

# SUSTAINABLE DESTINATION PLAN FOR THE ANCIENT CITIES OF UPPER MYANMAR

Mandalay, Amarapura, Innwa, Sagaing, Mingun  
(2016-2021)

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MAECI Ministero Italiano degli Affari Esteri e Cooperazione Internazionale



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# Acronyms

ACUM	Ancient Cities of Upper Myanmar (Innwa, Amarapura, Sagaing, Mingun, Mandalay)	MOHT	Ministry of Hotel and Tourism, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar
ADB	Asian Development Bank	MOLFRD	Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Rural Development, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations	MONPED	Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar
CSO	Central Statistical Organisation (Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar)	MORT	Ministry of Rail Transportation, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar
DIDA	Dipartimento di Architettura	MOT	Ministry of Transport, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar
DIHR	Danish Institute for Human Rights	MPT	Myanmar Post and Telecommunications
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	MRA	Myanmar Restaurant Association
FDA	Food and Drug Administration Supervisory Committee	MRTI	Myanmar Responsible Tourism Institute
GHF	Global Heritage Fund	MTGA	Myanmar Tourist Guides Association
GMS	Greater Mekong Subregion	MTGS	Mandalay Tourist Guide Society
IATA	International Air Transport Association	MTF	Myanmar Tourism Federation
ICAO	International Civil Aviation Organization	MTMP	Myanmar Tourism Master Plan
ICH	Intangible Cultural Heritage	OPEC	Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries
IDP	Integrated Destination Plan	PATA	Pacific Asia Travel Association
IHRB	Institute for Human Rights and Business	SAGAS	Dipartimento di Storia Archeologia Geografia Arte e Spettacolo
INGOs	international non-governmental organizations	SDP	Sustainable Destination Plan
IWT	Inland Water Transport	SEATGA	South East Asia Tourist Guide Association
LaGeS	Laboratorio di Geografia Sociale del Dipartimento SAGAS	SPDC	State Peace and Development Council
MCDC	Mandalay City Development Committee	SWIA	Sector-Wide Impact Assessment
MCRB	Myanmar Centre for Responsible Business	TCH	Tangible Cultural Heritage
MHA	Myanmar Hotelier Association	TEU	Twenty-foot Equivalent Unit
MIMU	Myanmar Information Management Unit	UNSD	United Nations Statistical Division
MOBA	Ministry of Border Affairs, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar	UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organization
MOC	Ministry of Construction, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar	UMTA	Union of Myanmar Travel Association
MOC DANM	Ministry of Culture Department of Archaeology and National Museum	UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
MOD	Ministry of Defense, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar	UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
MOE	Ministry of Education, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar	WHO	World Health Organization
MOHA	Ministry of Home Affairs, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar	WSD/MCDC	Water and Sanitation Department of the Mandalay City Development Committee
		WTO	World Tourism Organization
		WTTC	World Travel and Tourism Council

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 THE AIMS OF THE PLAN

The recent opening up of Myanmar to the global economic system, and the transition process that has been initiated in the country, opens up new development scenarios and important opportunities for economic growth. Thanks to this opening, Myanmar is destined to rapidly become a very attractive tourist destination, in view of the extraordinary natural, historical, and artistic heritage it can offer international tourists. However, the country does not appear to be well-equipped from a material point of view, as regards infrastructure and organization, for the management of this development process. Therefore, there is the risk of a rapid deterioration of resources, with possible destabilizing effects at the economic, social and cultural levels – as has been the case in some areas of neighbouring countries such as Thailand and Indonesia (Adams, 1990; Hitchcock et al., 2010).

Faced with this scenario, it is urgently necessary to manage the phenomenon with adequate tools, so as to avoid the rapid deterioration of the cultural and landscape heritage, to meet the population's legitimate expectations for economic growth, and to extend the economic benefits of development in a sustainable, equitable and responsible way. This plan is therefore in line with the *Myanmar Responsible Tourism Policy* (MOHT, 2012)<sup>1</sup>.

These tools include the destination plans envisaged by the *Myanmar Tourism Master Plan 2013-2020* (MTMP) for the country's main tourist destinations. These are aimed at promoting the development of the tourist sector, in the framework of a general regional development strategy, paying attention to the social and cultural impact of tourism.

The authors of the MTMP were well aware that there is a gap between the current (and above all future) pressure of tourism and the organizational weakness of locations, and that this gap may have negative repercussions. For this reason, they identified the drafting of integrated destination plans, for the six main tourist destinations, as one of the country's top priorities, to be completed by 2015. The six main destinations listed in the MTMP are Yangon, Bagan, Mandalay, Inle Lake, Kyaukse and Ngapali Beach.

We have focused on the city of Mandalay and the area within a radius of 20 km from it, including Innwa, Amarapura, Sagaing, and Mingun. Owing to their proximity to each other, they may be regarded as a single tourism district, the *Ancient Cities of Upper Myanmar* (ACUM) district.

In accordance with the MTMP, and in particular with Strategic Programme 3: *Strengthen Safeguards and Procedures for Destination Planning and Management* and with sub-programmes 3.1: *Support for local planners... to prepare integrated destination management plans* and 3.3: *Improve zoning in tourism destinations*, we have therefore developed the *Sustainable Destination Plan (SDP) for the Ancient Cities of Upper Myanmar: Mandalay, Innwa, Amarapura, Sagaing, and Mingun*.

<sup>1</sup> The work of the recently-formed Myanmar Responsible Tourism Institute-MRTI is also a move in this direction.

The plan is the result of a cooperation project between the University of Florence and the MOHT – Ministry of Hotels and Tourism, the authority in charge of tourist development financially supported by the Italian Directorate for Development Cooperation (DGCS). Partners of this project were the MONPED – Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development, and the MOCDANM – Ministry of Culture, Department of Archaeology and National Museum (Fig. 1.1.1).



Fig. 1.1.1 Meeting at MOHT (March 2015).

Photo: C. Lo Presti.

The University of Florence has taken on responsibility for the scientific coordination of the project, which has been conducted by an interdisciplinary Team working out of the Social Geography Laboratory (LaGeS). Also participating in the preparation of the plan was Studio Azzurro Produzioni, a Milan-based company, and an NGO, Progetto Continenti (Yangon office). Finally, a significant contribution to the development of the project came from dialogue with the Myanmar Centre for Responsible Business, and from the documentation produced by the Centre.

In line with the philosophy of cooperation adopted by the LaGeS<sup>2</sup>, we came up with an approach in which cooperation becomes a means towards general social development, through the strengthening of institutions and grassroots democracy. In this paradigm, importance is given to participative practices to facilitate a deeper understanding of the place, its internal dynamics and workings, and finally, a process of virtuous change.

In putting together the plan, great importance was therefore attached to the way in which participative processes were formulated. Dependent upon this point are the opportunities for our interlocutors to take ownership of the technical content of the plan, and, above all, of the knowhow behind it. This in turn affects the sustainability of the cooperation project, i.e. the ability of the local parties to be able to independently reproduce content and knowhow in the future.

This involvement included both the institutions directly or indirectly involved in tourism planning (technical staff of the relevant departments, university lecturers) and the wider public of stakeholders and society at large (Fig. 1.1.2).

<sup>2</sup> For a detailed description of the approach to cooperation developed by LaGeS, see LaGeS (2015a) and LaGeS (2015b).

Fig. 1.1.2 Meeting with  
Mandalay City Committee  
(March 2016).

Photo: Ms. Sint Sint.



This involvement took various forms. As regards institutional personnel, there were three main ways, each with a different duration and degree of complexity. The most demanding was actual training, which was achieved by facilitating the participation of 10 students (5 men and 5 women) in the 2016 edition of the *Master's course in Urban Analysis and Management* at the University of Florence (Fig.1.1.3)<sup>3</sup>.

Fig. 1.1.3 Participants in the  
Master in Urban Analysis and  
Management (May 2016)

Photo: E. Macri .



A second form of involvement is represented by the fast-track training courses open to technical personnel from the departments involved in tourism development. One such course was offered to 10 technical staff (7 men and 3 women) at the University of Florence from 1 to 19 February 2016 (Fig. 1.1.4).

<sup>3</sup> For information, see: <http://www.lages.eu/eng/pages/MasterUrbanAnalysisEngLuglio2014.pdf>.



Fig. 1.1.4 Participants in the training course (February 2016).

Photo: S. Bartolini.

The Master's course and the training course allowed us to form a group of supervisors with sufficient skills to tackle the roles assigned to them. Above all, however, it established a close and ongoing dialogue between participants and academic staff, and between the participants themselves with regard to sustainable tourism development in the ACUM area. This contributes indirectly, on a trickle-down basis, to raised awareness of these themes among wider sections of the population.

The involvement of university personnel is achieved through meetings at Mandalay University during which the data emerging from the surveys are interpreted, possible developments discussed, and project proposals evaluated. For the preparation of this plan, three workshops were organized<sup>4</sup>, involving a total of about 60 people comprising university personnel and students<sup>5</sup>. Moreover academic staff from the Departments of Geography, History, Oriental Studies, Anthropology and Archeology of the University of Mandalay took a direct part in building the preliminary framework of facts (cf. List of authors in this volume).



Fig. 1.1.5 Workshop on sustainable tourism development at Mandalay University (March 2016).

Photo: M. Hinz.

<sup>4</sup> The meetings took place on these dates: 5.3.2015, 21.9.2015, and 15.3.2016.

<sup>5</sup> Especially with students on the Degree Course in Tourism Studies at the University of Mandalay; for this we thank Dr. Tin Tin Nwe.

Fig. 1.1.6 Meeting with the  
Tourist Guide Association  
(April 2016).

Photo: E. Macri.



Finally, a larger group of people actively participated in meetings and focus groups organized to discuss the issue of tourism development. Meetings were held with the following categories:

- Mandalay Hotel Association;
- Union of Myanmar Travel Association (UMTA), Mandalay Branch;
- Myanmar Tourist Guide Association;
- Myanmar Restaurant Association;
- Consumer Protection Association.

In addition to these meetings, there were also meetings organized directly by Progetto Continenti to discuss the issue of street food, in spring 2016.

Fig. 1.1.7a e Fig. 1.1.7b  
e Fig. 1.1.7c Meeting with  
Mandalay Tourism Students.

Photo: M. Loda (September 2015).



## ■ 1.2 SUSTAINABLE TOURISM, RESPONSIBLE TOURISM, CULTURAL HERITAGE

On 4 October 1996 Mandalay, Innwa, Amarapura, Sagaing and Mingun were included in the Tentative List of UNESCO World Heritage Sites, under the name *Ancient Cities of Upper Myanmar* (see <http://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/823>).

Inclusion in the UNESCO list is often seen as a “passport to development”, especially in the tourism sector. Indeed the inclusion of ACUM in the Tentative List of UNESCO World Heritage Sites has helped this area to climb up in the hierarchy of Burmese tourist destinations. However, it is yet to be seen if the inclusion in the list can actually be a driver for a local development based on “sustainable tourism” (see below). This definition is used to indicate not only a quantitative increase in numbers of incoming tourists, but also a process of positive interaction with the community, of social participation and of joint exploitation of resources.

The experience of other countries shows that the process of exploitation of cultural heritage is often governed by exogenous entities which tend to follow a standardized approach to tourist development, without taking into account the complexity of the local context. This often leads to the diffusion of exogenous consumption models (food, alcohol, clothing), the transformation of craft products into less original pieces, an emphasis only on the picturesque aspects of intangible culture, and the insufficient use of local human resources. Accordingly, instead of being a local development factor, developing and promoting the cultural heritage for tourism risks having negative repercussions on the social structure, and generating mediocre economic results, well below the expectations of the population.

Therefore, the greater visibility of the ACUM area should be properly managed as soon as possible, in such a way as to promote equitable and responsible tourism, and to avoid the rapid deterioration of resources.

In order to achieve these objectives, the destination plan should not only focus on the preservation of the archeological sites, but also encompass the local context where the historical, artistic and archeological remnants are located. The plan should also be based on a more complex approach to the exploitation and preservation of local resources, in which the cultural heritage is linked to all the significant, identity-related dimensions of the local socio-cultural context, in line with the most recent interpretations of the concept of cultural heritage (Lacy, Douglass, 2002; Byrne, 2008). Similarly, the point of reference for the management of tourist development – which is currently the most dynamic sector in the district’s economy – should not be a mere quantitative element, and should extend beyond the expansion of accommodation facilities. Indeed, it is necessary to adopt a more wide-ranging approach to the development of tourism services, and to focus also on qualitative aspects, in such a way as to guarantee the sustainability and fair division of the benefits deriving from tourist development among the various components of the population.

A point of reference for orienting oneself in this context is offered by socially and culturally responsible development models, which have been defined at an institutional level through the concept of “sustainable tourism” (*Charter for Sustainable Tourism*, Lanzarote, 1995)

Sustainable development models are aimed at preventing mass tourism from levelling out local (regional) specificities, and preventing an excessive emphasis on the picturesque aspects of intangible culture from replacing the traditional,

daily cultural production of local communities. To do so, they assign the role of key player in development processes to the local population, and they identify “cultural heritage” in its broadest meaning as one of the essential elements of the tourist product.

However, the implementation of these models has turned out to be rather difficult for a number of reasons, one of them being the complexity of the concept of “cultural heritage” (Sandis, 2014).

The concept of “cultural heritage” is indeed a complex one.

UNESCO initially classified the most important historical and natural sites in the list of World Heritage sites. However, starting from the *Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity* (2001), and, above all, from the 2003 *Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage*, the concept of cultural heritage was extended also to intangible manifestations of culture. This led to the introduction of the category of “intangible cultural heritage”, which is defined as “the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage”.

This evolution radically changed the way in which the concept of cultural heritage is addressed in public discourse. While on the one hand this broader view of cultural heritage is now consolidated – i.e. it is now commonly accepted that cultural heritage consists of both tangible and intangible elements – on the other hand there is still some uncertainty in the attribution of value to individual “objects and knowledge”.

As a result, there is some difficulty in implementing, at a local level, the paradigm of sustainable development based on (intangible) cultural heritage. There is often an inability to fully and promptly identify the most significant resources of the local cultural contexts, and to activate them in the development process. This normally happens because there is an insufficient, belated and almost purely formal involvement of the local population. UNESCO is interested in defining the value of intangible culture for the local identity, but this aspect is only rarely taken into consideration in tourism development plans.

In order for tourism not to become a factor eroding “indigenous values”, i.e. the constituent parts of collective imagination, the self-representation mechanisms of the local community, the symbols of local identity, the symbolic value of places, etc., these resources must be carefully examined when planning the development process, and they must be safeguarded through discussion with, and the mobilization of, the local community (Robinson, Picard, 2006). This argument is one of the cornerstones of this plan, the results of which should facilitate interaction with organizations involved in the promotion of sustainable tourism.

An important point of reference for the drafting of this plan is the *Sector-Wide Impact Assessment document* (SWIA) recently drawn up by the Myanmar Centre for Responsible Business (MCRB). This helps to supplement the points raised in the international debate on sustainable and responsible tourism with the specific issues of tourist development in Myanmar, such as gender issues, community dynamics and the safeguarding of cultural heritage<sup>6</sup>.

The SDP for the ACUM area aims at developing a crucial tool to effectively manage local resources towards a responsible and sustainable tourist development of the area. Based on the attractiveness to tourists of archeological sites, the SDP enables the local administration to enhance the economic, environmental and social

<sup>6</sup> An important result of this approach is the Destination Management Plan for the Inle Lake Region, 2014-2019.

conditions of the region, with positive effects on productive activities (agriculture, handicrafts), infrastructure, and facilities.

The point is to promote a forward-looking, shared and participatory approach to tourist development, starting from a systematic analysis of resources, from the comparison of different types of exploitation models of such resources, and from an assessment of the risks and opportunities associated with each of them.

To this end, the ACUM area is certainly a very delicate region. Indeed, the ACUM area not only includes important archeological sites and areas of natural interest, it also involves different social and territorial systems that have differing levels of complexity: the metropolitan area of Mandalay is juxtaposed with the network of rural villages and to the farming economy of smaller towns, while these are juxtaposed to the river system and to the very important monastic centre of Sagaing. Each of these social and local geographical systems has its own individual resources as regards tourism, but at the same time each has a specific set of problems, which the plan must harmonize and integrate, within a logic of dynamic protection.

The Plan is organized into two sections, which are highly inter-dependent: analysis and plan.

The analytical section consists of five chapters, which serve to provide the information necessary to formulate the recommendations of the plan, in such a way that these may emerge from specific conditions, needs and dynamics expressed by the local area, and so as to respond to the same.

The plan section is arranged into ten chapters, and adopts a strategic planning approach focused on illustrating the strategies, goals and actions that serve the purpose of implementing the plan itself. Each chapter corresponds to a planning strategy. In turn, the ten strategies are divided up into objectives and actions. The actions have differing levels of complexity and detail: the actions for which it was possible to prepare a suitable basis in the form of information have been described with detailed planning recommendations; less complex actions, or those which would require more time to be put into effect than the scope of the plan allows, have been described in more general terms, while still indicating the path to be taken to achieve the goals and strategies.

Chapter 16 (Plan implementation) offers a general overview of the system of strategies, objectives and actions contained in the plan, with an indication of the lead agencies responsible for each action, the performance indicators, a time horizon as a reference for implementation, and the target to be achieved.

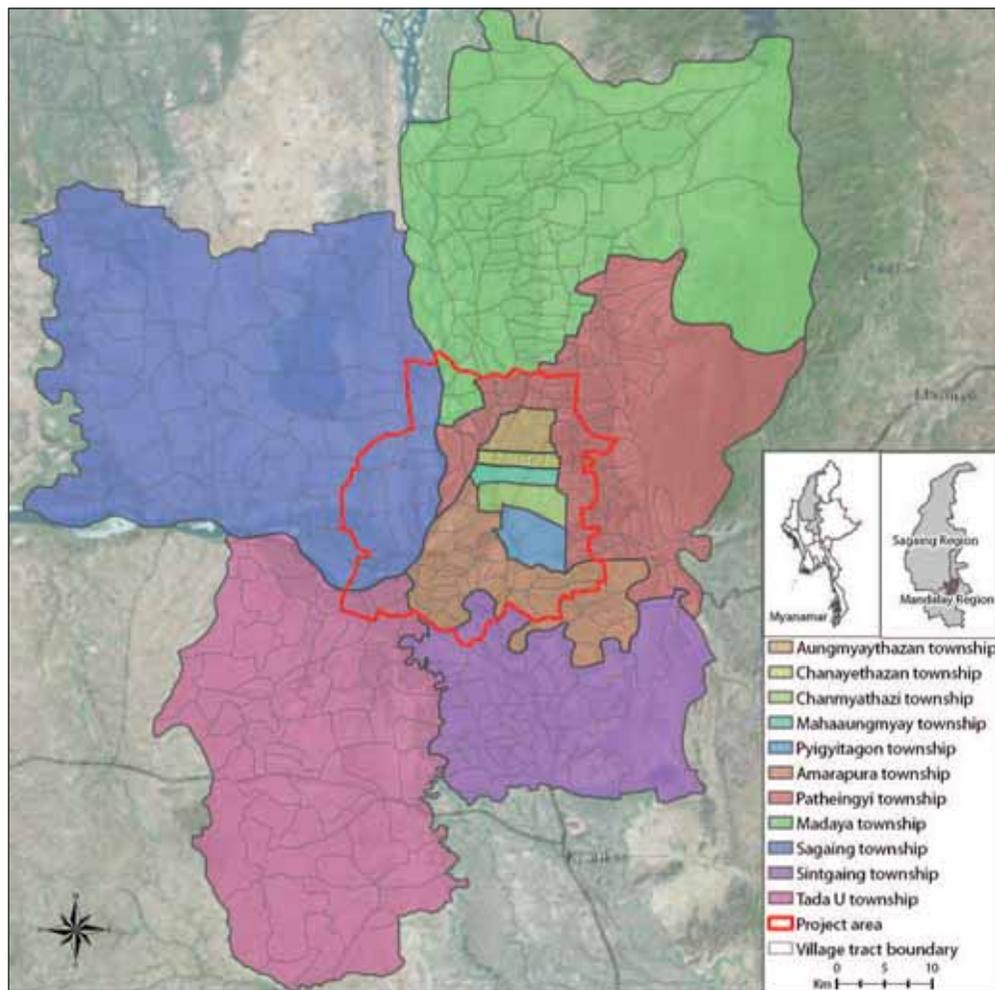
### ■ 1.3 PROJECT AREA

The project area is situated around the main point of contact between two important Regions in Myanmar, the Region of Mandalay and the Region of Sagaing. It includes almost all the places which, for many centuries, represented the heart of the country. In other words, it was one of the main religious concentrations in Burma and, between the 14th century and the end of the 19th century, it was its main political centre.

The two Regions stand, respectively, on the left bank and the right bank of the great river Ayeyarwady, the course of which, within the project area, alters from a north-south direction to an east-west direction, with the great curve around the Sagaing promontory, which was one of the main cradles of Burmese civilization.

Fig. 1.3.1 The project area.

Source: author, background map from ESRI Imagery Basemaps.



In administrative terms, the project area includes completely the townships of Aungmyeytharzan, Chanayetharzan, Mahaaungmyay, Chanmyatharzi, Pyigyidagun and partly the townships of Amarapura and Patheingyi in the Mandalay District; moreover it contains a small part of the townships of Sagaing to the west (district of Sagaing), and marginal parts of the townships of Madaya to the north (district of Pyin Oo Lwin), and of the townships of Tada U and Sintgaing to the south (district of Kyaukse).

The geographical area covered by the project area is almost 565 sq. km, of which 366.2 sq. km in the district of Mandalay, 140.4 sq. km in the district of Sagaing, 21.4 sq. km in the district of Pyin Oo Lwin and 36.3 sq. km in the district of Kyaukse.

As regards morphology, the project area is basically a broad valley system (or alluvial basin) between the furthest-flung spurs of the Shan uplands, to the east, and the Arakan hills to the west.

The part permanently or temporarily occupied by the waters is very large, around 100 sq. km., of which around 85 is occupied by the course of the major river, around 6 by the courses of its tributary, the Myitnge, and by the numerous seasonal streams and channels that flow down from the uplands, and around 9 by the Mandalay Kan Taw Gyi Lake and the Taung Tha Man lake basins.

Of the dry land, the flat part is dominant, but the project area is surrounded by hills, which stand both on the bank of the Ayeyarwady (Sagaing Hill) and to the rear

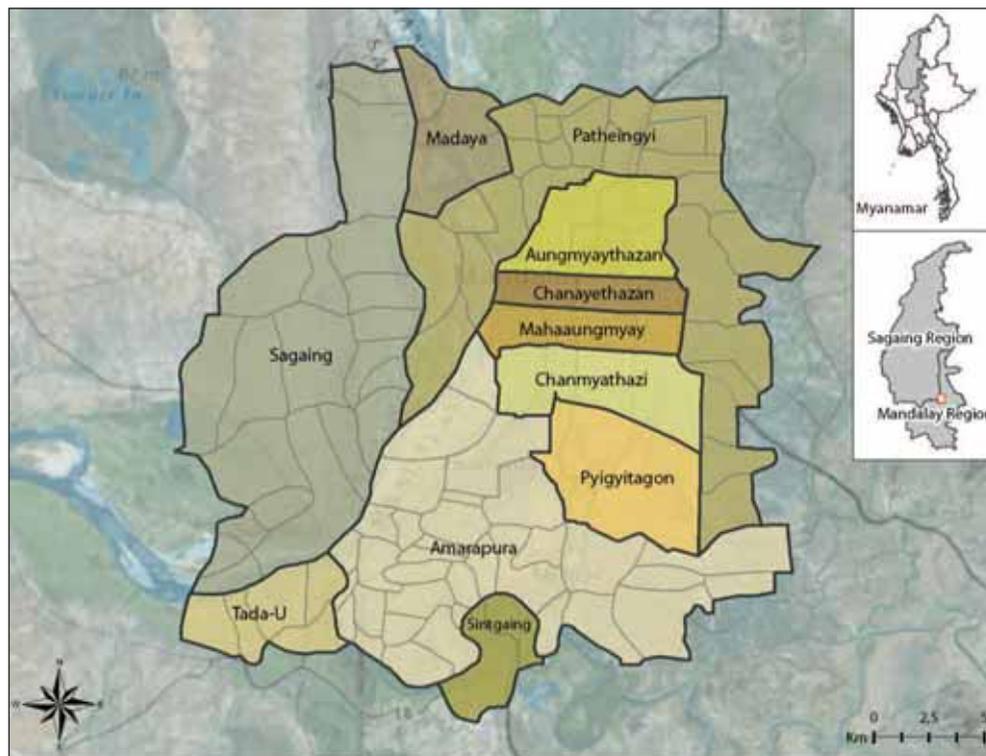


Fig. 1.3.2 The administrative subdivision of the project area.

Source: author, background map from ESRI Imagery Basemaps.

of it (Mandalay Hill, Yankin Hill, etc.), and which, along with the river and the lakes, make it the main landscape feature.

## 1.4 DEVELOPING THE SUSTAINABLE DESTINATION PLAN: METHODOLOGY, RESOURCES AND DATA

Drafting a sustainable destination plan for the ACUM area is one of the actions proposed by the MTMP. The aim is to provide the Administration with a planning instrument which is still strategic in nature, but specific for tourism development.

The development canons of tourism development plans are not uniformly defined in the international literature, and this has resulted in a wide variety of approaches. However, in recent times the attention of planners has instead shifted to an approach based on sustainability. This approach has been adopted by Myanmar's authorities (cf. Ch. 2.2).

### 1.4.1 PLANNING METHODOLOGY

The Sustainable Destination Plan is a strategic sector plan whose aim is to manage tourism development dynamics in such a way as to meet the legitimate expectations of economic growth, but in the context of the active protection of environmental and cultural resources, and social equity.

In terms of the sector, the plan concerns all infrastructures, functions and bodies directly linked to the tourism sector. However, given the transversal nature of tourism, it is not limited to an analysis of the tourism demand and supply in a strict sense, but also takes into account the influence of other subsystems, such as

demographics, type and distribution of settlements, the economy, and culture, with which tourism is closely interrelated.

In terms of strategy, the plan is based on a medium-term vision of tourism development. The time period of the Plan corresponds to the period from 2016 to 2021.

The general approach of the SDP is to apply the concepts of strategic planning to the tourism system. The organization of the SDP constitutes much more than merely compiling a plan. Rather, it is an ongoing part of the decision-making process, providing planners with useful information for understanding problems, identifying and selecting alternative actions, and developing successful implementation strategies.

In order to achieve these results, the planning process was broken down into a series of rational steps:

- creating a vision of how the community wants to be, and of how the tourism system fits into this vision;
- defining the main goals that comply with this vision;
- assessing future opportunities and limitations in relation to goals, and desired system performance measures;
- identifying the short- and long-term consequences of alternative choices to take advantage of these opportunities, or respond to these limitations;
- understanding the types of decisions that need to be made to achieve the defined vision and goals: strategic guidelines, policies (or measures), and specific actions (Tab. 16.1);
- presenting this information to decision-makers in an understandable and useful way, in order to help them establish priorities, and develop an investment programme.

The preparatory phase of the SDP included the assessment of boundary conditions and project planning, both leading to a diagnosis of the current functioning of the tourist system. The assessment of the boundary conditions involved the description of the regulatory and planning framework, the identification of the key actors and stakeholders involved in the tourism system, and an analysis of the tourism system and of the main factors related to it (demographic and social dynamics, economic aspects, cultural heritage, infrastructure, and land use). Project planning included the definition of the plan's scope, the methods to be adopted, an analysis of available resources, the planning of necessary activities with regard to the usable resources, the identification of data sources, the planning of surveys, and the definition of the main milestones of the project. Particular care was taken with planning the involvement of principal stakeholders, both through the participation, in all the operational stages of the SDP, of experts belonging to the institutions involved in the cooperation agreement, as well as by informing local actors through workshops (cf. Ch.1.1).

The diagnostic stage comprised analyses of the data collected, in order to define the problems and the opportunities emerging from the current state.

The development phase of the SDP was conducted, as mentioned above, on the basis of a strategic planning approach. The first step was to define possible development scenarios, as well as projects and plans already under way, and the evolution in tourist demand emerging from forecasts of trends in international demand. On the basis of this information, and in accordance with what was established in wider terms

in the MTMP, we created a vision of ACUM tourism development, and identified the objectives to be pursued in order to achieve this vision. On the basis of these aims, we then went on to decide on the most effective actions, and to package these actions in a number of policies for the development of the tourism system.

After the plan's adoption by the relevant authorities, the next stage will define the centres of responsibility that must be involved in carrying out the action, as well as dealing with the allocation of resources, the provision of a monitoring programme, and the assessment of the plan's implementation.

Thereafter, the implementation phase of the plan must be based on effective project management, continual checking of the progress achieved, timely communication with and involvement of ordinary people, checking the impact on the mobility system, and regular updating of the plan in the future.

#### 1.4.2 SURVEYS AND DATA

Given the transversal nature of tourism development, the diagnostic phase involved many dimensions of the local system, so as to:

- Define the regulatory framework and the context of projects under way at the local level;
- Identify the stakeholders (potentially) involved in tourism development;
- Characterize the local context as regards environmental and urban/village features and distribution, available infrastructure, and socio-economic and demographic dynamics;
- Analyze the tourism system from the point of view of supply and demand;
- Analyze the cultural heritage in terms of its tangible and intangible components.

As far as possible, the analysis was conducted utilizing the available material and literature, and secondary statistical data. However, for some questions use was made of direct investigations, deploying both quantitative and qualitative methods.

The definition of the regulatory framework was effected by means of an analysis of official documents. Particularly useful, owing to the completeness of the information and its affinity with the approach behind this project, was the overview provided by the *Myanmar Tourism Sector-Wide Impact Assessment* produced by the MCRB, DIHR and IHRB.

The identification of the stakeholders and of the projects under way resulted from discussions with our official talking-partners at the Ministries involved, both at the central level and at local offices, as well as from field visits made prior to the commencement of the actual project work.

The summary analysis of the local context, as regards the environmental and urban/village distribution pattern, available infrastructure, and socio-economic and demographic dynamics was conducted on the basis of secondary literature, as well as on the data provided by Myanmar's official statistical sources (mainly the CSO, MIMU, MOHT, MMRD, MMSIS, MNPED, MOT) and by international bodies (ASEAN Bank, FAO, IMF, WTTC, UN, UNESCAP, World Bank). The aforementioned departments at the University of Mandalay collaborated on this section, and in part they produced original data, such as the data on the pollution of surface water in Mandalay (cf. Ch. 3.1). The analysis of the system of towns and villages was conducted at LaGeS by means of photographic interpretations of a recent (2015) satellite image of the area.

Particular attention was devoted to examining the tourism system. For the purposes of the analysis, this system was broken down into two parts: the supply system and the demand system. The first source used were the official data provided by the MOHT, which made it possible to quantify the tourism demand (international arrivals, provenance etc.), and the supply (hotels and accommodation). The availability of comparable data also made it possible to conduct a longitudinal analysis for both aspects. The MOHT data was later supplemented by several items of information provided by the various associations questioned (hoteliers, tourist agencies, tourist guides etc.) or gathered directly during field research.

It was also decided to carry out a direct survey of tourism demand to analyse the profile of visitors, and to characterize their motives, to complement the narrow margins allowed by official statistics. A sample investigation was conducted by directly contacting tourists at hotels<sup>7</sup> or at the main sites of tourist interest. The survey was conducted between August and December 2015 via a standardized questionnaire that was filled out by the tourists themselves. In order to include the quantitatively largest component sectors of local tourism in the survey, the questionnaire was administered in 7 languages: English, Italian, German, French, Spanish, Chinese and Thai; in this way, theoretically 83% of international tourism in the area was covered. As well as information of a general nature, the questionnaire was specifically aimed at measuring the degree to which interviewees subscribed to forms of sustainable tourism, both as regards their ideal inclinations and in terms of the practical organization of their trip. The questionnaire also included two open questions regarding the perception of the context<sup>8</sup>, and these provided linguistic findings useful for adding qualitative elements to the quantitative survey of the perception, also because they constituted a solid point of reference for the interpretation of the information obtained by sentiment analysis (cf. below).

Indeed, for the purposes of experiment, and also with a view to supplementing the traditional sample-based survey, it was decided to explore the analysis of the perception of the project area by studying the way in which it is represented in social networks. Although the use of data from social networks raises considerable methodological problems (Loda, Tartaglia, forthcoming), the importance acquired by these instruments for sharing the most diverse experiences (Xiang, Gretzel, 2010) makes it a very significant field for tourist destinations in terms of marketing and promotion (Hudson, Thal, 2013).

Finally, great attention was also devoted to an analysis of the cultural heritage, given the importance that this factor holds in prospects for sustainable tourist development. As regards the tangible cultural heritage, the aim was to have as complete and up-to-date a picture as possible of the significant episodes. To this end, use was made primarily of the data provided by the MOC DANM. This information was supplemented with information provided by other sources. Especially useful were the studies by Khin Khin Moe (2012) and Khin Khin Moe and Nyo Nyo (2015), which also surveyed other categories of assets not included in the MOC DANM data, such as those built recently, and with non-religious functions. All the information gathered was processed using GIS software, and made available on a geo-referenced database.

As regards the intangible cultural heritage, it was decided to focus attention on cultural practices that are unanimously seen as particularly significant and perceivable for the (re)production of local cultures, namely food culture, specifically in the form of street food, and craft skills. For each of these two sectors, thorough field

<sup>7</sup> The sampling plan was formulated in such a way as to include, in the survey, tourists staying at different types of accommodation facilities (from guest houses to 5 star hotels), in basically equal numbers.

<sup>8</sup> The questions were formulated as follows: “What has made a positive impression on you here?” and “What has made a negative impression on you here?”.

research was conducted with the aid of qualitative methods. Surveys, conducted both with semi-structured interviews and interviews with experts, and using audio-visual techniques, provided wide-ranging and original documentation. Taking part in this part of analysis of the intangible cultural heritage was the Studio Azzurro Produzioni company, and the Progetto Continenti NGO.

Consideration was also given to the main festivities: in these, specific and agreed forms of socialization take shape, forms that are of definite interest to a tourism that is attentive to the local context, and which are of great importance for active protection of the intangible cultural heritage. This issue was addressed in part via the available literature, and in part by the Florence team by participatory observation. The Department of Anthropology of the University of Mandalay took part in the handling of this issue.

The maps in this book have been elaborated using cartographic data from different sources, as mentioned in the caption of each map.

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