

# **ANNUAL REPORT**

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**Implementation of CSI Flagship Program Activities**

**2019-20**



## **I. BACKGROUND**

- Bhutan Agriculture and Food Regulatory Authority (BAFRA) is a competent authority for food safety in Bhutan. It provides its food safety services through Food Quality and Safety Division and Plant and Animal Biosecurity Division, Certification Services unit and National Food Testing Laboratory. Product testing is the core part of conformity assessment wherein products need to be tested against the standards and certification requirements. Therefore, product testing services are an essential for product certification.
- BAFRA is accredited for product certification as per requirement of ISO 17065, but its scope is limited to three products. This means BAFRA has to increase its accreditation scope to cover CSI products. At the same time, the testing capacity of NFTL has to be increased. This entails capacity building of the laboratory particularly for testing nutritional analysis for verification of label as well as for conformity assessment against the product certification requirements. However, building capacity of NFTL takes some time and product needs to be tested immediately considering that CSI products are already in market facing certification issues for market access, products needs to be subcontracted to reference laboratories outside Bhutan for testing of parameters that are beyond the scope of NFTL.
- On the other hand, it is important that our CSIs are well educated on basic requirements to prepare themselves to produce safe and quality food products that can compete both in domestic and international markets. They should be adequately trained on GHP/GMP and product certification requirements to build their capacity to meet the requirements.
- Therefore, BAFRA proposed the following activities under the CSI Flagship Program with the objective to improve the food safety and quality standards and facilitate market access of CSI products particularly food and agriculture products;

## Activities of BAFRA for FY 2019-20

Serial No	Activities	Budget (Million)	
		Allocated	Utilized
1.	Awareness on GHP/GMP/Certification requirements as per ISO/IEC 17065 to CSIs	0.5	0.5
2.	Subcontract food samples to reference lab for authentication of label and verification of nutritional claims	0.75	0.75
3.	Identification and preparation of CSIs for Licensing against BAFRA's GHP/GMP Criteria and Product Certification as per requirements of ISO/IEC 17065	2.75	1.0
4.	Purchase and installation of laboratory equipments at National Food Testing Laboratory, Yusipang for increasing of scope of testing of CSI products	9.95	8.45

## II. PROGRESS (FY 2019-20)

### 1. Awareness on GHP/GMP/Certification requirements as per ISO/IEC 17065 to CSIs

- Four days awareness training for Cottage and Small Industries (CSI) manufacturing food products on licensing and certification requirements was held from 16 -19 September 2019 at Jambayang Resort, Thimphu.
- Forty participants consisting of representatives from CSIs from Thimphu, Paro, Chukha and Bumthang, representatives from Department of Cottage and Small Industries, Queens Project Office, National Post Harvest Center, National Food Testing Laboratories and BAFRA attended the awareness training.
- The Director General of BAFRA graced the opening session. In his opening remarks, he highlighted the importance of CSIs in country's economic growth and improving the livelihood of Bhutanese population. He also stressed on the importance of certification for better market access of our agricultural products.



*Participants with Director General, BAFRA*

- The main objective of the training was to orient the CSIs on licensing and certification requirements and make them understand and prepare themselves as per licensing and certification requirements. The workshop consisted of the presentations on certification requirements and group session to identify the potential CSIs and their products for licensing and certification. The various challenges faced by CSIs were also discussed where CSIs acknowledged the support provided by government. Further CSIs expressed the following points for consideration by the government;
  1. Build capacity of National Food Testing Laboratory which is backbone for the food industries in Bhutan
  2. Pursue recognition of BAFRA's Certification by the importing countries
  3. Organize twinning programmes for CSIs with the well established food industries in Bhutan to learn the best practices
- The awareness training is part of CSI Flagship Program focused at building capacity of CSIs in licensing and certification of their food industries for better market access.

### **Two twining programmes conducted in Thimphu and Gelephu**

- As follow up to the awareness workshop, two twining programmes were also organized in Thimphu and Gelephu with the remaining fund for the awareness training.



#### ***Twinning Program for CSIs in Thimphu***

- Eighteen representatives from CSIs from Thimphu and Paro attended the programme on January 7, 2020. The main objective was to share the experiences and challenges faced by CSIs for licensing and certification of their products for better market access and also take stock of status of CSIs in terms of licensing and certification and come up the way forward.
- The programme was organized as a follow up to the awareness training held in September 2019 and preliminary assessments of CSIs by BAFRA. Some of the challenges faced by CSIs were lack of technical capacity for shelf life study of their products, testing and labelling of their products and difficulty in fulfilling the certification requirements of importing countries. The challenges were discussed and way forward activities were planned accordingly.



*Twinning Programme in Thimphu*

- Similarly, two days of Awareness Training and twinning program for CSI's on Licensing and Certification Requirements and Process was held from 27<sup>th</sup> January to 28<sup>th</sup> January, 2020 in Gelephu.
- The awareness program included presentation on BAFRA's roles for CSI, GHP/GMP criteria, Food hygiene and Personal hygiene, Pest Control, Food Labeling, Food rules, Value Added, Laboratory Activities, Plant Bio-security in relation to Food Safety, Animal Bio-security in relation to Food Safety, Food borne situation in Bhutan, and BAFRA.
- Dasho Thrompon graced the program opening ceremony and Regional Director, RRCO, attended closing session. Sixty-eight participants for CSIs attended the program.



*Twinning Program in Gelephu graced by Dasho Thrompon*

## **2. Subcontract food samples to reference lab for authentication of label and verification of nutritional claims**

- Seventy-five food samples were submitted by CSIs to BAFRA. BAFRA has subcontracted the samples to two laboratories in Kolkatta, India for testing against label claims and verification of nutritional claims and test results received were circulated to individual CSI owners to be used for validation of their nutritional claims. The samples include;
  - i. Herbal Tea
  - ii. Vegetable Pickles
  - iii. Drinks
  - iv. Cereal Cookies
  - v. Dried fruits
  - vi. Jams
  - vii. Candy
  - viii. Cereals
  - ix. Herb Extracts
  - x. Fruit Juices

## **3. Identification and Preparation of CSIs for Licensing against BAFRA's GHP/GMP Criteria and Product Certification as per requirements of ISO/IEC 17065**

- Preliminary assessment of CSIs against requirements of BAFRA Licensing requirements based on GHP/GMP Criteria is completed. Based on the reports, the following 5 CSIs were identified for licensing based on GHP/GMP Criteria and issued with Food Safety License upon fulfillment of licensing requirements viz.
  - 1. Meto Charbeb, Changzamtok, Thimphu for Production of Noodles
  - 2. Bhutan Herbal Tea, Shaba, Paro
  - 3. Nyam Tshe Brother Dairy, Rama, Thimphu
  - 4. Druk Honey, Chamkhar, Bumthang
  - 5. OGOP Unit, Kuengacholing, Upper Motithang, Thimphu
- The assessment of Laykha Dairy, Bondey, Paro and Gyeltshen Bakery, Takse, Trongsa has been completed and has been recommended for issuance of Food Safety License. The Food Safety License will be issued after the approval process is complete (probably within June). The CSIs who has been awarded with the Food Safety License are encouraged to apply for food product certification. Based on the availability of Product Standard, the certification process will be initiated as per BAFRA's ISO 17065 accredited system during the coming fiscal year.



*Visit to CSIs for assessment against BAFRA's Licensing Requirements*

**4. Purchase and installation of laboratory equipments at National Food Testing Laboratory, Yusipang for increasing scope of testing of CSI products**

- Certain parameters like pesticide residues in Tea, Heavy metals in Grains/flour, fat content, *Campylobacter* and Mesophilic Lactic acid bacteria had been identified in the CSI products for the FY 2019-2020 and accordingly the list of chemicals /reagents/certified reference materials/consumables required for introduction of these new test parameters and the technical specifications of equipment like fat extraction unit and the muffle furnace had been prepared. Accordingly, the supply order has been placed for the purchase of the all above lab items following the Procurement Norms of the RGoB.
- Further the required electrification work for installation of the equipment in Nutrition section had been completed. In addition, from the purchase of the lab items, the equipment like the autoclave and CO<sub>2</sub> incubator has been received and installed in the microbiology lab and NFTL is yet to receive other lab items required for testing. However, in the heavy metal analysis, having purchased the required Certified Reference Materials and the consumables, NFTL can test for Zinc in rice samples.



**CO<sub>2</sub> INCUBATOR WITH GAS CYLINDER**



**VERTICAL AUTOCLAVE**

### III. PROGRESS AS PER APA FOR CSI FLAGSHIP PROGRAM (FY 2019-20)

APA Objectives	SI	Target	Progress	Rating
Enhance Access to Market	Timeline by which awareness training on GHP/GMP/Certification requirements to CSIs is conducted	May-20	Completed in September 2019	Excellent
	Timeline by which fat determination facility in NFTL is established	May-20	Procurement process completed but yet to receive the equipment due to COVID-19	Excellent
	Timeline by which Preliminary assessments for increase of accreditation scope are conducted.	May-20	Preliminary assessment of CSIs completed and Identified CSIs licensed as per GHP/GMP Criteria	Excellent

#### Implemented by;

1. Food Section, FQSD
2. NFTL, FQSD
3. BAFRA Certification Services

**CSI Flagship PSC Member-BAFRA:** Dr. Tashi Samdup (PhD), Director General

#### Component Managers:

- 1) Kubir N. Bhattarai, Dy. CRQO, FQSD
- 2) Tashi Yangzom, Sr. RQO, BAFRA-CS