

Election Commission of Bhutan



Guidelines for Maintenance of Financial Records and Accounts for an Election in the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2023

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ELECTION COMMISSION OF BHUTAN

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Guidelines for Maintenance of Financial Records and Accounts for an Election in the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2023

Preamble

The Election Commission of Bhutan in appreciation of the full authority over all aspects of its financial management for conducting free, fair and clean elections, bestowed upon it as per the Section 41 of the Election Act:

1. *Instituting a sound financial control and accountability system towards enhancing an electoral management system of total integrity and credibility;*
2. *Offering a perfect and corruption free election that conforms to all the norms of a good election; and*
3. *Endorsing the national objectives of attaining efficiency, economy and effectiveness in the application of scarce and precious financial resources of the State, hereby adopts and promulgates the “Guidelines for Maintenance of Financial Records and Accounts for an Election in the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2015, 2017, 2021”, 2023.*

1. Title and Extent of Application

1.1. These Guidelines shall:

- 1.1.1. Be called the *Guidelines for Maintenance of Financial Records and Accounts for an Election in the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2015, 2017, 2021 & 2023;*
- 1.1.2. Conform with the Financial Rules and Regulation of the Ministry of Finance and the Election Act of the Kingdom of Bhutan 2008; and
- 1.1.3. Extend to the whole of the Kingdom of Bhutan for handling of funds for an election.

2. Definition

2.1. In these Guidelines, unless the context otherwise requires:

- 2.1.1. “Commission” means the Election Commission of Bhutan;
- 2.1.2. “Deposit Works” means a work or service, the execution of which has been entrusted by the Commission to another budgetary agency including the twenty Dzongkhag Administration, Royal Bhutan Police and Royal Bhutan Army;
- 2.1.3. “Election Act” means the Election Act of the Kingdom of Bhutan 2008;
- 2.1.4. “Election Period” means the period beginning on the day of issue of notification and ending with the declaration of result;
- 2.1.5. “Memorandum Register” means recording the details of advances released and

adjustment made thereof; and

2.1.6 "PEMS" means Public Expenditure Management System developed by Ministry of Finance.

3. Purpose

3.1. These Guidelines shall ensure:

- 3.1.1. Sound accounting procedures and internal control systems exercised at all times;
- 3.1.2. Timely settlement and accounting of transactions;
- 3.1.3. Settlement of accounts in accordance with all relevant laws, rules and regulations;
- 3.1.4. Continuous monitoring and management of funds;
- 3.1.5. Utilization and management of Funds according to budget appropriations norms;
- 3.1.6. Appropriate allocation of expenditures from the funds; and
- 3.1.7. Management of funds for conduct of elections adhering strictly to the financial norms and procedures for transparency, accountability and better management of the internal control system.

4. Appointment of Focal Person

- 4.1. The Commission shall appoint dedicated Accounts Personnel in each Dzongkhag Administration, the Royal Bhutan Police (RBP HQ), the Royal Bhutan Army (RBA HQ) as Accounts Focal Person who will be solely responsible to look after the accounts pertaining to an election;
- 4.2. The Dedicated Accounts Person shall be responsible to ensure that adjustment of all advances released to the concerned organization is made on time;
- 4.3. The dedicated accounts personnel shall have the roles and responsibility to:
 - 4.3.1. Serve with highest degree of responsibility, integrity, honesty, loyalty and efficiency;
 - 4.3.2. Maintain relevant Accounting Records such as:
 - 4.3.2.1. Details of funds received from the Commission and Expenditure Statement;
 - 4.3.2.2. Monthly accounts on utilization of funds from the date of receipt of funds from the Commission;
 - 4.3.2.3. PEMS generated Vouchers, supporting documents;
 - 4.3.2.4. Memorandum Register for the Deposit Works;
 - 4.3.2.5. Ensure timely submission of consolidated accounts to the Commission

within fifteen working days after the Declaration of the Election Results;
and

4.3.2.6. The Accounts Officer of the Commission shall be responsible to ensure that each Accounts Focal Person submit on time the account of adjustment of all advances made to the RBP, RBA and the twenty Dzongkhags.

5. Heads of Accounts/Budget in Elections

5.1. The heads of Accounts and Budgets during an Election shall normally be classified under the broad head "Capital" and "Current;"

5.2. The activities under "Capital" shall be:

5.2.1. (51.08) Exp. On Structure-others, for maintenance of election advertisement board and construction of temporary Polling Stations;

5.2.2. (52.04)- Plant & Equipment - Telecommunications;

5.2.3. (54.02)-Office Equipment; and

5.2.4. (54.03)-Computers & Peripherals.

5.3. The activities under "current" shall be:

5.3.1. (11.01)-Travel In Country;

5.3.2. (12.01)-Utilities -Telephone, telex, Fax, Email, Internet;

5.3.3. (12.02)-Utilities-Telegram, wireless Transmission, Postage;

5.3.4. (13.01) Rental of Properties, Building;

5.3.5. (14.01) -S & M-Office Supplies, Printings, Publications;

5.3.6. (17.01)-Op. Advertising;

5.3.7. (17.03)-Op. Exp.-Transportation; and

5.3.8. (17.08) -Op. Exp.-In country meetings and celebrations.

6. Budgeting

6.1. The respective Departments/Divisions of Commission, Dzongkhag Election Offices, the Royal Bhutan Police and the Royal Bhutan Army shall be responsible to submit the budget estimates for the conduct of election to the Commission.

6.2. The Budget Estimates shall have:

6.2.1. Clear link between the budget estimations and the objectives;

6.2.2. Clear heads of Expenditure for all election activities required under the laws;

6.2.3. Clear relation to roles and responsibility of the Dzongkhag Election Offices including electoral officers under deputation in an Election Period and the security personnel; and

6.2.4. Adequate justification and explanation for all proposals with the most effective estimates for the cost of activities.

6.3. The Commission shall be responsible to process budget from Department of National Budget, Ministry of Finance upon consolidation of the proposals received from the Departments/Divisions of the Commission, Dzongkhag Election Offices, Royal Bhutan Police and Royal Bhutan Army and other stakeholders.

6.4. The estimated Budget received for the conduct of elections shall then be released to respective Dzongkhag Administrations, Royal Bhutan Police and Royal Bhutan Army as Deposit Work Advances.

7. Expenditure Guidelines for an Election

7.1. The expenditure during election shall be under following areas:

7.1.1. TA/DA for Electoral Officers including Returning Officer, Assistant Returning Officer, National Observer, Micro Observer, Media Arbitrator, Officials of Media Arbitrator Office and Legal Officers on deputation;

7.1.2. TA/DA for Polling Officials including Presiding Officer, 3 Polling Officers, 1 Polling Assistant & 1 Lady Security Assistant for each Polling Station; and

7.1.3. TA/DA for other Officials on election duty including the dedicated accounts personnel travelling to ECB, Head Office for submission and settlement of accounts.

7.2. The rates for payment of DSA & TA shall be as per the rates prescribed by the Government;

7.3. The officers on the election duties shall be admissible to claim allowances to meet the cost of Telecommunication facilities for effective communication, coordination and reporting at the following rates, which may be revised by the Commission from time to time:

7.3.1. Nu. 8,000/- (Ngultrum Eight Thousand only) for each office of the Returning Officer, Office of Media Arbitrator (two telephone lines: internet connection and regular landline connections);

7.3.2. Nu. 2,000/- (Ngultrum Two Thousand only) per line per month allocated for the Returning Officer and Office of Media Arbitrator to set up four telephone lines - internet connection and 3 regular landline connections;

7.3.3. Nu. 3,000/- (Ngultrum Three Thousand only) mobile recharge for three

Commissioners and Directors;

- 7.3.4. Nu.1,000/- (Ngultrum One Thousand only) mobile recharge voucher for each Returning Officer, Assistant Returning Officer, National Observer, Micro Observer and Media Arbitrator;
- 7.3.5. Nu.1,000/- (Ngultrum One Thousand only) mobile recharge voucher for each Chief Election Coordinators, Deputy Chief Election Coordinators and Dzongkhag Electoral Officers/Dzongkhag Electoral Registration Officer, Gewog Election Coordinators;
- 7.3.6. Nu.1,000/- (Ngultrum One Thousand only) mobile recharge voucher for each Chief of Departments, Divisions and Officers of the Commission;
- 7.3.7. Nu. 1,000/- (Ngultrum One thousand only) mobile recharge voucher for each, Officials of Media Arbitrator, Legal officials on Deputation to the Commission;
- 7.3.8. Nu.300/- (Ngultrum Three Hundred only) mobile recharge voucher for each Presiding Officer;
- 7.3.9. Nu. 600/- (Ngultrum Six Hundred) for mobile recharge voucher for officers, support staff and dedicated accounts personnel of Dzongkhag Election Offices.
- 7.3.10. Nu. 400/- (Ngultrum Four Hundred only) mobile recharge voucher for support staff of Department and Division of the Commission;
- 7.3.11. Nu. 1,000/- (Ngultrum One Thousand) mobile recharge voucher for each Chief Election Security Coordinator, Election Security Liaison Officer, Constituency Officers, Focal Officers;
- 7.3.12. Nu. 500/- (Ngultrum Five Hundred) mobile recharge voucher for each Security personnel team per polling station and Border Sealing Team; and
- 7.3.13. Nu. 300/- (Ngultrum Three Hundred only) mobile recharge voucher for each security communication team.
- 7.3.14. A budgetary provision shall be allocated to each Dzongkhag for meeting expenses for fuel for Dzongkhag pool vehicles on Poll Day duties as well as transportation of election materials and election officials.
- 7.3.15. Private vehicles may be hired only as a last resort and subject to prior approval from the Commission when no government vehicle is available for transportation of election materials and election officials. However, when a government vehicle is used, the fuel expenditure shall be borne by the Commission.
- 7.3.16. A Budgetary provision prescribed here under shall, which may be revised from time

to time, be paid as per the ceilings fixed below:

- 7.3.17. Nu. 3,000/- for lunch & refreshment per Polling Station on the Poll Day;
- 7.3.18. Nu. 300/- per person for working-meal which shall be served during:
 - 7.3.18.1. Dzongkhag Coordination meetings;
 - 7.3.18.2. Briefing of team to conduct Dhamngoi Zomdu;
 - 7.3.18.3. Conduct of Dhamngoi Zomdu;
 - 7.3.18.4. Scrutiny of Nominations;
 - 7.3.18.5. Briefing of Candidates;
 - 7.3.18.6. Conduct of Common Forum;
 - 7.3.18.7. Packing and sending of postal ballot;
 - 7.3.18.8. Sealing of EVM and packing of Presiding Officer's bag;
 - 7.3.18.9. Refresher's Course;
 - 7.3.18.10. Deployment of polling officials to polling stations;
 - 7.3.18.11. Receiving of polling officials and collections of results;
 - 7.3.18.12. Meeting on Dispute Settlement;
 - 7.3.18.13. Opening of envelope, A at RO's Office;
 - 7.3.18.14. Counting team & participants at RO's office during counting and compilation of results;
 - 7.3.18.15. Nu. 300/- per person for working-lunch for official meetings in Media Arbitrator's Office;
 - 7.3.18.16. Nu.300/- per person for dinner during public debate broadcast by BBSC (BBSC team, Returning Officer, National Observers and other Election Officials on duty).
 - 7.3.18.17. Nu. 1,000/- for refreshment per Gewog for conduct of CVE programme.

8. Official on Deputation

- 8.1. Following officials shall be entitled for incentive of one-month basic pay for conduct of Parliamentary and Local Government elections:
 - 8.1.1. The officials at the Office of Media Arbitrator based in head office;
 - 8.1.2. The Legal Officials on deputation at ECB head office;
- 8.2. For the conduct of parliamentary bye-election, officials of the Office of Media Arbitrator shall be paid one third of one-month basic pay.
- 8.3. A sum of Nu. 2,000/- per head for polling team deploy in Lunana (Gasa Dzongkhag) polling stations in lieu of extension kits.

9. Expenditure Processing

- 9.1. The fund appropriated for election purposes or activities is non-transferable and cannot be re-appropriated and shall be utilized solely for the purposes of funding election activities;
- 9.2. The concerned Chief Election Coordinator/Deputy Chief Election Coordinator, Returning Officer and Dzongkhag Electoral Officer shall be responsible for verification of all the claims; and
- 9.3. The respective Drawing and Disbursing Officer or the Head of Administration and Finance

- Division of each organization shall sanction and approve the expenditure.
- 9.4. Cash handling should be minimized as far as possible.

10. Reports

- 10.1. The designated Accounts Personnel for Dzongkhag Administration, the Royal Bhutan Police and Royal Bhutan Army shall be responsible to maintain the Statement of Expenditure systematically with all supporting documents attached as required under these Guidelines, Orders and Financial Rules and Regulations, 2001;
- 10.2. The Statement of Expenditure and Accounts submitted to the Election Commission upon the closing of accounts must invariably consist of:
- 10.2.1. Expenditure Statement for the fund of the election conducted within the time frame as in **Annexure 1**; and
- 10.2.2. A copy of the Memorandum Register for Deposit Work.
- 10.3. The Accounts Section of the Election Commission, under the supervision of the Secretary, shall be responsible to compile all the expenditure incurred by the Head Office as well as the Deposit Works to be submitted not later than the forty five days after the date of Declaration of Election Results of an election;
- 10.4. The Public Election Fund Division shall prepare Comprehensive report on the funds released to the candidates and/or parties and expenditure statement on the sponsored activities within fifteen days after the poll day; and
- 10.5. The respective Head of Departments/Divisions shall be responsible to review and ensure the correctness of the same before submission to the Commission.

11. Regular Budget and Accounts

- 11.1. The Annual Budget proposal of the twenty Dzongkhag Election offices shall be submitted to the Commission for assessment and scrutiny and consolidation with the head office budget for the consolidated Commission budget proposal to be put up for approval by Parliament from the Consolidated Fund Account;
- 11.2. The budget of the Dzongkhags shall be directly transferred and fund released under a separate sub programme, to the Dzongkhag Administration by the Department of National Budget, Ministry of Finance;
- 11.3. The Dzongkhag Election Officer shall have full control over the use of Dzongkhag Election Budget;
- 11.4. No transfer of budgets and re-appropriation of fund to and/or from the Election Sector to

Election Budget;

- 11.5. No transfer of budget and re-appropriation of fund to and/or from the Election Sector to other sectors in the Dzongkhags;
- 11.6. The quarterly expenditure statement and budget status shall be reported to the Department of Public Accounts and Commission simultaneously.

12. Internal Audit

- 12.1. The Commission shall appoint an Internal Audit for the accounts of an Election to be completed within seventy days of the Declaration of Election Result; and
- 12.2. The Commission shall be responsible to consider the Internal Audit Report within three months after the Declaration of Election Result.

13. Penalty

- 13.1. Any person or organization found guilty of violation of these Guidelines shall be dealt in accordance with the Election Act.

14. Power of the Commission to issue Instruction and Directions

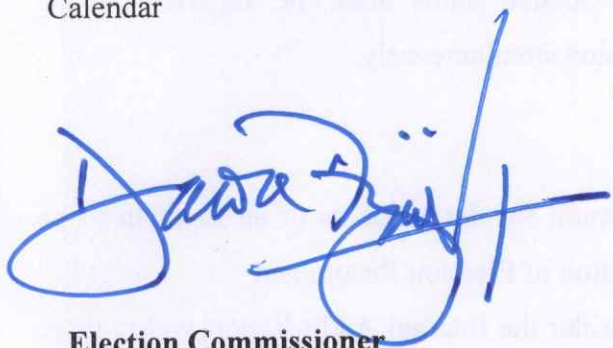
- 14.1. The Commission may issue instructions and directions:
 - 14.1.1. For the clarification of any of the provisions of these Guidelines;
 - 14.1.2. For the removal of any difficulty which may arise in relation to the implementation of any such provisions; and
 - 14.1.3. In relation to any matter with respect to Maintenance of Financial Records, for which these guidelines make insufficient provisions in the opinion of the commission.

15. Interpretation and Amendment

- 15.1. The Commission shall be the competent authority to interpret the provisions of these Guidelines; and
- 15.2. The Commission shall have the power to amend these Guidelines by way of addition, variation or repeal, provided that no such amendment shall be made in contravention to the provisions of Election Act.



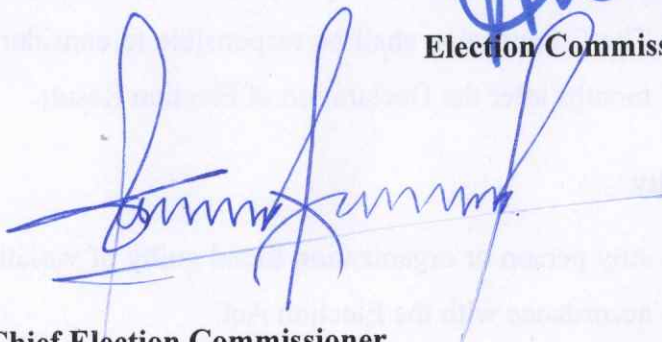
Done under the seal of the Election Commission of the Kingdom of Bhutan on this 15th August 2023 corresponding to the 29th Day of 6th Month of the Water Female Rabbit Year in the Bhutanese Calendar

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Election Commissioner

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Election Commissioner

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Chief Election Commissioner

The following sub-sections are amended for the document titled: ***Guidelines for Maintenance of Financial Records and Accounts for an Election in the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2023:***

- 4.3.2.5. Ensure timely submission of consolidated accounts to the Commission within ***thirty days*** to fifteen working days after the Declaration of the Election Results
- 7.3.3. Nu. 3,000/- (Ngultrum Three Thousand only) mobile recharge for three Commissioners and Directors; (***New sub-section***)
- 7.3.9. ***Nu. 400/- to*** Nu. 600/- (Ngultrum Six Hundred) for mobile recharge voucher for officers, support staff and dedicated accounts personnel of Dzongkhag Election Offices
- 7.3.18.13. Opening of envelope, A at RO's Office;
- 7.3.18.14. Counting team & participants at RO's office during counting and compilation of results;
- 7.3.18.17. Nu. 1,000/- for refreshment per Gewog for conduct of CVE programme (***New sub-section***)



EXPENDITURE STATEMENT

Annexure 1

Name of Office: Dzongkhag.....

Expenditure Statement for: (Activity) For the

Period:

Sl. No.	Expenditure Head (OBC)	Amount	Remarks
	Total		

1. Total Fund Received:

2. (Less) Expenditure:

3. Balance:

The statement of expenditure as given here is correct and expenditures incurred are for approved activities.

Yours sincerely,

(Signature)

Accounts Officer

Name and Seal

Dated: DD/MM/YYYY

Counter signed by:

Chief Election coordinator

Dzongkhag Electoral Officers

Note:

1. Expenditure Statement is required for each activity
2. The Statement shall be submitted within fifteen days after declaration of election result