



Regional Stakeholder Forum on Mekong Adaptation Strategy and Action Plan

26 June, Vientiane, Lao PDR

Concept Note and Agenda

Background

Climate change is a fundamental threat to sustainable development and the fight against poverty. Climate change is already impacting countries and communities around the world with the most vulnerable hit the hardest. Climate change is best viewed as an ‘amplifier’ of current environmental threats such as habitat loss, poorly planned infrastructure, and unsustainable natural resource extraction. These threats weaken ecosystem resilience, which makes ecosystems even more vulnerable to climate change—a downward spiral that ultimately has serious consequences for humans too.

Studies show that the basin is vulnerable to several climate change impacts that include a predicted mean temperature rise of approximately 0.8 degrees Celsius by 2030, as well as a regional increase in annual precipitation of 200mm¹. With more extreme weather events such as typhoons, the basin is more vulnerable to floods and drought, affecting people’s livelihoods and reducing agricultural productivity. In the Mekong Delta, saltwater intrusion caused by sea level rise is predicted to take a toll on agriculture, aquaculture and capture fisheries. Sea level rise could also result in the displacement of millions of people throughout the Delta.

Recognizing the critical threats to economies, ecosystem sustainability and social harmony in the Lower Mekong Basin and to the pivot role of the MRC in addressing climate change adaptation needs, since 2009 MRC has developed Climate Change Adaptation Initiative to provide knowledge, tools and capacity building and other assistance to the Member Countries to better adapt to climate change.

Mekong Adaptation Strategy and Action Plan (MASAP) has been formulated as a regional adaptation strategy and is part of the MRC’s commitment stated in the MRC Basin Development Strategy (BDS) 2011-2015 and 2016-2020. The MASAP is setting a vision for the Lower Mekong Basin, aiming at strengthening the basin-wide resilience and ensuring sustainable development of the Basin in line with the 1995 Agreement on the Cooperation for the Sustainable Development of the Mekong River Basin. The MASAP sets out the strategic priorities and actions at basin level to address climate change risks on the basin and strengthen basin-wide resilience.

In terms of climate-resilience, the MASAP contributes to ensuring that people, communities, businesses, and other organizations can cope with current climate variability as well as adapt to future climate change, preserving development gains, and minimizing damages. Moreover, the added values of the MASAP are ensured by addressing critical climate change adaptation aspects that need transboundary cooperation via IWRM-based approach and by

¹ www.mrcmekong.org

enhancing the capacity of Member Countries in implementing their own national strategies. In the Mekong region, climate change is likely to cause significant impacts on water resources. The MRC can help LMB countries address the question of climate change and water linkages at basin level most effectively. Climate change impacts upstream can have implications downstream and vice versa. Adaptation options implemented by a country may pose directly and/or significant cross-border implications to the other country as well. Thus, addressing transboundary issues associated in climate change adaptation via MASAP is necessary. While Member countries are facing difficulties and hinders during implementation of national, regional and international commitments in climate change adaptation in the countries, the MASAP will position MRC as a leading regional institution in providing the support needed and thus advance MRC countries' implementation of national and international adaptation strategies.

The scope of the MASAP will:

- ✓ Consider the vulnerability of water resources, other related resources and people of the LMB due to current and future climate change over a 50-year period
- ✓ Take into account the existing policy, legal and institution setting of climate change adaptation associated with water management and water related sectors in the LMB
- ✓ Provide regional strategic priorities and actions for climate change adaptation in the LMB that are considered beneficial in filling the adaptation gaps and add values to national policies and plans
- ✓ Describe the implementation arrangement and potential resources for implementing the MASAP

Approach to MASAP's development

The development of MASAP has gone through a long process. A roadmap for the formulation of the MASAP was developed and agreed by the Member Countries in 2014. Following the agreed roadmap, the MASAP team was formed including the MRC Secretariat (MRCS) CCAI team, an international expert and four national experts. The tasks of the expert team also include policy analysis of climate change and adaptation in the LMB to ensure that the MASAP is consistent and does not contradict with the national climate change policies in the Member Countries.

In parallel with the MASAP formulation, the MRCS CCAI team in cooperation with other MRCS teams (including fisheries and environment, and flood and drought) carried out basin-wide assessments of climate change impacts on water and water related resources and sectors in the LMB. In these studies, seven sectors were assessed including impacts on hydrology, flood behavior, drought behavior, hydropower production, ecosystem and biodiversity, food security, and socio-economics. The assessments of the seven sectors draw the vulnerability context and provided basis for the formulation of the MASAP. These studies were carried out by seven technical teams of international, regional and national experts started in 2013.

MASAP's stakeholder

Stakeholder engagement was paid high attention during the whole MASAP development. They were involved through engagement of international, regional and national experts in

various fields as mentioned above. At national level, the process was led by National Mekong Committee Secretariat (NMCS) with close involvement of National Climate Change Focal Agencies and related line agencies with more than 40 national contracted experts for policy review, data collection, modelling and assessments.

Furthermore, a number of national and regional consultations and working sessions was carried out throughout the formulation process of the MASAP and the basin-wide assessments of the seven sectors.

To kick-off the formulation process, a forum namely “the 2nd Mekong Climate Change Forum” was conducted in Siem Reap, Cambodia, in October 2014 under the theme of “Adaptation to Climate Change in the Transboundary Context”. At the forum, the roadmap and the way forward for the formulation of the MASAP were discussed. The forum was attended by more than 150 participants from national government agencies, research institutes and universities, non-governmental organizations, international river basin organizations, development partners, and private sectors.

In a wider angle, the *ultimate target beneficiaries* of the MASAP are the *people of the LMB*, especially *the poorest and most vulnerable communities living along the river banks and on the floodplains* of the Mekong mainstream and its tributaries. These are the people who are most at risk from floods and droughts, and who depend upon the availability of good quality water for agriculture and fish and other aquatic flora and fauna for their livelihood. It also includes *the people living in the watersheds* whose use and management of the natural resources can influence the water quality and availability, and whose vulnerability to extreme climate events threatens sustainable watershed management.

Regarding the *direct beneficiaries* of the MASAP, they are:

- ✓ National climate change focal points: *Ministry of Environment in Cambodia, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment in Lao, Thailand and Viet Nam* which facilitate and promote implementation of national climate change target plans throughout government and the community.
- ✓ The *NMCs* and *sector agencies* in the 4 LMB countries which are tasked with planning and implementing adaptation options in all their development policies and activities
- ✓ *Local government authorities* and *local communities* in areas where the adaptation measures and actions are taken place.

The *main stakeholders* in the implementation of MASAP will be:

- ✓ National climate change focal agencies and national line agencies of key MRC sectors: agriculture, irrigation and forestry, hydropower, navigation, floods and droughts, fisheries
- ✓ NMCs
- ✓ Local authorities and local communities
- ✓ International NGOs
- ✓ Local NGOs
- ✓ Private sector, companies, experts and organizations associated with agriculture, forestry, fisheries, hydropower, navigation
- ✓ Development partners who support the MASAP

Based on these analysis, relevant and interested stakeholder groups should be engaged in the Regional Stakeholder Forum on MASAP as following:

- National Mekong Committees (including national experts of MASAP team), National Climate Change Focal Agencies, and Line/ Implementing Agencies
- Research Institutes and University
- INGOs and LNGOs
- Representatives of international river basin organizations
- Representatives of local authorities and communities
- Private sector and company
- Development partners
- MRCS

Objectives of the Forum

The regional stakeholder forum aims to share and consult the 2nd draft of the Mekong Adaptation Strategy and Action Plan to its relevant stakeholder groups; discuss and engage stakeholders on suitable regional action plan for climate change adaptation in the context of Lower Mekong Basin. This Regional Stakeholder Forum has following specific objectives:

- Sharing the draft Mekong Adaptation Strategy and Action Plan undertaken by the MRC
- Seeking the viewpoints, recommendations and suggestions of concerned stakeholders in order to improve and finalize the MASAP
- Sharing information on finalization and next steps for future engagement of stakeholders in implementing the MASAP
- Creating a platform and network for all relevant and interested stakeholders to share key issues and concerns regarding climate change adaptation.

Expected Outcomes

- Gained better understanding of the Mekong adaptation strategy and its action plan,
- Obtained comments and suggestions for improvement of the 2nd draft MASAP towards its finalization, endorsement by the JC and approval by the Council
- Identified synergies and cooperation opportunities with interested stakeholders in implementing the MASAP.



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Agenda

Time	Session	Responsibility
08:00 – 08:30	Registration	MRCS
08:30 – 08:40	Welcome and Opening remarks	MRCS CEO
08:40 – 08:50	Remarks by MRC Development Partner	EU representative
08:50 – 09:00	Forum’s ground rules, introduction, objectives and agenda	Mr. Nadeem Samnakay, MRC-Australian Water Partnership
09:00 – 09:30	Keynote speaker on complementarity of regional climate change adaptation strategy to national strategies Q&A	Mr. Miodrag Milovanovic, Serbia representative, ICPDR and ISRBC
9:30 – 09:50	The Mekong Adaptation Strategy and Action Plan – Formulation Process Q&A	Dr. Thim Ly, Chief River Basin Planner
09:50 – 10:15	The MRC Basin Development Strategy (BDS) and linkages of MASAP & other Basin-wide Sectoral Strategies Q&A	Dr. Anoulak Kittikhoun, Chief Strategy and Partnership Officer
10:15 – 10:40	Coffee/Tea break	All
10:40 – 11:05	Review of International Experience on formulation of Adaptation Strategy Q&A	Dr. Jos Timmerman, International Expert
11:05 – 11:30	Climate Change and Adaptation - Policy Review Q&A	Dr. Thim Ly

11:30 – 12:10	Basin-wide assessments of climate change impacts and vulnerability Q&A	Dr. Nguyen Dinh Cong Dr. Anne Chaponniere, GIZ Technical Advisor
12:10 – 13:30	Lunch	All
13:30 – 14:30	The Mekong Adaptation Strategy and Action Plan: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview • Strategic Guidance and Priorities • Action Plan and M&E Q&A	Dr. Nguyen Dinh Cong Dr. Thim Ly Dr. Anne Chaponniere
14:30 – 15:30	Parallel Group Discussions: comments and recommendations on Mekong Adaptation (1) Strategic Priorities and (2) Action Plan and (3) Synergies for MASAP Implementation	All
15:30 – 16:00	Coffee break & return to plenary	All
16:00 – 16:40	Report back on key comments and recommendations (10' per group) Q&A	Rapporteurs (TBA)
16:40 – 16:50	Recap of overall key points and future plan for Finalization and implementation of MASAP Clarifying Q&A	Dr. An Pich Hatda
16:50 – 17:00	Thank you remarks and closure of Forum	MRCS CEO