

BACKGROUND

Myanmar in Transition

In 2011, Myanmar embarked on a triple transition, from authoritarian rule to democratic governance; from a centrally directed economy to market-oriented reforms; and from 60 years of conflict to peace.

At that time, Myanmar was among the poorest countries in Asia; had the worst social indicators in the region; and had extremely low levels of access to phones, roads, and other infrastructure than anywhere in the world. Myanmar's rich natural resources had not been well, or transparently, managed, leading to lost revenue, corruption, and community grievance. The country's fertile agriculture sector had been mismanaged for decades, leading to high levels of poverty and chronic rural indebtedness. Long periods of isolation had left Myanmar poorly integrated regionally and globally.

Myanmar Partnership Multi-Donor Trust Fund

The reforms initiated as part of Myanmar's transition opened up opportunities for poverty reduction and sustainable, inclusive growth. This important shift was reflected in an increased engagement by development partners in policy dialogue and investments.

Prior to the formation of the Myanmar Partnership Multi-Donor Trust Fund (MDTF) in 2014, the World Bank Group (WBG), Government of the United Kingdom Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (formerly Department for International Development), and Australian Department of Foreign Affairs had engaged in thematic areas that supported Myanmar's transition as reflected in collaborations on public financial management, financial services, the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, and other sectors.

The formation of the Myanmar Partnership MDTF built on this collaboration as a means to increase the efficiency and impact of the diverse programs in Myanmar. The Myanmar Partnership MDTF continued to expand: the Kingdom of Denmark joined in December 2014 and Finland joined in 2017.

Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan

Myanmar laid out its sustainable development plan in 2018 with a vision for "a democratic, peaceful, and prosperous country". The Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan (2018-2030) is in early stages of implementation while actions are under way to further articulate operational priorities.

In April 2019, the European Single-Donor Trust Fund was established to support the Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan in focal areas of similar concern to the European Union and the World Bank Group. The two funds were consolidated under the Myanmar Strategic Partnership Program.

Myanmar Strategic Partnership Program

The Myanmar Strategic Partnership Program is aligned with two focus areas of the WBG Country Partnership Framework FY2020-FY2023:

Focus area 1, Building human capital and fostering peaceful communities that target improving inclusive access to quality services and community-level infrastructure; and

Focus area 2, Fostering responsible private sector-led growth and inclusive economic opportunities.

The cross-cutting theme of the CPF is to promote social inclusion, including in conflict-affected areas into the focus areas of engagement. In the Myanmar Strategic Partnership Program particular attention will be given to building in measurable results on social inclusion across the CPF as well as promoting gender equality.

As a response to the complexity of issues impacting Myanmar, where almost one-third of the country is conflict-affected and other parts of the country are experiencing or prone to humanitarian crises, the World Bank Group in collaboration with the Myanmar Strategic Partners has increased its focus on social inclusion in conflict-affected areas, including Rakhine State. This is reflected in the cross-cutting theme of the Country Partnership Framework. The Myanmar Strategic Partnership Program is, also, giving particular attention to building in measurable results on social inclusion, including gender equality across its program.

