Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)

The Mekong Wetlands Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use Programme (MWBP) started to develop its monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system during the first six month of programme implementation. Active involvement of programme staff in further defining the outcomes and developing performance indicators has helped to increase understanding of the intended results of the programme at a very early stage. The aims of the M&E system are to:

- provide information for adaptive management;
- create accountability to donors and partners; and
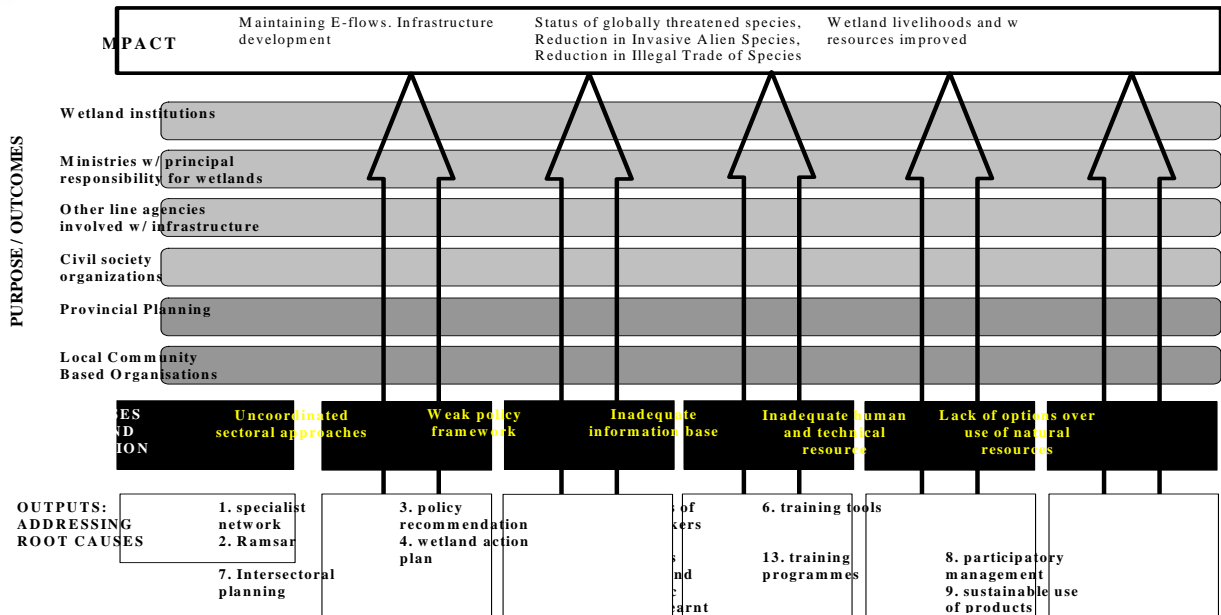- generate lessons learnt.

M&E framework

Logframe level	Focus	Information source & reporting	Reporting frequency
IMPACT "goal"	Changes in biodiversity, ecosystem and human well-being	- Biodiversity surveys, PPAs - community monitoring at demo-sites - (Annual indicator reporting)	Baseline, every 1-5 years, ex-post
OUTCOMES "purpose"	Acceptance of knowledge. Behaviour change (individuals). Policy changes and plans (organisations)	- Review of policy documents - Steering Committee Meetings - Annual Review & Planning Meetings - Post-training assessment - Annual indicator reporting	Baseline, annually Ex-post (after 10 years on sustainability)
OUTPUTS	Programme deliverables: products and services. Equity of reach / participation	- Annual indicator reporting	Quarterly
ACTIVITIES	Activity reports, milestones, deliverables	- Quarterly activity report (against workplan milestones) - Reporting on programme deliverables (trainings, workshop report) - Regular staff meetings - Staff performance assessments (against individual workplans)	Quarterly
INPUTS	Cost, staff & partner time, materials	- Regular staff meetings - Financial reporting formats - Programme Audits	Monthly Annually

Phase A

The main contribution of internal M&E activities to Phase A has been measuring the extent to which the enabling environment and other results have been achieved, and where additional efforts are required. Building of staff capacity has so far focussed on understanding the logical framework approach, conceptualising the programme intervention logic and meeting donor's reporting standards. During Phase B, the focus of M&E will move more towards learning and documenting lessons learnt. The Situation Analysis and other studies can be used as a baseline to provide matching evidence of successful approaches piloted by the programme in the demonstration sites.

The MWBP logframe is very large and complex as the outputs do not bear a clear one-to-one relationship with the outcomes. This diagram shows the generic relationship between outputs, outcomes and impacts (national components only)
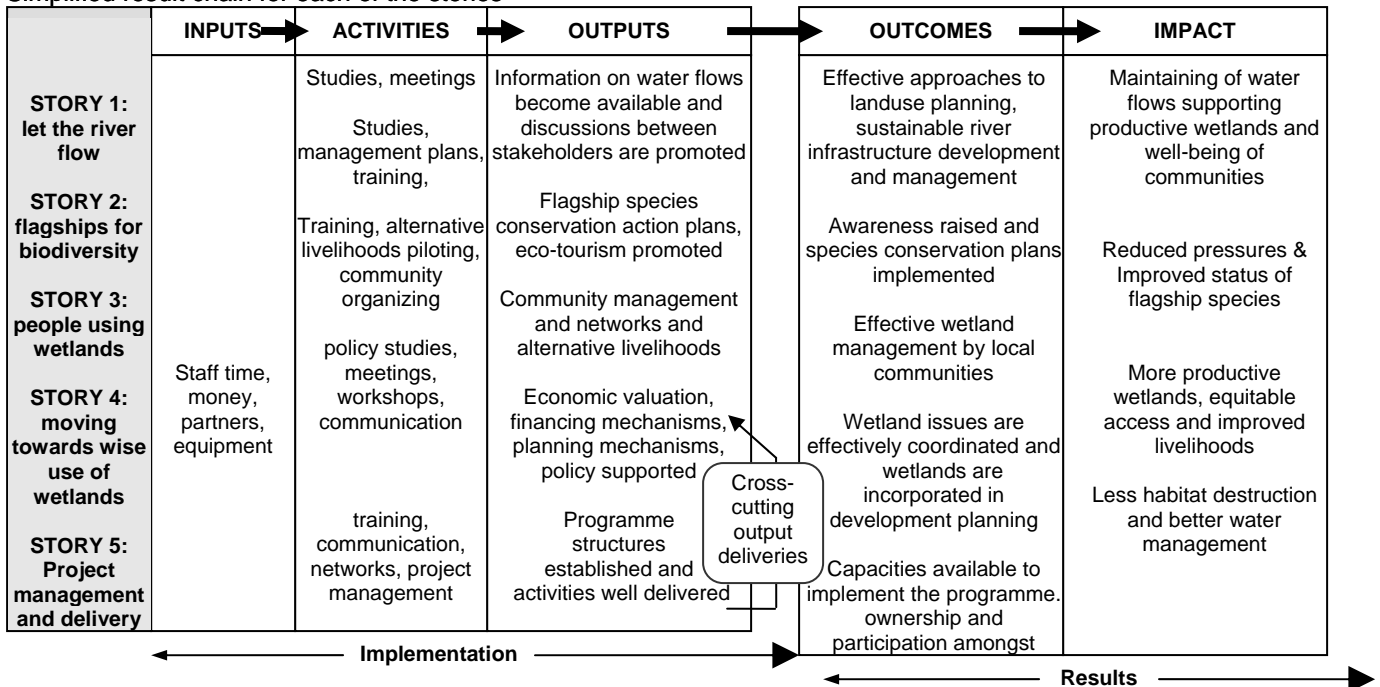
IMPACT — Maintaining E-flows. Infrastructure development | Status of globally threatened species, Reduction in Invasive Alien Species, Reduction in Illegal Trade of Species | Wetland livelihoods and w resources improved

PURPOSE / OUTCOMES
- Wetland institutions
- Ministries w/ principal responsibility for wetlands
- Other line agencies involved w/ infrastructure
- Civil society organizations
- Provincial Planning
- Local Community Based Organisations

Uncoordinated sectoral approaches | Weak policy framework | Inadequate information base | Inadequate human and technical resources | Lack of options over use of natural resources

OUTPUTS: ADDRESSING ROOT CAUSES
1. specialist network
2. Ramsar
7. Intersectoral planning
3. policy recommendation
4. wetland action plan
6. training tools
13. training programmes
8. participatory management
9. sustainable use of products

Stories

The M&E operational plan has tried to simplify the intervention logic (and make it more exciting) through the development of "stories". These are IF … THEN … narratives explaining what the programme is all about based on the kinds of impact that we expect to see on the ground. They are to be adapted as the programme strategy and staff understanding evolves:

- o "Let the river flow"
- o "Flagships for biodiversity"
- o "People using wetlands"
- o "Towards wise use of wetlands"
- o "Programme implementation and cross cutting issues"

Simplified result chain for each of the stories

	INPUTS	ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES	IMPACT
STORY 1: let the river flow	Staff time, money, partners, equipment	Studies, meetings	Information on water flows become available and discussions between stakeholders are promoted	Effective approaches to landuse planning, sustainable river infrastructure development and management	Maintaining of water flows supporting productive wetlands and well-being of communities
STORY 2: flagships for biodiversity		Studies, management plans, training,	Flagship species conservation action plans, eco-tourism promoted	Awareness raised and species conservation plans implemented	Reduced pressures & Improved status of flagship species
STORY 3: people using wetlands		Training, alternative livelihoods piloting, community organizing	Community management and networks and alternative livelihoods	Effective wetland management by local communities	More productive wetlands, equitable access and improved livelihoods
STORY 4: moving towards wise use of wetlands		policy studies, meetings, workshops, communication	Economic valuation, financing mechanisms, planning mechanisms, policy supported	Wetland issues are effectively coordinated and wetlands are incorporated in development planning	Less habitat destruction and better water management
STORY 5: Project management and delivery		training, communication, networks, project management	Programme structures established and activities well delivered	Capacities available to implement the programme. ownership and participation amongst	

Cross-cutting output deliveries

← Implementation → | ← Results →

Weaknesses

So far, the stories have mainly been used in presentations by the PMU (as was originally intended). National offices prefer to stick to the logframe of the approved project document but with revisions, sometimes creating confusing over parallel systems. Weaknesses of the M&E include the complexity of the programme logic itself and mixed qualit /focus of field studies. Staff have faced some technical problems in using the programme database.

Programme Database

The Programme Database has become an important M&E tool and is used for entering and reporting on the annual workplan. All offices have database modules to write quarterly activity reports. The database modules ensure that all information is comparable between countries and over time. Old reports or portions there-off can be conveniently printed in different formats and for different countries or topics depending on the needs of the audience.

The database facilitates quick analysis of quarterly reports by sorting of information by office, type of intervention, date, constraints, achievements. The figure below shows changes in the kind of constraints that MWBP staffs face in implementing activities. It shows that "institutional" constraints are gradually overtaken by "other" constraints that are more related to the technicalities of implementing activities. The database allows production of these graphs at the click of a button.

Constraints reported by programme staff