

## **Member's Annual Report 2006**

**Date of preparation: 15/1/2007**

**Name of the editor: Virginia Addison**

### **About the organization**

#### **Name of the organization**

Mekong River Commission

### **Purpose and roles of your organization**

#### **A) Historical background of the organization**

The Mekong River Commission 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 the 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 been built on a foundation of nearly 50 years of knowledge and experience in the region starting from 1957 when it began life as the UN-founded Mekong Committee. In 2002 China and Myanmar became Dialogue Partners of the MRC and the countries now work together within a cooperation framework.

#### **B) Purpose and role of the organization**

The MRC is an international country-driven river basin organisation that provides the institutional framework to promote regional cooperation in order to implement the 1995 Agreement. The MRC 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, a Regional Cooperation Programme for the Sustainable Development of Water and Related Resources in the Mekong Basin owned by its member *countries*. 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, which extend previous efforts of the MRC over the coming five years. They imply both strong commitment on the part of member states, donors and stakeholders and the mobilization of sufficient funds in support of the MRC's work programme and activities.

The four goals correspond to the four roles of MRC with regard to water and related resources. They are:

- 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, NMCs, Line Agencies, and other stakeholders.

**Number of staff**

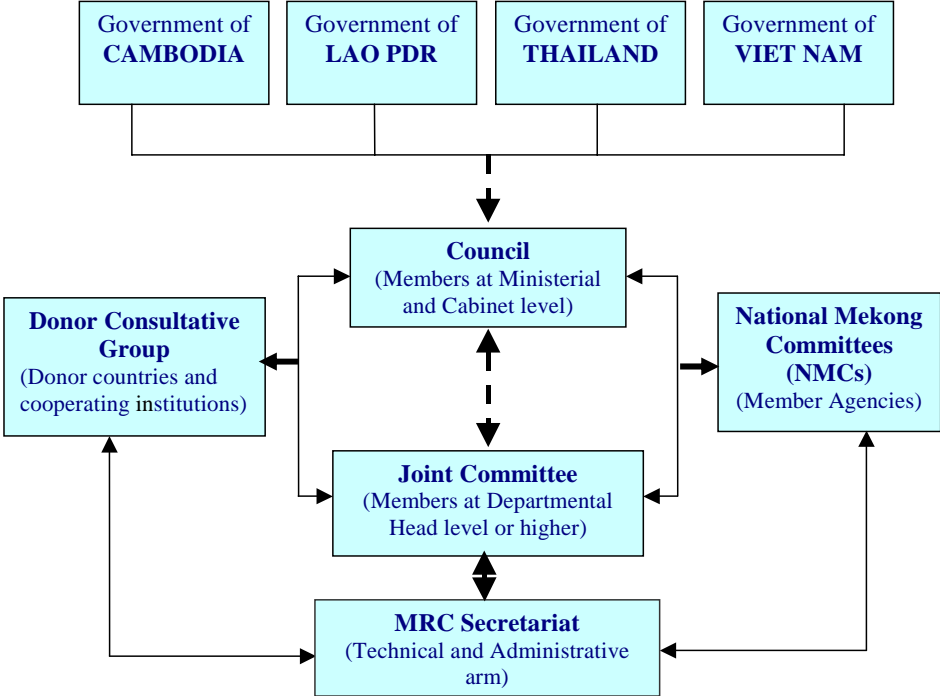
There are approximately 130 staff at the Secretariat in Vientiane, Lao PDR and around 30 in the Regional Flood Management and Mitigation Centre in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

**Amount of the annual budget**

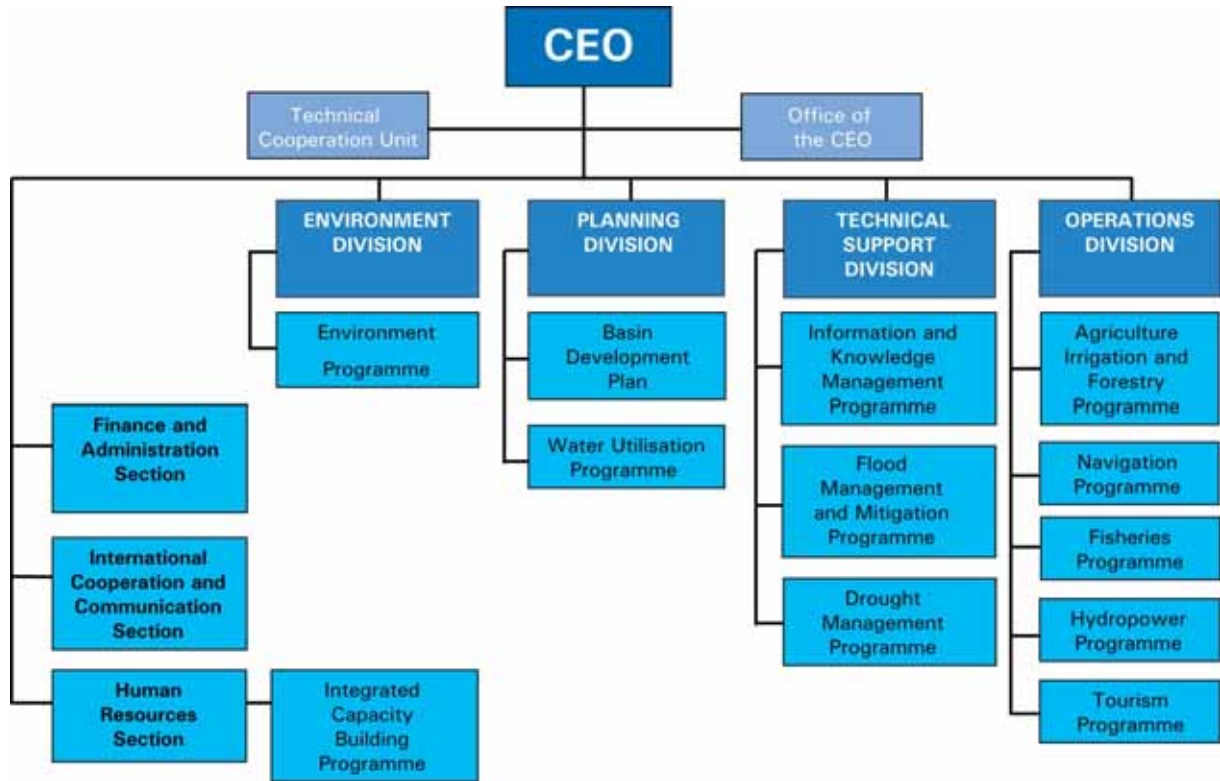
US\$12-13 million

**3) Organizational chart**

MRC Organizational Structure



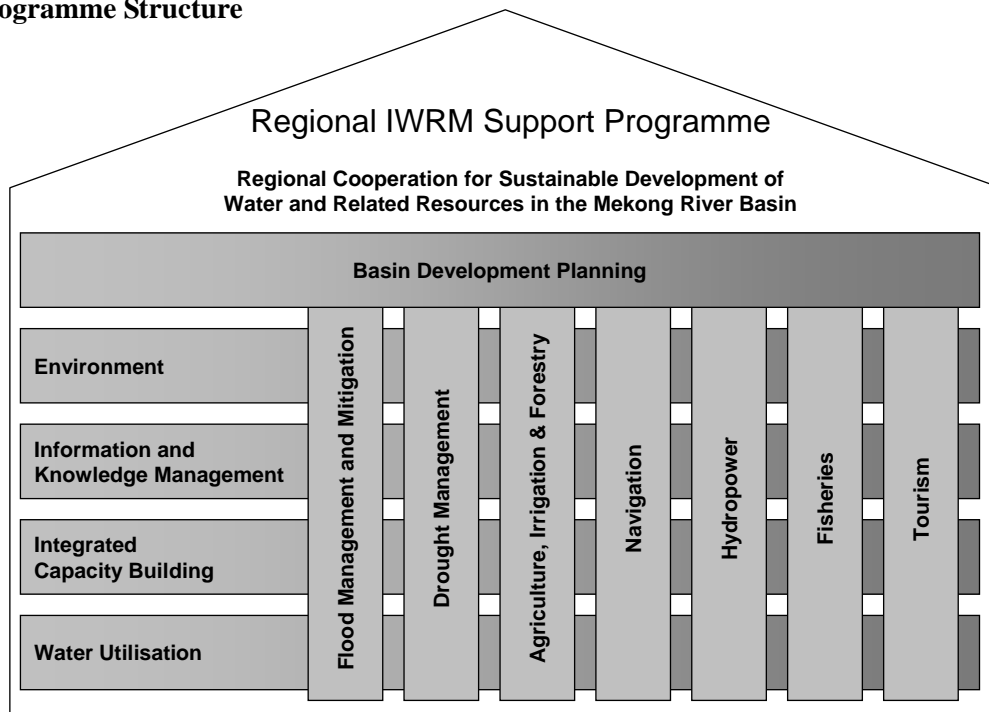
## MRC Secretariat Structure



## Ongoing projects

The MRC is engaged in a Regional IWRM Support Programme, and maintains an integrated approach to its programme work.

## MRC Programme Structure



### **Basin Development Planning**

**Objective:** To identify, categorise and prioritise projects, programmes 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

### **Water Utilisation**

**Objective:** To provide effective mechanisms to improve joint water management and ensure mutually beneficial water utilisation in the Lower Mekong River Basin while maintaining its ecological balance. To develop a computerised package of hydrological simulation models, knowledge base and analytical tools to serve as the technical basis for basin development planning and management. To develop procedures for water use and management. **Components:** Basin Modeling and Knowledge Base; Environmental and Transboundary Analysis; Rules for Water Utilisation; Management and Institutional Strengthening.

### **Integrated Capacity Building**

**Objective:** To strengthen the capacity of the MRC, the National Mekong Committees and the line agencies in all fields leading to more effective integrated water resources development and river basin management. **Components:** 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 develop and maintain the databases and tools 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 Systems; Data Exchange Policy and Procedures.

### **Environment**

**Objective:** To strengthen the framework for transboundary 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, minimise 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 a facilitator on transboundary issues and to build capacity in member countries. **Components:** Regional Flood Management and Mitigation Centre; Structural and Flood Proofing Measures; Mediation of Transboundary 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, and to increase social development and international trade opportunities using the navigation potential of the river system.

**Components:** Socio-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.

## **Programmes under Development**

### **Hydropower**

**Objective:** To develop hydropower in order to meet the need for economic development in a way that fully recognizes the requirement to safeguard ecosystems and social interests.

### **Drought Management**

**Objective:** To address the problem of droughts in the LMB, their impacts upon agriculture and water resources and to ascertain what management plans and mitigation policies might be put in place.

### **Tourism**

**Objective:** To promote tourism within the Mekong River Basin in a balanced manner, which also ensures necessary protection of the environment against adverse effects of tourism.

Approach

### **Big events in 2006**

In 2006 the MRC finalised approval and implementation of its new Strategic Plan 2006-2010. The

MRC Council members signed the Procedures for the Maintenance of Flows on the Mainstream – an important agreement on water use in the Mekong. The MRC launched two new programmes – the Drought Management Programme and the Information and Knowledge Management Programme. The MRC participated in the expo and made several presentations at the 4<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum in Mexico City.

Dr Olivier Cogels, the CEO of MRCS attended the Asia-Pacific Water ministerial conference at the forum and participated in formulating the joint statement. Dr Cogels made the keynote address and representatives of MRC programmes participated in Asia 2006, a major hydropower conference held in Bangkok. It launched a joint initiative with the WWF Living Mekong Initiative and the ADB on environmental criteria in hydropower.

### **About NARBO activity**

#### **Activities your organization implemented in 2006 as the member**

We did not implement any specific activities but representatives of our Member States participated in the NARBO 3<sup>rd</sup> thematic workshop.

### **The contact person and organization's web-site**

#### **The name of the contact person and contact number (including e-mail address)**

Wolfgang Schiefer, Chief, International Cooperation and Communications Section  
Schiefer@mrcmekong.org

#### **Your organization's web-site URL (English and local language)**

[www.mrcmekong.org](http://www.mrcmekong.org)

### **Resolutions and expectations for NARBO activities**

#### **Your organization's resolutions**

To reflect the NARBO goals of helping to achieve IWRM in river basins throughout Asia, while strengthening the capacity and effectiveness of RBOs in promoting IWRM and improving water governance, through training and exchange of information and experiences among RBOs and their associated water sector agencies and knowledge partner organizations.

#### **Expectations for NARBO activities**

Continued networking and information exchange with River Basin Organisations in Asia as well as participation in joint events, RBO exchange visits and staff exchange programs, where possible. Fostering regional cooperation for improved management of water resources in transboundary river basins.

**Accessibility to the NARBO web-site (<http://www.narbo.jp>)**

**Whether you can access to the NARBO web-site**

Yes

**Whether you can access to the ADB's web-site (<http://www.adb.org/>) and the ADBI's web-site (<http://www.adbi.org/>)**

Yes

**Who can access NARBO web-site usually**

Anyone who wishes

**How often do you access the NARBO website on average?**

About once every couple of months

**What content are you interested in most and what information do you want to get from the NARBO website?**

Details of upcoming events and conferences, reports of events

**What do you think we need to do to get more hits on the NARBO website?**

Include more information on the different basins involved and relevant news items from around the region.

**What do you think we need to do to stimulate information exchange among members through the NARBO website?**

Launch a discussion room where people can exchange views.