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Recap on MRC stakeholder engagement, the 1st Forum and objectives of this forum

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*The 2nd Regional Stakeholder Forum
The Pak Beng Hydropower Project
5th May 2017
Vientiane, Lao PDR*

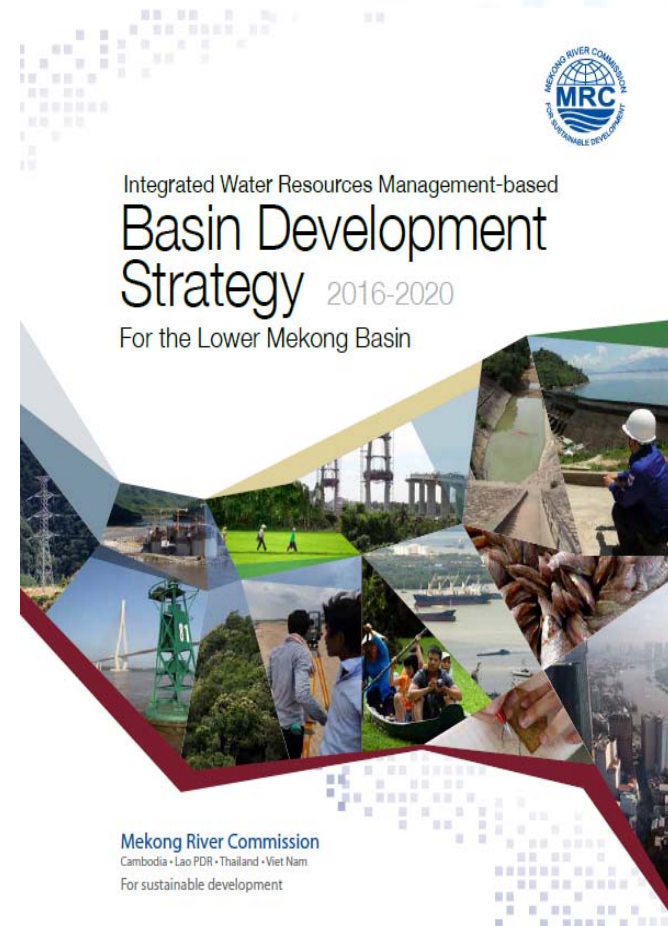


Stakeholder engagement - a strategic priority for Basin



Basin Development Strategy 2016-2020 (Section 5.4 Engagement of broader stakeholders) stipulates priority #7 “increase cooperation with partners and stakeholders” and identifies the following key ones:

- MRC Council, JC, Secretariat
- NMC Secretariats
- Line agencies of the NMCs
- Dialogue Partners (China and Myanmar)
- Development Partners
- GMS, ASEAN
- Private Developers, consulting firms
- Scientific and advisory institutes
- Other NGOs

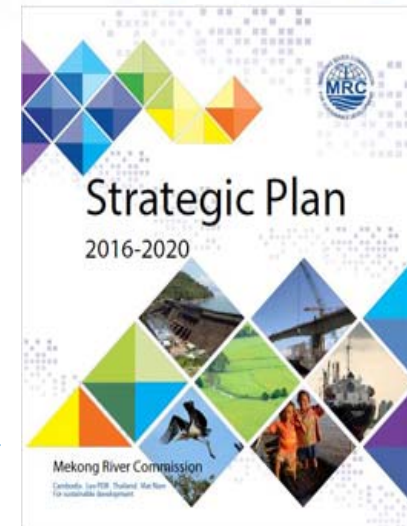


Stakeholder engagement – an important outcome for MRC



In the **MRC Strategic Plan 2016-2020**, Result Area #2 (Strengthening regional cooperation) identifies various actions to enhance stakeholder engagement and water diplomacy.

- Implementing MRC Procedures
- Strengthening cooperation with China and Myanmar
- Leveraging partnerships with ASEAN and GMS
- Convening a Regional Stakeholder Platform
- Strengthening strategic engagement and water diplomacy



What is the new enhanced mechanism?



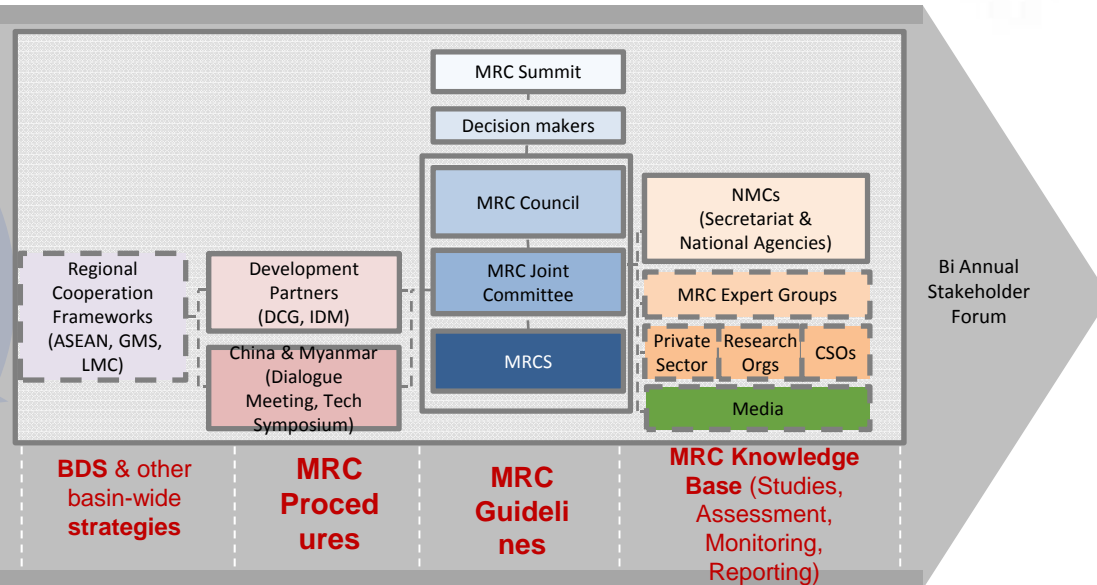
MRC Stakeholder Engagement Platform

2. MECHANISMS & GROUPS

3. PROCESS



4. TOOLS



1. MRC PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

5. MRC STRATEGIC PLAN OUTCOME

Effective dialogue and cooperation between Member Countries and strategic engagement of regional partners and stakeholders on transboundary water management

For meaningful and effective engagement...

What had been engagements for previous PNPCA?

- ✓ For Xayaburi and Don Sahong Prior Consultations, **national meetings** were organized based on their national laws and procedures
- ✓ Before submitting the projects to the MRC, the Lao government, together with the developers, organised **consultation activities in Lao PDR** on the proposed dam projects as part of the Social Impact Assessment (SIA)
- ✓ At the regional level, MRCS facilitated one **regional stakeholder meeting for Don Sahong**.



What are the objectives for broader engagement for PNPCA?



- To provide information and build an understanding of the MRC's Prior Consultation process, clarify roles/responsibilities on all sides
- To provide information on the proposed Project and potential environmental and socio-economic impacts (positive and negative)
- To gain a representative range of views from interested stakeholders
- To document these views and identify action points to address them
- To reflect these views as part of the MRC Prior Consultation Technical Review Report for consideration by the MRC Joint Committee
- To provide feedback on how key concerns are addressed
- *Not about seeking endorsement or rejection of the proposed project*

What is the scope of engagement?



- All areas potentially affected by the proposed Pak Beng Project
- *Transboundary* impacts (positive and negative) that may be caused by changes to fisheries, livelihoods, water quality, ecology, hydrology, sediment transport, navigation and dam safety
- An understanding of the Prior Consultation process, as well as other issues about operation and coordination of existing dams upstream and downstream of the proposed project.
- Less emphasis will be given to direct resettlement aspects
- *Measures for the minimization of adverse impacts and enhancement of benefits and cooperation*

The first regional stakeholder forum

That meeting had the objectives of:

- early information sharing,
- communicating the PNPCA process and mandate
- reaffirming the importance of stakeholder engagement in good faith and the enhanced MRC mechanism, and
- soliciting of preliminary views on the project, as well as
- MRC approach for review of the project



Results from 1st Regional Stakeholder Forum



- Over 180 participants including the MRC member country governments, development partners, NGOs, research institutes, media, and private developers of the proposed Pak Beng Project, the Xayaburi Hydropower Project, and other planned dams
- Opened by the Lao MONRE Minister and MRC Council Member, and senior Lao MEM officials made presentations
- Comments from stakeholders, even from critical ones, were raised constructively and respectfully
- At the end of the Forum, MRCS conducted an anonymous survey for participants to provide feedbacks. The results are generally positive regarding the conduct of the forum.



Key comment categories



Comments and suggestions have been categorized into 4 different types:

- **Knowledge related comments:** general questions or comments with most answers provided at the forum. These comments are aimed for additional information and knowledge needed for increase of understanding.
- **Approach related comments:** they are comments and suggestions for improvement of the MRC procedures and its prior consultation process.
- **Design related comments:** these questions and/or comments and recommendations relate to technical design or structure of the dam. They were documented for further actions by developer/Lao Government.
- **Review method related comments:** those are comments and recommendations for the MRC Secretariat to consider and refer to during review of project documents. They will be reflected in the Technical Review Report (TRR) as relevant.

Key comments: On PNPCA



- Nature of PNPCA – binding or not
- Timing of proposed use
- Lessons learned from previous two PNPCAs – no resolution
- Incorporation and consideration of stakeholder comments
- Early involvement/sharing info to NGOs at the national level consultations
- Greater involvement of developers in dialogue at forums and with review team
- Joint Action Plan good idea

Key comments: On assessment methodologies (addressed in the MRC Technical Review Report)



- Hydrology and hydraulics
- Sediment
- Fisheries, water quality and aquatic ecology
- Environment
- Socio-economics
- Dam Safety
- Navigation

Survey feedbacks on first forum



- 94% of respondents agreed that their comments are taken and documented
- 94% of respondents agreed that the Forum helps them to better understand MRC mandates and roles
- 94% agreed that the Forum help them to better understand MRC stakeholder engagement mechanism and process
- 93% of respondents agreed that the Forum help them to better understand the process and expected outputs of the Pak Beng consultation
- 88% of respondents agreed that the presented post consultation of PNPCA will strengthen PNPCA process
- 92% of respondents agreed that the Forum provides a participatory environment for all stakeholders to raise opinions
- The top five concerns in order perceived by the respondents for the Pak Beng hydropower project are the following:
 - fisheries,
 - sediments,
 - water flow (fluctuation of water, erosion),
 - hydrology,
 - coordination among dams in cascade system



Objectives and inputs needed from 2nd forum



- update on the PNPCA process
- Present and discuss the MRC review/assessment of the project documents
- to solicit further recommendations for the MRC JC
- the next steps for the PNPCA process and any post-consultation engagement plans

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Thank you

