

ROYAL SOCIETY FOR PROTECTION OF NATURE



STRATEGIC PLAN 2011 — 2015



STRATEGIC PLAN

OF

**ROYAL SOCIETY FOR
PROTECTION OF NATURE**

2011 — 2015

**ROYAL SOCIETY FOR PROTECTION OF NATURE
KAWAJANGSA
THIMPHU; BHUTAN**



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



The 2011-2015 represents the third Strategic Plan period of the Royal Society for Protection of Nature (RSPN). This strategic plan has been developed to primarily ensure consistency in RSPN's programmes while adapting to the changing social, political, economic and more importantly the environmental conditions in Bhutan. Despite the cautious approach to economic development by the Royal Government of Bhutan, increasing demand for modern amenities, goods and services are posing immense pressure on the fragile ecosystem and natural resources of Bhutan. Bhutan is at a stage in its political economy wherein the parliamentary democracy and transition of power to the people have enabled people's development aspirations to transpire into votes and priorities of the government. The impacts of land degradation, loss of habitats and species, deforestation, dwindling water supply, and unpredictable climatic conditions pose immense threats to the stability of the ecosystem and natural resources of Bhutan. The impacts could be far too great to tackle if development were to be pursued unchecked. The need to embrace conservation on a continuous time scale is inevitable.

RSPN's priorities in the next five years remain primarily in the areas of Environmental Education and Advocacy, Conservation and Sustainable

Livelihoods, Research and Institutional development. One may note here that Advocacy and Research are two important program elements that have been introduced in this strategic plan. This indicates RSPN's acknowledgement of the need to enhance its rightful role of a civil society. Representing the public interest in protecting nature and conserving the environment will be prioritized. RSPN aspires to achieve it with the backing of science-based knowledge generated through research. Apart from those two additional program components, RSPN will continue to foster environmental education, implement community based sustainable livelihood programs, engage in endangered species conservation, and build organizational and institutional capacity.

Strategic approaches to implementing its strategic plan include building partnership with relevant agencies, holding stakeholder consultations and participation in project formulation and implementation. RSPN will also foster collaborative efforts with relevant agencies in the government, CSOs and private sector. The strategic plan shall provide the overall guidance and direction to RSPN's programme interventions in the next five years. However, it is important to note that the realization of the plans is entirely dependent on the level of funding support. Hence, the extent to which the strategic plan is implemented



depends on the fundraising capacity of RSPN. For this, the program and development division and the respective program units of RSPN shall take on the task of developing the action plans and detailed project proposals.

While the implementation of the plan shall be reviewed annually, a mid term review is due for mid 2013. RSPN will initiate development of the fourth strategic plan during the organization's annual retreat in 2015.





INTRODUCTION

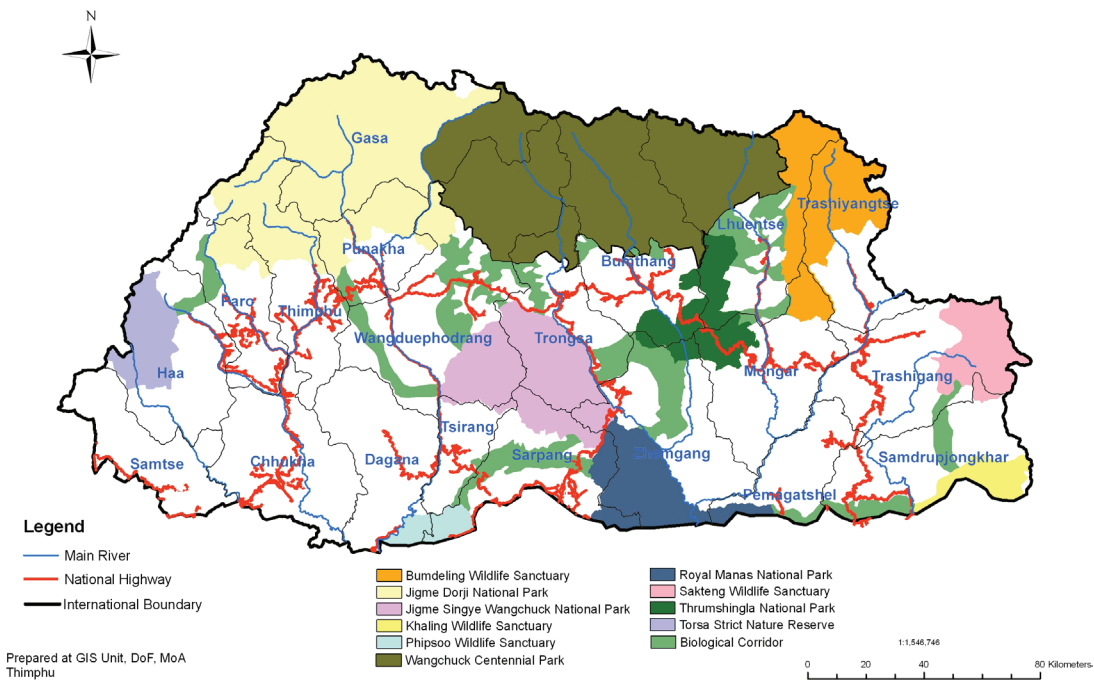
An Environmental Overview of Bhutan

Bhutan has one of the richest biodiversity owing to its socio-cultural norms, geophysical aspects and conservation leaderships. Geographically, Bhutan falls in the eastern Himalayas, a global hotspot for biodiversity conservation. From an elevation of about 200m above sea level in the south to over 4000 m in the north, its pristine water resources and contiguous landscapes of natural forests encompass huge diversity of wild flora and fauna. Environment is at the core of its development agenda; its conservation commitments are visible in its stringent laws, policies and leaderships. Bhutan has one of the highest

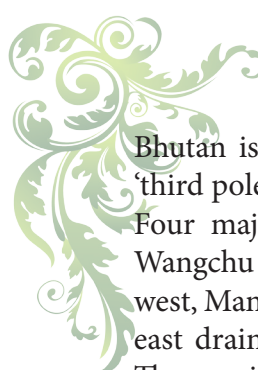
proportions of area under protection.

Although Bhutan has its natural environment relatively intact reinforced further by pro- environmental policies, programmes and investments, it has some of the world's poorest communities living within biologically rich ecosystems.

The Kingdom of Bhutan is richly endowed with affluent biological diversity owing to its altitudinal and climatic variations ranging from warm and humid sub tropical foothills in the south to cool temperate and alpine highlands in the north. In the context of water as an important environmental component,



Protected areas and biological corridors of Bhutan



Bhutan is also located in the so-called 'third pole' or the 'water towers' of Asia. Four major river systems namely the Wangchu and Puna-tsangchu in the west, Mangde chu and Kuri Chhu in the east drain the country north to south. The species, natural resources, and the ecosystem services have been long preserved through traditional customary laws and proactive government policies guided by the visionary and dynamic leadership of the Monarchs.

With an area of 38,394 square kilometers, 72% of Bhutan is under forest cover. It is home to a wide range of plants and animals many of which are endemic to Bhutan, globally threatened or endangered. It boasts 5600 vascular plant species including 369 species of orchid and 46 species of Rhododendron, 770 bird species and 200 mammals. Some of the globally valued and protected mammals like the Snow Leopard, the Bengal Tiger, Clouded Leopard, and Himalayan Black bears roam the jungles. The Takin, Golden langur, Blue sheep, Ghoral (mountain goat), Sambar deer, Pigmy hog etc. are representative

herbivores. The forests also provide safe haven to about 770 bird species including the endangered Black-necked crane, Wood snipes, White-bellied heron, Ibis bill, and Hornbills. Many are believed as yet to be discovered. Some of the recently discovered species include the Druk Shou which is endangered as per the IUCN status.

The above biodiversity is the result of strong conservation policies of the Royal Government. Article 5 of the Constitution of Bhutan requires 60% of the country to be maintained under forest cover for all times and mandates every citizen to be a trustee of the Kingdom's natural resources and environment. Currently, Bhutan has the highest percentage of managed protected areas in Asia. There are ten protected areas covering 39.6% of Bhutan in 18 of 20 districts. Another 9.7% of the country falls under biological corridors. In addition, the Royal Government accords special importance to protection of Phobjikha and Phochhu areas as habitat of black-necked cranes and white-bellied heron respectively.



Description of RSPN working areas



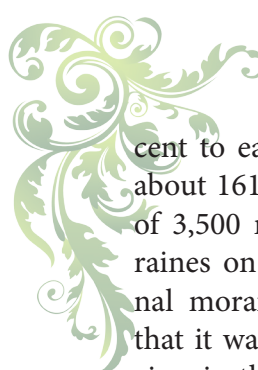
During the first strategic plan period, RSPN focused mainly on environmental education and institutional development with a few interventions in the valley of Phobjikha to monitor the wintering habitat and population of the Black-necked cranes (*Grus nigricollis*). The second strategic plan (2005-2010) reviewed the first plan document and assessed the needs and issues related to species conservation, ecosystem based environmental management, and emerging issues such as water and waste management; in addition to ongoing environmental education and institutional development programs from the

first plan. With the directives of the Department of Forest and Park Services, at least five priority areas were identified in terms of ecological significance and the need for conservation action. Therefore, Phobjikha in Wangdue phodrang, Kangpara-Wamrong in Trashigang, the tri-junction of Chukha, Haa, and Samtse, and Ada-Goenshari in Punakha and Wangdue phodrang districts received significant or some form of intervention and investment during the plan period. This defined RSPN working area primarily outside of the protected areas.

Phobjikha and Ada in Wangdue phodrang district are located adja-



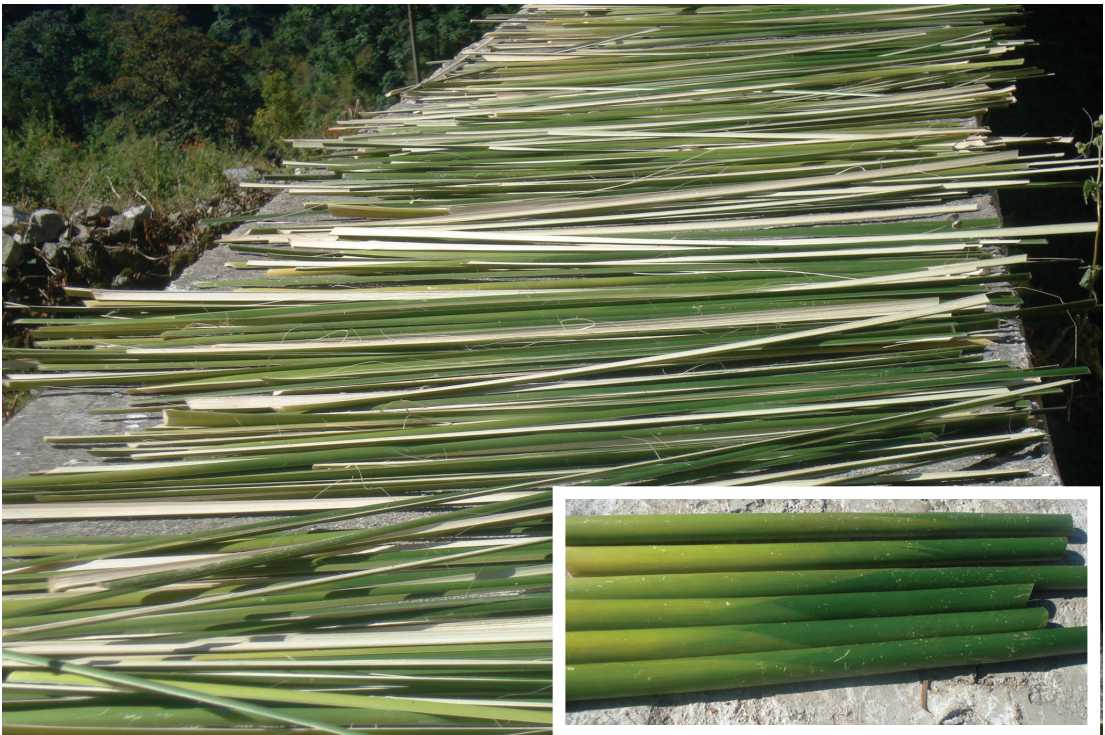
Phobjikha valley is the largest wintering habitat of black-necked cranes



cent to each other. Phobjikha valley is about 161.9 km² with a mean elevation of 3,500 masl. The valley's lateral moraines on the upper slopes and terminal moraines at lower slopes indicate that it was formed from retreating glaciers in the past. It has one of the largest known high altitude wetlands in the country, which plays hosts to over 300 Black-necked cranes in the winter and is a scheduled conservation area. Besides, its rich vegetation cover and wild flora and fauna including seven vegetation types, 15 species of large mammals, and 88 recorded bird species are some of the natural assets that merit conservation measures. While the valley has conser-

vation significance, it is also home to more than 5000 people living in about 500 households that are directly or indirectly dependent on the forest and wetland resources for their daily subsistence livelihood. Potato is the mainstay of the economy in Phobjikha while other crops such as wheat, barley, buckwheat, and vegetables are grown at a smaller scale.

Phobjikha valley stretches further south towards the village of Ada under Athang Gewog and forms a contiguous landscape with ecosystems and species of conservation significance especially the White bellied herons (*Ardea insignis*). The Phobjikha landscape conservation area is thus appropriate in the con-

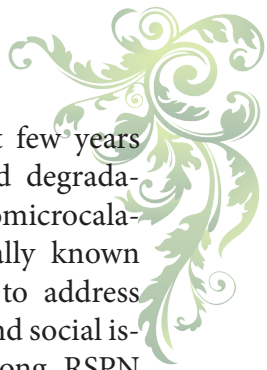


Communities in remote villages depend on forest resources for their livelihoods

text of optimizing long term protection of ecosystems and associated species such as the Black-necked cranes, Tiger and the critically endangered White-bellied Heron.

Kangpara Gewog under Thrimshing Drungkhag (sub-district) and Lumang under Wamrong Drungkhag in Trashigang Dzongkhag are located in the broadleaf forest zone with potentially high diversity of faunal and floral species. It is also one of the only two sites in the world that supports western sub species of the Blyth's tragopan (*Tragopan blythii molesworthii*). The area is also home for high population of subsistence farmers significantly relying on forest resources such as the cane and

bamboo craft. Over the last few years heavy harvesting has caused degradation of a bamboo specie *Neomicrocalamus andropogonifolius* locally known as Ringshu. In an attempt to address some of the environmental and social issues in Kangpara and Wamrong, RSPN initiated a community-based natural resource management program. Baseline ecological and socio-economic surveys resulted in assessing the status of human-wildlife conflicts affecting the food security of the communities of Pasaphu and Madhuwa in Kangpara, capacity building and plantation of Ringshu in the same communities, and establishment of community forests in three villages in Wamrong and Kangpara.





Royal Society for Protection of Nature

The Royal Society for Protection of Nature (RSPN) was established in 1987 to primarily assist the country in safeguarding biodiversity and the natural environment and in promoting sustainable development in Bhutan. At a time when the concept of civil society organization or non-governmental organizations was barely in the understanding of the Bhutanese people, RSPN enjoyed significant recognition within and outside the government as a non-state actor. With the support of the Royal Government, RSPN has enjoyed legal recognition and tax-exempt status much ahead of the formal adoption of the Civil Society Organizations Act by the parliament in 2007. The growing need for improved organizational management, program planning and implementation meant that significant amount of time and resources were mobilized to support its growth. Since its establishment, RSPN has constantly maneuvered to strengthen its institutional and program implementation capacity. In 2011, RSPN successfully de-registered itself from the Companies Act and is now registered

with the Civil Society Organizations Authority Secretariat as a full-fledged Public Benefit Organization (PBO). Today, it remains a pioneer public benefit civil society organization engaging at the national, regional and international levels. A seven-member Board of Directors manages the organization and the day-to-day management responsibilities are delegated to the Executive Director. Its Administrative and Human Resource Management Manual (AHRMM) prescribe the administrative and financial authorities, procedures and processes. RSPN continues to enjoy the Royal Patronage of His Majesty the King owing to which the organization maintains high degree of discipline, transparency, accountability and due diligence in the conduct of its affairs while constantly striving to build its professional base. Acknowledged for its creativity and effectiveness, the organization has evolved as a preferred partner for cooperation and collaboration by the Royal government and agencies within and outside Bhutan.



RSPN's Vision, Mission and Core Values



Vision

Future generations of Bhutan will live in an environmentally sustainable society

Mission

RSPN's mission is to inspire personal responsibility and active involvement of the people of Bhutan in the conservation of the Kingdom's environment through education, research and sustainable livelihood opportunities.

Core Values

RSPN's core values are statements

based on clear, concise, and shared beliefs of the organization that will contribute towards achieving its mission in the long run. Its core values are to:

- provide leadership in conservation
- promote innovative technologies and methods
- be proactive towards environmental issues
- be accountable and transparent
- be efficient and effective in delivering programmes





ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

At the close of the twenty first century, international and national commitments and actions fall far short of the recognized need to safeguard the environment and ecosystem integrity. Increasing population, pursuit of economic development, democratization and politics, and globalization continue to inhibit environmental protection and pose immense pressure on the natural resources and ecosystems. 69% of Bhutan's population lives in rural areas depending primarily on agriculture and natural ecosystem and 23% live in poverty. At least 57.2% of rural and 2.3% of urban population still depend on wood for cooking; 39.8% of rural and 1.3% of urban population have no access to

electricity and therefore rely heavily on non-renewable resources for energy needs. Additionally, traditional resource sharing institutions that enabled communities to sustainably manage local resources such as water, tsamdrog (grazing lands), and sokshing (leaf litter forests) are losing significance under nationalization policies. The issues are exacerbated by limited technologies, expertise, and skills rendering these communities incapable of uplifting themselves to decent standards of living. We are now faced with a number of environmental issues and challenges that in the long term may have a direct impact on the future development and welfare of Bhutan.



Environmental Issues

In Bhutan, the middle path, sustainable development and gross national happiness (GNH) philosophies provide basis for proactive environmental policies and action. However, practical issues contribute to widening gap between policy and practice. Environmental issues in the country are on the rise. Some of the prominent issues include:

Land degradation and loss of forest cover

Over 69% of the Bhutanese population are directly dependent on crop agriculture, livestock rearing and forest products. The stability of forestland, rangeland, and arable land is therefore, of critical importance to communities across Bhutan, especially to sustain livelihoods and rural economies. Land management problems such as loss of soil fertility and erosions stem from both human-induced and natural

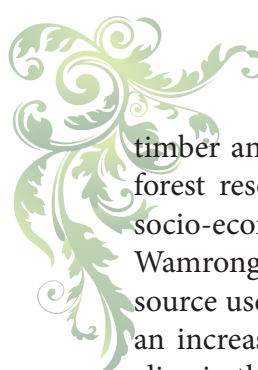


It is mandated by the Constitution to maintain 60% of landcover under forests for all times to come

processes. At the outset, anthropogenic pressures are multifaceted and substantial often appearing in the form of forest degradation, unsustainable agriculture, mining, industries and infrastructure development. While these are direct and symptomatic causes of land degradation, poverty, land shortage, and rise in population are known to be the root causes.

The constitution of Bhutan requires the country to maintain minimum 60% of its land cover under forests. However, with the launch of democratic government and constituency pressures for infrastructure and economic development, the challenges to meeting this

constitutional requirement seem daunting. Pressures from human population, agriculture, and livestock coupled with monetization and development of the economy are adversely affecting forest sustainability in Bhutan in general. The emphasis on providing infrastructure to rural communities of all 202 gewogs has largely scarred the country. Many of the roads and electric grids that inevitably are aligned through forested areas cumulatively demand significant parts of forests to be destroyed leading to habitat fragmentation and reduction of the forest cover. At the community level, localized forest degradation is often associated to unsustainable harvesting of



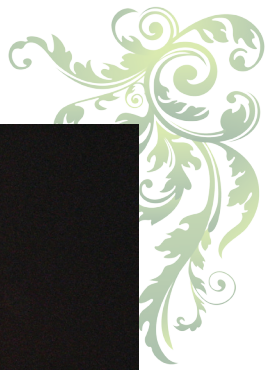
timber and firewood, high demand for forest resources and overgrazing. In a socio-economic study carried out in Wamrong and Kangpara, a forest resource use and threat analysis indicated an increase in resource use with a decline in the resource base. Among other issues, deforestation caused by shifting cultivation and overexploitation; unregulated exploitation of non-wood forest products and overgrazing were some of the prominent issues challenging both forest quality and livelihoods of the communities. In Phobjikha, the usage of timber and firewood are found to be

varied and very extensive. On an average, about 31,158 kg of fuel wood were consumed annually with an estimated total of 15,516.83 tons of fuel wood harvested (RSPN, 2004).

Land slides and soil erosion from roads aligned on the fragile mountain slopes expose them to monsoon rainfall and flooding causing severe erosion and destabilizing the slopes. The potential of small slope erosions developing into massive landslides causing entire mountainsides to erode is very high. This will entail loss of forest cover and increase the need for expensive restora-



Fertile farmlands along fragile terrains are vulnerable to erosion and landslides.



Forest fire destroys large tracts of forest every year

tion, reforestation, and relief programs. The associated costs in maintenance and disaster management could potentially be beyond affordability.

Every year several hundred acres of forest are lost to agricultural or infrastructure development purposes. There is increasing demand for private and institutional ownership of land that earmark huge areas of forest land for development purposes. Government institutions, NGOs and private agencies have taken on lease and reserved huge areas of government reserved forests. This is

further aggravated by the inevitable need to provide land to the landless.

Forest fires destroy thousands of acres of forest every year. In addition to the continuing pursuit of communities, especially in the east, to intentional burning of forests for grasses, accidental fires from increased human interactions with forests during hikes, treks, grazing, picnicking, electrical short circuiting and careless disposal of cigarettes have resulted in significant loss of forests to fires.



Threats to biodiversity

Bhutan is home to several globally significant species that are categorized as endemic, endangered or critically endangered. Of the many, the Black-necked cranes (BNC) and White-bellied herons have been identified as threatened by development impacts on their habitats.

Rural communities of Bhutan are located in close proximity to forests from which they derive timber, non-wood forest products, and other ecosystem services including water, grasses for livestock and protein supplements from hunting. With increasing pursuit of economic development, degradation of natural resources and forest habitats around communities are becoming prominent with increasing incidences

of human-wildlife conflict. According to the Wildlife Conservation Division (then Nature Conservation Division) of the Department of Forest and Park Services, annual crop loss ranges from 0.3 to 18% of total household income (Ref. Bhutan human-wildlife conflict management strategy, 2008). In Wamrong and Kangpara, at least 30-70% of households were affected by wildlife, and suffered food insecurity ranging anywhere from 1.5 months to 6 months a year. Loss of livestock to predators like tigers, leopards, wild dogs etc. and loss of crops to prey species such as deer, macaques, wild boar make communities antagonistic to wildlife. Such antagonistic approaches of the communities may further endanger the species especially the



Endangered Black-necked crane in Phobjikha



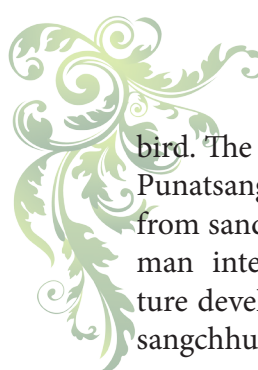
Phobjikha faces eminent threats of development without legal status

most vulnerable and endangered species such as Tiger, Black-necked cranes, White-bellied Herons etc.

Phobjikha valley has the best known high altitude wetland in the country playing host to a large number of the globally threatened black-necked cranes and several other water birds, plants and animal species of ecological significance. Today, economic development and population growth exerts immense pressures leading to loss of wetland and threatening its quality. Conversion of wetland to meet infrastructure and agricultural demands is an increasing challenge, which poses serious threats to the habitat and survival of associated species. The quality of the wetland is also vulnerable to degradation from increasing non-point source

pollutants such as chemical fertilizer run-offs and effluents from various other sources.

The White-bellied Heron (*Ardea insignis*) is one of the 50 rarest bird species in the world, which historically occurred in Nepal, India, Bangladesh, Myanmar and Bhutan. Its population in the world is still unknown with global population ranging from 50 - 200 birds. Information on the life history of the species is negligible and restricted to the study carried by the RSPN. Today hydropower projects pose immense threat to the conservation of the White-bellied heron. Roads and infrastructure facilities concentrated along the river, increasing human settlements and related economic activities are already looming threats to the habitat of this endangered



bird. The best known habitats along the Punatsangchhu are extremely disturbed from sand mining, recreations, and human interventions during infrastructure development especially the Punatsangchhu hydropower projects. In 2010,

the white-bellied heron population along the Punatsangchhu suffered most with no juvenile recruitments. None of the hatchings survived.



Critically endangered white-bellied herons depend on the fresh water ecosystems that face threats from developmental projects.

Degrading water quality and quantity

Bhutan is considered to have an abundance of water per capita, but there is an unequal distribution, both spatially and seasonally. Increasing pressures on the water resources caused generally by rising demands and competition from various users further exacerbates this issue. From domestic consumption and agriculture to new water users such as hydropower projects, manufacturing industries, and recreation, demand for water is expected to intensify in the fu-

ture. Simultaneously, there is a decline in the quantity of water mainly attributing to loss of forest cover and critical watersheds. Today only 78% of the population has access to safe drinking water and only about 12.5% of the arable land is irrigated (RGOB, Bhutan Water Policy, pp.3). Further, the quality of available water is often compromised from non point sources in the rural areas and a combination of point sources and non point sources in urban areas.



People struggle to save their water sources before its dried completely

Sedimentation and suspended particles from increasing soil erosion, construction, and extraction of sand and boulders are transforming the fresh water of the streams and rivers into polluted undrinkable water. Water pollution is more pronounced in the urban areas where wastewaters, garbage and industrial effluents find their ways into water bodies. Unregulated sanitation outlets and toilets contribute to fecal contents of water causing diseases and health risks. Effluents from industrial, mining activity and road construction are main contributors to chemical and increased sediments in water depriving rivers of biotic life. Some of the major areas of concern include Pasakha Industrial Estate, Jimina stone quarry, coal mines in Eastern Bhutan, dolomite & limestone

mines in Southern Bhutan etc.

In the rural areas however, runoffs from excessive use of fertilizers, as in the case of Phobjikha seriously undermines the quality of water. In recent times, farm roads and their construction process remain the major contributors to soil erosion and suspended soil particles in water. Access to water is becoming an increasing issue in rural areas of Bhutan. Increasing demand for water against decreasing availability from drying water sources make water an increasingly scare resource. In RSPN's working areas in Trashigang, three out of the four communities in Wamrong and Kangpara report water scarcity as a priority issue as they lose their water sources to deforestation, overgrazing, and erosion (RSPN, SES report 2008, pp. 16-34).

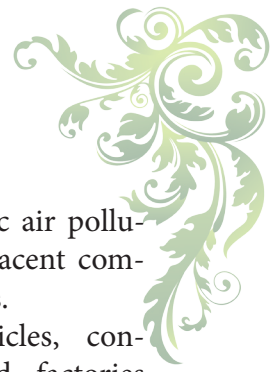
Increasing waste issues

The issue of waste management poses a phenomenal challenge. On the one hand, inadequate management of solid wastes and wastewaters are some of the conspicuous problems arising either due to insufficient infrastructure planning or inadequate municipal facilities and services. On the other hand, levels of economic growth, subsequent changes in consumption pattern and a high urban population growth rate have all led to increase in the quantity and composition of wastes. As per the report on the study of solid wastes carried out by the RSPN (PPPUE policy framework),

major waste problems arise from change in the consumption pattern of urban residents, lack of public awareness and advocacy, lack of civic responsibilities among the public at large, lack of coordination among institutions responsible for waste management, lack of strong legal framework and implementation mechanisms, and rural-urban migration contributing to rise in population. The waste prevention and management act of 2010 is yet to implement incentives and disincentives including taxation and polluters pay principle.



With increase in population and economic growth, solid waste is a serious concern for all



Air pollution

Every year, economic activities in the country are growing both in sphere and size. Avenues for individuals to do and grow businesses, secure loans, and access modern facilities are growing year by year. Industries and transport sector have grown to the extent that pollution from factories, mines, construction and associated vehicular pollution are a matter of concern. Construction and mining projects have dramatically increased in the last few years that air quality in some of the major development areas have been compromised to the risk of human health. Urban constructions sites, hydropower construction sites, mines etc. spew large amounts

of dusts making site specific air pollution threats to workers, adjacent communities, plants and animals.

Emissions from vehicles, construction machineries, and factories remain unregulated. Exposed soil and mud from construction sites as well as sand and debris dumped along public roads and community spaces find their way into the atmosphere making the capital city Thimphu and other urban areas the source of respiratory diseases. This is further aggravated by overhanging smoke from forest fires, emissions and wood stoves during the winter and spring season.



Air and water pollution from unregulated construction increases every year.

CHALLENGES

Bhutan has earned global recognition for spearheading environmental conservation. However, with democracy and choice of the people, maintaining its position as a global leader in environmental protection and conservation will be challenging.

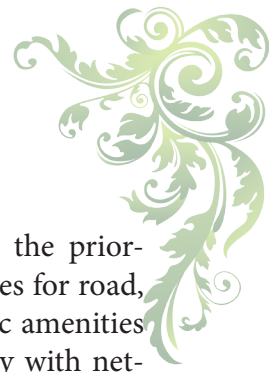
Fragility and terrain

Being located in the young fold mountains of the Himalayas, Bhutan remains vulnerable to its fragile mountain terrain i.e. the unstable geology and soil structure. Any small disruption in the geology could destabilize the entire slopes and associated mountain ecosystem and services emanating from them. Hence, any development activity in the country requires extra caution and timely environmental consideration.



Developments on fragile terrains lead to landslides in many areas

Democracy vis-a-vis the environment



Bhutan is categorized least developed country with majority of its population dependent on subsistence agriculture. With globalization and modern economic development, the aspiration for economic development is understandably strong. The launch of parliamentary democracy and power to vote has enabled the people to prioritize development over conservation. Preservation of the environment, though an important pillar of Gross National

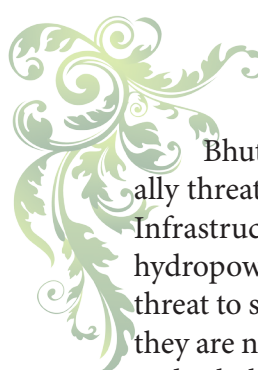
Happiness, remains low on the priority list of the people. Priorities for road, electricity, modern economic amenities etc. have scarred the country with network of farm roads that cut along fragile mountain sides. Such priorities of the communities, if not changed, will drive future governments to continue prioritizing economic development over the environment.



Infrastructure development



Large areas of forest are cleared infrastructure developments



Bhutan is home to numerous globally threatened and endangered species. Infrastructure development especially hydropower projects pose immense threat to species and habitat especially if they are not planned on run off the river and rely heavily on dams. For example, the critically endangered White-bellied heron habitat is heavily disturbed under the ongoing Punatsangchu hydro-power project. The subsequent phases rely heavily on dams that will submerge villages, agriculture farms, forests and associated species. Lack of measures to ensure aquatic migration and minimum flow requirements threaten aquatic life and other species dependent on them.

Similarly, the Phobjikha conservation area is vulnerable to unregu-

lated tourism development. The lack of staunch regulatory measures and legal protection of the valley will lend the valley's wetland and watershed vulnerable to destruction and ultimate loss of the Black-necked cranes. The pristine state of nature in the valley, the beautiful landscape, and the magnificent Black-necked cranes make Phobjikha valley a potential ecotourism destination. Unplanned management and associated infrastructure development in the valley pose immense threats to maintaining its environmental significance as a source of economic welfare of the people.

Bhutan is potentially experiencing high per-capita destruction of natural environment for meeting economic development goals.



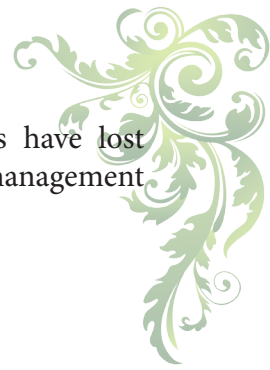
Human interface with forests and wildlife

With 72% forest cover and 69% of the population under agriculture based rural livelihoods, the interface between humans and wildlife is extensive. In recent times, the issue of human wildlife conflict has attracted the attention of the parliament owing to the loss of livestock and crops to wildlife by rural farmers. However, the challenge lies in separating wildlife from forest. Forests are an integral part of rural livelihood. All rural communities are nestled in the forests and depend on them for timber, fuel wood, water supply for drinking

and irrigation, fodder, manure, and to some extent on wildlife for protein supplement. Managing and maintaining natural forests are essential to maintaining biodiversity and ecosystem services. With the recent nationalization of leaf-litter forests (Sokshing) and the promotion of community forestry by the Royal Government, communities are showing increasing interest in community forest that entitles them to rights over timber and other forest products. Considering that community initiatives are driven by economic rationalities, management

by communities may eradicate certain plant species over desired economically valued species thereby reducing diver-

sity. In the past, Sokshings have lost diversity through human management over time.



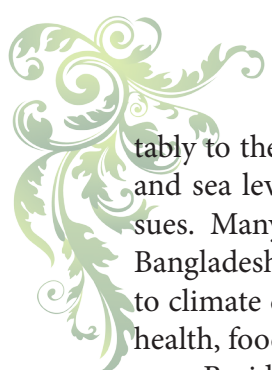
Climate change

Over the last decades, human activities, particularly burning of fossil fuels have increased carbon and other greenhouse gas emissions directly leading to global warming and subsequently changing the climate patterns irrevocably. Climate change is a looming threat to humanity and its consequences stretch over time and space. From ecological and economic losses to social aggravations, climate change

will have adverse impacts on the environment, human health, food security, economic activity, natural resources and physical infrastructure. It is assumed and at the same time predicted that the world's developing countries and the most marginalized groups of people in these countries will be affected severely by climate change consequences. This will mainly stem from their incapacities to mitigate adequately and adapt inevi-



The melting of glaciers - disasters in the making



tably to the chain of events from floods and sea level rise to water and food issues. Many Asian countries including Bangladesh and Bhutan are susceptible to climate change especially in terms of health, food and water security.

Besides natural processes and geological factors causing land degradation, the complex relationship between climate change and loss of productivity of land and related issues needs specific mention given that climate change is expected to be an additional stress on rates of land degradation in the future.

The Bhutanese are considerably

vulnerable to climate change and its impacts, especially as a mountain community and with low economic/human capacity to deal with impending risks and disasters. Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOFs) leading to morbidity and mortality, agricultural pests and diseases giving rise to food security, and water security are some issues already occurring without forewarning. Although Bhutan's contribution to climate change is considered very minimal, strengthening its capacity to adapt to climate change is a challenge and a necessity.

Policy implementation deficiencies

Bhutan is perhaps one of the few countries in the world with strong environmental policies and regulations. However, it is also among the many countries with serious deficiencies in implementation of the environmental regulations. While regulations to curb pollution and environmental degradation exist, on the ground situations reveal immense gap between policy and implementation. Economic development is occurring at a rapid pace. Industrialization and infrastructure development have become the major demand of the people and therefore the focus of the government. Air and water quality are being compromised with competent authorizes in the construction, mining, and manufacturing industries, automobile workshops and farm roads sectors failing to prevent or mitigate the environmental impacts of their sector. Envi-

ronmental impact assessment and clearance processes for projects have suffered at various stages including lack of public consultation, compliance monitoring and enforcement to the extent that the processes have become more of rubber-stamping exercise.

Two major factors are primarily responsible for causing these deficiencies. First, the Bhutanese society is small and closely-knit wherein most of the people especially at the bureaucracy and business levels are known to the other and bound by traditional social obligations. Such relations at the level of the empowered and affluent often get in the way of official undertakings, making policy enforcement difficult. Second, the provisions of the law are not matched by adequate institutional set up with required human resources, equipment and budgetary support for effective enforcement.

PROGRAMMES AND ACHIEVEMENTS



RSPN has constantly pursued adaptive management and sought to fit its programmes and projects to changing social, economic and political situations and associated emerging environmental issues. The strategic plan, which is revised every five years guides and directs the organization's programmes and activities. Over the last two strategic plan periods, RSPN has maintained focus on specific subjects and consistency of presence in specific locations to enable adequate outcomes and learning for replication. While its environmental education program covered the entire nation with the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Home and Cultural Affairs and the Municipalities as the major partners, the work of species

and ecosystem conservation, sustainable livelihoods, and research were targeted to specific locations as entrusted by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forests. At least five priority areas were identified in terms of ecological significance and the need for conservation action. Therefore, Phobjikha in Wangdue phodrang, Kangpara-Wamrong in Trashigang, the tri-junction of Chukha, Haa, and Samtse, and Ada-Goenshari in Punakha and Wangdue phodrang districts received significant or some form of intervention and investment during the plan period. The history of RSPN programmes and achievements are described under the following thematic areas:




Environmental Education

RSPN probably was the first organization to introduce the concept of environmental education in Bhutan. The society initiated the first environmental education programme to raise awareness and promote positive attitudes and sustainable actions in conserving Bhutan's rich environmental heritage. Since then it has become a major programme facilitating the delivery of environmental education to formal and non-formal education system through a network of nature clubs established in schools and training institutes and LCSGs (Local Conservation Support Groups). Follow-

ing this, RSPN has been able to institutionalize nature clubs within the Ministry of Education. Nature club manuals were produced and teachers trained annually in collaboration with the Ministry. Such programmes have won the support of the Minister and education officials that nature clubs are now institutionalized and regular in schools. This has set the stage for RSPN to take on the role of facilitating curriculum development and revision as desired by the Royal University of Bhutan and the Ministry of Education.

RSPN launched a Water Quality



monitoring project (Follow that stream) in schools around Thimphu in 1992 and as the project gained nationwide popularity, many nature clubs across the country adopted the water quality guide to monitor their local water bodies. The project has also been modified and adapted for the Wang Watershed management project that has been piloted in four districts of Haa, Paro, Thimphu and Chukha. RSPN now engages students to measure the physical, chemical, biological and socio-cultural characteristics of the local catchments using action research tools. The project WATER (Watershed action through education and research) enables students and local communities to better understand the impact of land and water use on the quantity and quality of water.

In the last two strategic plan periods, RSPN has also seen the realization of its advocacy programs. The call for environmentally friendly development in Phobjikha was heeded to by the Royal Government of Bhutan and supported by the Austrian Government

for underground electrification in the Phobjikha valley. Grid electricity has come into the valley in the most unprecedented manner with lines buried underground or running along forest edges. Electric transformers placed inside traditionally designed houses and shed that blend with the natural surrounding and cultural sanctity of the valley. Further, the assistance of Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) to upgrade the primary school enables the Gewog and district authorities to restore the wetland currently occupied by the Phobjikha Primary School. Similar efforts to advocate for measures to address increasing garbage and litter issues in the urban and rural areas have been answered through the enactment of the Waste Prevention and Management Act. However, implementing the Act remains a challenge. Attempts to garner public support for environmental cause, especially in the context of political change and rapidly emerging democracy, have also been initiated with the establishment of the LCSGs.



Environment Education is the foundation for sustained conservation.

Conservation and Sustainable Livelihoods Program



Empirical evidence from around the world suggests communities and their livelihoods choices play important roles in collectively enhancing and managing natural resources or compromising its quality and quantity thereof. Therefore, it is crucial for conservation organizations to consider the social aspects of environmental conservation paying special attention to the livelihood needs of people and their ability to meaningfully involve in conservation planning and practice.

RSPN has also identified the need to integrate livelihood needs of local people in the interest of long-term sustainability of communities. In the late 1990s, research findings suggested that community people increasingly perceived conservation as an obstacle to development. RSPN initiated the Integrated Conservation and Development Program (ICDP) through which it at-

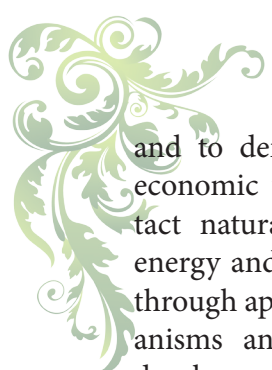
tempted to demonstrate and advocate for nature and environmental conservation as the foundation for economic advancement and human welfare.

RSPN began its sustainable livelihoods approaches to conservation with its Integrated Conservation and Development Program in Phobjikha valley. The programme primarily targeted conserving the Black-necked cranes, its wetland habitat, associated species and ecosystems through science based conservation projects and incentive based diversification of alternative incomes of the local communities.

Alternative energy, eco-tourism, organic agriculture and community capacity building programmes were developed and piloted to incentivize local participation in conservation. Several alternative income and sustainable livelihood programs were initiated to garner public support for conservation



Energy efficiency is key to green economy.



and to demonstrate the associated of economic wellbeing with rich and intact natural environment. Alternative energy and income were demonstrated through appropriate institutional mechanisms and environmentally friendly development interventions. In the absence of grid electricity, about one hundred ninety households were provided with subsidized solar photovoltaic systems and twenty one institutions were provided with free solar lighting systems; pico hydro with demonstrated underground cabling was provided to the Gangtey monastery and the monastic school (Shedra), the Black-necked crane information centre, and Gogona temple. Through a project on women in energy and water management, a women's group was formed, two villages provided with piped water supply and one hundred gas cylinders were procured to enable wood replacement and reduction of drudgery; through ecotourism initiatives, local people were exposed to the utility of natural beauty for tourism purposes, nature trails and camp sites were constructed, a crane festival was instituted; further and considered most essential by RSPN, a local management committee was also established and trained in various aspects such as decision making, recording of minutes, accounting, reporting etc..

Simultaneous programmes and activities on ecological research and species conservation were carried out. The need for a landscape level approach to conservation in Phobjikha and Ada was identified. Optimizing species and ecosystems protection, the programme

culminated into a management plan. The plan is a comprehensive description of the physical area, its ecological and social significance, and the need for legalizing its status as a conservation area. Within its management domain, specific outcomes include area zoning, nature conservation measures, and sustainable livelihood plans. As a result of the above initiatives, Phobjikha has emerged as the most attractive conservation area in the country. The area, as a conservation site, enjoys environmentally friendly development. The inner core wetland and the surrounding forests remain primarily in pristine state. Apart from these livelihoods oriented programs, RSPN has constantly assisted the district authorities and the communities in fostering community forestry and species conservation. Today Phobjikha remains the most significant habitat of the Black necked cranes with an economically advanced and environmentally conscious community.

The above experiences have enabled RSPN to replicate its success to other areas. Since 2005, RSPN has widened the scope of its reach. It has initiated the community based natural resource management in Wamrong and Kangpapra areas of Trashigang district in Eastern Bhutan. In a span of few years, RSPN has assisted the Dzongkhag (district) and Drungkhag (sub-district) authorities in environmental education, community forestry, preservation of Ringshu (bamboo) species, land management, assessing human wildlife conflicts, and fostering collective action and capacity building of communities.

Organizational and Institutional Development



RSPN's institutional capacity and financial sustainability was also strengthened. A million dollars endowment fund was created and the investment income helped the organization to sustain part of its core operational costs. The construction of its own headquarters office and an environmental resource centre (ERC) comprising of the research unit, conference centre and a library with in-house books and online access to journals was initiated on 17,000sft land secured on lease from the Royal Government. Institutional reforms and restructuring of the organization have been carried out to establish a strong foundation for growth of the organization. With the Civil Society Organizations Act in place, RSPN was also able to transfer its registration from the companies act to the Civil Society Organizations registry as a public benefit organization.

RSPN has also increased its international presence through partnerships and membership to networks and organizations. Representing Bhutan, RSPN is the only member of the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) and the Climate Action Network of South Asia (CANSA) networks. It is also one of the founding members of the South Asia Forum for Responsible Business (SAFoRB). Within the country, it has

initiated building networks of Local Conservation Support Groups (LCSG) and consortium of water professionals. It has also initiated the establishment of national climate action network.

Owing to the little capacity of Bhutanese to engage in philanthropy (other than religious affairs), RSPN relied primarily on external technical and financial resources to support its programmes and projects. In the early years of its establishment, RSPN sought institutional and program support from the Royal Government of Bhutan, WWF-US, the MacArthur Foundation-US, and the Bhutan Trust Fund for Environmental Conservation (BT FEC). The support provided by the above entities has enabled RSPN to be founded on strong principles of accountability; transparency and organizational capacity to implement conservation programmes. RSPN programmes continue to receive unfailing support of past and new donors. In addition to the above, some of the existing donors to RSPN projects include the Government of Netherlands (through the sustainable development agreement), the Government of Finland, UNDP, UNEP, Austrian Development Cooperation, Felburn Foundation and the International Crane Foundation, The Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC) contributed to the RSPN endowment fund.





STRATEGIC PLAN 2011-2015

The strategic plan for RSPN is a framework for decisions that enables the organization to review, revise and plan its program and institutional arrangements towards the direction of meeting its goals, objectives. It provides a five-year roadmap for the organization primarily in working towards its vision and mission. 2011 marks the beginning of third strategic plan period (2011-2015). This strategic plan endeavors to position RSPN in the changing environmental, social and political situation within the country, in the region and globally. The Board of Directors and staff of RSPN developed this third strategic plan with assistance from Dr. Judith brown Meyers, USA. The plan was developed with broad participation from staff members during a one-week workshop held in Paro Bhutan from 9th to 13th March 2010. The strategic planning process comprised of a series of reviews and brainstorming sessions on priority issues concerning the state of the environment and ongoing RSPN programmes. Thus this plan presents fundamental statements relating to RSPN's mission, values, goals, and objectives.

The goals set for this strategic plan are:

- to contribute significantly to

environmental conservation in Bhutan through natural resources management and development of sustainable livelihood approaches.

- to increase the level of environmental awareness through education, advocacy and public participation in conservation.
- to enhance and increase the knowledge on the Bhutanese environment and sustainable livelihoods.
- enhance RSPN's institutional, organizational and human resource capacity to support conservation, sustainable development, research and education.

Three major thematic programme areas include: (i) environmental conservation and sustainable livelihoods; (ii) education and advocacy, and (iii) research on both natural and social sciences will set the basis for all RSPN's programme planning. A number of goals and objectives accompanied by appropriate programmatic strategies were identified to contribute to the overall purpose of the organization.



Implementation of vision and mission

In line with the vision and mission RSPN has identified four organizational goals. Each of the ownership, operation-alization and management of these goals will be taken up by three programme units. The goal that comprises RSPN's

institutional development is cross cutting through the whole organization but will be managed by the 'Management Team'. The Management Team will consist of the various unit heads and will be lead by the Executive Director.



Objectives and Strategies

CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS PROGRAM

Organizational goal 1

To contribute significantly to environmental conservation in Bhutan through natural resources management and development of sustainable livelihood approaches.


Program goal 1.1

Minimize forest degradation in collaboration with relevant stakeholders

Objectives 1.1.1 Assist Social Forestry programmes in at least selected peri-urban and rural areas

Strategies:

- Support development and implementation of selected community forest management plans
- Promote afforestation programmes through plantations (World Environment Day, Social Forestry Day etc.) in peri urban and selected rural areas
- Collaborate with Department of Forest in defining, mapping and monitoring forest utility zones, critical watershed zones and community forests in RSPN working areas



Objective 1.1.2 Conduct research on the biodiversity in community forestry

Strategies:

- Secure research partnerships with Council of Research and Department of Forest and Park Services
- Establish and monitor permanent plots
- Conduct research
- Publish periodical reports and journal articles

Program goal 1.2

Enhance the conservation of threatened species and their habitats

At least three species of concern have been identified in the management plan for Phobjikha landscape conservation area. The Black-necked crane (*Grus nigricollis*) is a vulnerable species sharing its habitat among Bhutan, India, and China. Its conservation significance stems from the loss of habitats with increasing population pressures. The White-bellied Heron (*Ardea insignis*) is a critically endangered bird and one of the least studied birds. Concerns in Bhutan and elsewhere in Asia include loss of habitat to large hydropower constructions and other anthropogenic stressors. The Royal Bengal tiger (*Panthera tigris*) is another species of concern because of its dwindling status in most its habitats. Phobjikha and its surrounding forests supplement the biological corridors to provide an important transit for this species.

Objective 1.2.1 Ensure annual winter population of black-necked crane does not decline below 300 for Phobjikha and 500 for Bhutan

Strategies:

- Protect BNC habitats especially wetlands
- Monitor winter populations and conduct annual counts
- Foster transboundary research

Objective 1.2.2 Increase the population of the critically endangered White-bellied herons

Strategies:

- Conduct surveys and studies on various aspects of WBH
- Initiate captive breeding program to restore annual juvenile recruitment
- Carry out public education, awareness and advocacy



Objective 1.2.3 Support the Royal Government in conservation of Tiger and other endangered species

Strategies:

- Provide tiger data from surveys
- Protection of tiger habitats
- Where relevant, integrate Tiger and endangered species in human wildlife conflict projects
- Identify scheduled species and habitats using biodiversity surveys, RGOB legal provisions and IUCN guidelines.

Program goal 1.3

Minimize land degradation in RSPN’s working areas by 25% through appropriate land management techniques in collaboration with stakeholders.

To minimize the impacts of human-induced land degradation such as deforestation, unsustainable agriculture, mining, industries and infrastructure development, RSPN will identify, adopt, and demonstrate available land management techniques or models that are contextually appropriate to the community engaged. This requires partnership with the national soil service centre and other stakeholders at the national and local levels.

Objective 1.3.1 Introduce soil conservation and land management program in affected areas

Strategies:

- Assess soil and land management needs at the local level
- Identify appropriate management techniques
- Conduct awareness, training and demonstration programs
- Adopt specific areas for soil and land management projects

Program goal 1.4

Enhance the management of water resources by establishing appropriate community-based water management models.

Water is a crosscutting theme and an important indicator of the health of a natural environment, and therefore, it is essential to consider comprehensive water management approaches and models that will address some of the water issues and contribute to water resources management.



Objective 1.4.1 Promote research in water resource management

Strategies:

- Synergize RSPN initiatives of RSPN and Bhutan Water Partnership in water resource management.
- Designing and piloting of sustainable water resources management using IWRM concepts
- Develop and promote awareness, education and training programs on water resource management at various levels such as schools, communities and water professionals
- Provide technical and financial support for locals to adopt and implement the models and approaches.

Program goal 1.5

Reduce solid waste through feasible waste management models and up-scaling initiatives

Addressing solid waste and waste water issues will require different approaches or models appropriate to each community depending on the size of the population, accessibility by motor roads, access to waste services, and consumption patterns. RSPN will focus on developing pilot waste management systems in collaboration with relevant stakeholders while building the capacity and awareness of local communities to become responsible in managing their own wastes through appropriate waste management models.

Objectives 1.5.1 Introduce affordable and feasible solid waste and wastewater management in rural communities

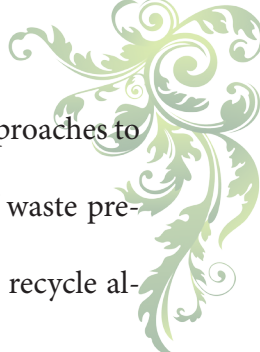
Strategies:

- Assess the extent of solid waste and waste water issues at local community
- Develop appropriate and affordable management mechanisms for solid waste and wastewater
- Seek the support and partnership of Ministry of Home Affairs and respective Dzongkhags and Dungkhags

Objective 1.5.2 Assist municipalities in tackling garbage issues in urban areas

Strategies:

- Support public awareness and campaigns in cities and towns

- 
- Foster concerted efforts to Clean Bhutan program with specific approaches to management of solid waste in rural and urban areas.
 - Advocate with respective sectors for effective implementation of waste prevention and management act and associated regulations
 - Promote sustainable enterprise based waste reduction, reuse and recycle alternatives.

Program Goal 1.6

Garner community support and stakeholder participation in conservation by promoting environmentally sustainable development and livelihood options.

Sustainable livelihood is important as an enabling condition for long term sustainability and success of conservation efforts. It seeks to offer alternative options in place of environmentally unfavourable livelihood practices.

Objectives 1.6.1

Establish and promote environmental conservation as a means to economic development

Strategies:

- Formulate a framework for conservation and sustainable livelihoods projects
- Design and implement appropriate sustainable livelihood programs and projects
- Build community organizations/ institutions and local capacity for collective action
- Replicate environmentally sustainable livelihood options.

Program Goal 1.7

Increase resilience to climate change impacts through community-based adaptation programmes

Mitigation is an important approach to addressing climate change. As an environmental organization, much of its conservation works contribute directly or indirectly to mitigation. Adaptation is now acknowledged as necessary for responding effectively and equitably to the impacts of both climate change and climate variability at the community level. Community-based adaptation measures will entail both education and introduction of appropriate technologies and methods in various sectors including human health, energy, water, food, agriculture and forestry. Within the five-year plan period, RSPN will look at at-least two broad objectives will contribute towards this goal.



Objective 1.7.1

Mainstream climate issues into RSPN programs

Strategies:

- Participatory climate vulnerability assessment of representative communities
- Design and adopt appropriate local solutions based on the assessment
- initiate adaptation projects for selected communities



ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND ADVOCACY PROGRAM



Environmental awareness, which in turn drive human attitude, behavior and action, is the single most important drivers of environmental change and conditions. Recognizing this, environmental education (EE) emerged as a cultural response to a global awareness that the human population was negatively impacting the environment, causing ecological and social crisis. Therefore, it places special emphasis on the social dimensions of the many facets of environmental problems; from loss of biodiversity, water and air quality, to emerging challenges of global warming and climate change. EE today, focuses on the learning processes that ‘increases people’s knowledge and awareness about the environment and associated challenges, develops the necessary skills and expertise to address the challenges, and fosters attitudes, motivations, and commitments to make informed decisions and take responsible action’ (UNESCO, Tbilisi declaration, 1978). EE

Although environmental education is not new to Bhutan, it is still new to a large section of the Bhutanese population. It was first introduced through a collaborative conservation education project of the RSPN and Ministry of Education in the early 1990s. However, a large section of the Bhutanese popula-

tion is environmentally aware; the level of translation of the awareness into action remains largely low among both the rural and urban populations. 79% of the Bhutanese population are based in the rural areas where their livelihood involves close interactions with the natural environment be it in the national parks or outside. With modern economic development, evolving livelihood practices and habits are imposing negative impacts on the natural environment. It is important for all sections of the population to possess the right understanding, attitudes and values towards their natural environment so as to enable every individual to conserve and use natural resources with rationality and wisdom. It is with such qualities at the individual level that communities can participate in the sustainable use of natural resources. Environmental education is a prerequisite quality for people to pursue the goal of conservation and sustainable development. While schools and institutions throughout the country continue to be the target for inspiring individual action, urban areas have become the cause for major concerns relating to water pollution and solid waste management. Rural areas are also being challenged with the issue of solid waste management.



Organizational Goal 2

To increase the level of environmental awareness through education, advocacy and public participation in conservation.

Objectives 2.1 Improve the quality, access, and coordination of environmental education information, resources, and programmes in Bhutan.

Strategies:

- Develop environmental education curriculum in collaboration with the royal university of Bhutan
- Develop education materials and tools for interested citizens through schools and institutions including monastic schools, Non-formal Education centers and communities.

Objective 2.2 Expand RSPN constituencies for public support and participation in conservation of local environment in all districts by end of 2015.

The main approach towards strengthening public support and participation in conservation of local environment is by organizing and building civil society groups across the Kingdom to identify local environmental concerns and develop solutions. The local conservation support group (LCSG) is a local action group comprised of community-based voluntary members who may include teachers, extension workers, village heads and other local people with an interest in environment and biodiversity conservation. In addition, the existing network of nature clubs in schools and training institutes will compliment the LCSGs and its functions. Both groups will take the lead role in the implementation of priority project activities, including initiation of monitoring programmes and implementation of local conservation actions.

Strategies:

- Establish at-least one LCSG in each district by end of strategic plan period
- Institute funding mechanism to support annual actions by LCSGs
- Establish coordination mechanisms between LCSG with RSPN especially RSPN membership program

Objective 2.3 Enhance stakeholder capacities for effective participation in environmental conservation.

RSPN accords high priority on the capacity of its partners and stakeholders in delivering effective environmental programmes and projects. RSPN will work with a diversity of stakeholders from a cross section of Bhutanese society to build their capacities in respective areas of collaboration.

Strategies:

- conduct capacity needs assessment of stakeholders
- backstop environmental education program requirements of RSPN projects.
- train and update education practitioners and other target groups on environmental education

Objective 2.4 Provide education and publicity support to other RSPN programmes and reduce the gap between environmental policy and implementation.

RSPN's research, conservation and sustainable livelihoods programmes will require the services of environmental education program to advocate and disseminate information to various target groups and audiences to meet specific objectives and stated goals. As an NGO with the mission to safeguard Bhutan's natural heritage, RSPN will take on the role of complimenting conservation plans and identify gaps in terms of environmental policy and implementation processes. Towards adequately representing the concerns of the environmental sector, the following strategies will be adopted

Strategies:

- identify environmental issues and associated policy gaps.
- provide public education and publicity
- Publish reports and prepare annual advocacy paper for the CSO forum organized by the CSO Authority.
- Lobby for specific policy decisions and environmental interventions.





RESEARCH PROGRAMME

Till end of the last strategic plan, RSPN's engagement in research has been project based and more of action research. Research was vaguely placed in the communications unit and lacked specific strategic direction. Hence, research work till date was carried out on an ad-hoc basis though notable outcomes have been achieved.

Organizational goal 3

To enhance and increase the knowledge on the Bhutanese environment and sustainable livelihoods.

This goal of enhancing and increasing knowledge on the Bhutanese environment primarily serves:

- to position RSPN in playing rightful role of an NGO advocating on the basis of science based information. This goal sets the strategic direction for institutionalizing research in RSPN.
- to contribute to environmental and sustainable livelihoods knowledge base to strengthen RSPN programmes by providing research services to support RSPN's advocacy programmes

Objective 3.1 to establish and strengthen an environmental research program for RSPN

Strategies:

- Formulate research strategy for RSPN including research collaborations and associated terms, conditions and obligations.
- Establish consortium of researchers in various fields of study
- Prepare and adopt standard formats for publications
- Periodical publications including books, journals, grey papers, and reports made available.
- State of environment report produced.

Objective 3.2 to backstop research components of RSPN programmes

RSPN's programmes and projects entail research components. Program units requiring such research components including establishing baseline and monitoring changes over time may be outsourced to the research unit in whole or part for timely

conduct of the research activities.

Strategies:

- develop modalities and processes for undertaking or backstopping research work of programme units (eg. Support to EEA in advocacy work)
- Backstop specific research needs of RSPN programs and projects
- Specific knowledge needed for RSPN programmes made available
- Be the repository of data and research outputs.
- Manage, maintain and make available database





INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Since its establishment in 1987, RSPN has been a growing organization with its organizational structure evolving over time. In its primary stage, the management was not well defined and its programs were limited. With added experience of its staff, strategically planned programs, and strengthened management, RSPN has passed its primary stage to acquire higher stages of organizational development. RSPN now manages its affairs through a seven-member board of directors. An executive director manages the day-to-day affairs of the organization and reports to the board of directors. Currently RSPN has three divisions i.e. the Program Divi-

sion, Administrative and Finance Division and the Communications Division. Within the Program Division, there are three program units comprised of environmental education program, conservation and sustainable livelihoods program, and research programs.

In order to meet the needs of the current strategies, strengthening of program procedures and processes, structural and procedural changes will be initiated. Organizational reforms that allow the organization to 'pay for the work' and match human capacity to the needs of the needs of the programmes and projects will be institutionalized.

Organizational Goal 4

Enhance RSPN's institutional, organizational and human resource capacity to support conservation, sustainable livelihoods, research and education.

RSPN's cross cutting organizational goal is to strengthen institutional, organizational and human resource capacity of RSPN to support conservation, sustainable development, research and education. The revised strategy will focus RSPN's resources and core capabilities on specific areas of conservation significance. This will require changes in the organizational structure. An organizational development exercise was conducted in the 2010 the recommendations of which are proposed for integration in this strategic plan.

Objective 4.1 To build human resource capacity of RSPN

How people are managed in an organization is a critical component to improve productivity. Therefore, human resource development and management is about put-

ting the right people in the right place i.e matching employee knowledge and skills to job requirements. Further, it is about providing services and opportunities to enhance the knowledge and skills of employees and providing trainings and mentoring to add value to their existing capacity.

Strategies:

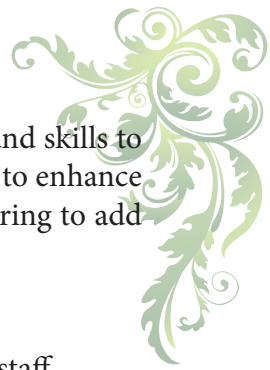
- Conduct human resource needs assessment of core and program staff
- Support in-house/ in-country short term trainings and continuing education
- Adopt policies to attract and retain professional and experienced employees

Objective 4.2 To strengthen organizational and institutional development of RSPN

Organizational development is primarily about reinforcing the organization's financial position, improvement of internal (consultation) structures, work processes and feedback mechanisms. It is the process through which an organization develops its internal capacity to effectively work towards attaining its mission and to sustain itself over the long term. Institutional development is the sustainable improvement and reinforcement of an organization whereby the organization improves its relevant social environment and achieves harmonization in that environment with other organizations and manages to maintain its own position. It is the context in which an organization is able to develop and achieve its own policies, contributes to positive development in the sector and is able to learn from experiences.

Strategies:

- Revise, update and implement administrative, human resource management, and program policies and procedures.
- Implement the revised organizational chart and employment policies
- Develop RSPN program procedures and project management manual
- Computerize accounting and reporting system.
- Develop Financial Manual of RSPN
- Strengthen RSPN membership base
- Expand RSPN membership to international and regional networks and organizations
- Practice adaptive management, build partnerships, and promote innovative approaches
- Institute regular stakeholder meetings and provide platform for cooperation, collaboration, and concerted efforts.
- Conduct annual, mid term and final review of strategic plan.
- Improve work environment and facilities





Objective 4.3 Strengthen financial sustainability of RSPN

Financial sustainability of an organization is assured through effective fundraising primarily dependent upon its programmes and fundraising capacity. RSPN's needs for financial resources are mainly in the areas of 1) Programme and projects and 2) Institutional development and Core operational support. As the organization's programmes, outreach, networking, and partnership, the core fund requirements increase with increased programmes and project and associated transactions. Hence, enhancing the existing endowment fund and cost recovery mechanisms is essential in sustaining its programmes.

Strategies:

- Increase RSPN endowment fund by US \$ 500,000 by end of 2015
- Develop investment policy for RSPN endowment fund
- Initiate separate management of RSPN endowment fund.
- Develop and implement fundraising strategy
- Institutionalize cost recovery mechanisms

Objective 4.4 Strengthen communications, outreach and RSPN interface with public

Strategies:

- Establish and operate a self sustaining Environmental Resource Centre
- Provide up to date communication and information on RSPN activities and achievements
- Enhance access to internet
- Foster publicity and organizational information sharing
- Update website regularly
- Publish timely newsletters and annual reports
- Undertake design, layout and publication tasks for RSPN programmes







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