



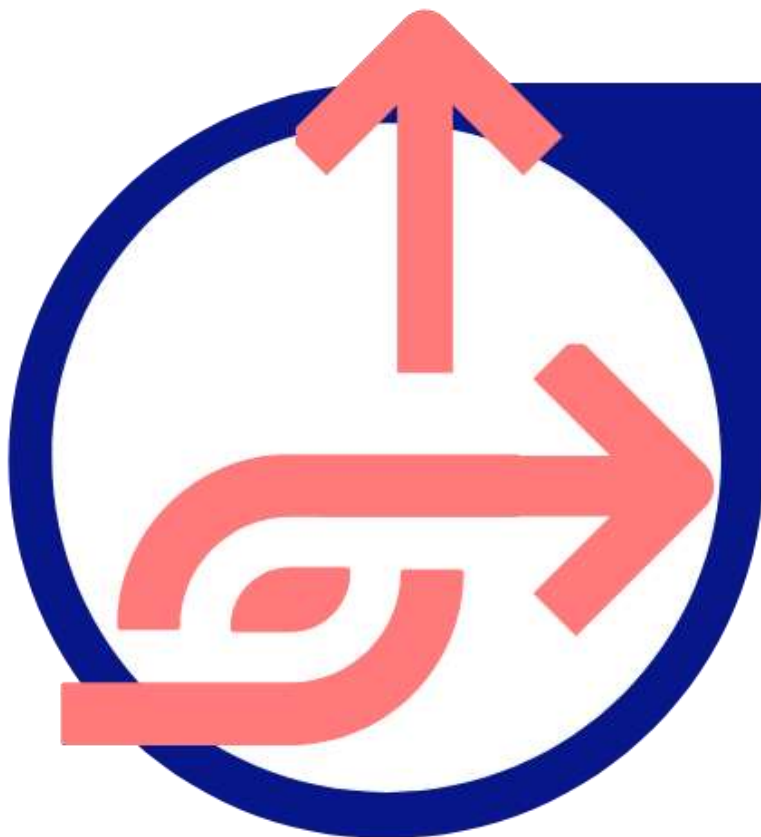
HAPPINESS

Development with Values



“As a nation, we are at an inflection point. Our actions today will determine the course of our future, and put us either in the path of success or failure. There will not be any more opportunities, and we have no choice but to work with the greatest sense of urgency.”

His Majesty the King



BHUTAN

Believe

GNH SURVEY-

HOW TO VISUALISE THE LEVEL OF

HAPPINESS?

WATER: *Global Scenario and Water in Bhutan for Economic Security, Environmental Integrity and Intragenerational Equity*

Public Financial Management in action

Buddhist Wildlife Trade Demand Reduction Initiative in Southeast Asia

The Greatness of Skills Development

Dual Training program

Transformation- the way to move forward

Gyalsung begins 2024

HAPPINESS



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BHUTAN
Believe

Transform... or stagnate

When His Majesty the King addressed the nation in November during the opening session of the eighth parliamentary session, He said the nation was at its inflection point and highlighted ‘Transformation’ as a driving force. Bhutan’s smallness is its strength or advantage — His Majesty has oft repeated this to make a point in the efficient drive of planned policy initiatives. The Royal Address touched upon areas of developmental topics each one vast and varied in the different stages of qualitative and quantitative fates accomplished. The advice from the golden throne however came in the simplest form, understandable by the simplest minds. His Majesty said we must not fail twice where we have failed once. And if it is ‘forward’ that we aspire to move toward, then ‘transformation’ is the way to go. Only then would we be able to cast off what has become old and obsolete and embrace what is new and with the times. His Majesty has always reminded the people that if we as a nation do not adapt and evolve, we will be left behind.

Skilling, upgrading skills is a chief way to stay relevant on the changing technological landscape. The skills development programs in the country helmed by the Ministry of Labour and Human Resources is customized to do just that. The Helvetas Swiss Inter-cooperation Office is rendering support to various iterations of these skilling programs. Water resources are hot on the watch list to be preserved and also to use as an agent to alleviate climate change impacts. The NEC is Bhutan’s lead agency for all things environment and it

is continually in action to scout, identify and act to preserve water for Economic Security, Environmental Integrity and Intragenerational Equity. Everything in their right places while pursuing progressive development; that’s important. And financial management will always take precedence to ensure that all working parts stay functional. The reforms introduced through MoF’s PFM are demonstrating effectiveness and delivering on the claims with which they were instituted. The Buddhist Wildlife Trade Demand Reduction Initiative (BWTDMI) in Southeast Asia promotes conscious compassionate and sustainable lifestyle choices. Bhutan is one of the chosen nations for the project. Bhutan’s pursuit of GNH as its development model saves the day in almost every facet of developmental works. And every five years the nation undertakes GNH Surveys to find out how happy people are. The JICA as a development partner has supported the nation to efficiently conduct these surveys.

After more than two years of forced hiatus, Bhutan opened itself to tourism again in September. It did so with a new national brand – Believe. And the tagline resonates in more ways than one to take on the national dreams and aspirations. Coincidentally, it is happening amidst the whirlwind of reforms in the bureaucracy where the undercurrents have not yet settled. Or maybe there is nothing coinciding with anything. A visionary plan is perhaps beautifully playing itself out in the best interest of Bhutan and Bhutanese.



With changing times we will confront new challenges,
but if we pledge to work together in an intelligent,
resourceful manner, we will overcome every difficulty. –

–
His Majesty the King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck



Reveal.

Reform.

Repeat.

PFM

in action

Everyone wants financial security. Everyone desires financial security. That destination is set, but the road is not. And the reasons explaining that is an exhaustive list effected by fluttering life events hinged on the heat and chill of the global or domestic financial climate/state of affairs. And in the solutions or answers; it can be reasoned that the difference between 'the best charted route' and 'the one that is left to chance,' can be measured in the many financial plans of a nation with the best set of laws, rules, systems and processes at its disposal – to mobilise revenue, allocate public funds, undertake public spending, account for funds and audit results.

The accomplishment of a sound year-on-year financial status is therefore not a matter of choice for the nation; because it is the only choice. It is also an opportunity for a nation to set in motion the best financial device or plan that works best for the nation's prevailing dynamics in administration and governance. Public Financial Management (PFM) in that sense is without a doubt, in its every aspect, engineered to influence prudent use of resources and funds, thereby channelling collective efforts toward one common chosen direction – the right direction – one that facilitates the nation's development plans.



Refined wisdom, uncommon sense, and then there is PFM

There’s a generation of people out there schooled and raised on ‘Money doesn’t grow on trees,’ ‘Save for a rainy day,’ ‘a penny saved is a penny earned,’ ‘a stitch in time saves nine etc.’ – Classic and timeless pearls of wisdom. And they in turn most potentially continue to school the posterity on it (probably not with the exact lyrics, but the message is delivered).

The operating machinery of governance too must consider all things that are favorable for growth and avoid all things that are a drain on the country’s economy, its available resources for development and most importantly its continued efforts in that direction that manifest as Five Year Plans, and resultant action plans. While measuring up to all that, a country must tread the fine line of some effectively structured and efficiently time-tested mechanism. Think of them as being similar to the age-old adages aforementioned, but operating on a more macro-scale in the larger interest of the present and future of the nation and its people.

This ensures that there is judicious and prudent use of available fund and fund resources; unwarranted spending does not happen; unethical practices are curbed and corruption is not allowed to breed; that development works achieve intended goals; established institutions are characteristic of balanced growth and more inclusive of factors such as gender equality and poverty alleviation. To all that is hailed the need to toe the line of a financial system that puts in place a working template that serves as a means to this end (year-on-year and year after year).

In recent years, PFM or Public Financial Management continues to be that financial tool wielded exhaustively by the country’s lead financial body – Ministry of Finance, to introduce and sustain all of the best practices there is to be instituted across the nation’s financial spectrum.

What is public financial management?

Public financial management (PFM) refers to the “set of laws, rules, systems and processes used by sovereign nations to mobilise revenue, allocate public funds, undertake public spending, account for funds and audit results.”

PFM is regarded as a central element of a functioning administration, underlying all government activities. As such, a sound PFM system is of great importance to the provision of public services as well as to the creation and maintenance of fair and sustainable economic and social conditions in a country.

As the PEFA Secretariat (2016) puts it, a robust PFM system is “the linchpin that ties together available resources, delivery of services, and achievement of government policy objectives. If it is done well, PFM ensures that revenue is collected efficiently and used appropriately and sustainably.”

Improvement on the effectiveness of a PFM system is perceived to provide widespread and enduring benefits, and to assist in reinforcing “wider societal shifts towards inclusive institutions, and thus towards stronger states, reduced poverty, greater gender equality and balanced growth.”

On the contrary, weaknesses in PFM systems can result in a lack of fiscal discipline and macroeconomic instability, diminished alignment between the allocation of public resources and national policy priorities, and more opportunities for corruption and greater waste in the delivery of public services.

Donors looking to promote state-led development through country PFM systems have faced challenges related to extremely weak PFM systems in recipient countries. Such weak PFM systems expose donor funds to fiduciary risk or the more general risk of reduced impact. To that end, donors began providing more technical support targeted at improving the quality of PFM systems in partner countries through specific interventions and reforms.

Initially, each donor organisation used its own diagnostic tool to assess partner countries’ PFM systems. However, the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness of 2005 committed donors to develop and implement harmonised diagnostic reviews and performance assessment frameworks in the field of PFM. This led to the emergence of the public expenditure and financial accountability (PEFA) framework as the instrument to harmonise these various diagnostic tools.

Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability (PEFA)

PEFA is a PFM assessment tool initiated and managed by nine international development partners. These are the European Commission, International Monetary Fund, World Bank and the governments of France, Norway, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, Slovak Republic and Luxembourg. It is the most widely used PFM assessment tool in low- and middle-income countries.

The PEFA framework was established with three goals in mind:

- i) To strengthen the ability of governments to assess systems of public expenditure, procurement and fiduciary management, and contribute to a government-led reform agenda
- ii) To support the development and monitoring of reform and capacity development programmes and facilitate a coordinated programme of support
- iii) To contribute to the pool of information on PFM

The PEFA framework identifies seven pillars that define the key elements of a PFM cycle. These are budget reliability, transparency of public finances, management of assets and liabilities, policy based strategy and budgeting, predictability and control in budget execution, accounting and reporting, and external scrutiny and audit. Within the seven pillars, PEFA identifies 31 specific indicators disaggregated into 94 characteristics (dimensions) that focus on key measurable aspects of the PFM cycle.



The strategic workings of PFM

PFM system performance affects three main fiscal and budgetary outcomes namely; fiscal discipline, strategic allocation of resources, and efficient use of resources for service delivery.

Fiscal discipline is assisted by the comprehensive coverage of the RGoB's Public Expenditure Management System, orderly execution of the budget, good control over expenditure commitments and fiscal risks, risk-based administration of revenue, timely and

reliable financial reporting, and continued improvements in external audit and legislative scrutiny. At the same time, fiscal discipline is undermined by some lack of public transparency in administrative classification in the budget and accounts, which would inform and facilitate public demand for better accountability. It is also reduced by the limited economic appraisal of projects before inclusion in the budget, as the projected social and economic costs and benefits of proposed projects cannot be exposed to wider scrutiny.

Strategic allocation of resources is assisted by a strong planning and budgeting system that translates the Five Year Plans into sectoral strategies, programs and annual budgets within a rolling three-year fiscal framework. Favorable factors are the amount of time allowed to agencies to prepare their budgets, and the reliability of resource flows to service delivery units in accordance with annual budgets (at least where resources are domestically funded).

Efficient use of resources for service delivery is assisted by competitive procurement, which yields greater value for money. The adoption of a performance management system, based on annual performance agreements with the Prime Minister, is potentially a powerful tool for cost control and efficiency savings.

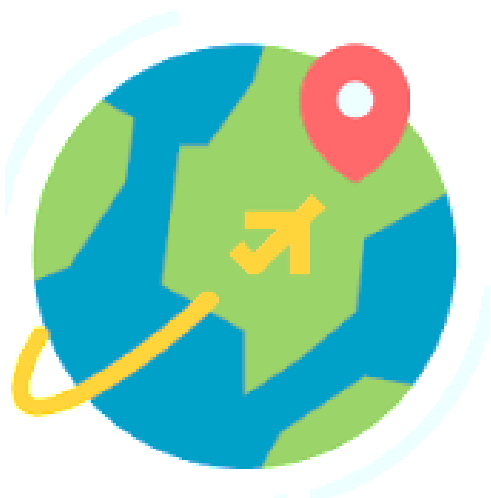


PFM – rolling out the Reforms

Bhutan is committed to the Good Governance agenda. Good Governance is one among the Four Pillars of Gross National Happiness (GNH), nation's home-grown and unique development philosophy. It is the central theme of many key strategic documents of Bhutan which includes the Five Year Plans, and the GNH index.

The country awards great importance to good governance on principles of accountability,

transparency and efficiency. The country and its development partners implemented the PFM Reform Program prepared in 2010. To further improve PFM in the country and take forward the reform agenda, the PFM assessment is used as a basis for a comprehensive, sequenced and time-bound PFM reform action plan. To implement the above strategy, a PFM Project financed by multi donor fund (PFM-MDF) to strengthen PFM in Bhutan was instituted in 2017



Electronic Daily Allowance & Travel System (eDATS)

“With this system in place, expenditure reduction will naturally happen. Considering, that a huge chunk of the recurrent budget goes to travel related expenses, it is time to streamline the system and promote digital processing of the claims and payment.” — Finance Minister Namgay Tshering (Kuensel 12/01/2021)



The introduction of eDATS or Electronic Daily Allowance & Travel System was timely; to streamline the system and promote digital processing of the claims and payment. With this system in place, expenditure reduction will automatically happen considering, a huge chunk of the national recurrent budget goes to travel related expenses. For example, in the fiscal year 2020-21, the government earmarked 44 percent of the total (budget) allocation as recurrent expenditure, which amounted to Nu 32.9 billion.

What is eDATS? eDATS is an online web-based travel authorisation and claim system where civil servants can apply and receive their claims without having to do manual paperwork. The system is incorporated in all budgetary agencies, including dzongkhags and gewogs.

Benefits of eDATS: The initiative by design inculcates the habit of proper travel plans in agencies and public servants. Having annual travel plans (except unforeseen travels) at the beginning of the year as per the Annual Work Plan enables the government to make more accurate budget estimates and minimise unexpected expenditures. Most travels are known to be undertaken on an ad-hoc basis.

The system applicable for in-country travel reduces time to process claims of government agencies at all levels and does it in a transparent way. It also eliminates the practice of fictitious claims and payments. According to the MoF, the eDATS minimizes risks of fraud and corruption as it eliminates the practice of table tours and bogus payments while giving real-time reports for monitoring and decision-making purposes.

The other important benefit is the application of uniform rates and distance. It removes the ambiguities. Also, the eDATS greatly reduces administrative burden through paperless procedures and help to provide timely reports for monitoring and decision-making purposes. It serves the purpose of strengthening PFM through the digitalization of daily allowances and travel payment process.

The eDATS was launched on 20 February, 2021. The System was developed in-house by the Department of Public Accounts (DPA), Ministry of Finance with financial support from MDF which is contributed by the EU and the ADA, and administered by the World Bank.



Electronic Government Procurement (e-GP) System

“The engine to drive the 21st economic roadmap should be digitisation and we cannot shy away from this. e-GP is an integral part of this digitisation.” — Finance Minister Namgay Tshering (Kuensel 08/07/2020)

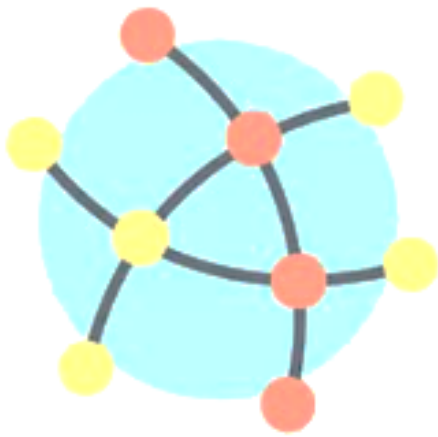
The government is the biggest avenue for those seeking work opportunities and therefore significant public spending takes place through the public procurement system. A well-functioning procurement system ensures that money is used effectively in acquiring inputs and achieving value for money in the delivery of programs and services by a government. While a centralized data system would provide for monitoring the efficiency and effectiveness of the procurement system, currently data maintained by Procuring agencies have been serving this purpose. Realizing the difficulties in doing so, the Ministry of Finance initiated the e-GP or the electronic Government Procurement system. The e-GP System facilitates all Procuring Agencies to publish Tenders, Corrigendum and Notification of Contract Award. The primary objective of this portal is to provide a single point access to the information on procurements made across various Procuring Agencies.

Today, the e-GP system is implemented by all the government agencies. Bids are submitted electronically without the bidder having to visit the procuring agency’s office to submit the document. Online evaluation of bids enabled on the system eliminates the tedious manual evaluation of tenders. The enhanced system also allows item-wise evaluation of bids. The e-GP system therefore saves time and prevents corruption. The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) registered more than 500 complaints related to the construction sector between 2006 and 2016.

The first phase of the e-GP system was launched in June, 2017 as a tool to drive efficiency in the procuring system. Since the launch of the first phase, 4,683 tenders (amounting to over Nu 7.2 billion worth of contracts) were floated through the system by the time the Government launched the second phase of e-GP in July, 2020. The second phase was launched with enhanced features that links it to other government agencies or procuring agencies for improved efficiency.

One major enhancements is the integration of six independent systems with the portal including the multi-year rolling budget (MYRB) system of the Department of National Budget (DNB), RAMIS of the Department of Revenue and Customs (DRC), and online systems of the Construction Development Board (CDB), Department of Civil Registration and Census (DCRC), the Royal Civil Service Commission (RCSC) and the economic affairs ministry’s. The e-GP online portal remains most instrumental to iron out ambiguities and ensure efficient implementation of government’s budget spent on procurement.

With such an integration, 127 procuring agencies registered with the e-GP system could now plan their annual procurements based on budget approved by the DNB. All government procurement activities including the approved budget are reflected on the DNB’s system, now integrated to the e-GP platform. The integration of CDB system with the e-GP is expected to further enable procuring agencies to link data from the CDB system such as bidder profile and also to evaluate works. Procurement agencies can also check for tax clearance certificates with the DRC while validating bidding documents.



Cluster Finance Services

“We expect that through this initiative, it will try to enhance the budget process and improve the financial norms as enshrined in the Royal Kasho on Civil Service Reform. We are hopeful that this initiative will make the financial service delivery efficient and seamless to the users.” — DPA Director Tshering Dorji (BBS 21/04/2021)



The Cluster Finance Services (CFS) initiative is based on the concept of sharing of services by leveraging the use of ICT. The initiative optimizes/rationalizes the deployment of finance personnel and eliminates the current practice of their placement in individual agencies. That way, the CFS achieves the objective of ‘doing more with less.’ The CFS is expected to contribute toward restructuring the budget process and financial norms as enshrined in the Royal Kasho on Civil Service Reform.

The CFS initiative is expected to enhance prudent fiscal discipline through proper check and control mechanism, and adequate internal control system in the agencies. It also improves the performance and delivery of finance services through enhanced efficiency of finance personnel and standardized service delivery across agencies.

The CFS initiative was piloted for the regional offices of Paro, Bumthang and Trashigang Dzongkhags starting in March, April and May 2021 respectively. CFS

The impact of public financial management interventions on corruption

PFM is regarded as a central element of a functioning administration, and underlies all government financial activities. The main stages of the PFM cycle are revenue collection, budget preparation, budget execution, accounting and reporting, and audit and oversight. Improving a country’s PFM system is widely believed to provide extensive and enduring benefits, including stronger institutions, reduced poverty, greater gender equality and balanced growth. Evidence shows that interventions at every stage of the PFM cycle have a positive impact on curbing corruption, and a recent report also found a positive correlation between public expenditure and financial accountability (PEFA) scores and perceptions of corruption.

The PEFA framework was revised in 2016. It assesses PFM performance using 31 indicators across seven pillars: budget reliability, the transparency of public finances, the management of assets and liabilities, policy based strategy and budgeting, predictability and control in budget execution, accounting and reporting, and external scrutiny and audit.

Empirical evidence and the literature generally support the view that PFM reforms have a positive impact on reducing corruption. However, many of the findings are based on perceptions based indicators of corruption. A recent World Bank study found a positive correlation between overall PEFA scores and Worldwide Governance Indicators’ Control of Corruption score.

is being carried out with the financial support of MDF contributed by the EU and the ADA. It is administered by the World Bank.

The Cluster Finance Services was rolled out starting July 2021. The MoF has implemented 23 CFS across the country thus far.

A collaborative initiative of the MoF and the RCSC, it brings together all finance personnel working in various regional/autonomous/branch offices under one cluster office. All finance services is catered from the office of CFS irrespective of the location of the agencies. However, this initiative does not include the Finance Sections of the Dzongkhag administration.



PFM – Welcome food for thought

The RGoB launched the country-wide electronic payments functionality through the e-PEMS or electronic Public Expenditure Management System as part of the Integrated Financial Management Information System (IFMIS) development in 2019. The e-PEMS facilitated smooth delivery of payments to vendors and civil servants and demonstrated the efficiency it was purposefully launched for.

However its existence was celebrated with far greater gratitude and satisfaction when Covid-19 an unexpected global pandemic struck. In the course of prevailing conditions of such an unprecedented time, public service delivery is critical, and it became clearer that having an efficient and effective PFM system is all the more important.



e-PEMS launch July 2019

The e-PEMS played a significant role in transferring relief payments of the Druk Gyalpo's Relief Kidu

(DGRK). The DGRK was the most important and most instrumental measure taken to provide immediate relief to COVID-impacted and distressed individuals whose livelihoods was heavily impacted by the pandemic. The e-PEMS proved itself a life-saver as it facilitated prompt electronic payments to the DGRK beneficiaries by distributing payments directly to their bank accounts. The DGRK continues to play out as the most enduring and consistent support system for all affected in attempts to get back on their feet.

The Public Finance Act of 2007 in Bhutan provided a legal framework that would allow the MoF to use public funds for emergency expenditures. This framework was then submitted to Parliament which passed the Supplementary Appropriation Bill. The MoF notified the procedures and how activities related to the pandemic would be implemented to ensure proper budgeting, timely disbursement of funds, proper accounting, and finally, audits of the Covid-19 related expenditures. This is an example where strong systems and good governance converge. Bhutanese have fared better than others around the world during the COVID crisis due significantly to a combination of swift government actions, citizen participation and investments in GovTech that are paying off.

PFM reforms in the country are supported by the PFM Multi-Donor Fund which is administered by the World Bank and funded by the EU and the ADA. Taking the timely and efficient demonstration of e-PEMS as a thought provoking reflection, it can be safely and effortlessly said: strengthened PFM systems helps a country to better manage challenges unexpected.

Reference: *Press Releases by MoF; Public Financial Management PERFORMANCE REPORT Based on Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability 2016 Framework;*

<https://blogs.worldbank.org/governance/investments-govtech-allowing-bhutan-reap-benefits-during-covid-19>; www.u4.no (The U4 Helpdesk is a free research service run in collaboration with Transparency International); BBS; Kuenselonline



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Bhutan BELIEVE

Bhutan reopened its borders to the world on September 23, 2022. It was a forced hiatus of more than two years on the nation’s tourism that the global pandemic Covid-19 induced. But when the nation welcomed international guests it launched a new national brand designed to inspire national pride and spark the imaginations of citizens and visitors alike. A new website has also been revealed as part of the new brand launch, available at Bhutan.travel. It is designed to help travellers get answers they need when planning a trip to Bhutan.

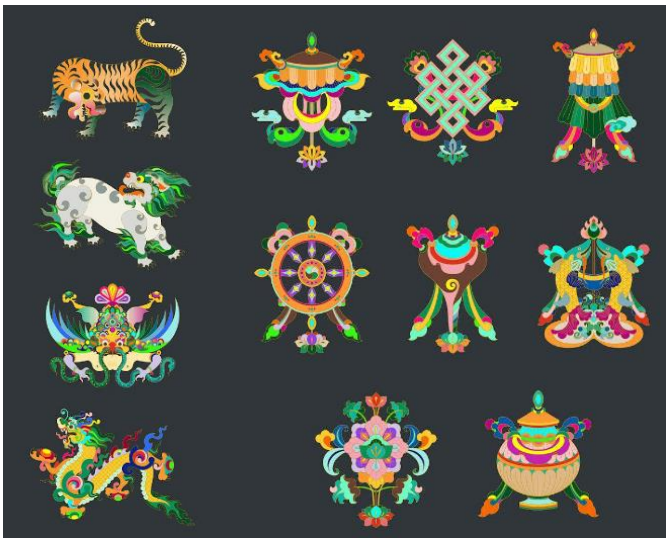
The brand reflects Bhutan’s character and landscapes, history and ambitions: bold, vivid, richly storied and utterly distinctive – rebranding it for a new future, both for its people and its guests who are seeking a different travel experience. It draws on the vibrant yellow and orange of the Bhutan flag, with further colour palette inspiration from nature — the cypress green of the forests that cover 70% of the country, the blue of Bhutan’s national flower, the Himalayan blue poppy, and a soft black referencing the natural soot from the fires burning in the country’s hearths.

“We are so excited that our tourism reopening is timed together with the launch of the new Nation Brand. Inspired by our new brand, and with a renewed focus on our time-tested high value low volume approach to tourism, we aim to offer an elevated experience to all guests who visit Bhutan, while at the same time creating well-paying and professional jobs for our citizens. We like to believe that Bhutan can offer that space and place for guests to reconnect with themselves, with Bhutanese people, and with the world at large. We are happy to welcome you to experience – Bhutan Believe!” — Dorji Dhradhul, the Director General of the Department of Tourism.

About the brand ‘Believe’

A sense of possibility greets you in Bhutan, a feeling that other ways of being in the world and experiencing life are within reach. Far from the humdrum and the hectic, removed from hollow luxury and high pressure, Bhutan is proof that happiness, connection, respite and revelation are our birth right. Restoring one’s sense of belief is the kingdom’s real gift to its visitors. The nation itself believes in a better future, led by wisdom from its past – a belief it is manifesting daily.





Bold, Confident

A distinct logotype is the manifestation of a bold and confident country, grounded in time-honoured traditions and a majestic landscape.

Contemporary, Clear

Clean lines create a contemporary feel, mirroring the nation's future-facing ethos. The logotype's elegant and crisp expression conveys the elevated experience Bhutan offers its guests.

Traditional, Warm

With a gentle curve, the logotype alludes to the warm and grounded personality of the Bhutanese people. This timeless and organic form embodies the kingdom's earthy character.

Graphic elements in the branding of 'Believe'

Ornaments: Hand-painted architectural decoration is one of the zorig chusum or 13 crafts that represent Bhutanese cultural identity. Traditional motifs have been reimaged with digital precision to create dynamic, new icons.

Auspicious Symbols: A series of auspicious symbols evokes Bhutan's dynamism and transformation, rooted in its vibrant heritage.

Mythical Animals: Four auspicious beasts from Buddhist mythology, carrying powerful symbolism, have been digitally redrawn. Imbued with all their traditional meaning – but presented with newly sharp definition and vivid colour – they invoke stories past, present and future.

Patterns: Contemporary Constellations draws on the traditional decorations of Bhutan, rearranging and reinterpreting them as a richly decorative pattern. The complete iteration on display is primarily used on the inside of applications: hidden at first, but revealed

As the country re-opened to tourism on 23 September, 2023, it unveiled a new tourism strategy reinforced by transformations in three key areas: enhancements to its sustainable development policies; infrastructure upgrades; and the elevation of the guest experience. Bhutan's new tagline 'Believe' reflects this determined focus on the future as well as the transformative journeys experienced by its guests



when you take a closer look. It can be imagined as an interpretation of the clear night sky, filled with mesmerising constellations.

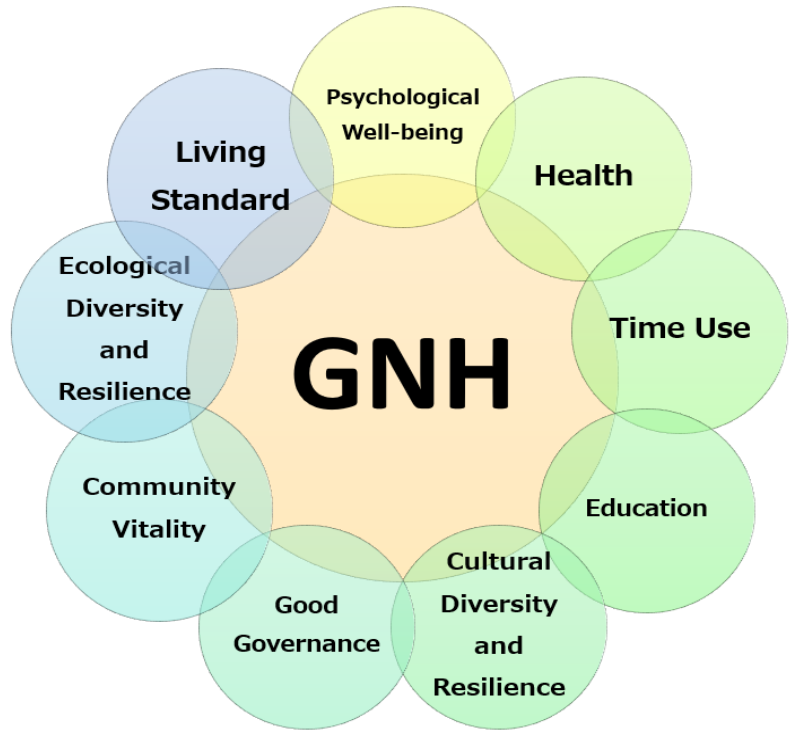
Courtesy: <https://www.unwto.org/asia/bhutan-new-national-brand>; www.tourism.gov.bt

HOW TO VISUALISE THE LEVEL OF

HAPPINESS ?

GNH Survey in partnership with the Centre for Bhutan and GNH Studies and JICA

Gross National Happiness (GNH) has been the guiding development philosophy of Bhutan. Over the years, GNH has not only guided Bhutan’s socio-economic development but has also gained wider international recognition as an alternative model of socio-economic development. The Centre for Bhutan and GNH Studies (CBS) has initiated series of GNH Surveys since 2006 to develop GNH indicators and measure GNH. The two most recent GNH surveys conducted in 2015 and 2022 was supported financially by Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).



What is GNH Index and How to Measure It?

The GNH Index was first developed in 2008 to measure the progress towards maximising well-being and happiness of the people. The index is comprised of nine domains: 1) psychological well-being, 2) health, 3) time use, 4) education, 5) cultural diversity and resilience, 6) good governance, 7) community vitality, 8) ecological diversity and resilience, and 9) living standard.

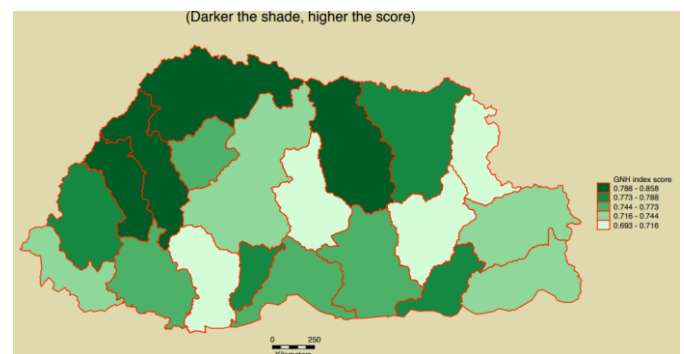
Three nationwide GNH Surveys were carried out in 2010, 2015, and 2022 in addition to a large-scale GNH pilot survey in 2007-2008 to develop GNH indicators and the GNH Index to be used as baseline indicators for planning and as target indicators to assess progress of the planned development.

What is the Level of Happiness?

The GNH Index is a single number ranging from zero to one with zero being the lowest possible value and one, the highest possible value. The GNH Index in 2015 was 0.756 which grew statistically significantly from 0.743 in 2010. Overall, 91.2% of people reported experiencing happiness while only 8.8% of people were unhappy in 2015.

2015 GNH Index	Percentage of people who are
Deeply Happy	8.4%
Extensively Happy	35.0%
Narrowly Happy	47.9%
Unhappy	8.8%

Across districts, GNH was highest in Gasa, Bumthang, Thimphu and Paro, and lowest in Dagana, Mongar, Trashi Yangtse and Trongsa.



In addition, the survey shows some remarkable features of happiness in Bhutan.

- ✓ Men tend to be happier than women
- ✓ Urban residents tend to be happier than rural
- ✓ More educated people tend to be happier

Source: CBS (2016) *A Compass Towards A Just Harmonious Society: 2015 GNH Survey Report*

GNH Survey 2022

The objective of the survey is to consolidate and strengthen the GNH Index, so that it can drive policy in Bhutan and serve as a model to other interested organisations and governments. In addition, this survey was carried out to measure and understand changes in the level of well-being of the people over time, progress in social development, and differences in well-being among regions and groups within the country.

The data of the survey are collected based on interview by enumerators. The number of target respondents are 11,440 people which were randomly selected from all 20 dzongkhags. This year, in collaboration with De-suung Office, desuups were involved in the survey as enumerators.

The nationwide field surveys were carried out by 8 enumerator teams in different dzongkhags between April and August 2022. In this survey, the enumerators visited respective houses of target population for interview. They asked more than 150 questions, and it normally takes more than an hour and a half per person to complete the interview.



This year, all enumerators used tablets to collect answers and it largely reduced the time of data entry and analysis. In addition, the survey includes the

additional questions about COVID-19 this year to know the socio-economic and psychological impacts of lockdown over the past few years. The report of the survey will be released by CBS by early next year.



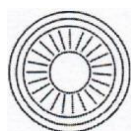
JICA's Cooperation in Bhutan

For many years, JICA has been working together with the government of Bhutan in areas such as agriculture, infrastructure, health and education. JICA believes that these areas are closely related to the nine domains of GNH and hopes to improve the living standard and well-being in the country. The wide range of cooperation, not limited to the GNH Survey, has become the basis of close relations between Japan and Bhutan.

In 2022, the Government of Japan celebrates Japan-Southwest Asia Exchange Year with the seven south Asian countries. Also, Japan celebrates 35th Anniversary of the conclusion of the JOCV (Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers) Agreement between Japan and Bhutan.

Guided by the vision of GNH, Bhutan is now ready to graduate from the group of Least Developed Countries (LDC) in 2023. JICA, as a development partner, continues to work with the people of Bhutan to promote socio-economic development even after graduation of LDC to promote conditions that will enable the pursuit of GNH.

✉ *This article is contributed by JICA Bhutan Office.*



CENTRE FOR BHUTAN &
GNH STUDIES





WATER: Global Scenario and Water in Bhutan for Economic Security, Environmental Integrity and Intragenerational Equity

A. Global water scenario

Water is an essential resource for sustaining human livelihoods, ecosystems and socio-economic development. Around 78 percent of the earth's total surface area is composed of water of which 97 percent is ocean and sea water, and the remaining 3 percent is freshwater. The world has been witnessing change in the water scenario. The Water Resources Group concluded that the world would face a 40 percent global water deficit by 2030 under a business-as-usual scenario. Meanwhile, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development projects an increase in the global water demand by 55 percent between 2000 to 2050. Therefore, the water availability and accessibility will likely decrease while the demand increases.

Over 2 billion people across the world are already living under water stressed situations and around 1.7 billion people still lack access to improved sanitation. Nearly 1 million people die annually from water, sanitation and hygiene-related diseases. The lost economic opportunities analysis indicates an annual loss of USD 260 billion due to lack of access to improved drinking water and sanitation (*UN World Water Development Report, 2021*).

Owing to the projected increasing water deficits and demands, and expected future water crisis, countries around the world have been proactive in developing critical interventions to address the issue. The following section highlights some global trends in managing water resources:

i) Integrated water resources management (IWRM)

The Global Water Partnership's definition of IWRM is 'a process which promotes the coordinated development and management of water, land and related resources, in order to maximize the resultant economic and social welfare in an equitable manner without compromising the sustainability of vital ecosystems'. The components of IWRM are management at the basin or watershed level, optimizing supply, managing demand, providing equitable access, establishing policy and inter-sectoral approach. IWRM aims at creating an enabling environment –*through policies, strategies and legislation*–, a capable institutional framework, and adopting effective management instruments.

ii) Transition to hydrogen economy

The global interest towards a hydrogen economy has risen remarkably as it is considered as one of the key paths to energy transition. Many countries have announced national roadmaps and strategies to develop hydrogen, essentially to replace fossil fuels in 'hard-to-abate' areas such as in heavy industry –*iron, steel, cement and fertilizers*– and transport. Green hydrogen which is hydrogen generated by renewable energy or from low-carbon power through electrolysis is gaining popularity in the transition to a clean and green future. Hydrogen is considered as a future energy source and countries worldwide have initiated plans and strategies to scale up both technology and investment to bring down cost and support wider adoption of hydrogen.

iii) Paradigm shift to Water 4.0

Water 4.0 puts digitization at the forefront of the strategy for resource productivity, efficiency and transparency. Digitization tools such as Internet of Things (IoT), Big Data, Artificial Intelligence (AI) and blockchain technology are playing a revolutionary role in elevating the standards to water 4.0. Cyber Physical Systems are drivers of the optimal networking of virtual and real water systems with planning, construction and operation largely being done by software. The uses of AI, sensors and IoT devices at individual level, such as home water metering, and for irrigation, with ability to process and provide customized real-time information to the user using web or mobile apps provide effective means to encourage conservation and resource optimization at individual user level. From an operational point of view, Water 4.0 is about having the right information to enable the water sector to make an informed decision to operate in the most efficient and cost-effective manner.

iv) Levying of adequate water tariffs

The water tariffs established for type of use, level of usage and additional fees for conservation. The tariffs not only cover operation and maintenance costs but also the capital investment. Water tariffs for domestic and non-domestic use differ, along with its level of potability. There are tariff rates established for specific ranges beyond which additional fees are levied.

v) Specialization in water resources management

Specialization in the field of water resources is inculcated from an early age by revamping the education curriculum. Many universities around the world offer undergraduate and postgraduate degrees in areas such as water resources engineering or management, hydrology, hydraulics, and irrigation engineering. The future demands specialization in the water sector to ensure that planning of any projects, feasibility studies, source protection measures, design and construction of infrastructure, and operation and maintenance is backed by a deeper understanding of the hydrological and hydraulic systems and their corresponding infrastructure.

vi) Integration of water sensitive urban design (WSUD)

WSUD is an emerging urban development strategy to minimize hydrological impacts of urban development on the environment. In practice, WSUD integrates urban designs adapted to ecosystems and natural processes. This includes maintenance of natural hydrologic behavior of catchments, minimizing water wastage and management of wastewater. WSUD concepts such as rainwater harvesting systems have been successful in many countries in managing water resources. The concept enables adaptation to the increasing demands and potential erratic behavior of our water sources in light of urbanization and climate change respectively.

vii) Public private partnership (PPP) in water sector

Traditionally, provision of water supply services and infrastructure has been an exclusive government domain. However, the increasing population pressure, rapid urbanization, and other developmental trends has severely stretched the government's ability to adequately address public needs in the urban water sector. Under the PPP, the private sector benefits as they gain access to business opportunities allowing them to move from merely taking construction components to designing and delivering innovative solutions. Given an opportunity, the private sector has more leverage to innovate and offer efficient and sustainable solutions to the public services.



B. Water resources management initiatives in Bhutan

Bhutan is known to be water abundant with one of the highest reported water availabilities of 94,500 cubic meter per capita per year, one of the highest in the world. Freshwater system is mostly sourced from monsoon, contributing about 72 percent of the feed and the rest supplemented by glaciers and snow melts, wetlands and springs. Overall, Bhutan is blessed with combined outflow from the basins estimated at 70,576 MCM per annum or 2,238 cubic meter per second. Bhutan economic development is largely attributed to the country's water resources which are used for agricultural production, hydropower generation, tourism and industries. Although endowed with abundant water resources, Bhutan has not been able to harness its full potential.

National Environment Commission being apex body and enshrined with the overall mandate of water resources management in the country. In order to ensure effective implementation of the provisions under the Water Act of Bhutan 2011, the Water Resources Coordination Division under National Environment Commission Secretariat (NECS) was established in 2010. Since then, the division has been carrying out several water resources management activities in coordination with other implementing agencies to achieve the overall objective of efficient water resource management. The following are some of the initiatives taken:

i) Water Act and its Regulation

Recognizing that water is one of the most important natural resources of the Kingdom and acknowledging the increasing pressure on the quality and quantity of water resources under rapid socio-economic development which may further be exacerbated with threats from a changing climate, the Water Act of Bhutan 2011 was enacted and later Regulation 2014. The legislation is also in determination to protect the environment and human health through integrated water resources management in pursuit of Gross National Happiness and the age-old tradition of living in harmony with nature. The act also provides comprehensive power, functions and responsibilities of different agencies in fostering institutional linkages and guide various water user sectors in the best interest of the nation and the people.

ii) National Integrated Water Resources Management Plan (NIWRMP) 2016

The Water Act 2011 identifies integrated water resources management as the approach to ensure protection, conservation and management of water resources in an economically efficient, socially equitable and environmentally sustainable manner. As mandated by the act and in taking forward the Royal Government's drive for a more comprehensive management of water resources, the NECS has

initiated and prepared the NIWRMP 2016 under the ADB-funded technical assistance 'Adapting to climate change through Integrated Water Resources Management' and with the guidance of a Technical Advisory Committee comprising representatives from the competent Authorities. The overall goal of the NIWRMP is to establish the framework and priorities for the implementation of integrated water resources management in Bhutan.

iii) River basin plans and Water Security Index Systems

The NIWRMP recognizes five river basins in Bhutan namely Amochhu, Wangchhu, Punatsangchhu, Mangdechhu and Drangmechhu basins. In line with the plan, the NECS has completed preparation of Wangchhu Basin Management Plan and Wangchhu Water Security Index System (WWSIS).

WWSIS provides an understanding of the roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder in the collection of data for the preparation of WWSI reports. Furthermore, it provides a clear understanding of data types and levels to be collected, and entities responsible for providing the information.

WWSI is a tool to assess the status of water security in Wangchhu Basin based on the aggregation of the five dimensions viz. Rural drinking water supply and sanitation, Economic water security, Urban water security, Environmental water security, and Disaster and climate change resilience. The security indices of all five river basins will give the Bhutan Water Security Index, which will provide the basis and framework for planning, monitoring and interagency coordination in water resources management.

iv) The Water Roadmap

The NECS led the development of 'The Water Roadmap' in collaboration with relevant agencies with the vision of creating a vibrant water economy through effective governance, prudent investment in infrastructure and human capital, leveraged on creative "disruptive" technology.

As water is becoming a strategic and scarce global commodity, Bhutan is in an advantageous position due to its abundance of the resource. There is immense potential in numerous areas to develop mega projects that can create an enormous revenue. This potential must be explored through development of a globally competent workforce that can utilize technology and propagate innovation. However, if our water resources are managed as is without consideration of the above, we may eventually face a water crisis. This calls for an urgent intervention to turn our existing challenges into

opportunities that can be harnessed as future dividends.

Considering the current challenges faced by the water sector and abundant opportunities it has in line with the global trend, the Water Roadmap identifies five 'THRUST AREAS -governance, human capital, innovation and technology, performance excellence and economic transformation'.

v) Minimum environmental flow project

The NECS is coordinating and implementing the environmental flow (E-flow) project in collaboration with relevant agencies and institutions. The overall objective of the project is to minimize the negative impact on the environment from developmental activities on our water resources mostly through abstraction and diversion. The project aims to consolidate achievements made in the previous phase by further institutionalizing the E-flow utility beyond the run of the river hydropower plant development, and integrate the study and analysis of E-flow into the curriculum of the educational institutes and establish robust institutional capacities.

vi) Coordination and implementation of 'Comprehensive assessment of water resources targeting both quantity and quality aspects of water in selected Dzongkhags' as part of the National Adaptation Plan readiness project.

The NECS is coordinating and implementing the project on 'Comprehensive assessment of water resources including both quality and quantity' in collaboration with the relevant agencies as part of the National Adaptation Plan project. The assessment includes the assessment of both surface and groundwater in the selected Dzongkhags. The groundwater assessment has been conducted in Gelephu Gewog under Sarpang Dzongkhag and the assessment findings point out the prospect of groundwater in two sites of the total three sites that were assessed. To further build upon the water sources mapping of the Department of Forest and Park Services, surface water assessment in critical areas within Thimphu and Wangdue Phodrang Dzongkhags is to be conducted.

vii) Development of a proposal for "BE in Water Resources Management" in collaboration with College of Science and Technology has been involved.

Based on the desk study, the NECS drafted the 'BE in Water Resources Management' with an objective to provide a robust and holistic view of environmental concepts, focusing on water resources management – *from source to supply to treatment and governance* –



Picture: UNICEF

order to ensure that our resources are adequately governed and utilized. The draft was later shared to Royal University of Bhutan (RUB).

Water as a strategic resource is imperative for the sustenance of numerous sectors and has to be safeguarded through integrated planning and management, coupled with technical expertise and skills. To allow for such expertise in the country as well as to enable job opportunities in the international market, the NECS with the support from the RUB, specifically the College of Science and Technology has developed the water engineering curriculum.

viii) Development of water tariff guidelines to provide service providers with a set of guiding principles and basic structure to develop a customized tariff.

In line with the provisions of the Water Act, the NECS is coordinating the development of water tariff guidelines. The guideline is being developed to provide service providers with a set of guiding principles and basic structure to develop a customized tariff.

ix) Development of the water quality monitoring guideline to develop uniform protocols and procedures for water quality monitoring.

The NECS is coordinating the development of the water quality monitoring guideline, with an objective to develop uniform protocols and procedures for water quality monitoring.

x) Coordinate and facilitate the National Adaptation Plan –Assessment of climate risk on water resources

Though Bhutan is a carbon negative country, we are also affected by the Climate Change due to the cumulative global greenhouse emission. Since our water resources are strategic, the NECS carried out an assessment of climate risk on our water resources based on short, medium and long-term impact Climate Change scenarios.



Austrian Development Agency

*Water Resources Coordination Division, National Environment Commission Secretariat (NECS)
For more info, please visit www.nec.gov.bt*



Buddhist Wildlife Trade Demand Reduction Initiative in Southeast Asia

A half is not whole, because half is... well, how do you put it? It's half! It's not whole; it's not complete. A half is not whole because a whole half is missing. Nature conservation is all about saving that patch of green wherever it may be on earth that conservation is in action. But that process is just half the action if the constituents of the natural environment aren't accounted for within that process of conservation. Biodiversity is after all inclusive of floral and faunal aspects. And that's what we're here to highlight – the denizens of the wild, or should we say wildlife in the wild.

The march of progress, it has indeed brought much progress. But it has also plundered, pillaged and trampled all in its path (quite thoughtlessly most times). Everyone got a piece of their dreams. But that's talking only about humankind. The natural environment and its constituents have only lost and lost. The spate of destruction on the natural environment in the name of human development knowingly takes into stride the loss of wildlife and its habitat. Add to that, the ills of poaching and wildlife trade is touching a high point wherein it has become a thorn in the side for everyone trying to do their best at conservation.

The situation: Regionally

Southeast Asia is a major hub for national and international wildlife trade – both legal and illegal – and is home to some of the largest illicit wildlife markets on earth. The region also plays a key role as an end-market for consumption and onward trafficking in the global illegal trade of high value endangered species and is the primary destination for illegal ivory and rhino horn. Moreover, wildlife trade in SE Asia is predicted to rise in the future. SE Asian wildlife markets therefore play an important role in the accelerating destruction of both local, regional and global biodiversity. These markets have shown themselves to be highly resilient to international efforts to curtail them through law enforcement and conventional demand reduction initiatives that rely on governments, public figures or health professionals.



SE Asia is a major hub for national and international wildlife trade – both legal and illegal. It remains to be the global hotspot for illicit wildlife markets on earth serving as an end-market for consumption and onward trafficking in the global illegal trade of high value endangered species

The situation: Vietnam and Mongolia

Vietnam is one of the world's largest consumer markets and transit points for global wildlife trafficking. It is the world's largest destination for ivory, with the number of recorded violations more than doubling between 2019 and 2020. The country is also one of the world's largest markets for rhino horn. Consumer demand for pangolin products too is showing no signs of abating. The trade affects both native and foreign high value species, as well as reptiles, birds, amphibians and insects. According to the Environmental Investigation Agency, Vietnam was implicated in the deaths of at least 15,779 elephants, 610 rhinos, 228 tigers and 65,510 pangolins between 2003 and 2019. Violations related to tigers reportedly reached 390 cases in 2020, up almost 70% from 2019. Besides the sale of wild caught animals, Vietnam also maintains a host of both legal and illegal captive breeding facilities for a wide range of species, including tigers and bears. Such facilities have been shown to act as a high-risk interface for the transmission of zoonotic pathogens.

Even when supported by more effective law enforcement, regulations alone are not able to solve Vietnam's wildlife trade crisis.

Mongolia does not generate all of the demand for its own wildlife, nor is it a major destination for wildlife products from other countries. However, wedged between China, with which it shares a 4630 km long land border, and Russia, the Mongolia cannot escape the pressures of global and regional trade flows. In 2009, a multi-agency consortium comprising three government departments called for the prohibition of "selling, buying and export of wildlife, its parts and products" in an attempt to stem the continued strip-mining of the country's biodiversity. But despite new laws and enforcement efforts by the government, overexploitation for the same target species continued for decades.

The situation: Bhutan

More than 70% of Bhutan's land area is covered by forest and more than half lies within a network of protected areas. As a result, Bhutan is characterized by remarkable species diversity and abundance, which includes 770 species of bird, 119 species of herpetofauna and 200 species of mammals. The latter include a range of high value species whose future is threatened because of overexploitation and international trade. The country's growing role as a transit route for illegal wildlife and timber between

India and China is increasingly undermining the Bhutan's remarkable biodiversity successes.

Over the past two decades, the number of reported cases of poaching and arrests in connection with illegal wildlife trade have been on the rise. Affected species include tigers, leopards, bears, musk deer, wild boar, Asian elephants, greater one-horned rhinos, clouded leopards, pangolins, porcupines, Himalayan monal, pythons and pheasants. In the three years leading up to 2020, some 4,000 wildlife crimes were reported in Bhutan, most of which were linked to illegal timber and wildlife trade. The growing demand for wildlife and their parts in the global black market, difficult to patrol and therefore porous borders with China and India, a lack of enforcement capacity and a low risk of detection all contribute to this lamentable trend. Like elsewhere, such weaknesses are exploited by regional and global organized wildlife crime syndicates that are interwoven with sophisticated networks throughout the entire supply chain.

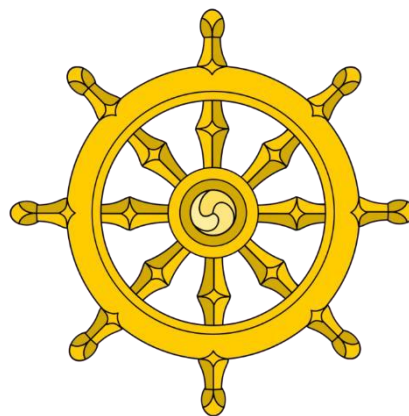
Trying the Buddhism way — Appealing to the compassionate self

Called the Buddhist Wildlife Trade Demand Reduction Initiative (BWTDR) in Southeast Asia; it is floated in the manner of striking a chord with the universal mind that is generally and individually capable of compassion for all living beings. The project is funded by the German government through the International Alliance Against Health Risks in Wildlife Trade and NABU International. The project is actively supported by the International Buddhist Confederation (IBC)

In the chaotic scenario of reckless and rampant cruel and criminal harm against animals, it is presented as the device that should draw the proverbial line (of morality) which individuals as consumers shall not cross. Success in gaining actionable agreement among the thousands and millions on this front means a significant plunge in demands for wildlife products. A near-zero demand among consumers should straight away kill the market for poachers. And safely said, this is one market no one will shed a tear for, even if it vanishes from the face of earth. Put simply, if no one buys it, no one kills it.

Traditional demand reduction campaigns that are led by government agencies, prominent public figures or modern and traditional health professionals have had limited success, in large part as a result of lack of consumer trust. In contrast, harnessing traditional religious and cultural values via respected spiritual leaders as catalysts for transformative change has resulted in significant positive results for such

interventions in the past. The BWTDR project is based on the model of the Tibetan Conservation Awareness Campaign (TCAC) conceived by Dr Barbara Maas in 2005 and successfully tackled trans-Himalayan trafficking of tiger skins and other wildlife by Himalayan communities in collaboration with His Holiness the Dalai Lama. The initiative benefits from the expertise and experience of at least two of the key people involved with TCAC.



Project countries (Bhutan, Mongolia, Vietnam) were chosen because of their role as recognized wildlife trade hotspots, a high Buddhist population and on the basis of feasibility. Reverence for life is enshrined in the first of the five precepts of Buddhism, namely the commitment not to harm living beings. It is common to all Buddhist traditions, forms part of lay Buddhist initiations and regular Buddhist devotional practices and is a corner stone of the IBC's overall goals and objectives as well as its Nalanda Declaration on Nature Conservation and Animal Welfare



Behind the Methodological approach and measures

Buddhism is the predominant faith in SE Asia, including the three project countries: Mongolia: 52%, Vietnam: 55% (but as many as 85% of Vietnamese regularly visit temples), Bhutan: 75%. The project will work closely with the support of the Secretariat of the International Buddhist Confederation (IBC) and the Buddhist leadership in the three project countries. By promoting conscious compassionate and sustainable lifestyle choices, based on the Buddha's teaching, the initiative will make a tangible contribution towards mitigating zoonotic disease spread and spillover risks, sustainability, biodiversity conservation, livelihood protection and peace.

Reverence for life is enshrined in the first of the five precepts of Buddhism, namely the commitment not to harm living beings. It is common to all Buddhist traditions, forms part of lay Buddhist initiations and regular Buddhist devotional practices and is a corner stone of the IBC's overall goals and objectives (see below), as well as its Nalanda Declaration on Nature Conservation and Animal Welfare.

Specifically, the BWTDR I project will:

- Contribute to a decline in environmental, human and animal health risks associated with contact and handling of wildlife along the trade value chain by raising awareness and reducing trade and consumption volumes through a faith-based behavior change initiative.
- Promote and facilitate international dialogue and cooperation with regard to human health risks resulting from contact with wildlife along the wildlife trade value chain amongst Buddhist leaders, NGOs and civil society in Vietnam, Bhutan, Mongolia and the wider Buddhist world.
- Contribute to the design and implementation of faith-based behavior change initiatives with regard to the use, trade and consumption of wild animals to reduce environmental, human and animal health risks.



The Mode of Operation

Project countries (Bhutan, Mongolia, Vietnam) were chosen because of their role as recognized wildlife trade hotspots, a high Buddhist population and on the basis of feasibility.

- Public awareness and demand reduction campaigns in Vietnam, Bhutan and Mongolia that draw on the fundamental Buddhist principles of compassion towards all life, universal responsibility, and interdependence to:
- Discourage wildlife consumption and trade by fostering lasting, value-based behavioural change;
- Promote sustainability by sensitizing communities to take proactive roles in biodiversity conservation;
- Reduce the risks of spreading existing zoonoses and the emergence of new viral spillovers; Generate a model for effective Buddhist demand reduction initiatives that may be transferable to other faiths

References: A Buddhist Wildlife Trade Demand Reduction Initiative in Southeast Asia, BES Bhutan. Rhino picture courtesy (Dr.Barbara Maas)

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*“Climb higher on the shoulders of past achievements-
 your task is not to fill old shoes or follow a well-trodden
 path, but to forge a new road leading towards a
 brighter future”*

*— His Majesty the King Jigme Khesar Namgyel
 Wangchuck*

DTP – Dual in approach, Singular in purpose

Bhutan is a landlocked nation sandwiched between two giant nations from the north and the south. It's the age-old opening line to introduce the country. And the line continues to age as the age-old line, because we cannot change it. Why can't we change it? Because, it's the nation's geographical narrative and there's the ensured element of geographical perpetuity to it. There is another line wearing the familiar tag of perpetuity; and it frequents the job-seeking job-providing landscape, which for a prolonged period now is flaunting the prevalence of 'mismatch between available jobs and skills/qualifications.' It alludes to the





statistical conclusion in youth unemployment figures, that even though there are jobs available, there are no takers; and that the skills-job mismatch is the culprit. But, this line/narrative—we ‘can’ change. And the agencies that be have been on it to- do the deed!

The country, since the mid-1960s, put a spotlight of priority on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). Call it a long-term visionary move. But, also call it a long and enduring charge that has had to continually model, remodel and evolve to effectively address changing dynamics/factors. Along the way and amidst the various implemented programs/measure, one has always proved better than another and some have always outshined others. The mission however has one common destination and that has not lost focus.

Formal vocational training in Bhutan is conducted through training schools known as Technical Training Institutes (TTIs). These institutes are administratively placed with the Ministry of Labour and Human Resources (MoLHR) which guides the curriculum, standards and assessments of vocational training. There are six TTIs in the country and two IZCs or Institute of Zorig Chusum - set up specifically for traditional arts and crafts.

The DTP or Dual Training Program is the up-and-comer star performer at present that is taking forward the TVET ship. It is the outcome of field-tested TVET programs and interventions that have been in action over the years and demonstrates weighed effectiveness of various compared and contrasted instances.

Let’s talk about DTP

What is DTP? How does it work? Dual Training Program (DTP) is a training delivery system that involves two venues of learning: the TTIs and Industries. At the TTI, trainees are offered the fundamental establishment of theoretical knowledge and a solid framework for practical training while at the industries. It’s a collaborative achievement between the prospective employers and implementing partners whereby they prepare trainees with hands-on experience. With the completion of the training, the graduate not only gets a National Certificate but also a vocational training certificate from the industries that the individual was trained at. The DTP is executed in a manner that the trainees spend full time in the institutes and complete 30% of the DTP curriculum, and 70% of the trainees are deployed to industries to gain hands-on experience.



the institute’s partnering companies such as the Construction Development Corporation Limited (CDCL) and the National Housing Development Corporation Limited (NHDCL).

DTP – rooted in history: The development of the DTP is inspired by the VET policy (2006) and TVET-Blueprint 2016 and on the long tradition of apprenticeship training in Bhutan. Skills and craftsmanship has been the foundation of Bhutan’s socio-economic development for ages. In 1616, after the arrival of Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyel in Bhutan, traditional skills were provided on-the-job and practiced through apprenticeship. The thirteen traditional arts and crafts (Zorig Chusum) flourished during that time. The dzongs, monasteries, and many other artefacts seen today are manifestations of highly skilled craftsmanship handed down from generation to generation. This DTP framework takes on the challenge of adapting the traditional apprenticeship training, which has been so successful in Bhutan, to the current challenges of the modern working world.

The country gave much importance to TVET since the beginning of the second Five Year Plan period in the mid-1960s. The first technical school, the Don Bosco School, Kharbandi was established in the country during this time. Close to a decade later, the government restructured and reviewed the courses of the school and to focus more on the technical and vocational aspects. The school was renamed Kharbandi Technical School and later Royal Technical Institute (RTI) as part of the one-time Ministry of Social Services. The need for a national authority for technical education was recognized in 1974.

DTP — the road so far

The DTP was introduced in the year 2019 in the two TTIs of Ministry of Labour and Human Resources namely, the Technical Training Institute Chumey and the Jigme Wangchuck Power Training Institute in Dekiling. As of April 2022, a total of 79 (63 male, 16 females) trainees have graduated from the two institutes in the courses of Carpentry, Furniture, and Masonry. Two occupation were identified based on the needs and priority of the country’s socio economic development (Construction carpentry and Masonry) with 60 trainees. The introduction and success of DTP is based on the following considerations:

- Priority needs in the country identified by private sector firms, youth, TVET training providers, and the responsible government bodies.

A successful pilot and the first batch: The program was successfully piloted at the TTI in Bumthang. The first batch of 27 trainees completed their two years with the Dual Training method last year. With the DTP program, trainees spend a bulk of their two-year course outside the institute working with partner companies. Except for the first six months of theory classes at the institute, the trainees spent the rest of the course working with

- Technical and Vocational Education and Training provides a means of increasing the income and employment opportunities for Bhutanese youth.

- Understanding and easing the transition of vocational skills to employment with active involvement of stakeholders from the private sector, youth groups and the government

DTP — room for improvement along the road

The operating model of the DTP has its advantages but there are factors that are not complementary to the DTP mission and vision. Following are some observations:

- The history of formal vocational training is embedded in the government system;
- **Low interest from private sector:** the private sector is not very interested to participate in the program perhaps for reasons that the incentives to get involved is not sufficiently attractive;
- **Low wage cross-border workers:** the availability of workers from across the border who are ‘less demanding’;
- **Lack of readiness to leave institutes:** an inclination among trainees to prolong their stay at the TTIs rather than spend more time in much more demanding and difficult working and living conditions of construction sites.
- **Low female participation:** An observation is also made that there is low female participation in the program. The explanation for this from the Program is that the early days of the DTP provided only two areas of training—masonry and carpentry—and that both were largely requisite of brute strength and therefore favored more participation from the males. Currently, the program has remodeled trainings, bifurcated them and made it all inclusive for wider participation. For example, the catalog now presents six disciplines in construction, then there is furniture-making, and in the automobile section there is welding, auto mechanic, auto electrician, auto body repair (painting,

denting) etc. Trainees can also learn to become technicians for Heavy Earth-Moving Machinery.

The DTP’s progressive report

In its early days the DTP had three partnering companies (CDCL, NHDCL and Gyeltshen Wood Industry) with two implementing Institutes in one sector and two occupations (Construction Carpentry and masonry). Today, there are 21 partnering companies with four implementing institutes in two sectors (construction and automobile) and 12 occupations. DTP is developing an innovative approach to tackle the skills gap problem in many of Bhutan’s industrial sectors. There is a consensus that the private and the public partner have to cooperate in order to come to a satisfactory and quality focused solution with regards to skills development. DTP will be successful if it can create a win-win arrangement for all stakeholders involved. As a result, the demanding industries will receive the needed trained workers, the government can utilize the TVET institutions more efficiently and the young women and men will be able to enjoy high-quality training which leads to decent employment or self-employment.

The HELVETAS and the DTP

The HELVETAS is partnered with the program to support and promote the engagement of the private sector in vocational training, thereby making it a “dual” partnership between the government and the private sector.

Last year the HELVETAS supported the e-learning project ‘e-learning management system (LMS)’ for the construction sector. LMS and e-learning contents were developed by a team from the TTI in Chumey, Bumthang.

Operating in this empowering environment, the MoLHR is rolling out more and more programs that will include the private sector significantly more than was ever done in the past. The larger aim is to benefit youth in Bhutan through a vocational training that is practical, market relevant, and of a good quality.

Reference: HELVETAS; TVET (TTIs and Zorig Chusum) Graduates Employer Survey Report 2022, DTE, MoLHR; Kuensel; BBS

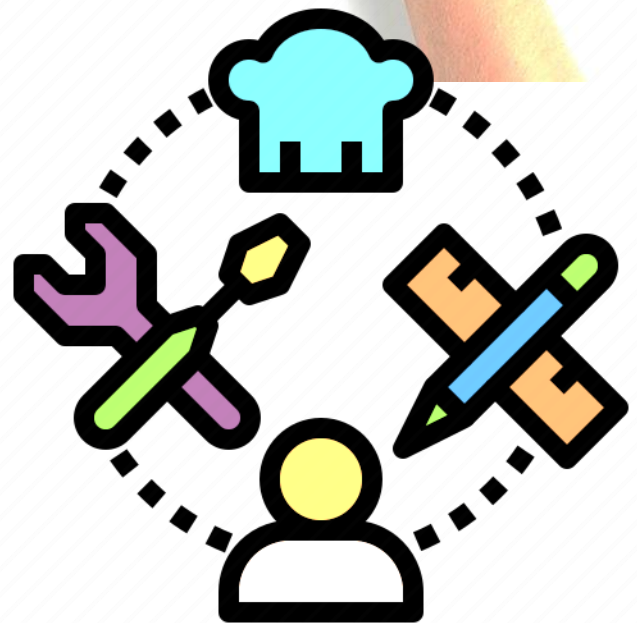


THE GREATNESS OF SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Develop skills, become valuable

A skilled person is a valuable asset for the team he works with. His presence in the group brings in the advantage of speed and time and thereby facilitates production of excellent finished products complementing factors of time, energy and resources invested. For the person, the skills have proved useful because it has made him useful and therefore valuable to others; it created employment opportunity and helped him keep a job.

All things considered, all things roll out as visualized, in the larger scheme of things, a proliferation of skills contribute to alleviating poverty and addressing inequalities. Individuals are employed owing to their skills and therefore unemployment is on the decline, and because productivity is on the climb it leads to improved living standards and consequently the economy of a country performs better. In that sense it definitely makes economic sense, and it certainly



makes business sense to equip people with skills, update and upgrade their skills.

Skill sets, they are destined to 'click' with complementary jobs, in the pool called the job market. It's an obvious statement. It is also easier said than done as multiple factors come into play to showcase such a fluid transition. For example, jobs are available; but are the skill set of individuals compatible, and even when there is compatibility, will there be takers? These are grounds on which the job market is stationed and the effectiveness or ineffectiveness with which employment and unemployment figures get played reflects on the nation's economic strength and versatility.



TVET is the way to go

For Bhutan the start toward initializing TVET or Technical and Vocational Education and Training was a step in the direction of skilling its citizens. TVET was recognized as a vital constituent early on in the beginning of the second Five Year Plans (FYP) during the mid-1960s. It was during this time that the first technical school, the Don Bosco School, Kharbandi (now called Rinchening) was established in the country. Almost a decade later, the government invested in restructuring and reviewing the courses of the school and shifting the focus more on the technical and vocational aspect of it. The school was renamed Kharbandi Technical School and later Royal Technical Institute (RTI), within the erstwhile Ministry of Social Services. And the need for a national authority for technical education was recognized in 1974.

The country's TVET system has aged. It is seasoned and weathered. It should hit six decades in three years. Age, however is not the point to be impressed with over here. Its effectiveness with respect to the skills development and its resultant effect on the job sector is.

What is skill development? The term generally refers the productive capabilities acquired through all levels of learning and training, occurring in formal, non-formal, informal and on-the-job settings. One can gain and improve skills with education and experience.

Importance of skills: Skills help people expand their professional competency and that helps them perform their job/s well. The more advanced a person is with certain skills, the more likely they are to get a job or progress in a job.

Skills development in the workplace: It is a process that aims to improve employees' skills and productivity in the workplace. It helps people find jobs and keep them. It enhances one's employability and productivity. Skills empower youth/fresh grads/jobseekers by equipping them with necessary skills and training to increase their compatibility with jobs in various sectors.

TVET must constantly keep up to meet the changing needs of the youth and to ensure adequate provision of a skilled workforce that meets international standards and the local demand in the dynamic labour market. All this must be done but it all happens alongside TVET's low social status persists as society continues to place greater emphasis on academic education and fails to recognize TVET's enormous potential and unique role in societal and economic development.

As a logical consequence of the progress made in school enrollment, significant progress in TVET is required to ensure the provision of quality and relevant knowledge and skills, job competencies, attitude and workmanship, as well as clear and appealing pathways to higher education and career to enhance their employability and entrepreneurship. Amid global and technological changes, TVET has become even more important. As a result, TVET plays a critical role in training youths and adults to succeed in the ever-changing 21st-century world while also addressing skills gap and satisfying employers' needs.

The MoLHR — initiatives in tow, results in the offing

To prepare the youth to create jobs for themselves and for others, the Ministry of Labour and Human Resources (MoLHR) had initiated clubs in schools across the country. In line with that the ministry launched Rig Tsel Yarphel or skills development clubs at Shaba Higher Secondary School, Paro on 31 October. By becoming members of the clubs, the students learn skills in tailoring, weaving, painting and haircutting. The clubs are part of the ministry's initiatives to address youth unemployment in the country which currently stands at close to 21 percent.

The MoLHR is focused on skilling the youth to address youth unemployment. This is chief among its strategic interventions. The unemployment scene can be addressed by providing skills to youth to cater to domestic as well as international markets.

The MoLHR has trained 255 young jobseekers under its 108 skills program as of last year (2021). The aim is to train 9,000 jobseekers within two years. Its Youth Engagement and Livelihood Programme (YELP) supported 1,225 youth. Through YELP, year-long support of Nu 5,000 a month was provided to youth aspiring to start any kind of business, and those in on-the-job-training to develop skills. Similarly, the Build Bhutan Project (BBP) has trained 2,717 youth under its skilling programme. The ministry expects to train 3,364



youth in a year. The ministry also resumed overseas employment and 139 youth went to 16 countries to work. The ministry's aim is to engage 6,000 youth within four years.

The ministry's programs like the DTP or Dual Training Program are showing big signs of promise and progress. The DTP is a training delivery system that involves two venues of learning: the TTIs and Industries. The DTP is executed in a manner that the trainees spend full time in the institutes and complete 30% of the DTP curriculum, and 70% of the trainees are deployed to industries to gain hands-on experience.



To succeed in the 21st century labor market, one needs a comprehensive skill set composed of:

Global mega trends such as the rising role of technology, climate change, demographic shifts, urbanization, and the globalization of value chains are changing the nature of work and skills demands.

Cognitive skills, which encompass the ability to understand complex ideas, adapt effectively to the environment, learn from experience, and reason. Foundational literacy and numeracy as well as creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving are cognitive skills.

Socio-emotional skills, which describe the ability to navigate interpersonal and social situations effectively, and include leadership, teamwork, self-control, and grit.

Technical skills, which refer to the acquired knowledge, expertise, and interactions needed to perform a specific task, including the mastery of required materials, tools, or technologies.

Digital skills, which are cross-cutting and draw on all of the above skills, and describe the ability to access, manage, understand, integrate, communicate, evaluate, and create information safely and appropriately.

The development of skills can contribute to structural transformation and economic growth by enhancing employability and labor productivity and helping countries to become more competitive. Investment in a high-quality workforce can create a virtuous cycle, where relevant and quality skills enable productivity growth and foreign direct investment, which result in more and better jobs for the current workforce and more public and private investment in the education and training system. This, in turn, increases the employability and productivity for both the current and future workforce.

From:
<https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/skillsdevelopment>

The Desuung Skilling Program

His Majesty the King graciously commends the dedicated services rendered by the De-suups in supporting the national effort to overcome challenges arising from the Covid-19 pandemic. As a mark of appreciation for the services rendered by the De-suups, His Majesty commanded that the State reciprocate by providing opportunities for the youth to enhance their skills and capabilities so that they can participate even more meaningfully in the process of nation building. This gave birth to the De-suung Skilling Program (DSP).

Further, to ensure the success of the programs, the De-suung Support Service Unit was established. It caters to Career guidance and Personal Counselling, which helps De-suups around the country to make the best possible choices. With this the DSP is prepped to provide end-to-end services to facilitate seamless transition from skilling to work.

The back story: When the Covid-19 pandemic spread globally and when the reality of it sank in deep back home toward early 2020, challenges piled upon piles throughout the year. In expression of solidarity with the nation, thousands of youth stepped forward to join De-suung. Within a span of eight months, about 14,000 De-suups were trained as part of its 38th to 43rd batches in 2020. Many of these youths were still pursuing their education or had just completed their studies and were yet to be employed. Today thousands of De-suups have volunteered for deployment in various capacities across the nation to bolster national security, ensure public health and improve the well-being of nation and its people through the De-suung National Service programs.

Reference: TVET (TTIs and Zorig Chusum) Graduates Employer Survey, 2022, DTE, MoLHR; Desuung page; BBS; Kuensel

TRANSFORMATION – the way to move forward

“As a nation, we are at an inflection point. Our actions today will determine the course of our future, and put us either in the path of success or failure. There will not be any more opportunities, and we have no choice but to work with the greatest sense of urgency.” –

His Majesty the King in his Royal Address or November, 2022 during the opening ceremony of the Eighth Session of Parliament

Bhutan was a late entrant to the development game when it opened up to the world after freshly ending a self-imposed isolationist policy. That was in 1961. Now, in 2022 of this 21st century, that country of old trying to put things together to toe the development line and usher in developmental progress wears the much seasoned appearance. After more than 60 years of chugging in these seemingly familiar yet unfamiliar developmental territories, the ship that is Bhutan sails at a speed that is its own, toward a destination that is still the same, on a route familiarly charted back in the day at the starting line. Plans and activities move at a tempo that is fiercely powered by the undying will to take the nation forward, always trying to make it greater than itself in its former self. And in the midst of all that Bhutan became the country that wanted to do things differently (through a GNH development philosophy) – to progress and move up – but do it with all its age-old values intact.

So after more than 60 years are we getting it right? Are we achieving the proportions in all the right proportions? Are we getting there? Those are not unanswerable questions. And the answers are yes, yes and yes. Bhutan is winning accolades the world over and viewed as a country that managed to achieve a blend of the old and the new. The instances are very telling if you look at how age-old culture, traditions and way of life continue to be practiced and demonstrated as ‘living’ culture as opposed to many that have become museum staples the world over. The country’s natural environment is another facet of what it has successfully been able to bring along across through



the decades and centuries just like its unique culture – unscathed and in mint condition.

All that is well and good in their own places. But reality has other plans as it keeps checking in with progression of time and especially in this 21st century. The earth spinning on its axis is barely noticeable but we cannot but take note of how the world makes our heads spin as it touches dizzying heights of achievement in various fields largely enabled by advancement in information technology and its many manifestations.

When His Majesty addressed the opening sitting of the eighth parliamentary session on 04 November, 2022, the illuminating spotlight of firm focus was on the progressive path of the country’s development trajectory thus far. ‘Inflection point’ was the key term that edged on the stimulating speech which complementarily maneuvered the Royal Address through conveyed messages that consistently highlighted ‘transformation’ as a driving force to reinvigorate the nation’s developmental machinery in tandem with the reality of the times by looking inward and outward. In short, Bhutan is at its inflection point and transformation is the way to go, if it wants to go forward.

His Majesty’s address to the parliamentarians broadcast Live on national TV spoke about the importance of transformation and change. The Royal address reflected on how the country has visibly put in so much work, time, and effort behind the resources it has invested in various ventures to enhance the development process of the country. He said while all

this is visible and true, yet it also seems like the results/outcomes speak otherwise. His Majesty says as a nation we must succeed where we have failed and we cannot fail twice where we have failed once. This is a reflection on all the manners in which things have been done thus far and the need to transform the way things are done.

“We will succeed if we all shoulder responsibility and work as a united people. ...this is for the benefit of our country and people.” – His Majesty the King

The civil service and ongoing reforms

“...the ongoing national efforts for transformation gives me hope. For the first time since I became King 16 years ago, I see a new dawn over the horizon. There is a perceptible difference in our efforts this time. There has been a shift in attitudes towards work, and a greater sense of concern, seriousness and urgency, even as we tackle the increasing volume of work,” – His Majesty the King

The elected government

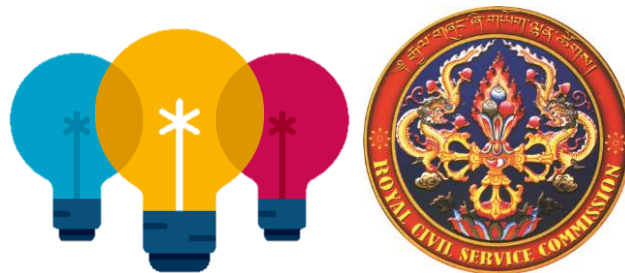
“It is difficult for elected governments to introduce change, even if they are beneficial for the country. Whereas a new, finished bridge is welcomed by the people, not everyone is willing to contribute, participate and make sacrifices during construction. Our government, led by the Prime Minister, has been fearless and firm in their resolve to carry out the transformation process, which we all deeply appreciate.” – His Majesty the King

The people

“This monumental transformation taking place in the country today would not have been possible without our people’s understanding and support. Moreover, the ongoing work stems from the aspirations of our people, who are well aware of our problems, as well as the steps needed to course-correct for our present and future.” – His Majesty the King

The youth

Bhutanese, especially youth in large numbers are moving out to foreign countries to seek better opportunities. This is a continuing trend whereby young Bhutanese continue to apply for study and work opportunities most popularly in Australia, Canada, and the US wherein the number of destination countries are said to be close to 100 where Bhutanese are already residing. It is expected that more youth would leave in the coming years. And although this is presently viewed as a means that serves an end the long-term solution is the need for them to receive a good education.



“Education given to the youth falls short of global standards, therefore indicating need for transformation in the sector. By failing to equip them with the skills and competencies needed for the 21st century, we are putting their futures at risk.” – His Majesty the King

“Our task ahead is to bring about change and transformation, and radically improve the lives of our people. This is not the time to shift the responsibility to someone else. It is important that our people identify the nature and extent of our problems, and recognise that now is the time to take ownership to fix them.” – His Majesty the King

No goal too ambitious, no idea too idealistic

We continuously portray Bhutan as being extraordinary, as a land of Pelden Drukpa, as a land blessed by Guru Rinpoche and Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyel. It’s logical that exceptional pursuits should be backed by exceptional efforts.

“As King, I have pledged my life and service for the wellbeing of our country and people. If I had the slightest doubt that our goals were far beyond our reach, I would not encourage our people to pursue them. I am fully confident in the capabilities of our people. I believe that we can achieve everything we set out to do.” – His Majesty the King



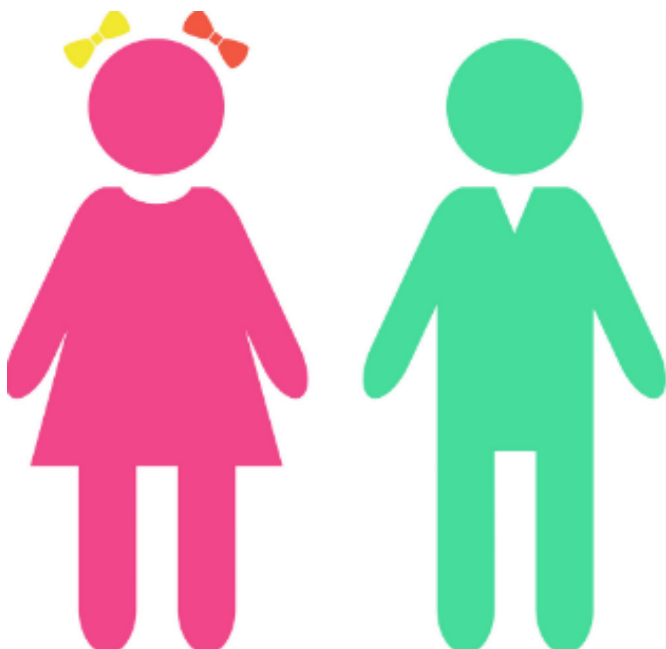
"One of our most important national objectives is to empower every single child in Bhutan for success. Bhutan's future will be mirrored by the strength and capabilities of our youth. For our children to excel, they must adhere to the highest standards, and have capability, integrity, discipline, 21st century education, unity and solidarity."

The Gyalsung, or National Service, will provide direction and encourage our youth to be strong, independent thinkers, capable of serving the country. It will bring the youth of Bhutan together in a shared experience and act as a common rite of passage, irrespective of their economic or regional backgrounds."

An extract from His Majesty's address to the Nation during 112th National Day Celebration - 17th December 2019



Gyalsung begins 2024



The Gyalsung Bill of the Kingdom of Bhutan 2022 was introduced to the National Assembly on 07 November 2022. His Majesty the King commanded the drafting of the Bill to the National Service Core Working Group led by Dasho Sonam Kinga (Ph.D.). The National Assembly passed the Bill unanimously and likewise it was unanimously passed by the National Council of Bhutan. The first batch of Gyalsung is expected to commence in 2024.

The Gyalsung Bill of the Kingdom of Bhutan is His Majesty's vision to institutionalize the Gyalsung to empower all Bhutanese youth to participate in the process of nation-building to further enhance the security, peace, unity, harmony, and sovereignty of our nation. The Gyalsung program aims to realize the above vision by enabling each and every Bhutanese youth to actualize their innate potential and become

productive and worthy citizens in the service of the Tsawa-Sum. The National Service is also a Fundamental Duty required of all Bhutanese citizens as enshrined in Article 8.1 of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan. The main objectives of the National Service Program (Gyalsung) are to:

- a. Endow the youth of Bhutan with the knowledge, skills, and values to actualize their potential in this rapidly changing world and contribute to realizing the national goals and aspirations;
- b. Empower the youth with the capabilities and attributes needed to succeed academically and professionally;
- c. Enhance the awareness of the youth about the challenges that our country faces and meaningfully engage them in finding and implementing collective solutions;
- d. Encourage volunteerism among our citizens to foster the spirit of selfless service in enhancing the well-being of our people;
- e. Ensure that we prepare the future generations to fully shoulder their sacred responsibilities of upholding and promoting the unity, peace, security, and sovereignty of our nation for all times to come.

The Gyalsung training program is envisioned as a one-year integrated training program mandatory for all youths attaining the age of 18 and if in school – upon completion of grade twelve. The one-year training will include three months of basic military training followed by nine months of specialized training in various fields ranging from home construction technologies, computing, and entrepreneurship to focused development of skills in agriculture. The National Service shall comprise of the following three phases:

- a. National Service Training: National Service (NS) Cadets shall undergo a one-year integrated training program which shall include three months of Basic Military Training. This will be followed by specialized skills training in various areas that are critical for personal self-development as well as enhancement of self-reliance and national security.

The Gyalsung Bill of the Kingdom of Bhutan is His Majesty's vision to institutionalize the Gyalsung to empower all Bhutanese youth to participate in the process of nation-building to further enhance the security, peace, unity, harmony, and sovereignty of our nation.



- b. National Service Duty: Upon completion of the one-year training program, Gyalsups may be called for both Mandatory Duty and Voluntary Duty until the age of 35 years.

- c. National Service Reserve: Upon completion of NS Duty, NS Personnel shall remain as Reservists until they attain the age of 45 years at which point they complete the National Service obligations. Thereafter, they may volunteer to join De-suung. The enactment of the Gyalsung Act will be followed by the establishment of the institutions, systems, Rules, and Regulations and the activation of processes that have to necessarily precede the launch of Gyalsung Training.

The ZERO WASTE Life

Zero Waste is a set of principles focused on waste prevention that encourages the redesign of resource life cycles so that all products are reused. The goal is for no trash to be sent to landfills, incinerators, or the ocean. Zero Waste is more of a goal or ideal rather than a target.



Reusable Bags, Jars & A Refillable Water Bottle

Plastic bags and plastic bottles cause the biggest strain on our environment, yet replacing them in our day to day lives are the quickest and easiest change to make.

So, instead of saying YES to that plastic bag at check out simply because it is convenient, rather invest in a few reusable bags, or make your own.

Glass jars are also very useful to store spices, grains, oil, etc. Also invest in a refillable water bottle instead of buying a plastic bottle each time.



Get Rid Of Disposables

Be it bags, straws, paper towels, napkins, plastic spray bottles, and what not. The kitchen especially is filled with disposable items that are responsible for a whole lot of waste. Living Zero waste you can instead use alternatives where possible:

- Replace paper towels with reusable rags.
- Pack meals in a container or a reusable bag.
- Invest in bamboo or stainless steel straws.
- Use cloth napkins.



Recycle

No, don't buy that plastic bottle just to recycle it. That won't really help. Don't buy the plastic bottle in the first place. Recycling saves energy because the manufacturer doesn't have to produce something new from raw natural resources. Recycling reduces the need for more landfills, and no one wants to live next to a landfill.



Compost

Compost what you can, like food scraps and paper ...and if you have a garden, so much better. Composting reduces waste, makes us less dependent on landfills and decreases greenhouse gas emissions.

Reduce Food Waste

Most people don't realize how much food they throw away every day — from leftovers to spoiled produce.

- Cook or eat what you already have at home before buying more.
- Making (and sticking) to a shopping list help combat your “shopping on a whim” habit.
- Also keep “use by” dates in mind when preparing food.
- Prepare & store perishable foods soon after shopping (freezing, preserving, etc)



Buy in Bulk; Organic & Local

Buying local also means you’re supporting people or businesses in your community, and it reduces transportation pollution.

Buying in bulk will also save a lot on expenses as the prices tend to be lower, and most bulk stores won’t mind if you take your own containers/bags/boxes.



Go Digital, Get Rid Of Junk Mail

Try to go digital wherever you can. Going digital is environment friendly, it has increased productivity, it is cost saving and it helps in data security.

Minimize, Downsize & Say No to Unwanted Stuff

Decluttering is where it’s at. It’s not an overnight change; it’s not as simple as just getting rid of stuff you don’t need. It’s the emotional attachment you have to stuff. Take baby steps and you will get there. Say NO to unwanted stuff. Turn down freebies (buy 1, get 1 item free), you are just creating a bigger demand to make more. You don’t really NEED that item.



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ZERO WASTE BHUTAN

WHY THE WASTE MANAGEMENT FLAGSHIP PROGRAM (WMFP) HAS A BETTER SHOT AT THINGS

Changing the unchanging mindset: At the center of issues is people; it’s always people. The changing and unchanging mindsets have always swayed success rate for any waste management approach. The WMFP is strategized to attend to this detail by creating social awareness to bring attitudes and behavioral changes of general public through its various activities.

One program to unite them all: The implementation of waste management strategies in the past was erratic and disorganized. For instance, integrated waste management approach was not adopted, not aligned to the national goals; whereby, respective agencies formulated their own waste management measures. Besides the obvious confusion being generated out of such a scenario, the entire process became quite the cost-intensive affair. The effective coordination and overall management on the WMFP’s part seeks to weed out all such confusions and duplications of functions. The waste management, hereafter, will also find itself incorporated into Annual Performance Agreements (APA) and Individual Work Plans (IWP).

All aboard the WMFP bandwagon: Unlike in the past the WFMP is a nationwide program. The WMFP embraces comprehensive waste management strategies involving the entire value chain from source to disposal in the 20 dzongkhags and 4 thromdes. The program also consolidates all the waste management-related plans, projects and activities across the country by involving all the relevant stakeholders.

Effective recovery and treatment: Treatment of waste also involves composting. Recovery of waste comes from Material Recovery Facility (MRF), refuse-derived fuel (RDF), construction and demolition plants, and e-waste dismantling centres. After recovery and re-using every bit of waste, the residue is dumped in landfill or incinerated. Waste management fees would be introduced later which would be ploughed back to the waste management fund to support waste management initiatives including support to the waste service providers and low-interest loan scheme for waste management businesses.



THE ROYAL HIGHLAND FESTIVAL 2022

The Royal Highland festival was first introduced on 16 October in 2016 to mark the celebration of the birth of His Royal Highness the Gyalsey; 400 years of Zhabdrung Rinpoche and the Rabjung (60 years cycle) birth year of Guru Rinpoche. The Royal Highland festival shares the beauty and the wonders of Gasa Dzongkhag through its nature, history and its age-old tradition and culture. It promotes Gasa's vision of "Good to Great Gasa" by showcasing the authenticities and the simplicity of the life of the highlanders.

During the festival, visitors can witness the traditional offering of Buelwa (Gift offering) with Auley



(traditional epic poem/song recitation) that began during Zhabdrung Rinpoche's reign to show the Laya community's loyalty and respect. It is being offered for the dynamic and visionary leadership of our successive monarchs.

Variety of cultural programs are performed by Layaps. Various competitions on highland animals including yaks, horses and mastiffs are held and competition on traditional songs and dances are also held.

The series of stalls at the festival display items ranging from local yak produce to highland technology, highland agriculture technology, medicinal herbs & plants and others.

The Fifth Royal Highland Festival

The fifth Royal Highland Festival was held this year on the 23rd and 24th October which was after a hiatus of two years owing to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Thousands of people made up for the gathering as spectators and performers. It included the highland communities from almost ten districts.

Cultural performances like the Yak-cham of Sakteng was the cynosure of all eyes while the performance extravaganza was also helmed by the exciting horse race coupled with display of decorated yaks and horses of the different highland communities.

His Majesty the King envisioned and introduced the Royal Highland Festival in 2016 to enhance the highland community's socio-economic conditions and promote their unique culture and tradition.



Picture courtesy: Department of Tourism, MoEA



8 Questions for an Aspiring Bhutanes Entrepreneur

When I was invited to talk to a group of young entrepreneurs at the “I’m an Entrepreneur” event in Thimphu, I had to stay up late into the night thinking of what to talk about because my regular subjects weren’t going to make any sense to the entrepreneurial audience.

So, I came up with a list of 8 questions a Bhutanes Entrepreneur must ask himself or herself, which is a compilation of bits and pieces of wisdom I have gathered from my encounters with successful entrepreneur friends, books, talks and from my own experience of founding and running Bhutan Toilet Org.

Despite several suggestions from the young entrepreneurs in the audience that day to rewrite my talk into an article, I didn’t get the right time or motivation to do it till today. The lockdown has given me a long and quiet time to catch up on the things I have missed, this being one. And I also thought if I shared this during the lockdown, chances of you reading it wholeheartedly and contemplating it is greater.

One of the organizers came to me after my talk and said, “Acho, I felt like you were talking about all the mistakes I have made.” I had to assure him that these were general theories that are often overlooked and that’s how we land up making the same mistakes;

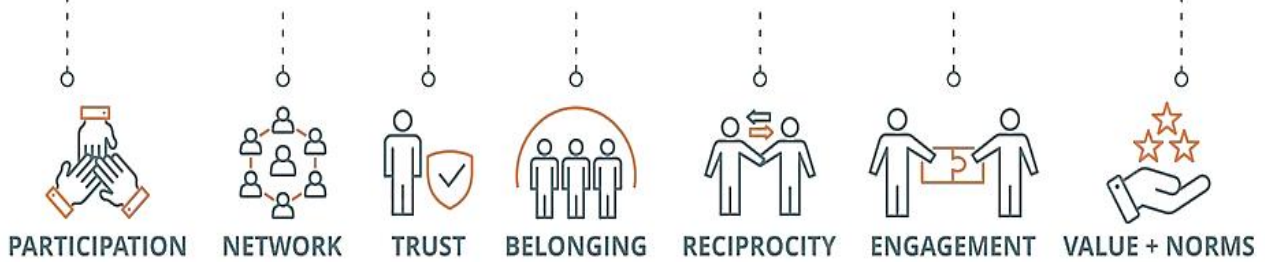
Following are the 8 questions, in no particular order, an aspiring entrepreneur or a new entrepreneur must ask him/herself to ensure that they don’t have to make the same old mistakes people ahead of us made.

1. Are you ready to start a business?



By hearing about some geniuses who made their millions in the early 20s, we are often tempted to start so early in life when we are still living off your parents’ handouts and don’t even know how to do a weekend shopping let alone process a loan or write a business proposal.

SOCIAL CAPITAL



Like Jack Ma says, in 20's you work for others, learn how things work, how people work, how finances work and get a feel of the reality. Give yourself time to mature and become capable of making informed decisions. Harden yourself to face challenges with grace and dignity. Earn a little bit on your own to be able to sustain yourself. Therefore, don't rush, take your time.

2. Have you built enough social capital?

Don't waste your youth in fooling around, with social media, you have the equal opportunity like anyone else to make a mark and stand out. Use it wisely to build your social capital. Get yourself known to people in a good way. Build networks. Your reputation and network will serve as a launchpad for your dream when you are ready. Build social capital early on.

3. Can people trust you with their money?

It's a greater honour to be known for your integrity than for your knowledge or wealth. A reliable and trustworthy person will



attract investment and network. Your integrity will be your collateral and mortgage. Banks and Angel investors will invest in you blindly. Never mess with people's trust. With an ill reputation, it will be difficult to make a foothold in the world of business. Don't make that mistake.

4. Is your business idea realistic?

It's good to have a big and bold business idea but at the end of the day, you need to be practical and realistic. Do your homework diligently, don't get the illusion that your venture will work magic and go all out at once. Base your decisions on numbers and facts, not astrology or unfounded advice.

If your idea is big, break it down into manageable chunks and deal with them one by one. Some part will work and some won't. Make adjustments. Bhutan has just 750,000 people.

5. How much money you need?

Financial discipline is critical to the success or collapse of any form of business. For a start-up, it's even more important to work out the finances realistically and borrow only as much as you need to invest. Don't include the cost of buying a car.

The loan you take for business must be used in financing the business and nothing else. Work out a salary for yourself and your employees alike. Never mix your business account with your personal accounts. Never touch the capital. Don't party on the whole profit. Reinvest the profit in the venture. Don't Joke with your Finances if you want to go far in life.

6. What is your strength?

If your business is about making pickle, make pickle with all your heart. Make yourself really good at making pickle and let yourself be known for making pickle.



Don't go off track to produce bottles for packaging pickle, set a branding company to brand and market your pickle, start an eCommerce website to sell your pickle online, start a delivery service to deliver your pickle, etc.

Just focus on producing pickle. You can't do everything yourself. Focus on what you are good at and seek the help of those who are good with packaging, branding, marketing and delivering to take care of those elements for you. They can do it better, cheaper and faster.



7. Is your conscience clear?

Don't start a business on the wrong footing. Research thoroughly to make sure that your business idea is socially acceptable, that it's not infringing any copyright or patent law and that it's not an exact duplicate of a business in the neighbourhood?

Even if your idea is not an original, at least make sure that it has something different to offer and that it's not contributing adversely to the existing businesses.



First of all, there is no scale in our economy to accommodate more than one serious venture and secondly, in a small society, everyone will eventually know that you are trying to enjoy the fruit of someone else's effort. Where is the honour in enjoying success, if any, on a stolen business idea?

8. Do you know the art of Branding?

For a business to make a first good impression and grow its presence in the market, it needs a good branding; from giving it a great name to designing a great logo and keeping its reputation high over the year.

Branding is a different art altogether, therefore, outsource it to someone who knows this art well and let them help you take care of it. If you don't have the fund to outsource, at least reach out to your friends who are good at it and seek their support. Don't take branding easy.



You can't say doing business is an art. But you can say it is a longstanding culture/tradition. And therein rests the golden nugget of wisdom. Basic and common sense aided by a digitally advanced business ecosystem can all be coupled to chart a business plan/venture that will see fruition on one's own terms.

Courtesy: Passu Diary



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སོ་ནམ་དང་ནགས་ཚལ་ལྷན་ཁག
སྒྲིལ་ལས་ཁུངས།



འབྲུག་གི་སྒྲིལ་ལས་ (ཡེགས་བཅོས་) བཅའ་ཁྲིམས་དང་སྒྲིག་གཞི་ ༢༠༢༢ ཅན་མ།

ཁྱོད་པའི་ས་ཁོངས་ནང་ཡོད་པའི་གཅེས་པའི་ཚོ་
ཁྱི་འདི་ཐོ་བཀོད་མ་འབད་མཁུ་ལྷོ་བདེ་ལྷན་པ་
ཅིན་ རོ་ཁྱི་འདི་ཚོ་བདག་ལུ་ ལུ་འབད་པའི་ཉེན་མ་
ལུ་གི་རང་འཁོད་ ཐོ་བཀོད་འབད་དགོ་པ་འབད་
བརྟུན་ལཱ་འབད་འོང་། གལ་སྲིད་གོང་དོན་ལུ་
ས་གནས་པ་ཅིན་ རོ་ཁྱི་འདི་ཚོ་བདག་གིས་ རོ་ཁྱི་
རོ་ལུ་ཉེས་ཚད་དངུལ་གྲམ་ ༡༠༠༠/- རེ་
བཏང་བ་དགོ་པ་མ་ཚད་ ཐོ་བཀོད་མ་འབད་མཁུ་རྩེན་
ཉེན་མ་རེ་བཞིན་ཉེས་ཚད་དངུལ་གྲམ་ ༥༠/-
རེ་བཏང་བ་དགོ་པ་ཨིན།



གལ་སྲིད་ནད་གཞི་ཡོད་པའི་རོ་ཁྱི་
འདི་རང་གི་ཁྱི་མ་ལི་མཐའ་འཁོར་
ནང་མེན་པ་ ས་གནས་གཞན་ཁར་
གཏང་བ་ལས་བརྩེན་ མི་དང་
སེམས་ཅན་རྩེན་ལུ་གཞོན་ཉེན་རེ་
འབྱུང་བ་ཅིན་ རོ་ཁྱི་འདི་ཚོ་བདག་འདི་
གིས་ ཉེས་ཚད་དངུལ་གྲམ་
༥༠༠༠/- རེ་བཏང་བ་དགོ་པ་ཨིན།



གཅེས་པའི་རོ་ཁྱི་འདི་བདག་མེད་པ་སླེ་བཀོ་བཞག་
པ་ཅིན་ ཉེས་ཚད་དངུལ་གྲམ་ ༥༠༠༠/- རེ་
བཏང་བ་དགོ་པ་མ་ཚད་ རོ་ཁྱི་འདི་དབང་བརྩུང་
འབད་ནི་ཨིན།



ཁྱོད་པའི་གཅེས་པའི་རོ་ཁྱི་འདི་མི་
དམངས་ས་ཁོངས་ནང་འཁྱིད་པའི་
སྐབས་ སླེ་ཐག་འདི་བཏགས་ཏེ་འཁྱིད་
དགོ་པ་ཨིན་མ་དེ་ གལ་སྲིད་གོང་དོན་
ལས་འགལ་བ་ཅིན་ སེམས་ཅན་རོ་ལུ་
དང་ལུང་རྩེན་རོ་ལུ་ ཉེས་ཚད་དངུལ་
གྲམ་ ༡༠༠༠/- རེ་བཏང་བ་དགོ་པ་ཨིན།

སེམས་ཅན་སྲི་ཁར་གཏང་ནི་དང་གཞན་ སེམས་ཅན་ཕན་བདེ་གནས་ཚད་
དང་ཚེ་ཐར་ལམ་སྒྲོན་ལུ་ས་གནས་པ་ཅིན་ ཉེས་ཚད་དངུལ་གྲམ་ ༥༠༠༠/-
རེ་བཏང་བ་དགོ་པ་ཨིན།



གཅེས་པའི་རོ་ཁྱི་འདི་ རང་སོའི་སྒྲིལ་ལས་ཁོངས་ནང་བདག་འཛོན་མ་འབད་
བར་སྲི་ཁར་གཏང་བ་ཅིན་ རོ་བདག་འདི་གིས་ ཉེས་ཚད་དངུལ་གྲམ་ ༡༠༠༠/-
རེ་བཏང་བ་དགོ་པ་ཨིན།



རོ་ཁྱི་རྩེན་གནས་གཅིག་ལས་ གཞན་ཁར་བཀལ་བ་ཅིན་ ཉེས་ཚད་དངུལ་
གྲམ་ ༥༠༠༠/- རེ་བཏང་བ་དགོ་པ་ཨིན།

མི་དམངས་ས་ཁོངས་དང་གཞུང་ལས་ དེ་ལས་མི་ལས་བདེ་ལྷོ་སྤྱང་འབྲུག་
ཁྱོད་མི་རོ་ཁྱི་རྩེན་ བཞེས་སྒྲིལ་ལས་ཁོངས་པ་ཅིན་ ཉེས་ཚད་དངུལ་གྲམ་
༥༠༠༠/- རེ་བཏང་བ་དགོ་པ་ཨིན།



སྤྱོད་ཁལ་དགོང་ཡངས་ཨང : ༡༢༧༧ (དུས་ལུན་ཁལ་ཅིག་བཞི་འབྲེལ་བ་འཐབ་རྩུག་ས)



དཔལ་ལྷན་འབྲུག་གཞུང་།
 སོ་ནམ་དང་ནགས་ཚལ་ལྷན་ཁག། སློ་རྩོམ་ལས་ཁུངས།
ROYAL GOVERNMENT OF BHUTAN
Ministry of Agriculture and Forests
Department of Livestock
Thimphu



LIVESTOCK (AMENDMENT) RULES AND REGULATIONS OF BHUTAN, 2022

Upon detection of unregistered pet dog within the premise, a notice will be issued to the owner to register their pet within 5 working days. Failure to do so will be liable for a fine of Nu. 1000 per dog and an additional fine of Nu. 50 for each day of delay in registration.



If an infected pet dog is found outside the premises, posing threat to public safety and safety of other animals, the pet owner shall be liable to pay a fine of Nu. 5000.



A fine of Nu. 5000 shall be levied against a pet owner for abandoning their a pet animal followed by the confiscation of the pet animal.



A pet dog must be secured on a leash while being taken to public places. The failure to do so shall result in a fine of Nu. 1000 per pet per instance.

Fine of Nu. 5000 for Non-compliance to animal welfare standards and Tshethar guidelines including release of animals.



A fine of Nu. 1000 will be levied on pet owners failing to restrain their pets within their private premises



A fine of Nu. 5000 shall be levied against any person for feeding stray animals in public places, including highways and roadsides.

A fine of Nu 5000. shall be levied against any person found translocation dogs/animals from one area to another.



Toll-Free Number (24x7): 1244