



WWF

BHUTAN



# STRATEGIC PLAN

2025 - 2029

SUSTAINABLE AND JUST BHUTAN  
FOR NATURE AND PEOPLE

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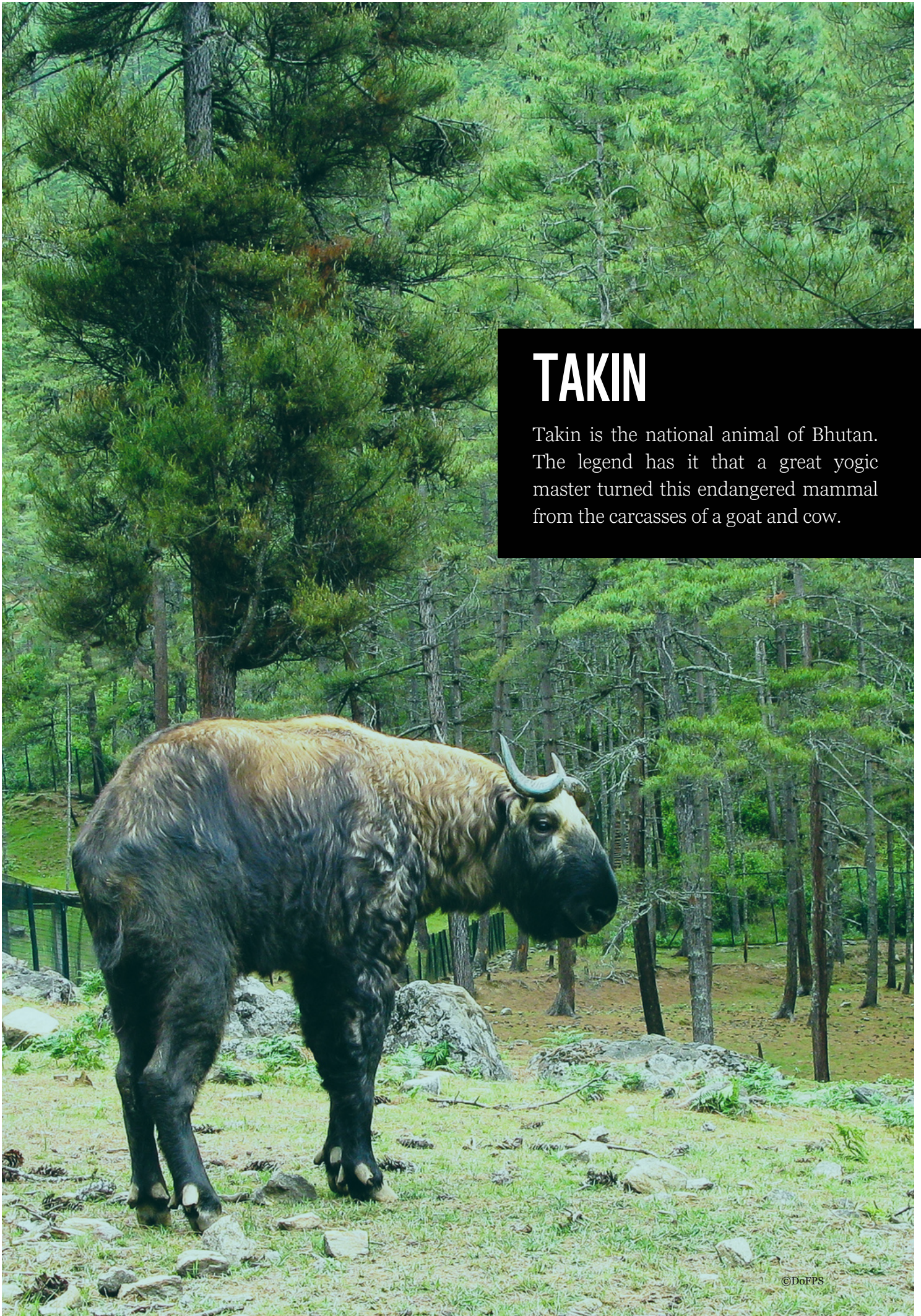
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# TAKIN

Takin is the national animal of Bhutan. The legend has it that a great yogic master turned this endangered mammal from the carcasses of a goat and cow.

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# 1. CONTEXT AND NATIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

## 1.1 Economy and Conservation

Bhutan a landlocked country between China and India, with an estimated population of 770,000, is a lower middle-income country. Guided by the development policy of “gross national happiness”, a stable political system, and prophetic leadership, noteworthy gains were made in human development, poverty reduction, and other economic improvements without compromising its biodiversity and natural capital assets, including its cultural heritage. The country’s poverty rate reduced from 23% in 2007 to 12.4 % in 2022. Endowed with an abundant water resource (94,500 cm<sup>3</sup> per capita), Bhutan’s economic development is largely attributed to the water-dependent sector through hydropower generation earning over Nu. 23 billion (approximately 286 million USD), agricultural production that employs 43.5%, and other water-based industries.

Although Bhutan’s constitution mandates 60% of the country’s area to be under forest cover in perpetuity, current forest cover stands at 69.71% with a net carbon sequestration capacity of 11 million tonnes. Bhutan is therefore amongst the few countries with net negative greenhouse gas emissions with a commitment to always remain carbon neutral. Significantly, Bhutan continues to demonstrate conservation leadership and commitment. The country declared 216 square km of the new biological corridor in 2023, increasing the protected area network to 52% from 51.44%. The population of iconic species increased – a 27% increase in tiger population (from 103 in 2015 to 131 in 2023), a 39.5% increase in snow leopard population (from 96 in 2016 to 134 in 2023), and a 38.2% increase of Black-necked crane population from (370 in 1987 to 500 to 2021). Bhutan is also home to 27 white-bellied herons 13, and 678 Asiatic elephants.

## BLUE POPPY

Blue poppy is the national flower of Bhutan. Gakyidiana is the epithet based on the Dzongkha word for happiness, gakyid, to reflect the aspiration of “Gross National Happiness” while diana is the nomenclature for the flower.

Currently, 167 species of fish and 3 species of freshwater otters have been documented. Seven species of fish are listed as threatened in the IUCN Red List, of which three are assessed as 'Endangered' and four as 'Vulnerable'. Besides, an endemic, newspecies of torrent catfish (*Parachiloganis bhutanensis*) was described from Bhutan in 2014. Thus, to meet long-term conservation financing needs, the country also established Bhutan for Life, Asia's first Project Finance for Permanence.

However, socio-economic vulnerability remains, and this stems from the country being challenged by difficult terrain, limited economic development opportunities, an unproductive agriculture sector, and an import-dependent economy, which is compounded by the post-COVID economic recession. Today, with a decline in the economy and youth unemployment soaring nearly 16%, there is a major drive for accelerated economic growth. The country aims to increase GDP to USD 5 billion by 2029, and USD 10 billion by 2034 by diversifying economic activities, which includes venturing into timber harvesting and mining.

Furthermore, Bhutan aims to achieve greater economic leverage by linking and integrating with larger South Asia and Southeast Asia markets with the establishment of the Gelephu Special Administrative Region (GeSAR) in Southern Bhutan. This economic heartbeat centered on green technology, education, financing, and infrastructure development will be developed through large FDIs.



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# CONSERVATION GAINS



**52 % BHUTAN BIOLOGICAL CONSERVATION COMPLEX**



**167 SPECIES OF FISH AND 3 SPECIES OF FRESHWATER OTTERS**



**27 WHITE-BELLIED HERONS**



**27 % INCREASE IN TIGER POPULATION FROM 2015 TO 2023**



**38.2 % INCREASE OF BLACK-NECKED CRANE POPULATION FROM 1987 TO 2021**



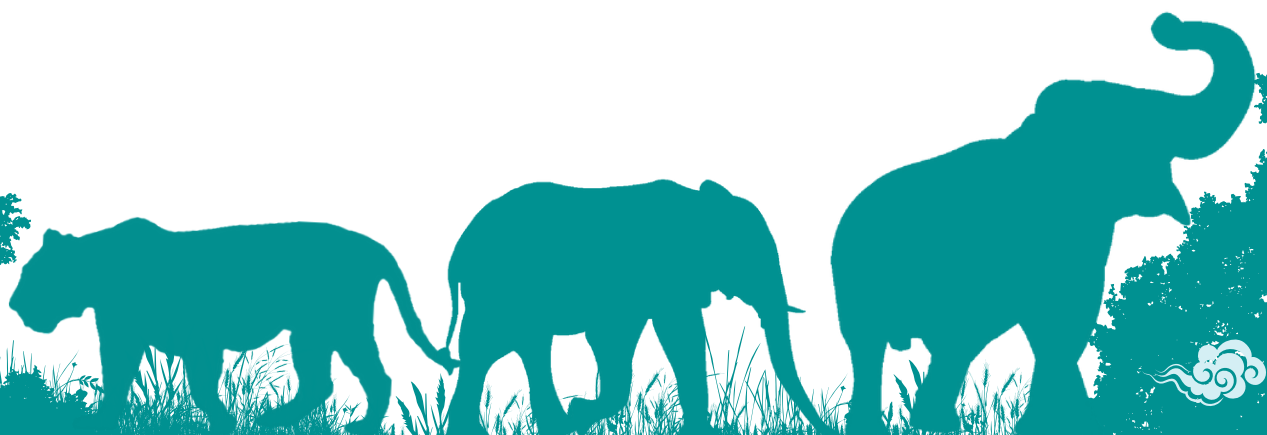
**678 ASIATIC ELEPHANTS**



**27% INCREASE IN TIGER POPULATION FROM 2015 TO 2023**



**39.5% INCREASE IN SNOW LEOPARD POPULATION FROM 2016 TO 2023**





## 1.2 Conservation Challenges

Bhutan faces growing conservation challenges, from the far-reaching impacts of climate change to the nuanced complexities of human-wildlife conflict, intensified by the growing population and increasing demand for natural resources.

**a) Climate change** threats to Bhutan's ecosystems, species, and people are multifaceted. Forest fire risk is predicted to be intense posing a threat to biodiversity, and the climate-induced drought and heat are expected to amplify tree mortality and pests and pathogens outbreaks. According to the assessment of Climate Risks on Water Resources for the National Adaptation Plan, climate change will also impact temporal and spatial distribution, and hence access to water for economic and social needs.



**b) Human-wildlife conflict** is a persistent and growing conservation challenge causing negative community perceptions and leading to reduced support for conservation initiatives. The report suggests that almost 30% of the crops are lost to wild animals, and it is also attributed to farmers leaving their land fallow and out-migration, leading to the contraction of employment in the agriculture sector to 43.5% in 2022 from 54% in 2018. Between 2020 and 2023, as many as 477 cases of human-elephant conflict cases were reported in Southern Bhutan, in some cases causing human fatalities. The incidences of tigers killing cattle are widespread and increasing in most of the country and likewise, highland communities face a similar challenge from snow leopards.

**C) Environmental crimes** are emerging as a growing threat to conservation. For instance, between 2017 and 2021, more than 10,700 incidences of illegal activities were recorded which included illegal logging, fishing, and wildlife poaching. The tiger, clouded leopard, elephant, bear, and musk deer are hunted or poached and smuggled, which speaks to the fact that Bhutan serves as an important gateway to illegal markets in northeast India and China. The nexus of environmental crime and illegal wildlife trade is expected to become more complex with regional market integration in South and Southeast Asian countries.





**d) Deforestation, forest degradation, and unsustainable harvesting of forest resources** due to a surge in developmental activities and the expansion of human settlements are a concern. Between 2000 and 2015, more than 6,700 hectares of forest were lost annually for various development needs, and from 2015 to 2022, over 35,992 hectares were allocated for infrastructure development such as roads, power transmission lines, and others. With the post-pandemic economic recovery geared towards increasing the contribution to GDP from the forestry sector, the pressure on forests is expected to increase tremendously. This will further be heightened with the plan to enhance infrastructure development, such as road connectivity and other hydropower development.

**f) The ecological footprint** in water and waste is also increasing. The land use change from forest degradation and other development activities leads to watershed and spring-shed degradation impacting the quality and quantity of water for economic purposes, while the ambition to secure energy independence through the construction of dams will disrupt the riverine ecosystem. It is estimated that Bhutan generates around 6.5 million liters of wastewater per annum, polluting our river system. The growing urbanization has also led to increasing waste pollution. On average, each household in urban areas generates about 0.7 kgs of waste per day, while each rural household generates about 0.4 kgs of waste per day. Almost 65 percent of the households in the country do not have access to waste collection services.

**g) The changing attitude and actions** arising from the perception that conservation acts as a barrier to development remains a growing challenge. And the reduced tolerance towards conservation efforts, influenced by increasing incidences of human-wildlife conflict accentuates such negative attitudes. For instance, tolerance towards co-existing with tigers in Bhutan is reducing due to economic tradeoffs. These coupled with a lack of awareness and unwillingness to embrace sustainable practices add to the challenges of effective management and conservation of natural resources and biodiversity.

While the national conservation challenges and context are important, the strategy recognizes that Bhutan’s conservation landscape is part of the two important eco-regions, the Eastern Himalayan Alpine Scrub and Meadows, and the Eastern Himalayan Broadleaf and Conifer that serve as the biological hotspots. These eco-regions also serve as water towers for more than 65 million people and shelter charismatic species like snow leopards, takins, red pandas, tigers, black-necked cranes, black bears, and many others that are of global economic and cultural significance. Currently, WWF-Bhutan operates in two national-level landscapes as presented in the table and country map below:

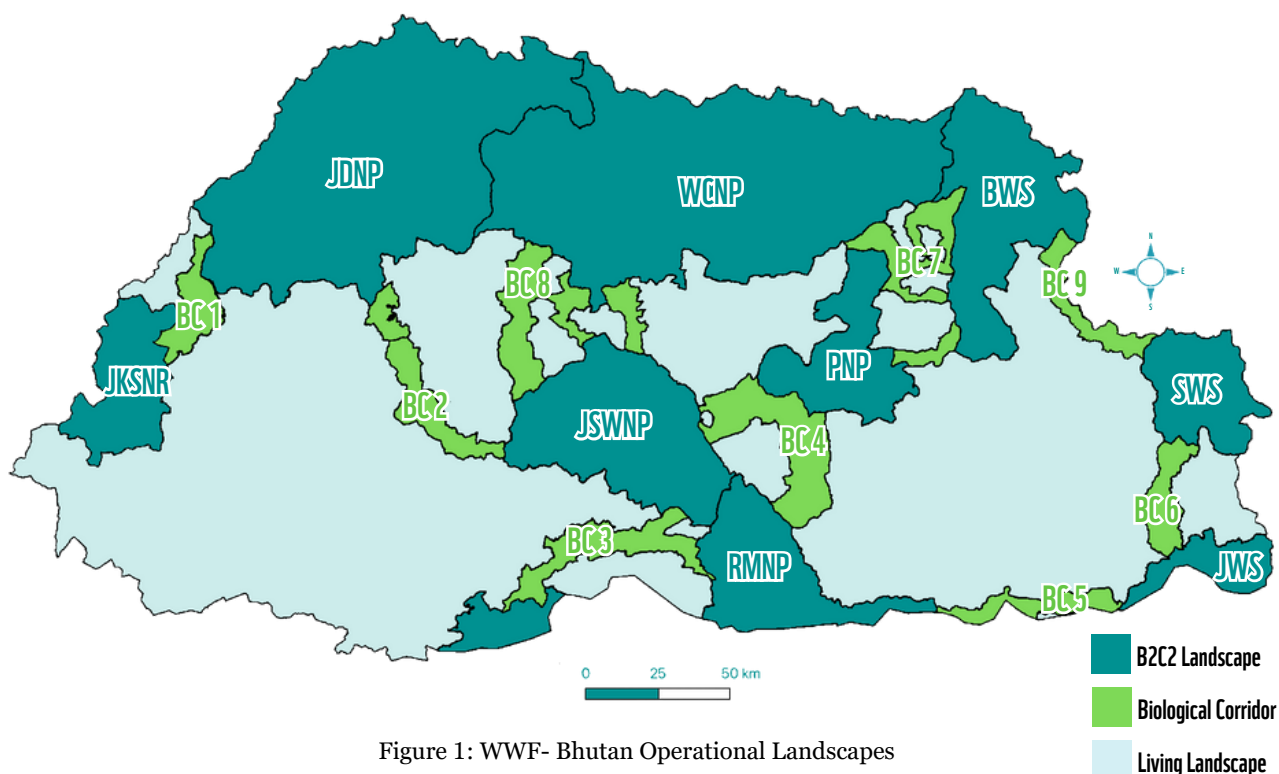


Figure 1: WWF- Bhutan Operational Landscapes

DETAILS	BHUTAN BIOLOGICAL CONSERVATION COMPLEX(B2C2)	BHUTAN LIVING LANDSCAPE
AREA	19,969.71sq.km (52%)	18,424.29 sq.km (48%)
COVERAGE	10 Protected Areas Network (PAN) system	All areas outside the PAN
HUMAN POPULATIONS	41,180 persons ( Female 20,549)	6,40,540 persons [Female 3,19,629]
INTERVENTIONS	Effective management of the protected areas resulting in biodiversity conservation, while improving and sustaining the livelihood of populations living within it.	Reducing carbon footprints and managing anthropogenic threats

## 2. TRANSFORMATIONAL STRATEGIC SHIFT & CONSERVATION TARGETS

### 2.1 The five strategic shift

WWF-Bhutan recognizes the imperative to transform the conservation approach and this is informed by the evolving paradigm shift in the country's economic development ambition and approach and its significance on natural resource management and conservation. This “strategic shift” is therefore pivotal for WWF-Bhutan to remain “relevant, responsive, agile, and adaptable” in delivering “innovative, impactful, and inclusive” conservation outcomes at scale. It redefines the value of conservation and transcends species and practices while consolidating organizational competitiveness locally and globally. Our transformative shifts are therefore embodied by the five strategic approaches:

1) The new conservation pathway for **“people, prosperity and progress”** recognizes the need to transcend the traditional confines of species-focused conservation, aiming instead to address complex drivers and threats, and forging a direct link between conservation efforts and tangible economic benefits. This shift places “people” at the front and center of initiatives, pivoting toward heightened community involvement and catalyzing nature-based solutions that yield societal, economic, environmental, and biodiversity benefits, and being able to demonstrate 'nature' as a cornerstone asset for sustainable development. The shift aligns with the Royal Government of Bhutan's development goal of “enhanced productivity and diversified products and markets driving economic growth by 2029” as outlined in the 13th Five-Year Plan which looks at strengthening natural resource-driven sectors such as energy, tourism, agriculture, forestry, water resource management, and carbon market.



II) Cultivating “**stewardship**” will be at the heart of the conservation approach in driving behavioral change, aimed at cultivating understanding and appreciation for our natural world. The value shift has become pivotal to challenge and disrupt the misconstrued narrative that environmental interests and economic interests are a trade-off, and instead position environment protection as fundamental to the economy and therefore for societal well-being. By fostering a sense of ownership and responsibility toward nature, the endeavor will directly cultivate a generation of proactive advocates at all levels, reinforcing behavior change, and championing sustainable practices for biodiversity conservation for years to come.

**III) Integrated Program (IP)** recognizes the fact that today’s conservation challenges are much more complex and delivering a narrow set of solutions through a species or practice-focused approach will not yield transformational conservation results. The IP allows the office to be agile and seize opportunities while also maintaining focus on addressing emerging conservation issues. It also allows prioritization of interventions that target complex conservation challenges, beyond species and practice, through interconnected themes. Most importantly it exhibits a clear alignment with national priorities and opportunities for collaboration within the WWF network through a place-based and landscape approach, promoting greater cross-practice coordination and collaboration. The resulting framework is designed for the integrated programs to contribute to any of the core impact indicators of the four WWF Practices, Climate & Energy, Forests, Freshwater, and Wildlife.



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**IV) Conservation financing** shift aims to double the conservation impacts through diversification of grant and non-grant resources and leveraging domestic resources. The office will aim to mobilize USD 30 million over five years anchored on the three pillars of resource mobilization strategy which are 1) Public Sector Partnership, 2) Network Partnership, and 3) Private and Corporate Sector Partnership. Non-grant and innovative and market-based financing mechanisms such as impact investing, wildlife conservation bonds, biodiversity credits, and carbon-linked conservation financing will be explored. Similarly, efforts will be stepped up to divert the domestic flow of resources towards nature and biodiversity outcomes at the local level.

**V) Securing connected transboundary landscape** - a regional 30 x 30 initiative aligns with the Global Biodiversity agreement of targeting the protection of 30% of land, inland waters, and the ocean by 2030. This transboundary Eastern Himalayas initiative with WWF-India and WWF-Nepal aims to secure 10 million hectares of contiguous conservation and cultural Landscape of Greater Himalayas that is home to some of the most unique ecosystems, harboring more than 10,000 plant species, 977 birds, 300 mammals, 269 freshwater fish, 176 reptiles and 105 amphibians. The Eastern Himalayas are now under threat from growing environmental challenges that include habitat loss, deforestation, wildlife poaching illegal wildlife trade, and climate change. The regional initiative will be aimed at inspiring, catalyzing, and fostering regional collaborations towards achieving the global biodiversity targets, building climate resilience, and fostering sustainable development across the extremely vulnerable region.

## 2.2 Program Theory of Change

The **Theory of Change** for this **Strategic Plan** is built on the premise that; **if** people and community are engaged in conservation initiatives and catalyze nature-based solutions generating tangible economic and employment benefits, creating conditions for co-existence; **if** at all levels people can understand a true value of conservation leading to behavior change and development of positive stewardship towards nature; **if** financing framework and partnership are diversified and delivered through the integrated program; and **if** connected transboundary conservation landscape is secured through regional collaboration; **then** the country will sustain its current conservation gains, and people will further contribute to conservation goals thus achieving the vision of **sustainable** and **just** Bhutan.

## 2.3 Vision & Goals

### OUR VISION

A sustainable and just Bhutan for nature and people.

### OUR GOALS

#### Goal 1

Sustain a healthy and resilient natural ecosystem with a viable wildlife population of ecological and cultural significance.

#### Goal 2

Inspire environmental stewardship to promote inclusive conservation and development.

#### Goal 3

Catalyse and support nature-based economy contributing to human well-being and resilient economic growth.



# Outcomes and Targets

Goal 1: Sustain a healthy and resilient natural ecosystem with a viable wildlife population of ecological and cultural significance.

OUTCOMES	TARGETS
1. Healthy and viable population of key flagship/keystone/indicator species maintained.	1.1 By 2029, population of 10 key species (Tiger, Snow Leopards, Elephants, Red Panda, BNC, WBH, Ruddy Shelduck, Mahseer, Takin and Musk Deer) maintained.
2. Natural ecosystems area maintained and/brought under sustainable management.	2.1. By 2029, 1.99 million ha of the area under PA maintained. 2.2. By 2029, 62,000 ha of the area brought under OECM. 2.3. By 2029, 2 regional initiatives to secure transboundary conservation and cultural landscapes in the Eastern Himalayas promoted. 2.4. By 2029, 1 million ha of the area under improved SFM practices. 2.5. By 2029, 3 new innovative mechanisms and technology promoted. 2.6. By 2029, 20,000 ha of freshwater and wetland ecosystems protected and restored. 2.7. By 2029, 20,000 individuals will benefit from the effective management of freshwater and wetland ecosystems and OECM initiatives.
3. Human wildlife coexistence promoted.	3.1. By 2029, 10,000 individuals supported by HWC management interventions. 3.2. By 2029, at least 4 HWC management interventions identified and implemented. 3.3. By 2029, at least 60% of people living in HWC hotspot areas have a reduced perception of risk from wildlife.
4. Development of wildlife-friendly sustainable, low carbon and climate resilient human settlements catalyzed.	4.1. By 2029, at least four cities and human settlements adopt and implement integrated policies and plans. 4.2. By 2029, wildlife-friendly infrastructure principles/guidelines integrated into national and local human settlement & linear infrastructure design and capacity for implementation strengthened. 4.3. By 2029, financing and domestic capacity for catalyzation of alternative renewable energy enhanced.

Goal 2: Inspire environmental stewardship to promote inclusive conservation and development

5. Continued appreciation and value for nature and adoption of sustainable practices is enhanced.	5.1. By 2029, at least 5 institutions adopt sustainable practices. 5.2. By 2029, at least 5 innovative and sustainable approaches initiated. 5.3. By 2029, at least 50% of the total population engaged in stewardship and sustainable practices.
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Goal 3: Support nature-based economy for human well-being and resilient economy

6. Resilience and adaptive capacity of vulnerable communities strengthened.	6.1. By 2029, resilience and adaptive capacity of 100,000 individuals enhanced.
7. Innovative and diversified nature-based enterprises and sustainable financing solutions promoted	7.1. By 2029, household income of the targeted communities through sustainable livelihood interventions increased by 40%. 7.2. By 2029, 12 enterprises and sustainable financing mechanisms contributing directly to livelihoods are implemented.
8. Operational excellence for conservation impacts.	8.1. By 2029, WWF-Bhutan continues to deliver conservation impacts at scale by leveraging highly motivated team and innovative systems and processes.

### 3. Integrated Programs

The eight outcome targets will be delivered through three integrated programs (IP). As recognized, the IP is aimed at delivering transformational conservation results through place-based and landscape approaches by integrating cross-practice efforts and initiatives. It will also allow both human and financial resource optimization.

#### 3.1 Program 1: Integrated Conservation Program

Integrated Conservation Program (ICP) embraces a holistic strategy aimed at securing the natural ecosystems such as forests and freshwater sources, as well as the diverse wildlife on land and in water by addressing the diverse drivers and threats to these ecosystems, including climate change impacts through an inclusive conservation approach wherein local communities are actively engaged in conservation planning and decision-making processes. The program will be aimed at generating benefits for the local communities from conservation activities through diversified and sustainable livelihood opportunities and building stronger stewardship for nature. The emphasis will be on fostering inclusivity through both the process as well as in outcome ensuring that marginalized and disadvantaged communities are enabled to participate and benefit from the conservation programs and projects. Inclusive approaches and interventions that foster gender equality and empower women and vulnerable groups in line with national policy frameworks and WWF best practices/standards will be pursued.

The program will be delivered through integrated interventions either at the landscape level or during the execution of comprehensive measures that cut across various domains, encompassing policies, transferring of knowledge and technology, bolstering enforcement regulations, and enhancing overall capacity, yielding wildlife, forest, water, climate change results and benefits to the local communities.



**Inclusive Wildlife Conservation** considers global imperatives and aligns with Bhutan's National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans, and measures that aim to safeguard habitats including Other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs), ensuring inclusivity, land rights, and significantly to achieve a shift from Human-Wildlife Conflict to Co-existence. Embracing a One Health approach, the effort will be focused on integrated solutions that address unsafe wildlife trade and consumption and disease transmission risks. Strategic policy and advocacy work will be stepped up to embed biodiversity goals and targets into economic and social development planning. Building on the success of SMART patrolling, satellite tracking, digital alert systems, DNA technologies, and other technology-based conservation approaches will be leveraged to address increasing cases of poaching while enhancing biodiversity monitoring capability.

**Sustainable Natural Resource and Forest Management** will focus on bringing forest sector transformation through a holistic approach to natural resource conservation and utilization. Recognizing the vital role of local communities, community empowerment and participation in forest resource management will be prioritized while engaging private and non-state actors to foster sustainable harvesting and waste minimization. The introduction of advanced technology for optimal and sustainable forest resource harvesting and promotion of nature-based enterprises through economically feasible forest products and value chains will be developed and supported. Payment for Ecosystem Services, an incentivizing model, that hinges on the dual benefit of natural resource conservation and economic returns will be strengthened for community benefits and environment sustainability.





**Freshwater Protection and Conservation** is a priority of the national adaptation plan and recognizes its critical nexus to development imperative, particularly for food, energy, health, and overall ecosystem health. The actions, therefore, will be focussed on the watershed, springshed, and wetland protection, while ensuring connectivity for migratory birds such as black-necked crane and Ruddy shelduck. Protection and management of critical rivers for freshwater biodiversity will be pursued by enhancing river ranger and community livelihood programs through site-specific green business enterprises that safeguard species of conservation significance like mahseer and white-bellied heron. With increasing pressure, water governance is emerging as a critical challenge, that will have far-reaching conservation consequences. In collaboration with partners, solutions will be explored and supported to enhance governance and management.



**Climate Adaptation and Resilience** intervention will target anthropogenic drivers and threats, focused on building the resilience of both nature and people. This will be delivered through climate-smart conservation programs and projects that support the implementation of the National Adaptation Plan in general, with a prioritized focus on building the resilience of forest, freshwater, biodiversity, agriculture and food systems and vulnerable communities through ecosystem-based adaptation measures and other nature-based solutions such as regenerative economic solutions.



These interventions will further cascade into actionable steps, ensuring a dynamic and effective approach to conservation. Through hands-on measures, community involvement, and innovative technologies, we are transforming conservation ideas into impactful, tangible results for the benefit of both nature and people. Furthermore, through this interconnected approach, our program not only addresses local challenges but also contributes significantly to global conservation goals, embodying the collaborative spirit of the WWF network's initiatives such as Asian flyways, Living with Big Cats, People protecting landscapes & seascapes, Tiger heartlands, Wildlife Connect, and free-flowing river and freshwater challenge. Foster cooperation with neighboring regions to protect shared ecosystems and cultural landscapes in the Eastern Himalayas.

## 3.2 Program 2: Conservation Stewardship and Education

The overbearing and misconstrued notion that environmental protection and conservation lead to unnecessary economic trade-offs is a growing concern that undermines the very foundation of sustainable development and growth. This negative value shift towards nature and environment across different levels, cultivated through misinformation and alternative narrative requires a disruptive change beyond science and intellectual narrative and advocacy. It requires an intentional design to enable sustained action to generate positive views and assert that the loss of nature impacts economies and hence societies.

The program therefore aims to foster a greater sense of ownership and responsibility towards nature to sustain current conservation gains and to steward champions to consolidate further. This will be achieved through developing a targeted narrative shift campaign about biodiversity and ecosystem values by engaging faith leaders and institutions to bring about long-term behavior change. The program will continue to partner with schools and youth groups to marshal action campaigns around climate change and environmental issues. High-level policy discourse and engagement will be continued in partnership with local CSOs including local multilateral organizations. Innovation camps and campaigns will be fostered to support the discovery of eco-friendly solutions and alternatives. An immersive engagement program will be developed to foster partnerships with private and public sectors to cultivate national, regional, and global champions that will enhance stewardship support and network.





### 3.3 Program 3: Nature-Based Economy, Livelihood and Footprints

This program is targeted at catalyzing a green and nature-based economy that contributes to economic growth while generating environmental and social benefits. This very much aligns with Bhutan's development principles and values of Gross National Happiness and the country's commitment to carbon neutrality. Nature-based solutions and nature-based enterprises, for example, nature and wildlife tourism and other related solutions, will be explored and promoted to protect and enhance nature while at the same time creating employment, diversified livelihood opportunities, and contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The program will target towards addressing societal challenges such as climate change, food insecurity, water insecurity, and the impacts of natural disasters. It will be aimed at generating benefits for both local communities and contributing to the national economic growth.

Green and low-carbon development solutions will be catalyzed to deliver large-scale climate, biodiversity, resilience, and inclusion benefits. While focused on the Living Landscape (landscape outside the protected area network) and urban places as key areas, the program will also take a larger landscape approach (such as at Districts and regional level) and support peri-urban areas and surrounding ecosystems to drive circular economic approaches and bring resource efficiency. It will work with strategic cities, sub-national and national governments, and urban actors to plan and implement sustainable solutions across energy, buildings, transport, food, and waste. The integration of nature-based Solutions (NbS) in urban and peri-urban areas is expected to generate multiple environmental benefits, such as climate change mitigation and adaptation, biodiversity enhancement, and land & water restoration enhancing ecosystem services. Under this activity framework, innovative financing mechanisms and bankable nature solution models to draw investments will be leveraged.

## 4. OPERATIONALIZING THE STRATEGY



Figure 2: Five Key Enablers

WWF-Bhutan has identified five (5) key enablers to achieve the vision, goals, and milestones of this strategic plan. These enablers are capabilities that WWF-Bhutan recognizes as critical for the efficient and effective delivery of SP results.

1. The ambitious target of doubling conservation delivery is anchored on “**robust resource mobilization and strategic partnerships**” centered around three main pillars:

- Leveraging Public Sector Partnership (PSP)
- Enhancing Network partnership and
- Leveraging Private and corporate sector financing

These three pillars form a strategic framework of sustained flow of resources for implementation which will be followed through targeted action plans. WWF-Bhutan will focus on diversifying its partnerships. In line with the ‘Local to Global’ approach, the partnership with private and corporate sectors will be pursued, initially starting at a local level, and eventually taking it to regional and global levels. Additionally, collaboration with new implementing partners such as corporate, private, and local CSOs will also be explored.

2. **Communication and marketing** will be crucial pillars for the overall success. It will prioritize consistent and targeted communication to achieve awareness, engagement for fundraising, partnership building, youth and community engagement, policy advocacy, crisis management, etc., through diverse communication mediums.

3. The integrated program design is inherently to bring program and operation silos to achieve **Operational Excellence**. Systems and processes will be further enhanced to allow team integration, efficiency, and positive organizational culture. Based on the SP and its projected growth, WWF-Bhutan will develop its five-year strategic HR plan focusing on values -of team integration, capacity development, performance management, motivation, retention, succession planning, etc., which will be reviewed annually.

4. **Innovation** in the current SP is intrinsic in terms of the aspiration to deliver conservation solutions. Yet WWF-Bhutan will continue to drive and cultivate culture, mindset, and skill set to build our organizational capacity for innovation to explore conservation solutions, organizational systems and processes, and our ways of working.

5. **Adaptive Management through a holistic M&E system** will track the results and performance of programs and projects. WWF-Bhutan will undertake periodic monitoring of results and evaluation of the impacts to improve learning and knowledge management. Further, WWF-Bhutan will continue to leverage innovative online project management tools such as Monday.com for planning and tracking progress and achievements annually. The data and information generated from such tools will be used for adaptive management, donor reporting, and making informed decisions. WWF-Bhutan will carry out its annual M&E events following the M&E calendar depicted in Figure 3.



Figure 3: Annual M&E Events

## 4.1. ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL SAFEGUARDS AND RISK MANAGEMENT

WWF’s environmental and social safeguards (ESS) and the 3 statement of principles (SoP) apply in the context of all WWF’s work in Bhutan. This application emphasizes WWF-Bhutan’s commitment to the organizational values and policies for nature and people.

The two conservation landscapes are screened for ESS risks and an Environmental and Social Safeguards Management Framework (ESMF) is in place to mitigate the potential risks. The annually identified mitigation activities are integrated into the work plan for implementation and M&E. To ensure a broad-based and inclusive engagement of partners, a stakeholder engagement plan (SEP) for the two landscapes has been developed and is implemented in all phases of the program/project. In addition, stakeholders are informed and updated on the Grievance Redressal Mechanism (GRM) to ensure that individual concerns are heard, acknowledged, investigated, and resolved effectively and transparently. Further, as recommended in the WWF Inclusive Conservation (IC) baselining and learning [report](#), 2023, emphasis will be placed on building a shared understanding of IC and capacity among partners and embedding its practices in our works. Capacities and tools for social monitoring, evaluation, and learning will also be strengthened to ensure sustained adaptive management in programming and implementation.

For non-ESS risks, our internal processes with oversight from the SMT ensure its identification with appropriate treatment measures in the form of a risk register, which is quarterly monitored and reviewed by all risk owners. WWF-Bhutan’s organizational goal in terms of risk management is to embed it as WWF-Bhutan’s office culture so that it is part of WWF-Bhutan’s strategies, governance, operations, and processes for delivery of high conservation impact.

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# 7. ANNEXURES

## Annex 1: WWF- Bhutan Goal Alignment to Bhutan’s 13th Five-Year Plan

	13TH FIVE YEAR PLAN OBJECTIVES			
	Economic development	Social development	Security	Governance
<b>WWF-BHUTAN GOALS</b>	By 2029, Bhutan has enhanced productivity and diversified products and markets driving sustainable economic growth	By 2029, more Bhutanese equitably access and benefit from quality and wholesome education and lifelong learning	Safety and security threats and disaster risks to the country, its economy, infrastructure, institutions, and people are mitigated and managed	Bhutan's state institutions ensure inclusive, effective, and accessible justice, transparent rule of law, and public oversight
1. Sustain a healthy and resilient natural ecosystem with a viable wildlife population of ecological and cultural significance				
2. Inspire environmental stewardship to promote inclusive conservation and development				
3. Support nature-based economy for human wellbeing and resilient economy				

The 13th FYP has four outcomes – Economic Development, Social Development, Security, and Governance. Color shading indicates the degree of alignment of WWF-Bhutan Goals to the 13th FYP and National Priorities

Major

Moderate

Minor

NATIONAL PROGRAMMES				OUTPUTS		
Ecological resilience and diversity				Quality infrastructure, connectivity and energy ensured	Contribution of strategic sectors to GDP increased	
Sustainable Forest Resource Management	Building Carbon Asset	Sustainable water Resource Management	Environmental Policy and Regulatory Reform	Fossil Fuel consumption reduced	Installed renewable energy-generating capacity in Bhutan (Wind and Solar)	Contribution to GDP from climate financing and carbon trading

## Annex 2: WWF- Bhutan Goal Alignment to Global and Asia Pacific 25 Goals

WWF- Bhutan GOALS	GLOBAL WWF GOALS													ASIA PACIFIC 25						
	Zero Loss of Habitats					Zero Extinction of spp.	Have Footprint of Consumption and Production & GHG Emissions							SIX Clusters of Zero Extinction						
	Protected & Conserved areas	Halt Deforestation	Fores restoration	Sustainable use of land	National climate adaptation plan	Species over exploitation	Have food waste	have footprint of diets	Have sustainable fisheries	Have GHG emissions	Reduce energy demand	Renewable Energy	No Plastics in nature	Sustainable infrastructure	Transboundary/ Ecoregional species	Linking species to habitat conservation/ Area based conservation	Species in Crisis	Financial Crime and IWT	One- Health	Species that have critical ecosystem functions
1. Sustain a healthy & resilient natural ecosystem with a viable wildlife population of ecological & cultural significance	Major	Major	Major	Major	Major	Major	Major	Major	Major	Major	Major	Major	Major	Major	Major	Major	Major	Major	Major	Major
2. Inspire environmental stewardship to promote inclusive conservation & development	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor	Major	Major	Major	Minor	Minor	Major	Major	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor
3. Support nature-based economy for human well-being & resilient economy	Major	Minor	Minor	Major	Major	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor

Color shading indicates the degree of alignment of WWF-Bhutan Goals to Global and Asia Pacific 25 Goals.

Major

Moderate

Minor



## Annex 3: Result Framework

<b>Goal 1: Sustain a healthy and resilient natural ecosystem with a viable wildlife population of ecological and cultural significance.</b>				
OUTCOME TARGETS	INDICATORS	INDICATOR DESCRIPTION	BASELINE	TARGETS
1.1. By 2029, population of key species maintained	1.1.1. Population status of key species	The indicator aims to measure the trend/population status of key species such as Tiger, Snow Leopard, Elephants, Red Panda, Black-Necked Crane, Ruddy Shelduck, and Takin while for Mahseer, presence/absence in delineated areas will be tracked.	Elephants - 678 (2017) Tigers - 131 (2023) Snow Leopard - 134 (2023) Ruddy Shelduck - 1500 (2020) Black-Necked Crane - 552 (2021) White-Bellied Heron - 27 (2020) Red Panda - To be updated after report is published. Mahseer - Presence in delineated rivers Takin - Establish baseline by 2025 Musk Deer - Establish baseline by 2025	Target: Maintain the population of all species
2.1. By 2029, 1.99 million ha of area under PA maintained	2.1.1. Areas under PA maintained	The indicator aims to measure the area designated as PA (including BCs) endorsed by the Royal Government of Bhutan.	Baseline: 1.99 M ha	Target: 1.99 M ha
2.2. By 2029, 62,000 ha of area brought under OECM	2.2.1. Areas brought under OECM	The indicator aims to measure the areas outside PA network effectively brought under the long-term conservation (OECM-HCV, KBAs).	Baseline: 0	Target: 62,000 ha
2.3. By 2029, 2 regional initiatives to secure transboundary conservation and cultural landscapes in the Eastern Himalayas promoted	2.3.1. Number of regional initiatives promoted	The indicator aims to measure the development of regional initiatives to secure transboundary conservation and cultural landscapes in the Eastern Himalayas with other network offices and relevant stakeholders.	Baseline: 0	Target: 2 (Eastern Himalayas & Central Asian Flyways)
2.4. By 2029, 1 million ha of area under improved SFM practices	2.4.1. Areas under improved SFM practices	The indicator aims to measure the areas brought under improved SFM practices including introduction and adoption of improved forest technologies, management of forest fire, pests & diseases, and strengthened community forest management.	Baseline: 0	Target: 1 M ha
2.5. By 2029, 3 new innovative mechanisms and technology promoted	2.5.1. New innovative mechanisms and technology promoted	The indicator aims to measure the number of new and innovative mechanisms and technologies promoted. It could include any technologies and mechanisms that improves SFM practices, timber utilization and processing thus reducing wood waste.	Baseline: 0	Target: 3 new technologies
2.6. By 2029, 20,000 ha of freshwater and wetland ecosystems protected and restored	2.6.1. Areas under freshwater and wetland ecosystems protected and restored	The indicator aims to measure the area of freshwater and wetland ecosystems brought under protection and effective management including watershed/springshed management, wetland protection and connectivity for migratory birds.	Baseline: 0	Target: 20,000 ha

2.7. By 2029, 20,000 individuals benefitted from effective management of freshwater and wetland ecosystem and OECM initiatives.	2.7.1. Number of individuals benefitted from effective management of freshwater and wetland ecosystem and OECM initiatives.	The indicator aims to measure the number of individuals directly benefitted from the interventions of OECM and other effective freshwater and wetland ecosystems.	Baseline: 0	Target: 20,000 individuals
3.1. By 2029, 10,000 individuals supported by HWC management interventions.	3.1.1. Number of individuals supported by HWC interventions.	The indicator aims to measure the number of individuals disaggregated by sex directly supported by the HWC management interventions including electric fencing, insurance schemes.	Baseline: 2541 (809 Female)	Target: 10,000 individuals
3.2. By 2029, at least 4 HWC management interventions identified and implemented	3.2.1. Number of HWC management interventions implemented	The indicator aims to measure the number of actions/strategies implemented to address human wildlife conflicts. These actions could include electric fencing, hybrid fencing, insurance schemes and attractant management activities.	Baseline: 1	Target: 4
3.3. By 2029, at least 60% of people living in HWC hotspot areas have reduced perception of risk from wildlife	3.3.1. Percentage of people with reduced perception of risk from wildlife	The indicator aims to measure the proportion of people, that are residing in HWC hotspot areas where Conflict to Coexistence (C2C) strategy will be implemented, who perceive a lower level of risk, or threats associated with wildlife interactions.	Baseline: TBD from the C2C survey report	Target: 60%
4.1. By 2029, at least four cities and human settlements adopt and implement integrated policies and plans	4.1.1. Number of cities/human settlements adopting and implementing integrated policies	The indicator aims to measure the number of cities adopting and implementing integrated plans and policies towards inclusion, resource efficiency, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, resilience to disasters.	Baseline: 0	Target: 4
4.2. By 2029, wildlife friendly infrastructure principles/guidelines integrated in national and local-level human settlement & linear infrastructure design and capacity for implementation strengthened.	4.2.1. Number of projects incorporating wildlife-friendly infrastructure principles/guidelines in human settlement & linear infrastructure designs	The indicator aims to measure the number of projects that have integrated wildlife friendly infrastructure principles/guidelines into the planning and designing of projects at both at national and local level.	Baseline: 0	Target: 2 (Local and national level)Target: 2
4.3. By 2029, financing and domestic capacity for catalyzation of alternative renewable energy enhanced.	4.3.1. Scale of investment for catalyzing renewable energy	The indicator aims to measure the scale of investment/financing the catalyzing the adoption of alternative renewable energy (solar, biogas).	Baseline: USD 200,000	Target: USD 1 million

## Goal 2: Inspire environmental stewardship to promote inclusive conservation and development

5.1. By 2029, at least 5 institutions adopt sustainable practices	5.1.1. Number of institutions that have adopted sustainable practices	The indicator aims to measure the number of institutions adopting and integrating sustainable approaches and behavioural change activities in collaboration with faith leaders and youth groups.	Baseline: 0	Target: 5
5.2. By 2029, at least 5 innovative and sustainable approaches initiated.	5.2.1. Number of innovative and sustainable approaches initiated.	The indicator aims to measure the number of innovative and sustainable approaches including waste management innovations, efficient use of energies and natural resources.	Baseline: 0	Target: 5
5.3. By 2029, at least 50% of the total population engaged in stewardship and sustainable practices	5.3.1. Percentage of population engaging in sustainable practices	The indicator aims to measure proportion of population that will actively in engage in activities or behaviours that promote environmental sustainability, conservation and responsible use of natural resources.	Baseline: 0	Target: 50% of the population

## Goal 3: Support nature-based economy for human well-being and resilient economy

6.1. By 2029, resilience and adaptive capacity of 100,000 individuals enhanced	6.1.1. Number of individuals with improved adaptive capacity and resilience	The indicator aims to measure the number of individuals within the vulnerable communities in Bhutan with an improvement in their ability to respond, recover and adapt to various climate-induced disaster risks and challenges.	Baseline: 0	Target: 100,000 individuals
7.1. By 2029, household income of the targeted communities through sustainable livelihood interventions increased by 40%.	7.1.1. Percentage increase in the average household income as a result of sustainable livelihood interventions	The indicator aims to measure the percent increase in household income/financial resources due to targeted sustainable and inclusive livelihood interventions such as skill-building programs, ecotourism initiatives and supporting nature-based enterprises.	Baseline: Nu. 276,398	Target: Nu. 386,957
7.2. By 2029, 12 enterprises and sustainable financing mechanisms contributing directly to livelihoods are implemented.	7.2.1. Number of enterprises and sustainable financing mechanisms explored and implemented	The indicator aims to measure the number of nature-based businesses, ventures and sustainable financing mechanisms identified and implemented. 12 enterprises (5 value chain, 4 PES, 3 SFM) could include ecotourism, PES, carbon credits, wildlife credits, etc.	Baseline: 0	Target: 12

## OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE FOR CONSERVATION IMPACTS

8.1. By 2029, WWF-Bhutan continues to deliver conservation impacts at scale by leveraging highly motivated team and innovative systems and processes	8.1.1. Maintain and sustain the annual income threshold of USD 6M	The indicator aims to ensure that WWF-Bhutan consistently achieves and sustain a certain annual income level to support financial sustainability.	Baseline: USD 2.2 M	Target: USD 30M
	8.1.2. Employee Satisfaction rate	The indicator aims to measure the percentage of employee satisfaction and contentment to foster well-being, supportive and engagement workforce.	Baseline: NA	Target: 70%

## Annex 4: Strategic Plan Resource Framework

Strategy Goals	Projected Resource (in million USD)				
	FY2025	FY2026	FY2027	FY2028	FY2029
<b>GOAL 1:</b> Sustain a healthy and resilient natural ecosystem with a viable wildlife population of ecological and cultural significance	1.75	2.50	3.25	3.75	3.75
<b>GOAL 2:</b> Inspire environmental stewardship to promote inclusive conservation and development	0.70	1.00	1.30	1.50	1.50
<b>GOAL 3:</b> Support nature-based economy for human well-being and resilient economy	1.05	1.50	1.95	2.25	2.25

## Annex 5: Strategy Development Process



**100%**

WWF- Bhutan has projects in all of the protected areas in Bhutan & works with several other local, regional & global organizations.

**1977**

WWF's work in Bhutan started in 1977.



**+100**

WWF-Bhutan is part of a global network of more than 100 offices worldwide

**+45**

WWF-Bhutan has been supporting conservation programs in Bhutan for over 45 years



**Why we are here**

To stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony and nature.

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