

# DAWEI Special Economics Zone



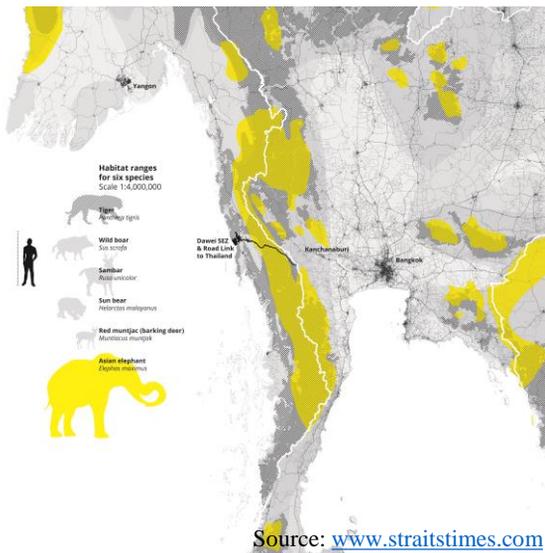
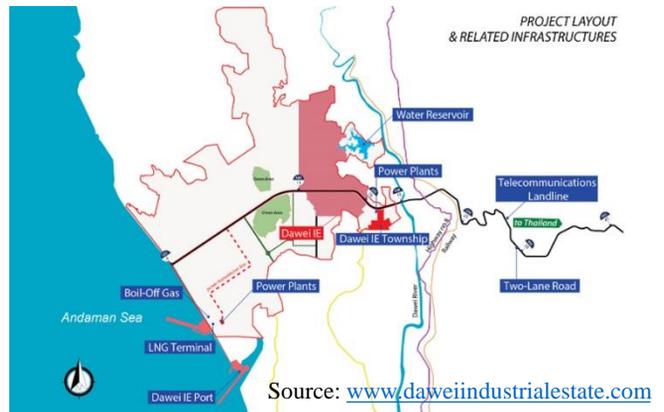
The Dawei Special Economic Zone (SEZ) Development Project is an enormous plan to build what could be among the largest industrial zones in the world if it goes according to plan. It would replace villages, plantations, rice fields, rolling hills, and ecosystems supporting endangered species with light and heavy industrial complexes, a road/highway, reservoirs, a power plant, and other facilities.

## Main project proponents:

Governments: Burma, Thailand and Japan  
Private Companies: Italian-Thai  
Development Plc (ITD)

**Location:** 20km north of Dawei, capital of Tanintharyi Region.

**Project Area:** approx. 200 square km.



## Social and Environmental Concerns:

- Involuntary resettlement
- Loss of livelihood, land and income
- Water and air pollution
- Destruction of ecosystem and wildlife habitat
- At this stage, it is unclear how many people will be affected, but the Dawei Development Association, a local civil society organization, estimates 22,000-43,000 people will be affected depending on the final scale of the project.
- Social impacts of migration as the SEZ is developed

Source: [www.worldwildlife.org](http://www.worldwildlife.org)



## Irrawaddy dolphins (*Orcaella brevirostris*) in the Ayeyarwady River, Myanmar

- Critically Endangered subpopulation
- Less than 60 individuals left; likely decreasing. This means that even 1 death per year due to human causes is unsustainable
- Live on the Ayeyarwady River, along 400 km between Bhamo and Mingun
- They used to have “cooperative fishing” with local throw-net fishers, but this is disappearing: *"We used to be like a family with the dolphins,"* he says. *"When we make the tapping sound the dolphins used to come to us. Now they don't come close because they're scared of being trapped by the electric shock fishermen who make the same tapping sound."* (from BBC story “How Burmese fishermen upset Irrawaddy dolphins”, 16 Jan 2015)



### Other considerations

- Wildlife Conservation Society, a conservation organization, has been working with communities to try to stop these threats; their activities include education and livelihoods, as well as enforcement. They are trying to establish community-based eco-tourism.
- The Ayeyarwady Dolphin Protected Area was established in 2005 by the Department of Fisheries, with support from WCS, but there are not enough enforcement personnel to control electric fishing and other activities in the area

### Threats

- Bycatch in gillnets (Gillnets are the most widespread gear in the dolphin's habitat)
- Electric fishing with car batteries – depletes their prey and can cause direct injury or even death. The batteries are getting bigger and fishers are using higher voltage now
- Habitat degradation and sound pollution caused by gold mining, which occurs near the preferred habitat of the dolphins. This also might cause mercury pollution in the water, as well as sedimentation that changes the river habitat.

# Sea Turtle Population Decline in Thamihla Island, Myanmar



Source: [www.wcs.org](http://www.wcs.org)



Source: [www.istockphoto.com](http://www.istockphoto.com)

Sea turtles have many habitat requirements – they migrate through open ocean, and feed in different parts of the ocean depending on their life stage (open ocean and coastal waters). They also need beaches for nesting.

Thamihla Kyun Wildlife Sanctuary (0.88 km<sup>2</sup>) in Ayeyarwady Division is an important nesting place for Green sea turtles (*Chelonia mydas*) and Olive Ridley sea turtles (*Lepidochelys olivacea*).

From the report “Myanmar Conservation in Myanmar”:

*...despite the management actions of recent decades, there continues to be an alarming long-term decline in marine turtle nesting populations (Limpus, 2012)*

- *Green turtle nesting numbers: declined from 1000s of nesting females/year to a few 10s of females at Thamihla Island*
- *Olive ridley turtle nesting numbers declines from 1000s of nesting females/year to a few 10s of females at Thamihla Island*
- *Hawksbill turtles, which nested in the 100s at the turn of the last century, are now approaching extinction as a nesting species in Myanmar*

## Threats

- Loss of nesting beaches due to mangrove degradation (the nature of this is not known) and damage from Cyclone Nargis
- Bycatch in large-scale trawlers and longlines, as well as local gillnets
- Eggs were extensively harvested from nesting beaches and are still being poached



Source: [www.worldwildlife.org](http://www.worldwildlife.org)

## Other considerations

- Some fishers do not want to share information on their catches because they do not want to get in trouble for catching sea turtles
- Conservation officers have a very small budget
- No communities live on the island but it is close enough for people to easily take boats to