

**Awareness Training on Management Prescriptions and By-Laws of Harra chhu
Capture Fisheries Management Group**

TRAINING REPORT



**RNR R&DC BAJO
IN COLLABORATION WITH
DEPARTMENT OF LIVESTOCK**

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*Awareness Training on Management Prescriptions and By-Laws of Harra chhu Capture Fisheries
Management Group*

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Front cover: *Awareness training on the management prescriptions & B-Laws and Handing over of the Ownership Certificate*

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Introduction and background

The livelihood of communities dwelling along the Harra chhu basin depended on fish and fish products in the form of *Nya-Dosem* (smoke dried fish) from time immemorial. This is evident because elderly members of the community still recall the payment of taxes in the form of *Nya-Dosem*. It was after the nationalization of the forest and forest products by the then Department of Forest (now DoFPS) that the community lost their right to catch fish from the Harra chhu river. The community then resorted to unsustainable illegal fishing using non-selective fishing equipments such as cast nets, traps, etc, even-though the Forest and Nature Conservation Rules did not allow them to do so. Farmers revealed that the equipments used in past were much more selective in the sense that the smaller fishes gets filtered by the bamboo mats they used. On the other hand it is more sustainable because the egg laden fishes move upstream which are never caught by the local equipments (Drow and Dang). These especially designed methods of fishing which catches the fishes that come downstream after spawning.

Most of the farmers in the community live apparently below poverty line. Knowing the conditions under which the farmers in this Harra chhu basin live, His Excellency Lynpo Sangay Ngedup, then Minister for Agriculture, recommended the introduction of *warm water fisheries* to improve household income and improve nutritional intake during his visit to the community. Her Royal Highness, Azhi Dorji Wangmo Wangchuk also made visit to the community and granted Kidus to construct houses with fund from the Tarayana Foundation. Following these two great visits, the National Cold Water Fishery Centre (NCWFC), Haa under the directives from the Department of Livestock (DoL) along with Renewable Natural Resources Research and Development Centre, (RNR-RDC), Bajo made a study to establish a Community Capture Fishery in running water.

Having understood the sustainability of fishing methods used by the farmers in the community, a draft management plan was prepared to manage the Harra chhu as **Capture Fisheries**. The management plan was made comprehensive with specific emphasis on managing fish resources by putting in sustainable community based conservation and management practices in place¹.

The plan was proposed to the Ministry of Agriculture and Forest (MoAF) through Department of Forest and Park Services (DoFPS) in line with the Royal Government's Policies to reduce acute poverty and raise household income through sale of fish and fish products without compromising the fish population in the river for times to come. The plan was approved by the MoAF with Royal consent from His Majesty the Fifth Druk Gyalpo.

Therefore, we need to make the farmers aware of what they have agreed on in the said management plan. It was aimed at making every individual understand the dos' and don'ts of the management plan and abide by its prescriptions.

Training objectives

1. To make farmers familiar with the Harra chhu Capture Fisheries *Management Prescriptions and the rules of the By-Law* formulated in consultation with the Office bearers of the Management Group
2. To prevent individuals from indulging in the activities that are restricted the rules in the By-Law.

Training approach and implementation

The farmers were briefed on various aspects of the Management plan with presentations and also lively question answer session after every individual topic. The mode of training was truly participatory with insightful games to make the discussion and the learning process livelier.

Day 1

On the first day of the training we emphasized on the management objectives, prescriptions, harvest and processing, marketing, and monitoring and evaluation.

Day 2

While on the second day we basically briefed them the rules for the management of the Capture Fisheries which was earlier framed in consultation with the Office bearers/leaders. It was a tedious day in-fact as the By-Law consisted of various sub heading such as membership arrangement, management committee, rights and responsibilities of individual members, risks and liabilities, offences and penalties, marketing and record keeping, community fund development, meetings, conflict resolution, amendment of management plan and the equity issues.

Day 3

On the third day, we trained them on the procedures for processing for different permits such as permit for poles to construct *Dangs* (poles) and permit for the sale of *Nya-Dosem* (Smoke dried fish), simultaneously we introduced them to the HCFMG permit which the Chairman of the Group is going to sign for the purpose of the sale of fish products from the Group. We also introduced them to the receipt and it proper handling and recording. In the afternoon we handed over the whole set of packages which include the fish product movement permit, the money receipt, the official seal for the Chairman and few other relevant stationeries along with the Ownership certificate for the Hara chhu Capture Fisheries.

Expected training outcomes

The first day of the training was purely intended to make;

- The farmers aware of both short term and long term objectives of Harra chhu Capture Fisheries Management Plan

- The farmers knowledgeable on sustainable harvest of fish using locally available equipments (*Drow (basket) and Dang (poles)*) and also on the sustainable management of vegetation in the Hara chhu basin.

On second day we intended to make;

- The farmers aware of all the clauses in the HCFMG By-law

Third day we intended to make;

- The farmers aware as to where they should apply for the permit to cut poles for Dang construction, permit for transaction and marketing of fish products and obtaining valid receipt for future record
- Training report

Training team and responsibilities

The training team comprise of

Mr. Rinzin Dorji, RNR-RDC, Bajo responsible for the entire training content and course management.

Mr. Purna B. Gurung, RNR-R D&C, Bajo responsible for logistical arrangement for the training and some technical support.

Mr. Karma Tenzin, National Cold Water Fisheries, Haa responsible for technical backstopping of the fisheries aspect

Mr. Yeshey Wangdi, Park Warden, JSWNP & Mr. Sonam Phuntsho GFEO, Athang responsible for technical backstopping on the Forest Rules

Mr. Norbu Wangdi, ALO, Lower Athang responsible for technical aspects of Livestock and fisheries

ⁱ Harra chhu Capture Fisheries Management Plan, September 2010 to September 2015, renewable Natural Resources Research and Development Centre, Bajo, Wangduephograng