

Annex 21:

Project assumptions for Theory of Change

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A1. Willingness exists between relevant agencies to collaborate at national and land and seascape levels in order to achieve ILSM.

Evidence: A goal has been set by the national government to achieve harmony and balance between economic development and environmental conservation across multiple sectors via the coordination efforts of the National Environment Conservation Committee (NECC). NECC is chaired by the MONREC Minister, and its members include deputy ministers from related ministries. However, inter-sectoral collaboration for integrated landscape management is a recognized weakness in the governance system that this project aims to address. One of the key project proponents is Tanintharyi Regional Government, which is responsible for planning and coordinating land use in the region, and therefore stands to benefit directly from such a collaborative approach. Other key proponents are MoNREC, which covers the forestry and nature conservation sectors, the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, and the Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Rural Development. All these stakeholders have been engaged during the PPG process and have expressed their support for the project's approach towards achieving ILSM. There is no doubt that challenges remain to achieve meaningful inter-sectoral collaboration, given that this is a major shift from the traditional narrow sectoral view that has dominated government in Myanmar, but it should be supported by the engagement of a wide range of stakeholders including independent entities.

A2. The recognized benefits of ILSM towards providing ecosystem services, ecological security and biodiversity conservation outweigh the immediate short term economic benefits of sectoral land development practices

Evidence: The national government is party to CBD, the Ramsar Convention, CITES and other MEAs and these international obligations are reflected in national policy including the NBSAP, National Forest Policy (1995) and National Sustainable Development Strategy (2009). With the current process of decentralization, and the establishment of a new government following elections in 2015, in fact there are many uncertainties as to how the new regional government will address biodiversity conservation and environmental sustainability issues, especially in the face of strong demands and potentially lucrative agreements with private sector investors. The KNU also have an important role to play in this equation, as they manifestly support rural Karen communities including their right to self-determination over land use (versus incoming plantation companies, etc), and much of the forested land within their control remains in good condition. Efforts to sustain the region's ecological security will ultimately contribute towards national security through ensuring continued ecosystem services and by reducing risks from food insecurity and natural disasters.

A3. The MoNREC / FD continue to provide strong political and financial support for the development and operational management of the PA system, as well as science-based integrated management of forest resources as key contributions towards national prosperity and ecological security

Evidence: The National Forest Policy (1995) aims to maintain 30 percent of the country's total land area under Reserved Forests and Public Protected Forest and 5 percent of total land area as Protected Areas. The 30-year National Forestry Sector Master Plan (2001/02 to 2030/31), prepared in the year 2000, has a goal of expanding PAs to 10 percent of the country's total land area. Annual budgets for the Forestry Department under the current Five Year Plan and progress in implementing the priority activities and meeting KPIs under the FYP. Current District Forest Management Plans include proposals for new protected areas covering Lenya PNP and Lenya Extension PNP, and FD has supported the project's inclusion of Reserved Forests (Tha Gyet and Their Khun RFs) for protection and rehabilitation. Community Forestry Instructions (CFIs) issued by the Forest Department (FD) in 1995 were a remarkable initiative to foster partnership, participation and decentralization in managing the forests including coastal forests and mangroves in Myanmar. The instruction grants the local communities trees and forest land tenure rights for an initial 30-year period that is extendable based on the success of implementation. The FD provides technical assistance and plays the leadership role in the exercise of community forestry. As an example, there is a proposal by the Tanintharyi Regional Forest Department to allot Protected Public Forest in the Palaw township, and a part of Pinyinbugyi Village Tract is also proposed to be a part of the would-be Protected Public Forest. The future management of these areas will require additional capacity and financial support from FD, which the project must support through enabling sustainable financing mechanisms.

A4. The Tanintharyi Regional Government and other key stakeholders continue to be committed to the extension of the PA system, buffer zones and corridors in the face of other demands for land and resources.

Evidence: Myanmar is in the process of devolving power from the national government to regional and local governments. In 2013, the Region or State Parliament Law was promulgated. It is envisaged that an increasing level of authority and responsibility will be decentralized to the regional and state governments, including natural resource management. The government is also in the process of developing the National Land Use Policy. Related to this, MoNREC started an initiative called One Map Myanmar Programme to harmonize the spatial planning data required for land use planning at the national and regional levels. Tanintharyi has been selected as a pilot region under the programme.

After the 2015 election, the winning National League for Democracy formed the new government and political commitment has become stronger on environmental issues and also prioritized on the peoples' desire. Tanintharyi regional government also focuses on environmental conservation and the following are examples of political will as potential strengths of the project:

- The Chief Minister inspected fish meal factories in Myeik Township and temporarily shut down 2 out of 6 factories for not following pollution prevention requirements
- Checked illegal mining.
- Checked oil palm plantations.
- Banned charcoal production in the whole Tanintharyi Region (although it is not clear if this includes significant amounts produced for domestic consumption (note - charcoal making is the main threat to mangrove forests and the main markets are Yangon and Thailand). The FD plans to supply fuelwood and charcoal from natural forest, village fuelwood plantations, home-gardens and community forestry.

A5. Stakeholders responsible for hosting the information system, providing data and information and making use of the information are willing to collaborate and share information and resources openly.

Evidence: The majority of stakeholders consulted during the PPG assessment (e.g. government agencies, academic institutions and NGOs, see Annex 2 of the report in **Annex 17**, baseline reports on the NBS and knowledge management framework) viewed the creation of a biodiversity data repository and open access web portal as important for facilitating collaborations and information-sharing, and ultimately, to improving capacity for analysis and decision-making (although partial reservations were expressed by some WCS and WWF staff). The extent to which different data holders will contribute to an open access web portal will ultimately depend on the costs and benefits associated with doing so. Open access platforms are an effective approach to data sharing, but their success also depends heavily on ease of use and existence of clear policies and release agreements describing the terms and responsibilities for data provision (including standards for data and metadata), ownership, maintenance, user access levels and subsequent use, liability and attribution. Development of a carefully rationalized policy encouraging contributions and use across the broadest range of stakeholders is therefore essential to effectiveness of the open access web portal.

A6. The National Biodiversity Survey system is sustainable, supported by the host government institutions and easily accessible to all stakeholders

Evidence: There are existing examples of such information systems maintained by some of the same agencies: the Myanmar Clearing House Mechanism, managed by NWCD within the Forest Department; Myanmar Environmental Information Portal, a new website supported by the ADB GMS Core Environment Program and managed by the Environmental Conservation Department of MONREC; Myanmar Information Management Unit (MIMU), established by the UN in 2007 for the purposes of improving capacity for analysis and decision making for a wide variety of stakeholders, MIMU maintains a common data and information repository with data from various sources for a wide range of sectors and likely constitutes the most extensive source of RS/GIS data nationally; and the Myanmar Biodiversity website created by several local and international NGOs (WCS, OIKOS, NYBG, TSA and Helmsley Trust) working on nature conservation in Myanmar.

A7. Involvement in the design and implementation of project interventions and knowledge sharing on the experiences and expected benefits of ILSM practices will result in long-term support for the project and adoption of new knowledge, skills and practices.

Evidence: Strong participation and ownership by the key agencies with mandate for biodiversity conservation (FD and DoF) during project preparation workshops and consultations, and willingness to participate in the Project Board and RTACG, and interest in sustainable development from the incoming Tanintharyi Regional Government (including a current review of oil palm concession licences). DoF recently approved four LMMAs in Tanintharyi (October 2016) through collaborative work with FFI; FD have allocated two experienced staff to Lenya PNP for tiger conservation work in collaboration with FFI.

A8. National and regional commitment to democratic sustainable development approaches over sector-led rapid development allows sustainable resource use and biodiversity conservation to be included in planning processes.

Evidence: As for A7, underpinned by national policy for sustainable forest management (Forest Master Plan), biodiversity conservation (NBSAP), and wetland conservation (e.g. participation in the Ramsar Convention).