



NATIONAL LAND COMMISSION SECRETARIAT
Royal Government of Bhutan

GUIDELINES ON PLOT BOUNDARY REALIGNMENT



PREPARED BY
Cadastral Information Division



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Acronyms

1. NLCS: National Land Commission Secretariat
2. LG: Local Government
3. SL: State Land
4. SRFL: State Reserved Forest Land


Forward

Land is a finite and vital national resource that underpins socio-economic development, environmental sustainability, and social harmony in Bhutan. With increasing development activities, infrastructure expansion, and the modernization of cadastral systems, issues related to irregular plot boundaries and land usability have become more pronounced, particularly following the National Cadastral Resurvey Programme (NCRP) and the issuance of new Lagthrams.

The *Guideline for Plot Boundary Realignment/Reconfiguration* has been developed to provide a clear, uniform, and legally grounded framework for addressing genuine plot boundary-related challenges faced by landowners and implementing agencies. Anchored in Section 33 of the Land Act of Bhutan 2007, the Guideline seeks to ensure consistency, transparency, and fairness in the assessment and approval of plot boundary realignment proposals, while safeguarding the interests of the State, communities, and individuals.

This Guideline establishes clear eligibility criteria, procedures, terms, and delegated authorities to facilitate efficient service delivery, improve the quality of cadastral data, and support orderly and sustainable land development. It also aims to minimize discretionary decision-making by providing standardized guidance to Local Governments and implementing officials across the country.

It is expected that this Guideline will serve as a practical reference for consistent implementation, enhance coordination between institutions, and contribute to improved land administration and governance in line with national development priorities.



(Tshering Gyaltshen Penjor)

Secretary

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1 Introduction

The NLCS and the LGs are grappling with numerous cases related to plot realignment post NCRP and after issuance of new Lagthram. The majority of such proposals come from rural areas where the plot shapes are not convenient for development purposes as the land in rural areas were mainly used for agricultural purposes in the past. In addition, the difficult terrain of the country makes it even more challenging to make optimum utilization of the available land for development purposes. Other compelling reasons for reconfiguration of plot boundaries include land affected by high tension electric structures, construction of roads and other public utilities, structures falling partially on state land etc.

The reconfiguration of such plot boundaries will provide an opportunity to improve the land, to facilitate improvement of the overall development plan which in turn will enhance the land value, ultimately improving the living standard of the people and creating social harmony. Furthermore, improving the cadastral plot shapes will improve the overall quality of the cadastre.

Till date, due to lack of a realignment guideline, the realignment proposals are studied on a case by case basis and are subject to individual judgment. Consequently, cases of similar nature are often treated differently and hence the decisions do not become consistent all the time.

Therefore, this guideline is developed in line with Section 33 of the Land Act of Bhutan 2007, which states that ***“The Commission Secretariat shall affect minor realignment in the boundary in order to minimize the number of points that need to be recorded. However, area shall remain the same”***, to address the plot reconfiguration/realignment issues.

2 Scope and Limitation

This guideline shall apply to all cases of plot boundary realignment/reconfiguration superseding any previous circulars and executive orders.

Here, realignment/reconfiguration means:

- I. Adjustment of common boundaries between two or more parcels;
- ii. Adjustment of parcel boundary with SL/SRFL

This guideline will not cover the case of value-based land adjustment and plot relocation.

3 Objectives

The main objective of this guideline is to define the qualifying criteria and a uniform procedure for plot boundary reconfiguration/realignment in order to deliver a fair and consistent service to all.

Apart from this, the general objectives are as following:

1. To provide a legal basis for the implementation
2. To improve the overall developmental plan
3. To streamline the realignment procedure
4. To correct technical errors
5. To improve the quality of the overall cadastre.
6. To reduce the number of plot boundary points required to be recorded in the cadastral database

4 Criteria

4.1 Plots affected by Public utilities

The plots affected by construction of public utilities such as water canals, drains and sewerage shall be considered for realignment if there is adjacent vacant state land for adjustment since the utilities are for public use.

4.2 Access Provision

Plots, especially in rural and unplanned areas, have access issues since there is no development plan. As per section 271 of Land Act 2007, a landowner has the right to pass through the surrounding plots if his/her land has no access to a public way or his/her other land. Therefore, plot realignment with adjacent vacant state land (if available) in order to provide an access road.

However, access related issues that result from intentional plot fragmentation or sub-division will not be eligible for realignment/reconfiguration.

4.3 Plots affected by high-tension cable pylons, transmission towers and electric substations (Power structures)

Plots affected by electric structures such as high-tension cable pylons, transmission towers and electric substations have development restrictions as per safety regulations of Electricity Regulatory Authority (ERA). While there is no provision for land exchange or satshab for such plots, realignment may be considered, only if the existing electrical structure directly affects or obstructs the construction of a house on the plot. A supporting letter from BPC confirming the existence of the electric structure with details of voltage and minimum setback requirements shall be submitted.

4.4 Plots affected by road

Plots affected by roads shall be considered for realignment from the adjacent state land in line with section 173 of the Road Act 2013 which allows re-adjustment of land affected by roads.

4.5 Plots partially falling in buffer zone (road, river, stream, water source etc)

Plots falling partially or entirely within buffer zones may be considered for special boundary realignment, if the affected plot is the landowner's sole holding, provided there is adjacent vacant state land available for adjustment and the minimum buffer defined by the relevant authority is maintained.

4.6 Structure partially falling on state land

Realignment proposals involving structures that partially encroach on state land shall be considered only for cases prior to 2017, when Khimsa demarcation was not mandatory. Any encroachment post 2017 will be subject to approval or may entail demolition or penalty.

However, overlaps resulting from verified technical errors may be exempted from penalties.

4.7 Not suitable for house construction

Realignment shall be considered only if the landowner's sole available land for house construction is narrow and irregular in shape. The area to be realigned must not exceed 25 decimals, regardless of the total size of the plot. The landowner must submit a valid construction approval issued by the competent authority. However, if the plot's irregular shape is a result of plot subdivision, realignment proposals will not be considered.

4.8 Realignment between Chhuzhing & Kamzhing

4.8.1 Realignment between Chhuzhing and Kamzhing

If the shape of a Kamzhing plot, adjacent to a Chhuzhing plot is such that the plot width is very narrow or the shape is meandering and not fit for development, realignment with the adjacent Chhuzhing plot may be considered, provided the realignment does not affect the use of Chhuzhing plot as well as other neighbouring Chhuzhing plots, if any. Or if the Chhuzhing plot is not used a Chhuzhing on ground.

4.8.2 Realignment of khimsa (converted from Chhuzhing) with parent Chhuzhing

When there is a minor overlap of structure on parent Chhuzhing due to errors during construction, minor realignment shall be considered.

5. Delegation of Power (DoP)

Realignment shall be approved at the division level. All realignment cases shall be endorsed by the local government.

6. Terms and Conditions.

- i. Pursuant to Section 33 of Land Act 2007, reconfiguration of plot boundaries shall not alter the Total Thram area of the participating parcels.
- ii. Reconfiguration shall not create trapped land.
- iii. Realignment of exchanged/substituted land shall not be allowed
- iv. Plot boundary realignment shall be allowed only for one time unless it is in the public interest
- v. All realignment proposals shall be routed through LG
- vi. Realignment should not affect the state, community and individuals (Zhung, Mang Gayer sum).
- vii. The realignment proposal shall include the documents specified in the annexure 1.
- viii. All the parties involved shall agree to the realignment.

- ix. In areas where plot realignment has been carried out, any trees or natural resources present shall remain the property of the State. The authority to extract, harvest, or utilize such resources shall be vested solely in duly authorized entities, such as NHDCL.

7. Procedure

The procedure for plot boundary realignment is as follows:

- i. The applicant shall submit a written application to the Dzongkhag/Thromde with valid reason for realignment.
- ii. The official shall verify the application and if it qualifies the criteria specified in section 4, shall make ground verification. If found genuine, they shall submit the proposal with all necessary documents to HQ for review and approval
- iii. Service fee shall be calculated as defined by this Guideline.
- iv. Survey shall be carried out in presence of land owners and LG and complete the survey report form.
- v. If approved, the changes shall be updated in the Cadastral Geo-database and new Lagthram shall be forwarded to Dzongkhag/Thromde.
- vi. Dzongkhag/Thromde shall replace the Lagthram and dispose of the old lagthram.

8. Service Fee Calculation

Section 315 of the Land Act 2007 empowers the Commission Secretariat to levy service fees and charges wherever relevant. Therefore, a minimal fee shall be collected for the plot realignment services. Since it involves field survey, the structure of cost calculation shall comprise of the following;

Sl. No	Details	Daily Wages	No. of days	Amount
1	DSA for Surveyor			
2	DSA for SFA			
3	DAS for Drivers (if applicable)			
4	DAS for LRO (if applicable)			
	Total			

***No charges shall be levied from the applicants for correction of technical errors as per Section 288 of Land Rules and Regulations of Kingdom of Bhutan 2007.

9. Annexure

Annexure 1: Checklist

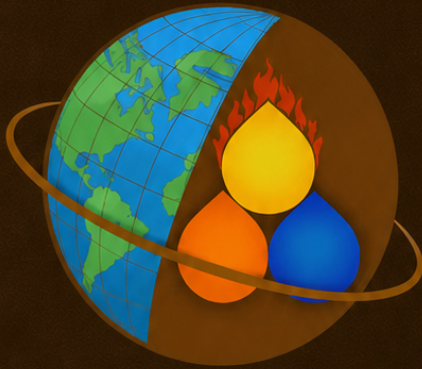
The realignment proposal shall include the following documents:

- i. A written application outlining the reasons for the boundary realignment, along with comments based on the findings of the verification team (PR form).
- ii. Completed service fee calculation form
- iii. A copy of the receipt for the fee collected.
- iv. All associated documents and technical files including the features cited as justification for realignment.
- v. Photos as supporting documents wherever necessary

Annexure 2: Application for Plot Boundary Realignment (PR Form)

Annexure 3: Service Fee Calculation Form

Annexure 4: Survey report form



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