

## **NORWAY: Development Cooperation**

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Norway has a long history of cooperation with Myanmar. In previous years, particularly after Cyclone Nargis hit Myanmar in 2008, the bulk of Norwegian assistance to Myanmar was humanitarian, channelled mainly through multi-donor trust funds and civil society organizations. Norway started engaging directly with the Government at an early stage and following the transition to civilian rule in 2011, Norway initiated development cooperation with the Government with a view to increasing institutional capacity in a number of areas.

In 2012, the Government of Norway developed a strategy for development cooperation with Myanmar. The strategy sets the stage for long term development cooperation between Myanmar and Norway, particularly in the areas of peace, democracy and reform and (natural resource management, particularly energy and environment/climate change.

The overarching goal of Norwegian development cooperation with Myanmar is to contribute to peace and reconciliation and an enabling environment for social and economic development. In 2013, Norway has allocated approximately 190 million Norwegian kroner (approximately 32 million USD) to development cooperation with Myanmar.

### **Peace, democracy and reform**

In 2012, Norway was requested by the Government to establish the Myanmar Peace Support Initiative and the Peace Donor Support Group. Norway works closely with the Government and ethnic groups to support their ongoing efforts of securing national peace and supports a number of civil society organizations working to promote peace and reconciliation on the grass roots level. See more information about the Norwegian support to the peace process in Myanmar [here](#).

Support to the democratization process has been and still is an important part of Norwegian development cooperation with Myanmar. While in earlier times the support was principally channelled through organizations and media operating outside of Myanmar, the bulk of the support is now being channelled through organizations based in Myanmar. Norway is also in contact with international and regional organization regarding support to Myanmar in the preparations to the parliamentary elections in 2015.

The Government of Myanmar is in the process of implementing an ambitious reform agenda. Norway supports the Government in these reform efforts with capacity building and expert advice to the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development on economic reform, capacity building related to the implementation of the Freedom of Association Law, through the International Labour Organization (ILO), and capacity building of the civil service in preparation for the chairmanship of the Association of the South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) in 2014.

Norway is also a significant contributor to the 2014 Population and Housing Census, which will be conducted in April 2014. The Census will be conducted with assistance from the United Nations' Populations Fund ([UNFPA](#)).

## **Energy**

Realizing the country's energy potential and increasing access to electricity is a top priority of the Government of Myanmar. Norway is assisting the Ministry of Electric Power with capacity building through assistance from the International Centre for Hydropower (ICH) and the Norwegian Directorate for Energy and Water Resources (NVE).

Norway is also an essential contributor to the World Bank "Myanmar Electric Power Project", through consultancy services provided by Norconsult, and assists the Government in revising the electricity regulatory framework, in cooperation with the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

The Government of Norway will also assist Myanmar on petroleum sector management through the Oil for Development Program. The program will involve capacity building within the Ministries of Energy, Finance and Revenue and Environmental Conservation and Forestry on issues related to resource management, revenue management and environmental management related to the petroleum sector. Government accountability and civil society engagement is an important aspect of the program.

## **Environment and climate change**

Environmental conservation has been a priority for Norwegian development cooperation with Myanmar since early days, particularly since the visit to Myanmar by the then Minister of Environment and Development, Mr. Erik Solheim in 2011.

The return visit by the Union Minister of Environmental Conservation and Forestry U Win Tun in October 2012 marked the beginning of an institutional cooperation program between the Norwegian Ministry of Environment and the Union Ministry of Environmental Conservation and Forestry (MOECAF) on environmental management. The program, which is currently in the inception phase, will focus on building capacity within the Government on biodiversity and wetlands management, integrated water resource management (IWRM) and natural heritage (in cooperation with the Nordic World Heritage Foundation and UNESCO). Cooperation with civil society is an important part of the program.

Another important component of the Norway-Myanmar cooperation on environmental issues is the ongoing efforts to conserve and rehabilitate the beautiful Inle Lake in Shan State. The lake is severely threatened by environmental degradation and rehabilitation requires concerted efforts by the Government, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and development agencies. Norway is assisting the Government with technical support to develop a long-term plan restoration and conservation of Inle Lake in cooperation with the UN Human Settlements Program (UN HABITAT), and supports a

number of community activities in the Inle Lake watershed area through the UN Development Program (UNDP).

In 2014, Norway will explore options for including Myanmar in the REDD ("Reducing Emissions for Deforestation and Degradation") initiative. A REDD+ Roadmap, developed by the Centre for People and Forests (RECOFTC) in cooperation with UNDP and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) was recently finalized, developed with financing from Norway.

Norway has for many years been a main contributor to the UN HABITAT's work on disaster risk reduction in Myanmar, through the Cities and Urban Risk Program (CURB).

### **Trade and commerce**

In January 2012, the Norwegian Government decided that it would no longer urge Norwegian companies to refrain from trade and investment in Myanmar. A dynamic, vibrant private sector is critical for long-term, sustainable poverty eradication through creating value and broadly based wealth, tax revenues and productive jobs. Better standards of living will also help to propel further democratisation. Trade and foreign investments will have both immediate and long-term benefits in strengthening local capacity and fostering local competition.

Norway attaches great importance to the principles of decent work, corporate social responsibility and environmental sustainability. Norwegian companies operating abroad can have a positive impact, for example by setting high standards for corporate conduct, which can subsequently be followed by local companies.

*Source:* <http://www.myanmar.norway.info/NorwayMayanmar/DevelopmentCooperation/#.Uv3yyqJZQdU>