



MID-TERM INDEPENDENT PROJECT EVALUATION:

Sustainable Livelihoods and Development in Myanmar 2014- 2019

– Sub-Programme 5 (MMRZ39) August 2018

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

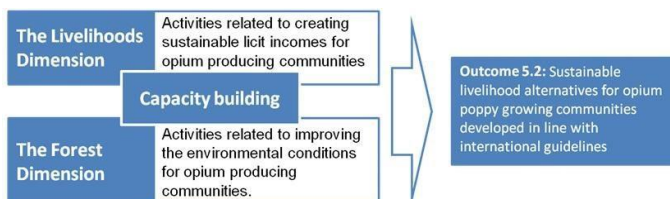
Countries: Myanmar
Duration: 03/03/2015 – 31/12/2019
Budget: USD 6,473,948
Donors: Embassies of the United States of America (USA) and Japan. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland and the German Corporation for International Cooperation (GIZ).
Implementing agencies: UNODC Country Office in Myanmar.
Evaluation team: Ms. Eva Otero (lead evaluator) and Mr. Sebastian Behrle, (Alternative Development Expert).
Full evaluation report:
<https://tinyurl.com/MMRZ39evaluation2018>



The **main objective** of the Sub-Programme (SP) 5 on Sustainable Livelihoods and Development, of the UNODC Country Programme (CP) for Myanmar is to strengthen capacities to **reduce drug production** through illicit crop monitoring and alternative development in selected communities in the South Shan State.

The SP has two **specific objectives**. The first one is to improve the **availability and use of data on illicit crop cultivation, drug production and trafficking**. Its main outcome is the annual Myanmar Opium Survey.

The second one is to **promote sustainable livelihood alternatives for opium poppy** growing communities in line with international guidelines. This second specific objective constitutes the main part of the SP and has two main outcomes: a) the livelihoods dimension and b) the forest dimension.



From its Field Office (FO) in Taunggyi, the SP operates in **three townships in Southern Shan State** (Ywangan, Hopong and Loilen).

This project was implemented by the Terrorism Prevention Branch (TPB) of UNODC. Its **overall objective** was to “support Nigeria to bring terrorists to justice and prevent terrorist acts from being committed, through rule of law-based and human rights-compliant criminal justice measures against terrorism”.

METHODOLOGY

During the evaluation, the team followed four stages; 1) Conceptualizing what UNODC needed to know in a well-defined and transparent analytical framework; 2) Designing appropriate data collection tools applying a mixed methods approach; 3) Gathering evidence through extensive desk review, remote interviews and two missions to Myanmar (296 people were consulted, 172 men and 127 women); and 4) Systematically processing and analysing the information collected.

MAIN FINDINGS

The SP follows an implicit Theory of Change (ToC) which has not been documented or reflected upon. The main rationale of this ToC is **straight, clear and fully in line with UNODC mandate**. This is to incentivize and assist targeted communities supplying needed inputs (seeds, fertilisers, etc.) and providing support throughout the production and selling of alternative crops to opium (mainly coffee).

As well as the main pathway to change, the intervention has **three extra layers of complexity**. These layers of complexity are: a) the formation of an **association of farmers** inspired in cooperative models from Latin America to increase the bargaining power of the united farmers; b) protecting the **environment**; and c) fighting **gender inequality**. These layers mean making the road to change more difficult, but they are also enriching the results expected from the SP.

The SP **design is mainly founded on the expertise built by UNODC** from the preceding projects in the area. However, **the formal inception phase had very limited resources**. This meant that key pieces of research that should have informed the design of the SP were not carried out.

The intervention is generally **highly relevant to the needs and expectations of the targeted communities**; being Hopong and Loilen townships the most relevant areas to the SP's aims. There are however a **few important aspects** for the beneficiary population that were **not reflected** on at the design and implementation stage.

The SP is **fully aligned with the national strategies**, UN and donor's priorities in Myanmar, as well as with the **international development frameworks**.

The financial administration system of UNODC and the **financial reports present serious deficiencies** that do not facilitate taking informed management decisions, and that could jeopardise the efforts to mobilize future resources.

On a daily basis, the **management and coordination of the team works well**. However, they are greatly **focused on** the achievement of results and the fulfilment of **indicators**. This means there is a **lack of time and formal space for strategic thinking**.

The SP **lacks a comprehensive partnership strategy**. **Excellent partnerships** have been established essentially **with donors** and to a lesser extent with some governmental entities at the national and regional levels. The lack of a strategy has meant **missing opportunities** to establish synergies, coordination and information **sharing with highly relevant actors** in the area; most significantly with the USAID-funded project Winrock.

The initiative is **on track to fulfil most of its formulated targets**. This impressive progress has occurred despite significant administrative difficulties and a very complex and volatile political background. Remarkably, the SP **succeeded to establish a sizeable area of well-performing coffee plants**. Additionally, it secured a **5-year contract with an international coffee trading company**.

Despite good progress, an **important issue requires close attention**. The SP has supported and coached the development of **Green Gold**, an association of producers inspired by the cooperative model. This model is innovative in Myanmar **and carries considerable risks**. In the long term, the main concern is that there is no guarantee that this farmers' association will be able to sustain the organisational concept of a regional producer-processing-marketing cooperative.

SP's indicators regarding gender equality are still poor even if stakeholders have a strong will to mainstream gender.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Commission an **in-depth engendered value chain analysis** for a revised design to strengthen achieved results and manage expectations as to what can be realistically achieved and sustained over time.
- During concept development for the next phase, **develop an explicit and participatory Theory of Change (ToC)**, in order to use it as a complementary guiding framework to the log frame.
- **Develop a realistic partnership strategy**. Most significantly, investigate the scope for cooperation with the Taunggyi-based Winrock project 'Value Chains for Rural Development'.
- **Establish a middle-management position** with access to Umoja to plan, oversee, and document all the specific aspects of the SP.
- At the field level, **bring in permanent gender expertise** to creatively and realistically design concrete measures to get women more and better involved in all the stages.
- **Phase out the township of Ywangan** and consider an expansion into new areas adjacent to the present target area in Loilen by including new villages with a presently high reliance on opium production and a lack of alternative sources of income.
- Guided by instructions from the Country Office, **improve financial reporting** to donors and financial management in general

LESSONS LEARNED AND BEST PRACTICES

The **partnership established with the International Company Malongo is a best practice**. This agreement has become an essential component to the success of the SP and could potentially be replicated and expanded across geographic boundaries (within the SP to other farmers or townships and/or with other UNODC initiatives).

An important lesson learned has been that **having all required analyses** (gender, context, stakeholders and value chain) done **during the inception phase** of the SP is key for a sound planning and implementation

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