

The navigational channel to the Bassac river to be smoothed by end 2012

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The navigational channel to the Bassac river is scheduled to be smoothed by end 2012 as promised to the MOT's leaders by Vietnam Maritime Administration – the project owner following the 3-month project implementation in Tra Vinh province.



Cầu Đầm Cùn̄g đ̄ang trīển khai 2 trụ giữa sông Bảy Háp

The improvement project of navigational channel to the Bassac river has officially been kicked off in Dec 2009 in Duyen Hai district, Tra Vinh province.

Presently, 70-80% of volume of exports/imports of the Mekong Delta (about 30 million tons per year) has to be shouldered on Ho Chi Minh city port complex, overloading the traffic infrastructure in Ho Chi Minh and the Mekong Delta and uneconomically taking away nearly US \$2.1 billion of roadway and waterway transport costs. Meanwhile, the sole navigational channel in the Mekong Delta (Dinh An channel) can accommodate vessels with a tonnage of about 5.000 DWT only at spring tide. In addition, the dredging work has to be executed at great cost as a result of speedy sedimentation velocity.

The navigational channel to the Bassac river is located in Duyen Hai and Tra Cu districts, Tra Vinh province. The distance from the Bassac river to the estuary is of about 40km long, of which the river channel section is of 6km long, Quan Chan Bo channel section is of 19km long, Bypass canal section is of 9km and the sea channel section is of 6km long. The total volume of dredging for shaping a fresh channel and improving the existing channel sections is of about 28 million m³.

According to Maritime Project Management Unit III, the total volume of dredging in this package is of 6.470.000 m³, of which the volume of 1.1 million m³ has been dredged by the 3-contractor Association (reaching 17%). 8/9 dredgers, 15 excavators, 01 scraper, 03 bulldozers have been mobilized to be in service of the construction work. The project owner has advanced VND 75 billion to the contractor. The project progress is slower than expected as assessed by the project owner.

In package 1 - the consultancy, survey, check-up, design and estimate preparation of the project undertaken by Portcoast – Nippon Koei association, the topographical, geological, geophysical and hydrographical surveys have been completed. For the design work, the work item as the dredging and bank protection work of Bypass canal and the work item as the breakwater and numeral model has been accomplished; and the remaining items are expected to be finished by April 2010. As assessed by the project owner, the design work is also in slow progress due to arising additional work items... The selection of a contractor to implement other packages such as environmental impact assessment, review consultancy, supervision consultancy, etc has been completed.

It is said that a concerning issue is the environmental impacts on local people's living and aquaculture. It is not simple to choose a location of regrouping and processing tens of millions of m³ of mud. This is typically exemplified by package 6A. In order to lessen the cost, the contractor has taken advantage of large shrimp ponds with a height of 4.5-5m as to contain soil and settling ponds as water drainage gates.

However, many sections of dikes are downthrown and broken, resulting in overflow of dredged mud, contaminating the surrounding environment and adversely affecting local people's aquaculture. As thus, Tra Vinh provincial People's Committee has to commit to ask the contractor to shape bank protection dikes in accordance with the project design, ensuring the technical requirements. This is seen to be a task which is crucial to coming packages.

The MOT's Permanent Deputy Minister Ngo Thinh Duc has asked Vietnam Maritime Administration to review the bank protection dike item and assign the Southern Construction and Transportation Management Bureau to check up the overall project. It is noted to put forward an alternative as to prevent from having adverse impacts on environment as taking advantage of bank protection dikes.

As with the design work which allows additional survey on extraordinary sedimentation of the channel, layout clearance area must be put forth in early May 2010 at the latest upon the slope adjustment of from 4m to 6m (276 hectares increased, of which 160 hectares is used for dumping sites).

As regards the environmental impacts, the MOT is of the same mind as Tra Vinh provincial People's Committee. The provincial authority promises to complete the layout work no later than April 2010.

For Dam Cung jetty project – (the jetty which is on Ho Chi Minh road, across Bay Hap river and connecting 02 Cai Nuoc and Nam Can districts, Ca Mau), the progress currently gains 23%, equal to an output of 60/260 billion VND.

Due to the slower layout assignment than expected upon the contract, in order to speed up the progress and smooth the traffic by April 2011, Ho Chi Minh city Project Management Unit proposes to allow the contractor to both cast and purchase Binh Minh 620 concrete beams; to improve soft soil to bank bridgeheads and Kenh Don culverts by load reduction platform; to mobilize sufficient capital; etc.

On March 24 2010, at the Dam Cung jetty project site, Permanent Deputy Minister Ngo Thinh Duc has assigned Cienco6 to re-prepare the detailed progress, the Department of Science and Technology and Construction and Transportation Management Bureau to consider curtailing beam casting time of from 5 days to 4 days. The alternatives such as increasing diameter and depth of sand piles and density of load reduction platforms need to be by common consent.

Nghĩa - Hà
(Translated by Portcoast)