#4 ON SUSTAINABLE HYDROPOWER PRACTICE
“Dialogue with Hydropower Developers”

Date: 10-11 August 2017
Location: Crowne Plaza Hotel, Samsenthai Road, Vientiane, Lao PDR

XAYABURI HYDROELECTRIC POWER PROJECT
Plenary Session
“Developer and planner experience with Preliminary Design Guidance and in applying mitigation measures”

Summary of Xayaburi PNPCA and experience with PDG
• First project to undergo the PNPCA
• Check of project’s FS against the PDG
• MRC Project Report and Country Reply Forms listed many observations and concerns, however in most cases no clear or direct reference to the PDG could be made since the PDG is kept quite general
• GOL contracted Pöyry to review the Project Review Report, Country Forms and comments from other stakeholders and to produce a “Compliance Report” with concrete measures and actions the developer had to implement
• Implementing those concrete recommendations were considered to make the project compliant with the PDG
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Practical use of the PDG

- Experience showed that where the PDG is quite concrete, the application is clear and straightforward, e.g. requirement of “bottom outlets” or specific requirements related to navigation (i.e. vessel size and dimensions)
- Where the PDG are vague or unspecific, the room opens for interpretation where naturally a developer would tend to provide a minimum whereas MRC, governments, NGO’s etc... would expect a “Rolls Royce”
- Particularly the requirement for additional investigations is very difficult for a developer to follow after the PNPCA when the project is about to start. Such investigations should be specified and carried out before the PNPCA process
- It should be acknowledged by all parties that in some areas the knowledge on both sides, i.e. MRC / Government and the developer is limited and a balance must be found between baseline research and investigations providing necessary input data for the design; best example is “fish”. Joint effort should be undertaken to achieve best results.
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Conclusions
• The more detailed the PDG are, the easier and unambiguous their implementation becomes.
• However the requirements must remain sensible and achievable.
• An early exchange of opinions and cooperation, maybe even before the PNPCA process, could allow the developer to plan from the beginning for acceptable technical solutions.
• Once in force, all projects must follow and provide common solutions and services, i.e. for navigation, sediment routing and fish passage.
• For example all navigation locks on the Mekong should follow the same design principle so that boat operators find the same conditions in terms of equipment and operation procedures at every lock, independent from the entity who owns the project.
• Same accounts for sediment flushing, here also common rules need to be defined valid for all projects along the Mekong. Design should ensure that all facilities have the required capacity and allow a joint, coordinated operation.