How to promote Lancang-Mekong River Basin Management by strengthening data and information sharing and collaboration

Lancang-Mekong Water Resources Cooperation Center
February 3, 2021
Who are we?
Lancang-Mekong Water Resources Cooperation Center (LMC Water Center) was established in June 2017 in accordance with the Sanya Declaration of the 1st Lancang-Mekong Cooperation (LMC) Leaders’ Meeting.

10. Enhance cooperation among LMC countries in sustainable water resources management and utilization through activities such as the establishment of a center in China for Lancang-Mekong water resources cooperation to serve as a platform for LMC countries to strengthen comprehensive cooperation in technical exchanges, capacity building, drought and flood management, data and information sharing, conducting joint research and analysis related to Lancang-Mekong river resources.

——Sanya Declaration (March 2016)
Lancang-Mekong Water Resources Cooperation Center

- Secretary General
  - Deputy Secretary Generals
    - General Affairs
    - External Relations
    - Cooperation Programs
    - Training and Information
• Ministry of Water Resources (MWR) of China provided substantial support to the Center for its institutional development and capacity building as well as office places and running funds.

• Lao PDR and Viet Nam each sent 2 experts worked in the Center on a short-term basis.

• The Center signed the MOU with MRCS for synergies in regional water resources cooperation.

• Partnership is developing with organizations of six member countries, enterprises, Civil society organizations (CSOs), regional and international institutions.
Ministerial Meeting is held on a regular basis to discuss about and make decisions on strategic issues related to Lancang-Mekong water resources cooperation.
Joint Working Group

- Joint Working Group (JWG) has been set up by the six member countries as a decision-making coordination body to advance Lancang-Mekong water resources cooperation.

- The JWG meets once every year and holds special meetings if necessary.

- The LMC Water Center works under the guidance of JWG.

the 1st Meeting of JWG (Feb 2017, Beijing)

the 2nd Meeting of JWG (Mar 2018, Chiang Rai)
Six Cooperation Areas in the Five-year Action Plan

1. Water resources and green development
2. IWRM and climate change adaptation
3. Water sector production capacity cooperation
4. Rural areas, water conservancy and livelihood improvement
5. Sustainable hydropower development and energy security
6. Transboundary river cooperation and information sharing
What have we done and learnt on data & information sharing?
Decision and Consensus on Information Sharing

- Decision of the Leaders of the six member countries
  
    
    — Section 2.6, Vientiane Declaration of the 3rd LMC Leaders’ Meeting, Aug 24, 2020

- Consensus of the Water Ministers of the six member countries
  
  - We will continue to take joint actions to implement the decisions made by our leaders, through policy dialogue, information sharing, experience exchange, capacity building, and partnership development.
    
    —Para 10, Joint Statement of the 1st Ministerial Meeting, Dec 17, 2019
  
  - Strengthen and expand cooperation on data and information sharing among member countries towards comprehensive LMC data and information sharing in the field of water resources.
    
    —Para 12, Joint Statement of the 1st Ministerial Meeting, Dec 17, 2019
Letter of Intent on the Establishment of Lancang-Mekong Water Resources Cooperation Information Sharing Platform (signed by the JWG on Sept 24, 2020)

Pursuant to the Vientiane Declaration of the Third Lancang-Mekong Cooperation (LMC) Leaders’ Meeting of 24th August 2020 supporting the establishment of Lancang-Mekong Water Resources Cooperation Information Sharing Platform hereafter referred to as the Platform, We, the Joint Working Group on Lancang-Mekong Water Resources Cooperation (JWG), hereby have the intention to establish Lancang-Mekong Water Resources Cooperation Information Sharing Platform:

1. Principles

The development, operation and maintenance of the Platform will be governed by the following principles:

- Inclusive and comprehensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits.
- Respect for laws and regulations of each member country and mutually recognized international laws and norms, which already signed and ratified by the member countries, in particular with regard to the national defense or security, commercial-in-confidence and copy rights protection.
- Member countries will provide data, information, knowledge, experiences, and technologies that are needed for the development, operation of the Platform, in an equitable, efficient, reciprocal, timely and cost effective manner.
- Member countries will maintain their data and information systems enabling availability and continuity of the data and information sharing.

Member countries will review data and information to be provided to the Platform and ensure their compliance with the formats and quality requirements agreed by the member countries, coordinate and solve copyright issues that may occur.

6. Validity

This Letter of Intent will come into effect on the date of signing and will continue to be in effect during the Establishment of the Platform.

Signed in six copies on 24th September, 2020 in English language.

[Signatures]

Head of Chinese JWG  Head of Cambodian JWG

Head of Lao JWG  Head of Myanmar JWG

Head of Thai JWG  Head of Vietnamese JWG
Jointly developed by member countries:

- Member countries will provide data, information, knowledge, experiences, and technologies that are needed for the development, operation of the Platform, in an equitable, efficient, reciprocal, timely and cost effective manner (Principles).
- Member countries will contribute to the development, operation and maintenance of the Platform in the forms of funding, human resources and technologies (Implementation Arrangements).

Cooperate with MRC and other partners:

- Complement and develop in close collaboration with MRC (Principles);
- The Implementing Team, consisting of officials and experts of all member countries and representatives of the LMC Water Center in close collaboration with Mekong River Commission Secretariat (MRCS) and other international partners, will provide technical support to the establishment of the Platform (Implementation Arrangements).
The Lancang-Mekong Water Resources Cooperation Information Sharing Platform Website was launched on November 30th, 2020, jointly by Minister E Jingping of Water Resources of China and honorable diplomats of the six LMC member countries.

The Website aims to advance the sharing of data, information and knowledge, while providing experience and reference for the six member countries to jointly build the Platform.
Other Progress on Information Sharing

China provides to the other five member countries and MRCS year-round hydrological information of the Lancang river starting from 2020 after providing flood season information to MRCS since 2002.

In case of significant change to the operation of the Jinghong Hydropower Station, JWG China will inform other JWG countries in a timely manner, which is highly appreciated by the downstream countries.

The JWG is considering and discussing about a mechanism of data and information sharing on floods, droughts and emergency water-related situation.
Joint Observation and Evaluation on the Emergency Water Supplement from China to the Mekong River, carried out by MWR China and MRC found the active effects of the water supplement on the drought in downstream countries.

Joint Assessment on Flood Prevention and Drought Relief in Mekong River Basin, led by China IWHR and involving experts from the other LMC member countries, is of good reference for advancing regional cooperation in flood and drought prevention and mitigation as well as improving decision-making by member countries.

Joint research Hydrological Impacts of the Lancang hydropower Cascade on Downstream Extreme Events, carried out by China IWHR, MRCS and IWMI, concluded that the Lancang hydropower cascade played a positive role in drought relief of the Mekong River, and the flash flood in December 2013 was not caused by the operation of reservoirs in China.

Transboundary Cooperation Mechanism On Adaptation To Climate Change And Hydropower Development Projects, led by Thailand and involving experts from other LMC member countries, held two regional consultation meetings and presented findings.
Key findings of Transboundary Cooperation Mechanism On Adaptation To Climate Change And Hydropower Development Projects

• In order to enhance regional data and information sharing, continued efforts need to be made to address the following limitations and challenges at the national level (to the extent that are agreed to by the concerned parties within existing agreements at the national and regional levels):
  - technological capability
  - technical skills in data monitoring, sharing and database management
  - documentation and automatic back-up system on data-sharing and emergency response
  - links to water data from hydropower projects to national hydro-met network and database
  - operational database of key water data users
  - inter-agency coordination

• The lessons learned from the development and progress in regional data-sharing practices prove that having several projects and activities to support data-sharing efforts, while useful, cannot address all the key challenges in intergovernmental communication at the national and regional levels.

• There is a need for a joint body to oversee, and regularly monitor and report on, the progress of data-sharing practices in the region.
•Part Three•

What to do next?
Concept of the Information Sharing Platform

- Website portal of information provision and sharing
- Interactive Map of Multi-spatial Data
- Decision-making Support System for Operational Application
- Standards System for Information Sharing on Water
- Video Conference and Consultation System
- Infrastructure of the Information Sharing Platform
Approach of Lancang-Mekong Water Resources Cooperation
Seizing opportunities for further cooperation, the Parties decide to cooperate in areas of experience sharing, data and information exchange, monitoring, joint assessment and joint research and study, knowledge management and associated capacity building relating to water and related resources development and management so as to jointly promote sustainable social and economic development of the Lancang-Mekong countries.
Thanks for your attention and support.

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