



---

## Royal Government of Bhutan

### Protocol for Policy Formulation

---

All public policies in Bhutan, irrespective of their origin but with the exception of a Royal Command or national exigencies, shall be formulated/ revised, approved and adopted in line with the following Protocol for Policy Formulation.

1. Proposals to formulate/revise public policies in Bhutan can originate from the Lhengye Zhungtshog (Cabinet), sectors and the GNH Commission.
2. For purposes of proper planning the conception and formulation/revision of policies will be undertaken periodically.
3. All policies/concept notes originating from the Sectors must be routed through their respective Policy & Planning Divisions (PPDs), who shall be the focal points for policy coordination.
4. All policy concept notes will be submitted to the Gross National Happiness Commission Secretariat (GNHCS) by the last week of October for review.
5. The GNHCS will submit the concept notes and recommendations to the Cabinet for approval by the last week of December.
6. The Cabinet will approve/reject the concept notes by the last week of January.
7. The formulation/revision of any policy will be undertaken in two stages. Stage one: Policy conception stage; and Stage two: Policy formulation and approval stage.
8. Proponents desiring to formulate or revise a policy may do so only after the approval of the policy concept note by the Cabinet.
9. Only policies endorsed by the GNH Commission will be submitted to the Cabinet for approval.

#### **Stage One: Policy Conception Stage**

1. The proposal to formulate/revise any policy will begin with the preparation of a concept note of maximum 5 pages as per the format prescribed in Annex A, by the proponent.
2. The concept note will be submitted to the GNHCS for review and comments by the last week of October.
3. The GNHCS will submit the concept note to the Cabinet for approval upon completing the review by the last week of December. The submission will include recommendations/views/comments on the concept note.



---

## Royal Government of Bhutan

### Protocol for Policy Formulation

---

4. The Cabinet may either approve/reject the concept note or seek further clarifications from the proponents or GNHCS based on which approval/rejection can be made. The approval of rejection will be conveyed by the last week of January.
5. Approval/rejection of the concept note will conveyed to the GNHCS and the proponents by the Cabinet Secretariat.
6. Upon approval of the concept note (with changes as directed by the Cabinet) proponents may commence formulation/revision of the policy

#### **Stage Two: Policy Formulation and Approval Stage**

1. The proponents shall commence formulation/revision of the policy after receiving approval on the concept note (with changes as directed by the Cabinet) from the Cabinet.
2. While formulating/revision the policy, proponents should ensure that as a minimum:
  - i) all policy alternatives have been considered;
  - ii) all cross cutting issues such as Gender, Environment, Climate Change, Disaster, Poverty, Population and others are integrated within the policy;
  - iii) all relevant stakeholders who may be affected by the policy are consulted; and
  - iv) there is no conflict between the proposed policy and other existing policies, laws, and regulations.
3. After formulation/revision, the concerned proponents shall submit all proposed policies to the GNHCS along with the Policy Protocol Report as per the Format specified in Annexure B.
4. With the formal submission of the above documents to the GNHCS, the Research and Evaluation Division (RED) of the GNHCS shall review the draft Policy and provide feedback/comments to the proponent. If required the proponent will be required to make a presentation of the draft policy to the GNHCS.
5. The proponent can either incorporate the comments/feedback or seek further clarifications from the GNHCS. If required bilateral discussions can be held between the proponent and GNHCS.
6. Upon incorporation of the comments agreed on between the sector and GNHCS, the revised Draft Policy shall be subjected to the Gross National Happiness (GNH) Policy Screening Tool by the Proponent Sector and the GNHCS (as two separate exercises):
  - i. Prior to screening of a policy, a bilateral session shall be held between the proponent sector and the GNHC Secretariat on the relevance of certain GNH indicators against the policy in question.



---

## Royal Government of Bhutan

### Protocol for Policy Formulation

---

- ii. The screening shall be undertaken individually by those participating in the screening exercise (The Draft Policy and Screening Tool to be shared a few days prior to the meeting).
  - iii. A diverse mix of stakeholders shall participate, numbering to at least 15 participants.
  - iv. The Gender Focal Point of the proponent sector, environment representatives and other external key stakeholders shall be involved in the screening exercise.
7. The proponents will submit their individual and consolidated GNH Screening results to the GNHCS. All rationales and mitigation measures need to be duly completed.
  8. The revised draft policy document and the screening results shall be submitted to the GNHC through the GNHCS. The presentation of the draft policy to the GNHC will be done by the proponent, the GNHCS will present both the GNH screening results and additional comments if any.
  9. The GNH Commission can decide to either go straight to Step 11, or consider instituting a task force to review the draft policy further. The task force will be purpose-based, work to a defined timeline and ensure all major stakeholders affected by the Policy are consulted.
  10. The task force shall present its recommendations to the GNHC for review.
  11. The GNH Commission will endorse the draft Policy as submitted, recommend further review, accord endorsement subject to revisions, or provide additional directives.
  12. If endorsed, the sector shall revise the policy according to the directives received from the GNH Commission and submit a copy of the revised draft Policy to the GNHCS to ensure all directives of the GNH Commission have been considered.
  13. The GNHCS will convey endorsement of the revised draft Policy to the proponent and Cabinet Secretariat.
  14. The revised draft Policy endorsed by the GNHCS shall be submitted to the Cabinet by the proponent for approval.
  15. The Cabinet shall convey approval of the Policy or issue further directives to the proponent with a copy to the GNHCS.
  16. If approved, a copy of the approved Policy (after incorporation of Cabinet's comments) will be shared with the GNHCS by the proponent.




---

## Royal Government of Bhutan

### Protocol for Policy Formulation

---

17. If there are major revisions to the policy the Cabinet can subject the draft policy to the following before according approval:
  - i. The re-application of the entire Policy Protocol
  - ii. An additional review by the GNHC/S or other agencies and institutions
  - iii. A re-application of the GNH Policy Screening Tool
18. The approved Policy shall be implemented by the proponent/agency identified within the policy.
19. The proponent/agency shall submit an action plan for implementation of the policy to the GNHCS.
20. The action plan should clearly spell out the responsible agency, indicative budget and timeframe, activities, outputs, outcomes and associated indicators.
21. The GNHCS will endorse the action plan and seek clarifications if necessary.
22. Based on the endorsed action plan, the GNHCS and the implementing agency will agree on a monitoring framework for the policy.
23. The GNH Commission shall carry out post-adoption evaluation of policies. The findings of the evaluations shall be used to refine the policies.



## Annexure A: Format for Submission of Policy Concept Note

The formulation of any policy will begin with the preparation of a Concept Note of maximum 3 pages by the proponent Sector, which is submitted to the GNHC Secretariat for endorsement. The primary purpose of the concept note is to provide convincing arguments on the existence of pertinent issues that need to be resolved and to justify the need for a new policy/revision of an existing policy. The note should be succinct and understandable. As a minimum the Concept Note should clearly state the following:

### **i. Context and Background-The reason/rationale for proposing a new policy or revising an existing policy**

- Is the proposed policy an outcome of government directives, if so which directive?
- What are the major issues the proposed new policy/policy revision intends to address? What are the root causes of the issues in question?
- What are the implications if the issues are not addressed?

### **ii. Critique of current policy options and approaches:**

- Briefly explain the shortcomings/failing of the current approaches (policy/act/regulation/others) or the limitations posed by the absence of the policy in addressing the issue(s).

### **iii. Policy Recommendations**

- Briefly explain how the proposed new policy/policy revision will address the shortcomings of the current approaches/regulations/policy or the limitations posed by the absence of the policy.
- Briefly explain the major costs and benefits that may arise out of the policy in terms of resources (physical, financial, human, and others) and processes that will result with the proposed new policy/policy revision.

### **iv. Integration of GNH and cross cutting issues**

- What are the opportunities and challenges pertaining to GNH, Disaster, Environment, Poverty, Climate Change, Gender, Population, Health, ICT, and other cross-cutting issues that may arise from the proposed new policy/policy revision?
- Briefly describe how the policy will make use of the opportunities or mitigate the challenges that may arise with respect to GNH, Disaster, Environment, Poverty, Climate Change, Gender, Population and other cross-cutting issues by adopting this policy.



---

## Annexure A: Format for Submission of Policy Concept Note

---

### v. **Process and indicative timeline**

- Provide details on the process and indicative timeline that will be followed developing the policy including likely need/use of TA. (If TA is to be used, the ToR must be shared with RED, GNHCS for comments)
- Briefly provide details on policies/acts/regulations that may conflict with the proposed new policy/policy revision and explain how the conflict will be resolved
- List of stakeholders who will be consulted.

### vi. **Major impediments or risks foreseen in the development of the policy.**



---

## Annexure B: Format for Policy Protocol Report

---

### 1. Title Page

- a. Title of the Policy
- b. Name and contact details of the organization submitting the issue
- c. Name and Contact details of the focal point
- d. Date of submission

### 2. Background and Context

- a. Current situation: Provide a brief overview of major issues, their root causes, and implications if not addressed.
- b. Current approaches and options: Provide a brief overview of the existing approaches (rules/regulations/acts/ policy) that currently exist.
- c. Critique of the current approaches/options: Provide a brief overview of the shortcoming or limitations of the current options or approaches in addressing the issue.
- d. Provide brief information on Prior Government Decisions/ Orders. Kindly mention References, etc.

### 3. Policy Recommendations

- a. Provide a brief overview on how the proposed policy will address the issues in question.
- b. Briefly explain the major costs and benefits that may arise out of the policy in terms of resources (physical, financial, human, and others) and processes that will result with the proposed new policy/policy revision.

### 4. Research and Findings

- a. Mention any studies, appraisals, etc. carried out on issues related to the PP along with key findings and recommendations
- b. Attach copies of the studies and reports referred to under a.

### 5. Integration of GNH and Other Cross Cutting Issues

- a. What are the opportunities and challenges pertaining to GNH, Disaster, Environment, Poverty, Climate Change, Gender, Population, Health, ICT, and other cross-cutting issues that may arise from the proposed new policy/policy revision?
- b. Briefly describe how the policy will make use of the opportunities or mitigate the challenges that may arise with respect to GNH, Disaster, Environment, Poverty, Climate Change, Gender, Population and other cross-cutting issues by adopting this policy.



---

## Annexure B: Format for Policy Protocol Report

---

### 6. Other Implications

- a. State any other implications (legislative, financial, social, administrative, political, institutional, etc.)

### 7. Consultations

- a. Consultation Process with other Stakeholders/Organizations – Provide a list of the stakeholders and organizations consulted.
- b. State controversial issues, key findings and recommendations from the consultation process.

### 8. Attach a copy of the proposed policy.

\*\*\*\*\*