

# Chindwin River Basin Organization (Chindwin RBO)

## 1. Justification

The Chindwin River is the biggest tributary of the Ayeyarwady River. The health of the river is important to the economic development of the region and the quality of life of its inhabitants. There are already signs that the Chindwin River Basin is facing serious environmental and water management challenges.

The Chindwin RBO is envisaged to serve as a mechanism for integrated water resources management, ensuring environmentally and socially sustainable development in this vital river basin.

Mining activities in the Chindwin have caused water quality degradation. This makes it dangerous for people to continue using the river for drinking, bathing or washing. Land use changes, including deforestation in the valleys, have led to severe erosion during the seasonally heavy monsoon rains, when the rivers run high. In some

locations huge sections of the river banks have been washed away, taking down houses and forcing hundreds of families to relocate inland. Erosion has also affected riverside farming and fields, which are crucial to the local food supply and subsistence livelihoods.

Sedimentation of the river appears to have increased as well. During the dry season, river depths are dropping to levels much lower than was seen in the past, making it difficult for boats to travel upstream. The low water levels affect the region's economy which depends heavily on river transportation for the trade of goods such as rice, cooking oils, dry fish and fish paste with lower Myanmar. During the wet season, the Chindwin also faces challenges from extreme floods. Losses to lives and the economy from the most recent flood in Myanmar in 2015 were the highest ever in the Chindwin River Basin.

## 2. Goal

To achieve sustainable development in the Chindwin River Basin by improving the management of water resources and river health.

## 3. Mandates

- To help improve the gathering and sharing of information among all stakeholders about opportunities and threats
- To help coordinate collaboration among different sectors, groups, and areas
- To help achieve reconciliation and solve problems across different sectors, groups and areas
- To support the development of more coherent policies and plans
- To encourage and recognize local initiatives that can provide bottom-up inputs to the Chindwin RBO
- Building public awareness and education about river conditions and integrated water resources management

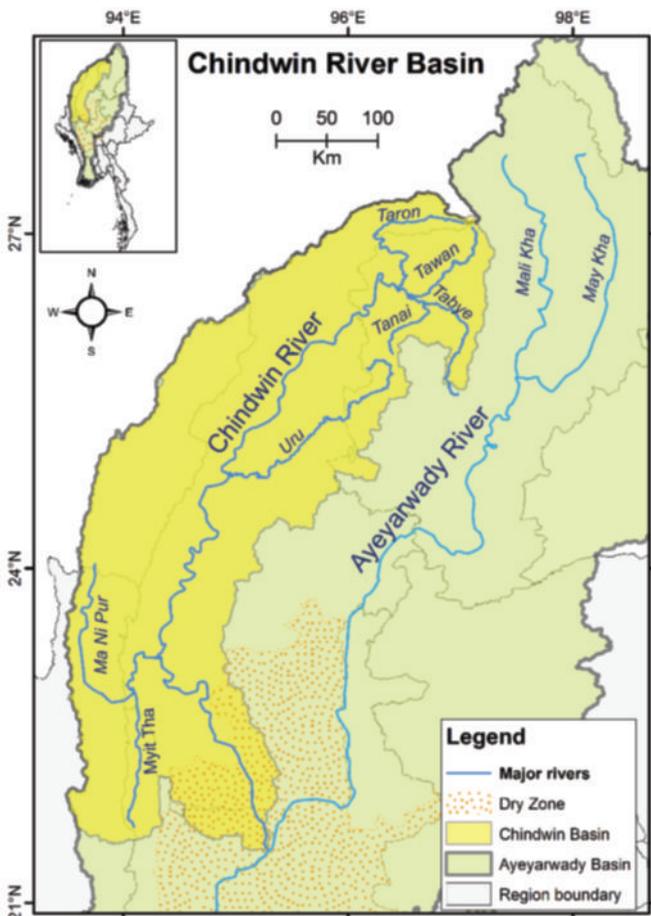


Figure 1 Chindwin River Basin, Myanmar



**Figure 2** Fourth stakeholder consultation on Chindwin Futures Assessment, Monywa, 6-7 October 2015: Participants discussed the various mandates of Chindwin RBO that can add value to existing institutions

- Coordinate trainings of communities for monitoring water resources considering different seasons, locations and sources and other concerned topics
- To approve new membership of the Chindwin RBC, set up the River Sub-Basin Organizations and nominate sub-committees or working groups to handle tasks as assigned by the Chindwin RBO committee

## 4. Structure

### Chindwin River Basin Committee (RBC)

The RBC steers the operation and development of the Chindwin RBO and provides strategic guidance to the work of the Chindwin River Basin Secretariat (Chindwin RBS). The Chindwin RBC normally meets 1-2 times a year.

Chindwin RBC consists of about 50-60 members. Half of all members in the RBC are from the governmental agencies and remaining members are from non-governmental agencies as follows:

- Chaired by Sagaing Chief Minister or a representative appointed by the Chief Minister
- 1 member from the National Water Resources Committee (NWRC)
- 3 regional ministers (e.g. Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, Ministry of Forestry, Mining and Energy

and Ministry of Transport and Communications)

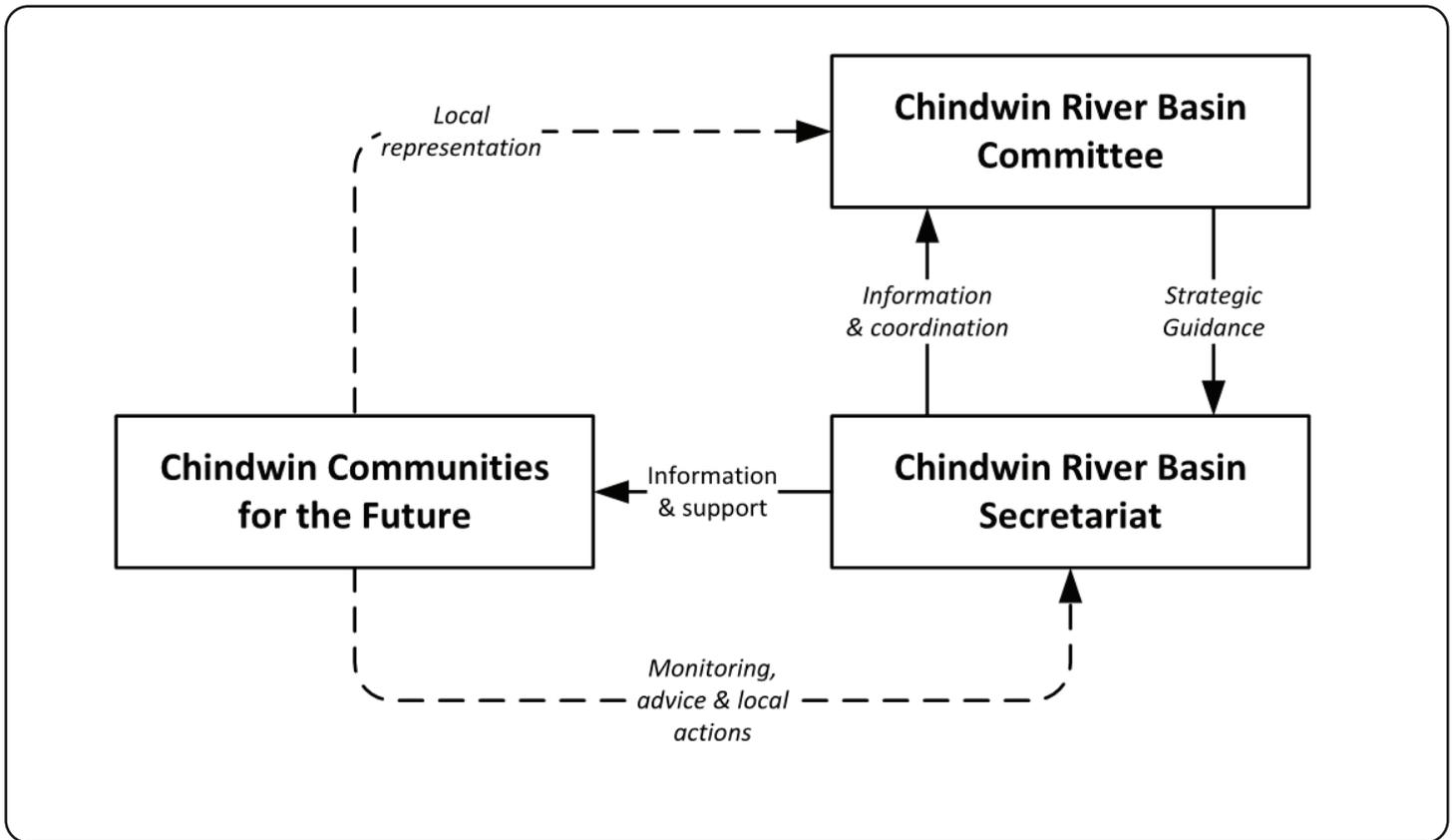
- 13 regional heads of departments (DWIR, DMH, WRUD, ID, Forest, ECD, Industry, Health, Regional Development Committee, Land Use, Waterways Department, Water Transportation Department and Hydropower Power Implementation Department)
- 8 members from local area-based governments at district level (5 from Sagaing region, 1 from Magwe region including 1 each from Kachin and Chin States)
- 4 members from public civil society organizations (e.g. Farmers' groups, Women Association, Youth Association, or other CSOs)
- 13 regional parliamentarians from selected townships in the basin (9 from Sagaing region, 2 from Magwe region and 1 each from Chin and Kachin States)
- 9 members from research & academic communities in the basin (e.g. MEI, University of Economics, Monywa University, University of Art and Science, Monywa Technical University, and Sagaing University of Education, Kalay University, Kalay Technical University and Kanti Technical College)
- 4 members from Chindwin Communities for the Future, locally formed groups by the communities
- 6 members from private sector that are formed as the chamber of commerce or business associations (e.g. Mining, River Vessel, Traders, Fisheries, Timber, Agricultural/Farmer's Associations)

Committee appointments are initially for 5 years. In the initial stages, the RBC will be drawn mainly from the Sagaing region and a few members from Magwe region as well as Kachin and Chin States. There is an option to include more new members and dialogue partners at a later stage.

The Sagaing Regional Government is the main administrator of the RBC.

### Chindwin River Basin Secretariat (RBS)

The Chindwin RBS is responsible for day-to-day management, administration and accountability of the Chindwin RBO. It reports to the River Basin Committee (RBC) and supports their meetings and other activities. The RBS should submit a report to the RBC every six months (two times in a year).



**Figure 3** Governance Structure of Chindwin River Basin Organization (Chindwin RBO)

The RBS collates, maintains, and shares relevant data and information to the public. It coordinates directly with the national Hydro-Informatics Centre that will be soon established for sharing data and information and capacity building related activities. The RBS is responsible for all administrative reports of the Chindwin RBO.

The agency that will host the RBS and Chindwin database will be determined by the RBC.

- The RBS initially has 2 staff (Chindwin RBO coordinator with knowledge of water and river management issues, and an assistant with IT and communication skills) not necessarily full-time but eventually so. Number of RBS staff may be expanded as necessary if required by the work and as allowed by the budget.

### Chindwin Communities for the Future (CFF)

This comprises locally formed groups of people who live along the Chindwin or its major tributaries as well as communities geographically located away from banks of the Chindwin and major tributaries, and in more upland watersheds. Groups should be interested in supporting the goals of the RBO through their own activities, includ-

ing monitoring and other local actions. This is the main mechanism for bottom-up inputs and public engagement in RBO activities.

- Established as per need & interest; formally recognized by the Committee
- Some representatives eventually included in the Committee

### River Sub-Basin Organizations (RSBO)

The Chindwin is a very large river basin. In the future, it may make sense to create other formal river-sub-basin organizations (RSBO) with a similar structure to the parent body. Considering existing challenges, the first few RSBO that should be considered for establishment include Myittha, and Uru Rivers. The second set of the RSBOs can be established for the Yu and Muu Rivers.

## 5. Chindwin RBC selection process

At an early stage of the Chindwin RBO establishment, the Sagaing Regional Chief Minister as a chair of the RBC will appoint the selection committee drawing from

the members of the Sagaing Regional Cabinet to oversee the selection process and approve the whole committee.

- The members from governmental agencies are appointed by the government considering their positions and capabilities
- The members from research & academic communities are nominated by the universities and research agencies
- The members from the private sector are nominated by sectoral business associations or Chambers of Commerce
- Other members are nominated by a township level supporting committee
- To handle technical tasks of the Chindwin RBO, a technical working group with the members drawn from the regional heads of departments and research and academic communities will be established

## 6. Funding support

Continued funding support is needed for successful establishment, operation and development of the Chindwin RBO.

Funding support for staff fees and direct costs related to core activities and functions of the RBO should be from four sources: regional government, union government,

large commercial water users, and international and domestic donors.

- In the early stage, the fund should be drawn from the regional government and union government
- In the longer term, after related legal regulations and monitoring system are ready, large, commercial water and river users will contribute additional funding support for the Chindwin RBO, considering Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and taxes from business enterprises and large commercial water users. Different RBO members contribute in-kind with their staff time to work on RBO related tasks.

Additional funding and technical support from the international aid and other initiatives may be sought for specific assessment activities or studies as well as for strengthening relevant capacities of the Chindwin RBO.

## 7. Accountability and Reporting:

The Chindwin River Basin Secretariat (RBS) is responsible for the preparation of bi-annual reports summarizing the activities, achievements, challenges, expenditures, and proposed work plan and budget for the Chindwin RBO for consideration and comments. The RBS led by Chief Minister of Sagaing Region submits the annual report including also the proposed annual work plan and budget of the Chindwin RBO to the Sagaing Regional Parliament for approval before a formal submission to the union government and NWRC for endorsement.

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