

Swiss Agency for Development
and Cooperation SDC

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SOUTHEAST INFRASTRUCTURE REHABILITATION PROJECT (SIRP)

INTERIM EVALUATION

NORWEGIAN REFUGEE COUNCIL (NRC)

SWISS AGENCY FOR DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION (SDC)

ACTIONAID MYANMAR (AAM)

KNOWLEDGE AND DEDICATION FOR NATION-BUILDING (KDN)

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Emerging Markets Consulting (EMC) for the Southeast Infrastructure Rehabilitation Project's (SIRP) Consortium Partners has prepared this interim report. The statements and views expressed in the interim report do not necessarily reflect the views of EMC and/or any of the Consortium Partners or any of its staff or personnel, and do not bind any of the organizations.

This interim report has focused entirely on the outlined areas defined in the ToR and the specifications defined in the EMC proposal to the Consortium Partners. EMC staff was responsible for collecting data through desk reviews and Key Informant Interviews, and relied solely on data provide by the Consortium Partners.

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AAM	Action Aid Myanmar
CBO	Community Based Organization
CSC	Citizenship Scrutiny Cards
DEU	Delegation of the European Union
EC	European Commission
EMC	Emerging Markets Consulting
EU	European Union
FG	Financing Guarantee
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
KDN	Knowledge and Dedication for Nation-building
KII	Key Informant Interviews
KNLA	Karen National Liberation Army
KNU	Karen National Union
MNLF	Mon National Liberation Front
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NATALA	Ministry of Progress of Border Areas and National Races and Development Affairs
NMSP	New Mon State Party
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
NSAs	Non-State Actors
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SHG	Self-Help Groups
SIRP	Southeast Infrastructure Rehabilitation Project
ToR	Terms of Reference
VDCs	Village Development Committees
VDPs	Village Development Plans

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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

The Southeast Infrastructure Rehabilitation Project, hereafter referred to as SIRP, covers communities in Mon and Kayin States and Tanintharyi Region, with an initial planned implementation timeframe of 36 months (2012-2015). The project partners aim at implementing a range of activities in 90 villages, with an estimated impact of 140,000 direct beneficiaries. Activities were designed to empower communities through improved access to basic education, primary health care, water and basic sanitation facilities, and the creation of new income sources¹. The paramount project feature is participatory planning processes where communities themselves define their priority needs. The total value of the project over the 36 months is approximately 7 million Euros.

The SIRP is implemented by a *Consortium* established and funded under the European Union's *Aid to Uprooted People Programme in Myanmar*. The four organizations in the consortium are: **The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)**, grant holder and consortium lead responsible for overall project implementation, and for the implementation of the project in *Kayin State*. **The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)** was selected to serve as liaison between SIRP partners and Myanmar's government authorities to obtain all legal mechanisms for the action, and responsible for all project implementation activities in *Mon State*. **The Knowledge and Dedication for Nation-building (KDN)**, was selected to be responsible for the implementation of the project in *Tanintharyi region*. Finally, and due to its role as the primary designer of the "fellowship approach", **Action Aid Myanmar (AAM)** was mainly responsible for the training and facilitation of the "fellows" (community change-makers) across all 90 villages and initially in charge of the livelihoods component of the project.

Purpose of the evaluation

In conjunction with the ToR, the interim evaluation is conducted in line with the OECD DAC criteria's for evaluating development assistance programmes. The specific objectives of this interim evaluation as outlined in the terms of reference are:

- To engage all partners in the EU required interim evaluation for SIRP under EuropeAid's funds
- To conduct and complete a thorough interim evaluation that covers the grant from December 2012 to June 2014
- To evaluate SIRP's consortium technicalities and functions of the secretariat and steering committee mechanisms throughout the life of the project (up to August 2015)
- To produce an interim evaluation product/document that will inform ways forward and provide recommendation for the remainder of the grant

Methodology

The interim evaluation methodology was aligned to the specific objectives set in the terms of reference (ToR) as validated by all partners. The evaluation assignment was undertaken through the collection and review of key documentation (e.g. quarterly reports, contracts, proposals, etc.), semi-structured Key Informant Interviews (KII), Focus Group Discussions (FGD) with stakeholders,

¹ Refer to Annex 1 – Terms of Reference for SIRP evaluation

² This was the case in Kayin State and Tanintharyi region

beneficiaries and key staff and site observations. In line with the ToR, EMC emphasized collecting qualitative data.

Conclusions and Findings

Thematic area 1: Context

- The socio-political context in the SE region of Myanmar and the presence of armed Non-State Actors (NSAs) throughout the region, general grouped along ethnic lines with *de facto* control of vast geographical areas, is challenging for the implementation of SIRP.
- The NSAs have decentralized structures, which meant dealing with different sets of systems and changing demands. The consortium partners have in general been able to navigate across the different regions and lines of authority, though not without delays.
- The vast geographical area and remoteness of villages has also presented challenges to the SIRP implementation. As per project design, one of the criteria for selecting communities included “remoteness and limited availability of public services”, which ended up limiting the effective coordination among stakeholders for the implementation of project activities.
- Several components of the “*village book*” were found to be challenging in nature by authorities, NSAs and communities alike, which delayed the process required for its completion. This document included perceived sensitive information. These sensitivities arose, in part, due to the existing overlap of jurisdiction between government authorities and NSAs in most areas of implementation.
- The interim evaluation found that payments (lump sum of \$500 per project) have been made to KNU’s Brigade #1 in Bilin township for “management and logistics expenses”. The fact that a fee was negotiated between the brigade leaders and contractors, with little transparency and clarity into the process is of concern.

Thematic area 2: Effectiveness

- The following activities were fully or partially completed during the first 18 months of SIRP implementation: field assessments, village selection, fellow selection, training (two rounds) and placements, cluster meetings, village priority compilation, preparation of village books (and VB process trainings) and village development plans (VDPs).
- Finding fellows that fulfilled the minimum requirements in terms of age and education was a challenge across all regions. Many suitable candidates migrate searching for work and/or have not completed secondary education.
- The training tools for fellows were in Burmese only, which presented a challenge for fellows from ethnic minorities who spoke only local languages/dialects. In some cases up to 50% of participants had difficulty understanding Burmese². However, this situation improved at later stages of the project.
- Monthly cluster meetings proved a very effective and essential platform for fellows to share their experiences and challenges during SIRP implementation. The meeting also instigated strong support networks, and received direct technical support from field officers.

Thematic area 3: Efficiency and deliverables

- Project implementation faced initial delays in Kayin and Mon States due to the difficulties in obtaining approval from NSAs and local authorities to access targeted villages, and negotiating

² This was the case in Kayin State and Tanintharyi region

village lists³. When the necessary endorsement was received, activities were carried out within the planned timeframe.

- In Kayin State, the main challenge was the state authorities' reservations in regards to the fellowship approach and his reluctance to provide access to villages until that issue was clarified⁴. It took between 3-4 months and several rounds of clarification meetings to obtain approval from his office, significantly delaying implementation
- In Bilin township of Mon State, the main challenge was the Karen National Union's (active NSA) scepticism in relation to the resource mapping component of the village books. This delayed the activities between 2-3 months.
- In Tanintharyi, delays were experienced only during the fellows' placements and mainly due to the overlap with other village activities such as harvest season and festivities.

Thematic area 4: Relevance

- Stakeholders' development priorities appear to have been well reflected in the initial design of SIRP. However, the "bottom-up approach" requiring active participation from communities and beneficiaries throughout project's life seems relevant primarily during the first half of the project (i.e. production of village books and priorities). Involvement of fellows and community members was drastically reduced during the second half of the project (i.e. construction phase).
- Some villages were drawn into the project mainly incentivized by its infrastructure component and not necessarily by the "softer" components. This created expectations among communities, which were not met (e.g. some villages were not allocated their top infrastructure choice). This reflected negatively on fellows and partner organizations and resulted in collaboration challenges.
- In some areas, state authorities may have acted in their own interest when strongly encouraging communities to submit their village books early so they could claim attribution for the outcome of this work. However, another perspective is that local authorities wanted to encourage communities to share village books and development plans so their needs could be prioritized in the government's budget allocation. While no actual submission case was reported, it is clear that this approach from the state authorities created tension for fellows, communities and partners alike.

Thematic Area 5: Partnership

- The Steering committee (SC) is the highest decision making body of the consortium. The SC is composed of country directors and head of agencies from the four consortium partners and is chaired by NRC. The secretariat is the "operational body" of SIRP and meets on a monthly basis. To the knowledge of the evaluators, there is not a unison mandate/ToR for the operation of the SC or for the Chair of the SC. The CPs appears to condone the operation and efforts of the secretariat.
- Deviating from best practice, it was noted that the meeting minutes from previous SC meetings and secretariat meetings, were not approved in the subsequent SC meetings on a

³ Village list negotiation was a source of delay for Kayin State specifically, where it was done directly with the state authorities

⁴ It should be noted that communities in the SE region have shown reluctance to the works of NGOs and other humanitarian agencies in the past

regular basis. The evaluation does not otherwise find that the operations of the SC deviate from good governance practices and sound operating procedures.

- For the first 18 months of the project, the evaluation found regular attendance by the heads of all agencies in the SC. As the project evolved the attendance declined, making the SC “less effective”. Also the “double” role of NRC in the SC - as both represented through their CD, and as the Chair of the SC, has raised some concern amongst partners.
- It is widely considered that the SC has not been able to engage sufficiently with the EU/EC. The partners testify to a “lost opportunity” of showcasing the pioneering work of the SIRP in the south eastern region.
- At the implementation level, consortium partner representatives have collaborated well and been able to draw on the knowledge available amongst the different partners. The consortium model has resulted in a much wider and deeper “opportunity, scope and impact” than the partners would have been able to on their own.
- The full integration of a staff member from one consortium partner to another, in order to support a critical component of the project (AAM and the fellowship approach), has proven effective and appreciated at the implementation level. There is consensus amongst the consortium partners, that this collaboration has been “very positive”.

Thematic area 6: Fellowship modality

- Fellows positively highlight the skills they have gained from taking part in this project. Predominantly emphasized are “leadership skills” and “communication skills”. A number of fellows highlight that the understanding of the context in the south east and language barriers have been a challenge for their skill development.
- Fellows highlight their role in linking the implementing partners and the communities. The closeness to the communities has been an advantage but has also placed the fellows in a position where they have been “blamed” for challenges arising in the communities.
- There were cases of fellows being “very young” and three under the age of 18. Very young fellows had significant difficulties initiating SIRP work in the villages due to a lack of trust and respect from community elders.
- The culmination of village books was regarded as very collaborative but resource intensive process. Initially many villages did not appreciate the concept, partially due to a lack of understanding of the components. The completion time of village books varied considerably between the villages. This resulted in some communities losing interest in the project.
- Communities underline that fellows continue to be actively involved in the decision making processes of their respective villages after the completion of the village books.
- The Consortium partners recognize quite positively the fellowship approach during the first 18 months of the project. The village books are lauded since they belong to the host community and are a tool that can be used extensively in other forums and interactions. However, the evaluation also finds that the role of the fellows greatly diminished after the completion of the village books⁵.

⁵ It should be noted that village books, fellows and volunteers were not fully represented in the original logical framework submitted to the DEU. However, the revised framework updated on September 26th 2014 includes more explicitly these components.

Additional relevant findings

- The lack of alignment between the financial systems of all partners was highlighted as an important issue that, in part, delayed the disbursement of funds in the project and was excessively time consuming and ineffective.
- Some partners acknowledge that there was never a clear and full understanding of the budget and its further amendments, which resulted in referencing different budget figures for the implementation of SIRP activities among stakeholders.
- Due to higher than expected costs on infrastructure activities, 13 villages in Tanintharyi had activities significantly reduced, deviating from the original plan and the expectations of the communities. This reflected negatively on the image of the project, the implementing partner (KDN), and the fellows, with communities losing interest and trust in SIRP.
- There has been very high staff turnover within all four consortium partners at both national and field levels. Several of the partners have had multiple individuals in the same position over the first 18 months of SIRP. Proper and efficient handover of responsibilities was limited.
- The uncertainty and significant weaknesses in relation to the log frame to be reported against has been challenging. The original log frame is regarded as “technically inaccurate” and underwent an extensive revision during most of 2013, through a collaborative process. However, the amended log frame is not used, and has not been approved by the EU.
- Furthermore there is limited collaboration between the partners regarding M&E, which is predominantly carried out by each individual partner through different “systems”.

Recommendations

1. It is recommended that the consortium seek clarification into the lump sum payments per project in Bilin township, and the contractors role in this. It is recommended that no payments through such a process be conducted.
2. For the remainder of SIRP, it is recommended that the fellows should be effectively engaged. The consortium should consider the feasibility of allocating funds for appropriate activities that will “reengage” the fellows in the villages. The fellows have an important role to play in achieving sustainability and ownership of the infrastructure project. This should be the focus for “reengagement”.
3. The monthly cluster meetings for fellows could be emphasized and scaled up for the remainder of the Grant. This has proven to be a useful “community of practice”.
4. The fellowship trainings should for future references be adequately contextualized and conducted in the appropriate languages.
5. The SIRP should for the remainder of SIRP ensure that the priorities in the communities that did not receive the “prospective” infrastructure are included constructively in the activities of the project.
6. The heads of all agencies should, for the remainder of SIRP, prioritize attending the SC meetings to ensure the commitment of all partners in the critical closing phase of the project.

7. Meetings minutes should be consistently approved at the SC and secretariat meetings.
8. A linkage and better dissemination of information between the secretariat level discussions and SC level should be emphasized
9. NRC as Grant holder should engage the EU and bring its representatives into the work of the SIRP. Field trips and invitations to SC meetings and secretariat meetings should be extended. Also workshop and seminar can be considered as an appropriate forum for engagement.
10. The Consortium must report on time and to the standards of the donor.
11. At the implementation level, consortium partner representatives have collaborated well and been able to draw on the knowledge available amongst the different partners. This experience, from a post-conflict context, should be documented and lessons learnt disseminated amongst the consortium partners and to relevant stakeholders.
12. The consortium model has resulted in a much wider and deeper opportunity, scope and impact than the partners would have been able to on their own. The consortium partners should begin work on documenting best practices and lessons learned.
13. The consortium partners should individually explore why there has been very high staff turnover. The organizations must take appropriate actions to ensure greater continuity within the organizations.
14. The revised logframe should be approved as soon as possible to ensure clarity of the requirements of the reporting for the end of SIRP.
15. For the remainder of SIRP, consortium partners should collaborate extensively on monitoring and evaluation while aligning their systems for the end of project evaluation.

2 INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

1. The Southeast Infrastructure Rehabilitation Project (SIRP) is a partnership established and funded under the European Union's *Aid to Uprooted People Programme in Myanmar*, with the main objective of improving the living conditions of the most marginalized and vulnerable conflict-affected uprooted people, and of their host communities, in the south eastern part of the country. The *consortium* of partners is composed of four agencies: The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), Action Aid/Myanmar (AAM), and Knowledge and Dedication for Nation-building (KDN).

2. The consortium has contracted Emerging Markets Consulting (EMC) to conduct an interim evaluation of SIRP as part of the requirements under EuropeAid's funding protocol. Signed and contracted by the Norwegian Refugee Council, the evaluation was finalized in the timeframe of two months with an additional preparation period of 7 days required to reach consensus on the final Terms of Reference (ToR) by all partners. It should be noted that the original ToR experienced further modifications during the evaluation phase based on direct inputs from partners and the EU⁶.

2.1 EVALUATION OBJECTIVES

3. The specific objectives of this interim evaluation as outlined in the terms of reference are⁷:

- To engage all partners in the EU required interim evaluation for SIRP under EuropeAid funds
- To conduct and complete a thorough interim evaluation that covers the grant from December 2012 to June 2014
- To evaluate SIRP's consortium technicalities and functions of the secretariat and steering committee mechanisms throughout the life of the project (up to August 2015)
- To produce an interim evaluation product/document that will inform ways forward and provide recommendation for the remainder of the grant

4. The complex nature of the project design, including the infrastructure development and application of the fellowship approach⁸ in Myanmar's south eastern unique socio-political context, required a comprehensive analysis of the relevant components of SIRP in order to achieve the objectives of this evaluation. For this purpose, EMC utilized the framework for program and project evaluation⁹ provided by OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC), adhering to the principles of impartiality, independence, credibility, usefulness, and participation of donors and recipients. The following six thematic areas were explored in detail throughout this process:

- *Context*: Understanding of the main challenges and opportunities experienced by SIRP due to geographical implementation in the context of south eastern Myanmar

⁶ Refer to Annex 1 – Terms of Reference for SIRP evaluation

⁷ Idem

⁸ Refer to paragraph 12

⁹ DAC Principles for the Evaluation of Development Assistance, OECD (1991)

- *Effectiveness*: Measure of the extent to which SIRP attained its objectives with a particular focus on operations at all levels including the steering committee, secretariat, and field offices.
- *Efficiency & Deliverables*: Analysis on the timing of project outputs, with a particular focus on qualitative information, in relation to project inputs
- *Relevance*: Analysis of the extent to which SIRP methodologies and approaches were suited to the priorities and policies of beneficiaries, recipients and donors
- *Partnership*: Evaluation of SIRP partnership-design and collaboration among consortium partners for the implementation and management of project activities
- *Fellowship modality*: Analysis of the impact the fellowship approach had in targeted areas and challenges/lessons learned arising from its implementation

5. The evaluators placed emphasis on identifying areas that could offer potential for improvement while determining practices that should continue for the remainder of the consortium. The methodological approach for this entire process is described in detail in the following section.

2.2 PROJECT BACKGROUND

6. SIRP's geographic scope covers communities in Mon and Kayin States and Tanintharyi Region, with an initial planned implementation timeframe of 36 months (2012-2015). The project partners aimed at implementing a range of activities in 90 villages across the three aforementioned States, with an estimated impact of 140,000 direct beneficiaries¹⁰. These activities were designed to empower communities through improved access to basic education, primary health care, water and basic sanitation facilities, and the creation of new income sources. The project had six expected results with some of the main outcomes listed below¹¹:

- Result 1: *All targeted villages have the tools, knowledge, skills and seed capital to be able to address their rights and development needs, as well as to promote peace*. Among others, this was to be accomplished through the training of one "fellow" (and two volunteers) per village for a total of 90, the provision of a Village Development Committee (VDC) grant to 45 of them, and the delivery of 60,000 Citizen Scrutiny Cards (CSC) across the three regions.
- Results 2: *Improved educational conditions*. This was to be accomplished through the construction of newly or rehabilitated fully-equipped schools in 22 of the 90 villages, and training of community teachers in each one of the 90 targeted communities.
- Result 3: *Improved basic health services*. Fully equipped and well maintained rehabilitated or newly built health centers were to be provided in 8 of the 90 villages. Also, auxiliary midwives were going to be trained and equipped in 30 of total targeted communities.
- Result 4: *Hygiene and sanitation practices have improved due to construction and awareness-raising work*. This was to be accomplished through the construction of newly/rehabilitated wells or gravity flow piped water systems in 60 of the 90 villages.
- Result 5: *Rehabilitated roads and bridges improve access*. A total of 15 villages to benefit from the rehabilitation of roads and short span bridges. The improvement of 8km of roads was going to be provided in 4 villages, and short bridge rehabilitation in 11 of them.

¹⁰ Refer to Annex 2 – SIRP information sheet

¹¹ Refer to Annex 1 of SIRP's proposal – "Description of the Action"

- Result 6: *Most marginalized and vulnerable uprooted people have acquired skills and knowledge, and received inputs to improve their livelihoods.* Among others, this was to be accomplished through the establishment and grant provision for 90 self-help groups in all targeted villages.

2.3 THE CONSORTIUM PARTNERS

7. **The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)** was selected among partners as the consortium's leader being responsible for overall project implementation in line with the contract and its annexes. This implied being the grant holder, contract signatory, co-funder, and in charge of submitting all required reports and request for payment to the Delegation of the European Union (DEU). In addition, and due to its particular experience and expertise, NRC was responsible for the implementation of the project in *Kayin State*, the training of all project staff on EC grant management, activities planned for the issuance of CSCs, protection and mine awareness, and implementing the vocational training component of SIRP. Finally, it was also the leading agency for the construction and maintenance of schools, gravity flow piped water systems, roads and maintenance in Kayin and Tanintharyi region (construction shared with SDC in the latter).

8. As a government institution, the **Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)** was selected to serve as liaison between SIRP partners and Myanmar's government authorities to obtain all legal mechanisms for the action¹². SDC would also be responsible for all project implementation activities in *Mon State*, while leading the construction and maintenance of schools, gravity flow piped water systems, and roads in Mon and Tanintharyi region (construction shared with NRC in the latter). Moreover, the agency would also be responsible for the construction and management of all health centers across the project's geographical scope.

9. **The Knowledge and Dedication for Nation-building (KDN)**, a Myanmar based NGO with experience working on behalf of displaced and conflict-affected communities, was selected to be responsible for the implementation of the project in *Tanintharyi region*. In addition, it was also assigned to lead all the work related to peace promotion and strengthening of education services (training of teachers) in the entire project area, as well as the training of midwives and construction of shallow wells in Tanintharyi.

10. Finally, and due to its role as the primary designer of the "fellowship approach", **Action Aid Myanmar (AAM)** was mainly responsible for supporting and managing the implementation of this component across all 90 villages. This included having a full-time support staff present in each of the other partner's regional offices throughout the life of the project. Also, AAM was the leading agency for the establishment of self-help groups (SHGs), community based organizations (CBOs), trainings on active citizenship, and all coordination activities supporting SIRP's livelihoods component.

¹² SDC works in the Southeastern region based on an MoU signed with NATALA

2.4 PROJECT DESIGN

11. The paramount project feature is participatory planning processes where communities themselves define their priority needs and match these to State development ones. This was supported by the selection of fellows and volunteers in each village, whose role was to provide technical assistance and facilitate all project activities. Furthermore, and due to the political context of the south eastern region of Myanmar, local authorities and non-State actors (NSAs) were to be fully involved in village selection, the definition of village priorities, and the subsequent implementation of programmatic priorities/activities, through regular consultation meetings in order to ensure transparency. The project design and scope was initiated by EurpoeAid, at that time based in Bangkok.

2.4.1 Fellows

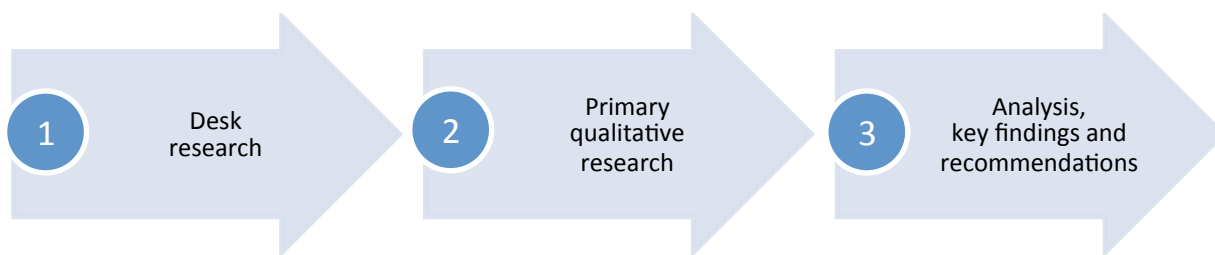
12. The central approach of AAM in Myanmar is supporting local organizations through intensive training and deployment of youth leaders (fellows). Fellows mobilize and organize local communities, facilitate analysis of community problems, undertake participatory planning, promote democratic norms and forms of decision-making, mobilize community resources (including that of local government), and facilitate the implementation of community prioritized action points. This is a non-prescriptive, rights driven program, where potential achievements are diverse and span a range of areas including social cohesion, community capacity building and organizing, education, health, livelihoods, infrastructure, environment, and women's empowerment, with an equally wide range of activities within each thematic area. By investing over a long period of time in young, motivated, capable individuals, who come from and live in the village itself, opportunities can be seized to engage in the processes of community driven change.

2.4.2 Budget

13. The total value of the project over the 36 months was estimated at 7 million Euros. EuropeAid committed to provide 80% of this amount (5.6 million Euros), with NRC and SDC committing to provide the remaining 20% (700,000 Euros each). The budget allocation to each agency was done based on the direct eligible costs as incurred for the implementation of assigned activities. As such, and out of the 7 million Euros, NRC was initially allocated 50.1% of the total budget (3.51 million Euros), SDC 32.6% (2.28 million Euros), KDN 7.2% (0.5 million Euros), and AAM 10.1% (0.71 Million Euros).

2.5 METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH APPROACH

14. The interim evaluation methodology was aligned to the specific objectives set in the terms of reference as described in the previous section. For this purpose, EMC conducted the evaluation in three distinct phases, as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: SIRP evaluation – Research phases**Phase 1: Desk research**

15. EMC commenced the evaluation by collecting and reviewing all relevant documentation provided by the four consortium partners including, but not limited to:

- Project concept papers and project proposals
- Appropriate M&E systems and logical framework
- Relevant assessments and baseline surveys
- Quarterly, annual and monitoring reports
- Relevant agreement (e.g. MoUs)
- Written communication exchanged between consortium partners

16. The main objective of this phase was for the evaluators to gain a good understanding of project design, technical details, implementation progress, and initial impressions of partners' perspectives on SIRP. While it drew mainly on qualitative data through a review of historic project information, and KIIs, quantitative data was collected -where appropriate- for subsequent contextualization and validation of qualitative information through data triangulation (e.g. budget allocations)¹³. To strengthen the research efforts, EMC kept constant communication with focal people at each of the partner organizations and catalogued this information to develop the tools required for the subsequent phase.

Phase 2: Primary research

17. EMC conducted primary research and site observations in order to gain a first-hand understanding of SIRP's consortium technicalities and functions of the secretariat and steering committee mechanisms throughout the life of the project.

18. Performance during the first 18 months of the project. For this purpose, the evaluators conducted a series of Key Informant Interviews' with relevant stakeholders including beneficiaries, recipients and donors. This was accomplished in the approximate timeframe of five weeks¹⁴ through field visits to village fellows in Mon and Kayin States and Tanintharyi Region; interviews with project staff in the regional offices of implementing partners (Hpa-An, Mawlamyine, and Dawei); consultations with steering committee members and the secretariat in Yangon; and follow-up interviews over the phone where appropriate.

¹³ Data triangulation was made -where appropriate and possible- through follow up interviews with key stakeholders. However, the evaluation team placed priority on official documentation when discussing unclear information

¹⁴ Refer to Annex 3 – Evaluation work-plan

19. Data collection techniques utilized for the primary research included structured questionnaires, semi-structured KII, focus group discussions (FGD) and rapid appraisal methods¹⁵. Also, most interviews revolved systematically around the following three discussion areas:

- An overview of the interviewee's experience in terms project implementation (inputs, outputs and timelines)
- A discussion of the nature of project design and what has worked (or not) in the respective agencies
- Reflections on the collaboration among consortium partners

20. It should be highlighted that the evaluation design included inputs from EMC's Monitoring and Evaluation specialist as well as specific requests made by partners and the secretariat. Table 1 below provides a comprehensive list of interviews conducted for this assessment.

Table 1. Methodology: Informants, tools and methods used for primary research

<i>Organization</i>	<i>Title and sample size</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Tools</i>	<i>Method</i>
Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)	Partnership Manager (Secretariat Chair)	Yangon	Semi-structured interview guide	KII
	SIRP's National Project Coordinator - M&E	Yangon	Semi-structured interview guide	KII
	National Project Coordinator	Hpa-An	Semi-structured interview guide	KII
	Fellows (7)	Kawt War Lae village (Kayin)	Semi-structured interview guide / observation checklist	Mixed methods (KII, FGD)
Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation (SDC)	Head of Humanitarian Affairs	Yangon	Semi-structured interview guide	FGD
	Deputy Head of Humanitarian Affairs	Yangon	Semi-structured interview guide	FGD
	YGN - Admin & Finance	Yangon	Semi-structured interview guide	FGD
	National Project Officer	Yangon	Semi-structured interview guide	FGD
	Operation Officer	Yangon	Semi-structured interview guide	FGD
	Head of field office and management team (2)	Mawlamyine	Semi-structured interview guide	KII
	Field facilitators team (6)	Mawlamyine	Semi-structured interview guide	KII
	Fellows (5)	Pa Yaw He village (Mon)	Semi-structured interview guide / observation checklist	Mixed methods (KII, FGD)
Knowledge and Dedication for Nation-building (KDN)	Operations Manager	Yangon	Semi-structured interview guide	Mixed methods (KII, FGD)
	Project Manager	Yangon	Semi-structured interview guide	Mixed methods (KII, FGD)
	Head of field office and management team (2)	Dawei	Semi-structured interview guide	KII
	Field facilitators team (7)	Dawei	Semi-structured interview guide	FGD

¹⁵ Refer to Annex 4 – Research tools

	Fellows (8)	Ka Nyin Chaung village (Tanintharyi)	Semi-structured interview guide / observation checklist	Mixed methods (KII, FGD)
Action Aid/Myanmar (AAM)	Country Director	Yangon	Semi-structured interview guide	KII
	Consultant	Yangon	Semi-structured interview guide	KII
	M&E officer	Hpa-An	Structured interview guide	KII
	M&E coordinator	Hpa-An	Structured interview guide	KII

Phase 3: Analysis, key findings and recommendations

21. EMC analysed the information collected in Phases 1 and 2 by framing it around the six thematic areas described in the previous section (i.e. context, effectiveness, efficiency and deliverables, relevance, partnership, and fellowship modality). This systematic approach allowed evaluators to clearly identify key areas where the project faced challenges during the first 18 months of implementation, and to provide programmatic recommendations for potential improvement and successful practices. In addition, it should be noted that the evaluation purposefully emphasized three different levels within SIRP, while focusing on the interrelationships within and between them. These are:

- Management level (Secretariat and Steering Committee in Yangon)
- Implementation level (Field office of consortium partners in Kayin, Mon and Tanintharyi)
- Beneficiaries level (Targeted villages and fellows)

2.6 LIMITATIONS

22. The interim evaluation has focused entirely on the outlined objectives defined in the terms of reference and the specifications defined by EMC in the proposal to the consortium. Though elements may be present in the report, this evaluation does not attempt to assess and analyse other aspects of the project. Also, while the assessment took place between June and August 2015, it technically covered only the implementation period from December 2012 to June 2014. This time gap presented some challenges to the evaluators since staff turnover across partners' office has taken place since then, and interviewees had to be reminded constantly of this chronological boundary. However, in order to cope with this challenge, a recent amendment to the contract, validated by all partners, extended the analysis throughout the life of the project for the works of the secretariat and steering committee. The conclusions and recommendations are based on the various sources of data and information available.

3 KEY FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

23. This section presents the main findings and analytical outcomes from the evaluation carried out for SIRP's activities implemented between December 2012 and June 2014. For matter of completeness, it will also cover the works of the steering committee and the secretariat up to August 2015. As Stated in the previous chapter, the information is systematically arranged revolving

around six key thematic areas; *Context, effectiveness, efficiency and deliverables, relevance, partnership, and fellowship modality*, all of which will be described into detail below.

24. In order to begin this analytical process, it is important to revisit the overarching project objective as defined in the original proposal submitted to the European Union: “Most marginalized and vulnerable conflict-affected uprooted people and their host communities, in 90 villages of Mon and Kayin States and Tanintharyi Region, *have been empowered*, and have *improved access to basic education, primary health care, water and basic sanitation facilities, and to new income sources*”. It is clear that SIRP has two well-defined but interdependent building implementation blocks: One related to the empowerment of targeted communities, and the other one related to infrastructure development. The former is mainly represented through the application of participatory processes embedded in project design, which apex is the preparation of village books and village development plans supported by community-based fellows. This is further supported by the livelihoods component of the project which aligns to the creation of new income sources. The second part builds upon the empowerment component by constructing the infrastructure that each village defined as a priority (if any), which is handed over to communities at the end of the project¹⁶.

25. While each subsection of this chapter will feature different components of SIRP, it is important to underscore in particular the “fellowship approach” which has been central to the implementation of this project for the first 18 months of the project. As described in the introduction, the approach was initially developed and successfully implemented by AAM in Kachin and Kaya states in 2006¹⁷ by allowing communities to select young people who had leadership potential and training them to become “change-makers” within their own localities. These trainings emphasized social development theory and participatory methods with the goal that fellows would then facilitate the analysis of the causes of poverty, identify strategies to overcome it, and support their communities in collective action.

3.1 CONTEXT

26. The Republic of the Union of Myanmar has been affected by internal conflict since the time of independence, mainly inflicted along ethnic lines. Several ethnic opposition groups, generally referred to as Non-State Actors (NSAs), have opposed the ruling military junta and are geographically and politically dispersed around the country with strongholds in the north eastern, western, and south eastern parts of the country. Some of these NSAs act as pseudo-governmental bodies controlling vast areas of territory with complex organizational structures including their own internal laws, democratic elections, and even representative offices abroad. For the purpose of this evaluation, the two most relevant NSAs are the Karen National Union (KNU) and the New Mon State Party (NMSP) which control areas in Kayin and Mon States, and Tanintharyi region¹⁸.

¹⁶ The project was not prescriptive in this sense and communities could have prioritized non-infrastructure needs. However, this did not happen.

¹⁷ Followed by Rakhine State in 2007 and Ayeyarwaddy in 2008

¹⁸ It should be noted that tensions between other NSAs have also contributed to operational challenges in Kayin State in particular – DKBA, KNLA, BGFs, and splinter groups that have broken away from the KNU.

27. The Karen National Union operates mainly along the mountainous Thai border of the south eastern region and claims to represent the interests of Karen people, one of the largest and most dispersed of Myanmar's ethnic minorities, through its armed wing the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA). The KNLA engages through a highly decentralized group of armed "brigades" (seven in total) that have jurisdiction over pockets of territory where mainly Karen people reside. Although the infighting between the KNU/KNLA and Burmese government has lasted for over sixty-five years, a historic cease-fire agreement was signed in early 2012 which has allowed access to these areas by international humanitarian and developmental organizations.

28. Similarly, the New Mon State Party (NMSP) claims to represent the interests and self-determination of Mon people and operates mainly along the eastern hills of Mon State and Tanintharyi region. The NMSP engages through its military wing, the Mon National Liberation Front (MNLF), although a cease-fire was agreed with the government in 1995, which has held steady since then.

29. The importance of understanding the internal politics of NSAs, their relationship with governmental authorities, and their influence within local communities, has proven to be a critical step for the successful implementation of SIRP during the first 18 months of the project. Specifically, consortium partners had to navigate a system composed of several stakeholders with different agendas, both simultaneously and from the onset of the project, which varied not only across States but also across targeted villages.

30. The above became evident during the *project field assessment*, which is part of the initial identification of villages that could be potentially targeted by SIRP. This preliminary stage got delayed in several townships since partners could not access communities without obtaining official permission from governmental authorities and also the NSA in charge, thus effectively dealing with two different systems.

31. NRC experienced extensive delays at this stage due to the scepticism of Kayin's state authorities who "had reservations about project design"¹⁹, in particular the fellowship component. The final approval took 4-6 months and came only after several rounds of clarification meetings and internal advocacy by NRC's team. It should be noted that the Karen National Union (KNU - active NSA in this region) also had some reservations about the project, but access was approved in a much shorter timeframe.

32. On the other hand, SDC had to deal with three different stakeholders in Mon State in order to gain initial access to potential villages. These were: Local government authorities, the KNU and the New Mon State Party (NMSP). However, delays were mainly experienced in the northern areas controlled by the KNU since this NSA was "sceptical about the concept of village books"²⁰ which included, among others, a complete mapping of resources for each community.

¹⁹ Quote. Field officer in Hpa-An

²⁰ Quote. Field officer in Mawlamyine

33. In the case of Tanintharyi region, KDN appeared not to have had issues accessing villages due to its well-established relationship with active NSAs in the region. This is particularly the case for KNU's majority-Christian leadership, who are associated with KDN's religious-based establishment.

34. An important finding from the aforementioned experiences is the highly diversified socio-political contexts encountered both across and within regions in the south eastern region. This presented challenges and constraints that were not adequately taken into consideration during SIRP's project design. Implementation tools and project technicalities applied in other more homogenous contexts in Myanmar, were not indiscriminately applicable in the south east.

35. A common challenge encountered by all partners during this initial stage was an objection to several components of the village book, including modality of data collection, from both government and NSAs. Specifically, the village book was going to be prepared by communities with the technical support of trained fellows, and included, among others, a mapping of existing geographical boundaries, historical timelines, resources, socio-economic conditions, power relations, seasonal climate and a list of priorities in each village. Some of these components were considered sensitive topics, especially the mapping of resources and power relations. This can be attributed to the following: a) The overlap of jurisdiction between government authorities and NSAs in most areas, and b) Fear that once disclosed, "external entities would decide to claim and exploit the natural resources in these areas"²¹.

36. It should be noted that in theory, and as stated by AAM, the "village book approach does not follow a standard procedure and it is a very flexible process in which communities have the freedom to omit parts if they think it is too sensitive information". A lack of clear understanding of the approach by the other stakeholders may have resulted in the above-mentioned situation.

37. One of the main strategies to cope with this issue, included paying continual visits to communities and explaining the objectives of SIRP repeatedly to villagers and local authorities. Also, and since all partners already had experience implementing projects in these areas, some level of distrust was less difficult to overcome.

38. Another important challenge experienced by all partners was the difficult physical access to some areas due to their "remoteness and high levels of infrastructure underdevelopment"²², including communication infrastructure. In the case of Kayin State, the state authorities were particularly keen to select very distant communities that were under full or partial control of the KNU. As such, and as depicted in

39.

40.

²¹ Quote. Field officers in all regions

²² Quote. Field officer in Hpa-An

41. Figure 2, a total of 30 out of 45 eligible villages were selected in the following townships: Kyainseikkyi (7 villages), Kawkareik (11 villages), and Thandaunggyi (12 villages).

42. In Mon State, the areas of intervention were worked out together with NATALA although KNU also had some involvement at this stage particularly when allowing access to some of these areas (e.g. village assessment). It was Stated by field officers that both organizations had a special interest in selecting villages located in the northern part of the State (Bilin Township) which are characterized by their geographical remoteness (see

43.

44.

45. Figure 2). However, and following the initial assessment, a total of 30 out of 54 eligible villages were selected throughout the State in the following townships: Mudon (2 villages), Thanbyuzayat (3 villages), Ye (12 villages) and Bilin (13 villages).

46. In the case of Tanintharyi, village selection did not encounter major challenges and took place expediently between KDN and NSAs. A total of 65 villages were found eligible but only 30 were selected as per project design in the following townships: Thayetchaung (14 villages), Palaw (6 villages), and Myitta/Dawei (10 villages).

47. An important finding based on these experiences is that while SIRP had a well-intentioned aim to reach remote areas under a specific set of criteria's, the actual process was more challenging than expected for the implementing partners. While the geographical scope of the project was theoretically relevant, in practice, reaching out to some of these villages was difficult and hence limited the coordination among fellows, field officers, and construction activities.

48. A final consideration in regards to the project "context" relates to the decentralized nature of KNU, which works through its armed brigades that control pockets of territory in the south eastern part of Myanmar. This situation directly affected the implementation of activities mainly in Kayin and Mon States where targeted villages are geographically dispersed (see

49.

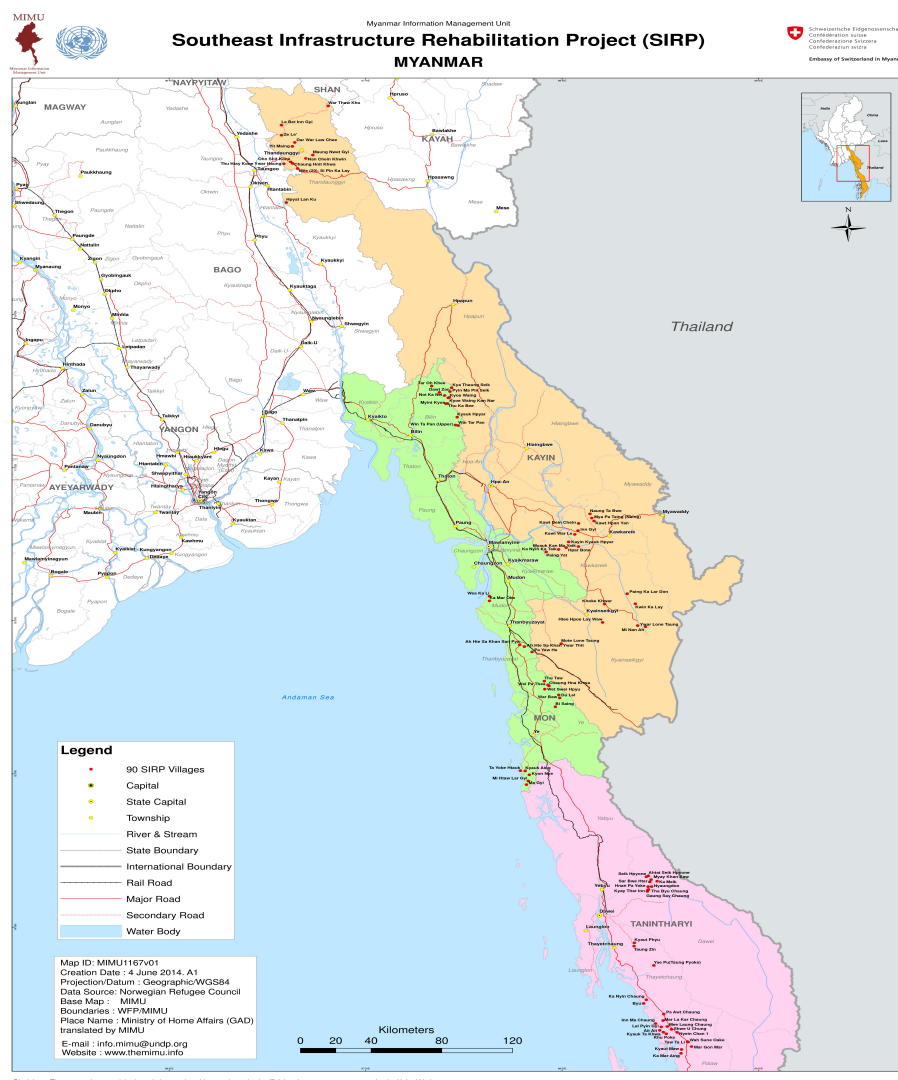
50.

51. Figure 2). While the KNU has a liaison office that technically represents all of its units, each brigade has de facto independence in the way it manages the territories under its control, thus creating two parallel systems within one single NSA²³.

52. In the case of Kayin, the villages located in the northern part of the State (Thandaunggyi township) are under the jurisdiction of KNU's brigade #2 while the areas in the south are under the jurisdictions of brigades #6 and #7 (see Figure 3). Following the endorsement of SIRP by KNU's main liaison office, each brigade also approved access individually and interacted with partners following the rules of KNU's "development policy". The "development" policy outlines the official policy on how to "handle" projects funded by external organizations (e.g INGOs, bilateral organizations, etc.)

Figure 2. Map of selected villages for the Southeast Infrastructure Rehabilitation Project (SIRP)

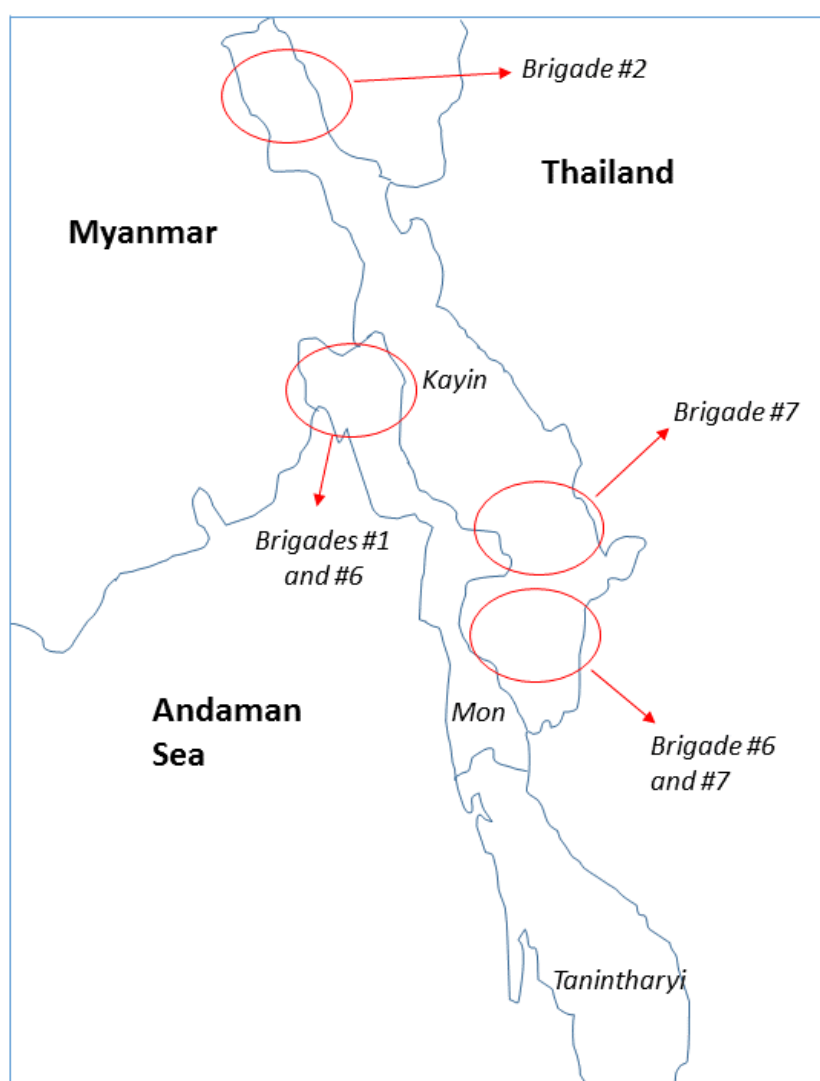
²³ Interaction with brigades #2 and #5 was particularly difficult in Kayin State since they did not communicate through liaisons offices



53. Before the commencement of construction activities, brigade #2 communicated to NRC that it had produced its own “development policy” which where to be followed for the implementation of activities in Thandaunggyi township. This new policy Stated that donor agencies should pay the equivalent of 10% of total project budget to the brigade in order to cover “management and coordination” costs. This was in violation of NRC’ policy on private funding to armed groups. The SIRP activities had to be paused in the 12 villages. Extensive negotiations with the Brigade leaders failed. This is the main reason why SIRP only started implementation in 18 out of 30 villages in Kayin State.

54. A similar situation arose in Mon State when the “social development committees” in Bilin township (northern areas of the State, see Figure 3) requested 2% of total project costs for “management and logistics expenses”. This request occurred right before the commencement of construction activities, but unlike the experience in Kayin where the project got cancelled, the contractors were able to negotiate directly with committee leaders and agreed to pay a \$500 lump sum per project. This whole process delayed the project for about one month.

55.

Figure 3. Areas controlled by Karen National Union's brigades under SIRP

56. The main lesson from these experiences relate to the parallel systems that must be navigated by SIRP partners in order to implement project activities. While the Government of Myanmar (GoM) follows a very centralized structure²⁴, some NSAs like the KNU are very decentralized which creates issues of accountability, transparency and consistency.

57. It is clear that the limited contextualization of SIRP design in the context of south eastern Myanmar, directly affected project performance and implementation from the onset. The impacts of these challenges in terms of timeline will be explored into detail in the next section

²⁴ i.e. an "official letter" from the state authorities would be enough for partners to access these targeted areas

3.2 EFFECTIVENESS

58. The main objective of this section is to focus on the achievement of project milestones with a particular focus on operations. This section will focus on the detailed workings for the activities that were actually completed up to June 2014.

59. It should be noted that all partners recognize that SIRP has “generally been well-received among communities mainly due to its infrastructure component”²⁵ which has proven to be an important incentive. Nonetheless, the soft components of the project epitomized in the fellowship approach and production of village books have also been critical for the SIRP effectiveness.

3.2.1 Fellow selection

60. Following the *field assessment* and *village selection*, the next important milestone in the project was the *selection of fellows*. Fellows were going to provide technical support for the implementation of activities particularly the production of village books²⁶. Villagers were responsible for their selection, alongside the communities, with the support/inputs from consortium partners and local authorities (e.g. government or NSAs).

61. In Kayin State, the main challenge during this process was the limited number of suitably aged candidates to take upon the responsibilities of being a fellow. The primary reason was that “many working age adults immigrated to Thailand looking for better job prospects”²⁷ which resulted in the selection of fellows that were young and in some cases under the age of 18.

62. In Mon State, fellowship selection took longer than expected due to several factors including limited education level, financial challenges, and a slight distrust in the project design by the community. In particular, the “limited educational level attained by potential fellows”²⁸ was emphasized throughout the interviews. All participants needed to have at least the equivalent of a secondary school certificate which was difficult to find. A similar situation was also experienced in Tanintharyi region, although it had otherwise a more straight forward selection process.

3.2.2 Training

63. Fellow selection was followed by an *initial training round*, which was managed and delivered by Action Aid/Myanmar (AAM) with the support of NRC, SDC and KDN in each of the three targeted regions. This training introduced newly selected fellows to the project’s technical details including the tools required to develop village books (e.g. human rights, collection of historical data, resource mapping, geographical mapping, seasonal information, etc.). The challenges experienced during this first training related to the difficulties in understanding new and complex concepts provided in a relative short timeframe.

64. In Kayin State the abovementioned challenges, was compounded by language barriers. “Over half of Village Committee members spoke Karen and Mon dialects but the training tools utilized

²⁵ Quote, field officers in all regions.

²⁶ The empowerment of the fellows will be explored in detail in the section Fellowship modality

²⁷ Quote. Field officer in Hpa-An

²⁸ Quote. Field officer in Mawlamyine

were in Burmese”²⁹. To cope with this situation, NRC moderators who spoke these dialects were able to provide direct support throughout the training session although this made the process less efficient than expected.

65. A similar situation ensued in Tanintharyi where roughly “a third of participants were from different ethnic groups and did not understand the key messages or technical jargon used”³⁰. However, AAM’s trainer in this region was both ethnically Karen and a previous fellow from a similar AAM program, which “greatly improved the overall experience for participants due to his knowledge of the fellowship approach and the socio-economic context of trainees”³¹.

66. An important lesson from the first training round is the importance of adapting the training tools to the language of selected participants. While this may not have been an issue in more homogenous areas of Myanmar, the unique context of the south eastern region must take these differences into consideration.

3.2.3 First placement

67. After the first training round, fellows were back to their villages for a 2-3 months *placement* where the initial activities towards the production of the village book were undertaken. This served as an opportunity to gain practical experience in the knowledge recently acquired, and also to cement SIRP’s objectives among targeted communities.

68. Common challenges experienced across regions during this process were: a) the difficulties in engaging villagers into these activities, and b) the sensitive nature of some of the questions asked as part of the village book mappings.

69. In the case of Kayin State, *natural resource mapping* was one of the most difficult issues, since villagers thought that disclosing this information would “expose them to government and/or other entities who then may want to exploit these riches”³². As a consequence, this entailed initial distrust of fellows who were seen as “informants”³³ to these external agents. Some of the fellows’ coping mechanisms in Kayin included gaining the trust of important people in the village who gave them some leverage, and also having field assistants and project officers from NRC visiting on a regular basis to offer direct support.

70. In Mon State, natural resource mapping was divisive particularly among communities in Bilin Township (under KNU control), while the concept of *power relations* was misunderstood in one village of Mudon Township³⁴. Moreover, engaging villagers to attend community meetings was also difficult, but fellows partnered with authoritative individuals in the village who were able to influence participation.

²⁹ Quote. Field officer in Mawlamyine

³⁰ Quote. Field officer in Dawei

³¹ Idem

³² Quote. Field officer in Hpa-An

³³ Idem

³⁴ The power dynamics between NSAs and government authorities is a sensitive issue in the SE context of Myanmar

71. While similar issues arose in Tanintharyi, the approach taken by fellows in this region focused mainly on “reaching out to village leaders and walk them step-by-step through each one of their planned activities”³⁵. This strategy proved to be effective for engaging village leaders and trust-building with the communities.

72. The concept of monthly *cluster meetings*, which started during the first placement period and lasted throughout the first half of the project, was an important feature. While these meetings aimed to provide technical support for fellows, they also served as a platform for participants to exchange their experiences from the project implementation. All stakeholders recognize that cluster meetings proved to be a very effective resource, which led to the creation of support networks among fellows.

3.2.4 Second training round

73. Following the first placement, fellows underwent a *second training round* which focus was the finalization of village books, including topics such as mapping (resource, geographic, and climatic), analysis of power relations, and a detailed implementation plan for the remainder of the project.

74. Implementation partners agreed that the second training improved considerably. Fellows were generally more comfortable with the concepts introduced and the details of SIRP. Nonetheless, language barriers persisted. Furthermore, participants from Tanintharyi Stated that “trainers did not understand the context, which reflected in the inapplicability of the proposed “solution” provided to their challenges in the villages”³⁶.

3.2.5 Village books

75. As of June 2014, the compilation of *village books* was only completed in the thirty SIRP communities of Tanintharyi region. The compilation of books for Kayin and Mon States did not take place until later in the year due to the challenges mentioned³⁷.

76. It is identified that most of the activities carried out during the first 18 months of the project (i.e. field assessment, village selection, fellow selection, trainings, and placements) were completed as planned in operative terms. Nonetheless, some important lessons must be highlighted, including the adaptation of training tools to the language of participants while reinforcing activities such as the monthly cluster meetings.

3.3 EFFICIENCY AND DELIVERABLES

77. This section focuses on the timing of project outputs and deliverables compared to the initial proposed action plan. As mentioned, SIRP had a planned duration of 36 months starting in December 2012 and ending in December 2015. The main milestones for the first 18 months of the project are detailed in Table 2. These were: Field assessment; village selection; fellow selection, trainings and placements; and review of priorities including the production of village books.

³⁵ Quote. Field officer in Dawei

³⁶ Idem

³⁷ This is out of the scope of the interim evaluation.

Table 2. Proposed Action Plan for SIRP (first 18 months)

	Semester 1						Semester 2						Semester 3					
Month	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Field assessment and village selection																		
Selection of fellows																		
Fellowship training round #1																		
First fellow placement																		
Fellowship training round #2																		
Second fellow placement																		
Volunteer training																		
Reviews of village priorities and finalization of village books																		
Contracting and construction activities																		

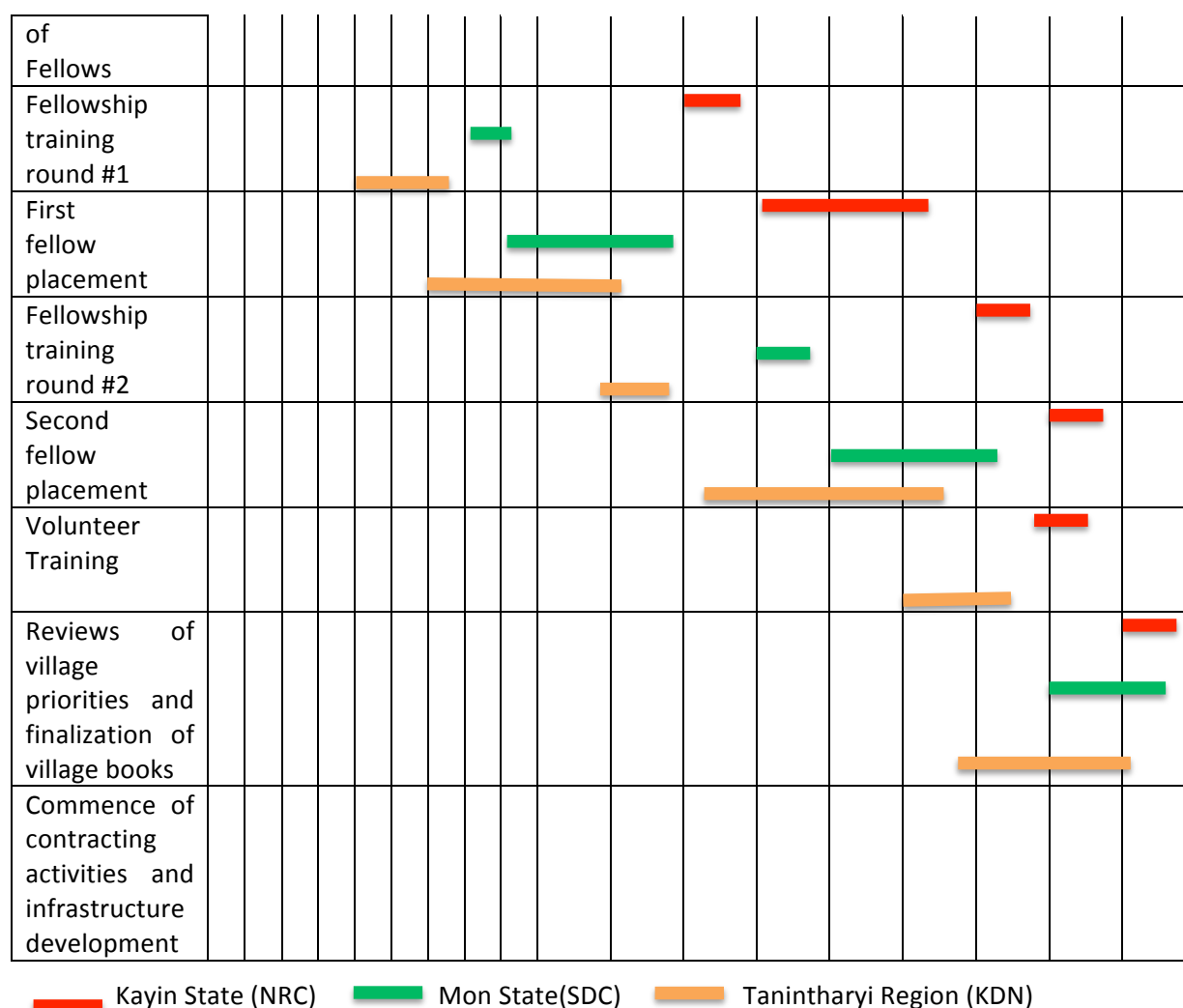
78. The contracting and construction activities were expected to commence in September 2013, following ten months of preparation activities including fellow placements and review of village priorities. However, the contextual challenges outlined in the previous sections delayed most of the activities significantly.

79. Table 3 depicts the actual implementation timeframe in each of the three targeted regions.

Table 3. Actual Action Plan for SIRP (first 18 months) – Kayin, Mon and Tanintharyi

	Semester 1 ³⁸						Semester 2						Semester 3					
Month	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Field assessment and village selection																		
Selection																		

³⁸ Refer Annex 1 of SIRP's proposal – "Description of the Action"



80. Partnerships contracts between the consortium partners were signed at different times during Q1 – Q3 2013.

- NRC and KDN signed on 28.03.2013
- NRC and SDC signed on 16.08.2013
- NRC and AAM signed on 09.10.2013

81. The first financial disbursement to the project was delayed due to the lack of Financing Guarantee (FG). Although the FG was submitted by NRC to the EU Del on 16/02/2013, the EU reacted asking for clarifications (lack of right template) ten days later (26/02/2013). Then NRC sent a new Financing Guarantee on March 11 and the disbursement was made effective 04/04/2013. Financing Guarantees are compulsory for disbursements of more than EUR 1.300.000. The delay in receiving funds force KDN to use reserve funds, while SDC used its 10% project contribution to start implementing

82. In Kayin State, the entire project got delayed between 4-6 months due to the state authorities' reservations in regards to the fellowship approach and their reluctance to provide access to villages until that issue was clarified. However, and once the official endorsement was obtained by NRC, the activities took place within the planned timeframe up to the initial review of village priorities in May 2014.

83. In Mon State, the project got delayed between 2-3 months due to KNU's skepticism in relation to the resource mapping component of the village books. This affected mainly villages in Bilin township which were under the control of KNU's brigade #1 (see Figure 3). This area has experienced delays throughout the life cycle of the project. All other activities were implemented within the original planned timeframe.

84. In Tanintharyi, no major delays were experienced and all activities finished on time. This is mainly attributed to the strong relationship between KDN and active NSAs in the region. However, the first and second placements took 1-2 months longer than expected due to "harvest season and festivities"³⁹ in the villages, which delayed some activities for the culmination of village books.

3.4 RELEVANCE

85. The main objective of this section is to understand the suitability of approaches and methodologies utilized by SIRP in relation to the priorities outlined by each of the stakeholders. For the purpose of this evaluation, the main stakeholders are identified as the European Union (EU), the government of Myanmar (GoM), consortium partners, targeted communities, and fellows⁴⁰.

86. The EU is the main donor for the *Aid to the Uprooted People Programme in Myanmar*. The overall objective of this program is to improve the status of uprooted persons in the country with a specific focus on the most marginalized and vulnerable groups. This includes the creation of a viable foundation for longer term development through improved living conditions and livelihoods; improvement of living conditions through enhancing protection from forced repatriation or relocation; and to promote reconciliation and conflict resolution through construction engagement⁴¹. The SIRP's is the main recipient of funding within the grant program, including the improvement of livelihoods among targeted communities and the construction of key infrastructure to support development in this region.

87. The priorities of targeted communities and beneficiaries were identified during the *field assessment* carried out at the beginning of the project. The purpose of this initial assessment was mainly to identify villages that were eligible to take part in the project under the criteria set in the proposal and to ensure local relevance. It also provided an opportunity to understand villages' needs and interest in the project.

88. In this regard, most of villages in Mon States claimed that their main concern was to cement the peace process agreement between the KNU and the government, and that any other activities were secondary to them. This is important to highlight since SIRP secondary outcomes included activities related to peace promotion, but this was not necessarily a main component of the project. This was also the case in Kayin State although such statements arose mainly from representatives of the NSA⁴².

³⁹ Quote. Field officer in Dawei

⁴⁰ Fellows will be covered in detail below in section 3.6).

⁴¹ European Union. *"Aid to Uprooted People Programme in Burma/Myanmar - Guidelines for grant applicants"*

⁴² Quote. Field Officer in Hpa-An and stakeholders

89. On the other hand, villages in Mon State and Tanintharyi region were very receptive to the idea of SIRP but mainly incentivized by its infrastructure component and not necessarily other important areas of the project. While not necessarily problematic in the short term, this created expectations among communities that when not fulfilled in the long term (e.g. some villages were not allocated their top infrastructure choice in Tanintharyi), it reflected negatively on fellows and partner organizations.

90. The bottom-up approach appears to have worked well during the first half of the project (from fellow selection up to preparation of village books), but “lost steam during the construction phase in which involvement of the fellows and the community was minimal”⁴³⁴⁴. The latter can be attributed to the fact that construction of traditional projects (second half of the project) were offered to external contractors as per project guidelines, time during which the direct participation of fellows and villagers got drastically reduced. It should be noted that non-traditional projects (e.g. renovation works, road rehabilitation, etc.) involved at some extent fellows and villagers in Mon State.

91. The priorities of (GoM) in regards to SIRP is framed around its recent emphasis on supporting a bottom-up approach to the country’s development through relevant national-level policies⁴⁵. This was reflected in the south eastern region after a cease-fire agreement was signed with the KNU, which allowed access to development and humanitarian organizations in the area. AAM had provided support to government officials in the region for technical support of a “bottom-up” training approach and had also implemented the fellowship approach in other villages of Kayin state. In relation to this initiative, District officers were requested by state authorities to produce a document outlining the needs of each village under their jurisdiction.⁴⁶ Many submitted the village books from AAM-supported communities. This situation created expectations from state authorities on the SIRP-managed villages to finalize their village books sooner so they could share it with the state authorities. While no actual submission case was reported among SIRP villages, it did create tension for fellows, communities and partners alike.

92. This report identifies that at least theoretically, stakeholder priorities appear to be well reflected in SIRP’s initial project design. During the first 18 months of implementation, both the soft (e.g. community mobilizing) and hard (i.e. infrastructure) components of the project acted as two separate elements and not as integrated and complimentary components of the same project. This was a recurrent theme throughout field interviews since SIRP was initially introduced to villagers as having a “bottom-up approach” guiding the implementation. This was compounded by the misguided expectations of communities due to lack of clarity for the overall objectives of the project.

⁴³ Idem

⁴⁴ In Mon State this happened only in the construction of traditional projects (e.g. schools and health centres) based on contractor approach. The main challenge was to get good quality construction materials such as sand, bricks, aggregates, wood, etc.

⁴⁵ Idem

⁴⁶ A lot of the same information that can be found in the village books

3.5 PARTNERSHIP

93. This section will focus on the collaboration among the consortium partners. In order to allocate responsibility and ensure transparency in the works of the consortium, two formal entities were constructed: The steering committee (SC) and the secretariat.

94. **The Steering committee (SC)** is the highest decision making body of the consortium. When needed, all major decisions in this body are reached by voting, although most commonly decisions are they agreed upon based on consensus. The SC is composed of country directors and head of agencies from the four consortium partners. Meetings are held quarterly unless otherwise required. The SC is chaired by the Partnership Manager and co-chaired by NRC's CD. For any voting actions etc. the Partnership Manager is removed from the process and only Heads of agencies discuss and vote.⁴⁷

95. The second operational entity of the Consortium is the **secretariat**. The secretariat is the "operational body" of SIRP and meets on a monthly basis⁴⁸. The role of the secretariat is to regularly address issues and challenges, in addition to harmonizing operational approaches and procedures among all consortium partners. This body also informs and discusses implementation-focused procedures, tools and approaches as an operating unit, while monitoring and evaluating progress in project activities.

96. Frequently emphasized by the partners as a notable strength, is the complimentary abilities and experience of the different organizations in the consortium. There is an inherent understanding of the context and there have been relevant forums and opportunities for partners to interact at both national and local levels. While such interaction can be demanding, findings suggest that at the implementation level, representatives have collaborated well and been able to draw on the knowledge available amongst the different partners. Thus, the partnership model has resulted in a much wider and deeper "opportunity, scope and impact"⁴⁹ than the partners would have been able to on their own.

3.5.1 Coordination at the implementation/field level

97. A unique feature of SIRP's project design is the allocation of a full-time AAM staff in each one of the partners' field offices across the three regions. The main purpose of this placement is for AAM to provide direct technical support to partners for the implementation of the fellowship component. The specific role and responsibilities of this associate were agreed upon by all consortium partners in a bilateral understanding signed in Q3 of 2013. The bilateral understanding, included details in regards to logistics, finances, reporting, fieldwork and collaboration with the host office.

98. The full integration of a staff member from one consortium partner to another, in order to support a critical component of the project, has proven effective and appreciated at the implementation level. To achieve functionality, this required a strong sense of partnership, clearly delineated responsibilities, and a level of trust. There is consensus amongst the consortium partners,

⁴⁷ Annex 5 – SIRP organogram

⁴⁸ Bi-monthly as of March 2015 as decided by the Secretariat membership

⁴⁹ Note that the interim evaluation has not evaluated the preliminary results of the project

that this collaboration has overall been “very positive”⁵⁰. This arrangement has also caused confusion, as the case in Mon State, where fellows did not have a clear understanding of who was the leading organization/s in field. This created some inefficiencies particularly in regards to communication since SDC, and not AAM, was the agency in charge of sensitive issues such as assessments, but village liaisons keep contacting the latter for these matters.

3.5.2 Coordination at the national level

99. The SC meetings were conducted on a regular basis and agenda's were repetitively shared pre meeting. The SC Chair, giving the consortium partners an opportunity to provide feedback, shared post meeting draft minutes. Deviating from best practice, the evaluation team noted that the meeting minutes from previous SC meetings were not approved in the subsequent SC meetings on a regular basis. The evaluation does not otherwise find that the operations of the SC deviate from good governance practices and sound operating procedures.

100. To the knowledge of the evaluators, there does not appear to be a unison mandate/ToR for the operation of the SC or for the role of the Chair of the SC.

101. For the first 18 months of the project, the evaluation found regular attendance by the heads of all agencies in the SC, but later a "pattern of deputies attending"⁵¹ is evident. “To some extent I think this made the SC less effective and the communication between our agencies deteriorated”⁵². Also the “double” role of NRCs in the SC - as both represented through their CD, and as the Chair of the SC, have raised some concerns amongst partners. The evaluation recognizes the balance between applying time intensive democratic and transparent governance procedures in the SC and the perceived “lack of effectiveness” this can trigger. The consortium partners mainly appreciate the efforts of the implementation focused secretariat.

3.5.3 Consortium coordination with external partners

102. There is a general sentiment that the SC has not been able to engage sufficiently with the EU/EC. There has been little contact and this is accentuated by the CPs, that the limited contact with any EU representatives testifies to a “lost opportunity”⁵³ of showcasing the pioneering work of the SIRP in the SE region and to clarify the changing operational contexts and decisions taken within the project.

103. Generally emphasized positively is the diversity of the consortium partners and the prospective learning opportunities amongst the complimentary organizations and its representatives with various *modus operandi*. It is the evaluators' opinion that this opportunity has not been taken advantage of and utilized effectively, primarily because of the lack of implementation of an appropriate and holistic knowledge management system.

3.6 FELLOWSHIP MODALITY

104. According to SIRP's proposal, AAM was the organization in charge of supporting the

⁵⁰ Quote partners

⁵¹ Quote partners and verified by SC meeting attendance lists

⁵² Quote partner

⁵³ Quote partner

implementation of the fellowship approach (comprising the village books), including support for self-help groups (SHGs), organizing trainings on active citizenship, and coordinating the livelihoods component.

105. Fellows themselves highlight that their role within SIRP has been to support the communities in producing the village books and to act as a link between the implementing partners. Particularly emphasized is the fact that the fellows know the “history of the village”⁵⁴, knowledge that they have brought to the partners and have been important for the contextualization of activities. The closeness to the communities has been an advantage but it has also, at times, placed the fellows in a position where they have been “blamed” for delays, and challenges arising in the communities.

106. The village book process was regarded as very collaborative, but it took some efforts to get relevant stakeholders on board. In the beginning many villages did not appreciate the concept, partially due to a lack of understanding in the nature of its components. However, fellows drew on the benefits of working in a group/cluster together with other fellows when carrying out the activities in their communities⁵⁵.

107. In terms of timing, the completion time of village books varied considerably between the villages - from two-three months, to more than eight months in some instances. Nonetheless, it must be noted that it was never a goal to complete these documents as fast as possible. The delays caused the communities to lose interest in the project, compounded by the fact that fellows were young, had limited experience, and were trying to achieve the trust of their communities.

108. In the case of the former, three fellows were under the age of 18 and had to register to participate together with their parents. The project did not initially have a child safeguarding policy in place. The evaluation is skeptical to allowing children under 18 to become fellows, regardless of the fact that they were chosen by their communities⁵⁶. The very young fellows had a “significantly harder time”⁵⁷ initiating SIRP works in their villages due to a lack of trust and respect from community elders. The young age of some fellows are also highlighted as a challenge in dealings with GoM and local officials. AAM acknowledges that some of the fellows were “too young”⁵⁸,

109. Most fellows positively highlight the skills they have gained from taking part in this program. Predominantly emphasized are “leadership skills” and “communication skills”, in addition to the important knowledge and understanding of the operations and modalities of the government. Several fellows mentioned how GoM representatives approached them for “advice” and how some have been asked to take on a role on behalf of their communities in forums other than SIRP.

110. In terms of sustainability, communities underline that fellows continue to be actively involved in the decision making processes of their respective villages after the completion of the

⁵⁴ Partner quote

⁵⁵ Fellows quotes

⁵⁶ Note: The three fellows turned eighteen during the lifetime of SIRP

⁵⁷ Partner quote

⁵⁸ Partner quote

village books. A large number of fellows “continue as community mobilisers⁵⁹” and there is even one example of fellows starting a community based organization (CBO).

111. Consortium partners recognize quite positively the fellowship approach and the important role that these “change-makers” have played during the first 18 months of the project. In particular, their support in the finalization of village books is lauded since these belong to the host community and is a tool that can be used extensively in other forums and interactions. However, the evaluation also finds that the role of the fellows greatly diminished after the completion of the village books.

112. A number of fellows and project officers expressed the lack of relevance in some of the training provided by AAM representatives. Primarily highlighted was the fact that many trainers lacked understanding of the context in the south east, the challenges of operating in NSA controlled areas, understanding of project’s specific targets and language barriers.

3.7 OTHER RELEVANT AREAS

113. In addition to the six-thematic areas previously discussed, there are three additional themes that arose during the evaluation process and that must be highlighted; a) financial management, b) staff turnover, and c) monitoring and evaluation.

114. In terms of financial management, the lack of alignment between the financial systems of all partners, and partners not consistently abiding by the financial guidelines was highlighted as an important issue that in part slowed down the disbursement processes and delayed the disbursement of funds. For the consortium, this implied difficulties in reporting to the EU and challenging communication when allocating these resources.

115. Also, some partners acknowledge that there was never a clear and full understanding of the budget allocated to each one of the activities of SIRP, and that there were delays in terms of funds disbursement. Specifically, KDN had to use its own funds during the first six months of the project but this is attributed to the fact that the first transfer from the EU did not take place until April 2013. AAM also used their own funds for a longer period of time in the first year. This was primarily caused by the delayed process of reaching an agreement between AAM and the Consortium, in addition to the challenges mentioned above.

116. Another consideration in terms of financial management is the higher than expected costs of infrastructure projects due to the high inflation rates in Myanmar, and because of the remoteness of some of the areas. This led to the re-adjustment in the number of infrastructure projects to be built in each region, with 17 villages in Tanintharyi being left out because of the high costs in reaching some of the villages in the area. This situation affected negatively the image of the project, the implementing partner (KDN), and the fellows, with communities losing interest in SIRP. The details of how this shifting/redirection of funds was decided is out of the scope of this evaluation but it is an important area to address, since some partners State a serious lack of clarity and transparency in this regard.

⁵⁹ Partner quote

117. In relation to staff turnover, this was an issue across all organizations and at every level of the organizations. Since the beginning of SIRP's implementation activities, changes of personnel were recorded within the EU, NRC, AAM and SDC at both the national and field levels. In particular, AAM program associates and officers placed at each of the field offices to support the fellowship component appear to have changed constantly across all regions⁶⁰. This was also the case for the consortium's M&E officer, which to date has had three different people in this specific role. The main challenge experienced from this high staff turnover is the lack of knowledge continuity between new and exiting personnel, as well as the lost personal relationships built between beneficiaries and project staff.

118. In terms of monitoring and evaluation (M&E), the initial M&E matrix submitted with the proposal was technically inaccurate with measurability issues, which led to a full revision during the Q2 of 2013. This included a re-definition of indicators, systems, and careful consideration of the logframe. This process lasted for about 11 months and was mainly the responsibility of NRC. However, up to the time of the evaluation, partners have not been able to streamline the new M&E system because the donor did not approve it yet. Furthermore, M&E is still done individually by each organization and through different systems, and limited collaboration is reported between their M&E officers in Yangon and that of the consortium.

⁶⁰ AAM's project associate in Tanintharyi region remained the same throughout the first 18 months of the project

4 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. It is recommended that the consortium seek clarification into the lump sum payments per project in Bilin township, and the contractors role in this. It is recommended that no payments through such a process be conducted.
2. For the remainder of SIRP, it is recommended that the fellows should be effectively engaged. The consortium should consider the feasibility of allocating funds for appropriate activities that will “reengage” the fellows in the villages. The fellows have an important role to play in achieving sustainability and ownership of the infrastructure project. This should be the focus for “reengagement”.
3. The monthly cluster meetings for fellows could be emphasized and scaled up for the remainder of the Grant. This has proven to be a useful “community of practice”.
4. The fellowship trainings should for future references be adequately contextualized and conducted in the appropriate languages.
5. The SIRP should for the remainder of SIRP ensure that the priorities in the communities that did not receive the “prospective” infrastructure are included constructively in the activities of the project.
6. The heads of all agencies should, for the remainder of SIRP, prioritize attending the SC meetings to ensure the commitment of all partners in the critical closing phase of the project.
7. Meetings minutes should be consistently approved at the SC and secretariat meetings.
8. A linkage and better dissemination of information between the secretariat level discussions and SC level should be emphasized
9. NRC as Grant holder should engage the EU and bring its representatives into the work of the SIRP. Field trips and invitations to SC meetings and secretariat meetings should be extended. Also workshop and seminar can be considered as an appropriate forum for engagement.
10. The Consortium must report on time and to the standards of the donor.
11. At the implementation level, consortium partner representatives have collaborated well and been able to draw on the knowledge available amongst the different partners. This experience, from a post-conflict context, should be documented and lessons learnt disseminated amongst the consortium partners and to relevant stakeholders.
12. The consortium model has resulted in a much wider and deeper opportunity, scope and impact than the partners would have been able to on their own. The consortium partners should begin work on documenting best practices and lessons learned.
13. The consortium partners should individually explore why there has been very high staff turnover. The organizations must take appropriate actions to ensure greater continuity within the organizations.

14. The revised logframe should be approved as soon as possible to ensure clarity of the requirements of the reporting for the end of SIRP.
15. For the remainder of SIRP, consortium partners should collaborate extensively on monitoring and evaluation while aligning their systems for the end of project evaluation.

5 ANNEXES

ANNEX 1: TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR SIRP EVALUATION

SIRP Interim Evaluation

NAME:	EMC Myanmar
TITLE:	Interim Evaluator (SIRP)
DUTY STATION:	SE Region Myanmar (SIRP areas of operation)
REPORTING TO:	Partnership Manager – NRC Myanmar

1. BACKGROUND

Project Title: Southeast Infrastructure Rehabilitation Project Interim Evaluation (SIRP)

Consortium Partners: NRC (grant holder, co-funder and implementer in Kayin State), SDC (co-funder and implementer in Mon State), KDN (implementer in Tanintharyi Region) and ActionAid Myanmar (technical partner for Fellowship and Village Book process and other soft skills/training activities).

Current project period Dec. 2012 - June 2014

Operational Area: SE Region, Myanmar in 89 villages, MIMU maps provided for desk study. In line with the overall objective stated in the concept note, NRC and its partners will implement a range of activities, in 10 selected townships, 90 targeted villages (yet to be selected), for 10,800 households, 54,000 individuals, reaching 2,720 school children, 24,000 individuals with health services through clinics, 60,000 individuals with citizen scrutiny cards, 27,000 with seed grants and at state/region levels, to achieve the following specific objective: **“Most marginalized and vulnerable conflict affected uprooted people and their host communities, in 90 villages of Mon and Kayin States and Tanyintharyi Region, have been empowered, and have improved access to basic education, primary health care, water and basic sanitation facilities, and to new income sources”**. Based on participatory planning processes, the communities will define their priority needs to which project staff and other stakeholders will flexibly respond with a range of services and products detailed below, and contributing to six results:

2. OBJECTIVES and EVALUATION APPROACH/DELIVERABLES

The main objectives for the consultancy

- To engage all partners in the EU required interim evaluation for SIRP under EuropeAid funds (AUP).
- To conduct and complete a thorough interim evaluation that covers the grant from Dec. 2012 to June 2014.
- To produce a interim evaluation product/document that will inform ways forward and provide recommendations for the remainder of the grant.

Narrative Questions of Inquiry and Thematic Areas

Based on Secretariat-level inputs and specific requests made by partners, and in line with the overarching project objective: *“Most marginalized and vulnerable conflict-affected uprooted people and their host communities, in 90 villages of Mon and Kayin States and Tanyintharyi Region, have*

been empowered, and have improved access to basic education, primary health care, water and basic sanitation facilities, and to new income sources”, seven key thematic evaluation questions are to be explored, through Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs):

- Effectiveness: Please analyse and comment on SIRP operations at all levels:
 - Steering Committee
 - The project set-up and design
 - Secretariat and Implementation (field) levels
 - Financial procedures
 - Monitoring mechanisms
 - What improvements could be made? What approaches and practices should continue for the remainder of the consortium?
- Efficiency: Analyse and comment on the timing of project outputs, how long it took to produce results.
- Context/s: What have been the major challenges and opportunities for SIRP implementation based on the varied contexts in the SE Region? Please explain/highlight key points.
- Partnership and Performance: Comment on the strengths and weaknesses of the SIRP partnership/s based to date. Provide inputs and feedback on project performance in relation to partnership development and management if applicable.
- Relevance: Based on experiences to date, comment on how relevant the SIRP methodologies and approaches have been in the contexts of the SE Region.
- Timeline and Deliverables: What challenges have been faced that has resulted in any delays in project deliverables? If none, please comment on how timelines have been met with minimum obstacles.
- Fellowship Modality and Wider Impact: Based on partners experiences in the project, what value has the modality of the Fellowship approach brought to the project? What challenges or lessons learned have been arrived at? For interviews with Fellows, what do they feel they have brought to the consortium? As a Fellow, what have they gained during the first half of the project? What was the gain for the communities? How participatory was the process?

Methodology

The evaluation will draw on purely qualitative data and review of historic project information. Data collection techniques shall include structured questionnaires, Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and/or appropriate rapid appraisal methods. Informants include:

- Key SIRP stakeholders such as, but not limited to:
 - Steering members
 - State actors from regional and township level
 - NSA members
- SIRP consortium team and selected Fellows from the SIRP villages
- NRC and Partners Management staff
- Selected Fellows

Sample identification: A sample of specific sites to visit will be identified in agreement with the Consortium members for review.

Evaluation Process

Tentative evaluation approach and field research plan:

1. Desk study/project docs provided prior to arrival, dedicated time with PM Partnership/NRC
2. Meet with relevant representatives of all consortium partners on an individual basis in Yangon
3. Evaluation team representatives travel to Hpa-An, Kayin State (NRC)
 - Hpa-An – interviews with SIRP NRC team and selected Fellows from the SIRP villages
4. Evaluation team representatives travel to Mon State (SDC)
 - Interviews with SIRP SDC team and selected Fellows from the SIRP villages in Mon State
5. Evaluation team representatives travel to Dawei, TND Region (KDN)
 - Interviews with SIRP KDN team and selected Fellows from the SIRP villages
6. Return to Yangon - meeting with KDN, AAM, NRC and SDC teams
7. While in the SE Region, the Evaluator/s to meet with selected Fellows as logistics and access at village level is difficult in some locations.

NRC and partners will be responsible for scheduling all appropriate meetings with relevant stakeholders

Evaluation Format:

1. Draft evaluation work plan and research tools
2. Final evaluation work plan and research tools
3. Draft Evaluation Report: The Consultant will submit a draft evaluation report for review by NRC and Partners by 1st Sept. 2015. Only a soft copy is to be submitted. The draft report shall include but not be limited to the following components:
 - Executive Summary – 2-5 pages - The executive summary is a tightly drafted and self-standing document which presents the project/programme under interim evaluation, the purpose of the evaluation, the main information sources and methodological options and the key conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations.
 - Tables of contents, figures, acronyms, etc.
 - Introduction – The introduction describes the consortium project/programme and the interim evaluation. The reader is provided with sufficient methodological explanations in order to gauge the credibility of the conclusions and to acknowledge limitations or weaknesses if there are any.
 - Evaluation Methodology/Approach Taken
 - Answered Questions/Findings – Stated questions posed and explored with rationale for:
 - Visibility of the Project – summary of visibility approach among all partners as this is linked to contexts and many of the programmatic rationale taken forward in the project.
 - Overall Assessment – as arrived at by the evaluators

- Conclusions, Lessons Learned and Recommendations – to be framed by the evaluators as appropriate.
- Annexes (suggested) - Terms of reference, List of interviews/appointments held, Logical framework and comments, Detailed evaluation method including: - Options taken, difficulties encountered and limitations and Detail of tools and analyses, List of documents used, and any other text or table which contains facts used in the evaluation.

4. Presentation of Key Findings and Discussions if desirable by NRC and Partners via Skype/“work shop” in Yangon.

5. Final Evaluation Report: The final report will be delivered in English. The report shall have an Executive Summary with no more than five pages, and the main section of the report with no more than 40 pages, excluding annexes. There will be no page limit for the annexes. Soft copy and three copies in hard copy format are to be submitted.

Data Ownership - the data collected through this evaluation will be kept and stored by NRC in hard and soft copy and shared with the Consortium members.

3. PROGRESS PLAN

Progress plan with milestones and delivery dates

Delivery dates:	Milestones:
May 25 th to June 5 th 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inception phase • EMC communications and introductions with SIRP Partners • EMC leading the finalization/validation of the interim evaluation ToR
August 1 st – August 31 th 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interim evaluation carried out according to ToR • Draft evaluation and progress reporting
Sept. 1 st 2015 Sept.16 th 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft Final interim evaluation completed and submitted to NRC and partners for review • Final Evaluation submitted to NRC and SIRP partners

4. Available Documentation

The evaluator will have access (but not limited) to the following resources of documentary information:

1. Project Concept Papers and Project Proposals
2. The appropriate M&E system and log frame,
3. All relevant assessments; Baseline surveys
4. Village books
5. Reports: monitoring reports,
6. All relevant agreements, MoU's
7. All written communications with partners, consortium members

5. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION (Explanatory Note)

Inception phase: May 25th to June 1st 2015 will have EMC leading the finalizing of the interim evaluation ToR with all SIRP partners as a neutral agent in this process. This is important for partner buy in as well as quality of the evaluation results and recommendations.

Kelly Flynn and Thomas Poulsen will make any amendments to the Consultancy Contract and attached Annexes by June 2nd as deemed appropriate (based on inception phase) however the fee rate and days dedicated to the Action will not change or be altered.

Interim evaluation phase will be carried out between June 3rd and Sept. 16th 2015.

Please note that EMC is the contracting agency after six other candidates were explored by NRC Myanmar between the dates of Aug. 2014 and January 2015. The consultancy was announced via SIRP partners and their networks in June 2014 and all partners put forth candidates that were not awarded the consultancy. EMC was referred to the Partnership Manager in Jan. 2015 with following meetings in Feb. 2015. Expression of interest and reference checks were completed in March 2015 prior to this contracting phase.

5. ENQUIRIES

All enquiries regarding this agreement shall be directed to:

ANNEX 2: SIRP INFORMATION SHEET



Funded by the European Union

Southeast Infrastructure Rehabilitation Project (SIRP)

The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), Action Aid/Myanmar (AAM), and Knowledge and Dedication for Nation-building (KDN) have recently won funding under the European Union's *Aid to Uprooted People Programme in Myanmar* funding mechanism. In so doing, our agencies have formed a partnership entitled the South-eastern Infrastructure Rehabilitation Project (SIRP) with plans to implement coordinated activities in Mon and Kayin States and Tanintharyi Region from 2013-2015. The SIRP Partnership is committed to its core values of enabling positive change and building capacities of target IDPs, refugee returnees and their host communities by bridging relief and development interventions and working with established local community and government partnerships.

The SIRP Partnership will implement a range of activities in 90 targeted villages across the three States to achieve the following specific objective: **“Most marginalized and vulnerable conflict-affected uprooted people and their host communities, in 90 villages of Mon and Kayin States and Tanintharyi Region, have been empowered, and have improved access to basic education, primary health care, water and basic sanitation facilities, and to new income sources”**. Based on participatory planning processes, the communities will define their priority needs and match these to State development priorities. Partners will then flexibly respond with a range of relevant services and products to attain sustainable positive change in the lives of the target beneficiaries.

Beneficiary villages will be selected according to the following criteria, jointly agreed between the four SIRP Partners: (a) conflict-affected villages with a peace process underway; (b) poor and particularly remote; (c) with a significant number of IDPs and/or returnees; (d) with limited access to government social services; (e) with a limited presence of other actors engaged in community development; (f) accessible physically and security wise, but also politically: this means that all stakeholders, including the government and NSA, should approve the selection of every village. With this understanding, SIRP Partners will ensure that selected villages include both government-controlled and NSA-controlled villages. This will demonstrate the humanitarian principles of neutrality and impartiality, and build trust and establish close relationships between the communities and local authorities.

Target Areas:

- **Kayin State:** 30 villages in Kawkaik, Kyaukseikgyi, and Thandaunggyi townships
- **Mon State:** 30 villages in Mudon, Ye, Billin, and Thanbyuzayat townships
- **Tanintharyi Region:** 30 villages in Dawei, Palaw, and Thayetchaung townships

The total value of the action over three years is USD 9,400,000 with an estimated 140,000 beneficiaries across the South-east. EuropeAid will provide 80% of the project funding with 20% equally provided by NRC and SDC.

ANNEX 3: EVALUATION WORK-PLAN

Delivery dates:	Milestones:
May 25 th to June 5 th 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inception phase • EMC communications and introductions with SIRP Partners • EMC leading the finalization/validation of the interim evaluation ToR
August 1 st – August 31 th 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interim evaluation carried out according to ToR • Draft evaluation and progress reporting
Sept. 1 st 2015 Sept.16 th 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft Final interim evaluation completed and submitted to NRC and partners for review • Final Evaluation submitted to NRC and SIRP partners

ANNEX 4: RESEARCH TOOLS**Work and research outline SIRP 2012 – 2014
FELLOWS' QUESTIONNAIRE**

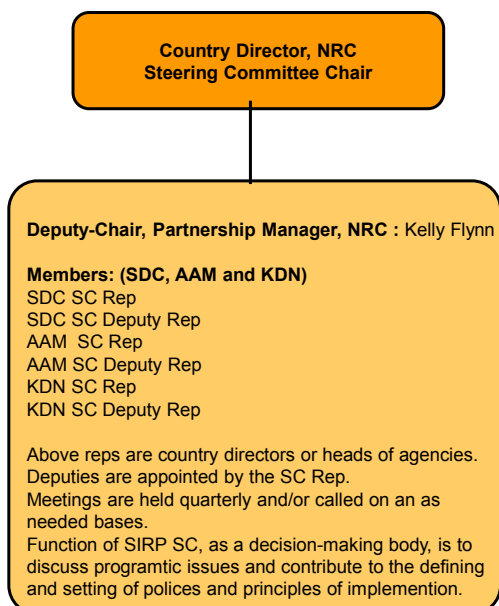
Village/s	Informant 1	Informant 2
Questions	Answers	Answers
What do the Fellows feel they have brought to the consortium?		
Information on the village book process?		
Was the identification of the village priorities (prior to June 2014) a collaborative process?		
As a Fellow, what have they gained during the first half of the project?		
What is the gain of the Fellowship model for the communities?		
What challenges or lessons learned have been achieved?		
Has the Fellows been adequately supported?		
Please specify (trainings etc)?		
Would they like to have seen more support?		
Are the Fellows paid?		
Anything else they would like to share?		

Work and research outline SIRP 2012 – 2014**FIELD OFFICES AND HEADQUARTERS QUESTIONNAIRE**

Effectiveness:	
From the beginning?	Steering Committee
Frequency and # of representation from the DPs	
Mandate in place	Secretariat
Guidelines in place and adhered to	
# of meetings	
# meeting minutes	
# action plans	
Compliance control in steering committee	
Monitoring and evaluation	
	Secretariat and Implementation (field) levels
	Financial procedures
	Monitoring mechanisms
	What improvements could be made?
	What approaches and practices - should continue for the remainder of the consortium?
Efficiency:	Analyse and comment on the timing of project outputs, how long it took to produce results.
Context/s:	What have been the major challenges and opportunities for SIRP implementation based on the varied contexts in the SE Region? Please explain/highlight key points.
Partnership and Performance:	Comment on the strengths and weaknesses of the SIRP partnership/s based to date. Provide inputs and feedback on project performance in relation to partnership development and management if applicable.
Timeline and Deliverables:	What challenges have been faced that has resulted in any delays in project deliverables? If none, please comment on how timelines have been met with minimum obstacles.
Relevance:	Based on experiences to date, comment on how relevant the SIRP methodologies and approaches have been in the contexts of the SE Region.
Fellowship Modality and Wider Impact:	Based on partners experiences in the project, what value has the modality of the Fellowship approach brought to the project? What challenges or lessons learned have been arrived at? For interviews with Fellows, what do they feel they have brought to the consortium? As a Fellow, what have they gained during the first half of the project?

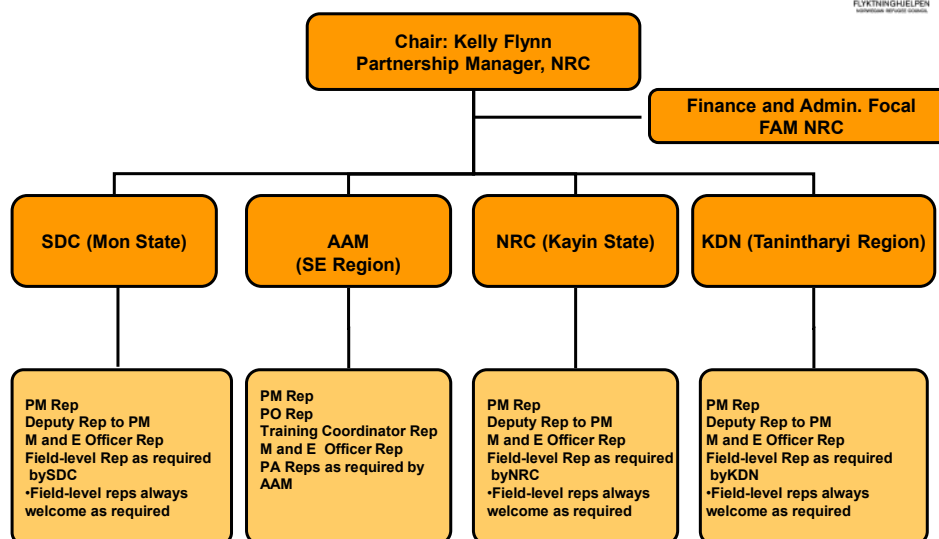
ANNEX 5: SIRP ORGANOGRAM

SIRP Steering Committee (SC)



NRC-70698

SIRP Secretariat (Sec.)



NRC-70698

SIRP ORGANIZATION