

FEEDBACK FORM

Details of Consultation Event

Name of Consultation Event: Training and Trialling of HSAP in Lower Mekong

Date of consultation event: 10 – 13 November 2009

Location of consultation event: Mekong River Commission Secretariat, Vientiane, Lao PDR

Information about local host(s) or sponsorship: Hosted by MRCS, facilitated by ADB RETA 3S Rivers Basin project

Form of consultation event:

This event was a four day workshop with an initial day of training about the protocol, followed by trialling of Section 1 considering the basin aspects of the Sekong, Sesan and Sre Pok rivers (3S Basin) which are major tributaries of the Mekong. It is a transboundary river basin, with the rivers rising in Vietnam and flowing through Lao PDR and Cambodia. A total of 43 hydropower dams are in operation, under construction or planned in the basin. Each country group considered Section 1 from their own country's perspective, or in the case of Thailand and the international group, from a basin-wide perspective. The participants were government staff attending in their own professional capacity, and were not representing the views of their respective countries.

- 1st day presentations and exercise presented by Helen Locher and Michael Simon,
- 2nd – 3rd day trialling of section 1 on 3S Rivers basin by country groups from Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand and Vietnam. Presentation on hydropower development in 3S rivers by Peter-John Meynell
- 3rd and 4th days review of section 2, with presentation on Xe Kattam dam (Sekong basin) by Somsavanh Panmatha and consideration of a basin wide approach being developed by MRCS, WWF and ADB (Environmental Considerations for Sustainable Hydropower Development (ECSHD) initiative.)

Information about Who was Consulted

<p>Organisations or groups represented: Government departments and agencies from Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand and Vietnam, covering different sectors – energy/electricity, environment, water resources, fisheries and social development</p>
<p>Countries of Origin of organisations or groups represented: Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand and Vietnam plus some international consultants associated with 3S Rivers Basin project, and the ECHSD initiative.</p>
<p>List of Participants and their Email Address (s): see attached</p>
<p>Please select the organisation type that best describes the organisations involved in the consultation event (please delete or mark as appropriate): Government – Technical agencies concerned with Hydropower, Water resources, Environment, Fisheries, Social development</p>
<p>Please note if (any of) the consultee(s) consider themselves to be members of dam-affected communities or indigenous peoples. No</p>

1 Some Introductory Questions that May be Useful to Break the Ice

<i>QUESTION 1: Did you have any initial questions/issues you want to raise on the consultation</i>
No
<i>QUESTION 2: Were you aware of the HSAF process prior to receiving information about this consultation, and if so, how?</i>
Limited

2 Detailed Feedback on the Draft Protocol

	Question
1	<i>Practicability and Ease of Use. Does the Draft Protocol seem like a practical assessment tool, and if not, how could it be improved?</i>
Response	<p>Group 1</p> <p>Yes. However, there is need to provide some explanation to the users and easing the assessment work by setting certain guiding questions for each attribute and put the columns with scores from 1 to 5.</p> <p>Group 2</p> <p>It seems to be practical assessment tool, but there needs to be more clarification on who will use this tool - developer, independent auditor, government or NGO. The tool should be consistent with the relevant existing law, regulation, decree of each country. The concept and the criteria of sustainability for hydropower development. needs to be proved and point out the advantages of the tool as compared with other existing tools. Should provide a short brief to explain the document</p> <p>Group 3</p> <p>Yes, definitely, there is a need for a useful, voluntary strategic assessment tool but, it should be improved. Too many Aspects and Attributes could be aggregated.</p> <p>Use of the Protocol could inform the scoping ("ToR") of various important studies, such as the environmental and social impact assessment. Assessment of the project (including quality of various studies) would then be done after preparation of the studies.</p> <p>Needs further piloting - the group recommends that Section 1 should be used at the Mekong basin geog. scale – and that professional consultants involved in planning studies be invited to get involved with trial assessments conducted (e.g. by MRC)</p> <p>There will be questions about the qualification & capacity of auditors . . . auditors should be trained & certified</p>

	<p>What will assessment scores mean in practical terms?</p> <p>Group 4</p> <p>Yes, it is but it is not perfect yet. It needs to be more objective and to be supplemented by details, guidance, annexes, avoiding assessor’s attitude.</p> <p>Have enough annexes which contain “to do” list (“yes/no” answers); better translation into local language; diagram and detailed work</p> <p>Group 5</p> <p>Complex and difficult to do in basinwide context. It needs to be defined why it is being done and who the assessment is for. More practical than WCD guidelines, but this is more complex than earlier versions. How to find compromise?</p> <p>Assessor can not be an expert in everything, so needs to be usable by people who are not expert.</p> <p>Some questions can be interpreted in different ways – need more guidance. But is the existing guidance already too big to be practical? Still some gaps for what we want it to be.</p> <p>Realistically documentation will not be available for basin – so no developer will be able to do it and it will need the host agency in each country or MRC to gather information. Need to also score for different countries of the basin</p>
<p>2</p>	<p><i>Content and Implementation Guidance. What do you think about the Draft Protocol content in terms of its appropriateness, quality and applicability for a range of projects of different types, scale and geographic settings? Do you find the Draft Protocol introduction and auditing guidance notes helpful? What improvements would you propose to the Draft Protocol content?</i></p>
<p>Response</p>	<p>Group 1</p> <p>The content has been significant for the assessment, but there are some missing points for particular contexts, which may be flexible according to the project to be assessed. At the same time, each aspect/attribute and their contents need to be clarified so that the assessment will be well focused. (e.g. is it “risks management” or “management of the assessment process”?)</p> <p>Group 2</p> <p>The group can not clarify whether the content of protocol is appropriate or not since there are no results of practical use for a specific project. The application of the tool for different project scales should be defined - small, medium or large project</p> <p>It may be not necessary to cover the all aspects of assessment process for smaller projects and on the contrary the larger and multipurpose project may need more aspects</p> <p>The content should focus mainly on the sustainability concept for the basis of defining aspects</p> <p>Group 3</p> <p>Too many Aspects & Attributes in the Draft Protocol. Is there a way to focus on</p>

	<p>fewer Aspects, aggregating them in ways that are more intuitively compelling ("what really matters"). Strategic assessment by definition should not involve too many criteria.</p> <p>It would be very good to have an accepted HSAP but (from experience in Thailand, in cases where there is already or anticipated high levels of controversy / dispute, we're not sure what difference the HSAP will make</p> <p>Those stakeholders who strongly oppose a project / plan may feel that their concerns/issues/Aspect is diluted by the presence of many other Aspects, but civil society/NGOs concerned about environmental & social & options assessment, less interested in econ & financial risks. However, all important Aspects should be considered in the development point of view.</p> <p>Group 4</p> <p>In general, its content is suitable and applicable, but in particular, social (culture, ethnic), economic, environmental impact assessment aspects are not mentioned enough. Its content should be more specific and comprehensively assessed.</p> <p>Group 5</p> <p>Assessment – some aspects not relevant to the basinwide assessment</p> <p>Simple questions to ask – have you done a study, does it address relevant issues, has it been reviewed and accepted, has it been publically accessible? The discussion and the comments of feedback are important to note</p> <p>Content – pretty comprehensive, gaps are those relevant to those relevant to Mekong. Not enough on fisheries, on livelihoods and poverty. Institutional questions sometimes not relevant to here.</p>
<p>3a.</p>	<p><i>Implementation Guidance.</i> Do you find the Draft Protocol Introduction and the Auditing Guidance notes helpful, and how might they be improved?</p>
<p>Response</p>	<p>Group 1</p> <p>Yes, the improvement needed includes: i) explain each attribute clearly and ii) as explained in question no. 1.</p> <p>Group 2</p> <p>It is helpful but the introduction should be more comprehensive and give the whole picture of sustainability concept.</p> <p>The auditing guidance note is helpful to guide the assessor to give the score, but it should not be limited to guidance only, it should be consistent with and help someone to give the score</p> <p>Group 3</p> <p>The Introduction and Guidance Notes (GN) are detailed. Further simplification of the language used in the GN, and definitions in the GN would help.</p> <p>Example: Looking specifically at Aspect I-1 (Demonstrated Need), the standard Guidance Notes for Assessment are detailed, in fact more detailed than the four</p>

	<p>bullet points in the first Attribute (Quality of Assessment Process). The assessor is potentially swamped (overwhelmed) by two sources of direction.</p> <p>Group 4</p> <p>In the Guidance there is a lack of information with a few specific items. It needs to be supplemented by specific information, and rearranged</p>
3b	<p><i>Approach to Scoring and Presentation of Results. What suggestions could you make for effective and practical mechanisms for scoring and presentation of assessment results?</i></p>
Response	<p>Group 1</p> <p>Comment on scoring as explained in question no. 1. Presentation of results looks fine, but a table summarizing detailed results and highlighting key issues and some recommendations for improvements needs to be attached</p> <p>Group 2</p> <p>Scoring needs clearer criteria with detailed indicators of each aspect, especially for sensitive aspect</p> <p>The presentation should have an example on the IHA and SAP from other regions to increase understanding and make it easy to give a score.</p> <p>Group 3</p> <p>9 Aspects in Section I may be acceptable but too many Attributes for each Aspect make the scoring difficult. Too many bullet points in an Attribute make scoring difficult. In Section II, 27 Aspects are too many for scoring.</p> <p>Different persons may come up with different scores in evaluation</p> <p>Presentation needs to include presentation of Assessor qualifications, methodology, evidence used, etc. and finally scoring. It is not just about how to present the scores! The total score in percentage should be presented because it is easy to understand.</p> <p>Circular graph works better than Column Graph. Presentation of an average score, if done at all, must be accompanied by presentation of detailed results.</p> <p>Group 4</p> <p>Scoring is good however a quantitative assessment may be needed</p> <p>Choose best assessors; Have enough objective and fully information; Have consensus among assessor team</p> <p>Group 5</p> <p>Maybe need key questions with indicators to help score and help identify what information needs to be collected</p> <p>If you don't have all information to hand, can not score appropriately, so scores can be criticised.</p>
4a	<p><i>Basic Good Practice. The score of 3 is intended to be basic good practice, with a particular consciousness of what is achievable in countries with minimal resources or capacities or projects of smaller scales and complexities. Do you have any</i></p>

	<i>comments on the scores? Do you have any information that would assist in understanding what is basic good practice for individual attributes in the Draft Protocol?</i>
Response	<p>Group 1</p> <p>Here the matter is that different people would have different decision on scoring, thus it is useful to develop systematic parameters for scoring which will be the most acceptable for assessors.</p> <p>Group 2</p> <p>Difficulties for individual for give appropriate scores</p> <p>Group 3</p> <p>Note that it may be difficult to distinguish "very few" from "a number" (see Quality of Assessment: difference between 4 and 3). Note also that the difference between 3 and 4 is less than 2 and 3.</p> <p>With respect to contexts with low capacity, instead of lowering the standard of 3 (Good), perhaps the definition of 2 could be revised to something like Moderate instead of Poor.</p> <p>Group 4</p> <p>Make the score quantitative; 1-10 score band for more exact assessment; detailed guideline for scoring is needed</p>
4b	<i>Proven Best Practice. The score of 5 is intended to be proven best practice, but conscious of the global applicability of this tool, so that it is not only attainable by the largest projects with the most resources at their disposal. Do you have any comments on these scores? Do you have any information that would assist in understanding what is proven best practice for individual attributes in the Draft Protocol?</i>
Response	<p>Group 1</p> <p>There are some difficulties in scoring due to the different views of assessors and complicated definitions of each score, thus more precise and measurable indicators may be helpful.</p> <p>Group 2</p> <p>Lack of clarity on when to give a score of 5 and if a score of 3 is unsuitable</p> <p>Group 3</p> <p>Protocol needs to give examples of proven best practice for all Aspects. FPIC is one of the few examples in the draft.</p> <p>Otherwise, it's difficult to see how any project will attain #5.</p> <p>Group 4</p> <p>Make the score quantitative; 1-10 score band for more exact assessment; detailed guideline for scoring is needed</p>
5	<i>Other comments: 3 messages about HSAP to take back to the office</i>

	<p>Group 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The need to report that the protocol has 4 sections • The protocol could be useful, but need for improvement • Suggestion for providing training from IHA more about the application of the protocol <p>Group 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To report the objectives of the protocol and how it is used • To brief the benefits of the protocol • The delegate feels that the protocol is useful <p>Group 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The need to revise or modify the IHA protocol and then provide training to the assessor • To assess and apply the modified protocol to mainstream dams/projects <p>Group 4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The protocol is a good tool for assessment of hydropower project compared to existing tools, but how it gets to the final results. The knowledge of the protocol is limited, the need to study more about it. • The scoring is difficult where information is limited. It depends on the assessor. • The need to make example on how to use and apply the protocol. At this stage it is not clear picture yet. If information is not enough, the assessor may give wrong signal to the Government.
6	<p>Developing a basin-wise rapid assessment tool for the Mekong</p>
	<p>During the final session of the meeting, the current thinking in the development of the basin-wide tool for the Mekong by an MRC, ADB and WWF initiative was presented and discussed. It was considered that a basin-wide and transboundary aspect should be added to Section 1 in the current SAP, but this will not be sufficient to meet objectives for a basin wide tool as stated in ECSHD fast track implementation project document. Therefore ECSHD partners are going to develop a stand alone "basin wide rapid assessment tool" that is going to be built using the principles of the SAP, followed by a trial and consultation, and then presented to HSAF at the meeting in May 2010.</p>

INTERVIEWERS COMMENTS

Question: Please summarise your overall feeling about the feedback received?

In general the HSAP was well received by participants at the workshop, who retained interest throughout. Section 1 was trialled for a full 1.5 days, followed by a partial trialling of section 2 on a particular dam. The overall impression was that the HSAP is useful but needs to be made less complex and be easier to apply. Guidance is comprehensive but the application of section 1 in the

basin context is not yet fully clear yet. The other sections provide an excellent checklist of sustainability issues and what would be expected of a developer.

The attendees from the different government agencies in the four countries of the Lower Mekong, appreciated the HSAP, but recognised that more work was required to improve it. In summary the general message is that the current version of the SAP is too complex for easy application, but, when simplified will still require more detailed guidance and examples to help assessors give appropriate scores.

Attendees at Workshop on Creating Awareness and Understanding of Hydropower Sustainability Assessment Protocol and application from 10 – 13 November 2009 at MRCS in Vientiane, Lao PDR

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