

Table 3: SOBR 2018 Summary of Conclusions and Challenges and Recommended Priority Actions

 No immediate concerns

 Some significant concerns to address

 Considerable concern, urgent action needed

 Insufficient data to form a view, requires action to address knowledge gaps

Strategic indicators	Key strategic questions	Status /condition	Challenges	Recommended priority actions
Environment				
Water flow conditions in mainstream	<i>Are the conditions of water flow in the Mekong mainstream acceptable?</i>	 Generally compliant with PMFM, but induced changes in flow regime are of some concern	Managing the impacts of an apparent decrease of wet season flow during the recession period, the increase in dry season low flows and the increase in daily fluctuation in flows experienced in some reaches of the mainstream.	Continue monitoring programmes and, in addition to PMFM reporting, monitor decreases in wet season flows and daily fluctuations and consider implications of impacts that may arise, Improve monitoring of water use for various sectors to ensure balance is maintained with increased development
Water quality and sediment conditions	<i>Are the conditions of water quality and sediment acceptable?</i>	 Generally compliant with PWQ, but sediment concentrations much reduced	Identifying and implementing practical measures to mitigate the effects of reduced sediment concentrations and minimise further reductions	Continue the sediment and water quality monitoring programmes. Address the implications of reduced sediment concentrations through mechanisms to better manage sediment flows and mitigate transboundary impacts of reduced concentrations
Status of environmental assets	<i>Are key environmental assets in the Mekong basin being adequately preserved and protected?</i>	 Loss of wetlands and riverine habitats continues, pressure on capture fisheries becoming evident	Taking urgent action to protect remaining assets and to better manage fisheries Addressing the lack of sufficient data on wetland and riverine habits	Agree clear regional objectives, joint strategies and action plans for protecting and sustainably managing the remaining environmental assets and fisheries. Establish regular monitoring and data collection to address knowledge gaps and conservation activities for wetlands and other environmental assets including fisheries.
Social				
Living conditions and well-being	<i>What social benefits, direct and indirect, are being derived from water resource developments in the Mekong basin?</i>	 Living conditions improving but water sector impacts unclear	Provincial and district levels data needed to better understand relationship with water-related sectors alongside greater consistency of data quality and accuracy.	Review and refinement of indicators and develop and implement a data acquisition, generation and requirements action plan to address knowledge gaps.
Employment in MRC water-related sectors	<i>How are the river-related livelihoods in each country being affected by land and water management decisions?</i>	 More information is needed to form a view	As above	As above

Strategic indicators	Key strategic questions	Status /condition	Challenges	Recommended priority actions
Economic				
Aggregate economic value of MRC water-related sectors	<i>What economic value does each Member Country derive from the use of the Mekong river system within the water-related sectors?</i>	 More information is needed to form a view	Comprehensive data on all water-related sectors need to be assembled and analysed. Promotion of economic development consistent with the aims of the 1995 Mekong Agreement.	Review and refinement of indicators and develop and implement a data acquisition, generation and requirements action plan to address knowledge gaps. Adoption of pro-active regional planning to promote optimal and equitable development through increased cooperation and to identify opportunities for both socio-economic development and environmental protection consistent with these aims
Contribution to basin economy	<i>How important is the economic value of the water-related sectors to the economy of the basin?</i>	 More information is needed to form a view	<i>As above</i>	<i>As above</i>
Climate Change				
Greenhouse gas emissions	<i>To what extent is the Mekong Basin contributing to global GHG emissions?</i>	 LMB countries (as a whole) emission is about 1.5% of global total	Promote development practices within the basin that minimise GHG emissions consistent with each country's Nationally Determined Contribution under the Paris Agreement	Promotion of development practices that minimise GHG emission. Develop and implement a data acquisition, generation and requirements action plan to address knowledge gaps.
Climate change trends and extremes	<i>Is there evidence of climate change within the basin?</i>	 Some evidence of rising temperatures and sea-levels. Flood damages are also higher. Other CC impacts are not seen.	Continued monitoring needed Continued assessment of potential future CC impacts based on latest available global and regional forecasts	Incorporate sea level rise as an indicator in future SOBR. Continue hydro-meteorological data collection programmes.
Adaptation to climate change	<i>How resilient are the current water infrastructure and plans to climate change?</i>	 All countries have policies and strategies in place and 166 climate adaptation projects identified (2016)	To ensure that climate change is fully factored into development plans and that resilience is assured	Adoption of pro-active regional planning to address climate change and promote optimal and equitable development through increased cooperation
Cooperation				
Equity of benefits from the Mekong River system	<i>How well is Mekong basin development moving towards optimal and sustainable development?</i>	 Significant development in all countries, but equity considerations need more data as above	Adoption of pro-active regional planning to promote equitable use of basin's resources, together with establishment of a clear mechanism to define equity of benefit and trade-off arising from development in throughout the basin in water-related sectors	Adoption of pro-active regional planning to address climate change, promote optimal and equitable development through increased cooperation and to identify opportunities for both socio-economic development and environmental protection consistent with these aims
Benefits derived from cooperation	<i>What is the added value of cooperation under the 1995 Mekong Agreement facilitated by MRC?</i>	 US\$838m of projects supporting cooperation identified in National Indicative Plans	<i>As above</i>	<i>As above</i>
Self-finance of the MRC	<i>Is the MRC on-track to self-finance by 2030?</i>	 MRC budgets in line with achieving self-finance by 2030, alongside renewed commitments to this end	Retain focus on core function activities and look to ways to improve efficiency in delivering these	Identify smart and cost-effective approaches to basin monitoring and information and knowledge sharing