



BHUTAN

COUNTRY REPORT ON SUSTAINABLE URBAN TRANSPORT

Submitted by:

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1. Introduction

Bhutan, being a landlocked country, land transport is the primary mode of transport, and is fully dependent on its road network for transportation. Considering the country's mountainous terrain, provision of road services is extremely difficult and costly. Nevertheless, all Five Year Plan periods has prioritized construction and development of road and bridge infrastructure due to the fact that the national security and socio-economic development of the country largely depends on a safe, efficient and reliable road network. Currently, the existing road networks are as follows:

Road Type	Length (KM)
Expressway	6.20
National Highway	2438.38
Dzongkhag Roads	1178.29
Urban Roads	349.67
Farm Roads	5376.29
Access Roads	1230.43
TOTAL	10,578.26

Transportation on the existing national highways is highly lengthy and susceptible to blocks due to natural calamities, snowfall and landslides. Owing to difficult topography and resource constraint, roads are generally built following land contours. Hence, the roads in general are narrow with sharp curves and steep gradients and prone to accidents. Moreover, roads were also constructed at a time when the flow of traffic and load factors was very low.

As per the Road Rules and Regulation – 2016, the 'National Road Authority' constituting the Department of Roads under the Ministry of Works and Human Settlement as the national

authority is responsible for all matters pertaining to construction, maintenance and development of roads in Bhutan. The jurisdiction for the Department of Roads is on National Highways comprising of International/Asian Highways, Expressways, Primary National Highways and Secondary National Highways. The ‘Local Road Authority’ comprising of Thromde/City Administration, Dzongkhag/District Administration and Gewog/Block Administration, subject to the overall monitoring by the Department of Roads, are responsible for the management, development, rehabilitation and maintenance of the:

- Thromde/Urban Roads including access roads by the Thromde Administration;
- Dzongkhag Roads including access roads by the Dzongkhag Administration; and
- Farm Roads including access roads by the Gewog Administration.

Urban Transport, known as City Bus Service in Bhutan, is operated in Thimphu and Phuntsholing. City bus service was started in 1999 by Thimphu City Corporation or Thimphu Thromde with 4 buses. The operation of city bus service was transferred to Bhutan Post in April 2001 as per the directive of the Royal Government of Bhutan, and it is being operated on the subsidy provided by the government. The total combined bus fleet of 38 operates on 16 routes as mentioned hereunder:

Number of buses and operators in Thimphu, 2015

Operators	Types	Nos	Year
Bhutan Post	Coaster Bus	12	2008
	Tata Bus	3	2010
	Golden Dragon	11	2012
	GAC Bus	4	2012
Lama Transport Service	Eicher Bus	3	2011
			2012
			2013
Bumpa Transport Service	Eicher Bus	2	2013
			2014
K. Wangyel Transport Service	Eicher Bus	1	2016

Total Number of Bus	36
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City bus service operates on 15 routes in Thimphu, out of which Bhutan Post operates on 13 routes. During peak hours – 7 AM to 9.30 AM and 3 PM to 6.30 PM, the frequency of city bus service is every after 15 to 30 minutes on all 7 intra-city routes and during off peak hours – 9.30 AM to 3 PM, the frequency of city bus service on all 7 intra-city routes is every after 30 to 60 minutes.

The Vision and Mission of City Bus Service of Bhutan Post is:

Vision: People-centric City Bus Service System
(safe, reliable, affordable and comfortable City bus service)

Mission: To provide an efficient, safe, reliable, comfortable and affordable city transport system for all needs including people with disability, elderly citizens, pregnant women and women toddler

To serve the society at large without any profit motives

To plan, develop and manage City bus service system that support quality environment and reduction of GHG emission.

Number of buses and operator in Phuntsholing, 2015

Operators	Types	Nos	Year
Bhutan Post	Tata Bus	2	2010
Total Number of buses		2	

Bhutan post is the only operator that provides city bus service on one route in Phuntsholing.

2. Urban Transport Policies

Bhutan, for the last 50 years or so, has progressed from a closed pastoral society with no road networks and modern connectivity facilities into a rapidly emerging economy aspiring to holistic development. Bhutan Transport 2040 Integrated Strategic Vision

prepared under the Development Partnership Program for South Asia, financed by the Government of Australia through the Australian Agency for International Development establishes the building block to enable Bhutan to achieve its vision for transport. The overall content covers both the implementation of transport infrastructure (roads and aviation) as well as the execution of institutional and management functions associated with the delivery of transport services (regulatory tasks, bus services, and institutional reforms).

The vision, goals and strategies are as follows:

Vision

- To provide the entire population with a safe, reliable, affordable, convenient, cost-effective, and environment friendly transport system in support of strategies for socio economic development.

Goals

- Accessibility to activities and supplies needed by people and enterprises,
- Efficient use of economic resources,
- Environmental sustainability, and
- Transport safety especially on roads.

Strategies

- Road network
- Civil aviation
- Intercity passenger transport
- Freight transport
- Regional connectivity
- **Urban transport**
- Road safety
- Road transport regulation, and
- Transport sector management.

The focus of urban transport strategies is to provide attractive public transport services and facilities for pedestrians, so that walking becomes the dominant mode in the central area and for

short trips. The strategy also seeks to control the impact of private cars through careful management of vehicle numbers and use with. However, the overall objective is to create vibrant, functional, and livable “green” cities, thus minimizing the adverse effects of traffic growth.

The Urban Transport Strategy has six key activities:

- Reviewing and updating of the existing structure plan based on the revised population and vehicle ownership forecast, including the preparation of an urban transport plan;
- Improving traffic engineering and management system, including better use of existing road space, provision of safety enhancements, and revision of traffic circulation;
- Developing public transport, including identifying measures to boost ridership based on several options, both for the short and long term;
- Improving facilities for pedestrians, including a safe and secure network of routes and priorities with the central area;
- controlling or restricting vehicle ownership and use in urban areas; and
- Conducting study on parking demand, establishment of a parking policy, and development of a parking of regulatory measures