

Social Monitoring Report

September 2018

Bhutan: SASEC Road Connectivity Project

Phuentsholing Mini Dry Port
Northern Bypass Project – Package I
Northern Bypass Project – Package II

Prepared by Phuentsholing Thromde for the Government of Bhutan and the Asian Development Bank.

CURRENCY EQUIVALENTS

(as of 20 September 2018)

Currency unit	–	Bhutanese Ngultrum (Nu)
Nu1.00	=	\$0.0138887924
\$1.00	=	Nu72.000500

ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	–	Asian Development Bank
HISC	–	Health and Information Service Center
MDP	–	Mini Dry Port
NBR	–	Northern Bypass Road
NLCS	–	National Land Commission Secretariat
TCC	–	Tashi Commercial Corporation

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I. Introduction

1. The SASEC Road Connectivity Project is being implemented by the Phuentsholing Thromde under the Ministry of Works and Human Settlement, with support from the Asian Development Bank. The following components of the project will support Phuentsholing Thromde ease out traffic congestion in the urban core area in the future:

- (i.) construction of the northern bypass road;
- (ii.) development of the Mini Dry Port (MDP) under Department of Trade, Ministry of Economic Affairs to have custom clearance for import and export traffic, storage, transshipment, etc.; and
- (iii.) development of the Allay Land Custom Station under the Department of Trade, Ministry of Economic Affairs to have customs clearance for import and export traffic at Pasakha.

2. This social monitoring report covers the period from October 2017 to March 2018 and intends to monitor the social safeguards being implemented at all subproject sites in accordance with ADB's guidelines. The social monitoring report will also include the HIV/AIDS awareness program conducted at the Northern Bypass Road for Package I and Package II. No awareness program was conducted at the MDP site this time since it was carried out in November 2017. Another round of awareness programs can be conducted in all the sites by the end of 2018, depending on the turnover of workers at the construction sites.

3. The awareness programs which are conducted at the project construction sites include programs on HIV/AIDS, anti-trafficking and child labor, and gender sensitization activities. Although the Labour and Employment Act (2007) of Bhutan does not permit the recruitment of foreign female labourers and children below the age of 18 years, monitoring is still necessary to ensure that contractors are adhering to these rules. Bhutanese women are always encouraged to take up work at the construction sites, however, there were no Bhutanese female workers on any of the sites.

II. Social Monitoring

A. Mini Dry Port

4. Accommodation has been provided for the labourers within the project boundary—some of the day workers are from Jaigaon, a border town, so they come in at 8 am and leave by 6 pm. Accommodation includes bamboo thatched houses with corrugated galvanized iron sheets for roofing. Each shed is shared amongst four to five workers and are provided with a fan. There are also other facilities such as toilets, clean water and electricity that are provided to the labourers. However, the contractors have been requested to improve these sheds and the utilities to provide better living conditions to the workers.

5. Labourers work on a daily wage rate system. Daily wages range from Nu. 350 (USD 5.38) per day for unskilled to Nu. 550 (USD 8.44) per day for skilled workers. The recruitment of labourers at the MDP is carried out by a labour contractor. Payment is made directly to the labourers by their labour contractors. Payment is made at the end of each month, although labourers do take a certain amount (as advance) every week to buy household grocery items for the week. A copy of a typical labour attendance and payment record has been attached below:

Marushin Shitaka Construction Company Inc.	
BHUTAN	
Labor Attendance AND Payment Records	
2018 Year February Month	
(Near Manzil)	
Labor Description:	
Full Name :	Munich
Full Address :	
Designation :	Mason
Payment Description:	
Total Working Days :	27
Daily Wage Rate :	550
Total Amount :	14,850
Advance Payment (If any):	x
Net Payable Amount :	14,850
Received By :	
Signature :	[Signature]
Name :	Marushin
Date :	03/03/18
Recorded By:	
Signature :	[Signature]
Name :	Pemba Sherpa
Designation :	

Marushin Shitaka Construction Company Inc.	
BHUTAN	
Labor Attendance AND Payment Records	
018 Year February Month	
Munich	
Labor Description:	
Full Name :	Amel Senkar
Full Address :	
Designation :	
Payment Description:	
Total Working Days :	28
Daily Wage Rate :	500
Total Amount :	14,000
Advance Payment (If any):	
Net Payable Amount :	
Received By :	
Signature :	
Name :	
Date :	
Recorded By:	
Signature :	[Signature]
Name :	Pemba Sherpa
Designation :	

Marushin Shitaka Construction Company Inc.	
BHUTAN	
Labor Attendance AND Payment Records	
018 Year February Month	
Munich	
Labor Description:	
Full Name :	Munich
Full Address :	
Designation :	
Payment Description:	
Total Working Days :	28
Daily Wage Rate :	500
Total Amount :	14,000
Advance Payment (If any):	x
Net Payable Amount :	
Received By :	
Signature :	
Name :	
Date :	
Recorded By:	
Signature :	[Signature]
Name :	Pemba Sherpa
Designation :	

Marushin Shitaka Construction Company Inc.	
BHUTAN	
Labor Attendance AND Payment Records	
018 Year February Month	
Munich	
Labor Description:	
Full Name :	Amel Senkar
Full Address :	
Designation :	
Payment Description:	
Total Working Days :	28
Daily Wage Rate :	500
Total Amount :	14,000
Advance Payment (If any):	
Net Payable Amount :	
Received By :	
Signature :	
Name :	
Date :	
Recorded By:	
Signature :	[Signature]
Name :	Pemba Sherpa
Designation :	

Marushin Shitaka Construction Company Inc.	
BHUTAN	
Labor Attendance AND Payment Records	
018 Year February Month	
Munich	
Labor Description:	
Full Name :	Amel Senkar
Full Address :	
Designation :	
Payment Description:	
Total Working Days :	28
Daily Wage Rate :	500
Total Amount :	14,000
Advance Payment (If any):	
Net Payable Amount :	
Received By :	
Signature :	
Name :	
Date :	
Recorded By:	
Signature :	[Signature]
Name :	Pemba Sherpa
Designation :	

Figure 1. Copy of typical labour attendance and payment record

6. The labourers are expected to wear safety equipment and gears at the worksite at all times. These gears have been provided by the contractor. Samples of the different types of gears and equipments are on display in the construction site office (review Social Monitoring Report November 2017).

7. Proper traffic and facility signs and message boards have been displayed at appropriate locations at all the construction sites. All the sign posts are bright in color (mostly black and yellow colors) and clearly visible, providing safety and security to the workplace, employees, and the property.

8. The boundary wall to exclude the graveyard site from the MDP has been completed. The boundary of the MDP was realigned after requests from family members not to disturb the graveyards (Resettlement Plan Report, SASEC Road Connectivity Project, Mini Dry Port, December 2015).



Figure 2. The completed wall separating the graves from the MDP

B. Northern Bypass Road – Package I

9. The labourers are provided with accommodation very similar to the accommodation provided to the labourers at the MDP site. Facilities such as toilets, clean water, and electricity have also been provided to the labourers. The contractors and site engineers have been requested to provide the labourers with treated mosquito nets which are designed to maintain their effectiveness against mosquitoes that carry malaria and other diseases. These nets can be acquired from the General Hospital free of cost or can be purchased from the market.

10. Labourers have been recruited by labour contractors who supervise and monitor them. Daily wages range from Nu. 350 (USD 5.38) per day for unskilled to Nu. 550 (USD 8.44) per day for skilled workers. Although labour payment is made at the end of each month, labourers do take a certain amount (as advance) every week to buy household items for the week.

11. All labourers employed at the construction site including site engineers and contractors are required to take reasonable care of their health and safety. They are expected to wear safety equipment and gears at all times to reduce risks encountered at the construction site. These gears have been provided by the contractor.

12. Dust along the project road has been minimized with water trucks plying along the entire stretch. This is done on a daily basis and this helps in preventing dust issues, cooling down the areas, and also helps with soil compaction in the case of open roads. Such initiatives from the contractor's side make it a better environment for both labourers and the public who use this road on a daily basis. Waste materials during excavation have also been properly disposed off to avoid any hindrances to the construction site and to the public.



Figure 3. The roads (NBR-Package I) watered

13. Proper traffic and facility signs and message boards have been displayed at appropriate locations at all the construction sites. All the sign posts are bright in color (mostly black and yellow colors) and clearly visible, providing safety and security to the workplace, employees and the property. At the junction point (underpass route), the posts include new road marking, new road layout, changes in the road surface, and workers and message boards.



Figure 4. Road sign posts along the NBR-Package I

14. Barricade tapes have been used in most areas to warn pedestrians of any hazards. In areas where barricade tapes have been tampered or destroyed, the contractors were requested to barricade these areas again. This can be useful and effective especially in marking an unstable or a hazardous area. Barricade tapes which are bright in color can also cover a wider margin of workplace area and it is an inexpensive alternative to signposts.



Figure 5. Barricade tapes around a construction opening

15. **Status of the new vegetable market.** The civil works for the construction of the new vegetable market is well underway and expected to be completed by September 2018, according to the site engineer, Mr. Saroj. This should allow sufficient time for the Thromde to move the old market. If for any unforeseen reason, there are delays, the Thromde has agreed to compensate the people owning or working at the vegetable market. Computations for the compensation packages are included in the Social Monitoring Report dated September 2016.



Figure 6. New Vegetable market under construction

16. **Setbacks to the project.** During the excavation of the road for the underpass, a number of underground power and telecommunication lines, water and sewerage lines have been exposed. These issues can have major implications to the project, the key stakeholders, and to the public such as:

- (i.) delay to the project;
- (ii.) financial implication; and
- (iii.) disruption of utility services to the public

17. Discussions have been held with key stakeholders to resolve these issues to avoid further delays to the project. In addition, a certain budget has been allocated in the contract document for temporary measures until these underground utilities can be reinstalled.



Figure 7. Underground utility lines exposed by the excavation (NBR – Package I)

C. Northern Bypass Road – Package II

18. All labourers are given accommodation by the contractor. These are temporary sheds built using bamboo mats and corrugated galvanized iron roofing. The labour camp has been set up within the project boundary with drinking water supply, light, and proper sanitation facilities. The contractors and site engineers have been requested to provide the labourers with treated mosquito nets which are designed to maintain their effectiveness against mosquitoes that carry malaria and other diseases. These nets can be acquired from the General Hospital free of cost or can be purchased from the market.

19. Similar to both the MDP and the Northern Bypass Road Package I, labourers have been recruited by labour contractors and paid a daily wage ranging from Nu. 350 (USD 5.38) per day for unskilled to Nu. 550 (USD 8.44) per day for skilled workers. Labour payments are paid every maid although labourers take a certain amount as advance towards the purchase of their weekly grocery.

20. All labourers at site are expected to wear safety equipment and gears at all times. These gears have been provided by the contractor. Proper traffic and facility signs and message boards have been displayed at appropriate locations at all the construction sites. All the sign posts are bright in color (mostly black and yellow colors) and clearly visible, providing safety and security to the workplace, employees and the property.



Figure 8. Workers on site at the Northern Bypass Road – Package II



Figure 9. Entrance to construction site at NBR – Package II

21. **Setbacks to the project.** The site for the construction of the culvert near the crocodile farm has not yet been handed over to the contractor, causing delays to the project.
22. The site (belonging to Tashi Commercial Company) has not yet been officially handed over to the contractor as the document of the private land is still with the National Land Commission in Thimphu. The Thromde has been following up with the National Land Commission in Thimphu.

III. Awareness programs

23. The construction industry in Bhutan attracts large numbers of migrant workers from India with a vast majority of them leaving their wives and family behind for long periods of time. This can lead to risky sexual behaviour amongst the workers such as unprotected sex, men having sex with other men, multi-partner sexual networking as well as the prevalence of STI/HIV/AIDS infection. Often times, it is not only the migrant workers who are at risk of acquiring the diseases, but they are most likely to carry the infection and pass on to others at their source communities and along their migratory routes. Young girls and women from the locality (including Jaigaon) who are poor and uneducated can also be at risk as they can move to construction sites to sell sex or be lured into sex by these male workers. In addition, the lack of economic power means that most women are unable to negotiate safer sex.

24. There are certain precautionary measures being taken by the Government. All migrant workers go through a series of blood tests, urine tests, and X-rays to test for tuberculosis, gonorrhoea, syphilis, and malaria. If any of the tests show positive, the person is not given a permit to work in Bhutan. In addition, the Government ensures that all construction and industrial sites are monitored on a periodic basis. Such monitoring is carried out by the regional labour offices and the Health and Information Service Centers which are located in all the districts and even some large towns. These agencies have the authority to conduct ad hoc visits to any construction site to monitor for health, occupation and environment hazards.

25. Yet still, as per the ADB requirements, awareness programs related to health, pollution, HIV, human trafficking and forced labour in all ADB supported projects must be carried out. On 22 March 2018, two separate awareness programs were conducted at the Northern Bypass Road Package I and Package II. They were both carried out by the team from the Health and Information Services Center¹, Phuentsholing. The site engineers supervised the gathering. There were 32 participants in Northern Bypass Road Package I, and 45 in Northern Bypass Road Package II, excluding the 2 site engineers from the Construction Supervision Consultants team, one engineer from Phuentsholing Thromde and 2 site engineers from the contractor's side. These awareness programs are an effort to combat complacency about HIV/AIDS and also educate the labourers at construction sites with regards to their sexual activities, the risks associated with multiple sex partners, preventing STD/HIV, and social marketing of condoms. The program went on for over an hour at each site and covered topics on practicing safe sex, including demonstrations on the usage of condoms, distribution of condoms (photo below) and pamphlets that had been translated into Hindi and Bengali—languages familiar with the labourers.

26. No awareness program has been conducted in MDP this time since one was already conducted in November 2017. Details have been included in the Social Monitoring Report November 2017.

¹ HIS Centers were first opened in 2005 in Thimphu and Phuentsholing to encourage and facilitate the general population to avail HIV/STI Counselling, Testing and Treatment services. HIS Centers are also involved with awareness programs in schools, institutes, industries and hotels.



Figure 10. Labourers gather for the awareness program (NBR Package I)



Figure 11. Condoms being distributed to workers at NBR Package II

IV. Grievance Redressal Mechanism

27. As per ADB's policy, any grievance that may arise from the aspect of the project and development process requires proper mechanisms for resolution of disputes. The mechanisms should be 'affordable and accessible' and should be administered in the first instance at the local project level to facilitate access and flexibility.

28. There were no grievances received during this period of reporting.

V. Conclusion

29. This is the first social monitoring report for the Northern Bypass Road project and the second monitoring report for the MDP. Awareness programs were conducted at the two Northern Bypass Road sites but not at the MDP site since there was one carried out in November 2017. The labourers have been provided with basic accommodation with clean water and sanitation facilities, and electricity. Contractors have ensured that all workers on the site are using personal protective equipment at all times. Proper signage and barricade tapes have been used at appropriate places at the construction site to warn the workers and the public of hazards ahead. In areas where there is continuous damage to the tapes and signposts, the contractors have been instructed to ensure that they are replaced with new tape or signs to warn people of hazards ahead and to avoid any accidents at the project site.

30. The issue of the affected area belonging to Tashi Commercial Company (TCC) is still under discussion with the TCC and the National Land Commission. The land has not yet been officially handed over to the contractor. Once these issues have been resolved, the construction works will resume. This will be highlighted in the next social monitoring report.