

PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT

FOR GOI ASSISTED PROJECT TIED ASSISTANCE

Strengthening Biosecurity System in Bhutan

1. **Project title:** Strengthening Biosecurity System in Bhutan
2. **Project duration:** October 2014 to June 2018
3. **Implementing Agency:** Bhutan Agriculture and Food Regulatory Authority (BAFRA), Ministry of Agriculture and Forests
4. **Project Cost:** Nu. 60.00 million
5. **Actual Expenditure:** Nu. 60.00 million
6. **Project Objectives**

The main objectives of the project were to strengthen the institutional capacity of BAFRA to handle challenges posed by biosecurity threats and food safety issues for the country through:

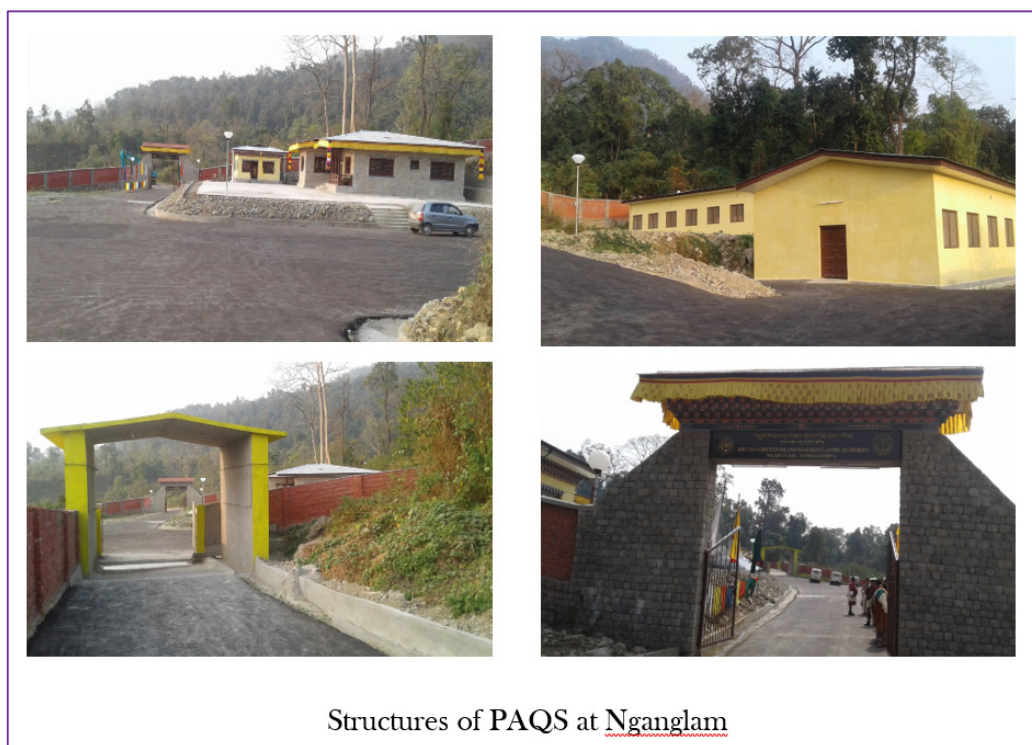
- i. Equipping Entry Points with adequate quarantine infrastructure/facilities
- ii. Equipping quarantine stations with required decontamination facilities
- iii. Construction of biosecurity offices in areas of high biosecurity concerns
- iv. Strengthen G2C services of BAFRA
- v. Educating general public on biosecurity and food safety.

7. Scope of works

A. Construction of a quarantine station at Nganglam, Pema Gatsel

Quarantine station in Samdrup Jongkhar was not able to cater to the quarantine service demands of the people of six Eastern Dzongkhags. Also, with the mega projects at Samrang under implementation by the Department of Livestock, Ministry of Agriculture and Forests, the quarantine station in Samdrup Jongkhar was stretched to the limit. Therefore, proposal for construction of a quarantine station in Potanala, Chokhorling Gewog, Nganglam Drungkhag, Pemagatsel Dzongkhag was proposed for which a budget of Nu. 17 million was allocated.

The quarantine station has been constructed and is being used benefiting people in the six Eastern Dzongkhags. The quarantine structure has two cattle sheds with the capacity of 20 heads each in the high-risk zone and the administrative building, a sentry post and the parking space in the low risk zone. The whole complex has been constructed in 2.5 acres land with a compound wall.



Structures of PAQS at Nganglam

B. Construction of a biosecurity office at Lhamoyzingkha

Biosecurity office in Lhamoyzhingkha Drungkhag was necessary because a highway was constructed connecting this Drungkhag with the Thimphu-Phuentsholing highway at Gedu. With the completion of this highway, many people started using this highway as an alternative to the Gedu-Phuentsholing road. Besides, activities related to livestock and agriculture sector has increased over the past years leading to increase in biosecurity issues viz. bird flu outbreaks reported from this area in December 2012 and early 2013.

Two storeyed biosecurity office with four units has been completed and is being used.

Establishment of the biosecurity office in the Dungkhag has helped the people of the Dungkhag avail better quality biosecurity and food safety services thereby reducing incidences of disease outbreaks in the Dungkhag.

In addition, with the setting up of this office at Lhamoyzingkha, illegal export of scrub animals from Bhutan to India across the border has also been checked leading to better biosecurity continuum at the border areas.



Biosecurity Office at Lhamoyzingkha, Dagana Dzongkhag

C. Establishment of decontamination facilities in the existing quarantine stations

With the increasing amount of import and export, risk of importing or exporting controlled goods/goods of high biosecurity risk has also increased. Imported diseased plant and animal products, and dead animal carcass from quarantine stations must be disposed using incinerators. The incineration of these waste material can besides safeguarding the environment and health of the people, can also reduce high cost of waste transportation and landfill management. Similarly, imported/exported good of high risk should be quarantined and necessary treatment / decontamination carried out before importation or exportation.

Since, none of our Entry Points had fumigation facilities to decontaminate imported/exported agricultural goods or other decontamination facilities, the budget for procurement and installation of decontamination facilities such as incinerators and fumigation facilities was proposed and accordingly the facilities put in place.

Through this project, two incinerators were procured and installed in Plant and Animal Quarantine Stations (PAQS) at Phuentsholing and Nganglam. Similarly, fumigation facilities were built in PAQS at Phuentsholing and Gelephu. Through the same project, seven BAFRA officials have been trained and certified on handling highly toxic chemicals for phyto-sanitary treatments at National Institute of Plant Health Management (NIPHM) at Hyderabad, India.

With the installation of these facilities, the PAQS can now handle export and import of agricultural goods with more professionalism and confidence.



Incinerator Houses at PAQS Nganglam and Phuentsholing



Fumigation House at Phuentsholing



Fumigation House at Gelephu

D. HACCP/ISO 22000 Certification of food establishments

Implementation of Food Quality and Safety Management Systems especially HACCP/ISO 22000 by food establishments is very crucial. During the 11th FYP, BAFRA facilitated ISO 22000 certification of eight selected food establishments against our target of five food establishments.

ISO 22000 certified Food Establishments have enhanced consumer confidence in their food products being safe and better market access for their products. Further, ISO 22000 certification is a pre-requisite for any Food Establishments to be able to go for Product Certification. With ISO certification, BAFRA doesn't have to monitor these establishments as the system will take care by itself. Through the same project, BAFRA Food Inspectors have also been trained on Food Safety Management Systems (FSMS) and as the Lead Auditors for FSMS.

E. Awareness and educational programme on Food Safety and Biosecurity

Every year, there are food borne disease outbreaks and the outbreaks of animal diseases and plant pests in the country being reported from different parts of the country. Such outbreaks are mainly because of lack of food safety and biosecurity awareness among people. To minimize such incidences, the public needed food safety and biosecurity awareness programmes for which BAFRA conducted mass awareness programmes in the form of trainings, TV shows with food safety and biosecurity messages.

Through this project, BAFRA conducted one day mass awareness workshop on Biosecurity, Biosafety and Food Safety in 20 Dzongkhags. During the workshop, participants from 176 gewogs from 20 Dzongkhags of Bhutan attended the programme. The programme was conducted by the respective BAFRA Dzongkhag offices from May to June 2017 at a centralized gewog center convenient for the participants. It was attended by 5621 participants comprising of local leaders, farmers, cooperative groups, nursery growers, importers, exporters, wholesale retailers, extension agents, hoteliers and food business operators.

BAFRA also developed and distributed posters, brochures, biosecurity notices, 3 D animation clips with biosecurity and food safety messages for public awareness. Animation clips have also been aired through national TV channel.

Zobel Gewog on 19/05/2017



Yurung Gewog on 21/05/2017



Shumar Gewog on 23/05/2017



Chongshing Gewog on 25/05/2017



Nganglam Central School





F. Upgradation of Bhutan Biosecurity System (BBSS)

BAFRA needed a new database system or upgrade the existing BBSS system for the collection, storage and reporting of information related to the Biosecurity measures implemented by BAFRA with the following features:

- Online import application processing and issuance of permit
- Online export application processing and issuance of phyto/zoosanitary certificates
- Maintain records of quantities plants/animals and their products imported/exported
- Maintain records of illegal encounters and the fate of such commodities
- Maintain records of movements of livestock/plant and their products within the country
- Maintain records of livestock/plant products inspected and certified by field officials

- Maintain records of ante-mortem and post mortem conducted in slaughter houses
- Maintain records of diseases detected at ante-mortem and post mortem inspections
- Generate report of these features

Such system would improve public service delivery in an efficient and cost-effective manner, reduce administrative workload, and enhance record keeping for analysis, traceability and improvement measures in regulatory works.

Through the project, the existing Bhutan Biosecurity System (BBSS) was upgraded to the needs of BAFRA and were given to BAFRA field officials for use. All Livestock and Plant Inspectors of BAFRA have been trained on the use of the system. Desktop computers were also purchased (at least one each for each office) and distributed. The system is being used and has greatly helped both BAFRA as well as our clients in availing the biosecurity and food safety services of BAFRA.



BAFRA Officials in the Training Session on BBSS



Screen Shots of the BBSS in Use

G. Commodity Standard Development

Commodities standardization is important for quality and safety assurance of any commodity for both local consumption and trade. Further, the regional and international harmonization of standards will allow for mutual recognition of the commodity standards thereby enhancing trade and access to global market and ultimately increasing the foreign exchange value. During the 11th FYP, commodity standards for 11 local food commodities were developed.

Through the same project, four Rules and Regulations being implemented by BAFRA viz. Livestock Rules, Food Rules, Plant Quarantine Rules and Seed Rules have been revised and updated in addition to development of a new Biosafety Rules.



Revised Technical Regulations and some Standards (sl. No. 21 – 32 above)
developed for Local Food Commodity through this project

H. Construction of biosecurity office in Samdrupcholing

BAFRA's initial plan was to construct it at Phuentsholing for which a budget of Nu. 8.00 million was allocated. However, due to change in plans and priorities of the Government, this activity could not be carried out as planned. Hence, with the

consent of the Authorities concerned, the budget was diverted for construction of the same at Samdrupcholing.

Although, this activity under this project was supposed to be completed by end of June 2018, but because the plan had to be changed in the course of implementation, it could not meet its completion deadline. Construction is still going on and is about 80% completed. It is likely to take another one and half to two months to complete the whole structure.

The work is being carried out by Dzongkhag Administration of Samdrup Jongkhar Dzongkhag as deposit work and the required budget has also been deposited in the Dzongkhag's account. Once, completed the structure would be handed over to BAFRA.



Latest Status of Progress of Construction of Biosecurity Office at Samdrupcholing

8. Remarks and Comments:

BAFRA's mandates are to ensure country's biosecurity and food safety. To help build capacity of BAFRA in areas of biosecurity and food safety, BAFRA was provided Nu. 60 million from GoI-PTA as a part of its 11th FYP programme. There are eight specific activities identified to be carried out under this project. Except for one i.e construction of

biosecurity office at Samdrupcholing, all other activities have been successfully completed as reported.

With the completion of this GoI-PTA, the country especially the farming communities and the public at large have benefited a lot. The project has helped strengthen country's biosecurity and food safety system and hence, would immensely contribute towards implementation of safe trade (both export and import) of agriculture and agriculture products with our trading partner countries.

The Bhutan Agriculture and Food Regulatory Authority (BAFRA) would like to thank GoI for their generous support to BAFRA in strengthening its capacity. Such support would not only benefit Bhutan but also India because pests and diseases have no boundaries. We look forward to similar support in future. BAFRA would also like to take this opportunity to thank GNHC for coordinating and facilitating timely release of funds for successful completion of this project.