

**– Workshop Summary –**

**Conflict Management Program Inception Workshop  
Promoting Regional Cooperation in the Mekong River Basin  
Udon Thani, Thailand – June 5-6, 2006**

**I. Summary**

Through the Conflict Management Program Inception Workshop on June 5-6, 2006 in Udon Thani, Thailand, the Mekong River Commission (MRC) and Environmental Cooperation-Asia (ECO-Asia), a regional program of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), launched a new program of cooperation to raise awareness of and promote the use of improved conflict management policies, plans and mechanisms among the MRC Member Countries. Attendees included representatives from the MRC Secretariat (MRCS) and National Mekong Committees (NMCs) from Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand and Vietnam. Resources people included experts from U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) Conflict Prevention and Resolution Center, Oregon State University and ECO-Asia, who shared their experience on transboundary conflict management and public participation at the workshop.

Collaboration between USAID and MRC on transboundary conflict management builds on earlier work. Beginning in 2005, MRCS invited USAID to participate in MRCS meetings held by the MRCS Working Group on Conflict Management and Mitigation. While supported by the MRC Environment Programme, the Working Group consisted of representatives across all MRC programs with activities related to conflict management and participatory decision-making. One output from Working Group meetings was a “concept note” for consideration by senior staff that would support development of an overall conflict management strategy, which supports implementation of Goal 2 of the MRC Strategic Plan 2006-2010.

To prepare for the Conflict Management Program Inception Workshop with Member Countries, USAID and MRCS conducted a planning meeting on June 2, 2006, in Vientiane, Lao PDR. The objective of the meeting was to share information and ideas, and identify strategies for collaboration in supporting implementation of Goal 2 of the MRC Strategic Plan. At the planning meeting, MRCS identified the following proposed activities: (1) conducting a historical analysis and mapping of conflict and cooperation; (2) developing common conflict management terminology for use by MRCS and NMCs; (3) developing a conflict management strategy for MRC; (4) developing ideas for improved institutional arrangements and capacity at MRCS to support conflict management; and (5) building capacity within MRC programmes.

The objectives of the Conflict Management Program Inception Workshop were to: (1) launch program of cooperation between MRC and USAID ECO-Asia and discuss present capabilities for supporting implementation of Goal 2 of the MRC Strategic Plan; (2) raise awareness and introduce principles, tools and techniques for conflict management and public participation; (3) facilitate identification of Member Country priority in strengthening regional cooperation; and (4) establish common understanding and relationships among Member Countries on conflict management to enable more effective regional cooperation.

Participants included: 35 participants from the Member Countries of Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand, and Vietnam, 8 from the MRCS, 9 from ECO-Asia and 2 observers. Resource persons from the planning meeting in Vientiane attended and shared their experience and expertise. ECO-Asia also provided technical resource persons, including experts from the U.S. EPA and Oregon State University to share ideas and information with MRCS staff, and support discussion. Workshop activities included technical presentations, interactive sessions and group discussions on conflict management and prevention tools and techniques, transboundary water cooperation, terminology, institutional strengthening, and capacity building.

Based on group discussion, Member Countries identified priority program areas and activities for building institutional and human capacity for achieving Goal 2 of the MRC Strategic Plan in three areas: (1) situational analysis; (2) institutional strengthening; and (3) capacity building (see table below).

| <b>MRC-USAID CONFLICT MANAGEMENT PROGRAM</b> |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Program Areas</b>                         | <b>Potential Activities</b>  |
| Situational Analysis                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Assess historical events and trends of transboundary issues in the basin</li> <li>▪ Develop inventory of existing or potential transboundary issues in the basin</li> <li>▪ Prepare needs assessments (both institutional and capacity)</li> </ul>  |
| Institutional Strengthening                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop MRC Conflict Management Strategy (joint work program for implementing Goal 2 of the MRC Strategic Plan and/or operational approach linked to MRC public participation strategy)</li> <li>▪ Support development of institutional analysis of MRC and Member Country relationships – identify roles and responsibilities, key challenges, etc.</li> <li>▪ Strengthen existing or develop new mechanisms for implementing 1995 Mekong Agreement</li> </ul> |
| Capacity Building                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop common terminology and materials in local languages</li> <li>▪ Assign national focal points</li> <li>▪ Provide regional tools and training (awareness raising and skills development – joint fact finding, mediation, etc.)</li> <li>▪ Help transition skills development to country level</li> <li>▪ Support development of river basin committees</li> </ul>  |

To provide MRCS and ECO-Asia with a better understanding of existing capacity, priorities and needs from NMCS, and to support design of new capacity building activities, workshop participants will be asked to complete a questionnaire elaborating on their specific interests and priorities. Based on the findings of this questionnaire and follow-up interviews in Member Countries, MRCS and ECO-Asia will prepare a regional capacity building assessment, identify regional needs and develop a detailed work plan with a series of activities to support the achievement of Goal 2 of the MRC Strategic Plan.

## **II. Transboundary Cooperation in the Mekong River Basin**

### **Background**

As the Mekong sub-region develops, riparian countries have been constructing dams, dikes and irrigation, and navigation waterways that significantly impact river livelihoods. A major challenge for Mekong River countries is the adoption and implementation of policies and practices that enable participatory and collaborative engagement for planning and development that support sustainable development that both protects vital ecosystems and promotes economic and social prosperity, while ensuring prevention, management and mitigation of conflict.

### **Mekong River Commission and Regional Cooperation**

Established in 1995, the Mekong River Commission (MRC) is an intergovernmental organization that fosters cooperation among the four lower Mekong countries of Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, and Vietnam, in the sustainable development of the Mekong River Basin. The MRC Secretariat (MRCS) supports the

implementation of the 1995 Agreement by to promote interdependent sustainable and equitable economic growth whilst preserving the natural resources and environmental quality of the river basin. The MRC's goal is to achieve this mission through participatory and collaborative decision-making within and among the Mekong countries.

The MRC Strategic Plan for 2006-2010 includes a goal for the MRC to enhance effective regional cooperation (see box below). One objective under this goal is, “[t]o identify potential transboundary issues for negotiation, mediation and conflict prevention; and develop mediation and conflict management capacity.” To achieve this objective, the MRC is developing new mechanisms and institutional arrangements for addressing transboundary conflict in partnership with international and regional development partners.

|   |
|---|
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Mekong River Commission (MRC)</b><br/><b>MRC Strategic Plan 2006 - 2010</b></p> <p><b>Goal 2: To enhance effective regional cooperation.</b></p> <p><i>This goal will entail the development of dispute resolution and compromise mechanisms such as co-management, public involvement and institution building. In an organizational perspective the MRC will establish links with existing and emerging sub-basin organizations.</i></p> <p><b>The Outcome of this goal will be increased use of the MRC by its Member Countries as the key mechanism for joint planning, cooperation, and resolution of transboundary water-related issues. A basin-wide dialogue will result in an increased number of activities with the upper riparians.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Objectives</b></p> <p>2.1 To increase MRC's function as a transparent and effective cooperation mechanism among Member States and develop and demonstrate enhanced linkages, compatibility and complementarities of partnerships with other regional organizations and initiatives such as GMS, the World Bank's MWRAP, ACMECS, ASEAN, etc., including sub-basin organizations;</p> <p>2.2 To complete, adopt and make applicable mechanisms, procedures and guidelines as required under the 1995 Mekong Agreement;</p> <p>2.3 To identify potential transboundary issues for negotiation, mediation and conflict prevention; and develop mediation and conflict management capacity;</p> <p>2.4 To promote and improve dialogue and collaboration with China and Myanmar.</p> |
|---|

### **MRC-USAID Collaboration on Promoting Regional Cooperation**

To support achievement of Goal 2 of the MRC Strategic Plan, Environmental Cooperation-Asia (ECO-Asia), a regional program of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and MRCS are collaborating on a multi-year support program for the Member Countries to work together to develop and adopt improved conflict management policies, plans, and mechanisms. ECO-Asia support will include targeted technical assistance and training, small grants and counterpart exchange to share best practices.

As a first step in this joint program, USAID ECO-Asia and the MRCS organized the Conflict Management Program Inception Workshop on June 5-6, 2006, in Udon Thani, Thailand for participants from Member Countries to share experience and information on strategies for regional cooperation. To prepare for the

inception workshop, USAID and MRCS conducted a planning meeting on June 2, 2006, in Vientiane, Lao PDR.

### **III. MRC-USAID Planning Meeting – June 2, 2006, Vientiane, Lao, PDR**

To prepare for the Conflict Management Inception Workshop with Member Countries, USAID and MRCS conducted a planning meeting on June 2, 2006, in Vientiane, Lao PDR. The objective of the meeting was to share information and ideas, and identify strategies for collaboration in supporting implementation of Goal 2 of the MRC Strategic Plan. USAID ECO-Asia also provided technical resource persons, including experts from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) and Oregon State University.

Collaboration between USAID and MRC on transboundary conflict management, however, builds on earlier work. Beginning in 2005, MRCS invited USAID to participate in MRCS meetings held by the MRCS Working Group on Conflict Management and Mitigation. The Working Group consisted of representatives from across all MRC programs with activities related to conflict management and participatory decision-making. One output from Working Group meetings was a “concept note” for consideration by senior staff that would support development of an overall conflict management strategy, which supports implementation of Goal 2 of the MRC Strategic Plan.

Planning meeting participants from the MRCS included representatives from a range of MRC programs, including Agriculture, Irrigation and Forestry Programme, Environment Programme, Water Utilization Programme, Basis Development Planning Programme, Fisheries Programme, Flood Management and Mitigation Programme, as well as the Operations Division, Programme Coordination Section, Human Resources Development Section, and the Technical Support Division.

#### **A. Meeting Opening**

In opening the planning meeting, Dr. Olivier Cogels, Chief Executive Officer of the MRCS, observed that the 1995 Agreement sets out mechanisms for addressing differences and disputes where the Joint Committee (JC) and the Council are recognized as the appropriate forums for resolving any differences. Dr. Cogels also noted that the Secretariat and the NMCs have a role to play in supporting the JC and the Council in such matters, and that there is a need for staff in MRCS and the NMCs to have the capacity to address the underlying issues that may cause such differences.

Representing USAID, Mr. Winston Bowman, Director of the Regional Environment Office for the Regional Development Mission/Asia (RDM/A), stated that in partnership with the MRC and Member Countries, USAID hopes to support the demonstration of best practices and methods that reduce transnational water and natural resources conflicts. He highlighted the importance of the opportunity to work closely with the MRC and Member Countries to develop joint activities that will assist MRC in meeting objectives under Goal 2 of the MRC Strategic Plan.

#### **B. Strategy for MRC-USAID Cooperation**

Meeting sessions centered on presentations and discussions by resource persons and MRCS staff on challenges, best practices and capabilities for promoting regional cooperation and managing potential conflicts. Following these sessions, a representative for the MRC Working Group on Conflict Management and Mitigation led a group discussion on possible strategies for MRC-USAID cooperation on institutional strengthening and capacity building to support effective implementation of Goal 2 of the MRC Strategic Plan. Proposed MRCS-USAID joint activities included:

- Conducting a historical analysis and mapping of Mekong conflict and cooperation;
- Developing common conflict management terminology for use by MRCS and NMCs;
- Developing a conflict management strategy for MRC;
- Improving institutional arrangements and capacity at MRCS to support conflict management; and
- Building capacity within MRC programmes based on a program needs analysis.

These activities and outcomes would benefit both the MRCS and NMCs in strengthening institutions, capabilities and systems for promoting regional cooperation and managing transboundary conflict. USAID ECO-Asia support for these activities would include technical assistance and training, small grants and counterpart exchange to share best practices.

### **C. Next Steps**

As next steps, MRCS and USAID ECO-Asia will conduct the inception workshop with NMCs on the proposed conflict management program to gain feedback on Member Country interests and priorities. USAID and MRCS will prepare a multi-year work plan that will include activities on situational analysis, institutional strengthening and capacity building. In addition, the MRC Working Group on Conflict Management and Mitigation will meet to discuss developing a conflict management strategy for MRC and explore ideas for improved institutional arrangements.

## **IV. Inception Workshop – June 5-6, 2006, Udon Thani, Thailand**

On June 5-6, 2006, MRCS and USAID ECO-Asia co-organized the Conflict Management Program Inception Workshop, which included 35 participants from the Member Countries of Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand, and Vietnam, 8 from the MRCS, 9 from USAID ECO-Asia, and 2 observers. Resource persons from the planning meeting in Vientiane attended and shared their experience and expertise. As detailed in the program agenda, workshop activities including technical presentations, interactive sessions and group discussions on conflict management and prevention tools and techniques, transboundary water cooperation, terminology, institutional strengthening, and capacity building.

### **A. Workshop Opening**

Opening the Inception Workshop, Dr. Wijarn Simachaya, Director Environment Division of the MRCS, noted that Objective 2.3 under Goal 2 of the MRC Strategic Plan aims to identify potential transboundary issues for negotiation, mediation and conflict prevention, and develop mediation and conflict management capacity. Dr. Wijarn shared with the participants the activities of the Working Group on Conflict Management and Mitigation. He also noted the importance of developing a conflict management strategy, capacity building for MRCS and NMCs, identifying potential hotspots for conflicts and ensuring that “objective” information is gathered. He also highlighted the importance of developing conflict prevention mechanisms, and identifying a group of external “neutral” expert advisors who might assist in addressing conflicts when they arise.

Representing USAID, Mr. John Pasch, Regional Water Policy Advisor for the RDM/A, noted that USAID has recently revised its water and sanitation strategy in foreign assistance to reflect the importance of transboundary dialogue in successful basin management. Mr. Pasch shared with the participants one USAID priority in improving information quality and availability; strengthening institutions responsible for management of shared waters and negotiation of treaties; and strengthening or developing new agreements to promote cooperation on shared waters. He expressed USAID’s commitment in working with the MRCS and NMCS in support of Goal 2 of the MRC Strategic Plan.

## **B. Workshop Objectives**

- Launch program of cooperation between MRC and USAID ECO-Asia and discuss present capabilities for supporting implementation of Goal 2 of the MRC Strategic Plan;
- Raise awareness and introduce principles, tools and techniques for conflict management;
- Facilitate identification of Member Country priority in strengthening regional cooperation; and
- Establish common understanding and relationships among Member Countries on conflict management to enable more effective regional cooperation.

## **C. Technical Presentations and Discussion:**

Strategic Plan 2006 – 2010: Goal 2 on Regional Cooperation: Dr. Wijarn Simachaya, who chairs the MRCS's Conflict Management and Mitigation Working Group, presented Goal 2 of the MRC Strategic Plan for 2006-2010, and relevant working group outputs, including the concept note developed by the Working Group and process for developing a Conflict Management Strategy to implement Goal 2.

International Experiences on Water Transboundary Cooperation: Professor Aaron T. Wolf from Oregon State University presented international experience on water transboundary conflict and cooperation models, including the international water events database and training module. He highlighted research, training and database management as tools for understanding how conflicts arise and how they can be prevented. His main conclusions included:

- The Transboundary Freshwater Dispute Database developed by Oregon State University provides evidence to expel certain myths about water-related conflicts, namely that water wars are prevalent and inevitable and that primary causes of conflict are: climate, water stress, population, level of development, dependence on hydropower, dams or development, and general degradation of water quality ([www.transboundarywaters.orst.edu](http://www.transboundarywaters.orst.edu));
- Based on his research, his working hypothesis is that, “the likelihood of conflict rises as the rate of change within the basin exceeds the institutional capacity to absorb that change”;
- Resilient transboundary water institutions are those that have an adaptable management structure; clear and flexible allocation; equitable distribution of benefits, not water; a detailed conflict resolution mechanism; and sustainable institution and financing; and
- To prevent and resolve water conflict, it is helpful to assess historic trends and future areas of concern, rigorously evaluate institutional capacity to prevent and resolve disputes at multiple scales, and develop focused skills-building training based on local needs and culture, while drawing on international experience.

Overview of Terminology on Conflict Prevention and Resolution: Experts from U.S. EPA (Deborah Dalton) and USAID ECO-Asia (Cynthia Irmer) facilitated discussion on conflict management terminology and linkages between conflict management, consensus building, conflict prevention, and public participation. Several terms were defined as follows:

- *Negotiation:* a discussion or other communication between two or more parties who want to reach an agreement regarding specific issues.
- *Mediation:* a voluntary and confidential discussion or other communication where a third party neutral (the mediator) helps people discuss difficult issues and reach an agreement.
- *Arbitration:* a process where a neutral third party (the arbitrator) with subject matter expertise: (1) listens to evidence and arguments from the parties; and (2) issues a decision terminating the dispute.

- *Facilitation*: a process in which a neutral third party (the facilitator) helps a group accomplish its goals.
- *Conciliation*: a process in which a neutral third party (a mediator or facilitator) helps parties work through difficulties in their relationships rather than resolve a dispute regarding a particular subject matter.
- *Joint fact-finding*: a process in which a neutral third party (a mediator or facilitator) helps parties identify subject-matter experts who assist in developing the factual basis for resolving their dispute.

Representatives from the MRCS gave examples of different types of conflicts they have encountered. One point emphasized during discussion was that some divisions within the MRC use the terminology “differences” when referring to conflict or disagreement, and that there are differences between sectors, groups, countries, and stakeholders. Having a common terminology would be useful.

Tools and Techniques for Conflict Management and Public Participation: Experts from U.S. EPA (Deborah Dalton) and USAID ECO-Asia (Doug Sarno, Cynthia Irmer) presented best practices, tools and techniques for conflict prevention and resolution that highlighted linkages to public participation. U.S. EPA presented an overview of community involvement, conflict prevention and resolution, as well as alternative dispute resolution processes. The session also highlighted the need to consult, involve and collaborate with the public/stakeholders. ECO-Asia presented different types of conflicts, including data conflicts, conflicting interests, structural conflicts, value-based conflicts, and relationship conflicts.

Representatives of the MRC Secretariat presented existing tools and techniques used throughout various programmes. Wolf Hartmann of the Fisheries Management and Governance Component (FMG) shared experience on “co-management,” which is a formalised process of sharing authority and responsibility by government and organised user-groups in decentralised decision making. Some achievements of using co-management have been increases in production and income, strengthened use of organizations, knowledge sharing, and a decrease in illegal fishing. In addition, Hans Guttman of the Environment Programme shared information on five activities: (1) guidelines for transboundary EIA (including a framework); (2) environmental risk assessment in water quality in two hotspot areas (border areas Cambodia/Vietnam in the Delta and northern Thailand/Lao PDR); (3) response to a request by the Cambodian government to conduct a joint fact-finding water quality monitoring programme on the Sesan River for one year (Vietnam and Cambodia); (4) response to a request to undertake an impact diagnostic study in the Sesan, Srepok and Sekong Sub-basins (Cambodia, Lao PDR and Vietnam); and (5) facilitate agreement on management of trans-boundary wetlands (Lao PDR and Cambodia).

Strategies in Building National Capacity: Thailand’s Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MoNRE), U.S. EPA and ECO-Asia shared lessons learned and experiences in developing conflict management institutional and policy frameworks and national capacity. Ms. Ratchanee Phatashit of Thailand’s Department of Environmental Quality Promotion (DEQP) (under MoNRE) shared how in 2003, US.EPA worked with DEQP to develop a conflict prevention and resolution policy. To implement the policy, DEQP developed a pilot training for key government officials, and trained a core group of mediators. In 2004, DEQP established the Environmental Dispute Prevention and Resolution Center (EDPRC). With USAID support, the Center developed trained over 600 officials trained nationwide. EDPRC’s activities include curriculum development, training programs, research and development, and networking.

Deborah Dalton of U.S. EPA presented on the EPA Conflict Prevention and Resolution Center and its mission to build capacity and infrastructure for increased use of conflict management and collaboration throughout EPA. At EPA, building capacity to handle environmental conflict requires institutional framework (laws, regulations, policies, organizations), training (courses, experiences, publicity) and services

(neutrals, assessments, lessons learned). It was also noted that building capacity happens at the national level as well as the agency, local, and civil society levels.

Public Participation Case Study: Dr. Solieng Mak of the MRCS provided an overview of on-going public participation practices in Basin Development Plan (BDP) programme. Dr. Mak presented the history of public participation in the MRC, as well as principles, rationales and strategy. For public participation in the BDP context, she highlighted the planning process/stages, purpose of stakeholder participation, process and outcomes, and findings/lessons learned. Dr. Mak concluded that there is a clear tendency towards direct public participation in the decision-making process, as well as in daily water management, and that water user groups exist in all four MRC member countries. Stakeholder involvement in various decisions is gradually being introduced in some of the member countries, but is still a new modality, in need of consolidation, including formalization.

Simulation Exercise on Managing Transboundary Water Resources: Professor Aaron T. Wolf led a simulation exercise on managing transboundary water resources. The exercise is part of the Graduate/Professional Skills-Building Workbook titled, “Sharing Water, Sharing Benefits: Working Towards Effective Transboundary Water Resources Management,” which was adapted from the World Bank International Waters Course. Workshop participants were randomly placed in one of five fictitious countries in the “Sandus River Basin” and were given the geographical, political, economic, and hydrological profile of their country. Exercises highlighted the importance of cooperation in reducing transboundary impacts. The skills-building exercise illustrated the importance of awareness-raising, the need for trained facilitators/mediators, and collaborative learning.

Building Institutional Capacity to Mitigate for Change: Professor Aaron T. Wolf from Oregon State University discussed international water conflict management and transformation, which is a process that allows for sustainable, equitable and efficient water resources management, while incorporating the political realities of international borders. He presented a program in water conflict management and transformation, which aims to enhance capacity to address and prevent transboundary waters conflict and degradation by focusing on four focus area initiatives: skills-building workshops/collaborative learning; graduate and professional certification; linked information technology; and collaborative analytical studies.

#### **D. Priority Program Areas and Activities for Cooperation**

To support development of a joint program in promoting regional cooperation in the Mekong River basin, MRC and USAID ECO-Asia led an interactive group discussion identifying priority program areas and activities for cooperation in the following areas: (1) situational analysis; (2) institutional strengthening; and (3) capacity building. As detailed in the summary table below, workshop participants from all four countries came to agreement of specific activities and outputs that will assist the MRCS and NMCs in achieving outcomes and objectives identified in Goal 2.

| <b>MRC-USAID CONFLICT MANAGEMENT PROGRAM</b> |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Program Areas</b>                         | <b>Potential Activities</b>  |
| Situational Analysis                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Assess historical events and trends of transboundary issues in the basin</li> <li>▪ Develop inventory of existing or potential transboundary issues in the basin</li> <li>▪ Prepare needs assessments (both institutional and capacity)</li> </ul>  |
| Institutional Strengthening                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop MRC Conflict Management Strategy (joint work program for implementing Goal 2 of the MRC Strategic Plan and/or operational approach linked to MRC public participation strategy)</li> <li>▪ Support development of institutional analysis of MRC and Member Country relationships – identify roles and responsibilities, key challenges, etc.</li> <li>▪ Strengthen existing or develop new mechanisms for implementing 1995 Mekong Agreement</li> </ul> |
| Capacity Building                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop common terminology and materials in local languages</li> <li>▪ Assign national focal points</li> <li>▪ Provide regional tools and training (awareness raising and skills development – joint fact finding, mediation, etc.)</li> <li>▪ Help transition skills development to country level</li> <li>▪ Support development of river basin committees</li> </ul>  |

### **E. Workshop Closing**

To conclude the Conflict Management Program Inception Workshop, Dr. Wijarn Simachaya from MRCS made closing remarks, noting that while conflict management is a new program area for the MRC, there are many good models and experiences from which MRCS and NMCs can learn. He noted the experience of the Thailand Environmental Dispute and Resolution Center and U.S. EPA, and encouraged all participants to think about how to apply to these models in the Mekong context. Dr. Wijarn Simachaya concluded that the success of the Conflict Management Program will depend on Member Country participation and commitment to regional cooperation.

### **V. Next Steps**

To provide MRCS and ECO-Asia a better understanding of existing capacity, priorities and needs from NMCS, and to support design of new capacity building activities, workshop participants will be asked to complete a questionnaire elaborating on their specific interests and priorities. Based on the findings of this questionnaire and follow-up interviews in Member Countries, MRCS and ECO-Asia will prepare a regional capacity building assessment, identify regional needs and develop a detailed work plan with a series of activities to support achievement of Goal 2 of MRC Strategic Plan.