Submission Document – Mekong Project 4

Draft submission by M-POWER governance network

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www.mpowernet.org

10 September 2009
1. Basin Development Challenge:
Mekong: To reduce poverty and foster development through management of water for multiple uses in large and small reservoirs

2. Project:
Mekong Project 4: On water governance

3. Project Data
Duration: Four years
Target start date: January 2010
Finish date: December 2013
The nominated finishing date for this project is December 2013, however, M-POWER would likely prefer to conduct this research over 3 years, completing by end of December 2012. Given the budget on offer, and the agenda of the governance research, it is likely wiser to have a more intensive research over 3 years, instead of 4 years.
Maximum budget requested from CPWF:
A notional budget of USD 800,000 has been indicated by CPWF for Project 4 when issuing the invitation to M-POWER. The final budget for this project will be negotiated and agreed after the discussions on this draft, and also in relation to Project 5.
M-POWER partners will be offering matching funds, via the complementary research work they are undertaking in the 6 Mekong Region countries. This will be calculated and included in the final submission.

4. Project Deliverables
- Negotiation methods and techniques that enable WSI operating rules that optimize benefits and that take advantage of agricultural and fisheries opportunities
- Multiple agent modeling and other research tools capable of structuring and supporting negotiations on water use and water allocation
- Information on how WSI can be operated sequentially to create agricultural and fisheries opportunities, both locally and downstream
- Other means of informing decisions on dam and reservoir management that contribute to addressing the BDC

5. BDC Goals to which the Project will contribute
New water storage infrastructure (WSI) is being built in various tributaries of the Mekong, including (but not restricted to) the common border area between Lao PDR, Cambodia and Vietnam. If this BDC is successfully addressed, these reservoirs will be managed in ways that are more fair and equitable for all water users. WSI management will take account of fisheries and agricultural potential as well as hydropower generation, and riparian communities will be able to utilize these water sources for multiple purposes. Catchments will be managed in ways that reduce erosion and the siltation of WSI, while benefiting riparian communities by opening up farming and other opportunities. Of importance will be the ability to manage WSI sequentially, along the length of rivers, so as to optimize benefits for all. In order to achieve this, water governance – the capacity to negotiate amongst water users (including dam operators) – must be improved, paving the way for policy and administrative changes that enable the sharing of benefits among riparian communities, among water users and between nations.
6. Links with other projects in the Basin Development Challenge:

The project will need to work with other projects in the BDC to contribute to a coherent research program that is lead by a Basin Leader.

7. Project Summary

This project focuses on the governance structures and mechanisms needed to enable, support and maintain successful WSI optimization strategies. It considers the ways in which WSI are presently managed, and what needs to change if benefits are to be optimized, and multiple uses implemented. The latter research relates not only to individual reservoirs, but also to cascades, including transboundary cascades. It draws on other Mekong BDC projects as well as institutional analysis of current water governance for different uses, and innovation histories of “positive deviance” in water governance for benefit optimization.

Water management and governance for multiple uses need to move beyond traditional and sectoral approaches. It needs to consider the broader biophysical, social, and economic context, focusing on threats to effective management and benefit delivery. This project will not aim at developing a single blue-print for governance, but rather will identify and evaluate a range of options that can support stakeholders’ choices and decisions – link with Project 5 for stakeholder participation in resource research development and resource management.

8. Links to previous and ongoing work

8.1 Previous and on-going work

The Mekong Program on Water, Environment & Resilience (M-POWER) is a program constituted by an active network of about 23 research and advocacy partner organizations working on democratizing water governance throughout the Mekong Region. M-POWER recognizes that the Mekong Region is widely diverse and rapidly changing, yet water governance remains opaque and in many ways, exclusive, with little participation by the diverse peoples that depend largely on its water systems for livelihoods and energy. M-POWER has embarked on a series of projects to respond to the challenges of diversity of stakeholders and interests, as well as skewed social, economic and political benefits of water resources management. These projects reside largely in the domains of research and deliberative political engagement, with a view toward iteratively achieving an integrative approach to research and action for democratic and improved water governance.

In the research domain, baseline work on water governance has been completed where M-POWER researchers published a volume on ‘Democratizing Water Governance in the Mekong Region’ (2007). One other published volume, ‘Contested Waterscapes in the Mekong Region’ (2009) has been completed, another one is in progress that focuses on issued of water governance and social justice, and a final volume is publishing the products of the M-POWER Research Fellows. Various policy briefings and working papers have been produced, while a number of scientific reports have been translated into journal papers. Many of these studies were supported by the CPWF, Echel Eau and IFAD under CPWF’s Project no (PN). 50, through a competitive grants awards program involving 32 Mekong Region fellows endorsed by M-POWER’s partner organizations. Through CPWF PNS0, M-POWER aimed to develop transnational governance analysts across the Mekong Region, and give them multi-country experience with other fellows, and other M-POWER colleague peers. Local and transboundary
studies on water governance regimes were principally the products of this project, involving flood systems, waterworks. Regular M-POWER Research Updates have also been circulated to a larger body of M-POWER contacts and associates (M-POWER-l@sea-user.org). These documents and other related information are found in the M-POWER website: www.mpowernet.org, and some of which have been listed in the bibliography below.

As innovative processes have been underway to improve water management regimes in the Mekong Region, M-POWER members and partners are seeking to understand the use of such processes and whether they are specifically leading to improved water allocation especially in view of increased tensions over water use. These tools and processes have been identified as Scenarios and Modeling, Environmental Flows, Cumulative Impact Assessment (CIA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA); and market-based instruments such as Payments for Ecosystem Services (PES), and pricing. Under CPWF’s PN 67, M-POWER seeks to examine the overriding conditions and political drivers of these current processes and tools – and whether they reduce the impacts of disputes over, and improve the fairness of, water allocation. Research is currently ongoing after a writers’ workshop was held in February 2009 in Kunming, China.

M-POWER co-organized the Mekong Region Waters Dialogue in July 2006 in Vientiane, Lao PDR, where major stakeholders engaged in a high quality, multi stakeholder debate and learning with the goal of improving Mekong water governance. ‘Dialogues,’ was employed as a tool of deliberative democracy in order to inform water-related negotiations among national, regional and multilateral stakeholders present at this event. About 160 participants including senior officials of ADB, MRC, WB governments and civil society organizations attended leading to greater recognition by states and multilaterals (WB, ADB, MRC) that they must improve their level of engagement with other sectors in society. This was one step within a larger program of water dialogues that M-POWER has been contributing to or leading since 2004.

M-POWER annual meetings have been held to synthesize lessons learned from completed and ongoing research and to chart ways forward to respond to evolving challenges around water governance in the Mekong Region. M-POWER was also present in various regional and global events such as the World Water Week in Stockholm, Gender and Water Alliance Regional Meetings, the CPWF international forums, and the World Water Congress in France.

8.2 Lessons learned

By water governance, we mean the ways in which power is organized, shared and negotiated in society, and the interactions and decision-making processes involved in how water resources are to be developed and used, and the distribution of benefits and involuntary risks from doing so. This includes shaping agendas and deliberating options through the design of institutions and policies through the way these are implemented in the practices of day-to-day management of water. Over the years, M-POWER has steadily evolved as a regional space for the production of scientific knowledge on water governance, with its members concurrently engaging in deliberative processes for democratizing water governance. The following are some of the salient insights and lessons culled from these activities.

Plural and competing interests in Mekong water systems result in winners and losers:

As countries in the Mekong Region pursue trajectories of economic development and wealth accumulation resonating with the rest of growth-driven Southeast Asia, water resources are also increasingly contested and livelihoods that depend on them, increasingly threatened. Moreover, large-scale public investments in water infrastructure such as hydropower and irrigation, entice private players to generate huge gains at the expense of livelihood and environmental security.
There is therefore a much wider set of interests in water politics than ever before: from national agencies and governments, banks and financiers, politicians, rent-seeking business men, technical consultants, infrastructure operators, consumers and organized civil groups, academics and international NGOs. Governance therefore is not the privy of the State or confined to a particular politico-administrative scale or arena but emerges from the interactions between State, business, and diverse and not-for-profit actors at multiple scales. As a result, there is need to develop innovative platforms for more complex engagements to negotiate a reasonably fair, socially acceptable, and sustainable balance between economic, social and environmental dimensions of water governance regimes.

Public sector planning and implementing water infrastructure projects vary: In the Mekong Region, practice differs from one country to the other – ranging from non-transparent and repressive modes such as forced displacement of local residents, co-opting and/or buying out of representatives in official and ad hoc water management bodies, and exercising patronage through the rewarding of consultancies, to genuine initiatives at social inclusion and public participation. Additionally, regional and trans-boundary water governance institutions remain uneasy at engaging with non-state entities and instead prefer to deal with state-created ones. Attempts at inclusive water governance processes – whether trans-boundary, national or local in scale – will therefore have to come to terms with these varied and for some, highly inequitable and polarized, socio-political contexts and playing fields.

Dominant development discourses and counter discourses define water management agendas: Dominant development discourses vary in their functions. One set of discourses forecast impending doom and dismal scenarios, often assumed and unquestioned, such as untamed nature, poverty, national security and climate change. In response, huge hydropower infrastructure in parts of the Mekong Region have been constructed to generate energy savings and revenue to bolster economic growth through bilateral trade arrangements for energy supply, and to generate clean and alternative energy sources that will mitigate further global warming. When faced with the prospects of social unrest due to poverty and possible dislocations from climate-related changes, governments tend to draw security from huge development projects, including those with water. These discourses that shape development agendas, however, sidestep the fact that they build on highly inequitable relations of power, resources, assets and capacities, and may in the end exacerbate rather than mitigate these inequities.

Other discourses serve to marginalize groups and interests. They explicitly classify certain groups and sectors as ‘marginal’ to the trajectory of economic development, unworthy of investment and in doing so, fulfill the prophecy of edging them out of the negotiating tables of mainstream development. There is therefore need to challenge labels like “vulnerable” and the “narratives of doom” that for instance surround fisheries and subsistence farming, and instead highlight people’s rich knowledge, agency, adaptive capacities and innovation.

On the other hand, discourses of certain advocacy groups claiming to represent interests of local communities and marginalized groups may oversimplify or ignore real trade-offs in management issues of WSI in order to assert and highlight their own urgent stakes.

Bureaucratic structures are rigid and there is an insistence on technical fixes for water-related problems: This reflects the ‘silo’ and sectoral fragmentation inherent to water bureaucracies everywhere. The cross-cutting and cumulative impacts of water flows and levels, flooding, fish migration and aquatic resources regeneration, climate change-related impacts, suggest the need for integration and the lifting of ‘territorial’ barriers among water management entities. But business as usual still dominates this realm.
With these lessons learned, M-POWER is now called upon to contribute to recent developments, especially in ongoing institutional experimentations in the Mekong Region. These institutional experiments will be the central domain under study in this research project.

CPWF has selected a particular part of the Mekong Region on which to focus research activity – Nam Theun, Sesan and 3S. In each, there is substantial institutional experimentation underway, with more soon to start. M-POWER has the opportunity to provide substantial knowledge support, via constructive research, to this experimentation for the benefit of the social complex of Mekong communities, to address various stresses and opportunities triggered by the following developments.

The Nam Theun river system is the site of two of the highest-profile hydropower developments in Laos – the Nam Theun 2 (NT2) project, the existing Theun Hinboun (THP) project, and the Theun Hinboun Expansion Project (THXP). Each of these projects has a substantial impact on various rivers due to the tunnels and diversions and flow changes that are inherent in their operation. NT2 also has a substantial reservoir on the Nakai Plateau whereas the others have relatively small reservoirs. The major current institutional experimentation is with the Watershed Management Protection Authority (WMPA) and the Adaptive Management Committees of the Nam Theun Power Company (NTPC). However, The World Bank also contributes to and drives a Khammouane Development Project (USD 9 million project just starting up). There are also plans to create a Xe Bang Fai River Basin Organisation (RBO) with mandate and roles yet to be determined.

The 3S refers to Sekong, Sresan and Srepok rivers. The Government of Vietnam, with Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE) in the lead, has decided to proceed to form a Sesan River Basin Organisation. They are open to active membership by Cambodia, however, this will likely be difficult at least in the short-term due to a new wave of opposition by Cambodia’s Ministry of Water Resources and Meteorology (MOWRAM) to river basin organisations/committees/authorities and Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM). To this point, RBOs in Vietnam have been the domain of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD). However, the responsible Ministry has changed, legislation is being rearranged, and the experimentation will continue. Thus far, much of the RBO experimentation in Vietnam has been donor driven (eg. ADB with Red, Denmark with Srepok). However, there is a substantial Vietnamese constituency for learning the lessons from these recent but finished and incomplete initiatives, and going forward in Sesan. The Vietnam National Mekong Committee will be supporting MONRE to form a Sesan RBO with funds from The World Bank, under the auspices of a Mekong IWRM Project. However, the Vietnamese are already underway via a core group associating under the Vietnam Global Water Partnership umbrella.

Institutional experimentation in the Cambodian parts of the 3S is being led by civil society rather than the state. The 3S Working Group, the associated Rivers Coalition and the Cambodian NGO Working Group have all been working to improve water governance in this part of Cambodia by providing knowledge inputs and reaching out to the Cambodian, Vietnamese and international communities. Their innovation is critical at a time when the Cambodian National Mekong Committee of the Mekong River Commission is restricted as to what it can do.

Into each of these ‘experiments’, M-POWER can make an important contribution at a critical time when future options are being explored. The research questions that follow bear out these potential contributions further.
9. Research questions

Research questions include:

- What sorts of policy and administrative mechanisms would be needed to implement cross-border collaboration to optimize the benefits of hydroelectric dam operations?
- In what ways should the management of dams be altered so as to maximize benefits to communities?
- How can success stories from this research be scaled up and out, and what role would policy and administration play in this process?

How will your research address these research questions? What other research questions should be added?

On policy and administrative mechanisms that would be needed to implement cross-border collaboration to optimize the benefits of hydroelectric dam operations: The research results are envisaged to inform the positions of various stakeholders, generate dialogues, and redraw and enlarge common standards and values between representatives involved in specific institutional experimentations currently ongoing in the Mekong Region.

Often, the lack of cross-border collaboration is conditioned by non-inclusive top-down planning, usually state-centered with single-purpose visions (usually supply-side energy optimization) advanced by one national government. Neighboring governments’ oppositional stances meanwhile are based on different and multiple sets of standards and values that shape their own priorities. This research includes not just knowledge generation per se, but more importantly, social learning and communications through the application of negotiation methods and techniques and information sharing between and among stakeholders and researchers.

The project intends to enroll key stakeholders in the research process at the outset. This stimulates the shaping of relevant policies and mechanisms through which cross-border cooperation can develop in the long run. It also enlarges the iterative platforms for negotiation and options for cross-border and cross-border cooperation.

Out of examining current forms of institutional experimentations in the Mekong Region, this action research will crystallize several governance options and multi-level trade-off scenarios involving primary stakeholders. It will observe stakeholder groups as they advocate for and agree on the most mutually acceptable and appropriate options of governance relative to the functions of managing dams.

On the ways in which the management of dams can be altered for the benefit of communities: This is an action research where various stakeholders, especially local communities, are envisaged to come together to share knowledge, needs, their respective notions of rights, and risks. The research will examine to what degree and extent they are included and part of the engagements in current institutional experimentations. Through a co-learning process that will address specific water rights and allocation problems, power-sharing and structures around the management of dams can be redrawn or reconfigured. Since this particular research will enlist the participation local communities, it will strengthen their claim and legitimacy to re-configure dam management or aspects of it (including the option of a co-management and/or a repayment arrangement). Further, while community voices are often heard during the planning or construction of dams, these are often muted, post-construction, or when dams have become
This research provides a forum for adjacent or downstream communities to dialogue with dam operators and other stakeholders in order to realize their current stakes in response to changing conditions due to the effects of dam operations. It can also create or clarify structures for participation in the management of WSI.

On scaling up and out of success stories: Depending on the similarity of their contexts, success stories on institutional experimentation at a lower scale can potentially be institutionalized by certain policies created by higher scale authorities. Further, administrative measures can enable local level good practices to flourish and take on deeper roots. Success stories generated from this research can be shared through various forums of multi-stakeholders’ dialogues, experts’ workshops, inter-local community meetings for scaling out. Positive and summed up processes leading to clear positive outcomes in well defined contexts can be taken up by official policy makers at a wider politico-administrative jurisdictions in Mekong areas to inform, guide or shape specific policy instruments (such as standards setting, or procedural rules) to advance democratic water governance reforms that are likely to lead to more equitable and sustainable impacts.

How can communication become more effective to bridge or narrow the gap between local knowledge and the experts’ knowledge for more socially-acceptable and cooperative ways of managing dams?

This research will undertake an in-depth examination of both local and experts’ knowledge on water, agriculture and fishery resources that are brought to bear on debates and institutional experimentations on how dams should be managed. More importantly, these varied and often conflicting knowledge claims together with their articulators will interact and converse with each other in stakeholders’ workshops and interaction in the research process, enabling communications and language gaps to be bridged and facilitated through constructive and shared framing of problems, interpretations and approaches to solutions.

10. Research Outputs, Methods and Uptake Pathways

10.1 Project research outputs

- Negotiation methods and techniques that enable WSI operating rules that optimize benefits and that take advantage of agricultural and fisheries opportunities
- Multiple agent modeling and other research tools capable of structuring and supporting negotiations on water use and water allocation
- Information on how WSI can be operated sequentially to create agricultural and fisheries opportunities, both locally and downstream
- Other means of informing decisions on dam and reservoir management that contribute to addressing the BDC

What additional research outputs should the project produce, if any? What does the output(s) add to the BDC?

- Communication techniques that can bridge or narrow the gaps between local and experts’ knowledge used in contestations related to management of dams.
Several governance options regarding modalities (i.e. sets of rules, norms, procedures and mechanisms) of stakeholders’ relations in decision-making in dam management that deliberatively takes into account the interests of fisheries, agriculture, hydropower and riparian communities.

10.2 Project partners

Output 1: (Negotiation techniques): M-POWER network  
Output 2: (Multiple Agent Modeling and other research tools): M-POWER network; AIT  
Output 3: (Information-related optimization): CENTDOR; EcoLao; Vietnam Water Partnership  
Output 4: (Means of informing decisions): M-POWER network; AIT  
Output 5: (Communication techniques): M-POWER network  
Output 6: (Governance and modality options): AIT

10.3 Next users

For every output, the next users will be defined and specified in the first project inception workshop of partner/s. This inception workshop will consist of six separate panel meetings corresponding to the six defined outputs, where the relevant researchers and representatives of partners will discuss the next users and learning required by next users, including behavioral changes.

10.4 Learning required by next users

Refer to 10.3.

10.5 Research methods

We locate this research within the methodological genre of ‘action research.’ Action research typically refers to a cyclical process and approach that has a practical and problem-solving emphasis, and which involves critical reflection and action. Action is then undertaken to understand, evaluate and change. Research involves observation, gathering and interpreting data, often in an aspect of teaching and learning (in this project, ‘institutional experiments’), whereas critical reflection involves reviewing actions undertaken and planning future actions. It is therefore (i) practical in nature; (ii) its focus is change; (iii) it involves a cyclical process; (iv) is concerned with participation. In brief, a basic action research model is as follows:

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Plan  
Act  
Observe  
Reflect
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A number of researchers that have adopted an action research design also believe that the research should contain an action agenda for reform that may change the lives of participants, the institutions in which they live and work, and the researchers’ lives as well (Creswell, 2003).
As explained in 8.2, the research will take place in five river areas, where institutional experiments are taking place.

That said, the research outputs and their attendant research methods are as follows.

For Output 1: (Negotiation)

Principally qualitative data gathering
- Documents review of negotiation procedures and outcomes
- Participant observation in negotiation procedures
- Key informant interviews of important representatives and agents in the negotiation
- Planning of intervention actions in negotiation
- Actual interventions in negotiation
- Reflections of changes in the negotiation process and outcomes resulting from intervention or action
- Evaluation of the entire cycle of negotiation process and drawing conclusions in terms of what methods and techniques work in negotiation and the relevant contexts.
- Gender analysis of actors and negotiation processes
- Outcome mapping

For Output 2 (multiple agent modeling and other research tools)
- Multi-criteria decision making (MCDM) techniques based on multiple objectives and criteria
- Participatory workshops where major stakeholders interact and collaborate

For Output 3 (Information on how WSI can be operated)
- Hydrological modeling
- Records review
- PRA/PLA (participatory rural appraisal/participatory learning and action) methods. These would include: review of secondary sources, direct observation, crafting of key indicators, semi-structured interviews, ranking and scoring, construction and analysis of maps, models and diagrams, case stories, triangulation and continuous analysis and reporting.
- Gender analysis

For Output 4 (Means of informing decisions)
- Participatory workshops where major decision makers are present
- Quantitative analysis such as multiple regressions
- Narratives of communities’ experiences and first-hand accounts of grassroots water users
- Maps, diagrams and schematic representations of linkages and causalities of problems.
- Documentation and reporting
- Gender Analysis: The Social Relations Approach

For Output 5 (Communication techniques for bridging local and experts’ knowledge)
- Discourse analysis
- Participatory methods for communication
- Gender analysis of knowledge discourses
– Interactive teaching-learning activities between locals and experts on empirical problems and issues in WSI management

For Output 6 (Options of governance modalities)
– Institutional mapping
– Pathway analysis of decision and policy making processes
– Participant observation
– Decision makers’ and citizens interactive workshops
– Historical accounts/media and oral accounts of decision events
– Outcome mapping
– Gender analysis

10.6 Participatory research approaches

Listed research methods corresponding to each of the six outputs (10.5) have one or several techniques that are participatory. These participatory research tools will take precedence over other conventional research techniques (that is, non-participatory) since this project aims to communicate with and enlist various stakeholders in dialogues and cooperative processes for optimizing outcomes WRI management on the basis of realizing equitable and sustainable goals.

10.7 Change in user practice

Refer to 10.3.

10.8 Suggested sites

The study sites will be located in the following river systems: Nam Theun, Sesan, and Sekong, Sresan and Srepok rivers. More specific locations of research will be finalized in the project inception meeting with partners.

11. Activities and Implementation Plan

In the form of a Gantt chart, constructed as an Excel spreadsheet, which is part of the project workbook.

12. Communications and alignment with CPWF Culture

12.1 Communications

The project, along with other BDC projects in the Mekong, is expected to contribute to the following communications products:
– A series of political and developmental relationships with key institutions to accelerate the application of research findings, both in the research target area and beyond
– Negotiation techniques and institutions, which enable the coordinated management of dam operations and development, both within and among countries
A series of innovatively-designed products that communicate research findings to a range of stakeholders with a diversity of interests.

Working papers, journal articles and book chapters, particularly in Mekong-based journals and edited volumes, that describe the cumulative impacts of dam operations on downstream resources (particularly fisheries) and livelihoods; that reveal both the positive and negative impacts of hydropower and irrigation at livelihoods levels; that describe the trade-offs in altering dam operations to the benefit of alternative, multiple uses (including hydropower); and that analyze the utility and effectiveness of negotiation techniques across borders and between stakeholder power asymmetries.

An open access website with contributions from CPWF partners and stakeholders.

**Briefly describe how your project will contribute to BDC communications plans**

| Policy briefs intended for key decision makers and their hands-on personnel |
| Documentation of stakeholder and institutional processes and the testing of methods for negotiation |
| To be negotiated with BDC Coordination Project, to enable the existing network and platforms of M-POWER partners to be fully utilised – to the extent appropriate – to support achieve the objectives of CPWF. |

**12.2 Evaluative culture**

**Briefly describe how you will support an evaluative culture in the project**

M-POWER expects to be able to make a major contribution to the BDC Coordination Project (i.e. Project 5) and will have discussions as soon as possible with Dr Kim Geheb. For Project 4, there will be:

- An evaluative template designed through a consultative process within the project or beyond that identifies gender and diversity knowledge and action gaps
- Testing of evaluative and monitoring methods to see if they generate learning and reflection that they intended to do so at the outset.
- Iterative monitoring and evaluation mechanisms that equally learn from the experience of researchers.

**12.3 Alignment with CPWF core values**

1. Partnership among water governance organizations is intrinsic to the M-POWER ethos and operations.
2. Capacity building efforts may take the form of engaging post-graduate students in research projects. M-POWER also encourages ‘learning by doing’ approaches where researchers themselves engage in multi stakeholder processes that will in turn inform their research and policy recommendations.
3. A gender and diversity consultant will be hired to ensure that all research and political engagement activities are conscious of and will include gender-responsive elements at the outset, to fully integrate these in their activities and outcomes.
13. Assumptions and Risks

A key assumption in this research is an open policy (that is, reasonable transparency) and cooperative attitudes, especially of government agencies and officials who have the mandate for, and are strategic nodes of current decision making processes, pertinent to management issues of WSI. This assumption pertains to the government agencies and officials of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia.

The main risks may be the following:
(a) Resistance of authorities in Vietnam, Laos or Cambodia to participatory methods of research, especially those methods that will be applied to institutional experiments with grassroots communities.
(b) Secrecy and opaqueness blocking researchers’ access to public records pertinent to WSI management issues by the Mekong countries.
(c) Non-cooperation of groups in countries of the Mekong in dialogues, negotiations, and participatory workshops that tackle trans-boundary issues in WSI management.

14a. Any other comments to explain your project?

This proposal is still work-in-progress. To date, the commitment of partners to the basic research project design has been clarified and firmed up. However, a further round of direct consultations with partners in relation to output users, specific activities and timelines is currently underway. The inception workshop to be attended by researchers and partners will also firm up the details of these parts of the proposal.

The final work plan will be finalized in the project’s inception workshop.

14. Project Team

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<tr>
<th>Names of team members</th>
<th>Professional discipline</th>
<th>Institutional affiliation and address</th>
<th>Area of expertise important to this project.</th>
<th>Brief description of research responsibilities with respect to the outputs and activities listed in the Gantt chart.</th>
<th>Commitments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Edsel E. Sajor</td>
<td>Development Studies</td>
<td>School of Environment, Resources &amp; Development, Asian Institute of Technology (AIT), Km 42, Klong Luang, Pathumthani, Thailand 12120</td>
<td>Governance, conflict resolution, social research methodologies for action research; Led two Southeast Asia and Asia-wide research projects supported by CIDA (2003-2008) and IDRC (2008-2011)</td>
<td>Substantive inputs and over-all management on behalf of M-POWER; coordination with CPWF representatives</td>
<td>Involvement in CPWF PN 67 as monitoring and evaluation leader Involvement in CPWF PN 50 as research leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Names of team members</td>
<td>Professional discipline</td>
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<tr>
<td>Suon Seng (Deputy Project Leader) - to be confirmed</td>
<td>Economics, Research Management</td>
<td>CENTDOR, Centre for Development Oriented Research, Phnom Penh, Cambodia</td>
<td>Currently managing research in Cambodia and Laos, and with previous experience in Vietnam.</td>
<td>Close collaboration with the Project Leader and all research partners.</td>
<td>Recently completed M-POWER Research Fellowship.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other team members and possible component leaders from M-POWER partner organisations] – being finalised.</td>
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<td>Tu Dao Trong</td>
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<td>Gary Oughton</td>
<td>EcoLao</td>
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Provide a brief text statement on why the lead institution is well-placed to lead the group.

The Asian Institute of Technology (AIT), being one of the major partner organizations of M-POWER, has a strong track record of managing regional research projects with an interdisciplinary staff of academics and experts who have responded to the challenges of water-related research.

Provide brief text statements on why the proposed institutions are qualified to carry out the proposed research.

M-POWER network
- Proven CPWF partner, with consistent delivery of high quality water governance research;
- Demonstrated ability to facilitate constructive engagement, informed by research and other evidence-based inputs to deliberations.

15. Indicative break down of budget

The budget is part of the project workbook.
16. Bibliography

Bastakoti et al. (in progress). M-POWER Book 4 – Book by M-POWER Research Fellows.
M-POWER Guide 2008, downloadable from [www.mpowernet.org](http://www.mpowernet.org)
Lazurus, K., Resurreccion, B., Ngo, W., and Badenoch, N. (eds) (in progress) (M-POWER Book 3)

Selected Nam Theun, Sesan and 3S literature – still deciding the most appropriate work of M-POWER colleagues and others for inclusion here.

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1 This project is one of several that together constitute a research program to tackle the basin development challenge (BDC). Please read the description of the BDC that can be found in the Medium Term plan. If you are successful you will be expected to work as part of a coherent research program, led by the Basin Leader responsible for program coordination and coherence.

2 Project linkages and project contribution are shown in the BDC impact logic model in the Medium Term Plan.

3 The quality and experience of your project team will help ensure the delivery of quality outputs.