

# 301 Organisations and Administrative Systems

## Module 3: Institutions and Organisations

### Chapter 3.1: Organisations and Administrative Systems

#### Introduction

Various institutions and organisations, with their spheres of operation ranging from regional to local levels, are involved in watershed management in the Lower Mekong Basin (LMB).

There is not always a very clear distinction between the *terms institution and organisation*. In a broad sense, our understanding is that institutions incorporate formal and informal rules including the corresponding measures to enforce them [25], while organisations are rather groups of individuals who work together for a common purpose. Please refer to another chapter of this module (See also: Chapter 3.3: Introduction to Institutional and Organisational Development ) where we have provided further details to clarify this distinction. However in line with this interpretation, this chapter concerns itself more with organisations than with institutions, while institutions, in the sense of formal rules have already largely been dealt with in previous chapters (See also: Chapter 2.2: National Policies ; Chapter 2.3: National Legislation ). Nonetheless, both terms will be used in this chapter, as the sources that we have drawn from often use the terms institution and organisation interchangeably.

This chapter outlines the current institutional and organisational landscape ranging from the regional, national to sub-national levels and also covers related processes, such as the establishment of new river basin organisations, or the overall decentralisation process. It further presents suggestions and recommendations for further institutional development, which were made during the policy dialogues on watershed management in 2004 and 2005.

The structure of this chapter consists of:

- Characteristics of River Basin Organisations
- Organisations at the Regional Level
- Organisations at the National Level
- Decentralisation Processes
- Organisations at the Sub-national Level
- Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs) and Networks
- Suggestions for further Institutional and Organisational Development

#### Characteristics of River Basin Organisations

*River basin organisations (RBOs)* are specialised organisations that have been set up by political authorities, or otherwise in response to stakeholder demands. They deal with the water resource management issues in international or national river basins, lake basins or across important aquifers. The *Mekong River Commission* for instance addresses management issues that concern an international river basin, whilst the *Chao Phraya River Basin Organisation* in Thailand manages a national river basin.

RBOs provide a mechanism for ensuring that water uses and needs are reflected in land management – and vice versa. They may also play a role in consensus building, facilitation and conflict management [7].

RBOs aim to support sustainable river basin management, which is characterised by [8]:

- Basin-wide planning to balance all user needs for water resources and to provide protection from water related hazards
- Wide public and stakeholder participation in decision-making resulting in local empowerment
- Effective demand management

- Agreement on commitments within the basin and mechanisms for monitoring those agreements
- Adequate human and financial resources

The *form and role* of an RBO is closely linked to its historical and social context. Establishing an effective RBO is a long-term process [20] and experience has shown that all RBOs evolve over time and thereby occasionally adapt their composition and duties. *Successful RBOs* are characterised by [8]:

- An ability to establish trusted technical competencies
- A focus on serious recurrent problems such as flooding, drought or supply shortages, with the provision of solutions that are acceptable to all stakeholders
- A broad stakeholder involvement that caters for grassroots participation at a basin-wide level (e.g. through water forums)
- An ability to generate some form of sustaining revenue
- The capacity to collect fees, and attract grants and / or loans
- Clearly defined jurisdictional boundaries and appropriate powers

## Organisations at the Regional Level

### The Mekong River Commission

The *Mekong River Commission* (MRC) is an international, country-driven RBO that provides the institutional framework to promote regional cooperation in order to implement the *1995 Agreement* (see below). 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* [12].

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 as the UN-founded Mekong Committee. It was established on 5<sup>th</sup> of April, 1995 by *The Agreement on the Cooperation for the Sustainable Development of the Mekong River Basin* [1]. The *MRC member countries* are Cambodia, the Lao PDR, Thailand and Viet Nam. In the 1995 Agreement, the countries state their intention “to cooperate in all fields of sustainable development, utilisation, management and conservation of the water and related resources of the Mekong River Basin” [10]. Please refer to a previous chapter (See: Chapter 2.1: International and Regional Policy Framework ) for more detailed information on the 1995 agreement. It should also be noted that China and Myanmar are *Dialogue Partners* to the MRC.

The organisational structure of the MRC is shown in the figure below. The MRC consists of three permanent bodies: the *Council*, the *Joint Committee* (JC) and the *MRC Secretariat* (MRCS).

The *Council*, which meets once a year, consists of one member from each country at the ministerial or cabinet level. The Council makes policy decisions and provides other necessary guidance concerning the promotion, support, co-operation and co-ordination of joint activities and programmes in order to implement the 1995 Agreement. The Council has overall governance of the Mekong River Commission. [12].

The *Joint Committee* (JC) consists of one member from each country at no less than Head of Department level. The Joint Committee is responsible for the implementation of the policies and decisions of the Council and supervises the activities of the Mekong River Commission Secretariat. This body functions as a board of management [12].

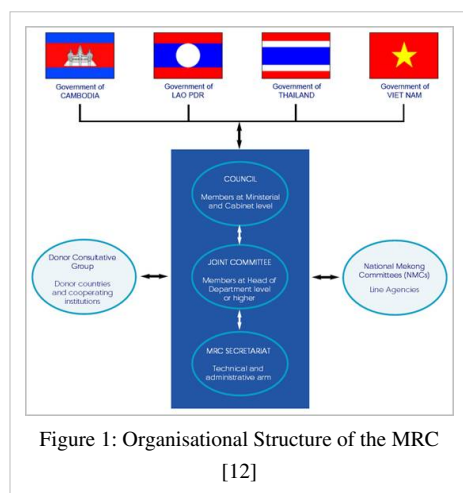


Figure 1: Organisational Structure of the MRC [12]

The *MRC Secretariat (MRCS)* is the operational arm of the MRC. It provides technical and administrative services to the JC and the Council, and is under the direction of a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) who is appointed by the Council. Under the supervision of the JC, the CEO is responsible for the day-to-day operations of around 120 professional and general support staff. The MRCS is currently located in Vientiane, the Lao PDR. The Assistant CEO is of the same nationality as the JC Chair and serves a one-year term. The main counterparts for MRC's activities in the four member countries are the National Mekong Committees [12]. Please refer to the related technical annex (See: TA: Mekong River Commission Secretariat (MRCS): Organisational Structure [3.1] ) for details of the organisational structure of MRCS.

The *National Mekong Committees (NMCs)* coordinate MRC programmes at the national level and provide links between the MRCS and the national ministries and line agencies. The principal implementing agencies of the MRC programmes and projects are the line agencies of the riparian countries in the Lower Mekong Basin. They are served by the respective National Mekong Committee Secretariats in each country [12].

The MRC receives *financial support* from various country governments through their development agencies, as well as through development banks and international organisations; but it also has relationships with many other partners and organisations [12].

### **The Network of Asian River Basin Organisations**

The *Network of Asian River Basin Organisations (NARBO)* was established to share knowledge and build the capacity for integrated water resources management (IWRM) in river basins throughout Asia. It has the following main objectives [1]:

- To exchange information and experience among RBOs in Asia
- To strengthen RBOs' capacity and effectiveness in promoting IWRM and improving water governance

NARBO is in the process of creating synergy and strengthening regional cooperation in the water sector among developing countries and development partners within the region, and therefore its activities are focused on [1]:

- Promoting advocacy and raising the awareness of IWRM
- Establishing RBOs
- Sharing information, good practices and lessons learned by the RBOs
- Supporting NARBO members to improve water governance
- Improving water governance for IWRM
- Building capacity of RBOs to implement IWRM
- Fostering regional cooperation for trans-boundary river basins

NARBO was jointly established in 2003 during the 3<sup>rd</sup> World Water Forum through a letter of intent which was signed by the *Asian Development Bank (ADB)*, the *ADB Institute* and the *Japan Water Agency*. The network was officially launched in November 2003 at the 1<sup>st</sup> Southeast Asian Water Forum held in Chiang Mai, and its charter was ratified during its first general meeting in Indonesia in February 2004 [22].

NARBO now has 56 members, with 43 organisations having signed up as new members during the first general meeting in 2004. Moreover, an additional 13 members signed up after the second general meeting in 2006. Nowadays the members include the MRCS, as well as RBOs from Bangladesh, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Philippines, Sri Lanka and Viet Nam. Members also come from government organisations from various countries such as Cambodia (*Ministry of Water Resources and Meteorology*), the Lao PDR (*Water Resources Coordination Committee Secretariat*), Thailand (*Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment*) and Viet Nam (*Department of Water Resource Management / MoNRE*) [1].

## Organisations at the National Level

An overview of the major government organisations related to watershed management at the national level has been provided below. More detailed information concerning their mandates and responsibilities can be found in a separate technical annex (See also: TA: Overview of National Government Line Agencies relevant for Watershed Management and their Mandates and Responsibilities [3.1]). It should be noted that an interesting categorisation of Lao government agencies at the national level, according to their roles as regulators, managers, operators and service providers has also been provided in a separate technical annex (See also: TA: Government Agencies and their Roles in Watershed Management – Examples from the Lao PDR [3.1]).

Table 1: Overview of the Key Government Agencies at the National Level ([4], [14], [16])

Country	Government Agencies
<b>Cambodia</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cambodian National Mekong Committee (CNMC)</li> <li>• Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF), Department of Planning / Forestry Administration (former Department of Forestry and Wildlife)</li> <li>• Ministry of Environment (MoE), Department of Nature Conservation and Protection</li> <li>• Ministry of Industry, Mines and Energy (MIME)</li> <li>• Ministry of Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction (MLMUPC), Department of Land Management</li> <li>• Ministry of Water Resources and Meteorology (MWRM), Department of Water Resource Management and Conservation</li> </ul>
<b>Lao PDR</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lao National Mekong Committee (LNMC)</li> <li>• Water Resources and Environment Administration (WREA))</li> <li>• Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) Department of Forestry, Department of Agriculture, Department of Meteorology &amp; Hydrology, Department of Irrigation, Department of Livestock &amp; Fisheries</li> <li>• Ministry of Communication, Transportation, Post and Construction (MCTPC)</li> <li>• Ministry of Industry and Handicrafts (MIH)</li> <li>• Ministry of Finance (MoF)</li> <li>• Ministry of Public Health (MPH)</li> <li>• National Land Management Agency (NLMA)</li> </ul>
<b>Thailand</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thai National Mekong Committee (TNMC)</li> <li>• Ministry of Interior (MINT), Office of Policy and Planning, Natural Resources and Environmental Policy Division, Department of Local Administration</li> <li>• Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives (MAC), Royal Forestry Department, Royal Irrigation Department, Land Development Department, Natural Resources and Environmental Policy Coordination Centre</li> <li>• Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MoNRE), Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy, Office of Environmental Policy and Planning, Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation (DNPWPC) (DNPWPC, has an attached Watershed Conservation and Management Office), Department of Water Resources / Watershed Administrative Committee (WAC)</li> <li>• The National Water Resources Committee (NWRC)</li> </ul>
<b>Viet Nam</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Viet Nam National Mekong Committee (VNMC)</li> <li>• Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD), Office for River Basin Management and Planning at the Department of Water Resources (previously Department of Irrigation), Department of Dyke Management and Flood and Storm Protection, Department of Agriculture and Forestry Extension, Department of Forestry, Department of Forest Protection, Institute of Water Resource Planning</li> <li>• Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MoNRE), Department of Water Resource Management, Land Department, Department of Environment, Department of Environment Protection</li> <li>• National Water Resources Council (NWRC)</li> </ul>

In *Cambodia*, the administrative and political system has had to recover from many years of war and political instability that occurred during previous decades. Government institutions at the national and provincial levels still face numerous challenges, which also have implications for watershed management [4]. Among the multitude of government organisations that concern themselves with watershed management, the most important ones are the *Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries*, the *Ministry of Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction* as well as the *Ministry of Water Resources and Meteorology* and the *Ministry of Environment* [9].

Nevertheless, there is no clear mandate for watershed management and the current institutional arrangements lack clarity regarding each organisation's role and responsibilities [4].

In *the Lao PDR*, responsibilities for issues related to watershed management are shared among several government organisations under the *Prime Minister's Office* (CPI, STEA) and various sectoral ministries, out of which the *Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry* (See: TA: Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of the Lao PDR: Organisational Structure [3.1] ) has the deepest involvement. The *Ministry of Industry and Handicrafts* is responsible for overseeing hydropower development and operations. Another important organisation is the *Water Resources Coordination Committee*, which is responsible for coordinating the line agencies and the formulation of relevant policies and strategies. It is also responsible for monitoring, controlling, promoting and reporting on the implementation of activities related to water resources [16]. However there appear to be a number of constraints that affect watershed management. An analysis by MAF / DANIDA in 2002 found that "the current institutional problem in the water sector mainly relates to a lack of effective coordination among agencies within the sector and those of other sectors, and the loose line of communication and coordination between the central agencies and the provincial governments" [14]. The same report also made suggestions for improvements (See also: TA: Suggested Organisational Structure for Integrated Watershed Management in the Lao PDR [3.1]). More recent evidence suggests that the cross-sectoral and vertical linkages between central level stakeholders in watershed management are undergoing significant structural and procedural changes so as to allow for cross-sectoral management planning [4].

In *Thailand* more than 30 government agencies are involved in watershed management related activities. At the central level the *Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment* (MoNRE) plays the most important role in the overall planning of watershed management. Furthermore, there are also a number of coordinating bodies who are concerned with watershed management. The *Department of Water Resources* recently established the *Watershed Administrative Organisation* (WAO) to assist in finding resolutions to water resource problems. At the same time the *Watershed Administrative Committee* (WAC) was established to create policies and coordinate plans for water resource management [4]. Moreover the *National Water Resources Committee* (NWRC), which was established through a cabinet resolution is chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister, and it has a clear mandate to oversee all management of water and related resources [28]. The committee began to implement water resources management through the river basin approach, setting up for example the *Chao Phraya River Basin Organisation* in 1998. Duties of the RBO comprise information collection, the formulation of local projects as well as the issuing of approval before submission to NWRC. Additionally they have the task of resolving local conflicts about water issues. The pilot implementation of River Sub-basin Organisations (RSBOs) started in three priority sub-basins of the Chao Phraya Basin (Upper Ping, Lower Ping, Pasak). Members of RSBOs include the representatives of local government, the local community and local people's organisations ([17], [22]).

*Viet Nam* has various government organisations that deal with watershed management and in fact each has its own (and often overlapping) mandate [9]. A technical annex (See also: TA: Institutional Landscape for River Basin and Watershed Management, Viet Nam [3.1] ) provides an overview of the country's institutional landscape for watershed and river basin management. In spite of the multitude of agencies that are involved, the main responsibility for watershed management has been assigned to the *Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development* (MARD), and especially to its *Department of Water Resources* (See also: TA: Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Viet Nam: Organisation in Relation to Watershed Management [3.1] ). A *River Basin Planning and Management Office* was established within this department to oversee the local *River Basin Planning and Management Boards* [4].

The *National Water Resource Council* (NWRC) is chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister. Other relevant Ministries, such as MARD, MoNRE, the *Ministry of Science and Technology*, the *Ministry of Planning and Investment*, the *Ministry of Finance*, the *Ministry of Construction* and the *Ministry of Communication and Transport* are represented by the Ministers concerned or by their Deputies. The NWRC has the role of advising the government on issues related to national water resources strategies, the approval of large river basin plans, water transfer, relevant

government projects and the resolution of water resource disputes among the ministries, provinces or cities [4].

The establishment of RBOs in Viet Nam has formally been initiated for the Red River, the Dong Nai River and the Lower Mekong Delta. The process of establishing a RBO for the Red River started for example in 1998, which meant setting up the RBO as a coordinating agency which could not adopt any state management power or functions. The RBO entails different structural elements and consists of the representatives of relevant ministries (e.g. MARD) and provincial authorities, as well as academic experts (See also: TA: Structure of the Red River Basin Organisation, Viet Nam [3.1] ). Its major functions include water resource assessment, planning and monitoring, as well as information management and conflict resolution ([15], [20]). Some of the experiences that have been gained through the establishment of RBOs are presented in a related case study (See also: CS: The Establishment of River Basin Organisations – Experiences from Viet Nam [3.1] ).

## Decentralisation Processes

*Decentralisation reforms*, which influence the organisational set-up, as well as the decision making over and the management of natural resources have been evolving for decades in all of the four countries of the Lower Mekong Basin (See also: TA: National Decentralisation Processes in the Lower Mekong Basin [3.1] ). The reforms range from the empowerment of elected local governments with mandates related to natural resources in Thailand, to the financing of village committees in Cambodia, to the emerging co-management arrangements for water and forests in Viet Nam and the Lao PDR (See also: CS: Decentralisation Approaches in the Lower Mekong Basin [3.1] ). They can result in a reduction in the central government's costs and an increase in efficiency by decreasing the size of the central bureaucracy. They may also empower citizens and increase public participation in planning and implementation processes [2].

**Box 1: Decentralisation** is understood to be the devolution of specific functions (administrative, political and economic) by central to local governments, which function independently of the central government and are sovereign within a geographic area and a functional domain [6]. The range of powers and the type of accountability that exists for local actors largely define the main types of possible decentralisation reform, such as political, fiscal and administrative decentralisation ([2], [18], [24]).

Participation (See also: Chapter 1.3.5: Participation ) and decentralisation have a symbiotic relationship. On the one hand successful decentralisation requires a certain degree of local participation, as sub-national governments' proximity to their constituents will enable them to respond better to local needs and efficiently match public spending to private needs. On the other hand, the process of decentralisation can itself enhance the opportunities for participation by placing more power and resources at a closer, more familiar, more easily influenced level of government [23].

## Organisations at the Sub-national Level

An overview of the major government agencies at the sub-national level, which are concerned with watershed management, is presented in table 2 below.

Table 2: Overview of the Key Actors at the Sub-national Level ([4], [14], [16], [17], [19])

Country	Government Agencies
<b>Cambodia</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provincial Rural Development Committees, Provincial Agriculture and Fisheries Department, Forest Administration (Inspectorates / Cantonments / Divisions), Provincial Office of Land Management</li> <li>• District Administration, Offices of Line Ministries</li> <li>• Commune Councils, Rural Development Committees</li> <li>• Village Development Committees, Sector Committees (e.g. Village Community Forestry Committees)</li> </ul>
<b>Lao PDR</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provincial Government, Provincial Planning Committee (PPC), Provincial Agriculture and Forestry Service (PAFS)</li> <li>• District Government, District Agriculture and Forestry Service (DAFS)</li> <li>• Village Development Committee (VDC), Sector Committees (e.g. Village Forestry Associations), Mass Organisations (Lao Front for National Construction, Lao People's Revolutionary Youth Union, Lao Women's Union)</li> </ul>
<b>Thailand</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• River Basin Organisations (29) chaired by Governor of Province, Working Groups on (1) Planning, (2) Information Management, (3) Public Relations, and (4) MRC-TNMC Relations</li> <li>• Provincial Administration, Governor, Office of Provincial Administration</li> <li>• Provincial Watershed Management Centres (DNP / MONRE)</li> <li>• Tambon Administration Organisations (TAO)</li> <li>• Watershed Rehabilitation Management Units (DNP / MONRE)</li> <li>• Village Development Committees (VDCs), Village Watershed Network Organisation / Watershed Management Network Committees (WMNCs), Village Forest Conservation Committees (VFFCs)</li> </ul>
<b>Viet Nam</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provincial Peoples Committees</li> <li>• Provincial River Basin Planning Organisations (3)</li> <li>• Inter-provincial River Basin Management Boards, with Members from National and Provincial Sector Line Agencies</li> <li>• Provincial Sector Line Agencies (e.g. Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) and Department of Natural Resources and Environment (DONRE))</li> <li>• Community Committees</li> </ul>

## NGOs and Networks

*Cambodia* is characterised by a diverse NGO landscape, which consists of international and national NGOs. There is a high dependence on externally funded projects in almost all fields of development, also including those related to watershed management [4]. NGOs often form and promote networks at national and sub-national levels, which are partially supported by the international donor community. Examples to illustrate this are the *Environment Working Group* (initiated by the *NGO Forum*) and the *Community Forestry Working Group* (initiated by *Concern Worldwide*) at the national level, and the *Community Forestry Network* at the provincial level (See also: CS: Networks on Community Forest Management in Cambodia [3.1]). Inter-village networks also exist, especially those created as a result of project interventions that are related to community based forest management, such as the *community forestry associations* (CFAs) ([3], [9]).

In the *Lao PDR*, the role of international NGOs is gradually growing and developing, but they still make a limited contribution towards environmental management. The majority of NGO activities have focused on small-scale “on-the-ground” projects, with IUCN being the only exception as it has a national programme [9]. Local networks exist on a limited scale, but there are inter-village networks in the form of *water user associations* (WUAs) or *village forest associations* (VFA) [13]. Mass organisations, such as the *Lao Women's Union*, play a significant role in rural environments.

In *Thailand*, *Tambon* (sub-district) *Administration Organisations* (TAOs) play a key role in local governance and administration, which includes planning for local development and natural resource management (See also: TA: Overview of the National and Local Government in Thailand [3.1]). Watershed organisations have been established at the provincial level and catchment organisations at the district and community level [28]. The *Royal Forestry Department* (RFD), NGOs and several *Official Development Assistance* (ODA) projects have successfully established watershed management network organisations in the upland areas, as a result of participatory land use planning exercises [9]. Local multi-village networks, which sometimes end up being federated into broader alliances,

have emerged as an important institutional innovation that seeks to enable and facilitate community-based natural resource governance and management. Such local sub-watershed networks emerged for example under the Sam Mun project in the Mae Taeng sub-basin and also under the projects in Mae Chaem (e.g. Care-Thailand, Queen Sirikit), where the formation and operation of a substantial number of multi-village networks was promoted [21].

In *Viet Nam* a large number of NGOs are involved in natural resources management. Many of these are small projects in comparatively restricted areas focusing on participatory planning and development but IUCN and WWF are international NGOs with larger programmes [9].

## **Suggestions for further Institutional and Organisational Development**

The policy dialogues that were held in 2004 [19] and 2005 [28] (See also: Chapter 2.1: International and Regional Policy Framework ) identified constraints related to institutional and organisational development for watershed management in the LMB countries, and also recommended options for further development.

These dialogues concluded that it is not so much the lack of institutions and organisations, but rather the lack of clarity regarding responsibilities, and the lack of integration between institutions that poses the challenges for watershed management in the region. Overlapping functions have to be addressed, and clearer coordination and feedback mechanisms need to be put into place. Planning and implementation experiences need to be linked with impact monitoring [19]. A country's institutional and organisational arrangements for watershed management depend on the country's experience and needs. Structures vary between countries, but whatever the specific structure, it is essential to have mechanisms for dialogue and co-ordination to ensure integration [7].

In the LMB as elsewhere, decision making is organised within administrative units at different levels, which are not identical within watersheds (See also: Chapter 1.1.5: Key Problems and Challenges in Watershed Management ; TA: Natural River Basins / Watersheds and Administrative Boundaries – An Example from the Lao PDR [1.1.5] ). It is for this reason that a matter of particular concern in the region is whether new organisations such as RBOs should be created, or if existing collaboration should be improved [19]? In other words, does watershed management require the creation of organisations specifically dedicated to this purpose [27]?

It has been advocated that it is not necessary to create permanent organisations to implement watershed management, as coordinating bodies are able to achieve the same goals [27]. The broad introduction of river basin management appears to come up against a number of fundamental institutional constraints, and many such arrangements had an exceedingly long and problematic history of development [26].

Considering the aforementioned, the policy dialogues in 2004 and 2005 made mixed recommendations, which varied according to country. They suggested river basin organisations, river basin authorities or watershed management committees (For information related to arrangements and experiences made in establishing such committees in Australia see: CS: Watershed Management Arrangements in Australia's Murray Darling Basin [3.1] ) as being suitable in providing the framework for watershed management in the LMB. However, no matter which arrangement one considers, it is most likely to face constraints in terms of human resources, finances and the transfer of power [19].

The following suggestions were made by the individual country groups in the 2005 policy dialogue [28]:

*Cambodia:* The dialogue group emphasised the need for the joint development of policies and guidelines by different line ministries as well as the establishment of joint planning procedures. The group suggested setting up river basin or watershed management organisations at the national level (chaired by CNMC) and at the sub-national level (chaired by a provincial governor). The responsibilities that were suggested for the different levels comprised firstly at the national level of the formulation of policy and guidelines, monitoring and evaluation and conducting awareness programmes. At the sub-national level they were planning and monitoring, developing community councils to lead the planning and implementation at a grass roots level as well as conducting awareness programmes. In addition, the CNMC should play a major role in coordination efforts between the different sectors at the national



level.

*The Lao PDR:* The country, so far does not have a single institution that has a clear mandate and responsibility on either water resources management or watershed management at the national level. There are more than 10 institutions currently dealing with water resources and watershed management. The dialogue group suggested that there should only be one institution with a clear mandate and responsibility for water resources management, and therefore the existing institutions concerned should merge to become a single water resources institution (*Water Resource Authority* or *Ministry of Water Resources*). This water resource institution would then act as the executive agency responsible for implementing water resources management projects as well as be the principle coordinator for all activities related to water resources.

At the regional level it was suggested to form northern, central and southern sub-area committees. It was also suggested that watershed working groups for the main rivers (e.g. a watershed organisation for each watershed) should be formed at the provincial level. These should be permanent management bodies under the supervision of the sub-area committees. The government would allocate an annual budget for water resources management projects through the water resources institution, and also watershed-funding mechanisms should be established for each watershed to collecting funds from the existing revenue sources within that particular watershed.

*Thailand:* "The dialogue group agreed that the current structure is suitable for the conditions in Thailand as it involves all stakeholders at the different hierarchical levels. However, RBOs need to be strengthened as well as the fact that they need to be more flexible.

#### **Box 2: Options for Watershed Management Organisation Models in Thailand [22]**

In a recent study on developing watershed management organisations on a pilot scale in Thailand [22], an array of five alternative sub-basin organisational models in three categories were proposed for consideration, selection and adaptation by sub-basin working groups and stakeholders:

*Government-oriented models* continue past trends in Thailand towards the establishment of RBOs and RSBOs through central government initiative aimed primarily at improving government programmes:

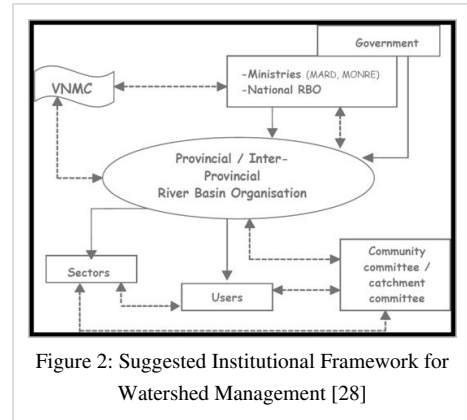
- *Focused government model:* Its main focus is on helping MoNRE design and implement its programmes in a more effective and efficient manner, and coordinate the work of its agencies. MoNRE takes a strong leadership role, with RSBO providing assistance.
- *Broader government model:* Its main focus is on improving effectiveness and efficiency of programmes within MoNRE, plus coordination with other ministries. Provincial administrations partner with MoNRE in the coordination and integration of plans, with RSBO assisting.
- *Multi-level partnership model:* It employs multi-level partnerships to establish the sub-basin level as the primary venue for an interface between top-down and bottom-up processes:
- *Central – local partnership model:* Its main focus is on a partnership between central and local levels, with the RSBO providing more leadership in identifying and analysing problems, planning the monitoring of conditions and impacts as well as public awareness. Participating ministries are *reaching down* to local partners for work within their mandates.
- *Local – central partnership model:* Its main focus is on a local-central partnership with RSBO leading most tasks. Local organisations and civil society groups are *reaching up* for partnerships with relevant ministries under locally defined mandates.
- *Non-government alternative model* It views the RSBO as a further extension of bottom-up non-governmental processes:
- *Local non-government model:* Its main focus is on mobilising non-governmental groups and civil society institutions to formulate, advocate and monitor activities within a locally-defined RSBO mandate.

*Viet Nam:* The dialogue group emphasised that watershed management is multi-sectoral and requires cooperation and coordination of various stakeholders, sectors and levels. Yet, there should be one organisation that is responsible for all aspects of watershed management, namely a RBO operating at the provincial and inter-provincial level. RBOs already exist in some river basins, but they are not yet fully functional.

The provincial authorities of the provinces that are located in the river basin should have representatives in the RBO and the chairmanship should be rotated periodically. The sector line agencies should also participate in the RBO and provide technical support as required. This ensures that the interests of all sectors are taken into account when joint decisions are made. This suggested "ideal" framework is illustrated in the figure 2.

## References and Sources for further Reading

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