IWT and sustainability: a holistic approach

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1. Introduction to the Mekong River Commission and the Mekong Basin
MRC’s CHALLENGE:
To find the optimal balance

The population in the Basin is growing rapidly, at 2% per year.

It will increase from 73 million at present to 120 million in 2025.
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2. MRC Strategic Plan and Integrated Water Resources Management
Role of the Mekong River Commission

According to the 1995 Agreement, MRC’s role is to promote

“Cooperation in all fields of sustainable development, utilisation, management and conservation of water and related resources of the Basin.”
The MRC Strategic Plan 2011-2015 is introducing an alternative approach to the work by MRC by implementing Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) approaches in national water and related sector frameworks and development programmes for sustainable development.
Mekong Programme

Basin Development Planning

- Environment Management
- Information and knowledge management
- Integrated Capacity Building
- Climate Change Adaptation Initiative
- Flood management
- Drought management
- Irrig. Agr. and Forestry
- Hydropower
- Fisheries
- Tourism
- Navigation
MRC AGREEMENT

Article 9: Freedom of Navigation
DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE OF THE NAVIGATION PROGRAMME
To assist in developing sustainable, effective and safe waterborne transport in a sustainable and protective manner for the waterway environment

To increase the international trade opportunities for the mutual benefit of the Member Countries
Most of the European and US River Commissions for Navigation can now focus on applying technological innovations, improving e-logistics and modernising fleet.

In the Mekong Basin we first have to raise the standards and start harmonizing standards, rules and regulations and ensure waterborne development grows in a sustainable manner.
Even though MRC has assisted, and still is assisting cross-border river transportation projects, such as
Establish the Navigation Agreement between Cambodia and Viet Nam (2009)

- Install buoys and beacons
- Prepared the Hydrographic Atlas of the whole river
- Constructed Ferries and Landings
- Harmonise standards and systems
The Navigation Programme will also focus on other aspects which may no longer be of relevance in developed regions but which are in the Mekong Basin.

We therefore should look much further than only navigation improvements for economic development.
LIVING WITH THE MEKONG

Thousands of people rely on the river for their day to day travel as well as a source of fish and other important contributions to their livelihoods.
accessibility to schools and hospitals
Fish are crucial for nutrition and food security. They provide Cambodian people with 80% of their animal protein. To access fish, people need boats.
Accessibility during floods
In some cases even the most basic infrastructure is missing
Important Habitats
One of the most important projects is on the Sustainable Management of the Carriage, Handling and Storage of Dangerous Goods.
When conducting the Risk Assessment for river transportation of Dangerous Goods we looked at all aspects of the transport chain.
Fire and explosion hazards - spillages
4. Conclusions
There is indeed potential for active involvement in Global Green Growth through river transport in the Mekong Basin.

There are however many aspects in Mekong IWT – very specific and unique to the region - that deserve priority as well.

MRC stands ready to work towards an intensification of cooperation between the river navigation authorities and the setting up of an informal global network.
Thank you for your attention,