

**DELIMITATION OF ELECTORAL CONSTITUENCIES RULES AND
REGULATIONS OF THE KINGDOM OF BHUTAN**

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ELECTION COMMISSION OF BHUTAN

DELIMITATION OF ELECTORAL CONSTITUENCIES RULES AND REGULATIONS OF THE KINGDOM OF BHUTAN

In keeping with the provisions of the Election Act of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2008 to allocate seats and delimit boundaries of constituencies for election to Parliament and Local Governments, the Election Commission of Bhutan hereby adopts and promulgates the Delimitation of Electoral Constituencies Rules and Regulations of the Kingdom of Bhutan.

1. Short Title, Extent, Application and Commencement

- a. These Rules shall be called the Delimitation of Electoral Constituencies Rules and Regulations of the Kingdom of Bhutan;
- b. These Rules shall extend to the whole of the Kingdom of Bhutan;
- c. These Rules shall apply to the delimitation of boundaries of constituencies for elections to Parliament and Local Governments in the Kingdom of Bhutan; and
- d. These Rules shall come into force with effect from.....

2. Definition

In these Rules unless the context otherwise requires:

- a. “DT” means Dzongkhag Tshogdu;
- b. “Election Commission” means the Election Commission of Bhutan;
- c. “Gewog Tshogde Constituency” means the constituency for the Gewog Tshogde Tshogpa;
- d. “Thromde Tshogde Constituency” means the constituency for the Dzongkhag Thromde Tshogde member;
- e. “GIS” means Geographic Information Systems;
- f. “GT” means Gewog Tshogde;
- g. “TT” means Thromde Tshogde;

- h. Words importing the masculine gender shall include the feminine gender; and
- i. Words importing the singular number shall include the plural number and vice-versa, unless the context otherwise requires.

3. Delimitation Authority

- a. The Delimitation Commission shall be responsible for the delimitation of boundaries of constituencies for elections to Parliament and Local Governments.
- b. The Delimitation Commission shall comprise of the Chief Election Commissioner, the two Election Commissioners, Secretary, Ministry responsible for Urban and Municipal Administration, Secretary, Ministry responsible for Civil Registration, Census and Local Governments and the Surveyor-General.

4. Guiding Principles and Criteria

- a. Equality of Voting Strength
 - 1. Boundaries shall be drawn so that constituencies within a Dzongkhag are, as far as possible, equal in the number of registered voters, resulting in equivalent weight of the votes cast by every voter.

However, other factors prescribed below may be also taken into consideration.
- b. Administrative Units
 - 1. A constituency shall correspond, wherever possible, to the existing administrative units and boundaries to facilitate benefits from integration within the territorial area.
- c. Accessibility
 - 1. The means of communication and travel within the constituency needs to be taken into account in delimiting constituencies.

d. **Geography**

1. Geographical and landmark features such as mountains, rivers and main roads shall be taken into account in delimiting constituencies.
2. Constituencies shall be, as far as possible, unbroken and interconnected to facilitate easier interaction of political parties and candidates with their constituencies.
3. The final delimitation process will, as far as possible, take into consideration the size, remoteness as well as sparseness of population.

5. Delimitation Proposal

a. The delimitation proposal shall include the following:

1. Dzongkhag-wise apportionment of National Assembly seats;
2. Gewog level registered voter population data and the proposed territorial extent of the National Assembly constituencies in each of the 20 Dzongkhags;
3. Village level registered voter population data and the proposed territorial extent of the Gewog Tshogde constituencies for each of the Gewogs;
4. Proposed territorial extent of the constituencies of the Thromde Representatives for each Dzongkhag;
5. Thromde registered voter population data and the proposed territorial extent of the Thromde Tshogde constituencies for each Thromde; and
6. Detailed maps for the above with clear description of the boundary.

6. Delimitation Process

a. **Neutral and Non-Discriminating Process**

1. The delimiting process shall be a non-partisan activity.

2. All political parties shall refrain from attempting to distort the outcome of the delimitation exercise.
 3. The Delimitation Commission shall undertake public consultations in all Dzongkhags at public sittings in appropriate place or places.
 4. The Delimitation Commission shall consider all objections and suggestions, which may have been received by it before the date so specified.
- b. Preparation of the Draft Delimitation Plan
1. The use of computer and GIS software shall be applied in the delimitation process to ensure accuracy, efficiency and speed.
 2. The territorial constituencies shall be drawn by using the demographic, topographical, spatial and administrative digitized information and the GIS capability in the Royal Government and the use of computer software where appropriate.
 3. A draft delimitation plan will be prepared by designated members of the Delimitation Commission with technical support from relevant agencies.
 4. All agencies shall provide necessary information and support to the Delimitation Commission in the Delimitation exercise.
 5. An efficient coding system shall be adopted for the purposes of identification of the delimited constituencies and the polling areas.
- c. Review of the Draft Delimitation Proposal
1. The Delimitation Commission shall review the proposals submitted under sub-section (b) and issue the Draft Delimitation Proposal for public opinion.
- d. Consultation and Publicity
1. The Proposal shall be made public through the media to ensure that it is given the widest publicity.

2. The Proposal shall be discussed at public hearings in every Dzongkhag in order to provide opportunity for all interested and concerned members of the public to be heard in person.
 3. The Delimitation Commission shall give the views and opinions so received its utmost consideration while not being bound by such opinions in arriving at the final Delimitation Orders.
- e. Revision of the Delimitation Proposal
1. The Delimitation Commission shall deliberate on all the suggestions and objections, and appropriate changes where necessary will be incorporated.
- f. Delimitation Orders
1. The Delimitation Orders for the National Assembly and Local Government constituencies shall be prepared and signed by the full Delimitation Commission and made public through the media.
 2. The Orders shall come into effect on the day they are signed by the Delimitation Commission.
 3. Copies of the Orders shall be transmitted to Parliament, respective Local Governments and to the Election Commission for information and appropriate action.
- 7. Methodology for Allocation of Seats and Delimitation of Parliamentary Constituencies**
- a. National Council Constituencies
1. The administrative boundaries of the 20 Dzongkhags shall serve as the boundaries for the National Council Constituencies.
 2. Each Dzongkhag shall return one member to the National Council.

b. National Assembly Constituencies

The National Assembly Constituencies shall be determined in the manner prescribed hereinafter.

1. Allocation of National Assembly Seats Among Dzongkhags

- i. The Delimitation Commission shall take a total of 10,000 registered voters as the standard size of a National Assembly constituency. However, no Dzongkhag shall be allocated less than two or more than seven National Assembly seats.

2. Delimitation of Constituencies Within Dzongkhag

- i. The National Assembly constituencies within a Dzongkhag shall be delimited based on the average registered voter population size of a National Assembly constituency in that Dzongkhag, calculated by dividing the total number of registered voters in that Dzongkhag by the number of National Assembly seats allocated to that Dzongkhag.

$$\begin{array}{l} \text{Average Registered Voter} \\ \text{Population Size of a} \\ \text{National Assembly} \\ \text{Constituency in a} \\ \text{Dzongkhag} \end{array} = \begin{array}{l} \text{Total Population of} \\ \text{that Dzongkhag} \\ \\ \hline \text{Number of} \\ \text{Constituencies} \\ \text{allocated to that} \\ \text{Dzongkhag} \end{array}$$

- ii. The territorial delimitation of the constituencies shall also take into consideration the other factors outlined under section 4 of these Rules.

8. Methodology for Allocation of Seats and Delimitation of Local Government Constituencies

a. Dzongkhag Tshogdu (DT)

1. Gup and Mangmi Constituencies

- i. The Gup and Mangmi shall be chosen by a Gewog through direct election.

- ii. The administrative boundary of the Gewog, as given at the time of conducting the delimitation exercise, shall form the boundary for the Gup and Mangmi Constituencies.
2. Constituencies of Thromde Representatives to DT
 - i. A Dzongkhag Tshogdu shall have one elected representative from that Dzongkhag Thromde and one elected representative from Dzongkhag Yenla Thromdes.
 - ii. The territorial constituencies for the Thromde representatives shall be as determined by the Delimitation Commission based on the provisions of section 4 of these Rules.
- b. Gewog Tshogde (GT)
 1. Each Gewog Tshogde (GT) shall have a minimum of 7 and maximum of 10 members, including the Gup and Mangmi.
 2. A Gewog shall have a minimum of 5 and a maximum of 8 Gewog Tshogde constituencies.
 3. The number of Gewog Tshogde constituencies in a Gewog shall be determined as per the following considerations:
 - i. Average National registered voter population size of a Gewog Tshogde Constituency, is determined by dividing the total registered voter population of the country by the average number of Gewog Tshogde constituencies and mathematically represented as follows:

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \text{Average Registered Voter} & & \text{Total Population of} \\ \text{Population Size of a} & & \text{that Dzongkhag} \\ \text{National Assembly} & = & \\ \text{Constituency in a} & & \text{Number of} \\ \text{Dzongkhag} & & \text{Constituencies} \\ & & \text{allocated to that} \\ & & \text{Dzongkhag} \end{array}$$

- ii. The number of Tshogpa Constituencies for a given Gewog Tshogde shall be determined by dividing the registered voter

population of a particular Gewog by the Average National registered voter population size of a Gewog Tshogde constituency.

- iii. For a Gewog, which as per the above formula, gets less than 5 Tshogpa seats, the number shall be enhanced to 5 and if more than 8, the total number of seats shall be controlled at the maximum of 8.
- iv. The number of the Tshogpas and delimited territorial constituency maps shall ultimately be determined after taking into consideration the factors given in section 4 of these Rules.

c. **Thromde Tshogpa Constituencies**

- 1. Each Thromde Tshogde shall have a minimum of 7 and maximum of 10 members, including the Thrompon.
- 2. Delimitation and election of the Thromde Tshogde shall be carried out for an urban area, in every Dzongkhag, declared as a Thromde by the competent authorities.
- 3. The size of Thromde Tshogde shall be decided as follows:
 - a. Thromdes with population less than 5,000 shall have 6 Tshogpa constituencies;
 - b. Thromdes with population between 5,001 and 7,500 shall have 7 Tshogpa constituencies;
 - c. Thromdes with population between 7,501 and 10,000 shall have 8 Tshogpa constituencies; and
 - d. Thromdes with population of more than 10,000 shall have 9 Tshogpa constituencies.
- 4. The number of Tshogpas and the delimitation of the Thromde Tshogde Tshogpa constituencies shall ultimately be determined after consideration of factors including:
 - i. The existing geographical areas in the Thromde as demarcated by the competent authorities; and

ii. Provided in section 4 of these Rules.

d. **Thrompon Constituencies**

1. The Thrompon shall be chosen through direct election by the Thromde.
2. The administrative boundary of the Thromde as defined by the laws made by Parliament and areas recognized as such at the time of conducting the delimitation exercise shall form the Thrompon Constituency.

9. Voting Areas and Polling Booths

- a. A territorial constituency shall be sub-divided into polling areas, referring to the geographic areas where all voters within the circumscribed territory are assigned to the same polling booth for the purpose of casting votes.
- b. The delimiting of voting areas must take into account the following criteria:
 1. **Size of the Voting Population**

To ensure that polling booths are accessible by voters for the purpose of casting their votes and are manageable, every polling site shall cater to a:

 - i. Minimum of 100 voters; and
 - ii. Maximum of 1000 voters.
 2. **Convenience and Accessibility for Voters**
 - i. A polling site shall be centrally located for ease of travel and access by every voter assigned to the polling station.
- c. The voting area and the location of Polling Booths must be clearly indicated in the Electoral Roll.
- d. Every Dzongkhag Electoral Officer shall, with the prior approval of the Election Commission, be responsible for providing adequate number of

polling stations for his constituency and informing voters, political parties, candidates and observers.

10. Implementation

a. Implementation

The Election Commission shall have the overall responsibility for conducting elections as per the seat allocation outlined in the Final Orders of the Delimitation Commission.

11. Review and Revision

- a. The delimitation of electoral constituencies shall be carried out after every ten years.

12. Offences in Relation to Delimitation

- a. Any person guilty of violation of any provision of these Rules and Regulations shall be dealt in accordance with the Election Act and other laws.

13. Power of the Commission to Issue Instructions and Directions

- a. The Commission may issue instructions and directions:
 - 1. For the clarification of any of the provisions of these Rules and Regulations;
 - 2. For the removal of any difficulty which may arise in relation to the implementation of any such provisions; and
 - 3. In relation to any matter with respect to the Delimitation of Electoral Constituencies, for which these Rules make insufficient provision, and clarification is necessary in the opinion of the Commission.

14. Authority of Interpretation and Amendment

- a. The Election Commission shall, in case of differences in meaning, be the final authority on interpretation of these Rules.

- b. The Election Commission shall have the power to amend by way of addition, variation, or repeal the provisions of these Rules.

Done under our hands and seal of the Election Commission of the Kingdom of Bhutan (ECB) on this...Day of the ...Month of the Year... corresponding to the...Day of the... Month of the ...Year in the Bhutanese calendar.

Election Commissioner

Election Commissioner

Chief Election Commissioner