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INSIDE

Construction Manager Software Launched



USE OF UPGRADED CONSTRUCTION MANAGER SOFTWARE FROM FISCAL YEAR 2020-2021 (Software for project planning, contract administration and project monitoring) - DES

The Department of Engineering Services, Ministry of Works and Human Settlement, has upgraded Construction Manager Software which was previously developed by School Planning and Building Division, Ministry of Education, in 2002.

This software is used in project planning, contract administration and project monitoring. It helps in preparing estimates and analyzing rates, preparation of running account bills and monitor both physical and financial progresses of the project. The objective of upgrading this software is to simplify the many processes involved in construction such as cost estimation, generation of running account bills, work planning, progress reporting, resource forecasting and thereby:

Phuntshopelri to be connected by Road



1. Professionalize the construction sector: The introduction and uniform application of this software will assist in drawing the construction sector closer to instituting the best and common practices. This software will establish a systematic approach to planning and implementation thereby ensuring quality, cost effectiveness and timely execution of a project.

Phuntshopelri to be connected by Road

2. Establish a common platform for all the engineers in the construction industry: The Construction Manager Software (CMS) will set a common platform and establish uniform standard operating system for project planning and management.

Housing Crunch: Real or Illusion?

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CMS was launched by Honorable Zhabtog Lyonpo and Dasho Secretary, MoWHS.

3. Enhance transparency and accountability: This software will greatly reduce room for manipulations and unscrupulous practices. All the transactions will be done automatically after entering the measured quantity of works which cannot be altered thereby maintaining accountability and transparency.

4. Phase out the measurement book: The long time practice of maintaining measurement book will be replaced by the use of Construction Manager Software starting fiscal year 2020-2021. It is expected that all the engineers will adopt using the CMS. This is one of the resolution of 10th Engineers, Architects and Planner's conference held at Pangbang, Zhemgang from 29th to 31st December, 2019.

5. Provide adequate time for site supervision: The digital recording of work measurement would save a lot of time for the engineers concerned. The time gained from this can be utilized for better site supervision and monitoring thereby improving the work quality and service delivery.

The Ministry has so far trained over 660 government Engineers and some officials from RAA on the usage of CMS. Besides, it will be helpful for the contractors and related officials especially to prepare the estimates and rate analysis. After numerous trainings and feedback received from the users, the software eventually took the desired form.

Therefore, the Ministry hereby mandates all the agencies within MoWHS, Dzongkhags, Thromdes and Regional Offices to use CMS starting from financial year 2020-2021. We would also like to recommend other procuring agencies, corporate and private sectors to adopt using the CMS and should there be requirement to train on the software, the Department of Engineering Services, MoWHS will provide any professional support.

Phuntshopelri to be connected by Road - Phuentsholing Regional Office, DoR

As commanded by His Majesty during the recent Royal visit to Phuntshopelri (Gomtu) on 17 April 2020, the gewog will soon be connected to Phuentsholing via Pugli and Tading Gewog.

The work to connect the gewog started on 1st May 2020 and is expected to take around a month. The new road which will be constructed will run over Sisney mountain pass and is being initiated by Phuentsholing Regional Office, DoR.

At present, the commuters from Phuntshopelri have to go to Samtse to reach Phuentsholing, which is 103 Km. The road will benefit the commuters and reduce the traveling time by half to Phuentsholing. The road from Phuntshopelri to Phuentsholing will be approximately 44 km.

Apart from boosting the local economy, the new road will greatly benefit the public of two gewogs and all business and industries of Phuntshopelri and Pugli.



The road was inaugurated by DASHO DZONGDA, Samtse Dzongkhag Administration

Tshelingore-Khothakpa road to be improved- Samdrup Jongkhar Regional Office, DoR

The second package of improvement work on Tshelingore-Khothakpa secondary national highway is aimed at improving the geometric curves and reconstruction of road pavement to a standard of primary national highway.

The work executed by Regional Office, Samdrup Jongkhar, DoR through contract. The duration of work is 30 months and is expected to be completed by Septemebr 30, 2022. The project is funded by Government of India



The ground breaking ceremony was graced by Dasho Dzongdag and Ven Lam Neten of Pemagatshel Dzongkhag.

Housing Crunch: Real or Illusion? - PPD

Just before the corona virus pandemic strike the world, my house owner revised and increased the rent for its tenants. The rent was revised within the purview of the Section 26 of the Tenancy Act of Bhutan 2015. With increasing number of housing shortages in thromdes like Thimphu and Phuntsholing and some dzongkhags like Samdrup Jongkhar and Dagana, the tenants have to adhere to the whims and fancy of house owners.

At present National Housing Development Corporation is the only agency that provides social housing services to civil servants. The corporation has a total of 617 blocks consisting of 2,506 units in the country. The housing units are solely meant for civil servants. The shortage of housing is evident considering the size of civil servants. However, other institutes like National Pension and Provident Fund and Royal Insurance Corporation of Bhutan also provides housing for its members irrespective of whether they are civil servants, corporate or private individuals. These institutes functions more on commercial basis rather than social.

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It has to be mentioned that the housing is now becoming unaffordable to middle- and lower-income groups. This can be attributed to 10 % revision by the house owners every two years. The motive behind 10% revision is to ensure that the house owners revise the rents based on the inflation in the country and not necessarily increase the rent. However, this specific clause has been misused by the house owners and is being used as a basis to increase the rent on a yearly or two-yearly basis rather than revising the rents based on economic situation of the country. On the other hand, neither the Tenancy Act nor the Tenancy rules and regulations mentioned for how long can house owner revise the rent by 10%.

The shortage of residential housing has to be attributed to commercialization of the residential area. For example, in Thimphu almost every residential area now has a designated commercial space. The Thimphu Structure Plan clearly states that in residential areas, commercial activities will not be allowed except for small shops. However, the LG Act gives them the authority to amend an approved urban development plans to regulate and enforce land use and building activity within their jurisdictions. Thus, legality of structure plan is questionable because during the implementation phase the plans and requirements are amended according to thromde tshogdes approval.

However, all is not doomed for mid-level civil servants like me and other lower income group. The present government during its campaign period in 2018 has pledged to construct 2500 flats of home ownership. In doing so, the government needs to prioritize its plans and programs based on assessment. As mentioned earlier, housing shortage is limited to few dzongkhags and thromdes only.

The government of the day also needs to interpret the 10% revision of the rent. So far, the understanding is that, the rent will be increased after every two years or in some cases by lumpsum on a yearly basis. It should also be clearly deliberated either through act or rules and regulations for how long can a house owner revise the rent. There is also a need for government to inform the public what should be the actual basis for increasing the rent by 10%. Should it be the initial amount as agreed between the tenants and the houseowners or should it be based on revised rent. The government should also formulate a housing act which would repeal tenancy act to address the housing and tenancy issues.

There is also a need for the government to pass the spatial planning bill so that there is a legal backing to structure plan prepared and approved by the National Committee for Human Settlement. In doing so, the local governments will not be able to change the plans as desired by the elected tshogde members.