

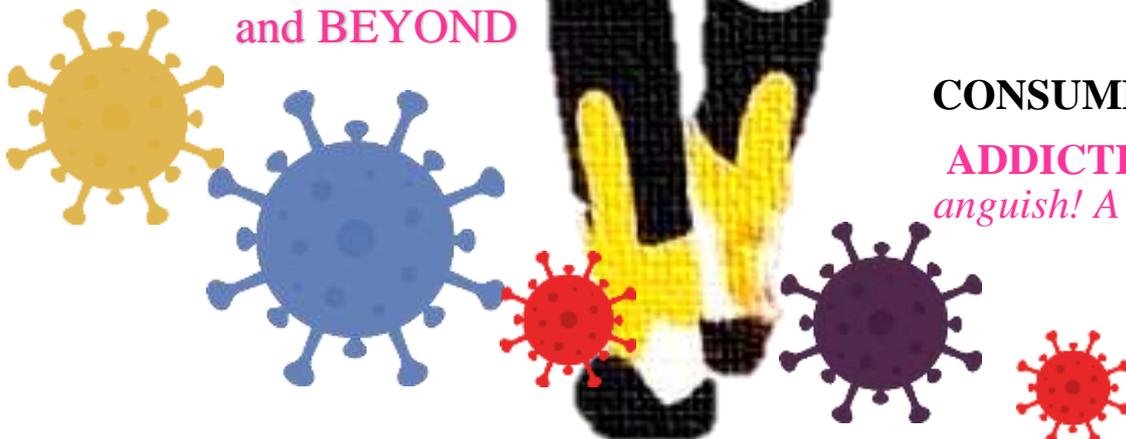
HAPPINESS

Development with Values



“We look to the youth of Bhutan to come forward – in this hour of need – so that, beyond overcoming the challenges posed by COVID-19, we build a stronger nation.”
His Majesty the King

COVID-19
and BEYOND



: Asia’s First Project Finance for Permanence (PFP)

WASTE MANAGEMENT FLAGSHIP PROGRAM

SUSTAINABLE & RESPONSIBLE FINANCE:

Financial Inclusion, Digitalization, Impact Investment, Green Finance – COVID or No COVID, COVID-19 & PEOPLE

In Conversation with TCB DG: Tourism affected but coming out stronger

CONSUMER PROTECTION

ADDICTION – the pain and the anguish! A day in the life of BNCA



OUR
KING
OUR HERO

Greatness of nation vs. universality of pandemic

The COVID 19 global pandemic continues to ravage countries and peoples worldwide. Closer home, the fight has grown in intensity since its inauspicious entry in March. The country has seen the enforcement of its first nationwide lockdown of 21 days from 11 to 31st of August.

As much as we may not want to accept what is being dished out by the global pandemic, reality happens to be that ever since it made its unwelcome entry, it has continually shaped the workings of government machinery and regular daily routines of everyday life. To say it in the same breath, living life adjusting with 'it' has become the new reality. Grudgingly, reluctantly



Letters

Your warm wishes keep us going. do keep them coming!!!

Dear students,

The seriousness of responsibility worn by one mind might just be replicated by another, and then another to build a chain of responsible individuals, who operate responsibly automatically on their own without having to flip through info leaflets or scroll through health web pages. Here the bet is pinned on "Hope it does."

As you return to your places of learning, schooling would be the same, where you learn your lessons as laid out for the academic year. But as you school yourselves in an atmosphere of apparent danger looming large of the COVID 19, it falls upon you to shoulder the responsibility of being mindful of all measures that keep you safe and keep those others around you safe.

After all, a chain is only as strong as its weakest link. And in these unpredictable times, no one, nobody can afford a weak link, not even one. The new normal is about being safe, wise and responsible by wearing mask, keeping distance and washing hands.

Stay strong, keep others strong.

Cheers,
Happiness Team

Keep in touch! Email!

Got an interesting story to share? Have any experiences you want to narrate? Or just feel like you have an interesting article to share? We have a space to promote something on those lines, to spread the good culture of reading and keep alive the art of writing. ☺ Share your happy stories with the Happiness at happinessbooklet@gmail.com We would love to hear from you. You can also find us on facebook

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or compellingly, it is accepted we are living, what is being called by many – the new normal.

But meanwhile, the measures the government is taking guided by His Majesty the King to not just stem the tide of contagion, but also bring harmony, the nearest form possible of it in these chaotic times, to one and all in the country – they continue to be an everyday show of oneness. This is witnessed in the way things are reciprocated by the general citizenry. It is visible in the way rules are followed, lockdown protocols are respected. It is more so evident largely in the way collective and unanimous solidarity is expressed in thoughts and deeds.

At the First line

Men and women in blue, green, orange and white have not had the well-deserved rest ever since their amped-up duties began—in patrolling the country’s borders; overseeing counter- and preventive measures in monitoring citizens and ensuring necessarily mindful behavior of hand hygiene, physical distancing; attending to treatment of those ‘confirmed,’ tracing their contacts and spending sleepless hours in testing samples— to act as the nation’s first line of defence and shield against a fast-spreading aggressor virus.

Looking into needs, also the wants

The government has gone to the extent of embracing the proverbial necessary evil in taking an untoward move of allowing sale of tobacco through government-permitted outlets. This move although contested by few quarters as an affront to the continued enforcement of the Tobacco Act, is singly looked upon for its favorable weight in purpose of ensuring that people don’t cross borders illegally to bring in tobacco. Whether it is out of desperation or for sheer opportunistic gains, whether said people are caught, tested, quarantined, and eventually face due process of law, it all ends in compromising the ‘job well done’ of so many who ensured that cross-border transmissions are kept at bay. For that weighty reason bearing national interest, this improvisation currently holds more merits than flaws.

Similarly, alcoholic beverages are made available in shops regardless of whether their business license covers it or not. The first 21-day lockdown witnessed the operation of this facility wherein a zoning system was instituted with each zone containing a shop that sells essentials in grocery and vegetables.

People for people

The inter-country transport and supply of vegetables and dairy products from dzongkhag that produces in excess to those that are experiencing high demands and less supply, has been a frequent and notable activity during the first nationwide lockdown period. This phase of vegetable supplying has also shined light on hopeful insights that vegetable self-sufficiency may not be a dream too distant.

Business-as-usual, situations unusual

As ad hoc as conditions may have turned to be—to operate under conditions adjusted to and dictated by the raging pandemic—the wheels of governance are meant to keep turning, plans and policies need to keep seeing the light of day, and people should be able to find some form of normalcy in daily life even in these abnormal times. While concerned agencies and personnel continue to battle the mounting pile of COVID issues, the machinery of development does keep churning.

The sudden entry of an unexpected pandemic has opened up loose ends for opportunists to make a few gains out of it all. This is of course something wrong to do, especially when all involved are hands-on to ensure preventive measures are soundly in place. Those doing it obviously are brushing it aside by pulling the “Unenlightened minds” card – the Bhutanese equivalent of “I’m only human.” But as rested as their conscience may be, the nation’s consumer protection body (OCP) won’t think twice to instill the fear of law in their minds. Agencies like the BNCA have continued its steely gaze on all things narcotic and shoved in every bit of effort to dutifully do what is their mandate.

Likewise, waste watch is on, pandemic/no pandemic. And with a flagship program in waste management in swing since a year ago, waste management provisions can be found running their courses. In the same vein, environmental conservation programs like the BFL continue to oversee the conservation in the dozen tributaries they branch out into.

Read up on these topics in this edition of Happiness while also going through a select coverage on Sustainable Investment & Finance. Stay safe, stay away from crowds, stay indoors as far as possible, practice hand-hygiene (with hand sanitizers/soap and water), protect your loved ones, protect yourself.



His Majesty The King's

Address to the People of Bhutan sept 12, 2020

Last month, the threat of the pandemic became very real for Bhutan when the first COVID-19 cases were detected outside the quarantine facilities. It was extremely worrying to find several positive cases, in more than one place. Those who contracted the virus and their loved ones have suffered a great deal of anxiety.

A nationwide lockdown was introduced with immediate effect to contain the virus. The entire population had to stay home for weeks, stopping work, losing income, and running out of food and essentials. Yet, our people fully understood the magnitude of the threat we face, and willingly endured the discomfort and hardship, extending their wholehearted support to the government. I thank our people for being concerned about the collective good and showing exceptional forbearance and resilience.

We closed our international borders in March. But, in the following months, there has been no sign that the COVID-19 pandemic will end. It has continued to spread; bringing illness, death, and distress to so many people around the world. In comparison, we were able to lead reasonably normal lives in Bhutan with some disruptions caused by just a few cases. The government, led by the Prime Minister, Dr. Lotay Tshering, has worked tirelessly over the past six months. Many public servants have put in long hours of work. Health Minister Lyonpo Dechen Wangmo, the health ministry-secretary, doctors, nurses, technicians, and other health workers – have been serving without even a day's rest. The armed forces – RBA, RBP and RBG – supported by Desuups and numerous other volunteers, have served with inexhaustible strength and energy. Most importantly, their work has been strengthened by the unwavering sense of civic duty of the people. All these efforts have culminated in our success so far.

What we do next is critical. The road ahead will be arduous. The enemy that we are confronting is invisible. But we cannot afford to allow COVID-19 to spread unchecked among the population. It is a new virus and, therefore, still unpredictable. Our priority will always be the health and wellbeing of our people. We will continue to do everything to ensure that lives are not put at risk.

As we battle the pandemic, we need to be aware that it will not disappear in a matter of months – we have to brace ourselves to deal with the impact of the pandemic for the next year or two. We need a cure or a vaccine to see an end to COVID-19. There will undoubtedly be a vaccine, but it will take some time before it is ready, and some more time before it becomes widely accessible. All our planning, at both the individual and national levels, must be based on this fact.

The pandemic and its ramifications have posed some debilitating challenges. Education has been interrupted this year. The national development process, economic activity, and the everyday lives of the people have been disrupted. When I look ahead, I see a period that will be fraught with difficulties for our people.

At the same time, however, I am confident that we will overcome this. All our national resources, accumulated over the years through the hard work of our Kings and ancestors, our national assets, the collective capability of our institutions, the knowledge and experience of our public servants, and the dedication and stamina of our people, are being utilised today.

Indeed, an enormous responsibility faces us all – the King, the government, and the people. As in the past, if we think and act as one, and exert our concerted efforts, we will surely overcome every obstacle and prevail against all odds.

Although we were confronted by unforeseen challenges this year, everyone has been outstanding in performing their services. We have come together and made sure that the national machinery is functioning well. This was possible because of the immense love and dedication that our people have for our country. Our commitment to the wellbeing of our fellow Bhutanese was clearly evident in the hard work, and what we have accomplished in the past six months.

Moving forward, to further build on our achievements, we must now muster the active involvement and support of our youth. Demographically, we have a large proportion of young people who can make a significant difference if given the opportunity. The youth of Bhutan embody vigour and energy, and they are ready to serve without fear or hesitation when needed. I am always profoundly heartened when I hear their aspirations and see their enthusiasm.

During such times, our most crucial national endeavour is to ensure the continued wellbeing of our people. One major challenge we face today is the shortage of workforce. Understandably, expatriate workers wish to return to their homes during the pandemic, and many have already left. It is up to Bhutanese citizens, therefore, to step in and serve wherever there are shortfalls. In a sense, this is a timely opportunity. At a time when our youth are ready to serve, we can translate this prospect into reality for the long-term benefit of the nation, and achieve the extraordinary.

When we place such a mandate on our youth, we have to be, first of all, clear about precisely what we expect. Secondly, the task that we give them should be timeless and of such national importance that it will inspire and motivate them. And finally, what we ask of them must be pragmatic and achievable given the limitations of the current situation.

For example, Bhutan has abundant water resources compared with most of the countries in the world. Yet, there is no water in many places where it is needed, leaving large tracts of productive land fallow. Water is also a cause of conflict between communities and a predicament for rural and urban settlements alike. Our food import in the past year was over Nu. 7 billion while about 78,000 acres of arable land remained fallow.

An estimated half of the Bhutanese population is engaged in the agriculture sector. If with a well-designed programme, our youth were engaged in building a robust water management infrastructure, it would be of long term benefit to the country. While global conflicts and wars will be fought over access to water, if we can solve this problem once and for all in Bhutan, it will be a truly noble accomplishment. This would also ensure food security, an essential aspect of our overall national goal of self-reliance. What the youth of Bhutan achieves over a year or two during the COVID-19 pandemic, will remain as a mark of triumph– an invaluable asset and a lasting legacy for future generations.

As we grapple with this pandemic today, our religious institutions continue to supplicate the blessings of our Guardian Deities, and the government will not relax in its efforts to contain the threat. Our institutions, armed forces, Desuups, public servants, and volunteers will continue to serve the nation. The elderly will remain safe, and the people thoroughly conscientious.

We look to the youth of Bhutan to come forward – in this hour of need – so that, beyond overcoming the challenges posed by COVID-19, we build a stronger nation.

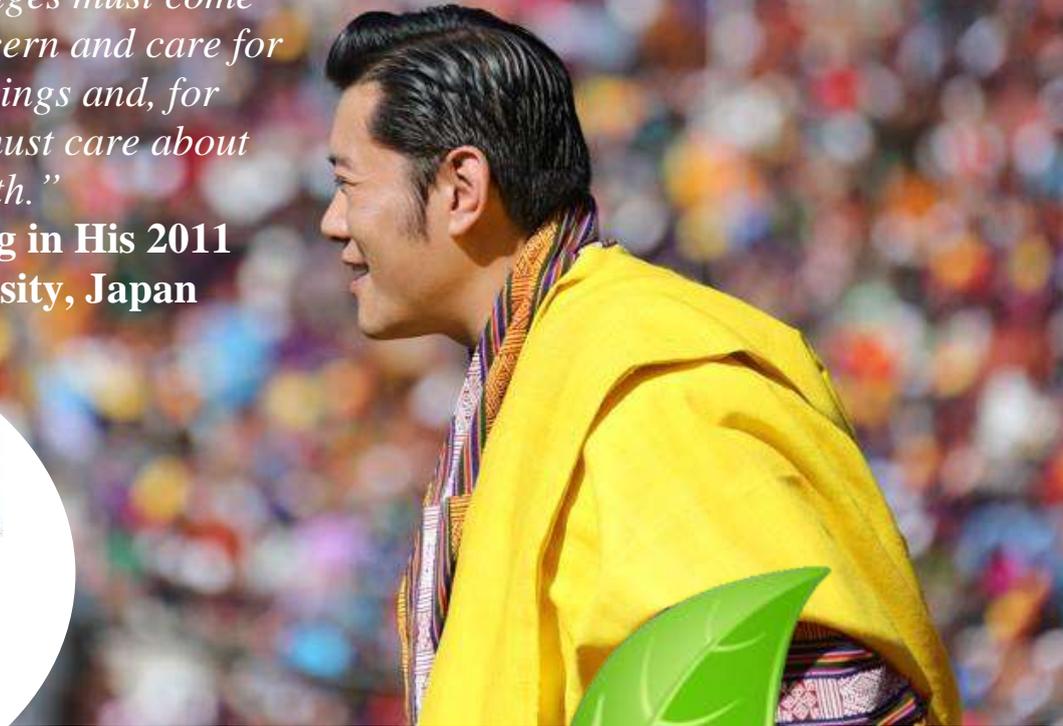
During this pandemic, my only priority is the wellbeing and happiness of our people, including those living abroad. With the blessings and protection of our Guardian Deities, we will all remain safe. And, as I always say, if our people stay diligent and committed, united in purpose and spirit, all will be well.

Tashi Delek.

Under the GNH umbrella

“The problems facing the world today— they challenge all of us equally. And the solutions to these challenges must come from a real sense of concern and care for others, for all sentient beings and, for future generations. We must care about what happens to this earth.”

– His Majesty The King in His 2011 Address at Keio University, Japan



BFL – So that the Legend lives on & the CONSERVATION carries on

Many things come and go. In fact, all things come and go. They must come and go, because nothing is forever. What lives on though, are stories – stories traded from one to another, stories passed on from generations to generations, and stories that circle on for centuries, in space and time. As long as there are stories, worth telling, there will always be tellers, telling them, again and again; And bards singing on and on about them.

In this story though, clearly, the bard has not sung enough songs about the legend. Or perhaps, the legends do not contain enough stories. Or maybe, the songs and stories are floating in a universe that altogether sings and re-sings the songs; tells and retells those stories, so much so that, seemingly exceptional feats are downgraded to commonplace, and potentially great deeds are discounted to routine acts.

And, that is maybe why Bhutan is the greatest conservation story the world has never heard, or hears all the time. It would depend on the world where the Bhutan story is being heard and told all the time, or the world where the Bhutan story has never been heard or told at all. But if the legend that is Bhutan were to live forever, and its stories are to be so compellingly powerful to continually invent its own details, to infinitely fuel the legends, then Bhutan has to do something on its own to ensure just that.

And it seems, Bhutan already has. It's called Bhutan For Life or BFL.



A closer look at the Legend

But before we go on to narrate – ‘why BFL?’ let’s take a look, up-close and personal, at why the legend is a legend, and why its stories need continuity.

Long did Bhutan leave behind the garb of isolation, after ending a policy that was self-imposed and dedicatedly pursued up until 1960. But, its purpose in protection and conservation still continues. The country to this day in the new millennium and current century, wears and works the harmonious blend of the old and new. Its culture and traditions dating back centuries—to when Padmasambhava was flying to Taksang riding a tigress; to when Bhutan was witnessing evolution to a unified nation with Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyel at the helm; and to when Bhutan as a nation finally left behind its medieval avatar, and stopped being a scattered, warring nation of many kings ruling various small regions by unanimously crowning its first hereditary monarch—is still practiced every day as a living, breathing culture as compared to those in many other countries that have become museum staples, occasionally exhibited and promoted . **Chalk this up as one.**

Development in itself is a desirable phenomenon. It improves lives and brings in a lot of possibilities in further living life with a lot more ease and less difficulties. Consumerism, however is a runaway train, made unstoppable by its agents of modernism. In this, state of the earth, especially the health of nature is unconsciously overlooked or intentionally sidestepped or trampled to achieve things in the name of progress. Bhutan, by taking a middle path from being an

isolationist and embracing all-out development activities is pursuing its own home-grown development philosophy of Gross National Happiness (GNH). Noticeably, it is in contrast to the GNP or Gross National Product that is followed by the world outside. The GNH philosophy based on its four pillars of conservation of environment, balanced socio-economic development, preservation of culture, and good governance aims to ultimately achieve Happiness for the people. **Punch this in as two.**

The level of no-nonsense and strategic seriousness with which the country plans and implements environmental conservation is unlike any other. With over 70 percent of forest cover to show, and a Constitutional backing of “ensuring 60 percent forest cover for all times to come,” the country’s conservation move is definitely in a good place, having started from a good pace. **Make that three**

Now let’s do a roundup: a nation that has stood the test of time to rise from the rubbles of ancient and medieval struggles; a nation that demonstrates adamant resolve to preserve its values that have carried on transcending ages; a nation that continues to push forward with steely resolve to stay the constant course regardless of what sweeping changes are spinning the world inside and outside.

Bottom line: Let’s just say the legend has lived up to its legends. And continues doing so. Now, let’s return to ‘Why BFL?’



Why BFL?

A landlocked nation's endeavour to win by attrition the development game is elaborately networked to do things differently—GNH etc. Retaining and upholding values in culture and conservation being the major building blocks in this. After going at it for about six decades, it is still fighting the good fight, but there are few losses to account for amid the major wins.

The inevitability of change: Where the phenomenon of change is the only certainty, there is the inevitable uncertainty of the state of all things wherein nothing remains the same. The point being driven at is there are no guarantees Bhutan's forests will remain forever intact. The country is at risk of losing the forests and other natural resources it has worked so hard to protect. That is why – BFL.

The answer around that inevitability: Offering reassurance is the PFP approach, which offers a proven model that provides long-term protection of Bhutan's network of protected areas. In one agreement, it mobilizes the governmental, financial, and other commitments needed to develop Bhutan's network of protected areas and maintain it forever. That is why – BFL.

Layered in the creases: As the kingdom that is 'isolated no more' gets overwhelmed by sweeping elements of change rushing in through the fabled floodgates that it opened up, a generation of Bhutan's youth are growing up at a crossroads. The manner in which this is effecting changes to Bhutan's centuries-old Buddhist culture and traditional rural lifestyles are changing is growing as an issue.

The unwelcome guests: As in other Himalayan countries, the impacts of climate change are growing and expected to be particularly severe in this region. At the same time, serious threats are coming from outside Bhutan's borders, resulting in increased illegal extraction of natural resources and poaching of wildlife. These incursions are increasing both in frequency and impact, such that Bhutan's current enforcement capacity is being overwhelmed. That is why – BFL.

Troubles up front: Despite operating amid favorable conditions of political stability, political will and remarkable conservation milestones, Bhutan's natural resources are still threatened than ever. In its opening up to the world, the country has changed more in the last 50 plus years than in the past 500 years combined. Rapid modernization, the adoption of democracy, and a significant shift in demographics have all contributed to a country in transition. Today, 60 percent of the country's population is below the age of 34. Natural resources are exploited as new industries are created



and existing ones grow to meet the needs of a rapidly growing population. There are fewer stewards of the land in rural areas, as people move to cities and larger towns in search of the perceived and real comforts of modernity.

The challenges of poverty and the increasing need for resources are riddled up every alley and roadways that Bhutan treads on in pursuit of development. Bhutan's future depends on how it manages its single-most important economic asset — its natural resources. It is of comfort to know then that only few countries match the depth of Bhutan's commitment to conservation. Hailed as a country that champions environmental preservation, Bhutan easily holds on to the bragging rights.

Reality check: But conservation for all the good tidings it pours in from admirers, is still not a journey or venture that can perennially do without fund support, and especially for Bhutan, an LDC or Least Developed Country that needs to get its house in order every other new day; address the growing pains, if you will.

Bhutan faces severe constraints due to its small size, landlocked location, extremely rugged terrain, and limited resources. While the country remains heavily dependent on foreign aid to support its development, most of its population is engaged in subsistence farming and forestry. Its largest export is hydropower sales to India. Environmentally conscientious tourism is also an expanding sector.

Bhutan For Life

BFL stems from the Bhutan's long-standing commitment to conservation, which is enshrined in the constitution. BFL operates on a PFP or Project Finance for Permanence model, which is an innovative approach to sustainably finance the long-term protection of important ecosystems around the world. It celebrates Bhutan's bold commitment, and asks others around the world to invest in making it a reality. For all that it has done so far, and achieved so far, Bhutan reaches out to the global community to help create a system of permanent protection, together. It would benefit Bhutan's forests, rivers, wildlife, and people in perpetuity and set an inspiring model for the whole world. Sure, that is how things roll out at the origin, the end goal is by far strategized to branch out and spread the benefits globally. The country's age old

tradition of protecting its rugged mountains and wilderness for the wellbeing of people and animals will get a big boost. But the permanent protection of Bhutan's forests will impact generations of humans to come (both within Bhutan and around the world, both living and those yet to be born).

The world recognizes this extraordinary value of Bhutan's rare natural assets and the difficult realities Bhutan's government and people are facing as they strive to skillfully fuse sacred values and traditions with the challenges of poverty and development in the 21st century. BFL offers a unique opportunity for public and private investors to help carve a path that upholds the protection of nature and invigorates economic development for Bhutan's people.



Bhutan's protected area network is one of the most comprehensive in the world—ranging from tropical grasslands and forests in the southern foothills, through temperate forests in the central mountains, to high alpine meadows. It is home to 200 mammal species, including tigers, and 700 species of birds.



- More than 70 percent of Bhutan is covered with forest. It's one of the highest proportions of any country in Asia—and the country boasts a 5-million-acre network of protected land rich in mountain forests, pristine rivers, and thriving wildlife such as tigers, snow leopards, and elephants. Bhutan sits in the heart of the Eastern Himalayas—one of the world's 10 most biodiverse regions.

- The protected area network in Bhutan covers more than 51 percent of the country encompasses 10 protected areas all linked by biological corridors, and. These landscapes contain a vast repository of ecosystems, species, and genetic diversity, and play a critical role in supporting socioeconomic and environmental health within and around Bhutan. The protected area system is especially critical to the country's climate resilience, providing the connectivity between habitats and refugia that these ecosystems and species will need to adapt to ever-increasing temperatures and climate change impacts.





The benefits all around: for Bhutan & the world

The forests of Bhutan are not just important as habitat for wildlife, but also as necessary defenses for the country as it grapples increased impacts of climate change. Forests help reduce run-off, improve groundwater re-charge, reduce erosion, and improve water quality. Some 69 percent of Bhutan's population lives in rural areas, and forests and surrounding landscapes help make their livelihoods by providing food, shelter and income.

Nature benefits: BFL offers a far-sighted solution for the permanent protection of the country's entire 5-million-acre network of protected areas. It is an approach designed to deliver measurable and long-term benefits.



BFL will protect the country's vital watersheds, forests, and ecosystem services. By 2022, at least one stretch of river of high conservation, economic and cultural value will be designated as free-flowing and managed for conservation and climate resilience. By 2023, protected area and biological corridor management plans will incorporate climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies. BFL will ensure that all protected areas and biological corridors are furthermore equipped with the necessary staff, infrastructure, and technology to conserve these valuable assets over the long-term.

The BFL transition fund will increase populations of two flagship species by 2022, including increasing tiger numbers by 20 percent over 2015 levels. By 2018, all of Bhutan's protected areas and biological corridors will have established the zero poaching framework and instituted SMART (Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool) to radically improve patrolling effectiveness. By 2022, BFL expects to see significant improvements in the management of protected areas, with conservation plans developed for 10 additional priority species.

People benefit: BFL will conserve the country's natural assets in active partnership with local people. There are close to 40,000 people living within the protected area network, most



of whom depend on natural resources for their livelihoods. In addition, a little more than 100,000 people living in rural areas less than 10 km from protected area borders, and half Bhutan's population living in rural areas downstream benefit from an array of ecosystem services that protected areas provide.

BFL is set to **work directly with local communities** to develop sustainable, climate-resilient land management that enshrines traditional knowledge. It will also directly support sustainable economic development. An initial estimate of the total value of the country's ecosystem services is about \$15.5 billion per year—approximately five times the country's GDP. Two emerging industries—hydropower and tourism—depend heavily on natural resources.



Ecotourism and nature-based business models will be created for all protected areas based on sound market assessments, conservation gains, planning, and multi-stakeholder engagement. By 2025, BFL aims to see 80 percent of households within protected areas with access to nature-based employment and income-generating opportunities. Because conflict between communities and wildlife is a growing issue, BFL will ensure that 80 percent of households living within protected areas benefit from reduced human-wildlife conflict by 2020 as a result of adoption of human-wildlife conflict prevention strategies.

BFL will work with communities living within protected areas to increase their **resilience to climate change and disasters**, employing both traditional knowledge and the best available science. This will be complemented by climate-smart reforestation efforts.

A close-up photograph of a red panda sitting on a tree branch. The panda is looking towards the camera with its mouth slightly open, holding a large, dried leaf in its mouth. The background is a clear blue sky with some bare tree branches and small, dark berries.

Red panda
(*Ailurus fulgens*)

The BFL impact
will be in seeing
things through to
protect, save, and
monitor wildlife
and habitats

A photograph of a tiger walking through a dense forest. The tiger is in the lower right foreground, walking towards the camera. The forest is filled with tall, thin trees and large, moss-covered branches. The ground is covered in grass and fallen leaves.

Tiger
(*Panthera tigris*)

The world benefits

Bhutan's environment benefits the region and the world by providing clean water, clean air, and carbon sequestration. Bhutan's rivers, which flow into neighboring India and Bangladesh, are part of a network of rivers originating from Asia's "water towers" that provide water for one-fifth of the world's population. Its forests sequester more than 6 million tons of carbon dioxide annually, said to be four times more than what the country emits. Additionally, Bhutan has committed to remain carbon-neutral forever. More recently, Bhutan has made robust commitments to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, especially those relating to environmental sustainability, poverty alleviation, food security, and water quality, and the Convention on Biological Diversity Aichi targets.



BFL – Working an innovative approach

The government of Bhutan and WWF pursues a project finance for permanence (PFP) model. PFP is an innovative approach to sustainably finance the long-term protection of important ecosystems around the world. Borrowing tactics from private finance, one of its trademarks is a single closing deal in which all partners come together to sign and agree to full funding. It offers governments of developing countries a transition fund over an agreed time frame, giving them time to build up capacity and organize internal funding sources to manage protected areas in perpetuity.

For investors interested in long-term conservation impacts, Bhutan presents an exceptional set of favorable conditions. Few nations on Earth have managed to protect their natural wealth in the way that Bhutan has, and fewer still share its dedication to conservation in the future. A young and politically stable democracy, it is eager to enact systems that will benefit all life within its borders—from trees to wildlife to people. It has a rare opportunity to chart a unique development path that entwines protection of the

EVOLUTION

2032: BFL transition fund complete and the RGoB assumes full responsibility for sustainable financing
2027: 80 percent of households within Bhutan's protected areas have access to nature-based employment
2024: Wild tiger populations in Bhutan have increased by at least 20 percent over 2015 levels
2018: From here onward, Bhutan's protected areas sequester 2.6 million tons of CO₂ annually
2017: BFL transition fund officially closes
2016: RGoB completes BFL conservation plan and PM TT delivers a TED talk on Bhutan's commitment
2015: WWF CEO Carter Roberts and former PM Tshering Tobgay conduct multi-city tour to present BFL
2014: RGoB and WWF sign MoU to begin conservation and finance planning
2013: BFL conceived with early start-up funding

BFL by the numbers

60% of Bhutan's population is under the age of 34
US\$ 15.5b in ecosystem services is generated in Bhutan each year
200 species of mammals live in Bhutan, including tigers, red pandas, and golden langurs
1/5th of world's population depends on the Himalayan region's rivers for water
5 million acres of land protected (51% of the country)
15% of the total population lives within 10 km of protected areas
70% of Bhutan is covered by forest
700 bird species live in Bhutan, including the white-bellied heron
69% of the population lives in rural areas

environment with economic growth. In doing so, it can grow into a model for the world.

The BFL initiative provides Bhutan's government with a \$40 million transition fund until 2030 to build up and effectively manage a robust network of protected areas and wildlife corridors, covering 51 percent of the country. This network will protect and restore wildlife—including endangered elephants, tigers, elusive snow leopards, and critically endangered white-bellied herons; contribute to rural economic development and the wellbeing of Bhutan's people; and support robust climate mitigation and adaptation measures. The impacts will extend far beyond Bhutan's borders to the millions of people who rely on the region's rivers, and will elevate Bhutan across the world as an example of permanent forest protection and climate resilience.

The odds in favour – why it works for Bhutan

PFP has a growing track record of securing the benefits provided by conservation areas over the long-term. The WWF sees scaling up this approach as urgent, given the threats of rapid species decline, deforestation, climate change, and resource depletion facing the planet. BFL is part of a global strategy to strategically increase the number and accelerate the pace of PFP initiatives.

BFL is modeled in part on the success of ARPA for Life—the largest PFP to date, orchestrated by the government of Brazil, WWF, and a diverse group of partners from public and private sectors. In 2014, ARPA for Life created a \$215 million fund to permanently protect 150 million acres of Brazilian Amazon rainforest—a landmark win for conservation.

Bhutan presents highly favorable conditions for the PFP model, including high levels of government transparency, political stability, a leadership deeply committed to conservation, an economy that will directly benefit from the ecosystem services protected areas provide, a developing ecotourism industry, and a national ethos that upholds reverence for the environment. The initiative will likewise benefit from WWF's partnership and experience with successful PFP initiatives in Brazil and elsewhere. Bhutan for Life will be the first PFP initiative in Asia and, as such, can provide a model for other Asian countries to follow.



PFP is an innovative approach to sustainably finance the long-term protection of important ecosystems around the world. Borrowing tactics from private finance, one of its trademarks is a single closing deal in which all partners come together to sign and agree to full funding. It offers governments of developing countries a transition fund over an agreed time frame, giving them time to build up capacity and organize internal funding sources to manage protected areas in perpetuity.

BFL has developed a detailed conservation plan that outlines expected conservation and socioeconomic outcomes over the life of the transition fund: from 2017 through 2030. In accordance with the PFP approach, the Bhutan for Life transition fund will only be launched when the total fundraising commitment target has been reached and all key legal and financial conditions necessary to secure the deal are in place.

BFL is part of a global strategy to strategically increase the number and accelerate the pace of PFP initiatives.

An overview of the settlement in Sakteng



BFL – The organized structure

A board consisting of donors, WWF, government, and other partners oversees the transition fund and disburse funds each year, as long as predetermined conditions, including conservation milestones and financial transparency, continue to be met. This ensures that all financial needs to cover activities are committed from the start, and creates financial incentives to minimize the risk of partners not meeting their obligations throughout implementation. At the end of the transition fund, Bhutan will assume full responsibility for financing the protected area system in perpetuity.

The BFL transition fund will be governed by a Board of Trustees, with balanced representation of all parties. Two members will be appointed by the Royal

Government of Bhutan and the remaining will be reserved for non-government members, one of which shall be WWF and the others shall be representatives appointed by the transition fund donors. A clear set of roles and responsibilities for the Board of Trustees will be defined and agreed. Amongst others, the roles and responsibilities of the Board of Trustee will include:

Review of annual financial performance and progress; Authority to approve or withhold funding disbursements; Compliance with anti-corruption mechanisms; Provision of financial safeguards; Compliance with disbursement conditions.

BFL's impact will directly contribute to the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

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References: BFL official website; Bhutan For Life (Prospective); Bhutan's Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDC) Picture credits-BFL office, NCD, and WWF.

✉ Happiness article –Bhutan For Life (BFL). For more information, pls. visit www.bfl.org.bt



WASTE MANAGEMENT FLAGSHIP PROGRAM: Where battling waste is not a wasted battle

Weighing the issue: How heavy does 172 metric tons weigh? You can say, as heavy as 43 elephants (with assumption each elephant weighs 4 MT), or as heavy as 215 Alto cars (assuming each car weighs 0.8 MT). But of course, you can't go anywhere to witness such a sight, that is, an event that brings together 43 elephants or an organized incident that demonstrates the weighing of 215 Alto cars. There is however, occasion and opportunity to find out if one really wishes to do so. And the occasion and opportunity lie in the daily amount of waste generated collectively by all of us as a nation.

As per the latest National Waste Inventory Survey of Bhutan (NWIS-2019), the country generates 172 metric tons of solid waste in a day. The next time you chance upon a mountain of waste at a landfill; know the amount that goes in to raise the mound by a little every day.

Mulling the factors: Development may be the desirable phenomenon the country has embraced, but it does not have absolute control over the ills that come attached on its frills – the mounting problem (quite literally) of waste is a highlight aspect in this. Problem within the problem is the increased composition of non-biodegradable waste sourced from domestic household waste, e-wastes, waste from health care facilities and industrial wastes.

Addressing the issue:

Tackling the issue of waste has been a prolonged fight for the country. Let's say, few battles have been won along the way due to many initiatives introduced for better waste management and reduction. But the war still rages on. Various perspectives are accounted for in addressing the waste issue, but the main cause of the problem has always been people's attitudes, behavioral changes, and lack of proper waste management services and facilities.

Initiative gets the Flagship boost:

Just because you're fighting the good fight, circumstances will not align themselves in your favor, all in a row. You could say, this has been exactly the case with addressing waste management issues. Perhaps, it has always awaited a big boost in governmental support and financial support. Being awarded the status of a Flagship Program in June 2019 with a fund support of Nu 1 Billion, has been that big moment.



The Waste Management Flagship Program (WMFP)

Treating waste as a crosscutting issue, for which every individual/agency must act responsibly, the WFMP aims to achieve zero-waste in the country where 80 percent waste going to the landfill is reduced to less than 15-20 percent by 2030. The program targets to reduce waste at every point and put in place a strong management set-up and conscientious monitoring system. The program also includes implementing measures to control the stray dog population to see a reduction to a manageable level.

Covering all of 20 Dzongkhags, four Thromdes included; the flagship program operates on 21 strategically crafted strategies, which roll out as follows:

Strengthen Waste Collection System; Institute and operationalize 3 bin coloured waste bins; Waste



segregation at source; Application of 3Rs; Strengthen waste management system; Put in place cluster based integrated waste management system (biomedical waste, plastics, household hazardous waste C&D waste, e-waste); Wet waste management in rural and small towns at household level; Construction of waste management infrastructure; Establish processing facility; Waste management data and information system; Strengthen waste management legislations and policies; Waste management fees; Development of recycling industry; Engagement of the private sector in waste management; Strengthen waste management rules and regulations; Stray Dog Population Control (Nu. 94.984 million); Promote stray dog adoption; Feral dog population management; Implement animal birth control activities; Social/engineering and awareness program; Awareness programs and integration into school curriculum

Why the WMFP has a better shot at things

Changing the unchanging mindset: At the center of issues is people; it's always people. The changing and unchanging mindsets have always swayed success rate for any waste management approach. The WMFP is strategized to attend to this detail by creating social awareness to bring attitudes and behavioral changes of general public through its various activities.

One program to unite them all: The implementation of waste management strategies in the past was erratic and disorganized. For instance, integrated waste management approach was not adopted, not aligned to the national goals; whereby, respective agencies formulated their own waste management measures. Besides the obvious confusion being generated out of such a scenario, the entire process became quite the cost-intensive affair. The effective coordination and overall management on the WMFP's part seeks to weed out all such confusions and duplications of functions. The waste management, hereafter, will also find itself incorporated into Annual Performance Agreements (APA) and Individual Work Plans (IWP).

All aboard the WMFP bandwagon: Unlike in the past the WFMP is a nationwide program. The WMFP embraces comprehensive waste management strategies involving the entire value chain from source to disposal in the 20 dzongkhags and 4 thromdes. The program also consolidates all the waste management-related plans, projects and activities across the country by involving all the relevant stakeholders.

Effective recovery and treatment: Treatment of waste also involves composting. Recovery of waste comes from Material Recovery Facility (MRF), refuse-derived fuel (RDF), construction and demolition plants, and e-waste dismantling centres. After recovery and re-using every bit of waste, the residue is dumped in landfill or incinerated. Waste management fees would be introduced later which would be ploughed back to the waste management fund to support waste management initiatives including support to the waste service providers and low-interest loan scheme for waste management businesses.





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OFFICE OF CONSUMER PROTECTION
MINISTRY OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS
ROYAL GOVERNMENT OF BHUTAN



Consumer Protection

1. Consumer and Business Entity 1.1. Consumer



Consumer means a natural person who buys goods and services for personal, family or household use with no intention of resale and shall include farmers.

Business entity

1.2. Business Entity

means any undertaking whether in the private or public sector, involved in production, supply and distribution of any goods or services to consumers and it includes **manufacturer, supplier of goods and service provider**.



Manufacturer is a business entity engaged in production of goods in the market.



Supplier of goods is an authorized or licensed business entity engage in distribution and sale of goods in the market and it includes wholesaler, retailer, etc.



Service provider is an authorized or licensed business entity engage in providing services to the consumers and it includes automobile workshop, telecom, banks, insurance company, consultancy firms, hotels, tour operators, etc.



2. Rights and Responsibilities of the Consumers

- ❖ Keep themselves informed.
- ❖ Exercise due care while making purchase decisions in the marketplace, be it online or offline.
- ❖ Consider the detrimental consequences that may arise from purchases.
- ❖ Compare price, quality, standard and features with competing products or services.
- ❖ Understand that advertising and marketing materials may not necessarily give the full picture and further inquiries may be necessary.
- ❖ Seek clarification when the price indicated is outside the normal pattern.
- ❖ Ask for a receipt, statement or transaction record for every transaction.
- ❖ Seek redress and compensation against unfair trade practices.
- ❖ Act in good faith.



- ❖ Make impulsive decisions based on false claims or exaggerated representations.
- ❖ Panic and make bulk purchases based on false information.
- ❖ Encourage unfair trade practices.
- ❖ Purchase expired goods.
- ❖ Purchase substandard goods that may be damaging to life and property.
- ❖ Give false information to other consumers and regulatory agencies.

BUSINESS ENTITIES SHOULD:

Duties of business entities - manufacturer, supplier of goods and service providers.

- ❖ Provide true and clear information to the consumers regarding the goods and services sold in the market.
- ❖ Comply with safety standards as prescribed by the relevant agencies.
- ❖ Ensure proper product labelling as per requirements of relevant agencies in Bhutan or recognized by international agencies.
- ❖ Affix price tags on goods displayed for sale or on materials used for displaying goods or display fees for services offered.
- ❖ Use correct weights and measures certified by Bhutan Standard Bureau.
- ❖ Issue money receipt to the consumers upon sale of goods and services.
- ❖ Compensate, remove and replace defective or faulty goods and services provided to the Consumer.
- ❖ Engage in fair trade practices and develop fair trade culture in the marketplace.
- ❖ Be aware of Consumers' rights and legal duties of business entities.

BUSINESS ENTITIES SHOULD NOT:

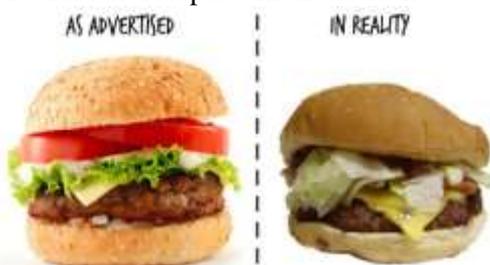
- ❖ Hoard goods and create artificial scarcity in the market.
- ❖ Deny sale of goods and services to the consumers.
- ❖ Unfairly close the shops taking situational advantage.
- ❖ Indulge in any unfair trade practices and unscrupulous exploitation of consumers.
- ❖ Sell unsafe products and provide deficient services.
- ❖ Indulge in misleading representations and false advertisements of goods and services.
- ❖ Charge unreasonably high prices on goods and services.
- ❖ Indulge in price rigging & manipulation and market collusion.



3. Misleading, False Representation and Unfair Trade Practices

3.1 Misleading and False Representation:

Misleading and false representation is a trade practice adopted by supplier, manufacturer and service provider to promote sale or supply of goods and services in the markets through unfair practices or deceptive methods such as:



- ❖ Misleading indication of price;
- ❖ Misleading advertisement and marketing;
- ❖ Demanding or accepting payment without intending to supply;
- ❖ Falsely claiming that goods are limited mainly to increase the sale, and
- ❖ Inappropriate product labeling.

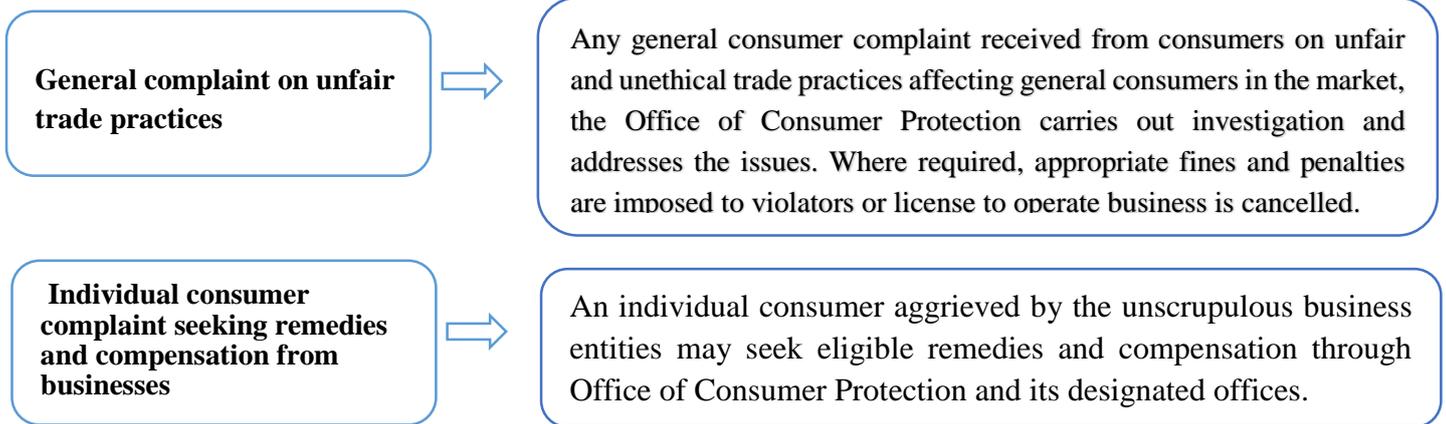
3.2 Unfair Trade Practices:

Any trade practices that are unethical, unfair, and professionally not diligent that exploit consumers and materially distorts, or is likely to materially distort, the economic behavior of the consumer are considered unfair trade practices. The false and misleading representation of goods and services are considered as one of the unfair trade practices.

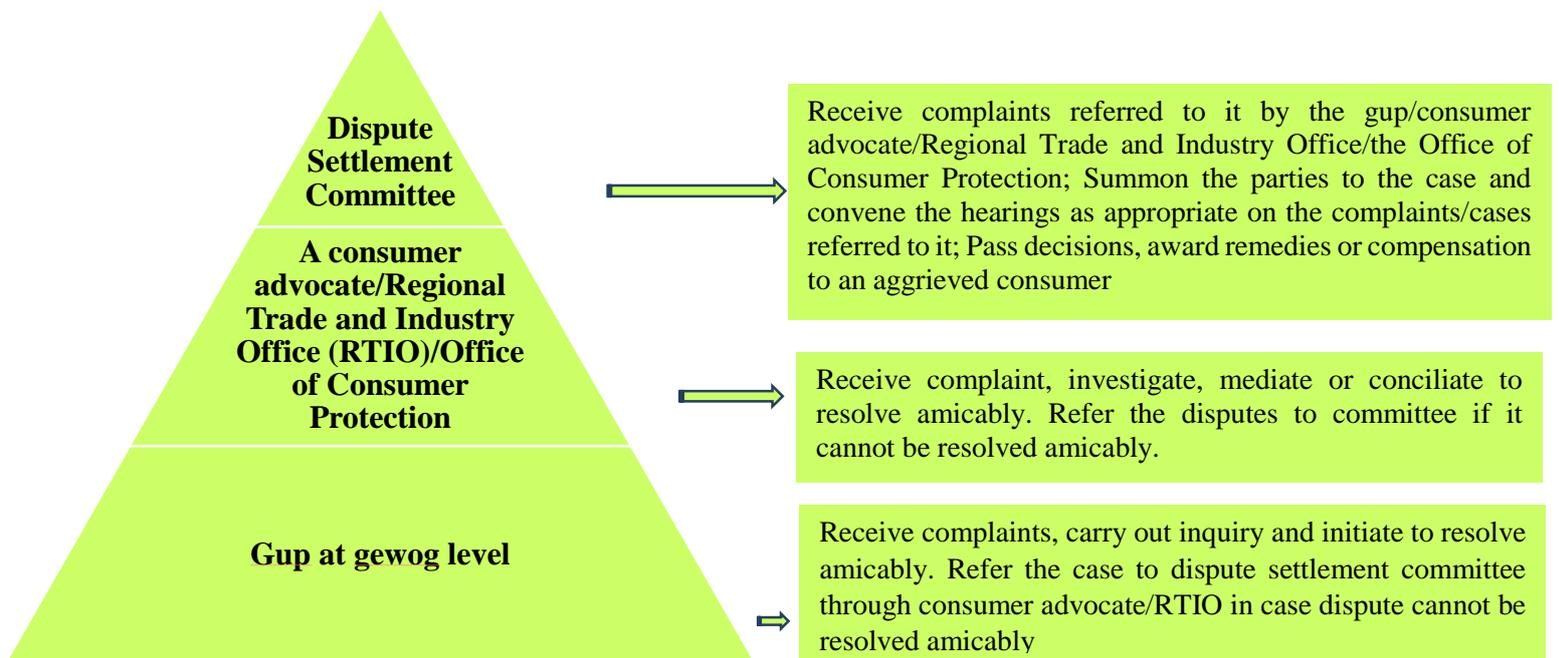
Some of the examples of the unfair trade practices are:

- ❖ False and misleading advertisement and marketing to deceive and lure the consumers;
- ❖ Claiming that the service provider, supplier or manufacturer is about to cease trading, providing services or move premises when it is not the case;
- ❖ Falsely claiming that a product is able to facilitate winning in games of chance;
- ❖ Falsely claiming that a product is able to cure illnesses, dysfunction or malformations;
- ❖ Price rigging and collusion by businesses;
- ❖ Manufacturer, supplier and service provider unfairly charging exorbitant price, charging different price, etc.;
- ❖ Displaying inappropriate product labeling to deceive consumers;
- ❖ Business entities not complying with safety standards;
- ❖ Business entities distributing unsafe products in the market;
- ❖ Creating a false impression that after-sales service in relation to a product is available in Bhutan when it is not the case;
- ❖ Selling goods through pyramid schemes, and
- ❖ False discounts.

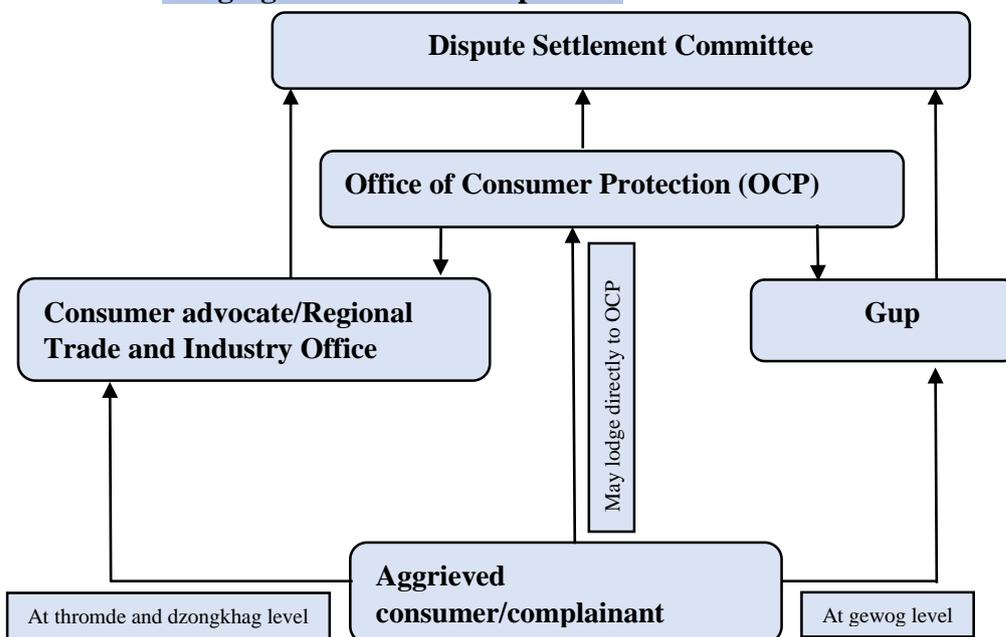
4. Complaint management and consumer grievance redress mechanism



4.1 Dispute Settlement Mechanism:



4.2 Lodging of consumer complaints:





Sustainable and Responsible Finance

The life and times of such a thing as ‘economy,’ is for the most part, something stylized and choreographed, to dance to the beat of its chosen drummer, one that is expected to steadily steer the pulse of a nation, keeping it steady. Every smart systems have smart backup plans built into it, fail-safe and contingency measures that would save the day, or at least salvage enough that things don’t have to start from scratch. And yet, every once in a while on that long stretch of the life and times, it is cautiously anticipated that something might go wrong.

Often we reflect upon a point where the best laid plans (of mice and men) go awry. The unannounced entry of an equal-opportunity impactor like the COVID 19 crisis happened to be that anticipated point. The global pandemic on a rampage plows on, like a war without a head. It assertively compels global nations to halt, modify or adjust business-as-usual workings to submissively dance to its whimsically rising and falling tune – amazingly connected and efficiently networked global economic systems, seemingly rigged to fall prey to such a debacle. Who knew inter-connectivity would seem to be such a bad thing.

Now that Bhutan is sufficiently knitted into the global economy, it reaps the rewards when goings are good. It also suffers the backlash when things hit a rough patch and spill-over effects aren’t the most positive. The COVID times is demonstrating that rough patch – as it is, on a global scale, so it is at a national level—none is completely spared, all are affected—that, seems to be the unwritten law.

For Bhutan, the workings of hydropower plants and the agriculture export sector are disrupted. The tourism industry is the hardest hit with complete restriction of tourists in play since March after an American tourist was detected as the nation’s patient zero. With chief sectors being shaken up, it affects the nation’s economic growth. This as per the World Bank estimates: Bhutan’s real GDP growth rate will drop to 2.2–2.9 percent, down from its pre-crisis estimate of 6.5 percent.



The Druk Gyalpo’s Relief Kidu is in place to ease the financial stress on citizens. Waiving interests on loans for citizens has been a graciously received reprieve for the people; put into action across the board as part of His Majesty’s Kidu. A high-level task force is in action to focus on infection control, the economy, and security. The Royal Monetary Authority (RMA) announced a series of measures to help businesses and citizens, including by providing working capital and issuing microloans for agriculture.

Financial Inclusion, Financial Literacy, Sustainable and Responsible Finance are all headers where far-sighted plans and policies have been crafted and continuously translated to actions. As painful as the global pandemic is to experience, for nation and people, still it is proving to be a sign post, or a series of sign posts—teaching what we have been doing right, and where we need to do better.

Sustainable and Responsible Finance

The sense in sustainability and responsibility

In the wake of COVID 19 rendering economies vulnerable and placing people in unstable financial situations (especially those sections that already remained vulnerable pre-COVID times), financial inclusion makes for easier tracking of the economic and financial impact. Same can also be done by financial inclusion to gauge and mitigate impact of policies therein. Most economic transactions and especially those operated in the SMEs, such as cash deposits or withdrawals, wage payments, card transactions, and loan applications/approvals—are recorded with banks. That way, banking data constitutes detailed source of real-time, high-frequency information on businesses' economic activities during the crisis. The greater the financial inclusion in a country, the more useful banking data is to track the impact of COVID-19. Somewhere in this there is a light shining, and the spotlight of lesson, is certainly on sustainable and responsible finance.

What is Sustainable Finance?

Sustainable finance refers to any form of financial service integrating environmental, social and governance (ESG) criteria into the business or investment decisions for the lasting benefit of both clients and society at large.

A sustainable financial centre is a financial marketplace that, as a whole, contributes to sustainable development and value creation in economic, environmental and social terms. In other words, one that ensures and improves economic efficiency, prosperity, and economic competitiveness both today and in the long-term, while contributing to protecting and restoring ecological systems, and enhancing cultural diversity and social well-being.

Activities that fall under the heading of sustainable finance, to name just a few, include sustainable funds, green bonds, impact investing, microfinance, active ownership, credits for sustainable projects and development of the whole financial system in a more sustainable way. Terminology used in sustainable finance can be confusing as there are few standard definitions, and different countries and organisations use the same terms to mean different things.

sustainablefinance.ch



What is Responsible Finance?

Responsible finance (RF) is simply offering financial services in an accountable, transparent and ethical manner. By definition, responsible finance must focus on **financial service providers**, (their practices, what they do or do not do) **and on clients**, (mainly aimed at improving their capacities to access and use high quality financial services).

Responsible Finance Forum refers to RF as “coordinated public and private sector interventions that encourage and assist financial service providers and their clients in improving their understanding and approaches, practices, and behaviours that can eventually contribute to creating more transparent, inclusive, and equitable financial markets”. RF involves and applies to not just financial service providers, but also to investors, lenders and funders – not only of microfinance, but the financial sector as a whole.

There are a number of reasons for the emergence of the importance of RF

- The race for growth and profits resulted in high growth rates and less focus on customer service and product innovation;
- Allegations against microfinance institutions (MFIs) of profiteering at the cost of clients;
- Client protection issues (especially multiple lending leading to over-indebtedness and coercive collection practices) leading to repayment issues;
- Focus on a rapid rollout and a mono-product culture (excessive focus on only credit led to inadequate efforts to address the diverse needs of the clients, which are again linked to client protection).

microfinancegateway.org



A financially inclusive approach

Financial inclusion has been acknowledged as an important national tool to ensure access to affordable and most appropriate formal financial services to all citizens. This is consistent with His Majesty's aspirations. As per the National Financial Inclusion Strategy (NFIS) 2018–2023, financial inclusion in Bhutan is defined as: “The provision of appropriate financial products and services at an affordable cost by formal financial service providers that meet the needs of the unserved and underserved segments of Bhutan’s population.”

His Majesty's address to the country during the 109th National Day in 2016 articulated the potential of the financial sector to create opportunities and improve access to finance for youth and the rural populace. Various researches also back the finding that access to formal financial services can contribute immensely toward advancing inclusive economic growth.

Pre-, Post-, and Beyond-COVID: Financial Inclusion

Financial inclusion has been recognized as one of the mainstream focus for achieving Bhutan's national goal

Mobile App.



of sustainable and inclusive socio-economic growth. Within the purview of inclusive finance, promoting and expanding access and usage of appropriate financial products and services marks the most prominent effort for impactful economic growth. Studies have shown that access to basic financial products and services, such as savings, payments, credit and investments, make a substantial positive difference in people's lives. Financial inclusion, therefore certainly contributes to the potential of improving the financial well-being of the unserved and underserved segments of the population.

The RMA has long embarked to reinforce financial resilience, inclusiveness and sustainable economy as one of the most crucial strategic initiatives to drive financial sector transformation. The RMA's Financial Inclusion Secretariat (FIS) set up since 2017, is a nod in the direction to drive financial inclusion initiatives and collaboration.

Oh but those hills and valleys – of the financial (inclusion) landscape

Barriers: to Equitable Financial Inclusion

Technological: The amount of time and work put in, the sophistication of environment and working tools used; none of these aspects of birthing a prototype are of consequence to the end users, if they are not user-friendly or if they don't possess a certain level of utility value.

It's the same for financial products. If the financial sectors do not align financial products and services with innovative digital age products, investments may be lost because they don't meet the demand of emerging tech-generating companies. Then again, lack of capability of the underserved particularly the rural and poor segment of the populace, to step up to the digital revolution plate will be a major barrier to financial access. If major portions in the population pie remains excluded from internet penetration, the digital divide will only widen. Services and products would then be profitable and benefit only those in the urban areas and isolated digital deserts in remote areas. This may also potentially escalate rural-urban migration.

Social and Psychological: Getting with the times is possibly nothing wrong to do. But if you're doing it with clientele in mind, roping in their affinity to the finished products is a must. With financial products, many factors warrant consideration: the need to ascertain whether people will use technology-based financial services; common barriers due to low or no general literacy to read and write; inability to understand long number strings for digital transactions, and language barrier. There's also the gender element to reckon. Women facing social barriers, also remain excluded from technology-led financial services. Also, concern arises regarding willingness, choice and capability to use fintech products. The complication arises with the poor and rural folks, who very likely face technology with uncertainty and prefer continuing with devices showing more human touch.

Regulatory: Absence of enabling regulations to promote digital revolution may hamper the growth of fintech and digital-led economy. Regulations must be in place to regulate the development of emerging threat and exploitative digital systems. Digital revolution could be amplified significantly if enabling regulatory environment, data privacy norms and consumer protection regulations are put in place or reinforced.



Financial inclusion makes for easier tracking of the economic and financial impact. Especially in these pandemic times, Greater the financial inclusion, the more useful banking data is to track the impact of COVID-19

Digitalization's 15 minutes & COVID's probable perennial presence

Cash economies are not receiving the most hospitable in treatments during these pandemic times. It's the truth the world over. And it has chiefly to do with the Novel Coronavirus and its proprietary mode of transmission. With the coronavirus spreading and cases increasing every other day, governments and businesses everywhere are struggling to stem the tide of COVID. One aspect of this has been that to limit cash exchanges, which the World Health Organization has warned could transmit the virus.

By proxy, electronic/mobile money is basking in its 15 minutes (of popularity). It has filled as an alternative to keep life in motion. A sticky point in observation though; what electronic/mobile money is doing, is just supplying an urgent service – something like a need of the hour thing. Truth is, it is no replacement for institutionalized and established structures, which the COVID 19 has put at a slight disadvantage – for now.

All this talk is of course, not to discount the sheer possibilities of digitalization by singling out and stringing one of its constituents out to dry. If anything, we are warming up to say, the world is now potentially more set than ever to move toward more digitalized financial systems. And aforementioned mobile money services would only come out new and improved; and stronger than before from this global pandemic experience.

Digitalizing efficiently, doing it empathically, enlighteningly

The elements of 'sustainable' and 'responsible' in finance is planned carefully into about-to-be implemented plans and policies. Measures are only about to be heightened in the digital world to absorb currently prevailing economic vibes.

The superhero who will save us, 'if' we keep pace with its super pace: Technology moves at an accelerated pace, and in the tech-world, new developments are witnessed just as fast. All that is well and good, if we're singling out, and speaking solely for technology. The point for consideration here is how these progressive tech-wonders can be used effectively aligned with policies and plans of policymakers.



World Economies are now more than ever set to move toward more digitalized financial systems. For Bhutan, this also promotes financial inclusion.

In the decades to come, unimaginable advances would be made in the tech world and commensurate efforts need to be in place as well in the decision-making and policy-making camps – to unlock the outburst of technological wonders, understand them sufficiently to efficiently and productively lay them out while implementing policies aiming to reach out to various unbanked sections.

To grow your own wings, if you want to be saved: Those making policies, those making decisions also have to improve or upgrade their capabilities. Naturally, implemented policies that are a result of wholesome understanding, will trickle down as effective chain reactions. More innovations and technology is required in the policy sphere to address 'banking the unbanked.' On a global scale of things, predictions point to the 2 billion people who are unbanked in the current scenario. They will avail mobile money with full range of financial services from savings to credit to insurance products. Partnerships may likely thrive between the incumbent banks and fintech startups; and insurtech needs to reach out to reap continued success. On the social front, even healthtech and medtech may arise to meet the emerging markets. Harnessing data for the potential to improve lives could be further analyzed for better insights and takeaways.

Will everybody get to fly: All these predictions could be realistic/realized. But, will these innovations be equitable? Technology advancements provide opportunities in the economy to be more efficient in terms of speed and quality, however, the intention of financial inclusion shall always remain to protect the low income group, rural remote community and vulnerable segment of the society that does not have the equal capabilities to harness the prospects of digital age.



Dorji Dhradhul is the Director General of the Tourism Council of Bhutan (TCB). Prior to taking up as the TCB DG, he was the Gasa Dzongdag, a post he held from 2015 to 2019. He is also the founding Director of the Department of Agriculture Marketing & Cooperatives (DAMC) of the MoAF where he worked from Jan 2010 to December 2014.

Q. The tourism sector is the hardest hit, no need to hazard a guess there. But what is the level or scale at which the sector is hit since March (when the COVID 19 pandemic hit Bhutan)?

A. The COVID-19 pandemic has brought the tourism industry in the country to a complete halt with no tourist arrivals since 6th March 2020. As an industry dependent on inbound tourism with minimal or no domestic tourism, the tourism businesses and allied sectors are amongst the hardest hit by the pandemic. Tourism businesses such as the airlines, hotels, restaurants, tour companies, tour guides and other allied sectors have no business operations and most of the personnel employed are either laid-off or sent on unpaid leaves (some on paid leaves) since 7th March 2020.

While tourism touches almost everyone in the country in one way or other, it is estimated to engage about 50,000 persons directly. For the last five years on average, tourism has contributed about USD 80 million in foreign exchange earnings and an average of USD 220 m in total gross receipts from tourism.

This year with only a total tourist of about 25,000, a total of 5,758 were MDPR paying arrivals who have contributed USD 11.76million in foreign exchange and USD 2.98m in direct revenue contributions were earned. A total of about 2000 tourists have canceled their trips, resulting in a refund of about USD 4.6m.

Q. How is TCB preparing to address the impact of the current pandemic on the sector, or otherwise how is it laying the ground works to battle such unannounced and sudden adverse effects on the sector?

A. TCB has been working closely with all stakeholders, both private and public to work to assess and mitigate the impact on COVID-19 through the following interventions:

Stock taking and assessment of impacts of the pandemic on tourism in the country including the situation across the globe; Initiate and implement engagement program for tourism personals who have lost jobs because of the pandemic through various projects; Facilitate discussions and interventions in terms of support from the government in terms of fiscal and other benefits; Develop and implement an economic stimulus plan for the tourism industry to support the businesses; Work on various aspects of tourism recovery in terms of; A roadmap for tourism; A Tourism recovery/resumption plans; Mechanisms/interventions to maintain Bhutan's visibility as a tourism destination and also to work towards tourism post-COVID-19.

Q. Pre-COVID 19, Bhutan was basking in the spotlight of being awarded the slot of a Top Destination to Visit in 2020 by the Lonely Planet. Does that put a dent in the country's (grand) scheme of things? How has TCB been working/planning to sustain the advantage in light of disadvantages being presented by the global pandemic?

A. The pandemic has brought unprecedented economic and social impacts across the globe including Bhutan and it has given growth to new ways of thinking as we prepare for new world order. More importantly, the pandemic has given us the opportunity to re-think our ways of doing things. Increasingly, experts are pointing to a new world order/new normal with emphasis on sustainability.

The recognition Bhutan has received pre-COVID will only strengthen our brand in working towards tourism post-COVID-19. More importantly, Bhutan being a pioneer in sustainable tourism development guided by the tourism policy of High-value Low Volume (HVLV) will only enhance and help us to recover from this crisis, but also show the way to the world in how to better manage tourism sustainably.

As mentioned earlier, there are several interventions and plans that will be initiated to work towards tourism post-COVID-19 and we hope these will only strengthen our initiatives to promote HVLV tourism.

Q. Tourism is lauded, only a place behind the hydropower sector in contributing to the nation's GDP. Are we looking at a new reality post-COVID? How do you see the Tourism sector holding its place as a major economic player?

A. We will definitely be looking forward to a new world order post-COVID-19 and definitely so for tourism as well. Since the travel and tourism industry is about individuals and their behavior and preferences, we are hopeful of its resilience to overcome the current pandemic as it has done so in the past and we are hopeful it will only bring greater benefits for all albeit a supposedly new tourism world order. Interestingly, in Bhutan's case, the new world tourism model is the old tourism model of High-Value Low Volume.

Q. What's the outlook for tourism and hospitality moving forwards post COVID 19?

A. Like the rest of the world, tourism is the hardest hit in Bhutan. While we do hope for its quick restart and recovery, which would greatly depend on the solidarity of all the countries and citizens. We all need to learn, adapt, and practice new behaviors such as physical distancing, wearing masks, and regular hand washing as the new normal in the post-Corona virus world. Therefore, going forward, the world has to really come together as one close-knit family and do some things just as same without exception, otherwise, we can be under serious threat.

Coming to tourism, fortunately for Bhutan, the policy, practice, and approach might not see many changes; at the most, it would involve the reinforcement of what we have been doing for the last 50 years. I believe, Bhutan can offer our model as that new model for tourism the destinations are looking for in the wake of Coronavirus pandemic.

With deepest gratitude to the visionary leadership of our selfless Kings, Bhutan's tourism policy of 'High Value, Low Value' has been in place since the 1970s – which is the same time when Bhutan opened up to foreign tourists. The tourism policy of High-Value Low Volume guided by our development philosophy of Gross National Happiness always avoided mass

tourism. As aptly put by His Majesty The King during one of the Royal Addresses in 2019.

“... when Bhutan opened to foreign tourists in the 1970s, our leadership resisted the temptations to harness the quick fortunes from mass tourism and instead was prescient to formulate a visionary policy of High Value – Low Volume tourism...”

Therefore, the policy of HVLV makes tourism beyond revenue and receipts. It basically aspires to give exclusive experience (high value) to tourists by managing the volume. Therefore, tourism is regulated, meaning at a certain fixed cost paid up-front, the tourists are assured a minimum of 3-star accommodation, meals and refreshments, full time licensed tour guide, chauffeur-driven SUV. The policy of HVLV is also about respecting the carrying capacity of our nature, socioeconomic...sustainability, which are emerging as big issues amid the coronavirus crisis.

Q. Every crisis creates opportunities. What are the opportunities that will arise from the current situation?

A. Up until now, Bhutan has mainly promoted itself as a destination with a unique culture and a pristine nature. While this still remains true today, Bhutan has even much more to offer. In the last decade, a worldwide growing trend of wellness/well-being travel could be seen. Especially in the wake of COVID-19, this travel trend will grow only more, as people worldwide will reflect on their lives, what truly matters to them, and most likely seek ways to improve their mental and physical well-being.

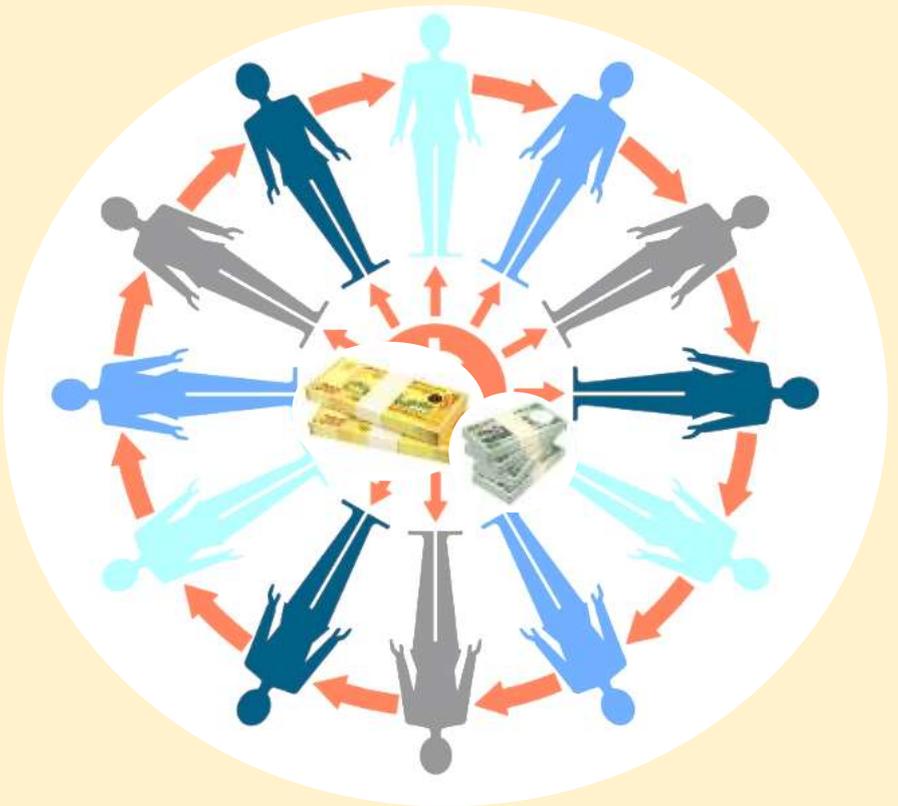
Bhutan, called 'Menjong – The Land of Medicinal Herbs' in its olden days, with its Gross National Happiness, its peaceful surroundings make a great destination for these travelers to reflect, relax, and reset. Bhutan's well-being offer is increasing yearly. From yoga and meditation to Buddhist philosophy teachings, from traditional medical treatments to other unique spa experiences, from retreats to pilgrimages. All to be experienced in a serene and spacious environment. And while it may feel contradictory, with the new practice of physical distancing allowing you to truly connect to yourself and your surroundings.

An Impact investing Bhutan

The COVID 19 pandemic is spreading, and seemingly headed to reach economic activities to near-standstill positions. Pre-COVID, Bhutan has been increasingly working to strategically move toward a market economy. Even as things stand, Bhutan is on fertile grounds to have a real shot in the growing Impact Investment market.

The Finer points

Globally, Cottage and Small Industries (CSIs) are becoming more and more the mainstream financing target. Bhutan is said to be favorably positioned to reap the benefits. To make things better, there is also a flagship program launched in its name, making it a focus of the current government. The Bhutan Economic Forum of Innovative Transformation (BEFIT 2019) was carried out with the theme 'catalyzing CSI to drive economic diversification.' The BEFIT is a national undertaking to put in place necessary reforms. Take for instance the need for enabling regulatory environment – it is most crucial to nurture drive, innovation, and technology; improve market access and enhance access to finance; all of which naturally spills over to promote entrepreneurial culture, which is just yet seeing its budding stage. That's one. And two, the philosophy of Gross National Happiness (GNH) is fully aligned with evolving investor and corporate mindset. And three, the country's population is heavily youth. The median age of Bhutanese is 27 and the demography is heavily tilted toward a generation of millennials who think businesses should go beyond profits to improve society. According to Credit Suisse's global next generation report, millennials perceive corporate purpose as to improve, educate, inform and promote wellbeing of society, generate jobs and protect the environment besides profit. This is a favorable point to drive CSI growth while solving problems related to environment, social and governance.



Impact investing: The term Impact Investing defines a commitment to measure social and environmental performance, with the same objective that financial performances have. It is said to be a subset of sustainable investing. Sustainable investing is an investment strategy which seeks to consider both financial return and social/environmental good to bring about positive social change. It is called by various names such as socially responsible investing (SRI), social investment, sustainable socially conscious, green or ethical investing.

Impact investments provide capital to address social or environmental issues. The investments made into companies, organizations are done so with the aim to generate beneficial social or environmental impact alongside a financial return. Impact investing is different from crowd-funding because impact investments are typically debt or equity investments with longer-than-traditional venture capital payment times—and an "exit strategy" (traditionally an initial public offering (IPO) or buyout in the for-profit startup sector) may be non-existent. Although some social enterprises are non-profits, impact investing typically involves for-profit, social- or environmental-mission-driven businesses.

The Impact Investment industry: The Global Impact Investing Network (GIIN) in a 2019 Report estimates the worth of the global impact investing market at \$502 Billion. Such capital may be deployed using a range of investment instruments, including equity, debt, real assets, loan guarantees, and others. India is emerging as a major geography for impact investors according to consulting firm, McKinsey, with over \$1.1 billion already invested as of 2016.

An observed plus

The highs and lows of the small and medium enterprises (SMEs) sector is symptomatic of economic health. Being an area that employs a big chunk of the population, the progress of this sector surely reflects on overall progress of the nation's economy. Prolonged downturns in the SMEs is a major threat to economic recovery, specifically at the current juncture. With the current global pandemic in sight, the profits made and losses incurred by the SMEs sector signals the available opportunities or threats thereof for economic recovery.

Favorable Accessories

The National Financial Inclusion Strategy (NFIS) has provisions primarily aimed to encourage the development and use of financing instruments that would support economic growth related to CSI financing (both agricultural and non-agricultural CSIs). The workings to ensure effectiveness of CSI financing to boost economic activities and employment, will involve appropriate products and an enabling regulatory environment as pre-requisites. A review will be necessary to explore public support programs, such as credit guarantee schemes. Also important, is to provide technical support to improve the scope of a bankable project. With diverse innovative project portfolios in Bhutan's rapidly emerging market, enhancing enabling regulations to meet the factoring gap and establishing dynamic financial infrastructure to support venture capital and other sources of financing are also to be considered.

At the ground but of a golden opportunity

Bhutan has the opportunity to start at the ground floor of a golden opportunity in the impact investment industry. The impact investment is a half-a-trillion dollar-worth financial market, and the sustainable investment avenues hail a 30 trillion dollar-worth. Highly lucrative bars to meet.

In the world of impact investing, investors and the corporate world as well, have been making a dramatic shift in their mission to 'sustainably' solve global challenges. Between the more than 2,000 signatories to UN principles of responsible investment, the avenue is amounting to about \$85 trillion. Clearly, Sustainable Development Goals or SDG has become the language of the world. The 17 SDGs, have identified the biggest problems of the world, and for the public and private sectors, investors and entrepreneurs; these goals are a must-use to attract investments.

Bhutan has some favorable factors operating to its advantage in its home-grown development philosophies, policies and projections. They are rolling out as follows: Bhutan is easily and effectively identified as an environmental champion and its enduring drive toward sustainable development works in its favor.



With some favorable drivers in its economy, Bhutan is strategically positioned at the ground floor of a golden opportunity



Green for now, and green for always – COVID or no COVID

It's like the world didn't have the climate change show on, that the COVID 19 pandemic is inconveniently rising to the occasion. But COVID or no COVID, the world must churn and the good fight must be fought to keep the world churning. The growth of Green Finance is certain to continue; since climate change hasn't taken a day off. The worldwide focus on how to cut pollution and greenhouse gases will still require companies to disclose climate-related risks—leading to more data showing which companies are most exposed. This will lead to better insight about how to make money while saving the planet.

When it comes to all things green, and things that ring conservation, Bhutan has always had the concept and the motive pegged down solid. Let's give it the tag of bragging rights since this was all very much before 'Green Finance' popped up as a catchy investment avenue phrase. Here's an insight into the how: Environmental clearance is one of the chief criteria all individuals must meet to avail loan from financial institutions. This ensures the nation's strong conservation policies are flowing through the veins of all activities/business being operated by each and every citizen. This way, the nation as a whole is able to stay dedicated within the consciousness of the GNH-driven environmental pillar following strong principles of environmental protection. Green finance refers to the provision of financial services for climate action and

related projects. It's an avenue through which investment avenues are opened up to finance sustainable development that protects/conserves environment, and address climate change.

Green finance in the country

The RMA is charting a developmental roadmap on green financing. This is happening by creating tools and criteria; identifying key stakeholders and establishing monitoring, supervision and assessment structures for the country's financial sector. The roadmap will have strong Inclusive Green Finance (IGF) elements wherein RMA will provide all necessary resources to develop it within the year. IGF is how financial regulations can enable financial inclusion that builds resistance and mitigates climate change. The forthcoming roadmap looks to be conceived for easy understanding to reach out to the widest of audience across all levels—from governors to financiers and even borrowers—emphasizing that banks can contribute significantly to green initiatives. When such a plan comes together, it means that everyone gets to play their part in ensuring environmental protection and sustainability.

All valid points, but let's talk funds

Many climate change and environmental preservation initiatives are in action at the national level. Still, conservation doesn't come free; it involves expenditure.

Having a strong green finance component will further power the country's conservation drive. In this IGF should contribute to make the various operations more efficient. And after all, people shall be better-protected in the end from the effects of climate change.

Benefit – Be the friend of a friend

Foreseeable interventions by concerned authorities in introduction of new financial products are very likely to lean toward being developed to cater to green finance companies, fintech startups, guarantee schemes, finance for alternate collateral security services, smart cards etc. In this, it is noteworthy that even though the 'green' aspect should be removed from the equation focus still remains on reshaping quality and affordability. That being or being in the midst of becoming a tech-driven society, the current financial products and services need to be reshaped to meet the needs of the clients while ensuring quality, affordability and security.

It so happens, that the RMA is coming up with a framework to engage banks toward lending to environment-friendly projects. It will take the lead with AFI's endeavor to develop a common framework which can be followed by all member countries. According to RMA, Bhutan is way ahead of other countries in terms of pursuing inclusiveness as well as green financing.

Green Financing: Green financing is to increase level of financial flows (from banking, micro-credit, insurance and investment) from the public, private and not-for-profit sectors to sustainable development priorities. A key part of this is to better manage environmental and social risks, take up opportunities that bring both a decent rate of return and environmental benefit and deliver greater accountability.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Green Financing: UN Environment has been working with countries, financial regulators and finance sectors to align financial systems to the 2030 sustainable development agenda – to direct financial flows to support the delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals. At the core of today's globalized economy are financial markets through which banks and investors allocate capital to different sectors. The capital allocated today will shape ecosystems and the production and consumption patterns of tomorrow.

Some of the main areas for green financing are: Supporting public sector on creating enabling environment; Promoting public-private partnerships on financing mechanisms such as green bonds

Capacity building of community enterprises on micro-credit
Courtesy: unenvironment.org (UNEP)

Environmental clearance is one of the chief criteria all individuals must meet to avail loan from financial institutions.



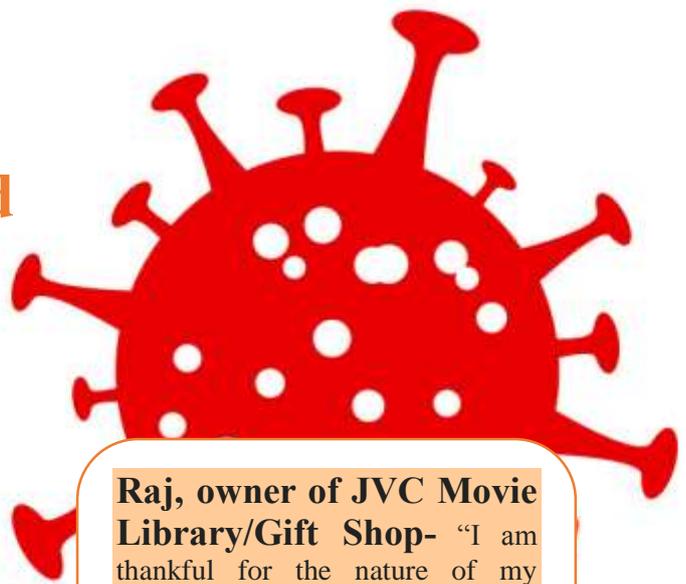
The infected, the affected

COVID-19 has been the uninvited guest that not only barged in with every sick intentions but has also decided to inconveniently and infectiously overstay. The global pandemic is the thorn in every global economy's side affecting livelihoods, disrupting daily life and overall just drumming a morbid sense of mortality into every one, every day of its pandemic existence.

There is no version of the global pandemic, kind on select humanity type, that way it is something of an equal opportunity infector... or impactor. Since that fateful day in March when the country marked its patient zero, things have been a slow burn that maliciously keeps threatening to explode to a full-scale attack. Thanks in large part to His Majesty's guided leadership and the efforts of all those involved, Bhutan is still coded in the Orange Zone. Meaning, we have COVID cases, but all of them were imported and no instances of community transmission has been recorded.

Life as we know it, however is not normal. They are calling it the new normal, but it only means that with sudden disruption introduced into daily routine, adjustments had to be made under compelling conditions, by one and all.

Taking a 'lesson-learnt' approach to the predicament currently in hand, the RMA e-FinLit collected thoughts from the men and women on the street, and those in their shops. Opinions vary from where some rebelliously vent "if you are meant to die, you die, if not Coronavirus is nothing to be frightened of," to those who magnanimously declare, "it's (Coronavirus) the great teacher, who should have come sooner," – a snarky dig on all habituated to excessiveness—in buying, in wasting, in not saving, in not planning ahead. Some have looked and re-looked into their way of doing things, discovering blessings in disguise, as well as pointers (lessons) on how not to cultivate vulnerabilities, be it while deciding the nature of business to pursue or how one should perhaps have a Plan B to "absorb the shock and prevent a heart attack," as flatly put by a middle-aged Corporate Legal Officer, also a Grocer, who also moonlights as a bar tender on weekends.



Raj, owner of JVC Movie Library/Gift Shop- "I am thankful for the nature of my business. Had I been running just the gift shop, livelihood will be badly affected. Because of my movie rental business, I'm spared the full blow of COVID-19"



Padam, Grocery Shop- "The importance of money management and the judicious use of resources is what I have learnt"



Banu, Pan Shop- "Generally, COVID-19 is teaching everyone the basics that elders have been chanting into children's ears, like hand hygiene, cleanliness, not wasting (money or food) etc. COVID-19 is showing proof of rewards and punishment if one follows the simple Dos and Don'ts. Personally, I feel it has sent the message of being 'mindful' in everything one does"

One world's COVID, another's opportunity

The COVID-19 pandemic, a river of misery flowing everywhere across the globe and throughout the country too. In so saying, the scene at home safely said is very much feeling the affection of the infection (!). Government machinery (of plans and policies) are affected; businesses are compelled to operate at half strength, and naturally, achieve/earn half or less of what used to be achieved/earned.

Then again, it's nice to know, the fabled 'silver lining (around every dark cloud)' does shine through from time to time in people's experiences of wading through depths of despair. Businesses operating with an 'online' or internet-assisted aspect have come to demonstrate an edge over all others that don't. And one might say, these businesses are not just 'surviving' the pandemic, they are prospering.

Preventive measures to fight the COVID pandemic's proprietary attributes include physical/social distancing; avoiding crowds and crowded places; having to constantly indulge hand hygiene. In light of having preventive measures put in place, and therein, people practicing them accordingly, things have added up to push consumer behavior favorably in the direction of businesses aligned synergically with said measures.

Bhutan Smart Shop – smart move!



Sangay Nedup, BSS -
"Business is still running better than how things were in the pre-COVID days"

The vegetable and fruit delivery enterprise based in Thimphu has seen a spike in the number of customers making online orders. This has been the case since March when the COVID pandemic hit Bhutan. Besides the business Bhutan Smart Shop (BSS) website where majority of the interactions happen, customers also continuously place their orders through text messages, phone calls and social media platforms.

The BSS received more than 30 orders a day since government put COVID 19 measures into action. After relaxation of measures though, especially that of

extending business closing hours to 9 PM, there has been a slight decrease in orders. The BSS averaged about only four to five orders a day before the pandemic.

Happy Delivery Service – diversification is on the cards



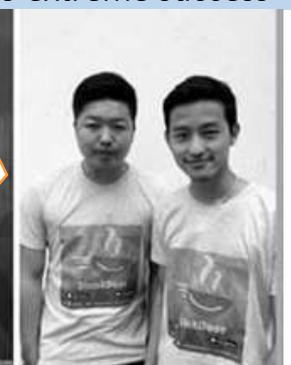
Jigme singye, HDS-
"HDS is no longer confined to foods. We deliver whatever clients order"

The Happy Delivery Service (HDS) roped in quarantine centers in Thimphu and Paro toward the end of March this year. That's post-COVID 19 struck Bhutan. This added a drastic increase of ten times more the number of customers it used to receive in its pre-COVID 10 customer traffic.

The HDS which largely became known for LPG deliveries, branched out to delivering food while also providing all the services of a one-stop-shop that delivers whatever is ordered.

Dish8Door – moderate to extreme success

Ngawang Tobgay, Dish8Door-
"Due to the 'normal timing,' the flow of customers is also back to normal"



With 38 restaurants listed with it, Dish8Door an app-based food delivery service enjoyed moderate success. After the COVID-19 global pandemic reached Bhutan and government's preventive measures were enforced, Dish8Door was overwhelmed by orders on a daily basis. So much so that, the business had to hire additional staff, bring in friends and families to add more hands. Let's call that 'extreme' success. With the recent extension of business timing to 9 PM from the earlier imposed 7 PM, the flow of orders have also come down.

ADDICTION -

the pain and the anguish! A day in
the life of an agency...

Every day, number of young people are apprehended on charges of controlled substances abuse and are sent to Bhutan Narcotics Control Authority (BNCA) or its regional centers to avail treatment services. For these individuals their visits to these centers often become a defining moment in their lives and to those providing the services, it often can test their patience, grit and commitment to the optimum for these individuals do not come out of self-interest and realization to change but on compulsion. Escorting these individuals are their distraught parents, spouses, relatives etc. whose expressions of anxiety, remorse and resignation will keep playing in your mind long after they leave the scene.

Caught in the act, but to get their acts together

Illicit substance abusers are apprehended and sent to treatment centers to assess the severity of their addiction levels by independent professional teams called the 'Treatment Assessment Panel' (TAP) before they are provided with treatment support. A TAP team normally consists of a medical professional (preferably a psychiatrist), a lawyer and a (addiction) counsellor supported by peer counsellors of BNCA who provide secretariat service to the committee. The decisions taken by the team are independent of BNCA management. Apart from Thimphu, BNCA has recently established TAP facility in five other Dzongkhags i.e. Phuentsholing, Samdrup Jongkhar, Gelephu, Wangdue Phodrang and Mongar for convenience of the clients.



Getting to the root of it, reaching out with sound counsel

As a means to seek first-hand information on the causes and issues leading to their addiction, we take opportunities to interact with and ask questions to these young individuals during their TAP sessions. In most of our interactions, the victims often are the youth and the causes revolve around; peer pressure, curiosity, wrong exposures, boredom, socio-economic challenges, relationship issues etc. Unexpectedly, one common factor that cuts across most (older) drug users are their remorse and the desire to come out of it but for the difficulties that this chronic relapsing brain disease called 'addiction' can impose. Yes, no one ever plans to be an addict but becomes as such with one wrong turn....and the fast changing social and economic trends of our times do not help the situation either.

I then turned to a male corporate employee in his early 30s and a college student in his late teens. Both explained of having been introduced to drugs by their peers and soon their experimental use turned into regular craving. Both are suspended from their job and education and remain uncertain about their future just because of the addictive nature of the substances!

In another corner was a young deluded farmer consumed by marijuana for the past 10 years - a trade that he had picked up from urban lads and a habit that stuck on to him to rob him of his potentials to be a productive farmer. This is how urban vices soil rural innocence. Standing close to him was a pale looking person- a young professional driver. He confessed of having got hooked onto SP capsules to 'feel good' in his professional engagement! This seems to be the growing trend among young drivers thus compromising on their safety and those of the passengers whose lives depend on them. A step ahead, I was alarmed by the sight of a young rather withdrawn monk in the group of people brought in for substance abuse. I feared the worst but was eventually relieved in finding that he was there to accompany his brother but then, our records show that even monks are not spared by the menace of drugs.

A few days later, I was again face to face with some more of TAP clients. Among those who flocked our office, I was drawn towards two grim looking ladies seated on a corner couch. One is a farmer in her late 50s and the other an employee of a corporation in her 40s. Both were accompanying their younger sons (17 and 18 years) on substance abuse offense. The elder lady has two sons, both expelled from their schools on substance abuse case. Her elder is under police custody for a battery and assault charge under the influence of drugs and now her younger one is brought in for substance use assessment and treatment. As I talked to the mother to find out the causes, she was overwhelmed by agony and wept bitterly exclaiming that her future was devastated as both her sons are wasted by addiction. Her only income came from her

farming engagement but her body was starting to yield with each passing season besides the occasional disruption caused by the indulgence of her sons. Her husband remains unaware of the situation as he is said to be mostly on religious errands and in any case she does not dare discuss with him on such matters as he is the least tolerant of any discipline issues involving his sons. I tried to comfort her saying that they would improve in time and this could be a passing phase for them. She was uncontrollable and as my voice knotted to silence all I could do was comfort her with silent pats on her back. The younger lady has 5 kids and her youngest and perhaps the most doted one is into addiction. I could not stand the pain these two ladies were going through and decided to confront the sons for a heart to heart chat as they do not seem to be into full blown addiction. They both looked just around 15 years! Pulling them close, I asked them to look at their mothers and feel their pains and that what they shed from their eyes are not tears but blood. I also told them that their mothers will not be there forever and that unless they can make something out of their lives, they will be left behind by the society and even their own kins and by then it would be just too late for them to repent. I gently persuaded them to promise that they will improve and apologize for the pains they have caused their parents. For now both of them promised to improve and serve their parents by not going back to drugs. I also urged them to continue with their studies and agreed to help them with their enrollment if need be. (Incidentally, after a year, one of the boys has fallen back into addiction and the mother leaving her farm work at bay, is still tending to her son's follow-up treatment programs).

The next victims were young men in their late 20s and both into 3rd and 2nd cases of relapse from drugs and alcohol. Their faces showed desperation and helplessness. They had tried their utmost to stay away but they just could not avoid the lure of dopamine seizures and one wonders if they ever would...such is the destructive power of addiction!

Of profits at the cost of kin, of miseries that don't differentiate

The unending lists of victims will make any sane person cringe with remorse but perhaps not those who are blinded by the greed of instant wealth... those who feel it right to make quick profit from destroying the lives of others . Understandably, most TAP clients I meet try to justify of not being substance dependents (denials) and vehemently promise never to do drugs again but we see enough of such resolves in our everyday work to be thus comforted. However, a small light of hope was the gratitude that most (early users) express on being thus apprehended by law enforcement as this provided an opportunity – even if under compulsion- for them to redeem themselves though for many, we know all too well that recovery would be long and an arduous journey for, the scientists would never define addiction as a 'chronic relapsing brain disease' without reason and therefore, for most recovering addicts, staying out of drugs is a life long struggle requiring them to live each day at a time!

Be one, act as one, the vicious cycle hurts everyone

In seeing growing cases of addiction around, one is plunged into deep reflection of whether our society and the country can take this any longer? The causes leading to this situation are varied and the fundamentals are most concerning to say the least. As citizens of a small vulnerable country, we only have one choice for an assured future stability and that is to think and act collectively as Bhutanese whether we are educators, policy makers, service providers, parents, families, communities etc. Partisan thoughts and deeds will only cause us to lament in time on what could and should have been.



Blinding greed costs lives, shared responsibility to fight all that

Among hordes of issues and challenges posed by the changing times, it is the dwindling sense of our collective responsibility that seems to hurt us as Bhutanese the most. Looking at things as it stands, unless we are prepared as a society to prevent or root out those exploiting and destroying our own citizens and communities, there will always be someone somewhere out there waiting to strike for selfish ends unperturbed by the consequences that their greed can pose on our children, society and the country. As our wants continue to overshadow our needs, ruthless competition and selfish desires for material extravaganza will continue to eclipse the empathy, resilience and tolerance that Bhutanese once were known for and in the process, giving rise to weak, intolerant and exploitative society. Yes, there are ominous signs of social disconnect in our modernizing world and if we cannot act now, we all must carry the guilt of our failures on our conscience in times to come. In these times of competitive age, we have little time to worry about matters beyond our doorstep while we stand ready to exploit situations far beyond our means for personal gains. I say this because there are our own citizens who distribute harmful substances like drugs, alcohol, tobacco etc. illegally for selfish gains despite knowing that these can harm or destroy the lives of someone's child or the peace and happiness of a family. We also know that there are many of us who remain aware of illegal dealers of drugs and other harmful substances within our surroundings and yet we will not stop or disclose these perpetrators unless we are directly affected. We are prepared to condemn or expect instant solace at the slightest of our discomfort but we will rarely stand up to help those outside our realm.

Fight the good fight – with education, alongside the law

Yes, there are serious socio-economic challenges in the present world but this does not give anyone the right to gain at the expense of others least of all one's own countryman. It is perhaps time for us all to assume our citizenry responsibilities and supplement the efforts of our law enforcement agencies to stop those who hurt our children and the society from getting away with their ways before it is too late for us to even reconsider. Today it may be someone's child but tomorrow it may very well be ours for, if our community is not safe, no homes or schools will be safe enough! Let us say no to illegal sale/distribution of drugs, alcohol, tobacco and other harmful substances that can snatch the future of our children and the peace of the Bhutanese society.



TOGETHER WE CAN DO IT IF WE FEEL IT!

Courtesy: Director General Phuntsho Wangdi, BNCA. For more information please visit www.bnca.gov.bt The BNCA functions as the secretariat to the Narcotic Control Board and is the nodal agency of the Government for all matters related to narcotics drugs, psychotropic substances and substance abuse.

Poetry

Warrior, Protector, King of Kings

*Streets of jagged rocks,
Lined with chaos,
Walls of decaying wood,
Dripping diseases*

*People trampling insects,
People trampling people,
Shouts and screams
All through the day... and night*

*That is the fate the world will meet,
The disease has come,
To end this world,
That's what people kept saying*

*Somewhere in the Himalayas,
A King assured His people,
If we stand together,
There's nothing we cannot withstand*

*The King, The Country, The People,
Built the unbreakable wall,
Inside, all are safe,
Inside, there is only peace*

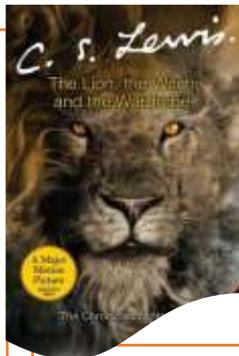
Sonam Dema

Goodreads

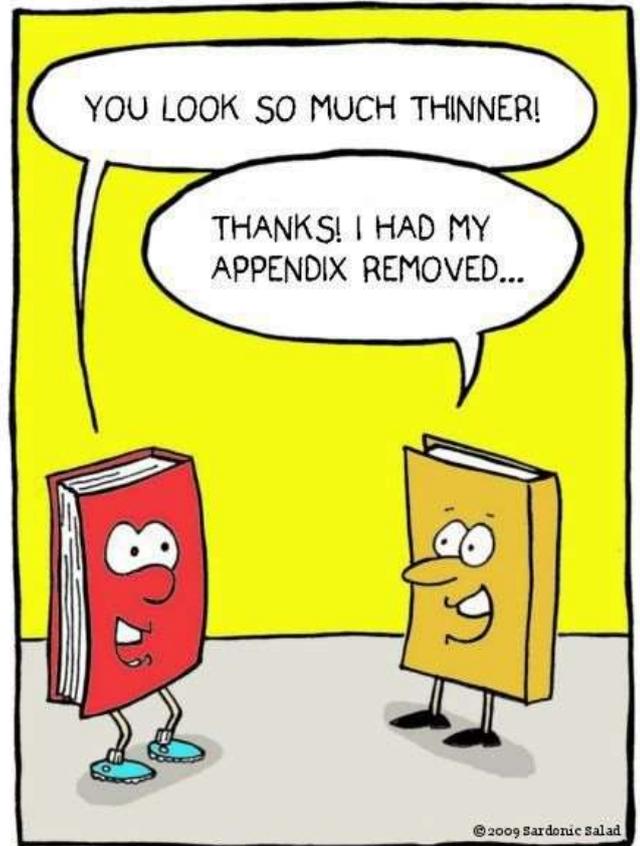
The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe

by C.S Lewis

Narnia...the land beyond the wardrobe door, a secret place frozen in eternal winter, a magical country waiting to be set free. Lucy is the first to find the secret of the wardrobe in the professor's mysterious old house. At first her brothers and sister don't believe her when she tells of her visit to the land of Narnia. But soon Edmund, then Peter and Susan step through the wardrobe themselves. In Narnia they find a country buried under the evil enchantment of the White Witch. When they meet the Lion Aslan, they realize they've been called to a great adventure and bravely join the battle to free Narnia from the Witch's sinister spell.



Laugh



Teacher: What is it? Both of your answer sheets are like same??

Student: Madam! Question paper also looks same!!

Teacher: !!!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Clive Staples Lewis was one of the intellectual giants of the twentieth century and arguably one of the most influential writers of his day. He was a Fellow and Tutor in English Literature at Oxford University until 1954. He was unanimously elected to the Chair of Medieval and Renaissance Literature at Cambridge University, a position he held until his retirement. He wrote more than thirty books, allowing him to reach a vast audience, and his works continue to attract thousands of new readers every year. To date, the Narnia books have sold over 100 million copies and been transformed into three major motion pictures.



: Development with Values

According to the World Happiness Report 2019, Bhutan is 95th out of 156 countries



GNH: Definition

GNH or Gross National Happiness is the development philosophy that guides the government of Bhutan. It includes an index which is used to measure the collective happiness and well-being of a population. GNH is instituted as the goal of the government of Bhutan in the Constitution of Bhutan.

GNH: Origin story

The term was coined in 1979 during an interview by a British journalist for the Financial Times at Bombay airport when the Fourth King of Bhutan, Jigme Singye Wangchuck, said "Gross National Happiness is more important than Gross National Product", expressing a concept that had been developed during the 1970s.

GNH: United Nations takes note

In 2011, The UN General Assembly passed Resolution "Happiness: towards a holistic approach to development" urging member nations to follow the example of Bhutan and measure happiness and well-being and calling happiness a "fundamental human goal."

GNH: World Happiness Day

In 2012, the UN convened the High Level Meeting: Well-being and Happiness: Defining a New Economic Paradigm to encourage the spread of Bhutan's GNH

philosophy. At the High Level meeting, the first World Happiness Report was issued. Shortly after the High Level meeting, 20 March was declared to be International Day of Happiness by the UN in 2012 with resolution 66/28.

GNH: Versus GDP

GNH is distinguishable from Gross Domestic Product by valuing collective happiness as the goal of governance, by emphasizing harmony with nature and traditional values as expressed in the 9 domains of happiness and 4 pillars of GNH.

GNH: The four pillars

The four pillars of GNH are: Sustainable and equitable socio-economic development; Environmental conservation; Preservation and promotion of culture; and Good governance.

GNH: The nine domains

The nine domains of GNH are psychological well-being, health, time use, education, cultural diversity and resilience, good governance, community vitality, ecological diversity and resilience, and living standards.

Each domain is composed of subjective (survey-based) and objective indicators. The domains weigh equally but the indicators within each domain differ by weight. The domains work differently depending on the person's GDP. For instance, if there are two people, one whose life is consumed with working, leaving barely any time for friends and family, while the other, though not as good in working conditions, has still enough time to spend quality time with their friends and family. The person who spends time with family and friends ends up having a larger GNH, than the person who is just in it for work. In other words, a person is happier, or can be happier, in life when focusing on the little things.

GNH: Development of GNH Index

The Bhutan GNH Index was developed by the Centre for Bhutan Studies (CBS) with the help of Oxford University researchers to help measure the progress of Bhutanese society. After the creation of the national GNH Index, the government used the metric to measure national progress and inform policy.

A distinguishing feature of Bhutan GNH Index from the other models is that the other models are designed for secular governments and do not include religious behavior measurement components. The data is used to compare the happiness between different groups of citizens, and changes over time. According to the World Happiness Report 2019, Bhutan is 95th out of 156 countries.

GNH: The GNH Surveys

In 2008, the first GNH survey was conducted. It was followed by a second one in 2010. The third nationwide survey was conducted in 2015. The GNH survey covers all twenty dzonkhags and results are reported for varying demographic factors such as gender, age, abode, and occupation. The first GNH surveys consisted of long questionnaires that polled the citizens about living conditions and religious behavior, including questions about the times a person prayed in a day and other Karma indicators. It took several hours to complete one questionnaire. Later rounds of the GNH Index were shortened, but the survey retained the religious behavioral indicators.



GNH: Implementation in the country

The Gross National Happiness Commission (GNHC) is charged with implementing GNH in Bhutan. The GNHC is composed of the Prime Minister as the Chairperson, Secretaries of the 10 ministries of the government, and the Secretary of the GNHC. The GNH's tasks include conceiving and implementing the nation's 5-year plan and promulgating policies. The GNH Index is used to measure the happiness and well-being of Bhutan's population. A GNH Policy Screening Tool and a GNH Project Screening Tool is used by the GNHC to determine whether to pass policies or implement projects. The GNH Screening tools used by the GNH Commission for anticipating the impact of policy initiatives upon the levels of GNH in Bhutan.



CORONAVIRUS, SOCIAL AND PHYSICAL DISTANCING AND SELF-QUARANTINE

What is social distancing?

The practice of social distancing means staying home and away from others as much as possible to help prevent spread of COVID-19. The practice of social distancing encourages the use of things such as online video and phone communication instead of in-person contact.

What is physical distancing?

Physical distancing is the practice of staying at least 6 feet away from others to avoid catching a disease such as COVID-19.

How can I practice physical distancing?

Wear a [face mask or covering](#) when you are not in your home and whenever you are around people who are not members of your household. Maintain at least 6 feet of distance between yourself and others. Avoid crowded places, particularly indoors, and events that are likely to draw crowds.

Other examples of social and physical distancing to avoid larger crowds or crowded spaces are:

- Working from home instead of at the office
- Closing schools or switching to online classes
- Visiting loved ones by electronic devices instead of in person
- Cancelling or postponing conferences and large meetings

What is self-quarantine?

People who have been exposed to the new coronavirus and who are at risk for coming down with COVID-19 might practice **self-quarantine**. Health experts recommend that self-quarantine lasts 14 days. Two weeks provides enough time for them to know whether or not they will become ill and be contagious to other people.

You might be asked to practice self-quarantine if you have recently returned from traveling to a part of the country or the world where COVID-19 is spreading rapidly, or if you have knowingly been exposed to an infected person.

Self-quarantine involves:

- Using standard hygiene and washing hands frequently
- Not sharing things like towels and utensils
- Staying at home
- Not having visitors
- Staying at least 6 feet away from other people in your household

Once your quarantine period has ended, if you do not have symptoms, follow your doctor's instructions on how to return to your normal routine.

What is isolation?

For people who are confirmed to have COVID-19, **isolation** is appropriate. Isolation is a health care term that means keeping people who are infected with a contagious illness away from those who are not infected. Isolation can take place at home or at a hospital or care facility. Special personal protective equipment will be used to care for these patients in health care settings.

Lessening Coronavirus Impact

It's important to know [what to do if you feel sick](#). The coronavirus pandemic is making everyone aware of handwashing and protecting others from coughs and sneezes. Along with those essential steps, practices such as social and physical distancing, and self-quarantine and isolation when appropriate can slow the rate of infection in a city, town or community.

The pandemic can seem overwhelming, but in truth, every person can help slow down the spread of COVID-19. By doing your part, you can make a big difference to your health, and that of others around you.



LOCKDOWN

STAY AT HOME



Ways to feel better

Here are a few tips and thoughts to help in guarding against depression and dealing with it when it comes.

- Look after key relationships. Your parents and grandparents, siblings, closest friends. Really try to look out for them.
- Stay active. The temptation to do nothing is strong. Try to resist it.
- Exercise. It is vital to physical and mental wellbeing.
- Watch your diet. For many people, boredom = eating, dislocation = eating, loneliness = eating. It is important to be aware of it. Try to eat healthily.
- Sleep. An early night is a good night.
- Read books. Don't be a 24/7 news junkie. Books that have nothing to do with the current crisis, fiction or nonfiction, can be such a wonderful release.
- Cut down on social media. Endlessly scrolling through Facebook, Twitter and Instagram is not healthy.
- Listen to music regularly.
- Even better – make music.
- Write down your thoughts. Keep a diary. Make lists.
- Keep in touch with the people you would normally be in contact with.
- Get in touch with someone you have lost contact with.
- Do something good for someone else every day.
- Do the easy things if you are finding it hard to do the difficult things.
- Stay curious. Try new things.
- Remember that all crises end eventually. By the time this one is over, there will have been a lot of grief, a lot of suffering. But it will end, and most of the world will still be here. So ...
- Keep things in perspective. Don't panic. And finally ...
- See an opportunity in every setback. The whole world is going to have to take that approach when this is all over, but we can do it in our own lives now. Most people are being kinder. There is a boom in volunteering and there is appreciation of that. The air is cleaner. Our carbon footprint has shrunk. Guess that is a long-winded way of saying try to look on the bright side. What choice do we have?

This is an edited version of an article that was published originally in The Guardian

Reduce the risk of **Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)** infection at workplaces.

Promote regular and thorough hand washing or use alcohol based hand rub.



Surfaces like (desks, tables) and objects like (telephones, mobile phones, computers) should be wiped with disinfectant regularly.



Follow cough etiquette.

Advise those who are sick to stay home.

For information on COVID-19, Call MoH at toll free no.2121



COVID-19 AND BEYOND:

six lessons to keep us going

Covid-19 has killed hundreds of thousands and upended the lives of millions more. However, it is also teaching us lessons, while revealing the strength of our people and inspiring fresh thinking about our nation's future. I listened to people from all walks of life regarding this unprecedented pandemic; from friends, relatives, families, office colleagues and people on the streets. I wish to share with you the five most inspiring stories I encountered. Their stories made me realise some things with relevance not only to our country's current struggle with the pandemic, but also to our country's future. To these five insights, I also add a sixth: My own thoughts on the raging debate about reopening schools in Bhutan as this is the most discussed topic today, not only in our local streets but all the way to the parliament.

I will start with Pema Yangchen, a school teacher in Paro, who shared that Covid-19 has given her the opportunity to teach her students through digital platforms. "Suddenly the efficacy of e-learning is on everyone's lips. Now we need to build this practice into our education system." I am reminded that His Majesty the King of Bhutan has emphasized the need to apply digital technologies to improve our people's lives. This is an opportunity for our country's brilliant minds in the technology and education sectors to provide solutions that will serve Bhutan and countries beyond, thus answering His Majesty's call to bring the

benefits of digital technologies to the people. Meme Phuntso from Trongsa feels that this has been the best time of his life. Though he did not understand the purpose of closing schools for so long, he is happy seeing his grandchildren sitting around him all the time to listen to his folktales. His grandchildren reinvigorate his memory by demanding more stories and bombarding him with questions. According to Meme Phuntsho, the bond he has developed with his family during this time is a memorable part of his life, and it shall remain close to his heart. His story reminds us of two important things: First, that even as our younger generations busily pursue progress, we should always reserve time for the older members of our families and communities. Our communal and familial bonds keep our nation strong amid challenges. And second, our folktales can still captivate our youth despite competition from digital entertainment. We should cherish these nuggets of our rich culture even as we transition to a future dependent on digital technology.

According to Lam Gayleg from Zhemgang, the Covid-19 crisis reminds us about the fickleness of life. "It's only through awareness and inner psychology that we can handle such uncertainties. Covid-19 is a reminder to invest not just in your body (physical training) and intellect (books), but in mastering your inner psychology." On shortages of foods and essential items in the markets, Lam Gayleg reminds us to

develop a mindset of abundance, not scarcity. Uncertainty is a cold, hard truth of life. As Bhutan's economic status improves every year, our younger generations are less exposed to past hardships that toughened prior generations of Bhutanese, whose resilience allowed Bhutan to weather many storms. Our nation benefits if we can encourage everyone, especially the youth, to see this pandemic as an opportunity to develop inner strength. A young nurse Lhamo from Lunana shares how she was able to convince the villagers on the importance of hand washing, which has been so difficult to promote there before. "People are very open to health awareness now and the situation has transformed their thinking about healthcare. Scientists and doctors all across the globe are striving hard to discover a vaccine for Covid-19 with no success so far. I wish people continue to practice this good habit. A simple hack for making your health twice better," she concludes. Crises can result in something positive when they encourage people to accept good reforms that they rejected before. Inspired by Lhamo's story, I enjoin people in all fields to ponder: "That great idea I had before that people did not accept, what if I try it again for the good of all?" Ten-year-old Lhazin Tshomo stayed home during this lull period. However, she has discovered a new and fascinating passion, the art of weaving colorful kira. She proudly explains to her friends the key elements of techniques used to weave kira from threads. She can now describe the art of operating weaving tools, including the intricacy of blending colorful threads to produce beautiful patterns. Without the noise and pace of "normal" life, the pandemic is a chance for us to reconnect with the marvels of our rich culture. These stories show our tremendous success in rising to the hard situation and transforming the crisis into something positive. This is possible because His Majesty the King continues to lead our fight against this pandemic. And we have blessings of the compassionate Je Khenpo, and the solidarity of the masses rising to the call of the nation in such difficult times. Under the firm guidance of the Prime Minister, Dr Lotay Tshering, who is himself a doctor, the government has succeeded in strengthening the trust of our people in our medical institutions. Thus, the public obeys government recommendations. Through an effective quarantine system and border control, Bhutan is doing well so far. We have an epidemiologist in our Health Minister to keep us informed on the ways to prevent spreading Covid-19 in communities. Their dynamic leadership deserves our gratitude.

However, a critical issue that remains unresolved is whether we should reopen schools. We need to balance between the risks and opportunities. I offer

two points to think about. First, if the government decides to reopen schools, I believe it must restructure the school syllabus, which is designed for a full academic year, to suit this short academic session. Otherwise, having to teach so much in so little time will undermine the ability of our education system to deliver quality education. Second, if schools reopen, the mantras issued by the Health Ministry regarding physical distancing and disinfection, among others, must be strictly followed. Schools must plan new systems and implement practical measure to ensure that government guidelines are followed. It would help to require prior site inspections done by local authorities to ensure that the plans and practical measures of each school are up to par. There should also be continuous monitoring by authorities to ensure that schools and students continue to strictly follow the systems in place. This communication between schools and authorities also ensures that schools can voice out their difficulties and authorities can then respond to help. These measures are not only important for the safety of our schools, but for the health of the nation. There is no perfect strategy, and we can only make do with the information we have today.

However, adhering to these practices will enable schools to stay open and complete the remaining academic year. Otherwise, we will have to close the gates midway and the students will not finish the academic year – and all of this will be for nothing. Some of us may notice that the youth do not easily accept the traditional values and cultural teachings promoted by our old G's, such as observing rituals and maintaining strict discipline while eating, talking, and dressing, among others. Judging by that trend, there may be cause to worry whether our youth will strictly follow all the guidelines from the health ministry. However, one thing is for certain in Bhutan, our hearts will beat together when we hear our king. Regardless of each person's difficult situation, the resounding line we hear from the mass today, especially from the youth, is "we are emotionally, mentally and physically prepared to serve the king." The unprecedented rise in the numbers of youth rushing to register for Desuups is one of the many outstanding examples demonstrated by our youth. With the right care and guidance, our youth will not disappoint us. Come what may, this GNH country is set to move forward undeterred beyond Covid-19.

Courtesy: Samphel Norbu, PHPA-I, Wangdue, as featured in kuenselonline.com

TIRED OF PROCRASTINATING? To overcome it, take the time to understand it



This post is part of TED's "How to Be a Better Human" series, each of which contains a piece of helpful advice from someone in the TED community.

It's 11 o'clock. You're in your dorm room, and you have a paper due in a day or so. You sit down at your desk, you open up your books to get started, and then you think, 'I'm gonna check my phone just for a minute; get that out of the way.' Forty-five minutes later, you are still online. "You've done a really good job of that, but now you realize, 'You know what? I'm pretty tired. I'm kind of exhausted, and that's not conducive to writing a good paper. What do I need? I need to go to sleep.'" And you do — only to wake up and go through the whole cycle of delays-and-excuses the next day.

Is this you? Rather than a school or college paper, maybe it was a report, applications, review, or some other important thing that you kept kicking down the road until the road ran out and you had to deliver.

You probably scolded yourself for your behavior. And wondered, "Why am I so lazy /weak-willed /disorganized /unmotivated /hopeless /[fill in other belittling adjective]?"

Well, here's good news for you. Procrastination isn't shameful. It's not a sign of weakness. It's not a flaw. It's actually pretty predictable; it's something we can really expect if we understand the dynamics of motivation.

There are many theories about why we procrastinate. Some have said it's about the inability to cope with difficult emotions; others, that it's connected to faulty time management or perfectionism. It is rooted in our self-worth, the paramount psychological need that all of us have is to be seen by ourselves and others as capable and



competent and able ... and we will actually sacrifice or trade off other needs to meet that need.

To be clear, the need to be seen as worthy or worthwhile is *not* the problem. Where things go wrong is that some of us depend heavily on external feedback — in the form of good grades, praises from parents, friends or other authority figures for those feelings of worthiness. People who procrastinate a lot have a kind of simplistic equation in their mind: their performance is equal or equivalent to their ability, which is equal or equivalent to their self-worth as a person or performance = ability = self-worth. The reason we're so terrified about performing poorly on that paper, application, analysis, etc. is because we feel our ability rests on it — and our value as a person.

In the performance = ability = self-worth equation, the only variable we can control is how much effort we put into our performance. When we procrastinate and put in less effort, we're doing it as a form of self-protection. That way, if we earn a bad result, it doesn't mean we're not talented, able or worthy; we were just too busy or distracted to do our best.

Think about the murmurs you inevitably heard before exams in high school or college. What are people saying? ‘I only studied three hours.’ ‘I only studied two hours; my computer froze.’ Everyone’s explaining how they’re not ready. Why? Because if they don’t achieve, then they have this built-in excuse not only for themselves but for others.

Anyone who has ever procrastinated has experienced that feeling of being stuck. Many people

How do we break the cycle? Here are three strategies:

1. Be aware of what you’re doing and why.

Know when you’re procrastinating. Pro-tip: If you have to ask yourself whether you’re procrastinating or not, chances are you are. Get familiar with your “greatest hits” of wasting time. Most of us have specific fall-back activities that we do when we’re playing the delaying game. What’s yours — house-cleaning, napping, shopping, reading email, catching up on movies? Learn to recognize it so you can nip it in the bud; it’s much easier to prevent falling down the cleaning /napping /shopping rabbit hole rather than pulling yourself out. The greater awareness we have of our tendencies and our motivations, we’re more likely to overcome them.

2. Tip the balance.

Our progress towards completing any activity is affected by “approach” motives (reasons why we want to do this thing) and “avoid” motives (reasons we don’t want to do this thing). With activities that we have no hesitations doing — let’s say, eating something that’s delicious and healthy — it’s because we have many “approach” motives and very few “avoid” motives. Many procrastinators have the mistaken belief that the reason they’re putting off a task is because there’s an underlying reason they don’t want to do it. Often, that’s not the case. It’s simply that their fears dominate or overwhelm their ‘approach’ motives. When this happens, think of all the reasons why you want to do this activity. It might help to remind yourself of how completing it fits into your larger goals, objectives or mission. Then, if it seems especially big or intimidating, break it down into manageable pieces.

describe procrastination as being stuck at or against a wall or an obstacle they can’t get over. We are often agitated, we can’t sleep — but we [also] can’t work. At those times, we find ourselves pulled between two equally strong and compelling forces: the drive to achieve and the fear of failure. We come unstuck only when the fear of not getting things done overrides our fear of failure.



3. Challenge your beliefs.

We need to undermine the ideas that brought us to procrastinate in the first place. The equation that we carry around in our head is flawed ... your ability is *not* equivalent to your worth. Our worth derives from our human qualities of kindness and thoughtfulness and our vulnerabilities.

Courtesy: *TED Community*



BHUTAN TRUST FUND FOR ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

Conserving fragile Mountain ecosystem

Bhutan maybe a small landlocked country in the Himalayas but it is a thriving home to some of the most rare and endangered species on the planet such as the red panda, the black-necked crane, the white-bellied heron, the golden langur, snow leopard, tiger, one-horned rhino, and many others. Although 38,394 square kilometers in size, the tiny Himalayan Kingdom is home to more than 770 species of birds, 200 species of mammals, 5,600 species of plants, 64 species of rhododendrons, 423 species of orchids, 411 species of ferns, 232 species of moss, 329 species of mushrooms, more than 110 species of fish, more than 80 species of agricultural crops, and 15 species of livestock. This rich biodiversity is partly due to the extreme ecological and climatic zones that stretch from the southern foothills to the northern most regions of the greater Himalayas that provide favorable conditions to sustain diverse flora and fauna. But largely, the success of this conservation story is due to the enlightened environmental policies and stewardship of Bhutan's visionary monarchs.

Yet, even as Bhutan doggedly continued to pursue conservation, the pressures on the natural environment were increasing by the day. This was evident in the rising frequencies of human wildlife conflicts, overgrazing, forest fires, pollution, waste accumulation and climate change, among others.

The Royal Government of Bhutan was facing serious financial, institutional and human resource constraints to achieve the conservation goals. A nationwide program of biodiversity conservation was considered well beyond the government's present and foreseeable financial capacity, and unlikely to be achieved through its regular budget.

It was in this context that the Bhutan Trust Fund for Environmental Conservation (BTFEC) was conceived and donors provided capital to vest an endowment. As envisioned by the Fourth Druk Gyalpo, His Majesty Jigme Singye Wangchuck, BTFEC was established in 1992 with the financial support from Global Environment Facility (GEF), multilateral donors, and World Wildlife Fund (WWF) as a long-term sustainable financing mechanism for biological diversity and ecosystem conservation. It is legally and administratively an independent grant-making organization established in perpetuity under the Royal Charter of 1996.



Rufous-necked hornbill



Black-necked crane (*Grus nigricollis*)



Red panda (*Ailurus fulgens*)



Spotted deer (*Axis axis*)



Over the past years, BTFEC has made vital contribution in the areas of environmental conservation and management, natural resource management, cleaner technology and land use planning, rural livelihood, human-wildlife conflict, field research, environmental education, green transport, waste management, plantation and reforestation, biodiversity assessment of various flora and fauna, conservation of endangered species, ecotourism, with special attention to the legal and institutional framework for environmental and natural resource management.

Initiatives were also taken to establish facilities such as ecological park, environment resource center, greenery park, door-to-door waste management services, development of hot springs, solid waste management, zero waste projects, rural livestock and agricultural crop insurance, recovery plan for white-bellied heron, development of compact onsite sanitation technology, and fuel-efficient stoves and rice cookers in schools and monasteries.

Further, BTFEC grants strengthened resource monitoring, patrolling, and service delivery in National Parks and Reserves, and enhanced management effectiveness and sustainability of these Parks. With the successful implementation of its first Strategy Plan of 1997 and second Strategy plan 2010-2015, the BTFEC is currently implementing its third Strategy Plan 2015-2020.

Agencies of the Royal Government of Bhutan, National NGOs/ CSOs/CBOs, and Bhutanese individuals are eligible for the grant. Proposals received directly from grassroots communities are desired. When submitted by government and CSOs, proposals that enhance community involvement in conservation are prioritized, co-financing is desired, but our support does not displace other donor funding.

There are three funding windows, namely project feasibility and preparatory grant of up to Nu 150,000, small grant of up to Nu 400,000, and MB-Grant-projects approved by the management board of up to Nu 15 million. From June 2017, BTFEC instituted a grant based on thematic areas through “Request for Proposal” (RFP) on an annual basis. This approach is used to address specific conservation issues.

It is expected to supplant the existing system of funding a large number of dispersed projects. Two and a half decades after its inception, the trust fund has spent US\$ 23.91 million on conservation projects, against an accumulated capital base of US\$ 71.56 million. During this period, the BTFEC executed and completed Global Environment Facility grant of US\$ 4.08 million targeted at Bhutan’s High Altitude Northern Areas. In 2018, BTFEC was accredited as the 28th National Implementing Entity (NIE) of the Adaptation Fund.

Through Climate Investment Fund, the trust fund implemented Sustainable Land Management (SLM) and Innovative Financing in Bhutan through a grant of US\$ 150,000. This has enhanced capacity at the grassroots level on SLM and produced nationwide SLM maps. Through this project, innovative financing for SLM in Bhutan was developed. Today, BTFEC is at stage one of accreditation process seeking NIE for Green Climate Fund. The BTFEC has also committed US\$ 7.5 million for 14 years starting July 2019 - annual contribution of US\$ 500,000 to Bhutan For Life, a ‘Project Finance for Permanence (PFP)’ mechanism to provide sustained flow of fund to effectively manage Bhutan’s protected areas and biological corridors.

To know more about Bhutan Trust Fund and its projects visit

www.bhutantrustfund.bt

Photo Credits: Bhutan For Life (BFL), Nature Conservation Division (NCD), Dept. of Forests & Park Services, MoAF



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Druk Holding and Investments Limited



Brief Description:

Druk Holding and Investments (DHI), the commercial arm of the Royal Government of Bhutan, was established in 2007 upon issuance of Royal Charter in 2007 "to hold and manage the existing and future investments of the Royal Government for the long term benefit of the people of Bhutan". DHI, the largest and only government-owned holding company in Bhutan, has shares in 21 different companies operating in the manufacturing, energy, natural resources, financial, communication, aviation, trading and real estate sectors. Of the 21 portfolio companies 9 are fully owned (DHI-Owned Companies), 5 are controlled (DHI Controlled Companies - 51% and above) and 7 are linked (DHI-Linked Companies - below 51%). The Ministry of Finance is the sole shareholder of DHI.

Mission

Safeguard and enhance national wealth for all generations of Bhutanese through prudent investments.

Vision

"To be the leading wealth management and creation organization that helps transform Bhutan into a globally competitive economy guided by the principles of GNH".

Our Destination

DHI Group finances the entire of Government's current expenditure for fiscal year 2029/30 and the Bhutan Future Fund is Nu. 30 billion in the year 2030.

PERFORMANCE EXCELLENCE

ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION

HUMAN CAPITAL

GUIDING THEMES

Druk Holding & Investments Ltd.

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