



BHUTAN



HIGHLIGHTS 2021

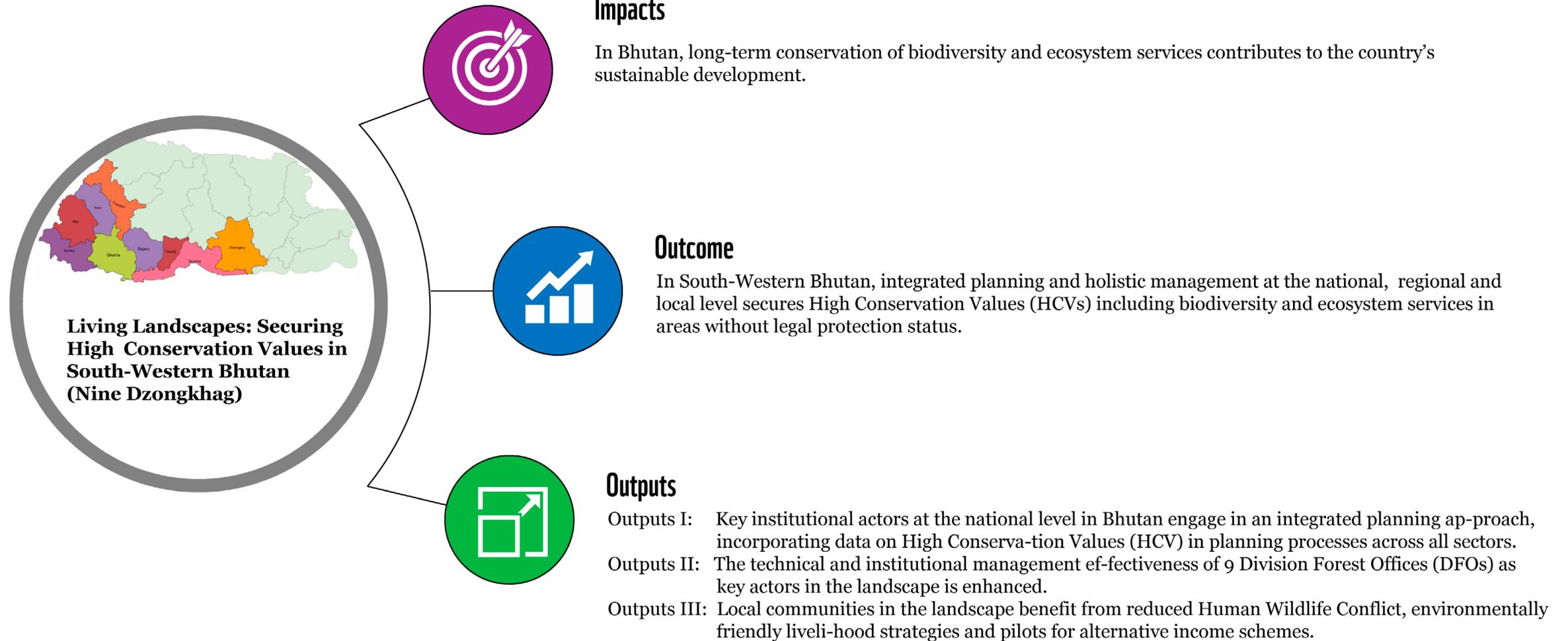
IKI LIVING LANDSCAPES - Securing High Conservation Value (HCV) in South-Western Bhutan



IKI
INTERNATIONAL
CLIMATE INITIATIVE



Project Summary





IKI LIVING LANDSCAPE PROJECT : HIGHLIGHTS OF 2021 BACKGROUND

The year 2021 wasn't different from 2020 as far as the COVID-19 pandemic situation was concerned. Therefore, most of the activities involving travels and large gatherings such as meetings, trainings, and workshops were affected. Nevertheless, there has been a significant progress made, owing to concerted effort of the project implementers. Some of these key achievements are presented below for record and wider communications and awareness.

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01

Annual work plan and budget for 2021 - 12 March 2021

The annual work plan and budget meeting is an important platform and a step towards planning, agreeing and then implementing the activities and budget for the following year. Given the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdown in December 2020, the annual work plan and budget 2021 (AWPB2021) couldn't be held in December 2020 but was held on 12 March 2021.

Attended by all implementing partners of the project and other key stakeholder agencies such as Gross National Happiness Commission (GNHC), and Policy and Planning Division (PPD) of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forests (MoAF), the AWPB 2021 developed activities and budget for 2021. The AWPB 2021 was held in Thimphu at the Jambayang Resort.



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02

PAC meeting - 30 March 2021

Project Advisory Committee (PAC) is an important committee that provides guidance to the project implementing agencies. The PAC meeting is a platform through which the AWPB proposal is deliberated, scrutinized, and endorsed for implementation. The annual PAC for 2021 was held on 30 March 2021.



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03

M&E plan development workshop - 29-30 April 2021

As much as it is important to implement planned activities, it is important to track and assess progress of implementation. Hence, Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) plan is an important document to enable tracking and monitoring the progress. The M&E plan development workshop was held from 29-30 April 2021. It was attended by all project implementing partners and stakeholders. Following the workshop, the project technical team worked on the draft M&E plan and refined it further. The same was finalized in December 2021 and has been shared for wider use and reference.



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04

ESS - GRM development and translation

Environmental and Social Safeguards (ESS) is an important and integral part of this project. Recognizing this, Grievance Redressal Mechanism (GRM) has been developed for the project. The GRM provides guidance on raising and resolving any grievances that may arise from implementation of interventions planned through this project. The same has also been translated into Dzongkha and both the documents are uploaded on WWF Bhutan website and are readily available for use.

(link for GRM- https://wwfasia.awsassets.panda.org/downloads/grm__iki__english__28_june_2021.pdf)



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05

Communications Strategy development - May-June 2021

Visibility and awareness on the project are as important as implementation of the activities. To provide enhanced visibility and ensure the project interventions and lessons learnt reach wider and intended target audience, the project Communication Strategy has been developed. It has been developed with a set of strategies, targets and indicators to guide communication activities that will ensure that the project lessons learnt reach wider stakeholders. The strategy can be accessed from:

https://wwfasia.awsassets.panda.org/downloads/communication_strategy.pdf

06

Guidelines to prepare DFO Management Plan - June-August 2021

One of the major outputs of this project is to develop a holistic and climate smart management plan for divisional forest offices (DFOs) of the project landscape in nine districts. Therefore, to guide development of such plans for all nine divisions, the guidelines for preparing DFO management plan has been developed through a series of technical workshops and meetings held from June through December 2021. The final document is uploaded on webpage for wider reach and reference. The guidelines can be accessed from:

https://wwfasia.awsassets.panda.org/downloads/dfo_managment_plan__final.pdf



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07

Conducted training on Bhutan METT+ for IKI Living Landscape project focals - August 2021

Until now, the Bhutan Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (Bhutan METT+) has been applied only to Protected Areas (PAs) in Bhutan. However, through this project, the tool will be applied to divisional forest offices. This will help assess the management effectiveness and guide implementation of interventions to improve the effectiveness of the management interventions undertaken by the divisional forest offices. Hence, facilitated by the experts from Nature Conservation Division (NCD), the training on Bhutan METT+ for the field focal officials from the project landscapes divisions to build their capacity of use and application of this tool was conducted from 2-4 August 2021 at Paro.



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08

Carried out METT+ Assessment for IKI landscape division offices - June-December, 2021

Following the training on Bhutan METT+, the field focal officials conducted assessment of management effectiveness of their divisions using the Bhutan METT+. The assessment was conducted from August through September 2021. The average METT+ score of nine divisions in the project landscape is 50.31%.



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09

Developed NLUZ technical frameworks and guidelines for NLCS - laying foundation for integration of approach of HCV into NLU planning and zoning - August 2021

Another key output of this project is to integrate and mainstream the approach of High Conservation Values (HCVs) into national land use zoning (NLUZ) and planning system. To this end, the National Land Commission (NLC) developed two key documents namely; NLUZ technical framework and NLUZ technical guidelines. These key documents were developed through a technical workshop organized from 24 -31 August 2021, held at Paro. Two documents can be accessed from the links -

https://wwfasia.awsassets.panda.org/downloads/national_land_use_zoning67.pdf and
https://wwfasia.awsassets.panda.org/downloads/revised_technical_guidelines_2022.pdf

10

Rolling out HCV National Interpretation development - June-October 2021

High Conservation Values (HCV) National Interpretation (NI) is a key document which will guide adoption and implementation of HCV approach in Bhutan, which is a central approach for this project. Thus, HCV NI development was rolled out to National Consultant and to the HCV Network for a period of six months starting from November 2021 till April 2022. The rolling out process involved developing and defining the terms of reference for consultants, tendering out the consultancy, recruiting the consultants and awarding consultancy, all of which were completed between June-October 2021.

11

Procurements - June-December 2021

Major share of the budget for 2021 was allocated for procurement. Field gears, and equipment for enabling SMART application, forestry, watershed assessment, forest fire and establishing nursery etc were procured. The procurement also included IT equipment such as laptops and high specification desktops for DoFPS and NLCS. The second phase procurement of high-resolution satellite (HRS) image was also completed in 2021. The image had an area of interest of 2,364 square kilometer and will be used for base mapping and developing DEM for NLCS.



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12

HCV NI development inception meeting - 30 November 2021

The key principle of HCV NI development is inclusivity. To seek views and comments from relevant stakeholder agencies, an inception meeting for HCV NI development was held on 30 November 2021. It was also to enable the official kickstart of the development of NI.



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13

Springshed assessment

Led by Tarayana Foundation, the Springshed assessment for 12 gewogs under seven districts in the project landscape was completed in 2021. As part of the assessment, recharge zone mapping of 21 springs and two lakes was completed. Also, the springshed assessment book containing the detail delineate of potential recharge areas of 21 springs and two lakes in the project sites was published. The book will help determine sites for restoring dried up lakes and have guidance on how to improve springs protection through nature-based solutions. As the assessment in the two districts (Sarpang and Samtse) was not conducted due to covid-19 restrictions, the assessment will be carried out in phase II.



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14 Study and survey of key invasive species

The study and survey of key invasive plants has been completed for 14 gewogs under eight districts. The study looked at the followings;

1. Field botany identification and description of key Invasive plant species (IPS),
2. Evaluation of people's perceptions on IPS,
3. Mapping the locations of and spatial prediction of IPS,
4. The study also provided individual IPS control methods with seasonal calendar.



15 Annual work plan and budget for 2022 - 23-25 December 2021

The annual work plan and budget meeting for 2022 was held at Wangdue Phodrang from 23-25 December 2021. It was attended by all field chief forestry officers, besides project focal officers. The AWPB 2022 enabled development of activities and budget for 2022.

Financial achievement

Despite the challenges and impediments due to COVID-19 pandemic, the project implemented activities and initiatives worth of Euros 702,920.28 equivalent to Nu. 56,750,030/- in the year 2021. The quarter wise financial progress, as reported to the donors, is presented below;

SN	Quarter	Expenditure (in Euros)	Expenditure (in Nu)
1	January - March 2021	44,235.71	3,754,739.5
2	April - June 2021	39,992.84	3,456,749
3	July - September 2021	114,419.07	9,722,356.5
4	October - December 2021	504,272.66	3,981,618.5
	Total Expenditure	702,920.28	56,750,030

Key Insights gained

The COVID-19 pandemic continued to impact the progress of the project implementation in 2021, particularly on-ground implementation of activities, given restrictions enforced by the Royal Government of Bhutan to contain the spread of the virus. Government restricted travels both in-country as well as ex-country, due to which activities involving travels were adversely impacted. Likewise, even some of the procurement related activities were limited and constrained by the travel restrictions. Similarly, activities requiring large gathering such as meetings, workshops and training also stand affected due to COVID restrictions.

Given the COVID-19, the project team and implementing partners accessed virtual platforms and means to deliver planned targets and objectives. Meetings and trainings were mostly held virtually using zoom, teams and other virtual platforms to minimize in-person interaction to mitigate spread of the virus. Use of the virtual platforms have been immensely useful, though in terms of effectiveness, it was observed that virtual options are not as effective as it is with the in-person conducted programs.

The project team also learnt and reinforced its earlier insights that proactive and foresighted planning; and adaptive management are essential for successful implementation of the project activities. Project plans and implementations were reviewed and revised to adapt to changing circumstances due to COVID-19. This enabled mitigating the impacts of COVID-19 on project progress.

It has also been noted that multi-stakeholder engagements present its challenges while it also has its strength. For instance, annual Project Advisory Committee (PAC) meeting had to be postponed several times due to unavailability of all stakeholders for the proposed date. When one stakeholder was available, other wasn't. Such issues and hurdles have been addressed by proactive planning and execution.

**OUR MISSION IS TO STOP THE
DEGRADATION OF THE PLANET'S
NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND
TO BUILD A FUTURE IN WHICH
HUMANS LIVE IN HARMONY
WITH NATURE.**



Working to sustain the natural world for the benefit of people and wildlife.

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WWF Bhutan Program, P.O. Box 210, Kawajangsa, Thimphu, Bhutan-11001

T:+975-2-323528, F:+975-2-323518, Website: <http://www.wwfbhutan.org.bt/>