

Capacity Building for Sustainable Enterprise Development

Collaborative Project Proposal

Sherubtse College (Bhutan) and Dalhousie University (Canada)

Submitted to the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)

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Introduction

After centuries of relative isolation, Bhutan is opening up to the world. Though modernity can provide the Bhutanese with many benefits, such as increased economic growth for investment in education, health, cultural preservation and infrastructure, it can also bring them the worst of modern globalization – environmental and social degradation, political instability, cultural disintegration and consumerism. Fortunately, Bhutanese development policy, Gross National Happiness (GNH), recognizes these challenges and opportunities and proposes an alternative model of development².

The Ninth Plan Report³, the primary development policy document of Bhutan, states that development goals for the nation will be guided by five overall goals: 1) improving the quality of life and income, especially for the poor; 2) ensuring good governance; 3) promoting private sector growth and employment generation; 4) preserving and promoting cultural heritage and environment conservation; and 5) achieving rapid economic growth and transformation.

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² See: Centre for Bhutan Studies, “Gross National Happiness and Development” (2004); Institute for Development Economics-Jetro and The Center for Bhutan Studies, “Economic and Political Relations Between Bhutan and the Neighboring Countries”; Kingdom of Bhutan, “Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women”; Planning Commission, Royal Government of Bhutan “Bhutan 2020: A Vision for Peace, Prosperity and Happiness”; Planning Commission and Central Statistical Office Royal Government of Bhutan, “Gender Pilot Study” (2001).

³ Planning Commission, Royal Government of Bhutan, “Ninth Report” Presented to the 80th session of the National Assembly (June 2002)

According to the Plan, an added emphasis is currently being placed on the growth of the private sector as a way to support socioeconomic policy and meet development goals. In order for this new private sector-led development strategy to work along with, and not against GNH's broader good governance and sustainable development goals, the emerging private sector will likely have to conceive of its objectives in a "sustainable enterprise" or "triple bottom line" (TBL) framework. These frameworks complement the standard narrow, short-term, financial return analysis, objectives and measures with environmental and social costs/benefit analysis objectives and measures that impact the firm, society and social institutions, the nation, and the world as a whole. GNH provides a public policy enabling environment and incentive for the incorporation of sustainable enterprise aims into corporate strategy for local and international firms operating in Bhutan.

A Mutually Beneficial Project Partnership

Sherubtse College, Bhutan's main tertiary educational institution and part of the newly formed Royal University of Bhutan, is currently involved in the process of "repatriating" its business education program⁴. The College is replacing the curriculum provided in association with the University of Delhi with an English language, world-class curriculum, which can simultaneously take into account competitive global realities and a Bhutan specific context. This new curriculum, scheduled for implementation in 2006, is the result of an extensive review process that involved consultation with many stakeholders such as employers (private and public sectors, national and international, large and SME), alumni, professors and students. The smooth and effective implementation of this impressive new curriculum is, nevertheless, likely to require a comprehensive support infrastructure.

Sherubtse College and a Canadian partner institution, Dalhousie University, have developed a project proposal, currently under review by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), aimed at facilitating this know-how. The goal of the project is to strengthen Sherubtse's capacity to deliver a business curriculum and an educational programme that can foster the creation of an internationally competitive private sector that is aligned with the sustainable development and good governance goals of Bhutan's GNH policies.

⁴ See: Royal University of Bhutan and Sherubtse College, "BBA Proposal", "Feasibility Survey for the Proposed Bachelor of Business Administration Program at Sherubtse College", and Kuensel On-line, "Connecting Bhutan", December 4, 2004, www.kuenselonline.com/print.php?sid=3781. Also see: www.sherubtse.edu.bt; www.rim.edu.bt;

Dalhousie's Faculty of Management, composed of four Schools, Business Administration (SBA), Public Administration (SPA), Resource and Environmental Studies (SRES), and Library and Information Studies (SLIS) is in a position to offer its Bhutanese counterpart, a comprehensive, inter-disciplinary support infrastructure for the optimum implementation of this new BBA curriculum. The SBA would be the lead School, where Dalhousie faculty in the areas of Finance, Accounting, Marketing, and Management Information Systems will form the core of the project team. Other faculty specializing in entrepreneurship, research, operations management, will be brought in, as needed. The SPA involvement would support the integration of private sector-led development objectives with the requisite Bhutanese public policy and governance objectives, to support GNH's sustainable development goals. SLIS faculty members would work with Sherubtse library staff to ensure that adequate information resources are available in support of the new BBA. Finally, SRES would provide expertise in issues germane to Bhutan's sustainable development goals, in areas of environmental management and in eco-efficiency industrial models within the private sector.

In addition to the collaborative work undertaken between the two lead partners in support of the sustainable enterprise model, the project will engage specialists in private sector executive training to lead Bhutanese corporate managers, faculty, and key public sector officials in training activities. The goal of these activities will be to: 1) address the sustainable enterprise concerns of Bhutanese managers and 2) provide Sherubtse faculty with access to materials, and methods of analysis and teaching to integrate a sustainable enterprise view into the overall curriculum.

The strength and depth of institutional relationships, as well as the commitment of the partner institutions to the success of the project are key determinants of project success. Dalhousie has a long-standing relationship with Bhutanese academic partners, having hosted Bhutanese trainees (college staff and judges) in the Faculty of Management's SLIS and in the Faculty of Law. This institutional relationship has been sustained and strengthened through on-going communications and the participation of Dalhousie Faculty in the "Operationalizing Gross National Happiness Conference", hosted by the Center for Bhutan Studies in Bhutan in February of 2004. The fact that the curriculum review was initiated, approved, and implemented by Sherubtse/RUB itself, with broad participation of stakeholders, and that the project objectives are consistent with the strong national development policy framework (GNH), speak to the likelihood of sustainable results. The Bhutan project should serve as a further support to the process of integration of the 4 schools of the Faculty of Management by providing a feedback loop between the two institutions on the best practices for developing integrated inter-disciplinary, multi-sector management curriculum, as well as a sustainable enterprise orientation. The

Bhutan project will also broaden the scope of the internationalization efforts of the Faculty by emphasizing a developing world perspective, including case studies and models drawn from the Bhutanese experience. This project will provide a fertile ground for further linkages to the International Development Studies (IDS) program at Dalhousie, especially as a support for the development of private sector-led development know-how, research and pedagogy. Furthermore, the unique holistic and integrated development model promoted by Bhutan may serve as a best practice case study for other international development initiatives.

Project Description

Activities – 5 Pillars

1) faculty training and curriculum development

Dalhousie and Sherubtse faculty will collaborate on a review of educational objectives, teaching methods, course content, and material selection for the new BBA curriculum. Sherubtse faculty and selected staff will receive short-term training in Canada and/or be paired with Dalhousie faculty to provide for on-going support for knowledge transfer in the functional areas targeted by the new curriculum, as well as course delivery, evaluation and case writing. The training and pairing program will include exchanges of faculty members from both institutions to Bhutan and Canada, workshops, and one-on-one collaboration, as well as an active and on-going internet-based dialogue.

The capacity development and gender strategies of the project will support the national strategy on gender equity⁵. A project gender equity component will monitor and measure the full and meaningful participation of women in all of its activities. The project team will encourage a ‘summit’ of women stakeholders (managers in the private sector, Sherubtse faculty, staff, students) to evaluate progress and to articulate a vision and a program to achieve what is desirable, and possible, given local realities.

2) assistance with the development of Bhutan specific pedagogical materials: cases, management briefs, etc

Management education aims to prepare a cadre of individuals for optimum performance within the profession. The Dalhousie/Sherubtse project team (faculty and students) will explore and document the experience of private sector managers in the field in order to

⁵ See: Planning Commission and Central Statistical Office, Royal Government of Bhutan, “Gender Pilot Study” and Kingdom of Bhutan, Report, “Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women”.

develop both applied pedagogical methods and materials (cases) and a locally relevant body of applied and theoretical knowledge. This activity will also involve case writing and teaching workshops.

Short interactive workshops, facilitated by Dalhousie faculty, will be held for Bhutanese managers, as well as Sherubtse faculty, to explore best practices in specific fields (e.g. marketing, finance). The goals of these best practice workshops will be: 1) to strengthen managerial and pedagogical capabilities by exposing managers, as well as faculty and students at Sherubtse, to educational methods and materials in line with the recommendations of the curriculum review; 2) to enhance Dalhousie faculty awareness in a very practical and contextualized way of the realities and priorities for Sherubtse faculty and for Bhutanese managers; 3) to capture Bhutan-specific managerial know how for use in cases and analytical models in the main business disciplines (e.g. accounting, finance, marketing, MIS), and 4) to provide on-going educational support activities that have both a short term impact upon the managerial practices of Bhutan, as well as long term benefits rooted in national realities. A GNH, as well as a gender equity perspective, will be maintained throughout this process of mutual learning and exchange.

3) development of links between the student body, the faculty and industry

Strategies and mechanisms aimed at strengthening the links in Bhutan between academe and the private sector community will be developed, including cooperative programs, internships, industry-based student projects, and industry guest speakers. The workshops for the private sector will help to promote these closer linkages, and expanding links between Canadian and Bhutanese businesses will be explored. To support the formation of these partnerships, visiting Sherubtse faculty will be linked with the Canadian business community through attachments in Canadian companies.

4) grounding of the curriculum and training modules in the framework of “ sustainable enterprise” which is congruent with GNH

Programming will promote the convergence between profitability and sustainability, is particularly relevant for the private sector in Bhutan. The workshops will also assist in building further linkages between Sherubtse, the business community and the public sector.

5) information management and educational media resource upgrading

Faculty and staff from Dalhousie’s School of Library and Information Studies will work with Sherubtse faculty and staff in Canada and Bhutan on the provision of information resources support and infrastructure for the delivery of the new curriculum. This will include provision of information management hardware and software, and advice and training on accessing and using information resources. Educational media resources,

such as data and overhead projectors, TV/VCR/DVD equipment, presentation and statistical analysis software packages, and the requisite training in their use, will be provided to Sherubtse through the project.

Method of Delivery – 3 Phases

Phase I, An Inception Phase of up to six months duration will target foundational activities such as: the establishment of a project management committee and project institutional committees to oversee and implement the project; the establishment of administrative and communication processes; needs assessment, an initial project workshop for Sherubtse faculty, Bhutanese private sector managers, government officials, and others, to discuss private sector best practices, Bhutanese challenges;

Phase II, A Curriculum Review and Training and Resource Upgrading Assessment Phase of up to 1 year, to review of the new BBA curriculum and systems review; Sherubtse faculty enhancement in Canada through short-term exchanges, mentoring arrangements, training workshops in Bhutan targeting case writing, teaching methodologies, library information systems and teaching technologies, and sustainable enterprise (by York's SEA); library and teaching equipment assessments and acquisition plan; the mid-term evaluation;

Phase III, Implementation support of the BBA Program Phase of up to 3 years including: establishment of the basic curriculum; enhancement of teaching and course materials; admission of first students; continuation of training and resource upgrading from Phase II; case writing; team teaching; private sector internships/workshops; equipment purchases; finalisation of curriculum and course outlines and materials production; final project evaluation.

Project Outcomes

- 1) An established Bachelor of Business Administration program at RUB's Sherubtse College which produces graduates capable of supporting private sector-led development in Bhutan which is consistent with the country's development objectives and model.
- 2) A cadre of faculty at RUB's Sherubtse College with enhanced and/or strengthened capacity to develop curricula and teach courses in business administration which support Bhutan's ongoing economic development.
- 3) A cadre of faculty at RUB's Sherubtse College with enhanced capacity to link and work with members of Bhutan's private and public sectors in support of private sector-led development and supportive policy support.

- 4) Corporate managers and staff with enhanced capacity in the range of functional areas to support a private sector in Bhutan that embraces the “sustainable enterprise”, “triple bottom line” model.
- 5) Enhanced library/information material resources for both RUB/Sherubtse faculty and private sector managers, overseen by college staff with enhanced capacity to manage and access IT.
- 6) Closer integration of Dalhousie University’s Faculty of Management Schools and increased expertise in the fields of sustainable enterprise and private sector-led development.

Contribution to the field of private sector-led development and sustainable enterprise

The project is also expected to provide benefit to audiences beyond the two partner institutions and their immediate constituencies. The Bhutanese approach to development is unique and holistic in its integration of multiple socio-economic and environmental objectives, and offers an opportunity to provide a model to other jurisdictions grappling with development issues. Thus, this project can also advance know how on practical strategies for the achievement of sustainable development through the integration of public policy, private sector strategies and academic models. The learning that will result from this integrated multi sector project will provide useful lessons for both developed and developing countries.

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