How much water does agriculture use in the lower Mekong River Basin?

By several accounts, 80 – 90% of the water abstracted from the Lower Mekong Basin (comprising parts of Vietnam, Thailand, Lao PDR and Cambodia) is destined for agriculture. But what does this proportion mean? Water demand in the Mekong is highest during the ‘critical period’ between February to May, when water flows in the Mekong are just 7 – 10% of annual flows. Water is least needed during the rains. Nesbitt and colleagues estimate that during the 2000 critical period, 17.3 billion m\(^3\) of water were withdrawn over these four months for agriculture. Most of this is concentrated in the Mekong Delta, which consumed twice as much was as all the other basin areas combined.


**Want to know more?** Contact h.nesbit@bigpond.net.au

Source: Mekong Research Volume 1 No. 2 December 2004