Introduction to the draft update of the IWRM-based Basin Development Strategy

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Purpose of the IWRM-based Basin Development Strategy for 2016-2020

The Basin Development Strategy is a ministerial-level agreement that sets out how the MRC member countries will develop, utilize, conserve and manage the water and related resources of the Mekong River Basin.

The BDS responds to the goals, objectives and underlying principles of the 1995 Mekong Agreement that established the MRC.
1995 Agreement gives MRC clear mandate:

To cooperate in all fields of sustainable development, utilization, management & conservation of water and related resources of Mekong...... to optimize multiple-use & mutual benefits of all riparians...

...with emphasis & preference on joint &/or basin-wide development through formulation of basin development plan, that would be used to identify, categorise & prioritise the projects & programmes to seek assistance for and to implement at basin level
What is the updated Strategy trying to achieve?

We have seen this morning that current national plans are suboptimal.

The Strategy tries to move national planning towards optimal and sustainable development in the Mekong Basin in order:

- To ensure water, energy, food and flood security
- To protect key environmental assets
- To contribute to regional cooperation and integration
- To increase national benefits and minimize negative transboundary impacts ("making the pie larger")
Formulation of the updated Strategy for 2016-2020 – **sources of information**

- Experiences and lessons learnt from implementing the Strategy for 2011-2015
- An assessment of development trends and of future development projections
- A review of existing previous scenario assessments underpinning the Strategy for 2011-2015 in the light of the new knowledge
- National perspectives by Member Countries and regional perspectives by MRC Programmes
- The new directives of the 2nd MRC Summit
- The streamlined approach to strategic planning adopted by MRC and the move to core functions
Formulation of the updated Strategy for 2016-2020 – participatory formulation process

- We are now over half way in the formulation process

- The first few drafts of the updated Strategy for 2016-2020 have been discussed with a range of stakeholders at the regional, national and sub-basin levels

- This Forum is another opportunity to provide your comments and suggestions

- The key messages of the Forum will be considered by senior government officials when they will discuss and negotiate the next version of the Basin Development Strategy for 2016-2020
Main elements of the draft updated Strategy for 2016-2020

- A summary of the current status and trends in the Mekong Basin (Chapter 2). Mostly covered this morning

- A long-term outlook of development needs, opportunities and risks (chapter 3). Covered this morning

- The identification of Development Opportunities for basin and national implementation (for all relevant actors (Section 4.1))

- Medium term Strategic Priorities (10-20 years) for all relevant actors to optimise opportunities and minimize risks (Section 4.2 and 4.3)

- Near term Strategic Actions (under each basin Strategic Priority) to be undertaken by the MRC in the ensuing 5-year period (2016-2020)

- How the Strategy will be implemented (Chapter 5)
Development Opportunities

Based on the 2010 basin-wide cumulative impact assessment of national plans, the LMB countries agreed on development opportunities in the Basin Development Strategy 2011 in the following four areas:

• Tributary Hydropower Development
• Expansion of Irrigated Agriculture
• Some Mainstream Hydropower Development
• Other Opportunities

These opportunities are retained in the current draft update of the 2011 Strategy.

Consultations and negotiations on the results of ongoing studies (e.g. the Council Study) and the assessment of new (exploratory) development scenarios will likely lead to a more detailed identification of development opportunities in the next edition of the Strategy.
Medium term Strategic Priorities

The MRC has two fundamental roles mandated by the 1995 Mekong Agreement:

- **To promote** optimal and sustainable development of the Mekong water and related resources
- **To coordinate** the management of the river

The role of *promotion* relates to expanding the DOS (making the pie bigger), whereas the role of *coordination* relates to maintaining the boundary of the DOS in line with the MRC’s principles (impacts within acceptable limits).

- **Strategic Priorities for Development** address issues related to *promotion*
- **Strategic Priorities for Management** address issues related to *coordination*
The medium term Strategic Priorities for Basin Development:

1. Regional joint cooperation and interdependent development increased

2. Essential knowledge to address development uncertainty and minimise risks acquired

3. Basin-wide optimal development for multiple use and mutual benefits in water and related sectors enhanced

4. National water resources development improved
**Selected Strategic Actions for the Priority: “Basin-wide optimal development for multiple use and mutual benefits in water and related sectors enhanced”**

- Undertake assessment of alternative medium term development plans based on exploratory long-term scenarios
- Implement and update basin-wide fisheries management and development strategy
- Prepare and promote regional strategy for sustainable hydropower development
- Finalise and implement Regional Master Plan for Waterborne Transportation
- Prepare and promote regional strategy for flood management of the Cambodia - Viet Nam flood plains
The medium term Strategic Priorities for Basin Management:

1. Basin management procedures and processes strengthened

2. Protection and management of mutually agreed environmental assets strengthened

3. Information management, communications and impact monitoring tools maintained and enhanced
Strategic Actions for the Priority: “Protection and management of mutually agreed environmental assets strengthened”

- Catalogue prevailing environmental regulations, measures and governance
- Establish transboundary biodiversity conservation sites
- Establish criteria for protection of environmental assets (like for PMFM and PWQ)
- Prepare and promote strategy for basin-wide management of mutually agreed environmental assets
Implementation of the Strategy

- This Strategy will be implemented at the regional and national levels. Coordination and promotion of the Strategy at the national level will be led by the National Mekong Committees.

- National agencies, RBOs and the private sector will be expected to take up the Development Opportunities.

- Regional organisations, agencies, academic organisations, NGOs can contribute to the building of knowledge and monitoring of development impacts, positive and negative.

- Implementation of the Strategy will be supported by national budgets and also by Development Partners.

- The Strategy will be reviewed and updated every five years, with the next update taking place in 2019 in readiness for the 2021 – 2025 cycle.
More at parallel session 3C...

Thank you