

# BHUTAN

## Believe

### Green Bhutan

#### *An overview of the sustainability projects ongoing in Bhutan*

*Conservation of the environment is one of the four pillars of Bhutan's Gross National Happiness philosophy. As mandated in its constitution, Bhutan preserves (at all times) at least 60 percent of its land under forest cover. In fact, Bhutan is one of the only carbon negative countries in the world. But there are many other important environmental and sustainability projects ongoing in the country. Read more about some of these below.*

#### 1. Million Trees Project

A million trees will be planted in the next five years in Bhutan's fallow land under a drive 'Million Trees Project' that was launched in 2021. The project aims to plant an average of 200 to 300 high-value tree crops per acre of land, ultimately adding up to over one million trees. Under the project, local farmers will be given tree saplings of plums, pears, walnuts and peaches. These trees are specifically chosen for their capability to generate annual and long-term income for rural farmers. The project will help improve the livelihoods of communities while nurturing the environment as well as significantly add to biodiversity and help buffer the impacts of climate change. Read more: [Million Tree Project Launched in Bhutan – Bhutan Foundation Bhutan Foundation](#)

#### 2. Dungsam Community Seed Bank in Samdrupjongkhar

In less than a decade, farmers in Bhutan had lost many of their traditional crop seeds, increasingly becoming dependent on external sources for seeds. The age-old practice of farmers saving their own seeds is dwindling due to free supply of imported seeds. Therefore, in an effort towards reviving, sustaining and promoting local cereals and to help farmers get access to seeds on time, Dungsam Community Seed Bank was constructed - using mostly local materials. Traditional crops like wheat, barley, buckwheat, mustard, millet and amaranthus are on the verge of disappearing. However, the community is able to revive, preserve and promote these native seeds with the help of the seed bank. Watch this video for more information: [The Seed Keepers of Dewathang - YouTube](#)

### **3. Electric Vehicle (EV) Project (Bhutan Sustainable Low-emission Urban Transport Systems)**

The project facilitates low carbon transition in Bhutan's urban transport sector by promoting wider uptake of low-emission vehicles, in particular electric vehicles, as the preferred mode of transport. In 2014, Bhutan launched its all-embracing Electric Vehicle Initiative, keeping in mind both economic and environmental gains. Electric vehicles were bought as government vehicles, private vehicles and commercial taxis. The project was promoted through fiscal, as well as policy support. Currently there are 21 charging stations in six dzongkhags of Thimphu, Paro, Punakha, Wangdeuphodrang, Chukha and Haa.

Read more: [Bhutan Sustainable Low-emission Urban Transport Systems | United Nations Development Programme \(undp.org\)](#) and [Bhutan's electric vehicle journey | Kuensel Online](#)

### **4. Enhancing sustainability and climate resilience of forest and agricultural landscape and community livelihoods under UNDP**

The project aims to address the adverse impacts of climate change on rural livelihood, and effects of sector-led development practices on the ecological integrity of forested landscapes rich with biodiversity. The long term goal of the project is to ensure effective climate resilient management of forest areas, securing ecosystem services that underpin livelihoods, and climate change adaptation.

Read more: [Enhancing Sustainability and Climate Resilience of Forest and Agricultural Landscape and Community Livelihoods | United Nations Development Programme \(undp.org\)](#)

### **5. Bhutan Green Power Development Project**

The Green Power Development Project has two components: (i) regional clean power trade, and (ii) renewable energy access for the poor. Under the first component, the Dagachhu hydropower development (a 126-megawatt [MW] run-of-river type) aims to export power from Bhutan to India through the existing grid to India. The second component of rural electrification seeks to provide access to electricity sourced from hydropower to over 8,000 households and facilities with grid extensions, and electricity sourced from solar energy to over 100 remote public facilities (schools, health clinics, and other community facilities) on an off grid basis.

Read more: [Bhutan: Green Power Development Project | Asian Development Bank \(adb.org\)](#)

### **6. Ecotourism and biodiversity project under UNDP (funded by GEF - Global Environment Facility)**

The five-year GEF ecotourism and biodiversity project is being implemented by the Department of Tourism as part of Tourism Flagship Programme and will cover two protected areas (PAs) of Bumdeling Wildlife Sanctuary (BWS) and Sakteng Wildlife Sanctuary (SWS) in eastern Bhutan, and five districts of Lhuentse, Mongar, Trashigang, Trashigang and Zhemgang. The project aims to establish Bhutan as a model ecotourism destination. It seeks to mainstream biodiversity conservation into tourism development, while also generating sustainable conservation financing and livelihoods for people, diversifying ecotourism products, as well as mitigating the negative impacts of tourism on the country's socio-cultural heritage.

Read more: [UNDP, Bhutan sign project to promote ecotourism and biodiversity](#) | [Kuensel Online](#)

## WASTE MANAGEMENT AND LANDSCAPES PROJECTS

### 7. Green Bhutan Project launched in 2016

The Green Bhutan project seeks to make Bhutan greener by planting flowers and trees in all towns across the country. It aims to foster a culture of planting trees among the citizens. The Green Bhutan Corporation Limited provides various services such as floriculture, nursery, plantation, and preserving landscapes by improving their Aesthetics and making them secure for inhabitants. Website: [Green Bhutan Corporation Limited \(gbcl.bt\)](http://gbcl.bt)

### 8. Clean Bhutan Project

Clean Bhutan was established in 2014 under the royal patronage of Her Majesty, The Gyaltsuen Jetsun Pema Wangchuck, (The Queen of the Kingdom of Bhutan) with the aim to change the mindset of every Bhutanese to responsibly practice sustainable consumption lifestyle by using available resources efficiently. Clean Bhutan works with authorities, local government, municipalities, and communities to manage waste more efficiently. The project mainly comprises youths, volunteers and communities who work to keep Bhutan clean and beautiful. Website: [About Us – Clean Bhutan](#)

### 9. Zero Waste Bhutan

Zero Waste Bhutan is an initiative under the Waste Management Flagship Program, with the goal to realize zero waste Bhutan by 2030, through effective source segregation, improved waste management service delivery, and maximum material recovery through reducing waste going to landfills to less than 20%.

## WORLD WIDE FUND FOR NATURE (WWF) PROJECTS

### 10. Living landscapes: securing High Conservation Value (HCV) in the south-western Bhutan

The goal of the project is to achieve long term conservation of biodiversity and ecosystem services, and contribute towards the country's sustainable development through securing High Conservation Values (HCVs) in the south-western Bhutan. It seeks to ensure sustainable management of natural resources in the areas outside the protected areas and biological corridors. The project covers 9 districts/dzongkhags in the south-western Bhutan (Thimphu, Paro, Haa, Samtse, Chukha, Dagana, Tsirang, Sarpang and Zhemgang).

Read more: [Living landscapes: securing High Conservation Value \(HCV\) in the south-western Bhutan](#) | [WWF \(wwfbhutan.org.bt\)](http://wwfbhutan.org.bt)

## 11. Community Based Forest Resources Management

This project with focus on community forestry and non-wood forest management groups, which are outside of protected areas is implemented in 10 districts ((Trashiyangtse, Trashigang, Mongar, Pemagatshel, Samdrup Jongkhar, Sarpang, Zhemgang, Trongsa, Dagana, Samtse). The project aims to strengthen the Community Based Forest Resources Managemnt (CBFRM) groups to actively participate in sustainable management of their forest resources, improve their livelihood, and generate employment opportunities.

Read more:

[https://www.wwfbhutan.org.bt/projects\\_/community\\_based\\_forest\\_resource\\_management/](https://www.wwfbhutan.org.bt/projects_/community_based_forest_resource_management/)

## 12. Bhutan for Life project

Bhutan for Life is an innovative funding initiative that aims to provide a sustained flow of finance to maintain the country's protected areas and biological corridors for perpetuity (until Bhutanese government takes over the costs entirely without foreign assistance). Bhutan for Life can be one of the strategic and long-term innovative solutions to ensure a balanced need for economic development with the need to protect natural resources, and opportunities in the cities with incentives in the rural places.

Read more: [Home - bfl](#) and [Bhutan For Life | WWF \(wwfbhutan.org.bt\)](#)

## 13. Bhutan Biological Conservation Complex

Bhutan Biological Conservation Complex (B2C2) refers to the conservational landscape comprising all protected areas (including buffer zones) and their connecting biological corridors. Presently, there are five national parks, four wildlife sanctuaries, one nature reserve and nine biological corridors. The protected area coverage is almost 20,000 sq km which makes up 51.32% of the country's area.

Read more: [Bhutan Biological Conservation Complex | WWF \(wwfbhutan.org.bt\)](#)