MRC Stakeholder Engagement Principles and Mechanism
Stakeholder engagement experiences

- Stakeholder engagement has been gradually enhanced in MRC and is now well established.
- For the Xayaburi’s Prior Consultation, stakeholder engagement was minimal and no regional forum took place. For Don Sahong, one took place and late in the process.
- For Pak Beng, information was shared more timely, public communication and engagement were extensive – e.g. two regional forums.
- From 2016-2017, the MRC conducted a number of broad Regional Stakeholder Forums (RSF) and specific forums on the Council Study, Climate Change, Hydropower Strategy, Watershed Management, Fisheries, PDG, etc.
Stakeholder engagement experiences (con’t)

• For Pak Beng, **feedbacks from stakeholders were more positive**. Yet there were **concerns regarding degree and inclusiveness of consultation at the national levels** and addressing comments by stakeholders.

• For Pak Lay, based on critical feedbacks and lessons learned, the MRC will make more efforts in the following areas:
  
  • **Enhanced national consultations and forums**
  
  • **More efforts to show clearly how comments were addressed and taken into account** – and what are beyond MRC’s mandate
  
  • **Support proposing country to hold national consultations and consider feedbacks and recommendations from the MRCS, other countries and stakeholders**
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<tr>
<th>COMMENTS</th>
<th>IMPROVEMENTS</th>
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<tr>
<td>The need for project documents and MRCS’ review to be released to the public in a timely manner well ahead of the meeting days in order to enable effective involvement</td>
<td>Release of documents were transparent and timely for the Pak Beng &amp; Pak Lay.</td>
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<td>a 6-month timeframe was a very tight schedule for stakeholders to be meaningfully engaged</td>
<td>The Joint Action Plan mechanism (post-PC) is meant to address this limitation.</td>
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<td>Public consultation meetings must be arranged much earlier in the process to allow sufficient time for stakeholders to learn about the project and provide recommendations.</td>
<td>This has been addressed with at least two regional stakeholder forums during the PC process.</td>
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<td>The project developer should be present at consultation meetings to provide relevant information, clarification, and subsequent feedback</td>
<td>Developers have been invited to all stakeholder forums and were present at RSFs. More engagement is needed at national level.</td>
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<td>Information about the project should be translated into the riparian languages</td>
<td>Project fact sheets as well as summary of TRR are and can be translated. Press releases are translated.</td>
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<td>All stakeholder involvement needs to be guided by the spirit of good faith and roles and expectations need to be clearly communicated</td>
<td>Efforts were made especially for Pak Beng process and will continue for Pak Lay.</td>
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Objectives of engagement (and its value)

• To provide information and reinforce common understanding of the MRC’s Prior Consultation process under the PNPCA and the 1995 Mekong Agreement

• To provide information and understanding on the proposed Pak Lay Hydropower Project and potential impacts (positive and negative)

• To gain a representative range of views from potentially affected communities upstream and downstream – it will be less representative if certain voices are missing

• To reflect these views as part of the MRC Prior Consultation Technical Review Report for consideration by the MRC Joint Committee

• To provide feedback on how key concerns are addressed by the MRC Joint Committee
What engagement is / is not about

- Mutual efforts – *all sides should make efforts to engage*
- Contributing to decision making – *engagement brings new ideas, reinforces key points, and contributes to better informed decision making*
- NOT about endorsement or approval of a certain project
**Scope of engagement for Pak Lay prior consultation**

- The geographic scope will include **all areas potentially affected** by the proposed Pak Lay Hydropower Project.

- The substantive scope will include **direct and indirect transboundary impacts (positive and negative)** that may be caused by changes to fisheries, livelihoods, water quality and aquatic ecology, hydrology, sediment transport, navigation and dam safety.

- It should also include an **understanding of the Prior Consultation process**, as well as other issues about operation and coordination of existing dams upstream and downstream of the proposed project.
Receiving and Addressing Feedbacks

• The MRCS has a channel for web-based submissions of stakeholders’ comments on the website.

• Stakeholders can also submit their feedback to the MRC via e-mail.

• Stakeholder comments will be documented during the regional and national meetings into a matrix and feed into the Technical Review Report for consideration of the MRC JC.

• Feedbacks to key comments at Regional Stakeholder Forums will be provided in forum reports on the MRC website and at subsequent RSF meetings.

• MRCS will make efforts to individually follow up on critical comments from certain stakeholders.
The MRC has gradually enhanced stakeholder engagement.

Lessons have been learned and will be used for even more improvement.

All this will be deployed to engage in good faith and manage expectations.

Stakeholder engagement and communication had much improved - it is not time to turn back now.

A number of stakeholder engagement and communication tools are available and will be used.
Thank you