



# DEVELOPMENT EVALUATION POLICY OF BHUTAN 2017

(Draft)

Gross National Happiness Commission  
Royal Government of Bhutan



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## GLOSSARY

Academic Research	<i>Research carried out by academic institutions</i>
Development Evaluation	<i>Development Evaluation is a systematic and objective assessment of a development program, project or policy to determine the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, sustainability or timeliness.</i>
Evaluation Management	<i>Agency/officials responsible for overall coordination, facilitation, administration and management of evaluation</i>
Evaluation Team	<i>Agency/evaluating firm/evaluating individual carrying out the actual evaluation assignment.</i>
Financial Year	<i>Royal Government of Bhutan financial year from 1<sup>st</sup> July to 30<sup>th</sup> June</i>
GNH Values	<i>Values as enshrined in GNH index</i>
Medical Research	<i>Research carried out by medical institutions for health and medicinal development</i>
Policy	<i>Policy of Royal Government of Bhutan</i>
Programme	<i>Development programme implemented by Royal Government of Bhutan</i>
Project	<i>Development project implemented by Royal Government of Bhutan</i>
Social Research	<i>Research carried out by research centers on social issues</i>

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The Article 25 of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan highlights the importance on the need for a system for timely assessment of efficiency and effectiveness of the public resources.

The erstwhile Planning Commission, now renamed as the Gross National Happiness Commission, established the National Monitoring and Evaluation System (NMES) to serve as a standard system of monitoring and evaluating developmental plans.

However, a very little progress has been made in the area of evaluation although a reasonable progress has been achieved in the monitoring area especially since the 10<sup>th</sup> five-year plan while. Only a few donor-led evaluations of programmes and projects have been carried out with varying processes and standards. There was still a lack of understanding on the benefits of evaluation and technical knowledge on evaluation concepts and practices.

In addition, while evaluation processes are outlined in the NMES, the change in context especially the changes in institutions have led to the need for the update of the NME manual in making it relevant to the current context.

Against this backdrop, the GNH Commission Secretariat spearheaded the development of Development Evaluation Policy and Development Evaluation Protocol and Guidelines to provide focus and impetus to evaluation. It is a step towards strengthening the evaluation system in Bhutan. In addition to programmes and projects, the Evaluation Protocol and Guidelines shall apply to the evaluation of policies.

With the formal launch of the Development Evaluation Policy and Development Evaluation Protocol and Guidelines, it is expected that evaluation activities will gain ground and eventually contribute towards improved accountability, efficiency and effectiveness of limited resources available in the country for socio-economic development.

While the Development Evaluation Policy provides overall framework for evaluation, the detailed step by step requirements and processes shall be provided in the Development Evaluation Protocol and Guidelines.

## CHAPTER 2: SCOPE OF THE POLICY

5.1. The policy shall apply to all RGoB development plans, projects, programmes and policies implemented by agencies or organizations within and outside the government. However, researches such as academic research, medical research and social research shall be outside the scope of this policy.

5.2. The policy shall not cover other performance assessments such as Annual Performance Agreements.

## CHAPTER 3: OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of the evaluation policy are as below.

- 2.1. To provide overall framework for evaluation.
- 2.2. To streamline evaluation initiatives and to standardize the evaluation process and products.
- 2.3. To promote quality and credibility of evaluation.
- 2.4. To promote use of evaluation findings.

## CHAPTER 4: GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The evaluation of a programme, project or policy shall be guided by the following evaluation principles.

### 3.1. Independence

3.1.1. The evaluation function shall be carried out by an independent entity, which is separate from designing or implementation of a programme, project or policy. The independence of evaluation will reduce the potential for conflict of interests and provide legitimacy and credibility to the findings.

### 3.2. Impartiality and Fairness

3.2.1. The findings of the evaluation shall not be influenced by personal preferences of the evaluator and it must be true and capture balanced views.

### 3.3. Objectivity

3.3.1. The evaluation findings shall be based on verifiable or objective evidence.

### 3.4. Transparency

3.4.1. Transparency of the evaluation process is the key to credibility of evaluation findings. The relevant stakeholders shall be kept abreast of the evaluation process and shall have access to information concerning any part of the evaluation process.

### 3.5. Feasibility

3.5.1. The feasibility of carrying out an evaluation in terms of practicability of methodology and availability of resources shall be considered.

### 3.6. Propriety

3.6.1. The evaluation of a programme, project or policy shall not harm individuals or communities.

### 3.7. Cost-efficiency

3.7.1. The evaluation of a programme, project or policy shall be carried out at the least cost without compromising the quality of the evaluation.

### **3.8. Accuracy**

3.8.1. The collection of data shall maintain the highest level of accuracy and precision by using the most relevant measures and methodologies.

### **3.9. Credibility**

3.9.1. The evaluation of a programme, project or policy shall consider all other core principles such as independence, impartiality, transparency, objectivity, accuracy, and fairness to ensure credibility of the evaluation findings.

### **3.10. Usefulness**

3.10.1. The evaluation findings shall be useful to implementers, decision makers, policy makers, development partners, politicians and other stakeholders.

### **3.11. Evaluation ethics**

3.11.1. The evaluation processes shall observe the evaluation ethics, which include integrity and honesty; gender sensitivity, respect for culture, beliefs, and etiquettes; protection of the rights and welfare of participants; and protection of the confidentiality of participants.

## CHAPTER 5: THE EVALUATION REFERENCE OFFICE

GNH Commission Secretariat, being the overall coordinating body for evaluation of development programmes, projects and policies, shall act as the evaluation reference office. All issues related to evaluation shall be directed to GNH Commission Secretariat, for clarification or guidance.

## CHAPTER 6: PROTOCOL FOR EVALUATION

GNH Commission Secretariat shall develop and implement 'Development Evaluation Protocol and Guidelines' to implement the policy.

The development evaluation protocol and guidelines shall be revised periodically with the changing context and needs, or with change in policy provisions by GNH Commission Secretariat. The protocol shall consist of the following steps.

### 6.1 Scoping evaluation

The evaluations shall be categorized into three levels; national, ministry/agency and local government.

#### 6.1.1 National level

The authority to commission or conduct national level evaluations shall lie with the Cabinet, Gross National Happiness Commission or Gross National Happiness Commission Secretariat. National level evaluations may typically comprise of the following:

1. Major programmes of Sectors, Dzongkhags and Thromdes that have strategic importance for the country;
2. Thematic areas and cross-cutting issues;
3. Joint evaluations with development partners;
4. National policies

#### 6.1.2 Ministry/Agency level

Ministry or Agency level evaluations, including joint evaluations for cross-cutting programmes and projects, shall be conducted or commissioned by the Ministries or Agencies. However, Cabinet, GNH Commission and GNH Commission Secretariat may also commission/conduct ministry/agency level evaluations which may be of national importance. Ministry or agency level evaluations may typically comprise of the following:

1. Selected programmes and projects within ministry or agency;
2. Programmes and projects of the ministry implemented in the Dzongkhags, Thromdes and Gewogs;

3. Programmes and projects that may cut across different Ministries and Agencies; and
4. Sector policies

#### 6.1.3 Local Government level

Local Government level evaluations shall be commissioned or conducted by Dzongkhag administrations and Thromdes. However, Cabinet, GNH Commission, GNH Commission Secretariat or Ministries/Agencies may also commission/conduct local government level evaluations. The local government level evaluations may typically comprise of the following:

1. Selected programmes and projects within Dzongkhag and Thromdes
2. Selected programmes and projects implemented by Local Government

### 6.2 Identifying evaluation areas

6.2.1 The agency shall identify the area/s of evaluation such as a programme, project, policy or thematic area that is within the agency's scope of evaluation using criteria identified in the Development Evaluation Protocol and Guidelines.

6.2.2 The criteria for identifying evaluation areas shall include i. the strategic importance of a programme, project or policy, ii. Replicability of the programme, project or policy, iii. Availability of technical knowledge and understanding of the required methodology, iv. Availability of the adequate financial resources, and v. Contribution to GNH values and other cross-cutting issues.

6.2.3 In addition to standard evaluation criteria, GNH values, gender and environment shall be used as the additional specific criteria in identifying evaluation areas. This is to ensure that the policies and programmes that impact GNH values, gender and environment are closely monitored and evaluated.

6.2.4 The GNH Commission may revise the criteria as and when deemed necessary.

### 6.3 Preparing evaluation proposal

6.3.1 To ensure uniformity and set standard of evaluation proposals, an agency shall prepare evaluation proposal as per the evaluation proposal format specified in the Development Evaluation Protocol and Guidelines.

#### **6.4 Reviewing evaluation proposal**

6.4.1 An agency shall submit the evaluation proposals to Gross National Happiness Commission Secretariat for review and endorsement.

#### **6.5 Managing, implementing and budgeting**

6.5.1 The evaluation protocol and guidelines shall provide directions/guidance for the management, implementation and budgeting of evaluation.

#### **6.6 Use of evaluation findings and recommendations**

6.6.1 To ensure use of evaluation findings, the agencies shall develop dissemination and utilization plans as well as reporting on its progress as specified in the evaluation protocol and guidelines.

## CHAPTER 7: PROMOTING EVALUATION CULTURE

While concerted efforts from various actors in government, private sectors and CSOs are important to promote evaluation in the country, the following measures shall be pursued.

### 7.1 Increase in number of evaluations commissioned or conducted

7.1.1 Royal Government shall strive to progressively increase the number of evaluations commissioned/conducted.

### 7.2 Capacity Development

7.2.1 The evaluation culture remains weak in Bhutan partly because of lack of capacity in evaluation area. GNH Commission shall coordinate and organize workshops and training programmes on evaluation.

### 7.3 Creating Awareness and Demand

7.3.1 GNH Commission in partnership with other government and international agencies shall periodically organize meetings and workshops on the importance and benefits of the development evaluation. Media shall also be used to disseminate and promote evaluation.

### 7.4 Use of Evaluation Findings

7.4.1 The government agencies shall be encouraged to use findings and recommendations from the evaluation in development of policies, programmes and projects.

## CHAPTER 8: FINANCING

8.1 The Royal Government of Bhutan shall explore various means or mechanism to ensure financing for evaluation. These may include;

1. Allocating annual budget for evaluation
2. Requiring projects with huge budget to allocate certain proportion of their budget for evaluation of the projects.
3. Seeking funding from relevant 'Endowment Funds'. For example, accessing fund from Bhutan Health Trust Fund for evaluation of health programmes and projects.
4. Exploring partnerships with regional and international organizations and institutions.

## **CHAPTER 9: MONITORING IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POLICY**

9.1 Gross National Happiness Commission Secretariat, as the Guardian of the Evaluation Policy, shall monitor the implementation of the policy. The policy shall be subject to periodic review and shall be revised according to the changing needs and systems. Gross National Happiness Commission Secretariat shall initiate the revision of policy, if need arises.

## REFERENCES

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