

The Republic of the Union of Myanmar

Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation

NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY OF MYANMAR

Draft for discussion



MINISTRY FOR FOREIGN
AFFAIRS OF FINLAND



*Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.*

Foreword

[To be drafted at the completion...

- Minister's (and/or President's ?) foreword
- Sets context for NEP document
- Explains basis for subsequent:
 - National Environmental Policy Strategy Framework and Master Plan
 - Green Economy Policy Framework
 - Myanmar Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan
- Places NEP in 2016 context – why being developed now and what it hopes to achieve
 - Note relevant political statements from both current and previous governments, and key documents (National Sustainable Development Strategy, Framework for Economic and Social Reform, National Comprehensive Development Strategy)
- Clarifies that the NEP should be seen as long term strategic document – lasting beyond existing political situations
- Should be able to read NEP at any point in next 15 years and have it relevant – not written for now.

- This should be drafted once the rest of the document is finished

]

Introduction

Myanmar has long been recognised for its rich natural capital, which provides critical benefits to its people. From the dominant agricultural sector to livelihoods dependent on natural resources, much of Myanmar's society and economy requires clean, healthy and functioning ecosystems. Yet many of the country's natural resources and environmental assets are under pressure from a number of different causes. Deforestation, mangrove loss, illegal wildlife trade and air quality deterioration are just some of the ongoing threats to Myanmar's natural capital. These are existing problems that could be further exacerbated by rapid, unmanaged economic development. At the same time, Myanmar is one of the most vulnerable countries to climate change, with widespread natural disasters caused by extreme weather events already occurring and future dramatic climate change predicted.

In short, Myanmar depends on its natural capital, which is already under pressure and facing extreme threats from climate change. This National Environmental Policy has been prepared in this context to place environmental considerations at the centre of efforts to promote economic and social development, reduce poverty, and mitigate and adapt to climate change and natural disasters.

This Policy document reaffirms and builds on the 1994 National Environmental Policy, the environmental responsibilities in the 2008 Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, and the obligations contained in the 2012 Environmental Conservation Law. The Policy recognizes Myanmar's commitment to the UN Sustainable Development Goals and integrates these goals into the nation's environmental policy objectives.

Building on the 1994 National Environmental Policy of Myanmar, this Policy reiterates the following core values:

- The wealth of the nation is its people, its cultural heritage, its environment and its natural resources.
- It is the responsibility of the State and every citizen to preserve its natural resources in the interests of present and future generations.
- Environmental protection should always be the primary objective in seeking development

The purpose of this National Environmental Policy is to provide long-term guidance for government, civil society, the private sector and development partners in Myanmar on environment and sustainable development objectives in Myanmar. The Policy will guide detailed strategic frameworks and action plans for the environment sector, including green economic development, climate change and waste management strategies, as well as provide guidance for the mainstreaming of environmental considerations into all other plans and policies developed in Myanmar.

The National Environmental Policy sets the direction for the ongoing enhancement and implementation of the Environmental Conservation Law 2012 through Rules and Procedures. It establishes a foundation for decision-making on economic and social development and activities by:

- Identifying a long term vision for environmental protection and sustainable development in Myanmar, supported by key national environmental policy principles
- providing a framework for establishing detailed, strategic policy frameworks and action plans for environmental protection and sustainable development
- setting a basis for enhancing environmental governance in Myanmar, including through mainstreaming environmental considerations

National Environmental Policy Framework

<p>Vision</p> <p>By 2030, Myanmar will be actively protecting and managing the environment in ways that maintain biodiversity, support inclusive social and economic progress, respect human rights, and enhance quality of life for all people now and in future generations. Myanmar will have prioritized low-carbon and green economic development, and in doing so have helped ensure healthy and functioning ecosystems and living environments for all people.</p>
<p>Mission</p> <p>To provide a practical framework for integrating environmental objectives in all policies, laws, regulations, plans, strategies, programmes and projects so that they contribute to environmental protection and sustainable development across Myanmar.</p>
<p>Objectives</p> <p>To articulate national environmental policy principles and guidance on incorporating environmental considerations into all sectoral policies and planning in order to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- protect Myanmar's important ecosystems, natural resources, and natural and cultural heritage, and ensure healthy living environments- promote sustainable development in Myanmar and provide a practical framework for its pursuit- improve environmental governance in Myanmar

To pursue this vision, mission and objectives, the following 20 National Environmental Policy Principles are adopted as guiding principles for environmental protection and governance, natural resource management, and economic and social development, in Myanmar. These Principles will guide the preparation of a Strategic Framework for the implementation of the National Environmental Policy, as well as detailed master plans that will establish activities, timeframes and budgets for pursuing the National Environmental Policy objectives.

National Environmental Policy Principles

Clean environment and healthy, functioning ecosystems

1. Access to a clean and healthy environment is **the right of every person and citizen** living in the Union of Myanmar.
2. **The complete value of Myanmar's environment is recognized and considered** – both tangible and intangible values, including its significant spiritual values, ecological assets and cultural heritage, in addition to its direct benefits for humanity.
3. Myanmar's ecosystems are to be protected and managed in sustainable ways to ensure their **natural functions and resilience, and rich biodiversity, are maintained.**
4. Myanmar's natural resources are to be protected and managed in integrated and sustainable ways to ensure their **availability and quality for future generations is not diminished.**
5. The **rights of indigenous people and ethnic nationalities** to their lands, territories, resources and spiritual heritage, and their contributions to the respect for and conservation of the environment and natural resources, is recognized.
6. The significance of **Myanmar's natural capital and ecosystem services** for Myanmar's society and economy is recognised as a critical factor in environment and natural resources management.
7. **A resource efficient and zero waste approach to environmental service provisioning** (including solid waste management, wastewater treatment, drinking water purification, ambient air and water quality monitoring and management) is a necessary part of infrastructure planning and development for all urban areas. Innovative solutions must be found and implemented for rural and remote areas.

Sustainable development

8. **Environmental sustainability will always be the primary objective** in determining Myanmar's economic and social development strategies, which will prioritize low-carbon and green economy pathways.
9. Recognizing the inextricable link between environment and poverty, **environmental considerations are central to effective people-centred development and will guide development strategies** so that sustainable, green, and equitable approaches to improved prosperity and living standards are pursued.
10. **Sustainable and renewable energy for all Myanmar** will be achieved through the use of existing technology and innovations in the generation, storage and supply of energy.

11. **Climate smart approaches to development**, including resilience, risk management and climate change mitigation strategies, will be aligned to environmental protection and natural resource management approaches in the pursuit of low-carbon, sustainable development.
12. **Economic values** of environmental services will be recognized and incorporated in development policies so that these values are optimized and captured to the extent possible.
13. **Pollution and waste is to be avoided and minimized at the source** as more cost effective than remediation. Enterprises will be encouraged to adopt clean production principles and industrial best practices that go beyond regulatory requirements.
14. **Remediation of past environmental damage** will be prioritized in development planning and decision-making to promote green outcomes and give effect to the polluter pays principle.

Mainstreaming environmental protection and management

15. **Gender equality** and the emancipation and the empowerment of women and girls will be integrated in all aspects of environmental protection and management.
16. **Environmental education** will be promoted at all levels of education to enhance understandings of the country's environmental values, challenges and management.
17. Institutional and legal frameworks for implementing environmental policies will be strengthened through clear definition of rights and responsibilities of, and **greater collaboration among, different institutions** within the government at all levels, as well as with non-government stakeholders.
18. Environmental decision making at all levels will be **inclusive, transparent and accountable to relevant stakeholders**, with communities and citizens having the right to access information that could affect their lives and property.
19. **Financial sustainability** of environmental governance will be achieved, including through the application of the polluter pays principle and the use of green financial instruments.
20. National environmental interest will be given thorough consideration before signing **international treaties**— this includes future international investment treaties only being signed with an understanding of Myanmar's evolving environmental governance and honouring ratified international agreements in the most environmentally sustainable manner.

Integration of the Sustainable Development Goals

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by UN Member States including Myanmar, includes a set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to end poverty, fight inequality and injustice, and tackle climate change by 2030. This National Environmental Policy and the SDGs both recognise the fundamental relationships between environmental protection, economic and social development, and poverty alleviation. The SDGs provide internationally agreed targets that will support the implementation of this National Environmental Policy. Putting the National Environmental Policy into action will in turn ensure that Myanmar makes significant progress in meeting the SDGs. In particular, the National Environmental Policy will assist the SDGs that address poverty and inequality, healthy lives and wellbeing, water and sanitation, energy, consumption and production, and inclusiveness, as well as those directly focused on climate change, natural resources, ecosystems and biodiversity.

Strategic Policy, Sectoral and Governance Issues

The adoption of the National Environmental Policy in subsequent strategic policy frameworks and action plans, and other social and economic development plans, needs to address a number of strategic cross-sectoral policy issues that will continue to be of importance in Myanmar over the coming decades. These issues include:

- biodiversity
- water resources
- terrestrial resources
- marine and coastal resources
- energy and electricity
- climate change and disaster risk reduction
- air quality
- land use and spatial planning
- waste management
- food safety and consumer protection
- animal welfare

Addressing these strategic policy issues will require attention in many related sectors in Myanmar. Strategic policy frameworks and action plans under the National Environmental Policy will need to ensure these strategic policy issues are integrated into policy agendas for the following key sectors:

- industry and manufacturing
- urban areas
- electricity and energy
- agriculture
- fisheries

- mining
- forestry

The governance arrangements to ensure the National Environmental Policy vision, objectives and principles are mainstreamed into all sectoral planning and decision-making also need to be considered within subsequent strategic policy frameworks and action plans. The governance issues to be considered include:

- Strengthening coordination and communication between all government agencies and levels, as well as with self-administered zones and ceasefire areas, on environmental management
- Monitoring, compliance and enforcement
- Environmental management and cumulative impacts within Special Economic Zones
- Public participation and access to information
- Environmental education and public awareness
- Financial sustainability of environmental management
- Financial mechanisms and economic incentives
- Disaster Risk Reduction and Emergency Management
- Transboundary environmental impact management
- International treaty considerations and obligations