

**STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE
For
Inter-Agency Forest Fire Coordination Group (IFFCG)**







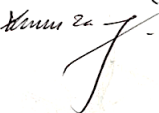



PARO DZONGKHAG

November 4, 2025



APPROVAL SHEET

IFFCG MEMBERS

AGENCY	NAME	DESIGNATION	SIGNATURE
Local Government	Mr. Gem Tshering	Dy DT Chairperson	
Royal Bhutan Army (RBA Commando Wing)	Col. Karma P Chopel	Wing Commander	 (Karma Phuntsho Chophyl) Colonel Commander
Royal Bhutan Police (RBP Division, Paro)	Col. Namgay Dorji	Superintendent of Police (SSP)	
De-Suung	Mr. Nim Tshemchey	Gojey	
Bhutan Power Cooperation (BPC)	Mr. Kuenzang Chopel	Manger	
Bhutan Telecom limited	Mr. Bikash Sharma	Manger	 Sr. Manager Bhutan Telecom Ltd. Paro
Tashi InfoComm Private Limited	Mr. Sha Bir Kharka	Manger	
Paro Dzongkhag Administration	Mr. Karma Chuendup	Asst.Dzongkhag Heath Officer	

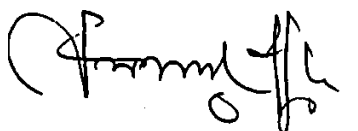
INCIDENT MANGER



Chief Forestry Officer

Divisional Forest Office, Paro

INCIDENT COMMANDER



DASHO DZONGDAG

Dzongkhag Administration, Paro

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1. Background

Forests, as a vital component of ecological wealth, play a crucial role in the socio-economic development and environmental well-being of the country. Recognizing their ecological significance, forest conservation has been prioritized, and robust policy frameworks have been established to protect these natural resources. The Constitution of the Kingdom underscores this commitment by mandating that at least 60 percent of the country's land area remain under forest cover. Thus, Article 5 of the Constitution of Bhutan states that *“Every Bhutanese is a trustee of the Kingdom's natural resources and environment and it is the fundamental duty of every citizen to contribute to the protection of the natural environment, conservation of the rich biodiversity of Bhutan”*. Currently, approximately 69.71 percent of the nation's geographical area is under the forest cover.

However, forests continue to face persistent threats from deforestation and degradation, driven by various factors such as forest pests and diseases, wildfires, rising demand for timber, and developmental activities. Among these, forest fires pose the most significant threat, challenging the Constitutional mandate to maintain 60 percent forest cover. The prevalence of coniferous forests, coupled with the country's steep and rugged terrain, makes effective fire suppression extremely difficult.

Paro Dzongkhag is no exception in the risk of forest. Paro Dzongkhag has 53.50 percent under forest cover out of which 37 percent is Fir, 26 percent Blue pine and 14 percent hemlock forest (Table 1).

Table 1. Percentage of forest cover

Forest type	Area_ha	%
Blue Pine Forest	17818.382	26
Cool Broadleaved Forest	2379.976	3
Evergreen Oak Forest	3354.066	5
Fir Forest	25283.166	37
Hemlock Forest	9483.453	14
Juniper Rhododendron Scrub	5612.448	8
Spruce Forest	4920.258	7
Total	68851.749	100

Due to its high coverage by conifer forests especially blue pine forest coupled with high land surface temperature and low rainfall in the valley, risk of forest fire is imminent and difficult to control.

The trend of forest fire has been increasing as per the record from 2018 to 2025 (Figure 1). Most of the forest fire have occurred in blue pine forests due to the high inflammability and proximity to the settlement (Figure 2).

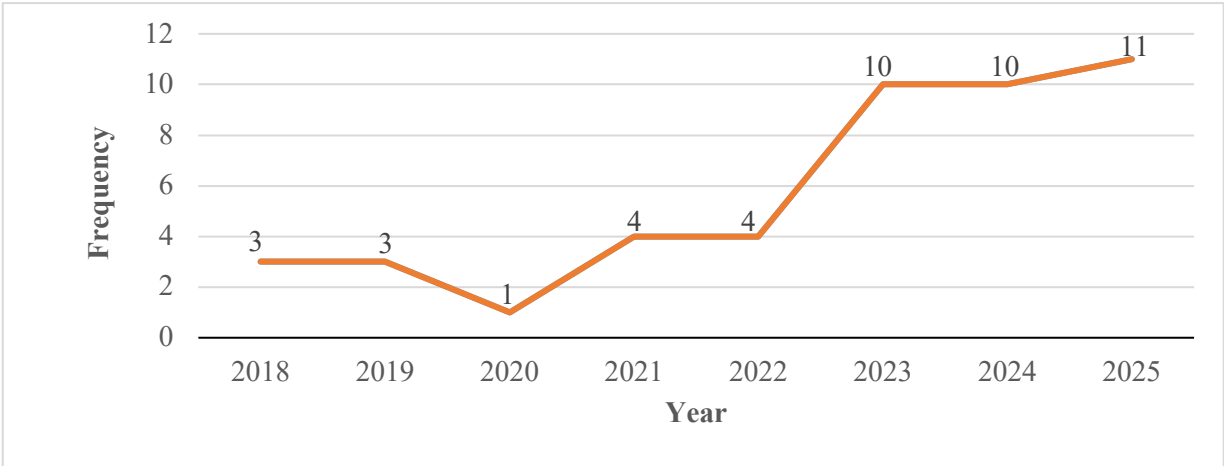


Figure 1. Trend of Forest fire from 2018 to 2025.

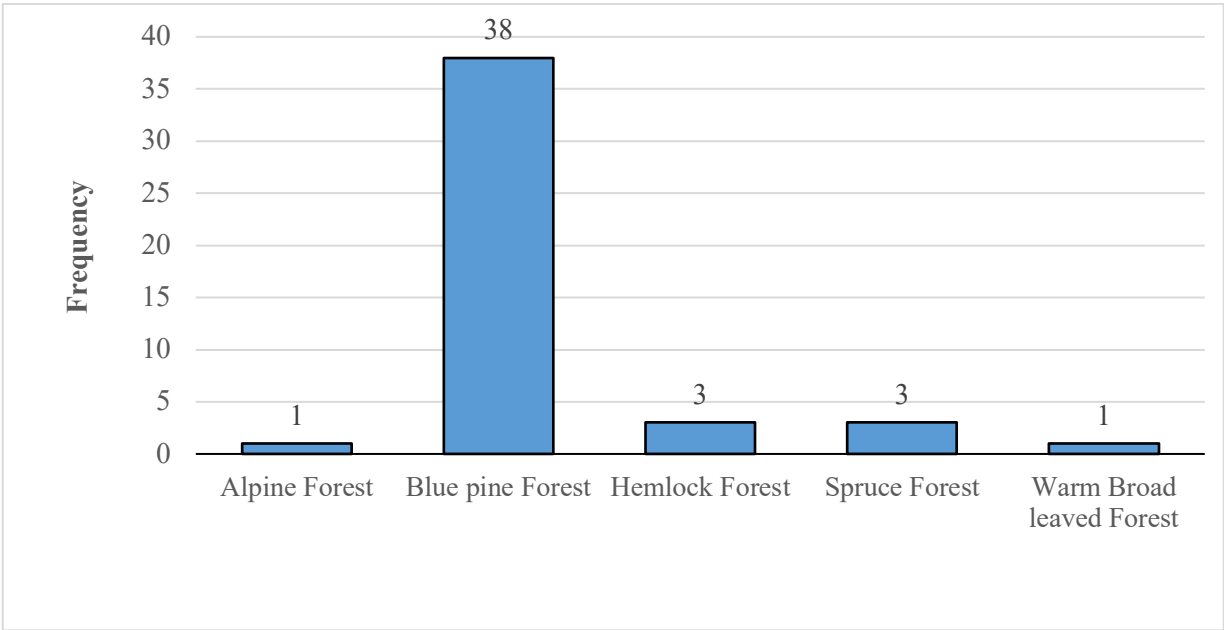


Figure 2. Forest fire frequency by forest types

In alignment with the Constitutional mandate that emphasizes the fundamental duty of every citizen to protect the natural environment, the Inter-Agency Forest

Fire Coordination Group (IFFCG) was first established in 2017 in Thimphu Dzongkhag. Thus, Paro Dzongkhag has developed this Standard Operating Procedure to foster collaboration among various agencies including local communities in forest fire prevention and suppression efforts in the Dzongkhag.

1.1. Objectives

The objectives of the SoP are:

- i. For better coordination among stake holders to prevent forest fire.
- ii. To enhance immediate response to forest fire and ensure the safety of firefighters.
- iii. To facilitate efficient coordination between stakeholders during forest fire incidents and optimal allocation of resources for all forest fire suppression activities.
- iv. To delineate roles and responsibilities for the IFFCG members.

1.2. Groups

The IFFCG shall have a Coordination Group and a Rapid Response Team.

i) Coordination Group

The Coordination Group shall discuss and plan to prevent forest fires, and also coordinate and mobilize manpower and resources at the time of forest fire depending on the severity of the incident. The group shall have a chat group in any of social media platform for discussions or information sharing at all times. The IFFCG shall make medical support team available if incase medical emergencies arise. The group shall conduct regular meetings to share experiences and plan way forward. The group shall comprise of the following members (Table 2).

Table 2. List of representatives for Coordination Group members

Sl. No.	Agency representatives	Responsibility	Contact Number
1	Dasho Dzungdag	Chairman	+975 17612095
2	Wing Commander, RBA, Shaba	Member	+975 77368016
3	Superintendent of Police, RBP	Member	+975 17632027
4	Chief Forestry Officer, DFO, Paro	Member secretary	+975 17939275
5	Gup, Dopshari Gewog	Member	+975 17919990
6	Gup, Dogar Gewog	Member	+975 17498712
7	Gup, Shaba Gewog	Member	+975 17684378
8	Gup, Lungnyi Gewog	Member	+975 17703795
9	Gup, Wangchang Gewog	Member	+975 17604834
10	Gup, Hungrel Gewog	Member	+97517508940
11	Gup, Doteng Gewog	Member	+975 17621763
12	Gup, Lamgong Gewog	Member	+97517606654
13	Gup, Tsento Gewog	Member	+975 17394376
14	Gup, Naja Gewog	Member	+975 17777363
17	De-suung coordinator	Member	+975 17551604
18	Manager, BPC	Member	+975 17118096
19	Manager, Bhutan Telecom	Member	+975 17128770
20	Manager, TashiCell InfoComm	Member	+975 77674675
21	ADHO, Dzongkhag Administration	Member	+975 17696064

Note: During the Interim Local Government period, the administrative officers shall assume membership responsibilities in place of the Gups.

ii) Rapid Response Team

The Rapid Response Team is formed for immediate response to forest fire incidence. The group shall attempt for immediate suppression of fire and update the situation to the Coordination Group for further support, if needed. The group shall also conduct preliminary investigation on cause of forest fire. The group shall comprise of officials from the following offices (Table 3).

Table 3. List of Rapid Response Team members

Sl. No.	Agency representatives	Contact Number
1	Divisional Forest Fire Focal (Team Leader)	+975 17696517
2	Dzongkhag Disaster Management Officer	+975 17997734
3	Officer Commanding, RBP	+975 17632027
4	Adjutant, RBA Shaba	+975 77368016
5	De-suung Gojey	+975 17551604
6	Range Officer, Paro Range	+975 17609567
7	Unit In-Charge, Zonglela FMU	+975 17465089
8	Unit In-Charge, Bitekha FMU	+975 17292999
8	Coordinator, Red Cross Society	+975 17613273
9	Mangmi, Dogar Gewog	+975 17831271
19	Mangmi, Doteng Gewog	+975 17630519
11	Mangmi, Dopshari Gewog	+975 17941817
12	Mangmi, Hungrel Gewog	+975 17381366
13	Mangmi, Lamgong Gewog	+975 17600041
14	Mangmi, Naja Gewog	+975 77626290
15	Mangmi, Lungnyi Gewog	+975 17657382
16	Mangmi, Shaba Gewog	+975 17660589
17	Mangmi, Tsento Gewog	+975 77411726
18	Mangmi, Wangchang Gewog	+975 77456480
19	BO, Dawakha Beat office	+975 17863585
20	BO, Tsento Beat Office	+975 17656247
21	Administrative Officers of the Gewogs	
22	BPC officials (Site In-charges)	
23	Tshogpas	

Three stages shall be followed to address the forest fire. They are forest fire prevention, forest fire suppression and post fire management.

2. Forest fire prevention

2.1. Capacity building

Considering safety concerns and requirement of effective command system, the Dzongkhag Administration and Divisional Forest Office shall plan and organize training on firefighting techniques, use of equipment handling and communication protocol, etc., for the Rapid Response Team members. The Divisional Forest office and Dzongkhag Administration will source fund for the trainings in collaboration with the DoFPS and Department of Local Governance and Disaster Management (DLGDM). In addition, the Divisional Forest Office will train Rapid Response Team and other stakeholders from member agencies and local communities on prescribed burning techniques and fireline creation.

2.2. Awareness programs

The Divisional Forest Office and Dzongkhag Administration shall create awareness on forest fire prevention through various media such as BBSC, local TV channels and social media regularly before the onset of the dry season. The Gewogs shall create awareness to local communities to refrain from debris burning, campfire and *sang* offerings in their respective Gewogs during dry season. The Gewog shall issue permit for agriculture debris burning where necessary and intimate to the Divisional Forest office.

The Divisional Forest office shall create awareness on forest fire prevention during meetings organized at the Gewogs and Dzongkhag in collaboration with Gups and DDMO.

2.3. Monitoring

The Bhutan Power Corporation (BPC) Limited shall monitor and clear right of way along the transmission lines between October and December to reduce risk of forest fire. The BPC shall also construct concrete bases and clear bushes around the transformers before the onset of dry season. The Divisional Forest Office, Paro, shall facilitate the removal of forest produce along the transmission lines that pose a risk of forest fire ignition. DFO, Paro and Gewogs shall regularly monitor any incidence of forest fire during the dry season especially around the settlements and lhakhangs. Local communities should also monitor regularly and

report any incidence of forest fire to the Gewog Administration or RBP for further action.

2.4. Infrastructures

The Dzongkhag and Gewogs shall plan and construct water reservoirs around lhakhangs and national monuments and cluster settlements, and mapped for use during fire emergencies. These water sources will support firefighting efforts through the deployment of fire engines, water pumps, and water bags in the event of a fire disaster. Community lhakhangs and private lhakhangs shall construct water reservoirs or ponds near their lhakhangs and the DFO and Gewogs shall monitor and report to the Dzongkhag Administration.

2.5. Creation and maintenance of fireline

Settlements and monuments located near forested areas are particularly vulnerable to the threat of forest fires, making the creation of fire lines a critical preventive measure. DFO Paro and Gewogs shall identify potential risk areas around national monuments and settlements to create fireline and reduce this risk of forest fire. Gewogs in collaboration with Dzongkhag administration shall plan and mobilize resources and man power, whereas, DFO, Paro shall provide technical support. Gewogs shall coordinate annual maintenance of fireline around the settlements and community lhakhang.

2.6. Tools and Equipment

The Dzongkhag Administration and Divisional Forest Office shall give priority for supply of personal protective equipment (PPEs) and tools for the Rapid Response team members. In addition, it shall be the responsibility of the member agencies to purchase equipment if there is fund provision or propose budget. The Divisional Forest Office shall also facilitate to supply of equipment depending on the availability of fund. Following are list of basic tools for rapid response teams (Table 4). The leader of response team for respective offices shall maintain the stock register and record of issue and ensure they are returned after the forest fire. The IFFCG members shall explore fund and procure firefighting tools and equipment for use by the fire fighters (Table 5).

Table 4. Personal protective equipment

Sl. No.	Name of equipment	Existing inventory	Requirement (nos.)
1	Mask (N95)	0	50
2	Gloves	0	50
3	Safety goggles	0	100
4	Helmet	5	100
5	Searchlight Torch	0	50
6	Water bottle	NA	0
7	Safety rope (4 metres)	0	0
8	Machete (<i>Patang</i>)	NA	0

Table 5. Firefighting tools and equipment

Sl. No.	Name of tools	Existing inventory	Requirement (nos.)
1	Backpack water pump	10	50
2	Rake	10	100
3	Shovel	0	20
4	Flappers	250	0
5	Collapsible water tank	0	2
6	Chainsaw of different size	1	5
7	Drone for fire monitoring and water transportation	2	2
8	Communication handsets	19	20
9	Water tanker (in areas accessible by road)	2	2
10	Portable water pump	2	5
11	Fire engine	5	2
12	Blowers	1	5
13	Spades	10	50
14	Drip torch	1	4

Note: Divisional Forest office, Paro have 2 drones for fire monitoring. 2 drone requirement is for water transportation.

2.7. Coordination meeting

The IFFCG coordination meeting shall be organized by the Divisional Forest office and Dzongkhag Administration at least twice in a year to address issues and plan way forward to strengthen the IFFCG.

3. Forest Fire Suppression

3.1. Communication and coordination during the forest fire

Effective communication is important to provide efficient and reliable information on the onset as well as during the incident to mobilize man power and resources. Therefore, IFFCG communication flow is important. On the first information of the forest fire incident, IFFCG members shall immediately communicate with each other and plan to deploy firefighters at an agreed strategic point. All IFFCG members are responsible for coordinating communication for their respective agencies and in the IFFCG.

3.2. Logistic coordination during the forest fire

The Dzongkhag Disaster Management Officer with advice from the Incident Commander and in coordination with the Divisional representative shall coordinate logistic during the forest fire suppression.

The Dasho Dzongdag shall be the overall Incident Commander of forest fire. In his absence, Dzongrab shall substitute as an Incident Commander.

3.3. Operational procedure for the forest fire incident management

On the first day of the incidence

1. Any member of the two groups getting the first hand information shall immediately inform both the Coordination Group and the Rapid Response Team through phone or Whatsapp group on the occurrence of a forest fire.
2. The Rapid Response Team led by the a representative from the Divisional Forest Office shall visit the forest fire site immediately for situation assessment and suppression by involving local people of the area without having to wait for the instruction from the Coordination Group (Figure 4). The Response team shall form a team to collect evidence on the occurrence of forest fire through a preliminary investigation.
3. The Divisional Forest Office will lead the investigation supported by the RBP on the cause of forest fire from the first day of forest fire incident for necessary action.
4. The Rapid Response Team led by Divisional Forest office shall report to the Coordination Group on the status of the fire and update on the requirement of manpower or resources.

5. The Coordination Group shall coordinate resource mobilization and wait for information from the Rapid Response Team.
6. If the fire is beyond control of the Rapid Response Team, the Rapid Response Team shall report to the Coordination Group. The Coordination Team will then mobilize additional manpower and resources (tankers, fire engine, etc) wherever accessible.
7. An Agency deploying manpower for fire fighting must send their people with necessary equipment in teams with a team leader. Each team from an agency must report to the Incident Commander or authorized representative at the indicated vantage point.

On the subsequent days

8. If the firefighting operation extends over more days, the Chief Forestry Officer or Divisional representative shall give the *Situation Report* to the Incident Commander in the Coordination Group and recommend for estimated number of manpower, resources required and deployment modality with time and indicate place of reporting at vantage points.
9. The Coordination Group members shall then mobilize the manpower and resources for the following days as per the recommendation.
10. The Dzongkhag Disaster Management Officer (DDMO) shall facilitate the arrangement of logistics for the firefighters. In the absence of the DDMO, the respective Gewog Administrative Officer shall coordinate these arrangements in consultation with the DDMO.
11. The firefighters must report at the indicated vantage point for briefing for the day on mentioned timing/ time.
12. The Incident Commander/authorized representative shall brief the firefighters on direction of firefighting, personal safety, team work, equipment handling, and place and time of reporting back in the evening.
13. In case of deployment of man power for night duty, concerned Gewogs shall nominate local communities in collaboration with RBP.

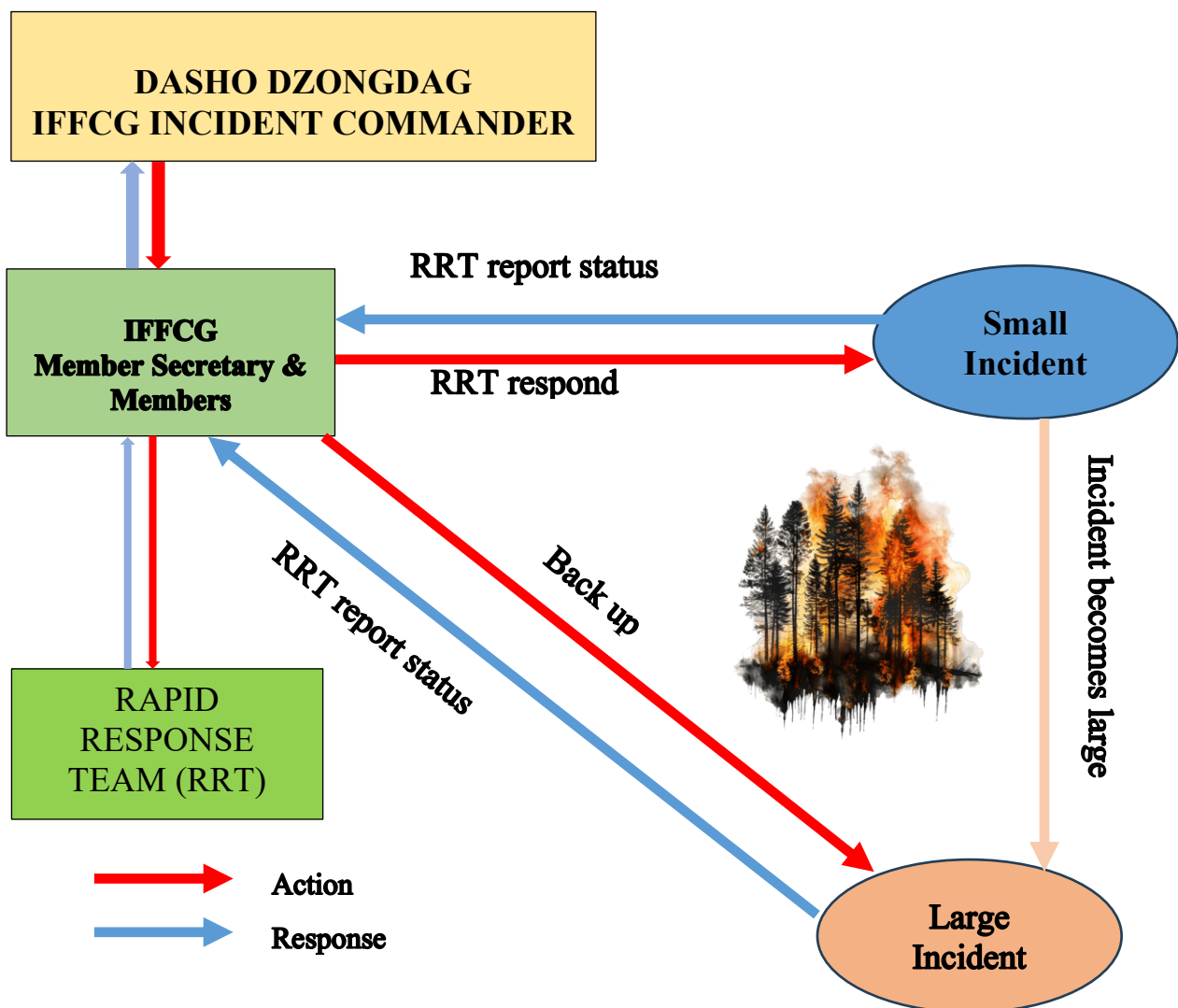
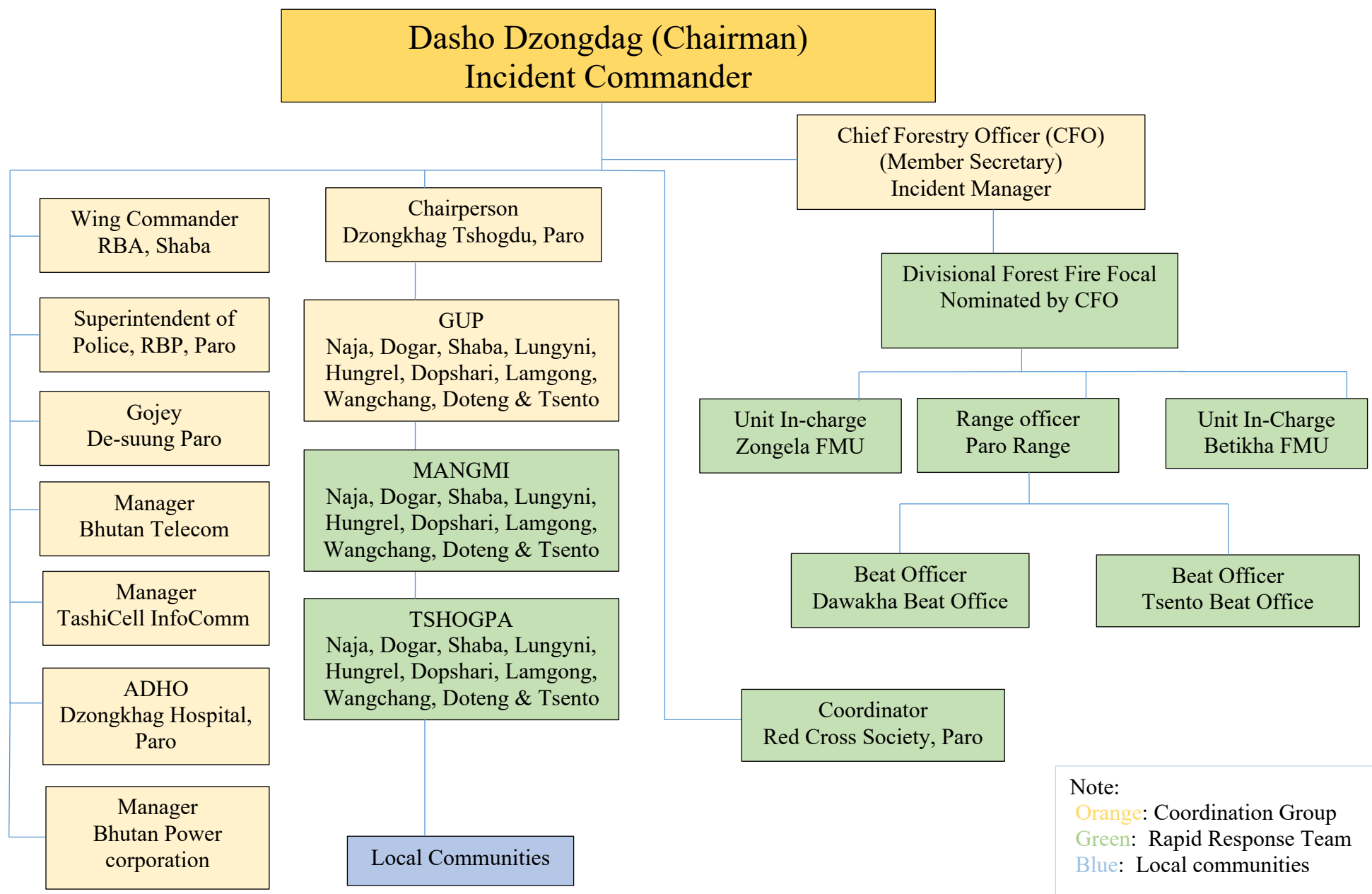


Figure 3. Incident coordination system during forest fire

4. Post fire action

The Divisional Forest Office shall assess the impact of forest fire and submit Forest Fire Report in a prescribed format to the DoFPS with a copy to the IFFCG. DFO, Paro along with RBP shall prepare detail investigation report and submit to coordination group. The Division shall appraise the Department for post fire management activities such as extraction of fire burnt trees and plantation.



List of participants who attended the 1st Consultation workshop

The consultation workshop was conducted on 09 June 2025 at Hotel Tenzinling, Paro

Sl. No	Name	Designation	Agency	Signature
1	Norbu Nangchuk	Dzongdag	PDA	
2	Col. Namgyal Dorji	SSB, Paro	NRP	
3	lt Col Jangdun Chopel	RNP, Paro	KBP	
4	Namgyal	CDO	DV and Fmt, Paro	
5	Sonam Tobgy	PRO	-	
6				
7	Kezang Jigme	SS. FR	ZEMU, PED	
8	Choden	Gr. FR	DIVISION HQ	
9	Phubs Thunley	Gr FR	Paro Range	
10	Arkesh Sharma	Manager	Bhutan Telecom	
11	Kunzang chopel	Manager	RSPC, Paro	
12	Sha Bir Kharka	Manager	Tashi Cell	
13	chenchi Gyeltshen	GUP	Tsero	
14	chendu	Manager	Doreng	
15	Jamphel Dorji	Manager	Naja - Gewog	
16	Singay Dorji	Capt (Cdo)	Cdo Wg: Shaba	
17	Nim Tshandhey	Desup DC	Desuung office	
18	Tshering Gaden	Desup DM	Desuung office	
19	Shera's Van	GUP	Lingrei	
20	Jangay Namga	GUP	Chetser	
21	Gyepo Tshering	GUP	Wangcham	
22	Jamtsab	GUP	Wu	
23	Namgyal	BRCS		
24	Leki Tshering	II		
25	zamgyal namgyal	II		
26	kenney namgyal	Manager	Pop-shedli	
27	Gem Thun	GUP	Lingrei	
28	Wangchuk Demu	DDMO	PDA	
29	Tshewang Rinzi	Reinforcement	QAR	
30	Roku Tshun	ME	Mumapsal	
31	Deki Uemo	Throude Nptab	LQ	
32				

List of participants who attended the 2nd Consultation workshop

IFFCG STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION AND ENDORSEMENT MEETING, DATED 04/11/2025

SL. NO	NAME	DESIGNATION	AGENCY	SIGNATURE
1	Norbu Wangchuk	Dzongdag	DAP	
2	Lam Gern Tshering	Gup	Lamgang	
3	Capt. Damcho Lham	(IO, RBP)	RBP	Tshangt.
4	Capt Tashi Nangyel		RBA	Tshangt. capt.
5	Yuden	Mangni	Hungrel.	Ref.
6	Gyelpo Tshering	(Gup) Wangchuk	Wangchey	Tshangt.
5	Tshendru	Mangni.	Dotey	Tshangt.
8	Nim Tshamchey	Det.	Desuung.	Tshangt.
9	Tshering Giden	Dai	"	Tshangt.
10	Tigme Choden	Desuung	"	Tshangt.
11	Phurb Tshintey	Paro Ranger	DOFPS	Tshangt.
12	Karans Chenshup	DOFO	Paro Dai	Tshangt.
12	Tshewang Norbu	EO	"	Tshangt.
14	Kanzong Chopel	Manager.	RPC	Tshangt.
15	Rinzin	Red Cross	Red Cross	Tshangt.
16	Karchung	Techn.	Tashidai	Tshangt.
17	Bikesh Shesma	Manager	telecom	Tshangt.
18	Jamtsho	uni	Gup	Tshangt.

19	kinley Wangmo	Mangni	Shari	Mingwangro.
20	Tempa Gyeltshen.	Mangni	Shaba.	Tshangt.
21	Thundru.	Mangni	Dotey.	Tshangt.
22	Lham Dagi	Forestry officer	DFD, Paro	Tshangt.
23	Wangchuk Denu.	DDMO.	PDA	Tshangt.
24	Cheten Zangmo	(DME)	DPA	Tshangt.
25	kinley Penjor	Gup	Dogew	Tshangt.

