MEKONG WETLANDS
GOVERNANCE: CHALLENGES, PROGRESS AND THE WAY FORWARD

ROBERT MATHER, HCMC 26 April 2010
CONTENT

1. WETLANDS GOVERNANCE COMPONENTS & PRINCIPLES

2. POLICIES AND LAWS

3. INSTITUTIONS

4. PROCESSES

4. RECENT PROGRESS AND THE WAY FORWARD
GOVERNANCE IS ABOUT....

• *who* has the power to make decisions that affect wetlands and wetland users and *how* those decisions are made

• *who* has the power and responsibility to implement those decisions and *how* those decisions are implemented

• *who* is held accountable, and *how*, for implementation.
WETLANDS GOVERNANCE

Wetlands Governance is:
the interaction of policies, laws and other norms; institutions; and processes; through which a society exercises powers and responsibilities to make and implement decisions affecting wetlands and wetland users, and to hold decision makers accountable.
GOVERNANCE HAS COMPONENTS AND PRINCIPLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Components of Governance</th>
<th>Transparency</th>
<th>Predictability/ “Rule of Law”</th>
<th>Accountability</th>
<th>Participation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Laws and other norms</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Processes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Policy and Law

- Lack of clear and specific national wetlands policy
- Lack of specific laws for wetlands
- Many other laws affect wetlands
- Many Ramsar sites have dual legal status.
- Many wetlands have no legal status at all and are effectively open-access resources
- Local user rights often not legally recognised
Institutions

- National Wetland Committees
- National agency mandates unclear/overlap
- Protected Area Management Boards
- Provincial Wetland Committees
- Local government
- Community Institutions
Processes

- X-sectoral planning
- Promoting civil society/community participation in wetlands planning and management
- Co-/community-based management
- Participatory and Integrated Assessments
- Tai Baan and Salaphoum
- Traditional management practices breaking down because of modern external pressures
Recent Progress

- Cambodia Community Fisheries Sub-Decree 2006
- Laos Fisheries Law 2009
- Vietnam Decree 120 – CS involvement in RBOs
- Provincial/local new institutional arrangements for Beung Kong Long/Koot Ting Thailand, Beung Kiat Ngong Lao PDR, Tam Giang & Tram Chim Vietnam
- >100 fisheries co-management agreements Laos
There is still a need for all Mekong countries to have comprehensive National Wetlands Policies.

There is still a need for all Mekong countries to have laws that recognise local community rights and responsibilities to manage “open access” wetlands.

 Attempts to foster multi-sector collaboration should be vigorously pursued at provincial level.

Institutional innovation at the local level has frequently been the key to improved wetland biodiversity & livelihood outcomes.
Governance Track

- Transparency
- Predictability/“Rule of Law”
- Accountability
- Participation