

On November 8th, 2015, millions of Myanmar citizens designated their representatives to the Amyotha Hluttaw (House of Nationalities) and Pyithu Hluttaw (House of Representatives), which constitute the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (Assembly of the Union). Voters have also chosen their representatives for State and Region Hluttaw, including Ethnic Representatives



The Myanmar general elections of November 2015 have been deemed free and fair for the first time in the history of that country



Numerous transparency measures of the Union Election Commission have contributed to guarantee a free and fair process in which the great mobilization of the Myanmar people has been able to express



To mention only a few...



Electoral observers were invited for the first time in the history of the country, with over 11,000 domestic observers and approximately 1,000 international observers accredited

Indelible finger-inking was introduced in the process for the first time, in order to avoid double voting



A photograph showing a man in profile, wearing a white long-sleeved shirt, a blue sarong, and a white cap, looking at a large display of voter registry data. The data is presented on multiple sheets of paper, some hanging vertically and others on easels. The background shows a building with windows and a stone pillar.

A software-based Voter Registry Update was conducted over the year to reduce disenfranchisement

A large, brightly lit room, possibly a community center or a school hall, is filled with people and stacks of materials. In the foreground and middle ground, there are numerous stacks of white, folded items, likely voter education materials or pamphlets, arranged on tables and on the floor. Several people, including men and women of various ages, are seen working with these materials. Some are sitting on the floor, while others are standing and talking. The room is cluttered with cardboard boxes, some of which are open, and stacks of papers. In the background, there are more stacks of materials, a large whiteboard on the wall, and a door. The overall atmosphere is one of active participation and preparation for an event.

Extensive voter education, awareness-raising and information sharing activities were jointly conducted by the UEC and other national electoral stakeholders

**One of the measures introduced
for the first time
in the history of Myanmar elections
was Electoral Risk Management**

**Electoral Risk Management
as
a tool for accountability and transparency
during Myanmar first free and fair elections**



**Building trust in ERM
before building trust through ERM**



An incremental trust-building process

Date	Activity
March, 2014	UEC and IDEA organize the introductory sessions “The Electoral Risk Management Tool and its potential use by the Union Election Commission of Myanmar” for UEC senior staff.
November, 2014	I-IDEA introduces ERM methodology to the Chairman and election officers from State and Region offices who participated in the workshop “The Election Risk Management Tool and its implementation: An Introduction to UEC State/Region Sub-Commissions”.
January, 2015	UEC creates an Electoral Risk Management Unit (ERM Unit) whose members participated in technical training on ERM methodology and applications.
March, 2015	UEC co-hosts context overview workshop with Sub-Commissions, and government officials from MPF, GAD, Ministry of Immigration and Ministry of Defence.
April, 2015	UEC co-hosts context overview workshop with political parties and CSOs.
May, 2015	I-IDEA visits Sub-Commission offices in Yangon, Mandalay, Myitkyina and Lashio to discuss ERM implementation.
June, 2015	UEC approves operational plan for ERM implementation
July, 2015	I-IDEA technical advisor provides re-fresher training and risk value workshop to ERM unit I-IDEA hosts 2-day training with State/Region Sub-Commissions Election Officers on ERM monitoring and reporting ERM report I completed
September, 2015	I-IDEA provides analytical training to ERM representatives ERM reports I & II submitted
October, 2015	I-IDEA and UEC commence operational planning for E-Day reporting ERM Report III submitted
November, 2015	Hotline risk-alert system deployed Media monitoring unit setup Pre-election report; three E-Day reports; 78 incident reports; and three post-election ERM reports submitted

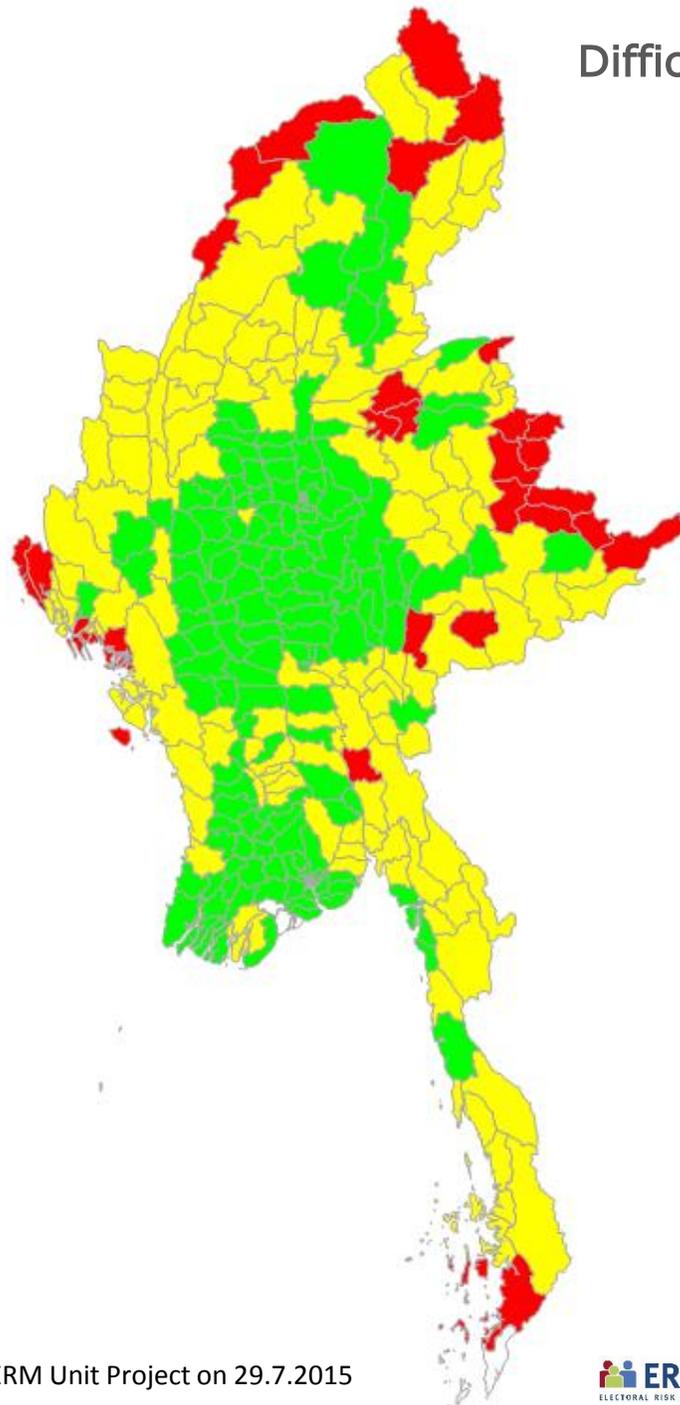
An initial focus on operational risks

- Context of limited exposure to foreign electoral assistance impeded the possibility to incorporate security risk factors at the beginning of the ERM process.
- Out of over 19 internal and external risk factors about which information were collected between August and October 2015, large majority were operational factors.
- In some cases, operational risk factors brought light on more security-related challenges, for example when there are transportation difficulties in areas not affected by flood but characterized by the presence of Ethnic Armed Groups (EAGs).
- The trust-building process between the UEC ERM Unit and International IDEA over 2015 led progressively to the acceptance of a more direct approach of security risks, including the setup of a hotline system for incident reporting during the polling period.

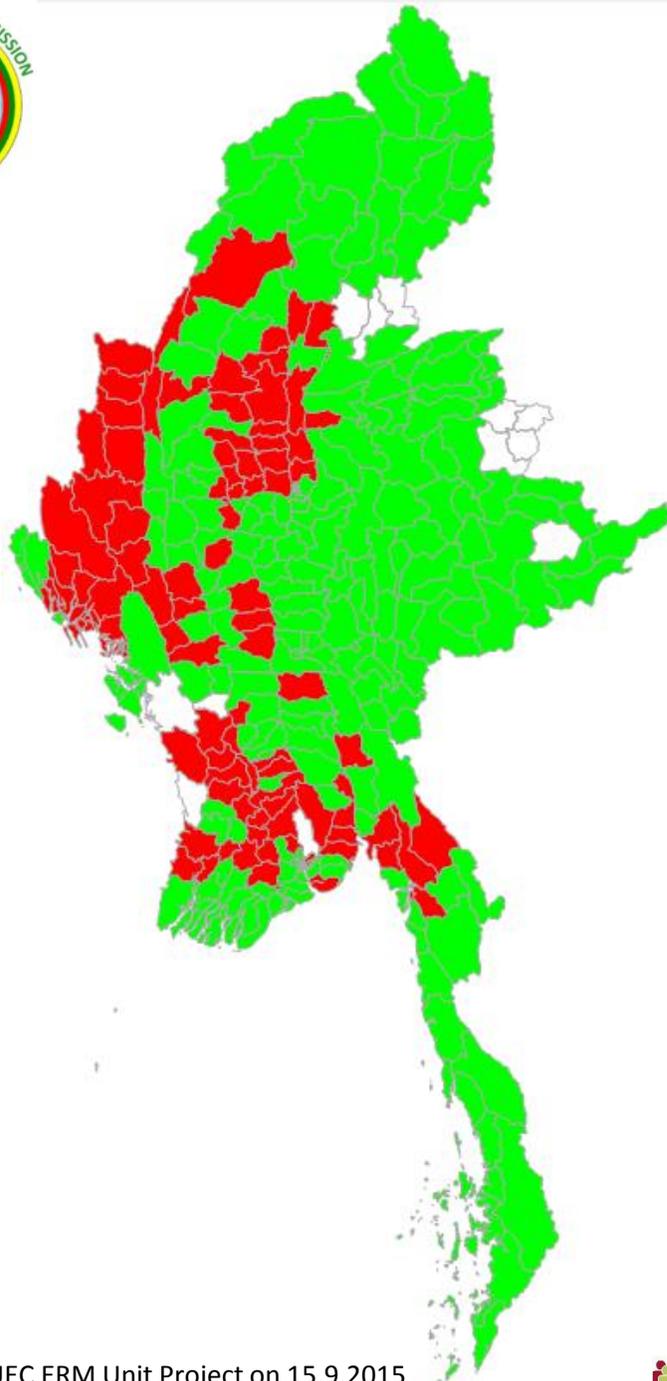


Difficulty accessing for election preparations due to poor road networks

24th July, 2015 – 29th July, 2015







Flood affected area

20-27 Aug 2015

Number of township affected by flood

State/Region	Number of Township
Kayin	2
Chin	9
Sagaing	23
Bago	15
Magway	7
Mandalay	5
Mon	4
Rakhine	8
Yangon	10
Ayarwaddy	14

-  Flood Affected area
-  Not affected
-  Ensure



The Electoral Risk Management Unit of the Union Election Commission was able to significantly contribute to a greater accountability and transparency of the 2015 elections because the UEC gained trust in the ERM mechanism ahead of E-Day.



Trust was at the roots.

Facilitating multi- stakeholder dialogue



- The overview workshops of the Myanmar ERM mechanism held in March and April 2015 were the occasion of dialogue between state agencies on electoral security matters (the Myanmar Police Force, Ministry of Immigration, General Administration Department), as well as between Civil Society Organizations and Political Parties. It led to the identification of 10 external risk factors and 32 internal risk factors.
- The ERM mechanism contributed in particular to two Myanmar administrations showing that a silo administrative culture could be detrimental to their efficiency and that dialogue was needed.

- The UEC itself, first, showed very open to dialogue with governmental entities and aware of the importance of this dialogue for a more systematic and institutionalized access to security-related information which could affect the elections.
- Meanwhile, the Myanmar Police Force (MPF) quickly developed a strong interest in the operational risk data collected through the ERM tool, probably as they could have security impact (for example it was observed in many countries that delays in transporting electoral materials could lead to violence against polling station officials).
- In July, further interest in institutional coordination emerged. Soon after, the MPF delegated two officers to be embedded in the ERM Unit throughout the electoral process. While their presence remained episodic, it created a good practice on which we expect the ERM Unit to build in the future.

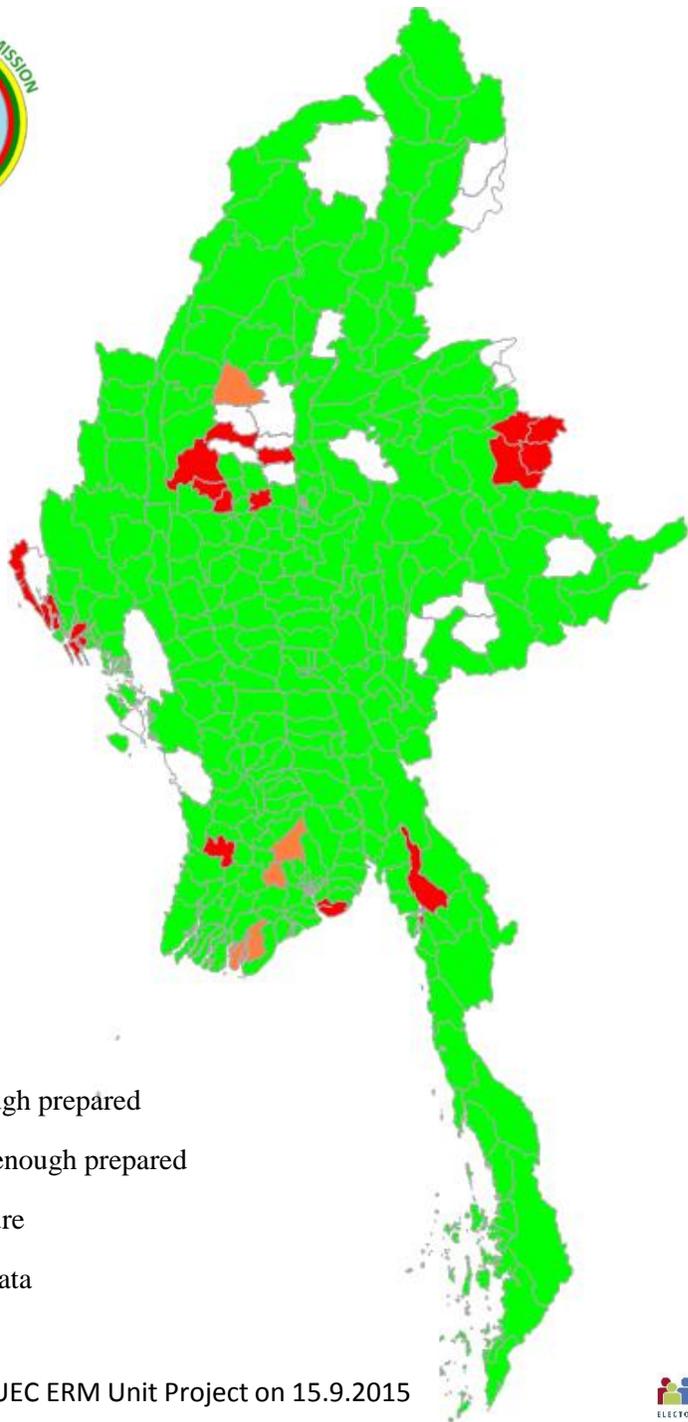
ERM reporting
for internal accountability



- Reinforcing accountability needed to start internally, in a context where the UEC sub-commissions were not always comfortable to report difficulties faced to Nay Pyi Taw.
- In the first months of reporting, the ERM Unit relied exclusively on State/Region Sub-Commission responses to questionnaires in order to complete monthly ERM reports, experiencing some delays – though decreasing from one report to another - and therefore minimizing the risk mitigation impact of the tool.
- The first data came slowly, and were sometimes reflecting a too “rosy” picture of the reality (or “greeny,” to use ERM color code to report that no difficulty is encountered). Several sub-commissions were too busy to report, leading to large areas of risk maps been left blank.



Preparations for training of polling staff 20-27 Aug 2015



- Enough prepared
- Not enough prepared
- Unsure
- No data

Number of township (not enough preparation)

State/Region	Number of Tsp
Sagaing	1
Yangon	4
Ayarwaddy	2

Number of Township (No data)

Sagaing	6
Mandalay	1
Rakhine	3
Yangon	1
Shan	7

Number of Tsp (unsure)

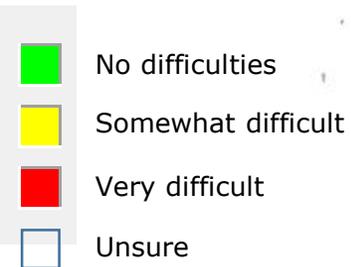
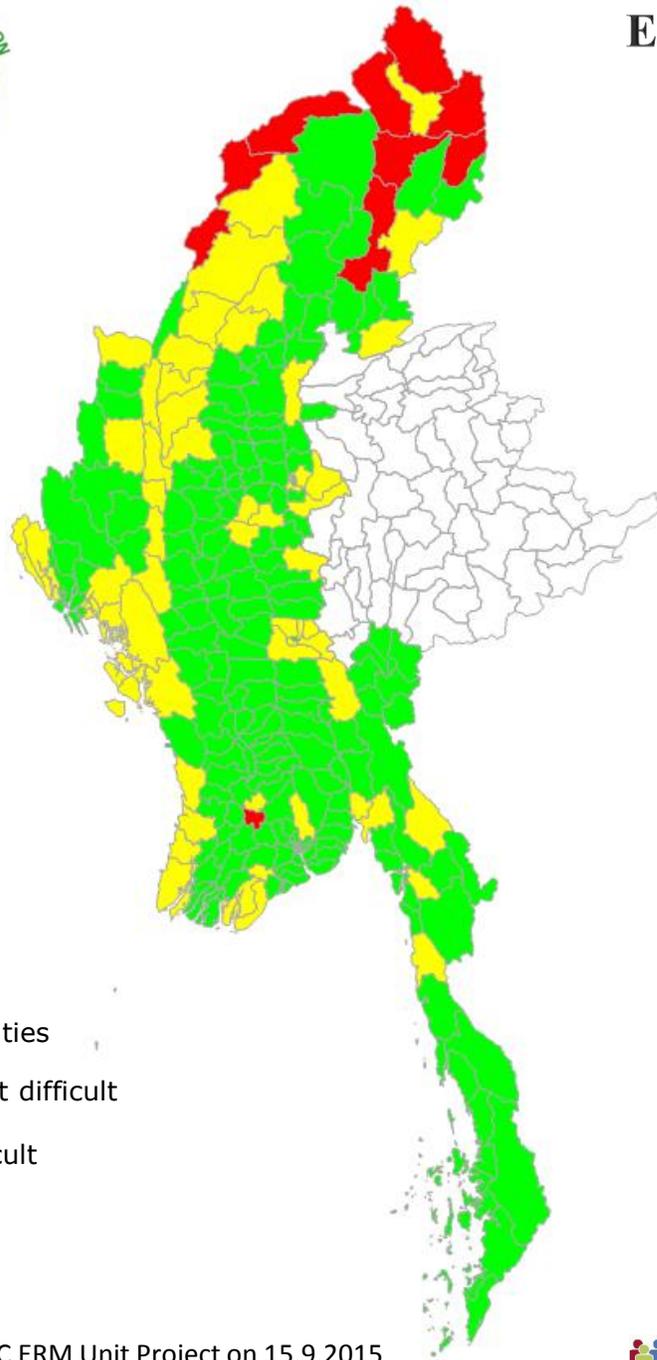
Kachin	3
Kayin	1
Sagaing	6
Mandalay	1
Mon	1
Rakhine	3
Yangon	4
Shan	4
Ayarwaddy	1

- Progressively, the UEC ERM Unit realized, notably by noticing inconsistency in data received, that the reports of sub-commissions were not always as accurate as expected.
- The ERM Unit encouraged the sub-commissions for more accurate and timely reporting, emphasizing the important of transparency and accountability in order for the ERM reports to be useful to the UEC Chairman.
- As a consequence, the accuracy and quality of data and therefore the knowledge of field challenges at headquarters level improved.



Expected difficulties in transportation of election related materials

28 Sep- 5 Oct 2015



No. of Township (Somewhat difficult)

State/Region	No. of Township
Kachin	6
Kayin	2
Chin	2
Sagaing	10
Magway	4
Mandalay	9
Mon	4
Rakhine	11
Yangon	1
Ayarwaddy	7
Union Territory	6

No. of Township (Very Difficult)

State/Region	No. of Township
Kachin	3
Sagaing	3
Ayarwaddy	1

- Given time pressures around E-Day, it was determined that a new approach was needed.
- With encouragement from I-IDEA, the UEC directed State, Region and Township Sub-Commissions to provide incident reports for critical issues throughout the day via a fax hotline system.
- The hierarchic structure ordinarily precludes Township Sub Commissions from interacting directly with the ERM Unit without going through State/Region sub-commissions, and initial reservations were therefore strong, but all parties soon realized the importance of such a mechanism.

- **78 incident reports were received during 8-11 November.**

No	Incident Typology	Number of reports	Percentage	Location and remarks
1	Advance Voting (e.g. late arrival, counting at wrong place)	6	7.7%	Ayerarwady (2) Mandalay (1) Shan (2) Yangon (1)
2	Ballot papers and boxes (e.g. wrong ballots sent to PS, lack of signature of polling station officers, ballot destruction, sealing)	28	35.9%	Ayerarwady (8) Mandalay (5) Shan (4) Bago (3) Kachin (1) Mon (6) Sagaing (1)
3	Voter List	5	6.4%	Mandalay (1) Shan (1) Yangon (1) Kayin (1) Sagaing (1)
4	Voter ID Slips (e.g. impersonation, fake Voter Slips)	15	19.2%	Mandalay (1 report involving 54 cases) Shan (1) Kachin (2) Kayin (1) Sagaing (8) Magway (2)
5	Campaigning	12	15.4%	Shan (11) Chin (1)
6	Other	12	15.4%	Examples of incident types under “other”: Ayeyarwady - Special police’s unjustified request to PS Shan – gunshots heard on way to PS by members of political party, shelter denied by monastery Mon – Voters dying in car accident Tanintharyi – Four people injured, including police and PS officer, by thunder
	Total	78	100.0%	

- **A total of 9 ERM reports were submitted to the UEC leadership over a six-day period (7-13 Nov).**

Product name	Description	Submission to ERM Director	Final submission to Chairman	Language
ERM Pre-election	Summary of pre-election media reporting	7-Nov	7 Nov	MM
ERM E-Day 1	Basic maps, key issues and verification of media reporting to 10am	8-Nov	8-Nov	MM
ERM E-Day 2	Basic maps, key issues and verification of media reporting to 2pm plus initial summary of UEC incident reports	8-Nov	8-Nov	MM
ERM E-Day 3	Summary of UEC incident reports	8-Nov	8-Nov	MM
ERM E-Day 4	Final summary of 48 UEC incident reports	8-Nov	9-Nov	MM
ERM Post E-Day 1	Summary of 16 incident reports submitted post E-Day	9-Nov	10-Nov	MM
Full media monitoring overview	Spreadsheet of media monitoring summaries	9-Nov	13-Nov	MM + ENG
Media monitoring verification	Summary of 12 incidents verified with Township Sub Comms	9-Nov	10-Nov	MM + ENG
Map package	Graphical representation of key incidents from media reporting plus incident reports	13-Nov	13-Nov	MM



The very fact these were lodged with the UEC leadership in time for remedial actions to be taken marked a significant achievement for the ERM mechanism in Myanmar, and the beginning of a new phase of reinforced trust and ownership of the UEC over the ERM tool.

More internal accountability for more external transparency

After E-Day was discussed by the UEC the possibility to use the incident reports collected through the ERM mechanism as part of the evidences (together with police reports and other evidences) at the disposal of the Election Tribunal for Electoral Dispute Resolution. While a final decision is still pending, the very fact that it is being considered show the level of trust existing in the ERM. Such a decision of the UEC would imply using the ERM mechanism as a legally recognized instrument of external accountability for the first time ever, putting the EMB of Myanmar in a pilot position worldwide.



Promoting
internal
and
external
fact-
checking



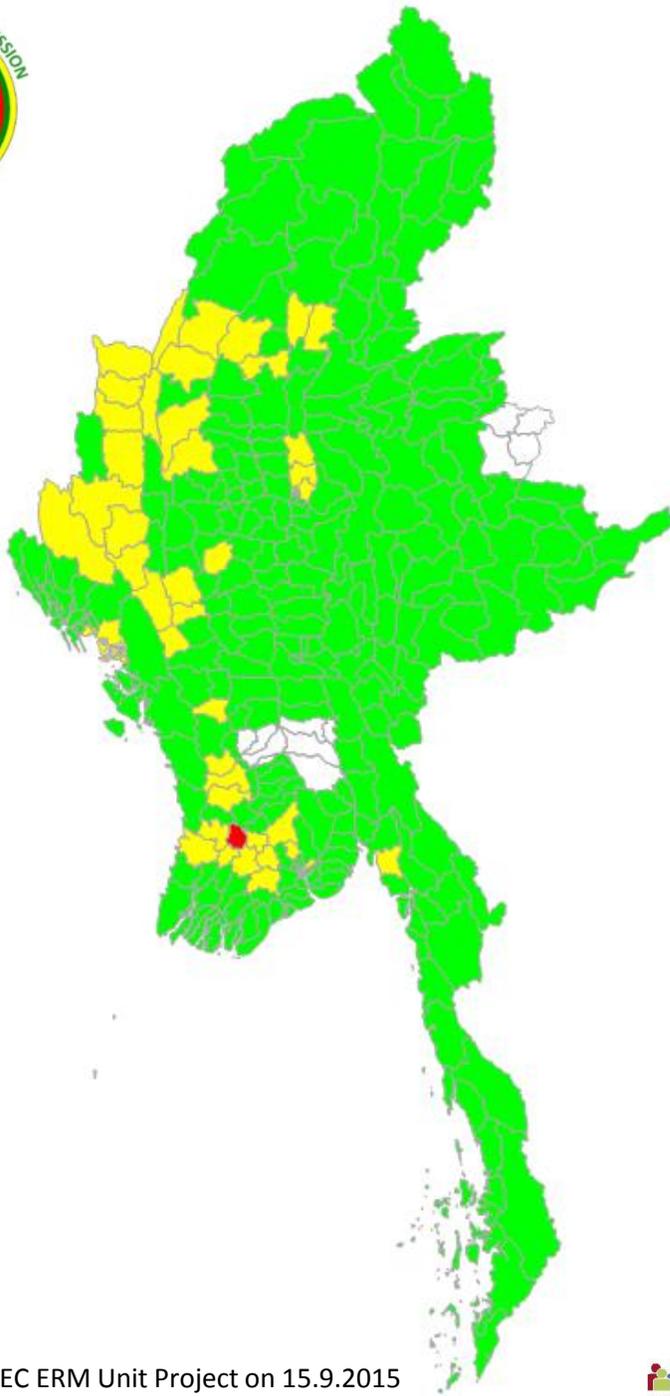
Encouraging decision-making based on factual data

- Although it is difficult to estimate the role of the ERM mechanism in promoting decision-making based on factual data, it has been obvious in several instances that the ERM reports were providing informational resources which could be useful to the UEC to demonstrate the rationale of a decision.
- The collection of factual data on operational risks can help making adapted decisions to address actual operational constraints.
- For example, the ERM reports of the UEC sub-commissions after July 2015 were showing that the impact of the flooding was creating major operational constraints, but would not justify *per se* a nationwide postponement.
- When a postponement was deemed necessary in townships where flooding or security concerns were making the voter registry update operations too difficult, the UEC decided to go for a much more “surgical postponement” and not a nationwide one.
- In such a context, ERM maps can be a great resources to make a decision and/or explain the rationale of a decision to the public.



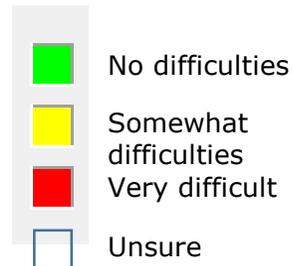
Transportation issues due to flood

20-27 Aug 2015



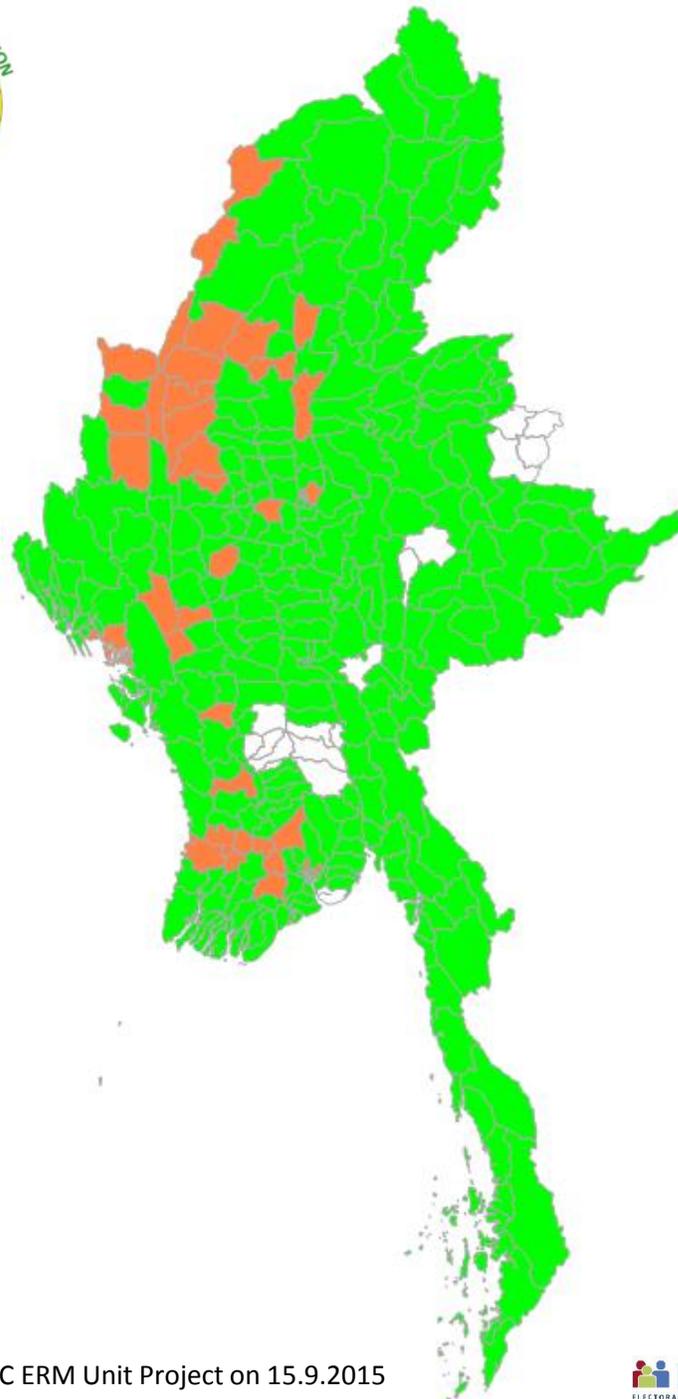
Number of Township

State/Region	Township
Ayarwaddy	Kyone Pyaw





Communication issues due to flood 20-27 Aug 2015



Number of township

State/Region	Number of Township
Chin	3
Sagaing	13
Magway	4
Mandalay	4
Rakhine	1
Yangon	4
Ayarwaddy	8



- The ERM mechanism proved particularly relevant as a fact-checking tool when it comes to the relations between the UEC and the media.
- After decades of limitation to the freedom of information, Myanmar is a country where people as well as media themselves rely very much on rumor and unverified information.
- During the voting period, I-IDEA established as an ad hoc addition to the ERM mechanism a media monitoring reporting system.
- The media monitoring reporting team provided hourly reports on E-Day in addition to reporting in the days before and after.

- This monitoring provided timely and comprehensive summaries (with over 150 reporting lines on E-Day alone and 250 over the three-day period).
- It enabled the UEC ERM Team to verify most significant incidents by reaching out to the UEC sub-commissions and other entities.
- This mechanism serves the UEC in identifying unreported problems. It also allowed the UEC to debunk wrong rumors.

This contributed to a major shift in the media perception of the work of the UEC and a more fact-based appreciation of the performances of the electoral administration. A media outlet such as the newspaper *Irrawaddy*, which had several times expressed suspicion that the UEC was not preparing transparent elections during the pre-electoral period, acknowledged the performance of the UEC and concluded *“Few trusted [the UEC Chairman] Tin Aye when he first took up the role but the Union Election Commission chair deserves recognition for facilitating a credible nationwide poll.”*



EDITORIAL

Burma's Election Chair Placates His Critics

Few trusted Tin Aye when he first took up the role but the Union Election Commission chair deserves recognition for facilitating a credible nationwide poll.



The way forward

- The purpose of this presentation was of course not to say that all issues related to transparency and accountability of electoral processes in Myanmar have been solved by the ERM tool or mechanism (neither that they have all been solved).
- The sole intent is to show that Electoral Risk Management is a relevant tool for an Electoral Management Body to promote inter-agency dialogue platform, multi-stakeholder problem solving, public trust and institutional accountability, in the framework of an electoral process.
- Much remain to be done for the implementation of the ERM tool in Myanmar, including when it comes to transparency.
- The UEC should consider going fully public on its ERM efforts, including by making risk maps accessible to media and citizens.
- Dialogue with Civil Society Organizations, Political Parties and media, and possibly also international NGOs and diplomatic missions, about electoral risks need to be institutionalized and systematized.
- When the democratic oversight of security agencies will become a post-electoral reality, a reinforced and more integrated coordination with the Myanmar Police Force should also be explored.
- The UEC ERM mechanism itself can keep reinforcing its efficiency and reliability by going beyond internal reporting (and media monitoring) and diversifying its sources of information.

Any question?



STEP
DEMOCRACY
ရှေ့သို့မြန်မာ

Some of the members of IDEA Myanmar team on E-Day