



# The MRC Basin Development Plan Stakeholder Participation

BDP Library Volume 5

July 2004  
Revised November 2005

Mekong River Commission





# BDP

The MRC Basin Development Plan

## Stakeholder Participation

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# Foreword

The BDP Library was compiled towards the end of Phase 1 of the BDP Programme. It provides an overview of the BDP formulation, together with information about the planning process and its knowledge base, tools and routines.

The library incorporates the essence of more than a hundred technical reports, working papers and other documents. It consists of 15 volumes:

- 1 The BDP planning process
- 2 Sub-area analysis and transboundary planning
- 3 Sub-area studies (including 13 sub – volumes)
- 4 Scenarios for strategic planning
- 5 Stakeholder participation
- 6 Data system and knowledge base
- 7 MRCS Decision Support Framework (DSF) and BDP applications
- 8 Economic valuation of water resources (RAM applications)
- 9 Social and environmental issues and assessments (SIA, SEA)
- 10 IWRM strategy for the Lower Mekong Basin
- 11 Monographs. March 2005
- 12 Project implementation and quality plan
- 13 National sector reviews
- 14 Regional sector overviews
- 15 Training

The work was carried out jointly by MRC and the NMCs with comprehensive support and active participation by all MRC programmes and more than 200 national line agencies. Financial and technical support was kindly granted by Australia, Denmark, Japan, Sweden and Switzerland.

The library has been produced for the purpose of the BDP and is intended for use within the BDP Programme. The work was done from 2002 to 2005, and some information may already have been superseded by new developments and new knowledge. The library does not reflect the opinions of MRC nor the NMCs.

It is hoped that the work will contribute to the sustainable development of water resources and water-related resources in support of the MRC vision of *'an economically prosperous, socially just and environmentally sound Mekong River Basin'*.



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# Acknowledgement

This paper has called on a variety of inputs and insights from many sources. They are gratefully acknowledged here.

BDP follows essentially an innovative and learning-based process. Contributions to improvements of this paper will be welcome.

## Acronyms and abbreviations

BDP	:	Basin Development Plan (of the Mekong River Commission)
EIA	:	environmental impact assessment
FMM	:	flood management and mitigation
GMS	:	Greater Mekong Sub-Regional Economic Cooperation Programme (of ADB)
IWRM	:	integrated water resources management
LMB	:	Lower Mekong Basin (the Mekong Basin parts of Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand and Viet Nam)
MRC	:	Mekong River Commission
MRCS	:	Mekong River Commission Secretariat
NA, n/a	:	not applicable
NGO	:	non-governmental organization
NMC	:	National Mekong Committee
NRE	:	natural resources and environment
NWG	:	National Working Group (in Cambodia = BDP Coordination Unit)
RBC/RBO	:	River Basin Committee/Organization
SAF	:	sub-area forum
SAWG	:	sub-area working group
SEA	:	strategic environmental assessment
TDRI	:	Thailand Development Research Institute
UN	:	United Nations
WUP	:	Water Utilization Programme (of MRC)



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# Executive summary

## *Introduction*

Diverse stakeholder participation in the BDP ...

- is essential if the BDP *programme* and *process* is to live up to its participatory claims
- should enhance understanding and integration of needs and concerns of people and groups directly or indirectly affected by development of water resources in the basin
- should lead to more informed identification and evaluation of issues, opportunities and constraints
- should validate, *or challenge and lead to revision of*, preliminary analyses

MRC stakeholders are often referred to as either ‘*internal to the MRC*’ or ‘*external to the MRC*’ and this classification is also used in the BDP. Both internal and external stakeholders are to be given genuine opportunity to participate in all stages of the BDP.

## *Internal stakeholders*

Internal BDP stakeholders refers to ‘the MRC family’ of organizations which collectively comprise the Mekong River Commission (MRC): MRC Council, MRC Joint Committee, MRC Secretariat (MRCS), National Mekong Committees and their secretariats (NMCs). The principal Line Agencies in each country – who comprise the membership of the NMCs – are also considered key internal stakeholders.

Internal stakeholders are responsible for organizing and overseeing the planning process in all five stages. This includes ensuring background technical work is completed and that data is organized. They are also responsible for much of the ‘backroom work’ in the BDP programme. Several key activities have to be undertaken before bringing preliminary results for discussion at public forums. They are also responsible for ensuring that external stakeholders are given full opportunity to participate.

## *External stakeholders*

External stakeholders in a project with the scope of the BDP are wide-ranging. They include the many individuals or groups who have a right to participate in a Lower Mekong Basin development planning process by contributing their knowledge, voicing their opinions, and learning along with other participants during the planning process. They include individuals or groups who may be affected – directly or indirectly – by the BDP development proposals and activities of the MRC.

This includes members of different parts of the state sector in riparian countries, plus:

- Civil society organizations (CSOs);
- Private sector;
- Donor agencies;
- Policy research institutes;
- Universities, research and advocacy networks, and individuals with relevant knowledge;

– Media.

External stakeholders are involved in many development activities in the Lower Mekong Basin. They have important experience which can be drawn upon to ensure that BDP interventions are strategic. They should be involved in the identification of key issues for consideration in BDP processes. They can greatly contribute to the knowledge base, verifying and improving the quality of decision-making. Their views, needs and priorities are important in defining management objectives and criteria for development projects /programmes. At each stage of the BDP process, it is important to review progress and listen to feedback from external stakeholders.

The major way for external stakeholders to be involved in the BDP planning is via participation in a series of forums at sub-area, country and basin levels.

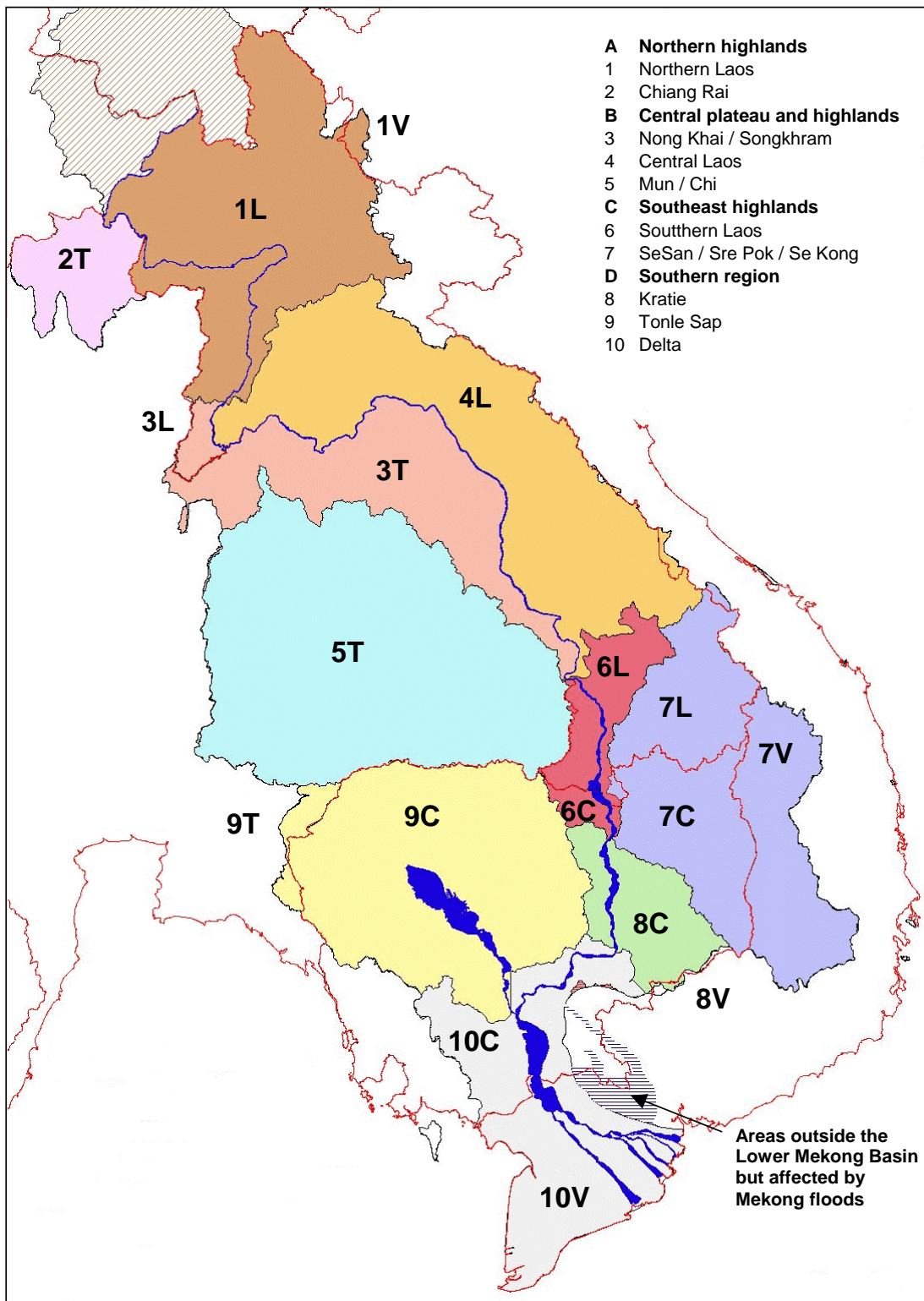
*Sub-area forums* will bring together various stakeholders who have an interest in the planning and development of water resources in the sub-area. They will also focus Sub-area studies and analysis on those issues that stakeholders agree are keys to the development of the sub-area. Moreover, they should ensure that local concerns and knowledge are better reflected in the larger scale basin development planning.

*Country forums* are intended to integrate local issues and priorities on resource uses with national planning and policy making, and agree on what should be put forward to the Basin forum. In particular, the country forums will act as a sorting house to ensure that only those issues and potential projects that relate to basin wide or trans-boundary planning are taken forward to the Basin forums, whilst other issues and proposals that better relate to national or sub-area planning are directed to existing national planning processes.

*Basin forums* are necessary to ensure that ‘whole of basin’ perspectives are gained.

In preparation for each forum, groups of internal stakeholders are responsible for preparing background sector and cross-cutting theme information to provide an initial basis for discussion. Other internal and external stakeholders, who choose and are enabled to participate, will scrutinize and enhance the knowledge base.

# Map of BDP sub-areas



# 1 Introduction

The MRC Basin Development Plan (BDP) was instituted by the April 1995 Mekong Agreement. Following a series of preparatory studies, the BDP project document was approved by the MRC Council in October 2000. The BDP formulation (Phase 1) started in October 2001 and is scheduled for completion in July 2006.

The vision of the Basin Development Plan (BDP) is to contribute to acceleration of inter-dependent sub-regional growth by establishing a process and framework conducive to investment and sustainable development. To contribute to this vision, the BDP process being undertaken by the Mekong River Commission (MRC) should establish a planning framework for development programmes, capable of balancing efficient use of resources with protection of the environment and the promotion of social justice and equity.

There are two main outputs sought from the first phase of the BDP programme. First, the establishment of a more participatory form of basin planning than has previously existed in the Lower Mekong Basin for use in subsequent planning rounds. Second, an agreed short-list of high priority development projects with basin-wide or trans-boundary significance which have benefits that transcend national borders.

This paper focuses on the stakeholder participation elements of the BDP.

## 1.1 Origin of document

The document is a compilation of guidelines prepared between June 2003 and July 2004:

MRC-BDP (Jun 03a): Framework for stakeholder participation in the formulation of the Basin Development Plan. BDP Stakeholder Participation Working Paper # 1

MRC-BDP (Jun 03b): Sub-area Forum 1: Approach & process for stakeholder participation in sub-area analysis. BDP Stakeholder Participation Working Paper # 3, revised July 2004

MRC-BDP (Jul 03): Sub-area Forum 2: Approach and process for stakeholder participation. BDP Stakeholder Participation Working Paper # 4

## 1.2 Basis and context

### 1.2.1 Link/relationship of subject to IWRM

Public participation is the second of the so-called Dublin Principles <sup>i</sup>, which form the basis for IWRM, as promoted by for example Global Water Partnership: *'Water development and management should be based on a participatory approach, involving users, planners and policymakers at all levels'*

This is elaborated by Global Water Partnership as follows: <sup>ii</sup>

*'Water is a subject in which everyone is a stakeholder. Real participation only takes place when stakeholders are part of the decision-making process. This can occur directly when local communities come together to make water supply, management and use choices. Participation also occurs if democratically elected or otherwise accountable agencies or spokespersons can represent stakeholder groups. Additionally, there are circumstances in which participation in decision-making can take place through market processes; if appropriate pricing systems are in place, local governments, community organizations or irrigation districts could signal their demands for bulk water services. The type of participation will depend upon the spatial scale relevant to particular water management and investment decisions and upon the nature of the political economy in which such decisions take place.*

*Participation is more than consultation. Participation requires that stakeholders at all levels of the social structure have an impact on decisions at different levels of water management. Consultative mechanisms, ranging from questionnaires to stakeholder meetings, will not allow real participation if they are merely employed to legitimize decisions already made, to defuse political opposition or to delay the implementation of measures which could adversely impinge upon a powerful interest group.*

*A participatory approach is the only means for achieving long-lasting consensus and common agreement. However, for this to occur, stakeholders and officials from water management agencies have to recognize that the sustainability of the resource is a common problem and that all parties are going to have to sacrifice some desires for the common good. Participation is about taking responsibility, recognizing the effect of sectoral actions on other water users and aquatic ecosystems and accepting the need for change to improve the efficiency of water use and allow the sustainable development of the resource. Participation will not always achieve consensus, arbitration processes or other conflict resolution mechanisms will also need to be put in place.*

*Governments at national, regional and local levels have the responsibility for making participation possible. This involves the creation of mechanisms for stakeholder consultation at all spatial scales; such as national, basin or aquifer, catchment and community levels. However, while the creation of consultative mechanisms is necessary, it will by itself not lead to real participation. Governments also have to help create participatory capacity, particularly amongst women and other marginalized social groups. This may not only involve awareness raising, confidence building and education, but also the provision of the economic resources needed to facilitate participation and the establishment of good and transparent sources of*

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<sup>i</sup> International Conference of Water and the Environment, Dublin 1992

<sup>ii</sup> GWP (March 2000), p. 16-17

*information. It has to be recognized that simply creating participatory opportunities will do nothing for currently disadvantaged groups unless their capacity to participate is enhanced.*

*Participation is an instrument that can be used to pursue an appropriate balance between a top-down and a bottom-up approach to IWRM. For some decisions the appropriate decision unit is the household or the farm; participation depends on the provision of mechanisms and information to allow individuals and communities to make water sensitive choices. At the other end of the spatial scale the management of international river basins will require some form of cross-national co-ordinating committees and mechanisms for conflict resolution.'*

### 1.2.2 Link/relationship of subject to BDP Inception Report

The BDP Inception Report (July 2002) states that '*public participation is a key element of the process, in order to ensure a broad acceptability, valid sector objectives and strategies, and the required support during implementation.*'

The Inception Report retains the stage-wise approach to BDP formulation that had been identified during the programme formulation:

Stage 1 - analysis of the LMB and of sub-areas

Stage 2- analysis of development scenarios

Stage 3- strategy formulation

Stage 4 - compilation of long-list of programmes and projects

Stage 5 - compilation of short-list of programmes and projects

The modalities described in the present report can provide an essential contribution to Stage 1 and can provide substantial guidance and added value to all stages in the process.

### 1.2.3 Link/relationship of subject to other BDP reports / activities

The present report builds on work has been in progress since 1997, as initially reported by a comprehensive regional public participation study conducted for the BDP by Thailand Development Research Institute in 1998. <sup>i</sup>

The stakeholder forums, at various levels, are a key activity within the sub-area studies and the transboundary dialogue that has taken place in connection with the BDP, as reported in the series of sub-area study reports.

Also, the stakeholder forums have contributed significantly to the to the strategy formulation and the subsequent identification of viable priority projects.

### 1.2.4 Link/relationship of subject to BDP's Logical Framework Matrix

The 1st immediate objective of the BDP formulation makes a clear reference to the need of stakeholder involvement in the process:

*A participatory form of Basin Planning Process established and ongoing*

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<sup>i</sup> TDRI (Jan 98a-d), TDRI (Sep 98)

*'Preparation of stakeholder participation guidelines'* is included as activity 1.2.5 under output 1.2 (guidelines).

In the BDP Logical Framework, the public participation modalities contribute comprehensively to

- Output 2.1 (Sub-area studies) in general, and
- Activity 2.1.8 (Public participation) in particular

The results of the work are carried forward to

- Output 2.3 (Sub-area strategies)

the results of which are in turn carried forward to

- Output 2.4 (Basin-wide development & management strategies), and
- Output 2.5 (long-list of programmes and projects).

## 1.3 Significance

### 1.3.1 Significance of subject for strategic planning

In connection with strategic planning, the stakeholder consultations provide guidance and *'ground-truthing'*, adding to the validity of basic assumptions and to the value of identified development schemes.

A particular aspect is that a continuous stakeholder dialogue improves the prospects for successful strategy implementation.

### 1.3.2 Significance of subject for Mekong Basin

The stakeholder dialogue often addresses local issues, but local issues, between them, make up an important part of the basinwide planning and water resources management.

*'Balance between stakeholder interests'* is one of the determinants for effective and useful development planning, and knowledge of stakeholder preferences is indispensable to basinwide planning. Also, it is noted that one of the various traditional divergences of interest is aligned along an axis of 'local versus basinwide interests', and appropriate attention to this aspect requires exchange of knowledge and opinions with and among the various stakeholders.

### 1.3.3 Significance of subject for MRCS / BDP 1

The stakeholder dialogue under the BDP has interacted positively with MRC's ongoing efforts, expanding the understanding of the particular needs and the particular context of public participation in initiatives that are shared by the four member countries.

In relation to the BDP, the stakeholder dialogue has supplied valuable inputs - last but not least during the series of transboundary meetings, conducted in late 2004 - as well as valuable experience about requirements and possibilities.



## 2 Summary of approach

The suggestions described in the present report build on the development of MRC's public participation modalities that has been in progress since a Joint Committee decision in 1996. An early milestone was the regional public participation study conducted for the BDP by TDRI and national specialists in 1997-98.

In 1999, the Joint Committee endorsed an MRC Public Participation Policy. A working paper, *Steps towards a public participation strategy* (February 2002), summarized extensive consultations with internal and external stakeholders carried out for WUP in 2001. It served as the basis for an MRC Regional Consultation Workshop on Public Participation held in late January 2002.

This basis has been supplemented with information achieved via MRC working groups and consultations with the NMCs and external specialists.





### 3 Framework



## 3.1 The BDP context

### *Principles*

- Optimize mutual and sustainable benefits to all riparian countries
- Minimize harmful effects that might result from natural occurrences and man-made activities
- Prevention of wasteful use of Mekong River Basin waters
- Emphasis and preference on joint and/or basin-wide development projects and basin programmes
- Protection of natural resources and ecological balance from harmful effects resulting from the implementation of any development plans
- Broad public participation
- Knowledge-sharing and capacity building

### *Interwoven processes*

The BDP is conceptualised as a set of three parallel, interwoven processes relating to:

*Planning*, carried out in five stages

*Capacity building*, including that related to knowledge assembly and learning

*Stakeholder participation*, promoting effective dialogue between those with an interest in the future of the Lower Mekong Basin

### *Eight sectors of analysis*

- Irrigated agriculture
- Watershed management
- Fisheries
- Hydropower
- Navigation, transport, river works
- Tourism and recreation (water related)
- Water supplies (domestic and industrial uses)
- Flood control and management

### *Four cross-cutting themes of analysis*

- Environment (including ecosystems and their water demand)
- Socio-economics (including poverty reduction and gender aspects)
- Stakeholder participation
- Human resources development

## 3.2 BDP planning stages

### Stage 1 Analysis of the Lower Mekong Basin and selected sub-areas

This stage aims to determine the key options and constraints for development of the Lower Mekong Basin by undertaking sectoral and thematic analysis at the basin, national and Sub-area scales. The following sub-areas have been selected for BDP focus:

#### *Northern highlands*

- 1L Northern Laos (includes a small area of Viet Nam)
- 2T Northern Thailand

#### *Central plateau and highlands*

- 3T Sonogram River/ Upper Northeast Thailand (includes a small area of Laos)
- 4L Central Laos (includes a small area of Viet Nam)
- 5T Mum/Chi Rivers / Lower Northeast Thailand

#### *Southeast highlands*

- 6LC Southern Laos/ Northern Cambodia: Laos and Cambodia territory; BDP cross border sub-area
- 7LCV Se San / Sre Pok / Se Kong Rivers: Laos, Cambodia and Viet Nam territory; BDP cross border sub-area

#### *Southern region*

- 8C Kratie (focused on the Mekong River mainstream)
- 9C Tonle Sap (includes small area of Thailand)
- 10CV Delta (Cambodia and Viet Nam territory; BDP cross-border Sub-area)

In summary, for BDP purposes 10 sub-areas have been identified. Three are being treated in the BDP planning processes as *'cross border sub-areas'* reflecting the reality of river basins, such as the Mekong, which often cross state borders. The cross border sub-areas show this most clearly and present particular planning challenges to which BDP aims to positively contribute.

### Stage 2 Analysis of development scenarios

This stage will formulate and analyse a few different development scenarios in order to illustrate limits and the possible significance of various driving forces and uncertainties.

### Stage 3 Strategy formulation

This stage will draft development strategies to be used as a tool for identification and assessment of development projects and programmes.

#### Stage 4 Compilation of long list of programmes and projects

The formulated and agreed development strategies should be the basis for identifying a long list of candidate programmes and projects.

#### Stage 5 Compilation of short list of programmes and projects

After further debate and negotiation, a short list of programmes and projects will be derived from the long list.

### 3.3 Public participation in the MRC

Stakeholder participation in the BDP needs to be considered within the context of the MRC approach to *'public participation'* (PP). In late 1996 the Joint Committee agreed to the preparation of a PP study. This was undertaken by Thailand Development Research Institute (TDRI) between late 1997 and mid 1998. Their report (Mingsarn Kaosa-ard and Kobkun Rayanakorn 1998) was considered by the Joint Committee and the Council in late 1998. Subsequently, the MRC Secretariat produced a report – based on, but independent from the TDRI report – titled Public Participation in the context of the MRC (MRC 1999) which was approved by the Joint Committee in March 1999.

The MRC Annual Report 2000 acknowledged that it is *"important that decisions on development include a 'bottom-up' process and are not confined to a 'top-down' approach. The voice of the people directly affected, and of other stakeholders such as community groups or NGOs, must be heard"*. However, it admitted that MRC *"has virtually no experience in this vital field"* and that it must *"drastically accelerate activities to promote public participation"* (MRC 2001:23). A further consultancy (Rosenbaum 2002) made a series of recommendations which were discussed in a regional workshop held at MRC in Phnom Penh, January-February 2002.

Further drafting, taking on board the criticisms and suggestions raised at the regional workshop, has yielded the MRC Public Participation Strategy (MRC 2002), which retains the definition of PP endorsed by the Joint Committee in 1999: *"Public participation is a process through which the key stakeholders gain influence and take part in decision making in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of MRC programmes and projects"* (MRC 1999).

### 3.4 Purpose of stakeholder participation

Diverse stakeholder participation in the BDP ...

- is essential if the BDP *programme* and *process* is to live up to its participatory claims
- should enhance understanding and integration of needs and concerns of people and groups directly or indirectly affected by development of water resources in the basin
- should lead to more informed identification and evaluation of issues, opportunities and constraints
- should validate, *or challenge and lead to revision of*, preliminary analyses

MRC stakeholders are often referred to as either *'internal to the MRC'* or *'external to the MRC'* and this classification is also used in the BDP. Both internal and external stakeholders are to be given genuine opportunity to participate in all stages of the BDP.

### ***Internal stakeholders***

Internal BDP stakeholders refers to 'the MRC family' of organizations which collectively comprise the Mekong River Commission (MRC): MRC Council, MRC Joint Committee, MRC Secretariat (MRCS), National Mekong Committees and their secretariats (NMCs). The principal Line Agencies in each country – who comprise the membership of the NMCs – are also considered key internal stakeholders.

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### ***External stakeholders***

External stakeholders in a project with the scope of the BDP are wide-ranging. They include the many individuals or groups who have a right to participate in a Lower Mekong Basin development planning process by contributing their knowledge, voicing their opinions, and learning along with other participants during the planning process. They include individuals or groups who may be affected – directly or indirectly – by the BDP development proposals and activities of the MRC.

This includes members of different parts of the state sector in riparian countries, plus:

- Civil society organizations (CSOs);
- Private sector;
- Donor agencies;
- Policy research institutes;
- Universities, research and advocacy networks, and individuals with relevant knowledge;
- Media.

External stakeholders are involved in many development activities in the Lower Mekong Basin. They have important experience which can be drawn upon to ensure that BDP interventions are strategic. They should be involved in the identification of key issues for consideration in BDP processes. They can greatly contribute to the knowledge base, verifying and improving the quality of decision-making. Their views, needs and priorities are important in defining management objectives and criteria for development projects /programmes. At each stage of the BDP process, it is important to review progress and listen to feedback from external stakeholders.



## 3.5 Stakeholder forums at different scales

The major way for external stakeholders to be involved in the BDP planning is via participation in a series of forums at sub-area, country and basin levels.

*Sub-area forums* will bring together various stakeholders who have an interest in the planning and development of water resources in the sub-area. They will also focus Sub-area studies and analysis on those issues that stakeholders agree are keys to the development of the sub-area. Moreover, they should ensure that local concerns and knowledge are better reflected in the larger scale basin development planning.

*Country forums* are intended to integrate local issues and priorities on resource uses with national planning and policy making, and agree on what should be put forward to the Basin forum. In particular, the country forums will act as a sorting house to ensure that only those issues and potential projects that relate to basin wide or trans-boundary planning are taken forward to the Basin forums, whilst other issues and proposals that better relate to national or sub-area planning are directed to existing national planning processes.

*Basin forums* are necessary to ensure that ‘whole of basin’ perspectives are gained.

In preparation for each forum, groups of internal stakeholders are responsible for preparing background sector and cross-cutting theme information to provide an initial basis for discussion. Other internal and external stakeholders, who choose and are enabled to participate, will scrutinize and enhance the knowledge base.

### 3.5.1 Sub-area forums

#### *Sub-area forum # 1*

There are 3 main aims for sub-area forum 1:

- identify key issues surrounding development of water and related resources in the sub-area.
- establish participatory planning process for sub-area, involving representatives of a wide range of stakeholders
- identify information gaps to complete the sub-area situation analysis

This is a part of Stage 1 of the BDP planning process. Details of a guiding process for sub-area forum 1 are given in the following chapter.

#### *Sub-area forum # 2*

Sub-area forum 2 will take the process further forward, looking in more detail at scenarios, broad development options and candidate programmes and projects.

#### *Cross border sub-area forums*

BDP is about planning for a river basin. As is well known, river basin and catchment boundaries often do not match country borders. So it is in the Mekong Basin. The following BDP Sub-areas have a significant cross-border dimension:

- 6LC Southern Laos / Northern Cambodia (includes Laos and Cambodia territory)
- 7LCV Se San / Sre Pok / Se Kong (includes Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam territory)
- 10CV Delta (includes Cambodia and Viet Nam territory)

Cross border sub-area forums will be held involving stakeholder representatives from each country. The cross border SAF would have the same objectives as the individual country SAF. However, more thought and care would need to be taken to ensure the forum is participatory and beneficial. Constructive facilitation to bring together the sub-area working groups from each country would be essential. Just as the MRC is a large scale “cross border forum” taking an integrated approach to water resources management and development, so too can the proposed additional forums for sub-areas 6, 7 and 10. These will enrich the BDP process.

### ***Interface forums***

BDP analysis should be further enhanced by two ‘interface forums’ for two SAs that face each other across the mainstream. The first will be between 1L Northern Laos and 2T Northern Thailand. The second will work towards increasing cross border understandings of issues common to 3T Songkram River/Upper Northeast Thailand and 4L Central Laos.

### ***Country forums***

The aim of the country forums is to gain an overall picture of the basin parts within each country as well as collective views of local/national stakeholders on the status of water and water-related resources and their needs. Another aim is to enable some input of local Sub-area views into national planning and policymaking. The results from the country forums will be key inputs to the Basin forums where all information should be pieced together to provide a whole-of-basin perspective

The country forums will only be held after the completion of both Sub-area forums in all Sub-areas in that country. The country forums should examine the extent to which Sub-area and basin issues and priorities mesh with national issues and priorities. The country forums are expected to further critique the sectoral and thematic analyses which have been commenced by internal stakeholders, and reflect on the country-wide feedback from the Sub-area forums. The country forums will also take the process further forward by looking in more detail at scenarios, broad development options and candidate programmes and projects.

The country forums will also act as a sorting house to ensure that only those issues that relate to basin wide or trans-boundary planning are taken forward to the Basin Forums, whilst other issues that better relate to national or Sub-area planning are directed to existing national planning processes.

### ***Basin forums***

The aim of the basin forum is to ensure that the BDP does indeed succeed in obtaining a basin overview. These are the forums where all of the work undertaken in the Sub-area and country analyses are aggregated, and cross-checked. The basin forum will focus on providing

a holistic view of the Mekong River Basin, informed by the sectoral and thematic analyses undertaken at different scales.

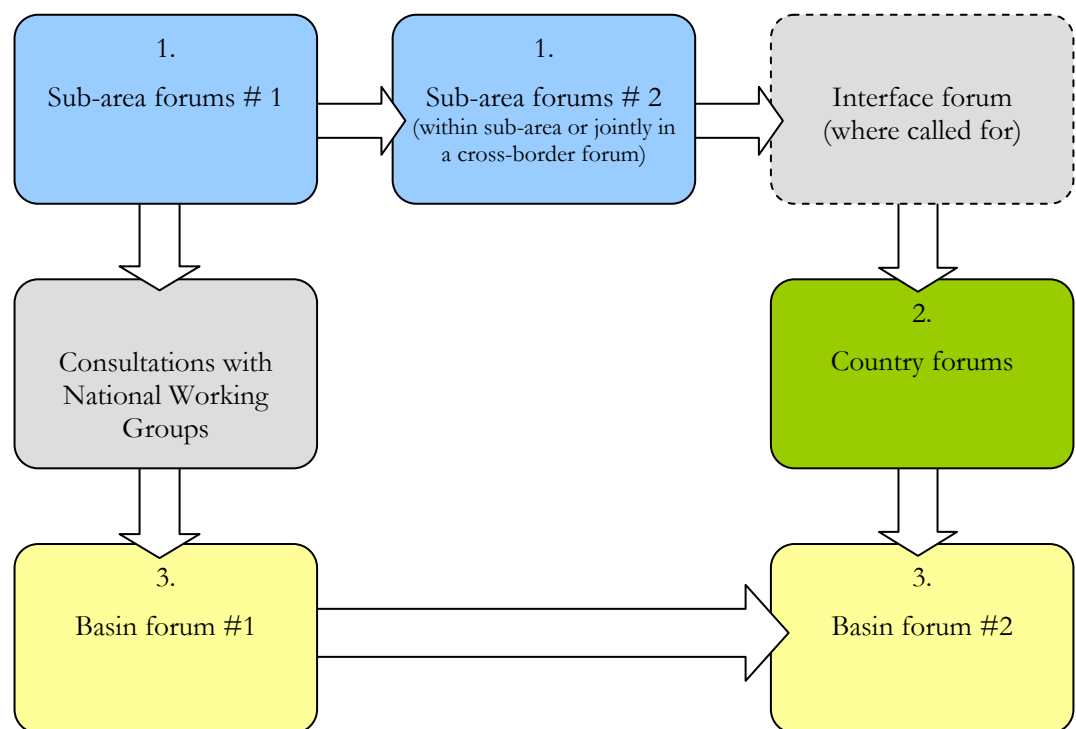
basin forum participants, as at all other forums, would be encouraged to review, validate, challenge and improve the standard of the knowledge base and preliminary analyses. The basin forum will be broader, crossing sub-areas, crossing disciplines, crossing interest groups.

To achieve a basin overview the basin forum should provide opportunities for interaction and exchange of views between sub-areas, at a technical level, but also on different views/priorities regarding resources development alternatives. The shared nature of many Mekong resources would inevitably be a subject of discussion. Outputs from the basin forum should, as with the other forums, concentrate on contributing to more informed political decision-making. The basin forum must ensure that the whole system perspective of the Mekong Basin is better understood.

**Basin Forum # 1** should examine the extent to which Sub-area and national issues and priorities mesh with additional basin issues. basin forum 1 would further critique the sectoral and thematic analyses which have been prepared by internal stakeholders, and improved upon via the feedback during the sub-area and country forum processes.

**Basin Forum # 2** will take the process further forward, looking in more detail at scenarios, broad development options and candidate programmes and projects.

Figure 3.1: BDP forum sequencing







## 4 Forum 1



## 4.1 Context

It is proposed that there will be two stakeholder forums at sub-area level as a part of each sub-area (SA) study in the BDP process.

SAF 1 will consist of two main components. First, it brings together various stakeholders who have an interest in the planning and development of water resources in the sub-area. Second, the forum will attempt to focus sub-area studies and analysis on those issues that stakeholders agree are key to the development of the sub-area.

The approach to BDP formulation and the five main stages in the overall planning process are described in the BDP Inception Report. Stage 1 of the BDP planning process (analysis of the Lower Mekong Basin and sub-areas) will determine key options and constraints for development, by analysing local concerns and requirements as well as regional trends and transboundary cause-effect relationships. The studies will result in a description of overall conditions, development potential and critical issues relating to water resources in each sub-area of the Lower Mekong Basin.

Sub-area analysis provides the basis for formulating scenarios and strategies (Stages 2 and 3 of the BDP planning process) for water use in the sub-areas and basin wide.

## 4.2 Objectives

The **primary objective** (and outcome) for the initial stakeholder forum is: the identification of key issues and opportunities (including constraints) for development of water and related resources in the sub-area. By narrowing the sub-area analysis to the key development issues, assets, and trends, this process will define scope of BDP planning relevant to the sub-area. Relevant questions include:

- What sectors or combination of sectors represent the principal needs and priorities for development in the sub-area?
- What environmental, economic and social factors constitute opportunities for development?
- What are the constraints to development?
- What are the major differences of opinion about development directions for the sub-area?

The **second objective** of the initial stakeholder forum is: the establishment of a participatory planning process for the sub-area, involving representatives of a wide range of stakeholders.

Diverse stakeholders participation in the sub-area analysis will:

- broaden the discussion leading to the identification of more issues, opportunities and constraints to be considered.
- validate, or challenge and lead to revision of the information presented in the preliminary analyses
- enhance planners' the understanding, and leading to an integration of the priority needs and concerns of local people and groups (directly or indirectly) affected by the development of water resources in the sub-area

- increase the understanding of wide range of local stakeholders on the BDP, and thus increase the prospects for wider stakeholder ‘ownership’ in the programmes or projects ( of relevance to the sub-area )

A *third outcome* of the initial stakeholder forum will be the identification of information gaps to complete the situation analysis of the sub-areas (also preparation of a work plan, responsibilities and schedule for any additional data collection and analysis to complete Stage 1 of the BDP planning process).

## 4.3 Approach

The approach to the initial stakeholder forum is broadly adapted from the Objectives-Oriented Project Planning (ZOPP) 1 approach which is commonly used by many agencies as a planning tool for new and ongoing projects and programmes. A ZOPP process provides a participatory framework for situation analysis, leading through consideration of problems and opportunities to identification of development objectives. Specific adaptation for consideration of long-term scenarios and identification of potential projects and programmes will be incorporated to align the ZOPP tool to the BDP planning stages.

### *Some guidelines and key points for organizing a successful sub-area analysis forum*

- Involve representatives of as many stakeholders as practical (national, provincial, local)
- Use a facilitator with experience in situation analysis techniques
- Encourage and enable all representatives to participate in discussions and contribute their ideas (either during or after the forum)
- Make sure all information already collected is made available to forum participants before hand
- Recognize that internal and external stakeholders ( who have not participated in preparing background information) may have an abundance of valuable new knowledge to bring to the forum and the BDP process

The preparation for SAF 1 includes:

- regional and national sector reviews carried out by the BDP teams at the Secretariat and NMCs, and
- preliminary analyses of the situation in each sub-area conducted by sub-area working groups.

These analyses constitute background information for the SAF 1. In addition to overviews at regional and national levels they include GIS mapping of existing data and information about

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<sup>1</sup> ZOPP is a German acronym for ‘Zielorientierte Projekt Planung’ which translates into English as objectives-oriented project planning. Amongst others, the German development agency GTZ has provided ZOPP training for many facilitators working in Mekong riparian countries. GTZ offices would be able to provide more information about possible facilitators to assist in conducting sub-area forums. In essence, ZOPP processes have two phases: analysis and planning. The first workshop in a ZOPP process usually concentrates on analysing information, and identifying needs or problems. All participants are provided opportunity to review and give feedback on the information being considered.



conditions in the sub-area, initial review of ongoing and proposed developments in the sub-area etc.

It is most important to have an experienced facilitator to conduct the forum. Assuming that participants are only available for a one day SAF 1 workshop, the facilitator will have to ensure that time is used as efficiently as possible.

It is inevitable and positive that some stakeholders will seek to extend their participation after SAF 1 and interact in follow-up discussions with BDP staff and/or the SAF 1 facilitator. This should be encouraged as it is highly unlikely that participants would have all additional opinion and information at their disposal during the meeting. There is a lot of information being prepared for the forums. Determining which information is most salient and responding to the issues which arise will take more than one day for many participants. Moreover, some participants may prefer to make their inputs more privately after the forum.

The forum itself should be carried out partly in plenary session (with all stakeholders) and, partly in smaller group discussions that report back to the plenary. The final choice will depend on the number of participants and the facilitators' methods for conducting the forum.

### ***Step 1: Basin cooperation and BDP context, plus participants introductions***

*Approximately 0.5 hours*

Rapid overview of Mekong River Commission context (1995 Mekong River Agreement, history of cooperation etc.) and the BDP context (embedded in the 1995 Agreement), Mekong Basin context (pointing out other sub-areas etc.), workshop objectives, agenda and participant introductions. Questions of clarification and purpose should be promptly responded to by the facilitator.

### ***Step 2: Situation and issue analysis for sub-area***

*Approximately 2.5 hours (including a mid-session break)*

Presentation of Mekong Basin overview context

Presentation of summary of national sector reviews (relevant to sub-area)

Presentation of sub-area sector information:

- 1 Irrigated agriculture
- 2 Watershed management
- 3 Fisheries
- 4 Hydropower
- 5 Navigation, transport, river works
- 6 Tourism and recreation (water related)
- 7 Water supplies (domestic and industrial uses)
- 8 Flood control and management

Summary of cross-cutting issues which emerge from a review of all sector papers:

- 1 Social issues

- 2 Economic issues
- 3 Environmental issues
- 4 Water resources issues

Discussion of key sub-area development issues, assets and trends

Clearly, the presentations for this early part of SAF 1 will require careful preparation by the members of the sub-area working group, and/or consultants who will make the presentations. They must be clear and concise, setting the scene for the following discussions. In particular, the part that presents cross-cutting issues will require a careful review of the sector studies.

### ***Step 3: Pre-lunch plenary discussion***

*Approximately 0.5 hours*

It will be important to ensure that the previous presentations do not run over time so as to allow time for an initial plenary discussion of the morning's presentations prior to the lunch break. The facilitator will have to decide how the group will work in the post-lunch session, and make arrangements with participants eg. divide up according to stakeholder interest in particular sectors or cross-cutting issues?

### ***Step 4 :Sub-area needs, opportunities/constraints and threats analysis***

*Approximately 2.5 hours including mid-session break and plenary feedback*

Small group discussion – sub-area needs, opportunities/constraints and threats

Plenary – consolidation of small group work

This step leads on from the identification of key sub-area development issues, assets and trends. The analysis involves discussion of the issues affecting the sub-area as a means to identifying opportunities/constraints and threats. It is expected that various stakeholders will have different perspectives on problems and opportunities as well as how to harness the potential of the sub-area. The main focus should be on the sub-area, but also the context of neighboring sub-areas or the LMB as a whole should be raised during discussions. Such tools as "problem/opportunity trees" could be considered to facilitate group discussions and the plenary session.

### ***Step 5: Preliminary discussion of development objectives for sub-area***

*Approximately 0.25 hours*

Identify short-term (circa 5-10 years) development objectives – reference to current national and provincial plans / sub-area problems, constraints/opportunities and threats.

Identify long-term (circa 20 years) development objectives – reference key sub-area assets, issues, trends

An objective can be considered to be a situation in the future that the participants consider to be desirable. For the short to medium term objectives, they are likely to be at least partially covered in national or provincial plans, although specific consideration of sub-area problems, constraints and opportunities is likely to raise a number of water-related factors

that have not yet been fully covered. For long-term objectives, broader consideration of key sub-area assets, driving forces and trends will be needed, together with views on the potential to mobilize the resources required to achieve the development goals.

If the time available, all that could be achieved is a brief discussion of some example development objectives. Consensus could not, and should not be sought. Stakeholders would be invited to contribute their suggestions of example development objectives to assist the organizers prepare for SAF 2.

### ***Step 6: Preliminary discussion of scenarios and strategies***

*Approximately 0.25 hours*

Introduction to use of scenarios in BDP process

Review long-term sub-area objectives – discuss assumptions related to factors needed to reach objectives

Identify possible alternative long-terms scenarios for sub-area

Discuss examples of management strategies associated with alternative scenarios

#### ***Scenarios***

BDP is using a scenario-based approach to planning and a scenario assessment tool (the Decision Support Framework) is being developed by the Water Utilization Programme (WUP). Scenarios are descriptions of possible future development alternatives – things that might happen. For BDP, each scenario is an example of what might happen to the water resource system under a particular set of assumptions.

The purpose of this step is to introduce to the participants the scenario-based approach to planning being used by BDP and using the outcomes from earlier steps in the forum to discuss examples of long-term scenarios for the sub-area. These could include:

- A no development scenario, where water demands are assumed to increase with population and economic growth, but without changes to existing management practices and infrastructure
- A high development scenario, where demand increases and significant interventions are made
- A conservation scenario, where protection of the environment is given highest priority.

The influence of differing scenarios on management strategies should also be introduced. However, it should be borne in mind that alternative long-term scenarios and management strategies for the sub-area will be one of the main points for discussion and agreement during SAF 2.

Again, in the time available, all that could be achieved is a brief discussion of some example views of scenarios. Consensus could not, and should not be sought. Stakeholders would be invited to contribute their suggestions of example scenarios to assist the organizers prepare for SAF 2.

***Step 7: Preliminary discussion of potential sub-area programmes and/or projects***

*Approximately 0.25 hours*

Introduction to guidelines for project/programme selection – long-list pro-forma

Small group discussion – identification of potential sub-area projects and programmes

Plenary session – preliminary list of potential projects and programmes

A pro-forma that incorporates criteria for inclusion of projects/programmes on a long-list is progressively being updated. The types of projects that can be considered for BDP will be introduced, emphasising the basin-wide, trans-boundary focus of MRC cooperation. Initial ideas and/or projects/programmes already included in national and provincial plans can be raised. Again, considerable time will be devoted to identifying potential projects/programmes during SAF 2.

Again, in the time available, all that could be achieved is a brief discussion of the selection criteria for the programmes/projects which will result from the BDP. Consensus could not, and should not be sought. Stakeholders would be invited to contribute their suggestions of selection criteria to assist the organizers prepare for SAF 2.

***Step 8: Work plan for completion of sub-area analysis***

*Approximately 0.5 hours*

Summarize information gaps needed to complete sub-area analysis

Draft work plan to fill information gaps, including responsibility and timing

The workshop participants should summarize the information gaps identified during the course of the forum. They should then agree on a work plan for the most efficient and reasonable manner to fill these gaps and how additional information can be effectively used during Forum 2. The work plan should designate responsibilities and set a time frame.

***Step 9: Wrap-up and agreement on SAF 2***

*Approximately 0.5 hours*

Review and summary of main outcomes from SAF 1.

Agreement on content, timing and venue for SAF 2.

***Concluding remarks***

As can be seen from the steps, the 1 day program for SAF 1 is ambitious. The facilitation of the forum must rapidly create a situation where attendees can become, and wish to become, genuinely involved in the BDP process, either at the forum, or in subsequent follow up.



## 5 Forum 2



## 5.1 Context

Stage 1 of the BDP planning process (analysis of the Lower Mekong Basin and Sub-areas) is tasked with determining key options and constraints for development. This will be done by analysing local concerns and requirements as well as regional trends and transboundary cause-effect relationships. Sub-area analysis will provide a basis for formulating scenarios and strategies for water use in the basin (Stages 2 and 3 of the BDP planning process). This will lead in due course to long and short lists of projects and programmes.

Stakeholder Sub-area Forums and smaller multi-country ( transboundary) Meetings will be important and integral part of this sub-area analysis process<sup>1</sup>

### ***Sub-area Forum No. 1***

Sub-area Forum No. 1 (or SAF No. 1) consists of two main components. First, it brings together, for the first time within BDP, various stakeholders who have an interest in the planning and development of water resources in the sub-area. Second, the Forum attempts to focus ongoing sub-area studies and analysis on those issues that stakeholders agree are key to the development of the sub-area.

### ***Sub-area Forum No. 2***

Sub-area Forum No. 2 (or SAF No. 2) takes the process further forward, looking in more detail at scenarios, broad development options and examples of candidate programmes and projects. SAF No. 2 will therefore contribute directly to BDP Stage 2: analysis of development scenarios, Stage 3: development objectives and strategy formulation and Stage 4: long list of projects and programmes.

### ***Cross-border or transboundary meetings: between sub-areas that share a catchment***

BDP is about planning for a river basin and river basin and catchment boundaries do not always match country borders. There is thus a need for meetings between Sub-areas that share a catchment. This would introduce the concept of inter-dependence to the relevant Sub-areas at the earliest possible stage.

Those BDP sub-areas that have a significant cross-border dimension are:

- 6LC: Southern Laos / Northern Cambodia (includes territory in Lao PDR and Cambodia)
- 7LCV: Se San / Sre Pok / Se Kong (includes territory in Lao PDR, Cambodia and Viet Nam)
- 10CV: Delta (includes territory in Cambodia and Viet Nam)

For these Sub-areas, it will be important to hold Cross-border Meetings, involving key stakeholder representatives from each country. Constructive facilitation to bring together the representatives of the Sub-area working groups and other key stakeholders from each country could be very helpful.

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<sup>1</sup> See BDP 005 “Basin Development Plan Draft Guideline for Sub-area Analysis”

### *Interface meetings*

Two Interface Meetings will further enhance BDP analysis. The interface will be held between 2 independent Sub-areas that are on the opposite side of the Mekong Main stream. The primary objectives of this meeting are to 1) account for the main stream in the basin planning both at Sub-area and basin wide planning. 2) to discuss transboundary issues between the 2 Sub-areas. The first will be between 1L Northern Laos and 2T Northern Thailand. The second will work towards increasing cross-border understandings of issues common to 3T Songkram River/Upper Northeast Thailand and 4L Central Laos.

## 5.2 Objectives

The overall aim of the second Sub-area Forum is to provide an avenue for local stakeholders - those concerned with the Sub-area and responsible for its development - to contribute directly to the shaping of the Basin Development Plan. In the process, participants' awareness of their basin rights as well as basin responsibilities will be strengthened – as well as their understanding and ownership of the Basin Development Plan process.

This broad aim is supported by four specific objectives.

The first objective for the second stakeholder Forum is:

*To review a synthesis of the understandings developed from (a) the Sub-area studies (b) SAF No.1 output and (c) work subsequent to SAF No.1 and to endorse / amend a summary of a “present position” situation analysis of the Sub-area*

The second objective for the second stakeholder Forum is:

*To get responses to and improve outline development scenarios for the Sub-area over the next 5-20 years*

The third objective for the second stakeholder Forum is:

*To develop an understanding of Sub-area / Basin interdependence, leading to development of some draft basin-wide objectives, based on local stakeholder views on what is important for the joint management of the Mekong*

The fourth objective for the second stakeholder Forum is:

*To review the project / programme selection process and criteria, and to develop first ideas for one or more example projects / programmes, of high relevance to the Sub-area but also fitting the basin-wide criteria*

## 5.3 Approach

### 5.3.1 Essential substance-related work to bridge Forum No. 1 and Forum No. 2

It is important that all SAF No.2 Forums start off on the same footing. As the ambition and completeness of SAF No.1 will have varied from Sub-area to Sub-area, it follows that some Sub-areas will have more work to do - some less - in preparation for SAF No.2.

Whatever the starting point, prior to Forum No. 2 the following essential activities will need to have been completed by the BDP National Working Group and BDP Unit:



- Follow up on Forum No. 1, seeking additional information, views and insights from those Forum participants who still have something to say
- Collection of remaining information by Sub-area Working Groups, filling the gaps identified at SAF No. 1 and implementing the workplan agreed at the Forum
- Based on the Sub-area studies and the outputs from Forum No. 1, development of a “present position” Situation Analysis Paper for the Sub-area
- Preparation of three or four Draft Development Scenarios for the Sub-area over the next 5-20 years

### 5.3.2 Documents

Two documents should be prepared in preparation of Forum 2: (a) a Situation Analysis Paper and (b) Alternative Development Scenarios for the Sub-area.

These two outputs will be essential tools for the successful implementation of SAF No.2 and the onward development of the BDP process. The work will need to be prepared by BDP National Working Group and BDP Unit, perhaps supported by external consultants.:

The *Situation Analysis* will attempt to draw together the information from the Sub-area studies, the National Sector Reviews, Forum SAF No.1 output and other sources. It will synthesise this information into a succinct statement of “present position” in the Sub-area. Amongst other questions the Situation Analysis should answer are: “how do things stand right now in the Sub-area with relation to water and water-related resources?” / “what are the trends, opportunities and constraints?” / “what are the principal cause / effect relationships?”

The *Alternative Development Scenarios for the Sub-area* will paint realistic alternative development pictures for the Sub-area, taking account of national and provincial policies, plans and objectives. Essentially scenarios will explore the question: “if we do this and this, and that and that happens externally, then what would the outcomes be in terms of likely social, livelihoods, economic and environmental change?” The scenarios should also include external implications (i.e. what is needed from and what the likely impact is on other Sub-areas / countries).

These are both challenging and intellectual pieces of work – but it is essential that they are carried out well for each Sub-area - and in a timely manner - if the bottom-up participatory approach that BDP aims at is to succeed.

For this reason, a learning workshop, resourced by BDP team members and external resource persons, will agree an appropriate process. The workshop will assist BDP Coordinators and other members of the country teams to learn or hone the necessary skills to successfully manage and guide the work. One Sub-area in one of the four countries will be taken as an example and a trial analysis and scenario development carried out. Subsequently, practical guidelines will be developed<sup>1</sup>. Close monitoring and support to the work in the remaining Sub-areas will follow.

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<sup>1</sup> The following two papers already give some guidance:

- (i) BDP Paper 005 *Draft Guideline: Sub-area analysis*
- (ii) BDP Paper 006 *BDP Data System Part 2 Working Paper on Information needs assessment and information available at MRCS*

Hands-on consultant and BDP team support will also be available to all Sub-areas to the development of this important work. Given its importance – and the need for high quality and credible work - each NMC is also strongly urged to recruit appropriately skilled and locally-based consultants to resource this key analytical phase.

### 5.3.3 Forum methodology and process

The proposed methodology for SAF No.2 is ambitious, and will require skilful preparation, organization and facilitation. But it is necessary if the desired output is to be achieved.

The broad steps proposed in conducting the Forum are as follows:

#### *Setting the scene*

Some of the participants in SAF No.2 will have participated in SAF No.1, and some will not, so it will be particularly important to make sure that all participants start from the same point. The Forum should therefore begin by a quick MRC and BDP briefing,

#### *Update since Forum 1*

Updating of participants on the results of SAF No.1 and work that has been done since through a progress overview will follow. This overview will be based on a summary of the key issues and opportunities (including constraints) for development of water and related resources in the Sub-area - as identified in SAF No. 1. It will also summarize how information gaps have been filled since then. The briefing should however not attempt to recapitulate the detailed findings of the Sub-area studies. Clarifications can be given if necessary in plenary, but it is important not to spend too long on this stage of the Forum.

#### *Situation analysis*

A presentation of the Situation Analysis – a synthesis of the present situation in the Sub-area, including identified trends and cause / effect relationships – will follow. This will be pre-prepared, based on the Sub-area studies, the output of SAF No.1, information gap filling activities, and detailed analysis of all these findings. Again, this presentation will be open to questions and clarification in plenary. It is important that additional insights are sought from the Forum participants, and any missing perspectives noted.

#### *Alternative development scenarios*

These initial presentations and dialogues will lead into probably the most important part of the Forum, a discussion on Alternative Development Scenarios for the development of the Sub-area in the next 5-20 years. Firstly, a broad description of three or four potential scenarios will be presented. After clarifications, the Forum will move into probably its most participatory mode, small working groups. These will discuss and report back to plenary on each of the scenarios, raising questions for discussion by the whole Forum.

#### *Links with the Basin*

The question of which scenario is the most preferred or the most likely should be deliberately deferred by the facilitator at this stage. Instead, realisation needs to be built that such a decision depends not only on the internal dynamics and ambitions of the Sub-area,

but also on what goes on outside of the Sub-area that might affect its water needs. Similarly, from the reverse perspective, the facilitator will need to build awareness through discussion that what goes on within the Sub-area may well also affect the reasonable needs / livelihoods of those outside (in other Sub-areas / in other countries).

This is a most important step. Awareness of the wider issues and the need to closely link local needs with basin responsibilities is essential if BDP is to succeed. Participants need to explore the concept of what it is to be a “basin citizen” and what it means in terms of expectations from – and duties to – other parts of the basin.

At the same time macro influences on the Sub-area (actions by countries outside the LMB, global warming, climate change etc.) also need to be introduced into the discussion. A final factor to be considered might be shared basin needs and influences of a less substantive nature - such as research, human resource development, information sharing, communications and the like. These clearly cut across country and Sub-area boundaries.

### ***Basin Development Objectives***

The important dialogue in the previous stage – assuming it is successful - should lead naturally into the next stage of the Forum, a discussion on desirable basin-wide development objectives - their impact on the Sub-area and on what the Sub-area should and can do. Through this the balance and interdependence between livelihoods, economic, social and environmental objectives should become clearer.

If wished and if time is available, scenarios might now be revisited in the broader light of basin responsibilities. A tentative choice might be made on the preferred and “reserve” scenarios – or qualities selected from several that should be retained.

### ***Project selection processes***

Finally, a proposed project cycle and project decision making process and criteria will be presented, and active feedback sought on these. With all the foregoing stages in mind, the Forum will be asked to propose and consider just one or two example development projects (not a long wish list) in the Sub-area. The essential question that needs to be considered is how these would fit with the proposed basin-wide development objectives and project / programme selection criteria.

This is an important outcome for the Forum: firstly helping participants see that projects and programmes of benefit to the Sub-area will likely be the practical and real medium term result of BDP and secondly, reminding them that these will need to have a basin-wide or transboundary link and be “basin friendly” to be incorporated in the Basin Development Plan.

### ***Wrap up - and ensuring continuity***

A last issue to address is to summarize the Forum achievements and to remind participants that their inputs have played – and will continue to play – a very important part in the BDP process.

Some ideas on how to keep the growing BDP stakeholder network active and involved should be discussed in plenary. In particular discussion should be encouraged on how to link

with and be kept informed of subsequent Forums (Country Forums, Basin Forums) and other BDP developments. This would make an appropriate closing point for the Forum.

***Some key points for organizing a successful Sub-area Forum***

- Involve representatives of as wide a range of key stakeholders as is practical (local, provincial, national)
- Consider using a facilitator with experience of participatory techniques and give him/her a sufficient mandate to independently guide the Forum process
- Encourage and enable all representatives to participate in discussions and contribute their ideas (either during or after the Forum)
- Make sure all available information is made available to Forum participants, beforehand if possible
- Recognise that some external and internal stakeholders, who may have not participated in preparing background information or in earlier stages, may have valuable new knowledge or insights to bring to the Forum
- Keep a reasonable balance between prepared work for presentation and fresh input from the Forum, with a balance in favour of stakeholder contributions
- Be prepared to be flexible, adapt thinking and find compromise as new insights emerge

#### 5.3.4 Maximizing effective participation

Forum No.2 will be more complex than Forum No.1, as it addresses aspects such as scenarios and strategies. It also has a key role to play in linking Sub-area and Basin level thinking.

Sub-area Forum No.2 will also need to set a further positive example of stakeholder engagement. This will be part of the growing practice of good governance by MRC and the NMCs. A genuine effort will be made to hear – and take account of – the voices of a wide variety of “stakeholders” - an essential part of the intended BDP planning process.

To this end, it might be considered to recruit an experienced facilitator to conduct the Forum, to guide and lead the participatory process. He / she would be independent, and help stimulate all participants to express their views, and help structure the outcome. A facilitator would also help overcome any differences, and make sure that any conflicting viewpoints are noted for further dialogue if necessary. BDP, MRC and NMC credibility would be enhanced by such utilizing such an open, neutral process.

Whatever the approach adopted, an open and non-hierarchical approach will be needed and will require the cooperation and goodwill of all participants. This will help ensure that all viewpoints are heard, and a strongly participatory process will be brought to a successful conclusion.

The Forum itself should be carried out partly in plenary session with all stakeholders and partly in smaller group discussions that report back to the plenary. There will also be short presentations and opportunities for social interaction. Although the final choice of programme will depend on the number of participants and the method chosen for conducting the Forum, a recommended programme of events, spread over two days, is put forward in Appendix 4.

Small group work might be supported by resource persons, one assigned to each discussion group. These would be selected beforehand from NMC or SAWG( Sub-area Working Group), and given some basic pre-Forum training in group facilitation techniques. They would also be briefed by the NMC team members to ensure they are familiar and comfortable with the substantive content of the Forum, and can respond to any requests for clarification within the small groups.

Forum functions, such as a welcoming dinner or the lunch breaks, can sometimes be used for cross-introductions (getting to know each other) and generally “breaking the ice”. For this reason it might be preferred to have the welcoming dinner on the first evening of arrival, rather than in the middle or at the end of the Forum.

It is important to separate out the necessary “formal” opening and closing sessions from the more relaxed and perhaps facilitated sessions. Sometimes a break for photos gives the opportunity for a change of mood, removal of the “top table” furniture, and seating rearrangement if necessary.

Similarly, if the media are present, it is important to restrict any visual intrusion (flash cameras, video cameras etc.) to the two formal sessions. Whilst exercising their normal personal responsibility, participants in the main facilitated sessions should feel absolutely free to express their views without being on camera or formally “on the record”. This should be made clear in the opening briefings.

The organizers may also wish to use an informal Forum evaluation process at the end of the workshop through feedback forms, “mood meters” throughout the Forum, or in some other way.

### 5.3.5 Detailed preparations

Because Forum 2 covers more challenging concepts than SAF No. 1 and requires participants to make the important link between Sub-area needs and wider Basin responsibilities, thorough preparation will be essential if it is to be successful.

#### *Forum planning*

- Review the output from Step 6 in the guideline for SAF No. 1 (which discussed content, timing and venue for SAF No.2) - and see to what extent these ideas can be adopted
- Carry out an analysis of stakeholders, to better understand who should come and why. What perspective do they represent? What insights can they bring to the Forum?
- Based on this analysis, preparation of an appropriate invitation list (which should remain open also to requests from others with a genuine interest or stake in the process)

- NWGs and SAWGs (as well as senior officers in the involved NMCs and line agencies) should hold briefing and preparation meetings as may be required. These will both seek their views and keep them fully engaged.
- It is particularly important that NMC management fully supports the open, facilitated debate that is the essence of SAFs, and that senior officers are aware of their roles in the Forum through one-to-one briefings.
- For certain key participants or participant groups, it may be worthwhile having informal face-to-face pre-Forum briefing meetings, to better prepare these participants, raise confidence in the process to be used, and maximize effective inputs.
- If so decided, identification and thorough briefing of an experienced and independent facilitator, to help the Forum process, and his / her familiarisation with key colleagues and NMC management. Because of the significance of this potential role, it might be sensible to consider bringing in facilitators early in the preparation process, to benefit from their insights and also help ensure they are fully briefed.
- Identification, from within the ranks of the NMC and SAWG, of several resource persons. These would help the Forum processes, particularly during small group work. Arrangements would need to be made for training these resource persons in basic group facilitation techniques, and carrying out practice group-facilitation exercises.

### ***Background material to be sent out in advance***

An appropriate Forum “briefing kit” should be developed and distributed well in advance. Additional copies should also be available at the Forum itself. Material for the briefing kit and / or for display at the Forum might include:

- Follow up and feedback forms
- “Present position” Situation Analysis Paper for the Sub-area
- Paper describing three or four draft Development Scenarios for the Sub-area
- Summary sheets describing the main themes of the Situation Analysis and draft Scenarios (say two pages maximum for the Situation Analysis and one page maximum for each Scenario)
- Regional Sector Reviews carried out by the MRC Secretariat BDP team
- National Sector Reviews carried out by the NMCs
- Reports on any recent Stakeholder Outreach initiatives by the NMCs
- MRC, NMC and BDP background literature

### ***Material for the Forum***

#### *Main papers*

The following papers will constitute essential background information for SAF No.2, and will need to be presented in clear summary form at the Forum:

- A summary update on work since SAF No.2

- The “present position” Situation Analysis Paper for the Sub-area
- The three or four Draft Development Scenarios for the Sub-area over the next 5-20 years

Summary sheets for both the Situation Analysis and the Scenarios should be produced, helping build understanding amongst those that have no time to read the full reports – or would welcome being reminded of the main themes.

#### *Reserve resources*

The following resources should also be prepared in case they are needed in the Forum:

- Starter questions, to be raised if it proves necessary to get discussion going
- Some possible draft basin-wide Development Objectives for discussion, in case they do not emerge
- In case they do not emerge, ideas for one or more example Projects / Programmes, of high relevance to the Sub-area but also fitting within the basin-wide criteria

#### *Display material*

Aside from additional copies of material included in the Briefing Kit and any appropriate supplementary papers, visual displays should be prepared for use in the room used for plenary. These might include maps, photos, news cuttings etc. – not only of the Sub-area but of the Basin and other typical Sub-areas too. These can form useful focal points for discussion, during coffee breaks for example.

### 5.3.6 Duration and follow-up

In order to be effective and give enough time for proper discussion it is essential that the Forum spans *two consecutive days*.

However, it is inevitable - and positive - that some stakeholders will seek to extend their participation after SAF No.2 and interact in follow up discussions with BDP staff. This should be encouraged. However participatory the process, it is in fact highly unlikely that participants will be able to table all their opinions and insights during the meeting.

There are also a lot of concepts and ideas to digest during the Forum. Determining what aspects are most relevant and responding properly to the issues which arise will take some time for many participants. Some may prefer a chance to think things through. Moreover, some participants may wish to make their inputs more privately after the Forum, rather than during it.

Follow up contributions from participants will therefore need to be actively promoted and facilitated.

### 5.3.7 Proposed programme

As can be seen from the proposed steps in the proposed Programme (Appendix 4), the two-day programme for SAF No. 2 will, like SAF 1, be very intensive. The facilitation of the

Forum must rapidly create a situation where attendees wish – and are able – to become genuinely involved in the BDP process, either at the Forum, or in subsequent follow up.

Thorough preparation, good process facilitation and active follow up will be critical if this is to succeed.

## 5.4 Outputs and results

Assuming it is successfully executed, Sub-area Forum No. 2 should yield a number of important outputs and results. Amongst others these will include:

### *Substance-related output:*

- A Situation Analysis for the Sub-area that has been, and then broadly agreed and improved by adding additional insights
- A set of development Scenarios for the Sub-area, amended and agreed as alternatives for consideration, with one broadly accepted as being more desirable than the others
- Some contributions to potential Basin-wide development objectives
- Feedback on / improvement of project selection processes, criteria and pro-formas, and one or two first examples of projects or programmes of relevance to the Sub-area but with significant trans boundary or Basin-wide significance as well

### *Process-related results:*

- A committed group of stakeholders who are interested in BDP, see its potential and know that they can express their views on it – and that they will be listened to
- Widened understanding about the links between Sub-area and Basin
- A heightened awareness at sub-Basin level of the interdependency of Basin residents, and the need to plan conservation, development and use of water and water-related resources together
- Learning for all involved on how to better engage stakeholders in subsequent stages

# 7 Issues and priorities

### *Openness and transparency*

It is believed that BDP Phase 1 has taken place in full openness in relation to internal as well as external stakeholders. All major documents have been broadly circulated during their preparation (which in many cases proceeded over lengthy periods of time). The '*BDP Archive*' (containing all technical documents of any practical interest) has been maintained and distributed widely via NMCs, at workshops and seminars, and to visitors. A series of posters has been prepared that provide at-a-glance information about the BDP.



The transparency of the planning process has been somewhat less than ideal, simply because the process was a continuous learning exercise, being adapted according to needs as experience was achieved. For example, the guidelines that were anticipated at an early stage were drafted, but were never formally agreed on.

### *Participation by external stakeholders*

During BDP Phase 1, most of the dialogue has taken place with internal stakeholders. There is a scope for increased involvement by external stakeholders, such as NGOs, the scientific community, and the general public.

### *Participation by women*

The third so-called '*Dublin Principle*' states that '*Women play a central part in the provision, management and safeguarding of water.*'<sup>1</sup>

During BDP Phase 1, women constituted an average of 8% of the participants in the sub-area forums.

### *Mandate of MRC*

MRC is in a particular position to promote, support and facilitate public participation, but implementation must always be done via, and often by the NMCs and the line agencies.

Also, there are differences between national policies and modalities for public participation.

During BDP Phase 1, however, these circumstances did not impede the work, at all, except for the formality that a guideline could not be agreed on.

## 8 Solutions

### *Openness and transparency*

The openness and transparency can be further enhanced by

- more use of national languages, by necessity in combination with clear and crisp reporting wherever appropriate;
- consolidation and continued maintenance of the 'BDP Archive', possibly with national language sections;
- continued use of posters, and (perhaps) a video;
- use of agreed guidelines (that would make the planning process more transparent);
- better use of Internet dissemination - for example of draft documents - and supported by newsletters via the (widely used) MekongInfo platform. This was tried

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<sup>1</sup> International Conference of Water and the Environment, Dublin 1992

during the formulation of the MRC Flood Management and Mitigation Programme (although the response was disappointing) <sup>1</sup>.

### *Participation by external stakeholders*

The participation by external stakeholders can be enhanced by

- active approaches to MRC partners and institutional stakeholders, including development agencies and NGOs;
- active approaches to the scientific community, including participation in (and presentations to) relevant conferences and seminars;
- occasional press releases, press conferences and articles in newspapers;
- invitation of broader participation in key workshops and seminars, where appropriate;
- consolidation of existing, and development of new linkages to the upcoming River Basin Committees/ River Basin Organizations in the Lower Mekong Basin.

### *Participation by women*

There is a clear scope for strengthened participation by women throughout the BDP process. Basically, this requires increased awareness by all involved organizations.

## 9 Findings and recommendations/ lessons learnt

By early 2005, Forum 1 and 2 have been conducted in all BDP sub-areas. In Thailand, the two forums were combined into one. A series of transboundary meetings were held in late 2004.

Several particular aspects have characterized the stakeholder participation in the BDP formulation process: <sup>2</sup>

- (i) The four member countries have quite different policies and modalities regarding stakeholder participation in public planning. MRC must strictly observe the national policies and practices, and all activities at the national level (including a large part of the stakeholder dialogue) is taking place by or via the autonomous National Mekong Committees;

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<sup>1</sup> All draft documents were published on the Internet, and comments were invited in a MekongInfo newsletter to all subscribers, but the response was nil. Still, the exercise cost nearly nothing, and it is believed that Internet dissemination is a powerful tool for dialogue with institutional stakeholders and the media

<sup>2</sup> Muanpong Juntopas and T. K. Nielsen (Jul 05)

- (ii) a stakeholder dialogue about transboundary, multi-sector, strategic development efforts is technically more difficult (and less 'sexy') than a dialogue about a single sector in a single country, not to speak of a specific intervention;
- (iii) stakeholder participation based on documentation that is predominantly in English is not at all effective in this region;
- (iv) on the other hand, it can reasonably be claimed that all or most people living in the Lower Mekong Basin have some potential interest in one or several elements of the BDP;
- (v) national routines for stakeholder participation are not fully consolidated, as well as the confidence between the actors that are a precondition for a fruitful process with a useful outcome.

While the process has been fully open to any external participation, with all key documents broadly published and disseminated, it has mostly involved institutional stakeholders, and only to a limited extent. Reasons include a lack of promotion, and perhaps also the subject matter being partly of a conceptual rather than a tangible character.

## 10 Relevance

### 10.1 Relevance for NMCs and/or line agencies

The stakeholder dialogue on water-related development is highly relevant for the NMCs and the line agencies. First, these organizations share, by definition, a common interest in a successful BDP; and second, the dialogue and feedback is not always confined to strictly '*water-related and transboundary*' issues.

*As observed by CNMC, 'ideas emerging from the Sub-areas that do not fit in with the wider outlook of BDP will not be discarded, but will be directed towards existing local, provincial or national planning channels. The involvement of national planning institutions and agencies has been important from the earliest stages to allow this filtering to progressively take place and to ensure general conformity with the national planning procedures in the riparian countries'.<sup>1</sup>*

### 10.2 Relevance for MRCS and/or BDP Phase 2

Public participation is important to many MRC activities, and lessons learnt (and progress made) under one programme can often benefit other programmes.

During BDP Phase 2, the modalities introduced during Phase 1 should be retained, consolidated and expanded.

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<sup>1</sup> CNMC (Sep 03): Integrated water resources management in Cambodia, national sector review. Basin Development Plan Programme. Phnom Penh, Cambodia, p. 7

## 10.3 Recommendations

The participation modalities should be reviewed and revised based on experience gained during BDP Phase 1.

The work should be made in a close dialogue with the NMCs and should coordinate closely with related efforts under other MRC programmes.

# 11 Concluding general outlook

Today, there is a clear tendency towards direct public participation in the decision-making process, as well as in the daily water management. Public participation *'is here to stay'*. Water user groups exist in all four MRC member countries, and stakeholder involvement in various decisions is gradually being introduced in some of the member countries, but is still a new modality, in need of consolidation, including generation of some sound traditions as a supplement to the formalities.

It is expected that public participation will be facilitated by the river basin committees / river basin organizations that are planned or being established in many places within the Lower Mekong Basin. Also, the ongoing decentralization/deconcentration efforts will assist in the involvement of the general public in decisions that affect their welfare and livelihoods.

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# Appendix 1:

## Tips for successful forums

### ***Venue***

The venue selected should be appropriate for the needs. It should enable informal seating layouts, have good acoustics, and have facilities for breakout/working groups. Ideally it should be possible to have refreshment breaks and lunch in the same venue as - or nearby to - the Forum discussions. Coloured maps and MRC, NMC and BDP displays could be used to stimulate interest in BDP and what it intends to achieve.

### ***Seating***

Seating should be arranged to be deliberately different from the ranked lines of seats common in typical large-scale meetings. Instead, consider setting out chairs to make a series of circles (say 5-10 people in each circle), or crescent-shaped (with the arms pointing forward). Such layouts stimulate communication, and also are easily adapted for small group work. Tables are not essential and can sometimes present barriers to effective dialogue. The VIP 'top table' should only be set up for the formal opening and closing sessions.

### ***Independent facilitation***

Having an independent facilitator, carefully selected, well briefed and fully prepared is an important factor for a successful forum. The facilitator brings neutral guidance to the process, and should have no vested interests. His / her role is to guide and draw together a quite complex participatory process and possibly divergent views, from a fully independent standpoint. These are heavy responsibilities, and it is essential that the facilitator be allowed a free course of action by the Chairperson.

The facilitator needs to inspire the trust of stakeholders and help enable all voices to be heard. He or she will have techniques to draw out viewpoints, guide the debate, time manage sessions, overcome conflicts if any, and reach consensus or necessary compromise. Needless to say, the facilitator must have a good command of the relevant national language and culture. It might be worth conducting some dedicated training for a group of selected facilitators, to ensure that they all have access to the latest participatory methods and are up to date on BDP's intentions.

### ***Chairperson***

Chairpersons should be senior enough to be well respected - but remain willing to hand over the practical running of the Forums fully to the Facilitator. The Chair for each Forum must therefore be well briefed on (and in support of) the participatory, independently facilitated processes to be used. It is important that the Chair recognises that, outside of the formal opening and closing sessions, the debate will be open and informal. Chairpersons will help the process tremendously if they are prepared therefore to focus their role on setting the scene, summing up, and generally giving the meetings an essential credibility, rather than attempting to guide or influence the debates once they are in the hands of the Facilitator.

### ***Senior participants***

Senior officers should be similarly briefed to respect the process, and, unlike in more formal meetings, they should not seek to steer or guide the discussion or its outcome or expect to dominate it as 'experts'. The forum is consultative, rather than decision-making, and in this context, all voices are equal and should be enabled to be heard.

### ***Mix of participants***

There should be a wide range of participants and a good balance within the participant list. Amongst others, there should be balance between men and women, young and old, poor and better off, educated and less so, commune, district, provincial and national levels, private and public sector, government agencies, non governmental organisations (NGOs) and international agencies (IOs). The facilitator should ensure that more modest participants do not get 'drowned out' by more articulate colleagues who may be more used to public forums.

### ***Opening and closing formalities***

Formalities should be minimised and quickly completed.

### ***Media***

Although good media coverage is important (as is prior briefing of the media through press releases and briefing meetings), media coverage should not be intrusive, especially in the facilitated sessions.

### ***Numbers***

Attendance should be tailored to the type of forum – sub-area (including cross border) country or basin – but should probably not be less than 40 or more than 150 people. The key consideration is to allow all participants to have a voice if they wish. If there are too many people for the facilitator or for the chosen venue, that will become progressively difficult.

### ***Briefing material***

To save time at the forum, briefing of all participants before hand will be vital. This includes information on MRC, BDP, the role & objectives of the forum, and the process to be used during the forum. Briefing material should be prepared in the riparian language (as well as English where appropriate). All information should be distributed well before hand (at least 2 weeks), to enable interested participants to digest it properly.

### ***Reporting***

Careful capture of ideas and opinions is essential. For this reason two reliable rapporteurs, working in parallel, should be appointed, so as not to miss anything. Informal feedback and ideas outside the sessions can also be important. Good ideas that come up during coffee or meal breaks should therefore be noted.

### ***Contributing other than through attendance***

Invitees should be reminded that if they cannot attend the Forum, they can contribute instead by mail, fax, e-mail or hard copy. A Feedback Form should be distributed with the invitation. Those that attend the forum should also be reminded that they can still contribute further written contributions for a specified time after the forum. Again, Feedback Forms should be distributed at the forum for this purpose. Such feedback might be individually followed up by the organisers.

### ***Conflict resolution***

Allow some extra ‘float’ time in the programme for unexpected difficulties, ‘hot topics’ or the resolution of conflict. If these are not addressed on the spot and just ‘parked’, it may affect the integrity of the whole process. Agreeing to differ and recognise other viewpoints is an important part of the process.

### ***Post forum follow-up***

Feedback to participants on whether their inputs have been useful and how it has / will be used is extremely important. For that reason, some weeks after the Forum, a circular letter should be sent to all participants thanking them for their inputs, summarising the learning from the Forum, and setting out next steps. The ‘stakeholder networks’ thus formed should continue to be briefed – and further input sought – at subsequent stages of the BDP process. Unless this happens the Forum consultations at each level – even if successful – will be seen as token ‘one-off’ events.

## Appendix 2: BDP stakeholders

Thought needs to be given to proactively seeking the involvement of stakeholders at Sub-area forums (SAF), Cross-border Sub-area Forums (Cross border SAF), Country Forums (CF) and Basin Forums (BF). Different participants may be suited to different levels. For example, many of those listed below may not be able to contribute well at the Sub-area SAF, Cross-border SAF or Interface SAF, but would be quite valuable at either Country or Basin Forums.

Each Sub-area working group, plus the SAF facilitator, should give thought to who would be able or wanting to make a contribution to the Sub-area analysis and the SAF. National Working Groups and Sub-area working groups from different countries will have to work together to plan Cross-border SAF. The National Working Groups need to give similar thought when planning Country Forums. Organizers of the Basin Forums need to be equally thoughtful to ensure that a range of views are represented and brought to bear on the BDP process.

Without prejudicing the decisions of the Forum organizers, the following are some lists of stakeholders, provided as examples for consideration:

### *Cambodia Internal*

Cambodian NMC and associated ministries

Cambodian BDP Coordination Unit (equivalent to National Working Group in other countries)

Cambodian BDP team within CNMC

Cambodian Sub-area working group members

Groups within particular ministries (e.g. Mekong Units, Tonle Sap Coordinating Unit within Ministry of Environment, Fisheries project teams in Department of Fisheries, within the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry etc.)

Provincial, District and Commune based government officials

### *External*

Universities and technical or policy research institutes e.g. Cambodia Development Resource Institute (CDRI), Prek Leap Agriculture University, Royal University of Phnom Penh, the Cambodian Office of the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), Cambodia Agriculture Research and Development Institute (CARDI), Chamka Dong University, other members of the CGIAR organizations etc.

Civil society organizations e.g. Centre d'Etude et de Developpement Agricole Cambodgien (CEDAC), Fisheries Action Coalition Team (FACT), Cambodian NGO Forum, Culture and Environment Preservation Association (CEPA), representatives from fishery communities (Tonle Sap etc.), representatives from ethnic minorities in the northeast (Ratanakiri etc.), representatives from water user group networks, community researchers monitoring impact of Yali Dam on river communities etc.

Local consultants/researchers e.g. Toni Nooyens (Ratanakiri) etc.

Private sector e.g. Cambodian Development Council etc.

International NGOs e.g. IUCN, WWF, The Oxfams, CIDSE etc.



UN agencies e.g. UNDP, FAO etc.

Donors/lenders e.g. World Bank, ADB, JBIC, JICA, USAID, AusAID, SIDA, CIDA, DANIDA etc.

Specific individuals who are able, and may be willing, to make a contribution.

***Lao PDR*** *Internal*

Lao NMC and associated ministries

Lao BDP national working group

Lao BDP unit

Lao Sub-area working group members

Groups within particular ministries and offices (e.g. Water Resources Coordinating Group within Prime Minister's Office, Science Technology and Environment Agency (STEA) within Prime Minister's Office etc.

Provincial and local officials

*External*

Universities and technical or policy research institutes e.g. National University of Laos (NUOL), National Agriculture and Forestry Research Institute (NAFRI), National Economic Research Institute (NERI), International Water Management Institute (IWMI), other members of the CGIAR organizations etc.

Civil society organizations or mass organizations e.g. Lao Women's Union, fishery conservation groups in southern Laos provinces, farmers organizations in irrigated areas, Participatory Development Training Company (PADETC)

Local consultants/researchers e.g. Ecolaos, Lao Consulting Group, MEK Consult

Private sector e.g. hydropower joint venture partners, forestry concession joint venture partners, Doa Reung Coffee Company, VINAI Group

International NGOs e.g. IUCN etc.

UN agencies e.g. UNDP, FAO etc.

Donors/lenders e.g. World Bank, ADB, JBIC, JICA, USAID, AusAID, SIDA, CIDA, DANIDA etc.

Specific individuals who are able, and may be willing, to make a contribution.

***Thailand*** *Internal*

Thailand NMC and associated ministries

Thailand BDP national working group

Thailand BDP unit

Thailand Sub-area working group members

Groups within particular ministries and offices

Provincial and local officials

### *External*

Universities and technical or policy research institutes e.g. Ubon Ratchatani University, Khon Khaen University, Chiang Mai University (Regional Centre for Social and Sustainable Development, and, Social Research Institute, and Unit for Social and Environmental Research), Chiang Rai University, Chulalongkorn University, Thailand Environment Institute (TEI), Thailand Development Research Institute (TDRI), Focus on the Global South (FOCUS), The World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF), other members of the CGIAR organisations etc.

Civil society organisations or mass organisations e.g. Project for Ecological Recovery (PER), Southeast Asia Rivers Network (SEARIN), Northeast Assembly for the Poor, Northern Development Foundation, community fisheries network of Song Kram, CORD, Mae Mun fishery research group, Towards Ecological Recovery and Regional Alliance (TERRA), Nan peoples's network, IMPECT etc.

Local consultants/researchers e.g. SEATEC

Private sector e.g. agriculture investors, horticulture (especially citrus) investors, Sugar Cane Chain, tapioca industry representatives, Phoenix Pulp Company, Sun Tomato Processing Company, CP Talapia Cage Culture Group etc.

International NGOs e.g. IUCN, WWF, GRID, WRI-SEI-REPSI

UN agencies e.g. UNDP etc.

Donors/lenders e.g. World Bank, ADB, JBIC, JICA, USAID, AusAID, SIDA, CIDA, DANIDA etc.

### ***Viet Nam*** *Internal*

Vietnam NMC and associated ministries

Vietnam BDP national working group

Vietnam BDP unit

Vietnam sub-area working group members

Groups within particular ministries and offices

Provincial and local officials

### *External*

Universities and technical or policy research institutes e.g. Ho Chi Minh University of Agriculture and Forestry; Hanoi Water Resources University, and its Center for Regional Development and Research; Long Xuyen University in the delta, Can Tho University in the delta, Vietnam National University's Center for Natural Resources and Environmental Studies(CRES), Viet Nam Environment and Sustainable Development Centre, National Institute for Science Technology Policy and Strategic Studies (NISTPASS), within Department of Science Policy Studies, Ministry of Science & Technology, members of the CGIAR organisations etc.

Civil society organisations or mass organisations

Local consultants/researchers e.g. ESSA, SEI etc.

Private sector e.g. hydropower joint venture partners, aquaculture investors

International NGOs e.g. IUCN, WWF etc.

UN agencies e.g. UNDP, FAO etc.

Donors/lenders e.g. World Bank, ADB, JBIC, JICA, USAID, AusAID, SIDA, CIDA, DANIDA etc.

Specific individuals who are able, and may be willing, to make a contribution.

# Appendix 3:

## Roles of internal stakeholders

### *Stage 1: Analysis of the Lower Mekong Basin and selected Sub-areas*

#### *BDP sub-committee*

- Assignment of BDP national working groups, including approval of Terms of Reference
- Ensuring consistency of BDP with other MRC programmes
- Coordinating with MRCS, and with the wider BDP team, to ensure that activities are in line with those being carried out in other riparian countries

#### *MRCS BDP unit, national working groups and national BDP units*

- Overall coordination and supervision of sub-area working groups
- Consistency checks between sub-area analyses
- Identifying links between sub-areas and critical development issues and potential transboundary impacts
- Mobilise, coordinate and manage participation of NMCs and national/provincial line agencies
- Organise staff and equip the sub-area working groups to ensure that they have the capacity to carry out the work
- Ensure BDP responsibilities, task assignments, schedules and outputs are well understood by involved national partners
- Monitor the progress and course of action

#### *MRCS BDP unit*

- Coordination between MRCS working groups and between MRCS and NMCs
- Participation in MRC Core Programmes Management Group
- Establishing information base; producing reports
- Provide technical and facilitation back up for the BDP stakeholder participation

#### *MRCS working groups*

- Special inputs to BDP regarding environment, transboundary, water modelling and socio-economic issues from groups such as Water Utilisation Programme (WUP) Working Group 2, and the Environment Programme team.

#### *BDP sub-area working groups*

- Overall coordination of sub-area analysis

- Lead role in information collection and analysis; ensure on-going consultation with stakeholders in that sub-area
- Identify development opportunities and constraints, seek expert local advice
- Prepare and review of reports

*National and provincial government agencies*

- Provision of overall sub-area information and advice on information analysis
- On-going consultation with resource users for information exchange
- Assist in organising and participating in Sub-area forums

***Stage 2: Analysis of development scenarios***

*MRCS and national BDP units, plus sub-area working groups*

- In cooperation with external stakeholders formulate and analyse example development scenarios
- Disseminate the scenarios among stakeholders and ensure there are appropriate mechanisms in place to elicit and receive feedback

***Stage 3: Strategy formulation***

*MRCS and national BDP units, plus sub-area working groups*

- In cooperation with external stakeholders formulate development strategies
- Disseminate the strategies among stakeholders and ensure there are appropriate mechanisms in place to elicit and receive feedback

***Stage 4: Compilation of long list of programmes and projects***

*MRCS and national BDP units, plus sub-area working groups*

- In cooperation with internal and external stakeholders lead the process by which a long list of programmes and projects is identified
- Disseminate the long list among stakeholders and ensure there are appropriate mechanisms in place to elicit and receive feedback
- Ensure that programme and project selection criteria are articulated and discussed amongst stakeholders

***Stage 5: Compilation of short list of programmes and projects***

*MRCS and country BDP units, plus sub-area working groups*

- In cooperation with internal and external stakeholders, and using transparent criteria, propose short list of projects and programmes for approval by national working groups, the BDP sub-committee and the MRC Council.

# Appendix 4:

## Programme for Forum 2

### Day 1 - Review of the analytical work

*Totalling 7 hours of working sessions*

#### ***Short opening***

*Approximately ½ hour maximum; chaired formal session*

#### ***Step 1: Setting the scene***

*Approximately ½ hour maximum (20 minutes presentation and 10 minutes question and answer); facilitated session – presentation to plenary plus clarifying questions*

Rapid overview of Mekong River Commission context (1995 Mekong River Agreement, history of cooperation etc.) and the BDP / Mekong Basin context (embedded in the 1995 Agreement, other sub-areas etc.), workshop objectives, agenda and participant introductions. Questions of clarification should be quickly responded to by the facilitator.

#### ***Step 2: Update since Sub-area Forum No. 1***

*Approximately 1 hour maximum (45 minutes presentation and 15 minutes questions and answer); facilitated session - presentation to plenary plus clarifying questions*

Progress review, to remind participants of the results of SAF No.1 (including local priorities, issues and concerns) and update them on the work that has been done since. Questions and clarifications should be dealt with succinctly by the facilitator and key members of the BDP team

#### ***Step 3: Situation analysis***

*Approximately 2 hours maximum (45 minutes presentation and 1¼ hours discussion); facilitated session - presentation and extensive plenary discussion*

A presentation of the Situation Analysis – a synthesis of the present situation in the Sub-area, including identified trends and cause / effect relationships. This will have been prepared prior to the Forum based on the Sub-area studies, the output of SAF No.1, information gap filling activities, and a detailed analysis of all findings.

Clearly, the presentation will require careful preparation by team members from national and Sub-area level (and/or consultants). It must be clear and concise, paving the way for the active discussion to follow.

All being well, as stakeholders views are already well embedded in the analysis, output from this session will probably be a broad endorsement of the Situation Analysis. However any

points of contention or uncertainty should be identified, addressed in plenary discussion if possible or otherwise noted for further consideration.

#### ***Step 4: Alternative development scenarios for the sub-area***

*Approximately 3 hours maximum (1½ hours for presentations and clarifications and 1½ hours for small group work); facilitated session – presentation, clarification in plenary and intensive small group work*

This key session will focus on Alternative Development Scenarios for the development of the Sub-area in the next 5-20 years. Firstly, a quick summary will be given of what a scenario is and how it scenarios at two levels will be used in the planning of BDP. A broad description of three or four potential scenarios for the Sub-area will then be presented, based on pre-Forum work. This will outline each scenario, and establish the credibility of the conclusions by explaining how they have been derived. Short clarification questions on these presentations in plenary will follow.

The session then moves into probably the most important part of the Forum, a discussion in small groups on the Alternative Development Scenarios, their degree of realism, advantages and disadvantages and Sub-area implications if they become reality.

Possible questions for the small groups, looking at one scenario each include:

- Do you agree that this is a likely scenario in 20 years, given that what we know today?
- What are the implications of this scenario in social, local livelihoods, economic and environmental terms? At Sub-area level? At country level?
- If we pursued it, what measures need to be taken to ensure that this scenario actually develops? To which extent is this realisation linked to (a) internal (local demand, country demand) and (b) external factors (quantity, quality, reliability of water)? How could these be managed?
- What are downstream implications of this scenario? How can negative effects be mitigated, reduced or avoided?

To remind them of the main themes, the groups will have summary sheets describing the Alternative Scenarios – and the background Situation Analysis – to hand. These will have been distributed before hand, with extra copies available on the day.

Group members can continue their discussions and prepare their presentations to plenary during the evening if appropriate.

## **Day 2 - Linking sub-area and basin perspectives**

*Totalling 7 hours of working sessions*

#### ***Step 5: Alternative development scenarios for the sub-area (continued)***

*Approximately 1 ½ hours maximum (1 hour for small group presentations and ½ hour for discussion); facilitated session - presentations from small group work to plenary followed by plenary discussion*

The small groups will each report back to plenary on the scenarios, rising questions for facilitated discussion by the whole Forum. The question of which scenario is the most preferable or the most likely should be deliberately deferred by the facilitator until the next session.

### ***Step 6: Links with the Basin***

*Approximately 1 hour maximum (15 minutes for introduction and 45 minutes for discussion); facilitated session – facilitator-guided plenary discussion*

This important session aims to further build understanding through discussion that the decision on which scenario is the most preferable or the most likely depends not only on the internal dynamics and ambitions of the Sub-area, but also on what goes on outside of the Sub-area that might affect its water needs.

Similarly, from the reverse perspective, the facilitator, supported by BDP resource persons, will need to build awareness through discussion that what goes on within the Sub-area may well also affect the reasonable needs / livelihoods of those outside (in other Sub-areas / in other countries).

At the same time macro influences on the Sub-area (actions by countries outside the LMB, global warming, climate change) need to be introduced into the discussion.

### ***Step 7: Basin development objectives***

*Approximately 1 hour maximum (20 minutes for presentation and 40 minutes for discussion); facilitated session - presentation and plenary discussion*

The key dialogue in the previous stage – assuming it is successful - should lead naturally into this stage of the Forum, a discussion on desirable basin-wide development objectives - their impact on the Sub-area and on what the Sub-area should and can do. Some first ideas from MRC can be presented as necessary to get things going. These would illustrate the balance and interdependence between livelihoods, economic, social and environmental objectives.

If wished and if time is available, scenarios might now be revisited in the broader light of basin objectives and responsibilities. A tentative choice might now be made - in plenary - on the preferred and “reserve” scenarios – or qualities from several that should be retained.

### ***Step 8: Project cycle, selection criteria and example projects***

*Approximately 2 ½ hours (½ hour for presentations, 1 hour for small group work, 1 hour for small group presentations and discussion); facilitated session – presentations, plenary discussion, small group work, reports back to plenary, plenary discussions and consolidation of findings*

An abbreviated version of the proposed project cycle and project decision making process, criteria, pro-formas and application channels will be presented, and active feedback sought on these in plenary. Amongst other issues, the Forum should consider what sort of support will be needed to design future projects that meet the proposed criteria.

With all the foregoing stages in mind, the Forum will then be asked to propose and consider just one or two example development projects (not a long wish list) in the Sub-area. The

essential question, to be considered in small group work, is how these example projects would fit with the proposed basin-wide development objectives and project / programme selection criteria.

Findings will be reported back to plenary for discussion and conclusions drawn on the appropriateness of the example project/s and how this or other more appropriate projects could be developed in the future.

***Step 9: Wrap-up, agreement on achievements of SAF 2, next steps***

*Approximately ½ hour; facilitated session – overview by facilitator, plenary discussion*

Review and summary of main outcomes from SAF 2 and discussion on next steps, especially how to keep the stakeholder network active and fully engaged in subsequent steps in the BDP process, and how to ensure regular feedback to interested stakeholders.

***Closing***

Approximately ½ hour maximum; chaired formal session