



## CONCEPT NOTE

### Updating of Basin Development Strategy 2021-2030

Updated 17 September 2019

#### 1. Introduction

The Mekong River Commission (MRC) Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM)-based Basin Development Strategy (BDS) was firstly developed in 2011 with a five-year planning cycle for 2011-2015, followed by the updated BDS 2016-2020.

The BDS is a statement of the Lower Mekong Basin (LMB) countries setting out how they will utilize, manage and conserve the water and related resources of the Mekong in line with the Agreement on the Cooperation for the Sustainable Development of the Mekong River Basin (the 1995 Mekong Agreement). It provides regional perspectives for development opportunities and management of the basin. It also responds to the goals, objectives and underlying principles of the 1995 Mekong Agreement. The BDS is an instrument for basin planning and cooperation.

Since 2011, the BDS has been implemented at regional and national levels through its MRC Strategic Plan (MRC SP) and the four National Indicative Plans (NIPs) for 2011-2015 and 2016-2020, respectively. Currently, the plans are being implemented for 2016-2020.

For the next planning cycle, the update of the BDS will adopt the approach of shared vision planning which includes the development of long-term vision toward 2040 to reflect the recommendations of the MRC Council Study entitled “Study on Sustainable Management and Development of the Mekong River including Impacts of Mainstream Hydropower Projects.” With the 20-year vision, the BDS will identify the strategic priorities for the development and management of the basin for the duration of 10 years to guide the development of the MRC SP and NIPs for two short-terms of 5 years for 2021-2025 and 2026-2030. In this regard, the next BDS will be developed for a span of ten years (2021-2030).

This concept note is developed to serve as a roadmap to guide the update of the BDS 2021-2030, including overall framework, scope, approach, mechanisms, processes, outputs, and activities and timeframe. It has been incorporated inputs from internal discussion with Divisions of the MRC Secretariat as well as consultations with Member Countries through Expert Group of Basin Planning (EGBP) conducted on 13 May, and 06 June 2019, respectively. Further, this concept note is revised based on working session conducted on 12 September 2019.

#### 2. Roadmap to update the Basin Development Strategy (BDS) 2021-2030

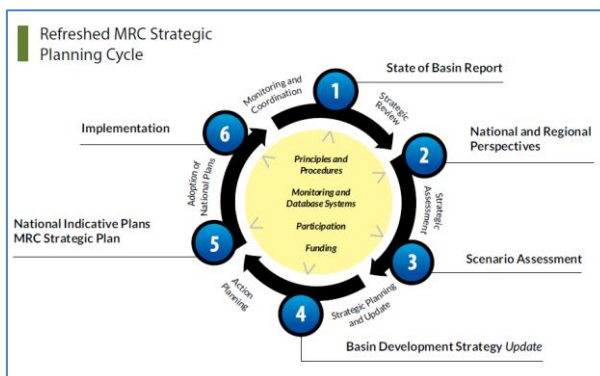
The roadmap describes overall framework, scope, approach, mechanisms, processes, outputs, and activities and timeframe.

## 2.1 Overall framework

The update of BDS will follow six stages of the MRC Strategic Planning Cycle, picture adjacent. Steps 1 to 4 are the process leading to the development and update of the BDS. Steps 5 and 6 are for the development and implementation of MRC SP and NIPs.

Currently, stages 1 and 3 have been completed. These include the MRC State of Basin Report 2018, scenario assessment of the MRC Council Study, and other MRC scenario assessments including basin-wide assessment of climate change impacts on water resources, and sustainable hydropower development strategy (SHDS) study.

Stage 2 on national and regional perspectives has been done for some cross-cutting sectors including the Mekong climate change adaptation strategy and action plan (MASAP) and SHDS. For the update of BDS, stage 2 on national and regional perspectives will be developed further and broader to provide framework conditions for the strategy.



## 2.2 Scope

The BDS will:

- Describe current and future conditions of the basin, as well as prioritized issues of concerns to be managed within the basin;
- Define opportunities to promote sustainable development and strengthen management, and increase regional and national benefits;
- Include a long-term vision or desired state for the long-term future of 20 years to address the issues identified by the MRC Council Study toward 2040;
- Set medium-term strategic priorities up to 2030 that contribute towards achieving the long-term vision or desired state for the long-term future under different possible future conditions by specifying a coherent suit of strategic priorities related to development, environmental protection, and institutional cooperation; and
- Prescribe strategic actions for basin development plan including MRC SPs and NIPs 2021-2025 and 2026-2030 to address the basin-wide strategic priorities.

## 2.3 Approach

It adopts a shared vision planning exercise by developing a long-term vision toward 2040. The vision formulation process considers a desired future and delineates a platform of shared preferences among the Member Countries with different perspectives. The vision planning is valuable in processes where there is significant complexity in the basin, with potential difficult trade-offs between different environmental and development perspectives. The vision will provide the long-term aspirational desired state for the basin together with goals and principles to achieve this over time. Based on the vision, 10-year strategic priorities will be developed to achieve the vision. The strategic priorities will recommend a coherent suite of strategic objectives, outcomes and actions for the new MRC strategic plan to be formulated in 2020.

The approach will take into account:

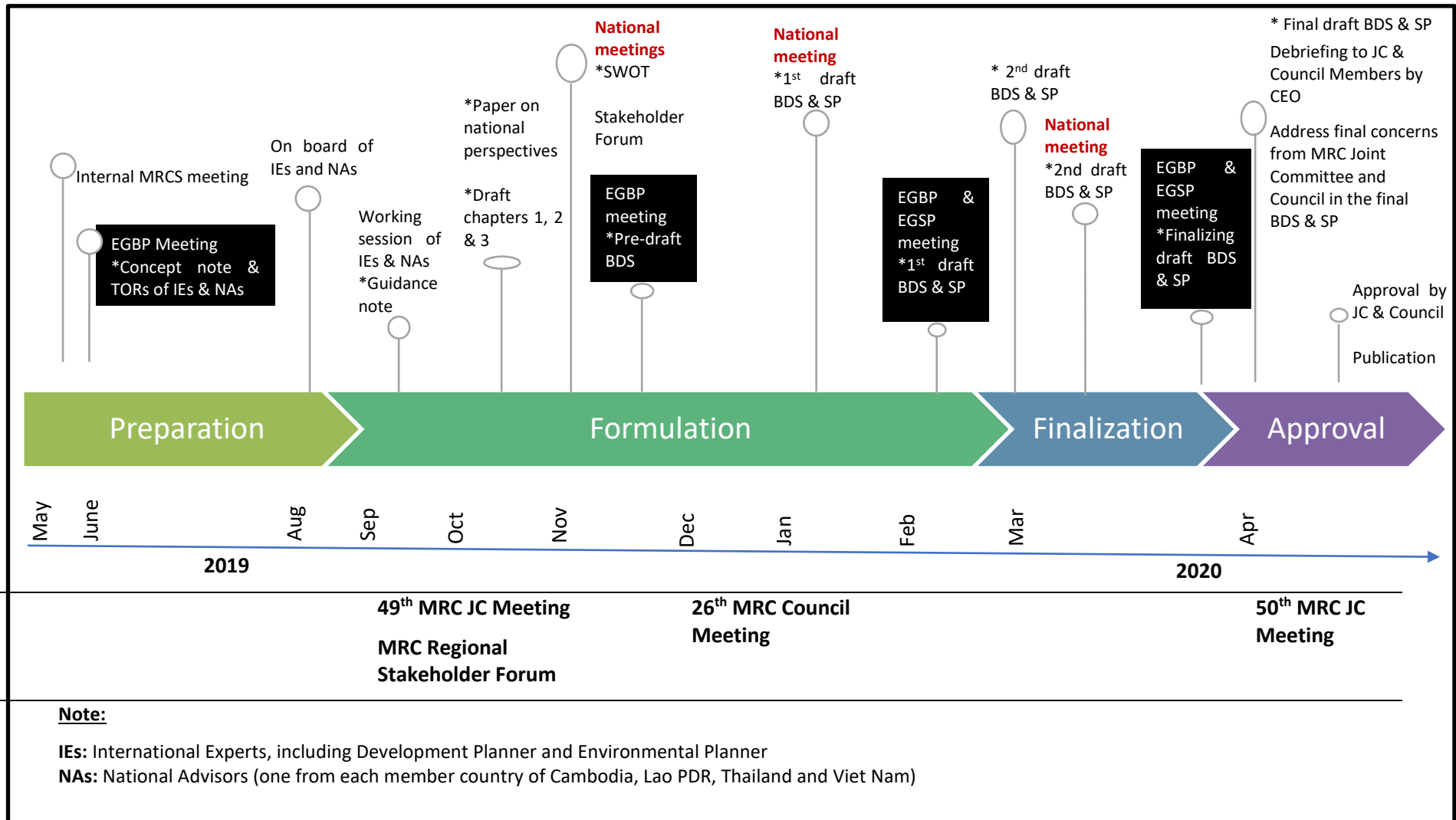
- Progress made in implementing the strategic priorities of BDS 2016-2020 and lessons learned from BDS implementation including issues and challenges (based on Mid-Term Review – MTR – including for each of the seven BDS strategic priorities) as well as lesson learned from other regional organizations and initiatives such as ASEAN, Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS), and Mekong Lancang Cooperation (MLC);
- A review and assessment of the status and trends and key recommendations in water resources and economic, environmental and social factors based on the MRC State of Basin Report 2018 and other scenario assessments and studies;
- The national and regional perspectives and alignment between them;
- Scenario assessments of the MRC Council Study and other studies to understand the trade-off to develop a 20-year shared vision and shape the 10-year strategic priorities; and
- Relevant strategic priorities of the MRC Sectoral Strategies including the Mekong Climate Change Adaptation Strategy and Action Plan (MASAP), Basin-wide Fisheries Management and Development Strategy (BFMS), Navigation Masterplan, Sustainable Hydropower Development Strategy (SHDS), Drought Management Strategy (DMS), and Strategy for basin-wide Environmental Management for Environmental Assets of Regional Importance in LMB. The last three sectoral strategies are being developed and are expected to complete by 2019.

## 2.4 Mechanisms

The update of BDS will follow the following mechanisms.

- Active involvement of all MRC Divisions and Office to ensure all cross-cutting issues are considered in the BDS
- National consultation meetings: three national meetings will be conducted including national perspective, SWOT analysis, and 1<sup>st</sup> draft BDS
- Regional meetings of Expert Group on Basin Planning (EGBP): three regional meeting of EGBP will be organized to discuss and get inputs to pre-draft BDS, and on 1<sup>st</sup> draft and final draft of BDS.
- MRC Regional Stakeholder Forum will be organized in November 2019 to account for broader stakeholder engagement in the basin and provide inputs to the BDS.
- **MRC Joint Committee** will provide strategic direction during its governance meeting in September 2019 and its preparatory meeting for the MRC Council meeting in November/December 2019. A debriefing of final draft BDS may also be carried out to the JC member in each country by CEO. The MRC Joint Committee will endorse BDS in April 2020.
- **MRC Council:** will be briefed on the progress and draft BDS for strategic direction during its governance meeting in November/December 2019. A debriefing of final draft BDS will also be carried out to the MRC Council Member in each country by CEO. The MRC Council will approve BDS in April 2020 following the endorsement by the MRC JC during the same month.

2.5 Processes (with a combined process for updating BDS & Strategic Plan) [Concept Note for updating Strategic Plan is in a separate note by OCEO]



## 2.6 Outputs

Outputs	Tentative date
- Final concept note for the update of SBDS 2021-2030 (including TORs of international development planner, international environmental planner, and national advisors)	10 June 2019
- Guidance for preparing national and regional perspectives	12 Sep 2019
- Paper/Power Point on national and regional perspectives	15 Oct 2019
- National SWOT Workshops	29 Oct - 12 Nov 2019
- Stakeholder forum	5-6 Nov 2019
- Zero draft BDS 2021-2030	24 Dec 2020
- First draft BDS 2021-2030 and SP 2021-2025	21 Feb 2020
- Second draft BDS 2021-2030 and SP 2021-2025	20 March 2020
- Final draft BDS 2021-2030 and SP 2021-2025	13 April 2020
- Final BDS 2021-2030 and SP 2021-2025 for publication	30 Apr 2020

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