



UNDP Management Response
Mid-Term Evaluation of Expanding Financial Access in Myanmar (EFA)

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Overall comments:

Management would first like to thank the evaluation team for their evidence, analysis and insights presented in the Mid-Term Evaluation of the Expanding Financial Access in Myanmar (EFA) Programme. The Country Team and broader UNCDF Management Team found the recommendations provided useful feedback to further build on the achievements of the programme to date and to strengthen programme implementation moving forward.

Since 2012, UNCDF Myanmar has been focused on promoting inclusive growth, poverty reduction and sustainable development. With the implementation of the EFA country programme, UNCDF aimed at increasing formal financial access in Myanmar by developing and implementing innovative initiatives such as the Myanmar Financial Inclusion Roadmap, Women's Economic and Financial Inclusion Project (WEFIP), Market Development Facility (MDF), Leaving No One Behind (LNB) and development of an MFI Payment Integration Platform. EFA began with a mandate to support the government early on with the Financial Inclusion Diagnostic and Roadmap, leading to many challenges that included a lack of local capacity and limited resources. Some areas of improvement recommended by the evaluation team stem from this earlier period. However, over the past two years, the EFA programme has evolved to incorporate new initiatives in different areas and staff to support these initiatives. The team has changed over time as needs and opportunities and is currently a strong balance between local and foreign staff members. Moreover, while the evaluation team has recommended the engagement of the Central Bank of Myanmar (CBM) in the Financial Inclusion Roadmap and UNCDF's in-country operations, it is important to note that this does make a lot of sense, but it is a decision that UNCDF cannot control.

At the time of this management response, Myanmar is under a military coup and in political and economic turmoil. According to UN Country Team (UNCT) Guidelines and various other donor guidelines, UN agencies have been instructed to pause/halt all engagement with government authorities, agencies and/or counterparts. This situation and response are likely to continue for the foreseeable future. The directive has required all agencies to review current programmes to repurpose and/or cancel/suspend initiatives with the government. As a result, some of the recommendations provided by the evaluation team are not applicable to the current situation and will need to be reexamined when it is possible to do so.

Overall, UNCDF management accepts the recommendations from the evaluation, and will take the necessary measures to strengthen the EFA programme.

Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 1: Close collaboration with CBM and other stakeholders in implementing inclusive digital economy

The Leaving No One Behind in the Digital Era (LNBIDE) focus on digital financial services will require close engagement with the key people within the CBM, and coordination with other major stakeholders, particularly the World Bank (already working closely with the CBM), and GSMA that is working directly with fintechs and MNOs. Data management and reporting on supply, access and use of digital financial services, including disaggregation (by key segments – geographic, gender, age) will be an important area to support.

Management Response: Agreed; at the time of the management response, unable to act on the recommendation due to the military coup of February 2021 (as per UN Guidelines to pause all interactions with government authorities, agencies and/or counterparts) but any actionable item will be taken forward as the situation gets better and/or returns to a state where UNCDF is able to re-engage with government counterparts

Key Action(s)	Time Frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Status	Comments
<p>1.1. Present the UNCDF Leaving No One Behind in the Digital Era (LNBIDE) strategy to government agencies that are participating in the inclusive digital economy space</p> <p><i>a. Include various digital finance and digitalization initiatives that UNCDF currently focuses on in Myanmar and globally (i.e. interoperability, digital remittances)</i></p>	Q4 2021, tentative; will have to be reassessed as the situation evolves	Myanmar Country Technical Lead	Initiated	<p>Prior to the coup, UNCDF has engaged, trained, and shared various UNCDF digital initiatives with the government.</p> <p>However, due to the political situation, UNCDF is unable to further these discussions. UNCDF hopes to re-engage with the government when the situation allows.</p>
<p>1.2. As part of the latest Financial Inclusion Roadmap, a Digital Financial Services (DFS) Working Group was introduced to meet regularly – priorities for this Working Group included creating an enabling environment for DFS, interoperability across systems to promote DFS, etc.</p> <p><i>a. Working Group includes participants from various government agencies, private sector partners, FSPs, and other development agencies</i></p>	Q4 2021, tentative; will have to be reassessed as the situation evolves	Myanmar Country Technical Lead	Initiated	<p>Progress was made in late 2019/early 2020 on DFS Working Group development and UNCDF took part to some meetings.</p> <p>Due to the political situation, UNCDF is unable to engage with the government and hold more Working Group sessions as per the Roadmap but will re-engage when the situation allows.</p>
<p>1.3. Present the UNCDF LNBIDE global strategy to major private sector and INGO stakeholders in the inclusive digital economy space</p> <p><i>a. Present the Inclusive Digital Economy Scorecard (IDES) tool to key players and position UNCDF as a leader in the digital economy space</i></p>	Q4 2021	Myanmar Country Technical Lead	Initiated	UNCDF presented the IDES and UNCDF's work in the digital economy sector at the Magenta Mobile Money & Financial Inclusion Summit in 2021.
<p>1.4. Leverage existing initiatives in digital finance and interoperability, IDES, etc. to attract additional funding to support the LNBIDE strategy in Myanmar.</p> <p><i>a. As appropriate prepare and submit concept notes and proposals to perspective donors for ongoing or</i></p>	Q4 2021	Myanmar Country Technical Lead	Initiated	A concept note was developed and submitted to a potential donor to support a digital literacy extension as part of UNCDF's

<i>new initiatives.</i>				<p>existing MFI interoperability platform.</p> <p>Due to the current political situation, there is little appetite from donors for investment in Myanmar.</p>
<p>Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 2: Review the validity of focusing on FRD as part of the Roadmap secretariat; include the role of Central Bank <i>There may be scope for reviewing the strategy of focusing only on Financial Regulatory Department (FRD) as the secretariat for the FIRM. Whilst recognizing that the Government has designated FRD in this role, perhaps directly linking microfinance - and the state-owned banks - to the concept of financial inclusion, financial inclusion is much wider than this. The CBM as a strong independent authority in the financial sector should have an independent role (coordinating, reporting) in the areas for which it is directly responsible. UNCDF/EFA can act as a 'bridge' through engagement, communication and messaging to reinforce the roles of different parts of the government to play their mandated role effectively in contributing to the overall goal of financial inclusion and quality services for the unserved.</i></p>				
<p>Management Response: Agreed; at the time of the management response, unable to act on the recommendation due to the military coup of February 2021 (as per UN Guidelines to pause all interactions with government authorities, agencies and/or counterparts) but any actionable item will be taken forward as the situation gets better and/or returns to a state where UNCDF is able to re-engage with government counterparts. Furthermore, involvement of the Central Bank (CBM) will require further discussions with the Government.</p>				
Key Action(s)	Time Frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking	
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<p>2.1. Have discussions with the government on the involvement of CBM and FRD</p> <p><i>a. UNCDF Myanmar team is open to work with the Central Bank however the decisions on the relationship and nature of UNCDF's involvement are made at the government level – which originally appointed FRD to be UNCDF counterpart in the country</i></p> <p><i>b. UNCDF to further elaborate on the value of having a working relationship with CBM and UNCDF's involvement in the financial sector not just with MFIs but including digitalization</i></p>	<p>Q4 2021, tentative; will have to be reassessed as the situation evolves</p>	<p>Myanmar Country Technical Lead</p>	<p>Initiated</p>	<p>In the past, it was agreed that FRD will take the lead on the Roadmap as it closely aligns with the microfinance sector, state-owned banks, and financial inclusion. While this is currently still the case, UNCDF has had open dialogues with the CBM on the broader financial and banking sector particularly with digital finance.</p> <p>Unfortunately, UNCDF is currently not able to continue these discussions but will aim to re-engage with both government</p>

				agencies when the situation allows for it.
2.2. Inclusion of CBM's active role in the Financial Inclusion Roadmap <i>a. Position the CBM centrally within the Financial Inclusion Roadmap Action Plan to lead and coordinate as Chair of the DFS Working Group and Savings Mobilization Working Group</i>	Q4 2021, tentative; will have to be reassessed as the situation evolves	Myanmar Country Technical Lead	Initiated	In recent years, UNCDF has had an open dialogue with the CBM on the broader financial and banking sector particularly regarding digital finance. CBM Chairs DFS Working Group and Savings Mobilization Working Group under the current approved Roadmap. Unfortunately, UNCDF is currently not able to continue these discussions but will aim to re-engage with the CBM when the situation allows for it.
Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 3: Pursue a more active approach to engage with the cooperatives sector to strengthen financial inclusion <i>Cooperatives remain an important potential sector for financial inclusion and interesting work is under way be different agencies. Pursue a more active and informed consultation to develop a practical plan to engage with cooperatives – digital and otherwise.</i>				
Management Response: Agreed – an initiative was planned under the Leaving No One Behind component to support strategy development and policy review, and support the digitization preparation of township cooperatives however this initiative has since been canceled due to UN Guidelines to pause all interactives with government authorities, agencies and/or counterparts as a result of the February 2021 military coup.				
Key Action(s)	Time Frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking	
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<p>3.1. Develop an initiative to support the strategy development and policy review of the cooperatives sector, including working with township level cooperatives</p> <p>a. <i>An initiative was proposed as part of the Leaving No One Behind component to support the Department of Cooperatives (DoC) in developing a “roadmap”/strategy, including support to digitize some township level cooperatives</i></p> <p>b. <i>Cooperative work in the country requires more involvement with the government and the Department of Cooperatives</i></p>	<p>Q4 2021, tentative; will have to review and revise as the situation evolves</p>	<p>Myanmar Country Technical Lead</p>	<p>Initiated</p>	<p>Previously, UNCDF has engaged with and been part of the cooperatives sub-sector working group under the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, and Irrigation.</p> <p>As a part of the LNB initiative, UNCDF also had discussions with the Department of Cooperatives in 2020 to increase engagement with the DoC prior to the Coup but have since not able to re-engage with the government.</p>
<p>3.2. Active participation and collaboration with other agencies focused on cooperatives sector (e.g. the German Cooperative and Raiffeisen Confederation - DGRV) to find ways for synergies and involvement</p> <p>a. <i>Initiate periodic check-ins and communications with key players in the cooperatives sector to get latest insights in the sector</i></p> <p>b. <i>Take part in any active Working Group or discussion group that provides information sharing</i></p> <p>c. <i>Participate in quarterly meetings with DGRV</i></p>	<p>Q4 2021, tentative; will have to review and revise as the situation evolves</p>	<p>Myanmar Country Technical Lead</p>	<p>Initiated</p>	<p>Prior to the coup, UNCDF had discussions with DGRV and other cooperatives-focused organizations. These discussions have been paused in recent months.</p>
<p>Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 4: Engage with CSO, key players to integrate financial inclusion elements into household surveys <i>Before another refresh of the financial services demand survey becomes due, engage with the Central Statistics Organization (CSO) and other key players supporting the CSO on related surveys (UNDP, World Bank) including digital surveys, to explore the possibility of integrating Financial Inclusion (FI) questions within existing household surveys, including how a perspective on individual intra-household financial inclusion and decision making might be introduced.</i></p>				
<p>Management Response: Agreed, but can only partially implement</p>				
<p>Key Action(s)</p>	<p>Time Frame</p>	<p>Responsible Unit(s)</p>	<p>Tracking</p>	
<p>4.1 Review the relevance of conducting a financial inclusion survey in the absence of government leadership</p> <p>a. <i>Collect information on all different household surveys being conducted in Myanmar</i></p>	<p>Q4 2021</p>	<p>Myanmar Country Technical Lead</p>	<p>Initiated</p>	<p>While some initial work was being planned prior to the coup, which included plans to launch a local</p>

<p>b. <i>Connect with UNDP, World Bank, and other agencies to discuss household surveys</i></p> <p>c. <i>Enter into MOUs with relevant agencies to include relevant FI questions based on identified areas to include “financial inclusion” elements</i></p>				<p>based solution to surveys, identifying key focus areas – there needs to be a review on the relevance of continuing and how to continue with the absence of government leadership</p>
<p>Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 5: Review and evaluate the global standardized process for the MDF lending to best apply it the local interventions</p>				
<p><i>Whilst UNCDF has a duty of care to avoid the waste of public resources, it needs to consider whether too much caution (in applying an MDF) undermines the development objectives and enhances the cost of its intervention. Consider how a global standardized intervention process (Least Developed Countries Investment Platform) is best applied to a local venture capital type intervention, building appropriately on local expertise. A focus on minimizing risk moves the development returns towards zero on any risk-return continuum.</i></p>				
<p>Management Response: UNCDF/LDCIP agrees with the evaluators that there should always be an ambition to perform duties as cost efficient as possible. LDCIP does not agree with the evaluators claim that minimizing risk is in contrast to return. On the contrary if the financial sustainability is ensured there is higher probability the social impact will be reproduced over time. Naturally there is trade off which always needs to be discussed depending on the expected impact return and the expected impact risk, in relation to the expected financial risk.</p>				
Key Action(s)	Time Frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking	
			Status	Comments
5.1. Simplifying some of the document requirements for the Investment Committee	Q4 2021	LDC IP	Initiated	The LDCIP is planning to simplify some of the document requirements for the Investment Committee.
5.2. Conduct virtual due diligence	Q4 2021	LDC IP	Initiated	This will support UNCDF/ LDC IP to save costs and simplify operations
5.3. LDCIP is launching an IT software for online management of the loan and guarantee portfolio	Q4 2021	LDC IP	Initiated	This will make many steps in the process more clear and easier to complete and monitor.
<p>Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 6: Ensure local country team has the technical skills and capacity to support diversified programme design</p>				
<p><i>Ensure that the local team has the technical skills, depth of understanding and the financial resources necessary to work with the range of institutions (in this case range of FSPs in terms of type and size) and breadth of support opportunities (grants, suitably crafted TA) to fulfil the ambitions of programme design.</i></p>				
<p>Management Response: Agreed – some part of the recommendation may stem from the initial years of the EFA programme as the team has continued to grow over the past 2-3 years; but it is acknowledged that the team has to continue to be fully staffed to adapt to the changing priorities in the financial sector</p>				
Key Action(s)	Time Frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking	
			Status	Comments
6.1. Actively maintain and ensure that Myanmar team is fully staffed according to its needs and the Inclusive Digital	Q3 2021	Myanmar Country	Completed	UNCDF Myanmar has been understaffed for the

<p>Economies (IDE) strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Regularly update the programme organogram b. Conduct an annual review of staffing needs according to the initiatives/activities and organogram c. Onboard local digital consultant and policy experts to support with new initiatives in alignment with the IDE strategy d. Include support to the implementation of the LNBIDE strategy in the team's annual performance goals 		Technical Lead		<p>programme needs and opportunities. As more initiatives and funding was provided over the past three years, additional expert staff, including technical consultants were hired to support implementation of initiatives.</p> <p>More recently a full team for women's economic empowerment was created; followed with a full team focused on digital policy and digital economy, digital payments/digital finance was procured; staff was also hired to support microfinance initiatives and other financial inclusion activities.</p> <p>The Country Technical Lead 2021 performance goals explicitly mention the support to the implementation of the LNBIDE.</p>
<p>6.2. Support and encourage learning and development for staff through various training opportunities, with a focus on digital finance, strengthening program/project delivery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Develop training/learning and development plan template for all staff members to complete 	Q4 2021	Myanmar Country Technical Lead	Initiated	<p>Program officer and country lead are taking courses with the Digital Frontiers Institute.</p> <p>Programme Associates have participated in regional trainings to strengthen their abilities in internal policies,</p>

				procedures, software, etc. Several other staff have attended online trainings for Project Management, Data Analytics, Data Software, etc.
Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 7: Clear and separate accounting system to capture loans/repayments as opposed to grants <i>With the application of lending as a funding tool (as opposed to grants), there needs to be a clear and separate accounting system to capture repayments.</i>				
Management Response: Agreed				
Key Action(s)	Time Frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking	
			Status	Comments
7.1. Create a process and method in ATLAS to track inflow/outflows separately <i>a. Discuss with UNDP Finance, LDCIP Loans and Guarantees Team, and UNCDF Regional/HQ team various ways to track loans in ATLAS</i> <i>b. Develop a loan tracking monitor, either in Excel or other software, to track the progress of the loan</i>	Q4 2021	Myanmar Country Technical Lead	Initiated	LDCIP is developing a loan tracking system. The Myanmar team aims to align with that.
Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 8: Follow previous recommendations to analyze constraints to women's financial inclusion <i>Follow up on the recommendations from the PoWER country assessment and SHIFT's analysis of regulatory enablers and constraints to women's financial inclusion. (which go beyond the framework of the gender sub-section of FIRM 2).</i>				
Management Response: Agreed – from the recommendations from the PoWER assessment, the Myanmar office has been able to expand its activities through the Women's Economic and Financial Inclusion Project (WEFIP)				
Key Action(s)	Time Frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking	
			Status	Comments
8.1. Thanks to recommendations from the PoWER country assessment and the Shaping Inclusive Finance Transformations (SHIFT)'s analysis of constraints to women's financial inclusion, UNCDF was able to develop the Women's Economic and Financial Inclusion Project (WEFIP) <i>a. Utilize the private sector/technology sector to implement digital and financial literacy strategies targeted to women/girls</i> <i>b. Support microfinance institutions in country to use client data to develop gender smart products that cater to the needs of women</i>	Q3 2021	Myanmar Country Technical Lead	Initiated	As a follow-on from the PoWER recommendations and SHIFT's analysis of constraints to women's financial inclusion, WEFIP was implemented. As part of WEFIP, many Financial Inclusion Roadmap sensitization workshops and trainings have taken place to raise

				awareness on the issues around women's financial inclusion. As part of the SHIFT programme, the Team has supported three MFIs with technical assistance on data analytics to develop gender smart products.
8.2. In addition to supporting women/girls at a household level, deliver support to women-led/owned MSMEs <i>a. Work with partner agencies (UNDP, UN Women) to support the capacity building of women-led/owned SMEs in Myanmar</i> <i>b. Develop strategies, trainings to support the financial sector to bridge gaps between local banks, institutions, and capacitated/potential women-led/owned SMEs</i>	Q4 2021	Myanmar Country Technical Lead	Initiated	Joint initiative with UNDP and UN Women as part of COVID-19 Response focuses on supporting women led-owned MSMEs. The Myanmar Team has also collaborated with SHIFT to support women led/owned SMEs that focus on addressing the gender gaps.
Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 9: Do not dismiss M&E and strengthen core M&E throughout the country programme <i>Do not treat M&E and communications as dispensable. Under pressure of limited resources for staff, EFA lacked a specialist for M&E and communications, and these functions were added (or not) to the responsibilities of staff who have little spare time from their existing responsibilities. As a result, M&E and systematic communications do not happen or may get delegated to anyone available – such as UN volunteers who often lack both relevant expertise and continuity. WEFIP funding enabled the hiring of an M&E specialist for the initiative – who has well demonstrated the relevance and utility of, for example, capturing feedback from trainings/workshops.</i>				
Management Response: Agreed				
Key Action(s)	Time Frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking	
			Status	Comments
9.1. Onboard a dedicate M&E & comms resource in country that supports all initiatives <i>a. Reserve funding to onboard a qualified M&E & comms resource person</i>	Q3 2021	Myanmar Country Technical Lead	Initiated	The country team has distributed these functions to interim focal points but will look to onboard an M&E & comms resource person funds permitting.
9.2. Leverage resources at the Regional Office to support	Q4 2021	Myanmar	Initiated	The Myanmar team has

<p>Knowledge Management and M&E</p> <p>a. <i>Rely on the regional office capacities for M&E and comms</i></p> <p>b. <i>Establish clear responsibilities and reporting activities, including indicators to track/report on, frequency and ways of collaboration</i></p>		Country Technical Lead		relied on the Regional Office to provide support on M&E and comms when no dedicated resource was available in country.
<p>9.3. Integrate individual initiative M&E frameworks, processes into a “country-level” database</p> <p>a. <i>Gather and evaluate individual initiative frameworks</i></p> <p>b. <i>Establish a country-level database and dashboard</i></p> <p>c. <i>Integrate into global IDE ToC, Results Framework</i></p>	Q4 2021	Myanmar Country Technical Lead	Initiated	The Myanmar Team has collaborated with the regional office to develop a comprehensive Results Development Framework (RMF) to capture all the results from the initiatives implemented in the country.
<p>Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 10: Integrate a detailed Theory of Change into monitoring and planning <i>Integrate a more detailed but still legible Theory of Change (organized by financial sector) into monitoring and planning.</i></p>				
<p>Management Response: Agreed</p>				
Key Action(s)	Time Frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking	
			Status	Comments
<p>10.1.Leverage the global Inclusive Digital Economies (IDE) ToC to implement and integrate it with Myanmar activities</p> <p>a. <i>The global IDE ToC closely aligns with UNCDF’s LNBIDE strategy moving forward</i></p> <p>b. <i>Country initiatives will closely align their M&E framework to ensure that outputs/outcomes are in line with the global IDE</i></p> <p>c. <i>Tie each outcome/output or indicator from existing initiatives into the global IDE</i></p> <p>d. <i>Integrate the RMF to tie into IDE ToC; working with the regional office to develop knowledge management tools that capture the intended outcomes</i></p>	Q4 2021	Myanmar Country Technical Lead	Initiated	The Myanmar Team has made efforts to align recent initiatives M&E frameworks (i.e. Gates funding secured in September 2020) to the LNBIDE TOC and indicators.
<p>Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 11: Review/evaluate current process of centralized management of communications <i>Review the current process of centralized management of communications – specifically the UNCDF (Myanmar) website. It may be efficient to have a single specialist resource across UNCDF’s different activities, but the processes are not working well either for the suppliers of material or the (potential) users of the website.</i></p>				
<p>Management Response: Agreed</p>				
Key Action(s)	Time Frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking	
			Status	Comments

11.1.Onboard a dedicated knowledge management and communications resource locally	Q1 2021	Myanmar Country Technical Lead	Completed	A local UNV has started performing this role since the beginning of 2021.
11.2.Draft and finalize UNCDF Myanmar Communications Strategy a. <i>Review current strategy and make any necessary changes needed to finalize the strategy</i> b. <i>Provide training to staff to ensure that the Strategy is widely accepted and operational</i>	Q3 2021	Myanmar Country Technical Lead	Initiated	A communications strategy has been drafted. This draft must be revised to adapt to the current circumstances.
11.3.Develop a content calendar for UNCDF Myanmar a. <i>Content calendar will be a shared document with the central communications contact</i> b. <i>Highlight key communication updates, communication channel and frequency</i> c. <i>Calendar needs to be also shared and adopted by local team to have active participation from initiative leads to provide input on content</i>	Q3 2021	Myanmar Country Technical Lead	Not initiated	By Q3 2021 the Myanmar team aims to develop a content calendar including key communications updates.
11.4.Establish consistent and frequent communication with regional and global communications team a. <i>Set-up regular meetings with the regional and global communications team to ensure there is a flow of information and updates from both sides</i> b. <i>Attend trainings and sessions on a regular basis</i>	Q3 2021	Myanmar Country Technical Lead	Not initiated	The Myanmar team plans to set up regular meetings among the communications colleagues by Q3 2021.
Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 12: Evaluate centralized decision-making process and time/effort needed for staff, consultant procurements <i>Whilst acknowledging that decisions within UNCDF cannot be solely taken at the country level, the time needed for centralized decision-making needs attention, as do the processes for staff and consultant procurement.</i>				
Management Response: Agreed				
Key Action(s)	Time Frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking	
			Status	Comments
12.1.Develop a tracking system to all procurement activities against stages of the process a. <i>Develop a tracking system in Excel (for example) to properly highlight each stage that the procurement item is in; and can be easily available to management to reference</i> b. <i>Tracker will also help monitor how long processes are taking both in its entirety and where the bottlenecks are – this will help provide feedback to HQ/Regional level on areas of improvement</i>	Q3 2021	Myanmar Country Technical Lead	Initiated	The Myanmar team will start developing a tracking system for all procurement activities.

<p>12.2. Maintain regular communication with HQ/Regional Offices</p> <p>a. <i>Set-up regular meetings with the regional procurement/operations team to ensure there is a flow of information and updates from both sides</i></p> <p>b. <i>Attend trainings and sessions on a regular basis</i></p>	Q3 2021	Myanmar Country Technical Lead	Not initiated	The Myanmar team proposes to set up regular call with the procurement/operations team to smooth the procurement processes and reduce their duration.
<p>Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 13: Foreign/international staff work closely with local counterpart to enhance each other's skills, language <i>Pay attention to the language divide: much Government activity (particularly outside Yangon) and of course other local interactions, involve the Myanmar language – spoken and written. We recommend that for each international/foreign staff member there might be a local counterpart – to work together to enhance each other's expertise and language skills whilst also supporting local capacity development. This is particularly relevant for communications. At the least, there could be an attempt to enhance the English skills of national staff, as seems appropriate, whilst facilitating international staff to take lessons in the Myanmar language.</i></p>				
<p>Management Response: Agree that there needs to be a close working relationship between foreign/international and local staff, and the importance of understanding the language divide. This recommendation likely stems from a situation in the early years of EFA when there was one expat based in the capital NPT without a national counterpart. Agree that this situation would have been much more effective with a national counterpart.</p>				
Key Action(s)	Time Frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking	
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<p>13.1. Build a culturally literate team that has a good balance between local and international expertise</p> <p>a. <i>Ensure that each initiative/team has a both local and foreign talents</i></p> <p>b. <i>Dedicated local staff to liaise with government counterparts</i></p>	Q3 2021	Myanmar Country Technical Lead	Completed	The previous situation with foreign staff member working directly with FRD was a lesson learned. Since then, the team has grown with equal representation of foreign and local staff; with local staff working closely with government counterparts and other staff members.
<p>13.2. Develop communication in both languages (e.g. knowledge management, events, etc.)</p> <p>a. <i>Public events and workshops, trainings with partners always have both foreign and local staff to ensure that material and language is translated; for events translators are hired.</i></p> <p>b. <i>Hire translators for events, initiative kick-offs, meetings with partners, trainings, etc.</i></p> <p>c. <i>Translate media initiatives such as posters, posts, videos, etc. into English and local language</i></p>	Q4 2020	Myanmar Country Technical Lead	Completed	All events have translators to provide both languages Recent digital literacy posts/content were in both English and the local language

* The implementation status is tracked in the ERC.