



# *Mekong River Commission*

**For Sustainable Development**

**GUIDELINES FOR MANAGEMENT OF  
THE MEKONG RIVER COMMISSION  
HYDROMETEOROLOGICAL NETWORK**

**August 2005**

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**CONTENTS**

	<i>Page</i>
SCOPE	1
OBJECTIVE	1
DEFINITIONS	1
Section 1 - MANAGEMENT OF THE NETWORK	2
Section 2 - MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING	3
2.1. Required Contents of the MOU	
2.2. Roles and Responsibilities	
Section 3 - RIGHTS AND BENEFITS	4
Section 4 - FINANCIAL AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN	4
Section 5 - REVIEW AND AMENDMENT OF THE GUIDELINES	4

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## **GUIDELINES FOR MANAGEMENT OF THE MEKONG RIVER COMMISSION HYDROMETEOROLOGICAL NETWORK**

The member countries of the Mekong River Commission (MRC) recognise that the objectives of the "Agreement on the Cooperation for the Sustainable Development of the Mekong River Basin" signed in Chiang Rai, Thailand on 5th April 1995 (hereinafter referred to as the Mekong Agreement) can only be achieved when their implementation is supported by the acquisition, updating, and exchange of the necessary data and information for planning, development and monitoring purposes.

At its Eighth meeting held on 01 November 2001 in Bangkok, Thailand, the MRC Council approved the Procedures for Data and Information Exchange and Sharing (hereinafter referred to as the PDIES).

As provided in the PDIES, a series of technical guidelines and standards has been developed. These Guidelines for Management of the Mekong River Commission Hydrometeorological Network (hereinafter referred to as the Guidelines) form part of that series.

### **SCOPE**

The Guidelines apply to management of the Mekong River Commission Hydrometeorological Network (hereinafter referred to as the Network) established for collection of hydrometeorological data, specified as physical data.

### **OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of the Guidelines are:

- To promote the role of the MRC in regularly obtaining, updating and exchanging information and data necessary to implement the Mekong Agreement.
- To ensure the long-term sustainable management and operation of the Network.
- To strengthen and support institutional and technical capacity for the management of the Network.

### **DEFINITIONS**

**Hydrometeorological Data:** Data obtained by the measurement or observation of

- Water level
- Discharge
- Flow velocity
- Related hydrological and meteorological parameters



**Hydrometeorological Facility:** Any physical structure, set of equipment, computer system and other relevant systems used to obtain, update and exchange hydrometeorological data.

**Hydrometeorological Network:** In-situ hydrometeorological facilities, hydrometeorological sites, technical support systems, management support systems and personnel being concerned with obtaining, updating and exchanging hydrometeorological data.

**Hydrometeorological Site:** Any location from which hydrometeorological data is obtained.

**MRC Hydrometeorological Network:** The hydrometeorological network in which the MRC has a direct interest, supported by operating Memorandums of Understanding between the MRC Secretariat, National Mekong Committees (NMCs) and concerned national Line Agencies.

**Interim MOU:** MOU that is used to address the immediate needs until the long term financial and implementation plan is designed and implemented.

## **Section 1 - MANAGEMENT OF THE NETWORK**

- 1.1. The MRC shall establish the Network in order to regularly obtain, update and exchange hydrometeorological data in an accurate, timely and effective manner.
- 1.2. The MRC member countries have national ownership of the hydrometeorological facilities of the Network located in their respective countries.
- 1.3. The MRC Secretariat shall coordinate the creation of national systems of management, operations and maintenance, coordinated in a basin-wide manner in collaboration with the MRC member countries.
- 1.4. The MRC member countries entrust the MRC Secretariat with the coordinated, basin-wide, sustainable management of the Network.
- 1.5. The MRC through the Joint Committee directs that a Memorandum of Understanding (hereinafter referred to as 'the MOU') be prepared and executed between the MRC Secretariat, each NMC and the relevant nominated Line Agencies to govern the operation and maintenance of the hydrometeorological facilities. In accordance with the MOU the nominated Line Agencies within each member country will be entrusted with the operations and maintenance of the hydrometeorological facilities.
- 1.6. The primary role of the NMCs is the coordination of MRC functions and activities within their respective countries.
- 1.7. The MRC member countries acknowledge the distinctly different nature and needs of hydrometeorological data in comparison with other water resources data, in particular, the fact that time is of the essence in hydrometeorological data acquisition and exchange. The Joint Committee therefore encourages the cooperation of NMCs in allowing direct communications at times of need, as may be appropriate, between technical staff of the MRC Secretariat and the nominated Line Agency. The NMCs will be immediately notified by the MRC Secretariat of such communications.
- 1.8. The hydrometeorological facilities of the Network, their locations, the country responsible for their operation and maintenance, and the operating specifications will be defined in the MOUs.

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## Section 2 - MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

In order to have consistent and coordinated management of the Network, the MRC Secretariat is responsible for preparation of a template MOU which then be completed with specific details as may be needed for each member country and duly executed.

### 2.1. Required Contents of the MOU:

The template MOU shall have, in addition to necessary procedural clauses, the following minimum contents and stipulations.

- Identification of the parties to the MOU;
- Detailed listing of roles and responsibilities of each party for management of the Network and for operations and maintenance;
- Detailed listing of the technical and management support services to be provided by each party;
- Specific commitments which shall include but not be limited to:
  - Budgeting and financial provisions;
  - Staffing plans;
  - Training plans;
  - Performance standards;
  - Provision for the supply of operations and maintenance manuals; and,
  - Detailed activities plan and time schedule.
- Details of content and parties to an annual report to the Joint Committee; and,
- Annexes which define:
  - The identification and location details of all the hydrometeorological facilities and sites of the Network (defined in latitude and longitude details and a map);
  - The hydrometeorological facilities and sites to which the MOU applies;
  - The type of data to be collected, and the required accuracy of that data, and;
  - An operation and maintenance budget and resource plan.

In recognition of the main and critical role of nominated Line Agencies in the acquisition of hydrometeorological data, and of the important coordinating role of the NMCs, the MOU shall be signed between the MRC Secretariat and relevant parties in the respective MRC member countries.

### 2.2. Roles and Responsibilities:

The template MOU is to provide for the following broad classes of responsibility.

#### • MRC Secretariat:

The MRC Secretariat shall be responsible for the overall management of the Network, the coordination of functions performed by the MRC member countries, and for auditing and reporting to the Joint Committee annually on the data records and performance of the Network as required in Section 4 of the Guidelines.

#### • National Mekong Committee:

The NMCs shall be responsible for the general coordination of hydrometeorological data collection from the Network, performed by the nominated Line Agencies of their respective country in accordance with the agreed practices, formats and standards of the MRC, and on behalf of all member countries of the MRC. These practices, formats and standards will be defined in the MOU.





- **Line Agency:**

The Line Agencies nominated by the respective NMC shall be responsible for the actual operations and maintenance of the hydrometeorological facilities assigned to them in conformity with MRC practices, formats and standards, and for delivering data and reporting network performance to the MRC Secretariat through their relevant NMC.

### **Section 3 - RIGHTS AND BENEFITS**

The NMC/relevant Line Agency/ies of each member country is acknowledged as the primary custodian (as defined in the "Guidelines on Custodianship and Management of the Mekong River Commission Information System") of data collected in their country, in accordance with the Guidelines.

Data collected and exchanged in accordance with the Guidelines shall be integrated into the Mekong River Commission Information System (MRC-IS). All parties to the collection of data in accordance with the Guidelines will have rights to access and utilise the data through the MRC-IS.

### **Section 4 - FINANCIAL AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

The MRC Secretariat, in collaboration with the NMCs, immediately upon adoption of the Guidelines, shall prepare a long-term financial plan and implementation plan designed to ensure the long-run sustainability of the assets of the Network and of the hydrometeorological data services provided by the Network. These plans will be submitted as soon as possible to the Joint Committee and Council in accordance with Article 14 of the Mekong Agreement.

Until such time as the Council approves the long-term financial and implementation plan, interim annual implementation plans and budgets for operation and maintenance of the Network are to be prepared by the MRC Secretariat for adoption by the Joint Committee. These annual plans and budgets are to be prepared on the basis of detailed estimates provided by nominated Line Agencies in accordance with provisions of an interim MOU and coordinated by the relevant NMCs.

### **Section 5 - REVIEW AND AMENDMENT OF THE GUIDELINES**

The MRC Secretariat shall be responsible for conducting a review of the Guidelines, and for making appropriate recommendations for further guidance and direction. This review, including recommendations, shall form part of the annual report to the Joint Committee and Council, required by Section 5.2 of the PDIES.

The review shall be formulated through the Technical Assistance and Coordination Team, incorporating the views of NMCs, Line Agencies performing operations and maintenance, and users of the exchanged and shared hydrometeorological data, including the extent to which their needs are met.

Any proposed amendment, modification, or revision of the Guidelines is subject to the Joint Committee's approval.

The Guidelines shall take effect among the MRC member countries on the date of the approval by the Joint Committee.

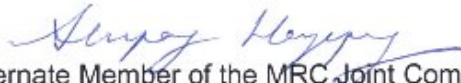


Done on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2005 at the 22<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the MRC Joint Committee in Vientiane,  
Lao People's Democratic Republic.



Member of the MRC Joint Committee for the Kingdom of Cambodia

Alternate Member of the MRC Joint Committee for the Lao People's Democratic Republic



Alternate Member of the MRC Joint Committee for the Kingdom of Thailand



Member of the MRC Joint Committee for the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam

