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**Opportunities and Constraints for
Promoting Community Forest-based Tourism in Inle Lake Watershed Area:
Lesson Learned from FD-MKCF Project**

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Table of contents

	Pages
Abstract.....	i
စာတမ်းအကျဉ်း.....	ii-iii
1. Introduction.....	1
2. Objectives.....	2
3. Materials and Methods.....	2
3.1 Project Area.....	2
3.1.1 Local livelihood in relation to tourism.....	3
3.1.2 Community Forest status.....	3-6
3.1.3 CFE Potential and Market Analysis	6-7
3.2 Results and Discussion.....	7-8
3.3 Major Findings and lessons learned from project.....	9
3.4 Opportunities.....	9-10
3.5 Constraints.....	10
3.6 Recommendations.....	10-11
4. Conclusion	11
5. Acknowledgement.....	11
6. References.....	12
Photo Records.....	13-20

List of Figures

	Pages
Figure 3.1. Location of Lwe Nyeint Community Forest	2
Figure 3.2. Trend of foreigners visiting Nyaung Shwe Township	3
Figure 3.3. Number of trees in Lwe Nyeint CF by diameter class	5
Figure 3.4. Four Phases of Market Analysis and Development (MA&D)	7
Figure 3.5. Resource map of Lwe Nyeint Community Forest	8

List of Tables

	Pages
Table 3.1. Stem number and estimated volume by diameter classes of trees in Lwe Nyeint CF	4
Table 3.2. Area figures of stand number, volume and basal area	5
Table 3.3. The stem number and volume of trees in Lwe Nyeint CF	5
Table 3.4. List of tree species found in Lwe Nyeint CF	6
Table 3.5. SWOT analysis of stakeholders on potential of Tourism based CFE.	8

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Abstract

With growing global pressures on forest resources and the search for models of sustainable development and sustainable forest use, tourism in forest areas has been seen as a potential win-win component in the design of conservation strategies and practices. This paper explores the opportunities and constraints for initiating community forest based tourism (CFT) in the watershed area of Inle Lake which is an ASEAN Heritage Site and one of the popular tourist destinations in Nyaung Shwe Township, Shan State, Myanmar. The paper is based on the activity reports and lessons learned of Mekong Institute-funded model CF project which supported 600-acre Lwe Nyeint community forest managed by 139 users to initiate as the first CFT in Myanmar. The forest resource inventory in 62 sample plots in the CF has highlighted the good natural forest condition which can further be improved for tourism activities. The socioeconomic assessment on 111 CF users has shown the CF users' positive experience in tourism activities and willingness to practice CFT. In addition, ecotourism potential in Nyaung Shwe was assessed employing FAO's innovative market analysis and development approach, and a follow-up enterprise development plan was prepared with the projected profit of 164,153,700 MMK in three consecutive years. The main constraints hindering the initiation of CFT in the Lwe Nyeint CF are lack of policy and guidelines for CFT, weak linkage and cooperation among relevant stakeholders, insufficient capacity and initial investment, and lack of business skills of the user group. On the other hand, the opportunities are forest resource status, nearby tourist attractions, CF users' existing knowledge and experience in tourism activities, high interest in CFT, presence of relevant management plan and enterprise development plan, the project's support for basic infrastructure and capacity building in the initial phase, and more importantly, Forest Department's current effort to adopt a regulatory guideline for CFT in line with the standing forest law and CFIs.

Key Words: *Community forestry, tourism, enterprise, market analysis, management plan, policy, guidelines*

**FD-MKCF စီမံကိန်း အကောင်အထည်ဖော်ဆောင်ရွက်မှုအရ အင်းလေးကန်
ရေဝေရေလဲဒေသတွင် ဒေသခံပြည်သူအစုအဖွဲ့ပိုင်သစ်တောအခြေပြုခရီးသွားလုပ်ငန်း
ဖွံ့ဖြိုးရေးအတွက် အခွင့်အလမ်းနှင့် အကန့်အသတ်များ**

ဒေါ်မေဇင်မြင့်၊ ဦးစီးအရာရှိ၊ တိုးချဲ့ပညာပေးရေးဌာန၊ သစ်တောဦးစီးဌာန

စာတမ်းအကျဉ်းချုပ်

ကမ္ဘာတစ်ဝန်းတွင် သစ်တောသယံဇာတများအပေါ် ဖိအားများ ပိုမိုသက်ရောက်လာ သည်နှင့်အမျှ ရေရှည်တည်တံ့သောဖွံ့ဖြိုးတိုးတက်မှုကို အထောက်အကူပြုစေပြီး သစ်တော များကို ရေရှည်တည်တံ့အောင် အသုံးပြုနိုင်မည့် နည်းလမ်းများရှာဖွေလာကြရာ ထိန်းသိမ်း ရေးမဟာဗျူဟာများချမှတ်ခြင်းနှင့် နည်းလမ်းများဖော်ထုတ်ခြင်းတွင် သစ်တောဧရိယာ များ၌ ခရီးသွားလုပ်ငန်းဆောင်ရွက်ခြင်းသည် နှစ်ဦးနှစ်ဖက် အကျိုးဖြစ်ထွန်းစေမည့် အလားအလာရှိသော နည်းလမ်းတစ်ခုဖြစ်ပါသည်။ ဤစာတမ်းသည် မြန်မာနိုင်ငံ၊ ရှမ်း ပြည်နယ်၊ ညောင်ရွှေမြို့နယ်ရှိ ထင်ရှားကြော်ကြားသော ခရီးသွားနေရာတစ်ခုဖြစ်ပြီး အာဆီယံအမွေ အနှစ်နေရာတစ်ခုဖြစ်သည့် အင်းလေးကန်၏ ရေဝေရေလဲဒေသတွင် ဒေသခံပြည်သူအစုအဖွဲ့ပိုင်သစ်တော အခြေပြုခရီးသွားလုပ်ငန်း စတင်ဆောင်ရွက်ရာတွင် ကြုံတွေ့ရသည့် အခွင့်အလမ်းများနှင့် အကန့်အသတ်များကို ဖော်ထုတ်တင်ပြထားပါသည်။ အင်းလေးဒေသရှိ (၆၀၀) ဧကကျယ်ဝန်းပြီး အသုံးပြုသူအဖွဲ့ဝင် (၁၃၉) ဦး စီမံအုပ်ချုပ်သည့် လွယ်ငြိမ့်ဒေသခံပြည်သူအစုအဖွဲ့ပိုင်သစ်တောတွင် မြန်မာနိုင်ငံ၏ ပထမဆုံး ဒေသခံ ပြည်သူ အစုအဖွဲ့ပိုင်သစ်တောအခြေပြုခရီးသွားလုပ်ငန်း စတင်ဆောင်ရွက်ရန် Mekong Institute ၏ ရန်ပုံငွေပံ့ပိုးမှုဖြင့်ဆောင်ရွက်သည့် သရုပ်ပြစီမံကိန်း၏ လုပ်ငန်းဆောင်ရွက်မှု အစီရင်ခံစာများနှင့် စီမံကိန်းအကောင်အထည်ဖော်ရာမှ ရရှိလာသည့် အတွေ့အကြုံ၊ သင်ခန်းစာများကိုအခြေခံ၍ ယခုစာတမ်းကို ပြုစုတင်ပြထားပါသည်။ လွယ်ငြိမ့်ဒေသခံ ပြည်သူအစုအဖွဲ့ပိုင်သစ်တောအတွင်း နမူနာကွက် (၆၂)ကွက်တွင် သစ်တောသယံဇာတ စာရင်းကောက်ယူခြင်းရလဒ်များအရ သဘာဝသစ်တောအခြေအနေ ကောင်းမွန်သည့် အပြင် ခရီးသွားလုပ်ငန်းဆောင်ရွက်ရန်လိုအပ်သည့် သဘာဝအခြေခံ အဆင့်မြှင့်တင်မှုများ ဆောင်ရွက်ရန် အခြေအနေကောင်းများရှိကြောင်း တွေ့ရှိခဲ့ရပါသည်။ ဒေသခံပြည်သူ အစုအဖွဲ့ပိုင်သစ်တော အသုံးပြုသူ (၁၁၁)ဦးအား လူမှုစီးပွားအခြေအနေ စစ်တမ်း ကောက် ယူမှုအရ အများစုမှာ ခရီးသွားလုပ်ငန်းအတွေ့အကြုံများရှိကြပြီး ဒေသခံပြည်သူ

အစုအဖွဲ့ပိုင်သစ်တောတွင် ခရီးသွားလုပ်ငန်း ဆောင်ရွက်ရန်ဆန္ဒရှိကြောင်း တွေ့ရှိခဲ့ရပါသည်။ ထို့အပြင် FAO ၏ ဈေးကွက်ဆန်းစစ်ခြင်းနှင့် ဖွံ့ဖြိုးရေး နည်းလမ်းကို အသုံးပြုကာ ညောင်ရွှေမြို့နယ်တွင် သဘာဝအခြေခံခရီးသွားလုပ်ငန်း ဆောင်ရွက်နိုင်မှု အလားအလာကို ဆန်းစစ်ခဲ့ပြီး ၎င်းဆန်းစစ်ချက်ရလဒ်အပေါ် အခြေခံ၍ (၃) နှစ်စာအတွက် စီးပွားရေး လုပ်ငန်းစီမံချက်ကို ရေးဆွဲခဲ့ပါသည်။ အဆိုပါစီမံချက်အရ (၃) နှစ်ကာလအတွင်း အသားတင် အမြတ်အနေဖြင့် မြန်မာငွေ (၁၆၄,၁၅၃,၇၀၀) ကျပ် ရရှိမည်ဟု ခန့်မှန်းထားရှိပါသည်။ လွယ်ငြိမ့် ဒေသခံပြည်သူအစုအဖွဲ့ပိုင်သစ်တောတွင် ခရီးသွားလုပ်ငန်း စတင် ဆောင်ရွက်ရာတွင် ကြုံတွေ့ရသည့် အဓိကအကန့်အသတ်များမှာ ဒေသခံပြည်သူအစုအဖွဲ့ပိုင် သစ်တောအခြေပြုခရီးသွားလုပ်ငန်းဆိုင်ရာ မူဝါဒနှင့် လမ်းညွှန်ချက်များမရှိခြင်း၊ ဆက်စပ်ပတ်သက်သူများ/အဖွဲ့အစည်းများကြား ချိတ်ဆက်ဆောင်ရွက်မှု၊ ပူးပေါင်းဆောင်ရွက်မှု အားနည်းခြင်း၊ စွမ်းဆောင်ရည်နှင့် ကနဦးရင်းနှီးမြှုပ်နှံမှု မလုံလောက်ခြင်းနှင့် အသုံးပြုသူအဖွဲ့၏ စီးပွားရေးလုပ်ငန်းဆိုင်ရာကျွမ်းကျင်မှုအားနည်းခြင်း စသည်တို့ဖြစ်ပါသည်။ တစ်ဖက်တွင်လည်း သစ်တောသယံဇာတ အခြေအနေကောင်းမွန်ခြင်း၊ အနီးအနားတွင် အထင်ကရခရီးသွားနေရာ များရှိခြင်း၊ အသုံးပြုသူများအဖွဲ့က ဒေသခံပြည်သူအစုအဖွဲ့ပိုင် သစ်တောအခြေပြု ခရီးသွားလုပ်ငန်း ဆောင်ရွက်ရန် ဆန္ဒရှိခြင်း၊ ခရီးသွားလုပ်ငန်းဆိုင်ရာ ဗဟုသုတနှင့်အတွေ့အကြုံရှိခြင်း၊ သင့်လျော်သော အုပ်ချုပ်လုပ်ကိုင်မှု စီမံချက်ရှိခြင်း၊ စီးပွားရေးလုပ်ငန်းစီမံချက်ရေးဆွဲပြီးဖြစ်ခြင်း၊ ကနဦးအဆင့်တွင် စီမံကိန်း၏ အခြေခံအဆောက်အအုံနှင့် စွမ်းဆောင်ရည်မြှင့်တင်ခြင်းပံ့ပိုးမှုရှိခြင်း၊ လက်ရှိအချိန်တွင် သစ်တောဦးစီးဌာနက တည်ဆဲသစ်တောဥပဒေ၊ ဒေသခံပြည်သူအစုအဖွဲ့ပိုင်သစ်တောလုပ်ငန်းဆိုင်ရာ ညွှန်ကြားချက်များနှင့်အညီ ဒေသခံပြည်သူအစုအဖွဲ့ပိုင်သစ်တောအခြေပြု ခရီးသွားလုပ်ငန်းကို ခွင့်ပြုကြီးကြပ်နိုင်ရေး ညွှန်ကြားချက်တစ်ခု ရေးဆွဲပြဋ္ဌာန်းရန် ဆောင်ရွက်လျက်ရှိခြင်း စသည့် အခွင့်အလမ်းများ ရှိနေပါသည်။

အဓိကစကားလုံးများ- ဒေသခံပြည်သူအစုအဖွဲ့ပိုင်သစ်တော၊ ခရီးသွားလုပ်ငန်း၊ စီးပွားရေးလုပ်ငန်း၊ ဈေးကွက်ဆန်းစစ်ခြင်း၊ အုပ်ချုပ်လုပ်ကိုင်မှုစီမံချက်၊ မူဝါဒ၊ လမ်းညွှန်ချက်များ

Opportunities and Constraints for Promoting Community Forest-based Tourism in Inle Lake Watershed Area: Lesson Learned from FD-MKCF Project

1. Introduction

Myanmar, being one of the one of the top ten countries for average annual net loss of forest area according to Global Forest Resources Assessment (FRA, 2020), is facing both deforestation and forest degradation. With 42.19% of forest cover and about 70% of rural population, Myanmar Forest Policy (1995) has recognized the importance of the provisions of the basic needs of people and local participation in the conservation and utilization of forest resources. Community forestry was initiated in Myanmar in 1990s as an effective approach to fulfill the basic needs and strengthen sustainable forest management and people participation.

The National Forestry Master Plan (2001-2030) has targeted to establish 2.27 million acres of community forests (10% of country area) by 2030, and the Community Forestry Instructions (CFI) had been adopted in 1995 as a legal tool to guide the implementation of community forestry and fulfill the national target. The revised CFI (2019) emphasizes the economic aspect of community forests by integrating the opportunities for commercialization of community forest products and services and development of viable community forest-based enterprises.

Despite the existing CFI which allows the interested CF User Groups to operate tourism enterprises in CFs based on the potential products or services, there remain many requirements to successfully initiate them, such as resource condition, eligibility criteria, monitoring system, compliance with relevant rules and regulations, and presence of relevant management plan, interest and participation of CFUG and presence of regulatory guidelines and so on.

In order to demonstrate the model of ecotourism-based CFE by initiating tourism activity in CF for the first time in Myanmar, the Forest Department has implemented the project entitled **“Demonstration of Model Community Forests to Promote Community Forestry Development and Improve Livelihood of Local Communities”** with the financial support of Mekong-Korea Cooperation Fund (MKCF) of the Mekong Institute of the Republic of Korea from December 2020 to November 2023.

The project has established three Model community forests in Nay Pyi Taw, the capital of Myanmar, and Shan State in three different thematic areas as follow:

Model 1: CF based on agroforestry in Nay Pyi Taw for development of agroforestry designs suitable with local situation.

Model 2: CFE based on non-timber forest products in Maing Thauk Community Forest in Nyaung Shwe Township, Shan State

Model 3: CFE based on tourism in Lwe Nyeint Community Forest in Nyaung Shwe Township, Shan State.

This paper will present the opportunities and constraints for promoting the Community Forest Based Tourism in Nyaung Shwe Township with a focus on Model 3, Lwe Nyeint CF, highlighting the lessons learned from project implementation.

2. Objectives

The community forestry in Myanmar has various objectives based on the potential products and services as well as different backgrounds and land use status. The common objectives are to protect the forests for water resource management, establish various forest plantations, conserve the forests and natural landscape for community-based tourism, and manage the forests for extraction of timber and non-timber forest products together with CFE development.

The main objectives of the project are as follows:

- (1) To strengthen participatory forest conservation and management, as well as improve the livelihood of local communities
- (2) To promote community forestry-based enterprise (CFE) development
- (3) To demonstrate Community Forest Based Tourism (CFT).

3. Materials and Methods

3.1. Project Area

The project site, Lwe Nyeint Community Forest, is in the watershed area of Inle Lake which is an ASEAN Heritage Site and one of the popular tourist destinations in Nyaung Shwe Township in the southern part of Shan State, Myanmar. Specifically, the 600-acre Lwe Nyeint CF is located in Inle (West) Protected Public Forest and is managed by the user group of 139 users since 2000 under the technical and financial assistance of UNDP project.

The location map of Lwe Nyeint Community Forest is shown in the following figure.

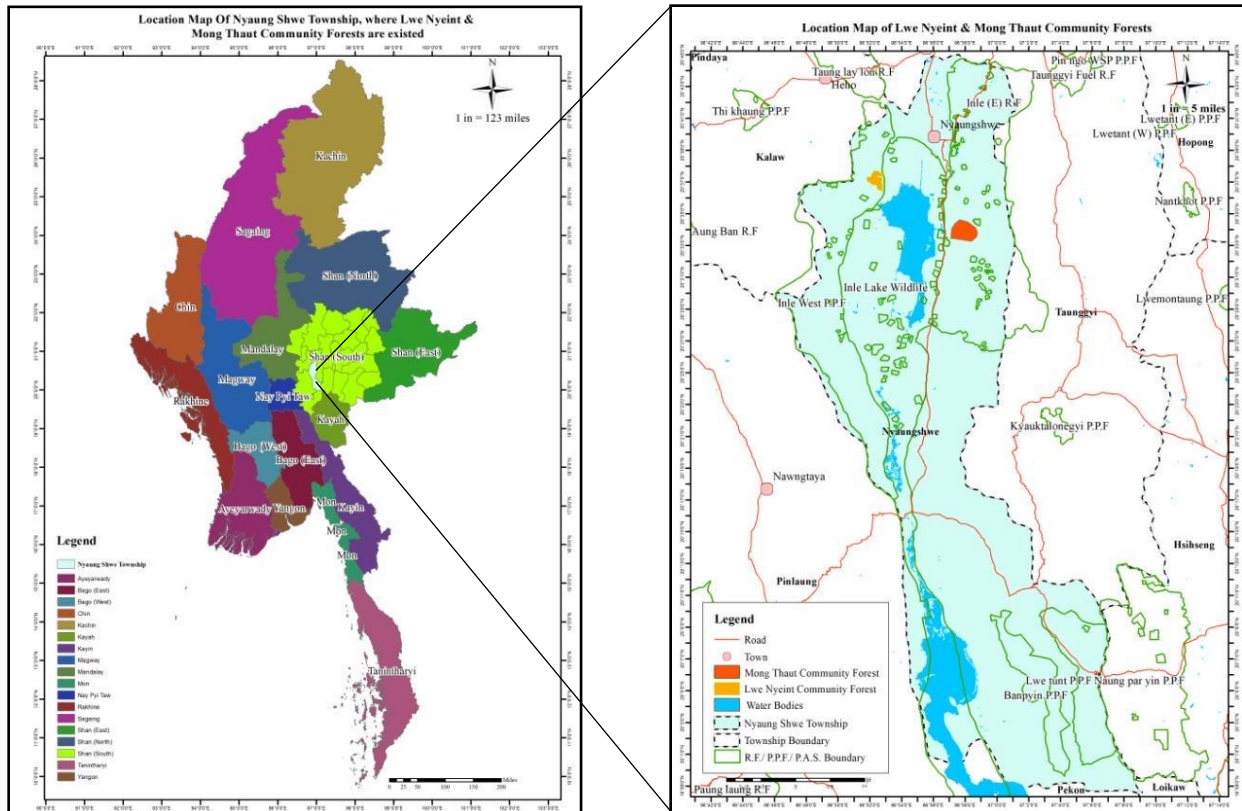


Figure 3.1. Location Map of Lwe Nyeint Community Forest

3.1.1. Local livelihood in relation to tourism

According to the socioeconomic assessment conducted by the project team, it was found that the income of the respondents of Nyaung Shwe township is mainly sourced from the livelihood activities such as agriculture (floating farm, farm, and paddy cultivation), wage labour, boat and tourist service, local snack business, hotel, and company staff. The main crops include rice, corn, pigeon bean, tomato, sugarcane, turmeric (*Curcuma longa*) and avocado. In addition, being Inle Lake in the township attracts domestic and foreign visitors. The following figure highlights the status of foreigners visiting to Nyaung Shwe Township between 2001 and 2020.

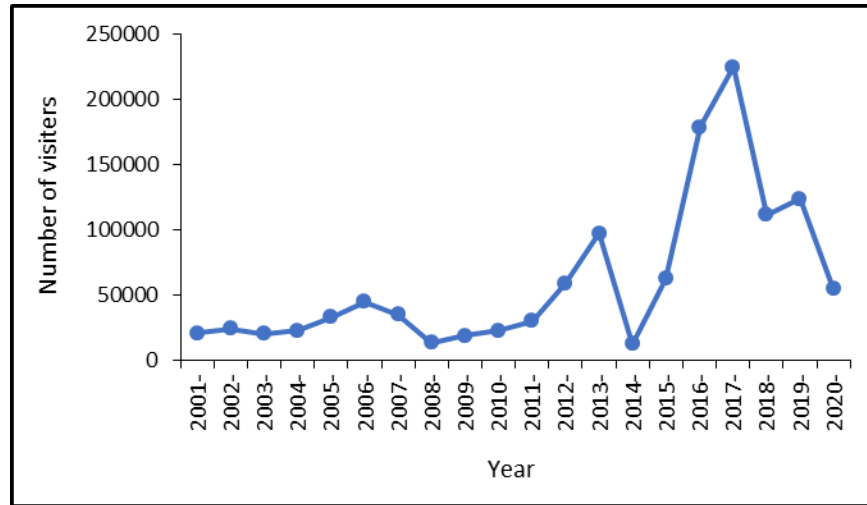


Figure 3.2. Trend of foreigners visiting Nyaung Shwe Township

Lwe Nyeint village contains 194 households with a population of 700, and the majority of residents is composed of Inn ethnicity. The village is assessable by means of boats, bikes or cars as it is about 6 miles from Nyaung Shwe. As the village is located alongside the lakeshore of Inle Lake, boat rental service is the main source of income for their livelihood after the development of tourism in Inle Lake in 2013. Prior to this, fuel wood and charcoal product in the village was high as the villages depended on Kyway Mont (local snack made with rice powder) business which needs high fuel consumption in processing procedures.

As there are famous tourist destinations in the surroundings, the Lwe Nyeint Community Forest has potential for becoming tourism-based CF enterprise, as pointed out by the socioeconomic assessment.

3.1.2. Community Forest status

The area of community forest is about 600 acres, covered by Indaing forest species including *Shorea siamensis*, *Shorea Robusta*, *Dipterocarpus tuberculatus*.

In order to assess and record the current status of the community forest and contribute to the management of CF in the long term, forest resource inventory was conducted by the CF users themselves, employing the simple inventory guidelines with close monitoring of the project staff members.

The forest resource inventory was conducted in Lwe Nyeint CF with the participation of CF users in 62 sample plots in Lwe Nyeint CF with the following objectives:

- (1) To train the CF users to conduct forest resource inventory by themselves
- (2) To provide a scientific and feasible forest inventory method to the CF users
- (3) To calculate the yield of CF in a relatively short time
- (4) To help CF users know the yield of their community forests and make better management
- (5) To partly contribute to District Forest Management
- (6) To monitor and evaluate the CF

Based on analysis results of inventory in 62 sample plots, it is estimated that in the 600 acres (242.8 ha) of CF, there are 124,839 trees, with average diameter 45 cm (17.7 inches) and average height 13 cm (42.7 ft), and an estimated volume of 243,067 cubic feet. Conserving the current condition of community forest will greatly contribute to the conservation of Inle Lake watershed as the consumption of fuelwood has already dropped in recent years. Table 3.1 and Figure 3.3 show the estimated stem number and volume in different diameter classes of trees in Lwe Nyeint CF.

Table 3.1. Stem number and estimated volume by diameter classes of trees in Lwe Nyeint CF

District		Taunggyi		Township		Nyaung Shwe		Village		Loi Nyeint		Forest block		U Myo Tun									
08-14.9 cm		15-19.9 cm		20-24.9 cm		25-29.9 cm		30-34.9 cm		35-39.9 cm		40-44.9 cm		45-49.9 cm		50-54.9 cm		55-59.9 cm		60-64.9 cm		> 65 cm	
diameter class		diameter class		diameter class		diameter class		diameter class		diameter class		diameter class		diameter class		diameter class		diameter class		diameter class		diameter class	
Stem number	Volume	Stem number	Volume	Stem number	Volume	Stem number	Volume	Stem number	Volume	Stem number	Volume	Stem number	Volume	Stem number	Volume	Stem number	Volume	Stem number	Volume	Stem number	Volume	Stem number	Volume
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
14752	780.7	5462	770.5	1833	483.9	599	274.2	254	180.2	218	214.9	200	256.2	36	67.8	0	0.0	54	160.6	0	0.0	0	0.0

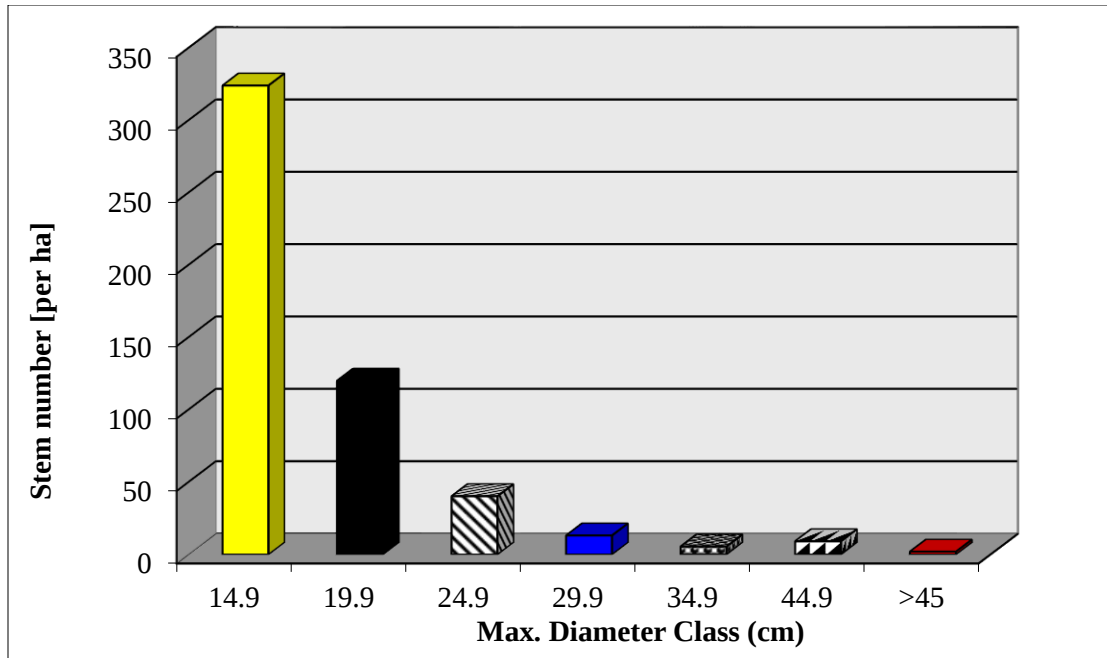


Figure 3.3. Number of trees in Lwe Nyeint CF by diameter class

Table 3.2 shows Area figures of stand number, volume and basal area and Table 3.3 the stem number and volume of trees in Lwe Nyeint CF. The list of tree species found in the CF is shown in Table 3.4.

Table 3.2 Area figures of stand number, volume and basal area

Area figures	Per ha		per ac	
Stem number	514	ha	208	acre
Volume	70.0	m ³ /ha	1001.05	f ³ /acre
Basal area	10.0	m ² /ha	2.29	f ² /acre

Table 3.3. The stem number and volume of trees in Lwe Nyeint CF

Stand figures (block)	Quantity	Unit	Quantity	Unit
Block size	242.8	ha	600	acre
Sample plots	62	plots	62	plots
Average diameter	45.0	cm	17.7	inch
Average height	13.0	m	42.7	feet
Stem number	124,839	no	124,839	no
Volume	17,008	m ³	243,067	f ³

Table 3.4. List of tree species found in Lwe Nyeint CF

Sr.	Common Name	Scientific name	Family name
1	Yindaik	<i>Dalbergia cultrata</i>	PAPILIONACEAE
2	Ingyin	<i>Pentacme siamensis</i>	DIPTEROCARPACEAE
3	Lun	<i>Buchanania lanzan</i>	ANACARDIACEAE
4	Tayaw	<i>Grewia polygama</i>	TILIACEAE
5	Magyibauk	<i>Randia dumetorum</i>	RUBIACEAE
6	Didu	<i>Salmalia insignis</i>	BOMBACACEAE
7	Zibyu	<i>Emblica officinalis</i>	EUPHORBIACEAE
8	Shaw	<i>Sterculia urens</i>	STERCULIACEAE
9	Pauk	<i>Butea monosperma</i>	PAPILIONACEAE
10	Inn	<i>Dipterocarpus tuberculatus</i>	DIPTEROCARPACEAE
11	Thit-e	<i>Castanea sativa</i>	FAGACEAE
12	Letpan	<i>Salmalia malabarica/ Bombax malabaricum</i>	BOMBACACEAE
13	Thit-cho	<i>Sideroxylon assamicum</i>	SAPOTACEAE
14	Shawphyu	<i>Sterculia versicolor</i>	STERCULIACEAE
15	Ziphyu	<i>Zizyphus jujuba</i>	RHAMNACEAE
16	Yone	<i>Anogeissus acuminata</i>	COMBRETACEAE
17	Gyo	<i>Schleichera oleosa</i>	SAPINDACEAE
18	Taw-zi	<i>Zizyphus rugosa</i>	RHAMNACEAE
19	Taung-htan	<i>Livistona speciosa</i>	PALMAE
20	Thitsi	<i>Melanorrhoea usitata</i>	ANACARDIACEAE

3.1.3. CFE Potential and Market Analysis

To develop sustainable CFE based on tourism activities, an expert team of the project has assessed the potential of CFE and market, employing FAO's innovative market analysis and development (MA&D) approach of FAO. The MA&D approach is a step-by-step process that includes screening the following five areas of sustainable enterprise development to identify the products with the highest potential success:

- (1) Sustainability of the resource
- (2) Social sustainability
- (3) Market sustainability
- (4) Legal and institutional sustainability
- (5) Technological sustainability.

By 4 phases or stages (from the assessment to the start-up of the enterprise) as shown in Figure 3.4, the potential entrepreneurs follow a sequence of systematic steps to ensure that all critical elements are included in order to minimize any risks linked to establishing their enterprises and to select the best product among several possible for their business. The selection process is performed step by step screening the, so called, five areas of the enterprise development. It means that each piece of information collected, and each decision made takes into account the environmental, social, institutional and technical factors, as well as commercial and financial aspects of a product.

The screening of these five areas of enterprise development is performed step by step through the four stages as shown in Figure 3.4.

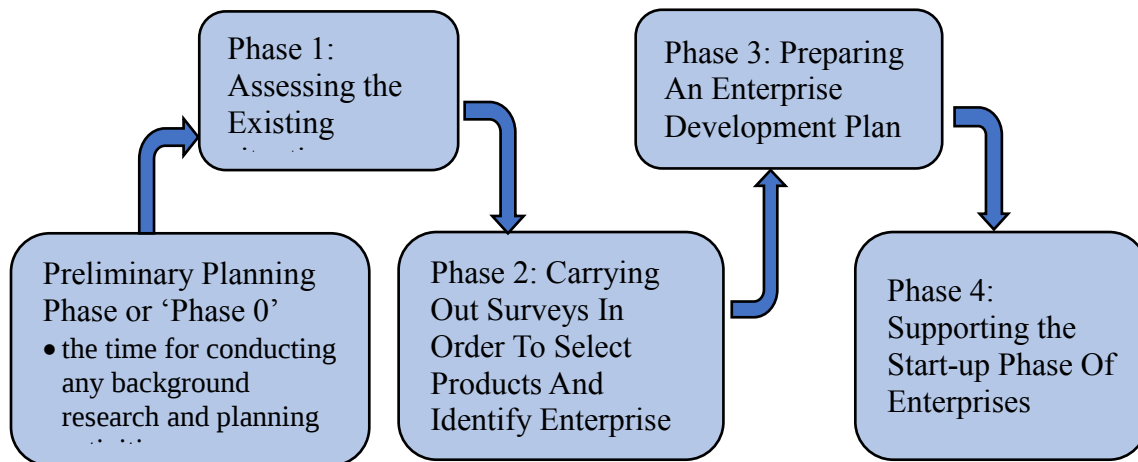


Figure 3.4. Four Phases of Market Analysis and Development (MA & D)

A mixed method of quantitative and qualitative approaches was employed. Survey questionnaires, key informant interviews and in-depth interviews were applied for data collection. 19 in-depth interviews were conducted for Lwe Nyeint's CBT initiatives.

Through household survey and focus group discussion with 19 CF User household members of Lwe Nyeint CF, the resource map of CF was drawn, natural distribution and seasonal calendar of the resources were collected, and the flow of various marketing channels and different actors were identified.

Secondary data was also compiled from the relevant organizations. Consultation meeting with the relevant stakeholders was conducted using SWOT analysis to have recommendations and suggestions on the outputs of group discussion. The potential services for CFE were selected based on five areas scoring method (FAO, 2011).

3.2. Results and Discussion

Figure 3.5 explains the current situation of landscape in CF. By this figure, CF site located besides of the road and good access to visit CF while visiting to Inle lake, Kaung Tai village to see traditional food business and hot spring. Within CF, Ingyin, Pine forest and wild animals can be seen. Local and foreign visitors entered into the CF for sight seeing and for the visit to forest using the temporary trail.

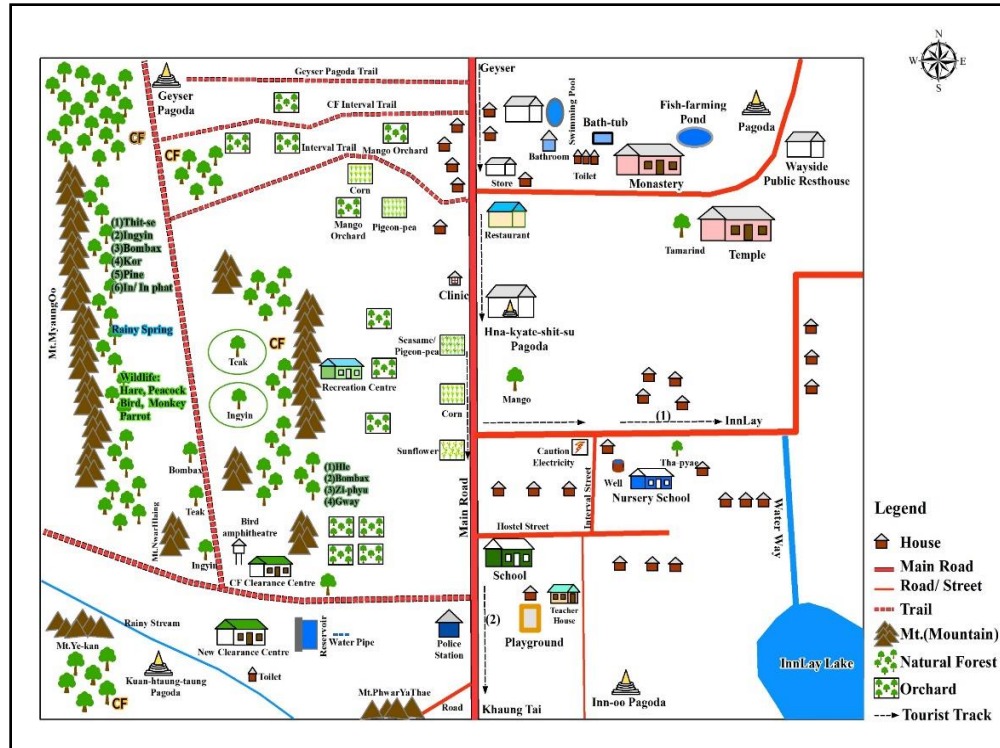


Figure 3.5. Resource Map of Lwe Nyeint Community Forest

The analysis result showed that the socio-cultural score is very strong for of Community Forest based Tourism in Lwe Nyeint CF. However, the creation of natural resources to attract visitors and the institutional and legal support are a little bit small. This is because although the area is one of the famous visiting places in Myanmar, there is a little visitor to come to visit that place due to COVID 19 travel restrictions. From a technological point of view, handicraft training for bamboo and NTFPs and tourism trainings related to natural places should be necessarily and urgently conducted with support of Forest Department.

Table 3.5 shows the results of SWOT Analysis using consultation meeting with relevant stakeholders to determine the status of community-based tourism and to clarify the locally required resources and skills and current gaps.

Table 3.5. SWOT analysis of stakeholders on potential of Tourism based CFE.

Strength - Good community participation - Diversified by-products for tourists (Arts and crafts, Kyway Monh, Trekking etc.) - Many tourist attractions (Hot springs, etc.,)	Weakness - Lack of marketing, advertising - Lack of vocational training for local people - Poor infrastructure
Opportunity - Policy support - Improved living standards of local people - More job opportunities	Threat - Technology - Funding (Budget allocation) - In short terms, facing challenges from pandemics or global economic stagnation

3.3. Major Findings and lessons learned from project.

Regarding the initiation of CFT in Lwe Nyeint CF, the followings are the major findings from socioeconomic assessment, CFE potential and market analysis, and lessons learned throughout implementation of the project:

- (1) Nearly most of the community forests in Lwe Nyeint village are aimed for water resource conservation, basic needs fulfilment and socioeconomic development, income generation from CF products has not apparently found.
- (2) According to foreign travel records, the outbreak of Covid-19 has led to a drop in tourism revenue.
- (3) CF users in Lwe Nyeint village are willing to participate in CF for CFT but they do not have knowledge about tourism and need the investments.
- (4) There was very limited or no previous study or research on the economic valuation of the CF ecosystem services linked with tourism activities.
- (5) Considering the current situation in Myanmar, the CFT may rely on local visitors rather than international visitors.
- (6) Although CFE development is encouraged and enabling conditions are created for potential CFs, relevant CFT guidelines are not yet in place.

3.4. Opportunities

Nyaung Shwe has a strong potential to develop ecotourism initiative due to the high number of domestic and international visitors before Covid-19 pandemics. In compliance with the MA & D guidelines, a 3-year CFE Enterprise Development Plan for Lwe Nyeint CF has been prepared as one of the project outputs. As an annual projection, the net annual profit would be 54,717,900 MMK, and the profit for the three consecutive years 164,153,700 MMK. The plan includes description of unique features and origin of the products which would be sustainably operated by means of nature-based mechanisms (e.g, walking trails, signposts of scientific names of trees, natural waste disposal facilities, wild medicinal plants etc.). In addition, the project could provide the initial funding (revolving fund) whereas the mechanism has not started yet.

Despite the high fuelwood and charcoal consumption, the natural forest is still in good condition, and can further be improved for ecotourism development in line with the Community Forestry Instructions (CFI). Moreover, the active participation, positive experience of CF users, and willingness to operate CFT are the key factors that will enable the CF to become a successful model of CFT in Myanmar.

The project has organized training on CFT and market analysis, and bamboo craft trainings for the CF users in addition to basic CF trainings. The 20-year-old management plan could also be revised in accordance with the CFI, integrating important components such as financial management, rules and regulations for CF users, and commercialization of CF products and services.

Moreover, the project could establish the revolving fund of 2,329,000 MMK (1112 USD) for Lwe Nyeint CF so that the user group will be able to manage their CF without financial constraints beyond project life span. The fund will be a valuable source of capital for sustainable management of the CF and initiation of CFT in line with the enterprise development plan.

To regulate CFT, the Forest Department is currently making progress in drafting the CFT guidelines. As the CFT will be operated in community forests, the guidelines need to be comprehensive ones that cover different types of CFT in the country and in compliance with Forest Laws, CFI and other standing laws.

3.5. Constraints

The implementation of the project in Lwe Nyeint CF has highlighted many constraints and requirements for CFT initiation in community forests. Most CF management plans need to be revised in accordance with the CFI, and some potential CFs need to integrate commercial aspects in developing a new management plan or revising an existing one.

In order to manage and utilize the CFs, the CF users need the capacity and knowledge of existing CFI, market potential of their products and services. The availability of funding, especially from international support is the key to CF and CFE development and capacity building for both Forest department staff and CF users. However, due to funding constraints and limited number of extension staff, most of the CF users in Myanmar does not have the opportunity to improve their capacity.

As the regulatory guideline for CFT is currently not yet in place, the Forest Department cannot be able to allow the operation of tourism activities in CFs. At the same time, there are some CF users who fail to follow current CFI and operate tourism activities in the CFs. When a guideline is adopted for regulating CFT, many CFs will have the opportunity to promote to enterprises, and a win-win situation can be created for social, economic and environmental benefits of CF users as well as fulfilling the long-term national goal of community forestry.

3.6. Recommendations

Efforts are required in Community Forestry for rehabilitating the area as well as meet people's needs. Blank and degraded areas in the community forests should be regenerated by artificial regeneration through participatory approach.

In the degraded areas, natural regeneration is the best option for environmental conservation particularly soil erosion control in forest land of watershed area. To address poverty alleviation and environmental degradation simultaneously, community forest based tourism should be encouraged through policy support, funding and participatory approach especially in the areas like Inle Lake watershed area which is environmentally and culturally unique.

To implement the tourism based CFE in Lwe Nyeint CF, the followings are recommended to support as priority through group discussion with CFUGs:

- (1) Implementation of village cultural walk/ Canopy walk
- (2) Implementation of roads/ trails for mountain biking
- (3) Handicraft shops
- (4) Home stay facilities
- (5) Distribution of pamphlets
- (6) Community members to be trained as tourism guides
- (7) Labelling scientific name of trees in CF area
- (8) Study tour to successful CFT areas.

As Lwe Nyeint CF is the first model of CFT initiative in Myanmar, it will become a demonstration CF when the Forest Department adopts a regulatory guideline for CFT. Moreover, in order to share the lessons learned and experience of CFT initiation, there should be a network of CF User Groups in Nyaung Shwe Township with the support of district or township level CF Unit of Forest Department.

4. Conclusion

While legal reform led to commercial manufacturing of forest products, an increasing amount of support for local communities on forest-based enterprise and forest protection, improving market network connection and technical assistance from Forest Department are likely to grow in the implementation of community forestry enterprises (CFE) recently. However, financial constraints like achieving loan for implementation and other restrictions still exist.

Revealing funding opportunities through international cooperation is one of the most possible ideas for CFE development. Developing project proposals on CFT and related capacity building training, research and model CFT should be encouraged.

According to the findings of the project, it is noted that most of the donors and Non-Governmental Organizations and International Non-Governmental Organizations usually support for planting, awareness raising, education and revolving fund and not for access to market information and development. Therefore, the critical role of market access and linkage needs to be prioritized in future projects.

The process of adopting a CFT regulatory guideline should be performed with momentum as it will strongly support the interests of CF Users and highlight the important role of CFEs in both sustainable forest management and socioeconomic development of CF users.

5. Acknowledgement

Firstly, the project team of Forest Department would like to express our heartfelt thankfulness to Mekong-Republic of Korea Cooperation Fund (MKCF) of Mekong Institute for providing the fund to implement this project successfully.

Moreover, our heart-felt thanks also go to the villagers (community forest user groups) from the project sites: Pha Laung Village in Pyinmana Township, and Mine Thauk and Lwe Nyeint villages in Nyaung Shwe Township for their active participation and cooperation in the trainings, forest operations and other voluntary activities.

The team would also like to acknowledge the generous support from the local forest department staff for their kind assistance and proper arrangements in the field surveys and in the discussions with the local communities.

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Photo Records



Inle Lake Viewpoint in Lwe Nyeint CF



Forestry Inventory in CF



Viewpoint and Presentation Hall of Lwe Nyeint CF



Revolving Fund Handover Ceremony at Shan State Forest Department Office



Group discussion with Community Forest User Group members of Lwe Nyeint CF



SWOT analysis with relevant stakeholders in Nyaung Shwe Township



Household survey with CFUG members



Transact walk in surveyed CF