

Major Activities of the Mainstreaming Reference Group (MRG)

1. Mainstreaming the Planning Process

- Identification of windows of opportunity for mainstreaming of crosscutting issues into the planning process both at the national and local government levels. (Report of the Help Desk Training Workshop at Paro, 27-29 April 2011)
- Integration of Environment, Climate change and Poverty (ECP) and other cross cutting issues such as gender and disaster into the 11th Five Year Planning Guidelines. This led to the adoption of National Key Result Areas (NKRAs) such as carbon neutral and climate resilient development; integrated water resource conservation and utilization; sustained economic growth; poverty reduction and gender friendly environment. Further, a Six-Step Matrix Tool was developed and incorporated into the Planning Guidelines to facilitate mainstreaming of cross cutting issues into plans and programmes. (Planning Guidelines for the Eleventh Five Year Plan, GNHC 2008-2013)
- National level ECP mainstreaming awareness and exercise using the Six-Step Matrix Tool conducted with 9 ministries involving 50 participants from 4th to 10th January 2012 (with 34% women representation). This led to the publication of the “National Framework and Guidelines for Mainstreaming ECP concerns into the 11th Five Year Plan.”
- Local Government level workshops conducted involving 108 participants (with 20% women representation) from all 20 Districts held from 7th to 18th September 2012 in 4 regional centres (Paro, Bumthang, Tsirang and Monggar). This led to the development of “Framework and Guidelines for Mainstreaming ECP Concerns into the Local Government 11th Five Year Plan.”
- Review and integration of ECP and other cross cutting issues into the Draft 11th Five Year Sectoral and Local Government Plans from October to December 2012. *Comments on the draft plans included:*
 - regulating imports of environmentally hazardous materials with emphasis on imports of greener products and eco-friendly materials (Dept. of Trade, MoEA); inclusion of new tax measures for environmentally hazardous imports under “Propose new tax measures.” (DRC, MoF)
 - need to include promotion of cultural industries, green industries/entrepreneurship, brand Bhutan, promotion of energy efficient & low carbon innovative industrial technologies (DoI, MoEA)
 - though the output states “Sustainable and environment friendly mineral development” – the indicators do not consider this. (DGM, MoEA)
 - the output “Construction and upgradation of highways completed” to reflect improved access to socio-economic facilities for beneficiaries ensuring environmental sustainability, safety and reliability factors. (DoR, MoWHS)
 - construction of many new highways may warrant Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA) because of their cumulative environmental, economic and social impact. (DoR, MoWHS)
 - Under the Local Government Plans (in general) – Forestry Sector: would need to include increasing awareness and capacities and payment for environmental

(ecosystem) services for critical watershed management, ecosystem management, water utilization & management.

2. Mainstreaming the Policy Process

- Policy Protocol modified after assessment of the policy process and protocol to identify opportunities and interventions required for mainstreaming of ECP and other cross cutting issues. For eg.:
 - requirement of Concept Note at the outset of any policy formulation to ensure integration of GNH principles and crosscutting issues.
 - clear guidelines provided in the policy protocol format for mainstreaming environment and other crosscutting issues.
- Environmental Overview (EO) applied to the draft Mineral Development Policy. Given below is an example of the kind of changes and recommendations made:
 - The policy required that an Environmental Impact Assessment be done for all mineral development projects. However, it was informed that the EIA on its own may be grossly insufficient to assess the cumulative impacts of the development of all minerals in Bhutan. It was recommended that other approaches such as the Strategic Environmental Assessment would need to be applied in order to fully understand the potential social and environmental impacts of mineral development.
- The draft Tourism Policy will be reviewed towards the end of February 2013 using the EO.
- A total of around 9 policies were reviewed and screened by the MRG.
- Some of the draft Policies reviewed and screened by the MRG include: Cottage, Small and Medium Industry Policy (comments included: developing a culture of entrepreneurship with due consideration to environment, climate change and poverty issues and human capital with 'green' mindset and attitudes); Subsidized Timber and Non-Wood Forest Produce Allotment Policy (comments included: Sustainably meeting the needs of the construction sector may need to be solved with various alternatives rather than only by reviewing the timber allotment and pricing. This should be supplemented by other actions such as encouraging and promoting alternative construction methods and resources.) Others included the Renewable Energy Policy; National Population Policy; National Employment Policy; National Education Policy; Occupational Health and Safety Policy; and Food and Nutrition Security Policy.

3. Awareness raising and Capacity Building on Environment, Climate Change and Poverty (ECP) and other cross cutting issues like gender and disaster

21 Feb.-11 March 2011

- Internship Programme for MRG 2nd Cohort (10 Members) on "Mainstreaming cross-cutting issues into policies and plans in Bhutan" at Griffith School of Environment, Griffith University, Australia. [Report of Cohort 2 Internship Programme].

9 August 2011

- Sensitization to 33 District Planning Officers during the Planning Symposium held at NRDCL Conference Hall

21-25 November 2011

- Training on ECP Mainstreaming conducted for 40 Local Government officials and JSP focal points at Namgay Hotel, Phuentsholing

4 -10 January 2012

- Awareness raised on ECP mainstreaming to PPDs and technical departments of 9 Ministries (50 participants in total) at Migmar Hotel

12-13 April 2012

- MRG (Cohort 2) capacity building on Environmental Overview (EO) conducted by Professor Lex Brown. This training also included 25 other participants from Government and training institutes some of whom became members of Cohort 3. MRG members expanded from 10 in 2011 to 19 in 2012 (with 7 women officials).

14 May 2012

- ECP Mainstreaming Sensitization for Municipal 'Thromde A' Officials held at RochogPel

June 2012

- Presentation on ECP mainstreaming in Policies, Plans and Programmes during the One UN Plan (UNDAF) formulation at Taj Tashi

26 July 2012

- Sensitization conducted for financial, private and corporate sectors, and Civil Society Organizations at RochogPel

14-16 August 2012

- Training on Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA) for MRG and relevant agencies(28 officers) conducted by two mainstreaming experts: Professor Lex Brown and Dr.RikiTherival at RochogPel

17 August 2012

- High Level government sensitization on Strategic Environment Assessment to 32 high level officials from the government, corporate, financial and private sector, conducted by Professor Lex Brown and Dr.RikiTherivalat the National Assembly Conference Hall
- Subsequently, the Secretary of GNHC required an SEA to be conducted on Hydropower development in Bhutan

7-18 September 2012

- Awareness raised on ECP, disaster management and gender mainstreaming to Local Government officials across all 20 Dzongkhags from held in the 4 regional centres of Paro, Bumthang, Tsirang and Monggar. 108 officials took part includingdzongkhag planners, engineers, environment officers and gewog administrative officers.

1-14 October 2012

- Training for MRG 3rd Cohort (11 Members) on "**Mainstreaming cross-cutting issues into policies and plans in Bhutan**" at Griffith School of Environment, Griffith University, Australia. [Training Report of Cohort 3 Capacity Building Programme].

16 November 2012

- ECP Sensitization Workshop for 21GNHC & DLG planners/focal points, at the NEC Hall.

7-14 December 2012

- Initiated discussions with Directors and faculties of College of Science & Technology; Royal Institute of Management; and Sherubtse College to sustain mainstreaming efforts in Bhutan through the development of new curriculum and integration of ECP into the existing modules. The discussions included ECP concepts, approaches, issues & opportunities, govt's concerns on ECP in development, govt's policies to address these issues, national and international commitment and obligations on ECP, green development and sustainable development. The participants for sensitization, dialogue and discussions included Directors, Deans, Head of the Depts, and Lecturers of respective institutes and colleges.
- In an effort to ensure sustainability of the mainstreaming efforts in Bhutan beyond the current PEI/JSP and AusAID support, MRG initiated a brainstorming exercise to develop future strategy and priorities for ECP mainstreaming. The exercise mapped out the key areas of interventions for ECP mainstreaming in Bhutan, of which priority activities have been identified for MRG's intervention to facilitate effective mainstreaming by sectors and LG during the implementation of 11th Plan programme from July 2013. The exercise resulted in developing a strategic action plan for mainstreaming in Bhutan and will be presented to the government and development partners in 2013 for partnership and support to the implementation of action plan.

27 December 2012

- High Level sensitization conducted for Ministry of Finance during the Policy and Planning Coordination Meeting (PPCM) participated by 15 officials including the Secretary and all the Directors of the Ministry.
- MRG requested to assist in ECP mainstreaming during the review of the Financial Procurement Rules and Regulations.
- Budget Call Notification for financial year 2013 to 2014 of the Ministry of Finance includes requirement for sectors and local governments to incorporate gender and ECP concerns into their respective budgets.

4. Integration of ECP Modules in Curriculum of Tertiary Institutes

Some MRG members and Professor Lex Brown visited College of Science and Technology (CST, Kharbandi), Royal Institute of Management (RIM, Semtokha), and Sherubtse College (Kanglung), discussed and provided feedback to their module development on ECPM for students and trainees and also ECP incorporation in existing curriculum and courses (e.g draft modules; Environmental Studies-C51 (at CST), Environment Climate Change and Poverty Mainstreaming-EMT 302 (at Sherubtse)). The main objective is to introduce students to ECPM concepts, issues, approaches, tools etc. and prepare them to meet these challenges in future as leaders, decision makers, private sector players and as individuals.

The capacity needs, capacity building to provide research, consultancies, trainings and advisory services to the Royal Government, private sector and other clients was also discussed.

- The institutes and colleges expressed appreciation on the ECPM concepts, approaches and issues, and therefore also expressed their support on the urgent need to address ECPM issues and therefore Royal Government's concern in development through mainstreaming in existing curriculum and courses, and developing a separate module wherever required to be provided either as an elective to the interested students or to provide as a compulsory module for all students.
- They also expressed their readiness to support this initiative of ECPM in policies, plans, and programmes and thus supporting mainstreaming in development to realize the 11th Plan goal of 'inclusive, sustainable and green development'. They informed us of their existing capacity especially in terms of adequate infrastructure and human resource, future plans to start new MAs, MSCs, plans for entrepreneurship programs etc., which will support ECPM initiative. They also pointed out the lack of necessary knowledge and skills that they may need to engage in this new area on ECP and mainstreaming. Lack of funding for capacity building, research and consultancy was also one of their concerns.
- For ECP mainstreaming activity, the draft modules (module title as above) currently being developed by CST and Sherubtse college were discussed at length and necessary feedback was provided wherever relevant.

Some of the feedback and inputs given for improvement of the draft modules were:

- To put more substance, clarity and vision in the module objective, and expand the objective beyond its intention of mere fulfilment of poverty reduction through development, thus include wholesome objective of achieving sustainable development and GNH development philosophy.
- To merge the Units wherever possible because of some overlapping and repetition of some of the concepts found in the module. This is also to keep the module simple, straightforward and understandable for students.
- To start the module flow with basic introductory concepts and definitions in the beginning of the module, then go to the in-depth and detailed concepts in a sequential manner.

- To strengthen linkage and flow between ECPM concepts, tools and development processes (policy and plan formulation) to ultimately aim to address ECP issues and opportunities through development processes for sustainable and GNH based development.

Next Steps and Follow-Up:

Royal Institute of Management (RIM):

- The institute will mainstream ECP in their existing programmes such as the PGDPA-Module on Managing Development Projects. RIM as a consultant for GNHC will also mainstream ECP in Local Development Planning Process and revise the Manual for 11th Plan as part of this initiative.

College of Science and Technology (CST):

- The module for roads engineering and environmental friendly roads construction in CST will be improved and new module introduced. CST will put up the new module to the University Council for feedback, necessary directive and endorsement.
- Continue to develop and improve the new module “Environment & Development” which is to be incorporated into the Bachelors of Engineering curriculum in place of Environmental Studies that was offered till date. The college offers BE in Civil, Electrical, Electronics & Communication and Information Technology. The proposed module will be common to all these Departments and shall be offered in the Sixth Semester

Sherubste College:

- The college has finalized a module on ECP Mainstreaming [EMT 302] to be delivered under the B.Sc. Environmental Science. The module will be extended to other faculties such as economics, B.Sc. Physical Science, geography etc. The college has submitted the new module to the Royal University of Bhutan for validation and will be offered from July 2013

The institutes and Colleges will keep the GNHC, NEC and ECPM Reference Group informed on the progress and status of this work.

As a next step to bring in more institutes and colleges under ECPM initiative and program, dialogue will soon begin with the other institutes and colleges under RUB such as Gaeddug College of Business, College of Natural Resources, and private institutes like Royal Thimphu College. Also the plan is to start a dialogue and bring on board Ugyen Wangchuck Institute of Conservation and Environment (UGWICE), Bumthang in this process.