

COUNCIL STUDY

Study on Sustainable Management and Development of the Mekong River

Progress Brief 1 June 2017

“A comprehensive state-of-the-art, integrated and cross-sectoral study on sustainable management and development of the Mekong River; for the environment, people, and economy.”

INTRODUCTION

This brief provides a snapshot about the progress of Study on Sustainable Management and Development of the Mekong River or in short the ‘Council Study’ (CS), and will be updated bi-monthly.

At the 3rd Mekong-Japan Summit in Bali, Indonesia on November 2011, Prime Ministers of MRC Member Countries agreed on the need for a comprehensive study on sustainable management and development of the Mekong River. After numerous consultations with MCs, the CS implementation kicked-off on December 2015 and is to be completed in December 2017.

The study will provide reliable scientific environmental, social, and economic impacts of water resources

development in the Mekong River encompassing cross-cutting sectors and impacts.

The CS will also fill major knowledge gaps on the environmental, social, and economic impacts of major development in the Lower Mekong Basin (LMB) in the short, medium and long term. The CS will enhance the ability of MRC to advise MCs on the potential benefits and impacts of water resource development of the basin based on sound scientific evidence; optimise the Basin Development process; and ultimately contribute to the sound decision making by the MCs in the development of the LMB. A spillover effect of the CS is to promote capacity building and ensure technology transfer to MCs during the entire study process.

Phase 1: March 2016

- Developed the inception report and TOR of study
- Collected data and information for the study
- Formulated the scope of the study
- Deployed the impact assessment tool
- Decision Support framework (DSF), Water Utilisation Programme - Finland (WUP-Fin), eWater Source model

Phase 2: Impacts Assessment

- Formulated and finalised the development scenarios
- 22 Nov 2016: Joint Committee endorsed CS phase 2 implementation
- Finalised the impact assessment approaches and indicators
- Completed the CS impact assessment report

Post CS completion: Knowledge transfer - beyond 2017

- Information and knowledge transfer to Member Countries
- Improvement of some assessment tools, results and reporting
- Dissemination of knowledge to planning and public domain



PROGRESS (JANUARY – MAY 2017)

Major Reports/Deliverables

- ✓ Formulated main scenarios (2007, 2020, 2040) and working paper on development scenarios by all thematic teams.
- ✓ Final draft of the updated cumulative impact assessment (CIA), socio-economic impact assessment, resource and macroeconomic impact assessment, and thematic impact assessment approach and methodology.
- ✓ Updated mock-up report for final impact assessment of CIA based on Member Country's comments.
- ✓ Released version 2 of the final impact assessment reports for thematic and discipline teams including detailed thematic and disciplinary technical reports.
- ✓ Completed the MRC Decision Support Framework (MRC DSF), Water Utilisation Programme - Finland modelling, e-Water Source model setup and calibration, and finalised all related technical reports for reference period (1985-2008).
- ✓ Drafted version 2 of the modelling results for impact assessment of main development scenarios (2007, 2020 and 2040 with and without climate change).
- ✓ Developed initial version of the new ecosystem model.
- ✓ Updated and finalised preliminary calibration of DRIFT for the LMB.
- ✓ Completed version 2 of the specialist reports under Bio-resources impact assessment of LMB.
- ✓ Completed version 2 of the Downstream respond to Imposed Flow Transformations (DRIFT) model testing report.

Technical Meetings

- ✓ December 2016 – March 2017: **National consultations** on CS phase 2 implementation; CIA; socio-economic, macro-economic, and sub-development scenarios.
Key outcome: approved in principle of the CS phase 2 implementation; impact assessment can proceed because MCs approved methods, indicators, and assessment approach; MCs have improved knowledge and understanding on the report implementation and assessment approaches.
- ✓ January – March 2017: Series of **internal expert group meetings** on council study implementation, data gap filling, assessment approach, and methodology and assessment indicators.
Key outcome: The MCs has no objection on data gap filling approach; can proceed with impact assessment work because MCs has no objection in principle on proposed method, indicator, and assessment approaches; CS core team members have improved knowledge and understanding; task planned by all thematic and disciplinary teams.

- ✓ 17 – 18 January 2017: **Technical group meetings** on CIA and data gap filling.
Key outcome: MCs have no objection on the approach for CIA and data gap filling method and agreed in principle for the CS team to proceed the work forward.
- ✓ 6-10 March 2017: **BioRA Knowledge Capture Workshop (KCW)**
Key outcome: Finalised the DRIFT for FA1-8 including response curve.
- ✓ 20 March 2017: **Technical group meetings** to finalise CIA; and socio-economic, macroeconomic and sub-development scenarios.
Key outcome: MCs agreed in principle to proceed with proposed CIA, socio-economic, macroeconomic and sub-development scenarios.
- ✓ 27-28 March 2017, Ho Chi Minh, Viet Nam: **8th Regional Technical Working Group Meeting on the Council Study**
Key outcome: Appreciated the overall progress of CS and the preliminary results of the main development scenarios; Agreed in principle for the proposed CIA design and methods; agreed in principle the list of 2040 sub-development for the selected thematic sector; and agreed in principle the template of the final report for thematic and discipline team.
- ✓ 10-12 May 2017: **MRC Council Study BioRA DRIFT DSS Second Testing Workshop**
Key outcome: Experts from MCs appreciated the usefulness of the workshop and testing result of the DRIFT.

External Stakeholder Engagement

- ✓ 22-23 February 2017, Luang Prabang, Lao PDR: **Regional Stakeholder Forum on Council Study and the Pak Beng Hydropower Project** offered opportunities for interested stakeholders to jointly review, comment, and provide recommendations on the design of the Council Study's assessment methods, tools and indicators.

Upcoming tasks (June - July 2017)

- » Draft final report of the thematic and discipline team on the results of the main development scenarios (2007, 2020 and 2040).
- » Organise the internal CS expert group meeting to review the results of the main development scenarios for thematic and discipline assessment.
- » Organise a small group meeting on results of the main development scenarios of all thematic and discipline areas.
- » Deliver preliminary assessment results of 2040 sub-development scenarios for irrigation, land use, hydro-power and flood protection (July 2017).



What

is the Council Study?

The study will provide reliable scientific environmental, social, and economic impacts of water resources development in the Mekong River encompassing cross-cutting sectors and impacts.

Why

is the Council Study important and relevant?

The CS will fill major knowledge gaps on the environmental, social, and economic impacts of major development in the Mekong basin in the short, medium and long term. The CS will enhance the ability of MRC to advise MCs on the potential benefits and impacts of water resource development of the basin based on sound scientific evidence; optimise the Basin Development process; and ultimately contribute to sound decision making by the MCs in the development of the Mekong basin. A spillover effect of the CS is to promote capacity building and ensure technology transfer to MCs during the entire study process.

Who

is involved in the Council Study?

The Council Study is led by a regional coordinator with the support from a core technical group comprising regional and international experts broken down into:

Six thematic teams formulate water-resource development scenarios surrounding six areas: irrigation, agriculture and land use, hydropower, flood protection, domestic and industrial water use, and navigation.

Five discipline teams who conduct hydrologic, biological, socio-economic, macro-economic, and climate change assessments. This team assess the baseline status of the Mekong Basin and impacts of formulated scenarios.

The regional coordinator and technical advisors lead the thematic and discipline teams, and are overseen by senior management of the MRC Secretariat. Together a regional coordinator and technical advisors and CS core team are also serving as the advisory group of the study.

MC representatives and development partners who make up the Regional Technical Working Group, manage, supervise and provide guidance on the technical work of the Council Study.

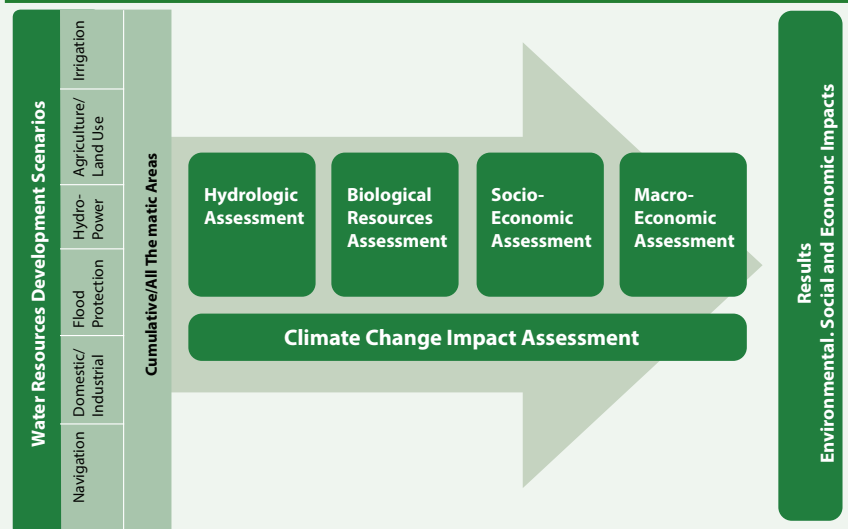
How

is the Council Study implemented?

The Council Study is broken down in three main phases: (i) formulation of water resource development scenarios, (ii) cumulative impact assessment, and (iii) knowledge transfer

- 1. Water Resource Development Scenarios:** The six thematic teams formulate development scenarios in the Mekong Basin covering a timeframe from 2020 – 2040. The twenty-year span scenarios will be irrigation, hydropower, flood control, navigation, agriculture and land use, and domestic and industrial water use. The **five discipline teams** assess the baseline status of the Mekong and the impacts of formulated scenarios on hydrology, sediments, bio-resources, coastal, socio-economy, and climate change.
- 2. Cumulative impact assessment:** integrates and builds on the results of the first phase (thematic and disciplinary assessments). *Resource sustainability, cross-sectoral synergies, and transboundary balance* underlies the cumulative assessment. **Resource sustainability** aims to achieve optimal socio-economic benefits at minimal cost to the environment. *Cross-sectoral synergies* intends to measure the extent of trade-offs among sectors. **Transboundary balance** intends to measure how impacts and benefits are equitably distributed among countries.
- 3. Knowledge transfer:** Results from the Council Study will be shared and disseminated via various channels to Member Countries and stakeholders of the Mekong River Basin.

Council Study Assessment Framework





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