

From Current BDS 2016-2020

Development opportunities

Based on the 2009-2010 basin-wide cumulative impact assessment of national plans, which remains essentially relevant (Section 3.2), development opportunities were negotiated by the Member Countries in the BDS 2011-2015. These development opportunities are confirmed again for the updated BDS for 2016-2020 in the four areas described below (Sections 0 to 0). The development opportunities will be updated in greater detail based on the results of the initiated new assessments, including the Council Study and assessment of alternative development scenarios taking into account the balancing of trade-offs and the nexus of water, food and energy security (see Section 3.3).

Tributary hydropower development

There is considerable potential for further development of tributary hydropower in the LMB, especially in Lao PDR and Cambodia, as well as for improvement in operation of existing hydropower projects in the LMB.

Further utilising this opportunity requires a focus on sustainability both at project and transboundary levels, and that any potential transboundary impacts are collaboratively identified and mitigated through national regulatory frameworks and guidelines as well as applicable MRC Procedures and guidelines

Expansion of irrigated agriculture

Subject to coordinated operation of the hydropower dams in the Lancang-Upper Mekong Basin and in LMB, there is an opportunity for increased dry season flows to be used, without affecting the baseline flow, to expand irrigation, including in Cambodia, Lao PDR and a possible diversion from the mainstream into Northeast Thailand, and to combat saline intrusion in the Mekong Delta. At the same time, there is the need to mitigate the potential risks relating to decreased sediment transport and unexpected flow changes.

To further capitalize on this opportunity and mitigate the risks, effective cooperation with China and rigorous implementation of agreed MRC Procedures to share data and information (PDIES), monitor water use (PWUM), maintain baseline flows (PMFM), maintain water quality standards (PWQ), and ensure transboundary assessment of certain uses (through PNPCA as applicable) are required.

Mainstream hydropower development

There is an opportunity to consider mainstream hydropower proposed by Member Countries, provided the major uncertainties and risks associated with mainstream dams are fully addressed and that the Member Countries consider and address jointly the transboundary impacts of any proposed project (through the PNPCA).

Other opportunities

Water-related opportunities, such as fisheries, navigation, flood and drought management, watershed management, tourism and environment including ecosystem management, as well as opportunities

beyond the water sector (e.g. alternative power generation options) have considerable potential. This potential will be identified, facilitating the move towards sustainable basin development.

The BDS 2011-2015 emphasises the need for water-related sectors to prepare basin-wide strategies and for further identification of alternative opportunities beyond the water sector.

Proposal for expansion/improvement of this section in BDS 2021-2030

Would your group agree with Table 9-4 in the 2018 SOBR to add the following environmental management opportunities to the development opportunities:

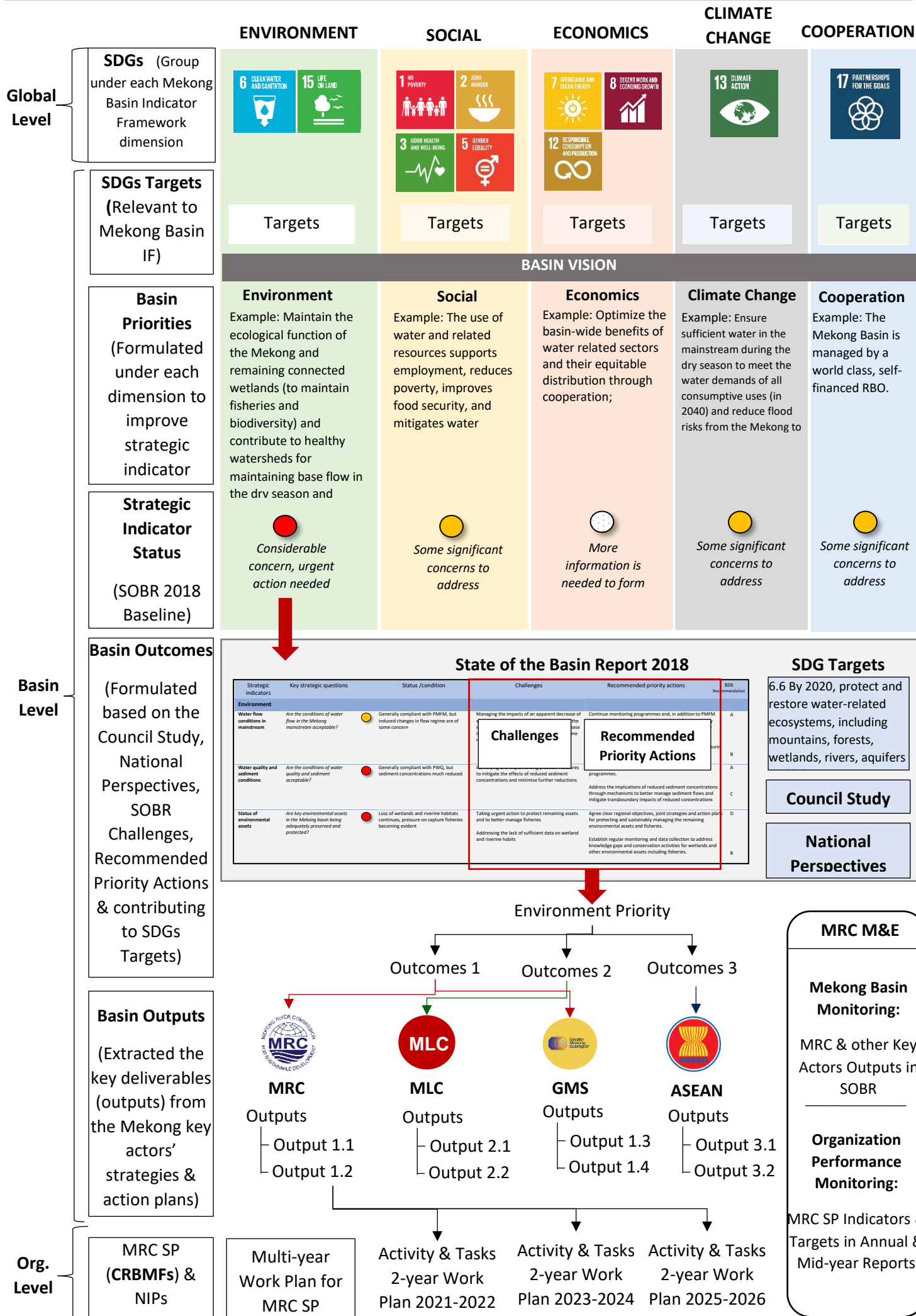
To preserve and leverage the remaining wetlands and regionally significant environmental assets, including riverine habitats, for both ecological purposes and enhancing bio-diversity, including fish and other aquatic organisms, and to extend and promote greater tourism income.

To continue to invest in rehabilitation and improvement of forest areas to better manage catchments, enhance the lifetime of storage reservoirs and contribute to reducing GHG.

To implement measures for managing mainstream and tributary floods in a manner sensitive to environmental needs and climate change (including sea level rise), recognising the ecological benefits of floods as well as the rising cost of flood damage as a result of changing use and value of flood plains prompted by growing economies and expansion of urban and industrial centres

Furthermore, the BDS 2021-2030 outline proposes in Section 4.2 to name specific large infrastructure projects where they have been identified (e.g. the name of large dams and irrigation projects). This could potentially provide opportunities for sharing information and adding value to the preparation of such projects by MRC or others (e.g. through TbEIA process). Significant UMB projects would also be described, where known. **Would your group agree with this proposal?**

INTEGRATION FRAMEWORK: SDGs, SOB, BDS, IF, SP, CRBMF, WP



The strategic priorities in the BDS 2016-2020 are:

- Reduce remaining knowledge gaps to minimise risks;
- Optimise basin-wide sustainable development and cost and benefit sharing;
- Strengthen the protection of mutually agreed environmental assets;
- Strengthen basin-wide procedures and national implementation capacity;
- Improve national water resources development;
- Enhance information management, communication and tools; and
- Increase cooperation with partners and stakeholders.