

**Ayeyarwady Integrated River Basin Management Project (Preparation Stage)**  
**Consultation Summary Note**  
**May 16 and 19, 2014**

The first round of public consultations on the AIRBM was carried out by the DWIR May 16 and 19, 2014 in Mandalay and Yangon, respectively. Participants included CSOs, local NGOs, International NGOs, the River Users' Association, researchers, private sector and the media. The main objectives of the consultations were to (a) provide background information on the proposed AIRBM, (b) obtain feedback on the scope of work of the draft Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) Terms of Reference (TOR), (c) discuss ways to maximize benefits from the proposed Project, and (d) discuss ways to improve the Project consultation processes. The documents used for consultation included the Myanmar and English versions of Project Information Document (PID), Integrated Safeguard Data Sheet (ISDS), and the draft Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) terms of reference.

Invitations were issued and documents were circulated and posted on the Directorate of Water Resources and Improvement of River Systems (DWIR) website [www.DWIR.coffeecup.com](http://www.DWIR.coffeecup.com), in both English and Myanmar language two weeks before the meetings. All the meetings were led by the AIRBM Project Director, U Sein Tun. The sessions were conducted in both English and Myanmar language with some simultaneous translation provided. Overall, the consultations were well attended, informative and constructive. The participants highlighted important issues for attention, provided the team with valuable information, and confirmed the need and value of improving the country's capacity to better plan and manage the Ayeyarwady River.

ISSUES/COMMENTS	RESPONSE
<b>General</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participants were supportive of the project and emphasized the importance of the Ayeyarwady River to riverine communities and to national economic development.</li> <li>• It is that it is important for the DWIR to ensure robust coordination across professionals, experts, research and government agencies, and donors in order to maximize project benefits and avoid overlap of work.</li> </ul>	<p>The Project Director clarified that the National Water Resources Committee (NWRC) was established by Presidential decree in July 2013 to function as an apex body to oversee the efforts of the 34 government agencies with current mandates affecting water. With the support of the AIRBM, the NWRC will be equipped with improved capacity and tools needed to effectively coordinate the development and management of the Ayeyarwady River Basin and Myanmar's water resources more broadly.</p>
<b>Watershed and Water Quality</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participants highlighted the importance of maintaining and improving water quality and the health of the Basin's forests and watersheds.</li> <li>• Mining activities in upstream watersheds, especially in Kachin State, were identified by participants as a threat to water quality and a source of excessive sedimentation.</li> <li>• Participants called for government action to set regulations and guidelines on water</li> </ul>	<p>The NWRC recognizes the importance of maintaining water quality and improving watershed management in the Ayeyarwady Basin. The Project Director clarified that the NWRC had recently drafted a water framework directive and is currently in the process of drafting a National Water Law. In the medium term, it is envisaged that the NWRC will establish river basin organizations that will be tasked to ensure coordination, regulation, management and development of water resources. Specific to the AIRBM, DWIR and DMH will also be piloting water quality monitoring systems (Component 2) and undertaking a review of the institutional and legal frameworks (under Component 1) to</p>

<p>quality and mining practices to ensure the protection of water resources.</p>	<p>support the development of the Water Law.</p>
<p><b>Ecosystems and Biodiversity</b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Ayeyarwady River is home to a wide array of flora and fauna. It is therefore important for the project to remain cognizant of impacts and opportunities relating to ecosystems management, including fisheries and migratory species.</li> <li>• In the upstream area of the Ayeyarwady Basin, deforestation represents a major development challenge. Clarification was solicited as to why the issue of deforestation is not covered in the proposed AIRBM project concept.</li> </ul>	<p>It was explained that issues relating to ecosystems, migratory species and fisheries are very important and will be captured in the development of a basin planning activity and the strategic social and environmental assessment both of which will be carried out under Component 1. Furthermore, all activities will comply with appropriate safeguards policies and requirements. The project team welcomed any input and information sharing from the participants in order to make sure the team has the best available data to support project design and activities.</p> <p>Regarding the issues of watershed management, the Project Director added that a number of development partners are currently working on this issue and are coordinating closely with DWIR and the World Bank to ensure synergies.</p>
<p><b>Groundwater</b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a need to increase the knowledge related to groundwater resources in order to sustainably utilize and manage it.</li> </ul>	<p>It is believed that the Ayeyarwady Basin is endowed with a great amount of groundwater. However, the actual quantity, quality and distribution are largely unknown. Under Sub-component 1.2, a groundwater survey will be carried out to improve the knowledge and understanding of aquifer characteristics in order help the Government make strategic and informed choices about groundwater management and development pathways.</p>
<p><b>Consultation Process</b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The participants emphasized the importance of robust consultation and feedback processes. It was suggested that consultation should be expanded to include more remote communities, as well as professional groups and government agencies in order to maximize the project benefits, to ensure that a broad range of views and concerns have been taken into account, and to build trust between the government and the public.</li> </ul>	<p>The World Bank clarified that this particular set of consultations is focused on the development of the draft TORs for the ESMF. The ESMF is a government document that will reflect an initial environmental and social assessment, lay out anticipated issues and provide a framework for impact mitigation at the beginning of a project. Moving forward, in July/August 2014 a second round of consultations will be carried out to solicit further input and feedback for project preparation, particularly on the draft ESMF. Once the AIRBM is formally launched, environmental management and mitigation plans will be developed for specific activities and more targeted community consultations will be carried out. Finally, it was also added that throughout the implementation period of the AIRBM, the project will support a Stakeholder Forum to ensure there is continuous outreach and input from stakeholder groups.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants asked the World Bank to clarify apparent inconsistencies in consultation procedures and resources among the ongoing World Bank financed programs/projects.</li> </ul>	<p>The World Bank team clarified the difference between specific project consultations like these, and the other major World Bank-supported consultation process that is now underway in Myanmar which is developing a Systematic Country Diagnostic (SCD) that will help prioritize the portfolio of World Bank-supported activities in Myanmar. The SCD is a program that aims to identify constraints to reducing poverty and increasing inclusive growth at the national level across all sectors, and to identify priorities for World Bank support. The product of the SCD is thus a social prioritization exercise. Given the nature of the SCD, it requires a much greater scope of effort and breath of representation than is required for consultations on specific projects like the AIRBM. In light of this, resources and guidelines for SCD consultations differ from those of project specific consultations. In addition, it was clarified that the SCD consultations are a World Bank run process, whereas the AIRBM ESMF consultation a government owned processed.</p>
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**International Waterway**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The designation of the Ayeyarwady as an international waterway was raised as an issue of concern. Specifically, clarifications were sought as to why the International Waterway Policy was triggered in the World Bank ISDS and why the Chinese names of tributaries were used in the TORs of the ESMF.</li> </ul>	<p>It was clarified that the designation of the Ayeyarwady as an international waterway relates specifically to the geographic definition applied in the World Bank's safeguards Operational Policy (OP 7.50 - Projects on International Waterways). Geographically, a portion of the catchment area that feeds two of the tributaries of the River (the Maykha and the Malikha) are located in China. The Malikha tributary in turn is fed by a sub-tributary originating within India. The combined flow outside of Myanmar is estimated to be 0.3%. The remaining 99.7% of the flow is accumulated within Myanmar which is the river's lowest downstream riparian. Because of this geographic configuration, the designation of an international waterway applies for the purposes of OP 7.50.</p> <p>It was also clarified that the names of the tributaries were used in accordance with common international practice. Generally, when referring to a river stretch that runs through a specific country, that country's name is used (i.e., the stretch of those tributaries that run within China would normally be identified by their Chinese names). However, to the extent that this caused offense, the World Bank team offered its apologies.</p> <p>To respond to these concerns, the relevant project documentation is being revised to clarify the restricted nature of the international waterways designation, and to</p>
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	ensure that Myanmar names are used for all tributaries in future AIRBM project documentation.
<b>Information and Transparency</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information collected and generated by the AIRBM should be made available to the public in order to promote data sharing transparency.</li> </ul>	It was noted that significant investments will be made under the project to better manage and share water, weather and climate data within government, and that broader data sharing policies will be explored in the context of Component 1. Moreover the establishment of the Hydro-Informatics Center will promote enhanced analysis and greater public awareness on water management in Myanmar.
<b>Component 1</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants asked for clarification on the intended output of the Component 1 basin modeling and planning activity.</li> <li>Questions were raised as to why there is no mentioning of investments in dams and large-scale infrastructure.</li> </ul>	It was clarified that the basin modeling and planning activity will develop a Decision Support System (i.e., a geo-referenced data base, hydrological model and suite of specialized models) that will equip the HIC and the NWRC Secretariat with the tools needed to make informed decisions and assess trade-offs across future management and investments options on the River. In parallel, consultations will be held to identify river basin objectives. This process of research and consultation will deliver, in phases, recommendations for prioritized investments beginning with 'no regrets' activities. Through this process it is possible that dams and large-scale infrastructure could be considered for future investment, but no such investment is planned in the current project and therefore none are referenced.
<b>Component 3</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants questioned why the river stretch between Mandalay to Nyaung Oo was chosen for the pilot channel enhancement work.</li> </ul>	It was clarified that the choice of pilot site was identified by the Government because it is the busiest stretch of the river for both passenger and cargo transport and it is a stretch that has numerous points of navigation constriction.
<b>Quality Assurance</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants asked for clarification on safeguards and EIA implementation and quality assurance processes.</li> </ul>	The Project Director clarified that National-level Environmental Impact Assessment standards and procedures are currently being developed by the Environmental Conservation Department. For the AIRBM, as the National-level procedures and guidelines have yet to be finalized, the Government will form a committee to review the EIA and ESMF.
Participants asked what implementation and financial management arrangements would be made for the AIRBM.	The meeting was informed that the project will be undertaken using all of the World Bank procurement and financial oversight processes to ensure good practice and transparency.