



Empowered Lives
Resilient Nations

Strengthening the Institutional Capacity of State/Region and township administrations

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Output Board Annual Report 2014

Strengthened capacity of local governance institutions

1. CONTEXT

As part of the democratic reforms agenda, the Myanmar government is committed to further democratization and decentralization. A detailed framework, systematically outlining the thematic areas described in the Framework for Social and Economic reforms, is however yet to be developed. The government's commitment to enhanced participation in local development planning and budgeting has already manifested itself concretely in the establishment of a number of committees at the township, district, ward and village tract level to allow participation of people and of various interest groups representing important sectors of society in local development (such as the business community, farmer, workers, civic organizations). In addition, the recent election of municipal affairs committee members for the YCDC (Yangon City Development Committee) is a clear sign of a more democratic approach to representation and involvement of people in local decision-making processes, which can serve as trigger for similar approaches in other states and regions. Mandalay region has already announced that they will be holding elections for the Mandalay City Development Committee in the near future.

In 2014, a number of research publications by both national and international actors has helped to address the information gap on how governance structures at the local level look like and helped to gain understanding of challenges and possible entry points for political, fiscal, and administrative decentralization reforms. They provide further inputs for evidence-based policy-making.

UNDP's local governance mapping (LGM), which documents the perceptions of almost 5400 citizens and 800 service providers (school teachers, midwives, health center staff) at the local level with regards to governance issues and service delivery, has been extended to all states and regions in 2014 and the research has been completed. The mapping was undertaken with the aim of better understanding the required government-citizen interface for improved local governance contributes to better service delivery. The findings provide a solid base of information for further interventions to strengthen the local governance structures at the local level and the reports are to be used not only by UNDP and the Government of Myanmar, but also other development partners. No other agency has so far systematically undertaken research in all states and regions and presented it in state/region-specific reports.

The issues covered under the local governance mapping provide evidence on how people perceive the status and progress of the government's agenda on people-centered development. Findings differ between regions and states and between different townships but some general trends that are emerging show the following:

- With regards to service delivery and access, the general perception in almost all locations is that services in education and health have improved, but only to a lesser degree in water supply.
- There are positive changes in the way information from government, in particular from the township administrator, via the village tract administrator and the township committees, reaches out to people. However, challenges remains, and several respondents also stated that the government should do more to improve the way information flow from the township administration to citizens.

Almost half of the respondents mention that they do have insufficient information on government plans for new schools, health facilities and roads. This points towards opportunities for increased transparency and improvements of accountability mechanisms.

- The mapping indicates that the various township committees in the different states/regions more actively participate in the township development planning processes. Their level of participation varies widely across the selected townships, and composition, interaction and role sharing among different committees still remains a challenge in some locations. It is also very clear that the way state/region and township administrators organize interaction with the committees on a structural basis has great impact on the way they are functioning and how good practices and lessons learned are shared among peers.
- The absence of women in local governance is striking. There are very few women in leading roles within the administration and within the township committees. Out of 16700 Village Tract Administrators, only around 40 are women, and overall participation of women in meetings and consultations is lower than that of men. This may lead to a situation where the needs and priorities of women are not adequately reflected in the local development action plans.

2. KEY ACTIVITIES

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

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

2014 HIGHLIGHTS	
Local Governance mapping	<p>12 stakeholder workshops on Local Governance Mapping (LGM) conducted through joint collaboration between UNDP and the Union and State/Region GAD in the 7 Regions (Ayeyarwady, Tanintharyi, Bago, Yangon, Sagaing, Magway and Mandalay) and 5 States (Kachin, Rakhine, Shan, Kayah, Kayin).</p> <p>The mapping was undertaken with the aim of understanding local governance and service delivery in the states/regions with a focus on issues that require government-citizen interface. This included conducting and completion of township governance studies in five Phase II and six Phase III states/regions (a total of 11 states/regions). The mapping at the community level was finalized in Chin state in 4 townships that led to the completion of mapping in Phase I, followed by community level mapping in 12 more states/regions and 44 townships and 88 village tracts and wards covered in Phase II and Phase III. At the community level, about 5400 citizens/people were interviewed through citizen report cards (CRC) and 800 service providers were interviewed. In the citizen reports cards, 50% of the respondents were women.</p>

	<p>Seven Interim LGM Finding sharing workshops were held jointly by UNDP and State/Region GAD to communicate the emerging results from Regions/States covered in Phase I (Mon and Chin) and II (Ayeyarwady, Bago, Tanintharyi, Kayin and Kayah). The interim findings workshops reached out to 70-140 key stakeholders from Village/Ward administrations, Township and State/Region administrations, township committees and civil society groups and members of Parliament. Both women and men participated actively in these consultations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ State of Local Governance reports were finalized and published for 7 States/Regions. Of these reports, 7 were published in English (Mon, Chin, Bago, Kayin, Kayah, Ayeyarwady, Tanintharyi) and 3 also in Myanmar (Mon, Chin, Ayeyarwady). ○ Mapping highlights were prepared for Mon and Chin states and Ayeyarwady region summarizing the key issues for general public and other stakeholders. ○ Two fast facts sheets were prepared outlining the overall mapping methodology and sampling strategy. ○ A Local Governance page was created on UNDP Myanmar website to provide visibility to the mapping initiative and results. ○ Local Governance mapping visualization tool prepared, consisting of poster outlining innovatively the local governance mapping methodology, process, general results and outcomes. ○ State of Local Governance reports disseminated to government, civil society, UN and other development partners. ○ Results shared at interim-finding workshops in 7 States/regions, donor meeting and the local governance mapping Advisory Committee meetings.
<p>Enhanced capacities of selected state, district and township administrations and state parliaments to establish participatory and responsive planning and monitoring mechanisms</p>	<p>In January 2014, the training, initiated in 2013, on participatory local development planning and budgeting for township administrators and committee members in Mon state was completed. A total number of 70 participants [F 17; M 53] from 6 pilot townships across Mon state participated.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>A workshop for development partners (UNDP; Action-Aid; Unicef; Myanmar Institute for Integrated Development, VNG and World bank) 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.</p> <p>UNDP provided one week of expert lecturing on good local governance, decentralization, planning and inclusive service delivery for the UCSB senior management course.</p> <p>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. The guidelines were finalized in May 2014 and shared with the General Administration Department whom had minor comments that are now incorporated. The guidelines are also shared with Ministry of Presidents Office No 5 and will potentially be used in local development planning in other states and regions.</p>

	<p>Study Tour to Turkey and Sweden: A two week study tour for a high level delegation led by Deputy Minister of Home Affairs [M 9; F 3] to Turkey and Sweden was conducted in late September and beginning of October. Other participants were from General Administrations Department, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development and a representative from Mon State and Ayeyarwady Region Government respectively. The objective of the tour was to study decentralization, multilevel governance and regional economic development. Participants were able to learn from Turkey’s experience of decentralization, rapid regional economic expansion and what the challenges from implementing democratic reforms have been. Participants were also exposed to the strong local governance system in Sweden and were able to compare different governance models and different stages of reforms.</p>
<p>Township Development Fund: Strengthened capacities of public service providers (including public-private partnerships) in an inclusive, responsive and accountable manner.</p>	<p>UNCDF/UNDP were not able to mobilize enough funding from development partners to implement the TDF as originally planned in the CPAP and AWP for 2014. 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 priority activity for the government before the election in 2015.</p> <p>No activities under 1.3 have been conducted between January and June 2014. UNDP and UNCDF have agreed to put the implementation of the TDF on hold.</p>

3. RESULTS REPORTING

Output Pro-doc and AWP	Output Indicators	Annual Targets	Progress Towards Targets
<p>Strengthened institutional capacity of state/region and township administrations for area-related participatory development planning, public financial management, and public service delivery.</p>			
<p>1.1 Adequate information and management systems for planning and budgeting, identifying priorities and coordinated development, supported.</p>	<p>1 - # of states and regions for which LG mapping reports and related baselines are established [13 states and regions and at least 1 district and 1 township in each state]</p>	<p>1 Baseline through local governance mapping for the remaining states and regions established</p>	<p>Achieved: Local governance baseline was established for 13 states/regions, 48 townships and 96 Village tracts/wards on quality of governance and service delivery.</p>
	<p>2 - # usages (by government officials and MPs) of the mapping findings for local development reform (# of downloads of the baseline study, # of mentions in speeches or documents, etc)</p>	<p>2 At least 5 usages of the mapping findings in local development reform</p>	<p>Not achieved / * Due to the delay of the production of the reports they have not been published and able to download. Starting from Jan 2015 the # of downloads will be registered</p>

Output Pro-doc and AWP	Output Indicators	Annual Targets	Progress Towards Targets
1.2 Enhanced capacities of Selected State, District and Township administrations and State Parliaments to establish participatory and responsive planning, budgeting, and monitoring mechanisms.	3 – Improved public expenditure management cycle tested in targeted pilot townships	3 Guidelines/manuals developed as a basis for implementation and training in targeted areas (6 states and regions)	Not achieved / indicator revision proposed: Following the decision to put the Township Development Fund [TDF] activities implemented by UNCDF on hold, no activities were pursued.
	4 – Mechanisms and guidelines for citizens' participation and increased horizontal coordination for development planning at township level developed and tested	4 Mechanisms and guidelines for citizens participation and increased horizontal coordination for development planning at township level developed and tested in at least 12 townships in 2 states	Partially achieved: - Operational guidelines for township development support committees, ward/village tract development support committees for Mon and Chin states developed and approved by Mon state government and GAD union level but not tested. - Draft guidelines for participatory development planning developed but not tested.
1.3 Strengthened capacities of public service providers [including public-private partnerships] in an inclusive and accountable manner.	5 - # of townships (out of 12 improving their performance in delivering pro poor services and infrastructure projects based on the performance based grant system	5 Improved public expenditure management cycle tested in at least 12 townships in at least 2 states	Not achieved / indicator revision proposed: Due to decision to put the Township Development Fund [TDF] approach activities in agreement with UNCDF and output board 1 on hold, no activities were pursued.

4. KEY RESULTS

Key 2014 results include the conclusion of the data collection and preparation of 11 state and region local governance baseline reports.

- National stakeholders (General Administration Department, Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development, Health and Education Ministries, state/region and township level administration, Township committees) have information on peoples' perception on certain aspects of service delivery (including gender disaggregated data) from 7 States/regions to make better decisions/produce informed policies/improved plans for better service delivery and democratic governance at local level. Interim-finding workshops resulted in action plans by 7 States and region governments on planning, coordination challenges and information flow.
- Citizens/people have increased opportunities to engage in this process and express their perceptions. Community dialogues held in each of the selected village tracts/wards under LGM revealed divergence of views between the government service providers (village tract administrator, teachers, and health assistants) and the people (women and men) on different services rendered. This process also allowed for appreciation of each other's challenges and decisions on action plans that they can take forward to improve some of the issues.
- International Development Partners are provided with relevant baseline data to improve programming, indicator development and progress monitoring. The State of Local Governance reports have continuously been shared with Development Partners and the usage of the findings by Development Partners needs to be determined during 2015.
- UNDP is using the information emerging from the mapping for designing various programmes e.g. capacity development for female village tract administrators jointly with the government counterparts.
- A local governance baseline was established for 11 states/regions (41 townships and 82 Village tracts/wards) on quality of governance and service delivery such as people's participation in village tract/ward meetings, people's perception of change in health, education and drinking water services over 3 years, access to information for people on government plans and projects (schools, health facilities, roads) and access to grievance redressal/dispute resolution mechanisms (e.g. land issues).
- Several knowledge products such as an overall fact sheet on: Local governance mapping in Myanmar: background and mapping methodology; 7 States/regions SOLG reports published in English and 6 in Myanmar; Mapping interim findings shared with stakeholders including GAD representatives, line department representatives, MPs, Civil society groups in 7 States/regions.
- Workshops on good governance principles have been provided for Union and state/region level stakeholders (GAD, sector departments, *Hluttaw* members, and civil society organizations) in 14 states/regions.
- Innovative model of community dialogue tested and demonstrated (for direct interaction between users and service-providers) in 96 locations across 13 states/regions for prioritizing community issues and arriving at resolutions.
- Operational guidelines for township development support committees and ward/village tract development support committees have been developed in collaboration with Mon state government and GAD Union level. The guidelines are also shared with Presidents Office No 5.

5. CROSS-OUTPUT LINKAGES

The findings and data from the local governance mapping have been widely shared within UNDP to enhance the awareness of local governance structures that are relevant for implementation of other activities and interventions. The findings have been an important source of information for the UNDP team working with civil society. Efforts to work in the same target townships and states/regions has been an important strategy already from the beginning and several trainings have been jointly organized in Mon and Chin states. Strengthening of local governance requires both institutional capacity and a civil society that has capacity to understand and contribute to a good society. A well-informed and strong civil society also helps government to perform better. The local governance mapping team has also collaborated with the Access to Justice mapping team in developing and refining the mapping methodology and sharing of data and findings from the respective research areas.

Mutually reinforcing findings regarding low levels of public/official trust were revealed by both the Access to Justice Mapping and the Local Governance Mappings conducted by the local governance team. As a result, the work around dialogue skills training has been organized in Nay Pyi Taw, Mandalay and Taunggyi throughout 2014 as a joint initiative led by the social cohesion team with contributions from the rule of law team in the Democratic governance pillar.

Experts from local governance have been engaged in the trainings for Union Civil service board coordinated by colleagues in the public administration reform team under the Democratic governance pillar. The trainings provide an important arena for a consolidated approach of experts from the different areas that naturally links the work under public administration reforms at local and national level to each other.

Cross-output collaboration in Rakhine and Kachin has started with Early Recovery programme in regards to support capacity development of state, district and township administrations on area-based participatory planning.

6. PARTNERS

At the union level, UNDP works in close collaboration with the General Administration Department of the Ministry of Home Affairs and other relevant line ministries such as Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development, Ministry of Finance and Presidents Office (number 5 and 6), other UN agencies and donors, under the overall direction of its Output Board. At the state/region and township levels, UNDP collaborates with state and region government institutions (in particular the general Administrations Department and Ministry of Planning and Economic Development), township administrations, relevant technical line departments, civil society organizations, ward and village tract administrators, committee members and citizens.

Other partners are Myanmar Survey Research who conducted the local governance mapping data collection in all states and regions. Development partners providing financial support are DANIDA, the Government of Sweden and the Government of Japan.

7. BUDGET AND EXPENDITURE 2014

Output 01	2014 AWP	Budget revised	Expenditure	Delivery
UNDP	2,965,032	2,516,128	2,495,728	96%
UNCDF	1,564,000	0	0	0

8. LESSONS LEARNED/CHALLENGES AND BOTTLENECKS

The whole UN system is opening a new chapter in Myanmar, which poses serious challenges. Difficulties were experienced to recruit qualified consultants, translators, designers, and printers that could sustain the UN standards of quality during the entire process of undertaking the research and producing the LGM reports. The local governance mapping has been extremely time and resource consuming using a complex methodology where information has to be collected at different levels, from multiple target groups and partners. The pilot phase in Mon and Chin states required more than a year to produce two State of local governance reports. An important lesson learned is to keep things as simple as possible but still qualitatively good and to be more realistic in ambition and time planning.

9. LOOKING AHEAD 2015

UNDP in general, and the governance program (including output one under pillar 1) in particular, will need to manage unpredictable demands that may result from events in 2015, with peace negotiations, constitutional referendum, the general elections and possible insecurity. There is a risk that, in late 2015 or earlier, the government will be preoccupied with preparation for the general elections and will have limited time to devote to particular project related activities. To mitigate this, UNDP will need to concentrate most of its activities in the first three quarters. Moreover, it should keep some room for flexibility and have a contingency plan for potential unforeseen events. It is important to start implementing activities in full force from the beginning of 2015 and reserve the last quarter for analysis, sharing of experiences with Development Partners and other partners and policy development (that are less demanding on government time).

Whatever the outcome of the elections, strengthening of the institutional capacity at the local level will likely continue to play an important role in Myanmar's transition to democracy and further decentralization. The activities will therefore remain highly relevant. Future work and activities in 2015 will help to enhance the capacity of local governance stakeholders and support initiatives such as on stop shops that will benefit people at the local level by providing in particular regulatory services in a more efficient way. The local governance mapping provides information of citizen's perception of the quality of service delivery and governance at the local level and constitutes an important complement to institutional functional reviews of how service delivery sectors such as education, health and water deliver services to the people. To guide further direction of the reform agenda, a comprehensive dissemination strategy will be undertaken in 2015 that will provide not only government but also other partners with more information about the situation at the local level contributing to strengthen programmatic activities. Continued training interventions will be complemented by more comprehensive approaches to curriculum development in governments own training courses, in particular the general administration departments training institute (IDA) and the union civil service board (UCSB), in key areas of local governance important for township administrators and other staff operating at the township level.