



Livelihoods and Food Security Fund



Managed by  UNOPS

Programme Framework for South East Myanmar

(Kayah, Kayin and Mon States, and Tanintharyi Region)

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Table of Contents

1. Introduction	5
Background on LIFT and the SE programme	5
Scope of this document	6
Process	6
2. Situation analysis	7
Overview	7
Conflict analysis	8
Evolution of the situation since 2012	8
Conflict, natural resources and ceasefire livelihood opportunities	9
Displacement and return	10
Land tenure, land acquisition, infrastructure and associated dynamics	11
Resilience/vulnerability	12
Gender and women’s empowerment	14
Nutrition	15
Agriculture, markets and food systems	19
Uplands	21
Lowlands	23
Aquaculture	24
Decent work and labour mobility	25
Labour migration	25
Local labour market	27
Financial inclusion	30
Other investments in the region	31
LIFT-funded initiatives	31
Other development initiatives	32
3. LIFT’s programme in the South East	33
What is LIFT aiming to achieve in the SE?	33
Targeting	34
Results framework	35
Programme framework	35
Nutrition	37

Maternal and Child Cash Transfer (MCCT) with Social and Behaviour Change (SBC)	37
Nutrition Sensitive Approaches	38
Agriculture, Markets and Food systems	39
Uplands	40
Lowland	43
Decent work and labour mobility	44
Expanding access to decent work within the local labour market	45
Making migration safer and more rewarding	45
Reducing labour exploitation and trafficking in key sectors with a focus on marine capture fisheries	46
Financial inclusion	47
Expansion of access to credit for IDPs and other vulnerable groups	47
Agribusiness financing for the 'hidden middle' of agri-food systems	47
Investments in Public Private Partnerships	47
4. Research and policy engagement	48
5. Conflict sensitive programming	49
Conflict sensitivity	49
Risk Assessment, Management and Monitoring	51
Multi-stakeholder consultative group	52
6. Coordination mechanisms	53
7. MEAL	53
Co-constructed Programme Level Theory of Change	54
M&E Stakeholders Analysis	54
Measurement framework with Key Indicators	55
Evaluation Design and Evaluation and Learning Questions (ELQs)	55
Reporting	57
Processes and mechanisms to support knowledge management and policy influence	57
8. Sequencing	57
9. Annexes	59
Annex 1: Conflict stakeholders	59
Annex 2: Results Framework	63
Annex 3: Integrated Programme Framework	64

1. Introduction

Background on LIFT and the SE programme

The Livelihoods and Food Security Fund (LIFT) is a multi-donor fund established in 2009 to address food insecurity and income poverty in Myanmar. LIFT 2019-2023 is funded by seven donors – the United Kingdom, the European Union, Australia, Switzerland, the United States, Canada and Ireland. The United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) is the Fund Manager for LIFT, administrating the funds and providing monitoring and oversight services.

The overall goal of the LIFT Fund is to achieve a sustained reduction in the number of people living in hunger and poverty in Myanmar. LIFT strengthens the resilience and livelihoods of poor and vulnerable populations through interventions to raise income, decrease vulnerability, improve nutrition and support pro-poor policy development.

LIFT works with a broad range of implementing partners, including non-governmental organizations, United Nations agencies, the Government of Myanmar, the private sector, civil society, academic and research institutions. The Fund is active in the four main agro-ecological zones of Myanmar and to date has reached more than 11.6 million people or roughly 26 per cent of rural Myanmar's population; and is active in two-thirds of the country's townships.

LIFT's refreshed strategy for 2019-23 has at its heart 'leaving no one behind' in Myanmar's rural transition, with a greater focus on inclusion and social cohesion, intensified commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment, increased geographical focus on ethnic/border states and conflict-affected areas, enhanced efforts to bring displaced persons and returnees into LIFT's development programmes, expanded support for underserved urban and peri-urban areas and broader engagement with Government at all levels on targeted policies that achieve gains in these areas.

At the same time, LIFT will continue to support a diversity of livelihood strategies that assist its beneficiaries to 'Step Up', 'Step Out' or 'Hang In':

- Households with land, labour or commercial potential to '**step up**' through increases in labour and land productivity and enhanced capacity to market production.
- Rural households or individuals to '**step out**' of agriculture into the local non-farm economy or to take advantage of opportunities further afield.

- Highly vulnerable households to **'hang in'** and use agriculture as a safety net, improve their food security and nutrition outcomes while building their capacity to move out over time.

LIFT will work toward the achievement of these outcomes through innovation, piloting and the generation of evidence-based interventions organised into four thematic programmes: Nutrition; Financial Inclusion; Agriculture, Markets and Food Systems; and Decent Work and Labour Mobility. For more details visit www.lift-fund.org.

Scope of this document

Operating within the scope of LIFT's 2019-2023 strategy, this document presents LIFT's assessment of the development needs and opportunities in South East Myanmar and outlines LIFT's objectives, target beneficiaries, thematic priorities, proposed foci of investment and operational modalities.

Process

This Programme Framework is a product of a literature review, a series of consultations with key stakeholders in Yangon and across the South East and the combined inputs of LIFT's national and international experts. A working group, comprising FMO staff, two Fund Board and two international consultants was formed to develop the programme framework. This included a series of discussions, organisation and documentation of a scoping mission to the South East¹, and the synthesis of findings into this report. A brief timeline of the process is presented below.

Stage	Dates
Desk review and planning	August 2019
Consultations in Yangon	4th to 6th September 2019
Scoping mission	9th to 27th September 2019
Development of programme framework	30th September to 18th October 2019
Launch of call for the South East programme	5 November 2019

¹ The project also builds on an earlier scoping mission focusing on private sector market development in selected regions of the South East.

Documents reviewed included research and studies on the South East published by a wide range of agencies and LIFT project documents. Available datasets were also queried.

The scoping mission that was carried out covered Kayin, Mon and Kayah States and Tanintharyi region. Consultations were held with a wide range of actors representing the government, EAOs, (Ethnic Armed Organizations) INGOs, LNGOs, CSOs, ESPs (Ethnic Service Providers) , private sector actors and selected beneficiaries of LIFT interventions. The consultation were held through a combination of workshops (for INGOs, CSOs and ESPs) and smaller meetings (with government departments, and representatives of KNU -Karen National Union- and NMSP-New Mon State Party-). Unfortunately, the scoping mission provided limited access to villages as TA (Travel Authorization) was not granted.

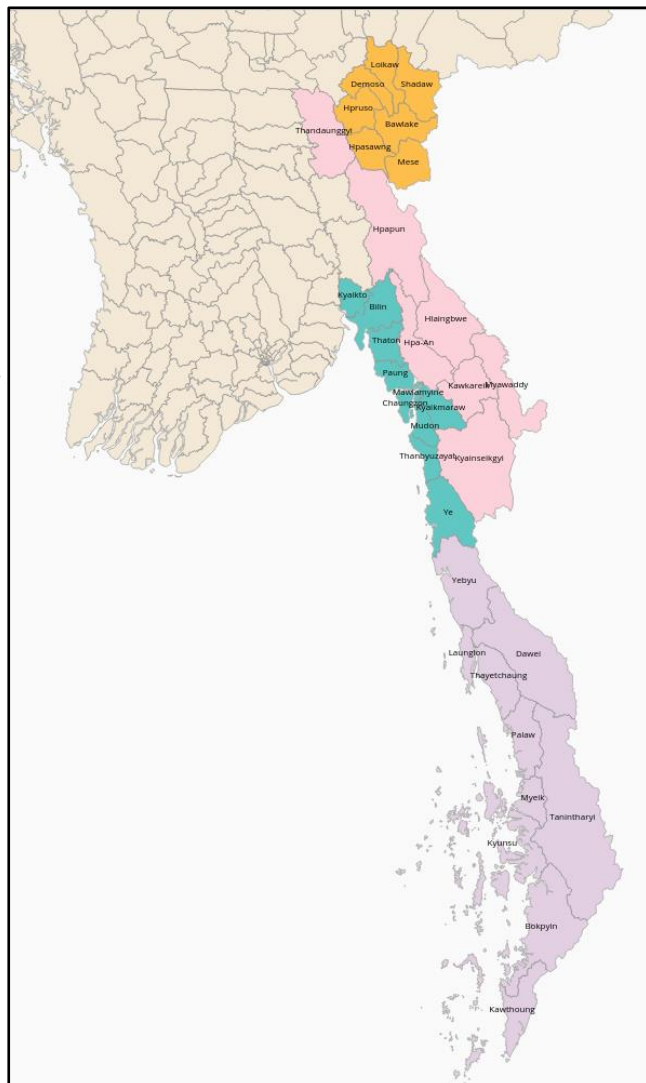
The synthesis of findings took place concurrently during the course of the trip and during the week of meetings within the Fund Management Office and with the Fund Board in Yangon.

2. Situation analysis

Overview

The Tanintharyi region and the states of Mon, Kayah and Kayin make up the target geographies that this programme framework refers to as South East Myanmar, which typically also includes southern southern Shan State and Bago. The region has an estimated population of over 5.3 million inhabitants comprising Karen, Karenni, Mon, Pa'O, and Bamar ethnic groups.

State/region	Population
Kayah	287,000
Kayin	1,574,079



Mon	2,054,393
Tanintharyi	1,410,000
TOTAL	5,325,472
Source: MDHS 2014	

This section of the report presents the context of South East Myanmar in terms of conflict, resilience/vulnerability, gender and women’s empowerment and LIFT’s four thematic areas.

Conflict analysis

Evolution of the situation since 2012

The South East of Myanmar, which usually refers to Bago and Tanintharyi divisions, and Mon, Karen, Kayah and southern Shan States, has seen a complex shift in Village, District and State level dynamics since bilateral ceasefire agreements were signed between the Karen National Union (KNU), the Karenni National Progressive Party (KNPP) and the Myanmar government in 2012 (refer to Annex 1 for details of key conflict stakeholders). The Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) process has added momentum to the peace process that began bilaterally, though the perceived lack of progress on implementing the NCA has also introduced a new level of uncertainty.

The situation in 2019 is complex. In addition to the EAOs mentioned above, other armed groups hold authority over some areas in the South East. Some of them are now affiliated with the Tatmadaw and have been renamed as Border Guard Forces.

Three broad categories of conflict-affected territory exist:

- Areas controlled by EAOs (mostly along the Thai border, off the main roads and away from towns);
- Areas of mixed control where EAO authority blends with government authority in an intricate and locally context specific manner;
- Areas where the government maintains control but tensions with competing authorities remain

Hopes for rapid progress towards sustainable peace since 2012 have not yet been met. While ceasefires have generally been upheld, progress in implementing the Interim Arrangements outlined in the NCA has been slow. In 2019, the KNU initially withdrew its full participation, but now appears to be re-engaging with the aim of ensuring there is

continuity beyond the 2020 election. Shifts in the political dynamics affecting the KNPP and its engagement with the peace process also have an impact on the area.

Recent statements suggesting that the KNPP is moving closer to a position that seeks to define the intentions of the peace process, and consolidate and secure the process in advance of the 2020 election suggest that the potential gains from signing the NCA may be extended to areas under KNPP influence. The National Reconciliation and Peace Centre have suggested publicly that the KNPP is willing to consider signing the NCA and will take a decision in September or October 2019.

The lack of clarity on the implementation of the Interim Arrangements clauses in Chapter 6 of the NCA fuels uncertainty for local populations, creating parallel governance structures in areas of mixed control, and potentially adding to the fragility and vulnerability of communities. The issues of taxation, citizenship registration and land ownership and usage are all affected by this dynamic. Development itself is also often viewed with suspicion.

Conflict, natural resources and ceasefire livelihood opportunities

There is a close association between the political contestation between conflicting parties, the military struggle associated with this contestation, and the economic opportunities presented by extending control over natural resources and managing access to livelihood opportunities. The changes at the political level have a direct effect on people living in communities, especially those under the control or influence of EAOs or affected by military activity.

In Kayin State, Mon State, eastern Bago and northern Tanintharyi the ceasefires have generated new livelihoods opportunities for sedentary, displaced, and migrant populations. Key issues include supporting market-based smallholder production and value chains, and durable solutions for current or potential returnees. Opportunities exist to improve the capacity of implementing partners and key stakeholders (including government, the civil wings of ethnic armed organisations, and NGOs) and to work with a range of different bodies.

The peace agreements have had a mixed effect on the context. Restrictions on movement have been lifted in several areas, opening opportunities to travel between villages and districts, levels of violence and intimidation have decreased, including reduced civilian abuse, and specifically a reduction in levels of violence targeting women. Increased participation of civil society groupings in development processes and civic engagement by local populations have also increased, taking advantage of the space that has opened because of the NCA. This has led to improvements in

transparency and accountability regarding human rights abuses and the exploitation of local populations. There are now also opportunities for improved social services and for addressing the longer term needs of refugees and IDPs.

New communications technologies and transport infrastructure have also served as connectors between communities, adding impetus to the peace process. The potential for new investment opportunities, for access to natural resources and for new livelihood opportunities, including in agribusiness and non-agricultural sectors has also escalated.

These developments have been welcomed by many, including state and non-state actors, but in the absence of a strong rule of law and in the face of weak governance mechanisms, the changes in relationships between stakeholders and the competition to gain leverage over resource streams could also escalate tensions.

Displacement and return

Conflict has generated repeated, long-term displacement within Myanmar's borders and into neighbouring countries. Large-scale land acquisitions and development-related displacement continue to generate further displacement across South East Myanmar. The expansion of extractive industries, commercial agriculture and road construction into ethnic territories during the ceasefire period exacerbated deforestation. Watershed areas in the South East appear to have become more prone to flooding and landslides as a result. It has been estimated that over 38,000 people in communities affected by the conflict have been displaced by natural disasters during the past five years in the South-East. At least 162,000 people are estimated to remain internally displaced in the rural areas of 26 townships across the South-East². These estimates are based on international standards that recognise internally displaced persons as having been forced to leave their homes due to armed conflict, generalised violence, large-scale development projects or natural disasters.

By the end of December 2018, 86,864 refugees remained in camps in Thailand. Since June 2013, UNHCR has piloted a system to assess spontaneous returns to south-east Myanmar, a process that may start in the absence of an organised voluntary repatriation operation. A verified return village is a village where UNHCR has confirmed there are refugees and/or IDPs who have returned since January 2012 with the intention of remaining permanently. By the end of 2018, more than 4,000 refugees and almost 11,500 IDPs had returned to more than 400 villages. There are preparations for a 'facilitated' repatriation programme by the Thai and Myanmar Governments along with

² TBC (2018). Human Security in South Easter Myanmar

international actors such as the UNHCR, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Thai foundation Mae Fah Luang. The efforts to repatriate refugees to Myanmar with United Nations support progresses slowly, even as international donors cut funding to camps in Thailand where the refugees are living. According to several reports from civil society groups, the main challenges the returnees face are safety, sustainable livelihood opportunities and a lack of education and health services.

Continuing conflict, tensions and a lack of cross-party agreement make many people in border areas of south-eastern Myanmar and elsewhere reluctant to join official systems for settlement. Uncertainty over the future of the peace process reduces levels of confidence in these systems. The number of humanitarian agencies active in the area, and the absence of effective coordination mechanisms add to the complexity of the context.

Land tenure, land acquisition, infrastructure and associated dynamics

Land ownership mechanisms and land use practices vary across the States and Regions, and in EAO controlled areas forms of land tenure and the issuing of certificates vary from one area to another. Traditional communal land use practices add complexity to development initiatives that impact on land.

Land disputes include concerns over the confiscation and misuse of land and complaints against 'land acquisition' either without compensation, or without the free prior and informed consent of communities affected by investment projects. The history of associated land disputes fuels underlying tensions, and add to the sensitivity of land related development activities.

Despite recent democratisation efforts, the South East remains heavily militarized. Military officials, and connected investors retain significant holdings in commercial mining and other natural resource-based enterprises, while the legacy of 'land acquisition' continues to affect many rural areas. This association between investment, development and the consolidation of power and authority, is part of the dynamic that escalates the concerns of communities and civil society organisations.

Major infrastructure projects including the construction of roads, dams, hydro-electric power stations and pipe-lines are highly controversial. National and local civil society networks and movements are actively opposed to many of these projects. Some of these investment initiatives include government and EAO support and involvement.

In addition to the concerns of civil society and directly affected communities there are also deeper concerns about the implications of opening-up development and investment opportunities in Myanmar, without fully addressing or acknowledging the depth of grievances amongst EAOs. Seeking a developmental solution without adequately addressing the underlying political concerns has the potential to obstruct the ability of EAOs to have their grievances fully addressed.

Economic opportunities and the control and ownership of assets and natural resources, including land, agricultural supply chains and trading routes, are also highly politicized in Myanmar. Forms of ownership and control within the formal economy are dominated by the Myanmar military. Militias and non-state armed groups are also involved in revenue collection, and economic activity dependent on the control of land and natural resources. The trade in timber, gems and precious metals including silver is matched by mining zinc, lead, iron, tungsten and tin, as well as malachite and quartz.

Resilience/vulnerability

Overall the South East of Myanmar can be characterised by relatively high rates of vulnerability. According to a vulnerability analysis developed by HARP and MIMU³, Kayin and Tanintharyi rank amongst the top 10 most vulnerable states/regions in Myanmar. The analysis categorises townships into 8 categories. Of the 34 townships across the target states/regions in the South East, three in Kayin are categorised as 'Extreme outliers in terms of development needs and/or exposure to conflict', four across Kayin and Mon as 'Hubs in conflict-affected areas' and eleven - particularly in Tanintharyi and northern Kayin - as having 'Very low access to basic services and infrastructure'. These findings are corroborated by the World Bank's Multidimensional Deprivation Index (MDI)⁴ which rank Kayin and Tanintharyi as the third and fourth most deprived states/regions in the country (following Rakhine and Ayerwaddy). This belies notable variation within regions, with selected townships faring much better than others.

Drivers of vulnerability are diverse. Workshops with various International Non Government Organisations (INGOs), Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and Ethnic Service Providers (ESPs) during the scoping mission highlighted the following as key drivers of vulnerability for local communities:

- Conflict, militarisation and land mines. This contributes to a general sense of insecurity, exposure to armed conflict and violence, restricted mobility due to Tatmadaw and EAO presence and the risks associated with landmines.

³ HARP-MIMU (2018) Vulnerability in Myanmar a secondary data review of needs, coverage and gaps

⁴ WB and MOLIP (2018) Multidimensional welfare in Myanmar

- Dual administration and taxation. The double burden on small scale producers of paying taxes to both the Myanmar government and governing EAOs in areas of mixed control impacts on their food and income security.
- Land acquisition including for large scale development projects (such as hydropower dams, mines and highways), exclusionary conservation (restricting community access to forests in the name of conservation) and military bases. This is linked to issues of land ownership and registration, the lack of free and prior informed consent but also to power imbalances as even those with land-titles may lose their land.
- Climate change, natural disasters and degradation of natural resources
- Structure of agricultural markets and inability to produce enough food for own consumption
- Lack of infrastructure, remoteness and lack of employment opportunities, especially for women
- Lack of affordable access to healthcare and nutrition services (including emergency referral for pregnant women) and low awareness on related issues
- Growing drug trade

While historic and ongoing conflict remains a major influence on people's lives and choices, evidence on IDPs indicates that natural disasters are replacing conflict as the key driver of displacement, including floods, droughts and landslides⁵. The insidious nature of climate change and environmental degradation have exacerbated the aforementioned events, which combine to have wide reaching impacts. This includes loss of road connectivity (particularly in upland areas), increased prevalence of pests and diseases, crop losses (and reduced productivity) and food and water shortages. Recent data from the FAO's emergency warning system indicates that in 2019 some 12,000 farmers across Kayin, Mon and Tanintharyi were affected by floods.

Poverty and food insecurity remain prevalent across the South East, and are particularly concentrated in rural, upland and more remote areas. Data from the **MMFCS**⁶ reported the highest rates of food security in Mon (86.0% of households) and Tanintharyi (77.2% of households) and lowest in Kayah (21% of households) and Kayin (37.2%). A similar pattern exists for Household Dietary Diversity Scores (HDDS), with Kayin faring the worst (68.4% of households having a HDDS score below 6), followed by Kayah (53% of households). In terms of poverty, Tanintharyi has the lowest proportion of households falling below the poverty line at 13.2%. This is followed by Mon (19.2%), Kayin (24.2%) and Kayah (32%)⁷. Tanintharyi presents an unusual case as higher per capita

⁵ TBC (2018) Human Security in South Eastern Myanmar. Wanida Press

⁶ MoHS (2018) Myanmar Micronutrient and Food Consumption Survey

⁷ WB (2018) Myanmar Living Conditions Survey 2017: Report 3, Nay Pyi Taw and Yangon, Myanmar: WB.

consumption occurs alongside poor performance on a range of other welfare indicators. It is worth noting, however, that the Myanmar Living Conditions Survey Report 3 also identifies an additional 25% (Tanintharyi) to 39% (Kayin) households in each state/region that are categorised as 'Non-poor insecure'.

Gender and women's empowerment

A variety of factors are contributing to the current situation of women in South East Myanmar, including traditional gender norms, insecurity resulting from decades of conflict dynamics and the rise in women headed households as a result of out-migration of men. Women remain largely absent from participation in political processes, including low representation in local and national parliaments and the broader peace process⁸. Women representation in leadership positions within the EAOs is also limited. Within the political dialogue processes women's participation is often limited to issues of education, child care and health, while those issues perceived as more political are dominated by men. Significant barriers limiting the participation of women in politics and governance include the socio-cultural norms that perpetuate gender inequality, and gendered leadership cultures and societal roles that tend to relegate women to private, household responsibilities.

A UNFPA⁹ report found that Gender Based Violence (GBV) remains prevalent across the South East with intimate partner violence among married couples, and sexual violence against children and young girls being the most prevalent forms of GBV in Kayah, Kayin and Mon states. The prevalence and acceptance of intimate partner violence (IPV) is a clear indicator of the gender inequality and subordination of women and girls entrenched in all aspects of the everyday life of communities across the region. The level of acceptance of IPV means that women and girls rarely seek support, including formal justice system responses, which results in it remaining a silent epidemic across the region. Key triggers for IPV, which were also widespread, included drug abuse, poverty, and lack of livelihood options.

Despite these constraints, women in the South East are reported to be relatively mobile and play important operational roles in agriculture and non-farm businesses. However, they also face a number of restrictive social norms and discriminatory practices that accentuate their vulnerability. Indeed, despite women's involvement in small enterprises and family business activities, they typically lack formal ownership of

⁸ GEN (2017) Gender and Politics in Myanmar: Women and Men Candidates in the 2015 Elections. Available at: https://www.genmyanmar.org/system/research_and_publications/rap_file_engs/000/000/023/original/Gender_and_Politics- Full- English.pdf

⁹ UNFPA (2017) Powerful Myths, Hidden Secrets

businesses and key productive assets, including land, and have limited control over decision-making and the income earned from these activities.¹⁰ Gender norms related to employment also restrict the types of activities that women engage in and the opportunities they face for upward mobility. In many instances traditional practices, particularly concerning Maternal-Infant and Young Child Feeding (M-IYCF), are harmful.

The UNFPA assessment found that the region was characterized by a general malaise as a result of the lack of civic engagement of young men and women. Given that the population demographic indicates a high level of young people, their engagement in civil society is critical.

The opening of the economy to investment in recent years, particularly large scale infrastructure development and commercial agriculture concessions, has presented both opportunities and challenges. Women's civil society organisations are documenting the gendered impact of infrastructure projects and have sought to raise awareness on the different impact of these developments on women and girls. For example, the Tavoyan Women's Union has conducted a study showing how developments surrounding the Dawei Special Economic Zone (SEZ) have led to livelihoods displacement and income insecurity for women in the area. The Molo Women Mining Network has reported on the social and community impact of tin mines in Kayah State. Concerns were also expressed by interviewees surrounding the potential for an increase in GBV as a result of incoming infrastructure and industries with imported labour.

Despite the obstacles to gender equality in South Eastern Myanmar, important gains are being made. These include the creation of the National Strategic Plan for the Advancement of Women 2013-2022 (NSPAW) and efforts by political parties, networks and NGOs to boost the role of women in public life and to monitor the gender impact of new projects. There remains, however, a lack of comprehensive gender and power analysis in the development, humanitarian and peace sectors in South Eastern Myanmar..

Nutrition

Undernutrition is a persistent challenge in South East Myanmar, despite the progress made in recent years. Rates of stunting range from 25.4% in Kayah state to 39.7% in Kayah state, while wasting ranges from 2.6% in Kayah state to 10.3% in Tanintharyi region. However, due to the significant variation in population across states, in terms of absolute numbers the highest numbers of wasted children are in Mon state (50,201),

¹⁰ Nepali, N (2018) Market Assessment in South Eastern Myanmar. MercyCorps

followed by Kayin (43,241) and Tanintharyi (40,058).¹¹ Data from the MMFCS¹² presents somewhat different figures, with the lowest rates of stunting for children aged 6-59 months in Mon at 16.4%, followed by Tanintharyi at 24.3%, Kayah at 28.1% and Kayin at 34.3%. Pockets of higher rates of wasting and stunting can be found across each of the regions, particularly in areas where poverty and food insecurity are high.

Drivers of malnutrition vary across the region but include food insecurity, low incomes, limited access to markets, limited availability or affordability of nutritious foods in local markets (with notable seasonal fluctuations), limited knowledge on nutrition and good nutrition practices specifically within the 1000 day period from conception to 2 years, the prevalence of harmful traditional practices (particularly related to food avoidance, breastfeeding and early introduction of complementary foods), including unequal and restrictive gender norms, poor sanitation and environmental hygiene conditions (driven by water shortages, lack of infrastructure, suboptimal practices related to small scale livestock rearing) and exposure to shocks and stresses.

The most food insecure areas are located in Northern Kayin and the mountains of Kayah. A higher proportion of households in these areas reported difficulties in getting access to food and for longer periods than in other areas. Food insecurity in remote upland areas is much higher than in the coastal plains where people consume macro and micronutrients more frequently. In Mon, more than half of households were found to consume well balanced and diversified diets, with 32 percent having a fish-based diet in Tanintharyi. The primary source of food for most households is from the market, rather than own production. In Kayin, however, 11 percent of food came from wild sources or relatives and neighbours, and in Kayah home production prevails. In southern Tanintharyi, more than one fifth of households rely on credit to purchase food, in many cases being heavily indebted. In Kayah and Kayin regions, half of the household experienced food gaps, with 18 percent experiencing hunger related suffering.¹³

The Multi Sectoral National Plan of Action on Nutrition (MS-NPAN)¹⁴ provides the overarching policy framework for addressing nutrition challenges across Myanmar. It brings together the Ministry of Health and Sports, the Department of Social Welfare, the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation and the Ministry of Education. Roll-out of the MS-NPAN is nascent and considerable work remains to be carried out in terms of identifying high

¹¹ All data taken from: RoUM (2018) Multi-sectoral National Plan of Action on Nutrition (MS-NPAN) 2018/19 - 2022/23 / MDHS (2015-16)

¹² MoHS (2018) Myanmar Micronutrient and Food Consumption Survey

¹³ Myanmar Food Security Atlas, June 2019-WFP

¹⁴ RoUM (2018) Multi-sectoral National Plan of Action on Nutrition (MS-NPAN) 2018/19 - 2022/23

risk townships and priority interventions, and clarifying contributions of different departments at the state/region level.

Healthcare is severely underfunded in ceasefire areas. In these areas, ethnic and community based organizations provide primary care to hundreds of thousands of vulnerable people. These organizations employ more than 3,000 staff and administer more than 232 clinics and mobile teams, they are only partially able to fill the gap left by the government. While the government provides services in some of these areas, it is impaired by geographic and security impediments, poor funding and restrictive policies.

Whereas health interventions focused on the delivery of essential health services (most notably HIV/AIDS, malaria and TB) and health system strengthening have received comparatively more attention, particularly with support from the Access to Health Fund (formerly 3MDG) in Kayah, Kayin and Mon States, nutrition remains a relatively new priority and capacity for implementation remains weak. The capacity gap affects both the government and the Ethnic Health Organisations and hampers the pace with which effective nutrition interventions can be rolled out.

Kayin and Kayah are priority states for the roll out of MCCTs by the DSW and also priority states for the MS-NPAN. These MCCTs involve the transfer of cash to pregnant and lactating women in order to enhance their ability to cover the costs associated with improved M-IYCF practices, especially during the first 1000 days. The MCCT programme, although led by DSW will only be successful with effective coordination, collaboration and participation of the MoHS to enable simultaneous equitable access to quality maternal and child health services. This initiative also represents a notable achievement in terms of collaboration, coordination and joint implementation between the government and Ethnic Service Providers in terms of increasing access to Antenatal Care (ANC) services, registration, and provision of nutrition services for mothers of children under two years of age. Rollout of the MCCTs faces numerous contextually driven challenges related to the transfer of cash that are linked to accessibility in remote areas, conflicting data sources regarding numbers of eligible beneficiaries, limited awareness of MCCTs amongst the target population and risks of sporadic or unpredictable delivery of cash, lack of connection with the provision of health and nutrition services and misappropriation of funds. While technical capacity to oversee the roll-out of the MCCTs is growing, it remains limited.

Moreover, the MCCTs are not yet accompanied by reliable access to health services nor effective Social Behaviour Change (SBC).¹⁵ SBC which includes a range of modalities to

¹⁵ Social Behaviour Change (SBC) comprises a broad set of approaches “grounded in a number of different disciplines, including social and behavior change communication (SBCC), community mobilization, marketing,

change perceptions, knowledge and practices of key behaviours, is known to be critical to ensuring that MCCTs translate into the desired behaviour change and nutrition outcomes. This presents a major gap restricting the effectiveness of MCCTs in improving nutrition outcomes.

Data on the nutritional status of children in South East Myanmar reveals a worrying picture. Adoption of Maternal, Infant and Young Child Feeding (M-IYCF) practices remains limited. For example, between 24.1% (Kayin) and 38.3% (Mon) of newborns do not start breastfeeding within one hour of birth.¹⁶ Moreover, compared to the national average of 51% of children receiving exclusive breastfeeding as cited in the MDHS, preliminary results of a baseline study in Kayin and Kayah indicate it may be even lower than 10%.¹⁷ In terms of complementary feeding for children in the 6-23 months age group, very few children were found to be receiving all three practices (includes consumption of milk, more than four food groups and meeting the recommended minimum meal frequency), with figures ranging from below 6.5% in Kayin and Mon to around 14.6% in Kayah.¹⁸

Micronutrient intake also remains low. The MDHS presents data on the percentage of children aged 6-23 months who consumed vitamin A and iron-rich foods in the last 24 hours. The figures are lowest in Kayin (56.7% for vitamin A and 50.6% for iron) and highest in Tanintharyi (65.6% for vitamin A and 57.8% for iron). The reasons for some of these poor nutrition indicators are complex and multifaceted and known to require a response which address issues ranging from women's workload, income, availability of appropriate foods, knowledge, support and societal norms.

Access to safe water for drinking and domestic use and improved sanitation facilities remain an issue for a significant portion of the population. Lack of access to water is most pronounced in Tanintharyi region and Kayin State, where only 55% and 59% of households report having access to safe drinking water¹⁹ in the dry season. Though they fare better, significant gaps remain in Kayah (67%) and Mon (79%).²⁰ In the uplands, water scarcity in the dry season places a tremendous burden on women who have to spend up to several hours a day to travel long distances in search of water. This can be

advocacy, behavioral economics, human-centered design, and social psychology.” Source: <https://www.fphighimpactpractices.org/briefs/sbc-overview/>

¹⁶ MDHS (2015) Myanmar Demographic and Health Survey

¹⁷ CPI-Valid International (forthcoming) Baseline Survey for MCCT in Kayah and Kayin

¹⁸ MoHS (2018) Myanmar Micronutrient and Food Consumption Survey

¹⁹ Central Statistical Organization (CSO), UNDP and WB (2018) “Myanmar Living Conditions Survey 2017: Key Indicators Report”, Nay Pyi Taw and Yangon, Myanmar: Ministry of Planning and Finance, UNDP and WB.

²⁰ Ibid. This report defines safe drinking water as “drinking water from an improved water source which is located on premises. Unlike the JMP definition, we are unable to include if the water is available when needed and is free from fecal and priority chemical contamination”

attributed in part to the ecological degradation of watersheds which leads to springs running dry and the absence of appropriate WASH infrastructure for capturing, storing and distributing water. Open defecation remains prevalent in Kayin, where almost 13% of the population still lack a toilet facility and a further 12.5% lack access to an improved sanitation facility.²¹ Compounded by the lack of water, adoption of key hygiene practices such as hand-washing also remain limited.

These issues also apply in the lowlands, where access to safe drinking water and improved sanitation facilities remains an issue for a significant section of households. Flooding is a recurrent issue in the lowlands, particularly in Kayin and Mon states, leading to a heightened risk of waterborne diseases and corresponding outbreaks of diarrhoea amongst infants and young children.

Agriculture, markets and food systems

Agriculture, including fisheries and the rearing of livestock, is the primary source of livelihood for approximately 50% of households across the South East,²² though with significant variation in terms of agro-ecological zones, topography and farming system. The South East can be broadly divided into the following agro-ecological zones:²³ lowland rice (particularly in central/southern Kayin and most of Mon state); tree crop mixed (in Tanintharyi region and parts of Mon state), upland intensive mixed (forming a long belt running from the south of Kayah, through Kayin and down to Tanintharyi), highland extensive mixed (across much of Kayah), and forest (forming a narrow band along the border with Thailand from Kayin in the north to Tanintharyi in the south). These can be further reduced to two broader zones: uplands and intermediate/coastal plains (referred to hereafter as lowlands). Annual rainfall is high across the South East (up to 4000 mm per annum in Mon), and in Kayin, Mon and Tanintharyi, the lowlands are particularly prone to prolonged flooding and inundation. In 2019, some 48,275 acres of land affecting 12,342 farmers were affected by flooding in Kayin, Mon and Tanintharyi.²⁴ Such events are predicted to become more frequent with climate change.

Across the different zones, land rights and land tenure arrangements are a focus of ongoing policy processes. They remain a point of contention in the context of the peace process and contribute to low levels of foreign direct investment in agriculture. Both the government and EAOs have their own land use policies and distinct systems of land registration. A large proportion of people, particularly IDPs and returnees have land

²¹ Ibid,

²² MOLIP (2014) Population and Housing Census

²³ FAO Geonetwork *** from MIMU (review and update) - <https://witsa.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Myanmar-Agro-ecological-Atlas.pdf>

²⁴ Official draft information of MOALI shared with LIFT by FAO on 2nd Oct 2, 2019

titles issued by EAOs that are not recognised by the government. Within the government, multiple ministries and departments are responsible for land related issues, though DALMS plays a central role.

In the case of agricultural land, farmers seek land titles from either the government or the EAOs operating in the area, and in some cases both. A major difference in the land administration policies of the Union Government and the EAOs is in regard to customary land use rights. Even though the National Land Use Policy makes explicit reference to customary land use rights, the government does not have a clear definition for customary land. Instead, much of the land that EAOs regard as customary land is what the Union government refers to as Virgin, Fallow and Vacant (VFV) land. Much of the land under cultivation in EAO jurisdiction falls under this categorisation by government, and as a consequence ownership of those cultivating such land is not recognised. This creates a situation of insecurity on the part of communities that manage land use according to customary practices. Many EAO leaders and CSOs believe that the VFV land law can be used to facilitate land acquisition by the state, whether for granting concessions to private companies (e.g. for mining or logging) or for hydropower and other infrastructure projects.

Forest cover is generally high in the South East with both Kayah state and Tanintharyi region having over 80% of land under forest cover, while Kayin and Mon states have the least. These latter two also have the highest annual rates of deforestation of between 1 and 2% per year (compared to the national average of 0.87% per year).²⁵ Traditionally, shifting cultivation was the predominant form of farming in the region, and while farmers have become increasingly sedentary, shifting cultivation continues. Traditional land governance has typically encouraged customary forms of land tenure and farmers, particularly in the uplands, cultivate land that is categorised as forest land. The Department of Forests and the EAO Forest Departments are responsible for the management of forests for timber, biodiversity conservation, environmental protection (including afforestation commitments under the Paris Agreement, 2015) and community livelihoods. Under the government policy, community forestry plays an important role in the uplands as it provides a mechanism for communities to legally utilise forest land for their livelihoods, provided they comply with applicable laws. The policies of EAOs, such as KNU, however, place restrictions on the sale of forest products. Overall, however, there are multiple areas of convergence between the aims of the EAOs and government Departments of Forestry and examples of collaboration were noted by representatives of both parties.

²⁵ Yang et al (2019) Analysis of Forest Deforestation and its Driving Factors in Myanmar from 1988 to 2017. Sustainability 11 (11). Available at: <https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/11/11/3047/htm>

The Myanmar Agricultural Development Strategy and Investment Plan for 2018-2023 (ADS)²⁶ provides a broad and overarching framework to guide agricultural development in Myanmar. The ADS situates agricultural development within the broader process of agricultural transformation (i.e. the transition from a predominantly agrarian society to one that is increasingly industry and service oriented). It identifies four main issues - integrated value chain development, agricultural diversification, institutional development and infrastructure development - within a broader context of inadequate financing. These are addressed through three pillars: governance, productivity, and market linkages and competitiveness. State and regional governments across Myanmar are currently in the process of identifying how to implement the strategy in context-appropriate ways, and the ADS outlines modalities through which development partners can contribute to the process. At the same time, in Kayin and Kayah which are priority states for MS-NPAN, MOALI is working to identify specific nutrition sensitive interventions that can contribute to nutrition-related goals. Focus areas include improved productivity and diversity of quality food products (crops and horticulture, fish and livestock products); increased income (through improved agriculture production, and expanded markets) and improved livelihoods for improved access to a diverse food basket; and improved food safety along food value and supply chains.

Infrastructure development (particularly road connectivity) remains highly uneven across the South East, with some remote areas lacking any kind of all weather access routes. Electric grid connectivity is also very uneven, with Kayah having the highest proportion of households connected to the public grid (75%), followed by Mon (55%), Kayin (23%) and Tanintharyi (0%).²⁷ Community grids have sprung up to fill the gap, especially in Tanintharyi where 66% of households have access through the community grid and Mon where an additional 18% of households are covered. Access to energy and roads play a vital role in enabling market integration and development and their absence poses a constraint to livelihoods development in the region.

Uplands

The uplands, composed of hills, steep valleys and ridges, span the length of the South East along the Thai border. Forest cover, both primary and secondary regrowth, remains relatively high in these zones, which also tend to be under EAO control. Inaccessibility, combined with years of conflict, have limited the development of markets in the upland areas and have contributed to the preservation of pristine fauna

²⁶ ADS: https://www.lift-fund.org/sites/lift-fund.org/files/publication/MOALI_ADS_June2018_compressed_EN.pdf

²⁷ Central Statistical Organization (CSO), UNDP and WB (2018) “Myanmar Living Conditions Survey 2017: Key Indicators Report”, Nay Pyi Taw and Yangon, Myanmar: Ministry of Planning and Finance, UNDP and WB.

and flora. Limited agricultural production and incomes, combined with an absence of local employment opportunities mean that many households are food insecure and have members who migrate in search of additional income. Food insecurity remains relatively high, particularly in the most remote areas.

In many areas where villages are located, natural resources are facing significant degradation as a result of deforestation, unsustainable farming practices and climate change. These result in changing micro-climates, reduced availability of water (springs drying, reduced soil moisture content and increased surface run-off), deteriorating soil quality, pest outbreaks, lower production, productivity and income, and increased propensity for landslides. In Kayin, significant crop losses (i.e. cardamom) and even a reduction in the area of rice sown were reported as a result of rat infestations. This has implications for both food and nutrition security as households are unable to either produce sufficient nutritious food for their members or access it from markets. Households adopt diverse livelihood strategies to meet their needs, from working in mines, to setting up small shops or businesses or migrating to Thailand (see DWLM section for further details).

Despite these conditions, most uplands households earn part of their income through the sale of agricultural produce. Networks of traders are involved in collection of various cash crops such as cardamom and betel nut. While in total these value chains may have a significant value, the quality and/or quantity of produce and the prices obtained by the producers are often low.

Coverage of extension services by the government, ESPs or the private sector remains very limited. Channels for distribution of inputs in upland areas are not well developed, as distributors tend to be concentrated in towns (through registered dealers or unauthorised grocery stores). In recent years, there have been numerous scattered and uncoordinated development projects which have comprised the primary means through which access to new inputs and knowledge has reached upland farmers. Such initiatives have largely struggled with issues of sustainability and market integration.

Alongside the lack of roads, a further constraint in the uplands is the lack of water for both agriculture and domestic use (see Nutrition section for further details on WASH). This significantly restricts the full production potential of the area, as does the prevailing pattern of land use. Moreover, many households rely on only a limited number of crops and lack the means to store or process them, restricting their ability to secure better prices or cope with price fluctuations for specific commodities. Utilisation of improved agricultural technologies, inputs or practices remain limited.

Access to appropriate forms of financing remains a major constraint to investment in increasing agricultural production at the household level and the development of inclusive upland value chains more generally. There is significant scope for the formation of cooperatives for both credit and production purposes.

Lowlands

Lowland farming systems (which includes the upland plains of Kayah) tend to be more intensive and commercially oriented, with a heavy emphasis on rice and increasingly maize (particularly in Kayah, Kayin and Mon) as well as larger tracts of rubber, oil palm and areca (betel nut) plantations (particularly in Mon, Tanintharyi and Kayin). The majority of producers involved in rice, maize and vegetable cultivation are smallholders (land holdings between one to three who sell relatively small volumes of surplus to the markets.²⁸ Mechanisation has significantly expanded in the South East, responding to rising agricultural wages, labour scarcity and new financing opportunities. A number of key commodities, most notably maize and sesame, are largely export-oriented, fuelling the growing demand for animal feed, particularly in China.

Capture fisheries, aquaculture and small livestock also play an important role in lowland farming systems, contributing to the supply of protein rich nutritious foods at the household level and in local markets. For example, in Mon State 40% of households keep livestock.²⁹ Key constraints to increased productivity of aquaculture and livestock are linked to the high cost of feed, the quality of stock and the lack of improved management techniques and veterinary services.

Lowland areas have witnessed an expansion in recent years in the commercial production of fruits (particularly citrus fruits) and vegetables as well as pulses/beans. Despite this diversity, the lowland agricultural sector is far from its full productive and economic potential and is constrained by a variety of factors including land tenure issues, the limited development of factor markets and competition from neighbouring Thailand.

In the main market towns across the lowlands, a growing number of input (seed, fertiliser, pesticides and increasingly machinery) supply companies³⁰ have an adequate presence with distribution networks in surrounding areas. Whereas they have strong linkages with larger-scale commercially oriented farmers, small-scale producers typically lack access to these inputs due to unavailability and cost (including lack of access to

²⁸ Nepali, N (2018) Market Assessment in South Eastern Myanmar. MercyCorps

²⁹ MSU, IFPRI, MCESD (2016) Rural Livelihoods in Mon State.

³⁰ such as Awba, CP Group, Golden Key, Kubota, Harmony, Min Dapa, Swan Arr, Ma Su Pyae, Shwe Gyo Gyar, East-West Seeds Pan international

appropriate forms of credit), and also lack knowledge on appropriate use of the inputs and Good Agricultural Practices in general, including those associated with harvesting and post-harvest management. Limited quality-based price discrimination is reported in local markets and serves as a disincentive to the adoption of improved practices.

The absence of reliable advisory services presents a significant obstacle to the more widespread uptake of improved inputs, new crops (such as vegetables and fruits) and associated increases in production, productivity and income. While there are a number of demonstration initiatives led by the state/region level Departments of Agriculture as well as by private players, these tend to have limited reach. Limited budget and human resources also limit the coverage and effectiveness of government extension services.

Small scale producers typically sell their produce in nearby markets or to local brokers, traders and buyers upon whom they often rely as a source of credit and market price information. The dependence on credit from traders can also result in producers having to accept lower than market prices at the time of sale. While the provision of financial services through MFIs and banks has been increasing, it often remains inaccessible, inadequate, unaffordable and lacking in flexibility to respond to agricultural cycles.

While there has been a growth in businesses involved in input supply, aggregation, storage, transportation and processing, packaging, etc., the sector remains somewhat nascent. The slow growth can be attributed to the risk associated with investments in agribusinesses, particularly given the lack of a conducive business environment. Key challenges here include informal and dual systems of taxation; weak regulation, including on issues of food safety and cross-border trade (especially related to imports from Thailand); and ensuring the quality of inputs.

Aquaculture

Besides the key crops, inland and coastal fisheries have an important role to play in rural livelihoods, particularly in the lowlands of Kayin, and in Mon and Tanintharyi. This encompasses aquaculture, wild capture fisheries and inshore fishing. Partly due to the relative ease of wild capture fisheries, uptake of aquaculture (using ponds) remains somewhat limited. It is also beset by a number of challenges.

In Mon State, the Department of Fisheries reported it registered around 1,000 fish ponds ranging in size from 0.5 to 4 acres but reports that many of them are not in use. In Kayin, the Department of Fisheries reported around 860 acres of fish ponds in total. A major challenge facing aquaculture is the cost of production, of which 75% goes into fish feed (excluding electricity and construction costs). Reportedly, fish feed is currently imported from China and Thailand, which further increases the cost of production.

Additional challenges include flooding, which results in breeding fish escaping from ponds and wild fish entering them as well as drying out of fish ponds.

The government operates breedings centres through which it produces fingerlings for sale to the private sector, but it is currently not able to produce a sufficient quantity to stock all the available ponds. In Kayin, infrastructural issues and flooding were reported to be hampering the production of fingerlings.

Decent work and labour mobility

Labour migration

Due to substantial unemployment and under-employment within the South East and high wage differentials with neighboring Thailand, labour migration has emerged as a key livelihood strategy for households during the last several decades. Data from the last census conducted in 2014 reveals that Mon, Kayin and Tanintharyi represent three of the four largest areas of origin for international migrants in Myanmar.³¹ Although accurate official data on the migration flows from these areas is unavailable due to the scale of irregular migration occurring, studies of Myanmar migrants in Thailand suggest that 58% percent come from the South East and nearly half are women.³² Considering the most recent UN migrant stock data, this suggests that there may be 1.3 million migrants from the region living and working in Thailand.³³

Historically, the high rates of migration in the South East have been linked to conflict-related displacement. While conflict remains a considerable source of insecurity and has restricted the development of local employment opportunities in many areas, current migration flows are predominantly motivated by the search for better employment opportunities. However, mobility from the region continues to be driven by a complex set of intersecting factors, including conflict, insecurity and natural disasters as well as the prospect of an improved household economic situation.³⁴

Migration is often a considerable gamble for migrant workers and their families in the South East, with many experiencing abusive practices during their recruitment and employment. In part, this is because the majority of migrants seeking employment

³¹ MOLIP, The 2014 Myanmar Population and Housing Census, 2015.

³² IOM, Assessing Potential Changes in the Migration Patterns of Myanmar Migrants and their Impacts on Thailand, 2013.

³³ United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, International migrant stock: The 2019 revision, 2019.

³⁴ MIMU, Situation Analysis of South Eastern Myanmar, 2016.

opportunities across the border in Thailand have limited opportunities to migrate through regular channels. A study by ILO and IOM found that 80% of migrants in Myanmar use unlicensed brokers, social networks or migrate independently. This is largely due to the long duration, high cost and considerable administrative complexity of the MOU process between Myanmar and Thailand.³⁵ Rather than crossing the border and starting work immediately, migration through official channels requires the services of a recruitment agency, obtaining legal documentation and completion of a long series of required procedures for deployment, many of which are highly centralized and entail significant time and expense to travel to Yangon.

Access to safe migration information and support services are extremely limited, particularly in areas under EAO control. Migrant Worker Resource Centres have been set up at Labour Exchange Offices in Hpa An, Mawlamyine, Dawei and Myawaddy. However, there is lingering distrust of approaching government authorities to obtain support among ethnic minorities planning to migrate and lack of outreach to build awareness in communities of origin. A study by the International Labour Organization found that friends and family were the only source of information on migration considered reliable among migrants interviewed. As there is a dearth of useful information and assistance available from officials, many migrants have little information to base their migration decisions upon.³⁶

While use of regular channels for migration is no guarantee of a safe and rewarding migration experience, there are particular risks involved for migrant workers going abroad without legal documentation as Thailand has substantially increased immigration enforcement during the last few years.³⁷ An estimated 1,000 migrants are detained and deported across the border to Myawaddy and Kawthaung in large groups each week. For those migrants who are arrested and cannot pay the fine for violating the Immigration Act, they are held in crowded conditions within Immigration Detention Centres for up to 45 days. Cases of poor nutrition, health and hygiene have been reported by CSOs providing assistance services on the Myanmar side of the border.

Government policy on providing support to deported migrants is limited, with no formal reception centres established and a patchwork of services available from the Department of Relief and Resettlement, CSOs and faith-based organizations. More comprehensive support for nutrition, health, accommodation, transportation, documentation and legal assistance is needed, as well as linking deportees with longer term livelihoods through vocational training, job matching and safe migration

³⁵ ILO and IOM, *Risks and Rewards: Outcomes of Labour Migration in South-East Asia*, 2017.

³⁶ ILO, *Safe Migration Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices in Myanmar*, 2015.

³⁷ UN Thematic Working Group on Migration, *Thailand Migration Report 2019*.

information. In the absence of these services, many migrants have little choice but to immediately return to Thailand without legal status through the assistance of brokers.

Remittances are a major source of income for migrant households within the South East. Surveys have shown that the vast majority of the money is sent home through informal channels such as the hundi system.³⁸ As a result, accurate data on the financial contribution of migration to the welfare of households in the South East is limited. In 2018, the World Bank estimated that US\$2.8 billion was sent through formal remittance channels to Myanmar as a whole and the real national remittance account may be up to US\$10.8 billion.³⁹ Given the large portion of Myanmar migrants originating in the South East, it can be assumed that several billion US\$ is received in remittances by households within the region each year.

Although they are important to many families in diversifying and smoothing income, remittances are currently used primarily to meet immediate needs and for consumption and are less frequently invested in productive assets.⁴⁰ Nevertheless, the importance for migrant households of having these remittances to pay for urgent needs cannot be discounted and consumption can contribute to economic growth. There is a need to avoid simplistic approaches to migration and development in the South East that would instrumentalize migrant workers as remittance-senders, as research has shown that remittances are not a magic bullet for development in Asia.⁴¹

Local labour market

Local employment opportunities remain insufficient in many areas of the South East to provide jobs for the large number of working-age people, particularly in the uplands which are more remote and have received very limited private sector investment to support market development. At the same time, increased opportunities for wage employment are emerging in other areas within the region which could provide decent work if the barriers to entering the labour market are reduced, including in retail, hospitality, tourism, manufacturing, food processing, construction, transportation and other sectors.

The lack of availability of market-oriented skills development training is a major constraint to the ability of individuals from poor and vulnerable households to secure stable employment or to establish their own enterprises. This is particularly the case for

³⁸ ILO and IOM, *Risks and Rewards: Outcomes of Labour Migration in South East Asia*.

³⁹ World Bank, *Annual Remittances Data, 2019*; UNCDF, *Remittances as a Driver of Women's Financial Inclusion in the Mekong Region, 2017*.

⁴⁰ IOM, *Capitalising Human Mobility for Poverty Alleviation in Myanmar, 2019*.

⁴¹ World Bank, *International migration and development in East Asia and the Pacific, 2014*.

returnees, IDPs and women in non-government controlled areas. The Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population, Ministry of Border Affairs and other government and NGO service providers operate vocational training centres across the South East. However, in many cases the training services provided are not responsive to labour market demands and offer very limited support for graduates to obtain employment or start businesses upon completion. In addition, educational requirements for enrolment, language barriers, lack of documentation, the high cost of relocating and protectionist views within ethnic communities restrict access to training for many within these areas.

Across the South East, women face additional limitations to their employment and upward mobility due to restrictive social norms. A significant gap remains in labour force participation rates between women and men over 15 years of age. The gap is highest in Mon (39.7% of women compared to 68.7% of men) followed by Kayin (38.8% of women compared to 61.4% of men) and is also substantial in both Kayah and Tanintharyi.⁴² The highly gendered division of labour limits women (and to a lesser extent men) to types of work considered acceptable for their gender based upon traditional cultural values. This segregation of women's work and men's work has had particularly detrimental effects both on the range of jobs available to women and the remuneration they receive.

Construction of the Dawei deep sea port and nearby Special Economic Zone in Tanintharyi, major electrification initiatives as well as various other large-scale infrastructure projects offer the possibility of an expansion of jobs in the manufacturing, construction and service sectors. However, despite promised quotas in the Special Economic Zone, many of the initial employment opportunities are reportedly not being offered to local people due to the high skill requirements. In addition, advocates and stakeholders have raised serious concerns related to the environmental impact of the project and large-scale land acquisition.⁴³

Due to labour shortages created by international migration, there has been considerable in-migration of poor populations from the Dry Zone and Ayeyarwady regions into the South East seeking work. Internal migrants often fill jobs in sectors with low wages and poor working conditions that are not considered attractive to local people, including work in plantations, fishing and construction. While there is some recognition that internal migrants are needed in the South East to provide labour, the

⁴² Central Statistical Organization (CSO), UNDP and WB (2018) "Myanmar Living Conditions Survey 2017: Key Indicators Report", Nay Pyi Taw and Yangon, Myanmar: Ministry of Planning and Finance, UNDP and WB.

⁴³ Myanmar Times, Dawei SEZ's grave human rights violations, forced evictions and flawed EIAs come under fire, 2018.

influx of migrants from outside the region over the years has not been effectively addressed by policy makers, contributing to challenges with social cohesion and the rise of identity politics.

Exploitative working conditions have been found in some labour-intensive sectors within the South East (e.g. fisheries, plantations and mining), closely linked to depletion of natural resources.⁴⁴ The marine capture fishing sector is a major contributor to the economy of the South East, representing a significant part of the US\$700 million national fisheries industry.⁴⁵ It is also an important source of food security as fish accounts for half of the animal-source food consumed and is second only to rice in the diet of Myanmar people.⁴⁶ Port areas in Myeik, Kawthaung, Dawei and Mawlamyine provide employment to tens of thousands of women and men, many of whom are internal migrants from other parts of Myanmar. However, largely due to a reduced catch per unit of effort caused by an 80% decline in offshore fish stocks during the last 40 years,⁴⁷ working conditions in the fishing industry are frequently grueling and abusive.

Patterns of coercion are deeply embedded within the business model, including withholding of wages and debt bondage that involves entire families. Advances on pay tie fishers to particular vessel owners, who often take measures to prevent workers from absconding. Research suggests that the most exploitative working conditions may be found in the rapidly growing “tiger mouth” fishery. Within this type of fishing, vulnerable migrant workers are indebted and rendered immobile on rafts as a strategy for maximizing profit. In some cases this can effectively amount to captivity for the duration of the fishing season, and threatens the health of fishers through the lack of safety equipment.⁴⁸

Myanmar’s labour laws do not effectively regulate conditions in the fishing sector and must be brought closer into line with the relevant international labour standards, such as the Work in Fishing Convention (No. 188) and the Forced Labour Protocol (No. 29), to eliminate exploitation and ensure decent work for fishers. There is also currently very limited engagement of the Department of Labour in enforcing labour protections for the fisheries industry, insufficient efforts from the private sector to ensure ethical

⁴⁴ Belton, B., Marschke, M. and Vandergeest, P., Fisheries development, labour and working conditions on Myanmar's marine resource frontier, 2019.

⁴⁵ FAO, Country Brief Myanmar, 2019.

⁴⁶ Myanmar Fisheries Partnership, Myanmar Fisheries: Overview, 2016.

⁴⁷ Myanmar Fisheries Partnership, Transforming Offshore Fisheries Governance: Increasing economic value and social benefits through collective action in Myanmar, 2016.

⁴⁸ Belton, B., Marschke, M. and Vandergeest, P., *ibid.*

employment practices and few opportunities for fishers to organize and bargain collectively for improved conditions of work.

Marine governance in Myanmar needs to be updated in order to regulate fishing practices and implementation by the responsible authorities is weak and fragmented.⁴⁹ Although Myanmar is a signatory of the Port State Measures Agreement, considerable problems with illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing remain in the South East and seriously threaten the long-term sustainability of the industry. An oversized fishing fleet that is not fully registered, fishing during closed periods, use of destructive fishing gear, lack of crew lists and other problems continue to plague the sector, contributing to overexploitation of marine fisheries resources and restricted access to export markets. In addition, stricter regulation of the fishing industry in Thailand, responding to the EU yellow card for IUU fishing in 2015, have pushed many Thai boats to register illegally in the South East. Thai owners are increasingly operating their vessels through Myanmar nominees in spite of the ban on the licensing of foreign vessels and smuggle their catch into the Thai seafood market, presenting major problems for traceability of fish.

Financial inclusion

Access to financial services remains underdeveloped across the South East, despite the expansion of banks and microfinance institutions (MFIs) in recent years. Banks and MFIs are concentrated in towns and cities in lowland areas, with limited coverage in remote upland areas. This is due to a combination of inaccessibility, conflict associated risks and limited financial opportunities. Moreover, many of the loan products available through banks and MFIs do not cater to the specific requirements of small scale producers, micro-enterprises or even MSMEs operating in the agricultural sector.

Having said this a number of government loan schemes exist which offer low interest loans for agricultural purposes. However, these are not generally perceived to be easily accessible to small scale producers, particularly those in remote areas and those lacking government-recognised land titles. IDPs thus represent a key group that is generally excluded from access to financial services. As a result, many small scale producers can only afford to make limited investments in agriculture using their own resources. Others rely on traders, brokers and other informal moneylenders who often provide money, inputs or other goods in advance. In some places the rates charged by these actors are reported to be as high as 10% per month. Moreover, dependence on traders and brokers for advances can also restrict the borrowers' options at the time of selling

⁴⁹ Myanmar Fisheries Partnership, *ibid.*

produce, pressuring them to accept lower than market rates often set in advance in exchange for the credit they receive.⁵⁰ Research by GRET has also highlighted issues of accumulated 'bad debt' amongst conflict affected populations leading to a rise in land sales by most vulnerable.⁵¹

Credit is needed for a range of purposes, including income smoothing, social inclusion/protection (for example participation in community functions) and investment in agriculture (particularly for the purchase of inputs) and for supporting a variety of off-farm enterprises. As a result, there is a widespread demand for access to sufficient and responsible credit across the South East. Efforts to set up Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) and Village Revolving Funds have been initiated across the South East through various development projects.

Lack of suitable financing for small and medium sized agribusinesses is a major bottleneck to economic development in South East Myanmar, limiting the growth of private sector agri-service providers and thus the inclusive commercialisation of small scale agriculture.

Other investments in the region

With the opening of Myanmar since 2012, and particularly following the signing of the NCA by the KNU in 2015 and the NMSP in 2017, South East Myanmar has witnessed a recent surge in investments from both the private sector and the international community. Data from MIMU's publicly available 3W database, indicates that the highest concentrations of interventions in the South East are in Kayin, with Kayah, Mon and Tanintharyi having significantly fewer and fairly similar intensities. Thematically, the emphasis is on social protection followed by livelihoods and agriculture. Mine action, nutrition and WASH have similar intensity.

LIFT-funded initiatives

LIFT has several ongoing projects in the South East. These are summarised in the table below.

Project Name	Start/End Date
IFDC: LIFT Uplands Agro-Input and Farm Services Project in Kayin State and Kayah State	2019 to 2023

⁵⁰ Nepali, N (2018) Market Assessment in South Eastern Myanmar. Mercy Corps.

⁵¹ GRET (2019) Land Tenure and Livelihoods Security in Karen Villages Under Dual Administration

CDN: Improving the Incomes and Nutrition Outcomes of Rural Poor in Northern Kayin State	2019 to 2020
KDN: Enhancing Livelihoods of Displaced People	mid-2020
Metta, SwissAid and GRET: Upland Township Fund (Kayah)	2019 to 2022
TBC: Sustainable Transformation of Agriculture, Nutrition and Development for Uplands (STAND UP) - Phase II	2019 to 2023
IOM Twe Let (w/Mon Women's Organization)	2019 to 2021
9 LIFT MFIs targeting households in the area	2019 to 2023

Other development initiatives

While there are numerous initiatives by other development partners in the South East, a number of these are relatively large-scale investments in livelihoods that overlap geographically and thematically with LIFT's work.

Project name	Donor/ Partner	Start/End Date
Advancing Community Empowerment	USAID/ PACT	2019-2024
Peaceful and Prosperous Communities Project [loan]	World Bank/ MOALI	2019 to 2027
Vocational Skills Development	SDC/ SwissContact	2018-2022
Generating Rubber Opportunities	SDC/ Care	2018-2021
Natural resources governance & Land governance	SDC/ Various	2017-2021
Improving Market Opportunities for Women - MEDA - Kayah agriculture+rice mills	Canada/ MEDA	2015-2020
HARP	DFID	Ongoing

Joint Peace Fund	Multi-donor/ UNOPS	Ongoing
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LIFT's support in the South East will need to ensure that adequate measures are taken to avoid duplication of effort, while at the same time seeking out synergies and complementarities.

3. LIFT's programme in the South East

This section sets out what LIFT is seeking to achieve in the SE, the key elements of LIFT's approach in the region, the target beneficiaries and the thematic programming that will achieve this.

What is LIFT aiming to achieve in the SE?

LIFT's programming in the South East is guided by the LIFT strategy. As such, it has as its purpose **to strengthen the resilience and sustainable livelihoods of poor and vulnerable groups in Myanmar, particularly women, internally displaced people, migrants, smallholder farmers, landless people, people with disabilities and those vulnerable to trafficking and forced labour.**

LIFT seeks to contribute to this purpose through three impact-level outcomes:

- **Improved nutrition status, particularly for women and children**
- **Increased household income and assets, with greater control by women**
- **Reduced vulnerability of households and individuals to shocks, stresses and risks**

Given the complex context of South East Myanmar, LIFT has further contextualised its aims for the South East programme. Operating in a **conflict sensitive** manner within the framework of key policies,⁵² including **interim arrangements** of the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement, by 2023 LIFT aims to:

- Lay the groundwork for and catalyse, where possible, inclusive, climate-resilient⁵³ and sustainable development in the region that addresses food, nutrition and

⁵² These include the Multi Sector-National Plan of Action for Nutrition (MS-NPAN), the Agricultural Development Strategy (ADS), the National Social Protection Strategic Plan (NSPSP), the National Plan of Action on the Management of Labour Migration (NPA-MLM), the Myanmar Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (MCCSAP)

⁵³ Climate resilience can be generally defined as the capacity for a socio-ecological system to: (1) absorb stresses and maintain function in the face of external stresses imposed upon it by climate change and (2) adapt, reorganize, and evolve into more desirable configurations that improve the sustainability of the system, leaving it better prepared for future climate change impacts.

livelihood security of the most vulnerable. This includes a specific focus on Internally Displaced People (IDPs), returnees, women, youth and those at risk of labour exploitation.

- Contribute to pro-poor and inclusive policy/legislative changes and implementation, particularly related to land rights, climate resilience, nutrition, migration and exploitative labour conditions and access to services
- Develop inclusive on and off-farm economic activities which connect diverse actors across geographies and socio-economic levels leading to integrated and inclusive market solutions
- Build cooperative partnerships between the government, Ethnic Armed Organisations(EAOs)⁵⁴ and Ethnic Service Providers (ESPs) and increase their capacity and accountability to reach the most vulnerable
- Advance a social inclusion and empowerment agenda across all sectors, with a particular focus on gender equality, youth engagement and people with disabilities
- Strengthen the voice and capacity of communities and Civil Society Organisations to increase transparency and promote accountability.
- Demonstrate sustainable and/or scalable models and approaches within the framework of the humanitarian-development-peace ‘nexus’⁵⁵ by working across conflict lines to secure rights, improve livelihoods and increase access to services for IDPs returnees and conflict affected people.

Targeting

Overall, LIFT’s strategy emphasises targeting of **the most vulnerable households and individuals**, which include

- IDPs and returnees
- Internal and international migrants
- Conflict affected people
- Small scale producers and landless people
- Migrant-sending households having only very elderly and very young members
- People with disabilities
- Women and women headed households
- Youth and in particular adolescent girls
- Women and children within the 1000 day period

⁵⁴ LIFT will only work with the EAOs that are signatories to the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA)

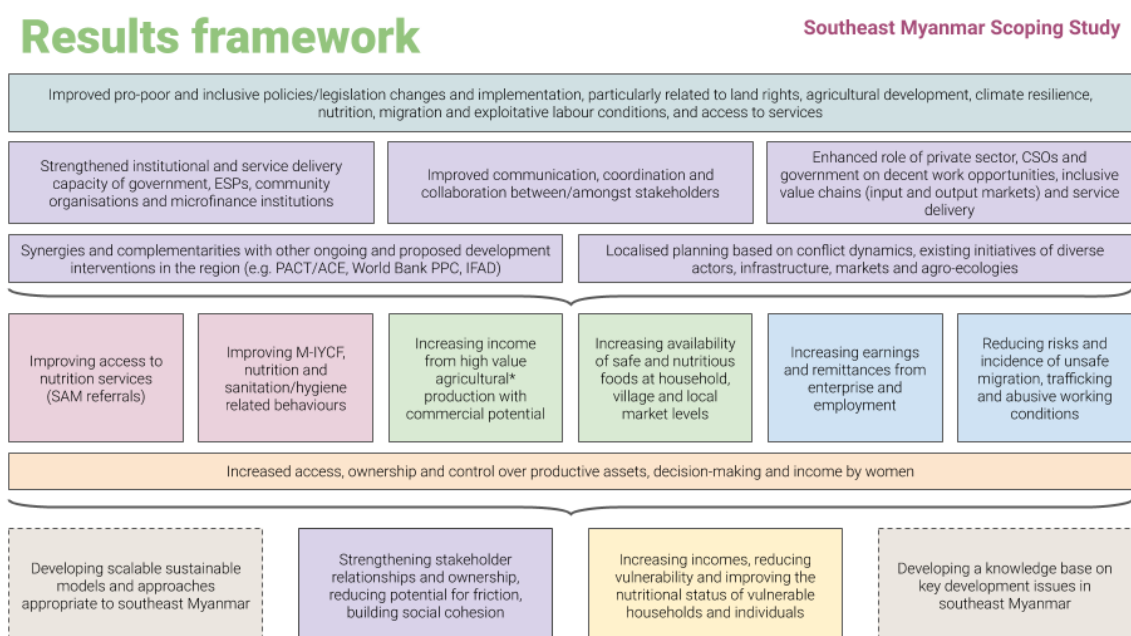
⁵⁵ The term ‘nexus’ is increasingly being used to refer to ‘the work needed to coherently address people’s vulnerability before, during and after crises.’ It is concerned with the intersection of humanitarian, peace and development initiatives, which have traditionally operated in a fragmented/uncoordinated manner, resulting in results that are widely recognised to be unsatisfactory. For further details refer to:

https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/dp-humanitarian-development-peace-nexus-260619-en_0.pdf

Results framework

In line with LIFT’s strategy, the programme will support initiatives at the policy, system and beneficiary levels. The diagram below presents a high level results framework for the programme and is divided into tiers reflecting these levels. The policy level is teal, the system level is purple, and beneficiary levels are shown in pink for nutrition, green for AMFS and blue for DWLM. An additional beneficiary level result focused on women’s economic empowerment is indicated in light orange. The bottom level includes selected higher-level results. Two on either end with dotted lines represent strategic knowledge/evidence related results which link to policy and systems level changes. The purple box represents the long-term system level goal, while the yellow box indicates LIFT’s three impact level outcomes as set out in LIFT’s refreshed Strategy 2019-2023.

This results framework will be further refined in consultation with key stakeholders and implementing partners during the inception phase of the programme. A larger version of this can be found in Annex 2.



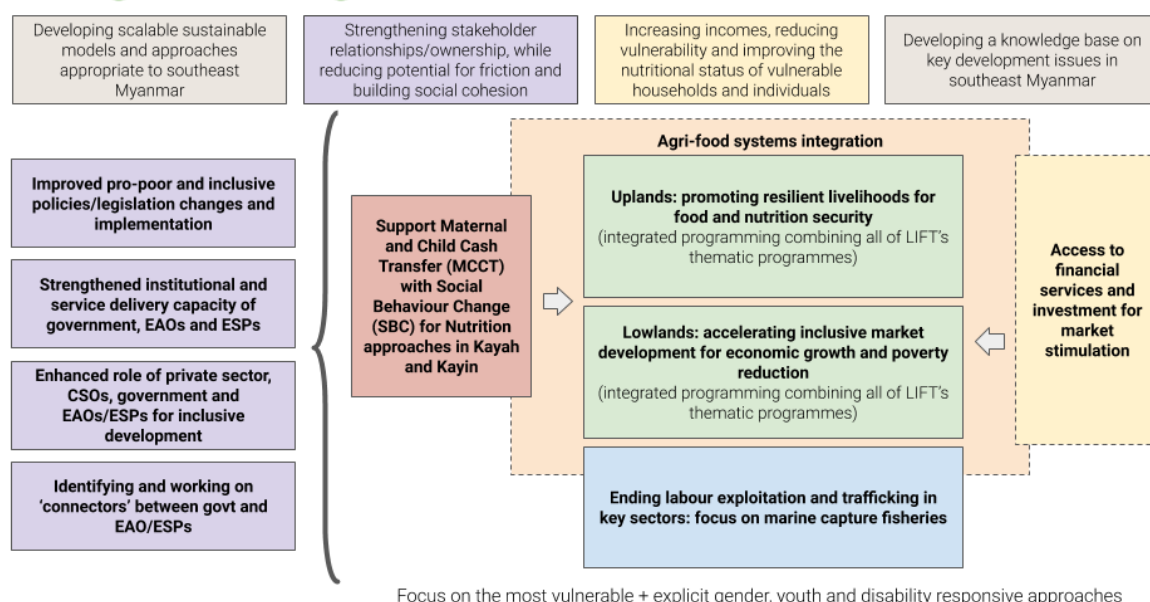
Programme framework

The programme framework divides interventions into a series of components. Some are based predominantly on agro-ecological zones, which also intersect with different governance dynamics, while others are cross-cutting or standalone. This configuration has been created to optimise the degree of integration while also ensuring that the coherence of programmes where they have their own logic.

The broad configuration of the components is set out in the diagram below. The boxes along the top indicate the high level/ultimate objectives of the programme. The boxes on the left (purple) represent key approaches, particularly at the system and policy levels. The group of boxes in the bottom right represent the different components and their relationships.

A larger version of this can be found in Annex 3.

Integrated Programme Framework



The central set of programme components, covering uplands, lowlands/coastal zone (in green) and coastal/marine fisheries (in blue) cover the range of agro-ecological zones represented in the South East from the hilly border areas down to the coastal zones and beyond. These three zones are linked under the broader framework of agri-food systems integration (beige box with dotted lines to the right of the three zones).

The pink box to the left of these represents a specific component on nutrition linked to the MCCT and MS-NPAN. To the right, the light yellow box indicates financial inclusion operating as a catalyst to stimulate inclusive development, addressing the key shortage in access to responsible credit at the individual/household level and incentivising private sector investment in factor and output markets.

The remainder of this section sets out LIFT's overall programme of work under each of its four thematic areas: (1) Nutrition; (2) AMFS; (3) DWLM and (4) FI.

Nutrition

Responding to the contextual challenges and opportunities, LIFT has identified a number of critical opportunities for making headway in addressing the poor performance on key nutrition outcomes, particularly for women and children. Effective nutrition initiatives must respond to the key contextual drivers and opportunities, which cut across thematic divisions. These include:

- Food availability, affordability (including seasonal variations) and consumption by those with highest vulnerabilities or needs
- Traditional practices and gender norms particularly as they relate to maternal and Infant and Young Child Feeding (M-IYCF) practices
- Implications of migration on targeting and modality of comprehensive social behaviour change approaches
- Maximising the potential of engagement with communities and other stakeholders to improve efforts to impact on LIFTs overall nutrition goal.
- Establishing linkages between nutrition, WASH and farming practices (including livestock)

Maternal and Child Cash Transfer (MCCT) with Social and Behaviour Change (SBC)

LIFT sees MCCTs as offering a vital avenue for enhancing the ability of pregnant women and mothers of infants and young children to ensure appropriate nutritional intake for themselves and their children. However, as evidence has shown, MCCT without SBC (as currently financed) is insufficient to achieve the desired impact. LIFT's long-term goal is to see context-appropriate SBC embedded in the government's approach to MCCTs, along with the availability and access to health services, with corresponding budget allocations to finance it.

In order to achieve this LIFT will invest in providing technical support to DSW and MoHS on the roll-out of a comprehensive MCCT in Kayah and Kayin. This includes establishing a baseline, strengthening M&E systems and establishing accountability and grievance mechanisms.

LIFT will also support the development, demonstration and scaling-up of context-appropriate models/approaches to SBC through both the government (DSW and MoHS) and EHOs. These will focus on using contextualised and adaptable SBC methods to achieve impact on nutrition sensitive and specific practices, and WASH practices. Efforts under this component should identify and tap into opportunities to leverage government, international and private resources for expanding access to improved

WASH infrastructure. This is critical for ensuring successful behaviour change for those who currently lack access to the required facilities.

Nutrition Sensitive Approaches

In response to the nutrition and food insecurity in the uplands and lowlands, LIFT will support investment in nutrition sensitive approaches which address the drivers of undernutrition through nutrition sensitive agriculture approaches and integration of nutrition concerns across LIFT programming in all thematic areas.

Under the framework of the MS-NPAN and the ADS, LIFT will support diversification of production to expand income generation opportunities, increase access to and availability of locally produced, diverse and nutritious foods and promote the consumption of appropriate micronutrient rich and safe foods. This will be achieved through the core activities related to agriculture, markets and food systems as well as using context-appropriate, targeted SBC approaches to influence behaviours related to production, purchasing and consumption patterns. Attention will also be given to ensuring that key issues of food safety are addressed as they apply to household level food production as well as broader value chains.

LIFT will support womens' empowerment, including adolescents, and increased control by women over resources and decision making as both an end in itself and a critical pathway for improved nutrition outcomes. This will be achieved through the adoption of gender-responsive and gender-transformative programming that pro-actively seeks to address barriers to women's empowerment and improve their position in the household as well as wider social, political and economic spheres.

LIFT will also promote increased access to and use of safe and improved water for household consumption and improved environmental hygiene (including appropriate livestock management to reduce key health risks). Across all geographies, LIFT will seek to leverage external (private, government, international) resources to support investment in WASH infrastructure.

In Tanintharyi LIFT will support research to understand the causal pathways of malnutrition, the contextual challenges and opportunities and the potential scope for future investment and support. LIFT will also work with the MoHS to encourage expansion of IMAM into this region

Agriculture, Markets and Food systems

The core goal of LIFT's work under the agriculture, markets and food systems (AMFS) theme is to develop sustainable and resilient solutions for the supply - and consumption - of nutritious food.⁵⁶ LIFT will pursue this through a differentiated approach in each of two broad geographic zones: uplands and lowlands. While each will require distinct context-driven responses, they will both contribute to a number of impact level outcomes. These include improved nutrition of women and children, increased income and assets with greater control by women, reduced vulnerability to shocks and stresses, and adaptation to climate change.

With respect to climate change, the predicted impacts of future climates on food systems are significant. Rising temperatures, higher rainfall, a shorter monsoon, that in combination will contribute to increases in the frequency and duration of flooding, and increased risks of landslides, will contribute to declines in agronomic output.⁵⁷ Further, rising sea levels along the coast are likely to compound the challenge through saltwater intrusion and soil salinity in coastal areas and river deltas resulting in displacement and changes in cropping systems. There is a need to adapt and promote food systems for the future that are climate smart, resilient and robust thereby ensuring future food and nutritional security. This includes 'no regrets' investments in the sector.⁵⁸

Contributions to nutrition will be driven primarily through expanding the production, and hence availability, of nutritious foods where appropriate and through influencing purchasing and consumption patterns. Wherever feasible, context-appropriate and targeted SBC approaches should be incorporated into the design of interventions. Particular attention should be given to reaching young women, pregnant women and mothers with newborns as well as husbands of such women and other caregivers through their involvement in project activities activities.

Increased income and assets will be driven through increases in production and productivity (through improved inputs, new management practices and technologies), diversification into more profitable crops, developing improved post-harvest and value addition practices and facilities, and market development.

⁵⁶ Siemen van Berkum, Just Dengerink and Ruerd Ruben, 2018. The food systems approach: sustainable solutions for a sufficient supply of healthy food. Wageningen, Wageningen Economic Research, Memorandum 2018-064. Available at: https://knowledge4food.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/20180630_FoodSystemsReport-WUR.pdf

⁵⁷ World Bank. 2012. World Bank Climate Change Knowledge Portal.

⁵⁸ For further information, see: <https://www.wri.org/our-work/project/world-resources-report/no-regrets-approach-decision-making-changing-climate-toward>

Advancing women's empowerment will require developing a detailed understanding of the position of women in agriculture and natural resource based livelihood systems, and developing gender responsive programming that specifically addresses gender norms that restrict women's equal control over assets, resources and decision-making, both with respect to agriculture and broader household dynamics.

Across both zones, the programme will focus on building resilience at both household and wider system levels. Climate change is a key driver of shocks and stresses that have a direct impact on both local conditions and broader systems, though with different patterns, consequences and solutions. In the uplands LIFT will focus on ecosystem resilience and food and nutrition security. In the lowlands, LIFT will focus on inclusive agricultural market development that is both nutrition sensitive and climate smart. At the centre of AMFS approach is ensuring the functionality of these ecosystems and the services that they provide.

While the uplands and lowlands have distinct agro-ecological characteristics and levels of market development, markets are an important connector between the two. This includes both the buying and selling of food products for household consumption as well as various market development initiatives focused on expanding market-based agricultural input and service provision (extension, veterinary services, energy, etc.) or processing and other post-harvest activities. Attempts should be made to deepen market integration where possible, while ensuring that these efforts do not pose conflict risks or undermine the distinct priorities of each zone.

Uplands

Responding to the specific challenges faced in the uplands - including fragile ecosystems, inaccessibility/remoteness, high levels of food insecurity and complex value chains centred on trader networks for key agroforestry cash crops - LIFT's AMFS programme will promote climate resilient, integrated and regenerative agriculture and natural resource use with a focus on increasing both food production and income whilst securing the provision of ecosystem services.

LIFT's investments in the uplands will target the most vulnerable households and individuals and work closely with ESPs, local CSOs and the government to strengthen their capacity to support the development of a sustainable, resilient and inclusive rural economy.

Given the uncertainty of the peace process and the high levels of poverty and vulnerability in the uplands regions, the emphasis of LIFT's work in the uplands will be on:

- Increasing ESP capacity to promote climate smart agriculture and sustainable natural resource use
- Strengthening communication and coordination between ESPs and government
- Enhancing individual, household and community resilience in the face of shocks and stresses
- Enhancing food production and availability and promoting consumption of diversified nutritious diets

Keeping these issues in mind, AMFS-related investments in the uplands should seek to:

Work with ESPs and communities to restore degraded agriculture and forest land and depleted water resources (springs, soil moisture and groundwater)

In the remote and often fragile ecosystems of the uplands, restoring and maintaining ecological integrity is of critical importance. Excessive use and poor management of natural resources has led to a number of challenges including water scarcity (for both domestic and productive purposes), reduced soil quality, declining productivity, increased susceptibility to shocks and stresses, and more frequent pest outbreaks, amongst others. Addressing this requires adoption of regenerative approaches to landscape restoration that recognise and support multiple land uses.

Key elements of this approach include participatory land use planning and integrated watershed development, engaging communities and local authorities and working with both agricultural and forest land. Emphasis should be given to ensuring the restoration of freshwater springs, soil moisture conservation and groundwater, with due attention to linkages with WASH related issues for both domestic and agricultural uses. Particular emphasis should be given to expanding tree cover through individual and community agroforestry, thereby ensuring the provision of ecosystem services while also contributing to the production of nutrient rich foods and increased incomes

Work with ESPs and entrepreneurs to increase the availability of nutritious foods in households, communities and local markets

A central goal of LIFT's AMFS programme in the uplands is to increase the consumption of nutritious foods amongst vulnerable households. A key step in this process is to increase the availability of nutritious foods in households, communities and local markets by promoting their production. This includes production of a variety of both staple foods, nutrient rich food crops as well as small livestock, which play an important role in upland farming systems and livelihoods.

To achieve this, LIFT will promote improved and climate smart agricultural practices and diversified farming systems with a focus on increasing both food production and

income. LIFT will also seek to develop long-term, integrated solutions to tackling key shocks and stresses, including outbreaks of pests and diseases, which lead to significant losses, underproduction and lower incomes. LIFT will achieve this by strengthening the capacity of ESPs to provide services and by financing, incentivising and de-risking entrepreneurial activity in the provision of key agriculture inputs and services.

LIFT will also support market integration through expanding access to inputs, extension and animal health services; and stimulating the growth of inclusive value chains through the introduction of appropriate technologies and working with local entrepreneurs to develop sustainable private sector solutions to transportation, storage, processing and marketing.

LIFT sees small scale rural infrastructure as critical to market integration and development in the uplands. LIFT encourages the mobilisation of resources available through other actors or initiatives (for example, the World Bank's Peaceful and Prosperous Communities project, the Department for Rural Development or private sector actors) and leveraging these to support agricultural market development initiatives. Initiatives that seek to expand access to irrigation through appropriate small-scale irrigation systems suited to the uplands are encouraged, particularly through climate smart approaches that rely on gravity flow and/or solar power.

Improve women's economic empowerment in agriculture and natural resource management

Women's empowerment has proven to be one of the key means to improving nutritional outcomes. LIFT's investments will include an explicit focus on analysing and addressing barriers to women's access, ownership and control over resources, including both productive assets (including land) and income as well as household decision-making. Gender-responsive and gender-transformative approaches that target both men and women to address and transform gender norms should be embedded in all uplands AMFS interventions.

Support ESPs and CSOs to work with governing authorities to address issues of land tenure, especially for returnees, IDPs and other priority vulnerable groups.

LIFT will support initiatives involving CSOs and ESPs that seek to secure land rights for IDPs, returnees and other vulnerable groups. These may combine awareness raising on land rights, the provision of information as well as the provision of legal and other forms of support that can facilitate land tenure security. Alongside these initiatives, LIFT will support research and documentation of existing land use practices, customary land tenure arrangements and key issues related to land tenure and link these to ongoing policy processes related to land rights reform.

Lowland

In the lowlands, LIFT's AMFS programme will focus on catalysing the development of inclusive, nutrition sensitive and climate smart agricultural value chains as a means of enhancing incomes, and food/nutrition security of the most vulnerable whilst ensuring environmental integrity.

LIFT's investments in the lowlands will entail working closely with the government, private sector, ESPs and CSOs and research centres to create sustainable solutions that address key bottlenecks in selected value chains while improving the livelihoods of the most vulnerable households and individuals.

Catalyse the development of inclusive nutrition sensitive and climate smart commercial agricultural value chains

LIFT will achieve this through strategic and targeted investments that target specific value chains that offer the highest potential for: (a) generating increased income for small scale producers, landless households and vulnerable groups; (b) strengthening the position of women in value chains and contributing to their empowerment at the household level; (c) increasing the supply of nutritious food at the household and local market levels; (d) fostering public private partnerships to pool resources, share risk and leverage comparative advantage; (e) generating employment in the non-farm rural economy for vulnerable individuals through various value addition activities and services including transportation, storage, handling, processing, packaging and marketing of produce; and (f) building resilience.

Relevant initiatives will need to work with all the key value chain stakeholders, including research institutes, government departments, private companies and small scale producers, amongst others. In-depth analysis of key bottlenecks and women's role within the value chain will be required to identify key challenges and opportunities to accelerate value chain development. Appropriate financing arrangements will need to be included as part of this to incentivise relevant private sector players, with a view to ensuring the long-term profitability and sustainability of the value chain. Initiatives will include a focus on the promotion of Good Agricultural Practices and adhere to food safety policies and protocols.

Key sectors under consideration include, but are not limited to:

- Aquaculture and inland capture fisheries
- Small scale livestock production
- Vegetables and/or fruit production

Expand factor markets through scalable public private partnerships and financing (derisking) for agri sector businesses

In addition to the more focused value chain interventions detailed above, LIFT will support investments in scalable public private partnerships and financing (de-risking) for agribusinesses associated with key inputs and services that are critical to the development of the agricultural sector. Examples, include working with government departments and/or businesses involved in mechanisation, irrigation, transportation, logistics, inputs, solar energy (as a climate smart solution that drives increased productivity and value addition) and post-harvest processing. Where appropriate these investments should be aligned with the more targeted value chain interventions.

Strengthen quality and coverage of sustainable extension and veterinary services in collaboration with government and private sector

Access to quality inputs, advisory and veterinary services remains a critical constraint in untapping the potential of the agricultural sector both in terms of productivity and incomes for small scale producers. In addition to this, such services help to reduce the risk faced by small scale producers by reducing their chances of losing their crops and livestock to pests and diseases. Given the central role of small livestock as a source of nutritious food in the South East, and the fact that livestock are predominantly managed by women, services oriented toward promoting improved practices and reducing losses have significant potential to contribute to LIFT's income, food security and nutrition goals. Advice also plays an important role in addressing key health risks associated by promoting improved practices and addressing key water, sanitation and hygiene related issues. Developing and/or expanding scalable service provision solutions therefore have an important part to play in strengthening lowland agricultural development.

Decent work and labour mobility

Supporting livelihoods of vulnerable households and individuals in South East Myanmar requires expanded opportunities for wage employment and enterprise development. Specific populations within the South East face a variety of challenges specific to their circumstances. This includes the need to diversify income sources in remote upland areas, the barriers faced by IDPs and returnees in securing safe livelihoods, the many risks and difficulties faced by migrants seeking work outside of Myanmar, highly restrictive gender norms that limit women's job opportunities and exploitation of internal migrants in labour intensive sectors such as fisheries.

LIFT's programming for the South East seeks to address these key issues through targeted intervention strategies, while contributing to LIFT's impact-level outcomes of increased incomes, improved nutritional status of women and children and reduced vulnerability of households and individuals.

Expanding access to decent work within the local labour market

To support those seeking to 'step out' of agriculture and into other sectors of the local economy, LIFT will support market-oriented skills development trainings combined with follow-up services to place graduates in jobs.

More specifically, LIFT will support the development and implementation of inclusive employment policies for non-government controlled areas through multi-stakeholder dialogue and cooperation. It will also invest in the delivery of market-oriented and sustainable skills development training through capacity building of ESPs and government providers, particularly for women, IDPs, returnees and people with disabilities.

Responding to prevailing gender norms surrounding women's employment and economic advancement, LIFT will place particular emphasis on empowering women to pursue non-traditional forms of employment through certified vocational training programmes, women-only spaces for networking, job matching services and access to finance. LIFT will also support efforts to reduce barriers to entering the labour market for IDPs and returnees through soft skills and language training, networking and transitional support. By supporting the establishment of assessment centres for obtaining NSSA certification, LIFT aims to increase access for IDPs, returnees and other populations lacking formal educational credentials.

Appropriate means of ensuring the sustainability of investments in skills development initiatives will need to be incorporated into the design and approach.

Making migration safer and more rewarding

LIFT will work to reduce the risks and increase the gains of migration for households within the South East, through policy development on migration governance, capacity building of key stakeholders and increasing delivery of information and services on safe and rewarding migration.

Through its investments, LIFT seeks to:

- Decentralize the MOU migration process in the South East to reduce the cost and time required for migrants to work in Thailand with regular legal status, applying lessons learned from the experience of the Hpa An Labour Exchange Office.
- Expand access to information and services on safe and rewarding migration for aspirant migrants and their family members in partnership between CSOs and Labour Exchange Offices.
- Increase legal assistance for migrants experiencing exploitation/claiming social protection benefits through CSOs and cross-border networking of service providers.
- Increase the capacity of ESPs to provide information and services on safe and rewarding migration in non-government controlled areas, including establishing a long-term institutional framework to support sustainability
- Improve policy and implementation of assistance services for deported migrants, including establishing reception centres to meet their immediate service needs and linking them to support for secure livelihoods through vocational training and safe migration information.

Reducing labour exploitation and trafficking in key sectors with a focus on marine capture fisheries

Labour exploitation, including unsafe working conditions, trafficking, wage theft and debt bondage exist in various sectors across the South East of Myanmar marine fisheries, oil palm and rubber plantations and mining. The marine capture fishing sector is amongst the most prominent of these with ineffective regulation contributing to declining fishery resources and exploitative working conditions within the industry

LIFT will ameliorate exploitative working conditions and reduce IUU fishing practices to provide decent work opportunities, protect marine resources and expand food security in fishing communities within Tanintharyi Region and Mon State.

LIFT's will support initiatives that seek to:

- Amend labour laws to better regulate working conditions in the fisheries sector and ratify Work in Fishing Convention (No. 188) and the Forced Labour Protocol (No. 29) to align them with international labour standards
- Build the capacity of government to regulate employment and fishing practices, support co-management⁵⁹ and develop bilateral cooperation.
- Support labour organizations to organize workers in the fisheries sector to improve working conditions and prevent exploitation.

⁵⁹ Co-management refers to the sharing of responsibility and authority between key fishery stakeholders, including local communities, people working in the fisheries sector, the government (at various levels) and the private sector. For more information, see <http://www.fao.org/fishery/topic/16625/en>

- Engage the private sector on development and independent monitoring of ethical codes of conduct, in cooperation with worker and buyer representatives.
- Develop payment systems and practices to end wage theft via increased regulation and transparency, including through electronic transfer of wages.
- Deliver services to fishing and seafood processing workers through CSOs and labour organizations, including skills development, awareness of labour rights and assistance in cases of exploitation.

Financial inclusion

The financial inclusion programme serves as a catalyst and contributor to changes across the Nutrition, Agriculture, Markets and Food Systems (AMFS) and Decent Work and Labour Mobility (DWLM) themes.

Expansion of access to credit for IDPs and other vulnerable groups

LIFT will expand access to credit for IDPs and other vulnerable groups by supporting contextually appropriate and innovative approaches to rural finance. This includes support to the formation and development of credit cooperatives, incentivising MFIs to provide financial services specifically to IDPs and other vulnerable groups, particularly in forms that enable them to invest in their on- or off-farm livelihoods.

As part of this, LIFT will also support the expansion of digital financial services targeting the most vulnerable, including IDPs, returnees, migrants and women.

Agribusiness financing for the 'hidden middle' of agri-food systems

In order to encourage private investment in businesses serving the agri-foods system, LIFT will provide appropriate forms of financing to de-risk and incentivise them. This will facilitate the expansion of key services related to mechanisation, processing, storage, transportation, etc.

Investments in Public Private Partnerships

Public Private Partnerships provide an effective means of pooling resources, sharing costs, leveraging comparative advantage of different partners and reducing the risk to all parties of developing sustainable solutions to the provision of key products and services. LIFT will invest in selected PPPs, working with government departments, private companies and other development partners to address key constraints to the development of the agricultural sector.

- Commercial Banks with MOALI/AMD in agribusiness (mechanization, irrigation)
- Solar power grids with MOALI/DRD and private sector investment

- MOALI/DOF, MOALI/LVBD, MOALI/DAR, and private sector investment in commercial hatcheries, livestock breeding stations and nurseries for perennial crops.

4. Research and policy engagement

Research and policy engagement are high priorities for LIFT and a central part of the legacy of LIFT's investments and will be addressed through:

- Integrated projects that address policy as part of their overall package of interventions responding to the components detailed in Calls for Proposals or Concept Notes; and
- Commissioned pieces linked to LIFT level policy activities.

LIFT has developed a tentative research and policy engagement agenda for the South East which is summarised in the table below. This research and policy agenda will be reviewed and revised during the course of the programme, responding to emerging issues and opportunities.

	Policy Objective	Research	Component(s)
1	Upland agriculturalists have timely access to affordable and responsible financial services.	Patterns of borrowing in the South East uplands and its impact on the rural economy	2 and 3
2	Customary land tenure and natural resource management arrangements, including customary land tenure, are recognized by all stakeholders	(a) Customary land tenure practices along with access to and management of increasingly scarce water and forest resources. (b) Impact of VFV land law and amendments on land tenure, including complaint mechanisms (c) Lessons learned re community-based forest management.	2 and 3
3	(Public) services for People Living with Disabilities are adequately financed and available.	Survey of Disability types, including but not limited to landmines	

4.	Working conditions in high-risk sectors for exploitation and abuse are improved through increased regulation.	Surveys of working conditions in labour intensive employment sectors (including fishing, mining and plantations), integrating an assessment of forced labour, child labour and human trafficking.	4
5.	Nutrition services are readily available to mothers and infants as well as young girls in Tanintharyi Region.	Causal analysis of nutrition context in Tanintharyi Region	2
6.	Improved food safety measures are integrated into cross-border trade.	Food safety and cross-border trade	3 and 4
7.	Public and private investments in the agriculture sector generate meaningful and decent employment opportunities	Role of agriculture sector development in generating employment	2 and 3
8.	Nutrition sensitive agriculture practices are integrated into extension services provided by governments and ESPs	High value nutrition sensitive value chains analysis	2 and 3
9.	The cost, time required and complexity of the process for regular labour migration is reduced through decentralization in South East	Research to map the process and assess the utilization, effectiveness and efficiency of regular and irregular migration pathways in the South East, including the MOU process and labour brokerage systems.	2 and 3

5. Conflict sensitive programming

Conflict sensitivity

A Do No Harm approach seeks to better understand and analyse the conflict dynamics in the context, and to pay attention to the interaction of a development intervention with these dynamics. A Do No Harm Approach then adapts programming in a way that seeks to maximise positive outcomes by strengthening connectors and minimize the

potential for unintended negative consequences that arise when dividers are inadvertently fortified.

Conflict sensitivity builds on this approach, but also emphasises a stronger analysis of the conflict systems affecting the context, and greater communication and coordination with all stakeholders, including political actors, to harness better synergies between humanitarian, development and peacebuilding processes. In situations of fragility and volatility the first aim should always be to Do No Harm. But the aspiration should be to also improve security and reduce the fragility of the situation at multiple levels.

Conflict sensitivity requires implementing partners to carry out a range of processes aimed at heightening awareness and sensitivity. These are well documented in the Do No Harm approach, the [LIFT Conflict Sensitivity Principles](#) and the LIFT Conflict Framework.

The principled and pragmatic LIFT approach to programming will be strengthened by:

- Considering conflict issues at a strategic level and integrating conflict sensitivity into programme approaches, calls for proposals, monitoring and evaluation, and other processes
- Applying a more systematic approach that will consider conflict factors within strategy formulation and as a part of assessing funding proposals at an early stage.
- Identifying conflict-affected areas with conflict-affected populations for integrated interventions, based on livelihood and food security needs, and addressing factors from the point of view of LIFT's areas of comparative advantage and within the main strategic objectives
- Working in conflict-affected areas incrementally and seeking initially to build on successful existing partnerships, prioritizing partners with experience and knowledge of the operating context
- Looking to build mutual understanding across conflict lines on livelihood and food security issues, recognising the presence of multiple service providers, including civil non-state bodies and affiliates associated with some EAOs; and, in some cases, engaging directly as an FMO with local stakeholders to generate trust and working relationships
- Strengthening connectors at Union, State and Township level, and connecting with multiple stakeholders to build relationships and contribute to social cohesion
- Establishing communities of practice on conflict and livelihood, involving implementing partners and associates

Within LIFT's earlier Uplands programme, LIFT has been supporting partners in integrating conflict sensitivity principles into their interventions and in conducting conflict analysis at project level with the support of a conflict sensitivity advisor during the inception phase. With the new LIFT Strategy 2019-23, LIFT will provide tailor-made and ongoing support on conflict sensitivity to implement interventions in a way that is responsive to the specific context and conditions in which they will take place. A minimum level of good enough conflict analysis will be established, as well as a system for regularly updating this analysis. Analysis will be gendered and include a focus on inclusion issues.

The rapidly changing nature of conflict dynamics (including ceasefire agreements and political developments in the peace process) in Myanmar requires implementing organisations to have support to keep up to date with changes and developments in the context. Partners will be given further support through a capacity building initiative driven by LIFT and Access to Health and carried by RAFT.

LIFT will also meet with key stakeholders including the NCA-Signatories Ethnic Armed Organisations Office, and the National Reconciliation and Peace Centre to inform them of its intentions.

Risk Assessment, Management and Monitoring

Risks to LIFT programming in conflict affected areas are significantly higher than in the Delta, Dry zone or Ayerwaddy regions of Myanmar. The volatile and unpredictable nature of the context make significant changes in the short term more likely, and therefore difficult to plan for. The politicised nature of the context also mean that risks have the potential to impact more significantly on LIFT itself, and on the wider context.

Effective Risk management will enable the LIFT Programme for South East Myanmar to achieve optimal results and reduce the potential for unintended negative consequences.

LIFT has developed a dynamic Programme Risk Assessment Matrix (PRAM) that will be regularly updated (at least every quarter). LIFT will expand its Risk Management and Mitigation systems to include these forms of Risk and explore ways in which Risk can be shared between the FMO at strategic level, and Implementing Partners at operational level.

The PRAM will enable LIFT to identify, analyse, treat and report on potential risks and risk mitigation strategies in at least seven areas:

- **Contextual Risks** – Concerned with rapid changes in the context, often related to the volatility of relationships between stakeholders, over which LIFT has little or no control. Includes the sensitivity of the context and the potential for confrontation and violent clashes.
- **Partner Risks** – related to the capacity of partners to operate in a conflict sensitive manner consistent with the needs of operating in a conflict affected area
- **Programme Risks** – associated with delays in programme implementation or the inability to access or remain active in areas affected by the shifting conflict dynamics
- **Political Risks** – connected to issues of access but also issues of authority and acceptance on the part of the controlling authority in the areas where LIFT partners are operating
- **Reputational Risks** – in line with how the LIFT programme is perceived by external stakeholders, magnified by high levels of tensions related to interpretation of the interim arrangements and concerns over encroachment of one authority into an area historically controlled by another authority
- **Security Risks** – The likelihood of increased clashes amongst EAOs and between EAOs and the Myanmar military will present security risks to LIFT personnel and those of their partners. LIFT needs to develop a strategy to mitigate and manage this potential. Clashes with government over policy and practice in sensitive areas may also draw attention to the programme, thus increasing the risks to LIFT in other areas.
- **Fiduciary Risks** – Weak capacity and the unpredictable nature of operating in a volatile context will likely increase potential for risks in relation to the management and accounting of programme expenditure

Multi-stakeholder consultative group

In addition to the above, LIFT will form and engage a multi-stakeholder consultative group composed of government, EAOs, ESPs and CSO partners. LIFT will begin engagement with this group prior to the launch of the programme so that relevant stakeholders are able to input into the design process. Beyond this, LIFT will organise periodic consultations with this group to provide strategic inputs into the South East Programme. Meetings of the reference group will provide the opportunity to review risks and conflict dynamics, identify potential issues before they arise and develop appropriate courses of action to effectively manage programme related risks.

6. Coordination mechanisms

LIFT will identify and assign up to 2 Programme Coordinators to be based in central locations in the South East to assist with coordination and implementation of the programme.

LIFT will establish an IP coordination mechanism for the programme that will bring IPs together on a periodic basis to share information and address key issues. These issues will include developing common parameters on vulnerability, identifying target groups, coordinating capacity building initiatives and identifying areas for joint work that create synergies between actors and interventions in the same location and across different areas of operation.

The IP coordination mechanisms will aim to improve guidance to IPs and monitor quality and compliance of IPs interventions with agreed principles, that improve local coordination and information exchange, reduce fragmentation, harmonise technical approaches and build more solid and durable relations with local counterparts and decision-makers.

Technical level consultations will form part of the coordination process, including efforts to ensure the harmonisation of approaches amongst IPs and joint policy messaging wherever possible.

As the relationship between vulnerability, nutrition, resilience, protection, food security and indebtedness is not linear, a better understanding of the causes of vulnerability should inform an integrated programme, across implementing partners, that responds to the multiple pathways which lead to vulnerability, and in so doing also reduce the complex vulnerability risk factors. The projects selected will be encouraged to operate within the comprehensive framework of integration developed by LIFT.

7. MEAL

Monitoring and Evaluation for Accountability and Learning (MEAL) will play an important role by generating evidence that can be used for accountability, learning and policy influence.

The overall programme MEAL approach will be developed in collaboration with Implementing Partners and relevant stakeholders during the course of proposal development and the programme/project inception phase. This will include:

- Co-constructed Programme Level Theory of Change:
- M&E Stakeholders Analysis
- Measurement framework with Key Indicators (in alignment with the LIFT results framework and including additional context-specific and conflict-related indicators and sex disaggregated data).
- Evaluation and Learning Questions (ELQs)
- Evaluation design
- Reporting requirements
- Processes and mechanisms to support knowledge management and policy influence

The role and responsibilities of all stakeholders with respect to the MEAL will be agreed upon during the formulation of the MEAL Plan.

Individual projects will develop their own MEAL plans along similar lines to the programme level MEAL framework. Implementing Partners may receive technical support from LIFT to develop and implement their MEAL plan where necessary. This is particularly the case where investments are seeking to develop and demonstrate the impact of sustainable and/or scalable models and approaches, additional MEAL technical support may be provided.

Co-constructed Programme Level Theory of Change

The co-constructed programme level Theory of Change will take an actor-centred approach to identify who is working with whom in order to achieve which results and through which interventions. This will provide a holistic picture of the programme. If required, component level Theories of Change will also be developed following a similar approach.

M&E Stakeholders Analysis

Evidence generated through the programme is expected to be of use to all the actors involved in the programme, each with their own distinct roles. This process will identify who the stakeholders, what kinds of evidence they require and what they need it for.

Measurement framework with Key Indicators

Based on the programme TOC, the draft results framework presented in section 3 and the LIFT logframe, a programme level Measurement Framework will be developed. This will include selected relevant indicators from the LIFT logframe as well as additional indicators that are context specific. Examples of additional indicators include indicators related to conflict sensitivity (context and interaction), collaboration, inclusion and capacity development.

Evaluation Design and Evaluation and Learning Questions (ELQs)

Evaluation and Learning Questions (ELQ) identify the specific questions on which LIFT seeks to develop evidence through its MEAL system in support of accountability, learning and policy influence. The ELQs will guide the evaluation design across projects, components and the programme as a whole.

ELQs will be developed at the following levels in consultation with key stakeholders identified in the M&E Stakeholder Analysis:

1. Programme as a whole
2. Programme components⁶⁰
3. Individual projects

Sample programme level ELQs

- To what extent has LIFT ensured the expansion of accountable public (government and ESP) services to reach the poorest/most marginal?
- To what extent has LIFT secured sustainable on/off-farm (diversified) livelihoods for the most vulnerable groups?
- To what extent has LIFT succeeded in stimulating off-farm employment in the agricultural sector?
- To what extent has LIFT contributed to land administration reform and ensured land tenure security for the most vulnerable groups?
- To what extent has LIFT enhanced food and nutrition security for the most vulnerable groups in the southeast?
- To what extent has LIFT enhanced the resilience of the most vulnerable groups in the southeast to climate-related and other types of shocks and stresses?
- To what extent has LIFT fostered improved communication, coordination,

⁶⁰ In some cases, it may make sense to break a component down into sub-components for the purposes of evaluation. Sub-components may be larger than a single project but not covering the full component.

collaboration, across conflict lines?

- To what extent has LIFT been delivered in an integrated manner and tapped into synergies and complementarities across themes, geographies, actors and other ongoing investments and development interventions.
- To what extent has LIFT demonstrated effective solutions and new ways of working on the humanitarian-development-peace nexus?

A variety of methods exist for conducting evaluations that generate robust evidence for both accountability and learning purposes. The selection of the appropriate approach should be based on careful consideration of the priorities for evidence generation, the feasibility of the evaluation design and the nature of the interventions. Options for consideration include (but are not limited to) process evaluation, impact evaluation (experimental design), quasi-experimental design, theory-driven evaluation, contribution analysis, realist evaluation⁶¹ and outcome mapping/harvesting. The focus and approach will need to vary by level:

At the **programme level**, evaluation should focus on the achievement of high level programmatic objectives. This includes changes at the policy, system and household/individual levels and requires aggregation of results from project and component evaluations. Impact evaluation at the programme level is unlikely to be feasible due to the overall complexity, differences in approach and focus across the components. However, quasi-experimental methods and methods based on a synthesis of evaluations at the component and project levels may be more viable.

At the **programme component level**, evaluation should focus on component level objectives. Thus at the programme component level attention should be given to whether or not the objectives of the component were fulfilled, whether elements were effectively implemented in an integrated manner and the extent of changes brought about for target beneficiaries. At the programme component level a flexible evaluation design will be required for assessing various sub-components/projects, their functionality in relation to context and other elements (i.e. integration). Impact evaluations may also be feasible under specific circumstances. The risks of these should be carefully considered.

At the individual **project level**, evaluation should focus on the specific aims and achievements of the individual project. These evaluations should be based on the overall LIFT ELQs and the project specific ELQs. Where the project is seeking to test or demonstrate an approach that lends itself to an impact evaluation, this option should

⁶¹ <https://bmcmedresmethodol.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12874-019-0736-6>

be considered⁶². Where this is not appropriate alternative approaches to evaluation should be considered. Projects may seek to draw on diverse evaluation approaches though alignment with component and programme level evaluation priorities and approaches may need to be co-created to ensure specific component or programme level questions are getting addressed.

Reporting

Reporting will follow the LIFT guidelines. Additional reporting requirements may be required to respond to the needs of specific MEAL users.

Processes and mechanisms to support knowledge management and policy influence

Regular multi-stakeholder mechanisms and platforms will be established at relevant levels (local, township, state/region and programme) to foster cross-learning, improved integration, coordination and collaboration between actors and interventions, and ongoing adaptive management in response to emerging challenges and opportunities. These mechanisms will be worked out in detail and integration will be sought with coordination platforms outlined in the previous section to the extent this is possible/feasible.

MEAL, in conjunction with the research and policy engagement component, will play a critical role in contributing to policy change by linking evidence generated through research, evaluation and learning mechanisms to policy engagements by LIFT and its partners.

8. Sequencing

In consideration of the complex contextual dynamics, LIFT is proposing a modified approach to the sequencing of interventions in the South East. Key factors for consideration include:

- The limited trust and the sensitive nature of relationships between EAOs and the government
- The complex dynamics between multiple actors operating in the region
- The forthcoming general elections that will take place in 2020

⁶² Alongside full project impact evaluations consideration should be given to the incorporation of randomisation to test modalities/options for implementation (e.g. A/B testing on messaging, approaches, etc.).

- The imminent roll-out of several large scale development programmes in the region
- The relatively lower capacity of ESPs, government and civil society organisations operating in the region
- LIFT's limited experience operating in the South East
- The lack of comprehensive, robust and detailed evidence on a wide range of issues relevant to the region
- The lack of demonstrated models for a wide range of solutions in the South East that are contextually relevant and respond to LIFT's strategic priorities
- The need to ensure adequate time and mechanisms in place for a systematic and multi-stakeholder approach to learning

To respond to this, the programme will feature an extended inception/start-up phase during the first year to create adequate time for:

- Consultations, relationship building and reaching agreements
- In-depth context/situation analysis, relationship building, negotiations and reaching agreement (getting permissions, approvals, etc.),
- Training and building capacity of counterparts, field staff, etc.
- Testing and refining various models and approaches

At the end of the first year, a programme review will be carried out to take stock of the progress across all projects and components, identify key issues and challenges and provide recommendations. This is intended to accelerate the pace of learning and avoid waiting until project mid-term reviews to take corrective measures to improve the performance of the programme.

9. Annexes

Annex 1: Conflict stakeholders

Karen / Kayin State

Rural Karen-populated areas in much of Kayin State, eastern Bago Region, parts of Mon State and northern Tanintharyi Region remain heavily contested following six decades of conflict. The main EAOs in these areas are the KNU and the Khlohtobaw Karen Organisation (KKO), which is better known by the name of its military wing, the Democratic Karen Benevolent Army (DKBA).

These EAOs administer no officially demarcated territory, but hold significant influence in several areas. The KKO (DKBA) has influence in Kyain Seigy, Hlaingbwe, and southern Hpapun Townships of Kayin State, and a stronghold in southeast Myawaddy Township. The KNU/KNLA maintains influence of varying degrees in at least 12 townships across Bago, Kayin, Mon, and Tanintharyi with numerous strongholds along the region's border with Thailand. Its largest strongholds are in Kayin's Hpapun and Thandaung Townships.

Meanwhile the KNU/KNLA-Peace Council has a small ceasefire territory in Kawkareik Township, and BGFs 1011-1023 have strong influence across much of Myawaddy, Kawkareik, and Hlaingbwe Townships. Social services in these areas are provided by a number of Karen national entities.

The foundations for these systems were laid by the KNU, which has a Karen Education and Cultural Department (KED), established in the colonial era, and the Karen Department of Health and Welfare (KDHW), established in 1956. Its agricultural department, KAD, also provides some basic livelihoods support, skills based training and other services to help Karen people register their land with both the KNU and the government. Today, the KED is a co-founding member of the Karen State Education Assistance Group (KSEAG), a network which also includes the Karen Teacher Working Group (KTWG) and an INGO called Partners Relief and Development. The group aims to provide equitable access to formal education for children across the Karen areas of the southeast, including non-KNU areas.

Several other Karen national organisations operate primarily in KNU areas and maintain close relations with the group, while enjoying varying degrees of autonomy.

These include:

- The Committee for Internally Displaced Karen People (CIDKP): Food and relief distribution and basic rehabilitation for IDPs; and landmine victim support
- The Karen Organisation for Relief and Development (KORD): Water and sanitation development; agricultural services; relief; and community development
- The Karen Women's Organisation (KWO): Support for women's and children's health through 'baby kit' distribution and training for traditional birth attendants; nursery school support; emergency assistance (especially for women); and care for elderly IDPs
- The Karen Youth Organisation (KYO): Adolescent reproductive health and HIV/AIDS awareness; basic relief, school construction and support for youth boarding houses in IDP communities; sports and physical education programmes; youth leadership skills development; and youth empowerment (including public speaking, and political and rights awareness) for youth in government-controlled areas
- Karen Student Networking Group (KSNG): Vocational training; and training for IDP community schools
- Karen Environmental Social Action Network (KESAN): Agricultural development and livelihoods support; environmental awareness; and land tenure support

Several Karen national organisations operating openly in government areas, without any formal connections to EAOs, have gained increasing levels of access to conflict-affected areas over the years. The largest of these is Knowledge Dedication for Nation-Building (KDN), formerly known as the Karen Development Network, which provides health, education and support for IDPs.

Others include KDN's mother organisation, the Karen Development Committee (KDC), Karen Women's Empowerment Group (KWEG), Karen Baptist Convention (Karen KBC), Karen Literacy and Cultural Association (KLCA), Karen Youth Network (KYN), Karen Monk Association, and Karen Environmental Network.

Karenni / Kayah

The main Kayah State-based EAOs involved in the peace process are the KNPP and Kayan New Land Party (KNLP), both of which have ceasefires in place. The region is also home to at least six other armed groups, most of which splintered from the KNPP.

The KNPP holds influence in Hpasawng, Pruso and Shadaw Townships and a small part of northern Loikaw Township. The KNLP maintains influence over a Special Region in northwest Kayah State and influence in adjacent parts of southern Shan State.

Meanwhile, BGFs 1004 and 1005 (formerly Karenni Nationalities' People's Liberation Front-KNPLF) maintain territories that were formally Special Regions, as do three Pyithu Sit, the Karenni National Peace and Development Party (KNPDP), the Kayan National Guard (KNG), and the Karenni National Solidarity Organisation (KNSO).

The KNPP's Karenni National Education Department (KnED) provides 460 primary schools, 33 middle schools, and 12 high schools in Kayah State, with 1,677 teachers and 50,351 students.

Healthcare is provided by a consortium of Karenni and Kayan entities linked to the various armed actors called the Civil Health and Development Network (CHDN). A lion's share of the capacity and resources utilised by this network comes from the Karenni National Mobile Health Committee (KnMHC), which is the Myanmar-based wing of the KNPP's Thailand refugee-camp based Karenni National Health Department (KnHD).

Karenni national organisations affiliated with the KNPP and operating in its territories include the:

- Karenni Social Welfare and Development Committee (KSWDC): Relief and community development support for internally-displaced and other conflict-affected communities; and
- Karenni National Women's Organisation (KNWO): Support for women's and children's health through 'baby kit' distribution and training for traditional birth attendants; nursery school support; emergency assistance (especially for women); and care for elderly IDPs

Mon State

The NMSP administers two ceasefire territories, one in southern Kayin State and another on the Mon State border with Thailand, and overlapping with southern Kayin and northern Tanintharyi.

There are several NMSP-linked social service providers operating in both NMSP and government territory, with varied levels of autonomy from the party.

These are:

- Mon National Education Committee and Department (MNEC/MNED):
- Mon National Health Committee (MNHC)
- The Mon Relief and Development Committee (MRDC): Provides limited food and support for shelter construction for around 9,000 IDPs in NMSP territory; and assists with coordination of the health, education, and community affairs of IDPs

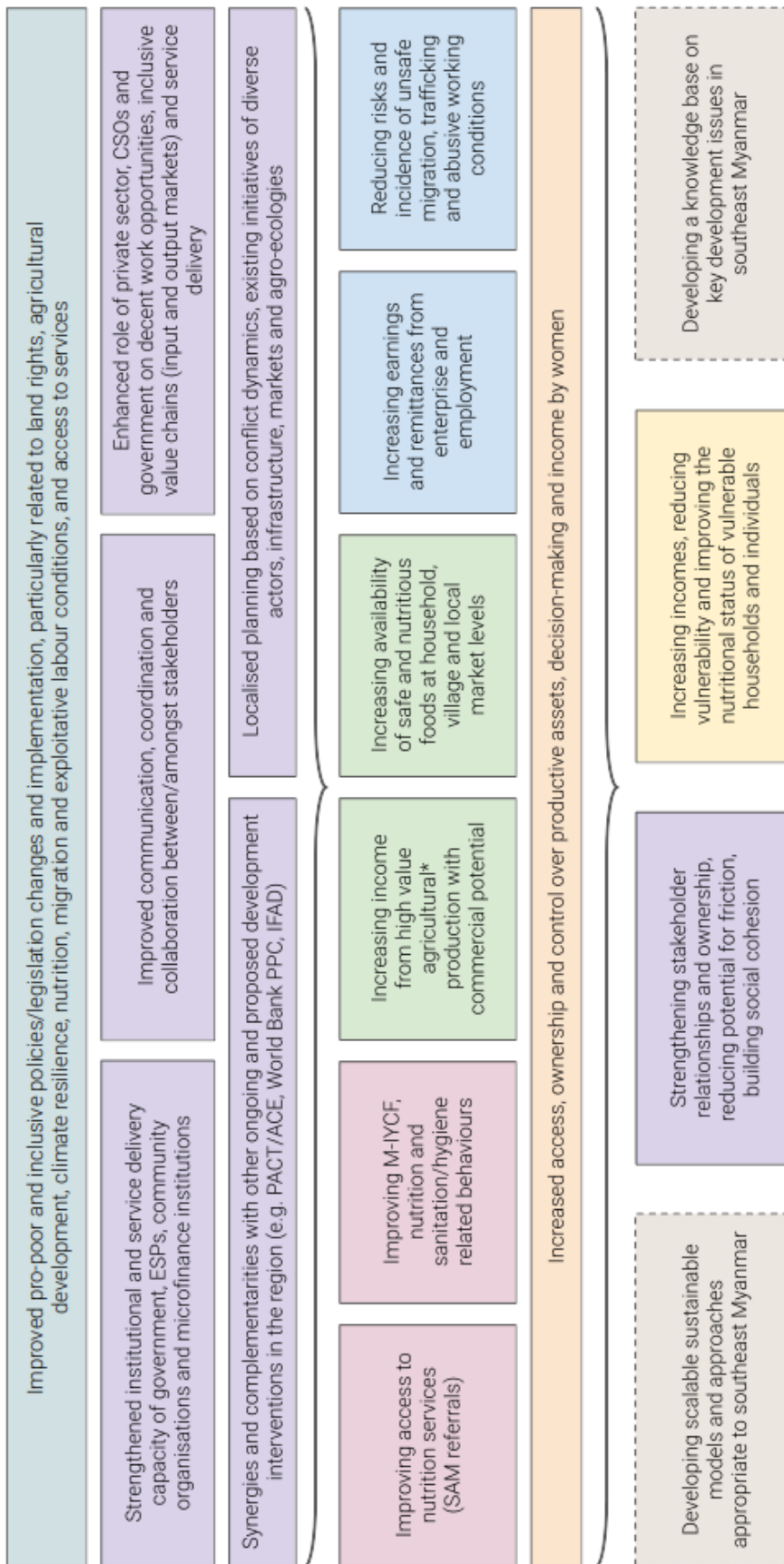
- The Mon Youth Progressive Organisation (MYPO): Limited awareness and rights-based empowerment programmes
- Mon Youth Educator Organisation (MYEO): Youth empowerment, organisation and networking
- Remonhya Peace Foundation: Community development; water and sanitation; and relief and rehabilitation for IDPs

Other key Mon national organisations working in NMSP and other conflict-areas but not affiliated officially with the NMSP, include:

- The Civil Society Development Programme (CSDP): Civic education; domestic and household management skills; women's empowerment; legal, rights and political awareness; and community mobilisation
- Magadu Development Foundation: Land tenure services, aiding farmers to register land; community water and sanitation; school construction; agricultural development and training; vocational training; legal and land rights awareness
- Mon Centara Development Foundation (MCDF): Micro-credit and income generation for women; agriculture training; ICT training; civil society capacity-building; and leadership training
- Mon-region Social Development Network (MSDN): Community water and sanitation; school construction; agricultural development and training; environmental protection; and IDP support and rehabilitation
- Traditionally in Mon areas, most villages have religious, youth, literacy, and cultural committees, some of which have become organised over the years, and receive support from Mon national civil society organisations

Annex 2: Results Framework

Results framework



Annex 3: Integrated Programme Framework

Integrated Programme Framework

