

Reviewer Comments

We would like to thank both Reviewers for their positive reviews and further comments to improve this manuscript in technical details. In the following, we provide answers to comments from Referees below. In addition, we have also improved this version of the manuscript in general with track changes. For clarity each answer is structured as follows: (1) RC# comments from Referees, (2) AR# author's response.

Answers to Comments of Reviewer #1:

RC#1: The paper is significantly improved and I applaud the authors' efforts to respond to reviewer feedback. In particular, the introduction and framing are significantly improved to describe the motivation and novelty of the work. The figures are also much clearer and cohesive. I suggest the paper be published with only very minor revisions to a few of the figures.

Authors Response#1: we appreciate the reviewer for the positive feedback, and have revised our manuscript in respond to reviewer's suggestion.

RC#2: Figure 3- what do the colors on the timeline mean?

Authors Response#2: we thank the reviewer for raising this question. The different colors denote events in different nature, "orange color" refers to interruption of the Mekong Committee, "blue color" refers to projects and "green color" refers to policy/strategy, we have clarified this in the revised manuscript Line 879-881

RC#3: Figure 6b- consider changing the color scale to be divergent with white at 0 to convey negative vs. positive sentiment

Authors Response#3: Corresponding changes has been made to Figure 6b for a clear presentation of negative vs. positive sentiment.

RC#4: Figure 7- The legend says that the sentiment score can swing between -5 and 5, but then the legend only shows colors for -1 to 1 and the map only shows positive values.

Authors Response#4: Yes, the sentiment score can swing between -5 to +5, however, most riparian countries exhibit moderate sentiment value, which is between -1 and 1.

Answers to Comments of Reviewer #2:

Some final (technical) comments:

RC#5: Split discussion and conclusions. No reason to combine. Flow of the story may be improved and main findings will be more clearly communicated.

Authors Response#5: We thank the reviewer for this suggestion. In the revised manuscript, we have addressed this suggestion to have a split discussion and conclusion section.

RC#6: Data availability statement should be updated to be accordance with HESS policy. If data are not openly available, an explicit statement should be made why this is not the case (https://www.hydrology-and-earth-system-sciences.net/policies/data_policy.html).

Authors Response#6: As per the suggestion from reviewer, we have update our data availability statement.

RC#7: Fig. 4 and 6: 1992 is missing so maybe update x-axis. If no data are available also include but leave out the bar.

Authors Response#7: Both Figure 4 and 6a has been updated in the revised manuscript.

RC#8: Fig. 5: update x-axis, either use percentages or proportion, but not both.

Authors Response#8: We thank the reviewer for this specific suggestion, and have updated x-axis in Figure 5.

RC#9: Fig. 7: Are there no tributaries between the Laos-China border and the most upstream location? Also the most upstream tributaries are not clear.

Authors Response#9: Yes, as shown in the map, there are almost no major tributaries in the most upstream location, most tributaries are located downstream.

RC#10: Fig. 8: Please don't use standard excel "smoothened graph". Connect the dots linearly or explain why you use some polynomial interpolation between the datapoints.

Authors Response#10: We thank the reviewer for this suggestion, Figure 8 has been updated.