Social Media Policy

For the

Royal Government of Bhutan

Department of Information and Media
Ministry of Information and Communications

1. **Policy Name:**

Social Media Policy for the Royal Government of Bhutan

2. **Rationale/Purpose:**

The message of His Majesty, the fourth King, during the introduction of television and the Internet on June 2, 1999, also applies to social media:

"I would like to remind our youth that the television and the Internet provide a whole range of possibilities which can be both beneficial as well as negative for the individual and the society. I trust that you will exercise your good sense and judgment in using the Internet and television".

Social media are Internet-based tools for sharing and discussing information. It includes: Social Networks (e.g., Facebook, Google+, SinaWebo), Blogs (e.g. Huffington Post, PaSsu Diary], Wikis (e.g. Wikipedia), Forums (e.g. Bhutan Speaks), Podcasts (e.g. TED Talks), Content Communities (e.g. Youtube), and Microblogs (e.g. Twitter, WeChat). It is different from traditional media -- such as newspaper, TV and radio – because it is not a broadcast medium. Social media is a Web 2.0 platform for collaboration and co-creation.

Social media has been described as 'an essential tool for hundreds of millions of Internet users worldwide and a defining element of the Internet generation'. It is also an enabler of social, economic and political change.

Social media has been credited to helping us 'return to neighbourly communications' in a globalizing society. With social media, distance is no longer a barrier to having social relationships. Social media has also facilitated the creation of 'intentional' groups − collections of individuals with shared recreational, social, political, or religious views or interests. Contrary to those who see social media as encouraging selfishness, a recent study concludes that Facebook encourages "some aspects of empathy" and that Facebook is "primarily a tool for staying connected, (rather) than self-promotion".

Social media also helps the economy grow. It enables businesses to improve consumer focus, enhance collaboration in the production process, and better marketing of goods and services. *One research firm suggests that improved communication and collaboration due to the use of social media in the enterprise could add $900 Billion to $1.3 trillion in value to the US economy alone* (A Study by the McKinsey Global Institute, MGI, entitled the Social Economy, Unlocking Value and Productivity through Social Technologies, 2012). Social media is also enabling

millions of people across every sector of the economy to join forces in self-organized collaborations to produce dynamic new goods and services.

Social media has also become a tool for good governance. Governments around the world are using social media to reach out to their citizens to get feedback on service delivery, seek inputs into policy making, and create community based programs. The use of social media in government creates greater transparency, a collaborative relationship with the public, a stronger sense of ownership of government policy and services. These lead to greater public trust in government.

But social media also brings challenges. It has been used to spread material which defame, abuse or threaten others. Children who use social media expose themselves to danger. Social media encroaches on privacy - once information is posted to a social networking site, it is no longer private. It has also facilitated the spread of inappropriate content.

Social media has great potential as a development tool and it can also do a lot of harm to individuals, communities and societies. This way it is important for government to develop a policy that would harness the potential of social media to do good and mitigate its dangerous effects.

Since the introduction of internet in 1999, the number of internet users especially the social media is gaining popularity among the urban educated population. Many of the users use social media on a daily basis to interact, network and share information. Social media is also widely used to *"express views and opinions on socio-political and economic issues"* Bhutan Information and Media Impact Study (BIMIS), 2013.

The highest number of social media users (40.1%) falls between the age group of 18 – 24 years followed by 25 – 34 years (32.4%) as per the BIMIS study report. Owing to the lack of internet literacy and in the absence of a code of conduct to guide the general public in the usage of social media, we have observed people misusing social media.

3. **Definitions:**

1. **Access:** The ability to see what you are trying to view e.g. you may be able to access a friend's photo but not their full profile.

2. **Agency:** means Legislature, Judiciary, Ministry, Constitutional Office, Autonomous Agency, Dzongkhag, Gewog, Thromde or a statutory body of the Royal Government

3. **App**: An abbreviation for application, which is a piece of software that performs a specific function on your computer or mobile device.

4. **Civil Servant:** A person registered with the Royal Civil Service Commission and employed in the services of the Judiciary, the Legislature, the Executive, Constitutional Offices and Autonomous Agencies of the Royal Government

5. **Civil Service**: The body of employees in any government agency (apart from the military) which is a separate extension of any national government; the permanent professional members of a state's administration.

6. **Collaboration**: Working with someone to produce or create something; one of the higher goals of social media, online collaboration is being able to discuss and work with people across boundaries of organization, time and space.

7. **Content**: Text, pictures, video and any other meaningful material that is on the Internet.

8. **Content Management**: is the set of processes and technologies that support the collection, managing, and publishing of information in any form or medium.

9. **Offline**: Not connected to the Internet; also used broadly to refer to the 'real' world

10. **Online**: Connected to the Internet, and also being there in the sense of reading or producing content.

11. **Open Data**: Data that can be freely used, reused and redistributed by anyone. *Open data* does not mean that a government releases all of its data to the public. Rather, *Open data* means that whatever data is released is done so in a specific way to allow the public to access it without having to pay fees or be unfairly restricted in its use.

12. **Platform**: The framework or system within which tools work; an underlying computer system on which application programs can run

13. **Post**: A message, link, image, etc. submitted to an online location, such as a social media website.

14. **Scammers**: Perpetrators of scams and fraudulent activities.

15. **Social media**: Web 2.0 based tools and platforms people use to publish, converse and share content online.

16. **Staff:** All the people employed by a particular organization.

17. **Troll**: One who posts a deliberately provocative message in social media sites with the intention of causing maximum disruption and argument.

18. **Virtual:** Not physically existing as such but made by software to appear to do so.

19. **Web analytics**: the measurement, collection, analysis and reporting of Internet data for the purpose of understanding who your visitors are and optimising your website and social media platforms.

20. **Web 2.0**: the second stage of development of the World Wide Web, characterized especially by the change from static web pages to dynamic or user-generated content.

4. Policy Statement:

The Royal Government of Bhutan (RGoB) sees social media as an important tool for operationalizing our Gross National Happiness (GNH) and strengthening democracy and good governance.

On its part, the RGoB shall use social media to facilitate the implementation of all the pillars of GNH. In particular, social media shall be used for:

1. Making easy access to government information and to foster greater transparency, collaborative relationships with the public, a stronger sense of ownership of government policies and services. These will lead to greater public trust and accountability in government.
2. Enabling businesses entities to improve consumer focus, enhance collaboration in the production process, and better marketing of goods and services.
3. Promoting and strengthening family and community ties.
4. Encouraging citizenry participation for democratic and socioeconomic discourse.
5. Timely and accurate information will create a knowledge based society.

Objectives:

On its part, the RGoB shall use social media to implement all the pillars of GNH. In particular, agencies shall use social media to:

1. Improve the accessibility of government information;
2. Serve as additional channel for consultation so that citizens can communicate with government on important and urgent issues and concerns;
3. Enable greater citizen participation. Social media would be deployed so that citizens can co-create policies and services to achieve happiness; and
4. Enhance transition to eGovernment. Social media would enable greater information sharing and closer collaboration among ministries and other agencies. This is expected to lead toward better understanding of issues and greater efficiencies. Sharing information and working together can also lead to a more collaborative civil service culture. This policy shall supersede existing agency policies on social media. Agencies shall review and update current policies to reflect the guiding principles outlined in this document.

5. Legislative Compliance:

This policy conforms with the following:

1. Bhutan Information, Communications, and Media Act, 2006 Civil Service Act of Bhutan, 2010.
2. National Security Act of 1992 (Sections 7, 8, and 9)
3. Penal Code of Bhutan, 2004, (Chapter 22 - Defamation and Related Offences; Chapter 30 - Offences Against Privacy; and, Chapter 31 - Computer Offences)
4. Bhutan Penal Code (AMENDMENT) 2011

Other relevant issuances:

1. Bhutan eGovernment Master Plan 2014
2. Information Management and Security Policy for the Royal Government of Bhutan
3. Bhutan Civil Service Rules And Regulations, 2012

6. Implementation Procedure:

1. Code of Conduct

The foundation of Bhutan's ability to harness social media for GNH is our online behaviour. The RGoB expects all citizens to conduct themselves in the 'virtual' world as they would in the 'real' world. Existing RGoB laws will continue to be enforced offline and online.

The Code of Conduct while essentially meant for the civil servants, is normally followed universally and therefore, all the citizens are encouraged to observe it.

- Be a good citizen. Respect the Constitution, all laws, and other people's rights, including intellectual property, trade-marked names and slogans and other copyrighted material.
- Be responsible. Always act in a constructive manner and exercise good judgment.
- Be transparent. Be open about who you are, who you work for, who you represent or who you may be speaking on behalf of
- Be accurate. Ensure that what you post is true
- Be considerate. Never post malicious, indecent, vulgar, obscene, misleading or unfair content about others, your organization, your friends or your competitors.
- Be careful. Do not disclose sensitive private information about yourself or others. Do not post confidential or proprietary particulars about your organization. Beware of trolls and scammers.
- Be appropriate. Use social media in a manner that is consistent with public sector values, legal requirements, related policies and this code of conduct.

Business Associations, Civil Society Organizations, Youth Groups and other associations are invited to define and promote their respective social media codes of conduct that balances the right to free expression and responsible use of social media.

2. Government's Use of Social Media

Agencies shall use social media to disseminate and receive information as well as a tool for collaboration in the formulation of public policy and the design and delivery of public services.

Agency Plans

All RGoB agencies shall develop and implement their respective social media plans. Agency social media plans include the following:
- Goals and objectives;
- Target audience(s);
- Benefits, risks and mitigations for those risks;
- Resources required;
- Measure for success; and
- Governance structure/mechanism.

Furthermore, agencies should consider the following in designing their plans:

- <u>Strategic Use</u>. Agencies should not use social media for narrowly defined subject areas. Instead they should use social media to increase citizen participation in policy development and public service design and delivery. Social media accounts should complement other channels used for major or core activities of the agency.

- <u>Cross Cutting Issues.</u> Agencies should address cross-cutting issues such as gender, poverty, disaster management, climate change and environment. □ <u>Responsiveness</u>. Agencies should respond to posts made in their social media accounts in a timely manner.

- <u>Information Quality Standards</u>. Agencies shall ensure the quality, objectivity, utility, and integrity of information and services provided to the public.

- <u>Open Data</u>. All government agencies that provide data shall provide them in a standard electronic format that permits users to aggregate, disaggregate, or otherwise manipulate and analyze the data to meet their needs.

- <u>Accessibility</u>. Agencies' social media sites should be easy to use and readily available.

Platform

All RGoB agencies shall create their own social media platforms or use existing commercial/third party social media platforms to disseminate information and also to engage citizens to participate and discuss with the government on important and urgent issues of concern. The choice of the platform should be made by the agencies based on the kind of information to be disseminated, cost of operation, reliability and security.

Social Media Account Management

A senior official will be appointed as Social Media Lead to manage the official agency social media accounts. The Social Media Lead shall be supported by an appropriate unit or individuals (e.g. ICT Officer and/or IMO) in the organization. The agency's social media lead shall oversee the following:

1.Approving official social media accounts based on implementation plans, and overseeing the life cycle of official social media accounts, including planning, creation, configuration, implementation, evaluation and disposition;

2.Developing and maintaining a list of pre-reviewed social media platforms that will be developed by considering RGoB needs and priorities, including the following:

i. Reviews of social media platform-specific functionality and terms of use; and
ii.Privacy and security risk assessments for social media platforms, including model Privacy Impact Assessments for social media platforms.

3.Ensuring the use of social media platform management tool to manage official social media accounts.

Content Management

1. The Social Media led or the Information and Media Officer of each agency shall be responsible in creation of content for the official social media account. The official will ensure that consistent of content are maintained in all media platforms.
2. A moderation policy shall be developed to encourage participation. The policy will protect the agency from third party content and also the citizens from copyright, right to addition and take-down/deletion of any content that is abusive and will create disharmony in society.
3. A rules on record management shall be created on the official account to ensure that all information/content shared online are captured, a trail is generated and managed appropriately.

Risk Management

There are risks associated in using social media and agencies must implement security measures to mitigate these risks that are consistent with the Information management and Security policy for the Royal Government of Bhutan.

Among the high risks that agencies should manage are:
- Security Risks. Social media is vulnerable to the following methods/techniques of cyberattacks: Spear phishing, Social Engineering, and Web Application Attacks. There are also risks for 'malware' and 'spyware'. Agencies must implement security measures to mitigate these risks.
- Decrease in Productivity. The use of social media has the same risk that exists in the use of telephones and email. Time wasting should be addressed as a management issue, not a technology issue.
- Privacy. There is no guarantee that social media users' privacy will be protected to a sufficient degree. Agencies should clearly state their privacy policies.
- Communications and Reputational Risks. Agencies must be able to deal with unintentional errors, criticism for not meeting user expectations regarding response time, usefulness of content, language, tone.

- Use of a Third-Party Platform. Agencies who use third-party platforms should plan for incidents such as lack of availability (e.g., platform is over capacity or down for maintenance), changes to the platform and inappropriate content appearing on the same page as the official account's content.

Monitoring

1. Agencies shall monitor all of their social media accounts.
2. Agencies must use specific and quantifiable metrics (e.g., number of followers, posts, re-tweets, replies, direct messages) or a qualitative approach (e.g., tone and quality of comments and video replies) to determine whether the official social media account is meeting its stated objectives.
3. They shall also establish an incident reporting process for the documentation of significant issues and the action taken.
4. Agencies shall also inform users that government is monitoring and will remove public comments that are political, target specific individuals or groups, are abusive, or are similarly unacceptable.

Guidance on Civil Servants' Use of Social Media

1.Access to Social Media Platforms:
   i. Civil servants are encouraged to participate in social media in order to enhance their work performance and contribute to improving their outputs and deliverables.
   ii. Civil servants' access to social media sites during working hours is granted for the following:
a. To manage the agency's official account(s); and,
b. To fulfill work-related activities through their personal accounts.

   iii. The use of social media for personal or non-work-related interests during office hours is not acceptable.
   iv. Civil servants will be held accountable for any improper access or use of any social media site.

2.Staff Behavior:
Bhutan's Civil Service Code of Conducts and Ethics, which establishes the desired standard of behavior among the civil servants, also applies online.
Additionally, civil servants who are on social media, whether on official or personal capacity, should always be guided by the following rules:
   1. Be credible. Be accurate, fair, thorough and transparent.
   2. Be respectful. Encourage constructive criticism and deliberation. Be cordial, honest and professional at all times.

3. <u>Be a good listener</u>. Before entering any conversation, understand the context. Who are you speaking to? Is there a good reason for you to join the conversation?
4. <u>Be responsive</u>. Answer questions directed to you in a timely manner. Share your insights where appropriate.
5. <u>Be consistent</u>. Wherever possible, align online participation with other offline communications.
6. <u>Be a public servant</u>. Remember that you are an ambassador for your agency. Use social media in a manner that is consistent with public sector values, legal requirements, related policies and our Code of Conduct.

Civil servants who are authorized to contribute on behalf of their agencies should be guided by the following:

1. Before engaging with a specific social media channel, ensure you understand its conventions and etiquette.
2. When you are speaking on behalf of your agency, identify yourself as such.
3. Correct any factual inaccuracies you find relating to government policy.
4. Promptly respond to queries about policy or published information with which you are familiar.
5. Refer people to appropriate government sites, when necessary.
6. Ensure that any comment you make on matters of government policy is appropriate to the agency role you hold.
7. Do not give out personal details of yourself or other staff members.
8. Do not post any material that is confidential, not for public release and those protected by copyright.

Capacity-Building

The RGoB shall undertake continuous educational and awareness raising programs to boost the understanding of and ability to harness social media in the pursuit of GNH. Capacity building for the Civil Service is necessary so that they will be able to implement this policy effectively.

Among the activities that the RGoB shall undertake are the following:
1. A comprehensive social media training program for the civil service to be led by the Ministry of Information and Communications (MoIC) and the Royal Civil Service Commission;

2. A national social media literacy campaign. This campaign shall not only teach the technical skills but also the ethical considerations in the use of social media. The MOIC shall lead this initiative together with the Ministry of Education. The MoIC

and Ministry of Education shall include Social Media literacy in their Media Literacy campaign. Ministry of Education should consider including Social Media Literacy in the curriculum.

3.   A national campaign to promote the appropriate and productive use of social media. The MoIC shall work with business associations, civil society organizations, youth groups and other civic associations to promote the use of social media to enhance our Gross National Happiness.

7   MONITORING and EVALUATION:

1. The MoIC shall monitor the implementation of the policy and guidelines. When necessary, they shall assist agencies to comply with this social media policy.
2. The MoIC shall issue a yearly report on the state of social media use in the RGoB.
3. The MoIC will review and, if necessary, revise this policy and guidelines every two years.

8   Approval Date:

This Policy was adopted at the 95th Lhengye Zhungtshog, held on 12th of January, 2016.

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY: RESOURCES*

Annex 1. *What is Social Media?*
Annex 2*. Social Media Menu, Risks and Mini-Case Studies* by Republic of South Africa
Annex 3. *Five Steps to a Successful Social Media Strategy* by socialbrite.org
Annex 3a. *Sample Social Media Tactical Plan* by Marketo
Annex 4. *Risk Register and Management Plan* by State Government of Victoria, AU
Annex 5. *Secure Use of Social Media* by State of New York, USA
Annex 6. *Introduction to Social Media Metrics: Best Practices* by University of Manitoba, CA
Annex 7. *Proposed Social Media Courses for RGoB*
Annex 7a. *Social Media Management for IMO – Course Outline*
Annex 8. *How To Create Social Media Guidelines for Your School* by Edutopia
Annex 9. *Student Social Media Guidelines* by NYC (USA) Department of Education
Annex 10. *Social Networking Site: Parent's Guide* by OnGuard Online

The materials reproduced here are considered among the 'better' practices in social media policy development and implementation. Inclusion of materials from the private organizations does not mean endorsement of the products of these organizations.