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ROYAL AUDIT AUTHORITY



AUDIT ON NATIONAL PARKS MANAGEMENT



ENVIRONMENT

AUDIT

REPORT

Reporting on Economy, Efficiency & Effectiveness



རྒྱལ་ཁབ་ལྷན་དུས་ཞིབ་དབང་འཛིན།

ROYAL AUDIT AUTHORITY
Bhutan Integrity House

Reporting on Economy, Efficiency & Effectiveness in the use of Public Resources



RAA (TAD-EAS)/ 2008-09/10694

30th October 2008

**The Hon'ble Minister,
Ministry of Agriculture,
Thimphu.**

Sub: Environmental Audit Report on “*The Management of National Parks in Bhutan*”

Your Excellency,

Enclosed herewith please find a copy of the *Environmental Audit Report* on the *Management of National Parks* comprising of Jigme Dorji National Park, Jigme Singye Wangchuck National Park, Thrumshingla National Park and Bumdeling Wildlife Sanctuary covering the period 01.01.02 to 31.12.07.

The audit was conducted on the principles of *Performance Audit* and in line with the mandates of the Royal Audit Authority as enshrined in the Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan and the Audit Act of Bhutan 2006. The main objective of this audit was to review, assess and recommend on the management of National Parks with special emphasis on the economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources.

The copies of the draft reports were issued to the Director, Department of Forests and the CFOs of the Nature Conservation Division and the respective Parks for confirmation of factual information and comments. However, the RAA did not receive any comments as of the dateline provided.

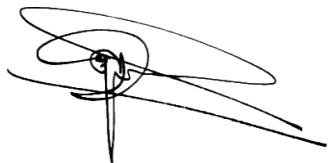
Based on the review of documents, physical observations, discussions, interviews and comparison with best practices around the world, the RAA has made series of recommendations that may be desirable for the efficient and effective management of Parks. With the similar nature of problem, the report is also expected to benefit other National Parks, Sanctuaries, Reserves and other protected areas in the country. Therefore, an effort has been made to forward copies of the report to all the dzongkhags.

The RAA would remain grateful, if Your Excellency could direct the concerned department and agencies to submit a detailed action plan with clear and definite timeframe for implementing the audit recommendations and instituting appropriate controls, corrective measures and management practices on or before **31st December 2008**.

“Every individual must strive to be principled. And individuals in positions of responsibility must even strive harder.”
- His Majesty The King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck

We would like to acknowledge the co-operation and assistance extended to the auditors by the officials of the Department of Forests, Nature Conservation Division and the Parks.

Yours most respectfully,



(Ugen Chewang)
Auditor General of Bhutan

Copy to:

1. The Hon'ble Prime Minister, Royal Government of Bhutan, Thimphu for kind information;
2. The Hon'ble Speaker, National Assembly, Thimphu;
3. The Hon'ble Chairman, National Council, Thimphu;
4. The Deputy Minister, National Environment Commission, Thimphu;
5. The Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, Thimphu;
6. The Secretary, Ministry of Finance, Tashi Chho Dzong, Thimphu;
7. The Secretary, GNH Commission, Thimphu;
8. The Director, Department of Forests, MoA, Thimphu;
9. Dasho Dzongdag, Dzongkhag Administration of all 20 Dzongkhags;
10. The Executive Director, Royal Society for the Protection of Nature, Thimphu.
11. The Park Manager, Jigme Dorji National Park, Damji, Gasa;
12. The Park Manager, Jigme Singye Wangchuck National Park, Tsangkha, Trongsa;
13. The Park Manager, Thrumshingla National Park, Ura, Bumthang;
14. The Park Manager, Bumdeling Wild Life Sanctuary, Trashiyangtse;
15. The Park Manager, Royal Manas National Park, Gelephu;
16. The Asstt. Auditor Generals, OAAG, Tsirang, Bumthang & Samdrupjongkhar;
17. PPAARD, RAA, Thimphu.
18. Office copy.

"Every individual must strive to be principled. And individuals in positions of responsibility must even strive harder."
- His Majesty The King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck

TITLE SHEET

1. REPORT : **Audit on the Management of National Parks** – (Jigme Dorji National Park, Jigme Singye Wangchuck National Park, Thrumshingla National Park, Bumdeling Wildlife Sanctuary.)

2. EXECUTING AGENCY : 1. Jigme Dorji National Park,
2. Jigme Singye Wangchuck National Park
3. Thrumshingla National Park,
4. Bumdeling Wildlife Sanctuary,
5. Nature Conservation Division, MoA,
6. Department of Forestry

3. NAME OF AUDITEE OFFICIALS:

SL. No.	NAME	DESIGNATION
1.	Kinley Tshering	Park Manager (JDNP)
2.	Mani Sangay	Park Manager (JSWNP)
3.	Ngawang Norbu	Park Manager (TNP)
4.	Karma Tenzin	Park Manager (BWS)

4. PERIOD COVERED BY AUDIT : January 2002 to December 2007

5. SCHEDULE OF AUDIT EXECUTION : 6th April – 16th May 2008

6. NAME OF INSPECTING TEAM:

SL. No.	NAME	DESIGNATION
1	Chandra Bdr. Gurung	Audit Officer
2	Sonam Wangmo	Asstt. Audit Officer
3	Tenzin Chhoedup	Asstt. Audit Officer
4	Tashi Lhamo	Asstt. Audit Officer

7. SUPERVISING OFFICERS:

SL. No.	NAME	DESIGNATION
1	Tashi	Chief Audit Officer

CONTENTS

1.	Executive Summary.....	1
2.	Introduction.....	5
3.	Observations.....	7
4.	Recommendations.....	15
5.	Glossary.....	19
6.	Appendix.....	20

Every Bhutanese is a trustee of the Kingdom's natural resources and environment for the benefit of the present and future generations and it is the fundamental duty of every citizen to contribute to the protection of the natural environment, conservation of the rich biodiversity of Bhutan and prevention of all forms of ecological degradation including noise, visual and physical pollution through the adoption and support of environment friendly practices and policies.

The Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan

1

Executive Summary

Why RAA did this study?

The Kingdom of Bhutan has always placed its environmental conservation efforts ahead of all socio-economic developments. The importance of such efforts are well resounded through

numerous national policy documents.

According to the Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 60% of the total land area of the country should be reserved as forest cover for all times to come. Such firm stand on the conservation of the pristine environment has given the country a unique place and recognition in the international arena.

Article 25.1 of the Constitution of Kingdom of Bhutan and Chapter 1, Section 3 of the Audit Act of Bhutan 2006, specifically states that *“There shall be a Royal Audit Authority to audit and report on the economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of public resources”*. In line with this important constitutional responsibility, the RAA is required to examine whether the Government agencies are doing the right things in the right and least expensive way. In doing so, the RAA not only looks at “what has been done”, but also “what has not been done” to achieve the ultimate objective.

Therefore the Audit on the Management of National Parks was taken up with the following objectives;

- ≈ To assess the adequacy of planning, management and reporting systems in achieving the desired outputs and outcomes;
- ≈ To review and assess the management of risks to the conservation of the natural and cultural heritage; and
- ≈ To review the economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of various funds allocated to the park offices.

The audit covered three parks and a sanctuary namely; Jigme Dorji National Park (JDNP), Jigme Singye Wangchuck National Park (JSWNP), Thrumshingla National Park (TNP) and Bumdeling Wildlife Sanctuary (BWS).

What RAA found?

Given that the parks were facing almost the similar constraints and had near similar problems, it was found appropriate to present combined observations so that a holistic approach could be taken to handle these constraints and problems. Only the major specific issues, if any, have been presented separately.

The RAA also came across certain good practices and some noteworthy achievements, as presented hereunder:

- ✓ In line with Forest and Nature Conservation Act of Bhutan (F&NCA), 1995 and the Forest and Nature Conservation Rules of Bhutan (F&NCR), 2000, all the park management offices had prepared **management plans** on five yearly periods.
- ✓ Since there are villages within the parks' boundary, one of the main activities of the parks is the implementation of the ICDP (**Integrated Conservation Development Programmes**). It was found that, generally, the villagers have economically benefited from this programme.
- ✓ All the parks have their own office buildings with few of them even having constructed staff quarters.
- ✓ Many of the staffs of the parks have undergone various relevant courses both within and outside the country, thereby improving the overall competency level of the park offices.

Despite such achievements, there were several constraints, problems and weaknesses. Some of the notable observations, in these lines, are;

- ✘ There was minimal integration of plans amongst the Parks, Geogs and the Dzongkhags, with the possibility of leading to duplication of works and loss of accountability;
- ✘ None of the park management offices had initiated impact assessment to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the various activities carried out by them;
- ✘ Zonation, though mentioned as a significant activity in all management plans, had not been carried out by the park management offices with the exception of BWS;

- ✘ There are inconsistencies among the various Parks in demarcating the different zones such as core, buffer and multiple-use. The zones are being interpreted differently by different Park Management Offices and also within the various levels of staff in each Park.
- ✘ There is no uniform and consistent approach in implementing environmental awareness programmes amongst parks.
- ✘ There is no consistency amongst the administrative organogram of the various parks, with each park having its own distinct set up.
- ✘ There is no proper documentation, especially in JDNP and JSWNP, on the various activities executed by them in the field,
- ✘ Although most parks have built sound human resource through ex-country and in-country trainings, seminars and workshops, none of them have carried out training need analysis to ascertain the need, relevance, priority etc. of the training.
- ✘ Considering the size of area under them and the need of sending the patrolling teams in groups, most of the parks are still facing the manpower constraint.
- ✘ The management plans of most of the parks, with the exception of TNP, had not come out on time. Besides, many of the activities included in the management plans were not achieved by parks.
- ✘ There is often conflict in balancing the activities between conservation and the development. The recent memory could be that of the development of the rich Takin habitat across the Tshachu area under JDNP. Most people in the park region often view the Park Management Offices as Donors.

What RAA recommends?

Based on the review, findings and analysis the RAA developed certain recommendations with an attempt to address the identified deficiencies, problems and weaknesses.

Some of the significant recommendations requiring immediate attention are;

- ⑧ The Park Management Offices should document all the activities carried out at field level, including the lists for all species.
- ⑧ The Parks should integrate their ICDP activities with Dzongkhags and Geogs to avoid duplication and to obtain greater value for money.
- ⑧ Periodically, the Park Management Offices should assess the impact of their activities in relation to their objectives and desired outcomes.
- ⑧ A more uniform and consistent approach towards ICDP and conducting environmental awareness programmes could be worked out within and amongst the parks.
- ⑧ The Department of Forest should develop a more consistent administrative organogram and the names and functions of the different units within the Park Management Offices should be standardised.
- ⑧ A proper Need Analysis should be carried to determine the need and relevance and to identify the types of trainings required for the staff and other stakeholders. Placing the right people at the right job, especially after the training, should also be looked into by the Department and Park Managers themselves.
- ⑧ Research works should be strengthened at a larger scale. Where appropriate works in conserving parks should be based on some kind of research works done.
- ⑧ The Department and/or the park managers should initiate ways of sharing information amongst the park managers, conservationists and other environmental institutes through various forums.
- ⑧ The Department may also look into the constraints faced by the various Park Management Offices in balancing their activities between the conservation and the development. Any developmental activities need to consider the implications for the biodiversity and integrate appropriate measures, if biodiversity is to be conserved.

2

Introduction

The ecological system is susceptible to numerous threats such as increasing population pressures, agricultural modernization, hydropower development, mining, industrialisation, urbanisation, sewage and waste disposal, tourism, road constructions and the provision of other physical infrastructure associated with the social and economic development. With the rising population and the economic development of the country such threats and pressures will certainly rise over the years.

Therefore, an appropriate balance has to be made between development and conservation.

Bhutan is a home to several endangered species of flora and fauna harbouring over 7000 species of plants, 165 species of mammals and 700 species of birds.

The country has been acknowledged as a model for conservation and is recognised as one of the global hot spots for biodiversity. There are several constitutional provisions on the

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The Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan

conservation of its pristine environment. Such commitment for the conservation is evident through the Government's policy to set aside over 26% of the total size of the country under the protected area system with a further additional 9% as biological corridors. Besides, almost all the legislations that were enacted till date contain some provisions relating either directly or indirectly, to the conservation of the environment.

Traditionally, the approach to the environment has been anchored in our Buddhist attitude and the way of life. Nature has always been respected spiritually.

Today, the establishment of National Parks, Reserves and other protected areas has created lines of demarcation between humans and nature, which in the past, never existed.

A brief overview of the protected area is as given hereunder;

Sl. No.	Name of protected area	Area in square km.	Dzongkhags (Districts)	Ecosystem representation	Funding source (besides the RGoB)
1	Royal Manas National Park	1,000	Zhemgang and Sarpang	Sub-tropical forest, habitat for tiger, elephants, leopards, golden langur	WWF
2	Jigme Dorji National Park	4,349	Gasa, Thimphu, Paro and Punakha	Habitat for takin, snow leopard, blue sheep, rare alpine plant species	1997-2003, UNDP/GEF
3	Jigme Singye Wangchuck National Park	1,400	Trongsa, Zhemgang, Wangdue, Sarpang and Tsirang	Pristine upland broad leaf forest, habitat for clouded leopard, tiger	1998-2003, Dutch (SDA)
4	Bomdeling Wildlife Sanctuary	1,300	TashiYangtse, Lhuntse and Mongar	Upland broad forest, winter roosting area of black-necked crane	1998-2003, DANIDA
5	Thrumshingla National Park	902	Bumthang, Mongar, Lhuntse and Zhemgang	Old growth fir forest with varieties of Rhododendron, prime habitat for red panda, tragopan and monal pheasant	2003-2007, GEF/WWF
6	Sakteng Wildlife Sanctuary	650	Trashigang	Pristine mixed conifers forest, highest number of Rhododendron plant species	2003-2006, WWF
7	Phibsoo Wildlife Sanctuary	278	Sarpang	Natural sal forest, habitat for spotted deer	-
8	Torsa Strict Nature Reserve	644	Haa and Samtse	Pristine temperate forests	-
9	Khaling Wildlife Sanctuary	273	S/jongkhar	Temperate forest, only habitat of pigmy hog	-

The Department of Forests under the Ministry of Agriculture has the mandate to preserve the natural ecological balance by maintaining at least 60 percent of the country under forest covers for all times to come. It is also the responsibility of this department to implement the Forest and Nature Conservation Act 1995.

In order to fulfill this important responsibility, the Department of Forests established Nature Conservations Division (NCD) in 1992 to plan and implement all conservation programmes in the country. The NCD also monitors and supports all protected area managements (National Parks, Wildlife Sanctuaries, and Strict Nature Reserves).

3

Observations

3.1 Lack of proper documentation

Though all parks have made significant efforts to manage parks in the most scientific manner, the activities carried out by them were not fully documented. In particular, the JDNP and JSWNP lagged behind the rest of the parks in this case. In absence of the documentation, it appeared that these parks had not achieved what they had initially planned. The parks are yet to develop listings and de-listings of species which is the single most important activity in the conservation of the parks. TNP has recently initiated listings and de-listings of certain medium and large sized mammals.

Inadequate human resource has been cited as the principal reason for such lapses. Non documentation will lead to loss of accountability in the system besides leading to loss of future references for research and other activities.

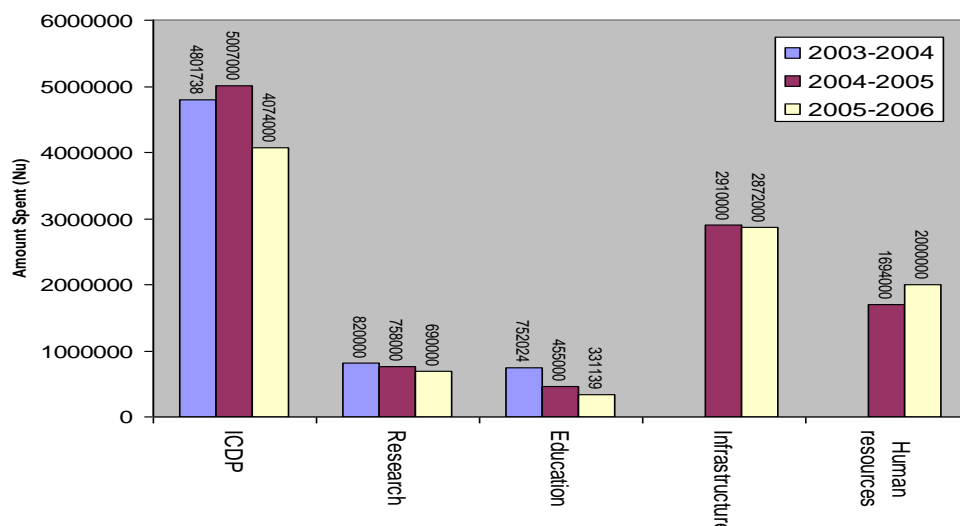
3.2 Lack of integration of Park's Plans with that of the Gewogs & Dzongkhags

The management plan provides for the integration of Park's plans with that of the Gewogs and Dzongkhags. The integration is necessary since there are dzongkhags operating within the parks jurisdiction and the parks also deal with developmental activities. Such integration will avoid duplication of works and also complement and supplement each others' activities. However, it was observed that no such integration was done with the Dzongkhags and Gewogs and vice versa. All activities of the Parks and the Dzongkhags (includes Gewogs) were planned and implemented in isolation to each other.

3.3 Deficiencies noted in Integrated Conservation and Development (ICDP)

The parks in Bhutan are unique with human settlements within and around the parks. Therefore in addition to taking care of the other species, park managements had to take care of the humans, as well. In this respect, the Integrated Conservation and Development Programmes (ICDP) play a vital role in elevating the economy of the rural people. The principle behind the ICDP is that once the people are economically better off, their dependence on the forest product will reduce and thereby aiding the conservation efforts in the long run.

Therefore, all parks have spent the maximum amount on the ICDP. For example, the following histogram depicts the activities carried out and the amount spent by TNP;



Similar trends prevail in all other parks. The activities under ICDP were wide and varied. In the case of TNP, the activities under the ICDP include strengthening of agriculture and livestock, supply of CGI Sheets and solar panels and rural scholarship programmes. The supply of CGI Sheets at 80% of the price and



Community vegetable garden assisted by TNP

the solar panels were made after signing a bond with the beneficiaries that the latter would not depend on the forest products for roofing and energy.

While the efforts of the parks in this respect were notable, the following deficiencies were observed;

- ✘ The actual impact created by the activities is not clearly known, since none of the parks have conducted any impact assessment of the ICDP till date;
- ✘ Once the activities were carried out, there is no mechanism of monitoring and reporting by the parks;
- ✘ The activities under the ICDP are not precisely defined thereby making it difficult to monitor and assess the impact. The activities are so varied that at times it was difficult to link the support with the conservation efforts though it might have helped farmers economically. For example it is hard to establish the link between supports to school sport activities, renovation of monasteries, construction of approach roads etc. to the conservation;
- ✘ Often the parks management entertained ad-hoc requests from public and schools implying the subjectivity and defying the importance of the planned activities; and

- ✘ The supports were extended based on the Socio-Economic Survey (SES) reports by external consultants. Not to discredit the SES reports, but the fact remains that the parks management having dealt with their region for so long and being aware of the issues within their park should be in a better position to prepare such report. The stakeholders should have been involved at least in processing the reports, even if the lack report writing skills.

3.4 Zoning of Parks, not done

Principally, the parks in Bhutan are generally divided into three zones, namely Core, Buffer and Multiple-Use zones. Core zones are exclusively protected where no human settlements and developmental activities are allowed, Buffer zones are cushion between multiple-use and the core where controlled use of natural resources are allowed while Multiple-Use zones are those where the residents can use resources and developmental activities can take place.

Zonation is the basis on which parks are managed. Despite the logic and having continuously included in the management plans of all parks, the parks management had not started demarcation of different zones with the exception of BWS. As depicted by the picture (pillar) on right, BWS is in the process of demarcating the zones.



Further, park officials in field interpreted zonation concept in varying ways. Some officials thought that the buffer zones were outside the main boundary park while others interpreted as between the multiple and core zone. Many did not understand the extent to which the communities can use the natural resources within the different zones. Some of the officials were even sceptical about the relevance of the system of zoning the parks.

3.5 No uniform approach in environmental awareness

Chapter 36 of Agenda 21 of the Rio Earth Summit in 1992 states that in order *“to improve sustainable development education, nations should seek to make environment and development education available to the people of all ages”*.

All parks management had taken up numerous activities on environmental awareness programmes. On verifying the process, it was found that all parks had their own unique approach of implementing such activities.

Some gave lectures, some produced CDs while others did demonstrations and so on. No study was done to identify the most effective method. Since most of the activities across parks are similar, a consistent and uniform approach could have been followed. Such an approach could not only save cost and time, but also provide for easy evaluation and comparison of the impacts across the parks.

A guideline on environmental awareness programmes designed and developed by the Royal Society for the Protection of Nature (RSPN) was available at JSWNP, but was found not implemented. The guideline of this kind could be very helpful and would encourage consistency and uniformity in the approach.

3.6 Inconsistency in the Parks Administrative Set- Up

The administrative sets up in the various parks were found to be inconsistent. BWS had established a Data Monitoring Unit while the rest did not. Likewise the TNP has Accounts Section independent of the administration while the rest have clubbed it with the administration. Besides, the units under different park management had inconsistent terms. For instance, in some parks there is a unit called Research and Monitoring Unit while others termed it as only Research unit. The JDNP had Forest Resource Management Unit while the TNP has Protection of Wildlife and Resource Utilisation Section.

Since all parks are administratively under one umbrella ministry, the consistency in parks set up is very essential for the proper functioning, monitoring and coordination. The parks officials were also aware of the fact and explained that the department is in the process of setting up standard organogram applicable to all the parks.

3.7 Trainings - Not based on Need and Relevance

While efforts have been made by the parks in developing the human resource by training the staffs in various fields of conservation, there were deficiencies in the overall training system, which if unchecked, could lead to waste of resources. The following were some of the significant deficiencies;

- ✘ A systematic training needs analysis was not carried out. Therefore, the trainings were not necessarily based on need and relevance. Many officials were sent on study tours that were not very relevant to the Bhutanese park management systems;
- ✘ The parks are yet to develop and document the contributions made by individual officials after availing a particular training;
- ✘ There is no system of disseminating the knowledge gained by an individual through trainings, to other officials of the parks;

- ✘ Dzongdags, chimis, gups, accountants and administrative personnel were also sent for study tours abroad. While it is important for these non-park officials to appreciate the conservation efforts, there was no direct contribution from them. The gups and chhimis who were sent for training either did not get elected or resigned while the dzongdags and other staffs were transferred to different dzongkhags or agencies thereby defeating the foregoing intention of the parks. Those availing masters' courses from the parks funds had hardly served in the parks for more than a year after the completion of the course, thereby creating very little/no impact on the parks from the studies undertaken.
- ✘ Besides, people from different fields from the MoA, HQ such as HROs and accountants were also sent for ex-country trainings from the parks fund.

Lack of training needs analysis leading to irrelevancy of the training to the conservation policy of the parks have led to waste of resources, which could otherwise be used effectively for other needy activities directly related to the conservation.

3.8 Delay in preparation of Management Plans

Good planning helps agencies identify what they intend to achieve, by when, and how they will measure the progress. All the parks in the country are mandated to prepare a management plan on a five yearly period which may not necessarily coincide with the Government Five Year Plans.

However, it was observed that the management plans of the parks were often delayed and were not ready even after the lapse of the plan period of five years. Some of them remained as drafts for the entire plan period. JDNP and JSWNP were not able to finalize their last draft management plans whereas TNP and BWS were on the verge of completing the drafts. Therefore, the parks were operating without management plans till now.

The management plans are the key documents for parks based on which the parks can carry out their activities. Therefore, it is extremely important for them to first complete the plans and then to execute them accordingly.

3.9 Lack of appropriate forum to share knowledge and information

The kinds of activities entailed in the management of parks in Bhutan are very similar to each other. Therefore, the parks management would benefit significantly if there could be a system wherein the staff and officials of different parks could share the knowledge and information amongst them.

Though there is a current system of annual conference at the ministry level, many middle and lower level officials does not participate in the conference.

Moreover, the issues discussed were more of administrative than of technical nature.

3.10 Unclear rules on seizure & retention of illegal items

Clause 78 of the Forest & Nature Conservation Rules of Bhutan, 2006, states that, “*All seized or confiscated items shall be held in subject to strict inventory and restricted access requirement*”.

Some of the parks have a system of surrendering the seized items to the DoF, MoA, while others have retained in the park HQ with some in the Warden Posts. Those retained at the parks were not inventoried properly and those submitted to Ministry were not sufficiently evidenced through acknowledgements from the recipient. On the whole, there is no clear system on the seizure and retention of the seized/confiscated items. It is also not understood as to who should finally take possession of those items.

3.11 Lack of Monitoring & Review

The monitoring and review process in the implementation and effectiveness of the parks’ activities had been generally lacking. JSWNP had attempted an impact assessment of some of the ICD activities. The exercise, however, was carried out by the same person who had implemented the activities thereby jeopardising the accuracy and objectivity of the findings from the exercise.

Monitoring and assessment is an important tool to keep the activities on the track of achieving the identified objectives and outcomes. It exposes problems and deficiencies before it becomes too late and provides timely solutions. Monitoring and Review is a regular and key process in the park offices, worldwide such as *the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, the Tasmanian Wilderness Management Plan etc.*

3.12 Inadequate Research Oriented works

The research works in the parks, in general, were found to be inadequate. Research should be the core or rather a leading point from which all conservation and park management activities should commence. On the contrary, many research works were found to be done on ad-hoc basis without proper objectives and conclusions. The research methodology followed for similar research works amongst the different parks differed from each other.

Although some research works were carried out by the expatriate conservationists and officials from head quarter out of professional interests, there was no system of archiving such research works, thereby often missing the valuable information from the outcomes of such research works.

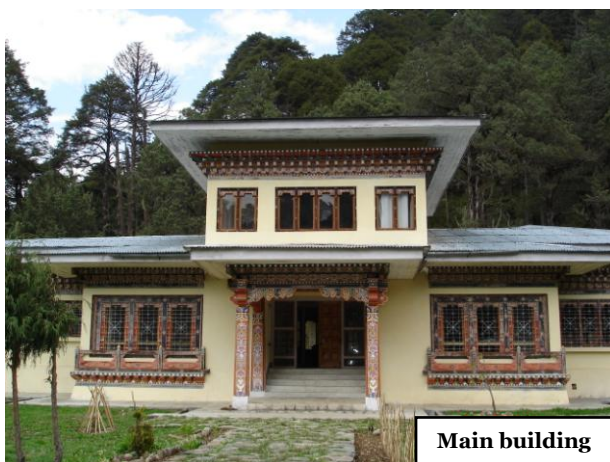
3.13 Frequent change in top Park Management officials

A lot of activities carried out by the park or under the park's initiative require continuous monitoring over a long period of time. The audit team observed that there was frequent transfer of Park Manager of JDNP. While the change was healthy as envisaged in the Government rules, the transfer of the JDNP Park Managers was found to be too frequent and irregular. Within a period of seven years, a total of five Park Managers got changed averaging about tenure of one year and four months per Park Manager. It appeared that many lapses and non-achievement of planned activities in JDNP could be mainly because of the frequent transfer of Park Managers. It was observed that the plans envisioned by the previous manager were often changed by the successor; or because it was not handed over properly, the new manager had to start all over again.

3.14 Nature Study Centre at Khebethang (JSWNP) Underutilised

The audit team, along with the officials from the JSWNP visited the Nature Study Centre at Khebethang, Phobjikha.

It was observed that the centre is huge with administrative buildings, staff quarters and hostel facilities. The centre is located approximately five kilometres away from the road point and was not electrified. According to the Park Manager, the centre was built sometime during 1994 -1995. However, no documents were available to substantiate the verbal statement of the park manager. It was also



Main building

confirmed from the inscription on the inaugural board at the site that the entire centre was funded by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF). The officials of WWF had no idea about the existence of such a facility. An attempt was also made to obtain information from the DoF, but to no avail.

It was learnt from the current park manager that JSWNP was once housed in this centre. Apparently, due to remoteness and dampness of the area, the office had to be shifted to other location.

Currently, the centre is being used as one of the Park Range Offices and is being vastly underutilised. The pictures of the staff quarters and the hostels are presented below;



Staff Quarters



Hostels)

4

Recommendations

All the observations of the RAA are the results of the audit techniques applied during the execution phase of the audit such as review of documents, physical observation, interviews, walk through tests, questionnaires etc. Some of the best practices around the globe which were found relevant and practical were also referred, compared and analysed during the audit. Based on the observations highlighted above and in line with Article 44 of the Audit Act of Bhutan 2006, the RAA recommends the following with the aim of improving the economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the management of parks;

1. Proper documentation of core park activities should be ensured.

The parks management should document their core functions in a more systematic manner. Listings and de-listings of species within the respective territory of the parks should be well documented. Proper documentation and knowledge on various species should ideally be the starting point for any conservation strategies.

Besides, all research works done within the park territory by any other conservationists should also be documented by the park management.

2. Proper synchronization in ICD Programmes and timely impact assessment to be carried out.

There should be proper synchronization in the plans of the Dzongkhags, Geogs and Parks to avoid duplication of works and to have more balanced socio-economic developments. The kind of ICD programmes extended to farmers and other communities may also be reviewed considering its linkages and importance to the conservation policy.

3. Need for uniform administrative set up in park management

The Ministry of Agriculture should smooth out the differences in the administrative set up of the various parks and come out with a standard administrative set up of parks management with uniform and consistent terms for different units under the management.

4. SMART Management Plans to be ensured.

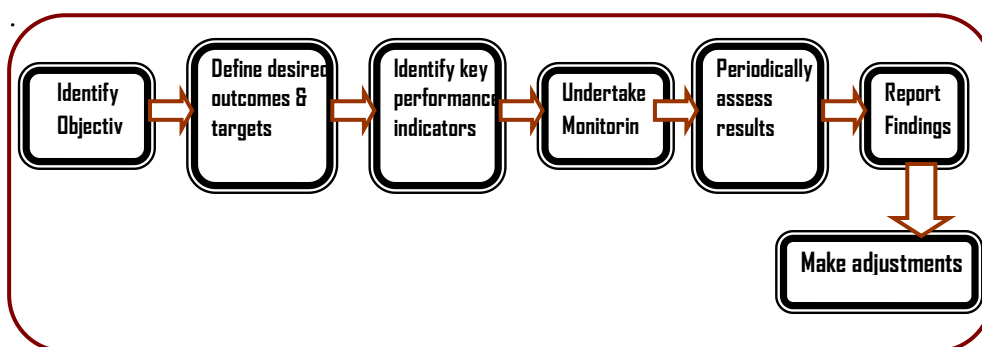
The parks management should initiate and complete their management plans on time. Ideally, the plans should be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time bound). Management plans should guide all the

activities and the monitoring, review and assessment of impact should be based on the management plans.

5. Need to institute system for monitoring, reviews and impact assessment.

The parks management should institute systems of monitoring, review and impact assessment at regular intervals so as to keep track of the activities achieving their desired outcomes. The impact assessment of all ICD Programmes would provide the Government, stakeholders and donors the information on whether the resources spent have fetched the expected outcome.

The parks could also adopt a system of reviewing each others' work so that a more common and unified approach could be developed throughout the park management system in the country. The following approach could be followed in evaluating and reviewing the activities;



Good Practices

- ✓ Incorporation in management plans of criteria for evaluating management effectiveness (e.g. statements of desired management outcomes and how success of management under the plan will be judged).
- ✓ Management plans that establish monitoring programs to measure changes in conservation outcomes over the management period.
- ✓ Assessments of management performance undertaken and reported periodically (e.g. annually – 5 yearly).
- ✓ Opportunities for internal and external stakeholders to provide feedback on what aspects of the plan have worked well and what have not: as well as factors that have helped and hindered management performance.
- ✓ Midterm / five yearly reviews of management plan implementation and effectiveness.
- ✓ Development of simple systems to monitor the effectiveness of management plans in achieving conservation and recreation outcomes.
- ✓ Findings of evaluation and associated recommendations are taken into account to improve ongoing management of the area.

6. Need for review and implementation of the zonation plans of the Parks

While all management plans specifically provides for the division of the parks territory into three different zones, as Core, Buffer and Multiple-use zones, none of the parks management with the exception of BWS had commenced their work.

In view of the fact that the parks management had not initiated the works fearing the futility of such plans, there is a need to revisit the rationale of zonation itself. Besides, a common understanding on the zonation terms, definitions and interpretations should be created amongst all the parks and their officials.

7. Need for conducting more research oriented works and facilitating knowledge/information sharing forums

The parks should strive to conduct more research oriented works. This would help manage species within the parks in a more scientific manner.

It is also encouraged that the parks officials and staffs should share knowledge with other parks so that a more common understanding is created in the field of conservation. They could also adopt common approaches in combating threats to conservation through such forums. The DoF or the NCD could look for ways of creating or facilitating such forums.

8. Need for consistency in the tenure for park managers and other officials

Park managers and other officials in the park should have stable transfer policies so that the planned activities are executed as envisioned. Any park manager may have to serve a minimum of three years to derive maximum benefit from the incumbent. During transfer the out-going officer should handover not only the files and equipments but also all activities with appropriate implementation status.

9. Need to ensure proper Utilisation of Nature Study Centre at Khebethang

After finding proper background information on the infrastructure from WWF, the Ministry and in particular the JSWN should find out alternatives to utilize such infrastructure in a judicious way. As discussed during the site visit, one of the options for park management was to consider re-introducing the centre for the purpose it was built. However, utilising such massive infrastructures for any purpose should be done with proper guidance and instruction from the Ministry.

10. Need to conduct Training Needs Analysis

Most of the parks spent quite a huge sum of money on in-country and ex-country study tours, workshops and trainings. Therefore, prior to their inclusion in the management plan, a proper need analysis should be carried out to identify the need, relevance and expected beneficiaries and outcomes of such training. Also, rather than sending more than two people for the same training, people availing the trainings could be made to disseminate the knowledge gained through the training, to other staffs and those people needing such training.

11. Need for clarity on the Conservation vis-à-vis Development.

The park management offices are often perceived as “donors” by the communities in and around the park territory. Besides, the parks were also involved in various developmental activities within the park territory such as providing scholarships, providing assistance in the area of agricultural development, construction of approach road to monasteries, assistance to schools and several other activities. The parks management are often at cross roads in balancing their activities between the conservation and the development.

Therefore, there is a need to make it very clear on the activities of the park especially in implementing the ICDP activities. Any developmental activity can be either directly or indirectly linked to the conservation especially when we refer to the basic purpose of the ICDP which is to make the people economically developed so as to reduce their dependence on forest products. While it could be argued on the reverse being true, it is essential, in order to derive the maximum benefit from the ICDP, to spell out clearly the activities that can be implemented under the ICDP.

GLOSSARY

RAA - *Royal Audit Authority*

MoA – *Ministry of Agriculture*

DoF – *Department of Forest*

JDNP – *Jigme Dorji National Park*

JSWNP – *Jigme Singye Wangchuck National Park*

TNP – *Thrumshingla National Park*

BWS – *Bumdeling National Park*

F&NCA – *Forest and Nature Conservation Act*

F&NCR – *Forest and Nature Conservation Rules*

ICDP – *Integrated Conservation and Development Programme*

RCSC – *Royal Civil Service Commission*

GPS – *Global Positioning System*

RSS – *Rural Scholarship Scheme*

WWF – *World Wildlife Fund*

SES – *Socio Economic Survey*

RSPN – *Royal Society for Protection of Nature*

APPENDIX

AUDIT MANDATE, SCOPE, CRITERIA & METHODOLOGY

Mandate

The Royal Audit Authority (RAA) conducted the audit of National Parks (*JDNP, JSWNP TNP & BWS*) in accordance with the Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan (*article 25*) and Audit Act of Bhutan 2006 (*Chapter 2b*). The RAA is mandated to report on the functions and operations of the Government Agencies and other organizations and recommends measures to improve their efficiency and effectiveness.

Scope

The audit was performed to review and assess the park management. In the process, the RAA took up the audit of JDNP, JSWNP, TNP & BWS were covering the period from 2002/2003 to 2006/2007. Wherever possible site visits were also made based on the need and necessity.

Sources of Audit Criteria

The RAA prepared the audit criteria based on the following sources;

1. Conservation Management plans;
2. Forest and Nature Conservation Act of Bhutan, 1995;
3. Forest and Nature Conservation Rules and Bhutan, 2000 Vol I & II;
4. Forest and Nature Conservation Rules and Bhutan, 2006 Vol I & II;
5. Vision and Strategy for the Nature and Conservation Division, 2003;
6. National Environment Protection Act of Bhutan, 2007;
7. Environment Act 2004;
8. Ninth plan Document (2002-2007);
9. Bhutan 2020 – A vision for peace, prosperity and Happiness;
10. Tiger Action Plan for the Kingdom of Bhutan 2006 – 2015;

11. Study on Grazing, Cattle migration and Tseri/Pangzhing in TNP, 2004;
12. Report on Avifauna survey-cum-training programme in TNP, 2000;
13. Report on the socio-economic study in TNP, 2001;
14. Vegetation survey report, TNP, 2000;

Methodology

The main methods used for this audit include Document Review, Physical Observation, Interviews, Walk through Tests and Questionnaires. However, due to lack of records, mainly the interviews and site visits were used.

Study Design

The audit was conducted based on explorative study. The team reviewed documents on National Parks and Reserves. For the purpose of gathering primary information, the team interviewed several park officials. A well-structured questionnaire forms was also designed separately for the management and beneficiaries. However, since most of the beneficiaries were un-educated interviews were the only option.

Secondary data were collected from the reports and researches done by the officials of the Parks.

