Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Decentralised Project Evaluation

Final Report, May 2022

# Terminal Evaluation

# "Sustainable cropland and forest management in priority agro-ecosystems of Myanmar"

## (GEF-SLM Project)

## GCP/MYA/017/GFF

## GEF ID 5123

## FAO Project ID 618969

**FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANISATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS**
**May 2022**

Required citation:

Author (corporate or personal). Year of publication. *Publication title*. [Series.] Place of publication, Publisher (if different to author). Number of pages (total including preliminary pages). Licence: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO.

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**Acknowledgements**

The Terminal Evaluation team would like to thank all those who contributed to the Terminal Evaluation managed by Mr. Ivan Scott the Evaluation Manager at FAORAP. The Terminal Evaluation team comprised two independent subject matter experts: Dr. Rita Gebert as lead consultant who covered in particular sustainable and community-based forest management and all crosscutting issues; and Ms. May New Soe who covered climate smart agriculture and related curricula and capacity building measures. Owing especially to the political situation in Myanmar since the February 2021 political crisis, the lead consultant had to conduct the evaluation home-based. Fortunately, the national consultant was able to visit three townships in two project areas.

The TE team would especially like to acknowledge the support and contributions of the Senior Technical Advisor, Mr. Xavier Bouan and the entire Project Management Unit, including Technical Field Officers. Former PMU staff and advisors were also particularly helpful. The Mission would not have been possible without this level of support. At the same time, the team would like to mention that fruitful discussions were held with a limited number of township level government stakeholders where Ms. May New Soe could visit.

The TE Team a brief, but useful discussion with the Budget Holder, FAO Representative Ms. Yuka Makino at the TE presentation of findings. It held longer interviews with Lead Technical Officer Mr. Pierre Ferrand and with Mr. Sameer Karki, Funding Liaison Officer. The TE further benefited from discussions with project Service Providers.

Finally, the TE team wishes to acknowledge the community stakeholders in the project areas: the men and women farmers who gave up their valuable time to meet with the national consultant to discuss different facets of project implementation and progress in their villages.

Terminal Evaluation Team

- *Dr. Rita Gebert*

- *Ms. May Nwe Soe*

## Acronyms and abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| AEZ | Agro-Ecological Zone |
| AVSI | Italian NGO |
| AWP | Annual workplan or workplan |
| BAU | Business as Usual |
| BH | Budget holder |
| BTOR | Back to Office Report |
| C1a, C2a, etc. | Component 1a, Component 2a, etc. |
| CARTC | Central Agriculture Research and Training Centre |
| CBFM | Community-Based Forest Management |
| CC | Climate Change |
| CDM | Civil Disobedience Movement |
| CDZ | Central Dry Zone |
| Cesvi | Italian NGO |
| CF | Community Forestry |
| CFC | Community Forestry Certificate |
| CFE | Community Forestry Enterprise |
| CFI | Community Forestry Instructions |
| CFNWG | Community Forestry National Working Group |
| CFUG | Community Forestry User Group |
| CSA | Climate Smart Agriculture |
| CSO | Civil Society Organisation |
| DALMS | Department of Agricultural Land Management and Statistics |
| DFMP | District Forest Management Plan |
| DOA | Department of Agriculture |
| EBSFM | Ecosystem Based Sustainable Forest Management |
| ECCDI | Ecosystem Conservation and Community Development Initiative |
| EM | Evaluation Manager |
| EQ | Evaluation Question |
| ET | Evaluation Team |
| Ex-ACT | Ex Ante Carbon Balance Tool |
| FA | Focal Area |
| FAA | Fish Amino Acid |
| FAO | Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations |
| FAOR | FAO Representative |
| FAORAP | FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific |
| FD | Forest Department |
| FFS | Farmer Field School |
| FLO | Funding Liaison Officer |
| FPIC | Free, Prior, Informed Consent |
| GAD | General Administration Department |
| GEF | Global Environmental Facility |

| | |
|---|---|
| GEF-SLM | Sustainable Cropland and Forest Management in Priority Agro-ecosystems in Myanmar Project |
| GHG | Greenhouse Gas(es) |
| GoM | Government of the Republic of Myanmar |
| IC | International Consultant |
| INRM | Integrated Natural Resources Management |
| LoA | Letter of Agreement |
| LCG | Land Core Group |
| LSC | Local Stakeholder Committee |
| LTO | Lead Technical Officer |
| LUAC | Land Use Advisory Committee |
| LULUCF | Land Use, Land Use Change and Forest |
| LUP | Land Use Planning |
| MERN | Myanmar Environment Rehabilitation-conservation Network |
| MoALI | Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation |
| MoNREC | Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation |
| MTR | Mid-Term Review |
| M&E | Monitoring and Evaluation |
| MRRP | Myanmar Reforestation and Rehabilitation Programme |
| NC | National Consultant |
| NCE | No Cost Extension |
| NGO | Non-Governmental Organisation |
| NLUC | National Land Use Council |
| NLUP | National Land Use Plan |
| NPC | National Project Coordinator |
| OCB | FAO Office for Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environment |
| OED | FAO Office for Evaluation |
| PFE | Permanent Forest Estate |
| PIF | Project Identification Form |
| PIR | Project Implementation Report |
| PLRs | Policies, Laws and Regulations |
| PLUP | Participatory Land Use Planning |
| PMU | Project Management Unit |
| PPF | Protected Public Forest |
| PSC | Project Steering Committee |
| PTF | Project Task Force |
| RECOFTC | The Centre for People and Forests |
| RF | Reserved Forest |
| SFM | Sustainable Forest Management |
| SLM | Sustainable Land Management |
| SMART | Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-bound |
| SP | Service Provider |
| STA | Senior Technical Adviser |

| | |
|---|---|
| tCO2eq | Tons of Carbon Dioxide Equivalent |
| TE | Terminal Evaluation |
| TFO | Technical Field Officer |
| TNA | Training Needs Assessment |
| ToC | Theory of Change |
| ToR | Terms of Reference |
| ToT | Training of Trainers |
| UFES | University of Forestry and Environmental Sciences |
| UNCT | United Nations Country Team |
| USD | United States Dollars |
| VFV Land | Vacant, Fallow and Virgin Land |
| VGGT | Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security |
| YAU | Yezin Agricultural University |

## Executive Summary

### Introduction

ES1. This report presents the findings of the independent terminal evaluation (TE) of the "Sustainable Cropland and Forest Management in Priority Agro-Ecosystems of Myanmar Project," GCP/Myanmar/017/GFF, otherwise known informally as the GEF-Sustainable Land Management (GEF-SLM) Project (this name will be used hereafter). The TE was partly conducted in Myanmar from 8 December 2021 until 18 February, 2022 with the international (lead) consultant based in Germany and the national consultant in Myanmar. The conduct of the TE was heavily influenced by the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, plus the political crisis of February 2021 with a *de facto* ruling authority. There are strict principles of engagement in place as to contact between UN agencies and the *de facto* ruling authority.

ES2. The GEF-SLM Project's objective is to build the capacity of farming and forestry stakeholders to mitigate climate change and improve land conditions by adopting climate smart agriculture (CSA) and sustainable forest management (SFM) policies and practices. The project began with an inception phase in July 2016, had a slow implementation start in mid-2017, was affected by Covid travel restrictions through much of 2020, then by the political crisis from February 1st 2021, and is due to end prematurely in March 2022. It is a full-sized GEF-5 project and the GEF Agency is FAO. Its geographical focus is five townships in three priority agro-ecosystem zones of Myanmar: the Ayeyarwady Delta (one township), the Central Dry Zone (two townships) and an upland, shifting cultivation zone (two townships). An additional focus was to support the further development of policies, laws and regulations on CSA and SFM. There are two executing partners of equal status: the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation (MoNREC) and the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation (MoALI).

ES3. The main purpose of the evaluation is to provide inputs for an overall analysis and assessment of the project in meeting its objective, outcomes and outputs. The terms of reference (ToR) mention making use of the TE findings and lessons learned for its main stakeholders – present and future. The TE will provide, as appropriate, strategic, programmatic and management conclusions, also considering the double crises of Covid and political crisis.

ES4. The scope of the TE covers the inception and implementation period of the GEF-SLM Project starting from July 2016 and covering the period to January 2022. All four project components, with sub-components, come under the purview of the TE.[1] Owing to the thoroughness of the MTR, plus the ongoing crises affecting project implementation since 2020, the primary scope the TE will be the post MTR period, including the project's implementation of key recommendations made by the MTR. The scope of the evaluation has thus included major developments in the context of the project's implementation, especially including those that may affect its sustainability and scalability.

ES5. The following, summarised, evaluation questions (EQ) guided the work of the TE team.
**EQ 1: Relevance.** To what extent has the project proven relevant and consistent with the strategies and priorities of the major stakeholders?
**EQ 2: Effectiveness.** To what extent have project objectives been achieved against plans, and were there any unintended results?
**EQ 3: Efficiency.** To what extent has the project been implemented efficiently and cost-effectively?

[1] In summary, the four components entail: C1a/b support to the policy, laws and regulatory framework plus land use planning; C2a/b Climate Support Agriculture – institutional support and Farmer Field Schools; C3a/b State and Community-Based Forest Management, including institutional support and model community forest user groups; C4 Replication of project models and knowledge management.

**EQ 4: Sustainability.** What is the likelihood that the project results and positive changes will be sustained after the end of the project?
**EQ 5: Factors Affecting Project Implementation**. What are the factors, especially including monitoring and evaluation, that facilitated or hindered the effectiveness of the project?
**EQ 6: Crosscutting Issues, Gender and Indigenous People.** To what extent were gender issues and other key equity considerations (indigenous people) effectively assessed and factored in project design and implementation?
**EQ 7: Environmental and Social Safeguards.** To what extent were environmental and social concerns taken into consideration in the design and implementation of the project?
**EQ 8: Co-Financing.** To what extent did any expected co-financing materialize (government and donor), and what were the critical factors underlying this?
**EQ 9: Progress to Long Term Impact.** To what extent may any discernible progress towards long-term impact be attributed to the project?
**EQ 10: Knowledge Management.** How effectively is the project assessing, documenting and disseminating its results, lessons learned and experiences?

ES6 In terms of methodology to address the questions/issues raised in the ToR, the TE team has employed three general methods for its overall approach, chosen for the triangulation of results they provide. Qualitative information gained from semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions has been complemented wherever possible by quantitative data from the project and other, including Government sources. Consultation of academic and/or grey literature provided further triangulation of evidence. The TE team could not hold in-depth discussions with primary government stakeholders above township level, and this detracted from the depth of findings, but there were no obvious alternatives under the circumstances (besides retired, or resigned, government officers).

**Main findings**

ES7 The following are the main findings of the TE, most of which arise from an analysis of the Evaluation Questions, plus further evidence from the field and other sources. Some of the ratings have been seriously affected by the aftermath of the political crisis –this will be explained in detail in the main text of the report.

ES8 **EQ 1**: **To what extent has the project proven relevant and consistent with the strategies and priorities of the major stakeholders?**

**Finding 1.1** The GEF-SLM Project has maintained its alignment with stakeholders' priorities despite some major changes that have occurred between the project's initial design and the present (about 10 years)**.**

**Finding 1.2** At community level, the GEF-SLM project's relevance for women and men farmers has been maintained through the FFS activities and Department of Agriculture (DOA) extension of CSA practices. Certainly, for Community Forestry User Groups (CFUGs) who did not have any land titles whatsoever, to have a CF Certificate (CFC) valid for 30 years is of high relevance for the land security it proffers.

**The GEF-SLM Project's relevance is highly satisfactory.**

ES9 **EQ 2: To what extent have project objectives been achieved against plans, and were there any unintended results?**

**Finding 2.1** The effectiveness of the GEF-SLM Project has presented a mixed picture in achieving outputs and outcomes against plans. Covid-19 restrictions played a major role in hindering effectiveness, while post- political crisis emergency rule has also played a major role.

**Finding 2.2** The GEF-SLM Project did not develop a strategy to deliver outputs contributing to an integrated SLM approach. The cropping and forest land activities were implemented separately for the duration of the project. This would have been ameliorated had the project started with land use planning activities.

**Finding 2.3** As the Government had already made substantial changes in the land and forest policy, laws and regulations (PLR) framework by the time the project started, this reduced the GEF-SLM Project's possibility to contribute to "regulatory and policy modifications for cropland and forest." Nonetheless, the work completed on finalising the Forest Rules has been an important achievement.

**Finding 2.4** While democratisation processes in Myanmar have been brought to an abrupt end, the GEF-SLM project's support for an inclusive and consultative approach to define and validate the Forest Rules was as important as the Forest Rules themselves.

**Finding 2.5** Project effectiveness was negatively affected by not having started its CSA and SFM activities with township land use planning (LUP) first, as this would have provided the basis for all further cropland and forest management planning, leading to integrated land management.

**Finding 2.6** Regarding the support services for CSA, the outputs under C2a have been achieved with much useful curricula produced and the National CSA Centre well-established.

**Finding 2.7** Despite the smaller CSA acreages under the farmer field schools (FFS) at first, this did increase substantially in subsequent seasons through various, successful mechanisms involving the farmers themselves.

**Finding 2.8** Achievements of Outputs and Outcome for Component 2 are satisfactory.

**Finding 2.9** Quality problems of the District Forest Management Plan (DFMP) package, reluctance of District Forest Officers to adjust their DFMPs midstream, and slowness of both Service Provider and Forest Department (FD) decision-making created ineffectiveness in what was considered a crucial project output. On the other hand, SFM capacity building was well done.

**Finding 2.10** The GEF-SLM's gaining issuance of "no objection letters" for three villages to do community forestry on "Virgin, Fallow and Vacant" land (land not under the remit of FD) was a major achievement, as there have been very few cases to date of local communities obtaining clearance from the Department of Agriculture Land Management Statistics to do a community forestry activity on VFV land.

**Finding 2.11** The difficulties and complexities in trying to establish the basis for SFM (models), including both the State's and community management of forest land, were massively underestimated.

**Finding 2.12** There is considerable overlap between Component 4 and other project components. It had, therefore, virtually no value added in the course of project implementation and its monitoring. It has not been provided a separate rating.

**Effectiveness is considered moderately satisfactory.**

ES10 **EQ 3: To what extent has the project been implemented efficiently and cost-effectively?**

**Finding 3.1** On the whole, the GEF-SLM project represents an efficient use of resources represented by a small project management unit and use of Myanmar-based Service Providers.

**Finding 3.2** The project was able to respond with high effectiveness (and efficiency) to the Covid situation of 2020 to provide livelihood assistance to project area households.

**Efficiency is considered satisfactory.**

ES11 **EQ 4: What is the likelihood that the project results and positive changes will be sustained after the end of the project?**

**Finding 4.1.** Overall, given the overly ambitious premises and inconsistencies in the project design, the late implementation start of the project, slowdowns caused by Covid restrictions, ongoing resource problems of the implementing ministries and the political instability caused by the political crisis, – the risks to sustainability are likely (significant).

**Finding 4.2** With regard to upscaling, the curricula produced under C2 in terms of national level CSA curricula, and C3 for SFM curricula at the Myanmar Forestry School show long term support potential for scaling up CSA, SFM and CBFM. In the aftermath of the political crisis educational institutions are only semi-functional.

**Sustainability is considered moderately likely, but if emergency rule continues beyond 2022, this may go up to moderately unlikely.**

ES12 **EQ 5: What are the factors, especially including monitoring and evaluation, that facilitated or hindered the effectiveness of the project?**

**Finding 5.1** Many factors have negatively affected project performance and management to date, starting from the design, but including a delayed start, a lengthy inception phase, too long a period without adequate M&E, Covid-19 and the political crisis.

**Finding 5.2** The project document and design contained too many inconsistencies and some logic flaws in the causal pathways from outputs to achievement of outcomes. The inclusion of three highly diverse AEZs brought additional complexity to an already complex and ambitious design.

**Finding 5.3** While the post-MTR introduction and implementation of FAO's Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan (MEAL Plan) undoubtedly improved the project's M&E, the PMU and major stakeholders were never in an optimum position to gain the depth of experiences and lessons learned from piloting measures that would lead to potential "models" as specified in the project document.

**Finding 5.4** Stakeholder engagement and involvement was high at Ministry level until the political crisis and UNCT principles of engagement stopped contacts, while township GOs retained adequate involvement until the end of project implementation.

*Stakeholder Engagement (extra comment)*

ES13 Besides GOs, as mentioned under Finding 5.4, other stakeholders, such as the NGOs involved in the project as SPs have shown high commitment in most cases and one in particular has devised a way to provide support to village-level stakeholders on CSA after the end of the project. An SP working on community forestry will also provide limited support for user groups in the Delta (with funds from another project), while it also maintains a Viber platform to exchange technical, and other, information with CFUGs.

**Overall assessment of factors affecting performance is moderately satisfactory.**

ES14 **EQ 6: To what extent have gender and social inclusion, including indigenous peoples, been taken in account in the design and implementation of the project?**

**Finding 6.1** The GEF-SLM Project did not develop an adequate gender approach. Women were involved in FFS and CBFM activities, but not with an eye to their specific interests or to improving gender equality.

**Finding 6.2** The project did not fully apply key GEF or FAO policies on indigenous peoples to provide guidance for project activities that engage indigenous peoples.

ES15 **EQ 7 To what extent were environmental and social concerns taken into consideration in the design and implementation of the project?**

**Finding 7.1** The project design did not include environmental and social safeguards concepts or plans. Indeed, there was little mention of safeguards of any kind. During inception and/or early implementation of the project, FAO did not take the opportunity to develop at least simplified safeguards plans.

ES16 **EQ 8: To what extent did any expected co-financing materialize (government and donor), and what were the critical factors underlying this?**

**Finding 8.1** With the major delay in starting the project, the envisioned co-financing in kind, while appearing substantial, did not materialise as planned.

ES17 **EQ 9: To what extent may any discernible progress towards long-term impact be attributed to the project?**

**Finding 9.1** The long term impacts in the sectors or focal areas should have been defined in the project document as overarching goals to be achieved after the project comes to an end.

**Finding 9.2** One of this project's most important contributions in the GEF focal areas relate, perhaps, less to the achievements on the ground in terms of hectares and carbon stocks, but rather in bringing the two most important land and forest-responsible ministries in Myanmar together for a steady process of consultations.

ES18 **EQ 10: How effectively is the project assessing, documenting and disseminating its results, lessons learned and experiences?**

**Finding 10.1** One of the GEF-SLM project's key products under knowledge management is its website, slmmyanmar.info. Some of the available documents at the website have been downloaded several hundred times.

**Finding 10.2** A missing aspect under knowledge management is the description of models, "good practices" and lessons learned.

**Conclusions**

**Extenuating Circumstances Affecting the GEF-SLM Project**

ES19 **Conclusion 1** There were major, extenuating circumstances that affected the implementation of the GEF-SLM project and the achievements of its outputs and outcomes. Since about April – May 2020 until project closure on 31 March, 2022, with the exception of a few months, the project team, including all SPs, were seriously affected by the onset of Covid-19 and then by the political crisis of 1 February, 2021. In the agricultural sector extension activities were not so much affected by the political crisis, although it is likely to affect broader upscaling. Nonetheless, farmer to farmer mechanisms should continue to function well at inter-community level.

**Relevance:**

ES20 **Conclusion 2** The GEF-SLM Project's underlying concepts related to climate change mitigation through integrated land management and restoration are as highly relevant now as they were in 2012. If anything, they have increased in urgency.

**Effectiveness**

ES21 **Conclusion 3** The GEF-SLM Project's overall effectiveness would have been greatly enhanced, had it started with appropriate baseline surveys and land use planning to understand where best to plan and implement integrated approaches to land/forest management and restoration.

**Outputs and Outcomes**

ES22 **Conclusion 4** The GEF-SLM Project pursued the delivery of outputs that whether met in their entirety, overachieved in some cases, or partly met, could not lead to the overall land and emissions targets at outcome and objective level met within the project's lifetime.

**Efficiency**

ES23 **Conclusion 5** While the project's overall efficiency was satisfactory, the fact that every LoA under the forestry component required an NCE reduced efficiency, but at the same time is indicative of an underlying problem which is that the outputs and outcome for the component were too difficult to achieve within the shorter period available to the project.

**Sustainability**

ES24 **Conclusion 6** Despite the immediate impacts of the political crisis and emergency rule, GEF-SLM project's capacity building programme including endorsed curricula at key training institutions under MoNREC and MoALI should have positive effects and longer term impacts.

ES25 **Conclusion 7.** The post-political crisis and the withdrawal, or non-start-up of many donor projects, including ones covering similar sectors and/or approaches to the GEF-SLM project, create higher risks to sustainability.

**Factors Affecting Implementation**

**Project Design**

ES26 **Conclusion 8** The major premises underlying the project design and its strategies were incorrect. While building skills and capacities through developing well-placed educational and training programmes is never amiss, the idea that this would inevitably lead to broad scale implementation and the achievement of massive emissions targets was misplaced.

**Monitoring and Evaluation**

ES27 **Conclusion 9** It took too long for the project to establish a centralised monitoring system (recommended by the MTR in 2019), thus losing out on valuable time to draw and distil good practices and lessons especially from field level experiences. Once the MEAL plan was established, however, it still proved rather unwieldy and did not prove to be the optimum tool to help define what FFS or CBFM models actually are.

**Other Factors Affecting Implementation**

ES28 **Conclusion 10** Factors such as stakeholder engagement and partnerships were supporting for project implementation, although the political crisis effectively ended them in part. The

project continued to work well through the SPs and field staff to accomplish work of benefit to local communities**.**

**Crosscutting Issues**

ES29 **Conclusion 11** The GEF-SLM Project's response to the MTR's recommendation on developing adequate strategies and approaches toward gender equality and indigenous people safeguards (FPIC) was incomplete for both FPIC and gender. This indicates that FAO (FAOMM, FAORAP) could have been more active in advising the project team on these crosscutting issues.

**Knowledge Management**

ES30 **Conclusion 12** The GEF-SLM project has developed a comprehensive and informative website: slmmyanmar.info. It has had several hundred downloads for some of the project products there, showing that they have utility for varied users.

**Overall Assessment**

ES30 The TE team's overall assessment of the GEF-SLM Project is moderately satisfactory, considering the difficulties faced with the Covid-19 pandemic and emergency rule since February 2021. If these factors were not considered, then the overall assessment would be moderately unsatisfactory given the lower than expected achievement of (reduced at the insistence of the MTR) the forest management-related emissions targets within the project's lifetime, although cropping land targets were overachieved vis-à-vis the reduced ones. Models for CSA expansion and ecosystem-based CFUGs remained in a nascent stage, without enough lessons learned and/or good practices to further develop them.

**Recommendations**

The recommendations below shall be understood as not directed at the GEF-SLM PMU. In the first instance they are directed at the FAORAP Lead Technical Officer (LTO) and Funding Liaison Officer (FLO), Evaluation Manager, Project Task Force (PTF) and the FAO Budget Holder. It is also directed at FAO's Office for Climate Change, Biodiversity and environment (OCB). They are not intended for the immediate future, but rather as suggestions for future GEF project planning.

**Recommendation 1:** A project of GEF-SLM's character should have a bridging phase in order to plan a follow on project with a design for broader scale implementation (best in cooperation with an IFI).

**Recommendation 2:** It should be ensured that projects always have centralised monitoring systems built in as part of the design, with use of SMART indicators, and not having M&E become an "add on" later on in the implementation phase.

**Recommendation 3:** PIRs and Progress Reports should show indicator achievements in terms of milestones, not as percentages, (i.e., a particular output indicator may achieve 80%, but if an appropriate milestone has not been reached, the 100% may never be achieved).

**Recommendation 4:** Project exit and sustainability strategies need to be devised by project midterm at the latest. Indeed, especially ideas on sustainability should be an integral part of the project's framework.

**Recommendation 5**: In a Least Developed Country such as Myanmar, the available institutional resource base must be accounted for when it comes to the replication and scalability of project-piloted approaches and/or models. Avoid "development islands." Do not be over ambitious.

**Recommendation 6:** Project PTFs should always include a senior social safeguards specialist to ensure that the crosscutting issues are properly accounted and for and implemented.

**Recommendation 7:** If the Theory of Change is to be used, it needs to be deeply embedded in the context that affects medium- and long- term impacts. Its logic should be revalidated over time to ensure that either the project is on the right track or that outputs and outcomes require adjustments.

**Recommendation 8:** (directed at FAO Myanmar Country Office BH). Should a legitimate government return to power within the next 18 months, then this report should be shared and discussed with MoALI (DOA) and MoNREC (FD). A translation of the report's summary should in any case be translated and provided to the key township GOs that were closely involved with project implementation.

**Recommendation 9:** (directed at FAO OCB along with FAOMM for presentation to GEF). Towards the end of the capitalisation period for emissions reduction targets, there should be an *ex post* project study done to ascertain emission reductions actually achieved by the project (using Ex-ACT).

## GEF Rating Table

### Table A1: TE Ratings and Achievements Summary Table

| GEF criteria/sub criteria | Rating | Summary Comments |
|---|---|---|
| **A. STRATEGIC RELEVANCE** | | |
| A1 Overall strategic relevance | HS | Myanmar remains one of the most vulnerable countries to climate change: the project's efforts to mitigate climate change are of high relevance. |
| A1.1. Alignment with GEF and FAO strategic priorities | HS | In general, the project aligns well with GEF and FAO priorities. |
| A1.2. Relevance to national, regional and global beneficiary needs | HS | Globally, the GEF-SLM Project's working areas related to climate change mitigation in both the agriculture and forestry sectors have high relevance. High relevance to beneficiary needs via CSA and community forestry. |
| A1.3. Complementarity with existing interventions | S | There has been complementarity with UN-REDD (less) and OneMap Myanmar (more) until the political crisis. |
| **B. EFFECTIVENESS** | | |
| B1. Overall assessment of project results | MS | Capacity building outputs were largely achieved, CSA-related outputs also achieved quantitatively, a professional LUP was introduced, but no plan endorsements could be made. SFM targets could largely not be met. Expected models for CSA/FFS and for CBFM not available. |
| B1.1 Delivery of Project Outputs | MS | All outputs expected vis-à-vis capacity building and curricula have been well met. Farmer field schools and Community Forestry Groups, both overachieved in number, but model character missed. Updated forest management plans too late and some quality issues. |
| B1.2 Progress towards outcome and project objectives | MS | Project implementation time was cut short by Covid-19 and the political crisis; would have achieved more if hadn't happened. |
| - Outcome 1 | S | The project cannot contribute as much as initially planned re: PLR framework; LUP came in too late as the key to SLM and landscape restoration. On LUP, project has made important contributions. Outcome indicators UA, so this rating is for outputs. |
| - Outcome 2 | S | Farmers have adopted useful CSA practices via a number of extension methods, starting with FFS. Curricula endorsed. National CSA Centre operational. Downward revised targets land targets overachieved. With its limited resources, GO-led FFS outside of target areas largely not feasible. |
| - Outcome 3 | MS | Land and emissions targets cannot be met within project lifetime, but likely during capitalisation period. Capacity building accomplished; no |

| GEF criteria/sub criteria | Rating | Summary Comments |
|---|---|---|
| | | Community-based forest management models accomplished, status or GO-driven ecosystem CFs outside of project areas. |
| - Outcome 4 | UA | This Outcome has so much overlap with Outcomes 2 and 3 that it is not given a separate rating. |
| Overall rating of progress towards achieving objectives/outcomes | MS | Results Framework original land targets reduced, but not met in forestry sector. Especially, the political crisis slowed project work in the sector. |
| B1.3 Likelihood of Impact | UA | There were no baselines from which an assessment of impact may be made. No possibility to assess attribution gaps properly in light of the political crisis. |
| **C. EFFICIENCY** | | |
| C1. Efficiency | S | Efficiency was initially affected by delayed start and long inception phase. Some SPs, especially forestry sector, had difficulty to deliver LOA outputs on time and with good quality – many NCEs (much less in CSA). |
| **D. SUSTAINABILITY OF PROJECT OUTCOMES** | | |
| D1. Overall likelihood of risks to sustainability | MU | Risks remain likely because of combination of factors; exacerbated by ongoing emergency rule after the political crisis. |
| D1.1 Financial risks | MU | Government budgets for field operations remain low in both agriculture and forestry – even more difficult to predict in light of the political crisis and possible changes in priorities after changes in Union Ministers. For now, technical and financial assistance projects in the relevant sectors are cancelled. |
| D1.2 Socio-economic risks | ML | Local communities are interested in CSA practices, especially in light of current inflation rates for agricultural inputs. CF is harder to predict, as CF enterprises not well-established and some forest areas highly degraded. |
| D1.3. Institutional and governance risks | ML | Low staffing and highly complicated PLRs related to land tenure security remain risks. Emergency rule may exacerbate these risks as it may not honour PLR updates made under the democratically elected government. |
| D1.4. Environmental risks | MU | Droughts, floods, heavy winds, high temperatures and pestilence are all risks that cannot be predicted, but will happen. |
| D2. Catalysis and replication | ML | Covid and the political crisis prevented the project from developing models for replication that are manageable for local offices – other projects that would have taken up some of the models (LUP in |

| GEF criteria/sub criteria | Rating | Summary Comments |
|---|---|---|
| | | particular) are now on hold as a result of the political crisis. |
| **E. FACTORS AFFECTING PERFORMANCE** | | |
| E1. Project design and readiness | MU | The project design was inconsistent and illogical in several respects. Despite this, PMU and PSC (until the political crisis) found some ways to mitigate some of the design problems. |
| E2. Quality of project implementation | MS | Most implementation was through SPs/LoAs for agriculture and forestry, not for LUP. Quality of the SP implementation varied, but LUP highly professional. University-produced curricula for Forestry School of particular note for high quality. |
| E2.1 Quality of project implementation by FAO (FAO, PSC, PTF, etc) | MS | The mistakes and inconsistencies in the project document should have been raised during inception. FAO should have hired a second full time forester, given the sector's high complexity. |
| E2.2 Project oversight (PSC) | HS | Until the political crisis, in its eight meetings the PSC took its oversight functions seriously, and made highly relevant decisions regarding project progress. |
| E3. Quality of project execution | S | All administrative functions of project, including communications with FAO were satisfactory at all levels. |
| E3.1 Project management arrangements and delivery (PMU, financial management, etc) | S | A full time STA arrived in mid-2018: this made for big improvement, but delivery was later affected by Covid and political crisis. |
| E4. Co-financing | MU | About 50% of co-financing was promised for the period before the project actually started – alternatives were not sought by FAO. |
| E5. Project partnerships and stakeholder involvement | S | Very high involvement at national level, including virtual meetings during Covid. UNCT principles of engagement forbade contact post-political crisis. At implementation level, local officers remained well-involved. Project partnering with OneMap excellent. |
| E6. Communication and knowledge management | MS | The project has some knowledge management products, including success stories, but didn't distil models and good practices. Project website offers many useful documents (bilingual). |
| E7. Overall quality of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) | MS | A centralised M&E system established after MTR. Spot M&E did occur with BTORs (trips halted by Covid rules), SP reporting and semi-annual progress reports. Useful stakeholder surveys done, especially on effects of Covid. |
| E7.1 M&E Design | MS | Project developed M&E design after MTR; this included improved data collection forms for CSA. and small scale quantitative surveys. |
| E7.2 M&E Plan Implementation (including financial and human resources) | MS | Project hired IC to develop M&E plan with SMART indicators, then hired full time monitoring staff. |

| GEF criteria/sub criteria | Rating | Summary Comments |
|---|---|---|
| E8. Overall assessment of factors affecting performance | MS | Factors affecting performance have been mostly supportive of project implementation, especially stakeholder engagement and partnerships. M&E system developed too late and too oriented toward surveys rather than good practices and lessons learned. |
| **F. CROSS-CUTTING CONCERNS** | | |
| F1. Gender and other equity dimensions | MS | Gender concerns have been integrated to a certain extent, but with too little consideration for the enabling conditions that would encourage women's participation *and* decision-making. |
| F2. Indigenous People | MU | No GEF or FAO indigenous people policies included in project design; LUP in IP village made sure of people's express consent. |
| F3. Environmental and social safeguards | UA | No safeguards planned or used. |
| **Overall project rating** | **MS** | Despite the many factors affecting the project negatively (late start, overly complex and inconsistent design with unreasonable area targets, Covid, political crisis), it was able to maintain a good standard of implementation. |

# 1. Introduction

1. This report presents the findings of the independent terminal evaluation (TE) of the "Sustainable Cropland and Forest Management in Priority Agro-Ecosystems of Myanmar Project," GCP/Myanmar/017/GFF, otherwise known as the Global Environmental Facility (GEF)-Sustainable Land Management (GEF-SLM) Project (this acronym will be used hereafter). The TE was conducted partly home-based and partly in Myanmar from 8 December to 18 February. The lead consultant was not permitted to travel to Myanmar, but the national consultant was able to carry out field investigations.

2. The GEF-SLM project objective is to build the capacity of farming and forestry stakeholders to mitigate climate change and improve land conditions by adopting climate smart agriculture (CSA) and sustainable forest management (SFM) policies and practices. The project began with an inception phase in July 2016, and is due to end in March 2022 after a no cost extension (NCE) of 11 months that was shortened to nine. Its geographical focus is five townships in three priority agro-ecosystem zones (AEZs) of Myanmar: the Ayeyarwady Delta (one township), the Central Dry Zone (CDZ) (two townships) and an upland, shifting cultivation zone (two townships). An additional focus was to support the further development of policies, laws and regulations on CSA and SFM.

## 1.1 Purpose of the Terminal Evaluation

3. The TE is explicitly called for in the project document at month 58 under section 4.6, Provision for Evaluations. Moreover, a TE is a requirement of both GEF and FAO (refer their guidelines[2]). The Terms of Reference (ToR) were finalised in November 2021 and follow the Guidelines for GEF Agencies in Conducting Terminal Evaluations for Full-sized Projects dated 2017. The TE will serve overall learning and accountability purposes for, among others, the Budget Holder (BH) and FAO's Office for Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environment (OCB) (see further list below under intended users). As the Project Management Unit (PMU) will cease to exist by the end of March 2022 it is addressed to a lesser extent. Owing to the fraught political situation in Myanmar since the political crisis of 1 February, 2021 and the subsequent United Nations Country Team (UNCT) principles of engagement with representatives of government authorities, this TE report is not directly oriented to the Ministries who have been involved in the project.

4. The main purpose of the review is to provide inputs for an overall analysis and assessment of the project in meeting its objective, outcomes and outputs. At project end, and in light of the grave political situation, sustainability is also a crucial issue. The TE seeks to draw lessons and make recommendations that will be useful for key stakeholders, especially the intended users, at the end of the project and for what might be done in future.

## 1.2 Intended users

5. Under normal circumstances, the primary intended users of the TE Report would include the Forest Department (FD) and the Environmental Conservation Department (GEF operational focal point) of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation (MoNREC). The Department of Agriculture (DOA) of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation (MoALI) would have been another primary user. Owing to the UNCT principles of engagement in Myanmar, findings and

[2] Guidelines for GEF Agencies in Conducting Terminal Evaluation (April 2017): http://www.gefieo.org/sites/default/files/ieo/evaluations/files/gef-guidelines-te-fsp-2017.pdf and the Project Evaluation Manual (http://www.fao.org/3/ca4821en/ca4821en.pdf)

recommendations of the TE cannot be addressed to the Ministries and Project Steering Committee (PSC). Therefore, the primary intended users are confined to FAO and GEF. As mentioned, the PMU is only operative until 31 March, 2022, thus having too short a time frame to remain a primary user. Nonetheless, units at FAO, including in the first instance the OCB and FAO Myanmar Country Office Representative (FAOR) as BH are intended users, as is the Office for Evaluation (OED). The FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (FAORAP), especially the Evaluation Manager (EM) Financial Liaison Officer (FLO) and Lead Technical Officer (LTO) shall use the report. The project task force (PTF) would generally be an intended user as will the GEF.

6. The report's Executive Summary could also be translated and shared with key township offices (as intended users) that were closely involved with project implementation. It may be noted and considered that, in the event of free and fair elections being held in the country within two years of this report's submission, that it still be shared with FD and DOA as primary intended users under normal circumstances.

### 1.3 Scope and Objective

7. The scope of the TE covers the entire lifespan of the GEF-SLM Project starting from its inception in July 2016 and covering the period to December 2021 when implementation activities ended. While certainly not disregarding the planning and inception period prior to the mid-term review (MTR) (early 2019), the TE will take up the findings of the MTR, considering the implementation of that team's key, validated, recommendations, but try to focus more on the roughly three-year period after the MTR. Equal consideration, however, will be given to the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic and emergency rule on both the project's achievements and its ability to implement the MTR recommendations. The latter two unforeseeable events have affected the project's planning and implementation approaches from about April-May 2020 onwards, and have also affected project achievements of its outputs, outcomes and objective. All four project components, including sub-components come under the purview of the TE.

8. The geographic scope of the evaluation includes all three of the agro-ecological zones (AEZs) with five townships. Nonetheless, due to the state of violence and civil unrest prevailing in Chin State (upland AEZ), there was far less that could be assessed there. In terms of stakeholder scope for the TE team, a detailed list was provided in the ToR.[3] Target stakeholders had to exclude line agency staff from MoALI and MoNREC at national level (excepting two persons who had left government), but it was considered within the UNCT principles of engagement to include township level government stakeholders. A wide scope of key stakeholders was included: representatives of almost all the service providers (SPs), key informants such as former project staff/advisers, and the FAO FLO and LTO based at FAORAP. Community stakeholders (beneficiaries) were considered of particular importance, especially members and lead farmers of Farmer Field Schools (FFS), members and leaders of Community Forestry User Groups (CFUGs) and villagers who had participated in participatory land use planning (PLUP).

9. The main objectives of the evaluation as set out in the ToR and reconfirmed in the inception report are: a) To examine the extent the project achieved its stated objective, outcomes and outputs, while assessing relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability; b) To provide an assessment of the project's performance and achievements disaggregated especially by gender and indigenous people (latter only in Chin State); c) To synthesize lessons learned that may help in the design and implementation of future FAO and FAO-GEF related initiatives in this sector.

[3] The list had been copied from the project document of 2012, making quite a large number of stakeholders irrelevant for various reasons, including that projects had ended, and the like.

### 1.3.1 Main Evaluation Questions from ToR

10. The main evaluation questions of the approved ToR are presented immediately below.

**Terminal Evaluation Questions as Provided in ToR**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Relevance (EQ 1)** | To what extent has the project proven relevant to the needs of stakeholders – national and sub-national government; participating communities; the FAO Myanmar Country Programming Framework and GEF strategies? To what extent has the project been able to cope with significant changes in the context relevant to its design and goals, and how well did the project and stakeholders adjust to these changes and ensure continued relevance? |
| **Effectiveness (EQ 2)** | To what extent have project objectives been achieved against plans, and were there any unintended results? To what extent was FAO successful in building understanding and ownership amongst the diverse range of stakeholders involved to maximise results *(to January 2021?)* What particular added value can be identified in FAOs contributions to results achieved – both planned and adapted as the context changed? |
| **Efficiency (EQ 3)** | To what extent has the project been implemented efficiently and cost-effectively, and has management been able to adapt to any changing conditions to improve the efficiency of project implementation? |
| **Sustainability (EQ 4)** | What is the likelihood that the project results and positive changes will be sustained after the end of the project, and what are the key factors relating to these conclusions? What are the key risks which may affect the sustainability of the project benefits? |
| **Factors affecting performance (EQ 5)** | What were the factors affecting performance such as project design and management, monitoring and evaluation (M&E), stakeholder engagement and project partnerships? To what extent were M&E plans appropriate and practical, and resourcing sufficient to contribute to reporting, timely decisions and fostering learning during project implementation? How well did these systems and approaches prove able to adapt to the changing context and needs? |
| **Gender and equity, including Indigenous People (EQ 6)** | To what extent were gender issues and other key equity considerations (indigenous people, youth, vulnerable groups) effectively assessed and factored taken into designing and implementing the project? Was the project implemented in a manner that ensures equitable participation and benefits? |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Environmental and social safeguards (EQ 7)** | To what extent were environmental and social concerns taken into consideration in the design and implementation of the project? |
| **Co-financing (EQ 8)** | To what extent did any expected co-financing materialize (government and donor), and what were the critical factors underlying this? |
| **Progress to Impact (EQ 9)** | To what extent may any discernible progress towards long-term impact be attributed to the project (including programming and policy areas)? Which existing or potential barriers or other risks can be identified that may prevent future progress towards long-term impact? |
| **Knowledge management (EQ 10)** | How effectively is the project assessing, documenting and disseminating its results, lessons learned and experiences and what can be said on the quality and appropriateness of these for intended audiences? |

### 1.4 Methodology

11. The Terminal Evaluation team (ET) consisting of one international lead consultant (Dr. Rita Gebert) and one national consultant (Ms. May Nwe Soe) conducted the TE according to the approved ToR (from November 2021). The TE was conducted in accordance with the guidance, rules and procedures established by FAO and GEF, with constructive advice provided to the ET by the EM in the early stages of, and whenever needed throughout, its mission. The team adhered to the GEF evaluation policy and followed the FAO OED Manual on Decentralised Evaluation (2019) and its guidelines giving emphasis to rigorous and evidence-based evaluation. The team adopted a consultative and transparent approach with all interlocutors. The TE was undertaken in line with the United Nations Evaluation Group, and GEF, principles of independence, impartiality, transparency, disclosure, ethics, credibility and utility. The team has respected the anonymity of its interlocutors as required.

12. In terms of methodology to address the questions/issues raised in the ToR, the ET has employed three general methods for its overall approach. These methods have been chosen for the triangulation of results they provide. Qualitative information gained from semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions using core questions has been complemented wherever possible by quantitative data from the project and other sources. Consultation of academic and/or grey literature provided further triangulation of evidence. The team had in-depth discussions with Service Provider (SP) representatives who had been tasked with much of the field level implementation. Other stakeholders directly involved with project implementation included township government officers from FD, DOA and the Department of Agricultural Land Management and Statistics (DALMS). Regrettably, national level GO technical staff such as the National Project Coordinators could not be contacted, although a couple of retirees were. The ET assured as broad a range of key informants as possible in order to answer the evaluation questions listed above completely and fairly. Additionally, the ET consulted a sizeable selection of documentation, especially project products, as noted below.

13. The main methods used, in greater detail, were as follows:

**Document and Report Study and Analysis:**

- Project progress reports and Project Implementation Reports (PIRs);
- Project Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEAL) plan;
- Curricula, manuals and handbooks produced by SPs for the project;
- Reports and other documentation produced by SPs under the terms of their LoAs;
- Relevant academic/grey literature related to the subject matters covered by the project;
- Available Government of the Republic of Myanmar (GoM) policies, laws and regulations (PLRs) and relevant strategy documents;
- Quantitative data available from the PMU and SPs related to activity coverage;
- PSC Minutes (from 8 PSC Meetings held up to October 2020);
- Maps, photos and drone footage available from the PMU and/or SPs;
- Project website http://www.slmmyanmar.info/

**Interviews with Key Informants among Stakeholders** (please see Appendix 4 for the list of persons met)**:**

- Key informant interviews with key GoM officials at township level regarding both the project and their own working context;
- Key informant interviews with SP representatives and staff (Yangon and field level);
- Key informant interviews with former international CSA Advisor, TFO of Chin State and other former GEF-SLM staff;
- Semi-structured focus group discussions with FFS Lead Farmers and women and men members (from five villages in the Delta and eight villages in the Central Dry Zone (CDZ) with some overlap with villages visited by the MTR in 2019) regarding what they have learned, what they have practiced and what they intend to continue in terms of techniques learned;
- Semi-structured focus group discussions with CFUG members (members from 10 different CFUGs) on general ideas and expectations regarding community forestry (CF), and with several villagers who had participated in PLUP.
- Interviews with two former OneMap Myanmar staff (a project with which GEF-SLM had a close working relationship on land use planning (LUP), digitised mapping, and data base creation.
- Interviews with other key informants, especially including the LTO and FLO of FAORAP.

### 1.5 Limitations

14. Given the travel restrictions to Myanmar, the lead consultant did the work as a home-based assignment. In this respect, the fact that the lead consultant had also been the lead consultant for the MTR helped immeasurably in understanding the project, its background, context and the situation in the target villages[4]. The TE team was contracted at a late stage before the mission was to begin in Myanmar, thus causing unexpected delays in TE start-up. As the GEF-SLM needed to stop virtually all of its field activities by 31 December, the project Technical Field Officer (TFO) in the Delta AEZ was only available until then. Thus, with the consent of the EM, the ET took a pragmatic approach and had the national consultant begin the Delta field trip while the lead consultant was preparing and finalising the Inception Report.

15. The long distances and times (travel times were increased by military checkpoints) required to travel to the project areas, and then within the project areas, has limited the number of villages the national consultant could visit in three townships. The long travel times pertain especially to the Delta area where much travel has to be conducted by boat. To compensate for this, travel allowances were

[4] Normal practice under GEF evaluations is that the same team leader should not be used for both MTR and TE. Given that an international team leader would not be able to visit the country, and the desirability of that person having recent experience of the country and the project, an exception was made.

provided to CFUG leaders to come to Labutta town as the villages with CFUGs are remotely situated in the Delta. Nonetheless, that field visits could be undertaken at all under the current, fragile political situation is a major plus. Since the two townships of the upland AEZ in Chin State could not be visited (civil unrest), the national consultant made a point of having an extensive interview with the former Chin State TFO.[5] Therefore, 13 of 76 FFS groups in two of the three zones (not including any of the 2021 "expansion" FFS groups in 20 Delta and CDZ townships) were met which has allowed the ET to get a decent picture of CSA progress; gaps in the picture have been filled with the many SP and other reports. Not all SPs could be met because of their close association with the two ministries.[6] CFUG members from 10 of 13 CF villages in two zones could be met for discussions, while two CF villages in the CDZ were visited where PLUP exercises had been conducted. For all village visits, the focus groups had to be kept small to avoid transgressing any ongoing Covid restrictions. Another reason to keep the groups small was to avoid any interpretation by authorities that the meetings might constitute unlawful gatherings.[7] Given the small sizes of the groups, and the limited time available for the group discussions, the national consultant was not able to delve into gender-disaggregated differences in terms of benefits from the project. Given limited reporting on this by the SPs and PMU, there was little that could be done to mitigate this.

16. A regrettable limitation that could not be mitigated to an acceptable extent was the necessary omission of national DOA and FD National Project Coordinators and Focal Points as interlocutors.

## 2. Background and Context of the Project

**Basic Project Information**

| |
|---|
| Region: **Asia-Pacific** |
| Country: **Myanmar** |
| Project Title: **Sustainable Cropland and Forest Management in Priority Agro-Ecosystems of Myanmar Project** |
| FAO Project Symbol: **GCP/Myanmar/017** |
| GEF Project ID: **5123** |
| GEF Focal Areas: **CC, LD, SFM** |
| Project Executing Partners: **Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation (MoALI) and Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation (MoNREC)** |
| Project Duration: **60 months plus 11 month NCE** |
| Date of CEO endorsement: **6th April 2015** |
| Project implementation start date: **1st July 2016** |
| Proposed project implementation end date/NTE: **30th June 2021** |
| Revised project implementation end date: **31st May 2022** |
| Actual project implementation end date: **31st March, 2022** |
| GEF Grant Amount: USD 6,183,031 |
| Total Co-financing amount as included in GEF CEO Endorsement Request/ProDoc: **USD 13,611,707** |
| Total estimated co-financing materialized: **USD 4,500,000 (in kind)**[8] |
| Date of Mid-Term Review: **February – April, 2019, endorsed May** |

[5] The lead consultant has extensive experience in upland farming systems and working with indigenous, upland people throughout mainland Southeast Asia that allowed the ET to assess project activities remotely.

[6] The three SPs associated with the ministries: the Yezin Agricultural University where the National CSA Centre is located, the University for Forestry and Environmental Sciences which worked on SFM curricula and the Community Forestry National Working Group based at FD, which had numerous outputs under two LoAs.

[7] The CDZ pilot township of Kyaukpadaung had also experienced unrest during the past year.

[8] Up to 1 February, 2021. It cannot be estimated with any accuracy after the political crisis.

17. This is a full-sized GEF-5 project. In short, it is referred to (unofficially) as the GEF-SLM Project. The GEF Agency is FAO and it had both an implementing and executing function. There were two ministerial "executing partners" of equal status: MoNREC and MoALI. The crucial stakeholder departments within these two ministries are FD and DOA respectively,[9] from national level down to township, focussing on the Townships, of which there were five. International and local Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) were primarily involved as SPs,[10] but non-SP NGOs and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) have also been invited to participate in the Local Stakeholder Committees (LSCs) at township level and at various consultation and validation workshops. The project developed close cooperation with OneMap Myanmar (hereafter referred to as OneMap) on LUP, digitised mapping and data base management for CF. The private sector was not directly involved, with the exception of participation at "input-output" days to acquaint CSA farmers with different value chains and improved marketing opportunities.

18. The GEF focal area (FA) objectives[11] to which the project is aligned are:
Conservation and Enhancement of Carbon Stocks (CC)-5[12]: Promote conservation and enhancement of carbon stocks through sustainable management of land use, land use change and forestry (LULUCF).
Land Degradation-Integrated Landscapes (LD)-3: Reduce pressures on natural resources from competing land uses in the wider landscape.
Sustainable Forest Management/Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (SFM/REDD+)-1: Reduce pressures on forest resources and generate sustainable flows of forest ecosystem services.

19. The GEF-SLM Project had an initial duration of five years (60 months ending June 2021). Primarily owing to delays in starting up forestry-related and LUP activities, the MTR recommended an NCE of 12 months. After a PSC decision to extend the project by 11 months it was to have ended on 31 May 2022. In the meantime, the extension of 11 months was reduced to nine months and the revised project end date is 31 March 2022. The reason for the reduced NCE relates to the political crisis that took place in Myanmar on 1 February, 2021, including arrests and detention of re-elected National League for Democracy politicians (including Aung San Su Kyi) and documented arrests, torture and unlawful killings of innocent protesters. Unrest leading to violence and outright warfare is commonplace in some parts of the country, including Chin State (upland AEZ). On recommendation of the GEF Secretariat, FAO terminated and/or suspended all FAO-implemented GEF projects in Myanmar. In the case of GEF-SLM, it was agreed that the project's field activities would terminate by 31 December, but the overall project termination date would be 31 March to allow time for the TE to take place.

20. GEF provided a grant of USD 6,183,031 with planned co-financing of USD 13,611,707 that, for the most part, did not materialise (see Appendix 2). The formulation stages for this project began during 2012, a Project Identification Form (PIF) was submitted in early February 2013, while the CEO Endorsement Letter is dated 06 April, 2015. The expected start date had originally been March 2015 (as shown on the project document), but the GEF-SLM Project only began its inception phase in July 2016

[9] Within DOA, the main division involved was the Land Use Division, while DALMS (also under MoALI) was involved in LUP activities and in processes required for approving CF activities on Virgin, Follow and Vacant (VFV) lands with forest cover. Within FD, the involved divisions have been Planning and Statistics, the Training and Research Development Division and the Extension Division (the latter for CF-related activities.)

[10] All NGOs involved as SPs were Myanmar-based even if they had headquarters elsewhere; the latter applied to only three (RECOFTC with HQ in Bangkok, AVSI and Cesvi both with HQs in Italy).

[11] The GEF FA objectives originate from the following document: *GEF-5 Focal Area Strategies* dated May 2012.

[12] In some parts of the project document there is reference to "Climate Change Mitigation" (CCM), whereby the CC would stand for Climate Change . . .

lasting until mid-2017 after the first PSC meeting confirmed the general framework in mid-December, 2016.[13] From the inception phase through until mid-2018 the project's implementation was slowed by the fact that it had only a part time Senior Technical Adviser (STA) and no forester on board. A full time STA took up his post in July 2018 and a full time forester in September 2018. Project implementation was again negatively affected from April 2020 with the rapid spread of Covid-19 in Myanmar. Strict travel and meeting restrictions were put in place that forced the PMU and SPs to cancel planned activities, replan some and newly plan others.

21. Following on from the project's objective, *to build the capacity of farming and forestry stakeholders to mitigate climate change and improve land condition by adopting CSA and SFM policies and practices*, its components provide indication of the project's overall approach: that is, multi-level capacity building, planning and piloting support in the agricultural (CSA/improved cropland management) and forestry (SFM/CBFM) sectors, and support for upscaling of successful models and approaches. Overall, the project's design was a response to Myanmar's critical situation as a country most affected by climate change globally, plus its need for adequate models and skilled GO staff to implement them.

22. The GEF-SLM Project has four components with the four broken into two sub-components each as follows:

**1. Institutional, Policy and Regulatory Frameworks Strengthened to Support SLM, CSA and SFM**

1a Comprehensive Programme to Enable Regulatory/Institutional Framework Assessment, Strengthening and Capacity Building[14]

1b Improved Land Use Management and Planning to Inform Institutional and Regulatory Improvements

**2. Models for CSA Practices Demonstrated and Enhancing Carbon Storage in Three Priority Agro-Ecosystems**

2.a/b Programmes for CSA support services and for farmer CSA capacity building.

**3. Models for Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) Practices Demonstrated and Enhancing Carbon Storage in Three Priority Ecosystems[15]**

3. a/b Programmes for Improved Forest Planning and for Community-Based Forest Conservation[16];

**4. SLM, SFM and CSA Knowledge Management, Training and Practices Scaled up Nationally.**

4. a/b Support Programmes Established for Scaling up SFM and CSA Practices.[17]

23. In terms of scope, the GEF-SLM Project worked from national to community level on training and capacity building, including curricula development for agriculture and forestry sector pre-service and in-service training institutions under the two ministries. It was to support different aspects of the PLR framework, while complementing this with piloting different types of planning: LULUCF in the Townships, District Forest Management Plans (DFMPs) and Township Agricultural Extension Plans.

[13] The project's first Annual Workplan (AWP) covered the second half of 2017 only.

[14] This sub-component was changed by an early PSC decision at the output level owing to changes in Myanmar's PLR framework between initial project design and begin of implementation.

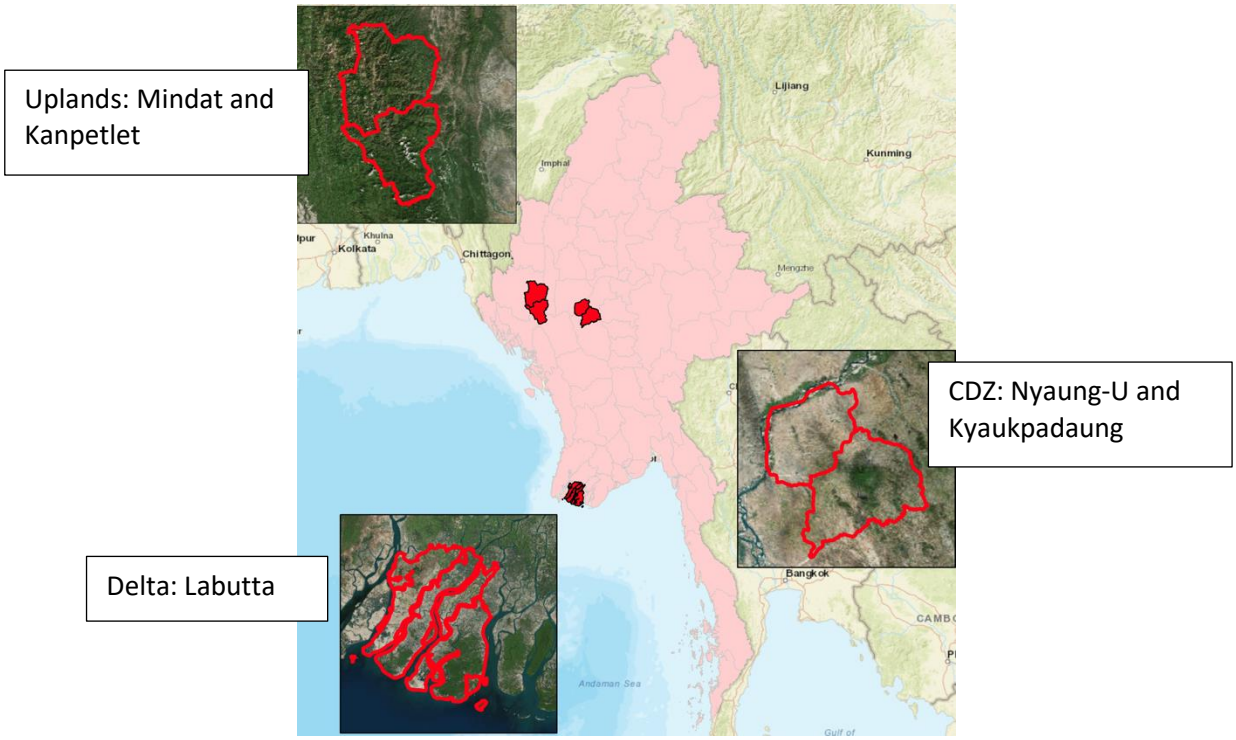
[15] The project document narrative has a completely different formulation compared to the Results Framework of Component 3: *Forest Department pilots improved multi-functional forest management in closed forestlands.*

[16] "Conservation" changed to "Management" owing to changes in the Community Forestry Instructions in 2016.

[17] There is so much overlap between the outputs of Component 4 and other components that it provides very little value added for the project's design and implementation.

24. Concerning its geographical scope, the GEF-SLM Project is a sub-national project in that its area comprises five townships in three agro-ecosystem zones: one in the Delta (Labutta) in Ayeyarwady Region, two in the Central Dry Zone (CDZ) of Mandalay Region (Nyaung-U and Kyaukpadaung) and two (Mindat and Kanpetlet) in Chin State, representing the upland agro-ecosystem zone. Within the five townships the project worked with a selection of farming communities; the main community stakeholders are smallholder farming women and men. The project document identifies female-headed households among community stakeholders, but without including a gender approach as such. In the Chin State, the project works with indigenous people as identified by GEF and FAO policies. Myanmar recognises 135 ethnic groups known as "ethnic nationalities."[18]

**Figure 1 GEF-SLM Project Area Townships in Three Agro-Ecological Zones**




Source: PMU, March 2019.

## 3. Theory of Change

25. At the time of the GEF-SLM Project's formulation, there was no requirement to construct a Theory of Change (ToC). Unfortunately, the project document's Results Matrix also provided too few, well-argued, causal pathways from barriers to outputs to outcomes and the project's objective. The land- and emissions-based targets for the outcomes and objective were so ambitious that they would normally be considered at a "development objective" level to be achieved. There appeared to be too little analysis at the time of attribution gaps, and no reference as to how the project would be making incremental additions to government efforts (i.e., how the targets could represent a combination of various government efforts, whether internationally-supported or not).

26. The project formulation team had identified four main barriers that would be addressed by the GEF-SLM Project as follows, quoting from the project document's Executive Summary (p.2). "Four

[18] The 135 ethnic groups are recognised by way of the 1983 Procedures of the Citizenship Law of 1982. Myanmar is a signatory of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP).

fundamental barriers restrict Myanmar from efficiently advancing beyond the existing business as usual (BAU) scenario":

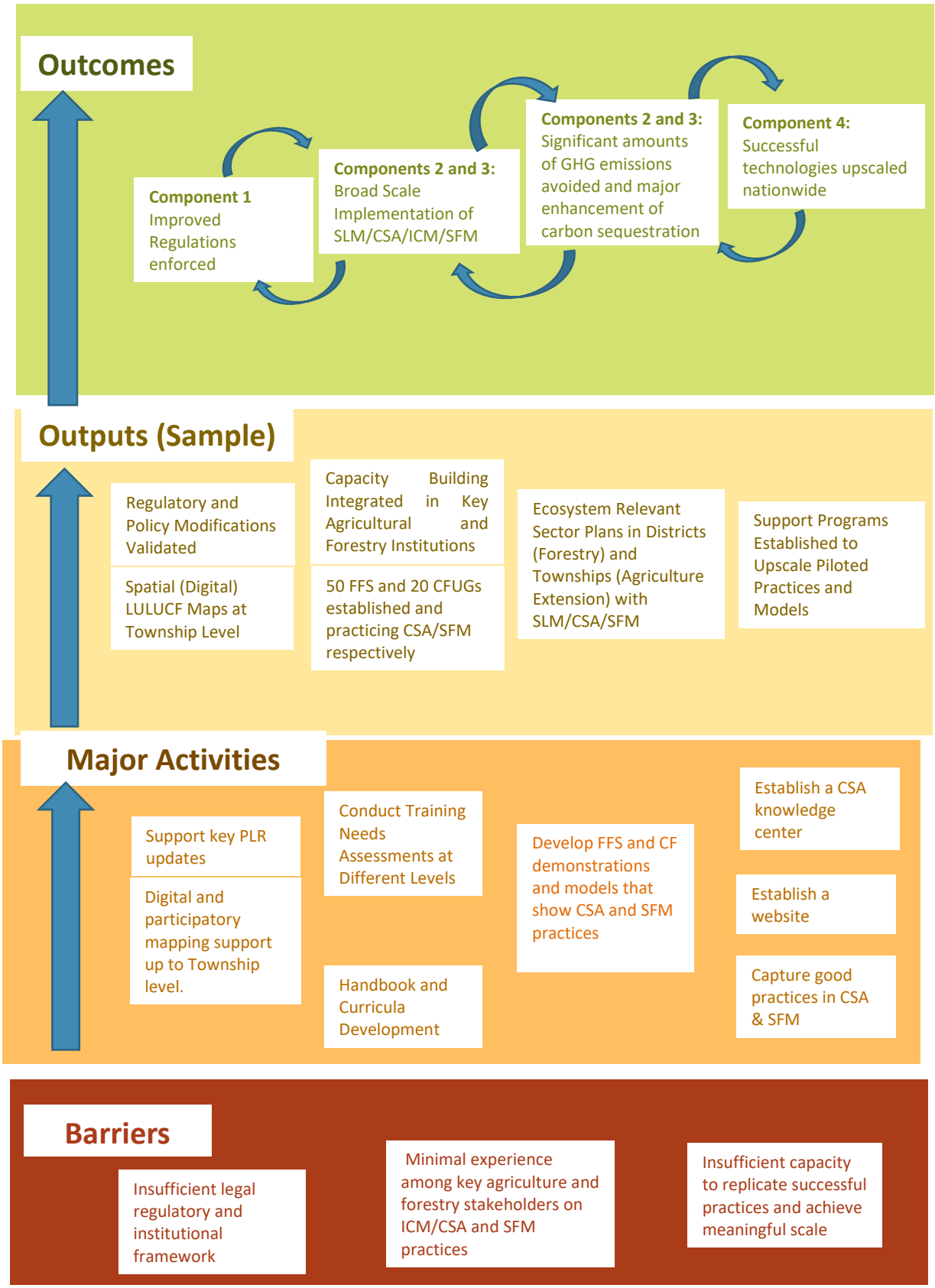
- Barrier 1: Insufficient legal regulatory and institutional framework for sustainable forest and cropland management;
- Barrier 2: Minimal experience among key agriculture stakeholders in developing and implementing improved cropland management/CSA practices;
- Barrier 3: Minimal experience among key forest stakeholders in developing and implementing FD and CF-driven SFM practices;
- Barrier 4: Insufficient capacity to replicate successful practices and achieve meaningful scale.

27. The project document authors summarised the threats in relation to the four barriers as follows: "rural Myanmar faces serious land degradation, forest degradation, and climate change threats. These threats emanate from existing forestry and agricultural practices. *The origin of these threats is a persistent management capacity gap that extends vertically from national management authorities to local resource users"* (emphasis added). The premise that a cadre of well-trained government staff could overcome significant under-resourcing (staffing and budgeting) and achieve broad scale land-based targets within five years was implausible. If there had been a robust ToC exercise done, the project design may well have looked differently, such as separating LUP from the PLRs and creating an independent component focusing only on LUP (as a difficult and complex set of activities on its own).

28. A summarised ToC based on the results matrix, but with the addition of core problems, put together by the MTR team in 2019 is at Figure 2. This ToC did not include the project objective included in the Results Matrix as it was considered far too ambitious; moreover, the project did not have a development objective or overarching goals.

29. Based on the MTR recommendation, the PMU engaged a consultant to assist in establishing a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system for the PMU. In the process, two additional ToC diagrams were produced (one for policy, one for technical implementation); it seems they were done as a preliminary exercise for the monitoring system. Not only did several key informants mention that the ToCs were not referred to anymore, they are also not referred to in any project documentation with one exception: the GEF-SLM's Monitoring Evaluation and Learning (MEAL) plan of November 2019. It may be concluded that as since the ToCs were too late in their creation that they didn't end up as reference points for project M&E.

**Figure 2 GEF-SLM Project Theory of Change Based on Project Document**




*Note that the activities and outputs in Figure do not imply a hierarchy in terms of importance, nor do they imply a chronological order within activities or outputs, as the project works concurrently on many different activities through the SPs*

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# 4. Key findings and TE questions

## 4.1 Relevance

**EQ 1**: **To what extent has the project proven relevant to the needs of stakeholders** – national and sub-national government; participating communities; the FAO Myanmar Country Programming Framework and GEF strategies? To what extent has the project been able to cope with significant changes in the context relevant to its design and goals, and how well did the project and stakeholders adjust to these changes and ensure continued relevance?

30. **Finding 1.1 The GEF-SLM Project has maintained its alignment with stakeholders' priorities despite some major changes that have occurred between the project's initial design and the present (about 10 years).** The GoM's commitments to environmental targets in both the agriculture and forestry sectors have been made clear, for example, in the Sustainable Development Goals and in Myanmar's Indicative Nationally Determined Commitment to the UNFCCC, and subsequent report to it. GoM commitments to sustainable agriculture and CSA were indicated through updated policy and strategy documents (ex. CSA Strategy 2015 and Agricultural Development Strategy, 2018). The GEF-SLM Project is well-aligned with these commitments although its design predated them. After the political crisis of February 2021, however, the State Administrative Council's ongoing commitments to those made by the previous, democratically elected government are uncertain. Nonetheless, the signs from both FD and DOA are that they are maintaining their commitments to CF and CSA respectively. This is evidenced by FD's completion of a new CF Strategic Plan, 2021 – 2025 and township DOAs' continued extension services including CSA practices.

31. The project is generally well-aligned with GEF's strategic priorities as identified in the PIF. With respect to the FAO Strategic Objective/Organizational Result identified in the project document, SO-2 *Make agriculture, forestry and fisheries more productive and sustainable*, the project is certainly still well-aligned with it, along with the identified regional result/priority area and four of the Country Programming Framework priorities valid at the time (2012 – 2016).[19]

32. The project's relevance vis-a-vis legal and institutional framework conditions—work under Component 1a (C1a)—lessened because of the overall, rapid changes in this framework between project document completion and onset of implementation phase. The PSC decided in 2017 to change two of the C1a outputs to "implementation support" of laws and policies rather than Master Plan updating. Although there was nothing the project could contribute on agricultural policy or updating, FD did request project finalisation support for the Forest Rules required for the updated Forest Law of 2018. This was a highly relevant activity carried out in a way to support consultative and inclusive processes required for Myanmar's interim period of "fledgling democracy." This provides a good example of the project coping with changes, adjusting to them, and ensuring its continued relevance.

33. **Finding 1.2 At community level, the GEF-SLM project's relevance for women and men farmers has been maintained through the FFS activities and DOA extension of CSA practices. Certainly, for CFUGs who did not have any land titles whatsoever, to have a CF Certificate (CFC) valid for 30 years is of high relevance for the land security it proffers.** Farmer adoption of CSA practices have helped to reduce input prices (inflation for agro-chemical inputs, especially fertilisers) and to increase yields for some crops. For those villagers involved in CF it is too early to say whether

[19] **Priority 1**: Increased agricultural production; **Priority 3**: Sustainable management of natural resources and the environment; **Priority 4**: Land use and land management; and **Priority 5**: Human resource development and capacity building.

this is of low, medium or high relevance for them as all forestry activities have had far longer gestation periods than expected.

34. **The GEF-SLM Project's overall relevance has been maintained over its implementation period and is highly satisfactory.**

### 4.2 Effectiveness

**EQ 2:** To what extent have project outcomes been achieved against plans, and were there any unintended results? To what extent was FAO successful in building understanding and ownership amongst the diverse range of stakeholders involved to maximise results *(to January 2021)*. What particular added value can be identified in FAOs contributions to results achieved – both planned and adapted as the context changed?
**Note:** The findings in this section are not strictly about effectiveness alone; they also include some contextual information and analyses that temper output and outcome delivery. Given the project design with eight sub-components, the paragraphs in this section also indicate which sub-component they refer to with abbreviations as relevant (C1a, C1b, etcetera)

35. **Finding 2.1 The effectiveness of the GEF-SLM Project has presented a mixed picture in achieving outputs and outcomes against plans. Covid-19 restrictions played a major role in hindering effectiveness, while the post-political crisis emergency rule has also played a major role.** There have been a number of project products that should have been revised, updated, submitted for endorsement or were already at the endorsement stage. These finalisations could not take place because of the political crisis. Another, unrelated, issue is that some of the outcome indicators, as also that of the objective, were unreasonably formulated in the project document – not being able to achieve them is thus not to blame the PMU for ineffectiveness. These general points will be clarified in the paragraphs that follow.

36. **Finding 2.2 The GEF-SLM Project did not have a strategy in place to deliver outputs contributing to an integrated SLM approach**. This is both cause and effect of the different pace of implementation under C1b, C2 and C3 (further discussion below in this section). The overall effect was an unavoidable, "silo" approach. Too little progress could be made to demonstrate an approach to integrated land management. The project document's initial budget allocation did not include full time international consultants (including the STA), although provision was made for full time national technical specialists for agriculture and forestry. This contributed to the project's disjointed implementation from the start, leading it away from the required integrated approach to cropping land and forest management. This was most certainly an ineffective allocation of project budgets; there was significant improvement after the full time STA joined in mid-2018.

37. The project document itself did not call for AEZ land/forest baseline assessments which should have been done latest during the inception phase. Such assessments should have led to a much earlier start of the land use planning and mapping exercises under C1b. Moreover, with the project's reliance on LoAs and SPs under C2 and C3, the activities and outputs were implemented independently of each other, both temporally and spatially (latter evidenced by project-produced maps). At times it seemed the SPs contributed to two independent projects even though the two main counterparts (DOA and FD) were brought together via various mechanisms at different levels and were well aware of the activities implemented in the townships.

38. **(C1a) Finding 2.3 As the Government had already made substantial changes in the land and forest policy, laws and regulations (PLR) framework by the time the project started, this reduced the GEF-SLM Project's possibility to contribute to "regulatory and policy modifications for**

**cropland and forest." Nonetheless, the work completed on finalising the Forest Rules has been an important achievement.** The first PLR gap analysis undertaken in March 2018 concluded: *Despite this mandate for the Project to make an ambitious contribution in terms of legal/policy/institutional review and improvements, the ability to actually deliver such ambitious outcomes might need to be reconsidered.* The legal consultant's opinion turned out to be correct, meaning that the project's focus on one PLR area was also the correct path to take. Unfortunately, because of the political crisis, although the Forest Rules were approved at the Attorney-General's Office, they were then sent to one more parliamentary committee (environment) for its endorsement. According to two well-placed sources, the committee is unlikely to provide endorsement before August 2023 when the military has set a tentative date for another election. The project had also commissioned a second PLR gap analysis in response to further updates in the PLR framework, but as this was also completed before the political crisis, it has also lost some of its validity.

39. **(C1a) Finding 2.4 While democratisation processes in Myanmar have been brought to an abrupt end, the GEF-SLM project's support for an inclusive and consultative approach to define and validate the Forest Rules was as important as the Forest Rules themselves.** There was a series of workshops held all across the country, giving many forestry stakeholders from communities to CSOs and national level government officers the chance to come into dialogue with each other.[20] Under this sub-component, the SP (Land Core Group) produced the curricula for a training course on the SLM Law and Policy Framework, while LCG and ECCDI cooperated to produce a training manual on SFM Law, Policy and Legal Framework. At this stage, post-political crisis, it cannot be certain who would provide training using these documents, nor who the participants would be.

40. **(C1b) Finding 2.5 Project effectiveness was negatively affected by not having started its CSA and SFM activities with township land use planning (LUP) first, as this would have provided the basis for all further cropland and forest management planning, leading to integrated land management.** The project document (p. 44) described it thus: *land use planning as a mechanism to catalyse on-the-ground adoption of SFM, SLM, CSA. The strategy will promote land use planning as a means to transcend currently compartmentalized planning regimes with more holistic approaches. Such an ecosystem-based approach is required in order to reach the desired SFM, SLM, and CSA project results.*

41. **(C1b)** Village level PLUP exercises were carried out in CF villages starting in October 2018, but were halted at village level (as an independent exercise) with the realisation that there is no legal basis for village or village tract boundaries in Myanmar. The GoM did not establish "Land Use Advisory Committees" at township level which could have unofficially endorsed such boundaries or plans. The Land Law has not been passed to date.[21] Realising also how unwieldy and time-consuming village-level PLUP exercises would be (confirmed at a consultative workshop held in 2019), the PMU switched to a dual approach focusing more on the townships where a "technical" exercise would take place. Nonetheless, village tracts[22] (with selected representatives attending from villages in that tract) were included to maintain participatory inputs from local communities. This represented good progress in serving the purpose of integrated land management at landscape level than had been observed during the MTR. Nonetheless, the GEF-SLM Project had not the time and resources to achieve a balance between local level, participatory exercises and larger scale landscape-oriented approaches (above township level). Digital mapping of the townships' land use cover took place with the support of

[20] Several interlocutors commented on the importance of encouraging dialogue between government and non-government, especially including CSOs and communities, stakeholders.

[21] The National Land Use Policy (NLUP) of 2016 was to be the basis for both the Land Law and all the institutions down to township level that would endorse all manner of LUPs starting from the National Land Use Council. The NLUC was created, but at sub-national level councils/committees were only created at State/Region.

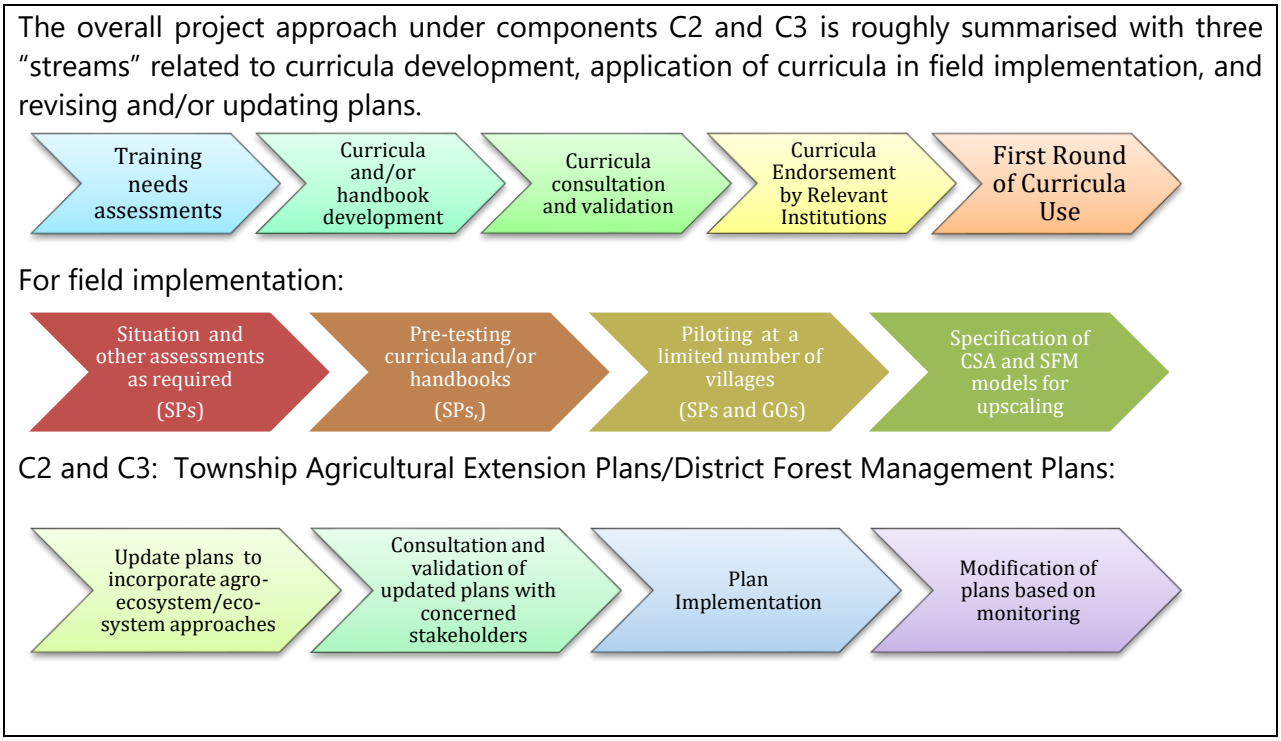
[22] The village tract is the lowest rural administrative unit in Myanmar, below township.

OneMap experts and an international consultant (latter's assignment cut short by Covid-19). The project also had several products it created under this sub-component: a). Coastal Delta Zone LUP Methodology, Labutta; b). Guidebook for Township LUP, Central Dry Zone; c). The Usage of Unmanned Aerial Vehicle in PLUP and Mapping.

42. **(C1a and C1b) Output and Outcome achievements.** Given the changes made to C1a and the effects of Covid and the political crisis, GEF-SLM has achieved the required outputs to the extent possible (final draft of the Forest Rules and the production of PLR-related training documents on SLM and SFM). For C1b, the output could not be achieved because the GoM has not established prerequisite "Land Use Advisory Committees" below the State/Regional level and that were to have been charged with piloting "regulations for LUP integrating SFM and CSA." The project successfully piloted digital LUP mapping processes in some of its pilot townships. The C1 outcome in the Results Matrix reads, "strengthened institutional, policy and regulatory frameworks." The original indicators for C1a (enhanced enabling environment, agricultural policy and updated strategies for SFM/CSA finalised) are of little to no relevance given the changes in framework conditions noted above. Another C1 outcome indicator reads "Township-wide LUPs *updated* and adopted to fully integrate CSA, SLM and SFM." It may be asked how something that does not exist should have been updated. **Therefore, for Component 1, it is only possible to assess the project's achievements at output level. These are satisfactory.**

43. **(Components 2a/b and 3a/b)** For the two components on CSA and SFM, the GEF-SLM Project largely followed the same approach. For the field level there was one SP per AEZ on CSA over several seasons, but one CBFM SP for all three AEZs initially, followed by a second SP for all three AEZs. For the CSA/CFBM support activities, there was one additional CSA SP, but another three for SFM/CBFM. The process is roughly shown in Figure 3 below (developed by the MTR team). Although the overall approach is largely the same for two components, they certainly did not proceed at the same speed. Progress under Component 2 (C2a/b) was much faster than under Component 3 (C3a/b) for reasons that will be spelled out immediately below.

**Figure 3:Schematic Overview of Project Implementation Approach**



44. **(C2 vs. C3)** One of the underlying reasons for the quicker pace of output delivery under C2, thus making it more effective compared to C3 is that the international long term (full time) consultant on CSA started working for the project from May 2017 onwards, as did the national CSA consultant. This led to the first LoA for CSA having been signed in time for the CDZ winter cropping season 2017-2018 involving 13 FFS. PMU forester staffing lagged behind: a national forester was appointed during 2017 as well, but left the project in April 2018. A replacement could only come on board by August 2018. Unlike for C2, an international long term forester was never appointed although arguably C3 had a more complex set of outputs to fulfil.

45. **(C2 vs C3)** Further CSA-related LoAs for the Delta and for the establishment of National CSA Centre were signed by the end of 2017. Further LoAs on CSA were signed on a season-by-season basis (with AVSI, CESVI and COLDA). This meant that SP involvement with the township DOAs and FFS members in the Delta and CDZ (three out of five townships) could be carried out over three further agricultural cropping seasons during which time 96 FFS (including the two townships in Chin) were established involving 1,968 male, and 621 female farmers – an overachievement of the C2b output. The process in the upland AEZ was different, however, in that it involved more perennials (coffee and avocado) in an agro-forestry system and elephant foot yam which has a maturation period of about one year. By contrast, the first LoA on CBFM was signed with RECOFTC only in April 2018, meaning that not only did the work on the SFM outputs start six months later than for CSA, they would also take much longer to start delivering benefits.

46. **(C2a) Finding 2.6 Regarding the support services for CSA, the outputs under C2a have been achieved with much useful curricula produced and the National CSA Centre well-established.** The CSA Centre has been well-established at Yezin Agricultural University (YAU) and has become one of the central points for CSA in Myanmar although it, too, has been affected by both Covid and political crisis. The CSA curricula, developed through the NGO called AVSI, were already endorsed by Myanmar's main agricultural training institutions (SAIs): YAU, the Central Agriculture Research and Training Centre (CARTC) and State Agricultural Institutes prior to the political crisis. The endorsement process included consultation and validation workshops with participation of key stakeholders. The content, however, focuses more on cropping than "improved cropping land management" and would have needed to be updated and improved with a greater focus on more adapted approaches and practices for the AEZs (including identifiable sub-zones). Moreover, the role of livestock in agricultural land use in the CDZ should have also been included as livestock-rearing plays a major role in farming systems there (apparently some 50% of farmers own large livestock in the CDZ and it is the largest livestock rearing area in Myanmar).[23]

47. **(C2a)** The GEF-SLM project has also supported several Training of Trainers (ToT) workshops for both township extension staff plus the SPs working on CSA. **The ToT workshops were well-received and contributed to valuable learning on climate change and CSA.** Participants provided feedback that more training of a similar nature would be useful. ToT is part of the CSA support package and has helped the GEF-SLM Project to deliver the outputs. Around 254 lead farmers and "trainer farmers" have had ToT. At YAU 47 persons were provided training on technical topics (gas chromatography and Ex-ACT) and another 48 on CSA.[24] Most of those trained from DOA are women, which reflects the overall larger number of women working for DOA. All in all, the GEF-SLM project has many products under sub-component C2a. They include, but are not confined to, a). CSA Curriculum for Extension Agents (in-service), aimed at CARTC short courses; b). CSA Curriculum for ToT (for both extension agents and

[23] See Tu Tu Zaw Win et al. (2019) "Characteristics of Livestock Husbandry and Management Practice in the Central Dry Zone of Myanmar." Tropical Animal Health and Production.

[24] Others have received ToT on CSA in the five townships, including the three SPs and DOAs, but the data were not available in any "central" project data location.

teachers of DOA, Dept of Agricultural Research, YAU); c). CSA Curriculum for Degree Level at YAU (modules are to be integrated into existing Bachelor and Master's degree programmes); CSA Curriculum for Diploma level at SAIs (for integration in a diploma course); d). CSA Handbook (for a varied audience – extension agents, teachers, lead farmers).

48. **(C2a)** An additional CSA support activity under C2a was to assist township DOAs to create extension service plans for CSA and improved cropland management practices. The GEF-SLM PMU moderated several workshops to produce such plans (one per pilot township). Therefore, the plans do exist, but the extent to which they are applied and/or implemented is unknown. The ET's field visits to three of five townships indicated a mixed picture. The DOA officers either said that the "new" plan was rather similar to the plans they already had, or that they would try to implement what they could if and when they had the budget available to do so. Therefore, the plans are available, but the extent to which they are used to make an impact on DOA extension programmes cannot be assessed clearly. Moreover, whether they would form the basis of further township CSA extension plans cannot be predicted. Nonetheless, promoting CSA practices is already included in DOA's regular extension activities.

49. **(C2b)** According to the project document, the GEF-SLM project shall establish 50 "model" FFS to implement CSA within the project townships, with another 50 facilitated by DOA on their own outside of the pilot townships. As mentioned above, the final number within the pilot townships is 96 FFS in somewhat fewer villages (owing to differing cropping patterns within the same village). Each FFS was set up with 30, mostly male, members (see 4.6 below on gender). The acreage coverage was initially relatively small for the direct FFS members, at something between 20 to 30 acres per FFS (generally 1 acre per lead farmer and ½ to 1 acre for each of the rest of the members depending on the crop/practices involved), but was expanded in subsequent seasons.

50. **(C2b) Finding 2.7 Despite the smaller CSA acreages under the FFS at first, this did increase with subsequent seasons through various mechanisms involving the farmers themselves.** Therefore, if CSA practices by FFS members covered some 859ha in Labutta by 2020, another 1,400ha had been expanded via Field Days and Farmer to Farmer learning activities. Thus, the expansion covered more than the original area under FFS members. The areas expanded by farmers in Nyaung U and Kyaukpadaung in the CDZ were much larger than in the Delta, attributable in part to the ease of travel in the CDZ compared to the Delta. In Nyaung U for example, the CSA area achieved via FFS members was about 1,750ha, while an additional 6,659ha came under CSA practices via Field Day demonstration plots and different kinds of farmer to farmer training. (Estimated from data from SPs and TFOs in Excel spreadsheets.)

51. **(C2b)** While many of the CSA practices promoted were well-accepted and have been adopted by the farmers, there were others that did not adequately recognise farmers' constraints in adopting them in particular zones (ex. Fish Amino Acid (FAA) and vermiculture in Chin, where fish and worms need to be purchased at a high price). The system of rice intensification (SRI) is a cultivation method that under the right conditions both dramatically increases yields and reduces required inputs especially seed and water. These conditions, unfortunately, are seldom found in the Delta area of the Ayeyarwady Region. By the end of the project, rather few farming households have adopted SRI or its "simpler" cousin, Alternate Wetting and Drying. While it is well-acknowledged that SRI results in much higher profitability than regular paddy production methods, there were too many barriers for farmers to adopt it in the deltaic areas the project focused on. These barriers included lack of labour, unlevel fields, too many bunds to allow adequate draining and too much rainfall to allow draining (SRI was developed for use under irrigated systems where water levels in a paddy field may be regulated.)

52. **(C2b)** The project document called for "early adopter farmers to pilot CSA practices and deliver lessons" in the three zones. These early adopters were defined as farmers who had attended an FFS and

could then be part of a cadre to expand CSA. The original idea was for the project to "provide venture capital financing" to the early adopters, but this was rejected at an early stage (2017). In the course of implementation, the "early adopters" became defined as those who had not attended FFS, but adopted CSA practices – they were then eligible for a small grant related to CSA adoption. These small grants (in kind) included among others agricultural inputs and various implements such as seeders, weeders and the like. The project SPs didn't seem to have promoted an incentive system whereby the early adopters, including also lead farmers, could have earned at least small amounts of money to cover opportunity costs of helping farmers in neighbouring villages. The ET discovered that some lead farmers were able to earn a little money with FAA production. FAA is produced in a highly concentrated form that must be diluted many times over for field application. Some lead farmers sold the diluted FAA. Other proven CSA inputs could also be produced and sold for a small profit by some of the lead farmers/early adopters, but it seems this may not have been actively encouraged.

53. **(C2b)** Farmer field schools the world over have proven themselves a highly effective method to promote farmer learning and exchange of experiences. This is not an exception in Myanmar, including the GEF-SLM pilot townships. A number of worthwhile CSA practices have been adopted by participating farmers to date in the AEZs, although to what extent they are "climate change mitigating" is difficult to calculate.[25] Partly at issue is that different farming households in the same AEZ (even within the same village tract) have not adopted the same practices to the same extent. One family may adopt organic fertiliser usage on one part of the field and reduced tillage on most of it. For another family it may be reduced tillage and no burning of crop residues. Without regular spot monitoring (ground truthing) over several seasons, the acreages may only be estimated.

54. **(C2b)** The project's implementation of FFS in the three AEZs was overly repetitive from season to season. That is, an FFS that was established with a series of modules on a particular crop in one season, basically received the same set of modules again in the second season. The main difference was in the involvement of facilitators: in the first season it would be the SP and DOA, in the second season DOA and the lead farmer. In the third season, the lead farmer alone. While this would have honed facilitation skills, it did not take farmers' learning and experience from the first, or a subsequent, season into account. The FFS approach should include careful consideration of such experiences, reasons for non- or partial adoption found and modules altered. Mutual learning and maintaining dynamism in the adaptation of CSA practices are key to the success of both farmer-to-farmer learning and improved climate change mitigation in the agricultural sector. That this was not done, perhaps because of SPs fulfilling strict terms in their LoAs, reduced the effectiveness of the FFS mechanism and that of the sub-component.

55. **(C2b)** Some concrete examples of the disadvantages of FFS repetition are provided here. During the FFS focus group discussions farmers in both the Delta and CDZ told the ET national consultant of CSA practices and seed varieties that they had tried, but then did not adopt. In both the Delta (green gram) and CDZ (groundnut) two improved varieties gave good results in the fields, but were not easily marketable – farmers stopped growing them. A promoted sesame variety in the CDZ was given up on because it didn't do well under drought conditions. In the Delta, an improved rice variety proved well-suited for field conditions and had good marketability. Farmers adopted the new variety, but they did not adopt the package of SRI practices and continued with their "regular" rice growing practices. Natural pesticides were tried in many villages, but the farmers found that they weren't effective enough (partly because of mistaken timing in their use). In the CDZ in particular mulching was rarely used as farmers had to feed crop residues to their cattle. In all cases, the varieties and practices are suitable in general,

[25] Monitoring of CSA practice adoption improved after the MTR, but the area coverage of CSA practices classified as contributing to climate change mitigation, as opposed to adaptation was not distinguished. As far as the ET is aware, if a farming family adopted two practices (no matter which ones), then it counts as a farmer "practicing CSA."

but not necessarily in a particular locality: learning opportunities for the further development of CSA were missed.

56. **(C2a/b)** Although the project document indicator on expanding FFS by DOA is included under Component/Outcome 4, its inclusion under C2 is more logical. The additional 50 FFS replicated by DOA in other townships should be directly the result of C2a/b having produced "model" FFS for replication and upscaling. The MTR report had concluded, however, and the ET concurs, that DOAs are not in a position to implement FFS on their own (at best a scaled down version in limited locations). This is not because township DOAs do not want to conduct FFS or consider it inappropriate; they are so under resourced (staff and budgets) for the large areas they are responsible for that it is not replicable without project support. A major assessment of the agriculture sector in Myanmar[26] reported on FFS that: *the costs* [are] *relatively high, and their scalability challenging*. Although the FFS approach in an intense form, as promoted by GEF-SLM may not be sustainable or replicable in the regular government extension system, FFS retains its validity as a vehicle to pilot CSA as long as there are additional facilitators available such as CSOs and NGOs.

57. The GEF-SLM project seems to have "reinterpreted" the concept of implementing additional FFS outside the project areas. Thus, when the two SPs (AVSI in the Delta) (CESVI in the CDZ) were provided LoAs responsible for 40 additional FFS[27] outside the original five townships, it was not strictly speaking a necessary activity. It did not capture the essence of what was intended in the project design. Had the political crisis not taken place, the project-driven FFS expansion would have been better replaced by a series of consultation workshops to strategize on DOA-driven expansion of a spectrum of appropriate CSA practices (whether new ones introduced by the project, or those introduced by others) using a variety of doable mechanisms available to DOAs. The valuable lessons gained from the project-supported FFS, therefore, should have been a catalogue of workable CSA practices, with indication as to climate adaptation vs. mitigation and the type of agroeconomic conditions where they were shown to have worked better.

58. **(C2a/b) Finding 2.8 Achievements of Outputs and Outcome for Component 2 are satisfactory.** The five outputs -- CSA support programmes established within key institutions, township DOA extension plans on CSA created, development of FFS curricula, FFS established in three AEZs, and a cadre of "early adopter farmers" piloting CSA -- have all been achieved, generally with satisfactory quality. The outcome, *models for CSA practices demonstrated and enhancing carbon storage in three priority agro-ecosystems* had an original indicator of 64,000ha for conservation and enhancement of carbon stocks in non-forest lands. The indicator was reduced to 20,000ha following a recommendation by the MTR team. It was overachieved vis-à-vis the reduced target (approximately 34,000ha cropping land and another 5,800ha agro-forestry)[28]. Over 80% of this area was, however, to have been "certified" as using "good climate change mitigation management practices." This "certification" of an area displaying mitigation management practices does not exist; not only would it have required much more intensive monitoring than was within the capacity of the SPs, what "certification would mean in this context is unknown (there is no certifying body in Myanmar to do this work). Other outcome indicators related to annual CSA/SLM knowledge exchange seminars held on an annual basis and the number of FFS and participating members. Annual CSA seminars and workshops were hosted by the National CSA

[26] World Bank, 2017. Increasing the Impact of Public Spending on Agricultural Growth: Myanmar Agricultural Public Expenditure Review, page 56.

[27] Fifty reduced to 40 because of having to omit Chin State.

[28] The ET differs with the cropping land data presented (from Ex-ACT) in two respects: having double-checked the CDZ SP's reports and the TFO's estimates, the area under agro-forestry for the CDZ (3,884ha) must be much less given the number of saplings distributed and their survival rates. Cropping land includes an area of rice under flooding management that appears too high (4,550ha) based on field investigations, key informant interviews and academic articles). Details of the Ex-ACT data for the GEF-SLM will be available with FAO's Agrifoods Economics Division (ESA).

Centre until Covid and the political crisis halted this activity (one workshop was still held virtually in 2020). The number of FFS and FFS members exceeded the outcome target.

59. **(C3a)** Under Component C3a, the programme for improved forest planning includes two major outputs: SFM capacity building and revision of DFMPs so that they incorporate ecosystem-based SFM objectives. For the first part of this programme, a well-considered Training Needs Assessment (TNA) was undertaken by an independent consultant (forester) starting in November 2018 for the Myanmar Forestry School (MFS) and the Central Forestry Development and Training Centre (CFDTC). Based on the TNA findings, it was not deemed necessary to develop curricula for the CFDTC. The University of Forestry and Environmental Sciences (UFES), using a technical working group approach, produced 15 modules for integration into the MFS two-year certificate course for forester in-service training. UFES employed a thorough and professional process to produce the necessary modules. Unfortunately, while Covid slowed some of the UFES work, the political crisis brought it to a halt. Of the 15 modules, only five could be tested at MFS and there was no chance to produce a teacher's guideline. Given their high quality, however, FD endorsed their integration (all 15 modules) into the MFS certificate course. Under a separate LoA, the Environment Conservation and Community Development Initiative (ECCDI) produced a training manual entitled Ecosystem-Based Sustainable Forest Management that was trialled with senior district forest officers in 2020. A key informant mentioned it was not deemed practicable and no further trialling occurred.

60. **(C3a)** The DFMP updating to include ecosystem-based SFM[29] was contracted to ECCDI (headed by a former DG of FD). ECCDI began this work in May 2018, but took somewhat longer (NCEs: four months, until February 2020) to produce the following: an Implementation Manual, a Planning Manual and updated DFMPs for three forest districts.[30] A launching workshop was held in Naypyitaw in January 2020 with the presence of the Union Minister for MoNREC. Unfortunately, the ECCDI products were uneven in quality, and including such new forest management concepts that a District Forest Officer (DFO) would not have been able to apply them. On the quality side, they are far too long, have too much copying between the products, with no succinct précis to make clear how ecosystem SFM differs from BAU planning and implementation, and with planning terminologies unclear between objectives, indicators and activities. A meeting held between the PMU and FD in mid-2020 highlighted some of the difficulties (perhaps reluctance) of DFOs to attempt adjusting their existing DFMPs (valid until 2025), plus their need for practical guidelines. After much "back and forth" with ECCDI followed by attempts to hire a senior national forester to assist with DFMP trialling (both processes slowed by Covid and the political crisis), an international consultant was contracted (who was then only available towards the end of 2021) to produce a usable set of planning guidelines for EBSFM. These were just completed in early February 2022, and were translated by March.

61. **(C3a) Finding 2.9 Quality problems of the DFMP package, reluctance of DFOs to adjust their DFMPs midstream, and slowness of both ECCDI and FD decision-making created ineffectiveness in what was considered a crucial project output. On the other hand, SFM capacity building was well done.** The revised DFMPs were the main output under C3a to lead to 50,000 hectares under SFM by project-end. The unfortunate set of circumstances outlined immediately above means the GEF-SLM project has no chance to meet any of this target within the project's lifetime. Instead, the 50,000ha will be included in a 15 year capitalisation period using Ex-ACT calculations. Difficulties under both C3a and C3b were exacerbated by the political crisis and its aftermath. A number of foresters left FD at different

[29] According to the Progress Report for July – December 2017, the District Forest Offices in three selected districts were to do the work on integrating ecosystem-based SFM into their existing DFMPs. This unimaginably ambitious idea delayed the contracting of an SP to do the work.

[30] Forest Districts do not exactly correspond to administrative districts in Myanmar. There are 68 forest districts, but 76 administrative districts.

levels to join the Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM) and the UNCT principles of engagement forced a hiatus in communication between the PMU and FD.

62. **(C3b)** The second part of C3 relates entirely to community-based forest management (CBFM), along with supporting products such as a strategy document, handbook, curricula and sets of short training courses for foresters and villagers. The project document refers to "community-based forest conservation," based on the Community Forestry Instructions (CFI) 1995. In 2016, and again in 2019, the CFI were updated with the major revision that CFUGs would be allowed to harvest forest products, including timber (even teak that had always been entirely under State control), for commercial purposes. In effect, this revolutionary (for forestry management in Myanmar) change allowed CFUGs to establish Community Forestry Enterprises (CFEs).

63. **(C3b)** There are three SPs that received LoAs to work on different aspects of CBFM. RECOFTC on establishing 20 new CFUGs and producing awareness creation curricula for CFUGs (one LoA with NCE, April 2018 until July 2019), CFNWG for various purposes (several LoAs with NCEs, see below), and MERN for support of existing CFUGs but mainly outside the five townships, and also finding new ones (one LoA with NCE from March 2020[31] until December 2021). MERN was then to assist CFUGs, whether active or only existing on paper, with the creation of reasonable Community Forest Management Plans (CFMPs), a prerequisite for being issued with a CFC. They were also to assist the CFUGs with deciding what type of forest products could eventually be sold (under CFE). MERN's LoA says it was supposed to find new, or reactivate existing ones, up to a total of 196 CFUGs! This seems something of an "overload" of the LoA which could lead to quality issues in the work. Such potential quality issues would also reduce project effectiveness to a certain extent (i.e., quantity versus quality).

64. **(C3b)** According to RECOFTC's reports and presentations to the GEF-SLM project under the first LoA on CBFM, to find 20 *new* CFUGs[32] in the three AEZs proved difficult, partly owing to the forest conditions (degraded, encroached), and partly to local communities'(relatively low) interest in active forest management (encroached forest areas being used for agriculture). Special to the upland areas in Chin State is a wholly different approach to land management based on customary titles and practices to manage swiddening. The 21 CFUGs[33] were as follows: Delta – 6, CDZ – 8 (of which 3 on VFV lands) and Upland – 7. This initial delay, not to blame the SP, meant that the gap between establishing CFUGs and them actually "delivering" carbon stock conservation or enhancement would be a long one. The concept in the project document that these 20 CFUGs could be valid demonstrations ("models") for many others was overly ambitious. Nonetheless, drawing out experiences and lessons learned regarding CFUG model development could have led to valuable overall learning for the GEF-SLM project and beyond.

65. **(C3b) Finding 2.10 The GEF-SLM's gaining issuance of "no objection letters" for three villages to do CF on VFV land was a major achievement.** In both CDZ townships the issue of land with forest cover was, and is, problematic. There is far more forested land that is gazetted as VFV and therefore not under the management of FD (Tables 1 and 2 below). For local CDZ communities, "forest-covered" land classified as VFV has generally been used by them according to traditional user rights. Being issued with a Community Forestry Certificate (CFC) with a 30 year land use right (and also bequeathable) provides them with more security than if it remains VFV land with no certificate. It is, however, something of a bureaucratic nightmare for the establishment of CFUGs on VFV land. With the

[31] Owing to Covid travel and meeting restrictions, MERN couldn't start the fieldwork under its LoA until June 2020.

[32] In fact, there were more "existing" CFUGs (existing at least on paper, with issued CFCs), owing to township FDs having set some up over the years plus various projects: mentioned were UNDP, JICA, JIFPRO, CARE and RECOFTC among others.

[33] At one village the FD decided to establish two CFUGs because the areas involved are distant from one another.

assistance of the GEF-SLM project, and many efforts of the TFO, it took at least a year to obtain "letters of no objection" from DALMS for the three villages. With the encouragement of the TFO, FD had to send request letters to DALMS several times over before DALMS finally issued the letters with the approval of the Township General Administration Department.[34]

66. **(C3b)** To complicate matters further in the CDZ, none of the seven villages seem to have CF areas with a contiguous area of *forest-covered* land, whether intact or degraded, that a CFUG could manage jointly for mutual benefit of the CFUG members. Rather, it is partly cropping land interspersed with trees and scrub managed by individual households (everyone knows whose land is whose). This would of necessity call for a different approach to developing the required CFUG plans (Community Forestry Management Plans – CFMPs) than if it were community-managed land. The main approach included under CFI 2019 is to encourage agro-forestry with tree planting within the farmers' fields. Recognising the seriousness of encroachment, but wanting to maintain encroached areas under the Public Forest Estate (PFE), FD has deemed that planting 150 trees per acre will suffice for the cropping land to be maintained as CF land. In the two townships so far, the agro-forestry tree planting supported by the GEF-SLM met with challenges (as reported by villagers and the township foresters independently), mainly because of drought conditions and poor planting and tending practices that led to inordinately large numbers of sapling deaths.

**Table 1 Reserved and Protected Forest Areas, VFV Lands (DALMS data)** (acres)

| Township | RF and PPF | VFV with Forest Cover | VFV without Forest Cover |
|---|---|---|---|
| Mindat | 184,400 | 121,013 | 50,443 |
| Kanpetlet | 255,334 | 1,042 | 24,185 |
| Nyaung U | 4,588 | 55,081 | 0 |
| Kyaukpadaung | 49,420 | 96,362 | 3,793 |
| Labutta | 166,915 | 6,771 | 3,366 |
| **Total** | **660,657** | **280,269** | **81,787** |

Table Notes: Data provided by DALMS to PMU. Protection Area (PA) (Conservation Forest) is not included under Reserved Forest/Public Protected Forest (RF/PPF).

**Table 2 Forest Areas by PFE Category (FD data)**
(acres)

| Township | RF | PPF | PA (Conservation Forest) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Mindat | 39,826 | 116,094 | 133,907 |
| Kanpetlet | 97,331 | 152,059 | 29,495 |
| Nyaung U | 0 | 4,588 | 114 |
| Kyaukpadaung | 78,933 | 0 | 43,340 |
| Labutta | 171,076 | 0 | 0 |
| **Total** | **387,166** | **272,741** | **206,856** |

*Table Notes: Data provided by FD to PMU (Nyaung U area provided by Township FD.)

[34] The ET found out that the reason the no objection letters could be issued at all is the areas in question are not that large; otherwise, the exercise might well have failed - only 165 acres/67ha. In fact, the final approval process still requires that the Regional Committee for Agricultural Land Management endorses the use of the VFV land in question for CF.

67. **(C3b)** The forest cover situation in the other two agro-ecosystem zones is completely different to the CDZ. Mangrove forests dominate the Ayeyarwady Region, but degradation and outright losses have been high. In a presentation made at the Mekong Forum on Mangroves (Bangkok virtual, October 2020), Dr. Nyi Nyi Kyaw (at that time DG of FD) made a presentation in which he stated that over 50% of Myanmar's mangrove forests have been lost, with 38% having been changed to other land use (mainly rice paddies, but also shrimp farming). The losses of mangrove in the Ayeyarwady Delta have been much higher than this: in 1980, there were close to 700,000ac, as of 2020 it was less than 200,000ac.[35] Nonetheless, the aftermath of Cyclone Nargis in 2008 led some communities to rethink the importance of mangrove restoration for their own protection. Additionally, the mangrove forests are a source of livelihood for people; aquatic animals such as crabs and fish thrive in the mangrove areas The GEF-SLM project has assisted various CFUGs with livelihood activities in the mangrove areas such as crab traps, small ponds and crab fattening activities. The mud crab traps (some 5,900 of them) in particular were a project-sponsored activity to assist CFUGs negatively affected by Covid. Additionally, the project also assisted the six original CFUGs with the establishment of mangrove nurseries (close to 380,000 propagules, plus equipment and protective clothing for the nursery work).

**Table 3 Mangrove Nurseries in Labutta: Planned and Actual Planted Area** (acres)

| Village | Area to be planted in 2020 (acre) | Number of seedlings required | Actual Area Planted Acc. to CFUG |
|---|---|---|---|
| Mya Yar Kone | 50 | 91,770 | 0 |
| Let Pan Kone* | 30 | 27,930 | 11* |
| Daye Phyu Lay | 30 | 50,540 | 20 |
| Yoe Gyi Su | 40 | 55,860 | 20 |
| Thit Pote Kone | 70 | 89,110 | 70 |
| Kwa Kwa Lay | 80 | 62,510 | 10 |
| **Total** | **300** | **377,720** | **131** |

*At Let Pan Kone, the CFUG leader said that they had planted 90 acres on their own using saplings they collected in the forest and planting them on bare (or relatively bare) areas; they have a plan to plant another 20 acres.[36]

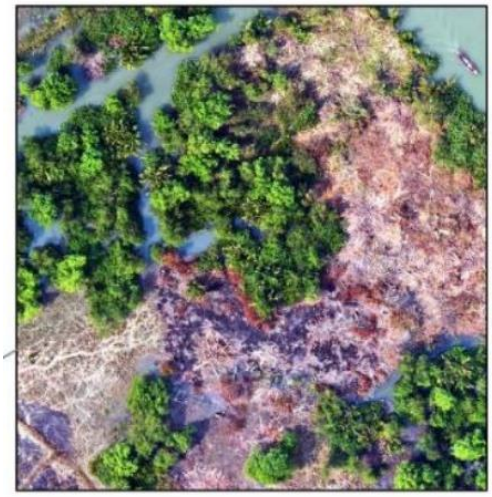
68. **(C3b)** According to the CFUG leaders at Mya Yar Kone, they have had difficulties with carrying out the agreed CF activities. They were pleased to receive the nursery supplies, but then realised later that they were not in a position to plant the saplings at the right time. According to them, the saplings are now too large, or have died, to be planted in potential mangrove forest areas. They said that because they are virtually landless, they have to make a living from daily, casual labour or fishing. Therefore, the land preparation activities such as scrub clearing were beyond their abilities to do. They had hoped for a "cash for work" programme to do this; without it, they have to continue their immediate livelihood activities. Additionally, they have not protected the mangroves in or near their CF area as drone pictures from November 2018 and February 2020 show (part of an LUP exercise done by the GEF-SLM). Who was responsible for the wholesale tree cutting within the CF is not known; it could well have been for making rice paddies. See drone photos in Figure 4 on next page.

**Figure 4 CFUG Difficulties to Maintain their Community Forest**

[35] Dr. Nyi Nyi Kyaw's presentation is available at: https://quest4action.org/mangrove/ Also see ECCDI's updated DFMP on Labutta, pg. 18, where it says that the annual present rate of deforestation in Labutta District is 2.4% - three times higher than in Myanmar as a whole.

[36] Based on the interview held with the Let Pan Kone CFUG leader, it appeared that this one was the best managed, and might have been the basis for a good case study.

Nov 2018 Image © FAO



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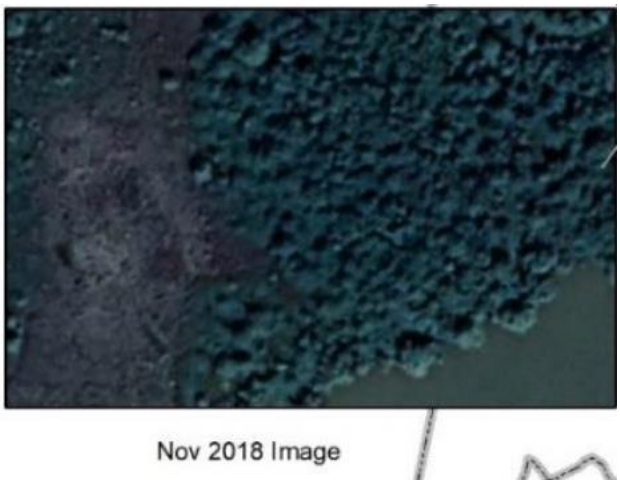

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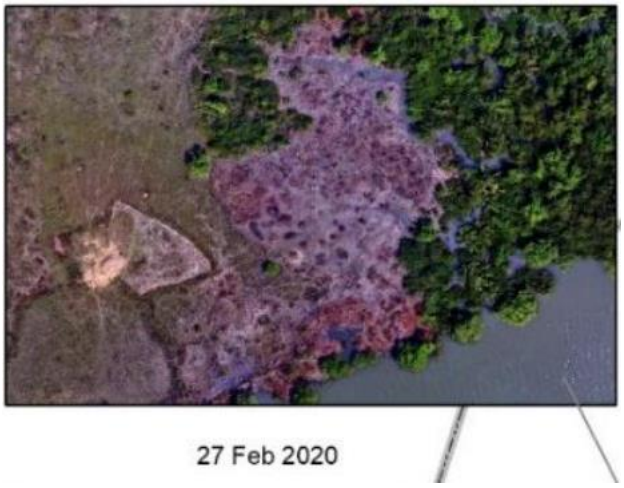

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69. **(C3b)** The situation in Chin State is also very different, and would have provided a very good case study for other states in Myanmar had the political crisis not taken place. Compared to the other two AEZs Chin State has the highest and best quality forest cover, with parts of it included under the shifting cultivation-forest fallow landscape mosaic. Given fallow periods of up to a maximum of eight to ten years in parts of the state (five years is more common now), secondary forest will still provide ecosystem services before becoming agricultural land again.[37] "Community" forestry in the Chin State would have to consider local people's concepts of forest land ownership and responsibility. Land is an individual asset which may be shared temporarily with others; generational patterns of land ownership mean also a mosaic of ownership that are not necessarily congruent with current village locations. To have CFBM accepted there would have required a different CF concept that also includes swiddening (shifting cultivation). As mentioned above, the tragic state of civil unrest in Chin State has made it impossible to work there since May 2021. A useful case study could therefore not be developed.

[37] See POINT, 2015 (p. 1) Shifting Cultivation in Myanmar: Case Studies from Southern Chin State and Bago Division, where fallow periods of 8-9 years were reported in Kanpetlet.

70. **(C3b)** The Community Forestry National Working Group (CFNWG)[38] was also deeply involved in the CF-related output. The CFNWG had worked on several fronts at once under two LoAs, mainly related to strengthening FD support to CFUGs and CFEs. The first one (June 2018 to March 2019, with NCE to May 2019) emphasized many key supporting activities for CBFM. The CF Strategy, 2018 – 2020 was produced, CF training was provided 10 times for 243 in-service trainees (five days each at the CFDTC, based on RECOFTC curricula developed prior to GEF-SLM), two CF promotion workshops were held, the latest CFI were translated into 15 languages, the CF Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) were developed and draft guidelines on LUP for forest restoration and for agroforestry in encroached areas were also started. Under the first LoA, the CFNWG also began work on an improved CFUG data base.

71. **(C3b)** The CFNWG received a second LoA starting in December 2019 which had two NCEs to take it to December 2021 (NCEs adding just over one year). During this time the CFNWG developed an updated, draft CF Strategy, 2021 – 2025 which is a key indication of FD's commitment to CF. The draft guidelines mentioned above were finalised, and will certainly be a useful addition to the SOP. According to the terms of its LoA, the CFNWG was to have established CFUG networks. A list of names for a network is available for Labutta Township, but after an initial workshop the network could not receive more support, although the final LoA report does mention a Viber platform (Covid and the political crisis certainly interfered with network support). The CFNWG was also to establish three CF Regional/State and three CF District working groups; again, there are lists of names from different departments for the six working groups, but although the concept is good, again Covid and the political crisis halted activities.[39] A participatory assessment of CFUGs in the CDZ and Mindat (Chin) was carried out by a forestry PhD student. It provides good insights as to the progress and pitfalls of CF, especially including recommendations on further skills requirements of township FD officers/rangers. The student also noted that most CFUGs she had contacted either didn't know they are entitled to sell timber products and/or didn't have saleable timber products at the time of her survey (timber for their own use – poles, for example – were available in some of the areas).

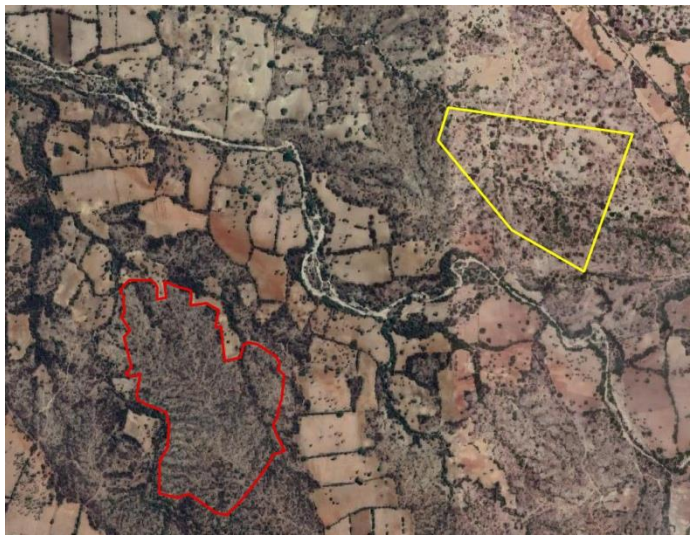
72. **(C3b)** One of the more important tasks under CFNWG's second LoA was to have operationalised the data base started under LoA. While further work was, indeed, carried out it cannot be said with any confidence that the data base will be operational despite worthwhile assistance from OneMap.[40] Indeed, this included one day training for 46 trainees on the Open Data Kit (ODK) application. The problem now, as before, is data entry and the accuracy of data. Reconciliation of CFUG data remains an unfinished task. Different levels of FD continue to have different area, and even location, data for the CFUGs. A small, random sampling of six CFUGs in Nyaung U conducted by GEF-SLM together with OneMap revealed that not only were the areas somewhat different, so were the exact locations (See Figure 5 on the next page). A further manifestation of this comes into play with the lists of "existing" CFUGs MERN produced under its second LoA. According to MERN's list for Nyaung U, there are six CFUGs (with 442ac), but in a recent TE interview with the township FD, he said there are 22 (with 1523ac)! Likewise, the number of CFUGs in Kyaukpadaung and the areas they are supposed to have appears different between the MERN and FD lists.

**Figure 5 Where are the CF Areas Really?**

[38] According to the CFNWG (or a similar body) was to have been assisted in its establishment by the project. In fact, the CFNWG was established in November, 2013.

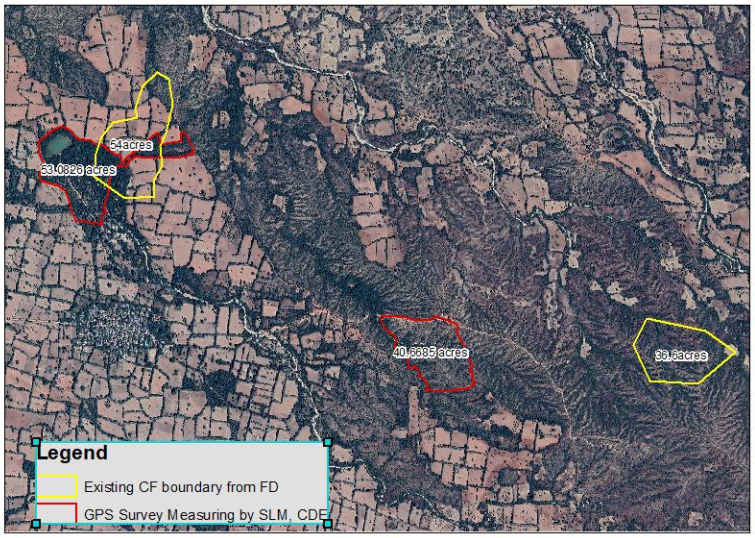
[39] The CFNWG itself has been affected by the political crisis. International support has dried up and its NGO members such as RECOFTC have also withdrawn.

[40] Among others, it seems a virus destroyed the data base because FD wasn't careful enough. Anonymous communication. The CDE, Bern is no longer providing its support to OneMap because of the political crisis.

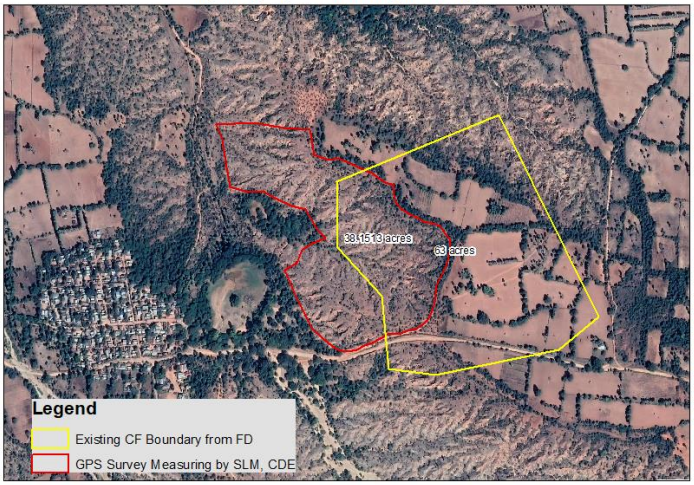


Let Pan Te Community Forestry

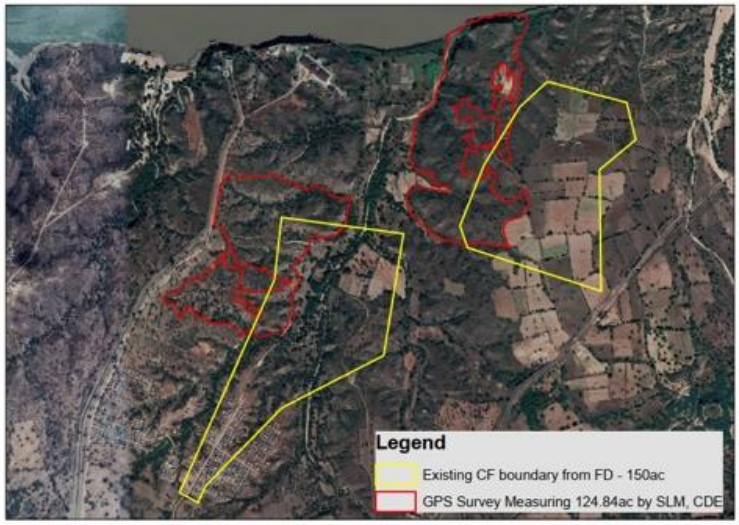
Myay Thin Twin Community Forestry




Nyaung Gyi Community Forestry




Kabari Community Forestry




Nyaung U Township: GPS Exercise product of GEF-SLM and CDE Bern (OneMap).

73. **(C3b/C4)** Just as with C2 and the creation of "model" FFS, the GEF-SLM project was also to create "model" CFUGs (20) that would then be replicated by FD outside of the project pilot areas (10). This aspect of CFUG replication is in the project document under C4. Nonetheless, as with the C2 FFS expansion, this modest expansion activity belongs much better under C3b. Under the second LoA agreed with MERN it was to "find" enough new and/or existing CFUGs to come up with an area target of some 24,000 acres (around 10,000ha), under up to 196 CFUGs as mentioned above. As with FFS expansion, this was the project's reinterpretation of the intention of the CFUG model creation activity. Criteria were never established to describe what "ecosystem-based" CFUGs are supposed to entail - neither in the project document, nor by GEF-SLM. Although the project has created or "revitalised" a larger number of CFUGs, the fact of their existence does not mean that they represent ecosystem-based SFM at community level. Likewise, expanding their number also does not mean there is an increase in ecosystem-based CBFM in Myanmar. FDs in various districts, including the districts where GEF-SLM has worked, have been setting up CFUGs since at least 2000; some with the help of donor projects, NGOs and CSOs, some without. The main difference, perhaps, between older CFUGs and the newer ones is that the older ones were established under the stricter, conservation only policy under the original CFI,

and most had become defunct. The newer ones, or re-established ones, have a better chance to survive with the more relaxed policy aimed at CF management that also allows (sustainable) harvesting for commercial purposes.

74. **(C3a/b)** Achievement of Outputs and Outcome. **Finding 2.11 The difficulties and complexities in trying to establish the basis for SFM (models), including both the State's and community management of forest land, were *massively* underestimated.** The project design did not consider that *w*ork in the forestry sector cannot, even under the best of circumstances, lead to results as quickly as CSA activities based on seasonal cropping. Under C3, the outputs related to training and capacity building could be fulfilled (with UFES-established curricula for the MFS of particular note for its high quality). Foresters at different levels and CFUG members all received awareness training on CF, while a number of CFUGs (inside and outside of the original five townships) were also assisted to create CFMPs and either gain new CFCs or have existing ones reissued after the CFMPs were updated to bring them in line with the CFI-2019. The outcome (*models for sustainable management practices demonstrated and enhancing carbon storage in three priority AEZs*) area indicators were reduced based on the MTR recommendation, although not as drastically reduced as recommended. The accepted, targeted reduction was 60,000ha (including both DFMP and CFUG areas). This reduced target is also, for the most part, not achievable within the project's lifetime; the DFMPs have not started implementation and the CFUGs (too many at the stage of recently established CFMPs) are not yet "delivering substantial climate change and sustainable land management benefits." Most of the 60,000ha will have to be built into the Ex-ACT capitalisation period of 15 years. The **rating for this Outcome is Moderately Satisfactory**, acknowledging the design's mistaken assumptions, combined with the delayed start for C3, its complexity and the implementation slowdowns caused by Covid and the political crisis.

75. **(C4a/b) Outcome 4** is phrased as follows: "SLM, SFM and CSA knowledge management, training and practices scaling up nationally." Despite the phrase "knowledge management" in the outcome wording, the indicators do not reflect "knowledge management" *per se*. Instead, they include a functioning National CSA Centre and number of annual participants in CSA in-service training (both aspects included under Component 2a). It also includes 50 FFS established by GoM outside of the project areas (in effect, under Component 2), 10 ecosystem-based CF initiatives established by GoM outside of project areas (Component 3b), and then numbers of participants trained on ecosystem-based forestry management (under Component 3a). The outputs 4.1 and 4.2: *support programme established for scaling up SFM practices, support programme established for scaling up CSA practices* are already covered under C2a and C2b, C3a and C3b and are phrased similarly to outputs 2.1, 3.1 and 3.4. Additionally, the PSC at its fourth meeting in 2017 changed two of the outputs under Component 1a on PLR frameworks. The altered outputs overlap with the outputs C2a and C3a since their wording is as follows: "Support implementation of the legal and institutional frameworks for SFM," and then the same again for CSA. Output 1.4 originally was written as follows: "training in SFM, CSA and SLM at national, state and district levels" which also shows considerable overlap with 4.1 and 4.2, not to mention 2.1, 3.1 and 3.4.[41] With hindsight, it would have been advisable to have had a separate component on LUP to heighten its priority in the project, rather than component 4 as it was formulated.

76. **Finding 2.12 There is considerable overlap between Component 4 with other project components. It had, therefore, virtually no value added in the course of project implementation**

[41] The PMU has continued to report on the outputs under Outcome 4, but not in accordance with their original intention. That is, the GoM was to have established 50 FFS outside of the pilot townships *on its own.* Likewise, ten ecosystem-based CFUGs were also to have been established by FD *on its own*. To cite project-supported FFS and CFUGs outside the original five townships is extending project implementation areas, but not creating models that GoM would accept and replicate.

**and its monitoring and is not rated separately.** Aspects related to Knowledge Management are at 4.10.

77. **Unintended Results.** Through the GEF-SLM's implementation work on the components and sub-components, some unintended results arose. At the forefront, perhaps, is the set of activities related to LUP. Although the institutional prerequisites were not available, the process of land use planning taken by the project had something of a model character. That is, it was able to show that in Myanmar it is possible to combine (bottom up) participatory with technical (top down) approaches in developing land use plans at least at township level. The resulting plans are of far greater relevance when local communities also have a say in them. Another unintended achievement was the project's ability to find a way to have "letters of no objection" issued. This is an ongoing problem for all communities wishing to do CF activities on VFV land. The project's success in supporting three communities may provide one path for further communities to gain CFCs for VFV land. The initially unplanned activity to distribute eco-stoves (6,225) to fuelwood-dependent families will result in reduced pressure on forests and carbon emissions. Finally, the closer involvement of township DOA staff with farmers through the project-supported FFS helped to increase trust between those farmers and DOA – they feel more at ease with contacting DOA should problems arise. On the unintended negative side, delays in seed and sapling procurements caused some harvest losses and excess sapling deaths, particularly in the CDZ where unreliable rains make it all the more important to have timely availability of seeds/saplings.

78. **Achievement of Project Objective.** As had been commented on by the MTR in 2019, the original indicators in terms of area and tons of $CO_2$ equivalent at project objective level to be achieved *within* the project lifetime were set inordinately high. Three years after the MTR, and even had there not been the negative impacts of the Covid pandemic and the military political crisis, the original indicators are reconfirmed by the ET as unreasonably high for a capacity building and "model demonstration" project. The original indicator of 124,000ha vegetative covering (understood as 60,000ha forest land and 64,000 cropping land) delivering Global Environmental Benefits by project-end was reduced to 80,000ha (20,000ha cropping, but maintaining 60,000ha forest). The reduction was based partially on the MTR's recommendation.[42] At project end, 50,000ha of the forest land target has been assigned to the capitalisation period of 15 years. In terms of the CBFM area of 10,000ha, the ET differs with the project team's assessment that 10,187ha have been achieved given the recent establishment and/or re-activation of so many CF user groups.[43] If the ET were to rate the GEF-SLM against the forest targets, it would be Unsatisfactory. Given that the indicators were unreasonable for a project of this nature (resourcing and timeframe) and that the cropping land targets were overachieved, the objective achievement is rated Moderately Satisfactory.

**The project's delivery of project outputs, outcomes and objective is moderately satisfactory. If "unachievable" area targets would be considered, then project delivery would have had to be rated as moderately unsatisfactory.**

**Effectiveness is rated as moderately satisfactory.**

[42] The MTR team had recommended drastic reductions in the indicator targets to be achieved by project-end – 6,400ha cropping land (based on areas under FFS) and 6,000ha of forest land. These were not accepted by FAO in its Management Response of June 2019.

[43] The estimates made by the project team appear too optimistic: according to the Ex-ACT data, the total area under CBFM by project-end is 10,187ha, with another 720ha for the capitalisation period. Given the difficulties mentioned by various CF user groups (and township FDs) in maintaining and/or increasing CF areas in the short term, it would require more of the 10,187ha to be placed under the capitalisation period. The other point is having an accurate measurement of the extent to which the areas are delivering Global Environmental Benefits.

### 4.3 Efficiency

**EQ 3:** To what extent has the project been implemented efficiently and cost-effectively, and has management been able to adapt to any changing conditions to improve the efficiency of project implementation?

79. **Finding 3.1 On the whole, the GEF-SLM project represents an efficient use of resources represented by a small PMU and use of Myanmar-based SPs.** It was, perhaps, an inefficient use of resources, for the PMU to have only one forester on board given the high complexity of the work under the component and the need for more technical supervision of some of the SPs' work under the component. Component 3 also included overlap with LUP, adding to its complexity. In this regard, however, the project's cooperation with OneMap represented high efficiency in resource use. For minor resource outlays, both GEF-SLM and OneMap achieved products useful for both.

80. The GEF-SLM Project's delayed start negatively affected the relevance of C1a (mentioned above), and also affected the project's general efficiency. From the PIF to start of Inception took more than three years. At project end it is about ten years away from the initial design. At project beginning, it was also an inefficient use of resources not to have had full time (11 month contract) international consultants, especially in the STA post. The effects of this were felt especially in the forestry and land use planning components, which had negative knock-on effects for the results achieved within the lifetime of the project (essentially, no major area targets achieved under C3). It also was a major cost to the project that it could not start much earlier with LULUCF planning and mapping, although the cooperation with OneMap starting in late 2018 partly compensated for this. The project PMU had to move twice during the project's lifetime; the first time in 2017 from Yangon to Naypyitaw and after the political crisis it had to move from the FD building to a hired office space in Naypyitaw. While there was no choice vis-à-vis the second move, the first one could have been avoided by having the PMU based in Naypyitaw earlier.

81. Project achievements for money spent could have been still higher in the CSA component if strategies had been found to make better use of farmer learning and experiences after a season or two of the FFS. These, then, could have been leveraged to help the DOAs make best use of their limited resources to expand CSA practices even more than they have. The project's use of the FFS approach, with many sessions/modules during a single cropping season, was cost and time intensive. It would have been more cost efficient to experiment with pared down versions of FFS that might have been able to be taken up, at least in part, by a "normal" DOA Township office. Moreover, the FFS approach is also cost inefficient in that it does not directly deliver major areas of "conservation and enhancement of carbon stocks in non-forest lands (agriculture)." Thus, although the project has "overfulfilled" its FFS target by number (136 instead of 100), and has overfulfilled its post-MTR reduced area target as noted above, the CSA area coverage has mostly been achieved by the DOAs using their own methodologies. To what extent the DOAs were extending "new" CSA practices and to what extent, ones they were already familiar with is not known.

82. The LoAs could not always be fulfilled in a timely manner. It seems some of the SPs accepted LoAs that were rather too ambitious for them. In other words, they were inadequately resourced to do a good job in a timely manner. For example, the SP AVSI was required under its first LoA to prepare all manner of CSA curricula, but eventually had to subcontract curriculum development work to two national consultants. In this regard, a more cost-efficient alternative may well have been for the PMU to have directly contracted the curriculum developers, as was done under C3. Indeed, the CSA component was the only one to have had two advisors at the time. The three SPs working directly on the forestry outputs did have in-depth experience that should have had immediate, positive effects on

efficiency. Despite this, however, all LoAs in the forestry sector ended up with NCEs.[44] This became less and less cost-efficient with time, as this led in part to the outcome under C3 not being achieved. Of course, the other part has to do with the gross underestimation by the project planners as to what could be achieved under SFM in a limited time. By project-end the largest part of project funds left over is under C3 as per Table 4 below. The current estimate is that there will be some USD 700,000 left unspent at project end. The effect of Covid on project spending is also evident from the table below. In 2020, when the project should still have been at peak spending, its expenditure level dropped considerably. With the political crisis and dramatic change in the political situation, much lower spending levels continued in 2021.

83. **Finding 3.2 The project was able to respond with high efficiency to the Covid situation of 2020 to provide livelihood assistance to project area households.** It quickly conducted farmer surveys (dated May and September 2020) to understand the impact of Covid on farmers' livelihoods. It then took swift action to assist farming and fishery households. The main activity for farmers was the provision of seed packages for home gardening (ending up with 2049 households receiving enough seed for about 5400ac of vegetable gardens), with a few in the CDZ receiving supplies to establish drip irrigation for fruit trees in the CDZ. CFUG members in the Delta could also receive mud crab traps. These activities did not require high resource outlays, but certainly made positive contributions to farmer and fisherfolk livelihoods at a time of need. Moreover, they were climate change positive as well. During this time the project cooperated with Mercy Corps International to distribute fuelwood efficient stoves to around 2325 CFUG members (especially those more fuelwood dependent). The project was also forced, as it were, into higher cost-efficiency by needing to conduct all meetings and workshops via virtual means.

**Table 4 Indicative, Component-Wise Spending and Budgets to 2022 (USD, rounded)**

| Year | C1 | C2 | C3 | C4 | PMC | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2016* | 33,200 | 33,201 | 33,201 | 29,614 | - | 129,216 |
| 2017 | 88,129 | 366,643 | 140,800 | 105,585 | 37,410 | 738,568 |
| 2018 | 287,938 | 601,489 | 398,538 | 51,366 | 36,688 | 1,376,019 |
| 2019 | 256,171 | 403,584 | 640,697 | 120,517 | 89,997 | 1,510,967 |
| 2020 | 101,422 | 348,900 | 487,080 | 59,226 | 46,099 | 1,042,727 |
| 2021 up to 28. Feb. 2022 | 140,719 | 142,823 | 43,941 | 168,310 | 36,850 | 534,619 |
| **Total** | **907,579** | **1,896,640** | **1,744,257** | **534,619** | **247,044** | **5,330,140** |
| | **March 2022 Projected Spending Unavailable** | | | | | |
| | **Original GEF Trust Fund Budget as Shown in Project Document (unchanged)** | | | | | |
| | **963,566** | **1,849,550** | **2,485,700** | **489,232** | **349,983** | **6,183,031** |

*Project management costs ($53,309) incorporated with the component budgets in 2016.

**Efficiency is rated as Satisfactory.**

[44] CFNWG's final LoA report also indicated several outputs it could not deliver at all; mainly owing to Covid, it seems.

### 4.4 Sustainability

**EQ 4:** What is the likelihood that the project results and positive changes will be sustained after the end of the project, and what are the key factors relating to these conclusions? What are the key risks which may affect the sustainability of the project benefits?

84. **Finding 4.1. Overall, given the overly ambitious premises and inconsistencies in the project design, the late implementation start of the project, slowdowns caused by Covid restrictions, ongoing resource problems of the implementing ministries and the political instability caused by the political crisis, the risks to sustainability are likely (significant).** As predicted by the MTR, the risks to sustainability vary across the components and their outputs. In summary, any of the approaches requiring a greater intensity (meaning higher resource outlays for smaller areas/smaller numbers of people) by township GOs and/or a high level of coordination combined with higher resource outlays (LUP) are unlikely, with exceptions, to have the desired level of sustainability. Use of curricula produced for integration in various courses, and the training provided on CSA and CBFM for DOA, farmers, FD and CFUG members, are more likely to be sustainable. The National CSA Centre retains good prospects for sustainability, although its own sustainability plan indicates a preference to be directly under MoALI rather than YAU for staffing reasons.

**The key risks to project sustainability as assessed by the ET are as follows:**

85. *Socio-economic:* **There are moderate risks to sustainability (ML).** Regarding CSA, people's interest in major changes to agricultural practices is constrained by interlinked factors such as investment limitations, labour shortages (mainly rice farmers in the Delta), smallholder reliance on casual labour (mainly CDZ where they hire out their labour) and the marketing potential of new or adapted varieties. Nonetheless, there are a larger number of useful, low-cost practices that farmers are adopting and adapting. Farmers have been spreading their knowledge within and beyond their communities which is positive for farm level sustainability. Local communities' long-term interest in CF is harder to predict given that so much of their forest land (CDZ and Delta) is degraded or encroached. Poorer farmers and fisherfolk still need to prioritise short term livelihood decisions above longer term forest management. Nonetheless, a crucial "plus point" for local people is to gain CFCs of 30 years; in some areas this represents the first time they would have received such tenure security. This adds a greater element of sustainability to CF, in that local communities may simply continue it in their own ways without external support. Positively as well, CESVI (SP on CSA in the CDZ) has made a commitment to continue to support farmers' CSA efforts in the CDZ via township level CSA Development Associations. This should further anchor CSA practices and strengthen farmer to farmer learning approaches in the foreseeable future.

86. *Financial:* **There are significant risks to sustainability (MU).** There are substantial budgetary limitations at township level offices of both DOA and FD. This makes the more "intensive" FFS or CFUG support approaches financially unsustainable without continued projects to facilitate these village-level activities. The point here would have been to find the right mix of mechanisms by which the "average" DOA could most effectively expand CSA practices. Funds may be available on the FD side from special programmes such as the MRRP, but this also runs out in 2026. All in all, in the advent of the political crisis, it also cannot be predicted what kind of budget allocations will be made under emergency rule to the different ministries, including MoNREC and MoALI. Further at issue is that larger, international financial institution loans and grants for the agriculture and forest sectors will all be on hold for an indefinite period. Myanmar remains a least developed country. Its own budgetary resources are limited and probably all the more limited in the face of various inflationary pressures in 2022.

87. *Institutional:* **There are moderate risks to sustainability (ML).** DOA and FD continue to show a high commitment to CSA and CF respectively. Despite the political crisis, for example, FD has endorsed the updated CF Strategy Plan from 2021 – 2025. The FD's overriding concern is to meet the Forestry Master Plan CF target of around 2.2 million acres by 2030; that target may well have become more difficult to reach in post-political crisis Myanmar. Although the status of the updated DFMPs incorporating EBSFMP have not yet been trialled, there is a chance of this, although rather unlikely before the next round of DFMP planning in 2025. All the township agriculture and forestry offices have below quota staffing. Thus, to carry out more participatory extension approaches, as would be required of FFS (even a pared down version) and CBFM, is not possible except on a limited scale. Both FD and DOA training and capacity building (pre-service/in-service) tend to stress knowledge and information rather than "soft skills" related to communication and facilitation. This also represents a risk to the sustainability of participatory approaches. Assuming donor funding is available, this may be mitigated with involvement of CSOs to do community facilitation/animation work. Generally speaking, staffing quotas were seldom fulfilled before the political crisis; after the political crisis an unknown number of FD officers from different levels have left the department to join the CDM, while others have taken premature retirement.

88. *Governance:* **There are moderate risks to sustainability (ML).** The political crisis of February 2021 and ongoing emergency rule in Myanmar has halted democratic processes in the country. According to a European Union press release[45], the number of internally displaced persons had reached 14 million by February 2022 (see also UNOCHA reports on Myanmar). Land governance and land tenure security was not settled in Myanmar prior to the political crisis and this is likely to remain the case during emergency rule. Certainly, tenure insecurity will continue to negatively affect local communities' willingness to make long term investments in degraded areas (partially mitigated hopefully by issuance of 30-year CFCs).

89. *Environmental:* **There are significant risks to sustainability (MU)**. Myanmar remains one of the most vulnerable countries to climate change in the world. Environmental risks will be high for the foreseeable future, while also remaining unpredictable. Extreme weather events and catastrophes could most certainly arise that are beyond any mitigation efforts so far. The Global Climate Risk Index placed Myanmar as the second highest vulnerable country based on an analysis of the period 2000 – 2019. The World Bank's Climate Change Knowledge Portal mentions the country's vulnerability to drought, unreliable rains, flooding, storms and higher temperatures. [46]

90. **Finding 4.2 With regard to upscaling, the curricula produced under C2 in terms of national level CSA curricula, and C3 for SFM curricula at the MFS show long term support potential for scaling up CSA, SFM and CBFM**. In the aftermath of the political crisis, not only are educational institutions working at far less than their usual capacity (many educators and students are involved in CDM), it is less likely that graduates of YAU, for example, will opt for careers as government civil servants. The MFS provides a different story as it provides diploma courses for in-service trainees.

**Sustainability is rated as moderately likely, but if emergency rule continues beyond 2022 this may go down to moderately unlikely.**

[45] Available at https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/110360/one-year-anniversary-military-coup-myanmar-joint-statement_en

[46] Website accessed on 15 February 2022: https://www.germanwatch.org/en/cri and the Climate Change Knowledge Portal: https://climateknowledgeportal.worldbank.org/country/myanmar/vulnerability

### 4.5 Factors Affecting Performance

**EQ 5:** What were the factors affecting performance such as project design and management, stakeholder engagement and project partnerships? To what extent were M&E plans appropriate and practical, and resourcing sufficient to contribute to reporting, timely decisions and fostering learning during project implementation? How well did these systems and approaches prove able to adapt to the changing context and needs?

91. **Finding 5.1 Many factors have negatively affected project performance and management to date, starting from the design, , but including a delayed start, a lengthy inception phase, too long a period without adequate M&E, Covid-19 and the political crisis.**

92. **Finding 5.2 The project document and design[47] contained too many inconsistencies and some logic flaws in causal pathways from outputs to achievement of outcomes. The inclusion of three highly diverse AEZs brought additional complexity to an already complex and ambitious design.** As already argued above, the barriers were inadequately defined, and did not consider that Myanmar remains a Least Developed Country (LDC), which has implications for both available budgets and staffing levels in the localities, now all the less predictable in the event of the political crisis.

93. Having three AEZs lessened what was to be the GEF-SLM Project's modelling potential and its ability to catalyse major changes in CSA, SFM and CBFM let alone SLM. Implementing activities in three zones with a lean PMU and, at times, not so well-resourced SPs meant that zone-specific models fell prey to somewhat one-size fits all approaches (evident for both FFS and CBFM). The concept of Zone-specific models could not be carried through. With hindsight, it would have been much better to have selected no more than two zones and then paid greater attention to how one should work differently in them. Also with hindsight, in the event of Covid and the political crisis and the shortening of the project's effective implementation time, two zones would have certainly been easier to manage.

94. The component-wise outputs were generally reasonably formulated, but their indicators revealed a weakness that could have been mitigated early on if the project had established a centralised monitoring system. A large number of the output indicators were formulated vaguely and/or unspecified, making it difficult to monitor progress with any degree of accuracy. The indicators were neither SMART, nor did they encompass qualitative aspects of the project products. For unspecified indicators, the PMU presented progress as percent achievement; a pragmatic solution, if not necessarily reflecting progress in terms of concrete milestones (i.e., if something is 80% achieved, it doesn't mean it is only 20% away from being wholly achieved. It is also possible it will never be achieved if the necessary milestones haven't been reached.)

**Project design is rated as moderately unsatisfactory**

95. **The GEF-SLM Project did not have a formal, centralised monitoring system in place by midterm, but this was rectified after the MTR recommendation about this.** The GEF-SLM project was intended to be a "demonstration project" (Prodoc, p.89 *This is fundamentally a demonstration project. Every element of this project is designed to create models that are appropriate for replication and pathways to facilitate replication and scaling up.*). With this in mind, the project needed an effective monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system from its beginning, rather than developing one only towards the end of 2019. Thjis could have contributed learning on key questions such as – What aspects of FFS or CBFM could have a model character suitable for scaling up? What could be learned from local

[47] The MTR Report (2019) presented a lengthy and thorough analysis of the various deficits in the project document; they will not be repeated here, but the reader may refer to that report.

communities, their constraints and opportunities, with these activities? What processes were needed to produce the desired results? What were good practices?

96. **Finding 5.3 While the post-MTR introduction and implementation of FAO's Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan (MEAL Plan) undoubtedly improved the project's M&E, the PMU and major stakeholders were never in an optimum position to gain the depth of experiences and lessons learned from piloting measures that would lead to potential "models."** This would have been essential if models for replication and upscaling were to have been presented for consultation and validation. The MEAL Plan does include "SMARTer" indicators than were present in the project document, but the idea of good practice distillation didn't gain traction. Of course, given the Covid pandemic followed on by the political crisis, the time available for the full time monitoring specialist to assist in drawing out good practices and a set of lessons learned was limited, indeed.[48]

97. As part of its overall M&E, partly based on an MTR recommendation, the PMU carried out several village-level stakeholder surveys from 2019 to 2021. **Of particular importance in light of the Covid-19 pandemic, the GEF-SLM project undertook several surveys to understand how farmer livelihoods might be affected by the government-imposed travel and meeting restrictions.** These highly useful surveys, followed up by the activities as noted above (under 4.3), contributed to Myanmar's Covid Economic Relief Plan and to FAO's contingency plan for the pandemic. The project also carried out "satisfaction" surveys on CSA and CFUGs (2019 and 2021 respectively), while a planned survey of government officers could not be undertaken as a result of the political crisis.

**Project Monitoring and Evaluation is rated as moderately satisfactory**

98. **Finding 5.4 Stakeholder engagement and involvement was high at Ministry level until the political crisis, while township GOs retained adequate involvement until the end of project implementation.** The National Project Coordinators (met during the MTR), along with division Focal Points, were much involved in the GEF-SLM Project, well-informed about it and were insightful as to project progress and pitfalls.[49] Moreover, the PSC also took its mandate seriously, was well-prepared for the meetings and made important decisions as it saw required (i.e., changing formulation of outputs, granting the project an NCE of 11 months based on the MTR recommendation). The CF-Unit in FD was also highly engaged with the project. Minutes of meetings showed that it expected SPs (MERN, for example) to provide it with monthly progress reports. With the UNCT principles of engagement in effect, this stopped the project's formal cooperation with both FD and DOA, not to mention DALMS and the educational institutions. Nonetheless, through the SPs and the TFOs, cooperation continued well at township level.

99. As for the township level GO engagement and involvement, it presented something of a fluctuating scenario. Some officers were highly engaged with field implementation activities – to the point where villagers felt that better trust had been built between themselves and either FD or DOA. Others, however, were not always keen to participate fully in the GEF-SLM activities as they had "other" work to do (either with other donor projects in the same area, or with tasks required of them from their superiors). The DOA townships' FFS involvement required staff transport allowances (included under SP

[48] He joined the project in November 2019, but just a few months later the Covid pandemic broke out, and the project's attention was turned to conducting surveys to assess how to help people in target villages. Not long after the pandemic eased, the political crisis happened. He left in November 2021 with very few months of "normal" implementation time during those two years.

[49] U Ngwe Thee of the FD (sadly, died of Covid-19), remarked to the MTR team in February 2019 that "models for CF are not yet in existence; there must be more concrete experience to demonstrate good practices. Simply having CFMPs to gain CFCs are not enough because it doesn't mean any real improvement is taking place."

LoAs), without which their involvement would most certainly have been lower. Covid meeting and travel restrictions effectively halted the "Local Steering Committee" meetings in the townships (with PSC endorsement the project facilitated the establishment of five LSCs). A problem with the LSCs was that they lacked the mandate to make critical decisions, and remained more of a coordination body for project activities (in particular, they could not make decisions on land-related issues, not being the equivalent of a Land Use Advisory Committee). They stopped meeting altogether from 2020 onwards (Covid/political crisis). The township DOA, FD and the General Administration Department (GAD), however, were always active in selecting and approving target villages.

**Stakeholder engagement is rated as satisfactory**

100. **Quality of Execution** Although the PMU suffered initially from staff turnovers and the lack of a long term STA, it has maintained good quality budgetary control and oversight over the lifetime of the project. It has also produced clear annual workplans. It seems there have been few discrepancies in reconciled budgets between project statements and FAOMM (despite somewhat different accounting procedures). No problems have been reported in receiving GEF tranches throughout the project's lifetime. Additionally, the project management systems have been geared to timely delivery of project progress reports. Back to Office Reports were also produced and submitted in a timely fashion although unfortunately the number of relevant field visits were drastically reduced owing to the Covid pandemic and then the political crisis. A period of 18 months went by without PMU field visits. Both the international advisor for CSA and the STA were required to stay longer than planned in their home countries, but quality of execution was maintained nonetheless. Communications processes with FAOMM and FAORAP appeared to have worked well for smooth clearance of the LoAs for example. Until the political crisis, the PMU, DOA and FD also had the necessary close working relationships to develop ToR for the LoAs and agree on the most suitable SPs to carry them out. In their role of executing partners, both MoNREC and MoALI instigated requests and made decisions vis-à-vis the LoAs and, as mentioned, the PSC was an informed, active decision-maker.

**Quality of Execution is satisfactory**

101. **Partnerships** As mentioned above, the GEF-SLM Project developed a close and productive partnership with OneMap Myanmar that lasted from around 2018 until the Political crisis. There had been exploration of other partnerships, but aside from occasional discussions and exchanges of ideas, nothing else materialised on the level with OneMap. The partnership with OneMap on digital mapping was certainly positive, with one of OneMap's international consultants also backstopping the GEF-SLM Project in 2019. Discussions with micro-finance institutions were also held, but didn't result in the provision of micro-credit to interested CSA farmers. A Covid-related limited partnership sprang up in relation to the provision of eco-stoves to CFUGs – Mercy Corps International made the stoves available.

**Partnerships is rated as satisfactory**

### 4.6 Crosscutting issues: Gender equity and inclusion, indigenous peoples

**EQ 6:** To what extent were gender issues and other key equity considerations (indigenous people, youth, vulnerable groups) effectively assessed and factored into designing and implementing the project? Was the project implemented in a manner that ensures equitable participation and benefits? To what extent

where environmental and social concerns taken into consideration in the design and implementation of the project?

102. **Finding 6.1 The GEF-SLM Project did not develop an adequate gender approach.** W**omen were involved in FFS and CBFM activities, but not with an eye to their specific interests or to improving gender equality.** Gendered differences in livelihood priorities and women's socio-economic status in the local communities were not considered. Thus, the LoAs on FFS activities, for example, mention only that "women's participation encouraged as much as possible, including female-headed households." FFS activities started with "village profiles" conducted by the SPs, but these profiles did not include analyses of gender differences in the villages. The possibility of using existing women's groups in villages to gain a deeper understanding of women's interests (related to the farming system and livelihoods) was not explored. The result of this was something of a "gender neutral" approach to FFS, with differences in cropping patterns chosen without reflecting possible gender differences in cropping priorities. The home gardening seed distribution activity, normally of high interest to women, appears not to have been discussed with them.

103. The result is also noticeable in the far fewer number of women who were members of the FFS, or became Lead Farmers. Although the project document did not include a gender plan of any kind, it indirectly indicated a "50/50" approach when it showed in the Results Matrix that an equal number of women and men FFS members should benefit. The table below shows men and women members disaggregated by zone and season. There were only 36 of 96 FFS where women had been adequately represented (starting with only 31% as a minimum level of adequate representation). The final draft of the FFS curricula, with advice and support of the FAO Headquarters gender team, was revised to incorporate gender concerns, but application in the field remained spotty as may be ascertained from the table below.

104. From the local communities' side, however, women may be participating in larger numbers than is shown in Table 5 below. When the TE national consultant discussed CSA directly with FFS members, it turned out that there were several villages where women attended some of the field school sessions (in lieu of their husbands), but were not listed in the FFS membership rosters. Nonetheless, of the total of 3389 formally noted FFS members, there were only 750 female members: 22%. Of 69 Lead Farmers, only 12 were women: 17%.

**Table 5 Number of Women and Men Members in GEF-SLM Project-Supported FFS (original and expansion townships)**

| Zone and Season | Men | Women | FFS with 0 – 30% women | FFS with 31 – 49% women | FFS with 50% and more women |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| CDZ 1 (2017) | 244 | 92 | 12/16 | 1/16 | 3/16 |
| CDZ 2 (2018) | 407 | 193 | 10/20 | 7/20 | 3/20 |
| CDZ 3 (2019) | 186 | 114 | 1/10 | 8/10 | 1/10 |
| **Total CDZ** | **837** | **399** | **23/46** | **16/46** | **7/46** |
| Upland 1 (2018) | 455 | 134 | 16/20 | 3/20 | 1/20 |
| Upland 2 (2019) | 173 | 101 | 2/10 | 6/10 | 2/10 |
| **Total Upland** | **628** | **135** | **18/30** | **9/30** | **3/30** |
| Delta 1 (2018) | 398 | 52 | 15/15 | 0/15 | 0/15 |
| Delta 2 (2019) | 115 | 35 | 4/5 | 1/5 | 0/5 |
| **Total Delta** | **503** | **87** | **19/20** | **1/20** | **0/20** |
| **Total Original Townships** | **1968** | **621** | **60/96** | **26/96** | **10/96** |
| **% of FFS** | | | **63%** | **27%** | **10%** |
| **FFS in 20 Expansion Townships** | | | | | |
| CDZ 4 (2021) (13 new townships) | 438 | 82 | 21/26 | 4/26 | 1/26 |
| Delta 4 (2021) 7 new townships | 233 | 47 | 14/14 | 0/14 | 0/14 |
| **Total Expansion Areas** | **671** | **129** | **35/40** | **4/40** | **1/40** |
| **% of FFS** | | | **88%** | **10%** | **2%** |

Source: Data provided to the ET by the TFOs (or former TFOs). Note there were no new FFS formed in the five townships in 2020; therefore, FFS only showed to 2019. No improvement in women's participation over the seasons, and a decrease in the expansion townships.

**Table 6 Lead Farmers in Five Townships**

| AEZs and Townships | Lead Farmers - Men | Lead Farmers - Women | Remarks |
|---|---|---|---|
| Kyaukpadaung | 19 | 2 | |
| Nyaung U | 23 | 1 | |
| **CDZ Sub-Total** | **42** | **3** | |
| Mindat | 11 | 4 | |
| Kanpetlet | 15 | 0 | |
| **Upland Sub-Total** | **26** | **4** | |
| Labutta | 15 | 5 | One woman took over from a man who quit. |
| **Delta Sub-Total** | **15** | **5** | |
| **Total = 69 Lead Farmers** | **57** | **12** | |
| **% of 69** | **83%** | **17%** | |

105. Likewise, in the CBFM activity, the LoA for RECOFTC did not include mention of gender differences in relation to local forest dependence, or use of forest ecosystem services. It did mention, however: "Forming socially inclusive CFUGs supported by a gender and pro-poor approach for benefit sharing.

Monitoring should be disaggregated by gender." At the same time, however, RECOFTC was not required to accompany and facilitate the CFUGs under the LoA to the point of benefit sharing (only to CFC application). The LoA with MERN to activate many more CFUGs, and find new ones, does not make mention of people at all (only areas). Therefore, support for CFUGs has not been particularly gender inclusive, nor women's participation strongly encouraged.[50] This does not mean that women have been excluded or that they did not contribute their labour in various CF-related activities, but this falls far short of a gendered approach. See Table 7 below.

**Table 7 CF Villages in Labutta: CFUG Members by Gender**

| Labutta Township Village Names | Male Members | Female Members | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| Kwa Kwa Lay | 17 | 0 | 17 |
| Lat Pan Kone | 30 | 1 | 31 |
| Mya Yar Kone | 23 | 2 | 25 |
| Dayal Phyu Gyi | 25 | 0 | 25 |
| Yoe Gyi Su | 28 | 1 | 29 |
| Thit Poke Kone | 37 | 2 | 39 |
| **Total** | **160** | **6** | **166** |

Source: MERN list of CFUGs provided to the GEF-SLM Project

**Gender is rated as moderately satisfactory**

106. **Finding 6.2 The project did not fully apply key GEF or FAO policies on indigenous peoples to provide guidance for project activities that engage indigenous peoples.** The GEF-SLM Project was not disrespectful of, or harmful towards, indigenous people's rights, but it didn't put into practice social safeguard policies with respect to indigenous peoples in Chin State. The project document made little mention of indigenous peoples nor did it provide a substantive treatment of safeguards, as one would expect under REDD+ for example. According to UNDRIP, and the GEF *Principles and Guidelines for Engaging with Indigenous Peoples* (May 2014), safeguards should be in place when activities are undertaken that may affect indigenous people's land-based livelihoods. In particular, a process of Free, Prior, Informed Consent (FPIC) in relation to proposed changes in people's access to, and use of, agricultural and forestry land would have had to be in place.[51] The GEF-SLM PMU's preparatory discussions (with the one Chin State local community involved in PLUP) did include explanations as to the intentions of PLUP. This was in accordance with a post-MTR ad hoc workshop involving the Project Steering Committee where it was decided that a PLUP exercise is inherently participatory and thus not requiring "extra" consultations. Thus, requesting explicit consent via FPIC when working on CSA and CBFM activities in Chin State communities wasn't carried out.[52]

[50] Gender issues in CF in the project area were never identified, but could have been done with a qualitative survey in the different AEZs. Examples of differences between women's and men's use of forest ecosystem services would be women's use of fuel, what type, its adequacy and women's use of non-timber forest products especially in the upland systems, but also in other areas with forest near villages. Moreover, women may well have different ideas as to what type of trees to plant near their homes and in the fields.

[51] FAO also has a *Policy on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples* from 2010. According to an FAO information poster, the policy was only implemented from 2015 onwards. The FAO BH and PTF were remiss in not having flagged the issue during the project's inception phase which only began in 2016. See the pdf file available for download here: http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/partnerships/docs/00000_FPIC_Toolkit_FAO___IPS_key_facts__web_.pdf

[52] The first PLR gap analysis by Fabbiano (p. 41) also observed the FPIC requirement in Chin State. The Indigenous Peoples Chapter of FAO's VGGT also stresses FPIC (9.9).

107. Regarding other vulnerable groups, especially poorer households, the project document makes mention of them such as the following: *more vulnerable sectors of society, such as women and the rural poor ,[shall] benefit directly from project activities* . . . At the same time, however, the design itself provides less indication of an inclusive approach. Nonetheless, during the project's implementation of CSA activities, FFS members were to be smallholders only and having no more than five acres of land. It may have been possible to include landless people as FFS members as well, as there are CSA practices that are suitable for homesteads such as fruit trees and home gardens.

**Indigenous Peoples is rated as moderately unsatisfactory**

### 4.7 Environmental and social safeguards

**EQ 7** To what extent were environmental and social concerns taken into consideration in the design and implementation of the project?

**Finding 7.1 The project design did not include environmental and social safeguards concepts or plans.** Indeed, there was little mention of safeguards of any kind. During inception and/or early implementation of the project, FAO did not take the opportunity to develop at least simplified safeguards plans to avoid or mitigate possible environmental and socio-economic risks. The GEF, however, only passed its Environmental and Social Safeguards Policy in 2019 (SD/PL/03).

**Rating: Unable to assess**

### 4.8 Co-financing

**EQ 8** To what extent did any expected co-financing materialize (government and donor), and what were the critical factors underlying this?

108. **Finding 8.1 With the major delay in starting the project, the envisioned co-financing in kind, while appearing substantial, did not materialise as planned.** The FAO co-financing as shown in the Letter of Co-financing dated December 2014 relates to two projects that both ended before the GEF-SLM Project began (a total of USD 2,194,000). The Livelihoods and Food Security Trust Fund (LIFT) in its Letter of Co-financing dated November 2014 promises in kind financing with its projects related to sustainable natural resources management (NRM) and environmental rehabilitation (a total of USD 4,417,707). The period mentioned is 2013 to 2016. Therefore, USD 6,611,707 of 13,611,707 in co-financing did not materialise. From the two ministries the promised co-financing was USD 7,000,000 with five million from MoALI and two million from MoNREC; this has been reported in the PIR to June 30, 2021 as USD 4.5 million. Given the difficulties to know how these GO contributions might be calculated, the ET assumes the contributions will end up being less than specified in the Letters of Co-financing.[53] The reason relates once more to the Covid travel and meeting restrictions of 2020, and then the post-political crisis situation that also reduced GO involvement in the project. At the same time, however, there have been continued activities by GOs at township level. Nonetheless, the MoNREC contribution in kind may have increased somewhat since 2017. Under the 10-year MRRP, FD would have been able to provide seedlings for degraded forests and for forest plantations, including some of

[53] The only area where there might a slightly lesser contribution than expected from MoALI relates to "extension work." Through project LOAs, extension workers in the five townships have received something over USD 16,000 worth of transportation cost subsidies for their FFS facilitation work.

the CFUGs, but the project was still requested for its support. Otherwise, the ET was not informed of any replacement co-financing. (See co-financing table at Appendix 2.)

**Co-financing is rated as moderately unsatisfactory**

### 4.9 Progress to Impact

**EQ 9** To what extent may any discernible progress towards long-term impact be attributed to the project (including programming and policy areas)?

109. The GEF sectors (focal areas) of this project (as shown on the front page of the project document) related to the following: Promote conservation and enhancement of carbon stocks through sustainable management of LULUCF; reduction of land use pressures on natural resources from competing land uses in the wider landscape; reduce pressures on forest resources and generate flows of forest ecosystem services.

110. **Finding 9.1 The long term impacts in the sectors or focal areas should have been defined in the project document as overarching goals to be achieved after the project comes to an end.** For the most part they are shown (not always clearly in the Results Framework) as targets to be achieved by project end. For long term impact, of course, there will be many attribution gaps that are not easily estimated. For example, what is the contribution of REDD+, what would be the contribution of other, larger projects such as with World Bank or GCF funding? What is the contribution of the GoM's own projects without external funding? All of these would be part of a more holistic look at what might be achieved long term in the sectors mentioned above.

111. **Finding 9.2 One of this project's most important contributions in the focal areas above relate, perhaps, less to the achievements on the ground in terms of hectares and carbon stocks, but rather in bringing the two most important land and forest-responsible ministries in Myanmar together for a steady process of consultations.** This was particularly evident in the LUP exercises at township level. Had the project been "blessed" with a longer, "normal" implementation time and a simpler more straightforward project design, it would also have had much better chances of solid achievements on the ground and greater contributions toward long term impacts.

112. At issue as well in determining long term impact is that there were no baselines from which to start from. The starting point was certainly not "zero." Myanmar had already been attempting mangrove restoration prior to this project's beginning with CF in the Delta. There were thousands of CFUGs with varied levels of success in the country. CSA practices, sometimes in the guise of good agricultural practices (GAP), were also not new. Therefore, the key question of what the project was actually supposed to contribute to make discernible progress towards long term impact was not defined. As mentioned in the earlier chapters, the PLR framework on both forestry and CSA had moved forward by the time the project started implementation. Therefore, its policy contribution was limited to Forest Rules for the already revised Forest Law. As mentioned, the Forest Rules could not be finally endorsed in advent of the political crisis.

113. It was foreseen that the project would make a major contribution to SFM via the DFMPs which include ecosystem-based SFM; a whole new silvicultural approach for Myanmar's foresters. If these plans will be eventually implemented, it will certainly contribute to a long term impact in the LULUCF area.

### 4.10 Knowledge Management

**EQ 10** How effectively is the project assessing, documenting and disseminating its results, lessons learned and experiences and what can be said on the quality and appropriateness of these for intended audiences?

114. **Finding 10.1 One of the GEF-SLM project's key products under knowledge management is its website, slmmyanmar.info. Some of the available documents at the website have been downloaded several hundred times.** The project document did not provide guidelines on a knowledge management system for the GEF-SLM project: *The project will enable stakeholders at national, regional and local level to have access to improved knowledge and data . . .* The website includes many reports, handbooks, manuals and curricula available to share with all interested. It also includes several farmer success stories, and videos illustrating CBFM, for example, have been produced. The opportunity to create a platform among interested users is available via the website. Most documents are available in both Burmese and English. Key documents will also be uploaded to FAO's document repository. The GEF-SLM website is a good means for disseminating project products and results; the only unknown at this point is how long will it be maintained from an IT perspective after the project closes, and how it should be "advertised" after project closure so that as many people as possible continue to access it.[54]

115. **Finding 10.2 A missing aspect under knowledge management is the description of models, "good practices" and lessons learned.** With hindsight, these aspects may have been gained via consultation and exchange workshops (virtually, if necessary) with all SPs that were involved particularly with field level implementation, and including some farmer leaders and local GOs. Success stories are useful, but they are sometimes isolated examples of an excellent result, rather than providing required good practices and a case study approach as to how they were achieved.

116. Smartphone penetration in Myanmar has expanded like "wildfire" in the last ten years. According to statista.com[55] it already reached 75% in rural areas by 2016. Therefore, rural people do use various internet platforms such as Facebook and Viber to get livelihood information. According to MERN, for example, they have established a Viber platform for sustainable livelihood activities in the mangrove areas of the Delta. After the Political crisis, unfortunately, internet and mobile phone use by the civilian population has also been viewed as contributing to dissident activities. Therefore, usage prices have doubled (personal communications) and there are regular cuts to internet/mobile phone services. More "traditional" approaches to rural knowledge management, such as Farmer Field Days have also worked well in the project areas and contributed to broader use of various CSA practices.

**Knowledge Management is rated as moderately satisfactory**

[54] Perhaps an idea here would be to upload some of the documents to the Myanmar Information Management Unit (MIMU) website – it is well-known and has many users.

[55] https://www.statista.com/statistics/1063852/myanmar-smartphone-penetration-by-region/

# 5. Conclusions and Recommendations

## 5.1 Conclusions

117. Based on the evidence presented above, the ET draws several major conclusions pertaining to the overall planning, implementation and monitoring of the GEF-SLM project and based on the major evaluation questions as provided in the evaluation ToR. As the project was already wrapping up its field activities by the time the TE began in December 2021, and will be brought to its final close within five weeks of producing a draft TE Report, the ET does not have recommendations for the PMU to act on, or recommendations of a specific nature. Rather, they are of a general nature and relate for the most part to *ex post* project recommendations for FAO in particular.

**Extenuating Circumstances Affecting the GEF-SLM Project**

118. **Conclusion 1 There were major extenuating circumstances that affected the implementation of the GEF-SLM project and the achievements of its outputs and outcomes.** Since about April – May 2020 until project closure on 31 March, 2022, with the exception of a few months, the project team, including all SPs, have been seriously affected by the onset of Covid-19 and then by the political crisis of 1 February, 2021. In the agricultural sector, extension activities were not so much affected by the Political crisis, although it is likely to affect broader upscaling. Nonetheless, farmer to farmer mechanisms should continue to function at inter-community level. Before this, however, the project's implementation had already been negatively impacted by the late start of implementation: project document produced (2012), PIF (2013), GEF CEO endorsement (April 2015), inception phase (mid-2016) and finally implementation phase (mid-2017). Although the project document had some good concepts (producing replicable models, importance of LUP, importance of integrated approaches to land management), it was also overambitious, inconsistent and partly outdated.

**Relevance**

119. **Conclusion 2 The GEF-SLM Project's underlying concepts related to climate change mitigation through integrated land management and restoration are as highly relevant now as they were in 2012.** If anything, they have increased in urgency.

**Effectiveness**

120. **Conclusion 3 The GEF-SLM Project's overall effectiveness would have been greatly enhanced, had it started with appropriate baseline surveys and land use planning to understand where best to plan and implement integrated approaches to land/forest management and restoration** (as called for in the project document). Without the overall technical planning at least at township level, the CSA and SFM components continued in their "silos," despite the two ministries sitting at the same table to oversee and implement the project. Had these two components been arranged so as to strongly encourage coordinated efforts of the different stakeholders at different decision-making levels they might have resulted in the sought after SLM. With hindsight, this might have been better accomplished with a river basin, landscape or watershed management approach. Any of these approaches would have provided a platform for the integration of both agricultural and forestry, including agroforestry, activities.

**Outputs and Outcomes**

121. **Conclusion 4 The GEF-SLM Project pursued the delivery of outputs that even though met in their entirety, overachieved in some cases, or partly met, could not lead to the overall land and emissions targets at outcome and objective level met within the project's lifetime.** After the MTR recommendation to reduce targets, the project could over-achieve (latest Ex-ACT draft report) its cropping land targets, but even a reduced SFM area target remained out of reach with the somewhat problematic situation relating to district forest management plans. The Ex-ACT capitalisation period of 15 years will provide a better assessment of what the project could contribute. Time will tell more clearly what the project's value added will have been.

**Efficiency**

122. **Conclusion 5 While the project's overall efficiency was satisfactory, the fact that every LoA under the forestry component required an NCE reduced efficiency, but at the same time is indicative of an underlying problem which is that the outputs and outcome for the component were too difficult to achieve within the shorter period available to the project.**

**Sustainability**

123. **Conclusion 6 Despite the immediate impacts of the political crisis and emergency rule, GEF-SLM project's capacity building programme including endorsed curricula at key training institutions under MoNREC and MoALI should have positive effects and longer term impacts**. Local people's continuation of CSA practices, some expansion by local farmers, and continued extension by DOAs of CSA practices combined with the crops they promote should also result in longer term sustainability. Local people who have received 30 year CF Certificates will do their best to ensure that the certificates will not be revoked by virtue of not attending to the forest land covered by such CFCs. With FD's ongoing commitment for CF, support should be available for CFUGs in the longer term.

124. **Conclusion 7 The post-political crisis situation and the withdrawal, or non-start-up of many donor projects, including ones covering similar sectors and/or approaches to the GEF-SLM project, create higher risks to sustainability.** If emergency rule continues for a longer period, there is also an additional risk of *de facto* rollback of policies that were favourable to participatory land use planning and sustainable forest management.

**Factors Affecting Implementation**

**Project Design**

125. **Conclusion 8 The major premises underlying the project design and its strategies were incorrect. While building skills and capacities through developing well-placed educational and training programmes is never amiss, the idea that this would inevitably lead to broad scale implementation and the achievement of massive emissions targets was misplaced.** Moreover, the *speed* by which the combination of nationwide capacity building programmes and a small number of project-driven models for CSA and SFM could lead to widescale areas delivering the enhancement and conservation of carbon stocks was hugely underestimated (even if the project had had a "normal" five-year implementation period). The means to leverage small size models into tens of thousands of hectares beyond the project townships – the means to upscale and replicate them in other words – were not in place.

**Monitoring and Evaluation**

126. **Conclusion 9 It took too long for the project to establish a centralised monitoring system (recommended by the MTR in 2019), thus losing out on valuable time to draw and distil good practices and lessons, especially from field level experiences.** Once the MEAL plan was established, however, it still proved rather unwieldy and did not prove to be the optimum tool to help define what CSA or CBFM models actually are. The monitoring system establishment and actual use was affected by the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic just a few months after its establishment (November 2019). As a general conclusion, it may be queried as to the need for separate monitoring and reporting formats (project progress reports, PIRs and then MEAL). With the need for "formal" reporting every six months according to whatever is in the accepted project document, something like the MEAL plan just becomes an additional layer that might be pushed to the side.

**Other Factors Affecting Implementation**

127. **Conclusion 10 Factors such as stakeholder engagement and partnerships were supporting project implementation, although the political crisis effectively ended them in part. The project continued to work well through the SPs and field staff to accomplish work of benefit to local communities.**

**Crosscutting Issues**

128. **Conclusion 11** The GEF-SLM Project's response to the MTR's recommendation on developing adequate strategies and approaches toward gender equality and indigenous people safeguards (FPIC) was incomplete for both FPIC and gender. This indicates that FAO (FAOMM, FAORAP) could have been more active in advising the project team on these crosscutting issues.

129. **Conclusion 12 The GEF-SLM project has developed a comprehensive and informative website: slmmyanmar.info. It has had several hundred downloads for some of the project products there, showing that they have utility for varied users.**

**Overall Assessment**

130. The TE team's overall assessment of the GEF-SLM Project is moderately satisfactory, considering the difficulties faced with the Covid-19 pandemic and emergency rule since February 2021. If these factors were not considered, then the overall assessment would be moderately unsatisfactory given the lower than expected achievement of (reduced) emissions targets within the project's lifetime and the nascent (but not adequately developed) models for CSA expansion and ecosystem-based CFUGs.

## 5.2 Recommendations

131. As mentioned above, the recommendations shall be understood as <u>not</u> being directed at the GEF-SLM PMU. In the first instance they are directed at the FAORAP LTO and FLO, EM, PTF and the FAO BH. It is also directed at FAO's OCB in Rome. They are not intended for the immediate future, but rather as suggestions for future GEF project planning.

**Recommendation 1:** A project of GEF-SLM's character should seek to build in a bridging phase in order to plan a follow on project with a design for broader scale implementation (best in cooperation with an IFI).

**Recommendation 2:** It should be ensured that projects always have centralised monitoring systems built in as part of the design, with use of SMART indicators, and not having M&E become an "add on" later on in the implementation phase.

**Recommendation 3:** PIRs and Progress Reports should show indicator achievements in terms of milestones, not as percentages, (i.e., a particular output indicator may achieve 80%, but if an appropriate milestone has not been reached, the 100% may never be achieved).

**Recommendation 4:** Project exit and sustainability strategies need to be devised by project midterm at the latest. Indeed, ideas on sustainability especially should be an integral part of the project's framework.

**Recommendation 5**: In an LDC such as Myanmar, the available institutional resource base must be accounted for when it comes to the replication and scalability of project-piloted approaches and/or models. This would help avoid "development islands" and over-ambition.

**Recommendation 6:** Project PTFs should always include a senior social safeguards specialist to ensure that the crosscutting issues are properly accounted and for and implemented.

**Recommendation 7:** If the Theory of Change is to be used, it needs to be deeply embedded in the context that affects medium- and long- term impacts including, of course, major assumptions and barriers to implementation. Its logic should be revalidated over time to ensure that either the project is on the right track or that outputs and outcomes require adjustments.

**Recommendation 8:** (directed at FAOMM BH). Should a legitimate government return to power within the next 18 months, then this report should be shared and discussed with MoALI (DOA) and MoNREC (FD). A translation of the report's summary should in any case be provided to the key township GOs that were closely involved with project implementation.

**Recommendation 9:** (directed at FAO OCB along with FAOMM for presentation to GEF). Towards the end of the capitalisation period for emissions reduction targets, there should be an *ex post* project study done to ascertain emission reductions actually achieved by the project (using Ex-ACT).

## 6. Lessons Learned

There must always be proper quality control during project formulation stages to ensure that a project document is consistent, has clear logic and provides useful guidance for project implementing teams and counterparts. Efforts could be usefully made to shorten the length of project documents in order to present a succinct, concise situation analysis and clear logical argument from problem and opportunity analyses to outcomes and objectives.

A project that is essentially geared to capacity building and its institutionalisation should not be expected to achieve broad scale implementation in the forestry sector within four to five years.

If a project shall foment integrated land management approaches, then it also requires integrated components that will keep project teams focused on integration rather than allowing them to split into sectoral silos. That is, land use planning at landscape level provides an excellent starting point from which all agricultural and forestry land management may be planned using an integrated approach.

It is extremely important to doublecheck the validity of a project document and its results matrix during the inception phase, especially if there has been a longer delay between formulation and start of project. This is a highly appropriate appoint to use the Theory of Change with key stakeholders.

Be aware of the past to "adjust" the present. If a project is not piloting completely new measures, it must study previous lessons learned, take them on board and apply them; adjust the wheel, don't reinvent it.

Local people's adoption of different agricultural or forestry management practices are based on many factors beyond "profitability," and may vary even within a short radius. Project experiences, good practices and lessons learned must be distilled from all relevant factors.

# 7. Appendices

## Appendix 1: GEF Evaluation Criteria Rating Table and Rating Scheme

**Table A1: TE Ratings & Achievements Summary Table**

| GEF criteria/sub criteria | Rating | Summary Comments |
|---|---|---|
| **A. STRATEGIC RELEVANCE** | | |
| A1 Overall strategic relevance | HS | Myanmar remains one of the most vulnerable countries to climate change: the project's efforts to mitigate climate change are of high relevance. |
| A1.1. Alignment with GEF and FAO strategic priorities | HS | In general, the project aligns well with GEF and FAO priorities. |
| A1.2. Relevance to national, regional and global beneficiary needs | HS | Globally, the GEF-SLM Project's working areas related to climate change mitigation in both the agriculture and forestry sectors have high relevance. High relevance to beneficiary needs via CSA and community forestry. |
| A1.3. Complementarity with existing interventions | S | There has been complementarity with UN-REDD (less) and OneMap Myanmar (more) until the political crisis. |
| **B. EFFECTIVENESS** | | |
| B1. Overall assessment of project results | MS | Capacity building outputs were largely achieved, CSA-related outputs also achieved quantitatively, a professional LUP was introduced, but no plan endorsements could be made. SFM targets could largely not be met. Expected models for CSA/FFS and for CBFM not available. |
| B1.1 Delivery of Project Outputs | MS | All outputs expected vis-à-vis capacity building and curricula have been well met. Farmer field schools and Community Forestry Groups, both overachieved in number, but model character missed. Updated forest management plans too late and some quality issues. |

| GEF criteria/sub criteria | Rating | Summary Comments |
|---|---|---|
| B1.2 Progress towards outcome and project objectives | MS | Project implementation time was cut short by Covid-19 and political crisis; would have achieved more if hadn't happened. |
| - Outcome 1 | S | The project cannot contribute as much as initially planned re: PLR framework; LUP came in too late as the key to SLM and landscape restoration. On LUP, project has made important contributions. Outcome indicators UA, so this rating is for outputs. |
| - Outcome 2 | S | Farmers have adopted useful CSA practices via a number of extension methods, starting with FFS. Curricula endorsed. National CSA Centre operational. Downward revised targets land targets overachieved. With its limited resources, GO-led FFS outside of target areas largely not feasible. |
| - Outcome 3 | MS | Land and emissions targets cannot be met within project lifetime, but likely during capitalisation period. Capacity building accomplished; no Community-based forest management models accomplished, status or GO-driven ecosystem CFs outside of project areas. |
| - Outcome 4 | UA | This Outcome has so much overlap with Outcomes 2 and 3 that it is not given a separate rating. |
| Overall rating of progress towards achieving objectives/outcomes | MS | Results Framework original land targets reduced, but not met in forestry sector. Especially, the political crisis slowed project work in the sector. |
| B1.3 Likelihood of Impact | UA | There were no baselines from which an assessment of impact may be made. No possibility to assess attribution gaps properly in light of political crisis. |
| **C. EFFICIENCY** | | |

| GEF criteria/sub criteria | Rating | Summary Comments |
|---|---|---|
| C1. Efficiency | S | Efficiency was initially affected by delayed start and long inception phase. Some SPs, especially forestry sector, had difficulty to deliver LOA outputs on time and with good quality – many NCEs (much less in CSA). |
| **D. SUSTAINABILITY OF PROJECT OUTCOMES** | | |
| D1. Overall likelihood of risks to sustainability | MU | Risks remain likely because of combination of factors; exacerbated by ongoing emergency rule after the political crisis |
| D1.1 Financial risks | MU | Government budgets for field operations remain low in both agriculture and forestry – even more difficult to predict in light of the political crisis and possible changes in priorities after changes in Union Ministers. For now, technical and financial assistance projects in the relevant sectors are cancelled. |
| D1.2 Socio-economic risks | ML | Local communities are interested in CSA practices, especially in light of current inflation rates for agricultural inputs. CF is harder to predict, as CF enterprises not well-established and some forest areas highly degraded. |
| D1.3. Institutional and governance risks | ML | Low staffing and highly complicated PLRs related to land tenure security remain risks. Emergency rule exacerbates these risks as it may not honour PLR updates made under the democratically elected government. |
| D1.4. Environmental risks | MU | Droughts, floods, heavy winds, high temperatures and pestilence are all risks that cannot be predicted, but will happen. |
| D2. Catalysis and replication | ML | Covid and the political crisis prevented the project from developing models for replication that are manageable for local offices – other projects that would have taken up some of the |

| GEF criteria/sub criteria | Rating | Summary Comments |
|---|---|---|
| | | models (LUP in particular) are now on hold as a result of political crisis. |
| **E. FACTORS AFFECTING PERFORMANCE** | | |
| E1. Project design and readiness | MU | The project design was inconsistent and illogical in several respects. Despite this, PMU and PSC (until political crisis) found some ways to mitigate some of the design problems. |
| E2. Quality of project implementation | MS | Most implementation was through SPs/LoAs for agriculture and forestry, not for LUP. Quality of the SP implementation varied, but LUP highly professional. University-produced curricula for Forestry School of particular note for high quality. |
| E2.1 Quality of project implementation by FAO (FAO, PSC, PTF, etc) | MS | The mistakes and inconsistencies in the project document should have been raised during inception. FAO should have hired a second full time forester, given the sector's high complexity. |
| E2.2 Project oversight (PSC) | HS | Until the political crisis, in its eight meetings the PSC took its oversight functions seriously, and made highly relevant decisions regarding project progress. |
| E3. Quality of project execution | S | All administrative functions of project, including communications with FAO were satisfactory at all levels. |
| E3.1 Project management arrangements and delivery (PMU, financial management, etc) | S | A full time STA arrived in mid-2018: this made for big improvement, but delivery was later affected by Covid and political crisis. |
| E4. Co-financing | MU | About 50% of co-financing was promised for the period before the project actually started – alternatives were not sought by FAO. |
| E5. Project partnerships and stakeholder involvement | S | Very high involvement at national level, including virtual meetings during Covid. UNCT principles of engagement forbade contact post-political crisis. At |

| GEF criteria/sub criteria | Rating | Summary Comments |
|---|---|---|
| | | implementation level, local officers remained well-involved. Project partnering with OneMap excellent. |
| E6. Communication and knowledge management | MS | The project has some knowledge management products, including success stories, but didn't distil models and good practices. Project website offers many useful documents (bilingual). |
| E7. Overall quality of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) | MS | A centralised M&E system established after MTR. Spot M&E did occur with BTORs (trips halted by Covid rules), SP reporting and semi-annual progress reports. Useful stakeholder surveys done, especially on effects of Covid. |
| E7.1 M&E Design | MS | Project developed M&E design after MTR; this included improved data collection forms for CSA. and small scale quantitative surveys. |
| E7.2 M&E Plan Implementation (including financial and human resources) | MS | Project hired IC to develop M&E plan with SMART indicators, then hired full time monitoring staff. |
| E8. Overall assessment of factors affecting performance | MS | Factors affecting performance have been mostly supportive of project implementation, especially stakeholder engagement and partnerships. M&E system developed too late and too oriented toward surveys rather than good practices and lessons learned. |
| **F. CROSS-CUTTING CONCERNS** | | |
| F1. Gender and other equity dimensions | MS | Gender concerns have been integrated to a certain extent, but with too little consideration for the enabling conditions that would encourage women's participation *and* decision-making. |
| F2. Indigenous People | MU | No GEF or FAO indigenous people policies included in project design; LUP in IP village made sure of people's express consent. |
| F3. Environmental and social safeguards | UA | No safeguards planned or used. |

| GEF criteria/sub criteria | Rating | Summary Comments |
|---|---|---|
| **Overall project rating** | **MS** | Despite the many factors affecting the project negatively (late start, overly complex and inconsistent design with unreasonable area targets, Covid, political crisis), it was able to maintain a good standard of implementation. |

**GEF RATING SCHEME**

**PROJECT RESULTS AND OUTCOMES**

| Rating | Description |
|---|---|
| Highly Satisfactory (HS) | "Level of outcomes achieved clearly exceeds expectations and/or there were no short comings." |
| Satisfactory (S) | "Level of outcomes achieved was as expected and/or there were no or minor short comings." |
| Moderately Satisfactory (MS) | "Level of outcomes achieved more or less as expected and/or there were moderate short comings." |
| Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU) | "Level of outcomes achieved somewhat lower than expected and/or there wee significant shortcomings." |
| Unsatisfactory (U) | "Level of outcomes achieved substantially lower than expected and/or there were major short comings." |
| Highly Unsatisfactory (HU) | "Only a negligible level of outcomes achieved and/or there were severe short comings." |
| Unable to Assess (UA) | The available information does not allow an assessment of the level of outcome achievements. |

**PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION AND EXECUTION**

| Rating | Description |
|---|---|
| Highly Satisfactory (HS) | There were no shortcomings and quality of implementation or execution exceeded expectations. |
| Satisfactory (S) | There were no or minor shortcomings and quality of implementation or execution meets expectations. |
| Moderately Satisfactory (MS) | There were some shortcomings and quality of implementation or execution more or less meets expectations. |
| Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU) | There were significant shortcomings and quality of implementation or execution somewhat lower than expected. |
| Unsatisfactory (U) | There were major shortcomings and quality of implementation substantially lower than expected. |
| Highly Unsatisfactory (HU) | There were severe shortcomings in quality of implementation or execution. |
| Unable to Assess (UA) | The available information does not allow an assessment of the quality of implementation or execution. |

**SUSTAINABILITY**

| Rating | Description |
|---|---|
| Likely (L) | There is little or no risk to sustainability. |
| Moderately Likely (ML) | There are moderate risks to sustainability. |
| Moderately Unlikely (MU) | There are significant risks to sustainability. |
| Unlikely (U) | There are severe risks to sustainability. |
| Unable to Assess (UA) | Unable to assess the expected incidence and magnitude of risks to sustainability. |

## Appendix 2: Co-Financing Table

| **Name of the Co-Financer** | **Co-Financer Type** | **Type of Co-Financing** | **Co-financing at Project Start (Amount confirmed at GEF CEO endorsement/approved by the project design team (in USD)** | | | **Materialised Co-financing by Febuary 2022 (in USD)*** | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | In-Kind | Cash | Total | In-Kind | Cash | Total |
| FAO | GEF Agency | In-Kind | 2,194,000 | 0 | 2,194,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| LIFT | Multi-lateral trust fund | In-Kind | 4,417,707 | 0 | 4,417,707 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| MoALI | National Government | In-Kind | 5,000,000 | 0 | 5,000,000 | 2,500,000 | 0 | 2,500,000 |
| MoNREC | National Government | In-Kind | 2,000,000 | 0 | 2,000,000 | 2,000,000 | 0 | 2,000,000 |
| **Grand Total** | | In-Kind | 13,611,707 | 0 | 13,611,707 | 4,500,000 | 0 | 4,500,000 |

*Estimate only.

## Appendix 3: Results Matrix for assessing level of achievements of project outcomes

| Project Objective and Outcomes | Indicator | Baseline Level | End-of-project Target | Achievement Rating | Justification for Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Objective:**<br>Build the capacity of farming and forestry stakeholders to mitigate climate change and improve land condition by adopting climate smart agriculture and sustainable forest management policies and practices. | Land cover delivering global environmental benefits in the project target area as reported in the GEF LD Tracking Tool | 0 hectares of vegetative cover | 124,000 hectares of vegetative cover delivering GEB | MU/UA | There was no monitoring of this indicator; unsure as to what "vegetative covering" is supposed to be – no definition available. |
| | Spatial coverage of integrated natural resource management practices in wider landscapes as reported in GEF LD tracking tool | 0 ha agricultural lands<br>0 ha forests | 64000 ha of agricultural lands<br>6 million ha forests<br>Direct (tons of CO2-eq):<br>Non-forest: 0,96 million<br>Forest: 1,91 million | U/UA | These indicators are much too high if they refer to areas outside of the project pilot townships (it is unclear from indicator wording). Baselines of 0 unlikely to be correct at time of project start. |
| | Direct and indirect lifetime greenhouse gas emissions avoided and carbon captured from forest and non-forest interventions from this project as reported in GEF SFM REDD+ Tracking Tool | 0 | Indirect lifetime (tons of CO2-eq):<br>Non-forest: 3,60 million<br>Forest:12,25 million | HU/UA | Ex-ACT capitalisation period is 15 years after a project lifetime of 5 years. It is unknown how the tons of $CO_2$ equivalent mentioned in the indicator could be achieved. The political crisis will make it even more difficult to know (stoppage of REDD+ support activities). |

| Project Objective and Outcomes | Indicator | Baseline Level | End-of-project Target | Achievement Rating | Justification for Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Outcome 1:** Strengthened institutional, policy and regulatory frameworks | An enhanced enabling environment within the forest sector for SFM strengthened as reported in GEF SFM REDD+ Tracking Tool | Forest Sector Policy/ Regulation SFM Framework Score:<br><br>#3: sector policy/regulation framework have been formally proposed but not adopted | Forest Sector Policy/ Regulation SFM Framework Score:<br><br>#5: sector policy/regulation framework are enforced | MS | Project started too late to make a large contribution to forest sector policy. Nonetheless, it made a useful contribution with support for the Forest Rules and for Community Forestry Strategies: 2018-2020 and 2021-2025. |
| | Agriculture policy enhancement score as reported in GEF LD tracking tool | Agriculture policy enhancement score of 2 | Agriculture policy enhancement score of 3 | UA | Agricultural policy/ regulation frameworks such as Agricultural Development Strategy had been developed and adopted concurrent with project begin, therefore such strategies are not direct outcome of the project. |
| | Updated strategies for SFM and CSA finalized and adopted | Updated SFM Strategy: 0<br><br>Updated CSA Strategy: 0 | Updated SFM Strategy: 1<br><br>Updated CSA Strategy: 1 | Partly UA, Partly S | Project was not requested by FD to work on SFM strategy, but Forest Rules. Could not be endorsed because of Political crisis. CSA strategy was developed by YAU and adopted in 2015 by MoALI, before the project was operationalized. |
| | Enhanced cross-sector enabling environment for integrated landscape management (LD3) | Framework strengthening INRM Score: 1<br><br>Integrated land management plans: 0 | Framework strengthening INRM Score: 5<br><br>Integrated land management plans: 3 (one at each pilot site) | MU | INRM was not a central focus of the project.<br><br>Participatory Land Use Planning process has been initiated. |

| Project Objective and Outcomes | Indicator | Baseline Level | End-of-project Target | Achievement Rating | Justification for Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Township-wide land use plans updated and adopted to fully integrate CSA, SLM, and SFM | | Number of updated township-wide land use plans: 3 (one for each pilot site) | MU | Land use planning needs more integration between agricultural crop land management and forest land management. To update township-wide land use plans, which rarely exists in Myanmar in the past, is a very difficult task for the project. |
| **Outcome 2:** Models for Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) practices demonstrated and enhancing carbon storage in three priority agro-ecosystems | Conservation and enhancement of carbon in non-forest lands (agriculture) as reported in GEF CC Mitigation Tracking Tool (Objective 5: LULUCF) | Conservation and enhancement of carbon in non-forest lands (agriculture):<br><br>0 ha | Conservation and enhancement of carbon in non-forest lands (agriculture):<br><br>64,000 ha | S (for reduced target) | Target was reduced from 64,000 to 20,000 after MTR recommendation. |
| | Good CC mitigation management practices developed and adopted for agriculture as reported in GEF CC Mitigation Tracking Tool (Objective 5: LULUCF) | #2: developing prescriptions for sustainable management | #5: over 80% of area in project certified | UA | There is no national certification process developed in Myanmar (Objective 5: LULUCF #3), so no way to know of project area certification. Also not tracked regarding "mitigation." |
| | Number of farm households adopting CSA practices that support SLM and climate change mitigation | Number of CSA farm households: To be determined at Project Inception | Number of CSA farm households: 3500 | S | The project introduced and trained CSA practices to farming households but the degree of adoption of adaptation versus mitigation practices should have been monitored. At any rate, number of CSA households must be overachieved. |

| Project Objective and Outcomes | Indicator | Baseline Level | End-of-project Target | Achievement Rating | Justification for Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Number of annual national CSA/SLM knowledge exchange seminars established and supported by GoM | 0 national CSA/SLM knowledge exchange seminars | 1 annual (5 completed during project) national CSA/SLM knowledge exchange seminar established | HS | Annual knowledge exchange seminars were held at the NCSA centre until the Covid pandemic. After that the political crisis stopped exchange seminars from being held. |
| | Number of FFS and number of participating members | FFS established: 0<br><br>FFS participating members:<br><br>Male: 0<br>Female: 0 | FFS established: 50<br><br>FFS participating members:<br><br>Male: 350<br>Female: 350 | HS | FFS numbers well over the target number of FFS to be established. Number of FFS members overachieved many times, although women's participation much lower than men's. On the other hand, the degree of adoption and participation would have needed better monitoring. |
| **Outcome 3.** Models for sustainable forest management practices demonstrated and enhancing carbon storage in three priority ecosystems | Carbon stored in forest ecosystems and emissions avoided from deforestation and forest degradation from this project as reported in GEF SFM REDD+ Tracking Tool | Conservation & enhancement of carbon in forests due to project-<br><br>Area: 0 ha<br>Tonnes of CO2eq: 0 | Conservation & enhancement of carbon in forests -<br><br>Area: 60,000 ha<br>Tonnes of CO2eq: 12,68 million | MU | The activities started extremely late and could not be achieved by the end of project. At same time, however, Covid-19 restrictions and emergency rule established after the political crisis slowed activities. |

| Project Objective and Outcomes | Indicator | Baseline Level | End-of-project Target | Achievement Rating | Justification for Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Good forest management practices applied in existing forests as reported in GEF SFM REDD+ Tracking Tool | Area covered by forest management plans:<br><br>0 ha<br><br>Restoration/rehabilitation of degraded forests:<br><br>0 ha | Area covered by forest management plans:<br><br>60,000 ha<br><br>Restoration/rehabilitation of degraded forests:<br><br>2,000 ha | MU | Three district forest management plans are in process, but still need to be tested before knowing if the district forest management plan implementation will have any impact on emissions targets. Ex-ACT capitalisation period of 15 years needs to be used. |
| | Enhanced institutional capacity to account for GHG emission reduction and increase in carbon stocks as reported in GEF SFM REDD+ Tracking Tool | National carbon stock monitoring systems in place (area covered):<br><br>#2: in design phase | National carbon stock monitoring systems in place (area covered):<br><br># 6: monitoring information database publicly available | UA | This indicator is mistakenly included in this results framework; it was not part of the project's remit to do work in this area. |
| | Number of SFM Model management plans adopted and operational | SFM model management plans adopted and operational: 0 | SFM model management plans adopted and operational: 3 (one for each pilot site) | MU | Three plans were developed, but needed to be tested, adopted and become operationalised; not done by the end of the project. |

| Project Objective and Outcomes | Indicator | Baseline Level | End-of-project Target | Achievement Rating | Justification for Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Number of Community-based forestry support units established at MOECAF | Community-based forestry support units established at MOECAF: 0 | Community-based forestry support units established at MOECAF: 1 | UA | A CF unit was established under the MONREC (Previously MOECAF) prior to the project's start up. |
| | Number of ecosystem based community forestry initiatives operational and actively monitoring/delivering substantial CC and SLM benefits | Ecosystem based community forestry initiatives operational: 0 | Ecosystem based community forestry initiatives operational: 9 (minimum of 3 per pilot site) | MS | 21 CFUGs were formed and CF training for CFUGs was completed. Further CFUGs reactivated at least to management planning stage. CF initiatives somehow operational, but not in keeping with "ecosystem-based" CBFM, neither inside nor outside of project area. Criteria for ecosystem-based CF not established. |
| **Outcome 4.** SLM, SFM, and CSA knowledge management, training, and practices scaling up nationally | CSA knowledge center established, fully functional and supporting national replication of project generated outputs | CSA knowledge center: 0 | CSA knowledge center: 1 | HS | Yes, NCSA Centre has worked as planned. Likely to be sustainable as well. |
| | Number of annual participants in national in-service CSA/SLM extension officer training program | 0 participants | 100 participants | HS | Yes, this number of trainees has been met. |
| | CSA/SLM supportive FFS established by GoM outside of project areas | FFS established outside of project areas: 0 | FFS established outside of project areas: 50 | U | This activity was never started as indicated here; nor expected that 50 FFS could be established and supported without project assistance. |

| Project Objective and Outcomes | Indicator | Baseline Level | End-of-project Target | Achievement Rating | Justification for Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Number of annual participants in project established national ecosystem-based forestry management training | Central Forestry Development and Training Center: 0<br><br>Forestry School: 0<br><br>University of Forestry: 0 | Central Forestry Development and Training Center: 100<br><br>Forestry School: 50<br><br>University of Forestry: 25 | MS | Short courses were held at the CFDTC, but arranged by the CFNWG, relating to CF.<br><br>University of Forestry withdrew its participation since 2nd PSC meeting as a venue for "training." Nonetheless, it produced good curricula for use at the Forestry School. Number of students there reduced owing to political crisis. |
| | Number of ecosystem based community forestry initiatives established by GoM outside of project area | Ecosystem based community forestry initiatives outside of project area: 0 | Ecosystem based community forestry initiatives outside of project area: 10 | MU | There were no "ecosystem based" CFUGs established; this is not part of the CF-Instruction, nor of the Standard Operating Procedures that guide all foresters' work on this topic. |

## Appendix 4: List of people Interviewed in date order met

| First Name of Person Met | Family Name of Person Met | Person's Designation and Organisation | Where Met (if not virtually) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Mr. Ivan | Scott | EM at FAORAP | |
| Mr. Xavier | Bouan | STA GEF-SLM | |
| Ms. May Zin Oo | | Finance and Admin Assistant GEF-SLM | |
| | | | |
| Mr. Tint Khine | | SLM Focal Point FAO CO, | |
| Mr. Sameer | Karki | FLO at FAORAP | |
| Mr. Pierre | Ferrand | LTO at FAORAP | |
| Mr. Htun Htun Oo | | TFO Delta, GEF-SLM | Labutta |
| Mr. Khin Si | | Field Officer, AVSI | Labutta |
| 22 women and 35 men FFS members | | 5 FFS villages | Labutta Township |
| 2 women and 12 men CFUG members | | CFUGs, Mya Yar Kone Village | Labutta Township |
| Mr. Aung Min and Mr. Than | | CFUG Leader, Let Pan Kone | Labutta |
| Mr. Hla Shwe and Mr. Naing Win | | CFUG leader, Kwa Kwa Lay village | Labutta |
| Mr. Naing Oo and Mr. Maung Zaw | | CFUG Leader of Yoe Gyi Su village | Labutta |
| Mr. Mya Hmwe | | CFUG leader of Da Yel Phyu Gyi Village | Labutta |
| Mr. Thein Myint | | CFUG Leader of Thit Poke Kone Village | Labutta |
| Mr. Than Htun and Mr. Kyaw Soe | | PLUP-involved leaders from Baing Daunt Chaung Village Tract | Labutta |
| Mr. Naing Lin Tun | | Field Facilitator, MERN | Labutta |
| Mr. Kyaw Thu | | Township Officer, Forest Department | Labutta |
| Mr. Myo Aung | | Township Officer, DOA | Labutta |
| Dr. Nyi Nyi Kyaw | | Retired DG, FD | |
| Dr. Thein Saung | | FD Staff Officer (invited to join Zoom call by Dr. Nyi Nyi Kyaw) | |
| Dr. Myat Su Mon | | Former OneMap staff (and former Deputy Director in FD) | |
| Dr. Hubertus | van Hensbergen | FAO Consultant on Forest Management Planning | |
| Mr. Aung Thant Zin | | CEO, MERN | |
| Mr. Than Soe Oo | | Senior Programme Manager, MERN | |
| Mr. Tun Tun Zaw | | Programme Officer, MERN | |
| Mr. Ye Naing | | Programme Officer, MERN | |
| Mr. Patrick | Oswald | CDE Myanmar | |
| Dr. Kyaw Tint | | Director, ECCDI | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Mr. Sein Moe Naing | | Knowledge Management Specialist | |
| Mr. Kyaw Win Htun | | TFO for CDZ, GEF-SLM | CDZ and also virtually |
| 24 men, 21 women FFS members | | 4 villages | Nyaung U Township |
| 14 men, 5 women CFUG members | | 3 villages | Nyaung U Township |
| 3 men, 0 women PLUP participants | | 1 villages | Nyaung U Township |
| 22 men, 19 women FFS members | | 4 villages | Kyaukpadaung Township |
| 17 men, 11 women CFUG members | | 3 villages | Kyaukpadaung |
| 7 men, 0 women PLUP participants | | 1 villages | Kyaukpadaung Township |
| Mr. Law Shein Mang | | Former TFO, Chin State GEF-SLM | Nyaung U |
| Ms. Htar Ei Ei Hlaing | | Deputy Staff Officer, DOA | Nyaung U |
| Ms. Win Khaing | | Assistant Staff Officer, DOA | Nyaung U |
| Ms. Hla Hla Tint | | Assistant Staff Officer, DOA | Nyaung U |
| Ms. Aye Thida Moe | | Assistant Staff Officer, DOA | Nyaung U |
| Mr. Nay Win Tun | | Township Officer, DALMS | Nyaung U |
| Mr. Thein Win Zaw | | Current Township Officer, FD | Nyaung U |
| Mr. Zaw Zaw Naing | | Former Township Officer, FD (Over Phone) | Nyaung U |
| Mrs. Khin Aye Aye Maw | | Township Officer, DOA | Kyaukpadaung |
| Ms. Sint Sint | | Deputy Staff Officer, DOA | Kyaukpadaung |
| Ms. Hla Hla Win | | Assistant Staff Officer, DOA | Kyaukpadaung |
| Mr. Khin Mg Nwet | | Ranger, FD | Kyaukpadaung |
| Mr. Soe Paing | | Popa Lovers CSO | Kyaukpadaung |
| Mrs. Nang Pain Hom | | Popa Lovers CSO | Kyaukpadaung |
| Mr. Myo Min Aung | | Project Manager, Cesvi | Nyaung U |
| Ms. Tin Nilar Than | | Project Coordinator, Cesvi | Over Phone |
| Mr. Zaw Zaw Aung | | Field Officer, Cesvi | Over Phone |
| Mr. Paing Phyo | | Regional Mangrove Restoration Project. | |
| Dr. Thiha | | Sustainable Forest Management Specialist, GEF-SLM | |
| Mr. Shwe Thein | | CEO, LCG | |
| Mr. Saw Doh Wah | | Deputy Director (Programs) LCG | |
| Mr. Paul | de Wit | Myanmar Land Governance and Titling expert | |
| Ms. Nang Swe Swe Aye | | Country Director, AVSI | AVSI Office, Yangon |
| Dr. Aung Paing Soe | | Former M&E Specialist, GEF-SLM | |
| Mr. Jitendra | Prasad | Former Agricultural Advisor of GEF-SLM, now at FAORAP | |
| Dr. NMH | Anonymous | Confidential Source on Component 2 | |
| Mr. Lorenzo | Mastripieri | FAO Rome Ex-ACT expert (ESA) | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Mrs. San San Myint | | Former GEF-SLM National Coordinator | |
| Ms. Yuka | Makino | FAOR MM and BH | |
| Mrs. Genevieve | Braun | FAO OCB | |
| Ms Luisa | Belli | FAO OED | |
| Ms Amelie | Solal-Celigny, | FAO OED | |

## Appendix 5: Selected References/Documents Consulted

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**Key Project Documents and Reports**

PSC Meeting Minutes: Meetings One to Eight, especially Meeting 8 held on 20 October, 2020.
Half Yearly Project Progress Reports covering the period up to December 2021, last report in draft form.
Project Budget – original and updated versions.
Annual Workplans: especially focusing on 2020 and 2021.
FFS Handbooks and Curricula
CSA Handbooks and Curricula
CSA Training of Trainer Workshop Reports
Township Land use Planning Guide Books
Letters of Agreement with Service Providers.
Service Provider Reports: Mid-Term and Final.
EBSFM DFMPs (including Implementation and Planning Manuals)
Planning Guidelines for DFMPs
LUP Planning Manuals/Guidelines for Delta, Dry Zone and Uplands