

REPORT ON
ANNUAL MENGO WORKSHOP
8 & 9 May 2004, Avillion Port Dickson

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Phase 1 of the MENGO project ended on the 31st March 2004 and it will be continued with the Phase 2 for another 3 years. The project demonstrated that there is value in having a common platform for the MENGO to work together in achieving the project objective which is *“To contribute to the strengthening of the MENGOs and facilitate their impact on the decision making process at all levels in Malaysian society.”* Based on the assessment of this Phase 1 project, the 3 main project outputs are as follows :-

- (a) The project has initiated a platform for MENGO-GofMY interaction
- (b) The project has initiated a collective approach with the establishment of MENGO to interact with GofMY and other NGOs
- (c) The project has increased support for MENGOs' capacity in securing funds and broadening perspective on environmental issues

As the MENGOs are about to embark on the next phase, it is time for them to take stock of what MENGO are and what MENGO want. This will help to facilitate and to develop a better framework and implementation of the next phase. With this objective in mind, a MENGO workshop was held on the 8 & 9 May 2004 at Avillion PD. It was attended by representatives from 17 MENGOs (see **Annex 1** for the list of participants).

2.0 WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the workshop are:

1. To evaluate the Phase 1 of the project (achievements & problems)
2. To brainstorm and strategize for the Phase 2 of the project (MENGO-Government relationship, MENGO's commitment, outreach program, project sustainability)
3. To plan for project activities (post-COP7 activities, National Environment Conference)

3.0 WELCOME ADDRESS

The Chair of MENGO Cooperating Committee (MCC), Dr Loh Chi Leong gave a warm welcome to all MENGO members. He thanked the participants for forsaking their weekend for the workshop and encouraged them to interact effectively as well as giving and exchange new ideas during all sessions. Dr Loh briefly went through the workshop programme and wished everyone a happy interaction and discussion.

4.0 WORKSHOP PROGRAMME

Day 1 (Saturday, 8 May 2004)

08:00	Depart from Shah's Village Hotel, PJ
10:00	Arrival at Avillion Port Dickson
10:00 – 10:30	TEA RECEPTION
10:30 – 11:00	Welcome & Introduction (by Dr Loh Chi Leong)
11:00 – 13:00	Session 1 – Evaluation of Phase 1 (facilitated by Dr Loh) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• SWOT Analysis
13:00 – 14:00	LUNCH
14:00 – 15:30	Session 2 - Brainstorming on Phase 2 (facilitated by Dr Sundari) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• MENGO's commitment• Membership drive• Interaction with Government• Mechanism for MENGO'S feedback on development projects
15:30 – 16:00	TEA BREAK
16:00 – 16:30	Continue with Session 2 (facilitated by Dr Lee Jin) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Project sustainability
16:30 – 17:30	Session 3 – Synthesis and The Way Forward (facilitated by Dr Loh)
19:00 – 20:30	BBQ BUFFET DINNER
20:30 – 22:00	“Multicentric Information Framework” (by Mr K. K. Aw)

Day 2 (Sunday, 9 May 2004)

09:00 – 10:30	Session 4 - Project Planning <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interaction with Government (facilitated by Bishan Singh)• Post-COP7 activities (facilitated by Chee Yoke Ling)• Capacity building trainings (facilitated by Adelaine Tan)
10:30 – 10:45	TEA BREAK
10:45 – 12:30	Continue with Session 4 - Project Planning <ul style="list-style-type: none">• National Environment Conference (facilitated by Dr Lee Jin)
12.30 – 13.00	Annual Election of MCC
13:00 – 14:00	LUNCH
14:30	Depart for PJ
16:00	Arrive at Shah's Village Hotel, PJ

5.0 WORKSHOP SUMMARY

5.1 SESSION 1: EVALUATION OF PHASE 1 (facilitated by Dr Loh)

Ms. Adelaine gave a short presentation on the Completion Report for Phase 1 highlighting the impact and lessons learnt from the past two years. The following are the feedback from the MENGOs on the 4 project outputs :-

- Output 1 : Environmental policy dialogue platforms established
The general feedback is that the significant impact from the project is that the MENGOs are able to initiate a platform for collaboration and networking within NGOs. However, the MENGOs agreed that it is difficult to measure the impact and moreover, a consensus/joint decision among the MENGOs may be hard to

achieve since the MINGOs have different objectives and may have different stand in certain issues. Mr. Bishan commented that the past dialogues with the government have successfully created awareness on the government developments and processes. He stressed the importance of a feedback and reporting system. Dr Kalithasan queried on the government's feedback to the MINGOs recommendations from the two dialogues conducted. Adelaine responded that MSU did not receive any response from the Government.

Dr. Sundari highlighted that MINGO need to have somebody who can liaise directly with government liaison person especially for high level of engagement. As for the MSU, the members believed that it can coordinate and strengthen the interaction with the government but they need to have reliable support.

- Output 2 : MINGO Support Unit (MSU) established and operational
The MINGO members mentioned that they are happy with the services rendered by the MSU. In return they queried on how they can contribute to MSU in terms of their commitment. Ms. Adelaine requested MINGOs to give their feedback promptly whenever requested. She also informed the MINGOs on the new MSU facilities/services available for MINGOS - the MSU Resource Centre and MSU's equipment for rent – an LCD Projector, a laptop computer and a digital camera.
- Output 3 : Funding application procedures documented
Dr Loh suggested that MINGOs have to start looking for other funding sources besides DANIDA for future sustainability. The details on the discussion are attached as **ANNEX 2**.
- Output 4 : Capacity strengthening of relevant MINGOs conducted
The MINGOs agreed that the project has benefited them and enable them to network and share knowledge and expertise among the MINGO.

To evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the MINGO, Dr. Loh invited the participants to give their comments in the structure of a SWOT Analysis. Their feedbacks are attached as **ANNEX 2**.

5.2 SESSION 2: BRAINSTORMING OF PHASE 2

The second session was divided into discussion on four main subjects. The summary of the discussion is as below :

1. MINGO's Commitment *(facilitated by Dr Sundari)*

Dr. Sundari started off the discussion by raising a question on how to measure a commitment. She said that numerical measurement may not be accurate because some of the courses organized may not be relevant or of interest to the particular MINGO. She invited the participants to raise issues that may influence MINGO's commitment. The identified issues are as follows :-

- (a) Relevancy to the cause of the individual organizations

- (b) Activities of MENGO inclusive
- (c) Annual meeting of MENGO – senior staffs (Director/Head) need to be present
- (d) Code of conduct – guidelines need to be developed
- (e) Resources to support attendance of MENGO’s event
- (f) Competition with NGO Forum 21

2. **Membership drive** *(facilitated by Dr Sundari)*

On the issue of MENGO membership, it was agreed that the MCC would write to existing members who are inactive to obtain their affirmation on being a MENGO. The MENGO membership will be opened to other interested NGOs but there need not be a membership drive. The interested NGOs will have to write in officially and the MCC will then screen through the application. The decision to accept the new members will be opened to all MENGOs. The MCC will have to develop guidelines, procedures, rules of action, code of conduct, membership facilities, etc. It was agreed that MENGO membership can be categorized into 2 categories : Full and Affiliated. At the end of the discussion, the participants sum up the following:-

MENGO’s Achievements

- Created a value for MENGO members
- Created a culture to work together

MENGO’s Future

- Keep 18 Full Members
- Engage the dormant members
- Expand on Full and Affiliate membership
- Maintain inclusively

3. **Interaction with government** *(facilitated by Dr Sundari)*

All members agreed that MENGO need to improve its interaction with the government. The MENGOs has agreed on the following stance; that is, MENGO will

- Work with the Government (not for Government) to promote environmental protection and sustainable development
- Independent body and non-partisan politically
- Lobby and advocate on questionable policy and other matters where disagreement needs to be recorded
- Become lobby group on environmental and sustainable development issues to seek and record transparency and accountability
- Seek to represent common environmental NGOs views but respecting members’ independence and diversity

Next step

It was agreed that MENGO will initiate interaction with the Government by writing an introductory letter to the relevant ministries and to request for a meeting,

4. Feedback on development project to Government *(facilitated by Dr Sundari)*

The MENGO deliberated on the mechanism for giving feedback to the Government on some of the development projects such as technical reports or EIA on dams, incinerators, highways, etc. The following are the suggested points :

- Find out the possibility of sourcing for some donors to fund experts to review the EIA reports
- Have a dialogue with DOE on the review of the EIA report
- MNS is currently working on a DANIDA-supported project where they will educate the public on EIA process. This can be used as a leverage to convince DOE to review the EIA review process.
- MENGO to develop a template for EIA consultant to fill up as a summary of the detailed EIA – Dr Lee Jin to help using the E-Decision Forum

5. Project Sustainability *(facilitated by Dr Lee Jin)*

Dr Lee gave a short presentation on MENGO Federation Business Plan. The points presented are:

- (a) Vision for MENGO
- (b) Mission of “MENGO Federation”
- (c) Niche Activities of “MENGO Federation”
- (d) Revenue Generating Activities of “MENGO Federation”
- (e) Implementation Plan for the “MENGO Federation”

Details of the points discussed are attached as **ANNEX 3**. At the end of the discussion, the MENGOs agreed that MENGO shall become a virtual federation when come to working with the government.

5.3 SESSION 3: SYNTHESIS AND THE WAY FORWARD *(facilitated by Dr Loh)*

Dr Loh’s synthesizes are as per below:

- **Identity**
 - (a) Indigenous network, inclusive, focal point, clearing house
 - (b) Not a DANIDA project only
 - (c) Not an umbrella organization or virtual federation
 - (d) Flagship project
- **Governance**
 - (a) Code of conduct
 - (b) Commitment
 - (c) Membership system (Full/Affiliates)
 - (d) Priority to Annual Planning/Decision Meetings
- **Capacity Buildings**
 - (a) Build on successful programme
 - (b) Establish expert teams

- (c) Set up compensation mechanism for experts/representatives
- (d) Collective resources

- **Sustainability**

- (a) Leverage for fund raising
- (b) Set up MENGO Trust Fund
- (c) Annual National Environment Conference & Exhibition
- (d) Consultancy (need guidelines)

- **Interaction with Government**

- (a) Need to reach out to more levels of government ministries or authorities
- (b) Identify relevant technical committees
- (c) Improve consultative process within members
- (d) Follow up process
- (e) Report back process

5.4 SESSION 4: PROJECT PLANNING

1. Interaction with Government (*facilitated by Bishan Singh*)

Mr Bishan started the discussion by defining the statement to “build relationship with the Government”. After discussion, the conceptualized MENGO’s vision is to become a collaborative network of Malaysian environmental- and other-related NGOs to synergies and energize each other and build capacity to interact with Government and other institutions to attain sustainable development in Malaysia.

The MENGOs have identified several strategies to improve their interaction with the government as listed below:

- To develop a common position on MENGO’s representation in technical / consultative meeting
- To build up expert teams within the MENGO on specific issues
- To maintain and reinforce consultative process within MENGO
- To understand the government (to find out what government want/need, understand their perspective and strive to assist them)
- To inculcate the perception of MENGO as being a collective and collaboration of local environmental NGOs
- To develop good public relations (dress appropriately, hand shakes, make courtesy calls, write introductory letters etc.)
- To establish and implement a follow-up process within the MSU (thank you letter, follow-up actions such as phone calls, visits, etc.)
- To implement a MSU report back mechanism to members

It was agreed that MENGO would initiate interaction with the Government by writing an introductory letter to the relevant ministries and to request for a meeting with them. The identified ministries/authorities are:

- Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (NRE)

- Economic Planning Unit
- Ministry of Energy, Water and Communications
- Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovations
- Ministry of Housing and Local Government
- Ministry of Agriculture and Agro-Based Industry
- Ministry of Plantation, Industries and Commodities

The 2nd MENGO-Government has been tentatively scheduled in September 2004 after the meeting with the new Minister of NRE. One possible issue that has been identified for the dialogue is on the “Roles and Responsibility of Government departments/agencies”.

2. **Post-COP7 activities** (*facilitated by Ms Chee Yoke Ling*)

Ms Chee Yoke Ling stressed on the importance of continuing on working with the several Working Groups set up by the Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment (now known as Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment). She mentioned that a new working group has been formed to work on the Protected Areas.

3. **Capacity Building Trainings** (*facilitated by Ms Adelaine Tan*)

In the discussion on the MENGO capacity building programme, on compilation of the capacity needs of the MENGO (see **Annex 4**). In forging partnership and synergies among the MINGOs, the MINGOs community has agreed to share their knowledge and expertise in their respective fields. After much discussion, it was decided that the following training will be conducted by the respective MINGOs:

- (a) Training on advocacy and campaign activities – SAM/CAP
- (b) Urban participatory – SUSDEN
- (c) Facilitation Skills – Dr. Timmi Hermann (proposed by Yoke Ling) or Mano (EPSM)
- (d) Rural participatory – PACOS (to conduct in Semenanjung, if possible)
- (e) Project management tools – SUSDEN to provide the trainer’s details

4. **National Environment Conference** (*facilitated by Dr Lee Jin*)

Dr Lee Jin gave a short presentation on this topic based on **Annex 5**. The following are the comments raised during the discussion :

- Ms. Chee Yoke Ling questioned the fundamental need of organizing such conference which needs a lot of financial and planning. She suggested that perhaps MENGO needs to be more modest and targeted. She reiterated the need to address the real environmental issues in the conference and expressed her concern of compromising the environmental value for economic profit.
- Mr. Bishan stated that MENGO must strategically identify the project before going any further. This includes studying the contents of the project, the benefits

and how to advance from the project and whether it goes beyond MENGO's constituency.

The following are the outputs of the discussion on the conference:-

Objective: to sensitize the private sector to environmental or sustainable development issues (to create awareness / to educate).

Theme: "Integration of environment into development policies and practices.

The six key areas to be addressed are:

1. Resource management
2. Pollution management
3. Technology assessment
4. Climate change
5. Governance (issues like transparency, accountability and participatory, corporate responsibilities and inter-agency government relationship)
6. Community participation

The Pro-tem Committee : Mr. Bishan, Dr. Lee Jin, Ms. Jenny Tan, Mr. Lee Shok Mee and Dr Loh.

6.0 ANNUAL ELECTION OF MCC

The new MCC for the term 2004/2005 are :

Chair : Dr. Sundari Ramakrishna (Wetlands International)

Vice-chair : Dr. Loh Chi Leong (MNS)

Committee : Ir. Dr. Lee Jin (ENSEARCH)
Mr. Bishan Singh (SUSDEN)
Ms. Chee Yoke Ling (TWN)
Mr. Lee Shok Mee (SERI)
Ms. Claudia Lasimbang (PACOS)
Mr. Raymond Abin (BRIMAS)

Due to a tie in the votes during the election, the MENGOs had decided on an 8-member committee but for this term only. This is in view of the significant project activities anticipated in this term which requires more inputs and expertise.