



Australian Government
AusAID

Quality at Entry Report for Koshi Basin Program Phase 1

A: AidWorks details

Initiative Name:	Koshi Basin Program Phase 1		
Initiative No:	INI 485	Total Amount:	AUD 5 million
Start Date:	2012 (4 year Activity)	End Date:	31 December 2016

B: Appraisal Peer Review meeting details

Initial ratings prepared by:	John Dore
Meeting date:	15 December 2011, and 19 March 2012
Chair:	Paul Nichols ADG South Asia
Peer reviewers providing formal comment & ratings:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> John Dore, Senior Water Resources Advisor, Mekong Region Wendy Conway Lamb, Climate Change Division, AusAID
Independent Appraiser:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Richard Hopkins, Chief Executive the International Centre of Excellence in Water Resources
Other peer review participants:	<p>ICIMOD: David Molden, Director General Eklabya Sharma, Director, Program Operations Ouyang Hua, Program Manager, Integrated Water and Hazards Management (IWHM) Arun Bhakta Shrestha, Climate Change Specialist (IWHM)</p> <p>AusAID: Brek Batley (Director South Asia Regional Section), Matt Spannagle (AusAID Climate Change Adviser), Wendy Conway Lamb (Climate Change, Asia Division, AusAID), John Dore (Snr Water Advisor, Mekong Region), Russell Rollason (New Delhi Post), Than Tun (Bangladesh Desk), Violet Rish (South Asia Desk), Fiona Lord, South Asia Regional and India Program Manager, Catherine Herron, Nepal Desk Gina De Pretto, South Asia Gender Focal Point.</p>

C: Safeguards and Commitments

<i>Answer the following questions relevant to potential impacts of the activity.</i>		
1. Environment	Have the environmental marker questions been answered and adequately addressed by the design document in line with legal requirements under the <i>Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act</i> ?	Yes
2. Child Protection	Does the design meet the requirements of AusAID's Child Protection Policy?	N/A

D: Initiative/Activity description	
3. Description of the Initiative/Activity	<p><i>What is it?</i></p> <p>This project is a 'multi-disciplinary river basin resource management programme' targeting the Koshi River Basin, covering parts of China, Nepal, and India. The overall goal is to contribute to inclusive poverty reduction and enhanced resilience to climate change by securing and sustaining freshwater ecosystem services. It will do this through evidenced based decision making and transboundary cooperation. The Koshi Basin project was selected because it targets the poorest parts of India and Nepal and is a sub-basin of the Ganges Basin, the most important basin in South Asia in terms of numbers of people affected.</p>
4. Objectives Summary	<p><i>What are we doing?</i></p> <p>Funding for the Koshi Basin project will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop a basin wide knowledge base in a web-based information sharing platform; • options for improved agriculture in different geo-climatic parts of the basin; • provide detailed case studies of the underlying causes and management options for a range of water hazards. <p>Partnering with ICIMOD, recognised as a centre of excellence for mountain and water knowledge, will enable AusAID to encourage cooperation among the eight member countries of the Himalayas – <u>Afghanistan</u>, <u>Bangladesh</u>, <u>Bhutan</u>, <u>China</u>, <u>India</u>, <u>Myanmar</u>, <u>Nepal</u>, and <u>Pakistan</u>. ICIMOD was established in 1983 and is based in Kathmandu. ICIMOD can lay claim to being the oldest and most effective regional intergovernmental development organisation in South Asia – offering unique access to Government players.</p>

E: Quality Assessment and Rating

Criteria	Assessment	Rating (1-6) *	
1. Relevance	<p>Koshi River Basin is a key place for ICIMOD to contribute to poverty alleviation, livelihoods support, climate change adaptation, development pressures adaptation.</p> <p>The ICIMOD Project Design Document (PDD) for Koshi Basin Programme Phase 1 (dated 7 February 2012) is a well written document and clearly describes the proposed activity. The PDD has clearly responded to the feedback provided during the Peer Review in December 2011 of design documentation dated 2 November 2011. The effort made to improve the documentation and detailed cross-referencing was certainly appreciated by this reviewer.</p> <p>Contributing to this Activity is well aligned with AusAID's overall aid program objectives, and the 'regional' objectives for Australian cooperation with South Asia. This relationship is summarised in the Design Summary Implementation Document (DSID).</p> <p>The PDD sets out a plausible case and pathway for constructive engagement in a transboundary initiative involving China, India and Nepal.</p> <p>AusAID is currently deciding whether or not to support the second phase of the World Bank led South Asia Water Initiative (SAWI 2) that has five key Focus Areas: (i) Ganga Basin, (ii) Brahmaputra Basin, (iii) Indus Basin, (iv) Sundarbans Landscape, and (v) Regional Cooperation. ICIMOD is a partner in SAWI 2.</p> <p>This Koshi Activity would in-effect become another "transboundary focus area" complementary to the above-mentioned five.</p>	5	Australia has received the draft ICIMOD strategic plan and has provided comments.

E: Quality Assessment and Rating

<p>2. Effectiveness</p>	<p>The Activity has the higher order aim to contribute to inclusive poverty reduction and enhanced resilience to climate change by securing and sustaining freshwater ecosystem services through evidence based decision making and transboundary cooperation. There are 3 core objectives, 5 core components and 2 supporting components. Each of the 5 core components has a specified outcome.</p> <p>The figure 2 schematic (page 9) is an effective summary of the Activity logic and intention.</p> <p>The Theory of Change (page 7) is plausible, grounded in the production and use of knowledge, to inform multi-level deliberative exchanges between key actors.</p> <p>The risks, from ICIMOD's perspective are set out, very briefly (page 19) relating to data sharing, influence and govt. engagement:</p> <p>Data sharing: Does ICIMOD have data sharing protocols in place between partners? The document says where possible it will build on existing datasets. What is the assessment of the current datasets? Are there substantial gaps, or is the main problem just piecing together data from different countries and different Ministries? What primary data collection is needed and envisaged to be gotten underway in recent ICIMOD Koshi Projects, or this 'Phase 1', or beyond it to a possible 'Phase 2+'? A risk if leadership were to be absent, would be that the scientists just churn existing information without establishing new insights and ways to constructively influence policies for the poor.</p> <p>Ability of the actors implementing the activity to influence policy/decision makers: ICIMOD have assembled a strong team. Care will need to be taken to ensure that as much thought and effort goes into policy and stakeholder influence (including at sub-national level) as it will in data assembly and processing and formal writing.</p> <p>Engagement with government agencies: It reads like ICIMOD still is only taking 'baby steps' in terms of its engagement with the Federal government of India, and States such as Bihar. This must be an issue for ICIMOD across their entire portfolio. What is the strategy of the Board and Executive, past and present, to address this problem?</p> <p>The PDD indicates that a functional partnership is in place with Government of Nepal. As previously noted, the extent (and quality) of Chinese and Indian involvement is critical.</p> <p>The revised documentation says that ICIMOD is "in discussion with the Institute of Mountain Hazards and Environment (IMHE) and the Institute of Geographic Sciences and Natural Resources Research (IGSNRR) about partnerships under the Chinese National Natural Science Foundation (CNNNSF)." We are left to hope that these discussions are successful to secure China's engagement.</p> <p>No new light is shed on the India/Bihar government relationships that will determine data availability. The role of the Indian partners in the team, and the ICIMOD Board, would appear vital.</p>	4	<p>Clarification of existing data sharing protocols between ICIMOD member countries.</p>
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E: Quality Assessment and Rating

3. Efficiency	<p>In the response to previous challenging of the draft document written in November 2011, ICIMOD have said in several places they would develop a Background Paper tracing in more detail the history of their previous involvement in the Koshi River Basin. This paper will apparently be available prior to the Inception (? Or Final Design?) What was done, collected, analysed, and concluded in the substantial prior work? How did that change ICIMOD's understanding of the key issues? And hence, how has it shaped the approach outlined in this PDD? The inclusion of Appendix 1 and 2 now go part the way to answer these questions.</p> <p>The roles of key implementation partners are adequately described via assigned leadership of different components.</p>	5	
4. Monitoring & Evaluation	<p>The draft logframe presented in Appendix 3 is already a very well developed basis for monitoring and evaluation.</p> <p>Substantial management time is costed. This <u>should include an M&E component</u>.</p> <p>Substantial baseline analysis is costed ie. All of Component 1 that is costed at AUD 0.8 million.</p> <p>We should request that data be gender-disaggregated to measure impact on men and women, boys and girls. But this might surely be advised upon and part of Component 4 that is to focus on gender inclusive and equitable adaptation. It may be that the Vulnerability and Adaptive Capacity Assessment (VACA) surveys (referred to on page 12) do disaggregate data in this way.</p> <p>I'm not sure how monitoring and evaluation arrangements use or contribute to strengthening local – or partner organisation – monitoring and evaluation systems and/or capacity? Is strengthening the capacity of partner performance management an objective of this Activity?</p>	5	<p>Logframe will be further improved during Inception Phase.</p> <p>Request the collection of gender disaggregated data.</p>
5. Sustainability	<p>With regard to sustainable development in general:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At its core the Activity is endeavouring to contribute to sustainable livelihoods and sustainable use and management of the landscape and its natural resources. <p>With regard to sustainability of the gains that might be made in this Activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> By having ICIMOD as the lead partner it would be hoped that the knowledge and processes of cooperation are institutionally embedded in a transboundary organisation. <p>With regard to the EPBC Act question, this Activity, if successful, would have substantially positive environmental impacts.</p>	5	
6. Gender Equality	<p>Component 4 is to focus on gender inclusive and equitable adaptation.</p>	4	<p>What is ICIMOD's own track record as an equal opportunity employer? - both with intake, and career advancement opportunities.</p> <p>Have there been any Gender Audits across the full ICIMOD Program?</p>

E: Quality Assessment and Rating

7. Analysis & Learning	The advanced concept note from November 2011 was a historical. This PDD is better due to the extra work put into it. However, I'd still like to see a more critical analysis by ICIMOD of its own Koshi-based work thus far, and that of its partners. What have they done in the past? What worked? What did not? What have they learned that has altered the approach/design for this Activity? (See point 3 above).	5	Request background paper on the Koshi
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* Definitions of the Rating Scale:

Satisfactory (4, 5 and 6)		Less than satisfactory (1, 2 and 3)	
6	Very high quality; needs ongoing management & monitoring only	3	Less than adequate quality; needs to be improved in core areas
5	Good quality; needs minor work to improve in some areas	2	Poor quality; needs major work to improve
4	Adequate quality; needs some work to improve	1	Very poor quality; needs major overhaul

† **Required actions (if needed):** These boxes should be used wherever the rating is less than 5, to identify actions needed to raise the rating to the next level, and to fully satisfactory (5). The text can note recommended or ongoing actions.

F: Next Steps *completed by Activity Manager after agreement at the Appraisal Peer Review meeting*

Provide information on all steps required to finalise the design based on <i>Required Actions</i> in "C" above, and additional actions identified in the peer review meeting	Who is responsible	Date to be done
1. Request ICIMOD to more clearly state link between the project activities and the beneficiaries	Russell Rollason	By June 2012
2. Request ICIMOD to provide a background paper on previous work on the Koshi and outline the protocols for data sharing	Russell Rollason	By June 2012
3. Seek to incorporate the capacity building activities throughout the project	Russell Rollason	By June 2012
4. Monitor ICIMOD capacity to absorb additional funds	Russell Rollason	By September 2012
5. Look for success stories on the active participation of women in the activities. Inclusion of gender disaggregated data in the project.	Russell Rollason	Over period of the project
6. South Asia Team to plan its human resource demands for this project, including time needed from the Climate Change Advisors.	Brek Batley	By December 2012

G: Other comments or issues *completed by Activity Manager after agreement at the APR meeting*

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H: Approval *completed by ADG or Minister-Counsellor who chaired the peer review meeting*

On the basis of the final agreed Quality Rating assessment (C) and Next Steps (D) above:

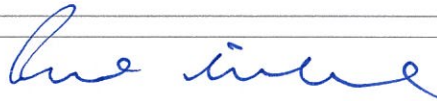
☒ **QAE REPORT IS APPROVED**, and authorization given to proceed to:

☒ **FINALISE** the design incorporating actions above, and proceed to implementation
or: ☐ **REDESIGN** and resubmit for appraisal peer review

☐ **NOT APPROVED** for the following reason(s):

Paul Nichols ADG

signed:



27 April 2012

