

Protocol for Policy Formulation for the Royal Government of Bhutan

All public policies in Bhutan, irrespective of their origin but with the exception of a Royal Command or national exigencies, shall be approved and adopted in line with the following Protocol for Policy Formulation.

1. Any issues to be formulated into public policies in Bhutan can originate from the Lhengye Zhungtshog (Cabinet), sectors and the GNH Commission.
2. The formulation of any policy will begin with the preparation of a concept note of maximum 3 pages by the ministry/agency proposing the policy and submitted to the GNHC for approval. The concept should clearly state the following:
 - i. The reason/rationale for proposing the policy i.e. What is the issue that needs to be addressed by the policy and where the directive is originating from?
 - ii. The process and indicative timeline that will be followed in developing the policy including likely need/use of TA.
 - iii. Identify opportunities and alternatives to integrate GNH principles and crosscutting issues such as environment, poverty, climate change, gender, etc. within the policy.
 - iv. Major impediments or risks foreseen in development of the policy.
3. The GNHCS shall comment on the concept note normally within 10 working days from the receipt of the concept note.
4. Upon incorporation/rejection of the comments after discussions with the GNH Commission Secretariat, the sector may commence formulation of the proposal.
5. The concerned ministry/agency shall submit the i) draft policy document, ii) policy protocol report as per the policy protocol format to the Gross National Happiness Commission Secretariat (GNHCS).
6. With the formal submission of the above documents to the GNH Commission, the Research and Evaluation Division (RED) of the GNHCS shall review the PP and provide feedback/comments to the concerned ministry/agency within one week. Within a week of submitting the policy proposals, the concerned ministry/agency shall also present the policy to the GNHCS, during which comments/feedback on the policy will also be discussed.
7. Upon incorporation of the comments agreed on between the sector and GNHCS, the revised draft policy shall be subjected to a policy screening exercise by the ministry/agency concerned and the GNHCS separately.
8. The revised draft policy document, policy protocol report, and the screening results shall be submitted to the GNHC through the GNHCS. The sector will make a presentation of the draft

policy to the GNHC and the GNHCs will present both screening results and additional comments if any.

9. The GNH Commission, can then decide to either go straight to Step 12, or consider instituting a task force to review the PP further. The task force will be purpose-based, work to a defined timeline and ensure all major stakeholders affected by the PP are consulted.
10. In the event a task force is instituted, the PP recommended by the Task Force shall be reviewed by an independent body identified by the GNH Commission. They will provide critical views (within two weeks) on the PP and provide its comments and recommendations to the Task Force and the GNH Commission.
11. The Task Force shall review the PP again to consider and incorporate their comments and then submit it (within one week) along with the original report of the independent body, for review and endorsement by the GNH Commission.
12. Feedback or comments provided during the GNH commission meeting will be discussed within a period of ten days between the sector and GNH Commission Secretariat commission. The revised PP (if feedback or comments have been accepted and incorporated) or responses to the comments/feedback will be submitted/presented to the GNH commission for review and endorsement, by the concerned ministry/agency
13. The PP endorsed by the GNH Commission shall be submitted to the next meeting of the Lhengye Zhungtshog (Cabinet) by the concerned ministry or agency for its approval.
14. Once approved by the Lhengye Zhungtshog, the policy shall be implemented by the concerned ministry/agency identified within the policy proposal.
15. A copy of the endorsed policy shall be sent to GNHCS by the concerned.
16. The concerned ministry/agency shall submit an action plan for the implementation of the policy to the GNH Commission Secretariat, after the endorsement of the policy by the Lhengye Zhungtshog. The action plan should clearly spell out the implementing agency, indicative budget and timeframe.
17. The GNH Commission shall carry out post-adoption evaluation of policies. The findings of the policy evaluations shall be used to refine policies.

Format for Submission of Policy Proposals

1. Title Page
 - a. Express the title of the policy issue in as few words as possible
 - b. Name and contact address of the organization submitting the issue
 - c. Date of submission
2. Proposal - State the proposal, clearly specifying what is to be considered in one or two lines.
3. Background
 - a. Current policy statement- a brief overview of the existing policy (if there is a existing policy)
 - b. Rationale - A brief explanation of the objectives of the proposal, highlight the key problems to be addressed by the PP
 - c. Prior Decisions, Government Order References, etc.
 - d. Current status/developments on the issue
4. Research and Findings
 - a. Mention any studies, appraisals, etc. carried out on issues related to the PP along with key findings and recommendations
 - b. Attach copies of the studies and reports referred to under a.
5. Policy alternatives/Implications

a. Link with GNH Indicators b. Pros and Cons - State the challenges and pros and cons of implementing the proposed policy

c. Mainstream Crosscutting Issues (as appropriate in this policy)

Gender

ii. Environment

- Identification of key sustainability issues linked to this policy and their mainstreaming
- Opportunities for sustainable use of natural resources
- Contribution to national goals, principles and international commitments eg. Carbon neutrality

iii. Vulnerability and resilience (adaptation) of communities and eco-systems

- Climate change
- Disaster
- Environmental degradation

iv. Health

v. ICT

a. Other Implications - State any other implications (legislative, financial, social, administrative, political, institutional, etc.)

6. Consultations

a. Consultation Process with other Stakeholders/Organizations - List the stakeholders/organizations consulted and state controversial issues, key findings and recommendations from the consultation process.

7. Attach a copy of the proposed policy.
