



The bridge machineries were handed over during the third Joint Coordination Meeting

Bridge inventory to complete this December

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Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) handed over 41 bridge inspection tools, and two vehicles (Toyota Hiluxes) to the Department of Road (DoR) on October 13 in Thimphu under the Technical Cooperation for Capacity Development in Construction and Maintenance of Bridges (CAMBRIDGE) project.

The inspection tools included RC radar, a hammer drill, a generator, a concrete core machine, nine schmidt hammers, nine test hammers, nine crack scale and 10 GPS. The two vehicles were handed over to DoR's bridge division.

The three-year project, which started from October 2016, covers 272 bridges in the country. The project has 10 experts from Japan advising Bhutanese on basic design, construction, and management of bridges.

Chief representative of JICA, Koji Yamada, during the third Joint Coordination Meeting said the experts would not always be available in future. He urged the gathering to learn as much from the existing experts to become more independent and professional. "For me, professionals always expect the unexpected, make no excuses, hold full responsibility for their results, and always do what they promise."

The meeting reported the progress of bridge engineering (preliminary design/test), bridge maintenance, Bridge Maintenance System (BMS), and quality and safety control.

To date, the collection of bridge inventory data of 203 bridges in Thimphu, Lobesa, Sarpang, Lingmithang, Tingtibi and Samdrupjongkhar have been completed with 15 bridges remaining in Phuentsholing, Trongsa and Trashigang.

Executive engineer of bridge division, Rinchen Khandu, said the ongoing inventory would be completed by December this year, and the data fed to BMS. "The regional offices can log in and input the data so that the headquarters can review the condition of the bridge to know where to focus the budget for maintenance."

The project also provides on the job trainings in construction and maintenance. The on the job trainings for construction starts this month in Wangchu bridge, Thimphu, and Dangdung bridge on Rafee-Khosala bypass road, Trongsa. The on the job trainings for maintenance will start in Katley II and III, Sarpang in February 2018.

The project aims to have five outcomes – to develop bridge maintenance manuals, involve Bhutanese engineers in bridge construction and maintenance to acquire basic knowledge on bridge engineering, develop a field checklist on quality control and safety control for bridge construction, develop a BMS, and develop a national policy on maintenance and management on bridges managed by DoR.

Director of DoR, Tenzin, said the policy is a crucial instrument for the continuity and sustainability of the project. "It will be a mechanism for the sustainability for whatever the project has achieved, the capacity the project has built, and the information that is recorded and developed."

Karma Cheki

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