

# Country engagement strategy Myanmar

RECOFTC - The Center for People and Forests

2013-2018



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RECOFTC - The Center for People and Forests

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Bangkok, Thailand

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This publication has been generously funded by Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad), Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida).

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# Acronyms and abbreviations

<b>ADB</b>	Asian Development Bank
<b>AFoCo</b>	Asian Forest Cooperation Organization
<b>ASEAN</b>	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
<b>ASFCC</b>	ASEAN-Swiss Partnership on Social Forestry and Climate Change
<b>BANCA</b>	Biodiversity and Nature Conservation Association
<b>CARE</b>	Center for American Relief Everywhere
<b>CBNRM</b>	Community-based Natural Resource Management
<b>CC</b>	Climate Change
<b>CCVfV</b>	Central Committee for the Management of Vacant, Fallow and Virgin Lands
<b>CDNA</b>	Capacity Development Needs Assessment
<b>CES</b>	Country Engagement Strategy
<b>CF</b>	Community Forestry
<b>CFI</b>	Community Forestry Instruction
<b>CFNWG</b>	Community Forestry National Working Group
<b>CFPWG</b>	Community Forestry Provincial Working Group
<b>CFUG</b>	Community Forest User Group
<b>COMFORT</b>	Community Forestry Training and Extension Project
<b>CSO</b>	Civil Society Organization
<b>DFID</b>	Department for International Development (UK)
<b>DFO</b>	District Forest Officer
<b>ECCDI</b>	Ecosystem Conservation and Community Development Initiative
<b>EcoDev</b>	Economically Progressive Ecosystem Development
<b>EITI</b>	Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative
<b>ELM</b>	Enhancing Livelihoods and Markets
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>FAO</b>	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
<b>FD</b>	Forest Department
<b>FDI</b>	Foreign Direct Investment
<b>FFS</b>	Farmers' Field School
<b>FLEGT</b>	Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade
<b>FMB</b>	Farmland Management Body
<b>FREDA</b>	Forest Resource Environment Development and Conservation Association
<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product
<b>GO</b>	Government Organization
<b>INGO</b>	International Non-government Organization
<b>JICA</b>	Japan International Cooperation Agency

<b>MCP</b>	RECOFTC Myanmar Country Program
<b>M&amp;E</b>	Monitoring and Evaluation
<b>MoAI</b>	Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation
<b>MoECaF</b>	Ministry of Environmental Conservation and Forestry
<b>MoU</b>	Memorandum of Understanding
<b>MoV</b>	Means of Verification
<b>NGO</b>	Non-government Organization
<b>Norad</b>	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
<b>NTFP</b>	Non-timber forest product
<b>PA</b>	Protected Area
<b>PAR</b>	Participatory Action Research
<b>PES</b>	Payments for Ecosystem Services
<b>PFCC</b>	People, Forests and Climate Change
<b>PFE</b>	Permanent Forest Estate
<b>PLUP</b>	Participatory Land-use Planning
<b>PM&amp;E</b>	Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation
<b>RECOFTC</b>	RECOFTC – The Center for People and Forests (Regional Community Forestry Training Center for Asia and the Pacific)
<b>REDD+</b>	Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries, and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries
<b>RNE</b>	Royal Norwegian Embassy
<b>SIGE</b>	Social Inclusion and Gender Equity
<b>SCF</b>	Securing Community Forestry
<b>SDC</b>	Swiss Development Cooperation
<b>SI</b>	Solidarités International
<b>SLRD</b>	Settlement and Land Records Department
<b>TA</b>	Technical Assistance
<b>TFC</b>	Transforming Forest Conflict
<b>TFO</b>	Township Forest Officer
<b>ToT</b>	Training of Trainers
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNODC</b>	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
<b>USAID/RDMA</b>	United States Agency for International Development/Regional Development Mission for Asia
<b>VFV</b>	Vacant, Fallow and Virgin (lands)
<b>VPA</b>	Voluntary Partnership Agreement
<b>WCS</b>	Wildlife Conservation Society

# Executive summary

About half of Myanmar's land area (almost 68 million ha) is classified as forest area (32 million ha). Most of the 20 million ha of other wooded land is fallow land used by villagers for shifting cultivation. About 20 to 25 million people out of a total population of 60 million are estimated to use forests as one of their sources of livelihoods. Most of these people live below the national poverty line.

A restricted form of community forestry (CF) was introduced in the early 1990s, resulting in the establishment of about 700 forest communities managing an area of over 60 000 ha. The government is targeting the establishment of 900 000 ha under CF by 2030.

The political and economic reforms initiated in 2011 are expected to contribute to more conducive policy and regulatory frameworks for expanding and strengthening CF development, building on the capacity acquired by the Forest Department (FD) and non-government organizations (NGOs) in the initial CF activities.

The RECOFTC Myanmar Country Program (MCP) proposes to support this initiative by enhancing capacity development of key stakeholders, contributing to an enabled regulatory framework, producing strategic communications and demonstrating good practices in pilot projects. For this purpose, the expected outcomes of the country programme for 2013-2018 include:

- To secure CF through more effective institutions and resources:
  - The Community Forestry National Working Group (CFNWG), civil society organizations (CSOs) and participants in capacity development programmes have enhanced capacities to provide quality support to communities;
  - Revised forest laws and instructions relevant to CF are initiated to secure CF;
  - Communication products are used by CF practitioners, government agencies and communities, and are referred to by other people for securing CF; and
  - A strengthened network of CF research sites is piloted to increase understanding on successful CF development.
- To enhance local livelihoods and market access through sustainable CF practices:
  - Key stakeholders from government organizations (GOs), CSOs, community forest user groups (CFUGs) and the private sector are able to apply market analysis to enable institutional support for enhancing livelihoods and markets;
  - A framework and model of the market-led approach for CF are researched and piloted;
  - Relevant actors and the general public have increased awareness and understanding on the market-led approach for CF; and
  - The model of the market-led approach is replicated and continued.
- To strengthen enabling conditions for local people's engagement in the governance of forested landscapes in the context of climate change:
  - Trained participants facilitate incorporation of forest-based mitigation and adaptation options in their capacity development techniques;
  - Forest-based mitigation and adaptation policies, guidelines and a framework are formulated that take into account issues and concerns of grassroots communities;
  - Partners and stakeholders, including local communities, have increased awareness on national and international climate change initiatives through communication products; and
  - Best practices of climate change integration in CF are piloted and replicated in different regions.



- To enhance effectiveness and support the establishment of institutions to transform forest conflicts:
  - GO and CSO staff gain more understanding and capacities in transforming forest conflicts and mediation techniques to provide better quality support to local communities;
  - A framework for transforming forest conflicts is adopted in CF policy and management plans;
  - Awareness on transforming forest conflicts is raised among CF practitioners, government agencies and communities through communication products; and
  - Best conflict management practices are replicated and continued.





# RECOFTC's vision and mission

RECOFTC's vision is that 'empowered local people are effectively and equitably engaged in the sustainable management of forested landscapes.' To achieve this, RECOFTC has missions to enhance capacities for stronger rights, improve governance and ensure fairer benefits for local people in sustainable forested landscapes in the Asia and Pacific region.

RECOFTC's vision and mission in national CF development is based on its Strategic Plan for 2013-2018 (RECOFTC, 2013) and its analysis of the status, prospects and priorities for national CF development in Myanmar. In this section, a brief description of RECOFTC's past activities, the current status of RECOFTC's country programme and the strategic programme framework are presented.

## 1.1 RECOFTC's history of CF development support

Historically, RECOFTC has been involved in supporting CF development in Myanmar through regional training and networking activities. In the wake of the recent political changes in Myanmar, RECOFTC was invited to support CF development in the country through various collaborative activities. Starting in 2011, these activities included support to an Oikos-implemented CF project in Rakhine State, participation in the review of CF with the Pyoe Pin programme, support to JICA's Integrated Mangrove Rehabilitation and Management project in the Ayeyawady Delta, participation in identification of biodiversity hotspots and landscape with the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), implementation of an ASEAN-Swiss Partnership on Social Forestry and Climate Change (ASFCC) project funded by Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC) and grassroots capacity development for Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries, and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries (REDD+). Also a scoping study for CF development was carried out in late 2011, followed by implementation of a one-year pilot project. In 2013, a capacity development needs assessment (CDNA) for CF and capacity development for REDD+ were carried out. The lessons from in-country activities, scoping study (RECOFTC, 2012) and CDNA (Aung, 2013) have contributed for the development of RECOFTC's Country Engagement Strategy for 2013-2018.

In January 2013, RECOFTC and the FD signed a five-year MoU for promoting sustainable community-based forest management and capacity development. RECOFTC's offices in Myanmar are located in the FD in Yangon and Naypyitaw.

## 1.2 RECOFTC's Strategic Plan 2013-2018

RECOFTC's thematic areas and functional approaches are outcome-driven and focus on addressing key issues to achieve measurable progress towards positive changes in rights, governance and benefits (Table 1).

Table 1. RECOFTC's thematic areas

Thematic areas	Strategic outcomes
Securing community forestry	Institutions and resources for securing community forestry are more effective.
Enhancing livelihoods and markets	Institutions are actively enhancing local livelihoods through sustainable CF practices.
People, forests and climate change	Enabling environments for local people's engagement in forested landscapes in the context of climate change impacts are strengthened.
Transforming forest conflicts	Institutions to transform conflict are in place and becoming more effective.

These results will derive from achieving intermediate outcomes that are the result of four functional approaches applied in each thematic area both in regional and country programmes (Table 2).

Table 2. RECOFTC's functional approaches

Functional approaches	Intermediate outcomes
Training and learning networks	Enhanced capacities are used by key stakeholders to provide quality support and professional advice to local communities.
Research, analysis and synthesis	Enabling policies and regulatory instruments are adopted to enhance the rights of local people, improve forest governance and ensure a fairer share of benefits.
Strategic communications	Communications strategies are used to enhance awareness, attitudes and behaviours among target audiences.
Piloting and demonstrating	Improved practices adopted in CF are effectively replicated.

During this strategic plan period, RECOFTC will enhance the value of its approach by fostering a learning culture and creating a learning environment within RECOFTC and with its partners, and placing increased emphasis on addressing the cross-cutting issues of:

- **Social inclusion and gender equity through a rights-based approach**  
 Key components are laid out in the strategic plan to ensure that a socially inclusive approach is mainstreamed across thematic areas and functional approaches with systematic and participatory monitoring and evaluation (M&E) mechanisms. These are an integration of social and gender equity perspectives in regional and country-specific programmes and projects; organizational capacity development with supportive functions, processes and policies; expansion of social inclusion and gender-focused work; and knowledge sharing for social- and gender-responsive policy and practice.
- **CF leadership development**  
 This initiative consolidates RECOFTC's core business of strengthening and expanding CF in the region with a targeted approach to identifying and cultivating 'agents of change' within the field of CF. Building on RECOFTC's extensive CF networks and learning from cutting-edge leadership development approaches being pioneered elsewhere, RECOFTC will identify and cultivate long-term relationships with key individuals demonstrating the potential to bring about real and effective change in the field of CF.
- **Participatory monitoring and evaluation (PM&E)**  
 Active engagement with key stakeholders in assessing the progress of the programme or project and in particular the achievement of results is the focus of this cross-cutting effort. Through their active

engagement, stakeholders are enabled to share control over the content, the process and the results of the M&E activities. Consequently, the assessments and learning from changes become more inclusive and responsive to the needs of the people directly affected, building ownership and empowering beneficiaries. Eventually, accountability and transparency, including timely corrective actions for improved performance and outcomes can be pursued.

In complementary with its regional work, RECOFTC will consolidate and expand its engagement with eight focal countries: Cambodia, P.R. China, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Nepal, Thailand and Viet Nam. RECOFTC will also continue to engage with other countries in the region and beyond, where it can add value and find opportunities for mutual learning.

The focus of the country programmes is on supporting development and building capacity for the implementation of national CF programmes through:

- Development of individual and organizational capacities for CF development;
- CF development at the field level through:
  - Identification of potential forest communities;
  - Formalization of CF institutions and framework;
  - Management planning of CF institutions for sustainable CF management; and
  - Ongoing management/implementation/institutional development.
- CF networks and coordination (within and between stakeholder groups);
- CF research and information management (including M&E); and
- Policy, legislation and administrative development.

**Table 3. Proposed framework for national CF programme components**

1 Training	2 CF Development		3 Information Management and Communication	4 Networks and learning groups	5 Policy and regulatory framework development
	CF establishment and management	Additional subcomponents			
Needs assessment	Identification – communities and forests	Institutional development	Research	CF membership networks	Review
Course & material development	Formalization	Enterprise development	M&E	Multistakeholder networks and learning groups	Clarification
Training/ coaching	Management planning	PES and climate change mitigation	Database and mapping	National CF working group	Revision
	Implementation	Climate change adaptation	Communication and outreach	Regional and global networking (e.g. ASEAN)	Budget allocation, sustainable financing and investment
		Alternative livelihoods			

RECOFTC will support the formation or strengthening of national multistakeholder CF working groups and align its portfolio of in-country initiatives with national CF programmes. This national CF programme components framework builds upon initiatives and experiences of relevant stakeholders in CF development.



# 2

## National development context

### 2.1 Geography, population and economy

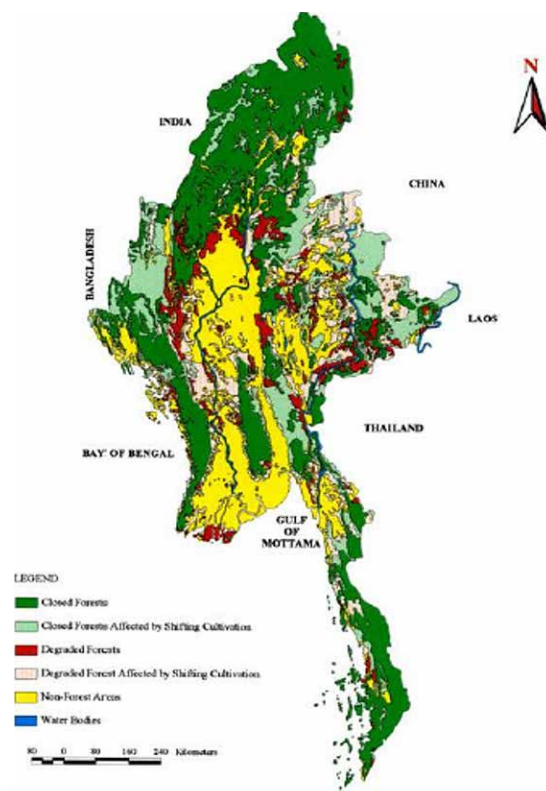
Myanmar's current population is estimated at around 60 million people, 50 to 60 percent residing in rural areas. It is thought that up to 70 percent of the rural population depends on forests for their basic needs. If this speculation is accurate then 20 to 25 million people depend (in many different ways and to varying degrees) on forests for their livelihoods.

According to data from 2009, contributions to GDP from agriculture, services and industry were 40, 37 and 21 percent respectively. GDP has grown in the past decade at around 5 percent per year. Much of this growth is a result of foreign direct investment (FDI) in the extraction of natural resources, particularly for power, oil and gas, and gems. Eighty percent of the total FDI is channeled into power, oil and gas. Agriculture and livestock only attract 1.1 percent. The FDI structure in Myanmar has been described as environmentally unfriendly and a non-contributor to the development of a green economy, as most of the foreign investment in sectors is related to natural resource extraction (Naing, 2012).

Timber contributed to 11 percent of total exports in 2001/2002, declining to 6 percent in 2008/2009 (Naing, 2012); 60 to 70 percent of timber export earnings come from teak, increasingly from lower grades than Myanmar was once famous for (Woods and Canby, 2011). In April 2014, a new law on banning raw log export was enforced, however sawnwood and finished products only constitute a small part of wood exports. The main market for wood export is presently India (Woods and Canby, 2011).

Myanmar's total land area is 67.7 million ha; forest covers 32 million ha (48 percent of the total land area). Other wooded land extends over 20 million ha (FAO, 2010).

Figure 1. Myanmar forest cover



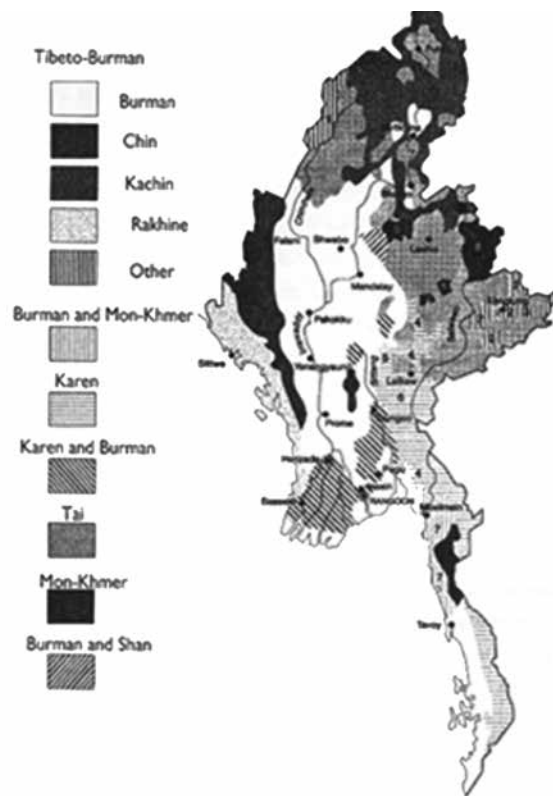
Source: Tint et al. (2011).

As the forest cover map shows, most of the closed forest area occurs in the north, south and west of the country, with little forest in the central dry zone.

Most forest areas are predominantly populated by different ethnic groups, each with their own customary arrangements for resource management. In many cases, rotational forms of upland agriculture ('shifting cultivation') form an important part of these customary arrangements.

It is estimated that ethnic groups comprise about 30 to 40 percent of Myanmar's population (Springate-Baginsky, 2012). As many of these groups have been in armed conflict with the central government for a long time, natural resources (including timber) have often been used to finance their struggle for independence (Woods and Canby, 2011). Under the new government peace treaties have been concluded with most of these groups, thereby creating conditions conducive for promoting more sustainable forms of forest management, building on customary arrangements. The recent insurgencies of different ethnic groups are reflected in the economic policies of the government that emphasize regional balance and inclusiveness.

Figure 2. Distribution of ethnic groups in Myanmar



Source: [www.burmacampaign.org.uk](http://www.burmacampaign.org.uk)

## 2.2 National social and economic development

Myanmar was one of the wealthiest and most developed countries in the region in the 1950s. The socialist system introduced in 1962, however, prevented the realization of Myanmar's development potential. In the 1990s, the economy started to recover after the introduction of market reforms. However, Myanmar remains one of the poorest countries in the world with a per capita GDP of US\$821 (in 2011), despite an average growth rate of 5 percent in the period 2005-2010 (Naing, 2012). It is estimated that one in four people lives below the national poverty line. Survey findings indicate that the incidence of poverty declined from 32 percent in 2005 to 26 percent in 2010. The rural poor account for 84 percent of the total poor population but there is much regional variation in poverty. The highest poverty rates are found in Chin State (73 percent), Rakhine State (44 percent), Tanintharyi Region (33 percent), Shan State (33 percent) and the Ayeyawady Region (32 percent) (UNDP, 2012).

Since the major political changes in 2011, Myanmar has been liberalizing trade, encouraging foreign investment and strengthening its financial sector. Myanmar has good potential for economic growth based on its rich natural resources and geographic location. It could grow at 7 to 8 percent per year for a decade or more and raise its per capita income from US\$2 000 to 3 000 by 2030 (ADB, 2012).

Three complementary development strategies (regional integration, inclusiveness and environmental sustainability) are the basis for the four economic policies proposed by the new government: 1) sustaining agricultural development towards industrialization and comprehensive development; 2) balanced and proportionate development among states and regions with equal shares of budget and taxation, foreign aid and foreign and local investment; 3) inclusive growth for the entire population; and 4) compilation of quality and accurate statistics (Kudo and Kumagai, 2012).



The National Plan for 2011-2015 aims at a rise in per capita GDP of 1.7 times more than that of 2010, an objective that is considered overambitious by some economic experts (Kudo and Kumagai, 2012). The goals of the 2009 National Sustainable Development Strategy also refer to a) sustainable management of natural resources; b) integrated economic development; and c) sustainable social development (National Commission for Environmental Affairs, 2009).

Many observers have identified major institutional challenges that need to be addressed in order to achieve these goals; Clapp and Dimaggio (2013) identified ten key challenges to sustain Myanmar's transition (Box 1). Many of these also represent challenges in the management of natural resources, including land and forest management.

#### Box 1. Ten key challenges for Myanmar's development

1. Professionalizing the military's political and economic role.
2. Upholding the rule of law and strengthening the judiciary.
3. Protecting individual rights.
4. Developing effective means for ethnic equality.
5. Instilling social and religious tolerance.
6. Rooting-out corruption.
7. Strengthening the implementation capacity of government institutions.
8. Reforming benefits for the broader population.
9. Addressing land and property rights.
10. Creating mechanisms for trade-offs between economic development and social and environmental protection.

Source: Clapp and Dimaggio (2013).

## 2.3 Land and forest resources

The area of closed forest has significantly decreased in the past 20 years. 'Open forest' has increased more but this is not the case for 'other lands'. Evidently forest degradation is more of a problem than deforestation.

Of the total forest area of 32 million ha, a little over half (18.4 million ha in 2006) is designated as 'permanent forest estate', with the remaining 15.6 million ha (2006) designated as public forest (Tint et al., 2011).

As Table 4 demonstrates, there are serious deficiencies in securing land tenure by local communities in all categories of land, with the possible exception of farmland for which records exist. The issue is urgent in view of the opening up of the economy for foreign (and domestic) investment, as also indicated in the ten key challenges for Myanmar's transition (Box 1).

Table 4. Administration, conflicts and tenure security in different land categories

Land category	Administrative authority	Nature of land conflicts	State of tenure security
Reserved forest land	FD, MoECaF DoF, MLFRD FMB, MoAI	Agro-industrial crop development (forest and non-forest crops)	Weak tenure security of rural populations for farming or traditional use of these lands; not allowed for other land use by the public.  However, villagers can obtain tenure rights over the encroached permanent farmland and settlements inside the reserve forest land.  According to the Fishery Act, the licensee can fish inside the community forests in reserved forests of the Ayeyawady Delta.
Protected public forest land	FD, MoECaF	Non-recognition of customary communal use of protected forest lands, high risk of encroachment	Weak tenure security of rural populations for farming or traditional use of these lands; not allowed for other land use by the public.
Public forest land (virgin land)	FD, MoECaF <sup>1</sup> SLRD, MoAI CCVfV	Agro-industrial developments, non-recognition of customary use of public forest lands, high risk of encroachment	Weak tenure security of rural populations for farming or traditional use of these lands often located in upland areas.
Vacant and fallow land	SLRD, MoAI CCVfV, MoAI	Agro-industrial developments, non-recognition of customary communal land use, conflict between grazing and agriculture	Weak tenure security of rural populations for farming or traditional use of these lands often located in upland areas. No tenure or tax records issued.
Farmland	SLRD, MoAI FMB, MoAI	Agro-industrial developments, non-recognition of customary communal land use, buying and selling of land outside of prescribed rules or procedures, land conflicts among individual farmers	Greater land tenure security than in other land classes because of records of land-use rights. Weaknesses in tenure security because of lack of information on value of land, poor record keeping, ability of the government to acquire land for other purposes, including business promotion.

Note: FD = Forest Department; MoECaF = Ministry of Environmental Conservation and Forestry; DoF = Department of Fisheries; MLFRD = Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries and Rural Development; FMB = Farmland Management Body; MoAI = Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation; SLRD = Settlement and Land Records Department; CCVfV = Central Committee for the Management of Vacant, Fallow and Virgin Lands.

Source: Adapted from Oberndorf (2012)

The other issues to be considered are the overlap in mandates of different government organizations in administering public forest (virgin) land, and vacant and fallow lands.

1. The FD, MoECaF will be involved where the SLRD of the MoAI agrees to allow CF establishment in this category.

## 2.4 Forest administration and policy

The present state of forest administration and policy is to be seen against a historical background of world-renowned forest administrative and policy arrangements based on the Myanmar Selection System. This provided the basis for large-scale sustainable logging until the 1970s, when central planning without reference to local conditions was introduced. Another well-known forest management system developed in Myanmar is the 'taungya' system, based on agroforestry in teak plantations. Subsequent changes in forest administration were influenced by the state's need for foreign exchange in the 1970s and 1980s, the market reforms in 1988 and increasing private sector involvement (also from Thailand and China) in logging and timber trade (Woods and Canby, 2011).

In the 1990s the government introduced legislation to enhance the sustainability of forest management. The 1992 Forest Law supports conservation, sustainable forestry and generation of socio-economic benefits. In addition the law supports limited decentralization, encouraging the private sector and community participation in forest management (Woods and Canby, 2011). Updated Forest Working Plans have been developed which include harvesting of non-timber forest products (NTFPs), biodiversity conservation and the well-being of local people in addition to timber production. Also new Administrative District Forest Management Plans have been prepared for 61 districts, acting as a more decentralized forest management planning system (Woods and Canby, 2011).

The National Forestry Action Plan (2001-2030) includes a wide range of activities, including a proposal to institutionalize CF as an integral part of a wider national sustainable forest management strategy, with a target of bringing 0.92 million ha under CF management by 2031 (RECOFTC, 2011). More recent policy developments aim to reduce illegal logging and promote value addition through processing in-country and branding for high end markets, hence the banning of the export of logs and the initiation of discussions on a Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) with the European Union (EU) under its Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) program.





# 3

## Context for community forestry development

### 3.1 Development trends and strategies

The main trends in development in Myanmar derive from the ongoing political and economic reform processes. Since the initiation of the reform process in 2011, reconciliation with the opposition and peace-making with ethnic minorities have been important achievements. Also press freedom has been promoted and overall the space for civil society has opened up, with NGOs allowed to form and participate in political life and socio-economic development. In 2013 (the third year in the reform process), the focus shifted to administrative reform to reduce bureaucratic constraints and corruption and to meet standards for transparency, accountability, citizens' participation, technology and innovations. An anti-corruption committee was formed and the government signed on to the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) (Clapp and DiMaggio, 2013). It is particularly the opening up of space for civil society and these administrative reforms that could provide a good basis for CF development as well as the administrative and legislative reforms required for it. Another element of great potential importance for land tenure reform is the development of the national parliament into a powerful centre of reform, taking initiative in oversight of the executive branch and legislative reform (Clapp and DiMaggio, 2013; ADB, 2012).

Examples of such legislative initiatives are the Farmland Law and the Vacant, Fallow and Virgin (VfV) Lands Law approved by parliament on 30 March 2012. The law recognizes non-rotational taungya as a legitimate form of land use and also acknowledges that farmers may use VfV lands without formal recognition by the government. However, overall the laws lack clarity and provide weak protection of the rights of smallholder farmers in upland areas and do not explicitly recognize the rights of women to register land rights. The laws are primarily designed to foster large-scale agricultural investments and provide inadequate safeguards for small farmers (Oberndorf, 2012). Moreover, some officials in strategic positions within government ministries are not entirely supportive of reform direction (Clapp and DiMaggio, 2013).

### 3.2 CF policies and resources

The 1992 Forest Law and 1995 Community Forestry Instruction (CFI) define CF very narrowly, with an emphasis on tree planting, reforestation and afforestation for fuelwood and other basic needs, limiting CF's potential as a 'pro-poor' vehicle for local economic self-development as well as excluding CF from more valuable natural forests (RECOFTC, 2011). The areas where CF can be established include "reserved and non-reserved forests, authorized by the government and the lands which could be managed by the government" (CFI cited in Tint et al., 2011).

The District Forest Officer (DFO) is, according to the Forest Law and CFI, authorized to facilitate and support CF establishment. The procedure prescribed in the CFI is that the local community has to form a CFUG and its members have to elect a management committee of five members minimum. The CFUG has to submit a request through the Township Forest Officer (TFO) to the DFO. If the application is accepted, the DFO has to identify the area, issue the permit and submit detailed data and a map of the area to the State or Regional Forestry Officer. After the VfV

Lands Law was issued in 2012, anyone who wants to use these lands needs to apply to the CCVFV, including for CF establishment.

The land lease is for 30 years, renewable depending on the performance and interest of the CFUG. Upon receiving permission to establish a CF, the CFUG has to draw up a management plan. After approval of the management plan, the DFO will issue the Community Forest Establishment Certificate, with forest rules, instructions and restrictions attached. If the CFUG violates the forest law and regulations, the DFO has the right to revoke the issue of the certificate.

The FD will provide inputs (seedlings) and technical advice to the CFUG, which has to protect and manage the forest according to the management plan. According to the CFI, seasonal and long-standing crops – such as orchard fruit species using appropriate spacing and planting techniques – are allowed in CF establishment. Shifting cultivation, however, is not permitted although trials are allowed in some controlled areas.

Surplus products from CF marketed within the village are tax exempt. If sold outside the village, tax at specified rates will be levied by the FD. Income is to be used for forest management and development, and surplus income can be used for social welfare and enterprise development. CFUG members will receive financial reports at least once a year. Forest products transported outside the township need a transport permit.

CFUGs must adhere to the instructions from the FD and any violation of forest laws and rules will be punished. Detailed records will be kept and inspected by TFOs and DFOs. By the end of the year, the management committee must submit a progress report to both entities within one month. A copy of which will be forwarded to the Director of the Planning and Statistics section of the FD (CFI in Tint et al., 2011).

After some years of implementation, a standing order was issued by the FD that the community forest certificate could only be issued after completion of the afforestation programme. This created confusion among district officers and staff implementing the CFI (Aung, 2013) and many community forests established under donor-funded programmes and/or with the active support from NGOs (Aung, 2013; Tint et al., 2011).

The achievements in implementing the CFI have been below expectations. In 2010, it was estimated that 572 CFUGs had been established, with 40 062 members, covering 42 148 ha. As the target for 2031 is over 900 000 ha, the pace of establishment will need to be stepped up considerably to achieve this target. There are indications of some acceleration. Recent reports indicate that by October 2012, the total number of CFs had reached 712 (Than, personal communication, 16 July 2013).



Despite the limitations in policy and implementation, the lessons learned from establishing CF based on the CFI 1995 are an important basis for the future development of the CF programme and policy in Myanmar.

Results from research in 16 community forests in Kachin, Mandalay, South Shan State and Ayeyawady demonstrate the effectiveness and relevance of CF as well as the needs for policy and legislative change for its further development. A summary of findings from this research is addressed in Box 2.

#### Box 2. Findings from CF research

The conditions in the CFUGs varied considerably; small villages (171 people) to towns (over 39 000 people); CFUG membership (from 5 to 263 families); area (33 to 1 200 acres); and age (from 4 to 16 years). In most CFUGs, the forests had been relatively degraded prior to CF establishment, in a few others the forest was in relatively better condition. In about half of the cases the CFUGs were well established and functioning; in three cases better-off villagers dominated the group. Effective arrangements for forest management and protection had been introduced in all cases, although problems were common with exclusion of outsiders (and limited or no support from the FD in addressing this), and many villagers were unclear about the legal status of selling teak.

Forest regeneration had occurred in almost all CFUGs, and forest health was moderately good in 13 out of 16 cases. In all cases there were considerable contributions by forests to livelihoods. Many opportunities were identified for improvement through livelihood-oriented forest management, value addition and marketing development. Only two cases had serious problems with inequitable sharing of benefits. In three cases the CFUGs were stagnant or inactive.

Altogether, there was only one case in which the CFUG was clearly dysfunctional. Half were working well and seven CFUGs experienced some problems that required post-formation (CF extension) support.

Source: Tint et al. (2011).

Community forestry evolution in Myanmar illustrates some challenges to sustaining reform in the forest and land sectors, and the need to consider both strengths and opportunities for CF development in parallel with the constraints and risks.



**Table 5. Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis for CF development and its policy environment in Myanmar**

Strengths	Weaknesses/constraints
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Strong commitment to reform, expected to be also reflected in forest and land policy, as well as CFI, granting more use rights to forests by communities</li> <li>2. Strong historical tradition of sustainable forest management</li> <li>3. Experience, lessons learned and stated commitment in CF development</li> <li>4. Basis for decentralized planning and management established</li> <li>5. Considerable and expanding number of (I)NGOs and donors introducing participatory and sustainable arrangements in forest management</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Weak rural forest and land tenure</li> <li>2. Obsolete land classification</li> <li>3. Overlapping institutional mandates in VFV land</li> <li>4. Unclear system of land-use planning</li> <li>5. Commercial use of forests by communities not permitted</li> <li>6. Top-down tradition/culture in the FD</li> <li>7. Limited understanding of CF principles and concepts</li> </ol>
Opportunities	Threats/risks
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Stated emphasis on balanced sustainable (economic, social and environmental) development</li> <li>2. Awareness in the forestry sector about the need to enhance sustainability and value addition</li> <li>3. Increased interest from donors in supporting sustainable, participatory development</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Use of forest and VFV land for large-scale commercial agricultural and forest development</li> <li>2. Ethnic conflicts affecting CF development</li> <li>3. Emphasis on coercive forest protection and conservation policies</li> <li>4. Forest and land receive lower priority in the reform process</li> </ol>

Source: adapted from ADB (2012).

The growing interest in addressing the role of forests in climate change adaptation and mitigation could provide new sources for addressing the constraints and reducing the risks for CF development in Myanmar (RECOFTC, 2012).

### 3.3 Stakeholders

The main stakeholders in CF development are the villagers whose sources of livelihood include forests and VFV lands; they reportedly comprise 70 percent of the rural population.

Villagers occupy a wide range of natural and socio-economic conditions (as illustrated in the CF research by Tint et al., 2011).

The strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for capacity development in CF of other stakeholders have been analysed in the CDNA commissioned by RECOFTC. The results are summarized in Table 6.



Table 6. CF development: SWOT analysis of stakeholder capacity

Stakeholders	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
FD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skilled foresters</li> <li>• Lead role in land use and poverty reduction</li> <li>• Collaboration with NGOs</li> <li>• Forest law to be revised</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low priority for CF</li> <li>• Limited extension skills</li> <li>• No CF law and budget</li> <li>• Coordination with other departments</li> <li>• No dedicated CF division</li> <li>• No clear policy on staff transfer</li> <li>• No social research skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased international collaboration with NGOs and INGOs involved in CF</li> <li>• Poverty is a priority</li> <li>• Climate change (REDD+)</li> <li>• Increased public awareness of the value of forests</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mechanisms to reach local communities</li> <li>• Policing role</li> <li>• Bureaucratic orientation</li> <li>• Insecurity of livelihoods</li> <li>• Language barriers</li> <li>• No financial support for social research</li> </ul>
Settlement and Land Records Department (SLRD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Authority over CF land allocation outside PFE</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of CF knowledge</li> <li>• Poor coordination with the FD</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NGOs could provide CF knowledge</li> <li>• Coordination with the FD via the CFNWG</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low interest in CF</li> </ul>
Department of Fisheries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Influence in the Ayeyawady Delta</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of CF knowledge</li> <li>• Poor coordination with the FD</li> <li>• Lack of understanding of CF rights</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordination with the FD via the CFNWG</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overlapping mandates</li> <li>• Competition between CF and fishery development</li> </ul>
NGOs (CSOs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training capacity</li> <li>• Networking</li> <li>• Social and facilitation skills</li> <li>• Policy advocacy</li> <li>• Research, knowledge sharing and demonstration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus more on targets than process</li> <li>• Limited CF understanding</li> <li>• Limited recognition of CFUG rights</li> <li>• Limited participatory planning skills</li> <li>• Weak forestry knowledge</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Donor interest in community-based approaches</li> <li>• Space from political reform</li> <li>• Trust-building capacity</li> <li>• Food security and environmental rehabilitation priorities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exclusion of some villagers</li> <li>• Limited facilitation of local rules</li> <li>• Poor law enforcement</li> <li>• Political conflict</li> </ul>

Note: PFE = Permanent Forest Estate; CFNWG = Community Forestry National Working Group.

Source: Aung (2013).

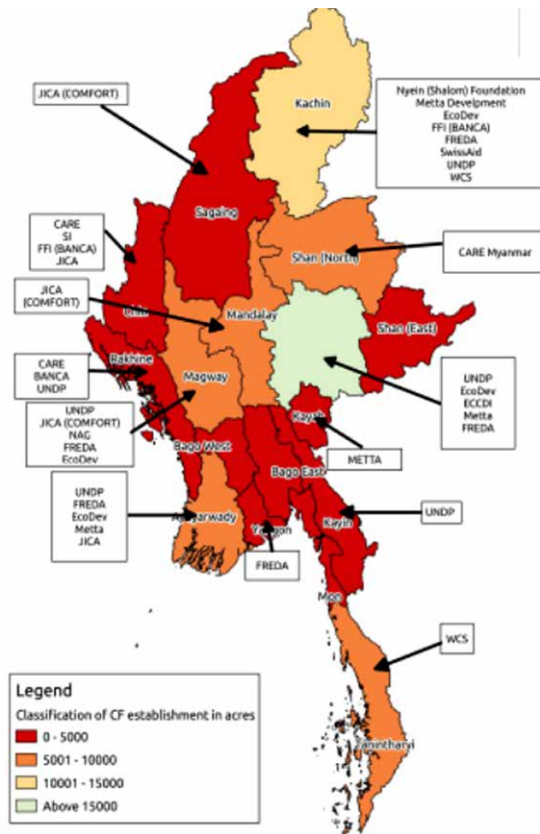
Additional stakeholders include local government bodies, traditional ethnic minority groups, other government committees, the growing number of private sector companies involved in commercial agriculture and forestry development and the various wood-processing (such as furniture) enterprises interested in sustainable supplies of raw materials.

For the main NGOs involved in CF development activities, the map in Figure 3 provides an overview of the initiatives in all regions and states – a pool of resources for potential collaboration in the development and implementation of a national CF programme.<sup>2</sup>

In Annex 4 of RECOFTC’s scoping mission report, a more detailed overview of key actors and initiatives in CF development is provided (RECOFTC, 2013). It is summarized in Table 7.

2. The map does not include all CF initiatives, e.g. Oikos in Rakhine and the DFID/Pyoee Pin programme.

Figure 3. Map of CF initiatives in Myanmar (1994-2013)



Source: Aung (2013).



Table 7. Actors and initiatives in CF development in Myanmar (1996-2013)

Actor	CF development initiative
UNDP (1994-2002)	Key support in early CF development; initiated the Environmental Thematic Working Group
FAO (1994-2002)	Technical assistance for the UNDP activities, till 2002
COMFORT (JICA)	25 training events with 424 staff trained by the Central Forestry Development Training Center
Forest Department	550 officials and 14 800 support staff; no CF division at national or subnational levels
Dry Zone Greening Department	137 officials and 3 094 subordinate staff; staff trained in CF by COMFORT
Forest Research Institute	Technical silvicultural and forest product research
University of Forestry	5-year BSc, 2-year MSc, 3-year PhD courses; 200 students/year; social forestry course
ECCDI	NGO run by senior ex-government officials, also involved in CF projects and research (see Tint et. al., 2011)
FREDA	NGO with forestry experts and others, focus on CF including 3 200 ha of CF mangroves
EcoDev	NGO of social entrepreneurs with 5 offices, 54 staff implementing 10 projects, facilitates networks for coordination and policy advocacy
CARE Myanmar	CF in Rakhine State, Southern Chin and Northern Shan; need for strengthening management and livelihood development
Pyoe Pin	CF in Kachin with EcoDev and Shalom
CES (coastal management)	Oikos with BANCA and RCCA in 2 townships
Oxfam UK	CF with ethnic minorities in northern Myanmar
Metta Development Foundation	Peace negotiators and other experts; grassroots and self-help initiatives: PAR and FFS
Mangrove and Environmental Rehabilitation Network (MERN)	Network of 20 organizations working in mangroves in the Ayeyawady Delta to share lessons and create an enabling pro-poor environment
Food Security WG	Initiated and facilitated by EcoDev, a platform to share knowledge and information. Works with EcoDev on CF in Kachin
WCS	Works with the FD's Nature and Wildlife Conservation Division through technical assistance in establishing new protected areas. Focus on CBNRM and use of PLUP in PA planning
JICA/FD mangrove project	Focus on co-existence between communities and mangrove forests in four reserved forests in the Ayeyawady Delta
Myanmar Forest School	Trains foresters (lowest level forestry official) to upgrade to (deputy) rangers at the township level. The more than 5 000 graduates are key people in facilitating CF
ASEAN SF network	Social forestry development support through the FD and Planning and Statistics Department, providing training in social forestry and climate change and strengthened participatory action research

Source: RECOFTC (2011), p. 36-42, Annex 4.

Note: PAR = participatory action planning; FFS = farmers' field school; PLUP = participatory land-use planning; PA = protected area; CBNRM = Community-based Natural Resource Management

## 3.4 Country CF development priorities

The objective of the National Forestry Action Plan (2001-2030) to institutionalize CF as an integral part of a wider national sustainable forest management strategy, with a target of bringing 0.92 million ha under CF management by 2031 (RECOFTC, 2011), is an important priority for guiding CF development. The basis for this target is an estimation of how much forest land is needed to fulfill rural households needs for fuelwood and so forth under the 'local supply working circle'. Clearly such a basis for setting the target needs to be reviewed due to demographic changes and changes in dependence on forest products (e.g. with rural electrification leading to a reduction in fuelwood needs).

In addition, the Government of Myanmar, through the President's Office, has made clear that community forestry is a high priority. To this end, the MoECaF has been directed to develop 'demonstration sites' in every state and region with a long-term objective of developing best practices in order to scale up towards national CF programme. Four sets of recommendations from research and reviews form the basis for the identification of country CF development priorities that guide the strengthening of CF arrangements, approaches and capacities. The first set is taken from the recommendations of the CF research study by the Ecosystem Conservation and Community Development Initiative (ECCDI) (Tint et al., 2011), the second from RECOFTC's CDNA (Aung, 2013), the third from the legal review of the farmland and VFV land laws (Oberndorf, 2012) and the fourth from the RECOFTC scoping mission (RECOFTC, 2013).

The recommendations from Tint et al. (2011) include:

- Strengthen the legal basis for CF – from instruction to new law;
- Enhance social inclusiveness – include all villagers, not just people from a self-selected group;
- Introduce a gender-specific and pro-poor approach in policy and extension support;
- Sustain and accelerate CFUG formation through prioritization of accelerated transfer of community forests and develop strategies, mechanisms and targets for doing this;
- Practical steps to meet the 2031 target include:
  - Identification of regional targets and interim (periodic) targets derived from them;
  - Allocation of adequate human and financial resources, and incentives for staff;
  - National-level awareness/publicity campaign for villagers to understand the CF programme and how to apply for this; and
  - Support stakeholders (CFUGs and NGOs) in implementation and facilitate the formation of multistakeholder coordination mechanisms (networks) at different levels.
- The best CFUGs need to be supported as they move into the 'second generation' phase of more active forest management and develop networks to support other CFUGs;
- The FD needs to play a lead role in CF extension support after formation of the CFUGs; and
- To support development of the CF extension programme, a social learning programme based on participatory action research with CFUGs needs to be developed and sustained in collaboration with NGOs and donor projects (Tint et al., 2011).

The recommendations from the CDNA report mirror those from the CF research study and include some additional specific capacity needs for the FD, such as facilitation skills and CF concepts and principles. Another recommendation is to assist in clarifying the role and contributions from CF in climate change adaptation and mitigation (REDD+).

The legal review of the farmland and VFV land laws recommends (Oberndorf, 2012):

- Strengthen protection against alienation or sale of communal land;
- Improve land titling procedures;
- Recognize and respect customary land use and customary laws;
- Improve the system of land classification based on participatory land-use planning at different levels (local and national);
- Strengthen the alienation right of the Community Forestry Certificate, e.g. mortgage; and
- Provide access to loans by authorized banks for FUGs, eventually leading to provision of an insurance system for CFs.

### 3.5 Risks

Risks are related to the possible loss of momentum and direction of the ongoing political reforms. The likelihood of that happening in the very near future is not very high and it is assumed that there will be sufficient momentum to support CF development, particularly if sufficient donor support for such development can be mobilized. More serious is the risk that vested commercial interests and rent-seeking administrators capture the space for initiatives in forest land development. The recent legal change related to VFV lands demonstrates this risk is real. Strong support for CF and local-level land-use planning is expected to provide some counterbalance to any unbridled expansion of commercial land concessions.

Other risks are related to the ethnic conflict in the country that may affect the willingness for granting rights and access to certain ethnic groups. It is expected that this may at worst affect only certain specific areas and groups, without affecting the expansion of CF in other areas.

Finally there are risks related to the high expectations of donors and partners. A clear and realistic programme with specified outcomes will need to be prepared, based on the engagement strategy, so as to enhance the generation of realistic expectations.





# 4

## RECOFTC's priorities and strategies

In this section, the priorities for RECOFTC's programme in Myanmar are identified, as well as indicative outcomes, outputs and strategies for addressing these priorities over time (the strategic plan for 2013-2018). Also, partners and donors potentially interested in collaborating and supporting the proposed priorities are identified.

### 4.1 Problem statement

Progress towards achieving the CF target has been very slow which can be linked to a number of issues as described already in sections 3.2 and 3.4. According to the CDNA (Aung, 2013), limited understanding of CF concepts and principles among different levels of the FD, other government agencies such as the SLRD and NGOs involved in CF establishment is one of the most important constraints to the success of CF. Although it was found that FD staff had moderate to high capacity on forestry-related practices, they need to improve their social skills such as facilitation, communication and mediation. In addition, realizing CF's potential to redress forest decline, improve rural livelihoods and increase resilience to climate change in Myanmar requires policy and legal change as well as stronger support at the field level, both for CF establishment (formation) and CF extension services.<sup>3</sup> The management plans of previous CFUGs were found to be difficult to understand and implement among villagers, resulting from lack of participation in developing their own management plans. Research on CF establishment – its strengths, weaknesses and socio-economic impacts in the changing context (such as climate change) – is inadequate to address the existing challenges for CF development in Myanmar.

### 4.2 Priorities

The RECOFTC scoping mission identified the following roles for RECOFTC in supporting CF development in Myanmar (RECOFTC, 2012):

- Support the establishment of a national CF working group and the development of a national CF programme strategy;
- Support capacity development for the FD and partners;
- Support demonstration of CF practices in partnership with existing projects;
- Facilitation of coordination and synergies between the government and NGOs;
- Enhance research capacity on CF; and
- Support demonstration and scaling up of CF practices in new areas.

3. CF extension refers to the advisory and information services provided to established CFUGs (e.g. post-formation support) and covers information and advice on forest management, livelihoods, enterprises and marketing, institutional development, CFUG governance and conflict management.

Based on the result of the scoping mission and priorities for CF development identified earlier, the priorities for RECOFTC's engagement in Myanmar are to assist in the development of an effective policy and regulatory framework, and approaches for securing CF; enhancing community livelihoods and market access through greater benefits from active CF management and enterprise development; improving the integration of CF in the national climate change adaptation and mitigation programme; and contributing to the development of approaches and capacity for transforming forest conflicts.

The functional approaches to addressing these priorities include training and learning networks; research, analysis and synthesis; strategic communication; and piloting and demonstrating initiatives as indicated in Table 8.

**Table 8. RECOFTC's CF development priorities (thematic areas) and approaches in Myanmar (2013-2018)**

Priorities/ approaches	Securing community forestry	Enhancing livelihoods and markets	Forests, people, and climate change	Transforming forest conflicts
<b>Training and learning networks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raise awareness of key actors;</li> <li>• Leadership development;</li> <li>• ToT and training in CF facilitation, extension and conflict mediation; and</li> <li>• Develop and share training and learning materials and experiences.</li> </ul>			
<b>Research analysis and synthesis</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contribute to policy assessments and reviews;</li> <li>• Contribute to the development of a regulatory framework and guidelines; and</li> <li>• Support national and subnational CF working groups and networks.</li> </ul>			
<b>Strategic communication</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Produce and share communication materials;</li> <li>• Organize workshops and seminars; and</li> <li>• Contribute to/participate in meetings organized by others.</li> </ul>			
<b>Piloting and demonstrating</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and develop at least one pilot site in each region (14 sites in all);</li> <li>• Contribute to design, research, documentation and sharing of lessons related to all four priorities; and</li> <li>• Support network(s) of CF pilot/good practice sites.</li> </ul>			

RECOFTC's social inclusion and gender equity (SIGE) cross-cutting theme ensures that inclusive approaches and methods are integral to the programme across all thematic areas and functional approaches. Key components of the SIGE cross-cutting theme are:

- Integration of social and gender equity perspectives in regional-and country-specific programmes and projects;
- Organizational capacity development and strengthening functions, processes and policies;
- Expansion of SIGE-specific work; and
- Knowledge sharing for social- and gender-responsive policy and practice.

RECOFTC targets gender-specific outcomes so that all relevant stakeholders will adopt gender practices in forestry-related programmes. Key stakeholders and partners' capacities on gender analysis and practices will be enhanced. In the initial year of the strategic plan, RECOFTC was successful in organizing gender leadership training in Myanmar for key stakeholders.



The Myanmar Country Program is developing a national communication strategy. The objectives of the strategy are to increase awareness among CF-related government agencies, CSOs and NGOs, the private sector, as well as CFUGs on the benefits of CF; to empower local people to effectively and equitably engage in the sustainable forest management; and to facilitate the establishment of an information network among CF stakeholders.

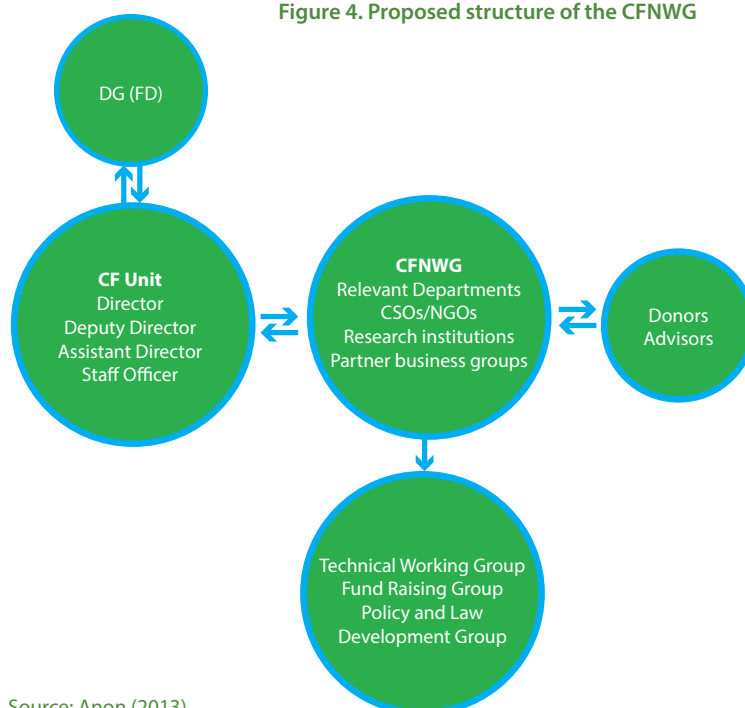
The primary target audiences are government agencies, local NGOs and CSOs, and local communities. The key messages are elaborated for each thematic area through the call-for-action focusing on adapting better policy and forest law, improving people's livelihoods and poverty reduction, ensuring more land tenure rights, equitable benefit sharing and good governance. Tools of the communication strategy (production and sharing of communication materials, Web sites, national forums, etc.) are presented in Table 8.

### 4.3 Partners

The main strategic partner in all activities is the FD with which RECOFTC has signed an MoU for 2013-2017. Other relevant departments in MoECaF are also important partners.

- Other programme and project partners include: The SLRD for securing CF and other relevant departments under the MoAI;
- Agencies under MoECaF, namely the Forest Research Institute for research activities, the Central Forestry Training and Development Centre (and its subcentre) for training activities;
- Local governments and traditional ethnic minority bodies;
- Other CSOs and NGOs (see Section 3.3 for details) such as EcoDev, Promotion of Indigenous and Nature Together, the Wildlife Conservation Society, the Development Foundation, etc.; and
- Organizations and international agencies actively involved in CF development and CF-related projects, including UN agencies such as FAO, UNDP, UNEP and UNODC which have demonstrated interest in contributing to institutional development through collaboration in the CFNWG (Anon, 2013).

Figure 4. Proposed structure of the CFNWG



Source: Anon (2013).

### 4.4 Donors

Donors with an expressed interest in supporting CF development in Myanmar include the United States Agency for International Development/Regional Development Mission for Asia (USAID/RDMA), Asian Development Bank (ADB), Norwegian agencies through Norad and Royal Norwegian Embassy (RNE), and Asian Forest Cooperation Organization (AFoCo), EU and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). In view of the political changes in Myanmar it is likely that more donors will become interested in the near future.

## 4.5 Thematic milestones

The country-specific targets and milestones identified for the 2013-2018 Myanmar Country Engagement Strategy fully integrate into RECOFTC's overall programme framework and are based on the initiatives and lessons from CF support activities carried out in 2011 and 2012.

As discussed already, a key element in the country strategy for Myanmar is to provide support to the formation of the CFNWG with representatives from relevant government agencies, research organizations, the private sector and CSOs/NGOs. The proposed objectives are to critically review the 1995 CFI and provide evidence-based recommendations for revised guidelines for CF development. Other objectives are to improve coordination and collaboration between CF development actors in policy and programme development, including CF research, extension and capacity development, particularly expediting the process of CF identification and establishment (Anon, 2013). RECOFTC's thematic programme milestones presented below will be submitted to the national working group for review and comments. Regular progress reports of the implementation of the milestones will also be periodically submitted and adjusted based on the working group's recommendations.

The summary of the thematic milestones for 2013-2018 in Table 9 provides an overview of Myanmar-specific milestones by thematic area and planned outputs consistent with RECOFTC programme activities, outputs, intermediate outcomes and strategic outcomes. New and existing projects will have their own M&E system due to donor requirements, but will always be designed to align with RECOFTC's overall programme framework.



Table 9. Thematic areas, outcomes and outputs of RECOFTC Strategic Plan (2013-2018)

Thematic areas		Securing community forestry (SCF)		
RECOFTC's strategic outcomes		Institutions and resources for securing CF are more effective.		
Functional approaches	Training and learning networks	Research, analysis and synthesis	Strategic communication	Piloting and demonstrating
<b>Country intermediate outcomes/targets</b>	<b>Training participants and CSOs apply their enhanced capacity to SFM.</b>	<b>Revised forest laws and instructions relevant to securing CF, adopt rights of local people, forest governance and a fairer share of benefits to women and marginalized people.</b>	<b>Communication products are used by CF practitioners, government agencies and communities as well as referred to by other people.</b>	<b>An approach in establishing a strengthened network of CF research sites across the country is piloted to increase understanding on successful CF development from local to national levels, and the learning is used by other networks.</b>
<b>Consolidated programme activities/ outputs</b>	1) A revised gender equity CF training curriculum developed	1) 3 roundtable meetings to develop recommendations for equitable legal instruments and institutional set-up (CFI revision and formation of CF unit, etc.) 2) 6 PARs on (1) land tenure; (2) the CF process; (3) socio-economic impacts of CF; (4) systematic application of agroforestry models in the CFI; (5) improving internal governance of CFUGs; (6) potential impacts of transfer of high-quality forests to communities 3) A synthesis report of the results from PARs 4) A subnational-and national-level meeting on validation of PAR results 5) A policy brief on the development of CF legal instruments and institutional setting 6) Continued support to CSO representatives in the GREEN Mekong Regional Learning Group on equity in forest management	1) Pamphlets on (1) results of 3 PARs; (2) guidelines for agroforestry models in CFI; (3) ways to improve internal governance of CFUGs 2) A story of change on CF; roundtable meeting and National Working Group Forum 3) A poster on idea and practices of CF demonstration plot establishment 4) A documentary film on CF: success stories of CF implementation across Myanmar 5) A guidebook on CF: different models of CF applied and recommended for the Myanmar context 6) Radio broadcasts 7) A functioning webpage in the Myanmar language	1) Pilot site establishment in Tanintharyi Nature Reserve for CF monitoring in Tanintharyi Region 2) 7 demonstration sites identified and supported continuously (Shan, Chin, Tanintharyi, Rakhine, Bago, Ayeyawady, Magaway)

Thematic areas		Enhancing livelihoods and markets (ELM)		
RECOFTC's strategic outcomes		Institutions are actively enhancing local livelihoods through sustainable CF practices.		
Functional approaches	Training and learning networks	Research, analysis and synthesis	Strategic communication	Piloting and demonstrating
<b>Country intermediate outcomes/targets</b>	<b>Training participants improve training curriculum including market analysis through sustainable CF practices.</b>	<b>A policy framework for the market-led approach in CF is recognized.</b>	<b>Awareness on the market-led approach among CF members and their support network is raised through communication products.</b>	<b>A model of the market-led approach is replicated and continued.</b>
<b>Consolidated programme activities/outputs (2013-2018)</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) A training curriculum on the market-led approach developed and translated</li> <li>2) A finalized CDNA report</li> <li>3) Training on the CF market-led approach for GO and CSO staff from subnational, township and CFUG levels (30 participants)</li> <li>4) Subnational workshops on the market-led approach for GOs, CSOs, the private sector and CFUGs (120 participants in total)</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) An inclusive framework on the market-led approach agreed</li> <li>2) A set of policy recommendations on (1) identification of different livelihood strategies based on CF; (2) the value chain of some NTFPs harvested from CFs; (3) appropriate benefit-sharing models; (4) the relationship between PES and CF</li> <li>3) A PAR on commercialization of CF products, ensuring women's participation</li> <li>4) Sharing sessions of findings from PAR at the national level</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) 2 case studies on market-led CF</li> <li>2) A pamphlet on the market-led approach</li> <li>3) Publication of findings (summary from PARs)</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) 4 demonstration sites of the market-led approach established and provided with technical support in different ecological zones</li> <li>2) A mid-strategic phase review paper on lessons from the first 2 demonstration sites</li> </ol>

Note: PAR = participatory action research; CDNA = capacity development needs assessment; PES = payments for ecosystem services.



Thematic areas		People, forests and climate change (PFCC)		
RECOFTC's strategic outcomes	Enabling conditions for local people's engagement in forested landscapes in the context of climate change are strengthened.			
Functional approaches	Training and learning networks	Research, analysis and synthesis	Strategic communication	Piloting and demonstrating
<b>Country intermediate outcomes/targets</b>	<b>CC training participants apply their enhanced capacity.</b>	<b>REDD+-related policies, guidelines and framework are formulated representing the issues and concerns of women, the poor and other CF members.</b>	<b>Partners, CF members and their networks have increased awareness on national and international CC initiatives through communication products.</b>	<b>Best practices on CC integration in CF are piloted and replicated in different regions.</b>
<b>Consolidated programme activities/outputs (2013-2018)</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Training on REDD+ grassroots capacity development and SFM for GO and CSOs in Sagaing and Taungoo regions; total of 355 participants</li> <li>2) Gender and REDD+ training for the FD, GOs, IP groups and local CSOs; in total, 115 participants</li> <li>3) CC training for 75 participants</li> <li>4) Journalist training on impact of CC adaptation and mitigation measures for local media; in total 20 participants</li> <li>5) Translated training materials on CC, Forest and You and a TOT manual</li> <li>6) A network on REDD+ and CC established</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) 2 policy briefs on CC issues and concerns of the grassroots community in Naga Land and Taungoo regions</li> <li>2) A synthesis report on CC issues and lessons from the grassroots capacity development project</li> <li>3) 2 case studies on appropriate adaptation measures in the dry zone region and social equity at the grassroots project site</li> <li>4) PAR on gender and CF – CC adaptation</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Awareness-raising events on REDD+ targeting a total of 6 500 participants from selected villages at the township level in Sagaing and Taungoo regions</li> <li>2) A set of posters on REDD+ and CC published (at least 1 000 copies)</li> <li>3) A documentary video about CC and REDD+ produced (1 000 copies)</li> <li>4) 2 stories of change on REDD+ and CC</li> <li>5) A booklet on REDD+ and CC produced (2 000 copies)</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) 4 demonstration sites on CC integration in CF implementation, including disaster risk reduction</li> </ol>

Note: CC = climate change; SFM = sustainable forest management; IP = indigenous peoples; TOT = training of trainers.

Thematic areas		Transforming forest conflict (TFC)		
RECOFTC's strategic outcomes	Institutions to transform conflict are in place and increasingly more effective			
Functional approaches	Training and learning networks	Research, analysis and synthesis	Strategic communication	Piloting and demonstrating
Intermediate country outcomes/ targets	GO and CSO staff provide quality assistance to local CF after they enhance understanding and capacities in TFC and mediation techniques.	A TFC framework is adopted in community forest policy and management plans.	Awareness on TFC is raised among CF practitioners, government agencies and communities through communication products.	Best practices of conflict management are replicated and continued.
Consolidated programme activities/ outputs (2013-2018)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) CDNA on conflict transformation</li> <li>2) Training curriculum on conflict transformation for GOs (FD and other relevant line departments), CSOs and the private sector developed</li> <li>2) National-level training and subnational workshop on TFC for government, CSO and private sector staff; 100 participants in total</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) A national and local framework and roadmap on participatory or collaborative conflict management developed</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) A film on forest resource conflict translated</li> <li>2) 2 stories of change on forest conflict transformation</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) A TFC model applied in 2 demonstration sites</li> <li>2) A revision of the TFC model in 2 demonstration sites</li> <li>3) 3 replicated sites provided with technical support</li> </ol>



# 5

## Resources

### 5.1 Human resources

There are currently five officers (programme coordinator, administrative officer, training coordinator, CF partnerships officer and communication officer) engaged in the MCP as core programme staff.

Additional project staff will be hired, part time (including provision of an additional daily subsistence allowance for government staff) and full time, depending on progress in approval of project proposals.

RECOFTC will also recruit national interns and volunteers on an annual basis – where possible seconded from national government or non-government institutions engaged in CF development.

### 5.2 Fundraising

Funding has been secured for many of the activities planned for the first two years of programme implementation. Exploring interest from donors to support activities and outputs foreseen for years 2 to 5 for which funding has not been secured yet, will be explored through concept notes, discussion and preparation of project proposals in consultation with RECOFTC programme management and interested donors. A RECOFTC three-year proposal submitted to the Royal Norwegian Embassy (Scaling Up Community Forestry in Myanmar from Demonstration Sites to the National Program) in June 2014 was approved. Implementation officially started in December 2014. In addition, Myanmar is one of the key countries for both national and regional project proposal development.





## 6.1 Impact and outcomes

The desired impact of all RECOFTC's CF development activities is that 'empowered local people are effectively and equitably engaged in the sustainable management of forested landscapes.'

The synthesis of research results and CF experiences in Myanmar presented in this document suggests that more effective engagement of local people requires more secure rights to use and manage forest resources, greater benefits from forest management, better arrangements for resolving conflicts to improve forest governance, enhancing the resilience of communities and strengthening support for their engagement in climate change initiatives.

Hence the outcomes (i.e. changes in capacity and behaviour) that RECOFTC proposes to contribute are in the form of enhanced effectiveness of institutions:

- To secure communities' property rights (rights of access, use, management and exclusion) of forests;
- To enhance livelihoods and access to markets (to enable communities to obtain greater benefits from forest resources);
- To reduce communities' vulnerability to shocks, enhance their resilience and strengthen their roles in policies related to climate change; and
- To transform conflicts over forests, from problems into opportunities for better forest governance.

RECOFTC recognizes that none of these changes can be made by RECOFTC on its own. Hence the emphasis is on strategic partnerships, strengthened arrangements for coordination, collaborative planning and implementation, and support to the development and implementation of a national CF development programme as a shared framework for coordination, planning and implementation.

Impact and outcomes are therefore the result of activities by many actors and influenced by events that are not under RECOFTC's control. However, there is also a need to assess the effectiveness of the activities and outputs that are controlled by RECOFTC which contribute to the expected outcomes.

This requires the design and implementation of a participatory monitoring and evaluation (PM&E) approach that enables both RECOFTC and its partners to assess the quality and relevance of RECOFTC's activities and outputs and how they have contributed to changes in institutional capacity and performance as well as how these changes have impacted the effectiveness of local people's engagement in SFM.

## 6.2 Participatory monitoring and evaluation (PM&E)

For RECOFTC's overall programme, the PM&E system with indicators and means of verification has been developed, that forms the basis for adaptation and development of the M&E system for the MCP. PM&E aims to engage key project stakeholders more actively in assessing the progress of the programme or project and in particular the achievement of results. Stakeholders participate at various levels of monitoring and evaluating a particular project or programme; not only as sources of information. Through their active engagement they are enabled to share control over the content, the process and the results of the M&E activities.

Strategically, M&E will have three tiers – routine activity monitoring, some targeted impact studies every year and overall country programme evaluation at the end of the strategic phase. However, the M&E will be conducted with relevant stakeholders, not only as a tool to collect data, but to generate learning together.

**Activity monitoring:** The country programme will conduct monitoring of activities and the outputs regularly, documenting them in the same format. A PM&E system will be developed with the partners and community groups to assist them in monitoring their activities and outputs effectively.

**Targeted impact studies:** In order to monitor the progress to achieve strategic and intermediate outcome indicators, at least one study will be planned and conducted. The impact study will help RECOFTC to find the trends towards the outcome as well as address the deviation in a timely manner. These studies include impacts of RECOFTC works on national and subnational policies, CF as institutions and different groups of local community members – men and women, youth, the landless poor and ethnic minorities. In addition, case studies, success stories and stories of change will be documented and used to improve programme planning and decision-making, and leveraging cross learning at the subnational, national and regional levels.

**Country programme evaluation:** the Country Engagement Strategy sets the basis for overall evaluation of the country programme at the end of the current strategic phase. The evaluation results will be the foundation for the design and development of following strategic phases for the country programmes.

The monitoring of the intermediate outcomes is expected to assist in the necessary adjustments and identification of baselines and targets of the strategic outcomes. Table 10 presents the indicators, means of verification and targets for RECOFTC's programmatic goal and strategic outcomes.



Table 10. Indicators for the programme goal and strategic outcomes (2013-2018)

Goal: Empowered local people are effectively and equitably engaged in the sustainable management of forested landscapes				
Indicators	Description	Means of verification (MoV)	Baseline	Targets
Number of community forests	Distinguish types (community forests, CPA, village, CFUG, household, IP forest, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Government statistics</li> <li>Project documents</li> </ul>	719 CF groups (March 2013)	10% increase
Area under CF	Total area of increased CF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Government statistics</li> <li>Project documents</li> </ul>	47 220 ha in 2013 <sup>4</sup>	10% increase
Number of people participating in CF	Specify ethnicity, gender and poverty, where MoV allow for this	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Government statistics</li> <li>Project documents</li> </ul>	29 992 members in 2013 <sup>5</sup>	10% increase
Documented cases that show achievements for Myanmar	Scales of 'effectively' and 'equitably' are difficult to quantify, best practices and examples will be presented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stories of change (qualitative)</li> <li>Case studies (qualitative)</li> <li>Project reports</li> <li>Survey reports</li> </ul>	0	1 case
Strategic outcome 1 – Securing Community Forestry Institutions and resources for securing CF are more effective				
Percentage of CF members reporting improved support from the government and other institutions	Improved support from government and non-government institutions can include both financial resources and advisory services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stakeholder/ community survey</li> <li>Country policy analysis</li> <li>Stories of change (qualitative)</li> <li>Case studies (qualitative)</li> </ul>	0 (no previous data have been collected)	30%

4. RECOFTC (2014). *Current status of social forestry in climate change mitigation and adaptation in the ASEAN region*. Available at: <http://www.recoftc.org/site/resources/Current-status-of-Social-Forestry-in-climate-change-adaptation-and-mitigation-in-ASEAN-region.php>.

5. Ibid.

Strategic outcome 2 – Enhancing Livelihoods and Markets  
Institutions are actively enhancing local livelihoods through sustainable CF practices

Indicators	Description	Means of verification (MoV)	Baseline	Targets
Number of new or enhanced components of the CF programme to promote local livelihoods through sustainable CF by both the government and NGOs	CF approaches clearly included in livelihood and poverty alleviation strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy analysis</li> <li>• Policy briefs</li> <li>• Forest management plans with business component</li> </ul>	1 (market-led component/ approach was introduced in 2011)	To be determined
Number of communities where RECOFTC has a presence that have an increased income from CF-related activities	40% of participating community members (50% women) has an increased income of 30% from their involvement in CF-related activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Case studies</li> <li>• Stakeholder survey</li> <li>• Value chain studies</li> <li>• ELM project reports</li> </ul>	0	40% of members has increased income of 30% from CF

Strategic outcome 3 – People, Forests and Climate Change  
Enabling conditions for local people's engagement in forested landscapes in the context of climate change are strengthened

Percentage of communities that include CCM and/or CCA in new or revised CF management plans	Both formal and informal management plans are assessed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CF management plans; land-use plans; other relevant rules or regulations</li> </ul>	0	50% of new and revised plans from CF demo sites
Documented cases where people are engaged and benefiting from mitigation and adaptation activities	Including current regional projects in Myanmar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Survey and case studies</li> <li>• Project monitoring reports</li> </ul>	0	1 case

Strategic outcome 4 – Transforming Forest Conflict  
Institutions to transform conflict are in place and increasingly more effective

Increased number of institutions for CF conflict resolution	Both GO and NGO institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Country analysis</li> <li>• Stakeholder/ community surveys</li> <li>• Stories of change (qualitative)</li> <li>• Case studies (qualitative)</li> </ul>	0	3 (CF unit of the FD, CFNWG and CFPWG)
Documented conflict cases successfully mediated following the practices developed by the mediators, resulting in a win-win solution for all actors involved	A short description of cases, not yet fully developed stories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Country analysis</li> <li>• Stakeholder/ community surveys</li> <li>• Stories of change (qualitative)</li> <li>• Case studies (qualitative)</li> </ul>	0	1 case

Note: CCM = climate change mitigation; CCA = climate change adaption; CFPWG = Community Forestry Provincial Working Group

Table 11. Indicators for monitoring of intermediate outcomes (2013-2018)

Intermediate Outcome 1 – Enhanced capacities are used by key stakeholders to provide quality support and professional advice to local communities				
Indicators	Description	Means of verification (MoV)	Baseline	Targets
Extent to which training participants have applied the acquired knowledge and skills	Self-perceived evidence of trainees (disaggregated by male/female, topic, geographical)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kirkpatrick level 3 surveys</li> <li>• Documented case studies and stories of change</li> <li>• Reports on RECOFTC-organized capacity development events</li> <li>• Project reports</li> </ul>	80% (survey from 2012/2013 training)	80%
Organizational adaptation of knowledge and skills from RECOFTC training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opinions of managers of attending organizations</li> <li>• Opinions of clients/beneficiaries of organizations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kirkpatrick level 4</li> <li>• Percentage of organizations which adapt new knowledge and skills acquired by their staff members through RECOFTC training or capacity development events</li> </ul>	0	40%
Number of active learning networks that RECOFTC engages with by Thematic Areas each year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Active' means regular interaction towards a specific goal.</li> <li>• A learning network has an objective</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Networking documentation</li> <li>• Internal Annual Report</li> </ul>	0	2 learning networks



Intermediate Outcome 2 – Enabling policies and regulatory instruments are adopted to enhance local peoples' rights, improve forest governance and ensure a fairer share of benefits

Indicators	Description	Means of verification (MoV)	Baseline	Targets
Percentage of changed policies, laws and regulations at the sub-national and national levels that are assessed as enabling improvements for:  i) securing the rights for local people to benefit from forest management  ii) good forest governance  iii) equitable sharing of benefits	70% of changed policies, laws and regulations that are assessed are rated as 'overall positive' for local people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Policy/regulatory framework analysis (including involvement of local people and processes in policy-making);</li> <li>Reviewing documents on working group composition or representation; assessment of benefit-sharing mechanisms</li> <li>Interviews, questionnaires</li> </ul>	0 (only new policies etc. after 1 October 2013 are considered)	70%

Intermediate Outcome 3 – Communication strategies are used to enhance awareness, attitude and behaviour of target audiences

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of references made to RECOFTC knowledge products</li> <li>Number of times RECOFTC is quoted</li> </ul>	A high number of references to RECOFTC publications indicates that the provided information is highly appreciated by relevant target audiences and further disseminated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Internal tracking methods</li> <li>Peer-reviewed (internal and external) information based on research translations</li> <li>Citation analysis</li> </ul>	0	10% increase each year
Changes in awareness/knowledge of target audiences as a result of RECOFTC communication tools/activities	Percentage of target audience that reports an increase in awareness/knowledge as a result of RECOFTC communication tools/activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stakeholder survey: interviewees should include representatives of policy-makers at ministries, academics, NGO managers, research institutes</li> <li>Communication surveys</li> </ul>	0	80% report increased awareness and knowledge
Documented cases of action taken as a result of RECOFTC's strategic communication strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A short description of cases, not yet fully developed stories</li> <li>Including all RECOFTC communication activities, not only publications</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Case studies</li> <li>Stories of change</li> </ul>	0	2 cases

Intermediate Outcome 4 – Improved practices adopted in CF are effectively replicated				
Indicators	Description	Means of verification (MoV)	Baseline	Targets
Number of innovative improved practices introduced by RECOFTC that are replicated beyond RECOFTC projects	A list of innovative improved practices promoted by RECOFTC is available in the M&E package	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Surveys</li> <li>• Case studies</li> <li>• Stories of change</li> <li>• Direct observation</li> </ul>	0	2 best practices
Percentage of CF practices through RECOFTC support that are still active	Still active by the end of the programme/ project or after support ends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Country programme reports</li> <li>• Project documentation</li> <li>• Surveys</li> </ul>	0	95%

The results of the monitoring of the strategic and intermediate outcomes are shared with the other RECOFTC country programme staff and the regional programme staff in annual programme review and direct annual planning. Results are also shared with donors and partners through annual reports. Where monitoring results indicate the need, proposals for adjustment of the country programme are presented, discussed and adopted when justified.

### 6.3 Learning and leveraging at regional and country levels

The RECOFTC programme framework and particularly its linkages with the framework for national CF programmes, enables the sharing of experiences and the drawing of lessons amongst other country programmes and with the regional programme.

This is expected to contribute to more effective leveraging of change for CF development in Myanmar and to more effective application in other countries of the lessons learned from Myanmar.







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## THE CENTER FOR PEOPLE AND FORESTS

RECOFTC's mission is to enhance capacities for stronger rights, improved governance and fairer benefits for local people in sustainable forested landscapes in the Asia and the Pacific region.

RECOFTC holds a unique and important place in the world of forestry. It is the only international not-for-profit organization that specializes in capacity development for community forestry. RECOFTC engages in strategic networks and effective partnerships with governments, nongovernmental organizations, civil society, the private sector, local people and research and educational institutes throughout the Asia-Pacific region and beyond. With over 25 years of international experience and a dynamic approach to capacity development – involving research and analysis, demonstration sites and training products – RECOFTC delivers innovative solutions for people and forests.

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