

Can a basin organization make a difference?

- responding to development challenges in the Mekong**

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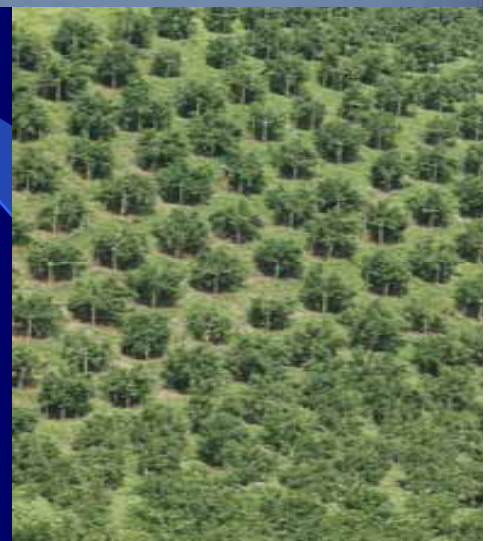
Alternative title:

**Love thy neighbour. Can transboundary
water resources cooperation last?**



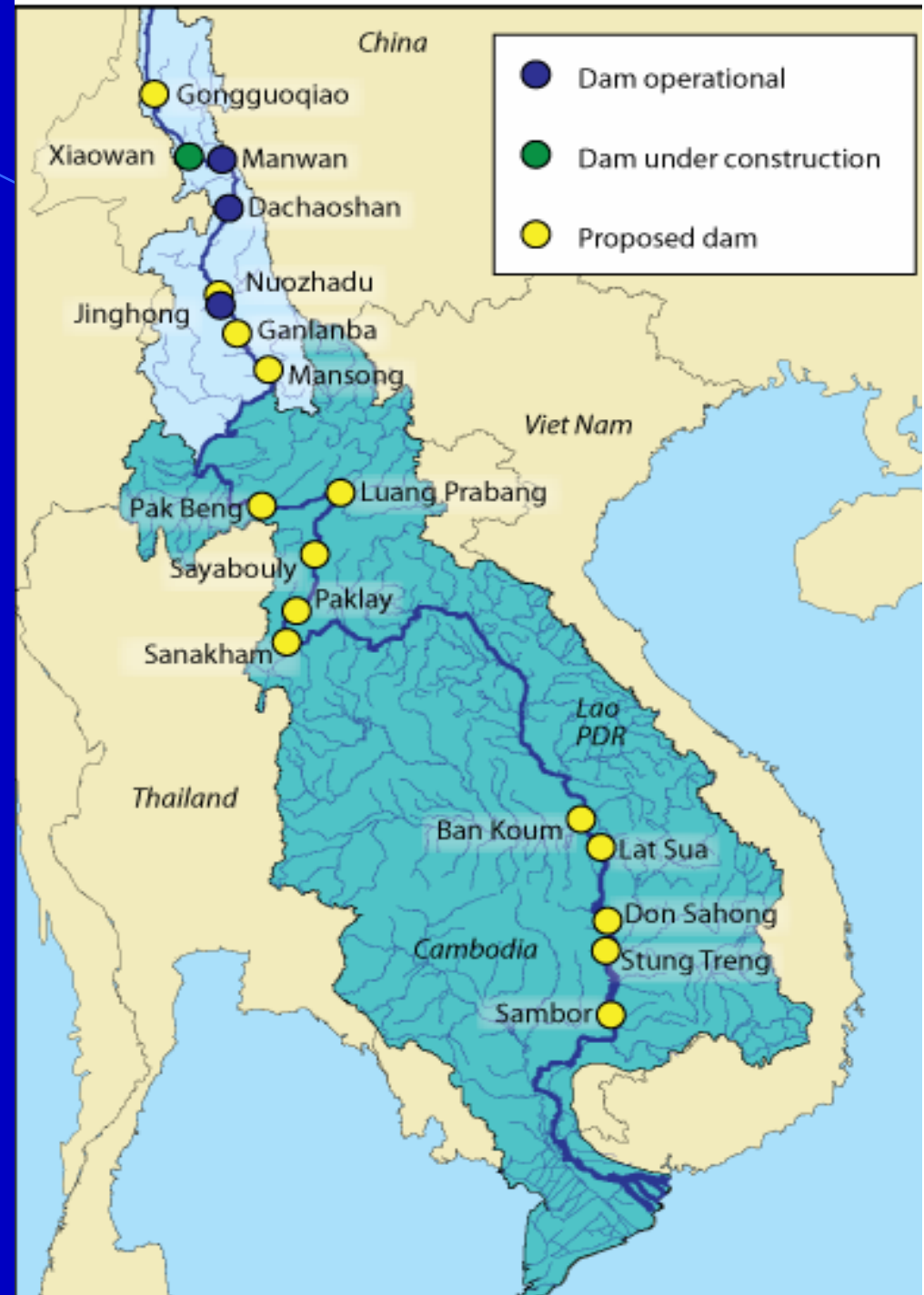


**Changing land and
water context –
population pressure,
urbanisation, hydropower,
mining, plantations, tourism,
agro industry, climate
change...**



Proposed hydropower dams

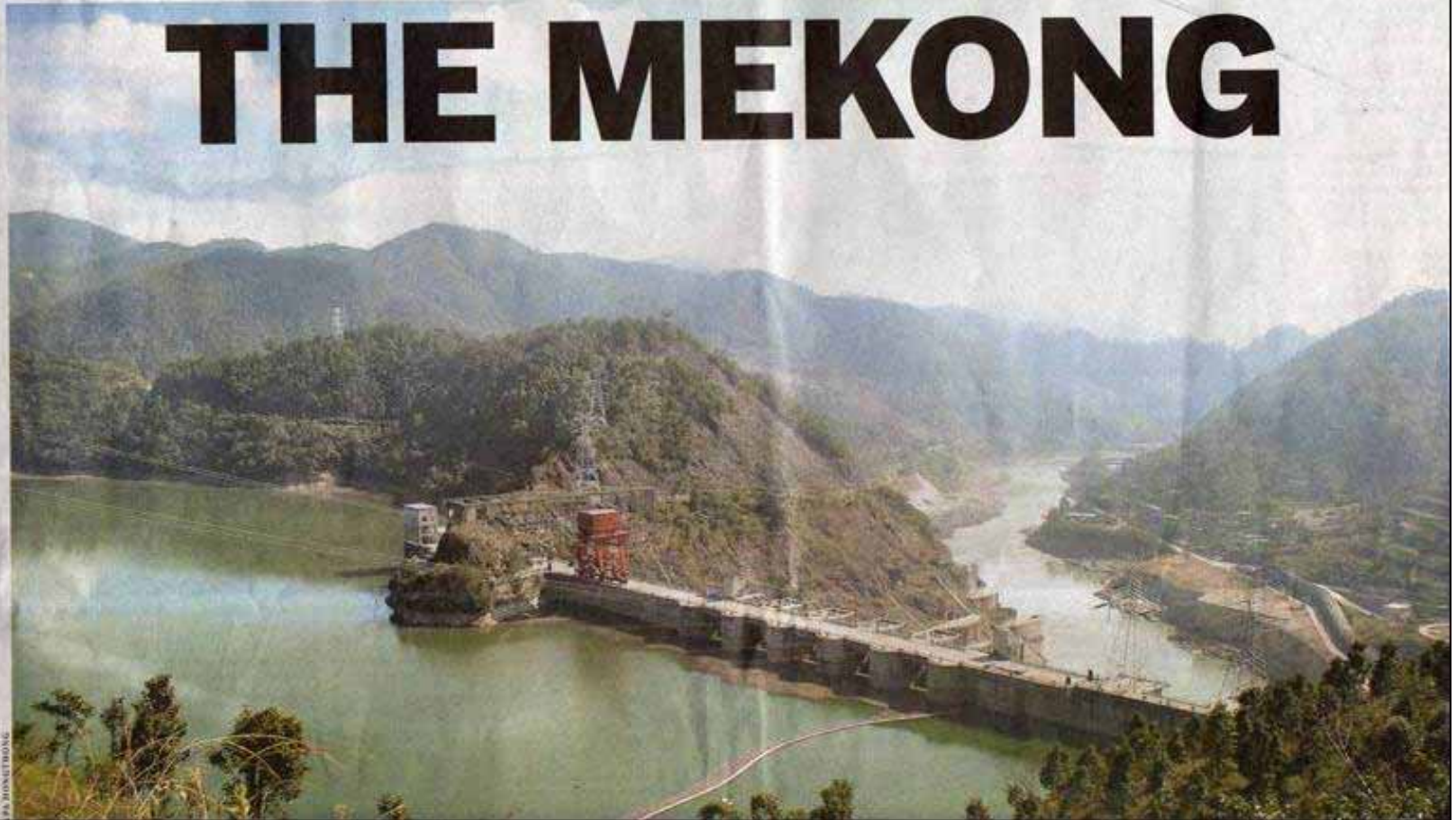
- Mainstream dams in China - changes to river flows and sediment supply
- 10 - 11 private sector proposals for mainstream dams in the Lower Mekong Basin
- More than 60 MOUs signed for tributary projects
- Total of 30,000 MW capacity projected for Lower Mekong Basin to meet regional electricity demand



**Mekong River is the world's largest inland fishery -
\$3 billion per year feeding millions of people**



MANIPULATING **THE MEKONG**



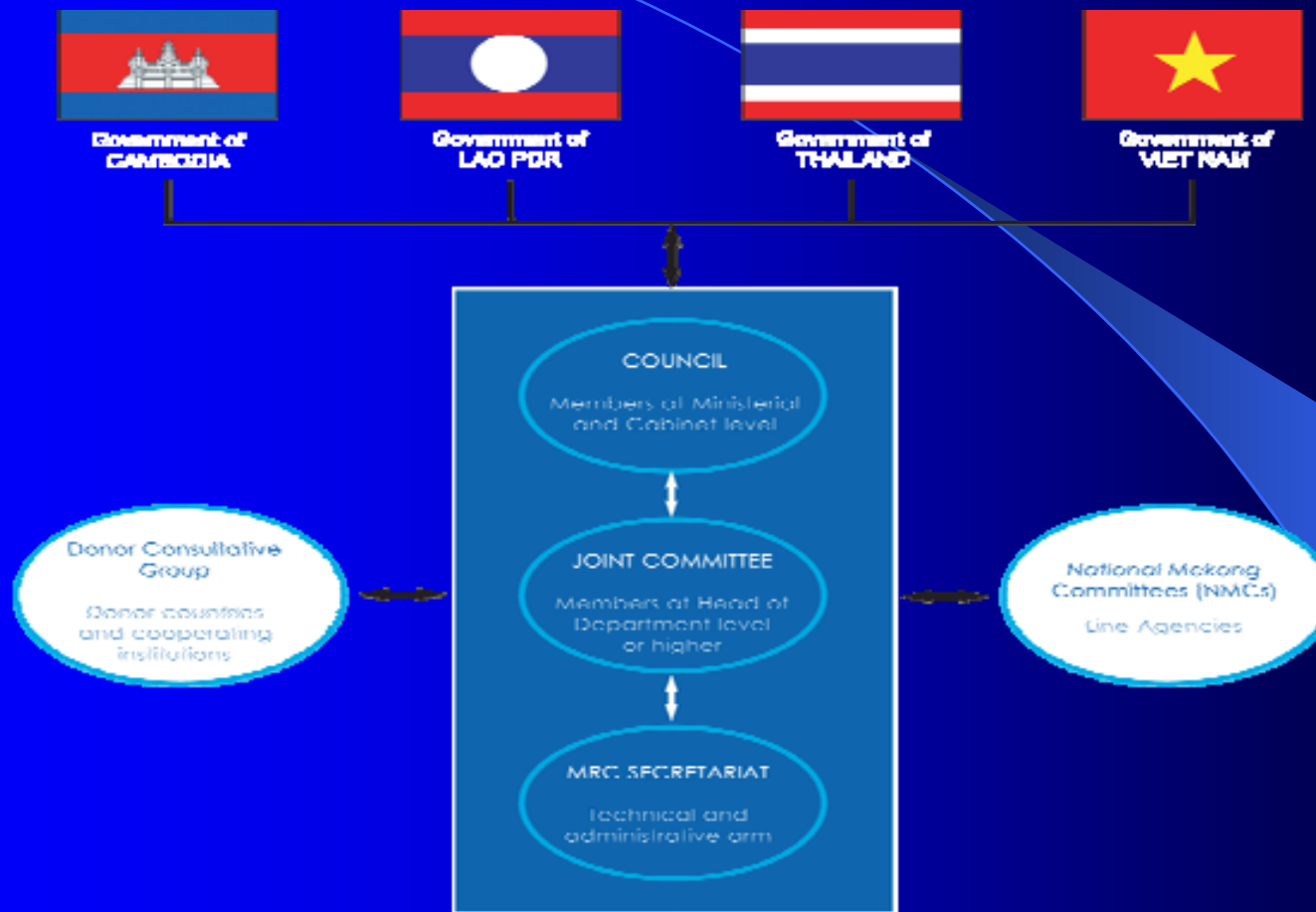
The Nation, Thailand, January 2008



“Mekong river hydroelectric dam threatens livelihoods and endangered species in landlocked Laos”

Guardian, UK, 13 March 2009

MRC – *Mekong spirit of cooperation*



Our Dialogue Partners

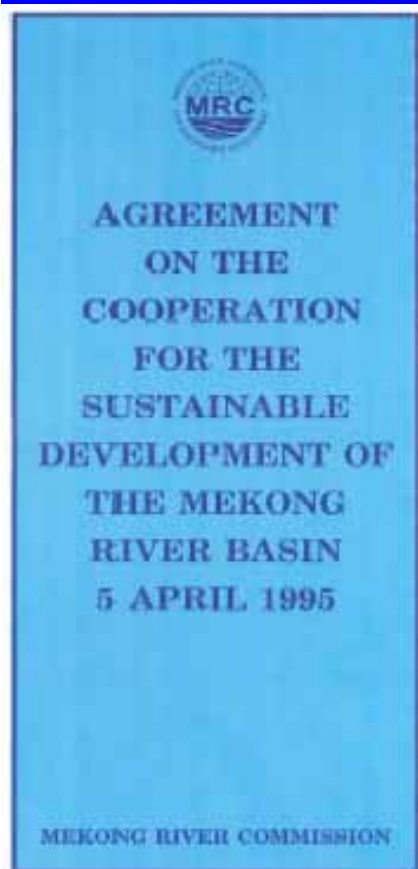


China

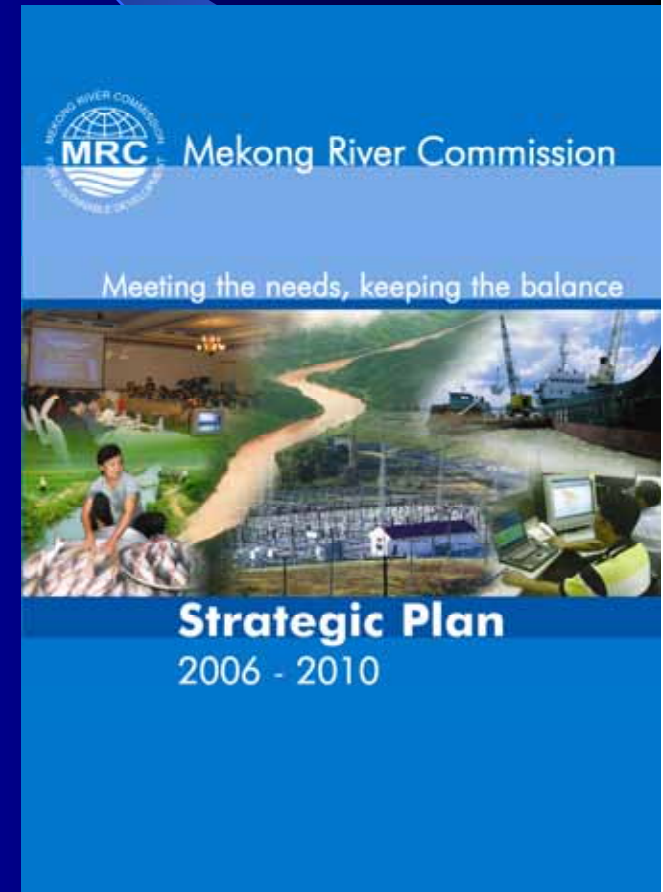


Myanmar

‘MRC supports sustainable hydropower development implemented within the framework of the 1995 Mekong Agreement and which serves the joint interests of its member countries’

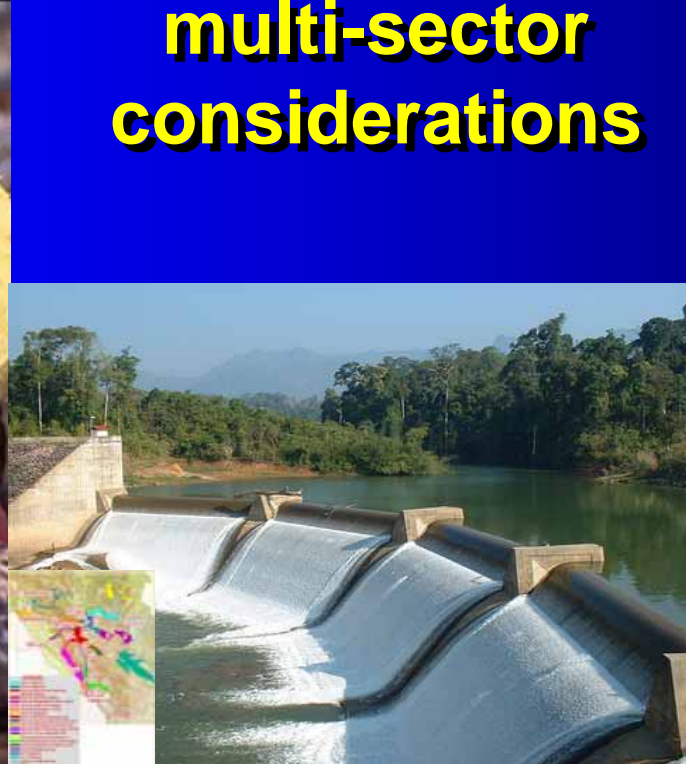


Mainstream dams are subject to: “..prior consultation which aims at reaching an agreement..”

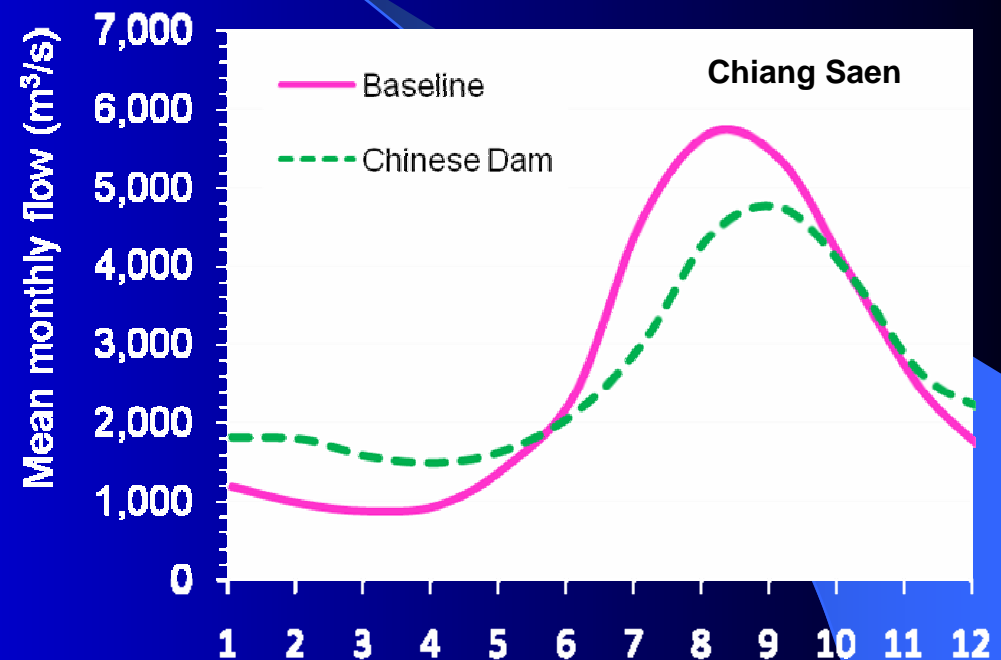




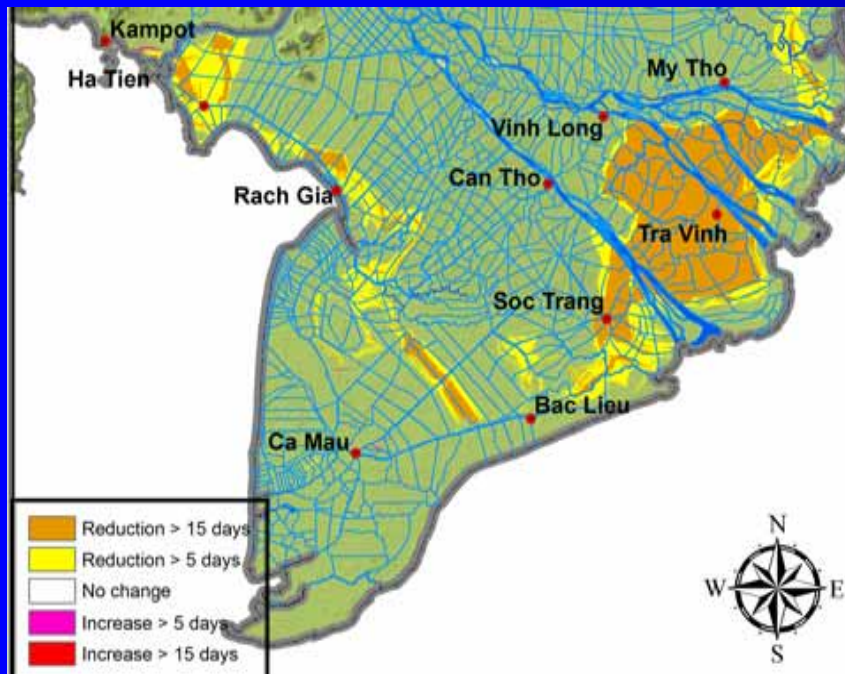
**...integrating
multi-sector
considerations**



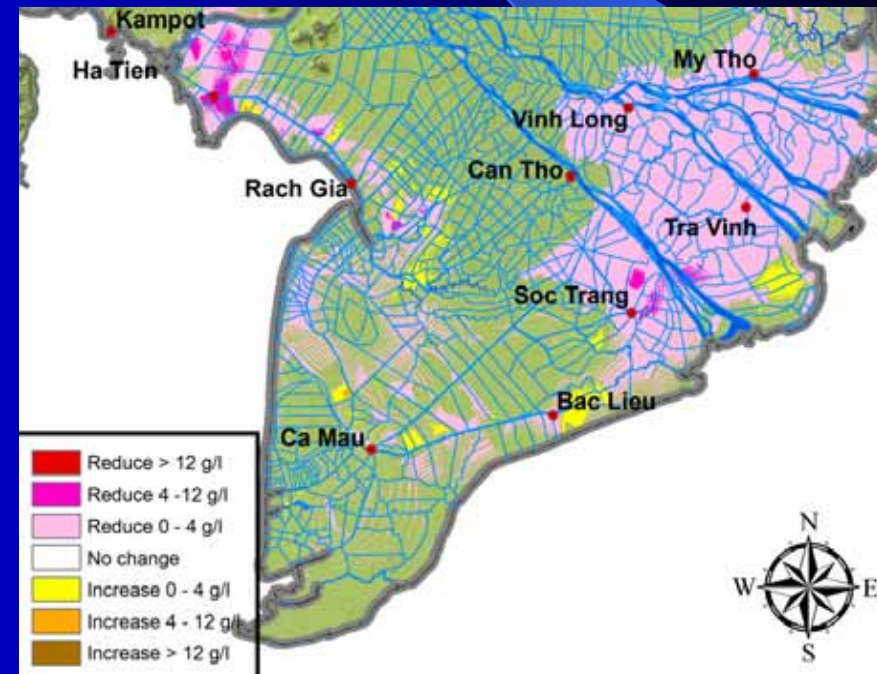
We can expect significant hydrological and morphological changes as a result of mainstream and tributary projects and climate change



We are modelling salinity changes in the Delta - Mekong's rice bowl



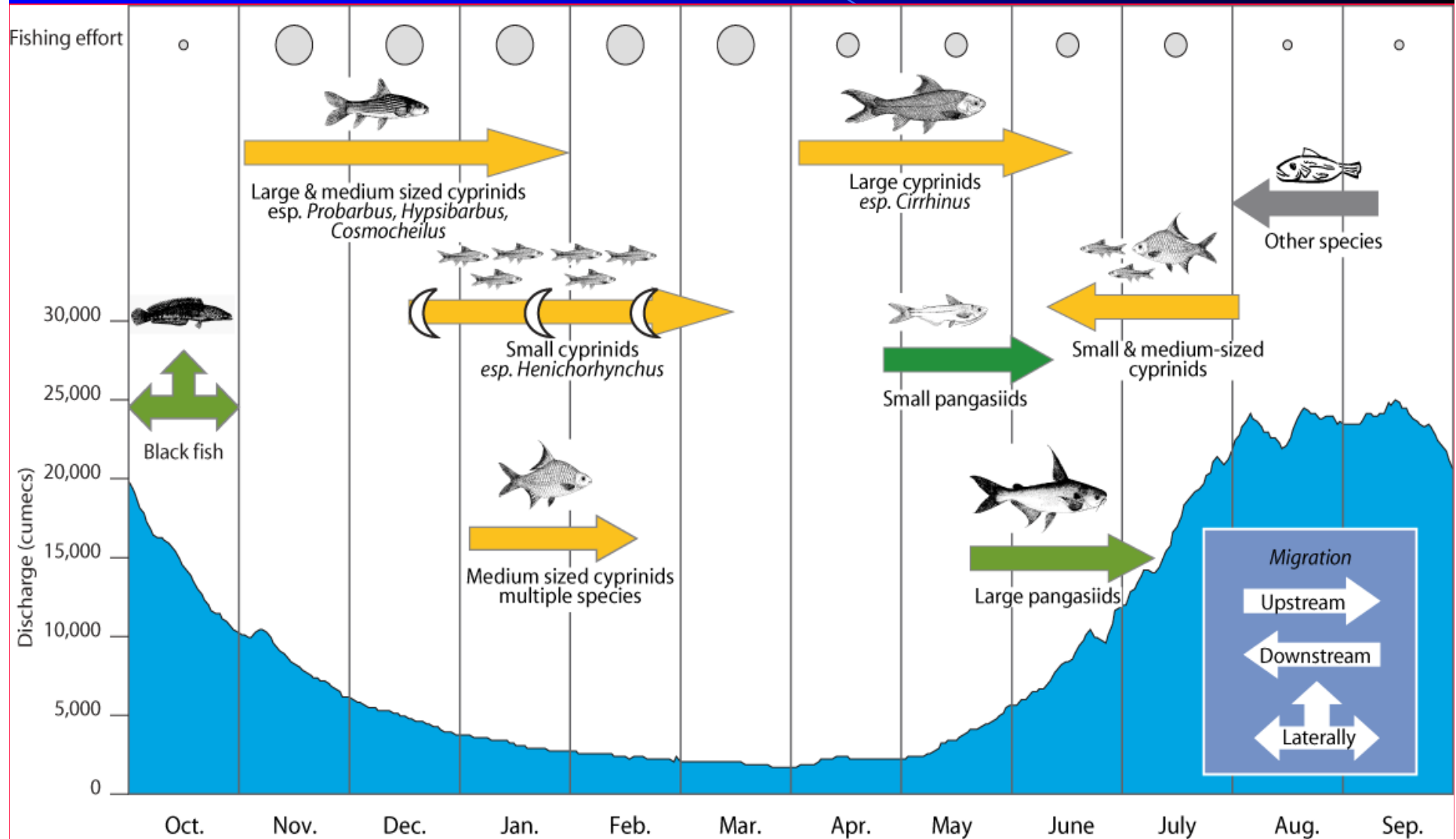
Salinity Intrusion Duration
(days)



Salinity concentration
(g/l)

Diversity of fish migrations

Can they survive?



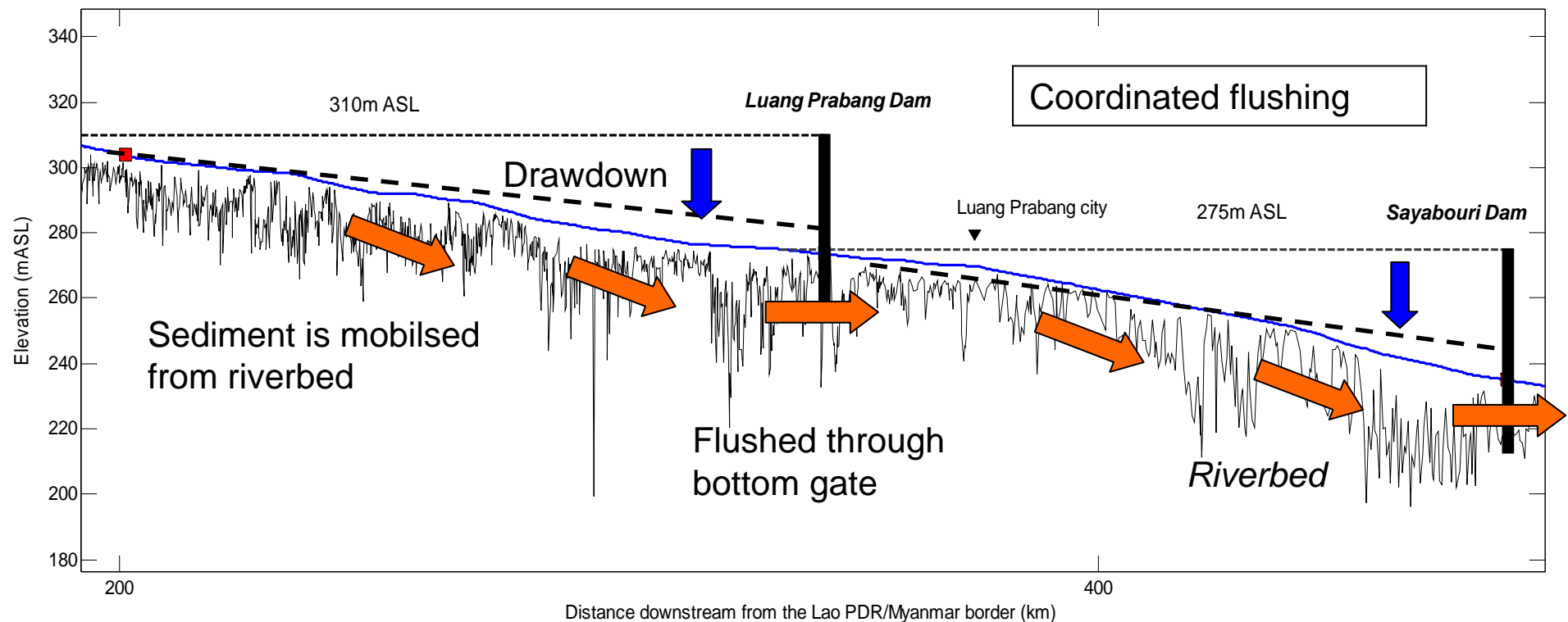
Mitigation – can this be adapted to the Mekong?



Columbia River, USA



What are appropriate sediment management regimes?



Participation

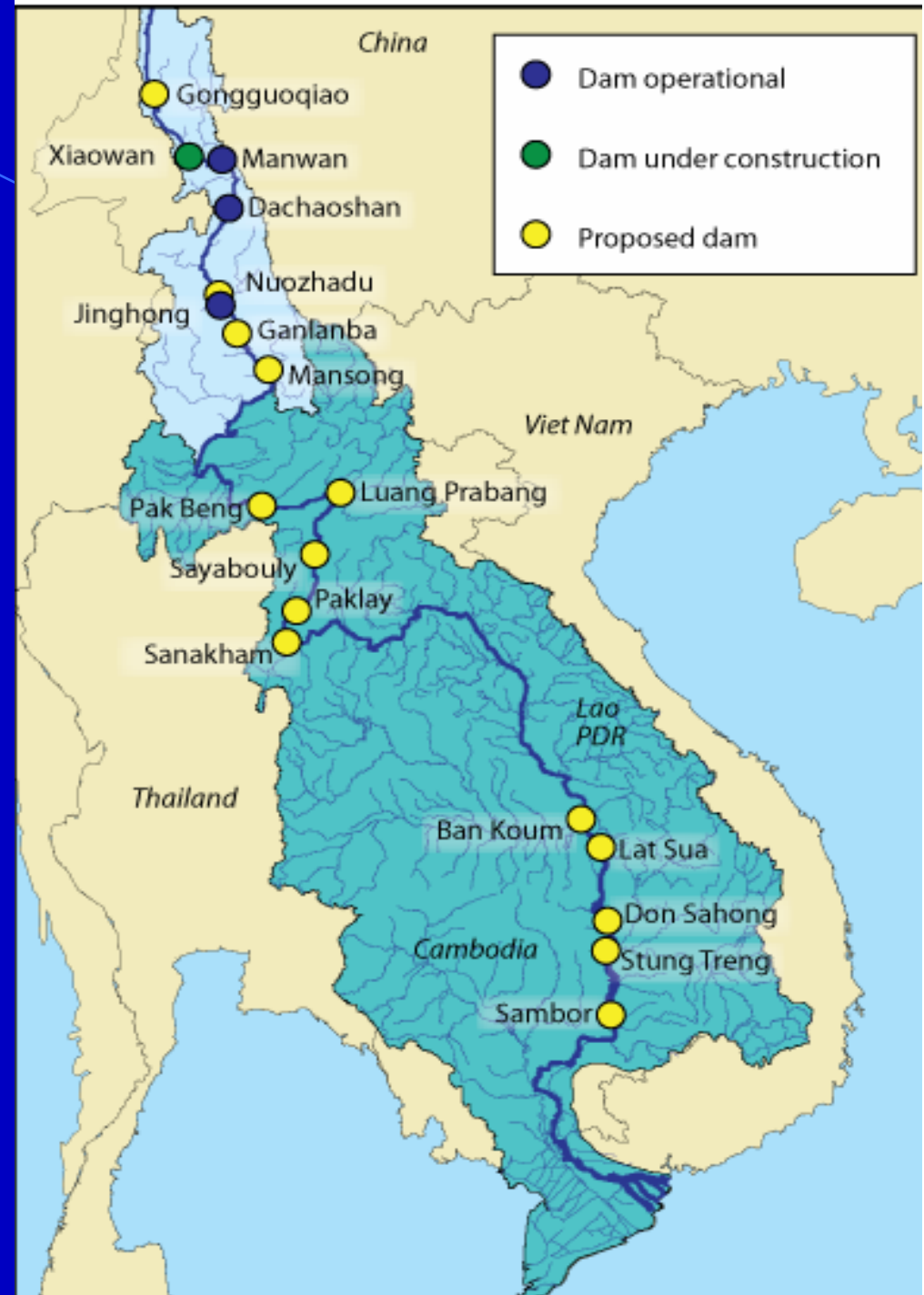
How does an international river basin organisation covering 60 million people ensure community interests are heard?



How sustainable is hydropower?

A major challenge in one of the world's largest undeveloped river basins

- and a major test for the 1995 Mekong Agreement



MRC's role in relation to mainstream hydropower development



Basin-wide understanding of cumulative impacts and sustainability assessment – Strategic Environment Assessment

Implementation of Procedures under the 1995 Agreement – providing advice to government decision-makers



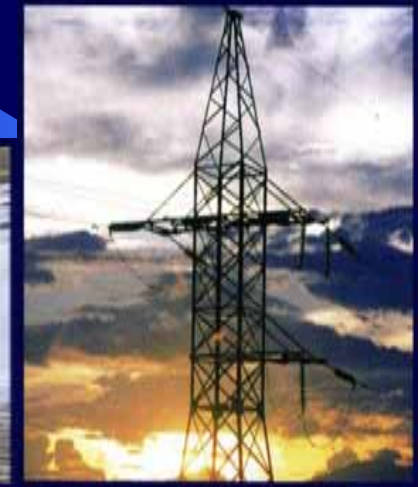
Building capacity, facilitating dialogue and providing technical guidance

Monitoring – river flow, water quality, sediment, salinity, fisheries, navigation



Love thy neighbour. How can transboundary water resources cooperation last?

- political commitment to cooperation
- effective legal framework
- agreed analytic tools and datasets
- independent and objective assessment capability
- mutually agreed vision of development prospects
- transparent and participatory processes
-



MRC – facilitating
dialogue on
sustainable water
resources
development

