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**TENTH REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT (EST)
FORUM IN ASIA,
14-16 MARCH 2016, VIENTIANE, LAO PDR**

**Country Presentation
(Bhutan)**

(Presentation for EST Plenary Session 6 of the Provisional Programme)

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10th Regional EST Forum in Asia
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Vientiane, Lao-PDR



BHUTAN

Presentation Outline



- Country background
- Key Achievements
- Critical challenges faced
- Key Initiatives and Major plans

Brief Country Profile



- ❖ **Area:** 38,394 sq km
- ❖ **Population:** 636,236 (of which 36.4% urban and 63.61% rural (2014 est.))
- ❖ **GDP at current price:** USD 1,740 m (2014)
- ❖ **Terrain :** Mostly mountainous (591' - 24,770')
- ❖ **Forest cover:** 70% approximately
- ❖ **Arable land:** About 8%
- ❖ **Transport System:** Land and Air Transport
- ❖ **Total Vehicle Number:** 84,891 (Jan 2017)
- ❖ **Road Length (all types):** 10,578 Km (2013)

Transport system in Bhutan



Implementation status - Key Achievements

- ❖ Most urban centers now have local area plans and follow integrated land use and transport planning process
- ❖ Established nationwide backbone fiber-optic network covering all 20 Districts and 192 (out of 205) Administrative Blocks (Gewogs)
- ❖ Achieved mobile penetration of about 87% and Internet penetration of ~61% (As of Dec 2015)
- ❖ Community Centre established in 201 out of 205 Gewogs (Administrative blocks)
- ❖ Teleconferencing facilities are established at a number of local government offices
- ❖ G2C services – Mobile Apps

Implementation status - Key Achievements

- ❖ More user-friendly pedestrian crossings have been placed with strict monitoring on the movement of both pedestrians and vehicles – thereby reducing accidents
- ❖ 5 June - world Environment day is declared a pedestrian day thereby restricting vehicle movement in the core cities.
- ❖ 18 buses have been procured through government funding to enhance urban transport in Thimphu
- ❖ Identified sites for bus stops and inter-city bus terminals
- ❖ Introduced e-ticketing system
- ❖ Feasibility study for Intelligent Transport System have been undertaken in the capital city of Thimphu.
- ❖ Pre-feasibility study undertaken for LRT Option through assistance of UNDESA/UNCRD

Implementation status - Key Achievements

- ❖ Long distance high quality buses operate between cities and the private sector is welcome to continue efforts at improving the services
- ❖ Emission standards are reviewed and up-graded periodically, and enforced
- ❖ Eight air quality monitoring stations established
- ❖ Strict enforcement of zero tolerance for traffic violation
- ❖ Under the electric vehicle initiative, Royal Government of Bhutan has provided fiscal incentives and free charging stations to promote uptake of EV in the country
- ❖ Interest subsidy to bus operators providing services to remote areas. The passenger transport operators are also exempted from payment of import duties

Critical challenges

- ❖ Non-motorized transport is slow:
 - quantity and quality of foot-paths
 - cycling has limitations due to terrain
 - people are reluctant to walk
- ❖ Lack of coordination among relevant agencies
- ❖ Lack of funding support for implementing priority initiatives
- ❖ Growing vehicle ownership with marginal increase in road network
- ❖ Vehicle crash still a major public health concern

Critical challenges

- ❖ Inadequate number of buses and frequency of services especially during peak hours
- ❖ Electric vehicles ownership low due to high initial cost, absence of charging stations, issue with long-distance travel etc.
- ❖ Freight industry remains largely unregulated
- ❖ People living in remote areas either pay high fare or are deprived of quality transport services due to low profitability

Critical Challenges

- ❖ Congestion charging/toll system remains unimplemented except parking fees
- ❖ PPP projects in the transport sector not seen as feasible due to low user base
- ❖ No single office or officials dedicated to EST – activities spread over many agencies
- ❖ ICT as a substitute for travel has been conceived but not seen as feasible immediately due to rural/urban digital gap

Future plans

- ❖ Revise National Transport Policy 2006 to make it more inclusive and sustainable
- ❖ Additional buses for urban transport
- ❖ Government has set a vision to promote electric vehicles
- ❖ Vehicle Emission Standards being reviewed to reduce pollution level
- ❖ Design and tendering of Dry port
- ❖ Massive road network expansion program, especially those providing access to remote areas
- ❖ Prepare a detailed project report for Light Rail Transit system for Thimphu and extending to serve the airport commuters in Paro

Future plans

- ❖ Implement ITS in Thimphu in a phased manner
- ❖ Possible piloting of electric buses
- ❖ Possible replacement of government vehicles and taxis by electric vehicles in a phased manner.
- ❖ Setting up fast charging stations in a phased manner
- ❖ Study feasibility of introducing congestion charges in busier roads
- ❖ Review taxation on vehicle import

THANK YOU