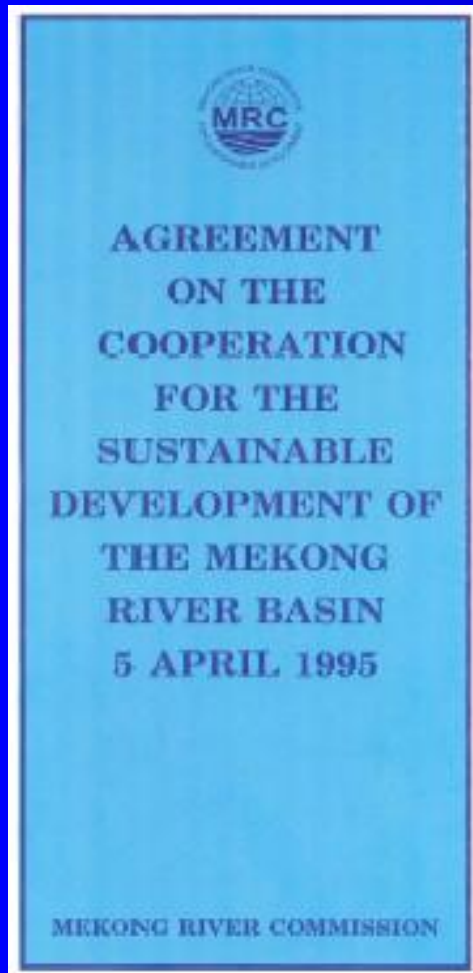




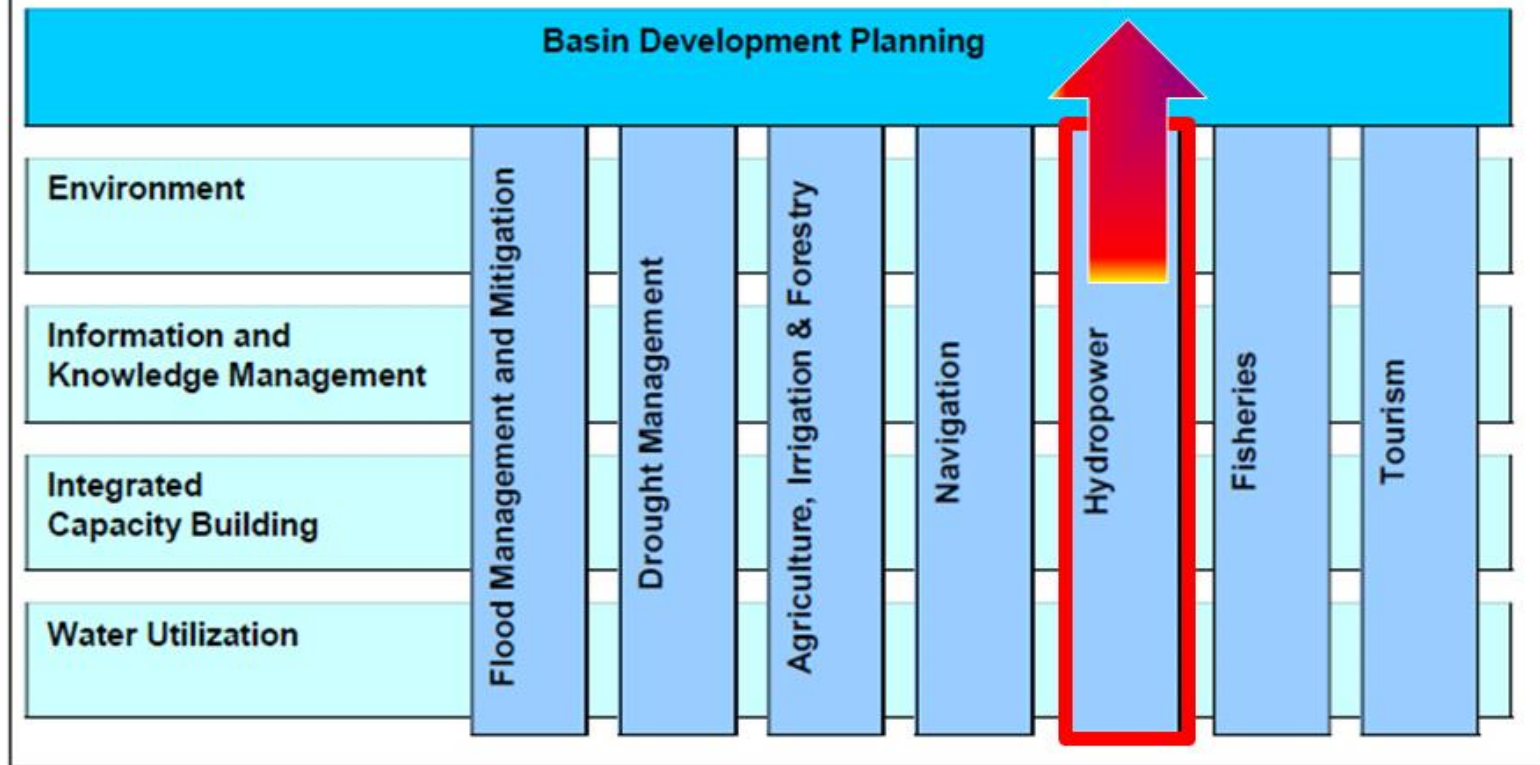
# I. 1995 Mekong Agreement



- **Advisory agreement**
- **Focus on basin-wide benefit-sharing**
- **Spirit of cooperation, joint planning and information sharing**
- **Based on rights, interests and responsibilities of riparian states for water utilization**

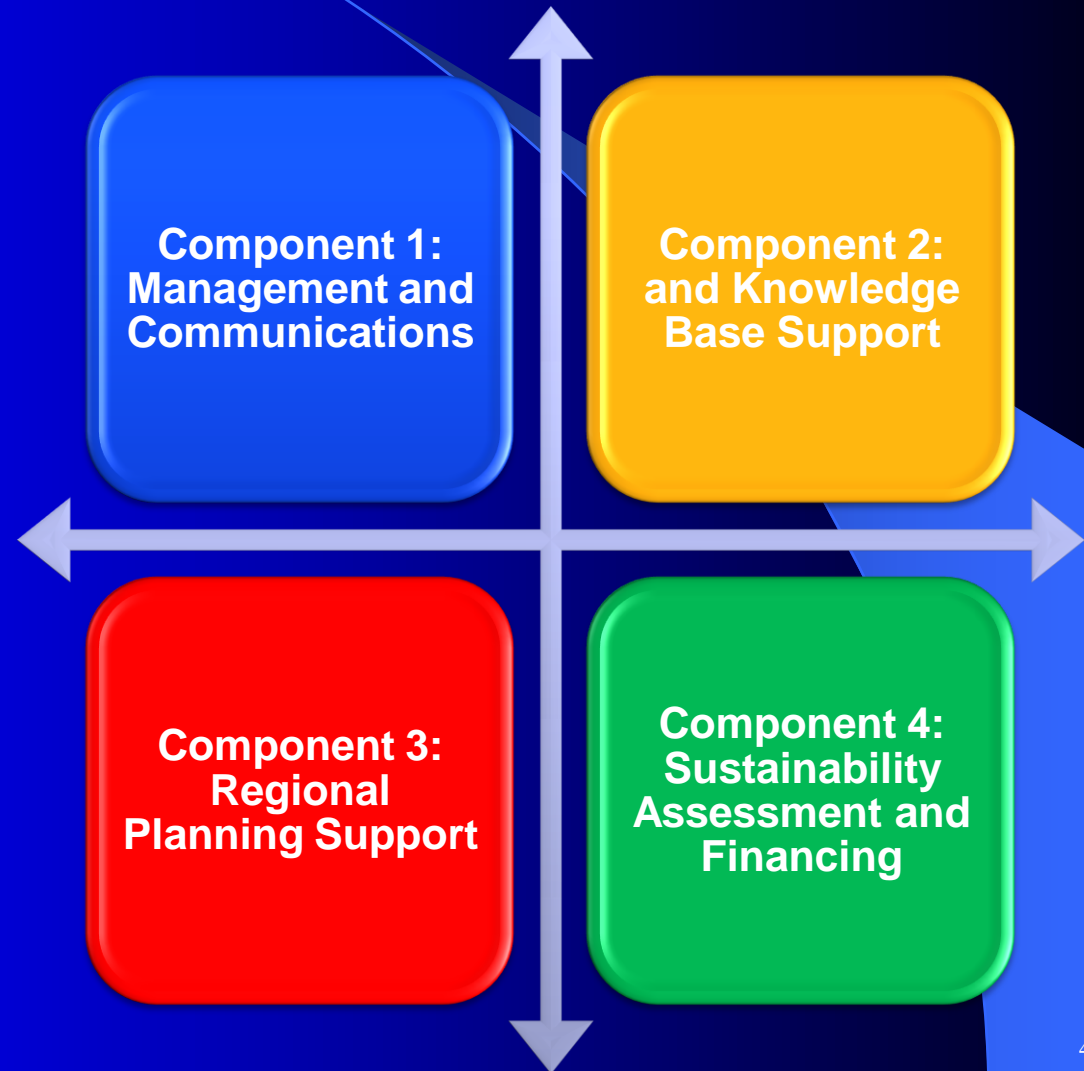
# Regional IWRM Support Programme

Supporting Regional Cooperation for Sustainable Development of  
Water and Related Resources in the Mekong River Basin



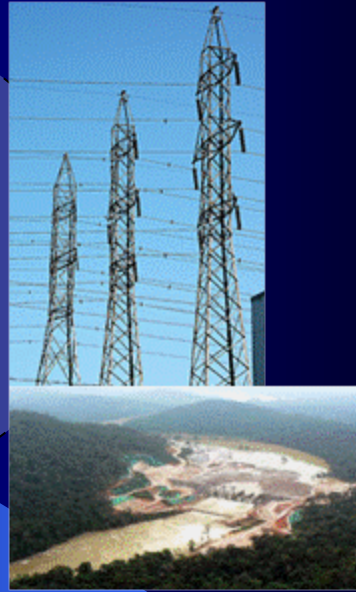
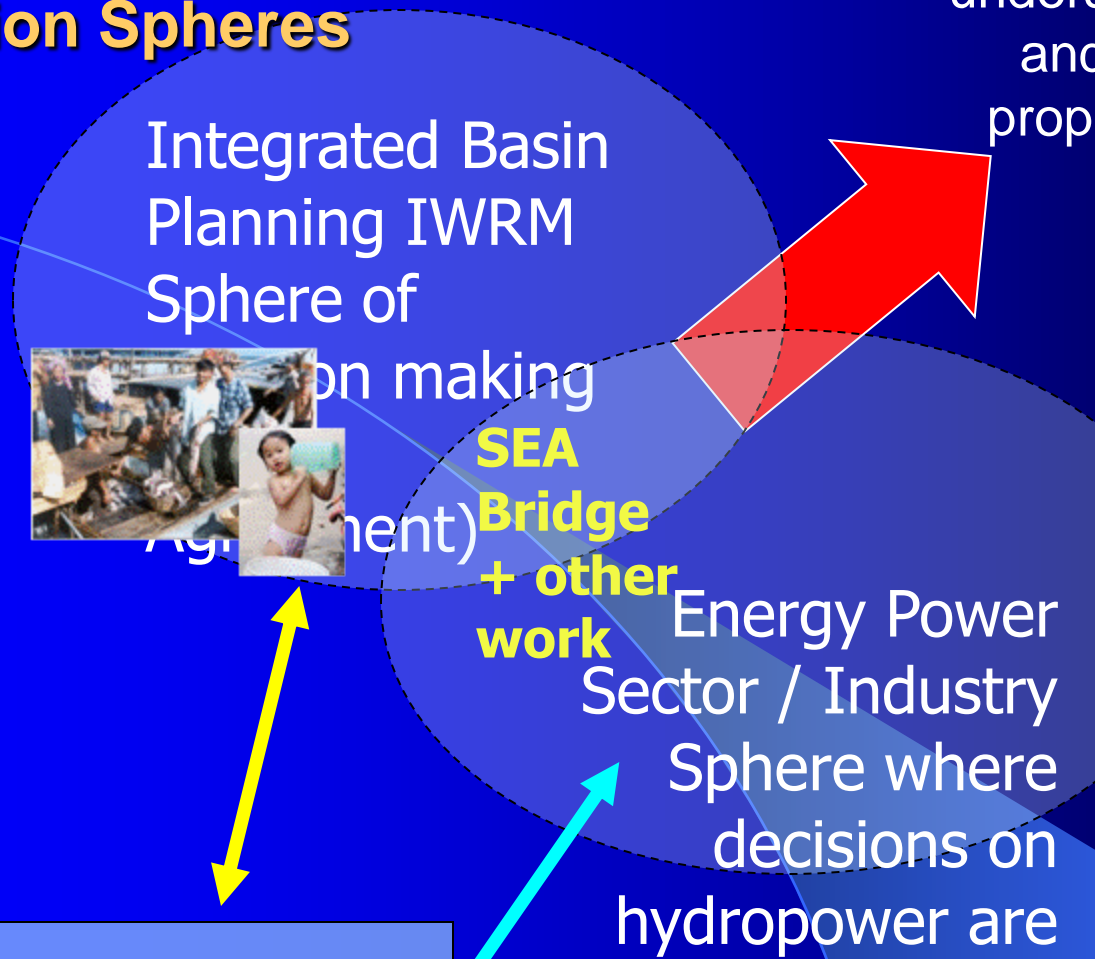
# Initiative on Sustainable Hydropower

- Cross-cutting initiative working with all MRC Programmes
- Focusing on Sustainability - balancing Social, Environmental and Economic considerations



# In Practice 2 Decision Spheres

To provide a broader understanding of the risks and opportunities of proposed 11 MS dams



**MRC**

**Programmes**

**es**

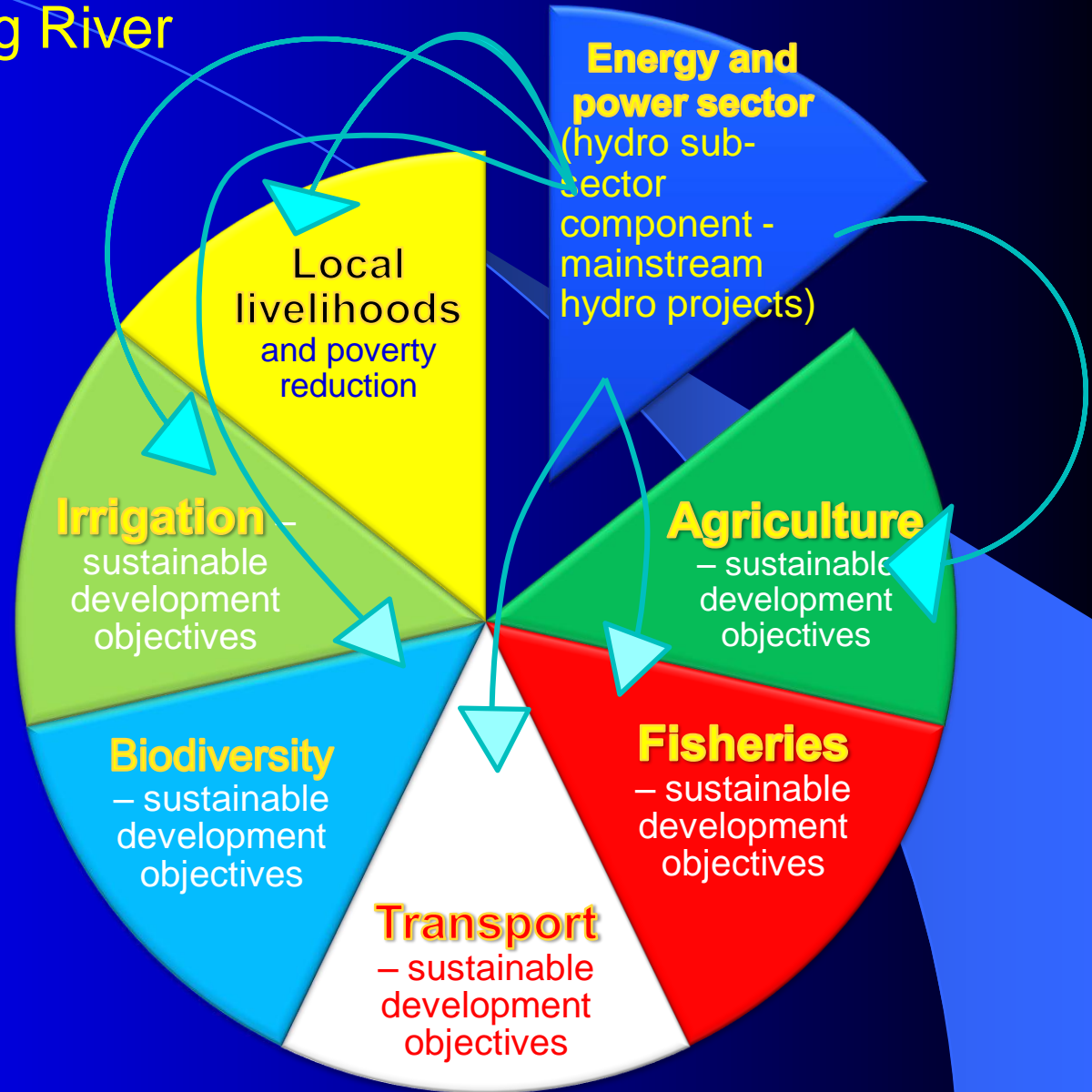
The SEA work helps bring Together the Two Decision Spheres IWRM & Power



# Basin development plan and role of SEA of hydropower on the mainstream Mekong River

## Functions of SEA:

1. Helps to integrate energy and power sector into the BDP
2. Assesses the effects of mainstream hydro projects on meeting the sustainable development trends / objectives of each sector
3. Provides framework for project –specific evaluation



# Article 1: Areas of cooperation

To cooperate in all fields of sustainable development, utilisation, management and conservation of the water and related resources of the Mekong River Basin ...

...including, but not limited to:

- irrigation
- hydro-power
- navigation
- flood control
- fisheries
- timber floating
- recreation and tourism...

## Article 2: Projects, Programmes and Planning

To promote, support, cooperate and coordinate in the development of the full potential of sustainable benefits to all riparian States and the prevention of wasteful use of Mekong River Basin waters... through the formulation of a Basin Development Plan



# Approved and Draft MRC Procedures

## **PDIES** (2001); Guidelines (2002)

Procedures for Data and Information Exchange and Sharing

## **PWUM** (2003); Guidelines (2006)

Procedures for Water Use Monitoring

## **PNPCA** (2003); Guidelines (2005)

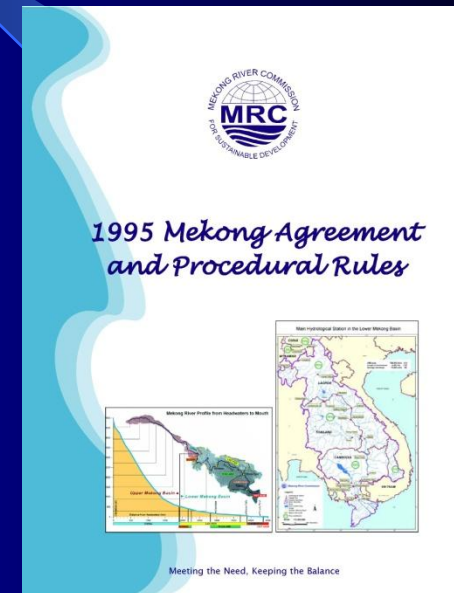
Procedures for Notification, Prior Consultation and Agreement

## **PMFM** (2006)

Procedures for Maintenance of Flows on the Mainstream

## **PWQ** (JC endorsed draft)

Procedures for Water Quality



# **Article 5 A and B: Reasonable and Equitable Utilization – PNPCA experience to date**

- Developments so far on tributaries
- 28 Notifications 1995 – 2008
- Initial information on mainstream dams by Lao PDR, Cambodia and Thailand

# PNPCA

## Main Elements of a Prior Consultation

Governing documents:

- (i) PNPCA (2003);
- (ii) Technical Guidelines on PNPCA (including forms) (2005)

State responsibility for process:

- NMCSs are submitting party

MRCS:

- Proactive assisting role to Joint Committee (G-PNPCA II.)
- Due diligence requirement before use (PNPCA 5.4.3.)

# PNPCA

## Prior Consultation Requirements

### Process Closure

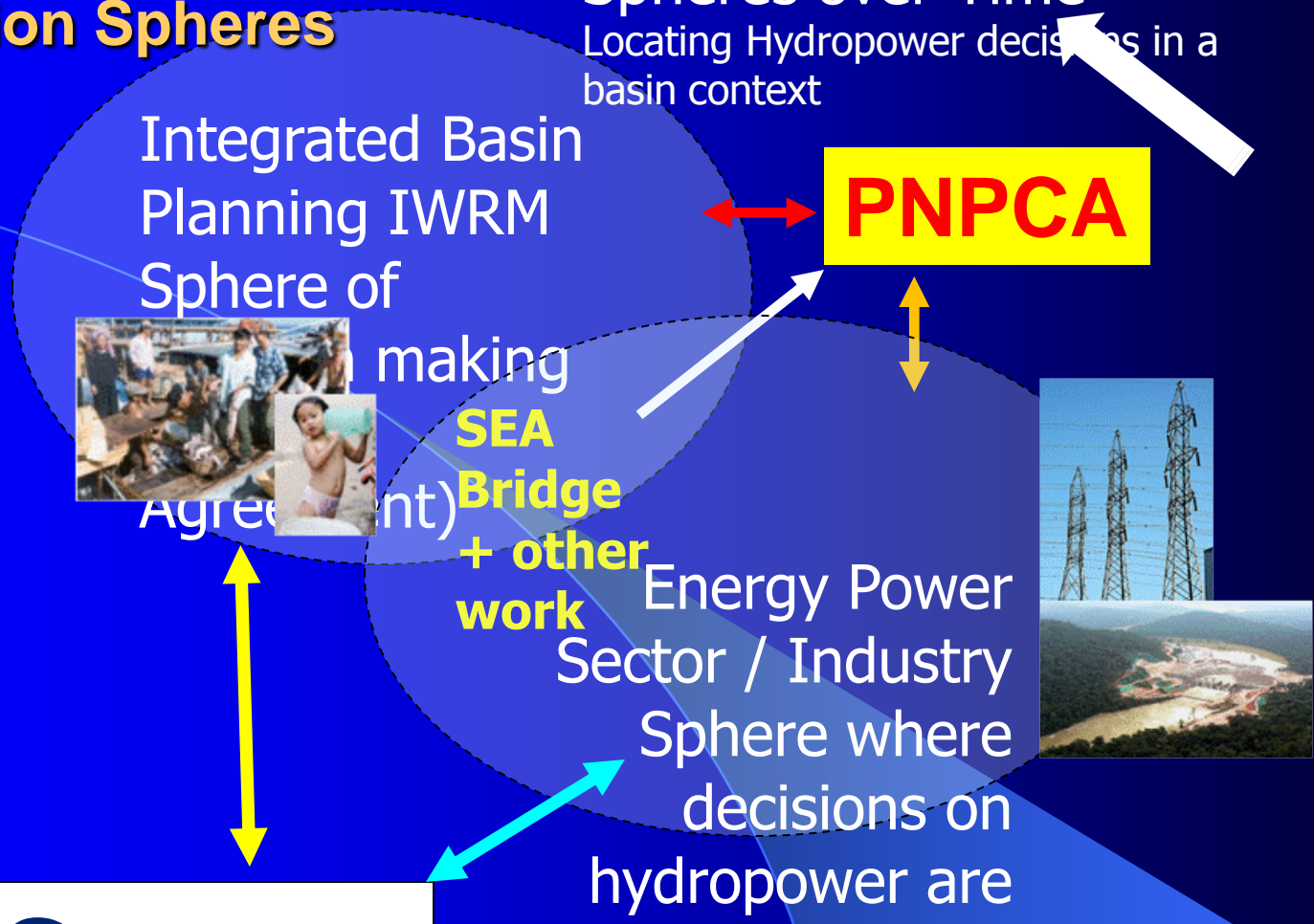
The Joint Committee shall:

- aim at arriving at an agreement and issue a decision containing agreed upon conditions that is recorded; and
- make a record of the use when it commences

(PNPCA 5.4.3.)

# In Practice 2 Decision Spheres

Progressively Merge  
Spheres over Time  
Locating Hydropower decisions in a  
basin context



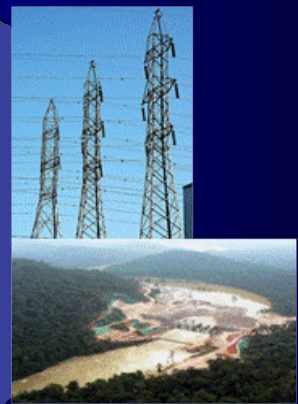
Integrated Basin  
Planning IWRM  
Sphere of  
Decision Making  
(Agreement)

**PNPCCA**



SEA  
Bridge  
+ other  
work

Energy Power  
Sector / Industry  
Sphere where  
decisions on  
hydropower are  
made



**MRC**  
Programmes

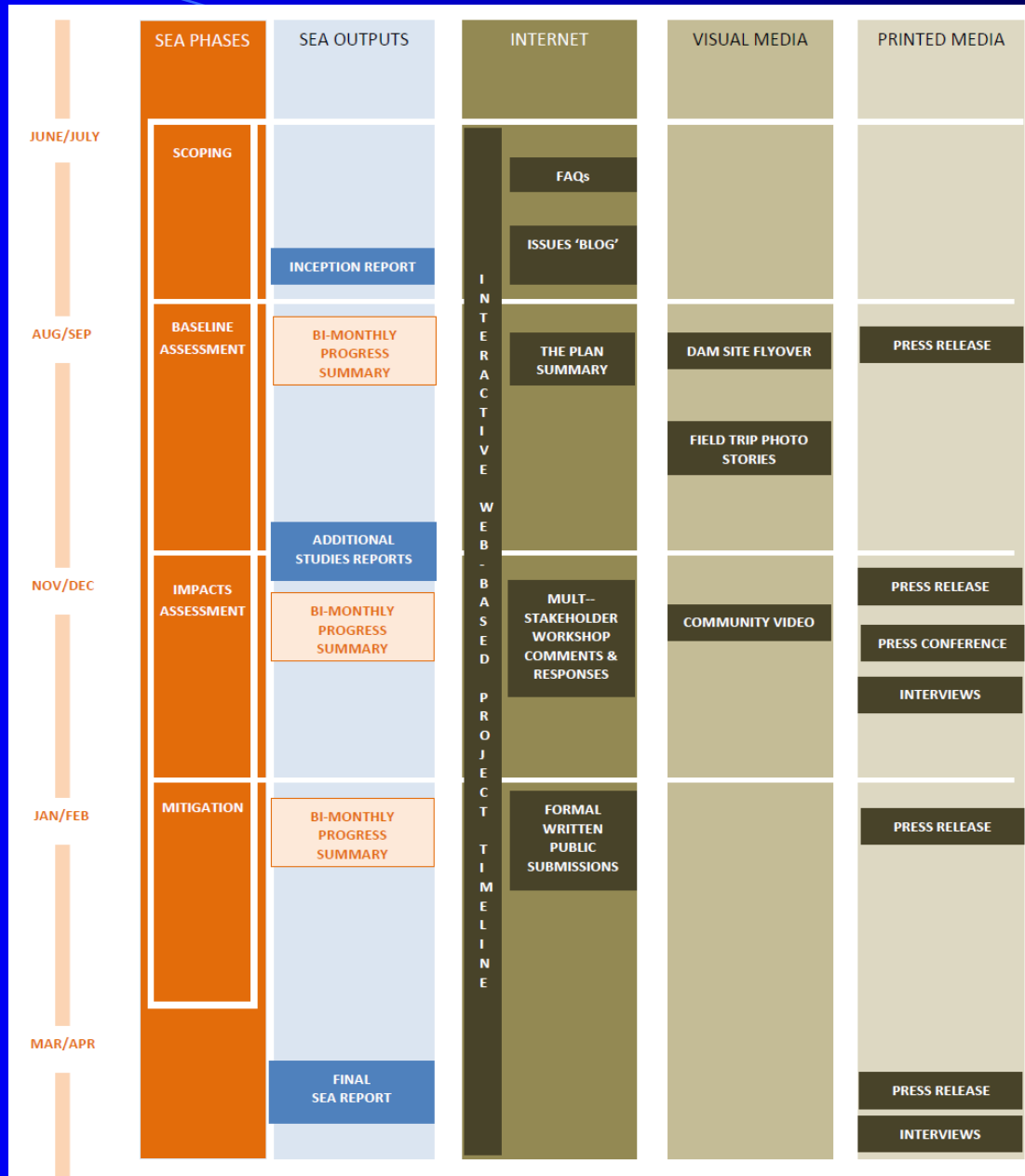
The SEA work helps bring  
Together the Two Decision Spheres  
IWRM & Power

es

# Communications tools







# MRC Website

## www.mrcmekong.org



**Mekong River Commission**  
For Sustainable Development

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**The MRC Initiative on Sustainable Hydropower (ISH)**

Since 2007, interest in the [potential for hydropower](#) development in the lower part of the basin has escalated. Many new proposals to develop hydropower schemes are being advanced by Mekong governments and the private sector, both on the tributaries; and more recently, a revival of interest on the mainstream, on the Lao, Lao-Thai and Cambodian reaches of the Mekong mainstream. [Click to find out more](#) about proposed hydropower developments

Hydropower brings with it several concerns regarding the potential for impact on the environment, fisheries and people's livelihoods. These concerns need to be balanced with the economic and poverty alleviation priorities of the MRC Member Countries. The MRC is working with Mekong governments to develop coordinated and integrated impact assessments, consistent and fair mitigation measures, and hydropower development strategies and policies.

The Initiative on Sustainable Hydropower (ISH) was formulated in Development in 2008 and endorsed by the MRC Joint Committee in March 2009. The Initiative is coordinated across many of MRC's programmes and includes a range of activities, for example:

- Studies on fish migration, the barrier effect of dams to fish migration and potential mitigation measures by the [Fisheries Programme](#)
- A collaborative venture with the Asian Development Bank and World Wildlife Fund for Nature to develop a hydropower sustainability assessment tool under the [Environment Programme](#)
- Designing specifications for the design of standard navigation locks with the [Navigation Programme](#)
- Providing a basin-wide integrated water resources management strategy within which individual project proposals can be assessed under the [Basin Development Plan](#)
- Capacity building within MRC Bodies, line-agencies and other stakeholder groups under [Integrated Capacity Building Programme](#), and
- Stepped-up [dialogue](#) with developers, line agencies and regulators to share multi-disciplinary data, applied research, analysis and other outputs that are available from all MRC Programmes ongoing basis.

**Facilitating dialogue to balance economic, social and environmental performance -**  
Central to the MRC's role in helping governments plan and strategize sustainable hydropower schemes is the need to [facilitate dialogue](#) on hydropower issues among the major stakeholder groups. [View >](#)

**The increasing interest in hydropower development in the Mekong Basin**  
There are several factors driving the increased interest in the potential for hydropower on the Mekong. Viability in the price of oil and gas and concerns over climate change have all intensified the focus on hydropower. [View >](#)

**Hydropower and the 1995 Mekong Agreement**  
The development of mainstream dams in the lower Mekong Basin, in particular, is perhaps the most important strategic decision the four countries of the UMG have faced since the signing of the 1995 Mekong Agreement on the cooperation for sustainable development of the Mekong basin. [View >](#)

**Understanding the sustainable development implications of mainstream Mekong dams - the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)**  
An immediate priority for the MRC is to assess the long-term implications of mainstream dam proposals and provide a broader understanding of the risks and opportunities. While the benefits of hydropower are potentially considerable for Mekong countries, the construction of one or more of the 17 hydropower schemes currently under consideration would have profound implications for the sustainable development of the basin. To identify and assess these implications the MRC recently launched a 14-month Strategic Environmental Assessment process. [View >](#)

**Support for implementation of Prior Notification, Prior Consultation Procedures**  
According to the 1995 Mekong Agreement, before Member Countries may initiate any large scale infrastructure development on the Mekong, they must notify and consult with other riparian states in the basin. This process is formalised in the [Procedures for Notification, Prior Consultation and Agreement \(PNPCA\)](#). The MRC supports the various MRC bodies and national line-agencies in implementing this process. [View >](#)

**Formulating the cross-cutting Initiative on Sustainable Hydropower**  
The MRC's [Initiative on Sustainable Hydropower](#) formally began a number of fast-track activities in 2008. Work to determine the final structure continued throughout 2008 involving national and regional multi-stakeholder consultations. [View >](#)

**MRC position on proposed mainstream hydropower dams:**  
Eleven hydropower dams are currently being studied by private sector developers for the mainstream of the Mekong. The 1995 Mekong Agreement requires that such projects are discussed extensively among all four countries prior to any decision being taken. That discussion, facilitated by MRC, will consider the full range of social, environmental and cross-sector development impacts within the Lower Mekong Basin. So far, none of the prospective developers have reached the stage of notification and prior consultation required under the Mekong Agreement. MRC has already carried out extensive studies on the consequences for fisheries and peoples livelihoods and this information is widely available. [See the summary report of an expert group meeting on dams and fisheries](#). MRC is undertaking a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the proposed mainstream dams to provide a broader understanding of the risks and opportunities of such development. Dialogue on these planned projects with governments, civil society and the private sector is being facilitated by MRC and all [comments](#) received will be considered.

[\[Top\]](#)

### Understanding the sustainable development implications of mainstream Mekong - the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

An immediate priority for the MRC is to assess the long-term implications of the mainstream [dam proposals](#) and provide better understanding of the risks and opportunities. While the benefits of hydropower are potentially considerable for Mekong countries, the construction of one or more of the 17 hydropower schemes currently under consideration could have profound implications for the sustainable development of the basin and affect the lives and livelihoods of millions of people in all four member countries of the MRC. To identify and assess these implications the MRC recently launched a 14-month Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) process of the mainstream Mekong dams under consideration.

The SEA seeks to identify the potential opportunities and risks as well as the contribution of hydropower to regional development. There will be many opportunities for various stakeholders to engage with and provide inputs to the SEA. The team conducting the assessment will engage with NGOs, civil society and community representatives, as well as work closely with the [Basin Development Plan's](#) stakeholder consultation process.

The SEA, which will report its findings in late 2010, will help to systematically assess and make recommendations on alternative mainstream Mekong hydropower development strategies, including the regional distribution of costs and benefits with respect to economic development, social equity and environmental protection and among different affected interests and sectors.

Particular emphasis is given to the importance of looking at the proposed dams as a group and the cumulative impact from an integrated basin-wide perspective through the [Basin Development Plan](#) scenarios and other methodologies.

[Click here to make submissions to the MRC regarding hydropower](#)

Alternatively you may also fax or post submissions via the details below:

#### Postal address:

Hydropower submission  
P.O. Box 6101,  
Vientiane 01000  
Lao PDR

Fax: + (856) 21 263 264

#### Who can make submissions?

Submissions can be made by individuals or organizations. The MRC welcomes submissions from all stakeholders including:

- Local, national and international NGOs and civil society organizations;
- Scientists, including fisheries, hydrology and ecology experts;
- Academics and researchers;
- University students studying a relevant field;
- Private sector developers;
- Development organizations or agencies;
- Hydropower oversight agencies;
- Representatives of development sectors affected by hydropower;
- Representatives or individuals of directly or indirectly affected communities; and
- Special interest groups.

#### Submission content

Your submission should pertain to one of the thematic areas under analysis by the team working for the MRC on the Strategic Environmental Assessment, which includes, but is not limited to:

- **Trans-boundary impacts:** The trans-boundary decision making process
- **Energy and power:** Energy security, supply and infrastructure, including possible alternative generation sources
- **Cumulative effects:** The potential cumulative effects of many projects, including the existing natural capacities to manage possible impacts
- **Ecology:** The river's ecology, and resource values and changes to the terrestrial ecology, land and water-use, including forest ecosystems
- **Fisheries impacts:** The potential impacts on aquatic biodiversity & fisheries
- **Climate change:** The possible interaction that climate change (mitigation, adaptation and vulnerability), will have on hydrology, water quality and sediment
- **Hub sector impacts:** Transport, navigation, tourism and other non fisheries related livelihoods including agriculture and irrigation
- **Poverty reduction:** Poverty, safety, health and nutrition, including the potential impact on protein intake
- **Development:** Migration, population growth and urban development, including the potential long-term effects of resettlement.
- **River Morphology:** Extent of the effect of the mainstream project on sediment flow and river morphology processes

Please indicate which of these above subjects is the main focus of your submission

[Make online submissions >](#)

#### Key documents

- [Background paper](#)
- [SEA of hydropower on mainstream Mekong](#)



Thank you