

Internal Ex-Post Evaluation for Grant Aid Project

conducted by Bhutan Office: Nov,2013

Country Name	The Project for Improvement of Equipment of Bhutan Broadcasting Service Corporation
Bhutan	

I. Project Outline

Background	<p>Bhutan suffered an illiteracy rate of 40% and wide disparities between urban and rural districts. Broadcasting services would play a vital role in tackling this issue. In order for the Bhutan Broadcasting Service Corporation (BBSC) to carry out its responsibilities as Bhutan's sole broadcasting station, it needed to become able to transmit nationwide objective, real-time information on the status and progress of Bhutan's democratization process based on news gathered independently by BBSC.</p> <p>However, BBSC had problems in transmitting information. Videotapes of news recorded at regional centers/bureaus were transported by regular bus services and others to the headquarters (HQ) for nationwide broadcasting. Extreme difficulties remained in transmitting information to and from local districts in a timely manner due to underdeveloped road and communication networks and many regions needed several days to transport the tapes to HQ. Under these circumstances, the government of Bhutan recognizes that the provision of equal access to information for the entire nation as one of the issues in its transition to a democratic state.</p>		
Objectives of the Project	To establish an expanded broadcasting system for broadcasting local news and events to the nation in a timely manner by procuring and installing a transmission system and other broadcasting equipment		
Outputs of the Project	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Project Site: (1) HQ, (2) Regional Centers in Jakar, Phuentsholing, and Kanglung, and (3) Regional bureaus in Wangduephodrang and Paro Bureaus 2. Japanese side Procurement and installation of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Master Control System (MCS) at HQ - 4WD SNG (Satellite News Gatherings) OB (Outside Broadcasting) van - transmission devices (5 sets of transmitters and 1 receiving apparatus) - news and production equipment for regional centers/ bureaus - equipment for continuity studio, and - maintenance equipment and tools. 3. Bhutanese side: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - removal of existing equipment, - procurement /installation of satellite receiver equipment and renting of satellite links, - maintaining existing SNG receiver equipment, - securing space for installing transmission system, and signing a contract with Bhutan Telecom for renting its facilities, transmission links, etc., - transportation of news and production equipment to bureaus, - installation of equipment for Continuity Studio, and - providing chairs needed for operating the equipment 		
E/N Date	30 May, 2008	Completion Date	5 November, 2009
Project Cost	E/N Grant Limit: 594 million yen, Contract Amount: 593 million yen		
Implementing Agency	Bhutan Broadcasting Service Corporation (BBSC)		
Contracted Agencies	Yachiyo Engineering Co., Ltd, and Mitsubishi Corporation		
Related Studies	Basic Design Study: August, 2007 – March, 2008		
Related Projects (if any)	<p>Japan's Cooperation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project on Enhancement of the Bhutan Broadcasting Service (Technical Cooperation, 2005-2007) - Project on Capacity Development of Bhutan Broadcasting Service (Technical Cooperation, 2007-2010) - The project for Strengthening of News Reporting Capacity from Every Part of the Country (Grant Aid for Grass-roots human security projects, 2007) - The Project for the Improvement of TV Programs of Bhutan Broadcasting Service Corporation (Cultural Grant, 2005) - The Project of Reconditioned OB Van for Strengthening the program Production Facility of Rural Areas (Grant Aid for Grass-roots human security projects, 2005) - The Follow-up Cooperation for the Project on Enhancement of the Bhutan Broadcasting Service in Bhutan (Follow-up Scheme, 2011) <p>Other Donors' Cooperation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Government of India (GOI): Commencement of national broadcasting by renting free transponder for satellite links of GOI (2006-9), Construction of TV broadcasting center (2006-7), Procurement of 		

- equipment for the new TV broadcasting center (2008)
- DANIDA: Speeding up and expansion of existing micro lines (2008), Human resources master plan (2002-2007), Plan for mobilizing own resources (2003-2006)

II. Result of the Evaluation

1 Relevance

This project has been highly consistent with Bhutanese development policies, such as “Rural development is one of the most important agenda for poverty eradication, and TV broadcasting is regarded as the important means of information dissemination to rural areas” and “improvement of outreach and quality of BBSC to strengthen the linkage to national development objectives and strategies of creating a knowledge-based society” as set in the 5 year national development plan, BBSC’s 10th Five Year Plan (2008-2013) and other documents, and development needs of strengthening of the function of BBSC, as the sole television broadcasting agency to play the highly important role for the remote communities to obtain necessary information, as well as Japan’s ODA policy for prioritizing good governance including decentralization and media support at the time of both ex-ante and ex-post evaluation.

Therefore, relevance of this project is high.

2 Effectiveness/Impact

The project has largely achieved its objectives, “to establish an expanded broadcasting system for broadcasting local news and events to the nation in a timely manner”. The number of outdoor live broadcasting shows by using 4WD SNG OB van procured by the project has increased from 1-2 times a month to 6-10 times a month, and the outdoor live broadcasting show from outside capital has become possible. The number of broadcasted local news from regional centers/bureaus has also increased and the project has contributed to this increase to a certain extent, as the 2 bureaus (Kanglung and Gelephu – former Phuensholing) produce news/programs on their own (2 programs a month) by using the production equipment procured by the project. On the other hand, due to the restructuring of BBSC, at the rest of the three bureau offices (Jakar, Wangdi, and Paro), only Camjo (cameraman and reporter)¹ is assigned to collect and send news materials to the HQ. News/programs are not produced there. The production equipment of the three bureau offices has been shifted to the HQ (since mid 2010) to meet the increasing needs of news production at the HQ. The HQ has fully utilized the equipment to edit the local news materials sent by the Camjos working at 17 local offices². Although this arrangement is different from what the project had originally planned, the equipment procured by the Project has contributed to the increase in the number of broadcasted local news. Regarding transmission, all regional programs with large volume and live programs prepared at the Kanglung and Gelephu are transmitted via the E1 terrestrial lines procured by the project and installed at Bhutan Telecom. Small-size news materials collected at the 3 centers (Jakar, Wangdi and Paro) are sent through the simple and high speed internet and E1 terrestrial lines are utilized only when the large volume of news/programmes need to be sent. BBSC thinks the regional news and program production and collection have become more efficient and cost effective by combining the E1 terrestrial lines for sending heavy volume news programs and the internet for light volume news materials.

As for impact, as a result of the project, BBSC is able to deliver accurate and relevant information for the nation at large. The live coverage of Parliamentary Elections in 2013 (public forums, election campaign news, ballot day, etc.) using the 4WD SNG OB van and the E1 lines was very effective to deliver accurate and relevant information on time to the nation at large. The election related public forums were done in Dzongkha which helped to educate the general public on the election.

Therefore, effectiveness/impact of this project is high.

Quantitative Effects

Indicator	Year 2007 (before the project) Actual value	Year 2011 (target year) Target value	Year 2011 (target year) Actual value	Year 2013 (ex-post evaluation year) Actual value
Indicator 1 Number of outdoor live broadcasting shows (by using 4WD SNG OB van)	1-2 times/month (capital area only)	3-8 times/month (including outside capital)	6-10 times/month in total (5-8 times/month from outside capital)	6-10 times/month in total (5-8 times/month from outside capital)
Indicator 2 Number of broadcasted local news from regional centers/ bureaus	2-3 times/day	4-5 times/day	5-10 times/day	15-20 times/day

Source: BBSC

3 Efficiency

The outputs of the project were produced as planned, and both the project cost and the project period were as planned (ratio against the plan:100%, 100%). Therefore, efficiency of this project is high

4 Sustainability

The operation and maintenance of the equipment procured by the project have been carried out by BBSC. Currently BBSC has more than 300 staff, out of which 33 are dispatched to bureaus and centers. BBSC HQ thinks that the current staff allocation and institutional set-up are adequate reflecting the current situation. However, bureaus think that the bureau staff’s capacity and expertise are not actually matched to the production itself.

¹ Currently Camjos have been assigned to 14 districts and Kanglung and Gelephu bureaus. BBSC will assign Camjo to 3 districts from August 1, 2013 (total districts where Camjos assigned would be 17) and plans to assign Camjo to all 20 districts in the future.

² Each Camjo (in 17 districts) sends 10-14 news and program materials in a month.

BBSC is technically capable to carry out repair and maintenance of the equipment. The defected equipment at the HQ is attended by the technical department for repair, while equipment at the bureaus are sent back to HQ for proper attendance. Lightning shock that has been causing damage of transmission equipment, is currently being attended by the follow-up cooperation of 2011, through which lightning protection is set-up at bureaus and transmission sites. In addition, transmission channel addition, provision of new FPU and FPU tool-kit under the same follow-up will secure stable and effective transmission of news and programme sources from all over the country. The issue is the operation side of the equipment, especially on the production; bureau staff claims that they are required to deal with the equipment that they have not learned how to utilize since their expertise are different from production. In this sense, production capacity at the bureaus are limited and therefore needs to be strengthened while it is sufficient at HQ.

Financially, BBSC has been incurring operational losses consecutively although cash flow has been positive. At present, BBSC's own revenue from advertisement, announcements and sponsorships is limited, and the government provides the necessary annual budget including maintenance cost. BBSC is expected to be financially independent by 2016 and BBSC needs to work on strategies to generate more income, although there is no information on the details of this policy decisions yet. So far, BBSC has not made a financial plan for the equipment renewal (The expected year for renewal of the equipment under the project is 2016).

As to the current status of operation and maintenance, most of the equipment is fitted except one E1 encoder which could not be repaired. All equipment is targeted for regular check up. The technical department makes the budget proposal for the spare parts in half yearly, however, in the absence of professional equipment dealer in Bhutan, procurement of spares sometimes delays. Currently, the follow-up scheme for this project is ongoing as anti-lightning set-up in the project sites.

Thus, as this project has problems in each of the institutional, technical and financial aspect as well as the current status of operation and maintenance, sustainability of the effects of this project is fair.

5 Summary of the Evaluation

The project has largely achieved its objectives, "to establish an expanded broadcasting system for broadcasting local news and events to the nation in a timely manner". The number of outdoor live broadcasting shows by using 4WD SNG OB van procured by the project has increased. The number of broadcasted local news from regional centers/bureaus has also increased, though the equipment is partially used in a different manner than the originally intended manner.

As for sustainability, there are issues in institutional, technical and financial aspects as well as the current status of operation and maintenance. Institutionally, allocation of production staff to the bureaus is not fully adequate. There is no problem with the maintenance capacity, though the production capacity needs to be strengthened. Financially, although the government has provided necessary budget, BBSC needs to increase own revenue since BBSC is expected to be financially independent by 2016. Basically, the equipment is maintained properly, however, sometimes procurement of spare parts delays.

In light of the above, this project is evaluated to be highly satisfactory.

III. Recommendations & Lessons Learned

Recommendations to implementing agency:

As BBSC is expected to be financially independent by 2016 from the Royal Government, BBSC needs to work on financial strategy urgently including securing maintenance budget, equipment renewal and others, for the sustainability of the project effects.

Lessons learned for JICA:

This project can be used as a sample for examining the change in utilization of equipment provided under the grant aid scheme, through the course of policy changes over the years. Even though the detailed design is precise and well prepared before the project, the same design might not be applicable even after 3 years, depending on, for instance, technology advancement, management change, government's policy change, ruling party's change, introduction of a new government plan, and others.

It is therefore very important to consider such factors during the project design, to conduct monitoring and to provide support where flexible adjustment could be possible when such changes occur during and after the implementation stage.



Transmission for live broadcasting taking place at the JICA-supported SNG van during the biggest religious ceremony of Bhutan's Capital, Thimphu



Gelephu Bureau staff using the camera procured by the Grant support at Gelephu studio