**Network Activities Group**

'Support the social, economic and environmental transformation of the small-scale fisheries sector towards its better contribution to food security and poverty eradication as a result of improved policies, strategies and initiatives'

**PROJECT FINAL REPORT**

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# PROJECT PERFORMANCE AND RESULTS

## Background to the Project

Myanmar has a total population of about 60 million and 75 per cent of the population lives in rural areas. Those living in the delta and coastal areas account for about 20 million of the population, and 40 per cent of these coastal and riparian communities are directly involved in fisheries. The majority of these are poorly resourced and highly vulnerable; they are dependent on outsiders for fishing rights and the latter also have significant control over the credit arrangements and the price offered for the fish catches. With a squeeze on fishing access, there is increasing pressure on those who eventually obtain fishing rights to over-exploit fishing grounds. Natural disasters such as Cyclone Nargis and Giri had the dual effect of badly affecting coastal spawning grounds and constraining small fishers’ capital base and loss of productive assets. The pressure to manage the resulting accumulation of debt has further exacerbated the weak position of small fishers. These broader processes act to trap the poor and vulnerable fisherfolk in a cycle of debt, dissociate them from control over their livelihoods, add unnecessary inefficiencies into the production and value chains, constrain the opportunities for value addition and undermine sustainable management of fishing grounds. Further, loss of fishing rights/livelihood opportunities forces the small-scale fishing communities to undertake migration. Fishers migrate in large numbers to work as casual labourers in Yangon and other major cities, as well as to join the marine fishing industry as fish-workers.

To address fisheries issues in Myanmar and to strengthen the capacity of small-scale fishering communities at a local level by securing sustainable small-scale fisheries in the context of the implementation of the SSF Guidelines, Network Activities Group (NAG) designed the project named “*Support the social, economic and environmental transformation of the small-scale fisheries sector towards its better contribution to food security and poverty eradication as a result of improved policies, strategies and initiatives”* with the fund support of ICSF.

## Progress towards the expected outputs and outcomes, and processes

### Activity 1.1 - Review the existing co-management plan of targeted fishing grounds and improve the co-management plan including species conservation and close season arrangement

The current government, spurred by the efforts of the FDA and the ARFN, has provided access to fishing grounds to some small-scale fishing communities in Dedaye Township. The FDA has established co-management mechanisms in the concerned communities since 2013 in collaboration with community leaders. However, it was observed that the management practices were seen by the fishers as merely a mechanism to allocate access to fishing grounds to those fishers living alongside the particular fishing zones. This observation led to a series of awareness and knowledge programmes relating to fishery ecology and trends indicating resource declines over the years, which helped the FDAs and ARFNs to improve their management plans by integrating important aspects of conservation and better governance approaches. In order to ensure effective community participation in the management process, NAG facilitated FDAs and ARFNs to undertake a participatory review of their existing co-management by organising a workshop which had strong participation from the fisheries representatives from all relevant fishing zones. The workshop was organised at the NAG sub-office, Pyapon Township on 22 and 23 December 2018 with 19 participants (14 male, five female) largely from the FDAs and the ARFNs, but also including a few non-member villagers. At the workshop, the discussions focused on critical issues, and constraints facing the implementation of the existing co-management plan were discussed threadbare by the participants who also dwelt on the root causes of issues in brainstorming sessions. In addition, the participants were encouraged to review their existing co-management plans for each fishing zone, and the areas which needed to be developed, revised and modified were mapped out. On the second day of the workshop, a revised co-management plan was developed by taking account of the issues and actions discussed on the previous day, which included the roles of the project and the FDAs to implement a more effective fisheries co-management strategy. The detailed report of the Co-management Plan Review workshop can be seen at *Annex (1)* and the FDA’s Co-management Plan can be seen at *Annex (2).*

Table 1 - Summary of Participants from Different Townships

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Sr.** | **Township** | **Male** | **Female** | **Total** | **Postal Address** |
| **1** | Dedaye | 8 | 3 | 11 | 10261 |
| **2** | Pyapon | 6 | 2 | 8 | 10251 |

In December 2019, the FDA’s Co-management Plan was reviewed again through the EAFM training, and provided to fisher leaders and FDA members. By reviewing the on-going co-management plan, fisher leaders will be able to prepare for a better management system for the upcoming Inn and Tender Season.

### Activity 2.1 - Capacity Need Assessments on existing FDAs

The first day of the Co-management Plan Review workshop (22 December 2018) also focused on a Capacity Needs Assessment, intended to understand the gaps in the current capacity of the FDAs to implement fisheries resource management effectively and efficiently. This exercise, undertaken with the active participation of representatives of the FDAs, indicated that the FDA members had good indigenous knowledge on how to manage and conserve the local fisheries resources. The existing customary practices were also supportive in solving the local level fishery related issues. However, in order to follow the new co-management plans more effectively, they still face a lot of challenges which need to be addressed, such as the need for better coordination with government agencies for more efficient financial management and organisational development and for documenting the process. The Capacity Needs Assessment indicated the need for project support to the FDAs in the immediate future in the following areas:

* fisheries ecology and mangrove habitats
* co-management and resource governance
* value chain and post-harvest
* SME and business planning
* small-scale aquaculture
* patrolling and bio-monitoring
* leadership and organisational management
* documenting and reporting
* advocacy training
* financial management

### Activity 2.2 - Capacity Building Training for FDAs

Based on the results of the Capacity Need Assessment, NAG undertook a Co-management Training, which included bio-monitoring aspects, to selected members of the FDAs on 24 December 2018 at the NAG’s sub-office in Pyapon. In the training, the NAG team used PowerPoint presentations, and brainstorming exercises involving group discussions to provide information on relevant issues: different types of resources, trends of climate change, root causes of resource decline, impacts of the decline for human well being, and appropriate systems and approaches to address resource depletion. The co-management training was instrumental in making FD members better aware of the key themes of resource management, in understanding the respective roles and responsibilities of fishing communities and government agencies in managing resources and in developing crucial step-by-step actions needed to implement the co-management plan at different levels.

With the purpose of improving the communities’ understanding on ecosystem-based resource management, Ecosystem Adaptation of Fishery Management (EAFM) training was provided to fisher leaders of the targeted area, FDAs and ARFM members from 24 to 26 December for three days at Myanmar Koe Hotel, Pathein Township. The total number of participants for the EAFM training was 26 people (18 male, eight female) and the detail training information can be seen at *Annex (3).*

### Activity 2.3 - Support community on developing a fisheries management plan, awareness-raising and enforcement for improving co-management arrangement and species conservation

For fishing communities to understand clearly the concepts and strategies of co-management and to implement the co-management activities more effectively at the community level, Capacity Building Coordinator supported to organize regular cluster meetings including collaborators in the co-management plan Cluster level FDA meetings were conducted as follow [not clear]:

Table 2 - Summary Information of Co-management Plan Cluster Meetings

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **No.** | **Village** | **Township** | **Postal Address** | **Cluster Name** | **Meeting Date** |
| 1 | Sat Wa Village | Pyapon | 10251 | A Char Tan Tender | 19.2.2019 |
| 2 | Kan Seik Village | Pyapon | 10251 | Ka Dar Tan Tender | 10.4.2019 |
| 3 | Sat Wa Village | Pyapon | 10251 | A Char Tan Tender | 24.4.2019 |
| 4 | Mya Sein Kan | Pyapon | 10251 | Akal Chaung Wa Tender | 26.4.2019 |

The cluster management committee member, community fishers, township level FDA members, ARFN representatives from Pyapon and village administrators participated in the meeting. The aim was to make the implementing management plan clear to all community fishers and members, to draw up the community base co-management plan, and to encourage close relationship and collaboration between members of the cluster committee, FDA and ARFN. The tender co-management plan and monthly work plan were discussed by committee members, and all participants reviewed the duties and responsibilities of committee members and the members list. Committee leaders presented the challenges and difficulties in implementing the co-management system. The cluster co-management plans and monthly work plans developed from the meetings were submitted to the Department of Fisheries.

In order to ensure effective community participation in the management process, in facilitating FDAs and ARFNs to undertake a participatory review of their existing co-management a training programme was organized.The training was organised at KMSS Center, Pathein Township on 16, 17 and 18 June 2019, including one day for a field visit, with 32 participants (27 male, five female), largely from the FDAs and cluster leaders of the co-management zone. At the end of the training,the ToT received participants developed a trip plan their respected areas as a mobile awareness raising programme, in collaboration with Capacity Building Coordinators. The detailed training information can be seen at *Annex (4).*

According to this arrangement, the ground level co-management awareness and review on operating management plan meetings by the ToT team were conducted in Kan Seik village, including community fishers from Ka Dar Tan tender, on 25 June 2019 and Sat Wa village from Ah Char Tan tender on 26 June 2019. At the meetings, the participants shared their knowledge of resource management – including the root cause of resource decline, impact on their socio-economic condition and the importance of fishery co-management – with fishing communities and reviewed their existing management plan.

Fishinf communities were encouraged to conserve fishery-related resources such as mangroves and fish species, and to follow fishing laws. As the community understood the impact of the ecosystem on their fishing business, they developed a proposal for the conservation of mangroves at their fishing ground and then submitted to the NAG a proposal for a small grant in second week of December 2019. Then the NAG team conducted a field visit to the proposed area and organised a meeting with members of the FDA for an implementation plan. In the last week of December 2019, the NAG team supported a grant to Dedaye Township’s FDA to implement the Mangrove Conservation Project in the targeted village, Nyi Naung. Detailed information can be seen at *Annex (5).*



Figure 1 - Mangrove conservation area of Nyi Naung village

### Activity 3.1- Study on working conditions of fishers and fishworkers in Kyar Phong

A study on the Kyar Phong fishery was conducted from 20 to 30 September 2018 in Yay township of Mon state and Pyapon township of the Ayeyarwaddy region. A second study was conducted at the end of the season from 7 to 10 May 2019 in Pyapon, and from 14 to 15 May 2019 in Yay, to collect information about raft workers. A Research Officer and Research Coordinator led the study and interns from the NAG research team and research assistants collected data and information. The study aimed to: 1) understand the Kyar Phong fishery in Pyapon and Yay townships; 2) propose how environmental, social and economic dimensions could be enhanced to optimise benefits, including the well-being of migrant fishers and fish workers; and 3) suggest a co-management framework for fishing, informal work and safety at sea, in a coordinated and coherent manner, drawing upon international instruments such as the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, FAO’s Voluntary Tenure and Small-scale fisher guidelines and ILO instruments in relation to decent work.

The study used qualitative methods, observation and semi-structured interviews for data collection. The participants were selected with the 'Purposive Sampling' method. The focus areas were the two main townships involved with the Kyar Phong Fishery, Yay and Pyapon.

Firstly, the team visited three villages (Khar Pyat, Nauk Mee and Daw Nyein) of Pyapon township from 7 to 10 May 2019 and interviewed 15 raft workers with support from the Kyar Phong Association and village tract administrators. Because the closing time in different areas changes depending on the target species and fishing grounds, the research team had to visit two villages (Sat Wa and A Phong) of Pyapon again on 5 and 6 June 2019, to interview 11 Kyar Phong raft workers.

The team also visited A Sin Village, Ah Baw Kyar Tan and Zee Phyu Thaung villages of Yay township with the help of the Kyar Phong Association and the Department of Fisheries in Yay, and collected data from 32 participants.

The detailed report on the Kyar Phong Fishery study can be seen at *Annex (6)*

### Activity 4.1 - Media engagement and awareness activities related to working conditions of fishworkers

Media training was conducted in collaboration with an external consultant, U Ye Yint Tun, a journalist from *Than Daw Sint* with U Ko Ko Naing, Communication Associate of NAG Headquarters from 10 to 13 June 2019 at Myanmar Koe Hotel, Pathein township, with 19 participants (17 male, two female) from ARFN and FDA. They learned that the role of the media is mainly to inform the public, to entertain the public, to convey information from the government to the public and vice versa, to seek the truth and report it accurately, and to be the voice of the voiceless. The concept of news and its sources was explained, and there were practical writing sessions in which participants were encouraged to write their own ‘news stories’ on topics related to fisheries and its problems after field visits to the project areas. Detailed information can be seen at *Annex (7).*

Table 3 - List of Participants for Media Training

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Sr** | **Township** | **Postal Address** | **Male** | **Female** | **Total** |
| 1 | Labutta | 10121 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| 2 | Maubin | 10181 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| 3 | Zalun | 10141 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| 4 | Dedaye | 10261 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| 5 | Bogale | 10231 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| 6 | Ngapudaw | 10131 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| 7 | Pyapon | 10251 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| 8 | Hninthada | 10061 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| 9 | Kyaiklat | 10241 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| 10 | Nyaungdon | 10161 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| 11 | Einme | 10191 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| 12 | Ingapu | 10051 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| 13 | Lemyethna | 10071 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| 14 | Wakema | 10201 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| 15 | Mawlamyinegyun | 10221 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| 16 | Danubyu | 10151 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| 17 | Pantanaw | 10171 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| 18 | Thabaung | 10111 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| 19 | Yegyi | 10081 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| **Total** | | | **17** | **2** | **19** |

### To improve the understanding of the working conditions at Kyar Phong, the NAG team organised a workshop on 23 December 2019 at Myanmar Koe Hotel, Pathein. Fisher leaders from the project area, FDAs and ARFM members were invited, and there were 29 participants (25 male and four female). The NAG programme team shared the key findings of the Political Economy Research of the whole Ayeyarwaddy region, the regional government’s focus on the fisheries sector, and the research on Kyar Phong by NAG’s research team. Detailed information can be seen at *Annex (8).*

### Activity 5.1 - Strengthen the capacity of the FDA and ARFN for handling the issues related to Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and Climate Change

DRR and Climate Change training focusing on safety and security at sea was provided to leaders of the fishing community in the targeted area, organised by the NAG Headquarters from 29 to 30 April 2019. of the purpose was to: 1) enhance their knowledge on Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction; 2) build technical capacity and skills; 3) catalyse the implementation of Village Plans of Action for Disaster Risk Reduction and Management at the community level; 4) understand the concepts of security and safety in fishing at sea. Detailed information can be seen at *Annex (9).*

Table 4 - Participants List for DRR and Climate Change Training

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Sr** | **Township** | **Postal Address** | **Male** | **Female** | **Total** |
| 1 | Hinthada | 10061 | 2 | 0 | **2** |
| 2 | Ngapudaw | 10131 | 2 | 0 | **2** |
| 3 | Danubyu | 10151 | 2 | 0 | **2** |
| 4 | Nyaungdon | 10161 | 1 | 1 | **2** |
| 5 | Labutta | 10121 | 1 | 0 | **1** |
| 6 | Ingapu | 10051 | 2 | 0 | **2** |
| 7 | Wakema | 10201 | 0 | 2 | **2** |
| 8 | Yegyi | 10081 | 1 | 0 | **1** |
| 9 | Einme | 10191 | 2 | 0 | **2** |
| 10 | Kyaiklat | 10241 | 0 | 1 | **1** |
| 11 | Lemyethna | 10071 | 2 | 0 | **2** |
| **Total** | | | **15** | **4** | **19** |

# In order to improve the communities’ advocacy action to be able to exercise their rights, Advocacy Training was provided to leaders of the community of the targeted area of the project and FDA members by an external consultant at FDA office of Pyapon from 16 to 18 December 2019. Participants were encouraged to identify key issues facing fishery sectors, including conditions of Kyar Phong fisherworkers, poor law enforcement and other related issues. After this, advocacy strategies to address each issue at different levels were discussed in brainstorming sessions and through PowerPoint presentations. There were 25 participants (16 male and nine female). Detailed information can be seen at *Annex (10).*

# LESSONS, NEW CHALLENGES AND RISKS

* Community participation needs to be further improved as weaker participation and, more critically, less contribution of several participants to the discussions make the objectives of the workshops difficult to achieve, and also make the practical implementation of the action points from the workshop more difficult in the field.
* The difficulties of the fishers in gaining access to the fishing grounds on account of the annual tender lease system remains the biggest obstacle to the management systems. Accordingly to the new Ayeyarwaddy Fresh Water Fishery Law, even though inns/tender areas with an auction floor price of under 40 lakh MMK are proposed to be allocated to the SSF on the floor price basis, the inns/tenders with an auction floor price of over 40 lakh can only be obtained through participation in the auction system. The floor price of inn/tenders keeps changing from year to year using the floor price calculation system and adds more uncertainty and hardship to the fishers. For example, in 2017, the floor price of Mya Sein Kan Tender was MMK 39 lakh and it was allocated to SSF. But in 2018, the floor price was increased to MMK 4,290,000, an addition of 10 per cent over 2017 floor prices, which meant that the tender could not be allocated to the SSF because its floor price had gone over 40 lakh and made it necessary to be allocated through the Auction System as per government policy. The inn/tender passed out of the hands of the SSF, who will now have to bid and get rights to the tender in competition with the more powerful and affluent outsiders. On the other hand, some DoF officers and powerful business interests may see the new law as a threat to their power base and domination over the fisheries sector, and may work to undermine its success.

**PREPARED BY**