

## Mekong-Ganga Cooperation (MGC)

The Mekong Ganga Cooperation (MGC) is an initiative by six countries – India and five ASEAN countries – Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam. It is an initiative aiming to facilitate closer connections between these 6 member countries which share the Ganga river and Mekong river basins. Aspirants preparing for [IAS Exam](#) or any other Government Exam should be aware of the topic.

The Mekong – Ganga Cooperation (**MGC**) can be studied as a part of *International Relations* in General Studies paper-2 and *Geography* in General Studies paper-1 of the [UPSC Syllabus](#).

### Latest Update about Mekong-Ganga Cooperation:

In the 12th Mekong Ganga Cooperation Senior Officials Meeting that took place virtually in September 2020, the member countries led a discussion on the **Mekong Ganga Cooperation (MGC) Plan of Action 2019-2022**.

### Mekong Ganga Cooperation Plan of Action 2019-22

The Mekong Ganga Cooperation Plan of Action (PoA) 2019-22 was adopted by the members in the 10th MGC Ministerial Meeting. The ministry of external affairs (MEA) has published on its official website the plan of actions which underlines the initiatives to deepen cooperation among member countries in the following sectors:

1. Culture
  - Textile Exhibition – This is an initiative to showcase the hand-woven fabrics of the MGC countries at the MGC Asian Traditional Textile Museum (ATTM).
  - Preservation of historical and cultural monuments – Exchange of delegations, the conduct of workshops and training programmes are undertaken. India offers 10 scholarships (two each to member countries) in museology and conservation techniques training.
  - Common Archival Resource Center (CARC) at Nalanda University to be established.
2. Tourism
  - Promotion of tour packages for thematic circuits.
  - Organization of food festivals.
  - Offer of scholarships for diploma and certificate courses in tourism and travel management, hospitality management etc.
3. Education
  - Utilisation of students from the Mekong countries by promoting 50 MGC scholarships offered by the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR).
  - 10 scholarships offered by the Ministry of AYUSH for students interested in pursuing undergraduate/post-graduate/Ph.D in Ayurveda, Unani, Siddha, Homeopathy and Yoga.
4. Public Health and Tradition Medicine
  - Promotion in cooperation in workshops and training on the eradication of communicable and non-communicable diseases with high incidences.
5. Agriculture

- Workshop on preservation of rice germplasm and productivity enhancement by India.
6. Water Resource Management
    - India to conduct training programmes and workshops to exchange experiences and best practices in community farming and water resource management.
  7. Science and Technology
    - Innovation Forum to be hosted in one of the MGC countries. It seeks to promote social innovations in agriculture, transport, communication, industrial know-how transfer, e-commerce, information and communication technology (ICT), health, energy and environment, food etc.
  8. Transport and Communication
    - The evaluation of the feasibility in extending the India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway to Cambodia, Lao PDR and Viet Nam took place.
    - The conclusion of the India-Myanmar-Thailand Motor Vehicle Agreement sought.
  9. MSMEs
    - The organisation of the MGC trade fair in one of the MGC countries.
    - Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA) to conduct research studies on 'Integration of MGC MSMEs into a Regional Production Chain: Potential and Challenges'.
  10. Skill Development
    - Promotion of national accounts statistics and large scale socio-economic sample surveys through training and workshops.

Related Topics that an aspirant must read:

<a href="#">India-Myanmar Relations</a>	<a href="#">India-Thailand Relations</a>
<a href="#">India-VietNam Relations</a>	<a href="#">SAARC</a>
<a href="#">RCEP</a>	<a href="#">QUAD</a>

## What is Mekong – Ganga Cooperation?

Established in 2000, the Mekong-Ganga Cooperation (MGC) comprises six member countries to foster culture and commerce among them.

- The four areas of cooperation are Culture, Education, Tourism, and Transportation.
- It is named after the Ganga and the Mekong which are both civilizational rivers.

## Member countries



<b>India</b>	<b>Cambodia</b>	<b>Laos</b>
<b>Myanmar</b>	<b>Thailand</b>	<b>Vietnam</b>

## MGC Mandate

*To facilitate closer contacts among people inhabiting these two (Ganga and Mekong) major civilizational river basins and enhancing cooperation in a cult.*

Click the link to read more about the [Association of Southeast Asian Nations \(ASEAN\)](#).

## Mekong Ganga Cooperation Objectives

The MGC aims at developing closer relations and better understanding among the member-countries to enhance friendship, solidarity, and cooperation; facilitating inter-state movement and transit; transport of goods and people in the region; creating necessary infrastructural facilities in the Ganga-Mekong basin areas, and encouraging active participation in poverty eradication.

## Mekong Ganga Cooperation Structure

The institutional structure of the MGC is yet to evolve properly. According to a preliminary concept paper approved by the MGC, Ministerial Meetings would be held annually back-to-back with the Annual Ministerial Meetings (AMMs). The chairmanship will be rotated in alphabetical order. The country which serves as chair shall act as the Secretariat to carry out coordination and implementation of the Cooperation plan.

## Mekong – Ganga Cooperation Working Mechanism

The working mechanism of Mekong – Ganga Cooperation consists of the Annual Ministerial Meetings, Senior Officials Meetings (SOM), and 5 working groups. These 5 working groups look after the cooperative areas of MGC. They are as follows:

1. Working group of Education
2. Working group of Tourism
3. Working group of Culture
4. Working group of Plans of Action
5. Working group of Communication

Click the link to read more about the [BIMSTEC](#).

## Mekong Ganga Cooperation Activities

- The inaugural meet in November 2000 identified tourism, culture, and the development of human resources as the first steps on a road that will lead to greater networking of communications, transport, and infrastructure development.
- In the tourism field, the MGC is committed to conducting strategic studies for joint marketing, launching the Mekong-Ganga Tourism Investment Guide, facilitating the travel of people in the region, expanding multimodal communication as well as transportation links to improve travel and tourism and promoting cultural-religious package tours.
- In the field of infrastructure development, member-countries are committed to developing transport networks, especially the “East-West Corridor” and the “Trans-Asian Highway”.
- When completed, the Asian highway project is expected to link Singapore with New Delhi in South Asia via Kuala Lumpur, Ho Chi Minh City, Phnom Penh, Bangkok, Vientiane, Chiang Mai, Yangon, Mandalay, Kalemmyo, Tamu, Dhaka, and Kolkata.
- Other areas of cooperation include air services and linkages, and IT infrastructure and networks.
- In the field of culture, the grouping is to undertake joint research in the field of music, dance, and theatre forms and conduct roundtables for writers, journalists, and experts in various fields such as literature, health, women’s empowerment, performing arts and nutrition.
- Focus is also to be given to the conservation, preservation, and protection of heritage sites and artefacts.
- Cooperation is also envisaged in the establishment of networking and twinning arrangements among universities in the region.
- The translation of classics of MGC countries into other MGC languages.
- Participation of member-countries in book fairs on a commercial basis.