



Strengthening Land Governance

Embassy of Switzerland, Swiss Cooperation Office Myanmar

Swiss Agency for Development
and Cooperation SDC

Towards an equitable and sustainable land governance by government, non-state actors and civil society, for women and men of all ethnicities in Myanmar



This programme works towards achieving a better land governance from three different angles: 1) The University of Bern provides technical assistance to OneMap Myanmar for improving the quality, accuracy and public availability of key land data to ensure sustainable land use planning and smallholder tenure security; 2) Land Core Group works with smallholder farmers, ethnic nationalities and women to engage government, civil society and other actors for a more inclusive land governance; and 3) Transnational Institute builds the capacity and networks of ethnic-based civil society organisations and ethnic armed organisations on fulfilling the right to land and natural resources for their effective participation in policy reform and efforts to promote peace.

Background

Land and natural resources are in high demand and they are critical, complicated and contested resources in Myanmar. About 70% of Myanmar's population are living in rural areas and land and natural resources provide an

important asset and source of livelihood through agriculture, forestry and other uses. Many smallholder farmers or forest dwellers do not have formal land use rights and therefore face difficulties in demonstrating their legitimate rights to land, they have been using over generations. Women, despite playing a key role in the rural economy, have very limited roles in decision-making around land. In the first decade of this millenary large land concessions were accorded to national and international investors. One of the priorities of the democratically elected government is to address land conflicts and to redistribute land to original owners or the landless. The *National Land Use Policy (NLUP)* was adopted by the Government of Myanmar in January 2016. It is a reasonably well balanced policy, but further advocacy for its implementation, the development of an umbrella land law and for sustainable land resources basic principles in all-inclusive approach is needed. Land and natural resources are also one of the key topics in peace negotiation process.

Goal

Small-scale food producers including women and men from all ethnicities have secure and equal access to land.

Outcomes (objectives) of the planned phase

1. Accurate data and knowledge on land is widely available, enabling transparent multi-stakeholders dialogues and decision-making for land governance and sustainable development planning.
2. Stakeholders in Myanmar have increased capacity and are able to effectively coordinate in promoting equitable land and natural resource rights in policy and law.
3. Ethnic-based CSOs play a significant role in decision-making on land policy and other natural resources.

Achievements

OneMap Myanmar (OMM) has successfully engaged with a wide array of stakeholders, both within and outside government, in the coproduction of new data, knowledge and an institutional framework that help the country move towards more transparent, inclusive and sustainable use of its land resources. Land Core Group (LCG) strengthened government capacities to engage with communities and other stakeholders in policy development. While the Transnational Institute (TNI) worked with ethnic based CSOs for them to make meaningful contributions to policy development and towards alternative policy options on land and natural resources.

Expected results

- The quality, accuracy, and public access to key spatial datasets relevant to land governance have improved.
 - The network of non-state actors involved in land is further expanded including to the private sector.
 - Research conducted by the implementing partners is relevant of high quality and made available publicly.
 - Government actors are more open to conducting meaningful public consultation in the development of land related policies and laws
 - CSOs have greater capacities to effectively coordinate and engage in policy dialogue to promote equitable land and natural resource rights
 - Ethnic based CSOs and Ethnic Armed Organisations (EAOs) have increased technical skills and knowledge to engage in advocacy and develop alternative proposals and clear strategies on land and natural resources issues.
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Approach

Implemented by three complementary partners, this project strengthens capacity for land governance among government, civil societies, and ethnic nationality leaders and communities at national and local levels. The OMM, coordinated by the Centre for Development and Environment of the University of Bern (CDE) provides technical support to the government for the implementation of an open access geospatial data platform on land. LCG strengthens the capacity of government actors at different levels to engage in multi-stakeholder policy and law reform dialogues and to understand the land rights issues faced by smallholder farmers, ethnic nationalities and women. TNI supports ethnic based CSOs in their efforts to achieve recognition,

protection and promotion of their right to land. They strengthen ethnic-based CSOs to re-claim ethnic customary and communal rights to land, including for IDPs and refugees. TNI also supports EAOs to be able to fully engage in negotiations on issues around land and natural resources. All three partners work to build national consensus on approaches to securing land tenure for women and ethnic nationalities, including under customary systems. This project directly works on conflict reduction and peace building, by making information on land more publicly available and building facilitated spaces for dialogue on conflicting claims. This all is done using a conflict sensitive approach and by constantly monitoring the context and relevant changes.

Target groups

Government officials, representatives of the ethnic-based civil society, ethnic armed organisations as well as the private sector are targeted for creating true multi-stakeholder processes, for trust building and constructively work on solutions for land conflicts, their prevention and for sustainable use of natural resources. Capacity building on the responsible governance of tenure of land is for all stakeholders while civil society actors, farmers, women and ethnic-based civil society organisations are empowered to effectively participate in policy and peace processes.

Project at glance

Project Title

Strengthening Land Governance

Duration and Total Budget

Phase I: 01.10.2014-31.05.2017, CHF 3,900,000

Phase II: 01.06.2017-31.05.2021, CHF 9,000,000

Implementing Agency

University of Bern (Centre for Development and Environment CDE), Land Core Group (LCG), Transnational Institute (TNI)

Project Partners

Ministries of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation, and of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation, Nationwide and specific geographic focus in the southeast (Tanintharyi, Mon and Shan)

IMPRESSUM

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Photo: CDE/OneMap Myanmar
