Ex-post Evaluation on the Myanmar Basic e-Government Project

The Export-Import Bank of Korea

(Government Agency for EDCF)

EDCF Evaluation Team

(Evaluated by Kookmin University)

I. Project Overview

1. Project Details

☐ Name of the project: The Myanmar Basic e-Government Project

☐ Name of the Borrower: Ministry of Communication and Information Technology (MCIT)

☐ Execution Agency: Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications (MPT)

☐ Amount of Loan: USD 12.5 million

☐ Condition of Loan: Annual interest rate of 1.0% and repayment period of 30 years (including a 10-year grace period)

2. Project Purpose

☐ The Myanmar Basic e-Government Project aimed to increase the efficiency, effectiveness, and transparency in public administration and to improve the quality of public services in Myanmar by establishing a basic e-government system.

○ Prior to the project, the Myanmar government relied upon personnels for delivering government documents between ministries due to the lack of other effective means of delivery. As a result, inter-ministerial communications were delayed. Sometimes documents got misplaced. Administrative inefficiency was rampant and the quality of public services was very poor.

○ The government of Myanmar identified the e-government system as the

solution to enhance its administrative efficiency and effectiveness. To launch a project to construct a basic e-government system, the government of Myanmar requested Korea's assistance in 2002.

☐ The government of Myanmar expected that improving the usage of ICT in the public sector would provide market opportunities for the domestic ICT industry, improve national competitiveness, and bring about economic benefits as a result. It also expected the project would increase ICT awareness by public employees and later by the general public.

3. Project Scope

☐ The project scope had to be modified twice to accommodate the sudden relocation of the capital city of Myanmar from Yangon to Naypyitaw.

○ The original plan of the project was to install a basic e-government network which would connect all government ministries and departments in Yangon, the capital city of Myanmar. However, the government of Myanmar abruptly moved its capital to Naypyitaw, approximately 320 km north of Yangon.

○ In order to accommodate this sudden change, the scope and contents of the project had to be modified twice. EDCF, the PMC, and the government of Myanmar effectively addressed the required changes, completing the project with only a month delay from the original plan.

<p align="center"><Project Scope></p>

Category	Original Plans	Adjusted Plans
National IT Infrastructure	• F/O cabling (Yangon) • Satellite connection in province • Data center	• ADSL (Yangon) • F/O cable (Naypyidaw) • Data center
Supply and install H/W	• 38 ministry servers • NMS, mail, development server • Backup server & device	• 35 ministry servers • NMS, mail, development server • Backup server & device
Supply and install S/W	• 39 DBMS • Firewall, NMS, case tool, backup S/W • Basic e-government package	• 37 DBMS • Firewall, NMS, case tool, backup S/W • Basic e-government package
Application	• Basic e-government application	• Basic e-government application • Government personnel management system • Video conference system
Training	• Administrator and user	• Administrator and user

II. Summary of the Ex-post Evaluation

1. Purpose of Evaluation

☐ The purpose of this ex-post evaluation is to review the performance of the Myanmar Basic e-Government Project and to draw lessons and recommendations for similar projects in the future.

2. Methods of Evaluation

☐ The following guidelines were used in this evaluation: Evaluation Guideline of the Committee for International Development Cooperation of Korea; EDCF Evaluation Manual; and EDCF Ex-post Evaluation Report Guidelines. The OECD DAC Evaluation Criteria (relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability) were used along with the criterion for cross-cutting issues to evaluate the performance of the project.

☐ Rigorous quantitative evaluation was not feasible to perform. However, this limitation was supplemented by key informant interviews and a literature review.

○ The necessary quantitative data were not collected because, at the time of implementation, it was not required for a project to set quantitative goals and indicators, especially at outcome levels. Moreover, the government of Myanmar did not have any statistical records on the performance of the project.

3. Results of Evaluation

☐ The project was evaluated as successful (3.6/4.0).

○ The project successfully established the basic public administration network which connected most ministries and agencies with optic fiber. A groupware and public personnel management system were loaded while file servers, operating software, and a data center were provided. Yangon and Naypyitaw were connected with ADSL. In addition, user training and education for the maintenance workforce were also provided.

○ The project was meaningful as the first e-government project in Myanmar that established the digital-based public administration in Myanmar's government. Since the project was completed ten years ago, the government of Myanmar has upgraded the basic e-government system several times with its own budget. The system had been actively in use until the time of this evaluation. Public officials in the government of Myanmar expressed high degrees of satisfaction about using the system.

<Evaluation Result >

Evaluation Criteria	Weight	Evaluation Rating	Evaluation Value
Relevance	20%	Highly Relevant	3.75
Efficiency	20%	Efficient	3.5
Effectiveness	20%	Effective	3.5
Impact	20%	Highly Influential	3.67
Sustainability	20%	Likely Sustainable	3.33
Overall Rating		Successful	3.6/4.0

□ (Relevance) The project was rated as highly relevant (3.75/4.0) since the project well-responded to the needs of Myanmar's government.

○ The Project's goal was aligned with the national development plans of Myanmar. The construction of the digital network for public administration was considered the best tool to solve the ineffectiveness and inefficiency in public administration and was a high priority project of the government.

☐ (Efficiency) The project was efficiently implemented (3.5/4.0). Despite the changes in project scope, the actual project duration and expenditure did not overly exceed the planned duration and budget.

○ Project completion was delayed only by one month even though the scope and contents of the project were changed twice due to the unexpected relocation of the administrative capital city to Naypyitaw. Additional expenses incurred by the changes were covered by the government of Myanmar.

○ EDCF and the contractors promptly responded to every change in the project. They were very cooperative to the government of Myanmar in implementing the project. MPT was fully satisfied with what the contractors had done for them, and still thankful to EDCF and the contractors, even more than 9 years after the completion of the project.

☐ (Effectiveness) This project was evaluated as very effective (3.5/4.0). Even though the scope and contents of the project were changed twice, the project delivered a fully functioning basic e-government package along with necessary networks.

○ The potential negative effects of the contract modification were well overcome by the contractors in active cooperation with EDCF. At the

time of this ex-post evaluation, the basic e-government system was being operated very well even after more than 9 years have passed since the system was first introduced in the government of Myanmar.

☐ (Impact) The project was evaluated as highly influential (3.67/4.0). As the first e-government project in Myanmar, the project has brought about ripple effects on the government such as the increasing awareness of e-government among public employees.

○ It provided a stimulus to the government of Myanmar to continue its own efforts to undertake more e-government-related projects. While implementing the project, for example, the government received e-government consultations from KISDI (Korea Information Society Development Institute) and NIPA (National IT Industry Promotion Agency; previously called KIPA at that time) of Korea.

○ The government of Myanmar has continued its efforts to introduce more and better e-government applications and services with either its own budget or ODA from other donors such as the ADB and Japan. One example of such efforts was found in upgrading the capacity of the basic e-government system from 100 Mbps to 1 Gbps with its own budget. As a result, the system was still being actively used, improving the overall efficiency and transparency in public administration, informatization mindset, and mutual networking among government officials.

○ However, it is hard to say that the number of e-government specialists and their capacities improved much.

☐ (Sustainability) The effect and impact of the project were evaluated as likely sustainable (3.33/4.0) thanks to Myanmar's high level of

ownership.

○ As mentioned above, the evaluation found that the government of Myanmar had upgraded the system with its own budget. As a result, the system was still being actively used as the main public administration network at the time of ex-post evaluation.

○ It was expected that the Myanmar government would continue its efforts to expand e-government services in the near future.

○ The lack of ICT experts and insufficient budget were beeing potential obstacles that could hinder the government of Myanmar from fully adapting to e-government services.

☐ (Cross-cutting Issues) Gender and environmental outcomes were assessed as the following:

○ (Gender) Women's participation in Myanmar's government was high partly because of the socialist political regime. Thus, this evaluation found that e-government had not had any negative impact on gender equality.

○ (Environment) Introducing e-government means public documentation will get digitalized. Therefore, this evaluation found that the e-government project had been bringing about a positive impact on the environment.

Ⅲ. Lessons Learned and Recommendations

1. Lessons Learned

1.1 Success factors

☐ As discussed above, the government of Myanmar demonstrated high ownership about e-government. This was the most important factor for the Myanmar Basic e-Government Project to be successful.

☐ Another important success factor was the active cooperation among the actors of the project, especially EDCF and the contractors. Without their quick responses and cooperation to the changing needs of Myanmar, the project would not have been completed as planned and would have seen much longer delay.

☐ The continuous support of Korean ICT agencies for keeping e-government running in Myanmar had positive impacts on increasing the benefits and sustainability of the project. As mentioned above, KISDI and NIPA helped enhance bilateral cooperation between Myanmar and Korea on e-government and boosted the Myanmar government's interest in e-government.

1.2 Limitations

☐ One of the difficulties in the implementation process was found in encoding the Burmese language into the unicode system. At the planning stage, software engineers assumed that the Burmese could be used in ASCII format. Later on, it turned out that the Burmese had to be encoded in unicode format. This required additional time and budget. Fortunately, the contractors were willing to solve this issue as

fast as they could with the government of Myanmar agreeing to pay the additional costs.

☐ Another limitation was that the maintenance period was too short; the maintenance service covered only one year after the completion of the project. Given the nature of the project, however, at least two to three years of stabilization period would be needed. The government of Myanmar confirmed that one year of maintenance was too short to make stable use of the basic e-government system. It was also found that the training provided through the project for the maintenance personnels was not sufficient for proper system management and maintenance.

☐ The Myanmar Basic e-Government Project did not use quantitative performance indicators which are used for regular monitoring and evaluation. The project was approved before setting such indicators became mandatory for all EDCF projects. This lack of pre-set indicators, along with weak monitoring capacity of the partner country made quantitative evaluation difficult.

2. Recommendations

☐ EDCF should strengthen the ex-ante analysis of technical requirements. Some risks are unexpected. However, many technical problems that arise during project implementation (such as the requirement for language coding) can be prevented through careful assessment of the needs and characteristics of the partner country.

☐ It is also recommended that EDCF more actively seek the possibility of combining grant and loan projects to aid the partner country to adapt to e-government more effectively.

□ EDCF should provide a flexible maintenance period and ex-post management program, taking into account the scope and contents of the e-government project.

○ If the project develops a single application system, the maintenance period may be short.

○ If the project develops a complex network of systems, the necessary maintenance period will be longer (at least two to three years).

□ It is also recommended that EDCF provide customized training not only to users but also to senior-level decision makers. Capacity building at different levels of the government bureaucracy could strengthen the effectiveness and sustainability of e-government projects.

○ High-level policy makers should have better understanding of the importance of e-government and its impact on the national development to ensure more effective adaptation and utilization of e-government.

○ User training should be strengthened to facilitate the active use of the new e-government system. Public employees often tend to stick to their business practice. Thus, simply providing a new system does not guarantee public employees' use of the new system. It is also highly recommended that EDCF provide further training for technical experts to ensure better maintenance.

□ For better performance management in similar e-government projects, we suggest that EDCF make a draft list of performance evaluation indicators which can be commonly applied to similar projects.