

# POLICY INFLUENCE AND OUTCOMES OF THE MEKONG INCLUSION PROJECT

IMPLEMENTING PERIOD: 2014 – 2019

OXFAM MEKONG REGIONAL WATER GOVERNANCE PROGRAM



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# Policy influence and outcomes of the Mekong Inclusion Project

2014 - 2019

Oxfam Mekong Regional Water Governance Program

Australia Mekong Water Resources Program

Jacqueline Storey, Consultant

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**Author:** Jacqueline Storey is an independent consultant in community development and evaluation, with experience working with communities and civil society networks in natural resource governance. Jacqueline worked previously with Oxfam’s programs in Asia and was the Inclusion Project Manager from 2016 – 2018. Email. [jstoreyconsulting@gmail.com](mailto:jstoreyconsulting@gmail.com)

**Contact:** Socheata Sim, Mekong Regional Water Governance Program Manager, Oxfam  
Email. [socheata.sim@oxfam.org](mailto:socheata.sim@oxfam.org)



## Acronyms

3S	Sesan, Srepok and Sekong river basins
CCW	Coalition for Clean Water, Vietnam
CECR	Center for Environment and Community Research, Vietnam
CEWAREC	Centre for Sustainable Water Resources Development and Climate Change Adaptation, Vietnam
CIYA	Cambodian Indigenous Youth Association
CNMC	Cambodian National Mekong Committee
CSO	Civil society organisation
CSRDC	Centre for Social Research and Development, Vietnam
CVS	Cambodian Volunteers for Society
CYN	Cambodian Youth Network
DFAT	Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
DONRE	Vietnam Department of Natural Resources and Environment
FACT	Fisheries Action Coalition Team, Cambodia
IFC	International Finance Corporation
IFI	International financial institution
IP	Inclusion Project
IR	International Rivers
KESAN	Karen Environmental and Social Action Network, Myanmar
KMF	Kalyana Mitta Foundation, Myanmar
KNU	Karen National Union, Myanmar
Lao PDR	Lao People's Democratic Republic
LWU	Lao Women's Union
MRC	Mekong River Commission
MRCS	Mekong River Commission Secretariat
MRWGP	Oxfam Mekong Regional Water Governance Program
MVi	My Village Organisation, Cambodia
NGO	Non-government organisation
NGOF	The NGO Forum on Cambodia
NRD	Northeastern Rural Development, Cambodia
PNPCA	Procedures for Notification, Prior Consultation and Agreement (1995 Mekong Agreement)
RCC	Rivers Coalition in Cambodia
StM	Save the Mekong Coalition
WARECOD	Centre for Water Resources Conservation and Development, Vietnam
VNMC	Vietnam National Mekong Committee
VRN	Vietnam Rivers Network
VWU	Vietnam Women's Union

## Executive Summary

The Oxfam Mekong Inclusion Project (IP) 2014 -2019 is a regional project promoting civil society inclusion in transboundary water governance policy and practice in the Mekong and Salween river basins. Oxfam has delivered the Inclusion Project in partnership with 31 funded partner organisations over the last five years; including civil society organisations, research institutions and government departments across Myanmar, Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR), Cambodia, Thailand and Vietnam. The Inclusion Project is part of Oxfam's Mekong Regional Water Governance Program (MRWGP) and Asia Water Governance Program and funded by the Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) Mekong Water Resources Program<sup>1</sup> with a total budget of AUD 9 million over 5.5 years, from March 2014 – September 2019.

This report highlights the policy outcomes the Inclusion Project has contributed to, and the extent to which the project has enabled a more open, inclusive engagement in water resource governance policy influencing at sub-national, national and regional levels in the Mekong. It also considers how Oxfam and partners adapted strategies for influencing policy in the changing context in countries and the region; and the lessons learned by Oxfam and partners on strategies for enabling inclusive, effective decision making and policy influencing in Mekong water governance.

Policy outcomes were compiled from document review, including review of the external evaluation reports completed in 2016 and 2019, and outcomes were verified in interviews with seven Oxfam staff and four partner staff in June 2019. Outcome Harvesting<sup>2</sup> principles and questions were used to gather and analyse outcomes; focusing on who or what has changed, the significance of the change, and how the project contributed in the context of contributions by other actors or contextual factors.

### Policy influencing outcomes of the Inclusion Project

Oxfam and the 31 funded partner organisations in the Inclusion Project have worked with a total of 14,018 people across the Mekong over the last five years (7,725 women and 6,293 men); reaching 8781 community members (4,453 women and 4,328 men), 2565 civil society organisation staff (1,106 women and 1,459 men), 43 government agencies and departments (Lao PDR: 5, Cambodia: 6, Vietnam: 17, Thailand: 5, Regional: 1 and Myanmar: 9), and 14 companies (Lao PDR: 2, Myanmar: 2 and Vietnam: 10)<sup>3</sup> and engaging these actors in community, sub-national, national and regional forums and dialogues on water governance.

The key policy outcomes influenced by the Inclusion Project cover five interlinked thematic areas in transboundary water governance in the Mekong region; including:

1. Regional and national water resource cooperation and policy: contributing to improvements in Mekong River Commission policies and plans, facilitating increased input from national and regional civil society networks in regional studies such as the Mekong Delta Study and Mekong Council Study.
2. Hydropower dam and infrastructure projects: supporting increased community and civil society inclusion in consultation for mainstream and major tributary hydropower dam projects, and supporting affected communities to negotiate with companies and government.

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<sup>1</sup> DFAT 2014. Australia's Mekong Water Resources Program - Sector Investment Plan 2014 – 2018. <https://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Documents/australias-mekong-water-resources-program-sector-investment-plan.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Wilson-Grau, R, and H Britt. 2013. *Outcome Harvesting*. Cairo: Ford Foundation.

<sup>3</sup> Oxfam 2019. Inclusion Project Year 5 Annual Progress Report, May 2019.

3. Gender in policies and practice, and Gender Impact Assessment (GIA) in hydropower: promotion of gender analysis throughout water resource policy and practice, and piloting of GIA with government and companies in Lao PDR and Vietnam.
4. Community water resource management, fisheries and irrigation:
5. Energy policies and plans: such as promoting renewable energy in Cambodia's National Strategic Development Plan and supporting regional civil society dialogues and research to promote renewable energy alternatives to hydropower and coal.

### **Influencing strategies in the national and regional context**

The Inclusion Project has strengthened women's leadership, consideration of gender, and capacity of Mekong and Salween communities and civil society networks to participate in and influence policy dialogue on water governance. Oxfam and partners have adapted a range of influencing strategies at sub-national, national and regional levels to build the capacity of civil society actors to contribute to policy processes, and through extensive relationship building and lobbying, created space for consultations in national and regional policies and projects.

These achievements are especially significant given the context of restricted civil society space in each country during this time, the political sensitivity of water resources and hydropower development, and the very limited responsiveness of Mekong country governments and national and international private developers and financiers to civil society concerns and recommendations.

### **Lessons learned for enabling inclusive decision making and policy influence in Mekong water governance**

In recognition of the limited space for civil society to influence the policy and practice of governments and companies in the Mekong countries and region, the lessons learned for what has worked well, and continued opportunities for policy influence, include:

- Tailored strategies and focus on women's participation and leadership, and engaging Indigenous communities and networks are required to support these targeted groups to be meaningfully involved in civil society networks and policy processes
- Engaging at multiple levels has been essential for influence; in particular, working at sub-national levels to build relationships and collaboration with government has also been effective in gaining provincial and in some cases national and regional policy outcomes; and working nationally is required to effectively create change in regional cooperation and policies
- Continuing to engage the youth populations and networks in the Mekong countries
- Using social media for community awareness raising, and also to gain government attention of issues of concern (noting the risks present in communicating on sensitive topics on these platforms)
- Inclusion Project-funded activities and partners have been closely aligned with the activities of the other Oxfam-funded Water Governance Program partners such as Save the Mekong Coalition, International Rivers, and youth organisations, who have engaged in additional research, advocacy and coalition building on water governance issues.

# 1 Policy Outcomes of the Inclusion Project

Over the last five years, Oxfam and partners in the Inclusion Project have significantly contributed to increasing community and civil society inclusion in a wide range of policy processes and dialogue on transboundary water resource governance in the Mekong countries.

Policy outcomes include changes across the multiple stakeholders - government, civil society and the private sector - involved in policy making and implementation, and include not only changes in policy content or formal legislation, but also in attitudes, awareness, framing of debates and the issues on the agenda, relationships, commitments, the process for making policy decisions (such as opening new spaces for policy dialogue), and behaviour change in key actors (from initial actions to more sustained changes in practice).<sup>4</sup>

The specific policy outcomes where the Inclusion Project has contributed, include changes in the following issues or topic areas:

## Regional and national water resource cooperation and policy

- The Mekong River Commission Secretariat (MRCS) has made commitments to engage with and disclose timely information to civil society stakeholders, following extensive engagement by Save the Mekong Coalition, Oxfam and civil society organisations with the MRCS, National Mekong Committees, and via MRC Development Partners
- Civil society organisations (CSOs) have made recommendations for incorporation in the MRC Sustainable Hydropower Development Strategy and Preliminary Design Guidance on mainstream dams, currently being updated by the MRCS, as well as comments on MRC State of the Basin Reports
- National civil society networks Vietnam Rivers Network and Rivers Coalition in Cambodia actively contributed to the draft findings of The Mekong Delta Study, as well as engaged in consultations on the findings of the Mekong Council Study
- Some contributions made towards 3S basin cooperation, through CEWAREC initiating dialogues between Vietnam, Cambodia and Lao stakeholders, and recommending that the Vietnam National Mekong Committee take forward further official collaboration on the 3S

## Hydropower dam and infrastructure projects

- The final report of the Myanmar Strategic Environmental Assessment of hydropower (December 2018) includes recommendations informed by civil society inputs, including consideration of conflict and reservation of mainstream rivers from hydropower
- CSOs and communities involved in the Procedure for Notification, Prior Consultation and Agreement (PNPCA) of Don Sahong hydropower dam project (2014-15) and CLICK has provided ongoing support to affected communities in Lao PDR
- Communities and civil society strategically contributed to national and regional consultations, submissions and debate on hydropower dams, such as the Pak Lay dam
- Support to affected and resettled communities of the Lower Sesan 2 dam, Cambodia, with results in reaching improved outcomes for communities in negotiation with government and company
- Awareness raising of communities, and coordination between civil society networks on the proposed Sambor dam, Cambodia
- Vietnam Rivers Network and Mekong Concerned Scientists convened experts and stakeholders to oppose the Cai Lon Cai Be project due to its predicted negative impacts on the Mekong delta

<sup>4</sup> Jones, H. 2011. 'Background Note: A guide to monitoring and evaluating policy influence'. Overseas Development Institute: UK. p.2 <https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/6453.pdf>

#### Gender in policies and practice, and Gender Impact Assessment in hydropower

- Gender Impact Assessment integrated into key regional and international publications
- MRC makes some improvements in incorporating gender into MRC initiatives; by adopting a Gender Action Plan as an annex to the annual MRCS workplan, and including gender-disaggregated data in the Sustainable Hydropower Development Strategy (SHDS)
- A Vuong company responds to concerns raised by women in Vietnam, through CSRD's Gender Impact Assessment (GIA) pilot project, and follow-up support to women's groups
- Following the GIA pilot project with Oxfam and Theun Hinboun power company, Lao Women's Union has gained knowledge and skill in GIA, and is in turn working with the Lao Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment to promote GIA in hydropower
- Oxfam provided gender training and advice to staff from the Lao Department of Water Resources, supporting inclusion of gender in the development of their Departmental Strategy

#### Community water resource management, fisheries and irrigation

- Daw La Lake community management recognised in Karen State, Myanmar
- Consideration of Indigenous People's Customary Land and Forest rights in the new draft Forestry Law, Myanmar
- Cambodian Ministry of Environment Environmental Impact Assessment reporting guideline influenced by recommendations from Rivers Coalition Cambodia
- Cambodia Fishery sub-decree revised to incorporate provisions to increase women's participation in fishery committees, following inputs by NGO Forum on Cambodia and Fisheries Action Coalition Team
- Irrigation sub-management board model adopted in An Giang province, Vietnam
- Soc Trang City and Women's Union urban water awareness raising model supported by the provincial government, Soc Trang, Vietnam

#### Energy policies and plans

- Rivers Coalition Cambodia recommends investments in renewable energy in the drafting process for the Cambodia National Strategic Development Plan 2019-2023
- Karen Environmental and Social Action Network (KESAN) energy scoping study and research into mini-hydropower to promote alternative options for local energy generation

Partners and Oxfam staff have identified the significance of these outcomes and the strategies that were effective in contributing to the outcomes, as well as the roles of other actors and influence of the context. Each of the main areas of outcomes are discussed in turn in the following sections.

### 1.1 Civil society engagement in regional and national cooperation and policies on water governance

#### Key outcomes:

- *The Mekong River Commission Secretariat (MRCS) has made commitments to engage with and disclose timely information to civil society stakeholders, following extensive engagement by Save the Mekong Coalition, Oxfam and civil society organisations with the MRCS, National Mekong Committees, and via MRC Development Partners*
- *Civil society organisations (CSOs) have made recommendations for incorporation in the MRC Sustainable Hydropower Development Strategy and Preliminary Design Guidance on mainstream dams, currently being updated by the MRCS, as well as comments on MRC State of the Basin Reports*



- *National civil society networks Vietnam Rivers Network and Rivers Coalition in Cambodia actively contributed to the draft findings of The Mekong Delta Study, as well as engaged in consultations on the findings of the Mekong Council Study*
- *Some contributions made towards 3S basin cooperation, through CEWAREC initiating dialogues between Vietnam, Cambodia and Lao stakeholders, and recommending that the Vietnam National Mekong Committee take forward further official collaboration on the 3S*

In response to targeted and timely communication by Save the Mekong Coalition, MRC Development Partners' statements to the MRC Council Meeting (November 2017) and Council and MRC Leaders' Summit (April 2018) adopted a number of the key recommendations from the Save the Mekong statement<sup>5</sup>, including issues related to timely information disclosure, public participation and gender.<sup>6</sup> Significant contributions were also made by national civil society networks such as Vietnam Rivers Network (VRN) and Rivers Coalition in Cambodia (RCC) to the Mekong Delta Study and Mekong Council Study stakeholder consultations on draft findings, including making recommendations for the use of these studies to inform decision making. MRC Secretariat staff confirm that Oxfam and civil society actors have played a role in holding the commission and secretariat to account regarding engaging with wider stakeholders and note the role of civil society pressure for informing the process of gaining agreement between riparian member states. As a result,

*"While MRC is still far from being meaningfully 'inclusive' of stakeholders beyond member governments, Oxfam and partner advocacy have contributed to some minor improvements. Ensuring MRC discloses information in a timely manner is critical to promoting more informed and meaningful dialogue... If maintained, the incorporation of Oxfam comments in the SHDS and Design Guidance could contribute to greater attention on social aspects, particularly gender, in MRC activities in the future. For example, the Design Guidance is the key document which MRC uses to inform technical review of mainstream dams submitted for Prior Consultation."*<sup>7</sup>

Oxfam and partners have contributed to this progress on social and gender issues being reflected in key regional policies, plans, and studies, as well as the processes for consultation and information disclosure by the MRC and member countries through a range of strategies; including submission of comments on key documents, regular meetings and relationship building with MRCS staff; engagement and relationship building in national consultation meetings with National Mekong committees – in Procedures for Notification, Prior Consultation and Agreement (PNPCA) as well as linking in with other key actors; for example by holding consultation meetings between Save the Mekong member organisations and MRC Development Partners prior to all key MRC meetings, to coordinate civil society concerns in MRC Development Partners' statements to the MRC.

Contribution has also been made towards cooperation in the 3S (Sesan, Sekong and Srepok) basin, through an initiative by CEWAREC in Vietnam, to bring together civil society and government stakeholders from Cambodia, Lao and Vietnam to strengthen transboundary water dialogues and propose practical solutions. Vietnam Rivers Network and CEWAREC have recommended the Vietnam National Mekong Committee consider further options for continued cooperation and dialogues, with the Chief of the VNMC office articulating in-principle support at a joint workshop between VNMC and

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<sup>5</sup> Save the Mekong 2017. Statement to the Lower Mekong Governments On the occasion of the 24th Mekong River Commission Council Meeting, 28 November 2017. Accessed: <https://savethemekong.net/2017/11/28/statement-lower-mekong-governments/>

<sup>6</sup> Oxfam 2018. [Internal] Draft MRC Brief for Evaluation V5, 5 November 2018.

<sup>7</sup> Oxfam 2018. [Internal] Draft MRC Brief for Evaluation V5, 5 November 2018.

VRN in May 2019.<sup>8</sup> This call for increased government cooperation recognises the existing cooperation between civil society networks working on complementary issues in the 3S region.<sup>9</sup>

## 1.2 Community and civil society concerns raised on the impacts of hydropower and infrastructure projects

### Key outcomes:

- *The final report of the Myanmar Strategic Environmental Assessment of hydropower (December 2018) includes recommendations informed by civil society inputs, including consideration of conflict and reservation of mainstream rivers from hydropower*
- *CSOs and communities involved in the Procedure for Notification, Prior Consultation and Agreement (PNPCA) of Don Sahong hydropower dam project (2014-15) and CLICK has provided ongoing support to affected communities in Lao PDR*
- *Communities and civil society strategically contributed to national and regional consultations, submissions and debate on hydropower dams, such as the Pak Lay dam*
- *Support to affected and resettled communities of the Lower Sesan 2 dam, Cambodia, with results in reaching improved outcomes for communities in negotiation with government and company*
- *Awareness raising of communities, and coordination between civil society networks on the proposed Sambor dam, Cambodia*
- *Rivers Coalition in Cambodia made submissions to the Cambodian Ministry of Environment, to include recommendations for including provisions for Free Prior and Informed Consent in the Cambodian Environmental Impact Assessment reporting guidelines for hydropower*
- *Vietnam Rivers Network and Mekong Concerned Scientists convened experts and stakeholders to oppose the Cai Lon Cai Be project due to its predicted negative impacts on the Mekong delta*

Inclusion Project partners and national and regional networks have actively and constructively engaged with available consultation processes on major hydropower projects, as well as lobbied (in some cases successfully) for increased or improved opportunities for consultation. This engagement has led to some small shifts in accountability of governments and companies; for example, in extending consultation opportunities, or incorporating requests for studies into fish passage technology or further environmental assessments. These achievements have been hard won and are set against the fact that hydropower projects have proceeded despite significant community and civil society opposition. In this context, Oxfam and partners have employed a range of strategies for influencing through available channels, as well as supporting affected communities in advance of and throughout the planning process and when projects have gone ahead. This has included making strategic choices about which hydropower projects and policies to engage in, depending on the opportunities to influence.

For example, in the case of the **Don Sahong dam** in Laos, civil society organisations particularly in Cambodia and Vietnam actively raised public awareness and profile of the transboundary impacts of this project and used the formal reply to ask the Lao government to address the concerns raised. As a result of these issues being raised through the PNPCA, the Lao government agreed to conduct a cross-boundary study on the impacts on fisheries. This was achieved through the combined efforts of civil society actors, the Cambodian and Vietnamese government submissions, and pressure from

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<sup>8</sup> Voice of Vietnam 2019. Public involvement in Mekong River Water Governance discussed. Tuesday 28 May 2019. Accessed: <https://english.vov.vn/society/public-involvement-in-mekong-river-water-governance-discussed-397469.vov>

<sup>9</sup> Interview with Oxfam in Vietnam, June 2019.

development partners. As the project is under construction, Inclusion Project partner CLICK in Laos has worked with the affected communities in Laos, to conduct *Saabaan* research (community-based action research) with the communities to raise their concerns about livelihoods and fishery impacts with the government and company; a strategy to approach these issues in the politically sensitive area of the dam construction, and the closed space for civil society advocacy in Laos.

In the case of the **Lower Sesan 2 dam**, Cambodian civil society organisations have supported the affected communities, who have experienced threats and intimidation from the local authorities to agree to resettlement. A portion of the communities (52 families) refused to accept compensation or resettlement and have instead been able to negotiate with the government to remain in a nominated area of land in the reservoir area. Local partners such as My Village organisation (MVi) and Cambodian Indigenous Youth Association (CIYA) have assisted the communities and youth networks to conduct dialogues with local, provincial and national government, with the support of national networks through NGO Forum / Rivers Coalition in Cambodia. Key strategies used by the communities with MVi and CIYA's support have included documentation of community assets and issues to present evidence to government and the company, social media, supporting Indigenous women and youth networks, establishing community-based organisations for fishery and natural resource management, and extensive engagement with different levels of government to sensitively advocate for community outcomes in the dam resettlement process.<sup>10</sup>

For proposed projects such as the **Sambor dam** in Cambodia, there is very limited access to any information about the planning of the dam. Inclusion Project partner Northeastern Rural Development (NRD), as well as Oxfam Mekong Water Governance partners (funded directly by Oxfam) have contributed to supporting local communities in Sambo district to gain access to information and network with other affected communities and civil society organisations. For example, Mekong Watch has conducted community resources mapping in Sambo district, together with NRD. Youth organisations Cambodian Youth Network (CYN) and Cambodian Volunteer Services (CVS) have facilitated exchange activities between Sambo district youth with other youth from Stung Treng and university students from Phnom Penh, and in events on International Day of Action for Rivers (in 2017, 18 and 19). Linking communities and networks to exchange with the communities affected by the Lower Sesan 2 dam has been important for transferring the lessons learnt to date for effective influencing and support to affected communities. Oxfam has also facilitated three civil society coordination meetings, to prepare key messages on the case of Sambor dam and provide a capacity building workshop with communities and non-government organisations (NGOs) working in Kratie and Stung Treng provinces.

In some cases, civil society networks have assessed the consultation processes for hydropower projects as so limited in scope or opportunity to influence, that they have chosen to boycott or limited their engagement accordingly. For example, in the case of the Procedures for Notification, Prior Consultation and Agreement (PNPCA) for the **Pak Lay dam in Laos**, the national and regional networks chose not to participate, citing serious concerns about the validity of the process.<sup>11</sup>

In Vietnam, the sustained engagement and advocacy on hydropower and coal by the Vietnam Rivers Network, focusing on the Mekong delta, has led to increased attention and consideration by the Vietnamese government. Vietnam Rivers Network commented that the cumulative effect of the network's extensive engagement on river basin governance and environmental issues, and diplomatic yet authoritative contributions to the debates on hydropower has created some recognition by the Vietnam National Mekong Committee (VNMC) and national government:

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<sup>10</sup> Interview with MVi staff, June 2019.

<sup>11</sup> VRN, 2018. 'VRN boycott the consultation on the Pak Lay hydropower dam in Vientiane on September 20th, 2018'. Vietnam Rivers Network: Hanoi. <http://vrn.org.vn/vrn-boycott-the-consultation-on-the-pak-lay-hydropower-dam-in-vientiane-on-september-20th-2018/>

*“VRN try to work with VNMC, during 2016, 2017, 2018 we try to involve VNMC, DONRE or DAS in the provincial level to participate in different workshops, sharing with VRN and members. Initially we can say the government did not really like VRN to raise these issues to the public. But this has been changing with pressure from the public, interest from other ministries who would like to hear more from VRN, and our statements and letters to the Prime Minister to call their attention to what VRN is sharing. Because VRN is the representative for the CSOs on water resources issues, community capacity building and sharing information with provincial government officer, they listen to VRN.”<sup>12</sup>*

Vietnam Rivers Network have also contributed to dialogue on irrigation infrastructure projects; convening stakeholders to communicate expert and civil society opposition to a **major irrigation project in Vietnam; the Cai Lon Cai Be project**. The government responded with assurances that it would consider the concerns raised by experts and civil society, however decided in 2018 to approve the project. VRN and experts held a workshop in Ken Giang in September 2018, raising their concerns on the impacts the project will cause; blocking sediment, and causing salt water intrusion into the delta, leading to serious negative impacts on biodiversity and livelihoods in the delta, and therefore called on the national government not to approve the project. In the workshop, the government

*“welcomed the suggestions and recommendations from scientists for further discussion with the National Assembly and stated that they will make a decision once they have had full environmental and social impact assessment. Unfortunately, at the end of 2018, the government decided to allow to build the project in the Mekong Delta.”<sup>13</sup>*

In Myanmar, CSOs effectively engaged with the **Strategic Environmental Assessment of hydropower** over 2017 – 2018; coordinating to share information and coordinate submissions across a range of national and regional civil society groups who participated in consultations and those who strategically chose not to engage in the process. Civil society inputs informed the final recommendations of the SEA report (December 2018), which include consideration of conflict, and recommend reservation of mainstream rivers in Myanmar from hydropower. Regional water governance partners (funded by Oxfam) such as Save the Mekong coalition and International Rivers also played a key role in influencing the SEA process.

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<sup>12</sup> Interview with VRN, June 2019.

<sup>13</sup> Interview with VRN, June 2019.

### 1.3 Promotion of gender in water governance policies and practice, and Gender Impact Assessment in hydropower

#### Key outcomes:

- *Gender Impact Assessment integrated into key regional and international publications*
- *MRC makes some improvements in incorporating gender into MRC initiatives; by adopting a Gender Action Plan as an annex to the annual MRCS workplan, and including gender-disaggregated data in the Sustainable Hydropower Development Strategy (SHDS)*
- *A Vuong company responds to concerns raised by women in Vietnam, through CSRD's Gender Impact Assessment (GIA) pilot project, and follow-up support to women's groups*
- *Following the GIA pilot project with Oxfam and Theun Hinboun power company, Lao Women's Union has gained knowledge and skill in GIA, and is in turn working with the Lao Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment to promote GIA in hydropower*
- *Oxfam provided gender training and advice to staff from the Lao Department of Water Resources, supporting inclusion of gender in the development of their Departmental Strategy*

Oxfam's approach to gender in water governance policy and practice has been to embed gender analysis and mainstreaming of gender and women's leadership across policies, strategies and water governance practice with partners and stakeholders, as well as specifically promote the application of gender impact assessment (GIA) in hydropower.<sup>14</sup> Oxfam is recognised among stakeholders in the Mekong region for leadership in gender in water governance and has been regularly called upon to contribute gender expertise. Oxfam's Gender Impact Assessment manual<sup>15</sup> has been cited in key publications, including discussion papers for the High-Level Panel on Water, World Bank report on lessons from gender and energy in 2018, International Finance Corporation (IFC) opinion pieces on gender and hydropower, and USAID's Practical Guide to Women in Energy Regulation. The

*"growing recognition by other actors beyond Oxfam and NGOs of the importance of GIA is important to build greater understanding and uptake of GIA in hydro planning and operations. In the case of IFIs [international financial institutions], like the World Bank and IFC, this is particularly relevant as they remain a key provider of financial and technical assistance in water and hydro-related sectors in the Mekong region, including development of regulations and guidelines."*<sup>16</sup>

Oxfam and partner networks' contributions and **advice to the MRC on gender** have been reflected in MRC adopting a Gender Action Plan as an annex to the annual MRCS workplan, and including gender-disaggregated data in the Sustainable Hydropower Development Strategy. These contributions update key MRC strategies and plans to at least include gender considerations.

In the **Gender Impact Assessment pilot projects in Lao PDR and Vietnam**, companies have responded to the concerns raised through the assessments, though this has often depended on the interest and commitment of key individuals, particularly in the case of the Thuen Hinboun hydropower company in Laos. Oxfam and Lao Women's Union are continuing to follow up on the results of the initial assessment with affected communities with support of the National University of Laos, Department of Water Resources, CLICK and Gender and Development Association. A key achievement (and significant investment of time and support) in the Lao GIA project has been to build the capacity of

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<sup>14</sup> Oxfam has also supported piloting of Gender Impact Assessment in the mining sector in Cambodia through the Oxfam Extractive Industries project; as part of a broader strategy of supporting improved practice on gender as well as avenues for communities to be supported in the process of negotiating with companies.

<sup>15</sup> Simon, M. 2013. *Balancing the Scales: Using Gender Impact Assessment for Hydropower Development*. Oxfam Australia and CPWF: Carlton. [https://cng-cdn.oxfam.org/asia.oxfam.org/s3fs-public/file\\_attachments/GIA%20MANUAL%20EN.pdf](https://cng-cdn.oxfam.org/asia.oxfam.org/s3fs-public/file_attachments/GIA%20MANUAL%20EN.pdf)

<sup>16</sup> Oxfam 2018. [Internal] GIA Brief. Oxfam: Phnom Penh.



the Lao Women's Union in gender impact assessment; this has positioned the women's union to take this work forward in conjunction with other ministries and is an important achievement for the legitimacy of continued use of gender impact assessment in the Lao context.

In Vietnam, the Centre for Social Research and Development (CSRD) worked with A Vuong company to conduct initial gender impact assessment, leading to a follow-up project where the company and provincial government have supported the establishment of women's groups and local economic development initiatives of these groups, with the continued support of CSRD as a partner in the Inclusion Project. CSRD also led the adaption of the gender impact assessment tools to tailor them to the Vietnamese context, and ensure they will be relevant and understandable for ethnic communities. This is a key achievement in gaining buy-in from the relevant stakeholders in the Central Highlands, and for positioning gender impact assessment as relevant in the Vietnamese context.<sup>17</sup>

#### 1.4 Greater policy recognition and support in practice for community water resource management, fisheries and irrigation

##### Key outcomes:

- *Daw La Lake community management recognised in Myanmar*
- *Consideration of Indigenous People's Customary Land and Forest rights in the new draft Forestry Law, Myanmar*
- *Cambodia Fishery sub-decree amendment (NGOF/FACT)*
- *Irrigation sub-management board model in An Giang, Vietnam*
- *Soc Trang City adopts and expands Vietnam Rivers Network's model for engaging women's groups in water quality monitoring and public awareness raising activities for protecting canals and rivers in the city*

Through investments in community-level projects; including community water management and action research, the Inclusion Project has contributed to significant influence at local and national levels, and formal recognition of community management models.

Recognition of **Karen communities' management of the Daw La Lake in Myanmar** has been achieved through the work of the Karen Environmental and Social Action Network (KESAN), in building community management committees with representation of women in leadership roles in four villages surrounding the lake. The shared governance arrangements of the Karen National Union (KNU) and the government in Karen state has afforded KESAN some space to negotiate with the state government for this recognition of the community management responsibilities. The government has also contributed funding to the community, to carry out research on fisheries in the lake, signalling ongoing cooperation and recognition of the community management role.<sup>18</sup> KESAN and Kalyana Mitta Foundation (KMF) have also been invited by the respective state governments to input into consultations on the new draft national Forestry Law in Myanmar. They have recommended consideration of Indigenous people's customary land and forestry rights in the revised law, though the drafting process is still underway.

**Community fishery initiatives in Cambodia** have contributed to strengthening relationships between communities and local fishery and district and provincial authorities; with Cambodian partners

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<sup>17</sup> Pham, T.D.M, and Nguyen, Q.H.(eds). 2018. Hydropower Impacts: From Environmental, Social and Gender Perspectives – Evidence from the Central and Central Highlands, Vietnam. Centre for Social Research and Development: Vietnam. [https://issuu.com/csrdd7/docs/csrdd\\_2018\\_hydropower\\_impacts\\_vietna](https://issuu.com/csrdd7/docs/csrdd_2018_hydropower_impacts_vietna)

<sup>18</sup> Interview with Oxfam in Myanmar, June 2019.

building the space for improved reporting of issues of illegal fishing (through a complaints box used to submit anonymous reports), and in turn creating space for more sensitive issues such as hydropower dam impacts. For example, Northeastern Rural Development has hosted community and government forums, and the Women on Air radio programme. While these activities focus on fisheries, they have allowed communities to also raise questions to government about the impacts of hydropower, and planned projects such as the Sambor dam in Kratie province, with women playing active roles in raising awareness in their communities as well as raising concerns and questions through the forums. Nationally, the Fishery Action Coalition Team (FACT) and Rivers Coalition Cambodia influenced the amendment of the national sub-decree on community fisheries, successfully increasing the quota for women as committee members in the community fishery committees to 35%.

In the Mekong delta in Vietnam, the Centre for Water Resources Conservation and Development (WARECOD) has facilitated a community approach to developing a **sub-region management board for water resources management in An Giang province**; establishing the community board through extensive participatory action research, and collaboration of the provincial department of Agriculture and Rural Development. Also in the delta, Vietnam Rivers Network has supported the **Soc Trang Women's Union and women's groups raising awareness of water management** and preventing water pollution in urban and peri-urban settings in the Mekong delta.<sup>19</sup> This inclusion of the women's union in provincial water resource management and public awareness raising has been recognised by the Soc Trang city and provincial government; with the government committing some funds in the provincial budget for the Soc Trang Women's Union to continue awareness raising activities with the communities and other arms of government (VRN and Oxfam in Vietnam interviews, June 2019).

## 1.5 Contributions to dialogue in national and regional energy policies and plans

### Key outcomes:

- *Renewable energy is gaining increased attention in regional dialogues on the water-food-energy nexus, and selected Inclusion Project and Water Governance program partners are promoting alternative, renewable energy sources in their work*
- *The draft of Cambodia's National Strategic Development Plan 2019-2023 incorporates principles of promoting technology and clean energy for energy efficiency, following contributions by Rivers Coalition in Cambodia members as well as other ministries and stakeholders in the drafting process*

Renewable energy discussions and options to move away from hydropower and coal; such as investment in solar and wind power, are gaining traction in policy dialogues in the Mekong region in recent years and engaging with the broader debates on energy mix and sources has been an emerging area of work for some Inclusion Project partners in Myanmar, Cambodia and Vietnam. Policy outcomes are until now limited; however, Inclusion Project partners have made some contributions where possible. Civil society organisations in Myanmar have advocated to the national government to follow and implement the existing provisions on community perspectives in the national energy policy, and KESAN have published research promoting local electricity generation options such as small-scale hydropower. In Vietnam, Vietnam Rivers Network and (Water Governance-funded partner) Green ID have actively engaged in research and lobbying on Vietnam's national energy mix and plans, advocating for reductions in reliance on coal and hydropower, and increased targets for renewable energy sources. In Cambodia, Rivers Coalition in Cambodia contributed recommendations in the drafting process for Cambodia's National Strategic Development Plan 2019 – 2023; the draft of which incorporates principles of promoting technology and clean energy for energy efficiency in the

<sup>19</sup> VRN 2018. [Video] “Enhancing women's capacity in water resource management” project in Soc Trang City’. Vietnam Rivers Network <http://vrn.org.vn/enhancing-womens-capacity-in-water-resource-management-project-in-soc-trang-city/>

action plans of the Council for Sustainable Development, Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Mines and Energy.<sup>20</sup> However the plan is not yet finalised, so the extent to which civil society recommendations are taken on is not confirmed. RCC is also considering ways to influence investment, seeing this as a key factor shaping Cambodian government priorities and likely decision making on energy sources; and has used recent consultation opportunities with the Asian Development Bank to raise similar recommendations on alternative, renewable energy sources and investments.<sup>21</sup>

In the context of increased interest in water-food-energy nexus in Mekong region where renewable energy has become emerging priority, Oxfam's Mekong Regional Water Governance Program also convened a regional Renewable Energy Forum in An Giang province, Vietnam on 20-22 May 2019 to create an opportunity for learning and exchange among local government, CSOs, private sector companies, and development partners. The forum participants emphasised the need for continued effort to advocate for alternative paths with more solar and wind, less hydropower and fossil fuels, particularly for Cambodia and Mekong countries. This forum will also inform next steps by Oxfam and partners regarding the shift from promoting inclusive water governance to embracing more pro-poor, inclusive renewable energy in Oxfam's Asia Water Governance Strategy.

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<sup>20</sup> Interview with NGO Forum-RCC, June 2019.

<sup>21</sup> Interview with NGO Forum-RCC, June 2019.

## 2 Lessons learned in policy influencing approaches

### 2.1 Influencing strategies in the national and regional context

The Inclusion Project was designed with three core strategies; supporting women's leadership, promoting gender in policies and practice, strengthening civil society capacity, and convening and facilitating civil society inclusion in water resource policy dialogue. Within these overarching approaches, Oxfam and Inclusion Project partners have combined and adapted a wide range of strategies for supporting civil society inclusion in national and regional policy at different levels; including:

- Supporting **women's leadership**, particularly Indigenous women, in local communities and civil society networks; to build women's confidence and knowledge to take leadership roles, as well as challenge community and stakeholder perceptions of women's capabilities and roles. As a result, the Inclusion Project has increased women's profile and opportunities to raise their perspectives through civil society networks and with government and companies
- Building **communities and civil society organisations and networks' capacity to influence**: building understanding of their rights, and strengthening civil society alliances, coordination, and skills in influencing strategies; to present well-informed, research-based and persuasive comments, submissions, and testimonials on water resource issues, policies and projects
- Actively **creating spaces for increased civil society consultation**, engagement and relationship building with government to hold regional and national government to account; achieved through persistent lobbying, relationship-building and advice to regional bodies such as the Mekong River Commission Secretariat (MRCS) as well as National Mekong Committees, national government departments, state movements such as Women's Unions, and sub-national government (including provincial, district and commune authorities)
- Making **formal recommendations and submissions** in available policy forums, processes and consultations that have achieved some uptake in regional and national policies and frameworks for water resource governance
- **Supporting communities affected by mainstream and tributary hydropower dam projects to raise their concerns** in highly politicised and sensitive situations; using dialogue, relationships with different levels of government, action research, access to information and facilitating community awareness raising, networking and planning. In some cases, such as the Lower Sesan 2 dam in Cambodia, communities have been able negotiate compensation and resettlement outcomes with companies and government
- Contributing to shifts in **national and regional dialogues on water resources and energy**, by questioning narratives of economic development, 'sustainable' hydropower, and promoting opportunities and targets for alternative and renewable energy investments.<sup>22</sup>

These achievements are especially significant given the context of restricted civil society space in each country during this time, the political sensitivity of water resources and hydropower development, and the very limited responsiveness of Mekong country governments and national and international private developers and financiers to civil society concerns and recommendations. The final evaluation of the Inclusion Project noted that legislation and policy in Cambodia, Vietnam and Thailand has formally restricted the space for civil society during the project period, the government of Laos has maintained a closed environment for civil society, and in Myanmar the space for civil society and dialogue is highly variable, with civil society voice and space likely to be strongest in areas controlled by armed groups or where civil society have links with these groups (Deasey, Vo and Kywe 2019).

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<sup>22</sup> Deasey, M. , Vo, Kywe, 2019. *Report on Final Evaluation: Inclusion Project, Oxfam Mekong Regional Water Governance Program 2019*. Oxfam: Phnom Penh.

However other key changes in the context, namely the active youth populations in the Mekong countries, and increasing influence of social media as a channel for raising issues publicly and eliciting responses from government are also changing the way that communities and civil society can raise their concerns. Both youth influence, and government responsiveness to issues raised on social media were noted as an opportunity by partners Vietnam Rivers Network (VRN), My Village organisation Cambodia (MVi), and Rivers Coalition in Cambodia (RCC) in interviews conducted for this report (partner interviews, June 2019) as well as in the final evaluation.

## 2.2 Lessons learned for enabling inclusive decision making and policy influence in Mekong water governance

The final evaluation found that the restricted context for civil society engagement in water resource governance in the Mekong countries needed to be better reflected in the Theory of Change; specifically, to make “more explicit the non-linear pathways of change and the degree of risk and unpredictability working in very complex systems across multiple countries with entrenched powerful interests.”<sup>23</sup> Lessons learned by Oxfam and partners in the policy influencing strategies and approaches used throughout the project are discussed against the key assumptions in the Inclusion Project theory of change, as follows:

### **Assumption 1. Mekong governments individually and together (via Mekong River Commission) will allow meaningful participation of informed civil society in decision making processes**

The willingness and ability of Mekong governments and the Mekong River Commission to allow or facilitate meaningful participation of informed civil society in decision making processes has been a key difficulty for the project. This has been evident in the restricted space and limited public accountability of Mekong country governments during the project period<sup>24</sup>, and decisions to continue hydropower and infrastructure projects despite extensive civil society and expert opposition and recommendations to stop, delay projects to conduct further impact studies, and/or pursue alternatives. Oxfam and partners’ extensive efforts to inform the MRC’s stakeholder engagement approaches have led to some increased openness of the MRCS to stakeholder engagement and commitments to gender and inclusion, though this is to date limited in practice.<sup>25</sup>

Despite the restrictions, Oxfam and partners have consistently identified and seized opportunities to influence where there have been consultations, or willingness of authorities or departments at different levels to engage in dialogue.<sup>26</sup> This has been enabled by Oxfam and partners’ experience and understanding of the stakeholders and context, as well as the diversity in the Inclusion Project partner portfolio; allowing for responsiveness and flexibility in the project delivery and influencing strategies. The role of the Mekong Water Governance Program partners; where Oxfam has funded regional and national civil society organisations engaging in more direct or outsider advocacy strategies, has also been critical for complementing the initiatives undertaken within the Inclusion Project.

### **Assumption 2. Civil society can affect changes in decisions on water governance and water project development at key times in planning and decision making if they are given opportunities**

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<sup>23</sup> Deasey, M., T.T. Vo, and M.E.E. Kywe. 2019. *Report on Final Evaluation: Inclusion Project, Oxfam Mekong Regional Water Governance Program*. Oxfam: Phnom Penh.

<sup>24</sup> Deasey, M., T.T. Vo, and M.E.E. Kywe. 2019.

<sup>25</sup> Oxfam. 2018. [Internal] *Draft MRC Brief for Evaluation V5 5 November 2018*. Oxfam: Phnom Penh.

<sup>26</sup> Besley, M., and Dawkins, Z. 2016; and Deasey, M., T.T. Vo, and M.E.E. Kywe. 2019.



The achievements of the Inclusion Project in strengthening the capacity and influence of community and civil society organisations and networks demonstrate that even within a constrained environment, civil society can affect policy and practice in water resource governance.

The challenging and restricted policy environment particularly at regional and national levels has meant that sub-national strategies to engage with district and provincial authorities rather than only in national or regional forums, and on issues such as fisheries and irrigation, where there is shared concern between government and communities; have been an essential component of the project. The community water management projects supported by the Inclusion Project have built trust with sub-national governments, leading in some cases to formal policy changes – for example the recognition of the community water management model in Karen state, national community fishery policy changes in Cambodia, and provincial recognition of the An Giang sub-region irrigation management board in Vietnam – all important achievements in their own right, and effective avenues to influence when national and regional level policy influencing opportunities were often closed.

Civil society partners identify working with youth in the Mekong countries as a key lesson and area for future work and influencing. Vietnam Rivers Network noted “if we target the group of Youth Union they will be the main people group who will go through with different projects...[They are] very dynamic, very active, and they are very concerned with environmental issues.”<sup>27</sup> Similarly, Cambodian partners commented on the potential for the large youth population, increasingly engaged with and communicating via social media about environmental and natural resource justice issues to influence government.<sup>28</sup> MVi also noted the achievement of supporting active and engaged youth in Stung Treng through supporting Indigenous youth networks, as one of the most significant outcomes to date.

**Assumption 3. Women leaders can articulate a strong and accountable vision for improved water decision making management that advances sustainability.**

The focus and achievements of the Inclusion Project in supporting women’s participation and leadership in water governance issues and networks at all levels is a significant achievement and contribution to inclusive water governance in the Mekong region. For example, outcomes in Indigenous women’s leadership in Northeast Cambodia were identified by Cambodian partners as one of the most significant outcomes; for bringing women’s perspectives into policy dialogues and advocacy. Similarly, Vietnam Rivers Network cited the achievements in supporting the Women’s Union and women in the Mekong delta as a significant outcome, and one that will need to be sustained in the future. Oxfam and partners’ achievements and experiences in women’s leadership in water resource governance have been extensively shared among partners and with external stakeholders through regular regional learning events and publications and are also being transferred into practice in Oxfam’s transboundary water governance program in South Asia.

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<sup>27</sup> Interview with VRN, June 2019.

<sup>28</sup> Interviews with MVi and RCC, June 2019.

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## Annexes

### I. Methods

The key questions for the policy outcomes report are:

1. To what extent has Oxfam's Inclusion Project enabled a more open, inclusive engagement in water resource governance policy influencing at national/sub-national and regional levels in the Mekong? What have been the policy outcomes (positive and negative) the project has contributed to?
2. How did Oxfam and partners respond to unintended effects in the changing context at countries and regional level?
3. What will be potential approaches for Oxfam and partners to enable inclusive, effective decision making and policy influencing at national level in Mekong countries?

The report also considers key assumptions in the Inclusion Project Theory of Change (ToC), and how these assumptions inform lessons learned from the Inclusion Project strategies to strengthen civil society influence in water governance. The assumptions in the project ToC (noting that the final evaluation report suggests revisions to these assumptions based on the project experience) are:

1. Mekong governments individually and together (via Mekong River Commission) will allow meaningful participation of informed civil society in decision making processes;
2. Civil society can affect changes in decisions on water governance and water project development at key times in planning and decision making if they are given opportunities;
3. Women leaders can articulate a strong and accountable vision for improved water decision making management that advances sustainability.

#### I.I Data collection methods

The data collection and analysis of policy outcomes were conducted using questions adapted from Outcome Harvesting.<sup>29</sup> Policy outcomes were broadly defined to include changes in relationships, attitudes, policies, actions or behaviours of targeted actors; focusing on government and private sector, as well as changes in the strategies and influence of civil society actors.

Outcomes were collected through review of project design documents, reports, policy briefs, partner reports and the mid-term and final evaluations. Draft outcomes from the document review were verified in a small number of follow-up interviews conducted remotely by Skype in June 2019 with selected Oxfam staff (7) and three partner organisations (4 staff) in Cambodia and Vietnam; a total of 11 staff involved in the project over its lifetime and with extensive experience in natural resource governance and policy influencing in national and regional water governance (Table 1).

Given the extensive existing documentation, and interviews already carried out with stakeholders across the region for the final evaluation, interviewees were nominated by Oxfam in discussion with the consultant; based on whether information was already available in project documentation or needed to be discussed by interview with partners. Some Oxfam staff provided clarification and further information by email rather than interview. Semi-structured interview questions were adapted for each interview (see the interview questions).

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<sup>29</sup> Wilson-Grau, R, and H Britt. 2013. Outcome Harvesting. Cairo: Ford Foundation.

*Table 1. Interviews to verify policy outcomes, June 2019*

<i>Inclusion Project staff and partners interviewed to verify the policy outcomes</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Cambodia civil society partners</i>			
<i>NGO Forum - Rivers Coalition in Cambodia (NGOF-RCC)</i>		1	1
<i>My Village organisation (MVi)</i>		2	2
<i>Vietnam civil society partners</i>			
<i>Vietnam Rivers Network (VRN)</i>	1		1
<i>Oxfam staff</i>			
<i>Oxfam in Myanmar</i>	1	1	2
<i>Oxfam in Vietnam</i>		1	1
<i>Oxfam in Cambodia (by email)</i>		1	1
<i>Oxfam in Lao PDR (by email)</i>		1	1
<i>Oxfam Mekong Regional</i>	1	1	2
	4	7	11

### Limitations

Outcome harvesting is a participatory evaluation method particularly well-suited to complex and adaptive development interventions, such as advocacy and influencing programs and projects. The method is usually used to collect and analyse outcomes in an ongoing and participatory way with stakeholders. However, as the Inclusion Project is ending, and with the consultancy being conducted remotely, the method was not used in full, but adapted to focus on analysing existing data (recognising the work Oxfam has already done to document outcomes in reports, as well as the external evaluation), and verification of the identified outcomes with a small number of selected stakeholders. On Oxfam's advice, government or private sector actors were not contacted for data collection due to the project ending and the recent consultations with these stakeholders in the final evaluation.

### I.I.I Outcome verification interview questions for Oxfam staff

Oxfam has contracted consultant Jacqueline Storey to prepare a short report highlighting the policy influencing outcomes of the Inclusion Project; i.e. any *changes in relationships, attitudes, actions, policies and practices of the targeted actors of the project; including civil society organisations, government, and private companies*. The report will build on the information already available in the final evaluation report, Oxfam briefs on influencing outcomes, and a small number of interviews with staff and partners to clarify and verify the outcomes. Draft outcomes have been identified in the different topics and areas of the Inclusion project; these are outlined in brief in the *Draft Outcomes document*.

#### Questions

##### **Policy outcomes – Changes in relationships, attitudes, actions, policies and/or practices of government, private sector, and CSOs in national and regional water governance**

1. Of the outcomes listed in the draft outcomes [note the main outcomes], which were you directly involved in, or are able to comment on?
2. For each main outcome / area of work in turn, add any comments from your perspective on:
  - a. What were the changes you observed in the targeted actors?
  - b. How significant was this change?
  - c. How did Oxfam and IP partners contribute to this change? What strategies or activities were most effective? Which strategies or activities were not so effective?
  - d. Who were the other people (actors) or issues in the context that contributed to this outcome?
3. Are there any other outcomes that are missing from the draft list, that should also be considered?
4. Looking at the outcomes overall, which ones do you see as the most important or significant changes, and why?

##### **Changes for civil society**

5. What have been the main changes you have observed in civil society organisations involved in the IP project; in their ability to influence other actors on water governance issues?
6. What achievements has the IP project made in ensuring inclusion of women, youth, people with disabilities, and indigenous people in influencing water governance issues? Which strategies have been most effective or not so effective?

##### **Project context, strategies, and lessons**

7. What are the important lessons for how to effectively influence inclusive water governance in (country/region)?
8. What opportunities do you see in the future for influencing inclusive water governance in (country/region)?
9. Do you have any further reflections or comments to add?



### I.I.2 Outcome verification interview questions for CSO partners

Oxfam has contracted consultant Jacqueline Storey to prepare a short report highlighting the policy influencing outcomes of the Inclusion Project; i.e. any *changes in relationships, attitudes, actions, policies and practices of the targeted actors of the project; including civil society organisations, government, and private companies*. The report will build on the information already available in the final evaluation report, Oxfam briefs on influencing outcomes, and a small number of interviews with project staff and partners to clarify and verify the outcomes.

As a representative of a partner organisation in the Inclusion Project, we would like to interview you to ask for your perspective on any changes you have observed – particularly in relationships, attitudes, policies and practices of government agencies or private companies over the last five years of working on water governance issues through the Inclusion Project.

Your responses will be used in a short report that Oxfam will publish externally on their website and share with other organisations. While we would not include your name, we would like to be able to refer to your organisation in the report. Are you in agreement with this? You have the option to make anonymous comments if you would prefer.

#### Questions

1. Clarify role and project funded via the Inclusion Project: Which water governance issues have you been working on, and which stakeholders have you been aiming to influence through this project?
2. What are the main changes you have seen in the issues and stakeholders you have been working with over the period of the project? *[Discuss specific issues and draft outcomes as relevant to the partner]*
  - a. What were the changes you observed in the targeted actors?
  - b. How significant was this change?
  - c. How did you and other IP partners contribute to this change? What strategies or activities were most effective? Which strategies or activities were not so effective? Did you make any changes in your strategies over time?
  - d. Who were the other actors who also contributed, or other contextual factors that contributed to this change as well?
3. What achievements has your work through the Inclusion Project had in ensuring inclusion of women and women's leadership, youth, people with disabilities, and indigenous people in influencing water governance issues? Which strategies have been most effective or not so effective?
4. Considering the changes we have discussed overall, which ones do you see as the most important or significant changes, and why?
5. What are the lessons your organisation has learned about how to effectively influence inclusive water governance in (country/region)?
6. What opportunities do you see in the future for influencing inclusive water governance in (country/region)?
7. Do you have any further reflections or comments to add?

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