

LAND RIGHTS MATTER FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH

BURMA, LAND RIGHTS, AND USAID

Burma is undergoing a period of historical transition with the electoral victory of the National League for Democracy in 2016 representing a change after fifty years of military rule. Burma has a profusion of antiquated and poorly harmonized laws related to land and forest rights, as well as a widespread lack of legal documentation and awareness of those rights by its rural citizens who represent 70% of the population. At the same time, the country's recent economic opening has led to concerns that extractive and agribusiness investments may undermine the land tenure and property rights of this rural population.

USAID recognizes the critical role of land in building a robust and inclusive economy, promoting democracy, and improving the livelihoods and well-being of Burma's people. As a result, USAID's Tenure and Global Climate Change (TGCC) Program supported inclusive land policy and legislation development in Burma, as well as development and piloted participatory mapping processes using low cost mobile applications to secure tenure (MAST). TGCC increased dialogue between local government, communities, and land-related stakeholders.

HOW USAID HELPS



POLICY
BEST PRACTICES

Burma's first National Land Use Policy (NLUP), which is largely based on international best practices such as the Voluntary Guidelines for the Responsible Governance of Tenure, was endorsed by Burma's government in January 2016, following three years of drafting and extensive, inclusive public consultations. USAID provided technical assistance and logistical support for communities and local CSOs to engage with the policy development process. USAID subsequently supported integration of the NLUP best practices into the Investment Law, Agricultural Policy, Agricultural Development Strategy, Community Forestry Instructions, and Livestock Policy as well as specific land laws, as opportunities arose.



PARTICIPATORY
MAPPING



MOBILE APPLICATIONS
TO SECURE TENURE



MULTI-STAKEHOLDER
DIALOGUE



REDUCING
DEFORESTATION

Over twenty CSOs were introduced to integrating mobile applications to secure tenure into participatory mapping processes. USAID worked directly with seven CSOs to pilot community land rights documentation across eight sites in four states/regions. Pilots demonstrated the importance and value of including community perspectives in national mapping initiatives, representing a change from historic, top-down approaches.

USAID supported 220 events, reaching 7,480 participants, to strengthen understanding and awareness of property rights and land governance. Promoting accurate, up-to-date information was critical to building more informed public participation. In addition to policy dialogue, USAID supported communities to use maps to engage with local governments through constructive dialogues.

USAID tested community forestry as a model to secure community tenure under the existing legal framework. During pilot activities, USAID certified 676 acres of land for five communities. USAID collaborated with the Forest Department on the documentation of land tenure rights of smallholder farmers and communities on forest lands within the country's Permanent Forest Estate.

PILOTS TO INFORM POLICY

NATIONAL

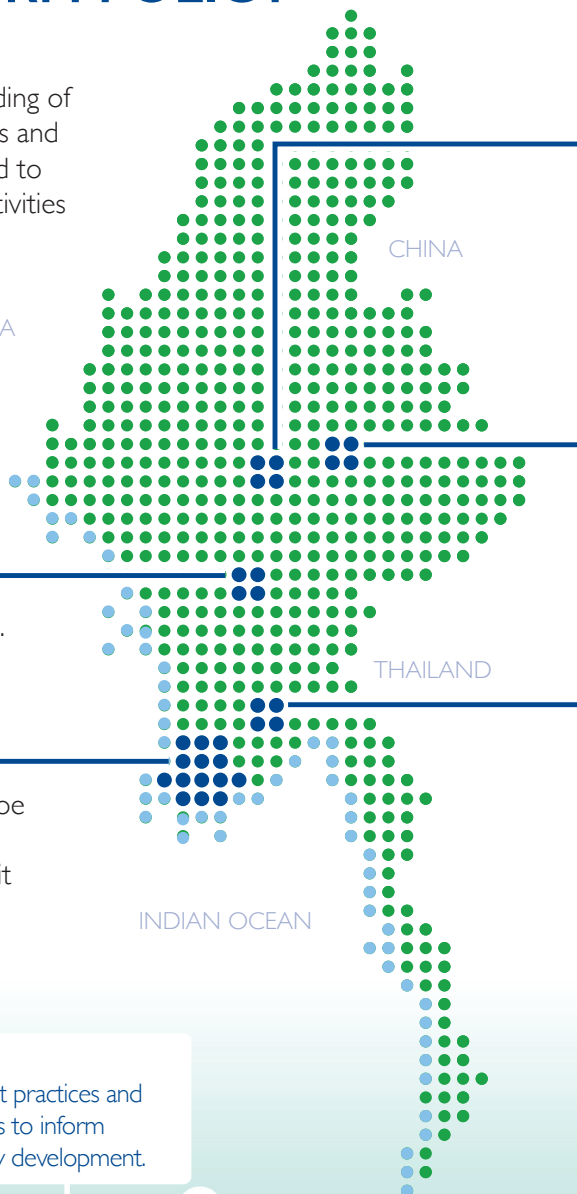
Promoted national level understanding of Land Use Policy through workshops and trainings to promote awareness and to share lessons learned from pilot activities to policy discussions.

NAYPYITAW

Supported government as well as CSOs to engage in land-related legislation and policy. Provided technical assistance to the Agricultural Policy Unit in the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation.

AYEYARWADY

Supported two CSOs, Badeidha Moe and Pyoe Khin Tint Foundation, to work on participatory mapping, as it related to land conflict, as well as disaster risk reduction planning.



SAGAING

Worked with Upper Chindwin Youth Network in four village tracts of Kalay District to use participatory mapping to address land conflicts. Also supported Sagaing Region Farmers' Union to pilot the use of participatory mapping with Land Reinvestigation Committee activities.

SHAN

Pilot work with upland communities on Forestry Department lands mapped boundaries and community forestry options, and engaged with the Myanmar Institute for Integrated Development on community mapping to support land use planning in a wetland area.

BAGO

Pilot in Minhla Township assisted one village tract to map their community boundaries and land uses, and engaged in dialogue with local government over recent land allocations.

National Government:

Provided international best practices and lessons learned from pilots to inform land-related law and policy development.

Local Government:

Supported CSOs and communities to engage constructively with main land management institutions on local land governance issues.

Local CSOs:

Provided financial support for multi-stakeholder dialogue processes, and technical training in participatory mapping and mobile applications to secure tenure (MAST).

International Donors:

Played a leading role in donor coordination.

Community Members:

Increased local awareness of land rights through outreach. Increased local demand for transparency of land information and recognition of community rights to land through community maps.