



REPORT ON LG PROTOCOL

(For Effective Functioning of Local Government Sessions)

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Department of Local Governance
Ministry of Home & Cultural Affairs

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Abbreviations

1. ACC	Anti-Corruption Commission
2. AGG	Annual Gewog Guideline
3. BCSR	Bhutan Civil Service Rules and Regulation 2018
4. CSAB	Civil Service Act of Bhutan
5. DLG	Department of Local Governance
6. DLGP	Decentralization and Local Governance Project
7. DDG	Dzongkhag Development Guideline
8. DT	Dzongkhag Tshogdu
9. GT	Gewog Tshogdu
10. LG	Local Government
11. LGA	Local Government Act
12. LGRR	Local Government Rules and Regulation
13. MoHCA	Ministry of Home and Cultural Affairs
14. MoWHS	Ministry of Works and Human Settlements
15. RAA	Royal Audit Authority
16. RCSC	Royal Civil Service Commission
17. TT	Thimphu Thromde

Acknowledgement

The consultancy firm wishes to express its deep appreciation to the Department of Local Governance, Ministry of Home and Cultural Affairs and HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation Bhutan for the assignment to develop protocols for the effective functioning of the Local Government sessions.

This report and protocols could not have completed without the kind guidance from the two offices and active support from the Local Governments, particularly to all the Dasho Dzongdags, Thrompons, Thrizins, Gups, Tshogdrungs, Gewog Administrative Officers and Sector Heads of Trashigang, Mongar, Pemagatshel, Bumthang, Zhemgang, Gelephu, Punakha, Paro, Thimphu and Wangdiphodrang Dzongkhags and Thromdes for their precious time and sharing frank reflections and experiences on the subject.

The assignment for the development of protocols was carried out between January and March 2020.

Background

Local Government has been described as “the closest and most intimate Government to the people.” This proximity allows the Local Governments to be amidst the everyday lives of citizens to understand and plan development in bettering their lives. Driven by this vision, Bhutan continues to move in the direction of deepening political, administrative as well as fiscal decentralization.

It is expected that by the end of the 12th FYP, the Local Governments would have received 50 per cent of the total capital outlay of the budget (Nu.50 billion). Increasing intergovernmental fiscal transfer as annual grant has not only increased local control over resources but also enlarged local decision-making space in local development. The Dzongkhag Tshogdus, the Gewog Tshogdes and the Thromde Tshogdes through consultative processes, make these important decisions as the highest decision-making bodies the Local Government.

While there have been many positive developments, studies have also identified gaps in their functioning. One of them is how Local Government sessions are conducted, including agenda generation to implementation of decisions. This study tries to further learn and identify the gaps in the functioning of the local government institutions and develop protocols to guide the Local Government members and administrations to make effective decisions in a transparent and accountable fashion consistent with the LGA and preferences of the citizen.

Methodology

Focus Group Discussions and Key Informant Interviews (KII) were conducted with Local Government officials across Dzongkhags, Gewogs as provided in the table below in addition to Thromdes of Thimphu and Gelephu. Findings from the Focus Groups and Key Informants were analyzed to identify gaps. The Districts and Gewogs are randomly selected based on the regions.

Local Government Offices Visited

Sl. no	Dzongkhag(s)	Gewog(s)/ Thromde	Officials interacted
1.	Thimphu	Chang and Kawang	Dzongdag, DT Thrizin, Mangmi, Tshogdrung and Tshogpa.
2.	Thimphu	Thimphu Thromde	Thrompon, ES and Deputy Thrompon
3.	Punakha	Chubbu	Dzongdag, DT Thrizin, GAO and Tshogdrung,
4.	Wangduephodrang	Theedtso	Dzongdag, DT Thrizin, Tshogdrung and GAO
5.	Bumthang	Chumey	Dzongdag, DT Thrizin, Tshogdrung and Mangmi
6.	Zhemgang	Trong	Dzongrab, DT Thrizin, Tshogdrung, Gup, PO, DLO, CFO, GAEO, Gewog Forest Officer, Gewog CC In-charge and Gedrung.
7.	Monggar	Monggar	Dzongdag, DT Thrizin, Tshogdrung, PO, DE, GAO and Tshogpas.
8.	Trashigang	Kanglung	Dzongdag, DT Thrizin, Mangmi, Tshogdrung, PO, DE and GAO

Sl. no	Dzongkhag(s)	Gewog(s)/ Thromde	Officials interacted
9.	Pemagatshel	Chongshing	Dzongdag, DT Thrizin, Mangmi, Tshogdrung, PO, DE, Cultural Officer, Election Officer and GAO
10	Sarpang	Gelephu Thromde	Thrompon, Planning Officer, Thromde Thuemi, ADM Officer and Sr.Urban Planner.



Figure 1 Meeting with the Gewog officials of Mongar Dzongkhag

To conduct an assessment of the capacity of the DT, GT and TT and their compliance to the prescribed norms and principles of good governance, the consultants followed two-step approach consisting of:

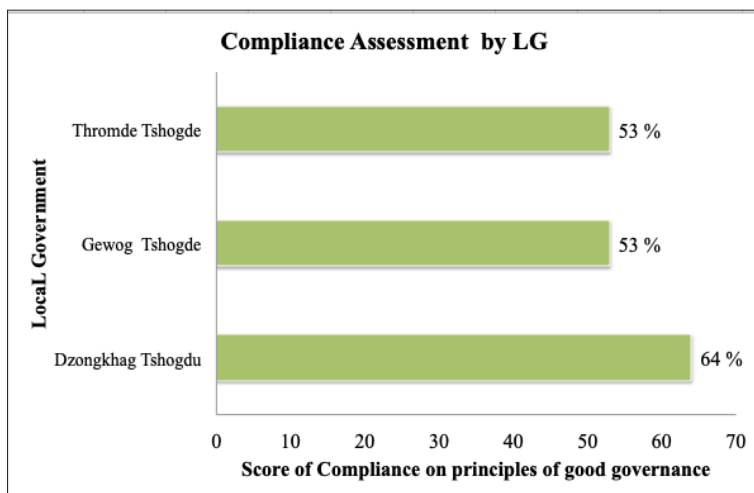
1. Desk Review of available information and data – prior, during and after the field visits
2. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and Key Informant Interviews (KII)
3. Besides, wherever possible efforts had been made to observe the LIVE sessions of the Local Governments.

While there were enough information and data available to conduct desk reviews, the assessment period between January and March was ill-timed as all the Local Government sessions had been completed a couple of months before to submit LG points for the winter session of Parliament. The period also coincided with the imposition of restriction owing to COVID-19 pandemic.

The team covered sizeable sample of 8 Dzongkhags, 9 Gewogs and 2 Thromdes and had interactions with all levels of officials ranging from Dzongdags to Thrompon, DT Thrizins, Gups, civil servants and Tshogpas.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted using a set of 32 pre-formulated questions to conduct interviews for Focus Group Discussions (FGD) with the LG officials. Additional questions were also posed to make deeper assessment on the capacity and to understand the challenges encountered by the Local Government. Separate set of questions was prepared for each phase of the decision-making process of the Local Governments – pre-session, during sessions and post sessions.

Summary of Findings



The above bar graph depicts a comparative analysis on the level of compliance to the stated procedures/ norms and general awareness of the Principles of Good Governance by the LGs. The scores in percentage of each LG are points scored against the total of 29 questions (Annexure - I) used for the interviews.

The study indicates a relatively higher level of awareness and compliance at the DT level to the processes prescribed for its functioning as compared to that of the GT and TT. The LGs have scored points mostly for fulfilling some of the preconditions necessary for conducting LG sessions. However, all three LGs have very low compliance to the obligations of the LGs when tagged according to the Principles of Good Governance.

Good Governance Principles	Obligations	Compliance
Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chairperson's report to the LG 	Never done
Transparency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to information • Dissemination of information and apprising adopted resolutions to people (360⁰ reporting) 	Low Never done
Effectiveness & Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institution of Standing Committees • Framing Bye-laws 	Low Low
Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public participation as audience in LG sessions 	Never done

The other factor hindering the efficacy of the LG is the capacity of the LG offices and lack of clarity in the role of the LG

Secretaries. Tshogdrung is more pre-occupied with the functions of disaster management and kidu activities, than his primary job as DT secretary. The Executive Secretary as the head of Thromde Administration is not able to give enough attention, and so is the GAO in the Gewog. As a result, the quality of sessions suffers with poor preparatory works, to quality of agenda and more importantly not able to implement effectively the decisions of the LGs.

Major Findings

i) Notification Process

Section 98 of LGA 2009 requires that the Chairperson of Local Government confirm the date for its session, and ensure their respective sessions do not coincide.

It was observed that there was no uniformity in how Local Governments decided on dates for sessions, leading to miscommunication among the Local Governments. Cases were reported where the two sessions had coincided on the same date forcing a member to be absent in one LG session. This is case between a DT and a TT in a Dzongkhag.

Another observation was that there were differences in the way the Local Governments drafted and issued notifications including the amount of information shared in it. In certain cases, the notifications contained the finalized date of a session and closing date for receiving agenda, while the other notified only the closing date for receiving agenda. This is an issue as a result of lack of communication between the two Chairpersons of the Local Governments.

While there is an established understanding and communication network between the Chairpersons of the DT and GTs, the

communication between the Chairpersons of DT and TT is somewhat irregular and lack a proper mechanism between the two Local Governments. This could be attributed to the absence of a common protocol or rules and regulations (LGRR has not covered TT), and partly due to lack of familiarity with or awareness of such provision in the LG Act.

ii) Observance of quorum

Following a notification for a session, chiwog zomdus must be convened in the constituencies in order to decide on agenda points. section 172 of LGRR requires not less than two-thirds of the total number of gungs in a constituency as quorum.

It was reported that there were concerns of poor attendance, the quality of participation and non-compliance to the prescribed rules.

iii) Agenda collection process

There is no uniform system of collecting agenda points by the members; some consult the constituents and in most cases agenda points were collected from the members during in an house meeting which happen on a day decided by the LG.

Sections 166 to 186 of Chapter 12 of the LGRR 2012 outline the entire process of collecting agenda from a Chiwog Zomdu which is a mandatory process and a forum for engaging grass-root citizens and soliciting their views for inclusion as points for agenda in the DT, GT and TT. It is observed that notwithstanding the provisions cited above, the Local Governments have adopted differing systems for the purpose. While it was evident that some of the Local Governments have partially complied with the laid down processes, it was also evident that some entirely depended on their members to submit agenda without following the due processes.

The Local Government Offices have not tasked the right officials for the purpose. It is learned that in some Gewogs the Geydrungs have been engaged for the task of a GT Secretary in place of Gewog Administrative officers as required by the Act.

These agenda points are not always vetted properly and not accompanied by required background information. The LG offices and the secretaries have not been engaged in the task assigned in the LGA.

iv) Agenda screening

It was observed that there were in place some form of screening committees at the Dzongkhag level; some involved Dzongdag and civil servants of the Dzongkhag Administration as members in addition to the DT Thrizin and few elected members. However, some elected members asserted that this should be left to elected members. The building of tension in the power equation and assertion for more freedom by elected members more were quite noticeable in some dzongkhags.

A primary concern expressed by Local Government administration was the submission of issues for agenda. Issues that could have been resolved with dialogue with sectors were admitted into Local Government sessions, adding an unnecessary step and also joining other competing issues for time on the agenda. Local Government members, on the other hand, felt that removal of agenda submission took away the opportunity to set a decision on action and accountability.

An agenda screening process involving the Local Government Chairperson and head of administration along with responsible officials for planning was in use. However, the grievance amongst Local Government members continues to exist despite rule 75(b) “be submitted in writing after due consideration and endorsement

by the Gewog Tshogde in case of Dzongkhag Tshogdu; Also, in this case, Gewog Tshogde and Thromde Tshogde should resolve all issues that can be resolved at its level and not submit them to the Dzongkhag Tshogdu.” There is a need to develop an agreed set of criteria for the screening process.

v) Agenda distribution

Distribution practices varied across Local Governments. In most cases, the agendas were distributed late and sometimes on the day of the session. In most instances, it was distributed on entry into the Local Government hall before a session. Further, the section 128 of LGRR states that hard copies of any report by the Dzongkhag or the Gewog administrations to the Dzongkhag Tshogdu or, the Gewog Tshogde are to be made available at the sitting.

Such culture of last-minute distribution of documents related to discussions does not allow the members and officials to prepare and make proper study on the agendas, which could adversely affect the quality of a session.

vi) Committee business

Section 188 of the Local Government Act 2009 provides for the formation of standing committees and ad-hoc committees of Local Governments. Although some Local Governments committees have been constituted, committees were found inactive and where committees had undertaken activities, there were no reports presented to Local Government session.

It has been reported that the difficulty arose mainly from lack of activation of such committees due to paucity of funds for conducting meetings and tours.

vii) Public participation as an audience

Section 138 requires that Local Government sessions be open to public except where the Chairperson feels ‘publicity would seriously prejudice public interest’, the public and the media may be excluded from all or any part sitting. Sections 141, 142, 143 and 147 require (submission of annual Local Government report by the Chairperson) require the Local Governments to strengthen transparency and accountability by promoting transparent mechanisms, including the announcement of session dates so that the public from the constituency can participate as audience/observers as allowed under section 145 of Local Government Act.

Despite the importance, public participation as audience has been almost non-existent excepting a few instances. Lack of space has been cited as a major reason.

viii) Participation by Sector and Regional offices

Section 116 of the Local Government Act 2009 requires a government official concerned to provide information either orally or in writing in relation to whenever a matter relating to that government agency is under discussion. The Chairperson may also invite officials or any person to observe Local Government session as per section 119 of the Local Government Act 2009.

It is acknowledged that the Local Governments will, from time to time, need to seek additional information or advice from civil servants to assist them in carrying out their official duties in relation to the activities of annual plans and programmes, committee meeting, event or function.

However, the civil servants, including the Dzongdags are referred as ‘observers’ while attending the Local Government sessions is increasingly alienating the civil servants from the decision-making processes of the Local Governments.

The connotation of the word ‘observer’ is interpreted liberally by many suiting the stand each person may take, for or against, by both LG members and civil servants in general. While most members strongly agree that the civil service should continue to play the advisory role and render in-depth technical expertise /opinions at time of need to the council members, there are others who would rather be better without civil servants in the council meeting.

Gradual bi-directional tendency of the civil service would have serious consequences in the decision-making efficacy of the Local Government, if not addressed appropriately. Any fissure or rift between the members and civil servants may jeopardize the local governance system.

ix) Delay in receiving responses

Section 129 and 130 of LGRR allows a member to propose a question to another member, a government official or anyone, which requires to be answered. However, much of the difficulty related to delayed response as shared earlier could be resolved by requiring advance notice of question, allowing enough time for appropriate response to be prepared and presented at a Local Government session rather than requiring response to be shared in the next session.

There were challenges in receiving timely and appropriate responses from the Government agencies that caused delays in decisions, The Local Governments expressed serious concerns as it was seen as undermining the sanctity and purpose of Local Governments.

The Local Government Administrative officials are also of the views that despite clear delineation of responsibilities among the stakeholders, they continue to encounter substantial challenges both in terms of horizontal as well as vertical coordination. Insufficient

horizontal coordination within the LG agencies and futile vertical coordination between the LG and the central government agencies often impede the decision-making processes and timely delivery of services.

x) Business transaction

Section 117 of LGRR requires adoption of the agenda as the first item to be considered for the Local Government session. Differences were observed as to how this was followed. Also, the process of resolution follow-up or action taken report as an important accountability mechanism was found missing across several Local Governments.

xi) Moving motion

LGRR 119 allows a member to move motion without notice to alter the agenda. However, there is lack of clarity on notice period for motions that require notice as suggested by rule 119 and others like sections 120-127. Section 137 and rule 108 allow motion on urgent business and could be inferred as another motion without requiring notice. However, this tool remains unknown.

xii) Voting

Section 129 of the Local Government Act 2009 makes reference to rules of procedure to guide voting at a Local Government session along with other related sections. Rule 152 allows decision by consensus, a roll call vote, show of hands or by any other means as a Local Government deems fit. However, Section 134 of the Local Government Act 2009 and rule 153 requires names of members who vote for the motion and those who vote against it be respectively recorded in the records of proceedings. However, there was no such practice and officials appeared unaware.

xiii) Recording a dissension

Section 132 of the LG Act provides for dissenting opinion to be entered into the record. There is culture of providing opportunities for members to express their dissenting opinion, if a member did not agree with the decision of the house. It is observed that there is no uniformity in recording a dissent of a member.

xiv) Minutes and release of documents

How minutes are written varied from Local Government to Local Government. The length of time taken to finalize and share also differed and in some cases, failure in circulation of confirmed minutes/ resolutions at all.

Section 157 and 159 of LGRR require draft minutes/resolutions be read out to members for confirmation and endorsement by members present before the end of a session and followed by verification and signing on each page by the Chairperson in presence of members present.

The systems of distributing adopted resolutions vary. Some send the entire resolutions/ minutes, while others confine to agency-specific issues. There is also ambiguity in who is responsible for follow-up actions on the resolutions and reporting mechanism.

A format could help develop a broader guidance in order to help with both drafting as well as communicating clearly the decisions to agencies for action.

xv) Annual report by Chairperson

Section 147 of the Local Government Act 2009, section 287 and 288 of LGRR require the Chairpersons of the Local Governments to present annual reports to the sessions of their Local Governments.

It is a very important provision on compliance obligation, which places an obligation on a Local Government to present an annual report highlighting the performances and challenges faced in a financial year. This is also a legal provision to ensure transparency and accountability in the functioning of Local Government.

It was reported that while there is a general understanding of such requirement, only one or two LG had ever made an attempt to do so. Sections 289 and 290 of LGRR stipulate a need for publication of reports by the Local Governments has not been initiated either.

xvi) Absence of adherence/ compliance mechanism

Sections 114 to 140 of the LG Act and section 70 to 186 of LGRR provide procedures for conducting LG sessions, and the organizational and functional linkages of the institutions.

Delving into each of the general, regulatory, administrative and financial powers and hosts of other functions, the Local Governments have humungous mandates to fulfill. The Dzongkhag Tshogdu, Gewog Tshogde and Thromde Tshogde are the empowered decision-making bodies of the Local Governments.

As studies in the past had identified some gaps in the functioning of the Local Governments, this study has also observed certain deficiencies, particularly in the critical areas of upholding democratic values and in pursuing the principles of good governance. Decades of decentralization programs have yet to attain maturity in the decision-making capability of the Local Governments.

The purpose of the sacred council is only partially fulfilled by able to conduct meetings as regularly as desired without sufficiently adhering to the most crucial democratic processes. Observing the steps taken by the Local Government at each phase of a session, it has been noticed that many of the mandatory processes are either

partially complied with or some are totally disregarded. Thromde Tshogde meets as many as 4 to 6 times in a year, and the level of adherence to the provisions of the Local Government Act and LGRR are low.

Tshogpas / Thuemis are not conversant with their roles and responsibilities as members of the Local Governments. These 1044 strong workforces of people's deputies could play a significant role in the local governance if due recognition and importance are accorded to enhancing their leadership capability. Role of Mangmis should be reviewed to make productive use of their services as the members and officials in the Gewog administrations.

It was observed that the regulatory and oversight functions have not been carried out in full letter and spirit. Standing committees required under Section 188-201 of LGA are not constituted in many Dzongkhags. Standing committees are expected to play important roles in the continuing process of Local Government.

Lack of proper coordination mechanism for collaborations between the Local Government and Dzongkhag Administration could also be affecting the efficacy of decision-making processes and overall performance of the Local Government.

xvii) Other observations

a) Role of Chairperson and members in conducting a meeting

A Chairperson has two primary leadership tasks, dealing with the subjects and the members. While some of the Chairpersons may possess adequate qualifications and experiences, there are others who have very little of both. The type of leadership that a Chairperson provides determines the performance of the Local Government.

Member to the Local Government provides an important institutional linkage between a community and its Government. A competent member shall not only be able provide leadership to the community but also represent the interest well in the Local Government.

b) Thomde Tshogde not incorporated in the LGRR 2012

Thomde governance had not been incorporated into the LGRR 2012 for want of an in-depth study to identify and delineate governance and technical functions between the Ministry of Home and Cultural Affairs (MoHCA) and Ministry of Works and Human Settlements (MoWHS). The two ministries have agreed that the MoHCA shall be responsible for overall Thomde governance, while the MoWHS shall oversee urban development and related technical aspects.

The revision of LGRR is further delayed since the Government has proposed to amend the Local Government Act. The Prolonged absence of tools for Thomde Tshogde is leading to inconsistencies in its operation and ambiguity in decision-making processes. The frequencies of Tshogde meetings in four Thomdes vary from 4-6 times in a year. Chiwog zomdus are not conducted as per the protocols, and therefore points of agenda are mostly prepared in the office.

Many of the Thuemis have not undergone any capacity and skill development training.

c) Lack of understanding of the concept of local governance across the Government agencies

It has been observed that there is generally low level of conceptual understanding of Local Government and governance system across the local functionaries. Many of the local leaders are not conversant with the provisions of the LG Act and LGRR, thereby not able to understand their roles and responsibilities.



Figure 2 Consultation with the officials of Trong Gewog

xviii) Recommendations:

- a) The study reiterates the recommendation made by the Local Government Assessment Study Report to formulate administrative instructions to enrich DT/GT decision-making structures and processes. In order to improve processes and information level of LG decision-making processes, and to make standing committees operational, it is recommended that administrative instructions, including detailed minimum requirements, are formulated which supplement the generic statutes of the DT/GT rules and regulations.

Current initiative to develop protocols for the effective and efficient functioning of DT, GT and TT is timely and perfectly in line with the above recommendation.

- b) Formulate Local Capacity Building and Development Strategy

A common strategy for Local governance is imperative to strengthen the knowledge, skills and behaviours of the

officials and to improve institutional structures and processes such that the Local Government efficiently meet its mission and goal in a sustainable way. A well-focused strategy shall determine the policy environment within which the Local Government as a public service provider can operate and interact.

Local Government capacity assessment studies have identified capacity gaps and made several recommendations ranging from individual to organizational to systems and networking capacity development. The studies have also recommended strengthening the institutional capacity of the national nodal agency (DLG, MoHCA) to coordinate with the central agencies for coherent and harmonized local government policy and capacity development strategies. The report recommends a need to enhance the capacity of the Local Governments as institutions and administrations.

- c) Revision of Local Government Rules and Regulations 2012 to incorporate Thromde governance under the umbrella of a common local governance system

The Local Government Act 2009 provides a comprehensive legal framework for the local governance, including the municipality or Thromde, which is somehow not covered in LGRR 2012 for want of further clarity in the division of responsibilities between the Ministry of Home and Cultural Affairs (MoHCA) and Ministry of Works and Human Settlements (MoWHS). Now the two ministries have agreed and jointly developed a local governance common framework (LG Common Framework), which specifies the roles and responsibilities of the two ministries with regard to the Thromde governance. The LG Act provides that the MoHCA shall be responsible for coordination pertaining to inter-local Government and between Local Governments and

Central Government coordination, while the MoWHS shall be responsible for urban development and technical aspect of Thromde Governance. The MoHCA shall assume the role of parent agency responsible for overall local governance, including Thromde.

The proposed revision of LGRR should incorporate all aspects of Thromde governance in all the chapters of future rules and regulations as per the provisions laid down in the LG Act. The LG Common Framework is also expected to enhance the functional relationship of Local Governments and their channel of reporting and accountability mechanism in the hierarchy of the Local Governments.

The incorporation of Thromde governance in the LGRR shall also bring clarity in the Local Government Administrations and working relationship between the officials and elected members of the Local Governments. In a nutshell, a common LGRR for DT, GT and TT shall foster a sense of common identity and unity among the Local Governments.

d) Training on Local Governance

The Department of Local Governance must continue with the programme of LG Act vitalization to the Local Governments and their Administrations. In order to enhance decision-making capacity and bring synergy in the local governance, awareness programmes, workshops and training on local democracy, decentralization, roles of administrations, roles of LG members and skill development programmes must be extended to the functionaries of the Local Governments.

It is recommended that with other capacity building programmes, the LG Protocols for LG Session is implemented in earnest to enhance the decision-making capacities of the Local Government elected members and civil servants. The

protocols could also foster a sense of unity and facilitate greater synergy between the Local Governments and their administrations.

e) Need to institute a compliance mechanism

The root cause for all deficiencies in the Local Government functioning could be addressed to an extent by instituting a compliance mechanism deriving inputs and strength from Chapter 14(Monitoring and Coordination) of the Local Government Act.

- i. Need for compliance has been amply highlighted by the various studies.
- ii. The Department of the Local Governance has a unit called Legal and Compliance Unit (L&CU) under Local Governance Development Division (LGDD) approved by the RCSC for the purpose.
- iii. DLG as the responsible central agency should collaborate with other Government agencies, like the Ministry of Finance, GNHC, RCSC, MoWHS and MOHCA to streamline reporting and compliance mechanism for Local Governments.
- iv. To improve efficiency and effectiveness, transparency and accountability in the LG, the information and reporting system, like LG portal of the Local Government should be strengthened.
- v. Local Government offices as complying agencies should institute robust internal quality assurance and compliance mechanisms. This should be an input to the Individual Work Plan (IWP) of civil servants.

- vi. Collaboration with the oversight bodies like RAA and ACC could also contribute to fulfilling compliance obligations and ensuring transparency and accountability in the management and operation of the Local Government.
- vii. Implementation of the LG protocol should address gaps in the decision-making processes and contribute to enhancing adherence level in the Local Government.

f) **Strengthen LG Offices**

It is imperative that the office of the Local Government, especially the Dzongkhag Tshogdu is strengthened with additional manpower to cope up with the increasing mandate of the office and Thrizin.

The dual functions of the Tshogdung as DT secretary and disaster focal person also warrant a thorough review. Effort should be made to motivate and retain the existing Tshogdrung and GAOs.

xix) References

1. Constitution of Kingdom of Bhutan
2. Local Government Act 2009
3. Local Government Amendment Act 2014
4. Local Government Rules and Regulation 2012
5. Draft Local Government Rules and Regulations 2019
6. Evaluation Report on Local Government Support Programs in Bhutan 2013
7. LG Assessment study Report 2016
8. Report on functioning of DT and GT 2019
9. Annual Gewog Grants Guideline 2019
10. DDG Guideline 2019
11. Resolutions of Dzongdag' Conference
12. Resolutions of Gups' Conference.

13. Bhutan Civil Service Act 2010
14. Minutes of DT and GT

Annexure-I: Questionnaires

A set of 37 suggestive questions are provided below to guide interaction with stakeholders during FGDs and KIIs to help provide a general sense of direction in mapping the processes of decision-making and challenges in the local governments. This will inform the work of developing protocol and recommendations to strengthen Local Government functioning.

(a) Focus Group Discussions

Group 1. Dzongkhag/Thromde level: sector heads like planning officer, head engineer, agriculture officer and finance officer (upto 6 officials)

Group 2. Gewog level: include Mangmi, Tshogpa, Gewog Administrative Officer, Geydrung, Agriculture Extension and Livestock Extension Officers or relevant officials in case of thromde (up to 8 officials).

Key Informant Interviews

Dzongkhag/Dzongrab, DT Thrizin, Thrompen/Executive Secretary, Gup, Tshodrung (Four Officials)

A. Pre-session:

1. Have regular Dzongkhag Tshogdu, Gewog Tshogde, Thromde Tshogde sessions been held as per the Local Government Act?
2. Who is responsible for planning and coordinating Dzongkhag Tshogdu, Gewog Tshogde and Thromde Tshogde sessions?
3. How is a notification inviting proposals from members for inclusion in agenda issued? (need to know place, date, time and through what mode)
4. Do the members for the purpose of collecting points for agenda call a zomdu in their constituencies?

5. How is the agenda for a Local Government session finalized?
6. What have been some key considerations in the finalization of a Dzongkhag Tshogdu, Thromde Tshogde] agenda?
7. How much time does a Gewog [Chiwog or Throm Demkhong] get to gather and submit agenda for a Dzongkhag Tshogdu [Gewog Tshogde or Thromde Tshogde]?
8. What has been the process of collecting agenda from the sectors?
9. Do Local Government Committee reports form part of the agenda?
10. How do agendas from a Gewog [Chiwog] differ from that of sectors?
11. Could some agenda submissions have been resolved without having to come to Tshogdu or Tshogde? [Seek a few examples]
12. When is the finalized agenda shared with Members? And sectors?
13. Have there been issues that needed urgent attention of the Local Government
14. Have any special sessions of the Dzongkhag Tshogdu [Gewog Tshogde or Thromde Tshogde] been held to address in the past? [If yes, seek info on agenda]
15. How are changes to Local Government bye-laws proposed?
16. Has social media platforms been used to share finalized agenda with Members and other attendees?
17. What could be changed/ improved in the agenda preparation process in order to further improve Local Government session outcome?

B. During Session:

1. What is the 1st business transaction of a Local Government session?
2. Do members submit new agenda items after commencement of a session? [In cases of Dzongkhag Tshogdu and Thromde Tshogde]
3. How are attendees, other than Members, selected to attend Local Government sessions?
4. Is the LG session open to public to participate as an audience? Why?
5. Do journalists attend Local Government sessions? Why?
6. On a scale from 1 – 4 (1=Very Poor, 2=Poor, 3=Good & 4=Very Good), how would you rate the quality of debate in Local Government sessions? Share reasons for your rating?
7. What challenges do Local Government sessions face?
8. What has been the role of the Dzongkhag, Gewog and Thromde Administrations in holding
9. LG sessions?
10. When does the Dzongdag/ Executive Secretary/ Gewog Administrative Officer contribute during a Local Government session?
11. What is the process of raising a question at a Local Government session? [Note the practice of questioning]
12. How is a decision reached? (Note process)
13. What system of recording and archiving do Local Governments maintain of sessions? (Individual votes, questions and responses, motions and resolutions)

14. Who is responsible maintaining and preparation of record of proceedings?
15. What can be changed to further strengthen decision-making process?
16. Does the Chairperson submit annual report to the session?
Seek contents?
17. Any disciplinary issue faced by the Local government?

C. Post –session:

1. How long does it take to finalize record of proceedings?
2. Who is responsible for forwarding and follow-up of resolutions to/with relevant offices? Timeline?
3. What is the mechanism for the Dzongkhag, Gewog and Thromde Administrations in the implementing and reporting of Local Government resolutions?
4. How are responses received back from relevant offices relayed to constituents?
5. What roles do the Tshogdrung, Executive Secretary and GAO play in the implementation of resolutions passed by the DT, GT and TT?
- 6) What could be changed for further improvement?
- 7) How accessible are record of proceedings to constituents and interested individuals or groups?