



# *Mekong River Commission*

**For Sustainable Development**

## **Procedures for Data and Information Exchange and Sharing**

P.O. Box 1112, Phnom Penh, Cambodia

Telephone: (855-23) 720 979

Facsimile: (855-23) 720 972

Email: [mrcs@mrcmekong.org](mailto:mrcs@mrcmekong.org) Website: [www.mrcmekong.org](http://www.mrcmekong.org)

*Souam Raikenta*

*Inang*

**MEKONG RIVER COMMISSION  
PROCEDURES FOR DATA AND INFORMATION EXCHANGE  
AND SHARING**

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## **PREAMBLE**

Recognizing the existing cooperation in data and information collection, exchange, sharing and management through the Mekong cooperation frameworks from 1957 to date;

Affirming the imperative for operationalizing an effective, reliable and accessible data and information system for the Mekong River Commission (MRC) and its member countries to implement the AGREEMENT ON THE COOPERATION FOR THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MEKONG RIVER BASIN, signed in Chiang Rai, Thailand on 5<sup>th</sup> April 1995, hereinafter referred to as the "Mekong Agreement";

Pursuant to the Council Resolution on the Water Utilization Programme of 18<sup>th</sup> October 1999, and the Decision of the 13<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Joint Committee of 8<sup>th</sup> March 2001,

***WE hereby approve the following procedures for data and information exchange and sharing:***

### **Definition of Key Terms**

For the purpose of the present Procedures, the following terms shall mean, unless otherwise stated:

**Data:** representations of facts, in a formalized manner, suitable for communication, interpretation or processing.

**Data and information exchange:** reciprocal transfer of data and information among the member countries.

**Data and information sharing:** provision of full access to data and information maintained in the MRC-IS to the member countries through MRCS.

**Information:** data interpreted, processed and refined, and then displayed by the competent authorities having ownership or possession thereof, which is required for exchange and sharing for the purpose of the implementation of the Mekong Agreement.

**Standards:** guidelines for data handling that are recognized as best practice in their relevant scientific or technical disciplines, with the objective to minimize the transaction costs of using data.

## 2. Objectives

The objectives of the undertakings under the present Procedures are to:

- Operationalize the data and information exchange among the four MRC member countries;
- Make available, upon request, basic data and information for public access as determined by the NMCs concerned; and
- Promote understanding and cooperation among the MRC member countries in a constructive and mutually beneficial manner to ensure the sustainable development of the Mekong River Basin.

## 3. Principles

In conformity with the provisions of the Mekong Agreement, the data and information exchange and sharing among the MRC member countries should be governed by the following principles:

- Subject to the laws and regulations in their respective countries, in particular concerning the national defense or security, and commercial-in-confidence and copy right protection, exchange, on a regular basis, data and information that are necessary to implement the Mekong Agreement;
- Data and information exchange and sharing, including the prioritization of information needs should be based on an efficient, equitable, reciprocal and cost effective manner.
- The data and information contained in the MRC-Information System that is maintained by MRCS (hereinafter referred to as "the MRC-IS"), should be relevant, timely and accurate, and exist in established usable formats for MRC and its member countries through an appropriate network and communication system.
- Any additional and unavailable data and information that is required from time to time to facilitate MRC activities, programs and projects will be agreed by the MRC Joint Committee, including procedures and cost sharing arrangements for collecting the minimum necessary data at the lowest feasible cost in a timely and equitable manner.

## 4. Data and Information Exchange and Sharing

Each NMC and MRCS shall cooperate with one another in the following:

- a. Supporting and promoting the implementation of the present Procedures;
- b. Providing data and information to the MRCS, as appropriate and where applicable subject to the following requirements:

- Major Groups/types of data and information required for implementation of the MRC program/activities and Mekong Agreement, inter alia:
    - Water Resources;
    - Topography;
    - Natural resources;
    - Agriculture;
    - Navigation and Transport;
    - Flood management and mitigation;
    - Infrastructure;
    - Urbanization/Industrialization;
    - Environment/Ecology;
    - Administrative boundaries;
    - Socio-economy; and
    - Tourism.
  - Standards to be determined by MRCS and approved by the Joint Committee, including but not limit to the format, standardization, classification, and acceptable level of data quality;
  - Delivery schedules; and
  - Modalities for exchange and sharing.
- c. Endeavouring to provide, on a case-by-case basis, historical data required for the implementation of the Mekong Agreement.

Cost for collecting additional data and information other than those required for the implementation of the MRC projects, programs, and not available shall be borne by any requesting party.

Channel of communication shall be made through MRCS.

## **5. Implementation Arrangements**

The MRC Joint Committee shall oversee the effective implementation of the present Procedures as required by the Mekong Agreement.

### **5.1 Custodianship of MRC-IS**

The MRC Secretariat shall be responsible, as custodian, for the following:

- A/ Obtaining and updating of required data and information;
- B/ Managing of this on behalf of the Mekong River Commission (MRC);
- C/ Ensuring proper access to, and maintenance and quality of the data and information that meet the required standards;
- D/ Providing a recognized contact point for the distribution, transfer and sharing of the data and information;
- E/ Estimating and collecting cost incurred according to Section 4; and
- F/ Preparing the MRC guidelines on custodianship and management to be adopted by the MRC Joint Committee.

The obligations and responsibilities of users, on the use of the data and information shall be elaborated in the MRC guidelines on custodianship and management of the MRC-IS.


## 5.2 Reporting

Report will be made annually by the MRCS to the MRC Joint Committee and Council respectively as to the overall effectiveness of the present Procedures, the status of the MRC-IS and the suitability of the technical guidelines and standards for ensuring the protection and integrity of the data, information and systems and its accessibility and quality, as well as the remedial and rectifying measures taken, and recommendations for further guidance and direction, including modification and amendments of the Procedures and related guidelines, if any.

## 6. Entry into Force


The present Procedures shall take effect among the member countries on the date of the signature by the MRC Council Members.

Adopted by the Council on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2001 at its Eighth Meeting in Bangkok, Thailand.



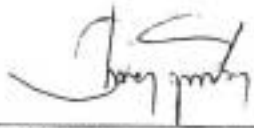
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MRC Council Member for the Kingdom of Cambodia




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MRC Council Member for the Lao People's Democratic Republic



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MRC Council Member for the Kingdom of Thailand



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for MRC Council Member for the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam