On 21st October, the Natural Product Development Facility was inaugurated at the Dzedokha village, Logchena Gewog, Chhukha Dzongkhag. The objective of the establishment of the facility at the Dzedokha village is to promote enhancement of livelihood of the local communities of Dzedokha village through the production and marketing of Zhinor Balm and Liniment/massage oil developed using the essential oil of *Zingiber cassumunar* (locally known as Phacheng), grown by the people of Dzedokha. The facility houses an essential oil distillation machine which could be used to extract essential from other potential medicinal and aromatic plants and secure market for those oil.

*Zingiber cassumunar* (Phacheng) is valued for its medicinal value and it is known for its anti-inflammatory properties and locals in Dzedokha have always used it to cure joint pains. The knowledge of this plant was first discovered by the officials of the National Biodiversity Centre (NBC), Ministry of Agriculture and Forests in 2012.

**Background of the project**

In 2014, when NBC received a GEF-UNDP project funding for the implementation of the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) in Bhutan, Dzedokha was chosen as one of the pilot sites to implement ABS regime and harness the traditional knowledge associated with *Zingiber cassumunar*, and diversify the local livelihood. 

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The project helped to form a community-based group called Dzedokha Pacheng Detshen and engaged the group in trail cultivation of Zingiber cassumunar. They were trained in essential oil extraction and how to produce massage balm and liniment/massage oil using Zingiber cassumunar essential oil. After four years of research and cultivation trails, two products: Zhinor massage balm and Zhinor liniment oil were launched, and are currently sold in spa and wellness industries nationally and internationally by the community with a technical backstopping from NBC. In order to secure a better market for the products, a trademark certificate has been secured and products are marketed under the name of “Zhinor” which literally means zhidey-gi-norbu’. The organic certification has been also granted for the cultivation or organic zingiber.

Although the people in Dzedokha continued to rely on cardamom, ginger and oranges as their primary sources of income for many years, the orange yield dwindled significantly over the years due to citrus greening and the price for the cardamom and ginger has been very volatile and unstable. Now, they have Zingiber cassumunlar as a new source of income. Some farmer earns as high as 50000-80000 annually from the sale of Zingiber cassumunlar.

Further, in 2016, Dzedokha Pacheng Detshen with the
technical support from NBC, secured a project funding of USD 47500.00 from GEF-UNDP Small Grant Programme to continue building technical capacity of the people of Dzedokha as well as upscale the marketing of the Zhinor products. The project further helped to strengthen the capacity of the local community in essential oil extraction and production of massage balm and liniment oil using Zingiber cassumunar essential oil. A ‘Natural Product Development facility’ has been established in Dzedokha village mainly to engage local people of Dzedokha till the final stage of value chain of Zingiber, encourage local entrepreneurship and in the long run provide employment opportunities to unemployed youths.
The Facility will be operated as a social enterprise. The identified operators from the Dzedokha Phacheng Detshen has been extensively trained and are competent for the development of the Zhinor line of products. The facility will be handed over to the community group and the identified operators will operate the facility under the Access and Benefit Sharing Framework. The operators will buy the zingiber rhizome from the members of the community and extract the essential oil for the development of Zhinor products. The operators will share certain percentage of the proceeds from the sale of the products to the community group as a benefit to the community group.

In the long run, this initiative is expected to generate employment opportunities for the un-employed youths in the village as well as increased livelihood and strengthened community vitality.

**Zingiber cassumunar product summary**

**Zhinor Liniment Oil**

The lightly viscous natural liniment oil is derived through a perfect blending of pure organic Zingiber cassumunar EO with other natural oils.

While the liniment shares the same beneficial properties as that of the Zhinor massage balm, being in liquid form, it is more spreadable and absorbable, making it suitable as a massage oil where therapeutic effect is desired over a wider area of the body.

**Zhinor massage Balm**

With Zingiber cassumunar (locally known as Phachang) essential oil (EO) as its main active ingredient, our massage balm is developed from all natural ingredients. The Zingiber Cassumunar is known for its analgesic, anti-inflammatory, anti-spasmodic rejuvenating and has relaxing therapeutic properties.

This massage balm comes in two different sizes (big & small) to fulfill different customer needs.
Rationale behind the RNR marketing policy

• Enhance Bhutan's ability to commercially exploit its seasonal and agro-climatic comparative advantages in agriculture production in general and in some niche RNR products in particular.

• Enable RNR sector to play an important role as an engine of economic growth and development.

• Stimulate growth and employment opportunities in the rural sector which will slow down the rural-urban migration phenomenon.

• Augment the important and efficient role played by women in the RNR produce marketing,

• Enable small-holder farmers to contribute to household and national food security, social stability, and harmony, by participating in the RNR produce marketing,

• Transform from a primarily subsistence to a commercial and market orientated farming, leading to transformational growth and improvements in the rural economy in particular and the national economy in general.

Please submit your articles for RNR-Newsletter at communication@moaf.gov.bt

JOKES

There was this trucker, and he was on a run on day, and stopped into this diner for a bite to eat.

Well, he sits down at the counter, and the waitress comes over hands him a menu and a glass of water, and says "What'll ya have?" Well, the trucker says, "Ya got any chili?" The waitress says, "No, I just sold my last bowl to the guy sitting next to you."

So, the trucker looks over at the guy next to him, and notices that he looks like he's mostly finished with his meal 'cept for the bowl of chili sitting there on the counter.

So, the trucker asks the guy, "Hey, are you gonna eat that?" To which the man replied, "Naw, you go right ahead." So, the trucker starts eating the chili, which tasted mighty good to him.

Well, he got about halfway through with it, and sees a dead mouse laying at the bottom of the bowl.

UP COMES THE CHILI!!!! Right back into the bowl!! The guy next to him says," Yep, that's about as far as I got with it too!"
The Ministry's week

Bir Kulo Irrigation inaugurated at Somlachen village

His Excellency Lyonpo Lok Nath Sharma, Minister for Ministry of Economic Affairs today inaugurated the 2.1 km Bir Kulo Irrigation system, which was constructed by Department of Agriculture through Food Security & Agriculture Productivity Project (FSAPP). FSAPP is funded by Global Agriculture and Food Security Program (GAFSP) Trust Fund through the World Bank. It is a five years project which started in 2017-2018 fiscal year and will end on 30th December 2022.

Some of the key features of Bir Kulo irrigation system include:
Type: HDPE pipe-full length, 280mm diameter, Total pipe length: 2.1km, Total command area: 150 acres, Total Beneficiary Households: 53 and Total Cost: Nu. 17.5 million

4th Royal Highland Festival boost highland opportunities

The 4th Royal Highland Festival held at Langothang in Laya, located above 3800 masl attracted more than two thousand visitors providing them an opportunity to experience the yak based livelihood and unique nomadic culture.

The highlanders from Wangdue, Thimphu, Paro, Haa, Trongsa, Bumthang, Trashigang, Lhuentse, Trashiyangtse and Gasa also participated in the festival exhibiting their local yak products such as chugo, fermented cheese, bags, neck sleigh, rope and caps among others.

The festival was initiated in 2016 under the Royal Command of His Majesty The King to preserve the highland tradition and culture through the promotion of tourism and yak based industries.

World Food Day observed in Sakteng

The World Food Day is observed every year on 16 October to mark the foundation day of FAO since its inception in 1945. This year, the day in Bhutan was marked in Sakteng Lower Secondary School, Trashigang with School Agriculture Program (SAP) Annual awards. Around 1600 spectators including students, teachers, government officials, community leaders, farmers, parents and members of UN organizations gathered to mark the day with the global theme, ‘Our actions are our future, healthy diets for zero hunger world.’.

The day promoted worldwide awareness and action for those who suffer from hunger and for the need to ensure food security and nutritious diet for all.