

# Updates of water environment governance in lao PDR

The 20th Annual Meeting WEPA

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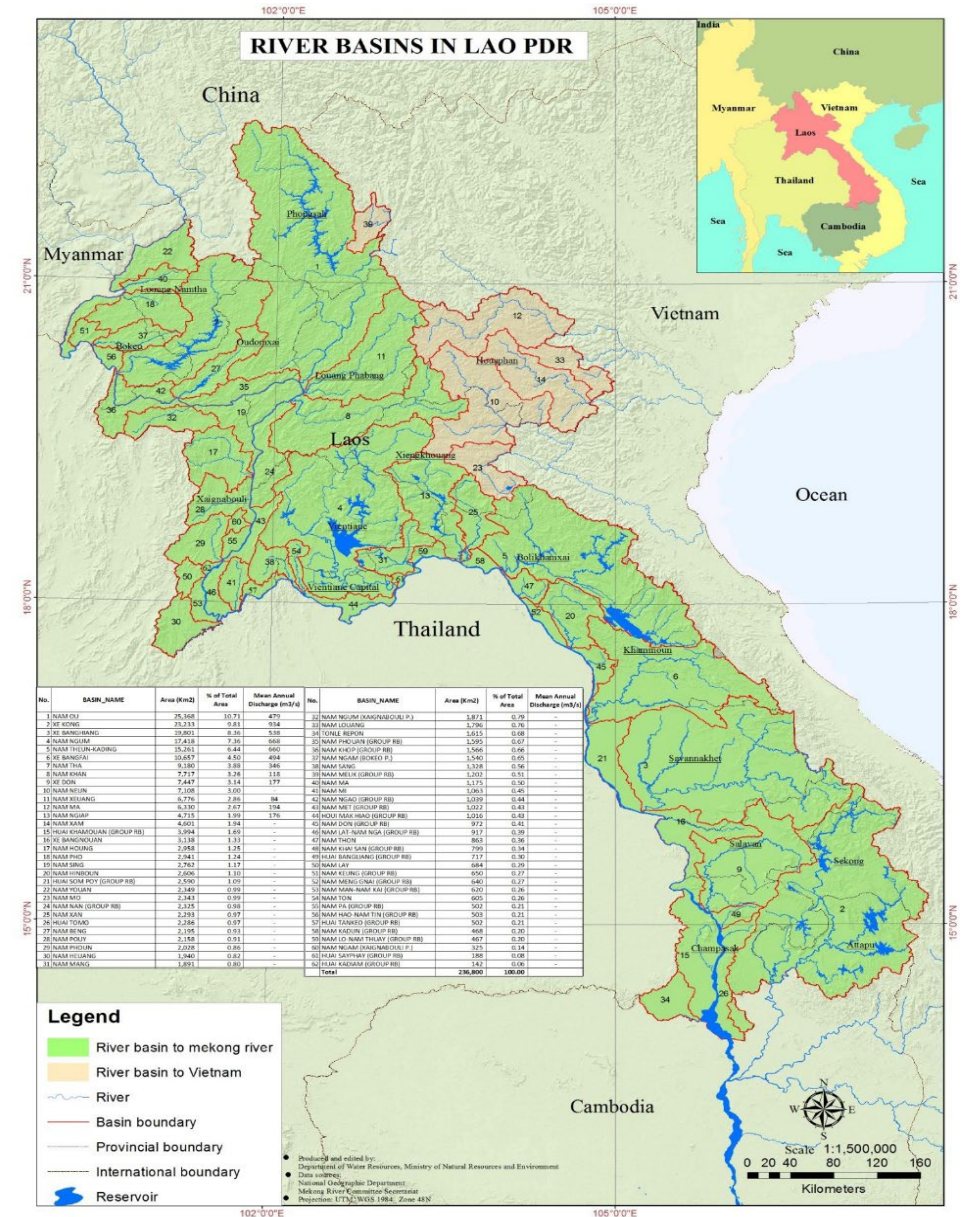
National Focal Point for WEPA in Lao DPR

# Outline of presentation

- ✓ Overview-Water Resources in Lao PDR
- ✓ Water Pollution Sources
- ✓ Water quality problems observed in the watershed
- ✓ Policies implemented to solve the problems
- ✓ Challenges

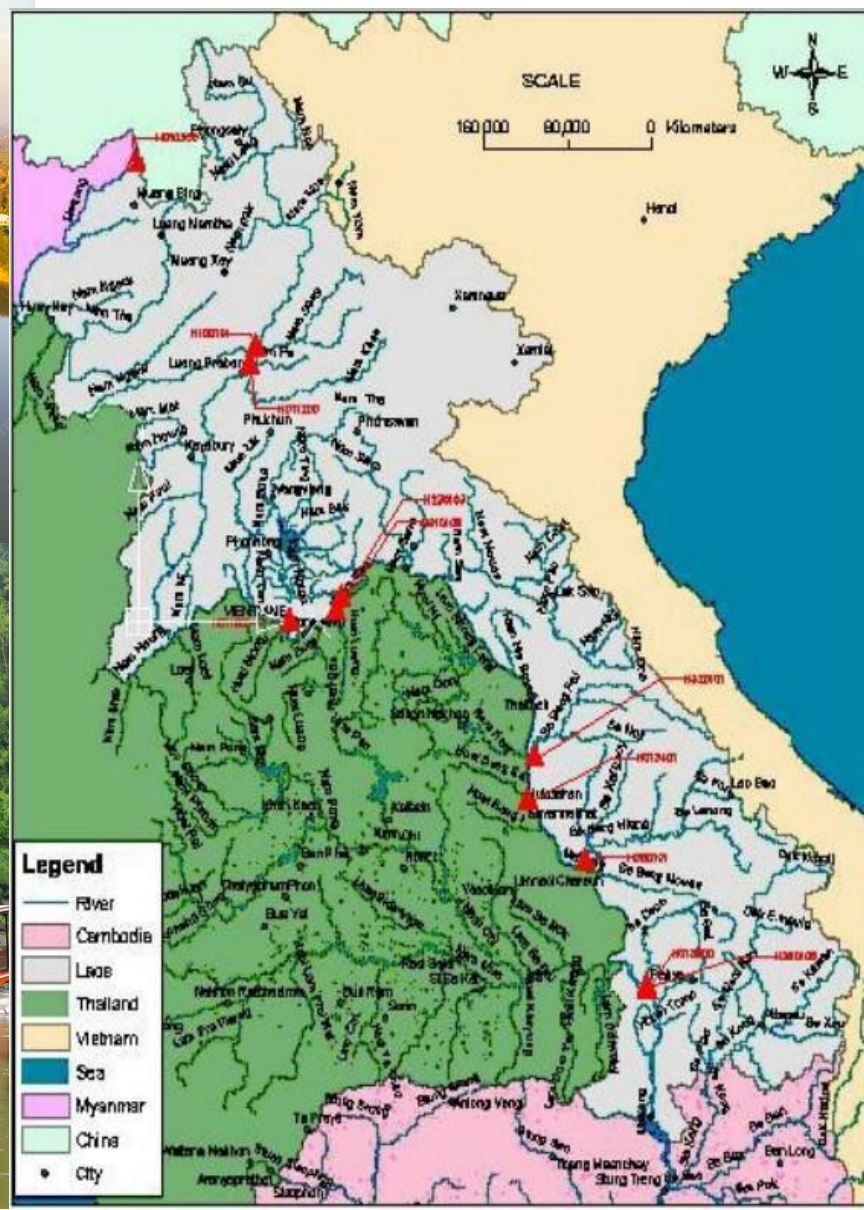
# 1. Overview-Water Resources in Lao PDR

- Lao PDR is located in South-East Asia with total land area of 236,800 km<sup>2</sup>, approx. population 7 Mil People
- Water resources per capita is around 55,000 m<sup>3</sup> /yea
- about 90% of which is located within the Mekong river basin. Lao PDR is rich in water resources with about 39 main tributaries flowing into the Mekong river and 62 river basins spread throughout the country 62 river basins. (14 Large, 19 Medium, 29 Small)
- 56 RB flow to Mekong and the other 6 RB flow to Vietnam





# Overview-Water Resources in Lao PDR





## 2. Water Pollution Sources

- Many small rivers, lakes, and streams form each year during the rainy season. These water bodies contain high values of total suspended solids as a result of human activities, including agriculture practices, mining activities, industrial processing and urban development such as road construction which causes soil erosion
- While the current water quality status is good, these bodies will face challenges in the future such as water pollution, over-exploitation and impacts from climate change which will negatively impact water quality in coming years.

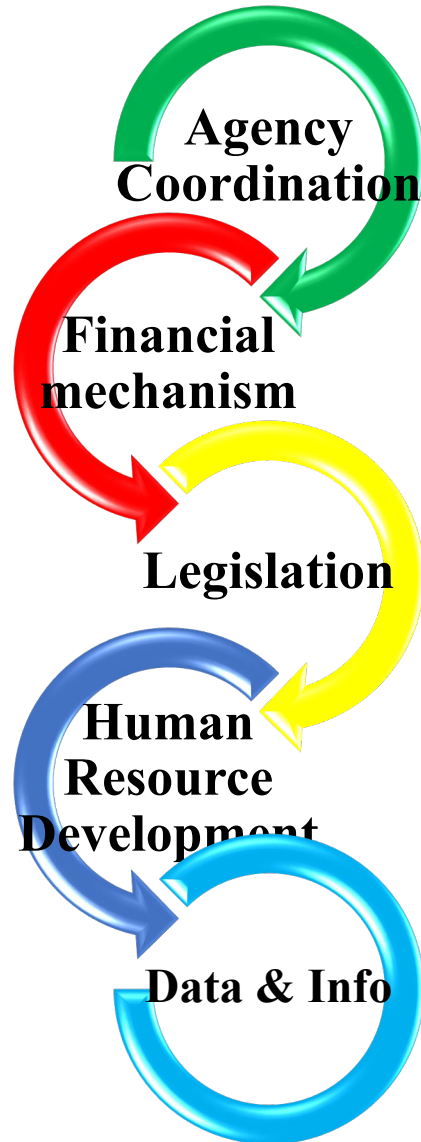
### 3. Water quality problems observed in the watershed

- Increased demand for water and water resources
- Some hydro power projects are experiencing a shortage of water for use in the power generation process during the dry season
- Chemicals are released from agricultural, industrial and urban wastewater into rivers, streams, and canals
- Mining activities draw water from rivers to use in mining and processing operations
- Agricultural production projects that use chemicals such as fertilizers, herbicides, and pesticides for production during the rainy season cause chemical leaching into natural water sources

## 4. Policies implemented to solve the problems

- The environmental Protection Law was promulgated in 1999, revised in 2012, and recently 2<sup>nd</sup> amended and enacted in 2024
- The law on water and water resources was adopted in 1996, amended in 2017, 2020 and 2022
- The national environmental standard was established in 2009 and amended in 2017
- Natural Resources and Environment Sector Vision towards 2030 and Ten-Year Strategy (2016-2025) and Natural Resources and Environment Sector Five year Action Plan (2016-2020) 22 September 2015
- Vision till 2040 and the National Strategy on Management and Utilization of Water and Water Resources until 2030, (2023).
- The vision is to “Managing and utilizing water and water resources based on IWRM principles to ensure the availability and health of water for sustainable development and the reduction of disaster risk”
- **Decree on River Basins and Reservoirs management, No. 20/GoV, 20<sup>th</sup> Jan 2021**
- **Decree on environment impact assessment (2022)**
- **Agreement on water utilization ( 2022)**
- **Agreement on management of water quality and wastewater discharge (2023)**

## 5. Challenges



Institutional arrangement & establishment – need to strengthen cross sector collaboration;

Limited financial support & sustainable mechanisms – equipment, tools, technologies...

Legislation & guidelines need to be developed and enforced

Limited capacity of concerned staff  
Low public awareness & participation in IWRM.

Lack of efficient & accurate Water data & information



Thank you