

Exploring opportunities for transboundary water cooperation through basin development planning

Presented by Solieng Mak

**NARBO Training Course on
Integrated Water Resources Management
Bangkok, 26 July - 6 August 2004**

Contents

1. Introduction
2. Transboundary experience at the MRC context
 - 2.1 What is Basin Development Planning?*
 - 2.2 Framework for dealing with transboundary issues in BDP*
 - 2.3 Exploring opportunities for transboundary water cooperation*
3. BDP and River Basin Organizations
4. Summary

1. Introduction

- Overall efforts of international rivers in addressing the transboundary issues
- Aim of this paper: Share ideas and experiences on transboundary from the MRC

2. Transboundary experience at the MRC context

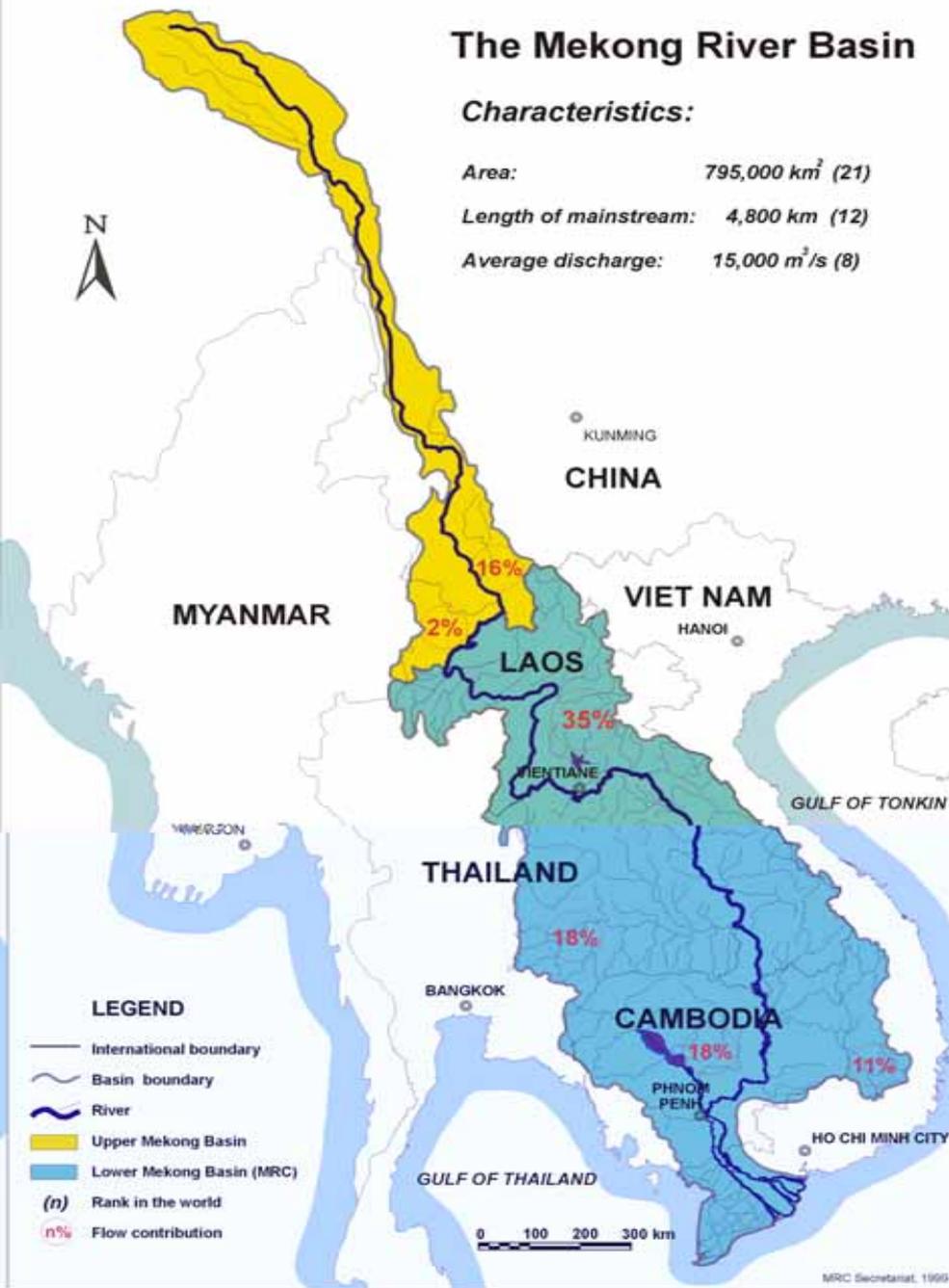
The Mekong River Basin

Characteristics:

Area: 795,000 km² (21)

Length of mainstream: 4,800 km (12)

Average discharge: 15,000 m³/s (8)



The Mekong River Commission

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

From lower Mekong to whole Mekong



In 1995, Agreement on *Cooperation for Sustainable Development* of Mekong River Basin was signed and MRC was established as the successor of the previous Mekong Committee.

Mekong Committee

Interim Mekong Committee

MRC

1957 - 1977

1978 - 1994

Since 1995

Goals of the Mekong Agreement

Balanced development, based on understanding of the resource – challenges!!!!



Transboundary impacts: Definition & efforts by WUP and EP

- *A measurable impact originating from a place in another country. It is important to note that not all transboundary impacts are necessary negative.*

(Water Utilization Program, 2002)

- **Efforts and outcomes:**
 - Identifying major issues,
 - approaches for transboundary analysis and conflict prevention, and
 - Policy Making Mediation in the Mekong River Basin

2.1. What is Basin Development Plan?

A planning process and tools designed to categorize and prioritize projects and programs.

It has remit to 'integrate', 'co-operate', and 'promote' but not 'manage' in basin-wide planning; and overall, it is a strategy

BDP strategy

- provides a *framework* for a level of information and analysis upon which to plan for the development of the LMB as a whole (it thus adds value to the existing levels of planning),
- provides a *process* for national-level planning and its outputs to become more integrated and consistent with one another, and which – collectively – encourage the pursuit of optimal water and resource use at the basin level, and
- identifies *transboundary/cross-border issues* of concern to all 4 countries, and addresses them through the design and promotion of agreed high priority interventions.

BDP subareas

A: Northern highlands

- 1 Northern Laos
- 2 Chiang Rai

B: Central plateau and highlands

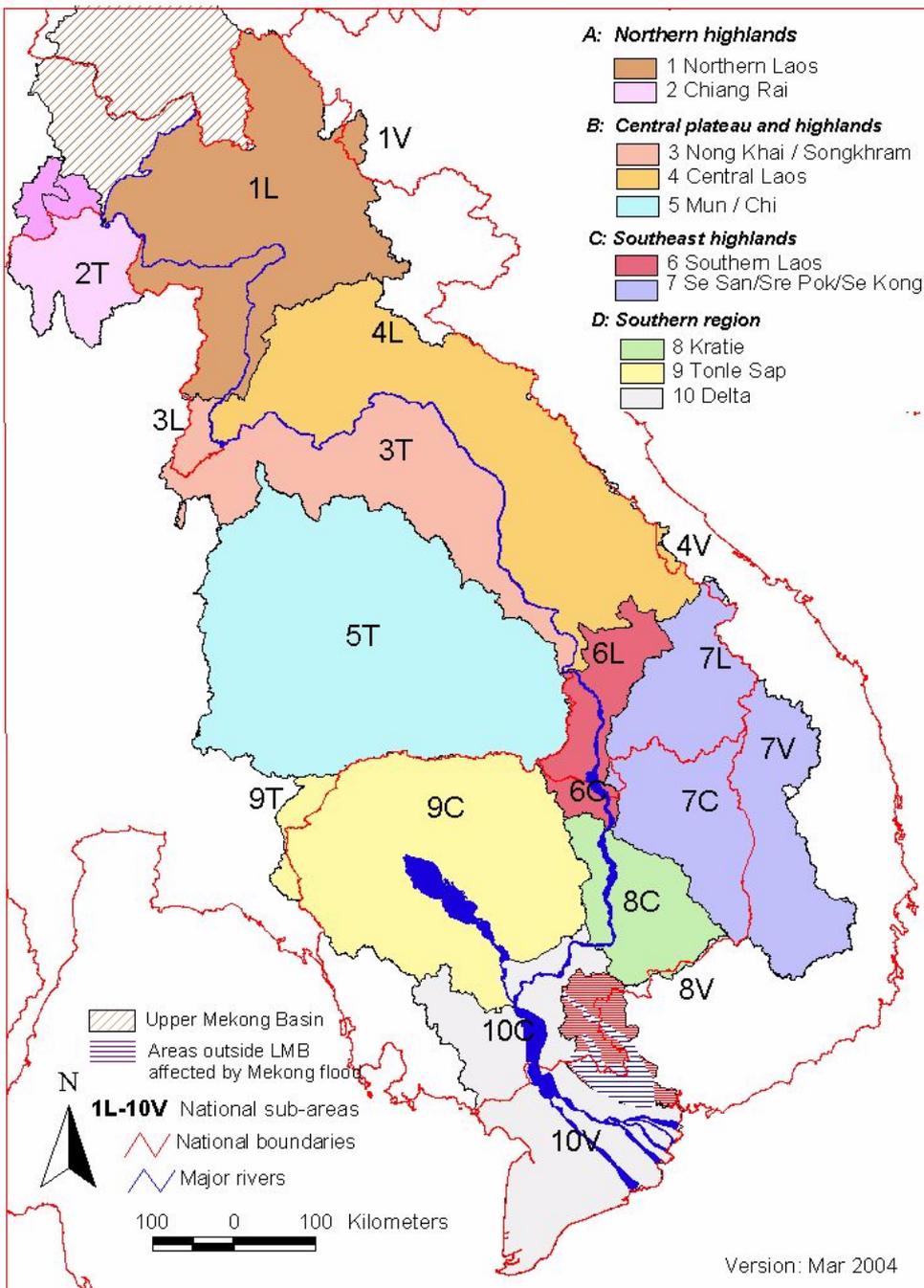
- 3 Nong Khai / Songkhram
- 4 Central Laos
- 5 Mun / Chi

C: Southeast highlands

- 6 Southern Laos
- 7 Se San/Sre Pok/Se Kong

D: Southern region

- 8 Kratie
- 9 Tonle Sap
- 10 Delta



Transboundary sub-areas

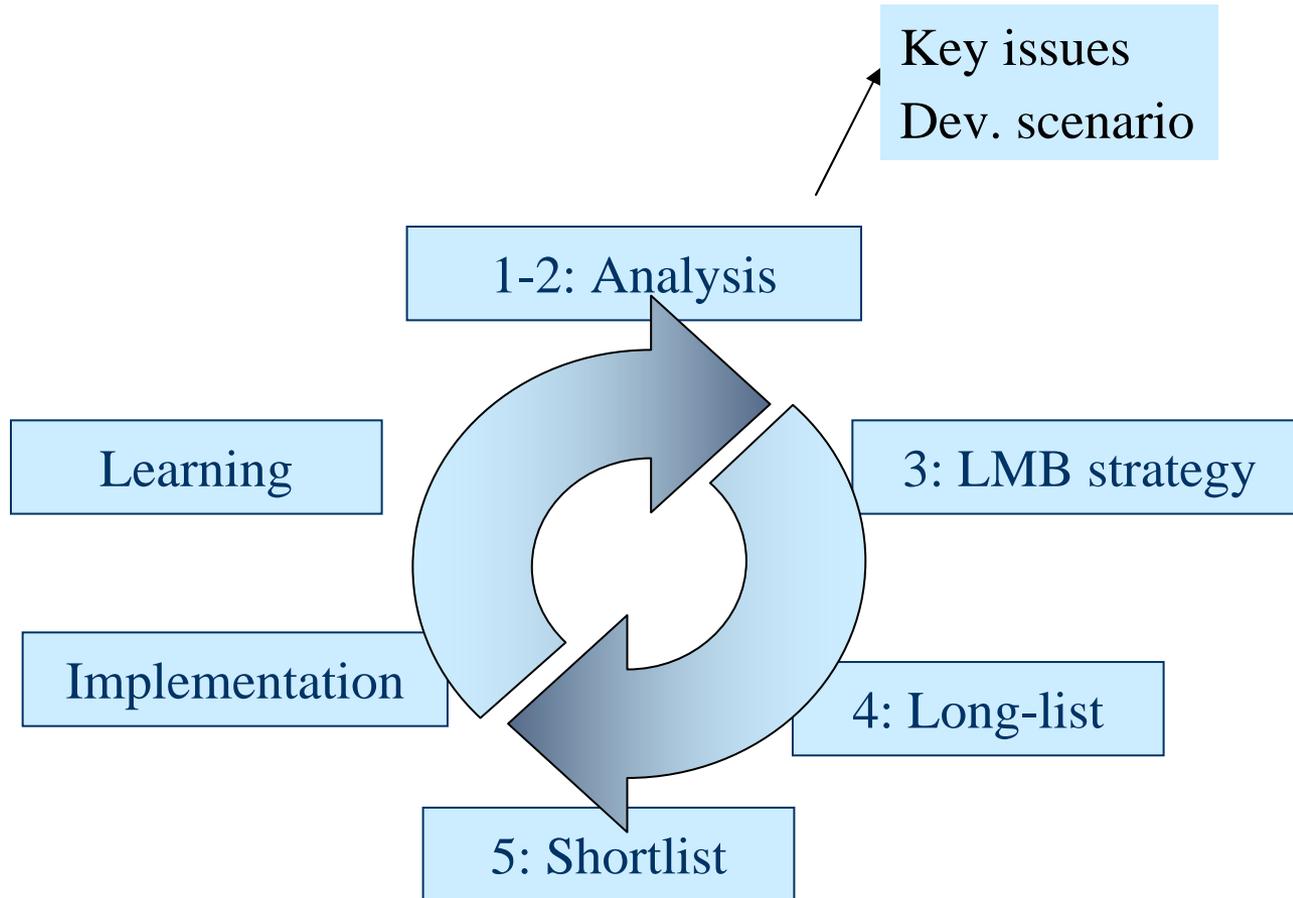
SA that share the catchment:

- SA Southern Laos/Northern Cambodia (6LC),
- SA Se San/Sre Pok/Se Kong (7CLV), and
- SA Delta (10CV).

SA that share the mean stream river:

- SA Northern Laos and Northern Thailand (1L & 2T), and
- SA Central Laos and Songkram River/Upper Northeast Thailand (4L & 3T).

The planning cycle



Concept

In BDP, *transboundary issues* include potential opportunities and basin-wide negative impacts that are raised at the sub-area level for regional water and water-related resources planning.

e.g: issues related to water resource management, environment and ecology, transboundary impacts, interdependencies between catchment, issues of cross-border trading and regional cooperation, basin assets.

2.2. Framework to address transboundary issues in BDP

- Concentrate on *cooperation for basin-wide benefits* in terms of economic, environmental and social needs.
- Will be built up by *integrating the planning components of the sub-areas* for identifying transboundary issues, and then identifying framework for cooperation and including 'joint development opportunities.
- The transboundary issues will be analyzed and addressed at the basin-wide level, by *involving the provincial people and other key stakeholders of the sub-areas to provide their views*

At the sub-area level

- Analysis: key development issues, scenario elements, strategies, and projects/programs.
- Key stakeholders: mainly the provincial level
- Process: 3 parallel process of BDP (planning, stakeholder participation, and capacity building), and *mainstreams the analysis of transboundary issues at each step.*

Transboundary sub-areas

- Analysis: integrated planning components, and cooperation agenda for the sub-area & basin-wide
- Key stakeholders: up to 5 participants from each country: representatives of the transbound sub-areas, key institutions and donors/organizations.
- Process: Meeting between transboundary SAs:
 - Common understanding of transboundary issues;
 - Integrating sub-area transboundary issues;
 - Identifying framework for dealing with transboundary issues and exploring opportunities for planning cooperation (through the supporting development initiative).

At the regional level

- Key stakeholders: representatives of the national working group from the 4 countries, key institutions and donors/organizations.
- Process: Regional stakeholders forum:
 - Common understanding of transboundary issues;
 - Integrating sub-area transboundary issues;
 - Identifying framework for dealing with transboundary issues and exploring opportunities for planning cooperation (through the supporting development initiative).
- Analysis: integrated transboundary issues from SAs & transboundary SAs that are of basin-wide significance.

Common understanding of transboundary issues

Presentation and discussion on the discussion paper that focuses on the following:

- key sub-area development issues: assets, needs/priorities, opportunities, concerns, objectives and some sub-area transboundary issues;**
- sub-area scenario elements, strategies and projects/programmes.**

Integrating sub-area transboundary issues

Will be done by making cross analysis of the sub-area key issues and scenario elements/projects and programmes.

Cross analysis consists of:

- comparison of the sub-area key issues and scenario elements and revision of projects and programmes for commonalities and differences;
- assessing the extent of conflicting issues;
- analysis of transboundary issues will also be done with the assistance of DSF, SEA, RAOM and other tools, (for sub-area scenario & projects/programmes)

2.3. Exploring opportunities for transboundary water cooperation

The process consists of identifying a transboundary development project (between sub-areas), and establishing a framework for cooperation.

The framework for cooperation will contain:

- goals and an agenda for cooperation,
- actions and measures for addressing transboundary issues in basin-wide planning, and
- joint development opportunities

3. BDP and River Basin Organizations

- Level of participation and collaboration in basin-wide planning, and roles of the BDP stakeholders
- BDP may link to the RBOs in the LMB in the future.

4. Summary

- BDP mainstreams the stakeholders participation and capacity building, transboundary issues and opportunity for cooperation in its planning process.
- BDP will be one way of conflict mediation in the Mekong River Basin, because the basin-wide transboundary issues are dealt from the onset of development plan.
- BDP may link to the RBOs in the LMB in the future.

A landscape photograph featuring a vibrant rainbow arching across a pale, overcast sky. The foreground is dominated by a flooded field, likely a rice paddy, with shallow water reflecting the light. The field is divided into sections by narrow paths and low wooden fences. The vegetation is a mix of green and brown, suggesting a transition between seasons. The overall scene is peaceful and scenic.

Thanks for your kind attention!