



PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION PLAN FOR THE CALENDAR YEAR 2025



ROYAL SOCIETY FOR PROTECTION OF NATURE

Inspiring personal responsibility for environmental conservation since 1987

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PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION PLAN 2025

01

ACRONYMS

BFL	Bhutan for Life
BNC	Black-necked Crane
BNCVC	Black-necked Crane Visitor Center
BPC	Bhutan Power Corporation
BT FEC	Bhutan Trust Fund for Environmental Conservation
CDB_COP	Convention on Biological Diversity_ Conference of the Parties
CNR	College of Natural Resources
DAMC	Department of Agriculture Marketing Cooperatives
DAEs	Direct access applicants and accredited entities
DoA	Department of Agriculture
DoFPS	Department of Forests and Park Services
DoL	Department of Livestock
DOT	Department of Tourism
ESRAM	Ecosystem and Socio-economic Resilience Analysis and Mapping
GEF	Global Environment Facility
HWC	Human Wildlife Conflict
ICF	International Crane Foundation
IEC	Information, Education and Communications
JDNP	Jigme Dorji National Park
JKSNR	Jigme Khesar Strict Nature Reserve
KNFC	Keidanren Nature Conservation Fund
LG	Local Government
LCSG	Local Conservation Support Group
MoAL	Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock
NABU	Nature and Biodiversity Conservation Union
NDA	National Designated Authority
PHPA	Punatshangchu Hydroelectric Project Authority
PSC	Project Steering Committee
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
RAA	Royal Audit Authority
RUB	Royal University of Bhutan
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SGP	Small Grants Programme
SLM	Sustainable Land Management
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UWICER	Ugyen Wangchuck Institute for Conservation and Environmental Research
WBH	White-bellied Heron
WBHCC	White-bellied Heron Conservation Center

02 BACKGROUND

Royal Society for Protection of Nature (RSPN) has been implementing numerous projects in the field of Species and Habitat conservation, Wetlands and Freshwater Conservation, Environmental Education, Sustainable Livelihoods, Waste and Pollution, eventually gearing towards climate change adaptation and building societal and community resilience, and while also complementing the Royal Government of Bhutan (RGoB) in meeting its vision and objectives.

Increasingly, as RSPN ventures into implementing many programs, it is important for RSPN to inform and foster partnership with implementing partners, stakeholders, and the targeted beneficiaries on the overall project goals and intended outputs and outcome.

This report will help to achieve the following objectives:

- Show RSPN's contribution in nation building.
- Inform our implementing partners of the various projects and activities.
- Clarify the role and responsibilities of the implementing partners.
- Garner support and cooperation from implementing partners for effective implementation of the project activities.
- Synergies efforts towards enhancing conservation of biodiversity ecosystems and building community resilience to the impacts of climate change.
- Strengthen partnership and collaboration with RGoB, stakeholders and other development partners.

03 WHO IS RSPN?

RSPN was established in 1987 under the Royal command of His Majesty the Fourth King of Bhutan as a citizen based Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) devoted to the conservation of the Kingdom’s environment. RSPN is a partner to the Royal Government of Bhutan that focuses on community engagement through livelihood projects and programs to ultimately build community ownership in conservation and climate adaptation and resilience.

His Majesty the King has granted Patron-ship to RSPN from 1999 to 2012. Her Majesty the Queen of Bhutan is the Royal Patron. RSPN is managed by a seven-Board Directors, the Executive Director is the Head of the organization and manages the day-to-day affairs.



VISION

To be the leader in conservation ensuring future generations of Bhutan live in an 'Environmentally Sustainable Society'.



MISSION

To inspire personal responsibility and active involvement of people of Bhutan in the conservation of the Kingdom’s environment through, education, community engagement and sustainable livelihood opportunities.

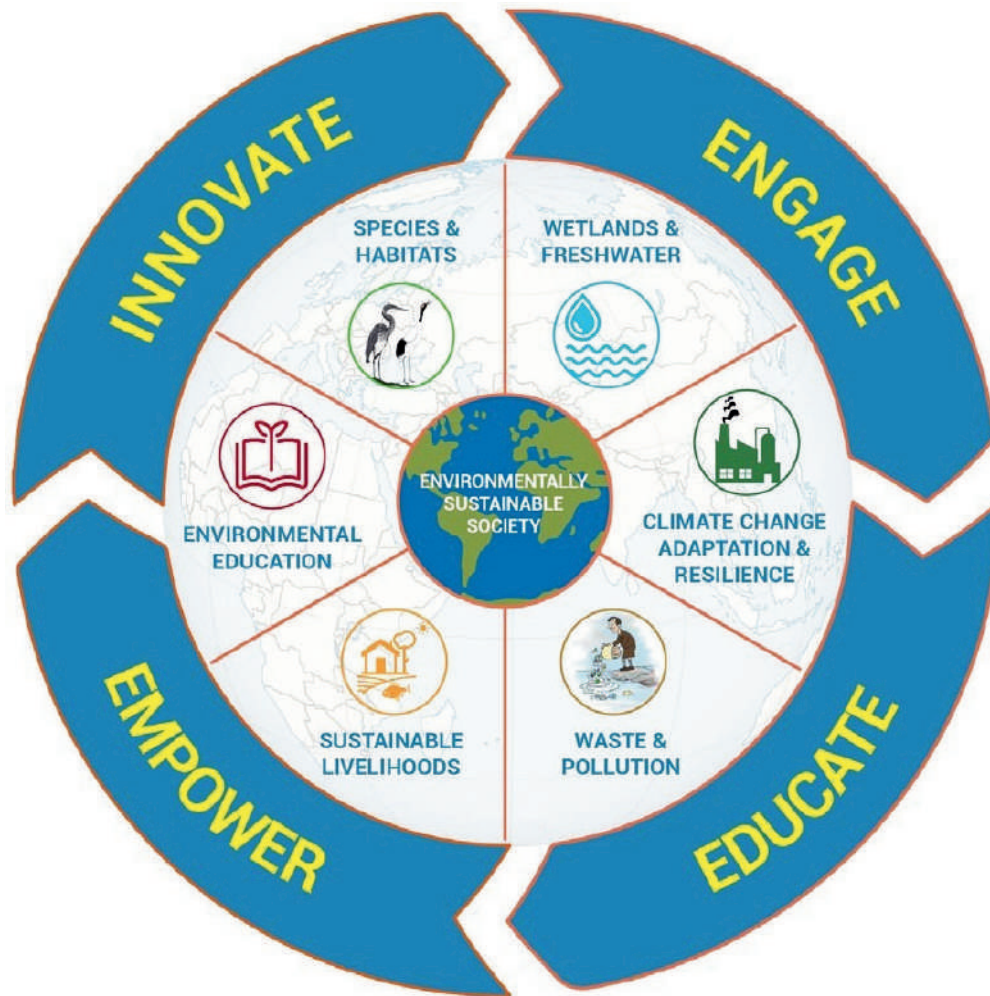


CORE VALUES

- Promote innovative technologies and methods.
- Be proactive towards environmental issues.
- RSPN’s Conservation Mandala.
- Be accountable and transparent.
- Be efficient and effective in delivering programs and services.

04 RSPN'S CONSERVATION MANDALA

The mandala represents our systemic approach and efforts, geared to implement sustainable solutions to emerging environmental challenges through, innovation, citizen engagement, education, and empowerment. The six thematic areas are initiated based on national and international priorities that are aligned to address the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Using this approach, it affirms our belief and commitment to addressing the global issues which are interdependent and connected in nature.



RSPN's Conservation Mandala

05 OVERALL PROJECT PROFILE

SL NO	PROJECT TITLE	DONOR	PROJECT PERIOD	TOTAL APPROVED GRANT (USD)	TOTAL APPROVED GRANT (NU)
1	Application for a Grant to support NIE accreditation through the readiness package	Adaptation Fund	1.11.2024-31.12.2025	150,000.00	12,450,000.00
2	Assess and map new potential habitat of White-bellied Heron in eastern Bhutan, Jomori river basin	ASAP and Global Wildlife Fund	30.08.24 -31.07.2025	20,000.00	1,660,000.00
3	BNC Conservation Project-Year 3, Gr. VI	International Crane Foundation ,USA	1.09.2022-31.03.2025	35,000.00	2,796,920.00
4	Developing Ecosystem-based Solutions for Managing Biodiversity Landscapes in Bhutan	Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection (BMUV), Germany	01.07.2021-30.06.2026	4,606,894.00	353,460,000.00
5	Enhancing Biodiversity Protection and Building Capacity for Cooperative Research in Bhutan to Address Sustainable Development Goal 15	Cooperation Development Research (KoEF)	29.08.2024-29.08.2026	50,000.00	4,150,000.00
6	Enhancing Climate and Biodiversity Knowledge in ASPnet Schools of Bhutan Fostering Sustainability	UNESCO	01.01.2025-31.12.2025	20,000.00	1,660,000.00
7	Mapping and Quantifying Multiple Threats to the Critically Endangered White-bellied Heron and associated waterbird species in Bhutan	Hongkong Bird Watching	03.09.24 -31.12.2025	2,000.00	166,000.00
8	Operational cost of White-bellied Heron Conservation Center Chachey, Tsirang, Bhutan	MAVA Foundation, Switzerland	01.01.2024-31.12.2025	272,589.00	22,355,023.89
9	Sacred Flyways: Securing Site Networks for the Black-necked Crane as a Flagship Species for High Altitude Wetland Biodiversity Conservation in the Central Asian Flyway	Fondation Hans Wilsdorf through International Crane Foundation	01.01.2024-31.12.2026	288,376.00	23,935,208.00
10	Securing White-bellied Heron population in Bhutan	Synchronicity Earth,London	20.09.24 -31.12.2025	98,662.00	8,188,946.00
11	Strengthening Capacities and Enhancing Climate Data and Services in Bhutan to Scale-up Climate Financing from Multiple Sources	GCF Readiness,South Korea	01.04.2024-31.03.2026	991,452.00	81,299,064.00
12	Strengthening Capacity to Enhance Knowledge and Skills in Conservation	Foundation Hans Wilsdorf, Switzerland	01.01.2024-31.12.2026	450,000.00	37,350,000.00
13	WBH Conservation-Conservation Allies Fund	Conservation Allies,USA	29.08.24 -31.12.25	2,000.00	166,000.00
GRAND TOTAL				6,986,973.00	549,637,161.89

Exchange rate: USD 1= Nu 83/-

06 PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION PLAN FOR THE CALENDAR YEAR 2025

SI No	Project	Total Approved Grant for 2025 (USD)	Total Approved Grant for 2025 (Nu)
1	Application for a Grant to support NIE accreditation through the Readiness package	138,000.00	11,454,000.00
2	Assess and map new potential habitat of White-bellied Heron in eastern Bhutan, Jomori river basin	20,000.00	1,660,000.00
3	BNC Conservation Project-Year 3, Gr. VI	2,566.35	213,007.05
4	Developing Ecosystem-based Solutions for Managing Biodiversity Landscapes in Bhutan	526,411.33	43,692,140.40
5	Enhancing Biodiversity Protection and Building Capacity for Cooperative Research in Bhutan to Address Sustainable Development Goal 15	31,739.24	2,634,356.92
6	Enhancing Climate and Biodiversity Knowledge in ASPnet Schools of Bhutan Fostering Sustainability	20,000.00	1,660,000.00
7	Mapping and Quantifying Multiple Threats to the Critically Endangered White-bellied Heron and associated waterbird species in Bhutan	2,000.00	166,000.00
8	Operational cost of White-bellied Heron Conservation Center Chachey, Tsirang, Bhutan	150,000.00	12,450,000.00
9	Sacred Flyways: Securing Site Networks for the Black-necked Crane as a Flagship Species for High Altitude Wetland Biodiversity Conservation in the Central Asian Flyway	31,265.00	2,594,995.00
10	Securing White-bellied Heron population in Bhutan	12,966.00	1,076,178.00
11	Strengthening Capacities and Enhancing Climate Data and Services in Bhutan to Scale- up Climate Financing from Multiple Sources	491,000.00	40,753,000.00
12	Strengthening Capacity to Enhance Knowledge and Skills in Conservation	150,000.00	12,450,000.00
13	WBH Conservation-Conservation Allies Fund	2,000.00	166,000.00
	GRAND TOTAL	1,577,947.92	130,969,677.00

Exchange rate: USD 1= Nu 83/-

07 PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION PLAN 2025

Project Title	i. Application for a Grant to support NIE accreditation through the Readiness package
Project Period	November 1, 2024 -December 31, 2025
Approved Grant	USD 150,000.00
Donor	Adaptation Fund through BT FEC

PROJECT SUMMARY:

The Adaptation Fund's Readiness Programme for Climate Finance aims to help strengthen the capacity of developing country Parties to access climate adaptation finance, particularly through the Direct Access Modality, and their overall capacity to develop and initiate implementation of concrete projects and programmes that increase the resilience of vulnerable communities to the impacts of climate change. The programme also aims to advance direct access in developing countries and promotes the accreditation of National Implementing Entities (NIEs) from developing countries that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change. As part of the Readiness Programme, address accreditation gap areas within NIE candidates/applicants to help them adequately meet the Fund's accreditation criteria.

PROJECT GOAL:

- The Adaptation Fund's Readiness Programme for Climate Finance aims to help strengthen the capacity of developing country Parties to access climate adaptation finance, particularly through the Direct Access Modality, and their overall capacity to develop and initiate implementation of concrete projects and programmes that increase the resilience of vulnerable communities to the impacts of climate change. The programme also aims to advance direct access in developing countries and promotes the accreditation of National Implementing Entities (NIEs) from developing countries that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change. As part of the Readiness Programme, address accreditation gap areas within NIE candidates/applicants to help them adequately meet the Fund's accreditation criteria.

PROJECT OUTCOME/OUTPUT:

- The objective of the readiness package is to provide enhanced support for accreditation by simultaneously employing a suite of tools to advance the delivery of climate finance through Direct Access. This includes enabling the recruitment of fiduciary, governance and other experts to support entities navigating the accreditation process to effectively address technical gaps and challenges, complete the process and obtain accreditation with the Fund.

Project Implementation Plan for the calendar year 2025

Sl. No	Activities	Budget (USD)	Start Date	End Date	Lead	Implementing Partner
1	Technical assistance (TA) in development of environmental and social safeguards and other relevant accreditation documents	138,000.00	Jan	Oct	RSPN	DMDF/MoF & BTFEC
	GRAND TOTAL	138,000.00				

Project Title	ii. Assessing and mapping new potential habitat of White-bellied Heron in the Jomori river basin in eastern Bhutan
Project Period	2024 - 2025
Approved Grant	USD 20,000.00
Donor	ASAP and Global Wildlife Fund

PROJECT SUMMARY

This project aims to safeguard the critically endangered bird, the White-bellied Heron. The proposed project location is at the Jomori river basin in the remotest and easternmost part of Bhutan under Samdrup Jongkhar district. The district shares a boundary with Arunachal Pradesh state of India. The river Jomori flows in this river basin and it is one of the few major rivers in Bhutan that is potential habitat for White-bellied Heron. One fourth of the proposed area for this project falls within the Jomotshangkha Wildlife Sanctuary. Jomori river flows through the Jomotshangkha town and converges right after the town with the river from Tawang of Arunachal Pradesh at the border of India and Bhutan.

This project aims to safeguard the critically endangered bird, the White-bellied Heron. The proposed project location is at the Jomori river basin in the remotest and easternmost part of Bhutan under Samdrup Jongkhar district. The district shares a boundary with Arunachal Pradesh state of India. The river Jomori flows in this river basin and it is one of the few major rivers in Bhutan that is potential habitat for White-bellied Heron. One fourth of the proposed area for this project falls within the Jomotshangkha Wildlife Sanctuary. Jomori river flows through the Jomotshangkha town and converges right after the town with the river from Tawang of Arunachal Pradesh at the border of India and Bhutan.

PROJECT OUTCOME:

- Protect habitats of White-bellied Heron.

PROJECT OUTPUTS:

1. Survey conducted to explore the habitat suitability for White-bellied Heron.
2. Threat assessment carried out.
3. Communities advocated and educated for the conservation of White-bellied Heron.

Project Implementation Plan for the calendar year 2025

Sl. No	Activities	Budget (USD)	Start Date	End Date	Lead	Implementing Partner
1	Carryout one time project consultation meeting with officials from Jomotshangkha Dungkhag (sub district), local government, Department of Forest and Park Services and hydropower authorities.	1,184.47	Jan	Jan	RSPN	DoFPS/LG/MoESD
2	Train surveyors for 3 days to survey White-bellied Heron, document potential threats, and foraging and nesting sites for White-bellied Heron, and associated wildlife distribution in the area.	1,991.61	Feb	Feb	RSPN	DoFPS/LG/MoESD
3	Conduct survey within 60 km stretch of Jomori river for 14 days during pre-monsoon and post-monsoon periods.	4,702.41	Feb	March	RSPN	DoFPS/LG/MoESD
4	Carryout social survey and perception study on White-bellied Heron in the communities residing along the Jomori river.	2,740.17	Mar	March	RSPN	DoFPS/LG/MoESD
5	Identify three schools along the Jomori river and institute the Nature Clubs to promote education on nature.	1,797.37	April	April	RSPN	DoFPS/LG/MoESD
6	Conduct advocacy programme on White-bellied Heron and other associated species conservation for students.	2,023.14	May	May	RSPN	DoFPS/LG/MoESD
7	Carry out data analysis and publish the reports.	1,000.00	Aug	Aug	RSPN	DoFPS/LG/MoESD
8	Conduct knowledge sharing workshop among the relevant stakeholders of hydropower, Department of Forest and Park Services, sub district officials and local communities.	1,500.00	Oct	Oct	RSPN	DoFPS/LG/MoESD
	GRAND TOTAL	16,939.17				

Project Title	iii. Black-necked Crane Conservation Project-Year 3, Gr. VI
Project Period	2022-2025
Approved Grant	USD 35,000.00
Donor	International Crane Foundation, USA

PROJECT SUMMARY

RSPN has been engaged in the conservation of the wintering Black-necked Cranes (BNC) and its habitats in Bhutan since its inception in 1987. Since then, in partnership with the RGoB and local communities, RSPN has implemented diverse conservation measures for BNC conservation through education, community participation and research. In particular, RSPN has been instrumental in the conservation of wetlands in Phobjikha and Bumdeling. Bhutan receives more than 600 numbers of cranes annually with the highest number visiting Phobjikha valley.

The first BNC migration study was conducted in 1998. Two cranes in Bumdeling were tagged with satellite transmitters by the International Crane Foundation and RSPN. The tagged cranes flew to Xigatse and then to Xianza in the Tibetan Autonomous Region in China. Since then, few more cranes were tagged in Phobjikha and Bumdeling. Through this tagging program RSPN have learnt that the cranes from Bumdeling summered much further North-West of Bhutan than the cranes of Phobjikha.

With the confirmation of Labana in Haa as the new breeding site of BNC, detailed study of the site as well as ascertaining their winter site, migration routes and other stopovers would be essential. We will plan track juveniles with GPS transmitters in the following breeding seasons. Partnering with important stakeholders would be the first step for effectively conserving the habitat of these birds, although it falls within the strict nature reserve. We will be educating the yak herders in terms of the habitat requirement and behavior of the birds and importance of living harmoniously with the birds.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES:

- Improve knowledge on migratory routes of BNC summering in Bhutan and identification of (potential) threats during migration.
- Determination of wintering sites of Black-necked Cranes in Haa.
- Analyzing habitat use of Black-necked Cranes in summering sites in Bhutan.
- Identification of important BNC feeding and roosting sites.

Project Implementation Plan for the calendar year 2025

Sl. No	Activities	Budget (USD)	Start Date	End Date	Lead	Implementing Partner
1	Analyzing BNC habitat	213,007.05	Jan	Dec	RSPN	-

Project Title	iv. Developing Ecosystem-based solutions for Managing Biodiversity Landscapes in Bhutan
Project Period	July 2021- June 2026
Approved Grant	USD 4,606,894.00
Donor	Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection (BMUV), Germany

PROJECT SUMMARY

The White-Bellied Heron (WBH), historically known from the Eastern Himalayan foothills, is no more reported from many of its home range. This state of affairs is attributed to the shrinking habitats of WBH, owing to increasing anthropogenic pressures in the face of changing climate. Currently, only about 60 individual birds are reported worldwide with the highest from Bhutan (*Recorded 26 birds in 2017*). The ecology, biology and population dynamics of this bird is little known. Despite conservation efforts, there is a growing concern over the shrinking population of WBH in Bhutan. The riparian ecosystem and WBH habitats are transforming at an alarming pace with the increasing number of developmental activities and the fast-growing infrastructure development. Loss of feeding and nesting habitat due to land use change, disruption of flyways and increased disturbances are potentially the dominant factor driving the WBH population decline.

The project aims to restore damaged WBH feeding and roosting sites in collaboration with hydropower projects and communities to reduce negative impacts brought about by developmental activities. The project also aims to provide an alternative economic and employment opportunities and to garner support for WBH conservation activities through community incentive-based and participatory approach to project planning and implementation.

PROJECT GOAL

Develop ecosystem-based solutions for managing biodiversity landscapes, with special objective to establish approaches and tools for protecting and managing WBH habitats.

PROJECT OUTCOME:

Effective adaptive ecosystem solutions for WBH conservation in Bhutan (and other Himalayan countries) created through habitat restoration and livelihoods enhancement.

PROJECT OUTPUTS:

1.Ecosystem-based biodiversity survey and community engagement strategies for WBH conservation based on ESRAM approach, designed and applied.

2.Degraded and new potential WBH habitats rehabilitated and created (feeding, roosting and nesting).

3.Capacity of all stakeholders on planning and implementation of ESRAM study, ecosystem-based adaptation and livelihood options strengthened.

4.Ecosystem-based adaptation livelihood options in the WBH habitat areas, applied and established.

5.Knowledge base on ecosystem-based biodiversity conservation, WBH habitat & population and climate adaptation, established and disseminated.

Project Implementation Plan for the calendar year 2025

Sl. No	Activities	Budget (EURO)	Start Date	End Date	Lead	Implementing Partner
1	WBH habitat restoration - Tree plantation on landfill/degraded areas	49,620.00	April	June	RSPN	DoFPS/GBCL/ Hydropower/ Communities
2	WBH Conservation - Survey & identify potential WBH nesting site	11,460.00	Jan	March	RSPN	DoFPS/LCSG
3	WBH conservation -WBH monitoring by LCSG	20,840.00	Jan	Dec	RSPN	DoPFS/LCSG
4	WBH Conservation - Nursery establishment - Transportation of nursery seedlings	5,318.00	April	June	RSPN	DoFPS/GBCL/ Hydropower/ Communities

5	WBH Conservation - Consultative meeting on degraded and new potential sites (perdiem for local community participants)	880.42	Jan	March	RSPN	DoFPS/GBCL/ Hydropower/ Communities
6	WBH Conservation - Consultative meeting on degraded and new potential sites (perdiem & transportation for project staff)	4,464.43	Jan	March	RSPN	DoFPS/GBCL/ Hydropower/ Communities
7	Climate-smart Livelihoods/Bee keeping & Fishery - Training on Bee Keeping and Fishery Marketing & Packaging.	107,000.00	Jan	Dec	RSPN	Dzongkhag/ Gewog/Communities/DoL
8	Conduct training on marketing and packaging of bee-keeping and fishery		Jan	Dec	RSPN	Dzongkhag/ Gewog/Communities/ DoL
9	Establishment cost for bee-keeping	12,500.00	Jan	Dec	RSPN	Dzongkhag/ Gewog/Communities/DoL
10	Establishment cost of fishery	19,750.00	Jan	Dec	RSPN	Dzongkhag/ Gewog/Communities
11	Establishment of seed bank	66,000.00	Jan	Dec	RSPN	Dzongkhag/ Gewog/Communities
12	Eco-Tourism - Homestay Assessment & verification	2,359.98	Jan	Dec	RSPN	DoT
13	Development of policy brief	6,750.00	Jan	Dec	RSPN	-
14	Hold PSC meeting	530.00	Jun	Nov	RSPN	Relevant stakeholders
15	Carry out Project monitoring & Project End Evaluation	10,725.00	Jan	Dec	RSPN	-
	GRAND TOTAL	318,194.98				

Project Title	v. Enhancing Biodiversity Protection and Building Capacity for Cooperative Research in Bhutan to Address Sustainable Development Goal 15
Project Period	2024- 2026
Approved Grant	USD 50,000.00
Donor	KoEF, Austria

PROJECT SUMMARY:

The project aims to deliver comprehensive data on Bhutan's forest cover and avian biodiversity and health, build local research capacity, and contribute meaningful insights toward the conservation of the White-bellied Heron's forest habitats.

The authors should have included some of these elements in the proposed title, which was left very generic. The cooperation/partnership is well presented in terms of what the different institution representatives and their institutions bring to the table and their shared goals, and a commitment to the sustainable management of natural resources. The study encompasses elements of conservation of a globally endangered bird species in the White-bellied Heron, and tropical forests that interact with avian biodiversity in complex ways. It addresses the dual threats of habitat loss and disease proliferation. This is therefore a timely endeavor whose recommendations can reverse negative trends and promote the good ones. Also, a good background with research gaps and rationales of the current situation are well presented in a clear way. The writing in the different sections is very good. The only detracting factor was a lack of detailing in the methodologies of the different studies/work packages. This left some issues like scope in geographical extent, and a lack of clarity in selection of scholars or individuals to participate in data collection, training and engagements in Bhutan. The team composition and cooperating institutions have the needed expertise and can bring success to the project. It is unique to see co-operations extending to societies/organizations other than universities, such as Royal Society for the Protection of Nature in Bhutan and Natural History Museum of Austria in this case.

PROJECT GOAL:

Deliver comprehensive data on Bhutan's forest cover and avian biodiversity and health, build local research capacity, and contribute meaningful insights toward the conservation of the White-bellied Heron's forest habitats.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES:

- Build the research capacity of Bhutanese researchers.
- Conduct White-bellied Heron habitat modeling.

PROJECT OUTCOME:

- Enhanced conservation of White-bellied Herons.

PROJECT OUTPUTS:

- 1.Capacity of researcher enhanced.
- 2.The habitat changes of White-bellied Heron known.

Project implementation plan for the calendar year 2025

Sl. No	Activities	Budget (USD)	Start Date	End Date	Lead	Implementing Partner
1	Category 2: Outgoing (Travel from Austria)	15,645.37	March	March	RSPN	DoFPS/Austria
2	Category 3: Field research	16,093.87	April	June	RSPN	DoFPS/Austria
3	Equipment and material (consumables)	3,129.07	Jan	Dec	RSPN	-
4	Stationaries (consumables)	2,615.39	Jan	Dec	RSPN	-
	GRAND TOTAL	37,483.70				

Project Title	vi. Enhancing Climate and Biodiversity Knowledge in ASPnet Schools of Bhutan Fostering Sustainability
Project Period	January - December 2025
Approved Grant	USD 20,000.00
Donor	UNESCO

PROJECT SUMMARY:

There is growing concern over the world for climate change and the loss of biodiversity. It is definite, as remarked by the UN Secretary-General "...the era of global boiling has arrived." Global climate change has multiple impacts resulting in the extreme loss of losing biodiversity and reducing nature's contribution to people's well-being. A country like Bhutan is most vulnerable and sensitive to climate change. More importantly, due to the low prevalence of literacy rate in the communities and climate concepts not being very well integrated into the school curriculum, there is a high risk and vulnerability that Bhutanese communities are exposed to the impact of climate change. Therefore, this project is imperative in enhancing climate knowledge among the Bhutanese communities through the network of school UNESCO clubs established in Bhutan, the ASPnet clubs. As the school plays a critical role in the community, there is a huge opportunity for the ASPnet schools to act locally to solve the environmental and climatic challenges. Additionally, the STEM knowledge in school would be added value to create innovative solutions for local community issues as well as for global challenges.

RSPN established in 1987 under the Royal Command of His Majesty Fourth King is a pioneering non-governmental organisation in Bhutan dedicated to the conservation of the environment through innovative solutions. Environmental and Climate education is one of the core mandates of RSPN and has been supporting the school curriculum for many years. Some of the works include establishing Nature Clubs in schools, supporting the development of an Environmental Science Curriculum for grade IX and X schools, and building the capacity of Environmental Science teachers. The organization has the capacity and strength to implement diverse projects related to environmental conservation and climate actions. RSPN is also a partner to many international organizations and local stakeholders. This project will be significant for the RSPN to continue its efforts in working with the Ministry of Education and UNESCO to holistically tackle climate issues and contribute to achieving some of the Sustainable Development Goals.

PROJECT GOAL:

- Strive to enhance Knowledge on Climate and Biodiversity in ASPnet Schools of Bhutan.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES:

- Build the capacity of teachers on climate knowledge through the outreach programme.
- Engage in place-based education identifying climate challenges in the community and develop innovative nature-positive solutions that contribute to fostering sustainability in the communities.
- Enhance knowledge transfer on innovative nature-positive solutions to tackle climate change.

PROJECT OUTCOME:

- Enhanced Climate and Biodiversity Knowledge in ASPnet Schools of Bhutan Fostering Sustainability.

PROJECT OUTPUTS:

- 1.The capacity of ASPnet teachers is enhanced on climate knowledge.
2. Locally led solutions are developed as a means to tackle climate change.
- 3.Knowledge of nature-positive solutions is generated and transferred among the ASPnet schools and the public.

Project Implementation Plan for the calendar year 2025

Sl. No	Activities	Budget (USD)	Start Date	End Date	Lead	Implementing Partner
1	Training : 'Capacity Enhancement on Climate Change for ASPnet Teachers'.	6,000.00	Mar	Mar	RSPN	MoESD
2	Study grants, field survey	9,000.00	April	June	RSPN	MoESD
3	National Conference held for ASPnet schools	4,000.00	Nov	Nov	RSPN	MoESD
4	Publication; Conference proceeding and Project Report	1,000.00	Dec	Dec	RSPN	MoESD
	GRAND TOTAL	20,000.00				

Project Title	vii. Mapping and Quantifying Multiple Threats to the Critically Endangered White-bellied Heron and associated waterbird species in Bhutan
Project Period	January – December 2025
Approved Grant	USD 2,000.00
Donor	Hongkong Bird Watching Society

PROJECT SUMMARY:

The project focuses on understanding and quantifying threats to the critically endangered WBH and other associated species of waterbirds that are found in the White-bellied Heron habitat landscape. The WBH bird is a critically endangered species with an estimated population of less than 60 individuals remaining only in three countries of the world. The heron is found only in freshwater rivers of the Himalayas and along its habitat, there are also diverse other associated species of wildlife including waterbirds.

Threat documentation in the WBH landscape will help in understanding the current environmental status and factors that pose risks to the survival of the White-bellied Heron and other associated species. Through the outcomes of this project, conservation efforts will be prioritized and effective strategies implemented to protect herons and other associated waterbird species.

The projects aim to contribute to the conservation of WBH and associated waterbird species by providing in-depth assessments of threats, mapping their distribution, and offering recommendations for mitigation. The outcomes of these projects can guide conservation actions, prioritize high-risk threats, and inform targeted strategies to safeguard the White-bellied Heron, associated waterbird species, and the habitats.

PROJECT GOAL:

Conservation of WBH and associated waterbird species by providing in-depth assessments of threats, mapping their distribution, and offering recommendations for mitigation.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES:

- Identify, quantify, categorize, and prioritize threats to White-bellied Heron and associated waterbird species.
- Map spatial distribution and severity of threats and prioritize areas requiring immediate attention.
- Provide appropriate recommendations to mitigate or minimize impact of major threats to WBH and its key habitats.

PROJECT OUTCOME:

- Enhanced conservation of White-bellied Herons through mitigation of threats.

PROJECT OUTPUTS:

- 1.A report on documentation of threats to White-bellied Heron and associated species of waterbirds.
- 1.A map of detailed analysis and quantification of threats and recommendations for mitigations.

Project Implementation Plan for the calendar year 2025

Sl. No	Activities	Budget (USD)	Start Date	End Date	Lead	Implementing Partner
1	Study Design	500.00	Jan	Feb	RSPN	DoFPS
2	Survey	1,000.00	Feb	Mar	RSPN	-
3	Report writing	500.00	Nov	Nov	RSPN	-
	GRAND TOTAL	2,000.00				

Project Title	viii. Operational cost of White-bellied Heron Conservation Center Chachey, Tsirang, Bhutan
Project Period	Long- term (Endowment fund established)
Approved Grant	USD 272,589.00
Donor	MAVA Foundation, Switzerland

PROJECT SUMMARY:

White-bellied Heron bird is Critically Endangered and considering its current population status, survival rate, distribution and changing environment, it is apparent to step up the conservation effort.

The conservation effort needs to be taken into consideration for the survival of WBH through adaptive measures in the risk of climate change and increasing anthropogenic activities in the habitats of WBH. Therefore, the establishment of a conservation & breeding Center would be one of the appropriate conservation approaches for this Critically Endangered species. The conservation & breeding center will not only serve to conserve the WBH gene pool but would also be a center for breeding of herons to be released in the wild to increase the wild breeding population. It would also serve as the center of WBH scientific research.

PROJECT GOAL:

Preserve and increase the WBH population in Bhutan through captive breeding and release program, habitat conservation and other mitigation measures.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES:

- To conserve an ex-situ gene-pool of the Critically Endangered, White-bellied Heron.
- To establish a White-bellied Heron conservation and breeding and rearing facility Centre in Bhutan.
- To continue conservation efforts with research, monitoring and to increase the population through captive breeding and release programs.
- To capacitate key partners in conservation, research, and training and establish a center for information sharing.
- To increase public and agency awareness and community participation in conservation of White-bellied Heron.

PROJECT OUTCOME:

- Conserved WBH through ex-situ measures.

PROJECT OUTPUTS:

1. Captive rearing successfully undertaken using captive breeding facilities.
2. Trainee foresters/researchers engaging actively in captive-rearing activities.
3. Increased deeper understanding of WBH ecological relationships, habitat preferences, and population dynamics with better understanding of the needs and options for its conservation and protection.
4. Local people and governmental agencies actively engaged in monitoring and conserving WBH and their habitats.

Project Implementation Plan for the calendar year 2025

Sl. No	Activities	Budget (USD)	Start Date	End Date	Lead	Implementing Partner
1	White-bellied Heron Breeding, Rearing and facility improvement cost	150,000.00	Jan	Feb	RSPN	-
	GRAND TOTAL	150,000.00				

Project Title	ix. Sacred Flyways: Securing Site Networks for the Black-necked Crane as a Flagship Species for High Altitude Wetland Biodiversity Conservation in the Central Asian Flyway
Project Period	2024 - 2026
Approved Grant	USD 288,376.00
Donor	Fondation Hans Wilsdorf through International Crane Foundation

PROJECT SUMMARY:

This project adopts the Black-necked Crane *Grus nigricollis* as a flagship species for the conservation of a network of high-altitude wetlands and the biodiversity they support along its migration routes in Central Asia.

This striking bird has long been of great cultural importance – even as a sacred bird, and it is uniquely suited to bring people together for conservation through its great charisma and transboundary migrations across spectacular mountain landscapes in China, Bhutan, India and Nepal. The developing Central Asian Flyway (CAF) initiative supported by the Convention on Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) provides a framework under which coordinated international species conservation action for the BNC would provide a model for other migratory bird species.

The Black-necked Crane (BNC) is a globally Near-threatened Species on account of its small population size that is subject to a range of threats, which are sufficient to cause future declines: with rapid economic development occurring across its range, the impact of existing threats is likely to intensify. As modernization sweeps across the Tibetan Plateau, vast solar installations now cover former wheat fields where cranes once foraged in winter. Collision with increasing spans of power lines claim crane lives at an alarming rate. In a national quest to reduce carbon footprints, monotypic forests planted above the tree line transform grasslands, wetlands, and crop land into areas of little use to indigenous biota. On the summer breeding areas, the changing livestock grazing practice from traditional nomads plus overgrazing deteriorates the health of the grassland ecosystem. Uncontrolled ecotourism and free ranging dogs often result in unwanted disturbance to cranes, and habitat loss through associated structures.

The proposed project aims to establish mechanisms for conservation of the migration routes linking Tibetan breeding and stopover sites in China with wintering areas for the BNCs in Bhutan; and the Indian breeding area in Ladakh with stopover and wintering areas in Tibet. It will seek to reduce the key threats impacting the population and preserve critical habitats along their migration routes. A land use plan will be developed for Phobjikha Conservation Area; livelihood support will be provided to communities through restoration of abandoned paddy fields used by BNC in Bomdeling; and the BNC education centre at Phobjikha will be enhanced to deliver environmental education.

PROJECT GOAL:

The overall goal of the project is to secure the flyway site network for the Black-necked Crane in the Central Asian Flyway, contributing to a stable trend in its population during the project cycle and an increasing trend in the long-term, and benefits to High Altitude Wetland biodiversity conservation. In Bhutan, the goals are:

1. To develop a land use plan for the Phobjikha Conservation Area.
2. Livelihood support will be provided to communities through restoration of abandoned paddy fields used by BNC in Bomdeling.
3. The BNC education centre at Phobjikha will be enhanced to deliver environmental education.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES:

This project adopts the Black-necked Crane *Grus nigricollis* as a flagship species for the conservation of a network of high-altitude wetlands and the biodiversity they support along its migration routes in Central Asia. The project is therefore intended to provide direct benefits towards the conservation of high-altitude wetlands, the ecosystem services they provide and the wide range of montane biodiversity that they support.

PROJECT OUTCOME/OUTPUT:

1. Ecologically and economically viable land use plan developed for Phobjikha Conservation Area where BNC, other wildlife and their habitats are secured against various threats.
2. Sustainable crane-friendly livelihood support provided to communities, to increase foraging grounds of BNC in Bomdeling through restoration of abandoned paddy fields.
3. Enhanced capacity and sustainability of the BNC education centre at Phobjikha to deliver environmental.

Project Implementation Plan for the calendar year 2025

Sl. No	Activities	Budget (USD)	Start Date	End Date	Lead	Implementing Partner
1	Carry out stakeholder consultation for equity, acceptability and ownership in Phobjikha	3,000.00	Jan	Jan	RSPN	DoFPS
2	Socio-economic survey in Phobjikha	3,000.00	Feb	Feb	RSPN	-
3	Natural resource inventory in Phobjikha	9,000.00	Mar	Apr	RSPN	DoFPS
4	Restore additional 21 acres of abandoned paddy fields in Bomdeling to increase foraging sites for the cranes as well as to improve the socio-economic well-being of the people	9,300.00	Mar	Apr	RSPN	DoFPS
5	Provide electric fencing around the paddy fields in Bomdeling.	4,500.00	Mar	Apr	RSPN	-
6	Irrigation channel maintenance (supply of materials) in Bomdeling	2,465.00	Mar	Apr	RSPN	-
	GRAND TOTAL	31,265.00				

Project Title	x. Securing White-bellied Heron population in Bhutan
Project Period	2023 – 2025
Approved Grant	USD 98,662.00
Donor	Synchronicity Earth,London

PROJECT SUMMARY:

RSPN is one of the pioneer non-governmental organizations in Bhutan established in 1987 to complement the government's effort in conserving the environment. It is legally registered with the Civil Society Organizations Authority in Bhutan and collaborates with relevant national and international stakeholders in safeguarding the natural heritage of Bhutan. The Queen of Bhutan, Her Majesty the Gyaltsuen Jetsun Pema Wangchuck is the current Royal Patron of the organisation. The Executive Director manages the day-to-day affairs of the organisation with the support of currently 34 staff and seven Board of Directors. RSPN works to address environmental and conservation issues through the implementation of a wide range of activities that includes halting environmental degradation, building climate resilient societies through adaptation and mitigation measures, enhancing environmental knowledge management and sharing, supporting the growth of socio-economic condition of the communities, influencing environmental policy intervention, and importantly saving the globally threatened species. Within these activities, the conservation of globally threatened species like the White-bellied Heron (WBH) bird is prioritised in halting the risk of extinction of the species.

A rigorous conservation effort was initiated in conserving WBH by the RSPN. This include restoring the habitats, mitigating the threats, constantly monitoring the population, and also through conservation breeding programme. The ex-situ means of conservation method was adopted due to the critical nature of the species having high extinction risk. Today, the global population of the species stands less than 60 individuals confirmed during the WBH International Workshop held in Bhutan in 2015. The sporadic distributed wild population is at high risk of losing without the conservation breeding programme. After a successful pilot programme of captive breeding of the WBH conducted in 2011, a full-scale conservation center was established and operated in the year 2011. Today, the basic facilities to support the breeding programme were established with the help of government and the generous donors including Synchronicity Earth. However, still there are numerous requirements for facilities like bird aviaries along with fish-raising ponds in accommodating additional herons and to have a successful breeding programme. This proposal therefore aims in building additional aviary and fish ponds that will help to raise the additional birds. Once the additional aviary is constructed with the fish ponds, we are planning to raise more herons in the center. The herons raised in the center will be later released to the wild in supplementing the declining population. The activity also consists of conducting an inventory of new habitats that were previously unexplored. This will help even in identifying potential habitats for future release of captive breed herons.

PROJECT GOAL

Securing White-bellied Heron population in Bhutan.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES:

- Construct bird aviaries to support the conservation breeding program of White-bellied Heron.
- Explore new habitats to assess the suitability for White-bellied Heron.
- Support capacity building of researchers.

PROJECT OUTCOME/OUTPUT:

White-bellied Heron conservation program enhanced.

PROJECT OUTPUT:

1. Bird aviaries constructed.
2. Two new habitats explored.
3. Drone trialling training conducted.

Project Implementation Plan for the calendar year 2025

Sl. No	Activities	Budget (USD)	Start Date	End Date	Lead	Implementing Partner
1	Conduct habitat inventories	7,801.00	April	June	RSPN	DoFPS
2	Conduct training on Drone Trialling	5,165.00	Feb	Feb	RSPN	DoFPS
	GRAND TOTAL	12,966.00				

Project Title	xi. Strengthening Capacities and Enhancing Climate Data and Services in Bhutan to Scale-up Climate Financing from Multiple Sources
Project Period	April 1, 2024 - March 31, 2026
Approved Grant	USD 991,452.00
Donor	GCF Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme

PROJECT SUMMARY:

Bhutan faces significant challenges in maintaining carbon neutrality and addressing climate vulnerabilities across critical sectors. The GCF Country Work Program (CWP) has identified capacity gaps, including a need for more reliable baseline data and technical expertise on climate change. These gaps hinder Bhutan's ability to pursue sustainable development with low carbon emissions and climate resilience. To achieve these goals, cross-sectoral and multi-stakeholder efforts are necessary to identify baseline conditions and projected impacts of climate change.

The Readiness project aims to enhance access to climate finance by strengthening the technical and institutional capacity of various stakeholders such as the National Designated Authority (NDA), Ministry of Finance (MoF);RSPN which secured an NDA endorsement for DAE application, and potential Executing Entities (EEs), including Bhutan Ecological Society (BES), Tarayana Foundation, and Youth Development Fund (YDF). The proposed readiness project will contribute towards meeting the GCF Readiness Objectives One (Capacity Building), Two (Strategic Frameworks), and Five (Knowledge Sharing and Learning).

PROJECT GOAL:

To increase Bhutan's access to climate finance by improving the availability and access to robust and credible climate information and data through stakeholder coordination, and technical capacity building to meet its NDC and NAP commitments and needs.

PROJECT OUTCOME/OUTPUT:

- Country NDAs or focal points and the network/ systems that enable them to fulfil their roles, responsibilities and policy requirements are operational and effective.
- Direct access applicants and accredited entities (DAEs) have established capacity to meet and maintain the GCF's accreditation standards; and accredited DAEs have the capacity to develop a pipeline of projects and effectively implement GCF-funded activities.

PROJECT OUTCOME/OUTPUT:

- Relevant country stakeholders (which may include executing entities, Civil Society Organizations and private sector) have established adequate capacity, systems and networks to support the planning, programming, and implementation of GCF funded activities.
- GCF recipient countries have developed or enhanced strategic frameworks to address policy gaps, improve sectoral expertise and enhance enabling environments for GCF Programming in low-emission investment.

Project Implementation Plan for the calendar year 2024

Sl. No	Activities	Budget (USD)	Start Date	End Date	Lead	Implementing Partner
1	NDA or FP staff trained in areas relevant to the GCF objectives of the GCF and oversight of GCF activities NDA operational manual developed and validated	50,000.00	Jan	Dec	RSPN	D MDF/MoF
2	Direct Access Applicants supported with training, capacity development, or improved systems to close gaps	45,000.00	Jan	Dec	RSPN	-
3	Studies, modelling efforts and other research conducted/developed	130,000.00	Jan	Dec	RSPN	-
4	NDA, DAEs, DPs have developed knowledge products containing information on LECRD, lessons learned or best practices extracted from within the country and from other countries (South-South cooperation)	266,000.00	Jan	Dec	RSPN	-
	GRAND TOTAL	491,00.00				

Project Title	xii. Strengthening Capacity to Enhance Knowledge and Skills in Conservation
Project Period	2024 - 2026
Approved Grant	USD 450,000.00
Donor	Foundation Hans Wilsdorf, Switzerland

PROJECT SUMMARY:

RSPN is dedicated to conserving biodiversity, promoting sustainable development, and fostering environmental stewardship across Bhutan. In line with our mission, RSPN has developed a comprehensive strategy for advancing the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources in the country.

The importance of capacity building in environmental conservation cannot be overstated. RSPN has been working on numerous projects related to biodiversity conservation, sustainable livelihoods, climate change adaptation, and community-based natural resource management. However, the rapidly evolving challenges in these areas require continuous skill development to ensure effective implementation.

Despite RSPN's commitment and progress in protecting Bhutan's natural resources, the need for enhanced technical and managerial capacity among our staff is evident. Our staff members are pivotal in carrying out on-the-ground conservation work, engaging with local communities, and driving policy advocacy efforts. However, they currently face challenges related to the implementation of RSPN's strategic goals, particularly in areas such as project management, monitoring and evaluation, and cross-sectoral collaboration.

This project seeks to address these challenges through a targeted capacity development program, which will empower RSPN staff with the necessary skills and tools to better execute our mission and address the evolving environmental challenges in Bhutan.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES:

1. Strengthen Staff Knowledge and Skills: To build technical and managerial expertise among RSPN staff to enhance their capacity to effectively implement RSPN's strategies and thematic areas.
2. Improve Project Management Competencies: To provide staff with advanced knowledge in project planning, execution, monitoring, and evaluation, ensuring projects meet their objectives and contribute to RSPN's long-term vision.
3. Foster Collaboration and Cross-Sectoral Partnerships: To enhance staff's ability to work effectively with other organizations, government bodies, and local communities for integrated conservation efforts.
4. Ensure Sustainability and Impact: To ensure that the capacity building translates into long-term positive impacts for the organization, its partners, and the communities that benefit from RSPN's work.

Project Implementation Plan for the calendar year 2025						
Sl. No	Activities	Budget (USD)	Start Date	End Date	Lead	Implementing Partner
1	Capacity Development of RSPN Staff in the Implementation of Strategic and Thematic Areas	150,000	Jan	Jan	RSPN	-

Project Title	xiii. WBH Conservation-Conservation Allies Fund
Project Period	2024 - 2026
Approved Grant	USD 2,000.00
Donor	Conservation Allies, USA

PROJECT SUMMARY:

This project aims to leverage funding to develop and optimize our website while enhancing our overall communications strategy. A well-designed and user-friendly website will serve as a central hub for information, engagement, and outreach, ensuring that our mission and impact are effectively communicated to a wider audience. Additionally, a refined communications strategy will improve donor engagement, strengthen relationships with stakeholders, and amplify our fundraising efforts. By investing in these key areas, we will create a stronger digital presence that drives support, increases visibility, and ultimately helps us achieve our organizational goals.

Project Implementation Plan for the calendar year 2025						
Sl. No	Activities	Budget (USD)	Start Date	End Date	Lead	Implementing Partner
1	Revamping of RSPN website	2,000.00	Jan	Dec	RSPN	-



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