



Sustainability Plan and Exit Strategy

Strengthening Sustainable Protected Area
Management in Myanmar

June 2020



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Sustainability Plan and Exit Strategy

The purpose of the Sustainability Plan and Exit Strategy is to ensure the sustainability of impacts after the Strengthening Sustainability of Protected Area Management in Myanmar project ends. The ‘sustainability strategy’ is referring to staggered graduation from specific project areas, simultaneous withdrawal from the entire program area, or transitioning to associated programming in selected areas, following our experiences with localized challenges from civil conflict and vocal opposition to the project in focal sites.

Universal Approaches to Exit Strategies

Three basic approaches to Exit Strategies are outlined below:

1. Phasing Down

Phasing down is a gradual reduction of program activities, utilizing local communities/beneficiaries to sustain program benefits while WCS or UNDP deploys fewer resources. Phasing down is often a preliminary stage to phasing over and/or phasing out.

2. Phasing Out

This refers to WCS’s or UNDP’s withdrawal of involvement in a program without turning it over to another institution for continued implementation. Ideally a program is phased out after permanent or self-sustaining changes are realized, thus eliminating the need for additional external inputs. Reaching a level of maturity with some interventions may be after the implementation of this phase, as such effective awareness must be undertaken.

3. Phasing Over

The third type of Exit Strategy approach is ‘phasing over’. In this case, WCS or UNDP transfers program activity to local institutions or communities. During program design and implementation, emphasis should be placed on community capacity building so that the services provided can continue through local structures.

During the course of project implementation there are still substantial needs that will need **Additional Investment** to continue to sustain the project objective.

Recommended Exit Strategies

The Strengthening Sustainability of Protected Area Management in Myanmar project will end in June 2020. The project objective is to *Strengthen the terrestrial system of national protected areas for biodiversity conservation through enhanced representation, management effectiveness, monitoring, enforcement and financing*. Under that objective the project has two outcomes; Outcome 1. Enhanced systemic, institutional and financial frameworks for PA expansion and management and Outcome 2. Strengthened management and threat reduction in the target PAs and buffer zones.

Following the Mid-term Review the Strategic Results Framework was revised into 14 Indicators. For the objective and each outcome, indicators are listed, summarizing the activities undertaken, an assessment for each indicator and recommendations for impact to be sustained, expanded or improved after the program ends.

Project Objective

Strengthen the terrestrial system of national protected areas for biodiversity conservation through enhanced representation, management effectiveness, monitoring, enforcement and financing.

Under the project objective there are 4 indicators reviewed below.

Indicator 1: coverage of Myanmar's terrestrial and aquatic PA network managed by the Forest Department as indicated by increased coverage of under-represented ecoregions

Activities

The project document used ecoregions to understand the distribution of existing protected areas and highlight ecological areas that were not yet being protected. This process was too broad to support focused protected area expansion, so the project invested in developing Myanmar’s first National Red Lists for Mammals, Birds, Reptiles

and Ecosystems. These trainings and reviews have developed a national list of mapped conservation priorities. These priorities are used to develop a revised series of Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs). Each KBA can be assessed for future management action based on the protected areas legally defined under the Conservation of Biodiversity and Protected Area Law.

The project has also supported the development of the CBPA Law and Rules to broaden the range of legal types of protected area. In particular, there is an opportunity for local communities to develop Local Community Protected Areas. This process is now supported under the new law although specific details are still to be developed.

	Assessment Criteria	Low	Acceptable	High
1	Have the program objectives been achieved?		✓	
2	How is ownership/commitment to continue program activities?		✓	
3	Does the Government value program activities			✓
4	What is the level of demand for the “phased over” services		✓	
5	How sufficient is the institutional and human resource capacity to sustain the project		✓	
6	Is there a viable plan to sustain the project		✓	

Recommendations

1. In order to sustain implementation of the project outcomes, it is recommended that Protected Areas continue to be the responsibility of the Nature and Wildlife Conservation Division (NWCD) and data supported through the project can be shared through the Convention of Biological Diversity’s Clearing House Mechanism as well as through the World Conservation Planning Centre (WCPC), especially Protected Planet.
2. To complement the important work of NWCD, there is need for continued support of the KBA National Coordination Group. The KBA National Coordination Group, will coordinate the process to identify, document and delineate KBAs at the national level in partnership with NWCD. This will ensure that civil society and government agencies can collaborate on the global mechanism to identify biodiversity priorities and lead to conservation actions.
3. Based on the strength of NWCD and the support for the KBA National Coordination Committee, this component of the project can be **phased down** by the project and eventually **phased over**.

Indicator 2: habitat conditions at the target sites indicated by percentage change in forest cover measured through remote sensing during the project.

Activities

In the first year of the project we supported a team of GIS technicians to assess forest cover changes using LANDSAT images and a time intensive system of interpreting the satellite images that took several months to assess all four of the original target protected areas. While this was feasible it was not easily used as a consistent monitoring tool since each technician had slight differences in their interpretation. The project coincided with the release of Global Forest Watch in 2014 and by the mid-term evaluation we had shifted to using the Global Forest Watch Data as a consistent mechanism to track and understand forest cover changes. These types of tools have become increasingly available during the project period and there is now a large range of GIS tools available online. To ensure that these mechanisms can be easily utilized by a growing number of government and civil society groups. The project has now developed its own portal to a wide range of Myanmar environmental and climate data. It is available here: <http://myanmar-geotools.appspot.com>

	Assessment Criteria	Low	Acceptable	High
1	Have the program objectives been achieved?			✓
2	How is ownership/commitment to continue program activities?		✓	
3	Does the Government value program activities		✓	

4	What is the level of demand for the “phased over” services		✓	
5	How sufficient is the institutional and human resource capacity to sustain the project			✓
6	Is there a viable plan to sustain the project		✓	

Recommendations

1. In order to sustain implementation of the project outcomes, it is recommended that Global Forest Watch continues to be used as a reliable monitoring tool for understanding changes in forest cover. This is a free system, that is continuing to be updated on an annual basis and is easily used by a range of decision makers.
2. The Global Forest Watch data and data from numerous other global data sets are available on <http://myanmar-geotools.appspot.com> While useful at the moment, the rapid pace of technical developments it is still not clear how long this tool will remain relevant. In the long run NWCD should continue to be the holder of all official protected area data and using their Clearing House Mechanism or similar.
3. Based on the strength of NWCD and the growing number of digital opportunities, this component of the project can be **phased down**.

Indicator 3: Financial Sustainability of PA System (measured through Financial Sustainability Scorecard)

Activities

The project has made substantial inroads into supporting financial sustainability of the protected area system as measured through the Financial Sustainability Scorecard although there is still much to do. The legal, regulatory and institutional framework for protected areas has improved through the 2018 CBPA Law and Rules, however this has not supported significant sustainable finance structures beyond collecting user fees. Much of the sustainable finance structure is still related to the 2012 Environment Law and there is still a lack of clarity in structuring institutional frameworks and revenue generation through the small range of pilot activities being implemented for several protected areas.

There has been significant capacity development in relation to alternative institutional arrangements with the creation of the Myanmar Biodiversity Fund as an independent trust fund mechanism supported by MONREC and is being integrated into institutional responsibilities for financial management of PAs. The project has drafted components for the National PA Financing Strategy and conducted trainings for economic valuation of protected area investment planning at project sites. The government has also expanding using management planning to improve government budgeting and understanding staffing requirements.

Over half of the staffed protected areas now have management plans but few have conducted any business-planning. Much of this capacity is difficult to build due to their limited activity budgets, although these have continued to grow from government budgets through the length of the project. With these budgets the government does support reasonable operations, with transparent and useful accounting and auditing systems.

The initial piloting of new revenue services is still at a very early stage. Setting and collecting some user fees have increased at multiple sites, but these fees still need effective fee collection systems and communication strategies to increase public awareness about the rationale for revenue generation mechanisms. There has also been limited time and interest from the project for developing operations Payment for Ecosystem Service schemes and expanding the few concessions operating with the PAs. PES schemes are still a widespread concept with limited structural investments and implementation actions. This is a significant opportunity that is also in need of significant future investment.

	Assessment Criteria	Low	Acceptable	High
1	Have the program objectives been achieved?		✓	
2	How is ownership/commitment to continue program activities?		✓	
3	Does the Government value program activities		✓	
4	What is the level of demand for the “phased over” services		✓	

5	How sufficient is the institutional and human resource capacity to sustain the project			✓
6	Is there a viable plan to sustain the project		✓	

Recommendations

1. In order to sustain implementation of the project outcomes, it is recommended that the government prioritizes strengthening the institutional framework for the support of the new financial mechanisms created. The Myanmar Biodiversity Fund and the legally mandated Environmental Management Fund are the clear government opportunities for building a real institutional framework to support substantial new revenue retention.
2. Within the protected area systems there is a clear need to improve the development and use of management plans and alignment with the institutional framework to ensure that PAs can become effective management mechanisms.
3. Following the initial results from the project, there is still significant need to support sustainable financing systems and increased capacities to develop new revenue streams, improve budgeting and cost effective management within an effective institutional framework. **Additional investment** should be prioritized for future activities.

Mandatory indicator 4: Number of direct project beneficiaries of which 50% are women¹.

Activities

The project has supported 278 Government Staff (227M, 51F) this was based on a final target of 160M and 160F. The project has also supported 18,148 local people (7,619M, 10,529F) based on a final target of 5600M and 5600F. Over 50% of local people have been women (58%), however only 18% of Government Staff were women. There has been significant participation of project activities from women, although there is still gender inequality within the structures of government staff.

	Assessment Criteria	Low	Acceptable	High
1	Have the program objectives been achieved?			✓
2	How is ownership/commitment to continue program activities?		✓	
3	Does the Government value program activities		✓	
4	What is the level of demand for the “phased over” services		✓	
5	How sufficient is the institutional and human resource capacity to sustain the project			✓
6	Is there a viable plan to sustain the project		✓	

Recommendations

1. The project met their targets on local communities but the participation of government staff who are women was still limited.
2. The gender planning mechanisms for the project did not build enough capacity or true understanding on how gender equality can be integrated with project beneficiaries and across all project activities.
3. Future projects should ensure sufficient investment in planning and capacity building to support eventual **Phasing Over** through local institutions. Unfortunately, there has not been enough investment in building those local institutions.

Project Objective Action Plan

Activity	Responsibility	2019	2020
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¹ Beneficiaries based on mid-2019, numbers will continue to increase until February 2020

		Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Indicator 1: coverage of Myanmar's terrestrial and aquatic PA network managed by the Forest Department as indicated by increased coverage of under-represented ecoregions	NWCD, WCS					X					
- National KBA Coordination Group	NWCD, KBACG						Phased Over				
Indicator 2: habitat conditions at the target sites indicated by percentage change in forest cover measured through remote sensing during the project.	NWCD, WCS	Phased Down									
Indicator 3: Financial Sustainability of PA System (measured through Financial Sustainability Scorecard)	NWCD, MBF, EMF, UNDP, WCS				X						
- New Project Development						Additional Investment					
Mandatory indicator 4: Number of direct project beneficiaries of which 50% are women.	NWCD, WCS						X				
- Need additional local institutions								Phased Over			

Outcome 1 Enhanced systemic, institutional and financial frameworks for PA expansion and management

Budget: US\$ 1,870,547

Indicator 5: Legal status enabling local people to use and benefit from sites within Protected Areas put in place and implemented.

Activities

The project has supported site-based activities such as participatory land use planning and community forestry management since the beginning. Despite these participatory mechanisms there has been considerable community opposition to protected areas and the expansion of protected areas, especially in relation to the nomination of Hkakaborazi National Park and Hponkanrazi Wildlife Sanctuary as a natural World Heritage site. Following this public outcry, the Forest Department modified the Conservation of Biodiversity and Protected Area Law (CBPA) in 2018. The new Law has created the legal creation of Local Community Protected Areas, a mechanism that could be used to recognize Indigenous Community Conservation Areas in Myanmar. Following the new Law, WCS and a range of other CSO partners have worked closely with NWCD to develop rules in relation to the CBPA Law. The rules have been developed with extensive public consultations as well as formal review by the Attorney General's Office. The rules will soon pass through the Security, Peace and Stability, Rule of Law Working Committee and then go through a period of parliamentary comment before being finalized. Following on from this achievement the project has provided draft materials for the Standard Operating Procedures in relation to Free Prior Informed Consent, in relation to Protected Areas. We are also providing guidelines in relation to Buffer Zones and Community Stakeholder Engagement.

	Assessment Criteria	Low	Acceptable	High
1	Have the program objectives been achieved?		✓	
2	How is ownership/commitment to continue program activities?		✓	
3	Does the Government value program activities		✓	
4	What is the level of demand for the "phased over" services		✓	
5	How sufficient is the institutional and human resource capacity to sustain the project		✓	
6	Is there a viable plan to sustain the project		✓	

Recommendations

1. The project's support to NWCD during the creation of the CBPA Law and then supporting significant levels of community participation in the development and review of the CBPA rules have resulted in significant legal changes to support local people to use and benefit from protected areas. However, this process will continue beyond the end of the project and field based pilot testing will be needed to understand the implementation of the new law and rules and to build the capacity of NWCD and other government partners to support local people in relation to protected area use and benefit sharing.
2. Once the CBPA Rules have been finally approved, there will be a growing number of new requests from communities to establish Local Community Protected Areas. This will need clear effective mechanisms to build implementation capacities and ensure that new conflicts are minimized.
3. Following the initial results from the project, there is still significant need to support piloting LCPA systems and increase community and government capacities. **Additional investment** should be prioritized for future activities.

Indicator 6: institutional capacity of the Forest Department for the PA system planning and management as indicated by the Capacity Development Scorecard

Activities

The project developed a Capacity Development Strategy and then supported a range of training activities to support several different divisions of the Forest Department. These included:

NWCD Training Programs – NWCD trainings have become more structured and capacity has increased. This has included the nationalization of the SMART program for tracking Law Enforcement Activities in relation to Protected Areas and use of the Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) scorecard.

University of Forest and Environmental Science – University Training has been mostly focused with the Year 4 Biodiversity Students as well as support for broader understanding of biodiversity and conservation training materials and exchange with universities in Thailand and Singapore.

Myanmar Forestry School – MFS provides a yearlong ranger training for junior Forest Department Staff. The project has supported the development of biodiversity training materials and direct technical support of biodiversity training in the ranger training course each year.

Central Forestry Development Training Centre – CFTDC provides specialized training for Forest Department Staff, the project has developed basic Biodiversity and Conservation relation training materials for CFTDC's own use in their training programs, and the project has provided technical trainers to some specific training programs.

The Capacity Development (CD) Scorecard was conducted with five offices, involved in capacity building activities within the Forest Department (NWCD, Sagaing Region FD, Kachin State FD, the Training and Research Development Division and the Planning and Statistics Division). Individual scores and average of all offices are shown below:

Offices	Initial	Mid-Term	Final
NWCD, NPT	57 (59%)	57 (59%)	67 (70%)
Forest Department, Kachin State	51 (53%)	51 (53%)	61 (64%)
Forest Department, Sagaing Region	65 (68%)	65 (68%)	65 (68%)
Planning and Statistics Division, NPT	51 (53%)	51 (53%)	51 (53%)
Training and Research Development Division, NPT	57 (59%)	48 (50%)	58 (60%)
Average Score for all offices	56.2 (59%)	54.4 (57%)	61.0 (64%)

	Assessment Criteria	Low	Acceptable	High
1	Have the program objectives been achieved?		✓	
2	How is ownership/commitment to continue program activities?		✓	
3	Does the Government value program activities		✓	
4	What is the level of demand for the “phased over” services		✓	
5	How sufficient is the institutional and human resource capacity to sustain the project		✓	
6	Is there a viable plan to sustain the project		✓	

Recommendations

1. The range of capacity development activities continues to be quite broad, and while basic capacity has developed there is a still a range of more technical capacities that are still needed.

2. An example of a training activities that can be **Phased Over** was the SMART Law Enforcement Program. NWCD now manages that program at the National Level and in multiple Protected Area sites. However, there is still a need for technical capacity support as this tool and its associated software is revised and updated.
3. Most training activities can be **Phased Down** but technical trainings will still be needed.

Indicator 7: Piloted a feasible sustainable financing mechanism.

Activities

During the project period, there was substantial understanding and capacity building with senior level government staff as well as the Steering Committee for the development of an independent trust fund. The project also supported the steering committee members to visit Kehati the Indonesian Biodiversity Trust Fund and to visit a range of financial and trust fund managers in Singapore. Following legal consultation with DFDL, the steering committee advised MONREC on the legal and technical issues to establish a biodiversity trust fund. This resulted in the registration of the Myanmar Biodiversity Fund Ltd. Gty. in July 2019. The MBF is now preparing to recruit a CEO and hold additional meetings with a range of international and private donors to raise capital for the fund.

	Assessment Criteria	Low	Acceptable	High
1	Have the program objectives been achieved?			✓
2	How is ownership/commitment to continue program activities?			✓
3	Does the Government value program activities			✓
4	What is the level of demand for the “phased over” services		✓	
5	How sufficient is the institutional and human resource capacity to sustain the project		✓	
6	Is there a viable plan to sustain the project		✓	

Recommendations

1. The legal structure and government support is high but there is still substantial need for strengthening the institutional framework for the support of the new financial mechanism as well as the Environmental Management Fund as outlined in **Indicator 3**.
2. The financial opportunities are limited and need significant support to ensure effective mechanisms. There is also clear need to build local civil society and community based organisations’ capacity to move beyond short term project implementation into sustainable conservation actions. The project has drafted a business plan in relation to **Indicator 9** as a way to explore how MBF can be used to support management needs.
3. The MBF has been **Phased Over** to the Directors although they need substantial financial support to ensure that the mechanism is sustained. WCS has secured additional financial support from Agence française de développement but this is still only the beginning.

Indicator 8: Developed Redlisted Ecosystem for PA expansion and network review

Activities

The project’s **Indicator 1** is focused on the expansion of protected areas to develop an ecologically representative conservation system. Ecoregion’s provide a general ecological representation for protected area planning but this relatively broad and is incomplete to inform the new system. The implementation of the project coincided with the development of the new International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Ecosystem Redlist Program providing a unique opportunity to build our ecological understanding of the country through the first ecosystem typology and ecosystem map. At the same time IUCN has been developing the Global Ecosystem Typology which is now being tested by the UN Statistics Division as a potential revision of the Global Environmental Economic accounts, Myanmar will be used as a pilot case.

The National Ecosystem Map typology covers 64 Ecosystems with 56 mapped. Following the red listing assessment two ecosystems are likely to have collapsed, twenty ecosystems are threatened including six critically endangered, eight are data deficient or still currently being assessed and 34 ecosystems are of least concern. Some of the smallest

ecosystems are probably under-estimated due to some criteria not assessed and we are still double-checking results to be finalized in early 2020.

In December 11-12 we held the final workshop on *Using National Red Lists of Ecosystems and Species to Identify Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) in Myanmar*. KBAs are developed through a consultative science-based process for identifying sites contributing significantly to the global persistence of biodiversity. We can now use the results of the project to inform the KBA process. Under the Global Standard for the Identification of KBAs, Myanmar now needs to form a National KBA Coordination Group to develop and review full documentation for each KBA and then submit them for approval through the KBA Secretariat.

With our improved understanding of the known populations of threatened ecosystems and species, conservation priorities can now inform the spatial needs for developing protected areas. There is also an improved understanding of the significant large tracts of Intact Forest that will need to be conserved to reach Myanmar's ambitious Nationally Determined Contribution under the Paris Agreement. The *Protected Area Review* will be completed based on this data in early 2020.

	Assessment Criteria	Low	Acceptable	High
1	Have the program objectives been achieved?		✓	
2	How is ownership/commitment to continue program activities?		✓	
3	Does the Government value program activities			✓
4	What is the level of demand for the "phased over" services		✓	
5	How sufficient is the institutional and human resource capacity to sustain the project		✓	
6	Is there a viable plan to sustain the project		✓	

Recommendations

1. The project has had a range of challenges in developing new Protected Areas in relation to **Indicator 1**. The National Forest Master Plan has a 10% goal for protected area coverage by 2030 and the Convention of Biological Diversity's (CBD) Aichi Target 11 has a goal of 17% by 2020. The changes in the legal system and the growing relationship between the Forest Department and local people will support a wider range of management systems to achieve conservation. There is still significant progress needed to reach these targets.
2. The CBD are now developing the Post-2020 Biodiversity Framework and WCS are expecting a new global target of 30% by 2030 and potentially 50% by 2050. This framework will address traditional PAs but also Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures (OECMs) such as Community Forestry and Indigenous Community Conservation Areas. To reach these growing goals there is a clear need to use the project's ecosystem and species results to plan for future conservation actions.
3. The project's outputs, through the *Protected Area Review* can be **Phased Over** protected area planning to NWCD. The data can be used to inform the next National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) for 2020-2030. There is still significant need to use the review to integrate into national and local development and poverty reduction strategies.

Outcome 1 Action Plan

Activity	Responsibility	2019				2020					
		Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Indicator 5: Legal status enabling local people to use and benefit from sites within Protected	MONREC					X					

Areas put in place and implemented												
- Support piloting LCPA systems and increase community and government capacities	UNDP, WCS						Additional Investment					
Indicator 6: institutional capacity of the Forest Department for the PA system planning and management as indicated by the Capacity Development Scorecard	NWCD, UoFES, MFS, CFTDC, WCS					X						
- CD Scorecard	NWCD, UoFES, MFS, CFTDC					X						
- NWCD now manages SMART at the National Level and in multiple Protected Area sites	NWCD	Phased Over										
- Training Program Activities will end in December 2019.	NWCD, UoFES, MFS, CFTDC					X	Phased Down					
Indicator 7: Piloted a feasible sustainable financing mechanism	MBF	Phased Over										
- AFD Budget Support to MBF	MBF, WCS						Additional Investment					
Indicator 8: Developed Redlisted Ecosystem for PA expansion and network review	NWCD, WCS, UNSW					X						
- Final Report	UNSW					X						
- Protected Area Review	WCS					X						
- NWCD protected area planning, data used to inform NBSAP for 2020-2030	NWCD						Phased Over					

Outcome 2 Strengthened management and threat reduction in the target PAs and buffer zones
Budget: US\$ 3,873,273

Indicator 9: No. of business plan for PA developed and under implementation

Activities

The project has supported NWCD to draft development plans for project sites, following the Mid-term review and subsequent violence in northern Kachin, Htamanthi Wildlife Sanctuary is the only site still developing a business plan in relation to their management plan. The management plan is still undergoing government comments with NWCD and the warden of HWS. The HWS business plan was developed based on existing experiences of Conservation Investment Plans developed in Eastern Africa. The plan is being revised in line with the recent Management Plan for HWS. The Conservation Implementation Plan for Htamanthi WS was shared with NWCD in June 2020.

	Assessment Criteria	Low	Acceptable	High
1	Have the program objectives been achieved?		✓	
2	How is ownership/commitment to continue program activities?		✓	
3	Does the Government value program activities		✓	
4	What is the level of demand for the “phased over” services		✓	
5	How sufficient is the institutional and human resource capacity to sustain the project		✓	
6	Is there a viable plan to sustain the project		✓	

Recommendations

1. The business plan allows for the understanding and development of new financial resources for management actions. This is clearly linked to **Indicator 3** and **Indicator 7**, while concepts for additional finance have been developed there is still a need to strengthening the institutional framework for the support of new financial mechanisms.
2. There is also a clear need to improve the development and use of management plans and alignment with the institutional framework to ensure that PAs can become effective management mechanisms
3. Following the initial results from the project, there is still significant need to support sustainable financing systems and increased capacities to develop new revenue streams, improve budgeting and cost effective management within an effective institutional framework. **Additional investment** should be prioritized for future activities.

Indicator 10: Reduction of threats at the target sites as indicated by increase of patrol distance (km) and decrease of evidence of illegal activity (people, camps and hunting weapons)

Activities

The project supports the use of Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool (SMART reporting tool) to collect and map threats through the project. SMART data are recorded annually in the PIR reporting mechanism to GEF. SMART patrolling was removed from the Project in Hukaung Valley following the Mid-term evaluation and was reduced further following conflict in northern Kachin State. The cumulative progress since project started for Htamanthi WS were 116,193 km, 948 peoples, 31 camps and 38 hunting weapons. There are still additional activities continued through the end of December 2019.

- Patrol Distance was targeted as 130,000 km, 116,193 km completed which is currently 89%
- Total People encountered was targeted as 500, 948 people were found which is currently 190%
- Total Camps encountered was targeted as 20, 31 camps were found which is currently 155%
- Total Hunting weapons encountered was targeted as 20, 38 hunting weapons were found which is currently 190%

These are currently related to the revised MTR end of project targets which are likely to be met, numbers will be revised at the end of field activities at the end of December 2019.

Stable or increased encounter rates for key indicator species in Htamanthi WS are based on annual summaries of SMART patrolling data, ungulate encounter rates per 100 km patrol distance using SMART law enforcement data and focused auditory surveys for gibbons.

- Encounter rate of 2 Hoolock Gibbon groups/ km² in Htamanthi WS was targeted, Hoolock Gibbon group density per sq. km in Htamanthi WS is now 3.01/km² Hoolock Gibbons may not be occurring at or very close to carrying capacity

- Encounter rate of 0.2 to 2.5 ungulate sign observations/ 100 km patrolled in Htamanthi WS was targeted, ungulate encounter rates were 8.6 ungulate sign observations/ 100 km in dry season 2018-2019

NWCD is now implementing SMART directly for ungulate numbers and threats. However, WCS is continuing to support auditory surveys for gibbons as a continued monitoring mechanism.

	Assessment Criteria	Low	Acceptable	High
1	Have the program objectives been achieved?		✓	
2	How is ownership/commitment to continue program activities?		✓	
3	Does the Government value program activities		✓	
4	What is the level of demand for the “phased over” services		✓	
5	How sufficient is the institutional and human resource capacity to sustain the project		✓	
6	Is there a viable plan to sustain the project		✓	

Recommendations

1. Law enforcement activities are needed in all protected areas, Htamanthi WS is an effective protected area with a growing population of several endangered species as the populations continue to grow there will constant and potentially growing threats to Myanmar’s biodiversity values. The SMART tool when regularly used and updated is an important mechanism to secure data and support regular detailed planning.
2. The law enforcement activities will need to continue and in the future be more extensive and improve connections for informative actions that will lead to actual arrests. There is potential to build stronger capacity across the legal system.
3. As outlined in **Indicator 6** above, the SMART system has been **Phased Over** to NWCD for future implementation. WCS will still provide technical support when needed.

Indicator 11: Management effectiveness of individual PAs covering 2,604,000 ha, indicated by the % increase in the METT assessment

Activities

The METT assessment was carried out during the project preparation phase and then completed prior to the mid-term review. In preparation of the terminal evaluation, the final METT scores were compiled in December 2019.

The results are shown below:

Site	Initial	Mid-Term	Final
Htamanthi WS	50	62	65
Hkakaborazi NP	52	59	48
Hponkanrazi WS	12	40	49
Hukaung Valley WS	53	49	48
Total	42	53	52.5

METT assessments were carried out with NWCD staff and WCS, covering each of the project focal sites. NWCD with the support of NEA and IUCN provided additional METT training. While capacity has been increased for this tool it is unlikely to become a frequently utilized tool outside of additional GEF biodiversity projects.

	Assessment Criteria	Low	Acceptable	High
1	Have the program objectives been achieved?		✓	
2	How is ownership/commitment to continue program activities?		✓	
3	Does the Government value program activities		✓	
4	What is the level of demand for the “phased over” services		✓	
5	How sufficient is the institutional and human resource capacity to sustain the project		✓	
6	Is there a viable plan to sustain the project		✓	

Recommendations

1. The management effectiveness for protected areas can be tracked using the METT. During the project period Management Effectiveness has been limited as senior NWCD staff have retired from service and less experienced Forest Department staff have become new wardens at project sites.
2. As Capacity Development linked to **Indicator 6** still needs to be developed to support new and junior NWCD staff in management positions.
3. This work should be **Phasing Over** as NWCD Capacity Building is increased and linked to the new development of the Wildlife College.

Indicator 12: Community and stakeholder’s participation systems piloted at demonstration PAs and landscapes, and incorporated into management plans

Activities

The project has changed WCS’s approach to community activities over the past five years., Since WCS prioritizes these field sites for long term conservation actions, the program will continue to support local communities for many years to come. During the Mid-term Review actions in Hukaung Valley were suspended and the continued conflict limits the potential for short term future activities. Hukaung Valley’s incredible biodiversity ensures that it must remain as a conservation priority for Myanmar and South-east Asia. The project reached out to senior community leaders and Senior Forest Department to improve their understanding of Indigenous Community Conservation Areas (ICCAs) by visiting communities managing ICCAs in the Philippines with the support of UNDP.

The challenges with communities in Putao District have already improved since their opposition to the creation of the Natural World Heritage nomination. WCS has provided additional trainings to representatives of the Rawang Culture and Literature Committee to build their internal capacity to document traditional land use plans in relation to Hponkanrazi Wildlife Sanctuary and potentially the proposed southern extension to the Hkakaborazi National Park. The committee members are now developing their own plans to work with the Forest Department through co-management and the development of their own Local Community Protected Area on the southern edge of Hkakaborazi NP. These are still an early stage in the process, but local community members are positive that they may one day support a Natural and Cultural World Heritage nomination for this globally outstanding area.

The project activities have focused in Htamanthi WS with continued meetings with the Shan Ni Culture and Literature Committees in Homalin and Hkamti as well as Community User Groups in the seven communities apply for Community Forest on the edge of HWS. Consultations have also been conducted in partnership with HWS Warden to develop a clear management plan for the area, now being reviewed by NWCD.

The project worked closely with MONREC’s creation of Protected Area Management Coordination Committees (PAMCC) at the State and Region Level, as well as district and township meetings. These meetings will still need significant outside motivation and financial support to maintain their usefulness. WCS will secure additional finance to support this mechanism in Sagaing Region after the project ends.

The project and co-financing from other WCS grants, have continued support to local community members to develop future activities related to ecotourism, value added to natural products and improve agriculture effectiveness.

The transition of this process and documentation of the project's experience working with communities will be documented through the *Policy Brief on the Evolving Framework on Protected Area Governance in Myanmar and Global Good Practices*. This work has been contracted through UNDP and will provide a draft report in early January 2020.

	Assessment Criteria	Low	Acceptable	High
1	Have the program objectives been achieved?		✓	
2	How is ownership/commitment to continue program activities?		✓	
3	Does the Government value program activities			✓
4	What is the level of demand for the "phased over" services		✓	
5	How sufficient is the institutional and human resource capacity to sustain the project		✓	
6	Is there a viable plan to sustain the project		✓	

Recommendations

1. The community and stakeholder's participation systems that have been piloted during the project have built the capacity of local community members, government staff and WCS in building collaborative mechanisms and working together to improve conservation actions. This process must continue beyond the end of the project and there are a range of additional activities that are still needed. WCS will continue to raise funds to support these activities in Htamanthi WS and in Putao District.
2. As well as the range of activity reports developed over the course of the past 5 years the documentation of the project's experience working with communities will be documented through the *Policy Brief on the Evolving Framework on Protected Area Governance in Myanmar and Global Good Practices*. This work will serve as a guide for securing additional resources for continued actions after the end of the project.
3. The public consultations that have supported the development of the HWS Management Plan can be **Phased Over** to directly implement management actions. Additional community based activities are in line with **Indicator 5** to support the expansion of LCPAs which are still in need of substantial **Additional Investment**.

Outcome 2 Action Plan

Activity	Responsibility	2019				2020					
		Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Indicator 9: No. of business plan for PA developed and under implementation	NWCD, WCS					X					
- HWS business plan	NWCD, WCS					X					
- Integrate management planning with institutional financial framework	MONREC						Additional Investment				
Indicator 10: Reduction of threats at the target sites as indicated by increase	NWCD, WCS					X	Additional Investment				

of patrol distance (km) and decrease of evidence of illegal activity (people, camps and hunting weapons)							
- NWCD now manages SMART at the National Level and in multiple Protected Area sites	NWCD	Phased Over					
Indicator 11: Management effectiveness of individual PAs covering 2,604,000 ha, indicated by the % increase in the METT assessment	NWCD, WCS					X	Phased Over
Indicator 12: Community and stakeholder's participation systems piloted at demonstration PAs and landscapes, and incorporated into management plans	NWCD, WCS					X	Additional Investment
HWS Management Plan	NWCD					X	Phased Over
PAMCC – supported through new funding							Additional Investment
Private Sector Opportunities – supported through new funding					X		Additional Investment
Policy Brief on the Evolving Framework on Protected Area Governance						X	

Indicator 13 (M&E): Knowledge Products

Number of knowledge products reflecting best practices and lessons learned documented and disseminated for scaling-up.

Activity	Responsibility	2019				2020					
		Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Reptile Red List	Reptile Experts, WCS					X					
Bird Red List	Bird Experts, WCS					X					

Mammal Red List	Mammal Experts, WCS					X					
Ecosystem Red List	UNWS, WCS					X					
Protected Area Review	WCS					X					
NWCD Curricula for Biodiversity and Protected Area management	NWCD, WCS	X									
UoFES Curricula for Biodiversity and Protected Area management	UoFES, WCS	X									
MFS Curricula for Biodiversity and Protected Area management	MFS, WCS	X									
CFDTC Curricula for Biodiversity and Protected Area management	CFDTC, WCS	X									
Draft Conservation Biodiversity and Protected Area Rules	MONREC				X				X		

Indicator 14 (M&E): Strategies

Activity	Responsibility	2019				2020					
		Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Capacity Development Strategy	NWCD, UoFES, MFS, CFTDC WCS	X									
Sustainable Finance Strategy	WCS, Lucy Emerton					X					
Exit Strategy	WCS, UNDP					X					

Additional Financial Investments

WCS will continue to work with NWCD in Naypyidaw and at sites across the country. There are a range of private, bilateral and regional projects that support WCS in Myanmar. WCS is currently raising over 1 million USD per year to support the initiatives that began during the GEF project. The actions identified under the project indicators that need continued financial support are listed below with existing funds or grants being developed.

Indicator 3: Financial Sustainability of PA System

WCS will continue to support activities to strengthen system and build financial opportunities to sustainably finance the protected area system. This indicator is linked to **Indicator 7** and the creation of the Myanmar Biodiversity Fund. WCS has secured additional funding (US\$ 381,000) from the Government of Norway and their Oil for Development Program to review legal opportunities and improve management systems in relation to the Mitigation Hierarchy, especially Biodiversity Offsets.

Indicator 5: Legal status enabling local people to use and benefit from sites within Protected Areas put in place and implemented

WCS will continue to work with local communities in and around protected areas especially in Kachin State, Sagaing Region and Rakhine State. In particular we will support piloting Local Community Protected Area systems and increase community and government capacities. WCS is currently implementing these activities funded by the

European Union (US\$ 956,533) around the Rakhine Yoma Elephant Range protected area. We are also developing an International Wildlife Trade funding from the UK government to support communities in the Putao valley, Kachin State.

Indicator 7: Piloted a feasible sustainable financing mechanism

The Myanmar Biodiversity Fund (MBF) was established during the GEF project. WCS currently has financial support from Agence française de développement (US\$ 1,672,500) but most of these activities are for continuing field activities. This project will maintain the basic costs for MBF, but the fund still needs to be capitalized with significant resources.

Indicator 9: Business plan for PA developed and under implementation

WCS has developed a Conservation Investment Plan for Htamanthi WS. This is the first integration of management planning with an institutional financial framework. Moving ahead this tool needs to be aligned with the Conservation of Biodiversity and Protected Areas (CBPA) Law and Rules that will lead to legal collection of entrance fees in protected areas. Once fees are being collected and managed the CIP will be a necessary tool for effective project management. WCS is considering this mechanism in relation to Rakhine Yoma Elephant Range and in Sagaing Region however funds are currently limited.

Indicator 10: Reduction of threats at the target sites as indicated by increase of patrol distance (km) and decrease of evidence of illegal activity (people, camps and hunting weapons)

WCS continues to work with Htamanthi WS from a range of private foundations supporting WCS, the Forest Department and local communities with over US\$ 400,000/year. WCS also continues to work closely with Alaungdaw Kathapa National Park, Rakhine Yoma Elephant Range and the Tanintharyi Nature Reserve. WCS is an active member in the SMART Partnership continuing to support the long-term sustainability of the SMART Patrolling tool. NWCD now uses SMART as their national system for reporting and monitoring threats across the country. This support will continue and has become a more widespread activity with continued support from the Norwegian Environmental Agency, Worldwide Fund for Nature, and Fauna and Flora International. WCS is developing a regional program with Germany's International Climate Initiative (IKI) to provide significant support for SMART patrolling.

Indicator 12: Community and stakeholder's participation systems piloted at demonstration PAs and landscapes, and incorporated into management plans

The project has had success in the development of the Protected Area Management Coordination Committee (PAMCC) early on in the project and is planning to support the next PAMCC meeting in Sagaing Region following the COVID-19 Situation with ACB/KFW funding. Community participation has supported the development of the Htamanthi WS Management Plan. Additional management plans still need to be finalized with greater community participation. The project understands the complications of these activities and recognize that additional projects should support this ongoing process. The project's remote location limited the opportunities for Private Sector Investments. WCS and the Directors of MBF are exploring additional opportunities in sustainable finance and longer-term conservation investments linked to Biodiversity offsets with the support of Norway Oil for Development as listed above.

Good Practice and Lessons Learned

From July 2015 until June 2020 the project worked closely with the Forest Department and other Myanmar Government offices and local communities in Naypyidaw, Kachin State and Sagaing Region to track, plan for, collaborate with and advise on conservation activities across the country.

The project's primary focus during its development was the significant expansion of **Myanmar's Protected Area System**. Although there had been discussions for some of these areas for many years, the project was implemented during a period of societal change that brought many complaints and concerns to the forefront of public discussions. During the project period the international conservation community has also been developing a broader range of management systems to achieve biodiversity conservation. Myanmar is now prepared for understanding and

implementing the full range of conservation actions to implement in to the post-2020 Biodiversity Conservation framework being drafted under the Convention of Biological Diversity. The government's new CBPA Law and Rules has recognized the Local Community Protected Areas (LCPAs) which are designed to work as Indigenous Community Conservation Areas in Myanmar. The Forest Department also recognizes that their job is evolving and all of their forest lands within the permanent forest estate have a role to play as other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs). This was a significant result of the project and an important tool is the effective conservation of Myanmar's biodiversity. Subsequent projects need to be developed to expand and refine LCPAs and OECMs across Myanmar.

Over the past five years, many of the **digital tools** being tested in protected area management and land use planning have moved from expensive investments to efficient and almost instantaneous tools that can be used with a telephone in almost everyone's pocket. The project has leveraged tools to quickly see and calculate annual forest cover changes for every protected area or any other area in the country. We have also used machine learning tools to analyse years of spatial data across the entire country to develop Myanmar's first ecosystem typology and then map and understand the threats of these ecosystems. Myanmar was the first country in the tropics to conduct such an inclusive ecosystem assessment and to use these digital tools to effectively understand the strengths and threats documented in the Red List of Ecosystems. Future projects can build on this process by using the typology and existing data for improving the use and understanding of threatened ecosystems and prioritizing threatened ecosystems for conservation action.

The development of the **CBPA** Law in 2017 and 2018 was a government process without public consultation. Once the Law was approved in May 2018 the project began discussions with NWCD on how best to engage with stakeholders to develop a robust series of rules aligned with the new law. This process expanded into a series of public consultations across the country and in Naypyidaw to bring together local leader, national NGOs and CSOs and international organizations to discuss priority issues and develop a draft set of rules satisfactory for most of the stakeholders. This process was an important lesson learned that has gone on to support additional stakeholder consultations in relation to the 2018 Forest Law associated rules and is now being discussed in relation to future laws and regulations. This process developed stronger relationships across organizations and projects to work together for better understanding and improved outputs. This is an important process that future projects should engage with and build upon.

In the earliest stages of the development of this project, WCS started working to review and analyse the government's budgets, income and expenditures in relation to protected areas and conservation activities. During the course of the project we have continued to track and understand these expenditures but also linked them to improved management systems and their budgetary needs. In understanding our budgetary needs we can now inform government and external funders on what costs are needed and why. By understanding these financial needs we have also developed the **Myanmar Biodiversity Fund (MBF)**, the first independent conservation trust fund in Myanmar. Future project can understand financial needs more clearly and are definitely needed to capitalize the MBF to secure the long term support of Myanmar's conservation commitments.

The project has had success in the development of the **Protected Area Management Coordination Committee (PAMCC)** early on in the project and is planning to support the next PAMCC meeting in Sagaing Region following the COVID-19 Situation with additional funding. Once the CBPA Rules are approved the PAMCC system will be expanded nationally becoming an important venue for linking community and stakeholder participation to township, district and state and Region governments in relation to protected area issues as well as broader discussions ranging from international wildlife trade to ecotourism. These mechanisms should be built into all future conservation projects and NWCD and Forest Department should continue their use of this important venue to link local government and community issues to future actions.

Conclusion

The project has achieved many of its original targets, the social and political challenges that have changed since the initial project development have provided opportunities to improve conservation action with greater collaboration between government and community participants.

There were a few activities that are now ready to be **Phased Down**. These include the LOCA System that can be used easily to access Global Forest Watch and other data tools to map and monitor Protected Areas and Forest

Cover. The capacity building strategy approved through the project can also be **Phased Down** and WCS will focus on specific technical support as needed.

At the end of the project, multiple activities have supported the **Phasing Over** of Project activities into several new mechanisms – KBA Coordination Group and Myanmar Biodiversity Fund now exist and stronger Gender Equality is also needed to support future projects. The Nature Wildlife Conservation Division (NWCD) has already begun by **Phasing Over** the SMART Law Enforcement Tool to be implemented nationally, and NWCD is also **Phasing Over** the development of Protected Area Management Plans and the use of planning tools to inform future Protected Area and OECMs being created to meet the next challenges of the CBD Post-2020 Biodiversity Framework.

From the project there is clear focus to continue and search for substantial **Additional Investment** to support piloting LCPA systems and increase community and government capacities to reduce threats. Community and stakeholder's participation systems have been piloted at demonstration PAs and landscapes. This participation was incorporated into a management plan linked to a business plan. The role of integrated management planning now needs to be linked through an improved institutional financial framework. This framework would support new tools such as MBF and EMF and to work with local governments (PAMCC) to understand and expand private sector opportunities to build and utilize new funding for the financial sustainability of Myanmar's PA System.