Agriculture sustainability:
Maintain or increase crop productivity by investing into enhancing water resources (source protection, harvesting and storage, and controlling soil erosion) and managing human-wildlife conflicts.

Key Performance Indicators (KPI):
- Maintained soil productivity and water quantity and quality
- Reduced economic losses and social costs due to human-wildlife conflict
- Reduced alien invasive species

Improved (green) rural economy:
Create value and optimize the supply chain of forest and agriculture products and promote eco-tourism, by developing business models and the capacity of local communities.

Key Performance Indicators (KPI):
- Increased the household and local communities’ income

NATIONAL AND GLOBAL BENEFITS

- Demonstrates balance between environmental conservation and socio-economic development
- Enables fulfillment of Bhutan’s Global obligations (Paris agreement, UN SDG and CBD- THE POST-2020 GLOBAL Biodiversity Targets and pledges for nature)
- Supports Bhutan in achieving its National Biodiversity targets and its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)
- Supports maintaining ecosystem resiliency and forest cover, thus enabling upholding constitutional mandate of 60% forest cover in perpetuity
- Complements the efforts of the existing protected areas and help maintain the connectivity between the protected areas and important ecosystems

BUDGET

Euros 9.7 million (approx. 10.67 million USD) for 8 years (2020-2028)
**RATIONALE**

Given impacts of climate change and unsustainable consumption and production systems driven by human greed, today the world is confronted with issues and challenges like no other time in our history. Amongst others, the global temperature is rising, new diseases emerge claiming lives of millions, biodiversity is lost at an alarming rate, ecosystems are under serious threats, livelihoods of millions are at stake and mother earth is experiencing loss of natural resources at an unprecedented rate.

The Living Planet Report 2020 of WWF shows an average 68% fall in almost 21,000 wildlife populations between 1970 and 2016.

Towards ensuring continuity of ecosystem functions and services, the biodiversity and ecosystem conservations are being integrated within the development priorities and pathways by the governments and organizations across the globe. For instance, UN SDGs includes goals on environmental conservation and sustainable management of natural resources. Similarly, Parities to UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) adopted ‘other effective area-based conservation measure’ or OECM as strategy for achieving the in situ conservation of biodiversity and associated ecosystem functions beyond protected areas. These are significant steps towards the conservation of biodiversity and ecosystem functions as seen for the next decade.

Likewise, the Royal Government of Bhutan (RGoB) is adopting and implementing approach of the High Conservation Values (HCV). It is an approach first developed and promoted by Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) in 1999 for use in forest management certification. But the concept gradually gained momentum for its larger use and has been used in agriculture and other natural resource management. It is a multi-beneficial approach that ensures conservation of natural resources besides enabling sustainable use. It is defined as biological, ecological, social or cultural values considered outstandingly significant at the national and regional level.

It is adopted and implemented, inter alia, to secure biological, ecological, and social or cultural values of significance in the areas outside the protected areas systems in the nine south-western districts of Bhutan. The initiative is called the Living Landscape (LL); Securing High Conservation Values (HCVs) in South-Western Bhutan.

**LIVING LANDSCAPE INITIATIVE IS THE SOLUTION**

- It is a joint effort of the Royal Government, WWF, and the Tarayana Foundation, a local CSO.
- It is an HCV based OECM to maintain/enhance the productivity, biodiversity, and resilience of forest and agriculture systems fostering overall human well-being
- It enables harmonization of the cross-sectoral land-use practices through scientific data generation, capacity building, and application of the best technological practices.

**LANDSCAPE DESCRIPTION**

The initiative will be implemented in the South-Western districts of Haa, Paro, Thimphu, Chukha, Dagana, Tsirang, Sarpang, Samtse and Zhemgang.

This landscape hosts magnificent species such as Tiger, Asiatic elephant, Hornbill, and Red Panda as key faunal species, aside from floral diversity, for which there is huge potential for future studies.

**MAIN PARTNERS**

1. Royal Government of Bhutan
2. Tarayana Government
3. Local communities
4. WWF (Bhutan and Germany)

**TOTAL AREA (Ha)**

- Project landscape covers;
  - 996,745 ha
  - 9 south-western districts
  - 53.5% areas outside the PAs

**EXPECTED IMPACTS**

- Contribute towards Bhutan’s sustainable development goals through long term conservation of biodiversity and ecosystem services, by securing HCV including biodiversity, ecosystem services, and cultural values in areas without legal protection status, in the nine south-western districts.

**OVERALL GOAL**

Contribute towards Bhutan’s sustainable development goals through long term conservation of biodiversity and ecosystem services, by securing HCV including biodiversity, ecosystem services, and cultural values in areas without legal protection status, in the nine south-western districts.

**KEY COMPONENTS OF LIVING LANDSCAPE INITIATIVE/PROJECT**

- Key institutional actors at the national and sub-national levels engage integrated cross-sectoral land-use planning and management approach, incorporating the HCV data in securing multiple functions landscape
- The technical and institutional management effectiveness of nine Division Forest Offices as key actors in the landscape is enhanced
- Local communities benefit from the conservation of soil and water, reduced human-wildlife conflict events, and generation of incomes from alternate income sources
- Capacity building at national, sub-national, and community levels to ensure congruence with HCV criteria and to improve project implementation skills

**EXPECTED IMPACTS**

**Forest sustainability:**

- Improve productive and ecological resiliency of forests through climate-smart forest management planning, silviculture, and conservation of the HCV areas

Key Performance Indicators (KPI):

- Increased forest carbon stock
- Maintained floral and faunal communities and their population
- Reduced forest fire incidences
- Increased local community stewardship of forest resource management
- Conserved nine high conservation value areas in the landscape