

Evolution of approaches and tools for basin planning towards IWRM

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IWRM: Implication of Macro-economic Development Goals

 How to effectively support, promote and coordinate the multitude of development in such an active investment environment ***to ensure a smooth and sustainable development process;*** and

 How to identify suitable and efficient water and related projects to ***maintain such high economic growth rates.***

MAP OF THE MEKONG RIVER BASIN



Source: MRC Annual Report

My basin planning experience

- Variety of problems in river basin management
- Difference of approaches and tools in river basin management

KEY ISSUE: How to prioritize water resources management activities within limited resources and diverse interests and different perception of priorities

Key Challenges In Water Policy Implementation

- ◆ **Planning-related issues:** Inadequate investment levels, Water resources information, International cooperation
- ◆ **Management-related issues:** Community participation, Protection of water resources, Demand management, Water-use efficiency
- ◆ **Overall consideration:** Lack of continuity and consistency, Low absorption capacity, Low flexibility in management

Important periods of Mekong River basin development

1. Early stage of Mekong cooperation
2. *Transition period (1947-1956)*
3. Mekong Committee (1957-1975)
4. *Interim Mekong Committee*
5. Mekong River Commission (1995 onwards)

Past Mekong major activities in basin planning

- 1970 Indicative Basin Plan
- *1987 Revised Indicative Basin Plan*
- Other Important Planning Studies
- *Important Experiences*

Past Mekong approaches in basin development planning (BDP)

- **Idealistic International Approach**
Basin as a single unit. Maximum water resources development.
- **National Development-Oriented Approach**
Maximum support to national development and basin planning as long-term guidelines
- **Integrated development planning approach**
Social-economic targets, environmental goals and institutional framework.

Mekong basin planning process

Over the decades, the basin planning process has changed significantly from *the planning activities* to *the planning practices, approaches* and underlying philosophy. Apart from *basin potentials* and the *needs of the riparian countries*; the evolved planning approaches focus also on economic development opportunities, the common goals of basin development and priority areas of cooperation: toward a Shared Vision process.

Mekong Recognition

- ◆ **Benefits to the riparian countries:** stabilizing factor, economic and social achievements.
- ◆ **International recognition:** financial resources, recognition awards and continuity in support.
- ◆ **Foundation for subregional growth:** the Basin forms the core element of a major Development Growth Subregion of Asia.

The Mekong Spirit, as known internationally for the common efforts and goals of development, forms *the major driving force to overcome short-term problems and to unify divergence of views in development.*

Understanding ***the strategic and key elements of the Mekong Spirit*** will further consolidate the foundation of cooperation, thus contributing to *prosperity to all the Mekong peoples* and ensuring *sustainable development of the Mekong River basin.*

Core element of BDP: the Mekong Spirit

Strategic elements

- 🔹 **Shared vision of cooperation**
- 🔹 **Mutual understanding**
- 🔹 **Mutual trust**
- 🔹 **Common goal: *the River of Prosperity***

Key element: **Mutual respect**

Recognition of the Mekong Spirit

- * Magsaysay Peace Award in 1968
- * *Assistance provided by 26 donor countries and 19 international organizations (1994)*
- * Planning and Development Funds amounted to about **US\$2,000 million** (up to 1987)
- * *Continued interest and support by the United Nations System*

Approaches in water resources management

- 💧 **Project-based approach**: for decision-making (feasibility of activities)
- 💧 **Natural resource-based approach**: for policy-making (*sharing of resources in space and time*)
- 💧 **Socio-economic approach**: for prioritization in decision-making (*resources allocation to suit development objectives*)
- 💧 **Integrated water resources management approach**: for integration into policy and decision making (*strategic planning and management*)

Key issues in BDP approaches

1. Active participation of the riparian countries
2. *Continuity and consistency of basin planning*
3. Advanced technology and latest methodology
4. *BDP be solidly based on basin development knowledge*
5. Establishment of core human resources group to support BDP process

Important lessons in BDP

- BDP needs to link to national targets of social-economic development of the riparian countries
- **BDP needs to establish development strategies forming criteria to prioritize development projects**
- BDP needs to be supported by an appropriate legal and institutional framework
- **Formulation needs active participation of riparian countries.**

BDP Conceptual Elements

- Common goals of basin development
- ***Common and related national strategies***
- Priority programmes of action and related mechanisms
- ***Dynamic legal and institutional framework conducive to development***
- Facilities and necessary information systems

The New Mekong Vision

- An *interdependent subregional growth*
- Faster and stable growth with better income distribution, cultural enrichment and environmental protection in the region
- Better *climate and environment for major investment and development*

Challenges in integrated water resources management (IWRM)

- 💧 Resource mobilization versus social equity
- 💧 ***Coordination and stakeholders' participation***
- 💧 Continuity and consistency of development

Challenges in IWRM

- IWRM requires tools to mobilize participation of all key stakeholders and their resources
- ***IWRM requires tools that support leadership and maintain commitment of leaders in planning and management***
- IWRM requires tools that would allow the use of the strength of existing planning practices and introduction of a new management mindset
- ***IWRM requires tools to create conducive environment for incorporating IWRM principles into the existing legal framework of water resources planning and development***

Tools in Water Resources Management

- 🔥 **Project-based approach:** project-focused tools to support decision-making (*Local optimization*)
- 🔥 **Natural resource-based approach:** Water balance models; Basin-system simulation; System optimization models (*Master Plans, Basin Plans*)
- 🔥 **Socio-economic approach:** Multi-criteria models; Utility trade-off analysis; Generalized optimization models (*Regional plans & strategies*)
- 🔥 **Integrated water resources management approach:** strategic planning and management models (*integration of models including consensus building, conflict resolution and prevention*)

Recommendations

- BDP needs to link to national targets of social-economic development of the riparian countries
- *BDP needs to establish development strategies forming criteria to prioritize development projects*
- BDP needs to be supported by an appropriate legal and institutional framework
- *Formulation needs active participation of riparian countries.*

Core elements of basin planning

- **Urgent needs of economic development**
Transport system development; tourism development; industrial development
- **Stabilization of basin development process**
Provision of good-quality water for domestic consumption; Expansion of irrigated agriculture; Improvement in resources management; Protection of the environment
- **Framework of long-term basin development**
Physical development plan; Legal and institutional framework; Human resources core group; Financial resources

Conclusion of my experience

- **Effective implementation of IWRM requires adoption of “Strategic Planning and Management” (SPM)**
- ***Capacity building is instrumental to successful application of SPM***
- **Successful application of SPM requires change of “Mindsets” of key stakeholders**
- ***BDP needs to be action-oriented***