obliged to provide public goods to the public, but in the reminding process, the existence of "market failure" and "free-riding" cannot be avoided, which makes it difficult for the public to meet public goods needs in democratic politics. It is extremely easy to waste and abuse public resources, leading to excessive public expenditure or low efficiency, resulting in poor policy measures in the provision of public goods by the public sector. This article deals with the problems that may exist in the interpretation and implementation of policies by local governments under the Lancang-Mekong cooperation mechanism. It will analyze from the theory of government failure whether social organizations, enterprises, and governments can be integrated to promote the development of the Lancang-Mekong cooperation mechanism.



### **3. RESEARCH METHOD**

The research uses a qualitative analysis method, using Literature research method, Comparative analysis method and Case analysis method, and strives for deeper analysis and easier understanding of the transformation.

#### **3.1 Research design**

Water diplomacy belongs to a subsection of diplomacy which fosters good benefits from the use of water, fulfills citizens' right to water, and enables multi-level stakeholders to solve various international disputes over shared waters (e.g., Pangare, 2014, Marshall – Salamé – Wolf, 2017). Water diplomacy may also be perceived as a political tool for realizing objectives beyond water, such as stability, security, peace, and cooperation (Schmeier, 2013). In other words, water diplomacy represents all kinds of measures that state and non-state actors undertake to set up more equitable, sustainable, and peaceful TWM (Hutjens et al., 2016: 3). Stakeholders can be found both in the public and the state sector and include various media, NGOs, governmental departments, state institutions, donors, and international communities. While supreme state authorities and other state-driven institutions are generally the key players in water diplomacy, non-state actors are also significant for TWM. For example, they may assist during various negotiation processes, provide additional technical reports, offer legislative assistance for local communities, train local water managers and farmers, ease the communication between a state's institutions, spread information enlightenment in public, organize informal meetings or otherwise mitigate political tension over the water (Yasuda, 2018).

In this article, I applied the multi-track water diplomacy developed by Patrick Hutjens, Yumiko Yasuda, Ashok Swain, Rens de Man, Bjørn-Oliver Magsig, and Shafiqul Islam (2016) which examines stakeholder interaction within the international river basins in a three-level track continuum. The continuum varies in formality, type of actors, and purpose, showing how particular stakeholders are involved in the TWM. Track I represent the bilateral level of communication between governments and other state institutions. Track I consists of the highest and most visible actors in TWG, which delegate other sub-state and non-state actors to ensure the national water security<sup>3</sup>. Track II can be characterized as an unofficial dialogue between privileged individuals (such as academics, religious, NGO, and other civil society leaders) who provide guidelines, feedback, and other recommendations on fostering water cooperation in certain areas.

In some cases, the high-ranking officials may also work together with particular non-state actors to resolve various conflicts in TWM<sup>4</sup>. Track III combines both Track I and Track II and opens up the cooperation dialogue to multi-level stakeholders and a wider audience, including municipal and

provincial agencies, think tanks, universities, NGOs, and civil society organizations. The data for analyzing multi-track water diplomacy is usually collected from interviews with stakeholders and a content analysis of official documents, policy papers, and other speech acts. This method is precious because it provides another cross-check for field-based research and desktop-based research. However, the downside of this method lies in immense time consumption and a higher possibility for information deviations during interviews.

### **3.2 Literature research method**

The data and literature in this paper are mainly derived from the research data of CNKI, Weipu, and related scholars. The research uses Chinese databases such as HowNet, Wanfang, Weipu, Web of Science foreign language database, Baidu search engine, etc., to collect the theoretical basis used in the research and other materials. “The Five-Year Action Plan for Mekong Cooperation and the grand launch of several new Lancang-Mekong cooperation projects” to bring Lancang-Mekong cooperation into a rapid growth period, the Lancang-Mekong cooperation model characterized by “efficient and pragmatic, project-oriented, and people’s livelihood priority” has gradually been launched. This is a shift in regional cooperation from focusing on trade to concentrating on investment.

To illustrate the stakeholder interaction, I decided to test multi-track water diplomacy in terms of RBOs, which traditionally serve as umbrella organizations for water cooperation (GWP, 2009). Since the 19th Century, the role of RBOs has slowly expanded into solid basin-wide platforms which can “standardize water policies across states, provide a discussion arena for diverse stakeholders and ensure viable water cooperation even during regional transformations, political fragmentation or armed conflicts” (Gerlak, 2010: 6 cit. in Schmeier, 2013: 23). Therefore, following the international agreements, the RBO representative shall restrict the geographical proximity of international rivers and lakes and realize the form of cooperation based on principles and governance mechanisms. (Schmeier - Gerlak - Schultze, 2013: 8). Additionally, according to Susanne Schmeier, Andrea K. Gerlak, and Sabina Schultze (2013: 9-12), there are three levels of indicators to identify RBOs.

The current cooperation mechanism in the Mekong region mainly invests in energy, environment, and transportation and vigorously promotes the development and utilization of local water resources (Roughneen, 2010; Urban, 2013). However, due to the system's limitations, most cooperation mechanisms are different from the expected goals and actual needs generated. Especially the cross-border development of water resources has not been effectively realized. Therefore, the first cooperation in this area is required. The mechanism is analyzed (Haefner, 2013). First of all, the existing cooperation mechanisms. Except for GMS and AMBDC, most of these mechanisms are led by coastal countries, but there are conflicts of interest between countries, and they will first ensure

their interests in energy and transportation. As a result, there is a lack of competition and trust in the cooperation mechanism, and the actual cooperation is not as effective as expected.

First, except for GMS and AMBDC, most of these mechanisms are dominated by countries outside the area. On the one hand, there are conflicts of interest between significant countries or organizations. They have different interests in the region, and they often use competition to ensure their interests (Hirsch et al., 2006). These stakeholders' various interests and concerns have led to a match and a lack of trust within the cooperation mechanism. Then weakens the effectiveness of actual cooperation in the region. On the other hand, although developed countries and environmental protection organizations advocate environmental protection, there are contradictions with the current economic development and social needs of the Mekong region. In particular, Western developed countries place too much emphasis on environmental protection while ignoring the countries' real needs along the Mekong River. Because of the idealization, the cooperation mechanism between the two parties has been negatively affected (Ha, 2011).

Secondly, the current cooperation mechanism lacks the participation of upstream countries, which makes the entire cooperation imperfect its authority. It cannot provide necessary guarantees for the whole of the water resources cooperation. After all, this cooperation is for the water resources of the entire Mekong River basin. Carry out comprehensive utilization and protection (Li & Guangsheng, 2016). GMS and MRC are the mechanisms with the most significant number of participants and the highest level of cooperation among all existing cooperation mechanisms. However, GMS is mainly concentrated in the economic and interconnection fields. It is precisely because of this background that for the development, utilization, and protection of cross-border water resources, strengthening cooperation between countries and attaching importance to water resources cooperation can improve effectiveness. But this time, China and Myanmar act as observers. Participation in a way that leads to a lack of regional recognition for full cooperation (Mehtonen et al., 2008).

Third, cooperative development requires all countries along the Mekong River to participate in cooperation. However, establishing a water resources cooperation mechanism without the participation of upstream countries prevents the cooperation platform from forming a community of shared futures with water as a unifying element, resulting in a certain degree of cooperation. However, the stakeholders involved in this cooperation have also provided investment and assistance due to the lack of comprehensive and systematic watershed management and governance framework. There is a lack of cross-border water resources. Practical cooperation makes this cooperation unequal. In addition, this cooperation is mainly concentrated in the economy, trade, and transportation, and the protection of water resources is lacking. The water quality and rareness of the Mekong River Basin in the Lancang-Mekong River Basin The fish protection policy measures focus on the aquatic environment and safety. However, they are sporadic and expedient policies.



### 3.3 Exploratory research method

Initially applicable to economic management, comparing various indicators such as financial statements to find hidden problems, mainly based on data comparison, and later extended into direct comparison analysis and trend comparison. The method refers to analyzing hidden issues between two or more similar or related objects by comparing them. The article mainly uses this method to compare the behaviors of local governments under the Lancang-Mekong mechanism with those under other instruments. It compares cognition, empowerment, gaming, and external threats and analyzes the internal and external problems in the Lancang-Mekong cooperation. On this basis, we understand, understand, and understand the historical and realistic constraints between the Lancang-Mekong countries and make suggestions on various issues. Local governments can hilly and indicatively play their part in the Lancang-Mekong mechanism and promote the Lancang-Mekong cooperation mechanism Went smoothly. The comparative analysis found that the Lancang-Mekong cooperation that shifts to project construction enables the collaboration to reflect better the advantages of the Lancang-Mekong tool of "leadership, comprehensive coverage, and participation of various departments."

The first level is called "Internationalization" and covers both the legal bindingness of international law and political bindingness provided by RBO's member states (Bernauer, 1995: 352). Each RBO then supervises a particular water resource (e.g., rivers, lakes, aquifers, or icebergs) shared by two or more riparian states and relies on legally or politically binding treaties. Then show the commitment to managing international waters beyond the national level (Schmeier et al., 2013: 9-10). The second category called "Institutionalization" captures the degree of permanence, organization structure, and capacity of RBO to act independently in the international system (Schmeier – Gerlak – Schultze, 2013: 11). RBOs must conduct their scientific studies, encourage water-related reforms, enforce international water law, and promote other forms of water cooperation. RBOs must also be transparent and diversify the source of their income between donors and their members. The last aspect for identifying an RBO is called "Governance." It comprises various principles, norms, rules, and water governance mechanisms found in RBOs' founding treaties, policy papers, and other official documents (Schmeier – Gerlak – Schultze, 2013: 11).

Firstly, every RBO must formulate certain principles that set normative standards for governing and sharing international waters. Such regulations cover general beliefs about sustainable and equitable protection of basin environment, obligations to not cause significant harm, or conviction not to over-exploit international waters for socio-economic purposes (Schmeier, 2013: 23).

Secondly, RBOs need to design various norms which outline obligations, rights, and commitments upon which riparian states shape their behavior towards TWM. Such means may lead to

more strict environmental protection, increased joint investments in various water projects, or further river development in particular economic sectors.

Thirdly, RBOs need to set up binding rules which more specifically operationalize principles and norms. The authorities have both prescriptive and proscriptive character and may include water allocation provisions, requirements for prior notification of co-riparian states, or other water-related limits (Schmeier –Gerlak – Schultze, 2013: 12). However, general designs and consequences for not fulfilling such obligations still depend on the willingness of riparian states, which institutionally anchor the effectiveness of RBOs (Schmeier –Shubber, 2018: 119).

Because in rule-making-oriented regional cooperation, once a cooperation agreement is reached, government departments retreat to the second line, and enterprises and capital begin to cooperate under the guidance of the market and rules. The infrastructure bottleneck has not been broken for relatively backward economic development, especially in the Lancang-Mekong region. The project construction is more targeted, and it is more suitable for solving the problems faced in effect under the leadership of leaders and achieving practical results.

### **3.4 Case analysis method**

It is also known as the case analysis method. The method was born in 1880 and was first practiced in managing elite talents and training senior managers. As an educational method to train and control skills, it gradually developed into small-scale research. Form, through the study of individual cases, a general rule is obtained. In the context of current socio-economic development and global warming, countries along the Mekong River have begun to attach importance to water resources in the region. Therefore, whoever governs across the border under the Chao Phraya River's attack is to achieve the cooperation goal guided by the Asian security concept. And hope to achieve sustainable security and cooperation results. To this end, countries have made significant contributions to this, but they still face some challenges. First of all, China needs to cooperate with countries along the Mekong River to provide more public products for cross-border water resources governance and improve the overall improvement of water resources governance. However, in this process, it is necessary to consider the Mekong River Basin's uniqueness, strengthen communication and coordination with ASEAN at the bilateral level, expand the experience of water travel, and improve the safety of cooperation. However, due to historical issues and the current new crown with the epidemic's outbreak, this cooperation still needs to be implemented through various considerations. In addition, China and the Mekong countries should release water flow data and initiate consultation procedures on dam construction activities.

Western powers intend to improve relations with the riparian countries by strengthening soft capacity in water governance and enhancing local economies and the environment. In doing so, they advocate their framework of water governance to increase their influence in the region and

counterbalance the LMC mechanism. Scholars define it as a method of in-depth analysis of a single object using authoritative data to obtain the most general and universal laws of things. They hope that the study of the behavior of local governments in the Lancang-Mekong region can better explore the role of local governments in international relations. The following article analyzes the cooperation between local governments under the Lancang-Mekong cooperation mechanism through the study of the participation behavior of the Yunnan Provincial Government and provides support for the analysis of problems.

The MRC is the most professional existing mechanism for water resources cooperation. It focuses on the development, utilization, and protection of water resources in the Mekong basin. However, an inter-governmental agency (Hirsch, 2011; Chang, 2013) lacks binding force or enforcement rights over member countries. The MRC is more like a discussion and investment introduction institution. Each member always puts the state interests before the basin's shared interests. A lack of sufficient trust, power imbalances, and narrow national interests hinder the complete cooperation among Mekong countries. Another critical reason that hinders the MRC from fulfilling its function is its simple 'water-based approach' that separates water resources cooperation from cooperation in other fields such as politics, economy, and security. The MRC or the initiators of the MRC, water resources cooperation must be solved by using a perspective beyond the water itself. Failure to do this would only lead to a zero-sum game. After all, the utilization and management of water resources for the Mekong River are of utmost importance. The countries on both sides of the river basin have helped this. However, due to the related interests involved, the countries still have reservations in investment and governance, and there are also security requirements and measures for cooperation—lots of challenges.

In summary, the existing regional cooperation mechanisms dominated by Western countries and organizations are not effective enough to coordinate and resolve water disputes. Therefore, it is necessary to establish a transboundary water resource cooperation mechanism that is truly participatory and led by all countries in the region, then has a specific binding force and meets the actual development needs of all nations.

### **3.5 Descriptive research method**

Water resources are one of the most critical resources for countries of the Lancang-Mekong River (Nagumo et al., 2013; Erban & Gorelick, 2016). I decided to use the descriptive research method because cooperation between countries has become more frequent with the deepening of globalization and regional economic integration. By the 1990s, the first regional economic cooperation had already appeared. The descriptive research method used according to this number is to verify the current existence of the technique through existing phenomena and laws combined with theory and describe

the phenomenon through real cases and diagrams (Orr et al., 2012). This time, the content of the research is precisely about the development of water resources, especially the utilization of cross-border rivers. Therefore, the use of descriptive research methods in the actual analysis of this research object is more conducive to popularization work, and it is of a revealing nature. Explain in various situations (Sokhem et al., 2007; Bhagabati et al., 2014). The economic and social development of the countries along the Mekong River is rapid (Walsh, 2013; Sing et al., 2016; Bolotov et al., 2017).

Then increases the demand for the development and utilization of water resources. Nevertheless, the needs vary according to the different developmental stages and geographical locations. Laos and Thailand are actively promoting the development of hydropower. Because its electricity demand is strong (Watcharejyothin & Shrestha, 2009), Lao dams are an infrastructural project for Thailand to help cope with the bottleneck causing its ever-impending power shortages. By contrast, Cambodia and Vietnam rely on the Mekong water for farming and fishery (Berg, 2002; Kobayashi et al., 2012). They worry that the water resource utilization upstream would disrupt their agricultural production. Thus, they have reservations about the hydropower development of the Mekong (Pearse-Smith, 2012). For example, the Xayaburi Dam and Don Sahong Dam were rejected by Cambodia and Vietnam. This idea would have established a relationship concerning water cooperation between lower Mekong countries and could have helped ease these strained relationships (Alistair, 2015; Guardian, 2015).

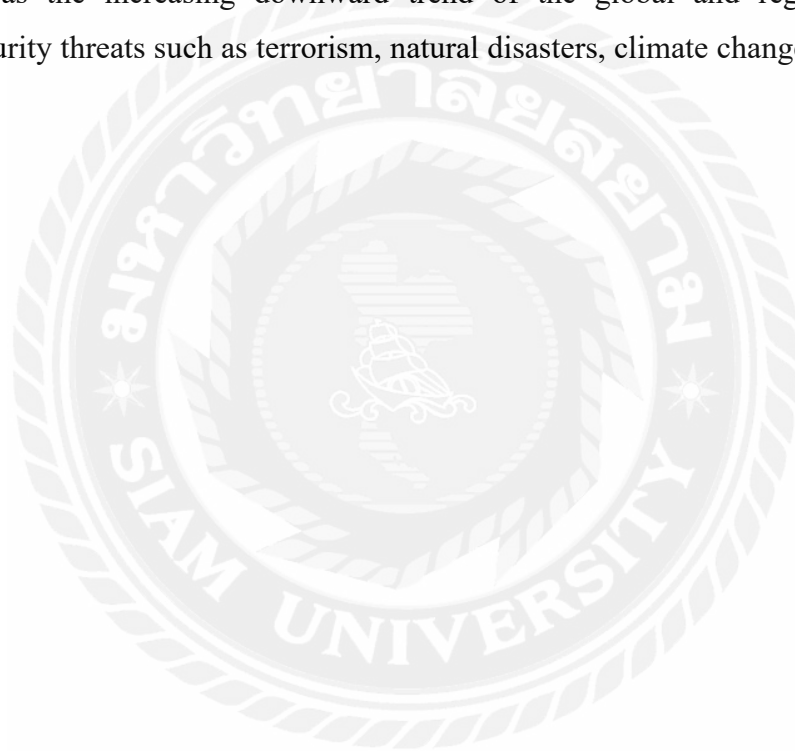
In addition, the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) also faces many water security issues. This includes water resources conservation, water ecological environment protection, and floods and droughts (Yorth, 2014; Chen & Zhu, 2016). This plan operates under constant global warming and extreme climates (Abiodun et al., 2013). As living standards increase in each riparian country, more energy and water-intensive food demand rise quickly. Meanwhile, global climate changes have brought enormous challenges to the sustainable use and management of water resources (Luo et al., 2018; Wang et al., 2018). In 2011, the Chao Phraya River in Thailand experienced a flood only seen once every 50 years (Preesan Rakwatin et al., 2013). In 2015, Myanmar suffered from a once-in-40-year flood (Kawasaki et al., 2017). The Mekong Delta especially suffered from the worst lack in a century (Hunt, 2016). It is hard to relieve or resolve problems caused by an entire basin that relies on a single riparian nation. Thus, watercourse states in the basin must work together effectively to deal with these common problems (Hensengerth, 2009).

Based on these characteristics, the Mekong sub-region has established a framework for bilateral and multilateral cooperation mechanisms and promoted the original intention of water resources cooperation, realizing that while using water resources for development, it also protects the water resources in the region. (Yu, 2003; Lee, 2015). The lack of mutual trust between countries has led to some shortcomings in cross-border water cooperation. The lack of original intentions has caused the cooperation mechanism to be less than expected in the implementation process. Therefore, it is more

necessary to analyze this to understand it better. So, what problems need to be improved in this cooperation to solve the existing limitations.

In addition, the actual needs are still ignored. Countries along the Mekong River must help develop water resources and the impacts and challenges caused. After all, it will significantly affect food production and upgrading security. Coastal countries must establish a highly-trusted cooperation mechanism to lay the foundation for developing, utilizing, and protecting water resources. They must proceed from reality based on the geographical location and specific needs of the Mekong River. (Dore, 2006).

Meanwhile, they have closed cultural and historical linkages. Nevertheless, they face the common task of developing the economy and improving people's living standards. There are also common challenges, such as the increasing downward trend of the global and regional economy and nontraditional security threats such as terrorism, natural disasters, climate change, and environmental problems.



## 4.PAPER ANALYSIS

### 4.1 Lancang-Mekong Cooperation Overview

The Lancang-Mekong Cooperation (Lancang-Mekong Cooperation), referred to as "Lancang-Mekong Cooperation", is a cooperation mechanism proposed by Premier Li Kenning of the State Council at the 17th China-ASEAN Leaders' Meeting in November 2014. Participating members include China, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam<sup>[1]</sup>.

The first foreign ministers' meeting was held in Jinghong, Yunnan on November 12, 2015. The foreign ministers of China, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, and Vietnam conducted in-depth discussions on further strengthening Lancang-Mekong cooperation and reached broad consensus. They agreed to officially launch the Lancang-Mekong cooperation process and announced the formal establishment of the Lancang-Mekong cooperation mechanism.

In November 2014, Premier Li Keqiang proposed the establishment of the Lancang-Mekong Cooperation ("Lancang-Mekong Cooperation") mechanism at the 17th China-ASEAN Leaders' Meeting. In May 2016, the first leaders' meeting of Lancang-Mekong cooperation was held in Sanya, Hainan, and the Lancang-Mekong cooperation process was fully launched. In January 2018, the second leaders' meeting of Lancang-Mekong Cooperation was held in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, marking that Lancang-Mekong cooperation has moved from a cultivation period to a growth period<sup>[17]</sup>.

Deepen the good-neighborly friendship and pragmatic cooperation among the six Lancang-Mekong countries, promote the economic and social development of the coastal countries, create an economic development belt in the Lancang-Mekong basin, and jointly build a community of shared future for the Lancang-Mekong countries. Enhance the well-being of the people of all countries, assist the construction of the ASEAN community and the process of regional integration, and contribute to the advancement of South-South cooperation and the implementation of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development<sup>[12]</sup>.

### 4.2 Analysis process

H1: Various areas of engagement by Governments under the demand and cooperation mechanism in the field of human resource development under the framework of "One Belt One Road". Regardless of the United States-Mekong, Lancang-Mekong, Japan-Mekong, ASEAN and other cooperation mechanisms, the impact of the participation of countries outside the region on the existing mechanisms in the region cannot be underestimated.

In the Lancang-Mekong River Basin, only six countries are involved: China, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, Myanmar, and Thailand. However, the United States and Japan have successively launched

cooperation mechanisms on the water resources management of the Mekong River in this region, which has led to overlapping mechanisms. Then came new shocks. For example, India's "Eastward Policy" in the 1990s and South Korea's "New Asia Vision" diplomatic strategy in the early 21st century created opportunities and challenges for the advancement of Lancang-Mekong cooperation.

First of all, it is clear that there is overlap of interests between the mechanisms, the interests of the dominant country will conflict, and the attitude of the dominant country will directly affect the relationship between the countries in other mechanisms. In addition to the grabbing of resources in the Lancang-Mekong basin, the relations between the dominant countries will also be affected by many aspects such as international status, historical relations, and party relations. Once conflicts occur, the grabbing of resources in the Lancang-Mekong region will be extremely violent. China and the United States are currently in a state of instability, but South Korea, Japan and other countries are capitalist countries with the United States, and there are precedents for long-term cooperation in history. It is difficult to ensure the continued advancement of the Lancang-Mekong cooperation mechanism. Secondly, in terms of relations between countries within the mechanism, Japan is more popular among the five Mekong countries, and Japan's attitude also has a great influence on the advancement of Lancang-Mekong cooperation.

It can be seen that other countries in the Lancang-Mekong region are vulnerable to the attitude of countries outside the region, which affects the sustainable advancement of Lancang-Mekong cooperation.

H2: Participation of the United States, Japan and Jiangsu Province in ASEAN and Lancang-Mekong Cooperation Project, and their respective concepts.

The relationship between China and ASEAN is of utmost importance. Mutual benefit is a big challenge, and Jiangsu Province has played a more important sub-government role in it. Jiangsu Province makes full use of its own economic conditions to expand exports to ASEAN countries to allow the economic development of Yangzhou and Xuzhou, and use the ASEAN "upgraded" certificate of origin to help Changzhou enterprises open up the market. In addition, Jiangsu Province and ASEAN countries have also carried out cooperation in the form of Sino-foreign cooperation in running schools, scientific research cooperation and exchange of foreign students.

Apart from the participation of the Jiangsu Provincial Government, some local private enterprises in Jiangsu are also actively participating. In 2018, Sywis Zhiye Group hosted the 3rd Service China Brand Forum and Service Power Private Board. This is also a meeting specially supported by the ASEAN Plus Six International Trade Promotion Council, which is of great significance.

The strong alliance between the government and private enterprises has enabled Jiangsu

Province to play the greatest role in the process of cooperation with ASEAN. At first, it took economic cooperation as the core and gradually expanded to the fields of politics, humanities and diplomacy, forming a multi-level, wide-ranging, All-mund cooperation mechanism.

H3: Comparison and Analysis of Lancang-Mekong Cooperation Project Mechanism and Its Limitations.

Political instability can be said to be the norm in Southeast Asia, but the project can be promoted through frequent communication with local governments to ensure the sustainability of the project. Due to historical colonial influence, most countries in this region will have many legacy problems. Therefore, whenever the political party changes, it will have a certain degree of impact on the existing cooperation system and implementation of projects. In order to weaken the impact of the project, local leaders and local governments of all parties can be more closely linked to follow up on the needs of this political party during this period.

H4: Countermeasures to Perfect Local Government Behavior in Lancang-Mekong Cooperation Project Mechanism.

As the local government is the main body of project implementation, if the cross-border project cannot be completed, the material and manpower input in the early stage will become a sunk cost. Since the changes of political parties and military intervention in the Lancang-Mekong region are historical issues, it is safest to divide the project into several stages. The phased cooperation between local governments and local governments can provide support for phased results. If a certain party in a Lancang-Mekong country comes to power but does not support the continued implementation of the project under the Lancang-Mekong cooperation mechanism, it can be reported to the central government, and the local government of our country and the local government of other countries can agree to temporarily terminate a certain stage of the project. Let the project continue to play its role, and the next phase can begin when the next party comes to power.

### 4.3 Recommendation

#### 4.3.1 Under the Lancang-Mekong Cooperation, China's participants are relatively single

Compared with the leading countries in the U.S.-Mekong, Japan-Mekong, and ASEAN, China in the Lancang-Mekong mechanism involves a relatively single participant. The table below is from the official website of the Vietnam National NGO Affairs Committee.

**Table 4-1 Comparison of participants under the three major mechanisms**

Cooperation mechanism	Participating countries	NGO (Vietnam)



Lancang-Mekong	Cooperation China, Laos, Myanmar, Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand	17
U.S.-Mekong	cooperation U.S. Laos, Myanmar, Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand	111
Japan-Mekong	Cooperation Japan, Laos, Myanmar, Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand	32

From the perspective of participating countries, the United States-Mekong, Japan-Mekong and Lancang-Mekong cooperation mechanisms are extremely similar. Only the dominant countries are different. The international participation of Jiangsu Province is a special behavior of China's participation in ASEAN, so this section will not compare..

From the comparison of the participation behaviors of the leading countries, the participation of the U.S. government and NGOs is much larger than that of Japan and China. Japanese NGOs also played a huge role since the end of World War H. Because of the Chinese NGOs The initiation time is the shortest, the organization is relatively small, and the government directly leads the project. The participation method is mainly by the government and supplemented by the enterprise, and the participants are relatively single.

#### **4.3.2 The advantages of the Chinese government system under the Lancang-Mekong cooperation mechanism need to be exploited**

As far as the leading countries under the US-Mekong, Japan-Mekong, and Lancang-Mekong mechanisms are concerned, China ' s local governments have a great advantage in adjusting animal resources to carry out major events, but they are subject to the greatest restrictions in the implementation process.

The relationship between the central and local governments in China is a relationship between leadership and being led. This is suitable for concentrating efforts on major issues. Especially taking this epidemic as an example, the nation' s medical staff and materials have been concentrated to the most severely affected areas for effective control. The epidemic spread. However, because of China's vast land and resources, it is difficult to accurately integrate local actual conditions in policy formulation. Inadequate policy interpretations and inaccurate measures to local conditions will result in policy downturns, making it difficult for some projects to continue.

The predecessor of the federal government in the United States is a government formed by the confederation of states. The central government does not have much power to interfere in state management, and the state government has its own reserved powers. The state governments of the United States have the right to formulate their own laws in the areas of economy and trade, public

products, and medical care, and to provide support to local NGOs to achieve economic and social development of their state governments without violating the Constitution. Of course, the federal system in the United States also has major problems. It is difficult to control the epidemic as a whole, and the independent actions of local governments have also caused problems for overall management.

Japan is a unitary country, but local autonomy is also practiced locally, and the local government, as an independent legal person, maintains its relative independence. Even if the central government can intervene in administrative and judicial interventions in the local government, local governments in Japan can object to the decisions of the central government and arbitrate different opinions at the central and local dispute resolution offices. This means that local governments have considerable power. Local power is sufficient to support its "public welfare actions" to realize national interests in foreign exchanges.

Under the comparison of the three mechanisms, each has its own characteristics and can be used for reference. The advantages of China's system characteristics have been fully reflected in this epidemic. However, in the face of China's vast land and resources, its advantages should be further utilized. Policy formulation should be made by scholars and officials. Make decisions after site visits and encourage local governments to inspire innovation in local governments under the premise of correct interpretation, and further promote the development of Lancang-Mekong cooperation.

#### **4.3.3 Historical factors**

The historical factor mainly refers to the differences in the cognition of nationalism among the Lancang-Mekong countries. China is adjacent to the Mekong countries and has a certain physical and geographic basis. It has inherent advantages in cultural exchanges and population mobility. However, some countries have a tradition of "discriminating Chinese people" due to differences in nationalist perceptions. Part of the Lancang-Mekong countries is a nation-state formed by rebelling against colonialists. In the process of learning from China's revolutionary movement, many Chinese participated in and immigrated to this region. Some Chinese gained wealth through business, and some Chinese gained wealth through revolution. Political influence, but this just violated the nationalism they perceive. Therefore, the Chinese were recognized as "colonialists" by the people of Vietnam, Thailand and other places. Later, the military government guided by public opinion, which made some people in the Lancang-Mekong countries hate China. . But the nationalism promoted by China is to make the country prosperous and strong, which is different from the nationalism recognized by Vietnam and Thailand.

It is precisely because of the differences in nationalism between the Mekong countries and China that even if the parties have similarities in their geographical environment, they also hinder the construction of the Lancang-Mekong cooperation mechanism. In the process of promoting some

projects, the Chinese-led Lancang-Mekong cooperation mechanism will send Chinese people to participate in these projects. Then this tradition will affect the progress of specific projects.

#### **4.3.4 Realistic factors**

The actual factors mainly include the game of interests between countries, the obstacles of countries outside the region, and the political instability of some Lancang-Mekong countries, which affect the future development of the Lancang-Mekong region from different angles.

First of all, the internal game of the Lancang-Mekong mechanism is very tense. National relations are determined by national interests. Due to differences in political systems, economic development, and social and cultural differences, it is difficult for all parties to reach consensus and promote the development of Lancang-Mekong cooperation when their interests are oriented differently. China and the Mekong River basin countries have reached agreement on the goal of seeking economic development and seeking internationality, but when it comes to specific resource development, the mutual political trust between the two parties is low.

Second, the involvement of countries outside the Mekong River Basin is serious. Many countries outside the region are involved in this regional activity, especially in areas where content overlaps. The different interest orientations of countries outside the region will affect the progress of the project under the Lancang-Mekong mechanism. For example, the United States, Japan, India,

South Korea and other national actors are particularly active in the Lancang-Mekong region. Through high-level communication and non-governmental organizations have formed their own leading cooperation mechanism in this region to participate in the development of water resources. Cooperative project cooperation has a great impact.

Finally, there are political instability in the Lancang-Mekong region countries. The local political situation in Myanmar is particularly unstable. Myanmar is a socialist country, but the game between politicians and the military has always existed, and the military has a dominant position and has substantive power. At the same time, Myanmar has many ethnic groups and complex religions, and armed conflicts often break out in northern Myanmar. , To a certain extent affect the sustainability of the project. Thailand ' s political environment is also quite complex, with more military coups and frequent party changes; Thailand has a system of military intervention, which makes Thailand ' s political development more complicated and has a negative effect on the promotion of LMC projects.

#### **4.3.5 Government participation under the Lancang-Mekong mechanism**

##### **(1) Central participation**

The involvement of the central government mainly involves actions taken by leaders, the State Council and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. According to the data published on the official website

of the State Council, since 2016, the State Council and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs have roughly the following contents in jointly formulating a large cooperation strategy with the five countries.

The State Council issued the "Thirteenth Five-year Plan for Ecological Environmental Protection" in 2016. The policy requires that in order to promote the green construction of the "Belt and Road", the Lancang-Mekong environmental cooperation should be actively carried out, and comprehensive and multi-channel dialogue and exchange activities should be carried out. Actively promote the exchange of scholars and talents, and build an environmental protection industry.

Premier Li Keqiang affirmed the achievements of the first anniversary of Lancang-Mekong cooperation in the government work report of the Fifth Session of the Twelfth National People's Congress in 2017. In the "Thirteenth Five-year Plan for the Action to Promote Borders and Enrich the People", it is proposed to strengthen the comprehensive management of cross-border rivers, as well as strengthen the construction of international water transport channels and waterways. Wang Yi participated in the third Lancang-Mekong Cooperation Foreign Ministers ' Meeting in Dali, Yunnan in December. He summarized the achievements of Lancang-Mekong cooperation in the past year and released a list of new special fund-supported projects, which promoted the construction of Lancang-Mekong cooperation.

Hu Chunhua attended the 5th China-South Asia Expo, the 25th China Kunming Import and Export Fair, and the 1st China-South Asia Cooperation Forum in June 2018, hoping to expand in the fields of culture, education, tourism, sports, media, etc. Countries reach more cooperation intentions and deepen cultural exchanges.

The "Overall Plan for China (Yunnan) Pilot Free Trade Zone" adopted in 2019 emphasizes the cultivation of talents in the document, and proposes to build a Lancang-Mekong vocational education and training base to train talents for the construction of a high-quality and high-standard pilot free trade zone. In the same year, China successively signed special fund project agreements with Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia, and Thailand. China and Thailand also signed the Sino-Thailand Lancang-Mekong Cooperation Special Fund Vocational Education Cooperation Agreement. Wang Yi attended the Fifth Lancang-Mekong Cooperation Foreign Ministers' Meeting this year. At this meeting, he passed the "Joint Press Communiqué" and the agricultural cooperation plan for the next three years, summarizing the achievements of the past few years and making new achievements.

Make a new plan this year.

From the above information, we can see that the central government is very active in the overall planning. The Premier of the State Council and the Minister of Foreign Affairs made decisions on humanities, environment, water resources, education and other aspects at the leaders' meeting, and also formulated some localities. government policy.

(2) Participation in Yunnan Province

According to data from the official website of the Yunnan Provincial Government, the Yunnan Provincial Government has played an important role in cross-border sub-regional cooperation as an important sub-government body in the Lancang-Mekong cooperation since 2017.

At the 117th meeting in the province, the Yunnan Provincial Government proposed that Yunnan Province should deeply participate in the construction of the Lancang-Mekong Cooperation and the upgraded version of the China-ASEAN Free Trade Area, and strive to build itself into the center of South Asia and Southeast Asia, and the Lancang-Mekong cooperation. It is an important link to promote this goal. In December, Chen Hao, secretary of the Yunnan Provincial Party Committee, and Ruan Chengfa, governor of Yunnan Province, attended the third Lancang-Mekong Cooperation Foreign Ministers ' Meeting. Yunnan Province took over the tasks of local governments at the meeting.

The provincial government hosted the 2018 GMS Economic Corridor Governor' s Forum with the theme of "Promoting a long-term partnership led by project cooperation". The provincial governor issued an initiative to deepen cooperation in poverty reduction, energy and tourism, and proposed to strengthen policies between local governments Dialogue, but also to strengthen cooperation in projects along the economic corridor. In the same month, the Yunnan Provincial Committee of the Communist Party of China hosted the "2018 China South Asia Southeast Asia Alt

Week and Lancang-Mekong Alt Festival" and the second Lancang-Mekong International Film Week, to appreciate the humanities, customs and arts of Lancang-Mekong countries and deepen the connections between the people of all parties. In November, the provincial government assisted in holding the first Lancang-Mekong Water Resources Cooperation Forum and the 2018 LancangMekong Cooperation Expo and Lancang-Mekong Cooperation Dianchi Forum. Government leaders, scholars, and youth exchanged ideas on water resources development in the six Lancang-Mekong countries. The advancement of water resources projects provided intellectual support.

Yunnan Province hosted the 2019 Greater Mekong Sub-Region (GMS) Economic Corridor Governor' s Forum. The Governor of Yunnan Province issued the title "Taking the construction of the park as the carrier, industrial cooperation as the starting point, comprehensively improving the level of digital economy, and jointly building the Lancang-Mekong River The keynote speech of "the economic development belt of the river basin" provided suggestions for building an economic development belt. In the same year, the Lancang-Mekong River China-Laos-Myanmar-Thailand border trade cultural exchange activities were held in Guanle Port, Mengla County, •which played a positive role in promoting people-to-people exchanges and proj ect cooperation.

It can be seen from the above data that local governments mainly focus on meetings, forums and activities in the province, and are less involved in the formulation and implementation of specific local policies, and are less active than the central government.

### (3 ) Inter-provincial coordination behavior

This article mainly concerns the coordinated actions of Hainan, Guangxi and Yunnan. The local governments of the three parties work together to promote the establishment of the Lancang-Mekong cooperation mechanism.

Hainan Province hosted the Lancang-Mekong National Tourism Cities (Sanya) Cooperation Forum in 2016. Participating provinces include Guangxi and Guangdong. All provinces and cities have reached consensus on tourism and jointly promoted that the relevant tourism cities under the Lancang-Mekong mechanism hope that More cooperation intentions have been reached in the construction of communication mechanisms between cities and future cooperation in tourism projects. Later, Yunnan Province joined the tourism city, and the three provinces exchanged tourism development channels and models to promote the development of Lanmei tourism.

The Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region held a series of activities on poverty reduction in the "2019 Lancang-Mekong Week" and exchanged information on the process of Lancang-Mekong cooperation projects with Yunnan Province at the meeting. The country makes joint efforts to reduce poverty.

From the above data, it can be found that Guangxi, Yunnan, and Hainan are all provinces involved under the Lancang-Mekong cooperation mechanism. As an important province, Yunnan Province seldom jointly organizes some activities and projects to promote the participation of the three parties, weakening the role of coordination and cooperation among the three provinces.

#### **4.3.6 Participation of other governments**

It mainly involves Thailand, Cambodia, Laos and other countries, sorting out and analyzing their roles in Lancang-Mekong cooperation.

Thailand established the Lanmei International Vocational College in Ruili in 2017 to provide intellectual support for the sustainable advancement of special fund projects and promote the deep integration of the six countries of the "Lanmei Organization" in education, culture, and industry.

The second Lancang-Mekong Cooperation Leaders ' Meeting was held in Phnom Penh, Cambodia in 2018. China and Cambodia signed a project agreement for the Lancang-Mekong Cooperation Special Fund in Phnom Penh. Both parties proposed joint construction for the in-depth cooperation of the Lancang-Mekong cooperation mechanism. A community of shared future in strategic significance.

Vientiane, Laos, held the first Lancang-Mekong Week series in 2019. The activities included the Lancang-Mekong Small-scale Forum, Lancang-Mekong Cooperation Achievement Painting Exhibition, Handicrafts Exhibition and Lancang-Mekong Food Awards, etc. to celebrate the second anniversary of the establishment of the Lancang-Mekong Cooperation Mechanism , Feel the results

and promote new cooperation intentions in the exchange.

It can be seen that the local governments of various countries organize Lancang-Mekong activities, but most of them occur in the capital, and the participation of other local governments is relatively weak, which will affect the scope of cooperation between Yunnan Province and the local governments of the six Lancang-Mekong countries.

#### **4.3.7 Government participation in other mechanisms**

The section mainly sorts out the participation behaviors of the United States, Mekong, Japan, Mekong and Jiangsu Province in participating in ASEAN, and analyzes their respective concepts.

(1) Cooperation between government and non-governmental organizations under the US-Mekong cooperation mechanism

The U.S. government relies on the power of NGOs to provide public services. NGOs accomplish their voluntary goals with government support. Many parties gradually develop friendly and cooperative partnerships. The government and NGOs work closely together to intervene in the following areas. There are talent training, medical and health care, population poverty reduction, environmental protection, democratic system, economic cooperation, judicial assistance, cultural exchanges, etc.

In history, there have been many NGOs that have been active and successful in the Mekong

River Basin, and the cooperation between the U.S. government and NGOs has continued to expand and has been fruitful. According to data from the official website of a non-governmental organization in Vietnam and Laos, the "Wildlife Alliance" has been active in Laos and Cambodia since 1980, focusing on improving biodiversity conservation, natural resource management, scientific research, improving local governance, wildlife, plants and humans. The healthy and illegal wildlife trade has completed 6 projects as of 2013. As of 2020, there are 111 American NGOs in Vietnam, which are engaged in various fields such as training for the disabled, dental care, health and education funding, AIDS treatment, support for adopted children and people in need, and infrastructure construction.

Some of the above-mentioned active projects of U.S. NGOs can overlap with the U.S.-Mekong Cooperation project to some extent. Then the U.S. government can provide non-governmental organizations with a small amount of funds, and non-profit organizations can provide more professional talents and more Materials that conform to the actual situation have not only saved manpower and material resources for the U.S. government, but also completed the established U.S.Mekong cooperation projects, which is conducive to the continued advancement of U.S.-Mekong projects.

(2) "Public welfare" behaviors of local governments under the Japan-Mekong Cooperation



## Mechanism

Since World War II, Japan has often been active in the Mekong River Basin in the form of international assistance, mainly focusing on infrastructure development, industrial training and human resources education, environmental sustainable development, etc. and also focusing on joint cooperation with other countries in the world, and Japan also Help the people of the Mekong region by donations.

Japan has adopted the method of combining non-governmental organizations with the government. The Japanese-Mekong governments hold high-level meetings with the leaders, foreign ministers, and economic ministers every year, with the theme of assisting the overall development of the region, and formulating overall regional development plans and priority projects. At the same time, at a low-level, meetings such as the Japan-Mekong Government-Mekong Cooperation Promotion Forum, the "Friends of the Lower Mekong" cabinet-level meeting, and the Japan-Mekong foreign ministers meeting will be held as usual.

According to data on the official website of Lao NGOs, Japan has established international cooperation NGOs IV-Japan, Japan International Volunteer Center and other organizations in Laos. At the same time, according to the official website of Vietnamese national NGOs, Japan has established 32 organizations in Vietnam, respectively In support of community development, medical assistance, agricultural planting technology, clean water sanitation and other livelihood fields.

Japan has been active in many areas of the Mekong River Basin countries, and has "grabbed" the hearts of the countries surrounding the Mekong River in various forms such as donations. NGOs supported by the government are active in this area, building political mutual trust through public welfare behaviors, but at the same time obtaining water, production capacity and forest resources in the Mekong basin through Japan-Mekong cooperation, which has found a sustainable resource area for Japan Solve the problem of lack of resources in island countries.



## 5.CONCLUSION

### 5.1 Conclusion

The LMC is a new type of subregion cooperation mechanism that was established jointly by China, Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia, Thailand and Vietnam in 2016. The shared vision of the LMC is to contribute to the economic and social development of subregional countries, enhance the well-being of six countries' people, narrow the development gap among regional countries, and support ASEAN Community building, together with promoting the implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and advancing the South–South cooperation.

The LMC aims to establish an example of a new type of international relations, where they emphasize the importance of a win–win cooperation. To achieve this goal, a framework featuring leaders' guidance, all-round cooperation and broad participation was conducted. Consequently, a government-guided, multiple-participation and project-oriented cooperation model was built.

According to the Sanya Declaration of the First LMC Leaders' Meeting, political and security issues, economic and sustainable development, and social, cultural and people-to-people exchanges are the three cooperation pillars of LMC. Furthermore, as a result of the meeting, it was confirmed that practical cooperation would start with five key priority areas during the initial stage of the LMC, namely: connectivity; production capacity; cross-border economic cooperation; water resources; agriculture; and poverty reduction.

The Lancang-Mekong cooperation mechanism is an important strategy for China to connect countries in the Mekong River basin and an important link in promoting the development of the Belt and Road Initiative. This article first understands the development of domestic and foreign research involving the Lancang-Mekong region through the literature, and finds that most of them are from the overall macro perspective to build a new institution or strengthen the communication between the leaders of the two sides, thus ignoring that the local government is the specific cooperation. The promotion subject has not formed a systematic and complete investigation and research on the behavior of local governments. Then it took the US-Mekong mechanism, JapanMekong mechanism and Jiangsu Province's actions in ASEAN to compare with the LancangMekong cooperation mechanism, to find out that China, the United States, and Japan are both the leading countries in this region, and to analyze what exists in the Lancang-Mekong cooperation. Differences in behavior, exploring the reasons for the slow development of the Lancang-Mekong cooperation mechanism. From the comparison of the four perspectives, it can be proved that the six countries in the Lancang-Mekong cooperation mechanism have historically recognized problems of nationalism, the lack of

interconnection between local governments and the instability of local governments. The behavioral concept of cooperation between the government and nongovernmental organizations to improve the Lancang-Mekong cooperation mechanism can also fully stimulate the innovation of local governments and participate in policy formulation, interpretation and improvement more deeply.

## **5.2 Suggestions**

This chapter mainly studies how to put forward countermeasures based on the historical and practical limitations of the Lancang-Mekong cooperation and the advantages of the Japan-Mekong and U.S.-Mekong mechanisms.

### **5.2.1 Deepen interconnection and break down cognitive barriers**

(1) Attach importance to local tourism cooperation and expand communication channels

Tourism projects have played an important role in the modern economy, adding modern market-led tourism agencies, tourism websites, bloggers and other elements to expand the tourism market. Attach importance to modern tourism cooperation, use more companies and network platforms in the selection of tourist routes, homestays, hotels and attractions to encourage more people to join tourism consumption, and promote the development of tourism through local government preferential policies to promote the economic development of all parties. The channels of exchanges between Lancang-Mekong countries and China have improved the impression of overseas Chinese in Lancang-Mekong countries and reduced the tendency of nationalism to hate Chinese.

(2) Focus on the cultivation of talents among local governments and promote cultural exchanges

People are the core force of national development. In the past few years, China and Vietnam have established a shared talent pool, and China is also continuing to accept young students from the five Lancang-Mekong countries. The exchange of talent ideas can further promote people-to-people bonds. At the same time, the exchanges of vocational education concepts between China and Lanmei countries are also proceeding simultaneously. China has provided sufficient talent support and financial support for Lanmei vocational education training. Talent training will be a crucial link in the development of various countries in the future. Focus on talent training in various countries. It can not only cultivate practical talents from youth forums and vocational education, but also from the development of corporate and NGO activities. Local governments can organize Lanmei Youth participation in public welfare activities. At the same time, the local government will guide the training of all-round media professionals to prepare talent support for cultural communication.

### **5.2.2 Integrate all forces to promote mutual political trust**

This section mainly proposes countermeasures against the political game of state relations within the Lancang-Mekong mechanism.

(1) Strengthen the dialogue between parties and governments and local governments and exchanges of ideas on governance

In the Lancang-Mekong cooperation, exchanges between leaders have played a vital role. The Communist Party of my country is relatively stable in power, but some Lancang-Mekong countries have military interventions and changes in political parties. Only more frequent exchanges and dialogues and connectivity in project formulation and approval can better promote the building of political mutual trust between the two sides. It is not just a dialogue between high-level leaders, but more importantly to strengthen exchanges between leaders of local governments, participate in project implementation and promote cooperation between all parties.

(2) Local governments use social organizations to provide friendly assistance

In China's foreign aid, the main actor is the government, and enterprises play a supporting role.

China's social organizations have a short time to initiate and participate in less aid activities. China can learn from the participation concepts of the United States, Japan and other countries, and local governments and society will ensure financial support and supervision, guide outstanding social organizations to host Lanmei exchange projects, or adopt the "government purchase service" model, where social organizations will actually undertake the field work of the exchange project. It can not only give play to the professionalism of social organizations in such social fields as poverty, education, and environmental protection, but also reduce the workload of local governments. The voluntary nature of social organizations has the natural advantage of being close to local residents and has a greater positive role in providing social services and public products. The close cooperation between the Chinese government and Chinese social organizations can alleviate the "suspicion" of political infiltration between the two parties, and achieve the purpose of cooperation through non-governmental promotion.

### **5.2.3 Strengthen the linkage of local institutions and weaken the influence outside the region**

This section mainly proposes countermeasures from the perspective of the influence of the actions of countries outside the territory.

(1) Joint secretariat of local governments to monitor extraterritorial behavior

Many institutions have been established under the Lancang-Mekong Cooperation Mechanism. This article uses the Lancang-Mekong Cooperation Secretariat as an example to propose the following countermeasures. When looking for offices under the established Lancang-Mekong cooperation mechanism, I found the website of the Lancang-Mekong Cooperation China Secretariat.

The main content is the project development, the latest leader news, and the current situation of the five countries. In addition to the latest news and photography activities, The deadline for the dynamic content of the five countries is 2017, and there are almost no events hosted or participated in by the Secretariat of China. The Secretariat is more in the form of organizing news. The two events held are "the most beautiful photography". It is reasonable to guess that Lanmei The Cooperative China Secretariat has no real power. If a specially set up organization has some real power, it can play a great role in supervising the progress of the project. In some overlapping areas, local governments can cooperate with the secretariat. Communicate with local governments during the event and react quickly to weaken the adverse effects caused by overlapping mechanisms.

(2)Tighten local governments' cross-border security governance rights

Tighten the security governance powers owned by local governments, so that the central government can always monitor the actions of countries outside the region. Combined with the "unauthorized institutions" mentioned above, the central and local governments can respond more quickly and comprehensively to prevent countries outside the region. The act of "separation". Cross-border security is an issue that must be raised in the Lancang-Mekong River Basin. In order to protect the security of neighboring countries in the Lan-Mekong River Basin, the cross-border security governance rights owned by local governments of various countries must be tightened,which can prevent local governments from colluding with terrorists and reduce The channels for terrorists to obtain weapons are more controlled by the high level of the country as a whole to reduce the occurrence of terrorist incidents. At the same time, this power may affect the interconnection of all parties and the tourism industry. Tightening this power can protect the safety of traveller, reduce the occurrence of terrorist incidents, and bring a sound development environment for cooperation between the six Lancang-Mekong countries.

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