

# LOWER MEKONG INITIATIVE IMPLEMENTERS WORKSHOP



**2019**

Hanoi, Vietnam,  
*December 19*



LOWER MEKONG INITIATIVE



## *Community engagement projects & Policymaker engagement projects*



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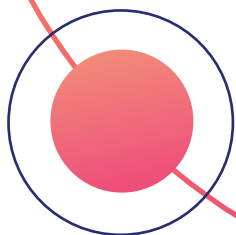


# LOWER MEKONG INITIATIVE IMPLEMENTERS WORKSHOP



*December 19, 2019  
Melia Hotel, Hanoi, Viet Nam*

Key objectives of the Lower Mekong Initiative Implementers Workshop were to facilitate an annual roundtable event for LMI projects/program implementers and managers to update each other and discuss upcoming activities and lessons learned, as well as to explore collaboration opportunities, new ideas and initiatives. The workshop also invited representatives from Friends of the Mekong (FLM), the Mekong River Commission (MRC), and Mekong stakeholders to join discussions and provide ideas on how LMI' projects and programs should be designed and implemented, to fully support and build capacity of the Lower Mekong region and existing initiatives. The workshop also facilitated two breakout group dialogues on the topics of "community engagement projects" and "policymaker engagement projects."





“Positive impacts of LMI projects and programs should benefit local communities and promote healthy ecosystems of the Mekong River Basin.”

## Key Takeaways

Positive impacts of LMI projects and programs should benefit local communities and promote healthy ecosystems of the Mekong River Basin.

Socio-economic data that is accessible to users: enabling straightforward back-of-envelope calculations using accurate data allows for better communication.

Partnerships are key to bridging the science-policy-academic gaps, especially for systematic socioeconomic data collection and modeling

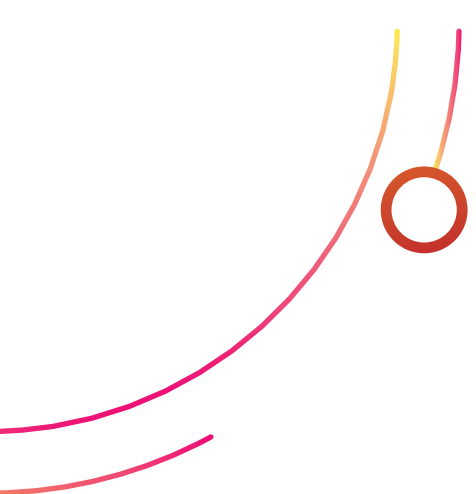
LMI should identify key problems, target groups, and specific issues, then implement activities to address them. Bring decision support capability to those who will benefit from it.

Good science doesn't directly translate to good policy: the science community should better consider how to influence policy and converge parallel discussions.

Recognize the power of small grants and volunteers. People can be force multipliers in their own communities.

Small projects do have an impact. Multiple smaller projects can create a significant change.

Build a link between LMI MekongWater.org and MRC water data through high-level dialogue.





## Summaries of LMI Implementers Roundtable meeting

### Lower Mekong Initiative (LMI)

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LMI is a strategic LMI to reinforce the United States' partnership building in the Lower Mekong. The mechanism addresses good governance, sustainability, and challenges of the Mekong. In 2020 LMI has come to its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

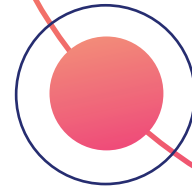
There have been many achievements over the past decade; one highlight was the US Secretary of State's Mekong Water Data Initiative (MWDI), announced in 2017 at the LMI Ministerial Meeting.

LMI also facilitates the Friends of the Mekong (FLM), a consortium of donors that engage in capacity building and coordination activities. The FLM includes Australia, Japan, South Korea, New Zealand, the European Union (EU), Asian Development Bank (ADB), and the World Bank (WB).

LMI has two pillars: the **Water-Food-Energy and Environment Nexus**, and **Human Development and Connectivity**. LMI has structured meetings that take place annually, namely: (i) a Technical Planning Meeting, for country heads of delegation; (ii) a Policy Dialogue, which is a working group for officers up to director-general level; (iii) two Senior Officer meetings, and; (iv) an LMI Ministerial Meeting. The last two are aligned with the ASEAN calendar.

How can US agencies and organizations engage with the LMI? Please express your interest to the US State Department. For organizations in the Lower Mekong countries that would like to contribute, make queries and/or participate in LMI activities, the US Embassy in your country is your point of contact. Please get in touch with an environment officer, or contact Mr. John Choi at [ChoiJY@state.Gov](mailto:ChoiJY@state.Gov).

## Sustainable Infrastructure Partnership (SIP)



The Sustainable Infrastructure Partnership (SIP) is a capacity building and coordination program that works with LMI agencies, the MRC, FLM and US agencies. The program addresses three key thematic areas, namely, Cumulative Impacts, Socioeconomics, and Data Sharing. SIP also facilitates the Mekong Water Data Initiative.

SIP is a program that coordinates and fills gaps. The program has carefully avoided wheel reinvention – and this approach has been welcomed by stakeholders. The capacity building initiative on socio-economic data is one of the highlights of SIP's work, and has been very interested by stakeholders. This is expected to be a good complement to Social Impact Monitoring and Vulnerability Assessment (SIM&VA) project, to be implemented side by side, either through a case study approach or by supporting digitalizing data technology and building an open platform for sharing socioeconomic data.

Upcoming events and activities:

- Facilitate activities with multiple partners to develop a plan for program impact monitoring.
- The 2019 Mekong Research Symposium (MRS) and Implementers Workshop highlighted the importance of socioeconomic data sharing, which remains a big gap in the Lower Mekong region. To address this gap, SIP aims to survey existing data, and develop socioeconomic database and socioeconomic training program.
- Explore Ayeyawady, Chao Phraya - Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy (ACMECS) cooperation to coordinate between ACMECS and LMI.
- Implement Groundwater Resources Management Program with USGS, Lao PDR, Thailand – Hydro Informatics Institute (HII) and include training resources on [MekongWater.org](http://MekongWater.org).
- Explore opportunities for telemetry maintenance and operations program between DOS, USGS, Thailand, Myanmar, Laos, and Cambodia.
- Refine and improve [MekongWater.org](http://MekongWater.org) interface and website.
- NASA and Eyes on Earth collaboration. Facilitate support for USGS-led projects.
- DOE cascade hydropower, and hydropower trade scenario with Stimson and increasing renewable energy capacity to replace hydropower needs.
- Next series of Cumulative Impact Assessment training.
- Explore a plan and initiatives to better engage local community stakeholders.

## US Geological Survey (USGS) and NEXVIEW

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Upcoming events and activities:

- NEXVIEW project is being formed. The team is reviewing existing quality data that can be used for project activities.
- Week of February 17-23, 2020, to be working with SIP on Thai-UGS Groundwater Meta-data Management Training. The same week will be a meeting with colleagues from Can Tho University in Bangkok.
- Joining ASU to invite MRC colleagues to Tempe to learn more about the Decision Theater.

## Arizona State University (ASU)

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- A privilege for ASU to demonstrate the Decision Theatre (DT) with overwhelming interest from stakeholders at the Symposium.
- DT integrates all work like modeling, presentations, data etc., into one platform. It is a tool for engagement between technical experts, policy makers and stakeholders.
- ASU-H2O project is conducting a governance study on how water decisions are made by using case studies in the Mekong.



## US Department of Energy (DOE)

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- Establishing relationships for collaboration; following up on future project implementation on cascade hydropower management.
- Pilot study on five hydropower dams and cumulative impacts. There is a need to develop a scientific peer-reviewed paper especially on cascade hydropower management, before we suggest any alternatives to stakeholders. We need to raise the profile of our claims.

## US Army Corps of Engineers (USGS)

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- Extraordinary amount of work going on in the region, activities through USACE are mostly operational and practical, not somewhat research-based.
- USACE is getting Shared Vision Planning (SVP) tool online.
- Upcoming event for the MRC, 2-day training workshop in February/March 2020. However, this will be depending on shared data.

## Eyes on Earth (EoE)

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- Working with SIP and ASU to develop the next phrase of real-time monitoring of surface wetness to share on website so people can see extreme events.
- Develop models and tools to promote transparency and data sharing.



## USAID Wonders of the Mekong

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- The project recognizes the importance of work at the community level. The project is planning for studies and activities on community-based fish passage, decline of fish quality in Cambodia i.e. from contamination of pesticides, and activities that involve education about the impacts from drought and climate extremes.
- To develop tools that local stakeholders can easily adopt and visualize, and understand. Perhaps, survey and communication tools that collect and communicate messages from communities, households, and individuals. School student education tools.
- Arts and education activities at local festivals. Using water festivals in Cambodia to convey messages to large audience, perhaps on impacts of plastics, climate, and uses of chemicals, etc.

## Dr. Venkat Lakshmi from ASU and NASA:

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- Plans (NASA): Disasters and SERVIR – understanding changes in land use and downstream relationships with satellite data. Land use change has immediate and devastating impacts – SWAT can measure this. K-Water/NASA/Pact/USACE coordination: HEC models and training package.
- Face-to-face meetings are critical.

## Department of Interior (DoI) – International Technical Assistant Program (ITAP) and Smart Infrastructure of the Mekong (SIM):

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- SIM is ending in September 2020. Fish Passage Programs in Thailand and Vietnam were successful.
- Wildlife crossing project is under discussion and getting meaningful results.
- DOI-ITAP Ambassador's Water Experts Program(AWEP): technical expertise in water resources, recently sent experts to Vietnam through a program that is like a “Hydrogeologists Without Borders” program.

# LMI 10<sup>th</sup> years Anniversary

## POST-CONFERENCE WORKSHOP











# Annex I

## Program Agenda

### LMI 10-Year Anniversary Implementers Workshop

December 19, 2019

9:00 AM LMI Overview and Goals: State Department representative

9:30-10 AM LMI Alumni: lessons learned (panel/discussion)

10:15-10:30 AM Embassies and LMI: John Choi

10:30-10:45 AM Break

10:45-11:45 AM Breakout discussion

- Takeaways from the symposium
- Ways to integrate across programs

11:45-12 PM LMI Forward Calendar activity

- Participants put events on sticky notes under different months

12-1 PM Lunch

1-2 PM Breakout discussion

- Describe your program in 2 sentences
- How does your program support: LMI, MRC, national governments?
- How can DOS support your program?

1:45-2:15 PM Communications and PD: Rachael Chen, Embassy Hanoi

- How to message and share their work; How to work with Embassy PD teams; what sort of content and photos are useful, and how to spread the message about their work through their own channels as well as DOS ones

2:15:3 PM Wrap up and next steps

## Annex II

# 52

Total participants  
by country-based

### List of Participants



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