

## **Minutes of the 4<sup>th</sup> Project Management Board Meeting for the Gender Responsive Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) Implementation Project**

*13<sup>th</sup> January 2022, City Hotel, Thimphu*

### **Board Members Present:**

1. Mr. Phento Tshering, Director, NECS, Chair
2. Mr. Khurshid Alam, Deputy Resident Representative, UNDP Bhutan, Co-Chair
3. Mr. Tshering Tashi, Offtg. Chief, Climate Change Division, NECS, member secretary
4. Ms. Ugyen Tshomo, Chief Program Officer, National Commission for Women and Children (NCWC), member
5. Mr. Dhendup Tshering, Assistant Program Coordinator, Development Cooperation Division, Gross National Happiness Commission Secretariat, member
6. Mr. Yeshi Dorji, Bhutan Chamber of Commerce & Industry (BCCI), member

### **Member not present:**

1. Mr. Sonam Tashi, Chief, Policy and Planning Division, Ministry of Economic Affairs, Thimphu

### **Other Officials present:**

1. Mr. Chimi Rinzin, Portfolio manager, Climate Change, Environment and Livelihood, UNDP Bhutan
2. Ms. Nidup Zangmo, Waste Management Division, NECS
3. Ms. Sonam Y Rabgye, Program Analyst UNDP Bhutan
4. Mr. Tashi Dendup, Project Manager, CCD, NECS

### **Agenda item I- Opening remarks by the Chairs**

The Director, NECS (Chair to the project board) welcomed the board members and other officials present. A special acknowledgement and welcome was extended to the new Deputy Resident Representative (DRR), UNDP (co-chair to the board). The chair also welcomed the new representative from the GNHC to the project board. Likewise, on behalf of the project board, the chair thanked the former DRR (Mr. Jürgen Nagler) for his support and guidance. An appreciation was extended to the UNDP, the NCWC and all the key partners for their continued support and efforts towards the implementation of the project activities. The delay in the execution of some of the project activities was also highlighted.

The DRR-UNDP joined the chair in thanking all the board members and the PMU team for convening the meeting. The overall project delivery of 69% was underlined, due to challenges posed by the pandemic the past 2 years. DRR pointed out one of the main



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purposes of the board meeting was to update progress and discuss the reprogramming of activities from the project savings. DRR applauded the government's effort on the successful submission of the second Nationally Determined Contributions and conveyed the importance of working on its implementation.

DRR furthermore stressed on the gender-climate change interconnectedness. It was outlined that men and women face different kinds of challenges in terms of access to information, access to resources and access to decision-making. Thus, we should be mindful that any potential investment on climate change should result in gender-equal societies so that the differential impacts of climate change are addressed or curtailed. The co-chair expects that many of the knowledge products developed through this project will support the thirteenth five-year plan formulation process or any other policy processes.

### **Agenda item II- Adoption of the Agenda**

The proposed agenda was adopted without any change

### **Agenda item III- Follow up on the 3<sup>rd</sup> PMB Meeting**

The project manager, Gender NDC project presented the follow up actions from the last board decisions.

Three activities required further action:

I. Private Sector Engagement forum.

Instruction: *The board suggested to keep it focused, targeting small groups, with room for interactive sessions.*

Follow-up action(s): The earlier board meeting's direction also faced some challenges because of the pandemic situation. From the Bhutan Chamber of Commerce and Industry's recent experience, it was found that the online meetings were not effective, especially with the majority of the private stakeholders present in the southern parts of the country. Thus, a shift from the initial event-based forum to an in depth assessment to promote enabling conditions for green business was appraised to the board. The study will be complemented with an action plan for the private sector uptake. The board suggested the study could also tap the international trade opportunities under the Paris agreement, Through the trade lens- create enabling environment for more business and investment for Bhutan and identify enabling financing mechanisms to promote youth/women led business. Additional resources can be topped up to promoting green business through demonstration, piloting and research, with a focus on vulnerable groups.

II. Sustainable Solid Waste Management.

Waste Management Division-NECS to update the meeting on the progress and achievements as per the approved proposals during the earlier board meeting.



III. On the Feasibility Study of Domestic Charcoal production in Bhutan.

The Project Manager clarified to the board that the Department of Forests and Park Services (DoFPS) could not attend the meeting because of some prior commitments. The following follow-up actions against the instruction were then shared:


*Instruction: As the current report is limited to residues in the Forests Management Units, suggestions to include inferior tree species, residues outside FMUs, and plantation of bamboo was set-forth. This was envisaged to bring down the cost of charcoal and its raw materials.*

Follow-up action: In order to address the raw material resource gaps (for the existing one charcoal production unit and 5 approved units), the DoFPS had further assessed the availability of raw materials. The study has explored several other potential areas in order to ensure adequate quantities of raw materials in a sustainable manner. These include afforestation in barren land, possibilities of using bamboo as a raw material, bringing additional forest area under timber production, encouraging efficient use of wood-residues from the existing harvested areas, leasing of SRF land for plantations. All these additional options also have their challenges and advantages specified in the study.

*Instruction: To stress on the technology part in the report especially in the Charcoal production process. The need for a departure of the conventional/highly emitting technologies was discouraged because the primary objective of the activity was to reduce emissions.*

Follow-up action: The characteristics of three most commonly used charcoal production technologies were explored through the study. The use of improved technology has also been covered. It's advantage of not only improving the efficient use of the raw materials but also other environmental benefits of reducing air pollution is mentioned. Besides, the improved technologies can accommodate other raw materials for charcoal production apart from wood. A cost-benefit analysis on the cost of charcoal production has also been carried out; the deployment of an improved technology results in a large profit margin essentially due to increase in the charcoal turnover per unit of wood used.



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**Agenda Item IV - Presentation on the Project's Physical and Financial Progress**

On the account of the Physical and Financial progress till date, elaborative presentations across different outputs of the project were carried out by the NECS, NCWC, and UNDP. The progress under different outputs is attached as *Annexure I*.

Under the budget summary, an overall balance of USD 82289 was shared that includes the earmarked budget (USD 20000) for the private sector forum, USD 20000 for the PMU support and USD 5376 for UNDP General Management Support. The remaining amount of around USD 36900 savings mainly from the domestic charcoal assessment activity, and the project terminal evaluation.

The PB members were informed that the Terminal Evaluation (TE) planned for the project in the fourth Quarter (Q4) of 2021 was dropped after consulting with Regional Technical Advisors in Bangkok and UNDP Head Quarters. The NDC global program has plans to conduct a Terminal Evaluation in 2023 and with the advice sought from the UNDP RBM and RTA it was agreed a separate TE at the CO level was not required. Also the project fulfils all conditions and requirements in the UNDP POPP to drop the TE. However project will undergo audit in 2022.

The savings of USD 36900 was presented to the board members for reprogramming discussion

The NCWC proposed Capacity development of MRG/LG members, cooperatives, women groups and others to mainstream gender and NDC targets in sectoral plans , policies and programs. The NCWC wants to expand/replicate the present work to the Local Governments and sectors that were not covered so far.

***Discussions:***

1. Concerning the training program for the Mainstreaming Reference Group (MRG), a need to coordinate and collaborate with similar initiatives by the Department of Local governance (DLG) under the Ministry of Home and Cultural Affairs was made.

The NCWC clarified that the gender mainstreaming efforts have not been effective across the sectors especially at the Local government levels. The project activity intends to steer and complement the existing efforts undertaken by the DLG.

2. The reason behind the low financial output for the domestic charcoal study at only 17.5% (USD 3500 out of the USD 20000 apportioned for the activity) was sought.

The PMU clarified that the DoFPS had undertaken the study inhouse using their own staff expertise and this resulted in the low cost of assessment.. Besides, some of the



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critical components like undertaking a field visit to observe charcoal production processes in the neighbouring countries got compromised because of the pandemic situation.

3. Solid Waste Management (Construction of the Waste Collection Facilities and the Drop-off-Centers)

A further emphasis on the overall set-up of the facilities and their efficient use was suggested. This includes the need for data collection to record the amount and nature of the waste, raising awareness on the disposal and subsequently on the waste segregation. Broadly, a data collection template could be developed for information collection and to understand the impacts that the facilities are making to the households in the neighbourhood. A follow up meeting with key agencies namely Thimphu Thromde, waste service provider, NEC and UNDP to be organized.

4. General recommendation:

The PMU and the implementing agencies could work on the design elements for the assessments/studies conducted so far in order to draw implementation plans/follow-up actions for them. Ensure that the activities are women friendly or gender responsive.

**Agenda Item V-Update on the Climate Promise Program (Bhutan's NDC 2)**

The physical and financial progress for the Climate Promise Program was also presented by UNDP. The 2 year project with a total budget of USD 280,800 (including of 8% GMS) from 2020-2021 was successfully completed as of December 2021. However a fund balance of around USD 14000+ is available from savings under the project. A request for use of the balance funds has been submitted to Bangkok Regional Hub for approval. The fund has been committed towards the proposal submitted by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forests to strengthen/refine the Implementation and investment plan for the Low Emission Development Strategy (LEDS) for Food Security.



## **Agenda Item VI- Presentation on New activities (AWP 2022 endorsement) and Project Extension**

From the savings, a total of six new activities were proposed for reprogramming. These are illustrated in the table below:

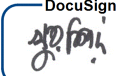
<b>Proposals for Reprogramming</b>	<b>Justifications</b>
Air Quality Monitoring Equipment	To strengthen the existing Air Quality Management efforts of the NECS and spread the Air quality stations to the other parts of the country.
Capacity development of MRG/LG members, cooperatives, women groups and others to mainstream gender and NDC targets in sectoral plans , policies and programs.	To build on the existing work carried out by the NCWC where-in the Local Government leaders are being trained and made aware of the Gender mainstreaming into their plans and programs. The proposed money will further build the capacities of the newly elected leaders and the remaining LGs from the earlier program.
Top up for the Private Sector Engagement Forum	Around USD 5000 from the savings to add-on to the private sector forum assessment activity because the earmarked funds may be insufficient to cover the stakeholder consultations.
Purchase of EV car	The NECS looks forward to demonstrating and also exemplifying in terms of carbon footprint reduction. The office wants to avoid emissions from the old conventional (ICE) cars that are presently in use.
Climate Series 2.0 (Awareness program through Youth engagement)	In continuation to the recently concluded climate series, CP 2.0 can work with Universities to demonstrate technological solutions that are clean and green with the community for scale up
Assessment on the Standard Baselines	To establish and strengthen Bhutan's position to access the benefits of the Paris Agreement Article 6 mechanisms. The Grid Emission Factor will only help mitigation actions in the sector that use electricity, but for a greater coverage of sectors, the NECS proposes to set a standard (emission) baseline to drive climate mitigation actions.

### ***Discussions:***

Due to a very limited budget and also acknowledging the pandemic situation, the board suggested a focus to reinforce/consolidate towards the most easily achievable activities that fall within the overall scope of the project.

Apart from the proposed activities, considerations on developing the private sector through demonstration activities were also set forth. This includes exploring financial opportunities in terms of green business, partnering with the relevant agencies like the




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Royal Monetary Authority and the Ministry of Finance to develop some strategies or instruments to enhance green financing that would include women, youth and the wider community. Such initiatives might help promote the private sector business and help the government in terms of increasing domestic finance. Besides, it will transform Bhutan's green initiatives into trade opportunities.

**Decisions:**

1. The following activities (shaded) against the allocated budget were agreed. Other activities are still treated as potential and agreed in principle subject to the availability of resources.

Activities	Budget (USD)
Capacity development of MRG/LG members, cooperatives, women groups and others to mainstream gender and NDC targets in sectoral plans , policies and programs.	16913
Purchase of EV car	10000
Promoting green business and investment through demonstration, piloting and research in a Gender Responsive manner	10000
Air Quality Monitoring Equipment (Program Strengthening)	parked for future projects
Top up for the Private Sector Engagement Forum	parked for future projects
Climate Series 2.0 (Awareness program through Youth engagement)	parked for future projects
Assessment on the Standard Baselines	parked for future projects

2. The PMU together with the UNDP and BCCI will develop a ToR for the private sector assessment and circulate for inputs.
3. If the Pandemic situation does not improve or become favourable over the next few months' time, then the private sector engagement activity, then the reprogrammed activity 'promoting green business and investment through demonstration, piloting and research in a Gender Responsive manner' will be reprioritized. With the new activity for promoting green business, the BCCI now has two activities to be implemented by June 2022.
4. Official communication submitted from NCWC to NEC for the inclusion of the NCWC as a member to the Climate Change Coordination Committee (C4). This is one of the follow up actions and recommendations from the Gender and Climate Change study. The climate change division-NECS to pursue this with the NEC Secretariat.

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5. Similarly, the GNHC representative was requested to consider NCWC's inclusion when they roll out the work on MRG under the NAPA 3 project.
6. As mentioned above, for the sustainable solid waste management activity, a waste inventory to be maintained for the 7 WCF/DoCs supported through the project to keep record of the amount and nature of the wastes and also raise awareness on the disposal and segregation of the waste. A template could be developed to address this.
7. The one year project extension was endorsed due to few new and carry over activities from 2021. The new timeline approved for the completion of all activities is June 2022 and another six months for the project wrap-up that includes operational and financial closing of the project by December 2022.

### Closing Remarks

The Chair adjourned the meeting by thanking all the members for attending and contributing to the meeting.


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