

BRIEF RESULTS OF

The first national consultation workshop on Xayaburi hydropower project proposed on the Mekong mainstream of Lao PDR

(14 January 2011, Can Tho city, Viet Nam)

In response to the notification of Lao PDR's Government on Xayaburi, the first proposed hydropower project on mainstream of the Lower Mekong Basin, the Mekong River Commission (MRC) in collaboration with national counterparts in all Member Countries have been conducting a series of consultations with relevant stakeholders about the project as required by the Notification, Prior Consultation and Agreement Procedures (PNPCA) of the Mekong River Commission.

As planned, in Viet Nam two national consultation workshops are conducted to seek different views of the national agencies and local authorities on the proposed Xayaburi hydropower project. While the first meeting had been already conducted by the Viet Nam National Mekong Committee (VNMC) in Can Tho city on 14 January 2011 for the participants from the Southern part of Vietnam (list of participants attached), the second will be held on 22 February 2011 in Ha Long city for the participants from the Northern part of Vietnam.

The first workshop in Can Tho city chaired by H.E. Dr. Nguyen Thai Lai, Deputy Minister of Natural Resources and Environment, Vice Chairman of Viet Nam National Mekong Committee, drew large participation of about 50 VNMC members and representatives from 13 Mekong Delta provinces/city and related line agencies, institutions in Ho Chi Minh and Can Tho cities.

After opening remarks of H.E. Dr. Nguyen Thai Lai, representatives from National Mekong Committee presented three presentations on (i) Hydropower projects proposed on the mainstream, 1995 Mekong Agreement and Procedures for Notifications, Prior Consultation and Agreement, (ii) Results of the MRC Strategic Environmental Assessment of the hydropower dams proposed on the Mekong mainstream, and (iii) Report on proposed Xayaburi hydropower project.

According to the reports at the Workshop, the Xayaburi hydropower project is the third among 11 cascaded hydropower projects proposed on the Lower Mekong mainstream. This project is located on the Lao territory and invested by the SEAN & Ch. Karnchang Public of Thailand. This is the first project which is notified to the Mekong River Commission following the Procedures for Notification, Prior Consultation and Agreement. The dam is located 1930km far from the Mekong delta of Vietnam. The main parameters of this project are follows: Length of dam: 820m, dam height: 32.6m, including 8 units with installed capacity of 1,260MW. There are 2 navigation locks with carriage capacity of 500 tons, spilling way on the right banks, and plant house, sediment flushing sluices on the left side. The project construction is proposed to be completed after 8 years starting from 2011 and ending by 2019.

The Xayaburi hydropower project was officially notified to the MRC in October, 2010 by the Government of Lao PDR and is now in the period of 6-months prior consultation as stipulated in the aforementioned Procedures. It was expected the MRC would arrive at an official response to the first propose use of this kind from the Member Countries by April 2011.

The meeting participants expressed their comments and concerns on the status of dam development in the Mekong river basin and their potential impacts caused by these dams. The participants raised strong concerns about the severe impacts of the mainstream dams

and strongly recommended that the tributary hydropower development should be considered at this stage.

With respect to the Xayaburi dam, the main comments are summarized as follows:

1. Documents about the Project provided by the Developer was assessed as inadequate of basic information, particularly the technical essential design features such as fish ladders, sand flushing outlets, and navigation locks, and their proven feasibility and effectiveness in reality, as well as lacking of appropriate and comprehensive assessment of the trans-boundary and cumulative impacts of the project to the downstream.

2. Emphasizing the importance of the Mekong Delta as a rice bowl feeding almost 20 millions of people, the Workshop participants expressed their great concerns and worries about the possible impacts of the project on the productivity of the Mekong Delta and the livelihood of millions of people living in the Delta with particular concerns on impacts on sediments, fisheries, wetland ecosystems and lost of agriculture cultivated land due to salt intrusion. Potentially facing double impacts, from climate change and sea water level rise, and from the fast development in the Mekong upstream part, especially on the mainstream, the Delta would be adversely threatened by severe impacts resulting in the intrusion of saline sea water far into the inland, immense damage to the fisheries, declination of agro-productivity vital to millions and unpredictable degradation of the invaluable bio-diversity, cited most of the comments at the Workshop.

3. It was commonly emphasized that as this was the first of a series of dams planned to be built on the mainstream of the Mekong River in the Lower Mekong Basin, it must be considered with due care and full precaution. The time proposed for the prior consultation process of 6 months is certainly too short for consideration. While noting the status of missing of some basic information in the documents provided as well as lacking of comprehensive understanding on the severity and extent of the possible impacts that may occur, most of the participants expressed their strong views that the decision on the dam construction should be deferred in a sufficient period of time for further studies to facilitate understanding and confidence of concerned stakeholders on the dam impacts. In a meanwhile, it was suggested that the Lao government and developer would continue providing more information on the project, especially the information on the environmental impact for consideration.

4. Vietnam appreciates the results of SEA of the MRCS in collaboration with the international consultants. However, due to many reasons, the results of this study are still limited, and have not reflected all potential impacts on environment which could be caused by the mainstream hydropower dams. Therefore, it is requested that the MRC and its member countries will make every efforts to conduct further researches on this issue.

5. Regarding the PNPCA process, the participants requested more consultations at communities levels to be conducted on the process.

NEXT STEPS

The second national consultation meeting for the participants of the Northern part of Vietnam on the Xayaburi project will be organized. The results of the two meetings will be shared with the MRCS.

Annexes

1. Agenda
2. List of Participants

Annex 1:

VIET NAM NATIONAL MEKONG COMMITTEE

AGENDA National Consultation on Proposed Xayaburi Dam*Can Tho City, 14 January 2011*

Time	Content	Event Leader
08.30-09.00	Registration	VNMC
09.00-09.15	Opening Remark	H.E. Dr. Nguyen Thai Lai, Deputy Minister of MONRE, Vice Chairman of VNMC
09.15-09.30	Participants Introduction	VNMC
09.30-10.30	-Mainstream dam cascade and SEA study -Mainstream dams – Mekong Agreement and PNPCA -Roadmap of the Prior Consultation -The Proposed Xayaburi Hydropower Dam, location and related technical designs	VNMC
10.30-11.00	Coffee Break	
11.00-12.00	Q & A, discussion	H.E. Dr. Nguyen Thai Lai
12.00-13.30	Lunch	
13.30-14.00	Review of received documents by the Developer and its related findings and conclusions	VNMC
14.00-14.30	Q&A, discussion	H.E. Dr. Nguyen Thai Lai
14.30-15.30	Results of the Scoping Assessments by the MRCS	VNMC
15.30-16.00	Afternoon Break	
16.00-17.00	Q&A, discussion	H.E. Dr. Nguyen Thai Lai
17.00-17.30	Wrap-up, Conclusion and Closing Remark	H.E. Dr. Nguyen Thai Lai
18.30	Reception Dinner	All

Annex 2:**List of participants**

No.	Name	Position	Agency
Hanoi Participants			
1	Dr. Nguyen Thai Lai	Vice Minister - MONRE, Vice Chairman of VNMC	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE)
2	Dr. Le Duc Trung	Director General	VNMC
3	Dr. Truong Hong Tien	Deputy Director General	VNMC
4	Mr. Pham Anh Dung	Unit Chief	Appraisal and Environment Impact Assessment Department, MONRE
5	Mr. Nguyen Van Bang	Programe Officer	VNMC
6	Mr. Nguyen Van Trieu	Senior Officer, Assistant to Deputy Minister	MONRE
7	Ms. Nguyen Thi Thu Linh	Programe Officer	VNMC
Ho Chi Minh City Participants			
8	Ms. Vo Thi Be Nam	Deputy Director of Centre for Agricultural Economy and Geographic information	Sub-institute of Agricultural Planning and Projection
9	Mr. Phan Thanh Lam	Chief of Inland fisheries Department	Research Institute for Aquaculture
10	Mr. Tran Hoai Giang	Deputy Director	Sub-institute of Fishery Economy and Planning
11	Mr. Nguyen Nhu Trien	Deputy Director	Southern Centre for Economic Study
12	Mr. Ton Than Lang	Chief of Education Department	College of Natural Resources and Environment, Ho Chi Minh City
13	Mr. Bao Thanh	Director	Sub-Institute for Hydro-Meteorological and Environment

14	Mr. Phan Thanh Minh	Director	Southern Regional Hydro Meteorological Center
15	Mr. Pham Van Do	Senior Official	Representative Office of MONRE in Ho Chi Minh City
16	Mr. Vu Minh Thien	PO	VNMC Office, HCM City
17	Ms. Tran Thi Kim Hue	PO	VNMC Office, HCM City
Mekong Delta Participants (outside Can Tho)			
18	Mr. Nguyen Thanh Nguyen	Vice Chairman	People's Committee of Long An Province
19	Mr. Nguyen Van Chinh	Deputy Director	DONRE of Ben Tre Province
20	Mr. Nguyen Van Kieu	Senior Expert	Department of Natural Resources and Marine of Ben Tre Province
21	Mr. Dang Ngoc Loi	Deputy Director	Department of Agriculture and Rural Development of Dong Thap Province
22	Mr. Roan Ngoc Chien	Director	DONRE of Vinh Long Province
23	Mr. Le Hong Trinh	Chief of Natural Resources Department	Provincial People's Committee of Vinh Long Province
24	Ms. Tran Anh Thu	Deputy Director	DONRE of An Giang Province
25	Mr. Nguyen Van Huyen	Director	DONRE of Hau Giang Province
26	Mr. Hoang Minh Chau	Director	Environment Department of Hau Giang Province
27	Mr. Khuu Le	Deputy Director	DONRE of Bac Lieu Province
28	Mr. Ho Hoan Tat	Deputy Director	Ca Mau Province
29	Mr. Dang Quoc Nam	Senior Official	Ca Mau Province
30	Mr. Tran Van Thanh	Deputy Director	DONRE of Soc Trang Province
31	Mr. Chau Ngoc Thom	Specialist	DONRE of Soc Trang Province

32	Mr. Tran Xuan Thanh	Deputy Director	DONRE of Tien Giang Province
33	Ms. Vo Thi Van	Deputy Director	DONRE of Kien Giang Province
34	Mr. Le Thanh Phong	Specialist	DONRE of Kien Giang Province
35	Ms. Phung Thi Bich Lam	Specialist	DONRE of Kien Giang Province
36	Ms. Pham Thi Hong Van	Specialist	DONRE of Kien Giang Province
Can Tho Participants			
37	Mr. Nguyen Thanh Son	Deputy Chairman	People's Committee of Can Tho City
38	Mr. Le Anh Tuan	Vice chief of unit of Faculty of Natural Resources and Environment Management	Can Tho University
39	Mr. Nguyen The Minh	Deputy Director	DONRE of Can Tho City
40	Mr. Ha Thanh Toan	Deputy Director	Can Tho University
41	Mr. Dang Van Tri	Senior Expert	Can Tho University
42	Mr. Doan Thanh Tam	Deputy Director	Hydrological Survey Center, Cantho
43	Mr. Ky Quang Vinh	Director	Hydrological Survey Center, Cantho
44	Ms. Luu Hong Van	Director	DONRE of Can Tho City