



# Completion Report

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Project Number: 48145-001  
Technical Assistance Number: 8786  
July 2019

## Myanmar: Environmental Safeguard Institutional Strengthening

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TA Number, Country, and Name: TA 8786-MYA: Environmental Safeguard Institutional Strengthening			Amount Approved: \$1,000,000		
			Revised Amount: \$1,500,000		
Executing Agency: Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation		Source of Funding: TASF-V	Amount Undisbursed: \$298,405.90	Amount Utilized: \$1,201,594.10	
TA Approval Date: 11 December 2014	TA Signing Date: 26 January 2015	Fielding of First Consultant: 22 August 2015	TA Completion Date Original: 31 December 2017		
			Actual: 31 December 2018		
			Account Closing Date Original: 31 December 2017		
			Actual: 29 April 2019		
<p><b>Description.</b> Prior to the technical assistance (TA), the Government of Myanmar articulated its intention to improve environment and natural resources management and environmental governance through the establishment of new national environmental policy, legal, and regulatory frameworks. The Environmental Conservation Law (2012) provided the mandate for mainstreaming environmental issues into national policies and planning, and development management. The newly created Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation (MONREC) through its Environmental Conservation Department (ECD), emphasized the government's commitment to environmental impact assessment and environmental quality management. As of 2013, it was clear that ECD's institutional capacity and human resources needed to be strengthened. ADB responded to the government's request for assistance, with a capacity development program to expand environmental impact assessment and environmental quality management capacity, and capability within ECD and selected sectoral ministries.</p>					
<p><b>Expected Impact, Outcome, and Outputs.</b> The TA impact is sustained environmental quality across investment projects in key sectors. The outcome is for the ECD national and state branches to exhibit improved processes and procedures for environmental assessments and review. The outputs were (i) enhanced environmental impact assessment (EIA) framework and capacity development plan prepared; (ii) comprehensive environmental quality management training program delivered; and (iii) improved environmental monitoring, information-sharing, and reporting documented. The TA is rated <i>highly relevant</i>. The TA objectives were highly relevant to Myanmar needs, particularly, support for implementation of the new EIA Procedure (2015). The TA was consistent with ADB's Country Partnership Strategy, 2012–2014 for Myanmar which identified environmental sustainability as a key theme to be mainstreamed into its operations. In line with the Midterm Review of Strategy 2020, the TA was designed to strengthen governance and institutional mechanisms and mainstream international best practices on safeguards. The choice of MONREC as executing agency and ECD as implementing agency was appropriate. The terms of reference were appropriate and adaptable to ECD's changing priorities.</p>					
<p><b>Delivery of Inputs and Conduct of Activities.</b> The TA originally allocated 25 person-months and 30 person-months of inputs for international and national consultants, respectively. In early December 2016, ADB approved the increase in TA amount by \$500,000, a change in scope and implementation arrangements, which resulted to a revised design and monitoring framework and extension of the TA completion date by one year to 31 December 2018. The revised framework included additional activities under output 2 and based on ECD's request, the additional financing funded: (i) EIA's capacity development and the mining sector's environmental management, including development of sector EIA Guidelines, preparation of a sector-specific Environmental Compliance Certificate Framework, training, and awareness raising; (ii) development of national Environmental Quality Standards; and ECD's staff capacity development to review EIAs and provision for external technical expertise to review EIA reports. To support the change in scope, total consultants' inputs increased by 105.25 person-months (52.09 person-months international and 53.16 person-months national) from the original TA allocation of 55 person-months. Total actual consulting inputs used were 92.28 person-m. The delivery of the TA inputs was efficient through an optimal mix of national and international consultants. The productivity of consultant inputs was acceptable. In some cases, productivity was limited by the absorptive capacity and ECD staff's availability. International and national consultants' performance was rated <i>satisfactory</i>. Funding of ECD-led training courses and workshops was efficient and effective. With this, the TA had savings of 7% which came from the international consultants' unused out-of-pocket expenses, while 12% came from workshops,</p>					

studies/surveys, and contingencies. Senior management and ECD staff were appreciative of the inputs provided. The executing agency (MONREC) and implementing agency's (ECD) performance was satisfactory. ECD provided considerable support and cooperation. The TA team was provided with office space and some support services in ECD headquarters. The National Support Unit assisted the Ministry of Environmental Conservation and Forestry in program implementation, and under the Greater Mekong Subregion Core Environment Program, it provided excellent support in organizing training courses and workshops until 31 December 2017. ADB headquarters' support on contract administration and consultants' recruitment was satisfactory. Support from ADB Myanmar Resident Mission's (MYRM) was highly satisfactory through staff participation in meetings, workshops, and workshop funding administration in 2018.

#### **Evaluation of Outputs and Achievement of Outcome.**

Output 1 was achieved. An assessment of environmental safeguard capacity evaluated the legal and regulatory framework, environmental assessment guidelines and environmental standards, organizational arrangements, administrative procedures, human resources, budgets and support facilities. The assessment was complemented by a preliminary equivalence assessment, which compared Myanmar's legal and regulatory framework to the ADB's Safeguard Policy Statement, 2019 environmental safeguard policy principles. Based on gaps identified, a capacity development plan was prepared. The plan (i) improved legal and regulatory framework for environmental assessment, review and management; (ii) improved guidance for environmental assessment, review, and management; (iii) strengthened institutions and enhanced capacity of selected government agencies; (iv) enhanced environmental and social management systems within selected government sectoral agencies; (v) increased awareness and involvement in environmental assessment, review, and management; and (vi) enhanced pollution control management.

Output 2 was achieved. Ten EIA and environmental management training courses were delivered to over 445 participants (of which 44% were female), including staff at: (i) ECD national, regional and state levels; (ii) other MONREC departments and enterprises; and (iii) other union government ministries and EIA consultants and academics. Two training courses and two workshops on pollution control monitoring and inspection were completed with 103 participants (of which 53% were female). Four ECD-led training courses were conducted for 298 staff (of which 65% were female). To promote learning by doing, the TA provided assistance for EIA report review, including: (i) review guidelines for environmental impact assessment reports for use by ECD staff; (ii) financial support for four ECD-led courses for staff from regions and states on review of environmental management plans; and (iii) provision of national EIA experts to help reduce the backlog in the environmental assessment reports' review. Guidance documents included guidelines for: (i) review of EIA reports; (ii) Environmental Compliance Certificate preparation; (iii) EIA for mining sector (six documents); (iv) draft National Ambient Environmental Quality; and (v) Pollution Control Monitoring and Inspection. From 2016, MYRM safeguard specialists and consultants supported ADB project officers and TA consultants to apply Myanmar's EIA Procedures in ADB projects.

Output 3 was substantially achieved. Data for sectors (general economy, forestry, agriculture and livestock, aquaculture and fisheries, energy, mining, and tourism), natural resources (land resources, land use, biodiversity, forest, and watersheds) and environmental laws were collected and assessed. The Myanmar Environmental Information Portal was maintained by the national environmental information specialist, with regular updating of environmental information. Portal review was completed in September 2016 which identified needed improvements for the portal's functionality and usefulness. A country environmental analysis helped prepare a draft Country Diagnostic on Environment and Climate Change, which provided inputs into the ADB Country Partnership Strategy and Inclusive Sustainable Growth Assessment.

The TA is rated *effective* in achieving its outputs. Assessment of the environmental safeguard capacity and capacity development plan was completed. Thirteen training courses and workshops (ten on EIA and three on pollution control monitoring and inspection) were successfully completed. In addition, four ECD-led training courses were successfully completed. Eight EIA guidance documents were prepared. The Myanmar Environmental Information Portal is maintained and regularly updated. A Country Environmental Analysis was undertaken.

The TA is rated *efficient*. The TA efficiently used inputs through an optimal mix of national and international consultants. The TA was completed within the revised budget and the revised project completion date.

The TA's expected outcome was *achieved*. Information on the increased allocation (by at least 40%) of the ECD budget to development and implementation of EIA Review and compliance monitoring was not obtained; the increase in budget allocation can be inferred by the increase in human resources. At the headquarters level, ECD management and staff officers responsible for EIA and environmental management increased by 140%. At the state and regional levels, ECD management and staff officers increased by 275%; and are increasingly taking on more of the EIA review workload. The knowledge transferred and guidance documents developed are used by ECD staff at the national and state and regional levels for EIA review, preparation of the Environmental Compliance Certificates, and compliance monitoring and inspection. Senior management and ECD staff are highly satisfied with the results. The EIA Procedure (2015), developed under separate ADB technical assistance) has been in effect since December 2015. Sector Guidelines were developed for Oil and Gas (by Norwegian Environment Agency); and Hydropower (by International Finance Corporation); and mining (by the TA). A Guide for Reviewing EIA Reports (November 2016); and a Guide for Preparing Environmental Compliance Certificates (November 2017) were developed for ECD staff. Myanmar environmental information platform was maintained. About 30 news titles from over 15 news sources were weekly uploaded since October 2016, and reports were uploaded when available. Among over 100 data charts referred from draft state of environment report, and over 30 indicators data related with environmental performance were updated.

**Overall Assessment and Rating.** Overall, the TA is rated *successful*. The TA strengthened environmental impact assessment and ECD's environmental management performance at the national and state and regional levels. It strengthened Myanmar's environmental safeguards system. Progress was made to achieve the TA's impact, sustainable environmental quality across investment projects in key sectors, as measured by increased compliance of official development assistance projects with national laws, regulations and performance standards for environmental assessment and quality management.

The TA is rated *most likely sustainable*. The knowledge transferred and [guidance documents](#) developed are used by ECD staff. There was a significant increase in human resources at the national and state and regional levels. ADB will distribute the training materials to the ECD Safeguard Learning Center to foster further capacity development.

**Major Lessons.** The EIA procedures and practices in Myanmar are evolving. The TA had to be flexible and presented ECD with choices with respect to TA activities to adapt to ECD's changing priorities. Recruiting qualified national environmental consultants with a combination of technical and interpersonal skills was integral to the TA's success. The language barrier made it difficult for international consultants to be completely effective. A team of international and national consultants worked very well. Training activities that included small group exercises conducted in the Myanmar language proved to be an excellent learning technique. Translation of documents into the Myanmar language was essential to allow for careful review of guidance documents and broadening the dissemination of ideas. Considerable time and effort had to be allocated for the development of EIA guidelines and guidance documents. In addition to the technical tasks, the process required stakeholder consultation all throughout the TA, multiple reviews and document revisions, awareness-raising, and dissemination of the final product.

**Recommendations and Follow-Up Actions.** ECD's immediate priorities directed TA activities towards the environmental assessment, review, and approval part of their mandate. Future capacity development assistance should be directed to environmental management and compliance monitoring during project implementation. While sector agencies participated in many TA activities, the primary beneficiary was ECD. Notwithstanding the importance of further strengthening ECD, greater emphasis should be placed in developing the environmental and social management capacity of key sector agencies including the Ministry of Construction, Ministry of Electricity and Energy, Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, and Irrigation, and City Development Committees.