



RECAP OF THE 8TH REGIONAL STAKEHOLDER FORUM

THE 9TH MRC REGIONAL STAKEHOLDER FORUM: PRIOR CONSULTATION FOR LUANG PRABANG HYDROPOWER PROJECT & BASIN DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2021-2030

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OUTLINES



Background



**Key comments and
recommendations**



**Public comments from 8th
RSF in the draft TRR & BDS
2021-2030**

Key comments and recommendations (1)

Prior Consultation process for Luang Prabang Hydropower Project

- Informative and inclusive national consultations
- Comprehensive and feasible impact mitigation measures
- Optimization study for joint cascade operations and management
- Proven operation of fish passage models ensuring conservation of fish species, habitats and connectivity
- Consideration of immediate flow abruption

BDS 2021-2030 & SP 2021-2025

- Engagement with other regional powerful actors (ASEAN, LMC, GMS, US, Japan, ...)
- Data limitation and challenges
- Salinity intrusion, land erosion, droughts and floods mitigation
- Local best practices into planning and implementation
- Social inclusion, participatory facilitation and gender equity integration

Luang Prabang Hydropower Project (1)

Comments/Recommendations	Reference to the draft TRR
Project general information including beneficiaries, cost, access the information of HPP projects in Laos, purchase agreement, etc ...	Chapter 3 Further information to be shared when available.
The stakeholder should have the documents before the 6-month process has started so they have enough time to study them	Summary of the draft TRR in English and Riparian languages. MRCS will work on project overview and translation well in advance of the consultations.
What will be the roles of CSO in the assessment of impacts in cooperation with private sector, governments and researchers?	Regional and national consultations.
Some communities were not able to participate in the consultations. How can this be improved?	Further engagement with CSOs: informal dialogues, online comment box, exchanges, further discussions, participating and contributing to each other's events, etc.
The LPHPP level is 312m while the max. downstream level for Pak Beng is 310, it is not in line for cascade management. The upstream and downstream levels need to be aligned.	The issue will be dealt with by the GOL
Design features of LPHPP would follow and adapt from Xayaburi?	The TRR has recommended that certain aspects of the LPHPP be separately tested to ensure that the design is also applicable to this HPP

Luang Prabang Hydropower Project (2)

Comments/Recommendations	Reference to the draft TRR
Reflection of low flows, droughts in different parts of the Mekong and mitigation measures in coping with infrastructure development	Information sharing, coordinated operation of dams, run of river principle are reflected in the TRR.
Retention time in LPHPP is different to Xayaburi and if the retention time is 3-9 days, quite a long time, which is not a run of river scheme.	Further dialogue with developers and reflection in the TRR
Will the project consultants or MRCS staff be carrying out additional studies to compliment the gaps in the current studies?	The draft TRR indicates that the prior consultation process does not have the resources for additional studies, and so information only comes from the existing studies. Recommendations are made for additional monitoring by the developer.
Will there be an independent panel of experts to conduct the review or will it be conducted only by MRC and the MCs?	The PDG2009 and 2019 recommend the appointment of independent panels, and this has been addressed in the draft TRR.
The impact of upper stream Lancang cascade in reduction of sediment indicated is not correct. Total is 80million tones, not 100 million tones. How has it been estimated?	The data is based on the investigation that CNR carried out along 1,000km stretch from Northern Laos border to Vientiane over the last years. We didn't receive any data from Lancang in this matter. This has been addressed in the draft TRR.

Luang Prabang Hydropower Project (3)

Comments/Recommendations	Reference to the draft TRR
<p>Flow regime maintenance is an issue, water fluctuation keeps changing, this will increase with new dam construction, together with increased erosion. What type of maintenance is proposed?</p>	<p>Section 5.4 on managing the cumulative impacts. During dam operation the water level and flow regime will be affected and impact on bank erosion and landslides. Reduced velocity of water release can change the erosion regime. From the developer’s perspective, there will be no hydropeaking. It’s a pure run of river dam. For the rating curve, we intend to have a constant low level. The operating range needs a 0.5m for the operating range.</p>
<p>How much sediment deposit in reservoir? How much sediment discharge? How much reservoir capacity reduced due to sediment? Impact on normal WL, impact from Xayaburi Dam backwater, quality of data from MRCS?</p>	<p>The documentation submitted does report on preliminary assessments of deposition of sediments in the impoundment and concurs with the developer’s commitment to do more detailed studies. The impacts on the backwaters of Xayaburi are dealt with in some detail.</p>
<p>Is there a baseline on the fish assessment that we can assess any differences and impacts, to judge the success of the mitigation measures?</p>	<p>The draft TRR reviews the current recommendations for fish passages and makes extensive recommendations for improving the design. MRCS to request review of additional information collected as part developer ongoing monitoring studies.</p>
<p>With regard to fish pass, have your preliminary findings been addressed by GoL?</p>	<p>Developer noted proposals in TRR to improve the efficiency of the system and will study the implementation thereof. This would not be considered a “re-design” but optimisation of the present concept</p>

Luang Prabang Hydropower Project (4)

Comments/Recommendations	Reference to the draft TRR
<p>The fish before dam project was 160 species. The MRC research has shown 200 species. One the Se San river, some traditional fish species have declined, new ones appear, but they are not commercially beneficial. What is the kind of the fish found?</p>	<p>Differences likely caused by some species listed in MRC studies only found in Tributary headwaters.</p>
<p>Fish passage in LPHPP seems very different to XBR with the absence of fish ladder. Is this because the XBR fish ladder is inefficient or because there are different conditions?</p>	<p>Tail water level variations at Xayaburi much greater (>15 m) than LPHPP (max 7 m) due to Xayaburi back water, therefore developer considers no need for fish pass. Appropriate hydraulic modelling required to show design effective.</p>
<p>The dam safety design is based on WB policies. Are other dams in Laos based on WB guidelines too?</p>	<p>The TRR refers to the importance of the Lao Electric Power Design Standards with regard to design. These would apply to all the dams in Lao PDR.</p>
<p>Concern on ship lock design for the water head is 35.5m; the proposed seems too high.</p>	<p>The MRC PDG 2009 stated that water head of more than 30m requires a double lift system which has been included.</p>
<p>The Master Plan on Regional Navigation should be taken into account by considering 2nd ship lock in the future in the design and plan.</p>	<p>The Navigation Master Plan does not call for bigger ships (upstream Khone Fall), vessels and barges than those that can be accommodated by the actual approved ship lock chamber dimensions: 120x12x4m.</p>

Luang Prabang Hydropower Project (5)

Comments/Recommendations	Reference to the draft TRR
Regarding economic considerations, cost and benefit analysis (IRR or NPV information) is not available in the documents.	This is not addressed in the documentation provided and has therefore not been reviewed. It will be explored using the previous MRC Studies under the MRC Joint Platform as a working paper.
Limited baseline information on transboundary communities	Flagged up clearly in TRR and transboundary impact mitigation consideration has been addressed more fully in a separate paper on reasonable and equitable use
No information on alternative projects of greener nature or market demand for energy.	These subjects, while very valid, are not covered in the PNPCA process. There are suggestions in the Sustainable HP Development Strategy
Reserve fund from Project's revenue should be used for further environmental restoration and protection. The impact mitigations should be feasible and acceptable for the local communities and riparian stakeholders. Benefit could have been shared in fairness.	Mekong fund issue will be further explored under the MRC Joint Platform.

Basin Development Strategy (1)

- **The watershed, wetland area, salinity intrusion and erosion, Mekong delta sinking**

→ investment projects that could increase dry season flows, assessment of alternative basin-wide development scenarios, actions ranging from socio-economic/ spatial planning to the reduction of sand mining → sustainable development opportunities (including for wetlands, watersheds, joint projects) in coordination with national and local action

- **Sediment management**

→ Numerous guidelines and tools have been developed to improve the design and operation of infrastructure that could have an impact on sediment transport and these need to be taken and applied in a systematic way. The preparation of the proposed basin-wide sediment plan will also likely be initiated in 2020 given the urgency of this issue

- **Application of technology to timely coordinate for information sharing regarding emergency flood and drought situation**

→ This is a focal area of the BDS. Flood and drought management figures prominently as part of the sustainable development opportunities (mitigation of floods and droughts requires also infrastructure) and in the results-chain where it is one of the 5 strategic priorities.

Basin Development Strategy (2)

- **How can MRC relate local best practices to trends and outlooks, to bring local communities and civil society into planning and implementation, for better outcomes and results?**

→ *The draft BDS 2021-2030 is based on the outcomes of stakeholder engagement events in support of several MRC activities during the last few years (State-of-the Basin report, PNPCA consultations, regional sector strategies, and the BDS preparation. Implementation of the BDS by the national agencies and others will provide further opportunities for engagement with local communities and civil society.*

- **How can MRC address the urgency of environmental impacts happening in the Mekong river?**

→ *Drawing on the SOBR 2018, the BDS identifies the urgent environmental issues facing the Mekong River and outlines a Strategic Priority to address the most pressing ones, in particular in relation to sediment, fish and environmental assets such as wetlands. Three Outcomes and several Outputs are proposed to help guide the work of all actors to cooperate in addressing these issues. A response to environmental issues is also prevalent throughout the BDS including in the consideration of more sustainable development pathways and in flood and drought management.*

Basin Development Strategy (3)

- **Coordinated effort of cascade dam operations to ensure minimum flow, water quality for sustainability of biodiversity, environment as well as livelihoods and agriculture activities**

→ *Coordination of basin management operation is a focal area of the BDS. The coordination of cascading dams is a national responsibility, but regional guidance and/or coordination guidance is needed to achieve the best outcomes at the basin level, including for sediment transport towards the delta*

- **The trends and outlook mainly focus on development perspectives, we should also discuss and consider management perspectives**

→ *The trends and outlook section also considers environment and social perspectives and can be reviewed and updated where necessary and appropriate*

- **Enhancing engagement and collaboration with upstream countries**

→ *the BDS has been prepared for the entire Mekong. The proposed proactive regional planning and the coordination of basin management operations can be implemented only on a basin-wide scale, starting with joint basin expert groups to direct and oversee the planning and coordination work, as well as data collection, sharing and information management.*

Basin Development Strategy (4)

- **Member Countries take the strategy into their national plans**

→ *the strategy provides conditions, guidance and an advisory service that suggests impact pathways, which illustrate what needs to be done to help ensure the outputs will contribute to the outcomes and in turn to achieving the strategic priorities.*

- **Alternatives for energy production, energy efficiency and green building**

→ *The BDS promotes also other renewable energy sources, including new technology such as floating solar on hydropower reservoirs. Energy efficiency and green buildings are beyond the scope of the BDS, which is focused on regional water resources management and development.*

- **Tributary hydropower development**

→ *The BDS section on sustainable development opportunities provides conditions and guidance for all hydropower development that are based on these best practices and standards, including those mentioned. One of the BDS strategic priorities includes the implementation and updating of the sustainable hydropower strategy for the Mekong Basin.*

Basin Development Strategy (5)

- **Balance of economic, social and environmental perspectives as the main target to SDGs**

→ *All the draft strategic priorities and outcomes of the BDS are directed towards achieving relevant SDGs. The strategic priorities seek a balance between economic development, social justice and environmental integrity, with climate resilience and regional cooperation a cross-cutting focus. All dimensions are equally important to achieving the sustainable development.*

- **Reduction of plastic utilization in relation to SDG12 (responsible consumption and production) and SDG14 (life below water)**

→ *The BDS should focus on regional water resources management and cooperation. Plastic pollution in waterways can be addressed through national industrial policy and waste management, with monitoring of transboundary issue at regional level.*

- **What does it mean social dimension? Greater social inclusion**

→ *The draft BDS defines a social strategic priority, 2 social outcomes, and 5 social outputs that are directed towards inclusive development in terms of water, food and energy security; improvement of employment and livelihoods for both men and women; and reduction of poverty and inequality through less direct dependence on natural resources. The Basin Vision, also seeks to identify what the countries see as a socially just society by around the year 2040.*

Basin Development Strategy (6)

- **The BDS could be a strategy that incites member countries to further fund smaller projects as well as to attract regional and national funds**

→ *the BDS sustainable development opportunities as well as the results chain under each of the 5 strategic priorities offers opportunities for smaller investment projects and non-structural and enabling activities*

- **How can MRC make the industrial developments returning back its revenues and social corporate responsibility for further development and improvement of local and transboundary livelihood?**

→ *The BDS touches on this issue in the section on funding of BDS implementation. The MRC can explore options for the basin countries to consider, such as the set-up of a 'Mekong Fund'.*

- **Groundwater resources should be recognized in terms of water knowledge, information gap and the transboundary impacts**

→ *The BDS recognizes the role of groundwater for storage and (conjunctive) use. Major groundwater surveys and studies were implemented in the basin in the 1990s (which indicated limited transboundary aquifers). These could be reviewed and updated, as necessary*

Basin Development Strategy (7)

- **Transboundary protection of mutually agreed environmental assets**

→ *The identification of joint projects and projects of basin-wide significance should also include projects that improve transboundary environmental outcomes.*

- **River-based tourism should be taken into account and well-recognized in the BDS**

→ *River-based tourism is a focal area of the navigation strategies and master plans that are being implemented by cooperation arrangements in the basin, including the navigation master plan*

- **Gender, climate change and data sharing are cross cutting issues and should be in all dimensions**

→ *These are issues that cut across the environmental, social and economic strategic priorities of the BDS. For the first time, gender has been mainstreamed in all chapters of the BDS 2021-2030. This has been a challenge since gender disaggregated data are still scarce in the Mekong Basin countries. A focus of the strategy will be on addressing the needs and opportunities of people in vulnerable situations by supporting inclusive economic growth and improved water, food and energy security for all*



THANK YOU

One Mekong. One Spirit.