BRI MONITOR

Belt and Road Monitoring Project: Letpadaung Copper Mine

Sandhi Governance Institute, Myanmar

MYANMAR

Sandhi Governance Institute is a Myanmar Policy Research Institute with the focus on enhancing capacity of political parties and civil society organizations, increasing transparency and accountability in public sector and strengthening participation of all key stakeholders in public affairs and major investments to promote democratic governance in Myanmar.

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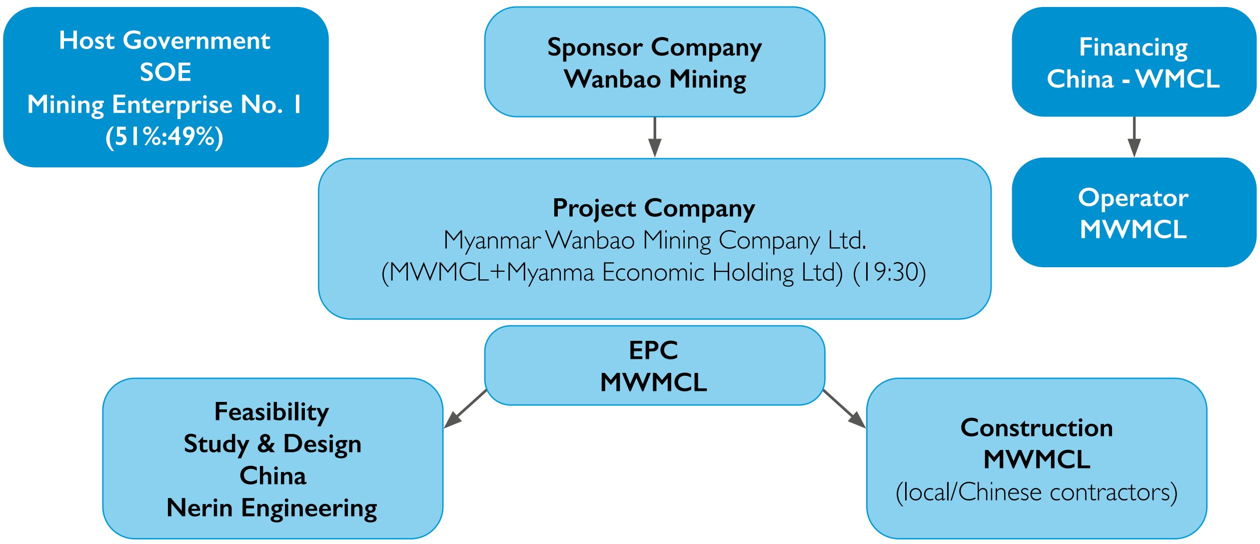
Case Study Project Mapping

The Letpadaung Copper Mine Project, implemented by Myanmar Wanbao Mining Company Ltd. (MWMCL) and the military-owned Myanma Economic Holdings Ltd. (MEHL), is a Sino–Myanmar joint venture between the two companies and the Myanmar state-owned Mining Enterprise No. 1 (ME-1). Originally a joint venture between the then-Union of Myanmar Economic Holdings Ltd. (UMEHL) and China's Wanbao Mining Company Ltd., after significant villager protests at the project site, an amended Production Sharing Contract agreement was enacted in 2013 that gave the Myanmar government a majority stake (51 percent) through ME-1 and made MWMCL and MEHL minority stakeholders. China Nerin Engineering (NERIN) conducted a Project Feasibility Study and Design in 2011 and local and Chinese contractors carried out mine construction. Also, in response to villager protests over loss of land and the project's environmental effects, consulting firm Knight Piésold conducted an Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) and prepared a report on behalf of MWMCL in 2014. The mine began operations in 2016.

Latpadaung Project Mapping Outline



Source: IDEAS, June 2020 Workshop

Introduction

The Letpadaung Copper Mine Project is a joint venture operated by China's MWMCL in cooperation with the military-owned MEHL. Under a 2013 amendment to the project's Production Sharing Contract, MWMCL and MEHL agreed to share profits with Mining Enterprise No. 1 (ME-1), a state-owned enterprise of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation (MoNREC). China has claimed the project as a demonstration project of its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) international infrastructure development strategy.[1] The project is located in Salingyi Township of Sagaing Region in Myanmar, covering an area of 32.73 square kilometers.[2]

This investment began after China initiated its "Go Global" (or "Go Out") policy in 1999, encouraging Chinese enterprises to invest overseas.[3] In the early 2000s, Chinese investment in Myanmar was limited, amounting to only USD $20 million in 2004, but it grew a hundred fold in the next six years to around USD $2 billion by 2010, making Myanmar the largest recipient of Chinese investments in ASEAN except Singapore.[4] According to Lund University scholar Travis Mitchell in 2010, part of the motivation behind the "Go Global" strategy was to secure long-term supplies of natural resources. Most Chinese investment in Myanmar was thus concentrated in the extractive industries of hydropower, mining, oil, and gas. Myanmar, still under military dictatorship at that time, was isolated and under Western sanctions and consequently had to rely largely on China diplomatically and economically.

The Letpadaung project and other Chinese investments in the extractive sector shed light on the political economy and governance of SOEs in China and Myanmar. Chinese SOEs, with domestic constraints and decreased profits as well as government incentives under the "Go Global" policy, tapped into overseas investment opportunities and are rapidly expanding internationally. According to Lee Jones and Yizheng Zou, they exploited Myanmar's lax regulatory environment while escaping domestic scrutiny as Chinese regulatory agencies failed to keep pace with the SOEs' global expansion.[5] Lee Jones and Yizheng Zou pointed out that investment from China's state-owned China Power Investment Corporation (CPI) in the Ayeyarwady (or Irrawaddy) hydropower project was profit-driven, not a strategic decision by the Chinese state. After a popular backlash in response to the Myitsone Dam, which halted construction and damaged the two countries' relations, the Chinese regulatory state had to intervene to repair the damage. At the same time, Myanmar's military was in desperate need of foreign investment to extract rents from these megaprojects without establishing proper institutional structures to manage risks. Therefore, they agreed to implement multiple Chinese investment projects including the Letpadaung Mine project in extractive sectors without proper analysis of the social and environmental impacts these projects would cause. Myanmar's SOEs, which often partnered with Chinese SOEs in those investment projects, also suffered from their own problems as they operated under a different regulatory framework than regular private companies and, at the time, were under the direct control of the military. This resulted in their priorities driven by the narrow interests of the military,

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1. *Sun Guangyong, "China-invested Letpadaung Copper Mine Brings Tangible Benefits to Sagaing Region, Myanmar," People's Daily, January 15, 2020* http://en.people.cn/n3/2020/0115/c90000-9649079.html
2. *"Myanmar Wanbao Mining Copper Ltd Letpadaung Copper Project Environmental and Social Impact Assessment," Knight Piésold Pty Limited, January 2015* https://www.myanmarwanbao.com.mm/images/pdfs/final_esia_rev6_update.pdf
3. *Travis Mitchell, "Chinese Foreign Direct Investment in Myanmar: Remarkable Trends & Multilayered Motivations," 2012 (dissertation) Lund University* https://www.burmalibrary.org/sites/burmalibrary.org/files/obl/docs14/Chinese-Foreign-Direct-Investment-in-Myanmar-Case-Study-2012.pdf
4. *"2010 Statistical Bulletin of China's Outward Foreign Direct Investment," Ministry of Commerce, People's Republic of China, September 16, 2011* http://images.mofcom.gov.cn/hzs/accessory/201109/1316069658609.pdf
5. *Ivanhoe Capital, "Monywa Fact File – 2011," December 2012* https://www.ivanhoecapital.com/site/assets/files/4039/monywa_fact_file_december_2012.pdf

so projects lacked accountability and transparency. As a result, these projects sparked major opposition from local communities and civil society, with frequent mass protests.

Project Background

In 1992, the Canadian Ivanhoe Company Ltd., through its subsidiary Ivanhoe Myanmar Holdings Ltd. (later Bagan Copper Holdings Ltd.), began negotiations to extract copper from the Monywa deposits with ME-1, which had begun developing the deposits in 1978, and later made a formal agreement to conduct a feasibility study in four areas near Monywa: Sabetaung, Sabetaung South, Kyesintaung, and Letpadaung. The two parties in 1996 established a joint venture, Myanmar Ivanhoe Copper Company Limited (MICCL), with 50 percent of shares owned by Ivanhoe Myanmar Holdings Ltd. and the other 50 percent owned by ME-1. In February 2007, following international criticism and sanctions, Ivanhoe transferred its share of the joint venture to the ostensibly independent Monywa Trust as part of its divestment from Myanmar.[5] Ivanhoe had invested $100 million for expansion of the project and received $103 million when it divested.

To fill Ivanhoe's place, China North Industries Corporation (NORINCO), a state-owned defense company, and the then state- and military-owned company Union of Myanmar Economic Holding Limited (UMEHL) took over the Monywa Copper Project, which encompassed both the initial Sebetaung and Kyesintaung (S&K) copper mine and the Letpadaung mine, which had not yet been developed at that stage. This transfer occurred in an opaque process that appears to have occurred before the Monywa Trust sold Ivanhoe's share to the Wanbao Mining Company Limited, a professional mining company based in Beijing[6] that was established in 2005 as a subsidiary of NORINCO.[7] The original contract between China and Myanmar was signed during Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao's visit to Myanmar on June 3, 2010.[8] Myanmar Wanbao Mining Company Ltd. (MWMCL), was founded in September 2010 to run the Letpadaung Copper Mine Project. The Myanmar partner, MEHL, contributed the mining rights with MWMCL responsible for project investment, development, and management. MWMCL began construction in 2011, allegedly forcing local villagers off their land, leading to accusations of land confiscations, forced relocations, and failure to conduct social and environmental impact assessments properly.[9]

These actions resulted in protests at the mine site. In late 2012, police brutally cracked down on the protestors, killing and injuring local community members and monks.[10] After the crackdown, a parliamentary investigation commission led by Aung San Suu Kyi was established to investigate the incident, assessing whether MWMCL had complied with standard procedures of land acquisition, social and environmental regulations, investigating the violent dispersal of protesters by the security force as well as determining whether the project should go on.[11]

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6. *"Myanmar Wanbao Mining Copper Ltd Letpadaung Copper Project Environmental and Social Impact Assessment," Knight Piésold Pty Limited, January 2015* https://www.myanmarwanbao.com.mm/images/pdfs/final_esia_rev6_update.pdf

7 *"Open for Business? Corporate Crime and Abuses at Myanmar Copper Mine," Amnesty International, February, 2015,* https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/ASA1600032015ENGLISH.PDF.

8 *"China Weapons Giant to Mine Myanmar," Democratic Voice of Burma, June 24, 2010* https://www.dvb.no/news/china-weapons-giant-to-mine-burma/10433

9 *Open for Business? Amnesty International*

10 *Jason Burke & Swe Win, "Burma: riot police move in to break up copper mine protest," The Guardian, November 29, 2012* https://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/nov/29/burma-riot-police-mine-protest

11 *Yadana Htun, "Myanmar's Suu Kyi to head probe into copper mine," Associated Press, December 1, 2012* https://apnews.com/article/c86b729699ba43cc8feb66368538b6c2

The Letpadaung Taung Investigation Commission released its report in 2013, supporting the project's continuing operation despite acknowledging the lack of environmental protection measures as well as impact assessment among other problems.[12] Local communities were outraged by the Commission's findings and its emphasis on not abrogating the contract or suspending the project. The Commission was perceived to have given priority to national interest and relationship with the Chinese government rather than the interests of the local people.[13]

In response to these findings, an amendment to the Production Sharing Contract was signed in July 2013 that gave ME-1 under the Ministry of Mines (now MoNREC), and by extension the government of Myanmar, 51 percent of shares, and MWMCL, and MEHL 30 and 19 percent respectively. ME-1 and MEHL are together responsible for community consultation and all aspects of land acquisition, compensation, and resettlement.[14] MWMCL, on the other hand, was in charge of the design, operation, and closure of the project as well as completion of the Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA). The initial project permit was granted for the period from March 5, 2010 to March 5, 2013; the amended agreement permit period is for twenty-five years from March 4, 2013 to March 4, 2038.[15] The Letpadaung Copper Mine began production in March 2016;[16] its production exceeded an average of 100,000 tons per annum of cathode copper in 2018 and reached 120,000 tons in 2019.[17] The Myanmar government receives in-kind payment for royalties, production sharing ratios, commercial taxes, and income taxes.

Almost all agreements with respect to ongoing Chinese investment in Myanmar were signed during the period of military rule (1988–2010) or under the quasi-civilian government between 2010 and 2015, during which the country was governed by President U Thein Sein, retired military general who represented the military-proxy Union Solidarity and Development Party in the 2010 election that was boycotted by Aung San Suu Kyi's party.

SOE Governance

As mentioned above, this case study concerns two state-owned economic enterprises, MEHL and ME-1, which is under the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation. MEHL was founded in 1990 in the name of Union Myanmar Economic Holdings (UMEHL) under the 1950 Special Company Act with the ownership shared by the Ministry of Defense as well as current and former military personnel. MEHL changed its status to public limited company in 2016, shares once held by the defense ministry were all transferred to military cronies.[18] Since its transformation into a military-owned private company, issues of SOE governance mainly pertain to ME-1, which is the contracting authority of the project, though MEHL has continued to demonstrate similar problems as those SOEs.

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12. *"Aung San Suu Kyi support for copper mine outrages Burmese activists," Associated Press, March 12, 2013* https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/mar/12/burma-confirms-phosphorus-crackdown-mine

13 *Ei Ei Toe Lwin, "Fury over Letpadaung Copper Mine Report", Myanmar Times, March 18, 2013* https://www.mmtimes.com/national-news/5175-fury-at-copper-mine-report.html

14 *"List of Permits Issued by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation by Region/State," Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation, 56*

15 *"List of Permits Issued by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation by Region/State," Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation, 24, December 31, 2020* http://www.mining.gov.mm/DM_mm/1.DM_mm/Dec%20Permit%20List.pdf

16 *Htoo Thant, "Letpadaung Copper Project to Bring in US$20m," Myanmar Times, February 15, 2017* https://www.mmtimes.com/national-news/mandalay-upper-myanmar/24953-letpadaung-copper-project-to-bring-in-us-20m.html

17 *Guangyong, "China-invested Letpadaung Copper Mine Brings Tangible Benefits"*

18 *Clare Hammond, "Military-owned MEHL Applies to become public company," Myanmar Times, April 1, 2016* https://www.mmtimes.com/business/19799-military-owned-mehl-applies-to-become-public-company.html

Under the 1989 State Economic Enterprises Law, state economic enterprises (SEEs), the equivalent of SOEs in Myanmar, enjoy monopoly power over certain sectors, such as the lucrative oil, gas, and mining industries. Since the 2010s, SOEs have regularly contributed about half of the government's fiscal revenues.[19] A 2017–18 Myanmar Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative report published in March 2020 also indicated nearly 80 percent of extractive sector revenues in Myanmar were collected by SOEs.[20] However, there are a number of issues with respect to the legal status, oversight, financial disclosures, and revenue retention of SOEs. Although formal supervisory institutions exist, they lack the clear legal mandate or resources to subject SOEs to proper checks and balances.[21] Meanwhile, SOEs and their respective ministries play both regulatory and implementing roles. As a result, SOE managers have significant discretionary power in signing concession agreements and act as the gatekeepers to natural resources for foreign investors.[22] ME-1 and other SOEs in Myanmar do not have proper oversight mechanisms and thus their standards of accountability and transparency fall short of international ones, and conflict of interest issues loom large in SOE governance in Myanmar.

Compared to ME-1, MEHL is above the regulatory regime. Not much has changed after it was transformed into a private company from a SOE in 2016. MEHL throughout the years has operated in an opaque manner. Without making its financial and revenue structure transparent, the company has not been held to account for its finances and activities,[23] and it has yet to disclose its beneficiary ownership in accordance with the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) guidelines, a critical step to corporate transparency and combating corruption.

According to the analysis of Global Witness on Disclosure of Information on Beneficial Ownership, Myanmar Wanbao Mining Copper Ltd, is one of the five listed corporate owners without providing information on who their beneficial owners were.[24]

Recent reforms aimed at strengthening the financial independence of SOEs have also given rise to new challenges in SOE governance. The setting up "Other Accounts" for revenue retention introduced in 2012 under U Thein Sein's government is a significant example. More than 50 percent of revenues collected by SOEs are kept in "Other Accounts," namely, Union Fund Accounts (UFA-OAs)—separate bank accounts allowing the enterprises to retain a portion of their net profit.[25] This system undermines SOE efficiency, as some expenditures of profit-making ones remain covered by the government budget. Profit-making SOEs are allowed to retain up to 55 percent of net profit.[26] This means that some SOEs, especially extractive ones, are

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19. *Andrew Bauer, Arkar Hein, Khin Saw Htay, Matthew Hamilton, Paul Shortell, "State Owned Economic Enterprise Reform in Myanmar Policy Options," Renaissance Institute and Natural Resource Governance Institute, January 2018* *https://www.extractiveshub.org/servefile/getFile/id/7395*

20. *BDO LLP, "EITI Report 2017–2018," Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative Myanmar, January 2019,* *https://eiti.org/files/documents/meiti_reconciliation_report_2017-2018_final_signed_31st_march_2020.pdf*

21. *Andrew Bauer, Arkar Hein, Khin Saw Htay, Matthew Hamilton, Paul Shortell, "State Owned Economic Enterprise Reform in Myanmar Policy Options"*

22. *Patrick R. P. Heller & Lorenzo Delesgues, "Gilded Gatekeepers: Myanmar's State-Owned Oil, Gas and Mining Enterprises," Natural Resource Governance Institute, January 2016* *https://extractiveshub.org/servefile/getFile/id/1716*

23. *"Time for targeted sanctions against military businesses," Alternative ASEAN Network on Burma, February 21, 2019* *http://altsean.org/reports/UMEHL_MECTargetedSanctionsBrieferFinal_Feb19.pdf*

24 *Nan Lwin, "Many Myanmar Mining Firms Fail to Name Politically Connected Owners: Global Witness," The Irrawaddy, July 22, 2020* *https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/many-myanmar-mining-firms-fail-name-politically-connected-owners-global-witness.html*

25 *Marie Gay Alessandra Ordenes, "Myanmar EITI: SOE reforms underway in the extractives sector", Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, May 28, 2020* *https://eiti.org/blog/myanmar-eiti-soe-reforms-underway-in-extractives-sector*

26 *Andrew Bauer, Arkar Hein, Khin Saw Htay et al., "State-Owned Economic Enterprise Reform in Myanmar: The Case of Natural Resource Enterprises," Renaissance Institute-Natural Resource Governance Institute, January 2018* *https://data.opendevelopmentmekong.net/dataset/ff5d2a03-ce99-40ae-8b64-ad77371ade7a/resource/64dffd64-7d1d-4b3b-8fab-fce91a1289b1/download/state-owned-economic-enterprise-reform-in-myanmar_0.pdf*

among the "largest hoarders of cash," while occupying a portion of annual budget.[27] Like other SOEs, ME-1 also maintains such a separate account.

More importantly, SOE management of "Other Accounts" has been shadowed by opaqueness with no publicly accessible report regarding the usage of these retained revenues, according to a report issued by EITI international secretariat in 2018.[28] The report recommended further examination of the details of these "Other Accounts," such as tracing the exact extractive sector revenues that go to these accounts and how these revenues are spent, as well as explaining the rules in the maintenance and management of these accounts.

A 2018 report on SOEs in extractive industries by the Renaissance Institute and the Natural Resources Governance Institute titled, "State-owned Economic Enterprise Reform in Myanmar: The Case of Natural Resource Enterprises," explicitly identified the challenges associated with SOE governance in Myanmar.[29] The challenges include revenue retention rules, management of Other Account balances, transparency, budgeting, and oversight.[30]

1. Disclosure of Financial and Operating Results

Since the Aung San Suu Kyi-led National League for Democracy (NLD) took power in 2016, the Myanmar government has been pushing SOEs for increased disclosure in the whole financial process including financial and operating results. To date, information on the activities and expenditures of SOEs is still limited. Moreover, even the Ministry of Planning, Finance, and Industry (formerly the Ministry of Planning and Finance) has neither the mandate, the access to information, nor the capacity to properly analyze SOE financial data.[31] The Myanmar EITI Report for 2013–2014 indicates that ME-1 transferred approximately MMK 3 million into its Other Accounts.[32]

2. Board Qualifications, Selection Process and Remuneration

Usually, SOE management falls under the purview of an appointed civil servant managing director with the minister of the relevant ministry playing an oversight role. All board members are appointed active military officers or ex-military; the selection process is unknown. As government staff, it can be assumed that their remuneration is the same as other military and civil servants. However, with respect to ME-1, all information related to SOE management is not available.

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[27] *Andrew Bauer, Arkar Hein, Khin Saw Htay, Matthew Hamilton, Paul Shortell, "State Owned Economic Enterprise Reform in Myanmar Policy Options"*

[28] *Validation of Myanmar: Report on Initial Data Collection and Stakeholders Consultation (EITI International Secretariat: Oslo, November 2018) https://eiti.org/files/documents/myanmar_validation_report_on_initial_data_collection_and_stakeholders_consultations.pdf*

[29] *Andrew Bauer, Arkar Hein, Khin Saw Htay, Matthew Hamilton, Paul Shortell, "State Owned Economic Enterprise Reform in Myanmar Policy Options"*

[30] *"This Government Was Left with a Huge Mess," interview with Andrew Bauer, Frontier, July 27, 2018 https://www.frontiermyanmar.net/en/this-government-was-left-with-a-huge-mess/*

[31] *Bauer et al., "State-Owned Economic Enterprise Reform in Myanmar"*

[32] *"Myanmar 2013-2014 EITI Report", Myanmar EITI, November, 2015 https://eiti.org/files/documents/fy2013-2014_myanmar_eiti_report.pdf*

3. Material Transactions with the State and Other Related Entities

The 2012 SOE reform enacted by the quasi-civilian government (2010–2015) allowed SOEs to transfer a large proportion of their profits to Myanma Economic Bank (another SOE) to make them financially independent. These SOEs took their assets with them and placed their liabilities on the government balance sheet. Thus, 55 percent of profits from the SOE sector go to their Other Accounts, the details of which are unknown, and the enterprise managers are not held accountable for this money.

According to a 2019 government directive, Other Accounts were to be closed and all SOE revenues were to be recorded in the national budget starting from fiscal year 2019–2020.[33] However, whether this was actually carried out is unknown, given the lack of transparency regarding SOEs' finances. The February 2021 coup d'etat has further complicated the matter.

4. Financial Assistance Received from the State

At present, the Ministry of Planning, Finance, and Industry is still pushing the SOE regulatory body to provide necessary information such as beneficial ownership and oversight lists. Free access, through an online portal, for all stakeholders, including civil society and the general public, to any financial assistance, including guarantees received from the state and commitments made on behalf of the SOEs involved in this project, including contractual commitments and liabilities arising from public-private partnerships, is still impossible at the moment.

5. Conflicts of Interest

SOE governance in Myanmar has not improved much to date. In May 2020, the prominent investigative journal *Myanmar Now* reported on conflicts of interest of two MEHL board directors who also serve as the heads of the Port Authority and Customs Department, respectively. Both are retired military officers, like many top-level civilian government staff such as the president's office spokesperson and the attorney general (the former acting as the figure to ask the latter to investigate this potential conflict of interest). According to the report, although MEHL is supposed to publish regular financial statements and information on its major shareholders under the nation's Securities and Exchange Law, it has failed to do so.[34]

As mentioned above, conflict of interest in SOE governance is demonstrated through the fact that SOEs are implementing the ministries' policies while being experts in their field and regulatory system, weakening the role of ministries to keep them accountable. After 2011, SOEs through their respective ministries have to be accountable to the Union Parliament nominally because legislative bodies do not have institutional capacity and sufficient resources to scrutinize them. After the NLD-led government came to power in 2016, it attempted to initiate SOE reforms and hold them accountable to the different oversight bodies.

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[33] *Myanmar EITI: SOE Reforms Underway in the Extractives Sector," EITI, May 28, 2020 https://eiti.org/blog/myanmar-eiti-soe-reforms-underway-in-extractives-sector*

[34] *Nyan Hlaing Lin, "President's Office to Seek Investigation of Possible Conflict of Interest on MEHL Board," Myanmar Now, June 1, 2020 https://myanmar-now.org/en/news/presidents-office-to-seek-investigation-of-possible-conflict-of-interest-on-mehl-board*

Conclusions

The Letpadaung Copper Mine project not only illuminates the political economy and SOE governance of both countries at that time but also sheds light on the nature of BRI and Chinese investment projects. Existing literature has highlighted the two main features of BRI projects in various countries, which are "political capture and corruption."[35]

Chinese SOEs from the year 2000 on were under pressure to seek overseas investment opportunities due to a changing domestic situation and dwindling revenues. They were not abiding by environmental and social standards even in their own country and faced local protests. As a result, the pursuit of profit and lax regulatory environments led SOEs like NORINCO to form joint ventures, in this case with the Myanmar UMHEL. It was the perfect example of collusion between two SOEs, corruption, and political capture. Myanmar generals even now are extracting rents from UMHEL and corrupt local authorities were involved in land grabs for the project.

Under these circumstances, local grievances reached a boiling point and the relative opening and freedom after 2011 gave local communities and civil society an opportunity to vent their anger and seek redress. Local communities were not satisfied with the Letpadaung Commission's findings and decision to go ahead with the project after amending the concession contract in favor of the government state-owned enterprise ME-1.

It is obvious that Chinese investments and BRI projects will face opposition from the public in Myanmar in the future if they are implemented in cooperation with the military junta and in an opaque manner. To implement BRI and other resource-extraction and infrastructure megaprojects, host countries need strong regulatory environments and public consultation. The NLD-led government initiated regulatory reforms (such as Project Bank Notification 2018), albeit imperfect, and moved to strengthen institutions to assess risks associated with BRI and other infrastructure megaprojects and implement them for mutual benefit. However, all hopes for proper implementation of BRI projects and infrastructure investments were dashed when the military staged a coup on February 1, 2021. Foreign investors, including Chinese companies, will definitely encounter high risks if they decide to cooperate with the military by investing in billion-dollar infrastructure and resource extraction megaprojects in the future.

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[35] *Brad Parks, "Chinese Leadership and the Future of BRI: What Key Decisions Lie Ahead," CGD Note, CGD, July 24, 2019* *https://www.cgdev.org/publication/chinese-leadership-and-future-bri-what-key-decisions-lie-ahead*

What is BRI Monitor?

BRI Monitor is a collaborative effort by five civil society organizations in Southeast Asia and the Pacific: the Institute for Democracy and Economic Affairs (IDEAS) of Malaysia, Stratbase Albert Del Rosario Institute (ADRi) of the Philippines, Sandhi Governance Institute (SGI) of Myanmar, the Institute of National Affairs (INA) of Papua New Guinea and the Future Forum of Cambodia to promote transparency and accountability in major infrastructure projects funded through the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in the region.

These organizations have studied the regulatory environments governing these large infrastructure projects in respective countries, including public procurement, official development assistance, public private partnership (PPP), and more, to identify regulatory gaps. They have each researched a set of case studies to identify implementation gaps and governance gaps. Each case study assesses the level of transparency based on almost 40 data points, from basic project information to the tendering process to project completion. Last but not least, each organization maps out the structure of the projects in question in order to understand the degree of public financial exposure resulting from each project. (please check our research methodology here).

This website is intended to be a platform for the publication of our research outputs and as a knowledge repository. We also hope that the website can be used as a platform for knowledge sharing and a tool to advocate better governance of major infrastructure projects in the region.

BRI Monitor is supported by the Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE).

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