

COUNCIL STUDY

Study on Sustainable Management and Development of the Mekong River

Progress Brief, October 2017



“A comprehensive state-of-the-art, integrated and cross-sectoral study on sustainable management and development of the Mekong River; for the environment, people, and economy.”

INTRODUCTION

This third brief provides a snapshot on the progress of the *Study on Sustainable Management and Development of the Mekong River* or in short, the ‘Council Study’ (CS), and will be updated bi-monthly.

The study will provide reliable scientific environmental, social, and economic impacts of water resources development in the Mekong River encompassing cross-cutting sectors and impacts.

The CS will also fill major knowledge gaps on the environmental, social, and economic impacts of major development in the Lower Mekong Basin (LMB) in the short, medium and long term. The CS will enhance the ability of the MRC to advise member countries (MCs) on the potential benefits and impacts of water resource

development of the basin based on sound scientific evidence; optimise the Basin Development process; and ultimately contribute to sound decision making by the MCs in the development of the LMB. A spillover effect of the CS is to promote capacity building and ensure technology transfer to MCs during the entire study process.

The Council Team has completed notable tasks during the course of August and September 2017, including the model results and bio-resource assessment for main and sub-scenarios of the study.

Phase 1: March 2016

- Developed the inception report and TOR of study
- Collected data and information for the study
- Formulated the scope of the study
- Deployed the impact assessment tools (DSF, WUP-Fin, eWater Source model)

Phase 2: Impacts Assessment

- Formulated and finalised the development scenarios
- 22 Nov 2016: JC endorsed CS phase 2 implementation
- Finalised the impact assessment approaches and indicators
- Completed the CS impact assessment report

Post CS completion: Knowledge transfer - beyond 2017

- Information and knowledge transfer to MCs
- Improvement of some assessment tools, results and reporting
- Dissemination of knowledge to planning and public domain

PROGRESS (August – September 2017)

Major Reports/Deliverables

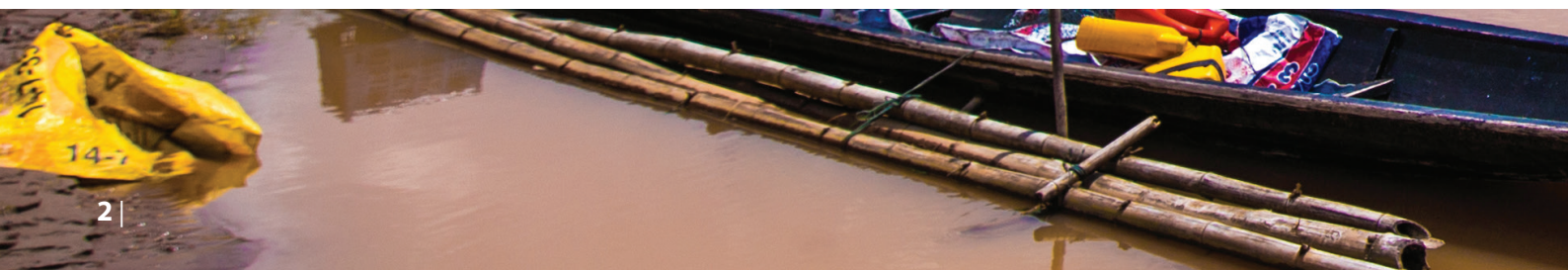
- ✓ Completed the model results for main and sub-scenarios of the council study.
- ✓ Completed the Bio-resources assessment for main and sub-scenarios of the council study.
- ✓ Finalised the main and sub-development scenarios for socioeconomic and macroeconomic assessment.
- ✓ Delivered final impact assessment report (version 7) of the council study.

Technical Meetings

- ✓ 26 September 2017: **CS internal experts working session** on CS results, deliverables, and planning to discuss results of the main and sub-scenarios of the discipline teams; and prepare a roadmap to finalise remaining work for discipline impact assessment.
 - **Key outcome:** the meeting finalised the modelling results for main and sub-scenarios; outlined the roadmap and timeline for discipline impact assessment; and prepared key messages for end of the study.
- ✓ 28-29 September 2017: **Regional modelling working session** with member countries to review and attain feedbacks on results of the main and sub-scenarios to improve the quality of modelling technical reports.
 - **Key outcome:** Attained comments from member countries on the main and sub-scenarios; and agreed on a plan to update and improve the model and technical reports.
- ✓ July 2017: **National training on BioRA** model and assessment tools.
 - **Key outcome:** participants learned about all the BioRA model setup, calibration, and scenarios assessment results of the main development scenarios; and had a hands-on practice on the Downstream Response to Imposed Flow Transformation (DRIFT) model.

External Stakeholder Engagement

- » 28 September 2017: Engaged with USACE on using results of the Council Study to support cooperative scenario modelling (considering benefit and trade-offs) for the Mekong Basin.



Upcoming tasks (August – September 2017)

- » Finalise report for the main and sub-scenarios and impact assessment of all six sectors and five discipline teams.
- » Organise the 9th and 10th Regional Technical Working Group meeting for the council study to review progress to date, and finalise the project.
- » Organise series of national consultations to review progress of the study and collect comments to improve quality of the reports.
- » Organise series of CS internal expert meetings to review the final results and report; and produce the summary of key findings and key messages from the study.

“The potential transboundary socioeconomic impacts of the Pak Beng Hydropower Project will be better understood by considering the emerging results from the socioeconomic impact assessment of the MRC Council Study, and undertaking further assessment if needed on the consequences of the PBHPP on livelihoods and food security”.

Statement on Prior Consultation Process for the Pak Beng Hydropower Project in Lao PDR, 19 June 2017.

Read previous brief at URL: <https://goo.gl/KYxt2U>

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Progress Brief June 2017

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INTRODUCTION

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At the 3rd Mekong-Japan Summit in Bali, Indonesia on November 2011, Prime Ministers of MRC Member Countries agreed on the need for a comprehensive study on sustainable management and development of the Mekong River. After numerous consultations with MCs, the CS implementation kicked-off on December 2015 and is to be completed in December 2017.

The study will provide reliable scientific environmental, social, and economic impacts of water resources development in the Mekong River encompassing cross-cutting sectors and impacts.

The CS will also fill major knowledge gaps on the environmental, social, and economic impacts of major development in the Lower Mekong Basin (LMB) in the short, medium and long term. The CS will enhance the ability of MRC to advise MCs on the potential benefits and impacts of water resource development of the basin based on sound scientific evidence; optimise the Basin Development process; and ultimately contribute to the sound decision making by the MCs in the development of the LMB. A spillover effect of the CS is to promote capacity building and ensure technology transfer to MCs during the entire study process.

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The Council Study team has achieved deliverables in June and July 2017, including a draft of the results and findings from the main development scenarios which was tabled at the small group meeting on main development scenarios, a *National consultation workshop*, and a *National training on the Bio-Resources Assessment (BioRA) model and assessment tools for member countries*.

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What

is the Council Study?

Why

is the Council Study important and relevant?

Who

is involved in the Council Study?

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The CS will fill major knowledge gaps on the environmental, social, and economic impacts of major development in the Mekong basin in the short, medium and long term. The CS will enhance the ability of MRC to advise MCs on the potential benefits and impacts of water resource development of the basin based on sound scientific evidence; optimise the Basin Development process; and ultimately contribute to sound decision making by the MCs in the development of the Mekong basin. A spillover effect of the CS is to promote capacity building and ensure technology transfer to MCs during the entire study process.

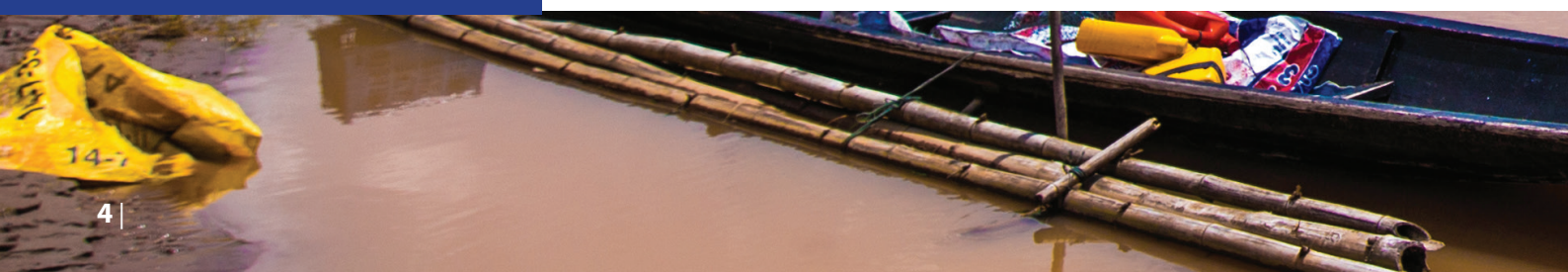
The Council Study is led by a regional coordinator with the support from a core technical group comprising regional and international experts broken down into:

Six thematic teams formulate water-resource development scenarios surrounding six areas: irrigation, agriculture and land use, hydropower, flood protection, domestic and industrial water use, and navigation.

Five discipline teams who conduct *hydrologic, biological, socio-economic, macro-economic, and climate change* assessments. This team assess the baseline status of the Mekong Basin and impacts of formulated scenarios.

The **regional coordinator and technical advisors** lead the thematic and discipline teams, and are overseen by senior management of the MRC Secretariat. Together a regional coordinator and technical advisors and CS core team are also serving as the advisory group of the study.

MC representatives and development partners who make up the **Regional Technical Working Group**, manage, supervise and provide guidance on the technical work of the Council Study.

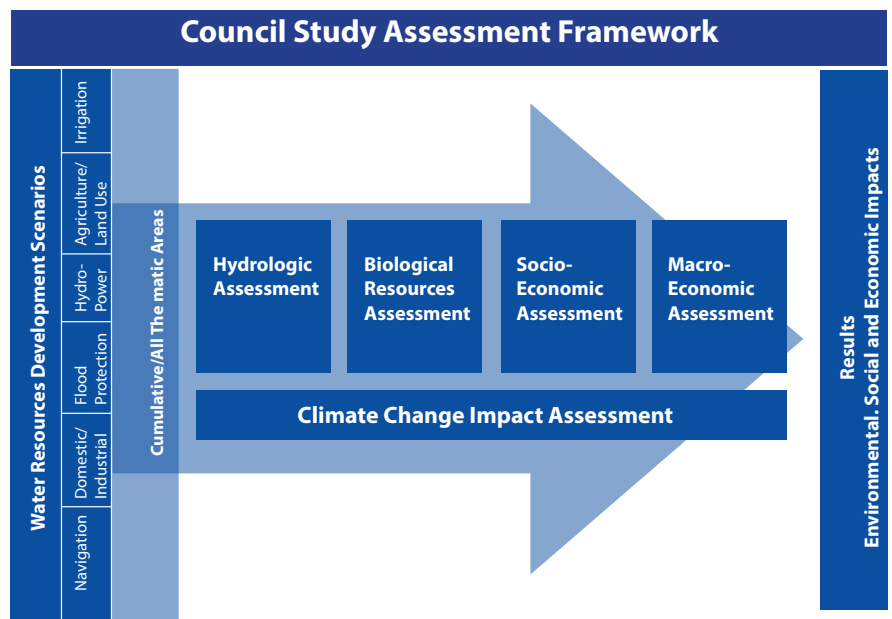


How

is the Council Study implemented?

The Council Study is broken down in three main phases: (i) formulation of water resource development scenarios, (ii) cumulative impact assessment, and (iii) knowledge transfer (See figure 1)

- 1. Water Resource Development Scenarios:** The **six thematic teams** formulate development scenarios in the Mekong Basin covering a timeframe from 2020 – 2040. The twenty-year span scenarios will be irrigation, hydropower, flood control, navigation, agriculture and land use, and domestic and industrial water use. The **five discipline teams** assess the baseline status of the Mekong and the impacts of formulated scenarios on hydrology, sediments, bio-resources, coastal, socio-economy, and climate change.
- 2. Cumulative impact assessment:** integrates and builds on the results of the first phase (thematic and disciplinary assessments). *Resource sustainability, cross-sectoral synergies, and transboundary balance* underlies the cumulative assessment. *Resource sustainability* aims to achieve optimal socio-economic benefits at minimal cost to the environment. *Cross-sectoral synergies* intends to measure the extent of trade-offs among sectors. *Transboundary balance* intends to measure how impacts and benefits are equitably distributed among countries. [Insert info box 4 on Stakeholder Consultation]
- 3. Knowledge transfer:** Results from the Council Study will be shared and disseminated via various channels to member countries and stakeholders of the Mekong River Basin.





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