



**Report on Quality at Entry for  
Mekong River Commission Climate Change Adaptation Initiative  
(Mekong CCAI)**

**A: AidWorks details**

<b>Initiative Name:</b>	MRC Climate Change Adaptation Initiative (CCAI )		
<b>AidWorks ID:</b>	INI 946	<b>Total Amount:</b>	AUD 3 million
<b>Start Date:</b>	1 October 2009	<b>End Date:</b>	30 June 2011

**B: Appraisal Peer Review meeting details** *completed by Activity Manager*

<b>Meeting date:</b>	15 July 2009
<b>Chair:</b>	Sam Beever, AusAID Counsellor, Regional Programs, Bangkok
<b>Peer reviewers:</b> providing formal comment ratings prior to the Peer Review meeting	Louis Lebel, Chiang Mai University, Thailand Brian Dawson, AusAID Climate Change and Energy Advisor Graham Rady, AusAID Asia Division Quality Advisor (provided comments and ratings on version 1 but was unable to join Peer Review of version 2) Kirsty McMaster, AusAID Design and Procurement Management Group
<b>Independent appraiser:</b>	Louis Lebel, Chiang Mai University, Thailand.
<b>Other peer review participants:</b>	Pornsook Chongprasith, Director, MRC Environment Division Vithet Srinetr, Program Coordinator, MRC Environment Program Kien Tran Mai, Mekong CCAI Program Officer Hanne Bach, Chief Technical Advisor to the MRC Environment Program Amphavanh Sisouvanh, AusAID Mekong Water Unit, Vientiane Andy Isbister, AusAID Mekong Section Barbara O'Dwyer, AusAID Gender Unit Claire Ireland, AusAID Environment Advisor Joanna Pinkas, AusAID Sustainable Development Group John Dore, AusAID Mekong Region Water Advisor, Vientiane Post Mac Kirby, CSIRO Nicholas Wolf, AusAID Mekong Section Andreas Zurbrugg, AusAID Vietnam (provided written comments on version 1 but was unable to join Peer Review of version 2)

**B: Appraisal Peer Review meeting details** *completed by Activity Manager*

This QAE report should be read in conjunction with the AusAID Engagement Overview provided to all Peer Review participants. This document provided an overview of the Mekong River Commission's Climate Change Adaptation Initiative (Mekong CCAI) and the rationale for Australia's proposed contribution to and engagement in the initiative.

*Key points to note:*

MRC submitted version 1 of the framework document 1 on 3 April 2009.

Independent appraisal and QAE report on version 1 was provided by Louis Lebel:

- Attachment 1 Appraisal-MRC-CCAI-Lebel-13may09
- Attachment 2 QAE-MRC-CCAI-Lebel-13may09

Additional QAE reports on version 1 were provided by Brian Dawson, Graham Rady and Kirsty McMaster:

- Attachment 3 QAE-MRC-CCAI-Dawson-1may09
- Attachment 4 QAE-MRC-CCAI-Rady-12may09
- Attachment 5 QAE-MRC-CCAI-McMaster-19may09

Louis Lebel's assessment of version 1 was critically constructive. AusAID Vientiane judged that the MRC should have opportunity to reflect on their CCAI document in light of Lebel's review and respond with a second final draft of the design document (hereafter referred to as Version 2).

MRC submitted version 2 of the design document 12 June 2009. Also provided by MRC were matrices responding i) specifically to Lebel, and ii) to the AusAID reviewers. In addition, MRC provided a synthesis report from the CCAI regional forum held in Bangkok 2-3 February 2009 (partly in response to some of Lebel's criticism about a lack of background analysis).

- Attachment 6 MRC-CCAI-version2-12june09, ('the Mekong CCAI framework document')
- Attachment 7 MRC-response-to-Lebel-12june09
- Attachment 8 MRC-response-to-others-12june09
- Attachment 9 MRC-CCAI-forumsynthesis-2-3feb09

A final relevant document to the QAE process is the up-dated strategy for implementing the Australian Mekong Water Resources Strategy 2007-11 (AMWRS): the Delivery Strategy (DS). Approved in March 2009, the DS pursues our strategy objectives related to institutions, knowledge and decision-making.

- Attachment 10 AusAID Mekong Water Delivery Strategy\_28march2009.pdf

C: Quality Rating Assessment against indicators			
Quality	Rating (1-6) *	Comments to support rating	Required Action (if needed)
1. Clear objectives	5	<p>All the AusAID appraisers that provided initial ratings (Dawson, Rady, McMaster) considered that the objective and outcomes sought were clearly stated and appropriate.</p> <p>Most notable was the praise from Rady who scored it a 6, primarily because of the realistic timeframe being suggested to achieve significant and sustainable change against the Objective. He also liked the clear and appropriate differentiation between the vision/Goal ("the road we are on") and the the Objective ("how far down that road we plan to travel").</p> <p>After good discussion during the Peer Review, all agreed the objective and outcomes sought (p16-17 – pasted above) are plausible and in harmony with the AusAID Mekong Water Resources Program.</p> <p>When appraising Version 1 Lebel had given a low score of 3 to the objective due to his concern that though the objectives were very good, the design did not sufficiently match the objectives, and that overall there was insufficient emphasis given to adaptation vis a vis other aspects of climate change science. This was explored during this Peer Review and in a separate recent review of Australia's International Climate Change Adaptation Initiative (ICCAI), that is the source of the Australian funding to the Mekong CCAI.</p> <p>The objectives of the ICCAI are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ establish a sound policy, scientific and analytical basis for long-term Australian action to help partner countries adapt to the impacts of climate change;</li> <li>○ increase partner understanding of the impacts of climate change on their natural and socio-economic systems;</li> <li>○ enhance partner country capacity to assess key climate vulnerabilities and risks, formulate appropriate adaptation strategies and plans, and mainstream adaptation into decision making; and</li> <li>○ identify and finance priority adaptation measures that can immediately increase the resilience of partner countries to the impacts of climate change.</li> </ul> <p>The Mekong CCAI objective and outcomes are in line with the ICCAI.</p>	<p><b>No further modifications required to the framework document being reviewed.</b></p> <p>To ensure political commitment at the highest level, MRCS will seek an endorsement of the Mekong CCAI at the 2009 end of year meeting of the MRC Council.</p> <p>Implementation of the Mekong CCAI will constantly keep the outcomes sought in mind and be wary about over-consumption of resources simply aggregating and disseminating existing climate change science and data.</p>
2. M&E	4	<p><i>Effectively measure progress towards meeting objectives</i></p> <p>Australia, via AusAID Mekong would monitor and evaluate implementation via its engagement with the Mekong CCAI Steering Committee that the framework document has reporting to the MRC Joint Committee.</p> <p>There were some concerns about the M&amp;E in the original Version 1 about the outcome-oriented Design and Monitoring Framework. As a result of the feedback section 4.7 has been revised.</p> <p>Version 2 also includes an initial Performance Management Framework.</p>	<p><b>No further modifications required to the framework document.</b></p> <p>Performance Management Framework to be further developed to include the output level during the early days of the Intermediate Phase.</p>

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3. Sustainability	5	<p><i>Appropriately address sustainability, with due account of partner government systems, stakeholder ownership and phase out</i></p> <p>MRC presented a 'sustainability matrix' (p24) that identifies a range of important factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Embedding adaptation in national and local policy;</li> <li>○ Partnerships to provide long-term commitment in supporting the LMB governments and communities in adaptation;</li> <li>○ Adaptation tools and options appropriate to the region;</li> <li>○ Building political commitment;</li> <li>○ MPCC as a permanent dialogue forum;</li> <li>○ Building capacity of counterparts to utilise outputs;</li> <li>○ Adequate resourcing of MRCS to continue the developments of the outputs;</li> <li>○ Devolution of appropriate elements to national governments;</li> <li>○ Emphasising the benefits of adaptation.</li> </ul> <p>Recognising that this will take persistence, it was agreed that the realistic timeframe for the Mekong CCAI – commented on above – will give good opportunity to normalise climate change adaptation.</p> <p>Sustainability was better addressed in Version 2 than Version 1, to the satisfaction of the reviewers.</p>	<p><b>No further modifications required to the framework document.</b></p>
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4. Implementation & risk mgt	4	<p><i>Continually manage risks</i></p> <p>The implementation arrangements for the Mekong CCAI are laid out in the framework document (Attachment 6, p27-36, 56-79, 105-106). It is envisaged to run to 2025, directly linked to the MRC strategic planning cycle. The Intermediate Phase would run until end of 2010, and the 1st 5 year Phase from 2011-2015.</p> <p>The framework document examines risk in some detail (p25-26, 98-104). Risks are identified and actions to manage the risks are identified. On p25-26 risk is divided into four categories: political commitment and macro-economic context, national level risks, MRC support risks, and implementation and financing risks. In a later annex (p98-104) a more detailed risk management matrix has been prepared for all outcomes and their contributing outputs.</p> <p>Insufficient funding is recognised as a risk. The MRC have prepared an ambitious program with a budget to 2015 of USD 15 million. The Australian contribution – including for design – is budgeted at AUD 4 million. Hence it is clear that other funds are required. MRC representatives gave a satisfactory report on their plans to bring other development partners in as funding partners.</p> <p>MRC have an opportunity to establish a constructive niche that complements the existing efforts of Mekong governments, bilateral donor programs, UN agencies, IFIs and civil society organisations – many of which are attempting to make a contribution to climate change analysis, mitigation and adaptation at various levels. The niche will not be automatically established, and will take substantial work from the Mekong CCAI team and their counterparts, beyond the NMCSs in each country and demonstration place.</p> <p>Intra-MRC coordination, within MRCS, was also discussed as a risk. The framework document explains how MRC propose to manage the Mekong CCAI, not by establishing a new Program (at least not during the current last days of the MRC Strategic Plan 2006-2010), but rather by creating an Office of Climate Change – situated with the MRC Environment Program – that leads the work, and also coordinates with other MRC Programs that have a role to play in implementation. Regarding financing, it was noted that in addition to the 11% MRC overhead fee, that the Office of Climate Change will also be charging a further 13%. This is working funds for the Office of Climate Change and is not an additional overhead fee.</p>	<p><b>No further modifications required to the framework document.</b></p> <p>AusAID has committed to support MRC as it seeks contributions from other donors, such as Denmark, USAID, DFID.</p> <p>The Intermediate Phase will also treat as a high priority the formulation of a CCAI Engagement Strategy to ensure the successful establishment and maintenance of a value-adding MRC niche. MRC will ensure that responsibilities and accountabilities within MRC – laid out in the framework document – are promptly and competently established.</p>
5. Analysis and lessons	4	<p><i>Be based on sound technical analysis and continuous learning</i></p> <p>Analysis of and referencing existing literature is barely adequate.</p> <p>Currently there are lists of relevant organisations but no detailed analysis of what they are already doing in the Mekong Region. Similarly, there is a substantial compendium of material from the MRC-led CCAI workshop held in Bangkok in early 2009, but insufficient analysis of what presented is relevant to the Mekong CCAI, and why.</p> <p>In particular there should be considerable effort in the Intermediate Phase to Output 1.1 and the demystification of “methods and tools for assessment and adaptation planning” and demonstration.</p>	<p><b>No further modifications required to the framework document.</b></p> <p>The Intermediate Phase to begin from mid 2009 will include a more substantial analysis of the literature relevant to the Mekong CCAI. This should include reviewing ‘theory’, ‘practice’ and ‘tools’.</p>

* 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

D: Next Steps		
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. AusAID has already had a two-step QAE process with MRC. Version 1 of the framework document for Mekong CCAI was reworked – taking account of substantial feedback from reviewers – leading to Version 2 being taken to formal Peer Review. The framework document is now considered by the Peer Review to be of an adequate standard.	Simon Buckley	September 2009
2. MRC should be formally advised that the framework document is accepted by AusAID.	Simon Buckley	September 2009
3. AusAID should proceed to FMA9-10 approval, and if obtained	Simon Buckley	September 2009
4. Schedule for Mekong CCAI governance and M&E should be confirmed with MRC who should move straight to the Intermediate Phase.	Simon Buckley	October 2009

<b>E: Approval</b> <i>completed by ADG or Minister-Counsellor who chaired the peer review meeting</i>		
<p>On the basis of the final agreed Quality Rating assessment (C) and Next Steps (D) above:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>QAE REPORT IS APPROVED</b>, and authorization given to proceed to:</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;"> <input type="radio"/> <b>FINALISE</b> the design incorporating actions above, and proceed to implementation  or: <input type="radio"/> <b>REDESIGN</b> and resubmit for appraisal peer review </p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>NOT APPROVED</b> for the following reason(s):</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>		
Sam Beever, Counsellor, Bangkok	signed:	/ / 2009