

UNEP And MRC Sign MoU To Collaborate On Water Quality Monitoring

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Nairobi and Vientiane, 16 January 2020 - The United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) Global Environmental Monitoring Programme for Freshwater (GEMS/Water) and the Mekong River Commission (MRC) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to facilitate collaboration in the area of water quality monitoring and further their shared goals. Water Quality Monitoring is one of the key environmental monitoring activities of the MRC and has provided a continuous record of water quality in the Mekong River and its tributaries. Recognising that water quality issues are trans-boundary by nature, MRC Member Countries support the regional Procedures for Water Quality with the objective to maintain good/acceptable water quality and to promote the sustainable development of the Mekong River Basin.

Even before having the MoU in place, MRC and GEMS/Water have collaborated in the area of capacity development. Over the years, MRC has participated in various regional training activities of the GEMS/Water Programme. Most recently, GEMS/Water experts were invited to deliver Water Quality Monitoring training at workshop organized by MRC in Vientiane, Lao PDR, from 19th to 21st February 2019. The workshop brought together regional experts from the four Member Countries (Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand, Viet Nam) and the training topics covered options for monitoring water bodies (physical, chemical and biological); data storage, sharing, presentation and analysis; preparation of a water quality report; and reviewing and evaluating an existing monitoring programme. In this process, several topics were identified that will be addressed during specific training workshops in the future.

In addition to joint capacity development activities, the other areas of collaboration under the MoU include networking and outreach; data and information sharing and management; and sharing of expertise through consultancy services. Discussion on joint activities for the current year under the newly signed MoU are underway. The signing of the MoU paves the way for great synergy between the two entities to work on activities of mutual interest and benefit as relevant to water quality monitoring.

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