

LIFT ANNUAL REPORT 2014



HIGHLIGHTS



Livelihoods and Food Security Trust Fund



Government of the Netherlands



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DISCLAIMER

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NUMBER OF FAMILIES REACHED BY LIFT 2010 – 2014*

*cumulative

LIFT IS REDUCING THE NUMBER OF RURAL PEOPLE LIVING IN POVERTY AND HUNGER IN MYANMAR

The Livelihoods and Food Security Trust Fund (LIFT) has been working in Myanmar since 2010 to improve the lives and prospects of smallholder farming families and the landless rural poor. Our projects lead to better harvests and improved access to credit and markets, while making it easier for people to cope with setbacks and change. Incomes have risen, nutrition and food security has improved and LIFT is providing evidence to support the development of inclusive, sustainable policies.

Since 2010, USD 206 million has been committed to support over 90 projects across Myanmar's four main agro-ecological zones: the Uplands, the Dry Zone, the Ayeyarwady Delta and the Coastal areas. LIFT is active in nearly half of the townships in the country.

So far LIFT support has reached approximately 2.8 million people - or roughly five per cent of the country's population.

LIFT is governed by a Donor Consortium and a Fund Board, and managed by the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS). Projects are implemented through partners, who are local and international NGOs, research and academic bodies, United Nations agencies and private sector organisations. Originally established as a five-year fund, LIFT has been extended twice, and will continue until the end of 2018.

In 2014, LIFT was supported by twelve donors: Australia, Denmark, the European Union, France, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Switzerland, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States of America. The Fund's first private sector donor, the Mitsubishi Corporation, has recently joined.

2014

A YEAR OF TRANSFORMATION & PREPARATION

This year marked the Livelihoods and Food Security Trust Fund's fifth year of operation and growth. LIFT continued to perform well against its milestone targets, notably in the areas of food security and access to credit.

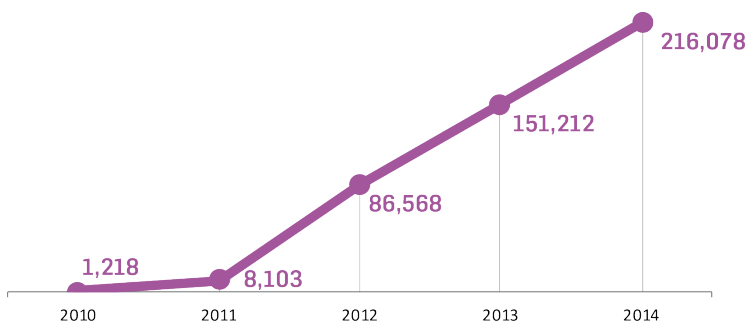
More than 1.1 million people have better food security, and 133,000 poor farming families have increased their agricultural productivity. 216,000 people have accessed affordable credit from LIFT-funded microfinance providers, which helps to explain the increase in agricultural productivity.

In addition to strong results on the ground, policy and technical advice to government has become an increasingly important feature of LIFT's work. LIFT is applying its knowledge and experience to influence better sector policies, more effective sector organisations, better sector planning and investment, and to improve the implementation of agriculture and rural development programmes. Equally, partnerships with local civil society organisations play a crucial role in LIFT's contributions to affect systemic change.

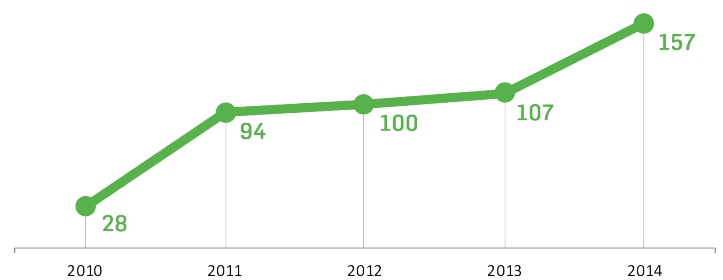
This year LIFT updated its strategic direction to make the most of new opportunities presented by recent reforms. Work continued on the development of three major programmes that will launch in early 2015: the Dry Zone (USD 53 million), the Delta 3 programme (USD30 million) and the Uplands programme (USD 65 million). Preparations also took place for new financial inclusion and migration funding windows, and an expansion of the programme in Rakhine State.

LIFT is focused to achieve these four outcomes:

- Increased incomes of rural households
- Increased resilience of poor rural households and communities to shocks, stresses and adverse trends
- Improved nutrition of women, men and children
- Improved policies and effective public expenditure for pro-poor rural development



Number of households accessing LIFT-funded loans



Number of townships where LIFT is active (out of total 330 townships)

RESULTS



628,500

households were reached by LIFT,

35%

of them received cash-for-work



60% of Myanmar's

microfinance clients access services from LIFT-supported microfinance institutions

94% of LIFT-funded

microfinance clients are women



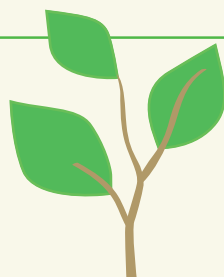
252,000

households increased their food security by more than one month



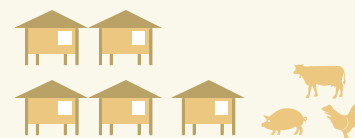
292,000

people took part in LIFT-funded training



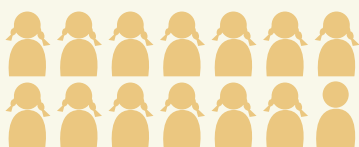
36,000

households took part in improved resource management activities



50,200

households have increased their number of assets



Women represent

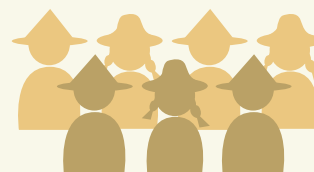
96%

of people who established enterprises after receiving training



138,000

households reported increased incomes



11,000 community

based organisations have been established or strengthened

WHERE WE WORK

The pathways to improved livelihoods differ across the agro-ecological zones of the country where LIFT is active: the Ayeyarwady Delta, the coastal region of Rakhine State, the central Dry Zone (including Mandalay, Magwe, and southern Sagaing Region), and the Uplands Region of Chin, Kachin, Kayin and Shan States.

Across all four zones, LIFT supports the integration of smallholder farmers and businesses into “commercial” agriculture value chains, and is extending the reach of rural financial services to vulnerable and remote communities. In 2014, LIFT commissioned 16 studies and reports to improve understanding of the sector and to inform programme design.

AYEYARWADY DELTA:

Thirteen partners worked at various stages of the rice value chain, in fisheries and agricultural development.

Highlights include:

- Advances in the selection of high yielding and stress tolerant rice varieties for particular conditions
- A new approach that allows a second yearly rice crop to be grown in areas of brackish water – effectively doubling farmer incomes
- Credit based storage systems allow farmers to make the most of seasonal fluctuations in the rice price

DRY ZONE:

The seventeen partners working here focused on building resilient communities and bolstering incomes.

Highlights include:

- Low-tech irrigation techniques prove to be efficient in areas of water stress
- Villagers in LIFT project areas develop their own ideas for social protection as a result of new village cohesion and cooperation

UPLANDS:

Innovative projects include beekeeping and pollination services, private sector partnerships and agroforestry.

Highlights include:

- Increased incomes as a result of improved use of land and irrigation in Chin State
- Short technical and vocational education training in Kayin State that provide skills for graduates to get better paying jobs.

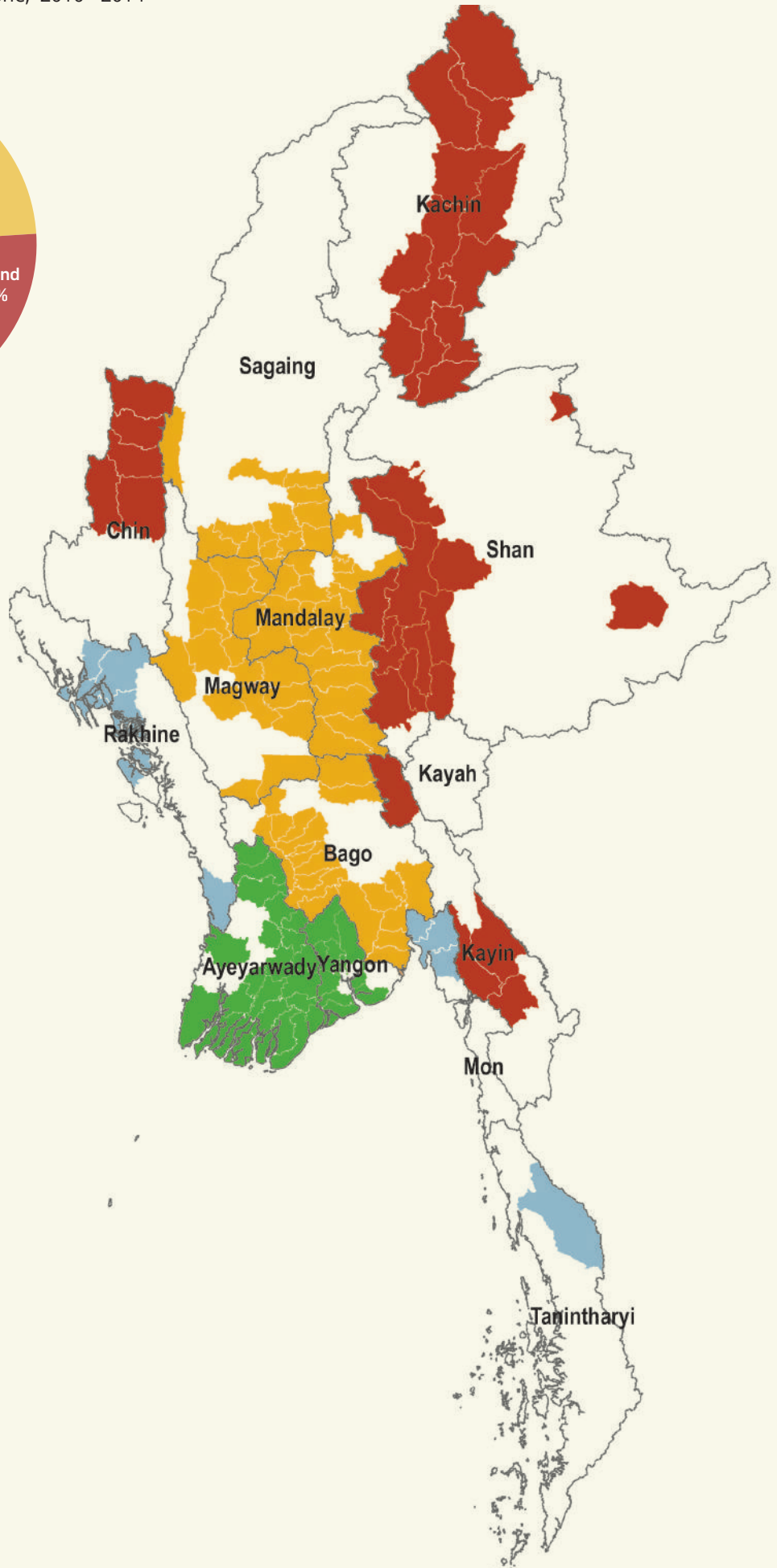
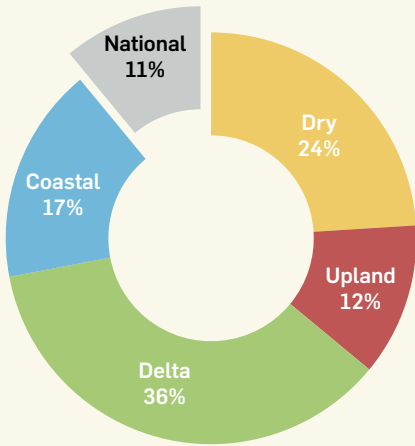
COASTAL AREAS:

Despite social unrest, the Tat Lan Programme in Rakhine State made notable advances.

Highlights include:

- Early results from a pilot maternity cash transfer/nutrition education project to improve the health and nutrition of mothers and children under the age of two confirm that the money is being used for more and better food, and healthcare.
- 162 Village Savings and Loans Associations are operating; 88% of members and 93% of borrowers are women.





LEGEND

AYEYARWADY DELTA

THE DRY ZONE

UPLANDS

COASTAL

2014

THE YEAR IN REVIEW



JANUARY

LIFT reviews the effectiveness of its support to civil society at a workshop in Yangon. LIFT has supported the development of over 11,000 community based organisations, and provided training for 250,000 members of civil society.

MAY

A two-day event draws over 100 finance professionals to Yangon to promote responsible financial services through licensed microfinance institutions. Lessons feed into continuing efforts to support the development of a just microfinance regulatory system.



JULY

Members of the Fund Board visit Kachin to inform the development of the 2015 Uplands programme. The new strategy opens the potential to support internally displaced people in areas emerging from conflict.

AUGUST

LIFT's Household Survey 2013 launches in both Yangon and Nay Pyi Taw. Compared with LIFT's 2012 Baseline Survey, this paints a picture of general improvement in terms of food security and assets, but with more improvement in villages where LIFT is active.



SEPTEMBER

LIFT and its Dry Zone partners form working groups to lay the base for a results framework for the upcoming Dry Zone programme.

OCTOBER

At two workshops, partners working in the Ayeyarwady Delta share their lessons and good practice to feed into the design of the upcoming Delta 3 programme.



NOVEMBER

LIFT shares knowledge and experience at the Annual Forum, held in collaboration with the Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Rural Development in Nay Pyi Taw. Video of the sessions is available at www.youtube.com/liftfundmyanmar



NEW PATHS, NEW OPPORTUNITIES

Fine-tuning its own priorities and responding to recent government reforms, LIFT redefined its strategic direction in 2014 in a process that involved both partners and government.

LIFT supports poor families to rise out of poverty by tailoring its activities to the livelihoods potential of different groups. Acknowledging that the two main sources of cash income for the rural poor – and the two main paths out of poverty – are small-scale commercial agriculture and rural off-farm employment and small businesses, LIFT is to help:

Smallholder farmers with commercial potential to ‘step up’ their production and more actively participate in the growing market economy.

STEPPING UP

Rural households or household members to productively ‘step out’ of agriculture over time. This could be a local ‘step out’, finding better-paid employment and small business opportunities in local off-farm activities. It can also be a ‘migration step out’ to take advantage of opportunities further afield.

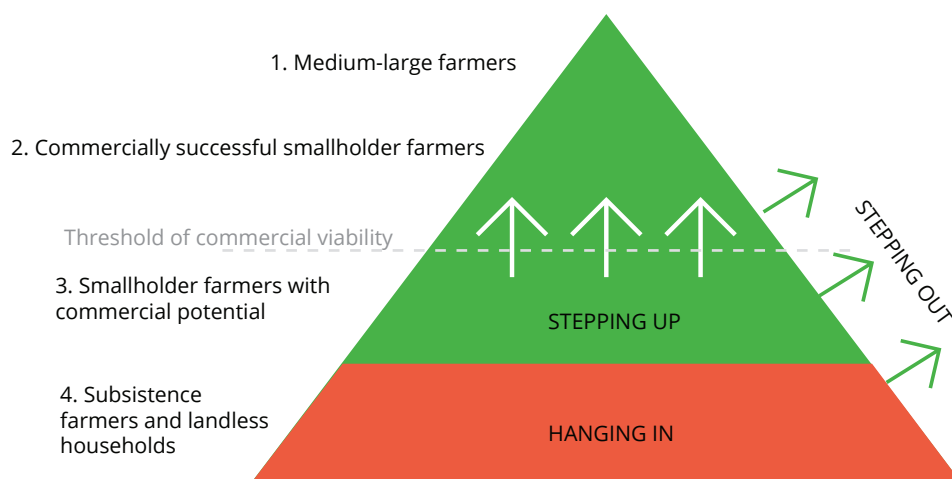
STEPPING OUT

For households without commercial potential or the ability to ‘step out’, LIFT helps households ‘hang in’, using agriculture as a safety net and improving their food security and nutrition outcomes during Myanmar’s period of economic transition.

HANGING IN

The new strategy places explicit focus on resilient growth, promoting nutrition and climate change adaptation. It provides for work in areas emerging from conflict and with internally displaced persons. Another important new element is engagement with the private sector for greater scope, impact and sustainability.

DIFFERENTIATED LIVELIHOOD STRATEGIES OF FARMERS AND LANDLESS PEOPLE



STEPPING UP

TO COMMERCIAL PRODUCTION: THE FLOWER GROWERS OF MYO CHAUNG VILLAGE



**“BEFORE, WE RARELY EVEN VISITED EACH OTHER.
NOW WE WORK AS A TEAM.”**

▲ *LIFT targets rural households with land, labour and/or commercial potential to ‘step up’ their production and more actively participate in the growing market economy.*

Action Aid/Thadar Consortium’s *Building Local Capacities for Livelihoods Systems Approaches in the Ayeyarwady* project is helping smallholder farmers to ‘step up’ by increasing their economic potential and ability to link to markets. The community in Myo Chaung village, in particular, has flourished both economically and socially as a result of the project.

With guidance from the Myanmar Baptist Church Union (MBCU), the villagers developed their own business plan to cultivate and sell zaw sein flowers, which are in high demand across Myanmar as religious offerings. The project provided financial support while land for the plantation was prepared, alongside technical training in flower cultivation and packing.

Monthly meetings are held to share ideas and experiences, and farmers make trips to the Yangon markets in groups of three or four. The average monthly income in the village is now MMK 90,000–100,000 (USD 85–95). The income has been used for loan repayments, village improvements (a concrete bridge and home roof repairs), purchasing land, and medical treatment. The activities have been particularly beneficial for women who previously had little opportunity to earn money, as most of the casual farm work on offer went to men. Jobs have been created, and neighbouring villages are now adopting the same business plan.

Every family contributes 50 cents each month to a welfare fund. Social Protection Group Leader, Daw Thein Swe, saw the benefits of this first-hand when her neighbour suffered a breeched birth. The emergency transfer to hospital was paid with a no-interest loan from the fund.

STEPPING OUT

HELPING PEOPLE TO 'STEP OUT' OF CASUAL AGRICULTURAL LABOUR



"I'M MAKING MORE MONEY THAN BEFORE, AND I CAN WORK IN THE PEACE AND SHADE OF MY OWN HOUSE"



LIFT helps rural households or household members to productively 'step out' of agriculture over time. This could be a local 'step out', finding better-paid employment in local non-farm activities. It can also be a 'migration step out' to take advantage of opportunities further afield.

As a child, U Maung Tun sat at his mother's knee while she sewed, hoping that one day he too would be a tailor. However, his parents died before he was 10 and he had to take whatever work was available. Until his mid-40's he worked as a casual farm labourer, earning around 90 cents a day. For U Maung Tun, who lives with a disability, the work was particularly arduous.

When the Disabled Peoples Development Organisation (DPDO) arrived in his village, he applied for a small loan (USD 76) to buy a second-hand sewing machine. U Maung Tun worked hard to learn the craft and build up a client base. His reputation spread to surrounding villages and he was able to pay back the loan in only eight months. He now earns a regular income of around USD 2 a day and lives, he says, with more dignity.

DPDO works with families with disabled people to tailor livelihood activities for them, such as home gardens and animal husbandry. They also provide training in book keeping, craft making, and agricultural practices. Later, the households form their own savings self-help groups. Start-up capital is provided by the project and members pay back loans ranging from USD 28 - 95 at the end of three or eight month terms. The two per cent monthly interest rate is much more affordable than the eight per cent charged by local money lenders.

DPDO works with other LIFT partners - HelpAge, ActionAid and SPPRG - to promote social protection at local and national levels and has reached more than 8,000 families with disabled people.

HANGING IN

AGRICULTURAL SUPPORT TO ASSIST THE MOST VULNERABLE



“WITH SUPPORT FROM THE PROJECT, I CAN NOW SAVE SOME MONEY TO BUY MY OWN LAND.”

▲ *For households without commercial potential or the ability to ‘step out’, LIFT helps households ‘hang in’, using agriculture as a safety net and improving their food security and nutrition outcomes during Myanmar’s period of economic transition.*

Before taking part in MERN’s Coastal Livelihood and Environmental Assets Restoration project in southern Rakhine State, Ma Khin Yamon Kyaw and her husband were the poorest couple in their village. As landless farm labourers, they could earn around USD 1 a day, but only when there was work available.

Their lives changed when the project set up a vegetable demonstration plot in the village, which promoted alternatives to paddy cultivation since the amount of water required for paddy was draining village resources. The villagers elected Ma Khin to work on the tomato demonstration plot, and she took part in training in plantation methods and the proper use of fertiliser. Before long, her plot became a model for the village. Encouraged by her example, and seeing that Ma Khin now had a steady income, others got involved.

With her new income, Ma Khin started growing betel and bought a cow and a pig. After fattening the pig, she sold it for USD 250 and bought two more piglets.

“We lent our cow to a farm for monsoon rice cultivation and received 20 bags of rice in return,” she says. “The land where I grow betel vines isn’t mine, but the village committee lets us use it for allotted amounts of time. With support from the project, I can now save money to buy my own land.”

Watch a video featuring Ma Khin Yamon Kyaw at www.youtube.com/liftfundmyanmar



LIFT COMMISSIONS
STUDIES AND REPORTS
TO SUPPORT
PRO-POOR POLICY
DEVELOPMENT

BRINGING ABOUT LONG-TERM CHANGE, USING RESEARCH AND EXPERIENCE

LIFT actively gathers evidence to support policies that will improve the lives and prospects of rural poor people. The 70 studies in LIFT's library are used to inform policy thinking, programme design and to improve understanding of the rapidly changing context in Myanmar.

Working with government, this year LIFT placed two full-time advisors in the Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Rural Development, supporting the ministry's efforts to implement the new national Strategic Framework for Rural Development. A capacity development plan for the ministry, plus a plan to develop a national approach to village-level and township-level planning are in development. LIFT is also supporting the government to establish a National Action Plan for Agriculture.

LIFT's updated strategy defines specific areas where LIFT can impact systemic change. Working directly with government or through LIFT's network of capable partners, strong advances were made in 2014.

FOCUS AREAS

1. Access to finance
2. Inclusive value chains and market systems development
3. Social protection
4. Land tenure security
5. Nutrition
6. Climate change adaptation
7. Gender equality



LIFT IS SUPPORTING
MICROFINANCE
MARKET DEVELOPMENT
IN MYANMAR



1. ACCESS TO FINANCE

The enormous gap in access to financial services remains one of Myanmar's most pressing development challenges. Improving access to finance for unserved and underserved market segments is critical to expanding economic opportunities for rural households, while generating positive social and economic benefits for the Myanmar economy more widely. At present, 83 per cent of the country's 33 million adults are unbanked and outstanding credit and deposits are equivalent to five per cent and 13 per cent of GDP, respectively (World Bank, 2013). This compares unfavourably to Cambodia (34 per cent and 40 per cent), and the Lao PDR (25 and 31 per cent).

LIFT has made significant investments in financial inclusion, dedicating a specific funding window to it in 2013. This year, LIFT extended the reach of

microfinance providers it supports with initiatives reaching remote communities in Chin State and in previously unbanked areas of the Dry Zone.

LIFT also assisted in the development of a microfinance regulatory framework, working with four partners to provide targeted technical input and recommendations. The most important contributions came from UNCDF's Making Access Possible (MAP) project and the World Bank's Financial Inclusion for National Development (FIND) project.

By the end of the year, LIFT had provided institutional support to 15 microfinance organisations that provide financial services to 728,000 people, or 60 per cent of all microfinance clients in Myanmar.

UPDATES TO THE MICROFINANCE LEGAL FRAMEWORK IN 2014

- The single loan size cap has increased from MMK 500,000 to MMK 5 million.
- MFIs/MFOs are required to have at least 50% of their portfolio in rural areas.
- MFIs/MFOs are required to maintain their solvency ratios at ($\geq 15\%$), liquidity ratios at ($\geq 30\%$), and debt to equity ratios at ($\leq 5:1$).
- New financial reporting guidelines were issued that include requirements for loan loss provisions, detailed instructions for financial statements using standard chart of accounts.
- Local MFIs/MFOs are allowed to borrow money from the Myanmar Economic Bank for investment funds.
- International MFOs/MFIs are allowed to borrow money from foreign financial institutions with a maximum loan size limit USD 3 million.
- Equity financing is allowed for all MFOs/MFIs.
- Use of payment systems via mobile phones is permitted for all MFOs/MFIs.
- MFOs/MFIs are allowed to charge a maximum annual interest rate of 30% for loans.
- MFOs/MFIs are required to pay a minimum annual interest rate of 15% for deposits/savings.



LIFT IS WORKING
ON A NUMBER OF
DIFFERENT INVESTMENT
OPPORTUNITIES TO
SUPPORT SMALLHOLDER
FARMERS

2. INCLUSIVE VALUE CHAINS

LIFT provides smallholder farmers with support along value chains across the country:



LIFT's work on inclusive markets focused on development of private sector partnerships that stimulate direct and indirect investments in smallholder agriculture. This is being done mainly through contract farming models that give smallholder farmers access to quality agricultural inputs, efficient and competitively-driven financial services, reliable markets, and extension services that increase farmer knowledge.

In 2014, LIFT made progress on a number of different investment opportunities, including preparations for:

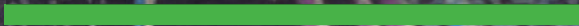
- commercialising government seed research in partnership with the private sector and with smallholder farmers
- establishing a farmer-owned agribusiness cooperative with direct links to the private sector
- contractually linking smallholder farmers with private sector irrigation infrastructure
- upgrading the knowledge and skills of smallholder farmers regarding food safety, improved seed, and good agricultural practices

BUILDING THE VEGETABLE SECTOR IN SOUTHERN SHAN STATE

LIFT funds a vegetable project involving the NGO Mercy Corps, private company East West Seeds International and business oriented independent foundation, Swisscontact. Farmer groups, organised by Mercy Corps, are given Good Agricultural Practice training and certification from East West, and access to quality inputs such as seed. Still in its early stages, the project is also bringing together government, development, domestic and multi-national business partners to prioritise actions at both regulatory and market levels for the vegetable sector.



LIFT IS SUPPORTING
THE DEVELOPMENT OF
A NATIONAL SOCIAL
PROTECTION POLICY
FRAMEWORK



3. SOCIAL PROTECTION

Activities around social protection are fragmented due to the lack of a social protection policy framework in Myanmar. LIFT partners SPPRG and HelpAge have worked to assist the government to develop this.

- The Social Protection Policy Research Group (SPPRG) has engaged with government, particularly the Department of Social Welfare (DSW) to develop a national social protection strategy, which was presented in December 2014. SPPRG also works at state/regional level. The *Community Led Action for Social Protection* project, conducted in five villages in Sagaing Region, has been successful in linking community organisations providing services with resources from the Sagaing regional government. DSW has requested that planning be conducted in other states and regions.
- HelpAge has provided technical assistance to the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement to develop the framework for the *National Social Protection Policy and Strategy*, which the ministry subsequently developed in consultation with relevant ministries, development partners, INGOs and NGOs. A medium term *National Social Protection Strategic Plan* was endorsed by the Social Protection Working Committee in November, approved by the Cabinet and the President, and launched in December. At local level, HelpAge and its partners in the REVEAL project modeled a community-based approach to strengthening community capacity. This achieved additional funding from relevant government departments to cover new activities identified by the communities in their action plans.

HOME-GROWN INITIATIVES

HelpAge's successful village development approach is based on inclusiveness, and enhancing capacity and confidence within communities. At the end of the project, the villagers show a greater ability to organise themselves. In Mahlaing Township, three villages have recruited women to provide early childcare development for children with working mothers. Technical support is provided by the Department of Social Welfare, with financial support, including the child care worker's monthly salary, provided by each Village Development Committee.

All of the committee's annual plans in Mahlaing include funds to support travel expenses to hospital for the elderly and people with disabilities (PWD). In two villages, the VDCs have set up nursery plantations to provide PWDs, the elderly and female-headed households with fresh fruit and vegetables.

Attitudes towards older people, women and PWDs have significantly changed and most people now support the inclusion and well-being of these groups.



LIFT SUPPORTS LAND
ACCESS THAT IS
INCLUSIVE AND FAIR

4. LAND TENURE SECURITY

Land tenure continues to be a highly contested issue in Myanmar. In October 2014, the Government released its draft National Land-Use Policy (NLUP), which is envisioned to harmonise the many existing land-related laws in Myanmar, and guide the development of a new Land-Use Law during 2015. The policy is under review through public consultations around the country.

These discussions and debates have had a mixed response. On the one hand, they have provided opportunity to engage in the land sector for the benefit of smallholder farmers. On the other, some CSOs and international organisations have contested the apparent priority given to economic development and private land ownership over the social role of land and the need for equitable access. They have requested more reference to international guidelines, especially regarding prior consultation and compensation for affected communities in cases of forced land acquisition. The subject of customary land tenure and gender, made explicit in the draft policy, has also raised a number of concerns.

LIFT supports three projects that directly link to land issues, though several other projects have land components. Despite its limitations, LIFT hopes that the future National Land Use Policy (NLUP), when endorsed, will open new opportunities for engagement. LIFT is considering how to provide technical support to the government - to make land access more inclusive, fair and secure, to reduce conflict and to better protect resources in the years to come.

UN-Habitat's Land Administration and Management Programme (LAMP) provides technical support to the Settlement and Land Records Department (SLRD) to pilot new land registration processes in two townships. It has successfully tested a new mapping methodology for two

rural map units in Thayarwaddy Township (Bago region). Practical and efficient methods of surveying and mapping have been tested, including combining GIS with satellite imagery. A similar process will soon follow in a second township, Myingyan (Mandalay Region).

The Land Core Group (LCG) has played an important role in supporting the NLUP consultation process. The LCG is leading a number of land studies, in particular, a study of upland customary communal tenure in Chin and Shan States and a study about land and gender (conducted by Trocaire). LCG is engaged in a long term research programme, the 'Mosaic Collaborative Research', led by the International Institute of Social Studies (Erasmus University), which aims to understand the interplay between climate mitigation policies, land grabbing, and conflict. In March, LCG supported 40 farmers to participate and share their experience of land grabbing at the ASEAN Peoples Forum in Yangon. They also developed Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials on land registration processes and related legislation for translation into six ethnic languages (Chin, Shan, Mon, Kayah, Kachin and Karen). In addition, LCG manages an online document repository, MyLAFF, used for sharing information on land, agribusiness and forestry issues in Myanmar.

The initial results of GRET's study, *Understanding rural land issues to engage in comprehensive policy dialogue in Myanmar*, shows significant geographical differences in the historical roots of land issues between the surveyed areas in the Dry Zone and Delta. LIFT has extended the study to survey new sites in the Uplands and other areas in the Dry Zone to further explore the diversity of the country's land dynamics and better inform policy makers.



LIFT IS FOCUSED ON
IMPROVING THE
NUTRITION OF WOMEN
AND CHILDREN

5. NUTRITION

Improved nutrition was formally prioritised in the new LIFT strategy as one of LIFT's four major desired outcomes. Since 2010, LIFT-funded projects have assisted nearly 100,000 households to increase and/or diversify their food consumption.

The approach is two –pronged:

- LIFT funds the Leveraging Actions to Reduce Malnutrition (LEARN) project to ensure that all LIFT-funded projects are nutrition sensitive. LEARN provides LIFT partners with nutrition-sensitive training, technical support and input for project design, as well as awareness raising activities. LEARN promotes a comprehensive approach involving food availability, access, and utilisation.

Nutrition is improved through direct project interventions. For example:

- Partners ADRA and Action Aid include a nutrition awareness component in their vocational training courses.
- CESVI supports nutrition education and school gardening in northern Shan.
- The Better Life Organisation works with fishing and aquaculture communities in Rakhine to challenge traditional barriers to fish consumption for pregnant and breastfeeding women.
- AVSI and Metta have expanded their staple crop production activities to integrate nutrition education and home gardening activities.



SPREADING THE WORD

LIFT and partner LEARN, together with the National Nutrition Centre, developed a short video to promote the importance of good nutrition during the 1000 day window, from a child's conception through to its second birthday. This is being promoted by LIFT partners and through national TV and radio broadcast.

www.youtube.com/liftfundmyanmar



NEW KNOWLEDGE
AND TECHNOLOGY
HELPS FARMERS STAY
ONE STEP AHEAD OF
CLIMATE CHANGE

6. CLIMATE CHANGE

The new strategy prioritises resilience to bolster people’s ability to cope with shocks, stresses and adverse trends. In 2014 LIFT also began mainstreaming climate change adaptation by directly supporting farmers to build resilient agriculture systems, helping diversify household income through non-farm businesses, and increasing disaster risk reduction investments.

LIFT funds a number of projects for ‘farmer extension services’, or training and access to new and innovative technologies that provide small holder farmers with the knowledge to increase their incomes and keep one step ahead of the changing climatic conditions. A project that is showing good results is by partner Proximity Designs, whose Farm Advisory Services (FAS) team have identified a timing window in which to successfully cultivate a second annual crop in brackish areas of the Ayeyarwady Delta. With a second crop, the farmer’s incomes have effectively been doubled.

Droughts in the country’s Dry Zone are having a knock-on effect in the Delta. With less water in the rivers during the dry season, salt from the sea is encroaching up the rivers and affecting farm land. Since rice is sensitive to salinity, irrigating with water that is too saline can mean complete crop failure. The FAS team is proving that if farmers plant their first crop earlier in the year, and use a faster growing variety of rice for the second crop, they can squeeze both crops in before the water salinity gets too high. The key is when to irrigate the second crop – it is only safe to irrigate when the tide is lowest and the salt content is down. FAS developed a simple lunar chart for the farmers to follow for irrigating their crops.

So far, over 1000 farmers have successfully harvested second crops, and the method can be replicated elsewhere in the Delta. LIFT-funded microfinance loans are also available to help the farmers pay for the inputs needed for a second crop.

Irrigation success also features in the Dry Zone, where villagers face ongoing problems accessing sufficient water for domestic and agricultural purposes. Partner Terre des Hommes has introduced simple, low-cost hydroponic and drip irrigations systems for fruit and vegetable production, which use up to 70% less water than traditional watering methods. These systems have been introduced to the teaching syllabus by Yezin Agricultural University, and nutrition-rich produce is increasingly available in remote Dry Zone communities.





LIFT WORKS AT LOCAL
AND NATIONAL
LEVELS TO IMPROVE
THE POSITION OF
WOMEN

7. GENDER EQUALITY

LIFT's gender strategy (2012) aims to promote and integrate gender equality through all LIFT-funded projects, while being sensitive to Myanmar's cultural and ethnic diversity. LIFT is committed to ensure fair access to technology, credit and training. Gender-sensitive language is encouraged in all activities, and gender-disaggregated data is a requirement for all programmes. The gender strategy will be updated in 2015.

At national level, LIFT works with the Gender Equality Network (GEN) to affect policy decisions that promote the position of women:

- As a result of GEN's advocacy efforts with the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Department, the Protection of Violence Against Women (PoVAW) law was successfully drafted by the GEN PoVAW Law working group. Submission to the Attorney General's Department will take place in early 2015.

- GEN developed a policy brief based on the study Behind the Silence: Violence Against Women and their Resilience, Myanmar, which provided valuable evidence supporting discussion around the PoVAW Law.

- The Gender and Environment working Group (GEG) submitted a comprehensive report on gender equality for inclusion in a draft of the National Land Use Policy (NLUP) to the government's Land Use Allocation and Scrutinizing Committee. This includes gender-specific legal analysis of the NLUP, with primary research on the barriers that rural Myanmar women face in accessing, controlling, and benefiting from land.

- At the request of the government, GEN conducted training on the National Action Plan for the Advancement of Women (NSPAW) to MoLFRD. GEN also provided technical input to the government's Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

WOMEN REPRESENT



49% OF THE 300,000 PEOPLE WHO TOOK PART IN LIFT-FUNDED TRAINING

94% OF LIFT-FUNDED MICROFINANCE CLIENTS

95% OF PEOPLE BORROWING FROM THE TAT LAN PROGRAMME'S LOAN GROUPS

TO IMPLEMENT THE NEW STRATEGY EFFECTIVELY, LIFT IMPROVED ITS INTERNAL DECISION MAKING AND GOVERNANCE

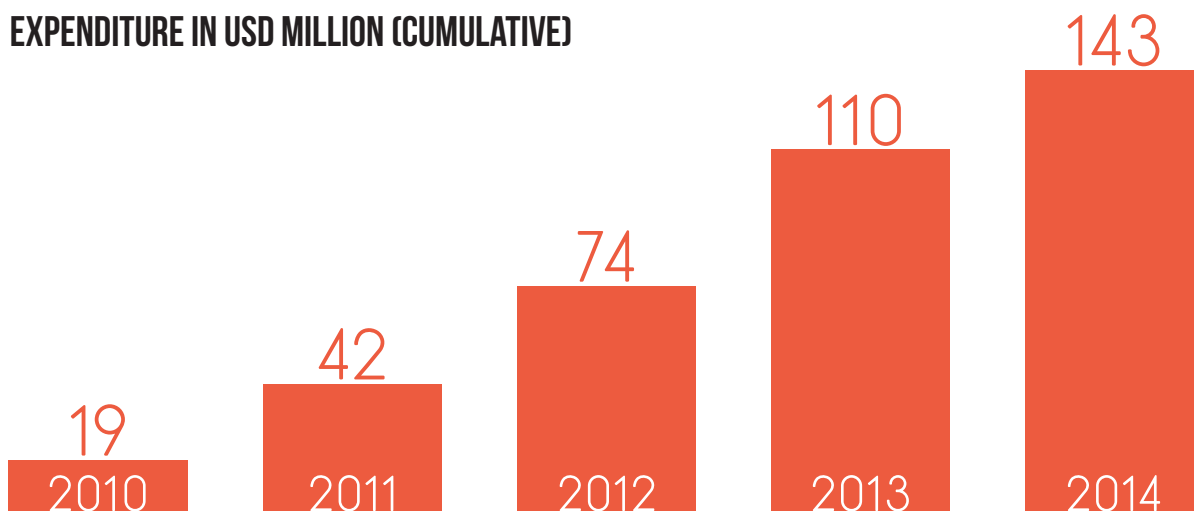
In early 2014, the respective roles of the Fund Management Office, the Fund Board and the Donor Consortium were revisited. In 2015 LIFT will establish a government-chaired Senior Consultation Group, including representatives from various ministries, private enterprise and civil society. The Senior Consultation Group will: advise the Fund Board on strategic priorities; review LIFT implementation and performance, and advise the Fund Board on risks to LIFT and appropriate risk mitigation.



FINANCE

LIFT mobilised modest new financial contributions. One new donor (Italy) joined LIFT in 2014, bringing the total number of donors to twelve. New contributions were also made by a number of existing donors.

EXPENDITURE IN USD MILLION (CUMULATIVE)





INFORMING POLICY



INNOVATION



MARKET DEVELOPMENT



FINANCING



PARTNERSHIPS



TRAINING

