We asked 1,400 people living in 3 cities of Myanmar what they thought about taxation.

**FINDINGS**

- **94%** agreed that paying a fair share of taxes is a civic duty.
- **81%** agreed that citizens should “always pay their taxes, even if they disagree with the government”.
- **66%** would pay more property tax if it meant better municipal services for them and their city.
- **60%** said they didn’t know which level of government received most of the revenues from income, commercial and property tax.
- **89%** of respondents agreed they wanted more information on what taxes they are supposed to pay and how the government spends taxes.
- **81%** of respondents living in cities surveyed agree that the government has the right to tax citizens.
- **50%** of respondents living in more rural areas agree that the government has the right to tax citizens.

**Urban citizens surveyed were more positive about tax than those in more rural areas.**

**Urban citizens aren’t as negative about taxes as government thinks they are.**

When we asked over 40 government officials what they thought the people would say, they thought that:

- **64%** would agree that paying tax is a civic duty.

**Myanmar’s policy makers face a careful balancing act with tax reform.**

Reform that is poorly designed or communicated could be opposed. But failure to reform taxes at this moment of greater acceptance will mean the government will miss out on revenues that could be used to meet the needs of the people.
RECOMMENDATIONS

Seize the moment and be more ambitious in tax reform.

Improve citizens’ understanding of the tax system.

Don’t make the tax system too complex. Improve tax education. Show what taxes are to be paid and where they are spent.

Improve government communications of tax policy to make tax reform more feasible and to improve citizens attitudes towards government.

FRAMEWORK

Our research shows that tax attitudes are influenced by the strength of fellowship between citizens, state responsiveness, generosity and citizens’ understanding of the tax system.

Generosity

Strength of fellowship

State responsiveness

Understanding of the tax system

Tax attitudes

Myanmar’s citizens are extremely generous and willing to support public goods and social causes. Especially at this unique moment in Myanmar’s history.

The tax paying experience may be undermining trust in government and making it harder to collect taxes.

Low levels of understanding, limited tax education and poorly communicated tax policy changes can result in more opposition to tax reform.

METHODOLOGY

This report uses data from the 2017 City Life Survey. This survey is the first of its kind in Myanmar and tracks public perceptions and lived experiences of urban life through 118 questions, asked to 1,400 people. Two focus groups were run to triangulate some of the survey findings.

We focused on the cities Taunggyi, Hpa-an and Yangon (North Dagon, Tharkayta and Kyauktada areas).

We also interviewed and surveyed over 40 tax officials to determine what they thought about urban citizens’ attitudes to tax.

To access the full report “Attitudes toward taxation in Myanmar: Insights from urban citizens”, please visit www.asiafoundation.org/