



EVALUATION OF THE

DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE Thematic Trust Fund

COUNTRY
STUDY:
BHUTAN

United Nations Development Programme

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By Bob Boase and Rinzin Dem

Country case studies are a key part of the evaluation of UNDP's Democratic Governance Thematic Trust Fund (DGTTF). In 2006, the evaluation team reviewed and analysed DGTTF projects in eight countries: Bhutan, Bolivia, Kyrgyzstan, Mauritania, Mozambique, the Philippines, Sierra Leone and Yemen. The country case study is meant to complement the main text of the evaluation report.

The DGTTF has left a remarkable footprint in Bhutan with its four completed projects and one new project underway. **Moving on Gender** and the **Performance Audit** have made and are making a difference in Bhutan, perhaps even a substantial difference, and the evaluators have judged them successful. **Moving on Gender** was largely responsible for the National Plan of Action for Gender (NPAG), which targets specific measures to promote women's rights, welfare and their enhanced role and participation in all spheres of development.

Performance Audit trained auditors in this new kind of audit and developed a manual for auditors on how to conduct it. This project was instrumental in helping government go beyond the tradition financial audit into value for money auditing.

However, two projects, **Public Access to Information and Services** and **Strengthening Capacity of Legislators**, failed to measure up to expectations. While it is too soon to draw conclusions about the fifth project, **Building the Election Commission**, which had only just started at the time of the evaluation, it holds great promise, especially for this critical period leading up to Bhutan's first election.

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ABBREVIATIONS

| | | | |
|------------------|--|-----------------|---|
| APR | Annual Project Report | MYFF | multi-year funding framework |
| ASOSAI | Asian Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions | NAS | National Assembly Secretariat |
| BCPR | Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery | NCWC | National Commission on Women and Children |
| BDP | Bureau for Development Policy | NDI | National Democratic Institute |
| CEDAW | Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women | NGO | non-governmental organization |
| CIC | Community Information Centres | NPAG | National Plan of Action for Gender |
| CO | Country Office | OECD/DAC | Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development/ Development Assistance Committee |
| CPAP | Country Programme Action Plan | OGC | Oslo Governance Centre |
| CS | Cabinet Secretariat | ProDoc | Project Document |
| CSO | civil society organization | RAA | Royal Audit Authority of Bhutan |
| Danida | Danish Development Assistance | RB(x) | Regional Bureau(x) |
| DFID | UK Department for International Development | SAARC | South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation |
| DGG | Democratic Governance Group | SIDA | Swedish International Development Agency |
| DGP | Democratic Governance Practice | SL | Service Line |
| DGTTF | Democratic Governance Thematic Trust Fund | SNV | Netherlands Development Organisation |
| DIT | Department of Information Technology | SURF | Sub-Regional Resource Facility |
| DYT | District Development Committees | SWAp | sector-wide approach |
| ECB | Election Commission of Bhutan | TOR | terms of reference |
| ECIS | Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States | TRAC | target for resource assignment from the core |
| EOI | expression of interest | UN | United Nations |
| GTZ | German Agency for Technical Cooperation | UNAIDS | Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS |
| HQ | headquarters | UNDAF | United Nations Development Assistance Framework |
| HURLITALK | Human Rights Policy Network | UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| ICT | information and communications technology | UNDP NY | United Nations Development Programme New York |
| IDRC | International Development Research Centre | UNESCAP | United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific |
| INTOSAI | International Organization for Supreme Audit Institutions | UNICEF | United Nations Children's Fund |
| IT | information technology | UNIFEM | United Nations Development Fund for Women |
| JICA | Japan International Cooperation Agency | UNFPA | United Nations Population Fund |
| LPAC | Local Project Appraisal Committee | | |
| MCT | multi-purpose community telecenter | | |
| MDG | Millennium Development Goals | | |

1. BACKGROUND

While DGTTF is not widely known in Bhutan outside the institutions where it has operated directly, the programme has made a commendable difference where it has operated—and this is particularly the case for two of its four completed projects, Moving on Gender and Performance Auditing.

The five projects are in sync with the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), the Country Programme Action Plan (CPAP), the seven UNDP Democratic Governance Service Lines and the UNDP Corporate Plan 2008–2011. Table 1 below summarizes the input and outcomes of DGGTF projects in Bhutan since 2003.

TABLE 1. PROJECT SUMMARIES

| PROJECT | OUTCOME | ACTIVITIES | REQUESTED | RECEIVED | SPENT | OTHER RESOURCES | COMMENTS |
|---|--|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|--|--|
| Strengthening Capacity of Legislators (2003) | Created a legal framework for decentralized authority | Training and providing equipment | \$150,000 | \$150,000 | \$149,972 | No | Only three months for implementation |
| Public Access to Information and Services (2004) | Demonstrated benefits of ICT to rural people | Testing rural ICT centre for use by locals | \$100,000 | \$125,000 | \$125,000 | No | Project too ambitious for one-year DGTTF |
| Performance Auditing (2005) | New method of performance auditing implemented in government | Strengthening of Royal Audit Authority (RAA); Drafting of performance audit manual | \$200,000 | \$125,000 | \$125,000 | Follow-on TRAC to complete work | Performance auditing has taken hold |
| Moving on Gender (2006) | New National Commission for Women and Children (NCWC) launched | Strengthening of NCWC; Formulating gender plan for government; Promoting political representation of women | \$200,000 | \$175,000 | \$175,000 | No | Transformed the way Bhutan looks at women and children |
| Capacity Development of Election Commission (2007) | Enhanced capacity of the new election commission | Improving the understanding of election process by women and youth | | \$150,000 | | \$250,000 (TRAC) \$1 million (JICA) | Under way so could not be evaluated |

2. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- As is the case in most countries under review, the track record of success in Bhutan is mixed. Success is measured here in terms of outcomes and not outputs, and the outcomes relate exclusively to DGTTF criteria for project success, i.e., whether they are innovative, catalytic, strategic and sustainable.
- Bhutan has been both active and successful in its DGTTF applications, having been granted all five DGTTF proposals it applied for. The 50 percent success rate in its projects is at odds with previously reported DGTTF global feedback, suggesting reluctance on the part of local project and programme managers to admit failure, an acknowledgement that is a necessary precursor for programme improvement. The 50 percent success rate also suggests the need for more careful screening of project proposals through more refined evaluation criteria.
- Three of the DGTTF projects in Bhutan are situated in a UNDP TRAC project. This is the quickest way to situate, negotiate and design a DGTTF undertaking because UNDP already has a relationship and has built up trust and momentum through its TRAC project.
- The modest financial range of DGTTF projects is appropriate for Bhutan, where the overall UNDP programme is relatively small and where bilateral donors are not in a position to fund UNDP initiatives. Where the DGTTF award was less than requested, UNDP Bhutan topped up the budget with TRAC funds. This meant that Bhutan projects escaped the chronic funding shortfall faced by DGTTF projects in most other countries.
- DGTTF projects are consistent with the Bhutan UNDAF and with CPAP. This demonstrates that DGTTF is advancing the overall UN/UNDP agreed plan for Bhutan.
- UNDP Bhutan applied (successfully) for the Gender Thematic Trust Fund rather than for DGTTF because the timing was more convenient for this fund than for DGTTF. The fixed timing of the annual DGTTF call for proposals compromises its utility. This demonstrates the critical nature of timing for all trust funds. With over 470 UN/UNDP trust funds, DGTTF is only one among several available options, and COs will apply for the most timely trust fund. One possible solution is an open call programme with a more stringent review of projects based on a more comprehensive evaluation of the factors most pertinent to project success.
- DGTTF shared experiences in-country in the case of two projects, and internationally in the case of the Moving on Gender. Sharing is not, however, organized or systemic in Bhutan, in the region or globally.
- The DGTTF one-year implementation restriction is counter-productive. It compromises DGTTF projects that do not get under way until well into the calendar year by forcing a focus on disbursement rather than impact. Moreover, some DGTTF initiatives are, in practice, multi-year undertakings, and are bound to fail if shoehorned into a single year. All four projects in Bhutan went beyond one year.
- The current 10-step DGTTF application process and accompanying negotiations with the recipient government is heavy in transaction costs for the relatively small amount of money in question. Programme officers feel that a DGTTF project takes as much front-end effort as a TRAC project. This process could be streamlined and simplified.
- There is no DGTTF strategy for sharing experience or replicating successful initiatives among UNDP COs.
- The DGTTF Annual Project Report is not a valid evaluation instrument. There must be something more objective for a proper evaluation.
- A champion to lead the project is a factor in all successful projects including the two described above, and should become a criterion for future DGTTF projects. This person must not only be sufficiently senior in terms of experience; he or she also must have the vision and drive to make it happen.
- There is a close relationship between DGTTF and TRAC projects in Bhutan. Most often, the DGTTF project fits into a planned or existing TRAC project. This is logical since UNDP has invested time and effort in building a relationship with a given

government agency and it is therefore easier to gain DGTTF agreement than starting from scratch with a new government agency. Sometimes the DGTTF project is followed by a TRAC project either because funds are required to finish it off or because the DGTTF project has identified a new follow-on opportunity.

- DGTTF proposals must be reviewed critically for their innovative quality. Equipment and study tours for general capacity-building as was the case in the National Assembly Secretariat project should not be approved as DGTTF projects.

- Bhutan has grown in its capacity to identify, design and make its DGTTF projects succeed. Its first and third projects did not meet DGTTF expectations while its second and fourth projects were clear successes and its current project shows every sign of being a success. This learning needs to be documented and shared.

The following table assesses the projects according to certain criteria used in evaluation.

TABLE 2: PROJECT PERFORMANCE SUMMARY

| PROJECT | INNOVATIVE | MOBILIZED FUNDS | CATALYTIC | UNDP COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE | PARTNERSHIPS WITH DONORS | PARTNERSHIPS WITH GOVERNANCE INSTITUTIONS | INCORPORATED GENDER ISSUES | INVOLVED CIVIL SOCIETY | INCORPORATED HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES |
|--|------------|-----------------|-----------|---|--------------------------|---|----------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Strengthening Legislative Process (2003) | No | No | No | UN seen as neutral | No | National Assembly | No | No | No |
| Public Access to Information and Services (2004) | Yes | No | Yes | None | No | Department of Information Technology | Yes | Yes | No |
| Performance Auditing (2005) | No | No | Yes | UNDP seen as source of global knowledge | No | Royal Audit Authority of Bhutan | No | No | No |
| Moving on Gender (2006) | Yes | Yes | Yes | UNDP seen as source of global knowledge on gender | No | National Commission on Women and Children | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Capacity Development of Election Commission (2007) | No | Yes | Yes | UNDP seen as neutral partner by election commission | Yes. JICA | Election commission | Yes | Yes | Yes |

3. OVERVIEWS OF FOUR COMPLETED PROJECTS

The evaluations of the four completed projects are presented below.

3.1 Moving on Gender with the new National Commission for Women & Children

Results: Exceeded expectations

UNDP Core Democratic Service Line:

Justice and Human Rights

UNDP Corporate Plan 2008–2011 Theme:

Grounding Democratic Governance in International Principles

Start/end date: January–December 2006

Amount requested: \$200,000

Amount approved: \$175,000

Amount spent: \$175,000

UNDP project context:

The project was core-funded with TRAC funds for equipment and training to develop the capacity of the newly formed National Commission for Women and Children (NCWC). DGTTF allowed the project to experiment with riskier and more innovative tasks, particularly the development and approval of the National Plan of Action for Gender (NPAG), which targets specific measures to promote women's rights and welfare and their enhanced role and participation in all spheres of development.

Project purpose:

- To address the low level of political participation of women in governance
- To undertake gender and women's rights sensitization and advocacy of key stakeholders
- To complete the CEDAW report
- To build capacity of the new NCWC
- To establish a pilot women's support programme in an NGO for victims of domestic violence

Planned project outputs and degree achieved:

- Bhutan's 7th Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) report completed, approved and sent to UN

- Pilot support established with RENEW (Respect Educate Nurture Empower Women), a local NGO, to protect women victims of domestic violence
- Broad-based advocacy and capacity development of NCWC itself and the judiciary, police, people's representatives and gender focal points established and trained in 20 ministries and agencies
- Gender research undertaken and used by NCWC to sensitize its partners and beneficiaries

Planned project outcomes and degree achieved:

The National Plan of Action for Gender was completed and approved by NCWC and is pending approval by the government. There was a delay in getting government approvals and clearances on reports such as the NPAG. The NPAG is to be tabled for discussion by the Planning Commission sometime in 2008. The NPAG has facilitated gender mainstreaming into the country's 10th Five-Year Plan.

Innovative nature of the project:

This was the first stand-alone gender project with the government; other donor projects up to that point were restricted to having a gender component only, e.g., a health project with a gender component. The project transformed the way Bhutan looks at issues of women and children. The NPAG spells out the gender gaps between the current and the desired situation across all sectors so that the government and donor community can see clearly the work that needs to be done. There is a 15-year work programme implied in the NPAG.

Catalytic nature of the project:

NCWC has worked with the police, judiciary and people's representatives on human rights and rule of law as they apply to women and children. This has impacted these important institutions to the point that they now bring issues to NCWC for discussion and resolution. The project was able to establish and offer training on gender focal points in 21 government agencies. NCWC initiated work with the Election Commission of Bhutan (ECB) on the participation of women in politics. This has led to a number of training initiatives with the ECB and the two political parties and a new DGTTF project in support of the commission.

Strategic nature of the project:

The project was timed to coincide with the establishment of the NCWC, which promises to be a strategic institution at the heart of Bhutan's change process and critical to women's participation in the socio-economic development of the country. With this project, UNDP was able to gain an office space in the new NCWC building. The NCWC executive director, a member of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Gender Committee, used the NPAG template to discuss the setting up of a SAARC gender database, which has subsequently expanded across SAARC.

Sustainability of the project:

The project resulted in a follow-on project to be funded by the Gender Trust Fund and TRAC funding, which will address the gender MDG gaps laid out in the NPAG. The NPAG is described as a 15-year work plan to bring Bhutan up to international standards. This new project focuses on three main areas: (1) political representation of women; (2) domestic violence against women; and (3) institutional strengthening of NCWC. In sum, this small initiative of \$175,000 has already brought about an impressive list of results—and the follow-on project to be jointly funded by the Gender Trust Fund and TRAC promises to broaden and deepen the impact.

Adequacy of one-year time-frame:

The project was not completed in the one-year time-frame. Eighteen months would have been more realistic to accommodate decisions and approvals inside the government.

Value of the DGTTF project:

Had there been no DGTTF project, several things would not have been possible. The NCWC would not have been able to hire staff. The government would not have completed the CEDAW report or fulfilled CEDAW reporting obligations. There would not be an NPAG and no gender mainstreaming in the 10th Five-Year Plan. There would not have been a proposal to SAARC for a regional gender database. The NCWC would not have the profile and credibility that it currently has with various government and non-government institutions. And the NCWC executive director would not be on the Board of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Gender Committee for advice on gender in UNDP's Asia Pacific Region.

Success drivers of project:

The prime reasons for the success of this project are as follows:

- it timed with the launch of the new NCWC when assistance was most needed
- the head of the new NCWC was visionary, tireless and courageous head of the new NCWC
- project outputs were clear and doable
- the project was nationally led rather than donor driven

3.2 Performance Auditing with the Royal Audit Authority

Results: Successful

UNDP Core Democratic Service Line:

Public Administration Reform and Anti-Corruption

UNDP Corporate Plan 2008–2011 Theme:

Strengthening accountable/responsible institutions

Start/end date: January 2005–June 2006

Amount requested: \$200,000

Amount approved: \$125,000

Amount spent: \$125,000

UNDP project context:

Prior to DGTTF, there was no donor involvement in a performance audit. The Royal Audit Authority (RAA) established a Performance and Value for Money Unit along with the piloting of a few performance audits in 2000. But it needed to train more auditors in this new technique and it needed to develop a manual for auditors on how to conduct this new kind of audit. DGTTF met these urgent needs of the RAA.

Project purpose:

The primary goals of the project were as follows:

- help establish, integrate and institutionalize performance auditing in the RAA's audit practices
- build the capacity of the RAA to help carry out performance auditing
- help to establish an institutional structure to encourage accountability and integrity in public service

- produce a draft Performance Audit Manual and pilot it by carrying out a performance audit in two public-sector agencies

Planned project outputs and degree achieved:

The planned outputs were largely successful and are outlined below:

- Strengthen capacity of the RAA to carry out performance audits. All short-term training and equipment procurement initiatives were successfully completed. Long-term study courses could not be undertaken due to the gap between the amount requested and amount approved and due to the one-year time-frame of DGTTF projects.
- Integrate performance auditing into the RAA's audit procedures. The integration of performance auditing into normal transaction auditing was largely accomplished, and still in progress. Since performance auditing is still new to Bhutan, it will take some time to move from the RAA's traditional role of 'transaction audit' to 'performance and issue-based thematic audit'. However, the concept is being applied in day-to-day audit assignments.
- Draft the Performance Audit Manual and pilot it in two public sector agencies. The Performance Audit Manual was released on 9 December 2005. For new auditors, a Performance Auditing Guideline was introduced in both English and Dzongkha. The two pilot audits were carried out in the Forestry Development Corporation Ltd. for Forest Road Management and in the Department of Public Health for the Audit of Basic Health Units. The audits were well received by the two agencies and their findings and recommendations are assured of implementation.

Planned project outcomes and degree achieved:

The outcomes of the project were by and large successfully achieved and are as follows:

- Establish an institutional framework to promote accountability and integrity in the public service. Performance auditing is now being mainstreamed in the RAA. It is now mandatory that all RAA audits incorporate performance auditing to a certain extent. The Performance and Thematic Audit Division in the RAA has been split into two sections

—one for performance audit and one for thematic audit, thus indicating a heightened importance of performance auditing. In 2006, the RAA issued five performance and thematic audits in their annual audit report.

- Share information and disseminate the concept of performance auditing among the public. This could not be carried out very effectively due to lack of time. A sensitization was done through the national newspaper, the *Kuensel*, but a sensitization in all the ministries could not be carried out due to lack of time.

Prior to this 2005 DGTTF project, there was no donor involvement in performance audit. The Royal Audit Authority (RAA) established a Performance and Value for Money Unit along with the piloting of a few performance audits in 2000. But it needed to train more auditors in this new technique and it needed to develop a manual for auditors on how to conduct this new kind of audit. DGTTF met these urgent RAA needs. The nature and results of this project are summarized below.

Innovative nature of the project:

Performance auditing is a new concept for the RAA. The RAA's shift to performance auditing is in sync with the Lima Declaration, which supports the movement from transaction-based auditing to performance auditing. The move away from record-based to performance auditing had a direct bearing in fulfilling the vision of the RAA. This performance auditing role requires the RAA to engage in reporting and advising Parliament on larger issues of governing and managing public resources, which in turn will inform policies, legislation and creation of rules pertaining to use of public resources. To assist existing and new auditors, a performance audit manual in both Dzongkha and English was introduced and is widely used.

Catalytic nature of the project:

All RAA audits now address questions of efficiency, effectiveness and economy. The RAA changed its mission from 'Clean Public Service: Nations Pride' to 'Reporting on Economy, Efficiency and Effectiveness in the use of Public Resources', which reflected this change from traditional accounting approaches to a more comprehensive type of audits using 'value for money' auditing. RAA officials were trained under DGTTF in India, Japan, Malaysia, the Philippines, the United Kingdom and the United States. Upon

their return, they have trained over 100 RAA auditors and 15 to 20 internal auditors in various government agencies.

This project strengthened international networking. Training, experience and lessons learned in other countries (India, Bangladesh, Canada, Pakistan and the United States) were used when the Performance Audit Manual was designed. Moreover, existing partnerships were strengthened with regional and international auditing centres including ASOSAI (Asian Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions) and INTOSAI (International Organization for Supreme Audit Institutions). New partnerships were developed with UNDP audit offices in Malaysia through that country's CO.

The RAA established two new sections: an environmental audit and an information technology (IT) audit section. The IT section is directly related to the growth and development of performance auditing. The project led to the division of the performance audit division into two separate focus areas, performance audit and thematic audit, in order to enable authorities to pay explicit attention to each of these two categories of audit.

Strategic nature of the project:

The deepening of performance audit will have the effect of containing official corruption while improving effectiveness of government programmes.

Sustainability of the project:

The project resulted in a follow-up project funded by UNDP (TRAC) to complete unfinished activities. The RAA's capacity in the area of performance auditing has been strengthened greatly and this in turn was used to train internal auditors in various agencies. The popular Performance Audit Manual is heavily used, and with stronger internal audit systems in place in agencies, sustainability is assured.

Adequacy of one-year time-frame:

The project required an additional four months for completion beyond DGTTF's one-year limit. A year and a half would have been more realistic.

Value of the project

In the absence of this project, the RAA would not have been able to train its personnel in performance auditing. The capacity of the RAA and the building up of substantial

knowledge on performance auditing would not have taken place. Performance auditing as a concept would not have been integrated into the RAA's audit procedures, and the Draft Performance Audit manual initiated in 2001 would never have been completed.

Success drivers of the project:

The primary reasons for the success of this project are as follows:

- the head of the RAA was, besides being visionary, very committed to the project
- the project manager was devoted, keen and pro-active
- the RAA had already begun work on performance auditing, so the DGTTF project benefited from the momentum and nationally driven initiative
- the project was nationally led rather than donor driven

3.3 Strengthening Capacity of Legislators with the National Assembly

Results: Did not meet DGTTF expectations

UNDP Core Democratic Service Line:

Parliamentary Development

UNDP Corporate Plan 2008–2011 Theme:

Strengthening Accountable/Responsible Institutions

Start/end Date: September 2003–December 2003

Amount requested: \$150,000

Amount approved: \$150,000

Amount spent: \$149,972

UNDP project context:

Prior to DGTTF, the National Assembly Secretariat (NAS) had a project funded by Danida for assistance in the area of office automation and study visits. This DGTTF project had NAS as the executing agency and the Cabinet Secretariat (CS) as the implementing agency for its specific component.

Project purpose:

The project aimed to strengthen the capacity of the parliament in the following ways:

- enhance the information management system of the NAS, build its profile and raise awareness on where information on the NAS is available
- reinforce the efficiency of the Cabinet Secretariat in providing delivery of government services and leadership in government
- strengthening the district committees (DYT) in terms of linking local citizens to the NAS

Planned project outputs and degree achieved:

The project outputs were largely successful and are as follows:

- Increased capacity of the NAS in strategic communications and information management. An officer was trained in Manila (the Philippines) on 'Information Systems and Strategic Communications in a Parliamentary Context'. Plans were made to set up a separate hall with modern audio-visual equipment and computers for use during the assembly sessions. A website was developed with content on assembly resolutions and other relevant data, and launched in 2004 after the DGTTF project.
- Increased technical capacity of the NAS in the handling, delivery and dissemination of information. Equipment was installed and 11 people from the NAS and CS) were trained in its operation. Books were added to the small library. A database was created, which is updated regularly, to provide information on National Assembly members. Booklets were printed internally for distribution, and a documentary aimed to build awareness was produced and distributed to some schools and all the districts. It is now under review, and a new one is being produced with Danida funding.
- Increased legislative and policy analysis capacity for the NAS. Five people were trained in legislative drafting in the House of Representatives in the Philippines. This training familiarized the officials with other Parliaments and equipped them with legislative drafting skills. Seven officials went on a study tour to the parliaments of Singapore and Thailand. The final draft of the rules and procedures of the NAS was submitted for endorsement to the 82nd session of the National Assembly is still awaiting endorsement at the time of publishing this evaluation.

- Strengthened capacities of the DYT in linking with their constituencies. This was only partially achieved. The district officials of only 11 districts out of 20 were trained. (The intention is to train the remaining officials at a future date under a different donor programme.) A two-day course in three different locations was conducted. While a total of 125 out of 300 DYT members were trained by the Royal Institute of Management in time management, problem solving and conflict resolution, conducting effective meetings, and financial management, there was no out-of-country training, which would have benefited them.

- Increased effectiveness of the Cabinet in linking with the National Assembly Secretariat. This output had a low level of achievement. A few trainings in document filing, archiving and storing were undertaken, which led to improved filing and retrieval systems. But the project manager from the NAS had to double as project manager from the CS. Due to the short time-frame (three months) of the project, the CS was unprepared and understaffed; as a result, fewer people from the CS were trained than initially planned. Communication and coordination between the NAS and CS was very poor. Finally, the effectiveness of linking the NAS with CS in this regard was very low.

Planned project outcomes and degree achieved:

The project contributed to the drafting of the National Assembly's rules and procedures, which have yet to be endorsed by the Assembly. This project provided for a large number of training programmes for legislative drafting officials and their exposure to parliamentary settings in other countries. However, the training and study tours did not result in the intended outcome of 'an effective legal and policy framework for decentralized authority and management'.

Innovative nature of the project:

While it was the first project of its kind to be implemented in the National Assembly Secretariat, this project was essentially training and equipment procurement, which in themselves are not innovative.

Sustainability of the project:

Currently there is a Danida project upgrading the NAS infrastructure, but some activities initiated by DGTTF have

also been carried forward. The documentary produced under DGTTF is now in the process of being reviewed and a new one will be created for distribution. Most of the officials trained under DGTTF are still at the NAS and continue their work in the area of legislative drafting. However, this project does not leave any lasting footprint.

Adequacy of one-year time-frame:

The project had to be implemented in the final three months of 2003 because of the prolonged process of government approval. According to NAS officials, this was too short a time-frame and it compromised the project by a focus on spending the money rather than bringing about a sustainable result.

Value of the project

Had there been no DGTTF project then the draft NAS rules and procedures would not have been started, and the capacities of the NAS and CS would not have been enhanced. Overall, however, this project was not evaluated as a success.

Reasons for low success rate of the project:

- Internal approvals within the government can be time-consuming. In this case the project did not start until October, which left only three months for implementation. While the title of the project was 'Strengthening Capacity of Legislators', the project focused on bureaucrats in the NAS and the CS to the exclusion of members of the National Assembly.
- Output 4 (Strengthening Capacities of the DYT in linking with their constituencies) was only partially achieved because only some district officials were trained. There was poor coordination among the various stakeholders, such as the Ministry of Home and Cultural Affairs (DYT members fall under this ministry but it was not an implementing partner of the DGTTF project), SNV (the Dutch Development Organisation) and Danida—two agencies involved in the decentralization effort and training of district and block committee members.
- Output 5 (Increasing the effectiveness of the Cabinet in linking with the National Assembly Secretariat) was not successful. The NAS project manager also managed the Cabinet Secretariat component. The discussions and consultations

between the NAS, CS and UNDP prior to project approval did not establish clear roles and responsibilities. The CS was pulled into the project at a very late stage, was understaffed and unprepared, and given the three-month implementation of this project.

- The District Committee members, who are the link between the government and the people at grassroots level, did not receive the planned training. In sum, a series of design and implementation problems are responsible for the failure of this project in DGTTF terms. Perhaps the most telling feature of this intervention is that it did not lead to anything. The evaluators were not able to discern the legacy of this project.

3.4 Public Access to Information with the Department of Information Technology

Results: Did not meet DGTTF expectations

UNDP Core Democratic Service Line:

E-Governance and Access to Information

UNDP Corporate Plan 2008–2011 Theme:

Fostering Inclusive Participation

Start/end date: April 2004–March 2005

Amount requested: \$100,000

Amount approved: \$125,000

Amount spent: \$125,000

Project purpose:

- demonstrate the benefits of ICT to rural people and communities, and the country as a whole
- determine how best to make rural information services sustainable and attractive for private investors
- provide government information and services online (forms, rules and regulations, and reports)
- determine appropriate policies for government with regard to providing access such as subsidy policies.

Planned project outputs and degree achieved:

- Data on sustainability and benefits to men and women based on pilot public access points were

gathered for future analysis. This project helped the DIT to study issues such as the time-frame required to set up MCTs, its sustainability, and the benefit to citizens of having access to public information and services. The findings also determined online content and services and helped to identify the problems with MCTs, such as unreliable service due to disruptions in the electricity supply, and connectivity and hardware problems. Data log books were distributed to various public access points (PAPs) for data collection.

- Relevant public information was made online through the government portal, although this was only partially successful. The Bhutan portal has since been revamped and now contains almost all required and necessary information online, and features a discussion forum and online polling. The website is interactive so that organizations can post and update information.
- A replicable system which allows remote postal applications for key government services is operational in one pilot district. This system, largely successful, was piloted in one district (Trashiyangtse) using three models of Community Information Centres (CICs): the block office model, the school model, and the business model.
- CIC facilities included computers, photocopiers, digital cameras, fax machines and public phone booths.
- An awareness campaign was successfully conducted to demonstrate the benefits of public access to information and services. Many posters, brochures, stickers and sign boards were created and distributed, a documentary was produced and an advocacy campaign undertaken. This awareness campaign was endorsed and supported by the 5th King of Bhutan.

Planned project outcomes and degree achieved:

- Government/DIT to design strategy, informed by field data, for access points in decentralized communities. In this partially successful project, the DIT conducted an assessment of how services could be further improved and conclusions drawn from that study were applied when setting up other CICs

after DGTTF. While there was no strategy designed as such, useful lessons were drawn.

- Citizens to gain access to key public content and services online. Poor connectivity in the area where CICs were set up, coupled with uneducated rural communities, made this difficult. Due to limited bandwidth, it was difficult to download forms, so the DIT distributed relevant forms and applications on a CD, which proved more effective.

Innovative nature of the project:

It was the first project of its kind to be implemented in Bhutan. This project helped to showcase the advantages of ICT and to empower rural communities in availing of government services and improving livelihoods. This project promoted access to information and services online, thereby contributing to transparency and accountability and also advancing the agenda of democratic governance.

Catalytic nature of the project:

This project was considered a leading paradigm for setting up other CICs in the country. Most of the CICs (funded by the International Development Research Centre [IDRC] and Microsoft) that were set up afterwards used lessons learned from DGTTF. This project sparked interest among donors and the government, and many donors subsequently initiated CIC projects. Currently, there are a number of projects funded by the Government of India, IDRC and Microsoft Unlimited Learning Services. The objective for the CICs remains the same but they are operated in different ways. UNESCAP and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) are considering CIC initiatives. While it is likely these additional donors would have come on board with or without the DGTTF project, it should be noted they are far larger and more knowledgeable in the ICT area than UNDP. The project provided out-of-country training for key people at the DIT for maintaining the government web portal. In-country training was provided for management of telecentres and key staff at the district level. The DIT began collaboration with the Bhutan Post after the DGTTF project.

Sustainability of the project:

A number of related projects followed, funded by the Government of India, IDRC and Microsoft Unlimited. Presently there are 40 CICs in the country with an

additional 33 to be set up in the future. UNDP, under its e-governance project, supports the existing CICs. Websites for the 20 districts were launched in 2007 and there are plans to establish MCTs in every block in the country by 2010.

Adequacy of one-year time-frame:

The project required an additional four months for completion beyond DGTTF's one-year limit. A two-year time-frame would have been more realistic given the novelty and scope of this project. Moreover, the time-frame resulted in not getting the required participation from district officials and communities and this compromised project success.

The value of the DGTTF project

In the absence of this DGTTF project, CIC piloting would have been delayed until another donor came along. The rural population would not have been exposed to the benefits and advantages of ICT, and the Bhutan portal would not have been set up.

Prior to this 2004 DGTTF project, the Department of Information Technology (DIT) in the Ministry of Information and Communication, had a pilot UNDP-funded project to form a MCT (Multi Purpose Community Telecenter) in one district (Jakar) in Bhutan. The DGTTF project was to support the government's good governance and decentralization process through piloting online information and services for rural communities. DGTTF piloted the development and setting up of Community Information Centres (CICs) in a remote district, while at the same time attempting to empower rural people in accessing government services and improving their livelihoods through use of ICT.

Reasons for low success rate of the project:

- This project was too ambitious for a one-year DGTTF undertaking. The selection of one of the most remote and poorly connected districts in Bhutan raised the project risk to the point of almost guaranteeing failure. Therefore, output 2 (availability of relevant public information online through the government portal) was only partially achieved.
- The portal was unsuccessful in incorporating electronic government forms because government agencies were reluctant to provide their forms to the project. This resistance was overcome only after the project ended, and the portal now incorporates all the forms. The lesson here is the importance of bringing government agencies on board as part of the planning of the project so that they understand and cooperate during the project. For the portal to be effectively used, the government should deliver all official services and news through the MCT and provide the information requested by the people, for e.g., agricultural information for farmers. Needs-based information and content should be developed in a participatory manner, which requires coordination among the districts, central agencies and communities. Connectivity was and remains a major problem with the Bhutan portal. The portal will have genuine difficulty in reaching its potential until connectivity is reliable and has reasonable capacity.
- Output 3 (a replicable system which allows remote postal applications for key government services) is operational in one pilot district (Trashiyangtse). In retrospect, the selection of the pilot district and block was not realistic. The district chosen was in the far eastern part of the country, which was inaccessible for over two months due to floods. Moreover, lengthy government tendering and contracting procedures delayed procurement of goods.
- Close coordination and partnerships among the key stakeholders such as the relevant ministries, district administration, central agencies such as Cabinet Secretariat, well-established institutions (Bhutan Post, for example) and the communities themselves is crucial to successful piloting, and did not exist in this case.
- The three models of CICs used were not properly assessed before implementation. The Block CIC was manned by a block officer who was uneducated and did not have the education, experience or skills to operate the CIC. The school CIC provided service to the public only after school hours but it promoted ICT as an educational tool with its students. The business CIC performed the best among the three, mainly because the operator was enterprising and

educated and the centre was located at a major intersection with well-trafficked by people. All three models unfortunately were used mainly by government officials, tourists and students passing by, rather than by the rural communities for which they were intended.

- This project was not a failure in implementation but in design. It was implemented as well as possible and the project implementers were dedicated and pro-active. This was a poorly designed project. The scope of the project went well beyond the single year of DGTTF projects. Projects of this nature take a while to show some visible impact, and infrastructure such as electricity and telephone lines need to be in place before implementation. In retrospect, the DGTTF project should have limited itself to a needs assessment and feasibility study, conducting awareness campaigns, and designing content to suit the needs of the communities. The feasibility study should have described and budgeted a number of options. Actual implementation could have followed thereafter and would be more suitable for TRAC, not a DGTTF project.

creating greater awareness and understanding of the electoral process among voters, particularly women, youth, illiterate people and people in remote areas. The ECB will be the main implementing partner working closely with other relevant agencies and the media.

The catalytic nature of this initiative is seen in the fact that the \$150,000 DGTTF project was bolstered by a \$250,000 UNDP TRAC project and a \$1 million grant from the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

3.5 Institutional and Human Capacity Building of the Election Commission of Bhutan

This project was just getting under way at the time of this evaluation; it therefore cannot be evaluated at this time. The Election Commission of Bhutan (ECB) was established on 16 January 2006 following the appointment of the chief election commissioner under a December 2005 royal decree. The objective of the ECB was to create an environment conducive to free and fair elections so that all Bhutanese women and men who are eligible and interested could take part in the elections. The ECB is mandated to oversee, direct and control the preparation of electoral rolls, conduct parliamentary and local government elections and hold referendums as specified under the Constitution—in a free and fair manner. The project aims to enhance national capacity in conducting fair and free elections at national and local levels by supporting institutional and human capacity-building of the ECB and

4. PEOPLE INTERVIEWED FOR THE BHUTAN COUNTRY STUDY

Government

Lakshuman Chhetri, Under-Secretary, National Assembly

Rinchen Chopel, Executive Director, National Commission for Women and Children

Gyamtsho, Chief Audit Officer, General Governance Division, Royal Audit Authority

Kuenzang Lham, Under Secretary, Planning Commission

Sangay Wangchuk, Joint Director, DIT, Ministry of Information and Communication

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

Marie Pedersen, Gender Specialist

Tshering Pem, Programme Specialist, Poverty and MDG Unit

Nicholas Rosellini, Resident Representative

Lily Wangchuk, Head, Governance Unit

Pem C. Wangdi, Programme Officer, Poverty and MDG Unit

Birgit Weyss, Programme Officer, Governance Unit

Tshering Yanki, Programme Officer, Governance Unit



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