

## Initiative on Sustainable Hydropower

### Components and outputs

ISH activities are delivered through four mutually reinforcing components:

#### Component 1: Management and Communications

This overarching component encompasses effective management of the ISH to ensure it adds value as a cross-cutting initiative, is well integrated with other MRC Programmes, and responds to challenges associated with hydropower that Mekong stakeholders perceive as important. Emphasis is on facilitating effective dialogue and communication with and among Member States, Dialogue Partners, the private sector and other stakeholders to raise awareness and to reinforce cooperation for multi-disciplinary approaches and functional partnerships. A special focus is coordination of thematic inputs to the PNPCA process.

#### Component 2: Capacity Building and Knowledge Base Support

This component supports knowledge sharing and capacity building within the MRCS, NMCs and line agencies, regulatory bodies and other stakeholders.<sup>1</sup> Technical knowledge is shared with developers and operators on safeguards for design and operations. Knowledge base support includes expanding MRC's databases and baseline data relevant to environment and social assessment and hydropower operations, and monitoring hydropower project development as regard to trends, influences, risks and opportunities.

#### Component 3: Regional Planning Support

This component focuses on imbedding sustainable hydropower considerations in the strategic and regional planning processes of Member States. A key focus is on extending support to government line agencies to introduce SEA-type assessments along-side hydropower policy/planning studies at the sector, sub-basin/basin and regional levels. These SEAs are linked to MRC Programmes to ensure the efficient sharing of information, cooperation and synergy, and to ensure consistent approaches.

#### Component 4: Sustainability Assessment and Financing

This component had two main complementary streams. The first stream involves developing the hydropower sustainability assessment tool and building toward a more comprehensive sustainability assessment "platform" that can be applied to the population of dams and dam proposals in the Mekong. The second stream involves assisting the relevant National line agencies, project developers and multi-stakeholder dialogue processes adapt and apply good practice tools.

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<sup>1</sup> The emphasis in capacity building is on (i) integrating sustainability considerations in policies and regulation frameworks, and (ii) assessing economic, social and environmental impacts of hydropower on strategic, regional and sector basis.

The focus initially is on benefit sharing at local, national and regional levels and innovative financing mechanisms that enhance the sustainable performance of hydropower.

### **Outputs of the ISH include:**

- Extending Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEAs) to sub-basin levels and significant tributaries incorporating sustainable hydropower considerations;
- Expanding the hydropower project knowledge base to provide integrated sustainability assessments of existing and proposed Mekong projects;
- Improving baselines and operational data for planning and monitoring of hydropower projects for use in MRC Programmes and to share with developers and operators through national line agencies and regulators;
- Technical assistance to regulatory agencies and developers on environmental and social safeguards and monitoring and adopting best practice;
- Assessment of the multipurpose functionality existing and proposed hydropower projects
- Guidance on providing sustainable management of reservoir watersheds
- Scoping of the potential and incentives for small hydro promotion and introducing sustainability considerations in small hydropower.
- Identification of benefit sharing mechanisms at local, national and trans-boundary levels with related sharing of regional experience and transfer of best practice
- Expanding the use of sustainability assessment tools to inform policy planning, regulation as well as design implementation and operation practices; and
- Evaluation and sharing of experience on innovative financing mechanisms that advance sustainable aspects of hydropower development and operation.