LIFT Uplands Programme Framework

July 2015

Background

Since 2011, LIFT has funded fifteen projects in the uplands from the Countrywide and Learning and Innovation Programmes, mostly in Chin, Kachin and Shan state. In 2014-15, LIFT has designed a new geographic programme specific for the upland areas of Myanmar, which includes a dedicated provision for support to areas emerging from conflict. From September 2014 to January 2015, LIFT completed a scoping assessment of the uplands and produced a scoping report and conflict sensitive principles (see Annex 3) to support the design of the programme. This work included the organisation of a consultative workshop with partners active in the uplands on 17 October 2014. Based on the scoping findings and learnings from previous LIFT upland's projects, LIFT has designed a new Uplands Programme Framework that is described in this document.

The scoping report[1] is provided independently from the Programme Framework. It is a complementary document to be used as a reference regarding the various issues encountered across a vast geographic area. It provides useful analyses, references and recommendations, but it does not limit itself to the scope of the programme as defined in this framework. In preparing proposals for submission to LIFT, applicants are advised to align themselves first and foremost with the Programme Framework.

Scope of the programme

The proposed framework provides for the support of projects/activities designed according to the agreed priorities and outcomes of the Uplands programme. Flexibility for potential partners to propose activities that are grounded in the local context is provided. The Uplands Programme Framework defines 3 target populations and 7 components for the targeting of activities that respond to priority needs across the diversity of the Uplands and agreed thematic issues of significance to LIFT's comparative advantage.

The programme carefully aligns with LIFT's purpose to increase livelihoods' resilience and nutrition of poor people in Myanmar by focussing on interventions that increase income, food availability, utilization and stability of access to food. The programme is not intended for replacing or adding resources to other funding initiatives with different purpose, whether for peace building, humanitarian aid or large economic infrastructure work. The programme is looking to complement those initiatives in a way that does not jeopardize or pre-empt peace efforts, offers development opportunities beyond humanitarian aid, and is based on a clear understanding of the local context and in agreement with local stakeholders.

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[1] LIFT Uplands Programme Scoping Assessment Report 2015. This will be available on the website in July 2015.

Conflict sensitive principles

Noting the significance of conflict affected communities in Myanmar's uplands LIFT has defined twelve conflict sensitive principles (see Annex 3) to guide the implementation of the programme and to raise awareness on the key issues that LIFT should be considering when working in conflict affected areas and seeking to '*Do No Harm*'.

Guidance is also provided on what should be considered for their application throughout the project cycle. Most of the principles reflect basic good development practice, though with explanation to varying degrees on what this should mean in the conflict context.

Some of these principles have implications for selecting potential partners for programme implementation. Particularly where conflict sensitivity is high, LIFT will favour partners who have a sufficient contextual understanding, have already built trust relationships with local stakeholders and whose intervention is supportive of local institutions, whether formal or informal.

3 target populations

Myanmar's uplands present a complex and diverse operating environment. They not only represent a considerable area covering over 55% of Myanmar territory, about 23% of the population. The Uplands are also confronted with a large diversity of issues and different conditions in terms of access and economic development. It is the home of a large diversity of ethnic, political and armed groups with different territorial claims. While it is impossible to encompass all the Upland diversity in a small number of sub-zones, the proposed programme distinguishes three different broad contexts or target populations that require specific operational modalities (refer to the table in Annex 1):

1) Displaced people
2) Remote upland communities with low food security and poor access to services
3) Productive communities with potential for engagement in value chain development

Previous LIFT Upland's experience relates well to #2 and #3, and #1 responds to LIFT decision to respond to areas emerging from conflict. Each of the community types offer different opportunities that are relevant to LIFT priorities provided for in the new LIFT strategy. The three target populations provide an opportunity to orientate the approach taken to the characteristics, needs and opportunities represented by each group.

1) Displaced people

Internally Displaced Persons are an important target for the programme: IDPs may be either inside or outside of camps. This includes persons, households and communities who face a history of regular displacement (either permanent or temporary) and who seek the security necessary to stabilize and improve their well-being. It also targets the receiving communities to help them to manage the influx of new villagers, to expand the village services and facilitate the new comers' integration.

While cross border displacement constitutes a significant population to be considered and targeted, plans addressing their status and resettlement in Myanmar are at present unclear. A 'wait and see' approach is thus suggested.

Targeting: The key factor for selecting intervention will be the partner's legitimacy to operate in the area rather than a specific location. *The programme will target areas where IDPs are currently located in number, where conflict is not active and access is allowed for LIFT operation*, in particular:
  - The Southeast Kachin and North Shan.

In Kachin, most IDPs have been living in camps for over two years. This situation is expected to continue over the medium to long-term. As such, the livelihoods of these people require special attention. The camps are mostly located around Myitkyina and Bahmo. Camps in KIA controlled areas are not accessible and in an active conflict zone. This situation may change in the course of the programme and will need frequent re-evaluation.

In North Shan, camps are located mostly in the Kokine region. In the Palaung area, IDPs have taken refuge with families in more secure villages rather than in camps.

  - The Southeast: Kayah, Mon, Tanintharyi and Kayin states.

There are high numbers of IDPs in the Southeast. Many village communities have been confronted with decades of regular displacement, but are now able to consider a more permanent settlement and investment in local farm systems. Many of these IDPs have been displaced to other villages. Some of these villages have accepted the IDPs as migrants to the village and allowed their settlement.

Whether under cease fire or not, these areas represent considerable challenges for LIFT operation and conflict sensitivity is high; not only because of some recent clashes between armed groups, but also due to the local stakeholders' perception of the role of development operations. In Kachin, local NGOs working with IDPs have made statements against moving toward more development oriented support. As the basic needs are not yet met, they are requesting additional humanitarian support as a matter of priority. In the Southeast, development efforts have been perceived as a way for the government to circumvent a deeper political dialogue that meets the ethnic groups' grievances. In both places and in Northern Shan, dialogue at local level between ethnic groups and governments is still limited and doesn't follow the pace of the discussions at union level. Hence, LIFT will need to consider carefully the way it communicates the programme and its intentions. Our partners will need direct support to avoid threatening their institutional relationships with the government while engaging with local ethnic groups. Trust building will need to be the priority in establishing project activity in these areas (i.e. avoid expectation of short term economic and development results). The LIFT conflict sensitive principles (see Annex 3) will be of primary importance.

The activities proposed therefore aim in the first instance at building trust between stakeholders. This means that LIFT development support will initially be transitional and complementary to existing humanitarian aid:
  - Help IDPs in camp or temporary settlement to rebuild their lives and start thinking about their future, whether in a rural community and in a permanent settlement, or through new job opportunities in rural towns and further.

- Support displaced communities to settle permanently, improve their village-level infrastructures, livelihood opportunities and linkage to outside services
- Support receiving communities to integrate IDPs
- Address chronic malnutrition and child stunting

2) Remote upland communities with low food security and poor access to services

Large areas of the Upland are remote and sparsely populated, especially where the terrain is elevated and often still forested. Traditionally, the more remote communities are subsistence level households depending on shifting cultivation, livestock and forest resources. Many of those communities are poorly connected to the government services and have lower nutritional status.

Nevertheless their livelihoods are changing significantly and over the last fifty years have progressively achieved more economic integration with the lowlands and nearby valleys through the development of cash crops, perennials and migration. The higher elevation provides a suitable environment and comparative advantages for a number of perennials and high value crops (fruits, nuts, spices, flowers, temperate vegetables, tea, coffee, etc.) which have less potential in the warmer climate of the lowlands. Todays' upland agricultural economy is increasingly diverse, but still far behind their real potential due to a lack of research and investment.

Conflict and low opportunities for education and higher income jobs outside agriculture have led to high migration levels in-country and further abroad. In some cases households have become increasingly reliant on remittances. Remittances have a potential for driving a new economic development.

Not everybody has the capacity and/or the will to migrate and many farmers are investing in new productions, but lack the appropriate technologies and resources. Landless rates are much lower and in most of these areas land access is not a major constraint while land development and productivity (e.g. access to water) are the main constraints especially for the poorest and households with insufficient labor.

The programme will aim at identifying and expanding new agricultural opportunities for these communities. Investment in perennial crops, irrigation and new technologies will help smallholder farmers to step up in a sustainable way. It will also consider support related to migration and skill development for those who choose to step out rather than step up, or households that choose to do both.

In areas with poor services, LIFT will work with the communities to improve nutrition, access to water and sanitation and other public services. Many upland areas are "brown areas" with a mix of government and ethnic authorities giving a complex political situation. In such contexts, the programme will follow a conflict sensitive approach. Small ethnic groups have had a long experience of exclusion from public services, active assimilation and sometimes dispossession from their local resources (land and forests). New state governments are looking at new ways to engage with the local communities. Improved governance and trust building between stakeholders will be important components to be adapted to the specific context, especially for the governance of natural resources.

The proposed geographical coverage for the sub-programme includes areas in Northern, Southern and Eastern Shan that are less connected to the economic corridors (see below) and are not in active conflict areas. The programme will target areas with low food security/nutritional indicators. This means those areas that are more remote with high poverty levels, but with economic potential can be considered, e.g. Chin, Northern Kachin and Nagaland. Remoteness and low population density should not detract from the merit of intervention results.

3) Productive communities engaged in value chains

Areas around the main rural towns and close to the roads connecting to Myanmar's borders, in particular to China have a strong pull factor in terms of markets and job creation even for rural communities further afield. They are amongst the most dynamic in the country and offer tremendous opportunities for smallholder farmers, landless households to step up both in the farming sector and small scale agribusiness, and to step out to off-farm jobs.

In the last ten years new value chains have expanded such as hybrid corn, sugarcane, rubber, coffee, etc. These boom crops have increased significantly the incomes of the farmers who have been able to invest without relying excessively on expensive credit. The private sector has made significant investment and provided techniques and inputs to contracted farmers. More firms are looking to invest while small enterprises based on local investments are established for transport, trade, transformation, processing, and also agricultural services. The Shan state is mechanizing faster than the rest of the country through smallholder investment. There is still a large potential to diversify the range of economic activities available to farmers and non-farmers and to help smallholders and landless grasp new opportunities, especially through cheaper financial services.

These changes also bring serious challenges for more vulnerable households. They depend on expensive credit for inputs, intensify production on slope lands without proper soil erosion control, abandon livestock production and loose the benefit of organic fertilisers. They also often enter into unfair farming contracts and in some cases are dispossessed from their primary resources (land, water, forests) due to high competition and rising prices.

The programme will promote more sustainable farming practices that are economically competitive, provide fairer natural resource allocation, more inclusive of women, and work to reduce farmer dependency on loans and oligopolistic markets. Interventions will engage farm households in both on-farm and off-farm economic opportunities through a value chain approach and active engagement with the private sector. It will help establish farmer organizations, improve access to agricultural services and better contracts. The target is not the village communities, but producers and businesses that are working within a similar value chain. The programme will also consider options to increase land security for smallholders and women, new opportunities for local job creation outside the farming sector and migration.

The proposed main economic corridors where LIFT will invest are:
- Northern Shan: axis PyinOoLwin – Lashio – Muse
- Southern Shan & Kayah: triangle Kalaw – Taunggyi – Loikaw and neighboring townships
- Kayin: axis Hpa-An – Myawaddy
- Northern Chin: axis Hakha – Tedim – Kale

Northern Chin is by far less dynamic than the Shan, but its agriculture systems are transforming and more market oriented than before towards India and Myanmar lowlands. Partners are encouraged to look at new approaches for working there outside only village-based intervention.

7 thematic components

Seven thematic components (intervention types) are provided to guide project design and selection:
1) Rural finance
2) Farm Advisory Services and Producer Groups
3) Equitable and sustainable natural resources management
4) Off-farm employment, new livelihood opportunities and safe migration opportunities
5) Nutrition
6) Social protection and access to collective/public services
7) Pro-poor policy advocacy, evidence-based learning and CSO capacity building

Each programme component includes a key outcome that all project activity should support.

Component 1: Rural finance

Outcome: Smallholders and landless have an increased access to adequate and affordable financial services.

Access to rural finance is dealt with separately in the Financial Inclusion Programme that will target support to existing financial institutions to achieve sustainability, and increase their supply of a broad array of demand-driven financial services that serve diversified market segments. It will support the rural population across a spectrum of financing investments and activities through MFIs and commercial banks (see more details in www.lift-fund.org/financial-inclusion):

- Expansion of existing pro-poor financial services
- Investment financing for agricultural and off-farm small businesses (including agro-processing)
- Mobilization of savings
- Market development assistance for institutional sustainability of MFIs and downscaling financial services of commercial banks
- Partial Risk Guarantee Fund (PRGF)

The component 1 was launched in February 2015 with a national call for proposals for financial inclusion.

Component 2: Farm Advisory Services and Producer Groups

Outcome: Smallholder farmers achieve increased farm production and income through the establishment of farm advisory services, producer groups and better opportunities along the value chain.

This component should exhibit a small-scale farmer focus. It aims to support smallholder farmers to "step up" and find new opportunities to enhance agriculture productivity, build income and food diversity. These opportunities will vary greatly depending on the specific context, environment, local market dynamisms, etc. Applicants are encouraged to carry out a careful agriculture system

diagnosis to identify current practices, bottlenecks in the value chains and existing agrarian dynamisms in the targeted area.

This component is expected to directly assist the LIFT high level outcomes: increase incomes of rural households; and increase the resilience of rural households and their communities.

- **Agriculture extension and farm advisory services**

The component will support the provision of technical advice on new and adapted technologies that will help farmers and small-scale agribusiness to access appropriate technical and farming system options that maximise production, reduce production risk, reduce post-harvest losses, provide value chain opportunities, and address the challenges of soil conservation, water management.

Applicants are encouraged to design activities that go beyond specific technologies and consider approaches and methods fitting the local context to ensure adoption and sustainability, especially peer-learning and on-demand services. The purpose is to increase the farmer capacity to take well informed decisions about farm management and consider the risks of investing in new technologies, crops, etc. Sound economic analyses and business planning should guide the decision process. Beyond specific crops, the intervention needs to consider the overall farm environment and household financial management.

Project extension systems should mobilise public and commercial farm advisory services and build capacity of government staff and input suppliers on climate smart agriculture options that support higher and more reliable yields.

The component will promote agricultural technologies and methods that improve soil and water conservation. They will be climate smart, nutrition sensitive and sustainable. Measures will be introduced that mitigate soil erosion and sedimentation through improved farming systems management. This might include, for example, improved crop rotation, inter-cropping and multi-cropping, organic composting, and nitrogen fixing cover crops.

- **Access to quality inputs, small mechanization, storage and processing equipment**

The extension services will also play an important role in linking finance providers, input suppliers, smallholder farmers, processors, and government on the introduction of new farm and processing technologies (e.g., greenhouses, climate smart irrigation, small scale mechanisation, agribusiness processing) which can be financed through the LIFT Financial Inclusion programme.

Alongside advisory services and access to loans, specific grants may be considered to bridge the investment risk of specific target groups that have the potential but would otherwise not innovate. This could include assistance that provides access and/or adds value to crops through the use of new inputs, post-harvest, storage and processing techniques or small scale mechanization that is simple and inexpensive and reduces harvest loss and transaction costs.

Formal financial services are excluded from this call unless they are delivered sustainably through informal farmer organisations, and for financial services that are not already available through existing formal institutions in the target area.

- **Support to agro-forestry systems, high value perennials value chains**

The variety of environments in the uplands provides multiple opportunities to develop new or emerging products and value chains. This includes agriculture, forestry and enterprises. The programme will promote high value crops, seed stock, processing and marketing of diversified products, commercial and niche products where suitable to Upland agro-ecosystems, and where farmer and small-medium commercial capacities can contribute to food security, market demand, and environment conditions. Products might include: elephant yam, cardamom, coffee, grape, honey, coffee, tea, nutraceuticals, essential oils, spices, resins, ornamental plants, orchid breeding, etc. Bamboo planting by communities and bamboo processing by responsible investors may also contribute to sustainable livelihoods and resource conservation. Proper linkage to the private sector and knowledge of the final market are fundamental for successful interventions.

The programme will prioritize interventions that focus on existing products and value chains that have a proven high economic potential and where there is a strong private sector engagement.

- **Organisational support to viable producer groups**

Accessing market opportunities and tackling value chain bottle necks may require the creation of productive interest groups delivering services to their members. Services may include contract farming, extension and information sharing, agricultural service provision, storage and bulking of product, processing, transport, quality assurance, small financial services. The programme will consider organisational and financial support to existing or new producer groups that are established based on a sound business model and clear needs assessment. Depending on the context, remoteness and access to market, these groups may be community-based or interest groups around a specific value chain. The institutional model for these groups (eg cooperative, informal group, commercial enterprise.) might be varied and adapted to the context and purpose.

- **Inclusive business planning, marketing and contract facilitation**

This component may also assist farmer negotiation with the private sector. It also recognizes powerful interests backing current markets. The aim is to improve market access and market terms for upland smallholder farmers. This should ensure that markets and value chains benefit the rural poor and increase the bargaining power of smallholder farmers and their producer groups. It should also provide for improved product quality. This may include a number of interventions such as:
- Facilitation of contractual agreements, contract farming;
- Crop value chain and market analysis;
- Locally appropriate certification, labelling, branding and the establishment of voluntary certification schemes and/or participatory guarantee systems (PGS) as community-based (and lower cost) alternatives to third party certification;
- Education and coordination of value chain actors supporting public and private sector partnerships through alliance building (eg within and/or between farmers, traders, millers, agribusiness);
- Building the marketing capacities of smallholders and local SMEs;
- Developing farmer markets and/or trade centres for commodity assembly/pooling and achieving economies of scale.

Component 3: Equitable and sustainable natural resource management

Outcome: Rural households are more resilient due to more equitable access and sustainable use of local natural resources.

Outcome: Women are involved in local decision making processes on natural resource management and have equitable access to land.

Access to land, water, forest and other natural resources are fundamental to upland household and community food security, resilience and economic potential. Forests are an important part of upland agro-ecosystems whether through shifting cultivation, specific wild food or valuable products collection or for the role they play in watershed protection. In many parts of the uplands the forest environment are under stress and local communities are unable or prevented to develop sustainable management practices due to unclear and contested rights. Moreover the legal security of accessing natural resources and land tenure is not always associated with economic security or the capacity of the farmers to extract the economic benefits linked to the natural resources or land tenure. This component will support small farmers and local communities to secure their right to access, to strengthen their capacity to manage sustainably, invest in, and valorise their natural resources.

While gender is a fundamental cross-cutting issue across the entire programme, a specific outcome is defined within this component to ensure that the role of women is properly considered in natural resource management.

This component will mainly support the LIFT high level outcome to increase the resilience of rural households and their communities. It might also have an effect on long term incomes that might not be measured during the project life.

The main visible forms of agro-ecosystem degradation include: soil erosion, loss of soil fertility, and deforestation. This is caused by a number of factors including, natural causes exacerbated by climate change (decreased soil fertility in substantive upland areas, increased intensity and severity of floods and droughts), and human causes (eg deficiencies in land use and sustainable planning, demographic changes, logging, fuel wood collection and lack of land tenure). Recent improvements to incomes through agriculture and forest productivity have not come to all, and rather at the expense of small farmers and deterioration of the natural resource base on which farming systems depend.

It is urgent to recognize upland farmer livelihoods, local knowledge, and natural resource management that is sustainable and works. Recognition of traditional and customary land tenure systems and user rights to reverse the degradation trend is important. There is a need to build community ownership of the resources within their reach so they are incentivised to adopt more sustainable methods of natural resource management. The programme may include improvements to forest productivity, protecting land access and the rights of local populations, reducing land degradation, improving watershed management, mitigating and/or adapting to the effects of climate change and ensuring the long term sustainability and livelihood benefit the upland agro-ecosystems should provide.

- **Multi-stakeholder land use planning and management**

Multi-sector and multi-stakeholder land use planning is important to sustainable resource allocation and use, including customary land use claims, watershed protection and equitable and transparent use of upland natural resources. This activity could facilitate collaboration between local authorities, communities and the agribusiness sector and technical agencies for holistic watershed management, climate change resilience, and sustainable socio-economic development.

This could include capacity building to support local initiatives (such as in conducting climate change vulnerability assessment, or support to local land and water decision making and development of landscape and watershed plans). The programme may also facilitate partnership building with agri-business operations. To be effective, these plans must be backed by an effective legal framework that is still in development. The programme will support pilot planning processes according to the new land use policy which will be enacted during the programme period. It would provide practical evidence for feasibility at scale and inform future land laws.

- **Community forestry**

The Community Forestry Instruction (1995) provides the legal backing for rural communities to establish Forest User Groups that co-manage forests. The current review of community forestry policy supports the use of FUGs for more productive agro-forestry systems linked to market potential. Sustainable forest garden/agro-forest production regimes can reduce land degradation, conserve water resources, and increase family incomes and nutrition. This can employee a diverse array of perennial and annual crops, medicinal, NTFPs and timber. Tree dominated agro-forests increase permanent soil cover and crop diversity.

The programme will support community forest planning and management, including but not limited to the:
- Preparation of participatory forest management and business planning;
- Reforestation and sustainable techniques that support regeneration and rehabilitation of degraded forests on private land;
- Development of fuelwood plantations and alternative energy to reduce fuel wood harvesting;
- Sustainable use of non-timber forest products through establishment of collaborative natural resource use and protection agreements;
- Value chain support, including processing and marketing.

- **Equitable and safe land access and tenure rights**

Beyond community forestry and land use planning, farmers need to be better protected from land dispossession. Stakeholders (eg smallholders, elected officials, IPs, etc.) need to be better informed about their rights and how to protect their livelihood assets both private and collective. The programme is supportive of activities developing formal recognition for local customary law and the protection of individual household and community livelihood assets.

This may include interventions to build awareness about land rights and assist the issuance of land-use certificates. The programme also recognizes the importance of assisting persons displaced and/or disposed from their land, of IDPs to have access to land.

The current land laws and government land registration procedures do not consider sufficiently the rights of women to land. Any initiative in this sector will have to build mechanisms that are

supportive of women access to land and broader women involvement in local decision making processes regarding natural resource management.

The programme will also consider piloting local conflict resolution mechanisms as suggested by the new land use policy. Such intervention should be linked to further support local governance systems to ensure independence and inclusiveness.

- **Land and water resources development**

The programme will promote improved sloping land tillage practices via mulching, hedgerows and bunding, SALT upland sloping land and conservation techniques. It will also support investment in more sustainable management of land and water resources through improved water harvesting, small-scale storage, irrigation and drainage works, terracing, and contouring to increase the long-term productivity of the land. The economic value and sustainability of those investments should be documented. Contributions from beneficiaries, financial institutions and government will be important to ensure commitment to maintenance.

Component 4: Off-farm employment, new livelihood opportunities and safe migration opportunities

Outcome: Smallholders and landless households increase their skills and their income through local and migration related off-farm safe employment, self-employment in small business and new local livelihood opportunities.

In addition to promoting improved agricultural and forest sector productivity, the programme recognizes that alternative jobs and non-farm employment can provide important employment, security and even surplus income for households that are otherwise restricted to subsistence living. This component aims to support poor farmers, landless households, and casual labourers to "step out" and find new opportunities to increase and diversify their income. Employment and small business opportunities will vary greatly depending on the specific context, eg access to market, dominant pre-existing migration routes. Applicants are encouraged to do a careful diagnosis of the skills and jobs demanded in the targeted areas (local and migrant employment), and of the business and local livelihood opportunities.

This component is expected to directly assist LIFT's high level outcomes to increase the incomes of rural households, and increase the resilience of rural households and their communities.

Migration has been a major livelihood strategy for many upland households for a long time. This component intends to create opportunities for the landless to better support their asset and entitlement needs, and recognizes that some SMEs have and/or will have the capacity to absorb/pull diverse upland skills and technologies together. The component also addresses the needs of women to access suitable livelihood opportunities.

- **Skill training and small business development**

Based on market needs assessment, the programme will support access to skills building and training in various trades (eg carpentry, haircutting, construction and other trades), artisanal and traditional arts (eg weaving, bamboo handicrafts), and eco-tourism. It will seek to link skills to identified

employment and market demand including support for safe migration. This may include curriculum development and support to vocational and education institutions. Priority will be given to off-farm employment and non-farm skills training that stimulate local value chains (ie rural, semi-urban satellite towns and in-country urban potential). However, the potential development of local agricultural services such as small scale mechanisation, trading, and processing should also be considered.

This training may also lead to self-employment opportunities. To enable trainees to set up their own businesses, the programme will support business planning, linkage to rural financial services and may provide ad-hoc start-up grants.

- **Safe and productive migration opportunities**

Activities supporting domestic and foreign migration may be considered by the programme where it emphasizes the development and provision of accurate and relevant information on employment potential, presenting opportunities for safer migration so people can make informed decisions, and protect themselves while pursuing improved incomes. The programme will include pre-departure information and advisory services on safe migration opportunities.

- **Diversification of local livelihood opportunities**

The programme will also support rural households, especially land-poor and women who are less mobile to access new livelihood opportunities in their locality. Priority should be given to activities with good marketing prospects and no or limited land requirement such as animal husbandry, small-scale aquaculture and horticulture, food processing, etc.

With proper advice about care, sanitation and improved feeding practice, livestock production has proved to be an efficient means to increase family income and nutrition. This may require the development of veterinary care and nutrition practices through productive interest groups and extension networks. It is anticipated that livestock interest groups developed within this programme could be tied closely to village level microenterprise activities.

As much as possible investment should be done through rural financial services, and grants should be provided to vulnerable households only to reduce the risk associated with adopting new practices. Activities should be promoted based on a clear cost-benefit assessment and knowledge of the risks (disease, price fluctuation, etc.).

Component 5: Nutrition

Outcome: Rural households have improved nutritional outcomes (stunting rates of children are reduced).

Projects that integrate direct nutrition-related activities are encouraged. This component aims at reducing chronic malnutrition, especially stunting through a focus on the 1000 day window (scalingupnutrition.org, www.thousanddays.org). LIFT is looking to integrate nutrition awareness within existing community health services. Implementing partners would also be recommended to work closely with the 3MDG fund to develop synergies where a focus in the same area is possible. While not exclusively, the long term nutritional needs of IDPs, with a focus on child stunting, are of particular concern.

This component is expected to directly assist the LIFT high level outcome: improved nutrition of women, men and children.

- **Behaviour change communication**

Behaviour change communication activities[2] should focus on pregnant women and the mothers of young children. The behaviours to be encouraged include: feeding colostrum to new-borns, exclusive breastfeeding for six months, as well as other positive infant and young child feeding practices (IYCF); helping mothers to choose nutrient-rich foods during pregnancy, in breast-feeding and infant nutrition including adequate intake of iron and folates; improved hygiene-related behaviours; and, improved health seeking behaviours including attendance of prenatal/postnatal appointments as well as proper treatment of childhood illnesses.

The output could enlist mothers with healthy children to serve as mentors, engage community health workers (where possible) as trainers, and other family members (especially mothers-in-law, grand-mothers) to ensure positive nutrition practices are supported in the long term.

- **WASH**

The WASH component targets a reduction in the nutritional and financial impact of water borne diseases and poor sanitation practices through effective/contemporary methods of behaviour change to improve family hygiene, small scale water and sanitation infrastructure. The lack of access to water also adds additional burdens to women in water collection. Improved access to clean water and sanitation are a primary means to reduce infant and early childhood mortality and disease burdens, ensure women's health in pregnancy, and the improved care and food security of their infants, children and families.

Sanitation messages could potentially be delivered through schools, public awareness campaigns, women's groups, and village health committees, etc. Interventions will especially mobilise communities to completely eliminate open defecation.

Water and sanitation infrastructure (eg improved latrines, well aprons, water supply infrastructure) should be planned in coordination with government relevant department and accompany water quality monitoring.

- **Year-round nutritious home garden production**

This component may include activities related to nutrition-sensitive cropping to improve household diets, food security, nutrition and health through home and forest gardens. Utilizing diverse and companion plantings of annuals and perennials, intermixed home gardens are a reliable method of producing nutritious food crops for upland families to access preferred food, and serve as a safety net for households when food is scarce.

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[2] Maternal cash transfers may be considered to enable and incentivise women to act on improved nutrition-related knowledge.

Component 6: Social protection and access to collective/public services

Outcome: Rural households are less vulnerable to shocks and stresses.

This components aims to support poor households to participate, organize and benefit from poverty reduction activities and to gain better access to existing government services. This support will help the most vulnerable households to become more resilient to shocks and stresses through effective collective social protection mechanisms. For this purpose, interventions should improve the scope, scale and sustainability of traditional community social protection structures. It will especially consider issues related to the integration and support of IDPs in receiving communities and improve inclusiveness of vulnerable groups. Interventions should be based on clear vulnerability assessment using the 'Vulnerability and Resilience Mapping Tools' developed by SPPRG for LIFT (www.lift-fund.org/best-practices/'leave-no-one-behind'-using-umbrella-model-map-vulnerability). This component is expected to directly assist LIFT high level outcome: increase the resilience of rural households and their communities.

- **Social protection and social safety nets**

Most villages with relatively intact traditional social structures and/or active local CBOs have established informal social protection mechanisms (eg ranging from village rice banks, communal support to students, rural teachers, funerals, to revolving funds which ensure access for disadvantaged households). Support for operational improvements, expansion and capacity building for local CBOs involved in supporting social protection services is relevant.

Interventions should be designed to help the most vulnerable to meet food, nutrition and other basic needs. It includes support for existing or new community mechanisms (eg rice or seed banks, revolving funds, Village Saving and Loan Associations (VSLA) and community emergency funds) that help meet the needs and build the capacities of a village's most disadvantaged and vulnerable.

Anecdotal information suggests there is significant upland farmer and household indebtedness in many locations that will require more rigorous investigation of indebtedness in the locations where social safety net interventions are proposed. The programme will consider the potential to re-organise smallholder farmer debt.

- **Recovery support for displaced people**

The sub-programme 1 will assist IDPs, including in camps and receiving communities, and may support the long-term livelihood needs associated with resettlement activities. Hence the programme intends to bridge gaps between humanitarian aid and more long-term recovery options. While the programme excludes short-term humanitarian aid, there is a blurred transition between early recovery intervention and long-term development. There may be opportunity for support for restoration of livelihood needs that are not immediately considered in other components, nor addressed by humanitarian actors.

- **Local governance and village planning**

The recent decentralisation reforms has improved the legitimacy of village tract authorities and established various local committees (Land Management Committee, Village Tract Development

Support Committee, etc) that provide a new platform for citizen engagement in development processes and interaction with public services. In areas emerging from conflict, the ceasefires provide for a renewed CSO engagement in public life and multi-stakeholder coordination. The uplands programme will promote locally appropriate models of effective participatory governance, the establishment of new and collaborative partnerships that give expression of local needs at village level and improve local service delivery to the poorest and most vulnerable.

To enable participatory decision-making, the programme will promote multi-stakeholder communication and consultation and promote the participation of women, landless, IDPs in local poverty alleviation and socio-economic development planning.

The programme will support village relevant development plans that facilitate better linkages to local authorities and public services. The Department of Rural Development (DRD) has an ambitious programme of village planning that would inform township and State level sector planning. Partners should coordinate their efforts with DRD.

The programme will build the capacity of village committees, leaders, non-state and government department staff in local development processes, participatory governance, technical skills, and project management.

Engagement on governance should remain practical and development orientated around clear outcomes. Activities will not have any direct involvement in peace processes but in effect will contribute to the wider peace effort.

Component 7: Pro-poor policy advocacy, evidence-based learning and CSO capacity building

Outcome: Improved government policies and expenditure, and increased capacity and information management at local level, stimulates rural economic growth and increases livelihood opportunities for the poor.

The livelihoods of the people in the uplands are directly impacted by the way public policies are shaped and implemented – or by their absence. LIFT advocates for public policies that increase the resilience of local communities, provides economic opportunities to the most vulnerable households through access to public services (health and nutrition, education, social protection), support the local and equitable governance of natural resources (land, forest, water…) and access to market and job opportunities. Part of the long-term impact of the programme interventions lies in the way they will influence public policies.

Civil society plays a crucial role in linking interventions to the policy arena, and also to inform the local stakeholders about existing policies. The programme will bring together those who generate knowledge with those who are in a position to effect policy change. It includes building the capacity of local and national actors to produce evidence-based knowledge and supporting them to contribute that knowledge to effective policy dialogue and change.

This component is expected to directly assist the LIFT high level outcome: improved policies and public expenditure for pro-poor rural development, as well as the LIFT vision for a 'knowledge platform'.

- **Generation of appropriate contextual analyses**

All interventions must be guided by a proper level of understanding of the local context. In a conflict sensitive lens, it is crucial to conduct political economy analyses, identify stakeholders, groups and power holders, and to understand conflict dynamics.

As explained above and beyond conflict sensitivity, the environment and market conditions vary greatly within and across upland areas. Partners should include detailed agricultural system analysis, market and value chain analyses where appropriate. Nutrition and vulnerability assessment should be part of a robust M&E system.

- **Capacity building of local CSOs and local government staff**

LIFT recognizes the key role played by local CSOs and CBOs to deliver services to isolated, conflict and post-conflict areas. Most of them have a good contextual knowledge; they have established long-lasting community level relationships and trust with local stakeholders at the township and village levels that allow them to operate across sensitive political and social borderlines. The uplands programme will work with local organisations recognising that many are more familiar with humanitarian activities and will need to make a transition to development oriented approaches. The management of international funds with complex monitoring and reporting requirements is also challenging.

For direct engagement, LIFT will create a small grant window dedicated to local CSOs that will provide funding opportunities separate to but complimentary to this call.

Within this call, the programme will support strengthening of the internal institutional and organisational systems of local NGOs and CSOs to improve their capacity to deliver effective services to communities. This may include enhancing their capacity to produce evidence-based knowledge and to influence policy processes. Support may be provided through various approaches including training, coaching, exposure, sub-contracting, short-term technical assistance, etc.

The programme will also promote the direct involvement of government and non-state technical staff in development projects and build their capacity through similar approaches. This may include support to technical agriculture education at State level to develop new curricula adapted to local agriculture systems.

- **Generation of policy relevant evidence**

The uplands programme will produce evidence and lessons that have policy implications, and which provide opportunities to contribute to the improvement and implementation of government policies. It will present an opportunity for scaling impact by aggregating the learning from projects to inform and contribute to improvements in state and national policy, regulation and legal frameworks. Developing effective advocacy, policy frameworks and agendas may be supported where the programme is able to identify and address important opportunities, needs and current policy gaps. Through appropriate M&E and learning systems, the programme will generate empirical data and practical knowledge with important policy implications at various levels. Opportunity to contribute this data and knowledge to planning processes, and advocate to specific power holders, may be included in projects.

Numerous government strategies and policies are relevant and could include, though not be limited to, application of the National Strategy on Rural Development and Poverty Alleviation, The National Action Plan on Agriculture,[3] the National Adaptation Programme of Action to Climate Change, the National Land Use Policy (draft), the Strategic Framework for Rural Development of MoLFRD, the National Plan of Action for Food and Nutrition.

The programme will also interact with thematic policy advocacy groups at national level such as the Food Security Working Group (FSWG), Land Core Group (LCG), Food Security Information Network (FSIN) (for food security and nutritional surveys), Social Policy and Poverty Research Group (SPPRG), the Microfinance Working Group or the Business Innovation Facility. In addition to monitoring and evaluation tools, the programme will include a robust knowledge system: ensuring that lessons are captured through evidence-based research and shared between partners and relevant stakeholders.

Research in support of the above proposed intervention domains may be necessary to strengthen the learning and knowledge generated from project activity. This may include research on, for example: agroforestry systems, climate change impacts on upland agro-systems, uplands tenure security and shifting cultivation, market and employment sources, border trade, migration, indebtedness levels, gender roles, etc.

Beyond M&E system, research and studies embedded within the individual projects, LIFT will manage the MEAL framework at programme level and may carry out specific thematic studies.

Approach to geographic targeting and determining intervention type

The programme defines a potential geographical targeting specific to each target population to guide partners on potential focus areas. These are indicative, not mandatory and intentionally broad.

Target population	Geographical targeting
#1: Displaced People	• Southeast Kachin around Myitkyina and Bhamo • North Shan around the axis Kyaukme – Lashio • Southeast in Kayah, Kayin, Mon and Tanintharyi states
#2: Remote Communities	• North, South and East Shan, outside the main economic corridors • Chin • North Kachin • Sagaing: Naga SAZ
#3: Productive Communities	• North Shan: axis PyinOoLwin-Lashio-Muse • South Shan & Kayah: triangle Kalaw-Taunggyi-Loikaw • Kayin: axis Hpa-An – Myawaddy • North Chin: axis Hakha – Tedim – Kale

Stretching LIFT across all uplands carries the risk of spreading LIFT too thin. The geographic scope of the upland areas is immense and extremely diverse and the three sub-programmes could potentially stretch across their entirety. On the other hand the allocated funding could be absorbed by any one of the proposed areas or target population. It will be important to ensure a balance is achieved between geographic spread and penetration for optimal impact and value for money.

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[3] The National Action Plan on Agriculture (NAPA) is under development by FAO and funded by LIFT.

The definition of three target populations provides an opportunity to orientate the approach taken to the characteristics, needs and opportunities represented by each community and/or area, ie degree of conflict sensitivity, remoteness, high or low elevation, food security, migration rates, and opportunities in terms of job creation, value chain, market, private sector engagement. This is provided as a mean for partner applicants to determine the different priorities for intervention, and how they should approach and adapt their activities to a specific context, noting that in specific geographic locations, the different community types may overlap.

All seven thematic components can in some way be relevant to each target area according to the local context, needs and opportunities of the target communities. As such they can potentially be applied in any area or with any target population. There is no reason why a partner applicant should not consider the options for supporting IDPs in a village community through a value chain approach, if they can prove that it is relevant, feasible and conflict sensitive.

Fund allocation

The total LIFT investment proposed for the programme is USD65 million.

The allocations detailed below are estimates and could change as the programme takes shape:

Components		Allocation
Component 1	Rural Finance	$18m
Component 2	*Farm Advisory Services*	$12m
Component 3	*NRM*	$5m
Component 4	*Off-farm livelihoods*	$10m
Component 5	*Nutrition*	$8m
Component 6	*Social Protection*	$6m
Component 7	*Pro-Poor Policies*	$6m
Total		**$65m**

The total envelope will be allocated through different "implementation packages" (see also annex 2).

Package 1. Component 1 rural finance ($18m) will be contracted through the Financial Inclusion Programme and a specific Call for Proposals (www.lift-fund.org/financial-inclusion).[4]

Package 2. Components 2-7 ($42m) will be contracted through a two-stage process including a Call for Concept Notes followed by a closed Call for Proposals (www.lift-fund.org/uplands)

Package 3. Complementary support ($5m) will be contracted later depending on further design work for specific programmes to support local CSOs and migrants. This may include a small grant window.
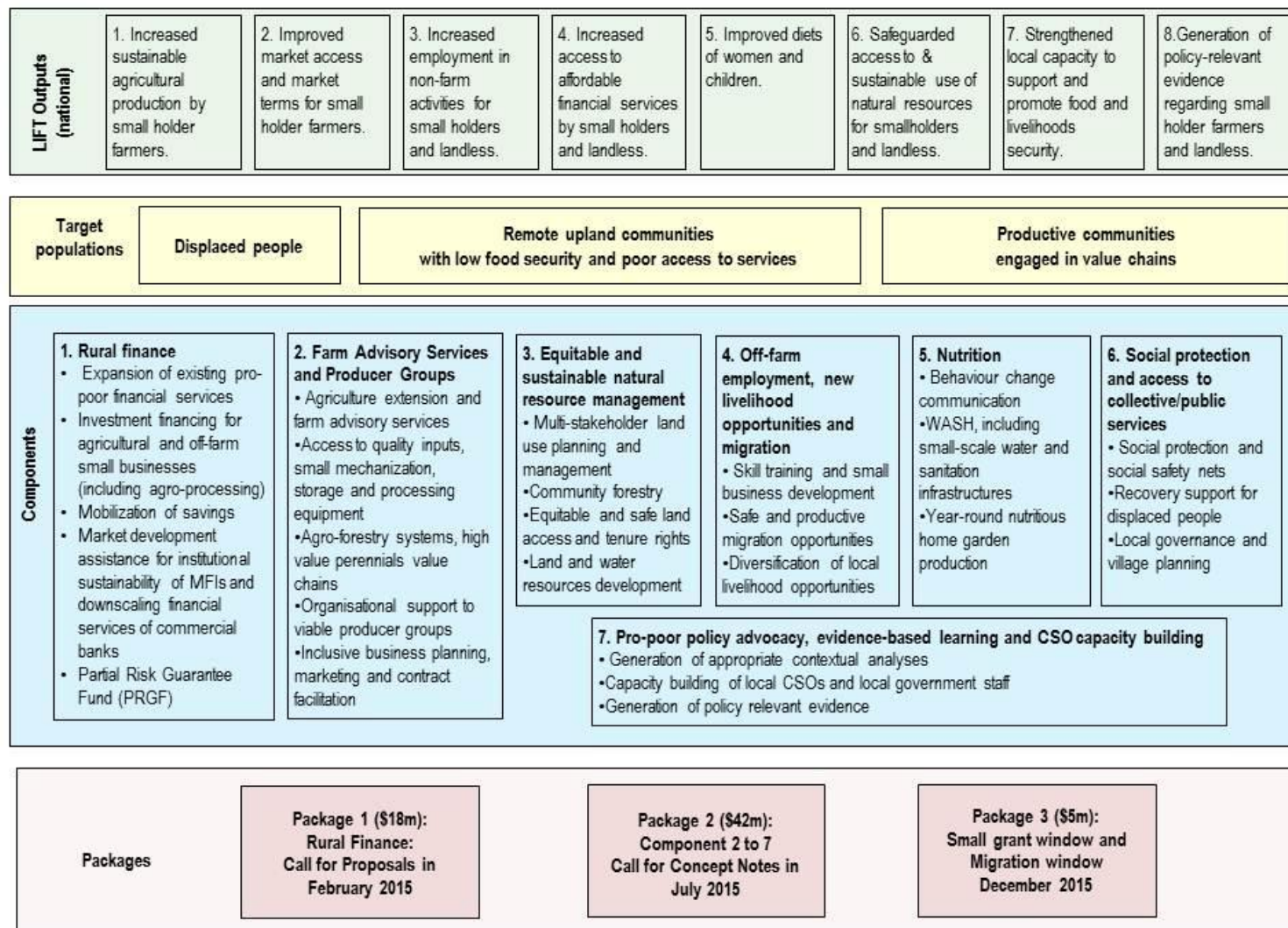
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[4] Component 1 was launched in February 2015 with a national call for proposals for financial inclusion.

Annex 1: Definition of three target populations in the uplands

Priority target:	Potential Geographical coverage	Targeting justification	Conflict sensitivity	Priority approach
1) Displaced people				
• IDPs in camp • People and communities affected by an history of multiple displacements • Communities receiving IDPs • Resettled communities	Conflict affected areas in • Southeast Kachin around Myitkyina and Bhamo • North Shan around the axis Kyaukme – Lashio • Southeast in Kayah, Kayin, Mon and Tanintharyi states	Broad targeting: the key factor will be the partner's legitimacy to operate in the area.	High, excluding active conflict areas Development perceived against political and humanitarian considerations	• Support for longer term economic development and nutrition • Increase capacities to rebuild life in permanent settlements and/or to migrate • Transitional and complementary support to humanitarian aid • Trust-building and conflict sensitive
2) Remote upland communities with low food security and poor access to services				
• Remote communities whose livelihood may depend partly on forest resources with high potential for perennials • Communities with high out migration rates • Isolated ethnic groups with opportunities to enhance linkage with state governments	• North, South and East Shan, outside the main economic corridors • Chin • North Kachin • Sagaing: Naga SAZ	Priority to Shan and Chin upland areas, especially in areas with low food security/nutritional indicators. Avoid working in areas where remoteness and low population density have detrimental effect on the expected project results. West Kachin excluded because of conflict and/or lower vulnerability	Moderate, some areas with mix control, "brown areas", some areas under stable cease-fire agreement	• Investments in sustainable agriculture technologies and high value perennials with potential to step up incomes in remote areas • Improve nutrition and community level social protection (hang in) • Migration related support • Increase the capacities of village communities to link with outside service providers
3) Productive communities engaged in value chain				
• Areas around the main rural towns and close to the roads connecting to the border offering both farm and off-farm economic opportunities • Farm communities affected by land value increase and increased indebtedness	• North Shan: axis PyinOoLwin-Lashio-Muse • South Shan & Kayah: triangle Kalaw-Taunggyi-Loikaw • Kayin: axis Hpa-An – Myawaddy • North Chin: axis Hakha – Tedim – Kale	The two main economic corridors are in Shan. Chin has less economic development, but value chain approaches would be suitable.	Low, but requires a careful dialogue with local stakeholders	• Increase opportunities in the on- and off-farm sectors through value chain and market driven approaches • Address vulnerabilities (indebtedness) and issues arising from increased competition for access to resources

Annex 2: Uplands Programme Framework

Uplands Programme Framework

LIFT Outputs (national)							
1. Increased sustainable agricultural production by small holder farmers.	2. Improved market access and market terms for small holder farmers.	3. Increased employment in non-farm activities for small holders and landless.	4. Increased access to affordable financial services by small holders and landless.	5. Improved diets of women and children.	6. Safeguarded access to & sustainable use of natural resources for smallholders and landless.	7. Strengthened local capacity to support and promote food and livelihoods security.	8. Generation of policy-relevant evidence regarding small holder farmers and landless.

Target populations

Displaced people	Remote upland communities with low food security and poor access to services	Productive communities engaged in value chains

Components

1. Rural finance
- Expansion of existing pro-poor financial services
- Investment financing for agricultural and off-farm small businesses (including agro-processing)
- Mobilization of savings
- Market development assistance for institutional sustainability of MFIs and downscaling financial services of commercial banks
- Partial Risk Guarantee Fund (PRGF)

2. Farm Advisory Services and Producer Groups
- Agriculture extension and farm advisory services
- Access to quality inputs, small mechanization, storage and processing equipment
- Agro-forestry systems, high value perennials value chains
- Organisational support to viable producer groups
- Inclusive business planning, marketing and contract facilitation

3. Equitable and sustainable natural resource management
- Multi-stakeholder land use planning and management
- Community forestry
- Equitable and safe land access and tenure rights
- Land and water resources development

4. Off-farm employment, new livelihood opportunities and migration
- Skill training and small business development
- Safe and productive migration opportunities
- Diversification of local livelihood opportunities

5. Nutrition
- Behaviour change communication
- WASH, including small-scale water and sanitation infrastructures
- Year-round nutritious home garden production

6. Social protection and access to collective/public services
- Social protection and social safety nets
- Recovery support for displaced people
- Local governance and village planning

7. Pro-poor policy advocacy, evidence-based learning and CSO capacity building
- Generation of appropriate contextual analyses
- Capacity building of local CSOs and local government staff
- Generation of policy relevant evidence

Packages

Package 1 ($18m): Rural Finance: Call for Proposals in February 2015	Package 2 ($42m): Component 2 to 7 Call for Concept Notes in July 2015	Package 3 ($5m): Small grant window and Migration window December 2015

Annex 3: Conflict sensitive principles

Because LIFT is willing to engage in areas emerging from conflict in the uplands, and in particular to support displaced people, LIFT will be intervening in new areas with a legacy of ethnic conflict, division, state failure and mistrust between stakeholders, including armed groups. The programme will need to navigate within very complex social-political settings. In doing so, LIFT wants to adhere to the international best practices related to 'Do No Harm'.

LIFT would like to ensure the programme design and interventions contribute to improve the livelihoods and food security and situation of people in conflict affected areas, while taking precaution not to contribute unintended negative impacts on society. The following set of conflict sensitive principles are outlined as a basic guideline to raise awareness and guide programme and project design and implementation.

Principle 1: Understand the conflict

Uplands Areas may be complex, and area specific analysis will be useful to understand how a community 'works' and to identify key stakeholders (their power and influence) and how each relates with one another and to the programme.

LIFT partners should conduct stakeholder analysis and conflict context analysis in order to understand the underlying political and socio-economic drivers of the conflict. The analysis should attempt, at a minimum, to identify key conflict drivers, conflict dynamics, capacities for tension (and violence) and for peace, and; 'map out' key stakeholders to determine the power relations between them (see *sample table below*).

Groups/Stakeholders	Position/Interests	Relationship
Who are the key stakeholders/ groups present in the programme operation area? Group based on (social, economic, religious, ethnic, etc).	• What are the underlying interests of key groups and individuals? • What are their hopes, concerns and fears? • Does they represent the community? • Who do they make the decisions for?	What are the relationships between the stakeholder groups? What divides these groups in the area of conflict? What brings them together? How are tensions currently expressed?

In these analyses, the potential impact and consequences of LIFT supported interventions on the conflict dynamics should be appraised to ensure they do no harm. It is important to keep progress in the peace process in view, and avoid pushing interventions ahead of the peace process or presuming outcomes that have not been realized.

The understanding of the context and conflict dynamic will help ensure that the livelihood programme is developing a strategy to minimize conflict impacts and maximize positive efforts across all areas, and at all levels (local, state/region, and national), of programme implementation.

Principle 2: Meaningful consultation with all local stakeholders

All key conflict stakeholders in the area should be properly consulted prior to the design and delivery of any interventions, and on-going, routine consultation with stakeholders should be effected throughout the programme lifecycle.

The definition of stakeholders needs to include not only local authority representatives from relevant government agencies and non-state armed groups, but all the actors who represent other aid and development service providers, political parties, business and civil society organisations (eg religious leaders, women, farmers and different social and ethnic groups at different levels). They should be consulted about where, how, if and what kind of interventions are best to take place. This includes obtaining prior consent from representatives of non-state armed groups to operate in areas where they are present and/or have relevant influence.

The stakeholder consultation has to be 'meaningful consultation' and fostering participation in decision-making processes, as well as promoting a sense of ownership. More inclusive, informal, and empowering channels of communication are required, especially where there are power imbalances between stakeholders.

Principle 3: Engage with power holders

There are different types of administration and governance practices in areas emerging from conflict[5]. The programme needs to engage with key power holders which may include both government and non-state armed groups. Balancing between 'too close to' or 'too remote from' one over the other, and the ability to manage these kind of relationships is essential. The programme should ensure that the engagements will not substitute their responsibilities, and rather set a good example in dealing with power holders in order to support peace.

Principle 4: Encourage cooperation across conflict lines

A long-term goal of inclusion among the different communities and conflict parties needs to be maintained as part of the process of conflict resolution. Experience continues to warn that development and humanitarian aid in different parts of the country can become regarded as divisive rather than equitable and inclusive. Thus strategies of cooperation and coordination need to be delivered, including target working groups, implementing partner meetings, and regular programme assessments. The initiatives should aim to strengthen and improve development structures of the local government administration as well as of non-state armed groups, and ensure not to create unnecessary burdens and bureaucratic layers.

The programme should facilitate co-operation on interventions between government and non-government entities where feasible and opportune. The programme should also work with civil society organizations, faith based and community-based organizations who have a significant role in crossing and bridging conflict actors, and sometimes facilitate the connectivity and relationships of those actors.

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[5] Three different types of administration and governance: i) areas administered by the government, ii) areas administered by non-state armed groups, iii) areas where both the government and non-state armed groups administer in parallel or in mixed arrangements.

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Often, local structures that cross conflict lines are not formally constituted. It may be that households, communities, or traditional structures are without formal 'institutional' representation and therefore, might be overlooked in partnering decisions. The programme and IPs must be able to identify and empower existing local and traditional structures or actors in the community that have roles to address community livelihood and development. Empowerment should include developing their capacity, particularly institutional capacity, so they become competent to perform their roles effectively.

Where there is opportunity, encourage partners representing different groups to work together around common activities for community livelihoods and food security (i.e. do not force partnerships). This will be an important measure in contributing to confidence and ensuring an up-to-date shared understanding of the progress of activities.

Principle 5: Transparency and coordination

The programme should operate in a way that builds collaboration with and among development actors. Collaboration should help minimise duplication in each other's work and build synergies and trust.

At all stages of intervention, it is important to ensure the objectives, activities, implementing partners, and availability of programmes and services are transparent. A lack of transparency could create fertile ground for rumours about inequitable assistance, and enables manipulation to generate animosity among stakeholders (e.g. conflict actors). Information dissemination is vital to building community and stakeholder trust, as well as successful programme delivery. The mechanism for communicating and sharing information openly needs to develop during the programme design.

However, information security needs to be considered also, particularly if related to people's stories and security in the area, to ensure the voices of people are heard without jeopardizing personal safety.

Principle 6: Meaningful involvement and participation of local and national civil society organizations

Civil society organizations in Myanmar (including faith based and community based organizations) are gaining momentum and are active from the local community to national levels at influencing policy and giving voice to the needs and concerns of people with policy makers and decision making bodies. They also have established working relationships with conflict actors in conflict-affected areas and have access to most places, including restricted areas, through their networks. They are often organized by local groups from these restricted areas. This all means that CSOs and CBOs have a developed understanding of the community (including culture and language) and its dynamics to contribute to all stages of the project cycle, including decisions on the choice of programme strategies and intervention.

Principle 7: Meet the priority needs of conflict affected populations

Misunderstandings on the intervention objectives of projects may arise if the support provided ignores key issues affecting the livelihoods of the local population, or by-passes important on-going

processes, e.g. on natural resource management. This may also affect the capacity to achieve results and induce long term changes.

Prioritization of the programme must be based on the needs for stable livelihoods, sustainable communities and recognition of the fundamental rights of all people, including vulnerable groups who may have been denied access to resources, forced to leave from their homes, or dispossessed from legitimate claims to land, etc. It is important to engage the community in discussing the relevance of interventions and acknowledge the project limitations, what it can and cannot do. A wide range of stakeholders – and especially the affected populations – should be included in the process of identifying, prioritising and achieving programme outcomes and outputs.

Principle 8: Inclusion and non-discrimination

Intervention programmes should adhere to the principles of inclusion and non-discrimination, and ensure that services are provided equally to all population groups, regardless of ethnicity, language, religion, gender and age.

Under most circumstances, representatives of all groups, sub-groups and stakeholders in conflict should be included in: a) programming decisions; b) among beneficiaries; and c) among partners. Excluded/marginalized groups should be empowered and participated. Their inclusion will assist stability, sustainability, and bridge gaps that reduce divisions and create space for effective collaboration between stakeholders.

In a conflict and ethnically-divided context, it is vital to recruit staff from all population groups. Staff and projects need to be sensitive to local ethnic, linguistic, faith and cultural realities and, at the same time, not become socially or ethnically exclusive. Inclusion rather than separation should be the goal.

This will also contribute to the local human resource development and ensure that there are clear and easy communication channels between beneficiaries and project staff who share a common language and culture.

Principle 9: Pragmatism and flexibility

The situation in conflict affected areas is often fluid and subject to change. Different regions may need different intervention approaches. A localised understanding of the conflict transformation challenges involved is necessary. Standard and rigid approaches in conflict zones are risky. The programme and its projects therefore, need to be flexible and provide for pragmatic responses to changeable situations. These situations may require urgent meetings with conflict actors, immediate discussions with community members, management of unexpected security concerns, and the ability to pause implementation while operations, and potentially design, are reviewed.

Standards and policies should be determined by IPs with key stakeholders and have a measure of flexibility in their application. Financial allocation for this flexibility and changes should be provided for in the programme budget.

Flexibility is also important to achieve results and sustainability. Design and implementation approaches need to be adaptable and based on experience and real time learning. This can be

supported by process oriented M&E systems that provide for reflection on lessons, best practice, and discussion with partners. Opportunity should be taken for upwards feedback of this learning to the state\region and national levels, also linking it in with current initiatives on conflict resolution by others, including the Peace Donor Support Group.

Principle 10: Establish feedback, accountability and grievance mechanisms

Feedback, grievance and accountability mechanisms are an essential part of ensuring positive relationships with communities and different stakeholders. The mechanism should be neutral, open to all, and enable good programming that could help to reduce potential for tension and conflict to escalate. The principle of accountability is central to conflict sensitivity, as it touches upon issues of power in agency, partner and stakeholder relationships, and informs the roles and type of power/influence each brings.

For partner guidance, LIFT has developed an Accountability Framework[6] which includes a clear mechanism for responding to complaints, concerns and suggestions. Partners are expected to set up a similar mechanism which is locally adapted and practical in their intervention areas.

Principle 11: Develop a project exit strategy

Tension can arise at the end of a programme, particularly if the stakeholders and community do not understand the reasons why the programme is ending or an organization is leaving. It is important to have a well-considered and agreed exit strategy well in advance of a programme or project coming to a close. Ideally the strategy will be designed at project inception in consultation with community, key stakeholders and partners, and with a conflict sensitive perspective.

Resource allocation issues should be carefully considered, especially where there is potential for conflict, including what, who and how they are allocated. Measures should be drawn up to mitigate the risk of exacerbating tensions.

The ownership arrangements for project benefits should be agreed, and any newly established local organisations and groups should be strengthened and brought to a point where they can be independent and able to operate without project support. Avoid setting up structures that are pushed by the project; rather engage stakeholders and community members to build their understanding and participation gradually with consent and ownership. Structures established by projects do not last long if they do not effectively serve the purpose and interests of the community. Structures that help bring conflict parties and others together and prove relevant to addressing community issues will be more likely to endure.

Principle 12: Operationalize the principles throughout the programme lifecycle

The guidance provided by these principles should be built into design to ensure effect throughout the whole life cycle of programme and project execution. The initial analysis of conflict dynamics can become quickly outdated and so will not be useful if not operationalized through a strategy for engagement throughout implementation. In some cases issues not identified by early analysis may

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[6] Available in English and Myanmar languages here: www.lift-fund.org/guidelines

unexpectedly appear when activities commence. It is important therefore, that projects have mechanisms to regularly review and update design and operational strategies.