



## Regional Workshop on Sustainable Watershed Management in the LMB

*“An exchange of experiences and lessons learnt on sustainable watershed management”*

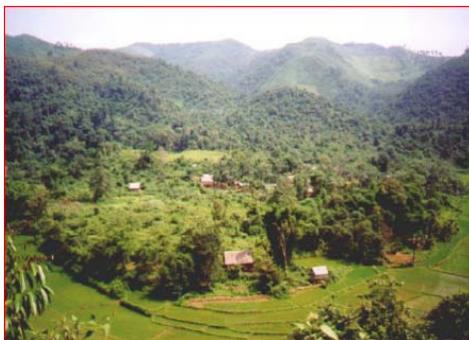
Crowne Plaza Hotel, Vientiane, Lao PDR

15 August 2017 plus ½-day field trip on 16 August 2017

### Final Draft Concept Note

#### 1. Background introduction

The Mekong region has seen considerable deterioration of watersheds from a combination of war, commercial and illegal logging, mining activities, population growth, hydropower development, and clearing of land for agriculture. In some areas over half of the original forest cover has been lost, leading to soil erosion, flash floods and a decline in the provision of ecological goods and services.



Watershed management has a long history in the Mekong region. But it is only during the last decade that the interactions between ecological, social and economic functions have become better understood. It is now widely accepted that watershed management requires the consideration of all three dimensions, as well as top-down and bottom up approaches to planning, and new incentives and funding for implementation<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Key message from the International Conference on Watershed Management “From local watershed management to integrated river basin management at the national and transboundary levels” in Chiang Mai, Thailand, 9-11 March 2011.

During the last few years the political commitment for sustainable watershed management has increased significantly in the Lower Mekong Basin (LMB):

- **At the local level**, government agencies have been preparing and implementing watershed management projects, while developers and development partners are supporting new approaches for watershed planning and management, such as the Nam Ton watershed project (see box), and pioneering new financing and benefit sharing mechanisms;
- **At the national level**, the LMB countries have put policies, regulatory, and institutional reforms in place that are improving the integration and decentralization of government services, and expanding and diversifying public and private sector funding for watershed management. They are also building technical and institutional capacity for improved watershed management; and
- **At the regional level**, the MRC addresses watershed management issues in its Basin Development Strategy, raises awareness of the basin-wide benefits of watershed management, promotes watershed projects, maintains a web-based watershed knowledge base, and puts forward options for benefit sharing.

**The Nam Ton watershed project**

The ongoing Sustainable Management of Watersheds in the Lower Mekong Basin Project (SUMALOM Nam Ton) is supporting the Nam Ton communities the Lao government agencies on water and land use planning, land registration, protected area management, irrigation development, agricultural research and extension, farming systems development, Integrated Water Resources Management, and development of a micro-finance system.

Building on the long and important work of MRC-GIZ WSMP, MRC has continued to cooperate with KfW on the SUMALOM Nam Ton in the upgrading and promotion and of knowledge on watershed management in the LMB, including approaches, methods, guidelines and networking concepts.

However, there are still major implementation challenges. In some countries the decentralized government services face challenges aligning the financing and actions of natural resource developers with watershed management plans. Other countries face challenges in the development of new institutional entities for watershed management. A key bottleneck in most countries is the capacity at the district/provincial level to prepare 'integrated' watershed action plans and deliver 'integrated' extension services to implement these plans. These are challenging tasks everywhere but particularly in fast developing countries where human and institutional capacities cannot keep pace with the growing needs.

Since 1995, MRC has implemented a variety of watershed management activities. In 2011, a multi-year watershed management project funded by GIZ was completed. The project has developed approaches, methodologies and tools and tested their use in pilot projects across the Lower Mekong Basin (LMB).

In 2009, the MRC signed a Financing and Project Agreement with the Government of Federal Republic of Germany (through KfW) and the Government of Lao PDR on Sustainable Management of Watersheds in the LMB Project (SUMALOM-Nam Ton). The overall objective of the Project is that the watershed function of Nam Ton Pilot project area within the LMB is secured and livelihoods are improved in a sustainable manner. This project includes Part I aiming at supporting watershed management in the Nam Ton Watershed and is being carried out by the Lao Government and Part II aiming at bringing specific technical support to Part I and wrapping up the lessons learn from the past projects, including the SUMALOM Nam Ton, in watershed management at MRC level.

## **2. Workshop objectives and expected outcomes**

Against the background mentioned above, this Regional Workshop will broadly discuss challenges, possible solutions, share experiences and lessons learnt from the implementation and make recommendations for sustainable watershed management in the Mekong region.

The specific objectives of the workshop are to (1) share knowledge and best practices, present findings, draw conclusions and facilitate exchange of experiences, from SUMALOM Nam Ton and other MRC Member Countries and (2) identify key challenges and priority actions to further sustainable watershed planning and management in the LMB.

The workshop will draw on the experiences of watershed practitioners at the regional, national and local levels, as well as the diverse views expressed by multiple stakeholders, to identify and recommend priority actions for the consideration of the MRC, national line agencies, RBOs, local government agencies, resource developers, and others.

The anticipated outcomes from the Workshop are: (i) shared knowledge and lessons learnt of successes and constraints in sustainable watershed management and of possible solutions for improvement (ii) documented findings and recommended priority actions that are necessary for sustainable watershed planning and management in Lao PDR and LMB.

## **3. The workshop proceedings**

With financial support from the Government of Federal Republic of Germany through KfW, the Regional Workshop will be hosted by the Mekong River Commission (MRC) in cooperation with MoNRE.

The workshop consists of three sessions. Each session will be interactive and structured around discussions and dialogues, using Power Point presentations to catalyze discussions that will be facilitated by a moderator.



The opening session sets the scene for the following session that focus on sharing of experience and lessons learnt from the implementation and what can be done better to further sustainable watershed planning and management. In the last session, the results of the discussions and dialogues will be synthesized and recommendations formulated priority actions for the MRC, national line agencies, RBOs, local governments, developers and others. Annex 1 is the agenda of the workshop.

## **4. Session 1: Opening and setting the scene**

After the opening address, the Workshop kicks off with an introduction on the Past, the Present and the Future of MRC watershed management focusing on progress,

opportunities and challenges. The implementation of SUMALOM-Nam Ton Project Part II will be highlighted in this session.

## 5. Session 2: Sharing knowledge, best practice and experience to improve sustainable watershed management in LMB

An important governance role at the local level is to prepare and implement watershed management plans that consider/encompass the economic, social, environmental and other functions of a watershed in consultation with the watershed inhabitants and users and are based on their interest. The main role of the national level is to create an adequate enabling environment for watershed management with appropriate policy, institutional, legal, financial, procedural, and planning frameworks. The role of regional organisations is to promote synergies and linkages between actions at different government levels (local, national, regional) and between different (economic) sectors, and to help to reduce and decide on trade-offs where benefits in one area create dis-benefits (disadvantages) in another.

This session will focus on what have been done so far on sustainable watershed planning and management, what the results and challenges are, and how sustainable watershed management can be further improved by actions at the local and national levels, as seen from various stakeholder perspectives.

Questions that could be considered include:

- ✓ How can we further improve the institutional and organizational arrangements for the preparation of 'integrated' watershed plans and the delivery of 'integrated' extension services to implement these plans?
- ✓ How can we better align district and provincial plans with watershed needs and opportunities?
- ✓ What are the priority actions for the further improvement of the means, tools and capacity for watershed planning and management?
- ✓ What can we learn from the Nam Tom watershed project? What worked and what didn't and why? And how could national and regional level organizations (such as the MRC) contribute to the project?
- ✓ How can the natural resource users and project developers contribute to watershed planning and management?
- ✓ How can we better align the financing and actions of resource industries (hydropower, agro-forestry, mining) with local watershed management plans?

### **New policies and reforms in Lao PDR**

Lao PDR has started to address the continuing watershed challenges through policy and institutional reforms, including:

- **New land rights and decentralization of government services**, such as forestry and agriculture and other services are reshaping how provinces coordinate and deliver the required extension and land management services;
- **New financing mechanisms and autonomous funds**: laws and regulations have been introduced to expand and diversify public and private sector funding for land and water resource management and environmental protection; and
- **New provisions in concession agreements for resource based industry**, which increasingly require provisions for watershed management.

Potentially, these reforms may go a long way to put watershed management on a successful path. However, decentralized government services face challenges to prepare integrated watershed management plans that are aligned to the financing and actions of resource industries.

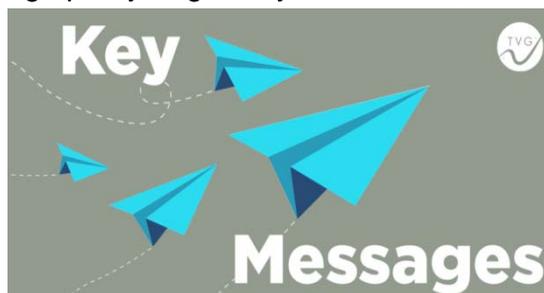
- ✓ What are the priority improvements in the enabling environment for watershed planning and management?
- ✓ How can we further improve the horizontal and vertical coordination and data and information exchange for watershed planning and management?
- ✓ How can the institutional framework be further improved to support integrated planning and management of land, water and related resources?
- ✓ How can planning and watershed management be integrated technically and institutionally in the increasing number of RBOs and RBCs?
- ✓ What are the informal institutions and arrangements that need to be taken into account in watershed planning and management?
- ✓ How can top-down and bottom up approaches to watershed planning be implemented in practice? Also considering that major infrastructure projects are planned and implemented at the national level.
- ✓ How has the MRC been supporting watershed management and what should be its role in watershed planning and management?
- ✓ How can we further improve the linkages between basin-wide, national, and local watershed management planning and management?
- ✓ Would it be useful to develop IWRM-based guidelines and planning frameworks for watershed planning and management? Which are the priority guidelines?
- ✓ How can regionally prepared guidelines be adjusted to suit the specific local watershed conditions and local government systems, and who can do that?
- ✓ Can experiences from watershed management projects, such as the Nam Ton watershed project, be up-scaled in practice?
- ✓ What else can/should MRC do to support watershed management projects, such as the Nam Ton watershed project?



## 6. **Session 3: Synthesis of discussions and recommended actions**

This session synthesizes the various presentations, discussions and dialogues of the workshop into key messages related to:

- ✓ What are the key issues and constraints (e.g., policy, regulatory, institutional, financial, capacity, data and information, tools) for sustainable management of watershed in the LMB?
- ✓ What are the opportunities, challenges and recommendations based good practices from SUMALOM-Nam Ton project and from other MRC Member Countries?
- ✓ **What are the recommended priority actions for the MRC, national line agencies, RBOs, local governments, resource users and others for further improvement of the sustainable watershed management in the LMB?**



The session concludes with propositions for follow-on actions: the way forward on how to improve and coordinate sustainable watershed management in the Lower Mekong Basin context.

## 7. **Field Visit**

In addition, MRCS in cooperation with MoNRE in Lao PDR will organize a field visit to Nam Ton Watershed Project Part I sites for half a day on 16 August 2017. The agenda of the field visit is provided in Annex 2.

## 8. **Participation**

The participants will include government officials with responsibilities related to watershed management at the regional, national and local level (MRC, line agencies, local governments), broader stakeholders engaged in watershed management (NGOs, communities, development partners). Tentative list of participants is provided in Annex 3.

## 9. **Registration**

The workshop will have a balanced representation by the groups identified above. Participation capacity is limited to about 70 people. All participants will be invited by the MRCS.

## 10. **Language**

The meeting will be conducted in English.

## 11. **Venue**

The MRC Conference Room cannot accommodate a huge number of participants of this Regional Workshop. The Workshop will be held at Crowne Plaza Hotel, Vientiane, Lao PDR.

## 12. **Agenda**

The draft workshop agenda is attached (Annex 1). Introductory notes and Power Point presentations will be available two weeks before the workshop on the MRC watershed information webpage.

### **13. Reporting**

The workshop report will be available two weeks after the workshop and published on the MRC watershed information webpage.

### **14. Market Stands**

With support from PPI, there will be market stands to display agricultural products from the SUMALOM-Nam Ton Project. This will be arranged around the space in front of Workshop Room at Crowne Plaza Hotel, Vientiane.

### **15. Contact points**

#### **For technical information please contact:**

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Dr. Thim Ly, Chief River Basin Planner  
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#### **For logistical arrangements and registration please contact:**

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## Annex 1: Draft Regional Workshop Agenda (15 August 2017)

| TENTATIVELY IN 15 AUGUST 2017  |   |
|--|---|
| 08:00 - 08:30  | Registration  |
| <b>Session 1: Opening and setting the scene</b>  |   |
| 08:30 - 08:45  | Opening remarks, followed by introduction of the Workshop objective, structure and process  |
| 8:45 - 09:25   | The Past, Present and Future of MRC Watershed management: progress, opportunities and challenges followed by Discussion and Q&A   |
| <b>Session 2: Sharing knowledge, best practice and experience to improve sustainable watershed management in the LMB</b> |   |
| 9:25 – 10:05   | Review of watershed management in Lao PDR – progress made, current status, opportunities and challenges using experience and lessons learnt from the implementation of SUMALOM Nam Ton pilot project followed by Discussion and Q&A   |
| 10:05 - 10:30  | <b><i>Coffee break</i></b>  |
| 10:30 – 11:10  | Review of watershed management in Cambodia – progress made, current status, opportunities and challenges using case study to illustrate the lessons learnt from the implementation followed by Q&A  |
| 11:10 - 11:50  | Review of watershed management in Thailand – progress made, current status, opportunities and challenges using case study to illustrate the lessons learnt from the implementation followed by Q&A  |
| 11:50 - 12:30  | Review of watershed management in Viet Nam – progress made, current status, opportunities and challenges using case study to lessons learnt from the implementation followed by Q&A   |
| 12.30 - 13.30  | <b><i>Lunch</i></b>   |
| <b>Session 3: Break out group discussion</b>   |   |
| 13:30 – 14:30  | <p><b>Topic 1:</b> Issues, Constraints, Opportunities and Challenges on watershed action planning and management</p> <p><b>Topic 2:</b> Sustainable financing for watershed action planning and management</p> <p><b>Topic 3:</b> Roles of Regional organization, Development Partners, International Organizations in watershed management</p>                         |
| 14:30 – 15:00  | <b><i>Report to plenary (10 min each)</i></b>   |
| 15:00 – 15:30  | <b><i>Coffee break</i></b>  |
| <b>Session 4: Synthesis of discussions and recommended actions</b>   |   |
| 15:30 - 16:00  | <p>Interactive synthesis and development of the key workshop messages related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The key issues and constraints (e.g., policy, regulatory, institutional, financial, capacity, data and information, tools) at different levels (local, national and regional) for sustainable watershed management in the LMB</li> </ul> |

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
|                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The opportunities, challenges and recommendations from SUMALOM-Nam Ton and from other MRC Member Countries</li> <li>• The recommended priority actions for the MRC, national line agencies, RBOs, local governments, resource users and others for further improvements of sustainable watershed management in the LMB</li> </ul> |
| 16:00 – 16:30          | <i>Follow-on actions/Next steps</i>  |
| <b>Closing Session</b> |  |
| 16:30 – 16:45          | <i>Closing remarks</i>   |

## Annex 2: Tentative agenda of the field visit (16 August 2017)

| Time          | Descriptions   | Responsibilities   |
|---------------|--|--|
| 7:00 - 08:30  | Travel from MRC to Sangthong District (Nalath Centre)  |  |
| 08:30 - 09:30 | Visit NalathCentre (Kum Ban Centre):<br>- Introduce management plan and implementation of activities at the Center   | - DAFO<br>- Nalath Centre  |
| 09:30 – 11:00 | Visit model family for <u>Afforestation</u> plantation at Ban Kou  | - DAEC<br>- DAFO<br>- Forester technician  |
| 11:00 - 12:10 | <u>Visit Irrigation scheme at Ban Nasaonang:</u><br>- Irrigation: Introduce system of the scheme and the WUA<br>- Paddy: Introduce paddy creation activities | - DAEC<br>- DAFO<br>- Irrigation technician<br>- Representatives from water use group and beneficiary family |
| 13:00         | Lunch at a restaurant in Sangthong District  |  |
| (Around14:00) | Travel back to Vientiane   |  |

### Annex 3: Tentative List of Participants

| # | Organization   | Number  | Remarks  |
|---|--|---|--|
| 1 | <b>LAOS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LNMC</li> <li>• Dept Water Resources (MoNRE)</li> <li>• Environment Protection Fund</li> <li>• Nam Ngum RBC or Nam Theun-Nam Kading RBC</li> <li>• Other relevant implementing agencies</li> <li>• PPI Nam Ton <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ CTA</li> <li>○ National Coordinator</li> <li>○ Rep. of DAEC (MAF)</li> <li>○ Representatives of Nam Ton project (PPI may suggest more)</li> </ul> </li> </ul> | 2<br>1<br>1<br>1<br>2<br>1<br>1<br>1<br>3<br><hr/> 13 | SG, Coordinator<br>DDG<br><br><br><br><br>Resource person<br>Presenter           |
| 2 | <b>CAMBODIA</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CNMC</li> <li>• MOWRAM</li> <li>• Pilot 4 Ps Basins</li> <li>• Siem Reap RBC?</li> <li>• Other relevant implementing agencies or academic and research institutions</li> </ul>  | 2<br>1<br>2<br>1<br>4<br><hr/> 10                     | Resource person/presenter (to be identified with support from CNMC)              |
| 3 | <b>THAILAND</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TNMC</li> <li>• MONRE (DWR)</li> <li>• Nam Poong RBC</li> <li>• Other relevant implementing agencies or academic and research institutions</li> </ul>   | 2<br>1<br>3<br>4<br><hr/> 10                          | Resource person/presenter (to be identified with support from TNMC)              |
| 4 | <b>VIET NAM</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VNMC</li> <li>• MONRE</li> <li>• Srepok River Basin Council (RBC)</li> <li>• Other relevant implementing agencies or academic and research institutions</li> </ul>  | 2<br>1<br>2<br>5<br><hr/> 10                          | Resource person/presenter (to be identified with support from VNMC)              |
| 5 | <b>MRCS</b>  | 7   | CEO, Env. Director, PD Director, Chief RB, Chief Env, Secretary, Admin Assistant |
| 6 | <b>DPs/IOs</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• KfW</li> <li>• GIZ</li> <li>• ADB</li> <li>• IFC</li> <li>• SDC</li> <li>• World Bank</li> </ul>   | 3<br>1<br>1<br>1<br>1<br>1<br><hr/> 7                 | Regional Manager, Director of KfW Lao office, Tech officer                       |
| 8 | <b>Private sector/Developers</b>   |   |  |

|    |  |  |  |
|----|--|--|--|
|    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nam Theun 2</li> <li>• Nam Theun Hinboun</li> <li>• Nam Ngiep 1</li> <li>• Mining companies?</li> </ul> | 1<br>1<br>1<br>1<br><hr style="width: 20px; margin: 0 auto;"/> 4 |  |
| 9  | <b>Academia</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NUoL</li> <li>• NAFRI</li> </ul>  | 1<br>1<br><hr style="width: 20px; margin: 0 auto;"/> 2           |  |
| 10 | <b>Facilitator/consultant</b>  | 1  |  |
|    | <b>Total</b>   | <b>65</b>  |  |