

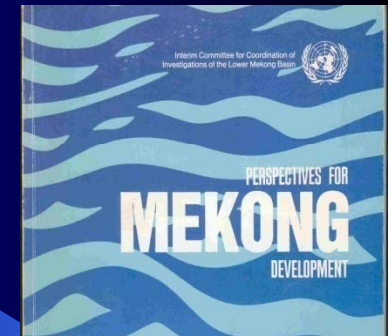


# **IWRM-based Basin Development Strategy for Lower Mekong Basin**

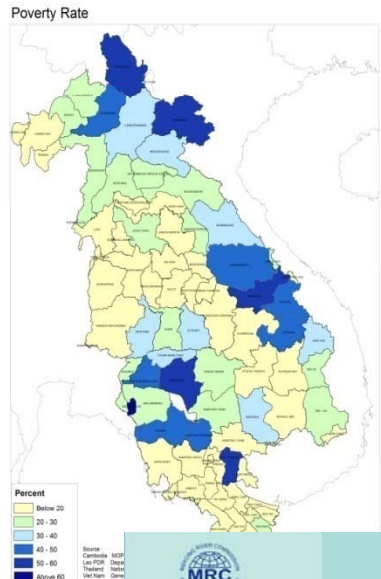
**Mr. Nguyen Hong Toan  
National Advisor**

# The need for a Basin Development Strategy

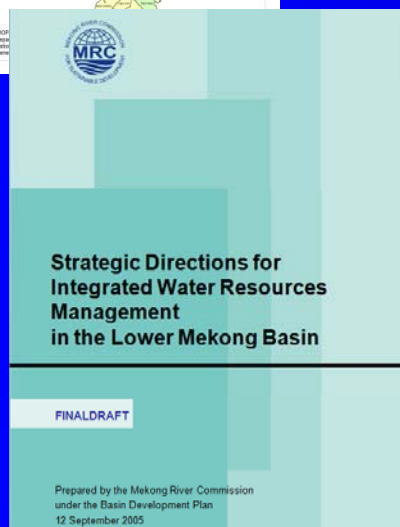
- Aiming to achieve the full potential of sustainable benefits from the Mekong is enshrined in the Mekong cooperation history
- Water resource development is now high in national agenda for economic growth and poverty reduction
- Increasing demand from riparian countries and project developers for the provision of an integrated basin perspective against which national plans and large projects can be assessed
- There is a need for a stronger commitment to a basin-wide IWRM approach to guide balanced water resources development



# The need for a Basin Development Strategy (2)



- Such an IWRM approach builds upon the Strategic Directions for IWRM in LMB, adopted by the MRC Council in 2005, which provides “high level” guidance to broad IWRM needs at the basin scale
- The Basin Development Strategy needs to be specific and provide links to the national planning and decision making process
- The preparation of such a Strategy is also beyond the responsibility of any riparian country



# What kind of Strategy is feasible?



- In a large and complex basin as the Mekong Basin, with six sovereign countries, it is not feasible to 'force' a rigid and constraining Basin Development Plan, based on 'optimization' of water resources development at a basin scale
- Nor is it feasible to prepare an 'IWRM Strategy", which would look at the 'integration' of water related national policies, strategies and procedures of the sovereign riparian countries
- **But it is feasible to prepare an IWRM-based Basin Development Strategy, which focuses on how development can proceed in a way that meets proper IWRM concepts and guidelines**

# Purpose of the Strategy



- Objectives:
  - *Reconfirm long-term goals and specific objectives of basin development and management*
  - *Provide a long term view of how proposed developments in the LMB can be achieved in a sustainable way*
  - *Provide a relational IWRM planning framework and guidelines for the basin, national and sub-basin levels*
- Scope: Basin-wide (both mainstream and tributaries)
- Terms: 20-year outlook with review and update every 5 years

# Scenario-based approach

- The most sensible option to develop guidance on how water related development can proceed in way that is sustainable from a basin perspective, and mutually beneficial to the LMB countries, ***is through a basin-wide dialogue on the results of a comprehensive assessment of basin-wide development scenarios***
- The scenarios should represent different levels of water resources development in the Mekong Basin
- Each scenario should represent different combinations of sectoral development, recognizing the synergies and trade-offs between sectors

# Assessment of scenarios

- The scenarios will be assessed against a range of economic, social and environmental indicators that can measure how well each scenario achieves the countries' development objectives and sustains the Basin
- As well, a basin-wide 'equity' indicator is included that is to measure how well a particular scenario achieves "equitable development" between the riparian countries, taking into account benefits from existing water use
- The assessment will be implemented by a team of riparian and international experts
- Methods, data, and intermediate results will be discussed with stakeholders at the sub-basin, national and basin levels

# Selection of scenario

- Technical capacity will be build to support national discussion and consensus building on the results of the scenario assessment; the possible trade-offs between sectors, areas, and population groups; and the selection of the preferred scenario
- Subsequently, consolidated national positions will be discussed at the basin level
- Ultimately, senior Government officials will indicate which scenario will provide the most acceptable balance between economic, environmental, and social outcomes, and would bring mutual benefits to the riparian countries



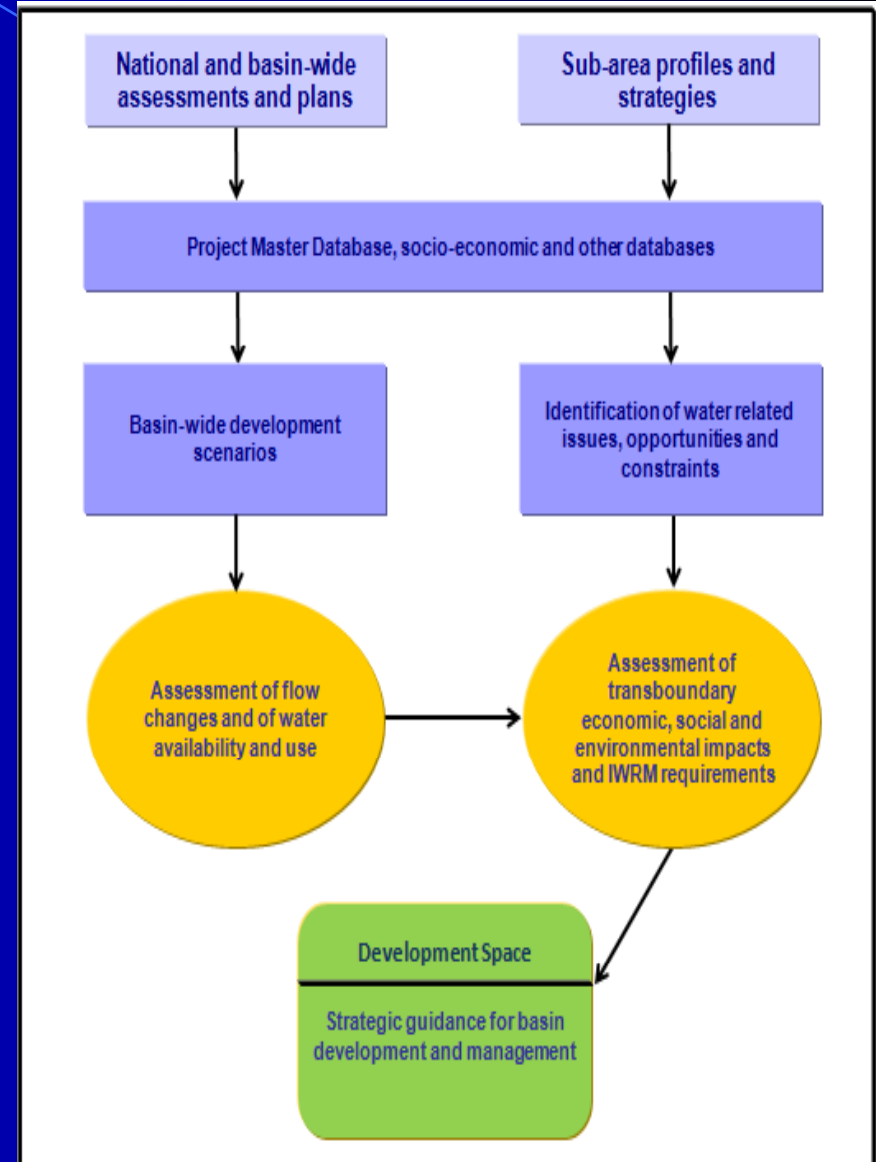
# Use of the selected scenario

- Subsequently, the chosen scenario will lead to the identification and preparation of:
  - *The 'Development Space' for water and related resources in the LMB, in which sovereign countries can plan and work*
  - *The Strategic Guidance for the use and management of that space*
  - *A package of IWRM guidelines that will assist water managers in planning and management of water and related resources*

# The visualized approach



- Use the BDP planning cycle that has been adopted by MRC Member Countries
- The “heart” of the approach is to define the “Development Space” in which the riparian countries can plan and work



# Definition of the “Development Space”



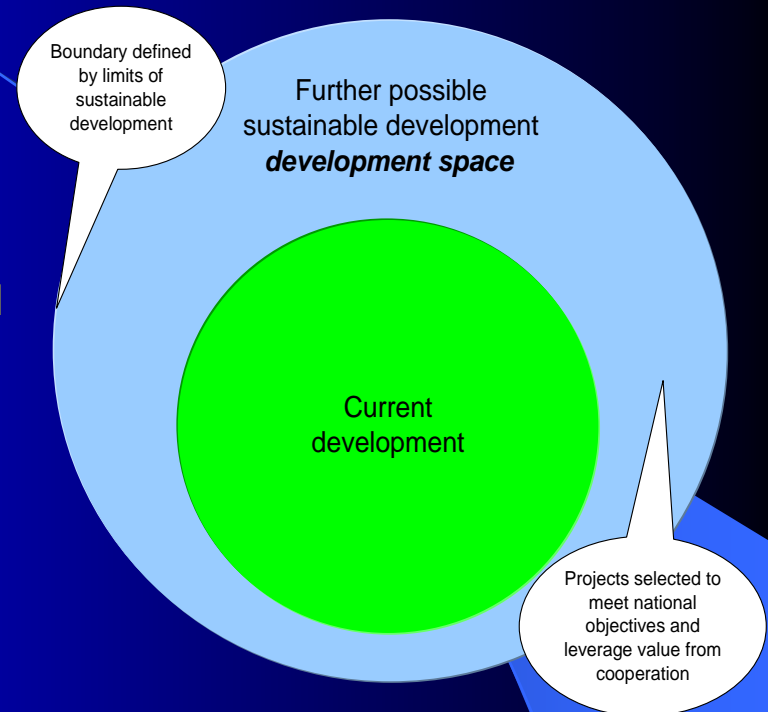
- Thus the “Development Space” is:

- NOT only a volume of water that can be used
- BUT *shaped* by sustainable boundaries defined by acceptable socio-economic and environmental impacts and existing procedures under the 1995 Mekong Agreement

- The assessment of the scenarios will provide these boundaries

- Countries can work and plan within the “Development Space”, supported by Strategic Directions on the use of the Development Space, and basin-wide IWRM guidelines for basin development and management

- MRC monitors, facilitates and periodically evaluates



# Examples of Strategic Guidance for basin development



The Strategic Guidance will be designed to assist policy makers and planners in the use and management of the “Development space”. Examples,

- Protect valuable wetlands
- Improve fisheries management
- Improve irrigation management
- Prevent or mitigate transboundary impacts of flood plain management
- Engage people and communities
- Develop institutional and people capacity
- Guidance for projects and the design of the Project Portfolio of the Basin Development Plan

# IWRM Guidelines

- “Helping hands for the implementation of IWRM from the basin scale down to the sub-basin level on the use and management of the development space
- Will be progressively developed – indicate the scope and nature of the “best practice” obligations of water managers and project developers
- Will be included in a “Manual of IWRM Best Practice”
- Targeted at planning and sector agencies, RBCs, provinces and project developers

# Harmonization of basin and national planning



- Provides practical institutional mechanisms to adapt the Strategic Guidance and processes into the various national and transboundary planning, decision-making and governance processes
- An important role for the “national water resource management agencies”: MOWRAM in Cambodia, WREA in Lao PDR, MNRE in Thailand, and MONRE in Vietnam, which are being strengthened to:
  - Merge basin-wide issues and strategies into national water policies and strategies
  - Review, steer and approve the periodically updated national socio-economic plans and sector plans.
  - Supporting the development of sub-basin IWRM strategies and plans.
- The harmonization measures complement ongoing efforts, such as the preparation of national IWRM policies and the development of sub-basin water resources planning and management approaches

# Indicative management arrangements for IWRM



Management Level and Strategy	Purpose of Strategy or Plan	Coordination or Management Body	Partner, Supporting or Implementing Bodies.
<i>Basin Scale:</i> IWRM-based Basin Development Strategy	Guides the water related development and management in the LMB	MRC	National water resources management agencies
<i>National:</i> National IWRM Strategy (linked to basin scale strategy)	Plans the actions to achieve national objectives, follows an IWRM approach. Takes account of the basin strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MOWRAM</li> <li>• WREA</li> <li>• MNRE</li> <li>• MONRE</li> </ul>	National planning and sector agencies, private and non-government stakeholders
<i>Sub-basin:</i> Sub-basin IWRM Strategy	Plans the actions for local level socio-economic development and resource protection, in accordance with the national IWRM strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• River Basin Organizations</li> <li>• Province level coordinating mechanism</li> </ul>	National sector agencies (province level)

# Implementation of the Strategy

- Over the next few years, each country will develop measures to bring the basin perspectives within the Strategy into the national planning, decision making and governance processes, in a way that suits national policies and processes
- It will lead to the four LMB countries creating and supporting a wide range of 'networks' or 'working groups' to jointly work on ways to make the Strategy implementation most effective
- And in this way, the countries will be able to bring existing and emerging national perspectives into future updates of the Strategy
- This creates a 'loop of ownership' between MRC and the four countries and ensures that regular updates of the strategy will be fully informed and based on current and emerging trends and issues



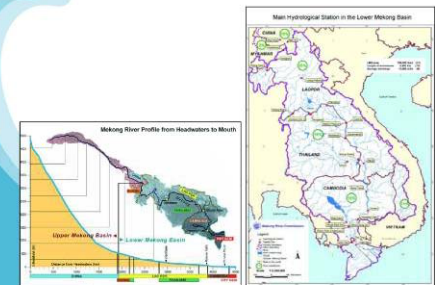
# Implementation of the Water Utilization Procedures



- The IWRM-based Basin Development Strategy will further develop capacities within MRC and the countries to utilise the existing water utilization procedures under the 1995 Mekong Agreement in a pro-active and value-added way.
- For example, a four-country agreement to a “Development Space” will create confidence that water can be allocated and used without unforeseen impacts. This should lead to proposals being notified under the Procedures for Notification, Prior Consultation and Agreement (PNPCA) much earlier in the process.



## *1995 Mekong Agreement and Procedural Rules*



Meeting the Need, Keeping the Balance

# Institutional and human capacity development

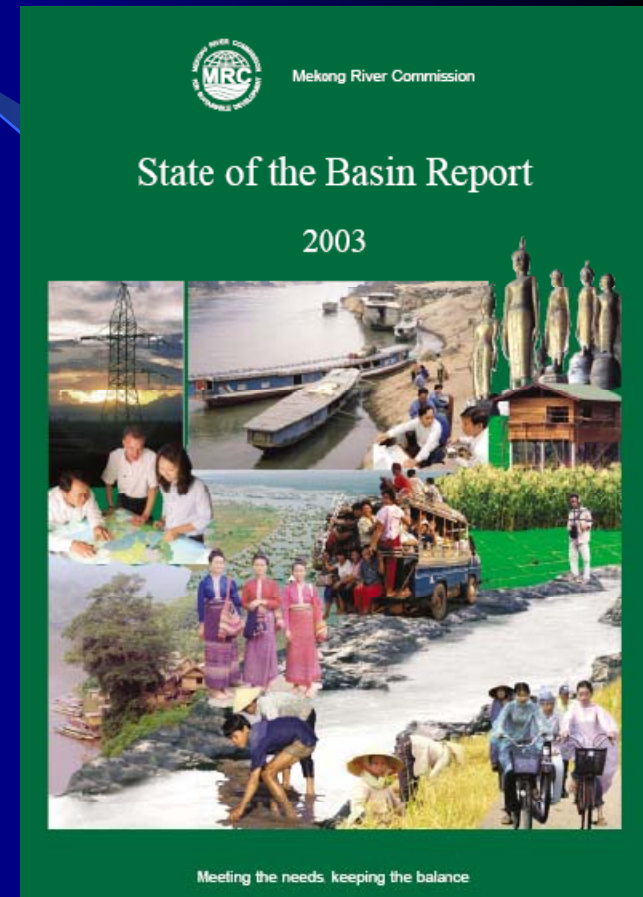


- The increasing pressures on the basin's resources call for those aspects of IWRM that aim at increasing synergies, or greater common features, between the policies and practices of the four governments, as well as greater integration/coordination between the national line agency policies and processes.
- This requires strong IWRM understanding and capabilities across the basin, and across institutions, and time for consultation and exchange of experiences.
- Developing networks of national water resource management agencies and of river basin organizations are effective ways of practical capacity building in IWRM issues, and a legitimate part of the MRC's "cooperation and coordination" role to facilitate these networks.

# Periodic updating of the Strategy



- The State-of-Basin Report, based on the countries' and MRC monitoring systems, will provide a regularly updated status of the Basin's resources
- The State of the Basin report should be one of the prime sources of information that informs how well the Strategy is implemented and guides whether it requires adjustment
- By adopting a five- year review period for the Strategy, there are sufficient checks and balances to adjust the "Development Space" and the associated Strategic Guidance and manage the many uncertainties.



# Benefits of the Strategy

- The “Development Space” agreed by Member Countries, within which national plans and projects can be considered, *builds confidence* that water can be allocated and used without significant unforeseen impacts
- Helps *attract funding* for projects with increased confidence of developers in water resources management processes
- *Builds synergies* in water and related resources planning at sub-basin, national and basin levels
- Provides *incentives* for a more strategic implementation of the agreed water utilization procedures *to benefit riparian countries and their people.*

**Thank you!**

