



STUDENT HANDBOOK

2005

PLEASE NOTE THAT THE INFORMATION PROVIDED IN THIS DOCUMENT IS PRELIMINARY ONLY. PLEASE REFER TO THE MEKONG e-SIM WEBSITE FOR UP-TO-DATE INFORMATION.

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1. Background

1.1 *What is the Mekong e-Sim?*

The Mekong e-Sim is an electronically supported roleplay-simulation set in the Mekong region of South-East Asia. Participants assume the role of a stakeholder concerned with development activities in the Mekong region. Students are divided into groups and a role is assigned to each group. From here, students interact with other groups in a roleplay situation concerning issues related to the Mekong area in order to achieve an outcome in relation to proposed development issues that are in keeping with the objectives and responsibilities of their role.

A sustainable economy for the Mekong region is still developing at this stage. This implies that many conflicts regarding development of the Mekong River Basin are brought to the forefront of discussion. These include social, political, economic, scientific and conservation based conflicts. The Mekong e-Sim seeks to inform participants of the issues faced in the Mekong region and attempts to involve students in the hypothetical management of some of these conflicts.

The Mekong e-Sim has been recognised as an effective means of meeting a variety of learning objectives by bringing together students with different backgrounds and points of view, and has received the Australasian Society For Computers In Learning In Tertiary Education (ASCILITE) award for best web based project, the Pearson Education Uniserve Science Teaching Award and the Commonwealth of Learning Excellence in Distance Education Award for distance education materials.

1.2 *Why Bother With The Mekong e-Sim?*

There is increasing emphasis on professional university education that develops graduates' generic skills and capabilities. It is expected that higher education will assist students in their chosen career and that professionally oriented study should demonstrate not only academic disciplinary rigour but also genuine relevance and value to the profession. Universities are expected to educate people to be both knowledgeable and adaptable in a demanding and uncertain future. These expectations are reflected in graduate attributes, which are the qualities, skills and understandings a University community agrees its students should develop. Desirable attributes can include those that prepare them for lifelong learning, those that allow them to operate effectively within a body of knowledge that underpins professional practice and those that commit them to actions and responsibilities required of a professional and a citizen. Students, employers and professional associations also expect the development of these types of attributes within a University degree.

The Mekong e-Sim provides an avenue for the implementation of a 'grassroots' multi disciplinary, cross-institutional educational activity designed to enhance graduate attributes. The experience is intended to be as realistic as possible and to give participants an accurate representation of the decision-making process operating in the real world. The incorporation of student groups with diverse backgrounds, both culturally and disciplinary, will significantly enhance learning outcomes, allowing for the integration of student knowledge and perspectives. Figure 1.1 shows the various stages occurring in a roleplay situation.

Roleplay participants start by adopting their role. This involves identifying the values, principles and policies that govern their adopted persona and acting according to them. News items initiate thoughts and discussions on issues relevant to adopted roles, and in response personae identify their course of action. This may well involve the formation of alliances and discussion groups, and information dissemination, as the roleplay simulation moves into an interaction and decision-making phase. Personae seek to establish links and identify others' points of view, to help them further their own causes and come to decisions or compromise agreements. Once the decision-making process, the focus of the roleplay simulation, has come to an end, participants step out of their roles and reflect on the learning outcomes and values of the simulation. It is at this important stage that much of the actual learning takes place.

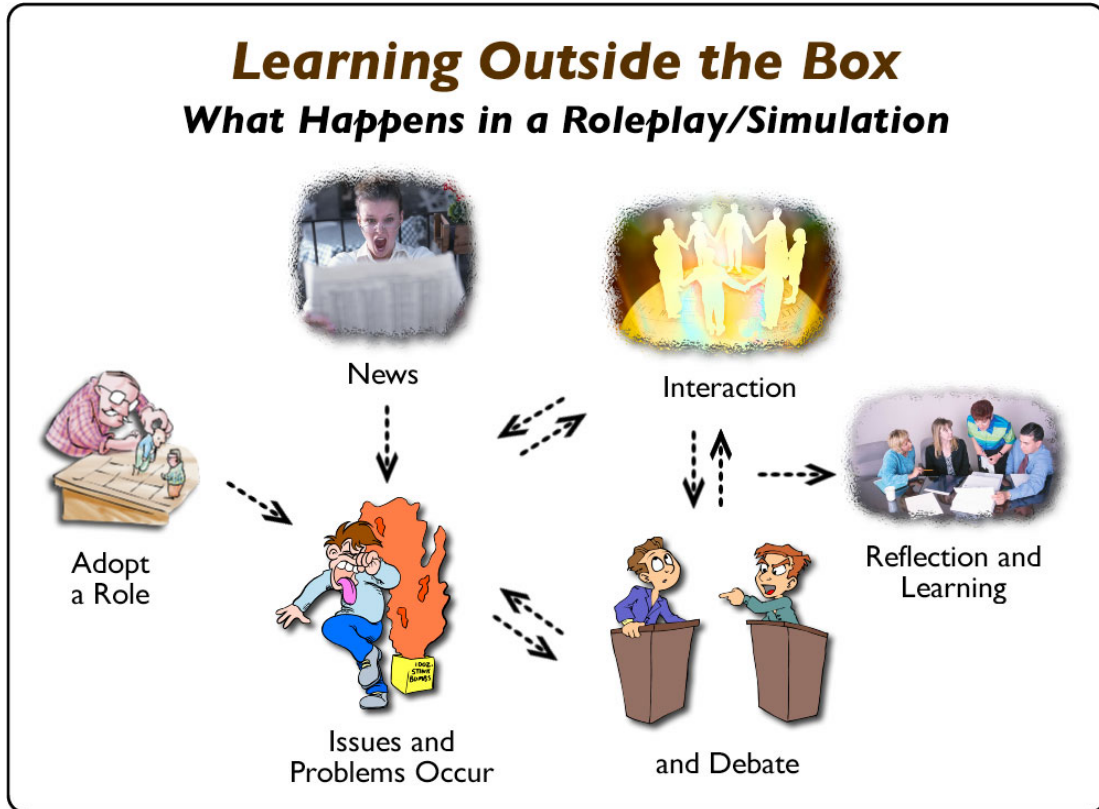
In collaborative learning situations, such as the Mekong e-Sim, participants work together in groups on activities that are designed to promote positive interdependence, accompanied by individual accountability. Collaborative learning activities are specifically designed to encourage participants to work together and help each other towards achieving common goals. This requires that learners take responsibility for learning, and for contributing to the achievement of the group task. It should be stressed that the more effort is invested in the e-Sim, the richer the learning experience.

Make sure you watch the video clips of students talking about their experiences of the e-Sim by clicking on "Course Information", then "Find out what the Mekong e-Sim is all about", followed by "Why bother with the Mekong e-Sim" on the Mekong e-Sim website.

1.3 Learning Objectives

Within the context of the Mekong e-Sim, students will be expected to:

- Identify the political, social, economic and scientific dimensions to decision-making in the context of natural resource management conflicts.
- Identify the responsibilities and appropriate responses for characters in the roleplay-simulation.
- Develop communication, research, critical thinking, negotiation and decision-making skills and an appreciation of cultural differences and approaches.
- Utilise Information Technology and Telecommunication skills.



The e-Sim will provide an opportunity for participants to:

- Work with students from other disciplines in a professionally relevant context.
- Learn more about the Mekong region and the forces shaping its development.
- Gain a perspective on working professionally within an international context.

The e-Sim will provide the following benefits to students:

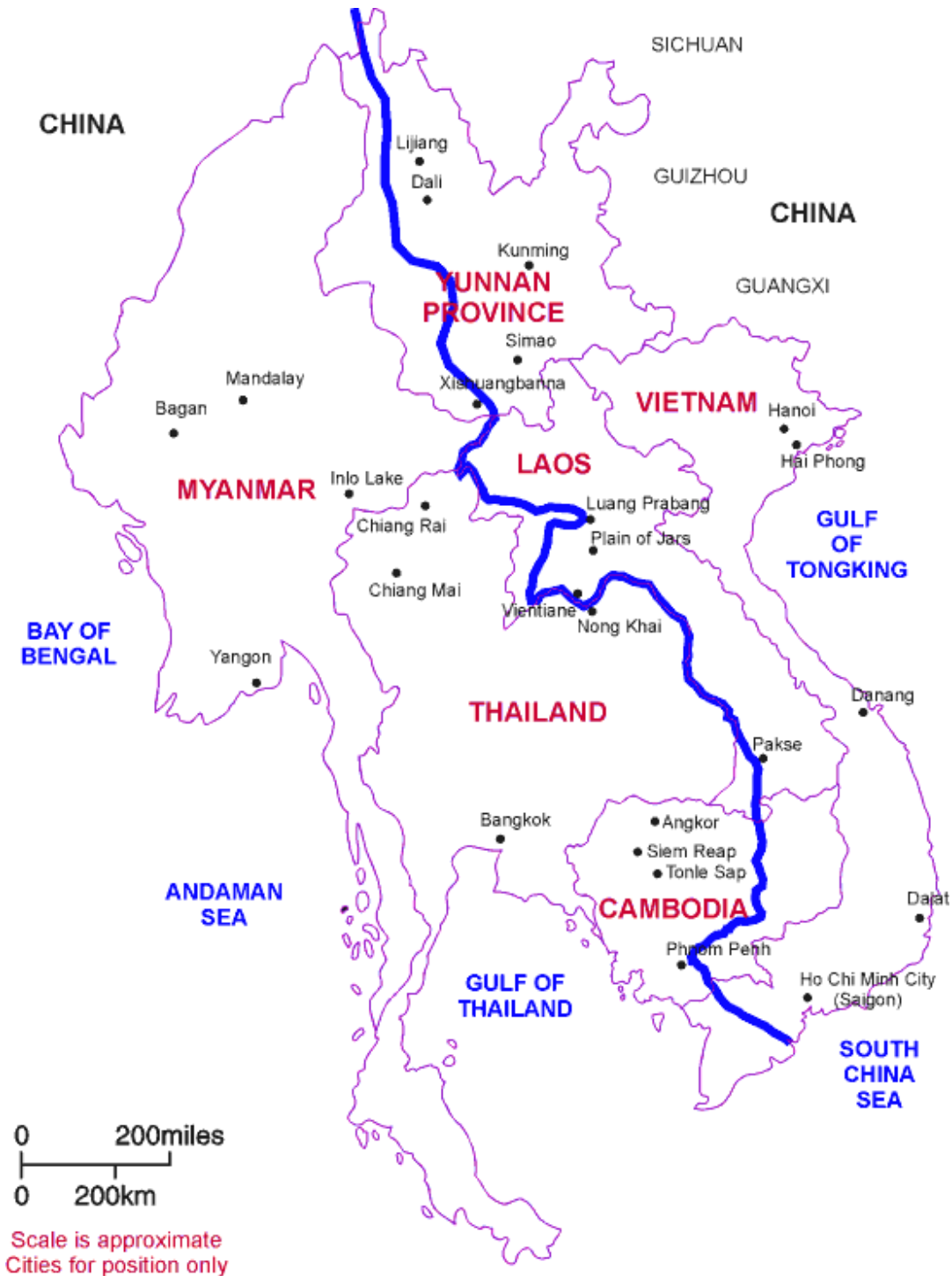
- Development of awareness of different perspectives about an issue.
- Appreciation of socio-technical system dynamics.
- Integration of skills into action: negotiation, computer literacy, problem solving and teamwork.
- Practice with procedures/protocols.
- Awareness of different organisations and their roles and responsibilities.

2. Introduction

2.1 The Mekong Region

The setting for the e-Sim is the Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS) of South-East Asia. The GMS comprises of land from six countries, namely, Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar (Burma), Thailand, Viet Nam, and the Yunnan Province in the People's Republic of China. A map of the region concerned is included below or an electronic version can be located at the following link:

<http://www.anu.edu.au/asianstudies/gifs/mekongmap.gif>



Measuring more than 4000 km in length, the Mekong is one of the longest rivers in the world, and one of the least spoiled. Its waters teem with an abundance of plant and animal species, many of which are found nowhere else. For more than 5,000 years, the rich and diverse resources of the Mekong River Basin have sustained the people who live there. As the human population of the Basin continues to grow, the challenge will be to manage the Basin's precious resources wisely and ensure future growth.

2.2 *Why The Mekong Region?*

The Mekong region provides an authentic setting for engineers to work together on understanding development needs of the region and issues related to engineering and technological approaches. The six countries within the Mekong River Basin all vary distinctly with regard to values, interests and belief systems. These variations lead to a rich political, social and cultural setting ideal for the portrayal of a roleplay simulation. In addition, many development proposals have been put forward throughout the Mekong River Basin leading to highly charged debates between opposing parties as alternate points of view are asserted, congenial to the objective of the Mekong e-Sim. Information is also readily available, in electronic form, from the Internet and the Australian Mekong Resource Centre.

2.3 *Development Issues*

Due to the Mekong region's relatively undeveloped landscape, the Mekong River Basin is the subject of many development proposals. These proposals have, in the past, included the construction of dams across the Mekong River to be used for hydro-electricity, the clearing of sections of forest for the construction of more efficient transport systems and the necessary development required to support the growing industries within the Basin. It has been recognised as a region that is yet to utilise its many resources and development opportunities for economic benefit.

The major aims of development are to create economic gain from an undeveloped site and to improve the quality of life for the people living within the Basin. This development, however, does not come without cost even though there are benefits resulting from the development. Significant environmental and social consequences can occur as a result of the development. If these consequences are not properly identified and managed, some of the biggest developments may turn into the biggest mistakes.

2.4 *Interested Parties and Stakeholders*

Many stakeholders exist within the Mekong region, all with varying levels of interest in the development of the Mekong River Basin. To enable the e-Sim to run effectively, it is necessary to represent a sufficient number of these stakeholders to promote interaction between opposing and allied roles. The major categories of the roles involved in the e-Sim are discussed briefly below.

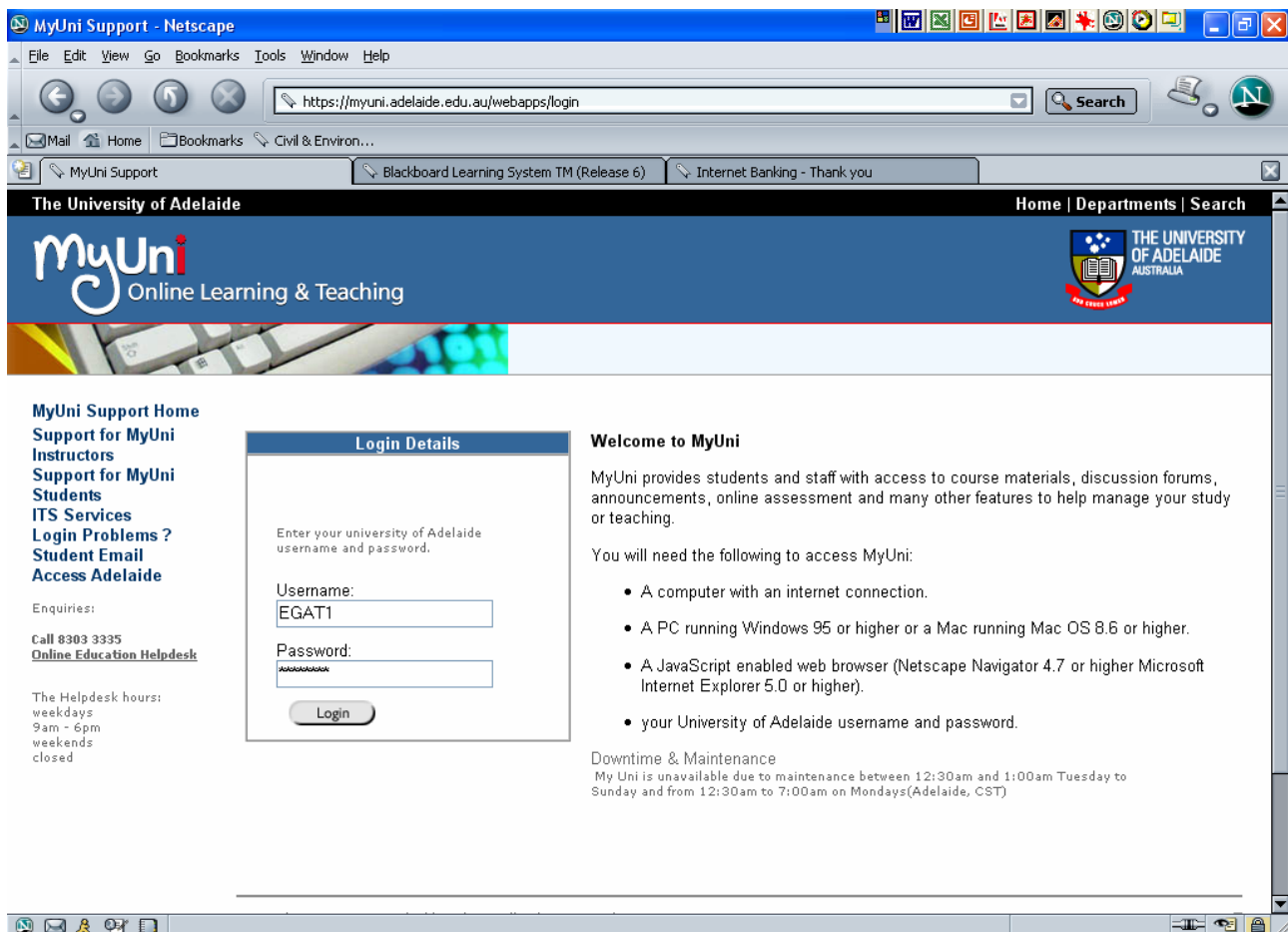
- Government Organisations – Government departments established to oversee a particular aspect relating to the basin pertinent to the country they manage. e.g. Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Laos, National Planning Committee, China.
- Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) – Organisations not affiliated with the government concerned, but with a particular issue or issues. e.g. Towards Ecological Recovery and Regional Alliance, Oxfam International.
- Development Organisations – Companies and organisations looking to support and promote development of the Mekong region. e.g. World Bank, United Nations Development Program, Mekong River Commission.
- Local Peoples Organisations – People living within the Mekong River Basin and relying on the Basin's resources for their survival. e.g. Nam Theun Villagers, TonLe Sap Fishers.
- Media Groups – Organisations distributing media information and news events pertinent to the Mekong River Basin. e.g. Vientiane Times Newspaper, Cable News Network.
- Academic and Research Institutions – Institutions with a focus on research in one or more specific areas with interests in the Mekong River Basin. e.g. Probe International, World Commission on Dams.
- Engineering Organisations (Multinationals) – Organisations involved in engineering activities (road and rail, dams, hydroelectric power etc.) with interests extending into the Mekong River Basin. e.g. Transfield, Lahmeyer.

3. Practical Tips

3.1 How Do I Log On?

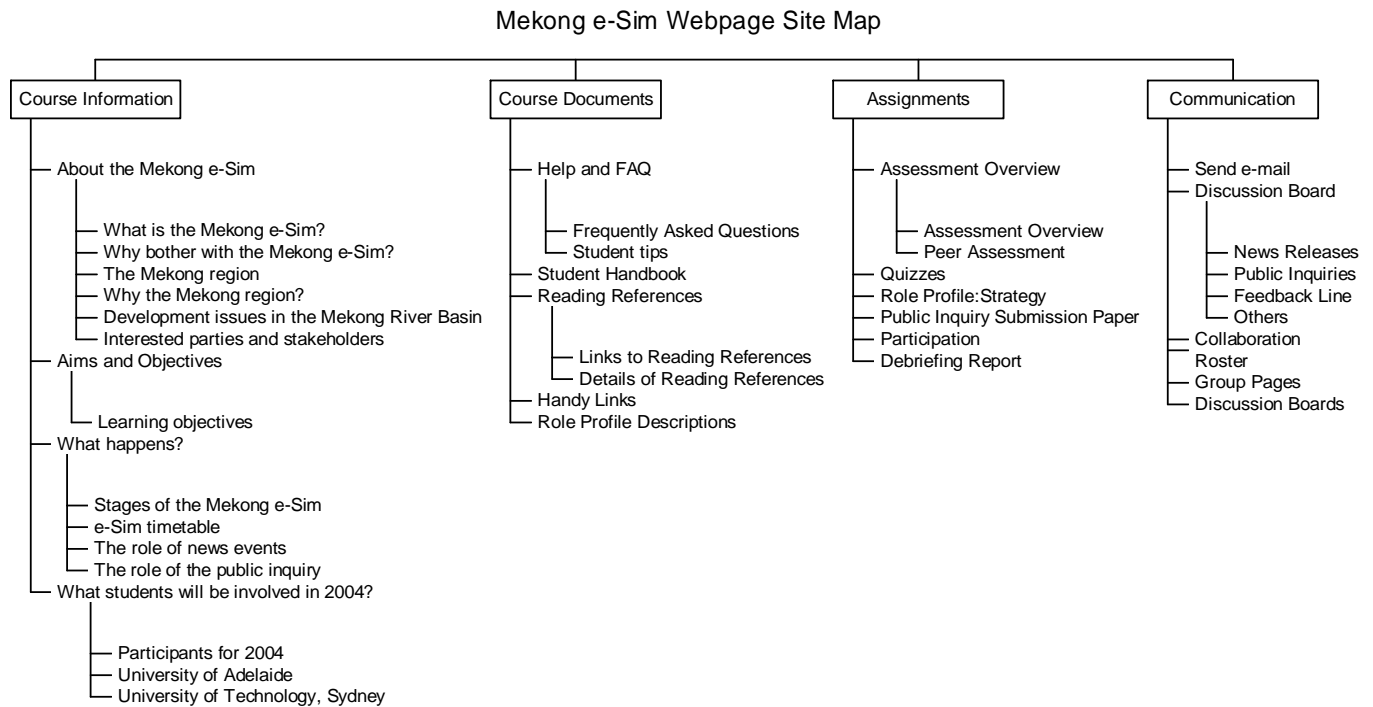
Step 1: The Mekong e-Sim is accessible directly through the University of Adelaide MyUni Mekong e-Sim course site, which can be accessed at: <http://myuni.adelaide.edu.au/>

Step 2: Once the login portal has loaded, enter your login details and click on the "login" button. Your login name (e.g. EGAT1) and password will be issued to you by your local instructor.



Step 3: Once you have logged on to the MyUni website, click on "Mekong eSimulation (2005)" under "My Courses" on the "MyUni" homepage.

The following sitemap will help you to navigate around the website for the Mekong e-Sim:



3.2 How Do I Submit Assignments?

Information about all assessment tasks, including deadlines and how to submit them, are given in the "Assignments" section of MyUni.

Assessment task submissions fall into 3 categories:

1. **Online Quizzes:** The quizzes will automatically appear in the "Quizzes" folder during the times specified in the "Assessment Overview" and need to be completed on-line. Detailed on-line instructions are available for each quiz.
2. **Discussion Board Postings:** Some submissions need to be posted on relevant discussion boards, as specified in the "Assessment Overview".
3. **Online File Submissions:** Most written work needs to be submitted electronically by clicking on the "View/Complete" link in the folder for a specific assessment task, as shown below. The files can then be uploaded and any comments provided to the instructor. It should be noted that University of Adelaide students also have to submit a hardcopy of each assessment task to the submission box for Environmental Engineering II, which is located outside the School of Civil & Environmental Engineering office.

Blackboard Learning System TM (Release 6) - Netscape

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https://myuni.adelaide.edu.au/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp?tab=courses&url=%2Fbin%2Fcommon%2Fcourse.pl%3F

MyUni The University of Adelaide

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Online Education Helpdesk
Call 8303 3335
myuni.help@adelaide.edu.au

MyUni Courses Community IT Services For Students

THE UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE AUSTRALIA

Announcements
Course Information
Staff Information
Course Documents
Assignments
Communication
Virtual Classroom
Discussion Board
Groups
Tools
Course Map

COURSES > MEKONG EMULATION > ASSIGNMENTS > ROLE PROFILE STRATEGY

Description
Describes the objectives and structure of the Role Profile:Strategy.

Example
This example includes the Background Description and Policy Sections that are provided for you. The sections you must complete are the Strategies, Group Dynamics and Persona Representation. i.e. not the Description or Policy sections.

RPS Submission - Adelaide
Uni of Adelaide Students, please submit your "Role Profile:Strategy" both:
* In hardcopy form to the Env. Eng. II submission box outside the School office.
* In electronic form here by clicking the "View/Complete" link below. The filename should be PersonaName_RPS (e.g. MARD_RPS, EGAT_RPS). The persona name (e.g. MARD, EGAT) should also be included within the Word document.

>> [View/Complete](#)

RPS Submission - UTS
UTS Students, please submit your "Role Profile:Strategy" in electronic form here by clicking the "View/Complete" link below. The filename should be PersonaName_RPS (e.g. MARD_RPS, EGAT_RPS). The persona name (e.g. MARD, EGAT) should also be included within the Word document.
The submission deadline is:
TBA

>> [View/Complete](#)

OK

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Blackboard Learning System TM (Release 6) - Netscape

File Edit View Go Bookmarks Tools Window Help

https://myuni.adelaide.edu.au/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp?tab=courses&url=%2Fbin%2Fcommon%2Fcourse.pl%3F

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Online Education Helpdesk
Call 8303 3335
myuni.help@adelaide.edu.au

MyUni Courses Community IT Services For Students

THE UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE AUSTRALIA

Announcements
Course Information
Staff Information
Course Documents
Assignments
Communication
Virtual Classroom
Discussion Board
Groups
Tools
Course Map

COURSES > MEKONG EMULATION > ASSIGNMENTS > ROLE PROFILE STRATEGY > UPLOAD ASSIGNMENT: RPS SUBMISSION - UTS

Upload Assignment: RPS Submission - UTS

1 Assignment Information

Name: RPS Submission - UTS

Instructions: UTS Students, please submit your "Role Profile:Strategy" in electronic form here by clicking the "View/Complete" link below. The filename should be PersonaName_RPS (e.g. MARD_RPS, EGAT_RPS). The persona name (e.g. MARD, EGAT) should also be included within the Word document.
The submission deadline is:
TBA

2 Your Files

Comments:

We enjoyed working on this submission!

File To Attach: EGAT_RPS.doc

Currently Attached Files:

3 Submit

Press save to continue working on this assignment later, or submit when you are ready to turn in this assignment.

3.3 Which Filenames Should I Use for Electronic Submission?

IMPORTANT: Due to the large number of files being submitted, the name of your files is of utmost importance. See example below.

Following are the abbreviations for the assessment tasks: Role Profile: Strategy (RPS), Public Inquiry Submission (PIS) and Debriefing Report (DEB).

INDIVIDUAL SUBMISSIONS:

For individual submissions, the filenames should include YOUR LAST NAME (e.g. SMITH) AND THE TYPE OF SUBMISSION (e.g. DEB). An example filename is SMITH_DEB. YOUR NAME SHOULD ALSO BE INCLUDED WITHIN THE WORD DOCUMENT IN CASE THE FILE GETS PRINTED.

GROUP SUBMISSIONS:

For group submissions, the filenames should include YOUR ROLE (e.g. MARD) AND THE TYPE OF SUBMISSION (e.g. RPS, PIS). An example filename is MARD_PIS. Only ONE person in the group should make the submission. YOUR GROUP NAME SHOULD ALSO BE INCLUDED WITHIN THE WORD DOCUMENT IN CASE THE FILE GETS PRINTED.

3.4 Sending Emails to Other Groups

For all emails sent to other groups: IN THE SUBJECT LINE, SAY WHICH GROUP(S) THE EMAIL IS TO, FOLLOWED BY THE SUBJECT OF THE EMAIL (e.g. To MARD: Flow in the Mekong River). Failure to do this implies the email will not be counted as part of the participation mark.

3.5 How to Locate and Submit Quizzes

The quizzes are located on the MyUni Mekong e-Sim course. Click 'Assignments' and then 'Quizzes' on the University of Adelaide MyUni Mekong e-Sim course homepage and then select the desired quiz. The quizzes are available for a fixed period of time only, with the option to take a particular quiz appearing and disappearing automatically at pre-determined times.

To submit the quiz when you are satisfied with your responses click 'submit' at the bottom right of the quiz page. Your quiz will then be marked and you will be advised of your mark on the screen. ONCE YOU HAVE STARTED A QUIZ, EVEN IF YOU DECIDE NOT TO ANSWER ANY QUESTION, IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT YOU SUBMIT IT BEFORE LEAVING IT. No score, or a low score, is not a problem since you may repeat the quiz as many times as you like to improve your score. The questions change each time you attempt the quiz.

3.6 How to Use the Discussion Boards

Online discussions are appealing for several reasons:

- They promote active learning and critical thinking
- Students can participate at any time
- They are open-ended and non-linear
- They allow time for thinking and reflection
- They promote the development of literature research skills

Connecting to the online discussion within Mekong e-Sim

Once you have logged into the MyUni Mekong e-Sim course:

- click on Discussion Board on the lefthand side of the screen
- click on the Forum title to enter that forum and view the threaded discussion
- note that each public inquiry will be colour coded to assist you in accessing the correct forum. The Test Forum and e-Sim Feedback Forum will be available immediately. Other Forums will be made available at later stages.
- apart from the Test Forum and e-Sim Feedback Forum, no anonymous posts are allowed
- once you have posted a message, you cannot remove it, so be careful to proofread your work before you submit it
- you can submit your entry by typing in the box provided, or copy and paste the text there from another program, eg Microsoft Word.
- only the relevant media groups are able to post to the media discussion board forums

Contributing to Discussions

- Ensure that you give a title/subject line whenever you are posting or responding to an entry. The title should be concise and should summarise the content of your response. To read another posting, click on the title/subject line, not the author's name.
- Be sure your entry is made at the appropriate place in the discussion hierarchy. Do this by opening the relevant posting and then click on the Reply button at the bottom of the screen.
- Entries should be focussed on adding information to the group's problem solving activities, but they should not attempt to cover the whole topic in any one contribution. Contributions should be responsive to previous material whenever this is appropriate.
- Entries should not be too long. The main body of text should fill approximately one screen on the computer or less (about 400 words will fill one screen).
- Do not be reckless with your opinions. Be sure to support your work with references to the literature or other sources of information. All references should be listed at the bottom of each entry.
- While the discussion may involve considerable individual opinion, it is important to support your opinions.
- Keep abreast of the discussion. You should login and read new entries every day.
- It is essential that you respect the opinions of others, even if you strongly disagree with them.

Here are some further details on 'netiquette':

Netiquette – Network Etiquette

The do and don'ts of online communications, including discussion boards.

Go to <http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html> for the ten Core Rules of netiquette.

For further details about Netiquette, go to <http://www.albion.com/netiquette/>

Group Discussion and Class Discussion

Group Discussion

Each participant in the Mekong e-Sim has been allocated into a group according to persona. You will only be able to access your group page, not other groups'. The group features allow you to privately communicate with other members of your group, however note that your lecturer will also be able to monitor activities within your group.

When you access your group page you will find several features that will enable you to effectively communicate with each other online. These include:

- Group discussion board
- Collaboration (lightweight chat and virtual classroom for real time chats)
- File Exchange (so that you can exchange files with each other)
- Send email (to allow you to email each other within your group)

It is recommended that you organise amongst yourselves some days/times that each of you will visit the group discussion board (as well as File Exchange). You should also decide which member of the group will post the initial 400 word Public Inquiry Submission (PIS) to the Class Discussion Board as well as who will respond to postings made to your group by other groups, including the decision-making group.

Class Discussion Board

The decision-making group for your Public Inquiry will moderate several forums within the Class Discussion Board. You should access the class discussion board daily – especially during the Public Inquiry stage.

It is important that your postings to the class discussion board are clear, concise and constructive.

You should also check the "Newsgroup" discussion board forums on a daily basis.

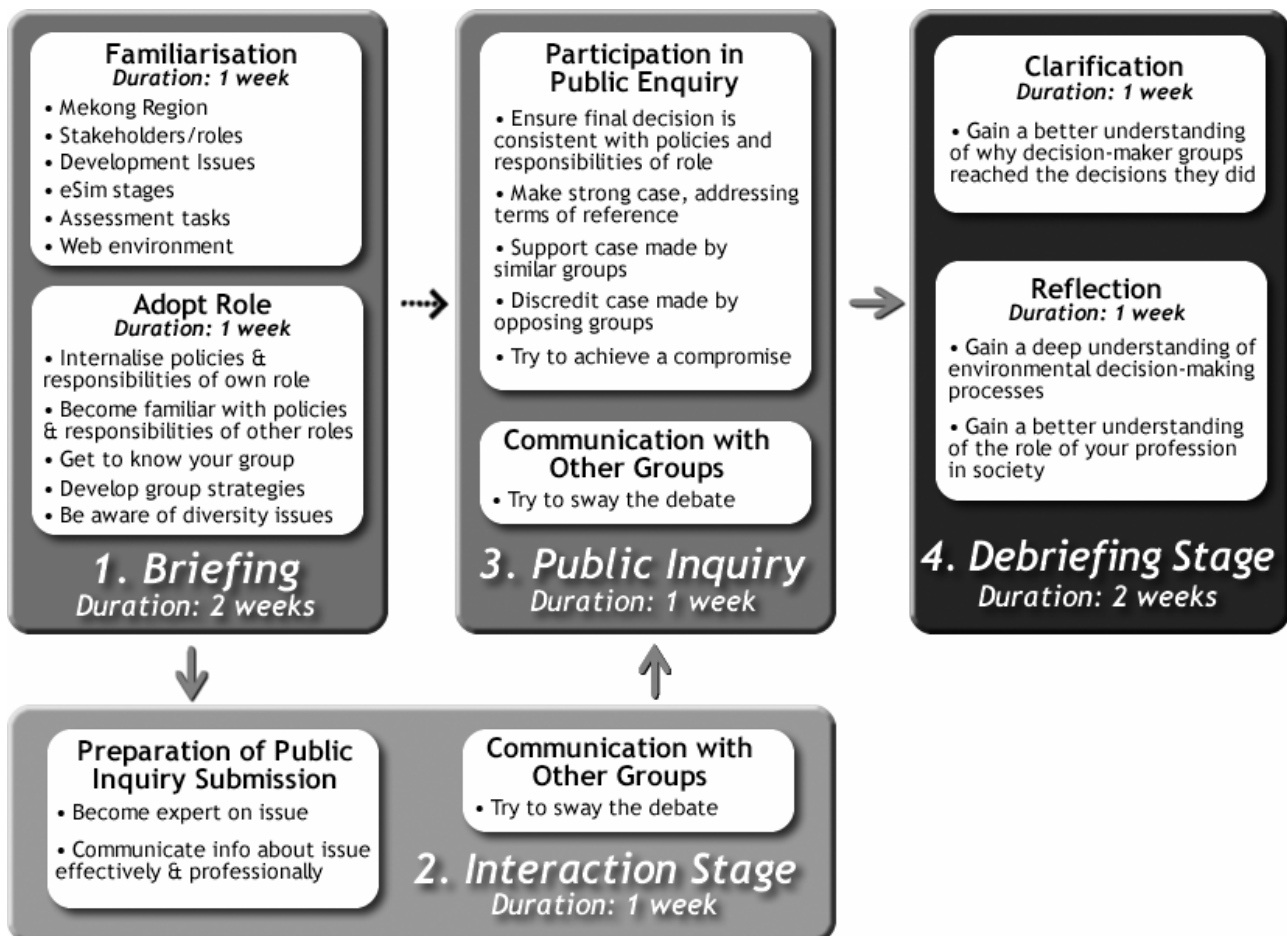
Acknowledgement: Some of this material has been adapted from Michael Keller's Online Discussion for Integrated Pest Management.

4. Outline Of Events

4.1 Stages Of The Mekong e-Sim – Purpose And Objectives

The Mekong e-Sim is constructed around four key stages focused on a simulated public inquiry. Details are given in a number of audio narrated powerpoint presentations, which can be accessed by clicking on “Course Information” and then “Here is a list of milestones that should be met during the e-Sim” on the MyUni Mekong e-Sim course. A brief summary is given below.

The briefing stage enables you to become familiar with the Mekong region, the e-Sim structure and your role, and it is essential that you immerse yourself in the e-Sim as early as possible in order to gain the most from your experience. Following the briefing stage, the terms of reference of the public inquiries are released. This will tell you what development issue you will be involved in, and you will be given a topic to research, which will form the basis of your public inquiry submission. The interaction stage of the e-Sim will be shaped by your correspondence within your group and with other groups through email and meetings, and your exposure and contribution to news events and information dispersal via the media. It is important to act “in character” in your interactions, which requires you to become familiar with the area of responsibility of your role. Information gained through e-Sim interaction and background reading will be used by your group to prepare the submission to the public inquiry. Your group will post a summary of your persona’s submission as your point of view to the relevant public inquiry discussion board. Once the public inquiry stage starts, groups begin to post responses to other groups’ contributions, and attempt to influence decision-maker groups through email and news media. Once the public inquiries have closed, it is the role of decision-maker groups to reach and post their final decisions. The final and most important stage of the e-Sim is the debriefing, which consists of two phases. In the first debriefing phase, you remain in your role and have the opportunity to ask the decision-maker groups specific questions in relation to the decision they have made in a face-to-face session. In the second debriefing phase, you step outside your role and reflect on and analyse what you, as an individual, have gained from the experience. The e-Sim draws to a close with your preparation and submission of a debriefing report.



4.1.1 Briefing Stage (2 Weeks Duration – Weeks 1 to 2)

The Briefing stage of the e-Sim involves participants becoming familiar with the e-Sim structure, geographical context, requirements and technology. It also involves them obtaining information from a range of different sources to develop an understanding about the responsibilities, views and strategies of their adopted persona identity. Participants have the chance to take in the information they have received and to think about a plan of attack for the e-Sim, culminating in the Public Inquiries. The objective is to understand what is going on at this stage i.e. the background of the Mekong Region, the different types of roles and how they relate to your role (i.e. friend or foe) and the software to be used throughout the e-Sim. The role profile of your persona should be considered and the strategic approach to the e-Sim defined. The result of this stage should be a unified group opinion on the role of your persona and the way in which your group will portray your persona.

Assessment tasks include:

- Quiz: Roles – 5% (individual - online)
- Quiz: Mekong – 5% (individual - online)
- Role Profile: Strategy – 10% (group)

More detailed information about the Briefing stage is given in the "Timetable" in Sect. 4.2 and the e-Sim website (by clicking on "Course Information" and then "Here is a list of milestones that should be met during the e-Sim").

4.1.2 Interaction Stage (1 Week Duration – Week 3)

The Interaction stage comprises interactions between different personae in response to events that have occurred and the actions of other personae. The events are modelled on news events such as the announcement of a public hearing on a specific topic (terms of reference) or the discovery/restriction of a scarce resource shared by various personae. Participants are therefore required to operationalise the understanding of their persona and the simulated environment gained during the briefing stage (i.e. participants have to act in their role in response to simulated events). This understanding is reshaped as participants experience consequences that follow from their actions. Group development activities also occur during this stage and are aimed at developing the dynamics within the group. Meetings allow the immediate answering of questions or queries. In other situations the group page area and email are adequate.

It is important to remember that the e-Sim runs in simulated time, so major sources of information should be the other e-Sim participants and the e-Sim media. Although the issues that form the basis of the e-Sim are real, it needs to be remembered that because this is a simulated environment only, participants must not be bound by decisions that have already been made in the real world, and only statements made by e-Sim participants may be quoted in correspondence or media articles. It is important to keep up to date with news releases, and where relevant and possible to use the media to disseminate news or information that you would like to make available to other groups in order to forward your persona's agenda.

During the Interaction stage, you will research and prepare your submission to the public inquiry. This includes both a 400 word summary, which will be posted on the relevant discussion board and will be seen by all participants, as well as a more detailed 1000 word technical paper, which will be assessed by your facilitator. Another important task during the Interaction stage is to try to sway the debate about the development issue that is the focus of the public inquiry you are involved in your favour.

Assessment tasks include:

- Participation – 20% (group)
- Submission to public inquiry – 20% (1000 word) (group)

More detailed information about the Interaction stage is given in the "Timetable" in Sect. 4.2 and the e-Sim website (by clicking on "Course Information" and then "Here is a list of milestones that should be met during the e-Sim").

4.1.3 Public Inquiry Stage (1 Week Duration – Week 4)

The Public Inquiry stage involves online public forum discussion boards based around the terms of reference of simulated Public Inquiries. Personae should post summaries (400 word) of their public inquiry submissions in response to the specific terms of reference for each of the inquiries and then respond to other submissions. During the Public Inquiries, students gain an understanding of the multiple perspectives about the topic being debated. The Public Inquiry stage encourages discussion between groups and culminates in the final decision handed down by the decision-making groups. Participants have a chance to practice the art of persuasion and to witness the decision making process in action.

Assessment task:

- Participation – 20% (group)

More detailed information about the Public Inquiry stage is given in the "Timetable" in Sect. 4.2 and the e-Sim website (by clicking on "Course Information" and then "Here is a list of milestones that should be met during the e-Sim").

4.1.4 Debriefing Stage (2 Weeks Duration – Weeks 5 to 6)

In the first part of the Debriefing stage, participants remain in their roles and have the opportunity to seek clarification from the decision-makers groups about why they arrived at their decision (i.e. why certain points were not taken into account or why certain factors were weighted more heavily than others). Participants are required to form alliances (consortia) with other, like-minded, groups and each consortium has to develop one or more questions for the decision-makers in their public inquiry. Each consortium must consist of at least 2 groups. There is no upper limit on the number of groups per consortium. Only consortia are allowed to ask questions of the decision-makers during the face-to-face discussion session. Generally, consortia will consist of groups with similar interests/philosophies, who will have similar queries with regard to the decisions made. The maximum number of questions each consortium may ask is $0.5(n)$, where n is the number of groups per consortium (e.g. a consortium consisting of 2 groups may ask 1 question, a consortium consisting of 3 groups may ask 1 question, a consortium consisting of 4 groups may ask 2 questions etc.). Consortia questions must be submitted to the relevant discussion board 1 day before the face-to-face discussion session in order to give the decision-makers ample opportunity to prepare appropriate responses. During the face-to-face sessions, consortia will re-state their questions, followed by a response from the decision-maker groups and a brief general discussion. It should be noted that face-to-face sessions will not be held at all e-Sim nodes (you will be advised by your local facilitator whether there will be a face-to-face session at your node or not). For those students at a node where a face-to-face session will not be held, a streaming video recoding of the face-to-face session(s) will be made available on the MyUni e-Sim course website for debriefing purposes.

In the second part of the Debriefing stage, participants step out of their role and identify what they have learned as a consequence of participating in the e-Sim. This is directed by face-to-face sessions that use a structured process of guided recall, reflection and analysis of the roleplay-simulation based on the experiences of the participants present. Nearly all of your learning will occur during this stage. It is here that participants have time to reflect on the occurrences of the past weeks and to draw together their own conclusions. Everyone's experiences will be different and consequently what people have learnt will also differ. At the conclusion of the debriefing stage, students are required to write a debriefing report, drawing on their experiences from the interaction and debriefing stages of the e-Sim.

Assessment tasks:

- Participation – 20% (group)
- Debriefing Report – 40% (individual)

More detailed information about the Interaction stage is given in the "Timetable" in Sect. 4.2 and the e-Sim website (by clicking on "Course Information" and then "Here is a list of milestones that should be met during the e-Sim").

4.2 *Timetable*

Included in the timetable are suggested activities, which should be undertaken by participants looking to prepare themselves for the e-Sim and associated tasks. These are included as hints and are there to make your job easier, so take notice of what you should be doing. Further details are given in the audio-narrated presentations on the e-Sim website (by clicking on "Course Information" and then "Here is a list of milestones that should be met during the e-Sim"). Please note that the dates given below could change throughout the duration of the e-Sim. Please refer to the e-Sim website for up-to-date information and Section 5 for more details about assessment tasks and deadlines.

Dates	Suggested Activities	Key Events	
		Description	Date
Feb 28 - March 13	<p>BRIEFING STAGE (2 weeks duration):</p> <p>(a) Familiarisation (1 week duration – Week 1)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch video on Mekong • Read student handbook • Read background papers • Explore e-Sim website • Complete Quiz: Roles (online) • Complete Quiz: Mekong (online) <p>(b) Adoption of Role (1 week duration – Week 2)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look at group pages on e-Sim Website 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Release of roles • Completion of Quiz: Roles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>ADEL:</u> March 3 • <u>UTS:</u> March 9 • <u>ADEL:</u> March 7 (10pm) • <u>UTS:</u> March 14 (5pm)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact other group members • Read role profile descriptions • Conduct further background research on roles • Complete Role Profile: Strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of Quiz: Mekong • Submission of Role Profile: Strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>ADEL</u>: March 7 (10pm) • <u>UTS</u>: March 14 (5pm) • <u>ADEL & UTS</u>: March 14 (5pm)
March 14-21	<p>INTERACTION STAGE (~1 week duration – Week 3):</p> <p>News Groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtain “newsworthy stories” • Try to influence debate • Publish news articles <p>Decision-Maker Groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be proactive • Find out information in relation to terms of reference of public inquiry • Raise profiles of public inquiries • Read information about public inquiry submission • Complete and submit first part (400 word) of public inquiry submission <p>Other Groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construct argument for public inquiry • Try to sway debate in your favour • Prepare public inquiry submissions (1000 word and 400 word) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Release of terms of reference for public inquiries • Release of public inquiry submission topics • Release of news articles • Submission of 1000 word Public Inquiry Submission (excluding media groups, who publish articles on a continuous basis) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • March 14 • March 14 • Continuous • March 21 (10 pm)
March 21-29	<p>PUBLIC INQUIRY STAGE (~1 week duration – Week 4)</p> <p>Decision-Maker Groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote public inquiry • Welcome everybody to public inquiry • Re-organise discussion boards • Continue to chair public inquiry • Deliberate • Make final decision and post 1000 word justification <p>Media Groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cover events as they happen • Post articles <p>Other Groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make initial posting in appropriate discussion board (400 word) • Respond to other groups’ postings • Respond to responses to your posting(s) • Respond to requests from decision-maker groups • Form alliances • Try to develop compromise solutions • Correspond with media • Lobby decision-makers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post contribution (400-word summary of PIS) • Respond to contributions • Release of news events • Decisions posted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • March 21 (10 pm) • March 22-24 (5pm) • Continuous • March 29 (11am)
March 29 - April 8	<p>DEBRIEFING STAGE (2 weeks duration)</p> <p>(a) Clarification (1 week duration – Week 5)</p> <p>Media and Other Groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examine justification for decisions made 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form formal alliances • Post questions for decision-maker groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • March 29 • March 30 (5 pm)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form alliances (consortia) with groups with similar interests • Post questions to decision-maker groups in appropriate discussion board as part of the alliance • Attend face-to-face question and answer forum (Adelaide students only) • View recording of face-to-face question and answer forum (UTS students) <p>Decision-Maker Groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read questions posted on relevant discussion boards • Prepare responses to questions posted for oral presentation at face-to-face question and answer forum • Attend face-to-face question and answer forum <p>(b) Reflection (1 week duration – Week 6)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in face-to-face debriefing sessions • Complete online Peer Evaluation Survey • Prepare Debriefing Report • Complete e-Sim questionnaire (in class) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend face-to-face question and answer session (Adelaide students only) • ADEL class debrief • Completion of peer evaluation survey • UTS class debrief • UTS submit Debriefing Essay • ADEL submit Debriefing Essay 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • March 31 (11 am) • April 5, 6 & 7 • April 7 (10 pm) • April 6 or 7 (TBA) • April 29 (5pm) • April 29 (5pm)
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4.3 The Role of News Events

News events are an integral part of the Mekong e-Sim. They distribute information to all participants and can significantly influence their perspectives. They have the potential to change the course or the direction of the debate throughout the e-Sim interaction phase. When used to their full potential, media groups can single-handedly dictate the opinion of the public. News events provide up to date information to readers about occurrences throughout the e-Sim. It is important to read news events, particularly those concerning your persona, so as to gauge what other groups are saying or thinking about certain topics. To use the media groups in the e-Sim to benefit the cause of your persona it is best to feed them pieces of information that they can then make into a news event, thus creating discussion and attention to factors or issues that are pertinent to your group. Most non-media groups will be expected to provide the media with relevant material for publishing, or media groups may be forced to respond to lack of information by making up and publishing their own news. If relevant, usage of the media may be assessed and form part of the group participation mark.

4.4 The Role of the Public Inquiry

The role of the public inquiry is to provide participants with a realistic insight into the decision-making process. Nearly all proposed developments are required to pass through some sort of public inquiry/public hearing allowing the public and other interested parties to comment on the positive and negative aspects of the proposal. Participants should be attempting to influence the thoughts of, and ultimately the decision made by, the decision-making groups. After initial submissions have been made, interaction should occur between concerned personae as each group attempts to influence the decision-making groups. It is critical that participants respond to other groups' opinions regarding your group's submission. Participants should also be reading other personae' submissions and commenting where they feel necessary. This way, the policies and strategies of different groups will be tested and the strength of their policies will be made evident.

It is from the information presented during the inquiry that the decision-making bodies will draw their conclusions. Those personae that communicate their views in the most convincing manner are usually the winners. Louder does not mean better and unsolicited criticism does not win any points; instead, carefully consider the content in an endeavour to influence the decision-making body. In some instances, a stalemate may be reached in the discussion and in order to achieve the best outcome for your persona, it might be beneficial to suggest compromise solutions.

5. Assessment Tasks

5.1 Table of Assessment Tasks and Critical Dates

Please note that these dates could change throughout the duration of the e-Sim. Please refer to the e-Sim website for up-to-date information.

Assessment Item	Submission type	% of e-Sim mark	Submission location	Due date
Quiz: Roles	Individual	5	Online submission	<u>ADEL:</u> March 7 (10pm) <u>UTS:</u> March 14 (5pm)
Quiz: Mekong	Individual	5	Online submission	<u>ADEL:</u> March 7 (10pm) <u>UTS:</u> March 14 (5pm)
Role Profile:Strategy	Group	10	Online (ADEL, UTS) + hardcopy (ADEL only)	<u>ADEL & UTS:</u> March 14 (5pm)
Public Inquiry Submissions	Group	20 (Also part of participation mark for 400 word submission)	<u>Media Groups:</u> Relevant news discussion board <u>Non-Media Groups:</u> <i>1000 word:</i> Online (ADEL, UTS) + hardcopy, (ADEL only) <i>400 word:</i> Relevant public inquiry discussion board <u>Decision-Maker Groups:</u> <i>400 word:</i> Online (ADEL, UTS) + hardcopy, (ADEL only) <i>1000 word:</i> Relevant public inquiry discussion board	<u>ADEL & UTS:</u> <u>Media Groups:</u> Continuous <u>Non-Media Groups:</u> March 21 (10pm) <u>Decision-Maker Groups:</u> <i>400 word:</i> March 21 (10pm) <i>1000 word:</i> March 29 (10pm)
Participation	Group	20	Based on emails, discussion group submissions, login statistics, participation in face-to-face discussion session and peer evaluation	Continuous
Peer Participation Evaluation Survey	Individual	0%, however 10% of e-Sim mark will be deducted if not completed	Online submission	<u>ADEL & UTS:</u> April 7 (10pm)
Debriefing Report	Individual	40	Online (ADEL, UTS) + hardcopy, (ADEL only)	<u>ADEL:</u> April 29 (5pm) <u>UTS:</u> April 29 (5pm)

Description of Assessment Tasks

5.1.1 Quizzes

Two quizzes have been developed covering separate aspects of the Mekong e-Sim. The first quiz is based on the roles within the Mekong e-Sim, and is designed to familiarise participants with the various abbreviations and roles of the personae involved in the e-Sim and the issues they are responsible for. The second quiz requires background knowledge of the Mekong region, and has been designed to assess participants' knowledge of the Mekong region at an early stage. This encourages participants to research general information regarding the Mekong region in order to gain a solid base of knowledge during the initial stages of the Mekong e-Sim.

The quizzes consist of 10 multiple-choice questions, all of which must be answered. Select only one answer for each question. You must obtain a mark of 80 % (8 out of 10) in order to pass the quizzes. You can attempt both quizzes as many times as you like until a pass mark is obtained. If you pass the quizzes, you will receive 10% of the marks for the Mekong e-Sim. Questions are randomly selected from a pool of available questions implying you will generally not be asked the same set of questions twice. It should be noted that the mark from your latest quiz attempt will be recorded in the online gradebook.

5.1.2 Role Profile: Strategy

The Role Profile:Strategy will help your group to develop a shared understanding of the policies and responsibilities of your role and of the strategies you will implement throughout the e-Sim, as well as critically identifying differences in your interpretation of your persona and the context you are working in. An example of what is required can be found on the e-Sim website. Please note that this submission is subject to self and peer assessment.

STRUCTURE OF REPORT

The following issues should be addressed in your report. It should be noted that there is no need to repeat the Role Description and Policy sections, as is done in the example. Please ensure that you explain your answers and give reasons for the statements you make.

Strategies [5 Marks]

- What strategies will you use to achieve your policy goals?
- All persona have ways of trying to influence the outcomes of the decision making process. Which other personae would you be likely to form alliances with?

Group diversity issues [3 Marks]

- How different are the group members' perspectives on the persona and representation issues?
- Why does this exist and how are you going to use this diversity to your group's advantage.
- How may this diversity hinder your group performance?

Persona Representation [2 Marks]

- How will your values, beliefs and knowledge affect how you represent your role? For example, being westernised professional students is very different to many of the roles in the e-Sim.

5.1.3 Public Inquiry Submission

During the development of the public inquiry submission paper, you will develop a deeper understanding of some specific issues relevant to your persona. This understanding, as well as the more general understandings you have developed from your role profile, will allow you to effectively participate through the various communication channels in the e-Sim (e.g. email, news, public inquiry). Each persona has a different topic and format relevant to them. The specific topics will be released into the group area for your persona as indicated in the e-Sim timetable (Section 4.2). The types of information sought will vary (see Student Tips on the e-Sim website). The types of public inquiry submission papers are different for the media, non-media and decision-making groups, as outlined below.

A. Non-Media Groups

The public inquiry submission paper consists of two parts:

Part 1: A 1000 word public inquiry submission on the topic provided for each group. The report is expected to be well researched and referenced appropriately for the type of information presented.

Part 2: A 400 word summary of the 1000 word public inquiry submission paper, providing the group's position in regard to the terms of reference of the relevant public inquiry. This summary will form the submission to the public inquiry and must be posted by the group to the public inquiry discussion board. This summary will form the submission to the public inquiry and must be posted by the group to the public inquiry discussion board. While this submission should still be based on the well-researched facts presented in your 1000-word submission, the style in which it is written is should be different, as it is an argument you present to persuade the public inquiry decision-makers. Also, be sure to relate your 400-word submission to the terms of reference of the public inquiry.

An example of a public inquiry submission paper on aquaculture would be:

"Evaluate the opportunities for the further development of the exotic aquaculture industry in the TonLe Sap region. What are the potential issues and what technologies/strategies may be used to mitigate any adverse impacts? How much certainty is associated with predicting these impacts?"

B. Media Groups

A minimum of five articles of around 500 words each are required. Articles should be spaced fairly evenly. Please note that additional submissions are requested compared with the non-media groups because the media groups will not be submitting to the public inquiries. They may choose to comment on issues raised in the public inquiries and may also publish press releases. The style and format for these media releases would be that used for features in public inquiries or investigative journalism. There is no upper limit on the number of articles and press releases (it should be noted that press releases do not count as articles, which means that at least 5 articles are required in addition to any press releases).

C. Decision-maker Groups

A public inquiry submission paper must be prepared, however, it should be submitted in two parts. The first part, due on the date required for all papers, is a 400 word summary of the major stakeholders expected to contribute to the public inquiry forum and their respective positions. This should not be submitted to the discussion board, as it is not a relevant contribution any public inquiry forum.

Part 2 of the report is due by the end of the public inquiry stage and comprises the justification for the final decision, which should be posted to the appropriate public inquiry forum to indicate the outcome. It should be no longer than 1000 words. It is recognised that the time frame you have to prepare this document is short, and this will be taken into account as part of the assessment.

Assessment Criteria

Marks will awarded for the following:

Content [12 Marks]

- Amount and accuracy of factual information presented
- Relevance of information presented to topic
- Degree and quality of referencing of factual information

Style [8 Marks]

- How convincingly is the argument presented?
- How well is the argument matched to the persona's capabilities?

5.1.4 Participation

Participation in interactions with other personae is the basis of the e-Sim. It will provide the experiences that you will draw your learning from.

All information flow through the e-Sim will be via email, public inquiries (discussion board), news events (discussion board), online chats and informal channels. All personae should use these various communication channels to influence the direction of the e-Sim and any decisions that may be reached within it. While individual persona control the release of information through email and the public inquiries, the media (with lobbying from various persona) control which information is released through news events. Email should only be used to correspond with several relevant personae. Blanket emails to all personae are not allowed and constitute spamming. You should contact the media groups to broadcast these types of information via a news event.

All personae should adopt a communication strategy relevant to their group. However all information channels may not be equally appropriate for all persona. For example, some personae who happen to have particularly newsworthy public inquiry submission papers or make high impact decisions may focus on news events, while other groups may spread their participation across all information channels. The assessment mark for participation will therefore take into account how effectively the persona was able to

utilise appropriate information channels to advocate their role. A separate peer assessment process may be used if necessary to account for any differences in the performance of group members within a persona.

A. EMAIL

All emails should be sent to groups (personae) from the e-Sim website, not to individuals within a group, and the subject headings should include the name of the persona(e) who are receiving the emails, followed by the subject of the e-mail (e.g. "To MARD: Mekong River Flow"). To send an email within the e-Sim, go to "Communication", "Send E-mail" and then to "Select Groups". A copy of every email sent between personae will also be copied automatically to the e-Sim facilitator. The quality and quantity of the emails will be assessed as one measure to indicate the participation of a group in the e-Sim. Peer participation evaluation will also occur in order to determine your participation mark (See Section 5.3).

B. PUBLIC INQUIRY

Public inquiries have been convened to allow public participation of the personae in the decision making process for the inquiries being held. It is expected that all relevant personae will make contributions and respond to relevant postings during the inquiries. The quality of any contributions will be assessed.

C. NEWS EVENTS

News events should be submitted to the media groups and will also be sought out by the relevant media persona. These news events can be very influential on e-Sim persona. Persona will be assessed on their ability to use the media to make announcements and further their cause. For the media persona, their ability to seek out newsworthy information relevant to their readership will be assessed.

D. FACE-TO-FACE DISCUSSION SESSION

Participation in the face-to-face discussion session will be assessed based on the quality of the submissions, responses and discussion.

5.1.5 Debriefing Report

The debriefing report is used to illustrate your understanding of the complexity of environmental decision-making and your professional skills. You should draw on your own experience within the e-Sim, and any face-to-face debriefing. Marked examples of the debriefing report have been included on the e-Sim website under 'Assignments'.

The framework that is used to assess the debriefing reports is known as the SOLO Criteria. These criteria have been included below:

Assessment Criteria

The assessment framework for the Debriefing Report is based on both concept differentiation and concept integration.

- ZERO MARKS: Prestructural: no relevant response, task is not tackled appropriately.
- LOW MARKS: Unistructural: ie. one strategy/view used in the interpretation of the problem, focus on one relevant aspect (technique, discipline, socio-technical dimension) only, low level of concept differentiation, retelling of source materials with minimal transformation.
- PASS: Multistructural: i.e. several strategies/views used to interpret the problem, focus on several relevant aspects but these are not integrated, some tolerance for ambiguity or complexity, there is some evidence of understanding, coverage and effort. Typically characterised by assimilation of knowledge rather than its integration.
- MODERATE MARKS: Relational: alternate aspects of the problem are clearly represented and there is a clear recognition of a dynamic/linkage between them, selectivity and judgement used in incorporating what is more and less important for the argument.
- HIGH MARKS: Extended Abstract: use of outside references (bring new phenomena under existing concepts), conclusions are related to a broader set of issues outside discipline (generalise to new context), clear depiction of all aspects of the problem (differentiation) and their interactions (integration).

STRUCTURE OF REPORT

The following issues should be addressed in your report:

Introduction

- A description of the context from which you are making these comments i.e. general description of your persona, course and group composition. [5 marks]

Policies

- To what extent were the policy objectives outlined in your role profile achieved? [10 marks]
- What are the main reasons (e.g. technical, political, social and environmental) that impacted upon you achieving those objectives? Illustrate using examples from the e-Sim and where possible discuss their relevance to outside examples. [30 marks]
- Would you have achieved those objectives if the e-Sim ran for longer? [5 marks]

Group Dynamics

- How have you utilised the diversity in backgrounds and skills of the members of your group? [5 marks]
- Was there conflict in the decision making process within your group? To what extent was this related to different personal priorities of the members and/or understanding of the role persona? [5 marks]

e-Sim Dynamics

- Did you feel the e-Sim represented the complexity of natural resource management decision-making? Illustrate using examples from the e-Sim and where possible discuss their relevance to outside examples. [30 marks]
- How would you improve it to better represent the situation and improve your satisfaction and learning? [10 marks]

5.2 Peer Assessment

Peer participation evaluation is carried out towards the end of the e-Sim and is used to moderate group participation marks. This consists of a compulsory online survey in which each participant is required to anonymously rate the impact and contributions of other persona, from the perspective of her or his own persona. The relationship between the rating and impact on the e-Sim is as follows: 5 - Very High Impact, 4 - High Impact, 3 - Moderate Impact, 2 - Low Impact, 1 - Negligible Impact. You should take into account the quantity and quality of e-mails and discussion group postings. It should be noted that (i) you should not rate your own group and (ii) the media and decision-maker groups are not listed, as their impact on the e-Sim will be assessed separately.

Note that although marks are not awarded for submission of the peer participation evaluation survey, because of the importance of the survey, 10% of an individual's e-Sim mark will be deducted if it is not completed.

In cases where it has been brought to the attention of the course facilitator that members within a group have performed inequitably throughout the course of the e-Sim, an additional peer evaluation may be carried out to moderate individual marks.

6. Role Profiles

A ready reference to the roles portrayed throughout the e-Sim is included below for information. Note that not all listed personae may participate, depending on student numbers for this year. The role profiles of the participating personae will be accessible from the e-Sim website under 'Course Documents'.

TYPE OF ROLE	ABBREVIATION	NAME OF PERSONA	AREA
GOVERNMENT ORGANISATIONS	MOP	Ministry of Planning, Cambodia	Cambodia
	CNMC	Cambodia National Mekong Committee	Cambodia
	MAFF	Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry	Cambodia
	MAF	Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry	Lao PDR
	MIH	Ministry of Industry and Handicraft	Lao PDR
	STEA	Science, Technology, and Environmental Agency	Lao PDR
	LGWRC	Leading Group For Water Resources And Water And Soil Conservation	China
	NPC	National Planning Committee of the Peoples Republic of China	China
	EGAT	Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand	Thailand
	MARD	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development	Vietnam
DEVELOPMENT ORGANISATIONS	CDB	China Development Bank	China
	WB_IAG	The World Bank International Advisory Group	Based in USA
	UNDP	United Nations Development Program	UN
	TCTID	Transport, Communications, Tourism and Infrastructure Development division of the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific	UN
	MRC	Mekong River Commission	Cambodia, Lao, Thailand, Viet Nam
NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANISATIONS	TERRA	Towards Ecological Recovery and Regional Alliance	Thailand
	OXFAM	Oxfam International	Mixed
	IRN	International Rivers Network	USA
ACADEMIC AND RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS	PROBE	Probe International	Based in Canada
	WCD	World Commission on Dams	World
MEDIA	VTIMES	Vientiane Times	Lao PDR
	WATERSHED	Watershed: The People's Forum on Ecology	Thailand
	CNN	Cable News Network	World
VILLAGE GROUPS	NTV	Nam Theun Villagers	Lao PDR
	TLSF	TonLe Sap Fishers	Cambodia
ENGINEERING ORGANISATIONS	TRANSFIELD	Transfield	Australia
	LAHMEYER	Lahmeyer International	Germany
	SWI	Scott Wilson International Consultancy	Malaysia

6.1 Government Organisations

CAMBODIA

6.1.1 Ministry of Planning, Cambodia (MOP)

Description

The Cambodian Ministry of Planning develops and implements most of Cambodia's national and regional plans. Any plans for development at a Ministerial level must be submitted to the Ministry of Planning for approval. Currently there are 25 ministers in the Cambodian government. The Ministry of Planning coordinates and allocates the budget for all the Ministries except the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of the Interior.

The Ministry of Planning is headed by the current Minister for Planning, and run by the State Secretary. The government and its Ministries operate under the Constitution of the Kingdom of Cambodia, 1993, while the Ministry's powers come from a 1996 Kram (Cambodian for a 'law'). In brief, the Ministry budgets monies and develops, implements and reviews governmental national and regional plans. As the Kram dated January 24th, 1996 states (in establishing the Ministry), "Article 2: The Ministry of Planning shall administer and regulate the economic and social development, planning and statistics of the Kingdom of Cambodia"

Policies

The Cambodian Ministry of Planning aims to develop the Cambodian economy in a sustainable manner, following the economically harmful isolationist policies of the Pol Pot regime, the coup of 1997, the Asian financial crisis of 1998, and the civil war that ended in 1999. Economically, Cambodia is lagging far behind the adjacent nations of Vietnam and Thailand. The Ministry also hopes to foster the integration of Cambodia into the global stage and open up its borders for trading.

The Ministry is committed to developing large-scale infrastructure projects, such as the development of hydropower dams, and localized, grass roots level information and infrastructure projects. These infrastructure projects will be advantageous in encouraging development in Cambodia by local and global industries, and by providing the necessary infrastructure for trading between local and international markets. Localised, grass roots programs will also help to alleviate poverty and to end the suffering caused by years of war.

6.1.2 Cambodia National Mekong Committee (CNMC)

Good start: <http://www.camnet.com.kh/cnmcs/>

Description

The Cambodian National Mekong Committee is the national committee of the Mekong River Commission, the latter being created by a 1995 agreement signed by Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand, and Vietnam.

Role: Operating directly under the Royal Government of Cambodia, the Cambodian National Mekong Committee is a national institution. It serves as an advisory committee to the Government of Cambodia. It assists and advises the Government on matters pertaining to the formulation of water policy, strategy, management, preservation, investigation, planning, restoration and the development of the water and other related natural resources in the Mekong River Basin within the country of Cambodia.

Members: The Cambodian National Mekong Committee is comprised of representatives from ten government departments, including the Ministry of Rural Development (not MARD!), and the Ministry of Planning, as well as an Executive Committee that steers the day-to-day works of the Cambodian National Mekong Committee. The Cambodian National Mekong Committee does not consist of researchers, members of the public or activists.

Policies

In advising and assisting the Royal Government of Cambodia, the Cambodian National Mekong Committee aims to achieve the following policy objectives:

- Promote sustainable development, utilisation, conservation and management of the Mekong River resources for social and economic development.
- Protect, preserve, enhance and maintain the ecological balance exceptional to this river basin.
- To promote cooperation with other National Mekong Committees and the Donor community.
- To plan and formulate strategies for development, management and preservation of the Mekong River water and related resources (which are then submitted to the Government).
- Act in the interests of the well being of all riparian States.

6.1.3 Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (MAFF)

Good start: <http://www.maff.gov.kh>

Description

The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry is a body within the Cambodian Government that encompasses many smaller departments, including the Department of Fisheries, the Department of Agronomy, and the Department of Forestry and Wildlife. More than 90% of the population depends on agriculture, fishing and other natural resources. The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry is thus in a position of great national importance. Some of the Ministry's responsibilities include developing policies on fishing, forestry and agriculture, carrying out environmental research, and promoting the sustainable use of resources. The Ministry's capacity to carry out its duties effectively is sometimes constrained by shortages in funding, and qualified, experienced staff.

Policies

Above all, the Ministry for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries' policies seek to promote development within Cambodia in an ecologically sustainable manner with a focus on the alleviation of poverty.

Forestry policies: The Ministry has come under major criticism for the amount of illegal destruction and exploitation of Cambodia's forests that has occurred in recent years due to high pressures on resources. The Ministry's forestry policy initiatives seek to address this widespread problem. The policies hope to counter the effects of forest destruction using reforestation programs involving participation of local people. The Ministry aims to maintain Cambodia's large proportion of land under protection and encourage ecologically sustainable forestry practices. The recent establishment of the Forestry and Wildlife research institute will increase their ability to do this.

Fishery policies: The Ministry of Agricultural Development and Fisheries, in co-operation with the Ministry of the Environment, is attempting to halt illegal fishing activities. Policies seek to safeguard this natural resource and ensure that only ecologically sustainable fishing practices are allowed to continue. Policy formulation will involve consultation at the local level with those who depend upon our fisheries for subsistence and survival. With a large number of fishing offences being recorded recently (832 in 1999), the Ministry seeks international assistance in the area of fisheries management, as staff members are inexperienced and underqualified in this area.

Agricultural policies: The Ministry aims to promote ecologically sustainable development. Little attention has been placed on agricultural policy in recent years and the Ministry plans to address this. Agriculture conducted on riverbanks is important as poor agricultural practices can have detrimental follow-on effects to fisheries and waterways. Siltation of rivers is emerging as a potentially serious problem. The Ministry is seeking aid and scientific assistance to boost knowledge in this area as staff have very little relevant experience. Problems relating to overuse of pesticides and other chemicals in agricultural activity are also of concern. Agricultural policy will attempt to curtail use of dangerous chemicals and encourage alternative practices that are more ecologically sustainable. A bilateral agreement with the People's Republic of China, which the Ministry hopes will continue, provides the Ministry with tractors and other farming machinery.

LAO PEOPLE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC (LAO PDR)

6.1.4 Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF)

Good start: <http://www.maf.gov.la>

Description

The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry was established in 1975, following the liberation of Lao PDR. Since 1975, much emphasis has been placed on healing the wounds of war, and the rehabilitation of the national economy. Before that time, agriculture, forestry and irrigation infrastructures were neglected; agricultural production was generally unsophisticated.

The Ministry undertakes roles relating to the administration and supervision of agricultural and forestry issues - from production to consumption - as well as rural development and the promotion of the welfare of rural inhabitants. In addition, the Ministry also undertakes the role as the country's environmental "watchdog", primarily in issues ranging from shifting cultivation that can be detrimental in densely populated areas, biodiversity conservation, forest resource management and water resource management. The Ministry faces a difficult task under its portfolio, which is to implement the government's priority programmes. These are the rehabilitation of the national economy through agricultural activities and exploitation of natural resources. The programmes need to be performed in a sustainable manner to protect the environment and maintain its quality.

In the past 25 years the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry has actively improved and expanded agricultural infrastructures. These include irrigation systems, water reservoirs, agricultural land and piloting and managing fixed livelihoods for people throughout the country. The Ministry also investigates issues related to forestry and rural development.

Policies

The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry aims to sustain deforestation for economic reasons while keeping environmental effects to a minimum. The export of timber is essential to the well being of Laos' economy but the Ministry realizes that long-term logging will have adverse effects on the Mekong river system.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry plays essential roles in ensuring the government makes informed decisions about policies and legislation, which affect the agriculture and forestry industry. The Ministry aims to support development paths through sustainable resource use, regulation of product safety, biodiversity and related matters. The Ministry must also maintain the integrity, diversity and symbiosis of local livelihood cultures and ecosystems. The Ministry is not only responsible for controlling the safety and quality of food but also for sustaining the welfare of the wildlife.

Some of the primary policies of the Ministry relate to:

- Agricultural development for foodstuff production and market oriented production.
- Slash and burn stabilisation with a provision for a fixed livelihood program.
- Sustainable natural resources management, utilisation and development.
- Integrating biodiversity conservation activities into the country's economic framework.

Other factors to consider are hydro-electricity, health, transport, communication and tourism.

6.1.5 Ministry of Industry and Handicraft (MIH)

Description

The Ministry of Industry and Handicraft is a central state management institution directly responsible to the Prime Minister's Offices in Lao PDR. It acts for the government and its primary role is the development and supervision of the industrial and handicraft sectors nationally, as well as mineral resource management. The Ministry also controls the key energy sector, working alongside the principal national electricity producer, Electricité du Lao (EDL), planning, supervising and funding infrastructure development. The Ministry plays a role regionally, having primary responsibility for the export of electricity.

Policies

The Ministry of Industry and Handicraft is in favour of fulfilling the region's potential by developing the Hydroelectric potential in Laos. Laos holds almost half the Hydropower potential of the Mekong River Basin, with less than 5% of the hydropower potential having been realised. Capital raised by exporting the hydroelectricity could be used to assist the local economy.

The Ministry of Industry and Handicraft is committed to promoting the production of consumer goods, export goods and for protecting domestic production and handicrafts.

Coordinating with foreign countries and different international organisations is also important to the Ministry of Industry and Handicraft. In addition, the Ministry of Industry and Handicraft will seek assistance from the above-mentioned groups and cooperation with them on industrial-handicraft development in accordance with principles prescribed by the government.

The MIH is also eager to act in accordance with Government guidelines to achieve the projected goal of supplying electricity to 90% of the Lao population by 2020.

6.1.6 Science, Technology, and Environmental Agency (STEA)

Good start: <http://www.stea.gov.la>

Description

The Science, Technology and Environmental Agency was created by the Lao Government in 1993 to co-ordinate and monitor government activities related to the environment. The Agency is part of one of the government agencies or Inter Ministerial working groups, which are concerned with environment protection and natural resource management. Within the Lao Government structure, the Science, Technology and Environmental Agency reports to the Prime Minister's Office and it is authorised to develop an environmental regulatory framework and emphasise the importance of compliance. Furthermore, the Science, Technology and Environmental Agency collects and distributes up to date environmental data to the ministries in order to set strategies and measures to assess the environmental impact of proposed projects. The Science, Technology and Environmental Agency is also responsible for overall coordination of planning and management activities among ministries and non-government organisations. It provides technical and policy advice to the government ministers.

In 1999, the Science, Technology and Environmental Agency started to develop general Environmental Impact Assessment guidelines, which were decreed in 2000. The Environmental Impact Assessment Decree serves as a basis for technical agencies to develop their own Environmental Impact Assessment guidelines. All major undertakings need to be subjected to an Environmental Impact Assessment before a license can be given. This is a very important contribution to sustainable development.

Also in 1999, the National Assembly passed the Environmental Protection Law that was developed by the Science, Technology and Environmental Agency. More than 14 provinces are covered by the legislation. According to the Environment Protection Law, the Science, Technology and Environmental Agency is the main coordinating government agency both on a horizontal as well as vertical level. In the year 2000, the Science, Technology and Environmental Agency established branches in 14 of the country's 17 provinces and special zones, with the remaining few to be integrated soon. These branches are the main instruments in environmental management at the provincial level.

The Science, Technology and Environmental Agency is being expanded as it approaches Ministry status. It is currently involved in developing hydropower and water resources along the Mekong River. The Science, Technology and Environmental Agency is required to make a final evaluation and approval of studies relating to social and environment impacts due to all the developments. The Science, Technology and Environmental Agency must also monitor social compliance of projects and shape public opinion before a decision is reported to the Prime Minister's Office.

Policies

The objective of the Science, Technology and Environmental Agency is to ensure that the uniqueness, diversity and quality of the environment are preserved. This will enable prosperity, security and well being for Lao PDR the present and the future.

CHINA

6.1.7 Leading Group For Water Resources And Water And Soil Conservation (LGWRC)

Description

The main role and responsibility of the Leading Group for Water Resources and Water and Soil Conservation is to supervise and oversee the management of water and soil resource development under the objective of conservation. As a unit under the Ministry of Water Resources, LGWRC operates at a provincial level, presiding over the Yunnan Province. LGWRC is primarily concerned with the conservation and preservation of the Mekong River Basin.

Essentially, the group is responsible for the utilization of the Mekong River in respect to irrigation, urban and rural water supply, flood control and drought resistance. LGWRC consists of 13 ministerial agencies acting in the interests of conservation and sustainable development in regard to water and soil management. The general responsibilities of the Group include the formation and implementation of water policies, laws, rules and regulations in the Yunnan Province. LGWRC supervise regional development projects and are the main authority for soil and water management in the Yunnan Province. The organisation also participates in cooperative efforts with neighbouring countries on the development potential of the Mekong Basin.

Policies

The fundamental mission of the Group is to develop and implement initiatives that will enable the resources of the Mekong River Basin to be regulated and used efficiently in an effort to provide for the needs of the current population of the Yunnan Province. However, care needs to be taken not to exploit the Mekong River Basin, which will compromise the ability of future generations to meet their needs. The group promotes sustainable practices of soil management and use.

6.1.8 National Planning Committee of the Peoples Republic of China (NPC)

Description

The National Planning Committee of China is a government led department working directly under the National People's Congress. The National Planning Committee is concerned with the strategic planning and development of Peoples Republic of China's resources, technology and infrastructure and utilise them in areas that are in the best interest of the National Planning Committee and its people. As a government body, the National Planning Committee's domain includes transportation, telecommunications, energy, and human resources development. However, in the Mekong region, the role of the National Planning Committee is limited to supplying resources and expertise, as well foster regional cooperation to produce the best possible result for the countries involved in the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and help cement the National Planning Committee's position in the region.

Policies

The National Planning Committee's policies concerning Yunnan Province, ASEAN and the Mekong region include the following:

- As the trend of economic globalisation continues, along with Premier Zhu Rongji's six-point proposal on China-ASEAN Cooperation, the National Planning Committee will attempt to encourage regional political and trade cooperation with ASEAN by:
- Strengthening political cooperation.

- Intensifying efforts for human resources development.
- Strengthening infrastructure building in the Mekong River Basin.
- Using Hi-Tech Cooperation.
- Deepening agriculture cooperation.
- Strengthening trade and investment link.
- In conjunction with the National Planning Committee's "15-year National Development plan", the National Planning Committee will strengthen domestic infrastructures and resources generation of power, transport and territory development.

THAILAND

6.1.9 Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand (EGAT)

Good start: <http://www.egat.or.th/english/>

Description

The Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand is an organisation solely responsible for the production of electric power and the subsequent transmission of the supply to the entire country. The authority was formed in 1969 to nationalise the functions of three independent state enterprises, the Yanhee Electric Authority (YEA), the Lignite Authority (LA) and the North-East Electric Authority (NEEA).

The Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand is a state enterprise, controlled by the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM). The authority specialises in the construction of power manufacturing facilities, along with the selling of surplus energy to surrounding countries. The EGAT employs engineers, construction workers, economists and business spokespersons, making it well equipped to cope with the burgeoning energy demands of a developing country.

Policies

The Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand recognises the need for economic development within Laos, and is of the belief that hydropower has the potential to aid in this development. Despite the lamentable localized human cost, the people of both Laos and Thailand stand to benefit from such a project in the long term. With increased development, Laos stands to become a more active participant in commerce and trade in the region. Thus, the Authority looks forward to developing new trade relations and cementing current ones to the benefit of both countries.

In addition to the hydroelectric potential of Laos, the Authority is interested in future power generating developments, particularly those in the renewable category. To this end, the Authority offers its aid in any research and development into any such fields. Although present power sources are adequate, future growth prevents the continued use of relatively expensive fuels sources such as oil. The Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand commends the Lao government on their long-term vision and supports their efforts to develop their country into a larger commercial presence within the region.

A summary of the Authorities goals include:

- Development of sustainable power generation for both Thailand and Laos.
- Increase trade relations between our two countries.
- Increase the economic strength and standard of living within both countries.

VIETNAM

6.1.10 Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD)

Good start: <http://www.agroviet.gov.vn/en/>

Description

In 1995 three ministries, the Ministry of Agriculture and Foodstuff Industry, the Ministry of Forestry and the Ministry of Water Resources merged to become the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of is one of the most important governmental organizations in Vietnam. In a country where 75% of the population work in the agriculture area, the Ministry is responsible for a wide range of activities, from the management and conservation of natural resource use for irrigation, to the planning and development of the rural areas. They have to ensure that the development of the country's agriculture is ecologically sustainable and that the living standards of rural people improve.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development operate in the administrative framework of the Vietnam government. Their activities are funded and controlled by the government. They have sub-offices at the district level in all provinces, which are

responsible for the implementation of policies in those areas. Some research institutes and universities belong directly to the Ministry and carry out research and projects to be examined and implemented by the Ministry.

Policies

The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development aims to develop policies in a way that solves problems by encompassing each sub-sector as a whole rather than taking a piecemeal approach. Problems should be solved looking at each area including forestry, agriculture, foodstuff industry and water resources. In this way solutions for one area are less likely to take their toll on another.

The Ministry aims to achieve the following:

- Establish international links that would result in the treatment of the Mekong Catchment as a whole rather than separate areas segregated by political boundaries.
- Ensure that agricultural productivity is kept sustainable, together with the enhancement of environmental awareness in the community.
- Ensure that waterways are managed for sustainability, whilst protecting settled areas from the consequences of flow variation.
- Surmount existing environmental issues by carrying out research and projects such as flood control methods, deforestation plans and conservation of wild species and water desalination.

6.2 Development Organisations

6.2.1 China Development Bank (CDB)

Good start: http://www.cdb.com.cn/cdb_e/

Description

The China Development Bank (CDB) was established in March 1994 as a policy bank under a special decree of the China State Council. It is wholly owned by the Chinese Government and reports directly to the State Council, which directly supervises and appoints its senior management. The CDB is the largest among three policy-oriented banks in China, and the only financial institution apart from the People's Bank of China with ministerial status.

Policies

Its primary objectives are to foster the construction of infrastructure and industries through financing, to support China's regional development policy and to on-lend loans from international financial institutions. This is achieved through input from a number of Government institutions. The People's Bank of China provides it unconditional liquidity support and approves its lending plans, while the Ministry of Finance is responsible for providing the CDB's capital support. The State Development Planning Commission recommends infrastructure projects and the State Economic and Trade Commission recommends technological renovation projects to be financed.

Specific objectives of the CDB are to keep close relations with governments to strengthen its legal status and government support. It aims to be able to continue to issue bonds and to reduce funding costs, combining traditional business with capital market to provide clients with comprehensive services. A key role for the CDB in the short term is seen to be in the development of central and western China. The focus of its lending activities continues to be in the development of power, telecommunication, railway, highway, petroleum and petrochemical, and urban facilities.

6.2.2 The World Bank International Advisory Group (WB IAG)

Description

The World Bank International Advisory Group is a group of six independent experts selected and funded by the World Bank to ensure that any projects proposed by the World Bank are environmentally and socially sound.

The International Advisory Group is also responsible for identifying social and environmental risks and opportunities that the project may bring to the World Bank and advising how these may be addressed to bring about stable and sustainable development. In keeping with the World Bank's central mission of poverty alleviation, the International Advisory Group must ensure that the proposed projects comply with Bank safeguard policies regarding environmental assessment, natural habitats, indigenous peoples, cultural property, resettlement and forests.

The findings of the International Advisory Group are made available to the public after comment from the World Bank. Decisions on issues addressed by the International Advisory Group will be made by the World Bank after taking into account Group recommendations as well as economic issues and other relevant rationale.

Policies

The International Advisory Group is free to decide on which environmental and social issues to focus, however its objective is to responsibly address all concerns regarding potential environmental and social impacts raised, including any impacts on current projects in the affected area.

The World Bank's central mission of poverty alleviation is motivation in any consultation process to ensure recommendations are made in order to "fight poverty" and "to help people help themselves and their environment by providing resources, sharing knowledge, building capacity and forging partnerships in the public and private sectors." The International Advisory Group aims to provide an independent perspective on all issues it addresses and endorse only those projects with an equitable distribution of benefits.

6.2.3 United Nations Development Program (UNDP)

Good start: <http://www.undp.org>

Description

The United Nations Development Program, a specialist branch of the United Nations, is the main provider of development assistance to governmental bodies in the developing world. Since reorganisation in 1994, the Development Program has elevated poverty alleviation to become its number one priority as well as restructuring its development programs in a move to a more holistic approach. New objectives such as economic growth, equitable distribution of income, population policies and ecological sustainability have also been incorporated.

The United Nations Development Program has a complex organizational structure with many different officers. The Development Program is led by an Executive Board, which oversees a network of 134 country offices and programs. These include regional offices in Africa, the Arab States, Asia and the Pacific, Europe and the CIS and Latin America and the Caribbean. This structure ensures those with the expertise deal with the appropriate issue. In addition to these central offices an emergency response division was formed and is considered an important element of the United Nations Development Program administration. The United Nations Development Program is a democratic institution and ensures that each member country has one seat, regardless of size or economic contribution.

Policies

The main policy objective of the United Nations Development Program is the eradication of poverty and focuses on the 66 countries that hold 90% of the world's poorest people. The Development Program aims to reduce the number of people living in poverty by fifty percent by the year 2015. Generally, the Development Program policies are aimed at a government level. However, regional traditions, resources and development experiences are also considered in policy formation.

The Development Program aims to assist developing countries through policy-based advice and consultancy. Large-scale infrastructure projects such as road and dam construction are left to associated institutions such as the World Bank.

The Development Program currently has 6 focus areas in which they have special expertise and experience.

1. *Democratic Government*: This involves decentralization and strengthening of the local government, judicial reform and promotes greater political participation by the people, especially women.
2. *Pro-Poor Policies*: The United Nations Development Program works with governments in developing countries to implement policies, which assist the poor by providing jobs, skills, land information and encouraging legal rights for women.
3. *Conflict, post-conflict and disaster situations*: This is a short-term policy objective involving advising governments on crisis prevention and management.
4. *Information and Communications technology*: The United Nations Development Program aims to reduce transaction costs of public services to the poor.
5. *Energy and environment policy*: Environmentally sound development policies, which improve the livelihoods of the poor, sustain economic growth and protect the global environment.
6. *HIV/AIDS*: A strategy to cope with the social and economic effects and undertake comprehensive responses to the epidemic.

6.2.4 Transport, Communications, Tourism and Infrastructure Development division (TCTID) of the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)

Good start: <http://www.unescap.org/tctd>

Description

The UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) is the largest of the five regional commissions reporting to the UN Economic and Social Council representing approximately sixty percent of the world's population. ESCAP works with governments to promote economic and social conditions with the aim of eradicating poverty. The Transport, Communications, Tourism and Infrastructure Development division is one of seven divisions of ESCAP.

The Division is mainly focused on regional development through integration and co-operation in transport, communications, infrastructure and tourism. Roles of the Division include undertaking policy oriented research, provision of support and advice through technical training, and facilitating interaction between various sectors. Underlying this is the belief that the eradication of poverty and improvement of the welfare of people everywhere are necessary for world peace.

Policies

The broader objectives of the Transport, Communications, Tourism and Infrastructure Development division are in line with those of the UN: to promote respect for human rights, protect the environment, fight disease, foster development and reduce poverty. More specifically, the division has a large number of policy objectives covering regional land and water transport, tourism, and infrastructure development. In brief, these are:

- Transport development with a view to achieving the objectives of sustainable development, environment, mobility, safety and access.
- Undertaking policy-oriented research and analytical studies on emerging transport issues of importance to the region as well as reviewing and analysing global as well as regional trends and developments.
- Assisting the strengthening of national capabilities in tourism policy, planning and marketing and providing technical advisory services.
- Foster a stronger understanding of what is required to improve opportunities to accelerate investment in regional infrastructure development through the Asia Infrastructure Development Alliance (AIDA).
- Creating a policy environment conducive to minimising the spread of HIV, as the high infection rates are a worsening problem for the region.

6.2.5 Mekong River Commission (MRC)

Good start: <http://www.mrcmekong.org/>

Description

There are four National Mekong Committees of the governments of Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand and Viet Nam. The National Mekong Committees act as focal points for the Mekong River Commission in each of the member countries and are served by the respective National Mekong Committee Secretariats. The Mekong River Commission was established in 1995.

The role of the Mekong River Commission is to implement sustainable management and development of water resources of the Mekong River Basin. The Mekong River Commission aims to look after the people and environment of the Mekong River Basin, China and Myanmar regions using scientific information and policies. Areas of concern to the Mekong River Commission are river navigation, flood control, fisheries, agriculture, hydropower and environmental protection.

The Mekong River Commission consists of three bodies: The Council, the Joint Committee (similar to a board of directors) and the Secretariat (based in Phnom Penh, Cambodia).

Policies

The policy objectives of the Mekong River Commission are to:

- Improve the management of the Mekong River to benefit farmers and companies who utilise the river for financial reasons.
- Improve the living standards for those who depend on the river by ensuring those villages that utilise the functions of the river are advantaged by any development. If this is not being satisfied, funding is provided to remedy the situation.
- Make sure the Mekong is preserved and improved for the future generations. This will ensure that all biota relying on the river is maintained and that there is no loss of species diversity.

The MRC seeks to achieve its goals through operational programmes. The Mekong River Commission 's programmes fall under three different categories, each possessing a specific focus:

- Core Programmes addressing issues central to the Mekong River Commission's purpose.
- Support Programmes consisting of capacity building activities.
- Sector Programmes focussing on regional issues.

6.3 *Non-Government Organisations*

6.3.1 Towards Ecological Recovery and Regional Alliance (TERRA)

Good start: <http://www.terraper.org/>

Description

Towards Ecological Recovery and Regional Alliance is a Bangkok-based non-government organisation (NGO) concerned with the environment and local communities within the Mekong basin region. It draws together and acts as a support for NGOs and peoples groups within the countries of the lower Mekong region: Vietnam, Thailand, Lao PDR and Cambodia.

Towards Ecological Recovery and Regional Alliance supports local communities in their way of life and other initiatives that protect their culture and environment. Towards Ecological Recovery and Regional Alliance aims to work with local people educating and bringing them together to address ecological issues within their own communities and then supports them in a wider political context.

Towards Ecological Recovery and Regional Alliance is the sister organisation of an older group called Project for Ecological Recovery (PER), established in 1986. PER works to support local communities in Thailand, trying to protect the local environment and people. Towards Ecological Recovery and Regional Alliance focuses on these same issues in the Mekong Region. Given its association with PER, Towards Ecological Recovery and Regional Alliance has practical knowledge of development and environmental issues within Thailand, and draws on this in its interactions with regional groups.

Policies

Towards Ecological Recovery and Regional Alliance has a clearly defined set of policy objectives, which are quoted below.

- To identify root causes of the ecological crisis and raise public awareness about its threat to the communities, cultures and societies in the region.
- To support initiatives or existing regimes of local communities, systems of knowledge, and cultures which manage and protect the natural environment upon which local people depend.
- To strengthen the capacity of local organisations to address ecological issues within their own political context.
- To support research and analysis which can illustrate and strengthen use and management of the natural environment by local communities and cultures.
- To build public participation and influence in policy and decision making processes affecting the natural environment and local people.
- To advance a strategic, holistic and participatory approach to environment and development issues, the ecological crisis, and strategies for recovery.

Towards Ecological Recovery and Regional Alliance also:

- Deals with ecological projects in Indochina and Burma.
- Mediates conflict between local groups and construction projects.
- Studies & monitors the impact of new projects, especially dams.
- Cooperates with the media on research findings.
- Publishes *Watershed* and *New Frontier* - newsletters on ecological issues.

6.3.2 Oxfam International (OXFAM)

Good start: <http://www.oxfam.org/>

Description

Oxfam is an international group of 11 independent, Non-Government Organizations (NGO) founded in 1959 which works towards ending poverty, injustice, distress and suffering around in the world. Oxfam members may come from a wide diversity of backgrounds but all share a commitment to working to end poverty and injustice in the world. Oxfam is presently working towards these goals through local organizations in more than one hundred countries worldwide. The Oxfam International Secretariat, based in Oxford in the United Kingdom, coordinates communication and co-operation between members. It is also here that funds are managed and projects chosen. The goals worked towards at Oxfam are done so on behalf of all of donors and supporters worldwide.

Policies

Oxfam believes in the right of the individual to make informed decisions about their own life and livelihood, and to have those decisions respected at all levels of government and by all people to eliminate the poverty and injustices they face. Oxfam also stands by peoples' rights to a sustainable livelihood. It believes that poverty and powerlessness can be eliminated by human action and political will. Basic human needs and rights can be met and it is Oxfam's job to do all in its power to achieve this.

In the Mekong-Delta Region this means that Oxfam will:

- Work with and through the local community and relevant aid organizations to strengthen their work.
- Investigate projects in relation to the effect on the lives of the villagers involved, to help them make informed decisions.
- Be non-judgmental about these decisions and respect the villagers' rights to govern their own lives.
- Ensure all other groups respect this right.
- Ensure that the villagers' opinions are heard by government and development groups, and that the villagers' needs and rights are met by them.
- Prevent damage to the environment so that the villagers can maintain a sustainable livelihood if they so wish.
- Remain with the village long-term.

Simply, Oxfam's objectives are to make sure the villagers are heard and their decisions respected, and that they are made fully aware of all aspects of any project, its pros, cons and impacts on their lives, the community and the environment.

6.3.3 International Rivers Network (IRN)

Good start: <http://www.irn.org/>

Description

The International Rivers Network is a non-profit, non-government organisation (NGO) that supports local communities to protect their rivers and watershed (catchment) ecosystems. The organisation is concerned with preventing and reversing the degradation of river systems and their biological communities as a means of ensuring the well being of the people whose livelihood and identity is dependent on them. Its responsibilities thus lie not only in maintaining the ecological integrity of physical environments, but also in creating a space for communities to participate in decision-making processes that directly affect their future. The International Rivers Network is therefore also concerned with promoting social equity and defending human rights. Since its establishment in 1985 as an all-volunteer organisation of activists, the International Rivers Network has opened communication channels with environmental and social activists worldwide, creating a network of supporters, financiers, advisers, interns and volunteers.

Policies

The main objectives of the International Rivers Network are based on promoting appropriate river and resource management by discouraging destructive development schemes such as dams, and promoting those that protect river ecosystems and maintain the livelihoods and cultures of local communities that depend on them. These can be summarised by the following:

- To prevent the further degradation of river systems, and work towards maintaining healthy biological ecosystems.
- To support affected communities, thereby protecting their source of livelihood and cultural richness.
- To formulate and promote ecologically sustainable alternatives to developments that destroy the biological and human communities of river systems (i.e., Dams).
- To spread a greater understanding, awareness and respect for rivers, thereby promoting the intrinsic value of the environment and river ecosystems.
- To carry out projects 'responsibly' and in a manner that is exemplary to other organisations that have similar interests in environmental protection and social equity.

6.4 *Academic And Research Institutions*

6.4.1 Probe International (PROBE)

Good start: <http://www.probeinternational.org>

Description

Probe International is a distinct division of the Energy Probe Research foundation. Energy Probe was first established in 1970 as the Energy Team of Pollution Probe. In 1980, it separated from Pollution Probe and became incorporated as Energy Probe Research foundation. It is a Canadian organisation and the majority of its funds come from public donation. It focuses on the environmental, social, and economic effects of Canada's aid and trade abroad revealing the devastating effects such as environmental damage, economic and social disasters of international projects.

Probe International believes the best way to maintain and protect the earth's environment is to ensure everyone has equal rights. That includes the rights of individuals, corporations and governments. Based on this, Probe International exposes the truth about activities that are having a detrimental effect. Probe International is not afraid to expose any group that is acting in a way that takes advantage of someone else's weaker position.

"Probe International fights for the rule of law and democratic processes as much as against ill-conceived development projects. We believe that the best way to protect the earth's environment is to ensure individual, corporate, and government accountability. We also believe that those affected by development projects should have the right to make the final decision whether projects that affect their environments and livelihoods should go ahead."

Probe International also supports citizen groups and rural communities across Asia to put a stop to projects that are environmentally damaging, or destroy resources, properties and livelihood. Probe does so because it believes that the rights of all people should be respected. Probe has stopped uneconomic and destructive hydroelectric developments in South Asia and is now focusing on a plan for more than 50 giant hydroelectric dams and diversion schemes threatening to destroy many species, and millions of farming and fishing communities. In addition Probe International helps organisations around the world that are fighting to protect their environments by publishing their information worldwide and urge that steps should be taken against development.

Policies

The main policy of Probe International is to counter ill-conceived development projects to ensure that the environments and livelihoods of people are protected. Probe International's policy is to educate the public about the benefit and importance of the environment and natural resources around them. Based on this policy, it educates the public in the Mekong region about the environmental and economic benefits of electricity sector reform, and the strengthening of property rights in the Mekong region.

Probe conducts research to determine mechanisms and strategies that could promote sustainable development in the most efficient ways. It investigates how private/public hybrid investors and public financiers can be held legally (financially and environmentally) accountable for their actions.

Probe International promotes democratic processes by encouraging individual responsibility and accountability. It provides businesses, governments and the public with information on energy, environmental and related issues and finally contributes to global harmony and prosperity.

Probe International also has ten principles (stated on their website at <http://www.e-p-r-f.org/eprf/about.html#principles>), which guide them in their activities.

6.4.2 World Commission on Dams (WCD)

Good start: <http://www.dams.org/>

Description

The World Commission on Dams is an independent multinational taskforce which has been set up to conduct an extensive global review of existing large dams, and to thereby develop a set of internationally acceptable guidelines and criteria for sustainable and equitable water resources management.

The World Commission on Dams consists of twelve Commissioners nominated by a wide range of interest groups, with each member serving in an individual capacity and not representing any single institution or country. The Commissioners are nominated on the basis of their experience and expertise, and between them have a broad range of diversity and stakeholder representation.

The research conducted by the World Commission on Dams has indicated that large dams often do not deliver predicted water and hydroelectric services, have a tendency to run behind schedule and above budget, do not distribute benefits equitably, often disadvantage the poor, and generally have an extensive range of negative environmental impacts.

Policies

The objectives of the World Commission on Dams are to:

- Review the effectiveness of dams to provide water and energy resources, and assess alternatives; and,
- Develop internationally acceptable criteria and guidelines for future decision-making in the planning, design, construction, operation, monitoring, and decommissioning of dams.

The World Commission on Dams recommends the following as vital for sustainable and equitable water resources management:

- Transparency during all stages of the development process, with a view to gaining public acceptance.
- Continuing comprehensive options assessment during development, construction and operation of the dam.
- Review and optimisation of existing dams and weirs.
- Researching affected river systems and their associated ecosystem to evaluate negative environmental impacts.
- Recognition of entitlements and even-handed sharing of benefits.
- Ensuring compliance with regulations and design criteria at all stages of construction.
- Sharing water resources fairly between upstream and downstream users: not advantaging one to the disadvantage of the other.

6.5 Media Organisations

6.5.1 Vientiane Times (VTIMES)

Good start: <http://www.vientianetimes.com>

Description

The Vientiane Times, based in the Lao capital of Vientiane, is Lao PDR's first and most popular English language newspaper. Although the newspaper covers a "wide range" of news stories, there is a clear focus on government policies and socio-economic development in Lao PDR. That such issues dominate the Vientiane Times is unsurprising given that all forms of media in Lao PDR

(which operates under a single party system) are controlled and mostly owned by the state. There is no private participation in the operation of the Mass Media.

The Lao People's Revolutionary Party (LPRP), which has held power since 1975, fully owns and has a leading role in the running of the Vientiane Times. The newspaper is controlled by a government agency, the Lao Press in Foreign Languages, which is a specialised agency of the Ministry of Information and Culture. The Vice Director General of the Lao Press in Foreign Languages is also the Editor in Chief of the Vientiane Times. As a consequence of this organisational structure, the primary role of the Vientiane Times is to endorse the policies and activities of the LPRP and the State, and to act as a common thread between the Party, the State and the Lao people residing in Laos and abroad. Decisions made as to the content and reporting style of the Vientiane Times are essentially made at a government level.

The legal framework in which the Vientiane Times operates is also restrictive. The connection between the media and the government virtually ensures that all information published in Lao PDR is LPRP-friendly. Anti-government writings and speeches are prohibited. Those who choose to use the media to slander the state, incite disorder, or distort government policies are punished. Subsequently, although the media is regularly seen as the "Fourth Estate" with a "watchdog" role in critiquing the government, it could be argued that the Vientiane Times is – at the very least – less than diligent in its scrutiny of the Lao PDR government.

With a circulation of 3000 in Laos and a position as the most-read English language newspaper in the country, it could be said that the Vientiane Times has a reasonable level of influence itself. It is seen as the 'official word' on government activities. Moreover the newspaper has a global reach (with an overseas circulation of over 200) which is further facilitated by the Vientiane Times website.

Policies

The overarching aims of Vientiane Times is to disseminate news and information which:

1. help to promote national unity, stability and patriotism within the Lao PDR; and
2. help consolidate support for the LPRP and the government.

The Vientiane Times envisions itself as a tool to mobilise the Lao people to actively engage in the economic and social development of their country. It is a link between the government and the public with the ultimate aim of fostering public harmony and promoting the government. Full support is given for a transition from a self-sufficient economy to a market economy. The Vientiane Times also strives to attract foreign interest and investment to the area.

In summary the Vientiane Times aims to:

- Inform the newspaper's audience (primarily Laotians). The Vientiane Times is, at its most simple, a source of information for the Laotian public.
- Discourage public dissent and reinforce the government's authority.
- Emphasise the favourable aspects of the LPRP and so convince the public of the government's merit.
- Encourage economic and social growth within Laos.
- Achieve the aforementioned stated policies without providing an avenue for criticism of the LPRP.

6.5.2 Watershed: The People's Forum on Ecology (WATERSHED)

Good start: http://www.terra-per.org/English_part/english_part.html

Description

Watershed: The People's Forum on Ecology is a tri-annual publication that critically deals with issues pertaining to development within the Mekong region. It is focussed on, but is not restricted to, reporting on environmental concerns, democratic participation, poverty alleviation, and political activity, principally within Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam, Lao PDR and Burma.

Watershed is published under the auspices of the NGO Towards Ecological Recovery and Regional Alliance (TERRA), the sister organisation of Project for Ecological Recovery (PER). Collectively, TERRA and PER are internationally registered as the Foundation for Ecological Recovery. Under this organisational umbrella, *Watershed* is specifically orientated towards providing an outlet for the voices and opinions of local communities within the Mekong Region.

Watershed is committed to maintaining the highest levels of journalistic integrity. To that end, it will endeavour to provide unbiased coverage of topical issues through free and independent journalism. Notwithstanding, the publication will prioritise submissions from a grassroots perspective, actively giving voice to marginalised groups.

In general:

- *Watershed* is committed to publishing the views and opinions of regional and international contributors to facilitate greater dialogue on issues of common concern to all in the Mekong Region.
- Wherever possible *Watershed* will articulate the voices of local and community groups.
- Disclaimer: Articles published in *Watershed* do not necessarily express the views of TERRA or of the editor.

Policies

Watershed has active policy to:

- Encourage the free flow and exchange of ideas between people's organisations in Burma, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand and Vietnam.
- Support local communities to protect rivers, forests, lands, and livelihoods.
- Advocate critical and diverse thinking promoting freedom of expression.
- Disseminate information to stakeholders drawing on the experience of past development projects.
- Welcome local, regional and international handwritten or typed contributions in the Lao, Khmer, Vietnamese, Thai, French or English languages.
- Distribute *Watershed* at nominal charge generally and subsidised rates for NGOs and community groups within the Mekong Region.
- Encourage greater democratic participation in decision-making structures within the Mekong.
- Facilitate greater dialogue about the impacts and outcomes of development within the Mekong Region.

6.5.3 Cable News Network (CNN)

Good start: <http://www.cnn.com/>

Description

CNN is the World's leading 24-hour global news distribution organisation and was one of the first to launch the concept of 24-hour television news. Since then, CNN has extended its news network to reach over 1 billion people around the world in 212 countries. The network provides its audience with in depth live coverage of breaking news events at an international level.

CNN distributes news and current affairs to a large range of people in many different forms and is responsible for providing prompt, accurate and appropriate information to its audience. In order to achieve the main goal of CNN, which is to "...provide its audience with in-depth, live coverage and analysis of breaking news events" CNN carries out three major activities:

- Development of a network of sources from which information is gained.
- Development and quality control of articles and scripts.
- Distribution.

One of CNN's key commitments is to provide news as it breaks. In order to do this, it is vital that the stories are published quickly and are easily accessible. CNN is a world leader in this field and uses a variety of media formats to achieve this, including, the Internet, television, radio, enhanced video sources and mobile devices. By using a combination of these different platforms, CNN is able to distribute up-to-date information throughout the world.

Policies

CNN strives to behave in a way that is socially responsible, truthful and objective, conscientious, shows respect for human values, professional solidarity and sensitive to the matters at hand. It is vital that CNN behave in a manner that is ethical and sensitive.

In order to ensure that CNN maintains high standards of professionalism the following policies have been developed:

- Every effort will be made to ensure that the factual content of news articles is accurate.
- The quality of reports is of a high standard.
- The news that CNN reports is appropriate and sensitive to the matters being discussed.
- All reports and publications will be balanced and unbiased.
- Reports and publications will be relevant to the general public and to the target audience.
- Publications will be released in a manner that is timely and appropriate.
- All sources will be treated as being confidential and shall not be disclosed, unless express permission is granted.

6.6 *Local Peoples Organisations*

6.6.1 Nam Theun Villagers (NTV)

Description

The Nam Theun villagers are situated on the Nakai Plateau in Lao PDR. They live in a close-knit village, where the population is all ethnic Hmong, and value their land highly, not only for agricultural purposes but also culturally. They live a subsistence life. Most of

the villagers are farmers relying on rice and other crops such as corn, sago and the raising of livestock. Some are fishermen, the river being an invaluable resource of fish and other edible biota. Any surplus food supply is either stored for later use, or sold at the markets to generate a small income to buy other resources. There is a strong sense of responsibility to one's family and the people of the village to ensure living conditions do not decline

6.6.2 TonLe Sap Fishers (TLSF)

Description

TonLe Sap Fishers is a representative organisation for the fishing communities in the TonLe Sap region of Cambodia. The main aim of the group is the sustaining of fish populations in the lake. These fish provide over 75% of the villagers' animal protein intake, and thus without them they would not only struggle for a balanced diet, but also to eat at all. On a larger scale the TonLe Sap Fishers are active in ensuring the minimisation of commercial fishing licenses on the lake. They have expressed concern over developments further upstream, as they might significantly deplete fish stocks. The Fishers play a large role in the protection of the TonLe Sap mangrove forests. These ecosystems are an essential part of the lakes biosphere and thus are important to villagers' lives, particularly because they are fish habitats.

Apart from ensuring that villagers' livelihoods are secure, the TonLe Sap Fishers work to provide food, housing, clothing, education and medical assistance to the Lake communities. They are also active in the growth of tourism on the lake; they believe that tourism, particularly eco-tourism, is of benefit to the economics and development of the region and assist in spreading the word about various concerns.

As the Fishers' primary focus is as a voice for concerns, they meet regularly to discuss issues such as sustainable development and economic, welfare, social and political issues. Any action taken is representative of and supported by a majority of the TonLe Sap citizens. All citizens are encouraged to become involved in TonLe Sap Fishers initiatives. They work closely with local authorities to ensure that requirements and concerns about policy and development are met.

Policies

- Maintenance and growth of fish stocks in TonLe Sap to ensure fishers' livelihood and income.
- Improvement of the quality of life for the population on the TonLe Sap, both for the present and the future.
- Ensuring that TonLe Sap is not adversely affected by commercial or international interests, such as dams, tourism, or commercial fishing.
- Maintain the biodiversity of the flooded forests and in the lake.
- Ensure the representation of TonLe Sap people at a local, regional, and national level through a democratic and efficient organisation, thus ensuring better government legislation.
- Continual lobbying of the Cambodian Government for the maintenance and environmental improvement of the TonLe Sap.
- Expansion of the organisation.
- The sharing indigenous knowledge on the methods of fishing and the local environment with others.
- Mediate conflicts that may arise between various lake communities.

6.7 *Engineering Organisations (Multinationals)*

6.7.1 Transfield (TRANSFIELD)

Good Start: <http://www.transfield.com.au/>

Description

Transfield is a private Australian company. It is involved in developing new technologies for both the government and private sectors. Transfield has often had several roles from project initiation through construction to maintenance and operation. From its origin 45 years ago, Transfield Holdings has expanded into one of Australia's pre-eminent project delivery, engineering, construction and maintenance groups. Transfield is currently targeting key markets such as road and rail, process and water, where they see growth opportunities over the next few years. They have won many prestigious awards for their many varied projects.

The Transfield Group comprises more than 30 divisions operating across a diverse range of markets, principally providing development, engineering and maintenance to government and industry. Annual turnover is \$1.7 billion and employees number 6,500. Transfield, which has operations throughout Australia, New Zealand and in several South-East Asian countries, is an instrument of dramatic and beneficial change. Transfield is a leading Australian Group with proven expertise in:

- Project Development
- Design and Construction
- Operations and Maintenance
- Infrastructure Investments

Policies

Transfield believes that its organisation is well structured to react quickly to the changes in the market and the demands of our customers. Advisory Committees have been established in Queensland, Western Australia and Victoria to facilitate customer interaction and to support various Group initiatives.

Transfield prides itself on being a leader in 'build, own and operate' projects, being at the forefront of Australia's major infrastructure projects and, over the last 45 years, delivering to every one of its clients. Transfield wants to be a market leader in the provision of outsourced mechanical, electrical, instrumentation, engineering, and facilities management services, and owns a range of infrastructure assets in the water and power sectors.

Transfield Construction undertakes all operations in an environmentally sustainable and responsible manner, which protects the environment and prevents pollution. Its environmental work practices are enhanced through a process of continual improvement. The primary goal is to prevent incidents occurring, which may adversely impact upon the environment and people.

Transfield's environmental objectives are to:

- Comply with all applicable legal, regulatory and other requirements for environmental management and protection.
- Implement and maintain an ISO 14001 based Environmental Management System which provides the framework for this policy, subsequent procedures and our management system.
- Identify and assess all activities that may create environmental impacts and risks. These risks will be managed by striving to achieve best practice.
- Provide an ongoing education program that generates a positive culture of environmental sustainability and excellence;
- Ensure that all Transfield's employees and associated stakeholders and contractors are aware of their personal duty of care for the environment.
- Display and promote this policy amongst staff, contractors and interested members of the community.
- Report on its environmental performance to its shareholders and employees.

6.7.2 Lahmeyer International (LAHMEYER)

Good Start: <http://www.lahmeyer.de>

Description

Lahmeyer International is one of the largest internationally leading companies for consulting and engineering services working in approximately 140 countries worldwide. The company group comprises six subsidiaries, together with a network of ten international offices, five regional offices in Germany and almost twenty representors worldwide. Lahmeyer International has a staff of 1000 from more than forty countries. Its core activities are project management and consulting. The Lahmeyer International management structure consists of a team of experienced economic and project engineers.

Lahmeyer International was formed thirty years ago from the engineering department of the former Lahmeyer AG that had been founded in 1890 under the name W. Lahmeyer & Co. by the engineer Wilhelm Lahmeyer. From the early 1900's W. Lahmeyer & Co.'s activities were focussed on hydropower plants in Europe. Lahmeyer International expanded their operation over the following decades to include energy, water resources and hydropower, transportation and project management and now works in many areas including Asia.

More recently, projects in the Asia region have included:

- 1970 Laos: Vientiane municipal grid.
- Thailand: Consulting services for the PEA utility company.
- 1984 Thailand: Kaeng Krung hydropower plant and irrigation system.
- 1994 Malaysia: Kuala Langat 730 MW combined-cycle power station (Build Own Operate project).
- 1995 Malaysia: Bakun hydropower plant, 2,400 MW, 650 km submarine cable interconnection.
- 1997 Nepal: Middle Marsyangdi hydropower plant.
- 1990 Thailand: Two 120 MW combined-cycle power stations with heat recovery steam generators.

Lahmeyer's Hydropower and Water Resources Division consists of several departments:

- The Hydropower Plant Design department.
- Technical department for Water Resources, Energy and Land Development.
- The Geology, Geotechnical Engineering and Dams department.
- The Hydraulic Engineering and Hydropower Design department.
- The technical department for Plant and Equipment.

Policies

Lahmeyer International works operates in accordance with national and international quality management regulations. The operational principles are thus verifiable and the quality of client relationships is ensured. Lahmeyer International has acquired DIN EN ISO 9001 certification, confirmed by DQS in 1994, 1997 and 2000. Additionally, Lahmeyer International is a member of over 35 domestic and foreign professional and trade associations, committees and societies.

It is Lahmeyer's aim, through strategic alliances, to expand project partnerships into lasting cooperative relationships and to share know-how and other resources with our partners. They use the media to achieve this. Lahmeyer concentrates on providing engineering services for complex infrastructure projects. They see working in an environmentally friendly manner as crucial to their success.

6.7.3 Scott Wilson International Consultancy (SWI)

Good Start: <http://www.scottwilson.com/main.html>

Description

Scott Wilson is an international consultancy company. They provide a wide range of engineering, management, planning and environmental services for built and natural environments. Scott Wilson is entirely independent and is owned by its working directors and senior staff. It's operations occur in more than 50 countries in Europe, Africa, the Middle East, Asia and the USA. Scott Wilson's worldwide staff of over 2500 employees include project managers, town planners, urban designers, civil, structural, and geotechnical engineers, architects, systems engineers, e-system specialists environmental scientists, transportation planners, economists, and other specialists.

In the area of Environmental Engineering, Scott Wilson has staff with expertise in environmental, waste management, water, coastal and rural development. Some of their specialised services include the following:

Environmental

- Environmental monitoring, auditing and management systems.
- Noise assessment, air quality, ecology, forestry, agriculture and socio-economics.

Water

- Rural and urban water supply & distribution.
- Dams, reservoirs and barrages.
- Irrigation, drainage and flood protection.

Rural Development

- Agriculture and irrigation.
- Community participation and management.

Coastal

- Port and coastal development impact assessments.
- Coastal and hydraulic engineering.
- Breakwater and dynamic berm construction.

Scott Wilson's Regional Office for the Asia Pacific Region is located in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. They also have offices in Australia, China, Indonesia, Hong Kong, Singapore, Thailand, Timor and Vietnam.

Policies

Scott Wilson is committed to developing comprehensive, sustainable and cost effective solutions to environmental, waste management, water, coastal and rural development problems. Scott Wilson employs environmentalists, engineers and scientists dedicated to assessing risk and providing sensitive management solutions to safeguard our environment and infrastructure.

Scott Wilson believes their global coverage is an advantage as they can pool resources and give a project the best attention. They wish to work together as a perfect team. As they say,

"People have always been the foundation and strength of Scott Wilson, but today more than ever, we have the ability to create project teams utilising professionals located almost anywhere in the world."

Scott Wilson is dedicated to providing the best services, in a safe and conscientious manner. At the same time they are always looking to improve.

7. Student Tips

A wide range of student tips have been sourced from discussion and evaluation activities with students who participated in the 2001 Mekong e-Sim. The students involved were: Eleanor Gee, Simon Watkinson, Michelle Philp, Simon Jenner, Elsie Mann and Phil Staniford, all from the University of Adelaide. Take note of these tips as they are from a student's perspective and address the issues the participants encountered in a previous year. Don't make the same mistakes again this year. The student tips are included on the e-Sim website under Course Documents then 'Help and FAQ'. The titles of the various topics are included below.

Background Information Is Not All Boring

"Background information contains a lot of useful knowledge, which can be directly applied to the various assessment tasks and stages of the e-Sim."

"It can provide you with directions in your research and should therefore be carefully examined."

"It is important to understand what your role encompasses. Use the background information to learn how you should be interacting with other personae."

"The student handbook provides an excellent reference for nearly all aspects of the Mekong e-Sim."

Get Into The e-Sim ASAP

"Get started as soon as possible."

"Get into the e-Sim straight away and approach it with enthusiasm."

"There is lots to do and lots to learn, but also lots to gain."

"The e-Sim is run on a very tight schedule and thus requires an immediate start. If you do not perform the suggested activities and read the relevant background papers, you will find yourself with a distinct disadvantage once group work begins and you realise you do not know anything about the e-Sim or what you are supposed to be doing."

"The time between assessment pieces is not long, so don't leave them too late as it will get quite hectic when you realise the due dates."

"Familiarise yourself with the due dates and plan the time spent on each task from there. Always be working with the knowledge of when the task must be submitted."

Bumble Your Way Through – Keep Working

"Don't worry if you feel as though you don't know what is going on - just keep plugging away."

"You most likely won't understand every aspect of the exercise until you have time to reflect, but keep trying to see the overall picture."

"At the start, you may not have a clue of how the whole simulation will work. But, after you start using it and get to know it, things will fall into place."

"You'll probably be confused throughout most of the e-Sim, but as long as you don't give up it will come together at the end."

"At the start you may feel confused about the e-Sim but it will eventually become clear, even if it's not until the very end."

"Feeling lost is not an excuse to sit around and do nothing. You must keep working at the e-Sim and performing the suggested activities and over time, things will work out."

"The more work you invest, the faster you will understand the e-Sim."

Development Of The Roles And Responsibilities Of Your Persona

"Develop an understanding of the roles and responsibilities of your persona as soon as possible."

"Find out about roles and responsibilities as soon as possible - get to know the persona acronyms."

"I found that the acronyms used for the role very confusing at first because I hadn't learned what they stood for. Familiarise yourself with other personae early on and attempt to form a picture of how different roles work both together and against each other."

"Read and understand the role profile provided for your persona, however, performing your own research regarding your persona, in conjunction with the provided role profile, will prove invaluable and generate a much more coherent understanding of your role."

"Knowing the acronyms for the other personae will be a distinct advantage."

"Know from early on which roles are your friends and allies, and which have opposing views."

"A united front will definitely help your cause. Develop alliances whenever possible and even present combined submissions to the public inquiries."

"Bribery and corruption exist within the 'real world'. Some roles have hidden agendas. Do some digging and see what you come up with. This may help you to decide whom you want to form alliances with."

Be Aware Of Information You Need For Later Tasks

"All key emails should be retained. There is nothing worse than realising you have deleted an email that you now require."

"Hold on to key emails - be aware of what you need for later assessment tasks."

"Recognise which emails are worth keeping as they can be referred to in later assessment."

"Be aware of what information you need for future assessment tasks such as the debriefing report, as emails provide some of the best sources of material."

"Familiarise yourself with what is required for future assessment tasks. This allows you to evaluate information and communication in a more valuable and efficient manner and will be extremely helpful when preparing your debriefing essay."

"Remember that you'll have to reflect on this at the end, so try to keep a broad perspective of what is going on."

"Check out what is required for your assessment tasks. You can often use quotes from your correspondence with other groups. Keep any emails that may seem important."

"Ensure that there is always memory available in your inbox. You do not want to miss messages because your inbox is at capacity."

"You will need to use quotes from emails received in your assessment tasks. Don't delete them after you've read them once. Try creating a word document and pasting important messages in there in order to free up your email inbox if that is an issue."

Participation

"Participation is the key to a happy and successful e-Sim."

"If you interact within your group from the start, you'll understand what's going on a lot more."

"The Mekong e-Sim will only return learning experiences equivalent to the effort that you devote."

"You get out what you put in. It can be fun, and the lessons learned will be worthwhile when considering your future career employment."

"Most of your learning will come from just being involved on a day-to-day basis."

"The maximum benefits from the e-Sim are obtained when you act in your role and behave appropriately."

"Enthusiastic participation will unlock the benefits of the Mekong e-Sim providing you with many learning experiences."

Be Professional – Act In Your Role

"Be professional in the manner in which you conduct yourselves."

"Be aware that the way in which you present yourself will influence how others react to you. Do your best to be true to your role at all times and do not let your own personal bias infiltrate if it is not along the lines of your persona. The e-Sim works best when all groups are represented as they are in real life."

"Act out your persona to the best of your ability regardless of your personal beliefs or opinions. Make the experience as realistic as possible."

"Take on your role in the same manner as if in real life. Keep it realistic - speak like them, think like them, be them."

"Don't take the roles too seriously. Remember that you're only acting and so is everyone else. Be Professional but enjoy yourself."

"The more you get involved, the easier everything flows."

"Media Groups: Remember that you are writing a news article, not an engineering report. Try to keep it short and interesting. If you don't want to read it chances are nobody else will either."

"Villagers: Just because you are educated doesn't mean that the people in your role are. Make your responses appropriate to your role."

"As in life, people will take your message more seriously if you're polite."

Communication Within Your Group

"Communicate well within your group - divide up tasks early."

"If you interact right from the start you'll understand what is going on a lot more."

"Try to get into a rhythm of communication within your group as early as possible as it will make the group assessments much easier to control and direct."

"Email any correspondence to your own group so they know what is going on and can contribute to the situation i.e. reply. Don't let one person do all the work or you will be left behind."

"Use the skills you have learnt already throughout your degree with regard to group dynamics."

"There is not enough time to work inefficiently. Divide the tasks up early and ensure a group leader is elected to oversee the group process and to push buttons when necessary."

"A group leader will be able to develop a sense of group uniformity and teamwork."

"Ensure communication is kept up throughout the entirety of the e-Sim."

"Work out what your aims are as a group, that way everybody's individual contributions will benefit the group's overall purpose."

"Communication within your group is vital to ensure you stay on top of everything."

Use Any Available Information – Both Issued And Researched Material

"Make use of the available information/resources e.g. the map."

"Participants should refer to the map of the Mekong region while reading background information. This will help to establish a more comprehensive picture of the situation throughout the Mekong River Basin."

"Look at other resources, as the information provided in the e-Sim handbook is a long way from exhaustive."

Modelling Professional Conduct

"The e-Sim is a great opportunity to experience the 'real life' interaction in which you will be involved when you graduate."

"The e-Sim was designed to provide participants with an opportunity to model professional practice attributes."

"For engineering students, it gives participants a chance to get away from the formulas and see another side of what engineering involves."

"The development issues occurring within the Mekong region provides a realistic situation, it should therefore be treated in this manner."

"The simulation is a good introduction to the issues faced outside of the usual theory based subjects. It models complex real life situations providing a practical indication of the work undertaken outside the classroom."

"One of the objectives of the e-Sim is to model realistic professional practice."

"Every member of your group should be participating equally. Realistically, if you do not do your job you will lose your job. If someone is not contributing a reasonable amount, bring this to their attention in a kind and considerate way. Harsh words will only provoke further disruption."

Length of the Submissions – Emails, Discussion Submissions And Public Inquiry Submissions

"You will find as the e-Sim advances that quantity of submissions does not equal quality, nor will it lead you to success. Be aware of what works best by evaluating other people's communication and attempt to learn from other's mistakes."

"There is lots of correspondence throughout the duration of the e-Sim and it should be your aim to make your correspondence as effective as possible."

"The quality of the correspondence is the most important factor. Identify exactly what you are trying to say and focus only on those salient points."

"I found long submissions daunting to read and often overlooked or left them 'to read later'. Brief and to the point is the best method when considering maximum effect."

"Keep your emails and submissions short and sharp - Nobody wants to read long submissions."

"Short pieces will increase the chance of you receiving a response."

"People will be more likely to respond to a polite email than to one that is abusive or arrogant."

Make Use Of The Time You Are Given

"The e-Sim is a concentrated learning experience. It is important to make sure you are always working on something within your group."

"The workload involved implies it is best if you divide the work associated between your group members. You're just wasting time if you are all doing the same thing."

Make Your Name Known

"Get your group name out there."

"Make sure people know who you are, this becomes important when trying to gather support and allies for any venture you may wish to pursue as a consortium."

Don't Take Things Personally

"News reports and other articles have the tendency to mis-portray certain roles. If your group is misquoted or negatively portrayed, don't lash out. Remain in your profile at all times and try to portray the real identity of your persona, which will eventually reflect in other's opinions of your role."

"Quite often news reports are designed to create a stir by reporting controversial information. A simple reply to these publications may sort everything out but angry words will only worsen the problem."

Keeping Up With News Events

"Not every news article released is going to affect you or your persona, but try to keep up on recent news"

"News events provide participants with relevant up to date information regarding occurrences within the Mekong River Basin. Relevant articles should be read."

8. Background Reading

Background reading on the Mekong region and the issues you will deal with in the e-Sim is plentiful, and you will find the information contained in the background papers very helpful to your understanding of the Mekong e-Sim. However, you will find that you don't have a lot of time to read background papers, and that some articles are more useful to you than others. These abstracts have been prepared to help you choose background reading that is relevant to your persona or issue paper. Try to choose a broad range of articles to read, keeping in mind who your opponents and allies are, and what their point of view might be.

Be aware that the reading included in the student handbook does not cover every relevant topic, and that your picture of the issues will be incomplete unless you do some further reading. Background reading might seem like an "optional extra", but with a broad understanding of the Mekong region and the issues surrounding development, you will gain much more from the e-Sim than you otherwise would.

SUMMARIES

8.1 *Background To The Region And Development Issues*

8.1.1 *Development in the MRB (Document 1)*

This document is quite long, but is in 5 parts. Each part deals with a different aspect of the Mekong River Basin (MRB) and contains a discussion of the current situation, possible development opportunities, and the environmental implications of development. Part One deals with agriculture and forestry. Part Two discusses natural resource use. This covers fisheries, the trade in natural wildlife, mining, and water diversion and irrigation. Part three talks about hydropower and other energy sources. Part Four deals with transportation. Part Five discusses urban and rural development, including sanitation and water supply; it also looks at industry and tourism.

This paper is worth reading because it gives a really good overall background to the region, with comparisons between the four countries through which the Mekong flows. Statistics help to illustrate the state of the region.

8.1.2 *Environments in transition: Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand, Vietnam (Document 2)*

This study by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) provides an overview of environmental issues with a view to enhancing sustainability through improved resource management.

"Environments in transition" is organized in four chapters. Chapter 1 provides an overview of the basic characteristics of the four countries. Chapter 2 analyzes and describes the extent of environmental stress and emerging problems. Chapter 3 provides the policy and institutional framework for improvements and interventions. Chapter 4 summarizes the environmental action and priority needs for their resolution and it also sets out a strategic framework and recommendations for addressing the key issues identified in each country.

Chapter 2 has been broken up into the following sections: Transboundary issues and ADB's regional assistance initiatives; Forests and their utilization; Biodiversity and Protected areas; Water resources; Coastal and marine resources management; Urban and industrial pollution; and Energy. Chapters 3 and 4 have also been broken up into sections, one for each country.

This report provides a good insight into the issues of importance to the Mekong countries, and the particular relevance of these issues to each country. The article is provided in different sections so that you can choose areas of interest to read about.

8.2 *Public Consultation In Decision Making*

8.2.1 *Public participation in the MRB (Document 3)*

This paper looks at possible models for public participation in decision-making and development in the Mekong River Basin (MRB). It explores the benefits and costs of involving the public, and looks at the legal factors involved. Case studies of public involvement in the Mekong region are presented, including the Nam Theun II Dam development. It would be beneficial for decision making groups to look at how the public is involved, but Document 4 is a much more succinct look at public participation, and is a more suitable paper for those not involved in decision making.

8.2.2 *Use of public consultation in the Nam Theun II Hydroelectric project (Document 4)*

This article gives a short, simple explanation of the public consultation methods used in the Nam Theun II project, who has been consulted, and why. It assesses the effectiveness of the various methods used. This is a really good introduction to the involvement of the public in environmental decision-making, and will help you understand the basis for the e-Sim.

8.3 Hydropower

8.3.1 *The Politics of hydropower: developing the Mekong (Document 5)*

This is a very long paper, but it is worth persevering with because it gives a very thorough look at hydropower development in the Mekong region. It delves into the recent history of the region, and the political and social climate in which development is occurring. The paper examines the stakeholders of hydropower development, how hydropower development is implemented and why. The paper examines the different perspectives on the Mekong River, and why development on the river is such a complex issue. The social implications of large-scale dams are looked at. The paper deals with the modes of development, including Build Own Operate Transfer (BOOT) schemes. Case studies of the Nam Theun II Dam, and the TonLe Sap are presented.

A. PRO-HYDROPOWER

8.3.2 *Hydropower and environment for Lao PDR (Document 6)*

This is a Laotian government document, published by the Ministry of Handicrafts (MIH). It explores the aims of hydropower development, the current status of such development in Lao PDR. It also puts the government perspective on Build Own Operate Transfer (BOOT) schemes, and the role of hydropower in sustainable development.

B. ANTI-HYDROPOWER

8.3.3 *Power struggle – The impacts of hydro-development in Laos (Document 7)*

This article, published by the International Rivers Network (IRN), looks at the downfalls of hydropower in Lao PDR. The article is divided into the following sections: resettlement, compensation, logging and access to protected areas, Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs), and regulation. It illustrates a Non Government Organisation (NGO) perspective on hydropower development in the Mekong region.

8.3.4 *Electrowatt Engineering: Consultants for Mekong dams (Document 8)*

This article was published in the magazine "Watershed". It examines a number of case studies of human rights breaches and environmental degradation due to dam construction. It also looks at problems that have occurred in the relocation of affected people.

8.3.5 *Financing infrastructure – CityLink and Nam Theun II: Infrastructure for private profit (Document 9)*

Also published by "Watershed", this article looks at Build Own Operate Transfer (BOOT) schemes. It discusses the CityLink project in Melbourne and looks at the similarities between it and the planned Nam Theun II development. The article explores the conflicting ideals of corporate confidentiality and public accountability, and looks at the financial implications of the Nam Theun II Dam development and the risks involved for the Laotian government.

8.4 Assessments Of The Nam Theun II Project

8.4.1 Third report of the International Advisory Group on the World Bank's handling of social and environmental issues in the proposed Nam Theun II hydropower project in Lao PDR. (Document 10)

This is a long paper that looks at the World Bank's involvement in the Nam Theun II Dam Project. It is published by the International Advisory Group (IAG), and provides a comprehensive and unbiased look at the issues surrounding the dam, and the impacts of development. The paper is divided into 6 chapters. Chapter One is an introduction. Chapter Two contains an assessment of the economic status of the project, and the government plans for poverty alleviation. Chapter Three presents some of the social impacts of preliminary measures. It also looks at legislation for the management of the Nam Theun II catchment area, and the environmental and social management plan for the project, including resettlement issues. Lastly it deals with downstream effects of the project. Chapter Four explores the environmental issues and risks of the project, and Chapter Five looks at global considerations. Chapter Six gives the conclusions of the IAG. Note the list of acronyms at the end of the document.

8.4.2 Nam Theun 2 Hydropower Project in Laos – Another World Bank Disaster in the (Document 11)

This article gives an anti-hydropower perspective of the NTII project. It gives a broad description of the current project status and the main impacts: destroyed livelihoods, environmental and social impacts, economic risk, uncontrolled logging, violation of WCD guidelines and false promises.

8.4.3 Lao – The Nam Theun II Hydroelectric Project; Report number PID6854 (Document 12)

This document is a succinct report on the Nam Theun II dam project. It includes project background, objective, components, financing, implementation and status. While it provides a good summary of the project itself, none of the social, economic or environmental issues surrounding the project are investigated.

8.4.4 More water, more fish? (Document 13)

This study by The Association for International Water and Forest Studies (FIVAS – It's a Norwegian phrase) is an independent assessment of the current status and effects of the Theun-Hinboun Hydropower project (encompassing the Nam Theun II dam). FIVAS are highly critical of the project on the grounds of its environmental and social effects. This paper includes insightful descriptions of the villages in the area affected by Nam Theun II and the villagers' knowledge and concerns about the project and its expected effects. Although long, this paper is an invaluable source of information about the affected villages and the perceptions of villagers about the project.

8.4.5 Damming the Sesan River: Impacts in Cambodia and Vietnam (Document 14)

This short article looks at the negative human impacts of a hydropower project in progress in Cambodia and Vietnam. It considers social impacts resulting from flooding, loss of agricultural production and fishing resources, water quality, and compensation issues.

8.5 Natural Resources

8.5.1 Food for the people: Natural fisheries of the Mekong (Document 15)

This article, published by Watershed, is a great source of general information about the geography, flow cycles and ecology of the different reaches of the Mekong and its major tributaries. It looks at the uniquely large-scale fish migrations that occur in the Mekong, and the role of forests, rapids and deep pools in the life cycles of fish species. The article then discusses deforestation, and the factors affecting fisheries, including sediment load, chemical pollution and dams. Also included are a summary of development in the last 40 years, and an EIA for Nam Theun II, focusing on the impact of the dam, on the fish populations of the river.

8.5.2 Environmental threats to the Mekong Delta (Document 16)

Published by "Watershed", this article explores the alternatives to infrastructure development in the Mekong delta. It presents the threats to the delta including flooding and salinity, and compares the solutions proposed by the World Bank (WB) with those traditionally adopted by local people. The article also includes a look at the history of agricultural expansion in the delta. This article demonstrates some of the arguments against the need for development, and although focused on the delta, it presents ideas that could equally be applied to the rest of the Mekong.

8.6 Transboundary Water Flows

8.6.1 The Evolution of an International Water Resources Management Regime in the Mekong River Basin (Document 17)

This article covers the history of the Mekong River Basin (MRB) water management regimes, from 1957 to the present. It deals with the three different management phases in the context of the political climate of the time. The article takes an in-depth look at the current Mekong River Commission (MRC) and the agreement that is the basis for the Commission. The strengths and weaknesses of the current agreement are explored and compared with previous agreements. This article is invaluable for those interested in the MRC agreement on transboundary water flows.

8.6.2 Agreement on the cooperation for the sustainable development of the Mekong River Basin (Document 18)

This document is the agreement signed by Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and Vietnam on transboundary flows. The agreement establishes the Mekong River Commission (MRC), and prescribes its structures and powers. It is probably more important to gain an understanding of the intentions and importance of this document than to read the actual agreement. A good explanation and appraisal of it is given in Document 17.

8.7 Assessments of the Lancang Power and Mekong Navigation Development Project

8.7.1 China's Upper Mekong Dams Endanger Millions Downstream (Document 19)

This document gives an excellent overview of the Lancang Development project. It gives a description of the development proposal and current status, and briefly discusses the major environmental, economic and social impacts the development will have on the downstream reaches of the Mekong.

8.7.2 Proposed Mekong Dam Scheme in China Threatens Millions in Downstream Countries (Document 20)

This document is a report on China's proposed hydropower development on the Lancang-Mekong. It looks at issues such as energy, politics, lack of education and consultation, and ecosystem impacts including sediment transport, erosion, flood cycle regulation and biodiversity.

8.7.3 Downstream ecological implications of China's Lancang Hydropower and Mekong Navigation Project (Document 21)

This highly recommended document is essential reading. An abstract is included here, but to access the full 7000-word document you may need to go to the following link: <http://www.irm.org/programs/lancang>.

China intends to develop Lancang or Mekong mainstream hydropower in Yunnan and make the Mekong mainstream navigable from Yunnan to the South China Sea, a distance of some 2,500 kilometres. This poses unprecedented environmental and social problems for the downstream countries Myanmar, Laos, Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam. Severe ecological deterioration of the Mekong River is a foregone conclusion if this plan proceeds. And of course the impacts will not be limited to the river. The downstream countries will be forced to undertake exhausting and largely futile efforts to protect themselves and make up for the damage to their agriculture, fisheries, forests, and way of life. Cambodia and Vietnam, the two countries farthest downstream, will benefit little and will experience the worst negative impacts from the scheme. Particularly at risk are Cambodia's Great Lake and Vietnam's Plain of Reeds and Mekong Delta. China itself will not be immune to adverse impacts. Of particular concern will be sedimentation of the Lancang hydropower dam reservoirs. Sediment in the Lancang mainstream, already great, is likely to increase due to larger and more frequent landslides and other effects brought about by the dams and their reservoirs. The useful lifetime of China's Lancang cascade of hydropower dams is likely to be only about thirty years rather than the one hundred years foreseen by project proponents.

SELECTED PAPERS

Some of the more relevant background reading papers have been included in this handbook (Documents 1, 4, 5, 11, 14, 15, 19, 20, 21). These papers were selected based on their widespread appeal to many different roles and personae. It is STRONGLY recommended that at least these selected papers be read to enable a firm background and understanding of the Mekong region to be developed. In addition, any background papers not included in this handbook that are of relevance to your role or persona should be read, allowing the further specialised development of knowledge pertinent to your role within the Mekong e-Sim. SEE YOUR UNIVERSITY SUBJECT FACILITATOR TO ACCESS PAPERS.