



RESOURCE

The Potential of MRC to Pursue IWRM in the Mekong: Trade-offs and Public Participation

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Description / Abstract

The Mekong River Commission (MRC) is committed to implementing IWRM in a development context that has a strong infrastructure focus. This raises questions about how to balance the goals of IWRM (economic efficiency, social equity and environmental sustainability) and the interests and power capabilities of the actors involved in the development of water resources. This chapter focuses on two key areas: the identification and negotiation of development trade-offs and public participation. Development of water resources involves trade-offs. In the Lower Mekong, the key trade-off is the development of hydropower versus fisheries which could bring local livelihoods and economic development into conflict. Public participation is extremely important within IWRM. However, there are issues of power and access that need to be mediated in order to allow a range of stakeholders to play a role in the development debate in the Lower Mekong. Through exploring these two areas, this chapter discusses some of the challenges the MRC must navigate if it is to play a strong role.

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