



# Generating Rubber Opportunities (GRO)

Embassy of Switzerland, Swiss Cooperation Office Myanmar

Swiss Agency for Development  
and Cooperation SDC

## Strengthen the rubber market systems to improve incomes and livelihoods for women and men smallholder farmers and tappers in the southeast of Myanmar



Smallholder rubber farmers, who own five to ten hectares of land, dominate rubber plantation areas. In Myanmar's southeast, rubber is an important cash crop. Nevertheless, productivity is low and processed products are of poor quality due to unclear land tenure, lack of inputs, and poor market incentive. The market system is in need of structural changes to increase competitiveness, such as good inputs, quality standards, processed products, and improved marketing. In addition, special caution should be paid on expanding rubber plantations, which can lead to deforestation and a loss of biodiversity.

**The production of natural rubber is a key livelihood activity of smallholder farmers in in the southeast of Myanmar. CARE International is mandated by SDC to implement a Market Systems Development Project to work with all market actors, particularly the support institutions (meso level) for improving information, market access and access to inputs for 25,000 farmers as well as improving working conditions of particularly women in rubber plantations.**

### Background

In Myanmar, rubber plantations were introduced during the British colonial period, mostly in Mon State by smallholder rubber farmers. However, the rubber sector remained stagnant until the national economy began to open up to private trade and foreign investment in the 1990s, combined with a rise in international rubber prices, led to an expansion of production in Mon State, Kayin State, and Tanintharyi Region.

### Goal

The vision of the GRO project is for a more resilient, competitive, environmentally sensitive and inclusive rubber economy in southeast Myanmar. The overall goal for the project is to work towards a market system that is more resilient, competitive, environmentally sensitive and inclusive and where rubber businesses are able to use their land as a business asset. This leads to the project's impact objective of enhanced well-being of women and men smallholder rubber farmers and tappers.

GRO has two outcomes and aims to reach 25,000 women and men smallholder farmers who own or manage plantation of up to 20 acres:

- 1) Women and men smallholder farmers and tappers have improved their businesses and productivity and quality of produce through better access to information and services
- 2) Women and men smallholder farmers have improved land tenure security and decision-making power to leverage land as a business asset.

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## Achievements (July 2015 – December 2017)

- The development of Myanmar Rubber Industry Law was drafted to define quality standards of rubber production and export regulations. GRO was a key player in the law's development process and facilitating a broad public consultation process
- GRO facilitated almost 9,000 smallholder rubber farmers (more than 3,000 women) to receive information, awareness and training services in gender, land law awareness, tapping skills, rubber processing, and better linkages with processing factories
- The project engaged with different stakeholders, market players; collaboration and linkages were established between producers and small and large buyers
- 492 farmers (of which 24% women) received 30-year-land lease certificates through close cooperating with Forest Department and Mon Rubber Planters and Producers Association (MonRPPA)

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## Expected results

- Rubber input and service providers have strengthened knowledge and capacity and provide better inputs and business services
- Market actors improve their understanding and take action, recognising the social and business case for gender-responsive practices/business models and improved working conditions
- Village heads, government and Ethnic Armed Organisations are implementing land information systems so that women and men smallholder farmers are aware of their land rights and the pathways to obtain land documentation from appropriate authorities

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## Approach

In Phase II, GRO continues to work with the "making markets work for the poor" (M4P) / Market Systems Development (MSD) approach. M4P/MSD is a development approach involving local partners and market actors, including business, public departments, CSOs, universities, etc. This approach addresses key constraints of a sector, and leads to a more inclusive business practices aimed at bringing about a sustainable change. The project applies a facilitative approach and works through regional, national and international

institutions and rubber businesses that each have a specific function or have the intention to resolve specific market or non-market constraints to drive change in the rubber economy.

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## Target groups

The project targets all actors in the rubber market chain including smallholder rubber farmers (holding 2-20 acres, with the majority owning 5-10 acres), tapper employees (internal and regional migrants), tapper contractors, small processors, regional and local processing factory groups, village runner collectors, township traders, exporters, and relevant government and private sector players.

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## Project at glance

### Project Title

Generating Rubber Opportunities

### Duration and total Budget

Phase I: 01.05.2014-31.12.2017, CHF 4,500,000

Phase II: 01.01.2018-31.12.2021, CHF 8,000,000

### Implementing Agency

CARE International Myanmar

### Project Partners

Government: Department of Agriculture; Department of Industrial Crops; Department of Agricultural Land Management and Statistics; Perennial Crops Research and Development Centre; Forest Department

Academia: Mawlamyine University (Law Department), French Agriculture Research Centre for International Development (CIRAD)

Private Sector: Myanmar Rubber Planters and Producers Association; State and Regional Rubber Planters and Producers Associations; traders; factories and private companies

Local NGO/CSO: Land Core Group (LCG) supports land outcomes through local CSOs

### Project Locations

Mon State, Kayin State and Tanintharyi Region

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## IMPRESSUM

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