Ministry of Science and ICT

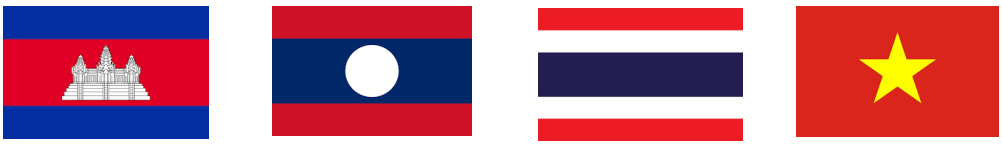
MEKONG RIVER COMMISSION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT MRC

United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation

STEPI SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY POLICY INSTITUTE

MEKONG INSTITUTE

Triangular Cooperation Project on Sustainable Development in the Lower Mekong Basin based on the Water-Energy-Food (WEF) Nexus [RoK-UNOSSC Facility Phase 3]



2021/2022 ANNUAL REPORT

P-LINK

People's **L**ivelihoods **I**nitiative
through water-energy-food **N**exus
in the ME**K**ONG Region

CONTENTS

Annexes

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In September 2021, the Ministry of Science and ICT (MSIT) of the Republic of Korea (RoK), the Mekong River Commission (MRC), and the UN Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC) launched a new project entitled, the "Triangular Cooperation on Sustainable Development in the Lower Mekong Basin based on the Water-Energy-Food (WEF) Nexus" ["RoK-UNOSSC Facility Phase 3"; Project ID:127005]. In line with Outcome 3 of *UNOSSC Strategic Framework 2022-2025*[1] and *MRC Basin Development Strategy (BDS) 2021-2030*, the project made concerted efforts to analyse development priorities of the Lower Mekong Basin (LMB) countries in supporting the livelihood of riparian communities, especially in contexts where appropriate technologies and innovations could be accessed to address the challenges faced by the communities.

During the first 16 months of project implementation (2021 and 2022), the project developed knowledge products, provided advisory services, and facilitated consultations with the four participating countries (Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand and Viet Nam) at the regional, national and local levels. These consultations and field visits to proposed national pilot sites guided the project stakeholders to better visualize and understand ongoing challenges related to access to water, energy and food faced by local communities that often extend to other socio-economic, environmental and health issues. While the project observed some common issues faced by the four Lower Mekong Basin (LMB) countries, each locality has its specific pressing challenges caused by its geographic and socio-economic situation. These exchanges served as critical processes to match the local needs and expectations with feasible solutions that could be offered by the project based on the principles of South-South and triangular cooperation (SS & TrC): that are, demand-driven, national ownership, mutual accountability and transparency and multi-stakeholder engagement.

The project also offered a platform for various development cooperation stakeholders to discuss integrated management of water, energy and food through the Water-Energy-Food (WEF) Nexus approach that encouraged sharing of knowledge and experiences.

The project had to overcome unexpected internal and external challenges including the prolonged COVID-19 pandemic and institutional changes/transitions of involved entities. Regardless, key deliverables during this timeframe were achieved.

On the way forward, the report addresses key issues and recommendations for effective project management and deliverables in 2023 and onward.

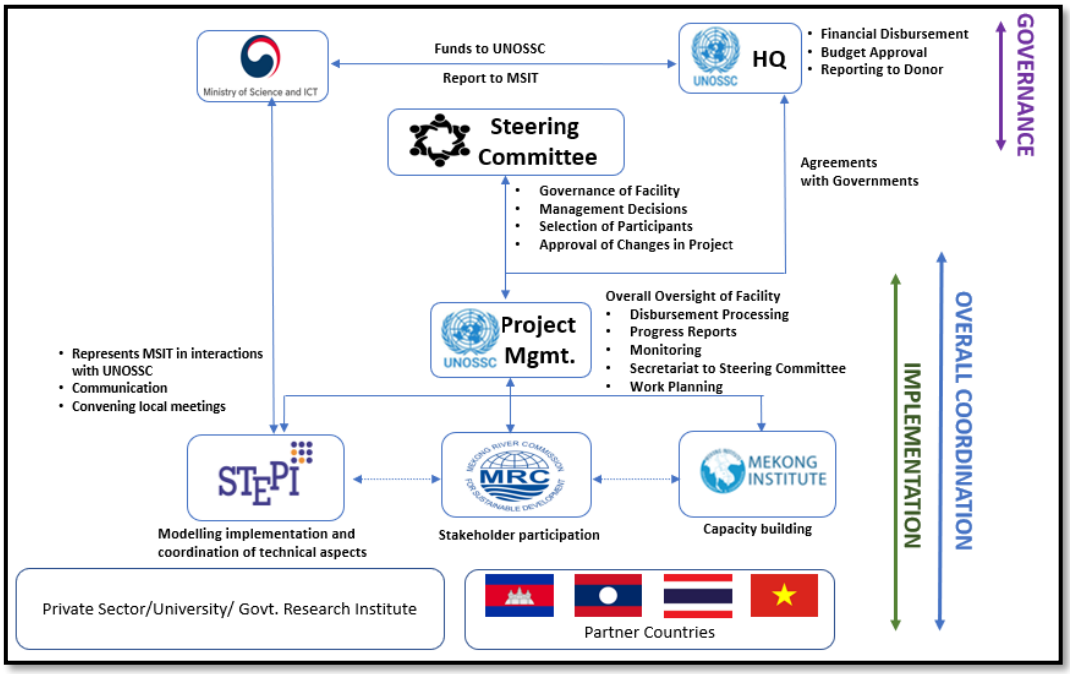
[1] Outcome 3: Developing countries are enabled to implement 2030 Agenda through harnessing South-South and triangular knowledge exchange, capacity building and technology transfer facilitation

CONTEXT

The "RoK-UNOSSC Facility Phase 3" is intended to strengthen access to water, food and energy for vulnerable communities living in the Lower Mekong Basin (Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand, and Viet Nam) through strengthening development approaches and management in these sectors. It takes integrative and multi-sectoral approaches in the application of technologies and innovations on water, energy and food to improve the livelihoods of the people based on SS & TrC modalities. With such a vision and objectives, the project is referred to as the P-LINK (People's Livelihoods Initiative through water-energy-food Nexus in the Mekong Region).

The 5-year project with a budget of USD 4 million, is supported by the Ministry of Science and ICT (MSIT) of the Republic of Korea (RoK), and the UNOSSC leads the project implementation in partnership with other institutions including the Mekong River Commission Secretariat (MRCS), Mekong Institute (MI) and the Science and Technology Policy Institute (STEPI) of the RoK. In its work, STEPI will also enlist technical expertise of other RoK institutions. Figure 1 shows the implementation structure for the project.

Figure 1: Implementing Structure

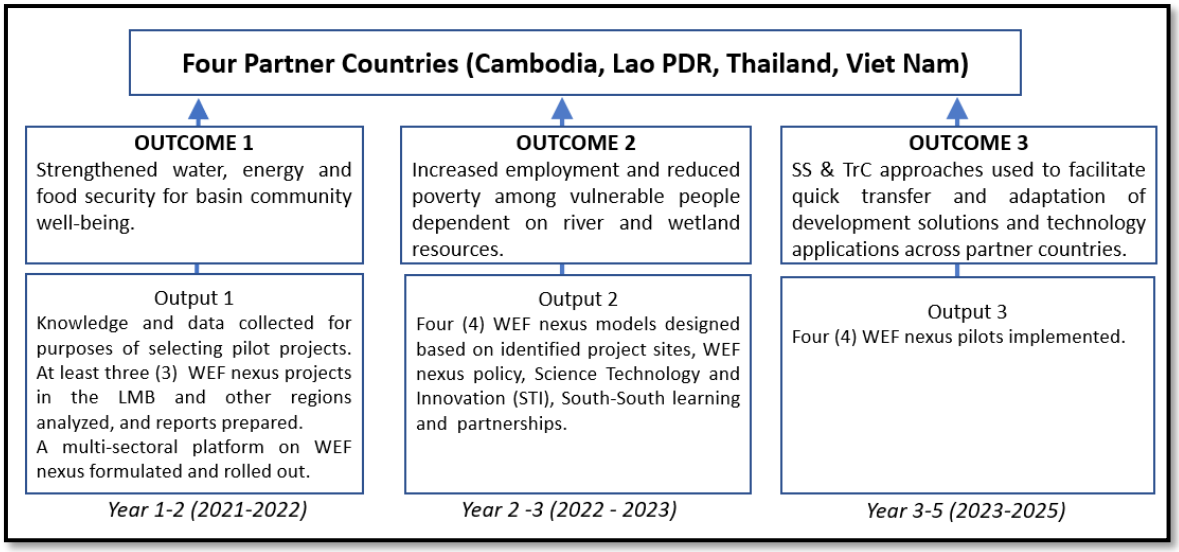


The project's outcomes and outputs, to be delivered by 2025, are shown in Figure 2. They are partly derived from MRC's *BDS 2021-2030*, taking a demand-driven approach. The project aims to strengthen water, food and energy for vulnerable communities living in the Lower Mekong River Basin. This will be achieved through the following outcomes:

1. Strengthened access to water, energy and food security for basin community well-being
2. Increased employment and reduced poverty among vulnerable people dependent on river and wetland resources
3. SS & TrC approaches to facilitate quick transfer and adaptation of development solutions and technology applications conducive for supporting development solutions against gender related and other disadvantaged groups across participating countries.

The core building blocks of the project include 1) Knowledge generation, 2) Multi-Sectoral Platform, 3) Advisory Services, 4) Technology Identification, 5) Capacity Building and 6) SS & TrC.

Figure 2: P-LINK Results Framework



Specific activities for 2021 and 2022 include the following:

1. Implement recommendations from the Project Appraisal Committee (PAC), First Steering Committee Meeting (finetune results framework and indicators and roll out multi-sectoral platform/MSP)
2. Develop at least three knowledge products (case studies) on WEF nexus related initiatives in the LMB and other regions capturing achievements and lessons learnt to be incorporated into P-LINK
3. Develop a study explaining the linkages of the WEF Nexus approach with COVID-19 recovery, build back better and SSC
4. Convene regional and national consultations with partner countries to learn the local needs and challenges and identify technologies needed to solve the problems.
5. Identify pilot sites in each country
6. Explore collaborative opportunities with other initiatives and networks related to water, energy and food
7. Increase project visibility and advocacy
8. Incorporate lessons learnt from the RoK-UNOSSC Facility (Phase 2) throughout implementation

PROGRESS REPORT FOR 2021 AND 2022

2021 Activities

On 9 June 2021, a Project Appraisal Committee (PAC) Meeting was convened prior to the approval of the project. The PAC recommended approval of the project document and inclusion of pertinent comments on the adjustments of the project indicators and clarification of the role of Thailand in project implementation.

In line with the recommendations of PAC, the project was officially approved on 15 September 2021. During the first two quarters (September – December 2021 and January – March 2022), the Project Management (UNOSSC) mainly carried out operational and managerial activities such as contractual arrangements with implementing parties (MI, MRCS and STEPI), and hiring of a Project Manager.

Table 1- Pre-implementation activities by UNOSSC

Item	Description	Month Task Completed
1	LOA with STEPI	November 2021
2	LOA with Mekong River Commission Secretariat	November 2021
3	Hiring of Project Manager	March 2022
4	LOA with Mekong Institute	August 2022

2022 Activities

Table 2 captures key activities carried out in 2022.

Table 2: Snapshot of major activities in 2022

No	Date	Event	Remarks
1	19 Apr	Internal Workshop on Water-Energy-Food (WEF) Nexus Case Study Design and Multi-Stakeholder Platform Conceptualization	Held between UNOSSC, STEPI, MRCS and MI. Other institutions were invited to share their experiences; e.g. Water and Energy for Food (WE4F) and Urban Nexus.
2	4 May	Official Kick-off Event	UNOSSC, MSIT and Implementing Parties marked the official commencement of implementation. (News brief)
3	4 May	First Steering Committee Meeting	Project Mgmt. presented outstanding issues and proposed annual work plan to Steering Committee Members. Refer to *Annex 1*.
4	17-18 Jun	Thailand: Visit to project site in Bung Khla under its national project, "Strengthening Civil Society Network in Eight Provinces along the Mekong River"	Ahead of first stakeholder consultation, the visit to the Thai Mekong projects was part of the preparatory process.
5	28 Jun	First Regional First Stakeholder Consultative Forum	See *Annex 2* for results of consultation. Preliminary steps taken to identify national project sites.
6	13 Sept	Global South-South Development (GSSD) Expo 2022 Side Event: The Role of Science and Technology in the Water-Energy-Food (WEF) Nexus	Requested by STEPI on behalf of the Govt. of Korea, the event served purpose of consultation with other stakeholders outside the project framework and to increase visibility.
7	22-23 Sept	Viet Nam: First National Consultative Forum and Visit to proposed pilot site	*Annex 3*: Progress made in site identification within context of the needs of proposed pilot areas.
8	20-21 Oct	Cambodia: First National Consultative Forum and Visit to proposed pilot site	*Annex 4*: Progress made in site identification within context of the needs of proposed pilot areas.
9	25-26 Oct	Lao PDR: First National Consultative Forum and Visit to proposed pilot site	*Annex 5*: Progress made in site identification within context of the needs of proposed pilot areas.

Main Adjustments to Project Implementation

The Steering Committee Meeting followed the Official Project Kick-off event on 4 May 2022. During the meeting, the Steering Committee endorsed changes to the Output 1. Key revisions were as follows:

1. Changed the number of WEF Nexus cases to be compiled by STEPI from 5 to 3 because much groundwork had been covered in exchanges with other projects and that in the region, a lack of successful implementation rather than dearth of knowledge had to be addressed.
2. Allocation of resources to MI to provide advisory services (including the formulation of MSP) and produce a study on the interlinkages driven by South-South and triangular cooperation for focus on WEF Nexus, Build Back Better and Covid-19 recovery; these are current priorities of Mekong countries.

Table 3: Revised Deliverables under Output 1

Output 1: Five (5) WEF Nexus projects in the Lower Mekong Basin and other regions analyzed and reports prepared (as per the Project Document)			
No	Deliverables	Focal Point	Remarks, if any
1	Three (3) WEF Nexus projects analysed and case studies completed	STEPI	Reduced from 5 to 3 cases Rationale: Consensus was that there was no need to document WEF theory/methodology and framework but rather to focus on formulating a strategy and platform to connect knowledge development with capacity building, through a multi-sectoral WEF platform formulation.
2	A study on the interlinkages driven by SS & TrC for focus on WEF Nexus, Build Back Better and Covid-19 recovery	MI	The rationale was to implement the project in the changed environment of countries impacted by COVID-19.
3	Partner Consultative Meetings	MRCS, UNOSSC	Convened 1 regional and 3 national forums: *Regional: June 25 *Viet Nam: September 23-23 *Cambodia: October 20-21 *Lao PDR: October 25-26 *Thailand: 26 January 2023 (postponed from Dec 2022)
4	Multi-Sectoral WEF platform *Focus on formulating a strategy and platform to connect knowledge development with capacity building. Such collaboration will pave the way to implementing a demand-driven initiative and synergy between Output 2 (modelling) and Output 3 (pilots).	MI	Debate emanated on the implications of creating a Multi-Sectoral Platform including cost and differentiation with stakeholder consultative meetings.
5	Selection of national pilot sites - Partner countries' demand to match with technical solutions	NMCs, MRCS, STEPI, MI, UNOSSC	The National Mekong Committees needed to reach out to the multi-stakeholders in their respective countries and enlist support of local authorities to implement the project.
6	Finetune project indicators	NMCs, MRCS, STEPI, MI, UNOSSC	This, as agreed by the Steering Committee, was contingent on identification of pilot sites, challenges to be addressed and demographic structure of partner communities.

In line with the revisions in the Output 1, the project consulted with national and local stakeholders in the four partner countries. Throughout consultations, some partner countries pointed out that limited coordination and cooperation on transboundary water resource development and management due to a lack of a transboundary cooperation mechanisms (deficient sharing of information and data on flows downstream, flood forecasting, flood control, and warning mechanisms) Had to be addressed in project implementation.

The project developed a proposed pilot selection kit (Annex 2) to guide the National Mekong Committee (NMCs) and national/local stakeholders in identifying site of national pilots and required technical solutions and capacities in the respective communities. This guide was first presented at the regional stakeholder forum and then circulated at each of the national stakeholder forums.

Proposed locality for pilots and their situation in Cambodia, Lao PDR and Viet Nam are captured in Table 4. Ultimately, the technical solutions should help increase community income and enhance their livelihoods.

Table 4: Proposed pilot sites, challenges and possible solutions

Country	Proposed Pilot Site	Challenges	Possible Solutions
Cambodia[2]	Sdao Commune, Sesan District, Stung Treung Province *Northern part *1,900 ppl *farming (80~90%) *factory workers (10%)	Water issue: Flooding, drought and limited access to clean water Food issue: Limited irrigation for the rice fields Energy issue: Limited access to electric power; deforestation → lack of wood Others: Climate Change: Extreme weather conditions → frequent flash floods	1) Provide water for rice paddy fields and increase agricultural production. 2) Provide technical solutions to increased food production, higher crop yields and resistant/adaptable crops to the adverse conditions Technology & Innovative solutions would include: *innovative technologies for clean water supply and pumping system powered by renewable energy, and training for agricultural production and marketing as follows: • Water pumping, purifying, storing, and distributing system • Solar power system working with the water system • Knowledge to enhance the Agricultural productivity and marketing

[2] *Challenges identified during the first national consultative forum and field visit to proposed pilot site. Solutions were proposed by STEPI after the consultations and shared with Cambodia National Mekong Committee Secretariat in writing.*

Lao PDR[3]	Mahaxay District, Khammouane Province (XeBangfai Basin) *Central part *~740 ppl * rice cultivation (core income)	Water issue: Severe flooding during the rainy season and limited access to drinking water Food issue: Limited irrigation system and severe flooding disrupting crop production. Energy issue: Energy available through the national grid, however limited access due to low-income level of some members of the population. Others: These are seasonal migrant communities, the impact of changing climate, drought, flooding entails their spending more time away from their homes and food production.	Reduce the impact of flooding and increase crop yields to enhance community incomes, health well-being. The possible solution is access to innovative technologies for real-time flood monitoring and early warning to prevent loss of human lives and livestock, damage to property, and destruction of crops as below: Data and analysis system • Remote sensing techniques to predict flood • System to automatically monitor the water level and set off an alarm if the level is too high • Knowledge to enhance productivity & marketing of agricultural products
Viet Nam[4] *specific site to be determined by a follow-up consultation in February 2023*	1. Bình Đại District, Ben Tre Province *Southern part	Water issue: Shortage in dry season Sea level rise: sea water intrusion Food issue: communities have had to shift from rice cultivation to shrimp farming. Energy issue: To develop wind power	Provide clean water (or demonstrate desalination technologies), enhance the shrimp yields, increase incomes for shrimp farmers (explore role of shrimp private sector) The possible solution will be innovative technologies for real-time monitoring and early warning to prevent saltwater intrusion

[3] *Challenges identified during the first national consultative forum and field visit to proposed pilot site. Solutions were proposed by STEPI after the consultations and shared with Lao National Mekong Committee Secretariat in writing.*

[4] *Challenges identified during the first national consultative forum and field visit to proposed pilot site. Solutions were proposed by STEPI after the consultations and shared with Viet Nam National Mekong Committee Secretariat in writing. STEPI suggests that Binh Dai would be a more appropriate site because 1) it would be possible to provide digital and ICT solutions to the challenges while the investment required for Ba Lai Sluice Gate, Ben Tre Province through sluice gates is beyond the resources of the project.*

			affecting shrimp cultivation such as • Remote sensing techniques to predict salinity intrusion • System to automatically monitor salinity and set off an alarm if the level is too high
	2. Ba Lai Sluice Gate, Ben Tre Province *Southern part	Water issue: ▪ Sea level rise, Saltwater intrusion, ▪ Lack of irrigation water in dry season Food issue: agriculture/aquaculture productivity affected by excessive salinity Others: Income of local farmers affected	Sluice gates constructed.

In parallel, STEPI and Mekong Institute have been working to finalize their assigned publications.

Table 5 – Status of other 2021/2022 Outputs

IP	Type	Description	Completion date	Remarks
MI	Knowledge Products	Paper entitled, "Sustainable Development in the Lower Mekong Basin: Building Forward Better toward COVID-19 Recovery with Water-Energy-Food (WEF) Nexus Approach through South-South and Triangular Cooperation"	2022 Q4	The study captures the benefits of the WEF Nexus strengthens not only the P-LINK activities but broadly to demonstrate how it strengthens recovery from COVID 19 recovery/build back better, and application of SS & TrC. *The knowledge product will be discussed at the next Regional Stakeholder Forum*
STEPI		Preparation of 3 case studies	2022 Q4	The study will be consolidated into one knowledge product by end of February. The case study presents key lessons learnt from other WEF Nexus projects. *The knowledge product will be discussed at the next Regional Stakeholder Forum*
MI led with other IPs	Advisory Services/ Networking	Roll out of the Multi-Sectoral WEF Platform		Regional Stakeholder Forum will serve as the MSP
All	Results Framework	Finetune project indicators	2022 Q4	Pending

Project Visibility and Advocacy

On the sidelines of the Global South-South Development Expo (GSSD) 2022, the project[5] organized a side event under the theme of "The Role of Science and Technology in the Water-Energy-Food (WEF) Nexus". The panel discussion focused on the sharing of water, energy and food development solutions for vulnerable communities and applications of appropriate technologies. It also served as a platform to introduce P-LINK, network with like-minded stakeholders and promote the added value of SS & TrC.

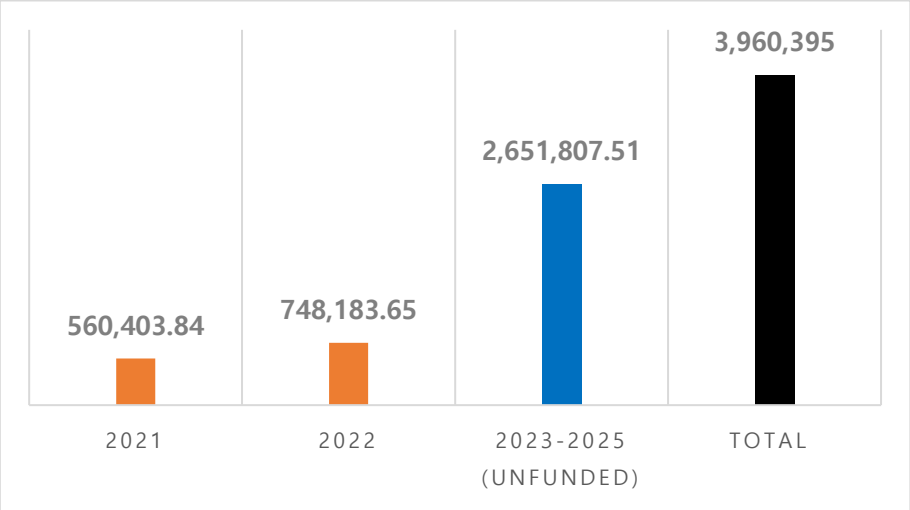
[5] The Mekong Institute (MI), the Office of the National Water Resources (ONWR), the Science and Technology Policy Institute (STEPI) and UN Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC)

The event focused on unpacking the issues related to WEF Nexus and Science, Technology and Innovation (STI), SS & TrC and vulnerable communities. The session also focused on development solutions for vulnerable communities through applications of appropriate technologies focused on water, energy, and food. Some of the cases showcased included 1. Integrated village development project in Sukabumi under the RoK-UNOSSC Facility (Phase 2), 2. RoK's efforts in integrated WEF nexus into policy/regulatory framework as well as technical application, 3. Thai Rice NAMA (Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Action) and 4. Water and Energy for Food (WE4F) Initiative.

FINANCIAL STATUS

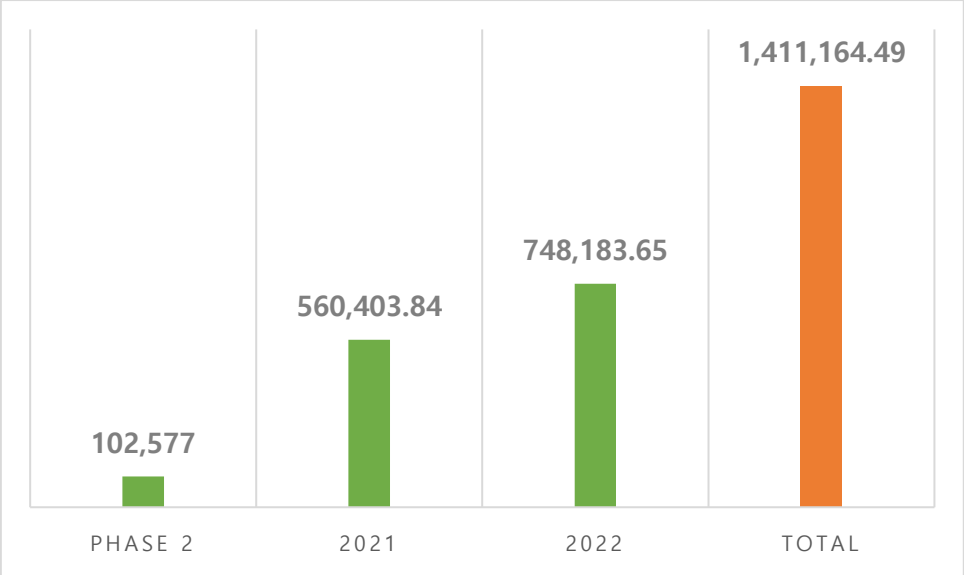
As of January 2023, the Government of the Republic of Korea (RoK) has contributed a total of USD 1,308,587.49. The Ministry of Science and ICT (MSIT) made two installments of USD 560,403.84 (KRW 655,000,000) in September 2021 and USD 748,183.65 (KRW 968,000,000) in June 2022. An additional USD 2,651,807.51 will be allocated to the project in the upcoming three years (2023-2025).

Figure 3: P-LINK Financial Status – Funds received and pending



The Steering Committee also agreed to receive USD 102,577 from Phase 2, the total P-LINK amount received is USD 1,411,164.49 in the reporting time frame (January 2023).

Figure 4: P-LINK Financial Status – Accumulated Project Resources



CHALLENGES AND ISSUES

CHALLENGES

1. **Refining the results framework**
   Refining the results framework had to be undertaken in the context of issues identified in the BDS, national development plans and issues to be addressed at reach pilot site and the socio-economic attributes of the pilot area. Furthermore, access to gender disaggregated data was assumed to be possible towards refining the data. These requisites have taken some time and are ongoing. Banking on the leadership of the National Mekong Committees has meant that the project supports the national processes towards these ends.

2. **Changes and delays in administrative and operational arrangements**
   It took some time for the project to adjust to the institutional financial and operational rules and regulation of the various implementing parties (MI, MRCS, STEPI). Letters of agreement had to be revised to meet the requirements of respective institutions.

   In the case of MRCS, the LoA was revised in September 2022 to reflect changes in the number of regional and national stakeholder forums as well as to allocate its Management and Administrative Fee (7%) agreed upon by MRCS and endorsed by the Steering Committee during the First Meeting.

   To comply with UNDP's financial protocol under the Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfer (HACT) framework, a micro-assessment of STEPI had to be conducted, followed by a revision of the LoA. The assessment process took more time than expected limiting STEPI to carry out planned activities committed in the project document.

   As financial allocations are disbursed each year from MSIT to UNOSSC, the LoAs signed with respective institutions have to be revised annually to include the new resources. The reason for this is that UNOSSC cannot commit (in LoA) to allocate to IP's resources that it does not yet have.

3. **UNOSSC restructuring and transition**
   The structural changes included the termination of presence of the UNOSSC Asia-Pacific Regional Office and transfer of the functions related to regional cooperation and partnerships to its headquarters in New York. During this transition, part of the Project Management Team relocated to New York and the Project Manager also had to execute additional operational and financial tasks without the presence of the Programme Associate who used to support the project as well. The changes resulted in a changed environment and context of the project. UNOSSC has proposed successor arrangement to enable the project to continue to operate smoothly.

4. **National Consultation Processes and different expectations of partner countries**
   UNOSSC tried to be flexible while adhering to project strategy and work plans but it faced scheduling challenges. Within the true spirit of South-South cooperation, the project has allowed a longer time for the National Consultative Meetings to be convened. The Thailand national consultative forum was to take place in December 2022. Yet, it had to be rescheduled to January 2023 at the request of Thai stakeholders.

   During the consultations, it became apparent that partner countries have varying levels of understanding and expectations of the project including the interpretation that the project budget will be split and shared directly among countries. In some cases, countries expected that the national pilots would establish a large-scale infrastructure in the identified locality.

   Thailand's role as a provider and possible beneficiary (relating to technology) was agreed to at the last Steering Committee. However, the details and working arrangements are still under discussion and hopefully should be resolved during the consultative meeting.

5. **Communication challenges**
   Language barriers and communication of the road map on this triangular cooperation project have been significant. The strength of the project in listening to and giving leadership to the MRCS, national and local government leaders is also a weakness in terms of agreed evaluation frameworks that govern UNOSSC work.

WAY FORWARD AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the wake of the issues raised the following are recommended for the implementation of the project in 2022.

1. **Successor arrangements to facilitate project Implementation**

   UNOSSC has proposed that the project management should remain in the region while working closely with and under supervision of the UNOSSC South-South Trust Fund and Programming Team. This will enhance the support to the project through its inclusion among other similar projects and this will facilitate interaction with other UNOSSC and UN entity offices. To provide institutional memory, the former UNOSSC Regional Coordinator for Asia-Pacific is proposed to join the Steering Committee as a member.

2. **Decision on Multi-Stakeholder Platform (MSP)**

   Initially proposed as a necessary component to help with guiding the implementation of the project, the MSP on closer reflection will have similar functions and role of the Regional Stakeholder consultative meeting. In addition, it will require resources to function and project management efforts to carry out these functions. It is therefore proposed that available resources be used to support the regional stakeholder consultations rather than create another structure. The framework, objectives and institutional support for the consultations are well established and tested. The creation of this body will dissipate the energies of Implementing Parties which should now be focused on achieving the project objectives.

3. **Reconciling local pilot activity and Regional Interventions.**

   The national consultative meetings and site visits have shown that there is a need for more communication between countries to enable better management of water resources, to avert unintended negative impacts, e.g. flooding or lack of water downstream. While this work was not initially envisaged in project design, it is inherent in the BDS as well as inclusion of national and regional plans. It is therefore recommended that some project resources be devoted to a study on how this challenge can be addressed.

4. **Visibility of the Project**

   A number of opportunities are available for showcasing the work that is being done under the project. Among these opportunities are the High-level Committee on South-South-South Cooperation 2023, The Fifth United Nations Conference on Least Developed Countries (LDC5), and the UN Day for South-South Cooperation 2023. Furthermore, if the project is indeed integrated into the South-South Trust Fund Umbrella, it will be jointly promoted under the framework for visibility of the portfolio of projects.

Ministry of Science and ICT

United Nations
Office for South-South Cooperation

First Steering Committee Meeting for Triangular Cooperation Project on Sustainable Development in the Lower Mekong River Basin based on the Water-Energy-Food (WEF) Nexus [RoK-UNOSSC Facility Phase 3] (Project ID: 00127005)

Meeting Minutes

Date: 4 May 2022
Venue: Virtual meeting
Agenda: Refer to Annex 1
Participants: Refer to Annex 2

Opening Remarks

Mr. Denis Nkala, Regional Coordinator for Asia Pacific of the UN Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC) indicated that he had been delegated responsibility to chair the Steering Committee Meeting the by the Chairperson, UNOSSC Director a.i.. He welcomed the meeting participants especially Ms. Ji Hyun Eom, Director of Multilateral Cooperation Division from the Ministry of Science and ICT (MSIT) and the co-chair of the meeting as well as H.E. Mr. So Sophort, Secretary-General of Cambodia National Mekong Committee, and the Chairperson of the Mekong River Commission (MRC) Joint Committee for 2022.

Mr. Nkala expressed UNOSSC's sincere gratitude to the Government of the Republic of Korea (RoK), particularly the Ministry of Science and ICT (MSIT) for the longstanding partnership between UNOSSC and MSIT that started in 2011. He also thanked the guidance and support provided by the Mekong River Commission Secretariat (MRCS) and National Mekong Committee Secretariats (MNCS) in the project approval process. He further highlighted that the participation of two Mekong institutions, namely, MRCS and Mekong Institute (MI) would strengthen the project's demand-driven approach with greater ownership based within the context of the horizontal partnership called for under triangular cooperation. He affirmed that the Steering Committee (SC) would listen and coordinate all the parties toward achieving transformative results for the people in the Lower Mekong region.

Ms. Ji Hyun Eom, co-Chair of the meeting, welcomed all participants and emphasised that the first Steering Committee meeting would facilitate all participating institutions to have a clear understanding on their roles and responsibilities under the RoK-UNOSSC Facility Phase 3. She looked forward to the joint review of the project progress and to review the proposed workplans for 2022.

H.E. Mr. So Sophort, 2022 Steering Committee member representing LMB countries, welcomed all participants and acknowledged the shared vision and joint mandate of the project stakeholders in building a sustainable and prosperous Mekong through Water-Energy and Food (WEF) nexus approach under the triangular cooperation modality. He noted that the WEF concept has been well acknowledged and appreciated by Mekong stakeholders and shared some of the ongoing challenges and complexities such as climate change and rapid urban development that hinder translating the nexus concept into practical applications. Hence, he emphasised the importance of harnessing appropriate technologies and improved WEF nexus tools to deliver integrated development options for the Mekong region. Complimenting the innovative design of the project, he encouraged all stakeholders to collaborate to achieve transformative action to enhance the livelihoods of people in the LMB. He also thanked the MSIT and UNOSSC for the partnership.

Adoption of Meeting Agenda

The proposed Agenda (Annex 1) for the meeting was adopted. The Chair referred to the Steering Committee Chair's welcoming letter to members, read the names of the members and referenced the minimum requirements for a quorum as laid out in the project document and observed that the Steering Committee members present did constitute a quorum. The chair asked members if they had any new agenda items, and duly noted that there were no additional agenda items proposed by the meeting. With preliminaries dispensed with, the meeting moved forward according to the agenda.

Agenda Item 1: Project Overview, Outstanding issues from Project Appraisal Committee (PAC), Progress on workplan 2021 Q4 & 2022 Q1, and Suggested Ways Forward

The Project Manager provided an overview of the project design and outstanding issues from the Project Appraisal Committee (PAC) as well as an update on work progress (2021 Q4 and 2022 Q1). The presentation is attached herewith.

A. Project Progress

The first-year activities are mainly focused on Output 1- a refinement of project implementation strategy based on lessons learnt from case studies and consultations among implementing parties and stakeholders. Under activity 1.1.1 and 1.1.2., the rationale for case study selection & research approach had been reviewed and discussed with implementing party (STEPI) and subsequently followed by two meetings with implementing parties (STEPI, MRCS & MI). Furthermore, a technical visit had been undertaken by STEPI to Bangkok for meetings with Project Management and project focal points of two of the case studies selected, (Water and Energy for Food (WE4F) & Urban Nexus). The result of these activities was a reduction of envisaged case studies and a proposal for a multi-sectoral platform.

> Multi-Sectoral Platform (MSP)
> The MSP is necessitated by the perception of partners that the WEF Nexus requires some institutional framework to enhance its success in the Mekong region. This is based on the experience with the other WEF projects. The limitation for WEF projects is that they require participation from the respective sectors of water, energy and food, whereas most projects only have one national focal point from one of the sectors participating. The proposed platform would include carefully identified from government ministries, academia and private sector (starting with government and building on with other partners). The Terms of Reference (ToR) will be finalized after the first consultive meeting.

A stakeholder consultative meeting had been planned for Q4-2021 by the MRCS as Activity 1.2. Due to delays in the recruitment of staff at UNOSSC and MRCS, the meeting had been rescheduled to Q2-2022 after consultations between MRCS and Project Management. The manager informed the Committee that there had been slight delays in delivering Output 1 and that the implementing parties have gained some momentum since the end of Q1.

B. Outstanding Issues from PAC & Other Cases requiring Steering Committee decisions

The Project Manager pointed out six outstanding issues from the PAC and suggested ways forward for the SC to consider. These were:

Issue 1: Adjustments of indicators subject to better clarity on pilots, targeted populations and technologies to be applied.

- The implementing parties' workshop (April 19) in Bangkok recommended that current indicators were sufficient for project take off and that once the multi-sectoral platform and the first stakeholder consultative meeting take place, the indicators would be reviewed with the participation of Member States & implementing institutions.

Recommendation to the Steering Committee:

- Defer revision of indicators until after the constitution of the multi-sectoral platform and consultative meeting.

Issue 2: Clarifications on the role of Thailand in implementation of the project.

- Thailand National Mekong Committee (TNMC) endorsed approval of the project pending further discussions on the role of Thailand in implementation. Questions included:
  - ✓ If a pilot will take place in Thailand? and
  - ✓ What other roles Thailand could play in support of the project implementation?

Recommendation to the Steering Committee:

- Task Project Mgmt. to have discussions with TNMC, results to be presented to multi-stakeholder consultative meeting.

Issue 3: Reallocation of resources between implementing parties (STEPI & MI).

- In the Prodoc, it was envisaged that MI would only carry out a capacity building role during the piloting phase (2023 – 2025).
- During implementing parties' workshops, the need for immediate input by MI into the case study process and implementation in general became clear. Thus, the implementing partner (UNOSSC) negotiated with STEPI & MI to allocate USD 40,000 from STEPI to MI.
- Thus, the LoAs for both parties will be revised to reflect this change.

Recommendation to the Steering Committee:

- Endorsement of this change by the Steering Committee.

Issue 4: Convening a multi-sectoral platform for the implementation of WEF in LMB.

- During the discussion on case study rationale between implementing parties, it became clear that the issue pertaining to WEF in the Mekong region is not the understanding of the concept nor lack of attempts at implementing the concept, but there is a need to bring together multi-stakeholders. In particular, the various govt. institutions dealing with water, energy and food.
- Thus, it was agreed to recommend convening a multi-sectoral platform.

Recommendation to the Steering Committee:

- Endorsement of the establishment of a multi-sectoral platform.
  (Note: STEPI, MI, MRCS & UNOSSC are working together to develop a concept note, led by STEPI).

Issue 5: Request by MRCS to support the Management & Administrative Fee (MAF), previously not included in the prodoc.

- The project was classified as an "Earmark Fund" by MRC. According to the MRC Finance Manual, all Earmark Funds are required to contribute 15% of the total budget for the Basket Fund as 'Management and Administrative Fee (MAF)' which will be used to support general operations.
- The project has already committed to cost share for a consultant position in MRC in the amount of USD 10,000/year (3 years) – already included in the LoA.

	Items	Total (USD)	MRC MAF (15%)		Difference btw Option A & B
A	MRC consultant contribution (LoA) @ USD 10,000/year	30,000	-	30,000	0
B	Total allocation to implementing party (MRC) (9 workshops) *USD 30,000/workshop	270,000	(270,000*15%)	40,500	10,500

Recommendation to the Steering Committee:

- Agreement to 15% MAF fee required.
- If agreed,
  - Payment of consultancy support + USD 10,500 OR
  - Payment of 40,500 ONLY
  - Further clarification was provided that Implementing Partner would have problems with a 15% requirement.

Issue 6: Adjustment of the budget with funds from Phase 2.

- The Steering Committee under Phase 2 of the RoK-UNOSSC Facility endorsed the allocation of left-over resources from that Phase to Phase 3 which was agreed to by the funding partner.
- The amount is USD 120,122.55 (as of 28 April 2022).

Recommendation to the Steering Committee:

- Endorsement of this adjustment by the Steering Committee
- Agreement by the Steering Committee to allocate the resources pertaining to MRC request and extension of provisions for project manager beyond current 2 year and 10 months

C. Workplan 2022- (Q2 - Q4)

EXPECTED OUTPUTS	OUTPUT INDICATORS/ ACTIVITIES	PLANNED WORK
Output 1 *Three (3) WEF Nexus projects in the LMB and other regions analyzed and reports prepared*	1.1.1: One (1) case study on WEF Nexus project in which the RoK is a partner reviewed.	Case studies and a strategic paper on the linkages between Nexus, Build Back Better and COVID-19 recovery prepared and presented (side-lines of GSSD expo)
	1.1.2: Two (2) case studies of WEF Nexus projects for SS & TrC comparisons analysed.	
	1.2: One (1) partner consultative meeting and planning meetings convened.	First stakeholder consultative meeting in June 2022 (BKK) - Multi-sectoral platform - Demand-survey (focused group discussion)
Output 2 *Four (4) WEF nexus models designed, and: based on identified project sites, WEF Nexus policy, STI, South-South learning and Partnerships*	2.1:Four (4) WEF nexus models designed for food and energy production focusing on surface and ground water for agriculture, aquaculture, irrigation; hydro and other energy sources based on identified project sites, WEF Nexus policy, STI, SS learning and partnerships, one area in Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand and Viet Nam. Areas may include rural, urban-rural & urban.	High-demand technologies identified in consultation with multi-sectoral platform. A preliminary WEF nexus model designed.
	2.2: At least one (1) appropriate technology for each pilot selected.	Identification of pilot sites via close engagement with multi-sectoral platform.
	Project Monitoring	Day-to-day mgmt. including risk assessment (progress reports). Provide training on "Harmonised Approach to Cash Transfer" (HACT). Convene review meeting and Prepare 2022 Annual Report

- Once the SC endorses reducing the number of WEF case studies from five to three, and establishment of a multi-sectoral platform under Output 1, the project will deliver three WEF case studies, a strategy paper on the linkages between WEF nexus, Building Back Better (BBB) and COVID-19 recovery which would also depict how SS & TrC can play a critical role to support such integrative development approaches. These studies would be presented in a side event during the Global South-South Development (GSSD) Expo in September 2022. The event would also serve as a showcasing and networking platform.
- The first stakeholder consultative meeting is scheduled in June 2022, where the structure of a multi-sectoral platform (MSP) and demand survey will be presented to member states and relevant stakeholders.
- In Q4, the project will start identifying pilot sites and design a preliminary WEF nexus model.
- The Project Mgmt. will continue its day-to-day operations, prepare the first annual report (2022) for Phase 3 and convene a review meeting.

D. Branding

Noting the importance of branding for easier recognition of the project and its focus for visibility, the Project Manager presented a tentative logo and requested for the SC's endorsement for its usage.

P-LINK

People's **L**ivelihood **I**nitiative through water-energy-food **N**exus in the ME**K**ONG Region

Agenda Item 2: Brief on key planned activities for 2022 by Implementing Parties (STEPI, MRCS, MI)

- Science and Technology Policy Institute (STEPI)
  STEPI's key planned activities for 2022 mainly focus on the case study generation and establishment of the multi-sectoral platform (MSP) to implement WEF modelling, applications and pilots. STEPI will produce three WEF case studies on the following projects:

	Project	Key stakeholders	Lessons learnt
1	Case study of Nexus in Korea and utilization for LAC countries (Colombia, Uruguay, Dominican Republic)	K-Water, IDB	Prevent from concentrating on single sector instead of WEF nexus approach by setting the common goal with the implementing institution and partner countries
2	Water and Energy for Food (WE4F)	EU, BMZ-GIZ, Sweden, Netherlands, USAID	Engage local partners (innovators) for project sustainability
3	Urban Nexus	UNESCAP, GIZ, ICLEI	Visibility and tangible results (e.g. waster mgmt. infrastructure, capacity building) through the pilot projects in each city/community of partner countries in partnership with local networks

- Mekong River Commission Secretariat (MRCS)
  In 2022, MRCS is mainly responsible for convening the first stakeholder consultative meeting jointly with UNOSSC. The event will most likely take place on the last week of June (proposed date: June 28). The first consultative meeting will include a broader spectrum of stakeholders Thus providing an opportunity for participating member countries to guide and suggest on the proposed work plans and align the work with the Basin Development Strategy (BDS) 2021-2030 and their national priorities.

- Mekong Institute (MI)
  The Mekong Institute is responsible for capacity building of stakeholders towards strengthening knowledge products, establishment of pilot areas and application of appropriate technologies as well as achieving results as per project indicators. Specifically, MI is responsible for the following tasks:
  1. Research and provide advice to Steering Committee Members,
  2. Produce at least one strategic paper on the interlinkages between South-South and triangular cooperation and the focus on WEF Nexus, Build Back Better and Covid-19 recovery in the Lower Mekong Basin in close consultation with UNOSSC, MRCS and STEPI, as driven by the current priorities of Mekong countries.)
  3. Provide advisory services and support in the review of project indicators and establishment and implementation of a multi-sectoral platform (MSP) for spearheading WEF outcomes, in collaboration with other implementing parties.
  4. Develop training modules for capacity building in respective pilot areas bringing together government and communities.
  5. Lead the co-organisation of capacity building workshops with the UNOSSC and other implementing parties.

Agenda Items 3 & 4: Summary of Discussion Outcomes Pertaining to issues for Steering Committee Decision

Item	Main discussion issue	Decision
1	The Chair explained to the meeting that there was a common understanding among PAC and Project Mgmt. that the proposed indicators on the project document were not adequate for accounting for what the project really aims to achieve. He elaborated further on the justification of keeping the existing set of milestone process indicators in the inception phase and to review the indicators in due course after identification of pilots by partner countries and specification of target beneficiaries as well as assessing the impact of WEF Nexus approach. The SC members concurred that the indicators should be reviewed with inputs from Member States and the consultative meeting. They also agreed that indicators needed to show effectiveness of the WEF nexus approach and resultant outcomes in the transformation of livelihoods of the target beneficiaries based on baselines.	The SC agreed to the recommendations on the adjusted of indicators, which would be developed and presented by the Project Team to stakeholders in the first consultative meeting and further revised following the suggestions from the multi-sectoral platform.
2	In addition to the need to engage TNMC, SC members also urged that such consultation should not be limited to TNMC only, but to other National Mekong Committee Secretariats (NMCS). The Chair agreed that the Project Mgmt. should compile all the outcomes of discussions and report to the SC. If additional SC meetings would be required, this would be arranged. He addressed the importance of setting the norm of the SC delegating the Project Mgmt. to have discussions with NMCS and to report to the SC. The SC members concurred that the Project Mgmt. should work with MRCS in engaging with NMCS.	The SC agreed to task the Project Management, in collaboration with MRCS, to have discussions with TNMC, results of which will be presented to the multi-stakeholder consultative meeting in June.
3	The Chair explained to the meeting that UNOSSC had not envisaged inputs from MI in the first year of the project. This perception has changed with consultations that took place among implementing parties. As any changes to the prodoc should be reported to the SC, the Project Mgmt. sought to get SC endorsement to allocate resources to MI in the first year.	The SC endorsed this change on the understanding that the issue had been discussed with STEPI and MI.
4	The Chair reiterated that the meeting reached a consensus on the need to establish a Multi-Stakeholder Platform (MSP) for the project. He explained that this idea had not been included in the prodoc. Such an initiative demonstrated the willingness of project stakeholders to adjust the work in areas that had not been initially foreseen in the prodoc. But the project team would not take further action without the support and approval from the SC.	The SC accepted and appreciated the work being done by implementing parties to set-up a multi-sectoral platform.

5	There was no consensus on the request and recommendations of the Project Mgmt. MSIT SC members regretted that this issue had not been presented to the partners during the project design phase. They also expressed the perception that the project was already contributing to Project Mgmt. through GMS (8%) levied by UNDP and 6% Direct Cost (6%) currently applied for Project Manager. The Chair confirmed that this issue has been raised by MRCS after the project approval. He explained to the meeting that each implementing institution can allocate on inputs to their work including human resources that would be compensated by Letters of Agreements (LoAs). He clarified that MRCS MAF is a separate item from UNDP's GMS (8%) cost which cannot be allocated among implementing parties. The Chair shared his discussions with UNOSSC headquarters on this issue. He informed the meeting that there were no objections of MRCS being compensated through their LoA for the human resources to support its work under the project. He highlighted that the issue of 15% MAF, however be problematic because MRCS is requesting 15% regardless of the scope and cost of inputs to the work to be delivered under the project. Pertaining to the support to the consultant, he noted this item has been reflected on the existing LoA. MRCS understood the current stance of MSIT and UNOSSC and noted that they were also constrained by organizational procedures and indicated that MRCS needed to have internal discussions taking into consideration sentiments expressed by other SC members.	The SC concurred to defer the decision on this matter until MRCS proposes a way forward, following its internal discussions.
6	MSIT SC members did not concur with the Project Management's recommendations. They referred to the previous discussion with UNOSSC in which an agreement was reached to allocate remaining Phase 2 resources to Output 3 of Phase 3.	Rephased budget from Phase 2 will be used for Output 3.
7	While agreeing on the need for a project branding and the logo, some SC members requested the project team to check on the originality and copyright of the proposed project acronym, P-Link to avoid conflict of interest with D-Link, a IT company.	The meeting concurred that the issue would be referred to UNOSSC HQ and follow the advice provided. In the case, they advise against using the acronym P-Link, SC members would be informed, and a new acronym proposed. The SC concurred that the Project Mgmt. should prepare a standarised project communication toolkit to help project partners to present the project to other stakeholders.
8	2022 Workplan (Q2-Q4):_No additional comments were made in the proposed workplan for 2022 Q2-Q4. The Chair reminded the meeting that at this stage, all activities are aligned with the work on the prodoc.	Workplan endorsed.

Agenda Item 5: Any other items

- Next SC Meeting schedule:
  - The SC members concurred to hold the second SC meeting in the first quarter of 2023 in order to facilitate work planning for 2023.
  - The SC members indicated the need to have a face-to-face meeting.
  - Project Mgmt. would call for an SC meeting before the scheduled, if required.

Closing Remarks

The Chair complimented the positive energy among all implementing institutions (MI, MRCS, STEPI, UNOSSC) to work together and help each other. He congratulated the SC for successfully reaching decisions on items brought to them by the Project Management which will enable the project to move forward with a common understanding among implementing institutions. He further underscored the need for a solid foundation for a successful project implementation with a clear focus on the people of the LMB as beneficiaries. He reiterated his appreciation to SC members and implementing parties.

Ms. Eom, the co-chair appreciated the value of the first SC meeting in reviewing the progress made to jointly plan for upcoming activities. She expressed her willingness to work together and support all implementing institutions. Ms. Eom stated the resolute stance of the Government of Korea that stands ready to help address WEF nexus issues in the four LMB countries, namely Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand and Viet Nam.

Signed by:

Mr. Denis Nkala, UNOSSC Regional Coordinator for Asia-Pacific, delegated Chairperson on behalf of Mr. Adel Abdellatif, UNOSSC Director a.i. and Chair of the RoK-UNOSSC Facility (Phase 3) Steering Committee

Annex 1

***Triangular Cooperation Project on Sustainable Development in the Lower Mekong River Basin based on the Water-Energy-Food (WEF) Nexus** [RoK-UNOSSC Facility Phase 3] (Project ID: 00127005)*

First Steering Committee Meeting
Wednesday, 4 May 2022
8:50a.m. (Bangkok), 10:50 a.m. (Seoul) / Online Event

Provisional Meeting Agenda

Time	Items
10 mins	Opening Session • Welcome by the Steering Committee Chair (UNOSSC) • Welcome by Co-chair (MSIT) • Welcome by the Mekong River Commission (MRC JC Chair for 2022) • Introduction of participants (present and apologies) • Adoption of agenda
10 mins	Project Overview, Outstanding issues from Project Appraisal Committee (PAC), Progress, Workplan 2021 Q4 & 2022 Q1, and Suggested Ways Forward: - Project Management, UNOSSC Regional Office for Asia-Pacific (ROAP)
15 mins	Brief on key planned activities for 2022 by Implementing Parties: • Science and Technology Policy Institute (STEPI) • Mekong River Commission Secretariat (MRCS) • Mekong Institute (MI)
10mins	Discussion
20 mins	Comments and feedback from Steering Committee members Issues requiring Steering Committee decisions: • Report on outstanding issues from the Project Appraisal Committee (PAC) meeting • Operational issues (Request by MRCS for 15% Management and Administrative Fee) • Approval of 2022 Work Plan and Fund Allocation • First Consultative Meeting Arrangements • Next Steering Committee Meeting Date • Any other issues brought by stakeholders prior to final agenda
5 mins	Any other issues
10 mins	Closing of Steering Committee Meeting: • UNOSSC Meeting Chair • MSIT Meeting Co-chair

Annex 2

Participants list

I. Steering Committee Members

Present:

- Co-Chair
  - Ms. Ji Hyun Eom Director of Multilateral Cooperation Division, International Cooperation Bureau, Ministry of Science and ICT (MSIT), Republic of Korea (RoK)
- Members (*by last name alphabetical order)*
  - Mr. Santi Baran, Chief of Strategy and Partnership Officer, Office of CEO, MRC Secretariat
  - Dr. Hwanil Park, Chief Director, Office of Multilateral Research, Division of Global Innovation Strategy, STEPI
  - Ms. Su Hyun Park, Deputy Director, Multilateral Cooperation Division, International Cooperation Bureau, MSIT, RoK
  - H.E. Mr. So Sophort, Secretary-General, Cambodia National Mekong Committee, Member of the MRC Joint Committee for Cambodia, Chairperson of the MRC Joint Committee for 2022
  - Mr. Suriyan Vichitlekarn, Executive Director, Mekong Institute

Apologies:

- Mr. Adel Abdellatif, UNOSSC Director a.i.
- Ms. Xiaojun Grace Wang, UNOSSC Deputy Director

II. Implementing Institutions

- Mekong River Commission Secretariat
- Science and Technology Policy Institute

III. Project Management

- UNOSSC Regional Office for Asia-Pacific (ROAP)

Prepared by MRCS and UNOSSC
as of 19 July 2022

Triangular Cooperation Project on Sustainable Development in the Lower Mekong Basin based on the Water-Energy-Food (WEF) Nexus; RoK-UNOSSC Facility Phase 3/P-LINK

FIRST REGIONAL STAKEHOLDER CONSULATIVE FORUM

FINAL SUMMARY REPORT

Tuesday, 28 June 2022 (Hybrid)
Marriott Marquis Bangkok Queens Park Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand

I. Introduction

The MRC Secretariat and the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC) on 28 June co-organized the First Regional Stakeholder Consultative Forum under the project entitled, "Triangular Cooperation Project on Sustainable Development in the Lower Mekong Basin based on the Water-Energy-Food (WEF) Nexus" also known as the RoK-UNOSSC Facility Phase 3 and P-LINK. More than 40 delegates from the four MRC Member Countries – Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand and Viet Nam - joined the meeting in person. The participants included representatives from the National Mekong Committee Secretariats, and line ministries responsible for water, energy, and food management. Representatives from the Mekong Institute (MI) and the Science and Technology Policy Institute (STEPI) attended the event in their capacity as implementing parties under the P-LINK.

The forum was opened by Dr Anoulak Kittikhoun, CEO of the MRC Secretariat, and Mr. Adel Abdellatif, Director a.i., of UNOSSC. The forum consisted of three (3) sessions, of which the first provided an overview of project direction, review and approach, case studies on the WEF concept and selection criteria for national pilot sites. The other two sessions focused on country discussions and presentations, facilitated by the MRC Secretariat team.

II. Objectives

The Stakeholder Forums are envisaged in the project document as a mechanism to ensure full participation of the MRC Member Countries, and to promote ownership and leadership in line with South-South and triangular cooperation (SS & TrC) approaches. The first forum was intended to (1) provide an opportunity for the MRC Member Countries to make suggestions on the proposed project's approach and direction, (2) discuss the integration of the three sectors (water, food, energy) in project's implementation, (3) discuss the proposed multi-sectoral platform (concept note shared prior to the consultation), (4) discuss/identify pilot areas based on the criteria developed by the Project Management Team prior to the consultative meeting, (5) discuss a joint work plan for 2022 that is aligned with the Basin Development Strategy (BDS) 2021-2030 and national development priorities, and (6) set timeframe for the next consultation.

Prior to the event, the Project Management Team held discussions with the National Mekong Committee Secretariats for the participating countries, i.e.: Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand and Viet Nam. During the discussions, the National Committee members asked a number of questions in relation to the proposed project's approach, direction, and pilot site selection criteria. The Project Management Team therefore prepared presentations and discussions to respond to the questions and also facilitate the delegates' efforts towards identifying pilot sites in their respective countries. The event also served as an experience and knowledge sharing platform among the participating countries.

III. Proceedings of the Forum

As the main convenor of the event and the implementing party responsible for consultative process, MRC Secretariat facilitated the meeting proceedings. Ms. Sothea Ros, Project and Partnership Manager moderated the opening session.

In his remarks, Dr. Anoulak Kittikhoun, Chief Executive Officer of the MRCS emphasized that the "business-as-usual" or a "single-sector" approach cannot continue and encouraged multi-stakeholder cooperation and bringing in of innovative solutions and technologies to solve Mekong water related issues and challenges. He also underscored the importance of working together with development actors beyond the water sector to re-orient the WEF Nexus approach in the Mekong context aligned with the *MRC Basin Development Strategy (BDS) 2021-20230*, specifically to "Enhance optimal and sustainable development by increasing regional benefits and decreasing regional costs". Dr. Kittikhoun reiterated that the project outputs were based on the *MRC BDS 2021-20230* and that from the time of the Project Appraisal Committee Meeting, the MRC Secretariat had pointed out that the project could bring in innovative solutions in water, food, and energy management in the Mekong region. Furthermore, he noted the request by some delegates for the project to encompass regional issues and go beyond the national pilots. He concurred with the request noting that as the project approached the MRC Secretariat for implementation partnership, it should have inter-governmental and regional elements and relevancy. He encouraged the Member Countries to consider linking the national pilots under P-LINK with other existing projects in the selected pilot sites.

Mr. Adel Abdellatif, UNOSSC Director a.i., appreciated the strong engagement by the MRC Member Countries and Inter-governmental Institutions in the project. He asserted his wish for the project to reach the communities in the Mekong and address the development challenges that they face. He indicated that UNOSSC would like to capture this unique experience in the Lower Mekong Basin, and share it with a broader global audience.

Session 1: Project Overview, WEF Nexus and Applications

This session was moderated by Mr. Denis Nkala, UNOSSC Regional Coordinator for Asia-Pacific who indicated that the implementing parties (MI, MRCS and STEPI) had designed the consultative forum to respond to questions from the Member Countries emanating from the bilateral consultations prior to the event and the Project Appraisal Committee Meeting. The session included four presentations on the 1) project overview, 2) WEF Nexus concept and applications, 3) proposed selection criteria for national pilot sites and 4) the rationale for a Multi-Sectoral Platform (MSP).

In the first presentation on the project overview, Ms. Yejin Kim, Project Manager, presented the background, achievements, challenges, and lessons learnt under the two previous Phases of the Republic of Korea (RoK) - UNOSSC Facility. She said the Facility contributed to promoting the importance of Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) through South-South and triangular cooperation (SS & TrC), shared RoK's development experiences and facilitated the institutional capacity building and human resources strengthening. She further mentioned that the third Phase of RoK-UNOSSC Facility (P-LINK) is intended to provide innovative solutions for improved access of water, energy and food for vulnerable communities in the Lower Mekong Basin. (Refer to Presentation A)

In the second presentation on the WEF nexus concept, Dr. Hwanil Park, Chief Director & Research Fellow, Division of Global Innovation Strategy at STEPI, introduced the WEF Nexus concept and explained how it is different from the Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) approach. He noted that the key difference between the Nexus and IWRM is that IWRM tends to be more water resource-centred in building interrelations among the three resources (water, food and energy) while the Nexus seeks to take a balanced and overarching approach in managing all three elements. Dr. Park clarified that contrary to some misconceptions, there is no such thing as "WEF Nexus technology". He explained that any technology can be applied to solve a WEF related challenges. Some examples of appropriate technologies include smart heat grid system, renewable energy generation and digitalized resource monitoring system. Therefore, identifying the most relevant technology in a WEF framework is critical to ensure successful implementation. Dr. Park and his team (Ms. Seohee Yoon and Ms. Aram Lee) also gave examples and other case studies of technology applications in WEF projects. (Refer to Presentation B)

In the third presentation on the selection criteria for the national pilot sites, the Project Manager presented a project structure from Phase 2 of the project in Indonesia demonstrating role identification and responsibilities among national, local, community, government, academia, and civil society stakeholders in implementation the project. Based on the lessons learnt from this structure, she proposed a similar structure for P-LINK national pilots (adaptable to member countries) for their consideration. (Refer to Presentation C)

In the fourth presentation on the multi-sectoral platform, Mr. Suriyan Vichitlekarn, Executive Director of the Mekong Institute, Dr. Wan Seok Chang, Associate Research Fellow of STEPI intended to respond to the call for a multi-sectoral approach to the project through a Multi-sectoral Platform (MSP). They indicated that the P-LINK would create institutional synergies across water-energy-food sectors through this platform. The functions of the platform would include documentation of best practices, promoting and sharing experiences and creating opportunities for collaboration with like-minded partners. Furthermore, the platform could provide advisory services and support for a longer-term development and policy dialogue for other initiatives with similar approaches and objectives in the Mekong region and beyond. The platform would allow the Nexus concept to be better translated into the Mekong context as no single institution can achieve the Nexus approach, and there is no one best development model that fits for all. (Refer to Presentation D)

During the Q&A, country representatives asked questions on the success factors of WEF Nexus applications, the scope of scaling up the national pilots, how P-LINK national pilots would incorporate different national priorities of participating countries, and support sharing of knowledge and experiences among local communities (bottom-up approach) as well. The Project Management Team provided responses to the questions asked, and will further discuss the same during the national consultative meetings to be held by the MRC Member Countries on the selection of the pilot sites in Q3 2022.

Session 2: Country Discussions

Sessions two and three were moderated by Mr. Sopheak Meas, Stakeholder Engagement Specialist from the MRC Secretariat and facilitated by the Secretariat's Directors of Technical Support Division and Environment Management Division, and Chief River Basin Planner. Participants were put into four groups by country and guided by the following pre-prepared questions:

1. Please refer to the National Priorities captured in the project document including water, food, and energy management, etc. Do these cover your priorities? Are there any additional priorities that you would like to make or issues/challenges you want to raise? What support do you need?
2. Please discuss your needs/priorities for a pilot on the basis of the selection criteria prepared by the Project Management Team. What support do you need?
3. Please reflect and map out water, energy and food stakeholders in your countries. (Stakeholders: government agencies, communities/beneficiaries/development partners) What support do you need?
4. Consider the situation at the end of the project, what can be done to ensure sustainability of what the project would have provided? Are you in favor of scaling-up the work regionally? What support do you need?

Session 3: Country Presentations

Following the group discussions, each country made a presentation on potential sites for the pilot project, relevant stakeholders to be engaged, key development priorities in proposed pilot areas, and expectations from the project.

The Table below provides a summary of each country's presentation.

Country	National Focal Point/ Relevant Stakeholders	Priorities in the proposed pilot sites	Expectations from the project
Cambodia	Cambodia National Mekong Committee (CNMC) Other Stakeholders: • Govt. agencies at • National/sub-national levels • Local communities • NGOs/Civil society • Development Partners • Academics/Researchers	• Aquaculture fish production • Irrigation and water use (flood and drought mgmt.) in Sekong (Northeast/Northwest) • Strengthened mechanisms to improve IWRM planning and integrated basin mgmt. to mitigate flood and drought risks in 3S (Sesan, Sekong and Srepok rivers)	• Knowledge creation and awareness for high income and less investment • Climate adaptation and resilient dev. • Behavior change • Documentation & sharing lessons learnt • Tech. experts & human resource for national & int'l STI dev. • Guidance on national planning/policies • Replication in other sites: project proposal needed to find more funding resource and partners
Lao PDR	• Local and Central Government (Mahaxay district) • Local community • Local/district authorities • Development partner • Civil society • Water user • Industry users	• Flood and drought • Electricity Generation • Water Utilization • Food security (irrigation, agriculture, livestock) • Climate change Pilot Site: Xebangfai basin Located in Khammoun Province, Moung Mahaxai upstream (There is large HPP called NT2, Outlet of Powerplant of NT2 HHP)	• Technical assistance and financial support • Supported from Development Partner • Study visits as achieved pilot project
Thailand		• Strengthen civil society network along the Mekong River • Fisheries, Aquaculture and Agriculture Vulnerability (extinction & decrease in fish population, lack fish breeding) • Rapid change in flow regime • Enhance Develop. In Mekong Mainstream • Impact on local agrotourism due to rapid changes in hydrological flow • Lack of capacity building in community livelihood, income generation, environ. Education & awareness raising. Proposed locations: Chaing Rai, Nongkhai, Loei, BungKhan, Amnatchareon, Nakhon Phanom, Ubon Ratchathani *(specific district to be determined)*	• Technology that is fit for local context, affordable & cost efficient to maintain. • Technology centre • Agriculture: crop planning mgmt., irrigation mgmt. (smart agriculture) • Establish vocational training center in the communities. • Landscape architecture for agrotourism/ cultural centre • Resilience centre
Viet Nam	• Viet Nam National Mekong Committee (VNMC) and relevant line agencies (MARD, MONRE, MOIT) • Local authorities (Province and district and village people committees) • Vulnerable communities • NGOs • Research institutes, universities • Development Partners • Project Owners	• Impacts from upstream development • Impact from climate change & sea water level rise • Local development • Severe drought for Mekong delta and central highland • Salt intrusion • Land subsidence • Bank erosion in Mekong delta • Over exploitation of ground water in Mekong delta Proposed location: Mekong delta	• Involvement of relevant stakeholders in the project formulation, implementation and post-project evaluation • Knowledge transfer to local communities • Scaling up of project to regional level (additional funding supports from DPs)

IV.Key Takeaways and follow-up actions

- The Basin Development Strategy 2021-2030 serves as a guiding principle, especially, "Strategic Priority 3: Enhance optimal and sustainable development by increasing regional benefits and decreasing regional costs".

- The WEF Nexus approach aims to tackle integrated development by bringing stakeholders from other sectors beyond water management.

- The Project stakeholders should collectively work together to translate/re-orient the WEF nexus approach in the context of Mekong region and drawing on the lessons learnt from past projects in other localities.

- Participants acknowledged that a Multi-Sectoral Platform (MSP) could facilitate the regional, national, and local stakeholders to occasionally convene discussions on balancing the management of water, energy and food as well as to promote mainstreaming integrated policymaking and applications in the longer-term, which would facilitate implementing pilots under the P-LINK project and beyond. The MSP would also foster people-to-people exchanges at the local, national and regional levels. This would provide greater ownership, accountability and sustainability of national pilots that could be scaled-up at a regional level later on.

- The P-LINK should facilitate sharing of knowledge and experiences at national, local and community levels. Communities are willing to exchange knowledge with other communities in the same country and overseas.

- Technology is an important instrument for resolving the pressing challenges faced by the region. However, there is no specific technology for the WEF Nexus approach.

- The forum facilitated the project's endeavour to develop one joint work plan as each country delegation indicated their national development priorities and proposed possible pilot sites in their respective countries. They however, indicated the need for further consultations with other stakeholder in their countries on the pilots and implementation structures. To that end, the Project Management Team will work with the other implementing parties (MI, MRCS and STEPI) to allocate resources and follow-up with each country bilaterally to organise national consultations towards finalising the selection of national pilot sites.

- Once the national pilot sites and relevant technologies have been selected, the Project will also develop indicators to monitor and measure the impact.

Annex 1: Meeting Agenda

TIME	ITEMS
8:00 – 8:30	Registration
8:30 – 9:00	**Opening Session** *Moderator: Ms. Sothea Ros, Project and Partnership Manager, MRCS* • Participants Introduction • Welcome Remarks – Dr. Anoulak Kittikhoun, CEO, MRCS • Opening Remarks – Mr. Adel Abdellatif, Director a.i., UNOSSC
9:00 – 10:30	**Session 1: Project Overview, WEF Nexus and Applications** *Moderator: Mr. Denis Nkala, Regional Coordinator for Asia-Pacific, UNOSSC* • A. Presentation/Discussion on Project Direction, Approach & 2022 Workplan (UNOSSC) 15mins – Ms. Yejin Kim, Project Manager • B. Presentation on WEF Concept and Case Studies (STEPI) 30mins – Dr. Hwanil Park, Chief Director & Research Fellow, Global Innovation Strategy Division – Ms. Seohee Yoon, Researcher, Global Innovation Strategy Division – Ms. Aram Lee, Researcher, Global Innovation Strategy Division • C. Selection Criteria for National Pilot Sites (UNOSSC) 10mins – Ms. Yejin Kim, Project Manager **Discussions** (35mins)
10:30 – 11:00	Group Photo and Coffee Break
11:00 – 12:00	**Session 1 (continue):** • **D. Presentation Rationale for a Multi-Sectoral Platform (MI, STEPI)** 20mins – Mr. Suriyan Vichitlekarn, Executive Director, Mekong Institute – Dr. Wan Seok Chang, Associate Research Fellow, Global Innovation Strategy Division, STEPI **Discussions**
12:00 – 13:30	Lunch
13:30 – 15:00	**Session 2: Country Discussions** (discussion questions are in annex 3) *Moderator: Mr. Sopheak Meas, Stakeholder Engagement Specialist, MRCS* • **Group 1: Cambodia** *Facilitator: Dr. Thim Ly, Chief River Basin Planner, MRCS* • **Group 2: Lao PDR** *Facilitator: Mr. Bountieng Sanaxonh, Director of Planning Division, MRCS* • **Group 3: Thailand** *Facilitators: Dr. Winai Wangpimool, Director of Technical Support Division, MRCS and Mr. Santi Baran, Chief Strategy and Partnership Officer, MRCS* • **Group 4: Viet Nam** *Facilitators: Dr. Socheat Hak, Director of Environment Management Division, MRCS & Ms. Sothea Ros, Project and Partnership Manager, MRCS*
15:00 – 15:15	Coffee Break
15:15 – 16:30	**Session 3: Country Presentations** *Moderator: Mr. Sopheak Meas, Stakeholder Engagement Specialist, MRCS* • Cambodia (15mins) • Lao PDR (15mins) • Thailand (15mins) • Viet Nam (15mins) Discussion (15mns)
16:30 – 16:45	**Closing Session (Summary and Way Forward)** *– Mr. Denis Nkala, Regional Coordinator for Asia-Pacific, UNOSSC*

Annex 2: List of Participants

CAMBODIA

1. H.E. Mr. Long Saravuth, Deputy Secretary-General, Cambodia National Mekong Committee (CNMC)
2. Mr. Chheang Hong, Director, Information and Knowledge Management Department, CNMC
3. Mr. Thach Sovanna, Director, Water Resources Management and Conservation Department, Ministry of Water Resources and Meteorology (MoWRAM)
4. Mr. Hean Veasna, Deputy Director, Hydroelectricity Department, Ministry of Mines and Energy (MME)
5. Mr. Dim Wanndet, Deputy Director, Science, Technology and Innovation Cooperation, General Department of STI, Ministry of Industry Science Technology and Innovation (MISTI)
6. Mr. Chroeung Phanna, Chief, Agriculture Irrigation Office

LAO PDR

1. Mr. Phonepaseuth Phoulipanh,Secretary-General, Lao National Mekong Committee (LNMC)
2. Mr. Keomany Luanglith, Director of Division, National AD Focal Point, LNMC
3. Mr. Sisavath Keuthkong, Secretary-General, Secretariat of Council for Science and Technology of Agriculture and Forestry
4. Mr. Viengsavay Sengsoulivong, Deputy-Director, Department of Agricultural Extension and Cooperatives
5. Mr. Lamphone Dimanivong, Director of Division, Department of Energy Policy and Planning
6. Mr. Ounakone Xayviliya, Deputy Head of Division, Department of Water Resources

THAILAND

1. Mrs. Thayida S. van Corstanje, National Coordinator for AD & OCEO, Office of the National Water Resources (ONWR)
2. Ms. Wachiraporn Kumnerdpet, National Coordinator for PD, ONWR
3. Ms. Phatchara Amphawanon, Foreign Relations Officer, Professional level, ONWR
4. Ms. Sakawtree Prajamwong, Plan and Policy Analyst, Practitioner level, ONWR
5. Ms. Panisa Semsan, Foreign Relations, Practitioner Level, ONWR

VIET NAM

1. Dr. Truong Hong Tien, Deputy-Director General, Head of Delegation, Viet Nam National Mekong Committee (VNMC)
2. Mrs. Le Thi Huong, Head of Division, VNMC
3. Mr. Nguyen Dinh Dat, Head of Division of Centre, VNMC
4. Ms. Tran Thi Dien, Official, Department of Water Resources Management, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE)
5. Mr. Trinh Tien Dung, Official, Electricity & Renewable Energy Authority, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD)
6. Mr. Nguyen Van Thanh, Official, Directorate of Water Resources, MARD

MEKONG RIVER COMMISSION SECRETARIAT (MRCS)

1. Dr. Anoulak Kittikhoun, Chief Executive Officer
2. Mr. Hak Socheat, Director of ED
3. Dr. Winai Wangpimool, Director of TD
4. Dr. Thim Ly, Chief River Basin Planner
5. Mr. Santi Baran, Chief Strategy and Partnership Officer
6. Mr. Sopheak Meas, Stakeholder Engagement Specialist
7. Ms. Sothea Ros, Project and Partnership Manager
8. Mr. Bounyong Phounpaseuth, IT Assistant
9. Ms. Soukouman Viravong, Admin. Assistant

MEKONG INSTITUTE (MI)

1. Mr. Suriyan Vichitlekarn, Executive Director
2. Ms. Jian Wang, Program Coordinator, Sustainable Energy and Environment Department

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY POLICY INSTITUTE (STEPI)

1. Dr. Hwanil Park, Chief Director and Research Fellow, Division of Global Innovation Strategy
2. Dr. Dongun Park, Associate Research Fellow, Office of SDGs Innovation Research,
3. Dr. Wan Seok Chang, Associate Research Fellow, Division of Global Innovation Strategy
4. Ms. Aram Lee, Researcher, Division of Global Innovation Strategy
5. Ms. Seohee Yoon, Researcher, Division of Global Innovation Strategy
6. Ms. Jeehye Min, Researcher, Division of Global Innovation Strategy

UNITED NATIONS OFFICE FOR SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION (UNOSSC)

1. Mr. Denis Nkala, Regional Coordinator for Asia-Pacific
2. Ms. Saowalak Sangsomboon, Programme Associate
3. Ms. Yejin Kim, Project Manager

P-LINK
People's Livelihoods Initiative through water-energy-food Nexus in the MEKONG Region

Triangular Cooperation Project on Sustainable Development in the Lower Mekong Basin based on the Water-Energy-Food (WEF) Nexus
[RoK-UNOSSC Facility Phase 3]

Selection Criteria for National Pilot Sites

In the project document, it is intended that pilots will be identified in the second (current) year and implemented in the last three years of the project (2023-2025). It is further stated that there will be a series of consultations, monitoring and evaluation processes and workshops regarding WEF Nexus, problem solving, technical approaches, improving strategies, and operation and management of Nexus technologies. Capacity building for implementation will be key, with a need for training to policymakers, communities and other stakeholders.

In the aftermath of the approval of the project document, consultations have taken place with National Mekong Committees (NMCs) and among the implementing institutions. A consensus seems to be emerging for a process as follows:

1) Communities are articulating the impact of the climate change and alternative water use processes on their livelihoods, environment and biodiversity and these consequences are a result of water use and energy production applications which impact on food production.
2) Affected communities may need help in identifying the underlying causes of these changes and hence move towards identifying solutions or to identify way of adjusting to the new normal. That assessment can be undertaken by the project but needs national expertise and perspectives in each country, e.g., an academic institution able to work at local level and engage communities. Some countries may have sufficient representation by local government institutions to use them rather than academic or NGO. Situations will differ in each country.
3) A technical assessment is then required on how to address the problems. For example, if there is overfishing, work out with community the means to reduce overfishing, if fish cannot move upstream to their spawning sites, address conservations options and technology that can be used. If the level of water is too low for irrigation, work out amounts of water required for community needs and consider options to get water to the fields.
4) Consider how to get available information to communities, perhaps on mobile phones in relation to expected water levels, etc.
5) Apart from the solutions to return to the normal, the supporting institutions will also identify ways for communities to live with the new normal. For example, can they diversify from fishing to other means of livelihood?
6) The project can help to network among the pilots' lessons learnt which will be the future function of consultative meetings.

Based on the process indicated above, the national responsible body will identify a pilot site, engage the local leadership and introduce the project and its national counterpart institution to the community with clear indications that the project will support their efforts.

It is preferable that the pilot should be a district or similar level of governance in countries where the term "district" may not be used. Similarly, if an urban area is selected it can be a small town or a part of a bigger urban area. The district can be facilitated to network with other communities that may be scaling up the project. The focus of the pilot will be on all members of the selected community. However, the local authorities may be asked to identify some most vulnerable in the community for more specific support.

In order to kick-off deliberations on site selection, the following guidelines are issued for participants in the consultative Platform. The country groups will discuss and may not conclude discussion during the process; however, they will identify additional steps required to select a pilot. Here are the issues to consider:

	Criteria	Questions
1	Institutional Arrangement	Is there a national responsible multi-stakeholder body to decide on a pilot site and introduce the project to the local government and community leadership?
2	Institutional Arrangement	Are local authorities, local government and community willing to host the pilot?
3	Institutional support	If site is selected, should the project seek its own national counterpart or the government will recommend capable institutions, e.g., an academic institution?
4	Location	Is the national preference for a rural or urban pilot?
5	Location	Is there preference for one site or more than one site given that this may affect level of investment by project?
6	Location	Are there communities that have recently approached authorities and would seem ready to engage with external support and should be prioritized in terms of support?
7	Location	Are there communities where development activities offer opportunities for innovation/entrepreneurship? In other words, changes offer opportunities rather than challenges?
8	Location	Are there similar initiatives that are ongoing that the project can work with or is preference to start on a new site?
9	Target beneficiaries	Would a greater emphasis on the vulnerable, a gender-based focus be acceptable to the communities? What is the number of households in the proposed site area?
10	Accessibility	Is recommended area accessible throughout the year? Are there any security risks for external workers in the selected site?
11	National Contribution	Are there resources from other national sources that can be used for the pilot? If so, a country may consider more than one pilot.

Note: Indicators (To be prepared once pilots have been selected)

Annex 1: Expected Roles of National Mekong Committees (NMCs)

In the project design, the National Mekong Committees (NMCs) are designated as the National Focal points for implementation with coordination through the Mekong River Commission Secretariat (MRCS). To that end, the National Mekong Committees will undertake the following:

- Serve as the national focal point for its pilot implementation or advise on the National focal point if they are unable to take that role in their country.

- Introduce the project to the responsible institution if they cannot coordinate.

- Hereafter, the responsible institution or NMC will undertake the following:
  - Identify appropriate pilot site and inform communities and local government on the project.
  - Facilitate access to the community leaders and local stakeholders by the project staff.
  - Arrange for capacity building of staff from line ministries and relevant agencies as well as local government staff, community leaders and members.
  - Enlist national project technical support, e.g., University to support the community define its needs through research and analysis of challenges faced by the community, unless this arrangement is left to project.
  - Review proposals for technology to be introduced and support community decision-making.
  - Relay progress of the project to the Central Government, advocate scaling up of project.
  - Facilitate access to appropriate water data required by communities for their planning from the responsible national custodian and through MRCS.
  - Convene capacity building activities (seminars, training) to strengthen national stakeholders' understanding of WEF Nexus and technical applications in collaboration with project implementing institutions (MI, MRCS, STEPI and UNOSSC).
  - (May) Voluntarily support the project by hosting at their own cost, other such consultative meetings and other knowledge-sharing meetings for synergy with other activities in the Lower Mekong Basin.

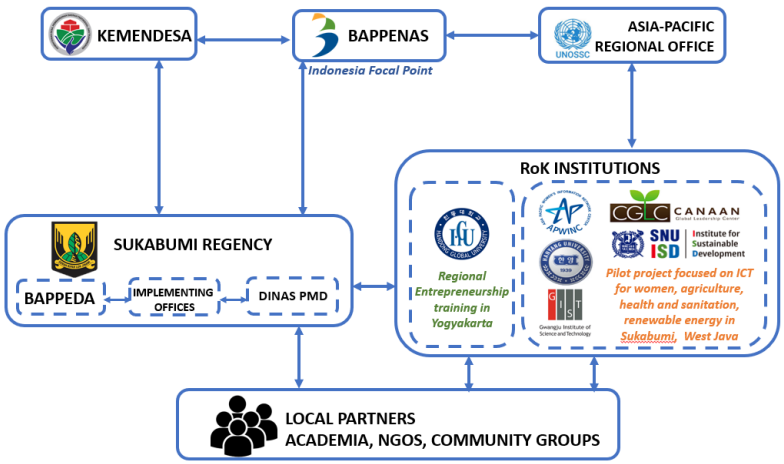
Annex 2: Pilot Implementation Structure

Under Phase 2 of the RoK-UNOSSC Facility, a coordination structure was developed to enhance communication among all the stakeholders from national to local authorities and the communities with respective external support institutions. The coordination was as follows:

	Institution	National Role	Role in the Project
1.	Ministry of National Planning (BAPPENAS)	Ensuring initiatives are within the overall scope of National Plans.	Coordination of External Support and National Institutions. Counterpart to UNOSSC as implementing Partner.
2	United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC)	UN systemwide coordinator on South-South and triangular cooperation. Hosted by UNDP.	Implementing partner, responsible for project results achievement and accountable to Govt. of Indonesia and the Govt. of the Republic of Korea (RoK, funding partner).
3	The Ministry of Villages, Develop. of Disadvantaged Regions, & Transmigration (KEMENDESA)	Overseeing the national village innovation project. Oversees national fund, develop. of monitoring indices.	Capacity building of partners, availing its assets/facilities for training, monitoring.
4	Line Ministries	Responsible for specialized services in their sectors, review of technologies installed, maintenance.	At local level, departments from Ministries participated in the Local Government meeting.
5	Sukabumi Regency (District level Government)	Leadership of Sukabumi District and coordination of local Government.	Accepted the project, reported on progress to BAPPENAS, KEMENDESA and UNOSSC.
6	Counterpart institutions (Mainly Academic) but local NGOs as well	Expert Institutes in Universities in their respect areas, usually advising Government already.	Contracted by RoK institutions to advise them on appropriate solutions.
7	RoK Institutions	Governmental Organisations, University Institutes and some NGOS involved in supporting RoK develop. work	Delivering development solutions to the communities and interacting with stakeholders at the local level.

The structure is as shown below.

RoK-UNOSSC Facility (Phase 2): Pilot Implementation Structure in Indonesia



P-LINK
People's Livelihoods Initiative through water-energy-food Nexus in the MEKONG Region

Ministry of Science and ICT

MRC Mekong River Commission for Sustainable Development

United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation

VNMC Ủy ban Sông Mê Công Việt Nam – Viet Nam National Mekong Committee

Mekong Institute

STEPI Science and Technology Policy Institute

Triangular Cooperation Project on Sustainable Development in the Lower Mekong Basin based on the Water-Energy-Food (WEF) Nexus; RoK-UNOSSC Facility Phase 3/P-LINK

VIET NAM FIRST NATIONAL STAKEHOLDER CONSULATIVE FORUM

SUMMARY REPORT

22-23 September 2022 (Hybrid)
Muong Thanh Luxury Can Tho, Can Tho City, Viet Nam

The United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC) promotes demand-driven projects implemented by willing partner countries. The project entitled, the "Triangular Cooperation on Sustainable Development in the Lower Mekong Basin based on the Water-Energy-Food (WEF) is one such example demonstrating a strong collaboration between the Republic of Korea (RoK), Lower Mekong Basin Countries and UNOSSC. The project, also known the "RoK-UNOSSC Facility Phase 3" or P-LINK, aims to strengthen access to water, food and energy for vulnerable communities living in the Lower Mekong Basin (Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand, and Viet Nam) through strengthening development approaches and management in these sectors. It takes integrative and multi-sectoral approaches in the application of demanded technologies on water, energy and food to improve the livelihoods of the people based on South-South and triangular cooperation (SS & TrC) modalities.

Following the First Regional Stakeholder Forum held on 28 June 2022, participating countries agreed to convene national consultations to further discuss the final selection of the national pilot sites under P-LINK as well as project indicators.

In this context, the Viet Nam National Mekong Committee (VNMC) convened its First National Consultative Forum and Field Visit to Mekong Delta on 22-23 September 2022. It was the first country to host the consultative process. The consultative forum took place in Can Tho city in Viet Nam as it is located near the Mekong Delta. More than 20 participants including officials from VNMC as well as staff members from other line ministries, local government and implementing institutions (MI, MRCS, STEPI and UNOSSC) attended the meeting in person and online (Annex 3: Participants List). The local government stakeholders were from the provinces of Ben Tre, Hau Giang, Can Tho and Soc Trang in the Southern Mekong Delta.

Noting that all national pilot sites must be identified by the end of 2022, the consultative forum was organized with the following objectives (Annex 5: Concept Note and Agenda)

1. To further discuss the final selection of national pilot site(s)
2. To visit a proposed/tentative pilot site/location in the country
3. To discuss national implementation structures for the national pilot project in Viet Nam;
4. To bring national stakeholders to discuss relevant issues pertaining to P-LINK; discuss the integration of the three sectors (water, food, energy) in P-LINK implementation; and
5. To develop new indicators for the pilots.

This first national multi-sectoral platform (MSP) provided an opportunity for national and local stakeholders to gain a better understanding of the objectives and directions of P-LINK, map out similar WEF Nexus initiatives in the Mekong Delta and identify their roles in national pilot implementation. In parallel, implementing institutions and UNOSSC were able to better identify ongoing developing challenges related to water, energy and food management, especially in the proposed pilot sites by Viet Nam in Ben Tre province in the Southern Mekong Delta (Annex 1).

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS AND FOLLOW UP ACTIONS

P-LINK Project Overview, Directions and Pilot Site Selection Criteria

The Project Management Team (UNOSSC) presented the key objectives, scope, expected outcomes (deliverables) and overall implementation structure of the project. Based on the principles of SS & TrC, P-LINK is driven by the demands of participating countries and their ownership. The Project Team also clarified that it is not a project designed to set up large scale infrastructure but to introduce appropriate technological solutions and capacity building for integrated development by applying the WEF nexus approach. The project is ready to facilitate and serve as a platform for sharing of knowledge and experience among participating countries, which can be expanded to a broader audience at a later stage.

Key Development Challenges in the Mekong Delta Viet Nam

According to the Viet Nam National Mekong Committee (VNMC), the Mekong Delta is directly affected by changes in climate and water flows. Water supply is one of the most important sources for national agriculture production and food security. For example, the total volume of water demand was 40.8 billion tons in 2020 among which 70% was used for rice production. Some ongoing challenges in the Mekong River delta for Viet Nam are as follows:

- Climate change which causes decreased and fluctuating levels of water (upstream) that is adversely affecting national/local development;
- Sea level rise resulting in increased saline intrusion;
- Upstream development such as hydropower dams that affect the country's water usage, water diversion and pollution;
- Erosions at riverbanks and coastlines; and
- With increased water usage and demands, adverse impacts on infrastructure development are affecting the country's management and usage of wetlands, mangroves and agriculture and aquaculture production activities.

The VNMC raised some of the common challenges faced by the Lower Mekong Basin (LMB) Countries. They underscored how balanced water-energy-food production and consumption are critical to maintain and strengthen socio-economic development and green resilient recovery in the sub-region. They also addressed that the pilot activities under P-LINK project could provide an opportunity for LMB countries to coherently discuss about upstream and downstream development of the Mekong River.

The meeting participants agreed that the likeminded stakeholders should collaborate for effective disaster management, smart water resources usage and adaptative measures for climate change towards achieving sustainable water usage for energy and food in the Mekong Delta.

In this context, the VNMC proposed several feasible solutions pertaining to both policy and technical aspects. These include improved policy and regulatory framework for transboundary resource management and information systems to monitor water and climate changes to facilitate decision making, application of new resource management technologies and transfer of technology. In terms of tangible solutions, the VNMC listed development of infrastructure and solutions related to water storage, flood control and saline water control for agriculture and aquaculture.

Appropriate RoK Technical Solutions

The Science and Technology Policy Institute (STEPI) summarized their observations and findings from other WEF nexus related projects in the region aligned with climate change adaptation and mitigation as below:

- Efforts to transform traditional rice-intensive farming to climate-resilient crops and livestock;
- Emphasis on nature-based solution such as mangrove protections and expansion for biodiversity in the Delta peninsula;
- Water and land usage management (flood-based crop cultivation promotion); and
- Climate-resilient infrastructure construction.

In addition, they showcased feasible appropriate technologies and applications from the RoK (Table 1) that could be considered as innovative solutions in the identified pilot site in Viet Nam.

Table 1: Appropriate RoK solutions that could be introduced in pilot area

	Technology (greater access to clean H_20)	Function
1	Artificial groundwater recharge facility	Increase the amount of water that enters an aquifer through human-controlled means
2	Renewable-powered desalination	Greater access to clean water
3	Hybrid distillation module	Combines solar energy with hydrothermal heat pumps to reduce thermal energy consumption during the desalination process
4	IoT-based water management system	IoT technologies in Flood Management

K-Water expert also provided an overview of WEF Nexus concept, technology applications in the RoK, and shared several RoK-Mekong Projects related to WEF Nexus as shown in the Table 2.

Table 2: RoK-Mekong Projects related to WEF Nexus

Name of Projects	Budget/ Period	Executing Organization
[Mekong-ROK Cooperation Fund] Water Data Utilization and Capacity Building in the Mekong Region (~'22.10)	USD 1million/ 3 years	K-water NASA, USACE
[KOICA] Feasibility Study on Water Supply Measure and Flood Mitigation for the Prek Neal River Basin, Svay Rieng Province, Cambodia (~'23.12)	USD 2million/ 2 years	KMCRC Dong-bu Eng
[UNDP] Integrated Water Resources Management and Enhancement of Climate Adaptability Project In Vulnerable Urban Areas of Mekong Basin (~'25.5)	USD 2million/ 3 years	KMCRC PEC, Saman

Finetuning Project Indicators

The Project Management Team (UNOSSC) explained the importance of setting project indicators and clarified the rationale for revising and finetuning them. The meeting participants agreed that the project should have two sets of indicators: 1) generic (regional) and 2) country specific. The generic indicators will be a common set of indicators to measure sub-regional (MRC) policymaking and joint initiatives focus on inclusiveness and access to water, energy and food for vulnerable communities in the region in consideration of gender dimensions. The country specific indicators are directly linked to national policy making and pilot implementation.

Required follow-up action

- Once the national pilot site has been identified, country pilot indicators should be developed
- Dr. Tien (VNMC DDG) requested MRCS to support the development of region-specific indicators aligned with the MRC Strategic Plan (SP) 2021-2025 and MRC BDS 2021-2030.

Viet Nam's Proposed Pilot Sites

The Viet Nam stakeholders had a group discussion to shortlist the proposed pilot sites for the field visit. (Refer to Annexes 1 and 2).

Final Pilot Selection Process for Viet Nam

Required follow-up action

- The VNMC will convene follow-up consultations with local stakeholders.
- The Project Team will prepare a draft meeting report along with profile of two pilot sites visited. The Project Team requested further guidance from VNMC and other Vietnamese stakeholders.
- To re-convene another discussion (virtual) and/or revisit Viet Nam to learn about proposed site with RoK technical experts

Annex 1: VNMC Proposed Site 1 (Binh Dai) – Background Note and Situational Analysis

Location: Near Bình Đại District, Ben Tre Province

Figure 1: Map of Ben Tre District

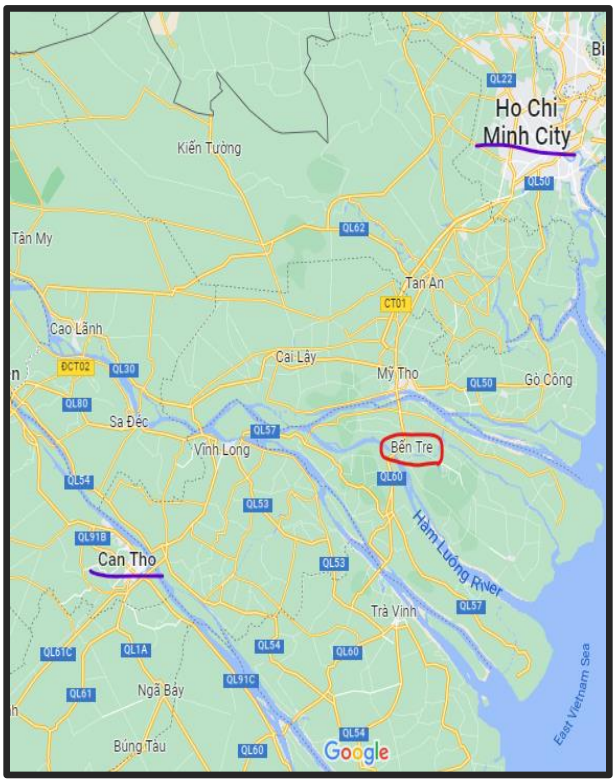
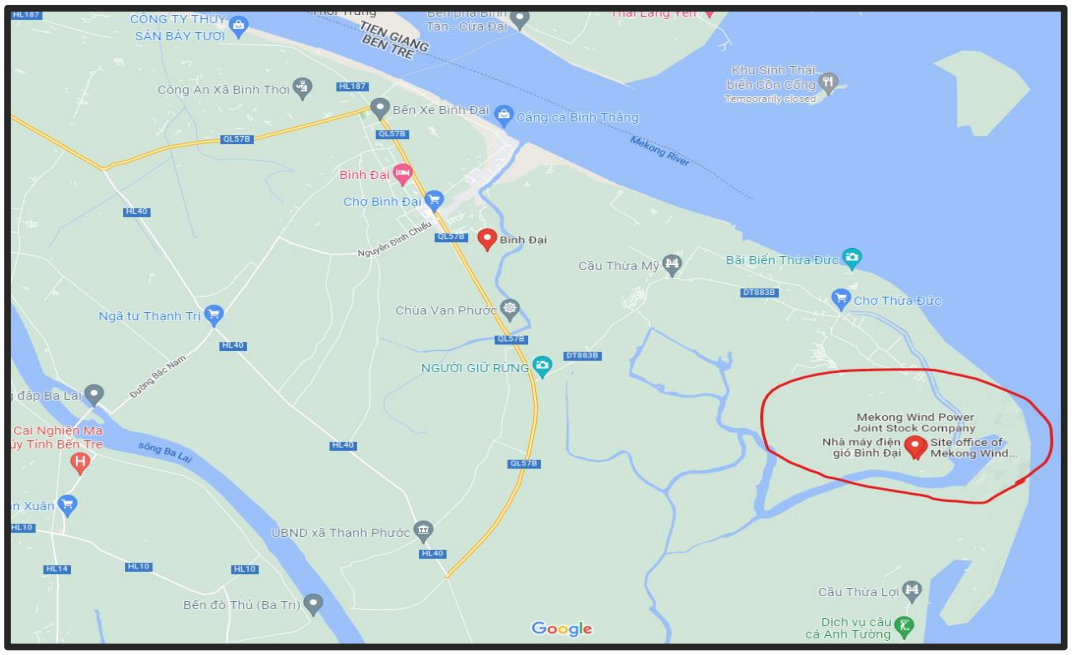


Figure 2: Map of site visited in Bình Đại District, Ben Tre Province



Background

Originally, the site was an important locality for rice production. Unfortunately, the area has been facing intrusion of sea water and drought in this area with climate change. The area is facing soil salinization and changed its rice cultivation into shrimp farms.

- The area has become a strategic locality for shrimp farm industry.
- Focused on developing renewable energies from the advantages of the sea (wind power projects)

Challenge

- Lack of fresh water and more saline water in the dry season, farmers have to reduce the number of main crops.
- Sea level rise and coastal erosion due to climate change. Coastal erosion reduces the farming land area and endanger the safety of people and assets.
- Livelihood problems caused by sea water intrusion.
- The Binh Dai locality focuses on shrimp farming. But the saltwater intrusion in shrimp farms is affecting shrimp cultivation.

Proposed Beneficiaries

- To increase in the income of stakeholders related to the aquaculture industry, such as those engaged in shrimp farming

Required Solutions

- Better management of fresh and salt water
- Seawater desalination technology
- Introducing technologies to improve agriculture/aquaculture productivity but also need to communicate with local residents to facilitate their understanding
- Need to provide advisory services to policymakers pertaining to long term benefits.

Possible STI solutions that could be applied

- Smart monitoring system for seawater/freshwater control
- Synopex's desalination technology (2019) for supply drinking water from Renewable Energy Sources in the southern part of the Mekong Delta.

Expectations from Viet Nam

- Willingness to scale up national pilot activity throughout Binh Dai district

Photo 1: Site visited facing greater salinity issues

Photo 2: Discussion with local stakeholders

Annex 2: VNMC Proposed Site 2 (Ba Lai Sluice Gate) – Background Note and Situational Analysis

Location: Ba Lai Sluice Gate, Ben Tre Province

Figure 3: Map of Ba Lai Locality

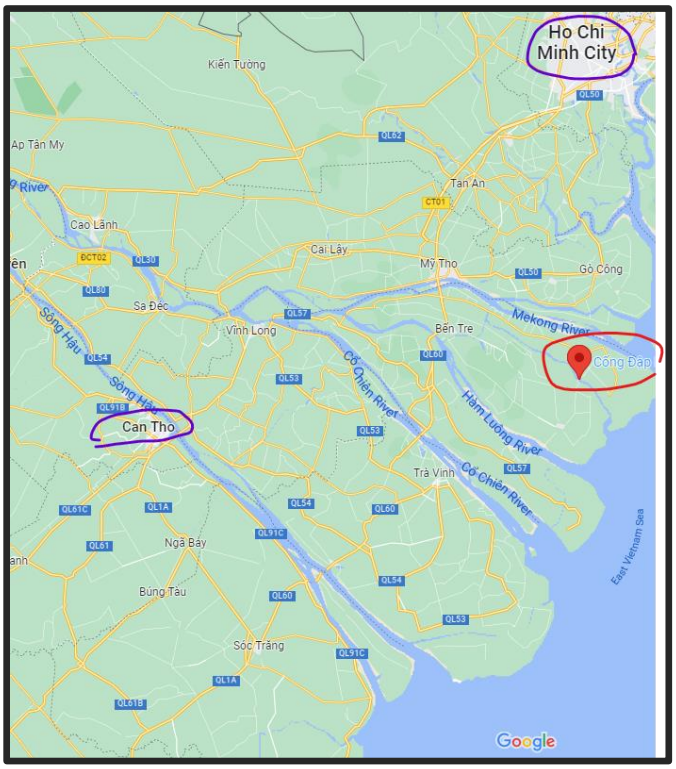
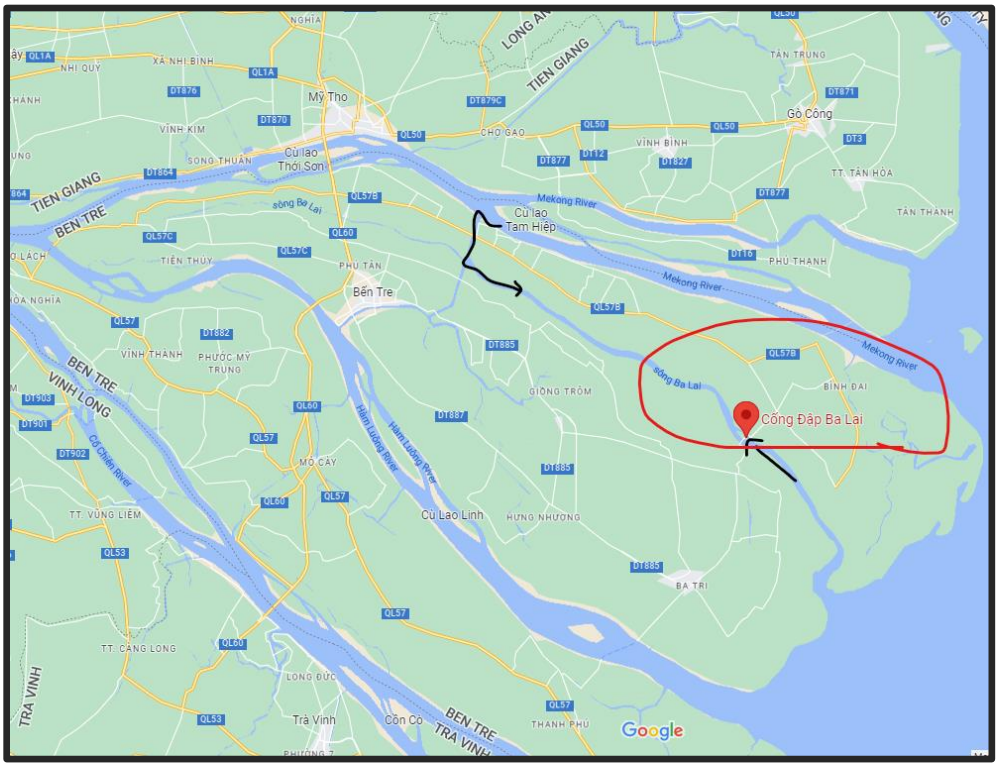


Figure 3: Map of site visited in Ba Lai Locality



Background/Challenge

- Problems caused by sea level rise due to climate change, coastal erosion, and saline backflow
- Ba Lai area is located next to Ba Lai river (Mekong streams) and agriculture productivity is affected by salination
- A sluice gate (1km) is installed on this site, and currently the local stakeholders are planning to establish another sluice gate (2 km) on the opposite side to prevent saltwater intrusion, creating a closed water retainment system and secure agricultural irrigation water.
- Concentrate on securing agricultural water for up to 3 months in preparation for the dry season by storing fresh water

Proposed Beneficiaries

- To increase in the income of agriculture stakeholders (local farmers)

Required Solutions

- Seawater desalination technology for agricultural irrigation water
- Desalination storage facility
- Need salination technology solutions that are more energy-efficient and cost-effective than pumping
- Introducing technologies to improve agriculture/aquaculture productivity but also need to communicate with local residents to facilitate their understanding
- Need to provide advisory services to policymakers pertaining to long term benefit

Possible STI solutions that could be applied

- Desalination storage facility
- Salination system that is more energy efficient and less costly than conventional pumping systems

Expectations from Viet Nam

- Willingness to scale up national pilot activity at the regional level when successful

Annex 3: Participants List

Viet Nam National Mekong Committee (VNMC)

- Mr. Truong Hong Tien, Deputy Director General
- Mr. Nguyen Xuan Tung, Officer
- Mr. Nguyen Chi Thanh, Officer

Officials from line ministries/departments and local Government

- Mrs. Nguyen Thu Phuong, Officer, Department of Water resources Management
- Mr. Trinh Tien Dung, Officer, Electricity and Renewable Energy Authority
- Mr. Nguyen Hai Nam, Officer, Directorate of Water Resources
- Mr. Pham Tuan Dao, Director, Sub-department, Water Resources, Soc Trang
- Mr. Bui Van Tham, Deputy Director, Ben Tre Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
- Mrs. Nguyen Tram Oanh, Head of Division, Hau Giang Department of Natural Resources and Environment
- Mr. Tran Hoang Thuy, Officer, Hau Giang Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
- Mr. Trinh Minh Khoi, Deputy Director of Department, Ben Tre Department of Natural Resources and Environment
- Mr. Ung Van Dang, Head of Division, Soc Trang Department of Natural Resources and Environment
- Mr. Le Van Dao, Expert, Ben Tre Province
- Mr. Huynh Phuong Luong, Officer, Can Tho Department of Natural Resources and Environment

Mekong Institute (MI)

- Mr. Suriyan Vichitlekarn, Executive Director
- Ms. Jian Wang, Program Manager

Mekong River Commission Secretariat (MRCS)

- Ms. Sothea Ros, Partnership Manager *(Virtual)*

Science and Technology Policy Institute (STEPI)

- Dr. Hwanil Park, Chief Director and Research Fellow, Division of Global Innovation Strategy *(Virtual)*
- Dr. Dongun Park, Associate Research Fellow, Office of SDGs Innovation Research *(Virtual)*
- Dr. Wan Seok Chang, Associate Research Fellow
- Ms. So Hyun Kwon, Senior Researcher

K-Water

- Dr. Sangyoung Park, Principal Researcher

UN Office for South-South Cooperation

- Mr. Denis Nkala, Chief, Intergovernmental and UN Systems Affairs
- Mr. Maes Suwantra, Advocacy Advisor
- Ms. Yejin Kim, Project Manager

Annex 4: Photos from the Consultative Meeting

Group Photo

Discussion with RoK experts

VNMC DDG showing the location of proposed pilot sites

Annex 5: Concept Note and Provisional Agenda

Triangular Cooperation Project on Sustainable Development in the Lower Mekong Basin based on the Water-Energy-Food (WEF) Nexus; RoK-UNOSSC Facility Phase 3/P-LINK

FIRST NATIONAL STAKEHOLDER CONSULATIVE FORUM
VIET NAM

CONCEPT NOTE

22-23 September 2022 (Hybrid)
Muong Thanh Luxury Can Tho, Can Tho City, Viet Nam
Zoom Meeting ID: 863 1796 9883; Link; No passcode

I. Background and Context

In September 2021, the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC), the Republic of Korea (RoK)'s Ministry of Science and ICT (MSIT), and the Mekong River Commission (MRC) launched a project entitled, "Triangular Cooperation on Sustainable Development in the Lower Mekong Basin based on the Water-Energy-Food (WEF) Nexus". The project, also known as the "RoK-UNOSSC Facility Phase 3" and P-LINK, is intended to strengthen access to water, food and energy for vulnerable communities living in the Lower Mekong Basin (Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand, and Viet Nam) through strengthening development approaches and management in these sectors. It will take integrative and multi-sectoral approaches in the application of highly demanded technologies on water, energy and food to improve the livelihoods of the people based on South-South and triangular cooperation (SS & TrC) modalities.

The First Regional Stakeholder Consultative Forum (hereinafter as Regional Forum) was held on 28 June 2022. As envisaged in the project document, the first Regional Forum was intended to (1) provide an opportunity for the MRC Member Countries to make suggestions on the proposed project's approach and direction, (2)discuss the integration of the three sectors (water, food, energy) in project's implementation, (3)discuss the proposed multi-sectoral platform, (4)discuss/identify pilot areas based on the criteria provided by the Project Management Team prior to the consultative meeting (5) discuss a joint work plan for 2022 that is aligned with the Basin Development Strategy (BDS) 2021-2030 and national development priorities, and (6)set timeframe for the next consultation. Furthermore, the Forum facilitated the project's endeavour to develop one joint work plan as each country delegation indicated their national development priorities and proposed possible pilot sites in their respective countries.

In the country presentation, the Vietnamese delegation indicated that the Viet Nam National Mekong Committee will collaborate with relevant line ministries including the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD), the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE), and the Ministry of Industry and Trade (MOIT) to implement the pilot under the P-LINK. They will also invite other line ministries and governance entities, local government, local communities, village people committees, research institutions and development partners for the collaboration. The delegation proposed the Mekong Delta area as a tentative site for the pilot. They indicated that the focus could be on the adverse impacts from upstream development, climate change and the rise of the sea level. These have resulted in saltwater intrusion, land subsidence, bank erosion and overexploitation of ground water in the Mekong Delta. Moreover, the communities in the Mekong Delta are facing decreased agricultural and fishery productivity. Furthermore, there are significant impacts on biodiversity.

The proposed national pilot site area is a district located in Viet Nam's southern Mekong Delta region. The district has a population of around 150,000 - 200,000 people. There is no hydropower

project in the locality. However, the area is affected by hydropower development in the upstream areas of the Mekong River.

The Vietnamese delegation also stated that the country's expectations for the national pilot and the overall P-Link project. These are: 1) engagement of relevant stakeholders in the national pilot formulation, implementation and evaluation, 2) technical exchanges and capacity building focusing on Science, Technology and Innovation (STI), and 3) knowledge creation, documentation and sharing of lessons learnt for local communities. They expressed a wish that the national pilot could be scaled up to the regional level with additional funding supported by development partners.

A prevalent view among all four country delegations was that there is a need for further consultations with other national stakeholders in their respective countries on the selection of pilot sites and the implementation structures. They also asked questions on the success factors of the WEF Nexus applications, the scope of scaling-up the national pilots, how P-LINK national pilots would incorporate different national priorities of participating countries, and support sharing of knowledge and experiences among local communities (bottom-up approach).

To that end, the Project Management Team, in collaboration with the implementing parties (MI, MRCS and STEPI) will follow-up with each country bilaterally to organise national consultations towards finalising the selection of national pilot sites. Once the national pilot sites and relevant technologies have been selected, the Project will also develop indicators to monitor and measure the impact.

Thus, within this context, this concept note is compiled to design a national consultative process for Viet Nam.

II. Objectives

The objectives of the national consultative forum are as follows:

1. To further discuss the final selection of national pilot site(s)
2. To visit a proposed/tentative pilot site/location in the country
3. To discuss national implementation structures for the national pilot project in Viet Nam;
4. To bring national stakeholders to discuss relevant issues pertaining to P-LINK; discuss the integration of the three sectors (water, food, energy) in P-LINK implementation; and
5. To develop new indicators for the pilots.

III. Expected Outcomes

The consultative forum will facilitate better understanding of P-LINK, the WEF Nexus and its applications, and minimize project risks, pertaining to communications and understanding of national implementation steps and requisite success. National pilot sites determined through consensus by national stakeholders. Concurrence on a national project implementation structure.

IV. Consultation Modality

The consultative forum will constitute of a discussion at the meeting venue and field visits to potential pilot site in the Mekong Delta.

IV. Meeting Participants

- 15 national participants from Viet Nam National Mekong Committee (VNMC), line ministries, local and provincial governments
- UN Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC)
- Science and Technology Policy Institute (STEPI)

- Mekong Institute (MI)
- Mekong River Commission Secretariat (MRCS)

Provisional Meeting Agenda

Day 1: Thursday, 22 September 2022 Zoom Meeting ID: 863 1796 9883; Link; No passcode	
TIME	**ITEMS**
9:00 – 9:30	Registration
9:30 – 9:45	**Opening Session** *(MC TBC)* • Welcome Remarks –Viet Nam Mekong National Committee (VNMC) –Mekong River Commission Secretariat (MRCS) • Opening Remarks – Mr. Denis Nkala, Chief, Intergovernmental and UN Systems Affairs (IUSA), UNOSSC • Participants Introduction
9:45 – 10:45	**Session 1: Project Overview, Pilot Site Selection Criteria and Outcomes of the First Regional Stakeholder Consultative Forum** *Moderator: Mr. Denis Nkala, Chief, IUSA, UNOSSC* • A. Presentation on Project Direction, Approach & Selection Criteria for National Pilot Sites (UNOSSC) 15mins –Ms. Yejin Kim, P-LINK Project Manager, UNOSSC • B. Outcomes of the Vietnamese delegation's deliberation at the First Regional Forum (VNMC) 15 mins **Discussions** (30 mins)
10:45– 11:00	Group Photo and Coffee Break
11:00 – 12:15	**Session 2: Mekong Delta Situational Analysis and Implications of P-LINK national pilot in this area** *Facilitator: Viet Nam National Mekong Committee* • A. WEF Nexus Situation Analysis of the Mekong Delta (VNMC) 15mins • B. RoK's experience in the application of WEF approach (STEPI & RoK expert) 30 mins – Dr. Wan Seok Chang, Associate Research Fellow and Ms. So Hyun Kwon, Senior Researcher, STEPI Topic 1: Summary of the current & ongoing projects in Mekong Delta (20 mins) Topic 2: RoK's experience of water projects in RoK & Mekong regions (10 mins) – Dr. Sangyoung Park, Principal Researcher, K-Water (Online) **Discussions** (20mins)
12:15 – 13:30	Lunch
13:30 – 14:00	**Session 3: Panel Discussion on National Pilot Project Indicators** • National Pilot Project Indicators (UNOSSC) *Moderator and Presenter: Mr. Denis Nkala, Chief, IUSA, UNOSSC* *Panelists* – MI – STEPI – VMCS

14:00 – 15:00	**Session 4: Group Discussions** *Facilitator: Viet Nam National Mekong Committee*
15:00 – 15:20	Coffee Break
15:20 – 15:40	**Session 5: Group Presentations**
15:40 - 16:30	**Session 6: Plenary Reflections and Consensus Building** *Facilitator: Mekong Institute (MI)* • Site selection • National implementation structure
16:30 – 16:45	**Closing Session (Summary and Way Forward)** – Mr. Denis Nkala, Chief, IUSA, UNOSSC
18:30	**Reception Dinner**
	Overnight stay in Can Tho city

Day 2: Friday, 23 September 2022	
TIME	**ITEMS**
7:30 – 9:00	**Travel from Can Tho to Proposed Pilot Site**
9:00 – 12:00	**Meeting with Local Authorities**
12:00 – 13:30	**Lunch**
13:30 – 16:00	**Field Visit to Proposed Pilot Site** • Visit to the community • Reflections
16:00	**End of Program**

Triangular Cooperation Project on Sustainable Development in the Lower Mekong Basin based on the Water-Energy-Food (WEF) Nexus; RoK-UNOSSC Facility Phase 3/P-LINK

CAMBODIA FIRST NATIONAL STAKEHOLDER CONSULATIVE MEETING SUMMARY REPORT

20-21 October 2022
Meeting Venue: Angkor Meas Hotel, Stung Treng Province, Cambodia
Proposed Pilot Site (Field Visit): Sdao Commune, Sesan District, Strung Treng Province

The United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC) promotes demand-driven projects implemented by willing partner countries. The project entitled, the "Triangular Cooperation on Sustainable Development in the Lower Mekong Basin based on the Water-Energy-Food (WEF) is one such example demonstrating a strong collaboration between the Republic of Korea (RoK), Lower Mekong Basin Countries and UNOSSC. The project, also known as the "RoK-UNOSSC Facility Phase 3" or P-LINK, aims to strengthen access to water, food and energy for vulnerable communities living in the Lower Mekong Basin (Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand, and Viet Nam) through strengthening development approaches and management in these sectors. It takes integrative and multi-sectoral approaches in the application of demanded technologies on water, energy and food to improve the livelihoods of the people based on South-South and triangular cooperation (SS & TrC) modalities.

Following the First Regional Stakeholder Forum held on 28 June 2022, participating countries agreed to convene national consultations to further discuss the final selection of the national pilot sites under P-LINK as well as project indicators.

The Cambodia National Mekong Committee (CNMC) organized its First National Consultative Forum and Field Visit to a proposed site in Stung Treng Province on 20-21 October 2022. The Consultative Forum took place at Stung Treng city area as the CNMC has proposed a pilot site locality in Stung Treng Province, Northtern part of the country. More than 20 participants including officials from CNMC as well as staff members from other line ministries, Stung Treng local government and implementing institutions (MI, MRCS, STEPI and UNOSSC) attended the meeting in person and online (Annex 2: Participants List). The occasion facilitated the preliminary set up of a national multi-sectoral platform (MSP) for national and local stakeholders. The Consultative Forum was organized with the following objectives (Annex 4: Concept Note and Agenda):

1. To further discuss the final selection of national pilot site(s)
2. To visit a proposed/tentative pilot site/location in the country
3. To discuss national implementation structures for the national pilot project in Cambodia;
4. To bring national stakeholders to discuss relevant issues pertaining to P-LINK; discuss the integration of the three sectors (water, food, energy) in P-LINK implementation; and
5. To develop new indicators for the pilots.

The National Forum helped Cambodian stakeholders to gain a better understanding of the objectives and directions of P-LINK, map out similar WEF Nexus initiatives in Sesan, Sekong and Srepok (3S) River Basins, and identify their roles in national pilot implementation. In parallel, implementing institutions and UNOSSC were able to better identify ongoing developing challenges related to water, energy and food management, especially in the proposed pilot sites by CNMC in the Sdao locality (Annex 1).

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS AND FOLLOW UP ACTIONS

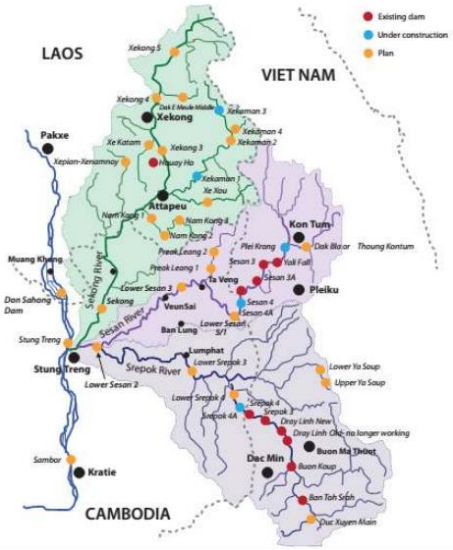
P-LINK Project Overview, Directions and Pilot Site Selection Criteria

The Project Management Team (UNOSSC) presented the key objectives, scope, expected outcomes (deliverables) and overall implementation structure of the project. Based on the principles of SS & TrC, P-LINK is driven by the demands of participating countries and their ownership. The Project Team also clarified that it is not a project designed to set up large scale infrastructure but to introduce appropriate technological solutions and capacity building for integrated development by applying the WEF nexus approach. The project is ready to facilitate and serve as a platform for sharing knowledge and experience among participating countries, which can be expanded to a broader audience at a later stage.

Key Development Challenges

In the country presentation, the Cambodia delegation [CNMC and MOWRAM (Ministry of Water Resources and Meteorology)] provided a situation analysis of the 3S River Basin mainly focused on water and food. The sub-basins of the Sesan, Srepok and Sekong rivers form the Lower Mekong 3S basin. This part of the basin has significant social, economic, and environment importance for the Lower Mekong Basin (LMB) countries. Among the four LMB countries, three countries: Cambodia, Lao PDR and Viet Nam share the 3S basin. These three countries are part of the Sekong sub-basin. The Cambodian delegation informed the parties that the upper/northern part of Cambodia has more actively utilized and exploited available water resources within the 3S River Basins as shown in Figure 1. At the same time, the areas face difficulties related to flooding and drought, impacting on fisheries, agricultural irrigation and sediment management, which cascade into adverse impacts on the environment and livelihood of communities dependent on basin resources. Some challenges include mal-nutrition and limited access to clean water.

Figure 1: Status of hydropower stations in 3S Basin



Source: CNMC and MoWRAM, Government of Cambodia

Cambodian stakeholders also shared with the meeting challenges of fostering strong sub-regional cooperation between Cambodia, Lao PDR and Viet Nam to ensure sustainable 3S River Basins. There is still limited coordination and cooperation on transboundary water resource development and management due to a lack of a transboundary cooperation mechanism (deficient sharing of information and data on flows downstream, flood forecasting, flood control, and warning mechanisms). Cambodian representatives underscored the need to enhance existing transboundary coordination and management mechanisms and plans related to transboundary water resources management priorities needed to facilitate greater cooperation among the three countries.

Appropriate RoK Technical Solutions

The Science and Technology Policy Institute (STEPI) team provided several examples of international development cooperation projects in the Lower Mekong focused on sustainable food, energy and water management, which are carried out by international development cooperation stakeholders (Table 1) including Mekong-RoK collaborations (Table 2).

Table 1: Examples of international projects related to WEF approach in the Lower Mekong

	Project	Approach	Implementers/ Funders	Period
1	Supporting the Mekong River Commission with Transboundary Water Mgmt. in the Mekong River Basin	Develop common strategies and guidelines on sustainable hydropower development and climate change adaptation	GIZ / BMZ	2016 – 2018
2	SERVIR-MEKONG	Develop regional geospatial tools and services from drought monitoring, flood forecasting, and crop yield mgmt.	ADPC/NASA/ USAID	2015-
3	SMART INFRASTRUCTURE FOR THE MEKONG	U.S. Government's best expertise in natural resource mgmt. of water security, biodiversity conservation, and DRR	Dept. of Interior and others/ USAID	2014 -

Table 2: RoK funded projects related to WEF approach in the Lower Mekong

	Project	Approach	Implementing Institutions	Budget/ Period
1	[Mekong-ROK Cooperation Fund] Water Data Utilization and Capacity Building in the Mekong Region	Produce hydrological data by utilizing the satellite-based technology and to apply hydrologic and hydraulic analysis technology in Mekong River Basin as study site and carry out trainee capacity building program	K-water, NASA, USACE	USD 1million/ 3 years (~'22.10)
2	[KOICA] Feasibility Study on Water Supply Measure and Flood Mitigation for the Prek Neal River Basin, Svay Rieng Province, Cambodia	Evaluate and improved water related vulnerability affected by climate change; development projects of climate and water resource mgmt. using various financial and governance mechanisms; and strengthen ability towards climate and disaster resilience in vulnerable urban areas of Mekong basin in Cambodia and Lao PDR	KMCRC Dong-bu Eng	USD 2million/ 2 years (~'23.12)
3	[UNDP & Ministry of Environment, RoK] Integrated Water Resources Mgmt. and Enhancement of Climate Adaptability Project in Vulnerable Urban Areas of Mekong Basin	Address the critical need for risk data to inform integrated water resources management and, in so doing, enable increased investment in risk reduction measures.	KMCRC, PEC, Sama	USD 2million/ 3 years (~'25.5)

In addition, they showcased feasible appropriate technologies and applications from the RoK (Table 3) that could be considered as innovative solutions in the identified pilot site in Cambodia.

Table 3: Appropriate RoK solutions that could be introduced in pilot area

	Technology (greater access to clean H_20)	Function
1	Renewable-powered desalination	Greater access to clean water
2	Digital Technologies (AI, Big data, IoT, Cloud), convergence and integration of multiple technologies	Water related Risk Mgmt.

STEPI also shared with the meeting some WEF related technology developments and applications in the RoK. The key message was that there is no one solution or technology to solve water, energy and food related issues. If any technology is applied to solve a WEF related problem and produces multiple effects on WEF,

such technology can be considered as WEF Nexus technology. Some possible examples of technology innovations include digital technology, Information and Communications Technology (ICT), and renewable energy technology. Therefore, it is an important task to identify technology and to design the application framework, in other to match local demand and supply.

STEPI explained that there are two different approaches for technology solutions/applications in the national pilots. The first way is to improve existing mechanisms for water, energy and food consumption and production such as access to ground water via electric pumps and traditional irrigation systems. The second modality is to introduce new solutions appropriate to the local demands depending on the population density and local geographical traits. Some potential WEF approach technology solutions include renewable energy generation (hydro, solar, wind energy), automated/electric agricultural facility, smart water management systems for disaster management, smart micro grid and water desalination, etc. Appropriate technologies will be introduced based on the situation in the identified pilot site.

Finetuning Project Indicators

The Project Management Team (UNOSSC) explained the importance of setting project indicators and clarified the rationale for revising and finetuning them. The forum participants agreed that the project should have two sets of indicators: 1) generic (regional) and 2) country specific. The generic indicators will be a common set of indicators to measure sub-regional (MRC) policymaking and joint initiatives focused on inclusiveness and access to water, energy and food for vulnerable communities in the region in consideration of gender dimensions. The country specific indicators are directly linked to national policy making and pilot implementation. The MRCS representative also proposed linking the project indicators with MRC's multi-year work plan.

Cambodia's Proposed Pilot Site

The Cambodian stakeholders had an internal group discussion to propose a pilot site for the field visit. (Refer to Annex 1).

- Sdao Commune, Sesan District, Stung Treung Province
- Proposed indicators:
  i. Target population (# beneficiary)
  ii. Gender and vulnerable groups (minorities and indigenous communities).
  iii. Agriculture production techniques (or number of crop types) to mitigate salination (should change form salination to climate change (flood and drought) because in 3S, salination does not reach there)
  iv. Aquaculture (fish species) to be considered should be a long-distance migratory fish species (or white fish) and at least should be 12 white fish species to be monitored
  v. Conservation/protected areas existing to be included

Final Pilot Selection Process for Cambodia

Required follow-up action

- The Project Team will prepare a draft meeting report along with the profile of the proposed site visited.
- CNMC together with national and local stakeholders will review how to design the local implementation structure (including budget planning and allocation arrangements) and responsibilities of involved stakeholders (national and local government stakeholders, academia, civil society, etc.)
- CNMC to provide baseline data to the Project Team.

Annex 1: CNMC Proposed Site 1: Sdao Commune, Sesan District, Stung Treung Province

Figure 1: Stung Treung Province location

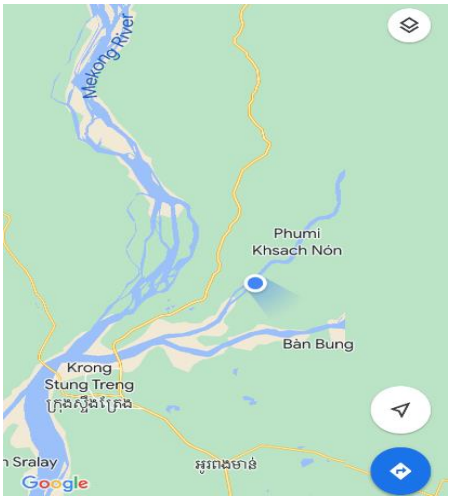


Figure 2: Sdao commune location on Google map

Photo 1: Snapshot of the community entrance

Location: Sdao Commune in Sesan District, Stung Treung Province

(about 30-40 kms away from Stung Treung Province, 1hour drive and boat ride)

Demographics/ Proposed Beneficiaries:
Population: 1,900 people [40% youth (age 15-32), 30% children]
There are three communities in the commune

- Sdao Community 1: ~192 households
- Sdao Community 2: 183 households
- Unregistered/informal community (not registered under Ministry of Interior): ~200 households

**one of the poorest locality in Cambodia*

Governance structure: Bottom-up approach (decision making in discussion with community members)
Education Facility: From primary to middle schools.

- Students who wish to continue their higher education should study in another district, across the river.

Main source of income/workforce:

- 80~90% agriculture (farming);
- 10% garment factory laborers (often sell labor but seasonal work)

Note: Agriculture and fishery activity cannot be detached. They are supplementary. Fishery work not so stable (not many available, challenges with illegal fishery)

Key agriculture products: rice, cassava, sesame, cashew nuts (some of them are sold to the provincial govt.)

Gender: These days there isn't much distinction between "men" and "women" chores at workspace (they both contribute to labor). Yet, women community representative stated that they have more household chores (raising children, housework- e.g. cooking) in addition to daily labor.
Key development issues/challenges:

WATER: Limited access

With the support of a local NGO ("My Village), the community installed a water pump (electricity) facility (photo attached) to use ground water in 2019. Still, only 80 households have regular access to water using this facility. The rest of the households have limited access to this water distribution channel because they cannot afford it. (Note: it costs around 1 USD for 4m^3 of water). So many households use electric pumps at individual households to pump water, some households bring water from the river.

Issue: The water is not filtered or treated. Some community members indicated that people often get sick from abnormal weather conditions, but poor water quality could also be a factor.

Photo 2: Installed water tank facility in the community

ENERGY: Limited access

There is electric power grid provided by the provincial government. But again, many households cannot afford the "energy cost" and rely on biofuels. Yet, with deforestation, it is hard to finds wood for such purposes. Community members have to travel further away from their neighborhoods to collect wood.

FOOD: Limited irrigation for their rice fields.

The community members requested for technical expertise to diversify crops that can be cultivated in two different seasons (wet and dry) in their locality. With changes in climate, rice paddy fields get extremely dry, resulting in decreased agricultural productivity. There are situations when they do not yield any crops and lack sufficient food resources, which not only affects their wellbeing of community members for also their income.

Photo 3: rice cultivation area

Climate Change: Extreme weather conditions

The community has been exposed with more frequent flash floods that affect their livelihood. There have been cases where community facilities built on riverbanks have been destroyed from heavy rain. In the Wet season, the locality faces drought (Aug-Sep) that affects their agriculture productivity. The community find it difficult to monitor the weather conditions and wished if there is any appropriate technology that can facilitate them to regularly check the water level and climate conditions.

Possible appropriate technologies/solutions that could be introduced

The project could explore introducing user-friendly and cost-effective appropriate technologies such as biogas, solar energy and water filtration system to the community. Micro-level water monitoring system, crop diversification and smart farming techniques could also be considered.

Expectations from Cambodia

The Cambodian stakeholders expect that the project could contribute to enhancing the livelihoods of Sdao Commune through application of technical solutions and capacity building opportunities to effectively manage water, energy and food.

Issues for consideration:

The project should consider if the locality is easily accessibility throughout the year. It could be difficult for project team and RoK experts to frequently visit the locality (400kms from Phnom Penh to the Stung Treng, more than 8-hour drive and additional 1-hour and boat ride to the community). The project team should find out alternative routes or travel arrangement to the Sdao commune.

Annex 2: Participants List

Cambodia National Mekong Committee (CNMC)

- H.E. So Sophort, Secretary-General
- H.E. Long Saravuth, Deputy Secretary-General
- Chheang Hong, Director of IKM Dept. and P-LINK focal point
- Meak Chhavannarey, Deputy Director
- Cheng Dum, Officer
- Yang Changbarey, Officer

Ministry of Water Resources and Meteorology (MoWRAM)

- So Im Monichoth, Deputy Director, Department of Meteorology
- Heng Bauran, Head of Remote Sensing and Mapping Unit
- Tong Seng, Chief Officer of Hydrology and River Works Dept

Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries

- Mr. Touch Bunthang, Deputy Director of Inland Fisheries and Research Institute of Fisheries Administration

Ministry of Mines and Energy

- Sok Navong, Officer

National Committee of Disaster Management (NCDM)

- Eng Tol, Officer

Stung Treng Local Government

- Det Chamnan, Chief, Fisheries Administration (FiAC)- Stung Treng Province
- Eng Sophea, Deputy of Administration, Municipal, Stung Treng City
- Sowan Piseth, Governor, Sesan District, Stung Treng Province
- Sok Ren, Deputy Governor, Sesan District, Stung Treng Province
- Oum Dyna, Officer, Department of mine and Energy, Stung Treng Province
- Pang Rameth, Staff, Department of Water Resource and Meteorology, Stung Treng Province
- Ket Vichet, Staff, Department of Water Resource and Meteorology, Stung Treng Province
- Chan Mearadey, Staff, Department of Water Resource and Meteorology, Stung Treng Province
- Hourn Sophea, Staff, Department of Water Resource and Meteorology, Stung Treng Province
- Sam Sreyna, Staff, Department of Water Resource and Meteorology, Stung Treng Province

My Village Organization (MVi)

- Sith Sovanthong

Research Institute

- Kim Makara, Staff

Mekong Institute (MI)

- Mr. Suriyan Vichitlekarn, Executive Director *(Virtual)*
- Ms. Jian Wang, Program Manager

Mekong River Commission Secretariat (MRCS)

- Ms. Sothea Ros, Partnership Manager

Science and Technology Policy Institute (STEPI)

- Dr. Hwanil Park, Chief Director and Research Fellow, Division of Global Innovation Strategy
- Dr. Dongun Park, Associate Research Fellow, Office of SDGs Innovation Research

UN Office for South-South Cooperation

- Mr. Denis Nkala, Chief, Intergovernmental and UN Systems Affairs *(Virtual)*
- Mr. Maes Suwantra, Advocacy Advisor
- Ms. Yejin Kim, Project Manager

Annex 3: Photos from the Consultative Forum

Group Photo

Discussions

Annex 4: Concept Note and Provisional Agenda

Triangular Cooperation Project on Sustainable Development in the Lower Mekong Basin based on the Water-Energy-Food (WEF) Nexus; RoK-UNOSSC Facility Phase 3/P-LINK

FIRST NATIONAL STAKEHOLDER CONSULATIVE FORUM CAMBODIA

CONCEPT NOTE

Date: 20-21 October 2022
Venue: Stung Treng Province, Cambodia
Zoom Meeting ID: 864 4715 0809; Link; no passcode

I. Background and Context

In September 2021, the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC), the Republic of Korea (RoK)'s Ministry of Science and ICT (MSIT), and the Mekong River Commission (MRC) launched a project entitled, "Triangular Cooperation on Sustainable Development in the Lower Mekong Basin based on the Water-Energy-Food (WEF) Nexus". The project, also known as the "RoK-UNOSSC Facility Phase 3" and P-LINK, is intended to strengthen access to water, food and energy for vulnerable communities living in the Lower Mekong Basin (Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand, and Viet Nam) through strengthening development approaches and management in these sectors. It will take integrative and multi-sectoral approaches in the application of highly demanded technologies on water, energy and food to improve the livelihoods of the people based on South-South and triangular cooperation (SS & TrC) modalities.

The First Regional Stakeholder Consultative Forum (hereinafter the Regional Forum) was held on 28 June 2022. As envisaged in the project document, the first Regional Forum was intended to (1) provide an opportunity for the MRC Member Countries to make suggestions on the proposed project's approach and direction, (2) discuss the integration of the three sectors (water, food, energy) in project's implementation, (3) discuss the proposed multi-sectoral platform, (4) discuss/identify pilot areas based on the criteria developed by the Project Management Team prior to the consultative meeting on the basis of criteria provided by the Project Management Team, (5) discuss a joint work plan for 2022 that is aligned with the Basin Development Strategy (BDS) 2021-2030 and national development priorities, and (6) set a timeframe for the next consultation. Furthermore, the Forum facilitated the project's endeavour to develop one joint work plan as each country delegation indicated their national development priorities and proposed possible pilot sites in their respective countries.

In the country presentation, the Cambodian delegation indicated that the Cambodia National Mekong Committee (CNMC) will serve as the national focal point to implement the pilot under the P-LINK and also invite other line ministries, respective local government, local communities, civil society, academia and development cooperation partners for collaboration. The delegation suggested that Sesan, Sekong and Srepok (3S) River Basins could be considered as tentative sites for the pilots. The 3S River Basins are important tributaries of the Mekong River, making up 10% of the basin area of the Mekong River Basin and have an average annual discharge that represents 20% of the total average annual discharge from the Mekong River.[1] They identified the following priorities: 1) sustainable aquaculture and fish production, 2) irrigation and water use (flood &

[1] Mekong River Commission (MRC). 2017. "Transboundary Water Resources Management Issues in the Seasan and Srepok River Basin of Cambodia and Viet Nam", p3.

drought mgmt.) in Sekong (Northeast/Northwest) and 3) strengthened mechanisms to improve Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) planning and integrated basin management to mitigate flood and drought risks in 3S River Basin region.

The Cambodia delegation also stated the country's expectations for the national pilot and the overall P-Link project. These are: 1) the need for advisory services on national planning and policies for climate adaptation and resilient development, 2) technical exchanges and capacity building focusing on Science, Technology and Innovation (STI), and 3) knowledge creation, documentation and sharing of lessons learnt. They expressed a wish that the national pilot could be replicated in other localities in Cambodia with additional support and funding from other partners.

A prevalent view among all four country delegations was that there is a need for further consultations with other national stakeholders in their respective countries on the selection of pilot sites and the implementation structures. They also asked questions on the success factors of the WEF Nexus applications, the scope of scaling-up the national pilots, how P-LINK national pilots would incorporate different national priorities of participating countries, and support sharing of knowledge and experiences among local communities (bottom-up approach).

To that end, the Project Mgmt. Team, in collaboration with the implementing parties (MI, MRCS and STEPI) will follow-up with each country bilaterally to organise national consultations towards finalising the selection of national pilot sites. Once the national pilot sites and relevant technologies have been selected, the Project will also develop indicators to monitor and measure the impact.

Thus, within this context, this concept note is compiled to design a national consultative process for Cambodia. The CMNC proposed Stung Treng Town in Stung Treng Province as a tentative area for field visit. Stung Treng Province is located in the northeast of Cambodia and borders Ratanakiri province to the east, Mondulkiri province to the south. Stung treng Town, the provincial capital, is situated 481km from Phnom Penh.[2]

II. Objectives

The objectives of the national consultation are as follows:

1. To further discuss the final selection of national pilot site(s)
2. To visit a proposed/tentative pilot site/location in the country (Stung Treng)
3. To discuss national implementation structures for the national pilot project in Cambodia; and
4. To bring national stakeholders to discuss relevant issues pertaining to P-LINK; discuss the integration of the three sectors (water, food, energy) in P-LINK implementation; and
5. To develop new indicators for the pilots.

III. Expected Outcomes

National pilot sites determined through consensus by national stakeholders. Concurrence on a national project implementation structure. The consultation will also facilitate better understanding of P-LINK, the WEF Nexus and its applications, and minimize project risks, pertaining to communications and understanding of national implementation steps and requisite success. The consultation will also help in finalizing new indicators as tabled by Project Management during the First Steering Committee Meeting.

[2] Mekong Wetlands Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use Programme (A Joint UNDP-IUCN-MRC-GEF Funded Programme). 2005. "Vulnerability Assessment of Climate Risks in Stung Treng Province, Cambodia", p4.

IV. Consultation Modality

During a preparatory online meeting convened on 24 August, a number of outstanding issues were identified for resolution during the National Consultative meeting. The consultative meeting will constitute of a discussion at the meeting venue and field visits to potential pilot site (s) in Cambodia. Although there is already a strong recommendation on the sites to be selected, the final decision will be made by the consultative meeting. Another issue to consider is whether one pilot site will be chosen or more than one. The Cambodian representatives requested a clarification on whether the sites could be selected still even though there are no hydro-electricity generating activities (the energy component of the WEF). It was noted that the potential sites are impacted by upstream hydro-electric generating and therefore can be selected as pilots. It was further noted that a component of the project requiring regional solutions could impact on the proposed sites. The meeting also clarified the methodology for funding the National Consultation and requested the CNMC to submit a budget for approval by project Management at the earliest possible opportunity.

IV. Expected Participants

- 15 participants from Cambodia National Mekong Committee (CNMC), line ministries
- In addition, approximately 6-7 participants and facilitators will come from the Implementing parties as follows:
  - UN Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC)
  - Science and Technology Policy Institute (STEPI)
  - Mekong Institute (MI)
  - Mekong River Commission Secretariat (MRCS)

Meeting Agenda

Day 1: Thursday, 20 October 2022	
TIME	**ITEMS**
8:30 – 9:00	Registration
9:00 – 9:20	**Welcome and Opening Session** • Welcome Remarks - H.E. Mr. So Sophort, Secretary General of CNMC - Mr. Denis Nkala, Chief, Intergovernmental and UN Systems Affairs (IUSA), UNOSSC
9:20 – 9:30	Participants Introduction
9:30 – 9:40	**Forum objectives and Tentative Agenda** - Mr. Chheang Hong, Director of CNMC and P-LINK focal point
9:40 – 10:40	**Session 1: Project Overview, Pilot Site Selection Criteria and Outcomes of the First Regional Stakeholder Consultative Forum** • A. Presentation on Project Direction, Approach & Selection Criteria for National Pilot Sites (UNOSSC) 15mins –Ms. Yejin Kim, P-LINK Project Manager, UNOSSC • B. Outcomes of the Cambodian delegation's deliberation at the First Regional Forum (CNMC) 15 mins **Discussions** (30 mins)
10:40– 11:00	Group Photo and Coffee Break

11:00 – 12:15	**Session 2: Mekong Delta Situational Analysis of the 3S River Basins & Implementation of P-LINK national pilot in this area** *Facilitator: CNMC* • A. WEF Nexus Situation Analysis of the Mekong Delta (CNMC) 15mins • B. RoK's experience in the application of WEF approach (STEPI) 30 mins – Dr. Hwanil Park, Chief Director and Research Fellow, Division of Global Innovation Strategy, STEPI – Dr. Dongun Park, Associate Research Fellow, Office of SDGs Innovation Research, STEPI **Discussions** (20mins)
12:15 – 13:30	Lunch
13:30 – 14:00	**Session 3: Panel Discussion on National Pilot Project Indicators** • National Pilot Project Indicators (UNOSSC) *Discussions (*CMCS, MI, MRCS, STEPI, UNOSSC)
14:00 – 15:00	**Session 4: Group Discussions** *Facilitator: CNMC*
15:00 – 15:15	Coffee Break
15:20 – 15:40	**Session 5: Group Presentations**
15:40 - 16:30	**Session 6: Plenary Reflections and Consensus Building** • Site selection • National implementation structure
16:30 – 16:45	**Closing Session (Summary and Way Forward)** - H.E. Mr. So Sophort, Secretary General of CNMC

Day 2: Friday, 21 October 2022	
TIME	**ITEMS**
7:30 – 9:00	**Travel from Sdao Commune, Sesan District, Stung Treng Province** *Note: originally scheduled to visit to Cambodia-Lao PDR border (slight change due to weather conditions)*
9:00 – 12:00	**Meeting with Local Authorities**
12:00 – 13:30	**Lunch**
13:30 – 16:00	**Field Visit to Proposed Pilot Site** • Visit to the community • Reflections
16:00	**Return to Stung Treng province**

Triangular Cooperation Project on Sustainable Development in the Lower Mekong Basin based on the Water-Energy-Food (WEF) Nexus; RoK-UNOSSC Facility Phase 3/P-LINK

LAO PDR FIRST NATIONAL STAKEHOLDER CONSULATIVE MEETING SUMMARY REPORT

25 -26 October 2022
Thakhek, Khammouane Province (Bangfai Basin), Lao PDR
Proposed Pilot Site: Nakio and Keng Sa Vang villages in Mahaxay District, Khammouane Province

The United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC) promotes demand-driven projects implemented by willing partner countries. The project entitled, the "Triangular Cooperation on Sustainable Development in the Lower Mekong Basin based on the Water-Energy-Food (WEF) is one such example demonstrating a strong collaboration between the Republic of Korea (RoK), Lower Mekong Basin Countries and UNOSSC. The project, also known as the "RoK-UNOSSC Facility Phase 3" or P-LINK, aims to strengthen access to water, food and energy for vulnerable communities living in the Lower Mekong Basin (Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand, and Viet Nam) through strengthening development approaches and management in these sectors. It takes integrative and multi-sectoral approaches in the application of demanded technologies on water, energy and food to improve the livelihoods of the people based on South-South and triangular cooperation (SS & TrC) modalities.

Following the First Regional Stakeholder Forum held on 28 June 2022, participating countries agreed to convene national consultations to further discuss the final selection of the national pilot sites under P-LINK as well as project indicators.

The Lao National Mekong Committee (LNMC) organized its First National Consultative Forum and Field Visit to a proposed site in Khammouane Province (near Bangfai Basin), Lao PDR on 25-26 October 2022. The Consultative Forum took place at Thakhek city area, the LNMC had proposed Nakio and Keng Sa Vang villages as pilot sites as well. These villages are located in Mahaxay District, Khammouane Province. More than 20 participants including officials from CNMC as well as staff members from other line ministries, Khammouane Province local government and implementing institutions (MI, MRCS, STEPI and UNOSSC) attended the meeting in person and online (Annex 2: Participants List). The occasion facilitated the preliminary set up of a national multi-sectoral platform (MSP) for national and local stakeholders. The Consultative Forum was organized with the following objectives (Annex 4: Concept Note and Agenda):

1. To further discuss the final selection of national pilot site(s)
2. To visit a proposed/tentative pilot site/location in the country
3. To discuss national implementation structures for the national pilot project in Cambodia;
4. To bring national stakeholders to discuss relevant issues pertaining to P-LINK; discuss the integration of the three sectors (water, food, energy) in P-LINK implementation; and
5. To develop new indicators for the pilots.

The National Forum helped involved Cambodian stakeholders to gain a better understanding of the objectives and directions of P-LINK.

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS AND FOLLOW UP ACTIONS

P-LINK Project Overview, Directions and Pilot Site Selection Criteria

The Project Management Team (UNOSSC) presented the key objectives, scope, expected outcomes (deliverables) and overall implementation structure of the project. Based on the principles of SS & TrC, P-LINK is driven by the demands of participating countries and their ownership. The Project Team also clarified that it is not a project designed to set up large scale infrastructure but to introduce appropriate technological solutions and capacity building for integrated development by applying the WEF nexus approach. The project is ready to facilitate and serve as a platform for sharing of knowledge and experience among participating countries, which can be expanded to a broader audience at a later stage.

Appropriate Technical Solutions

STEPI informed the meeting participants about some WEF related technology developments and applications in the RoK. The key message was that there is no one solution or technology to solve water, energy and food related issues. If any technology is applied to solve a WEF related problem and produces multiple effects on WEF, such technology can be considered as WEF Nexus technology. Some possible examples of technology innovations include digital technology, Information and Communications Technology (ICT), and renewable energy technology. Therefore, it is an important task to identify technology and to design the application framework, in other words matching demand and supply.

STEPI also explained that there are two different approaches for technology solutions/applications in the national pilots. The first way is to improve existing mechanisms for water, energy and food consumption and production such as access to ground water via electric pumps and traditional irrigation systems. The second modality is to introduce new solutions appropriate to the local demands depending on the population density and local geographical traits. Some potential WEF approach technology solutions include renewable energy generation (hydro, solar, wind energy), automated/electric agricultural facility, smart water management systems for disaster management, smart micro grid and water desalination, etc. Appropriate technologies will be introduced based on the situation in the identified pilot site.

Key Development Challenges in the proposed site

Lao PDR stakeholders indicated that they wish the P-LINK project to initiate a pilot in Mahaxay District in Khammouane Province, which is located in the XeBangfai Basin. The locality has arable land and has a relatively large land area for agricultural production.

Figure 1: Map of Khammoune Province

Source: Carte touristique de la province de Khammouane en 2015

However, many communities in the province have been struggling from severe floods every year. They have to evacuate and relocate for quite some time (one - two months) every year during the wet season (June - September). Consequently, their agricultural productivity has been reduced due to severe floods. There is a main canal (27 kilometers in length from Nam Theun reservoir) that comes near the village, but there is no irrigation system to distribute the available water. There are flood monitoring/warning systems in place, but nothing to address flooding itself. The community has requested for drought tolerant plant seeds that can be grown in the dry season (RoK agricultural expertise).

Initially, Lao stakeholders requested for infrastructure support to link these vulnerable communities to have better access to the newly built Nam Theun 2 Dam. However, the project team clarified that our project is not an infrastructure focused project. Instead, the Project Team explained that the project could possibly offer the following:

- Technical expertise/know-how on diversifying agriculture products to overcome the adverse impacts of climate change
- Capacity building on community's financial and marketing skills to better sell their agriculture products to increase agricultural productivity
- Water monitoring and forecasting systems
- Policy support (cross sector planning among water, energy and food related stakeholders)

Final Pilot Selection Process for Cambodia

Required follow-up action

- The Project Team led by UNOSSC will prepare the draft meeting report and send it to LNMC.
- In parallel, the LNMC will submit a national pilot proposal to the Project Team by mid-November.
    - Note: Submitted to Project Mgmt. team on November 15. (*Annex: Separate pdf document named, "P-LINK_Lao PDR_ Concept Paper_National Pilot*)
- The national pilot site selection process could be finalized based a follow-up call with the Project Team (UNOSSC, MI, MRCS and STEPI) and LNMC by the end of November.
- The meeting parties also noted how Nam Theun 2 Dam Company can collaborate in the project as part of the company's CSR work to create synergy between national initiatives and allow greater national ownership.

Annex 1: Proposed Pilot Site: Nakio village, Mahaxay District, Khammoune Province

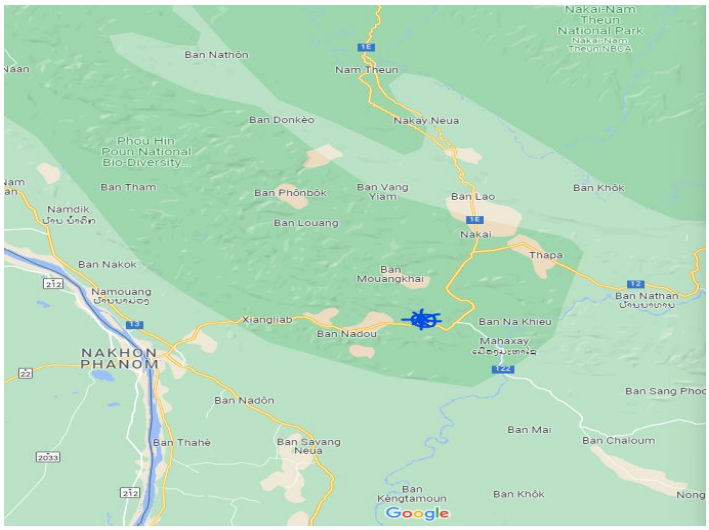


Figure 1: Location of the proposed pilot site in Mahaxay District

Photo 1: Mahaxay District City Centre

Photo 2: H_2O level Rise in the Mahaxay District during the wet season

Location: Nakio village, Mahaxay District, Khammoune Province
(about 50 kms away from the centre of Thakhek City, 1hour drive)

Photo 3: Nakio village entrance

Demographics/ Proposed Beneficiaries:

- Nakio village: 740 villagers (375 female)
- Main source of income is rice cultivation in the dry season, livestock for their source of protein only (not for sale)

Challenges:

- Severe flooding (June-September)
- The community cultivates their rice once a year
- This year's cultivation was not successful at all due to severe flooding
- Community members have to use boats during these time as the water level rises up to evacuate to another locality and have to bring all their livestock
- No irrigation system to support the rice fields (among 1,000 hectares are available for plantation, only about 300 hectares can be used)
- No proper water monitoring system: before severe flooding, the village Chief has to alert all community members to evacuate (climate migrants/internally displaced community)
- Ground water (Photo 5) is available but not provided for all households, they have to install individual water pumps for their own use (about USD 200)

Photo 4: H_20 level rise during wet season in Nakio village

Photo 5: H_20 tank installed in Nakio village

Possible appropriate technologies/solutions that could be introduced:

- Appropriate technologies that are user friendly and cost effective
- Smart water management technology
- Renewable energy generation beyond hydro based electricity
- possibility of micro-level water monitoring system
- crop diversification and smart farming techniques as well as business management for agriculture products
- integrated policy making and joint/cross-sectoral planning

Annex 2: Participants List

Lao National Mekong Committee Secretariat (LNMCS)
•Mr. Sivannakone Malivanh, ASG, LNMCS
•Mr. Keomany Luanglith, Director of Division
•Mr. Aphisath Phanthaly, Technical Officer
•Ms. Phonemala Boudsaba, Technical Officer

Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF)
•Mr.Sisavath Kertvong,Head of SCAST
•Mr. Sinthanou, D.Director of Division, Department of Agricultural Extension and Cooperatives(DAEC)
•Mr. Kongsy Xayavon,gDirector of Division, Department of Agricultural Extension and Cooperatives (DAEC)
•Mr. Sengsouly Kommameuang, Technical Staff, SCAST, PSO

Ministry of Energy and Mines (MEM)
•Mr. Alounzay Inthilath, Technical Staff, Department of Energy Policy and Planning (DEPP)

Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE)
•Mr. Phetsakhone Misomphone, Technical Officer, Department of. Meteorology and Hydrology (DMH)
•Ms. Phoukham Keosihoun, Technical Officer, Department of Water Resources (DWR)

Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA)
•Mr.Ongkane Sombounkhanh, Director of Division

Khammoune Province
•Ms. Lamkeo Suamphone, Director of Division, Department of Agriculture and Forestry (DAF)
•Mr. Khampiane Manitham, Director of Division, DEM
•Mr. Phanthanam Lathsachack, Deputy Head of Admin, DoNRE

Nam Theun 2 Power Company (NTPC)
•Mr. Khampany.T, CSR Coordinator, NTPC-NT2

TPIMU
•Ms. Keooula Souviyadeth, H.TPIMU, TPIMU
•Mr. Vanthaliya, Coordinator, TPIMU
•Mr. Laty, Admin TPIMU, TPIMU/RMU

Mekong Institute (MI)
•Ms. Jian Wang, Program Manager

Mekong River Commission Secretariat (MRCS)
• Ms. Sothea Ros, Partnership Manager (virtual)

Science and Technology Policy Institute (STEPI)
• Dr. Hwanil Park, Chief Director and Research Fellow, Division of Global Innovation Strategy
• Dr. Dongun Park, Associate Research Fellow, Office of SDGs Innovation Research

UN Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC)
• Mr. Maes Suwantra, Advocacy Advisor
• Ms. Yejin Kim, Project Manager

Annex 3: Photos from the Consultative Forum and Mahaxay District Government

Group Photo at the National Consultative Forum

Group Photo at the Mahaxary District Office

Annex 4: Concept Note and Provisional Agenda

Triangular Cooperation Project on Sustainable Development in the Lower Mekong Basin based on the Water-Energy-Food (WEF) Nexus; RoK-UNOSSC Facility Phase 3/P-LINK

FIRST NATIONAL STAKEHOLDER CONSULATIVE MEETING LAO PDR

CONCEPT NOTE

25 -26 October 2022
Khammouane Province (Bangfai Basin), Lao PDR

I. Background and Context

In September 2021, the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC), the Republic of Korea (RoK)'s Ministry of Science and ICT (MSIT), and the Mekong River Commission (MRC) launched a project entitled, "Triangular Cooperation on Sustainable Development in the Lower Mekong Basin based on the Water-Energy-Food (WEF) Nexus". The project, also known as the "RoK-UNOSSC Facility Phase 3" and P-LINK, is intended to strengthen access to water, food and energy for vulnerable communities living in the Lower Mekong Basin (Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand, and Viet Nam) through strengthening development approaches and management in these sectors. It will take integrative and multi-sectoral approaches in the application of highly demanded technologies on water, energy and food to improve the livelihoods of the people based on South-South and triangular cooperation (SS & TrC) modalities.

The First Regional Stakeholder Consultative Forum (hereinafter as Regional Forum) was held on 28 June 2022. As envisaged in the project document, the first Regional Forum was intended to (1) provide an opportunity for the MRC Member Countries to make suggestions on the proposed project's approach and direction, (2) discuss the integration of the three sectors (water, food, energy) in project's implementation, (3) discuss the proposed multi-sectoral platform, (4) discuss/identify pilot areas based on the criteria developed by the Project Management Team prior to the consultative meeting on the basis of criteria provided by the Project Management Team, (5) discuss a joint work plan for 2022 that is aligned with the Basin Development Strategy (BDS) 2021-2030 and national development priorities, and (6) set timeframe for the next consultation. Furthermore, the Forum facilitated the project's endeavour to develop one joint work plan as each country delegation indicated their national development priorities and proposed possible pilot sites in their respective countries.

In the country presentation, the Laotian delegation indicated that both the national and local government stakeholders will collaborate with the local district authorities to support the local community through the national pilot under P-LINK. Civil society and private sector (water and industry users) and development cooperation partners could be also invited for collaboration. The delegation suggested Xe Bangfai Basin in Khammouane Province as a potential pilot site. There is a large hydropower project called, "The Nam Theun 2 Hydropower Project (NT2)". They identified the following priorities: 1) flood & drought management 2) electricity generation, 3) water utilisation 4) food security and 5) climate change.

The Laotian delegation also stated the country's expectations for the national pilot and the overall P-Link project. These are: 1) technical assistance 2)financial support and 3) capacity building required to implement and sustain the pilot project.

A prevalent view among all four country delegations was that there is a need for further consultations with other national stakeholders in their respective countries on the selection of pilot sites and the implementation structures. They also asked questions on the success factors of the WEF Nexus applications, the scope of scaling-up the national pilots, how P-LINK national pilots would incorporate different national priorities of participating countries, and support sharing of knowledge and experiences among local communities (bottom-up approach).

To that end, the Project Management Team, in collaboration with the implementing parties (MI, MRCS and STEPI) will follow-up with each country bilaterally to organise national consultations towards finalising the selection of national pilot sites. Once the national pilot sites and relevant technologies have been selected, the Project will also develop indicators to monitor and measure the impact.

Thus, within this context, this concept note is compiled to design a national consultative process for Lao PDR.

II. Objectives

The objectives of the national consultation are as follows:

1. To further discuss the final selection of national pilot site(s)
2. To visit a proposed/tentative pilot site/location in the country
3. To discuss national implementation structures for the national pilot project in Lao PDR;
4. To bring national stakeholders to discuss relevant issues pertaining to P-LINK; discuss the integration of the three sectors (water, food, energy) in P-LINK implementation; and
5. To develop new indicators for the pilots.

III. Expected Outcomes

The consultation will facilitate better understanding of P-LINK, the WEF Nexus and its applications, and minimize project risks, pertaining to communications and understanding of national implementation steps and requisite success. National pilot sites determined through consensus by national stakeholders. Concurrence on a national project implementation structure.

IV. Consultation Modality

The consultative meeting included a site visit to a proposed pilot locality after the event.

IV. Expected Participants

- 15 national participants from Lao National Mekong Committee (LNMC), line ministries, local and provincial governments
- UN Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC)
- Science and Technology Policy Institute (STEPI)
- Mekong Institute (MI)
- Mekong River Commission Secretariat (MRCS)

Proposed Meeting Agenda

Day 1	
TIME	**ITEMS**
9:00 – 9:30	Registration
9:30 – 9:45	**Opening Session** *(MC TBC)* • Welcome Remarks –Lao Mekong National Committee (LNMC) –Mekong River Commission Secretariat (MRCS) • Opening Remarks – UNOSSC • Participants Introduction
9:45 – 10:45	**Session 1: Project Overview, Pilot Site Selection Criteria and Outcomes of the First Regional Stakeholder Consultative Forum** *Moderator: Mr Maes Suwantra, Advocacy Advisor, UNOSSC* • A. Presentation on Project Direction, Approach & Selection Criteria for National Pilot Sites (UNOSSC) 15mins –Ms. Yejin Kim, P-LINK Project Manager, UNOSSC • B. Outcomes of the Lao delegation's deliberation at the First Regional Forum (LNMC) 15 mins **Discussions** (30 mins)
10:45– 11:00	Group Photo and Coffee Break
11:00 – 12:15	**Session 2: Xe Bangfai Basin in Khammouane Province Analysis and Implications of P-LINK national pilot in this area** *Facilitator: Lao National Mekong Committee* • A. WEF Nexus Situation Analysis of the Xe Bangfai Basin in Khammouane Province (LNMC) 15mins • B. RoK's experience in the application of WEF approach (STEPI & RoK expert) 30 mins –STEPI, TBC –RoK expert, TBC **Discussions** (20mins)
12:15 – 13:30	Lunch
13:30 – 14:00	**Session 3: Panel Discussion on National Pilot Project Indicators** • National Pilot Project Indicators (UNOSSC) *Moderator and Presenter: UNOSSC* *Panelists* – MI – STEPI – LMCS
14:00 – 15:00	**Session 4: Group Discussions** *Facilitator: Lao National Mekong Committee*
15:00 – 15:20	Coffee Break

15:20 – 15:40	**Session 5: Group Presentations**
15:40 - 16:30	**Session 6: Plenary Reflections and Consensus Building** *Facilitator: Mekong Institute (MI)* • Site selection • National implementation structure
16:30 – 16:45	**Closing Session (Summary and Way Forward)** –UNOSSC

Day 2	
TIME	**ITEMS**
7:30 – 9:00	**Travel to Proposed Pilot Site**
9:00 – 12:00	**Meeting with Local Authorities**
12:00 – 13:30	**Lunch**
13:30 – 16:00	**Field Visit to Proposed Pilot Site** • Visit to the community • Reflections
16:00	**End of Program**