

# Accelerating progress towards SDG2

MYANMAR



# **POLICY EFFECTIVENESS ANALYSIS**

MYANMAR 2019

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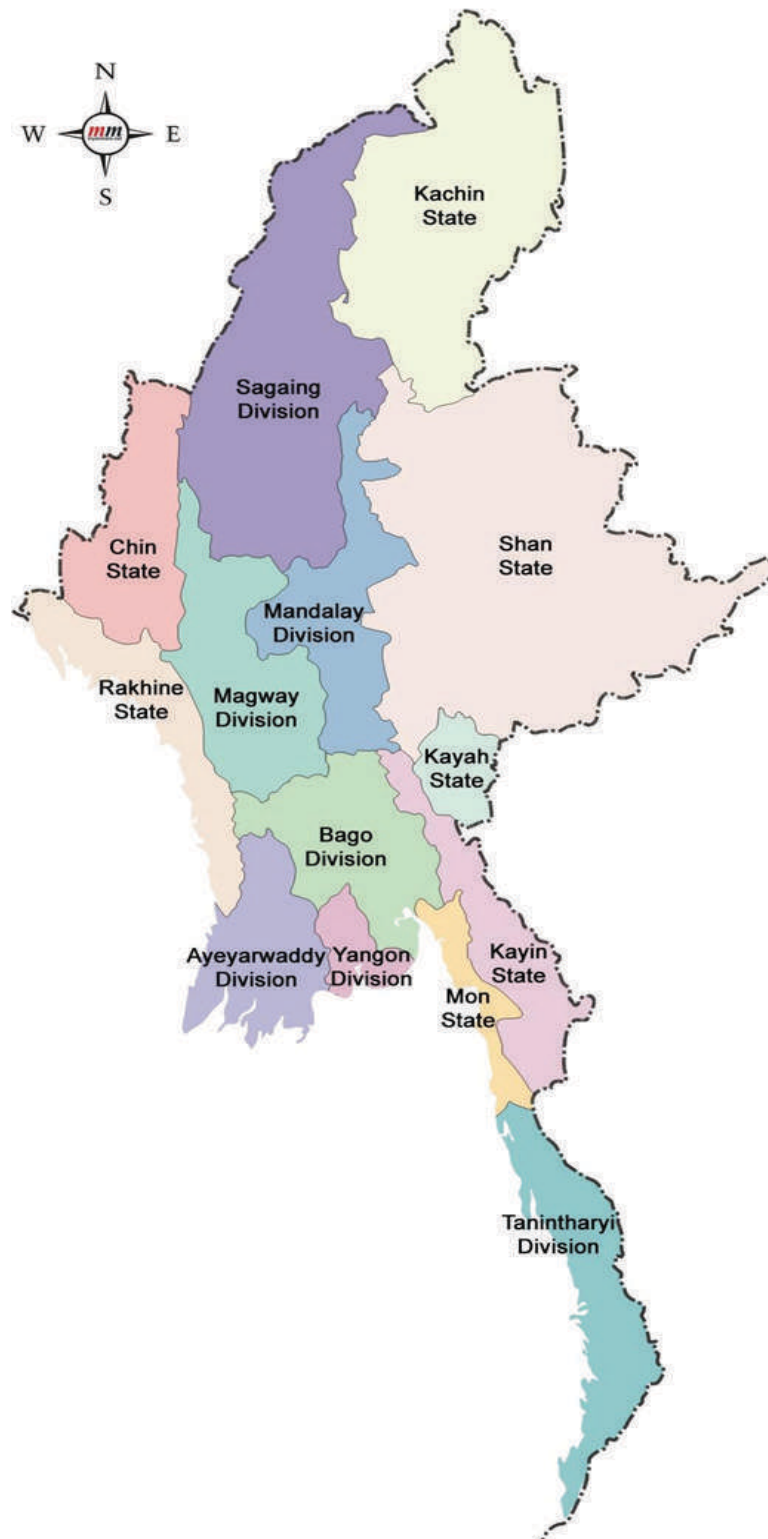
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# MAP OF MYANMAR





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# 1 | INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGIES





## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

**Myanmar is a resource-rich country, with sufficient food available at the national level to feed the population.** There is high potential for agriculture diversification, yet the country suffers a high burden of food insecurity and malnutrition, with a higher prevalence in peripheral ethnic states. Myanmar brings together 14 regions and ethnic states under the 2008 Constitution. After more than 50 years of economic and political isolation, Myanmar has become an integral and strong ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) partner. It is sandwiched between two major BRICS economies (China and India), which are seeking opportunities for regional development. Foreign land-based investments in Myanmar have had a slow start, but the country arguably remains the last land frontier in Southeast Asia.

**Agriculture is, and will remain, the backbone of the economy for years to come** but development and public investment in the sector are geographically uneven. The agriculture sector contributes to 32 percent of GDP, 25 percent of export earnings and employs 70 percent of the work force, fully justifying the focus of this assessment on the sector and its links with nutrition and land. The motivation to support policy development was originally inspired by a desire to restore Myanmar's fame as the world's major rice exporter, regaining its status of the 1950s. However, research indicates that the income generated from smallholder rice production, especially during the monsoon season, is significantly less than the revenues that can be derived from other crops and production systems (World Bank-LIFT, 2016).<sup>1</sup> Consequently, smallholders are not likely to benefit if Myanmar regains its place on the international rice stage.

**In 2010, Myanmar held its first democratic elections, emerging from nearly 50 years of self-isolation, military rule and civil war.** In 2008, the military led a reform of the Constitution, paving the path for this transition but still guaranteeing 25% representation of the military in the two parliamentary houses and control of three ministries. This shift to a democratically elected government has widened the space for more inclusive policy-making, including the three policy process that FIRST has identified and is supporting. Myanmar has a strong national identity and ownership of processes, despite geopolitical pressure to influence policy direction. A strong civil society emerged after the military period.

**The EU-FAO partnership, "Food and Nutrition Security Impact, Resilience, Sustainability and Transformation" (FIRST), started in Myanmar in 2016 with a focus on land as a foundation for sustainable agriculture and food security; a second strong focus on nutrition was added in 2018.** The FIRST partnership has primarily aimed to link these areas technically and strategically, anchoring its work in a number of nationally-owned policy processes.

**Over the course of the past three years, FIRST has identified and provided facilitation support to three country-led policy/strategic processes** that are considered key for addressing Sustainable Development Goals 1 and 2: i) **the National Land Use Policy (NLUP); ii) the Agriculture Development Strategy (ADS); and iii) the Multi Sector National Plan of Action for Nutrition (MS-NPAN).** A new area of work was recently added to provide

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<sup>1</sup> World Bank-LIFT study. *Myanmar: analysis of farm production economics*, 2016

financial backing and additional technical assistance to these plans through EU Budget Support (particularly on the ADS - MS-NPAN interface). As extensive evidence suggests, it is important to 'think multisectorally but act sectorally,' and so FIRST is mainly assisting the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation (MoALI) to explore the interface of these plans, principally anchoring them in the nationally-endorsed ADS.

**With the dawn of decentralization, there is a potential shift from top-down to bottom up participatory planning.** The recently endorsed Multi-Sectoral National Action Plan for Nutrition is currently being adapted to 7 States/Regions this year and there are intentions for the ADS to follow the same trend. The MS-NPAN is giving momentum to pilot tools and methodologies and to set a precedent for thinking multi and intra-sectorally, but implementing sectorally. This is part of a much larger shift from budget-based, union-level, activity-based planning, to planning for budgets based on sub-sector and sector priorities.

**FIRST has been a flagship policy assistance facility in a time of transition** where partners are increasingly working with Government but still based in the historic city of Yangon, with Government in the new capital of Nay Pyi Taw. FIRST has served as an interlocutor between agencies based across these cities and hotline for DPs attempting to establish stronger links with Government. The programme also established a permanent policy facilitation base in MoALI, key ministry for land, food and nutrition policy development. This particularly set a precedent for direct EU support to MoALI and opened the space for policy dialogue and the design of the Budget Support operation, which FIRST has extensively supported.

**The FIRST partnership has engaged with the MoALI to conduct a Policy Effectiveness Analysis in order to guide future support and investment.** The assessment addressed a range of issues, including the drivers of food insecurity and malnutrition in Myanmar; the development of an enabling policy environment to address these challenges and capitalize on opportunities; implementation capacity and needs for institutional strengthening and coordination; public and private financial needs, and policy credibility around SDG2. It concludes with a set of recommendations.

## 1.2 KEY FINDINGS

The Policy Effectiveness Analysis identifies a set of gaps that need further attention to take forward the agenda of food security and nutrition in Myanmar, as follows:

- » **The need to shift from budget-based planning to programme-based budgeting.** Efforts to strengthen national and especially sub-national planning must continue. The process of decentralizing the implementation of the ADS, MS-NPAN and NLUP offers a unique opportunity to achieve this and to set a precedent for inclusive policy development for Myanmar.
- » **Better identify and adapt specific interventions** to relevant socio-ecological conditions and deliver goods and services based on the profile and needs of specific groups.

- » Adequate funding is required for policy implementation at all levels, but with specific need for increased **sub-national budgeting** and possible engagement and contributions from the private sector.
- » **Performance and results-based Monitoring and Evaluation framework** to drive national and subnational planning, implementation, as well as targeting.
- » Deal with some outstanding **policy content gaps** under each of the three processes, such as better operationalization of nutrition in the ADS and its investment plan and creating a more enabling nutrition sensitive land tenure environment to genuinely respond to the challenges of a Food Basket policy.
- » **Improve intra-ministerial coordination** within MoALI, while at the same time continue support and strengthening existing **inter-sector and inter-ministerial coordination** on nutrition and land.
- » **Capacity strengthening of public institutions at national and State/Region level for nutrition, agriculture and land** to engage in policy, strategy, programme design, implementation and oversight provision including National Land Use Council, MoALI (including ADSISU) and National Nutrition Centre.

**Based on these findings, a concrete work programme for the extended phase of FIRST was drafted up to the end of 2020 - the Graduation Strategy.** The work with focus on further strengthening the enabling environment to accelerate progress for SDG2, focusing in particular on enhancing implementation capacities:

## 1.3 METHODOLOGY AND ITERATIVE PROCESS OF DRAFTING THE POLICY EFFECTIVENESS ANALYSIS

**The Policy Effectiveness Assessment in Myanmar was an iterative process- aiming to be informed by and inform ongoing national policy processes i.e. the ADS and its interface with the MS-NPAN.** Responding to a series of eight guiding questions around policy processes, this exercise was meant to be practical. Figure 1 illustrates the approach. The FIRST-Myanmar team developed a set of four tools to support the assessment process by: i) compiling a rich base of data and evidence; ii) strengthening and establishing networks with government partners, civil society organizations, development partners and national/international institutions; iii) providing technical assistance jointly with national and international experts; and iv) developing methodologies to address specific issues, including consultation processes, and multistakeholder policy dialogues.

FIRST designed these tools to support four closely linked processes: i) NLUP, ii) ADS, iii) MS-NPAN and, more recently, iv) the EU proposal for future budget support of the ADS-MS-NPAN interface. The results and outcomes of the Policy Effectiveness Analysis contributed to a set of concrete outputs as follows:

FIGURE 1

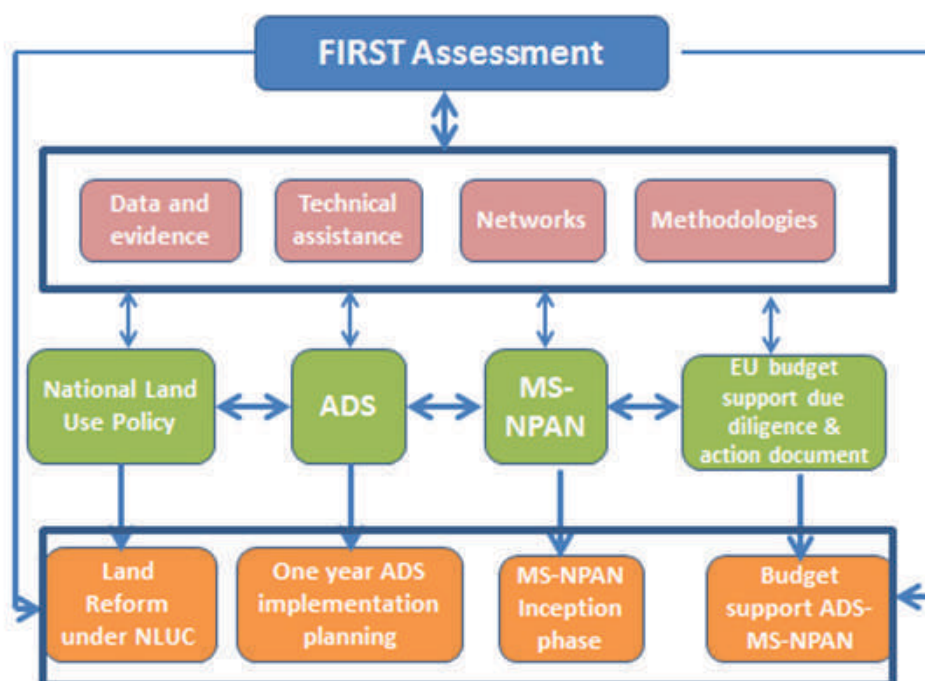


FIGURE 1: Embedding the FIRST policy assessment in policy processes

Source: FIRST-Myanmar

- » **Eligibility assessment and action document for possible EU budget support to MoALI on nutrition-sensitive agriculture.** The due diligence for the initial budget support proposal included answering similar questions to those in the assessment concerning policy relevance, robustness and coherence with other policies; credibility and inclusivity of policy actions; existence and functioning of performance assessment frameworks (M&E); adequate implementation financing (public and non-public sources); budget comprehensiveness; public finance management system functioning; institutional capacity and ownership; analytical basis and data quality; and issues of political economy. As part of the design team (taking the technical lead on nutrition), FIRST supported the development of a programme action document, articulating the theory of change, prioritization of MoALI departments with the potential to impact nutrition, assessing capacity gaps, prioritizing areas for intervention, and identifying variable tranche indicators, impact, outcome and output indicators. FIRST also supported the design of implementation mechanisms (local planning, accountability), capacity strengthening for implementation, M&E (performance assessment); and recommended requirements for further reform and measures to improve the enabling environment.
- » **Unfolding and operationalizing the ADS at union, region/state and possibly township levels.** This exercise considers the production of action plans at the subnational level to implement the ADS. It involves the development and capacity strengthening of several institutions for ADS implementation, including an

- » implementation support unit (ADSISU); creating strategic ownership at all levels; and subnational action and public resource mobilization planning for ADS implementation. The exercise is closely related to the implementation capacity needs assessment included in the analysis and is an area of work still to be undertaken by MoALI under the leadership of ADSISU.
- » **Developing the MS-NPAN.** The policy effectiveness assessment contributed substantially to MoALI's input to the MS-NPAN, its interface with the ADS, and MoALI's articulation of contribution to nutrition. FIRST has been recognized as the technical lead by Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement partners to support MoALI on MS-NPAN planning and implementation. As such, FIRST supports intrasectoral coordination, engagement in multisector fora, and linkages between development partners engaged in agriculture for nutrition. Eight MS-NPAN intrasectoral coordination sessions (convened by MoALI's Department of Planning [DoP]) were initiated and supported by FIRST. Outputs included the identification of effective impact pathways focused on the links between diversification, self-consumption, income generation, and land; identification of promising nutrition-sensitive agricultural interventions; development of a robust theory of change; proposing targets, outcome and output indicators; and an 'agriculture for nutrition technical network'. These are all outcomes of the analysis.
- » **Roll-out of the MS-NPAN at state/region level.** Upon endorsement of the MS-NPAN in November, 2018, a one-year MS-NPAN inception phase was declared for sub-national planning in prioritized States and Regions. The period includes a capacity needs assessment and preparing implementation programmes at subnational level; planning for convergence; intervention and township prioritization; M&E; coordination mechanisms; costing; and operationalizing specific interventions. FIRST has provided critical support to the methodology and development of tools for this sub-national planning process, including the facilitation of a second pilot consultation in Ayeyarwady to prioritize relevant interventions based on risks (food consumption, food gap, coping, and landlessness), opportunities, capacities, and feasibility. A package of tools has been finalized for the roll-out of the MS-NPAN in 6 further States and Regions by the end 2020, to be followed by others in 2020. FIRST has been of critical help in mobilizing resources from EU to hire an M&E consultant as part of the core MS-NPAN team of experts who are further supported by UNICEF, World Bank, WFP, and the Livelihoods and Food Security Fund (LIFT).

In addition to the tools and methods mentioned above, the FIRST-Myanmar team also undertook the following work in support of the analysis:

- » **Two four-day field visits** with MoALI staff, national and international consultants; one state – Shan State – and one region – Ayeyarwaddy Region – to explore subnational issues. This included work with state and regional governments and township and district administrations. The state and regional sites represent two significantly different priority areas for addressing nutrition and nutrition sensitive agriculture, respectively uplands/hilly ethnic states and the delta area. Village visits were also organized to explore and cross-check outreach and the quality of public service delivery.

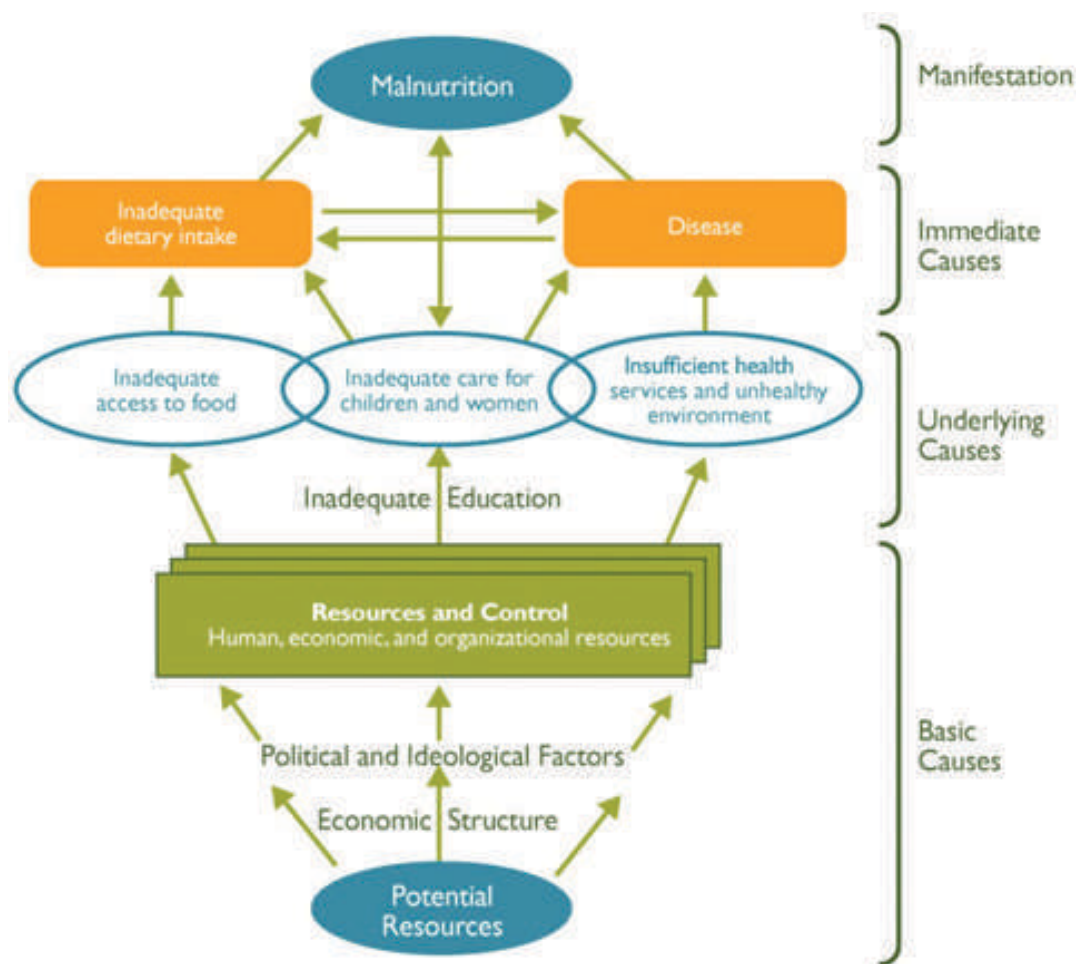


- » **Four three-day intersector policy dialogues** on nutrition-agriculture-land at the region/state levels generated significant evidence on key drivers of current food and nutrition security (FNS) status, and possible pathways to address them.
- » **A series of semi-structured interviews** on agriculture-nutrition linkages in Myanmar and lessons derived from project implementation across the country (with UN Network for SUN facilitator, World Food Programme (WFP), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Deutsche Gesellschaft fuer Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), Save the Children, World Concern, World Fish, International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), Michigan State University (MSU), United States Aid (USAID), Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC), International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT), World Bank, Asian Development Bank (ADB), European Union (EU), and Livelihoods and Food Security Fund (LIFT) and FAO project teams for livestock, fisheries, and Emergency Center for Transboundary Animal Diseases (ECTAD).
- » **Engagement with the Scaling up Nutrition (SUN) Movement and Land Core Group (LCG)** has been an important mechanism for engaging and coordinating with development partners working on similar issues. FIRST joined monthly 'expanded technical network' SUN meetings with representatives from donors, the UN, civil society, and academic networks to brainstorm coordination mechanisms and evidenced-based impact pathways for nutrition.
- » **Employed national consultants** to i) draft a comprehensive report based on a capacity assessment of MoALI's nutrition governance architecture; and ii) conduct an analysis of the Agriculture Development Strategy and its contribution to nutrition.
- » **FIRST also commissioned 5 review papers from Yezin Agriculture University** on:
  1. The impact of poverty and income on access to diverse, nutrient-rich diets in different agro-ecological zones in Myanmar;
  2. The identification of vulnerable socio-economic groups that face major constraints in meeting minimum dietary requirements;
  3. Consumption patterns and trends in different regions, knowledge of nutrition and food taboos, and food safety issues;
  4. Analysis of the profitability of agrarian production systems and profit margins of selected value chains for different operators along the chain;
  5. Overview of the capacity of agricultural research, extension and education systems to implement a strategy on agricultural diversification.
- » **European Union Delegation in Myanmar (EUD-MM) helped FIRST to identify an international food security and nutrition consultant** to support MoALI's theory of change on nutrition and assess the possible contribution of the ADS to nutrition.
- » **FIRST conducted an inception workshop on the Policy Effectiveness Analysis** to present the FIRST programme, introduce the rationale, focus and components of the

- » analysis, and discuss how to make the work most useful for the Ministry. Participants included representatives from the Departments of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries, Planning, and Rural Development.

**Because food security and nutrition are not sectors per se, the analysis drew on conceptual frameworks from across sectors as well as the UNICEF conceptual framework to analyse the drivers of malnutrition in Myanmar,** mostly focusing on unpacking the basic and underlying causes in the agriculture sector/rural economy. The terminology used in this conceptual framework will be referred to throughout the document.

**FIGURE 2**



**FIGURE 2: Causal pathway of malnutrition**

Source: Adapted from UNICEF 1991



## 1.4 SHARING FINDINGS

**This Policy Effectiveness Analysis has been conducted in parallel with ongoing policy processes** as discussed above (implementation of Land Policy, ADS, MS-NPAN and the proposal for European Union Delegation budget support). As such, the findings have been disseminated to the MoALI, EUD, SUN network, and the Agriculture and Rural Development Sector Coordination Group (ARDSCG) on a rolling basis.

**Once the report has been finalized, FIRST will organize a number of sharing workshops** as part of a series organized by the Agriculture Policy Unit, prepare a presentation for the SUN network to inform the MS-NPAN subnational planning process, and present the findings at an ARDSCG informal donor network meeting. The findings will be reflected in ongoing budget support discussions with member states and EU Brussels.

**Key findings from the diagnostic will likely be captured in policy briefs.** Discussions are already underway to host a rice-fish/aquaculture/land policy symposium and to develop a series of notes on livestock and aquaculture nutrition with partners such as World Fish and LIFT. These should be informed by state and regional level studies and project implementation and will inform the further design and implementation of subnational MS-NPANs and ADS.



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## 2 | FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION

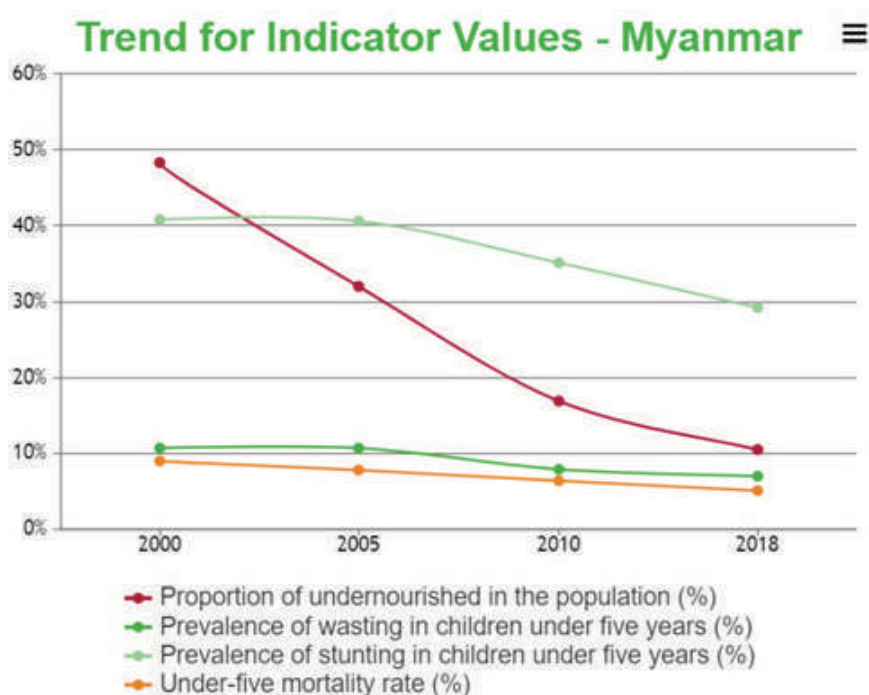




## 2.1 OVERVIEW

**Nutrition rates have significantly improved in Myanmar over the past two decades**, with wasting rates decreasing from 10.7 percent in 2000 to 7 percent in 2016 and stunting rates falling from 40 percent in 2000 to 29 percent in 2015 (Demographic Health Survey 2015-16). The prevalence of stunting is highest in upland, ethnic and border areas (Chin, Kachin, Kayah, Kayin, Shan, Rakhine States and Ayeyarwady Region). According to EU projections, it is unlikely that Myanmar will reach its World Health Assembly target of reducing stunting to 21 percent by 2025 (a target also identified in the MS-NPAN).<sup>2</sup>

FIGURE 3



**FIGURE 3: Global Hunger Index Myanmar, Trend for Indicator Values**

Source: Global Hunger Index Myanmar

**Myanmar ranks 68th out of 119 countries in the 2018 Global Hunger Index with a score of 20.1**, meaning that the country is still afflicted by serious levels of hunger.<sup>3</sup> However, undernourishment has significantly declined to 10.6 percent in 2017, down from 48.3 percent in 2000 (FAO, 2017<sup>4</sup>; UNDP 2017 SDG Baseline Report<sup>5</sup>). **Food insecurity varies by region and also by season**, with hilly states reporting the highest rates; according to the recent Micronutrient and Food Consumption Survey (2017-18), Kayah, Magway, Kayin and Chin reported the poorest food security figures (based on Household Food Insecurity Access Scale).

<sup>2</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/myanmar-nutrition-country-fiche-and-child-stunting-trends\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/myanmar-nutrition-country-fiche-and-child-stunting-trends_en)

<sup>3</sup> Global Hunger Index. <https://www.globalhungerindex.org/myanmar.html>

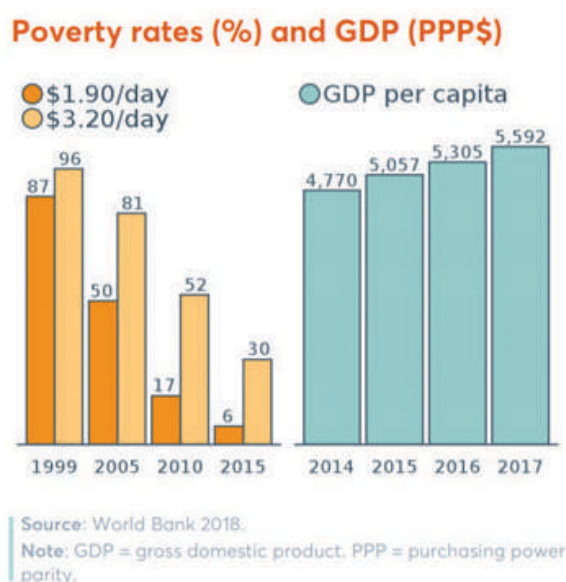
<sup>4</sup> <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SN.ITK.DEFC.ZS?locations=MM>

<sup>5</sup> UNDP. 2017. SDG baseline report.

**The Ministry of Health and Sports (MoHS) has identified five immediate causes of malnutrition:** anaemia, and deficiencies in protein energy, vitamin B1 (beriberi), vitamin A, and iodine. Most Myanmar households under-consume all food groups except for staples: “In 2015, only 38 percent of the population lived in households that consumed the recommended quantity of protein-rich foods, 38 percent fats and oils, 16 percent vegetables, 9 percent fruits, and less than one percent consumed the recommended quantity of dairy products (IFPRI, 2019).”

**Little is known about the underlying drivers of the rapid reduction in stunting.** It appears that poverty reduction has been an important engine for improving diets and exclusive breastfeeding has improved exponentially, from 10 percent in 2000 to over 50 percent in 2015 (DHS, 2015-16). Myanmar has experienced a steady 6 percent economic growth rate since coming out of isolation in 2010; nearly half of the population of 51 million now has the means to purchase a recommended food basket (adjusted for preferences and practices) compared with only 30 percent in 2010 (IFPRI, 2019).<sup>6</sup> Progress has not been even however; there is a strong association between access to animal-based foods and wealth quintile. Limited financial means are compounded by physical barriers to diverse diets (due to infrastructure and terrain constraints) and by dietary habits and taboos that limit the intake of diverse, nutrient-rich foods, especially for young children and pregnant and lactating women. Furthermore, availability and access to diverse foods may be further compromised by a sustained focus on securing national rice self-sufficiency.

FIGURE 4



**FIGURE 4: Poverty rates have significantly declined in Myanmar**

Source: Global Nutrition Report - Myanmar. <file:///C:/Users/Faouser/Downloads/Myanmar.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Mahrt, K. & Mather, D. 2019. *Household dietary patterns and the affordability of a nutritious diet in Myanmar*. IFPRI (forthcoming).

**Given Myanmar's 50-year legacy of Rice-promoting policies, diversification is a nascent discussion.** Farmers do not yet have unconditional freedom to choose the farming systems they intend to use, or the crops they wish to grow. Land tenure remains insecure, especially on lands where aquaculture, livestock and mixed farming systems are present. Existing irrigation schemes mostly cater to rice cultivation (flood irrigation); credit systems incentivize rice production, yet the return on rice is low leaving farmers vulnerable to the conditions of money lenders and often forcing them into cycles of debt. Nevertheless, the culture of rice remains steadfast in the Myanmar, where a common greeting is "Have you eaten rice today?"

**There is evidence that Myanmar's agriculture system has diversified more rapidly than its ASEAN neighbours over the last two decades.**<sup>7</sup> This is likely the result of farmers, including smallholders, responding to the needs (climate change, market dynamics, supporting livelihoods) and opportunities that the country's diversified agroecological settings provide (dry zone, delta, uplands), rather than due to public policies promoting and enabling this trend. A genuine policy shift towards a more diversified agriculture system in all its dimensions will take time, but the Agriculture Development Strategy is an important step to achieving this goal. Institutionalizing reforms in government and at farm level is not a straightforward task and so conclusions on progress to date cannot be clearly articulated at this point.

FIGURE 5

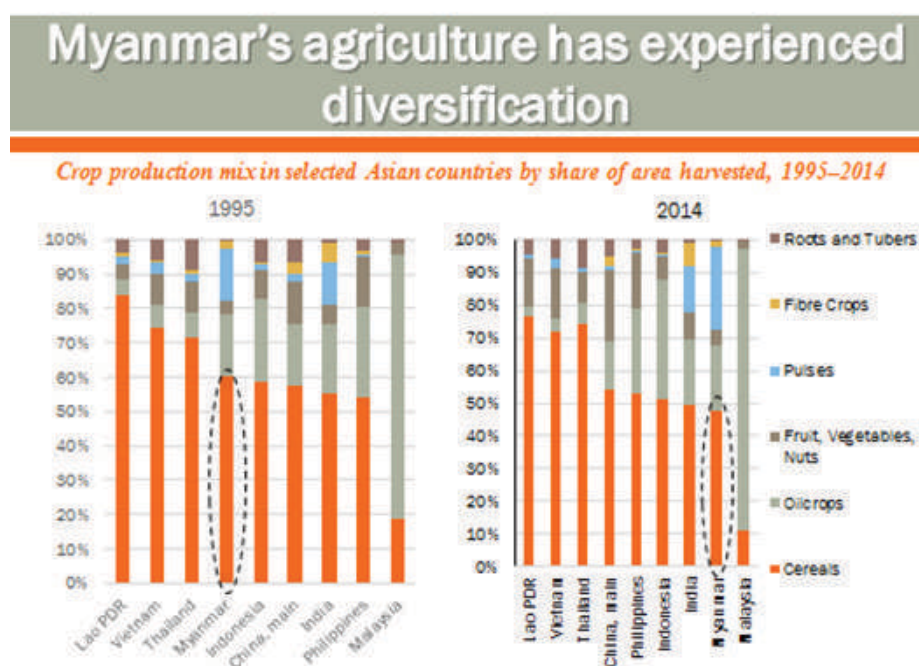


FIGURE 5: Diversification of crop production in selected Asian countries

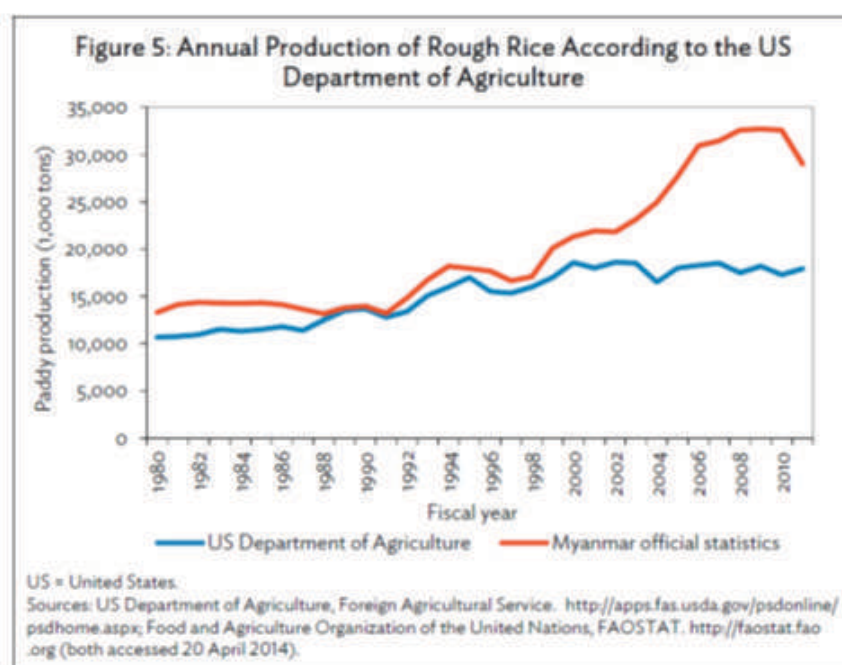
Source: World Bank, 2019

<sup>7</sup> World Bank, 2019 and Ingalls et al, 2018

## 2.2 SNAPSHOT OF CURRENT SITUATION

**Myanmar has achieved the historic policy objective of attaining rice security for its rural and urban populations.** Overall production of milled rice has risen significantly over time, with an estimated production of 13 million tonnes over the past three years (up to 2019) (see IndexMundi, 2019 based on USDA data). Official Myanmar statistics confirm this trend but put absolute production data significantly higher (see Fig. 6, indicating more than 30 million tonnes of paddy production over the last ten years and an estimated 19 million tonnes of milled rice in 2010/11 –WB/Myanmar data; conversion rate milled rice/paddy taken at 0,63).

FIGURE 6

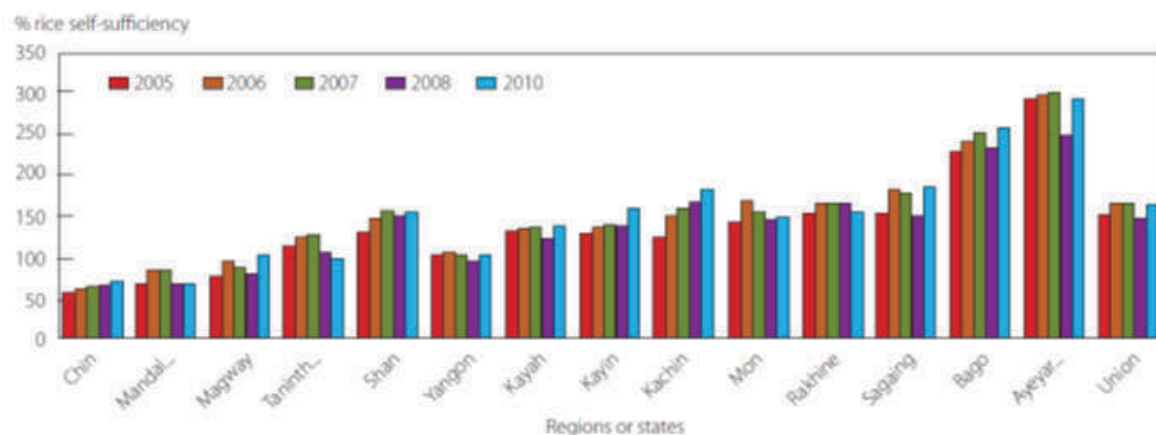


**FIGURE 6: Rice production in Myanmar**

Source: ADB. 2015. *Myanmar's agricultural sector: unlocking the potential for inclusive growth*. ADB Economics Working Paper 480. Figure based on US Department of Agriculture, Foreign Agricultural Service and FAOSTAT

There are still geographic challenges to achieving rice self-sufficiency at the level of each state and region, once a government policy objective. Chin State, for example, has a major challenge in producing and making rice locally available at a reasonable cost. In combination with difficult access and the remoteness of several rural areas, this has an impact on diet composition – with corn being an important staple food – and also on food insecurity.

FIGURE 7



**FIGURE 7: Rice self-sufficiency in regions and states**  
Source: Yezin Agricultural University, 2012

**Despite having reached a country average state of self-sufficiency in staple foods, food insecurity, particularly seasonal food insecurity, remains a concern across Myanmar with a risk of being exacerbated due to climate change and sporadic social instability.** Food insecurity, as measured by the proportion of households with members that consume less than 2 238 calories (calculated on the basis of food expenditure), is estimated at 41 percent in Myanmar (MOPF-World Bank, 2017 Part 2) with major differences by agro-ecological zone as demonstrated in the table below.

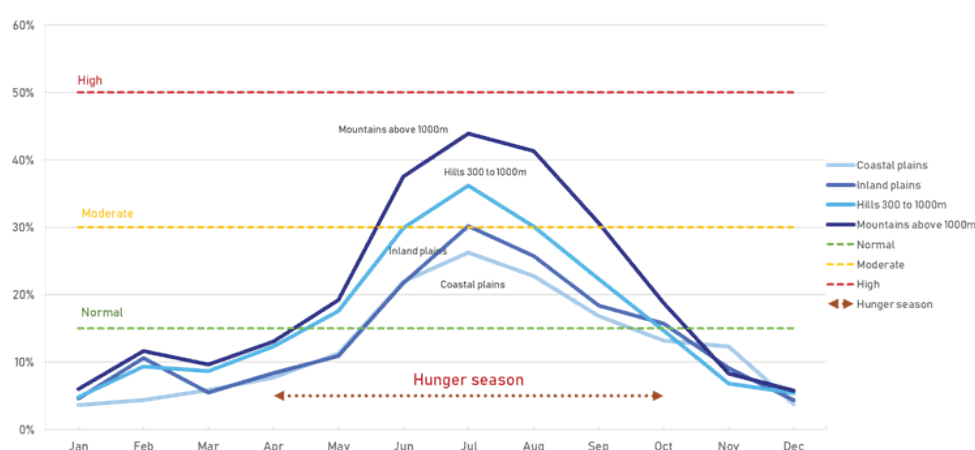
TABLE 1

|   | Mountainous areas (above 1000 m) | Hilly areas (300 – 1000 m) | Inland plains (100 – 270 m) | Coastal plains (0 – 100 m) |
|---|----------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Average household size  | 5.2                              | 4.9                        | 4.7                         | 4.4                        |
| Households with inadequate food consumption (7 days)          | 60 percent                       | 48 percent                 | 26 percent                  | 21 percent                 |
| Households with self-reported hunger (last 30 days)           | 13.2 percent                     | 8.6 percent                | 8.8 percent                 | 11.3 percent               |
| Households using consumption coping mechanisms (past 30 days) | 26 percent                       | 23 percent                 | 21 percent                  | 28 percent                 |
| Households reporting food gaps (last 12 months)               | 74 percent                       | 65 percent                 | 54 percent                  | 51 percent                 |
| Average number of months (food gap)                           | 2.5                              | 2.0                        | 1.7                         | 1.5                        |
| Food poverty (MOPF and World Bank, 2017b)                     | 16 percent                       | 16 percent                 | 7 percent                   | 19 percent                 |

**TABLE 1: Food security profile of Myanmar agroecological zones**  
Source: WFP Food Atlas, 2019. Not yet published.

As stated in the WFP Food Atlas, **“All ecological zones, wealth groups and livelihood systems are subject to the seasonality of food insecurity.”** Except for the Western mountainous region, food security is most common between November and April with insecurity at the highest between May and October. The ‘Hunger Season’ peaks between June and September (WFP Atlas, 2019).

FIGURE 8



**FIGURE 8: Seasonal household food insecurity by agroecological area**

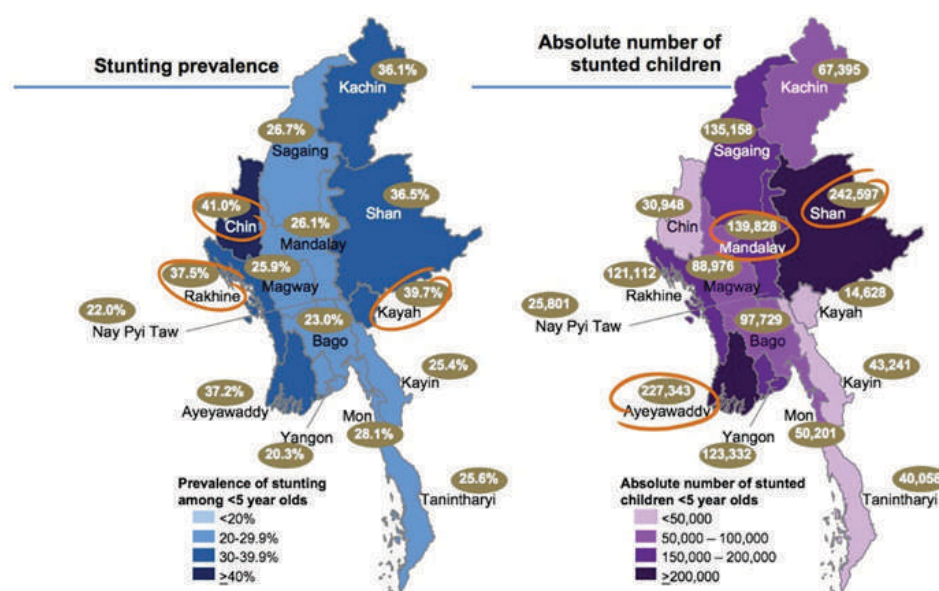
Source: (WFP, 2019, Food Atlas, Not yet published.

**Myanmar has experienced a rapid decline in malnutrition figures in just a few decades; stunting among children under 5 years shrunk from 40 percent in the 1990s to 29.2 percent in 2016 (DHS, 2015-16) and 26.7 percent in 2018**, according to recent figures (MOHS, 2018). However, chronic malnutrition, or stunting, still affects nearly one in four children in Myanmar. Acute malnutrition, or wasting, affects 7 percent of preschool children and micronutrient deficiencies persist. Nineteen percent of children under 5 years are estimated as being underweight and 1 percent overweight. Around 46.5 percent of women of reproductive age, 57.8 percent of children aged 6-59 months, and 70 percent of children aged 6 to 23 months suffer from anaemia, attributable in part to an inadequate intake of iron. Underweight among women, as measured by low BMI (less than 16), is 15.5 percent in Myanmar and is associated with low birthweight of newborns (8.1 percent) (DHS, 2015-16).

**Stunting rates are highest in the poorest quintile, among children whose mothers have low levels of education, and concentrated in rural areas in a number of states and regions.** Thirty-two percent of children in rural areas exhibit stunting compared with 21 percent of children in urban areas (DHS 2015-16). Chronic malnutrition figures are highest among: children from poor rural households (38 percent in the poorest quintile as compared to 16 percent in the highest wealth quintile); children whose mothers are not well educated (39.3 percent among children of mothers with no schooling, 22.5 percent with a secondary education, and 16.9 percent with more than a secondary education); and several ethnic upland areas (around 40 percent in Kachin, Shan, Chin, Rakhine and Kayah). The burden of malnutrition is highest in Shan, Mandalay and Ayeyarwaddy regions. **Six out of 15 regions suffer about two-thirds of the total burden of stunting.**



FIGURE 9



Stunting prevalence is highest in Chin, however Shan and Ayeyarwady have the highest absolute numbers of stunted children.

Source: REACH Myanmar stocktaking report, 2017. The map is based on data derived from DHS 2015-16 and 2014 Myanmar Population and Housing Census (Volume 4-F).

Stunting increases with age, peaking around 24-35 months of age (DHS 2015-16), indicating that the frequency of adequate food intake and diversity of that food is inadequate, likely compounded by poor hygiene and sanitation, hindering absorption of nutrients.

TABLE 2

## STUNTING INCREASES WITH AGE ACROSS AGRO-ECOLOGICAL ZONES

| Age (months)          | TOTAL   | Uplands | Dry Zone | Coastal/<br>Delta Zone | Number of<br>Children |
|-----------------------|---------|---------|----------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 0-5                   | 10.0*** | 15.7*** | 4.4***   | 10.1***                | 261                   |
| 6-11                  | 14.0*** | 17.9*** | 10.9***  | 4.3***                 | 285                   |
| 12-23                 | 35.0*** | 42.7*** | 30.0***  | 26.1***                | 658                   |
| 24-35                 | 47.8*** | 60.0*** | 35.6***  | 50.5***                | 751                   |
| 36-47                 | 51.5*** | 53.1*** | 51.2***  | 44.2***                | 788                   |
| 48-59                 | 43.9*** | 50.1*** | 40.4***  | 34.5***                | 722                   |
| Total                 | 38.9    | 45.1*** | 33.9     | 33.9                   |                       |
| Number of<br>children | 3465    | 1331    | 1003     | 1131                   | 3465                  |

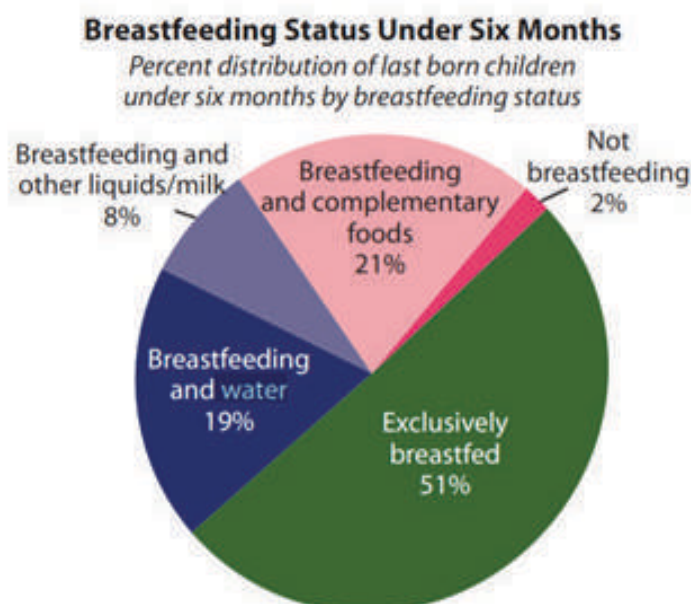
TABLE 2: Stunting data by child age

Source: Save the Children. 2016. *Underlying causes of malnutrition*.



**Myanmar has one of the highest exclusive breastfeeding rates in the region, a key driver for reducing stunting.** Exclusive breastfeeding is rapidly increasing (from 10 percent in 2000, to 24 percent in 2009, to 51 percent in 2016) but is rarely continued until the recommended two years of age. According to the NGO “Alive and Thrive”, this can be attributed to a number of factors: i) health care and counselling services have worked tirelessly to implement the National Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding; ii) the revitalization of the WHO/ UNICEF Baby-friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI); iii) adoption of the Order of Marketing of Formulated Food for Infant and Young Child (i.e. The Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes); iv) increasing the duration of paid maternity leave for the private and public sectors; v) coordinated policy advocacy for breastfeeding, supported by the Ministry of Health and Sports (MoHS), UNICEF, and others.

FIGURE 10



**FIGURE 10: Breastfeeding in Myanmar under six months**

Source: MoHS Demographic Health Survey, 2015-16

**Infant and young child feeding (IYCF) practices in Myanmar are rooted in customary habits,** which are often riddled with taboos. “Currently, only 25 percent of children 6-23 months are consuming a diet considered to be diverse enough to provide all needed vitamins and minerals, while only 16 percent achieve a ‘minimum acceptable diet,’ which is a composite indicator which includes breastfeeding or milk feeds, dietary diversity and meal frequency (MS-NPAN based on DHS 2015-16).”

FIGURE 11

### FEW CHILDREN 6-23 MONTHS RECEIVE ADEQUATE INFANT AND YOUNG CHILD FEEDING (IYCF) PRACTICES

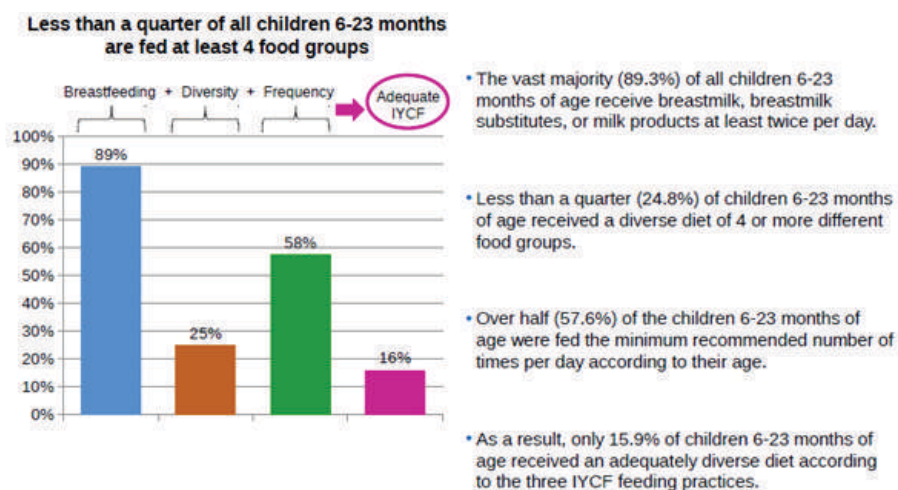


FIGURE 11: Delivery of IYCF practices

Source: REACH Myanmar stocktaking report, 2017. Based on DHS 2015-16.

TABLE 3

### FOOD HABITS AMONG CHILDREN 6-23 MONTHS

|   | BREASTFED 6-23 MONTHS<br>(85 PERCENT) | NON-BREASTFED<br>(15 PERCENT) | ALL          |
|---|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------|
| 4+ food groups                              | 21.5 percent                          | 42.4 percent                  | 24.8 percent |
| Food frequency                              | 58.2 percent                          | 54.1 percent                  | 57.6 percent |
| Minimum acceptable diet                     | 16.8 percent                          | 10.9 percent                  | 15.9 percent |
| Consumption of fruits/vegetables /vitamin A | 38.2 percent                          | 45 percent                    |              |
| Meat/fish                                   | 41.6 percent                          | 58.5 percent                  |              |
| Eggs  | 30.1 percent                          | 39 percent                    |              |
| Grains                                      | 65.8 percent                          | 72.3 percent                  |              |

TABLE 3: Food habits of children

Source: DHS 2015

**Diarrhoea is the fourth leading cause of death among children under the age of 5 in Myanmar** (MoHS 2014a). Access to basic drinking water improved by 10-15 percent points between 2000 and 2016, with 89 percent of urban households having access to improved water, compared with 77 percent in rural areas.

FIGURE 12

- The prevalence of diarrhea is highest among children age 12-23 months, followed by those who are age 6-11 months (Figure 10.3).
- The prevalence of diarrhea is highest in Chin State (24%), followed by Kachin State (20%).
- There are slight differences in diarrhea prevalence by household wealth. For example, the prevalence of diarrhea is 12% and 13%, respectively, among children in households in the lowest and second-lowest wealth quintiles, as compared with 7% among children in households in the highest wealth quintile.

Figure 10.3 Diarrhea prevalence by age

Percentage of children under age 5 who had diarrhea in the 2 weeks before the survey



FIGURE 12: Occurrence of diarrhoea in children

Source: DHS 2015-16

The causes of malnutrition (stunting, wasting, and underweight) will be further unpacked below, to recognize the agriculture sector's potential contribution to improving diets, care practices and hygiene and sanitation.

**While diets vary drastically across Myanmar's diverse agroecological zones and ethnic groups, overall, they remain heavily dependent on carbohydrates (60 percent of calories are derived from mostly rice)** (MPLCS, 2015), which is affordable, palatable, easy to store, handle, and readily available. Myanmar remains one of the highest rice-consuming nations in Asia, resulting in a diet lacking in a number of micro- and macronutrients. Dietary diversity is considered a proxy for diet quality and therefore is an important means for improving nutrition.

FIGURE 13

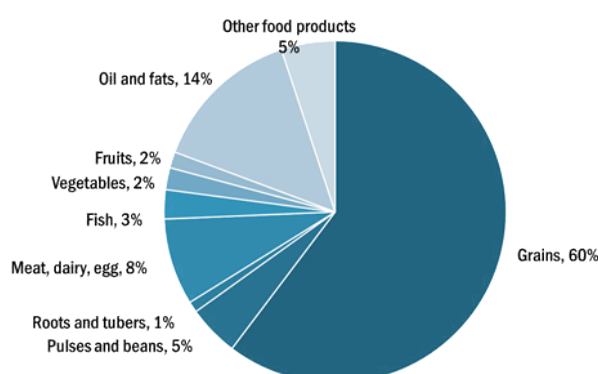


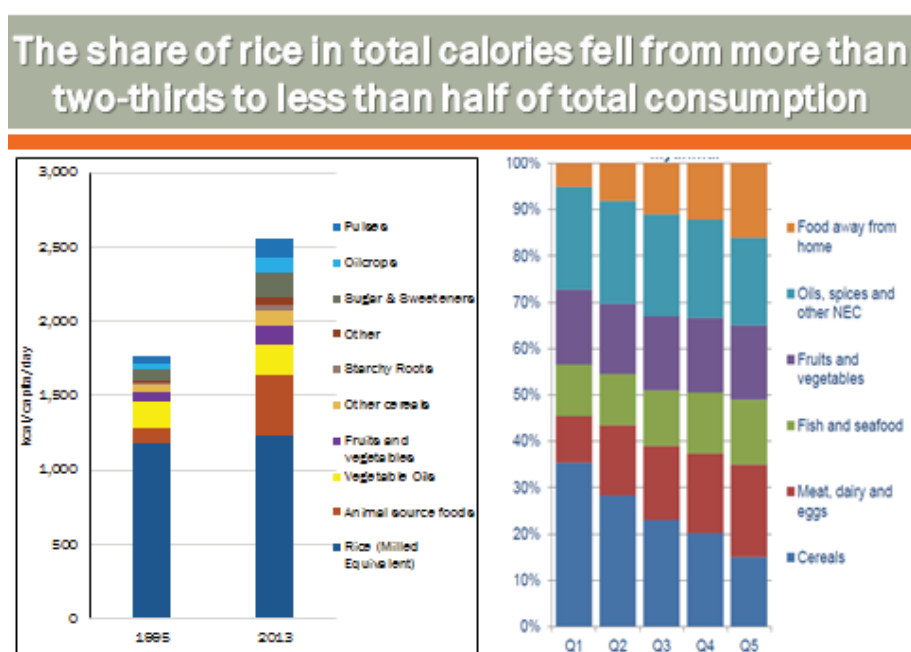
FIGURE 13: Caloric contributions of different food groups:

source of dietary energy (percentage) based on average of 2480 kcal daily per capita

Source: World Food Programme Fill the Nutrient Gap Analysis (2019) based on 2015 Myanmar Population and Living Conditions Survey

**According to a recent study, the majority of Myanmar households underconsume all food groups except for staples.** "In 2015, only 38 percent of the population lived in households that consumed the recommended quantity of protein-rich foods, 38 percent [consumed adequate] fats and oils, 16 percent vegetables, 9 percent fruits, and less than one percent consumed the recommended quantity of dairy products (IFPRI, 2019)." Data illustrate, however, that dietary diversity at the aggregated country level is already in a phase of major transition. The share of rice in total calories fell from more than two-thirds to less than a half between 1995 and 2013. This diversification is significantly more important in richer households (quartiles 4 and 5) than in poorer households (quartiles 1 and 2) (see also Section 3.1).

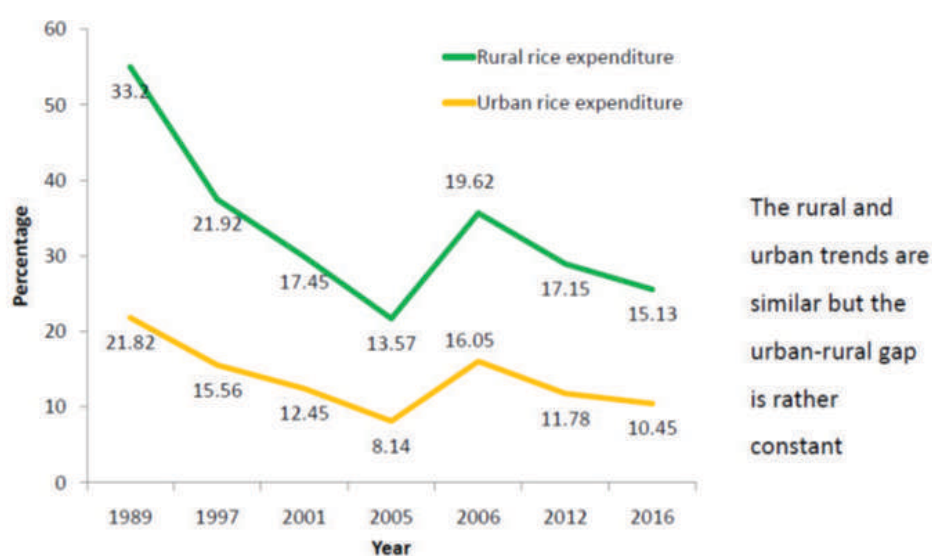
FIGURE 14



**FIGURE 14: Trends in caloric contribution of different food groups over time and distributed by wealth quintiles**  
Source: World Bank, 2019

**The ongoing trend in diversification of the diet can also be reflected in the significant decrease household rice expenditure (averaged at national level).** Expenditure on rice in both urban and rural areas fell by half between 1989 and 2016 however, the rural-urban gap remains rather constant.

FIGURE 15



**FIGURE 15: Percentage of rural and urban rice expenditure in Myanmar (1989-2016)**

Source: CSO, 2011 and Theingi Myint, 2016

**Household dietary diversity is the poorest in mountainous regions, where up to 80 percent of households have inadequate diets** (WFP Food Atlas, 2019). The recent MOHS Micronutrient and Food Consumption Survey used six out of twelve food groups as the 'cut-off point' and found that the following states/regions had the highest dietary inadequacy: Magway (82.6 percent), Chin (82.3 percent), Rakhine (68.9 percent), Kayin (68.4 percent), Magway (65.2 percent), and Nay Pyi Taw (60.7 percent). The states/regions with the best HDDS (>6 out of 12) were Bago (86.4 percent), Mon (65.1 percent), and Ayeyarwaddy (57.9 percent). These figures were found to be associated with wealth quintile but do not perfectly align with stunting figures. These are also not directly compatible but mostly aligned with WFP findings (WFP Food Atlas, 2019).

FIGURE 16

## HOUSEHOLDS WITH DIETARY INADEQUACY

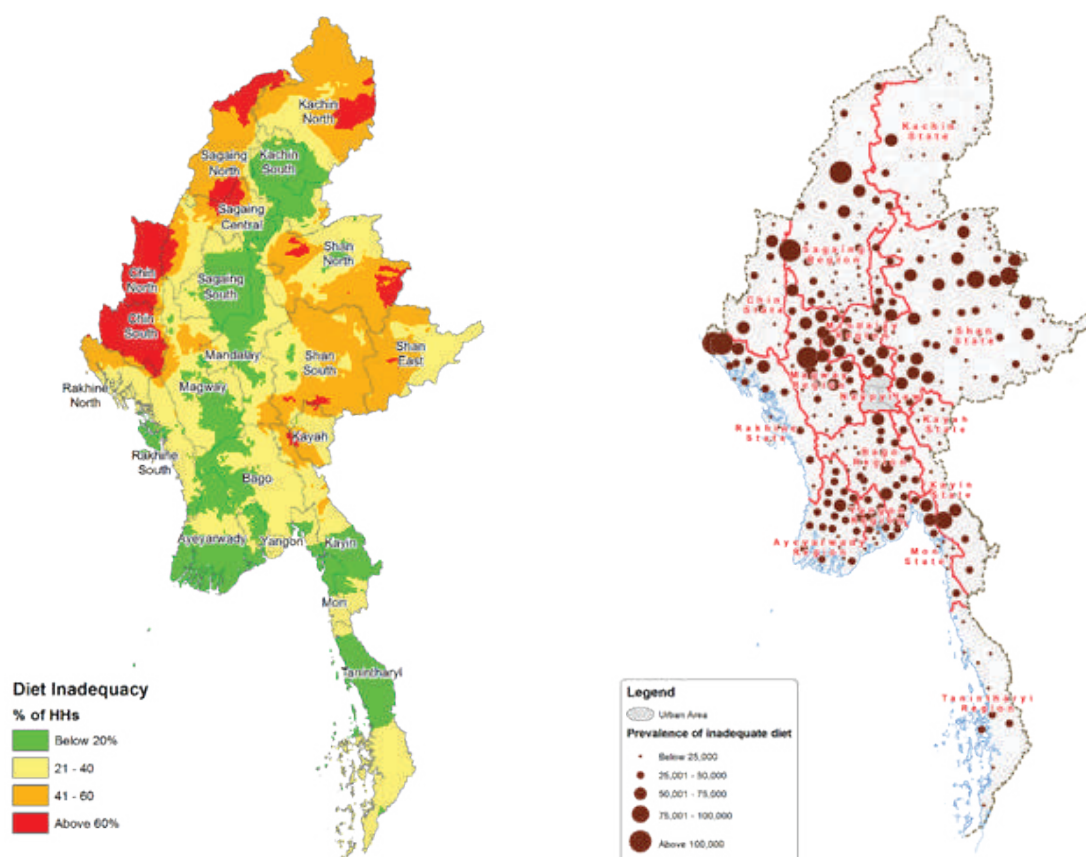


FIGURE 16: Geographic differences of dietary inadequacy

Source: WFP Food Atlas, 2019. Not yet published.

**There is a strong association between access to animal-based foods and wealth quintile.** With increasing population growth and urbanization, the production of animal-based foods (meat, milk and eggs) has also increased. Although production data is only indicative of food available at the national level, rather than consumed, it does indicate some transition. Based on existing production data, per capita availability of these products has increased over time amounting to 43.91-59.04 kg of meat per person, 34.54-47.44 kg of milk per person and 172-241 of eggs per person in the past three years. Based on dietary diversity data however, meat products are not accessed by the poorest quintiles.



TABLE 4

| YEAR      | HUMAN POPULATION (MILLION) | PRODUCTION/YEAR |           |            |
|-----------|----------------------------|-----------------|-----------|------------|
|           |                            | MEAT (KG)       | MILK (KG) | EGG (NOS.) |
| 2014-2015 | 51.423                     | 43.91           | 34.54     | 172        |
| 2015-2016 | 50.279                     | 58.38           | 46.88     | 230        |
| 2016-2017 | 50.782                     | 59.04           | 47.44     | 241        |

TABLE 4: Production of animal based foods  
Source: Cho Cho San, 2018

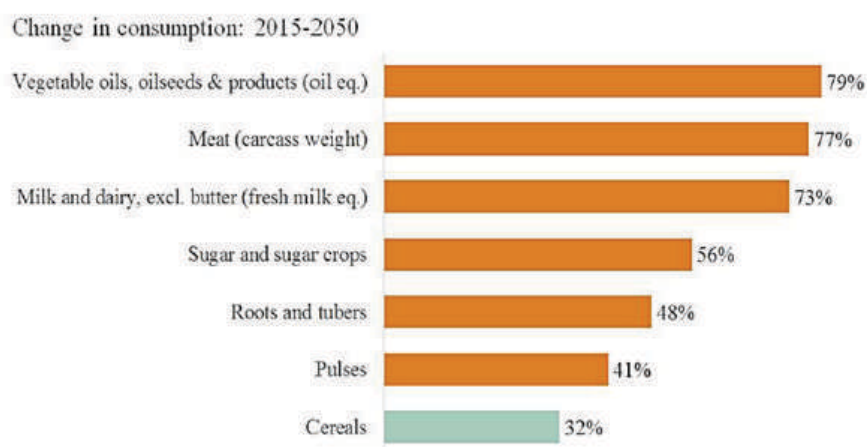
**Analysis is ongoing for the MS-NPAN inception phase to disaggregate data by township level to identify townships affected by underlying causes of malnutrition.** This is the first step to formulating vulnerability indices, food security data, and stunting information, which will be critical for targeting nutrition and food policies to vulnerable groups (landless, marginal small farmers. Few data are currently disaggregated by livelihood profile.

**Culinary practices and non-staple food items differ across the country, often reflecting regional production systems.** In the upland hilly zones, cereals (rice and corn), vegetables and small amounts of pulses and root crops compose the food plate (2010 Agriculture Census, FAO-MoAI). In the delta, the rice basket of the country, vegetables, fish and eggs widely accompany the rice bowl. In the dry zone, however, small amounts of meat or fish, vegetables, pulses and large amounts of edible oils make-up the diet, accompanied by lesser amounts of fruit. The consumption of fruits, pulses, animal-based proteins and nuts remains low across all agroecological zones. Overall, except for the hilly areas, fish and seafood are the most important source of protein (60%) and micronutrients in Myanmar households, although they are not accessible across all socio-economic groups and geographies.

**Overweight and obesity rates in Myanmar, while relatively low compared to neighbouring countries, are steadily rising; 19.2 percent of women of reproductive age are considered overweight and 5.5 percent are obese** (DHS, 2015-16). The increasing triple burden of malnutrition (undernutrition, inadequate nutrient intake, and over-nutrition) poses severe risks of diabetes, hypertension and overall health. Information and research on overweight and obesity are lagging, although a number of partners (including WHO in support of MoHS) are starting to engage more in research and advocacy on non-communicable diseases due to the soaring rates of diabetes (10 percent) and high blood pressure (28.9 percent) (NCD RF Survey Myanmar, 2014)<sup>8</sup>.

<sup>8</sup> National Strategic Plan for Prevention and Control of NCDs, 2017-2021.  
[http://www.searo.who.int/entity/ncd\\_tobacco\\_surveillance/monitoring\\_fw/mmr\\_ncd\\_action\\_plan\\_2017\\_2021.pdf?ua=1](http://www.searo.who.int/entity/ncd_tobacco_surveillance/monitoring_fw/mmr_ncd_action_plan_2017_2021.pdf?ua=1)

**Diets are rapidly shifting in Myanmar**, reflecting the changing economic climate and the opening of the country to foreign goods and advertising. Increased intake of processed foods, oil, and snacks are common trends in countries undergoing economic and social transitions, a trend coined - '*nutrition transition*' (Popkin, 2012). "During 1989–2016, rice expenditures [as part of] total household expenditures dropped from 33 percent to 15 percent in rural areas and from 22 percent to 11 percent in urban areas" (World Bank Public Expenditure Review, 2017, based on Myint, 2016). Following the globally-recognized stages of the nutrition transition, it is likely that diets will ultimately transition away from high carbohydrate, high sugar, high fat diets in favour of more nutrient-rich foods as rates of diabetes and hypertension increasingly threaten the health of people (Popkin, 2012).

**FIGURE 17****DEMAND FOR NON-CEREALS WILL INCREASE THE MOST BY 2050****FIGURE 17: Projected trends in food consumption**

Source: World Bank Myanmar Agriculture Public Expenditure Review, 2017, based on FAOSTAT

**Myanmar communities have a tradition of purchasing food, at least on a seasonal basis, including in rural (mostly lowland) areas.** The consumption of rice may be an exception, as many smallholders try to produce rice during at least one season for their own consumption. Most animal-based foods are purchased in lowland areas which are majority Buddhist where people prefer to avoid killing animals for food and consuming animals that work the land (buffalo and cattle). Hunting and gathering foods is common in upland areas. Most vegetables and fruits are purchased across the country except in remote areas. Based on anecdotal evidence, it appears that excessive use of pesticides by some producers has led people to refrain from self-consumption for food safety reasons. There are also increasing imports of ultra-processed foods from neighbouring countries, with a market that penetrates into the most remote rural areas.

**As per the MS-NPAN, "the burden of unsafe food in Myanmar is estimated at USD 500 to 700 million (World Bank, 2017). Diarrhoea, which can be caused by consumption of contaminated food, is the fourth leading cause of morbidity in Myanmar and is a risk factor for acute and chronic malnutrition (DHS 2015-16). While regulations exist,**



enforcement is a challenge, especially given that much of the food production and exchange in Myanmar occurs in the informal sector. The implementation of various measures, such as Good Handling Practices (GHP), Good Agriculture Practices (GAP), Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP), and Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) in food businesses, is critical to ensuring better food safety and quality standards in domestic markets as well as compliance with Myanmar's Pesticides Law. It is therefore important to track the problems and barriers to food safety along the entire supply chain. Quality standards need to be expanded to cover a wider range of foods, and capacities of extension staff strengthened to help farmers comply with standards and to conduct routine food safety tests. Clean water is a prerequisite for food safety. Improving access to potable water is an important intervention to complement Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) education. The MoHS will collaborate closely with other ministries, such as MoE, and MoALI to improve sanitation, water supply and hygiene practices as well as food safety along the food production value chain.

**Projected dietary patterns have implications for food production systems**, which will need to shift towards more nutrient-rich foods, including animal based foods, vegetables and fruits. While inconsistent with Myanmar's Agriculture Development Strategy (2018-2023), Sustainable Development Plan (2018-2030) and the Multi Sector National Action Plan for Nutrition (2017/18-2022/23), "... Most government programs in Myanmar continue to support rice production, with little attention paid to higher-value and more nutritious food (PER 2016)." Barriers and catalysts for this transition to take place in Myanmar will be discussed below.

**The shift toward increasing the production of nutrient-rich foods, is already underway**, although not necessarily due to public policy but rather a spontaneous reaction of producers, including smallholders, to climate change, market dynamics and – possibly – changing dietary patterns. It is evident that public policy does not always follow these trends, nor does it create an enabling environment to support them. For example, Myanmar hosts two of the six roads under the 'Belt and Road initiative,' which is likely to affect food trade flows by providing incentives for producing certain types of foods (particularly high-value crops). These crops may be exported to earn cash or farmers may transition to non-food crops (such as elephant foot yam for medicinal purposes, which is in high demand across the Chinese border). Such trends and an enabling policy environment for diversification will need to be accelerated and accompanied by nutrition education and an improvement in rural wages in order to afford dietary diversification.

## 2.3 KEY DRIVERS OF FOOD INSECURITY AND MALNUTRITION

Malnutrition figures vary drastically across Myanmar's diverse agroecological zones, 135 officially-recognized ethnic groups, inland and border areas, and urban and rural settings. Underlying barriers to diversified diets include poverty (related to insufficient purchasing power; indebtedness; landlessness), barriers to agriculture diversification (often linked to poverty), and physical isolation – especially during the rainy season – and poor infrastructure. Social instability and climate change exacerbate the impacts of these key drivers.

## 2.3.1 POVERTY AND CHRONIC MALNUTRITION

Household income is a determinant of chronic malnutrition in Myanmar, as measured among children under 5 by wealth quintile.

FIGURE 18



**FIGURE 18: Prevalence of stunting by wealth quintile (percent of children <5)**  
Source: DHS, 2015-16. REACH Stocktaking Report, 2017

**Incremental changes in income in the poorest quintile (one out of three people in Myanmar live below the poverty line) will likely have the greatest impact on reducing the burden of malnutrition in Myanmar.** With that said, the impact of increasing income on child stunting tends to be more significant when stunting is still above 20 percent of the population level, below requires a concerted effort of nutrition education, improved services, and targeted treatment (World Bank, Public Expenditure, 2017).

**Poverty has steadily declined over the last 15 years, but absolute poverty levels remain high.** Poverty has been most recently measured by the Integrated Household Living Conditions Assessment (IHLCA-I) in 2004/05, a second IHLCA in 2009/10, and the Poverty and Living Conditions Survey (MPLCS) in 2015. In 2014, based on the IHLCA-II, the World Bank set a new poverty line at 376 551 MMK per month (USD 248) per household. This new cut-off point demonstrates the following decline in poverty, disaggregated by rural and urban poverty rates.

FIGURE 19

## BOTH URBAN AND RURAL POVERTY RATES HAVE DECLINED RAPIDLY IN MYANMAR

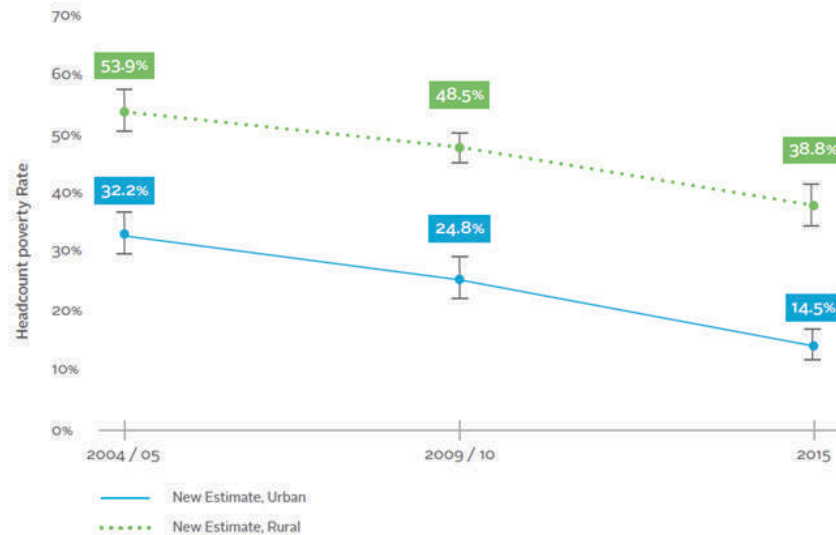


FIGURE 19: Trends in urban and rural poverty reduction

Source: MoPF-World Bank, Part 2, 2017

**Rural poverty in Myanmar (38.8 percent) remains substantially higher than in the towns and cities (14.5 percent).** Of the 15.8 million poor in Myanmar, 13.8 million live in rural areas (87 percent) and 2.0 million (13 percent) live in urban areas. Given high population densities in the central dry zone and the delta, the absolute number of poor people are highest in these regions (MoPF-World Bank, 2017).

FIGURE 20

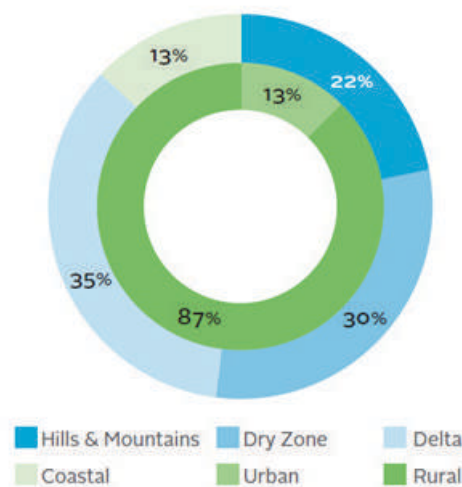
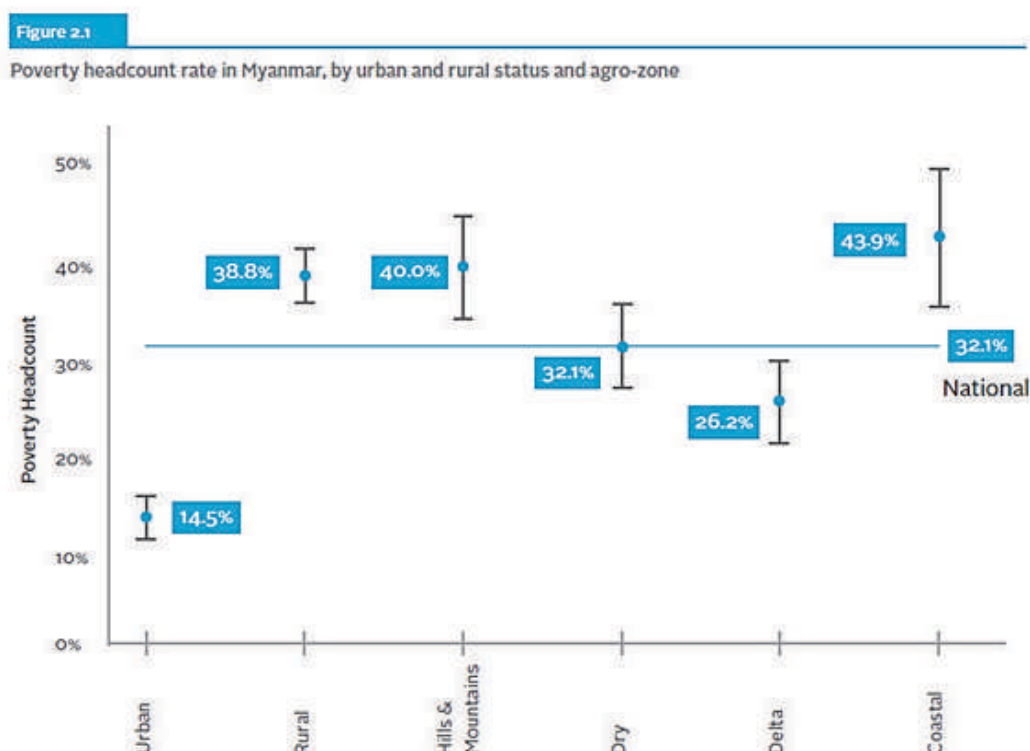


FIGURE 20: Poverty distribution across different zones and settings

Source: *An Analysis of Poverty in Myanmar Part 2*. 2017. MoPF-World Bank.

**Rural poverty rates are concentrated in the coastal and mountainous/hilly areas** (43 percent and 40 percent respectively), whereas poverty rates are much lower in the delta and dry zones (26 percent and 32 percent respectively) (MOPF-World Bank, 2017). However, absolute poverty data (headcount rate) are highest in more populous areas, especially in Ayeyarwady and the delta area, and to a lesser extent in the dry zone.

FIGURE 21



**FIGURE 21: Poverty headcount rate in Myanmar, by urban-rural status and agroecological zone**  
Source: MoPF-WB, 2017

**A comparison of wages across Myanmar demonstrates that agriculture wages remain disproportionately low compared to neighbouring countries.** Low labour productivity yields low rural wages, and may result in outmigration to neighbouring countries, where wages (and productivity) are significantly higher. Furthermore, job opportunities in the agricultural sector are mainly seasonal, contributing in part to seasonal food insecurity and, potentially, indebtedness.



FIGURE 22



**FIGURE 22: Myanmar's wages are still very low: Regional comparison of daily wages in the agricultural sector**

Source: Myanmar agriculture survey for Myanmar data, World Bank 2015a for Cambodia, and Bordey et al. 2014 and 2015 for all other countries





**Nationwide, 80 percent of the food consumed at the household level is purchased**, either with cash (64.4 percent) or credit (15.4 percent), but regional differences are significant (WFP Food Atlas, 2018). In the mountainous and hilly areas, production for self-consumption is an important source of food as well as to feed the family through climate variations and shocks. Income is therefore a condition for ensuring continued access to a diversified diet.

FIGURE 23

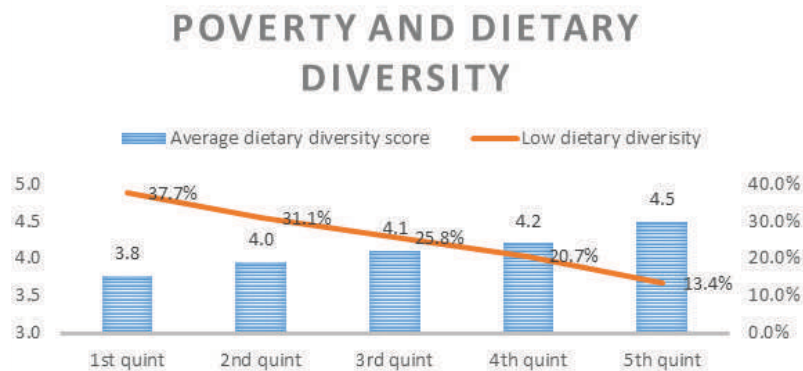


**FIGURE 23: Sources of food at household level**  
Source: WFP Food Atlas, 2019. Not yet published.

**Food expenditure as a proportion of total expenditure among the poorest quintile Myanmar is around 60 percent (of which 20 percent is for rice), compared with 38.5 percent among the richest quintile** (WFP Food Atlas, 2018). The wealthiest quintile tends to purchase more micronutrient-rich foods demonstrated for example by the fact that the richest quintile consumes more than four times the amount of fish, the most important source of protein in Myanmar, compared with the poorest quintile (28.22kg vs. 7.57kg) (Youn et al., 2018). Conversely, the poorest are severely constrained in their ability to access a balanced food basket.

With some exceptions, access to a balanced food basket in Myanmar is limited by disposable income. Income is often insufficient to access even basic food stocks throughout the year, let alone a diversified diet.

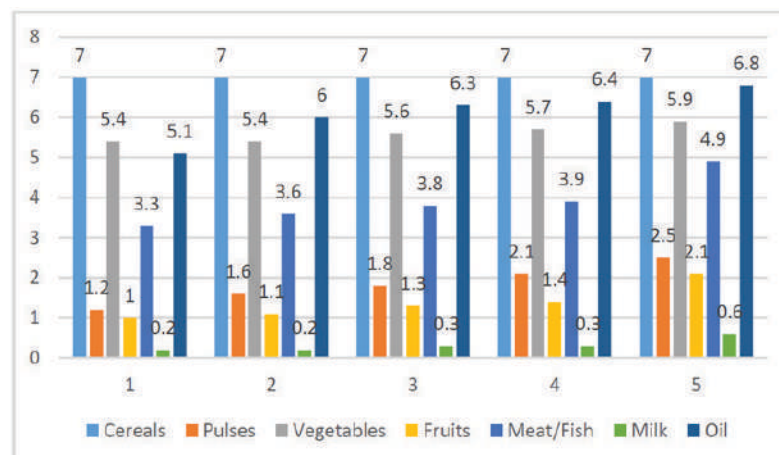
FIGURE 24



**FIGURE 24: Poverty reduction is associated with improved dietary diversity**

Source: WFP Food Atlas, 2019. Not yet published.

FIGURE 25



**FIGURE 25: Food group consumption by wealth quintile**

Source: WFP Strategic Review of Food and Nutrition Security in Myanmar, 2018.

**A nutrient-rich diet is generally unaffordable by poor households in Myanmar**, over half of the population of 51 million does not have the means to purchase a recommended food basket (adjusted for preferences and practices) although it is improving compared with only 30% in 2010 (Marht and Mather, 2019).

TABLE 5

SUMMARY OF DIET COSTS FOR AN AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD (OF FIVE) IN MYANMAR<sup>9</sup>

Cost of a nutritious diet varies across states/regions

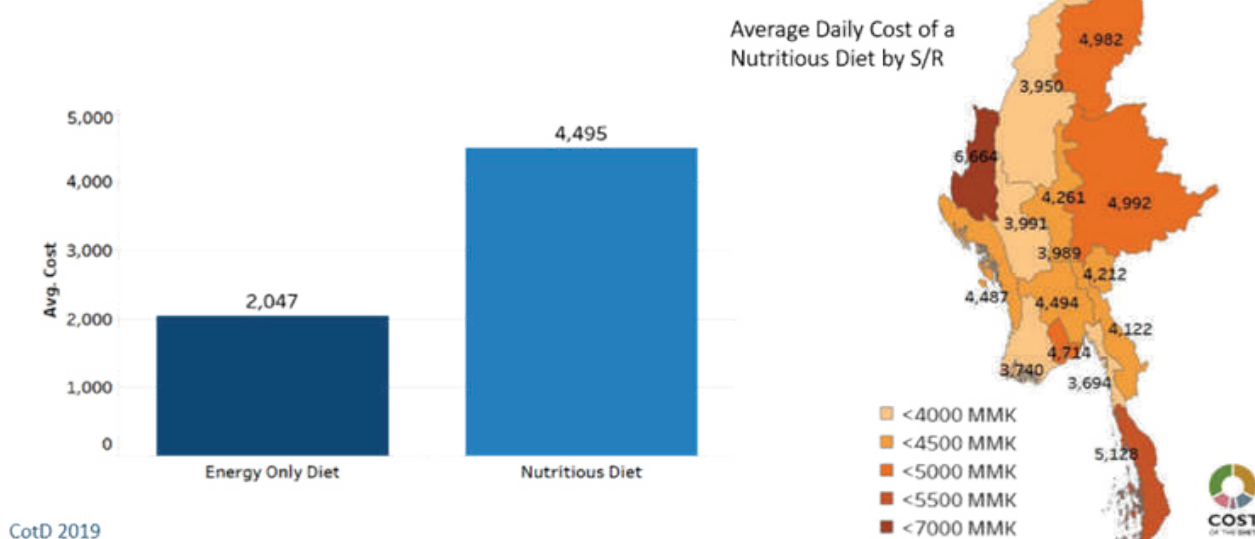


TABLE 5: Cost of diets

Source: World Food Programme, Fill the Nutrient Gap Analysis, 2019

Based on the same data set (MPLCS, 2015), a recent study further confirms that a nutritious diet would cost over 1 000 kyat per person per day (USD 0.59) and above 1 300 kyat (USD 0.77) in the hills where food is sometimes even not accessible with cash (IFPRI, 2019). A nutritious diet is likely to be even more costly for a pregnant and lactating mother, and therefore, the Maternal Child Cash Transfer (MCC-T) cash amount of 15 000 per month, is rather limited.

<sup>9</sup> The lowest cost of a nutritious diet was estimated for a modelled household of five members, which included a breastfed child of 12–23 months, a child of 6–7 years, an adolescent girl of 14–15 years, a lactating woman and an adult man. Two rice-based meals per day were included to account for approximately 50 percent of dietary energy from preferred staples.



TABLE 6

|          | Diet cost (kyat/day) |         | Ratios of diet cost   |                             |
|----------|----------------------|---------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
|          | CoRD                 | CoRD-FP | CoRD to National CoRD | CoRD-FP to National CoRD-FP |
| National | 808                  | 1,189   |                       |                             |
| Urban    | 802                  | 1,227   | 0.99                  | 1.03                        |
| Rural    | 810                  | 1,173   | 1.00                  | 0.99                        |
| Hills    | 902                  | 1,336   | 1.12                  | 1.12                        |
| Dry Zone | 727                  | 1,087   | 0.90                  | 0.91                        |
| Delta    | 841                  | 1,241   | 1.04                  | 1.04                        |
| Coastal  | 830                  | 1,072   | 1.03                  | 0.90                        |
| Yangon   | 773                  | 1,200   | 0.96                  | 1.01                        |

Source: Authors' calculations based on the 2015 MPLCS.

**TABLE 6: Relative costs of 'Cost of Calorie Adequacy (CoCA), Cost of a Recommended Diet (CoRD) and CoRD method called the Food Preferences CoRD (CoRD-FP)' diets, 2015**  
Source: IFPRI calculations based on the 2015 MPLCS



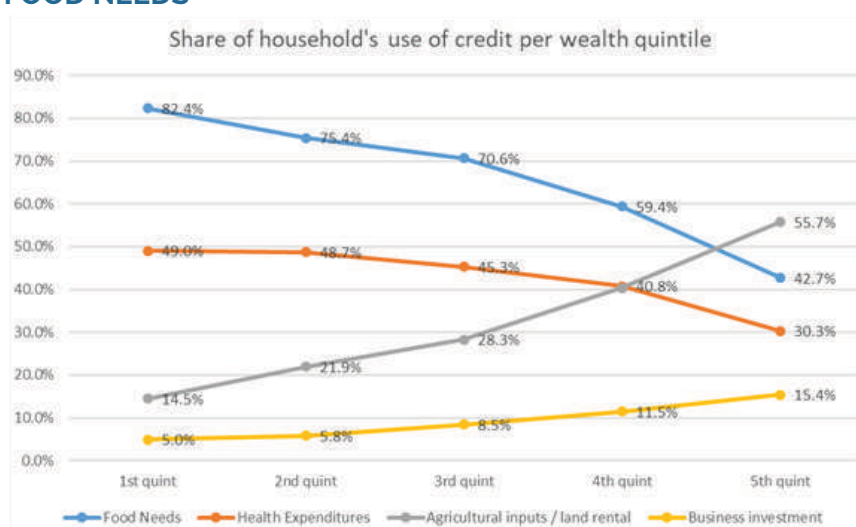
## 2.3.2 ACCESS TO CREDIT AND FOOD VERSUS INDEBTEDNESS AND FOOD INSECURITY

**Over 15 percent of the food purchased in Myanmar is with credit** (WFP Food Security Atlas, 2018).

**Nine out of ten households requested credit or a loan in the past year to cover costs related to (in order of importance); food, healthcare, agriculture inputs, education** etc. (WFP Food Security Atlas, 2018). In the central dry zone and delta, over 20 percent of households rely on credit to purchase food, "in many cases being heavily indebted as a consequence of cycles of poverty, non-profitable cultivation and natural disasters (WFP Food Atlas, 2019)."

**FIGURE 26**

**MOST OF THE CREDIT AND LOANS TAKEN BY THE POOREST QUINTILE ARE TO MEET FOOD NEEDS**



**FIGURE 26: Share of household use of credit by wealth quintile**

Source: WFP Food Security Atlas, 2018. Not yet published.

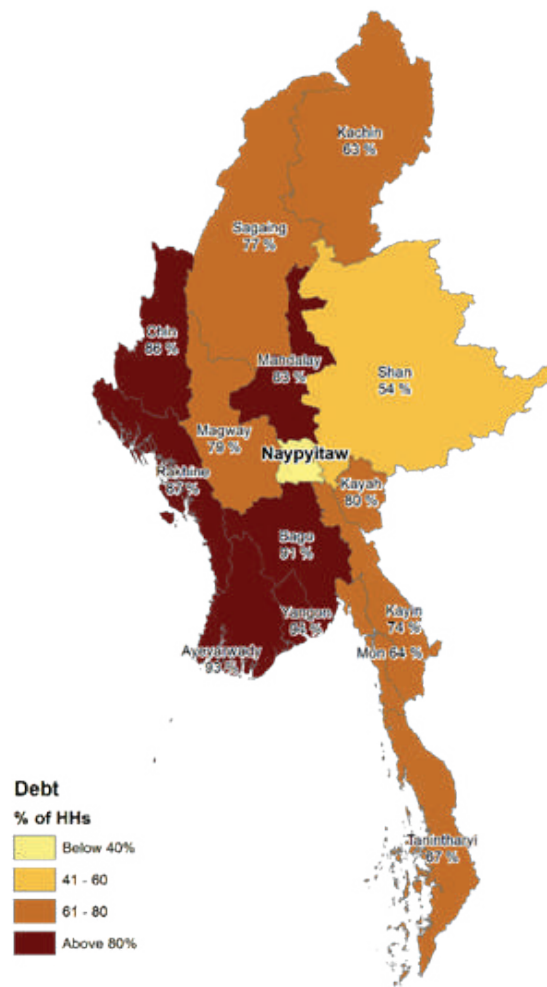
The WFP Food Security Atlas (2019) estimates that 50 percent of credit/loans taken by farmers are for food compared with the 75 per cent of credit/loans taken by landless and casual workers which are for food (WFP Atlas, 2018). Baseline figures from LIFT (2012) suggest a slightly that 58 percent of the loans taken by landless workers and 36 percent taken by small landowners (with less than five acres) are for food (LIFT baseline survey, 2012).

Twenty percent of the households that have taken a credit/loan 20 percent are in debt, defined as having a debt-to-asset ratio equal to or larger than 0.5 (MOPF and World Bank, 2017b). Only 10 percent of Myanmar's population is estimated to have access to formal financial services (MSU-MDRI, 2013) leaving vulnerable households to rely on the informal



sector where interest rates and repayment periods are up to the lender. Debt repayment rates can be as high as 30 percent in Rakhine South, Sagaing, and Yangon, perpetuating the cycle of indebtedness.

**FIGURE 27**



**FIGURE 27: Indebtedness at household level**

Source: *WFP Food Security Atlas, 2018*. Not yet published.

With the exception of Chin, the areas that have a high level of access to credit (and indebtedness) also enjoy better dietary diversity, indicating that credit/disposable income is an important means for accessing a nutritious food basket.

### 2.3.3 LIMITED AGRICULTURE DIVERSIFICATION AND CHRONIC MALNUTRITION

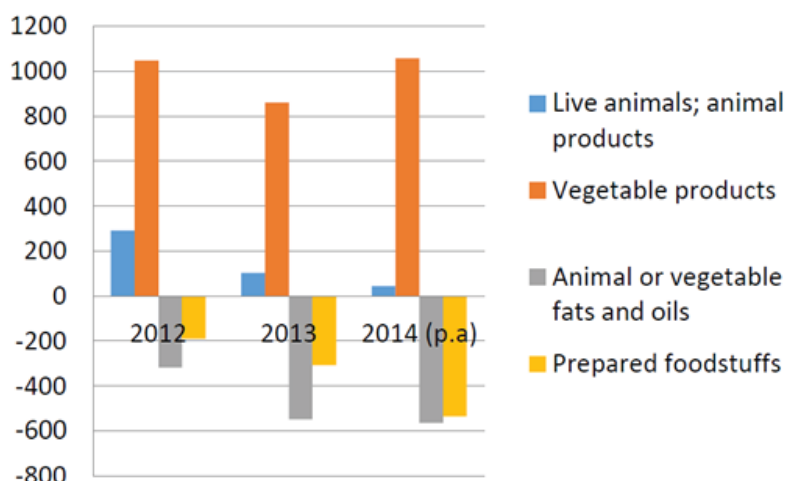
**Myanmar is home to some the most diverse production systems in the region.** "But rather than exploring this diversity, most public investments in the agricultural sector in Myanmar, up to an estimated 85 percent of the annual budgets, continue to be channelled towards the development of the rice sector. These investments cover infrastructure development for rice production, research and agricultural extension, and subsidized seasonal loans (MS-NPAN, 2018)."

**Land officially classified as 'rice land' (or "lé land" in Myanmar language) accounts for 50 percent (or some 6,39 million hectares of Myanmar's total farmland area<sup>10</sup>.** In 2015-2016, a total of 7,21 million hectares were cultivated with rice, spread over three cropping seasons (Myanmar Agriculture at a glance, MoALI, 2016). In the same year, beans and pulses were grown on some 3,7 million hectares; fruits on 279 thousand hectares; and vegetables on 276 thousand hectares (Agriculture Yearbook, MoALI, 2016). Legally, there is a compulsory cultivation of rice on land classified as rice land; failure to do so, at least for one growing season per year, may result in land confiscation. Since the abolishment of the compulsory quota system for rice production in 2003, there has been some more flexibility, but the principle of free crop choice, especially on paddy rice land, is not yet a reality."

**Myanmar exports a large proportion of its most nutrient-dense food stuffs.** "Pulses (beans and peas) accounted for 79 percent of Myanmar's total exports in 2014, valued at 951 million USD (Central Statistics Myanmar) while rice exports totalled 12.6 percent at 151 million USD. Fish and crustaceans accounted for 78 percent of animal product exports valued at 323 million USD, followed by cow/bovine products at 16 percent valued at 67 million USD (ibid). Myanmar has consistently maintained a trade surplus of both vegetable products and animal products. In 2014, these trade surpluses were valued at 1 058 million USD and 45 million USD. At the same time, it has consistently run a trade deficit in animal and vegetable fats and oils, and prepared foodstuffs (WFP 2018)."

<sup>10</sup> DALMS statistics, 2017-2018, not published

FIGURE 28

FIGURE 28: Balance of food trade (000 000 USD)<sup>11</sup>

Source: WFP Strategic Review of Food and Nutrition Security in Myanmar, 2018.

**The export of some of the most important nutrient-dense food stuffs is the result of an active export policy that prioritizes foods such as beans and pulses, oilseeds and fishery products** (Myanmar's National Export Strategy, 2015–2019). It should be noted that the Ministry of Commerce, which is responsible for the export strategy, was not involved in the development of the MS-NPAN. Nor has there been a discussion on how the strategy might negatively impact the consumption of these products in Myanmar to address malnutrition. This is compounded by the fact that these foods are not normally part of local diets, and awareness creation, behaviour change and cooking demonstrations are needed to increase their consumption.

**It is not clear whether the benefits generated from exporting agricultural products substantially increases the incomes of smallholder producers, allowing them to purchase nutrient-dense products locally.** A literature review conducted as part of the FIRST assessment (Theingyi Myint *et al.*, 2018) seems to indicate that middlemen along the value chain (e.g. collectors, millers, retailers among others) operate with higher profit margins than the producers of crops, including rice, oilseeds, fruits and vegetables. It is not clear whether important benefit-sharing streams, other than farm gate benefits, exist for smallholder producers who engage in the export of agricultural products through middlemen.

**Fifty years of rice-promoting in Myanmar has negatively impacted efforts to diversify the agricultural sector.** Myanmar's focus on rice production has resulted in: i) national, state and regional self-sufficiency with few exceptions (e.g. Chin State); ii) overall stable and low prices for consumers; and iii) the existence of a positive buffer that can be used to respond to emergencies and crises. A significant part of this buffer can be used for export, some 3.5 million tonnes of milled rice in fiscal year 2017–2018, without jeopardizing a strategic storage reserves. But this policy is perpetuated by skewed land policy, credit services, irrigation

<sup>11</sup> Myanmar Central Statistical Organization (CSO) Myanmar Statistical Information Services (MMSIS). Retrieved 23 November 2016. [http://mmsis.gov.mm/statHtml/statHtml.do?orgId=195&tblId=DT\\_YAJ\\_0002&conn\\_path=13](http://mmsis.gov.mm/statHtml/statHtml.do?orgId=195&tblId=DT_YAJ_0002&conn_path=13)

schemes, and extension provision that remain rice-centric. While it is acknowledged that rice is the most suitable (or least unsuitable) crop for vast areas of the delta and inland flood plains during the monsoon season, it is not the most suitable for other areas of the country and/or for other cropping seasons.

**Agrobiodiversity can provide a rich source of nutrients for dietary diversity and food quality. It is acknowledged that the consumption of a variety of foods across and within food groups guarantees to a large extent an adequate intake of essential micronutrients.**

While this is less strong in Myanmar due to the high dependence on markets, there is evidence of a direct link between the production and consumption of (cultivated) traditional vegetables, particularly in upland areas, such as Chin State, where the market infrastructure is weak. Where diets consist of mainly starchy staple foods, such as rice, the cultivation of nutrient-rich foods can help to support a balanced diet.

**Homestead gardens can support a wide variety of perennial and semi-perennial crops and trees, which adapt well to local microclimates and can be maintained with a limited amount of purchased inputs.**

For poor households, vegetables and fruits are often the only source of micronutrients in the family diet. Homestead production of fruits and vegetables provides the household with direct access to important nutrients that may not be always available through the market. Pritchard *et al.* (2017) highlight several challenges in having a home garden, especially the incompatibility of people's livelihood obligations and time, village morphologies, biophysical resources (shade issues, good soil, space and water availability) and animal conflicts. However, when these constraints can be overcome, home gardens can make important contributions to the food and nutritional well-being of households by offsetting seasonal food shortages and freeing up cash for other use.

**Most rural households in Myanmar rely on rice production (for cash and/or in-kind income generation). The high concentration of paddy harvest in November and December is the main cause of rice price volatility.**

Nearly 70 percent of paddy rice is harvested in just two months during the monsoon season (the most important of the three rice cropping seasons). This results in sharp price drops from December to January and spike-ups between May and October. As a result, during the lean season, food-deficient households purchase the same amount of rice they sold at harvest time for about double the price.

**The income that can be generated from rice production, especially monsoon rice, is significantly less than that from other production systems** (see WB-LIFT 2018; Michigan State University 2019; World Bank Public Expenditure Review 2017 Table 7).

TABLE 7

**LAND AND LABOUR PROFITS FOR PULSES AND OILSEEDS  
ARE IN GENERAL HIGHER THAN FOR PADDY RICE**

|                  | Net margin,<br>\$/ha | Labor productivity,<br>\$/day | Production costs,<br>\$/ha | Labor use,<br>days/ha |
|------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| Monsoon paddy    | 114                  | 4.75                          | 510                        | 103                   |
| Dry season paddy | 246                  | 9.20                          | 626                        | 63                    |
| Black gram       | 267                  | 9.29                          | 237                        | 45                    |
| Green gram       | 581                  | 15.92                         | 355                        | 51                    |
| Chickpeas        | 141                  | 6.85                          | 266                        | 42                    |
| Groundnuts       | 324                  | 8.32                          | 421                        | 65                    |
| Sesame           | 202                  | 8.54                          | 217                        | 44                    |
| Sunflower seeds  | 377                  | 15.68                         | 121                        | 30                    |

Source: 2013/14 Myanmar agricultural survey.

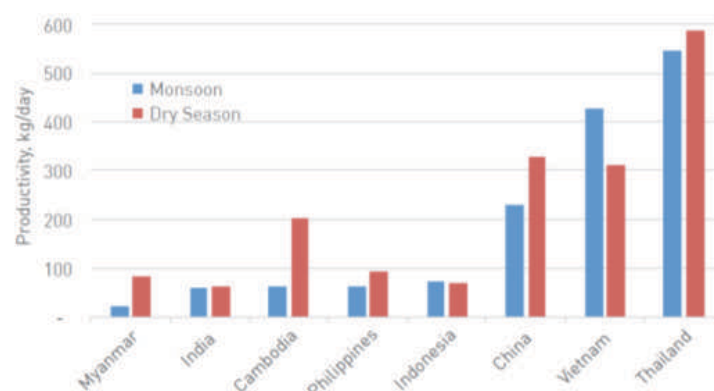
TABLE 7: Performance indicators for different cropping systems

Source: World Bank, 2016

**Myanmar's rice yields do not meet their potential and the labour invested in them is much higher than in neighbouring countries.** According to a 2016 World Bank study, "Agricultural productivity in Myanmar is low. For example, to harvest rice, one day of work generates only 23 kg of paddy in Myanmar, compared to 62 kg in Cambodia, 429 kg in Vietnam, and 547 kg in Thailand. [Furthermore], farm practices are still largely labour intensive. In Ayeyarwady, farmers spend more than 100 days per hectare on monsoon rice paddy, compared to 52 days in Cambodia, 22 days in Vietnam, and 11 days in Thailand" (Myanmar - Analysis of farm production economics. World Bank, 2016.)

FIGURE 29

**LOW YIELDS AND HIGH LABOUR INPUT KEEP MYANMAR'S PRODUCTIVITY LOW**



Note: Data for Myanmar are for Ayeyarwady. Data for other countries refer only to one key rice-growing area.

Source: 2013/14 Myanmar agricultural survey for Myanmar data, World Bank 2015a for Cambodia, and Bordey et al. 2014 and 2015 for all other countries.

FIGURE 29: Productivity of rice cultivation in selected Asian countries

Source: Public Expenditure Review, World Bank, 2017



The poorest people are most affected by the lack of diversification in production systems as their livelihoods are disproportionately reliant on agriculture, particularly rice production. The poorest quintile in Myanmar is most engaged in the agriculture sector, either as farmers or casual workers.

FIGURE 30

SOURCES OF INCOME BY WEALTH QUINTILE INDICATE DISPROPORTIONATE RELIANCE ON AGRICULTURE AMONG MYANMAR'S POOREST PEOPLE

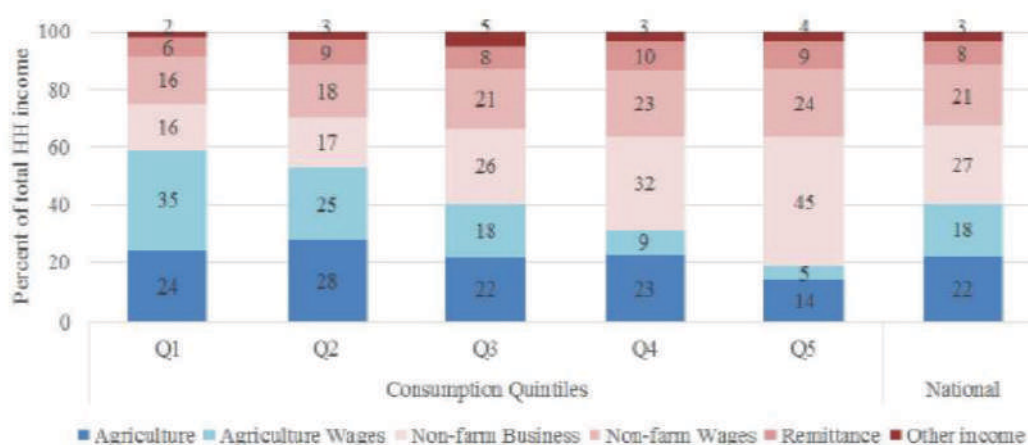


FIGURE 30: Sources of income by wealth quintile

Source: Public expenditure review. World Bank, 2017

**Focusing exclusively on market-driven agricultural commodity production entails risks for food security and nutrition.** Farming systems research by GRET, an international development NGO, indicates Myanmar's reliance on different types of farming systems, mainly shifting cultivation. While Chin's farming systems tend to combine subsistence crops (paddy rice, corn, etc.) with cash crops (elephant foot yam, ginger), Kayin and Kachin farming systems have evolved towards exclusively market/ cash crop-based systems. This is particularly true in certain parts of Kayin State, where food production has nearly disappeared and paddy terraces are being abandoned due to higher opportunity costs of wage-labour on cardamom plantations. This also heightens vulnerabilities to increased food prices and cash crop price drops (Diepart and Alleverdian, 2018).

In conclusion, limited diversification in agriculture systems compromises resilience, steady and stable income generation potential, and thereby access to a diversified diet.

## 2.3.4 INSECURE LAND TENURE AND ITS IMPACT ON DIVERSIFICATION

**In Myanmar, a formal land title is required to secure tenure and to access various services, including seasonal credit, land consolidation and mechanization, and entry to projects.**

People that hold land informally face major challenges of tenure security and in accessing public and private services. Since the introduction of the Farmland law, public financing institutions and commercial banks have replaced a 'social group loans' system for an individual land collateral-based lending system. Holding a land use certificate has become a prerequisite for a farmer to access seasonal credit. This system cuts off official seasonal credit to anyone who occupies land informally, often the poorest people. Some informal lending institutions appear to be using the new collateral system to acquire land cheaply from people who default on their loans against land collateral. The informality of land holding also results in people not being able to enforce their land claims and rights acquired through long term occupation, nor to undertake secure land market transactions.

**But arguably the major reason for many farmers seeking land titling is to protect their lands** from confiscation without receiving the necessary compensation, or from land grabbing by others, including their neighbours. There is evidence that even land titling does not protect farmers from land confiscation, including by the state, without proper compensation.

**Whereas the legal framework for land is complex and its implementation involves many different institutions, the Farmland and VFV land laws are used for securing tenure of almost 50% of the rural land area of Myanmar<sup>12</sup>.** These laws also determine the conditions under which smallholders and other rural households hold and use their land, what they can do and not do to meet their livelihood goals using land for agrarian activities, and at the end how they can engage in a strategy of agricultural diversification.

**The Farmland Law (2012) and its Rules put into place a system for securing tenure over farmland by issuing a Land Use Certificate (LUC) and registering this right in a cadastral system.** The law specifically targets the smallholder sector. It creates a private land use right which can be sold, exchanged, mortgaged, inherited and leased for an undetermined period, as long as the conditions attached to the LUC are being complied. Land transfers are however subject to state approval. The law includes conditions under which each LUC needs to be used; non-compliance with these conditions cannot only result in land confiscation but is also considered as a criminal act.

**Land titling under the Farmland law is mainly focusing on cropping land, often single and seasonal crops, in support of some specific policies including edible oil self sufficiency, pulses exports and especially rice self sufficiency and export.** In fact the Farmland law acknowledges in its article 28 that a main objective is to protect Myanmar's sufficiency of rice as the major staple crop of the Union. The underlying principle of the law is that farmland is restricted to cropping land, and does not consider other agricultural land uses such as

<sup>12</sup> Unpublished DALMS statistics (2017-2018) indicate a total farmland area of 128,921km<sup>2</sup> and a possible VFV land area of 206,450km<sup>2</sup>

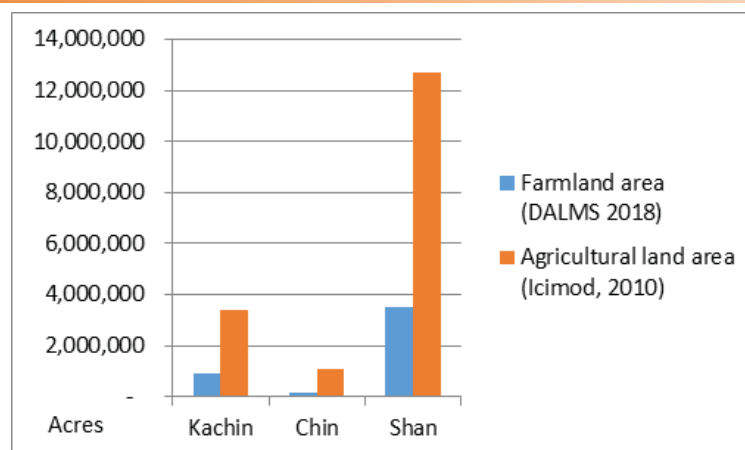
integrated crop-animal based systems, livestock and aquaculture. The Farmland law does not embrace an agriculture diversification strategy as promoted in the ADS and the MS-NPAN.

**The Farmland Law does not secure tenure over land that is not legally classified as farmland.** These include systems with immense potential to contribute to dietary diversity, including integrated rice-fish systems, fishponds, home gardens, grazing areas, poultry and duck farms. Farmers can request the conversion of annual cropping land to these uses. But such land use conversions are excessively complex and decided by a central committee that meets in the capital. Only 36 paddy land conversions, covering an area of 130 acres, were duly authorized for conversion, probably as fishponds, in the whole of Shan State between 2012-2018. On the other hand, demand for fish as a protein source is high in these mountainous areas (DALMS Shan State statistics 2018 made available to the assessment team). It is also noted that conversions from annual to perennial crops are equally subject to stringent procedures of which the outcome cannot always be predicted.

**Regardless, farmers often informally convert their titled farmland to other uses as they see benefits to do so, but thereby risk fines and possible land confiscation.** Thus if land tenure security is an issue, especially for vulnerable households who cannot afford taking risks losing their landholding, farmers will tend to avoid practising nutrition-friendly land uses. A lack of tenure security becomes as such a push factor to practice more nutrition sensitive farming systems. It is estimated that some 80 percent of current fishponds in the Delta area have a doubtful tenure status, mainly as the result of irregular conversion of VFV allocated for cropping, especially paddy rice, and of farmland classified for paddy use (FIRST field interviews 2016-2019).

**The narrow definition of farmland as compared to agricultural land has a major impact on securing land tenure for smallholders.** In upland states, lands over which agricultural activities have been identified cover significantly more area than these lands legally recognized as farmland. For Chin state for instance, 177,000 acres of Farmland are included in DALMS/MoALI statistics (2017-2018), but satellite imagery interpretation by Icimod (2010) recognizes an additional 0.9 million acres of agricultural land. For Shan state 3.49 million acres of farmland only capture a fraction of the total area of 12.67 million acres under agricultural activity (see fig 31). These "other agricultural lands" cover areas under agro-forestry, shifting cultivation, mixes of forest-garden-orchard lands. None of these are considered for land titling under the farmland law.

FIGURE 31



**FIGURE 31: Comparison between agricultural land classified as farmland and land on which agricultural activities are practiced**

Source: DALMs statistics 2017-2018 (unpublished) and Icimod satellite interpretation results (2010) available at <http://geoapps.icimod.org/landcover/mm/landcover/> on 30/10/2018

**Most lands under this broader concept of “agriculture activity”, not formally recognized as farmland, are located on land classified as Vacant, Fallow and Virgin (VFV) land.** The VFV land law creates mechanisms to allocate such land for agricultural development, livestock and small stock farming, aquaculture, mining and other possible uses. Individuals, public institutions and organizations, associations, national investors and joint ventures with international investors can make requests to the Central Committee for the Management of VFV lands (CCFVF). The allocation of VFV land is an on- demand process; the applicant identifies the land parcel, and by extension probably decides whether the land qualifies as VFV land. But in fact the law is not designed for smallholders to secure tenure; it focuses more on larger scale commercial investors. Land use rights can be acquired for 30 years, but these cannot be transferred. There are no specific provisions to change land use once land has been allocated for a certain use. VFV land can eventually be converted into farmland in case certain development conditions are met.

**The concept of VFV land is poorly defined and applied,** and often includes land that is not visibly used (vacant or fallow). Arguably more contentious VFV land may coincide with land that is used in such a way that does not correspond with established land use standards of law makers and law implementers. As a result, land on which shifting cultivation is practiced continues to be considered as VFV land. In a similar vein, land left fallow as part of rotational farming systems and/or shifting cultivation is considered as fallow land, although it is part of the farming system, hence a temporary status of land occupation.

**Smallholders who practice agriculture on VFV land, often using farming systems that are highly nutrition sensitive such as agro-forestry and shifting cultivation, are under threat.** Under the former VFV land law (2012) informal land occupation by these farmers could just be ignored and land continued to be eligible for allocation to outsider VFV land applicants.

The amended VFV land law (2018) requires that all informal land occupants apply for formalization within an unrealistic period of six months after the promulgation of the law. The law prescribes that failure to do so may result in forced eviction and criminalization, but this has so far not happened. It is anticipated that the possible titling of all VFV land occupied by smallholders, mainly in ethnic states, may require many years of effort. Unless the 6-month timeline for such land registration application is removed, land users will remain in an insecure tenure situation and their livelihoods are threatened by a possible loss of land.

**A significant part of nutrition-sensitive land uses, coinciding with VFV lands, are managed under customary land management systems.** The amended VFV land law provides an option for informal occupants of customary land to be exempted from compulsory VFV land registration and secure their lands as customary lands. So far land legislation has failed to legally recognize customary land tenure. Ironically it is the amended VFV land law that is the first official reference to do so. As a result, there are no specific legal tools available to secure land managed under customary systems; neither is there a clear understanding on the definition and possible location of customary land. Hence whatever way informal land users choose to secure tenure over VFV land, they will remain in a precarious tenure situation for many years.

**Secure tenure will not automatically result in diversification, and, by extension, better food security and nutrition.** In any case, many farmers are already attempting to diversify, driven by opportunities and needs, rather than by policy<sup>13</sup> (World Bank, 2019). However, if secure tenure could be provided as a result of policy, many of those farmers would be more confident that their actions would not result in negative consequences, including land confiscation. In addition, it would make them eligible to take advantage of support packages, such as access to credit.

**To achieve this, the current land regulatory framework should address a number of specific issues as follows:**

- » Extending land titling to livestock, fodder production, aquaculture, agro-forestry, rotating agriculture (including shifting cultivation), mixed farming systems, both on Farmland and VFV land
- » Making land titling less conditional to specific land use allowing more free choice of crop/production system
- » Making land use conversions for already titled land from rice/cropping to other systems more easy and flexible;
- » Securing VFV land informally occupied by smallholders gradually in such a way that mixed and integrated farming systems currently being used are also eligible for titling
- » Developing legal and procedural tools to protect customary land rights in such a way that land users can continue practising farming systems that are nutrition sensitive

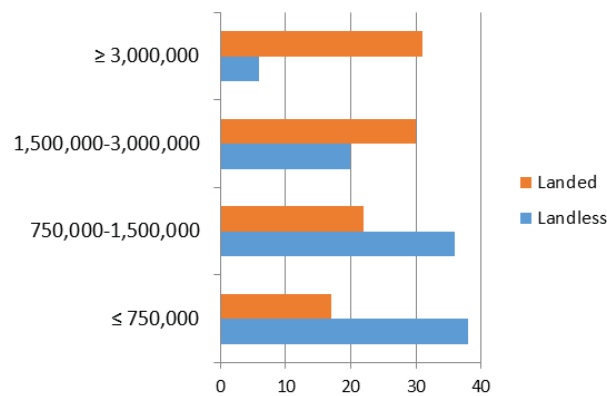
<sup>13</sup> See IFPRI-MSU research 2019



## 2.3.5 LANDLESSNESS, POVERTY AND DIETS

Most rural households lacking permanent land use rights over farmland – or that are landless – are poorer than their landed neighbours (see Graph 1).

**FIGURE 32**



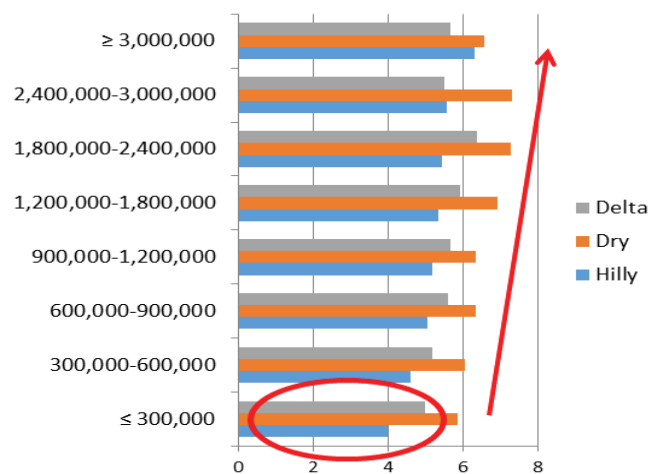
**FIGURE 32: The link between landlessness and poverty in Myanmar**

Source: Adapted from the *LIFT baseline survey, 2012*

x-axis: percentage of households; Y-axis: annual income in MMK (1US\$= 900MMK at time of survey), 2012

This results in less diversified diets, increased seasonal food insecurity with households spending significantly more income to purchase food.

**FIGURE 33**

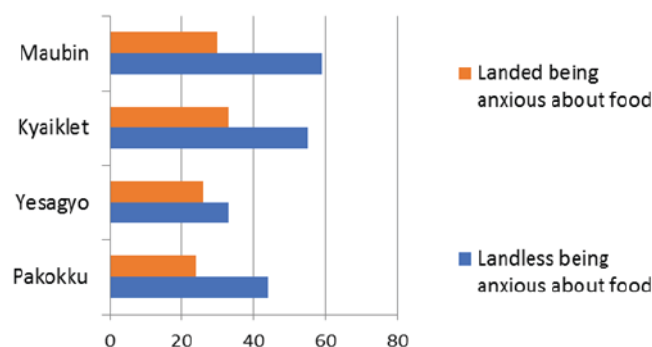


**FIGURE 33: Dietary diversity and incomes in the delta, dry zone and hilly areas of Myanmar**

Source: Adapted from Thandar Win Maung and Cho Cho San, 2015

(x-axis; dietary diversity score; y-axis annual household income in MMK)

FIGURE 34



**FIGURE 34: Perception of food insecurity for landless and land-owning households**

Source: Pritchard et al (2017)

Landlessness rates among rural households are generally very high in Myanmar, ranging from 40 percent in the dry zone to 60 percent in the delta, with lower rates (20 percent) in hilly areas, where customary land management systems provide a social security network to access land, especially for the more vulnerable households. An estimated two-thirds of these delta and dry zone households will probably acquire land at some stage. GRET (2019) categorizes landless households in the delta as follows:

- » *Farming landless*: households having access to temporary land use rights through tenancy contracts. They are associated with the youngest category of household heads. It is likely that they will gain access to land ownership through purchases with savings over time or inheritance.
- » *Farm wage-labourers and fishing landless*: households that rely mainly on farm-wage labour and fishing. They are associated with the middle age category of household heads and tend to be the poorest group of landless people.
- » *Off-farm landless*: households that mostly rely on non-farm wage labour or operate small businesses. These do not require access to agricultural land for livelihoods. This group corresponds with the oldest age category of household heads.

Approximately one-third of the landless households in the delta and the dry zone do not have a prospect of owning land (GRET, 2017). These are known as the livelihood landless, because they depend on agrarian land-based activities to produce food and generate income to purchase food. A Government programme to allocate agricultural land to these households and to provide them with some initial inputs for developing the land, would make a massive contribution to reducing malnutrition for the poorest members of society, where 0-5 year children stunting rates remain at 38 percent.

The Myanmar government supports a land rights-based social protection policy by allocating land to the landless and/or regularizing land tenure for people who already occupy land. This policy is embedded in the NLD Manifesto (2015).

However, the livelihood landless need more than access to land to build their lives and acquire higher levels of food security and nutrition through agrarian activities. Their farming skills (often acquired as farm labourers or tenants) are major assets, but they face difficulties investing in their production activities and maintaining a smallholder farm beyond a level of minimal sustainability. Several programmes such as the Global Agriculture Food Security Program-funded 'Climate Smart Agri-business Project (implemented by ADB and FAO) and LIFT-funded 'Reallocation and Development of Unused Concession Land Programme' (REAL DEV) complement land allocation and tenure security with input support such as seeds, land preparation, extension services and credit.

## 2.3.6 RURAL FINANCE SKEWED TOWARDS PADDY RICE AS A BARRIER TO DIVERSIFICATION

Seasonal loans for rice production represent some 90 percent of total loans for the period 2013-2017. For the 2017-18 season, the share of loans for other crops increased to 15 percent, which may indicate a shift towards more diversification. The states of Kachin (2.1 percent), Kayah (0.2 percent), Kayin (0.5 percent), Chin (0.1 percent), Mon (2.8 percent) and Shan (1.5 percent) captured a total of 8.2 percent of total disbursed loans, whereas major rice-producing regions, including Ayeyarwaddy (26 percent), Bago (21 percent), Yangon (9 percent), Sagaing (15 percent), Mandalay (7.8 percent) and Magway (6.3 percent), represented 85 percent of total loans. Monsoon period loans accounted for 82 percent of all loans, while winter period loans accounted for 16 percent during the period 2017-2018 (MADB data made available to the FIRST assessment team).

**Continuing to focus on subsidizing the rice sector through seasonal loans does not encourage diversification of agricultural production by smallholders.** The Myanmar Agricultural Development Bank (MADB) makes available seasonal loans for a limited number of annual crops (rice, groundnut, sesame, pulses, cotton, corn, mustard, sugarcane), over three growing seasons (monsoon, winter, pre-monsoon). The loan value depends on the crop, with loans values for paddy rice always many times larger (5-8 times from 2013 onwards) than values for other crops (with the exception of sugarcane). As recently as 2018 (winter season), loans for pulse production (100 000MMK/acre)<sup>14</sup> come close to loans for rice (150 000MMK/acre)<sup>15</sup>. Only certified farmland can be considered collateral, up to a maximum of ten acres per title holder. Although the loan scheme thus targets the smallholder sector, the crop specific and land use title conditionality creates major distortions.

<sup>14</sup> USD 66.00

<sup>15</sup> USD 99.00

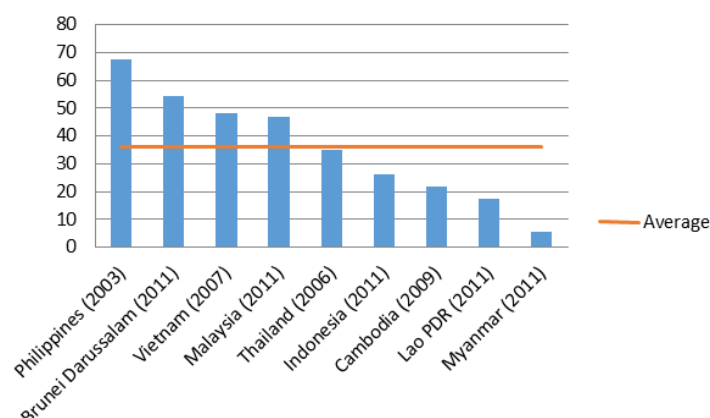
## 2.3.7 PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE AS A BARRIER TO ACCESSING DIVERSE DIETS

**While most food consumed in Myanmar is purchased, the hilly, mountainous and remote areas rely in part on self-production to meet household needs because access to markets is hampered by poor infrastructure and inclement weather conditions.** Thirty percent of the households in Chin, Kachin, Shan, Northern and Central Sagaing and Kayah States depend on their own production to source their food. These areas are inhabited by ethnic groups that practice shifting agriculture with multiple crops, and enable them to grow a variety of types of food throughout the year, thereby reducing dependency on the market (WFP Food Security Atlas, 2018).

At present, Myanmar has an underdeveloped road system, leaving many rural communities with limited access to markets, particularly in the hilly and mountainous areas. Myanmar has the lowest road density in ASEAN at 5.6 km of road per square kilometers of land. It also trails the rest of ASEAN on the WB Rural Access Index (RAI) with a score of 23.<sup>16</sup>

**FIGURE 35**

**MYANMAR'S ROAD DENSITY IS THE LOWEST IN ASEAN (1 KM ROAD/100 KM<sup>2</sup> LAND)<sup>17</sup>**



**FIGURE 35: Road density in ASEAN countries**

Source: WFP Strategic Review of food and nutrition security in Myanmar, 2018

“Insufficient road infrastructure can constrain food access on a state/regional level and limit food availability at the village level. Much of the rural road network in Myanmar’s hilly zone is un-surfaced, making many villages difficult or impossible to access during the monsoon season. Consequently, such populations are heavily dependent on the production of food at the village level and less resilient to climatic shocks and poor harvests. Poor infrastructure also translates into high freight costs. It costs 20 USD to transport one tonne of freight a distance of 100 km in Myanmar, compared to 10 USD in Cambodia and 5 USD in neighboring

<sup>16</sup> World Bank indicators. Accessed October 4, 2016.

<sup>17</sup> World Bank indicators. Accessed October 4, 2016.

Thailand".<sup>18</sup> These costs are ultimately borne by agricultural households (WFP *Strategic review of food and nutrition security in Myanmar*, 2018).

## 2.3.8 GENDER IS INEXTRICABLY LINKED WITH MALNUTRITION

Malnutrition cannot be addressed without recognizing the gendered dimensions of its causes and manifestation. Women are physiologically more vulnerable to malnutrition and also the key agents to break the intergenerational cycle of malnutrition. The MS-NPAN (page 16) clearly summarizes the link between gender and malnutrition.

*Women's empowerment and well-being is critical to improving nutrition. As the position of women in society is elevated, so is their self-confidence, autonomy/control in allocation of resources and decision-making; and available time and manageable workload. In contrast, poor maternal health is associated with a number of negative nutritional outcomes for children. Maternal short stature (defined as height <145 cm) is a sign of a women's own malnutrition in earlier life, which perpetuates the intergenerational cycle of malnutrition by increasing the risk of low birthweight births. Nationally, 6.4 percent of women age 15-49 are of short stature, with the prevalence as high as 14 percent in Chin State. Maternal stature continues to be the strongest predictor of child stunting in Myanmar, with children born to mothers of short stature 6 times more likely to be stunted. Female labor force participation is currently estimated to be 52 percent, significantly lower than that of men -- 74 percent, and lower than what would be expected based upon levels of overall economic development (World Bank "Myanmar Living Condition Survey 2017). Low-wage parity, a high degree of informal employment, increasing migration, and limited social and labor protection create difficulties for women in breastfeeding or providing adequate nutrition and care for their children.*

**Gender as a social construct** influences decision-making in agriculture production, women and men's division of labour engagement along the value chain, cooking practices, and consumption habits. Gender will be further discussed throughout this document, especially in Section C.

<sup>18</sup> Freight data are given for the year 2013. World Bank (2016). *Myanmar: rice price volatility and poverty reduction. Economic and sector work*, Report No. 89687-MM.



## 2.4 EMERGING TRENDS

### 2.4.1 CLIMATE CHANGE AND NATURAL DISASTERS

**Myanmar has been identified as one of the most vulnerable countries in the world to the effects of climate change, ranking 3rd out of 187 countries from 1998 to 2017** (Global Climate Risk Index, 2017). Flooding is the most common type of climate-related disaster with the most widespread impact on populations. Floods mainly occur during the monsoon season, often in coastal areas, such as the delta, Rakhine, Thanyinthari, and coastal Mon State), but are also prominent in inland areas including Bago and parts of the dry zone (Magway). Flooding is the result of tropical storms, such as Nargis in 2008; on other occasions, floods emerge from rising sea levels, such as in the delta. Landslides are common in hilly areas, such as Chin State. Climate change causes increasing drought in the dry zone and, importantly, the unpredictability and volume of rainfall events. The central dry zone is by far the driest area in Southeast Asia, with 40 percent of farmers exposed to risks of crop failure under rain-fed systems every year.

**According to a recent FAO-Action AID study (2019), “Climate change causes a multiplier effect on existing vulnerabilities and the potential impact of disaster events.** However, climate change, disaster and poverty interaction should not be viewed having as a linear relationship, but rather as a circular interaction: climate change drives the frequency and severity of disasters; at the same time, disasters that may or may not be caused by climate change are having greater and longer lasting impacts due to climate change. Cyclone Nargis provides an example of how the discussion about whether the event was caused by climate change or not is largely irrelevant. We know that the damage to the foreshore of the delta, paddy fields, mangrove forests, freshwater and saltwater fish stocks and fish breeding habitats caused by Nargis has been exacerbated in the decade since the event by climate change, and the poorest people are most adversely affected. The interaction of climate change and disasters will affect the poorest and most vulnerable people in two primary ways: By increasing the frequency and severity of extreme weather events and by increasing the overall vulnerability of poorer communities [...]. Secondly, climate change including increases in temperature, changes in total rainfall and rainfall patterns, a decrease in the duration of the monsoon season and an increase in the frequency and severity of extreme weather events all increase the vulnerability of Myanmar and particularly its poorer residents to the impacts of disaster events” (FAO/ActionAid, 2019).

**Climate change and natural disasters impact many drivers of malnutrition, both permanently and on a temporary or seasonal basis.** Table 8 presents the estimated capital loss for different sectors as a result of two natural disasters (Cyclone Nargis in 2008 and Floods and Landslides in 2015). It is clear that the agricultural sector was most severely hit, jeopardizing food security and exposing households to the risk of acute and, in the long term, chronic malnutrition.

TABLE 8

| DEVELOPMENT SECTORS  | CYCLONE NARGIS 2008<br>(IN MILLION KYATS) | FLOODS AND LANDSLIDES 2015<br>(IN MILLION KYATS) |
|--|---|--|
| Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries                               | 571,000-694,000                           | 713,217  |
| Industry and Commerce  | 2516,600                                  | 480,808  |
| Housing  | 711,900                                   | 542,233  |
| Education  | 116,300                                   | 50,772   |
| Health   | 18,900                                    | 8,185  |
| Total damage and loss as percentage of GDP of previous fiscal year | 21  | 3.1  |

TABLE 8: Impact of disasters on key development sectors

Source: New MAPDRR, 2017 (advanced draft)

In the face of disaster, affected people adopt negative coping strategies, including consuming less preferred/expensive food, reducing the number and size of meals, borrowing food, and non-food based strategies, i.e. borrowing money. Negative food-based coping strategies have direct implications for nutrition (CSFAM, FAO, WFP, 2016).

Figure 36 illustrates the food coping mechanisms used by different states during the 2015 floods.

FIGURE 36

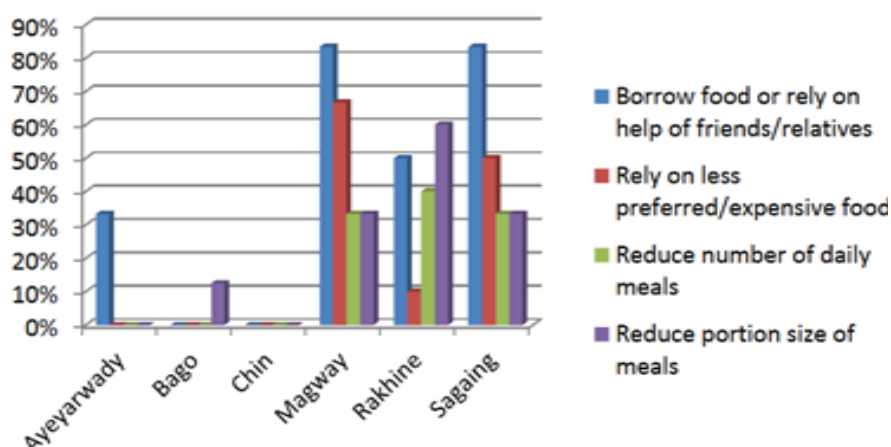


FIGURE 36: Occurrence of food coping mechanisms in different states and regions

Source: Agriculture and livelihood flood impact assessment in Myanmar. MoAI, MLFRD, FAO, WFP, 2015

**The Government of Myanmar launched the Myanmar Action Plan on Disaster Risk Reduction (APDRR) in 2019** and set up the Disaster Risk Reduction Task Force, chaired by MOALI and the Ministry of Education, in 2017. The Action Plan is a comprehensive and roadmap to disaster risk reduction until 2020 and FAO has conducted additional analyses to strengthen its interface with the ADS. While the plan emphasizes the importance of agriculture diversification for improved resilience, it does not go so far as to make the link between climate change and dietary diversity. The Climate Smart Agriculture Strategy (IRRI, 2017), on the contrary, mainly provides some technology solutions for rice-based production systems, including salt and high water-tolerant seed breeding, alternative drying and wetting of paddies, etc. This further builds on the legacy of a rice-centred policy.

**The leadership of DoP/MoALI has been visionary in promoting alternative land uses that are better adapted to the future impacts of climate change.** First, there is a focus on the delta area to create conditions for increasing investment in the aquaculture sector. Rice production becomes more marginal under rising sea levels and the intrusion of saltwater (resulting in soil salinization), **with aquaculture and rice-fish systems being good alternatives.** In addition, these systems generate significantly more income, and are more nutrition-sensitive, especially for the smallholder sector. The World Fish Centre recommends that farmers convert just 5 percent of their landholding (average is 5 acres) to fish ponds, with a focus on small fish that can thrive in water exhibiting different salinity degrees. These integrated systems can generate considerably more overall net profits and more nutritional outputs without sacrificing more than 10 percent of rice production. They are especially promising in areas where rice yields are already decreasing and becoming marginal.

**Farmers that rely on annual crops in the dry zone are susceptible to unpredictable drought and rainfall; this can be offset by increased investment in the livestock sector,** including, cattle, sheep and goats, pigs and poultry. This would involve more focus on fodder production. To this end, the ADS anticipates having a fodder policy in place within the next few years.

**Encouraging shifting cultivation systems that may evolve into more fixed agroforestry systems, is a sound climate change adaptation strategy that is also nutrition-sensitive.** Similar strategic thinking, which aims to mitigate the negative consequence of climate change and the occurrence of natural disasters, applies to the hilly and mountainous uplands. Mudslides in Chin State seem to occur more often on slope-land converted into permanent annual cropping systems (rice, maize), including on terraced land (Boutry et al, 2018).

**The link between climate change and nutrition in Myanmar cannot not be taken lightly.** As such, the MS-NPAN clearly articulates that diversification of the agriculture sector (aquaculture and rice-fish systems, small livestock, and agroforestry) can help households to mitigate some of the vulnerabilities created by climate change, while improving the resilience of their livelihoods and improving access to more diverse diets.

## 2.4.2 SOCIAL INSTABILITY

**Social instability exacerbates already poor dietary diversity scores in vulnerable areas.** Conflicts and intercommunal violence result in food insecurity and malnutrition and undermine development gains in Myanmar. Conflict can reduce the amount of food available, disrupt people's access to food, limit families' access to food preparation facilities and health care, and increase uncertainty about satisfying future needs for food and nutrition. Conflicts contribute to poor nutrition outcomes, especially the prevalence of wasting. Disasters can quickly turn into a food and nutrition crisis, which may require several years of recovery, trapping people in a cycle of hunger and poverty, and preventing sustainable development and prosperity (CESD for FIRST, 2018).

**According to Human Needs Overview (2019), "over 244,000 displaced people remain in camps or camp-like situations in Kachin, Shan, Rakhine and Kayin states.** Children make up at least 50 per cent of this population, while women and children together make up about 77 per cent. This includes approximately 97,000 people in Kachin, 8,800 in Shan and 10,300 in Kayin who remain displaced as a result of the armed conflict" (HNO, 2019).

FIGURE 37

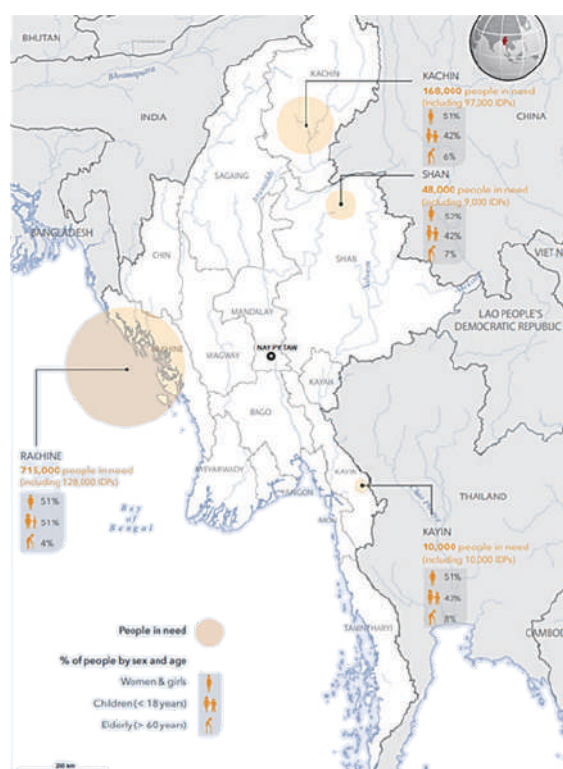


FIGURE 37: Geographic representation of social conflict in Myanmar

Source: Human Needs Overview, 2019

**Although social instability impacts all tiers of society, internally displaced people (IDPs) are most vulnerable to the effects of social instability.** Food insecurity is similar for IDPs and non-IDP households as measured by the use of coping mechanisms such as reduced meal size, reduced number of meals and borrowing food. But IDPs consume an increasingly narrow diet, with dietary diversity being lower among IDPs by nearly one food group. With increasing focus on the humanitarian-development nexus, the drivers of dietary diversity need to be carefully considered.

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### 2.4.3 MIGRATION

**Migration is a major issue in Myanmar and it is expected to increase given comparatively higher wages in urban areas and neighbouring countries.** An estimated 9.39 million people have migrated internally, with an additional estimated 4.25 million international migrants; altogether a quarter of Myanmar's population has left its area of origin and is on the move (Myanmar Census, 2014). However, "migrants are vulnerable to poor health and nutritional outcomes in growing peri-urban slums. It is estimated that nearly half a million people are living in informal settlements and urban slums with poor sanitation facilities, high water contamination, risk of flooding, poor drinking water and no access to health services, hence all significant risk factors for undernutrition and high rates of wasting (LIFT, 2019)."

**Migration has a major impact on the agricultural sector.** Massive emigration from agricultural areas creates major issues around the availability of young farm labour and results in fundamental changes to farming systems. In the dry zone, emigration and shortage of labour has greatly contributed to the increased mechanization of production systems. Emigration from the dry zone is considered a strategy of better off farmers to improve their financial capital, which will be reinvested locally by remittances in farm livelihoods and child education. In the Delta, however, migration tends to drive landless households to areas where there is potential for farm labour employment, such as Kachin State (Diepart and Alleverdian, 2018). Overall, remittances have become increasingly important to rural households' income and to their capacity to invest in farming and non-farming activities. In upland areas, such as Chin State, the limited labour force combined with an increased need for cash has caused households to switch from shifting cultivation to less rotating systems such as ginger fields, permanent gardens and fruit orchards.

## 2.5 PROGRESS IN ADDRESSING SDG2

**Myanmar's engagement with the SDGs and SDG targets are captured in the Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan (MSDP) 2018 – 2030.** The MSDP is "the integration and distillation of existing plans and priorities (MSDP, 2018)." Indeed, it makes direct reference to the Agricultural Development Strategy and National Action Plan for Nutrition. There is however no reference to the National Land Use Policy or an expressed need for such a policy to deal with land issues and land governance.



**The MSDP mediates between local developmental needs and the global sustainable development agenda by aligning MSDP action plans with global SDG targets.** It is however not explicitly stated that MSDP targets fully correspond with those of the SDGs. The MSDP is structured around three pillars, five goals, 28 strategies and 251 action plans. Annex A illustrates the correlation between the SDG2 targets and the MSDP Strategies and Action Plans.

**The MSDP seems to address SDG 2.3**, “doubling agricultural productivity and incomes” by “creating an enabling environment which supports a diverse and productive economy through inclusive agricultural and polycultural practices as a foundation for poverty reduction in rural areas (Strategy 3.1).” Hence, it highlights the importance of poverty reduction or income generation through diversified agriculture. This is complemented by a strategy to “Increase secure access to food that is safe and well-balanced (Strategy 4.4)” in support of **SDG 2.1 and SDG 2.2**.

UNDP provided support to Myanmar’s Central Statistics Organizations (CSO) to establish an indicator baseline for the GoMM (UNDP-CSO, 2017). Table 9 presents the available baseline indicators for SDG2, and compare these at a regional (Southeast Asia) and global level.





TABLE 9

| GOAL 2 | Indicator  | Year          | Myanmar                                      | South-East Asia                                    | World   |
|--------|--|---------------|--|--|---|
| 2.1.1  | Prevalence of Undernourishment (PoU)   | 2014-16       | 14.2%  | 9.6%   | 10.8%   |
| 2.1.2  | Prevalence of population with moderate food insecurity, based on the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES)   | 2014/15       | 11.31%                                       | 14.72%   | 11.22%  |
| 2.1.2  | Prevalence of population with severe food insecurity, based on the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES)   | 2014/15       | 1.47%  | 5.10%  | 7.34%   |
| 2.2.1  | Prevalence of stunting (height for age <-2 standard deviation from the median of the World Health Organization (WHO) Child Growth Standards) among children under 5 years of age | 2015-16       | 29.2%  | 27.3% (1)  | 23.8% (1)   |
| 2.2.2  | Prevalence of malnutrition – wasting (weight for height <-2 standard deviation from the median of the WHO Child Growth Standards) among children under 5 years of age            | 2015-16       | 7.0%   | 9.2% (1)   | 7.5% (1)  |
| 2.2.2  | Prevalence of malnutrition – overweight (weight for height >+2 standard deviation from the median of the WHO Child Growth Standards) among children under 5 years of age         | 2015-16       | 1.3%   | 7.4% (1)   | 6.1% (1)  |
| 2.5.2  | Proportion of local breeds classified as being at risk, not-at-risk or at unknown level of risk of extinction  | 2007-2016 (2) | Risk: 0%<br>Not-at-risk: 0%<br>Unknown: 100% | Risk: 2.6%<br>Not-at-risk: 17.9%<br>Unknown: 79.5% | Risk: 19.7%<br>Not-at-risk: 15.6%<br>Unknown: 64.7% |
| 2.a.2  | Total official flows (official development assistance plus other official flows) to the agricultural sector  | 2014          | 78.94 million constant 2014 USD              | –  | 12.10 billion constant 2014 USD (3)                 |
| 2.c.1  | Indicator of (food) Price Anomalies (IPA)  | 2013          | 8.10   | 8.10 (4)   | 7.80 (4)  |

Sources: See Annex.

(1) 2014 data.

(2) Data for "at-risk" and "not-at-risk" status are less than ten years old. 'Unknown' status means that no updates have been received on the population sizes at least in the past 10 years.

(3) Total for all developing countries.

(4) Source: FAOSTat database.

TABLE 9: Availability of baseline indicators for SDG2

Source: Myanmar Sustainable Development Strategy (MSDP), 2018

## 2.6 ADDRESSING KEY DRIVERS AND REMAINING KNOWLEDGE GAPS

**The NLD has recognized nutrition as an important policy agenda and it is quickly gaining prominence.** The nutrition agenda is proving useful to raise questions around targeting of public services, enabling environment for diversification, as well as intra and cross-sectoral linkages to address immediate and underlying causes of malnutrition in highly affected areas. While data on the impact pathways at subnational level remain inadequate to accurately design interventions to address these complex issues, current policy discussions are pushing the way for more analysis and research. Hence knowledge on impact pathways is a major “knowledge gap”.

### 2.6.1 ADDRESSING STUNTING

**Nutrition rates have significantly improved in Myanmar in the last three decades,** with stunting rates falling from 40 percent in 1990 (DHS 2015-16) to 26.7 percent in 2018 according to most recent figures (MOHS Micronutrient and Food Consumption Survey, 2019). It is important to note that stunting figures remain highest in border, Ethnic and upland areas (Rakhine, Chin, Kachin, Kayah, Kayin, and Shan). These areas also have the highest poverty rates and also fall short on other development indices. Given current political and social instability particularly in parts of Rakhine, Shan and Kachin, more targeted efforts will be required to effectively reach these states and bring them on par with the rest of the country while respecting their diversity and preferred development trajectory. Current shifts in Development Assistance to these affected states bodes promising for the future, more inclusive development of the country to effectively reduce stunting rates, and leave no one behind.

**The positive association between wealth quintile and mother's education with reduced stunting and with improved dietary diversity bodes well for Myanmar to improve a broad base of development indices.** Given steady economic growth projections for Myanmar, it is likely that food security and nutrition will continue to improve, at least until the 20 percent mark as evidence suggests from the region (at which point a convergence approach is required with education and health). The growing educated consumer base in Myanmar is also likely to act as a pull factor for more diverse production systems across the country.

**However, according to EU projections, it is unlikely that Myanmar will reach its World Health Assembly target of reducing the prevalence of stunting to 21 percent by 2025<sup>19</sup> although it won't be far from it.** Unequal poverty reduction and inadequate service delivery to border, ethnic and upland areas may slow these efforts.

<sup>19</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/myanmar-nutrition-country-fiche-and-child-stunting-trends\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/myanmar-nutrition-country-fiche-and-child-stunting-trends_en).

FIGURE 38

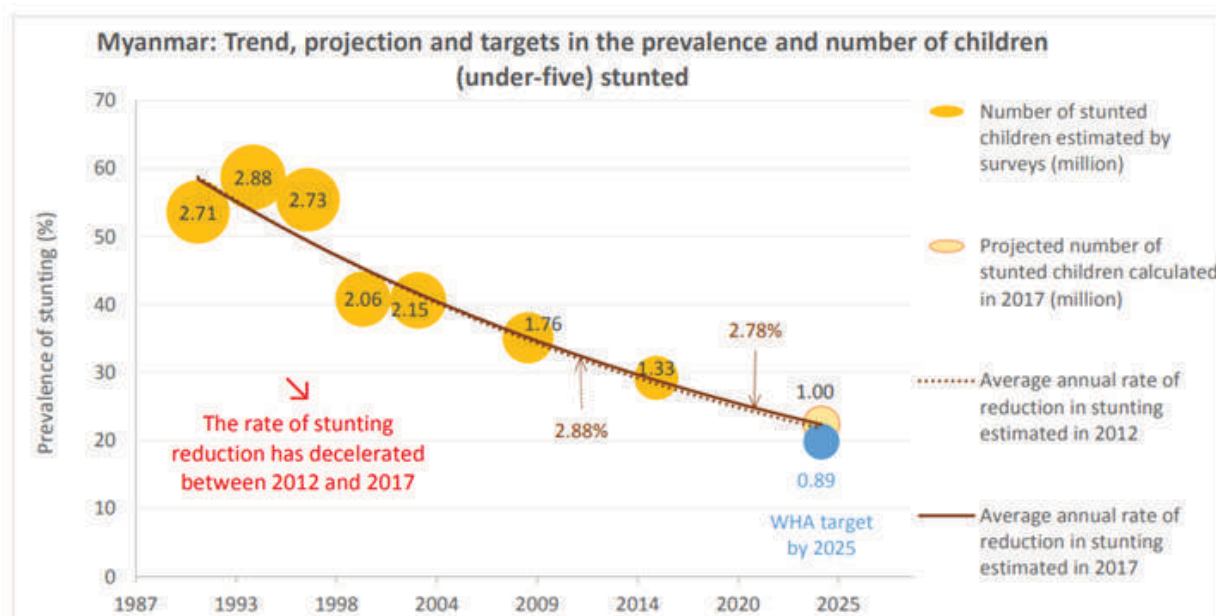


FIGURE 38: Trend; projection and targets in the prevalence and number of children stunted

Source: Myanmar: country profile on nutrition and child stunting trends, 2018

## 2.6.2 ADDRESSING DIETARY DIVERSITY

**While there is an increasing evidence base on dietary diversity, there is inconsistency in the use of indicators** and few surveys are national and are limited to project studies and impact evaluations. Much more work is required to understand the impact pathways from agriculture to nutrition as preliminary findings suggest that these differ drastic by agroecological region and by state and region. This has only recently become part of the agriculture discussion, promoted by EU, LIFT, and, increasingly, by IFPRI.

**Efforts are underway to encourage development partners working on agriculture for nutrition to harmonize their use of indicators** including the use of the Women Empowerment in Agriculture Index and MDD-W. This will help to build a narrative for change in Myanmar.

According to the Asian Development Bank, Myanmar's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is expected to grow 6.6 percent in 2018 and 7 percent in 2019, translated into per capita GDP growth of 5.9 percent in 2018 and 6.3 percent in 2019.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.adb.org/countries/myanmar/economy#tabs-0-1>.

FIGURE 39

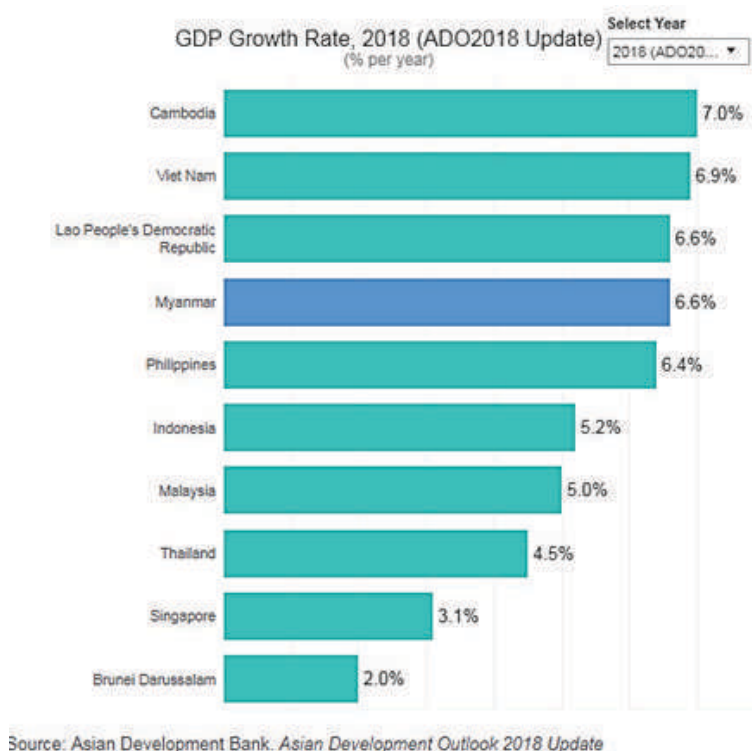


FIGURE 39: GDP growth rate in ASEAN countries

Source: Asian Development Bank. Asian Development Outlook 2018 Update

**While economic growth is quite promising at the national level, there is a risk of rising inequalities that might leave the poor and vulnerable behind.** As Myanmar undergoes rapid economic transition after nearly 50 years of economic isolation, a slew of opportunities and threats present themselves. The MSDP has sustainable inclusive growth at its foundation, however this will require effectively targeting public services across all sectors (currently not practiced by MoALI).

**Given the current uneven service delivery to the country's hilly, ethnic and border areas, efforts will need to be made to better reach these areas and adapt approaches according to different development trajectories.** Development partners will likely need to support processes to ensure that the inhabitants in these areas are truly engaged (LIFT, USAID, SDC, etc. are already shifting their assistance to these vulnerable areas). It is evident that to achieve a more balanced poverty reduction strategy covering all areas of Myanmar, gains from GDP growth will need to be increasingly invested in these poorer areas.

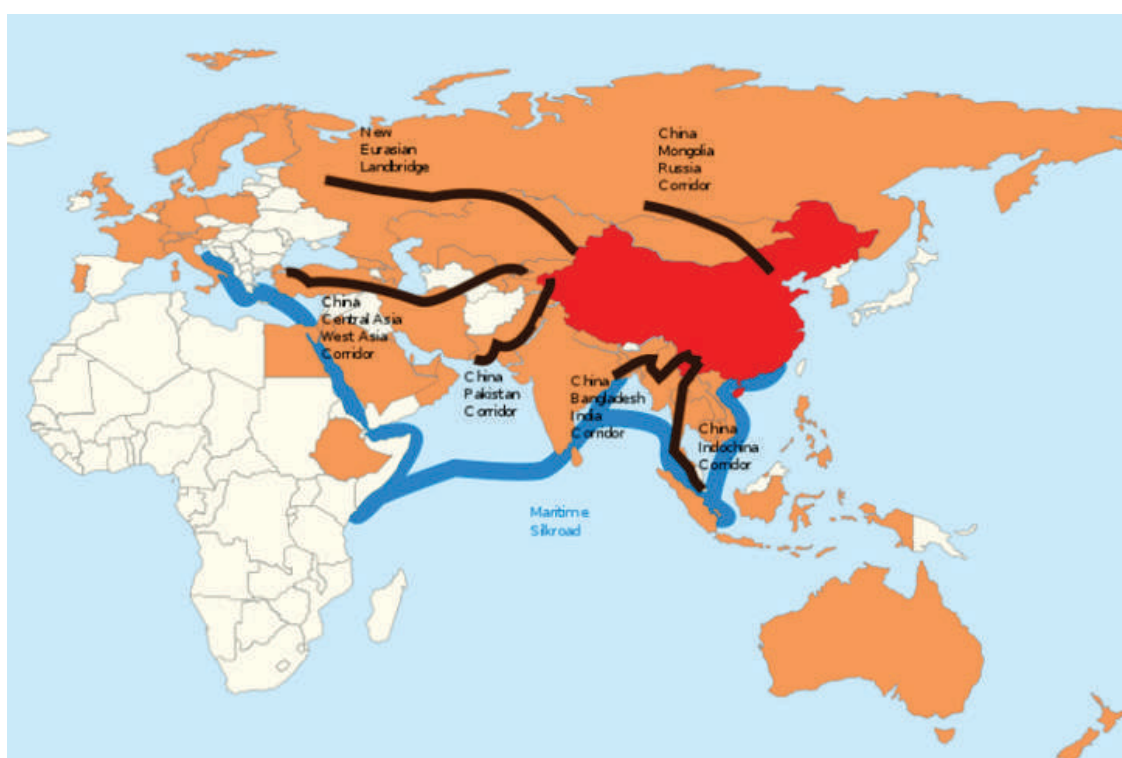
**The ongoing Chinese Belt and Road Initiative offers unprecedented opportunities for the GoMM, but will also require significant efforts to mitigate potential harmful impacts,** e.g. the relocation and loss of livelihoods (so-called economic dispossession). Myanmar hosts



two of six road corridors and so is a key frontier for this global initiative. The project is likely to improve physical access to markets (including food markets) by remote populations and may enhance their livelihood opportunities. However, regulation will be crucial, as it is likely that some will win big and others will significantly lose in this effort. This will be further elaborated in the recommendations section.

FIGURE 40

**BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE: MAJOR ROUTES PASS THROUGH MYANMAR  
(ROAD AND RAIL) TO ACCESS THE SEA**



**FIGURE 40: Representation of major Belt and Road Initiative transport corridors**

Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Belt\\_and\\_Road\\_Initiative#/media/File:One-belt-one-road.svg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Belt_and_Road_Initiative#/media/File:One-belt-one-road.svg)

## 2.6.3 PROGRESS IN ADDRESSING LANDLESSNESS

**The NLD Manifesto (2015) proposed allocating land to the landless as a major political commitment for the 2015 legislative elections.** It suggested identifying suitable VFV land that could enable landless people to engage in productive agricultural activities. A major task of the Central Reinvestigation Committee for Confiscated Farmlands and Other Lands is to identify and examine cases of previous land grabs and propose solutions for returning this land to its former owners/occupants.

**A CSO report on the progress of the Reinvestigation Committee reported that 10 891 investigated cases of confiscated land resulted in the return of land in 1 777 cases**

(SCTFN, Ethnic Concern, Keran, Agfa, LIOH, CPRCG, Olive Branch, 2018). Cases of land return are highlighted by the government press on a regular basis (Government Newspaper, the Global New Light of Myanmar), but returned land seems to represent only a fraction of investigated cases (more quantitative info may be available in Namati and GRET reporting). However, the high-level ceremonies that accompany the return of land to smallholders, often in the presence of the second Vice President, chairperson of the Committee, seems to indicate that this continues to be a priority for the current government. The return of land by public institutes (ministerial departments, schools and universities) and the military to landless people, while arguably often symbolic, seems to support this conclusion.

**Reclaiming land that is allocated for private investment under the Wasteland Act (1991)<sup>21</sup> to national investment companies and that remains unused and undeveloped, is a key area of interest to the government.** It is estimated that this unused land represents a total area of some 3.2million acres or some 82 percent of total VFV land that was allocated (MRLG, 2018). **The VFV land law allows the government to reclaim lands that have not been put into development four years after their allocation.** Real progress is however weak. The LIFT-MoALI REAL-DEV project is the first formal effort of its kind to address the return of such land to smallholders. It covers 6 000 acres and targets 500 households, most of which informally occupy the land with tillage rights (legal landless people). Progress is slow, with project assessment, design and proposal requests taking in excess of 18 months. The current initiative is now contested by a wide number of CSOs/NGOs, who are advocating for the abolishment of the VFV land law and its amended version.

**At the same time, the government has approved the seizure of 950 000 acres of unused private VFV land and their (re) allocation so that “people can settle there** (Myanmar Times, 24/01/2019).” It is not clear whether landless people will be the main beneficiaries for this settlement, however it can be concluded that land allocation to the landless continues to have support from the government, but that effective implementation is slow and has not yet resulted in tangible field interventions.

**One reason for this slow progress is probably the persistence of a number of knowledge gaps. In fact, land administrators and their partners, including CSO service providers, cannot yet rely on tested and validated approaches for allocating reclaimed land and/or regularizing the tenure of the people informally occupying the land.** This will require a number of pilot projects in different socio-ecological settings, with a varying degree of complexity. The REAL-DEV project is just one of these and once it becomes operational it will need to be complemented by other efforts.

**Information on the extent, location and nature of allocated land under the VFV land law and the current land use situation are major knowledge gaps.** In partnership with DALMS, MRLG has compiled such information (MRLG, 2018), but it has not yet been made publicly available to programme and development partners. In addition, recent objections to the amended version of the VFV land law by CSOs and development partners are delaying the implementation of the aspect of the law that the same actors have long sought to accelerate, i.e. reclaiming unused allocated VFV land after four years.

<sup>21</sup> The Wasteland act (1991) is the predecessor of the VFV lands laws (2012, 2018). Under this act some 4 million acres of land were allocated for investment by national agricultural companies and individuals. Most land was allocated around the period of the food price crises (2008-2011)

## 2.6.4 ADDRESSING INSECURE LAND TENURE AS A BARRIER FOR DIVERSIFICATION

Progress on addressing the negative impact of insecurity of land tenure on diversification can be measured by the extent to which the government has been able to secure tenure rights for smallholders over land used for nutrition-sensitive agricultural purposes but not falling under the legally defined farmlands, as well as over land that qualifies as farmland but where land certification is still outstanding.

### Land titling under the Farmland law has been successful in lower and central Myanmar.

By March 2018, some 9.7 million land titles (Land Use Certificates of Form-7) were issued for 5.9 million farming households covering a total area of 24.9 million acres. Land titling in the 7 regions of Myanmar accounts for some 80% of the total of issued titles. It covers some 93% of all land that is legally recognized as farmland (see Fig XX). It is noted that most farmland was titled during the period 2013-2015. More recent progress is slower; between March 2018 and May 2019 some 154,173 land titles were issued (unpublished DALMS statistics).

FIGURE 41

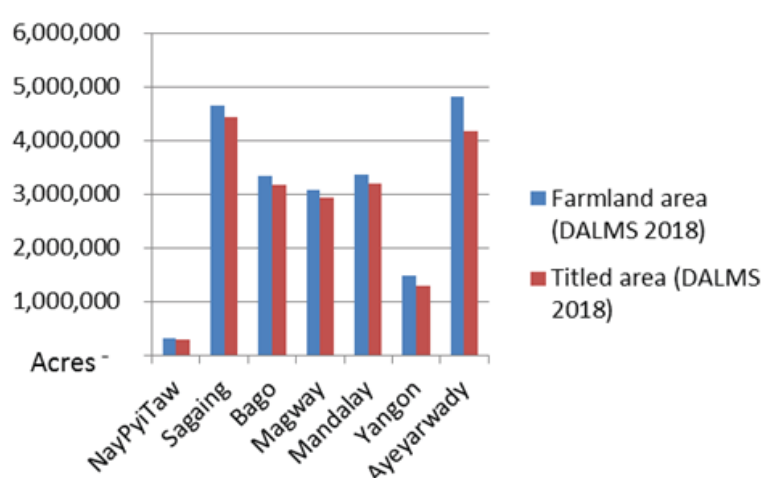
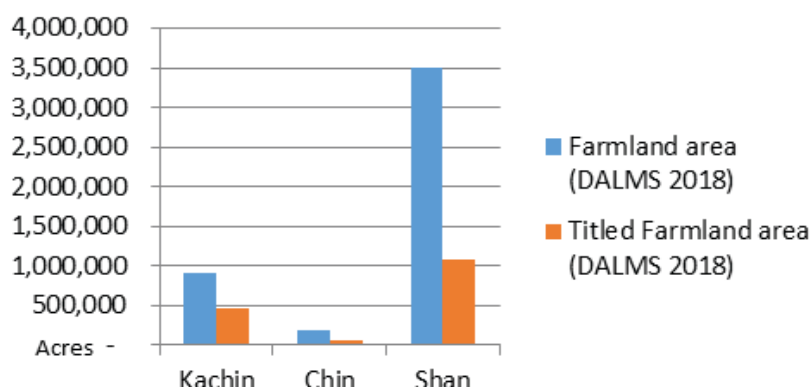


FIGURE 41: Land titling under the Farmland law in lower and central Myanmar

Source: DALMS statistics 2017-2018 (unpublished)

**Implementation of the Farmland law is weak in areas with the highest levels of poverty (and stunting). Progress of farmland titling in ethnic uplands is significantly different, with much less coverage.** In three ethnic states (Chin, Kachin and Shan), only 35% of legally recognized farmland has acquired a land use certificate (see fig.). Assignment of titles to eligible land under the Farmland Law is weak in Kachin, Chin and Shan States, with 51 percent, 27 percent and 31 percent area coverage respectively. There are several reasons for this, but overall it is acknowledged that land administration service provision in uplands is much less developed than in low and central Myanmar; much fewer areas have been subject to cadastral mapping.

FIGURE 42



**FIGURE 42: Land titling in the uplands states of Chin, Kachin and Shan (in acres)**

Source: DALMS statistics 2017-2018 (unpublished)

**Smallholders in areas with the highest levels of poverty (and stunting) engage in agriculture on VFV lands with extreme poor tenure security, and risk losing their livelihoods.** Most farmers in ethnic states such as Chin, Kachin and Shan practice agriculture on land classified as VFV land and not on Farmland (see Fig. 42). Estimations indicate very low coverage of agricultural land with secure tenure rights (under the Farmland law) as compared to the total agricultural area; respectively 13,7% for Kachin; 4,4% for Chin and 8,5% for Shan. Rather than the VFV law being an instrument for securing the large remainder of all this land, the amended VFV land law has created an environment of extreme tenure insecurity for these farmers. The failure to apply for formalisation of occupation on these lands may result in forced eviction. There is little information available on the actual number of applications for such tenure formalization. There is anecdotal evidence that over a period of some 8 months relatively few applications were received, some 43,000 covering an area of 700,000 acres. In response to a parliamentary question, the Shan state parliament was informed on 3759 applications (by April 2019) covering an area of 72,216 acres.

**The lack of progress and the resistance of certain parties to addressing smallholder land tenure security for other-than-traditional crop systems are well illustrated by the aquaculture sector.** There is a general acknowledgement of the high potential of smallholder rice-fish and aquaculture systems to contribute to diversification and nutrition. The precarious tenure status of these systems is however a major issue that may jeopardize this sector to fully unlock its potential. Land tenure challenges and possible answers to remedy these have been highlighted at a number of high-level 2018 events, organized with strong support from FIRST<sup>22</sup>. Follow up to act on concrete recommendations was agreed by a number of stakeholders (FIRST, GIZ MySAP project, World Fish International, FAO Fishadapt project) including the realization of a specific, action driven workshop, and the constitution of a working group on legal issues for the aquaculture sector. These initiatives were not supported by the Department of Fisheries (DoF), and by extension the Myanmar Fish Federation (MFF). The focus of the latter two institutions seems to be on the regularization

<sup>22</sup> See for instance FIRST contribution to the South East Asia Rice-Fish Symposium, organised by WorldFish-IRRI in August 2018 in NayPyiTaw

of tenure issues for larger scale aquaculture operators, in view of promoting the export of fish products, rather than on regularizing and protecting the rights of smallholders who are instrumental to make fish available at the local level.

**Progress the use of alternative tools to secure nutrition sensitive farming systems is also slow.** The Community Forestry Instructions (2016), for example, could have been used to secure tenure over forest based production systems, possibly including agroforestry. This measure has certain limitations; community forest licenses are provided on the basis of a proposed forest management plan with a focus on forest exploitation, not necessarily agroforestry. Community forest permits are only valid for 30 years (extendable though) and hence secure tenure for communities exists for the same period. Progress with licencing community forests is slow; only 0.5 million acres have been licensed against a target of 2.27million acres to be met in 2030 (Forest Management Plan, 2002-2031). Thus in two-thirds of the time available to implement the plan, only about 20 percent of the target has been achieved. It worth noting that the total of 4 218 Forest Users Groups are almost exclusively located in the permanent forest estate (PFE), with only a handful on non-PFE or VFV land, falling under the management of MoALI.<sup>23</sup>

**The recognition of customary tenure is potentially a strong tool to secure tenure of smallholders, especially those working on VFV land, but in the absence of specific legal provisions this option cannot yet be fully explored.** The amended VFV law is the first legal document that recognizes the existence of customary land tenure and the need to recognize it to some extent. A new land law will include customary tenure as a legal right to land and develop practical tools for rural folks and communities to ascertain these rights. There are however three major knowledge gaps limiting progress on securing tenure over smallholder land managed under customary rules. First, there is need for a better understanding as to the nature of customary systems: what are customary land rights, where do they occur, how are they managed? There are a number of research and knowledge initiatives underway, driven by iNGOS, CSOs and regional agents. Most are focusing on a limited number of geographic areas (Chin, Shan and Kachin States). This research will need to be scaled up. Second, there is a need to develop methodologies to identify, register and manage customary land rights, striking a balance between customary management systems and acceptable options for the government to support them. The cost effectiveness of such approaches is an issue. Several discussion fora have been organized over the last few years, mainly using the forest sector as an entry point. One of the first tasks of the NLUC will be to acknowledge, engage and build on these initiatives. Third, if the government wants to make substantial progress on customary land rights, it will need to build a service provision capacity. A partnership with CSOs and national/international NGOs is a must.

<sup>23</sup> The permanent forest estate (PFE) covers reserved forests, public protected forest and protected areas; land falling under the PFE is managed by MONREC.



## 2.6.5 ADDRESSING LIMITED AGRICULTURAL DIVERSIFICATION

**While the ADS and MS-NPAN both promote a shift from the Rice Bowl Policy towards agricultural diversification, both initiatives still need to be implemented.** This entails a massive shift in business as usual and a genuine change from 50 years of top-down planning. Previous sections of this report have described some of the underlying barriers to the diversification of agriculture production systems, particularly land use policies. As will be further discussed in Section E (public expenditure), it is obvious that the government still provides significant support to rice-based production systems.

**MoALI's Department of Planning provides the vision for agricultural diversification.** As an overall guiding principle, it considers that options for diversification need to respond to particular opportunities that different agroecologic areas present. In broad lines, DoP looks at opportunities to:

- » Diversify from monocrop rice production to fish-based systems in the floodplains of the delta. There is evidence that a significant part of this area is unsuitable for rice production, even under different production systems such as deepwater rice production and longer term flooded rice production with adapted varieties (IWMI, 2019). A gradual diversification into integrated rice-fish production (in longer term flooded areas and deepwater paddy fields) and possible conversion into aquaculture are options suggested by the DoP. This must be backed by research and testing of rice-based production systems with new varieties that are more salt and longer-term flood tolerant.
- » Diversify irrigated and rainfed crop production to include more integrated livestock-based production systems in the dry zone. The risk of crop failure, both under rainfed conditions and poor water-managed fringe irrigation schemes, is recurrent and increases with climate change. Increased production of various types of fodder (rainfed and irrigated) would support the development of the livestock sector. An agreement with China provides major potential for exporting cattle, in addition to an increasing demand for meat particularly in urban areas like Yangon and Mandalay
- » Better balancing the production of subsistence agriculture for direct household consumption with producing smallholder cash crops for generating income to purchase nutrition dense food stuffs to complement local diets. This transformation from mainly shifting cultivation to more stable agroforestry systems is well underway in several mountainous areas, but at a faster pace in parts of Kayin State than in southern Chin State, with Northern Chin still in its early stages. Experiences indicate good potential for crops that can grow under some forest cover, like coffee, cardamom, turmeric, elephant foot yam, avocado, among others.

**The diversification of agricultural production still needs to be better understood in the context of nutrition.** There is no doubt that different types of diversification may have better outcomes than others. There is also much need to start disaggregating the concepts of 'farmer' and 'smallholder' and to better classify different farming groups, based aspects such as income level, asset base and gender, that may have different capacities to diversify. This would call for more livelihoods analysis on capacity and opportunities, nuanced production and enterprise development approaches, and market assessments. Guiding principles for diversification policy should be shaped to realistically respond to different needs and opportunities.

**To this end, FAO developed a proposal for a small Technical Cooperation Project, 'Technical assistance in development of strategic tools for planning agriculture diversification and dietary improvement'.** The project has two main components:

- » crop suitability assessment: to assess the potential of different agroecological zones to produce a variety of local foods that can contribute to a more nutritious diet, and
- » the development of graphical illustrations of a balanced food plate, based on agroecological availability, cost of a balanced food basket, and local preferences.

**The process of planning for diversification consists of matching the dietary needs of target beneficiaries with nutritious and safe foods** through direct production-consumption pathways and production-income-consumption pathways. The *crop suitability assessment* and *region-specific food graphics* aspects of the project are interlinked, each serving as a planning tool to promote nutrition-sensitive agriculture in Myanmar. These tools will be crucial to informing the development of subnational multisector nutrition action plans and supporting an agriculture sector that helps reduce malnutrition. The crop suitability assessment aims to integrate the performance of different crops into a number of farming systems, taking into account the asset base (land, labour, capital).



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# 3 | NUTRITION POLICY ENVIRONMENT





### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

**The Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation (MoALI) is a strategic but still imperfect merger of three former ministries:** the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MoAL), the Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Rural Development, and the Ministry of Cooperatives merged in 2016. MoALI was created by the current government in 2016 and brings the major agricultural subsectors of crop production, livestock production and fisheries under one governance structure.

**Myanmar's legacy of commodity-driven agriculture development – mostly rice focused – still shapes policy discourse, investments, and institutional arrangements.** While a clear shift is evident as will be discussed below (inclusive and participatory policy development, systems-based focusing on diversification, intra-and multi sectoral dialogue and coordination), this transition is enormous, will take time, and will meet resistance. The current NLD government is juggling many competing priorities and expectations for immediate results from national constituents, ASEAN partners, and international actors.

**FIRST has supported three country-led policy processes that are key for addressing Sustainable Development Goals 1 and 2:** i) the National Land Use Policy (NLUP); ii) the Agriculture Development Strategy (ADS); and iii) the Multi Sector National Plan of Action for Nutrition (MS-NPAN). All of these were developed through an extensive consultation process- the first of its kind in 50 years. Given that these processes depart from established and strongly centralized policy development methods, it remains to be seen how these will be embraced and implemented by those who may oppose this approach. Although challenges remain, efforts are underway to operationalize and implement these policies, as described below. As FIRST has been heavily engaged in ensuring the alignment of the theories of change across these three plans, this section includes a substantial interface analysis. This is followed by commentary on the enabling environment and political economy of Myanmar.

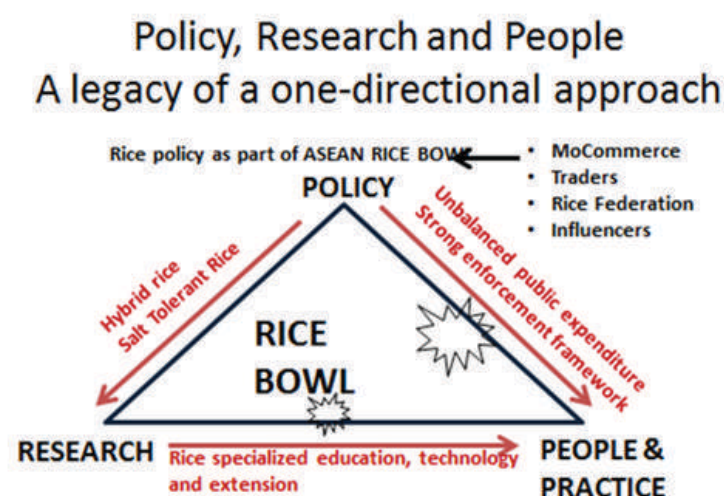
**The political economy of these three policy processes is complex, given the recent opening of the country following 50 years of military rule and economic isolation.** Since its independence in 1948, the concept of a single “Union of States and Regions” has been contested by several ethnic organizations, both political and armed, often striving for increased levels of self-determination. The current governance structure, albeit formed through a democratic process, remains dual, dependent to some extent on decisions taken by the military - Tatmadaw. The section closes with an analysis of the key stakeholders engaged in these policy processes.

## 3.2 POLICY ENVIRONMENT: THREE KEY PROCESSES

**Policy and strategy development in the agriculture sector in Myanmar has a legacy of being strongly commodity-driven, with a major focus on rice production.** This has not always corresponded with the needs and realities of farmers, which has resulted in certain policy directions, technology packages and extension messages not fully responding to farmers' requirements. Weak adoption of Myanmar's Rice Bowl Policy by farmers implied that the government needed to rely on a strong rice-driven regulatory framework such as the Farmland Law to enforce the policy. It also resulted in unbalanced public expenditure, taking away scarce resources for investment in the development of non-rice agricultural production systems. This policy approach drives research, education, technology development and extension in a direction that has not always provided solutions to farmer's problems.

FIRST-Myanmar describes this policy and strategy approach as a one-directional process, as illustrated in Fig. 37.

**FIGURE 43**



**FIGURE 43: One directional top-down policy development process**

Source: Paul De Wit, 2018

Improving the yields of a single crop does not necessarily result in increased household income, enhanced livelihoods or improved nutritional status of individuals. This has led the GoMM, including MoALI to consider a different approach to policy and strategy development. Such an approach is multidirectional, informed by evidence resulting from research and by clear demands from farmers. The approach supports a vision for smallholder-driven development, but also for establishing necessary linkages with larger commercial



entities through value chain development (From rice bowl to food basket: three pillars of modernization for Myanmar's Agricultural and Food Sector NESAC, 2016). It identifies opportunities and needs for substantial diversification of agrarian production, with the objective of improving household level food security and nutrition. This approach builds on existing practices of regular, risk-mitigated income generation through a variety of on-farm and off-farm activities. At the same time, the strategy responds with clear problem-solving interventions, such as the need to access agricultural credit and to ensure the security of tenure; opportunities for smallholders to engage in value chains, and derive more substantial benefits from engagement with the commercial sector.

FIGURE 44

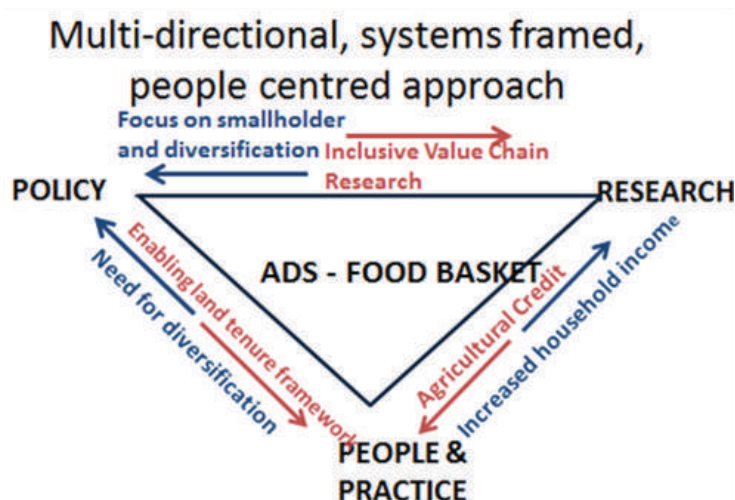


FIGURE 44: Multidirectional people centred policy development process

Source: Paul De Wit, 2018

Against this backdrop, three policy and strategy processes were assessed for their relevance and adequacy to respond to the immediate and underlying challenges to food security and nutrition as described in the previous section. The analysis considers the formulation of the Agricultural Development Strategy (ADS), the Multi Sector National Plan of Action for Nutrition (MS-NPAN) and the National Land Use Policy (NLUP). As indicated in Figure 1 (see methodology section) these three processes were closely interlinked. The ADS is central in that it constitutes the backbone of MoALI's contribution to the other two processes.

**The ADS-NLUP link is realized in ADS Outcome 1.6: Strengthened farmer's land rights and enhanced capacity of institutions involved in agricultural land.** This outcome (called the 'ADS land component') includes 16 work streams that are needed to establish a stronger enabling environment for the agriculture sector to respond to the objectives of the ADS.

The ADS-MSNAN link is established in ADS Outcome 1.8: Improved food and nutrition security of most disadvantaged groups. This includes outputs such as 'Design and implement targeted food and nutrition security programme,' which in fact could correspond with the MoALI's contribution to the MS-NPAN. The required coordination between ADS

and MS-NPAN is also explicitly cited in ADS Output 1.8.3: Coordinate with ongoing food and nutrition security and multisector initiatives on nutrition and poverty alleviation. However, nutrition is limited to three outputs and is not explicitly reflected across the rest of the ADS, despite one of the objectives being to improve food security and nutrition.

The following sections will briefly assess the three processes for their possible contribution to food security and nutrition.

### 3.2.1 THE AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

**With the aim to improve agriculture diversification and rural incomes, MoALI launched the Agricultural Development Strategy (ADS) and Investment Plan in June 2018, covering the period 2018-2022.** The ADS provides a vision for a new era of Myanmar's rural economy. It seeks to address five outcomes: i) improved food security and nutrition, ii) increased smallholder farmer's income, iii) reduced rural poverty, iv) enhanced trade competitiveness, and v) strengthened and ensured farmers' rights. These outcomes are to be realized through three pillars: i) governance, ii) productivity enhancement, and iii) competitiveness. The focus on competitiveness represents a shift from the previous National Agriculture Plan of Action (NAPA) developed under the previous Thein Sein Government (2011-2016), which was more focused on poverty alleviation. The ADS includes 27 specific outcomes.

TABLE 10

| PILLAR 1: GOVERNANCE  | PILLAR 2: PRODUCTIVITY   | PILLAR 3: COMPETITIVENESS  |
|---|--|--|
| OBJECTIVES  |  |  |
| Governance and capacity of institutions responsible for agricultural development enhanced.  | Productivity and farmers' income increased.  | Market linkages and competitiveness improved.  |
| OUTCOMES  |  |  |
| Planning. Effective integrated planning based on participatory processes, both at the union (national) and at the state/region level. | Agricultural research. Improved research systems for crop, livestock, and fisheries and improved research-extension coordination systems with participation of farmers and the private sector. | Business environment. Improved business environment, information and investment along the agrifood supply chain. |

| PILLAR 1: GOVERNANCE   | PILLAR 2: PRODUCTIVITY  | PILLAR 3: COMPETITIVENESS  |
|--|---|--|
| Policy capacity. Improved capacity for policy formulation and analysis.  | Agricultural extension. Transformed public-private agricultural extension system delivering improved products (crop, livestock, fisheries) and technologies for adoption and adaptation, better linked to agriculture research. | Intellectual property rights. Protected intellectual property rights for the agricultural and food sectors.  |
| M&E. Timely and effective monitoring and evaluation processes that inform a web-based management information system (MIS).   | Education and training. Develop (or revive) effective education and training to build human capital in the agricultural and food sectors, responding to the evolving needs of farmers and the private sector in rural areas.    | Quality. Develop reliable quality system that helps farmers and food processors get higher prices for higher quality goods, incentivizing quality upgrading.         |
| Statistics. Sound statistical systems for evidence-based decisions.  | Irrigation and water management. More responsive and reliable irrigation and drainage services and more efficient and sustainable water management systems.   | Rural development planning. Enhanced framework for gender-equitable and participatory planning and implementation of rural development programmes institutionalized. |
| Associations. Strong farmer and industry associations and federations. Triangular action of government, farmers and entrepreneurs, millers for agribusiness development. | Crop inputs. Increased use of improved farm production inputs and technologies by crop growers.   | Rural Infrastructure. Rural infrastructure improves smallholder agricultural efficiency and profitability.   |
| Land. Strengthened farmers' land rights and enhanced capacity of institutions involved in agricultural land.   | Mechanization - Increased application of appropriate mechanization in the agricultural value chain.   | Value chains. Increased competitiveness and stakeholder participation in agricultural value chains for priority commodities.   |
| Coordination. MOALI capacity for ADS coordination and implementation enhanced and guided by democratically appointed, gender equitable civil society representation.     | Livestock and fish. Increased use of improved livestock and fish breeding, health and husbandry service and technologies by livestock and fish producers.   | Food safety. Enhanced food quality and safety.   |
| Food and nutrition security. Improved food and nutrition security of most.   | Sustainable practices. Sustainable farming, good agricultural practices (GAP), good animal husbandry practices (GAHP), good aquaculture practices (GFP).  | Financial Services. Improved access to a range of financial services for farmers and agribusiness enterprises.   |

**TABLE 10: ADS pillars, objectives and outcomes**

Source: MOALI, 2018

**The ADS was developed through an extensive consultation process, representing a shift from a centralized towards a more inclusive and participatory policy development approach.** The ADS was developed over an eighteen-month period, subject to a one-year consultation covering all states and regions. A total of 17 public consultation workshops were organized across the country between May-June 2017, with some 3 763 participants, including 99 parliamentary members, 949 farmers, 726 CSO members, and 332 agribusiness entrepreneurs. The ADS was then reviewed by five prominent national and international economic experts and discussed by the Agriculture and Rural Development Sector Coordination Group (ARDSCG), parliamentary members and government officials in six rounds of meetings between September 2016 and June 2017. Technical support was primarily provided by ADB, FAO and LIFT. The ADS was ratified by the National Economic Coordination Committee, validated by the Agricultural and Rural Development Sector Coordination Group, and finally approved by the cabinet and launched in June 2018.

**The ADS has yet not been adequately disseminated to state/region-level governments.** As Myanmar undergoes public administrative reform, especially in the devolution of planning processes, raising awareness and capacities of the strategy at subnational level is crucial.

**Alignment of state and regional agriculture master plans with the ADS remains to be seen.** Some states and regions (including Mandalay Region, Mon State) are in the process of drafting their own agricultural master plans. Without extensive dissemination and advocacy on the vision of the ADS, it is unlikely that these plans will clearly reflect the new vision.

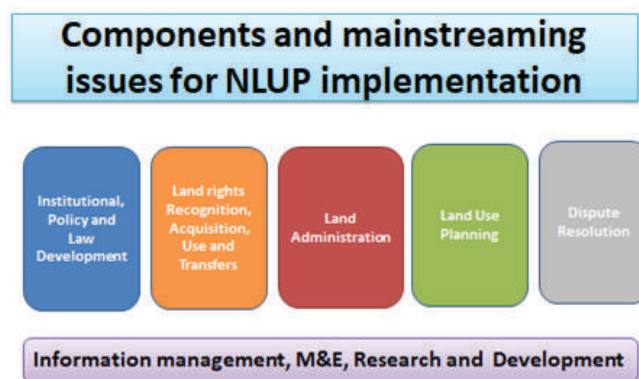
### 3.2.2 THE NATIONAL LAND USE POLICY

**The National Land Use Policy (NLUP) development process was a first real effort to change a legacy of poor land policy development in Myanmar.** Initiated in 2013, the process was guided by the Vice President under an inter-ministerial commission, and embraced principles of intersector collaboration, featuring broad partnership engagement, including the participation of civil society networks, external Technical Assistance (TA) support, the recognition of international best practices, and negotiation of content rather than unilateral decision-making. The exercise demonstrated that a multidirectional policy development process is possible in Myanmar and can work for all parties involved. The NLUP was adopted in January 2016.<sup>24</sup>

**The NLUP tackles many dimensions of land governance.** Against the background of the complex legal and administrative environment that Myanmar inherited upon independence, with many outdated laws still in place, the current policy is intricate but comprehensive. It builds on the principles of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure (VGGT) but converts them into a national policy which, in fact, is one of the ultimate goals of the VGGTs. The NLUP contains five major policy/legal and institutional work streams, including a number of crosscutting issues, as illustrated in Fig 39.

<sup>24</sup> A total of 909 written comments were submitted during the national consultation process.

FIGURE 45

**FIGURE 45: Components and mainstreaming issues for NLUP implementation**

Source: EU and FAO FIRST Myanmar

The NLUP encompasses most basic principles and interventions considered essential for creating an enabling land tenure environment that supports food security and nutrition for rural households, including the rural landless. It is noted that the NLUP has improving food security as a major objective but does not make the link with nutrition. These include:

- » simplifying land use classification and extending land titling to nutrition-sensitive production systems that currently are not covered under the Farmland Law (specifically animal husbandry and aquaculture);
- » promoting freedom of crop choice and type of agricultural production system;
- » recognizing, protecting and registering customary land rights, especially but not exclusively for ethnic nationalities;
- » acknowledging the right for women to hold land in their own capacity and under co-titling arrangements;
- » district land use planning to improve food security;
- » allocation of land to the landless.

**The implementation of the NLUP under the current government was postponed for a number of reasons**, but mainly because it did not originate under its own governance period. In addition, by the end of 2016, the parliamentary Commission for Legal and Special Issues Analysis (the Shwe Man commission) submitted in a letter to the Speaker of the Union Parliament sent a proposal to revise the NLUP. It proposed to exclude six facts perceived not to be in line with Myanmar's 'social reality,' including equal rights for women and men, specific provisions to recognize land use rights of ethnic people, special courts and independent arbitration to address land disputes, the recognition of shifting cultivation systems and the recognition of customary rights over land on which these systems are established.



**The NLUP provides guidance on how to deal with tenure security for people who rely on customary systems.** It recognizes customary tenure regimes and proposes that these be addressed in a new land law. Several CSOs are currently involved in small scale pilot projects to document customary land rights. Other programmes, such as the EU Budget Support to MoALI's *Nutrition Sector Reform Contract* (NSRC), include support for scaling up land titling, including in Shan State, which is a major area of concern for tenure security, poverty and nutrition.

**Implementation of the NLUP is slow but albeit steady, with as major achievement so far the creation of the necessary institutions under the NLUC to start the real work of NLUP implementation.** The government created the National Land Use Council in January 2018, two years after the adoption of the NLUP. By doing so, the government accepted the NLUP as its own. This was followed by the first NLUC meeting in April 2018, which adopted an institutional structure, with a secretariat hosted by Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation (MONREC), state/region land use committees, a national advisory group, three working committees on land law, land use planning and land information management. It was notable that, as a direct manager of all farmland (some 20 percent of the country's area) and co-manager of all VFV land (another potential 50 percent of the country's area), MoALI was not provided with a specific task. This would have negatively impacts on NLUP implementation and land governance transformation in general but also affect MoALI's strategic commitments under the ADS.

FIGURE 46

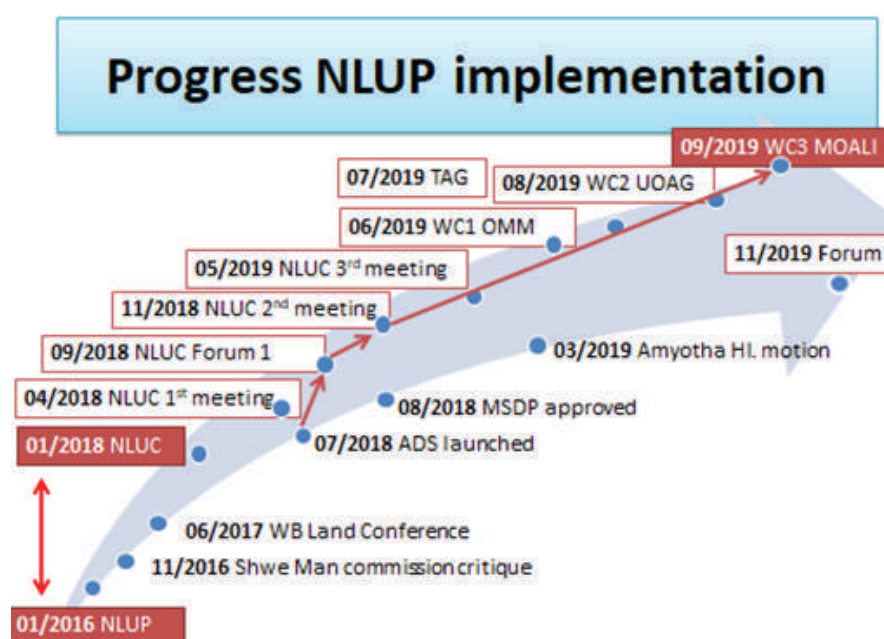


FIGURE 46: Progress with the NLUP implementation

Source: EU and FAO FIRST Myanmar

It took however another 18 months to constitute its Technical Advisory Group (TAG), three Working Committees (WC) respectively dealing with (see fig. 47):

- » land law development and land law harmonization hosted by the Office of the Attorney general (WC UOAG); this working committee has also created a Technical Support Group (TSG) for facilitating land law drafting and a Task Force (TF) to prepare a roadmap for land law drafting;
- » land information management systems which in fact institutionalizes the OneMap programme under the umbrella of the NLUC, hosted by MONREC (WC MONREC) and
- » coordination and implementation of the ADS outcome 1.6 which in fact is the ADS's land component, hosted by MoALI (WC MoALI);
- » The working committee to handle land use planning (WC MOPF) to be hosted by the Ministry of Planning and Finance still needs to be formed.

FIGURE 47

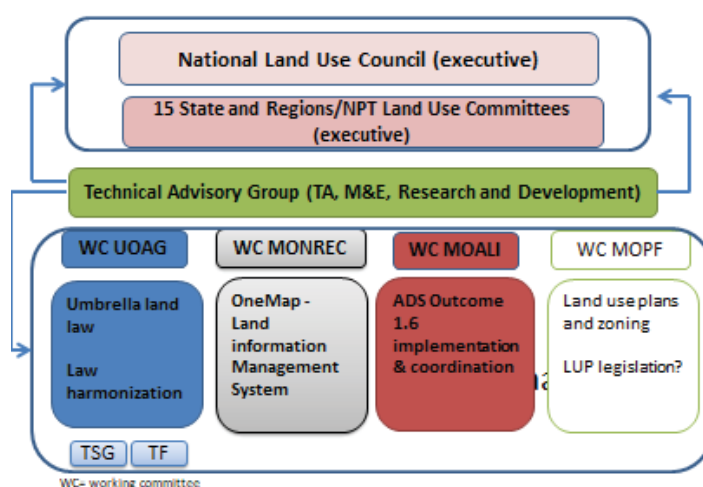


FIGURE 47: Institutional structure of the National Land Use Council

Source: EU and FAO FIRST Myanmar

**The creation of a fourth working committee with as mandate the coordination and implementation of Outcome 1.6 of the ADS, underlines the importance given by NLUC to MoALI/DALMS as a manager of rural land.** It also highlights the importance of Outcome 1.6 or the so called ADS land component as part of the Myanmar land reform process. The need for this working committee was jointly suggested by FIRST and the Land Core Group, under the umbrella of the EU-SDC-USAID land coordination facility.

**The functioning of the NLUC and its working committees is still faced with several possible obstacles.** There is no clear understanding on how the Union level council and the State/region commissions will interact as executive bodies. Will there be an arrangement of concurrent powers, or will the Union level delegate certain responsibilities to regions

and states. The NLUC did not request a budget for fiscal year 2019-2020 for the functioning of any of the bodies. It remains to be decided whether such budget will exclusively be allocated the NLUC and/or equally to the hosts of the different working committees. The working committee on land law development and law harmonization has taken the initiative or producing a road map to address its terms of reference, with other committees maybe following this example. The NLUC has pledged financial and TA support through the Technical Advisory Group, but development partners will arguably need to see a coherent reform programme, access to information and transparency before responding to such a call.

**Field implementation of the NLUP has not yet started, arguably because there is, arguably, need for a new land law first.** This is much required as current and proposed amendments to existing legislation, such as the VFFV and Farmland Law, do not really address the major obstacles mentioned above. The drafting of anew land law is a major undertaking. Some stakeholders including FIRST have made proposals for such law be drafted as a framework law of principle, not as a comprehensive law to tackle all at once, hence following its proposed modular unpacking. Such law of principle should focus on land rights first. The NLUC seems to be inclined to take this road of framework law; it has also disregarded the unsatisfactory result of an earlier attempt (2015- early 2016) to produce a new land law, based on the NLUP. The NLUC also seems to adopt the principle that all sector-related land legislation needs to be mainstreamed with this mother land law and not the other way around. The basic principle for the NLUC should be to have an open minded vision for producing a new law, respecting existing types of land rights but without getting swamped in a 130 year legacy of law complexity.

### 3.2.3 THE MULTI SECTOR NATIONAL PLAN OF ACTION FOR NUTRITION

**Myanmar's Multi Sector National Plan of Action for Nutrition (MS-NPAN), covering the period 2019-2023, was endorsed in November 2018 by four ministers in the presence of social ministers from each of the 14 states and regions.** The MS-NPAN was developed under the leadership of the National Nutrition Centre (NNC), which is hosted by the Ministry of Health and Sports (MOHS), in close partnership with the Ministries of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement (MoSWRR) and Education (MoE). The objective of the plan is to "reduce all forms of malnutrition in mothers, children and adolescent girls," measured in part by an overall reduction in stunting of children under the age of five from an average of 29 percent today to 21 percent by 2025. The MS-NPAN includes six key result areas as follows: health, social welfare, education, agriculture/livelihoods, governance, and monitoring and evaluation.

FIGURE 48

## MS-NPAN: OVERALL GOAL AND KEY OUTCOMES BY SECTOR

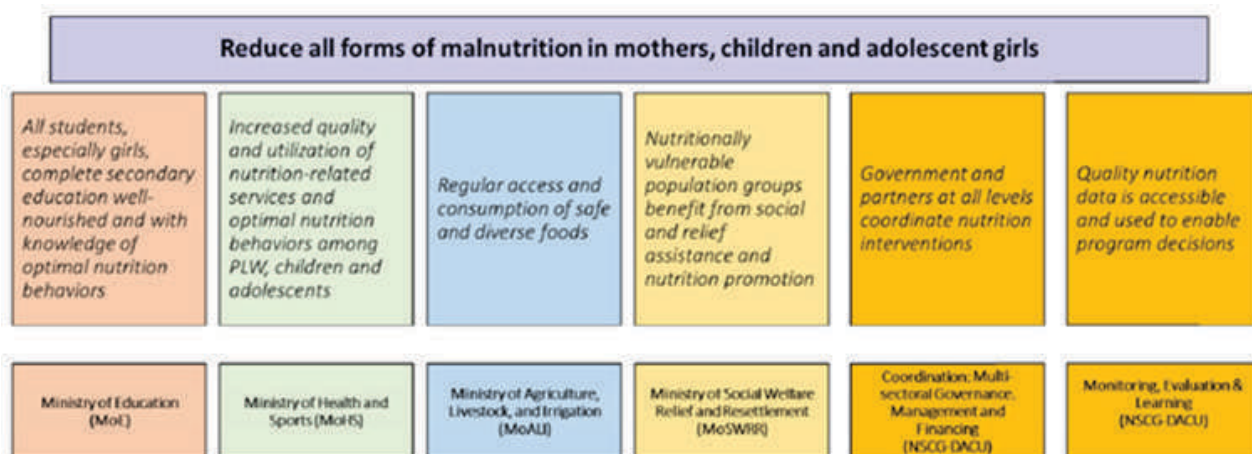


FIGURE 48: Framework of sector contributions to MS-NPAN

Source: MS-NPAN, 2018

**The agriculture sector's contribution to nutrition is well-articulated and integrated into the overall narrative of the MS-NPAN**, which emphasizes dietary diversification, and recognizes the important links between diversification of agriculture production systems, income generation and livelihoods improvement, and the improvement of food security and nutrition. Three nutrition-sensitive agriculture outcome areas of the MS-NPAN are reflected in the ADS:

- » increased availability of nutrient-rich food products at market and household level;
- » increased access to diversified diets through improved incomes;
- » improved safety along the food supply and value chain to enhance access to safe food.

**The MoALI drafted a results framework, prioritizing 22 specific interventions for which it is responsible, and identifying a set of nutrition-sensitive indicators to measure progress against set targets.** This was developed through a series of consultations facilitated by the Department of Planning and supported by FIRST. The results Framework will be further elaborated during a one-year MS-NPAN inception phase (January 1, 2019 - December 31, 2019).

**The MS-NPAN highlights the importance of coordinated interventions within and between sectors.** MoALI is responsible for coordinating issues related to i) food safety up to the farm gate, at which point the Food and Drug Administration under MoHS are responsible; and ii) the construction of tube wells and WASH training with MOHS. However, the plan also aims to ensure that income generating activities are complemented with nutrition education/behavioural change communication for nutrition, and secondly that nutrition-sensitive interventions should converge within the same household; i.e. maternal child cash transfers, nutrition education, promotion of household agriculture activities should all

be delivered to the same household as a coherent package rather than as dispersed and isolated interventions.

### **Inception phase of the MS-NPAN (January 1, 2019 - December 31, 2019)**

The MS-NPAN inception period will involve three complementary streams of work, including:

- » capacity assessment and capacity development planning, including i) governance and coordination capacity at the union and state/regional levels and b) implementation capacity at the programme delivery level;
- » state/regional prioritization and planning;
- » monitoring and evaluation systems development.

**A number of state and region-level plans for these work streams will be elaborated during the one-year period, supported by the extended SUN technical working group and a number of consultants.** Facilitated by FIRST, the European Union will support a monitoring and evaluation workshop to ensure convergence with ongoing M&E reform in MoALI in line with the ADS. The overall cost of the inception period activities is estimated at approximately MMK 1.815 billion (USD 1.3 million). The agriculture sector's engagement will continue to be primarily supported through FIRST. One of the REACH-capacity assessment findings was that "synergies between the contributing sectors could be reflected more strongly in the plan," which will need to be further facilitated through REACH/SUN.

**There is currently no official nutrition policy or strategy in place in Myanmar (the last one dates back 20 years).** The MS-NPAN is a costed action plan, which to some extent serves the purpose of a nutrition strategy for the time being. Myanmar subscribed to the SUN movement in April 2013. FAO supported the development of a Food Security and Nutrition Action Plan (2011-2016) under the Zero Hunger challenge, but this was never endorsed. Aung San Su Kyi called for multisector coordination between four ministries in Pakkoku in January 2017. A nutrition stock-taking exercise was conducted by the National Nutrition Centre, with technical assistance from UN-REACH. This work provided the basis for the development of the MS-NPAN.

## **3.3 INTERFACE OF ADS WITH LAND AND NUTRITION**

### **3.3.1 ADS LAND RIGHTS OUTCOME AND ITS LINKAGES TO NLUP**

**The main objective of the land rights outcome under the ADS governance pillar (Outcome 1.6) is to ensure that land issues are adequately addressed and progress is made in the medium term (five years).** During the past five years, there has been a ferment of legislative,



policy, civil society and private sector activities related to land issues, including agricultural land. Securing land rights, classifying land, issuing land use certificates, documenting and dealing with a massive caseload of land confiscations, land restitution, land allocation to the landless, and land redistribution, are complex matters for Myanmar. Poor land governance and rule of law over the past five decades have further complicated these issues. The government only recently started to make decisive efforts to redress the impact of this legacy. Given the complexity of the problem, quick solutions are not possible. However, it is possible to show a clear direction and a willingness to solve the problems. Specific results are needed within a reasonable time frame to reassure smallholder farmers, private sector, and civil society that progress is being made. A new social contract on land governance between the government and the population will be an indispensable part of the new Myanmar.

**To achieve longer term goals, the land rights outcome embeds part of its work in the National Land Use Policy.** The policy proposes a role in the inter-ministerial NLUC and the development of a new umbrella land law. At the same time, the MoALI continues to lead a legislative amendment programme for laws that fall under its direct responsibility, namely the Farmland Law and the Vacant, Fallow and Virgin Land Law. Although these amendments are the responsibility of the legislator, the MoALI needs to ensure that the final outcome supports its own strategies. This is only partially realized so far. On the one hand, the recently amended VFV land law is the first piece of legislation that converts the policy of recognizing customary land rights, as per NLUP, into law. This is a major achievement for improving the food security and nutrition situation in areas where customary land systems prevail, especially but not exclusively in upland hilly/mountainous states. On the other hand, the timeline of six months given under this law for informal occupants to regularize their tenure situation is highly unrealistic and may result in massive land confiscation with highly negative consequences for food security and nutrition.

**The land rights outcome also addresses many current land tenure and land use obstacles that block the ability of rural households to improve their food security and nutrition status by diversifying agricultural production.** Proposed remedies include i) removing restrictions and conditionalities for land titling to enable the free choice of crop and production system; and ii) extending land titling over nutrition-sensitive production systems such as agroforestry, aquaculture and livestock keeping. In fact, the explicit focus on land titling for fish cultivation, grazing lands and animal farms arose from the consultation process, and was added to previous drafts that dealt with these issues only in an implicit fashion. Some of these issues can be addressed under current legislation, only requiring clear administrative instructions, while others require new laws to be drafted under the auspices of the NLUC.

**The land component specifically promotes improved, user-friendly and unconditional public service delivery, especially for women,** including co-titling of land, registration of land transfers and leases. It also includes agroecological zoning and crop/production system suitability as planning tools to support decision-making and service delivery to smallholders in nutrition-sensitive systems. This analysis will be developed in parallel with work on regional food plates, to match supply for food plate ingredients with demand.

**The land component of the ADS also specifically targets landless households.** It proposes holding an audit on the current use of allocated VFV land, which is estimated at less than 20

percent of total allocated area. It also proposes that part of this land is allocated to landless farmers and smallholders. It also considers the creation of social land concessions for land allocation to these vulnerable groups. The MoALI has agreed to have a pilot activity on the reallocation of reclaimed VEV land. A number of NGOs, including Landesa, are involved in testing this practice.

## TARGETING

**Both the NLUP and the ADS unequivocally aim to respond to the needs of all land holders.** These needs have been neglected in past and current land legislation, and are weakened when powerful actors use this legislation for their own interests. The NLUP pays specific attention to the following groups:

- » Customary land holders whose rights are not recognized under current land legislation. The NLUP is the first policy document where the government recognizes customary land tenure;
- » Women, especially married women who practice land-based agrarian activities as part of the household livelihood strategy;
- » Smallholders whose rights have not yet been recognised and registered; this includes those who engage in farming systems that are not registered under the Farmland Law;
- » Ethnic nationalities, many of whom hold and manage land under customary practices. The NLUP sets the scene for formalizing and protecting the rights of these communities;
- » Internally displaced people (IDP) and returning refugees, who may have lost land during their absence. The NLUP includes principles of compensation, rehabilitation, restitution and reclaiming their rights.

In addition to protecting the rights of vulnerable groups, the NLUP is a policy instrument for managing the land tenure of people that have formalized and registered their lands, including large landholders, small and medium enterprises, and large private and commercial companies. The NLUP puts into place a number of safeguards to manage the possible unintended consequences of land allocation and registration of this group. The Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA), and appeal mechanisms for decision on land allocation and conflict management, are examples of such mechanisms.

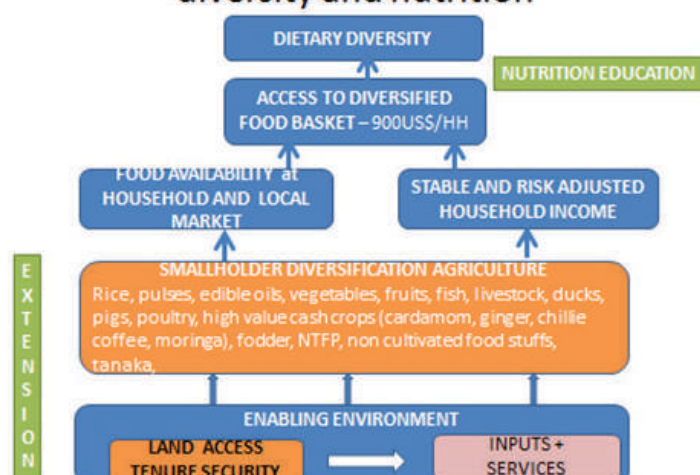
### 3.3.2 MS-NPAN AGRICULTURE OUTCOMES LINKED WITH ADS

**Although the MS-NPAN is directly linked with ADS outcomes, the ADS does not sufficiently recognize the contribution of the many agricultural subsectors to nutrition.** Unfortunately, the MS-NPAN formulation processes followed the development of the ADS.

Given the risk that a multisector strategy will pale in significance in comparison with a robust sector strategy where nutrition is clearly integrated, efforts have been made by FIRST to reflect the ADS' vision in the MS-NPAN.

FIGURE 48

### Diversification of agriculture underpins dietary diversity and nutrition



**FIGURE 49: Contribution of agriculture to dietary diversity and nutrition**

Source: EU and FAO FIRST Myanmar

Given the risk that a multisector strategy will pale in significance in comparison with a robust sector strategy where nutrition is clearly integrated, efforts have been made by FIRST to reflect the ADS' vision in the MS-NPAN.

**With respect to the agriculture sector, the MS-NPAN helps to remedy a gap in the ADS by articulating MoALI's theory of change (ToC) for nutrition, and identifying relevant indicators and targets.** MoALI established this ToC as the result of a consultative process between most relevant departments, as illustrated in Figure 49.

The ToC hinges on MoALI's key ambition to promote diversification towards high value products, including livestock and fisheries, as the major driver of agricultural transformation. Although diversification as the principle strategy is insufficiently elaborated in the ADS, it is clearly articulated in the MS-NPAN.

**Smallholder-driven diversification of agrarian production systems is the underlying principle for achieving two of the three agriculture MS-NPAN outcomes as well as realizing the overall objective of the ADS.** The ADS outcome links diversification with resilience and nutrition, and articulates the need for an enabling environment as summarized in the text below.

**Excerpt from MS-NPAN narrative on land for diversification, for dietary diversity, for nutrition (MS-NPAN, July 2018, page 24):**

*Options for diversification are multiple, but depend significantly on having in place an enabling framework and inputs (mechanization, seeds, extension, water access, credit and land). Access to land and security of land tenure play a cardinal role. They are not only part of the inputs and services required, but to some extent also condition farming households having access to several inputs and services...*

*Options to diversify depend on land use potentials of different agroecological zones (often categorized as delta, coastal, dry zone and uplands) and their technical suitability. These include small scale aquaculture, possibly in combination with rice production and chicken/duck raising and fish in delta and coastal areas; beans/pulses in drier parts of the country together with livestock and fodder production; diverse vegetables, green leaves, and fruits in more hilly areas. There is also a large potential for smallholders to produce high-value cash crops for income generation such as all sorts of vegetables, coffee, cardamom, pepper, chilies, turmeric, onion, garlic, mango, ginger, elephant foot yam, etc. Many of these crops are integrated into agroforestry systems in upland and hilly areas, currently managed under customary land systems. A rigorous information system for agriculture, livestock, and fish markets is required to track flows (exports and imports of food items) to match production with consumption trends.*

*Need for enabling land and land use legislation - The current legal land framework significantly hampers the implementation the ADS' diversification agenda. In fact, the current framework, especially the Farmland Law of 2012, largely facilitates the production of rice, and as such, is not a tool to enable agricultural diversification. The Farmland Law narrowly defines farmland and refers exclusively to crop land that is permanently cultivated, often with a single crop. Neither the Farmland Law nor any other law unequivocally secures tenure over lands that are not legally classified as "farmland." These include systems that hold immense potential to contribute to dietary diversity, including village grazing lands, fishponds, home gardens located in rural settlements and villages, most agroforestry systems, and different forms of shifting cultivation. Thus, major reforms are needed to achieve the official recognition of customary land systems, and the acceptance of legal tools to provide legal tenure security over these lands.*

*Because customary systems are not officially recognized, these lands also continue to be legally classified by the government as "fallow or virgin lands." The "Vacant, Fallow and Virgin (VfV) Land Law" facilitates private investors and companies to take up these lands.*

*The National Land Use Policy gives guidance on several major land reform streams to address the contribution of agriculture to nutrition in Myanmar. The first one deals with making tenure security over farmland increasingly unconditional as opposed to prescribing land use. This entails applying the principle of free crop choice, and by extension, more flexibility for converting different land uses of titled land as farmers see fit. The second is about extending the limited coverage that the current Farmland Law presents to secure tenure over nutrition-friendly agrarian production systems, such as agroforestry, aquaculture-livestock mixes, orchard-annual crops- legumes systems, and shifting cultivation. It is also required to respond to the needs for accessing land and securing land use rights for some specific vulnerable groups, including women (through*

*co-titling schemes) and especially the landless who will depend on agricultural activities for their livelihoods (especially laborers). This can take the form of a land-rights based social protection scheme, i.e. re-allocating unused VFV land to landless people including Internally Displaced Peoples (IDPs)."*

The MS-NPAN outcome of **increased access to diversified diets through improved incomes**, primarily relates to livestock, fisheries (aquaculture and rice-fish integration) and agroforestry promotion. The implementation of this shift in focus from rice to lucrative and at times nutrient-rich value chains and mixed farming systems requires research and extension, processing, handling, conservation, grading and marketing. These are key areas of focus in the ADS that need to be recognized as contributing to the MS-NPAN. Four out of the seven proposed value chains in the ADS (Outcome 3.6) are (potentially) of relevance for nutrition: vegetables, pulses, livestock and aquaculture. Edible oils— another proposed value chain – could be fortified. To facilitate this shift, both the MS-NPAN and ADS recognize the importance of enabling factors such as access to land and credit.

The MS-PAN outcome of **improved Food Safety along supply chains** is mainly linked to the ADS outcomes of food quality and safety (3.7) and sustainable farming/ GAP (2.8). This also links to research and extension activities to develop the appropriate technologies for farmer households.

### 3.3.3 ANALYSIS OF ADS CONTRIBUTION TO NUTRITION

**It should be noted that the ADS, despite subscribing to the vision of contributing to achieving food and nutrition security, with the exception of Outcome 1.8, makes no reference to food security and nutrition across any of the other 27 outcomes.** The recent MS-NPAN has enabled MoALI to fill this gap by articulating how it will contribute to the eradication of hunger and malnutrition and, as such, to help meet SDG2 targets (further discussed below). The following table illustrates the outcomes areas in the ADS that have the potential to contribute to food security and nutrition, as further elaborated in the MS-NPAN.



TABLE 11

| GOVERNANCE  | PRODUCTIVITY                               | COMPETITIVENESS                              |
|---|--|--|
| Governance and capacity of institutions responsible for agricultural development enhanced | Productivity and farmers' income increased | Market linkages and competitiveness improved |
| OUTCOMES  |  |  |
| 1.1. Planning   | 2.1. Agricultural research                 | 3.1. Business environment                    |
| 1.2. Policy capacity  | 2.2. Agricultural extension                | 3.2. Intellectual property rights            |
| 1.3. M&E  | 2.3. Education and training                | 3.3. Quality                                 |
| 1.4. Statistics   | 2.4. Irrigation and water management       | 3.4. Rural development planning              |
| 1.5. Associations   | 2.5. Crop inputs                           | 3.5. Rural infrastructure                    |
| 1.6. Land   | 2.6. Mechanization                         | 3.6. Value chains                            |
| 1.7. Coordination   | 2.7. Livestock and fish                    | 3.7. Food safety                             |
| 1.8. Food and nutrition security  | 2.8. Sustainable practices                 | 3.8. Financial services                      |
| 1.9. Restructuring  | 2.9. Resilience                            | 3.9. Trade and exports                       |

**Orange:** explicitly articulated contribution;

**Blue:** potential contribution to food security and nutrition (although not clearly articulated). Most of these outcome areas are reflected in the MS-NPAN and would require complementary actions/modification of the activity to address underlying causes of malnutrition (as will be further analysed below)

TABLE 11: ADS outcome areas and their potential to contribute to food security and nutrition

Source: FIRST, 2019

**A number of ADS outcomes have the potential to contribute to food security and nutrition as will be analysed below**

either by: i) directly addressing underlying causes of food insecurity and enhancing availability and access to diverse and safe nutrient-rich foods; ii) addressing the basic causes of food insecurity, poor diet diversity and lack of safe and nutritious foods; and iii) considering certain interventions as being a conditionality - as a requirement (mainly institutional, legal or organizational)- or a prerequisite (for instance research, extension, safety standards control, etc.). The difference between underlying and basic here draws on the UNICEF causal framework.

The following picture emerges from the assessment:

1. **Only three ADS outcomes can be considered to have a direct impact on nutrition (most likely through dietary diversity and food safety):** *1.8 Food and nutrition.* Despite the fact that no concrete activities have been identified under this outcome, there is substantial potential to use the budget line to pilot and further develop nutrition-sensitive agriculture actions. The other outcomes are *2.7 Livestock and fisheries* through improved animal breeding, nutrition, health and husbandry and also apiculture. These are an important source of proteins and micronutrients for complementing mainly rice-based diets. The third outcome that directly contributes to enhancing food security and nutrition is *3.7 Food safety and quality* throughout the value chain as well as at the household level. Food safety has been identified as a major issue in both crop production as well as meat and fish conservation.
2. **Seven of the 27 ADS outcomes (or 26 percent) may qualify as addressing basic causes of malnutrition:** *Farmers associations (Outcome 1.5), Access to land and land rights (Outcome 1.6), Irrigation and drainage (Outcome 2.4), Improved seeds and technology (Outcome 2.5), Sustainable farming and GAP practices (Outcome 2.8), resilience (Outcome 2.9) and development of value chains (Outcome 3.6).* These may contribute indirectly to improving the availability of more diverse foods and income generation to be able to purchase such foods on the market. However, some activities or may need to be added or modified in each of these areas to effectively leverage their impact on nutrition. The activities would require inclusive approaches targeting specific livelihood groups. Failure to do so might result in activities focusing on better-off farmers rather than these really needing support.
3. **In total, 17 out of 27 (or 63 percent) of the ADS outcomes can be classified as conditional or prerequisites for creating an enabling environment for food security and nutrition.** Most outcomes relate to interventions aimed at improving the institutional, legal and organizational context of agricultural production and marketing. Many proposed activities aim to adjust the laws, to restructure the ministry and improve its capacities to provide planning, research and extension services as well as the capacity to monitor and understand changes in the agricultural sector. These include ADS outcomes: *1.1 Planning, 1.2 Policy capacity, 1.3 Monitoring and evaluation, 1.4 Agricultural statistics, 1.7 Coordination and 1.9 Restructuring.* All of these are fall under the governance pillar. Under Pillar 3 (Market linkages) the protection of IPRs (Outcome 3.2) and the development of food safety and quality standards (Outcome 3.3) are also important prerequisites.

Other enabling ADS outcomes, relate more to making the business environment more conducive and hence making the agricultural sector more productive and competitive. These ADS outcomes are included under Pillar 2 (productivity): *Agricultural research and research-extension coordination (Outcome 2.1), public-private extension system (Outcome 2.2), capacitated extension staff (Outcome 2.3), and under Pillar 3 (markets) the development of value chains (Outcome 3.1), improved rural infrastructure by means of feeder roads, electricity, or markets (Outcome 3.5) as well as access to financial credit (Outcome 3.8)*. Market access/roads may have an equally determining effect on food security and nutrition as diversification and therefore should not be underestimated here as a basic cause of malnutrition in Myanmar.

**The potential for the ADS to achieve one of its main goals of food and nutrition security has not been fully articulated and is therefore at risk of not being realized.** This conclusion implies that the Ministry, during the further elaboration and implementation of the ADS and the inception phase of the MS-NPAN, will need to more explicitly articulate how the ADS outcomes may contribute to achieving this goal. A nutrition annex for the ADS is in the process of being drafted and this can provide guidance for its implementation and subnational planning.

## TARGETING

**Targeting remains the major discrepancy between the two plans.** The MS-NPAN clearly identifies specific target groups that it aims to reach in order to improve their nutritional status: pregnant and lactating women, women of reproductive age, adolescent girls and, in particular children, under the age of five years. The first 1000-days approach is a guiding principle in this strategy (from conception to 2 years of a child age as the 'window of opportunity' to address chronic malnutrition/stunting). Unfortunately, while the ADS briefly mentions landless, poor and marginalized farmers, the investment plan and logical framework do not reflect this focus. Under Outcome 1.8, the level of targeting is articulated as "improved food and nutrition security of most," 'most' never being qualified.

**Unless the ADS is better targeted towards smallholders (which should be reflected in its logical framework, currently under development), it is more likely to benefit larger landholders and those better-off.** As confirmed in a series of field visits, MoALI only targets particular population groups in donor-driven projects, not through its regular service delivery. In monitoring and evaluating the ADS, the ministry should in particular address the issue of targeting, specifically whether the MS-NPAN target groups are being reached through ADS interventions.

## 3.4 OTHER RELEVANT POLICIES IN SUPPORT OF NUTRITION

This Policy Effectiveness Analysis mainly focuses on the contribution of the agricultural sector to nutrition. In addition, major attention is given to the land policy process, which is perhaps one of the most important policy for unlocking the contribution of agriculture to nutrition. Many other subsector policies however also contribute to implementing the ADS and the MS-NPAN.

TABLE 12

| FOOD SYSTEMS                                 | MINISTRY   | POLICIES, STRATEGIES, LAWS  |
|--|--|---|
| Seeds  | MOALI  | Seeds Policy, Seeds Law   |
| Agriculture                                  | MOALI  | Agriculture Development Strategy, Agriculture Policy                                    |
| Water  | MOALI  | Water Policy  |
| Crops, rice, pulses, oil, fruits, vegetables | MOALI  | Crops Policy, Oilseeds Policy, Rice Policy, Seeds Policy                                |
| Irrigation                                   | MOALI  | Irrigation Policy   |
| Land   | MOALI DALMS  | Land Use Policy, Vacant and Fallow Land Law   |
| Mechanization                                | MOALI  | Mechanization Policy  |
| Fisheries                                    | MOALI  | Fisheries Policy and Aquaculture Policy   |
| Livestock                                    | MOALI  | Livestock Policy being drafted  |
| Forestry                                     | MONREC   | Forestry Policy   |
| Food harvesting                              | MoALI  | Food Safety Law   |
| Food trade and marketing                     | Ministry Of Commerce; Ministry of Industry; Ministry of Planning and Finance | Trade Law, Trade Policy   |
| Food consumption                             | MOHS, MoE, MOSWRR, MoALI, MOPF   | MS-NPAN   |
| Dietary diversity                            | MOH, MoE, MOSWRR, MoALI, MOPF  | MS-NPAN   |
| Food standards                               | FDA  | Food Safety Law   |
| Food safety                                  | FDA  | ADS, Nutrition Policy   |
| Sanitary and Phyto Sanitary standards        | FDA, MOALI   | Food Safety Law   |
| Biosafety of foods                           | MOALI, FDA, MOH,   | Pesticide Law, the Plant Pest Quarantine Law, and the Animal Health and Development Law |
| Food disposal                                | MOALI  | Food Safety Law with respect to contaminated food                                       |
| Climate-smart Agriculture                    |  | Climate Smart Agriculture Strategy and Agriculture Plan for Disaster Risk Reduction     |

TABLE 12: Key players and policies in Myanmar's agriculture system

Source: IFPRI and FAO, 2019

In addition to MoALI, three other ministries make major contributions to the MS-NPAN (see Section 2.3). Each of these ministries have their own policies, implementation mechanisms, funding and development partner support. An analysis of all policies is beyond the scope of this document; a brief overview is however given below, organized on the basis of major ministerial responsibilities.

TABLE 13

| MINISTRY  | POLICY/STRATEGY  | PROGRAMME   |
|---|--|---|
| Ministry of Education                               | » National Education Strategy Plan 2016 – 2012   | » School feeding programmes<br>» WASH in schools  |
| Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement | » Early Childhood Care and Development Policy<br>» National Social Protection Strategy Plan  | » Maternal Child Cash Transfers<br>» Social Behaviour Change Communication  |
| Ministry of Health and Sports                       | » National Health Plan (2017-21)<br>» Myanmar Health Vision 2030<br>» National Strategy for WASH (2016-30)<br>» Five Years Strategic Plan for Young People Health (2016-20)<br>» Myanmar National<br>» Myanmar National Comprehensive School Health Strategic Plan (2017-22) | » Maternal infant and young child feeding<br>» Integrated management of acute malnutrition<br>» Growth monitoring promotion<br>» Rice fortification |

TABLE 13: Non-agricultural policy and programme contributions to nutrition in Myanmar  
Source: FIRST analysis

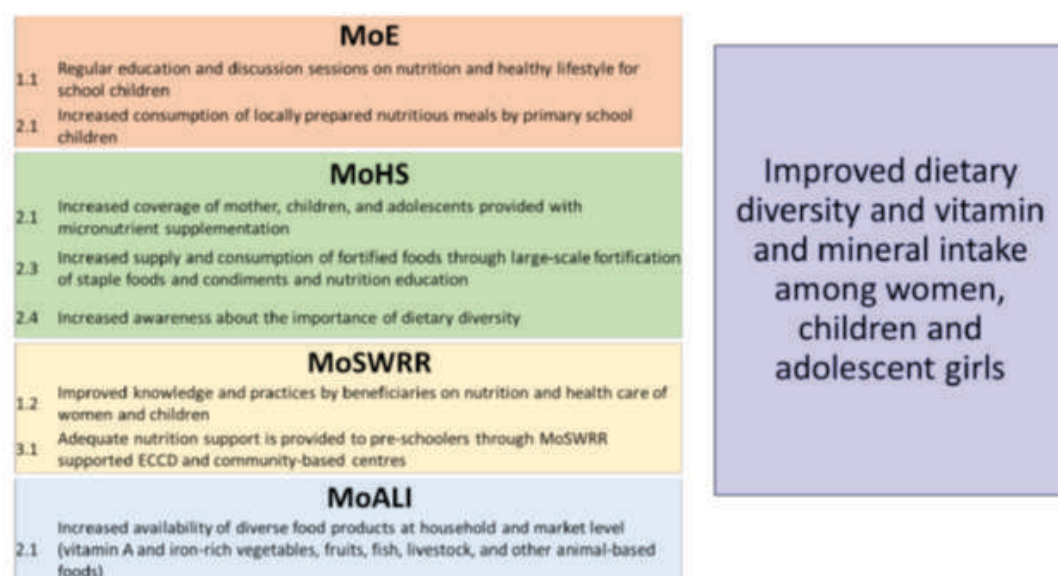
Clear synergies exist between the key policy contributions to nutrition and their implementation programmes, as seen below (MS-NPAN, 2018):

- » MoE provides nutritional education sessions to increase the consumption of locally prepared foods;
- » MoHS expands the coverage and supply of micronutrient supplements and fortified foods, together with promoting awareness among caregivers and enhancing health-nutrition literacy, which includes dietary diversity;



- » MoSWRR increases the knowledge of beneficiaries of mother and child cash transfers (MCCT) through behavioural change communications and nutritional support for preschool children participating in ECCD programmes;
- » MoALI increases the supply and production of micronutrient-rich diverse food products at the household and market levels.

**FIGURE 50**



**FIGURE 50: Key strategic contributions of different sectors to dietary diversity**  
Source: MS-NPAN

## 3.5 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

### **Monitoring and Evaluation systems are not well developed and poorly functioning.**

MoALI's M&E system remains embryonic, supported technically by EUD through the My Governance project. The work started at the Department of Rural Development (DRD) in November 2016 and was elevated to the ministry level in March 2018. There are now M&E Units in DRD, the Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department (LBVD), and the Department of Agriculture (DoA). An M&E Division was recently established under DOP. These M&E units are tasked with reporting. The units are however understaffed and need capacity needs assessment for identifying concrete actions of staffing and capacity building. The ADS and MS-NPAN are the two most important policies affecting the architecture of the M&E system in MoALI. Monitoring the ADS and MS-NPAN requires a significant development of the M&E capacity at all levels.

**The system for collecting, processing and analysing information and data in MoALI is department-specific. Data is rarely adequately analysed nor does it inform planning processes.** The data analysis process usually starts with hard copies of township-level data

collection forms; data is then reported to the district and then to the state/region before it is communicated to the relevant departments. At times, data is reported directly from the township to the union level. A number of progress and achievement reports, usually monthly and quarterly, are compiled by different departments. These are activity-based reports. Sometimes, these reports are summarized for the MoALI senior management (e.g. permanent secretary or minister) upon request. Reporting is poorly coordinated across divisions as well as across different departments of MoALI. The analytical skills needed to undertake data analysis and reporting are limited. Thus, much of the collected data are not utilized; a great deal of data is stored in hard copies in township offices.

**The M&E system only focuses on output-level indicators.** The ADS includes 27 outcome indicators falling under three objectives (nine outcome indicators per objective). These outcome indicators are currently not collected in regular monitoring and evaluations systems and the ones indicated for nutrition are beyond the scope of MoALI's short term contribution: including stunting. Agriculture and livelihood interventions take a longer time to take effect on dietary and WASH Practices than an immediate supplementation programme and therefore should be measured by changes in access to diverse foods, most ambitiously in dietary diversity. There is a need for outcome indicators that measure the results and impact of the activities, tracking the impact pathway to dietary diversity in Myanmar. Furthermore, data analysis (e.g. correlation, standard deviation...) is rarely undertaken.

**The Minimum Dietary Diversity Score for Women (MDD-W) has been proposed as a joint indicator in the MS-NPAN (hence an indicator shared between MoALI and MOHS) and would usefully be integrated into the ADS logical framework rather than an anthropometric indicator.** The MDD-W is a dichotomous indicator for assessing dietary diversity and the micronutrient adequacy in the diet of women of reproductive age; such women are particularly vulnerable to nutrient inadequacy due to the increased nutritional needs of pregnancy and lactation. The MDD-W was endorsed at a consensus meeting in 2014 by academia, international research institutes, UN and donor agencies. It has the advantage of capturing gender issues and dietary diversity, which are both central considerations for the equitable distribution of food and the provision of healthy diets for all. The MDD-W has been proposed as a key indicator in for the EU budget support operation and the revised LIFT framework.

**Data collection to track progress on MS-NPAN indicators needs to be conducted more regularly** (the indicators recommended in the MS-NPAN have been recommended by FIRST to be part of the ADS log frame, which is currently being finalized with EUD support through the My Governance Programme). While a number of nutrition surveys are in the pipeline, there is no plan to conduct a national baseline for the MS-NPAN due to budget constraints and Ministry-specific donor support. IFPRI is considering a number of panel surveys on agriculture-nutrition-gender and the next DHS (2020-21) may give the opportunity to include intermediate indicators such as MDD-W associated with socio-economic status. Data on trends in maternal and child nutrition status are available from several multiple indicator cluster surveys (MICS) and demographic health surveys (DHS) conducted between 1997 and 2016 using different indicators; these should be conducted more regularly (every two years).

## 3.6 GOVERNANCE AND THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF POLICY PROCESSES

### 3.6.1 BACKGROUND

**Myanmar is a complex country, grappling simultaneously with political transition and economic reform, where ethnic populations and organizations, both political and armed, strive for increased self-determination.** Ethnicity and ethnic identity, citizenship, the preservation of ethnic languages and culture are part and parcel of economic and governance processes, and exacerbate already complex challenges. Massive drug trade in certain areas (e.g. Shan State) and the profits derived from this business, conducted in passive or active partnership with local strong men and organizations, may block economic and social reform. In addition, Myanmar is highly susceptible to the effects of climate change and natural disasters.

**The regional environment in which these processes occur is equally complex, with Myanmar being sandwiched between two ambitious BRICS countries,** each with their own political and economic agendas. Thant Myint U's book, *Where China meets India*, provides good insight into how this plays out in the daily lives of rural and urban folks, albeit before yet another major layer of economic and political interference was created under the Belt and Road Initiative. Myanmar hosts two of the six road corridors under the initiative and is of interest to both India and China for access to deep sea ports. This section of the report focuses on national governance and political developments, and considers how these may affect the three policy/strategy processes that are subject of the policy effectiveness assessment.

The FIRST assessment draws initially from a recent political economy analysis by the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (Stokke *et al.*, 2018) and adds its own assessment conclusions.

### 3.6.2 POLITICAL CONTEXT

#### THE PERSISTENCE OF MILITARY STATE CAPTURE

**Through several decades of military and military-supported governance, the Tatmadaw has become a dominant economic and political force.** The current governance structure, albeit formed through a parliamentary democratic process, continues to depend on decisions and policy positions taken by the Tatmadaw. Constitutional provisions cement the influence of the military on governance and policy-making. This was partly motivated by the protection of asset accumulation during military rule; the accumulation of rural land, especially between 1991 and 2012 is an example (MRLG, 2018). The Constitution guarantees a 25 percent representation of the military in the two parliamentary houses. The Tatmadaw also operates three ministries, including Home Affairs. The latter has hosted

the General Administration Department (GAD), a main actor in decentralized governance and deconcentrated administration. The GAD plays a key role in land management at the local level (participating in farmland management bodies), and seems to have decision-making powers on the allocation of several community level rural funds. **The recent transfer of GAD to the civilian-controlled Ministry of the Office of the Union Government may augur change**, although this is regarded by some as cosmetic (Tan Hui Yee in Strait Times, 14/01/2019). The continued influence of the military over the democratically-elected government has led to a sort of two-headed government structure, with actors on both sides taking on opposite positions.

## THE CONTESTED AUTHORITY OF THE UNITARY STATE

**Since its independence in 1948, the concept of a “Union of States and Regions” has been contested by several ethnic organizations that inhabit the periphery of the republic**, such as the Karen National Union (KNU). Over time, early claims of independence have shifted towards regional autonomy under a federal state model. The current system is one of modest decentralization to regions and states and, in addition, to a limited number of self-administered zones. The sovereign authority of the state is contested by several political and armed ethnic organizations, resulting in a complex mosaic of territorial control by state and non-state actors. Dual governance territories exist for example in Kayah State, with the Karen National Union governing territories under its control using Karen-developed policies and laws, including with regard to the land and agricultural sectors. Several non-state actors occupy territories, often along the China and Thailand borders. Hence, whereas these areas are under a remote weak control of the Myanmar government – far away hinterlands – the same territories can be well accessed by neighbouring countries from the other side. China’s opium substitution programmes in Kachin and Shan States and more recent Chinese driven agricultural production in border areas, such as tissue banana in Kachin and to some extent watermelons down to the Mandalay region, may dilute the implementation of Myanmar’s policies and strategies, including the ADS. “The lack of authority of several parts on Myanmar may significantly limit the effectiveness of political reforms and aid programmes” (Stokke *et al.*, 2018).

## STATE CAPACITY: THE CHALLENGES OF POLICY-MAKING AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

**The shift to a democratically elected government has widened the space for more inclusive policy-making but appears to be hampered by an organizational culture of hierarchical decision-making within the ruling NLD, the government and the civil service** (Stokke *et al.*, 2018). The NLUP and the ADS are examples of inclusive public policy and strategy developments and indicate that inclusivity and participation of a large platform of stakeholders, including civil society, is possible. It is noted that the roles of national civil society facilitators, assisted by the concerted joint efforts of some development partners, have sparked and sustained these processes. Other policy-making processes remain centralized. Nevertheless, under pressure of civil society and development partners, some recent land law amendments have facilitated an opening to accommodate dialogue.

**The constitution has created some degree of decentralisation, but the devolvement of responsibilities remains limited in scope.** The revenue base of states and regions is

restricted, hence implementation of policies and strategies remains subject to centralized decision-making and funding. On the other hand, where states and regions have authority for decision-making, such as in the aquaculture sector, major regional discrepancies may arise, resulting in diversions from the national strategy vision.

**There remains considerable mistrust between the senior management of the government (mainly ministers and deputy ministers) and the civil service.** The latter developed under military rule and remains strongly influenced by the military. It should be noted that one of the last public service reforms of the USDP government was to create and staff the position of permanent secretary; many appointees in 2015 continue to exercise their function under the current government. Former military and sometimes USDP members continue to occupy key positions that impact policy and law development. Under the chairmanship of a former senior military official, a former strong SDPDC and USDP member, the Union Parliament Legal Affairs and Special Cases Assessment Commission has strongly criticized essential innovations of the NLUP such as the recognition of customary and women's land rights. Some of the entourage of the former military MOAI minister remain in senior positions in MoALI under the NLD government. The former minister was a strong advocate for the promotion of rice production, having major commercial interests in the sector himself. This illustrates the impact of personal interests on policy-making.

**The current NLD government is overburdened with urgent challenges: the Rakhine crises, Panglong Peace process, poverty reduction, economic reform, managing relations with China and India (the 2018 pulses export crises), civil-military relations, ethnic state challenges; dealing with natural disasters and climate change consequences.** Several development partners add to the pressure by pushing for quick solutions. In the new era of democratization, western development partners are quickly changing strategy from providing invisible financial support to mainly CSOs (mainly through basket multidonor trust funds like LIFT), to giving high profile bilateral support to government institutions and programmes. These programmes need to deliver within the funding cycles and tenure of development partner promoters, often limited to three to four years. The implementation of such programmes mainly relies on state actors; notwithstanding participation of civil society and private sector in some processes, most of these remain the exclusive domain of public institutions. The participation and investment of the private sector is probably less active than expected after the installation of the NLD government in 2016.

## DECISION-MAKING AND POLITICAL TRADE-OFFS IN A COMPLEX ENVIRONMENT

**Vikram Nehru (2015) wrote that “Myanmar’s difficult political and economic history over the last six decades and its unfortunate legacy of weak social trust and even weaker institutions present particularly complex reform challenges for its policymakers.** Data and information are scarce, and in-country experts who can understand, analyse, and act upon information are scarcer. What is more, although policy priorities may seem obvious, the choices available to policymakers are not straightforward. Study the potential trade-offs and political economy challenges related to any of these priorities, then factor in the weight of history, distrust and weak institutions, and it becomes apparent that Myanmar’s economic reform challenges are going to be particularly complex.”



The following are examples to illustrate the complexity of policy decision-making, with each issue requiring safeguards and measures to balance the possible negative effect of unintended or possible logical consequences of such decision making against a backdrop of strong vested interests and weak institutions:

1. Encourage rice exports and ensure food security;
2. Pursue military and fiscal reforms simultaneously;
3. Liberalize trade and investment while ensuring inclusive growth;
4. Pursue natural resource development, while ensuring environmental and social safeguards;
5. Encourage public-private partnerships in infrastructure development, while managing fiscal risks;
6. Devolve responsibility for public expenditures to local governments, while improving national government effectiveness;
7. Encourage agglomeration economies by concentrating infrastructure development, while accelerating the development of ethnic states as a crucial complement to the peace process; and
8. Encourage the formation of trade unions, while maintaining international competitiveness.

### 3.6.3 POLITICAL SPACES, ACTORS AND THEIR STRATEGIES

The following political spaces are relevant and important for assessing policy reform and its effectiveness.

#### PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY AND REFORM PROCESS.

The 2008 Constitution established a parliamentary democracy at union and state/region level. It established a platform for parliamentary politics and policy development, albeit with military participation. "The composition of Union and State/region Parliaments has become more reflective of the population in terms of political interests and identities, although there is a persistent under-representation of women as well as ethnic and religious minorities (Egreteau, 2017; Minoletti, 2014, 2016 in Stokke *et al.*, 2018)." Apparent weaknesses include the i) persistence of top down and unaccountable decision-making; ii) still limited public consultation; iii) limited rights and capacities of people to gain access and influence governance processes; influence is often based on personal networks (Stokke *et al.*, 2018). Although there seems to exist an environment of political party block voting, requested by senior leadership, controversial legislation that does not support the spirit of the NLD passes

parliament, with the newly amended VFV law as an example. This adds to the complexity of policy development. Other reform efforts, such as the Farmland Law, are often superficial and do not necessarily address key issues that are included, in this case, in the NLUP.

**The capacity of parliamentarians to make informed decisions, effectively prepare, and access the tools and/or of members to influence the outcomes of reform processes is limited.** It is also clear that top down orders from upper government levels has helped to instigate some policy processes, as was the case with the MS-NPAN. In a similar vein, inter-ministerial coordination for policy development seems only to be effective, at least initially, when clear instructions are given, i.e. from the Development Assistance Coordination Unit (DACU) to develop the MS-NPAN and/or proper institutions are created (e.g. the NLUC). Note that policy development is normally not subject to parliamentary approval, as opposed to the legislation needed to implement policies. Policies are mainly the outcome of ministerial decisions in line with a vision set out by an overall policy framework such as the MSDP. The ADS and MS-NPAN are explicitly recognized by the MSDP, whereas references to a land policy, which appeared in earlier drafts, were omitted in the adopted version.

There are also calls from CSOs and development partners to use the current policy and legal framework "creatively" to achieve reform. A legacy of top down decision-making with strict implementation at the local level of centrally devised governance tools does not leave room for much creativity, however.

## 21ST CENTURY PANGLONG PEACE PROCESS

**The 21st Century Panglong Conference, held in September 2016, was an opportunity for the participation of ethnic nationalities, ethnic armed organizations, civil society and political parties.** However, the system for setting agendas for policy negotiations considerably limits the issues that can be negotiated and the context in which these negotiations take place. Tatmadaw insists that negotiations follow the framework set by the current constitution, whereas several participants, especially those representing ethnic populations and groups, insisted that talks should be framed in the context of a strong federalized state, with high levels of self-determination.

**The Land Policy was a major topic of the Peace Conference,** covering ten out of a total of 37 agreed principles in follow-up discussions in 2017. Ethnic organizations and their supporters believed that the reform of the land sector should be dealt during the Peace Talks, rather than through traditional parliamentary reforms. This gave the process a strong ethnic dimension, combining issues such as language, culture, self-determination with issues of land governance and land administration. It pitched achieving sovereignty of ethnic territory against the recognition of customary land rights at the grassroots community/village level.

## DECENTRALIZED AND DECONCENTRATED PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

**The decentralization of public administration, initiated in 2011, is considered an option for bottom-up reform. "Decentralisation/deconcentration has created more contact points between the state and people, especially at local level, while the democratic opening has created expectations of more responsive public administration.** However,

the continued dominance of a hierarchical organizational structure, as seen in GAD, means that the actual openings for making claims and asserting influence on public administration remain limited (Kyi Pyar Chit Saw and Arnold, 2014 cited by Stokke *et al.*, 2018).<sup>25</sup> As with the issue of administrative creativity noted above, subnational structures and platforms seem to be discouraged from departing from the central line of thinking and implementation. It will remain a challenge to develop subnational policy and strategy implementation plans for ADS, MS-NPAN and NLUP with the full engagement of local actors, and responding to specific local needs if these are somewhat different from central-level decisions.

## THE MILITARY - TATMADAW

**Overall, the legacy of military control over the state constrains policy-making and public administration.** It includes strong Tatmadaw influence in the Parliament, control of key ministries and departments, and a military culture and loyalty in the bureaucracy (especially within the GAD) (Stokke *et al.*, 2018). Before 2010, policy processes were inspired by small groups of senior military people who had personal interests for supporting a particular policy direction. Even under the USDP, personal interests strongly supported the Rice Bowl policy.

**The impact of the military on policy takes different forms.** First, Tatmadaw used its oversight tenure of the Ministry of Home Affairs through the GAD to influence policy decisions and their implementation<sup>25</sup>. Second, it uses parliamentary presence, including in commissions and committees such as the Legal Affairs and Special Cases Assessment Commission. Third, several former senior military officers are engaged in the public sector and occupy key positions, including in MoALI (DALMS, Fisheries Department). Fourth, former military private sector operators and their cronies are exposed to the principle of political reciprocity to influence decision-making. Many military officers have used the military economy to establish their businesses and have an interest in the continuation of military rule to consolidate their interests. Whereas some may have speculated that other private sector operators, both national but increasingly international, would be interested to purchase these businesses, the current low interest in investment, from the corporate world at least, is delaying such transfers. In the absence of such transfers, some 80 percent of these lands remain unused.

## ETHNIC ARMED ORGANIZATIONS

**The primary objective of several ethnic armed organizations has been to achieve self-determination and confirm their ethnic identities.** "In 2016, The Asia Foundation's research team identified areas affected by active or latent subnational conflict in at least eleven of Myanmar's fourteen states and regions. Each of these contested areas, which include 118 of Myanmar's 330 townships, containing almost one quarter of Myanmar's population, hosts one or more ethnic armed organizations (EAOs) that challenge the authority of the central government" (Asia Foundation, 2017).

<sup>25</sup> It is noted that during the preparation of this document the General Administration Department – GAD – was transferred from military control in the Ministry of Home Affairs to civil control under the Ministry of the Office of the Union Governments.

FIGURE 51

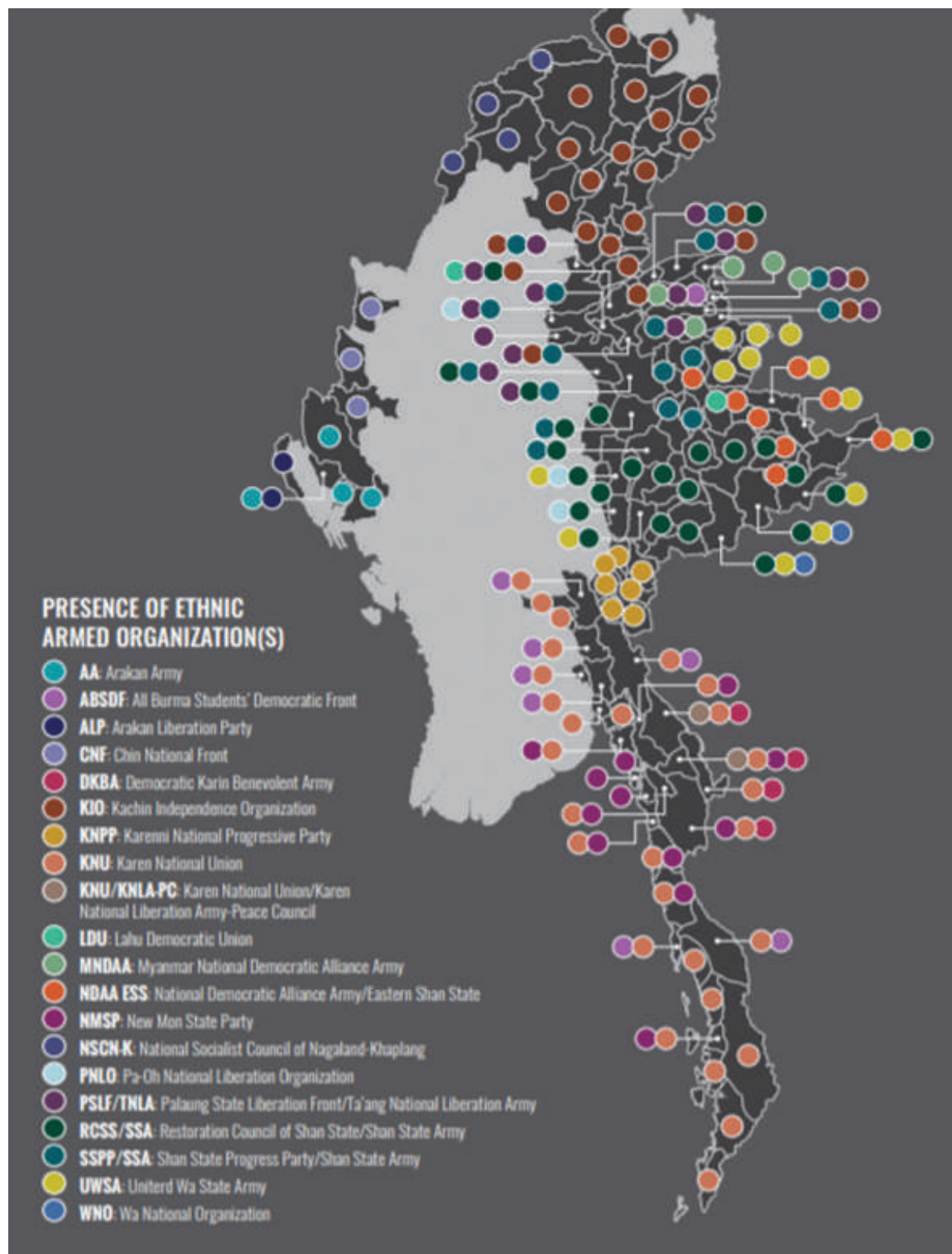


FIGURE 51: Geographic presence of ethnic armed groups in Myanmar (2016)

Source: Asia Foundation (2017). The Contested Areas of Myanmar: Subnational Conflict, Aid, and Development

**Parties involved in peace process negotiations may have different interests and influence in policy processes.** According to the Asia Foundation (2017), Central government authority within contested townships tends to be strongest at specific sites of economic interest such as dams, mines, main roads, and urban areas" (Asia Foundation, 2017), rendering EAO's sceptical of such investments. Warlords that control specific border territories may have an interest in continued destabilization, which allows them to continue their economic activities. The same has been said for the Central Government with cross-border interests in maintaining access to natural resources including wind, water, and minerals. Further analysis also claims that, 'development interventions can never be entirely neutral: who delivers them, what form they take, and where they occur are inherently political (Asia Foundation, 2017). This political landscape cannot be underestimated in engagement in sub-national planning.

## PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

**Several professional organizations, including the Myanmar Rice Federation (MRF) and the Myanmar Fisheries Federation (MFF), have established themselves as major actors in public policy development and implementation.** Many federations and associations are members of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI), which provides a platform for linking the private sector with the state. Several former senior public officers are members of these federations and continue to explore their previous public sector engagements to advance the interests of private sector operators (see below). Previous sanctions by the United States targeted some members of the federations and its umbrella organization.

Vikram Nehru (2015) highlighted the influence of professional organizations on the political economy of rice production, especially the export of rice as follows:

- » "Overcoming vested interests of the **powerful rice-milling group**, which prevents foreign direct investment in rice milling. The Myanmar Foreign Investment law (2012) law was an important milestone in improving the investment climate for foreign investors, but its implementation leaves a lot to be desired<sup>26</sup>. The responsible organization, the Myanmar Investment Commission, does not see itself as a facilitator for foreign investment, but rather as a protector of Myanmar's commercial and business interests. Its protective and interventionist instincts are unlikely to evaporate soon, and will take time to change and adjust.
- » Recalibration of the role of the monopsonistic **Myanmar Rice Federation**. Placing power over rice exports in the hands of one organization (in particular a confederation of business associations) potentially leads to conflicts of interest, high economic rents, reduced prices to farmers, lower production levels, lower farm incomes, and lower wages for landless laborers."

**The history of cooperative development, as part of the state-planned economy, has tarnished the cooperative brand.** The 1992 Cooperative Law imposed a top-down, four-tier cooperative structure with minimal investment and sense of ownership, autonomy and

<sup>26</sup> The Myanmar Foreign Investment Law (2012) is repealed by the Myanmar Investment Law (2016)



control by secondary, tertiary, and apex associations. In practice, however, cooperatives appear to demonstrate good business practices, accountability and transparency with members who understand democratic ownership. Elected leaders are dedicated and volunteer their time. Cooperatives pay taxes and contribute to the emerging business sector in Myanmar. As Myanmar opens to broader market forces, existing cooperatives will be challenged to adapt. Until now, these have operated as part of a state-driven economy. There is potential for collapse, and/or renewal of these cooperatives. There is also a growing engagement of outside actors that consider cooperatives as development tools and are starting new cooperatives or supporting existing groups without interaction with the government; (Jo-Anne Ferguson for LIFT, 2013).

**Local farmers' organizations are widespread throughout the country.** While differing in many ways, they fall into two broad categories: i) local farmers' unions, and ii) local technical-economic organizations. Both types have emerged despite a relative lack of interest from the government and main development partners until recently. Local Farmers Organisations (FO) address the most immediate needs of smallholder farmers, i.e. providing the information they need to secure their rights (especially land tenure rights) and disseminating knowledge to improve their farming practices (advisory services). When they can access more resources, local FOs tend to develop additional professional services such as input provision, seed production, marketing and financial services. Some farmers' organizations combine both social and economic functions. Such FOs mostly exist at the local level, although some can be found at township and regional levels.

Farmers' organizations also exist at region/state and country levels, but these have difficulty truly representing grassroots farmers due to their relative disconnection from local organizations. As a result, the representation of smallholder farmers at the national level is still very limited. This weakens their capacity to influence policies that affect them, despite the fact that they represent the majority of the population and promoting their interests is essential to reducing poverty and developing the economy. The emergence of such representation will take time because it must be built on strong foundations. (Food Security Working Group and GRET, 2015).

**The local technical-economic organisations intend firstly to improve the agricultural economy of the country.** To do so, they want to improve the integration of agricultural value chains, especially to push farmers' into these value chains as they consider farmers to be the weakest link of the chains. They consider that farmers have difficulties to organize themselves, so outsiders should help the process. In return, the better organization of farmers will benefit to the rest of the sector who will receive more produce or of higher quality. Their legal status is not clarified yet. Some of local affiliates are registered as associations, but the national organizations are operating under the umbrella of UMFCCI or unregistered. Structuring at local levels is uneven among regions and townships. While some regions and townships might have developed strong local organizations affiliated to the national networks, others exist almost only on the paper or through their leaders. (Food Security Working Group and GRET, 2015).

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<sup>27</sup> Civil society is often viewed as a threat by autocratic governments or those that do not wish to see their policies or programs undermined or even questioned. For this reason, and to preclude the development and influence of such organizations even if they are allowed to be formed, the state will often sponsor mass organizations that are designed both to provide a popular or mass base for state policies, or to pre-empt the formation of other groups that might oppose or threaten such policies. Mass mobilization has been used politically in Myanmar under different political regimes including by the Burma Socialist Programme Party regime (1962-1988) (David Steinberg, 1997)

<sup>28</sup> Paung Sie Facility. 2018. Unlocking Civil Society Contributions to Peace in Myanmar. Yangon, provides an elaborate account on civil society interaction with different policy processes and government, but with a focus on the peace process.

## CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS

### **Civil society organizations (CSOs) have a long history and strong legacy in Myanmar.**

Broad organizations were organized under socialist regimes to create a mass base but also to exert control over civil society groups in a systematic and organized fashion<sup>27</sup>. David Steinberg (2017) observed that as a result "civil society in Myanmar had died or, perhaps, more accurately, it was murdered". CSOs mobilized however around the 2007 Saffron Revolution, cyclone Nargis in 2008, and the 2010 elections and, albeit, civil society initiatives emerged without being driven by international support (Paung Sie facility, 2018).<sup>28</sup> Ever since CSOs and NGOs have played, The NLD government has followed the example of the previous USDP government to create a space for CSO in policy dialogues, with NLUP and the ADS as good examples.

**Strong CSO/NGO networks were built on the 'land grab' theme, with the most prominent being the Land Core Group (LCG) and Land in Our Hands (LIOH).** Each adopts a different strategy. LCG engages with the government, especially with MONREC and increasingly but still hesitantly with MoALI, to support the land reform process. LIOH does not engage with the government, but works with ethnic groups to promote a parallel agenda of land reform, mainly using the peace process as a platform. International supporters of LIOH, such as the Transnational Institute (TNI), question new government strategies such as the ADS, mainly on the basis of ideology (see Walden Bello critique on the ADS; Bello Walden, 2018).

**The SUN Civil Society Alliance, facilitated by Save the Children, provides a strong platform for dozens of CSOs and NGOs actively working on nutrition in Myanmar.** SUN CSA actively and regularly engages with the government, including MoSWRR, MoHS, and MoALI.

## RELIGIOUS ACTORS

Stokke *et al.* (2018) observe that "Religious institutions have long traditions of providing important services in Myanmar society, especially in education, health services, and welfare support, including humanitarian assistance to displaced persons. The strong and complex link between Buddhism and politics in Myanmar (has) under-pinned the recent re-emergence of Buddhism nationalism." Buddhist monks have been at the forefront of pro-democracy efforts such as the 8888 Uprising and the Saffron Revolution. Under the USDP government, Buddhist organizations managed to influence the Ministry of Religious Affairs in law-making, including regarding monogamy and population control measures. Buddhist identity has a strong mobilization capacity, not least during periods of major political, economic and social change (Stokke *et al.*, 2018).

**China is arguably the most important external actor, and increasingly influences economic development through its Belt and Road Initiative,** which mainly focuses on infrastructural development (railways, roads, deep seaports, dams). There also seem to exist interaction in border areas between decentralized Chinese administrations and several groups in Myanmar, including ethnic armed organizations. India's interest is trade, including in agricultural products such as beans and pulses. India's 'Look East' policy aims to address poor infrastructure development that negatively impacts trade exchange between the two countries. Such projects may unlock agricultural potential in Nagaland and create additional pressure on land access issues.

**Thailand has received many refugees from Myanmar, especially from the Karen and Shan ethnic populations.** There is also a massive labour migration to Thailand, which has a major impact on labour availability and farming system in Myanmar.

ASEAN sets a framework for regional and country policy-making in general including on specific issues such as agriculture, trade, fisheries, forestry, sustainable development, among others. MoALI for instance adheres to ASEAN frameworks to develop policies in a number of subsectors (organic food guidelines, soil and nutrient management, responsible land based investment, sustainable agri food systems).

## DEVELOPMENT ACTORS

### European Union

In 2013, the EU lifted all sanctions against Myanmar except for an arms embargo. After the 2015 elections, the EU significantly scaled up its engagement with Myanmar, with a solid support programme for: i) democracy, rule of law and good governance; ii) the peace process; iii) human rights; iv) poverty reduction and sustainable development; v) economic engagement and vi) regional partnership with ASEAN. Although this support was mainly delivered through participation in multidonor trust funds, such as from LIFT, NGOs and CSOs, the EU gradually increased direct partnerships with government institutions, especially in the education sector (providing budget support to the Ministry of Education), the agricultural sector (providing support to aquaculture under the MySAP project; institutional capacity building of MoALI through the My Governance project and FIRST), and upcoming support to nutrition-sensitive agriculture in support of MS-NPAN.

The EU has allocated EUR 3.6 billion (2014-2020) to nutrition globally. Rural development/agriculture/food and nutrition security in Myanmar account for 35 percent of this total envelope (EUR 241 million). The EU's aim (2014-2020) is to: i) enhance mobilization and political commitment to nutrition; ii) scale up actions, and (iii) strengthen expertise and the knowledge-base. The EU is keen to use the remaining funds from its multiannual programme to support MoALI in its implementation of the MS-NPAN.

### The Livelihoods and Food Security Trust Fund (LIFT)

LIFT is a multidonor fund established in 2009 to improve the lives and prospects of smallholder farmers and landless people in rural Myanmar. LIFT has financed 147 projects to date; it provides technical assistance, research and coordinates hundreds of NGOs. Improved nutrition has been formally prioritized in LIFT's 'refreshed' strategy (2019) as one of four major desired outcomes (together with agriculture and rural development, migration and decent work, and rural finance). Nutrition-sensitive indicators allow LIFT to comprehensively measure nutrition achievements and support the growing narrative around how agriculture contributes to nutrition. LIFT serves as a key partner to FIRST in supporting the nutrition-sensitive dimensions of the MS-NPAN.

One of LIFT's most significant nutrition interventions has been the introduction of maternal and child cash transfers in Rakhine, the delta and the dry zone. In total, maternal and child cash transfer projects of USD 14.5 million are being implemented by LIFT with over 54 000 mothers and children enrolled. The conclusions of recent randomized control trials designed

to measure the impact of these projects were largely positive. The World Bank is currently supporting MoSWRR to scale-up these efforts with a USD 100 million loan. This operation will support the expansion of these efforts through LIFT in marginalized areas and ensure convergence with other nutrition-sensitive interventions.

## **USAID**

The USA was a main actor and the driving force behind sanctions in the 1990s and 2000s. China's and Asia's rising influence resulted in Obama's 'Pivot to Asia' policy (2008), which led to a rapprochement with Myanmar. USAID and private/non profit service providers (such as Winrock, for instance), IFPRI and Michigan State University are increasingly looking for opportunities to support agriculture (e.g. through the Feed the Future programme) and, more recently, nutrition. USAID has supported project focusing on customary land rights in few selected areas of Myanmar. It is one three members of an informal donor coordination group on land issues, together with SDC and the EU.

## **World Food Programme (WFP)**

The WFP is increasingly engaged in the agriculture sector in Myanmar, having committed to supporting enhanced homestead food production (one of the interventions in the MS-NPAN). "WFP provides unconditional food or – where markets are functioning – cash assistance to people affected by conflict or intercommunal violence and natural disasters whose livelihood options are limited or non-existent. WFP currently targets 245 000 internally displaced and conflict-affected persons in Kachin, Shan and Rakhine States. The monthly basic food basket comprises rice, pulses, oil and salt, or its cash equivalent. WFP also supports Myanmar refugees returning from Thailand through six-month cash assistance to help with their initial reintegration."

WFP is piloting the 'Homegrown School Feeding' approach (an approach jointly developed with FAO and IFAD) in the dry zone and also conducted the 'Fill the Nutrient Gap Analysis,' which was completed in September 2019. Lastly, WFP has worked on three major analytical pieces, the Zero Hunger Challenge Review of Myanmar, the Food Atlas (forthcoming), and the Urban Nutrition Survey. These all served as major inputs to this study.

## **DFID**

DFID leads the UK's support to Myanmar and also co-facilitates the Nutrition Sector Coordination Group. DFID's aim is to help Burma continue on a path to being a better governed, fairer and more peaceful society. It focuses on four major programmes: i) economic development, ii) governance and security, iii) human development, and iv) humanitarian assistance, with a fifth smaller contribution to environment. DFID is the main contributor to several multidonor funds, including LIFT, the Joint Peace Fund and the Paung Sie- Peace support Facility. It also channels support to the UN and other international organizations. More recent support addresses marginalized populations in areas characterized by social instability, including in Rakhine and the ethnic border areas in Shan and Kachin States





### 3.6.4 POLITICAL ECONOMY OF THE POLICY PROCESS

#### POLITICAL ECONOMY FRAMEWORK FOR THE NATIONAL LAND USE POLICY AND LAND REFORM

**Political engagement in dealing with land governance issues and the processes that are being used to achieve this are multiple and differ significantly, both in process nature and contents.** Three such processes are: i) Panglong 21 Peace Conference; ii) the National Land Use Policy process and its implementation and iii) parallel ongoing amendment of land related legislation. Different actors have chosen one or several of these processes to participate in reform. These processes unfold in an equally complex environment and overlap each other. General elections are coming up by end 2020, and the ruling party has committed to a strong pro-poor land reform process in its 2015 electoral manifesto. On the other hand, there is increasingly pressure to facilitate national and international land based investment. It is too soon to assess whether and how political parties will address land reform in the upcoming campaigning.

**The Panglong 21 Peace Conference initially put a lot of emphasis on the land and environment sector but efforts do not seem to be sustained.** The first meeting sessions (May 2017) resulted in ten agreed principles under the land and environment sector, five of which referring to land policies. As mentioned before, this process failed so far to transform basic principles into agreeable land reform action. As a result some EAOs like KNU withdrew from the process (in 2018) and continue to implement their own land policy and legislation in territories falling under their control. The major challenge here is that EAOs consider land reform in a context of future state federalization, including perhaps in the context of state constitutions, whereas military participants reject this and see reform exclusively under the umbrella of the current constitution and existing legislation. The outcome of the parliamentary discussions on the possible amendment of the current constitution will certainly influence this process.



FIGURE 52

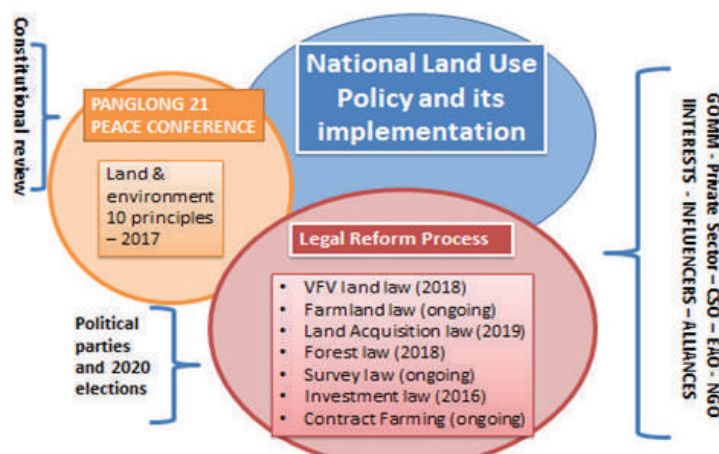


FIGURE 52: Parallel land reform processes

Source: EU and FAO FIRST Myanmar

**Progress has been made with the current government adopting the NLUP and creating the institutional infrastructure with a NLUC and its working committees to start its implementation.** At the same time the importance of the ADS land component was recognized (Outcome 1.6 “Strengthened farmers land rights and enhanced capacities of institutions involved in agricultural land”), and a working committee was created for its implementation and coordination. It is important that MoALI and DALMS, as managers and co-managers of some 300,000km<sup>2</sup> of rural land (all farm land and VFV land), representing 45% of the total country area, are now an integral part of land reform under the NLUP. MoALI was only marginally involved in the discussion of the NLUP (2013-2016), albeit by its own choice. MoALI seemed satisfied to continue exercising the role of peripheral player in the functioning of the NLUC, as it never claimed any institutional responsibility under the NLUC. It will be under the umbrella and oversight of an inter-ministerial body, the NLUC, that MoALI/DALMS will need to take their commitment to land reform. Having this working committee chaired by MoALI with secretarial support of DALMS and ADSISU, may to some extent compensate for MOALI/DALMS only being considered as an ordinary member of the NLUC, rather than as a co-secretary together with MONREC.

**Creating a more workable relationship between MoALI as manager/co-manager of farmland and VFV land, and MONREC as the manager of land falling under the permanent forest estate must be an integral part of land reform.** Legal territorial responsibility for land management divided between the two ministries includes a layer of rivalry and to some extent blockage of certain processes (such as creating community forests outside the PFE). Since 1991, the history of VFV land management profiles MoALI/DALMS as an operational ally of the military/crony and elite agricultural operators, many of whom acted as land speculators rather than real investors. It must however also be acknowledged that MoALI/DALMS played a crucial role in supporting land titling for smallholders under the Farmland Law. The engagement of MONREC and MoALI as land managers under Panglong process is not very clear.

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**The NLUP and the NLUC provide a platform for broader, yet imperfect, participation of several layers of society in land policy reform.** Whereas the NLUP is exclusively composed of government officials (Union level and one representative for each of the states and regions, including NayPyiTaw), the membership of working committees and supporting groups is somewhat more balanced (see table).

TABLE 14

| Institution                               | Government | Parliament | CSO/NGO | Farmers private sector |
|---|------------|------------|---------|------------------------|
| National Land Use Council                 | 27         |            |         |                        |
| R/S land use committees                   | not known  |            |         |                        |
| Technical Advisory group                  | 11         | 5          | 11      | 3                      |
| WC land law development and support group | 27         | 14         | 8       | 7                      |
| WC land information                       | 25         | 3          | 3       | 0                      |
| WC ADS implementation & coordination      | 15         | 8          | 2       | 1                      |

TABLE 14: Membership of NLUC, working committees and supporting groups

Source: EU and FAO FIRST Myanmar

Especially the land law development working committee is reasonably well balanced, as compared for instance to the working committee on land information management. Notably is the representation of parliamentary members, which in their majority include the elected of ethnic states. Members of farmers associations and similar are often representing larger commercial interests than these of smallholders, sometimes through the UMFCCL, or as former retired government staff. Several of the CSO/NGO members are arguably nominated without representing a specific CSO network or constituency. The absence of representatives of EAOs is notorious.

**There is little doubt that some actors, e.g. individuals who will lose out if a transparent pro-poor land policy is implemented, do not support the policy and its implementation.** It is also somewhat puzzling that the Myanmar Sustainable Development Programme (MSDP) does not make explicit reference to the NLUP (although a previous draft did). Albeit the MSDP includes the ADS as a strategic reference to deal with strengthening tenure rights for rural households (MSDP strategy 3.1.4).

**Parallel to the NLUP process, government institutions, including MoALI continue to engage in land reform by amending existing legislation without these processes necessarily following the same path of inclusivity and transparency.** Recent and ongoing amendments include:

- » Investment law (2016)
- » Forest law (2018)
- » VFV land law (2018)
- » Land Acquisition law (2019)
- » Farmland law (ongoing)
- » Survey law (ongoing)
- » Contract farming law (ongoing)

**Amendments made or being proposed to several of these laws do not bring these necessarily closer in line with the basic principles articulated under the NLUP.** In fact several outcomes are heavily contested by civil society, and sometimes by the private sector, for several reasons including possible risks for land confiscation in ethnic states (VFV land law), curbing transparent information sharing and public use of information platforms (Survey law). The lack of inclusivity and participation of civil society and private sector in law amendment processes is also questioned, and may be counterproductive in the longer term. The consultation process of the revised Forest law instructions for instance has also served for highlighting some major shortcomings in the law itself; this may result in the need to yet another revision of the law itself. It remains a question why government, and parliament, are so hasty with amending key land legislation in the absence of guidance by a yet to be drafted new land law. In any case, if these amendments are not harmonized with this future but still missing land law, new revisions will be required.

## POLITICAL ECONOMY OF THE ADS

**MoALI produced the ADS as a prerequisite for submitting a GAFSP public window proposal.** The proposal was successful, but in fact the ADS became strategically more important than the approved investment programme. Whereas the GAFSP is an agricultural development programme targeting smallholders in the restricted geographic area of the dry zone (covering 12 townships), the ADS addresses a much wider range of agricultural development challenges nationwide. It is broader in scope, and has a strong focus on the role of private sector in agricultural sector development. The ADS was to some extent inspired by a NESAC (National Economic and Social Advisory Council)-USAID white paper “A new vision for Myanmar’s agricultural development: from Rice Bowl to Food Basket”, which was also strongly supported by the UMFCCI.

**After some initial reluctance from development partners and CSO and their international supporters, the ADS became an agreed support platform for many stakeholders.** Several donors need such a platform to convince their constituency to engage with Myanmar government, including the World Bank, EU, ADB and USAID. This has not yet resulted in considerable concrete funding however, mainly due to some renewed lack of trust in the government as a result of, for example, the Rakhine unrest.

**National stakeholders ranging from the private sector to CSOs, national NGOs and other public institutions seem to accept the ADS as a valid strategy for the next decade.** In fact, it covers most aspects of agricultural development including smallholders, small and medium enterprises and larger private investment objectives. It provides room for non-public sector actors to participate in its implementation, including CSOs and NGOs. Views on the strategies for agricultural development are much less polarized than those around land governance.

## POLITICAL ECONOMY OF THE MS-NPAN

**The nutrition sector has not (yet) been subject to major bipartisan political influence.** The MS-NPAN process seems to have successfully addressed inter-ministerial cooperation, creating mutual understanding and consensus on the functions and responsibilities of each participating public institution. The MoHS acknowledged that nutrition needs a multisector approach, including major attention to nutrition-sensitive interventions. The approach ‘think multisectorally but act sectorally’ may also constitute a sound approach for containing possible sector frictions for its implementation.

## 3.7 GENDER ISSUES IN POLICY-MAKING PROCESSES

**The ADS identifies gender inequality in agriculture as an important issue for the sector.** An analysis of the commitments made by development partners to the agriculture sector indicates that 1 percent of the committed budget would be allocated to ‘gender related’ interventions (p30, ADS). Three out of five of the impact indicators selected for the ADS

are gender-disaggregated. Under Pillar 1, it is expected that MOALI capacity for ADS coordination and implementation will be enhanced and guided by democratically-appointed, gender-equitable civil society representation. In addition, it is expected that extension work, and notably the delivery of suitable technology packages, would be optimized by socio-economic and farming systems research considering gender roles in agriculture.

**The MS-NPAN is an evidence-based plan that focuses on the most vulnerable group of women during the first 1 000 days from conception through pregnancy and the first two years of life, with additional support to children between two and five years of age, adolescent girls, and all women of reproductive age.** Among the planned interventions is a social behaviour change communication (SBCC) strategy aimed at improving the knowledge of beneficiaries (particularly mothers) on nutrition, care practices, and health care for women and children (for the first 1 000 days and beyond). Most indicators are disaggregated by gender, including access to a diverse food basket (through improved incomes) and a minimum dietary diversity score for women (MDD-W).

**Overall, an unbalanced gender approach in the land and agricultural sector is at least partly due to a less than desirable participation of women in governance and decision-making.** Table 15 on women's participation in governance (as per March 2016) reveals just how limited the representation of women in decision-making bodies in Myanmar has been (Namati, 2016).

TABLE 15

| LEVEL OF GOVERNMENT  | POSITION                    | WOMEN AS % OF TOTAL |
|--|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| National Level Ministers   | Ministers <sup>1</sup>      | 5.00%               |
|  | MPs                         | 9.70%               |
| State and Region   | Ministers <sup>2</sup>      | 2.37%               |
|  | MPs                         | 12.80%              |
| Township   | Administrators              | 0.00%               |
| Ward/Village Tract (VT/Was)<br>General Administration Department | Administrators <sup>2</sup> | 0.25%               |
|  | gazetted staff              | 11.00%              |
|  | non-gazetted staff          | 35.00%              |

TABLE 15: Participation of women in governance  
Source: Namati, 2016



Namati describes the lack of women in government positions at the local level, with no female administrators in any of the 330 townships, and only some 42 female village tract/ward administrators out of a total of 16 785 such positions. Township administrators are critical for the implementation of policies and strategies. Village tract administrators are directly responsible for many important land administration tasks. Given that women are the guardians of nutrition at most levels, having very few women in responsible local administrative jobs may be a major impediment to the implementation of nutrition strategies.

Participation of women in different parliaments reflects the same pattern of low participation (ADB et al., 2016).

TABLE 16

Table 6.1: Women's Representation in Myanmar's Union, Region, and State Parliaments, 2013

|  | (A)<br>Total Number of<br>Constituencies<br>or Appointees                  | (B)<br>Total Number<br>of Elected<br>Seats | Total Number<br>of Women<br>Elected | Percentage of Women Elected<br>to Parliament |                               |
|--|--|--|-------------------------------------|--|-------------------------------|
|  |  |  |                                     | % of total<br>(in column A)                  | % of elected<br>(in column B) |
| People's<br>Assembly<br>(Lower House)              | 440<br>• 330<br>constituencies<br>• 110 military<br>appointees:<br>2 women | 322  | 24                                  | 5.5  | 7.5                           |
| Nationalities<br>Assembly<br>(Upper House)         | 224<br>• 168<br>constituencies<br>• 56 military<br>appointees              | 168  | 4                                   | 1.8  | 2.4                           |
| Union<br>Parliament<br>(Upper and<br>Lower Houses) | 664<br>• 498<br>constituencies<br>• 166 military<br>appointees             | 490  | 28                                  | 4.2  | 5.7                           |
| Region<br>and state<br>parliaments                 | 887<br>• 665<br>constituencies<br>• 222 military<br>appointees             | 663  | 25                                  | 2.8  | 3.8                           |
| <b>Total all<br/>parliaments</b>                   | <b>1,551</b>   | <b>1,153</b>                               | <b>53</b>                           | <b>3.4</b>                                   | <b>4.6</b>                    |

Source: Produced by Phan Tee Eain and the Gender Equality Network in October 2012 but adapted to take account of changes in 2013.

TABLE 16: Representation of women in parliamentary bodies

Source:

**The ADB finds that the representation of women in Myanmar's parliaments (4.6 percent at all levels) is low when compared with other ASEAN countries** such as Cambodia (21.1 percent in Lower House, Lao People's Democratic Republic (25.2 percent) and Vietnam (25.8 percent). Myanmar has a long way to go to reach the target of 30 percent that was envisaged in the Beijing Platform for Action (in 1995) as necessary to achieve a 'critical mass' of women's representation.

**The NLUP process provides a good sector example for illustrating the degree of participation of women in policy-making.** The following are some observations and conclusions (Faxon, 2017):

- » **Women were not visible in the NLUP drafting committee, composed of senior men, and have typically been absent from the military, peace talks and parliament.** To categorize these processes as male does not discount the intricate power structures through which different groups of men negotiate, or seek to obscure the presence of a few exceptional women, but it does acknowledge the assumption that state-making and land-formalization are for men.
- » **Given the drafting committee's composition, the fifth draft was surprisingly gender-sensitive, but only in the English version. The Myanmar version of the law omitted all mention of women and gender,** with the dubious exception of references to taxation on husbands and wives. Gender balance-specific references were the object of debate between conservative government factions and progressive advisors backed by donors. A specific reference to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in support of 'equality' was interpreted by some government officials as applying to urban-rural, not male-female gaps.
- » **Women were largely absent from the public consultation on the fifth draft.** These consultations, especially in smaller cities, shared the same characteristic that workshop participants observed about the land record offices; they were male spaces.
- » **Gender issues appeared not only within the text, but also in grassroots consultations.** Eleven of the comments collected at government consultations addressed women's rights to land. Of these there was a nearly even split between calls to eliminate gender-sensitive language – usually in the name of tradition and culture – and call to strengthen it.
- » During a feedback meeting on the comments (altogether some 909 comments were received), a presentation on barriers to women's access to land and suggested revisions to strengthen women's equal rights in the NLUP was met with immediate pushback. Senior ministers alleged that Myanmar did not have any gender inequality, and that Myanmar's Constitutional anti-discrimination clause foreclosed the need for any further legislation about gender – part Eight "Equal Rights of Men and Women" of the NLUP document should therefore be eliminated.

**The lack of gender sensitivity in policy development and the limited inclusion of specific gender equity measures in policy are probably even more prominent in the ADS.** First, gender issues only explicitly appear in two of 27 outcomes. It should be noted, however, that most indicators for measuring ADS impact are gender-disaggregated. Second, the extensive consultation process in all states and regions were organized around twelve discussion themes; gender issues were strikingly absent. Third, out of a total of 224 recorded consultation comments, none addressed gender issues.

## 3.8 CROSS-CUTTING THEMES

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### 3.8.1 SOCIAL PROTECTION

**A number of social protection measures are included in the ADS and in the MS-NPAN.**

ADS-based programmes include in-kind transfers (seeds, tools and equipment, water) to smallholders on a free or subsidized basis. While the ADS claims to be inclusive of the poor, the extent to which the poorest people will benefit from in-kind transfers and the practical mechanisms for ensuring that they do so have yet to be determined. Land re-allocation to the landless is a form of land rights-driven social protection included in the ADS Outcome 1.6.

**The MS-NPAN focuses heavily on maternal child cash transfers (MCCTs), complemented by social behaviour change communication for nutrition.** Scaling-up MCCTs is a key component of the National Social Protection Strategic Plan (2014). This is one of the largest social protection schemes in Myanmar (under MoSWR). While interventions supported by the MoALI have a longer time-horizon – and should perhaps not target the women receiving these transfers since this is during the critical 1 000 day window where it is important to reduce labour and work burden – the MoALI could better assist the poorest households to build their livelihoods in advance and post-delivery in order to improve their nutrition through more diverse diets. Cash transfers and health interventions can address more immediate causes of malnutrition, whereas agricultural interventions require a longer time horizon, indicating the need to support youth/adolescents and young adults.

### 3.8.2 RESILIENCE

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**Strengthening resilience to shocks and natural disasters is an expected outcome of the ADS.** The ADS recognizes that building the resilience of farmers to climate change and disasters will require a combination of adaptation and mitigation measures at household, community, and national levels. The Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) national action plan also offers a kind of annex to the ADS to further elaborate these actions. The ADS promotes: i) research on stress-tolerant breeds of crops, livestock and fish that can be resilient to climate change; ii) landscape-based measures to promote community-based disaster risk management (CBDRM); early warning systems that provide adequate lead time for communities to respond effectively to drought, heat waves, flash flood, dam spillage, and

floods, etc. At the household level, MOALI's veterinary services and animal disease outbreak surveillance and containment measures are already playing an important role in protecting the livestock of smallholders, thereby increasing their resilience.

**The ADS supports the diversification of agricultural production systems, a sound approach to increasing household resilience to economic and environmental shocks.** This includes a focus on balancing crop production with livestock and aquaculture development and diversifying the crop sector itself.

**The MS-NPAN recognizes that diversification is important for both resilience and nutrition.** "Diversification of agriculture production in time and space is also an excellent approach for generating risk mitigated stable income, as well as a strategy for increasing resilience against natural disasters and climate change risks, especially for poorer and marginalized households. Moreover, diversification of production and income sources also contributes to cope with seasonality of harvests, prices, temporary labour, morbidity and investment needs (MS-NPAN, 2018)." But this link needs to permeate into work planning in the Ministry as well as the support delivered by development partners.

### 3.9 SUMMARY AND KNOWLEDGE GAPS

**In conclusion, there has been significant progress in making land, nutrition and agriculture policy processes more inclusive, transparent, participatory, and comprehensive in the last decade.** However, the nation is just beginning to redefine itself and its common vision for development after 50 years of isolation. Expectations run high among all stakeholders, risking disappointment. For example, the fixation with rice runs deep and cannot change overnight; patience is key and long-standing technical assistance will be required to ensure that the core institutions that will carry the weight of implementation (at central and decentralized levels) are equipped to manage this transition and increasing pressure from the outside.

**The risk is that discussions around the current plans do not pay adequate attention to context.** Without taking a historical and political economy perspective of the enabling environment and the institutions responsible for their implementation, these plans will likely not be effectively and inclusively implemented. This chapter offers an overview of the duality of the government system, the diversity of states and regions, where some groups seek self-determination, and the plethora of stakeholder interests, political and economic. Myanmar is sandwiched between two BRICS countries and the interests of both will also need to be effectively managed.

**The lack of an effective M&E system is a major barrier to the implementation of the ADS.** This is work in progress, supported by the EU through the My Governance programme. The alignment of the support to the MS-NPAN M&E and the ADS M&E will be crucial for their successful implementation. This subject is further elaborated in the next chapter. Given the number of sectors, institutions, and stakeholders involved in the three policy processes discussed in this report (NLUP, MS-NPAN and ADS), the challenge may not be a lack of information and knowledge, but rather the need to distil the scattered base of information into key policy recommendations that are easy to understand, apply, and

translate into action. It is too early to assess the impact of any of the plans but the interface between them should be arranged to ensure that their implementation is coherent and convergent. Development partners also need to improve coordination mechanisms as their support remains fragmented and subsector specific. The soon-to-be established ADS Implementation Support Unit could help to guide the process of harmonization and convergence of plans and strategies to ensure that the MoALI departments move forward together.



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# 4 | IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISMS AND CAPACITIES



## 4.1 INTRODUCTION

**Government leadership, policies and directives can change overnight, but people and institutions take time to reform.** While MoALI is a recent merger of three ministries (since 2016 fisheries, livestock, rural development and cooperatives were added under the umbrella of agriculture)<sup>29</sup>, it retains a fragmented structure, epitomized by the positions of three permanent secretaries. The effective implementation of the ADS calls for considerable reform of MoALI's governance structure and will require extensive consultation, targeting and bottom-up planning. Efforts are underway to establish a body under the Minister's office to facilitate these efforts: the ADS Implementation Support Unit. However, capacities for subnational planning (priority setting, bottom-up budgeting) remain weak. Fifty years of top-down planning in Myanmar has left a legacy.

**Given that nutrition is a multisectoral issue, coordination across MoALI departments and with other ministries is key.** At present, implementation remains subsector-focused and collaboration between departments is limited. Implementing joint actions, such as ensuring that WASH education is provided upon completing the construction of a tube well, will likely require direction from above until the process of federalization is further advanced.

**Targeting represents a great challenge for MoALI if it is to meet SDG2 targets** (although impact indicators have not yet been fully espoused by the Ministry). Outreach to ethnic, upland and border areas remains weak and largely under the control of the Ministry of Homeland Affairs, which is still under the directorate of the Tatmadaw. Furthermore, despite identifying target groups in the ADS and other subsectoral plans, MoALI at present does not target its services. This will require a significant shift in its business model and will require extensive support.

## 4.2 IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISMS

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### 4.2.1 GOVERNANCE AND STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP

**The Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation (MoALI) is a strategic but still imperfect merger of three former ministries:** the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MoAL), the Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Rural Development, and the Ministry of Cooperatives merged in 2016. MoALI was created by the current government in 2016 and brings the major agricultural subsectors of crop production, livestock production and fisheries under one governance structure. In addition, it includes rural development, which focuses on rural electrification, potable water infrastructure and village development support through revolving fund management, as well as cooperative development and financing.

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<sup>29</sup> Under the current government, three former ministries were merged into the current MoALI: i) Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation; ii) Ministry of Cooperatives; iii) Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Rural Development

From a nutrition perspective, MoALI thus covers the major interest domains and this could facilitate, in theory, a holistic approach for an agricultural contribution to nutrition outcomes.

**The MoALI merger remains legally and institutionally incomplete.** A major constraint is that the enlargement of the agricultural sector from crop production under MoAI, to include livestock and fisheries (including aquaculture) under MoALI is not yet supported by legislation. The Farmland Law for instance reflects a dichotomy between a 'farmer,' considered as an economic operator in the crop, livestock or fisheries sector, and 'farmland,' which describes land on which crop production (annual, perennial crops, orchards, vegetables) is practiced. Fishery grounds, fishponds, rice-fish integrated systems, grazing lands, and land on which poultry farms are erected are not recognized as farmland, and consequently do not fall under the Farmland Law. This has major implications for non-crop farmers because they cannot access benefits under the law, such as acquiring a land title (land use certificate), accessing formal credit against land collateral, and engaging in the formal agricultural land market.

**The MoALI continues to have three permanent secretaries (PS), representing the three Ministries that were merged.** Although there is talk of merging the 3 functions upon the retirement of two PS, the division is a major barrier for strategic MoALI leadership. The functions of this PS and their cabinet, established in 2016, include policy analysis, managing relations between ministries and parliament, monitoring and evaluation of policies and projects, international and media relations, human resources and capacity building, and internal auditing. However, these tasks have not been given clear Terms of Reference, which leaves room for the incumbents and their superiors to work around these tasks. The PS needs to be able to deliver non-partisan policy advice to the minister, even if it is unwelcome (Barbados regional seminar, 2007). Each of MoALI's three permanent secretaries has their own vision on how to fill this posting. Legal provisions to insulate the civil service and protect bureaucrats from being fired by politicians have not yet been developed. Department Director Generals continue to attempt making their cases directly to the Minister rather than passing through the PS.

**Senior MoALI management has expressed its full support for the ADS, but the ministry must still demonstrate greater ownership of the interface with the MS-NPAN and NLUP.**

MoALI's commitment to the implementation of the ADS was reconfirmed by the Union Minister during its launch in June 2018. Ownership of the MS-NPAN by MoALI remains to be further strengthened, with the perception that MoHS is still the main owner of the plan. However, the Minister of MoALI, together with the Ministers from Health, Education and Social Welfare traveled to Yangon to endorse the plan, indicating increased recognition of the sector's role in nutrition. On this occasion, the Minister of Health singled out MoALI, recognizing its important contribution to nutrition. MoALI was somewhat isolated from the NLUP process under the previous government, mainly by its own choice. The newly established NLUC however has recognized, albeit after some hesitation, the importance of MoALI and the land component of the ADS as key to establishing a future land governance framework. It remains to be seen how MoALI will deal with the NLUC's decision to establish a working committee to manage the implementation of the 16 work streams on land, as captured in Outcome 1.6 of the ADS, and to be hosted by MoALI.



**The role of the Department of Planning and its senior management as a possible change agent for nutrition-sensitive agriculture remains compromised under the current governance structure.** It is beyond doubt that the DoP has staff with a clear vision for MoALI's future role in supporting nutrition-sensitive agriculture and its contribution to nutrition. In the absence of structural ministerial reform, however, which is probably necessary as a result of the merger, DoP remains at the same administrative hierarchic level as all other departments. Hence, it has little convening and oversight power to transfer this vision into inter and intrasectoral actions, especially for the ADS-MSN PAN interface.

**National policies are difficult to implement in self-administered zones.** For most issues, including agriculture and land, union-level policy and legislation applies (Schedule 1 of the 2008 Constitution). The responsibility for law development in self-administered zones falls under Schedule 3 of the Constitution, but is rather limited in scope. In practice, however, capacities to implement national policies in those areas are weak, and responsibilities of the union and specific administrative zones are blurred.

**Several border areas remain under a dual administrative system, where different areas are controlled by the government and EAOs.** Some EAOs have signed the National Cease Fire Agreement, others have signed a bilateral agreement with the government and still others have not signed any agreement. In some cases, political groups and their armed wings, such as the Karen National Union (KNU) in parts of Kayin State, have their own governance structures and policies/laws (the KNU land policy for example), including departments to administer agriculture, fisheries and land (the KNU Central Land Committee).

### 4.2.2 CIVIL SERVICE CAPACITY

**There is a tension between the old civil service administrations, in place since pre-2012 military rule, and the new government elected in 2016.** Administrators have been trained under a civil service system that no longer reflects the political and economic reform environment. A politically independent, permanent civil service system still has to be developed. Senior government staff (ministers and deputy ministers) remain inexperienced in public institutional governance, with several having spent many years isolated from Myanmar politics; including being jailed for years.

**Part of the administrative force continues to operate with loyalties to an elite that does not always support political reform.** The objections of the Legal Affairs and Special Cases Parliamentary Commission to reform under the NLUP is an example of this challenge. This commission was formed in 2016 and assigned to report to the parliament about legal issues and special cases. In November 2016 the commission reported on the approved NLUP to the speaker of the Union Parliament questioning several basic issues (these identified as being unfit and irrelevant for Myanmar) that are part of the policy, some of which as follows<sup>30</sup>:

<sup>30</sup> Submission of proposal to revise the National Land Use Policy for formulation and activation of the National Land Law. Letter No. 03/ Pa Hta Sa (Ka Ma Ra-1)/2016-750; informal translation and interpretation

- » As land use rights and tenure disputes are managed and resolved by respective departments, and land ownership and heritage issues are resolved by the courts, there is no need to have special courts and independent tripartite arbitration processes introduced as per NLUP part VI;
- » The NLUP should not include a specific section VIII on recognizing and protecting land use rights of ethnic nationalities. The respective line departments and organizations are systematically managing land in line with land related laws (land and revenue act, towns and villages act, vacant, fallow and virgin land management law, farmland law, forest law etc.) while respecting customs.
- » There should be no inclusion of specific references for recognizing equal rights between men and women. Equal rights between men and women are already expressed in land related laws. Addressing equal rights under local customary systems may also affect ethnic unity.

The issuance of this communication to parliament had created an environment of doubt in the current government whether to accept the NLUP as its guidance for land reform. At the same time it had frozen public debate on the NLUP and its implementation, including for CSOs that had been instrumental in its development process.

**The National League for Democracy (NLD) administration has adopted legal amendments to step up efforts towards meeting the international standards of the Union Civil Service Board (UCSB) but has faced great challenges in the enforcement of the civil servant system."** The legal framework of the civil service system depends on the Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar (2008), the Union Civil Service Board Law (2010), the Union Civil Service Board Rules (2011), the Civil Service Personnel Law (2013) and the Civil Service Personnel Rules (2014). The foundation of the current legal framework has been established during the transition period from the military regime of the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC)/State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) (1988-2011) to civilian rule of the USDP (2011-2016). Since the mandate and authority of the UCSB are not always clear, ministries, agencies and departments have to some extent operationalized their own personnel management systems. As a result, the civil service personnel management system is not administered consistently. In addition, nepotism and bribery are still common practices for recruitment, transfer and promotion in civil service while lack of people-centered public services and culture has remained as another challenge. In this context, the NLD administration launched the Civil Service Reform Strategic Action Plan (CSRSAP) 2017-2021 in July 2017 in order to enhance merit-based, fairness, efficiency, transparency, and accountability in civil service. It consists of four components: 1) new civil service governance, 2) merit-based and performance-driven culture and systems, 3) people-centered civil service leadership and capacity development, and 4) transparency and accountability in the civil service" (*JICA, 2017*).



### 4.2.3 DECENTRALIZATION AND PROGRAMME OWNERSHIP

**Both the NLUP and the ADS depart from centralized decision-making to embrace a more inclusive and decentralized process, but ownership of the outcomes remains weak at subnational and local levels.** In fact, the MoALI has not yet devised and organized a campaign to disseminate the approved ADS to regions and states, let alone to townships. In addition, some regions are developing their own development plans without much reference to the ADS and MS-NPAN. Mandalay Region has drafted its own Regional Economic Development Plan, and Mon State has developed a Rural Development Strategy. Lower-level government officials in regions and states remain unaware of the existence of the ADS and the MS-NPAN.

**While the drafting of the MS-NPAN was a centralized process involving mostly union-level stakeholders, this is intended to shift during the one-year inception phase** during which a number of subnational food security and nutrition plans are expected. A precedent was set by inviting social ministers from each of the 14 states and regions to participate in the endorsement of the plan in November 2018 and to join the inception phase launching in February 2019. The roll-out of subnational planning will require a well-developed methodology for consultation, possibly drawing lessons from the ADS consultation process and aligning the MS-NPAN with sector and subsector priorities, interventions and budgets.

### 4.2.4 MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REPORTING

**The MoALI continues to operate multiple M&E systems.** The Department of Rural Development (DRD) seems to have made major progress in developing a functional M&E system. Since November 2017, the EU-funded MY-Governance project supported DRD through the provision of technical assistance (TA) for programme monitoring and coordination (PMC). The TA has resulted in the creation of a sector results framework (SRF) for monitoring and evaluation of all DRD programming. The SRF was formally endorsed by the DRD in July 2017. In September 2017, the DRD's M&E Unit was elevated to a full M&E Division. The unit, which consisted of five staff members, will be expanded to 28 staff positions at the DRD headquarters and two M&E staff officers will be appointed in every DRD township office, bringing the full complement of M&E staff in the DRD to just under 600. In a similar vein, the M&E capacity hosted by DoP has received EU support since February 2018, resulting in the creation of a specific M&E Division. Some six DoP staff were transferred from other duties to take up functions under this new division, but it remains weak. In addition, other departments such as DoA, Cooperatives, Livestock and Fisheries all have their own M&E systems.

**The MoALI's M&E system collects, analyzes and delivers reports on activities** carried out by the Ministry, and is particularly active in some departments, including the DRD, DoP, DALMS, LBVD and DoA. As a significant limitation, this M&E system only focuses on output

indicators on activity descriptions (who is doing what, where, and with whom) and there is a need for indicators that measure the results and subsequent impact of the activities. Reports usually focus on updating the inputs used and the outputs produced during the reporting period. Adequate data analysis (e.g. correlation, standard deviation) is rarely carried out.

**The implementation of the ADS requires a solid M&E system and results framework to track achievements, performance and impact.** The need for such systems is included in Outcome 1.3 of the ADS governance pillar as 'Timely and effective monitoring system and evaluation processes that inform a web-based management information system.' The ADS includes a list of 27 outcome indicators falling under three objectives (9 outcome indicators per objective). This list captures the outcome of main activities under three objectives but efforts are needed to make these indicators SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Timely). Notably, many of these indicators remain either qualitative or general in their descriptions. In addition, at least a third of the outcome indicators are challenging in terms of measurement and data collection arrangements. The EU's 'My Governance' technical assistance supports this process and also assisting departments to analyse the extent to which ongoing activities (captured within or falling outside of the ADS) contribute towards ADS outcome areas.

**Making policy documents widely available to subnational governments and administrative bodies, as well as to the public at large, remains a challenge.** The ADS-Investment Plan (IP) document has not yet been widely disseminated, with only 1 500 copies printed in the Myanmar language. The MS-NPAN draft is currently being translated into the Myanmar language. The accountability of public institutions is gradually increasing at union and state/region levels. The ADS consultation workshops directly reached 99 parliamentary members of union and state/region parliaments, out of a total of 664 representatives. Field work however confirmed that these consultation workshops should only be considered a start in engaging local administrations in ADS implementation. The ADS and MS-NPAN are in their early stages and no progress reports are yet available. But even in the future, making progress and results reports available to the public will be a major challenge for MoALI. Reports of MoALI and its departments are rarely available in the public domain.

**The drafting of periodic progress and monitoring reports remains the responsibility of planning divisions in each department.** Once drafted, the DG and DDG approve the reports if needed. When reports are requested by the minister on particular topics (such as livestock or land, etc.), the departments in charge will prepare and submit them directly. There is no clear guidance on how reports should be published. In most cases, they are only available internally without much guidance provided as to their structure or format.

**The Statistics Division hosted by DALMS is responsible for monitoring crop, land use and land tenure information.** Data compilation is very cumbersome; each of the approximately 10 million registered landholdings are checked twice during each cropping season. The Land Administration and Management Programme (LAMP)<sup>31</sup> project calculated that this task requires 100 percent of the normal working hours of 12 000 field staff to complete. The resulting statistics do not reflect the reality in the field. DALMS does not use modern technology, such as high resolution satellite imagery or sampling methods

<sup>31</sup> The Land Administration and Management Programme was a LIFT funded and UN-Habitat implemented project (2012-2016) conceived to develop and demonstrate better ways to manage land records and land processes at two Township Offices of DALMS

to compile more reliable statistics. The estimated annual production of rice is an excellent example to illustrate the challenges of data collection and the use of such data for policy formulation. Gross paddy production documented by USDA-generated data (see Global Agriculture Information Network – GAIN – reports) and official government statistics (used by international organisations such as FAO and World Bank) covering the period 2016–2019 respectively indicate figures of approximately 20 million and 30 million tonnes; these differences are consistent over longer time periods.

**An inadequate information system is a significant limitation for programme design, planning, implementation, M&E, and outreach to the community.** There is no policy, and consequently no effective system and tools to improve the effectiveness of service delivery. In addition, too much staff time is spent on unnecessary tasks and not enough on important activities, such as mentoring and motivating staff (likely because there are no incentives to do so due to a lack of career growth schemes). The call center overseen by DOA is not actually functioning. Thus, the information and reporting flow at MoALI needs to be improved at all levels.

**Transparency in information sharing, including on budget and resource allocation, remains weak.** Budget information, financial reporting and external audit reports are not available to the public. Bottom up consultations from village tracks to township/district/state and region planning to implementation committees to the MoPF and Financial Commission, the governance within the sector can rely on formally established channels of information and communication. For the moment, accountability is limited, but signs of greater access to information are already visible. In 2018, 6 sub-national **governments have published their versions of citizen's budgets** (in Ayeyarwady, Bago, Kayin, Mon, Kayah, and Tanintharyi), with support of the Asia Foundation and the Renaissance Institute. As the name suggests, a citizen's budget is meant to provide government budget information to citizens. By doing so in a more accessible format, it fosters a greater understanding of how public money is being used. This initiative is a key step towards more participation and accountability.

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## 4.2.5 INTERSECTOR COORDINATION OF NUTRITION

**As in most countries, the nutrition agenda in Myanmar has historically been driven by the health sector.** The MoHS does not typically take a preventative approach to nutrition, mostly relying on treatment. In 2017, the State Counsellor assigned MOHS to take the lead in coordinating nutrition actions by three other sectors (MoE, MoALI, and MoSWRR). Until recently, nutrition-sensitive approaches (integrating nutrition into ongoing social protection or agriculture interventions) were not systematically applied in sector planning initiatives, mostly limited to projects. It is important to note that there is no budget for inter-ministerial coordination. Furthermore, “it is estimated that there are not many more than 20 qualified nutritionists in the country, most of whom are in the private sector, with only 6 qualified nutritionists – 4 Master degree holders and 2 PhD. holders (Chit and Sundar, 2018).”

**Nutrition is led by the National Nutrition Center (NNC)**, within the Department of Public Health in the Ministry of Health and Sports. It is not situated in a high enough position to convene four or five ministries (with the Ministry of Planning and Finance). According to the MS-NPAN Capacity Assessment, "The NNC itself is short-staffed: NNC has 8 professional staff and 28 support staff (including 6 Public Health Nurses). The full structure is supposed to have more than 70 staff. Basically the structure of NNC has been shrinking over the years [due to more 'visible' and acute health issues receiving priority]. NNC staffing is far from sufficient to be able to undertake multisectoral coordination. [...] An appropriate institutional home needs to be identified, with sufficient capacity, mandate and authority to serve both the Secretariat function and oversight function. Ideas about where to locate the SCG Secretariat range from 'keep it with NNC/MOHS, with increased capacity and authority' to 'the function must be moved to the office of one of the two Vice-Presidents (Chite and Sundar, 2018).'" In the absence of such a body (and the political will to establish it), a team of consultants has been requested to support the NNC in the roll-out of the MS-NPAN.

**Stakeholders have repeatedly iterated that it may be easier to work on nutrition through the MoALI rather than the MoHS.** Due to limited human resources and institutional bottlenecks that prevent nutrition projects and research proposals/reports being cleared by NNC and MOHS, stakeholders (particularly from civil society) indicate that it may be easier to work with MoALI. This is also the case with the development of Balanced Food 'plate' Graphics to illustrate Food Based Dietary Guidelines for Pregnant and Lactating Women (that FAO will support in 2019-20); this was discussed with NNC but did not receive sufficient support in the end. Instead, MoALI will be taking the lead, including NNC as a task force member.

**Many frontline workers could disseminate nutrition-sensitive and nutrition-specific messages, including agriculture extension agents, food inspectors, social workers, teachers, and health staff.** However, while there is a prominent cadre of health staff (including midwives and auxiliary midwives), the "Basic Health Staff (BHS) workload remains too heavy; each worker covers 3,000 to 15,000 population, many in far-flung geographical areas with difficult terrain making outreach coverage impossible. BHS represent only two thirds of the sanctioned number, below globally set standards (Chit and Sundar, 2018)."

**The Nutrition Sector Coordination Group (Nutrition SCG), one of ten priority development interventions under DACU, indicates a high-level government commitment to nutrition in Myanmar.** The group is chaired by the Union Minister of Health and Sports and includes five key ministries (MOHS, MOALI, MOSWRR, MOPF and MOE) as members. In the NSCG structure, the top structure is a steering committee at the minister's level, under which there is a working committee at the director general's level and, below that, technical working groups. The president officially established the Nutrition Promotion Steering Committee (NPSC) on 22 June 2018, which met for the first time on the 26th of November 2018 to endorse the MS-NPAN. There is some discussion about merging the NPSC and Nutrition SCG but this has yet to be resolved. A reason for this may be that guidelines for SCGs are not widely known, not officially communicated to NNC, and many officials in the relevant ministries do not know much about the coordination structure. The Terms of Reference (TOR) for the NSCG, and responsibilities for the committees/technical groups it includes still need to be defined. The DACU guidelines are generic to all SCGs, and there is a need to develop more specific TOR. Lastly, parliamentarians should be included in the SCG.

The **Scaling up Nutrition Network in Myanmar** is composed of government, donors, UN agencies, and civil society, each of which convenes individually at times. During the course of the MS-NPAN formulation period, the SUN network called for regular extended technical network meetings, composed of representatives from all groups. This included the EU, LIFT, UN, Alive and Thrive, Save the Children, World Bank, GIZ and other partners. SUN is functional platform that exchanges and coordinates efforts on nutrition and offers development partners a direct communication channel to the National Nutrition Centre of the Ministry of Health and Sports. With the ending of REACH, which served as the convener for the extended technical network, there is a risk that coordinated support from development partners may falter. REACH has been granted a six-month extension in 2019 and LIFT will support the position of national coordinator for the inception phase (a former REACH facilitator).

**A number of key actors should be engaged in nutrition coordination efforts going forward.** First and foremost, MoALI's partnership with MOHS, MoE, MOSWRR in SUN is being formalized as well as the direct relationship between MoALI's Department of Planning and NNC. Academia is included in the SUN network but has never participated. MSU, IFPRI and University of Sidney have launched recent studies on nutrition, diets, gender and agriculture, which could be better used to inform decision-making in MoALI. The SUN donor network, led by DfID, has also been fragmented and individual members usually join extended technical lead meetings on an *ad hoc* basis. Furthermore, the SUN business network has only recently been initiated. For example, ICRISAT is engaging in some research in the central dry zone on millets and pigeon pea, exploring their nutrient quality and business potential with the private sector.

### 4.2.6 INTRASECTOR COORDINATION FOR NSA AND LAND

**At the union level, coordinating the various MoALI departments remains a challenge.**

Most departments carry out their mandates in isolation, including the M&E and the Policy Units, which are both under the Department of Planning. The Department of Irrigation, DoF and DALMS do not communicate with one another. In fact, their first official meeting was facilitated by FIRST in 2018. One exception is the Department of Rural Development (DRD), which has demonstrated its capacity to pull technical resources from various departments of MoALI in the framework of various poverty reduction initiatives such as the 'green emerald fund' (a village development fund following a community-driven approach).

**Two of the ten sector coordination groups (SCGs) relate to agriculture and nutrition. The Agriculture and Rural Development Sector Coordination Group (ARDSCG) is tasked with overseeing the implementation of the ADS** (including the MoALI-MS-NPAN interface in collaboration with the Nutrition SCG). The Development Assistance Coordination Unit (DACU – MoPF) created the Agriculture and Rural Development Sector Coordination Group (ARDSCG) in August 2017 to facilitate effective and coordinated development assistance in the agricultural sector, with the ADS being the platform for such support. The functioning of the ARDSCG is co-facilitated by FAO and USAID, with the EU-FAO FIRST senior consultant acting as a FAO facilitator. After a slow start, the launching of the ADS and the second



coordination meeting in June 2018 created renewed impetus. Three subgroups were formed and meetings are expected to be organized on at least a quarterly basis. There is now discussion about addressing nutrition in an upcoming ARDSCG.

**The National Land Use Council is tasked with coordinating the implementation of the NLUP.** Since its creation in January 2018, it has overcome some hurdles and put into place an institutional infrastructure to advance the process. It has created four working committees, each hosted by a specific ministry to respectively handle i) land law development; ii) land use planning, iii) information management systems and iv) agricultural land administration. It is in the process of creating state/region land use committees and a technical advisory group, with multistakeholder membership including from the private sector and civil society. The Development Partners leadership SDC-EU-USAID is engaged to support the functioning of the NLUC.<sup>32</sup> It remains to be seen whether the working committees will adopt a culture of inclusivity and participation in their operations.

**Informal donor coordination on land issues is effective.** Three donors – EU, SDC and USAID – and their advisors – FIRST, LCG and a USAID land project legal consultant – meet on a regular basis (at least four times/year) to reflect on land sector developments, and consider possible joint action and support to the sector. A Record of Discussion was signed in 2014 between MONREC and the three donors to commit support to the NLUP process. A new Record of Discussion is currently being discussed with MONREC, in its function as secretariat of the NLUC, to commit support to the process of NLUP implementation. Regular larger informal land meetings are organized by the donor land groups with participation of INGOs/ NNGOs and CSOs.

**The ADS proposes a number of reforms, the most important being the establishment of the ADS Implementation Support Unit (ADSISU) under the minister's office.** The ADSISU is expected to support the following functions: cooperation and collaboration with the Secretariat of the ARDSCG; project screening, assessment, appraisal, evaluation, and resource mobilization; policy formulation and analysis, and legal advisory function; monitoring coordination of policy/programme implementation; coordination and facilitation of decentralized implementation planning (ADS, MS-NPAN, others); communication; linking with the national agricultural research and extension system. In order to effectively carry out these functions, extensive support will be required to understand agriculture-nutrition linkages, support bottom-up planning, and facilitate intrasectoral coordination. The ARDSCG is expected to work closely with the ADSISU.

**At present, there is no formal internal structure for coordinating nutrition in MoALI.** A group composed of focal points from key departments met regularly in 2018 to formulate MoALI's contribution to the MS-NPAN. However, to ensure effective coordination for the implementation of MoALI's responsibilities as reflected in the MS-NPAN, MoALI will need to officially recognize nutrition focal points from relevant departments, establish an official working group, which would ideally be represented by ADS Implementation Support Unit (ADSISU) to ensure that the interface of the MS-NPAN and ADS are strengthened.

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<sup>32</sup> The Development partnership SDC-EU-USAID supports the land sector, and more particular the NLUP process and its implementation since 2013. The partnership was formalized as a Record of Discussion (RoD) with MONREC; currently a new RoD is being prepared with the NLUC

**While FIRST has successfully identified and supported a number of so-called 'change agents,' there is currently no single nutrition champion in MoALI.** Speaking up against authority is not well-regarded in Myanmar and therefore change agents need to be well placed in the political hierarchy. Professors are often more respected than are parents and age takes precedence over academic degree and sometimes even position.

## 4.2.7 PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKING

**Formal partnerships between MoALI and different actors should be established through the National ADS Coordination Committee (NADSSC).** The NADSSC is a subcommittee of the National Planning Commission, chaired by the union's president. All of the MoALI's formal partnerships are established and managed through subcommittees. This includes partnerships with i) the private sector, represented by the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industries (UMFCCI), the cooperative sector; ii) NNGOs/INGOs but with no clear convening platform yet, iii) development partners through the ARDSCG.

**MoALI is a member of the LIFT Fund Board, represented by the DG DoP.** Hence it can influence, at least in theory, decision-making on the allocation of LIFT funds to MoALI and its partners. So far, LIFT has mainly worked with non-government partners, with an overall budget spending of only two percent being channeled to public institutions (see Section 5). LIFT's primary government partners have been the Department of Public Health, the National Nutrition Centre, the Health Literacy Promotion Unit of MoHS and the Department of Social Welfare of MoSWRR. Recently, a MoALI proposal for a land re-allocation project was approved by the Fund Board. In addition to private sector firms, civil society organizations, and national and international NGOs, LIFT actively engages with a range of development partners, including United Nations organizations, the SUN-CSA and the Three Millennium Development Goal Fund (3MDG)<sup>33</sup>. Efforts are underway to maximize nutrition impact through collaboration in planning, assessment, programming, learning and policy across LIFT, Access to Health and HARP. LIFT and its partners also actively engage with union, state, regional, and township authorities to promote better nutrition outcomes through cross-sector programming and policy advocacy. LIFT aims to be a key partner in the MS-NPAN subnational Inception Phase.

**Concrete operational public private partnerships exist for nutrition, but these are few for the time being.** A PATH project established partnerships with 15 private sector actors to produce, package and distribute fortified rice. Clients of this product include i) the World Food Programme for distribution in IDP camps; ii) the Department of Social Welfare for its school feeding programme for about 12 500 beneficiaries in select states/regions; iii) The Ministry of Health and Sports (MoHS) for hospital canteens; and iv) the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce (UMFCCI). Another partnership exists between PATH, Population Services International and Business Kind Myanmar to introduce fortified rice to garment factory canteens, where most workers are young women at high risk of malnutrition in peri-urban Yangon, according to a forthcoming study (Goudet, 2019).

<sup>33</sup> The Three Millennium Development Goal Fund (3MDG) is a multidonor trustfund to strengthen the national health system at all levels, extending access for poor and vulnerable populations to quality health services. 3MDG work is divided into three areas of focus: Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (MNCH), HIV/AIDS, TB and Malaria, and Health System Strengthening (HSS). It ended by end 2018 and was replaced by the Access to Health Fund, equally managed by UNOPS

**Civil society organizations, supported by international NGOs, remain divided on how to proceed with engaging and possibly supporting transformation in the land sector.** A network around the Land Core Group (LCG) works closely with the secretariat of the NLUC to support the implementation of the NLUP. Another network built around Land in Our Hand (LIOH) is mainly active in ethnic states and opts to support work independently from the union government, providing support to EAOs such as KNU.

It rejects union-driven land reform as per NLUP/NLUC. This network supports the development of ethnic peoples' land policy and law development, with a view to address land governance in a process of future federalization of the Union State. Such efforts are rejected by the current government as federalization does not resort under the current constitution. Yet another network led by the national NGO, Advancing Life and Regenerating Motherland (ALARM), explores the ethnic dimension of land governance and aims to provide support to its constituency to deal with land reform as part of the Panglong 2 peace talks.

## 4.2.8 SUBNATIONAL PLANNING

**MOALI has staff in every township of the country (see Human Resources section for more information).** The MoALI field staff is a vehicle for participatory bottom-up planning. This capacity however still needs to be leveraged. At this time, township and state/region planning committees are chaired by directors general who are over-stretched and tend not to delegate work to lower-level staff. As a result, the MoPF sometimes does not even receive any proposals from MoALI township and state and region-level departments, falling back on top-down budget planning and priority setting models. This means that, despite the transition towards a bottom-up planning model, this remains theory until institutions can effectively adapt.

**There is significant scope for improved intrasectoral coordination at the subnational level but this will need to be mandated from the union level in the current system.** For example, there is significant scope for collaboration between DoF, DoA and LBVD (on rice-fish-poultry); LBVD and DoA (on fodder production) and with DALMS and GAD (for non-rice system based farming). This could even extend beyond sectors, e.g. to promote collaboration between DRD and Health for hygiene and sanitation. However, at this moment, such functional and institutionalized coordination needs to be determined at the union level.

FIGURE 53

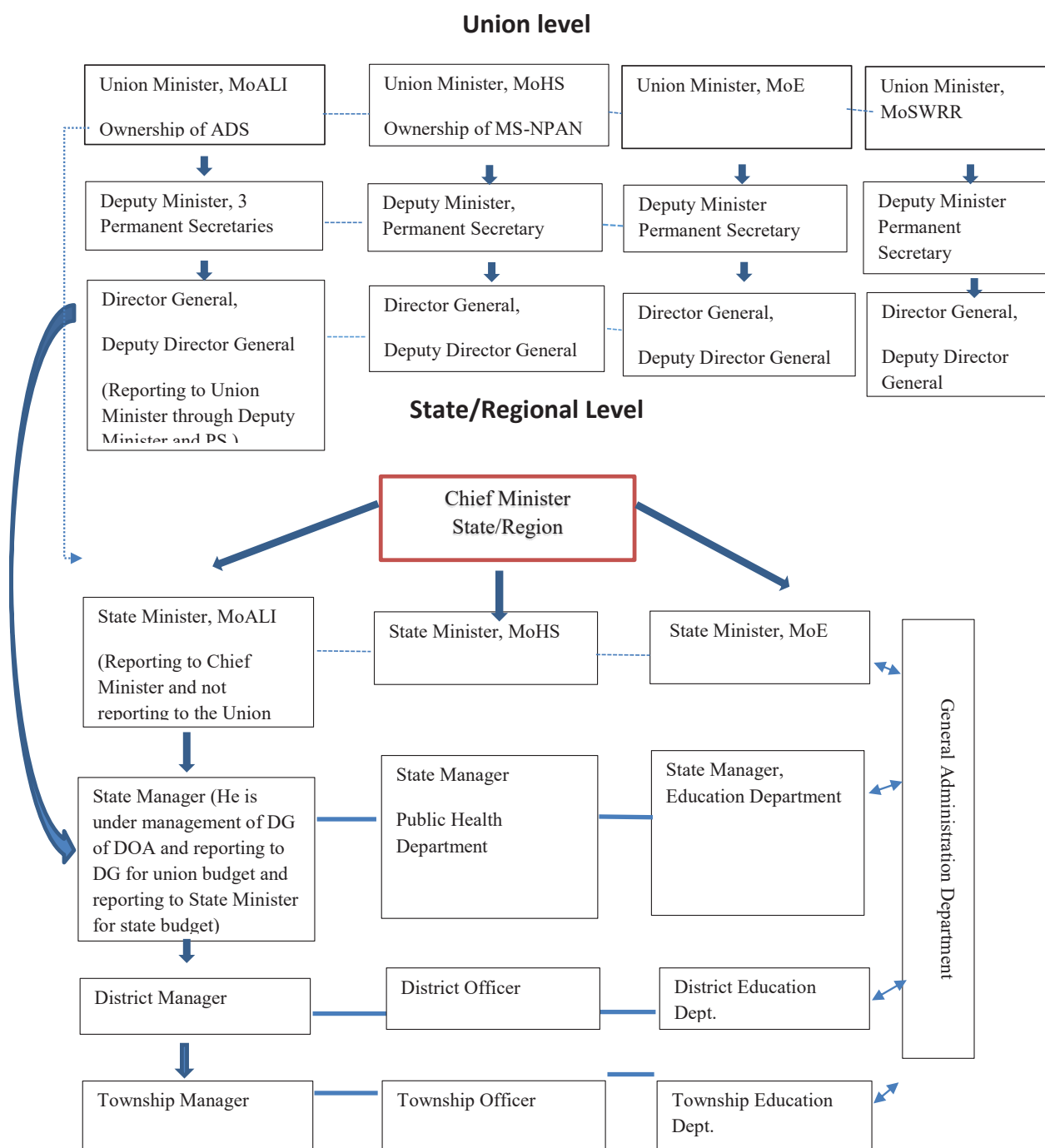


FIGURE 53: Coordination mechanism at union and state/regional levels

Source: EU FAO FIRST, based on field work in Ayeyarwaddy and Shan

**It may be easier to coordinate departments around technical work/implementation at the decentralized level.** Based on a series of field visits in Shan State and Ayeyarwaddy Region, there are clear opportunities for departments to collaborate bilaterally at the state, region and township levels. However, these arrangements are rarely institutionalized or alternatively they are facilitated by the General Administration Department (GAD), which is under the Ministry of Homeland Affairs (one of the three ministries under military control). Furthermore, it has been reported that, in conflict areas, MOALI's staff has had difficulties in accessing certain localities and rolling out field-based activities such as extension. In self-administrative zones, the Ministry of Homeland Affairs is responsible for agriculture outreach.

**GAD is the convener for intra and intersectoral coordination at state, region and township levels, which means it is the vehicle for integrating nutrition into planning processes.** This highlights the need to ensure that nutrition awareness is not just focused on technical line ministries but also on those bodies with convening power.

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## 4.2.9 OUTREACH AND COMMUNICATION

**MoALI does not have a formal communication plan or strategy.** Recent amendments of the VFV land law have made it clear that such a strategy would be helpful, especially for communication with CSOs and the different committees of parliament.

**MoALI lacks the capacity to reach out to poor and vulnerable households.** The Village Management Committee has developed criteria, with support from DRD, for selecting beneficiaries of microcredit loans. The planning period is a bit fast; thus, it can be a constraint if the beneficiaries live far from town. Otherwise, there is no common database of beneficiaries to target and track progress.

**Dissemination of the ADS, MS-NPAN and NLUP remains weak.** The ADS and accompanying Investment Plan are not readily available for the public or for MoALI staff at different levels, including at the union level (in fact, it is for *sale*). Only a limited number of ADS copies were printed in the Myanmar language, and these haven't reached subnational administrations, as was validated through FIRST field visits. The ADSISU will theoretically help bring the ADS to the state and region levels and develop an accompanying communication strategy. Currently, only the MS-NPAN has a clear roll-out strategy for communicating with administrations at the various levels about the plan, to adapt it to the needs of the specific states and regions, and to develop respective implementation plans. As Myanmar undergoes public administrative reform, especially the devolution of planning processes, raising awareness and capacities of the strategy at subnational levels are crucial.

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## 4.2.10 TARGETING

**Targeting nutrition interventions in Myanmar is a multitiered process,** which is still being conceived under the Inception phase of the MS-NPAN. First, there is a need for programmes to target specific geographic areas to meet the SDG targets in a timely fashion by 2030. The



MS-NPAN has initiated this exercise using different criteria to select administrative states and regions. These criteria include: i) stunting prevalence; ii) number of under-five children stunted; iii) burden of stunting and wasting; and iv) composite score of all nutrition outcomes (stunting, wasting, low birth weight, anemia). This approach led to targeting in Ayeyarwaddy, Rakhine, Chin, Kachin, Shan, Kayin and Kayah.

TABLE 17

| PRIORITY RANKING OF STATES/REGIONS<br>TOP SIX HIGHER RISK STATES/REGIONS |                        |              |                                   |                                    |
|--|------------------------|--------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| S/R  | by Stunting Prevalence | by # stunted | by burden of stunting and wasting | by composite score of malnutrition |
| CHIN   | 1                      |              | 2                                 | 6                                  |
| KAYAH  | 2                      |              | 3                                 |                                    |
| RAKHINE  | 3                      |              | 1                                 |                                    |
| AYEYAWADY  | 4                      | 2            | 5                                 |                                    |
| SHAN   | 5                      | 1            | 4                                 | 3                                  |
| KACHIN   | 6                      |              | 6                                 |                                    |
| MON  |                        |              |                                   | 1                                  |
| SAGAING  |                        | 4            |                                   |                                    |
| MANDALAY   |                        | 3            |                                   | 4                                  |
| MAGWE  |                        |              |                                   |                                    |
| TANINTHARI   |                        |              |                                   |                                    |
| KAYIN  |                        |              |                                   | 5                                  |
| BAGO   |                        | 6            |                                   |                                    |
| NAY PYI TAW  |                        |              |                                   |                                    |
| YANGON   |                        | 5            |                                   | 2                                  |

TABLE 17: Priority ranking for MS-NPAN interventions  
Source: MS-NPAN, 2018

**The first round of targeting was focused on state and region prioritization;** a simple analysis was undertaken to identify the prevalence and burden of stunting and wasting as per the above table. The aim will be for projects in the target states and regions to jointly contribute to high level MS-NPAN indicators.

**A second layer of targeting for the MS-NPAN takes place in the selected regions and states to prioritize townships.** It involves a risk-level assessment associated with the underlying causes of malnutrition at the township level using 26 indicators. This includes composite vulnerability indices, food consumption scores, indebtedness ratio, vitamin supplementation, etc. Unfortunately, some livelihoods information is missing and data is outdated; nevertheless, the process has helped to inform the problem tree analysis.

**Further targeting largely depends on linking risk profiles with MS-NPAN interventions through a participatory consultative process and connecting this with subnational priorities, budgets, and capacities.** Methodology development is in process and is more

straightforward for some ministries than for others. For example, contributions of the MoSWRR mainly concern the Maternal Child Cash Transfer Programme, which delivers 15 000 Kyat per month, following a blanket approach, to all mothers that fall within the 1 000-day so-called 'window of opportunity,' sometimes combining this with social and behaviour change communication interventions. Programmes such as IYCF and school feeding target specific age groups of children in areas identified as geographic priorities.

**However, the contributions of the agricultural sector to nutrition through diversified production to improve availability and access, require a fundamentally different approach.** Targeting needs to be based on the household as the major unit of agricultural production, responsible for managing production assets such as land, labour, capital, and remittances. Second, interventions must be targeted to particular members of the household, based on the specific tasks they undertake in the different production systems. Pig-raising, for example, is often carried out by women, thus extension services to support this intervention should target women's groups. Third, interventions need to be tailored to the specific agroecological conditions of the target areas, which to a large extent determine opportunities and challenges for agricultural production. In the delta area, for example, interventions focusing on small-scale aquaculture require major attention, while the potential for aquaculture in Shan State under a karst landscape are more limited.

**Subnational planning and targeting of agricultural interventions require a good typology of farming households to ensure that households with different asset bases receive the correct services.** LIFT has adopted a general typology of livelihood strategies of rural households to help design its interventions (LIFT, 2014 and 2018), as follows:

- » Households without commercial potential to 'hang in' using agricultural and social protection as a safety net;
- » Households with land, labour and commercial potential to step up;
- » Households with commercial experience to become more productive;
- » Commercially successful households able to become more productive.

Land ownership (secure and continuous land use rights) of at least ten acres is a proxy to identify the threshold of commercial viability.

GRET research yields a much more detailed, region-specific typology of farming systems, which can be used as a basis for agricultural intervention and fine-tuning (Diepart J.C. and Allaverdian C., 2018). Typology criteria include:

- » access to livestock, small stock, degree of engagement in shifting cultivation and its transformation into cash cropping – Chin State;
- » land access, size of landholding, potential for monsoon rice production, livestock and small stock ownership – Kachin State;
- » access to irrigation, upland cash cropping and perennial cropping, livestock ownership – Sagaing.

### 4.3 HUMAN RESOURCES

**MoALI has a strong field presence down to the township and village tract levels, with a total of some 70 000 staff**, including 8 000 extension workers (DoA) and 12 000 land administrators, mainly land surveyors (DALMS). Policy implementation at the local level can still be strongly influenced by the military, which constitutionally retains control of three ministries. This includes Home Affairs, host to the General Administration Department (GAD), which manages subnational administrative structures all the way down to the country's approximately 16 700 wards and village tracts. GAD is also prominent in several subnational committees that deal with agricultural affairs, including the farmland management bodies (under the Farmland Law, 2012) and the state and region VFV land committees.

**Currently, education and training for agricultural public officers do not meet the requirements for delivering a nutrition-sensitive agricultural programme.** Agricultural education is delivered through i) Yezin Agricultural University (YAU) and ii) state agricultural institutes. Seven out of ten undergraduate programmes deal with commodity-specific crop production; none provide insight into agricultural systems analysis. Starting from 2009 onwards, third and fourth year undergraduate students select one crop as a specialized subject and study it at one of the designated farms run by the Myanmar Agricultural Service (300 graduates/year). The aim is to expose students to agricultural commodities and train them as crop specialists. Research at the post graduate level continues to be crop-driven, with a major focus on rice. Some 34 percent of academic research papers produced at YAU and 38 percent at Department of Agricultural Research (DAR) deal with rice production. The state agricultural institutes prepare agricultural sector workers (1 500 diplomas /year) for more practical pursuits, including farm management, crop and livestock production. This is the main pool for extension workers, about 50 percent of the agricultural total workforce. Fisheries and aquaculture is generally not taught at these levels. YAU opened a department on food science and technology, focusing on food engineering, as recently as 2017. Since all MoALI national and subnational staff are recruited from these two institutions, there is very little academic and practical knowledge around nutrition-sensitive agriculture, let alone nutrition. All available expertise is received on the job and through exposure in workshops, seminars and participation in conferences.

**Extension services are not well prepared to support local communities practicing nutrition-sensitive agriculture.**

Since their inception in 1972, agricultural extension services, with a workforce of 8 100 people, focuses on increasing the yields of agricultural commodities, mainly rice but also industrial crops such as cotton and sugarcane. Farmer coverage is low, with each extension officer dealing with up to 2 600 farmer households, on average covering between 1 500-6 500 acres of land. Extension approaches are mainly supply-driven and are rarely oriented towards solving problems perceived by farmers (PER, 2017). Extension workers tend increasingly to focus on better-off farmers, offering services to have these licensed for Good Agricultural Practices (GAP). They also have other duties such as distributing subsidies, participating in meetings with local administrations and dealing with government structures. Relationships between extension workers and their clients are often poor and not built on mutual interests. The resources available to extension workers are limited, including salaries, so that opportunity costs for service delivery take on different formats. The model of Community Animal Health Workers (CAHW) used in the livestock sector seems to work better. These workers are not salaried, are based in the villages and are remunerated through service delivery fees.

**Incentives for good performance by agricultural staff are low, especially for mid-level positions.**

Current remuneration schemes of public servants are not sufficiently interesting to keep mid-level staff motivated. Salaries of all public servants are low in Myanmar, an equivalent of some USD 200-400/month. This is, to some extent, compensated the extra benefits provided to senior staff (director, DDG and DG) such as transport, housing, access to land, international travel, etc. It is more difficult for medium-level staff to benefit from these extras, resulting in frustration for these with a high educational degree (PhD). For the lower echelon of staff, employment is rather a social protection scheme, resulting in little value added for the public service itself.

Poor remunerations and low salaries can also be an incentive for certain service delivery becoming conditional on extra opportunity costs for clients. There is anecdotal evidence of an uncomfortable relationship between smallholders and extension staff. Certain forms of corruption have been documented in the land sector, especially by local level administrators (Boutry et al, 2017).

**Performance assessment/management is none-existent.** The Public Service Commission reportedly conducted a quick survey on public sector capacity assessment. It is acknowledged by MOALI that a data-based system on employee information is needed to assess capacity. At the subsector level, a few assessments have been conducted in the framework of donor-funded projects. These concern mostly research, extension, and livestock. An assessment of LBVD's capacity – called the PVS Gap Analysis – was conducted by the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) in 2010 and highlighted several areas of strength as well as gaps.

## 4.4 SERVICE DELIVERY: ADS-MSN PAN INTERFACE

**There is significant scope for subnational service delivery, if there is political will and clear instruction from above.** Previous nation-wide campaigns, such as the massive land titling effort in 2013-2015, proved that the potential for service delivery is immense, especially given the extensive cadre of field staff of MoALI across the nation. Over a period of some two years, DALMS services issued some nine million land use certificates to an excess of five million households. Although the land titling campaign was not without challenges, it is an achievement that few countries have realized.

**Public service delivery in contested regions remains poor, with EAOs operating independently from state services.** For example, there are many ethnic and community-based health organizations that are providing services to remote and border areas. Some of these have requested official recognition by the government; this could help secure access to standardized health training and facilities to ensure quality service delivery. This dual health care system puts a major shadow over the implementation of centrally-devised policies and strategies in those areas. While Myanmar's ministries remain centralized, engagement between EAO-linked service providers and union-level officials is critical for opening up space for meaningful local-level coordination and cooperation. Where union-level staff have given their blessings, state and region authorities have gained significantly greater confidence in working with EAO-linked providers (Kim Jolliffe, Asia Foundation, 2014).

**While political disputes between the government and the EAOs continue, NGOs are delivering certain services in contested areas.** LIFT, for example, intends to increasingly fund service delivery in conflict-affected areas, including targeting IDPs, especially in the uplands. The government is however reluctant for certain services to be out-sourced to non-public actors, including support for land titling.

**Cost-effective methodologies for nutrition sensitive interventions still need to be developed and staff will need to be trained in applying these in the field.** LIFT is an excellent fund to support pilot experiences and field operations where such methodologies can be developed. A lot will depend on whether effective operational partnerships can be established between the public sector and the NGOs to provide such services. As an example, the documentation and formalization of customary land rights requires a joint venture partnership between these two sectors. The NGO provides the social skills and expertise for public services using modern technology to establish cadastral maps.

**The following provides an impression of the MoALI departments that will play a role in MS-NPAN implementation.**

With around 16 500 staff, the **Department of Agriculture (DOA)** is MOALI's largest department in terms of manpower and has the capacity to deliver extension activities across the country (extension staff are positioned in every township) on a relatively large scale.



The Agriculture Extension Division under DoA is the largest branch of the department, composed of 8 161 extension workers, who are agricultural technicians. There are about 4.4 million farm families in Myanmar, and the ratio of extension staff to farm family is 1:534. As such, the public extension system is relatively well staffed but lacks operational funds and remains focused on maximizing yields, to the neglect of other issues of critical importance to farmers such as diversification and resilience. The large majority (80 percent) of MOALI/DoA's extension staff are female.

TABLE 18

TABLE 18 SHOWS THE NUMBER OF DOA STAFF WITH DIFFERENT QUALIFICATIONS

| ORGANIZATION    | Ph.D | M.Sc | B.Ag | DIP AGRI | OTHER | TOTAL  |
|-----------------|------|------|------|----------|-------|--------|
| DOA total staff | 67   | 205  | 2761 | 5 652    | 2 360 | 11 045 |
| Extension staff | 7    | 60   | 1641 | 4 780    | 1 673 | 8 161  |

TABLE 18: Academic qualifications of DoA staff

Source: DOA, 2018

Public extension services have been delivered under a variety of institutional structures in Myanmar over the past 50 years. The modern extension system was first established in 1972 under the Agriculture and Rural Development Cooperation of the time. Extension services were compartmentalized by department (mostly for economically prioritized crops). For example, extension service for sugarcane production came under Myanmar Sugarcane Enterprise; for coffee and seasonal crop production, extension came under Myanmar Farm Enterprise. In 1994, extension services were brought under a common arm: the Myanmar Agriculture Service (MAS). In 2012, MAS was reorganized as the Department of Agriculture (DOA). Although the recently-adopted ADS promotes diversification, the on-going extension and research system still remains heavily focused on rice and is mostly productivity oriented.

**The Department of Planning (DoP)** is responsible for coordinating all planning activities in MoALI at the union level, with subnational representation. The DoP has a monitoring and evaluation division, currently being strengthened with EU assistance, which is responsible for tracking progress on the delivery of the ADS and its impact on food and nutrition security, rural poverty and smallholder farmer's income. DoP also hosts the Agricultural Policy Unit (APU) which supports the department in analytical policy work and recommendations. However, links between planning and M&E are very weak. There is also weak capacity of DoP at the subnational level to facilitate a more inclusive bottom-up development process. The EU-FAO FIRST programme provides technical assistance to the DoP and APU.

The Department of Agriculture Land Management and Statistics (DALMS) is responsible for the management of farmland (under the Farmland Law) and vacant fallow and virgin (VfV) land (under the VfV Land Law). Under the chairmanship of the MoALI Union Minister, DALMS' Director General is the secretary of the Central Body for the Management of Farmland. At the subnational level, DALMS exercises the same function under the chairmanship of

GAD. The MoALI township offices have a pivotal role in land administration, with DALMS offices generally well-staffed with land surveyors. The latter have studied at the DALMS training centre (CLRDTC located in Taykkyi, north of Yangon) and are well versed in technical surveying matters, but often demonstrate poor soft skills, including communication with clients. The township services are often distant from remotely-located agricultural land; there is no public service counter; service costs are not publicly displayed; land administrators often deliver conditional services, with asset-poor households remaining at the end of the queue. The ADS aims to make township land administration more client-friendly. A recent World Bank proposal to develop a model township land administration service, including training of staff, was rejected by DACU.

Village Tract Farmland Management Boards play an essential field role in land administration, currently exercising a number of service delivery functions. Although they have little direct decision-making power, they provide information, guidance and advice to township administrators, which is often followed. Village tract administrators and clerks play a pivotal role in moulding this information; thus targeting the approximately 13 000 administrations with good land governance practices and improving their capacity to deliver better, more cost effective and transparent service delivery would be a major step towards improving overall service delivery. As with all public services in Myanmar, local land administrators strictly follow rules and orders from the hierarchy. Hence there is a need for clear and unequivocal instructions from above.

In contrast to many other countries, the land administration services are well staffed, but may require broader training to better carry out their current and possibly new functions. A lot will depend on decisions taken to enable services to better respond to the real needs of rural people and effectively delivered.

**The Department of Rural Development (DRD)** of MOALI has a presence in each of Myanmar's 14 states and regions and 330 townships. As part of the government's reform programme, the Department of Development Affairs was reorganized as the DRD in June 2012 to support a bottom-up approach to improving the socioeconomic conditions of the rural population. The DRD has long-standing expertise in the construction of small local infrastructure, including the provisioning of water supply. Since 2012, it has been tasked with supporting livelihoods and microfinance activities as part of the government's national rural development and poverty alleviation programme. Microfinance functions have been transferred to the MoPF. The DRD has experience working with development partners, such as the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (HABITAT) and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). DRD is recognized by most donors as having a track record in local infrastructure development and for its strong operational focus and technical knowledge.

**The Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department (LBVD)** of MOALI is in charge of all activities related to livestock development (not including aquaculture). Recent and past policies have largely focused on animal health. Despite deficiencies, LBVD's institutional capacities have been assessed as being structurally solid by the OIE, with clarity in its mandate and the technical capacity (staff, competencies) to deliver critically needed livestock services. The LBVD has units in every township. A new organizational structure was adopted less than two years ago and mandates developed for new divisions and units.

Over the past few years, budget allocations have remained inadequate as the livestock sector received only two percent of the total budget of MOALI. This is a very small allocation considering that the livestock sector likely contributes over 15 percent of the total agricultural GDP. Community animal health volunteers serve as paravets and have been supported by the LIFT-funded and FAO-implemented project "Improving Farmer Livelihoods in the Dry Zone through Improved Livestock Health, Productivity and Marketing."

The Department of Fisheries (DoF). According to the official website of the Department of Fisheries, the Department has 19 Directors and 2469 total employees. The objective of the Department is: (i) sustainable development of fisheries sector, (ii) development of small scale aquaculture for socio-economic development of rural people and extending of commercial fish farming; and (iii) food security, Production of safety fishery products and improvement of the production of value added fisheries products. The National Aquaculture Development Plan has recently been finalized but the links with the MS-NPAN and ADS remain to be assessed. DoF is most active in collecting leases rather than quality control and doesn't have any biosecurity protocol or capacity for lab assessment.

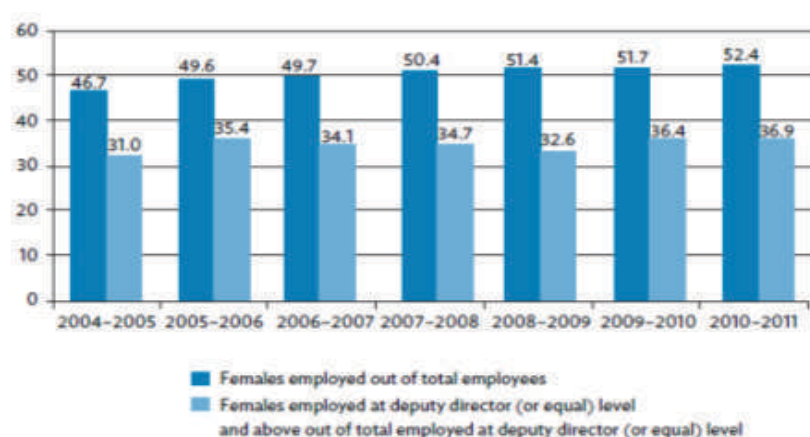
**The Small Scale Industries Department (SSID)** is a newcomer to the nutrition discussion. Originally part of the Ministry of Cooperatives, SSID's three key areas of responsibility are: (i) vocational training; (ii) food safety standards (laboratory tests for chemical residues); and (iii) registration of small food businesses. SSID runs a laboratory in each state/region. There is scope to improve the existing training on food processing to make better use of available nutrient-dense foods, retain nutrient value, and ensure that products have a market value.

**Links between research and extension service are limited.** Normally DOA and DAR do not have many collaborative activities. Links between research and extension are organized through annual review meetings of DAR for the purpose of setting up the research programme in accordance with the feedback of the farmers. Sometimes DOA and DAR conduct joint meetings and field trips on seed production and distribution and to identify and/or to solve the problems faced during the various crop production programmes.

## 4.5 GENDER ISSUES IN PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY

**"Female representation in government departments and public administration has been slowly but steadily growing since 2004-2005, both as a proportion of all staff as in senior positions,"** as illustrated in Figure 54. (ADB et al., 2016).

FIGURE 54



Source: Central Statistical Organization, Government of Myanmar, 2012.

**FIGURE 54: Representation trends of women in government departments and public administration**

Source: ADB *et al.*, 2016 and Central Statistical Organisation of Myanmar, 2012.

"Of the total staff of 31 government ministries, on average 52.4 percent were women during 2010-2011. This reflects an increase from 51.6 percent in 2009-2010 and 51.4 percent in 2008-2009. At the management level (deputy director or equal and above) in 31 ministries, 37 percent were women in 2010-2011, up from 36 percent in 2009-2010 and 32.6 percent in 2008-2009 (ADB *et al.* 2016)." In MoALI however, only two women serve at the deputy director general level and none above.

Despite the overall increase in the proportion of women employed in the public sector, the ADB *et al.* assessment raises several concerns including the following:

- » Women hold only 1.5 percent of the most senior civil servant positions, such as director general or managing director, indicating a glass ceiling and other barriers to women reaching senior positions
- » Despite better representation, wage gaps weighted against women persist in government administration
- » The civil service continues to designate certain positions as suitable only for men and can block applications from women. The Union Civil Service Board is responsible for the recruitment of the lowest level of gazetted civil service officers and their training. Despite constitutional guarantees of no discrimination in government employment, vacancies are still listed as male-only positions

## 4.6 SUMMARY AND KNOWLEDGE GAPS

**MoALI is still undergoing a process of structural reform.** Initiated by the merger of three ministries, most departments carry out their mandates in isolation, with minimal intrasector coordination. Many departments maintain their own planning divisions, monitoring and evaluation units, administrative divisions, etc. As DoP is at the same administrative level as all other departments, there is now renewed hope that ADSISU can assume a convening, planning function to facilitate a common vision for the implementation of the ADS.

**As Myanmar engages in the devolution of planning processes, engagement with stakeholders at subnational level will become ever more crucial.** However, clear instructions from above are still required for changes in service delivery and improved intrasectoral coordination at the subnational level to occur.

**Senior MoALI management has expressed its full support for the ADS, but still has to generate more ownership of its interface with the MS-NPAN and NLUP.** Agents to champion the land-ADS or ADS-MS-NPAN interface still need to be nurtured. Speaking up against authority is not well-regarded in Myanmar and therefore change agents need to be well placed in the political hierarchy.

**Current education and training for agricultural public officers are not in line with the requirements for delivering a nutrition sensitive agricultural programme.** Most education remains siloed and is not conducive to system thinking or responding to the emerging needs of farmers. It is estimated that there are not many more than 20 qualified nutritionists in the country, most of whom are in the private sector.

**Coordination mechanisms are still taking shape and being strengthened.** These will continue to require the support of development partners including the sector coordination groups. Agriculture and nutrition are two out of ten SCGs, demonstrating strong high-level commitment to these sectors/issues but these groups need to strengthen their functional relationship with parliament, CSOs and subnational bodies. Intrasectoral and intersectoral coordination are not currently in the terms of reference of any government body (nor is there any budget allocated to this function).

**A number of the aforementioned bottlenecks can possibly be addressed.** Developing terms of reference for each department and civil servant could be a first step to improving MoALI's performance and identifying areas of convergence as well as opportunities for collaboration between subsectors and sectors. Shifting the focus from union-level decision-making to subnational ADS implementation represents the next great challenge. Given the rigid hierarchies that permeate most institutions and relations in Myanmar, this will take time. The MS-NPAN inception phase methodology development is an opportunity to explore means for nurturing this shift. Lastly, the most important bottleneck to reaching out and improving coverage of service delivery is the lack of any M&E system that could help target services.



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# 5 | RESOURCING ADS AND MS-NPAN



## 5.1 INTRODUCTION

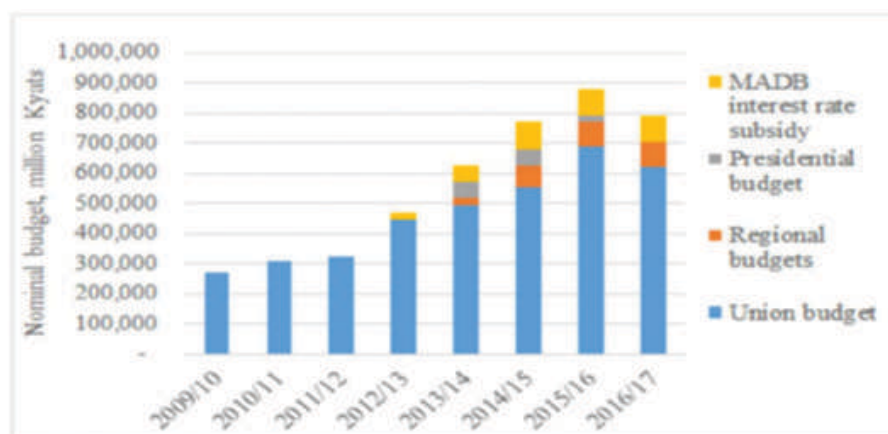
**Agriculture significantly contributes to Myanmar's GDP.** Unlike most developing economies in the region, the share of Myanmar's GDP from agriculture has increased significantly over the past several decades, from 35 percent in 1965 to 47 percent in 2005. This figure decreased to 37 percent in 2010/11, however still accounting for 29 percent of GDP in 2015/16, and it is estimated to remain around 24 percent in 2020/21. The agriculture sector absorbs some 49.93 % (2017) of the force and accounted for 30 percent of total exports in 2017/18 (World Bank, 2017). Beans and pulses were the largest export item, bringing in USD 1 152 million, with rice, livestock, and fisheries each generating USD 400–500 million. Rice exports have surged in past years, from approximately 1.3 million tonnes in 2013 to some 3 million tonnes in 2018. Informal rice border trade with China has significantly increased too, from nominal reported values of 68 thousand tonnes in 2011 to 747 thousand tonnes in 2013 (World Bank Rice Export Report, 2014).

**Agriculture has been among the key priority sectors: its budget is increasing in absolute value but declining as a percentage of the total budget.** Together with the two other key ministries supporting the MS-NPAN, the Ministry of Education (MoE) and the Ministry of Health and Sports (MoHS), MoALI has benefited from an important budget increase since 2009/10. MoALI's share in the overall GoM however declined from 7.3 percent in 2012/13 to 5.3 percent in 2016 and 4 percent in 2018/19 (EU Programme Support Action Document, 2019). Priorities seem to be shifting towards other sectors and areas (education, health, energy, states and regions, etc.).

## 5.2 PUBLIC FUNDING FOR AGRICULTURE

**The overall fiscal space for public financing of the agricultural sector is potentially growing and the debt ratio allows for further borrowing, particularly for infrastructure development.** Total union revenue in Myanmar however, is still small compared to other countries (around 7 percent of GDP) and it is projected to stay relatively small in the near future even if GDP per capita continues to grow and population does not increase by much.

**The agriculture sector (MoALI budget) receives funds from four public sources:** i) the union budget allocated to the MOALI; ii) the presidential budget; iii) the regional and state budgets; iv) MADB-subsidized loans. Figure 55 gives an overview of the relative contribution of each of these categories to the overall budget.

**FIGURE 55**


Source: MOPF, MOALI, WB staff estimates.

**FIGURE 55: Relative contribution of funds to overall budget**

Source: ADS, 2018

- » **Union budget.** The total union budget has increased by 222 percent since 2012/2013. In USD terms, the total union budget for agriculture almost tripled, from USD 267 million to USD 670 million between 2012 and 2018/19.
- » **Presidential budget.** Funds from this budget were used to respond to natural emergencies such as floods and were allocated entirely to the Irrigation Department (ID). These funds amounted to 23 billion Kyats in 2015/16, and were nominal in 2016/17
- » **Regional and state governments.** The devolution of some functions from the central to local governments started in 2013, along with rising budget transfers from the union government. In 2016/17, these transfers represented some 12 percent of total union expenditures (see Fig 56). The World Bank (PER, 2017) expects a 5 percent average allocation from all state and region budgets to agriculture, which in 2016/17 translated to 86 billion Kyats.
- » **The last public funding for agriculture in Myanmar was the interest rate subsidy for loans provided by the Myanmar Agricultural Development Bank (MADB).**
- » **Between 2014-2017, the MADB portion amounted to some 12 percent of the total MoALI budget.** This increased from just 1.5 percent in 2009-2012, mainly driven by the use of Land Use Certificates issued under the Farmland Law with one of the major objectives to create a land collateral seasonal credit market.

**Capital expenditures dominate the MoALI budget.** These accounted for 55 percent of the total budget, compared with 13 percent of wages and 32 percent of nonwage recurrent expenditures.



## 5.3 BUDGETING PROCESSES

### 5.3.1 UNION BUDGETING

**For many years, Myanmar embraced an annual, department-specific, activity-based budget driven planning process rather than practicing multiannual ministerial programme-based budgeting.** The ADS and its investment plan are a first effort to drastically change this approach.

**The Medium Term Fiscal Framework (MTFF) is a new tool to guide the future allocation of resources,** mainly through adjustments across sectors and especially line ministries. The MTFF indicates the maximum resources that a ministry can include in its overall budget within a period of three years (the fiscal year changed from April-March to October-September in 2018). This is the financial space within which MoALI needs to work toward a three-year vision.

**In principle, and in line with other countries in the region, the DoP should be responsible for budget planning,** but in Myanmar this department lacks such authority, capacity and budget. Instead, proposals from the 15 individual MoALI departments are consolidated internally by the Finance Division at the level of the minister's office. In many instances, allocation decisions are made by directors general without consulting with lower implementing units.

**The Budget Department of the Ministry of Planning and Finance (MoPF) is responsible for collecting and consolidating the recurrent budget.** This includes proposals made by the union ministries, the union government, state economic enterprises, and Naypyitaw council as well as state/region budgets. Budget requests for wages and routine operational activities are covered automatically.

**The MoPF Planning Department is responsible for collecting and consolidating the capital budget.** This includes proposals for investment and infrastructure development. The Economic Commission then finalizes union budget proposals at the national level including for the state/region levels and submit them to the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (Union Parliament). The Union Parliament will pass the union budget and state/region budgets and the regional parliament will draft and approve state/region budgets.

**MOALI departments are not required to provide evidence of the impact of their past programmes to justify their budget proposals.** Budget allocations are based on political priorities rather than on programme outcomes. A lack of monitoring and evaluation of programmes, largely because of limited pressure from senior management to link budget proposals with programme outcomes, further reduces the quality of the budgeting process.

**Poor transparency in budget planning and a lack of a monitoring and evaluation system contribute to misalignment between the budget and strategies at MoALI.** There is no empirical basis for rewarding high achievers and penalizing poor performers so

there is little incentive to reform the system. There is hope that the ADS will help with this alignment, recognizing that large institutions take time to change.

**Public finance management (PFM) and executive capacity indirectly impact allocation decisions.** They affect the extent of budget allocation by different departments and indirectly shape the distribution of public expenditures. The Irrigation and Water Utilization Department (IWUD), for example, has the strongest procurement capacity in the MoALI, which, combined with its in-house service delivery capacity, makes it easier to fully utilize the allocated funds.

**Parliament is an important check and balance.** The task of Myanmar's three parliaments in budget approval allocation has been given elevated importance since the adoption of the 2008 Constitution. However, poor information management does not allow Parliament to fully provide appropriate budget checks on the executive branch. The budget information is typically clustered by administrative unit and type of account, in paper form, aggregated across multiple physical stacks of books. Lack of access to electronic formats imposes an additional time burden and challenges the quality of the review. Arguably, it also narrows the scope for treating budgets as a regional policy document, shifting a larger focus to individual projects (Ildrim Valley and Hein Aung Kyaw for Renaissance Institute, 2018).

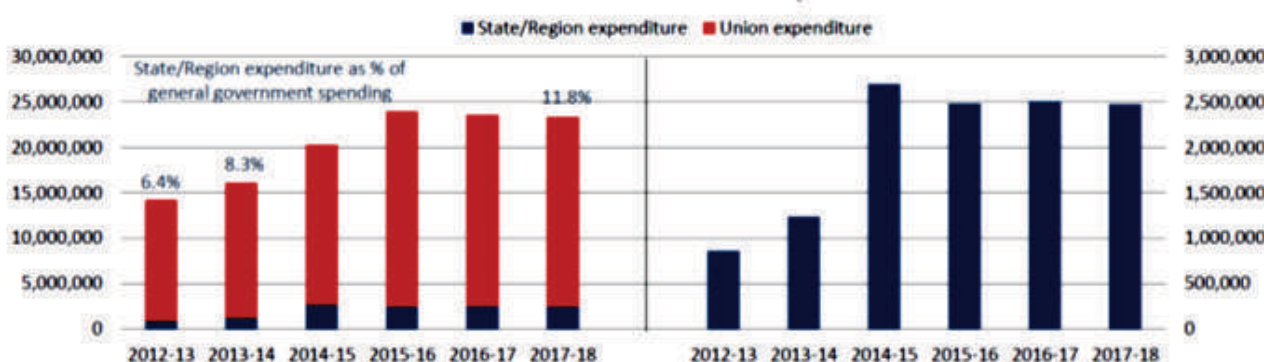
**There is inadequate coordination in the preparation of the union budget and the budgets of states and regions.** A rising share of local budgets is being spent on wages of local extension officers and Operations and Maintenance (O&M) of irrigation systems. Local budgets are typically prepared separately from budgets at the union level. Moreover, regions and states rarely know whether the union budget is allocated to, for example, the Department of Agricultural Research or Department of Agriculture farms and laboratories in their localities.



## 5.3.2 SUBNATIONAL BUDGETING

Since 2012, the share of state and region expenditures have doubled, from 6 to 12 percent of general government spending, while actual spending has tripled (see 50 Renaissance Institute, 2018).

FIGURE 56



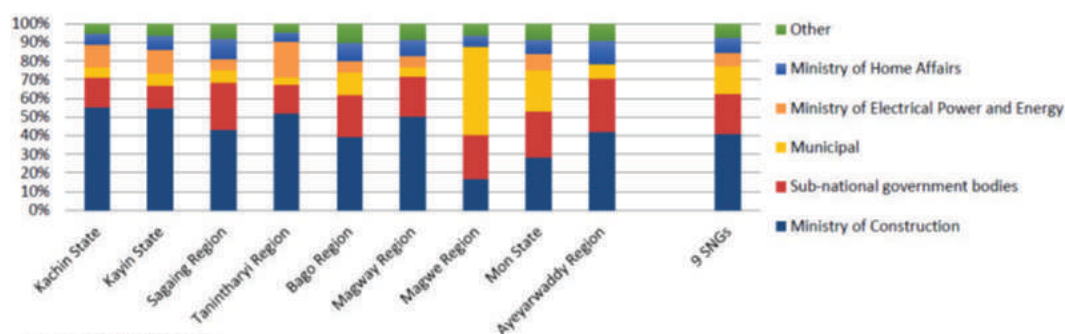
Source: Union Citizen's Budget, MOPF; RI staff estimates

FIGURE 56: Expenditure across levels of government (2012-2018 in million Kyat)

Source: Expenditure across levels of government (2012-2018 in million Kyat)

Most of subnational spending is targeted to road construction and the functioning of subnational governing bodies (see Figure 57). Agriculture and other sectors contributing to the MS-NPAN only have a small share in subnational budget spending.

FIGURE 57



Source: OMI; RI staff estimates

Note: Other includes: 1) Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation; 2) Ministry of Health and Sports; 3) Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation; 4) Ministry of Planning and Finance, and few other small departments; Sub-national government bodies includes: SNG Cabinet Office, SNG Parliament, Court, Attorney General Office and Auditor Office; Municipal units include Development Affairs Organizations (DAOs) and Mandalay City Development Committee (MDC); BE = Budget Estimate (enacted by legislature)

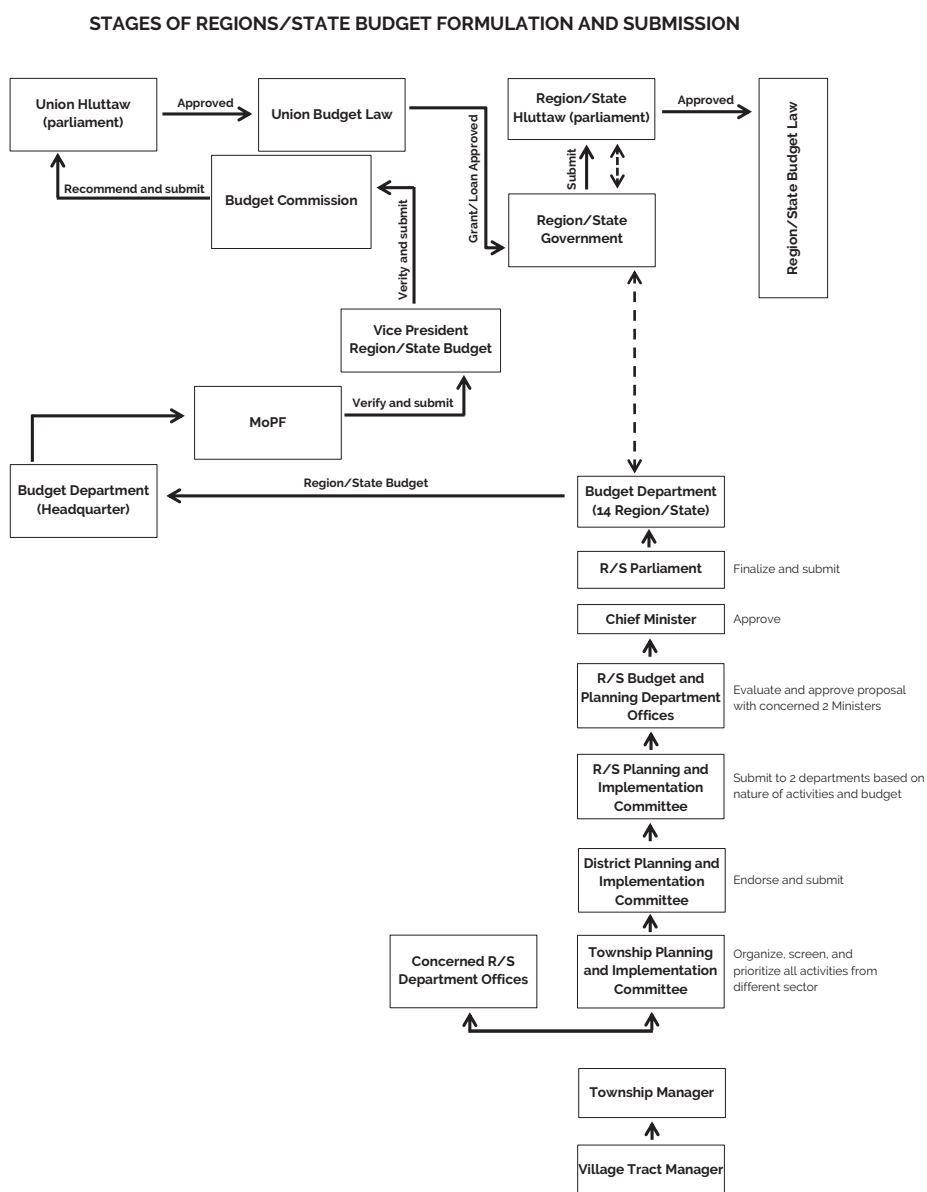
FIGURE 57: Subnational expenditure by administrative unit

(Percent of total across nine state/region budgets in 2017-18 BE)

Source: Union Citizen's Budget, MOPF (2019)

Both at the union and subnational levels, parliaments have the ultimate power to approve and adjust annual budget proposals, hence their importance in allocating budget to different sectors.

FIGURE 58



**FIGURE 58: MoALI budgeting flowchart**  
Source: EU and FAO FIRST Myanmar

Source: EU and FAO FIRST Myanmar



**The budgeting process at the subnational level is rather linear and while, seemingly bottom-up, is not very participatory.** There are two key bottlenecks:

- » The first is the small operational budget available at the regional level. Union staff absorb the majority of the recurrent nonwage budget, while frontline service providers do not have enough funds to do their basic job, let alone to provide field services. The daily allowance of 3 000 Kyats/day (USD 1.96) and travel allowance of 10 000 Kyats/month (USD 6.53) have not been adjusted for a decade and cannot cover real costs. Service providers lack essential resources such as transport/motorbikes, fuel, and lubricants. They also lack travel budgets to go beyond their assigned areas, hence restricting their scope of operation.
- » The second bottleneck is the limited influence of regions and states on decisions about capital investments. Decisions to upgrade seed farms or laboratories for example, are made in Naypyitaw, often without consulting the respective farm managers or regional administrators, who are much closer to the farm stations than the union government.





## 5.4 AGRICULTURE BUDGET BY SUBSECTOR

**Most of MoALI's expenditure still favours rice production.** Major funds are spent on irrigation infrastructure, the vast majority to expand irrigation coverage by building new dams and embankments. Under the previous government, irrigation works accounted for 70-75 percent of MoALI's expenditures. Under the current government, this share has decreased to 40 percent for fiscal year 2018-2019. The Department of Rural Development became part of MoALI in 2016 and accounted for 34-40 percent of total MoALI budget between 2016 and 2018. Under the previous government, it was part of the Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Rural Development.

TABLE 19

| Agricultural Budget of MoALI from 2012/13 to 2018/19 in Nominal Terms (Million Kyat) |         |       |         |       |         |       |         |       |         |       |         |       |         |       |
|--|---------|-------|---------|-------|---------|-------|---------|-------|---------|-------|---------|-------|---------|-------|
| Department   | 2012-13 |       | 2013-14 |       | 2014-15 |       | 2015-16 |       | 2016-17 |       | 2017-18 |       | 2018-19 |       |
|  | Amount  | %     | Amount  | %     | Amount  | %     | Amount  | %     | Amount  | %     | Amount  | %     | Amount  | %     |
| Minister's Office  | 835     | 0.2%  | 876     | 0.2%  | 1,421   | 0.2%  | 2,478   | 0.4%  | 1,836   | 0.3%  | 1,542   | 0.3%  | 11,063  | 1.6%  |
| Department of Planning   | 3,771   | 0.9%  | 641     | 0.1%  | 904     | 0.2%  | 818     | 0.1%  | 764     | 0.1%  | 792     | 0.1%  | 1,689   | 0.2%  |
| Department of Agriculture  | 34,490  | 8.1%  | 35,078  | 6.7%  | 40,856  | 6.9%  | 65,220  | 9.3%  | 83,761  | 13.7% | 52,839  | 9.0%  | 85,739  | 12.5% |
| Irrigation & Water Utilization Management  | 322,413 | 75.9% | 407,823 | 78.4% | 423,221 | 71.2% | 420,378 | 59.8% | 333,898 | 54.6% | 286,757 | 49.0% | 277,835 | 40.4% |
| Agricultural Land Management & Statistics  | 22,919  | 5.4%  | 24,653  | 4.7%  | 25,819  | 4.3%  | 28,431  | 4.0%  | 32,138  | 5.3%  | 32,367  | 5.5%  | 39,706  | 5.8%  |
| Agricultural Mechanization Department  | 23,391  | 5.5%  | 22,976  | 4.4%  | 41,171  | 6.9%  | 126,158 | 18.0% | 112,369 | 18.4% | 56,198  | 9.6%  | 83,316  | 12.1% |
| Yezin Agricultural University  | 6,806   | 1.6%  | 15,381  | 3.0%  | 9,084   | 1.5%  | 14,783  | 2.1%  | 5,688   | 0.9%  | 9,078   | 1.6%  | 10,463  | 1.5%  |
| Department of Agricultural Research  | 3,625   | 0.9%  | 2,903   | 0.6%  | 7,428   | 1.2%  | 9,289   | 1.3%  | 10,072  | 1.6%  | 8,017   | 1.4%  | 10,559  | 1.5%  |
| Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Dept   | 2,450   | 0.6%  | 2,785   | 0.5%  | 21,027  | 3.5%  | 14,874  | 2.1%  | 18,712  | 3.1%  | 20,510  | 3.5%  | 27,668  | 4.0%  |
| Department of Fisheries  | 1,803   | 0.4%  | 2,047   | 0.4%  | 9,835   | 1.7%  | 9,262   | 1.3%  | 4,512   | 0.7%  | 12,412  | 2.1%  | 21,734  | 3.2%  |
| University of Veterinary Science   | 597     | 0.1%  | 1,299   | 0.2%  | 4,128   | 0.7%  | 2,941   | 0.4%  | 2,105   | 0.3%  | 1,483   | 0.3%  | 2,077   | 0.3%  |
| Department of Cooperative  | 1,470   | 0.3%  | 3,268   | 0.6%  | 5,384   | 0.9%  | 6,130   | 0.9%  | 3,977   | 0.7%  | 101,910 | 17.4% | 113,584 | 16.5% |
| Small Scale Industries Department  | 357     | 0.1%  | 581     | 0.1%  | 4,187   | 0.7%  | 1,726   | 0.2%  | 1,325   | 0.2%  | 1,443   | 0.2%  | 2,075   | 0.3%  |
| TOTAL  | 424,927 | 100%  | 520,311 | 100%  | 594,465 | 100%  | 702,488 | 100%  | 611,157 | 100%  | 585,348 | 100%  | 687,508 | 100%  |

TABLE 19: Agricultural budget of the MoALI, 2012-2019

Source: Department of Planning, MoALI, 2018

**MoALI's largest expenditure category is for infrastructure; irrigation accounts for 40.4 percent of capital expenditures.** Allocation to the management of irrigation infrastructure has been decreasing but is still the largest item. It is noticeable that most irrigation infrastructure projects did not consider drainage, which makes it more challenging to use this land for non-rice crops.

The second largest item is for the **Department of Cooperatives** at 16.5 percent. This is mainly the result of a 10-year loan that was initiated by China's Exim Bank to fund cooperative loans; this loan covers 80 percent of the Department's budget.

**Crop development under the Department of Agriculture** has a modest share in overall budget but this increased to 12.5 percent in 2018-19. Investment remains heavily rice-centric, with a focus on breeding improved seeds and, importantly, supporting an agricultural extension service of some 8 000 staff, who are mainly trained to promote rice-based farming systems.

**The fourth largest spending category is agricultural mechanization.** This budget share picked up in 2015-16 (18 percent) but dropped to 12 percent in 2018-2019. The sharp increase corresponded with the DoA's purchase of large quantities of tractors and combine harvesters to provide direct services to farmers. This was considered a distortive policy, achieving little in terms of increasing mechanization or reducing farm production costs, while crowding out private investment (LIFT and World Bank, 2016). Mechanization particularly targets the rice sector; most available combine harvesters cannot be readily used for harvesting other crops such as beans/pulses.

The share of **livestock and fisheries** development is minimal, although it has increased recently, jointly accounting for 7 percent of the budget. It should be noted that fisheries capture important fiscal resources from the issuance of leasable fishery tenders and taxes, amounting to 7.2 billion MMK (USD 4.6million) in Ayeyarwaddy Region for fiscal year 2017-18 (DoF, 2018). Nevertheless, while a major potential contributor to the nutrition agenda, the fishery/aquaculture sector remains minimally resourced. The Myanmar National Export Strategy acknowledges the importance of fish as a protein source in the national diet, as well as its importance for job creation (Belton et al., 2018). The larger commercial sector seems however to get more investment attention than the smallholder sector.

The **Department of Planning** (DoP) receives the lowest share of budget. It is however becoming increasingly important in the new spirit of inclusive, participatory and increased decentralized planning. As demonstrated by the ADS, consultation at the subnational level becomes a critical part of policy/strategy development processes but requires substantial resources.

In closing, certain departments, such as Irrigation and Water Utilization Management Department (IWUMD), have a high rate of budget execution, mainly due to the use of its own service providers and strong fiduciary capacity. The budget execution of other departments averages 80–90 percent, often being lower for capital budget and expenditures financed by foreign loans and grants. The Livestock and Fisheries Departments have a low budget execution ratio, 52 percent and 56 percent respectively.



## 5.5 DONOR FUNDING

### 5.5.1 CONTEXT

A legacy of 'Burmese socialism' and a military regime with long years of isolation from major development partners has resulted in a tradition of ad hoc donor support, often outside the government and not always responsive to explicit GoM programmes (mainly because such programmes did not exist). The Nargis humanitarian crises in 2008 opened up the country to major emergency and relief support, mainly through NGOs.

The Livelihoods and Food Security Trust Fund – LIFT - is a good example of a continued funding mechanism outside the government system. LIFT is a major mechanism for channelling donor funds to specific livelihood supporting activities, including in the agricultural sector. Out of a total portfolio of USD 451 million disbursed since 2010, only some two percent was used in a partnership with GoM institutions. The Chin Maternal Child Cash Transfer (MCCT) nutrition programme was the first time that LIFT partnered with the government. Since 2017, LIFT has engaged more closely with GoM, investing in four government initiatives (LIFT, 2017 ). The advantage of LIFT is that it serves as a testing ground for methodologies and interventions that can be scaled-up, by either public or private services.

FIGURE 59

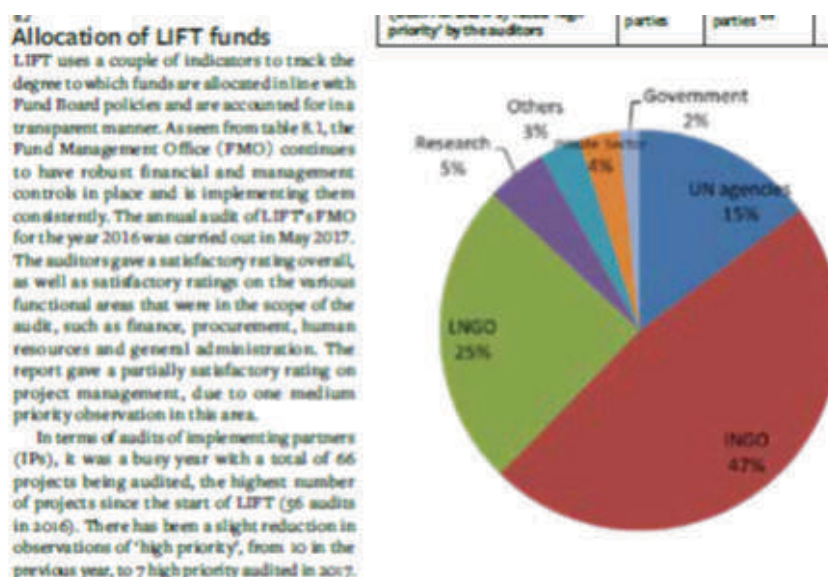


FIGURE 59: Allocation of LIFT funds by beneficiary class

Source: LIFT, 2017

**Before 2012, donor funding to the agricultural sector was almost non-existent.** Under the Thein Sein Government, it increased significantly from an estimated USD 7 million in 2012/13 to USD 108 million in 2016/17 (World Bank-PER, 2017).

TABLE 20

| \$ million                      | 2009/10 | 2010/11 | 2011/12 | 2012/13 | 2013/14 | 2014/15 | 2015/16 | 2016/17 |
|---------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Public ag budget                | 267     | 360     | 394     | 542     | 652     | 746     | 685     | 667     |
| Donor budget                    | Small   | Small   | Small   | 7       | 14      | 64      | 95      | 108     |
| Aggregate budget                | 267     | 360     | 394     | 549     | 666     | 809     | 780     | 775     |
| Donor funds in aggregate budget | 0       | 0       | 0       | 1%      | 2%      | 8%      | 12%     | 14%     |

TABLE 20: Donor funding for the agricultural sector

Source: World Bank staff estimates based on data from donor agencies in Myanmar

**Projections of possible future donor funding for agriculture are, optimistically, presented under the ADS for the period 2018/19-2022/23**, with a total of USD 812million or USD 162million/year (ADS, Table 42). This would represent between 14-20 percent of total annual MoALI budget and 29-40 percent of the total annual MoALI capital budget.

**DoP's analysis of 222 projects, however, may lead to somewhat different projections.**

The actual amount disbursed from all sources between 2015 to June 2018 resulted in a total investment of USD 328 million or, on average, USD 93 million/year.

TABLE 21

|   | NO. OF PROJECTS | TOTAL COMMITTED (US\$ M) | ACTUAL DISBURSED (US\$ M) | ACTUAL DISBURSED IN 2015-2018** |
|---|-----------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Completed*  | 75              | 163 476                  | 158 320                   | 62 333                          |
| Ongoing   | 108             | 436 986                  | 265 558                   | 265 558                         |
| Under negotiation                                 | 39              | 228 158                  | 0.000                     | 0.000                           |
| <b>Total</b>                                      | <b>222</b>      | <b>828 620</b>           | <b>423 878</b>            | <b>327 891</b>                  |
| *for projects that have started since 2010        |                 |                          |                           | <b>93 683</b>                   |
| **actual disbursements between 2015 and June 2018 |                 |                          |                           |                                 |

TABLE 21: Estimated donor support to MOALI between April 2015 and June 2018

Source: Department of Planning – MoALI

Donor funding probably reached a peak after the new administration took office in 2016. Current expectations for future donor support are impacted by the current political context (e.g. the Rakhine crisis). Some donor-funded projects and programmes may be slower to start than anticipated or may be reoriented towards other needs. Actual budget data from 2018-19 seem to confirm a trend of lower than expected donor contributions to agriculture, with a total of loans and aids for this period estimated at USD 63million. This may indicate the reluctance of several donors to fund public sector programmes and projects, mainly as a result of recent social instability in areas like Rakhine and Northern Shan.

## 5.5.2 COMPOSITION OF DONOR SUPPORT

**Most donor funds are allocated to irrigation**, especially focusing on the rehabilitation and management of existing infrastructure; these account for about half of total funds during 2010-2022 (see Table 22). This complements public expenditure, which mainly targets the construction of new infrastructure. It is acknowledged that the efficiency of existing irrigation schemes remains well below their potential. Out of a total of 2.17 million hectares under irrigation, only an estimated 50-60 percent are well used (IWMI, 2015).

**Donor investment targets climate-smart agriculture, but relative increases have been rather limited over a ten-year period.** Investment in fisheries is considerable: the EU-GIZ manages a 20 million Euro project supporting aquaculture; GEF makes available additional funding to deal with the fisheries sector in mangrove areas. Investment in the land sector remains marginal, with nominal funds allocated to strengthening land administration.

**Donor funding allocation confirmed by the recent informal donor group mapping exercise for the agriculture and rural sector highlighted that most funding is channelled to Pillar 2 of the ADS** (productivity improvements), with much less on Pillar 1 (governance). Land governance to protect farmer's rights as captured under Pillar 1 is only marginally supported, despite being identified as a major impact domain for the ADS. FIRST provides major support to nutrition governance (Outcome 1.8); with the outcome also supported by GAFSP, FAO TCP, and LIFT (but few others). The size and range of donors investing in this area remains minimal.

**The ADS-projected donor investment does not include a specific line on nutrition** (Outcome 1.8). At the time of ADS preparation and drafting, nutrition was not high on the agenda of MoALI and its supporters. Most of not all development partner contributions were channelled through other ministries and focused on non- agricultural interventions. An increased interest in the agricultural sector as a contributor to nutrition, and more specifically to MS-NPAN, coincides with the awareness raising and advocacy work of FIRST inside and outside of the MoALI, not least through its coordination work with other nutrition-support agencies and initiatives (UNICEF, WFP, LIFT, SUN/REACH, EU, among others).

TABLE 22

| INVESTMENT CATEGORY AND PROGRAMME            | 2010-15<br>(US\$ M) | 2016-22<br>(US\$ M) | PERCENT<br>OF GRAND<br>TOTAL (2016-<br>2022 ONLY) |
|--|---------------------|---------------------|---|
| 1) Infrastructure                            |                     |                     |   |
| New irrigation                               | 960 504             | 15 086 805          | 3.02%   |
| Rehab/upgrade of existing irrigation         | 60 212 790          | 248 933 737         | 49.83%  |
| Agroprocessing                               | 1 031 577           | 1 132 163           | 0.23%   |
| Other investments                            | 1 258 152           | 3 939 217           | 0.79%   |
| <b>SUBTOTAL</b>                              | <b>63 463 023</b>   | <b>269 091 922</b>  | <b>53.86%</b>                                     |
| 2) Production enhancement                    | 2010-15             | 2016-22             |   |
| Seeds  | 2 555 131           | 8 120 384           | 1.63%   |
| Soil nutrient management/fertilizers         | 2 888,546           | 7 879 871           | 1.58%   |
| Plant protection                             | -                   | 1 004 608           | 0.20%   |
| Agricultural mechanization                   | 4 222 917           | 9 919 671           | 1.99%   |
| Access and use of new agricultural practices | 5 533 323           | 10 785 912          | 2.16%   |
| Water management practices                   | 2 446 734           | 5 132 985           | 1.03%   |

| INVESTMENT CATEGORY AND PROGRAMME   | 2010-15<br>(US\$ M) | 2016-22<br>(US\$ M) | PERCENT<br>OF GRAND<br>TOTAL (2016-<br>2022 ONLY) |
|---|---------------------|---------------------|---|
| Other climate-smart agriculture   | 113 469             | 20 249 969          | 4.05%   |
| Other programmes  | 870 204             | 13 957 042          | 2.79%   |
| <b>SUBTOTAL</b>   | <b>18 630 324</b>   | <b>77 050 443</b>   | <b>15.42%</b>                                     |
| 3) Capacity development of education,<br>extension and farm organizations | 2010-15             | 2016-22             |   |
| Ag Extension  | 8 492 952           | 25 749 982          | 5.15%   |
| Veterinary services   | 499 088             | 12 928 521          | 2.59%   |
| Fisheries/aquaculture extension   | 3 397 459           | 16 545 984          | 3.31%   |
| University curriculum development   | 725 000             | 3 355 913           | 0.67%   |
| Agricultural producer cooperatives  | 1 553 170           | 2 644 690           | 0.53%   |
| Water user groups   | 701 552             | 9 581 144           | 1.92%   |
| Sector associations/trade associations<br>/interest groups                | 1 509 059           | 1 478 437           | 0.30%   |
| Other programmes  | 12 727 810          | 17 117 261          | 3.43%   |
| <b>SUBTOTAL</b>   | <b>29 606 091</b>   | <b>89 401 930</b>   | <b>17.89%</b>                                     |
| Subtotal as percentage of grand total                                     | 22.5%               | 17.9%               | --  |
| 4) Policy, regulations, and governance                                    | 2010-15             | 2016-22             |   |
| Land access and management  | 8 414 595           | 2 675 299           | 0.54%   |
| Water management  | 740 561             | 661 947             | 0.13%   |
| Fishery resource management   | 746 382             | 51 074 074          | 10.22%  |
| Sanitary and phytosanitary issues   | 705 207             | 948 957             | 0.19%   |
| Food safety and traceability  | 705 207             | 948 957             | 0.19%   |
| Gender related  | 648 860             | 646 370             | 0.13%   |
| Agricultural policy, value chains, ag inputs,<br>and others               | 7 691 872           | 7 108 674           | 1.42%   |
| <b>SUBTOTAL</b>   | <b>19 652 684</b>   | <b>64 064 278</b>   | <b>12.82%</b>                                     |
| <b>GRAND-TOTAL</b>  | <b>131 352 122</b>  | <b>499 608 573</b>  | <b>100.00%</b>                                    |

**TABLE 22: Recent donor financing (2010-2015) and anticipated donor investment (2016-2022)**

Source: World Bank, Donor Coordination Unit in ADS (Excel files made available to members of ADS and GAFSP preparation team, 2018)

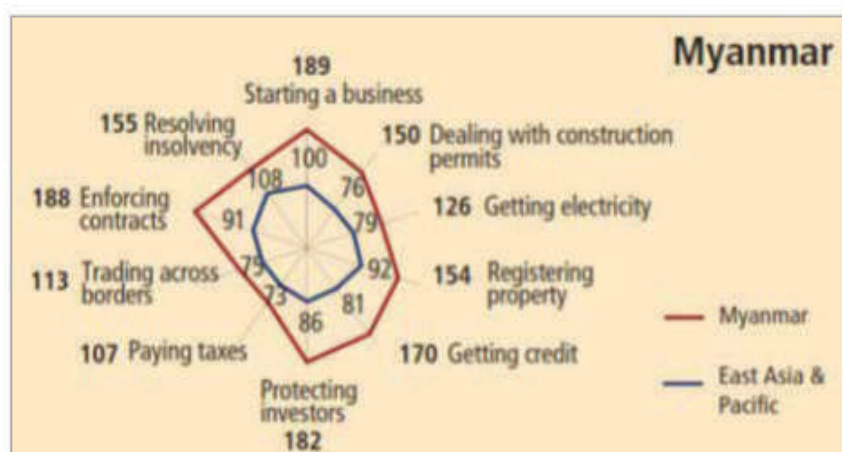


## 5.6 PRIVATE SECTOR FUNDING

There is little consolidated insight on possible contributions of the private sector and farmers to the agriculture sector. The ADS projects an average total contribution of 3 percent by the private sector to its support. This would mainly focus on the competitiveness pillar through in-kind and public-private partnership investments. Contributions by farmers and their organizations is estimated at less than 1 percent of the ADS, mostly in-kind. The role of the private sector to support diversification, generate income for smallholders, and improve food safety (the three outcome areas of the MS-NPAN) is crucial and remains underexplored.

FIGURE 60

### HOW MYANMAR RANKS ON DOING BUSINESS



Source: Doing Business database

Note: numbers are economy and regional average rankings, with 1 denoting the highest ranking on a topic and 189 the lowest.

FIGURE 60: Doing business in Myanmar: scoring

Source: Doing Business database, 2018

## 5.7 ADS FUNDING

### 5.7.1 CONTEXT

The ADS-Investment Plan (ADS-IP) is a first attempt by the agricultural sector in Myanmar to develop a clear and coherent strategy and, more importantly, a programme-driven multiyear investment plan for MoALI. The IP responds to several needs as follows:

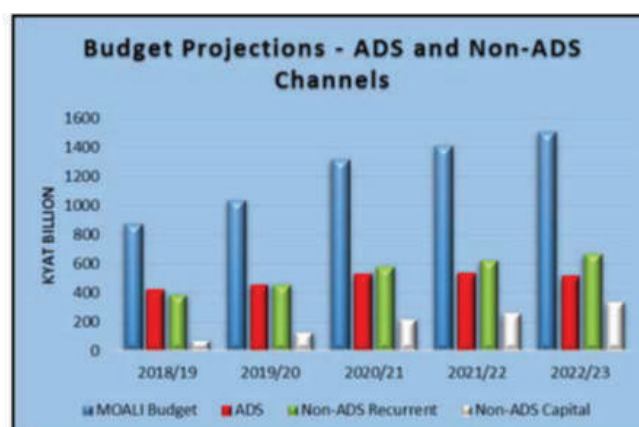
- » to consolidate and integrate the various plans, strategies, roadmaps and approaches currently foreseen by a plethora of stakeholders;
- » to map a systematic approach to operationalizing agricultural policy implementation and link it to the IP;
- » to coordinate activities, projects, programmes and policies;
- » to build dialogues with domestic and foreign investors and harmonize foreign aid to the sector.

**To a large extent, the ADS-IP replaces budget allocation against department-specific line items** that are not necessarily linked to planned outputs, outcomes and objectives. The ADS thus intends to address the misalignment between budgets and policies. The IP exclusively deals with capital investment, not with recurrent budget needs.

**Unlike past practices, the IP is not just a budgeting, but also a planning exercise** through which progress can be monitored towards the achievement of objectives and targets of the agricultural policy. The IP includes investment measures that are consistent with the objectives, outcomes, outputs and activities of the ADS. At the same time, the IP financial outlays are not mere expressions of need, but are anchored in a realistic assessment of the fiscal framework provided by the Mid Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) (ADS 2.6 p 106).

**The ADS-IP became operational in June 2018, however, two types of budget allocations will co-exist during a transition period: ADS and non-ADS (traditional) channels.** The ADS document confirms that, over time, all MoALI expenditures will be aligned with the ADS, facilitated by ADSISU. Figure 61 depicts the anticipated evolution of MoALI budget projections of ADS and non-ADS channels. This seems to indicate, however, an increase in non-ADS capital budget over time rather than a phasing out, suggesting that there are still outstanding challenges to a real transition.

**FIGURE 61**



**FIGURE 61: MoALI budget projections of ADS and non-ADS channels**  
Source: ADS-IP, 2018

## 5.7.2 COMPOSITION OF BUDGET PROJECTIONS

The preparation of the ADS-IP builds on recommendations made in the 2017 Myanmar Agricultural Public Expenditure Review (World Bank, 2017), which reviewed the cost-effectiveness of several important MoALI expenditures and made recommendations with regard to more efficient budget allocation.

In order to assess the intended budget changes and trends, ADS-IP projections over five years (2018-2023) were compared with actual budgets covering the period 2012-2018.

TABLE 23

|  | 2102-2018 (share overall budget real expenditure (table 36 ADS doc) %) | 2018-2023 (ADS projected budget) % |
|--|--|------------------------------------|
| Minister's Office                            | 0.20   | 3.4                                |
| Department of Irrigation and Water Resources | 44.80  | 28.8                               |
| Department of Land Management and Statistics | 3.30   | 1.8                                |
| Department of Agricultural Mechanization     | 7.90   | 6                                  |
| Department of Planning                       | 0.20   | 2.5                                |
| Yezin Agricultural University                | 1.20   | 0.3                                |
| Department of Agricultural Research          | 0.70   | 2.4                                |
| Department of Agriculture                    | 5.80   | 12.1                               |
| Department of Fisheries                      | 0.70   | 1.6                                |
| Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department | 1.30   | 6.1                                |
| University of Veterinary Science             | 0.20   | 0.5                                |
| Department of Rural Development              | 33.00  | 20.2                               |
| Cooperative Department                       | 0.40   | 6                                  |
| Small Scale Industries Department            | 0.20   | 1.4                                |
| Agribusiness and Market Information          |  | 7                                  |
| <b>Total</b>                                 | <b>100</b>   | <b>100</b>                         |

TABLE 23: ADS-IP budget projections disaggregated by department and service  
Source: World Bank APER, 2017 and ADS-IP document, 2018)

**Moving away from past rice-centric policies.** Budget allocations in the ADS-IP place considerably less emphasis on infrastructure for irrigated rice, as well as on mechanization. There is a marked shift towards diversified crop production, livestock and fisheries development. Yet, the budget allocation to fisheries, including aquaculture, remains on the low side, notwithstanding its potential contribution to nutrition objectives, as captured in the ADS and MS-NPAN.

**Investment in agricultural land administration has been reduced by almost half.** A significant investment was made to distribute nine million land use certificates during the period 2012-2016, which explains the decrease. However, a major outlay is still required for the implementation of the ADS land component and MoALI's responsibilities for significant parts of the National Land Use Policy. The ADS-IP considers the improvement of service provision for land administration (land use titling, land transfers and transactions, land restitution, etc.), including for women and the poorest people, to be an essential part of the strategy. The outstanding caseload of land formalization activities, especially of customary land in uplands and ethnic states, will require increased investment.

**The ADS recognizes the importance of planning and coordination at the highest level** (through ADSISU integrated in the cabinet of the Union Minister).

The ADS places significant emphasis on the **development of a new Agribusiness and Market Information Department**, especially to support Pillar 3 on competitiveness and the **Department of Cooperatives**. Key areas of investment include enforcing safety standards and issuing certificates; establishing laboratories for testing and improving standards in line with international best practices; developing a functional accreditation bureau and national metrology institute; market development; launching agroindustrial zones for production and processing; strengthening value chains and Public Private Partnerships (PPP); and supporting farmer organizations dedicated to specific value chain development. This provides hope for business development and more income generation-focused support for farmers that are able to engage in commercial agriculture and/or can expand their commercial enterprises. Poorer small-scale producers and more vulnerable households, including women, smallholders and the landless, are likely to benefit from this development through increased public and private value chain engagement. The Global Agricultural and Food Security programme (GASFP) in the dry zone also focuses on employment generation for poor people in rural society by creating off-farm employment, such as processing jobs and engagement in agricultural service delivery following vocational training. There is also increasing interest from the government in agricultural enterprise development on the basis of contract farming. This model requires more investigation.

The overall budget for research has increased, but there has been a **focus shift from Yezin Agriculture University to the Department of Agricultural Research**.

**The ADS-IP projected data for 2018-19 can be compared with 2018-2019 actual budget allocations** to assess to what extent the first year ADS-IP projection intentions were met by real budget allocations from MoPF to MoALI. This provides some early insights on MoALI's commitment to using the ADS-IP projection to request its 2018-2019 budget from MoPF.

TABLE 24

|   | Capital budget (million MMK)                    |   |
|---|---|---|
|   | MoPF capital budget for MoALI: approved 2018-19 | Approved budget/ADS projected budget: 2018-19 (percent) |
| Minister's Office                                       | 9 605   | 46%   |
| Department of Irrigation & Water Resources              | 148 574   | 90%   |
| Department of Agricultural Land Management & Statistics | 3 712   | 30%   |
| Department of Agricultural Mechanization                | 35 055  | 92%   |
| Department of Planning                                  | 604   | 3%  |
| Yezin Agricultural University                           | 7 475   | 272%  |
| Department of Agricultural Research                     | 4 989   | 29%   |
| Department of Agriculture                               | 39 499  | 59%   |
| Department of Fisheries                                 | 7 580   | 60  |
| Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department            | 12 688  | 28%   |
| University of Veterinary Science                        | 840   | 34%   |
| Department of Rural Development                         | 224 589   | 178%  |
| Cooperative Department                                  | 2 631   | 41%   |
| Small Scale Industries Department                       | 778   | 12%   |
| Agribusiness and market information                     |   | 0%  |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>498 619</b>                                  | <b>86%</b>  |

**Orange:** indicates negative difference;

**Blue:** indicates surplus as compared with projected ADS budget

**TABLE 24: Comparison between ADS-IP projected budget data for 2018-19 and 2018-2019 effective budget allocation**  
Source: Estimates generated by EUD Budget Support Design mission team (2018)

Major conclusions include the following:

- » **The overall projected capital budget allocation under the ADS was not fully met,** with a small deficit of 14 percent. This confirms earlier comments that possible budget gap issues – captured in the ADS – are probably underestimated.
- » **There are important differences between ADS intentions and actual budget allocations,** reflecting the fact that in 2018, budget allocation was still partially influenced by the previous system.



- » **Department of Rural Development-funded activities remain significantly above their projected share**, despite the Department of Roads and Bridges being transferred to MoC and MADB to MoPF. The expected reorientation within DRD from a major focus on rural infrastructure (water, energy) to community-driven development has not yet been accomplished.
- » **Capital investment in the livestock and fisheries sector remains significantly under-budgeted** compared to the ADS projections.
- » **Capital investment in planning and coordination at the ministerial level remains very weak.** The current budget allocation does not take into account the investment that is required to initiate and/or continue the innovative strategic processes in MoALI. Such activities include operationalizing ADSISU, turning the Department of Planning into a real programme/process planning unit, investing substantially in monitoring and evaluation, involving region/state institutions in bottom up, inclusive and participatory planning and budgeting.
- » **The anticipated research shift from Yezin Agriculture University to DAR has not yet been realized.** On the contrary, the trend seems to be the reverse.
- » **The effective expenditure for land administration is significantly lower than projected.** This will certainly aggravate the impact of much lower projected expenditures for the future. There seems to be a misunderstanding around the budget needs for increasing user-friendly land service delivery rather than reducing it. Investment needs for a gradual transformation from a paper-based system to a digital system has not been captured in current budget allocations.
- » **The agribusiness and market information budget has not yet materialized.** This is likely because the proposed Department of Agribusiness and Market Information itself still needs to be set-up.
- » **The budget for small-scale industries is very small** (12 percent) compared to the estimated needs under ADS
- » **If the entire MOALI capital budget is used for financing ADS (as was assumed), there will be no funding constraint in 2018-2019.** Subsequently, there will be deficits of between 9.6 percent to 18.4 percent. The average deficit in the five-year investment plan is around 12.1 percent (Hung, EU consultant, informal communication, 2018)
- » **However, there are doubts, as indicated in the ADS itself, that the entire capital budget of MOALI will be used to finance the ADS.** Some ADS expenditure items are not in the MOALI budget, such as the cost of M&E, other governance items and improving competitiveness. Non-ADS capital budget under MoALI budget are expected to average some 10 percent over the five-year period (see ADS table 49). It can probably be expected that some portion of the MoALI budget will be allocated to 'business as usual,' possibly resulting in higher deficits (Hung, EU consultant, informal communication, 2018).

## 5.8 RESOURCE NEEDS FOR NUTRITION IN THE ADS AND MS-NPAN

**MoALI's contribution to the nutrition agenda and the extent to which this contribution is adequately funded needs to be better understood.** There are two approaches to doing this. The most straightforward is to assess whether the MoALI activities that are captured in the MS-NPAN are adequately costed and funded.

**The indicative total cost to implement the five-year MS-NPAN during 2018/19-2022/23 is MMK 929 billion (USD 663 million).** The total funding required to deliver five-year results in the four participating sectors are MMK 285 billion (USD 203 million) in the Ministry of Health and Sports; MMK 204 billion (USD 145 million) in the Ministry of Education; MMK 197 billion (USD 141 million) in the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation; and MMK 225 billion (USD 161 million) in the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement.

**However, the costing of the MS-NPAN is a rough estimate and has not yet been finalized in a comprehensive and consultative manner.** The plan requires targeting individuals (pregnant and lactating women and the vulnerable) and there is currently no database on which to base this kind of targeting. For MoALI, the link with the ADS-IP still needs to be further explored. Costing MoALI's contribution to the MS-NPAN is an outstanding exercise that will need to be dealt with during the MS-NPAN inception phase in 2019.

**Output 1.8 of the ADS on "improved food and nutrition security of most disadvantaged groups" is the only output that explicitly addresses nutrition. It corresponds with a five-year proposed investment of MMK 55 190 million (USD 36.8 million) or USD 7.36 million/year.** Most of this is to be used for Output 1.8.2: "Implementation of a targeted food and nutrition security programme." It can be assumed that the entire MoALI contribution to the MS-NPAN corresponds with Output 1.8.2. It cannot be assessed at this stage whether the 2018-19 MoALI budget covers this cost.

**A second approach to estimating MoALI's contribution to nutrition is to determine the extent to which the current ADS programmes and respective budgets are nutrition sensitive.** FIRST analysed the degree to which the ADS might contribute to the goal of increased food and nutrition security, one of the five expected impacts of the ADS. The assessment screened all ADS outcome areas (considering the expected outputs under each) by applying the following criteria:

1. Is the outcome food-based; does it refer to the production, marketing and consumption of nutritious food?
2. Does the outcome promote nutrition-rich foods and diet diversity to address micronutrient deficiencies?
3. Does the outcome address the underlying causes of malnutrition (e.g. income, access to assets, food safety), hence contributing indirectly to the goal of food and nutrition security?

4. Does it target specifically poor and vulnerable groups of pregnant and lactating women (PLW), children under five and adolescent girls?

A weighting exercise was then carried out to identify the percentage contribution to nutrition, depending on the proportion of the outcome that contributes to nutrition, the length of the impact pathway, and targeting. This weight was then used to calculate the proportion of the outcome budget that would contribute to nutrition. While not a precise exercise, this is to gauge the overall contribution beyond the rather narrow scope of Outcome 1.8.

Conclusions drawn from this assessment are as follows:

**The overall share of the ADS projected budget contribution to nutrition is some 23 percent** and corresponds with a total capital budget of 679.09 million MMK or USD 453 million over 5 years, or US\$90.6million/year. This is based on the FIRST analysis as summarized in Section C, 3.3.

## 5.9 SUMMARY AND KEY KNOWLEDGE GAPS

**Public resources for agriculture are relatively limited and are focused largely on infrastructure** (irrigation works accounted for 40 percent in 2018-2019 and rural development for 34-40 percent of MoALI's total budget in 2016-2018). Public budgets are not yet planned around food security and nutrition priorities, despite the ADS emphasis on this overall objective. Most of MoALI's expenditure still favours rice production.

**For many years, Myanmar embraced an annual, department-specific activity-based budget planning process, rather than a multiannual ministerial programme-based budgeting course.** In principle, and in line with other countries in the region, the DoP should be responsible for guiding budget planning according to the sector's main strategy (in this case, the ADS), but in Myanmar the department lacks authority, capacity and budget. Furthermore, there is no system to reward high achievers and penalize poor performers so there is little incentive to reform the system. There is hope that the ADS will help support this alignment and that ADSISU will provide more direction.

**Since 2012, the share of state and region expenditures in general government spending have doubled,** from 6 to 12 percent. However, the operational budget remains very limited at the regional level and the states and regions have little decision-making power on capital investments. Given the ongoing process of federalization, these will be two key bottlenecks to address.

**With the opening of the union in 2012, a clear proliferation of actors and investors in the agriculture sector is visible.** However, there is little clarity on possible contributions of the private sector and farmers to the agriculture sector. Secondly, there is no information available on the gendered dimensions of agricultural expenditure. Furthermore, there is a lack of information on land markets. This last point is key to incentivizing future investment in the sector.



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## 6 | POLICY CREDIBILITY ASSESSMENT



**As part of its due diligence for the proposed budget support to MOALI, the Myanmar EU Delegation concluded that the ADS and the MS-NPAN, together as a policy framework, are sufficiently relevant and credible to support their implementation.** The ADS is recognized as the principle government document for policy implementation support. "The Proposed Action will primarily focus on supporting the implementation of the ADS in the policy areas that have a more direct contribution to the reduction of malnutrition, realizing MOALI's foreseen contribution to the MS-NPAN. Through the improvement of the three nutrition outcomes of enhanced rural incomes, diversification of food production and food safety across the ADS priorities, in selected subsectors (livestock, land, etc.) and targeting vulnerable groups, the programme will contribute to the higher-level objective of improving dietary diversity for women and children. This will be coupled with support to improve access to potable water in rural areas (another key underlying factor behind poor child nutrition in rural areas) for which MoALI is also responsible (EU NSRC action document, 2018)."

**The MS-NPAN**, with an emphasis on dietary diversity, recognizes the important link between the diversification of agriculture production systems, income generation from rural agricultural activities, and the improvement of food security and nutrition. With respect to the agriculture sector, the MS-NPAN helps to remedy, to some extent, a gap in the ADS by articulating MoALI's theory of change for nutrition and identifying relevant indicators and targets. The three nutrition-sensitive agriculture outcome areas of the MS-NPAN, are reflected across the ADS:

- » increased availability of nutrient-rich food products at market and household levels;
- » increased access to diversified diets through improved incomes;
- » improved safety along the food supply and value chain to enhance access to safe food.

**While ADS impact and outcome indicators for nutrition are still relatively poor, the MS-NPAN has enabled MoALI to explicitly articulate how it will contribute to the eradication of hunger and malnutrition and, as such, help meet SDG2 and World Health Assembly targets.** These indicators are likely to be integrated into the revised ADS logical framework. Most of the 22 interventions prioritized for MoALI's contribution to nutrition in the MS-NPAN found in the ADS, although their contribution to nutrition is not always articulated.

**Both the ADS and the MS-NPAN aim to improve inclusive access and use of quality services with a particular focus on frontline service delivery for vulnerable groups.** The ADS-IP presents a clear shift in budget allocation to better use of existing infrastructure, moving away from large-scale infrastructure and towards better service delivery, notably extension, financial support services and research. While it remains to be seen how soon and to what extent public-funded interventions will align with the ADS, development partners are already aligning their planned interventions with the strategy.

**The ADS-IP aims to improve a number of services**, including land administration (land use titling, land transfers and transactions, land restitution, etc.) for women and the poorest people, as an essential part of the strategy. The MS-NPAN seeks to enhance the coverage and quality of service delivery and the convergence of appropriately targeted social assistance and nutrition-sensitive livelihoods interventions that can enable people to access a balanced food plate. Consistent with regional and national evidence, income generation



should be complemented by nutrition education and potable water access through WASH education, particularly for nutritionally vulnerable populations.

**The overall policy framework aims to strengthen domestic accountability and national oversight mechanisms as a basis for improving governance.** The ADS envisions strengthening several MOALI functions that are key to proper oversight and accountability. In particular: i) an integrated and effective MOALI structure that would include new departments or divisions, human resources, tools, and practices; ii) strengthened monitoring of the effectiveness of policy implementation; and (iii) decentralization and regional planning. MOALI, like every other ministry in Myanmar, has embarked on several initiatives to strengthen accountability and oversight, including public administration reform, the national public finance management reform strategy, a re-enforced role for the Office of the Auditor General, etc.

**It is expected that the current policy will contribute to further progress in cross-cutting areas such as gender.** The ADS identifies gender inequality and insufficient women's rights in agriculture as an important issue for the sector. Three out of five of the impact indicators selected for the ADS are gender disaggregated. Under Pillar 1, it is expected that the MOALI capacity for ADS coordination and implementation will be enhanced and guided by democratically-appointed, gender-equitable civil society representation. In addition, it is anticipated that extension work and, notably, the delivery of suitable technology packages, will be optimized by socio-economic and farming systems research that consider gender roles in agriculture. The ADS highlights the need to train extension staff in social inclusion and gender and the importance of including women in capacity-building activities. The requirement for inclusive participatory planning to strengthen the participation of women at local levels and their inclusion in cooperatives is considered mandatory.

The MS-NPAN has the overall goal of addressing the nutritional needs of women of reproductive age and children. Most indicators are disaggregated by sex, including access to a diverse food basket (through improved incomes) and a minimum dietary diversity score for women (MDD-W), which is also contributed by the health sector. The plan explicitly highlights women's empowerment as one of the causes of malnutrition. It stresses that gender analysis should be used to strengthen the implementation of the MS-NPAN. It is of utmost importance to support the ministry in evidence-based policy-making by improving the availability of sex disaggregated data in all relevant nutrition indicators, promoting the study of different nutritional habits of men/women and boys/girls and engaging women as agents of change as well as beneficiaries of the actions.

There is also a cross-cutting National Strategic Plan for the Advancement of Women (NSPAW) focused on supporting the most vulnerable women, facilitating access to resources (including land) and empowering equitable decision-making. But it is not well known in MoALI or institutionalized.

**With regard to policy financing, the ADS-IP was prepared using an estimate of the existing fiscal space for the sector and the identified pipeline of donor-funded project.**

The planned allocations reflect 'value for money' as the ADS-IP was largely built on the recommendations of the 2017 Agriculture Public Expenditure Review, which identified underfunded strategic subsectors for MOALI such as research and extension. The ADS-

IP also reflects important policy priorities, including one of the ADS' main thrusts, which is to encourage agricultural diversification by moving away from past rice-centric policies. Accordingly, budget allocations in the ADS-IP place considerably less emphasis on infrastructure for irrigated rice. The recent Agriculture Sector Public Expenditure Review shows that the MOALI budget was generally balanced between wage, nonwage recurrent, and capital expenditures and there has been an – albeit moderate – rebalancing towards recurrent spending, in line with government efforts to increase resources for front line service delivery. It is anticipated that the costed MS-MPAN implementation plan will complement the ADS-IP with indications of necessary allocations for nutrition-sensitive agricultural services and interventions.

**An additional assessment of the ADS by FIRST provides some more technical insight into the policy's framework contribution to the food security and nutrition/SDG2 agenda.** It concludes that, irrespective of the policy framework being relevant and credible, the full potential of the ADS to contribute to achieving food and nutrition security in Myanmar has not been fully addressed. This implies that MoALI still needs to articulate how the various ADS outcomes may contribute to achieving that goal and contributing to SDG2. FIRST is supporting this effort.

**To ensure synergy between the ADS and MS-NPAN, work is still needed to clearly articulate, simplify, and illustrate how they relate to one another.** MS-NPAN intervention areas for MoALI may need to be slightly revised to better reflect the wording of the ADS-IP. On the other hand, a guidance document may be needed to articulate how each ADS outcome can contribute to food security and nutrition. This could take the form of an annex to the ADS. Such a document would help guide efforts on subnational planning for both plans, including implementation and monitoring.

**Given the number of competing development agendas, nutrition (as a multisectoral, multicausal issue) could be better linked with a number of ongoing discussions and emerging issues in the agriculture and rural sector.** For example:

- » **Postharvest management**, especially focusing on improved storage of cereals at the household level to reduce aflatoxins and maintain quality and food processing with a potential to develop methods of drying, conserving or transforming vegetables and fruits for better storage;
- » **Agrobiodiversity and agroecology**, especially on neglected and underutilized crops and the conservation of genetic resources;
- » **Climate-smart agriculture**, especially on mixed farming systems, organic production and carbon sequestration farming systems, linking resilience of livelihoods with climate change mitigation efforts (DRR) and the reduced risk of acute and chronic malnutrition;
- » **Gender**, especially in supporting efforts to target and take a more inclusive approach to rolling out policies, programmes and projects.

Finally, the FIRST assessment highlights specific strategies that could be further explored to make the ADS more nutrition-sensitive. These are organized around the different areas of expected impact.

## AREA 1: FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY

- » Homestead gardens and fruit orchards
- » Small livestock production (chicken, pigs); mixed crop-livestock farming systems
- » Aquaculture in uplands
- » Small-scale irrigation
- » Agroforestry systems in upland areas
- » Nutrition sensitive agriculture research
- » NSA extension
- » Capacity development at Yezin University
- » Technology development

## AREA 2: RURAL POVERTY REDUCTION

- » Land rights-based social protection for landless and land poor households
- » Vocational training
- » Gender-sensitive decision-making
- » Voluntary savings and loan associations

## AREA 3: FARMERS INCOME

- » Agricultural value chain development for nutrition dense products
- » Postharvest management
- » Contract farming
- » Credit

### AREA 4: COMPETITIVENESS

- » Promoting strong Farmers Associations
- » Establishing and certifying GAP and GVAHP
- » Providing Agricultural Information and investment along the agrifood supply chain
- » Improving rural infrastructure, especially rural feeder roads, local market construction, food storage, processing and cooling units
- » Improved access to a range of financial services for farmers and agribusiness enterprises.
- » Reliable quality system that helps farmers and food processors get higher prices for higher quality goods, incentivizing quality upgrading developed.

### AREA 5: AREA FARMERS RIGHTS ENSURED

- » Promote land tenure security for all farming systems and facilitating unconditional land use conversions
- » Enhance community level resilience; cash for work investments; Attention to agroecological approaches, agrobiodiversity, etc. Enhance financial resilience as farmers will be less indebted as a consequence of taking loans for production inputs
- » Protecting intellectual property rights for the agricultural and food sector, especially for neglected and underutilized crops

### AREA 6: GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING FOR NSA

- » Decentralized and participatory planning processes to develop food and nutrition plans, especially at the township level
- » Improved capacity for policy formulation and analysis, both in MoALI (DoP/APU) and MoHS (NNC).
- » Specific policy research and studies to better understand the factors contributing to enhanced food and nutrition security, such as studies on:
  - » knowledge of existing dietary patterns: Food Consumption Score (FCS), MDD-W, Minimal Accepted Diet (MAD), IYCF practices;
  - » cost of diet in different agroecological regions;
  - » enhancers of micronutrient absorption in household diets;

- » preparation of food;
- » nutrient content of local food items in diverse farming systems;
- » food beliefs and taboos;
- » food preferences;
- » workload of food production and preparation, including cooking time and collection of food; in particular for women.

Establish a Food and Nutrition coordination unit under DOP to improve intrasectoral coordination for food and nutrition within MoALI and for interacting with MoHS.

**In conclusion, the ADS and MS-NPAN are robust plans that are owned (at union level for now) and backed by development partners.** However, their interface needs to be strengthened, especially for using them as a framework to facilitate subnational planning. The approach 'think multisectorally, act sectorally' should guide the efforts to secure ownership, effective M&E, and adequate budget allocation.



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# 7 | RECOMMENDATIONS



## 7.1 INTRODUCTION

The recent opening of Myanmar has generated a wave of hope for reform across the nation. While much has changed, there are few incentives within MoALI to engage in structural transformation. The ADS promises to help guide this transition and to align stakeholder support and other ongoing policy initiatives.

This section outlines key areas for investment needed to accelerate progress towards the SDG2 targets. There are many resource and capacity constraints related to the three drivers of malnutrition (poverty, limited agriculture diversification, and physical infrastructure). This section will highlight the areas that the authors believe have high potential for impact and are politically feasible within the next five to ten years.

This section is divided into subsections on: (i) structural and human resources recommendations; ii) policy and regulatory action; iii) research; and iv) opportunities to strengthen linkages with other development and emerging issues.

## 7.2 STRUCTURAL AND HUMAN RESOURCES RECOMMENDATIONS

**The ADS Implementation Support Unit (ADSISU) aims to guide the strategic implementation of the ADS.** Given that MoALI's Department of Planning is thwarted by the governance hierarchy from effectively taking decisions (it is at the same level as other departments, with which it competes) and has limited human resources, the creation of ADSISU under the Minister's office promises a more effective means for MoALI departments to implement a common vision for the agriculture sector as articulated in the ADS. MoALI has already identified eight officials to be seconded to the ADSISU and development partners have been requested to support a number of additional positions to provide technical assistance (namely for M&E and planning). ToRs still need to be finalized and the unit is yet to become operational. FIRST will continue to support the establishment of the ADSISU, together with its ARDSCG donor partners.

**Strengthening the link between M&E and policy decision-making, two of DoP's core functions, could help elevate the role of the department.** MoALI houses a policy unit and an M&E unit under the DoP. However, every department has an M&E unit. The EU's My Governance Programme has supported DoP and DRD in the effort to improve the logical framework of the ADS and to conduct a contribution analysis of each department to the ADS. Nevertheless, linking M&E work with policy/decision-making remains to be improved for the implementation of the ADS and the MS-NPAN. The proposed MoALI indicators in the MS-NPAN could easily be adopted to the ADS logical framework. FIRST will collaborate with the My Governance Program to link support to M&E with decision-making (especially the in the Agriculture Policy Unit).

**The nutrition agenda is an excellent means to better target and cater interventions for the most vulnerable; but it requires a baseline.** MoALI does not target its services at present, which is a major bottleneck, nor does it collect information at an individual level. A shared database of households covered by different ministerial departments may help start to better target interventions; this is currently in discussion as part of decentralization plans. The Myanmar Information Management Unit's (MIMU) ongoing vulnerability assessment (which goes down to township level) could help in these efforts. A working relationship is needed between MIMU and DoP; this could potentially be facilitated by FIRST. A nutrition lens was used in designing EU programme support, to implement the aspects of the ADS that are likely to contribute most to reducing malnutrition. This should assist MoALI departments to identify and develop relevant impact pathways as well as to recognize the need for better targeting.

**With the Ministry of Health leading nutrition work in Myanmar, the National Nutrition Centre needs to be elevated or provided with higher-level support.** There have been suggestions to place the Centre under the office of the Vice President. This and other ideas need to be carefully considered and discussed in the Nutrition Steering Committee. Such suggestions may come out of the MS-NPAN inception phase capacity assessment.

**Sector coordination groups (SCGs) serve as vehicles for intrasectoral coordination, facilitate growing partnerships between ministries and development partners, and donor coordination in Myanmar.** Following the recent successfully completed donor mapping of ADS outcome areas, the Agriculture and Rural Development Sector Coordination Group (ARDSCG, co-facilitated by USAID and FAO) could organize a number of sessions on the ADS logical framework and its synergies with other subsector and multisector plans. Food security and nutrition was accepted as an agenda item at two ARDSCG meetings in 2019. Unfortunately, the Nutrition SCG remains inactive; the NNC has suggested to merge the roles of the Nutrition Steering Committee and the Nutrition SCG possibly confounding their respective functions. FIRST and EU have raised this concern but this remains to be taken forward and could potentially be launched at a second Pokkoku meeting (aimed for February 2020). The second Nutrition Steering Committee meeting took place in October, convened by four Union Minister (MONREC joined instead of MoALI Minister as he was abroad), to recognize progress made in rolling out the MS-NPAN at sub-national level.

**The SUN served a strong coordination function for all nutrition activities in Myanmar.** On a more technical level, SUN provides development partners with a forum to exchange and coordinate their efforts on nutrition. It also offers non-health stakeholders with a direct communication channel to the National Nutrition Center. The UN Network for SUN in Myanmar was hosted by WFP and since mid 2019 by UNICEF. The UN Network for SUN (comprised of UNOPS, UNFPA, UNICEF, FAO, WFP, WHO and WB) usually meets as an 'extended network' including partners from the government network (represented by NNC), the donor network (GIZ, WB, LIFT, and EU), SUN CSA (represented by Save the Children, and often joined by Alive and Thrive). It is thanks to the SUN network that the multi sector nutrition action plan was drafted and endorsed. The SUN extended technical network has helped to mobilize resources for NNC and a team of consultants to support the inception phase of the MS-NPAN, which involves its roll-out in seven states and regions. It has also helped to organize development partners to provide coordinated technical support to various ministries. FIRST has been recognized by SUN as the lead facilitator for MoALI on nutrition issues. With the ending of REACH funding (it is now running on a six-month



extension), there is a risk of fragmentation and a return to the days of the former Nutrition Coordination Group, which was mostly composed of health stakeholders. There is now talk of launching a SUN Business Network (spearheaded by WFP) and a SUN Academic Network (likely led by MSU and IFPRI) to include a wider range of stakeholders in the nutrition debate.

**Maintain and strengthen coordination in the land sector.** The informal SDC-EU-USAID land coordination platform has played an important role in supporting initial land reform, especially the NLUP process, but also more recently the VFV law amendment. The partnership plays an important liaison role between CSOs, NGOs and the public sector. Ongoing discussions with the NLUC's technical secretariat on formal support need to be concretized with a solid programme. Strategically, it would be beneficial to extend this partnership to other development partners in a single common land support programme.

**Capacity building for the National Land Use Council.** This inter-ministerial body plays an essential role in addressing many of the land tenure challenges highlighted in this assessment. However, major efforts are required to build its capacity and make it fully operational. FIRST has supported an emerging capacity building process by, among other things unpacking the complex NLUP, structuring it into manageable operational modules and initiating the visioning of a roadmap for NLUP implementation. The EU plans to scale up this support, with a focus on land law development and land use planning.

**Adding a costed strategic roadmap for implementing the NLUP and the functioning of the NLUC** is an integral part of this support. The ADS land component can be used as an initial reference point for a NLUP roadmap. Such a programme should include clear targets and indicators to objectively measure progress on NLUP/ADS land component implementation progress. Previous FIRST work on unpacking the NLUP can provide guidance for the functioning, agenda and activities of the NLUC.

**Addressing conservationism and vested interests in the agricultural land sector is essential for implementing all three policy/strategy processes.** MoALI/DALMS does not always seem to participate in or support new thinking on a number of essential land reform issues captured in the NLUP and even in its own ADS, such as the recognition and protection of customary land rights, extending land service delivery to women and the poorest people, and reclamation of unused VFV land. MoALI's proactive participation in this inter-ministerial body would provide an opportunity for the Ministry to handle sensitive issues in a more protected environment. The NLUC recommended in its second meeting to create a fourth working committee on agricultural land, under the technical leadership of MoALI. It is essential that MoALI positively engages in this proposal for agricultural land management or it risks being excluded from the reform process.

**Terms of reference are needed for departments, units and civil servants to assess performance, to track progress against a set of agreed deliverables, and to justify promoting and discharging staff.** Few staff in MoALI, committees and sector coordination groups have specific ToRs. DACU released a generic set of ToRs for SCGs but these have not been shared nor adapted to each of the ten groups, including agriculture and rural development and nutrition. The APU does not have ToRs, nor does its staff. This would help

staff to organize their work programme, take more initiative and identify strengths and gaps in the team. This is an important next step and will need to be taken up at highest levels. Highlighting this through policy dialogues and budget support discussions may help nudge these efforts.

**Improving advocacy and communication skills.** Public speaking and presentation skills in the ministry remain relatively weak. Communicating a narrative of progress and advocating for change requires skills in reading the audience, highlighting a small number of key messages, and motivating the audience to change. Given that two Australian volunteers have been mobilized to join MoALI's DoP, they could support the strengthening of these skills.

**Working with parliamentary institutions as part of the process of law development and amendment, especially in the land sector.** Once draft proposals for law amendment or new laws are entered in the chain of law development, MoALI seems to have little oversight and control over the process. Regular technical briefings to specialized parliamentary commissions, both formal and informal, could help creating better awareness among decision-makers, and prompt more iterative action, to ensure that the outcome responds to the initial intentions of the proposals.

## 7.3 POLICY AND REGULATORY ACTION

**Think multisectorally and act sectorally.** Given that nutrition is not an isolated sector and that many stakeholders address the underlying causes of malnutrition, nutrition too often becomes everyone's job but no one's responsibility. Ultimately, ministries and departments must implement their sector and subsector plans. As such, the MS-NPAN offers guidance, but nutrition will ultimately need to be anchored in the ADS and subnational plans. FIRST supported an analysis of the interface of the ADS and MS-NPAN, which is expected to feed into an annex on nutrition for the ADS. This will be completed in 2019 and will hopefully help to integrate nutrition into the overall logical framework for ADS and provide a strategic roadmap for implementation. The mantra 'think multisectorally and act sectorally' offers some guidance. When engaging in subnational MS-NPAN planning, it is important to consider that it may be more effective to anchor nutrition in existing and ongoing subsector plans rather than to develop a multisector plan.

**A rigorous methodology is needed for subnational ADS and MS-NPAN planning.** The extended SUN network have envisaged three streams of work for the MS-NPAN inception phase (October 1, 2018- September 31, 2019): capacity assessment, state and region prioritization, and monitoring and evaluation with the aim of completing three to seven state and regional multisector plans. It is anticipated that an international and national consultant will assist in developing each plan, with an overall facilitator to support the NNC. The SUN CSA meeting held on 6 December, 2018 highlighted the need to engage CSOs actively in setting priorities for states and regions (a mapping exercise of NGOs has already been completed). Subnational planning for the ADS has not yet started and in fact is not yet scheduled, although FIRST has encouraged the inclusion of this stream of work in the ADSISU's ToRs.



FIRST is well-placed to facilitate an informal technical network of stakeholders in proposing a methodology for subnational consultation, both for ADS and MS-NPAN. For MS-NPAN, the methodology will be developed with SUN technical partners and shared with all stakeholders. This should be followed by a series of three-day capacity strengthening workshops in advance of any planning/prioritization process. The implementation of a thorough subnational planning exercise for one state or region should inform the methodology going forward (i.e. how to integrate nutrition in existing subsector and sector state and regional plans and align them with the budget planning cycle). This was proposed to NNC and was accepted; the first pilot area will be Ayeyarwaddy Region. FIRST will accompany the team to support the roll-out of the MS-NPAN in Ayeyarwaddy. A similar approach could be envisaged for the ADS, using the ARDSCG as a platform. A challenge remains the fact that neither DoP nor ADSISU have been given a clear mandate to coordinate and facilitate such a decentralized process of implementation planning.

**Improving tenure security for fish-based systems (aquaculture and fish-rice systems) and integrated agroforestry systems.** Current land legislation does not provide mechanisms to acquire strong land rights over such systems. The MoALI can consider a series of measures, several of which can be decided internally, to improve the situation. Advocacy and awareness-raising around this issue need to continue. There is also a need to support better collaboration and interaction between land administration (DALMS), region/state and township-level administrative services (GAD), and the Department of Fisheries to ensure that the tenure regularization process for existing fishponds does not negatively impact smallholder farmers.

**Addressing the discrepancy between current land law amendment (Farmland and VFV Land Laws) under the auspices of MoALI, and new law development under the NLUC.** The amendments of existing laws do not always translate the spirit and basic principles of the NLUP. In fact, ongoing law amendment processes, such as for the VFV Land Law, are being contested by a number of stakeholders, including civil society and the private sector. The MoALI could benefit by working on these amendments under the umbrella of the inter-ministerial NLUC, and not in a unilateral fashion.

**Food-based dietary guidelines are an important technical tool for understanding production-consumption links and drafting a vision for the agri-food sector to meet dietary needs.** While Myanmar has a set of generic guidelines, these need to be quantified, based on evidence, and communicated in a more practical way (i.e. re: portion sizes) and, ideally, illustrated to make them more accessible to consumers. The FAO Technical Cooperation Project on developing food graphics for pregnant and lactating women has helped to open this discussion as complementary messages will need to be developed that would ideally be part of a comprehensive set of dietary guidelines. The project is also collecting and analyzing the same data that will need to be analyzed using linear programming for diet optimization modeling. The team has drafted a concept note for joint-funding by a number of UN agencies to be presented to MOHS by end of 2019 and FAO Myanmar has committed to supporting at least one international consultant to initiate the process.

**Improving the regulatory environment to slow the rapid transition towards high-salt, sugar and oily foods (and improve food safety).** With nearly 80 percent of food in Myanmar purchased in the market, market approaches are imperative. There is an obvious transition taking place in terms of what is offered and what is purchased. Sandwiched between three regional powerhouses (China, Thailand and India), Myanmar is exposed to unprecedented cross-border trade opportunities, but also faces the influx of unregulated sugar, fat, and sodium-rich foods. Food safety is one concern but so is easy to-access to ready-to-eat unhealthy foods abundantly advertised to children, and available in public institutions, including hospitals and schools, and on the streets. An improved regulatory environment for unsafe and unhealthy foods as well as e.g. breastmilk substitutes is imperative. However, the power imbalance between Myanmar and its neighbours makes it vulnerable to the increasing invasion of these foods, which are contributing to the ongoing nutrition transition. The food safety discussion may be a useful entry-point to regulatory discussions, but this will be a long-term process.

## 7.4 EU BUDGET SUPPORT FOR IMPROVED NUTRITION-SENSITIVE SERVICE DELIVERY

**Overall, proposed EU budget support will focus on improving the quantity, quality and reach of nutrition-sensitive agricultural services to provide support to vulnerable and food-insecure rural households.** Transformative functions of the Sector Reform Contract will be i) increasing MOALI's reach to the most vulnerable rural populations by scaling up inclusive nutrition-sensitive agricultural services; ii) supporting MOALI's efforts to establish accountability for the achievement of goals in nutrition (e.g. through nutrition-sensitive M&E systems; and iii) strengthening public financial management capacities in the agriculture sector.

Five departments have been prioritized for EU budget support based on their potential contribution to nutrition, existing support, and capacity. These include DoA, DALMS, DoP, DRD, and LBVD as described below (although SSID, DAR, and DOF could potentially also be included).

**Deliver increasingly inclusive extension services (DoA, extension and horticulture).** Most research and extension has focused on improving rice yields to ensure food security. Given existing nutrient gaps, seeds and extension services for the cultivation of Vitamin A and iron-rich fruits and vegetables remain limited. In the face of increasingly erratic weather and diseases propagated by climate change, improved seeds and diversification are critical. Indeed, there is high demand for perishable fruits and vegetables that are chemical free, within Myanmar and across its borders. Improving farmers' access to these seeds and support services can help farmers to diversify local production systems, build more lucrative and resilient livelihoods, while effective service delivery can support women's decision-making, regarding activities along the value chains. Improving DAR research, Yezin University areas of focus, and the curricula of the SAIs may help build the path to improved diversification.

**Scale up inclusive delivery of veterinary /livestock services for small livestock (LBVD).**

As indicated in the MS-NPAN, "Animal-sourced foods (ASF) including meat, eggs, and dairy products are a rich source of protein, vitamins, iron, calcium, and folate ...meat is almost exclusively sold and purchased. Increasing the consumption of animal-based foods will likely depend on income generation and market infrastructures, including food safety of animal-based products." Nevertheless, "For landless households, particularly in the uplands, backyard poultry and ownership of small ruminants can offer a good source of petty cash and protein. These diversification activities can reduce idiosyncratic risks, serve as informal economic safety nets during extreme events or disasters, and help articulate the role of women and children in household-level risk reduction." If livestock services are "pro-poor (targeting landless, marginalized peoples and women), support to livestock raising can serve as an effective means for poverty alleviation" and women's empowerment (Myanmar's Multi-sectoral National Plan of Action for Nutrition, 2018).

**Increase access to safe water, subnational food and nutrition planning, vocational training and access to village development funds through DRD.**

Overall, DRD plays a catalytic role in planning and livelihoods strengthening, thereby improving income generation as well as improving access to improved water across the country. With the reduction of GAD's role, DRD has become an important stakeholder at the township level for channelling funds, and liaising with other departments to provide technical backstopping for community driven development projects. While the existence of improved water sources is quite impressive in Myanmar, with eight out of ten households having access to safe water, the safe and proper use of the water remains inadequate, with the result that diarrhoea and parasitic infections are widespread. While part of the WASH Action Plan, DRD activities to construct tube wells and deliver WASH education (MoHS) do not; DRD could act as a convener to facilitate this convergence.

**Scaled up-delivery of land titles to the poorest people and women (DALMS).** The diversification of agriculture production is not underpinned by an enabling land tenure framework. In fact, current land legislation may drive smallholder farmers away from engaging in nutrition-sensitive production systems such as agroforestry, aquaculture-livestock mixes, orchard-annual crops-legumes systems, and shifting cultivation. Obtaining long-term tenure security over non-staple production systems through land titling is difficult, even more so for women than for men. Current procedures to convert smallholder farmers' annual crop fields into integrated systems are cumbersome and expensive, and therefore are not followed, resulting in tenure insecurity and possible land loss. The ADS addresses the challenges for smallholders to produce a more diversified basket of food products, both for their own consumption and for income generation. In his function as Chairman of the National Land Use Council, the Vice President recently emphasized the importance of the work processes that constitute the land component of the ADS (Outcome 1.6). These include diversified land use, security and stability of land use rights for small plot holders and landless farmers, which are an important enabling factor for engaging in higher income-generating agriculture activities, diversifying production systems, and improving women's control over resources. Formal land titling and formal land conversions are important in Myanmar, as these are prerequisites for landholders to access certain services such as seasonal credit.

**Robust support to public finance management reform is required (MoPF and MoALI).** PFM practices at MoALI are expected to be modernized in compliance with the national PFM Reform Agenda driven by MoPF. Of particular importance is the necessity for MoALI to align its budget structure with the ADS and MS-NPAN and to include performance indicators (including indicators linked to nutrition) in the budget proposal submitted to parliament. Additional support is required to strengthen the capacities of the regional planning processes at the level of townships/states and regions.

Required support actions include:

- » Perform a functional analysis of the PFM systems and consolidate the core PFM functions under one PS or by DG for monitoring and consolidation of procurement, payroll, and financial reporting functions.
- » Empower DoP with all planning responsibilities at union level and authority over the planning divisions of the other departments. Formulate detailed annual action plans for the implementation of the ADS by pillars/outputs and revise the financing needs based on realistic costing.
- » Embark upon the PFM reform agenda defined by MoPF, particularly regarding procurement (new law), comprehensive and timely financial reporting (e.g. through MoPF monthly training for electronic budget reporting) to facilitate informed management decision and improve absorptive capacity for additional financing in the medium term.
- » Integrate external financing under one plan and one budget and hold departments accountable for their use of all resources available.
- » Review the capital spending allocation and screening of projects and investments in light of the ADS priorities and formulate clear Public Investment Management (PIM) criteria and guidelines for capital planning and execution.
- » Strengthen capacities in MoALI, in particular for: i) horizontal and vertical financial management (from MoALI to village level), in areas such as planning and budgeting, including medium-term planning-budget integration, budget presentation and fiscal transparency, internal control and, possibly, internal audit; and ii) human resources planning, allocation and management–project modality (direct management).

**This package of budget support will be complemented by technical assistance, continued funding to LIFT and support for value chain development.**

## 7.5 RESEARCH

**Data and knowledge need to be produced shared with decision-makers to inform evidence-based agriculture for nutrition policies and programmes.** Efficient approaches need to be tested for the delivery of nutrition-sensitive agriculture and land services (e.g. by combining pilot activities with applied research to generate scalable practices). This will require increased capacities for applied research on nutrition-sensitive agriculture by the Department of Agricultural Research and partner institutions. FIRST will collaborate with other technical assistance partners to help APU make strategic requests for research projects based on identified needs and gaps. This will further require capacity strengthening on nutrition-sensitive agriculture for MoALI staff, front-line workers, and academic institutions, including the Department of Agriculture Research, and state and regional agricultural training institutes. Finally, it is important that the MS-NPAN has some form of baseline. Whether this means integrating the MDD-W into the next DHS or ensuring that all implementing partners utilize the same indicators remains to be determined.

**Nutrition-sensitive agricultural interventions need to be piloted, scaled up and complemented by social safety nets, nutrition social behaviour change communication (SBCC), and WASH promotion.** Non-governmental organizations are already piloting and testing innovative and cost-effective approaches to deliver nutrition-sensitive agriculture services such as dietary diversity promotion through extension services and inclusive agriculture, veterinary, and land and livelihood support. However, this work could benefit from improved coherence of messages, potentially part of a comprehensive SBCC strategy that could be adapted and delivered through various agriculture-related public and private channels. Secondly, stronger convergence with other services delivered that also address underlying causes of malnutrition would be beneficial such as promotion of Infant and Young Child Feeding Practices, access to improved water, WASH education, and backyard poultry or aquaculture in the same community. In remote and conflict areas where MOALI has a limited presence, it is expected that these interventions and convergence will be – albeit not exclusively – supported by LIFT. FIRST will continue to work with the EU, one of LIFT's largest donors, to encourage coherence with ADS and MS-NPAN.

## 7.6 LINKING THEMATIC AREAS

**Using common indicators across programmes to address agriculture for nutrition.** With support from its Board (including EU with FIRST inputs), LIFT has agreed to a common results framework, including a number of key agriculture-nutrition indicators also suggested in the MS-NPAN and ADS Outcome 1.8. These include MDD-W, WAEI, and FIES. It would be ideal for MDD-W to be considered across all projects promoting the diversification of agricultural production systems and diets. This could be suggested to the SUN CSA network, many of whom already work as LIFT implementing partners. The NSRC will also support MOALI to collect MDD-W data, with technical assistance from the Complementary Service provider.



**Linking climate change and nutrition.** Myanmar is highly likely to be affected by climate change. While recognized in the MS-NPAN, arguments for the link between climate change-agriculture diversification-resilience-and nutrition could be strengthened. Considering the seasonal fluctuations in access to micronutrient-dense foods, this link also serves multiple purposes. FAO is strategically placed to link climate change effects with nutrition through its GEF-funded projects, FishAdapt, and the FIRST programme.

**Gender issues need to be better recognized by the public sector in Myanmar.** Except for two DDG's, there is no senior-level female representation in MoALI. Furthermore, there is no official gender focal point in MoALI. The Ministry of Agriculture from Japan has offered to deliver training on gender in MoALI. This could serve as a starting point to further explore issues related to women's work, time and labour, unequal access to land (to promote co-titling), and access to other resources.

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