

Trans-boundary Rivers and Justice in Relation to the Salween Dams and Thailand's Water Diversion Plans

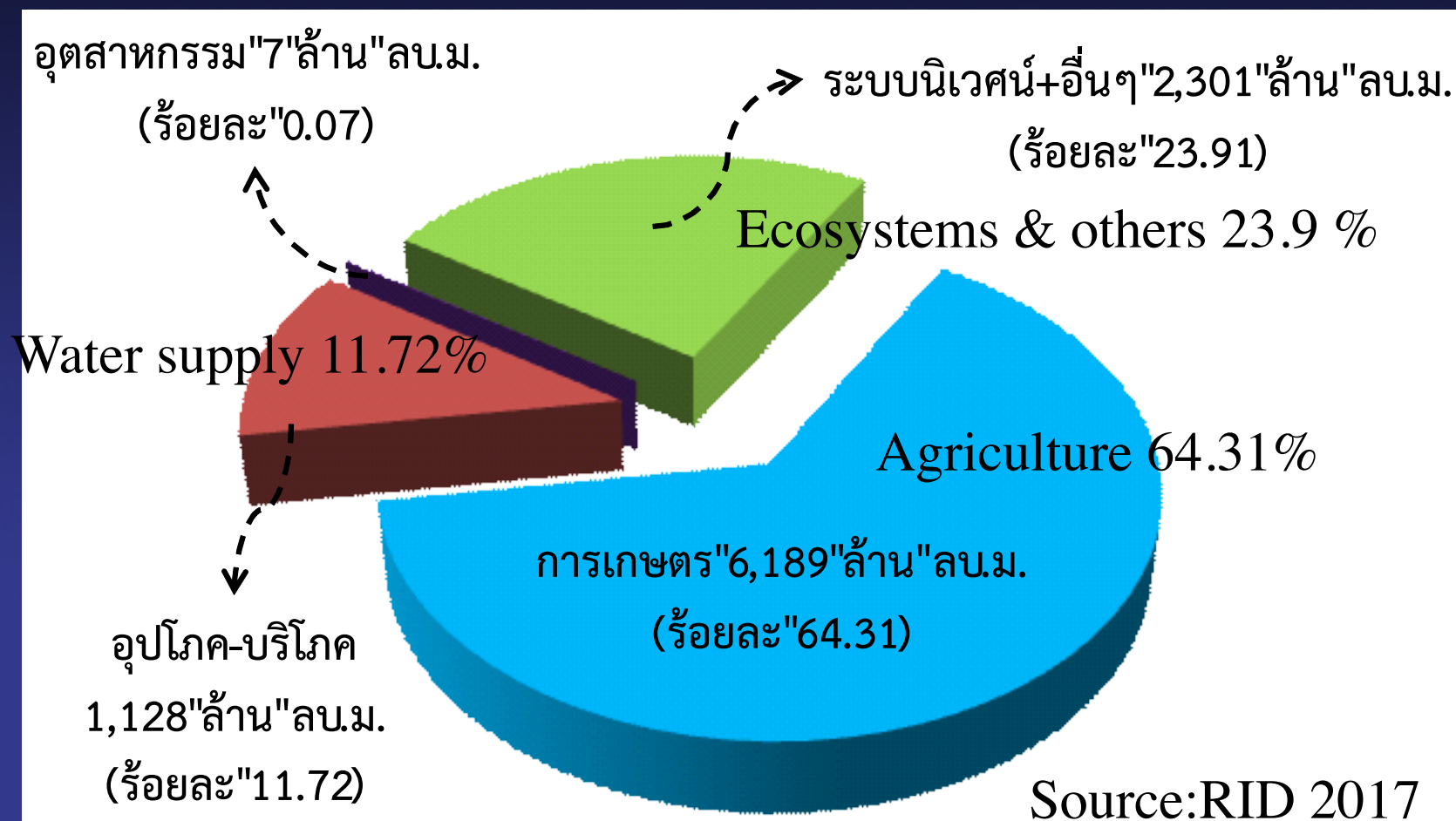


Pai Deetes, February 2018

Thailand's plans to divert water from the Salween

Serious water shortages are expected in Thailand, especially in the central part (Ping-Chaopraya basin)

where water demand is high



Bhumibol dam's reservoir has been filled only around half (since 1964)

Reservoir storage capacity = 13,462 million m³

Average dependable storage = 9,662 million m³



Less water from watershed in Thailand/ Ping River especially during dry season.

- increasing water demand
- deforestation at headwaters



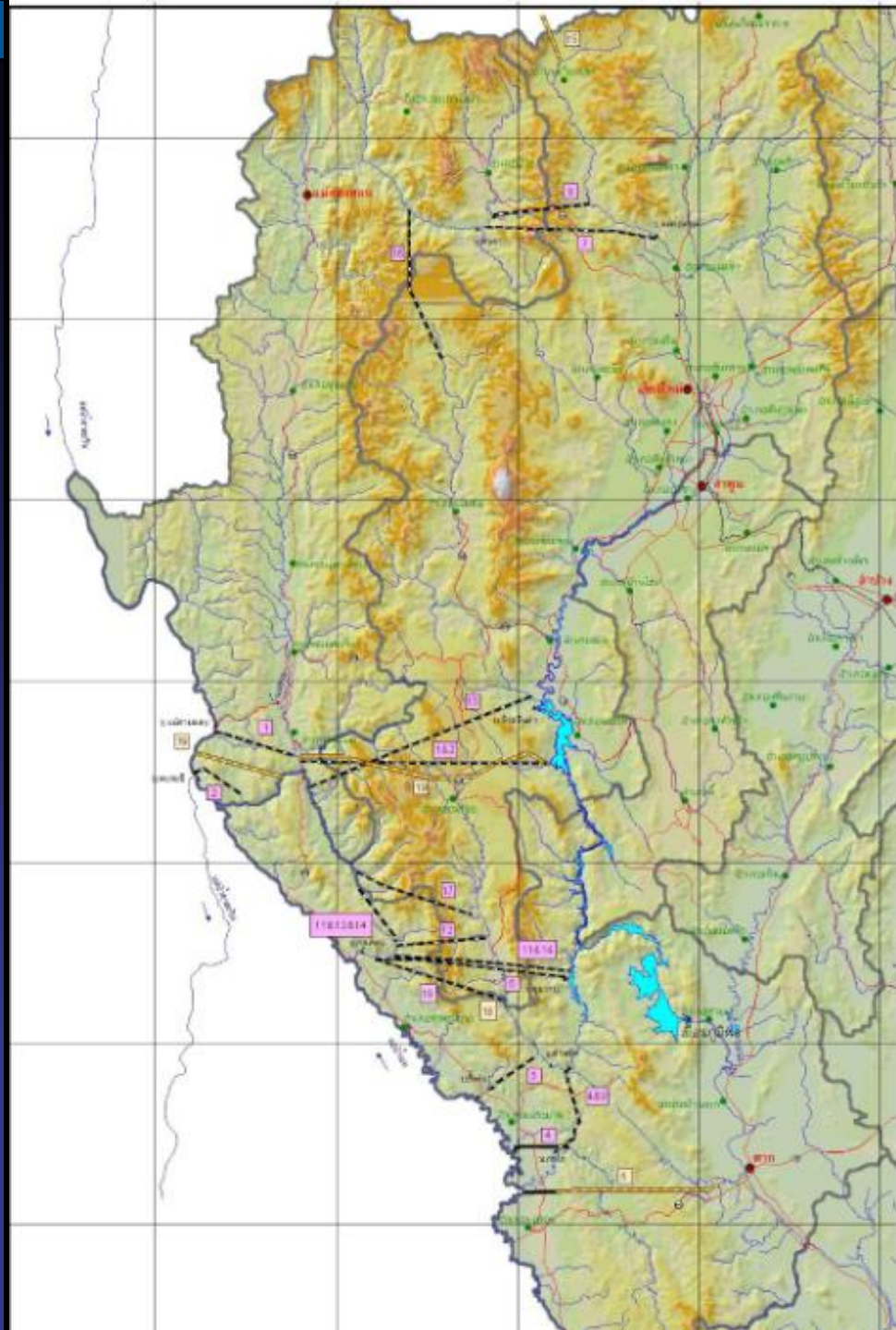
Photo: M Thai 2016

Volume of water flowing out from Thailand 'uselessly' to
Salween/Thanlwin (Moei, Yuam, tributaries)
= 8,937 million m³/year



Thai junta, led by Royal Irrigation Department, recently initiated a plan to divert water from the Salween River basin.

Studied 19 options, and it will likely choose the Yuam River- a tributary of the Salween.





1,795 million m³/year

Project component 1 Yuam River dam

Location: between Tak and Mae Hong Son provinces

Dam size: 71 m. height

Size of reservoir: 3.32 km³

Number of households to be relocated: 2

Project component 2

Water Pumping Station/ Storage Tank

Location: Moei-Ngao rivers confluence

Number of households to be affected: n/a (or 4)

Project component 3 Water Diversion Tunnel

Location: Hod district, Chiang Mai (Ping River) 67 km (8 m)

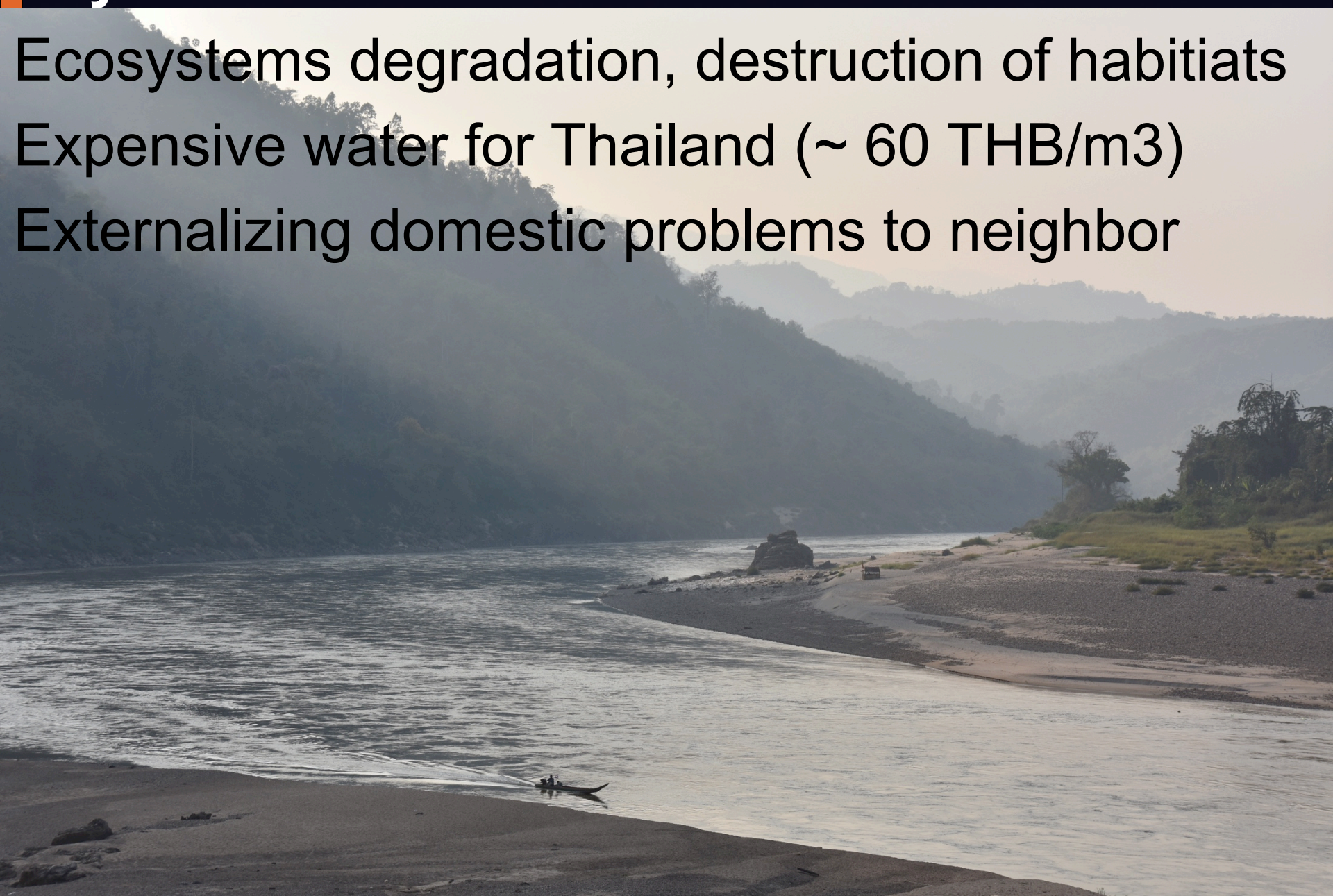
Number of households to be affected: n/a (14 villages)



Photo of Mae Teng Diversion: Khaosod

Key concerns:

Ecosystems degradation, destruction of habitats
Expensive water for Thailand (~ 60 THB/m³)
Externalizing domestic problems to neighbor



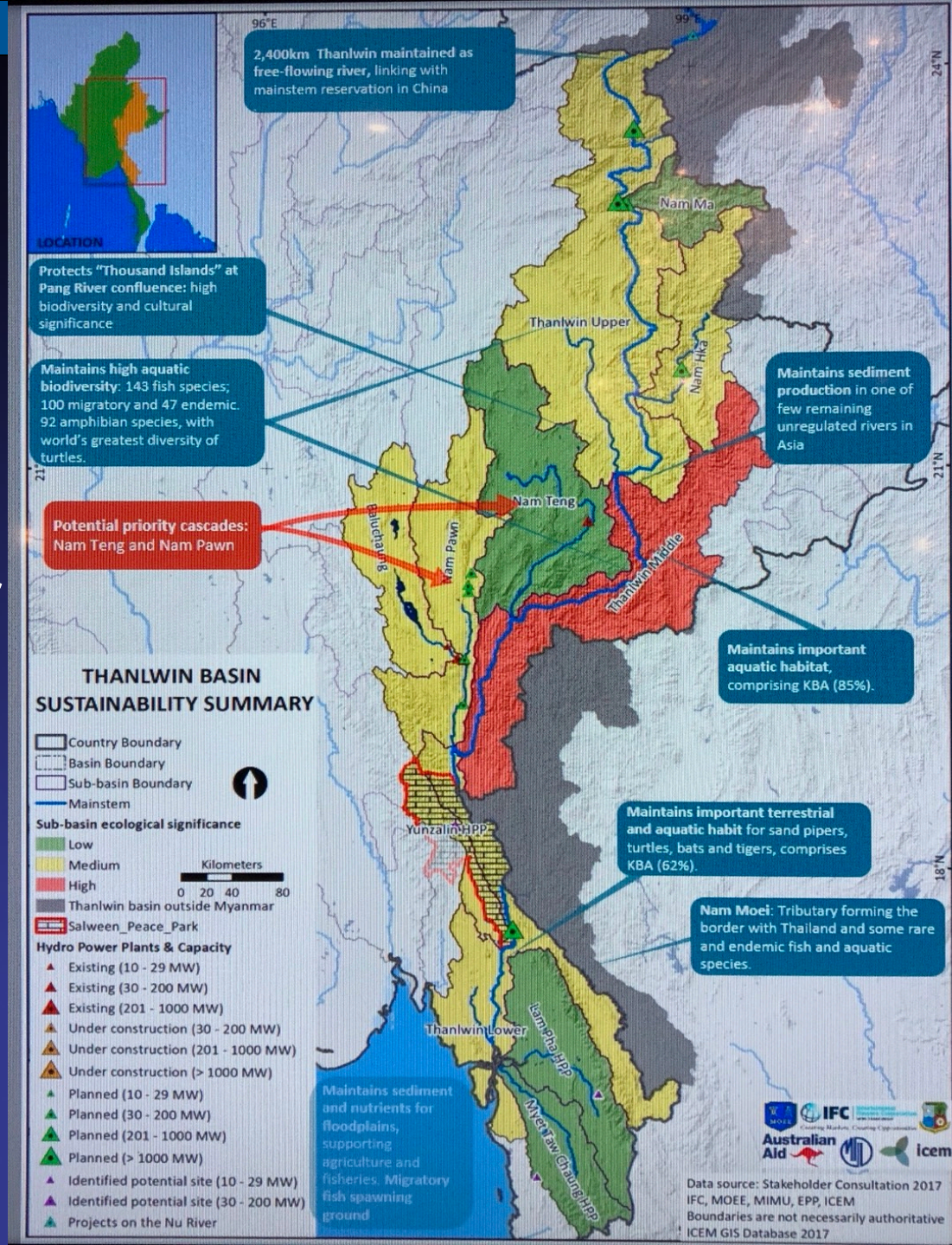
PROPOSED DAMS IN THE SALWEEN BASIN

At least 15 more dams upstream are planned or under construction.



IFC's Strategic Environmental Assessment for Hydropower Sector in Myanmar (02.2018):

- Mainstem reservation for Thanlwin 1,200 km
- Conflict sensitivity analysis for hydro projects
- Planned projects in conflict-prone area should explicitly assess conflict risk



Transboundary rivers Justice: Extraterritorial Obligations (ETOs)

The legal case on Xayaburi dam (Mekong River) at Thai Administrative Court

- Thai community representatives file a lawsuit against the Thai Ministry of Energy, Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand and others in 2012
- Lawsuit is based on the constitutional rights of people being violated, along with national and international laws





Supreme Administrative Court accepted the lawsuit, ordered the five government bodies to “undertake their duty under the Constitution, laws and resolutions of the [Thai] Government, through the notification and dissemination of appropriate information, adequate hearing and consultation and further environmental, health and social impact assessment for the Xayaburi Dam.”

This is a landmark case, as it is the first to recognize the transboundary impacts for Thailand of a project being built in a neighboring country, and the first to require a Thai state-owned company building a project overseas to comply with Thai laws.

Decision-making Process: Decisions and negotiations made by governments, business, and hydro industry and promoters without meaningful participation from affected communities, civil society, and consumers





Thank you ^^

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