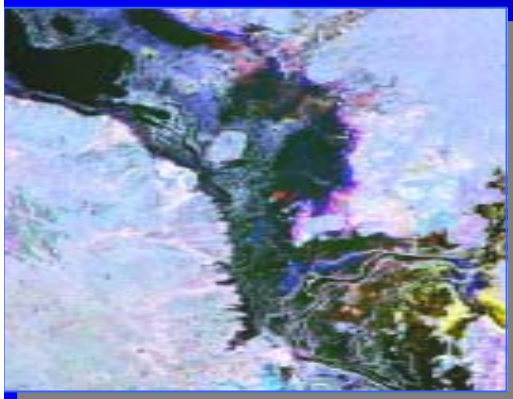




Mekong River Cooperation: IRBM – From Negotiation to a More Concrete Actions

Presented at NARBO 1st
General Meeting, Theme
1, 25 February 2004

By Pech Sokhem, MRC
Secretariat



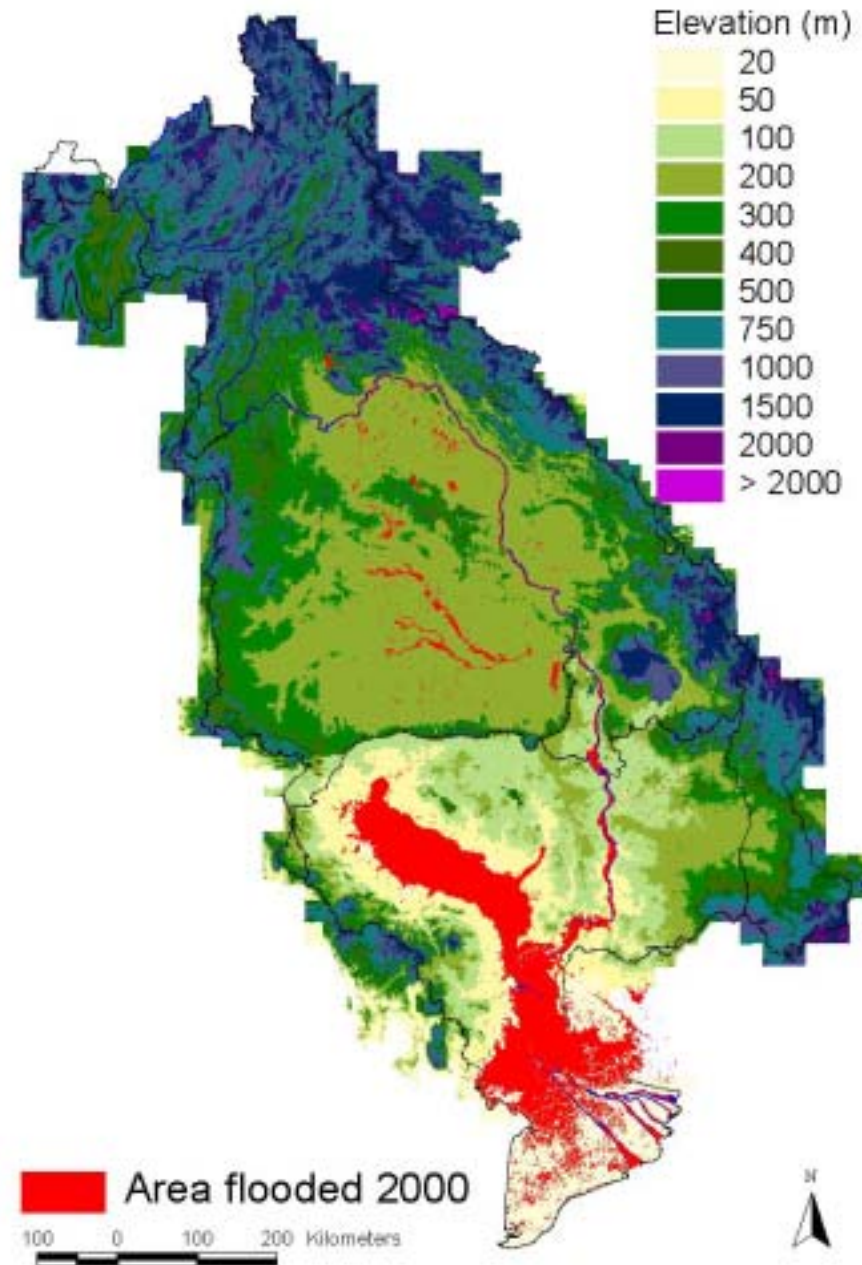
Mekong – River of Opportunity & Challenge



- ❖ 06 countries shared one of the most productive and diverse ecosystems in the world.
- ❖ River is relatively healthy, but challenges are here.

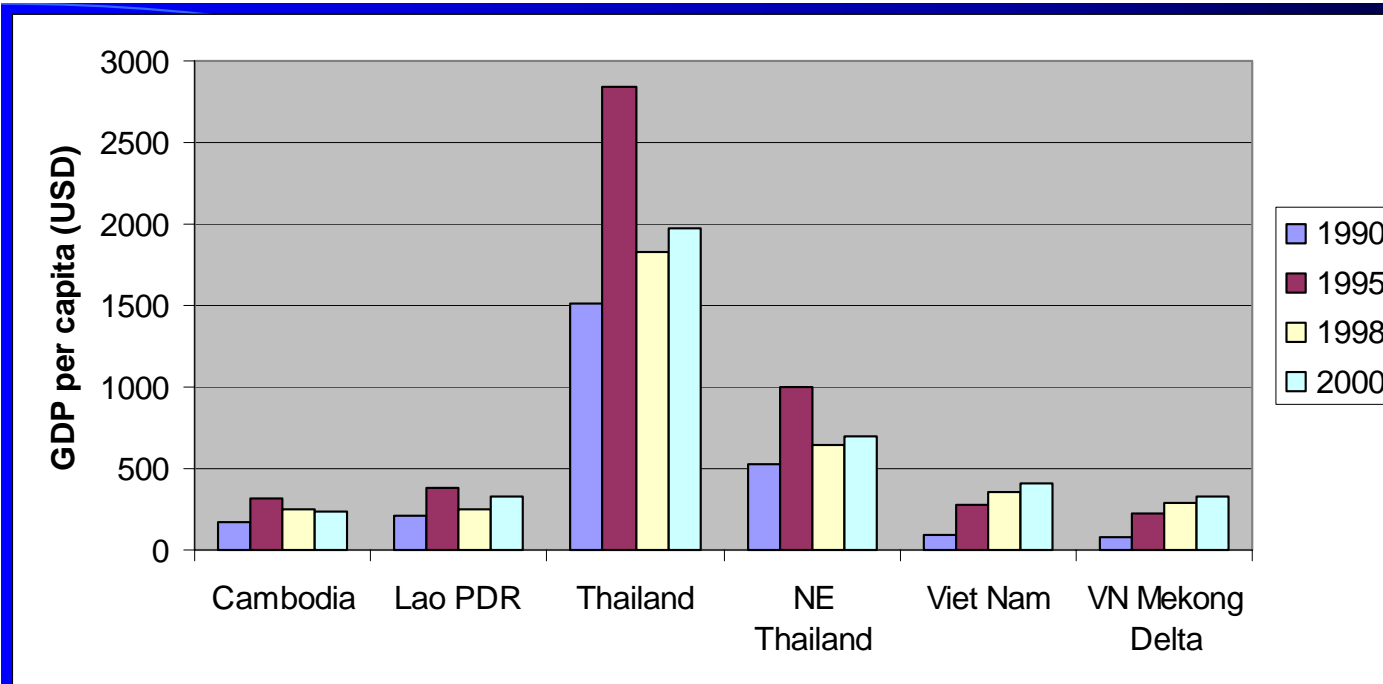
Change Management

- Growing Needs
- Globalizations and Regional Economic Cooperation
- Climate Changes
- Impacts of land use change, climate change?



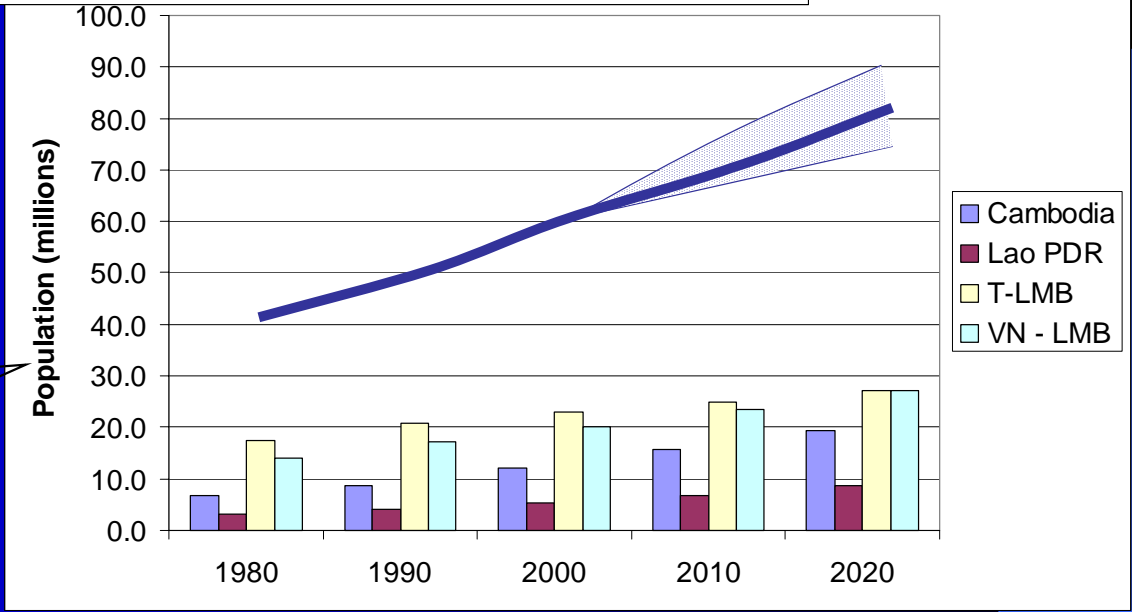


Source:
UNESCAP/
National govts



Poverty & Livelihood

Population growth



Lower Mekong River Co-operation - Spanning Almost Half a Century



- As early as 1947, the need for an international organisation to coordinate activities and promote cooperation in the Mekong River Basin was recognised.

- In 1957 “The Mekong Committee”
- 1978 -94 Interim Mekong Committee.
- 1995 – present, MRC Commission

1957 - 1977

1978 - 1994

Since 1995

Sustainable Development



Goal of 95 Agreement is to promote

- **sustainable development, utilisation, management and conservation of the water and related resources of the Basin.”**
- Inter-dependent sub-regional growth & cooperation.
- Joint Organizational Structure for planning, conflict management

Legal ground for integrated river basin management





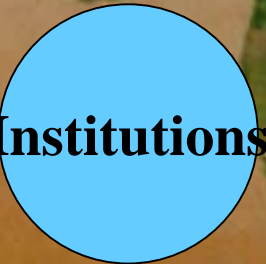
... And Three Focus Areas for MRC:



- **Needs of people** – and how these needs can be met.

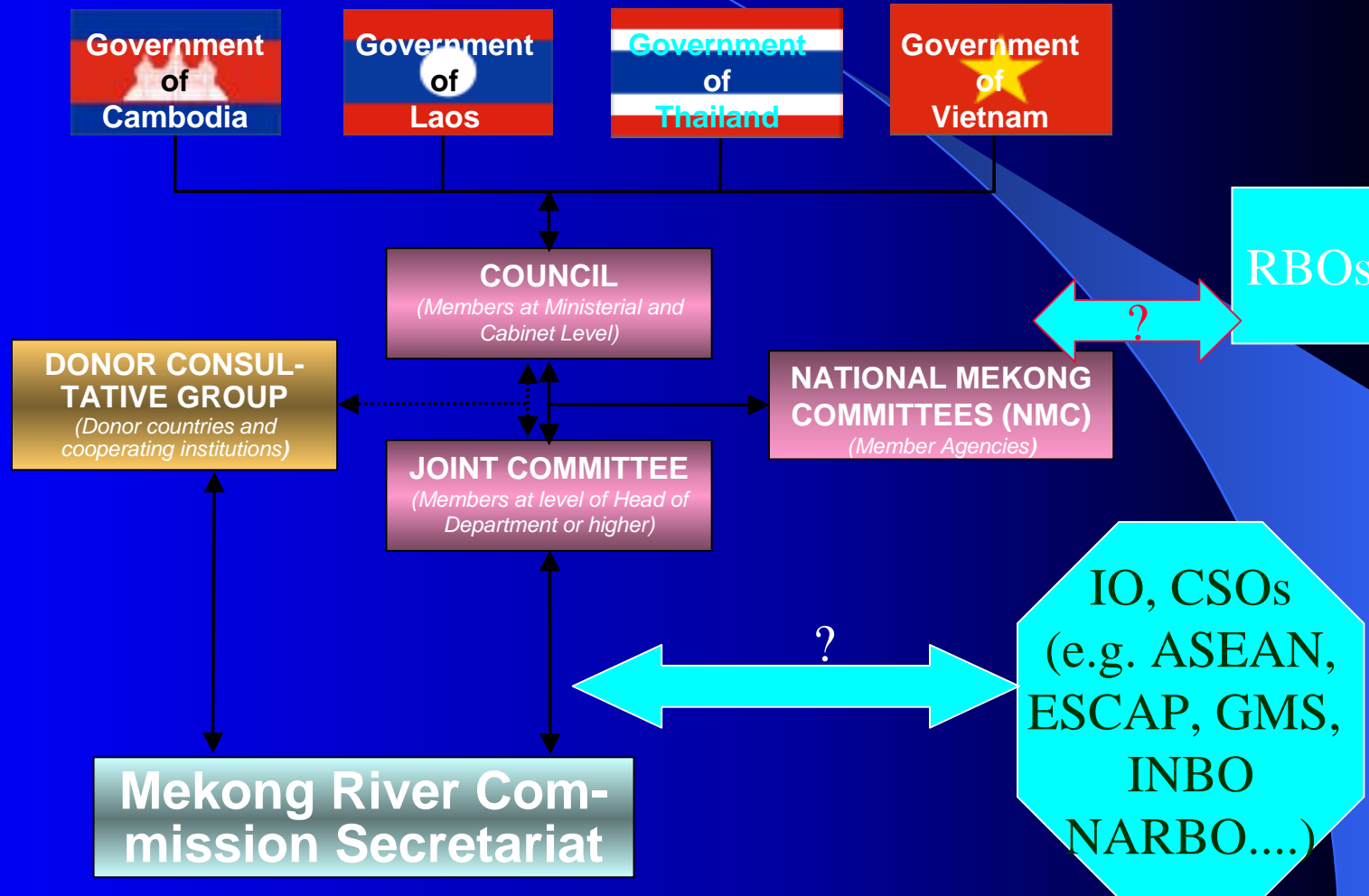


- **Environment** – and how resources may be used to the maximum and long-term benefit of all.



- Building **institutions** – helping them secure the needs of people.

Role of Permanent Body



Sustainable Development & Equitable use



This means to pursue equity, social and economic development and environmental protection

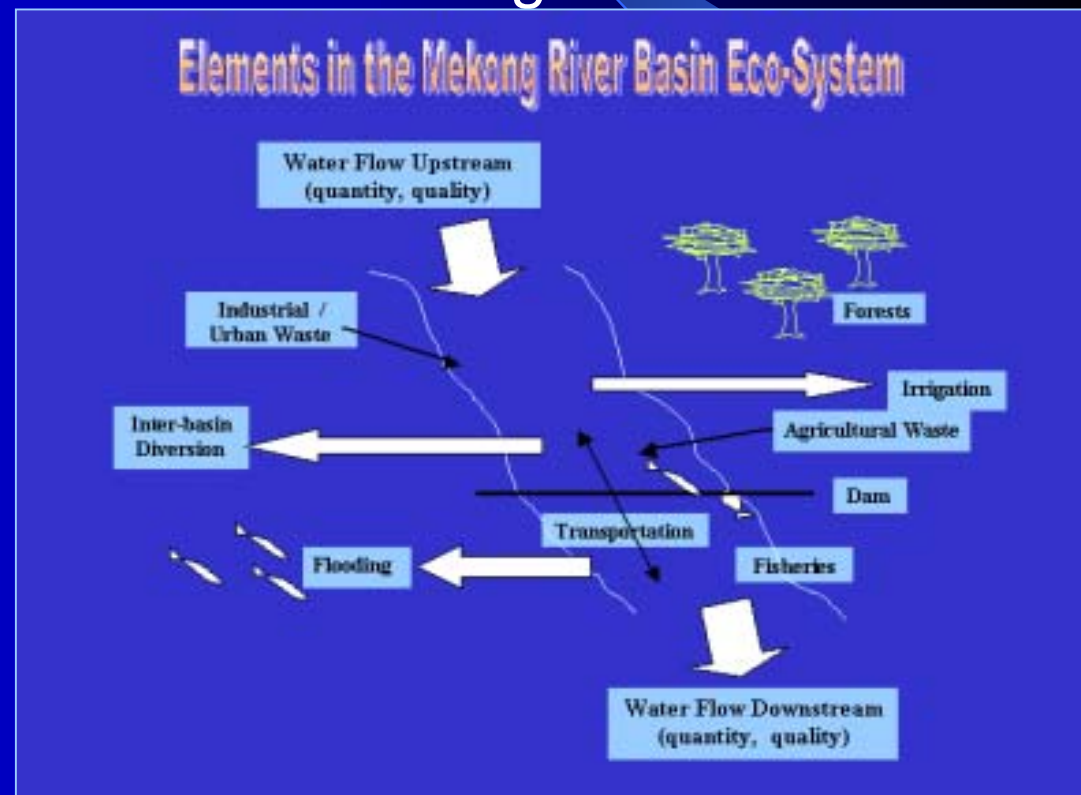


- Through dialogue at all appropriate levels
- Consensus building, scientifically informed decision making
- Effective dispute prevention and resolution

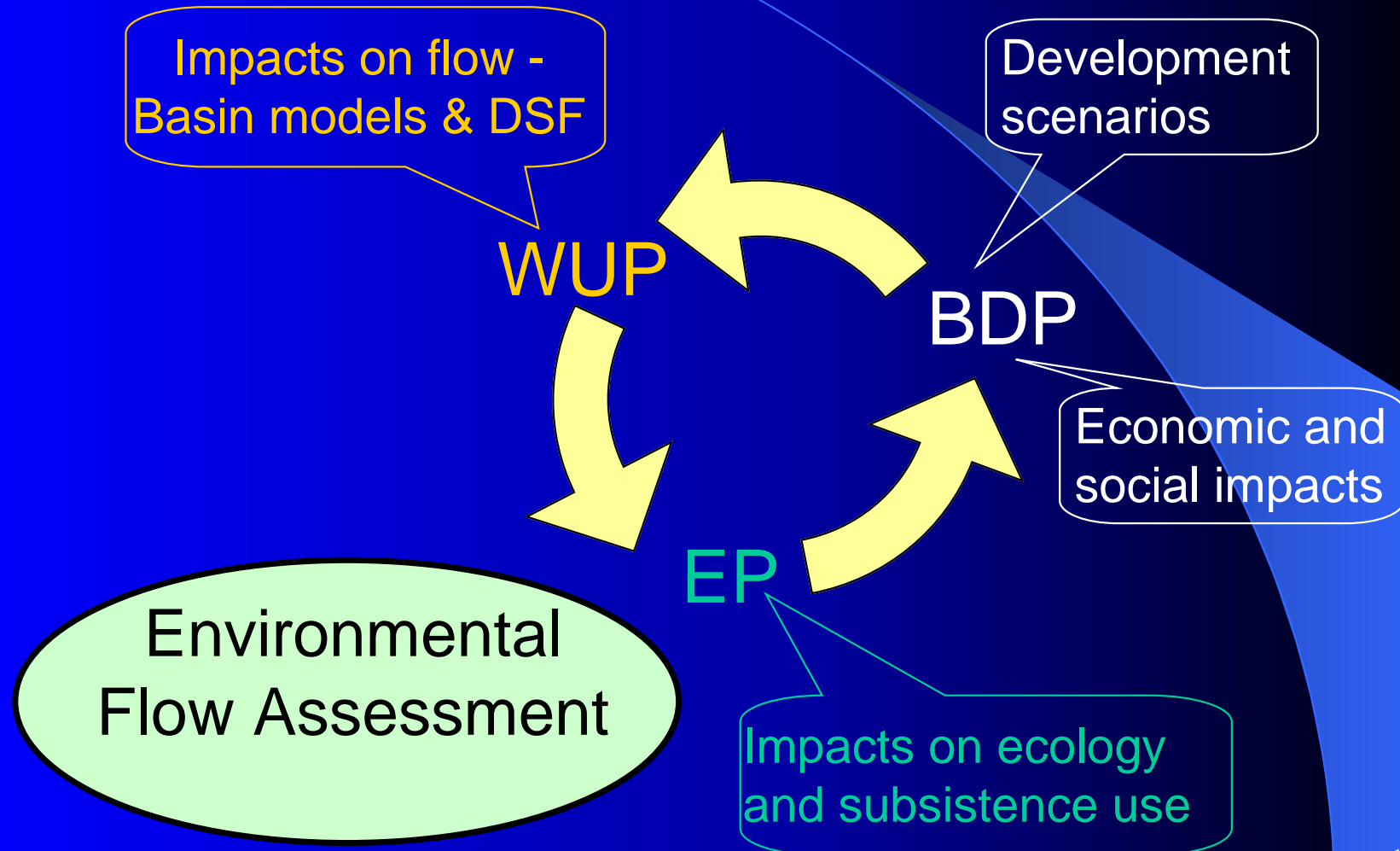
Regional planning



- Rules for Water Sharing (quantity & quality)
- BDP - coordinating water resources development at national and regional levels
- Coordination with regional initiatives
- Dialogue with China and Myanmar on issues relating to the Upper Basin



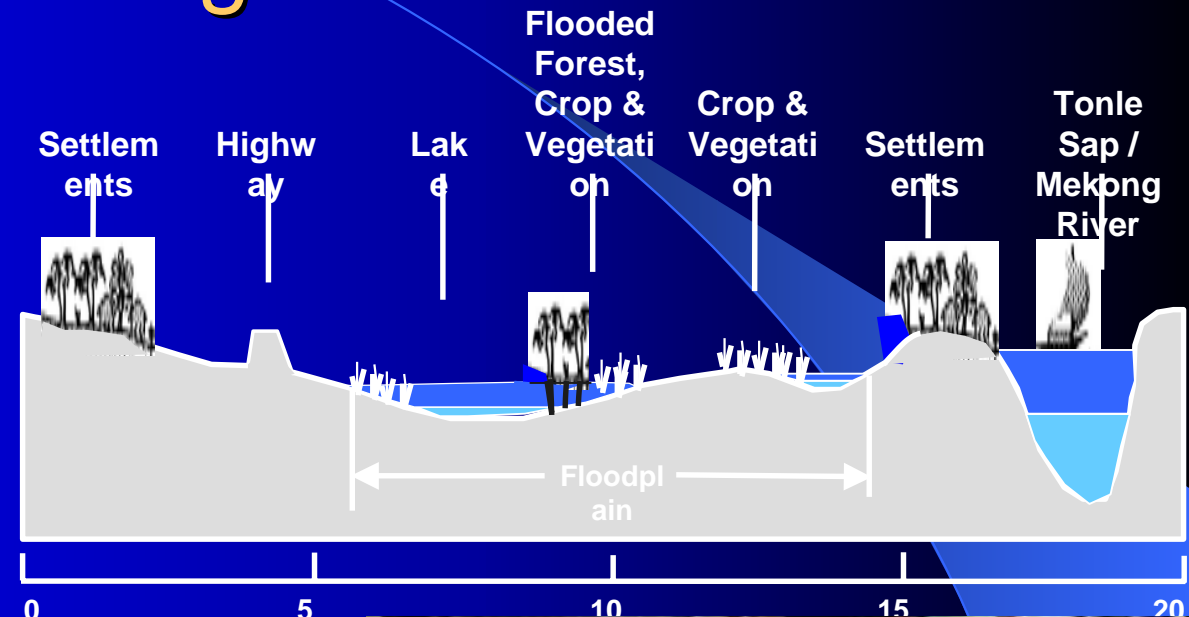
MRC Core Programs



Integrated Basin Flow Management



- How to determine “acceptable” flows – ref. Article 6.
- *Mekong IBFM* to provide guidelines for flow maintenance for each critical month. (three step approach)

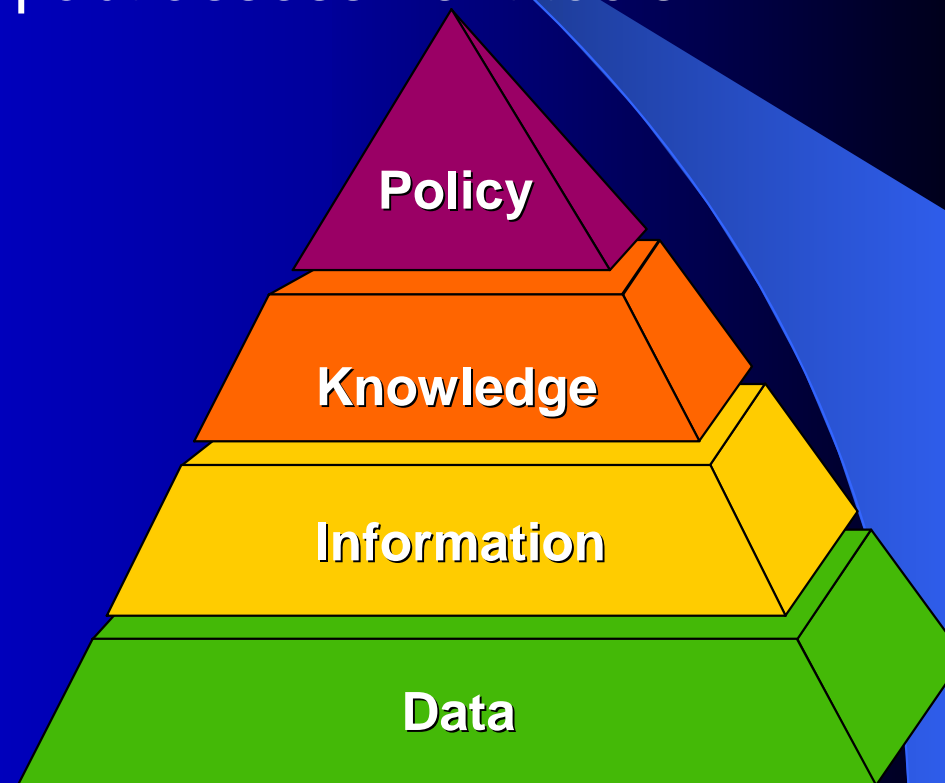


To support scientifically informed decision



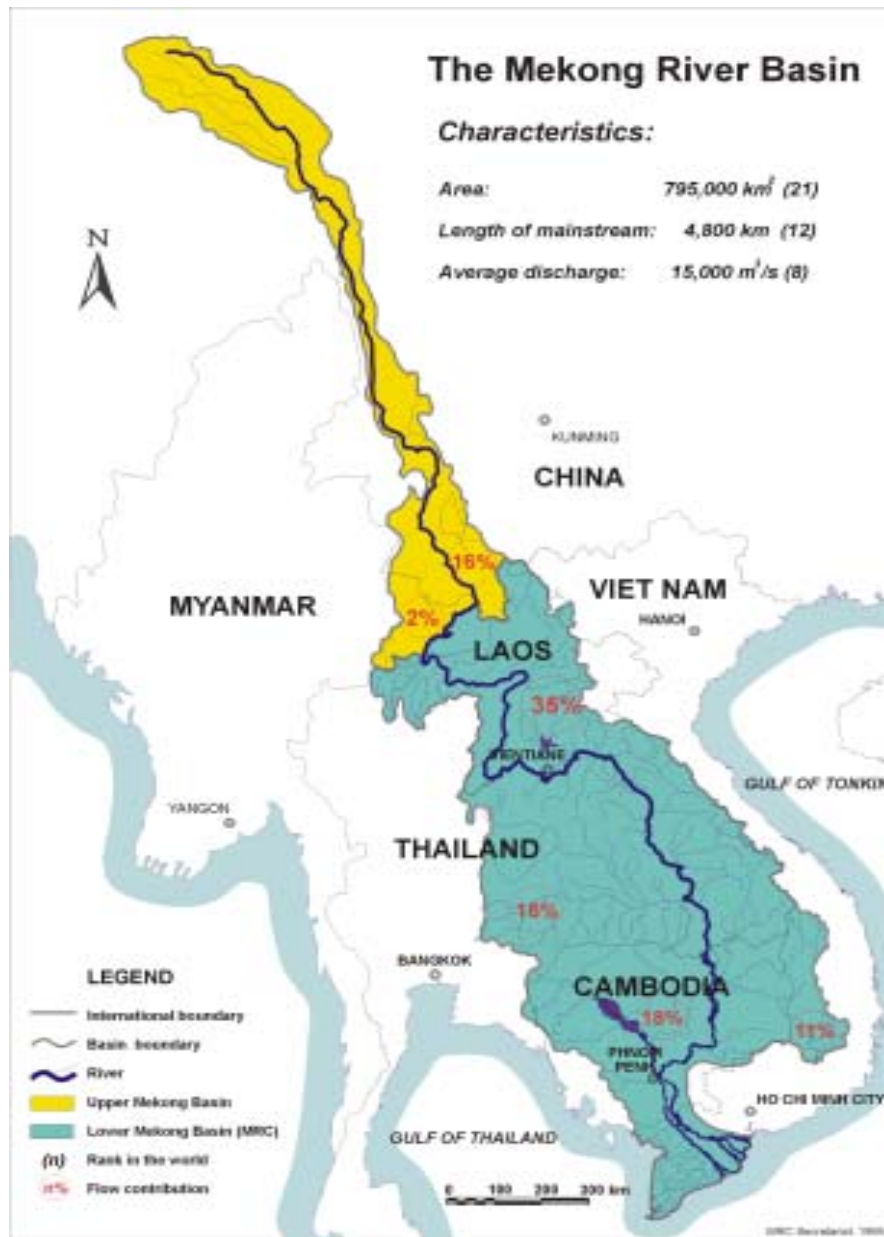
Generating MRC-Information System

- Information exchange, decision support frameworks and impact assessment tools



Transboundary River Management is more than an issue of hydrology, but 'psychology' - mutual trust and political commitment => Involvement





Holistic Approach and Mekong Reality



- 06 countries shared rich resources of a great river.
- China and Myanmar = Observers
- Challenge to application of IRBM to the whole basin.



If Regional Governance is there yet?

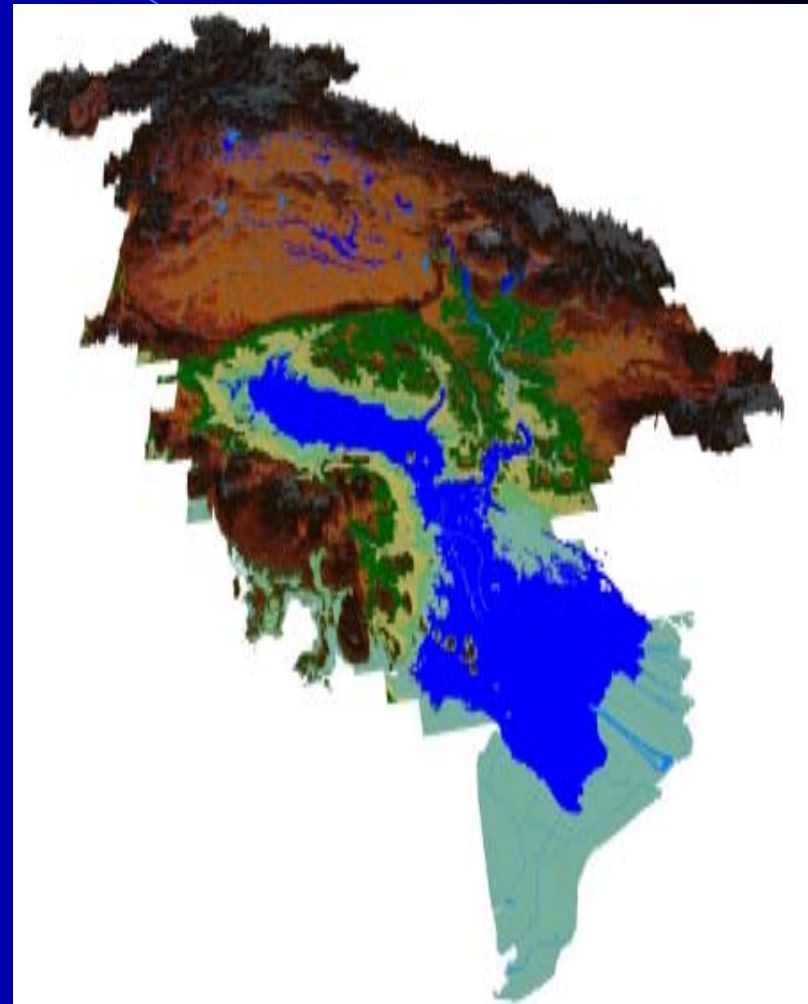


- 06 Governments
- 70 million populations
- Various institutions & fora
- Coordination & Public Participation, but How?

More Challenges



- ❖ Increase political weight of MRC (Relevancy)
- ❖ Succeed with a very limited time-frame for development of framework to support sharing of benefit.
- ❖ Improve capacity at national levels to deal with basin-wide issues.
- ❖ Regional Governance & Public Participation.
- ❖ Create stronger sense of mutual trust and mutual benefits.





Thank you for your kind attention

- MRC web page
www.mrcmekong.org
- Email:
mrcs@mrcmekong.org or
- sokhem@mrcmekong.org

