



# Mekong River Commission

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**Date: 19 July 2018**

## **TERM OF REFERENCE**

### **1. Consultancy Summary:**

- Title: **Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) Expert for the Midterm Review Team of the MRC Strategic Plan 2016-2020**
- Consultancy type: Short term consultancy
- Division: OCEO
- Duration: A maximum of **30** days, over 4 months from 13 August to 28 December 2018
- Duty station: Home-based, MRC Secretariat (MRCS) office in Vientiane, Lao PDR, and capital cities of the MRC Member Countries
- Reporting to: CEO of the MRCS
- Total number of days for this consultancy: Up to 40 days
- Required deliverables for this consultancy: Yes
- Daily timesheet requirement: No
- Daily stand up meeting requirement: No
- Finger print scanning requirement: Yes
- Monthly work plan requirement: No
- Monthly timesheet requirement: Yes

### **2. Background**

#### **2.1 The MRC**

The MRC was established by the 1995 Agreement on the Cooperation for the Sustainable Development of the Mekong River Basin signed between the governments of Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand and Viet Nam. The MRC provides the institutional framework to implement the Agreement. In accordance with this Agreement, the mission of the MRC is: *“To promote and coordinate sustainable management and development of water and related resources for the countries’ mutual benefit and the people’s well-being.”*

The MRC consists of three permanent bodies: The Council, the Joint Committee (JC) and the MRCS. The MRCS provides technical and administrative services to the MRC’s Council and Joint Committee to achieve the MRC’s mission.

National Mekong Committees (NMCs) act as coordinating and implementing bodies for MRC in each of the Member Countries and are served by respective NMC Secretariats located in the water/environment ministries. The MRCS works with the national agencies in each Member Country through the coordination of the respective NMC Secretariat.

MRC maintains regular dialogue with the two upstream countries of the Mekong River Basin, China and Myanmar, as well as with its Development Partners.

#### **2.2 The MRC Strategic Plan 2016-2020**

The MRC Strategic Plan 2016-2020 represents the consensus reached by MRC's Member Countries as to how MRC as a regional organization should respond to the 2016-2020 Basin Development Strategy's (BDS) key challenges, issues and opportunities facing the Mekong River Basin.

Implementation of the Basin Development Strategy is undertaken at both regional and national levels through the MRC Strategic Plan and the four National Indicative Plans (NIPs) respectively. These two levels collectively achieve the outcomes and outputs that address BDS priorities and actions.

The BDS thus establishes the strategic directions and agenda for the MRC, ensuring strong linkage between strategy at the basin level, the MRC's Strategic Plan and countries' NIPs. The Strategic Plan 2016-2020 was developed based on:

1. The updated IWRM-based Mekong Basin Development Strategy (BDS), which itself was the product driven by Member Countries, facilitated by the MRCS, with extensive consultations with their line/implementing agencies and broader stakeholder groups, and which identifies basin-wide development and management needs, challenges, opportunities and priorities;
2. MRC's organizational reform agenda, first signaled by the MRC Summit of Heads of Governments in 2010 and subsequently detailed in the 2014 Roadmap document; and
3. Recommendations from the MTR of the 2011-2015 MRC Strategic Plan, the final reports of (former) MRC programmes, and the 2015 appraisal mission commissioned by MRC's Development Partners.

The framework of this Strategic Plan 2016-2020 comprises a total of 7 Outcomes in four key result areas. Six outcomes relate to how MRC aims to address basin management and development issues, while the last outcome related to the reform of the MRC as an organization towards its core functions, self-finance and full riparianization of the Secretariat (6 Basin Management & Development Outcomes and 1 Organizational Outcome).

The Key Result Areas with their respective outcomes are:

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<b>Key Result Area 1:</b> Enhancement of national plans, projects and resources based on basin-wide perspectives	<b>Outcome 1:</b> Increased common understanding and application of evidence-based knowledge by policy makers and project planners <b>Outcome 2:</b> Environment management and sustainable water resources development optimised for basin-wide benefits by national sector planning agencies <b>Outcome 3:</b> Guidance for the development and management of water and related projects and resources shared and applied by national planning and implementing agencies
<b>Key Result Area 2:</b> Strengthening regional cooperation	<b>Outcome 4:</b> Effective and coherent implementation of MRC Procedures by the Member Countries <b>Outcome 5:</b> Effective dialogue and cooperation between Member Countries and strategic engagement of regional partners and stakeholders on transboundary water management

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<b>Key Result Area 3:</b> Better monitoring and communication of the Basin conditions	<b>Outcome 6:</b> Basin-wide monitoring, forecasting, impact assessment and dissemination of results strengthened for better decision-making by Member Countries
<b>Key Result Area 4:</b> Leaner River Basin Organisation	<b>Outcome 7:</b> MRC transitioned to a more efficient and effective organisation in line with the Decentralisation Roadmap and related reform plans

### 3. Objective of the Consultancy:

The objectives are to:

- 1) **Review the present state of the implementation** of the MRC Strategic Plan 2016-2020 against the agreed outputs and indicative activities set forth in the Plan;
- 2) **Assess the progress and achievement of the outcomes** and desired results as specified in the Strategic Plan;
- 3) **Make recommendations** on how to improve the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2016-2020, on prioritisation and implementation of key outputs during the remaining two years of the current planning cycle, taking into account emerging opportunities and challenges, as well as budgetary and organizational constraints at the MRC.
- 4) **Make recommendations on to the structure and content of future MTR or final reviews of the MRC SP.**

### 4. Responsibilities and tasks for MTR Team:

Review areas covered by the MTR Team shall include, but not necessarily be limited to, the following:

#### 4.1 Review of the present state of implementation of the Strategic Plan 2016-2020:

- a. Assess how the MRC is progressing in completing overall outputs planned (SP Annex B), and activities (Annual Work Plans 2016, 2017, 2018);
- b. Assess how the MRC is progressing towards the achievement of the Strategic Plan indicators (Annex A) with a focus on regional coherence and relevance as well as uptake/use by Member Countries at technical and policy levels;
- c. Assess how MRC, through its Strategic Plan, has addressed the Mekong Basin's issues, challenges, development opportunities and Strategic Priorities established under the IWRM-based Basin Development Strategy. What positive and negative development impacts that have been made because of the MRC's implementation of the BDS;
- d. Considering the Operational Review, assess whether and how MRC organizational reform has strengthened its long-term sustainable operations, greater relevance and increased Member Country ownership to respond to basin-wide challenges and opportunities;

- e. Considering the reviews of the implementation of the National Indicative Plans, assess how the NIPs have contributed to the implementation of the MRC SP;
- f. Assess the progress of decentralisation-related work, both at MRC and Member Countries' level, referring what has worked well and what has not;
- g. To the extent possible, how much has this Strategic Plan contributed to the implementation of the 1995 Mekong Agreement in this Strategic Plan period considering past achievements and challenges;
- h. To the extent possible, how MRC has contributed to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through the implementation of this Strategic Plan

#### **4.2 Provide recommendations on prioritisation of the outputs and activities for the remaining period of the Strategic Plan**

- a. Considering implementation progress, ongoing institutional reforms, as well as emerging key water resources and related development opportunities and risks, recommend prioritisation of outputs and activities for the remaining of the Strategic Plan. The MTR may also make recommendations regarding the nature of the indicators of the MRC SP as well as the future implication for the next planning cycle of MRC SP.
- b. Considering achievements and challenges of decentralization, make concrete recommendations for MRC and its Member Countries in terms of what activities have been successfully decentralised or made steady progress in that direction and those that face challenges and should change course. The consultants' team is also expected to provide measures and solutions for the long-term sustainability of monitoring activities;
- c. Review funding for the current planning period (both secured and pledged), and assess overall earmarking level towards certain thematic areas, assess realistic funding perspectives in completing the SP and provide relevant recommendations, including desirable overall earmarking level.

#### **5. Methodology**

The MTR will be conducted by a team of three independent consultants. You will work as a team reporting, to the team leader. The review must provide evidence-based information that is credible, reliable and useful. The MTR team is expected to follow a participatory and consultative approach ensuring close engagement with MRC Secretariat, national counterparts, the NMCs and their Secretariats and selected key national agencies as implementing entities in each Member Country, MRC's Development Partners, and other key stakeholders. The MTR team is expected to conduct field missions and interviews in the four Member Countries. Findings and recommendations should be based on sound evidence and analysis, clearly documented in the Final Report. Analysis leading to evaluative judgements will be clearly elaborated. The limitations of the methodological framework should also be presented in the Final Report.

The Final Report will cover assessment of the MRC Strategic Plan implementation with respect to the indicators set in the Strategic Plan's Annex A. The review will also provide an analysis of the MRC's performance based on the MTR objectives and provide recommendations for improving performance.

The Review will capture and integrate the perspectives of the four MRC Member Countries, the Development Partners, the MRC Secretariat and some key other stakeholder groups regarding the implementation of the MRC Strategic Plan 2016-2020.

A separate process on the Operational Review of the organization structure, human resources and finance will be conducted prior to the Strategic Plan 2016-2020 MTR and is expected to overlap with the MTR exercise to a certain extent. Reports will be included in the desk review, as soon as available. The Strategic Plan 2016-2020 MTR team may have opportunities to meet and discuss with the Operational Review team.

## 6. Deliverables and timelines:

Activity / deliverable	Timeframe
Review of relevant documents and preparation of MTR methodology & work plan proposal to MRCS	Mid-August 2018
Meeting with OCEO team to present, discuss and agree on MTR Methodology and Work Plan	Late Aug 2018 (last week)
Meeting with CEO & Divisions	Late Aug 2018 (last week)
Meeting with Member Countries back to back with National Consultations for the AWP 2019 Meeting with Development Partners & Stakeholders	September 2018 (first three weeks)
Draft Report produced & shared with MRC, MCs and DPs	Mid October 2018
Meeting with MRCS Senior Management on the findings (MTR team represented by team leader or a member only)	Mid October 2018
Comment period on Draft Report	Until late Oct 2018
Final Report produced	Mid November 2018
Presentation of Final Report to Member Countries & DPs by MRCS MRCS team reflection	End Nov 2018 at Council meeting Dec 2018 in national meetings if needed

### **Work Plan**

The Work Plan should outline the MTR team's methodology, activities and timeframe the team intends to apply. The Work Plan will be agreed with the MRCS (through the OC) on how the review will be conducted, how the achievement of outcomes will be evaluated, and what the final product will look like.

### **Draft Report**

After the field missions, the MTR team will produce a draft report outlining its preliminary findings. This will form the basis of a MRCS senior staff briefing of the preliminary findings of the review.

### **Final Report**

The Final Report will address each of the review areas outlined in Section 4: Scope of the MTR. Supporting data and analysis will be annexed to the report when considered important to complement the main report. Recommendations will be addressed to the

different stakeholders and prioritized: they will be evidence-based, relevant, focused, clearly formulated and actionable.

### **Individual Report**

A brief note on individual recommendations will be annexed to the report.

## **7. Working Arrangement:**

The MTR Team will consist of three individuals, one of whom as team leader will assume overall responsibility for the review & to produce the review reports/deliverables within inputs from team members. The other two team members, one with strong background on Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) and transboundary water management, and one with strong background on Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) will work closely with and provide support to the team leader. The required tasks and qualifications for each position are outlined below.

## **8. Qualifications and Requirements:**

### **8.1 Specific Tasks for the M&E Expert**

- Design the review methodology and approach to measure, validate and verify the evidence of achievement;
- Conduct indicators data collection and report on its status;
- Design the group discuss workshop methodology and prepare questions for the interviews;
- Provide inputs in reviewing the achievement of outcomes and progress made based on the indicators specified;
- Examine the SDGs indicators & targets and create a matrix to verify the level of influence of MRC;
- Ensure the MTR report meets monitoring & evaluation international standard;
- Provide recommendations to enhance the M&E system at both regional and national levels.
- Facilitate an outcome reflection meeting using theory of change.

### **8.2 Qualifications of the IWRM / water & environment monitoring expert**

- Master's degree in social sciences, project cycle management, performance management, development management and planning or other related field;
- 10 years of experience in designing and implementing monitoring and evaluation of development projects/programmes and/or similar organisation-level systems; with a strong emphasis on performance management or results based management and ongoing application of lessons learnt;
- Strong and proven experience in conducting independent evaluation of large, multi-sector, multi-country and complex cooperation programmes;
- Substantial experience in strategic planning;

- Experience of applying performance management in the countries of the Lower Mekong Basin;
- Knowledge of the Mekong Basin development context is an asset;
- Experience in international water resources management is an asset;
- Knowledge of the Mekong River Commission is an asset;
- Experience in preparation of reports for similar assignments;
- Excellent report writing skills in English.

#### **9. Condition of payment**

30 % of total contract value will be paid after signing the contract. The remainder will be paid upon acceptance of all the expected outputs.

**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.

**11. English competency:** TOEIC score of 600-700 (or equivalent)

**12. Other requirements:** monthly workplans, monthly deliverables reporting, finger print scanning if working at the MRC Secretariat office

**13. Signature Block**

**14. Project Code: AWP 2018 Activity 7.4.5.1**

#### **15. LIST OF RELEVANT DOCUMENTS**

Most of the following documents are available on MRC's website. Draft reports will be provided to the review team as available.

- 1) 1995 Mekong Agreement
- 2) Rules of Procedures for the Council, Joint Committee and Secretariat
- 3) MRC Strategic Plan 2016-2020 & its implementation annexes
- 4) Appraisal Report of the MRC Strategic Plan 2016-20
- 5) IWRM-based Basin Development Strategy for the Lower Mekong Basin,
- 6) Review Report of the MRC Strategic Plan 2011 – 2015 and MRC Programmes
- 7) Annual Work Plans 2016, 2017 and 2018

- 8) Report of the Independent Organisational, Financial and Institutional Review of the MRCS and the NMCs, January 2007
- 9) Statement of the International Conference delivered to the MRC 3<sup>rd</sup> Summit 2018 and Siem Reap Declaration of the 3<sup>rd</sup> MRC Summit 2018
- 10) Regional Roadmap for MRC core river basin management function decentralisation, June 2014 and 2017 MRCS Decentralisation Review Report.
- 11) Annual & Mid-year Reports 2016, 2017, 2018
- 12) National Indicative Plans 2016-2020 and their review reports
- 13) Operational review 2018
- 14) SDGs linking matrix