



February 26, 2014

The Hon Julie Bishop, MP  
Minister of Foreign Affairs  
PO Box 6022  
House of Representatives  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

**Re: Request for the release of findings from AusAid's Review of the Mekong River Commission's Procedure for Notification, Prior Consultation and Agreement.**

Dear Minister,

I am writing to you as a representative of civil society groups from Thailand who took part in the consultation process for the Australian Government's review of the Mekong River Commission's (MRC) Procedure for Notification, Prior Consultation and Agreement (PNPCA), conducted by Hatfield Consultants in 2012. **I am writing to request that the results of the consultation carried out in Thailand be released to those groups who participated in the process and that the "three comprehensive country reports" that have been produced as a result of the PNPCA Review, are made public.**

In February 2012, AusAid commissioned a review of the MRC's PNPCA process, which involved interviews and consultation with representatives from the non-government and government sector in Thailand, Vietnam and Cambodia. The review was expected to be completed by the end of 2013. However in response to questions raised on Notice during the November 2013 session of the Senate Budget Estimates, members of Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade stated that "the review has not been completed, as the contractor had asked to be released from their contract" and that there are "no plans to re-commission the review." In previous sessions of Senate Budget Estimates, Senator Lee Rhiannon raised questions about the timeline and plans for releasing the findings of the PNPCA Review to the public. Representatives of DFAT responded to questions raised on Notice in May 2012 that the findings of the review would be made public. Despite the review not being finalized, significant progress was made during the regional consultations and these findings should be shared with those involved.

In a recent performance report of the Mekong Water Resources Program January 2012 – July 2013, DFAT refers to the review of the PNPCA process. The report states that "insightful interviews with national focus groups and individuals were conducted in Cambodia, Thailand and Vietnam," and that "three comprehensive country reports have been produced." We request that these three country reports be made public, in order to help inform an assessment of the PNPCA process moving forward.

As one of the primary funders of the MRC's Mekong Integrated Water Resources Management Project, which includes support for the implementation of the PNPCA process, the Australian Government has a responsibility to ensure that this process functions in the most effective way possible to facilitate regional decision-making for the future of the Mekong River and its people. In order to ensure that this happens, we ask DFAT to release the results of the consultation on the PNPCA process carried out in Thailand, along with the three comprehensive country reports that have been produced.

Sincerely,

Pianporn Deetes  
Thailand Campaign Coordinator, International Rivers

Email: [pai@internationalrivers.org](mailto:pai@internationalrivers.org)