USING PROCEDURES TO SUPPORT TRANSBOUNDARY GOVERNANCE

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The Governments of Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand and Viet Nam signed on 5th April 1995 the; “Agreement on the Cooperation for the Sustainable Development of the Mekong River Basin” (the 1995 Mekong Agreement).

1999 Council Resolution: WUP was established as a mechanism to formulate the Rules \ Procedures for water utilization
THE KEY COMMITMENTS

To *(inter alia)*:

- Cooperate on all fields of sustainable development;
- A Basin Development Plan;
- Protect the ecological balance;
- The reasonable and equitable use of water;
- Notification and Prior Consultation processes;
- The maintenance of flows on the mainstream;
- Prevent, cease and take responsibility for harmful effects; and
- Notify one another of emergency situations.
THE KEY TOOLS

1) Best practice guidelines for hydropower development, navigation, flood management and mitigation, irrigation development etc.

2) The 1995 Mekong Agreement – which established the MRC.

3) The Procedures.

4) The Basin Development Plan / Strategy
THE PROCEDURES

- Procedures on Data, Information Exchange and Sharing (PDIES) - 2001
- Procedures on Water Use Monitoring (PWUM) - 2003
- Procedures for Notification, Prior Consultation and Agreement (PNPCA) - 2003
- Procedures for the Maintenance of Flows on the Mainstream (PMFM) - 2006
- Procedures for Water Quality (PWQ) - 2011
Technical Guidelines:

1. *Guidelines on Custodianship and Management of the Mekong River Commission Information System, approved by the JC in July 2002. These guidelines support the implementation of the PDIES and PWUM and are facilitated through the activities of the Technical Assistance and Coordination Team (TACT)*;

2. *Guidelines on Implementation of the PNPCA, approved by the JC at their 22\textsuperscript{nd} meeting, August 2005*.

3. *Internal MRCS Procedures for Implementation of the PNPCA, November 2005; and*

4. *Guidelines on Implementation of the PWUM, approved by the JC at their 23\textsuperscript{rd} meeting, April 2006.*
Data in 12 different groups is collated and regularly updated from Line Agencies in each of the Member Countries.

1) Water Resources; 2) Topography; 3) Natural resources; 4) Agriculture; 5) Navigation and Transport; 6) Flood management and mitigation; 7) Infrastructure; 8) Urbanization/Industrialization; 9) Environment/Ecology; 10) Administrative boundaries; 11) Socio-economic; and 12) Tourism

These data are verified and made available to all of the Member Countries via the internet.
‘Water Use’ is defined as any water use which may have a significant impact to the flows or water quality of the Mekong river system.

Water use for irrigation is based on the areas under irrigation, crop type and evapotranspiration factors.

Domestic water use is determined by population sizes as well as separately for villages, small towns and cities.
Prior Consultation and Agreement is required for planned water use on the mainstream in the dry season;

Notification is required on the tributaries, and on the mainstream in the wet season;

A ‘special agreement’ is required for transfers out of the Mekong River Basin as inter-basin diversion;

To date 34 projects have been notified, and 1 has been proposed for Prior Consultation.
Flow frameworks for selected sites are being tested on a learning-by-doing approach.

These provide for minimum flows in the dry season, as well as a total reverse flow volume into the Tonle Sap Lake.

These agreed flows represent a statistical representation of the agreed baseline flows from 1985-2000.
Water quality guidelines for the protection of human health and for the Protection of the Aquatic Environment have been agreed. These are based on the Member Countries national guidelines.

Guidelines for dealing with Emergency Situations are currently being finalised.
The Procedures represent a unique approach to transboundary cooperation, providing both ‘safeguards’ as well as supporting the management of the Lower Mekong Basin.

The MRC is now exploring ways to better integrate the Procedures in line with an IWRM approach.
THANK YOU