

NAVIGATION PROGRAMME UPDATE

1st December 2013



Phase One of the Dangerous Goods Project saw the delivery of a comprehensive “Risk Analysis” and a set of “Recommendations” on how to improve safety for transport of Dangerous Goods. It also included a Pilot Project in Chiang Sean Commercial Port, Thailand and the preparation of three manuals on Dangerous Good Management, Vessel Inspection and Waste Management. Phase One terminated in December 2012.

Phase II started in June 2013 and focuses on the preparation of a Regional Action Plan (RAP). This action plan will include a number of National and Cross Border projects as well as an Implementation Strategy for the MRC countries. Phase Two is anticipated to be finalised in the third quarter of 2014.

The key part of the Regional Action Plan will be a portfolio of projects that will be implemented on a national and sub-regional level based on a jointly designed Implementation Strategy and it is therefore very important to have the four MRC Countries Cambodia, Lao, Thailand and Viet Nam involved as much as possible through individual consultations and discussions.

To ensure national participation and efficient consultations, national working groups (NWG) for each of the countries have been established in the period from June to August 2013. Parallel with this, the Navigation Programme Team, with assistance from two dangerous goods’ specialists (also involved in Phase One) have consolidated the recommendations from Phase One into “Project Descriptions” for the four countries. These Project Descriptions are now being reviewed by the national working groups to ensure that they are in line with national priorities and needs. The review involves workshops with relevant Line Agencies as well as consultations with Navigation Programme between October 2013 and February 2014.

When the countries agree on the direction of the Project Descriptions, they will be developed into more detailed Project Documents, which will be part of the Regional Action Plan Portfolio. The Project Documents will address the same issues for all MRC Countries, but will be adjusted to cover individual needs and priorities. Parallel with this an Implementation Strategy will be prepared for each country and for implementation by the individual countries, regional agencies or banks.

The main challenge of Phase Two and the preparation of Regional Action Plan is to have national acceptance of the National and Cross Border projects and the Implementation Strategy. The liaison between Navigation Programme, the National Working Groups and relevant Line Agencies is of utmost importance, as a Regional Action Plan without national support will have little value.

Parallel with the preparation of the regional action plan, Navigation Programme is preparing Guidelines for Handling of Dangerous Goods, Vessel Inspection and Waste Management. This activity focuses on Cambodian and Vietnamese ports and terminals. The Guidelines shall be seen as a "Fast Track" or intermediate implementation of Regional Action Plan in order to have immediate improvements in handling of Dangerous Goods and Waste. It shall not replace the long-term implementation of Regional Action Plan and the identified projects.

So far, Phase Two is developing smoothly with valuable assistance from the National Mekong Committees, the National Working Groups and respective Line Agencies. The next 4-5 months until April 2014 will be very important and require significant workload and flexibility for all parties involved.

Navigation Programme will be back with Newsletter No. 2 in the beginning of 2014.

Thanks for your support/ The Navigation Programme Team