



Terms of Reference for the Myanmar Hydropower Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Advisory Group

Background

The Myanmar Hydropower Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is being prepared by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation (MONREC) and the Ministry of Electricity and Energy (MOEE) with support from the International Finance Corporation (IFC) to plan balanced hydropower development nationally by considering the potential cumulative impact of multiple projects on significant environmental and social values early in the planning process.

The vision for hydropower in Myanmar as described in the SEA Terms of Reference is:

Sustainable hydropower development based on integrated water, land and ecosystem planning, balancing a range of natural resource uses and priorities to achieve economic development, environmental sustainability and social equity.

An effective SEA will lead to optimising project siting and configuration, the single most effective environmental and social impact avoidance measure available.

The SEA and sustainable hydropower development policies and plans that emerge from this process will move hydropower development from a top down economic and technical approach to an approach based on negotiating and sharing benefits and gaining public acceptance. The process will enable major E&S impacts to be avoided and provide the mechanism for society to agree on trade-offs related to other potentially significant impacts at the earliest possible planning stage, adding an environmental and social sustainability agenda to traditional considerations.

Preparation of the SEA is being undertaken by the International Centre for Environmental Management (ICEM), the appointed consultant, who commenced duties in late September 2016.

Aim and objectives

An Advisory Group (AG) is being established to: (i) provide oversight and support to conducting the Myanmar Hydropower SEA; and (ii) to lend support to proposed subsequent actions recommended in the SEA (such as the development of policies, plans, etc.). The AG will commence by reviewing and providing advice on the SEA consultants' work and shall participate in some SEA public consultation activities as available. A key function of the AG is to ensure that diverse views are considered during the SEA process.

The AG will be briefed by the SEA consulting team on (i) forthcoming activities and methodologies, (ii) baseline conditions, and (iii) key findings as they emerge. The AG shall provide on-going advice

to the consulting team on SEA activities, sustainable development objectives and priority setting, available baseline data and the identification of significant biophysical and socioeconomic values, and consultation and relationship building. The AG will also review draft SEA reports.

Members: the AG will be chaired by IFC, and shall consist of 15-18 members. Each member will ideally commit to serving at least a one year term when the SEA Report is scheduled to be completed. Senior Representatives will be drawn from a range of stakeholder groups with the majority of representative based in Myanmar to facilitate regular interaction. Separate to the AG, the SEA will also organize expert groups (EG) which will draw in additional stakeholders to provide technical inputs. AG members may have technical staff that can also participate in the EG.

Meetings: the AG will aim to meet quarterly face-to-face and have additional engagements via conference call (or other means) as needed between the quarterly meetings.

SEA team input: the SEA consultants shall provide an initial briefing to the AG on the aim and scope of the SEA and on baseline findings to date. Further addresses to the AG are expected to occur during the progress of the SEA to inform about developments and forthcoming activities. In addition, each draft report will be provided to the AG to seek members' comments.

Reporting: the AG will provide feedback to the SEA team via discussions during AG meetings, in writing where the AG or a member wishes to make recommendations and/or comment on draft SEA reports, and verbal and/or written feedback to the consulting team after any SEA public consultation sessions that AG members participate in.