

OVERVIEW OF BDS 2021-2030 IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

THE 9TH MRC REGIONAL STAKEHOLDER FORUM

DAY 2: PREPARATION OF BASIN DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2021-2030 AND MRC STRATEGIC PLAN 2021-2025
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Dr. Anoulak Kittikhoun, Chief Strategy and Partnership Officer, MRCS



Outline of Chapter 6: Implementation of the BDS 2021-2030

6.1 Implementing sustainable development opportunities

6.2 Implementing strategic priorities

6.3 Engagement of broader stakeholders

6.4 Funding of BDS implementation

6.5 Monitoring, evaluation and reporting

Implementing development opportunities

- This is a role of national agencies and the private sector, taking into account national planning and approval processes and regional procedures
- The basin countries' water cooperation platforms (MRC and MLC Water), as well as ASEAN, GMS and other relevant actors, will continue to promote and help coordinate sustainable development opportunities
 - in particular joint projects and national projects of basin-wide significance
- Through the assessment of alternative basin-wide development scenarios, the MRC will identify significant joint projects and national projects of basin-wide significance
 - which could increase regional benefits, reduce regional costs and provide long-term water security

Implementing strategic priorities

- The BDS Outcomes in the five strategic priority areas will be addressed by the countries' regional organizations, initiatives and programmes in collaboration with relevant national counterpart organizations
- The MRC will coordinate BDS implementation and deliver many of the BDS Outputs in the BDS results chain
- Cooperation between MRC and MLC Water is essential for delivering several basin-wide Outputs and preventing duplication of effort
- Other regional cooperation mechanisms will contribute to BDS Outcomes through activities in their broader water-related priority areas

Engagement of broader stakeholders

- Outcomes of the Strategy can be realized only by the active, open and transparent involvement of all Mekong stakeholders
- Broader stakeholders can provide inputs to specific activities that will be implemented to produce BDS Outputs:
 - As a member of one the implementing teams that will be formed
 - As a participant in activity-related workshops and consultation meetings
 - Participation in meetings of Joint Basin Expert Groups and associated temporary task forces.
- Broader stakeholders can participate in forums that will be organized to discuss progress of BDS implementation

Towards a Multi-Stakeholder Platform

- While the MRC Regional Stakeholder Forum will continue, efforts are needed to further streamline, synergize and synchronize Mekong related stakeholder forums to:
 - to maximize stakeholder inputs and reduce stakeholder engagement fatigue
 - achieve common objectives of sustainable development of the Mekong
- This strategy promotes the ‘institutionalization’ of a basin-wide multi-stakeholder platform with the mandate to undertake regular stakeholder reviews of the implementation of the BDS. Important will be:
 - A balanced representation of the many stakeholders
 - consistent recording, reporting, and impact tracking procedures
- Collaboration between MRC and MLC Water is needed to prevent duplication of effort

Engagement of broader stakeholders – meetings on specific issues

- The BDS also promotes the proactive organization by the water cooperation platforms of targeted meetings with specific stakeholder groups (e.g. CSOs, private sector, media):
 - whenever needed on major issues of concern
 - to share information, discuss perspectives and viewpoints, and work towards consensus
- To support such meetings, the web portals of the water cooperation platforms need to be modernized to function as a web-based decision support system (DSS) where stakeholders can follow:
 - changes in land and water conditions in the basin
 - Integrate, visualize and download a wide range of data, and
 - make changes in development scenarios and assess the impact of these changes on selected indicators

Funding of BDS implementation – development opportunities (1)

- Most of the development opportunities in the hydropower, navigation, irrigation, and industry (mining, forestry, tourism, aquaculture) sectors will be largely financed by the private sector (and ‘state-owned companies’)
- In all of these areas, investment from the private sector now outweighs that from traditional public sources
- In these sectors, governments have an important regulating and resource planning and management role to ensure development is sustainable and beneficial for the country and its people
- There will be opportunities for creating added value for water resources management (such as monitoring and data sharing) by improving private sector concessions and contracts

Funding of BDS implementation – development opportunities (2)

- Most of the development opportunities in the environmental and social sectors will need to be financed through national public budgets and international and regional loans and grants
- There will be opportunities to benefit from innovative financing arrangements, such as attracting foreign carbon offsetting funds for reforestation of watersheds
- The large needs for flood and drought protection will need to be integrated to the extent possible in already planned sectoral development and newly identified (joint) multi-purpose storage projects (for flood protection, hydropower, irrigation, navigation, etc.)
- The remainder will need to be financed through national public budgets with limited opportunities for Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) for financing infrastructure

Funding of BDS implementation – Outputs and Outcomes

- The enabling and non-structural Outputs will be funded through international and regional grants, supplemented by national public budgets
- Since, MRC will coordinate BDS implementation and implement most of the Outputs, the above funding will contribute to the implementation of the MRC SP, either as unallocated, earmarked or associated funding
- The other regional water cooperation mechanisms will manage their own budgets for the implementation of the water-related activities that could contribute to BDS Outcomes

Funding of BDS implementation – a Mekong Fund

- The development of a regional Mekong Fund could be considered to attract funding from multiple sources to finance identified (joint) social and environmental investment opportunities of transboundary significance
- One of the funding sources would be a region-wide levy on the purchase of hydro-electricity for transboundary impact mitigation and benefit sharing to address the wider impacts of hydropower development
- Other funding sources are contributions from the private sector, development partners, and new sources such as carbon financing
- An operational Mekong Fund will enhance trust between the countries and unlock new opportunities for cooperative and joint water resources development

Monitoring and evaluation - general

- An integrated planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting system (M&E system) has been established by the MRC to track the implementation of the BDS 2021-2030
- The system has a practical dashboard to provide planners, decision makers, funders and other stakeholders with the information necessary to determine whether:
 - The plans and processes in the strategy are being implemented effectively
 - BDS Outcomes are being achieved
- The M&E system covers the entire BDS results chain, as well as the water-related activities of regional organizations, initiatives and programmes
- By using SDGs as Mekong Basin ‘Goals’, countries can better recognize and showcase MRC contributions to the SDGs at the international level. This helps demonstrate the value of the countries’ funding of the MRC

Monitoring and evaluation – Outputs and activities

- The dashboard tracks progress of activities, achievement of Outputs and progress along impact pathways
- It flags key areas of concern where interventions are needed to bring an Output back on course. Warning flags are identified as concerns over the perceived quality, relevance, acceptability, sensitivity, or timeliness, as well as any budget issues
- This feedback loop will facilitate timely corrective measures to be taken, including prioritisation of resources in annual work planning to redress delays in critical Outputs

Monitoring and evaluation - Outcomes

- The dashboard tracks progress towards Outcomes through a traffic light display aligned to the strategic and assessment indicators across the Mekong River Basin Indicator Framework (MRB-IF)
- These indicators will be valued and quantified every 5 years for the updating of the State of Basin Report.
- The SOBR records and evaluates the development impacts (positive and negative) within the Mekong Basin as a measure of the effectiveness of the implementation of the BDS
- This will inform the adjustments that need to be made in the next update of the BDS

