

CEPF SMALL GRANT FINAL PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT

Organization Legal Name:	ICEM – International Centre for Environmental Management
Project Title:	Biodiversity and Development of the Hydropower Sector: Lessons from the Vietnamese Experience
Date of Report:	2011
Report Author and Contact Information	Jeremy Carew-Reid Director icem - International Centre for Environmental Management 6A Lane 49 To Ngoc Van St, Tay Ho HA NOI VIET NAM T: 84 4 3823 9127 M: 84 (0) 915024895 F: 84 4 3719 0367 E: jecr@icem.com.au www.icem.com.au

CEPF Region: Indo-Burma Region

Strategic Direction: 3. Engage key actors in reconciling biodiversity conservation and development objectives, with a particular emphasis on the Northern Limestone Highlands and Mekong River and its major tributaries

Grant Amount: \$20,000

Project Dates: Extended to run over 2010-2011

Implementation Partners for this Project (please explain the level of involvement for each partner):

This project drew from the lessons of three strategic environmental assessments in the hydropower sector in Vietnam and one regional SEA commissioned by the Mekong River Commission. ICEM has led in two and conducted the biodiversity component in the third SEA in Vietnam, and led in the MRC SEA. In Vietnam, the SEA's were conducted over three years in total and included the intensive involvement of the Ministry of Industry and Trade, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, Electricity Vietnam and a range of provinces and sector stakeholders, including the World Bank and ADB as the principle, international initiating agencies.

Those government and international agencies had an intimate role in preparing the SEA reports and in shaping the methodologies. During the three hydropower SEAs in which ICEM was closely involved, stakeholders frequently raised the need for preparation of guidance of the kind prepared through in this CEPF project. The 2007 SEA for the World Bank recommended that these be prepared. The hands-on input of these state agencies, alongside international advisors and special interest groups, in the foundation SEAs and EIAs under review, will ensure this project and its final outputs is based on a long history of intensive discussion and involvement of stakeholders. Similarly, the 2010 MRC SEA involved all four Lower Mekong Basin countries and hundreds of stakeholders over 18 months. That SEA also recommended the preparation of guidance similar to the volumes from this CEPF project.

Selected experts from the network of sector specialists from national and international organizations who were engaged in the SEAs were invited to review and comment on drafts of the two main reports arising from the CEPF project. Useful comments were received..

Conservation Impacts

Please explain/describe how your project has contributed to the implementation of the CEPF ecosystem profile.

The main contributions of this study to implementation of the CEPF ecosystem profile are:

1. To update to extreme the level of threat facing biodiversity in the ecosystem mainly due to (i) the direct impacts on aquatic systems of hydropower development and (ii) the indirect impacts of extensive new networks of roads into previously isolated areas without a commensurate increase in investment for conservation management and safeguards
2. A better understanding of the biodiversity hot spots by river basin in Vietnam taking the level of planned hydropower and biodiversity importance into account
3. A comprehensive set of guidelines and policy innovation proposals to (i) enhance the use of SEA in integrating biodiversity concerns in strategic planning of hydropower and (ii) for biodiversity conservation such as the intact rivers and conservation offsets concepts.
4. The identification of priorities for additional biodiversity research – where major knowledge gaps remain that inhibit well informed development planning and decision making

Please summarize the overall results/impact of your project against the expected results detailed in the approved proposal.

The project achieved all the expected results over a much longer time frame than planned. There were five outputs planned – two major volumes, one on the impact of hydropower and Vietnam’s biodiversity and the second on how to improve SEA as a tool in integrating biodiversity into development planning, two summaries or policy briefs of those volumes, then a compilation of the reports and briefs and other reference documents in a CD.

The process of dissemination began with the circulation of Volumes 1 and III to MONRE and MOIT and their placement on the ICEM website where records show high demand through downloads. Volume II and its linked brief were only recently completed and their dissemination will take place in the months to come.

Planned outputs of the project	Delivered outputs
Volume I – A Review of the Effects of Hydropower Development on Biodiversity Resources in Vietnam	Final submitted July 2010
Volume II – Hydropower and Biodiversity: The Use of Strategic Environmental Assessment as an Assessment Tool	Final submitted November 2011
Volume III – Biodiversity and Hydropower Factsheet/brief (summary Vol I)	Final submitted August 2010
Volume IV – Hydropower and Biodiversity: The Use of Strategic Environmental Assessment as an Assessment Tool – Brief (summary Vol II)	Final submitted November 2011
Hydropower and Biodiversity: Lessons Learnt from the Vietnamese Experience CD-ROM	Final submitted November 2011

Describe the success or challenges of the project toward achieving its short-term and long-term impact objectives.

The success of the project was the distillation and analysis of the important experience which Vietnam has had in the use of SEA to build biodiversity concerns into hydropower planning. SEA reports were available but their distribution and uptake had been minimal and a fresh wave of summary material and analysis was needed. This has now been done in both lengthy and more technical volumes for practitioners and in two policy briefs for senior decision makers and the general public.

The challenge of the project was its overly ambitious design against the project budget and timeframe. Intensive high level technical inputs were required to prepare reports to international standard which required ICEM to contribute substantially to the project through its public interest resources to take it to completion.

The second key challenge was in difficulties in achieving adequate consultation linked to drafts of the reports. It would have been desirable to conduct workshops and to distribute the drafts widely for detailed input at public forums. This proved not to be possible within the budget. On the positive side, each volume was reviewed by a small network of national experts and useful comments received.

Were there any unexpected impacts (positive or negative)?

The position and unexpected impact has been the substantial interest shown in the initial volumes as reflected in the number of hits they have received on the ICEM website.

Lessons Learned

Describe any lessons learned during the design and implementation of the project, as well as any related to organizational development and capacity building. Consider lessons that

would inform projects designed or implemented by your organization or others, as well as lessons that might be considered by the global conservation community.

Demonstrated the importance of preparing “knowledge products” as a critical output of SEAs: The documents to come from this small project are essential to bringing the results of SEAs and to raising awareness among key stakeholders and a wider public. To date, SEAs have not included the preparation of this kind of communications and analytical lessons learned materials – they need to and provision should be made for them up front in SEA budgets.

A missed opportunity for capacity building through intensive workshops and training: The resources of this project went to the substantive work to draw together and analyze all the materials on the three intertwined concerns – biodiversity, hydropower and the use of SEA. There were no opportunities or resources to workshop through draft materials and the four main target SEAs with national experts. Including those events would have greatly added to the final report content and to their uptake by key technical people in government. At least one consultative/training workshop should have been included in the project.

Uptake constrained by lack of Vietnamese versions: The main targets for the project volumes are the hydropower planners and the biodiversity managers in government. Provision for translation of at least the policy briefs into Vietnamese should have been made in the original budget.

Project Design Process: (aspects of the project design that contributed to its success/shortcomings)

Most of the challenges/shortcomings in this project resulted from the overambitious design by ICEM. Initially the idea behind the project was just to summarise the Bird Life and ICEM SEA conducted for the World Bank in 2006. But since then three other important SEAs also addressed the issue of biodiversity so the work of distillation and analysis expanded considerably. Then the challenge of distilling lessons and guidance for the conduct of SEAs was a major undertaking in itself required substantial additional research and original analysis. All in all, we are very glad we have done this project – but if we were to do it again, would reduce the coverage by one third and spend more time on consultation and capacity building.

Project Implementation: (aspects of the project execution that contributed to its success/shortcomings)

ICEM underestimated the senior technical input which would be required to complete the four volumes. They were not just a matter of summarizing previous reports but more a fresh analysis of the issues and distillation of lessons. That senior level input was mainly covered through the ICEM contribution to the project - This caused delays in completing the reports as competing priorities continued to arise.

Other lessons learned relevant to conservation community:

Spend adequate time and resources in preparing “knowledge products” linked to all your projects. Too many important innovations and findings are occurring but being lost to a wider audience because of the lack of emphasis in communicating findings and recommendations sharply and concisely.

ADDITIONAL FUNDING

Provide details of any additional donors who supported this project and any funding secured for the project as a result of the CEPF grant or success of the project.

Donor	Type of Funding*	Amount	Notes

**Additional funding should be reported using the following categories:*

- A Project co-financing (Other donors contribute to the direct costs of this CEPF project)*

- B Grantee and Partner leveraging (Other donors contribute to your organization or a partner organization as a direct result of successes with this CEPF project.)*

- C Regional/Portfolio leveraging (Other donors make large investments in a region because of CEPF investment or successes related to this project.)*

ICEM contributed to this project on a dollar for dollar basis from its public interest fund.

Sustainability/Replicability

Summarize the success or challenge in achieving planned sustainability or replicability of project components or results.

The dissemination process for the reports has just begun by issuing them to a limited number of government officials and by placing them on the ICEM website. A follow up program of activities is needed to further promote the use and uptake of these documents.

Three key things need to be done:

1. Translation of policy briefs into Vietnamese
2. Conducting a workshop to present and discuss them
3. Updating Volume II based on a wider review and input from Vietnamese and other experts

The project outputs focus on the experience in Vietnam. However, similar threats to biodiversity resources from hydropower development apply throughout the Indo-Burma region. As such, the educational and guidance products developed under this project would be of use in other locations throughout the region, and could inspire development of similar country-specific materials for other locations.

The format of the four report outputs allows for updates and the release of revised editions – this is especially important for the rapidly evolving SEA guidance in Volume II. Some 120 hydropower projects exist or are planned for the Mekong Basin – most in areas of biodiversity significance. The biodiversity effects and mitigation are rarely adequately taken into account. ICEM has been contracted by ADB to conduct a major SEA of the GMS Power Plan – an upscaled and broader canvass than the SEA of mainstream Mekong hydropower. That experience in capturing biodiversity concerns will need to be summarized and built into a revised volume II.

Safeguard Policy Assessment

Provide a summary of the implementation of any required action toward the environmental and social safeguard policies within the project.

Not applicable

We regret that our project outputs and impact do not readily fit within the framework of the two following tables.

Performance Tracking Report Addendum				
CEPF Global Targets				
2 years				
Provide a numerical amount and brief description of the results achieved by your grant. Please respond to only those questions that are relevant to your project.				
Project Results	Is this question relevant?	If yes, provide your numerical response for results achieved during the annual period.	Provide your numerical response for project from inception of CEPF support to date.	Describe the principal results achieved from July 1, 2010 to June 30, 2011. (Attach annexes if necessary)
1. Did your project strengthen management of a protected area guided by a sustainable management plan? Please indicate number of hectares improved.	No	-	-	The reports relate to safeguarding the entire protected area system in Vietnam, and identify those most at risk of hydropower development and ways to ameliorate or avoid that risk
2. How many hectares of new and/or expanded protected areas did your project help establish through a legal declaration or community agreement?	No	-	-	Please also include name of the protected area. If more than one, please include the number of hectares strengthened for each one.
3. Did your project strengthen biodiversity conservation and/or natural resources management inside a key biodiversity area identified in the CEPF ecosystem profile? If so, please indicate how many hectares.	No			

4. Did your project effectively introduce or strengthen biodiversity conservation in management practices outside protected areas? If so, please indicate how many hectares.	No			
5. If your project promotes the sustainable use of natural resources, how many local communities accrued tangible socioeconomic benefits? Please complete Table 1 below.	No			

If you answered yes to question 5, please complete the following table.

Additional Comments/Recommendations

This project has led to valuable communications and policy reform documents which would not have been prepared without the opportunity provided by the CEPF grant. ICEM has other important tools and findings on biodiversity which need similar treatment. We are keen to discuss these with the CEPF team and to explore how a second collaborative initiative might allow for another set of “knowledge products” to be prepared – this time with greater stakeholder involvement.

Information Sharing and CEPF Policy

CEPF is committed to transparent operations and to helping civil society groups share experiences, lessons learned, and results. Final project completion reports are made available on our Web site, www.cepf.net, and publicized in our newsletter and other communications.

Please include your full contact details below:

Name: Jeremy Carew-Reid

Organization name: ICEM – International Centre for Environmental Management

6A Lane 49 To Ngoc Van St, Tay Ho | HA NOI VIET NAM

T: 84 4 3823 9127 | M: 84 (0) 915024895 | F: 84 4 3719 0367

E: jecr@icem.com.au | www.icem.com.au