In Myanmar, the individual economic sectors make different contributions to total gross domestic product (GDP). According to statistics from the Department of Planning, the primary sector (agriculture, livestock and fisheries, forestry) generates 27.9% of GDP, the secondary sector (energy, mining, processing and manufacturing, electric power, construction) accounts for 34.4% and services (transportation, communications, financial institutions, social and administrative services, rental and other services, trade) contribute 37.7% (MNPED 2015: 203).

If the townships are ‘localised’ within the sector triangle – in other words, if the percentage of GDP generated in each township is shown in terms of its dominant economic sector (primary, secondary or tertiary) – it is striking that in 86 of the 330 townships, the primary sector generates more than 50% (up to 75%) of GDP. Most of these townships are located in the central lowlands in the dry zone and the Ayeyarwady Delta, although a small number lie in predominantly agricultural mountain regions. In a further 166 townships, the primary sector contributes more than 25% (but less than 50%) to GDP. There are only 20 townships in which the secondary sector accounts for more than 50% (but less than 75%) of GDP. Just three townships – Kyaukpyu, Pathein and Yebu – are dependent on the secondary sector for more than 75% of their contribution to GDP. In 128 townships, between 25% and 50% of GDP is generated by the secondary sector. The majority of these townships are located in cities and towns across the country, indicating a broad regional spread of the secondary sector. In 40 townships, the tertiary sector accounts for 50% to 75% of GDP; in Pabedan/Yangon and Zayarthiri/Nay Pyi Taw, the figure is above 90%. As expected, GDP production is dominated by the tertiary sector in urban townships and, in some isolated cases, in border regions with dynamic trade. Surprisingly, none of the main tourist regions stand out. Frauke Kraas and Zin Nwe Myint