

Ministry of Livestock Fisheries and Rural Development

Rural Development Strategy for Poverty Reduction

Concept Note (Draft)

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Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Rural Development

Strategic Framework for Rural Development

1. Context

As Myanmar has been implementing a step-by-step measure for the transformation of political, economic and social sectors with great momentum, it has been trying to eradicate poverty throughout the whole nation by implementing community-based socio-economic development activities. Recently, it has had Rural Development Department reformed and incorporated into the Ministry of Livestock Breeding and Fisheries Industry and plan to reduce the number of poor people by implementing integrated rural development effectively and efficiently. Aiming to ensure all inclusive state holder participation in carrying out rural development activities for poverty reduction, the following discussion notes have been recorded to be considered as priority working proposals after discussing with international development organizations, civil societies and private business organizations for two times.

- (A) To effectively manage and carry out suitable activities for those who are in real need of help from the areas which really need intervention by organizing scattered expertise, technology, experience, capitals and funds by means of identifying implementing tools and project plans to ensure that all the able people can participate in rural development activities.
- (B) To enhance people's participation by adopting Decentralization Approach in implementing rural development activities.
- (C) To solve any cases to do with land tenure as it is important for small farmers
- (D) To use good results from microfinance, information and communication technology development, renewable energy development, environment conservation and agriculture and livestock breeding technology development collaboratively as necessary
- (E) To help improve social development and businesses directly as well as to help improve human rights conditions for local people, adopting Rights -based Approach.
- (F) Develop SMEs with participation of private businessmen in rural development activities for mutual benefits.
- (G) To strengthen community based organizations by developing human resources

A decision to set up a rural development strategy has been made in order to effectively implement all the activities mentioned in the above discussion notes. To write up a rural development strategy, a working committee will be formed to write concept paper for strategic framework and that is to be finalized and approved after consulting and taking advice from all the personal concerned.

2. Vision

Aligning with MDG goals, the vision of the framework is to improve socioeconomic life of rural populace and narrow down the urban-rural divides.

3. Mission

The missions are 1) addressing inclusive and sustainable rural development employing people-centered approach which aim to contribute the Nation's ultimate goal of reducing poverty rate by 16% by 2015; 2) strengthening community based organizations, building capacity of local communities, nurturing good governance process; and 3) mitigation of natural and social disasters and creation of resilience communities.

4. Setting the frame work for integrated rural development and five grand strategies for poverty reduction

The government has set up a development goal to reduce poverty to from 26% to 15% nationwide within coming 30 months.

According to initial surveys conducted by UNDP, it is found out that an average income per annum needs to be above 300,000ks to be able to have enough food rich in nutrition to be healthy. People who earn under this amount of income per year are considered people under poverty line. It will be necessary to increase incomes of each and individual household and socio-economic conditions so as to reduce the number of people living under poverty line and to bring about this, flexible and adaptable rural development strategy and tactics will need to be set up.

Thus, rural development policy that the government will set up and implement is –

“To reduce poverty with the emergence of a good governance process for progressive rural development by setting up and implementing most suitable self-help village development projects in a timely manner for the people who are in real need of help from special (priority) regions by means of implementing regular socio-economic development activities throughout the whole nation and organizing technology, expertise, capitals and development funds as well; by conducting their activities in harmony with special all-round central area development services for different sectors in the respective regions”

To effectively implement above-mentioned rural development policies, the following strategies will be set up.

Strategy (1) Prioritizing and Implementing All-round Development Strategy

Strategy (2) Synergy of Development Intervention and Multiplying Impacts Strategy.

Strategy (3) Sustainable Financing for Rural Development Strategy

Strategy (4) Effective Collaboration Strategy

Strategy (5) Good Governance Process for Progressive Rural Development strategy

It is aimed to gain the result of poverty reduction by creating good socio-economic conditions for (3)million people living in rural areas within coming (30) months by identifying and implementing strategies and tactics for each strategy.

5. **Prioritizing Strategy**

In implementing rural development activities, it is needed to prioritize plans and projects to effectively utilize human resources, capital, and other resources available as the nation has a lot of needs and necessities. As respective ministries will be carrying out development activities through the whole nation as usual, it is also aimed to identify and selecting some regions where poverty reduction activities should be focused on and village development activities will be conducted initially as pilot projects in those regions and they are expected to expand if they become successful.

Criteria for the Selection of Areas of Priority

(1) Development Need

- to select poor people from the regions that needs most help seriously for development
- to select districts and regions where a very high number of poor people are living in, based on current poverty map.

(2) Beneficiary Coverage

- to select the regions that can gain most benefits if development activities are carried out
- to select some regions from thus – selected regions based on their population density

(3) Operational Feasibility

- to consider feasibility as a criterion apart from development need and beneficiary coverage
- to select areas of priority considering remarks by local people who have social and economic connections and by administrative personnel

(4) Social Equity

- to select areas of priority based on social equity among national races
- to select some areas from thus-selected areas taking into account advice from personnel concerned

(5) Visibility for Replicability

If initial development projects achieve a success, they need to be expanded .Therefore, the selected areas where development activities are to be conducted must be located in prime areas and they should be easily accessible by people to bringing about multiplying impacts. This last criterion is to be used to finalize the selected areas of priority, which have been selected by above-mentioned criteria. The status of poverty by districts and townships is mentioned as Appendix (A).

6. Synergy of Development Intervention and Multiplying Impacts

It is to set up self-help rural development project and all-round local development project in order to effectively conduct poverty reduction and rural development activities and to implement them collaboratively

(a) Participatory Village Development Plan

It refers to projects directly managed by people living in rural areas at village level with development help available by identifying their own needs. It is aimed to set up and implement suitable activities such as improving farming incomes, social condition for education and health, village electrification, environmental conservation, improving village infrastructure and improving livelihoods and administration skills within the project period of 24 months. To set up and implement their projects, village development committees constituted with local representatives will need to be formed and they will need to be trained to improve their capacity with the help of civil societies and they will have to write village development project proposals. Twice a year, village development project proposals written in each township will have to be scrutinized and approved transparently according to set strict rules. Then, approved projects will be funded and implemented directly by the village (or) suitable service providers. Government departments in respective townships or international and local development organizations are to provide technical assistance to village development projects and to monitor and give advice on improvements of the projects.

The framework for strategy for poverty reduction that is to base on to make the process of setting up village development projects more systematic and effective is mentioned in the pie-chart(1).

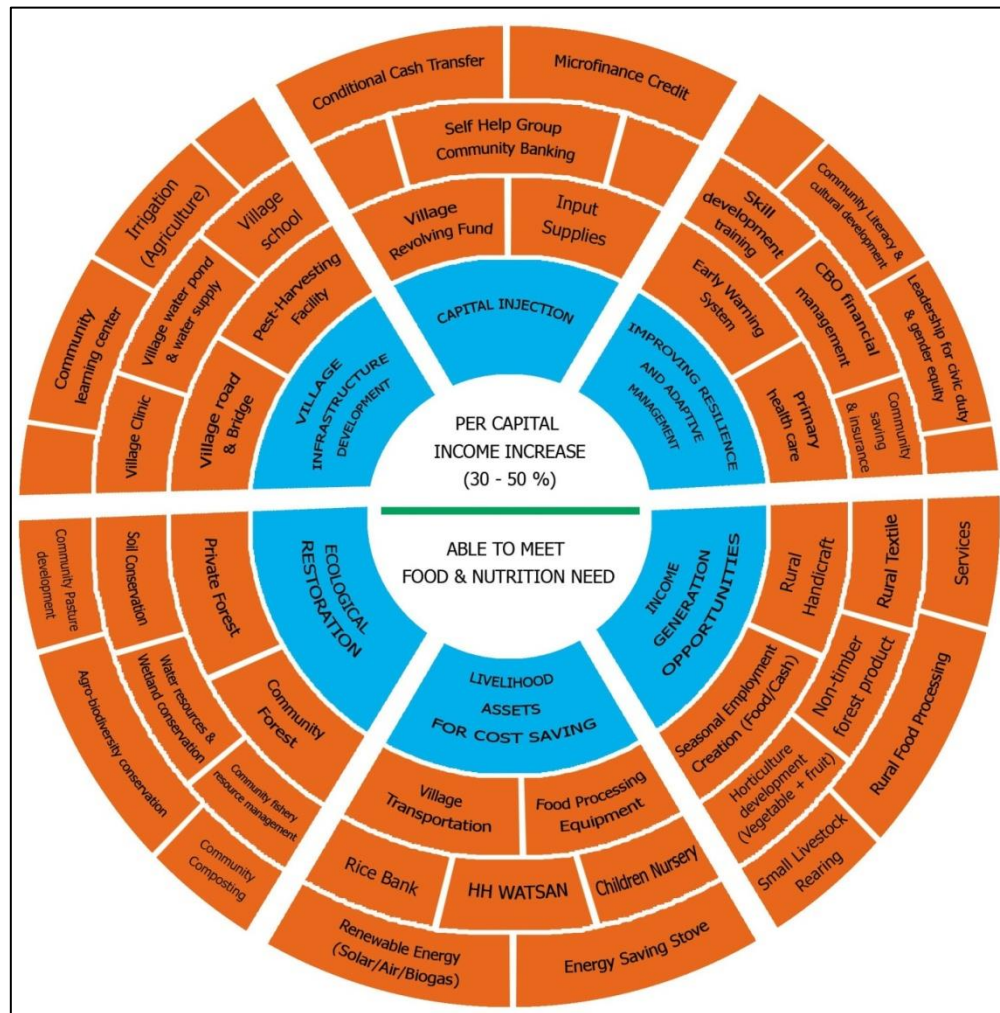


Table 1. Framework for Creating Rural Works for Poverty Reduction

Strategic Aim	Strategy	Tactics	Remarks
30-50% increase in annual income of those under poverty line 150\$	1. Increasing Working capital	1.1 Conditional Cash Transfer 1.2 Micro credit 1.3 Self Help Group Community Banking 1.4 Village Revolving Fund 1.5 Providing Inputs (seed grain, chemical fertilizers, fishery equipment, domestic livestock)	Current statistics shows a need for Ks 150,000 increase in working capital so that those with per capita income of Ks 200,000 might enjoy 50% increase in income.
25\$	2. Livelihood assets to reduce livelihood burden & expenditure	2.1 Expansion of potable water supply and construction of fly- proof latrines 2.2 Rural electrification with renewable energy	More guidelines will be made for rural development works especially those for each Tactic. 1) Feasible subsidiary works 2) Step for them

		2.3 Distributing firewood-efficient stoves 2.4 Establishing paddy banks 2.5 Rural-based child care 2.6 Rural Transportation 2.7 Rural food preparation and processing	3) Preliminary needs 4) Major input aids 5) Inputs and working capital to be provided by the village 6) Management 7) Analysis & Achievement Index 8) Preparation of reports 9) Basic Accounting Procedure needed 10) Miscellaneous
	3. Increasing income generating opportunities	3.1 Creating seasonal jobs for food or wages 3.2 Helping rural production of traditional fabrics 3.3 Development of rural handicrafts 3.4 Developing value-added food processing works in rural areas 3.5 Improving services in rural areas (Mechanic services, Hairdressing etc) 3.6 Expanded extraction of forestry products other than wood and logs 3.7 Development of livestock breeding on self-manageable basis 3.8 Development of Integrated Gardening	
100\$	4. Enabling physical environment for boosting socioeconomic development	4.1 More construction and maintenance of rural roads & bridges 4.2 Creating small-scale irrigation works for agriculture 4.3 Development of watershed areas in the countryside 4.4 Construction & maintenance of village schools 4.5 Construction and maintenance of village	

		<p>dispensary</p> <p>4.6 Building multipurpose central shelters in rural areas</p> <p>4.7 Building shelters for processing, production and storage of rural products</p>	
50%	5. Balancing environmental stability and ecological productivity	<p>5.1 Creating community-owned forests</p> <p>5.2 Creating forestry plantation on self-manageable basis of a family</p> <p>5.3 Community-based development of free range and pastures</p> <p>5.4 Management of water resources and swamps in rural areas</p> <p>5.5 Protection of agricultural biodiversity</p> <p>5.6 Community-based waste management and compost production</p> <p>5.7 Community-based conservation of fishery resources</p>	

	<p>6. Improving community strengthening skill, resilience through leadership and social safety net to reduce socio-politico-ecological risks and livelihood vulnerability</p>	<p>6.1 Improving livelihood skills</p> <p>6.2 Development of community-based organs and improvement of their finance management efficiency</p> <p>6.3 Development of savings and insurance services for rural people.</p> <p>6.4 Development of alarm system for preparedness against natural disasters in rural areas</p> <p>6.5 Improvement of community-based health care for the public</p> <p>6.6 Community-based literacy and maintenance of traditional culture activities</p> <p>6.7 Training in citizenship, gender equity and leadership skills</p>	
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Table 2. Framework for Planning Regional Development to Aid Rural Areas

Strategic Aim	Strategy	Tactic	Remarks
33 Centres for integrated regional development to aid rural areas	1. Strategic Infrastructure Development	1.1 Establishment of ICT network 1.2 Micro Grid for Electrification through renewable energy 1.3 Building a road network to aid regional economic development	To be carried out through feasibility study and promotion of private investments
	2. Sustainable land - based economic development & natural resources management	2.1 Protection of major watershed areas 2.2 Protection of biodiversity 2.3 Protection of land and	

		fertile top-soil 2.4 Developing agricultural land and settlements 2.5 Commercial forest plantation 2.6 Commercial plantation 2.7 Protection of pastures and free range 2.8 Micro irrigation works 2.9 Establishing strain farms for livestock breeding 2.10 Garden for growing saplings of crops and plants 2.11 Station for seeding of fish 2.12 Garden for protection of agricultural plant species	
	3. Integrated Public Services Development (One stop Public Services)	3.1 Comprehensive Public Services development for Citizens 3.2 Development of mobile public health care and disease control services 3.3 Development of mobile veterinary services 3.4 Development of farming education 3.5 Development of public sports activities 3.6 Improvement of security and law and order	Public services can be made available for convenience at a central place, or in the same building
	4. Development marketing link and added value services	4.1 Extension of market building for better commerce 4.2 Development of honest marketing standards and arbitration procedures for disputes 4.3 Development of small	To be carried out through feasibility study, increased private investment, quality control and coordination

		<p>industries for milling and processing</p> <p>4.4 Improvement of warehousing services</p> <p>4.5 Development of packaging services</p> <p>4.6 Development of transport and freight services</p> <p>4.7 Development of accommodation facilities</p> <p>4.8 Development of mobile banking services</p> <p>4.9 Development of mortgaged micro loan services</p> <p>4.10 Removing obstacles for added value production</p>	
	<p>5. Development works for promotion of human resources and efficiency improvement</p>	<p>5.1 Development of ICT services</p> <p>5.2 Local based radio broadcasts for variety educational purposes</p> <p>5.3 Development of services to aid start-ups</p> <p>5.4 Keeping a multipurpose training hall and holding regular courses for uplifting efficiency</p> <p>a) Citizenship and Leadership Course</p> <p>b) Livelihoods Training Course</p> <p>c) Course for Business Development</p> <p>d) Public Works Training Course</p> <p>e) Development of public participation</p>	

7. Strategy for Sustainable Financing

Poverty reduction requires large financing, and must necessarily be sustainable because it is not one-time effort on the part of the State. Thus the strategy takes local revenue as a base, then to receive yearly State subsidies and contributions from organizations local and foreign, civil society and the private sector each according to their own interests. Funds for reduction of rural poverty are to be established at Township, District and Region levels. The locals, knowing that their taxes directly revert to community development, may likely be more willing to bear them. Hence the amount of development funds will increase in the long term. The Fund for Reduction of Rural Poverty is to be divided into two; Township Development Fund and Locality Development Fund.

Township Development Fund

Township Development Fund means a development fund to be set up in a prioritized township in a chosen region.

(a) Aim of the Fund

The aim of Township Development Fund is to directly help implement the integrated rural development project which has been drawn up on self help basis.

(b) Establishment of the Fund

The Township Development Fund is constituted of monetary contributions made through the following means:

Township Development Committee taxes	70% of yearly TDC revenue is to be contributed
Departmental contribution for expenditure in rural development	<p>Capital expenditure for townshipwise rural development are turned over to Township Development Fund instead of incurring it by the department itself.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Agricultural loan 2) Livestock breeding loan 3) Allotment for establishment of household water supplies 4) Allotment for establishment of water supplies for agricultural use 5) Allotment for establishment of forest plantations in rural areas 6) Allotment for construction of new school buildings 7) Allotment for creating energy sources and saving purposes
State subsidies	The township concerned will receive annual or biennial subsidy

	<p>according to the following standard scales, if state finances permit.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Subsidy to increase working capital at Ks 150,000 per head of those in poverty b) Social welfare investment at Ks 25000 per head of those in poverty c) Subsidy at Ks 25000 per head of those in poverty for better income generation d) Subsidy at Ks 100,000 per head of those in poverty for development of village infrastructure e) Subsidy at Ks 25,000 per head of those in poverty for environmental protection f) Subsidy for development compatible with capability at Ks 25000 per head of those in poverty <p>Remarks: The above-mentioned standard scales are to be revised from time to time after being reviewed by experts.</p>
Contribution by developmental organizations	State-controlled development organs, INGOs, and local NGOs are to make contributions according to their own interests, expertise, or all-round development.
Contribution by private entrepreneurs	Developmental investments by private businesses for production sharing are received. For example, entrepreneurs in contract farming, micro finance and payment of Ecosystem Service.
Individual contributions	Voluntary contributions by persons interested in rural development. Contributions through Corporate Social Responsibility or as a proportion of corporate profits

(c) Management of the Fund

Township Development Fund is to be managed by Township level Consortium of Development Partners constituted with bona fide elected representatives of rural people and representatives of Township level Consortium of Development Partners (consisting of developmental personnel and INGO and NGO personnel).

The procedure for fund management is to be rendered best through refresher courses and support from government departments and NGOs. Cash expenditure is to be regularly audited by internationally recognized bodies. The funds at village level are to be regularly audited by local accountants of official recognition.

(d) Allotments out of the fund

10% of Township Development Fund is deemed to be administrative costs and 90% should directly go towards village development projects. A 24-month implementation program proposed by village tracts is to be directly submitted to Township Development Support Group. Twice a year, the plenary Township Development Meeting is held where the proposals coming from village tracts are scrutinized and adopted. Scrutinization procedure, directives and priorities are to be regularized and apparent and worthy of consensus.

Locality Development Fund

Locality Development Fund is the fund meant to be used in the district where the Township of priority stands or in a collection of districts which are topographically or administratively related.

(a) Aim of the Fund

Locality Development Fund is meant to be used for expenditure and investment for rural development in the Township of priority where feasibility studies, training, and initial capital investments would be needed. In other words it is Development Stimulus Fund, not comprehensive capital for development. Thus private entrepreneurs should be persuaded to participate in capitalization for the projects of locality development. If they find it hard to participate conditions could be created to invite investment from individuals with surplus cash.

(b) Procedure to set up a Fund

The following methods could be used to set up a fund:

Through local revenue	Constitution 2008 gives categories of revenue which could be locally collected; a percentage of State/Region revenue is to go towards the Fund. It is not currently practicable for its small quantity. It stands as a principle to be followed in the longer term.
Direct Subsidies	Capitalization by State is needed for locality development projects. However, how much for a locality of priority is hard to calculate, so such a locality should receive Ks 1,000,000,000 per year which could be revised after expert calculation and projected again.
Aid from internal and external organizations	Voluntary contributions from internal and external organizations interested in locality development projects are to be welcomed

Private investments	Private businessmen may participate in projects of the locality concerned by way of investment or transfer of a percentage of dividends as they relate to their own interests.
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(c) Administration of the Fund

The Locality Development Fund falls in the responsibility of the Fund Management Committee constituted with suitable persons from localitywise Consortium of Development Partners. A team of experts shall prescribe the management procedures. The use of Fund is to be examined by internationally recognized auditors.

(d) Allocation of the Fund

Allotments out of the Locality Development Fund are made as follows:

- | | |
|---|------|
| a) Use for feasibility study of locality project, document preparation and assessment | =10% |
| b) Capitalization for infrastructure | =30% |
| c) Multipurpose Public services | =20% |
| d) Promotion Purposes | =10% |
| e) Capacity and Information | =10% |
| f) Land-based Economic Development | =20% |

This allocation could be revised as necessary after coordination.

8. Strategy of Effective Collaboration

Achievement in poverty reduction of rural areas is faced with many challenges. This community-based rural development calls for organizational reach up to poor people in far-flung rural areas so that they may participate on self helps basis. Prospects for success will be better if the private sector, NGOs and government departments work together hand in hand, rather than the State takes the sole responsibility. Thus the following system is to be established in order to have effective cooperation of all interested parties.

- 1) Establishing a Consortium of Development Partners
- 2) Holding coordination meetings for development projects

Organizing Consortiums of Development Partners

A Consortium of Development Partners means an organization interested in and committed to poverty reduction in Myanmar rural areas that is constituted with Government and willing partners like development organizations internal and external, civil organizations internal and external, civil organizations and private businessmen. The following 3 levels are needed to be formed for implementation of strategic projects in rural development:

- a) Union-level Consortium of Development Partners
- b) State/Region – level Consortium of Development Partners
- c) Prioritized Township- level Consortium of Development Partners

(a) Aim of the Consortium of Development Partners

The Consortium of Development Partners is organized with the following aims:

- a) To identify projects responding to interested development category, or relevant topographical area
- b) To facilitate coordination matters in the implementation of development projects
- c) To improve development policy and procedure through mutual exchange of information and experiences among Development Partners

(b) Formation of the Consortium of Development Partners

Union-level Consortium of Development Partners shall be formed with departmental officials sent by the cabinet and those interested in working for rural development and responding to the following:

- a) Foreign aid organizations which are giving, or willing to give, technical and /or financial aid to official development projects inside Myanmar
- b) International organization (or) INGO currently engaged in official development projects inside Myanmar
- c) Local NGO, at least 1-year-old, being actually and formally engaged on self manageable basis in socio-economic development inside Myanmar
- d) Private-owned companies and financial institutions internal or external, which are functioning with investments inside Myanmar

Would-be development partners may send in their applications of intent accompanied by the following documents to Department of Rural Development.

- 1) Data description on organization and activities
- 2) Record on project implementation
- 3) The sector of the project to be participated and the land area to be covered
- 4) Status of prospective financial aid (or) technical cooperation

Recognition of Development Partners will be given as such based on the truth of items contained in the application and the extent of public opinion polled.

In forming State/Region- level Consortium of Development Partners responsible persons sent by State/Region Government concerned, personal assigned area-wise by Department of Rural Development,

current development partners or candidates in State/Division concerned and local business societies are to be included.

In forming Township-level Consortium of Development Partners the Township Administrator and responsible personnel, responsible township-level personnel associated with rural development, business societies, and current or would be NGO partners in development.

(c) Management and Task-sharing among Development Partners

In order to carry out systematic administration to achieve the objective of Consortium of Development Partners, the Delivery Core Unit shall be formed and administrative duties and responsibilities of the members shall be set up to be followed accordingly.

Serial	Post	Responsible Person	Duties
1.	Chairperson	Person appointed by the government	-Taking a leading role in the implementation of the project activities -negotiating, setting up links with other organizations -making decisions on important matters approving activities and records and holding accountable for them
2.	Deputy Chairperson	Person elected by Development Partners	Acting on behalf the chairperson and acting as the spokesperson
3.	Secretary Group	-First secretary appointed by Department of Rural Development -Second secretary selected from Development Partners -Third secretary selected from private organizations -Fourth secretary appointed by International Non-government Development Organization -Fifth secretary appointed by local Non-government organization	-drawing action plans -managing and supporting the implementation process -supervising and monitoring activities -Corresponding and recording -assisting special task forces -negotiating between respective organizations
4.	Leaders in respective fields	People elected from those who have skills, expertise and interest in respective	Setting up standard operation procedures as per the needs of project activities for respective fields

		fields as needed by the project activities	-negotiating between members
5.	Members	Members as per 6.1.2	Supporting project as per rural development strategy or participating in the project activities

(d) Meetings for Collaborative Development Activities

To achieve the objective of the Consortium of Development Partners, the following meetings will need to be held.

- 1) Regular Meetings of Delivery Core unit
- 2) Meetings of Receptive Fields
- 3) Quarterly Plenary Meetings of Consortium of Development partners
- 4) Annual Development Partners Conference

(e) Regular Meetings of Delivery Core Unit

The main purpose of this meeting is to give instructions on matters to be discussed and negotiated as per respective fields, to make necessary preparation for quarterly meetings. This meeting is to be held at least once quarterly and more meetings are to be held if needed. To hold meetings effectively, the following items need to be discussed on the agenda.

- (i) The status of accomplishment of the tasks as per the decision during the previous meeting
- (ii) The status of the accomplishment of nation-wide rural development collaborative activities and the things that need to be done urgently
- (iii) Evaluation of procedures and directives for respective fields and measures to be taken to improve them
- (iv) Discussion of challenges of project implementation reported by development partners to be negotiated collaboratively
- (v) Matters relating to preparation of quarterly meetings

(f) Meetings of Receptive Fields

Exact guidelines, rules and regulations, procedures are needed in implementing all-inclusive community-based all-round rural development projects. If all the stakeholders implement the projects differently applying their own conventional methods, there'll be a lot of confusion resulting from these differences. On the other hand, if exact guidelines are not feasible, it will create limitations, causing ineffective implementation.

The challenge posed by rural development is that only when the real needs of villages are accommodated in a timely manner, their participation will increase and the success rate of the projects will also increase. So, practical conditions and well-established procedures and guidelines need to be developed equally. Activities such as creating methods, guidelines adaptable to Myanmar context based on the vast experience relating to development activities of partner organizations, building mutual understanding among partner organizations, evaluation and modification of implementation process need to be carried out regularly. Therefore, task forces for respective fields of expertise among development partners are to be formed to discuss field-related issues and implementation issues.

The following task-forces are to be formed initially for Consortium of Development Partners and other task forces will have to be formed for other respective fields as needed.

1. Task Force for Participatory Planning
2. Task Force for Management of Development Information System
3. Task Force for Monitoring and Evaluation
4. Task Force for Procurement Guideline
5. Task Force for Training for Communication Management
6. Task Force for Financial Management Procedure
7. Task Force for Public Auditing and Grievance Procedure

(g) Quarterly Plenary Meeting of the Consortium of Development Partners

The meeting of Consortium of Development Partners is to be held quarterly. All the development partners are to be invited to attend the meeting and participate in the following sections on the agenda

Agenda

- a) Opening Speech
- b) Evaluation of the accomplished development activities during the previous quarter
- c) Sharing of Experiences
(In this section, research and assessment findings done by development partners, best practices and other relevant issues are to be shared with other partners.)
- d) Discussion of Administrative Management Issues that need to be reconciled and agreed on (The Delivery Core Unit has to present measures taken in response to administrative management issues reported by development partners)
- e) Presenting future plans for the next quarter (The Delivery Core Unit has to present a prepared plan)
- f) Questions and Answers Section for Attendees
- g) Closing Speech

The meeting is to last (3) hour as per the above-mentioned agenda and a lot of preparations will need to be made .The Delivery Core Unit has to take responsibilities for this to bring about good results from the meeting.

(h) Annual Development Partners Conference

Sharing information, experience, progress, challenges and potentials of development partners with the public annually can help to identify what policy changes need to be made. In this meeting, research papers for respective fields which include experiences of development partner, findings and evaluation of development activities, and findings on development by external scholars and policy analysis will be presented and workshops at which rural people can share their own experiences and reflections on development activities will be held.

9. Good Governance Process for Progressive Rural Development Strategy

Achievement of rural development activities is not a one-time effort. It is neither enough to promote incomes of poor households nor enough to build a good foundation for socio-economic and environmental conservation. It is more important to sustain progressive rural development. Thus, avoiding short-term plan, it is necessary to set good governance process for progressive rural development.

Accountability

Local people should take a leading role in the process of making decisions and take on responsibilities and hold fully accountable in undertaking village development activities. They should not wait to receive benefits from other people and organizations but they should take complete responsibilities, holding directly accountable for them actions to carry out development activities successfully.

(a) Forming Village Development Support Groups Systematically

Village Development Support Groups (KaFaAhFa) should be formed with bonafide village representatives. A person who is selected by ten-household heads and hundred- household heads from village tracts and approved by villagers and who gets majority votes should be selected as KaFaAhFa Representative.

All the representatives from each village shall form Village Development Support Group, consisting of (5) to (9) representatives depending on the size of the village. (2) or o(3) female representatives should be included in the groups. All the representatives should be selected fairly during public meetings in areas of priority organized by civil societies so as to allow villagers to choose whoever they like freely. A Village Representative should satisfy the following qualities.

- a) He or she must live permanently in respective village
- b) He or she must be between 20 to 55.

- c) He or she must have primary education or be literate.
- d) He or she must have proven record of active participation in village social and developmental activities
- e) He or she must not be blacklisted socially, morally and financially.
- f) He or she must be healthy and must have commitment to development activities
- g) He or she must be selected unanimously

KaFaAhFa Group constituted with people who satisfy the above-mentioned qualities shall be formed as follow and be assigned duly.

- | | | |
|-------------|---|--|
| Chairperson | - | The chairperson shall be selected by vote and appointed for two years |
| Secretary | - | The secretary shall be appointed by the chairperson and must be able to keep records and run day-to-day operations efficiently |
| Cashier | - | The cashier shall be a village representative, appointed by the chairperson |
| Auditor | - | The auditor shall be a village representative, appointed by the chairperson |
| Member | - | One to five members are to be appointed depending on the size of the villages. |

The duties of the members of Village Development Support Groups are as follows:

- (A) to collect and keep records of economic, social, and developmental data
- (B) to write development proposals for identifying development needs and priorities by organizing public meetings and to submit them to the respective townships
- (C) to attend the trainings conducted in the respective townships or to send other suitable personnel to enhance capacity
- (D) to give guidance on program activities to be carried out in collaboration with village tract administration officers
- (E) to conduct public auditing annually in the village to make financial management procedures transparent
- (F) to carry out village development activities in collaboration with government departments concerned and other development organizations in the respective townships
- (G) to write and submit progress reports on development activities

Members of Village Development Support Groups are not paid workers as they participate in the activities on their own volition but they have the rights to honorarium approved and granted by villagers depending on the village development funds. Procedures need to be prescribed if any questions are to be raised against the actions of the representatives including the chairperson so that enquiries and hearing can be done systematically.

If it is proved to make any replacements, existing representatives have to be replaced with other people who are selected by vote.

(b) Forming Township Development Support Groups Systematically

KaFaAhFa representatives shall be selected by votes from Village Development Support Groups. (9) to (5) members shall be selected and 30% should be female representatives. Township Development Support Groups shall consist of a chair person, a secretary, a cashier and an auditor and executive members. The chairperson shall be selected by vote from MaFaAhFa representatives and the chairperson shall appoint executive members. The time span of MaFaAhFa shall be two years and annual honorarium shall be determined and granted depending on township development funds.

The main duties of MaFaAhFa are –

- a) to supervise development activities in the respective townships in collaboration with organizations concerned
- b) to organize plenary meetings in the respective townships biennially
- c) to keep township development funds and issue development funds as per decisions made at township development plenary meetings.
- d) to call for tenders and to make contracts as per prescribed standard procedures in procuring materials for the implementation of village projects in the respective townships
- e) to organize meetings associated with the implementation of village projects to form task forces to supervise respective assignments
- f) to solve problems arising during the implementation process of village projects to deal with grievances raised by people
- g) to write progress reports on development activities in the respective townships.

Department of Rural Development will have to take complete responsibilities for day-to-day operation of MaFaAhFa office and Township Development Partners Group will have to provide technical and administrative assistance.

Transparency

Transparency is important in implementing village development activities, especially in providing development funds to the villages directly for proposed projects. These projects can be implemented effectively only when people trust these development activities, resulting in an increase in their participation in the activities.

Therefore, to prevent development activities and development funds being misused by any person or group for their own sake, the following need to be done.

Prescribing Framework and Procedures systematically

In order to carry out activities as per rural development strategy systematically and equally, a proper frame work and procedures must be prescribed especially for the following programs.

- 1) Procedures and framework for prioritizing villages, households, and activities
- 2) Procedures for participatory project planning
- 3) Framework for development support and estimation associated with projects that can be proposed and implemented by villages; and calculation methods
- 4) Procedures for scrutinizing and approving village project proposals
- 5) Guidelines and Procedures for the procurement of materials for the projects
- 6) Procedures for financial management
- 7) Procedures for hearing and prosecuting for grievances and losses associated with the projects
- 8) Procedures for evaluating the progress of projects
- 9) Procedures for project support and evaluation of outputs

Task forces consisting experts from respective fields are to be formed to prescribe above-mentioned frameworks and procedures and follow them accordingly.

(a) Practicing Public Auditing

Financial Management and Task Accomplishment shall be done as per procedures prescribed by the government and development activities will become more transparent as they gain public trust due to public auditing carried out at the same time.

(b) Information Services

Giving accurate information to people and all the stakeholders is an important task for bringing about transparency. Therefore, at central level and township levels, Information and Communication task forces should be formed to provide services for releasing helpful and relevant information and answering questions. Similarly, in project villages, an effective Information and Communication System needs to be set up and used for respective areas. Especially, an Information and Communication System that is accessible to poor villagers who live at the edge of the villages and housewives who are simply busy doing household chores and can't get involved in social works needs to be set up.

Citizen Participation

Citizen Participation is an important need for good governance. Especially, the rights of people to participate in the process of decision making and making rational decisions for which their opinions are also taken into consideration are important. To implement this, the following should be done.

(a) **Participatory Planning**

Over the past two decades, international development organizations including UNDP in Myanmar have been using participatory planning. As a result of this, there have been a lot of experiences and best practices relating to this available in the country. These experiences should be reviewed and suitable approaches and procedures should be adopted.

(b) **Biennial Development Forum**

It is important for people to have chances to participate in the decision-making process of scrutinizing, approving of village development projects planned as per the needs of people. In this regard, plenary meetings of village development groups are to be held twice a year to create chances for people to be able to take part in the decision-making process indirectly through village representatives. Relevant procedures should be prescribed and followed.

(c) **Practicing Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation System**

In implementing village projects, it is needed to set up a Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation System in order to check task achievement and effectiveness of the projects and it should be carried out at least twice a year. Based on the findings, weaknesses need to be overcome in implementing village projects.

Enhancing Capacity of Effectiveness and Efficiency

In bringing about good governance for rural development, it is needed to enhance capacity of effectiveness and efficiency. The following need to be done for this.

- (A) **Collecting Project Indicators and Monitoring Progress:** It is needed to set principal indicators that can be easily interpreted in monitoring progress of the projects and they should be collected regularly and necessary measures are to be taken.
- (B) **Managing Risks:** It is necessary to predict possible risks and seek ways to overcome or minimize them.
- (C) **Enhancing Capacity:** The capacity of the stakeholders engaged in the village projects is an important factor for successful implementation of a project. So, capacity-building works should be done to train all the stakeholders to enhance their capacity.
- (D) **Regulating by standardization:** It is necessary to set standards to ensure quality for village project activities and a task force needs to be formed to check if project activities are carried out in compliance with set standards. Code of conduct and Performance Evaluation standards that are needed to evaluate the performance of personnel and organizations involved in the projects activities have to be set.

To be able to do so, development partners have to hold through discussions on the above - mentioned matters and implement them duly.

Equity

It is needed to guarantee equity to bring about good rural development administration. It is also necessary to ensure that all the people regardless of their race, religion and sex have equal access to the benefits of rural development. Thus, equity as a basic principle should be taken into consideration in project planning, implementing and decision making. The procedures to prescribe must include this and it also needs to include this in setting indicators. It is also necessary to try and use gender-sensitive budgeting.

Rule of law

It is important that rural development activities are carried out in accordance with prevailing legal procedures. As rural development requires all-inclusive participation, all the activities need to be carried out in accordance with prevailing legal procedures set down sector-wise and in practical terms there are potential risks of confusion of legal procedures, and weaknesses. These may hinder implementation process. Similarly, if there are any cases for which legal action needs to be taken and if prompt actions are not taken there will be considerable losses. Therefore, in implementing rural development activities, a legal consultancy group should be formed to uphold law and it needs to be supported by all the stakeholders.

Responsiveness

Only when the needs of people in rural areas are accommodated in a timely manner, public participation will increase and development activities will be implemented successfully. Similarly, during the implementation period, there may be challenges, changes and public concerns. So, it is very important to promptly deal with the cases and cope with the challenges and changes. The collaborative actions among organizations for responding to current changes can take long and this may be a weak point. But, methods for collaborative actions among organizations concerned are already included in this framework for rural development strategy to overcome this weak point. Regular meetings among development partners are aimed at solving such a problem. However, the approach and process for enhancing comprehensive collaboration are faced with a lot of limitations due to the nature of development activities. So, collaboration with higher level organizations and authorities concerned and government ministries need to be established. Thus, it is necessary to establish protocols to set up links and coordinate with Delivery Core Unit formed by the government and project commission.

As procedures for dealing with losses and grievances have been prescribed, it is necessary to follow them and relevant reports need to be written, published and discussed.

10. Time Schedule for Project Implementation

If the principles, strategies and tactics contained in this paper had been adopted, the remaining projects would necessarily be implemented in 30 months. These a time frame for completion is suggested as follows.

	Activity		Period
1	Forming Consortium of Development Partners		November & December, 2013
2	Conformation of contribution to Development Fund		December 2013
3	Formation of Task force according to sector concerned		December 2013
4	Adoption of working rules, procedure and performance standards		December 2013 & January 2014
5	Selecting areas of priority		December 2013
6	Training , capacity building		February 2014
7	Organizing and strengthening village tract development support groups		March 2014
8	Drawing up village projects		April and May 2014
9	Organizing plenary development partners meetings		June 2014
10	Signing agreements for village projects and financing		July 2014
11	Implementation		August 2014

11. Miscellaneous

Reduction of rural poverty is found to be feasible through the use of various means. Economic stability brought about by implementation of monetary, financial and trade policies should help rural development. Moreover, Union-level improvement of infrastructure and development of SEZs (Special Economic Zones) makes for national linking of States and Regions, at the same time affecting rural development positively. In addition, relevant socio-economic development activities based on agriculture could greatly affect rural development. As this paper suggests, implementation of community-based village local projects based on areas of priority should directly help ruralhouseholds in poverty, thence leading to investment for creation of a basis of secure livelihood, it is believed. While purchasing power of the masses is raised in short term it should help in bringing about the development of private sector and dynamic economic activity as a consequence. Again people would trust and cooperate more in current democratization process because they are enjoying benefits as direct participants from development activities. As community-based civil organizations become more efficient civic duties and democratic values will become pronounced and help create an open society. Such a good basis, if realized, should help solve

general dissatisfaction and social conflicts, creating good prospects for efforts to enjoy self-determination, it is hopefully suggested.

Township-level Management of Rural Development Fund

