

Only four make final cut

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Civil Society Organisation 27 April, 2010 - Four organisations, two related to women, a third on media and democracy and the fourth to promote entrepreneurship, are the first to get civil society organisation status after the CSO Act was passed in 2007.

The civil society organisation authority (CSOA), established in March last year, received 44 applications from organisations vying for CSO status, but only eight turned up after CSOA released the new rules and regulations under the CSO Act 2007 in January this year.

The four organisations, Bhutan centre of media and democracy, Loden foundation, Respect, Educate, Nurture and Empower Women (RENEW) and Bhutanese association of women entrepreneurs (BAOWE), qualified, but the other four were asked to resubmit their application with complete documents.

CSOA member secretary, Kinchho Norbu, said that organisations could resubmit their applications with documents in conformity with the newly drafted rules and regulations.

Kuensel spoke to a number of organizations, which had expressed interest in registering as a CSO earlier, on their status now. A number of them said that they had submitted the documents and were awaiting approval, while others said that they were still compiling the required documents. “The requirements were lengthy and complicated, which is why it’s taking time,” said one.

Others were unsure of their position as a CSO authority because they did not fall under any category under the rules and regulations, and said that they were in talks with the government.

Kinchho Norbu said that the rules and regulations were written in line with the CSO Act 2007. “We’ll provide technical assistance to organisations facing difficulties with the registration process,” he added.

The CSO rules and regulations 2010 says that “any society, foundation, charitable trust, non-profit organisation and other entities that are not part of the government and do not distribute any income or profits to their members, founders, donors, directors or trustees” are eligible to be registered under the CSO Act.

According to the rules and regulations, CSOs can be either a public benefit organisation, or a mutual benefit organisation.

A public benefit organisation can be established to protect human life and health, prevent and alleviate human suffering and poverty, disseminate knowledge and advance learning, develop the country economically and culturally, assist in the protection and promotion of national culture and heritage, protect the natural environment, and/or promote social harmony and Gross National Happiness.

By Dipika Chhetri