

### Highlights

- Between April and June, the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MoAL) as Bhutan's Logistics Desk facilitated the National Logistics Preparedness Working Group (NLPWG) member organisations in reviewing their agency-specific Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and advocating for the SOPs endorsement within their respective organisations. 13 NLPWG member SOPs were subsequently developed in line with the National Logistics Operation Manual (NLOM) and endorsed by the management of the respective agencies.
- Next steps, MoAL and the NLPWG will continue advocating for the Royal Government of Bhutan (RGoB)'s official endorsement of the NLPWG, the NLOM and the [Five-Year Humanitarian Supply Chain and Logistics \(HSC&L\) Preparedness Action Plan](#) to ensure the country's commitment to implementing and sustaining logistics preparedness efforts as prioritised in the Action Plan and identified in the NLOM.
- June 2024 marked the transition of the Logistics Cluster Field-based Preparedness Project (FBPP) and handing over of logistics preparedness activities to the RGoB's ownership and leadership.



Figure 1: NLPWG members: Desuung (National Volunteer Services) and the Food Corporation of Bhutan Limited (FCBL) representatives exchanging ideas during the SOP review workshop in Thimphu, Bhutan.



Figure 2: National Logistics Coordinator, Mr Tsheten, MoAL presented a plan including next steps and priorities to the NLPWG members regarding logistics preparedness activities in Bhutan.

### 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 project aims to support national actors as they strengthen their capacity to autonomously prepare for and respond to humanitarian crises. A vital element of this is facilitating 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 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.

<https://logcluster.org/preparedness/bhutan>

Given 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 significant threat within the Himalayan region. The 2015 earthquake in Nepal heightened awareness of disaster preparedness among the RGoB officials. Since Bhutan is landlocked, Logistics and supply chains have traditionally been challenging for government and business sectors. Recent studies have indicated that Logistics and Supply Chain constitute more than 70% of the response cost; thus, strengthening the Government's Logistics and Supply Chain capacity becomes paramount in the Disaster Risk Management Agenda of the RGoB.

From March to December 2021, a Preparedness Expert began mapping Bhutan's national logistics capacities and stakeholders. He worked with national stakeholders led by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forests (MOAF) (later in late 2022 changed to 'the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MOAL)') in coordination with the Department of Disaster Management (DDM) – later changed to 'the Department of Local Governance and Disaster Management (DLGDM),' to augment information exchange, coordinate and assist in the organisation of national logistics stakeholder mapping and contextual SWOT analysis to define critical priorities and agenda to enhance overall logistics preparedness in Bhutan. A follow-up workshop was held in October 2021 to continue the discussions on identified gaps and challenges in the humanitarian supply chain, logistics preparedness activities, and other capacity-strengthening initiatives based on identified stakeholder needs.

In 2022, key priorities were advocacy for, and provision of technical support to, the implementation of the NLPWG action plan by national and sub-national actors to reinforce their capacities to take forward humanitarian supply chain and logistics preparedness across different administrative levels. In the final quarter, MOAL launched a Learning Needs Assessment survey to assess the existing logistics preparedness capacity and the level of learning needs of district-level agencies. The LNA results led to three regional Humanitarian Supply Chain and Logistics Management (HSCLM) workshops in November and December 2022 to enhance HSC&L skills and understanding of district-level stakeholders, update key logistics data, and draft district-level logistics preparedness action plans.

In 2023, MOAL achieved another milestone in developing a National Logistics Operations Manual/SOP (or a so-called 'NLOM') following the outcomes of the country-wide HSCLM workshops in 2022 and in line with the NLPWG Five-Year Action Plan for logistics preparedness. The NLOM will guide the country's strategic and operational logistics decision-making before, during, and after emergencies and ensure more effective coordination among the relevant actors.

## Coordination

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- Following the NLPWG agency-specific SOPs development workshops in quarter one, MoAL and the NLPWG held an SOPs Review workshop from 29 April to 1 May 2024 to conclude the logistics SOP exercise. The consultative workshop brought together 35 representatives from 20 NLPWG member organisations to review the recently developed 13 agency-specific SOPs under the Logistics Desk and present the draft SOPs by agency representatives and receive the working group's collective inputs, ensuring alignment among one another and with the National Logistics Operation Manual (NLOM).

- Some immediate action points jointly highlighted by MoAL and the NLPWG members include the agreement on Logistics Secretariat Organigramme identifying primary and secondary responsible agencies on different logistics tasks; the consolidation of feedback and review of all 13 NLPWG agency-specific SOPs; and further communication and advocacy for the endorsement of agency-specific SOPs by their respective agencies' management, etc.



Figure 3: MoAL and 20 NLPWG members gathered in the SOPs Review workshop from 29 April to 1 May 2024, Thimphu, Bhutan.

- In May, courtesy calls with the senior managements of some key national actors were held by the regional Logistics Cluster Team as part of the FBPP monitoring and transitioning support mission to collect national stakeholders' feedback and discuss transition plan. These organisations included the



Figure 4: A courtesy call with Food Corporation of Bhutan Limited (FCBL), one of Bhutan NLPWG members.

Department of Disaster Management (DDM), the Food Corporation of Bhutan Limited (FCBL), Ministry of Agriculture Livestock (MoAL), the Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport (MoIT), the Desuung (National Volunteer Services), and the Bhutan Livestock Development Corporation Limited (BLDCL).

- In June, the 13 agency-specific SOPs were endorsed by the senior management of respective NLPWG agencies. The endorsement and implementation of the agency-specific SOPs will help institutionalise relevant logistics practices and procedures into regular ways of working and enable a more coordinated approach to logistics response operations by and between different agencies before, during, and after emergencies.
- Next steps, MoAL as the chair of the Logistics Desk and the NLPWG will present to the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) the NLPWG logistics preparedness activities and key milestones including the Action Plan and the NLOM to determine national logistics preparedness priorities in short, medium, and longer terms, to be further implemented by the Logistics Desk and the NLPWG.

- Together with the NLPWG, MoAL will continue leading the implementation of the Action Plan and the operationalisation of the NLOM to strengthen Bhutan's HSC&L preparedness to be more resilient and ready in time of emergencies. Some of the identified priorities are as follows:
  - HSC&L management training for local government and municipality officials.
  - HSC&L awareness workshops with high-level government officials, including the Cabinet and the Secretaries and the Governors.
  - Simulation exercise to test and practice the developed NLOM and agency-specific SOPs.
  - Capacity development activities for the NLPWG members with support from the WFP Bhutan including mobile storage unit (MSU) assembly trainings, warehouse management trainings, and mapping evacuation areas for all districts and four municipalities, etc.

## Information management

- The following posts for the agency-specific SOPs Review workshop from 29 April to 1 May 2024 have been jointly developed with the WFP Bhutan and published on different social media platforms:



- Facebook: [Click the Link](#)
  - X: [Click the link](#)
- The recently published Logistics Cluster Newsletter (April to June 2024 edition) featuring the global logistics community of partners also highlighted Bhutan's key milestone in aligning different agencies' SOPs with the national logistics operation manual: [Click here to read more.](#)
- The quarterly report and infographic updates on the FBPP implementation between January and March 2024 have been published on the [Bhutan Preparedness webpage.](#)

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