



Audit of Multilateral Environmental Agreements on its compliance

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1. About the Audit

The audit was conducted on the principles of Performance Audit and in line with the mandates of the Royal Audit Authority (RAA) as enshrined in the Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan and the Audit Act of Bhutan 2006.

Selection of Conventions for Audit

UNFCCC, UNCCD, CBD & Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer.

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Environmental Risk underlying an accord;

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Obligations to comply with an MEA;

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Implementation of an MEA; and

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Strictness of Audit.

2. Audit Objectives

To ascertain the compliance with the obligations of the agreements;

To ascertain the adequacy of the organizational arrangements of the Royal Government in fulfilling such obligations; and

To ascertain the system and quality of reporting to the parliament on the progress and activities relating to implementation of the MEAs.



3. Audit Findings

Achievements

**Lapses &
Deficiencies**

3. 1 Achievements

Vienna Convention for the protection of Ozone layer has been the most successful.;

UNFCCC has met all its international obligations to the level of support provided;

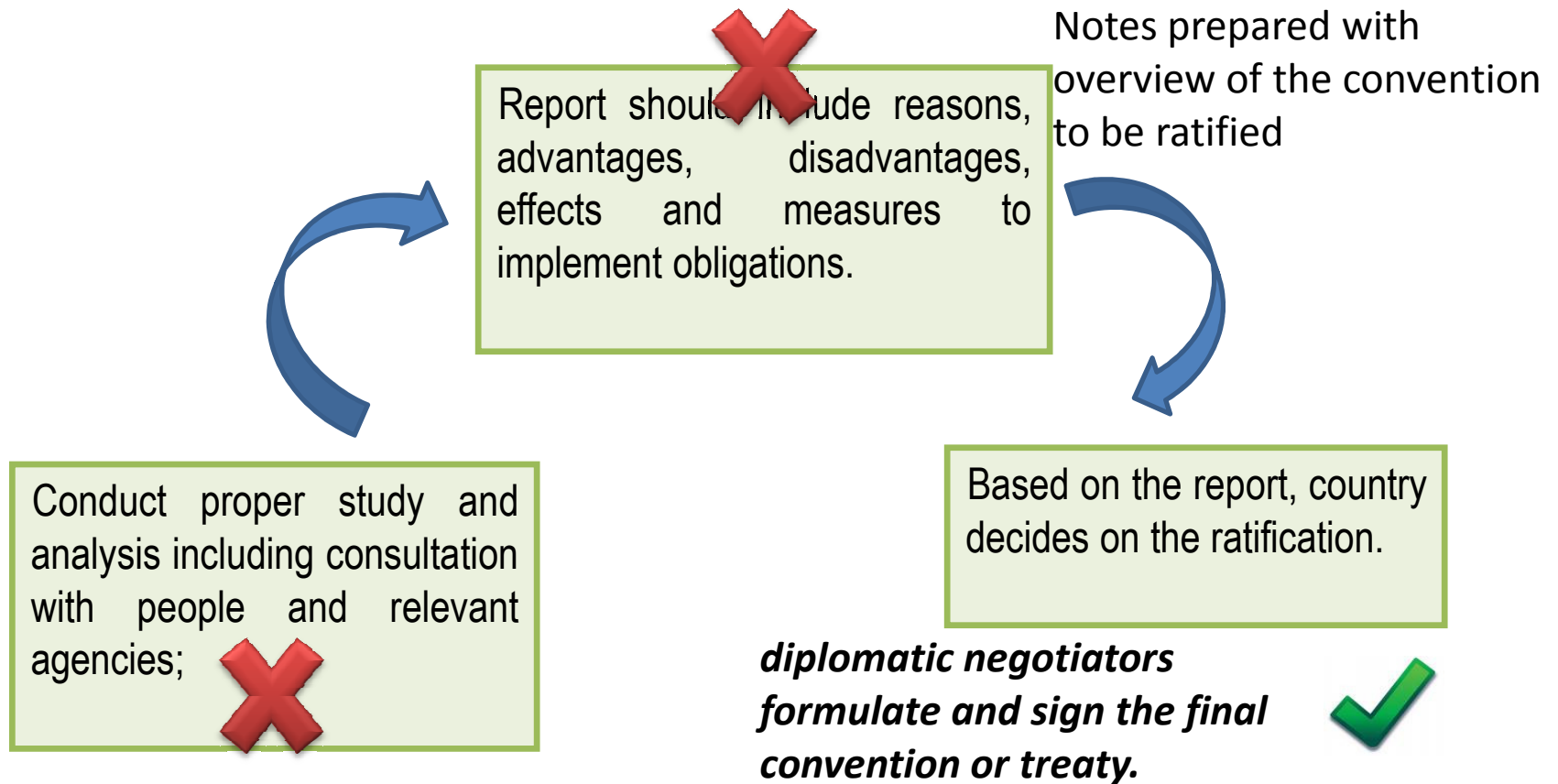
Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) had prepared three and implemented two Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPS) as required by article 6, of the UNCBD convention text;

The National Environment Commission Secretariat had prepared the National Bio-Safety Framework and submitted to the CBD Secretariat; and

UNCCD is also well on target in the implementation of ***Sustainable Land Management Project (SLMP)***.

3.2 Lapses and Deficiencies

Inadequate study for ratification for M.E.As



3.2 Lapses and Deficiencies

Non / Partial compliance in meeting the obligation













Few non compliance and partial compliance found; and

The lack of compliance to the obligations could have negative impact such as adverse relation with other member countries.

3.2 Lapses and Deficiencies

Un-clear roles and accountabilities of agencies

Issues tackled by MEAs generally impinge on the work of several government departments or agencies.

| AGENCY/CONVENTION | UNFCCC | UNCBD | UNCCD | Vienna Convention |
|--|--|---|---|---|
| National Environmental Commission ⁽²⁾ | Lead agency ⁽¹⁾ | Lead agency | | Lead agency |
| Ministry of Home and Cultural Affairs |  | | | |
| Ministry of Economic Affairs |  | | |  |
| Ministry of Agriculture |  | |  | |
| Ministry of Finance | | | |  |
| Ministry of Labor and Human Resource | | | |  |
| National Biodiversity Centre. | |  | | |
| Bhutan Agriculture and Food Regulatory Authority | | | | |
| Ministry of Foreign Affairs |  |  |  |  |

3.2 Lapses and Deficiencies

Non-development of criteria for selecting a focal agency

No designation process or set norm or criteria for selection of focal agency for the MEAs;

No Ministry or agency was officially authorized to appoint focal agency for the MEAs.

Lack of effective coordination amongst agencies.

Section E of the Guidelines on compliance and Enforcement of MEAs, stipulates that the, *coordination among the departments and agencies at different levels of government, as appropriate be undertaken during implementation of MEAs ;*

3.2 Lapses and Deficiencies

Non-dissemination of outcome of MoPs & CoPs

Dissemination of information on the deliberations and outcomes of conventions and meetings were found to be lacking;

Inadequate public awareness on the MEAs.

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Article 9 (2) of The Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer- “The parties, individually, jointly or through competent international bodies, shall co-operate in promoting public awareness of the environmental effects of the emissions of controlled substances and other substances that deplete the ozone layer”.

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The [Article 23](#) of the Cartagena Protocol also requires Parties, on their own and in cooperation with other States and international bodies, to promote and facilitate public awareness, education and participation, regarding the safe transfer, handling and use of LMOs. It also requires that public awareness and education encompass access to information on living modified organism identified in accordance with the protocol that may be imported.

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3.2 Lapses and Deficiencies

No Change in the Organizational structure and functions within the focal agencies

The existing arrangement of all the focal agency of the MEAs dates back to the time of accession and ratification;

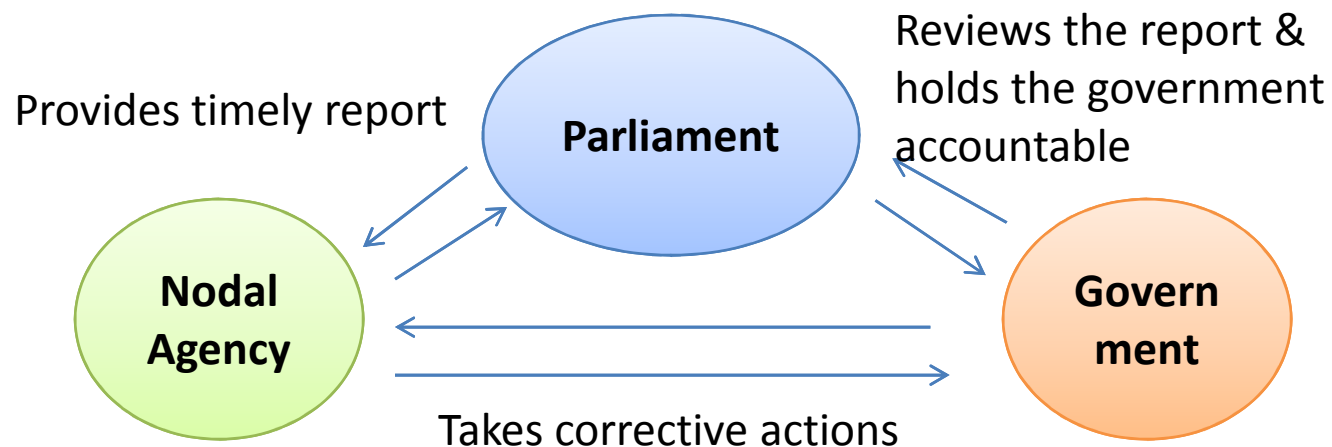
The designated focal persons have their regular roles and responsibilities to be carried out besides the activities under the MEA;

Such inadequacies in the organizational set-up and functions may hinder the progress of implementation of MEAs.

3.2 Lapses and Deficiencies

No system of reporting to parliament on the MEAs

NECS does report on the state of environment of country to the Parliament but do not report specifically on the status and progress on MEAs;



Training need assessments found not done

Only few or single individual gaining experience and competencies in the field of managing international agreements;

Such arrangements would disrupt the execution of the convention if the focal person gets transferred or retires.

3.2 Lapses and Deficiencies

Possible lack of funding for meeting obligations under the MEAs

All plans and programs under the MEAs are directly or indirectly donor funded.

Need for working out strategies for possible funding options in meeting obligations under the MEAs in future.

Lack of proper documentation.

No systematic and complete documentation of the activities carried out. Most of the information had to be gathered through discussion.

3.2 Lapses and Deficiencies

Inadequate Regional Cooperation

Regional cooperation (***Male Declaration on control and prevention on air pollution***) resulted in initiation of important activities such as installation of air pollution equipment, enhancing technical knowledge in impact assessment and monitoring.

4. Audit Recommendations

CLEAR ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND ACCOUNTABILITIES SHOULD BE SPECIFIED

CLEAR TARGETS FOR FULFILLMENT OF OBLIGATIONS UNDER MEAS SHOULD BE FIXED AND COMPLIANCES MONITORED

FRAMEWORK AND CRITERIA FOR SELECTING A FOCAL AND IMPLEMENTING AGENCY SHOULD BE DEVELOPED

AN APPROPRIATE ADMINISTRATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL SET UP SHOULD BE IN PLACE

COORDINATION BETWEEN THE FOCAL AGENCY AND THE IMPLEMENTING AGENCIES NEEDS TO BE STRENGTHENED

SYSTEM OF REPORTING TO PARLIAMENT SHOULD BE INSTITUTED



Audit Recommendations

ADEQUATE STUDIES SHOULD BE CONDUCTED PRIOR TO SIGNING OR RATIFYING ANY MEAS

PROPER DOCUMENTATION INDICATING ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT AND STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF MEAS SHOULD BE MAINTAINED

POSSIBILITY OF GREATER REGIONAL CO-OPERATION AMONGST SAARC AND WITH OTHER NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES SHOULD BE EXPLORED.

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