

Annex III

Report of the 1st Planning Meeting for the Council Study

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7-8 November 2013

OSV

Report

Background

This is a synopsis report of the meeting held on the 7th and 8th of November 2013 at the MRC OSV to plan the Council Study.

This was an MRCS internal meeting where the main objective was to agree on how MRC programmes can contribute to and lead the various aspects of the Council Study and identify the need for additional resources and expertise input. The outcome of this planning meeting will inform the Inception Report of which a draft is due the first week of December and a final is due in time for the next JC meeting.

The Council Study will build on ongoing and past activities within the MRC as far as possible and conduct new data gathering, modeling and field surveys only to fill gaps. Considering the specialized forms of information and data required for an IBFM type approach proposed for the Council Study, the objective of this meeting was to identify how ongoing MRC programme activities can contribute to the study, how they may need to be adapted and what new activities need to be considered.

In this context, the discussions focused on the following

1. The extent to which the work required of the Thematic and Discipline Teams can;
 - a. rely on ongoing work within programmes without any change,
 - b. adapt ongoing programme activities to support the Council Study,
 - c. identify new data gathering, modeling or field survey activities that may be required and can be carried out by programmes, and
 - d. significant areas where MRC has no internal expertise and/or experience and therefore will require significant external expertise (consultant input)
2. estimate additional resources including external consultancy input required
3. allocation of resources (both financial and expertise) from internal and external sources

In order to facilitate an informed discussion, the first session of the meeting included a detailed presentation of the methodology and framework that will be used for the Council Study.

The second session of the meeting focused on the roles and composition of the Thematic and Discipline Teams.

The third session discussed a number of outstanding issues that need resolution for the Council Study to go forward. The meeting was not meant to conclusively clarify these issues but to consider developing a

strategy to eventually address these issues (with RTWG input). They could include issues such as the definition of the baseline year, exact water resources developments/infrastructure to be included in the assessment, the mainstream corridor, delta assessments, etc.

The final session was meant to develop a work-plan. Considering the significant interdependency within the multi-disciplinary work required, this was meant to discuss how outputs from the various teams supported by the different programs can be streamlined towards the Council Study activities. This may require some reprioritization of programme work-plans and changes in the Council Study work-plan. Furthermore, in due course each team would need to develop a work-plan that integrates with the overall Council Study work-plan. However this discussion did not take place due to insufficient time.

Issues and decisions:

- Some programmes have already allocated a budget for the Council Study. These allocations may need to be augmented based on the requirements of the actual TORs.
- Some programmes do not have leeway within their existing work plans or budgets to accommodate requirements of the Council Study. This requires further discussions involving the CEO, development partners and directors.
- Considering the substantial consultancy input required for the Study, the ability of the MRCS HR department to issue contracts in a timely manner may be an issue

Session 1: Council Study Strategy and Methodology

Issues and decisions:

- Recommendations and conclusions related to social or economic dimensions will be developed by the proposed assessment methodology.
 - a. Social impacts will be estimated via impacts on hydrology and biological resources. The DRIFT methodology requires response curves to be developed to capture the impacts of biophysical changes on social indicators
 - b. A resource and macro-economic assessment will capture non-flow related benefits and costs.
- Indicator selection is important and a workshop will be held early on in the process to consider the work being done by BDP and ISH and agree on indicators for the Council Study. The added value is that it provides a focus and better and higher confidence in understanding the impacts.
- Crucial to look at the models that Mekong Delta study is using and that the approach is similar. DHI is leading Delta Study and DHI has a very high modeling capacity. But there is no clear mandate/direction on how to collaborate with the Delta Study. Both studies could gain for collaborations and this needs to be formally discussed.
- The DRIFT process includes considerations of sediment and fish barriers posed by dams and other infrastructure.
- The study will focus on Integrated Units of Analysis and Representative Sites. The eco-hydrological zones used by ISH and EP are based on the initial work of the IBFM initiative. Therefore they could be the basis for basin delineation for the Council Study.
- The representative sites need to be selected so there is as much information/data as possible.

Session 2: The Roles and Composition of the Thematic and Discipline Teams

2.1 Introduction to Team Approach

This discussion focused on three issues.

- a. the roles of the Thematic and Discipline Teams,
- b. the composition of the Teams
- c. the work required of each team and to the extent to which the work can be carried out by the MRC Programme and how much consultancy support is needed.

2.2 Roles and Functions of Thematic Teams

Issues and decisions:

- A majority of the information that the thematic teams need to provide it already within the MRCS. On irrigation schemes for instance there is a whole database, which might need to be updated and maintained but the basics are there already.

Thematic Team 1: Land use change, and Agriculture

Work Package: Agriculture & Land-use Change

- In general most activities required of this work package can be carried out by AIP.
- Specific activities on GIS mapping should be designated to a GIS expert.
- Additional support will be required in the context of economic data such as investments costs and production value. This will require the services of an Agricultural Economist
- Additional support is also required to estimate run-off coefficients under different land use categories.

Thematic Team 2: Domestic and Industrial Water use

Work Package: Domestic and Industrial Water Use

- Activities in this work package are beyond the scope or core expertise of EP which (EP was designated as the lead programme for this Thematic Team).
- The issue of sand-mining, should be included under this work package,
- The team dealing with geomorphological changes from hydropower could assist the work on the sand-mining issue. A work package needs to be developed to address this issue.
- Further discussion is required with regards to the lead programme for the Thematic Team on Domestic and Industrial Water Use

Thematic Team 3: Flood protection structures and floodplain infrastructure

Work Package: Flood protection structures, flood plain infrastructure, & Flood Risk Assessment

- This Thematic Team was to be led by FMMP. However some of the activities related to the assessment of downstream impacts of flood protection infrastructure are outside the scope of the programme.
- However, based on the outputs of the hydrologic team, the FMMP can assess the increased or reduced flood risk over the Study time period due to the assessed water resources developments.
- Additional expertise will be needed to map large-scale flood mitigation infrastructure and define how they may affect the flow regime

Thematic Team 4: Hydropower development

Work package: Hydropower

- The outputs required in this work package are within the work-plan of ISH. Most of the information required is already available and there are consultants onboard to deliver the required additional outputs.
- ISH will estimate in-kind cost of their input to the Council Study for inclusion in the Inception Report

Thematic Team 5: Navigation

Work Package: Navigation

Based on this and previous meetings it was agreed that navigation infrastructure developments will not be large enough to have a significant impact on the flow regime and therefore result in any significant transboundary environmental, social or economic impacts via the flow regime. The only impacts in this context may be some potential impacts via localized water pollution and bank erosion from increased navigation. However there could be significant

1. Direct Economic benefits from navigation via trade and transport,
2. Impacts from developments in other sectors ON navigation, and
3. the risk of spills from the transportation of hazardous goods

In the context of the Council Study hydrological and hydraulic analyses that conducted under the Council Study can inform an assessment of increased or decreased navigability and will be used in the Navigation Thematic Assessment.

- The NAP ITA will revise the work package accordingly.

Thematic Team 6: Irrigation

Work Package: Irrigation

- Besides groundwater-related activities, all activities can be done by AIP. Though certain activities will depend on data from countries,
- Additional support is required in the context of agricultural economics.

Discipline Team 1: Hydrologic modeling (cross cutting)

Work Package: Climatology and Hydrology

World Package: Sediment Transport

- The hydrological, hydro-dynamic and sediment models required for the Council Study are available within MRC.
- IKMP has the tools and the technical expertise to support the Council Study.
- A hydrodynamic model currently under development is not approved by the NMCs however it could be used for the Council Study.
- Considering the workload required, consultancy input will be required to support IKMP and the Hydrologic Team.
- Further detailed discussion is required between the Council Study technical coordinator/advisor and IKMP to define the exact outputs required for the Council Study.
- Modeling issues concerning the delta and coastal areas are further discussed below.
- ISH has initiated a sediment transport assessment which can complement the Council Study.

Discipline Team 2: Biological Resources

Work Package: Fish & other aquatic/riparian Biological Resources

- Most of the activities in this work package is within the scope of EP and FP
- Issues within a thematic area that influences outcomes within that thematic area should be considered by the Teams when compiling the thematic report. For an example the impact of over-fishing should be considered by the Discipline Team on Biological Resources and included in the fisheries report.
- Both programmes require external consultancy support in specialized areas such as botany (riparian, marginal and aquatic), zoology (plankton, aquatic invertebrates). These disciplines are important as they have an impact on fisheries.
- FP, EP and the Council Study coordinator will work on defining the external support needed and on developing the TORs
- FP presented a proposal FP-ISH Development of Standard Methods for Monitoring Fisheries. This will be included in the inception report of council study for additional funding as it is highly relevant to the Study.
- Coordination of the work will be done by FP and EP

Discipline Team 3: Socio-economics

Work Package: Socio-Economics

- EP was designated the lead for the Socio-economic Thematic Team. However, considering that their experience on socio-economic issues is limited to SIM/VA , they may not be the best positioned to lead this team.
- A MRCS Working Group on Socio-economics was set previously to coordinate socio-economic assessments amongst programmes and this group could coordinate the team.
- The significant amount of work involved requires an external person to coordinate the team with significant experience in assessing social wellbeing.
- The SIM/VA work is crucial in this context.

- Additional resources required include
 - Nutritional expert
 - Public Health expert
 - Livelihoods expert
 - Overall coordinator

Climate Change

The meeting discussed how to frame and contain the climate change considerations in this Study. Right now, based on the concept paper, CC is considered something that would compound the (positive and negative) impacts of water resources developments and infrastructure on the triple bottom line. However, it was acknowledged that climate change will by itself have significant impacts and/or create opportunities regardless of the water resources developments upstream.

Council Study coordinator is required to discuss this further with the CCAI team and develop a plan of action.

Economic Assessment

The methodology for the economic assessment is currently under development with assistance from ISH. The consultant developing the methodology briefed the meeting on current progress and discussed various aspects that should be included in a comprehensive economic assessment for the Council Study.

Issues and decisions:

- The assessment should consider a changing economic environment and a consumption patterns. We can use proxy values from neighboring countries where such transformations have taken place.
- The assessment will consider trans-boundary distributional issues and benefit sharing implications
- A comprehensive assessment may require a macro-economic model. We may be able to use one that exists for the region. This requires further assessment.
- Replacement costs can be included in the model such as for lost natural fisheries. However, this approach can pose problems as observed behavior is different. In the case of fish, people may not immediately consider aquaculture as an alternative if cheaper sources of protein are available.
- The Council Study will require the services of a Resource/Environmental Economist and a Macro-Economist. TORs will be developed for both

Session 3: Immediate Next Steps and Outstanding Issues

Defining Study Area

The assessment will take tributaries into account due to their impact on the whole basin. However the study will only report only on the mainstream corridor, the Tonle Sap, the Delta and the immediate coastal area.

Definition of the Mainstream Corridor

The mainstream corridor is currently defined as 15km on both sides of the river. However, Cambodia requested an extension of that corridor. EP stated that the SIMVA assessments considered a 40km radius from the upper flood limit of the Tonle Sap and found that the household reliance on river resources after 15km to be negligible. Furthermore, the data and information currently available is for the 15km corridor. Therefore the Council Study will maintain the same definition and seek concurrence with the Cambodian delegation.

Delta and Coastal Assessments

- The assessment should consider the delta and the coastal areas. However there is no expertise within the MRC on coastal zones. WWF has done some initial work on coastal erosion.
- DHI is leading the Delta study and finding a link to the study would be useful. However the Council Study has currently no mandate to do so.
- Furthermore, considering that the Delta Study is a national study conducted by a private contractor, the Council Study should strive to provide an independent opinion derived from a process led by MRC.
- DHI is renting the model from a Vietnamese Institute and is upgrading it. There might be the possibility to contact the organization and use the same model.
- However, considering that the member countries have approved the current MRC model, this should be the basis of Council Study results.

Stakeholder Consultation

- NMCs and line agencies should be included through the thematic teams. This level of engagement will also enhance the level of cooperation and ownership.
- NGOs, other government agencies and community-based organizations should be consulted early onwards. The MRC Stakeholder Forum in February, could be an opportunity to present the Council Study
- Other options for stakeholder consultation might include a stakeholder reference group
- A web presence and/or blog could also be used to inform stakeholders