

Minutes of the 3rd Project Board Meeting

UNDP-GEF funded NCSA project on “Enhancing Global Environmental Management in Bhutan’s Local Governance System

Date: 02 August, 2011

Venue: NEC Conference Hall

Members Present

1. Dr. Ugyen Tshewang, Secretary, NEC – Committee Chairman
2. Mr. Karma L. Rapten, Head, Environment & Disaster Mgt. Unit, UNDP CO, Thimphu
3. Mr. Pema Thinley, Sr. Program Officer, MoAF
4. Mr. Tshewang Wangchuk, Program Officer, Dept. of Disaster Mgt., MoHCA
5. Ms. Peldon Tshering, Head, PPS, NEC
6. Mr. Tshering Dhendup, Env. Officer, NEC
7. Ms. Sujata Sunwar, ICT Officer, NEC
8. Mr. Thinley Dorji, Dy. Chief Env. Officer (Project Manager), NEC

Agenda 1. Welcome note by the Hon’ble Secretary, NEC

Hon’ble Secretary, NEC welcomed the members for the third Project Board meeting for the UNDP-GEF funded NCSA project. The members were briefed on the project objectives and the outcomes outlined under the project including the progress achieved under the project since the inception of the project in 2008.

Hon’ble Secretary also informed the members that the target activities under three project outcomes such as the establishment of focal point for the DEOs/DECs, training-of-trainers program, development of manuals & environmental management learning materials, tool kits for the DEOs, training program for the DEOs, upgradation & integration of the existing environmental information management system (EIMS) with the environmental clearance system (ECS) have been completed.

Hon’ble Secretary informed the meeting that the project was scheduled to terminate by end of June 2011 but was delayed to due to certain unavoidable circumstances. One of the major outcomes under the project i.e. training for the local government officials (Gups & GAOs) on basic environmental management at local level could not be implemented owing to the delay in local government (LG) election process. Hon’ble Secretary, therefore, requested the committee members for the extension of the project termination period so as to meet the project objectives in addition to the immense benefit that the project could deliver to the local government officials.

He also highlighted the importance of this project particularly in capacity building areas in meeting the obligations for the three Rio Conventions.

Agenda 2. Presentation on the Project Status & extension request

The Project Manager made a presentation on the project objectives outcomes, status of implementation both physical and financial progress and with the request to the committee members for extension of the project termination date.

The representative from the UNDP CO clarified on the financial progress reporting and stated that an amount of USD 94602.00 only is remaining to complete the remaining activities. He cautioned that the project should carefully monitor the activities and align them with the project document so that the expected outcomes and the overall objectives of the project are met. It was also pointed out that most of the products reported as implemented under the project (such as TOT learning materials, Reference Guidelines for the 3 Rio Conventions, Environment Management Tools and techniques, Awareness materials on the 3 Rio Conventions, etc) have not been shared with the members of the Project Board. The Project Management was requested to make these available at the earliest possible. The UNDP representative also pointed out that progress reporting in FACE and SPR was not done properly. The progress reported did not match with the activities planned and he raised concerns that resources were not used for the intended purposes. Follow up: Ensure physical and financial reporting as per planned activities in the AWP

Share the various products of the project with the PB members and UNDP

On the request for time extension for the project, the members had an extensive discussion but all the members agreed that the extension request was justified. The reason being that one of the major activities under the project (to train the local government officials on environmental management which is aimed to equip them with basic knowledge on environmental management) could not be implemented due to the delayed LG election process. It was also presented that the extension could not be processed since the Project Manager was away from office due to some unfortunate incidents in the family. In view of the above justifications, the PB members acknowledged that it was proper for the project to postpone this important activity so that the newly elected local leaders can be accommodated for the training. This extension period of 9 months is being justified owing to the very busy schedule planned between now and end of the year (2011) such as the HCHF Phase out Management Program (HPMP) launch in August, SAARC environment ministers meeting in September 2011, Royal wedding, Climate Division at NEC with the deadline to complete the SNC report by September end, and the Climate COP in November. Finally, the members unanimously agreed to extend the project termination period till the end of 1st quarter of 2012 (31 March 2012).

The UNDP CO representative stated that the request for extension has to be fully justified based on the above points. He also pointed out that the minutes of the PB meeting has to be finalized and signed by the NEC, GNHC and UNDP and an official request letter of extension has to be sent to the UNDP through the GNHC. The Project Management was also requested to prepare a work plan for the duration of the extension period and share the same with the PB members.

Follow up: Finalize the minutes asap and share it with PB Members for comments/inputs and get the endorsement of NEC, GNHC and UNDP and send an official request for extension to UNDP through GNHC.
Project Manager to share the work plan for the remaining period of the project.

Agenda 3. Demonstration on EIMS and ECS

The project manager made a brief demonstration on the EIMS outlining the importance of the web-based EIMS. He also informed the members that the existing EIMS has been launched, validated and upgraded through the project including the identification of the relevant stakeholders for regular data validation, and now the project will hand over the EIMS to the relevant Division within NECS.

The NEC Secretariat developed through other funding sources the environmental clearance system (ECS) which is used for maintaining the environmental clearance records. The ECS helps generate reports that can be used as primary data for the EIMS. Therefore, through the project fund, the ECS was upgraded to sync with the EIMS so that manual data extraction and feeding from the ECS to the EIMS is automated.

The UNDP representative pointed out that the project should limit spending on equipment on hardware as a substantial amount has already been spent under this budget head.

Agenda 4. Adjournment of the meeting

The project manager thanked all the members for the presence. The meeting was adjourned at 12.30 pm.