TERM OF REFERENCE

1. Consultancy Summary:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>consultancy title</th>
<th>International Environmental Planner for the update of Basin Development Strategy for the Lower Mekong Basin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>consultancy type</td>
<td>Special Service Agreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>duration</td>
<td>49 working days, from 01 August 2019 to 30 April 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>division</td>
<td>Planning Division</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>working station</td>
<td>Home based with travel to MRC Secretariat and its Member Countries</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. General background

Background

The Mekong River Commission (MRC) Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM)-based Basin Development Strategy (BDS) was firstly developed in 2011 with a five-year planning cycle for 2011-2015, followed by the updated BDS 2016-2020.

The BDS is a statement of the Lower Mekong Basin (LMB) countries setting out how they will utilize, manage and conserve the water and related resources of the Mekong in line with the Agreement on the Cooperation for the Sustainable Development of the Mekong River Basin (the 1995 Mekong Agreement). It provides regional perspectives for development opportunities and management of the basin. It also responds to the goals, objectives and underlying principles of the 1995 Mekong Agreement. The BDS is an instrument for basin planning and cooperation.

Since 2011, the BDS has been implemented at regional and national levels through its MRC Strategic Plan (MRC SP) and the four National Indicative Plans (NIPs) for 2011-2015 and 2016-2020, respectively. Currently, the plans are being implemented for 2016-2020.

For the next planning cycle, the update of the BDS will adopt the approach of shared vision planning which includes the development of long-term vision toward 2040 to reflect the recommendations of the MRC Council Study entitled “Study on Sustainable Management and Development of the Mekong River including Impacts of Mainstream Hydropower Projects.” With the 20-year vision, the BDS will identify the strategic priorities for the development and management of the basin for the duration of 10 years to guide the development of the MRC SP and NIPs for two short-terms of 5 years for 2021-2025 and 2026-2030. In this regard, the next BDS will be developed for a span of ten years (2021-2030).

Overall framework

The update of BDS will follow six stages of the MRC Strategic Planning Cycle, picture adjacent. Steps 1 to 4 are the process leading to the development and update of the BDS. Steps 5 and 6 are for the development and implementation of MRC SP and NIPs.
Currently, stages 1 and 3 have been completed. These include the MRC State of Basin Report 2018, scenario assessment of the MRC Council Study, and other MRC scenario assessments including basin-wide assessment of climate change impacts on water resources, and sustainable hydropower development strategy (SHDS) study. Stage 2 on national and regional perspectives has been done for some cross-cutting sectors including the Mekong Climate Change Adaptation Strategy and Action Plan (MASAP) and SHDS. For the update of BDS, stage 2 on national and regional perspectives will be developed further and broader to provide framework conditions for the strategy.

**Scope**

The BDS will:

- Describe current and future conditions of the basin, as well as prioritized issues of concerns to be managed within the basin;
- Define opportunities to promote sustainable development and strengthen management, and increase regional and national benefits;
- Include a long-term vision or desired state for the long-term future of 20 years to address the issues identified by the MRC Council Study toward 2040;
- Set medium-term strategic priorities up to 2030 that contribute towards achieving the long-term vision or desired state for the long-term future under different possible future conditions by specifying a coherent suite of strategic priorities related to development, environmental protection, and institutional cooperation; and
- Prescribe strategic actions for basin development plan including MRC SPs and NIPs 2021-2025 and 2026-2030 to address the basin-wide strategic priorities.

**Approach**

It adopts a shared vision planning exercise by developing a long-term vision toward 2040. The vision formulation process considers a desired future and delineates a platform of shared preferences among the Member Countries with different perspectives. The vision planning is valuable in processes where there is significant complexity in the basin, with potential difficult trade-offs between different environmental and development perspectives. The vision will provide the long-term aspirational desired state for the basin together with goals and principles to achieve this over time. Based on the vision, 10-year strategic priorities will be developed to achieve the vision. The strategic priorities will recommend a coherent suite of strategic objectives, outcomes and actions for the new strategic plans to be formulated in 2020.

The approach will take into account:

- Progress made in implementing the strategic priorities of BDS 2016-2020 and lessons learned from BDS implementation including issues and challenges (based on Mid-Term Review – MTR – including for each of the seven BDS strategic priorities) as well as lesson learned from other regional organizations and initiatives such as ASEAN, Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS), and Mekong Lancang Cooperation (MLC);
- A review and assessment of the status and trends and key recommendations in water resources and economic, environmental and social factors based on the MRC State of Basin Report 2018 and other scenario assessments and studies;
- The national and regional perspectives and alignment between them;
- Scenario assessments of the MRC Council Study and other studies to understand the trade-off to develop a 20-year shared vision and shape the 10-year strategic priorities; and
- Relevant strategic priorities of the MRC Sectoral Strategies including the Mekong Climate Change Adaptation Strategy and Action Plan (MASAP), Basin-wide Fisheries Management and
Development Strategy (BFMS), Navigation Masterplan, Sustainable Hydropower Development Strategy (SHDS), Drought Management Strategy (DMS), and Strategy for basin-wide Environmental Management for Environmental Assets of Regional Importance in LMB.

3. **Objective of consultancy**

The objective of this consultancy is to provide technical support on river basin environmental management for the update of the BDS 2021-2030 based on the overall framework, scope and approach mentioned above. The consultant will support the International Development Planner to deliver the update of BDS 2021-2030.

4. **Required deliverables, timelines and tasks and responsibilities**

4.1. **Deliverables and tentative timelines:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deliverables</th>
<th># of days</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preparation and working session with international development planner and national advisors for the preparation of BDS using shared vision planning exercise to develop shared vision toward 2040 and strategic priorities toward 2030. The consultant will support the International Development Planner to prepare national and regional perspectives.</td>
<td>5 days (MRC Secretariat)</td>
<td>01-15 August 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review of MRC State of Basin Report 2018, progress against the 7 strategic priorities of BDS 2016-2020, results of MRC Council Study and related MRC sectoral strategies and documents, and provide technical inputs related to environmental issues for the preparation of Chapters 1, 2 &amp; 3 of the BDS, namely (1) Introduction, (2) development status and trends, and (3) development needs, trade-offs and challenges.</td>
<td>10 days (homebased)</td>
<td>15 Aug - 15 Sep 2019</td>
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<tr>
<td>National meetings on Strength, Weakness, Opportunity and Threat (SWOT) to develop shared vision and strategic priorities</td>
<td>8 days (Cambodia, Laos, Thailand &amp; Vietnam)</td>
<td>16-27 Sep 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Meeting of Expert Group for Basin Planning (EGBP) to develop shared vision, strategic priorities, and implementation of the strategy including key strategic objectives and actions for MRC SP and NIPs</td>
<td>5 days (MRC Secretariat)</td>
<td>30 Sep - 04 Oct 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical inputs related to environmental issues for the preparation of Chapters 4 and 5 of the BDS, namely (4) Shared Vision, Strategic Priorities and Actions, and (5) Implementation of the Strategy</td>
<td>8 days (Homebased)</td>
<td>31 Oct 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in EGBP meeting on the first draft BDS</td>
<td>3 days (MRC Member Country)</td>
<td>14 Nov 2019</td>
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<tr>
<td>Technical inputs related to environmental issues for the second draft BDS</td>
<td>3 days</td>
<td>28 Nov 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in EGBP meeting to finalize BDS</td>
<td>3 days (MRC Member Country)</td>
<td>12 Dec 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical inputs related to environmental issues for the final draft</td>
<td>2 days</td>
<td>30 Dec 2019</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
4.2. Required tasks and responsibilities:

- Prepare and participate in working session with international development planner and national advisors for the preparation of BDS using shared vision planning exercise to develop shared vision toward 2040 and strategic priorities toward 2030. The consultant will support the International Development Planner to prepare national and regional perspectives.

- Review MRC State of Basin Report 2018, progress against the 7 strategic priorities of BDS 2016-2020, results of MRC Council Study and related MRC sectoral strategies and documents, and provide technical inputs related to environmental issues for the preparation of Chapters 1, 2 & 3 of the BDS, namely (1) Introduction, (2) development status and trends, and (3) development needs, trade-offs and challenges.

- Assist in facilitation of national meetings on Strength, Weakness, Opportunity and Threat (SWOT) to develop shared vision and strategic priorities;

- Assist in facilitation of regional meeting of Expert Group for Basin Planning (EGBP) to develop shared vision, strategic priorities, and implementation of the strategy including key strategic objectives and actions for MRC SP and NIPs

- Provide technical inputs related to environmental issues for the preparation of Chapters 4 and 5 of the BDS, namely (4) Shared Vision, Strategic Priorities and Actions, and (5) Implementation of the Strategy;

- Assist in facilitation of regional meeting of EGBP for consultation on the first draft BDS;

- Provide technical inputs related to environmental issues for the preparation of second draft BDS based on comments from regional meeting of EGBP;

- Assist in facilitation of regional meeting of EGBP to finalize BDS;

- Provide technical inputs related to environmental issues for the preparation of final draft BDS;

- Address final concerns from MRC Joint Committee and Council in the final BDS in relation to environmental issues.

5. Working Arrangement

5.1. Director supervisor: Director of the MRCS Planning Division

5.2. Communication line: The Consultant will work under the overall managerial direction of Director of the Planning Division and technical guidance of the Chief River Basin Planner. He/she will also work closely with International Development Planner and National Advisors for the update of BDS, as well as other relevant staff of MRCS Divisions and Office.

6. Payment mode

Payment will be made based on the presentation of the deliverables outlined in section 4, including all reports, a short progress report and timesheet. All deliverables must be satisfactorily accepted by the MRCS Planning Division. The consultant will submit invoice for the request of payment.
7. **Qualifications and Requirements**

The international consultant will have the following qualifications:

- University degree(s) (Master or higher) in environmental management, water resources management or relevant field. A doctorate is desirable.
- Minimum 10 years of experience in river basin environmental planning and management;
- Extensive experiences in working in and with international/inter-governmental organisations and multiple stakeholder groups;
- Extensive experiences in leading and managing complex planning and negotiation process;
- Knowledge of the Mekong River Basin and understanding of Mekong cooperation are required; and
- Excellent writing and communications skills, including writing major strategic and technical reports related to water resources and environment and presentation in the English language.

8. **Intellectual property rights:**

Intellectual property rights - IPR: Information, data, database, knowledge resources in the forms of briefings, reports, proceedings, articles, essays, etc. issued by and for the MRCS will be the MRCS property. Any utility, announcement and disclosure that are without MRCS highest levels of authority’s permission is considered illegal and will be charged by relevant local and international legal procedures.

9. **Signature Block**