



# The potential of social learning for a land governance transformation in Southern Myanmar

## Multi-stakeholder platform for the review of oil palm concessions

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### Introduction

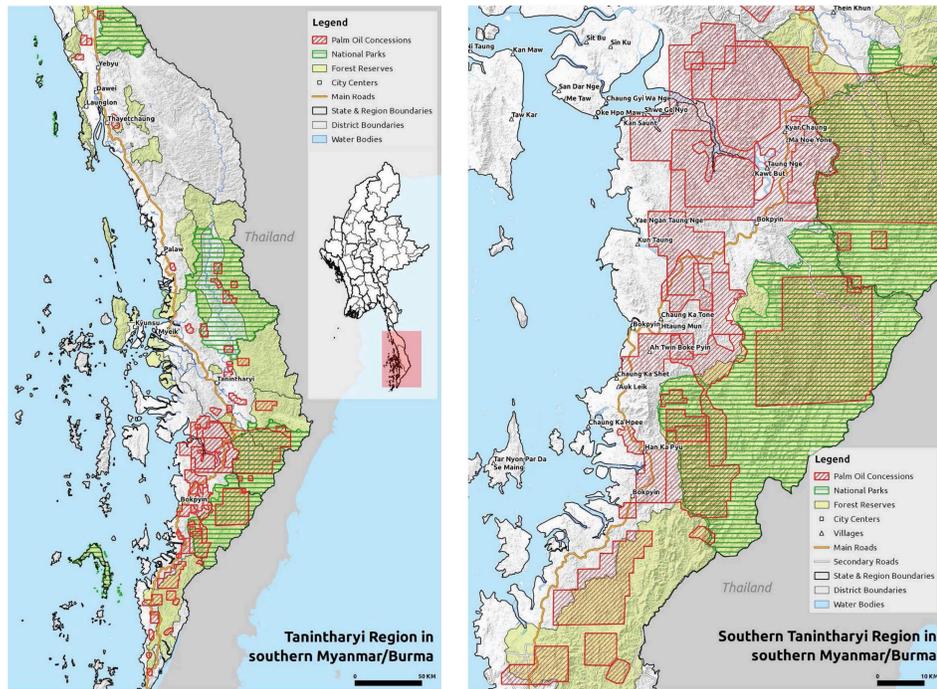


Fig. 1: Oil palm concessions in Tanintharyi Region, Southern Myanmar, impose challenges for the local population (Woods 2015)



During the military regime of the past decades, the Myanmar government decided to become independent on palm oil imports. As a consequence, more than 700,000 ha of land in Tanintharyi Region in Southern Myanmar had been put under oil palm concessions, sometimes regardless of the population and their livelihoods.

With the election of the recent government in 2015, the new Tanintharyi Chief Minister announced to redistribute the legally occupied but still unused oil palm lands to the local population. As a result, a multi-stakeholder platform has been established in 2016 to review the concessions.

This research accompanies this platform asking: **«How does social learning take place in the multi-stakeholder platform (dimensions of social learning)? And what framing conditions and outputs foster or hinder the social learning process?»**

Fig. 2: Oil palm plantation (© Lara M. Lundsgaard-Hansen)

### Understanding of social learning – a common definition:

“Social learning refers to learning by doing through experience in successful group processes. [...] a process of social learning must (1) demonstrate that a change in understanding has taken place in the individuals involved; (2) demonstrate that this change goes beyond the individual and becomes situated within wider social units or communities of practice; and (3) occur through social interactions and processes between actors within a social network” (Reed et al. 2010)

### Methods for Analysis

#### Six Categories of Analysis:

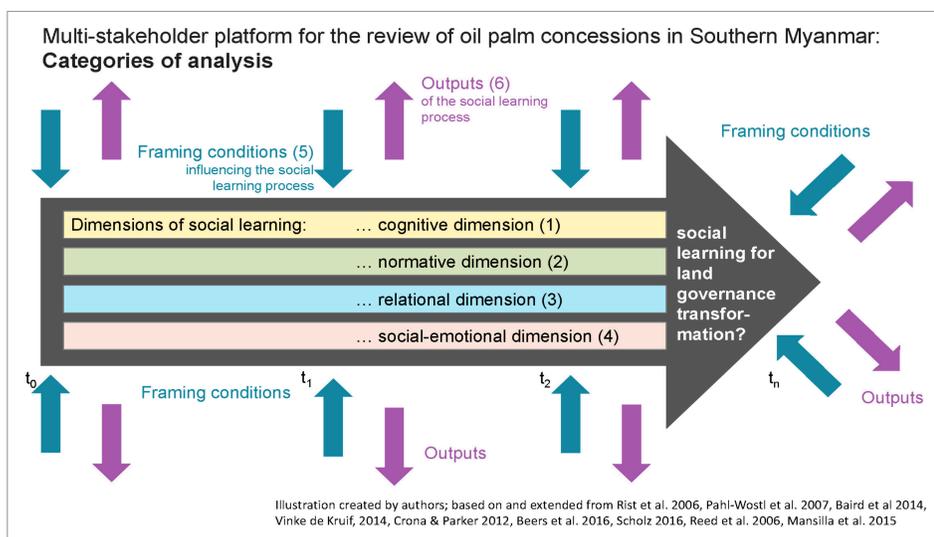


Fig. 3: The analysis of the social learning process is structured by six categories (fig. 2) and corresponding criteria (table)

#### Criteria of Analysis for the Social Learning Process (selection of most important criteria) (colours are identical to fig. 3)

<b>Cognitive dimension:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Acquisition of new knowledge</li> <li>Self-reflection on knowledge and perspectives</li> <li>Creation of joint language (tongue &amp; technical terms; misunderstandings)</li> </ul>	<b>Social-emotional dimension:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Motivation for learning, collaboration, self-reflection, and change</li> <li>Willingness and ability to express emotions and emphasize</li> <li>Social skills in interaction</li> </ul>
<b>Normative dimension:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consensus on joint goal and procedure</li> <li>Cultural norms and rules of interaction</li> <li>Values and attitudes of actors</li> <li>Actors' paradigms and beliefs</li> </ul>	<b>Framing conditions for social learning:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Process start: Legitimacy and acceptance of necessity</li> <li>Process management: coordination, communication, facilitation, technical support, involvement, funding etc.</li> <li>Formal and informal institutions</li> </ul>
<b>Relational dimension:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhanced trust for increased willingness of communication and collaboration</li> <li>Role of influential actors</li> <li>Prejudice and preconceptions about the “others”</li> </ul>	<b>Outputs of social learning:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Milestones and intermediate products</li> <li>Intermediate evaluations of process, methods and tools used, achieved results etc.</li> <li>Actions of platform participants outside the meetings</li> </ul>

### Preliminary Results – Potentials and Risks of the Social Learning Process

**Potentials:**

- This case is unique for this region and the country. If it is successful, it can be imitated in other regions and for other topics.
- Evolution of transparent, accountable, and just mechanisms in (land) governance (here also pro-poor)
- Capacity-building of all participating stakeholders
- Overcoming old prejudice about the “others” in (post-) war Myanmar (pro-peace)

**Risks:**

- If unsuccessful, it can spoil the prospects of future partnerships or inclusive processes
- Raising high expectations of what can be achieved
- Unexperienced decision-makers, fragile political system, ambitious plan, different interests etc.
- Lack of capacities and experience
- The social interactions can create new or strengthen bonds between already influential actors

The creation of maps is a participatory process where the participants receive various kinds of trainings

CSOs, the ethnic armed group, and companies collaborate for the first time since the civil war

Participatory mapping of land uses

Farmers' land gets cleared