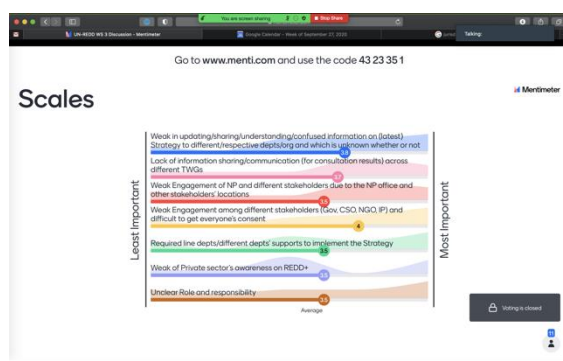


Terminal Evaluation of Myanmar UN-REDD National Programme 2016-2020

Final Report



Problem types or issues	Impact	Main causes of problem	NP actions to counteract the problem/challenge	If not effective, what will be the next steps?
Weak understanding of rights	High	Lack of information sharing/communication across different TWGs	NP actions to counteract the problem/challenge	If not effective, what will be the next steps?
Weak understanding of rights	High	Lack of information sharing/communication across different TWGs	NP actions to counteract the problem/challenge	If not effective, what will be the next steps?
Weak understanding of rights	High	Lack of information sharing/communication across different TWGs	NP actions to counteract the problem/challenge	If not effective, what will be the next steps?
Weak understanding of rights	High	Lack of information sharing/communication across different TWGs	NP actions to counteract the problem/challenge	If not effective, what will be the next steps?



Michael Richards with support from Phyto Thu
November 2020

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- The individual key informant interviewees; and
- Sarah Richards for demonstrating the '*Menti*' voting mobile phone App, which proved very useful and popular for ranking the problems or challenges in the stakeholder evaluation workshops.

Acronyms

AFOLU	Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use
CHRO	Chin Human Rights Organization
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CFNWG	Community Forestry National Working Group
CF	Community Forestry/Forest
CO	Country Office
CPA	Community Protected Area
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CTA	Chief Technical Advisor
D&D	Deforestation and forest degradation
DG	Director General
EAO	Ethnic Armed Organisation
ECD	Environmental Conservation Department
EF	Emission Factor
EM	Ethnic Minority
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FD	Forest Department
FPIC	Free, Prior and Informed Consent
FRI	Forestry Research Institute
FRL/FREL	Forest Reference Level/Forest Reference Emission Level
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GHG	Greenhouse gas
GIS	Global Information System
GoM	Government of Myanmar
GRM	Grievance Redress Mechanism
ICCA	Indigenous and Community Conserved Area
ICIMOD	International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (Nepal)
INDC	Intended Nationally Determined Contribution
IP	Indigenous People
KNU	Karen National Union
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MERN	Myanmar Environment Rehabilitation Network
MOALI	Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation
MOHA	Ministry of Home Affairs
MONREC	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation
MOPFI	Ministry of Planning, Finance and Industry
MRV	Measurement, Reporting and Verification
MSWRR	Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
NE5C	National Environmental Conservation and Climate Change Central Committee
NFI	National Forest Inventory
NFMS	National Forest Monitoring System
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NLUC	National Land Use Council
NLUP	National Land Use Policy
NP	National UN-REDD Programme
NPD	National Programme Document

NRS	National REDD+ Strategy
PAMs	Policies and Measures
PEB	Programme Executive Board
PLR	Policies, Laws and Regulations
PMU	Programme Management Unit
POINT	Promotion of Indigenous and Nature Together
RECOFTC	The Regional Community Forestry Training Center for Asia and the Pacific
REDD+	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation
ROtI	Review of Outcomes to Impacts (methodology)
RTA	Regional Technical Advisor
SEW	Stakeholder Evaluation Workshop
SIS	Safeguard Information System
SoI	Summary of Information
SLMS	Satellite Land Monitoring System
TA	Technical Assistance
TF	National REDD+ Taskforce
ToC	Theory of change
TOR	Terms of reference
TWG	Technical Working Group
TWG/DS	Technical Working Group on Drivers and Strategy
TWG/SES	Technical Working Group on Stakeholder Engagement Strategy and Safeguards
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UN-REDD	United Nations Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries
UPC	Union Peace Conference
USD	US dollar
VFV	Vacant Fallow and Virgin (Land Law)
WAVES	Weaving Leadership Gender Equality (initiative)
WOCAN	Women Organising for Change in Agriculture (NGO)

Executive Summary

The main methods used in this evaluation were key informant and stakeholder interviews, all undertaken remotely, three on-line stakeholder evaluation workshops (SEWs) each of a half day duration, a half day self-evaluation workshop by the Programme Management Unit (PMU), and documentation analysis. The four workshops were underpinned by theory of change analysis using an adaptation of the Review of Outcomes to Impacts (ROtI) method. Severe limitations to information collection were noted, e.g., poor interview quality due to connectivity problems.

An overall rating at the higher end of the Moderately Satisfactory (MS) rating (so not far below Satisfactory) was given to the Myanmar UN-REDD National Programme NP, although the quality of project implementation, agency coordination and supervision can be rated as Highly Satisfactory (HS). The overall rating was MS due to the modest progress as regards Outcomes 1 and 2 as further explained below. Management of the NP by the PMU was effective and efficient, based on strong leadership, technical competence and efficient organisational and management skills. Key factors have been the strong leadership of the NP Director, an excellent national coordinator, and the experience and continuity of the UNDP and FAO Chief Technical Advisors (CTAs); as well as being in position for the whole of the NP, the NP Director and CTAs had major roles in roadmap development. Support from the Regional Technical Advisors (RTAs) was also highly rated, with experience and continuity again being key factors.

The importance of the socio-political context, when considering the performance of the NP, cannot be over-emphasised. This includes the reality that Myanmar is still at an incipient stage in its democratic development; the 70 year civil war and a stuttering Peace Process; strong political economy and extra-sectoral drivers of deforestation and forest degradation (D&D), also driven by the insatiable commodity demand from China and India; and the problem that most intact forest is outside government control. This period has also seen additional political instability in the form of the Rakhine situation, and in the last year of the project the COVID pandemic constrained project activities, and, together with the imminent national election slowed decision-making.

The main reason for the MS rating was limited progress on Outcomes 1-2. With the modest high level political will achieved, the likelihood of effective cross-sectoral policy coordination was low. Outcome 1 (stakeholder engagement) can be rated as only MS since this component had insufficient resources to meet the scale and complexity of the challenge, and due to the modest progress on gender capacity building/mainstreaming. By contrast Outcomes 3 (safeguards readiness), 4 (technical readiness) and 5 (strategy readiness) were mainly achieved.

The fundamental challenge for almost all UN-REDD NPs is the sectoral or 'silo-based' approach to decision-making in the agricultural, forest and land use (AFOLU sector). As in many forest-dense countries the main causes of D&D in Myanmar are extra-sectoral, as well as poor governance, and therefore inter-sectoral coordination of policies and measures (PAMs) to counteract them is of paramount importance. This will not happen without high level political will; the limited progress on Outcome 2 or institutional readiness was due to the modest level of political will and support for the NP. This was reflected in the REDD+ Taskforce (TF), which, although it had strong cross-sectoral government membership, operated mainly at a technical level, partly because of the tendency of government departments to send subordinates – therefore decision/policy makers were insufficiently involved and could not easily be convinced by technical level staff who attended. As one respondent noted, the TF was seen as a Forest Department (FD)/Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation (MONREC) committee rather than an inter-institutional coordination agency. Behind this

was a reluctance to cede sectoral control. While recognising that raising high level political will is very challenging, it should have been an even greater priority from the beginning, and although the PMU tried to hold high-level meetings, it can be argued that this vital area was under-prioritised, strategised and resourced; a senior UNDP advisor¹ also felt there could have been a “Bridge-building advisor.”

As regards stakeholder engagement and capacity building, including developing a strong understanding of REDD+, the problem was partly one of scale but also one of trust. This came out strongly in the Stakeholder Evaluation Workshops (SEWs). While realising that comprehensive stakeholder engagement was impossible due to both the great diversity and number of stakeholder groups (with an estimated 135 Indigenous Peoples (IPs), 100 languages and 50,000 forest dependent communities) and continuing problems of the Peace Process, the SEWs revealed a deficiency of at least some civil society stakeholder groups as regards the level of stakeholder engagement and understanding of REDD+. They also emphasised the trust issue, and misconceptions about REDD+. While the latter was partly fuelled by anti-REDD+ propaganda, the trust problem was also due to (as mentioned by some CSO interviewees) ‘land grabbing’ policies associated with increasing Public Protected Areas. These factors meant that the stakeholder engagement component needed more resources, including possibly an EAO specialist from the start, and should not have been based on norms from other NPs, while accepting that this would still not guarantee that deep-seated issues such as the trust issue would be resolved.

Another area in which the NP has under-delivered has been in gender capacity building/mainstreaming. As a major cross-cutting priority of the UN-REDD Programme it should have been explicitly included in the Results Framework (gender only appears in the risks’ column) and properly budgeted with a full or part-time gender advisor attached to the PMU. Again there was a problem of political will - gender issues were regarded as low priority. This was reflected in the resistance of the TF to agree to gender training for TF and TWG members, and by the very weak participation of the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement (MSWRR) in TF meetings.

From the stakeholder interviews it was clear that the safeguards process (Outcome 3) has been very positive and helped raise the profile of many equity and rights-linked issues. A key achievement was that the Summary of Information (Sol) has been uploaded by the UNFCCC – few countries have achieved this. Government participation in the Safeguards Information System (SIS) was however patchy, again due to the problem of sending different or subordinate staff to a linked set of workshops. Support from CSOs/NGOs was much stronger; they were however doubtful about implementation of the safeguards based on current practices. Another concern was that the proposed institutional host for the SIS, the Central Statistical Office, has not yet been ratified.

Most CSOs/NGOs also welcomed development of the Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) Guidelines, although, following a pilot exercise in Mon State, progress stalled in 2020 with pushback by some CSOs and IPs following the attempt at on-line consultation (due to COVID restrictions) on a revised draft. It is clear that development of the FPIC Guidelines, seen by CSOs as having major potential beyond the forest sector, will take more time. As for Outcomes 4 and 5, development of the safeguards approach and SIS benefitted from sound technical assistance and coordination.

Outcome 4 (Technical readiness) was also mainly achieved, although the NFMS was not fully finalised due to the COVID-related delay in implementing the web-based geospatial platform for the NFMS (conceptualized as a module within the geospatial platform of the OneMap project of Myanmar) . Also

¹ Team Leader, Sustainable Inclusive Growth Unit, UNDP Myanmar.

opposing views between the Forest Department (FD) and the Environmental Conservation Department (ECD) on the interpretation of IPCC guidelines delayed development of the Greenhouse Gas Inventory (GHG-I) which formed part of the Second National Communication (SNC) to the UNFCCC; and COVID has prevented the planned capacity building activities to facilitate inter-institutional discussion and overcome the differences being undertaken. Again, it can be noted that issues around departmental coordination and communication (inter-departmental communications have to go through the Director-General) have complicated progress.

As regards development of the National REDD+ Strategy (NRS) (Outcome 5), there was widespread agreement that the process has been good, and that the comprehensive set of (44) PAMs represents a robust response to the drivers. But again CSO/NGO respondents lacked confidence that they will be effectively implemented (which links to the issues of political will and inter-sectoral coordination). It is disappointing that the NRS has not been ratified, again reflecting the modest political support and the COVID-related slowdown in decision-making in 2020. Another possible factor in the delay has been the desire to align targets in the NRS and the NDC.

Based on an analysis of risks and assumptions, informed by the evaluation workshops, it was possible to identify three main design gaps or shortcomings:

- Activities to influence high level political will should have been more strongly prioritised from the beginning since this is the key to the cross-sectoral policy coordination necessary to tackle extra-sectoral drivers;
- The component for communications, awareness raising and capacity building should have been significantly bigger;
- The gender component should have been explicitly included in the Results Framework, possibly as a separate Output, and resourced accordingly.

In sum the NP was partially successful in achieving its objective of developing the necessary capacity for effective REDD+ implementation. While this was mainly achieved in the areas of technical, safeguards, strategy and financing readiness - several approved, on-going or submitted sub-national REDD+ projects represent a very good exit plan – it was not achieved in the areas of institutional readiness and stakeholder engagement capacity, including the capacity to promote equitable gender outcomes (and avoid adverse ones). Although the NP objective was only partially achieved, the PMU tried very hard and competently to make the NP successful in a highly complex socio-political environment.

Recommendations

The recommendations correspond to the design gaps identified in the theory of change analysis, and which also correspond to the main readiness gaps. They are mainly directed at the lead national implementation partner (FD/MONREC) of the NP with appropriate support from the UN agencies, and more specifically the National REDD+ Coordination Committee proposed in the National REDD+ Strategy, and the on-going or pipeline national or sub-national REDD+ implementation projects. .

Recommendation for FD/MONREC supported by the UN agencies:

Development of a strategy and set of activities for influencing high level political will.

As discussed above the capacity for effective cross-sectoral government coordination depends on political will. Following development of a strategy/plan, an initial priority is to deepen the new National REDD+ Coordination Committee and REDD+ Office members in REDD+, possibly through

increased use of the REDD+ Academy course, but also considering other appropriate training materials; if possible NE5C and National Land Use Council members should also be deepened. The strategy will probably include policy briefs and high-level meetings/workshops and reaching out to the State Counsellor. In line with one of the PAMs, and as suggested by a key informant, it could include trying to get REDD+ into the Political Dialogue Framework of the Union Peace Conference (UPC) process.

Recommendation for FD/MONREC supported by the UN agencies:

Stakeholder engagement using a ‘training of trainers’ approach.

For stakeholder engagement and capacity building the ‘training of trainers’ approach is recommended. The trainers need to be very carefully selected. For civil society stakeholders, including IPs, the trainers should ideally be from CSOs/NGOs that represent them. The selected trainers would firstly be deepened through the REDD+ Academy course and/or other training materials. Language needs to be fully factored into the strategy. These activities will require continued funding of a stakeholder engagement officer in the new national REDD+ Office; the stakeholder engagement officer may need to be supported by continued engagement of the EAO engagement specialist.

Recommendation for FD/MONREC supported by the UN agencies:

Gender capacity building and mainstreaming.

As discussed above, consideration should be given to having a specific gender capacity building. Since this was not undertaken during the NP, a priority is to develop a gender empowerment/mainstreaming strategy based on a systematic baseline mapping exercise of stakeholder-related barriers or constraints to gender empowerment or mainstreaming. The strategy needs to include actions to mobilise high level engagement. There are at least two options (not mutually exclusive) for rolling out a programme of capacity building and other mainstreaming activities. One is for a full or part-time national gender advisor to be based in the REDD+ Office, supported by annual technical backstopping missions by an international NGO (probably RECOFTC or WOCAN). The international NGO would support the national gender officer in developing the baseline analysis and strategy, reviewing progress, developing an annual work plan, and participating in ‘training of trainers’ courses. A second option is for the gender budget to be used to strengthen the RECOFTC (in coordination with-- MERN) Weaving Leadership Gender Equality (WAVES) programme and adapt it to the needs of REDD+. A key criterion is which option is more likely to be effective in the challenge of capacity building male staff in the FD and other government departments since this is where the need is greatest. Another priority is to integrate some gender differentiated indicators into the M&E systems being developed in the sub-national projects.

Recommendation for the Government of Myanmar, including FD/MONREC, supported by the UN agencies:

Implementation of the institutional arrangements for REDD+ implementation, monitoring and evaluation set out in the NRS, and supported by a levy on REDD+ projects/programmes

In response to some of the institutional limitations experienced in the NP, an urgent requirement for effective REDD+ implementation is establishment of the National REDD+ Coordination Unit (NCU) and the associated monitoring and evaluation system, as set out in Sections 4.1.1 and 4.1.2 of the National REDD+ Strategy (Version 4.2). It is furthermore recommended that a modest levy or tax of 1-2% be imposed on national and subnational REDD+ programmes/projects in order to ensure the financial sustainability of the NCU, the M&E system and other institutional arrangements (probably including a National REDD+ Office), until such time as these costs can be met from Results Based Payments.

Recommendation for FD/MONREC supported by the UN agencies:

Prepare and implement capacity building of local stakeholders and support organizations on Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC)

As set out in the “Final Report on Preparation and Piloting of a Process to Ensure the Right to Free, Prior and Informed Consent is Respected and the design of a Grievance Redress Mechanism” by Howe Sustainable Pte Ltd (2019), a programme of capacity building of local stakeholders and their support organizations will be essential, in addition to a strong government commitment, for the effective implementation of FPIC. This will require development of a set of appropriate facilitation, information and communication materials, as well as a robust local communications strategy (see p.59-60 of the Howe Sustainable (2019) report).

Recommendations for the UN agencies:

The UN agencies need to exercise greater realism in recognizing practical and resource-related limitations in future project/programme design

It seems that the budget for stakeholder engagement in the Myanmar NP was based on norms from other NPs. This took insufficient account of the great number, range and complexity (including the many languages) of stakeholder groups; nor did it sufficiently factor in the challenge of dealing with a situation of very low trust between communities, especially of IPs/EMs, with government. The resources were therefore inadequate for engaging with large numbers of grassroots stakeholders as conceived in the project design. UN agencies therefore need to be more realistic in recognizing practical and resource-related limitations in future project/programme design.

Commission and undertake an economic study of the costs of deforestation and forest degradation in Myanmar

One of the ways of raising the level of political and public will for REDD+ in Myanmar can be to calculate the real cost of deforestation and forest degradation for Myanmar. A possible contributory reason for the limited national will for REDD+ is the perception that the international community is the main beneficiary of the NP, and because national benefits are under-estimated compared to the more tangible but short-term benefits of resource exploitation. As is becoming increasingly evident the degradation or loss of forest ecosystem services, including hydrological and other life-supporting services, has major impacts for human welfare and equity as well as for (sustainable) economic and livelihood activities. The initial requirement is for an experienced environmental economist to draw up terms of reference and a proposed budget for a study. It is noted that UNEP has experience of undertaking such studies.

1. Introduction

1.1. Background and purposes of the evaluation

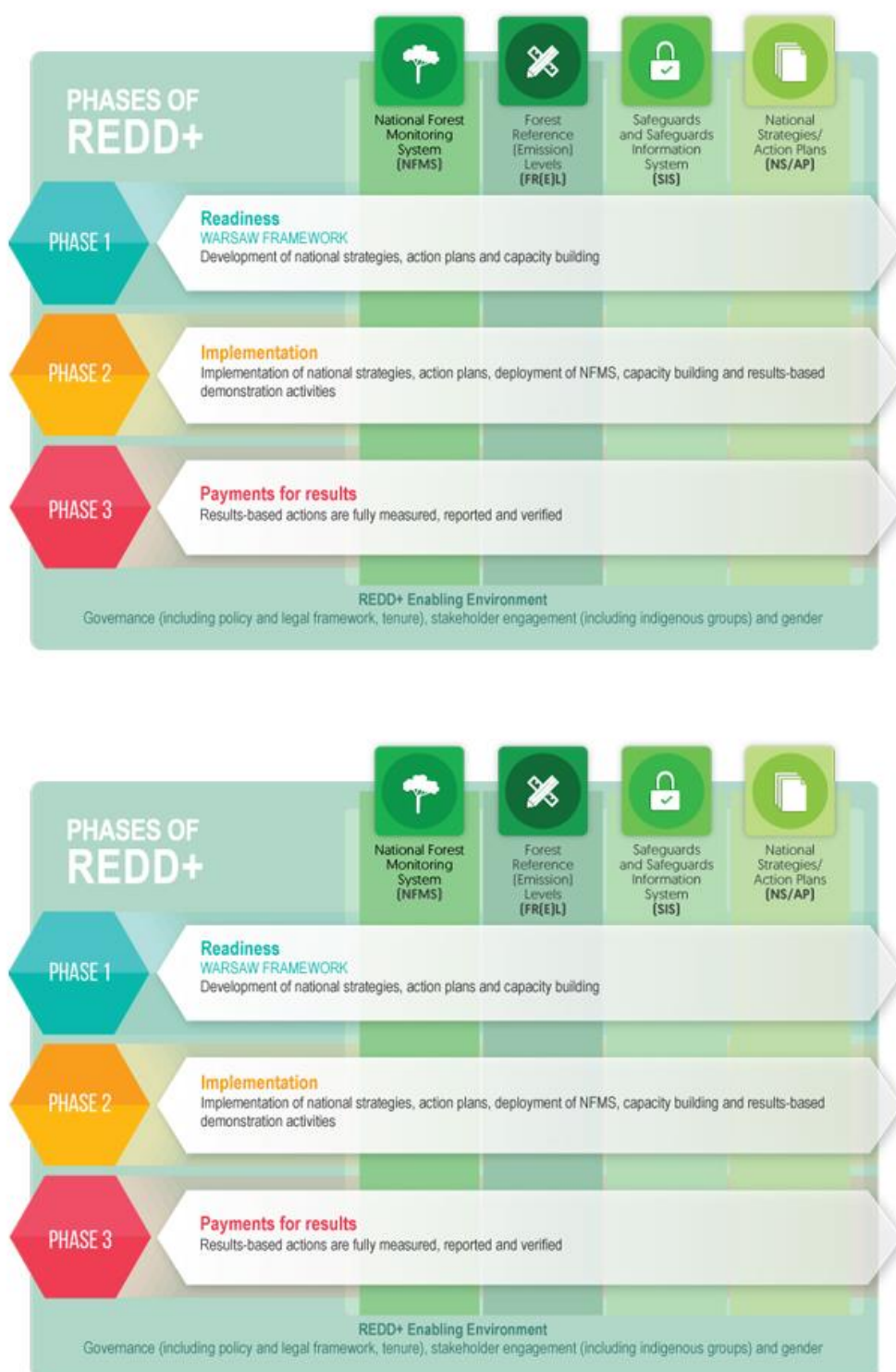
The UN-REDD Programme is the United Nations Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation (REDD+) in developing countries. It was launched in 2008 and builds on the convening role and technical expertise of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), referred to as the participating UN Organizations (UN Organisations). The UN-REDD Programme supports nationally led REDD+ processes and promotes the informed and meaningful involvement of all stakeholders, including indigenous peoples and other forest-dependent communities, in national and international REDD+ implementation. Following development of the Myanmar REDD+ Readiness Roadmap (see Section 2.2), the Myanmar UN-REDD National Programme (NP) was approved in July 2016 with a budget of US\$ 5,554,370 and a project duration of four years from 7th November 2016 to 6th November 2020.

Table 1. Profile of Myanmar UN REDD National Programme (from National Programme Document)

Project Identification		
Project Title:	UN REDD National Programme Myanmar	
Project ID:	00102606 (MPTF)	
Programme Objective		
National capacity for the implementation of REDD+ under the UNFCCC enhanced and relevant (technical, legal, social) systems developed		
Project Information		
Project Duration (month/year):	Start Date: 7 November 2016	End Date: 6 November 2020
Implementing Partner(s):	Forest Department, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation	
Participating UN Organizations	UNFAO, UNDP, UNEP	
Key Stakeholders:	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation (Forest Department, Environmental Conservation Department), Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation, Ministry of Planning, Finance and Industry, and CSOs (POINT, MERN, CHRO)	
Name of Regions/States covered:	All States and Regions across Myanmar	
Project Budget (US\$)		
Budget for Project Cycle:	\$ 5,554,370	
Donor Contribution for project		
Donor 1:	UN-REDD MPTF	

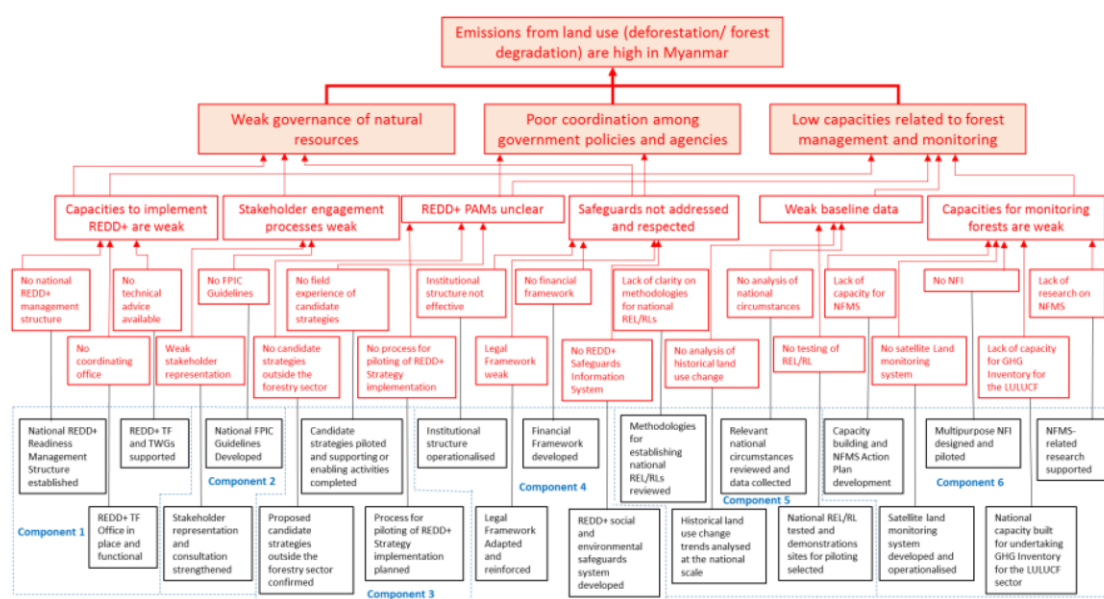
The objective of the NP, as stated in the National Programme Document (NPD), was “National capacity for the implementation of REDD+ under the UNFCCC enhanced and relevant (technical, legal, social) systems developed.” It is also important to note that in the course of the NP, the goal of the National REDD+ Strategy (NRS) was defined as being “to contribute to the achievement of a climate resilient, low carbon and sustainable development path of the country through transformational change in the land-use and forestry sector by reducing deforestation and forest degradation while enhancing livelihoods, sustainable growth and development.” More broadly the objective of the NP can be interpreted as achieving REDD+ “readiness” - the first of the three main stages of in the national REDD+ process (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. The three phases of national REDD+



The theory of change of the NP for achieving the objective, as set out in the NPD, is presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Myanmar NP theory of change in National Programme Document



The NP had five Outcomes and 11 Outputs:

- **Outcome 1: Relevant stakeholders engaged and their capacities developed**
 - Output 1.1: Strengthened stakeholder representation and consultation
 - Output 1.2: REDD+ TF, RO and TWGs supported
- **Outcome 2: National institutions have capacity to implement effective and participatory governance arrangements for REDD+**
 - Output 2.1: Institutional measures for REDD+ awareness raising and information flow defined and operational
 - Output 2.2: Legal and policy framework for REDD+ reviewed; and adapted and reinforced as necessary.
- **Outcome 3: REDD+ safeguards defined in the national context and national safeguards information system developed**
 - Output 3.1: Define REDD+ safeguards and safeguard information system (SIS) for Myanmar's context.
 - Output 3.2: Develop and implement Myanmar's safeguards information system
- **Outcome 4: Development of Myanmar's national forest monitoring system (NFMS) operational and preliminary forest RELs/RLs supported**
 - Output 4.1: Build capacity and develop national action plans on NFMS and RELs/RLs
 - Output 4.2: Develop Myanmar's Satellite Land Monitoring System and web-GIS portal.
 - Output 4.3: Design and pilot a multipurpose National Forest Inventory
- **Outcome 5: National REDD+ Strategy developed**
 - Output 5.1: REDD+ Strategy analysis

- Output 5.2: Formulation and approval of National REDD+ Strategy

The objectives of this evaluation are to:

- Provide evidence of results to meet donor and stakeholder accountability requirements;
- Assess achievement of the NP outcomes and objective, and to draw lessons that feed back into and strengthen the national REDD+ readiness and implementation process. This includes analysis of the status of REDD+ readiness in Myanmar, and identification of gaps and challenges that need to be addressed to achieve REDD+ readiness;
- Promote learning, feedback and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among participating UN Organizations and other partners. The evaluation aims to identify lessons of operational and technical relevance for future programme formulation and implementation in the country, and/or for the UN-REDD Programme as a whole.

The primary audience for the evaluation is the Government of Myanmar, the three participating UN Organizations of the UN-REDD Programme and the programme resource partners. The secondary audience for the evaluation is the UN-REDD Executive Board and national REDD+ stakeholders. The evaluation report will be made available to the public through the UN-REDD Programme website (www.un-redd.org).

1.2 Methodology

1.2.1 Introduction

The main methods used for this evaluation were a review of NP reports or documents, set of key informant/stakeholder interviews undertaken remotely using Zoom, three half-day stakeholder evaluation workshops (again using Zoom), and a half day self-evaluation workshop by the Programme Management Unit (PMU). The underlying methodological basis of the evaluation, and especially the workshops, was theory of change (TOC) analysis based on an adaptation of the Review of Outcomes to Impact (ROtI) method.

1.2.2 Documentation Review

The evaluation team reviewed many documents, including:

- The National Programme Document (NPD) and Results Framework
- Consultancy reports commissioned by the NP and other reports published on the REDD+ Myanmar website: <http://www.myanmar-redd.org/resources>
- Minutes of meetings of the National REDD+ Task Force (TF) and the Programme Executive Board (PEB)
- Annual Reports
- The Mid-Term Review Draft
- Report (November 2018)
- Key sectoral documents such as the Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan (2018)
- Other relevant publications such as a recent CIFOR report '*The context of REDD+ in Myanmar: Drivers, agents and institutions.*'¹

¹ Oo TN, Hlaing EES, Aye YY, Chan N, Maung NL, Phyo SS, Thu P, Thuy PT, Maharani C, Moeliono M, Gangga A, Dwisatrio B, Kyi MKM and San SM. 2020. *The context of REDD+ in Myanmar: Drivers, agents and institutions.* Occasional Paper 202. Bogor, Indonesia: CIFOR.

Based on a preliminary analysis of these reports, a provisional checklist of questions for the interviews was prepared (see Inception Report).

1.2.3 Key informant interviews

Interviews were held with about 30 key informants or stakeholders, mainly individually, including members of the Programme Management Unit (PMU), officers of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation (MONREC), including Forest Department (FD) – including the Director General - and the Forest Research Institute (FRI), the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation (MOALI), including the Departments of Agricultural Land Management and Statistics (DALMS) and Agricultural Planning, the Union Attorney General's Office, the Planning Department of the Ministry of Planning, Finance and Industry (MoPFI), and the Regional Technical Advisors (RTAs) of UNDP, FAO and UNEP.

NGOs and CSOs interviewed, mainly Directors, included the Myanmar Environment Rehabilitation-conservation Network (MERN), the Promotion of Indigenous and Nature Together (POINT), Chin Human Right Organization (CHRO), Myanmar Forest Association (MFA), Sone Sie Programme (linked to British Council), the Land Core Group (LCG), RECOFTC (Myanmar), Kachin State Conservation Working Group (KCWG), Women Network (under MERN), Myanmar Forest Certification Committee (MFCC), Myanmar Inter Safe Company Ltd., and Rainforest Foundation Norway. The consultant who undertook the first (main) drivers' analysis was also interviewed. The full list of interviewees is presented in Annex II.

1.2.4 Stakeholder evaluation workshops

Three stakeholder evaluation workshops¹ were held on Zoom with key stakeholders or informants of the NP as follows (participants listed in Annex II):

- Stakeholder Evaluation Workshop 1, held on 29th September 2020, focused on Outcomes 1 and 2 (especially issues around stakeholder engagement and institutional arrangement) and was attended by 17 participants, including 5 female participants;
- Stakeholder Evaluation Workshop 2, held on 30th September, focused on Outcome 3 (development of the SIS) and was attended by 11 participants, including 7 female participants;
- Stakeholder Evaluation Workshop 3, held on 1st 1st October, focused on Outcome 5 (development of the NRS) and was attended by 13 participants, including 5 female participants.

These workshops did not include PMU members due to the tendency noted in previous NP evaluations for stakeholder participants to defer to the views of PMU members. The aims of these workshops were to:

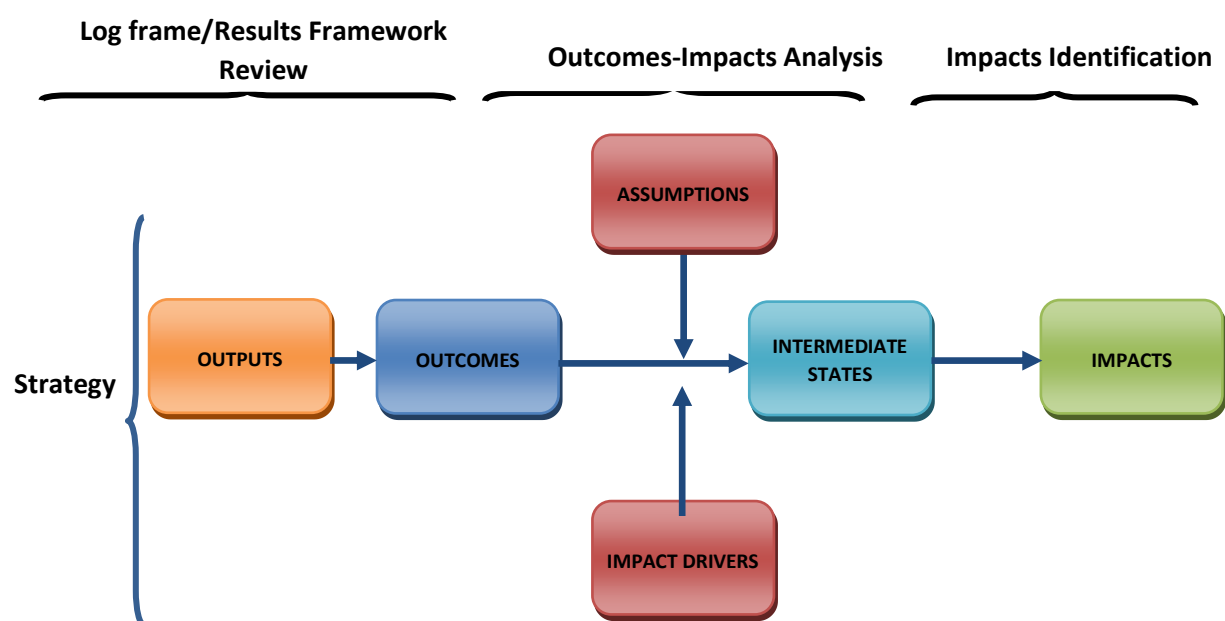
- Assess the assumptions and risks affecting the theory of change (TOC) of the NP
- Identify possible design gaps
- Identify causal factors in achievement (or not) of the NP outputs, outcomes and objective;
- Identify outstanding gaps as regards meeting the NP objective and to help generate recommendations for meeting gaps in REDD+ readiness.

The methodological basis of the workshops was theory of change (TOC) analysis, based on an adaptation of the Review of Outcomes to Impacts (ROtI) method. The essence of the ROtI method is

¹ It was decided in consultation with PMU that a separate workshop was less necessary for Outcome 4, and this would also be less useful as regards stakeholder participation.

to analyse assumptions, relationships and causal linkages between project strategies, outputs, outcomes and impacts, and especially between outcomes and impacts (see Figure 3). In view of the objectives and time frame of the NP, the method was adapted to focus on linkages between outputs.

Figure 3: Diagram of the ROtI Methodology



Source: GEF Evaluation Office. 2010. *Towards Enhancing the Impacts of Environmental Projects. The ROtI Handbook. Methodological Paper #2.* www.gefeo.org

Key steps in the workshop methodology were:

- Division of participants into breakout groups, usually of 3-4 people, using the Zoom *breakout room* facility;
- Each breakout group conducted a brainstorm on problems, issues, difficulties or challenges associated with the outcomes and outputs that were the focus of the workshop, and submitted up to eight problems for further consideration;
- Rationalization of the list of problems, issues, etc. from each breakout group into up to 16 potential priority issues or problems (usually about 8-12);
- Individual voting to rank or prioritise the problems/issues, using the www.mentimeter.com programme¹, which allowed participants to anonymously rank each issue from 1-5 in terms of the importance or seriousness of the issue/problem.² The average score served as a proxy for the perceived importance of the challenge or problem.
- For the top eight priorities a 'Problem Analysis Table' (see Annex IV) was completed, this time in plenary. This included analysis of the causes of the problems/challenges; analysis of whether and how the NP tried to mitigate each problem/challenge; the success or not of these

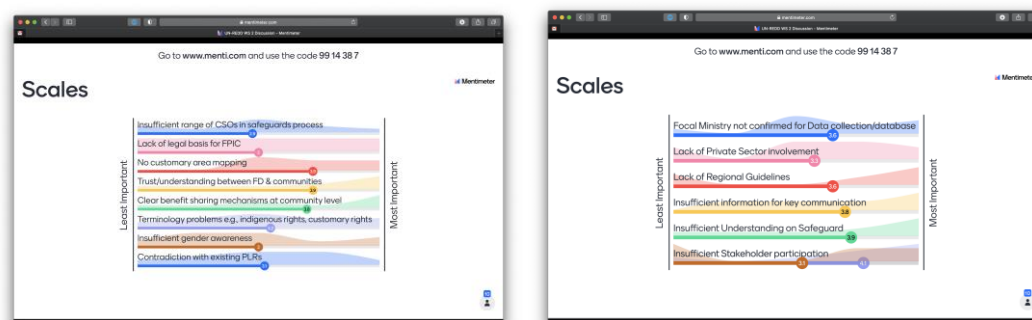
¹ Although this was not possible in the first workshop due to internet connection problems.

² Of nine people who returned a short evaluation form, six said what they most liked about the workshop was the use of *menti* voting or ranking system, and some participants said they planned to use it in other contexts.

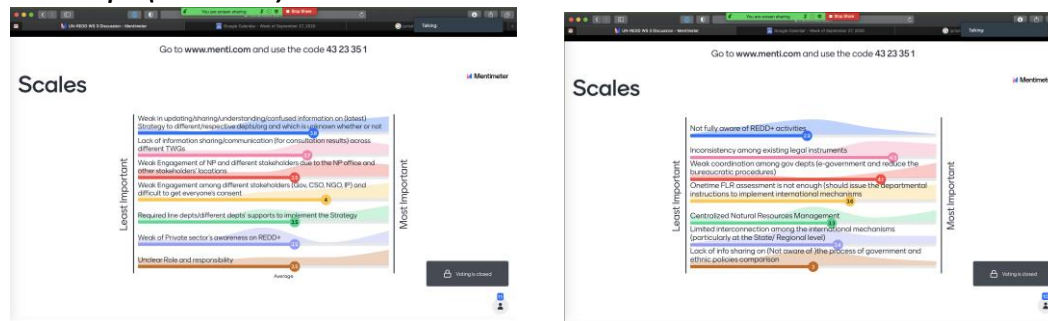
mitigation actions; whether the problems have continued to persist; and discussion of whether there were other actions the NP could or should have undertaken to tackle the problem or challenge.

Figure 4. Screenshots of *Menti* voting in Stakeholder Evaluation Workshops 2-3¹

Workshop 2 (Outcomes 1-2)



Workshop 3 (Outcome 5)



In the fourth workshop on 6th October 2020 the PMU conducted a similar analysis of the five NP outcomes, starting from the risks analysis (or 'risk log') in the National Programme Document (see Annex V). The tables generated by the workshops were then used to analyse the NPD risk assessment and project design assumptions, including assumptions in proposed risk mitigation measures. The workshop data also allowed, according to workshop participant perceptions, identification of:

- Other negative factors unforeseen in the NPD and possible design gaps;
- Causal factors in the sub-optimal achievement of outcomes (if this was the case);
- *Intermediate states*² necessary for successful outcomes;
- Readiness gaps and potential recommendations for actions to meet them.

1.2.5 Methodology and logistical constraints

This evaluation has faced some severe limitations. These mainly related to the impossibility for the international consultant to travel to Myanmar and for face-to-face meetings with stakeholders (not even possible for the national consultant). Therefore, all the interviews and stakeholder workshops were conducted remotely. This meant that it was not possible to reach the same proportion or range of stakeholder groups (and perhaps especially vulnerable stakeholder groups) or their representatives,

¹ Use of *menti* for voting was not possible in the first SEW due to connection problems.

² In the ROTI terminology, an 'intermediate state' is defined as a (missing) necessary condition or factor for achieving a successful result or outcome.

compared to evaluations of other NPs that have benefitted from being conducted face to face, including being able to take advantage of more informal meeting possibilities, such as breakfast or dinner meetings. The consultants had no previous experience of conducting a workshop on-line – it was noticeable that the second and third stakeholder evaluation workshops (SEWs) went more smoothly than the first workshop due to the steep learning curve, although this was also because they were not disrupted by internet connection problems.¹ Specific problems have included:

- Interviews were sometime cancelled or postponed at the last minute, including due to government announcements about lockdown and the need to hold urgent meetings;
- Electricity power cuts during Zoom interviews, as well as the internet going on and off, both in Myanmar and the UK;
- Internet connections problems disrupted and lengthened the first Stakeholder Evaluation Workshop, and prevented use of the *menti* voting system used in the second and third workshops;
- Poor sound quality in some interviews, even with Zoom video switched off, making it difficult to hear everything that was said; this included intermittent or erratic reception during the interviews with voices phasing in and out;
- Several respondents spoke from their homes, sometimes with children shouting in the background and with other domestic distractions;
- Participants in the SEWs also emphasised internet problems: two-thirds of nine workshop evaluation forms received said that the main problem, or what they most disliked, was the internet quality and/or that the internet must be better for future on-line work.

¹ Workshop participants were sent a short evaluation form which included scoring the workshop from 1 (Very poor) to 5 (Very good). The average score from nine returned forms was 3.67; two-thirds scored 4 (Good) and the other third scored 3 (Satisfactory). See Annex VI.

2 Context of the National Programme

2.1 National development context¹

Myanmar is a country in transition, trying to break with a difficult political and economic past marred by authoritarian rule, economic mismanagement, and multiple conflicts that persist today, driven by social exclusion and weakly regulated natural resource extraction. The country's opening, in 2011, and the first democratic elections in 2015, were key historical events. Unification of exchange rates, liberalization of product and factor markets, integration into regional markets, and modernization of economic and financial institutions and systems have resulted in rapid economic growth (over 7% in 2019) and significant improvements in social welfare, e.g., a fall in poverty from 48% in 2005 to 25% in 2017. Over recent decades, the economy has been heavily reliant on natural resources (agriculture, petroleum, mining and forestry), but is now diversifying, with garments and footwear accounting for about a fifth of exports. The growth rate has however been recently checked by COVID-19, the economic slowdown in China, the Rakhine situation, and intensification of the multiple ethnic conflicts.

In 2018 Myanmar adopted the Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan (MSDP) as a key instrument for becoming “a peaceful and prosperous” nation. The Plan has five main goals:

1. Peace, National Reconciliation, Security & Good Governance
2. Economic Stability & Strengthened Macroeconomic Management
3. Job Creation & Private Sector Led Growth
4. Human Resources & Social Development for a 21st Century Society
5. Natural Resources & the Environment for Posterity of the Nation

However, Myanmar also faces major challenges to achieving its goals, including the level of human capital, the on-going ethnic conflicts, and climate change. With its vulnerability to floods, cyclones, earthquakes, landslides and droughts, Myanmar was rated as one of the three countries most affected by climate change over 1999-2018 according to the 2020 Global Climate Risk Index.

Myanmar's Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC) under the UNFCCC presents a vision for achieving climate resilient, low-carbon, resource efficient and inclusive development as a contribution to sustainable development. This vision is also supported by the National Environmental Policy & Strategic Framework. The mitigation component of Myanmar's INDC encompasses two sectors: Forestry and Energy. For the Forestry Sector, the stated targets are to increase legally-defined “forest land”, composed of Reserved Forest (RF) and Protected Public Forest (PPF), to 30% of total national land area; and to increase Protected Areas to 10% of the national land area. These targets are in line with the 1995 Forest Policy and the 30-Year National Forestry Master Plan (2001-30).

2.2 Forest sector policy and legal context²

Myanmar has the second largest area of forest in the ASEAN region - about 29 million hectares covering about 45% of the Country; on the other hand, according to FAO (2015), between 2010 and

¹ This section draws strongly on the latest overview of Myanmar by the World Bank: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/myanmar/overview>

² This section also draws strongly on the December 2019 project document “Integrating mangroves sustainable management, restoration and conservation into REDD+ Implementation in Myanmar” (UN-REDD Mangroves TA to Myanmar). Further analysis of challenges and policy issues in the AFOLU sector is found in the World Bank (2019) *Myanmar Country Environmental Analysis. Forest Resources Sector Report*: <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/31891>

2015 Myanmar had the third highest rate of deforestation in the world. The policy agenda in the AFOLU sector is very dynamic with a number of new policies and laws, including for the expansion of community forestry and community protected areas (CPAs).

Community forestry was introduced in Myanmar through the 1995 Community Forest (CF) Instructions (CFI). The draft Forest Law allows CF boundaries to be defined based on customary tenure, which could accelerate CF allocation. The 2018 National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) recommended significantly increasing the number of Indigenous and Community Conserved Areas (ICCAs) to expand protected area coverage outside of the narrowly defined and tightly regulated community forests. In the past there was no legal provision for ICCAs and to date only one community-managed protected area has been established. However, the Conservation of Biodiversity and Protected Areas Law, passed in May 2018, included the provision: *Allow to practice community participatory protected area management that ensures a balance of social-economic sustainable development of local communities and the sustainable preservation of bio-diversity* (Article 13 (e)).

This law has the potential to accelerate the establishment of CPAs, particularly for forests outside the legally defined “Forest Land”. This would be a politically easier way to expand the area of legally protected forest than expanding legally defined “Forest Land”, which may be perceived as land grabbing by central government. Though the 1992 Forest Law allows for management of trees outside “Forest Land”, these lands are under the management of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, and Irrigation (MOALI) through the 2012 Vacant, Fallow and Virgin Lands Management Law. It is unclear how management of these forests can occur, given overlapping and potentially conflicting mandates, and limited means of coordination across ministries and sectors.

To improve land use policy coordination, the National Land Use Council (NLUC), chaired by the Vice-President, was established in January 2018. A key NLUC function is to ensure coherence between the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation (MONREC) and MOALI on land use planning and conflict, including surrounding the overlap between agriculture and the legally defined “Forest Land”. The NLUC is responsible for updating the 2012 Land Law to take into account the 2016 National Land Use Policy (NLUP) which, for example, recognizes customary land use. If this was enshrined in law it would allow villages to claim jurisdiction over Vacant, Fallow and Virgin (VfV) land that they have traditionally managed. Below the NLUC, state/region Land Use Committees will be formed. All other land use committees, including the Land Allocation and Scrutinizing Committee, have been repealed.

Thus, while the policy framework in Myanmar has been evolving rapidly towards more inclusive and participatory land management models, there is major gap as regards the institutional arrangements and capacity. The various governance bodies called for under the NLUP and other policies and laws have, in most cases, not yet been established.

2.3 Development of the National REDD+ Programme (NP)

Myanmar became a member country of the UN-REDD Programme in 2011. With support from the Government of Norway, the UN-REDD Programme, in partnership with the Regional Community Forestry Training Centre (RECOFTC), assisted the Government of Myanmar (GoM) and other stakeholders in the development of the REDD+ Readiness Roadmap between July 2012 and August 2013. Development of the Roadmap involved a series of multi-stakeholder consultations with a final roadmap validation workshop held in 2013. These consultations included one specifically with indigenous peoples (or “ethnic minorities”) in 2015. This was organised in collaboration with the CSO Promotion of Indigenous and Nature Together (POINT) and with support from the Asia Indigenous

Peoples Pact (AIPP); 33 participants from indigenous organizations and communities participated in this dialogue.

The Myanmar REDD+ Readiness Roadmap (2013) had six sections:

1. Management of REDD+ Readiness Arrangements
2. Stakeholder Consultation and Participation
3. Development and Selection of REDD+ strategies
4. Implementation Framework and Safeguards
5. Development of a National Forest Reference Emission Level and/or Forest Reference Level
6. Development of a National Forest Monitoring System

From the Roadmap, the total estimated budget for implementing the six sections was US\$ 23,320,650 (including administrative costs). This funding was to be accessed from various donors and development partners (see 2.3) as well as the government budget. Following the Roadmap preparation phase, Myanmar received Targeted Support from the UN-REDD Programme for an 18-month period from 2014 to 2016 since there was insufficient money in the Multiple Donor Trust Fund for the NP. In early 2015, Myanmar was invited by the UN-REDD Policy Board to submit an Expression of Interest for a full National REDD+ Programme (NP). The Policy Board provisionally approved the allocation of US\$ 5,554,370 to the NP. This decision became operational following confirmation of availability of funds in July 2016.

It is also important to mention that in 2015 Myanmar submitted its INDC to the UNFCCC. This placed considerable emphasis on the forest sector as a source of emission reductions, and also on REDD+ as a major instrument for implementing it. Myanmar is currently in the process of migrating from the INDC to an NDC formulation under the leadership of the Environmental Conservation Department (ECD) of MONREC.

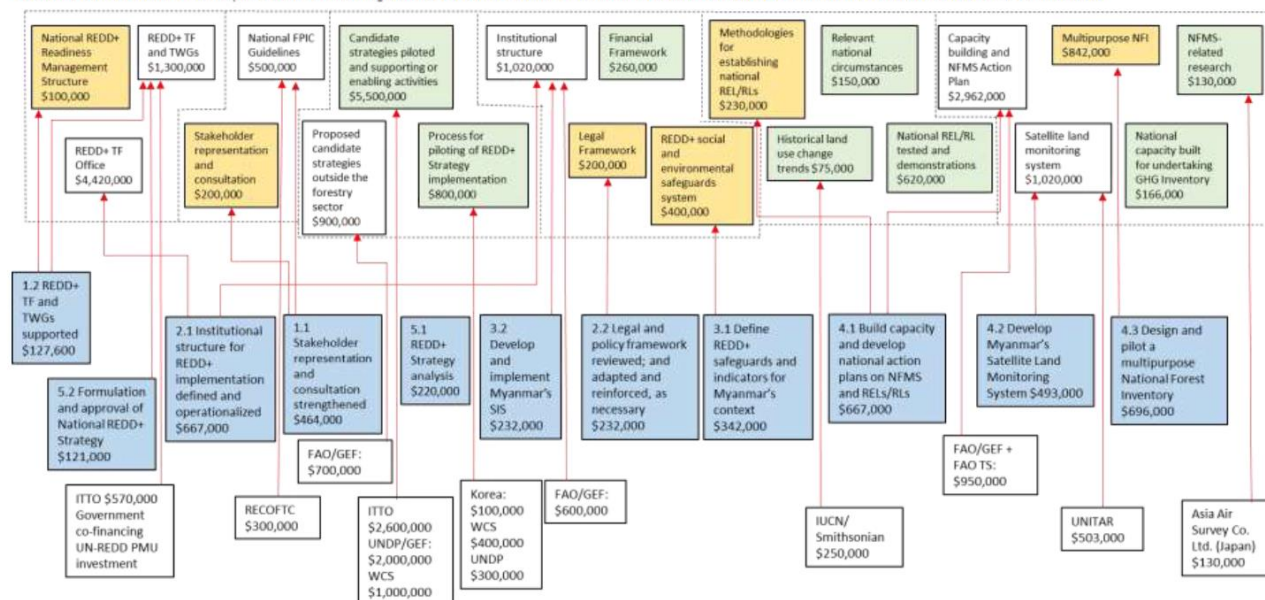
2.4 Related bilateral interventions

Figure 5 from the National Programme Document (2015) shows that a range of donors and development partners contributed to the Roadmap and subsequent work that has complemented the NP. The Roadmap was also supported through UN-REDD Targeted Support during 2014-15. With a budget of USD 244,000, this undertook work on spatial analysis (satellite image maps of land use and forest cover change) and preliminary activities in the development of the National Forest Monitoring System (NFMS) including the National Forest Inventory (NFI).

Figure 5. Contributions by development partners to development and implementation of the Roadmap

Contributions by Partners to Roadmap Sections (sections 1-6, left to right, separated by black dashed lines)

Orange boxes: UN-REDD provides almost all funding; white boxes: UN-REDD provides partial funding; green boxes: UN-REDD provides little funding



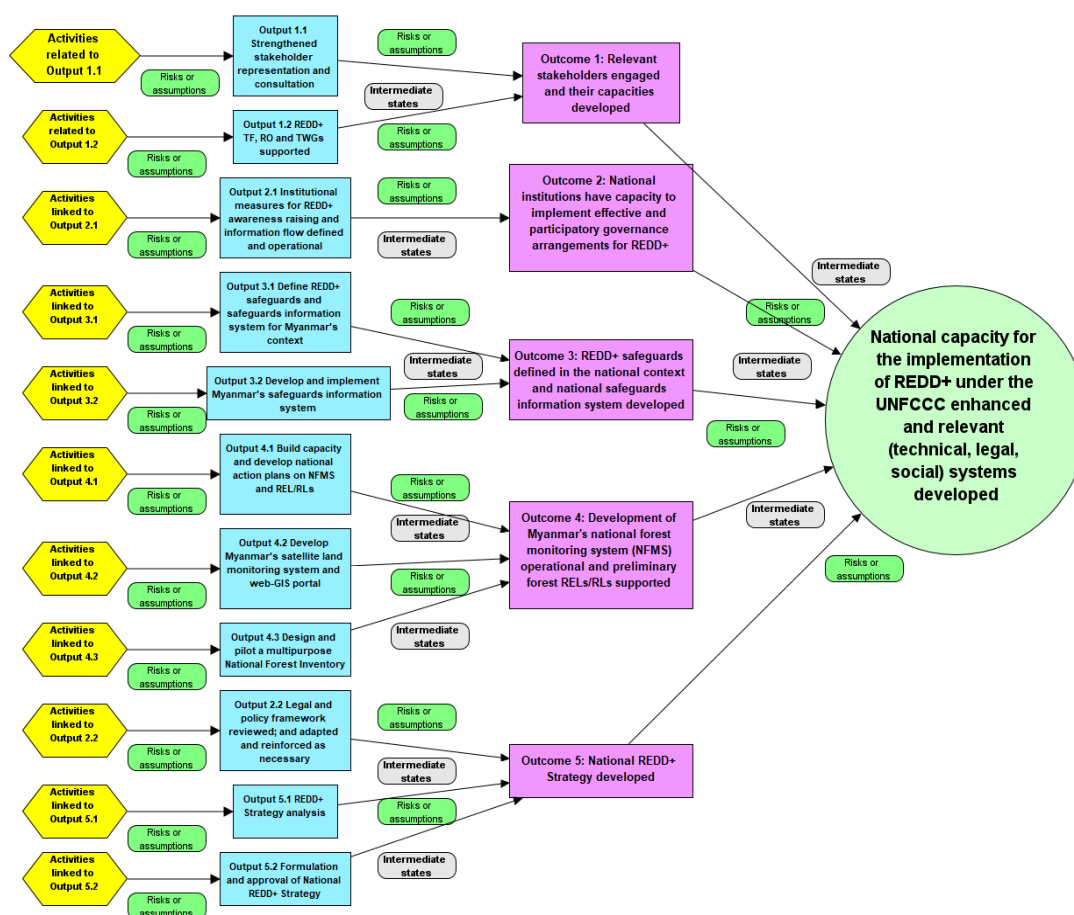
3 Concept and relevance of the National Programme

3.1 Design

3.1.1 Theory of change of the NP

The theory of change (TOC) of the NP is essentially the same as for all national UN-REDD programmes: this is that strategy, institutional, safeguards and technical readiness for REDD+ implementation will be achieved as a result of achieving the 11 outputs and five outcomes of the NP (represented diagrammatically in Figure 6).

Figure 6. Theory of change of the Myanmar NP



3.1.2 Analysis of risks and assumptions

From the risks analysis conducted for the NPD (Table 2), the Stakeholder Evaluation Workshops (SEWs) (Table 3) and the PMU self-evaluation workshop (Annex V), it was possible to identify some 'realised risks' and 'broken assumptions'. A 'realised risk' refers to a risk identified in the NPD, and for which some kind of mitigation measure (called 'counter measure/management response' in the NPD) was factored into the NP design. A 'broken assumption' can be an assumption in the project design, such as in a mitigation measure, or it can refer to a risk that was not considered at the design stage. Risks and assumptions can be within the influence or control of the NP or beyond its control, e.g., as regards the Peace Process and COVID-19.

Table 2. Review of risks identified in the NPD

<i>Description of risk (adapted from NFD description)</i>	<i>Risk* score</i>	<i>Proposed mitigation measures (adapted from NPD description)</i>	<i>Risks and assumptions (issues raised in Stakeholder Evaluation Workshops – see Table 2)</i>	<i>Possible design gaps or missed opportunities</i>	<i>Observations</i>
1. GoM commitment or high-level political support	8	Hoped that international negotiations and demo projects would increase it	Realised risk: modest high level political support (e.g., via): issues raised in SEWs: SEW1.3; SEW2.6; SEW3.1,3.4	No clear mitigation measure; earlier/stronger policy advocacy. capacity building for parliamentary support	Major risk for REDD+ implementation
2. Weak (inter-sectoral) coordination of government agencies	9	Hoped that TF would be viewed as multi-agency body, not dominated by FD/MONREC	Realised risk: NP is seen as MONREC/FD owned, issues raised in SEWs: SEW1.3; SEW2.6; SEW3.1, 3.3, 3.4	Same as for Risk #1	Major risk for REDD+ implementation
3. Weak donor coordination	2	Effective dialogue & info exchange process	Not realised – GoM has introduced measures to improve coordination		Implementation risk (as in all countries)
4. Weak commitment of some subnational authorities	4	Pilots to help develop provincial capacities	Realised risk based on SEW comments: SEW1.3; SEW3.3-3.4	Better information sharing (PMUW); more capacity building at state/region level; ‘regional guidelines’	High risk for REDD+ implementation, but State/regional REDD+ committees should help
5. Timely mobilisation of NP inputs	4	Rapid recruitment of PMU staff and technical advisors	Not realised		UN procedures could be more harmonized (PMUW)
6. Powerful stakeholders take over process	3	Empowering TF and rapid progress of NP	Not realized		Possibly a bigger risk for REDD+ implementation
7. Upstream planning processes threaten social & env. outcomes	6	Empowering TF and rapid progress to build and maintain high level ownership of REDD+; many consultation workshops	Weak mitigation measures; high implementation risk: SEW1.3; SEW2.6-2.7; SEW3.1, 3.3; 3.4		Related to Risks #1, 2 & 4. Major risk for implementation phase
8. Downstream planning processes threaten social & env. outcomes.	9	NP governance structures engage non-gov. stakeholders to promote consideration of social/env. Impacts	Weak mitigation measures, SEW concerns on participation of non-gov. stakeholders: SEW1.1-1.2; SEW2.1, 2.3, 2.4, 2.8; SEW3.2, 3.5	More subnational workshops on safeguards	Big implementation risk, but FPIC/GRM process + State/Region REDD+ Committees can mitigate
9. Env./social impacts on indigenous people or other vulnerable groups	4	NP governance structures engage vulnerable groups to promote consideration of social/env. impacts; EAO	Language/ coverage challenges; COVID-induced on-line consultation of FPIC guidelines caused some pushback + Peace Process problems; SEW concerns	Weak mitigation measures; EAO advisor from start; more info sharing, ethnic language publications/consultations; more support for CSOs to build	NPD risk score was low in view of Peace Process risks, language challenge. Major implementation risk, but FPIC/GRM can help after

		consultant recruited, increased consultation in EAO areas	on stakeholder participation: SEW1.1-1.2; SEW2.1-2.4; 2.8; SEW3.1-3.2	community trust & capacity; due to COVID more time needed for face-to-face meetings on FPIC guidelines	face to face consultations on guidelines
10. Gender equality and women's empowerment	4	Gender balance in REDD+ governance structures, dedicated gender advisor	Realised risk: Limited progress on gender capacity building/ mainstreaming. Broken assumption: Gender advisor not recruited	More funding for gender, including a budgeted gender advisor	High implementation risk since seems a low priority for GoM
11. Variable impacts on women/men, IPs/ ethnic groups, social classes	6	NP governance structures engage vulnerable groups - high consideration of social/env. impacts; EAO consultant + more consultations in EAO areas	Similar to Risk #9	Similar to Risk #9-10 – weak mitigation measure. More stakeholder capacity building through CSOs	Similar to Risks #9-10
12. Human rights of vulnerable groups	6	NP governance structures with “measures” to reduce negative human rights impacts	Similar to Risks #9, #11. “Measures” to reduce negative human rights impacts were not specified	No clear mitigation measure	Same as Risks #9-11
13. Women's/men's ability to use & protect land & other natural capital assets	2	NP governance structures engage non-gov. stakeholders to help reduce negative impacts in access to natural resources	Partially realized risk: remains high for implementation. SEW concerns on stakeholder participation (see Risk #8) and customary tenure/rights (SEW2.2)	Weak mitigation measure; Increased advocacy of National Land Law, NLUP, NLUC, etc.?	Big risk for implementation phase depending on PAMs, especially National Land Law, NLUP/NLUC
14. Potential to significantly affect land tenure or trad./cultural ownership	6	NP governance structures engage vulnerable groups to help reduce impacts on land tenure/trad. ownership	Same as for Risk #13	Weak mitigation measure; same as for Risk #13	Same as for Risk #13
15. Approved land use/infrastructure plans/policies effect on social/env. Sustainability	4	NP governance structures to strengthen coordination between central and local (provincial) levels	Similar to Risks #1, #2, #7. Weak mitigation measure (SEW2.3; SEW3.3; SEW3.4)	Same as for Risks #1-2; weak mitigation measure due to realised Risks #1 and #2	Major implementation risk, but can be mitigated by National Land Law, NLUP/NLUC, other PAMs

* The risk score in the NPD 'risk log' was estimated as follows: Probability of risk ranked 1 (low) to 5 (high); Impact of risk (if it happens) ranked 1 to 5; Risk score = Probability score X Impact score (maximum risk score = 25)

Table 3. Key problems or issues identified in the Stakeholder Evaluation Workshops (SEWs)

	<i>Problem statements phrased by participants</i>	<i>Rephrasing/interpretation of problem statement</i>	<i>Priority (1-5)</i>	<i>Linkage to NPD risks</i>	<i>Other observations</i>
Stakeholder Evaluation Workshop 1: Outcomes 1-2 (SEW1)					
1.	Weak understanding of REDD+ (policy, concept and approach)	Some stakeholders had a poor understanding of REDD+	High	8-9, 11-14	Budget constraint
2.	Difficulties on inclusion of different stakeholders' views/opinions	Some stakeholder group views were not included	High	8-9, 11-14	Partly budget, Peace Process, mistrust
3.	Mainstreaming in sectoral guidelines /policy of different departments/ organizations	REDD+ has not been prioritised or considered seriously by some line departments	High	1-2, 4, 7, 15	High level political support is critical
Stakeholder Evaluation Workshop 2: Outcome 3 (SEW2)					
1	Insufficient stakeholder participation	Weak participation by some stakeholders/ stakeholder groups	4.1	8-9, 11-14	Budget constraint, Peace Process, mistrust
2	Weak recognition of indigenous/ customary rights	Weak recognition and support for customary tenure/rights	3.9	13-14	More an implementation risk; importance of Nat. Land Law, NLUP/NLUC
3	Weak trust/understanding between government depts. & communities	Low level of trust by some stakeholder groups in government	3.9	4, 8-9, 11-14	Unidentified assumption (not in NPD risk log)
4	Insufficient understanding of safeguards	Weak understanding of safeguards by some stakeholders/groups	3.9	8-14	Partly budget constraint
5	No clear benefit sharing mechanism at community level	Lack of clarity of benefit sharing arrangements	3.8	11	Could be adding to trust problem
6	Insufficient/weak communication/ coordination among line departments	Low priority to REDD+ and cross-department coordination by some line departments	3.8	1-2, 7, 15	Same as SEW1.3
7	Focal Ministry not confirmed for communication/data collection (<i>related to SIS/Sol</i>)	Host institution for SIS not officially confirmed	3.6	Possibly 1-2	May be causing uncertainty on SIS
8	Limitations for inclusion of various stakeholders if pandemic continues	Reduced stakeholder participation in on-line consultations due to COVID	3.0	8-14	Has been problematic for FPIC Guidelines
Stakeholder Evaluation Workshop 3: Outcome 5 (SEW3)					
1	Inconsistent laws & policies do not fully support REDD+	Inconsistent laws & policies reflecting different sectoral policies	4.3	1-2, 7, 15	High level political support, cross-sector coordination vital
2	Weak engagement of different stakeholders (Gov, CSO, NGO, IP) and difficult to get all to consent	Weak engagement of some stakeholder groups	4.1	8-9, 11-14	Budget constraint, Peace Process, mistrust
3	Weak information/ comms. on latest NRS to some state depts/orgs. & across TWGs	Limited Information/ communications on NRS drafts and between TWGs	3.75	2, 4, 7	Communications issue
4	Required line department support to implement NRS (not only FD)	Low interest in REDD+ from some line departments	3.5	1-2, 4, 7, 15	Same as SEW1.3 and SEW2.6
5	Weak private sector awareness on REDD+	Weak private sector awareness and engagement	3.5	8	Weak incentive to participate – benefits unclear

Based on Tables 2 and 3, as well as key informant interviews and documentation, the situation as regards risks and assumptions of the NP (with some rewording of the way the risk or assumption was phrased in the NPD) can be summarised as follows¹:

1. Risks that have been 'realised':

- Too low a level of political support for effective cross-sectoral coordination (Risk #1);
- The TF was seen as being under the control of FD/MONREC rather than a multi-agency body (Risk #2);
- Sub-national authorities (or some of them) had considerably less commitment to REDD+ than at the central level (Risk #4);
- Limited progress on gender capacity building/mainstreaming (Risk #10).

2. REDD+ implementation risks that have not significantly fallen due to the NP:

- Adverse social/environmental impacts from upstream planning processes (Risk #7)
- Adverse social/environmental impacts from downstream activities (Risk #8)
- Adverse social/environmental impacts from already approved land use and infrastructure plans (Risk #15).

3. Risks possibly reduced by the NP, but that are still high for the implementation stage:

- Risks associated with land grabbing (Risk #13) and weak recognition and support for customary land rights (Risk #14). Realisation of these risks in the implementation stage depends critically on progress as regards the proposed National Land Law and of effective implementation of the National Land Use Policy (NLUP), the National Land Use Committee (NLUC) and the FPIC/GRM process.
- Social/equity risks (Risks #9, #11 and #12) have possibly been reduced through the NP safeguards process, although this may be a contested view judging by SEW comments.² On the one hand there was an appreciation by most respondent that the well organised safeguards process has greatly raised levels of awareness and scrutiny, but on the other hand the SEWs voiced concerns over stakeholder participation and awareness levels that imply that the main assumption in the risk mitigation measures has been only modestly upheld. It should also be noted that these risks are subject to on-going readiness activities, notably development of the FPIC Guidelines, including the GRM system.

4. Assumptions or risks missed (or not considered) by the NPD risk analysis:

- Difficulties in the Peace Process affecting the participation of IPs/EAOs (clearly this was a risk beyond the influence of the NP);
- The risk of low participation or resistance from forest dependent communities, especially IP communities, given the low level of trust in government and FD (e.g., due to loss of customary land in expansion of Public Protected Areas).

¹ Many of these risks were also picked up in the analysis in the SIS process. Recommendations on how to address them were developed, and should inform PaMs design going forward and future application of safeguards.

² Some CSOs were very doubtful about likely implementation of safeguards. A CSO respondent commented that COVID has probably made it easier for government to override social concerns. Also new laws that on paper give more protection to customary rights are yet to come into force, so that old laws that favour 'land grabbing' by government or the private sector can still be followed.

5. Risks that were impossible to predict were:

- That a global pandemic would disrupt consultation processes and stakeholder engagement in the last year of the project, including development of the FPIC Guidelines. This was clearly an ‘external risk’ to the NP.
- Differences between FD and ECD in the interpretation of IPCC guidelines concerning GHG-I calculations for the AFOLU sector as part of the process of developing the Second National Communication to the UNFCCC (in essence this was a cross-institutional coordination problem).

Based on the above analysis it is possible to identify some ‘intermediate states’ for successful REDD+ **implementation** in Myanmar, although the extent to which these are also ‘intermediate states’ for achieving the NP objective is more debateable:

- High level political support
- A successful Peace Process
- Consistent laws and regulations developed and implemented, e.g., National Land Law
- Effective operationalisation of the NLUP, the NLUC, Regional Land Use Committees, etc.
- Strong government support for the FPIC process, including GRM with an independent body
- Greatly improved level of trust between communities, especially IP communities, and the government/FD
- The end of COVID-19 restrictions

Identifiable design gaps based on the above analysis are:

- More activities to influence high level political support, including holding high level meetings, policy briefings for decision-makers, etc. These activities should have had the highest priority from the beginning of the NP, and been budgeted accordingly, since this high level political will is so critical to inter-sectoral policy coordination for tackling D&D drivers. There was a suggestion from a senior UNDP advisor for a ‘bridge building advisor’. While it is acknowledged that the PMU made various attempts to raise the political profile of REDD+, including taking the MONREC Minister to Brazil, this was a catch-up situation.
- Significantly increased resources for communications, awareness raising and stakeholder capacity building. While the impossibility of reaching all stakeholder groups in Myanmar is acknowledged, a bigger component than is normally the case for NPs was justified by the low level of trust, the challenges of engaging with EAOs with a stuttering Peace Process, and the multiplicity of stakeholder groups, especially IPs, which also implied high translation costs. A specialist EAO advisor to support the Stakeholder Engagement Advisor was possibly justified.
- Specific¹ and sufficient funding for gender capacity building/mainstreaming, including a national gender advisor (possibly part-time), and supported by an appropriately experienced NGO like WOCAN or RECOFTC.

¹ It is accepted that there are also strong arguments for the budget for gender activities, as a cross-cutting theme, to be distributed across all outcomes, but this does not seem to have proved effective for the NP. There may have been less danger of gender capacity building and mainstreaming under-performing or “falling between the cracks” if the activities (and budget) had been more explicit and visible, including in the Results Framework.

3.1.3 Causal relationships between outputs, outcomes and objective

Table 4 lists some positive and negative causal factors in the achievement of the NP outcomes and objective, based on a combination of the key informant interviews, the evaluation workshops and documentation. The number of causative factors in the ‘negative’ column reflects the challenges facing a programme that aims to change the status quo in the forest sector in a country still at a precarious stage in its democratic development and that has been in a civil war for seven decades.

Table 4. Main positive and negative causal factors for achievement of NP objective/outcomes

<i>Outcome/ readiness area</i>	<i>Causal factors in achieving good progress towards desired outcomes</i>	<i>Causal factors in slower or limited progress in achieving outcomes</i>
General causal factors affecting NP objective & outcomes	Strong PMU leadership and management Continuity of PMU staff Good quality CTAs and RTAs, including continuity Support of FD/MONREC Proximity of PMU & gov. offices from 2019 Able to learn from experience of previous NPs	Modest political support Perception of NP dominated by FD/MONREC – TF not seen as a cross-Ministry agency Language & IP diversity – high cost and difficulty of reaching all stakeholders Peace Process problems - only able to work with 7 EAOs Political uncertainty/problems, e.g., Rakhine situation, 2020 election COVID pandemic
1. Stakeholder engagement & capacity building	Effective TWG Stakeholder mapping exercise and Stakeholder Engagement Guidelines report EAO engagement specialist	Diversity of IPs/languages – budget constraint Peace process effect on IP/EAO engagement Low trust level between communities & GoM Poor selection of participants in first round of stakeholder consultation workshops COVID has reduced face to face consultation in 2020 Insufficient information flow from NP (although communications materials produced in 12 languages) Frequent government staff changes
2. Institutional arrangements and capacity	Effective PMU and TWG	Political support insufficient for inter-ministry coordination TF not seen as inter-agency body (FD/MONREC dominated) TF members sent subordinates to TF meetings Some line departments lacked dedicated person for REDD+ Slow formal communication channels
3. Safeguards process	Effective TWG Strong support of CSOs/NGOs, e.g., studied documents before meetings Good TA from UNEP Funds transferred from UNEP to UNDP – efficient	Lack of continuity of gov. & CSO participants in workshops – different people sent, often subordinates Weak government dept. support except in MONREC Gov. participants often disagreed in line with sectoral legal/policy differences, e.g., customary tenure Low priority/political will for gender COVID slowed development of FPIC Guidelines Weak private sector engagement (no incentive to participate) Host institution for SIS not ratified
4. MRV-related issues (inc. FREL, NFMS)	High quality national counterpart Effective TWG Experienced FAO CTA	Technical issues between ECD and FD delayed UNFCCC Communication, and, together with COVID, delayed GHG-I training
5. Strategy development	Effective TWG Good drivers’ analysis Extensive national & sub-national consultations	TF operated at technical, not policy level; government departments often sent subordinates Sectoral legal and policy inconsistencies, e.g., land tenure (pending National Land Law)

	Comprehensive set of PAMs developed 2018 Forest Law, 2016 NLUP	Slow implementation of NLUP and NLUC Regulations for 2018 Forest Law still under development NRS not ratified (government decision-making slowed up in 2020)
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3.1.4 Extent to which drivers for change are recognized and supported in the NP

From the analysis of the documentation and interviews, the drivers for change have been recognised and supported in the NP. For example, respondents agreed that there was a comprehensive analysis of the drivers of D&D, and that the 44 identified PAMs constituted a good response to these drivers. The good quality of the process can be attributed partly due to the extensive consultation process at both the national and sub-national level. This required some adaptive management - during the process of identifying the PAMs, the NP Director decided that more subnational consultations on the PAMs were needed. He therefore instructed the PMU to conduct 15 regional consultations on the PAMs. The NGO MERN was contracted to help do this, and local FD staff were asked for advice on who to invite to these consultations. Based on this a second draft of the PAMs was developed. At this point, however, it was realised that there had been limited participation of IP or ethnic minority stakeholders. Therefore, additional consultation workshops were organised with IP/EM participants.

Another example of responsiveness or adaptive management by the NP has been in regard to concerns raised by stakeholders about some of the PAMs. Four multiple stakeholder workshops have been held to discuss these concerns in greater detail. These generated a series of recommendations, many of which have been activated. These four workshops have been systematically documented.

3.1.5 Relevance and appropriateness of indicators

The indicators in the Results Framework were in general considered relevant and appropriate; the indicators, with the quantitative and time-bound definition of baseline and target levels, were sufficiently SMART¹. As pointed out elsewhere in this report, it was however regrettable that there were no specific gender indicators, for example, to show progress in capacity building and mainstreaming of gender issues in the NP. The only mention of gender issues in the results framework was in the risks column.

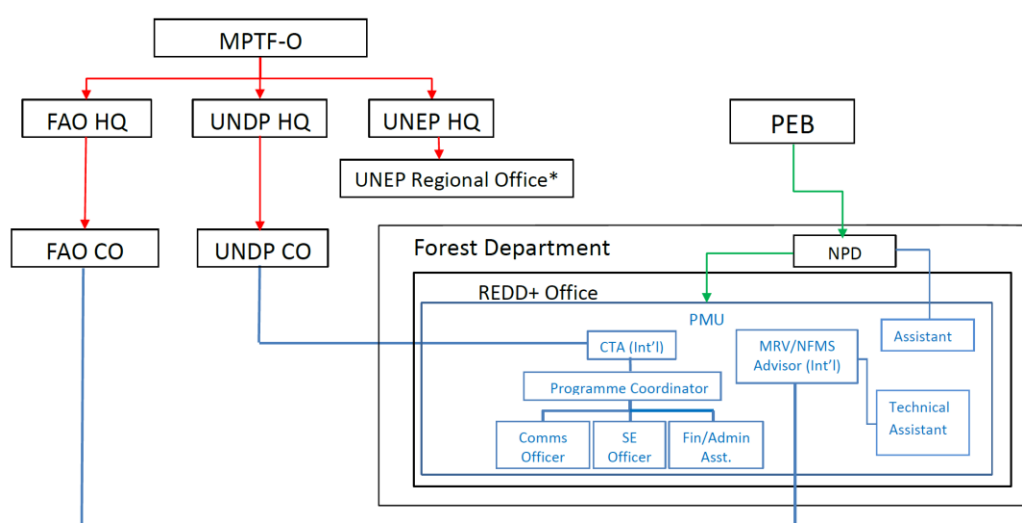
3.1.6 Institutional set-up and management arrangements

Institutional and management arrangement of the NP

Figure 7 shows the institutional and management arrangements for the NP presented in the NPD. A key difference between the implemented institutional arrangements and Figure 7 is that the NP established a national REDD+ Taskforce (TF) while the previous REDD+ Office, which supported development of the Readiness Roadmap, was discontinued. It was felt that with the Project Management Unit (PMU) and the TF, the REDD+ Office was not needed.

¹ Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound.

Figure 7. Institutional arrangements for the NP



In coordination with the lead national implementing partner and with the support of the UNDP country office (CO), the PMU has been responsible for day to day management of the NP. UNDP, as the lead UN agency, provided the CTA responsible for Outcomes 1, 2 and 5. FAO also provided a CTA for developing the MRV and NFMS systems (Outcome 4). UNEP, which operated through its Regional Office, was responsible for technical support for the development of the safeguards approach and Safeguard Information System (SIS), while FAO also provided technical support on SIS (Outcome 3). To facilitate operations, UNEP transferred part of its budget to the UNDP CO. This seems to have worked quite well.

The lead national implementing partner was the FD, MONREC. Although not shown in Figure 7, the plan was that the Permanent Secretary of MONREC would report to the National Mitigation and Adaptation Working Group of the National Environmental Conservation and Climate Change Central Committee (NE5C), which included most ministries and was chaired by the Vice Minister. The biannual meetings of the NE5C were attended by the MONREC Minister. Documents related to the Warsaw Framework on REDD+ were supposed to be referred to the Climate Mitigation and Adaptation Working Group of NE5C for review but it seems this did not happen. The NE5C was clearly a vital forum for gaining high level political support for the NP, but the NE5C had several high profile programmes such as the Green Growth and Green Economy Policy Framework initiatives, and it was unclear how much time and prioritisation the NP has received.

The PMU has made various efforts to raise the political profile of REDD+, for example, the Minister and other senior staff were taken to Brazil (in 2017 before President Bolsonaro) considering the successful REDD+ architecture in Brazil and the early positive results achieved in reducing deforestation in the Amazon would inspire decision makers in the Myanmar government. The PMU also proposed that UNDP hold a very high-level meeting, including with the State Counsellor, but the UNDP Resident Representative was preoccupied with other high-profile issues at the time (e.g., the Rakhine situation). A National REDD+ Retreat was held but was poorly attended by government staff.¹

¹ The Retreat was held at a location between Naypidaw and Yangon with the aim that government officials would stay overnight, thereby resulting in a more meaningful and substantial Retreat, rather than a 'regular'

As indicated by Figure 7, the Programme Executive Board (PEB) provided overall guidance to the NP, and especially the PMU. It been specifically responsible for approving annual work plans, budgets, and for overall monitoring and evaluation (M&E). The PEB was composed of the FD Director General (co-Chair), the UNDP Country Representative (co-Chair), the FD Permanent Secretary, the FAO Resident Representative, the UNEP RTA, the ECD DG, the directors of MERN and POINT, and representatives of the Norway Embassy and Finland Diplomatic Mission. The NP Director has been the Secretary.

Most members have attended all nine PEB meetings to date; the ECD DG and MERN director attended eight meetings, and the Finland Mission attended seven meetings. A disappointment has been that the Norwegian Embassy, representing the main REDD+ donor, attended two of the first three PEB meetings, but has not attended again. PMU members, UNDP CO staff, and UN agency RTAs also attended the meetings.

The REDD+ Task Force (TF) was created by MONREC (FD) in 2016. The main objectives of the TF, according to its TORs, were to:

- Provide guidance and oversight for all REDD+ related programmes, projects and initiatives.
- Coordinate between REDD+ programmes, projects and initiatives in order to achieve “coherent REDD+ performance, accounting and reporting to relevant national and international entities including the UNFCCC.”

The original intention was that the TF would work under the guidance of the NE5C, but this has not happened. In 2016 there were 12 Director level members of the TF:

- Deputy DG of FD, MONREC (Chair)
- Alternate National REDD+ Focal Point, FD (Secretary)
- Agricultural Planning Department, Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation (MoALI)
- Agricultural Land Management and Statistics Department (DALMS), MoALI
- Irrigation and Water Utilization Department, MoALI
- Environmental Conservation Department (ECD), MONREC
- General Administration Department (GAD), Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA)
- Planning Department, MoPFI
- Budget Department, MoPFI
- Department of Mines
- MERN
- POINT

For the second TF meeting, two more members were added:

- Department of Agriculture (DoA), MoALI
- Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA), MoPFI

A further four members were added during the course of the NP:

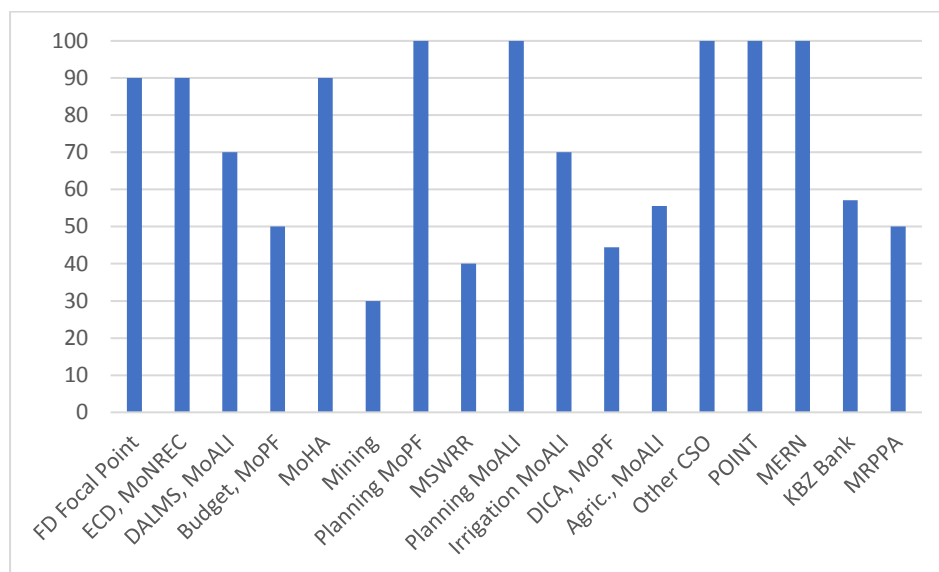
- Social Welfare Department, Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement (MSWRR)
- Another CSO member
- Myanmar Rubber Planters and Producers Association (MRPPA)

meeting as would have been the case had the event been held in Naypidaw. Unfortunately, most government officials proved unwilling to leave Naypidaw.

- KBZ Bank.

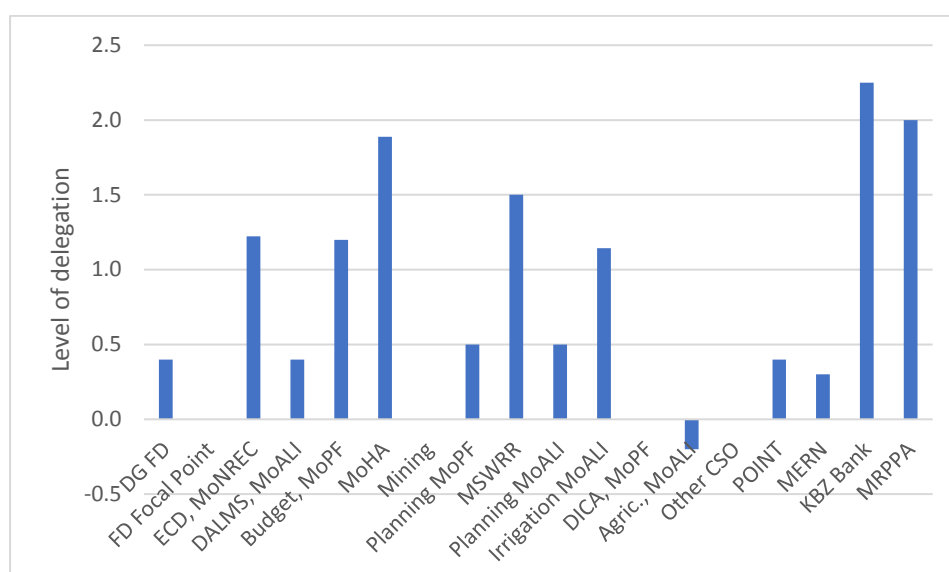
The latter two members were to represent the private sector, while the MSWRR was invited since it is responsible for women's or gender issues in Myanmar. Figure 8 shows the average attendance level of members in the 10 TF meetings held. This reveals the modest level of interest or participation outside MONREC, MOALI and the NGOs/CSOs: the MSWRR only attended two of the five meetings to which they were invited; the Department of Mines attended three of 10 meetings; and the Budget Department, DICA, DoA and the two private sector members attended about half the meetings they were invited to.

Figure 8. Average percentage attendance by Taskforce member



Secondly the average attendance (74%) of TF members disguises the problem that many members have tended to send subordinates. Figure 9 shows the average number of levels of delegation (i.e., to a lower level in the hierarchy of each institution) of each TF member. The overall average delegation level was 0.8, i.e., on average TF members sent someone who was equivalent to almost one level below the position of the nominated person. Often someone two or three levels below the named member was sent. The poorest performers on this criterion were the two private sector members, MOHA and MSWRR. Even after the TF members agreed to appoint focal points and alternates, following a recommendation of the MTR, they continued to send subordinate or junior people. Due to this, the TF has been severely constrained in its aim to influence policy.

Figure 9. Average level of delegation in TF meetings by each TF member



Although not an explicit objective, another aim of the TF was, through the proposed linkages to the NE5C, to raise the level of sectoral coordination needed to tackle the ‘extra-sectoral’ D&D drivers. Interviewed TF members revealed that the TF is seen as dominated by FD; a TF member commented that it was common to hear senior people in ministries like MoALI and MoHA say, in relation to REDD+ and deforestation, “that’s a Forest Department issue.”

Under the TF, three technical working groups (TWGs) were established under the TF:

- The Drivers and Strategy TWG (D&S TWG) facilitated by UNDP;
- The Stakeholder Engagement and Safeguards TWG (SES TWG or TWG-SES) managed by UNDP with technical assistance from UNEP and FAO;
- The Measurement, Reporting and Verification TWG (MRV TWG) managed by FAO.

The TWGs were composed of a mix of government and NGO/CSO members. There was a good inter-sectoral government presence in the first two TWGs; e.g., the Drivers and Strategy TWG included representatives from the Ministries of Agriculture, Home Affairs, Planning and Hydropower. It was widely agreed that all the TWGs have worked very well and efficiently and kept the TF well informed of progress.

The UNDP Country Office (CO), via the PMU, was responsible for overall operational management, M&E and financial reporting. Key informants commented that support from the CO has been good, with the only slightly critical comment being that the recruitment process was quite slow since the CO was short staffed. The PMU, reporting to the PEB, was responsible for the day-to-day operational and financial activities, developing quarterly and annual work plans, and reporting. The PMU has been composed of:

- NP Director (Director, Planning and Statistics Division, FD) (formerly Director of FRI)
- NP Coordinator (or PMU Manager)
- Chief Technical Advisor (UNDP)
- MRV/NFMS Chief Technical Advisor (FAO)

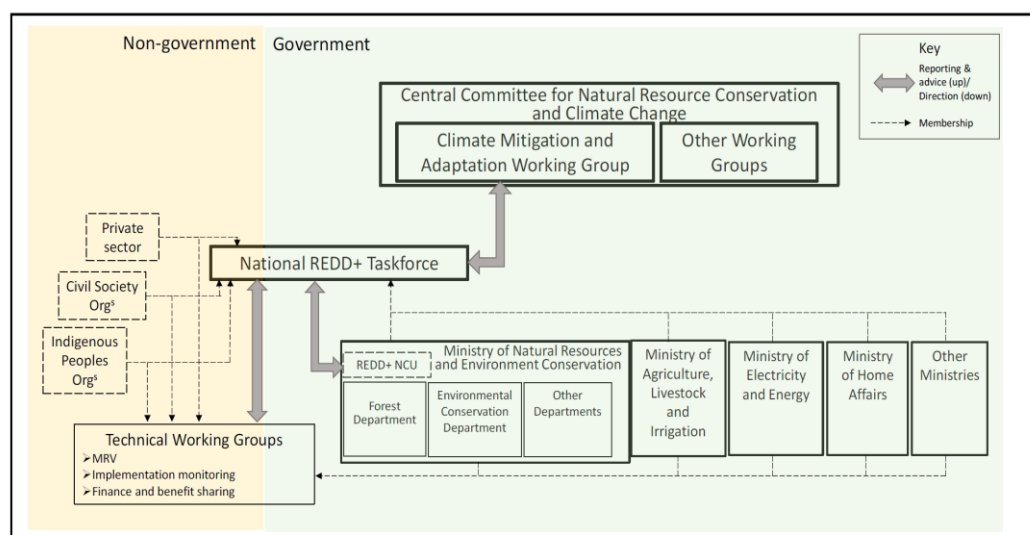
- MRV/NFMS Technical Project Assistant and Programme Specialist (FAO)
- Communications Officer
- Stakeholder Engagement Specialist
- Administrative Assistant

Again, the consensus among respondents was that the PMU has been efficient and effective in trying to achieve the NP outcomes and objective. A key factor has been the experience and continuity of the NP Director and the UNDP and FAO CTAs; apart from being in place for the whole of the NP, unlike in some other NPs in Asia, they had key roles in the readiness roadmap process. The NP has also been fortunate to have a very good PMU Coordinator.

Proposed institutional arrangements for REDD+ implementation phase

The NRS sets out a slightly different structure for the REDD+ implementation stage. The main proposed changes, shown in Figure 10, are that the TF will be replaced by the National REDD+ Coordination Committee, and that the National REDD+ Office will be re-established. The latter will be based in the MONREC Minister's Office in the hope that it will have a stronger convening power. It is also hoped that this may result in a stronger profile and relationship with the NE5C.

Figure 10. Institutional arrangements for national REDD+ implementation phase (from NRS)



3.1.7 Adequacy of the time frame

The general view was that, given the considerable lead-in time developing the readiness roadmap, as well the complementary support provided by the UN-REDD Technical Assistance (TA) programme (2020-2021,) four years was an appropriate time frame. It was noted however that the combination of the COVID-19 pandemic and the lead-up to the national election in 2020 has slowed down decision-making (e.g., ratification of the NRS and the host institution for the SIS) and several activities, e.g., the FPIC Guidelines. It could also delay some implementation phase funding.

This could be grounds for recommending a programme extension. However some PMU members and RTAs were confident that the momentum built up during the NP will be maintained through a series of projects that are either fully or partly focused on REDD+, and that are at various stages of becoming operationalised (to the extent possible given COVID-19), approval or awaiting confirmation (see Section 4.4 for more details). Additionally, in 2021 these projects will continue to be complemented by regional TA programme.

3.1.8 Adequacy of financial resources and appropriateness of budget allocation

In general, the budget has been adequate, although two areas that appear to have been under-budgeted were stakeholder engagement (and awareness raising) and gender.

- As regards stakeholder engagement, the SEWs revealed that several stakeholders felt there has been limited coverage and/or information flow from the NP. The PMU also admitted that it was a mistake to base the budget for stakeholder engagement on norms from other countries given the particular challenges of Myanmar. On the one hand it is recognised that it would be impossible to reach all potential stakeholder groups, partly since many are in EAO areas not signed up to the Peace Process, and secondly due to logistical and translation costs, and that the NP did well to produce information or communications materials in 12 languages, and hold consultations in every State and Region. It is estimated that there are about 135 IPs or 'ethnic minorities', 100 languages and 50,000 forest dependent communities in Myanmar. On the other hand it can be argued that the very low level of trust in the government and FD, and the widespread perception that REDD+ is a threat to customary land rights and livelihoods (as noted in the MTR), in addition to the coverage issue, warranted a considerably bigger stakeholder engagement component, possibly including a full-time or part-time EAO/IP engagement specialist to support the Stakeholder Engagement Officer from the start.
- As regards gender, it was noted that the management response to an MTR recommendation 29 (p.30) to hire a gender specialist was that "financial resources being limited, hiring a gender specialist is not an option unless additional resources are mobilised." It seems that there was an understanding (or misunderstanding) that a gender consultant would be contracted by the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) under its "Himalaya REDD+ Initiative" programme (the NP Director was also the Myanmar focal point for the ICIMOD project). It was also agreed following the "Inception Meeting and Gender Mainstreaming Workshop" held in August 2015 in coordination with ICIMOD that the latter would take responsibility for a gender mainstreaming needs assessment. While it can be argued that the gender consultant and capacity building activities "fell between the cracks", the failure to properly budget the gender component, including for stakeholder capacity building and other gender mainstreaming activities in line with the stated importance of gender in the Roadmap and NPD, as well as the absence of gender activities and indicators in the results framework, was a significant design gap.

3.1.9 Adequacy of methodology of implementation

As testified by key informants, the methods used in the various processes and studies were appropriate and adequate due to the high calibre of the PMU team and strong support from the RTAs. In general, the PMU has been able to effectively coordinate the work of the three UN agencies, although differences in procedures and accounting procedures presented their normal challenges (basically taking up PMU time in accounting and reporting).

3.1.10 Appropriateness of identification of stakeholders and participatory processes

The method for identifying the stakeholder participants, based on a stakeholder mapping exercise, was good, but not all stakeholders or stakeholder groups received sufficient information according to several stakeholders, including POINT. The same comments apply as in Section 3.1.8 – while it would be impossible to reach all stakeholder groups, the stakeholder engagement component should have been even more substantial due the political complexity, the low level of trust and misconceptions

about REDD+. This might have included a specialist EAO specialist advisor from the beginning, whether on a part-time or full-time basis. A list of communication products is presented in Annex VII.

3.2 Relevance

The NP is consistent with most government policies. The GoM has made several policy commitments to reduce deforestation and forest degradation, as well as to address the country's vulnerability to climate change and related disasters. The country's overarching national development and climate change strategy framework is set out in several documents including the Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan (MSDP) 2018 – 2030 (2018), the Climate Change Policy (2019), the Climate Change Strategy and the Master Plan 2016-2030.

As regards the MSDP, the NP is most relevant to the fifth of its five goals (already listed in Section 2.1): Natural Resources & the Environment for Posterity (sic) of the Nation. It is also relevant, although slightly less directly, to the first (Peace, National Reconciliation, Security & Good Governance) and fourth (Human Resources & Social Development for a 21st Century Society) goals. In practice, the extent to which national REDD+ implementation will contribute to the more social and governance related goals of the MSDP will depend how effectively the Cancun Safeguards and the FPIC, including the GRM, are implemented, in addition to other key related policy and legal instruments such as the NLUP, the NLUC, the 2018 Forest Law, the Peace Process, etc.

With the same caveats, the emphasis on safeguards around rights-based issues and FPIC makes the NP very relevant to government policies on poverty reduction. It can also be noted that several of the PAMs, if properly implemented, would have positive effects on governance, poverty reduction, gender equity, etc., for example, PAMs promoting community forestry and CPAs, implementation of the NLUP and other measures to support customary land rights, gender equitable land use planning, improved transparency, etc. Myanmar's Intended Nationally Determined Contribution INDC (2015) under the Paris Agreement prioritizes reducing emissions from the forestry and energy (including fuelwood use) sectors through implementation of existing sectoral policies and strategies. It can be considered that the NP has provided a significant boost to the Land Use Change and Forestry (LUCF) component of the INDC and has provided a sound basis for discussing appropriate measures and targets. This has been due to new data available from the FREL and NFMS which allowed quantification of emission reductions/enhancement of removal projections from the AFOLU sector with conditional and unconditional targets by 2030 with an overall goal for the AFOLU sector of achieving net zero carbon emissions by about 2045. The relevance of the NP to a revised and ratified NDC would be greater to the extent that CPAs are explicitly included in the controversial (for civil society, IPs, etc) INDC goal of 30% of the national land area comprising Reserved Forest and Protected Public Forest.

The INDC also highlights the need to consider an anticipated increase in GHG emissions from agriculture and other sectors, and for continued adaptation efforts by implementing the country's National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA. Actions related to these specific focus areas are further described and implemented through the Climate-Smart Agriculture Strategy (2015).

Myanmar's United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for 2018-2022 has four priority areas – People, Prosperity, Peace and Planet. The NP is most obviously relevant to the "Planet" priority: this is that "All people in Myanmar, especially those affected by and vulnerable to climate and disaster risks, are more resilient to those risks with efficient environmental governance and sustainable use of natural resources." It also has the potential to contribute positively to the other three priority areas, again depending on whether there is robust implementation of the REDD+

safeguards and FPIC (including the GRM), in addition to the NLUP and other vital cross-sectoral policies mentioned above.

Finally, the NP is very relevant to several of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goal (SDG)s, most directly to SDG 13 (Climate Action) and SDG 15 (Life on Land). It is also relevant, although slightly more indirectly, to SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions), SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) and SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation)

4 Results and contribution to stated objectives

4.1 Outputs and outcomes

Based on the key informant interviews and the evaluation workshops, an assessment of how effectively the outcomes and outputs have been achieved is presented in Table 5. In sum, Outcomes 3, 4 and 5 were mainly achieved, while Outcomes 1 and 2 were only partly achieved. The main reasons for partial achievement of these Outcomes was the limited progress on achieving high-level political will for REDD+ which is more or less a pre-condition for cross-sectoral coordination, the need for more work on stakeholder engagement and capacity building (a strong conclusion from the SEWs), and limited progress on gender capacity-building/mainstreaming, partly due to insufficient resources but also since this was seen as a low priority by government. Therefore, while technical, safeguards, strategy and financing readiness were well advanced, institutional readiness lags behind and is currently inadequate for effective REDD+ implementation.

Table 5. Achievement of outputs and outcomes with some causal factors

<i>Outcomes and outputs</i>	<i>Assessment of achievement</i>	<i>Main causal factors (see also Table 4)</i>
Outcome 1. Relevant stakeholders engaged and their capacities developed	Partly achieved – capacity of many stakeholder groups raised, some good dialogue with EAOs, but issues of coverage, limited interest outside MONREC; weak on gender – not mainstreamed.	PMU did its best within budget and political will constraints; TF not seen as an inter-agency body; low level of trust; Peace Process issues; gender was a low priority for GoM; COVID has restricted consultations in 2020
1.1: Strengthened stakeholder representation and consultation	Partly achieved – extensive consultations in all States/Regions, info materials in 12 languages, but impossible to reach all areas/groups. Trust & Peace Process issues also meant bigger budget was needed. For IPs and CSOs the NP has provided vital political space for participation in policy discussions, strong interest in FPIC Guidelines	Problem of EAOs not signed to Peace Process; great diversity/no. of stakeholders, especially IPs; budgetary limitations. COVID has delayed consultation of FPIC Guidelines drafts
1.2: REDD+ TF, RO and TWGs supported	Partly achieved - TF functioned at technical, but not at policy level; PMU and TWGs were hard working and effective; RO was not needed due to PMU & TF;	Experience and continuity of PMU, RTAs, good PMU leadership. But political will & silo-based policymaking have constrained TF; non-MONREC depts sent subordinates; MSWRR & private sector were not interested
Outcome 2: National institutions have capacity to implement effective and participatory governance arrangements for REDD+	Not achieved – capacity of FD/MONREC has increased, but inter-sectoral coordination remains weak, gender mainstreaming has not advanced	Insufficient political will for inter-sectoral coordination; gender is a low priority for GoM
2.1: Institutional measures for REDD+ awareness raising and information flow defined and operational	Partly achieved. Good quality of information, although awareness raising needs, number/diversity of stakeholder groups were beyond capacity of NP	Logistical difficulty of reaching all stakeholders, Peace Process and trust issues
2.2: Legal and policy framework for REDD+	Partly or not achieved: PLR gaps analysis undertaken, and target of filling 75% gaps almost achieved, 2016	Political economy interests, COVID and national election have slowed down or halted progress; may be insufficient

<i>Outcomes and outputs</i>	<i>Assessment of achievement</i>	<i>Main causal factors (see also Table 4)</i>
reviewed; and adapted and reinforced as necessary	NLUP, 2018 Forest Law, Common Land Law proposed, but little progress on institutions and regulations needed for application	political will for necessary institutions and regulations
Outcome 3: REDD+ safeguards defined in the national context and national SIS developed	Mainly achieved – national safeguards clarified, SIS designed & in process of being operationalised 1 st Sol uploaded on UNFCCC, but host institution for SIS not confirmed	Safeguards and SIS process well organised and supported by UNEP & FAO, strong participation by CSOs and some government depts, but others less supportive, often sending subordinates; delays due to COVID
3.1: Define REDD+ safeguards and safeguard information system for Myanmar's context	Achieved –national contextualisation of safeguards through National Safeguards Clarification	Good CSO participation, technical assistance, etc.
3.2: Develop and implement Myanmar's safeguards information system	Mainly achieved – Same as Outcome 3	Same as Outcome 3
Outcome 4: Development of Myanmar's national forest monitoring system (NFMS) operational and preliminary forest RELs/RLs supported	Mainly achieved – national forest inventory (NFI) design and piloting completed, satellite-based land monitoring system upgraded, and FRL developed	Good national counterpart, technical assistance, experienced CTA, etc.
4.1: Build capacity and develop national action plans on NFMS and RELs/RLs	Mainly achieved, although capacity building of ECD still needed	Same as Outcome 4; high staff turnover means capacity building needs to be semi-continuous
4.2: Develop Myanmar's Satellite Land Monitoring System (SLMS) and web-GIS portal.	95% achieved: SLMS fully achieved; Geoportal: NF developed NFMS module to be hosted by OneMap Geoportal (since broader scope) –was ready for public launch in April	Good national counterpart, technical assistance, etc. GeoPortal launch by OneMap has been delayed by COVID
4.3: Design and pilot a multipurpose National Forest Inventory	Fully achieved NFI design finalised and piloted in several forest types, Field methodology and data analysis methods developed, ready for full-scale implementation (via Finland project)	Very good national counterparts and disposition to learn and improve, including abandoning entrenched misconceptions about large area forest inventories,
Outcome 5: National REDD+ Strategy developed	Mainly achieved – good process and strong set of PAMs, but draft NRS not yet ratified by GoM	COVID has slowed decision-making
5.1: REDD+ Strategy analysis	Achieved	Good stakeholder participation and technical assistance
5.2: Formulation and approval of National REDD+ Strategy	Partly achieved – Draft 4.2 has been widely consulted, but is pending government approval	Same as Outcome 5

As regards the criterion of efficiency, there was no obvious area where significant opportunities for reducing the cost of outputs and activities could be identified, and in most areas the level of efficiency of using the available resources (financial/human) can be considered as acceptable. This was due primarily to effective and efficient management by the PMU and having a strong NP Director. The Direct Implementation Modality (DIM) used by UNDP and FAO, due to the national political context, was quite efficient – almost certainly more efficient than in most NPs in which the National Implementation Modality (NIM) has been used, which means having to work with the normal national

bureaucracy issues. While no major problems as regards financial management, disbursement and procurement were reported, it was however noted that at the beginning of the NP administrative procedures through the UNDP Country Office (CO) were quite slow; this was because of some relatively inexperienced administrative staff and a shortage of CO staff in relation to the number of UNDP projects.

There has been some delay in activities, but the causes of these delays have been mainly beyond the control of the NP. The most obvious cause of delayed activities in the last year of the project has been COVID-19. A second cause of delayed activities and decision-making has been the formal process of inter-departmental and inter-ministry communication; all communications have had to be approved by the responsible Director General. UNDP has sometimes used a “direct communication” mode although at the disapproval of GoM. The problem of inter-departmental communications can be viewed as part of a wider problem of poor and slow inter government department/ministerial coordination that has undoubtedly negatively impacted both effectiveness and efficiency.

One obvious cause of inefficiency particular to Myanmar has been the separation of the political and commercial/social capitals. While having the UN agencies together with the government in Naypyidaw has clearly facilitated the relationship of the NP with government, it has complicated and increased the costs of the relationship with CSOs or NGOs which are mainly based in Yangon. This was not just a question of time and cost – the NP has clearly had a significant carbon footprint caused by the possibly thousands of flights that would not have been necessary had all the main stakeholders been in the same city as used to be the case before 2012.

4.2 Gender issues

As already discussed in Sections 3.1 and 4.1, achievement of gender objectives, especially gender mainstreaming has been disappointing. To some extent this has been due to a possible misunderstanding with ICIMOD which resulted in the hiring of a gender consultant “falling through the cracks.” But there have been two others, and more important, causes of the weak gender component.

Firstly, work on gender, including hiring a gender specialist, was not specifically budgeted into the NP - the responsibility for gender was only written into the Stakeholder Engagement Officer’s ToRs, and any budget for gender was wrapped in the overall Output 1.1 budget. Gender is not mentioned in the NPD except in the risks’ column. This was surprising in view of the importance given to it by the UN-REDD Policy Board and the NPD.

Secondly it is clear from TF meeting attendance, minutes and informant interviews that gender was considered a low priority. Although the PMU tried to promote gender issues on many occasions, these efforts were rebuffed. This included the TF deciding against gender training for TF and TWG members. When the Department of Social Welfare of MSWRR was invited to participate as a TF member, it only sent a representative to two of five TF meetings; in the second meeting the representative was three levels below the appointed person. Several CSO informants commented on the gender problems in FD – although there are many female staff in FD, almost all leadership positions are filled by men. In sum FD was seen as very male dominated, and there was clearly a great need for, but resistance to, gender training/capacity building.

It was noted that work on gender issues has been spread out over the three stages of REDD+ readiness in Myanmar. During the Roadmap preparation stage (2012-2103) a consultant from the NGO Women

Organising for Change in Agriculture (WOCAN) was contracted to provide advice on gender issues (although a record or report from this assignment was not located); further consideration of gender issues took place during the Targeted Support stage (2014-2016).

In spite of the constraints, the PMU has been able to push through some progress on gender issues:

- Introduction of a checklist for women's participation (this was 'below the radar' of the TF)
- A significant increase in the gender balance in NP consultations and workshops, and in the TWGs, etc. In the first two years, the average ratio of female participants/members was about 20%, compared to over 40% in 2019.
- Gender issues were prominently included in the document "Guidelines for Stakeholder Engagement in Policies and Programmes for Sustainable Forest Management and REDD+" developed by the Safeguards TWG, as well in the National Safeguards Approach documents.
- The indicators proposed for the SIS included gender disaggregated data.
- The PAMs include several gender-sensitive or focused measures:
 - Establish gender-responsive Forestry and Agricultural/ Agroforestry Extension services in rural and hill areas;
 - Establish participatory and gender equitable land use planning approaches at region/state district and township level;
 - Provide low interest rate credit mechanisms and incentives, which are accessible to both women and men, to facilitate investment and technology transfer for forestry and agriculture; and
 - Promote farmers and growers' associations, including equitably for women and men, in order to facilitate cooperative market access.
- At the 5th TF Meeting in September 2018, an "Initial Briefing on Promoting Women's Active Involvement in REDD+ in Myanmar" was presented; the brief report included an overview of gender dynamics and women's involvement in Myanmar's forest sector, efforts undertaken to integrate gender in REDD+, and suggestions for strengthening the role of women in REDD+.
- Gender issues were included in the 2018 Competency Needs Assessment.
- Gender disaggregated data was collected on participation in consultations and other events, and for the annual stakeholder surveys undertaken to assess progress of the NP. In the 2019 stakeholder survey there were 25 women of 64 respondents (36%).
- The UN-REDD mangroves project, which is already on-going, is seen by the UN agencies as a good opportunity to raise the profile and intensity of gender-focused actions. A gender study in coastal zone management has already been undertaken.

While the above list of activities shows that significant efforts were made to progress gender issues both before and during the NP, the problem was that, without a gender advisor, a specific gender capacity needs assessment, a specific budget for capacity building, gender-related indicators in the results framework, and perhaps above all the political will for gender mainstreaming, the overall effect was of a piecemeal set of activities that did not add up to the needed comprehensive programmatic response.

Another initiative, independent of UN-REDD, that should contribute to the slow process of gender capacity building in Myanmar is the RECOFTC-led Weaving Leadership Gender Equality (WAVES) initiative: <https://www.recoftc.org/waves-weaving-leadership-gender-equality>. RECOFTC, with support from MERN, is working on a guide for forest-related organizations in Myanmar, although this is mainly oriented towards NGOs/CSOs – the greater need for gender capacity building is in government, especially FD.

4.3 Other cross-cutting issues

As regards other key UN-REDD cross-cutting issues, e.g., rights, IPs, poverty reduction, sustainable livelihoods, etc., it can be said that the NP has had a generally positive impact, most obviously through the SIS process, the stakeholder engagement guidelines and mapping process, development and field testing of national FPIC guidelines, the efforts made by the PMU to engage with EAOs, policy level support for implementation of the 2016 NLUP and associated institutions, identification of a robust set of PAMs with the potential for positive social, governance and equity impacts, etc. CSOs and NGOs, including some representing IPs, have in general strongly appreciated the political space provided by the NP, and for many it has been a first opportunity to engage with government on critical policy and governance issues. This can be considered as particularly important given that the FLEGT-VPA process, which in other countries like Vietnam and LAO PDR has provided significant policy level opportunities for civil society, has stalled in Myanmar.

On the other hand it is only at the implementation stage that more tangible positive effects will be observable, and many if not most interviewed CSOs/NGOs remained doubtful about effective implementation of the Cancun safeguards and FPIC in Myanmar, not to mention implementation of the NLUP, operationalisation of the NLUC, etc. While it is difficult to be definitive, it seems possible that through processes such as the SIS, the FPIC Guidelines and definition of the GRM, the level of trust between civil society and government may have slightly improved. On the other hand, it was clear that civil society remains rather distrustful of government, perhaps especially of the FD given the past issues around public protected areas at the expense of customary land rights.

4.4 Capacity development

The NP has undertaken a systematic analysis of capacity building needs, both through a capacity needs assessment during the Roadmap development phase, and through the “Competency Framework” report in 2018. This provided a good basis for capacity development. From the interview and evaluation workshops, it was however possible to identify several areas in which more capacity building was needed:

- High level decision-makers, parliamentarians, etc. This should have been a greater priority from the beginning. The PMU Evaluation Workshop suggested there could have been greater use of the REDD+ Academy course, which would have resulted in a deeper understanding of REDD+, although it is unclear if senior staff would have allocated sufficient time to attend it.
- Increased capacity building of State/Region FD staff, as well as technical level staff in other departments and ministries like MOALI; again, greater use of the REDD+ Academy course could have ensured a stronger understanding of REDD+
- Capacity building of government departments, especially FD, on gender issues;
- Capacity building of government departments in a wide range of data processing and analysis (this remains weak according to key informant interviews)
- Capacity building of ECD in various areas including GHG accounting (this was delayed by various factors, including differences in approaches between ECD and FD).

One of the constraints, particularly as regards capacity building on MRV related issues, is that many trained staff leave to do PhDs or other higher degrees overseas, for example, FAO noted there were only two staff left with training in the Open Source software. Therefore MRV-related training (at least) needs to be an on-going process built into the sub-national REDD+ projects. Another key constraint was that FD was short staffed – according to World Bank (2019) there were about 8,000 staff in post

and 7,400 vacancies. Other capacity building needs identified by the PMU for the implementation phase were capacity building of:

- The proposed REDD+ Office
- The proposed REDD+ National Coordination Committee
- The Central Statistics Office, or other nominated institution, in management of the SIS
- Government departments tasked with the management of REDD+ finance, including international results-based payments, and benefit sharing¹

In sum it can be concluded that there are still several readiness gaps as regards national and stakeholder capacity to implement REDD+.

As part of its efforts to raise stakeholder capacity, the NP has produced a number of knowledge products, including:

- Guidelines for Stakeholder Engagement in Policies and Programmes for Sustainable Forest Management and REDD+
- Policy Brief: REDD+ in the Context of Myanmar
- Misconceptions About REDD+
- The Road from Bali to Paris: Collection of COP decisions on REDD+
- Information Notes:
 - REDD+ National Strategies / Action Plans
 - Civil Society and Indigenous Peoples Organizations' Role in REDD+
 - Cancun Safeguards, SIS and Summary of Information

These are of very high quality and are very well written and presented, including high quality photographs and figures. Some of them are clearly of considerable value beyond Myanmar; they were mainly written in 2016 so it is possible some of them may be in need of updating (e.g., reflecting more recent UNFCCC guidance or decisions). With the quite high level of English in most of the products, they seem to be more oriented to higher or technical level stakeholders rather than local stakeholders or their representatives. The international consultant also noted from the NP website (<http://www.myanmar-redd.org/resources>) that 11 very attractive posters have been produced in Burmese, and which it is assumed are accessible to a range of stakeholders.

4.5 Sustainability

The sustainability of the NP, or of the national REDD+ process, is mainly a function of the level of institutional, technical and financial capacity achieved at the end of the NP, and whether this seems to provide a strong basis for the implementation stage. On one level sustainability, in the sense of moving into REDD+ implementation following the NP, is strong. This is because of the strong NP exit strategy, or in other words financing readiness. Several national REDD+ processes in Asia have lost momentum following the NP due partly to the lack of follow-on finance. In the case of Myanmar, the

¹ Explaining benefit sharing (which is subject to some current confusion or at least lack of clarity) could be very challenging, especially for CSOs/NGOs that are anti-market, e.g., CHRO. This will need great care - it may have been wise not to attempt to do this during the NP, although the cost is a continuing lack of clarity. The strategy around benefit sharing, including the possible role of cash payments (as opposed to broader in-kind or, ideally, policy/regulatory incentives) will need very careful discussion with all parties.

foresight and energy of the CTA and RTAs has resulted in three major approved or on-going project proposals with another major proposal in the pipeline:

- “Integrating mangroves sustainable management, restoration and conservation into REDD+ Implementation in Myanmar” (UN-REDD Technical Assistance project funded by NICFI)
- “Climate-resilient Agriculture, Forestry and Land-use in the Chindwin River Basin” (FAO funded by Green Climate Fund), approved in the GCF project pipeline (the full proposal package was due for completion about February 2021).
- “Addressing Forest Crime through Improved Governance in the Lower Mekong Region” (UN-REDD Programme funded by NICFI)
- GCF REDD+ Simplified Approval Process (SAP) concept note with a focus on sustainable biomass production was in the process of submission to the GCF Secretariat.
- National Forest Inventory, National Forest Monitoring Information System with a Human Rights Based Approach (NFI-NFMIS-HRBA project) in process of implementation by the FD with technical support from FAO (2020 – 2025/26)

These projects will be complemented in 2021 by regional technical assistance from the UN-REDD Technical Assistance (TA) programme, also funded by Norway. The TA programme is likely to cover benefit sharing and forest degradation accounting among other components. Without these projects and the TA, it seems doubtful whether a national REDD+ programme would have continued in view of the modest level of government ownership and political will.

Technical capacity and sustainability also seemed quite strong, as shown by the capacity of the MRV TWG which it is assumed will continue in some form, and with the caveat about the need for a continuous training process due to the flow of staff going overseas for training (on the other hand as some of them return this should strengthen national capacity and sustainability). It should also be noted that it is planned to develop sub-national FREL/FRLs for the mangrove and “Chindwin” projects, which will mean funding continuity for continued capacity development.

Institutional capacity was the weakest aspect of sustainability. The problems of inter-institutional coordination and political will are already sufficiently covered in other sections of this report. It is to be hoped that the proposed REDD+ Coordination Committee can achieve higher level support, but it will require a very pro-active approach to reach senior policy makers/institutions in the NE5C, the National Land Council, and also ideally the State Counsellor. It will also need a genuine willingness of FD/MONREC to allow other Ministries/departments to have a stronger role in the national REDD+ programme. As regards the financial sustainability of the proposed REDD+ Coordination Committee and REDD+ Office, an idea of the PMU is a modest levy (e.g., 2%) on donor-funded REDD+ projects or programmes.

4.6 Impact

Impacts refer mainly to mid- to long-term social and environmental effects, for example, reduced deforestation, improved ecosystem services, poverty reduction, and improved gender equity. Such impacts will only be observable in the REDD+ implementation phase. The main point of relevance of the NP to the question of sustainability is whether it has resulted in a sufficiently strong basis such that positive social and environmental impacts can be expected in the implementation stage. At this point in time it is not possible to answer this question definitively due to the partial achievement of the NP objective – in particular it can be noted that significantly more work and progress is needed in

the areas of stakeholder engagement, gender mainstreaming and government institutional readiness, especially cross-sectoral policy coordination.

5 Implementation

5.1 Budget and Expenditure

In Myanmar both UNDP and FAO have used the Direct Implementation Modality (DIM) rather than the National Implementation Modality (NIM) that UNDP has used in most countries. This was due to the political complexity of Myanmar. No major problems as regards financial management were reported, except that, at least initially, financial and procurement procedures through the UNDP CO were quite slow; this was because of some relatively inexperienced administrative staff and the shortage of CO staff in relation to the number of UNDP projects.

There have been no budget revisions. Quarterly financial progress reports have been prepared showing expenditure on the activities disaggregated according to the responsible government line agency and participating UN agency. As shown by Table 6, at November 2020 there was an unspent balance of about US\$ 17,968. It is expected that this will be fully expended by the end of the project.

5.2 Programme Management

Programme management issues, including the performance of the PMU, the REDD+ Taskforce and the Technical Working Groups, have been covered in Section 3.1.6. As already stated, programme management has been of a high standard due to the quality, continuity and experience of the personnel and strong leadership by the NP Director. The PMU maintained an Excel file as a ‘living document’, in which progress towards each target of every indicator was recorded (and progress was regularly reported to the PEB, especially if targets were not met) – see Annex IX.

Coordination between the three UN agencies has also been satisfactory. As in all NPs, the different accounting modalities of the UN agencies have slightly impacted efficient financial management and reporting. A good example of collaboration between the three agencies has been in the efficient implementation of Outcome 3 (development of the safeguards approach). More specifically, since UNEP did not have a country office, it transferred its Outcome 3 budget for meetings, workshops and consultations to the PMU/UNDP CO, resulting in timely disbursement and implementation.

5.3 Technical Backstopping and use of UN agency “normative tools”

Technical backstopping of the NP has been provided by Regional Technical Advisors (RTAs) based in Bangkok (UNDP and FAO) and Colombo (UNEP). The quality of technical assistance has been very good according to the interviews. The RTAs and CTAs have also facilitated a range of so-called “normative tools”, mainly in the form of software and guidelines developed by the UN agencies to support global REDD+ efforts. The comprehensive analysis provided by the PMU, CTAs and RTAs is presented in Annex VIII. From this it is clear that the UN normative tools contributed significantly to effective and efficient implementation of the NP.

Table 6. Expenditure and unspent balance by Outcome at November 2020 (US dollars)

<i>NP Outcomes</i>	<i>NP Budget US \$</i>	<i>Budget by agency</i>			<i>Expenditures by November 2020</i>			<i>Balance at November 2020</i>		
		<i>UNDP</i>	<i>FAO</i>	<i>UNEP</i>	<i>UNDP</i>	<i>FAO</i>	<i>UNEP</i>	<i>UNDP</i>	<i>FAO</i>	<i>UNEP</i>
Outcome 1: Relevant stakeholders have the capacities to support implementation of REDD+	567,935	567,935			567149			786		
Outcome 2 National institutions have capacity to implement effective and participatory governance arrangements for REDD+	878,120	878,120			875362			2758		
Outcome 3 REDD+ safeguards can be effectively applied and information on safeguards reported to UNFCCC	525,560	226,760	69,305	226,800	225311	66,420	224,658	1449	2,885	2,142
Outcome 4: Myanmar's national forest monitoring system (NFMS) operational and preliminary forest RELs/RLs submitted	1,856,000		1,987,947		-	1,979,880		-	8,067	
Outcome 5: National REDD+ Strategy under implementation	384,792	166,992	27,947	60,600	167990	27,947	60,600	-297	-	-
Programme management	978,593	978,593			981122			998		
Sub-Total	5,191,000	2,818,400	2,085,200	287,400	2816934	2,074,247	285,258	3698	10,952	2,142
7% GMS	363,370	197,288	145,964	20,118	195767	145,197	19,968	259	767	150
Total budget/expenditure/balance	5,554,370	3,015,688	2,231,164	307,518	3012700	2,219,444	305,226	3,957	11,719	2,292

5.4 Government participation

Due mainly to the strong leadership of the NP Director the participation of FD and MONREC can be considered as quite strong compared with some other NPs. The problem was that government support and ownership was very weak outside MONREC, especially among high level decision-makers, and therefore the prospects for inter-sectoral coordination in REDD+ implementation was modest. Several constraints to effective government participation were identified:

- Sector or silo-based policy making; e.g., it was reported that when PMU proposed an increased role for the Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA) this was resisted by MONREC.
- The slow formal (hierarchical) communication process restricted inter-departmental and Ministry coordination. For example, a discussion (except on a very informal level) between FD and the ECD required the permission of the FD DG. A recourse was “direct communication” from UNDP, but this was disliked by government.
- CSOs in particular commented that FD had some rather traditional attitudes, including as regards protected or reserve forests and gender. Such attitudes were not conducive to improving trust, e.g., protected forest establishment is associated with land grabbing.
- Government departments often sent subordinate staff to the TF, safeguards/SIS workshops and other meetings, although it was noted that some subordinate staff participated strongly, and there was good government participation in the Sol working group. It was also noted that in the TWG for Drivers and Strategy there was a stronger and more informed attendance from CSOs/NGOs than from government departments. In particular weak government participation in the TF detracted from the NP achieving more policy influence.
- Government departments were generally not responsive to communications from the PMU; the latter usually had to pro-actively follow-up in order to get an answer or decision.
- It was difficult to get data from government departments, and the data obtained was often of poor quality or inaccurate compared to other (science-based) sources. It was commented that a possible reason for being slow or reluctant to release data was embarrassment about its quality.
- It was felt by UNDP (but less so by FAO) that the government position on targets in the NP and in the NDC revealed a lack of “enhanced ambition” as called for by the UNFCCC. UNDP was concerned that this could affect implementation funding.

In sum it can be concluded that government participation and ownership has been insufficient for effective NP implementation.

6 Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1 Conclusions

It is concluded that the NP has been partially successful in achieving its objective of developing the necessary capacity for effective REDD+ implementation: the assessment of this evaluation is a performance rating of Moderately Satisfactory (MS). It was considered that NP performance, taking into account the very difficult context (see below), was at the higher end of the MS rating level, and therefore not far below a Satisfactory (S) rating. While readiness has been mainly achieved in technical, safeguards, strategy and financing readiness (the various approved or on-going sub-national REDD+ projects represent a very good exit plan), it has not been achieved in the areas of institutional readiness and government stakeholder engagement capacity. The main reason for the MS rating was limited progress on Outcomes 1-2. With the modest high level political will achieved, the likelihood of effective cross-sectoral policy coordination was low. Outcome 1 (stakeholder engagement) had insufficient resources to meet the scale and complexity of the challenge, and there has been modest progress as regards gender capacity building or mainstreaming.

Although the NP objective has been only partially achieved, the PMU and Forest Department as lead national implementing partner have tried very hard to make the NP successful. Management of the NP by the PMU has been effective and efficient, based on strong leadership, technical competence and excellent organisational and management skills.

This partial achievement, reflected in the ratings in Table 7, has been in a very difficult context – a country that is still at an incipient and delicate stage in its democratic development, where there has been a civil war for 70 years, and in which most intact forest is not under government control. Additionally, this period has seen additional political instability in the form of the Rohingya crisis, and the last year of the project the COVID pandemic. This has constrained project activities, in particular slowing down development of the FPIC Guidelines (due to the need for extensive and face-to-face consultations on the revised/draft guidelines). With COVID and the November 2020 national election, decision-making has also slowed down so that neither the NRS or the institutional host for the SIS have been confirmed.

There were however three areas in which, with hindsight, project design and implementation should have been stronger. The fundamental challenge for almost all NPs is the sectoral or ‘silo-based’ approach to decision-making in the AFOLU sector, often linked to strong political economy interests. As in most countries the main causes of D&D in Myanmar are extra-sectoral, and therefore the inter-sectoral coordination of policies and measures to counteract them is of paramount importance. This will not happen without high level political will. The problem of modest political will was reflected in the REDD+ Taskforce, which operated mainly at a technical level. While the PAMs look very good on paper, stakeholders were not confident they will be effectively implemented. Although the NP made various attempts to hold high-level meetings, raising the political profile of REDD+ at the highest possible level should have been an even greater priority from the start. A senior UNDP advisor felt that a “Bridge-building advisor” was needed.

The second area was stakeholder engagement and capacity building, including development of a sound understanding of REDD+. While it is realised that comprehensive stakeholder engagement would be almost impossible in Myanmar due both to the great diversity and number of stakeholder groups (with an estimated 135 IPs, 100 languages and 50,000 forest dependent communities) and the continuing problems of the Peace Process, the SEWs made it clear that there is still a widespread deficiency in stakeholder engagement and understanding of REDD+, including by many EAOs/IPs and state/region line departments. It is understood that the budget for stakeholder engagement was

based on norms from other NPs. This component needed more resources, including possibly an EAO specialist from the beginning to support the Stakeholder Engagement officer, due to the low level of trust of communities with government and the complex political and civil situation, especially as regards the EAOs, as well as due to the number and diversity of stakeholder groups.

The third area in which the NP has come up short has been in gender capacity building/mainstreaming. As a major cross-cutting priority of the UN-REDD Programme it should have been properly included in the Results Framework and budgeted with a full or part-time gender advisor attached to the PMU.

Table 7. Performance rating table¹⁷

<i>Criteria</i>		<i>Comments</i>
Agency Coordination and implementation: Highly Satisfactory (HS), Satisfactory (S) Moderately Satisfactory (MS), Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU), Unsatisfactory (U), Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)		
Overall Quality of Project Implementation	(rate 6 pt. scale)	HS
<i>Agency coordination</i>	(rate 6 pt. scale)	HS
<i>Project Supervision</i>	(rate 6 pt. scale)	HS
Outcomes: Highly Satisfactory (HS), Satisfactory (S) Moderately Satisfactory (MS), Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU), Unsatisfactory (U), Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)		
Overall Quality of Project Outcomes	(rate 6 pt. scale)	MS
<i>Relevance:</i> relevant (R) or not relevant (NR)	(rate 2pt. scale)	R
<i>Effectiveness</i>	(rate 6 pt. scale)	MS
<i>Efficiency</i>	(rate 6 pt. scale)	MS
Sustainability: Likely (L); Moderately Likely (ML); Moderately Unlikely (MU); Unlikely (U).		
Overall likelihood of Sustainability:	(rate 4pt. scale)	ML
<i>Financial resources</i>	(rate 4pt. scale)	ML
<i>Socio-economic</i>	(rate 4pt. scale)	ML
<i>Institutional framework and governance</i>	(rate 4pt. scale)	MU
<i>Environmental</i>	(rate 4pt. scale)	L
Impact: Significant (S), Minimal (M), Negligible (N): N/A. Impact will only be when REDD+ implementation		
Environmental Status Improvement	(rate 3 pt. scale)	
Environmental Stress Reduction	(rate 3 pt. scale)	

¹⁷ Scoring of ratings:

Ratings for Outcomes, Effectiveness, Efficiency, project implementation: 6: Highly Satisfactory (HS): no shortcomings 5: Satisfactory (S): minor shortcomings 4: Moderately Satisfactory (MS) 3. Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU): significant shortcomings 2. Unsatisfactory (U): major problems 1. Highly Unsatisfactory (HU): severe problems	Sustainability ratings: 4. Likely (L): negligible risks to sustainability 3. Moderately Likely (ML): moderate risks 2. Moderately Unlikely (MU): significant risks 1. Unlikely (U): severe risks	Relevance ratings: 2. Relevant I 1. Not relevant (NR) Impact Ratings: 3. Significant (S) 2. Minimal (M) 1. Negligible (N)
Additional ratings where relevant: Not Applicable (N/A) ; Unable to Assess (U/A)		

Progress towards stress/status change	(rate 3 pt. scale)	
Overall Programme Results	(rate 6 pt. scale)	MS

6.2 Recommendations

The recommendations correspond to the design gaps identified in the theory of change analysis, and which also correspond to the main readiness gaps. They are mainly directed at the lead national implementation partner (FD/MONREC) of the NP with appropriate support from the UN agencies, and more specifically the National REDD+ Coordination Committee proposed in the National REDD+ Strategy, and the on-going or pipeline national or sub-national REDD+ implementation projects. .

Recommendation for FD/MONREC supported by the UN agencies:

Development of a strategy and set of activities for influencing high level political will.

As discussed above the capacity for effective cross-sectoral government coordination depends on political will. Following development of a strategy/plan, an initial priority is to deepen the new National REDD+ Coordination Committee and REDD+ Office members in REDD+, possibly through increased use of the REDD+ Academy course, but also considering other appropriate training materials; if possible NE5C and National Land Use Council members should also be deepened. The strategy will probably include policy briefs and high-level meetings/workshops and reaching out to the State Counsellor. In line with one of the PAMs, and as suggested by a key informant, it could include trying to get REDD+ into the Political Dialogue Framework of the Union Peace Conference (UPC) process.

Recommendation for FD/MONREC supported by the UN agencies:

Stakeholder engagement using a ‘training of trainers’ approach.

For stakeholder engagement and capacity building the ‘training of trainers’ approach is recommended. The trainers need to be very carefully selected. For civil society stakeholders, including IPs, the trainers should ideally be from CSOs/NGOs that represent them. The selected trainers would firstly be deepened through the REDD+ Academy course and/or other training materials. Language needs to be fully factored into the strategy. These activities will require continued funding of a stakeholder engagement officer in the new national REDD+ Office; the stakeholder engagement officer may need to be supported by continued engagement of the EAO engagement specialist.

Recommendation for FD/MONREC supported by the UN agencies:

Gender capacity building and mainstreaming.

As discussed above, consideration should be given to having a specific gender capacity building. Since this was not undertaken during the NP, a priority is to develop a gender empowerment/mainstreaming strategy based on a systematic baseline mapping exercise of stakeholder-related barriers or constraints to gender empowerment or mainstreaming. The strategy needs to include actions to mobilise high level engagement. There are at least two options (not mutually exclusive) for rolling out a programme of capacity building and other mainstreaming activities. One is for a full or part-time national gender advisor to be based in the REDD+ Office, supported by annual technical backstopping missions by an international NGO (probably RECOFTC or WOCAN). The international NGO would support the national gender officer in developing the baseline analysis and strategy, reviewing progress, developing an annual work plan, and participating in 'training of trainers' courses. A second option is for the gender budget to be used to strengthen the RECOFTC (in coordination with-- MERN) RECOFTC Weaving Leadership Gender Equality (WAVES) programme and adapt it to the needs of REDD+. A key criterion is which option is more likely to be effective in the challenge of capacity building male staff in the FD and other government departments since this is where the need is greatest. Another priority is to integrate some gender differentiated indicators into the M&E systems being developed in the sub-national projects.

Recommendation for the Government Myanmar, including FD/MONREC, supported by the UN agencies:

Implementation of the institutional arrangements for REDD+ implementation, monitoring and evaluation set out in the NRS, and supported by a levy on REDD+ projects/programmes

In response to some of the institutional limitations experienced in the NP, an urgent requirement for effective REDD+ implementation is establishment of the National REDD+ Coordination Unit (NCU) and the associated monitoring and evaluation system, as set out in Sections 4.1.1 and 4.1.2 of the National REDD+ Strategy (Version 4.2). It is furthermore recommended that a modest levy or tax of 1-2% be imposed on national and subnational REDD+ programmes/projects in order to ensure the financial sustainability of the NCU, the M&E system and other institutional arrangements (probably including a National REDD+ Office), until such time as these costs can be met from Results Based Payments.

Recommendation for FD/MONREC supported by the UN agencies:

Prepare and implement capacity building of local stakeholders and support organizations on Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC)

As set out in the "Final Report on Preparation and Piloting of a Process to Ensure the Right to Free, Prior and Informed Consent is Respected and the design of a Grievance Redress Mechanism" by Howe Sustainable Pte Ltd (2019), a programme of capacity building of local stakeholders and their support organizations will be essential, in addition to a strong government commitment, for the effective implementation of FPIC. This will require development of a set of appropriate facilitation, information and communication materials, as well as a robust local communications strategy (see p.59-60 of the Howe Sustainable (2019) report).

Recommendation for the UN agencies:

The UN agencies need to exercise greater realism in recognizing practical and resource-related limitations in future project/programme design

It seems that the budget for stakeholder engagement in the Myanmar NP was based on norms from other NPs. This took insufficient account of the great number, range and complexity (including the many languages) of stakeholder groups; nor did it sufficiently factor in the challenge of dealing with a situation of very low trust between communities, especially of IPs/EMs, with government. The

resources were therefore inadequate for engaging with large numbers of grassroots stakeholders as conceived in the project design. UN agencies therefore need to be more realistic in recognizing practical and resource-related limitations in future project/programme design.

Commission and undertake an economic study of the costs of deforestation and forest degradation in Myanmar

One of the ways of raising the level of political and public will for REDD+ in Myanmar can be to calculate the real cost of deforestation and forest degradation for Myanmar. A possible contributory reason for the limited national will for REDD+ is the perception that the international community is the main beneficiary of the NP, and because national benefits are under-estimated compared to the more tangible but short-term benefits of resource exploitation. As is becoming increasingly evident the degradation or loss of forest ecosystem services, including hydrological and other life-supporting services, has major impacts for human welfare and equity as well as for (sustainable) economic and livelihood activities. The initial requirement is for an experienced environmental economist to draw up terms of reference and a proposed budget for a study. It is noted that UNEP has experience of undertaking such studies.

7 Lessons learned

Achieving high level political influence and support for REDD+ was the most important, if very challenging, priority. Raising political will is a long process but should have been prioritised from the start and with a clear strategy drawing on approaches in other countries. The weak participation of senior staff in the REDD+ Taskforce and the silo-based approach to policy making resulted in the NP having limited policy level influence.

In a complex political and social situation like Myanmar, characterised by a low historical level of trust between communities and government (including with FD due to the past policy around Public Protected Areas) and great diversity of indigenous groups, more resources were needed for stakeholder engagement. The stakeholder engagement budget should not have been based on norms from other NPs. The quality and quantity of communications, information flow and capacity building are critical in a low trust situation. From the stakeholder evaluation workshops, it appears that many stakeholders, including policy makers and State/Regional staff, had a weak understanding of REDD+. A deeper understanding of REDD+, as obtainable, for example, through the REDD+ Academy course, was needed.

Another lesson was that it can be difficult to impose an international community priority like gender mainstreaming when a government's political will for it is low. Making progress on gender capacity building or mainstreaming required a much more pro-active approach. This included having a specific and sufficient budget for it and having a full or part-time national gender advisor.

It appears that the composition of the PMU was based on norms from other countries. It can be argued that, given the somewhat unique and very complex contextual challenges for REDD+ in Myanmar, the composition of the PMU, and especially the mix of advisors, should have been decided on a case by case basis. In the case of Myanmar, in addition to the CTA, the Stakeholder Engagement/Communications Advisor, etc., there was a possible case for an EAO Engagement Advisor (from the beginning), a Policy Advisor (for liaising between Ministries and promoting high level political engagement) and a Gender Advisor, whether on a part or full-time basis, and whether these positions were for national or international staff.

Another lesson was the importance of a long planning period; this combined with the continuity of PMU staff and RTAs helped produce a coherent NP, and was a factor contributing to good or satisfactory progress on strategy, safeguards and technical readiness. Having said this some CSOs were critical that the planning or Roadmap process was too government or FD dominated. To the extent that this is true, it has not helped the trust issue. CSOs/NGOs were happy to work with the UN agencies, but more reluctant to work with government departments. The lesson is that as Myanmar moves into the sub-national REDD+ planning and implementation phase, the planning process needs to be as participatory as possible. It is recognised that the 'Mangroves' and 'Chindwin' sub-national REDD+ projects contain such provisions.

Another lesson (not a new one) was the importance of all participating organisations or stakeholder groups to appoint a focal person and alternate, and then for the NP to assiduously remind them to send the focal person/alternate to meetings, workshops, etc. While it is impossible to force a government department or NGO to send a nominated person, every effort needs to be made to encourage this. Sending different or subordinate people to the TF meetings and linked workshops in the safeguards/SIS process may have caused discontinuity and been a limitation in those meetings involving decision-making (it was much less of a constraint for technical workshops).

The COVID pandemic was impossible to plan for, but there may be some lessons. One was that it was probably unwise to try and consult on-line with IP representatives and other civil society stakeholders on such a sensitive topic as the FPIC Guidelines. Following good progress, including a well document piloting of draft FPIC Guidelines in Mon State, there was pushback by some CSO/IP stakeholders; this was understandable in view of concerns about connectivity, facility with the technology, language (on-line spontaneous translation is clearly more difficult) and the generally lower quality of on-line, compared to face to face, consultation.

There may also be some lessons from the COVID pandemic. It was observed that with fewer face-to-face meetings government decision-making slowed sharply, but this may also have been due to the coming national election (November 2020). A consequence seems to have been that the long-awaited ratifications of the NRS and confirmation of the host institution for the SIS have not to date happened, detracting from key NP outcomes. The disruption caused by COVID clearly needs to be taken into account when considering the 'success' of the NP or where it has got to at the project termination date. If resources were available, more time could be justified for completing the objectives, although an obvious problem is that it is currently not known when 'normal life' will be resumed.

The end of the project coinciding with the national election could be criticised as poor design; the question arises as to whether this could have been avoided, e.g., delaying the start of the project, but a problem with that is that the post-election period could be even worse than the pre-election period, especially as regards the uncertainty of political appointments in the AFOLU sector. The problem was more in the delay to the NP start-up due to a funding issue; therefore, the unfortunate coincidental timing was probably unavoidable.