



འབྲུག་གི་བཅའ་ཁྲིམས་ལྟར་སྤྱོད་ཚུགས།  
ELECTION COMMISSION OF BHUTAN  
(Ensuring Free, Fair & Democratic Elections & Referendums)



ECB/NOTIF-01/2015/2384

Dated: 25<sup>th</sup> of December 2015

NOTIFICATION

*Thromde Elections 2016:*

**Second Local Government Elections under the Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan**

The Election Commission of Bhutan, in pursuance of Section 197 of the Election Act of the Kingdom of Bhutan 2008, calls the second Local Government elections under the Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan for the *Dzongkhag Thromde* of (1) Gelegphu *Thromde* of Sarpang Dzongkhag, (2) Phuentshogling *Thromde* of Chhukha Dzongkhag and (3) Thimphu *Thromde* of Thimphu Dzongkhag and hereby notifies, for the purposes of these Elections, the Election Schedule and the details concerning *Demkhongs*, Selection Procedure for Nomination of Candidates, Electoral Rolls, EVMs, Polling Stations, Polling Officials, Polling Management, Security and other arrangements as follows:

**(A) Election Schedule**

1. The Schedule of Dates and time for the *Thromde Elections 2016* shall be as follows:

25 <sup>th</sup> December 2015 (Friday)	- Issuance of Notification calling for Elections to Dzongkhag Thromde - Freezing of Electoral Roll
26 <sup>th</sup> December 2015 (Saturday)	- Commencement of selection procedure ( <i>Zomdu</i> ) for <i>Thrompon</i> and <i>Thromde Thuemi</i> - Commencement of signature process by those interested to file nomination for the <i>Thromde Tshogpa posts</i>



འབྲུག་གི་བཅའ་འཁུར་ལྷན་ཚོགས།  
ELECTION COMMISSION OF BHUTAN  
(Ensuring Free, Fair & Democratic Elections & Referendums)



31 <sup>st</sup> December 2015 (Thursday)	- Last Date for filing of Nominations of Candidates for <i>Thrompon, Thromde Tshogpas</i> and <i>Thromde Thuemi</i>
1 <sup>st</sup> January 2016 (Friday)	- Scrutiny of Nominations of Candidates & Commencement of the Election Campaign
3 <sup>rd</sup> January 2016 (Sunday)	- Last date for withdrawal of Candidature
23 <sup>rd</sup> January 2016 (8:00 a.m. Saturday)	- End of Election Campaign
25 <sup>th</sup> January 2016 (Monday)	- Poll Day and Counting of Results
26 <sup>th</sup> January 2016 (Tuesday)	- Declaration of Results & Submission of the Results to the Druk Gyalpo - Start of Election Petition Period
29 <sup>th</sup> January 2016 (Friday)	- Issuance of Certificate of Election
8 <sup>th</sup> February 2016 (Monday)	- End of Election Petition Period

**(B) Polling Hours**

2. The polling hours shall be from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

**(C) Demkhong**

3. A *Dzongkhag Thromde*, declared as such by decision of Parliament, shall form the *Demkhong* for election of the respective *Thrompon* and *Thromde Thuemi*.
4. A *Dzongkhag Thromde Tshogde Tshogpa Demkhong*, declared as per the Final Delimitation Order issued vide Notification No.



འབྲུག་གི་བཅའ་ཁྲུ་ལྷན་ཚོགས།  
ELECTION COMMISSION OF BHUTAN  
(Ensuring Free, Fair & Democratic Elections & Referendums)



DC/CHAIR/2010/697 dated 16 October 2010, shall form the *Demkhong* for election of the respective *Dzongkhag Thromde Tshogde Tshogpa*.

**(D) Selection Process of the *Dzongkhag Thromde* Candidates**

5. A *Thrompon* and a minimum of six and maximum of nine *Thromde Tshogpas* elected through direct election shall constitute the *Dzongkhag Thromde Tshogde*.
6. A registered voter who fulfills the criteria laid down in Section 178 of the Election Act of the Kingdom of Bhutan 2008 is eligible to be nominated as a Candidate for election to the post of *Thrompon* or *Thromde Tshogpa* or *Thromde Thuemi*.
7. The selection process of the *Thromde Tshogde* candidates shall be as follows:

***Thrompon and Thromde Thuemi***

8. Every *Tshogpa Demkhong* is entitled to nominate one Candidate each to contest the election for *Thrompon* and *Thromde Thuemi* in the respective *Dzongkhag Thromde*.
9. A *Zomdu* shall be called by the Dzongkhag Electoral Authority in every *Tshogpa Demkhong* for the purpose of selecting a Candidate to contest in the elections to the post of *Thrompon* and *Thromde Thuemi*. The *Zomdus* shall be conducted as outlined in the *Strategy for the Conduct of the Thromde Elections 2016* issued by the Election Commission of Bhutan.



འབྲུག་གི་བཅའ་འཁུར་ལྷན་ཚོགས།  
ELECTION COMMISSION OF BHUTAN  
(Ensuring Free, Fair & Democratic Elections & Referendums)



10. The EVM must be used in the *Zomdu*.

***Thromde Tshogpa***

11. A Registered Voter aspiring to contest the *Thromde Tshogpa* Elections shall produce signatures and details as in the Voter Photo Identity Cards of at least 5 percent of the Registered Voters from the respective *Tshogpa Demkhong* supporting his/her nomination to the post of the *Thromde Tshogpa* but from at least 5 different *Gungs* provided no voter or a *Gung* can support more than one nominee.

**(E) Electoral Rolls**

12. The qualifying date shall, in relation to the preparation of the Electoral Roll for the *Thromde Elections 2016*, be the 1<sup>st</sup> of October 2015. Therefore, all those who attain eighteen years of age as on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2015 shall be deemed to meet the minimum age requirement to be a voter.

13. The Final Electoral Rolls for the Elections shall be published and provided to the Returning Officers by 26<sup>th</sup> of December 2015 and the Candidates will be given their copies on 3<sup>rd</sup> of January 2016.

**(F) Election Campaign**

14. A Candidate shall have up to 22 days for campaigning, which must stop at 8 a.m. on 23<sup>rd</sup> of January 2016 i.e. 48 hours before the start of Poll.



འབྲུག་གི་བཅའ་ཁྲུ་ལྷན་ཚོགས།  
ELECTION COMMISSION OF BHUTAN  
(Ensuring Free, Fair & Democratic Elections & Referendums)



15. No Minister, Member of Parliament, official or member of a political party and Local Government post holders shall campaign directly or indirectly for any candidate. No travels or official tours shall be undertaken by a Minister or Member of Parliament to a *Demkhong* during the Election Period except to cast their votes on the Poll Day should they wish not to use the Postal Ballot facility extended to them and their spouses under Section 331 of the Election Act of the Kingdom of Bhutan 2008.
16. All Banks will report any abnormal transaction of money, including in the account of a Candidate contesting the *Thromde Elections* in the three Dzongkhags, to the Election Commission of Bhutan.

***Election Campaign Expenditure***

17. A Candidate for the *Thromde Elections* cannot exceed his/her election campaign expense beyond the ceiling fixed in Section 59 of the Public Election Fund Act 2008 i.e. total of Nu. 50,000/-.

***Election Campaign Returns***

18. A Candidate must submit accounts of campaign to the National Observers for his/her scrutiny and file Election Returns within thirty days of declaration of the Election Result as per the prescribed procedures.



འབྲུག་གི་བཅའ་ཁྲུ་ལྷན་ཚོགས།  
ELECTION COMMISSION OF BHUTAN  
(Ensuring Free, Fair & Democratic Elections & Referendums)



***Public Debates of Thrompon Candidates***

19. Public Debates shall be conducted for the Candidates whose nominations for the post of *Thrompon* have been duly accepted by the concerned Returning Officer.
20. The debates shall be conducted as per the *Guidelines for Conduct of ECB Sponsored Public Debates for the Thrompon Elections in the three Dzongkhag Thromdes of Gelegphu, Phuentshogling and Thimphu.*

***Common Forum for Public Address by All Candidates***

21. Common Forum shall be conducted for the Candidates whose nominations for the post of *Thrompon, Thromde Tshogpa* and *Thromde Thuemi* have been duly accepted by the respective Returning Officer.
22. The Returning Officer in consultation with the Election Coordinator and Security Coordinator, in order to avoid inconvenience to voters of attending multiple sessions, shall facilitate the gathering of the electorate at a convenient venue and time in the *Demkhong* to hear the Candidates.

**(G) Postal Ballots**

23. The schedule for the processing of Postal Ballots for the *Thromde Elections* shall be as given below:

25 <sup>th</sup> December 2015 (Friday)	- All Postal Voters to commence application for Postal Ballots from Returning Officer
3 <sup>rd</sup> January 2016 (Sunday)	- Last date of receipt of application for Postal Ballots by Returning Officer





འབྲུག་གི་བཅའ་ཁྲུ་ལྷན་ཚོགས།

ELECTION COMMISSION OF BHUTAN

(Ensuring Free, Fair & Democratic Elections & Referendums)



---

4<sup>th</sup> January 2016 (Monday) - Commencement date for the issue of Postal Ballots by the Returning Officer

---

24<sup>th</sup> January 2016 (4:00 p.m. Sunday) - Last date for receipt of Postal Ballots by Returning Officer

---

25<sup>th</sup> January 2016 (2:00 p.m. Monday) - Counting of Postal Ballots by Returning Officer

---

24. A person who applied for Postal Ballot shall not be allowed to vote in person as his/her name will be included in the Postal Voters' List and struck off from the Voters' List sent to the Polling Station by the Returning Officer.

**(H) Voter Photo Identity Card (VPIC)**

25. Voter Photo Identity Card (VPIC) issued by the Election Commission of Bhutan shall be the valid document for identification of voters at the polling booths during the *Thromde Elections*.

26. However, all voters must carry with them the Citizenship Identity Card issued by the Ministry of Home and Cultural Affairs. In the event of any dispute related to the VPIC, the Citizenship Identity Card will form the basis for taking decision by the Presiding Officer.

**(I) Electronic Voting Machines**

27. The Electronic Voting Machine (EVM) shall be used for polling in all *Demkhongs*.



འབྲུག་གི་བཅའ་ཁྲུ་ལྷན་ཚོགས།  
ELECTION COMMISSION OF BHUTAN  
(Ensuring Free, Fair & Democratic Elections & Referendums)



**(J) Indelible Ink**

28. Quality indelible ink shall be used during the elections and mark from top of the nail to the bottom of the first joint of the left thumb.

**(K) Polling Stations**

29. The polling for the *Thromde* elections shall take place at the polling stations as given in the List of Polling Stations notified by the Election Commission as Annexure of the Final Delimitation Order for the three *Thromdes* as well as the Notification No. ECB/NOTIF-01/2010/699 dated 16<sup>th</sup> of October 2010.

**(L) Election Officials**

***Chief Election Coordinators***

30. *The Dzongdags* shall be the Chief Election Coordinators and the incumbent Executive Secretaries of Thimphu, Phuentshogling and Gelegphu *Thromdes* and the Dungpas of Gelegphu and Phuentshogling *Dungkhags* shall be the Deputy Chief Election Coordinators for the respective *Dzongkhag Thromdes*. The Chief and Deputy Chief Election Coordinators shall be responsible for carrying out the roles, responsibilities and duties as provided in the Electoral laws and in accordance with the Appointment Order issued by the Election Commission on 25<sup>th</sup> of December 2015.





འབྲུག་གི་བཅའ་འཁུར་ལྷན་ཚོགས།  
ELECTION COMMISSION OF BHUTAN  
(Ensuring Free, Fair & Democratic Elections & Referendums)



***National Observers and Micro Observers***

31. The Election Commission shall appoint three National Observers and three Micro Observers for observing the Elections in the respective *Thromdes*.
32. Observers are vested with the authority, roles and responsibilities as per the provisions in the Electoral laws, Rules, Regulations and Guidelines for Observers.

***Returning Officers***

33. The Election Commission shall appoint three Returning Officers and three Assistant Returning Officers in the three Dzongkhag *Thromdes*.
34. Returning Officers are vested with the authority, roles and responsibilities as per the provisions in the Electoral laws, Rules, Regulations and Handbook for Returning Officers.

***Presiding Officers***

35. The appointment of Presiding Officers for the Elections shall be as per the Appointment Orders issued by the concerned Returning Officer on or after 22<sup>nd</sup> of January 2016 i.e. three days before the day of Poll, unless otherwise authorized.
36. Presiding Officers are vested with the authority, roles and responsibilities as per the provisions in the Electoral laws, Rules, Regulations and Handbook for Presiding Officers.



འབྲུག་གི་བཅའ་ཁྲུ་ལྷན་ཚོགས།  
ELECTION COMMISSION OF BHUTAN  
(Ensuring Free, Fair & Democratic Elections & Referendums)



### ***Polling Officers***

37. The appointment of Polling Officers for the Elections shall be as per the Appointment Orders issued by the concerned Returning Officer on or after 22<sup>nd</sup> of January 2016 i.e. three days before the day of Poll.
38. Polling Officers are vested with the authority, roles and responsibilities as per the provisions in the Electoral laws, Rules, Regulations and Handbook for Polling Officers.

### ***Counting Supervisors & Counting Assistants***

39. The Presiding Officers shall serve as the Counting Supervisors and a Polling Officer as the Counting Assistant authorized as such in the Appointment Orders issued by the concerned Returning Officer.
40. Counting Supervisors and Counting Assistants are vested with the authority, roles and responsibilities as per the provisions in the Electoral laws, Rules, Regulations and Handbook for Counting Supervisors and Counting Assistants.

### ***Assignment of Duty Stations***

41. The Observers, Returning Officers, Assistant Returning Officers, Presiding Officers, Polling Officers and Counting Supervisors and Counting Assistants shall not be posted to the Dzongkhag where his/her *Gung* or *Mitsi* is registered.



འབྲུག་གི་བཅའ་ཁྲུ་ལྷན་ཚོགས།  
ELECTION COMMISSION OF BHUTAN  
(Ensuring Free, Fair & Democratic Elections & Referendums)



**(M) International Observers & Media Relations**

42. The Policy and Planning Division of the Election Commission shall coordinate and liaison on all matters that concern the International Observers, National and International Media permitted to observe the Elections as provided in the *National and International Observers Guidelines and Media Coverage of Elections Rules and Regulations*.

**Law and Order & Deployment of Forces**

43. The Royal Bhutan Police shall deploy security as per the Election Security Rules and Regulations of the Kingdom of Bhutan.
44. They shall deploy adequate numbers of personnel so that there is no possibility of any security threat to the electoral process.
45. The Election Security Focal Officers of the concerned Dzongkhag shall work in close coordination and cooperation with the election officers as a team towards conducting the Elections smoothly.
46. The concerned Dzongdags, Dungpas and incumbent Executive Secretaries of Thimphu, Gelephu and Phuentshogling Thromdes shall serve as the Focal Point for all administrative matters in these *Thromdes* until the election and assumption of the Local Government offices by those elected.
47. They shall be responsible to ensure that the administrative atmosphere, law and order situation in their respective jurisdiction are conducive, and congenial for Free and Fair *Thromde* elections.



འབྲུག་གི་བཅའ་ཁྲུ་ལྷན་ཚོགས།  
ELECTION COMMISSION OF BHUTAN  
(Ensuring Free, Fair & Democratic Elections & Referendums)



**(N) Election Control Rooms**

48. Control Rooms shall be established, at the *Thromde* level in the Office of the Returning Officers, in a convenient location identified by the Returning Officer and Chief Election Coordinator and at the National level at the Election Commission Headquarters to effectively supervise, direct, monitor and backstop the conduct of Elections.
49. The Control Rooms shall be set up and function in the manner detailed in the *Manual for Control Rooms*.
50. All concerned officials shall be provided with a copy of the Bhutan Election Directory to facilitate effective communications during the elections.

**(O) Election Code of Conduct**

51. The Election Code of Conduct shall be in force from 25<sup>th</sup> of December 2015 until the completion of the Election Period on 26<sup>th</sup> of January 2016.
52. All election officers, candidates and voters must comply with the Election Code of Conduct and the provisions of the Electoral Laws, Rules and Regulations and Guidelines.

**(P) Poll Day - A Holiday in the Concerned *Dzongkhag Thromde***

53. The Poll Day shall be declared a holiday in the concerned *Thromde* only. All employers are required by law to grant required number of days as election leave for any voter wishing to go to vote in person.



འབྲུག་གི་བཙན་འཇུག་ལྷན་ཚོགས།  
ELECTION COMMISSION OF BHUTAN  
(Ensuring Free, Fair & Democratic Elections & Referendums)



**(Q) Demkhong with No or Only One Candidate**

54. The *Thromde Elections* in a *Dzongkhag Thromde* with no candidate after the last date for filing of nomination of Candidates notified herein will be postponed till further notice.
55. The *Thromde Elections* in a *Dzongkhag Thromde* with only one candidate after the last date of filing of nomination of Candidates announced herein will be conducted as ‘Uncontested Elections’ provided under Sections 575 and 576 of the Election Act of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2008.
56. In those *Demkhongs* where there are candidates only for one post of either *Thrompon* or *Tshogpa* or *Thromde Thuemi*, the lay-out in the Polling Station shall be the same except there will be only one voting compartment for the concerned post instead of two.

**(R) Other Reference**

57. Election Officials shall, besides the Electoral Laws, Rules, Regulations, Guidelines, Handbooks, Orders and Notifications, also refer to “*Strategy for the Conduct of the Thromde Elections 2016*” for additional information and guidance in the conduct of the Elections.

**(S) Status of the Dzongkhag Thromdes**

58. The existing three *Dzongkhag Thromdes* of Gelegphu, Phuentshogling and Thimphu shall stand unaffected by calling of this Election. However, an elected official wishing to contest Elections shall be



འབྲུག་གི་བཅའ་འཁུར་ལྷན་ཚོགས།  
ELECTION COMMISSION OF BHUTAN

*(Ensuring Free, Fair & Democratic Elections & Referendums)*



required to have demitted office to participate in the nomination process and thereafter.

Now, thereof, from the day of issue of this Notification, the Election Commission of Bhutan notifies the general public on the Election Schedule of the *Thromde Tshogdes* in Sarpang, Chhukha and Thimphu Dzongkhags and all matters relating to it.

Issued on the 15<sup>th</sup> Day of the 11<sup>th</sup> Month of the Wood Female Sheep Year corresponding to 25<sup>th</sup> of December 2015.

By Order

**Chief Election Commissioner of Bhutan**