



United Nations Environment Programme DAMS AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

Promoting Dialogue

Vietnam-Dialogue on Dams and Development

Vietnam has actively participated in WCD and Dams and Development Project activities for several years. In February 2000, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) hosted the Fourth Regional Consultation of the World Commission on Dams. Following the launch of the WCD report, a delegation from Vietnam participated in a regional workshop on the report organised by the Asian Development Bank in February 2001.

Translation of the WCD Report into Vietnamese

Recognising the importance of a local language edition of the report for the review process within Vietnam, translations were prepared of the complete WCD report, Overview and Proceedings of the Third WCD Forum meeting that contains a wide range of reactions to the report. A peer review committee for the translation was established comprising MARD, the Hanoi Water Resources University, IUCN-The World Conservation Union and Oxfam GB.

Multi-stakeholder review meeting in Hanoi

The translated WCD Report (see box) was circulated to government agencies, water professionals, academics and other organisations working on environment and social issues in Vietnam with an invitation to a multi-

stakeholder consultation on the report. As the responsible agency under the National Water Act, MARD organised an initial workshop on the World Commission on Dams Report in Hanoi on 11 October 2002 with financial support from the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

Purpose of the meeting

Drawing together about 100 people from across the country, the purpose of the meeting was:

- to obtain feedback and reactions to the WCD report from Vietnamese agencies and NGOs;
- to examine the implications for ADB policies and procedures, and
- to consider the need and possible type of follow-on activities in the context of Vietnam.

Key Issues

Some of the key points raised in the working group sessions included:

- the positive contribution of existing dams to Vietnam's development and the role of dams in meeting future demands
- the outstanding aspects of resettlement of some existing projects, with recent projects showing improvements and commitment to providing sustainable livelihoods
- the need to consider mechanisms for benefit sharing with affected communities upstream and downstream of projects
- the need to consider more direct consultation with communities in project planning and implementation
- public acceptance is needed but how to obtain it in a transparent way?
- greater attention to be given to the needs of ethnic communities
- protection of biodiversity requires more study including recognition of the value of ecosystems
- the need for regular review of operational rules for existing dams from technical, social and environmental perspectives including consultations with local people
- the need to disseminate the Vietnamese translation of the WCD report more widely

Results

As a result of the meeting, it was decided that a scoping report should be drafted to identify key issues for discussion at a second multi-stakeholder meeting, during which priority tasks would be identified and an institutional mechanism would be established in which to develop detailed recommendations on policy and procedural reform.

It was also proposed that the second meeting would be held under the auspices of the newly created Vietnam National Water Resources Committee (NWRC), which is chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister and involves all three of the key ministries with responsibilities for water and energy management: MARD, the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources (MoNRE), and the Ministry of Industry (MoI). The Department of Water Resources, located within MoNRE, serves as the secretariat for the committee.

First Phase of Co-operation: Preparation of Scoping Report

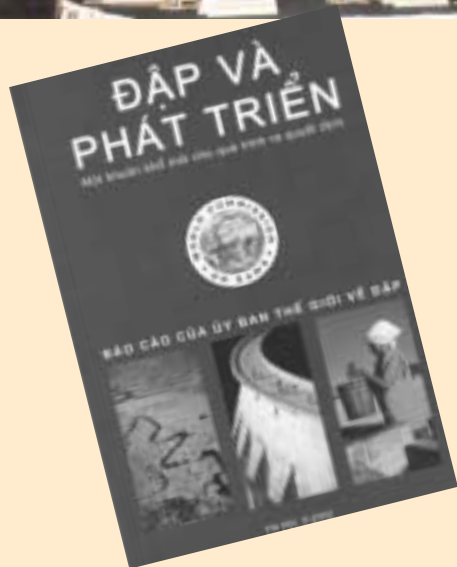
A multi-disciplinary writing team drafted a scoping report that identified key areas in relation to the WCDs seven strategic priorities for further analysis. The five national specialists involved in the team covered areas of water resources planning and design; water resources policy; hydropower planning, the environment including freshwater ecosystems; and social issues including resettlement. They collected, collated and analysed existing information and perspectives as a basis for defining the scope of further multi-stakeholder discussion and more detailed analysis of priority issues. The team submitted the draft scoping report to DDP in August 2003. DDP commented on the report and highlighted the key issues and recommendations. The team revised and finalized the report in February 2004.

Second Phase of Co-operation:

Drawing on the discussions that took place during a DDP mission to Vietnam on December 2003, a proposal for a second phase of co-operation made by DDP to MARD, MoNRE and MoI has been well received. The process to the proposed second phase would include the following components:

- The organization of a second multi-stakeholder workshop in Hanoi to consider the issues raised in the revised scoping report. The scoping report would be a background document for the workshop.
- The office of the NWRC will lead the preparation of the workshop in consultation with departments of the sectoral ministries with DDP and other agencies providing support to the workshop. A short briefing document (4-5 pages) will summarise the key issues for discussion in the plenary and breakout sessions of the workshop.
- The outcomes of the second workshop will provide input to the design of a programme for the second phase of the dialogue on dams and development with the goal of developing recommendations at policy, procedural and management levels that address the key topics raised at the workshop.

Based on experience from other countries undertaking a similar process, it is expected that this programme could take 12 to 24 months to complete.



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