Thailand Salween pathways

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Introduction

• Approximately 5% of the Nu-Salween River basin lies within Thailand.
• The Salween River forms a 120 km border between Thailand and Myanmar. The border is also partly formed of the Moei River
• The Salween National Park and Salween Wildlife sanctuary located on river
• The history of the Salween River and the various plans is also partly a history of Thailand-Myanmar relations
• We identify four pathways for Thailand
Method

• **Indepth interviews:**
  • Government agencies (n=4)
  • Civil Society (n=5)
  • Academics (n=2)

• **Community research**
  • Baan Sop Moei, Baan Mae Samlaep, and Tha Ta Fang villages

• **Extensive literature review**
  • Existing studies
  • Policy analysis
Centralized power sector and large hydropower dams pathway

- Thailand’s electricity utility, EGAT argues that Thailand needs to secure more electricity because current supplies are insufficient to meet future demand and RE and EE are unreliable.
Decentralized and renewable energy pathway

- Some civil society and academics have proposed that Thailand can prioritize demand-side management, energy efficiency and renewable energy to ensure the country’s energy security.

- Thailand Ministry of Energy has an Alternative Energy Development Plan (2015-2036) which aims for 19,600 MW by 2036
Large dams for water transfer pathway

- The Royal Irrigation Department proposes that water transfer from the Salween to Chaophraya river basins can mitigate water scarcity (drought) there.

Provinces in Chao Phraya river basin hit by drought

The drought in the Chao Phraya River basin’s Nakhon Sawan, Chai Nat and Lop Buri provinces from October until March 6 affected some 75,700 rai - nearly half of which was rice fields. It caused damage to 25,196 tonnes of rice worth Bt212 million, the head

Each year, Thailand sees about 1.3 million farming families and 8.45 million rai (1.35 million hectares) of farmland affected by flooding, while 2.86 million farming families and 2.74 million rai of farmland are affected by drought, Lersak said.

RID pushes two new water diversion bids

The Royal Irrigation Department (RID) will seek approval from the newly-established national committee on water resources, for the go-ahead on water diversion projects from two boundary rivers.
Local livelihoods and human rights pathway

- Civil society groups and communities in Thailand have emphasized their desire to work with the government around a range of issues, including related to statelessness, support for local development initiatives, and their relationship with the national park and wildlife sanctuary
  - Riparian communities have also opposed the Salween River dams
- The Thai National Human Rights Commission investigated and recommended the Salween dams be suspended
Summary: Which path to take?

- We have identified four pathways for the Salween within Thailand:
  - Large hydropower dam pathway
  - Decentralized electricity pathway
  - Water diversion pathway
  - Local livelihoods and human rights pathway

- The political context of Thailand continues to change, with less space for civil society recently.
  - However, there remains an active public discussion on the future of the Salween, within both formal and informal arenas
Thank you for listening

http://csds-chula.org/salween-water-governance/

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