

MFAT Management Response to Viet Nam – New Zealand Dam Safety Project Mid-Term Review Report

Review:	Viet Nam – New Zealand Dam Safety Project Mid-Term Review
Background:	<p>The Viet Nam – New Zealand Dam Safety Project (DSP) was launched in 2012 as a collaborative project between the Governments of Viet Nam and New Zealand, with the aim of reducing the risks and impact (economic and human losses) of dam failures. Viet Nam’s Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) estimates that some 1,150 dams need rehabilitation and improvement nationwide. Upgrading dams is an ongoing, high cost process as dams continue to age, and flood risks continue to increase. Even if these costs could be met, poor dam safety management practices would continue to put downstream communities at risk. Damwatch and GNS are MFAT’s delivery partners who implement the DSP in close partnership with MARD through the national water resources university, Thuy Loi University (TLU).</p> <p>Phase 1 (2012 – 2015) was a pilot initiative which developed a Dam Safety Methodology (DSM) which provided dam owners/operators with a better understanding of the risks associated with their dams, to develop options to mitigate these risks and their downstream impacts. The DSM was accepted by the Government of Viet Nam as its preferred approach to addressing dam safety.</p> <p>Phase 2 (2016 – 2021) is currently in implementation and expands on Phase 1 by applying the DSM across a whole river system, the Ca River basin. One of the key outputs of Phase 2 is the Dam Rehabilitation Assessment and Prioritisation Tool (DRAPT), which provides dam owners/operators with an evidence-based tool to make decisions on prioritising dams for rehabilitation and to improve downstream community-based disaster risk management.</p> <p>A third phase of the DSP (2021 – 2026) has recently been approved which will be key to fostering the Government of Viet Nam’s commitment to resource the scaling of the DSP’s tools across Viet Nam.</p>

In November 2019, MFAT commissioned Stantec New Zealand to conduct an independent mid-term review of implementation of Phase 2 of the DSP. The review assesses the progress of the DSP towards its intended outcomes and the strength of its monitoring and evaluation framework, with the aim of drawing lessons and recommendations useful for future phases of the activity. The Review has two objectives:

- Identify any improvements that can be made to management and implementation of the DSP to achieve its outputs and outcomes;
- Identify any lessons learned or good practices that can be used to inform the design of a third phase, including identifying any success stories.

Findings:

Key findings from the review:

1. Relevance of Results Management Framework

The Results Management Framework (RMF) remains relevant to a number of global disaster risk management frameworks, Vietnamese national development objectives and New Zealand's international development strategic objectives, including NZ's partnership with ASEAN in building disaster resilient nations. However the RMF is very complex and repetitive, and overemphasizes outputs over outcomes.

2. Achievement of Planned Outputs and Outcomes

The DSP Phase 2 is making sound progress towards achievement of outputs and short-term outcomes specified in the RMF. It has achieved good technical outcomes to date and a well-developed dam safety training programme is being implemented. To increase impact, the remainder of Phase 2 would best focus on training and dissemination of the tools.

3. Measurement of Progress and Impacts

Stronger focus on use of the RMF, including measurement methods and reporting against set targets, would help management and measurement of achievement of the DSP.

4. Strengthening of Impacts and Sustainability

MARD has frequently acknowledged DRAPT as a useful dam safety management tool. Increasing impact and sustainability of the DSP will need greater commitment from MARD to resource adoption of the tools developed.

5. Training

A well-developed dam safety training programme is being implemented. The approach of targeting selected groups (national-level, provincial, TLU curriculum) and use on selected sites in the Ca

River Basin is appropriate given the resources available.

6. Governance

Governance structures have not functioned as required and there has been no clear separation of setting project direction from the stakeholder viewpoint and actual project implementation.

7. Commune-level Systems

There is a need and demand for appropriate systems and participation at commune level to undertake safety assessment swiftly as first responders to dam safety issues.

8. Climate Change

Climate change considerations should be included in the DRAPT analysis, flood mapping and consequence analysis given the potential implications for increased dam safety risk under most projected climate change scenarios for the Ca River Basin.

9. Success Stories

The partnership and co-operation within the DSP Project Team has been a successful output of the Project. This has potential benefits longer term, even after the end of the Project. The technical performance of the DSP has been strong and well regarded. The technical assistance provided by New Zealand, resulting in valuable technical tools in the DRAPT and flood maps, is recognised and highly appreciated by the Vietnamese agencies involved.

Link to evaluation [VNNZDSP Mid-Term Review Report FINAL](#)

**Date of Steering Group
sign-off** April 2020

No	Recommendation	Response and Action (Agree, Partially Agree, Reject)	Responsibility	When	12 month progress
1.	<p>Activity Management</p> <p>The review team makes the following recommendation concerning governance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain a formal and effective governance structure that has suitable representation, is well resourced and active. The Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG) should be reinstated to further guide the direction of the DSP for the remainder of Phase 2. The role of the SAG needs to be strengthened to assist in securing the buy-in of stakeholders and give appropriate direction. The frequency of SAG and Activity Leadership Groups (ALG) meetings (from nil and once per year) should be increased to enable the making of timely project management decisions. The ALG meetings should be for operational project management decision-making rather than an annual plenary meeting of project participants. An agreed Terms of Reference clearly defining roles and responsibilities of all groups within the structure should be prepared. 	<p>Agree. SAG members, including senior government representatives, have been involved in project and ALG meetings to provide strategic direction. However, these processes will be formalised in a ToR.</p>	<p>GNS/Damwatch to lead development of ALG and SAG ToR.</p> <p>MFAT Post support to engage membership.</p>	<p>Late 2020</p>	

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2.	<p>The Review Team makes the following recommendation concerning the results management framework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the Results Management Framework and its components systematically. Ensure regular reporting of quantifiable and measurable indicators within the Results Management Table (RMT). Actual progress towards the targets specified for each indicator in the RMT should be routinely reported on in each six-monthly progress report. Consistent and replicable methods for collecting monitoring data should be used (and specified in the RMT). Outputs/outcomes that do not have defined target values (e.g. Short-term outcome 2 “Increased stakeholder understanding of dam safety risks and disaster prevention practices”) should have clearly specified targets. This will enable project management and the governance group to guide work activities and gauge progress across the lifecycle of the DSP and make operational decisions based on evaluation of the monitoring data. 	<p>Agree. The RMT is overly complex and difficult to report against and has not been adapted as the activity has progressed. Targets will be set for the remainder of the project to be included in remaining progress reports.</p>	<p>GNS/Damwatch to identify targets for MFAT consultation/ approval.</p> <p>Remaining six-monthly progress reports will be due in July 2020 and February 2021.</p>	<p>Late 2020</p>	

No	Recommendation	Response and Action (Agree, Partially Agree, Reject)	Responsibility	When	12 month progress
3.	<p>Implementation</p> <p>The review team makes the following recommendation concerning dissemination and focus of training:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consolidate the impact of the DSP. To increase impact, the remainder of Phase 2 would best focus on dissemination of the tools for medium term outcomes. Knowledge transfer and training needs should be carefully targeted at the specific needs of the beneficiary group. This will require good engagement and communication with stakeholders at all levels in Viet Nam. It is recommended that the Project Team engage an in-country person skilled in facilitation, stakeholder engagement and communication. 	<p>Partially Agree. The Project team has agreement to sign an MoU with Ban Ve Hydropower plant under Vietnam Electricity in Nghe An province to enable wider dissemination of tools. Whilst further training will be undertaken, an additional resource is not required as MFAT Post is capable of engaging stakeholders in-country. In addition, capacity building with TLU has ensured they are able to conduct training on project tools to contribute to further dissemination.</p>	<p>Damwatch/GNS to lead further dissemination of tools.</p> <p>TLU to provide facilitation.</p> <p>MFAT Post to support stakeholder engagement.</p>	<p>Ongoing for the remainder of the project.</p>	
4.	<p>The review team makes the following recommendation about the incorporation of climate change scenario analysis in DRAPT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add a climate change analysis module to DRAPT. This will enable estimation of changes in important weather parameters to be assessed in terms of their impact on dam safety. 	<p>Agree. It was important for earlier phases of the DRAPT to use reliable models built on historical data. Climate change modelling is now more advanced and the project team has been contracted by the World Bank to deliver climate change scenarios for flood impact on dams in Vietnam. This will be used to test models for the DSP.</p>	<p>Damwatch/GNS</p>	<p>Climate change modelling will be a focus for Phase 3 of the DSP.</p>	

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5.	<p>The review team makes the following recommendation about the development of tools for commune and non-technical users:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop user-friendly tools for dam safety assessment by non-technical users. DRAPT is a technical tool for dam safety practitioners, officials and dam owner/managers, but of little use for commune-level first responders if they observe signs of dam leakage. These observers need simple guidelines for inspection practices and follow up actions, without needing to be trained in the full DRAPT technical analysis. It is recommended that simple guidelines for dam safety assessment and actions based on DRAPT for use by commune and other non-technical users are developed. Communication methods should be adopted to suit the various target groups, and could include established public broadcasting methods. 	<p>Agree. A User Manual for the DRAPT has been published and translated into Vietnamese to improve access.</p> <p>Separately, simplified guidelines for dam inspections for use at commune level are being prepared and will be published in Vietnamese. The guidelines will be aimed at local communities with responsibility for dams, for use by non-engineers who still require some technical understanding through training delivered by TLU.</p>	Damwatch/GNS/TLU to engage community stakeholders in dissemination of the user manual, dam inspection guidelines and training.	Early 2021	

No	Recommendation	Response and Action (Agree, Partially Agree, Reject)	Responsibility	When	12 month progress
6.	<p>Future Planning</p> <p>The review team makes the following recommendation concerning alignment with other donors' programmes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively participate in the framework of implementation for dam safety management. There are many donors working in this space, and collaboration with the World Bank 8 project for dam rehabilitation has not eventuated as expected. The DSP should continue to be actively involved in communication and engagement with other donors participating in the framework for sharing of knowledge, methods and upgrading their tools for application in Viet Nam. This will enable the DSP to continue to be part of the dam safety conversations in Viet Nam. 	<p>Agree. The Government of Viet Nam has chosen not to draw down the full funding for the World Bank 8 project. Only capital improvements have progressed, not the capacity building components that could increase the reach of the DSP's tools. The DSP continues to engage with the World Bank to share knowledge and has recently been engaged to deliver climate change scenarios to inform dam safety conversations in Viet Nam. The World Bank has positively appraised the DRAPT methodology, increasing the likelihood it will be used to assess and prioritise dams for rehabilitation through their programmes.</p>	<p>Damwatch/GNS to continue to engage with the World Bank.</p> <p>MFAT Post to continue to facilitate involvement with dam safety conversations in Viet Nam.</p>	<p>Ongoing for the remainder of the project.</p>	
7.	<p>The review team makes the following recommendation concerning strategy for Phase 3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a clear strategy for any Phase 3 in consultation with Vietnamese stakeholders. This should consider target areas for expansion of the project, and be accompanied by a revised RMF and any commitments/agreements required by various parties for implementation and funding of any Phase 3. 	<p>Agree. A third phase of the DSP has been approved, which will focus more on community and stakeholder engagement and ownership, and wider application of DSP tools. A new RMF will be developed with assistance from MFAT expertise.</p>	<p>Damwatch/GNS/MFAT to jointly develop and approve implementation plans and RMF.</p>	<p>Part of Phase 3 design.</p>	

No	Recommendation	Response and Action (Agree, Partially Agree, Reject)	Responsibility	When	12 month progress
8.	<p>The review team makes the following recommendation concerning continuity planning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a clear Continuity Plan for the DSP. This should include implementation arrangements, funding and other resources needed, roles and responsibilities of key partner agencies (e.g., MARD, TLU) if project activities are to be continued. If the DSP is to continue to a Phase 3, a Continuity Strategy should be an integral part of Phase 3 planning and project design. 	<p>Agree. Ownership and sustainability were key criteria for approval of Phase 3 of the DSP. This will embed progress towards the long term outcomes of the activity.</p>	<p>Damwatch/GNS to build ownership into implementation plans.</p>	<p>Part of Phase 3 design.</p>	
9.	<p>The review team makes the following recommendation concerning impact and sustainability:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtain formal commitment from the Government of Viet Nam alongside MARD to apply and test DRAPT as their preferred dam rehabilitation and prioritization tool more widely in Viet Nam. To achieve wider impact and sustainability of DRAPT it needs to demonstrate wider application across Viet Nam beyond the Ca River Basin. NZ does not have the resources to test that. It can only be done by the Government of Viet Nam agencies responsible for dam safety. MFAT should request a formal written commitment from the Viet Nam Government alongside MARD that it will apply and further test DRAPT more widely across Viet Nam. 	<p>Agree. The DRAPT has recently been reviewed by a MARD appraisal committee. This review concluded that the DRAPT is a useful tool. MFAT has received written confirmation from MARD, signed by the Vice Minister, that the DRAPT can be applied in the area of dam safety management and will be disseminated for use widely in Viet Nam.</p>	<p>MFAT Post to continue to work with GNS/Damwatch/TLU to advocate for MARD to formally adopt the DRAPT.</p>	<p>DRAPT Approval sought from MARD by late 2020.</p>	