

# HAPPINESS

Development with Values



*“With changing times, we will confront new challenges, but if we pledge to work together in an intelligent, resourceful manner, we will overcome every difficulty.”*

*His Majesty the King*



## **BHUTAN’S MINDFULNESS CITY**

*Jigme Namgyel Super FabLab*

*Bhutan Innovation Forum*

## **DZONGKHA OR NOTHING –**

*One Language unites us all*

**CCAA – Protecting and Saving Consumers**

**NATIONAL LAND USE ZONING (NLUZ) – A Collaborative Effort**

**BHUTAN FOR LIFE –**  
*for all things Conservation – A Helping Hand*

**FOR THE TIGERS –**  
*A Billion Dollar Dream*

**BTL’s VoLTE benefits**

# HAPPINESS



Editorial - 3



**This Green Life - 33**

7. For the Tigers – a Billion Dollar Dream



**Under the GNH umbrella - 4**

1. Gelephu Mindfulness City
2. Dzongkha or Nothing – One Language unites us all
3. CCAA – Protecting and Saving Consumers
4. National Land Use Zoning (NLUZ) – A Collaborative Effort
5. BTL's VoLTE benefits
6. Bhutan for life- for all things Conservation – A Helping Hand



**Well-being - 37**

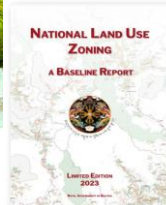
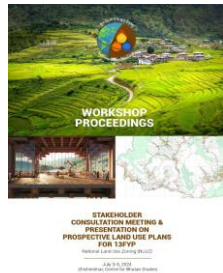
8. Happier mind, Healthier body



**Youth - 40**

9. Your Go-to Happiness Tools
10. Tips for feeling healthy Inside and Out

## Editorial



# Presence of Past in the Future

If you said that our sights are set on history. That would be correct, because we are, making history; as we live and breathe. We tread with nimble caution, for we want history to judge us kindly. As a nation, we are 'living' history. Sweeping changes are in the offing and the grand stage has already been set. Even as we speak, the sands of time are sifting commensurately to replay that moment in a future not too distant. There's a heavy presence of the past in the present. And the present looks promisingly at an optimistic and most promising future.

Some six decades ago we were virtually hidden from the world. Under a self-imposed isolation policy, as we chose not to buy into the 'way of the world' – the development game. When we did jump onto the bandwagon, we did it differently. GNH not GDP. Gross National Happiness not Gross National Product. Today, we are a proprietary blend of both. Brought along the age-old values across changing times and passing centuries. At the same time, we have metamorphosed. We wear a different look. We are us. But we are differently manifested avatars. We are upgraded, but we brought along what matters. What must be truly valued has always tagged along.

It was not the popular formula we banked upon, but it worked. We are here, and we are holding our own. And we are holding our own amidst giants, amongst the most formidably advanced and super developed nations. It's not a battle of winning races that we speak of here. It's more wholesomely about how a tiny dot on the world map quite audaciously and proudly established itself so strongly and uniquely that even the giants of giants took note to agree that we are 'Bhutan.' Same as no one and unique in itself.

So now, in a distant echo we can still clearly hear the voices afar. We pay heed to them. Respectfully. There's sage advice in them and guidance relevant to this day. But we move forward with the times.

There's also the matter of 'Identity' – which we haven't spoken of. Without identity, who are we? Really! On the world stage, it's everything that makes a Bhutanese- Bhutanese that sets us apart. We are so much a national language as we are a national dress. We are so much in the songs and dances as much as we are in the fluttering prayer flags and the hauntingly melodic Buddhist chants. And there's GNH – a nation whose ultimate goal is to pursue happiness and wellbeing for its people. A name and proof of identity does the trick for the individual. But that's identity singularly purposed for designated slots. The nation's sights are set on history, to make history. It's not being done for name... or a claim to fame. But sometimes, a big blast of recognition does help brighten and widen the spotlight on identity.

The Gelephu Mindfulness City (GMC) as the cognitive sum of all parts (past, present and future) assembled thus far is the visionary end goal, coming full circle.

The pages of this edition unsurprisingly heed to every aspect in which the visionary GMC is braced to play out as – Bhutan Innovation Forum (DHI); the Dzongkha language (DCDD, MoHA); consumer protection and education (CCAA, MoICE); National Land Use Zoning (NLCS); Bhutan For Life; Sustainable Finance for Tiger Landscapes Conference.



The GMC or Gelephu Mindfulness City is a Special Administrative Region or SAR; to be established as a vibrant economic hub for Bhutan. Like other SARs that have made their debut globally, Bhutan's too shall possess the salient features they do such as – invite foreign investment by providing an environment conducive for business with compelling incentives; and have autonomy to formulate laws and policies that are needed –executive autonomy and legal independence.

**Same, same but different:** Unlike the SARs of the world though, Bhutan's will be one-of-a-kind, anchored on the vision and values of GNH. It will be a Mindfulness City, encompassing conscious and sustainable businesses, inspired by Buddhist spiritual heritage, and distinguished by the uniqueness of the Bhutanese identity. All businesses will be based on invitation, and those selected would be the ones that are most beneficial for Bhutan and its people. While the project is implemented in Gelephu, people in all dzongkhags shall enjoy the economic benefits.

**Priority sectors:** Three immediate priority areas that supports the GMC are: Energy, Connectivity and Skills. The country must expand its energy sector and tap all available sources such as solar, wind, thermal and hydropower. Efficient and reliable connectivity is critical. In that construction of the international airport in Gelephu is foremost. The Government of India has

expressed its commitment to improve and expand the major roads leading to Bhutan and connect two or three border towns with railway lines. Digital infrastructure and digital connectivity is equally important and so the country has to improve its digital infrastructure and mobile, internet and satellite connectivity.

**Nation's growing digital environment is an advantage:** Bhutan continues to demonstrate a growing digital ecosystem and a growing centrality in its global digital future. One of the most significant signs of Bhutan's growing centrality in the global digital future was its role as host of the FAB23 conference on 'Designing Resilient Futures'. The conference built on Bhutan's existing experience in innovation and fabrication evident in the foundation of its Super FabLab, the Jigme Namgyel Wangchuck Super FabLab, the second ever Super FabLab outside of the United States.

The conference foreshadowed the thrilling possibilities of Bhutan NDI and Bhutan's bold move to own its digital future. The Druk Holding and Investments (DHI) unveiled its latest venture on the blockchain-based Sandbox metaverse, the 'Bhutanverse', during the conference. These ventures are meant to create an immersive digital experience that allow users to explore Bhutan's rich culture, history, and geography from anywhere in the world.



# THE JIGME NAMGYEL SUPER FABLAB

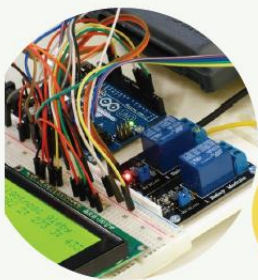


The Jigme Namgyel Wangchuck Super FabLab (JNWSFL) is an open platform for learning and innovation; a place to play, learn, mentor, collaborate, and create. The DHI in collaboration with the Bhutan Foundation, USA and the Center of Bits and Atoms (CBA) from Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Cambridge, USA, established the first-ever Super Fab Lab (SFL) in Bhutan. This facility is the second of its kind, outside of the United States, and fourth in the world, with advanced capabilities in research and prototyping. The space will impart an open platform for digital design, fabrication, and innovation with the latest machines and tools, allowing users to make (almost) anything.



**VISION:** Inspire the future of learning and creating  
**MISSION:** Provide digital design tools to ignite a culture of innovation  
**OBJECTIVES:** Through its resources, global support, and local partnerships, SFL will aspire to:

- Build a community of makers and innovators.
- Become a go-to platform for digital fabrication and rapid prototyping in the region.
- Run programs collaboratively with external stakeholders, all designed around SFL's focus areas and dynamic list of impact themes.
- Conduct research and development both in-house and collaboratively.
- Build machines for distribution to support the establishment of more labs in the country.
- Provide a platform for startups and entrepreneurs to build and incubate their products, and assist them in launching and commercializing.



**Mission**

Provide digital design tools to ignite a culture of innovation



- Learn
- Collaborate
- Create

**VISION**

Inspire the future of learning and creating





## FACILITIES OF THE LAB

**Infrastructure:** Super FabLab is located at TechPark, Thimphu, with a total flooring area of 715.765 m<sup>2</sup>. The space has been designed to create a happy, open, productive, and welcoming environment. The open plan and many common spaces encourage collaborative collisions and ideation.

The lobby has an ideation corner for everyone's use. The facility consists of 4 labs (electronics, carpentry, welding and heaving machinery), a training room and a conference room with a capacity of about 20 people. The Lab also consists of a self-serving cafeteria and a sauna room for recreational purposes. The surrounding areas will be reconstructed to create an outdoor space for users and to create an environment of collaboration and gathering.

The SFL will have a facial recognition system for entry into the lab for security purposes and to facilitate ease of check-in. This will ensure that only approved people with the right training enter the lab during off-hours. The lobby will have self-guiding instructions and lab information. A cozy lounge with a small library will be in the corner.

**Lab Capabilities:** 3D printing; CNC-Milling; Circuit production; Laser; Precision milling; Vinyl cutting

**Links:** <https://jnwbhutansuperfablab.bt/>;  
<https://innotech.dhi.bt/>

## MAKERS PROGRAM

This program at the JNWSFL is co-created with educators, hackers and makers, and stakeholders with the aim of incorporating digital fabrication in education system. It focuses on developing interest in STEM and providing students with an applied learning platform to enable further exploration of interests and knowledge. Some of the Makers Programs in ideation are: Programming Electronic design and fabrication Design thinking and creating Prototyping Digital Fabrication Use of machine and Machining programs.

The space at the Super FabLab provides an open platform for digital design, fabrication, and innovation with the latest machines and tools, allowing users to make (almost) anything.

## VISIT THE SUPER FABLAB BECOME A MEMBER

The JNW Super FabLab is open 9 to 5 pm from Monday to Friday. Visitors can also book a visit on the Super FabLab's website [jnwbhutansuperfablab.bt](http://jnwbhutansuperfablab.bt)

The JNWSFL Booking System makes it convenient for anyone to book machines and other services. As a member, you can use the system to book directly. If there are any specific requirements, contact the JNWSFL team directly. Non-members can contact the JNWSFL team directly for a one-time booking.

The Super FabLab offers four membership tiers, designed to fit various interests and roles.

**JNWSFL Youth:** Exclusively for students, this membership offers access to basic machines along with comprehensive training.

**JNWSFL Open:** Open to the public, it grants makers and hobbyists access to basic and intermediate machines. Members can bring their families to explore the lab's technologies and possibilities.

**JNWSFL Creator:** Tailored for startups and entrepreneurs, it provides a space and community for prototyping ideas. Members are granted access to basic and intermediate machines. Guidance and tools are available to transform concepts into prototypes, and eventually marketable products.

**JNWSFL Business:** Designed for companies and agencies in need of research and prototyping resources. It offers access to all lab machines, resources and necessary support.

## Membership amenities

Free use: of ideation area and training room; of computer and installed software; of coffee machines, printers, and refrigerators; WiFi with high-speed internet; Access to resources created by JNWSFL: user guides tutorials and JNWSFL Library; Newsletters on upcoming events and invites; Free service on all the machines; Free access to all the equipment and machines within the lab after training.

Non-members will be charged a higher rate. Priority will be given to members.



## ABOUT THE UPCOMING BHUTAN INNOVATION FORUM

A first of its kind, the Bhutan Innovation Forum will bring together the world’s most eminent thought-leaders, innovators, entrepreneurs, artists, philosophers, scientists, philanthropists, and investors to help realize His Majesty’s vision for building the world’s first Mindfulness City in Bhutan. Guided by a shared commitment to mindfulness, innovation, and sustainability, the Forum will serve as an incubator of innovations in digital technology, ecology and environment, education, health, urban planning, economic transformation and aesthetic appreciation in Bhutan and beyond.

The three-day gathering (01 October-03 October, 2024) of the leading minds in the tranquility of the Himalayas will deliberate on why mindfulness is critical for stimulating innovation, how innovation can foster entrepreneurship and when and how entrepreneurs promote sustainability. The Forum will set the stage for a new pathway of development for Bhutan and the world, ensuring equity, well-being and happiness for all.

The Forum will serve as a platform for investors, entrepreneurs and digital nomads to explore tech startups and other business opportunities in Bhutan,

leveraging its green ecosystem and creating jobs and value aligned with its commitments to economic, social and environmental sustainability.

Nobel Laureate economist Joseph Stiglitz said of the Forum: “The Forum has the potential to transform society’s most important kind of ‘endowment’ —our collective learning capabilities. The Bhutan Innovation Forum will set the dynamics for building human capital and creating a learning society, while upholding its commitments to mindfulness and societal well-being.”

**NOTE:** *The next edition of Happiness (vol.8 issue 3) will feature continued coverage on the topic.*

### References:

<https://www.fablabs.io/labs/JNWSuperFabLab/>;  
*Bhutan NDI; Kuenselonline (Translation of His Majesty’s Speech 116th National Day)*

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DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE AND DZONGKHA DEVELOPMENT

MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS



# DZONGKHA OR NOTHING – One Language unites us all

... Else we are just a babel of tongues

It is the age of plenty and there just seems to be an excessive amount of everything out there. Consumerism is at an all-time high; it is 'produce, produce, produce & consume, consume, consume,' round the clock, every hour, every day. It is the age of information; and there is a bombardment of it on our senses. But is all that excess really helping any of us, as in adding to our overall wellbeing. The intelligibly prudent mind shall come out unscathed in this scenario of chaotic confusion. However, the 'intelligibly prudent mind' is becoming ever the rarer phenomenon to spot.

In the realm of nationhood, things that continue to matter through any and all ages, such as those elements that have a timeless appeal to them like culture, tradition, national identity and language – they will continue to bear that weighty responsibility of awarding nations its nationhood and people their nationality. The role of preserving and hailing them to

perpetual relevance and effectiveness rests with people and therein also opens up the pitfalls to the winds of change.

Change in itself is an inevitable phenomenon and not really a bad thing, if the positive aspects are accepted. We continue to see virtue in seeing the world becoming a "global village." Heartiest emotions are on play when we see places/regions become a "melting pot" of culture, traditions and languages. It's a matter of pride and it's a win for humanity to witness borders disappearing and people demonstrating the ability for the most peaceful and exemplary harmonious coexistence.

But then; there's also the matter of drawing borders, respecting them or enforcing them, preserving and promoting cultural identities and languages – all for reasons founded on very, very valid points that are



very, very well-grounded and legitimately in touch with realities of the times.

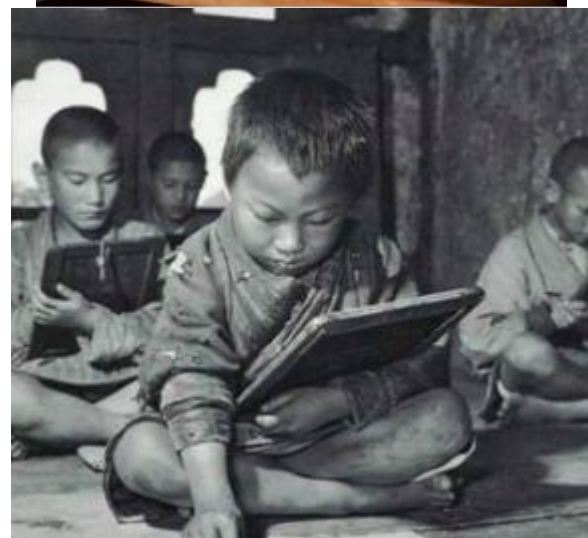
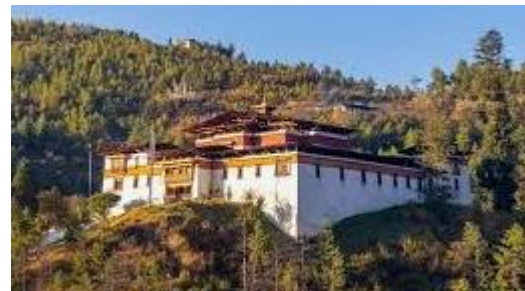
All these takes us back to where we started speaking above. Consumerism will continue to flourish, the bane or blessings of the information age will continually proliferate, and globalization shall continue to have its place in the sun, joyously creating those 'melting pots.' Identity, however will never stop being the most relevantly valuable characteristic for an individual or for a nation.

Identity can be worn, it is a recipe as much as it is a poem. It is in songs and dances, and it is in dramas, plays and skits, and movies. But it is most strongly expressed in writings and continually documented history. And nothing stands to do it better than employing the use of language.

## Dzongkha – our intangible homeland

Language is not the most uniquely defining characteristic of nationhood; or so it is generally understood. But Bhutan does it better than most. And Bhutan does it because it has to. It really actually must hail to lasting consequences its unique national identity more so than most other nations in the world. Language, therefore holds the most prized and prioritised portfolio for this tiny landlocked nation holding its own, between two of the most populous Asian nations in the world. On the world map we are literally a dot. We must 'stand out' or else simply get mashed and blended under the giant wheels of globalisation. The spotlight is on Dzongkha, our national language. What works for other nations will not do so for Bhutan; because we are different.

Look at all the countries in the world – each one is a giant amalgam of multiple languages. And yet they are individually different nations bearing different names, separated by geography and delineated by national borders. As a small landlocked Himalayan nation with barely 800,000 population, we cannot afford to head in that direction. Culture is Bhutan's most bankable strongpoint to set itself apart from other countries and cultures. And of that; Dzongkha its national language may just yet be the most important distinguishing element. All the elements that give a nation character, a unique identity; such as culture, traditions, they are in the end counting on that one 'national' language that gives it satisfactory interpretation and more effective value in preservation through communication.



Dzongkha as the national language, is emblematic of centuries of culture. It is endowed with weighty history; of the struggles surmounted and victories won. It is instantly representative of the progressive evolution of the country from the days of yore to this present day where we stand. The importance of the national language in awarding a unique identity to each one of us as 'Bhutanese,' – it is not to be trifled with. On the world stage, who are we, if not distinctly distinguished from a sea of 'others' as 'Bhutanese.'

*Bhutan is one nation. In comparison to most nations on our planet, Bhutan is one of the oldest nation states. Bhutan was a nation state long before Germany, Italy, India, the United States, Indonesia, Norway and most other countries emerged as nation states. As a nation, Bhutan has solid historical credentials. The Bhutanese people have experienced a sense of national identity for centuries more than people of most nationalities which are recognised in the world today. Whatever makes up national identity, Bhutan has a lot of it. Bhutan's national identity is grounded in a shared history and culture. Bhutan is one of the world's oldest and best-established nation states with a well-defined national identity. Language is extremely important to its national identity.*



*Dr George van Driem (PhD) of the University of Bern. He wrote the grammar of Dzongkha and is one of the first founders of the Himalayan Language Symposium*



**The Third Druk Gyalpo declared Dzongkha the national language of Bhutan when the country joined the United Nations in 1971. In 1993, His Majesty The Fourth Druk Gyalpo, recognising the importance of preserving and promoting the national language, issued a Royal Decree mandating that all government offices draft their plans and policies in Dzongkha**

## **Dzongkha – Here and now, always to stay**

The Bhutan of today is a picture of everything that, old Bhutan has planned and sought after. Progressive development has ushered in reforms and benefits in various spheres of agriculture, health, education, technology, transport etc. But, they don't call it 'the good old days' just like that. Modern Bhutan some say is witnessing certain challenges in increasing/maintaining popular usage of Dzongkha. The situation is being viewed from multiple windows.

Each of the many views seem to hold water in their own mannerism or rights. All in essence, the message is that Dzongkha isn't winning the popularity contest with the overwhelming majority with which it should. General public opinion too has inclined toward saying more needs to be done to promote Dzongkha. The recent trend of Bhutanese raising families in foreign countries have also sparked some thoughts on the fate of the national language.

Now the national language whose very mention and utterance is heavily symbolical of rich history and lasting cultural values is not a contest. It's the



### In the Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan

**“Dzongkha is the national language of Bhutan” – Article 1, Section 8**

**““language” and “literature” are to be preserved, safeguarded, and promoted in addition to the other forms of cultural heritage that Bhutan has” – Article 4 Section 1**



Bhutanese way of life. Dzongkha experts and linguists, researchers etc. they have substantiated how subjective the so-called popular views on Dzongkha is and has been. Important point to note is that, regardless of the voices or the opinions – Dzongkha is in prominent rotation, it is as important today as it was five, and six decades ago.

Now why are we able to say that? Because in another reality, it is being said Dzongkha has never enjoyed more popularity than now. This view stems from the visible usage of the national language in popular songs composed and sung by young artists which in turn has influenced a fan following of dedicated listeners nationwide. That’s definitely a one-up for Dzongkha as youth in sheer numbers fancy and romanticise their national language and popularize it not just among themselves and in the country, but even to the global audience outside as they hone their talents online and harness the power of digital new age media to broadcast to as big an audience as possible.

Dzongkha also is the official language in Parliamentary sessions and deliberations. The national level debates among individuals/aspiring candidates are held in Dzongkha owing to which there has been an all out sincere effort and renewed interest to master the language in all its eloquent best. Dzongkha is the national language. This has been time and again reaffirmed and announced.

### **The solid support base for Dzongkha**

The Third Druk Gyalpo declared Dzongkha the national language of Bhutan when the country joined the United Nations in 1971. In 1993, His Majesty The Fourth Druk Gyalpo, recognising the importance of preserving and promoting the national language, issued a Royal Decree mandating that all government offices draft their plans and policies in Dzongkha. The importance of Dzongkha cannot be overstated. But it is stated and reiterated from time to time.

**Prime Minister’s Executive Order:** Prime Minister Tshering Tobgay issued an executive order in June this year directing all government meetings and official correspondences be conducted in Dzongkha. The order also requires translation services or translated documents for foreigners attending meetings. The directive emphasises the urgent need to promote the national language. Past governments have also issued several executive orders mandating the use of Dzongkha for all official purposes.



“The responsibility to promote Dzongkha is not limited to a specific agency; rather, it calls upon all citizens to unite in recognising and championing the national language,” states the executive order.



**13th Five Year Plan:** The government is scheduled to spend Nu 12 billion in the 13th Five Year Plan for Socio-cultural Resilience and Community Vitality Program. In that efforts to uphold and promote Bhutan’s intangible cultural

heritage will include the digitisation of cultural and religious events, creation of an environment that is conducive for custodians of spiritual heritage, and engagement of the younger generation in local culture and language through digital technology.

The 13th Five Year Plan document (draft) highlights that besides cultural diversity and community vitality indices, cultural participation and Driglam Namzha (etiquette) indices have dropped over the years. The current Five Year Plan awards huge importance to Bhutanese identity and cultural heritage in strengthening community vitality and promoting cooperation and wellbeing. The Plan document states it is a cause for concern that the sense of belonging to local communities among Bhutanese has decreased and there’s a decline of customary institutions such as community self-help practices and social support networks.

The government’s allocation of Nu 12bn aims not only to strengthen community vitality but preserve and promote culture while enhancing overall social well-being. The Plan document also highlights the majority number of youth among the rising number of Bhutanese, living abroad for long periods could lead to disconnect from Bhutanese identity, values, and culture, causing their erosion.

**Identity can be worn; it is a recipe as much as it is a poem. It is in songs and dances, and it is in dramas, plays and skits, and movies. But it is most effectively expressed with speech, the spoken word; it is most strongly expressed in writings and continually documented history. And nothing stands to do it better than employing the use of Dzongkha language. Speak it, write it, teach it, sing it, dance to it. Dzongkha is our intangible heartland, our homeland. When nothing connects Dzongkha shall bring hearts and minds together.**

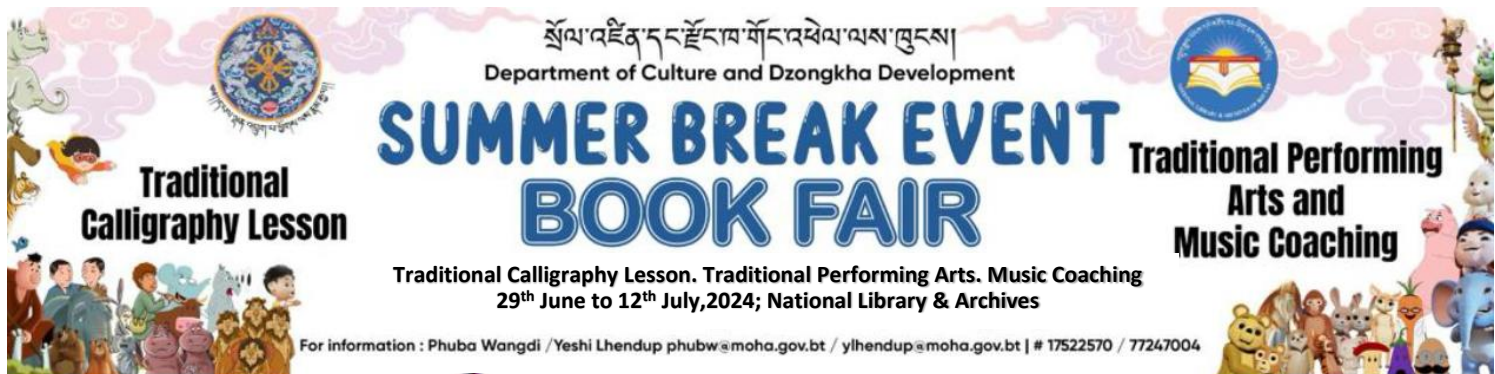


**Dzongkha is fine, we are fine & the nation is fine**

All things considered, and looking at things for how they truly are; the debate around the so-called survivability, popularity, and longevity of Dzongkha may just be a healthy buzz for the nation and its national language. Perhaps we could go as far to say: it stokes the fire in Dzongkha... and keeps it burning.

The entire situation is sometimes, one might say, akin to the story of the rabbit living in fear that the sky might fall on its head at any time. The sky never falls, but meanwhile the rabbit gets a lot done in preparatory and remedial tasks to meet that unforeseen fate should it really come to pass.

**References and pictures: BBS; Kuenselonline; Language & Identity in Bhutan-George Van Driem**



**Main Objective**

The Department of Culture & Dzongkha Development (DCDD) in line with the aims and objectives of the 13th Plan “Engaging younger generation as the custodian for culture and Dzongkha” has organized two weeks Summer Break Event for the youth with various programs to experience and learn Cultural Heritage elements, engage in reading and writing habits and also opportunity for the book vendors and readers to sell and grab a hold of book to their likeness.

**Traditional Calligraphy**

The art of traditional calligraphy is on the verge of declining due to advancement of technology esp. computers, laptops and tablets with keyboards and beautiful fonts readily available to be installed and easily be used and to be printed as desired. With sole intention to preserve, impart, experience and learn the skill by youths, such opportunity provided was one of the planned activities for students as well as interested



participants during the summer break program. The lessons/program in traditional calligraphy is in posterity’s favor as the students learn and gain experience, and later hone their skills in preservation and promotion of traditional calligraphy art and its usage in contemporary arts. This contributes in a positive way for the nation’s age-old traditional calligraphy to sustain some form of continuity and thereby keep its declination at bay.

**Performing Arts & Music**



As part of traditional performing arts and music coaching, students experiences and learns a range of traditional performances such as; *Zhungdra* (Classical folk dance) and *Boedra* (Folk dance) and *Gar-cham* (mask dances). Besides, lessons on various traditional musical instruments so called *Nyan-cha* which includes *yang-chen* (Dulcimer), *Dram-nyan* (Lute), *Pye-wang* (Fiddle) has also been provided. The experience and lessons gained especially by the selected students from the Thimphu Thromde schools will facilitate the education of other students and contribute to the preservation and promotion of culture in their respective schools.



**Creating Cultural Hub**

Organising such multi-programs on Cultural Heritage themes aims in transforming the DCDD premises to a center of Cultural and Language Learning and information sharing hub where youths and interested Bhutaneses without age or gender limitations and even people with disabilities can avail knowledge, wisdom, information and lesson free of cost in making youths as the custodian of our heritage. Moreover, the institution will provide free tutorials to the students of Thimphu Thromde to promote the national language *Dzongkha* by the Dzongkha language experts of the department from morning 9am to 7pm (Sunday on-demand) at the Jigme Dorji Wangchuck Public Library in completing Dzongkha-related Homework, Exercise, Assignments and Projects.

In a nutshell, the DCDD aims to create an avenue for all youths and interested people to freely access knowledge, information, experiences in all cultural

**Book Fair**

The aim of the Book Fair is to promote and establish the culture of reading among students, which ultimately helps to broaden knowledge and support the Ministry of Education and Skill Development in ensuring quality education. The venue at the National Library & Archives was an opportunity to purchase new books and new reading materials. In addition, such event will encourage private bookstores to purchase new books, upgrade their catalogs while promoting the sale of their books and giving the youth the opportunity to purchase new books and publications of preferred authors.

and Language fields. It also aims to provide a platform for the Bhutaneses authors to launch their books and conduct read aloud to the youths basically, in transforming the DCDD and Library premises to a vibrant Cultural Hub in the days to come.



Picture courtesy- facebook page of Jigme Dorji Wangchuck Public Library



# དོ་འགྲན་དང་ཉོ་སྤྱོད་དབང་འཛིན།

## Competition and Consumer Affairs Authority



## CCAA – Protecting and Saving Consumers

The barter system of acquiring goods and services was a safe bet for all involved. Both sides are guaranteed the assurance of seeing, touching, and in the end, believing they are getting what they want proportionate to what they have offered in exchange. We are of course speaking of a time that is shoved far, far away in history. Ours is the age where things are bought not bartered. It's the age of heavy advertising and promotion. There's a world, a universe of shopping 'online' and 'offline' out there. And the number of people buying and selling things, the number of things being bought and sold are innumerable – infinite.

All is well, as long as things end well on the buying and selling front. It remains largely to be the rather unexciting saga. The harmoniously quiet affair however, hits a snag when one side tries to 'make more,' and 'get more.' In the process of doing that the buyers/consumers are always the ones who stand to lose out. Unfair pricing, sub-standard items sold as quality products, shady get-rich-quick schemes, online scams, pyramid marketing and Ponzi schemes are just a few among the many ills that plague the impressionable consumer in a market that is still wanting of effective education in all things legit and all things 'too good to be true.'

This is the part, where, an agency with absolute focus on protecting consumers swiftly intervenes- to save and protect those wronged; and warn and punish those that seek to scam, swindle and con. The Competition & Consumers Affairs Authority (CCAA) is that organization. It is fierce, in its duty; and it remains absolute where right is right and wrong remains wrong.

### RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF CONSUMERS



#### Consumers' Rights

The Consumer shall have the right to:

- (a) Protection of their lives, health and safety in the consumption of goods and services;
- (b) True, sufficient, clear and timely consumer education including information on goods and services offered, as well as on prices, characteristics, quality and risks that may be encountered in the consumption of goods and services;
- (c) Fair, non-discriminatory and equitable treatment by businesses which will include fair terms of contract and sale;
- (d) Be assured, wherever possible, access to a variety of products, technologies and services at competitive prices;
- (e) Get redress against unfair trade practices and unscrupulous exploitation of consumers;
- (f) Form consumer associations;
- (g) A physical environment that will enhance the quality of life for present and future generations; and
- (h) Basic goods and services, which guarantee dignified living.

#### Consumers' Responsibilities

The Consumer shall endeavor to promote:

- (a) Awareness concerning the availability, price and quality of private and public goods and services;

- (b) Solidarity with consumer groups, which, together, can acquire the necessary influence to ensure adequate public attention and support to consumer interests;
- (c) Social responsibility to guard against the erosion of cultural, social and economic traditions;

- (d) Responsibility to consider the impact of consumption patterns on the environment to maintain the ecological balance; and
- (e) Safe environment for consumption of goods and services by providing information on the supply of goods and services which are harmful and not safe for consumption.

## THE COMPETITION & CONSUMER AFFAIRS AUTHORITY

**VISION:** A vibrant economy characterized by fair and vigorous competition and consumer access to accurate information.

**MISSION:** Protecting consumers and competition by preventing anticompetitive, deceptive, and unfair business practices through law enforcement, advocacy, and education without unduly burdening legitimate business activity.

**STRATEGIC GOALS:** Prevent unfair and deceptive practices that are detrimental to consumers in the marketplaces, Prevent unfair methods of competition that affects individual businesses and the economy in general and are detrimental to consumers in the marketplaces, Advance CCAA through excellence in managing resources, human capital and information technology

### CONSUMER EMPOWERMENT & ECONOMICS DIVISION (CEED)

The CEED takes on the responsibility of consumer empowerment through advocacy and education; advocacy and promotion of competition in the markets.

#### Specific functions

- . Disseminate information and educate public about rules & regulations and policies on consumer protection and competition;
- . Carry out consumer education need assessment, identify priority areas and target groups for capacity building;

- . Keep abreast of changing global trade practices and advancement of marketing products and tools so as to keep Bhutanese consumers aware and protected from deceptive schemes;
- . Educate big and small business entities about their obligations to consumers in line with the prevailing rules and regulations;
- . Educate all business entities on policies and rules governing anticompetitive practices in the market.
- . Develop, co-ordinate and manage a vibrant interactive website and official social media accounts – disseminating all relevant information and gathering feedback from the public;
- . Create regular news bulletins, press releases, fact sheets, monthly, biannually and annual reports and other advocacy material for disseminations via various information media;
- . Spearhead development of institutional linkages with other agencies – both local or international, as per



**“Consumers can report to the CCAA if they observe any unfair trade practices in the market that affect their health, safety, and welfare.”**





government protocols – to improve the Authority’s capacity;

. Ensure a functioning Consumer Dispute Settlement Committee at all required locations as per rules and regulations;

. Carry out market surveys and research related on consumer protection and competition and provide recommendation for intervention;

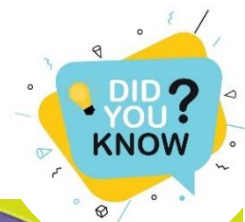
. Publish market price information of essential commodities on a regular basis;

. Carry out Competition Impact Assessment (CIA) of existing and new proposed laws, bye-laws, policies, etc. to ensure the provisions are in line with the national competition policy;

. Spearhead formulation of relevant bills, rules and regulations and guidelines, when required;

. Prepare FYP, annual work plans, and annual budget of the agency and ensure timely and effective implementation;

. Carry out any other additional functions as required by the Board, ministry or the management.

An infographic with a blue background. On the left is a cartoon woman. In the center is a bar chart with an upward arrow and a shopping bag labeled "HIGH PRICE". On the right is a shopping cart overflowing with goods. The title "BUSINESS ENTITIES SHOULD NOT:" is in white. Below it is a list of eight items.

**BUSINESS ENTITIES SHOULD NOT:**

1. Hoard goods and create artificial scarcity in the market
2. Deny sale of goods and services to the consumers
3. Unfairly close shops
4. Indulge in other unfair trade practices and unscrupulous exploitation of consumers
5. Sell unsafe products and provide deficient services
6. Indulge in misleading representations and false advertisements of goods and services
7. Charge unreasonably high price on goods and services
8. Indulge in price rigging, manipulation and market collusion

An infographic with a green background. On the left is a cartoon woman. In the center is a shopping basket with a magnifying glass over a red "EXPIRED" sign and a "FAKE NEWS!" explosion graphic. The title "CONSUMERS SHOULD NOT:" is in white. Below it is a list of six items.

**CONSUMERS SHOULD NOT:**

1. Make impulsive decisions based on false claims or exaggerated representations
2. Panic and make bulk purchases based on false information
3. Encourage unfair trade practices
4. Purchase expired goods
5. Purchase substandard goods that may be damaging to life and property
6. Give false information to other consumers and regulatory agencies

## CONSUMER PROTECTION AND COMPETITION ENFORCEMENT DIVISION (CPCED)

The CPCED is charged with the enforcement of all rules and regulations designed to protect consumers from unfair and deceptive trade practices and ensure business do not adopt anti-competitive practices in the market.

### Specific functions

- . Investigate veritable complaints to redress consumers and mediate, settle dispute and penalize guilty businesses;
- . Facilitate dispute settlement and resolution of consumer grievances by the Dispute Settlement Committee;
- . Proactively conduct regular monitoring of markets to check compliance to rules and regulations pertaining to fair trade and anti-competitive practices in the market;
- . Liaise with other regulatory bodies or other departments to monitor, investigate and/or report, on consumer and competition issues, that have the required technical expertise;
- . Provide regular reports on (i) consumer grievance and redressal statistics and (ii) complaints and actions taken on anti-competitive behavior;
- . Ensure open and functional channels for consumers and businesses to make complaints – using online complaint system, toll-free telephone, email, written letter or walk-in;
- . Manage a comprehensive Consumer Complaint Management System (CCMS), - which is an online database of complaints and redressal actions taken;
- . Keep abreast of emergence of new goods and services or marketing schemes that may have impact on Bhutanese consumers and market competition;
- . Carry out any other work as directed by Board, ministry or the management.

### CCAA BRINGS OUT PYRAMID SCHEME IDENTIFICATION GUIDELINE

The abundance in mobile tech advancement makes life easier for one and all. On a darker note, it has also helped fraudsters and con artists flourish as they increasingly use technology to their nefarious advantage.



The CCAA is strategically positioned to - Prevent unfair and deceptive practices that are detrimental to consumers in the marketplaces; Prevent unfair methods of competition that affects individual businesses and the economy in general, and are detrimental to consumers in the marketplace



Pyramid schemes continue to pop its ugly head in the market duping consumers. Given the persistent issue they pose, the CCAA has introduced a guideline specifically addressing pyramid schemes to protect consumers.

Pyramid scheme is a fraudulent system of making money based on recruiting an ever-increasing number of memberships or investors. A scheme is considered a pyramid promotional scheme if any individual, group of individuals, or business entities establish, operate, or promote a scheme where consumers receive compensation, directly or indirectly, that is derived primarily from recruiting or introducing other consumers into the scheme rather than from the sale or consumption of products. The compensation or benefits given to consumers are based on the number of downline members they recruit rather than the actual sale of the products.

It is regarded as an unfair trade practice because it forces members to recruit others below them to gain benefits. This type of business model is unsustainable, as it relies heavily on recruiting downline members, primarily benefiting only those at the top of the pyramid.

The guideline adds to the CCAA’s various public advocacy measures and bolsters awareness on pyramid scheme to protect gullible people from falling prey to it.

Called the Pyramid Scheme Identification Guideline, it operates to effectively monitor the prevalence of pyramid scheme businesses in the country. Since the implementation of Consumer Protection Rules and Regulations in 2015, the CCAA banned pyramid scheme businesses such as Magnessa, Oriens, The Enagic Machines or Kangen Water Filter Business, Crowd 1, OnPassive, QNET and PUTH.

Consumers should verify the legitimacy of such schemes with the CCAA before participating or report any suspicions of a pyramid scheme.

**References:** CCAA; Consumer Protection Act of Bhutan 2012;

**CONTACT US**  
 1214 (Toll-Free)  
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[consumerservice@moice.gov.bt](mailto:consumerservice@moice.gov.bt)



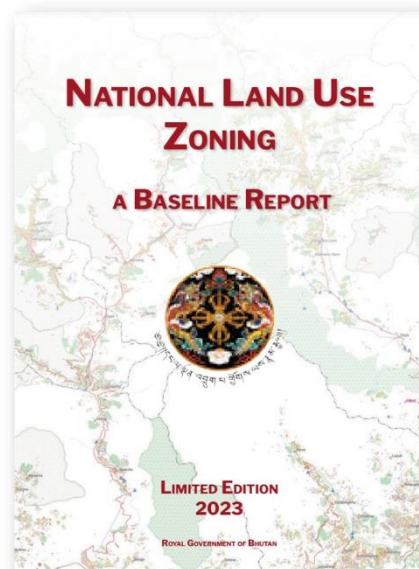
## National Land Use Zoning (NLUZ) – A Collaborative Effort

Amidst accelerated socio-economic development, the demand for land use is increasing across all sectors, leading to numerous conflicts and competing interests. The scarcity and limited optimization of land is a primary reason for discrepancies in land uses. For instance, only 7% of Bhutan's total geographical area is arable land, with a significant portion already utilized. Improper land use management, the absence of an integrated and reliable geospatial data repository, and weak institutional structures contribute to these contestations. Furthermore, inadequate cross-sectoral engagement for land use harmonization exacerbates these conflicts.

To address these issues, the National Land Commission, in collaboration with relevant sectors, has undertaken the NLUZ exercise and as of date baseline report 2023 has been completed. The NLUZ initiative aims to harmonize land use through spatial integration, geo-processing, and map analysis.



**WORKSHOP PROCEEDINGS**

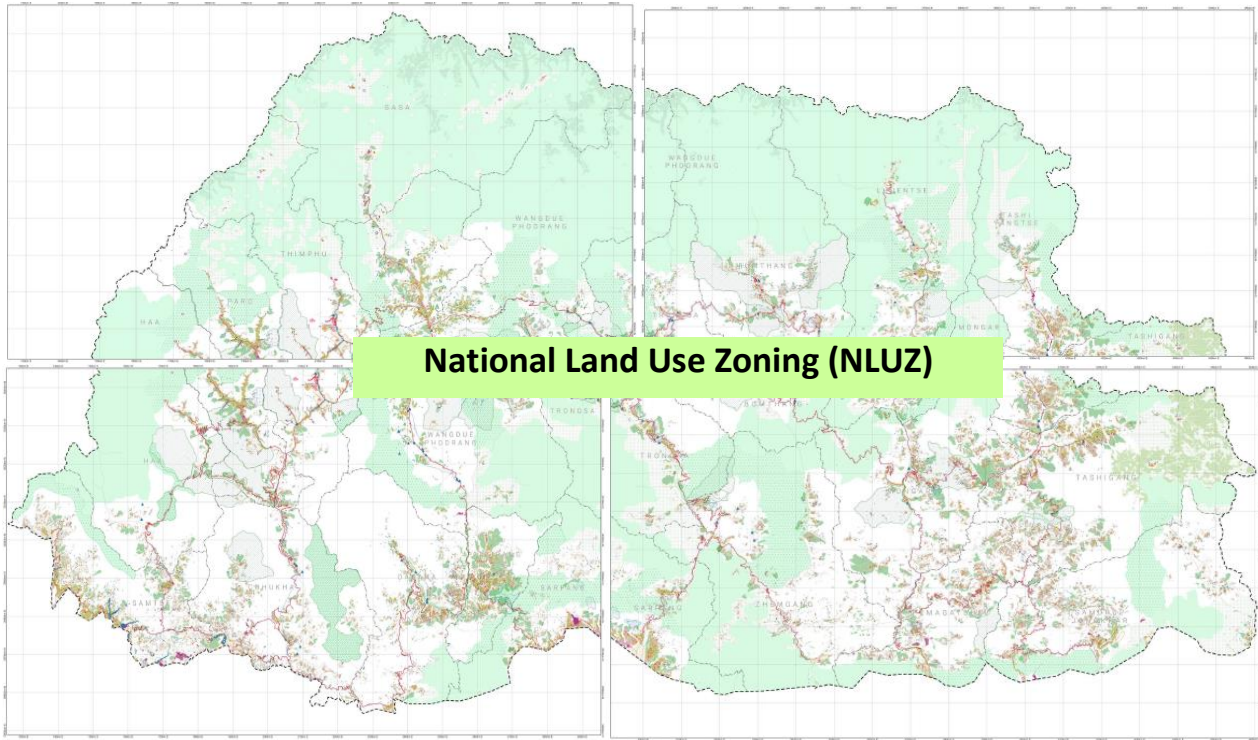


### STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION MEETING & PRESENTATION ON PROSPECTIVE LAND USE PLANS FOR 13FYP

National Land Use Zoning (NLUZ)

July 3-5, 2024  
Zhichenkhar, Centre for Bhutan Studies

The exercise seeks to delineate designated areas and macro land uses, ensuring judicious, optimum, and sustainable use of limited arable land. By resolving land use conflicts and establishing harmonized land use ordinances, the NLUZ exercise aspires to foster spatially-enabled land governance



and decision-making processes in Bhutan. For now, the 2023 baseline report presents zoned maps, unzoned areas, prospective land uses, and references such as LULC maps and metadata for zoning exercises. This information supports the NLCS and stakeholders in making well-informed land use decisions. Moving forward, NLCS and cross-agency collaborations will develop the first and second editions of the NLUZ, which will enhance the nation's spatial decision support system.



### Why NLUZ?

Every agency needs land to implement the 13th Plan. In this, some are found requiring additional land. The best use of available land is the running option in the backdrop of prevailing reality that the country has limited land. That is where the NLUZ comes into play.

As per the NLUZ 2023, the country has a total of 664,000 acres of arable land, of which about 500,000 acres are utilised and registered as freehold land and the remaining balance of arable land is about 164,000 acres. About 8,344 acres of State land has been leased out for activities like mining, commercial, business, and pasture development.

### NLCS organizes coordination meeting for NLUZ

Stakeholders and representatives from ministries attended a three-day coordination meeting in July to harmonise land use for sectors requiring additional land. This is done to prevent potential conflicts in land use during the implementation of the 13th Plan. The coordination meeting was organised by the National Land Commission Secretariat (NLCS).

The sectors presented their land holdings and how much of it they have used along with the amount of land they required seeking consolidation from the agencies concerned. During the coordination meeting (aforementioned) stakeholders sought mitigation measures and collaboration to solve land use conflicts.

The coordination meeting is only the beginning and would continue through negotiations until land use zoning and conflicts are resolved.

The NLCS aims to resolve the land use conflicts by 2025. The country has a land-use conflict amounting to over 435,000 acres identified through National Land Use Zoning Baseline Report 2023 (NLUZ 2023). The NLUZ Baseline Report 2023 is produced by NLCS, and was developed in collaboration with 12 agencies using geo-spatial data.

**References:** NLCS; Kuenselonline



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BHUTAN TELECOM LIMITED

# BT SERVICES

# VoLTE

Launched 28 November 2022



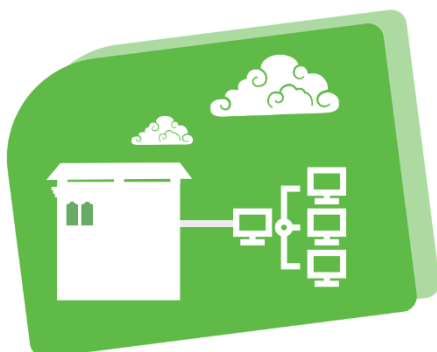
## A JOLT OF VoLTE – EXACTLY WHAT THE PHONE DOCTOR ORDERED



## VoLTE™

- VoLTE stands for Voice over LTE.
- It enables users to make voice calls over a 4G LTE network.
- Offers higher-quality voice calls compared to 2G and 3G networks.
- Features include HD voice and faster call setup times.

*Clear communication is key to understanding and better operation, and better execution. If what we say must be heard then what is said and heard must be very clear.*



There's a big long gap between patience, and ignorance. It's called difference. For the commonsensically operating, this is what assimilates sensibility. For the ignorantly operating, it does not make much of a difference. The smartly operating mind has no room for ignorance, or patience that is misplaced. Well, what about the smartly operating phone? We



keep saying it's the age of IT and the knowledge worker, don't we? In this case, there absolutely should be no room for patience, ignorance or a prolonged letdown.



Nothing stays the same. Things keep evolving to suit the needs of the changing times. From the criers on mountain tops shouting to relay communication (crude but necessary), to Graham Bell inventing the first practical telephone (breakthrough and inventive), to where we are today (high sophistication). We keep improving on what we have and keep re-inventing.

High efficiency is the demand of the day and it is accompanied by style and sophistication in delivering that performance. Dropped calls, static-ridden crackling calls, calls that don't connect instantly, erratic data usage – age comes to all and the world of tech too demonstrates this in its applications. But where high tech falls short, it is high tech itself that swings in and saves the day.

Ladies and gentlemen — VoLTE!



## What is VoLTE?

VoLTE stands for Voice over Long-Term Evolution or Voice over LTE. VoLTE offers the possibility to voice call via the LTE/4G mobile network. As the name suggests it is a technology utilized by phones and service providers like BTL to transmit our voices during calls. The names 4G and LTE refer to the same technology and can be used interchangeably.

Always there for you



## What are the benefits of VoLTE?

Users may recall a few seconds of pause before the phone starts ringing (on the recipient's side). An explanation for this is; earlier, 4G was limited to surfing the Internet. While it came to making calls, your phone would automatically switch to 3G or 2G. With VoLTE, that delay is gone.

On a 2G or 3G network, calls and data are separated and cannot work simultaneously. For example, during a phone call on a 2G network, incoming text messages/SMS will arrive only after your call is over. On a 4G LTE network, both calls and data work in unison, meaning that a text message will arrive instantly even during a call.

The use of VoLTE enhances coverage across the globe by seamlessly leveraging efficient network technology.

**Fast call set-up, High voice quality and reduced background noise:** VoLTE is your powerful alternative over the current 2G/3G voice service. It delivers superior voice clarity, faster data speeds, and extended battery life. With VoLTE, you can immediately notice the difference in overall call quality on both ends. You might also notice your calls getting connected much faster.

**Hello HD quality calls, bye-bye crackling noisy calls:** New and improved tech is continually out in the market, customer expectations and standards have grown. We want our TVs in HD, our laptops, our computers and phone display/camera picture quality in HD; nothing less. Why then should we stop ourselves from getting our calls in HD quality? VoLTE is sometimes also called 'HD Voice' for its clarity compared to traditional cellular calls. So say goodbye to crackly voices and dropped calls. VoLTE uses super-fast 4G networks to give you crystal-clear audio, almost like you're talking face-to-face. No more struggling to hear what the other person said; no missing out important parts of a conversation.



## More benefits of VoLTE

VoLTE is a powerful alternative to the current 2G/3G voice service, delivering superior voice clarity. We have said that. But it also facilitates faster data speeds, and extended battery life.

- The phone remains in the 4G/LTE network during voice calls.
- You can use 4G/LTE data services, such as web surfing and tethering, while simultaneously making - and receiving calls.
- When calling over LTE, you don't use extra data but call minutes. You pay for the voice call service, not the data you use. No more data pauses while

you're talking! VoLTE lets you seamlessly switch between chatting and using data like browsing, emailing, or even watching videos. It's like multitasking (minus the haste and panic) and it keeps you connected to both people and information at the same time.

- VoLTE opens up a whole new world of fun communication. Think high-quality video calls like you're in the same room, or lively group chats with friends and family. Share awesome pictures and videos, work on projects together, and experience a whole new level of connection that goes beyond just talking.

- VoLTE enhances coverage across the globe by seamlessly leveraging network technology.

## Good gets better, to give you the best



5G is the latest gig in mobile town. But even as the service provider (BTL) drives hard and fast to deploy everything 5G everywhere; it continues to maintain the existing 4G LTE infrastructure to fill in the gaps in coverage. As such VoLTE is highly supported and recommended. All 5G phones are backwards-compatible with 4G LTE and thus with VoLTE as well.

As 2G and 3G are sunseting across the globe everything connected to these old networks stops working. It is important to provide options for customers using traditional voice services. The rollout of VoLTE will enable customers to use next-generation technology to cater to their voice call needs. In tech-speak or business lingo, Sunsetting is the intentional phasing out or termination of something, and in business, the term is used often regarding brands, partnerships, agreements, policies, and hardware and software.

Most operators (globally) are already in the process of shutting down 3G, with closure of 2G not very far behind.





## Attachment Detachment



Don't we all just love romanticizing - people, memories, places, things...? But when we step out of that bubble and join the real

world; logic, effectiveness, sense and reason shall prevail and guide and steer us through life to ease the hurdles that spring up along the journey.

We loved the rotary phone but it's been one for the antiques now for a very long time, and the push-button phones/telephones are well on its way to retirement. Customers want the best in services and this is simply what it's all about. In with the new, the better and more efficient; and out with the old.

Upgrading to phones that support VoLTE will happen voluntarily as the demands of the day compel one's desire for better services to act on it (that is, upgrade your phones). It is believed (taking

into consideration trends and related behavior), most people, even those still using older phones without VoLTE support-will upgrade voluntarily before their network (service provider) requires them to do so. And no surprises there at all, but most of these phones are compatible with 5G networks as well.

Maintaining equipment for old networks (2G, 3G) for a few customers who continue using old-fashioned and outdated phones is a cost-intensive affair. A more convincing reason is also because there is a point where the hardware/equipment is just not able to keep up with the more and more modern infrastructure that keep coming out.

**References:** *BTL; androidcentral.com; iotbusinessnews.com; sony.co.uk*



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# BHUTAN FOR LIFE



## FOR ALL THINGS CONSERVATION – A HELPING HAND

*“The problems facing the world today-they challenge all of us equally. And the solutions to these challenges must come from a real sense of concern and care for others, for all sentient beings, and for future generations. We must care about what happens to this Earth”*

— His Majesty The King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck

Perhaps, we live in a world where people are pretty much desensitized to what happens – what happens around them in their immediate environment; or what is being informed to them about what is happening around the world. We could say, that we are simply numbed by the way things play and replay on a loop. An excessive bombardment of information, the frequency with which it is seen repeating. Many things have become commonplace; and people have simply awarded a tag of ‘normalcy’ to them. Matters are tossed around and simply lost in the maze of conversation.

On scene is the Bhutan For Life or BFL. It represents promises kept. It is the refreshing change. The refresher that counters the cliché. Because, come out with a bang it did; but it shows no sign of losing steam.

Matter of fact it is going on full of fire and furor. Conservation in action is indeed a beautiful thing.

BFL is a Project Finance for Permanence (PFP), first of its kind in Asia and one of the PFP models in the world. Core mission of BFL is to secure a robust network of PAs in Bhutan. It is a legal entity established under the auspices of Royal Charter granted by His Majesty the King on 27th July 2018 to support the achievement of robust network of Protected Areas (PAs) that contributes to biodiversity conservation, human-well-being, and increases Bhutan’s resilience to the effects of climate change by providing long-term financing.



### Action brings achievements – the BFL show-and-tell

To lead with the latest in a long line of achievements; a new biological corridor was added to the existing 8 biological corridors. The latest addition was called BC9 or Biological Corridor 9. To those thinking it a simple change in numbers – here’s news.

The declaration of Biological Corridor 9 is a milestone achievement. It further solidifies the interconnectedness of Bhutan’s PA networks. This expansion fosters the movement of wildlife and enhances overall ecological resilience. The BFL actively participated to secure necessary funding and logistical support for this historic expansion of Bhutan’s PA network.

The Proposed BC9 is found highly biodiverse and feasible as a biological corridor. It is highly biodiverse (124 species of birds, 25 species of mammals, 227 species of plants). The collection includes Red Panda, Ludlow’s Bhutan Swallowtail, Tragopan and Palla’s fish eagle.

The BC9 bill was deliberated and adopted on 15 June, 2023. With this declaration Bhutan’s PA network system has increased from 51.44% to 52%. It exemplifies solid conservation efforts of Bhutan. And its establishment completes the Bhutan Biological Corridor Complex in the eastern part of the country.

The BC9 connects Bumdeling Wildlife Sanctuary and Sakteng Wildlife Sanctuary. About 429 households reside within the Biological Corridor 9.

The BFL, a 14 year financial bridge provides the country the opportunity to contribute toward its constitutional

mandate of maintaining a minimum of 60% forest coverage in the country. In its years of action—acting on that constitutional vision—BFL strategized and oversaw implementation of various measures in all the PAs in the country. They include national parks, nature reserves, biological corridors and wildlife sanctuaries.

BFL’s commitment to long-term financing for PAs directly contributes to the global fight against climate change. Bhutan’s well preserved vast forest cover is a vital carbon sink that plays a critical role to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions.

BFL’s support toward ecosystem-based strategies empower communities to adapt to changing climate and help secure their livelihood.

BFL continues to invest in research, enhance PA management and foster community engagement and foster community engagement.

BFL continues to provide the necessary financial backing for crucial initiatives that strengthen Bhutan’s biodiversity conservation efforts.



### BFL & Gender

No issue is isolated when climate change is in question. Gender, environment, climate change, disaster management; and poverty are just some of the starkly visible cross-cutting issues in this particular crossfire of climate change, conservation and mitigation.

The BFL also touches upon universal value systems such as “Gender Mainstreaming” and makes inclusions of gender component in the BFL project. Consequently,

a gender action plan for the project has been implemented in all the PAs. The annual independent review for activities implemented under project has been carried out for the period 2020-2023. Several key findings have been identified in the context of implementation of the gender component in the PAs.

Several activities have been carried out in the protected areas and they have contributed toward empowering women. Women's participation in training and advocacy campaigns have improved, women's savings group have been specifically formed targeting women, skills development have been carried out in the field of culinary arts and home stay operations and management. Further women's participation in the conservation efforts have improved compared to previous years and their standard of living has also improved with access to various energy saving devices such as access to bio gas energy, access to protected farming and access to electricity.

Through the project several measures have also been drawn to enhance the livelihood of the women in the communities by developing women led rural enterprises in the community. Several contributions have been made contributing towards mainstreaming gender in the communities.

Based on analysis, recommendations are set out to achieve the targets as specified in the Project targets specifically in relation to mainstreaming gender in the communities. Of the key recommendations, one highlight is to review, re-evaluate and to reset the project targets and then implement the activities based on the redefined targets to achieve the project objects in the context of gender mainstreaming.

## **BFL & TIGER CONSERVATION**

BFL & partners have successfully completed a nationwide tiger survey. It provides data for population estimates and informing future conservation efforts. High altitude camera traps were deployed in critical snow leopard habitats which shed light on their population and distribution. A comprehensive National Forest Inventory provided vital information on forest health and carbon sequestration potential of forests in Bhutan.

The National Tiger Survey Report 2023 provides a comprehensive update on the status of tigers in Bhutan. It



provides detailed updates on the population status, geographical distribution, challenges, and opportunities in the conservation of tigers. This Report is based on extensive field surveys involving 307 field rangers, huge financial resources, and the state-of-the-art method in data analysis. It provides valuable insights into the status of tiger populations, their habitats, and the threats they face. It also highlights the progress made and the challenges that remain in conserving tigers and their habitats. 1,201 camera stations were set up in the wilderness of Bhutan to count the tigers and help the field surveys.

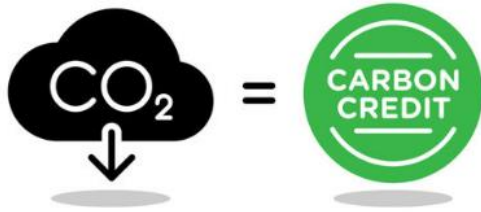
Tigers are an integral part of the nation's cultural and natural heritage. They play a crucial role in maintaining the balance of ecosystems. The conservation of tigers has always been a priority for Bhutan. Even as we celebrate a thriving tiger population in Bhutan, tiger populations in many other regions have declined significantly in recent decades due to habitat loss, poaching, and loss of their prey species. It is, therefore, imperative that we act to protect these magnificent creatures and their habitats.

The Report is now an instrument of applied knowledge for those working toward the conservation of tigers and their habitats. The Report does also serve a call to action for policymakers, organizations, and individuals unite and ensure the long-term survival of tigers in Bhutan.



## **BFL & SNOW LEOPARD CONSERVATION**

The National Snow Leopard Survey Report 2024 provides an updated status of the snow leopard in Bhutan. The report is an outcome of the camera trapping survey spanning five protected areas namely Jigme



Khesar Strict Nature Reserve, Jigme Dorji National Park, Wangchuck Centennial National Park, Bumdeling Wildlife Sanctuary and Jigme Singye Wangchuck National Park and two Divisional Forest Offices of Paro and Thimphu.

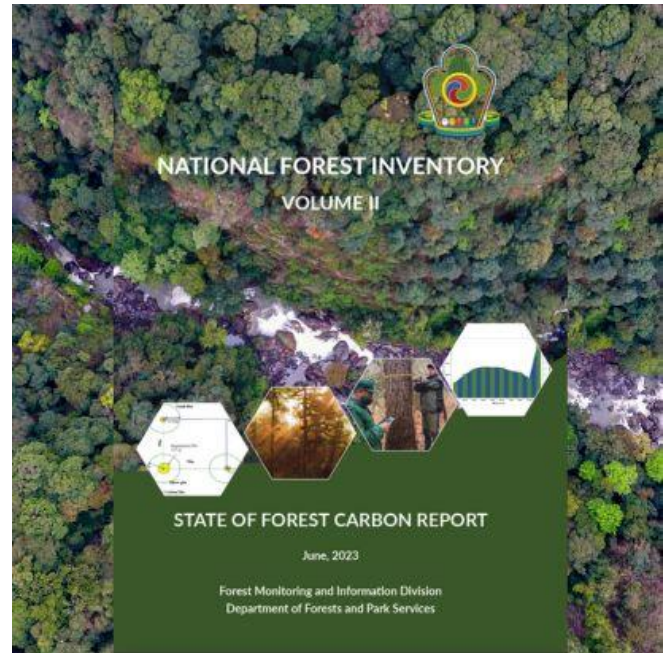
A total of 310 camera stations were set up across the field sites that accumulated a survey effort of 22,636 trap nights, with over 10,000 images of snow leopards. A careful review of 476 images identified 96 adult individuals

Snow leopards, being an apex predator of the alpine landscape, represent the ecosystem's overall health. However, large carnivores such as the snow leopard are globally threatened by habitat loss and fragmentation, prey depletion, retaliation in response to livestock depredation, poaching for illegal trade, human-induced climate change and anthropogenic disturbances. This calls for conservation actions from all government agencies, nongovernment conservation organizations, conservationists and local communities to unite and save the species.

In Bhutan, snow leopard finds a haven across the wide expanse of pristine alpine habitats, less inhabited by humans. The species is revered by the local communities, and it is strictly protected under forest and nature conservation laws. Bhutan started the first snow leopard survey in the 1980s,

The National Snow Leopard Survey (NSLS) 2022-2023 was conducted with the main objective of estimating the current population of snow leopards in Bhutan, including its distribution pattern. It is expected to contribute towards the global goal of assessing the global snow leopard population.

An estimated increase in snow leopard numbers from the 2016 baseline indicates that conservation efforts in the country are having a positive impact. It also reaffirms Bhutan as a stronghold for snow leopard conservation. To ensure that the species thrives in the face of emerging threats and challenges, snow leopard population needs to be monitored periodically at the national scale, patrolling and surveillance needs to be strengthened, and the degrading habitats should be managed regularly.



### BFL IN CARBON CREDITS

A rich natural environment pristinely and finely conserved through the ages – that is one of Bhutan’s easily identifiable and significant trait. This is established and globally renowned. Additionally Bhutan is a carbon-negative nation that pledged to remain carbon-neutral. At the 15th Conference of Parties to United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Bhutan pledged to remain carbon neutral for all times.

The Dagachhu hydropower project has traded close to 800,000 Certified Emission Reduction, CER credits. This was made known to parliament in its June session this year. The Minister for Energy and Natural Resources reported this during a Q&A session on the topic of government’s progress on carbon trading. CERs are carbon credits earned by emission-reduction projects in developing countries equivalent to one tonne of carbon dioxide. These credits can be sold to industrialised countries to meet their emission reduction targets.

The BFL plays a most pivotal role in sustaining conservation efforts of the nation and thereby it is no random connection that BFL gets a share in accolades for carbon credits as well.

According to the Carbon Markets Rules for the Kingdom of Bhutan 2023: “...Bhutan as a fragile mountainous country remains highly vulnerable to impacts of climate change. As a Least Developed Country, we are highly constrained by lack of financial, technological and human resource capabilities in achieving our goals of carbon neutral and climate resilient development. We recognize that carbon market mechanisms under Article 6 of the Paris



***“Bhutan For Life is not for the youth, It belongs to the youth”***  
— Her Majesty The Gyaltsuen  
Jetsun Pema Wangchuck

Agreement will play a crucial role in accelerating the transition towards a low carbon economy. It will have an important part in incentivizing and promoting emission reductions by providing an additional source of revenue against the transfer of mitigation outcomes; enabling transfer of technology and building national capacity for implementation; and trigger innovation and knowledge generation.”

The 56th National Environment Commission Meeting of 27 March, 2023 adopted the “Carbon Market Rules for the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2023” as a foundation for robust, transparent, and effective participation in the carbon market mechanisms that contribute to achievement of our climate goals of pursuing a carbon neutral and climate resilient development while promoting sustainable development to achieve environmental, social and economic benefits.

### **Innovative Financing Mechanism for sustainable management of Protected Area Networks in Bhutan**

**12 July, 2024:** The Ministry of Finance, Royal Government of Bhutan, World Wildlife Fund and Bhutan For Life Fund Secretariat (BFL-FS) organized an important stakeholder consultation workshop focused on the [#SustainableFinancing](#) Mechanisms Feasibility Assessment. Participants included representatives from the Royal Government of Bhutan, and other key national stakeholders, all coming together to discuss and refine sustainable financing strategies for Bhutan’s protected area networks.

The Bhutan For Life (BFL) program is a 14-year joint initiative by the Royal Government of Bhutan, WWF-US, and international private partners. With a robust funding of US\$ 118 million, BFL aims to ensure the continuous protection of Bhutan's rich biodiversity and natural landscapes. The Milestone 16 of BFL Program entails development of new [#InnovativeFinancing](#) mechanisms to craft new, lasting revenue streams to fund conservation programs indefinitely in Bhutan.

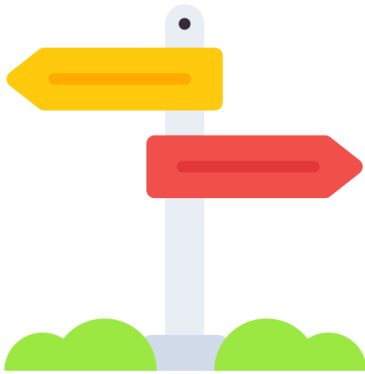
The workshop captured a comprehensive overview and objectives of the feasibility study. The study aims to identify and detail 4-5 priority financing mechanisms that can significantly contribute to the long-term funding needs of Bhutan’s protected area networks, and develop implementation roadmaps for these mechanisms. This was followed by an in-depth presentation and discussion of the proposed Financial Mechanisms by Terranomics, which included an interactive Question and Answer session.

The workshop participants engaged in evaluating the potential of various financing mechanisms. Discussions ensured a thorough and inclusive analysis of each identified financing mechanism. Participants had the opportunity to reflect on and discuss the potential and feasibility of each financing Mechanism, considering factors such as scale, political and legal feasibility, operational environment, and implementation timeframe. The discussions highlighted several financing mechanisms most feasible in Bhutan. These mechanisms were discussed in-depth for their ability to generate significant recurring financing, align with Bhutan’s conservation goals, and leverage both public and private sector investments.

Through this feasibility assessment, BFL aims to support the Royal Government of Bhutan in identifying and developing new long-term financing sources for its protected area network. The workshop provided a platform to update stakeholders on the project’s progress and gather their viewpoints and insights, which are critical to informing the analysis of the shortlisted 10-15 Financial Mechanisms.

The workshop was a success, providing valuable insights and fostering collaborative discussions that will help refine and prioritize sustainable financing mechanisms for Bhutan's protected area networks. The outcomes of the group work and stakeholder engagement will guide the next steps in developing a shortlist of high-priority mechanisms and their implementation roadmaps, ensuring the long-term sustainability of Bhutan's invaluable natural heritage.

**Courtesy:** *BFL FB Page*



## TO FINE-TUNE A BALANCING ACT

Balance has always been at the center of Bhutan's pursued and perceived goals. The nation made a late entry to the development fray remaining a nation following a self-imposed isolation policy up until 1960. And when it did jump into the development pool, a mad scramble to up the ante for GDP was not what it had in mind. GNH or Gross National Happiness was famously initiated and established as the nation's ultimate object of affectionate pursuit. Balance or equilibrium in all aims and objectives remains the order of business since then.

Bhutan needs a balanced and sustainable development paradigm to: Balance the need for economic development with the need to protect natural resources; Balance opportunities in the cities with incentives in the rural villages; Balance tradition with the desires for modern amenities.

The BFL is aligned to strategize and operate on those lines. The BFL addresses these conditions through Four Strategic Goals, 16 Milestones and 80-plus Major Activities.

**Goal I:** Forest and vegetative cover within the protected area network help Bhutan remain carbon neutral

**Goal II:** Socio-economic wellbeing of communities in and in the vicinity of the PA network enhanced by climate-informed natural resources management

**Goal III:** Maintain stable and thriving populations of key species contributing toward national and global biodiversity goals. Maintain habitat and ecosystem

diversity and contiguity. Protected area network provides sustained ecosystem services for socioeconomic and ecological wellbeing.

**Goal IV:** Organizational, institutional and resource capacity strengthened for effective management of the protected area network. Support the Government of Bhutan to develop new sources of financing for Bhutan's protected area network.

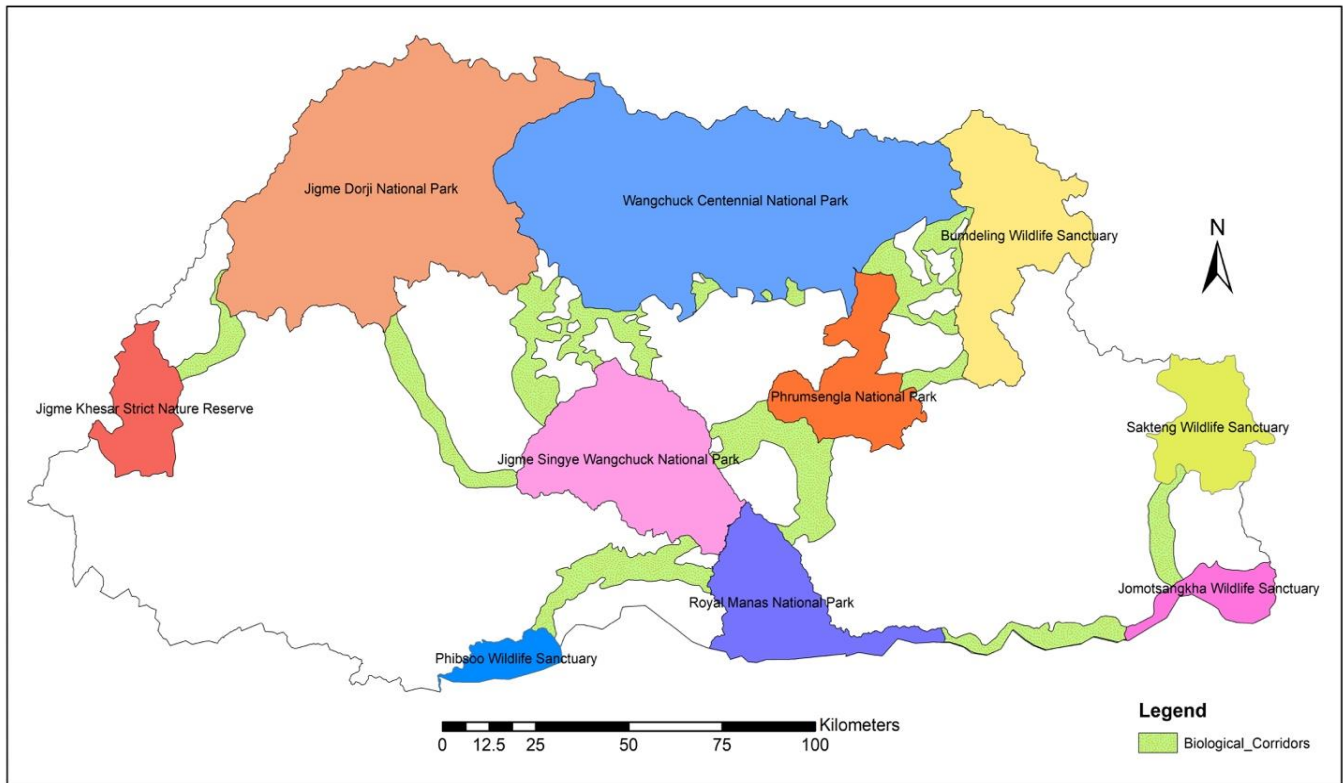
**Milestone 1:** From Year 2 onwards, forest quality and extent (at 1.1 million hectares) maintained within the PA network, thereby securing the storage of 240 million tons of carbon dioxide equivalent and increasing climate resilience through forest ecosystem conservation

**Milestone 2:** By Year 4, degraded lands within the PA network are brought under climate-smart reforestation mechanisms to enhance the carbon stock (above and below ground) and increase climate resiliency

**Milestone 3:** By Year 8, all communities in PAs value, support, and engage in conservation, including waste management and climate change adaptation

**Milestone 4:** From Year 7 onwards, all communities living within PAs use traditional knowledge, best available science and technologies to increase their climate and disaster resilience

**Milestone 5:** By Year 4, 80% of all households within PAs benefit from reduced human wildlife conflict as a result of adoption of appropriate policies, technologies and systems



Protected Areas of Bhutan

**Milestone 6:** By Year 9, 80% of all households within PAs have increased access to nature-based employment and income-generating opportunities including ecotourism and sustainable harvesting of NWFPs, enhancing their resilience to climate change

**Milestone 7:** By Year 6, populations of tigers and snow leopards, two flagship species that represent major ecosystems, are increased or stable (tigers increased by at least 20% over 2015 levels, and snow leopards stable at 2016 levels)

**Milestone 8:** By Year 6, information on the conservation status of 10 other high-profile, lesser known, endangered or endemic flora and fauna species established, and five climate-smart species conservation plans developed (in addition to those for tigers and snow leopards)

**Milestone 9:** By Year 2, Zero Poaching Framework and SMART/effective patrolling instituted in all PAs/BCs to prevent, combat, and monitor poaching, wildlife trade, and other illegal activities

**Milestone 10:** By Year 6, key high-biodiversity and climate resilience value habitats (and areas that connect them) are under improved management

**Milestone 11:** By Year 6, at least one high conservation, economically and culturally valued stretch of river linked to a PA is designated as free-flowing and effectively managed to continue to provide important ecosystem services for conservation and climate-resilience of local communities

**Milestone 12:** By Year 7, watershed conditions in ten critical catchments within the protected area network

improved for climate resilience, wildlife and socio-economic development

**Milestone 13:** By Year 7, National Five Year Plans and all PA management plans incorporate natural capital valuation, key ecosystem services provided by PAs/BCs, and salient climate change risks and mitigation/adaptation strategies

**Milestone 14:** By Year 2, the PA network has climate-smart management plans and a system to track management effectiveness, and by Year 6 the PA network is clearly demarcated

**Milestone 15:** By Year 5, PAs/BCs are equipped with adequate and competent staff, and by Year 10 all PAs/BCs are equipped with essential equipment and infrastructure

**Milestone 16:** By Year 2, feasibility assessments for new sources of sustainable financing have been completed, and by Year 8, new sources of long-term sustainable financing for Bhutan's protected area network have been developed, approved by the RGoB, implemented, and are producing funding that is flowing to the PA network

In addition, there are **80-plus major activities** that contribute towards achieving the 16 milestone and covers the 5 major themes namely: Biodiversity; Climate Resilience; Economic Opportunity; Effective Management; Healthy Ecosystem

**References:** BFL; BBS; MoENR





## For the Tigers — A Billion Dollar Dream

*“It is truly heartbreaking that even the tiger is now endangered. If our generation witnesses the extinction of tigers, it means that we have failed. If we allow biodiversity to erode, it means that we have lost our values. If we cannot sustain the ecosystem, it means we have lost the essence of life.”*

***Her Majesty The Gyaltsuen Jetsun Pema Wangchuck***

The Sustainable Finance for Tiger Landscapes Conference of April 2024 rounded up inviting participants to join a shared commitment to catalyze an additional US\$1 billion to conserve tigers and their landscapes over the next ten years (The Paro Statement). The Conference is the first step in a ten-year collaborative process toward securing sustainable financing for the conservation of tiger landscapes.

The launch for a new funding over 10 years for the preservation of tiger landscapes is vital for maintaining biodiversity, sequestering of carbon, supplying resources to over 100 million people, and ensuring the overall health of our planet. This fund would be divided among the tiger countries based on the opportunity, political will, country’s landscape context, and ambition to continue tiger funding. Ten among the 13 Out of 13 tiger countries attended the conference.

The funds raised would secure and increase global tiger population no doubt. Additionally though funds will contribute to expand tiger ranges and restore the ecological integrity of tiger landscapes. This benefits the tiger species, biodiversity, and local communities.

Under the patronage of Her Majesty the Gyaltsuen Jetsun Pema Wangchuck, the conference was hosted by the Government of Bhutan supported by the Tiger Conservation Coalition.

The Tiger Conservation Coalition brings together leading biologists and experts in wildlife crime, human-wildlife coexistence, policy, finance, development and communications, with unprecedented alignment on achieving tiger conservation at scale. Its member organizations include the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the Environmental Investigation Agency; Fauna & Flora; Natural State;



Bengal tiger (*Panthera tigris tigris*) in the Kanha National Park, India

# INTERNATIONAL TIGER DAY

Observed on July 29, International Tiger Day is a global initiative to draw attention to the critical threats faced by tigers worldwide.



## WHY TIGERS MATTER

As the world's largest cat and an apex predator, tigers play a significant role in the structure and function of the ecosystem on which both humans and wildlife rely. They are a 'landscape

species,' needing large areas with diverse habitats, free from human disturbance and rich in prey. Success or failure means more than securing the future of a single iconic species – it sets a precedent for how we will consider and prioritise the health of nature in global development and in a changing climate going forward.

**Ecosystem services:** Tiger landscapes provide many ecosystem services that go beyond the range of the tiger. Hundreds of millions of people use water from tiger reserves and these protected areas also provide disaster risk reduction against flooding, tidal surges, and landslides.

**Biodiversity:** When we protect tigers we also protect other endangered species like Asian elephants and greater-one horned rhinos. In this politically diverse region tiger conservation encourages cross-border collaboration on environmental issues, benefitting biodiversity.

**Economic benefits:** Well-managed tiger landscapes are vital for Indigenous Peoples and local communities as they provide access to natural resources. Nationally, tiger landscapes contribute to economies both directly through ecotourism and jobs, and indirectly by provision of ecosystem services.

**Cultural Values:** Tigers have immense cultural value at global, national and local levels as well as to a variety of Indigenous Peoples and local communities. Many of these communities live near or in tiger habitat and preserving tigers can also preserve traditional cultures.

Panthera; TRAFFIC; the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); the Wildlife Conservation Society; Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF) and the Zoological Society of London (ZSL).

High-level representatives from ten tiger range countries including Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, India, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Nepal, Thailand, and Vietnam delivered statements on progress and ambitions for conserving their tiger landscapes. Speakers also included His Royal Highness Tengku Hassanal Ibrahim Alam Shah, Crown Prince of Pahang; Prime Minister of Bhutan Tshering Tobgay; CEO and Chairperson of the Global Environment Facility Carlos Manuel Rodríguez; WWF-US President and CEO Carter Roberts, and multilateral banks and leaders in the financial sector.

“Over the last 10 years, the global tiger population has rebounded from a historic low of around 3,200 tigers to some 5,500 tigers in the wild today. This is the result of remarkable collaborations between tiger range countries, local communities and organizations such as those represented in the Tiger Conservation Coalition, (WWF, the Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA); International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN); Fauna & Flora International (FFI); Natural State; Panthera; TRAFFIC; United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS); and the Zoological Society of London),” said CEO of WWF-US said Carter Roberts.

References: [worldwildlife.org](http://worldwildlife.org); [tigers.panda.org](http://tigers.panda.org); [Kuenselonline](http://Kuenselonline)

**Tigers are fascinating animals, from their unique stripe patterns to their almighty roar they represent strength and power all while being the most endangered big cat in the world.**

Here are 10 top facts about tigers...

**1. Tiger stripes are unique.**

Like the human fingerprint, each tiger's stripe pattern is one of a kind. Individual tigers are identified by their unique stripes and counted using camera trap images to estimate population numbers, this could be in a protected area or on a bigger scale for a country population estimate.



Tiger, India

© Suyash Keshari / WWF-International

**2. Tigers can use their ears to communicate.**

A tigress uses the white spots on the back of her ears to communicate with her cubs. They act as a flasher to the cubs, when a tigress senses danger she flattens her ears and the cubs respond by crouching down and hiding.

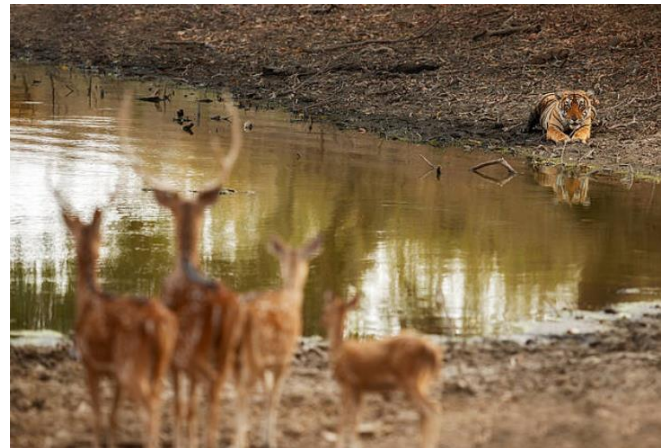


Tigress and cubs at Kanha Tiger Reserve, Madhya Pradesh, India.

© Dr Sanjay K Shukla / WWF-International

**3. India has over half the world's population of tigers.**

This makes counting them quite a logistical challenge! In 2018 India's national tiger survey made it into the



Tiger hunting prey in Ranthambhore National Park, India.

Guinness Book of World Records for being the largest camera trap exercise in the world.

**4. One meal a week.**

For tigers only one in ten hunts are successful; a large deer can provide a tiger with one week's food.

**5. The vocal repertoire of tigers is vast.**

They grunt, growl, roar, moan, snarl, chuff, hiss and gasp. It's thought that each vocalisation is used to communicate different things.

**6. Tigers have been around for over 2 million years.**

While tigers have been around longer than humans, the impacts of human development have caused their population to decline by 97% since the start of the last century.

**7. Tigers are endangered.**

Because tiger populations have declined so significantly, they're listed as 'endangered' by the International Union for Conservation of Nature. This means they are considered to be facing a very high risk of extinction in the wild.



Seized tiger pelt with claws.

© Ola Jennersten / WWF-Sweden



Tiger, Russian Far East

**8. On average two tigers are seized from traffickers every week.**

Despite an increase in tiger populations, they remain under threat from the illegal wildlife trade. The number in trade will be much higher than the estimation of approximately 2 tigers seized a week, as this is based on what is seized and reported. WWF is calling for governments to enforce clear bans on trade in tigers and their parts and products from any source, wild or captive.

many tiger farms across Asia profit from putting their tigers and their parts and products into trade. Not only does this undermine law enforcement efforts, but it perpetuates and even stimulates demand that also drives the poaching of wild tigers.



Tigers in captivity, Asia  
© Gordon Congdon

**9. There are more tigers in captivity than there are in the wild.**

There are 3,900 tigers in the wild and both China and the US each have over an estimated 5,000 tigers in captivity. Globally, there are some legitimate conservation breeding programmes for tigers, and where appropriately managed captive tigers could be used to re-establish wild populations in the future. However,



Tigress with cubs, India.  
© Shutterstock / Anuradha Marwah / WWF-Sweden

**10. The TX2 goal is the most ambitious conservation commitment for a single species.**

WWF has been working to protect tigers across Asia and for the first time in over 100 years tiger populations were reported to increase in some areas in 2016. 2022 marks the year tiger range countries will assess their progress towards the TX2 goal and to see if wild tiger numbers have been doubled. But the work is not over. Tigers are still under threat and their populations in Southeast Asia are declining.

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