

# Bhutan



## Project title

Participatory Conservation and Utilization of Rice Genetic Resources for Livelihood and Food Security in Bhutan

**Overall objective:** Promote Livelihood and Food Security of farming communities through participatory conservation, development and utilization of rice genetic resources

**Crops addressed:** Rice (*Oryza*)

## Main activities

- Participatory Varietal Selection and breeding of locally adapted rice varieties
- Promotion of *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation
- Reduction of the impact of varying rainfall pattern and drought on crop production
- Establishment of Community Seed Banks
- Protection of community water sources and development of management bylaws
- Diversification of cropping system
- Farmers' training

## Implementing institution

National Biodiversity Centre, Ministry of Agriculture and Forests, Royal Government of Bhutan

## Related website

[www.gnhc.gov.bt](http://www.gnhc.gov.bt)



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**THIS BSF PROJECT IS FOCUSED ON THE** poorest areas in Bhutan, where farmers are engaged in subsistence farming of lowland rain-fed and irrigated rice varieties: the provinces of Samtse, Samdrup Jongkhar and Monggar. This project aims at improving food security for these communities by providing access to diverse varieties of rice made available from the National Gene Bank, as well as through the selection in the field of best performing varieties. In addition, income generation will also be enhanced through value addition and marketing of local/traditional rice.

Our partners in Bhutan are implementing participatory selection of high yielding and locally adapted rice varieties, promoting sustainable management and conservation, and strengthening water source irrigation facilities. A baseline survey has been carried out to identify farmer's needs with regard to PGRFA, identify trends in the farming systems, the constraints faced by farmers and shape the project activities from a bottom up perspective. Farmers have already identified and selected a number of varieties of rice, maize, wheat and millet that demonstrate high yields and have the potential to improve their food security situation. In addition, our partners are sourcing and providing improved varieties for the Participatory Varietal Selection. This will, in the long run, broaden the rice genetic base and provide insurance against diseases and pests outbreaks.

A Biodiversity Fair has been organized to give farmers the opportunity to share, interact, exchange seeds and knowledge, and build on established good practices. More importantly, the fair provides the farmers an opportunity to showcase seed collections resulting from their selection and conservation practices.

A study visit to Community Seed Banks and on-farm conservation sites in Nepal has been organized by LI-BIRD, our executing partner for the BSF project in Nepal, to train and build capacity on Community Seed Bank management and further strengthen and up-scale Bhutanese Seed Banks.

***By the end of this project, food security of the target communities will be enhanced through access to high yielding rice varieties that have been tested and adapted to varying rainfall patterns and drought. Furthermore, it is envisaged that yields will be improved through proper seed selection, storage and rehabilitation, as well as the adoption of best cropping practices. In addition, a strong knowledge base will be created through capacity building, training and exchanging of experiences.***



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