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USAID PROJECT BRIEF

BURMA LAND TENURE PROJECT

Burma is experiencing rapid economic transformation across multiple sectors in urban, peri-urban and rural areas. This transition is creating risks for the environment and economic opportunities for Burma's diverse population, and is placing new importance on responsible governance of land and natural resources, as secure land tenure is a cornerstone for peace and stability. As policies and legislation are developed to better govern these resources, existing communal and customary rights must be incorporated. At the same time, new policies must be piloted in various communities to demonstrate broad applicability before national activities are launched.

Land-based natural resources in the country, including farmland and forests that are needed for urban expansion or infrastructure projects, will be essential components of a more equitable approach to national economic development. Decisions on how land will be used, by whom, and for what purposes could have far reaching consequences for the people of Burma, the majority of whom are currently smallholder farmers living in the countryside.

USAID works in close collaboration with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation (MONREC), multiple civil society organizations and other groups, both public and private, to ensure the successful implementation of this project.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

USAID's Land Tenure Project has a number of inter-related objectives focused on contributing to the goals of broad-based economic development, improving livelihoods, promoting sustainable land use management and achieving resilient community development. Specific goals include:

- Supporting the development and implementation of a National Land Use Policy and related laws that clarify rights and encourage sustainable use of land and natural resources;
- Strengthening the land tenure, resource, and property rights of rural individuals, households and communities, with particular attention to women, ethnic minorities, smallholder farmers and other vulnerable groups; and,
- Increasing consultation among government, civil society and business on issues of broad public concern related to land tenure and land use.

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

USAID is supporting the above components through the following activities:

- Providing technical assistance to further develop the policy, legal and regulatory framework for land governance through a focus on land, forests and other natural resource rights and management;
- Conducting pilots that include participatory mapping, formal recognition of customary land and resource tenure and approaches to alternative land dispute resolution;
- Raising public awareness and participation on the policy and pilot implementation process with educational and outreach materials; and,
- Conducting research and monitoring that will inform further legal development and policy implementation.



Representatives of civil society organizations participate in a project-sponsored training on the use of digital mapping applications.

PHOTO: NICK THOMAS, TETRA TECH



A female Member of Parliament speaks to her constituents during a public consultation on the National Land Use Policy

PHOTO: ROB OBERNDORF, TETRA TECH



Shifting cultivation in Heingyu Village in Minhl Township

PHOTO: NAYNA JHAVERI, TETRA TECH

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