

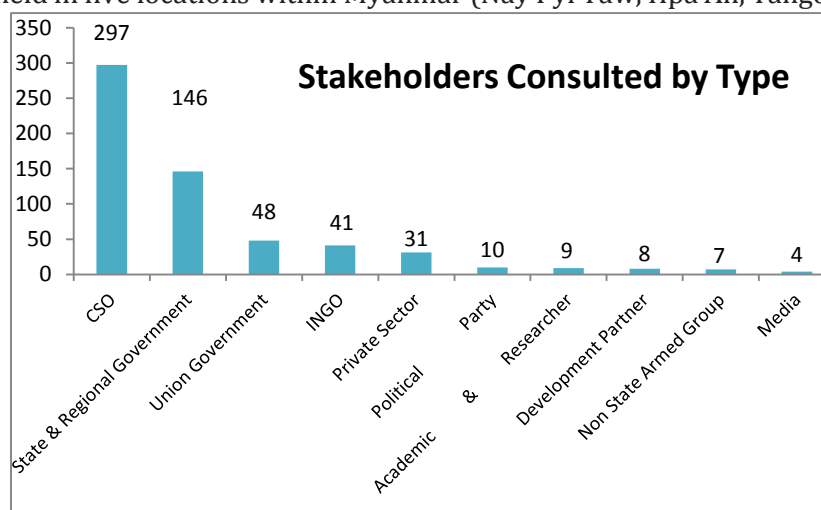
Overview

The World Bank Group in Myanmar is currently in the process of developing a new Country Partnership Framework (CPF). The CPF will outline the framework for the World Bank Group's engagement and support in Myanmar. One significant input to the CPF is the Systematic Country Diagnostic (SCD). The SCD seeks to identify priorities to end extreme poverty and promote shared prosperity in Myanmar. In this work, the SCD is not confined to priorities to be addressed by the WBG program, and draws on many sources of data and information, including consultations the World Bank Group has been undertaking with various stakeholders, including government, civil society, private sector, academia, think tanks, and other development partners. These consultations focused on identifying and prioritizing the key development opportunities to eliminating poverty and boosting shared prosperity in Myanmar to feed into the SCD and took place between February and June 2014 with 15 events in 6 locations. A summary of these consultations can be found here [\[add link\]](#).

A second round of consultations took place between the 2nd of July and the 15th of August 2014 and sought input on which of the development priorities for Myanmar identified in the SCD the WBG should address, to feed into the CPF.

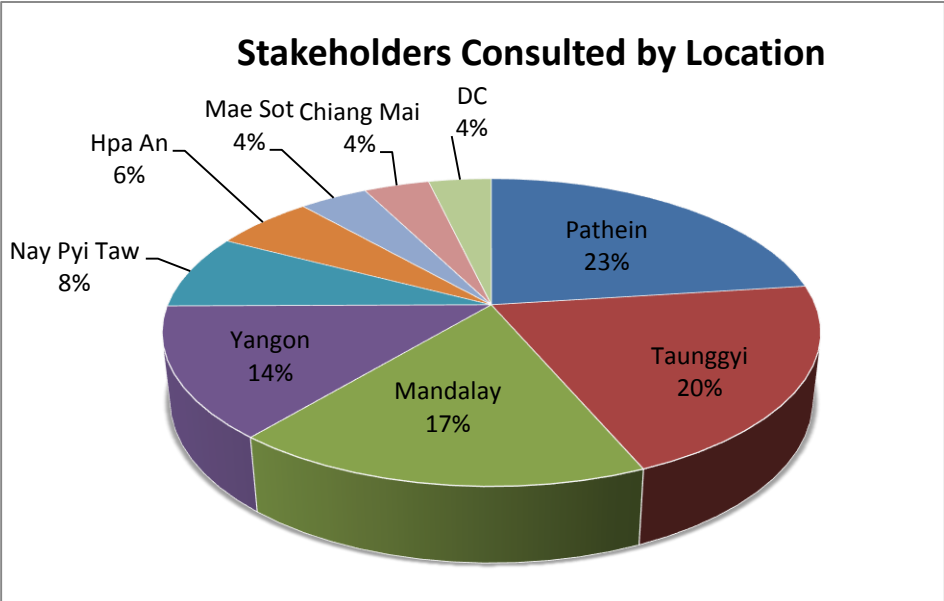
World Bank Group CPF Consultations in Myanmar

The consultations on the CPF comprised 16 consultation meetings with CSOs, State and Regional Governments, INGOs, Development Partners, Private Sector, Media and Researchers and Academics. The meetings were held in five locations within Myanmar (Nay Pyi Taw, Hpa An, Yangon, Mandalay, and Taunggyi, two in Thailand (Chiang Mai and Mae Sot) and one in the US (Washington DC). Online submissions in regard to the SCD and CPF were also solicited through the WBG Myanmar website, in the invitations to and in the presentation during the consultations. At the majority of consultations the participants also completed feedback forms which aimed to gather recommendations to enable the WBG to improve the organization and format of future events.



Invitation packages which were sent out two weeks in advance, in accordance with recommendations from civil society groups in Myanmar, included the summaries of the previous round of consultations, background information on the WBG and its activities in Myanmar, and information on the key content of the consultation meeting, in English and Myanmar in order to enable participants who wished to do so to prepare for the event.

This round of WBG consultation meetings were attended by total of 601 people representing approximately 380 organizations.



Key recommendations, concerns and ideas were discussed during the consultation meetings, received through written submissions at or after the meetings, and in three additional submissions by organizations.

These are summarized below, organized under two broad headings related to input on:

- How the WBG should engage in Myanmar, and
- Which sectors the WBG should, and should not prioritize for support over the CPF period.

Input on how the WBG should engage in Myanmar

Although the specific questions asked in the presentations were on which sectors the WBG should prioritize for engagement in Myanmar, a lot of the discussions during the consultations were related also to *how* the WBG should engage in Myanmar. More specifically, participants emphasized the importance of adhering to international standards and principles on all WBG programs and investments in Myanmar. This included recommendations to work towards the Millennium Development goals on women and children, and to abide by the principles of Do No Harm, the ILO labor standards, as well as the WBG’s safeguard policies. Some stakeholders suggested that the WBG has the opportunity to – and should – step up to play a leadership role in the development process in

Myanmar. It pointed out that WBG will be one of the biggest development players in the country over the next few years, has considerable technical expertise, and good access to the Government, and suggested that this gives the WBG a unique ability to shape overall government and development partner approaches to each sector. Several participants underlined that the WBG should not only support capacity development for government, but should recognize the importance and effectiveness of, and provide support to, alternative public services provided by communities themselves, CSOs, the border-based health and education programs, monastic education programs and INGOs.

Several participants noted the importance of ensuring that all WBG projects are conflict sensitive, including through the conduct of conflict analysis. The primary focus of discussions on conflict sensitivity was on operations in ethnic areas, with a number of participants urging the WBG to work carefully in these areas in the absence of a national ceasefire agreement. Concerns related to the problems in Rakhine State and the rise of religious nationalism in Myanmar in general, were raised on more than one occasion. The WBG was also strongly encouraged to do all it could to make the government aware of the threat that inter-communal conflict poses to sustainable investment and development, both in Rakhine State and the country more broadly.

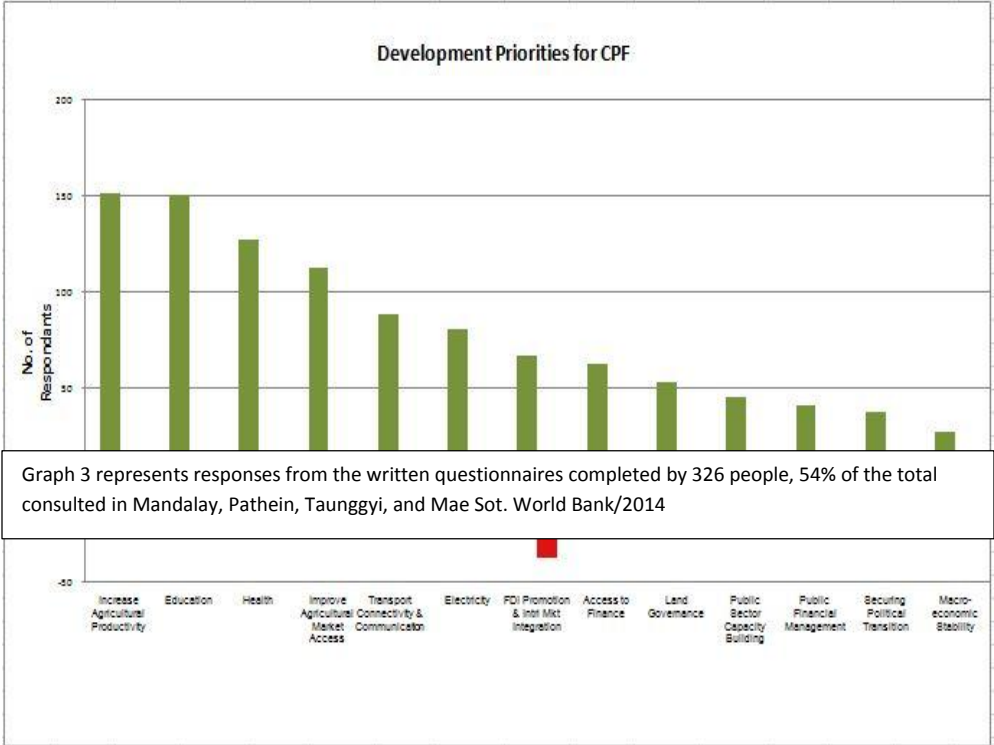
Participants emphasized that the WBG should ensure adequate staffing in country to effectively manage the work it undertakes given the complexities of the country context. Several comments were made related to the potential for the WBG to improve coordination between donors, the INGO community, and the Government of Myanmar, respectively.

Input on WBG development priorities in Myanmar

Throughout the consultations many individuals and groups stressed the importance of capacity building for government and a number suggested that WBG should support this, particularly in regard to policy development.

By far the largest number of comments, concerns and suggestions raised on government capacity related to transparency and accountability, and the majority of these focused on natural resource revenues. Some submissions asked that the WBG should prioritize strengthening governance of natural resources given the importance of this sector on the economy. A number of participants pointed to the need to improve public financial management, particularly the need to increase tax revenue.

Participants suggested that the WBG should support the development of the banking system in Myanmar to increase access to finance and to control inflation. Developing monetary policy and monetary instruments were cited as critical to supporting the transition from an economy based solely on agriculture to one that also has strong manufacturing and service sectors.



Agricultural development and suggestions that

the WBG should provide support for this were by far the most commonly raised points throughout all of the consultations. Many participants pointed out that around 60-70% of the population in Myanmar are dependent on agriculture, and emphasized the need for the technical expertise which they believe the WBG could provide to increase agricultural productivity and incomes.

Many participants felt that the provision of basic health and education programs should be priorities for the WBG. Comments focused on the need to develop comprehensive long term programs in these sectors rather than simply upgrading infrastructure. Many stakeholders highlighted the urgent need to improve access to health and education services in rural and remote areas. Several also pointed to the issue of cost, emphasizing that these services needed to be affordable, or free. Stakeholders urged

the WBG to support to improvements in the quality of education in Myanmar, through teacher training and curriculum development.

In regard to health, the most common responses were: the need to support primary and basic health care, to provide nutritional and health awareness training, to develop an effective health insurance system, and to provide effective maternal and child health care.

Several organizations pointed to the importance of promoting corporate social responsibility and of ensuring that private sector investments produced quality jobs with safe and healthy working conditions that benefitted the poorest of the poor.

The issue of land governance came up frequently. Some stakeholders drew attention to the fact that foreign direct investment and overall economic development could increase the value of land and the potential for land confiscation and landlessness at a time when proper land governance legislation and systems are not yet in place.

Suggestions as to how the WBG should support the development of the private sector in Myanmar, included requests to improve access to international markets, to increase electricity supply and support the development of legislation to promote trade and encourage foreign investment.

At the same time, some participants raised a different point of view, and the most common response on the question of what the WBG should not do in Myanmar was supporting Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). Many felt that the legal framework needed to protect local organizations and workers, and to ensure that FDI met environmental and social standards, was not yet in place, and suggested the WBG should instead work to 'level the playing field' and support the development of SMEs through capacity development programs and improving access to finance

Many participants pointed out the importance of increasing the supply of electricity for the development of other sectors, such as health, education, agriculture, industry, and the private sector (particularly SMEs), and thereby its fundamental role in the creation of jobs. The vast majority of those who raised the issue encouraged the WBG to support the production of electricity in Myanmar, while emphasizing the need to take into account environmental and social considerations while doing so, in particular in coal and hydro power production. Several participants recommended that even small scale hydro-power production must be avoided in ethnic areas during the peace process, due the potential that this could disrupt the process.

Although a few stakeholders felt that the WBG should not prioritize support for transportation networks, many drew attention to the important linkages between transport connectivity and development of education, health and trade sectors in Myanmar.

Several participants requested WBG support for the development of the telecommunications sector, citing its importance in the development of local economies and the health and education sectors. However, other organizations urged the WBG to carefully assess the risks to land rights involved in building communications infrastructure, and to support the development of effective policy, based on consultations with a wide range of CSOs, on data privacy protection that can be applied across WBG projects.