MOTA framework for strategic delta planning and management

Center for Water Management and Climate Change (WACC), Vietnam National University - Ho Chi Minh City (VNU-HCM)

Training workshop

21 – 22 May 2018

Reported by Gurvinder Arora, Dorien Korbee and Nguyen Hong Quan
## Program

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### Invited participants

- Dr. Dang Kim Khoi - IPSARD - Institute of Policy and Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development
- Dr. Nguyen Kim Linh - ISPONRE - Institute of Strategy and Policy on Natural Resources and Environment
- Dr. Pham Thi Anh Ngoc – Nong Lam University
- Ms. Pham Thi Nhi - Sub-NIAPP - Southern Sub-Institute of Agricultural Planning and Projection
- Dr. Le Xuan Bao - Thuy Loi University/Water Resources University – Second base
- Mr. Ngo Hoang Long – University of Socio Science and Humanity, Vietnam National University – Ho Chi Minh city.
- Prof. Dr. Tang Duc Thang - VAWR - Vietnam Academy for Water Resources) *(confirmed but could not attend)*
- Assoc. Prof. Dr. Nguyen Nghia Hung - SIWRR - Southern Institute of Water Resources Research) *(confirmed but could not attend)*
- Dr. Nguyen Duc Loc - Sub-NIAPP - Southern Sub-Institute of Agricultural Planning and Projection *(confirmed but could not attend, joined dinner)*
Aim of the workshop

This training workshop was organized under the NWO-UDW project ‘strengthening Strategic Delta Planning Processes in Bangladesh, the Netherlands, Vietnam and beyond’ (project number W07.69.106). One of the key pillars in the research project is the application and development of the MOTA framework. The MOTA framework has initially been developed by Prof. Ho Long Phi (WACC) as a tool to gain insights in the social adoptability of livelihood transformation options. The MOTA framework is still under development, currently studies are undertaken to assess the applicability of the MOTA framework for a feasibility assessment of the Mekong Delta Plan (both at farmer and governmental level) and as a tool to assess policies that address urban flooding. This training workshop therefore had a dual aim;

- Dissemination of the results of conducted MOTA studies;
- Explanation of the MOTA data collection and analysis methods;
- Critical assessment of the MOTA framework by the participants;
- Gaining insights on further development of the MOTA framework (short and medium term)

The set-up of this training workshop was designed in such a way to stimulate interaction between the participants. In practice this meant a small number of participants (experts from Vietnamese research institutes), a hands-on assignment and ample time for discussions. This set-up was highly appreciated, and even led to one of the participants (Dr. Khoi) to ask for a time-slot to present his recent work and the possible connections and applications of MOTA herein.

Opening speech and introduction Round

On the first day we were warmly welcomed by Chau Nguyen Xuan Quang (Director of WACC). He shortly introduced WACC and its research agenda. Hereafter all speakers and participants introduced themselves and the work they have been involved.
Hands-on exercise:
Practicing with MOTA
The first activity of the workshop was the hands-on exercise. The goal of this exercise was to show the participants how the MOTA framework works in practice. This hands-on exercise primes the participants towards the methodology of the MOTA and gives them a first-hand impression of how to apply the MOTA method. To be able to show this, the participants were asked to fill in the provided questionnaire as experts. The submitted answers will be analyses and the MOTA scores will be mapped and presented in the second half of the day. Before the participants were asked to fill in the questionnaire, Quan introduced the case based on two livelihood transformation options in Ben Tre province (Thanh Phu and Ba Tri districts).

Presentation and discussion 1:
MOTA Framework and Recent Developments
The context of MOTA application is the UDW project on strengthening the urban deltas. Quan introduced the project and a brief about the research and institutional actors involved in the project. Initially MOTA was developed by prof. Ho long Phi and used in the IUCN study. The objectives of the UDW projects is to enhance the understanding of the delta planning process to the different stakeholders. The hourglass framework (Seijger et al. 2016) was introduced and the position of the MOTA in the hourglass framework.

The challenges in the Mekong Delta and the different case studies were highlighted for planning and implementation process. The key idea is to address the challenges on plan implementation, and the lower impacts of the projects that have been already implemented. An example of this was discussed in context of the hydraulic planning, where even if the environmental impacts are considered, it does not address the research gaps of the environmental research. Additionally, the impact is low due to the unexpected lock-in which is a result of physical implementations which are perceived useful initially. Another example discussed was the livelihood adaptation proposed for a region from rice to rice-shrimp. This may be due to multiple factors of lack of financial or technical capacity. Furthermore, if the adaptation is completed, in case the neighbor does not adapt, the yield of his/her farm will be affected due to salinity leakage from the rice-shrimp system.
In an interactive discussion with the participants on implementation gaps, we defined the following reasons of non-implementation of plans;

- Quality of the planning is not good and does not dive deep into the issues which are linked to each other. Integration issues between sectoral plans, as water system affects the piping system below the roads.
- Financial issues are always predominant. There is not enough money for the implementation of plans. Most of the funding issues to the province is in the form of loans which the provinces must pay back.
- Institutional gaps to carry forward the implementation. The programs are now managed at the national level but for the management of the Mekong Delta implementation, there is no delta committee.
- Incentives are mismanaged due to the prevalent corruption which leads to leakage of funds.
- Linkage between plans is weak and details may be lost while communicating between the different departments.

The 3 dimensions of project planning;

- Performance: The experts present their point of view here in terms of the robustness and effectiveness of the project. It can be assessed by tools but may not necessarily mean the deciding criteria.
- Feasibility: The governments assess the feasibility of the project based on the internal criteria. It can be financial or institutional feasibility. It can be considered as a combination of consent and ability.
- Adoptability: This is community based where the social impact and acceptance of the plan are major indicators.

A balance between the 3 is required to be accounted for successful planning. That is where MOTA (Motivations, Opportunities, Threats, Abilities) helps to bridge the gap.

In MOTA, the Motivation is a balance between threat and opportunities. Ability is unpacked as institutional, financial and technical abilities. Motivations decides the direction where you will go, while the ability decided the constraints on how far you can go. These factors are mapped on a 2-dimensional space. (Capacity Building Vs Consent Building). Both capacity and consent need to be sufficient to reach an action. However, there needs to be a presence of an external trigger. Most of the plans overlook the soft implementation (Seijger et al. 2017) aspects of the plan, with the hard solution at the center of the plan. The application of MOTA into different participatory planning contexts is still debatable. A participant brought forward the point about the in-depth application of the MOTA in their sector. Within a top-down system, where the national level plans are translated
into provincial plans, the time to apply MOTA is limited and this may have effect on the outcomes of its application.

One of the major applications of MOTA was IUCN project where interviews were conducted for 8 provinces in Mekong delta

Lunch at the international University

**Presentation and discussion 2:**

**Assessment of Strategic Delta Plan using MOTA framework**

The second presentation discussed a recent application of the MOTA to assess the implementation feasibility of MDP in Ben Tre. The aim of this project was to study whether and how the MOTA framework can be applied to study the implementation feasibility of the MDP. The implementation feasibility at the local government level was the primary aim of the study, and at a meta level, the study was used to improve and to develop the MOTA framework. The framework was updated to unpack motivation into perceptions;

- To risks of the adaptation plans
- On Solutions that have been recommended in the regional plans
- On mandate of their role and responsibility in the process

The MOTA of the government is further linked to the Farmer MOTA and how the one influences the other respectively. The approach differs from the traditional MOTA was the departure from the use of structured questionnaire formats to semi-structured interviews. This is suggested to give insights into the nuances of the perceptions of different stakeholders. The interviews were conducted with officials at provincial and district level, and at the commune level the data was collected from the farmers. The questions were based on a topic list:

- Tasks and responsibilities in Provincial Plans
- Linkages between the MDP and provincial plans
- Motivations to change
- Abilities to change
The insights were that in the first round of interviews (April 2017), there was little awareness about the MDP and its role in the process. In the second round of interviews (October 2017), the awareness about the MDP was higher. The synthesis of the interviews was presented in the form of a table highlighting the risks, solutions and mandate part of the motivations. The importance of Dams/dikes was visible in the DARD and DPI interviews whereas the DoNRE was more interested in erosion control. A central conclusion of the analysis is that the motivations and abilities of the governmental actors at all levels is highly influenced by the institutional setting. The analysis furthermore shows that there are two possible ‘routes’ of implementing the MDP in Ben Tre province; as a checklist to assess all local plans and policies. This would not require an alteration of the motivations and abilities of the local governmental actors. A second option would be to combine a top-down and bottom-up implementation strategy. This does however, require that the involved governmental actors would be given more space to propose and implement local solutions. For this implementation strategy to succeed, requires an alteration of the motivations and problem perceptions of the local government actors.

The MOTA framework has in this study, been able to unpack the role of the local government actors. Due to the distinction between motivations and abilities, we were able to gain insights to go beyond a mere institutional analysis.

Two central topics were discussed after this presentation:

- The possibilities for improvement of the analysis; would it not have been more insightful if the analysis would have focused on the provincial level only, but including all 13 provinces of the Mekong Delta?
- How does this analysis differ and relate to a more conventional ‘institutional mapping’ study?

**Presentation and discussion 3:**

**Implementation planning framework from a combination of RDM and MOTA**

The next session focused on the master thesis research project of a student from TU Delft – Gurvinder Arora. As a part of the thesis, gurvinder is trying to use Strategic Delta planning framework to suggest an initial implementation framework. In the plan formulation phase in strategic delta planning, Robust decision making can be used as a participatory planning method to create comprehensive plans with potential for adaptation.

These plans can then be used to account for stakeholder motivations and abilities using MOTA, where the stakeholder position on the plan can be understood. Once the plan is made and accounted for the stakeholder positions, a framework was introduced by Gurvinder, which can keep track of this planning throughout the implementation phase. This is done through iterative adaptation where plan is reviewed under changing external conditions. This is an initial attempt to account for implementation possibilities and in the coming days, gurvinder will make interviews with the local officials to understand how they see the implementation process.
Interactive session:
Demonstration of MOTA mapping
Loc presented the analysis of the data collected from the experts of the workshop during the first half of the day. From the data, the motivation scores for the 2 districts and the perceived abilities map was generated and discussed with the participants. It was surprising to see that the MOTA scores of the experts’ perception of the situation was similar to the farmers’ MOTA scores of the districts. This also emphasized the use of MOTA as a visual tool which can give an overview of the situation and start the discussion among the decision makers for a relevant course of action.

Discussion
This exercise stimulated discussions on the MOTA questionnaires and methodology. Based on these discussions we showed the participants the original MOTA questionnaire that was used in the assessment of the farmers MOTA.

- Sample Size?
- Tool vs Framework
- Background information provision
- Background in Social Sciences methodologies?
- The time dimension of MOTA, when should different stakeholders be mapped?
- What level of MOTA (national, provincial, or district)?

Quan invited the participants to collaborate on development opportunities of MOTA. The trade-off between MOTA as a framework and a planning tool is highlighted. The acceptability of the tool is more likely as it is easier for the decision maker to understand. As a framework, it becomes extensive and difficult to operationalize for the policy makers.

For effective policy making, there are 2 key factors (as per discussion)
- The process should be participatory with multidisciplinary group of experts
- The quality of information provided to the policy maker. That can be of concern as most of the process is methodological and difficult to understand for the policy making.

In addition, the role of visualization in the process is important along with the simplicity of the tool.
2 plans discussion - Short term for immediate actions and long terms for fallback scenarios.

To do a case study for interprovincial linkage to understand the interactions between different provinces. This can be done as a publishable paper and MOTA can be tested for the feasibility and sustainability of the master plan. Work fast to produce the manual for MOTA.

In the long term, more meetings are required where WACC can join and introduce the method to key stakeholders. WACC is positive about the opportunity for collaboration and can have follow up with additional resources on development of MOTA.

In the interprovincial linkage program, one of the component; value chains; has to be finished in August and presented to the chair of the committee. With interprovincial linkage, there is a lot of talk about abolishing the provincial borders and integrating water management and crop calendar. Currently CAP is preparing subcomponents of the projects and have a lot of surveys and consultation.

Another thing to consider is the added value of MOTA as that needs to be justified to be the part of the project. Furthermore, the boundaries of the MOTA must be clearly defined for it to be made effective as a tool. The key question for interprovincial linkage program is that which institution is responsible for the governance of the program. MOTA can help address this question.

Within the policy paradigm, which are the key policy owner for the planning & implementation of the policy.

Dinner in Ho Chi Minh City
Andrew is IUCN manager for Mekong Delta and has been involved with the discussions about large scale transformations of livelihoods in Mekong Delta. This started with the MDP where IUCN was involved with some of the first farmer consultations, before the MDP was submitted in 2013. MDP utilized a very large expert group who provided feedback on the plan. Between 2013 -16, when world bank stepped in, to implement the MDP, it was the first big project at the time. Multiple challenges were identified:

- Consensus building
- Political support
- Knowledge gaps
- Alternative solutions
- Farmer Support
- Capacity to implement
- Regional coordination.

Farmer support is where MOTA came into picture to capture their perceptions for transformations. IUCN was one of the technical advisors for the WB project. By 2016, the input was completed for the design of the project regional social assessment, which was a safeguarding project. The assessment was completed in 2016, and was approved for implementation. The progress is slower and in 2018, it has just moved forward from preliminary implementations.

Andrew showed the safeguard assessment document, where the methodology used was focus groups and consultations, and the expectations was a standard socio-economic surveys. At this time, IUCN got in touch with WACC and MOTA methodology was introduced. The intital survey was modified to include the MOTA support questionnaire and Ho Long Phi’s team was involved in data collection, while IUCN was involved in the focus groups. For MOTA, different sub-project regions were visited under the WB project, and data was collected for the farmers motivation and ability on current and proposed livelihoods. The suggested livelihoods were proposed by the provincial governments and WB used these models for MOTA assessments.
For example, in Dong Thap, there were already Rice-shrimp models which were relatively successful. These models were considered as opportunities to transform other areas. The final report was submitted with regional social assessment as a background. The technical details of MOTA along with the findings are discussed in this report, along with the recommendations. The report was discussed with example on sugarcane to Shrimp farming transformation in Cu Lao Dung, Dong Thap province. One of the important points of considers is that the conclusion drawn by the farmers from Climate change in the short run might not be valid in the longer period. Most of the farmers acknowledged that intensive sugarcane farming will be bad for soil fertility; however, the motivation to change for the farmers was still very low. This was explored further to uncover that the risk of failure of the shrimp farming was a big factor that was responsible for the low motivation.

From the MOTA summary, the investment prioritization strategies for the WB project could be formulated. Another example discussed for the MOTA application in the IUCN WB project was for Ngoc Hien district in Cau Mau. The transformation in the region was from eco shrimp (integrated Mangrove) to organically certified eco shrimps. With this small step, the profit premiums can be increased due to the organic certification of the shrimps. The motivation in this district is positive as the increase in income was acknowledged by the farmers. The WB project is now focusing on upscaling this in Tra Vinh and Ben Tre province too.

The recommendation from the WB project suggested that in the upper delta, the motivation for triple rice farming was low MOTA, as the perception of failure and risk was very high. Therefore, the WB project will not fund any of these areas due to the low motivation. All the investments are the locations with Rice-Aquaculture models, as the risk of investment loss was lower. Hence the recommendations were to start the initial pilots near the triple rice crop areas so as to change the risk perceptions of the triple rice farmers.

Next, the limitations of the MOTA were discussed. Whenever there is a farmer interview, more often the information of the farmers is limited to the commune, while the risk perception goes beyond the commune. Therefore, the limitation was that the scientists had seen the risks of high Dikes, which displaces water and creates the risks elsewhere, either in neighboring countries or areas. Therefore, during the dike building period of late 2000s, almost half of the flood plain of upper Vietnamese Mekong basins was lost. This problem with high dikes within the academic world does not reach the farmer who uses high dike system for livelihood.

Therefore, if MOTA is mapped for farmers, scientists and governments; scientists always have high motivations to change as they have access to research and information from a wider perspective. Hence, it is difficult to rely completely on the farmers viewpoints for change. This emphasizes the importance of political leadership which has a broader picture on the issues. Hence decisions like (PM Decision 593) of sub-regional socio-economic planning are extremely important as it can be used to enable to political leaders to manage the adaptations with a broader worldview. The IUCN was involved in facilitating the process of the vision creation and bring to light the strategic directions. This was one of the first efforts to highlights the trade-offs of the third rice crop in the upper Mekong delta and a large-scale area of flood plain might need restoration upstream to maintain the salinity level downstream. This is still theoretical now but is being acknowledged steadily.

One of the discussion points raised during the discussion is that if the farmers knowledge needs to be extended, who is the one to decide about which scenarios should be discussed with the farmers? MOTA being a survey, it presents only a snapshot of their current capacity to adapt. However, from
the development perspective, the recommendations can be drawn about where the knowledge capacity should be built of the farmers.

MOTA was useful in recommendation process as it complemented the WB socio-economic survey. With the standard SES, it may show similar conclusions, but, with MOTA, the process becomes simple and structured and the insights can be reached easily with relevant conclusion.

The new planning law – to get away from sectoral planning to integrated planning,

**Presentation by participant Dr. Khoi**

**Presentation from Khoi – Interprovincial Linkage**

Based on the presentations and discussion of the first day, and the presentation by Andrew Wyatt, Dr. Khoi asked whether he could present his recent work on interprovincial linkages, to show possibilities for the applications of MOTA. We happily gave him the floor.

The presentation focus on the following:

- The process so far and possibilities to use MOTA
- To get opinion of experts on the pilot

In the government, there is a big movement of reshaping the organization of the delta planning. The MDP was not the 1st but the 3rd. The 2s was in 1974 by US, and the second was 1984. The third was the MDP. The MDP has a lot of similarities with the 1st plan but there is still no concrete implementation. In resolution 120, there are 3 main activities;

- Re-planning Mekong River Delta; where MDP 2013 is used a guideline to re-plan. However, there are issues of implementation (MPI)
- Water management of Mekong Delta (MoNRE) and is key for 120 Resolution (signed by Prime Minister – PM)
- Agriculture transformation plan for the delta – Pathways of implementation
In the end of this year, the agriculture transformation plan will be approved by the PM. The Agri plan and water plan needs to be integrated somehow. To achieve this objective, there was a study commissioned 3 months ago where more than 100 districts have been visited. The DARD, The DonRE and Dep. of industry and commerce and Dep. of social and labor affairs. This collaboration is key to drive the integration of the plan. In each province, discussions were initiated with farmers to understand the farmers views on the climate change and key issues. This was done in consultation with the provincial authorities and encourage them to have vision in this issue. After 2 months, a proposal was submitted to the ministers who suggested to have consultation rounds for the development. There are 6 components;

- Water; where consultations were conducted with experts in the field. The issues related to water, and how to manage the interprovincial water systems
- Discussion on the agribusiness opportunities. Workshops were organized
- Transportation; How transportation link with agriculture and rural development, exploring the location and potential of the sea ports.
- Rice; to see the potential of changing from triple rice to intercropping with aquaculture
- Horticulture; to discuss potential for fruits
- Aquaculture; Not only in land aquaculture, but also sea-based aquaculture as in the future the vision is to link delta with the sea.

After the consultations, the report will be prepared and shared with the interprovincial ministries. In July, a conference will be organized, chaired by the minister where the paper will be created and shared. This will lead to create a Target Program which will lead to creation of a list of all the projects running. This overview will make it easier to sanction investments from the central level.

The plan will focus first on the current situations for 3 factors

- Upstream hydropower development
- Climate change effects on livelihoods
- Internal Economic development; urbanization, industrialization, mining, building high dike problems

The key challenge is on how to divide the Mekong delta. The proposal to divide the Mekong delta into 6 regions has received mixed response from different ministries. The solution proposed to discuss with the provincial leaders on their impressions of this divisions. Therefore, the final solution was to use the Dutch MDP division for planning guidelines and the 6 divisions proposed plan for implementation. The historical movement of the cropping system has moved over time from 1 to 3 rice through infrastructure measures. However, recent diversification has split the system either towards rice-shrimp adaptation or completely to horticulture-based transformation. Changes in the rice have been from long term rice to short term rice with higher salinity resistant; also, from high quantity rice to high quality rice.

For fruit, there are similar changes, but the consistency is lower compared to rice system. Some areas have consistent fruit crops while others change based on changing market systems. This shows that some areas have higher market orientation while others have higher cultural and value orientation. For aquaculture, the orientation is changing towards intensive shrimps, but the households in clusters never have similar farming practices.

There are also changes in residential areas, where farmer living preference has changed from close to rivers, towards away from river. In case of regional and sectoral linkage, there are not very close
connections and the entire initiative is in its nascent phase. Further, for each area, these trends have been studied and the issues have been summarized to identify the problems in each area.

In the transformation plan;
- Climate change will have more effect
- For Hydropower, there are a lot of plants that have not been updated yet and may have adverse effects
- The market potential for rice will be reduced in the future, but the market for fruit and aquaculture, hence a recommendation is to reduce rice.

Res 120 key points
- Follow the natural rules instead of going against
- Brackish water is not the enemy
- Link the delta to the sea
- Change from natural food security to aquaculture
- From Quantity to Quality
- Focus on need of the market
- From top down to integrated top-down & bottom up with cooperation from farmers
- Integrated panning and interprovincial linkage
- Instead of heavily focus on hardware, focus on no-regret soft rules

Rice reduction;
- Reduce from triple to combine system
- Focus of high quality
- Still try to maintain part for lower quality for traditional market
- Divide rice in 3 groups
  - Special rice production zone, upstream in the area of close dike system, develop close cluster of rice production with higher technology. Keep some areas for 3-3-2 system.
  - Focus on Special rice by combining rice fish system
  - The outer area is proposed to be flexible where the farmer is encouraged to practice mixed system, based on market response.
- For Horticulture
  - Similar decision with focus on coconut in coastal, and create a trademark for Mekong delta
- For Aquaculture
  - Shrimp – fresh, Tiger, Wild Lac
  - Catfish in upstream
  - Sea based aquaculture (still in discussion of feasibility, mostly in the west side.)
  - Livestock – not for export only for domestic and with focus on HCMC
- Another issue is to consolidate land to create floodplains.
- Stop the construction and expansion of the dike system.
- MOTA can assist here to improve the administrative and institutional system, by establishing a research group to study the linkage possibilities within provinces. Establish protocols of cooperation.
- However, Implementation is still the biggest challenge. Should there be a Delta Commission and law?
A comment on the plan comes in terms of environmental mapping and overlay it on this plan, as it is extremely important. If there is not very concrete implementation plan, it will become big. In integrated planning, will account for water and agriculture planning. The agriculture planners look at water only from availability perspective, but not from quality issue and sediment carried by water. Another attractive factor for 120 is that it stresses the reduction of investment costs. So, if fruit is grown in coastal areas, if the soil quality is suitable, the water quality is not, and hence you need control measures. Therefore, it is very important to integrate water and agriculture resources and it is important to assess the combined function of both resources.

Khoi’s comment is the problem of time and resources. This has been developed with limited supports from the government. Limited access to the information from the government, it is extremely difficult to come together with an integrated approach.

**Final discussions**
Andrew and Khoi proposed that MOTA can really build into feasibility study for coming GCF (Global Climate Fund) project and the inter-province development initiative in Long Xuyen Quadrangle (LXQ). Here since the sanction depends upon the quality of the proposal, the government does not fund the feasibility studies. MOTA can be an effective tool here. If Khoi has to get together a draft LXQ initiative by August, after that, MOTA can be used to examine the parts of the program plan. Khoi’s concern is the time availability to use MOTA. A brief Manual/Guideline needs to be submitted for the initiation of the project. This must accompany with analytical framework and the tools/questionnaire.

- Decision in July
- GCF – the content need to be linked with MOTA
- How to apply MOTA - Maybe MOTA can be a facilitating tool.

MOTA can focus on the content of each branch or it can focus on the decision itself.

After the workshop Quan, Dorien and Gurvinder discussed on the next steps on developing MOTA. It came with 2 possible activities

- Developing the next MOTA paper in combining Performance, Feasibility and Adoptibility with case studies from the Netherlands, Vietnam. The paper will be led by Dorien.
- Developing of MOTA manual and MOTA policy brief based on a grant of (~15,000 Euro) recently share by Wim. We may need to invite some socio experts on providing socio theory backgrounds of MOTA.