

(5)Mekong River Commission

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Name of the editor: Michael Lowry

1. About the organization

(1) Name of the organization and postal address of the office

Mekong River Commission
PO Box 6101, 184 Fa Ngoum Road, Ban Sithane Neua,
Vientiane, Lao PDR

(2) The representative of the organization

Mr. Jeremy Bird, Chief Executive Officer, MRC Secretariat

(3) Purposes and roles of your organization

a) Historical background of the organization

The Mekong River Commission (MRC) was formed on 5 April 1995 by an agreement between the governments of Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand and Viet Nam. The four countries signed The Agreement on Cooperation for the Sustainable Development of the Mekong River Basin and agreed on joint management of their shared water resources and development of the economic potential of the river. The MRC has a foundation of over 50 years of knowledge and experience in the region starting from 1957, when it began life as the UN-founded Mekong Committee. China and Myanmar are also Dialogue Partners of the MRC.

b) Purposes and roles of the organization

The MRC is an international river basin organization that provides the institutional framework to promote regional cooperation in order to implement the 1995 Agreement. The MRC is owned by and serves its Member States by supporting decisions and promoting action on sustainable development and poverty alleviation as a contribution to the UN Millennium Development Goals. The MRC supports the Mekong Programme and a Regional Cooperation Programme for the Sustainable Development of Water and Related Resources in the Mekong Basin. The overall goal of the MRC is to support its Member Countries for:

“More Effective Use of the Mekong’s Water and Related Resources to Alleviate Poverty While Protecting the Environment”

The 2006-2010 Strategic Plan sets forth the following four goals:

- Goal 1: To promote and support coordinated, sustainable, and pro-poor development;
- Goal 2: To enhance effective regional cooperation;
- Goal 3: To strengthen basin-wide environmental monitoring and impact assessment;

- Goal 4: To strengthen the Integrated Water Resources Management capacity and knowledge base of the MRC bodies, National Mekong Committees, line agencies, and other stakeholders.

(4) Outline of the organization

1) Number of staff

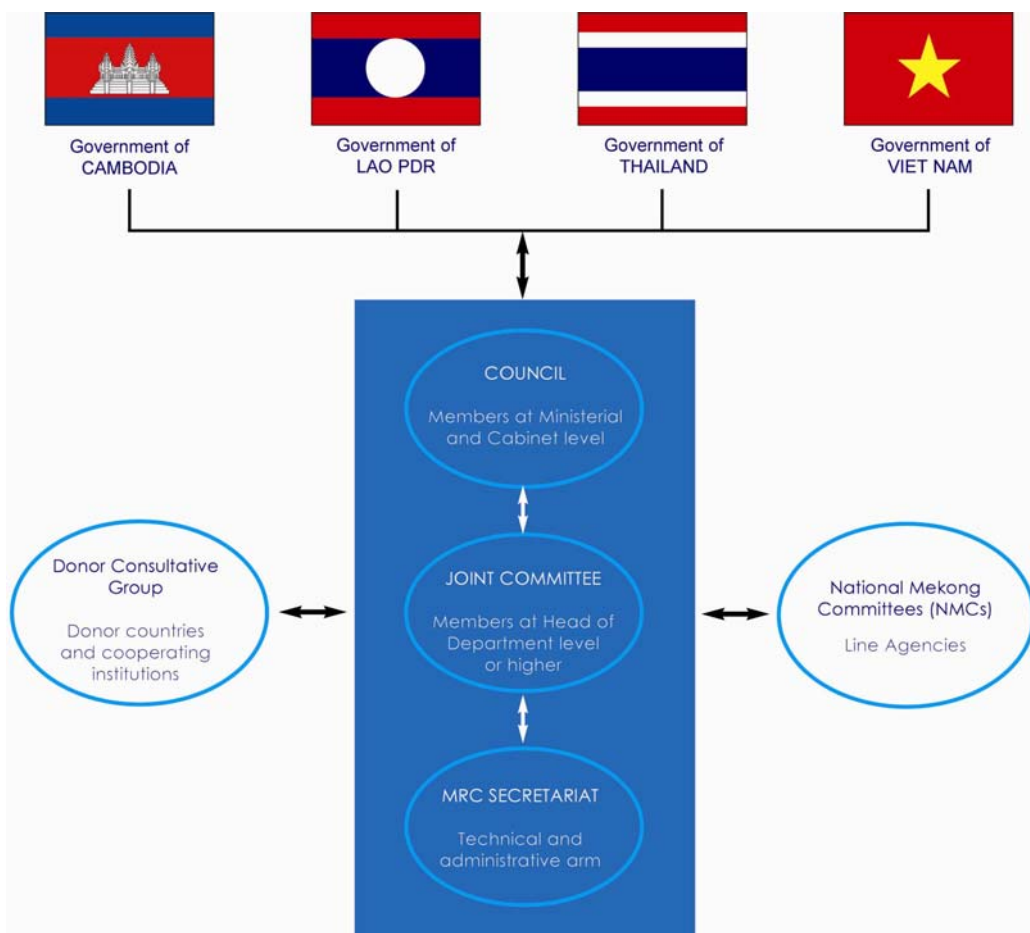
150 staffs

2) Amount of the annual budget in 2008

The total expenditure in 2008 was USD 16,393,276.

3) Organizational chart

MRC Organizational Structure



Our Dialogue Partners

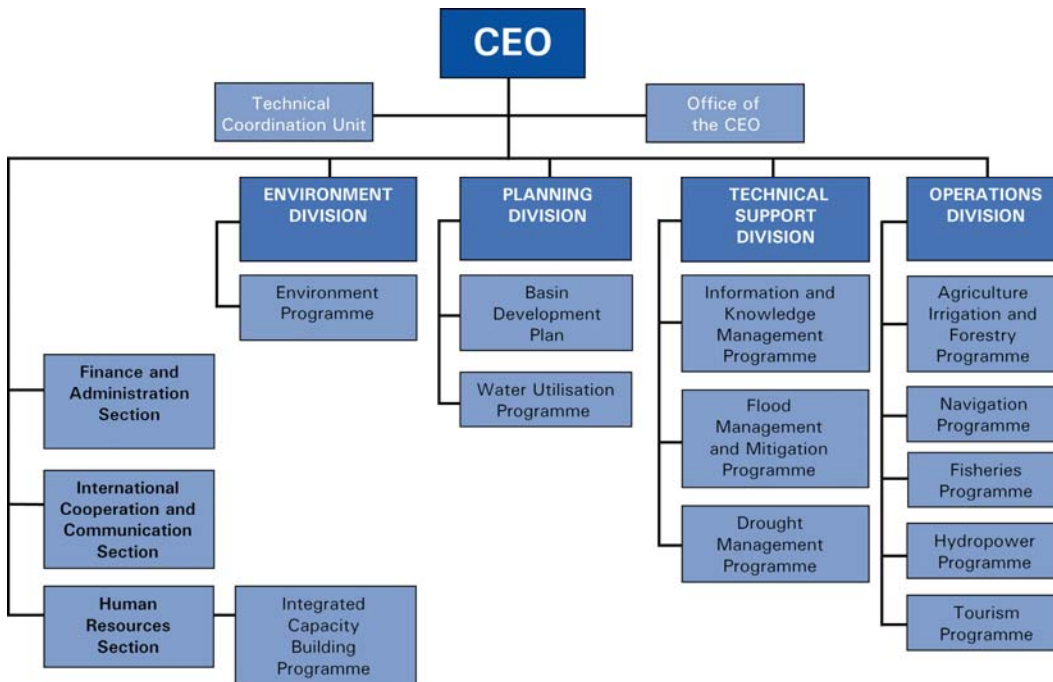


China



Myanmar

MRC Secretariat Structure



4) Ongoing projects

The MRC is engaged in a Regional IWRM Support Programme, and maintains an integrated approach to its programme work. MRC programmes are structured in a way that emphasizes their complementarities and their importance as a whole. Within the programme structure the Basin Development Plan plays a pivotal role, using knowledge acquired from the programmes to build an overall perspective of development needs and ‘pertinent knowledge gaps’.

Basin Development Planning

Objective: To formulate the basin-wide plan for water resources development; to identify, categorized and prioritized project, programme and investment opportunities, to assist and support countries in implementing them at basin level.

Components: Planning Capacity and Tools; Development Strategy and Investment Plan; Support to National IWRM; Project Portfolio Identification and Promotion.

Mekong Integrated Water Resource Management Project

Objective: To strengthen the regional enabling framework for the implementation of IWRM in the LMB countries; to contribute to the implementation of IWRM at the national and sub-basin levels; and to demonstrate mechanisms for the implementation of IWRM at trans-boundary project levels.

Components: Regional Component - Enabling framework for the implementation of IWRM at the interface between the basin and national levels; National Component – Implementation of IWRM at the

national and sub-basin levels, Trans-boundary Component – Implementation of IWRM at the trans-boundary project level and for joint management of water infrastructure assets.

Integrated Capacity Building

Objective: To strengthen the capacity of MRC, the National Mekong Committees and the line agencies in all fields leading to more effective integrated water resources development and river basin Management.

Component: Training in Project Management; Training in Information Management and Communication; Training in Environmental Governance, Junior Riparian Professional Programme, Strengthening Core activities of MRC; Research Coordination; Gender Mainstreaming.

Information and Knowledge Management

Objective: To provide database, IT infrastructure, expertise and services to support planning and decision-making.

Components: Hydro-meteorological data collection and analysis Information gathering and integration; Database management; Mekong basin GIS; Remote Sensing simulation and Decision Support System; Data Exchange Policy and Procedures.

Environment

Objective: To strengthen the framework of trans-boundary environmental management by the four Lower Mekong Basin countries. To generate data, information and knowledge for decision-making; to balance economic development and environmental conservation that will benefit the Basin's inhabitants.

Components: Environmental Monitoring & Assessment; Environmental Decision Support; Environmental Knowledge; People and Aquatic Ecosystems; Environmental Flow Management.

Flood Management and Mitigation

Objective: To prevent, minimize or mitigate people's suffering and economic losses due to floods, while preserving environmental benefits. To maintain an accurate flood forecasting system and establish an effective warning mechanism, To act as facilitator on trans-boundary issues and to build capacity in member countries.

Components: Regional Flood Management and Mitigation Centre; Structural and flood Proofing Measures; Mediation of Trans-boundary Flood Issues; Flood Emergency Management Strengthening; Land Use Management.

Agriculture, Irrigation and Forestry

Objective: To preserve the integrity of the watersheds of the four countries through monitoring land use changes, identifying problems and management training. To implement technical surveys of irrigation practices to improve efficiency.

Components: Irrigation water use efficiency and productivity; Watershed Management, Challenge Programme on Water and Food.

Navigation

Objective: To promote freedom of navigation on the Mekong, increase social development, and international trade opportunities using the navigation potential for the river system.

Components: Social-economic Analysis and Regional Transport Planning; Legal Framework for Cross-border Navigation; Traffic Safety and Environmental Sustainability; Information, Promotion and Coordination; Institutional Development.

Fisheries

Objective: To manage the productive Mekong fisheries so as to sustain their high yield and economic output well into the future, to undertake research and training and to disseminate information to policy makers and planners in the four Lower Mekong countries.

Components: Assessment of Mekong Capture Fisheries; Institutional Support; Aquaculture of Indigenous Mekong Fish Species; Management of River and Reservoir Fisheries.

(5) Main events in 2008

New Initiatives:

Climate Change and Adaptation Initiative

The MRC Climate Change Initiative was launched by the Environment Programme in July 2008 for the period of 2008-2012. The first national consultation meetings were conducted in July-August 2008. A Regional Forum on Climate Change and Adaptation Initiative, involving relevant stakeholders was held on 2-3 February 2009 to discuss approaches, interfaces with other Climate Change initiatives and activities in the region and how to best explore the value added of the MRC Climate Change and Adaptation Initiative.

Initiative for Sustainable Hydropower

As a result of consistent economic growth, the Mekong Region's demand for energy is rapidly growing. This and the increasing importance of regional trade and investment flows have stimulated a new era of hydropower development in the basin, now mainly driven by regional private sector actors. Extreme fluctuations in oil and gas prices and concerns over climate change have intensified the focus on hydropower as a renewable technology. The Initiative for Sustainable Hydropower, launched in 2008, aims to improve understanding of the regional implications of hydropower projects. With particular focus on how the barrier effect of mainstream dams can be minimised or successfully mitigated.

Other Activities:

Strategic Plan 2006-2010

The Mekong River Commission (MRC) has entered to the fourth year of its Strategic Plan 2006-2010. With regard to the strategic direction and priorities for the remaining period, the MRC undertook a Mid-term

Review of the Strategic Plan in July 2008. The review captured and integrated the perspectives of Member States, Development Partners, the Secretariat and other interested parties. The MRC dialogue partners, China and Myanmar, also had opportunity to provide input. The Mid-term Review had concluded that the Strategic Plan broadly provides the right direction to support the regional cooperation for sustainable development of Mekong water and related resources.

MRC Dialogue Partners

Cooperation with the two MRC dialogue partners, the People's Republic of China and the Union of Myanmar has been further strengthened through technical cooperation, the conduct of the regular annual Dialogue Meeting, the follow up meetings with MRC's focal point for P.R. China at Chinese Embassy to Bangkok, the visit of MRCS Delegation to Chinese Ministries in Beijing in October. The extension of the Agreement on the Provision of Hydrological Information of the Lancang / Mekong River in the Flood Season between the MRC and the Ministry of Water Resources, China which provides valuable data for MRC's flood forecasting system was signed on the occasion of the Thirteenth Dialogue Meeting in August 2008.

International Cooperation

The MOU and a Letter of Cooperation between the World Bank and the MRC was signed in October 2008. The Letter of Cooperation set out some cooperation principles and modalities which generally support the Mekong-Integrated Water Resources Management Project.

The MRC has also been actively involved in major international and regional events, such as the World Water Week in Stockholm. In September 2008, the MRC participated in the 13th International Water Resources Association (IWRA) Congress in Montpellier, France and the Mekong in Crisis Symposium, Gothenberg. The MRC also participated in the International Symposium on the Three Gorges Project and Water Resources Development and Project of Yangtze River, Yichang in October 2008.

2. About NARBO activity

(1) The contact person and organization's web-site

- 1) The name, position, phone & fax number, e-mail address of the contact person

Bérengère Prince

Officer-in-Charge

International Cooperation and Communication Section

berengere@mrcmekong.org

Tel: (856-21) 263 263 Ext 4070

Mob: (856-20) 782 2385

2) The organization's website URL (English and local language respectively)
www.mrcmekong.org

(2) Resolutions and expectations for NARBO activities in 2008

The MRC has taken part in NARBO's dinner meeting at the 5th World Water Forum in Istanbul.

1) Your organization's resolutions

The MRC will continue to share experience with NARBO.

2) Expectations of NARBO activities

That NARBO continues to promote international cooperation based on IWRM principles.

3. Questions to RBO members

(1) Areas which your organization has improved the performance in 2008.

Commissioning and implementation of an Independent Organizational Review.

(2) The way in which your organization was able to do so

The implementation of the Independent Organizational Review recommendations is a process for enhancing the organizational efficiency and capacity at the MRC Secretariat. Acknowledging the importance of this process, several meetings were organized in 2008, namely, the Task Force on the Organizational Structure of the MRCS and the Subcommittee on the Permanent Location of the MRCS to support the decision of the MRC Joint Committee as well as the MRC Council on the implementation of recommendations. This process is also accompanied by the Joint Contact Group meetings, bringing together MRC Member Countries and Development Partners. Against this background, the MRC has progressively addressed 20 out of 38 recommendations

(3) In what way NARBO has helped your organization

Through global and Asian promotion of Cooperation on trans-boundary water resources and IWRM