



IWRM-BASED BASIN STRATEGY FOR THE LOWER MEKONG BASIN

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CURRENT STATUS

- A preliminary draft outline of the basin strategy has been discussed last week with the regional technical working group on development scenarios and the IWRM-based basin strategy
- The outline builds on the “Strategic Directions for IWRM in the Lower Mekong Basin”, approved by the MRC Council in 2005
- In this presentation some aspects of the outline are highlighted

PURPOSE OF THE BASIN STRATEGY



- To reconfirm and/or define the long-term goals and objectives of basin development and management
- To provide a planning framework and a long-term view of how the basin's water and related resources, including the mainstream, will be developed in a sustainable way for the equitable benefit of the riparian states and their people
- To guide the strengthening of water governance for IWRM at the basin, national and sub-basin levels
- To allocate responsibilities for the implementation of the strategy

WHY ANOTHER STRATEGY AT THIS POINT IN TIME?



- Some drivers of change necessitate informed decisions by the four riparian states in the near term regarding basin development and management
- Drivers of change manifest themselves at different levels:
 - Global developments
 - Basin level developments
 - National level developments
 - Development partners
- These and other factors pose opportunities and challenges for basin development and management
- IWRM can help seize opportunities and avoid unwanted changes.

SHARED VISION, GOALS AND VALUES



- The shared vision, goals and values in the current directions for IWRM in the Lower Mekong Basin (approved by the MRC) will be reconfirmed
- Primary objectives for basin development and management remain:
 - **Optimal** with respect to being economically beneficial and efficient, socially just and environmentally sound (triple bottom line)
 - **Sustainable** with respect to current and future resource limitations and sound environmental management
 - **Equitable** with respect to being equally beneficial to each member state

ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK FOR DEVELOPMENT SCENARIOS



- Assessment criteria are being defined to assess the basin-wide development scenarios against the primary objectives of optimal, sustainable and equitable development
- The assessment criteria include: 1) specific objectives derived from national and regional policies, strategies and plans and 2) associated indicators to enable an estimation of how well the objective is met
- The key features of the tools, methods and processes used to assess basin-wide development scenarios will be summarized

BASIN DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY



- Must summarize the results of the assessment of basin-wide development scenarios in self-explanatory tables and illustrations, which permit a comparison of the scenarios in terms of the defined objectives for the development and management of the Lower Mekong Basin
- Must identify possible trade-offs between beneficial uses (or sectors) and MRC member states
- Must justify the chosen development scenario and clarify that in choosing a scenario, the member countries are not committing to a particular set of projects, but are identifying a development space within which they can work

BASIN DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY – PLANNING FRAMEWORK



- Must provide an easy to use framework that the MRC member countries can use to prepare and implement national policies, strategies and plans that are sensitive to the development space
- Must provide guidance to planning at the basin, national and sub-basin levels:
 - The IWRM-based basin strategy, which provides the framework within which the riparian states can plan and work (MRC leads)
 - The national IWRM strategy, which identifies and plans the actions needed to establish the principles and practice of IWRM, including the guidance of the development of IWRM-based strategies at the sub-basin level (national resource manager leads).
 - The sub-basin IWRM strategy, which provides a planning framework that will assist the long established sector agencies (agriculture, navigation, hydropower, etc.) in the on-the-ground planning that is sensitive to sound environmental , social, and other sub-basin needs (RBO leads).

BASIN MANAGEMENT STRATEGY – NATIONAL WATER GOVERNANCE



- Must guide the improvement of national water governance for IWRM, such as the increase of authority of the resource manager at the national level and the affiliated RBOs:
 - To coordinate and guide the water sector agencies in their planning through the aforementioned strategies
 - Draft policies, sector plans, and project preparation documents (TORs, feasibility studies etc.) would be submitted to the national resource manager for their review and approval
 - A monitoring and reporting process will be put in place that continually checks the condition of the sub-basin's resources to see whether changes in the sub-basin strategy are needed
- Such guidance would help overcome the common problems of fragmentation and funding of the water/environment sector, and may offer practical interface with transboundary water governance

BASIN MANAGEMENT STRATEGY – TRANSBOUNDARY WATER GOVERNANCE



- Must provide guidance for the improvement of transboundary governance for IWRM in the Lower Mekong Basin. These directions may address issues such as:
 - The review of draft national policies, plans and project documents throughout the project cycle (ToRs, project identification and feasibility studies, EIAs etc.)
 - Public information and consultation
 - The harmonization of systems, methods, procedures, standards and tools for monitoring, planning, developing and managing water resources
 - A monitoring and reporting process linked to the sub-basin level
- Must clarify the roles of the various entities in transboundary water governance, and the data and information exchange between them

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BASIN STRATEGY



- Must provides an action plan for the implementation of the strategy
- Must define the responsibilities of the different stakeholder groups for the implementation of the action plan
- Must define the mechanism and responsibilities for monitoring and reporting against the milestones and targets in the action plan

IMMEDIATE NEXT STEPS

- Update of outline of IWRM-based basin strategy
- Submit the outline to the MRC Joint Committee (June 2008)
- Preparation of first draft strategy (September 2008)
- National and regional consultations for review and inputs by stakeholders

Thank You