

Mekong River Commission

Regional Meeting on Stakeholder Engagement

25 November 2008, Vientiane, Lao PDR

Background

The Mekong River Commission (MRC) is committed to improving the way in which it engages with its many stakeholders at all levels of the institution including through:

- its programmes,
- the Basin Development Planning Process,
- and the Joint Committee (JC) and Council.

The MRC has adopted Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) as the conceptual basis for supporting the joint development and management of water and related resources in the Lower Mekong Basin. Stakeholder participation is an integral part of IWRM principles and has been adopted by the MRC in its Strategic Plan 2006-2010. However at present, MRC has limited overall strategic direction for public participation although recent efforts have been made by MRC programmes to address this gap but on an ad-hoc basis.

A recent Organisational Review team recommended the MRC improve upon its current stakeholder engagement and formalise a consultative process at the MRC JC and Council, the highest levels of decision-making within the organisation. The MRC JC, at its Special Session on 27 June 2007 agreed on the recommendation 37, which specifically says to “Formalise a stakeholder (NGO and civil society) consultative process as part of MRC annual meetings.”

The MRCS is now requested to develop standard principles for the organisation along with a policy focused on increasing the meaningful participation of stakeholders within the Joint Committee and Council. The stakeholder engagement policy will also include a process for its implementation.

Furthermore, the MRC’s Basin Development Programme Phase 2 (BDP2), the umbrella programme charged with joint basin development planning has already made significant efforts to develop stakeholder participation strategies and approaches. The BDP2 held a first regional consultation in March 2008 with a diverse set of stakeholders and have been in the process of developing a Stakeholder Participation and Communication Plan (SPCP) through a national consultative process. The SPCP provides principles, guidance and a plan of action for stakeholder participation and communication in the BDP process.

As the governance level and basin planning level are closely interlinked, both of these stakeholder participation processes are being developed further in a joint regional consultation.

The MRCS seeks input and feedback into the:

- scoping process for the development of stakeholder principles and policy at the MRC governance level; and
- finalisation of the BDP Phase 2 Stakeholder Participation and Communication Plan (SPCP).

Ensuring, thus, that stakeholder participation is carried out in a meaningful way and mainstreamed in all aspects of MRC work in the course of 2009.

Purpose

- To exchange information between the Mekong River Commission and Mekong River Basin stakeholders to increase understanding of possible approaches and tools for meaningful stakeholder engagement in the MRC;
- To share results from initial scoping on possible MRC-wide principles and policy implementation elements to guide stakeholder participation within the MRC Joint Committee and Council for feedback and comment;
- To introduce and receive feedback from regional stakeholders on the draft of the BDP2's Stakeholder Participation and Communication Plan.

Draft Agenda

Session	Description	Lead
Opening Session		
08:00-08:30	Registration	ICCS/BDP
08:30-08:45	Opening and Welcome Remarks	NMC (Thailand)
	Introduction: MRC and Stakeholders	Jeremy Bird, CEO, MRCS
08:45-09:00	Objectives and Expected Outcomes of the Regional Meeting	Facilitator
	Process Description	
Session 1: Stakeholder Engagement within the MRC Joint Committee and Council		
This session will focus on gaining input for the development of MRC principles for stakeholder engagement that would guide all aspects of the organisation in its efforts to improve stakeholder engagement as well as ideas for a new policy and implementation mechanism.		
09:00-09:45	Two case-studies of stakeholder engagement mechanisms from other regional organisations	TBD
09:45-10:15	Overview of initial results from scoping study on stakeholder principles and policy components including ideas for implementation	Kate Lazarus
10:15-10:30	Coffee Break	
10:30-11:30	Roundtable Discussions	Facilitated/Documented Roundtable Discussions (Prepared questions provided)
11:30-12:00	Feedback and Discussion in Plenary	Short presentations back to Plenary from Tables / Panel Discussion
12:00-12:15	Closing Statement	MRCS/NMC
12:15-13:30	Lunch	
Session 2: The Basin Development Programme's Stakeholder Participation and Communication Plan		

Session	Description	Lead
Key elements of this session include seeking final input into the latest draft of the SPCP, which has been recently improved by incorporating consolidated comments received through national consultations. This session provides the opportunity for regional stakeholders to input as well.		
13:30-13:45	Objectives and Expected Outcomes of Session 2	BDP
13:45-14:30 includes Q & A	<p>The Stakeholder Participation and Communication Plan for Basin Development Planning process (SPCP)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Principles and Approaches ◦ Content of the SPCP ◦ BDP in-depth stakeholder analysis – approach and interim results. How can stakeholder analysis strengthen the implementation of the SPCP? ◦ Participation approach in different stages of the BDP planning cycle: e.g. scenario formulation and assessment, sub-basin activities, and IWRM-based basin strategy ◦ Consolidated feedback from national consultations on draft SPCP 	Suparerk Janprasart and Consultant
14:30-14:45	Coffee Break	
14:45-15:15 includes Q & A	Sharing lessons learned on BDP participatory approaches in Thailand - perspectives from a Thailand River Basin Committee	RBC Thailand
15:15-16:15	Roundtable Discussions (gaining feedback on the SPCP)	Facilitated/Documented Roundtable Discussions
16:15-16:45	Feedback and Discussions in Plenary	
Session 3: Conclusions and Wrap-Up		
16:45-17:00	Conclusions and Next Steps	BDP/ICCS
17:00-17:15	Closing Remarks	NMC / CEO