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Report

Submitted to the Second Output Board Meeting

(Output 1: Strengthening Institutional Capacity of Local Governments and Administration for participatory local development planning, monitoring, public financial management and effective service delivery)



UNDP Myanmar

September, 2014

OVERVIEW

Strengthened institutional capacity of State/Region and Township administrations for area-related participatory development planning, public financial management and public service delivery (Output 1) is one of the four outputs under the Local Governance (Pillar 1) of the UNDP Country Program Document (CPD 2013-2015).

Output 01 is organized around three main sub-objectives;

- 1.1 Local Governance mapping: Adequate information management systems for planning and budgeting, identifying priorities and coordinated development, supported.
- 1.2 Capacity development: Enhanced capacities of selected state, district and township administrations and state parliaments to establish participatory and responsive planning and monitoring mechanisms.
- 1.3 Township Development Fund: Strengthened capacities of public service providers (including public-private partnerships) in an inclusive, responsive and accountable manner.

Output 01, as well as the other outputs in Pillar 1, is implemented through the Direct Implementation (DIM) modality, with a team of UNDP programme and technical specialists supported by the UNDP area and satellite offices in the relevant states and regions.

At the union level, output 01 works in close collaboration with the General Administration Department of the Ministry of Home Affairs and other relevant line ministries, other UN agencies and donors, under the overall direction of its Output Board. At the state/region and township levels, the output collaborates with state and region government institutions, township administrations, relevant technical departments, civil society organizations, village tract administrators, committee members and citizens.

This report presents the status of implementation of the activities conducted to achieve the stated objectives for output 01 for the period of January to June, 2014 and summarizes cumulative results from the start of the program in April 2013, challenges, best practices and lessons learned, as well as relevant financial information.

ACTIVITY PROGRESS AND RESULTS

1.1 Local Governance Mapping: Adequate information and management systems for planning and budgeting, identifying priorities and coordinated development, supported.

After some delays, the Advisory committee was established in April 2014 and since then, there have been 3 meetings. The Advisory Committee is co-chaired by GAD and UNDP with members from Ministry of Home Affairs (GAD); Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development, (FERD, Planning, CSO and PAPRD); Ministry of Finance (Budget Department) and selected UNDP staff members. The committee is an important platform for programmatic guidance, sharing of information evolving from the implementation, progress updates and discussions for improvement. The meetings held so far have had very good and constructive discussions taken place.

Phase 1: [Mon and Chin state] of the mapping has been finalized and the results shared in interim finding workshops with the involved stakeholders in February and March 2014. The reports are now in printing process and the reports will be widely shared by the end of September.

Phase 2: [Ayeyarwaddy, Tanintharyi, Kayin, Bago and Kayah] all data collection are finalized, interim workshops at the state and region level have been hold and the consultants are working on the reports that will be finalized by end of September latest. The average number of participants in the interim finding workshops has been around 85.

Phase 3: [Magway, Mandalay, Sagaing, Rakhine, Kachin, Shan and Yangon] All the sensitization and consultation workshops at the state and region level, where presentations on the UNDP local governance program and the different steps in the mapping including the criteria for selection of the sample townships are presented, have been completed. The selection of sample townships has been done in all the states and regions and the township background research has started in Shan, Yangon and Rakhine.

To date, local governance baseline has been established for 2 states, Mon and Chin and 2 State of Local Governance reports have been finalized and shared with stakeholders.

54 Community dialogues are completed in 7 states/regions identifying challenges in governance and service delivery and agreeing on local and community solutions (e.g. VTA agreed to print announcements of local projects and display them on his office wall to bridge the information gap) – reflecting the usage of the mapping findings at the cutting-edge level.

The process for contracting the research institution for the community level data collection is ongoing but unfortunately delayed. The additional international consultants for the township background research and for state / region reports have been identified and the contracting process is almost finished. The consultants are expected to start their work in September.

1.2 Capacity development: Enhanced capacities of selected state, district and township administrations and state parliaments to establish participatory and responsive planning and monitoring mechanisms

In February, training on participatory tools for township planning was conducted for a total of 586 (M 444; F 124) Village tract administrators and an additional resource person from each village/tract of the 12 pilot townships in Mon and Chin states.

In January continuation of the training initiated in 2013 on planning and budgeting for township administrators and committee members in Mon state was completed. A total number of 70 participants from the 6 pilot township participated in the training.

A one-week of lecturing on good local governance, decentralization, planning and inclusive service delivery for the UCSB senior management course was conducted in February 2014 by three international consultants.

Draft operational guidelines for township and ward/village tract development support committees have been developed in collaboration with Mon state government, township administrators and committee members. This was finalized in May 2014. The guidelines are now to be shared with GAD to discuss the content and potential sharing with other states and regions.

In February a workshop for partners involved in local participatory planning and budgeting at township level was held jointly with Action-Aid. The main objective with the workshop was to share experiences on the ground and improve coordination amongst different implementing partners. Presentations were held by UNDP; Action-Aid; Unicef; IID, VNG and World bank.

A small working group represented by UNDP, Unicef and Action Aid was formed to continue the coordination between the present organizations and also prepare a workshop where a consolidated picture of ongoing support to planning and budgeting at local level is presented.

1.3 Township Development Fund: Strengthened capacities of public service providers (including public-private partnerships) in an inclusive, responsive and accountable manner.

UNCDF/UNDP have not been able to mobilize enough funding from development partners to implement the TDF as originally planned in the CPAP and AWP for 2014.

The original estimation of the UNCDF/UNDP budget for the TDF was perhaps too optimistic and it has not been possible to mobilize enough resources from development partners to implement the township development fund effectively. Additionally, in the regular discussions between UNDP/CD level and the President's office the government has expressed that a township development fund may not be a prioritized activity for the government before the election in 2015.

Research on Fiscal space has been prepared by UNCDF in the end of 2013/beginning of 2014 but no report has been shared so far. No other activities under 1.3 have been conducted between January and June, 2014 consequently UNDP and UNCDF have agreed to put the implementation of the TDF on hold.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

SN	Organization	Annual Work plan budget	Allotted budget	Actual Delivery	Balance	Delivery % on AWP budget	Delivery % on allotted budget
			A	B	C=(A-B)		
1	UNDP	2,965,032	2,416,278	1,236,268	1,180,010	42%	51%
2	UNCDF	1,564,000	345,565	0	345,565	0%	0%
	Total	4,529,032	2,761,843	1,236,268	1,525,575	42%	51%

LESSONS LEARNT

The experiences from the pilot phase 1 on local governance mapping have been useful to improve planning and implementation of the specific activities; e.g. introducing the sensitization and consultation workshops that contribute to a better and effective support from various stakeholders; overall planning of the remaining phases, the sequencing of activities and the nature of the output. Some data collection tools used in the original methodology have been modified; e.g. the township governance self assessment State/Region Governance Self-assessment was replaced by State/Region Interim Findings Reflection Workshop; number of sample townships was reduced from 6 per state to 3 townships on average with some adjustments for the states and regions with specific characteristics like Shan, Kachin, Rakhine and Sagaing. GAD has taken a strong role in coordination with the state and region governments, which has greatly facilitated the implementation of the interviews with communities and citizens much easier.

As the mapping exercise gains familiarity, the collaboration with concerned township administrations and ministerial offices has improved. Accessibility to key informants is easier and they are gradually showing more openness in sharing of relevant official information as well as in sharing their more personal views in general.

Key informants also provided useful suggestions that also have led to improvements in conducting the exercise. This is, in fact, mainly a result of effective as well as transparent sharing of ideas and suggestions during the sensitization and consultation workshops at the state and region level.

The private research institute sub-contracted by UNDP has gained useful experience through implementation of Phase I, which has led to faster and improved implementation of Phase II and III states and regions.

For the 7 state and regions where the mapping has been completed some lessons learnt on gender are worth considering.

Activity	Total	Women	Men	Percentage
Female respondents in citizens' report card (CRC)	2592	1298	1294	50%
Participation of women in community dialogues	2201	908	1293	41%
Participation of women in interviews with frontline service providers	386	284	102	74%
Number of female respondents who has participated in community meetings	1298	486	0	37%
Number of male respondents has participated in community meetings	1294	0	743	57%

The findings of the mapping also shows important gender disparity at the decision making level to be considered for improvement. In the 3 pilot townships in Chin, where the township background studies were conducted, all department heads are men except the audit officer in Mindat who is a woman. Similarly, in the 3 townships in Mon, where the township background studies were conducted the township medical officer and planning officer was female, all others are male. Further, all township committees' members are men, and the participation of women in state and regional sensitization and consultation workshops are low, only 11 percent.

CHALLENGES

Due to the census and government holidays in April the data collection for phase II was delayed which has had some serious impact on the report writing.

The absence of a competitive market for qualified research organizations in Myanmar is a challenge for the local governance mapping which needs to be completed in a given time frame by UNDP.

The UNDP procurement requirements are a quit complicated process and small deviations from the time schedule can have huge implications on the ability to finalize the mapping in time. Alternative strategies have been developed by the mapping team to mitigate the risks.

The recruitment of qualified consultants, both locally and internationally, required to write the reports is equally a challenge, which has impact on the timeline.

Phase III states and regions include the states and regions with specific characteristics in terms of armed and communal conflicts (Kachin and Rakhine), relatively large and spread geographic areas as in Shan and self-administered areas as in Shan and Sagaing. Additional steps were required in these states and regions to coordinate with relevant stakeholders to create a receptive environment for the mapping, a process that also takes more time and might affect the delivery on time.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

In July UNDP recruited a local development and governance specialist to lead output 01. The terms of reference stipulate that 20 % of the time shall be dedicated to support GAD Nay Pyi Taw office on policy development for local governance. UNDP has also recruited a replacement for the previous international consultant operating as project coordinator and who left in June for personal reasons. The new project coordinator, Ms Mithulina Chatterjee is hired on a one-year contract starting from June.

As part of capacity development and support to policy development UNDP have organized a study tour for 12 members of union and state/region level governments. Two countries, Turkey and Sweden, will be visited in the end of September and beginning of October.

UNDP have recruited a firm to produce visualizations of the good governance principles and the local governance mapping. Those visualizations will be shared with all township administrators as well as union and state/regional government representatives to facilitate easy understanding of what good local governance means and the local governance mapping methodology.

Output 01 have provided comments on the *Local Governance Concept Note* prepared by the government (Presidents office number 6) on local governance reforms. Some of the areas proposed in the Note relates to previous work of UNDP who has expressed willingness to support e.g. pooling of the existing government funds available for local development into a township fund using a harmonized and participatory planning process for prioritization of projects. There are also areas where UNDP have relevant information/data from the mapping to support organizational development e.g. design of grievance systems at township level, and usage of citizens report cards to get feedback from citizens on government performance in service delivery.

The mapping will be finalized in December and results presented at the Local Governance Forum. However, the reports from Phase III will not be ready at this point so the work is expected to continue in 2015.

Output 01 will continue its support to policy development on decentralization and local governance in particular through the posting of the output lead in Nay Pyi Taw 20%.



A Sensitization and Consultation workshop

Group work in a Sensitization workshop



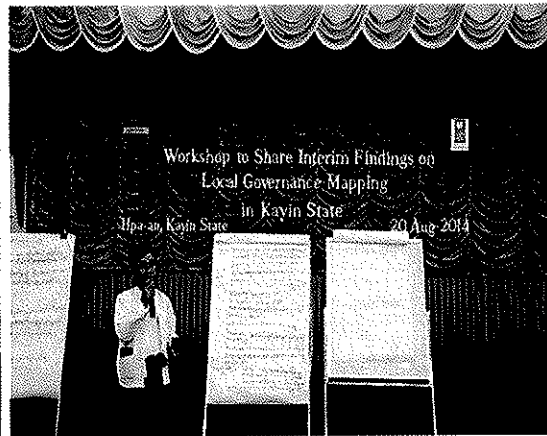
Community Report Card interview with sample households



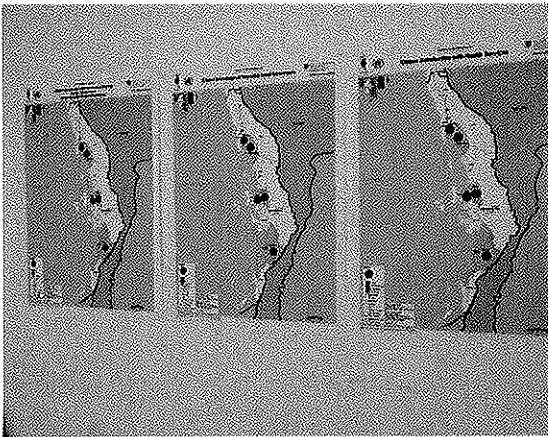
Township Background Study by international consultants



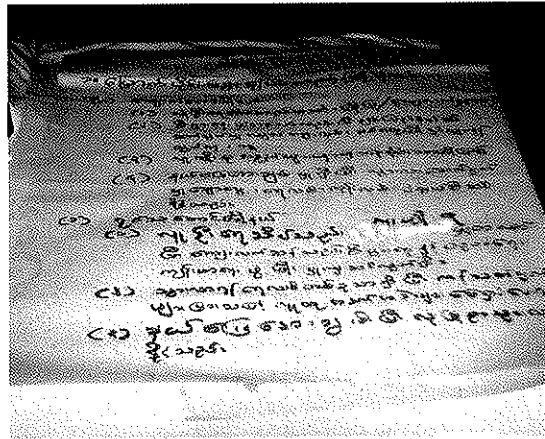
Discussion with key local stakeholders



State level interim finding workshop



Visibility of the mapping findings



Results of group discussions for sample township selection



State level interim finding workshop

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