

# Evaluation Brief

## Final evaluation of the Technical Cooperation Project in support of the Renewable Natural Resources Sector Bhutan

Evaluation conducted by:  
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**Project Timeframe: August 2014 to August 2021**

**Evaluation Timeframe: April 2020 to May 2021**

**Final Report Submission Date: March 2021**

**Note:** This Evaluation Brief was produced as an output of the Final Evaluation by the Evaluation Team. The content presented in this knowledge product are extracted from the Final Evaluation Report that could be accessed by writing to [subramanian.pattabiraman@eeas.europa.eu](mailto:subramanian.pattabiraman@eeas.europa.eu), Senior Programme Manager, EU Delegation to India and Bhutan.

# Technical Cooperation Project in Support of the Renewable Natural Resources Sector (EU-TCP) in Bhutan

Lessons Learnt from the project initiative

## The EU-TCP project background

Bhutan is a Himalayan country with about 57% of the population dependent on agriculture. However, farming has been constrained by the mountainous topography and rapid changes in environmental variability. The Royal Government of Bhutan (RGoB) has always considered agriculture sector as one of the important contributors to the national economy as depicted in the Five-Year Plans to achieve goals of the Gross National Happiness.

The European Union (EU) is a major development partner on the Renewable and Natural Resources (RNR) sector of Bhutan. During the last decade the EU has developed a strong relationship with the Ministry of Agriculture and Forests (MoAF) through budget support, trade support, technical cooperation and technical assistance initiatives.

The MoAF is composed of different departments and supported by divisions both at central and regional levels to cater various RNR services backed by one of the largest human resources amongst the ministry. Therefore, building capacity and institutional strengthening within MoAF has been a priority with a multi-institutional nature of the RNR sector, covering forestry, agriculture and livestock, and challenges posed by climate change, steep terrain which has direct impacts on productivity. Further, Bhutan also has a strong conservation policy for environment and bio-diversity.

Additionally, Bhutan government officials have traditionally limited access to technical skills in advanced agro-technologies or state of the art strategic planning or monitoring and analysis. These restraints have represented a bottleneck in effective MoAF's management and achievement of the stipulated FYPs' goals. The EU has responded to these needs by funding the Technical Cooperation Project in Support of the Renewable Natural Resources Sector (EU-TCP) initiative, a EUR 4.6 Million project implemented between 2014 and 2021, including a one-year extension granted to respond to Covid19 needs.



EU Delegation with Minister MoAF



EU TCP Project Steering Committee Meeting



Honorable Secretary, MoAF with MJU President



Funded by the  
European Union



Royal Government of Bhutan  
Ministry of Agriculture and Forests

# The EUTCP project at a glance

## Objectives

- The overall objective of the EU Technical Cooperation Project in support of the Renewable Natural Resources (RNR) Sector was to support the Ministry of Agriculture and Forests in Bhutan to achieve the objectives of the RNR 11th and 12th Five Year Plan
- The specific objective of the project was to increase the Ministry of Agriculture and Forests capacities and skills at both central and decentralised levels to conceptualise, plan, implement and monitor activities under the 11th and 12th Five Year Plan.

## Target groups

The key target groups of the project include:

- the staff of the MoAF, at central and local level, of various departments and agencies, who received training to enhance their skills and knowledge through technical, management and strategic leadership trainings,
- the smallholder farmers and community groups, who benefitted from capacity building initiatives (study tours, exposure trips and trainings), and

the farm shops, farmer cooperatives and producer groups who received value chain equipment, to strengthen their effort to market RNR produce.

## Salient Achievements

- Enhanced institutional capacity of the Ministry - around one third of the Ministry officials (around 1200) were trained by the project on various technical, managerial, administrative and leadership trainings.
- Around 200 farm shops / farmer cooperatives equipped with post-harvest value addition infrastructure to effectively market their produce
- A well-functioning human resource information system is in place
- Enhanced and effective knowledge management in place at MoAF
- COVID 19 agricultural contingency plan of MoAF implemented with the programme support



MoAF-Bhutan Delegation to MJU



Project First training session



# The Programme Results in Figures

Management and administrative capacities, skills and know-how of service departments of MoAF are strengthened and improved at central and local levels

Masters degree Programs Completed by MoAF officials	7
No. of officials trained in technical training	1152

Production and commercialization of selected commodities with marketing potentialities are increased

Value chain and market exploration studies conducted to enhance trade between Bhutan and neighbouring countries (Bangladesh, India and Nepal)	5
Display Fridges procured and supplied	261
Deep Freezers procured and supplied	50
Vacuum Packaging Machines procured and supplied	30
Cool boxes procured and supplied	415
Officials trained in Marketing and related fields	66

The approach to knowledge management and training documentation is substantially improved in the MoAF

Online Human Resources Information Management System Established	1
Officials trained on Human Resource Management and related areas	17

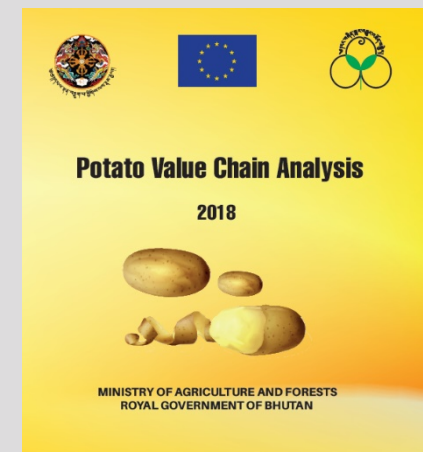
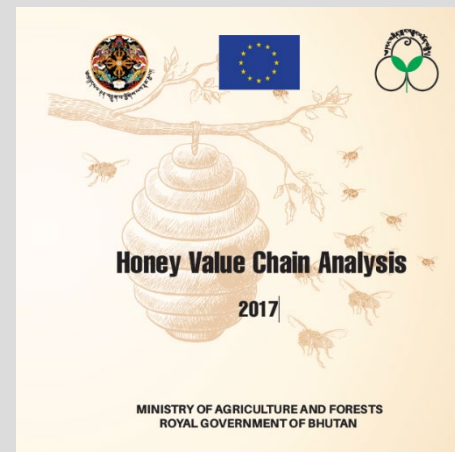
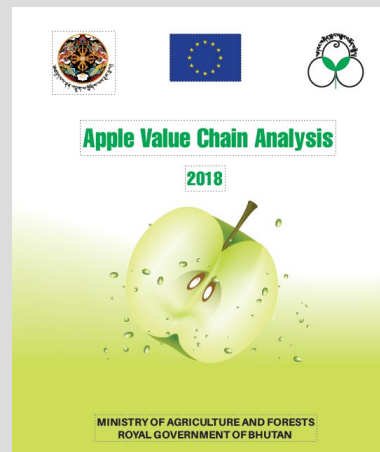


Display fridge

Closing visit to MJU



Cover pages of Apple, Honey and Potato Value Chain Analysis



# Good practices and Conclusions

- The TCP's Priorities Areas **were fully coherent and aligned to the national RNR sector plans**. TCP interventions made **direct contributions** towards strengthening Ministry's capacities in enhancing agricultural production and sustainable management and utilization of natural resource.
- The TCP has been **highly effective in building ownership and working with the Government** through the 11th and 12th FYP and the project demonstrated flexibility to adapt to changes. TCP interventions contributed to policy, legal and institutions strengthening in the RNR sector.
- TCP's added **value and comparative advantage lies in the development of MoAF in-house technical knowledge**. With limited financial resources, **the TCP chooses successfully to focus on training and capacity building for policy**, institutional and system development and pilot testing of localized knowledge. The TCP targeted appropriate beneficiaries who were most effective in building the basis for long-term capacity and disseminating the knowledge.
- The TCP triggered behavioral changes while building the policy, institutional and human resource capacities to sustain such changes ultimately improving the service delivery. The project achieved very concrete outcomes with enhanced capacities, however, it is important that these **outcomes translate into effective public service delivery**.
- The Project has established a long-term partnership with Majeo University, Thailand, ensuring continuous learning opportunity and in sustaining the institutional capacity of the Ministry.

## Lessons Learnt

- The TCP Project component (ER3) "providing supplies supporting commercialization and marketing supply chain of agricultural products" should have been designed in the framework of a wider comprehensive action plan linking training and capacity development with Farm shop investment in the longer term.
- The chosen Programme Estimate modality is complex to implement projects of technical cooperation in nature as it demands training and capacity building to government officials to learn the procurement and operational procedures of EU in advance.
- The project could have benefited from an in-country technical assistance to design a human resource and capacity building plan and launch the actions during the first year.
- The project should have developed a platform to ensure sustainability and continuity of the training actions to allow for full institutional absorption capacity. Most of the trainings can be articulated into a long-term capacity building program where farmers, and government officials receive continuing education to sustainable growth of capacity.
- The project could have addressed additional (multi-sectorial) factors hindering the low economic returns to farmers (e.g. markets, credits, economies of scale, labour shortages) in the training programs to ensure the introduction of new technologies and practices. For example, production and marketing of high-value and organic commodities would require putting in place additional appropriate policy, institutional and technical infrastructures to ensure food safety, biosecurity and quality standards as a more comprehensive approach.