

**Mid-Term Review
of the
Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
Gulf of Mottama Project (GoMP)
Implemented by Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation, NAG and IUCN**

Recommendations	Helvetas, NAG and IUCN feedback and comments on recommendations	SDC's Response on partner's feedback
General Appreciation	<p>The consortium implementing the GoMP overall appreciates the mid-term review. It has been a timely and thematically enriching input to the GoMP. The key lessons, which go beyond what the project anyhow is doing or has planned are the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Project needs to make more explicit the links between the livelihood support and state of the ecosystem. The Ramsar designation isn't the end but an important milestone that raises profile, builds pride, and makes the project responsible at the national level. The project will be asked to share results, lessons learned, etc. 2. The existing Coastal Management Plan needs a revision through a participatory approach. The management plan of the enlarged Ramsar site shall become an integral part of the overall coastal management plan (refers to recommendation 1). 3. A mechanism to assure the funding of conservation activities (such as the Local Conservation Groups, joint patrolling, "tax" on Revolving Funds) needs to be developed and introduced (refers to recommendation 11). <p>A gap in the review is the lack of specific attention to fisheries. At least on the level of recommendations there is no mention of the fishery co-management zones. In the view of the project they are the critical link between the local population and the more abstract Ramsar Site or integrated coastal management. The only recommendation directly related to fishery is recommendation #10 on log books, which is valid but an implementation detail.</p>	<p>SDC very much appreciates the overall positive appreciation of GoMP and valuable inputs made to the individual components. The concise presentation of the findings and the concrete and useful recommendations for remainder of Phase 2 as well as for the consideration of planning for Phase 3 is very much valuable.</p>
Recommendation 1	Partially agree	Agree with GoMP-Team

<p>Development and adoption of a single coherent management plan which adheres to Ramsar Convention's published guidance and provides an exemplar for future sites in Myanmar.</p>	<p>The existing management plan is a management plan for natural resources in the GoM. It already covers geographically the Ramsar site (extended). We feel it is consistent with Ramsar guidance but is also tailored to the specific context of a large area with multiple use and interests (fisheries in particular is a key feature, which needs to be looked at, beyond Ramsar criteria). We agree it needs to be strengthened on the conservation side, include better some of the specific Ramsar recommendations (e.g. a description of the ecological character and associated monitoring) and with more detailed ecological analysis and zonation (e.g., fisheries co-management zones). It also needs to move from a framework plan to an operational plan with specific activities and work plan. We should clarify that there won't be a specific plan for the Ramsar site; what we are talking is an Integrated Coastal Management plan that integrates the specificities of the Ramsar site and the fisheries co-management plans.</p>	<p>The Integrated Coastal Management plan has to further be developed so that it complies with the needs specified in the Ramsar Convention guidelines, at least for the part that is now designated as Ramsar Site.</p>
<p>Recommendation 2 Establish a clearly defined body responsible for the management of the Ramsar Site.</p>	<p>Partially agree For GOMP this clearly defined body are the Coastal Natural Resources Management Committees (CRMC). It is already planned to establish a Ramsar Working Group within the CRMC to manage the Ramsar site. It is foreseen that this will be one Working Group for Bago and Mon. We partially agree in the sense that the CRMCs already exist and the project has a clear plan how to reach to the "defined body responsible for the management of the Ramsar Site". This was communicated to the MTR.</p>	<p>Partially Agree with GoMP-Team The GoMP has to strengthen the CRMC during the process of handing over and has to make sure specific and adequate allocation of Ramsar Working Group under CRMC agenda. Ideally the Working Groups in Bago and Mon would have joint meetings on a regular basis.</p>
<p>Recommendation 3 Develop a coherent strategy to address DRR and associated geomorphological changes along the coastline of the GoM and integrate this within the single Ramsar Site Management Plan.</p>	<p>Partially agree GoMP is setting up a GIS task force within the CRMC with support from NAG and OneMap Myanmar to train CRMC staff in the GIS mapping for both Bago and Mon. One master student from Technical University Delft (NL) will focus on the geomorphological aspects with technical support from ARCADIS. The output of this unit will feed into the CRMC for the decision-making process. We agree partially in sense of that the steps towards such a "coherent strategy" have been taken prior to the MTR and the MTR was informed accordingly.</p>	<p>Partially agree with GoMP-Team SDC fully agrees with the recommendation made by the review team and recognizes that steps towards such a coherent strategy have already been taken. Furthermore, the implementation and strengthening of CBDRM is part of the GoMP strategy to address DRR. As a part of strategy to be considered, CRMC could initiate the coordination with existing DRRWG in Mon State which is already co-chaired by Helvetas.</p>
<p>Recommendation 4 Promote and demonstration how the project is contributing to wider policy frameworks in</p>	<p>Agree We are of the opinion that the project is contributing to wider policy frameworks and is communicating this, too. We however agree that there is always scope for improvement. Particularly, with an office in Nay Pyi Taw, IUCN will intensify union government engagement to ensure that the project is fully aligned with national</p>	<p>Agree with the GoMP-Team GoMP is contributing in various aspects. However, the promotion and highlights of achievements in wider policy framework can still be improved at Union Level.</p>

order to enhance institutional buy-in.	processes and policies. IUCN will include GoMP as a well-developed case study within the national Integrated Coastal Management (ICM) program it is designing on behalf of Forest Department/Danida.	
Recommendation 5 Align GoMP and any exit strategy to natural resource governance, with a particular emphasis on the Ramsar Site, to ensure delivery under the Swiss Cooperation Programme Myanmar 2019-2023.	Agree An exit strategy aligned to the Swiss Cooperation Programme Myanmar 2019 – 2023 will be developed. A clear indication from the side of SDC with regard to a third phase of the GoMP is required for this first.	Agree SDC is intended to finance a 3 rd sustainability phase for the GoMP with a much lower annual budget. However, the decision has to be taken by the respective SDC committees and cannot be given with 100% certainty before the final phase has been developed and presented to these committees.
Recommendation 6 Improve the emphasis on biodiversity conservation and the wise use of natural resources within the GoMP.	Partially agree Among the implementing partners there is conceptual clarity and consensus that livelihood development and conservation mutually reinforce each other and that the overall emphasis of the project is adequate. There has been a strong emphasis on conservation and some successes: annual shore-bird surveys, new cetacean sightings, Myanmar’s largest Ramsar site, increased fish catch, etc. But some “improvement” is needed. The conservation focus needs to be strengthened with the finalization of the fisheries co-management plans that will incorporate species and habitat conservation using the ecosystem approach to fisheries management. The preparation of the revised management plan, design of a sustainable financing system for conservation activities, etc. will support this recommendation.	Agree with the GoMP-Team The project is achieving in different ways of maintaining conservation along with livelihood development. This for sure has to be continued with conservation focus up to the Union high level decision maker. As mentioned in Recommendation 1, the Integrated Coastal Management Plan has to be strengthened in terms of conservation aspects and the activities have to be implemented accordingly.
Recommendation 7 Conduct a robust evaluation of the skills training activities and develop clear recommendations for future actions.	Agree The project will mandate an external local consultant to review the skills program in the frame of the GoMP in quarter 3 of 2020.	Agree Highly encourage to review the skills development program for effective and sustainable implementation.
Recommendation 8 Enhance knowledge of key species and habitats (including those specifically highlighted in the RIS) and improve understanding of the threats and strategies for	Partially agree Annual shore-bird surveys have been done and threats from nets have been removed through CEPA. Three dolphin/porpoise species have been documented. There is a need to do more to document the benthic biodiversity, which is what sustains the gulf’s natural productivity. A study of impacts of dams on sediment delivery to the gulf is currently being considered. The links between fisheries and ecosystems need to	Agree with the GoMP-Team Reading the text provided by the GoMP-Team, it fully agrees with the recommendation. In this sense also SDC agrees with the recommendation and response provided by the GoMP-Team. Enhanced knowledge flow in both way of informed Management Plan and similarly to the community is crucial.

protection and restoration in order to inform the Ramsar Site Management Plan.	be strengthened. The biodiversity work needs to include other critically endangered birds, marine mammals and marine turtles. All this enhanced knowledge will flow into the new Gulf of Mottama Management Plan	
--	--	--

<p>Recommendation 9 Develop collaborative fishery research priorities to be conducted by <i>inter alia</i> the CRMCs, Department of Marine Science, Department of Zoology, Department of Economics, Department of Geography at Bago and Mawlamyine Universities and, Department of Fisheries and Myanmar Fisheries Federation in Bago Region and Mon State.</p>	<p>Partially agree The project has made a significant investment in university-based fisheries research, admittedly with mixed results. The knowledge about economic key species has improved significantly. In view of the implementing partners the key issue is less in conducting research than involving key stakeholders (CRMCs) in priority setting and then even more importantly in sharing research results in an adequate manner (such as the poster sessions in December 2019, of which one was presented in an annex of the 2019 annual report).</p>	<p>Agree with the GoMP-Team While building research capacities in the institutions actually conducting research, there may be several ways of collaboration with institution rather than conducting co-researching. GoMP can serve as the facilitation role of informing the important aspects of conservation in either ways between institution and community.</p>
<p>Recommendation 10 Modify fishing log books in order to collect additional useful information which can contribute to fishery studies and fisheries management.</p>	<p>Agree Project developed the mobile application to collect fishery information and the catch per unit effort (CPUE) approach is considered in this application.</p>	<p>Agree One things to make sure that the application to be a local level friendly to become a useful in different ways.</p>
<p>Recommendation 11 Develop a sustainable financing mechanism that will underwrite the future costs of ecological monitoring, SMART patrolling and wider conservation activities.</p>	<p>Agree The GoMP is finalizing the contracts for CEPA and SMART monitoring activities now. With regard to the micro-finance interventions the project is currently preparing terms of references for a review similar as the one conducted in 2017 to compare the revolving fund and the efforts of Vision Fund Myanmar. An exploration of the proposed financing mechanism of conservation activities will be part of this process as will be an exploration how to make the revolving funds sustainable after the end of Phase 2.</p>	<p>Partially Agree with the GoMP-Team A review is certainly encouraged for micro-finance not only VF as well as RF for sustainable financing mechanism. The recommendation also talks about a mechanism to cover the future costs of ecological monitoring and SMART patrolling. SDC doubts that this can happen through finances from VF and through the RF only if there are clear rules introduced into this direction. A sustainable financing mechanism for the mentioned activities has to be found.</p>
<p>Recommendation 12 Improve integration with other donor-funded projects within the GoM area, as well as with</p>	<p>Partially agree The project assesses the collaboration with other projects, both in the geographic area and thematically related projects as good. The project has invested in Phase 2 substantially in improving collaboration with other stakeholders (including related projects). The time invested by</p>	<p>Partially Agree with the GoMP-Team Although GoMP has improved its collaboration with other relevant stakeholders and projects, there is further opportunities to link with SDC funded projects, such as VSDP (Swisscontact) and TDLG (UNDP/Oxfam).</p>

<p>synergistic SDC-funded projects.</p>	<p>the management of the project for this purpose is already now high. Further, the project is informing regularly about its activities using various channels. Both, in the area and on union level the project is well known.</p> <p>In view of the project the level of interaction is generally adequate; what can improve is the strategic selection and therefore prioritizing of coordination and collaboration. IUCN will ensure coordination with the Norwegian Environment Agency (NEA) support to Forest Department (FD) on the national wetlands committee.</p>	
<p>Recommendation 13 Develop a strategy for out-reach from the project villages to the non-project villages.</p>	<p>Agree The CEPA activities will be conducted in both GoMP villages as well as non-villages. This is an important approach to reach-out to non-GoMP villages. At the end of the CEPA activities the project will evaluate additional strategies to include non-project villages until the end of the phase and beyond.</p>	<p>Agree This should also serve the evaluation of the project impact to the GoM area as a whole and multiplication of outreach.</p>
<p>Recommendation 14 Work with appropriate government institutions, and through the project governance structure, to ensure long-term access to markets.</p>	<p>Partially agree Already in the planning of the current phase of the project the consortium highlighted the importance of access to markets for the improvement of livelihoods. The project has limited funds available for this and the Government confirmed at several instances that it sees e.g. the construction of access roads as its own responsibility. In the past the project has established links between local authorities and the relevant government departments / projects with regard to locally demanded infrastructure. This function should gradually pass over from the project to the CRMC. Infrastructure requirements should become a standing agenda point in CRMC meetings.</p>	<p>Agree with the GoMP-Team Capacity Strengthening of CRMC should include those kinds of aspects in different approach. CRMC could perhaps the lead of coordination mechanisms to integrate relevant Govt department in the chain.</p>
<p>Recommendation 15 Conduct a more rigorous evaluation of the benefits of the project and particular the multiplicity of values.</p>	<p>Disagree The implementing partners view is that the current mix of evaluation and information generation tools is adequate. The evaluation tools include baseline and endline survey, cost benefit analysis (CBA), project reporting, most-significant change studies, mid-term review, end of phase evaluation. This is supplemented with a whole range of research studies including fishery related research, erosion studies (Arcadis), Political Economy Analysis, Policy Impact Studies etc.</p> <p>The CBA applied the methodology developed for and by SDC. The MTR criticizes that the CBA is focusing on the economic aspects only.</p>	<p>Agree with the GoMP-Team The monitoring and evaluation system used and implemented by GoMP is sufficient for SDC.</p>

	<p>But already this comparatively simple analysis is based on multiple assumptions, which limit the relevance of the analysis to a certain extent.</p> <p>The implementing partners doubt that an even more complex study trying to cover the “multiplicity of values” would provide valuable insights with a reasonable investment of funds.</p>	
<p>Recommendation 16 Undertake a systematic review of the RF governance, prioritization criteria and beneficiaries to ensure that the financing mechanisms are equitable and reach the most vulnerable members of society.</p>	<p>Agree This will be integrated in the ToR as described under recommendation 11.</p>	<p>Agree It would be interesting to get the view of an external expert not only on the issues mentioned in recommendation 16 but also on the one in recommendation 11: Can the RFs play a role as sustainable financing mechanism for conservation activities?</p>
<p>Recommendation 17 Complete a review of the CEPA activities and ensure that they result in people taking action for the wise use of wetlands.</p>	<p>Agree IUCN and HELVETAS will work with BANCA and National Conservation Society (NCS), which have been hired to do CEPA and use the Spatial Monitoring and reporting Tool (SMART) during patrols, respectively, to ensure effective CEPA implementation. Need to re-boot the Local Conservation Groups (LCGs), ideally using sustainable financing from the revolving funds.</p>	<p>Agree</p>
<p>Recommendation 18 Progressively develop local ownership, empowerment and branding in order to embed the project within the local communities.</p>	<p>Agree The project will stop using its logo and text on the outputs and move towards using the CRMC with the respective Ministry logos more and more.</p>	<p>Partially Agree Agree to decrease project visibility and increase local ownership. However, the visibility of SDC/Switzerland as the donor and the owner of the project should somehow still be assured</p>
<p>Recommendation 19 Training on marine mammal stranding response and sea turtle by-catch should be conducted in both Bago Region and Mon State.</p>	<p>Agree This theme should figure clearly in the fisheries co-management plan and of course coastal management plan. This is part of having sustainable fisheries in the GOM. Training on marine mammal stranding response will be planned accordingly.</p>	<p>Agree</p>