

JICA assists DoR in bridge construction and maintenance

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A bridge management system (BMS) consisting of detailed inventory and inspection of bridges in the country and mainstreaming the safety and quality aspects in the construction sector are among the outcomes expected of the CAMBRIDGE (construction and management of bridges) project.

The contract was signed in October 2016 between Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the government. The project, which was to be completed in September 2019, is extended to April 2020 due to the upcoming elections.

Through this project, JICA has field 10 experts to help the Bridge Division and Department of Roads (DoR) in areas of bridge construction and maintenance.

The bridge division with the human settlement ministry has today collected inventory and inspection details of 272 bridges in the country.

Bridge division's chief engineer Karma Wangdi said with a proper bridge inventory data, bridge inspection data and conditions report, the department would be able to decide on correct and immediate intervention or reconstruction. "With BMS we will be able to forecast budget required for repair and maintenance. We will also be able to



► Joint coordination committee meeting between JICA, DoR and GNHC

justify the budget requirement."

At the joint coordination committee meeting held yesterday in Thimphu, it was suggested that the inspection be conducted during lean seasons and bridges on the gewog centre roads be included in the BMS. Improving the security of the system was also suggested.

While a quality and safety aspect is yet to be mainstreamed, a draft manual and a checklist have been developed through the CAMBRIDGE project. Officials also conducted case studies to check the quality and safety of the bridge construction in the country.

"We need a level of awareness with all those involved in construction sector. We will start with few aspects of quality and safety initially and as we move forward, we will understand and

implement quality and safety aspect in any of our construction works," Karma Wangdi said.

To transfer technical expertise, the Japanese government is providing trainings and workshops for DoR officials.

Earlier, about 61 officials took a test on basic bridge knowledge, bridge designing, and planning aspects. It is said that the results are poor with an average score of 2.58 out of 5. A target of 80 percent was set.

At the meeting yesterday, chief representative of JICA, Koji Yamada, shared concerns over officials leaving their jobs following the trainings. He also raised the importance of passing of skills and knowledge of bridge engineering to the students of the College of Science and Technology and Jigme Namgyel Engineering College.

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