

HELVETAS

MYANMAR



STATE/REGIONAL LEVEL MULTI-STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION ON DEVELOPING A MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR THE WISE USE OF THE GULF OF MOTTAMA

May 30-31, 2016, Mawlamyine

WORKSHOP REPORT

July 2016

1. BACKGROUND

On May 30-31, 2016, as part of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)-funded Community-Led Coastal Management in the Gulf of Mottama Project (GoMP), the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation (MONREC) and the project consortium, comprising the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Network Activities Group (NAG), HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation (HELVETAS) and Biodiversity and Nature Conservation Association (BANCA), organised **the first consultation workshop on developing a management plan for the wise use of the Gulf of Mottama (GoM) at state/regional level.**

The workshop had three objectives:

1. Start identifying objectives for the management of the GoM as a first step toward the development of a management plan;
2. Discuss the opportunity to have a part of the GoM designated under the Ramsar Convention, as a wetland of international importance; and
3. Create a management committee for the GoM which will support the development and implementation of a management plan.

The workshop brought together 66 representatives from Mon State and Bago Region governments, the Union government (NWCD), academia (Mawlamyine University), private sector, local communities, and local and international NGOs.

The agenda and participants list are attached (Annex A and B respectively), as is a link to the presentations (Annex D).

2. OPENING REMARKS

The workshop was opened by Dr Min Kyi Win, Minister of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation, Mon State, and Aung Kyaw Kyaw, National Program Officer from SDC in Yangon (see Annex C). The uniqueness and importance of the GoM in terms of its ecosystem functions and services were well recognized by the minister, in his welcome speech. The special characteristics of the gulf was noted, particularly the dynamics, livelihood support through fisheries, food and employment, and wintering areas for Spoon-billed Sandpiper (SBS), which give it potential for the designation as a wetland of international importance under the Ramsar Convention. However, unsustainable fisheries in combination with mismanagement and climate change are likely to be major challenge. To minimize consequences on biodiversity and local economy, these issues need to be addressed collectively and urgently. In line with the opening remarks from Aung Kyaw Kyaw, the need for collaborative and integrated approaches to the management of the GoM is needed. It is also important to identify and understand the potential international tools and opportunities to support the management of the gulf such as the Ramsar Convention, ratified by the government in 2005. Long-term support from SDC will help ensure the sustainable management of the GoM and equitable benefits to the communities including women and youth. This was followed by a series of technical presentations, working group discussions, and plenary sessions that culminated on the second day in an agreement on next steps.

3. SESSION 1: COMMUNITY-LED COASTAL MANAGEMENT IN GOM

Agnieszka Kroskowska, Country Director, Helvetas Myanmar

Phase 1 of GoMP started in February 2015 with a 7-month inception period, and will end mid-April 2018. The project is being implemented by a consortium led by HELVETAS with NAG and IUCN and includes a partnership with BANCA. Phase 1 represents the first phase of what is expected to be a 9-year SDC commitment to the GoM, highlighting SDCs long-term development cooperation strategy. The specific project objective is *Vulnerable women and men in targeted coastal areas of the GoM have improved livelihood security through effective fisheries value chain development, livelihoods diversification and equitable and sustainable management of resources.*

To achieve its objective, the program is supporting the development of a management plan for the GoM, which would be implemented through a multilevel/multisector committee. This management plan would build on three interdependent outcomes/pillars of work, each one facilitated by a consortium partner:

1. Sustainable management of fisheries and equitable share of its benefits through effective value chains and equitable market access (led by NAG).
2. Livelihood diversification for vulnerable coastal communities to increased income and resilience and improve access to non-fisheries resources (led by HELVETAS).
3. Sustainable conservation and management of the special habitats of the GoM on the basis of scientific evidence through integrated local, regional and national institutions/management bodies (led by IUCN in collaboration with BANCA and Mawlamyine University (MU) including Ramsar site designation).

Co-management, wise use and sustainability are the principles underpinning GoMP. Achievements to date include outreach and information sharing, participatory planning and consultation, and documentation for informed decision making.

4. SESSION 2: ECOSYSTEM SERVICES AND THREATS TO THE GOM

Dr Panwad Prae Wongthong, Coastal and Marine Consultant, IUCN

Prof Dr San ThaTun, Head of Marine Science Department, Mawlamyine University

Pyae Phyo Aung, Program Manager, BANCA

Dr Kenneth MacKay, Fisheries Advisor, NAG

Yin Nyein, Senior Program Officer, NAG

GoM is a large and generally undisturbed funnel-shaped estuary with extensive tidal flats. Its tidal cycle is extremely pronounced in speed and amplitude, causing a powerful bore phenomenon which is highly unusual in the region and which makes this one of the most dynamic estuaries in the world, with constant sediment redistribution, channel-shifts, erosion and accretion on a large scale.

GoM provides a large array of ecosystem services (i.e. provisioning services, regulating services, cultural services, and supporting services). The site provides fish and marine products for local village fisheries and thereby supports coastal livelihoods. It also potentially provides other edible non-timber products such as plants and seaweeds. A massive area of flood plain supports agriculture such as rice paddies, grains, vegetables and livestock.

GoM controls ecosystem processes like climate and water regulations and water purification. It acts as biological filters by helping to remove pollutants from water through mud, gravel and their fauna of worms, molluscs and crustaceans. The mudflats can store large quantities carbon and serve as an important carbon sink which helps mitigate climate change. Because the soils are largely anaerobic (without oxygen), the carbon that gets incorporated into the soils decomposes very slowly and can persist for years. In some areas, the mudflats are important for dissipating wave energy.

In terms of non-material benefits, bird watching, scenic beauty of the wintering site for waterbirds and educational opportunities are some of those obtained from the GoM. The area supports biodiversity and livelihoods not only in the close surroundings, but also areas far beyond the shelf.

The mudflats of the GoM contain nutrient rich sediments which support phytoplankton and zooplankton communities. The presence of these communities is particularly important to the production of benthic (bottom dwelling) invertebrates (e.g. ragworms, lugworms, sandhoppers) and subsequent richness of fisheries occurring in the region. Diverse populations of waterbirds including threatened and charismatic species like the SBS (*Calidris pygmaea*) depend on the site for their food sources and wintering areas. Many fish species use the estuary as spawning and nursing grounds before migrate to an open sea (e.g. various species of croaker, Hilsa Shad *Tenualosa ilisha* and Toli Shad *T. toil*). Fish are then captured by fishers from elsewhere and thus, the GoM apparently provides benefits to livelihoods way beyond the gulf and even far into the Bay of Bengal.

However, the gulf is currently under pressure. Unsustainable resources use and illegal practices appear the most threatening issues in the region. Studies on the GoM small-scale fisheries indicate that fishing grounds, practices, gears used and marketing are diverse from above Sittaung River bridge to south of Mawlamyine. The most widely caught and valuable fish appear to be croaker or locally known Rosy Jew fish which is marketed frozen to China. Dried swim bladders are also important. Mud crab fishing is among top three income sources for small-scale fishers including women and landless.

Fishers depending on the gulf are suffering from 50%-90% decline in fisheries over the last decade due to illegal fishing, overfishing, credit and labor shortage, etc. Illegal fishing through the use of small mesh nets which fish out all size of fish including juveniles and year-round fishing contribute greatly to the stock decline and small catch. Evidence suggests that there are 30-40 operators laying 2-mile long very small mesh nets on shallow mudflat for 20 years with no penalty. Since fish stocks are declining, fishers even fish more intensive. If no action is taken, fish catch and coastal economy will continue to further decline. However, without investment capital and skills training, options for small-scale fishers are limited.

Fish and fishing in the GoM are poorly known. The gulf was not covered by Norwegian surveys and PhD coverage is generally restricted to southern Mon State and the Thanlwin estuary. Yet, information like catch species, spawning grounds and seasons, lifecycle history, and migration pattern are critical for the management of the gulf.

The status of waterbirds is moving in the same direction. The SBS population survey in Myanmar 2008-2016 indicates that Myanmar holds at least 50%-70% of global wintering of this species. Yet, there has been 88% decline in population since 2002 due to habitat loss and hunting. To tackle these issues, Ramsar CEPA, the Communication, Education, Participation and Awareness, program; alternative livelihoods for ex-poachers; formation of local conservation groups; and capacity building training and consultation with multi-stakeholder for Ramsar site designation process are among many activities carried out by BANCA over the last 8 years.

Wise use of resources under the Ramsar Convention and co-management are among suitable approaches to improve natural resources governance of the GoM because it harmonizes fisheries, forestry and land aspects. Also, it provides a sense of ownership and responsibility toward future sustainability. It is empowering and is a learning process for participatory governance at larger scale.

5. RAMSAR CONVENTION AND RAMSAR DESIGNATION IN THE GOM

Established in 1971, the Ramsar Convention, the world's oldest global environmental agreement, is an international treaty for the conservation and wise (sustainable) use of wetlands. Globally, 2,212 wetlands have so far been nominated as Ramsar Sites worldwide. Wetlands provide a wide range of goods and services that underpin local livelihoods and the environment. Despite these benefits, wetlands are under enormous pressure. According to the Convention on Biological Diversity, 40% of a sample of 1,000 wetlands were lost between 1970 and 2008. Research showed a 76% loss of freshwater species in wetlands between 1980 and 2010.

By ratifying the Ramsar Convention, countries commit to the “three pillars” of Ramsar to:

1. Work toward the wise use of all their wetlands including revising their national laws and policies when needed and supporting a structured awareness program on wetlands through CEPA;
2. Designate suitable wetlands for the list of Wetlands of International Importance (the “Ramsar List”) and ensure their effective management; and
3. Cooperate internationally on transboundary wetlands, shared wetland systems, and shared species.

Following the ratification of the convention, the Ramsar Secretariat recommends four basic steps in each country:

1. Prepare a national inventory;
2. Establish a national wetlands committee (NWC);
3. Review national legislation to make it compatible with the Ramsar principles; and
4. Establish a representative network of Ramsar sites.

The process to designate priority wetlands as Ramsar Sites is at the discretion of each country, but the convention recommends several steps including conducting preliminary stakeholder consultations, particularly with the affected communities. The Ramsar Information Sheet (RIS) and map are the only documents required by the convention for designation. A joint status of protected area/Ramsar Site is not required and sometimes not recommended as it can trigger tensions with local communities and complicate the key Ramsar message of “wise use”.

A Ramsar management plan should come right after designation. The management plan preparation has to be inclusive; communities should not just be consulted but to the extent possible should co-lead the process through a special working group or committee to develop the plan. The management plan preparation, approval, and implementation are local level processes; the central level is informed but should not be leading necessarily. A Ramsar management plan is not only about biodiversity; wise use livelihood improvements and local engagement are fundamental components.

Myanmar ratified the Ramsar Convention in 2005, with MONREC acting a Ramsar Administrative Authority (RAA) and the National Focal Point (NFP) is Dr Nyi Nyi Kyaw, Director General, Forest Department (FD). The NFP for matters relating to the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) is Win Naing Thaw, Director, of the FD's Nature and Wildlife Conservation Division (NWCD). The NFPs for matters relating to CEPA are Tint Swe, Director, Training and Research Development Division, FD and Zaw Lunn, Marine Program Coordinator, Fauna & Flora International (FFI).

The RAA oversees and coordinates implementation of the convention and lead the NWC. While MONREC is the RAA, there is no reason or logic why the management of all Ramsar sites in Myanmar should be under its direct management. As the RAA, MONREC is responsible for providing oversight and coordination for the Convention in Myanmar and they can delegate other agencies to be responsible for the direct implementation of the convention, such as the management of Ramsar sites. Such a cooperative approach allows greater cross-sectoral support and implementation of the convention. In China, for example, the State Forestry Administration is the RAA but the country has Ramsar sites that are managed by the Ministry of Environment, State Oceanic Administration, and other government bodies depending on the site's nature and location.

In Myanmar, only two sites, Moeyungyi Wetland Wildlife Sanctuary (Ramsar site no. 1431), and Indawgyi Lake Wildlife Sanctuary (no. 2256) have been designated to date. Thailand and Vietnam, by contrast, have designated 14 and 8 respectively. Unlike Moeyungyi and Indawgyi, GoM is not a protected area and the designation of GoM does not require a joint status of protected area and Ramsar site. This is important because it allows for the implementation of wise use management, and less tension with local communities in terms of restriction on resources use and site zoning.

The GoM meets six of the nine criteria of the Ramsar Convention for site designation (see Annex F) and it has already been nominated as Flyway Network Site by MOECAP (now MONREC) under the East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership (EAAFP). CEPA programs have been carried out in many villages in Kyaikto and Bilin Townships by BANCA providing knowledge and awareness materials on ecosystem value and benefits of the GoM at local and regional scales, status of resources, threats, the Ramsar Convention, as well as process to develop action plans towards the conservation and sustainable management of wetland resources. BANCA also conducted several consultations at community level on the Ramsar site designation. To date coastal communities in Kyaikto and Bilin have approved the designation of a Ramsar site and discussed potential boundaries for the site which would include the large mudflats areas on the coast.

6. OUTCOMES OF GROUP DISCUSSIONS: MANAGEMENT PRIORITIES, MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE CREATION AND RAMSAR DESIGNATION

Group discussion 1: Definition of management objectives for the GoM

Group discussion 2: Ramsar site designation process in the GoM

Group discussion 3: Building a management committee for the GoM

Participants were divided into four groups: (1) government departments of Mon State; (2) government departments of Bago Region; (3) Mon State Legislative Committees, NGOs, CSOs and MU; and (4) Village Development Committees and village-level representatives.

During group discussion on management objectives for the GoM, benefits of the gulf to people and environment as well as threats and constraints to the management of resources were identified.

Participants ranked fish and fisheries, land formation and agriculture, birds and biodiversity, and mangroves as key values of the GoM. The key threats identified for the site include water pollution from agriculture (i.e. fertilizer and pesticides) and industrial use (i.e. mining, pulp and paper plant) as well as unsustainable fishing through overfishing and illegal fishing (e.g. small mesh net, electro fishing, poison, fishing in closed season), and channel shifting (erosion and accretion) which affect livelihoods of coastal communities - agriculture, fisheries and settlement. Participants also recognized existing limitations which may obstruct the management of the GoM such as weakness of law enforcement, limited knowledge and awareness, limited capacities and infrastructures, weak governance (lack of cooperation and power imbalance), and lack of employment opportunities. In response to threats and challenges, management interventions recommended by participants involve improvement of law enforcement, education and awareness, shoreline protection and mangrove restoration, livelihood diversification and improved agriculture (e.g. saline resistant varieties, irrigation scheme), skill development, land-use planning and effective cooperation between line departments and relevant stakeholders. However, whether or not these recommendations are suitable to the GoM, further discussion and comprehensive studies are necessary.

Participants in four groups stated that Ramsar Convention is a suitable management framework for the GoM because it helps ensure habitat protection (e.g. wintering areas for SBS and waterbirds, spawning and nursing grounds for fish species), biodiversity conservation, sustainable management of fisheries, pollution control, long-term livelihoods and food security, and recognition of the site to international community. It is believed that the designation of Ramsar allows for improvement of scientific baseline data and increased knowledge and awareness in diverse fields. However, based on group discussion the Ramsar designation process in Myanmar can be challenging due to lack/limited public knowledge and awareness about Ramsar, limited capacity (i.e. budget, skills and resources), ineffective regulatory enforcement particularly in relevance to illegal fishing and overfishing, and bird hunting. Among four groups, weak governance appeared a common challenge to the designation of Ramsar. Proposed boundaries for a Ramsar site in Mon State are considered practical, with suggestions to explore opportunity to extend to townships in Bago Region (Kawa, Thanapin, Khayan, Tongkwa) and in Mon State (Paung and Chaungzon).

At the end of group discussion, a composition of and ToR of the GoM Management Committee was proposed by participants. The committee comprises representatives from government agencies, universities and research institutes, communities and media. All proposals included representation from civil society (which is in line with the recommendation of the Ramsar Convention) representative of NGOs working on wetlands, fisheries, or community-based natural resources use. Private sector involvement is important and need to be further explored. Key line ministries include both who have a direct (e.g. environment, fisheries, agriculture, land use) and indirect interest or impact on wetlands (e.g. energy, industry, transport, education). In the administrative reforms in early 2016, the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation and the Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Rural Development were merged to form the new Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation. Further discussion is needed to identify roles and responsibility of each player in the GoM Management Committee.

7. NEXT STEPS

Since the Ramsar National Workshop held in Nay Pyi Taw in September 2015, there has been considerable progress toward the designation of the GoM as a wetland of international importance under the Ramsar Convention. This includes including community re-endorsement of the proposed Ramsar site; NWCD's directive to secure regional government commitment before submitting RIS and map; rapid review of MS/PhD theses at MU; development of research plans to fill in knowledge gaps in the GoM through partnership with universities; several site visits, and SBS surveys.

Based on the workshop recommendations, next steps for the Ramsar site designation of the GoM are as follows:

1. **Report back to Forest Department, Department of Fisheries, and General Administrative Department in Mon State and Bago Region** and at Union level in preparation for Ramsar designation. The workshop summary will be shared with these departments for reference and feedback. This will allow government to review and approve the GoM management objectives and the composition and ToR of the GOM Management Committee.
2. **Revise and finalize the RIS and Ramsar boundary map to submit to the Ramsar Secretariat.**
3. **Establish the GoM Management Committee**, which will be the governing body for the development and implementation of the management plan. The composition and ToR of the committee will be drafted in consultation with government agencies. Membership should include government agencies with both direct and indirect interest in Ramsar, academia, NGOs, CSOs, communities, and media.
4. **Expand CEPA** to additional townships in Mon State and Bago Region. Based on the workshop recommendations, there is still limited knowledge and awareness about Ramsar and there is a need for CEPA in areas inside and outside the proposed Ramsar boundary. Workshop participants expressed strong interest in exploring opportunities to extend the Ramsar boundary to Kawa, Thanapin, Khayan, Tongkwa, Paung and Chaungzon. BANCA will expand CEPA to these townships.
5. **Hold at least one meeting of the GoM Management Committee before the end of 2016 to review draft management plan.** The first section of the management plan (site description, site evaluation, description of threats and definition of management objectives) are being developed based on literature reviews, site visits and the workshop discussions. A meeting of the GoM Management Committee will be organized to discuss and validate the first section of the draft plan. Subsequent meetings will outline the management objectives and proposed actions for conservation, livelihood diversification and food security; and wise use, particularly fisheries.
6. **Identify and implement an advocacy strategy to deal with illegal fishing.** The workshop participants made clear that this is the greatest threat in the GoM. Illegal fishing requires a strategic response, cooperation across sectors and levels and the active participation of coastal communities. HELVETAS will organize an advocacy strategy workshop shortly.
7. **Review MS/PhD theses at MU relevant to the management of the GoM.** Partnerships with universities at national (Mawlamyine University), regional (Prince of Songkla University) and international (University of Washington) levels will build our knowledge of the GoM and fill important information gaps. Discussion with MU researchers at the workshop identified 3-4 potential research studies on fisheries (lifecycle history, spawning areas and seasons, migration pattern, etc.), mud crab fisheries, mangroves, and benthic communities. IUCN will fund these studies.

ANNEXES

A. Agenda

Day 1 – Monday 30 May 2016		Facilitator
8:00-8:30	Registration	
8:30-8:45	Welcome remark by the Minister for Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation, Mon State	Dr Min Kyi Win Minister, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation
8:45-9:00	Opening remark by the Swiss Development and Cooperation (SDC)	Aung Kyaw Kyaw, Representative, SDC
9:00-9:30	Session 1: Presentation of the Community-Led Coastal Management in the Gulf of Mottama Project (GoMP)	Agnieszka Kroskowska, Country Director, HELVETAS
9:30 - 10:00	Coffee break	
10:00-12:30	Session 2: Why does the GoM matter and what are the major threats to these values? State of knowledge and value of the GoM	Dr Panwad Prae Wongthong Coastal and Marine Consultant, IUCN Prof Dr San Tha Tun Head of Marine Science Department, Mawlamyine University Pyae Phyo Aung Program Manager, BANCA Yin Nyein Senior Program Officer, NAG and Dr Kenneth MacKay, Fisheries Advisor, NAG
12:30-13:30	Lunch	
13:30-15:00	Session 3: The Ramsar Convention: a tool/umbrella for the sustainable management of the GoM	Raphael Glemet, Senior Program Officer, IUCN Pyae Phyo Aung, Program Manager, BANCA
15:00-15:15	Coffee break	
15:15-17:00	Group Discussion 1: How to manage the GoM to respond to the challenges?	
Day 2 – Tuesday 31 May 2016		
9:00-9:15	Summary of day 1 and Introduction to day 2	
9:15-10:45	Group Discussion 2: Ramsar site designation process in the GoM	
10:45-11:00	Coffee break	
11:00 - 12:30	Group discussion 3: Building a management committee for the GoM	
12:30-13:30	Lunch break	
13:30-15:30	Session 4: Presentation of the outline of a pre-management plan	Raphael Glemet and Panwad Prae Wongthong, IUCN
15:30-	Coffee break	

15:45		
15:45-16:00	Session 5: Summary of agreed next step	Jake Brunner, Head of Indo-Burma, IUCN
16:00	Closing remark	Karin Eberhardt, Agriculture and Food Security Advisor, Swiss agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)

B. Participants list

	Name	Position	Organization
Mon State Government Official			
1	Dr Min Kyi Win	Minister for Resources and Environmental Conservation	Mon State
2	U Tun Htay	Minister for Agriculture, Livestock, Transportation and Communications	Mon State
3	Min Thein Myint	Director, Forest Department	Mawlamyine
4	Soe Naing	Chief Officer, Mon State Department of Natural Conservation	Mawlamyine
5	Kaythi Kyaw	Assistant Director, Mon State Department of Agriculture	Mawlamyine
6	Thiha Tun	Mon State Department of General Administration	Mawlamyine
7	Soe Nyunt	Deputy Director, Department of Fisheries	Mawlamyine
8	Saw Than Nyunt	Agriculture Officer, Department of Agriculture	Thaton
9	Win Htet Aung	Officer, Department of General Administration	Thaton
10	Than Than Wai	Agriculture Officer, Department of Agriculture	Thaton District
11	Tin Thant Htwe	Township Chief Officer	Kyaik-hto
12	Saw Lin	Deputy Director, Department of Fisheries	Thaton District
13	Thein Lin	Deputy Director, Department of Water Resources and Improvement of River Systems	Mawlamyine
14	Aung Paw	Assistant Director, Department of Water Resources and Improvement of River Systems	Mawlamyine
15	Kyi Lwin	Deputy Chief Officer, Department of Agriculture	Bilin
16	Than Oo	Deputy Chief Officer, Department of Agriculture	Kyaik-hto
17	Aye Naing	Assistant Director, Forest Department	Mawlamyine
18	Min Pe Than	PSO to the Minister of Resources and Environmental Conservation	Mawlamyine
Bago Region Government Officials			
19	Hsan Win	Township Fishery Officer	Bago
20	Thet Oo	Deputy Director	Bago District
21	Lay Myint	District Chief Officer, Department of Agriculture	Bago District
22	Nay Win Aung	Township Fisheries Officer, Department of Fisheries	Thanatpin
Nay Pyi Taw Government Official			
23	Kyaw Moe Aung	Deputy Director, Nature and Wildlife Conservation Division	NPT

Mon State Legislature			
24	Dr Aye Zan	MP	Mon State Legislation
25	Khaing Khaing Lei	MP	Mon State Legislation
26	Maung Maung Myint	Legislative Committee member for environmental conservation	Mon State Legislation
Political Party			
27	Aung Thu	Mon State Representative	National League for Democracy
Mawlamyine University (MU)			
28	Dr San Tha Tun	Head of Department of Marine Science	MU
29	Het Myat Maw	Master student	MU
30	Aye Aye Moe	Master student	MU
31	Thazin Htet	Master student	MU
32	David Owens	Fulbright Fellow	
CLCMGoMP Development partner			
33	Karin Eberhardt	Development Advisor	SDC
34	Aung Kyaw Kyaw	National Program Officer/Yangon	SDC
35	Saw Elgle Htoo	Deputy Head of Field Office	SDC
36	Agnieszka Kroskowska	Country Director	HELVETAS Myanmar
37	Nyein Chan Win	Program Manager	HELVETAS Myanmar
38	Than Htike Aung	Program Manager	HELVETAS Myanmar
39	Yin Nyein	Program Manager	NAG
40	Kenneth MacKay	Advisor	NAG/IUCN
41	Jake Brunner	Head, Indo-Burma Group	IUCN
42	Raphael Glemet	Senior Program Officer	IUCN
43	Panwad Prae Wongthong	Coastal and Marine Consultant	IUCN
44	Zin Myo Thu	National Coordinator	IUCN
45	Aubrey Winbaw	Project Outreach Coordinator	IUCN
46	Pyae Phyo Aung	Program Manager	BANCA
47	Nyo Latt	TCC, CLCMGoMP	Kyaik-hto
48	Zaw Min Aung	TCC, CLCMGoMP	Bago
49	Nay Myo Zaw	KM&E Officer CLCMGoMP	PIU, Thaton
50	Soe Min Oo	Fisheries Officer, CLCMGoMP	Bago
51	Min Nyan Seik	Communications Officer, CLCMGoMP	PIU, Thaton
52	April Y. Shain	AFO, CLCMGoMP	PIU, Thaton
53	Saw Wah Gay	DCL, CLCMGoMP	PIU, Thaton
54	Khin Hnin Saing	OA, CLCMGoMP	PIU, Thaton
55	Thet Thet Swe	Community Facilitator, CLCMGoMP	Bago
56	Khin Lay Mon	Community Facilitator, CLCMGoMP	Bago
NGOs			
57	Shwe Thein	Executive Director	Land Core Group, Mawlamyine
58	Dr Swe Thwin	Advisor	Myanmar Fisheries Federation, Yangon
59	Dr Tint Swe	Vice President	Marine Science

			Association Myanmar, Yangon
60	Zaw Zi nOo	Research Assistant	Marine Science Association Myanmar, Yangon
61	Kan Kaung	Field Assistant	Marine Science Association Myanmar, Yangon
62	Tsdiouz Auea	Consultant	Care Myanmar, Mawlamyine
63	Saw Nay Say	Branch Manager	Vision Fund, Mawlamyine
64	Say Paw Htoo	Area Manager	Vision Fund, Thaton
CBOs			
65	Kyaw Myint	Village Representative, CLMGoMP	Kyaikheto VDC
66	Kyaw Thu	Village Representative, CLMGoMP	Bilin VDC
67	Win Moe	Village Representative, CLMGoMP	Bilin VDC
68	Aye Win Oo	Village Representative, CLMGoMP	Thaton VDC
69	Soe Tint	Village Representative, CLMGoMP	Thanatpin VDC
70	Linn Htike	Village Representative, CLMGoMP	Kawa VDC
71	Aye Ko	Village Representative, CLMGoMP	BANCA
72	Aung Min	Village Representative, CLMGoMP	Thaton BANCA
Private sector			
73	Dr Soe Win	Executive Director	Mawlamyine Holding Ltd./MFF
74	Aung Thet Htay	General Manager	Mawlamyine Holding Ltd./MFF
75	Than Oo	Assistant Manager	Mawlamyine Holding Ltd./MFF
76	Soe Thein	Private Sector	Mawlamyine
77	Lina Sein Sein Myint	Interpreter	Yangon

C. Opening speeches

Dr Min Kyi Win, Minister, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation, Mon State

Distinguished guests,

This is my pleasure to hold this first consultation on developing a management plan for the wise use of the Gulf of Mottama in Mon State and Bago Region as part of GOMP supported by the SDC and organized jointly by HELVETAS, IUCN, NAG and BANCA.

As you will hear during the upcoming 2 days the GoM is an unique wetland in the region and even internationally. It is one of the most dynamic estuary of the world and hosts several species, some of them endangered as the SBS. It provides spawning grounds for a number of fish species, provides nutrients and supports marine productivity way beyond Myanmar national seas. Those specific characteristics make it potential for the designation as a wetland of international importance under the Ramsar convention.

As important, the GoM supports local livelihoods through fisheries and generates food and employment.

But this ecosystem is fragile. Recent reports highlight the fact that fisheries are declining in the gulf and this threatens the livelihoods of poor vulnerable communities as well as of the sustainability of the private

sector which depends on those fisheries. In addition combination of mismanagement and climate change is threatening ecosystems and villages through drought, erosion or floods.

If nothing is done it is likely that the degradation of the gulf will have strong consequences not only on biodiversity but also on our local economy.

Therefore, a joint collective approach is needed to ensure a sustainable management of the gulf and long lasting benefits from the ecosystem services it provides. The solution to those challenges has to be found altogether, across sectors, and across states, jointly with our neighbors in Bago Region and with the direct involvement of the local communities which depend directly on the Gulf.

It is also important to identify and understand the potential international tools and opportunities to support the management of the gulf such as the Ramsar convention, ratified by the Government of Myanmar which aims at ensuring the wise use of wetlands and could be a very relevant framework for the management of our coastal area.

This workshop proposes to initiate this collaborative approach and initiative a dialogue on the development of an action plan, or management plan in the gulf through 3 specific objectives:

- Start identifying objectives for the management of GoM as a first step toward the development of a management plan.
- Create a management committee for the GoM which will support the development and implementation of a management plan.
- Discuss the opportunity to have a part of the GoM designated under the Ramsar convention, as a wetland of international importance.

Today we have a very diverse and interesting audience including government representatives from Mon state and Bago Region, the academic sector (MU), private sector on fisheries and representatives from local communities as well as support from NGOs and international organisations. I would like to thank you all in advance for your participation and particularly thank the representatives from Bago Region to come and attend this event.

I hope those 2 days will initiate a very fruitful dialogue which will result in the development of clear action plan on how to ensure the sustainable use of the GoM to benefit us all.

Thank you very much.

Aung Kyaw Kyaw, SDC National Program Officer

The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (of the Embassy of Switzerland) is honoured to support development in Mon State through the Community-led Coastal Management in the Gulf of Mottama Project.

The project focuses on sustainable use of the estuary, including specifically on management of fisheries, on improved coastal livelihoods, and on protection of the special resources of the Gulf of Mottama.

The project is implemented by HELVETAS, in cooperation with the Network Activity Group and International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

In terms of livelihoods from fisheries, our assessments have found that fisheries have declined by up to 90% over the last decade, which is a staggering loss.

The Gulf of Mottama was chosen as a project area because it is internationally recognized as a habitat of global importance. We will hear later this morning more reasons why the Gulf of Mottama is special.

We are happy to have BANCA participating in the Gulf of Mottama project, and to be with us today. It was BANCA who first brought the special habitat of the Gulf of Mottama to the attention of Union government and the international community. For many years now, BANCA helped Mon State learn about the dangers of hunting Critically Endangered Spoon-billed Sandpiper, and mitigate against hunting. BANCA has done important work with in the townships of Bilin and Kyaikhto for designation of a Ramsar site.

SDC chose the Gulf of Mottama as a project area after the Union level government, specifically the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment Conservation (then MOECF) committed in 2012 to designate the Gulf as a Ramsar site. Ramsar is the name of the city in Iran where the international convention on the sustainable use of wetlands was signed, and to which Myanmar is a signatory. To be designated a Ramsar site means that the importance of the Gulf of Mottama, and the need for its sustainable management, will be recognized the world over. We will hear more about Ramsar convention later today as well.

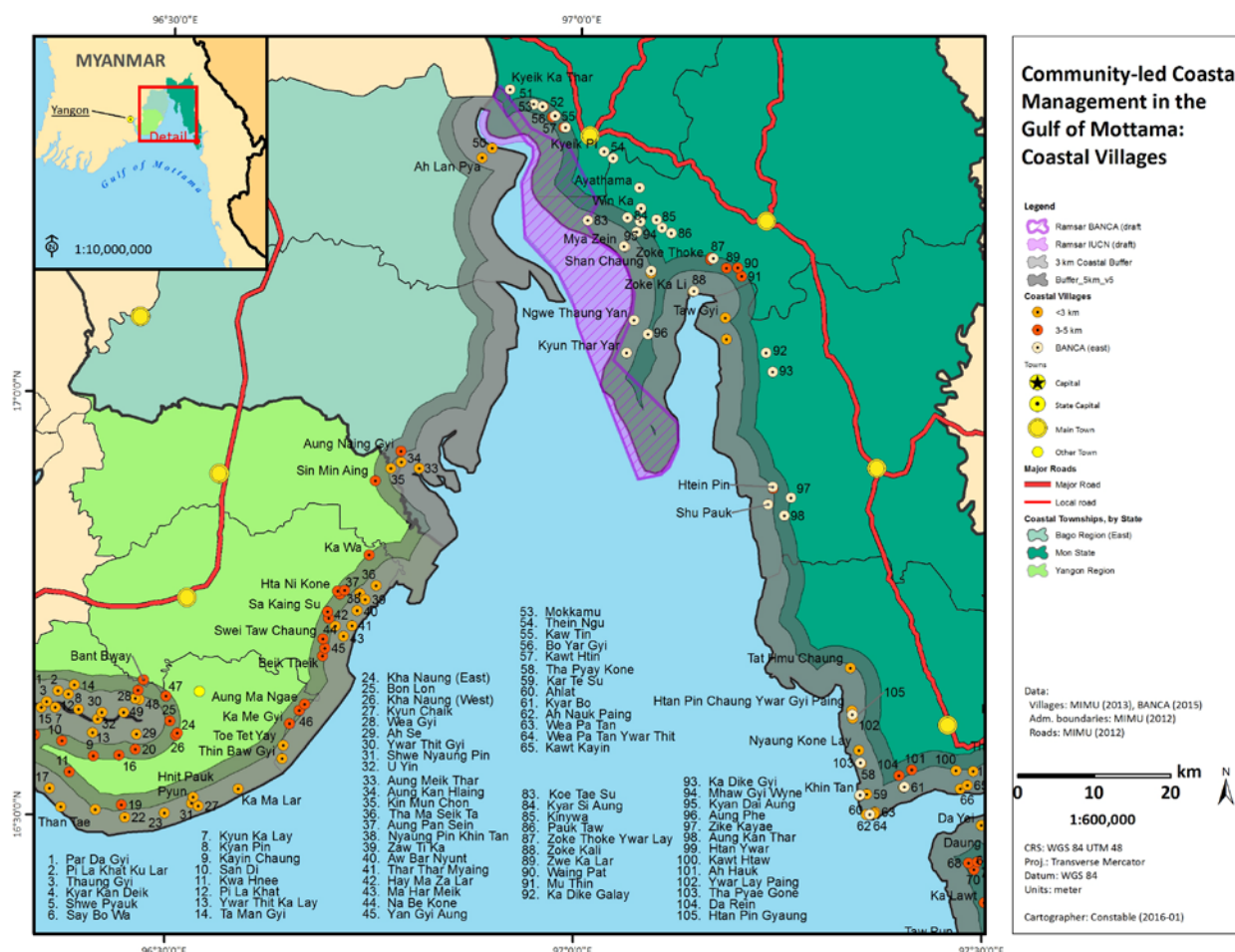
The project is designed around the designation of the Gulf of Mottama as a Ramsar site.

More importantly, the sustainable and wise use of the Gulf of Mottama resources requires a clear management plan. The management plan will outline key actions starting with how to help fisheries recover, how to develop coastal livelihoods and how to protect endangered species. The management plan must be created with the participation of fishers and farmers, communities, township authorities and State/Region administrators, including those working in fisheries, agriculture and forestry. The management plan must then be implemented by all these agencies together, across the coastal.

D. Presentations

All presentations, group discussion guidelines, and group discussion summaries can be downloaded from: <https://onedrive.live.com/redir?resid=EB3FF3C49402E148!30161&authkey=!AFYCRVmrLedU9Ss&ithint=folder%2cdocx>.

E. Ramsar map



F. Ramsar criteria and GoM

Ramsar criteria met	Rationale
Criterion 1: A wetland should be considered internationally important if it contains a representative, rare, or	Site exhibits very large areas of coastal mudflats, key wetland habitats for the biogeographic Region and critically threatened by human activities worldwide. Site

unique example of a natural or near-natural wetland type found within the appropriate biogeographic region.	has a tidal cycle that is extremely pronounced in speed and volume, producing a powerful bore phenomenon. The biological productivity of this system supports a rich biota that exemplifies the importance of large estuaries on an international scale.
Criterion 2: A wetland should be considered internationally important if it supports Vulnerable, Endangered, or Critically Endangered species or threatened ecological communities.	<p>Site supports 3 species listed by the IUCN Red List:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spoon-billed Sandpiper <i>Eurynorhynchus Pygmaeus</i> (Critically Endangered). • Nordmann's Greenshank <i>Tringa guttifer</i> (Endangered). • Yellow-breasted Bunting <i>Emberiza aureola</i> (Endangered). • Great Knot <i>Calidris tenuirostris</i> (Vulnerable).
Criterion 4: A wetland should be considered internationally important if it supports plant and/or animal species at a critical stage in their life cycles, or provides refuge during adverse conditions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site is likely to be the world's most important wintering site for the Spoon-billed Sandpiper. • Site is an important nursery area for fish and prawn species (how many species?) (see Criterion 8 below) and may be critical at a population level for some of these, but evidence to demonstrate this is currently lacking. It is critical for the commercially important species like the Hilsa Shad <i>Tenualosa ilisha</i> and Toli Shad <i>T. toli</i>, which migrate through the site to breed in the rivers upstream.
Criterion 5: A wetland should be considered internationally important if it regularly supports 20,000 or more waterbirds.	Site has not been well enough studied since to provide the normal time-series of count data to demonstrate peak numbers over a number of years to demonstrate regularity. The indications are, however, that this criterion should easily be met, and there are estimates of total wintering shorebird numbers of 150,000 from surveys in 2008 to 2012.
Criterion 6: A wetland should be considered internationally important if it regularly supports 1% of the individuals in a population of one species or subspecies of waterbird.	Count estimates indicate that 12 species of waterbirds are present in the non-breeding season in sufficient numbers to represent more than 1% of the relevant biogeographic population in each case.
Criterion 8: A wetland should be considered internationally important if it is an important source of food for fishes, spawning ground, nursery and/or migration path on which fish stocks, either within the wetland or elsewhere, depend.	Site is of high importance as a food source, breeding area and nursery area for fish and crustacean populations in the wider GoM and the transboundary Bay of Bengal beyond. A survey in 2014 found a total of 39 fish species, which is based on sample sites and does not represent a complete list of fish species in the GoM.

G. Contact information

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<https://www.eda.admin.ch/countries/myanmar/en/home/representations/embassy-in-yangon.html>

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