



About this newsletter

The unprecedented occurrence of COVID-19 has disrupted the conventional ways of communication and affected millions of socio-economic lives in Myanmar. As a response to the highly contagious virus, public gatherings were restricted, trainings and workshops were postponed and meetings became virtual. In the event of global health crisis, Myanmar is no exception. The “Sustainable cropland and forest management in three priority agro-ecosystems of Myanmar” with financial support by Global Environment Facility (the SLM-GEF project) has reprogrammed its regular activities with the adoption of COVID-19 preventive measures and formulated response activities to help build resilience of vulnerable populations particularly rural smallholder farmers and those rely on forest resources.

In response to COVID-19

The SLM-GEF project team has been innovative when fulfilling the project’s goal in time of COVID-19 crisis. The team has been contributing to UN Framework for the phased socio-economic response to COVID-19 and other policy and strategic papers under the umbrella of FAO. The project has been creative to cope with rapidly evolving situation and continue implementing ongoing project’s activities with an aim to contribute to the government’s COVID-19 response strategy.

Rapid Assessment on Impact of COVID-19

During May 2020, the SLM-GEF project conducted rapid assessment survey to identify immediate barriers and challenges of smallscale farmers and interviewed 171 farmers in five pilot townships. According to the assessment results 60% of respondents believed that COVID-19 can be transmitted from eating food bought from markets/outside indicating that conducting proper risk communication is essential to dispel the misinformation. Key barriers to take loan for coming monsoon season are: farmers need to pay back the existing loan (27%), not sure if the microfinance organizations operates (22%), nobody want to lend money during COVID-19 (18%), require Form-7 as a document (10%), 20% of the farmers reported that they have difficulties in selling harvest due to reduced demand, no transportation available or allowed, and decreased price. 92% of participants have never received formal transfers such as relief food, cash assistance, livestock, safety net programs, pension schemes in the past 12 months. 81% of respondents think that “Kitchen/home gardening program” can be helpful to save household cost and provide family consumption while ensuring food and nutrition security in the medium term.

Support Home Gardening



Distribution of Sprinkling in Central dry zone.

The SLM-GEF project also supported to MOALI's COVID-19 response strategy under the CERP section 2.1.7 by providing vegetable seeds and tools with technical training for home gardening in project area in collaboration with respective Township DoA offices to support food and nutrition security and compensate income loss.



Distribution of Home Gardening Seeds in Labutta

New Normal Meetings

The following meetings were held either online or face-to-face with strict infection control measures such as wearing face masks, washing hands thoroughly and keeping physical distancing in the meeting places.

- ✓ Organizing 2nd Time Community Forestry information management workshop at Forest Department with One Map Myanmar
- ✓ Conducting Land Use Planning task force meetings
- ✓ Retrieving Kwin map and geospatial data of the DALMS (Department of Agriculture Land Management and Statistics) in central dry zone
- ✓ Attending bi-monthly Technical Support Group meeting of Climate Smart Agriculture Center
- ✓ Meeting with DoA on upscaling of FFS beyond the project pilot areas and area expansion under CSA practices
- ✓ Conducting ToT on CSA at Township level
- ✓ Organizing regular virtual team meetings of the SLM-GEF project team
- ✓ Follow-up activities with field team and coordination/training of FAO country office

Closing Existing LoAs and Signing New LoAs

Communications with Service Providers were maintained through telephone conversation, frequent messaging, emailing, virtual meetings using all possible digital tools. Monitoring and evaluation of the field activities were conducted using audio-visual calls and regular correspondences with the service providers. Over the past four months, the letter of agreements with CESVI and AVSI were closed successfully. Four new letter of agreements were signed with YAU, CESVI, COLDA and AVSI for implementation of various CSA activities.

Developed Land Use Planning Guidebooks

The project hired a consultant and developed a guidebook for township land use planning in central dry zone and the usage of unmanned aerial vehicle technology in participatory land use planning and mapping.



Supported District Forest Department with A0 scanner

Conducted ground-truthing in Nyaung-U and Kyaukpadaung in relation to developing Land Use Land Cover Plan. Also, the project supported A0 multipurposed scanner to digitize Kwin maps (field maps) as an effort to efficient land use planning.



Digitizing the Kwin maps by using the A0 multipurposed scanner

Snapshot of SLM-GEF Project (March to July)



Distributed **2325** energy efficient stoves



Distributed seeds for home gardening to **1,899** households



Conducted **30** virtual/face-to-face meetings



Distributed **429,193** seedlings to **20** CFUG



Distributed **64** baskets seeds and **7,888** seedlings to 30 FFS

Produced LULC maps covered **643,652** ha



Promoted CSA techniques covered **10,285** ha



Supported FD to issue **21** CF certificate which cover **2,828** ha



5,954 households adopted CSA practices



Supported to established **6** mangrove nursery in Labutta



Supported Forestry Equipment to Training schools

The teaching aids and hardware equipment provided to the Forestry Department (FD) which will help deliver training to students and rangers at Myanmar Forest School, including to forestry staff at the Central Forestry Development Training Center (Hmaw-bi).



Forestry equipment handover ceremony at forest department.

Supported in Issuing of 21 Community Forest Certificates

Community forest user groups (CFUGs) were formed and 30 years forest management plans were developed with the technical support from district forest department and financial support from SLM-GEF project. Twenty CF certificates were issued to respective CFUGs in five project's pilot townships, opening up the opportunity for those CFUGs to embark livelihoods support activities while conserving local forests.



Community Forestry Certificate Giving Ceremony

Distribution of fuel efficient stoves

SLM also distributed 825 Envirofit M-5000 premium woodstoves and 1500 A1 stove to Community Forest User Group members in 20 Community Forest villages in five project townships. This will save wood and _____ prevent deforestation in the longer run.



"It (the stove) really reduce cooking time and safe firewood consumption."
Daw Aye Aye Mu, Eco-stoves recipient, Nyaung-U township.

Cash for work program

The project provided a cash support to members of 6 CFUGs in Labutta as part of operationalization of 20 CF demonstrations initiated under LoA with RECOFTC.



"We would like to thank, Forest department for showing us how to build this mangrove nursery and the SLM project for providing cash support." U Thein Myint, Mangrove nursery builder, Labutta township.

List of Publications:

1. Contributed to Policy and Strategic Paper -> United Nations Framework for the Immediate Socio-Economic Response to COVID-19 in Myanmar (UN-SERF) <https://myanmar.un.org/en/download/14125/51709>
2. Rapid assessment on immediate barriers and challenges of COVID-19 on rural smallholder farmers <http://www.slmmyanmar.info/download/impact-of-covid-19/>
3. Forestry equipment and teaching aids handover at FD, Nay Pyi Taw <http://www.fao.org/myanmar/news/detail-events/en/c/1293969/>
4. Success Story: Farmers willing to use climate-smart agriculture techniques including system of rice intensification in wider scale in Labutta <http://www.slmmyanmar.info/download/success-story-labutta-en/>
<http://www.slmmyanmar.info/download/success-story-labutta-mm/>
5. Communities in Ayeyarwady Delta participate in efforts to restore mangrove forests <http://www.fao.org/myanmar/news/detail-events/en/c/1301730/>
6. Successful issuing of twenty one CF certificates to support community-based forest conservation <http://www.slmmyanmar.info/news/supporting-communities-in-myanmar-to-get-community-forest-certificate/>
7. Completing 100% revision of the existing curricula of the Myanmar Forest School <http://www.slmmyanmar.info/news/completing-100-revision-of-the-existing-curricula-of-the-myanmar-forest-school-a-new-normal-meeting-in-post-covid-19/>

8. Agroforestry Animation is finalized.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u5t6WyzWoH0>

9. COVID-19 Human Interest Story: U Cho from Nyaung U

<https://myanmar.un.org/en/90872-against-odds-meet-farmer-who-continues-farming-support-his-family-and-build-his-community>

SLM-GEF Project In Brief

The SLM-GEF project with the financial support of Global Environment Facility (the SLM-GEF project) has been promoting the climate smart agriculture (CSA) and sustainable forest management (SFM) practices in five pilot townships (Mindat, Kanpetlet, Nyaung U, Kyaukpaduang and Labutta) in three agro-ecological zones (Upland/hills, central dry zone and delta/coastal zone).

The project provides not only legal support but also implement field activities through Farmer Field School and community based forestry management approaches in partnership with two distinct ministries – “Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation” (MOALI) and “Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation. (MONREC)”

Quotes

“We can eat fresh and chemical free veggies from our own garden and we can even sell if we have extra to get income.
U Htay, Kyapadaung Township
Home Gardening seeds recipient”

“We would like to thank, Forest department for showing us how to build this mangrove nursery and the SLM project for providing cash support.” U Thein Myint, Mangrove nursery builder, Labutta township.
FFS farmer”

“I hope the certificate will make it easier for us to sell trees and forest products to gain a better price, and to improve my livelihood in the future.
U Kyaw Soe, Labutta Township.
CFUG member”

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