

## **Hydropower & energy research theme leader's report, 2008–09**

### **Background**

This narrative report and accompanying financial report covers the one-year period **1 August 2008–31 July 2009**. During this past year, I also served as a Research Fellow based at CMU-USER.

### **1 Achievements**

During this period I lead, contributed to, and scoped a set of energy and hydropower activities which together helped give substance to the Hydropower and energy group, and helped represent it publicly. During this period, the Hydropower Theme Leader grant provided a source of supplemental income. All activities and publications should be classified as 'offered to M-POWER,' in the sense that M-POWER is my primary research network affiliation. Activities are also relevant to the following M-POWER themes: Hydropower & energy; Policy; Dialogue.

#### ***1.1 Activities which I led or initiated***

- (1) Continued to work on institutional and political analysis of Thailand's power development planning process, and quantitative demonstration of integrated electricity planning (Foran 2008).
- (2) As part of M-POWER's 'Improving Mekong Hydropower Investment,' project, I led the writing and peer review process for two policy briefs: one about the Equator Principles (Foran 2009a), the other about the HSAF Sustainability Assessment protocol (Foran 2009b).
- (3) For M-POWER 2009, I organized the Plenary Session on "Responsible Hydropower," with participation from three international and regional expert guest speakers.
- (4) Continued to promote M-POWER as a research network with interest and capacity in renewable energy. For example, I participated in a donor's pre-funding appraisal for a new renewable energy development plan for Lao PDR (Nuorkivi and Foran 2008).
- (5) First scoping (by e-mail in June 2009) of 2009–10 activities for the Hydropower & Energy working group. See Table 1 below.

#### **Fund-raising proposals:**

- (1) Thailand's Farming Future in 3D: development, democratization, dematerialization? ~ Exploring energy, water, and farming futures to the year 2050, proposal to CSIRO/AusAID, \$AUD200,000
- (2) Thailand roundtable on energy efficiency and sustainability, proposal to U.S. State Department, June 2009, US\$25,000
- (3) Understanding drivers of change in electricity generation policy, proposal to University of Sydney, Faculty of Economic and Business, May 2009, ~ \$AUD 160,000

**M-POWER Progress Report**

Date: 13/9/09

Grant-type: Research Theme Leader

Grant-id:

Partner Organization: CMU-USER

Period: 1 August 2008–31 July 2009

Author: **T. FORAN**

**Table 1 First scoping of 2009–10 activities for the Hydropower & Energy working group**

Type of Activity	Description / Details	Notes / Personnel
<p><b>Assessment &amp; roundtable:</b></p> <p><b>IHA Hydropower sustainability assessment protocol – new</b></p>	<p>(1) Test an industry-led Sustainability Assessment Protocol. We could organize a participatory trial of <u>Section 1</u> of the Protocol (assessing the quality of PDPs, and other strategic assessments). Note that (by definition) this does not require project-specific data.</p> <p>See draft policy brief (<i>Making hydropower more sustainable? A sustainability measurement approach led by International Hydropower Association</i>; e-mailed 18/6/09)</p>	<p>A Section 1 assessment will be challenging to governments and IPP developers who work from the assumption that particular large hydropower projects can be justified as superior to other options.</p> <p><b>Personnel: core team + facilitators + organizers ~ all invited!</b></p> <p>Funding tbd (IHA?)</p>
<p><b>Analysis – new – joint papers</b></p>	<p>(2) Paper reflecting on political advocacy around energy and hydropower. <i>What has worked? Why? What seems to be working, or not? How come?</i></p> <p>Case studies: Thai PDP, THB, NT2, Save the Mekong?</p> <p>Thesis and Working Paper by TF available (focus on Pak Mun and Thai PDP)</p> <p>Paper would be submitted to a peer reviewed journal by April 2010</p> <p>(3) <i>Does multi-criteria assessment of the kind to be tested by IHA (2009) worldwide lead to a practical, objective, broadly-endorsed approach to planning hydropower dams in mainland SE Asia? If so, via what processes?</i></p> <p>Paper based on participation and critical reflection</p> <p>(4) <i>Can the MRC's forthcoming strategic assessment of hydropower development on the Mekong River contribute to more ecologically sensitive power development plans by (i) developers (ii) national planning authorities? If so, via what processes?</i></p> <p>Paper based on participation and critical reflection</p>	
<p><b>Roundtable: financing responsible infrastructure</b></p>	<p>(5) Presentation and outreach to selected financial institutions in the region around CSR: use of Equator Principles; use of WCD . . . ?</p> <p>TF, JD, KL, + tbd (SK? International Rivers?)</p>	<p>Policy brief on Equator Principles is being finalized by TF</p> <p>Funding: Blue Moon C</p>

## **M-POWER Progress Report**

Date:  
13/9/09

Grant-type:  
Research Theme Leader

Grant-id:

Partner Organization: CMU-USER

Period: 1 August 2008–31  
July 2009

Author: **T. FORAN**

**Book Project:** I contributed to the writing, co-editing, and public launch of a book which explores the politics of water resources development in mainland Southeast Asia (Molle, Foran, and Käkönen 2009).

My role as co-editor and co-author on this project can be considered mentoring to other M-P researcher-authors such as S. Kelly, C. Middleton, J. Garcia and S. Lawrence.

**Fund-raising proposals & concept notes:** I contributed to the scoping & writing of: "Exploring Mekong Region Futures", proposal to CSIRO/AusAID (led by Dr. Alex Smajgl and Mr. John Dore).

### **Seminars and/or policy meetings at which I presented &/or represented M-POWER:**

1. 22–23 September 2008. Two presentations to civil society and Electricity Regulatory Commission (prior to Study Exchange)
2. 13 November 2008, Presented at PER's International Mekong Conference
3. 24–25 November 2008 at National Economic and Social Advisory Council (NESAC), attended by Ministry of Energy and EGAT staff;
4. 27 November 2008, hosted by Alternative Energy Project for Sustainability (AEPS), for local people opposed to nuclear power plant expansion
5. 27–29 January 2009 – (Improving Mekong Hydro Investment project): I participated in a set of high-level meetings and seminars in Bangkok organized as follow-up to the 2008 Thai Energy Study Exchange to U.S. Pacific Northwest. U.S. Experts from the Study Exchange came to Thailand.
  - a. 27 January 2009: Seminar at ERC; dinner with regulators hosted by ERC
  - b. 28 January: Seminar at EPPO am; pm seminar at EGAT (Deputy Governor Sahust Pratuknukul);
  - c. 28 January pm introductory meeting with Senator Rosana Tositrakul (Chair of Senate Standing Committee on Corruption Investigation and Good Governance Promotion);
  - d. 29 January: Multi-stakeholder Seminar at Thammasat University, hosted by Faculty of Economics.
6. 17–18 February 2009 – (Improving Mekong Water Allocation project) I participated in the Writers' Worskhop in Kunming.
7. 19–21 February 2009 – M-POWER Annual Meeting – I chaired session on responsible hydropower development .
8. 17–19 March 2009 – I participated in the SENSE Annual Retreat, Kunming, and gave a presentation on Contested Waterscapes in the Mekong (M-POWER Book 2).
9. 22 April 2009 / Scoping meeting for GMS Futures project, hosted by AusAID.
10. 14 May 2009, I lectured at the Mekong Energy and Environment Network (MEE Net) regional training, Bangkok.
11. 20 July 2009, I presented at WWF Workshop on Climate Change Adaptation in the Mekong.

## **2 Publications**

See References below.

### **3 Self-Assessment**

*3.1 Institutional limitations* The relationship between the M-POWER Research Theme Leader ('RTL'), and the thematic Working Group deserves comment. The Working Group has no separate budget: it is a collection of self-propelled individuals, pursuing diverse agendas. Not all members receive M-POWER funding. Often there are gains from collective action. Often there are limitations, in terms of existing commitments individuals have to their own organizations. The RTL can identify potential gains from collective action. He/she can encourage and persuade but neither assume nor demand cooperation. Furthermore, the RTL does not directly supervise the activities of Research Fellows (RF).

**Suggestion:** For RF's who join after 1 January 2010, I suggest that RTLs be given authority to review research progress and approve payment of final installment of the RF stipend.

*3.2 Need to recruit more working group members* – The weak response received to an e-mail scoping for **2009–10 joint activities for the Hydropower & Energy working group** suggests need to recruit more researchers with time & resources.

### **4 Priorities for the six months (1 August 2009–31 January 2010)**

(1) Continue to invest significant effort in the HSAF Hydropower Sustainability Assessment Protocol, in which M-POWER proposes to organize civil society consultations and an independent trial. Kate Lazarus and I are leading the proposal writing to AusAID, Oxfam and M-POWER.

- As part of these activities, I propose a sustainability assessment methodology seminar for hydropower-related researchers.

(2) Continue to help strengthen regional capacity in integrated electricity planning, in collaboration with PER's Mekong Energy & Environment Network (MEE-NET); for example by releasing Foran (2008) in English.

### **References**

- Foran, Tira. 2008. *Kan wikroh krabuan kan wan phaen fai fa khong prathet thai lae sathit kan wang phaen baep buranakan* [Analysis of Thailand's electricity planning process and demonstration of integrated electricity planning]. USER Working Paper 2008-WP-14. Chiang Mai: Unit for Social and Environmental Research, Chiang Mai University.
- Foran, Tira. 2009a. Good principles in search of better developers? The Equator Principles and Mekong infrastructure development. USER Working Paper 2009-xx-WP. Chiang Mai, Thailand: Chiang Mai University, Unit for Social and Environmental Research (USER).
- Foran, Tira. 2009b. Making hydropower more sustainable? A sustainability measurement approach led by the Hydropower Sustainability Assessment Forum. Policy Brief. Draft July 2009. USER Working Paper 2009-WP-xx. Chiang Mai: Unit for Social and Environmental Research, Chiang Mai University.
- Molle, Francois, Tira Foran, and Mira Käkönen, eds. 2009. *Contested Waterscapes in the Mekong Region: Hydropower, Governance and Livelihoods*. London: Earthscan.
- Nuorkivi, Arto, and Tira Foran. 2008. Appraisal on Interventions on Renewable Energy Strategy in Lao PDR: Energy Strategy Development and Capacity Building. Final Report. 17 November 2008. Helsinki: Energy AN Consulting.

**M-POWER Progress  
Report**

Partner Organization: CMU-USER

Date:  
13/9/09

Grant-type:  
Research Theme Leader  
Period: 1 August 2008–31  
July 2009

Grant-id:  
Author: **T. FORAN**