

CRITICAL REVIEW OF THE POYRY COMPLIANCE REPORT
ABOUT THE XAYABURI DAM
AND THE MRC DESIGN GUIDANCE
-Sediments -

WWF Global
Nov 2011

The key points are the following:

- 1) The Poyry report confirm the Xayabury reservoir will bloc part of the sediment flow, especially sand, and that there remains important gaps in the knowledge of the sediments aspects. But the report cleverly avoids stating clearly that this will have impacts not only in the reservoir but also on the geomorpholgy of the river downstream. In the long run, this will lead to reduced input of sand to the delta, when sand is the most important grainsize to prevent erosion of the delta front.
- 2) The ecological impacts of sediment flushing are not acknowledged/considered in the report ; and this is an important issue.
- 3) The report remain blurry about the frequency of the flushing (probably because the authors are trying too much to compromise mitigation measures with the production of power at the request of the developer thus avoiding to make any firm commitment); so the chances for the suggested measures to be fully applied by the operator on the basis of this report are low.
- 4) Therefore there is a high chance that the flushing will only be done on Q5 (to avoid loss of energy production) - plus a risk of longer return period du to changes of the hydrology from Chinese dams; this would mean a high risk of compaction of the fine sediment and thus they would be very difficult to remobilize them event with a strong flushing current. i.e flushing will not be effective
- 5) The report doesn't seem to want to address the cumulative impact of the Chinese dams, including the change of hydrology and its implication of the flushing calendar.
- 6) All the points above need to be better studied and adequatly addressed before the construction works starts. It is not possible to produce a complete feasibility and EIA/EMP until sufficient data is collected and understanding of the sediments aspects is achieved.