



A Model Initiative: Addressing Social & Environmental Concerns in the Context of Hydro Development in the Mekong Basin

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The Rivers Coalition in Cambodia

The Lifeblood of Cambodia



30% of Cambodia's Population lives below poverty line, 72% of these rely on the natural resources for their survival

The Tonle Sap Lake and the Mekong River and its tributaries is the lifeblood of Cambodia

The Tonle Sap Lake produces 100,000 tons of fish a year, providing 80 percent of the protein consumed within the country

Fish migrate from the Tonle Sap Lake into the Mekong River help restock fisheries as far upstream as Yunnan province in China

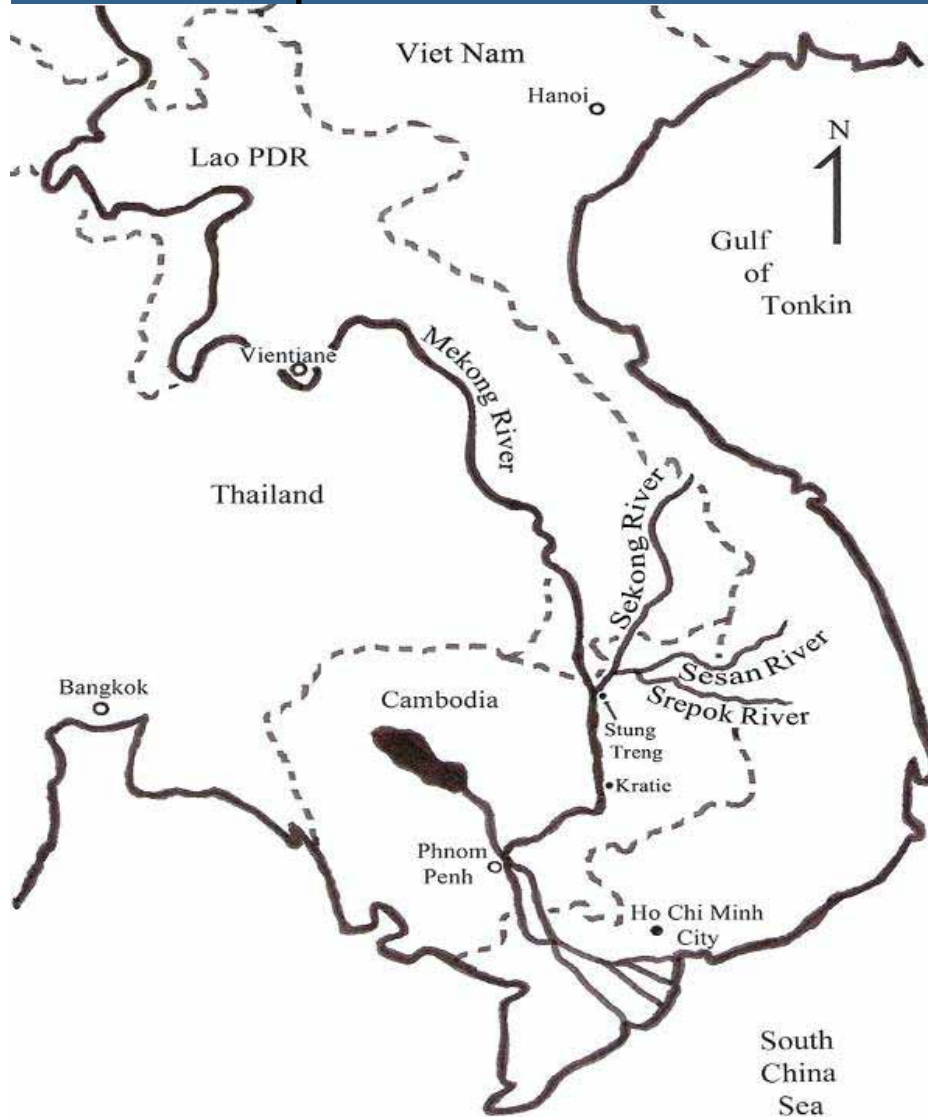


Experiences with Mekong Basin Hydro Development



- Transboundary Impacts of Vietnam's Dams
- 1995 Mekong Agreement Not fully being Enforced
- Inadequate/or No EIAs
- Limited/or No Public Participation
- Unresolved Environmental and Social Impacts

Transboundary Dams



Sesan River

3 dams operational and
3 under construction

Srepok River

1 dam operational and
4 under construction

Sekong River

1 dam operational and
1 under construction

Impacts to Ecological Systems

- Erratic and Irregular Water Flows (Floods, Dry Ups, and irregular)
- Deteriorating Water Quality
- Riverbank Erosion
- Loss of Fishery Habitat, Aquatic Life, and Riparian Species
- Reduction in Fish Catches and Fish Species



Impacts to Society

- Loss of Livelihood and Decrease in Household Income from \$109 to \$46 a month
- 76% Fish Decline = Loss of Food Security
- Increase in Water-borne Illness and Deaths
- 722 Households Have Abandoned Homes
- Disruption to Cultural Activities
- Fear of River



Threats of Mekong Development



Proposed dams on Lower Mekong mainstream

- PB** Pak Beng
- LP** Luang Prabang
- SA** Sayaburi
- PL** Pak Lay
- PM** PaK Chom
- BK** Ban Kum
- DS** Don Sahong
- SB** Sambor

MRC Involvement on Sesan

Year	Activity
2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ MRC Secretariat Delegate Visits Sesan➤ MRC Facilitates Dialogue between Vietnam and Cambodia➤ Joint Committee on the Sesan River Established between Vietnam and Cambodia
2001	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ First Bilateral Meeting Held
2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Vietnam's Ministry of Industry Acknowledges Harm from 2000 Water Releases
2003	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Five Solutions Established Establishing Notification System
2004-2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ MRC Facilitates Water Quality Study on Sesan [No health parameters were tested]
2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ EIA for Sesan Dams Completed [MRC Not Directly Involved, but CNMC and VNMC]
2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Fourth Bilateral Meeting Held [No Solutions Made]

Community and Civil Society's Experience with 3S Dams

- Limited or No Public Participation in Planning and Decision Making Processes
- Project Planning and Studies are Not Transparent
- Community and Civil Society Must Document Impacts
- Complaints Ignored
- No Compensation or Mitigation
- No Dispute Mechanism in Place





Conclusions from the 3S Experience

- 1) There Are No Model Initiatives to Address Social and Environmental Concerns In Place
- 2) The Concept of Sustainable Hydropower Development on the Mekong Must be Questioned



A Role for the MRC's Hydropower Programme

- 1) Facilitate Research and Dialogue
- 2) Promote Regional Water Governance
- 3) Capacity Building



1. Facilitate Research and Dialogue

- Generate Scientific Transboundary Data About the State of the River and its Major Tributaries (Including Environmental and Social Impacts of Dam)
- Facilitate Studies with Research Institutions, Scientists, Government Agencies and Civil Society
- Disclose Research to Public
- Hold Transboundary Dialogue and Debate



2. Promote Regional Water Governance

- Enforce the 1995 Mekong Agreement and Make Necessary Amendments
- Enable Member States to Promote and Respect Community Rights
- The MRC Must Define and Declare the International Standards that the MRC Agrees to Uphold related to hydropower
- Help Resolve Transboundary Disputes





3. Capacity Building

Capacity Building of Member States to Adhere To Best Practice Standards & To Adequately Prevent and Mitigate Impacts, including:

- Training on Transboundary EIAs
- Public Participation Tools
- Developing Public Disclose Standards
- Dam Operation and Environmental Flows
- Conflict Resolution



Thank you for your attention

For more information, please contact:

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