Highlights

- Led by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forests (MOAF) and the Department of Disaster Management (DDM), with support of the World Food Programme (WFP) and the Global Logistics Cluster Field Based Preparedness Project (FBPP), the third workshop of Bhutan’s National Logistics Preparedness Working Group was held on 14-16 September. The objectives were to discuss national logistics preparedness implementation progress, assess learning needs for humanitarian supply chain capacity strengthening activities, and identify requirements for the national logistics preparedness information portal.

- Three regional meetings in the east, central and west of the country were identified at the NLPWG workshop as one of the priorities for humanitarian supply chain capacity strengthening of district-level stakeholders. The meetings are being planned by MOAF to take place in the last quarter of 2022.

Background

Based on risk indices and national-level logistics performance and capacity indicators, in 2021 Bhutan was identified as one of the 24 country candidates for the Global Logistics Cluster’s Field-Based Preparedness Project. The primary aim of the Project is to support national actors as they strengthen their capacity to autonomously prepare for and respond to humanitarian crises. A key element of this is the facilitation of a coordinated approach towards improving the resilience of local humanitarian supply chains and supporting effective information exchange between the government, national actors, and the private sector, to ensure all actors are well prepared for joint humanitarian logistics responses. In the event of a large-scale disaster event, should the Royal Government of Bhutan request international humanitarian assistance, the Global Logistics Cluster capacities can support national actors in facilitating a coordinated response.

In view of its geologically vulnerable location in the eastern Himalayas, and because of climate change impacts, Bhutan is prone to natural disasters with earthquakes being the biggest threat to reverse Bhutan’s...
progress to date. Earthquake remains a major threat within the Himalayan region. The 2015 earthquake in Nepal has led to heightened awareness on disaster preparedness among the RGoB officials. Considering that Bhutan is a landlocked country, Logistics and Supply Chain have been traditionally a challenge for both government and business sector. Recent studies have indicated that Logistics and Supply Chain constitutes more than 70% of the response cost, thus strengthening the Logistics and Supply Chain capacity of the government becomes of paramount importance in the Disaster Risk Management Agenda of the RGoB.

From March to December 2021, a Preparedness Expert commenced the process of mapping Bhutan national logistics capacities and stakeholders. He worked with national counterparts, led by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forests (MOAF) in coordination with the Department of Disaster Management (DDM) to augment information exchange, coordinated and assisted in the organisation of national logistics stakeholder mapping and contextual SWOT Analysis to define key priorities and agenda to enhance the overall logistics preparedness in Bhutan. A follow-up workshop was held in October 2021 to continue the discussions on identified gaps and challenges in humanitarian supply chain and logistics preparedness, and other capacity strengthening initiatives based on identified stakeholder needs.

In 2022, key priorities are the advocacy for, and provision of technical support to, the implementation of the NLPWG action plan by national stakeholders. The aim is to ensure sustainability of humanitarian supply chain and logistics preparedness in Bhutan at both national and sub-national levels.

Cooperation

- Between July and September, several planning meetings were held with MOAF and DDM to prepare for the third National Humanitarian Supply Chain & Logistics Preparedness Working Group workshop, scheduled in mid-September 2022. The planning discussions were on finalisation of the draft workshop Terms of Reference, and agreement on agenda items and workshop activities. The overarching objectives of the workshop were to streamline the national and sub-national logistics information management and logistics preparedness coordination, as well as strengthen national capacity and readiness for effective and efficient humanitarian response.

- On 14-16 September, led by MOAF and DDM, with support of WFP and FBPP, the third National Logistics Preparedness Working Group workshop was conducted with 29 participants representing 22 organisations. The workshop aimed at informing the progress made to date of the National Logistics Preparedness Action plan implementation and assessing learning needs among the Working Group members for humanitarian supply chain capacity strengthening. The workshop also served to jointly identify key content and technical specifications for Bhutan’s national logistics information sharing portal.

- As part of the review of the national logistics preparedness implementation progress, the NLPWG members identified a more focus on capacity strengthening of stakeholders at the district level. Therefore, three regional meetings have been prioritised to be held in the east, central and west to raise awareness of district-level stakeholders and provide platforms for national staff to lead or co-lead capacity strengthening activities as appropriate. During the workshop, the NLPWG members also discussed roles and profiles of the district-level stakeholders to include in the regional meetings. As
for the next steps, MOAF, with support of the FBPP will determine dates and budget, and issue letters of invitation to 20 dzongkhags (districts) to participate in the meetings.

Information management

- The 2022 reports and infographic updates on the FBPP implementation have been published and are now available on the Bhutan Preparedness webpage.

Contacts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Email</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Temmy Tanubrata</td>
<td>Supply Chain Consultant</td>
<td><a href="mailto:temmy.tanubrata@wfp.org">temmy.tanubrata@wfp.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tashi Lhundup</td>
<td>Supply Chain Officer</td>
<td><a href="mailto:tashi.lhundup@wfp.org">tashi.lhundup@wfp.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tsheten</td>
<td>Head of Disaster Management Unit, Ministry of Agriculture and Forests</td>
<td><a href="mailto:tsheten@moaf.gov.bt">tsheten@moaf.gov.bt</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project email</td>
<td>Field Based Preparedness Project</td>
<td><a href="mailto:hq.glc.preparedness@wfp.org">hq.glc.preparedness@wfp.org</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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https://logcluster.org/preparedness/bhutan