



Third Green Economy Green Growth, GEGG Forum

Summary Report

Parallel Session 3-3: Making it Work – Energy, Water and Food Security in a Coherent Strategic Framework

Facilitated by WWF, November 22, 2013, Yangon, Myanmar

The session recognized that Myanmar has made clear its intention to develop a green economy with sustainability and equity at its core. To uncover critical policy requirements in a coherent framework, the session addressed cross-sectoral linkages important to Myanmar: land/food, land/energy, trade/energy, and water/energy. All the presentations are available at www.panda.org/greatermekong/greeneconomy.

The Land/Food Security Nexus discussion highlighted the importance of forests to Myanmar's sustainable development. Community forestry (CF) utilizes the plants and animals from forests to provide important nutrient-rich supplements for rural households. Food security programs have focused on volume rather than quality, but hunting, gathering and fishing are vital adjuncts to farming. Community managed non-timber forest products (NTFPs) provide options for enhancing food security and helping fight poverty through economic enterprises. It was recommended that appropriate land use policies balance CF opportunities and high-value NTFP areas with the land conversion to other uses. A review and revision can be undertaken of the Community Forestry Instruction (CFI), with consideration of amendments to target the poorest and allow the CFI to be locally adapted.

The Land/Energy Nexus discussion underscored the fact that currently only 26% of Myanmar has grid electricity coverage. There is great potential to upgrade access by the majority of the population using local clean energy sources of solar, biomass and micro-hydro in decentralized mini-grid systems. They can provide a reliable, safe and environmentally friendly power supply to households, communities, and small and medium enterprises (SME), in some circumstances at cheaper rates than national grid extended electricity. It was recommended that strong government policy and initiatives jump-start action to support renewable off-grid energy. The country's Power Development Plan is vital for upgrading the existing grid, but should also include a parallel priority action plan on decentralized mini-grids powered by renewable energy sources.

The Trade/Energy Nexus discussion noted the current challenge of establishing adequate energy supply in the short term on the path to a sustainable energy future. It was proposed that responsible use of natural gas can help meet Myanmar's immediate needs while establishing safeguards for sustainable hydropower development. However, there is a projected shortfall in gas supply before new sources become available. Opportunities exist for significant improvement in the efficiency of current gas fired generation facilities. The UK's example of a low carbon policy and green rational provides a valuable benchmark. Their lessons suggest the crucial need for a vision and sustained political leadership, such as through a high-level green growth and climate strategy, and for government to ensure real, significant action on the ground.

The Water/Energy Nexus discussion postulated that hydropower could contribute 72% of Myanmar's sustainable electricity supply by 2030. The challenge is to build the right hydropower projects in the right way. This could be guided by the recently developed Hydropower Sustainability Assessment Protocol (www.hydrosustainability.org). The role of hydroinformatics was emphasized as one tool that can solve water problems in a systematic, holistic, ethical and people-centered way by emphasizing the importance of integrating indigenous knowledge, local knowledge and water sciences. The *Nexus Dialogue on Water Infrastructure Solutions for Water, Energy and Food* is a platform for knowledge exchange on practical action in optimizing multipurpose water infrastructure, (www.waternexusolutions.org).

The importance of natural capital and ecosystem services (wetlands, forests, pollination of crops, etc.) to Myanmar's sustainable development was highlighted throughout the session. Several countries have been developing integrated frameworks for green economies, such as the Mozambique Green Economy Roadmap, that guide decisions on natural capital use and build green economy visions and policies, providing excellent examples for Myanmar's consideration.