



Mekong River Commission

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30 September 2017

TERM OF REFERENCE

1. Consultancy Summary:

Title:	Lead International Consultant to support (1) the update of MRC Indicator Framework, and (2) Preparation of the SOBR 2018 Chapter on Assessment of Environment Status and Trends
Consultancy type:	Individual Consultant (SSA)
Division:	Environmental Management Division
Duration:	43 days during 15 November 2017 and 31 December 2018
Duty station:	Home-based with travelling to MRC Member Countries (MCs)
Reporting to:	Director of MRCS Environmental Management Division (ED)
Required deliverables for this consultancy:	(1) An Updated MRC Indicator Framework, with a short explanatory note for each Strategic Indicator and each Assessment Indicator; and (2) A final Chapter on assessment of environmental status and trends

2. Background

The Mekong River Commission (MRC) was established by the 1995 Agreement on Co-operation for the Sustainable Development of the Mekong River Basin, between the governments of Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand and Viet Nam. The role of the MRC is to coordinate and promote cooperation in all fields of sustainable development, utilization, management and conservation of the water and related resources of the Mekong River Basin.

The MRC Secretariat (MRCS) is the operational arm of the MRC. It provides technical and administrative services to the Joint Committee and the Council to achieve the MRC's mission.

The Environmental Management Division (ED), in cooperation with Planning Division (PD) and Technical Division (TD), is responsible for environment monitoring, assessment,

planning and management to support basin planning management and development for sustainable development of the Mekong River.

MRC Indicator Framework: Reference is made to the MRC Annual Work Plan 2017 that MRC is updating the MRC Indicator Framework developed during the last MRC SP period 2011-2015 based on the experiences gained after practical uses. The purpose of the MRC Indicator Framework is to provide a unified and integrated approach to assessing the impacts of current and proposed water development projects and the management actions needed within the Mekong River Basin to achieve the development aims of the 1995 Mekong Agreement.

The MRC Indicator Framework will be used as the basis for: (1) State of the Basin reporting; (2) Assessment of basin-wide development plans, scenarios and projects (e.g. Council Study, PNPCA, the next BDP, etc.); (3) Collection and sharing of data and information needed for MRC activities agreed in the MRC Strategic Plan and enabled by the improved implementation of the Procedures for Data and Information Exchange and Sharing, PDIES); and (4) Decentralization and strengthening of primary data collection at the national level.

The development process of the MRC Indicator Framework has been started since 2012 and the third draft was prepared in December 2015 based on feedback from national consultations, MRC former Programmes and the BDP scenario assessment team followed by a regional working session held in April 2017 in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, to discuss and finalize the strategic indicators and assessment indicators only, while updating the monitoring indicators of the MRC Indicator Framework is needed. The current MRC Indicator Framework is already being used in ongoing preparatory work for the 2018 State of Basin Report and for environment, social, economic and scenario assessment under the Council Study. The use of the Framework during the coming years will provide a wealth practical implementation experience to further refine the Framework.

The current MRC Indicator Framework is structured as a hierarchy of indicators within the five dimensions of social, environment, economic, climate change and cooperation. Within these five dimensions, a hierarchy of 15 strategic indicators, more than 65 assessment indicators and approximately 250 supporting monitoring parameters has been established. Based on the results of national and regional consultations, the current Draft MRC IF will need to be updated as a living document, with a short description or explanatory note of each strategic indicator and assessment indicator, and review and update of the 250 monitoring parameters, for approval of the MRC Joint Committee by the end of August 2018.

MRC State of Basin Report: The MRC launched its first State of the Mekong Basin Report (SOBR) in June 2003. The second SOBR was published in 2010, which was built on the first SOBR of 2003.

The SOBR aimed at providing readers with an understanding of (i) the important role that the Mekong system plays in people who live in the basin and depend on its water and related resources; (ii) the present state of and trends in water related resources within the basin; (iii) the need to develop water-related resources in ways which are equitable and sustainable from

an economic, social and environmental point of view; and (iv) the importance of planning and monitoring development on a basin-wide scale so that gains in one sector or one geographic area do not result in losses in others.

Per the agreement among the MRC Member Countries, the State of Basin Report will be updated every 5 years serving as an important reference for the cyclic updating of the MRC Basin Development Strategy (BDS) and preparation of the Strategic Plan (SP) as well as the planning cycles of the basin countries (i.e. NIP). With this principle, the 3rd State of Basin Report will need to be available in 2018 prior to updating the BDS, SP and NIP for the strategic period 2021-2025.

Following the decision of the MRC Joint Committee at its 43rd Meeting, the preparation of the 3rd SOBR has been started since late 2015 by the former MRC Environment Team with support and participation of all former MRC programmes/teams. Under the new structure of the MRC Secretariat, this exercise will be executed through overall coordination of the Environmental Management Division (ED) with collaborative support and participation of all other Divisions and Office of CEO. To date, the Draft SOB Report or Preparatory SOB Report has been completed by the MRCS ED and was consulted with the MRC Member Countries at its regional consultation workshop held in March 2017. Based on the results of national and regional consultations, the Draft SOB (v.2.2) will need to be improved and finalized by the end of December 2018, with additional collection of latest data and information, and expansion of the scope of the report to cover whole Mekong River Basin, including Upper Mekong Basin in Myanmar and China, for approval of the MRC Joint Committee.

3. Objective of the Consultancy

The objective of this consultancy is to support the MRCS Environmental Management Division in the update of MRC Indicator Framework by September 2018 and the preparation of the Chapter on assessment of environmental status and trends of the State of the Basin Report 2018 by November 2018, based on available inputs from MRC ED, and available information from the four MRC Member Countries.

4. Key Expected Outputs

The two following outputs of this consultancy are expected:

- (1) The MRC Indicator Framework updated as a living document;
- (2) The Chapter on assessment of environment status and trends under the ED responsibilities prepared;

5. Responsibilities and tasks:

Update of MRC Indicator Framework (25 working days)

- Contribute to an MRCS Internal Review Working Session on the update of MRC IF;
- Work with other international consultants and national consultants to review the current draft MRC Indicator Framework, MRC environment monitoring activities and social and economic surveys, and other environment and socioeconomic indicators used for basin-wide monitoring, assessment, planning and management in other river basins, and prepare a short report, including recommendations for simple, practical, replicable, and cost-

effective indicator framework in the LMB;

- Work with other international consultants and national consultants to prepare short explanatory notes for 15 strategic indicators and more than 65 assessment indicators of the MRC IF, including methods for the estimate or quantification of each strategic indicator and assessment indicator;
- Work with other international consultants and national consultants to review and update the current 250 monitoring parameters, including their units, data sources and data availability, that are required to support national and regional planning for sustainable water resources management and development in the LMB;
- Work with other international consultants and national consultants to elaborate the field data required and the monitoring and data collection and processing arrangements for these monitoring parameters;
- Work with other international consultants and national consultants to establish the linkages between the monitoring parameters proposed in the MRC Indicator Framework and the field data being collected as a consequence of national needs and ongoing MRC activities;
- Work with MRCS SOBR Core Team and other international consultants to prepare the first updated version of MRC IF based on the results of the MRCS internal meeting;
- Contribute to the four national consultations on 1st updated version of the MRC IF;
- Work with other international consultants and national consultants to prepare the second updated version of MRC IF based on the feedback from the four national consultations;
- Contribute to the regional consultation on 2nd updated version of MRC IF;
- Work with other international consultants and national consultants to prepare the third or final updated version of MRC IF based on the feedback from the regional consultation, as a living document.

Preparation of the SOBR 2018 Chapter on Assessment of Environment Status and Trends (20 working days)

- Work with ED's specialists and officers, and national consultants to identify additional data and information needs, including tables, figures, and maps, for the preparation of the SOBR 2018 chapter on assessment of environment status and trends (see the Outline of SOBR 2018);
- Work with ED's specialists and officers, and national consultants to collect additional primary and secondary data and information for the preparation of the SOBR 2018 chapter on assessment of environment status and trends and with international consultant of socioeconomics to contribute to the preparation of other chapters related environment, social and economic aspects (see the Outline of SOBR 2018);
- Work with ED's specialists and officers, and national consultants to assemble all required data sets and information for the preparation of SOBR 2018; and
- Prepare, revise and finalize the draft SOBR 2018 chapter on assessment of environment status and trends and other environment related chapters of the SOBR 2018.

6. Working principles and reporting line:

The consultant will be working under the overall supervision of the Director of the Environment Management Division and in close and direct consultation and supervision with the Chief Environment Management Officer and the MRCS SOBR Core Team.

7. Deliverables and timelines:

A tentative schedule is provided below. The exact schedule will depend on the timing of the contracting with the successful consultant, but it is anticipated that the assignment will commence in 15 November 2017 until 31 December 2018.

No.	Task	Deliverables	No. days	Schedule
<i>Update of MRC Indicator Framework (25 working days)</i>				
1.	Work with other international consultants and national consultants to review the current draft MRC Indicator Framework, linkages to SDGs, MRC environment monitoring activities and social and economic surveys, and other environment and socioeconomic indicators used for basin-wide monitoring, assessment, planning and management in other river basins.	A short report, including recommendations for simple, practical, replicable, and cost-effective indicator framework in the LMB	2	December 2017- January 2018
2.	Contribute to an MRCS Internal Working Session on the review and update of MRC IF and the preparation of the SOBR 2018	Ppt presentation and materials; and the above short report finalized	1	December 2017 – January 2018
3.	Work with other international consultants and national consultants to prepare short explanatory notes for 15 strategic indicators and more than 65 assessment indicators of the MRC IF, including methods for the estimate or quantification of each strategic indicator and assessment indicator;	A short explanatory note for each of the strategic indicators, each of assessment indicators, and each of composite indicators of the MRC IF	3	January – February 2018
4.	Work with other international consultants and national consultants to review and update the current 250 monitoring parameters,	The 250 monitoring parameters reviewed and updated, with the consideration of field data requirement/need	5	January – February 2018

		and data collection and processing arrangements for national and basin assessment, planning and management		
5.	Work with MRCS SOBR Core Team and other international consultants to prepare the first updated version of MRC IF based on the results of the MRCS international meeting	First updated version of MRC IF	3	March 2018
6.	Contribute to four national consultations on 1st update version of MRC IF	Materials and ppt presentations	5	March April 2018
7.	Work with MRCS SOBR Core Team, other international consultants and national consultants to prepare the second updated version of MRC IF based on the feedback from the four national consultations	Second updated version of the MRC IF	2	April – May 2018
8.	Contribute to the regional consultation on the second updated version of the MRC IF	Materials and ppt presentations	2	June 2018
9.	Work with MRCS SOBR Core Team, other international consultants and national consultants to finalize the SOBR 2018 based on the feedback from the regional consultation	Final updated version of the MRC IF	2	September 2018
<i>Preparation of the SOBR 2018 Chapter on Assessment of Environment Status and Trends (20 working days)</i>				
10.	Work with ED's specialists and officers, and its national consultants to identify additional data and information needs, including tables, figures, and maps, for the preparation of the SOBR 2018 chapter on assessment of environment status and trends (see the Outline of SOBR 2018)	A short report on data and information needs	2	January – February 2018
12.	Work with ED's specialists and officers, and its national consultants	Primary and secondary data and	5	April 2018

	to collect additional primary and secondary data and information for the preparation of the SOBR 2018 chapter on assessment of environment status and trends and with international consultant of socioeconomics to contribute to the preparation of other chapters related environment, social and economic aspects (see the Outline of SOBR 2018)	information collected and analyzed		
13.	Work with MRCS SOBR Core Team, national consultants and other international consultants to assemble all required data sets and information for the preparation of the SOBR 2018	Data and information assembled	2	May 2018
14.	Prepare the first draft of the SOBR 2018 chapter on assessment of environment status and trends and other environment related chapters	First draft of the SOBR 2018 chapter on assessment of environment status and trends and other environment related chapters	5	May 2018
15.	Prepare the second draft environment assessment chapters	Second draft	2	June 2018
16.	Prepare the third draft environment assessment chapters	Third draft	2	October 2018
17.	Prepare the final draft environment assessment chapters	Final draft	2	December 2018
	Grand total (working days)		45	

8. Qualifications and Requirements:

- Advanced degree in environmental sciences, ecological economics, socio-economics or a related discipline;
- At least 15 years of working experience and knowledge on environmental economic analysis, socio-economic assessments, and similar assignments;
- Strong knowledge and experience in preparation of river basin assessment reports or state of the basin reports, including the MRC State of the Basin Reports which would be beneficial;
- Good knowledge and skills in preparation of indicator framework for river basin assessment, planning and management;
- Demonstrated ability to write technical reports which can be readily understood by decision makers and the public;
- Familiarity with the Lower Mekong River Basin, the Mekong River Commission and the

- MRC stakeholders would be beneficial;
- Excellent verbal communication ability, including ability to make positive and insightful contributions to consultation workshops and inspire learning motivation amongst stakeholders;
 - Strong work ethics, including commitment, responsibility, team spirit, and timely delivery; and
 - Fluency in written and spoken English.

9. Condition of payment

Since there will be several milestones/deliverables to be completed and to avoid many administrative works, payment by instalment will be selected for this assignment and it is shown below.

- The 1st payment upon signing of the Contract (20% of the total budget)
- The 2nd payment upon submission and acceptance by MRCS/ED on the task No. 1-6 & 10-13 under this given period (40% of the total budget)
- The final payment upon submission and acceptance by MRCS/ED on the task No. 7-9 & 14-17 under this given period (40% of the total budget).

10. 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' permission is considered illegal and will be charged by relevant local and international legal procedures.

10. Signature Block

MRC Chief Environment Management Officer

Consultant

Name: So Nam

Name:

Date:

Date:

Director of MRC Environmental Management Division

Name: Tien Truong Hong

Date: