



ANNUAL REPORT 2020/21

TOURISM COUNCIL OF BHUTAN

KINGDOM OF BHUTAN



CONTENTS

Foreword	2
Introduction	3
COVID-19 and Tourism in Bhutan	6
Impact of the pandemic	6
Response	6
Major initiatives as per APA	11
Strengthening policy and regulatory framework	11
Enhancing infrastructure development and product diversification	13
Strengthening Brand Bhutan	17
Improving service delivery	22
Ensuring excellence and professionalism	23
Research and Studies	25
Bhutan Experimental Tourism Satellite Account	25
Partnerships and collaboration	27
International Meetings & related events	28

FOREWORD

The Tourism Council of Bhutan (TCB) presents its first annual report which will be an annual feature publication in the future. The main objective of the publication is to provide updates and insights on the initiatives undertaken by TCB in that year.



TCB under the guidance of the Tourism Council's Chairperson Lyonpo (Dr) Tandi Dorji, Hon'ble Foreign Minister, and other Council members, and with support from other individuals and organizations have been able to do a lot. This first report presents the key highlights from the financial year 2020-2021.

We are now into the second year of the novel COVID 19 pandemic and despite progress in vaccines and in our case, inoculation of the second dose of vaccine, new variants are threatening the momentum that we have gained in our fight against this threat. Our fight is being led by His Majesty at the helm and supported by the government and people. It is only imperative that we be vigilant and do not let our guards down to continue this fight.

Looking ahead, we hope that the new normal following COVID-19 will provide greater relief, peace, and possibilities to build upon. Our sector has proved its endurance in the face of crises in the past, and we are certain that we will be able to overcome the present challenging times even stronger. Partnerships and collaborations aimed at developing a sustainable model for our industry and planet have never been more important.

Finally, we would like to humbly dedicate this publication to our beloved King, His Majesty Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck with our sincere prayers. We offer our prayers for the Long and Happy Life of His Majesty The King, Her Majesty the Gyaltsuen and Their Highnesses The Gyalseys.

Wangchuck Dynasty Gyalo! Palden Drukpa Gyalo!

Tashi Delek

With Respects

Dorji Dhradhul

Director General

INTRODUCTION

Bhutan welcomed its first group of tourists in 1974, marking the start of the country's tourism history. The first tourism office called the Department of Tourism was set up under the Ministry of Finance on 1st December 1971. Tourism has progressed and evolved into a thriving sector since then.

Today, it is one of the most important economic sectors, contributing greatly to the development of the country. The tourism sector is recognized as a flagship program in the 12th Five Year Plan, owing to its importance.

This annual report highlights the tourism sector's performance and initiatives for the fiscal year 2020-21. This report tells the story of our journey throughout the last year, from July 2020 to June 2021.

Vision

"A green, sustainable, inclusive and a high value tourism destination".

Guiding principles

- Develop and promote forms of tourism in line with the national development philosophy of Gross National Happiness
- Promote High value, Low volume tourism
- Promote tourism that does not undermine national security and our tangible and intangible cultural heritage and environment
- Promote inclusive and equitable growth
- Ensure sustainable tourism development

Tourism development in the country is guided by the policy of High value, Low volume.

High value

Targeting mindful and responsible visitors, creating good value for money and experiences, ensuring high revenue and yield, quality tourism infrastructure, products and services, and Brand Bhutan

Low volume

Ensuring that the number of tourists visiting Bhutan is in line with the carrying capacity of the natural environment, socio-cultural values and infrastructure without exacerbating our vulnerabilities as a small nation



Governance

Tourism Council of Bhutan

Tourism Council of Bhutan (TCB) is an autonomous inter-governmental agency with the following mandate:

- Tourism planning and policy,
- Regulation and monitoring,
- Facilitation and coordination,
- Branding and promotion,
- Development of tourism products and services, and
- Human resource development of the industry.

Tourism Council

TCB is guided by Tourism Council (Board), which provides overall leadership and strategic direction on all matters relating to tourism in the country. The Hon'ble Minister for Foreign Affairs is the chairperson of the Tourism Council.

The members are from the relevant government agencies and the tourism sector associations. These include the Ministry of Home and Cultural Affairs, two Dzongdags (Trashigang and Sarpang), Bhutan Sustainable Tourism Society, Association of Bhutanese Tour Operators, Guide Association of Bhutan, Hotel and Restaurant Association of Bhutan and the Director General of TCB as the Member Secretary.

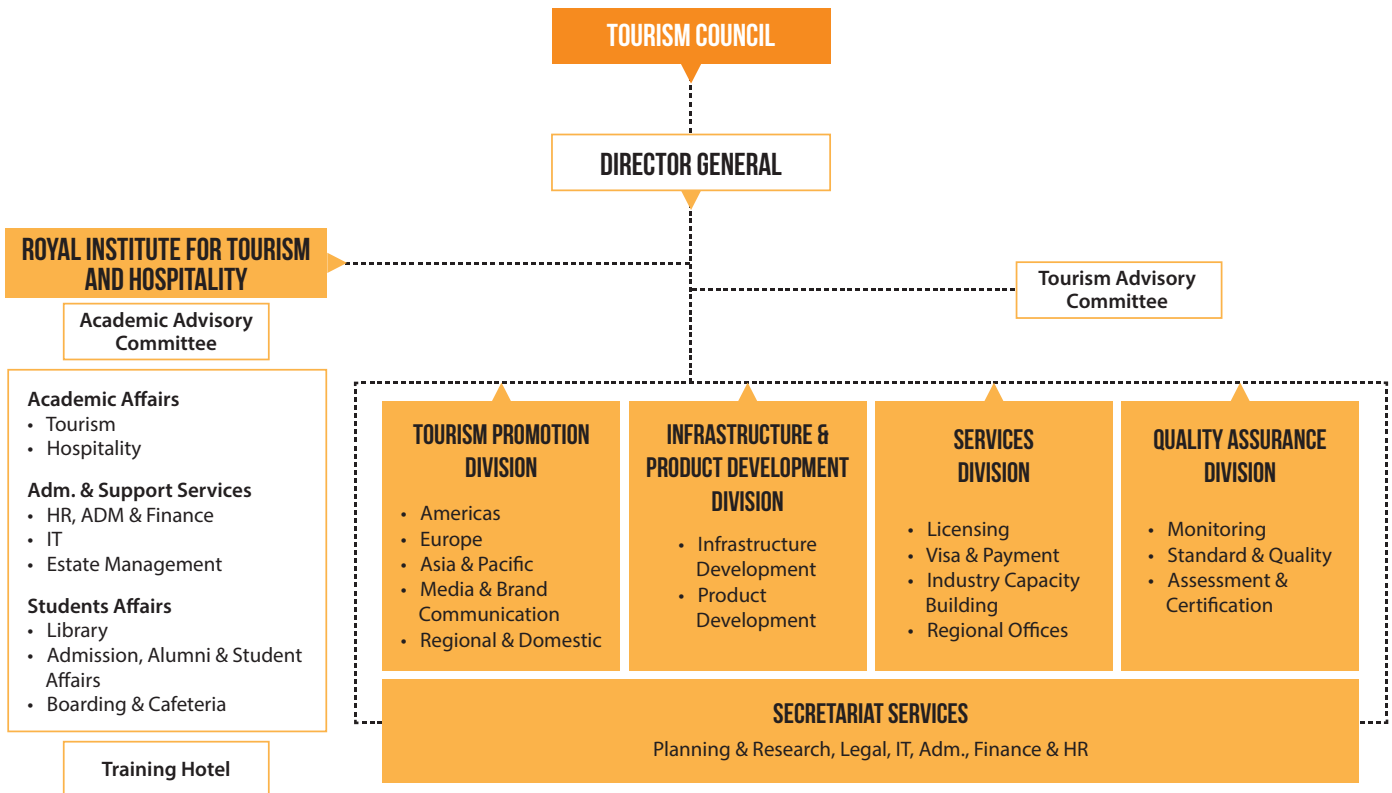
Technical Advisory Committee

Technical Advisory Committee has been established with representatives from the relevant government agencies and the tourism sector to support the Tourism Council of Bhutan in development and promotion.

TCB Structure

TCB is headed by the Director General, who is responsible for the overall management of the organization.

The Royal Institute for Tourism and Hospitality is also with TCB. The institute offers a 2-year diploma program in tourism and hospitality management for students who have completed Class XII. The institute also offers diploma course through the Bhutan Middle Management Program targeting industry in-service personnel to upgrade their skills and qualifications.



Tourism Sector Overview 2020 Prior to COVID-19

315,599 Visitor Arrivals (2019)	7 Average length of stay	
3,525 Tour Operators	3,591 Guides	158 Trekking cooks
143 3 star hotels	13 4 star hotels	17 5 star hotels
158 Village Homestays	28 TCB certified tourist restaurants	50,000+ Personnel employed



COVID-19 AND TOURISM IN BHUTAN

Impact of the pandemic

The impact of COVID-19 on the tourism sector has been overwhelming. Arrivals dropped by 91 percent from 315,599 visitors in 2019 to 29,812 visitors in 2020.

Similarly, gross receipts were down by 92 percent, reaching USD 19.84 million in 2020 from USD 225.87 million in 2019. Direct revenue also declined by 90.4 percent to USD 2.76 million in 2020 from 23.42 million in the previous year.

	2019	2020	% decrease
Visitors	315,599	29,812	91%
Gross receipts (USD)	225.87 m	19.84 m	92%
Direct revenue (USD)	23.42 m	2.76 m	90.4%

The pandemic also had disproportionate impact on the Bhutanese employed in the tourism sector leading to lay-offs and temporary closure of tourism businesses and other tourism related enterprises.

Response

Bhutan has been remarkable in its response to the pandemic's spread and impact. Without His Majesty's foresight and direction, none of this would have been possible.

With blessing and guidance from His Majesty the King, the Government worked relentlessly to overcome the challenges posed by the pandemic.

TCB implemented the Tourism Economic Contingency Plan in two phases from April to June 2020 and July to December 2020, respectively with the following objectives:

- Immediately engage those who have been displaced to provide a source of livelihood;
- Professionalize employees in the tourism sector;
- Identify new tourism products and provide a face-lift for tourism infrastructure through enhancement and beautification as part of an engagement program for displaced employees;
- Strengthen tourism governance; and
- Overall, work towards maintaining and promoting Bhutan's image as an exclusive high end and sustainable tourism destination.

The initiatives resulted in employment opportunities for more than 1,600 displaced employees, the details of which are provided below:

Infrastructure and product development

Acknowledging the need to upgrade the tourist sites and destinations, the following activities were implemented through engagement of the tourism employees displaced by the pandemic:

- Restroom construction at Chendebji, Ura and Membartsho
- Trail enhancement along Bumdra, Phajoding, and Dagala trek
- Improvement of 12 km biking trail within Thimphu
- Face-lifting of tourist sites in Bumthang, Chhukha and Punakha
- Taktsang site development
- Enhancement of Trans Bhutan Trail



Restrooms at Rimchu, Punakha



Restrooms at Ura, Bumthang



Enhancement of Taktshang trail

Training and re-skilling

TCB organized a trekking guide program in partnership with MoLHR and private training institutes to improve the skills and professionalism of tourism guides. The program was completed by a total of 100 tourist guides.

Similarly, a training on Menjong-Sorig Spa and Wellness was organized in partnership with the Faculty of Traditional Medicine, Khesar Gyelpo University of Medical Sciences of Bhutan to promote Bhutan as a wellness destination. 41 tourism personnel completed the course.

TCB also supported the training of craftsmen on the handicrafts and souvenir production.



Waste management

As waste management has emerged as a major concern along the popular trekking routes and at tourist destinations/sites, TCB organized a series of activities through cleaning, advocacy and awareness programs. These included Dagala, Bumdrak, Drukpath and Jomolhari-Yaktsa treks.

Google Street View Imagery

Recognizing the importance of providing latest information and images to the visitors, TCB updated the existing GSV imagery of Bhutan.



Image of Paro Taktshang as captured in GSV

Digitization of snowman trek

To enhance visitor experience through technology, TCB completed the digitization of the snowman trek in collaboration with National Land Commission Secretariat for providing easy access to information through web-based and mobile applications.

RITH as a quarantine facility

To address shortage of quarantine facilities in the early phase of COVID-19 in the country, the Royal Institute for Tourism and Hospitality (RITH) was used as a quarantine center for five weeks.

In addition, the institute's coaster bus was also deployed for COVID-19 duty for three months.

Mobilising Transportation for Desuung training and COVID-19 duty

TCB is actively involved in the coordination and mobilization of transportation for COVID-19 and other duties. As of October 2021, a total of 2,227 Toyota coaster buses were mobilized since April 2020.

These buses were deployed for the accelerated Desuung training programs, southern border surveillance, watershed management projects and other volunteer works across the country.



Transportation management for Desuung and COVID-19 duty

MAJOR INITIATIVES AS PER ANNUAL PERFORMANCE AGREEMENT (APA)

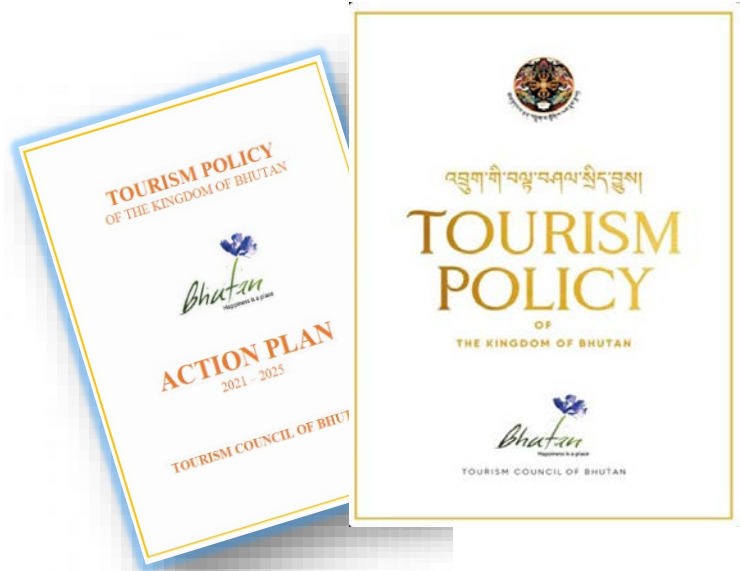
Fiscal Year 2020-21 was certainly a difficult year due to COVID-19. The country was affected severely by the pandemic, resulting in unprecedented impact on the tourism sector. The highlights of the major interventions are presented below.

Strengthening policy and regulatory framework

Tourism Policy

The Tourism Policy of the Kingdom of Bhutan was approved by the Cabinet in January 2021 to guide and provide direction for the development and promotion of sustainable tourism guided by the policy of *High value, Low volume*.

An action plan has also been developed for effective implementation of the policy.



Amendment of Tourism Levy Act 2020

TCB initiated the amendment of the Tourism Levy Act of Bhutan 2020 and submitted to the Cabinet. However, amendment was deferred.

Tourism Levy Rules & Regulations

TCB has developed the Tourism Levy Rules and Regulations in consultation with the stakeholders.

Non-certified hotels (budget hotels)

As per the directives issued in February 2021 by Cabinet, TCB has taken over the mandate of standardisation and regulation of the non-certified hotels (proposed to be called as “Blue Poppy Hotels”) in the country. Further, TCB has developed the national standards for this category of hotels to strengthen standard and quality in line with the overall accommodation standardization and classification system.

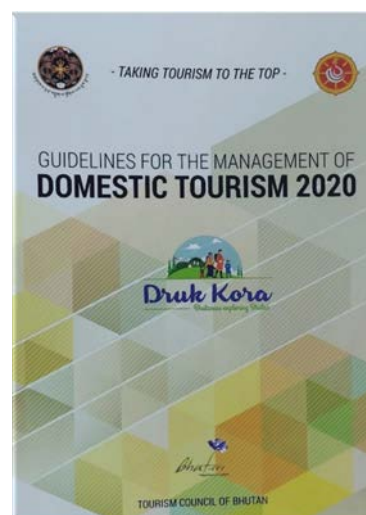
SOP for pilgrimage tour and trekking

To facilitate domestic tourists going for pilgrimage tour and trekking amidst COVID-19 and ensure compliance with health and safety protocols, TCB developed Standard Operating Procedures (SOP).

Among others, the SOP requires mandatory registration of the visitors through an online registration system. This is to facilitate contact tracing in the event of COVID-19 outbreak.

Guidelines for domestic tourism

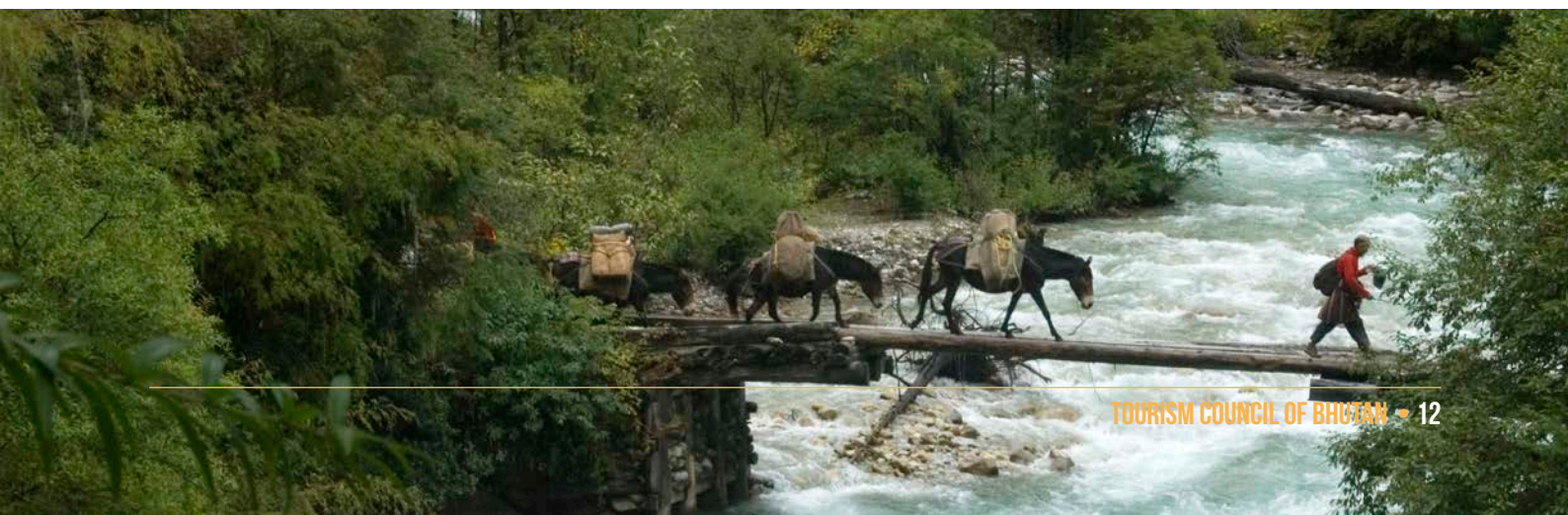
In order to promote domestic tourism, TCB developed and released the Guidelines for the Management of Domestic Tourism on 17th December 2020 coinciding with 113th National Day celebrations.



SOP for tourism service providers under new normal

TCB has initiated the development of Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for tourism service providers under new normal.

This document is expected to guide the tourism service providers to comply with COVID-19 health and safety protocols.



Disaster Management and Contingency Plan

Another major initiative of TCB is the development of the Disaster Management and Contingency Plan for the tourism sector. This reflects our commitment to promote Bhutan as a safe and high end tourist destination and take the tourism sector forward.

Among others, the plan will guide the tourism sector in strengthening planning, preparedness and response to disasters and emergencies.

This initiative fits in well with the Tourism Policy of the Kingdom of Bhutan 2021 and the Disaster Management Act 2013, which requires agencies to prepare the contingency plans for disaster management.

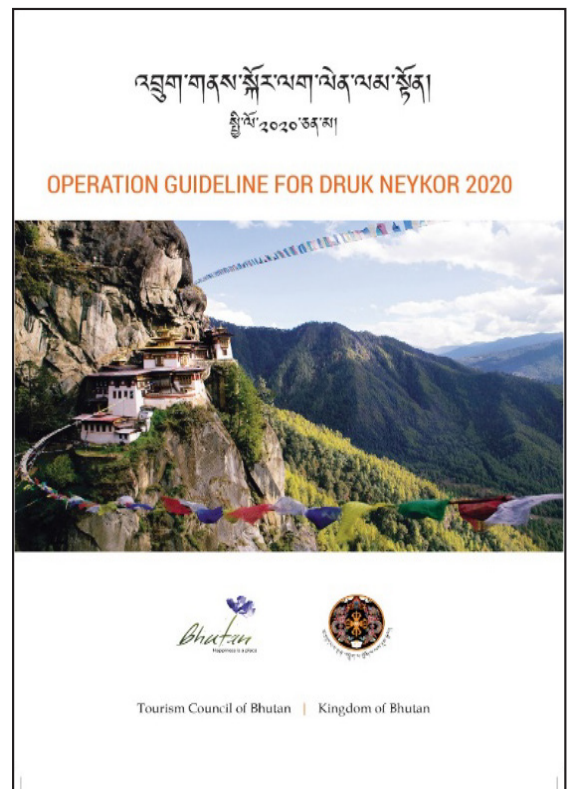
Enhancing infrastructure development and product diversification

Druk Neykor

In collaboration with stakeholders, TCB developed Druk Neykor package as a new tourism product

The package covers 108 sites of historical and religious significance across the country. The first phase of the package covering sites in Thimphu Dzongkhag has been launched.

A distinctive feature of Druk Neykor package is the use of the Druk Neykor Stamp Book (DNSB). The DNSB contains pictures with brief description of the designated sites under the Druk Neykor and a space for the seal stamp to validate their visit to a specific site.



Development of Dagala trek route from Genayzam (Thimphu) to Dagana

The joint survey was carried out involving officials from Dagana, Thimphu Dzongkhags and TCB. The works identified during the joint survey include: enhancement of existing trails, construction of canopy and seating benches, development of alternative trek routes, construction of wooden bridges and retaining walls.

Wellness and adventure tourism

In order to diversify tourism attractions, TCB worked on the strategy to promote wellness tourism in the country. Wellness tourism will be piloted before scaling up the initiative.

Meanwhile, TCB has also initiated the development of strategy document for adventure tourism.

Druk Neykor Stamp Book



Lotus Valley Trek

Lotus Valley Trek

Development of Lotus Valley Trek in Pemagatshel has been initiated. This will contribute to our objectives to diversify tourism products and ensure regional spread of tourism in the country.

The 4 days' trek starts from Mongling and ends at Khangma. This trek is known for natural beauty, numerous cultural and religious heritage sites, which are unique to the Dzongkhag.



Bridge along Gasa-Lingzhi Trek



Gasa-Lingzhi trek

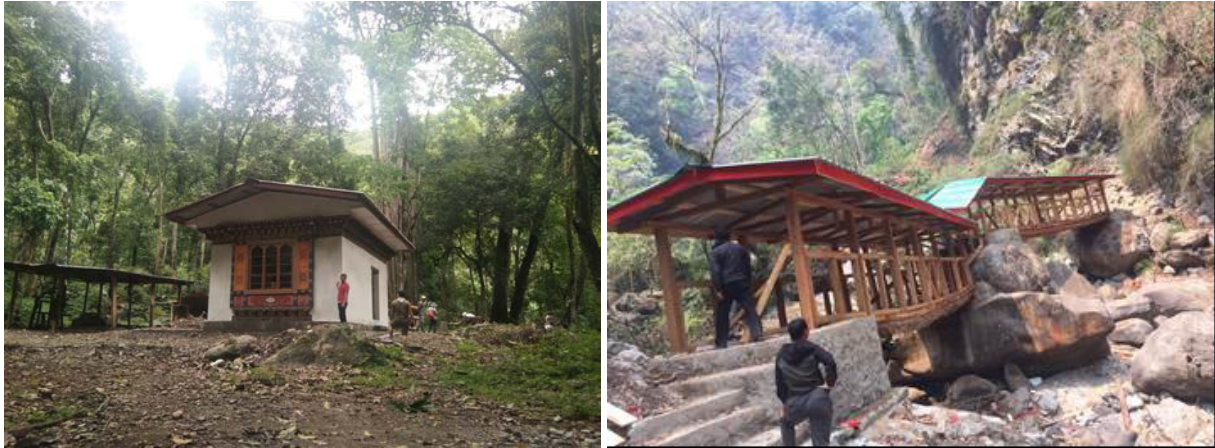
Revival of 36 km Gasa-Lingzhi trek has been initiated. This trail has religious and historical significance as it was used by Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal.

Druk Kora – Bhutanese Exploring Bhutan

A brand called 'Druk Kora' to promote domestic tourism package was launched on 17th December 2020. All those interested to promote domestic tourism packages could use the web-based platform developed and promoted by TCB. And those interested to explore places in Bhutan would access domestic tourism packages by accessing www.tourism.gov.bt/drukkora.

Rangtse Nye

In an effort to promote domestic tourism, TCB supported the development of Rangtse Nye. These include construction of restroom facilities, Choekhang, and 4 wooden bridges along the trail including footpath improvement.



Bridge and Choekhang in Rangtse Nye

Heritage Palace Tour

As part of the initiative to promote and develop Heritage Palace Tour in Trongsa, several activities were implemented. These include facelift and beautification of Chendebji Chorten, technical study for enhancement of heritage trail from Domkhar-Samcholing and the development of amenities around Kuenga Rabten, Samcholing and Yundrungcholing Palaces.

Facelift of Lekithang

The preparatory works including designs and drawings for the facelift and beautification of Lekithang area below Punakha Central School have been completed and handed over to Punakha Dzongkhag for implementation.

Waste management along trails, campsites and tourist sites

TCB strives to ensure that trekking trails, campsites and tourist sites are clean and free of waste. To support the national Zero Waste initiatives, TCB initiated the following activities:

- Developed a short sensitization and educational video clips highlighting dos and don'ts at tourist sites like lakes, temples and other sites.
- Clean up campaigns and awareness programs to raise awareness and solicit support of the communities to keep their areas clean and beautiful.

Roadside amenities (RSA)

TCB continues to develop and upgrade infrastructure and facilities in places frequented by visitors. Restroom facilities were constructed in collaboration with the local governments at:

- Yangner (Trashigang),
- Tshelingkhor (Pemagatshel),
- Morong (Samdrup Jongkhar),
- Yotongla (Trongsa),
- Lungsigang and Serutar (Tsirang).

In Gasa, visitor information centers and restrooms were constructed near Gasa Tshachu and in Damji.

TCB has also initiated the construction of restrooms at Takila (Lhuentse) and Dodena (Thimphu) including a care taker's house at Tachog (Paro).

In addition to the new constructions, enhancement of Pumla trail (Thimphu), revival of Paro Ta Dzong trail, and maintenance of restrooms at Chuzom and Hongtsho were also carried out.



RSA at Serutar, Tsirang



RSA at Morong, Samdrup Jongkhar

STRENGTHENING BRAND BHUTAN

Promote Bhutan as an exclusive travel destination

With international tourism halted as a result of COVID-19, only selective promotional activities were implemented to keep the visibility and interest alive on Bhutan. The following are some of the significant initiatives that have been implemented.

Broadcast, print and online platforms

The following are some of the promotional activities implemented using broadcast, print and online platforms to promote Bhutan.

- 30 seconds promotional video on CNN TV
- Advertisement in the Travel & Leisure Magazine, India
- Advertisement in 'The Economist' Magazine and digital
- Promotion in Conde Nast India



Promotional materials

In addition, promotions were also carried out through the development of promotional materials some of which include:

- Initiated the production of festival dates for the next 5 years in consultation with the School for Astrology, Pangrizampa
- A video titled 'Happiness is a place' in dedication to His Majesty's 41st Birth Anniversary
- Signed MoU with Bhutan Postal Corporation Ltd for postcard and personalized stamp for happiness campaign
- Completed frequently asked questions flyers for non-Minimum Daily Package Rate (MDPR)¹ tourists

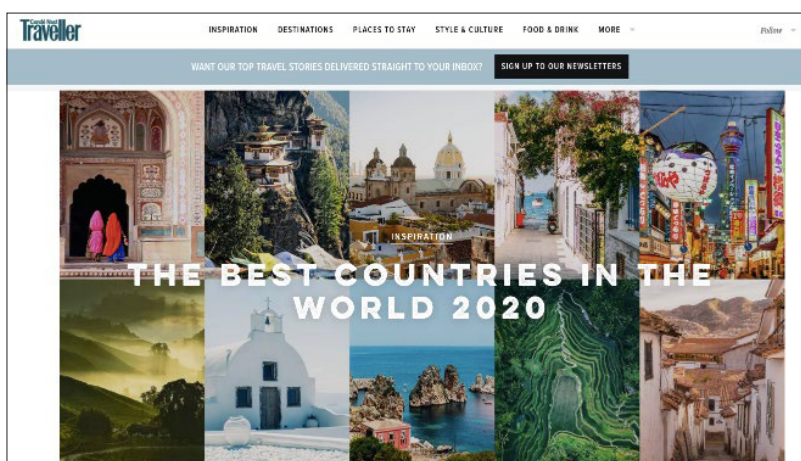


¹ MDPR – Applies to leisure arrivals from countries other than Bangladesh, India and Maldives. The rates are US \$ 250 / US \$200 per person per night during peak season and season respectively.

International media partnership and social media

We have enhanced our promotions through online and social media platforms as well as through international media partnerships. These includes:

- Partnering with Bhutan Echoes
- Participation in the "FUTURE of TOURISM" talk
- Featured as the 12th Best Countries in the World 2020: Reader's Choice Awards by Condé Nast Traveler
- Participation in the Digital Tourism Think Tank (DTTT)



Promotion of Domestic tourism

Initiatives were also taken to promote domestic tourism. These include:

- Ap Bokto animation video to promote domestic tourism
- Druk Kora module on www.tourism.gov.bt/drukkora featuring domestic tour packages
- Virtual tours of Taktshang, Chasing Phallus and National Dish of Bhutan
- Familiarization tour for tour operators to promote Dagana



Destination specific promotional events

Continuing our efforts to reach out to source market destinations, following promotional efforts were made:

- Signed contract and recruited Public Relations (PR) office to promote sustainable tourism fee in India
- Conducted consultation meeting with industry partners on the Tourism Levy Act 2020 with focus on Sustainable Development Fees (SDF)² for non-MDPR paying tourists
- Initiated Tourism Dialogue to discuss issues and opportunities in the tourism sector
- Participated in the global webinar on "Tourism and Happiness-for a Brighter Future"

² SDF for MDPR paying is US \$ 65 per person per night and Nu.1,200 per person per night for non-MDPR paying tourists as per the Tourism Levy Act of Bhutan 2020



Public Relations Agencies



- Australia:** the unique tourism collection
- India:** ChARSON ADVISORY (where brands are transformed)
- United States:** VIRTUOSO (SPECIALISTS IN THE ART OF TRAVEL)
- Japan:** Foresight Marketing
- United Kingdom:** HILLS BALFOUR



World Tourism Day 2020

World Tourism Day is an annual event celebrated on 27th September with relevant themes each year. The theme for 2020 was “Tourism and Rural Development”.

“Tourism and Rural Development” celebrates the sector’s unique ability to drive economic development and provide opportunities outside of the regions crowded by tourists such as communities that are left without knowing their potential. In line with the theme, TCB organized live online quiz competition among tourism stakeholders to generate awareness about tourism and rural development.

WORLD TOURISM DAY 27 SEPT

THEME 2020
TOURISM & RURAL DEVELOPMENT

FOR INDUSTRY PARTNERS IN BHUTAN

WORLD TOURISM DAY QUIZ

- Registration Sep 17-19(5pm)
- Selection Round Sep 21 through online quiz
- Top 10 Final Quiz Sep 27 at BBS

TO REGISTER LOG ON TO:
www.tourism.gov.bt/announcements

WORLD TOURISM DAY 27 SEPT

THEME 2020
TOURISM & RURAL DEVELOPMENT

PRIZES

WORLD TOURISM DAY QUIZ

1ST PRIZE	NU.25,000/-
2ND PRIZE	NU.22,500/-
3RD PRIZE	NU.20,000/-
TOP 7	NU.2,500 each

LOOKING FORWARD TO YOUR ACTIVE PARTICIPATION

TOURISM COUNCIL OF BHUTAN

Unlock Happiness Campaign

To promote and maintain Bhutan's presence as the number one destination after the pandemic, TCB initiated the Unlock Happiness campaign, which syncs well with Brand Bhutan slogan, "Happiness is a place". The campaign was implemented through a series of activities - unlock happiness puzzle series, happiness in a box gift from Bhutan, and Tourism Bhutan Dialogue.



Meetings, Incentives, Conferences (Conventions) and Exhibitions (MICE)

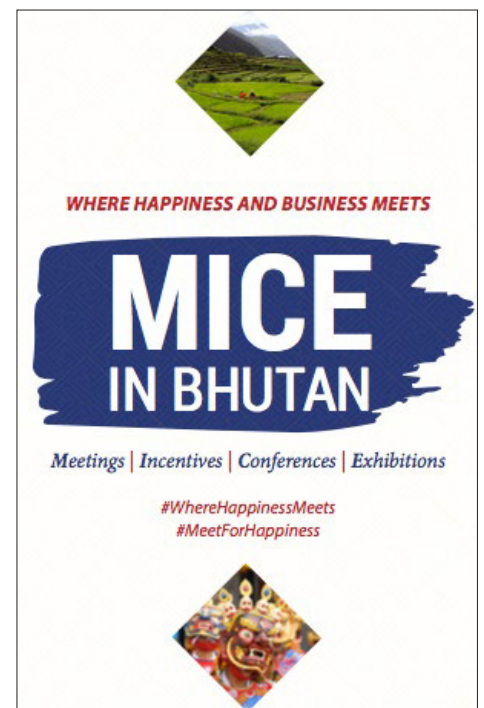
Another significant step taken in this fiscal year has been the formulation of a comprehensive strategy to guide the overall development and promotion MICE events and MICE tourism in the country.

Proposal for re-opening of tourism

TCB has developed a detailed proposal for providing tourism service under new normal with strategies and mechanisms to promote safe and secure travel in consultation with relevant stakeholders

Snowman Race

As part of efforts to promote Bhutan as a unique destination for top adventure tourism, TCB continues to support the development and promotion of snowman race in collaboration with the Secretariat for Snowman Race.





Improving service delivery

Digitalization of tourism industry

In order to leverage technology and improve service delivery, TCB has developed a blueprint for the digitalization of Bhutan's tourism with assistance from World Tourism Organization with financial support from UNDP sector.

E-tourism services & digital payment

To simplify services and improve efficiency, TCB has initiated the enhancement of the visa online system and tashel costing system, system integration with other agencies and development of tourism portal and statistics dashboard.

Efforts are also made to promote digital payment through use of credit card and payment solutions. Similarly, development of an online system to facilitate clearance for export of non-antique items has been initiated in collaboration with the Department of Culture.

Tourist Information Centers

As part of the on-going initiatives to improve service delivery and prepare for providing tourism service under new normal, TCB has set up a tourist information center at the Paro International Airport in June this year. Among others, the center will assist and provide information to the visitors arriving in the airport.

Two such centers will also be set up as part of the integrated check points in Gelephu and Samdrup Jongkhar to be developed by the Department of Law and Order.

Online registration for trekking and pilgrimage tours

An online system has been developed to facilitate the registration of domestic tourists. The system will facilitate on-line permits and also help in contact tracing in the event of COVID-19 outbreak.

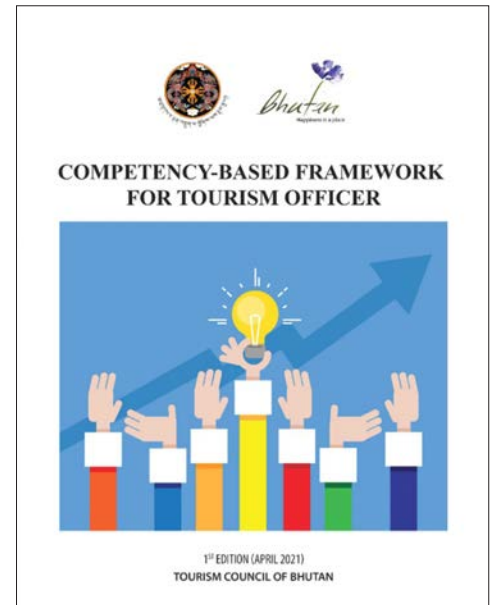
Ensuring excellence and professionalism

Competency Based Framework

TCB developed Competency Based Framework (CBF) for Tourism Officers with support from the Royal Civil Service Commission. CBF identifies the set of knowledge, skills and abilities required for a Tourism Officer to achieve a high level of professional competence and deliver the highest standard services.

Foreign language training for tourist guides

TCB in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other stakeholders initiated the foreign language course for tourist guides. The training program focused on foreign language, culture and history of the major source markets such as China, France, Germany, India, Japan, Korea, and Spain.



Training on hotel assessment

In order to create a pool of hotel assessors to provide timely services, a training on hotel assessment was organized in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour and Human Resources and certified hotel assessors.

Participants were from the tourism industry with hospitality background.



Hotel Assessment Training

TAFE Trainer and Assessor Course

RITH faculty participated in virtual training for the Trainer and Assessor offered by Technical and Further Education (TAFE) Queensland from June, 2021. This was part of the on-going efforts to provide opportunities for the faculty enhance their competency and professionalism.

Career Progression for Tour Guides

To improve the career progression for tour guides and make guiding a more attractive profession, RITH has initiated the review of the existing system and international best practices

Typsy online courses

The faculty and staff of RITH participated in the Typsy online courses on tourism and hospitality and a training on the Quality Management System training organized by the Ministry of Labour and Human Resources.



French Language Course

Research and Studies

Carrying capacity assessment

TCB conducted a carrying capacity assessment focusing on selected sites in Thimphu, Paro and Punakha Dzongkhags, the most visited tourist destinations in the country.

Bhutan Experimental Tourism Satellite Account

TCB with funding support from the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF) Trust Fund and the Government has initiated the development of a proper System of Tourism Statistics (BSTS) to work towards the computation of a Bhutan Experimental Tourism Satellite Account.

Technical assistance was provided by the National Statistical Bureau (NSB), World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and Tourism Research Australia (TRA).

Bhutan Tourism Monitor

TCB has published the Bhutan Tourism Monitor (BTM) 2020, an annual publication that provides a snapshot of tourism with focus on market trends, findings and analysis to guide the development of the tourism sector.

www.tourism.gov.bt/resources/annual-reports

Tourism Establishment Census of Bhutan

The Tourism Economic Census of Bhutan was conducted in March and April 2021. The Tourism Economic Census will provide data on tourism establishments and employment situation in the sector.

Post COVID-19 Travel Behavior Survey

In order to work towards responsible tourism in Bhutan, an online survey was conducted targeting potential future tourists to understand their perceptions and concerns on travelling post COVID-19.





Domestic and Outbound Tourism Survey

To assess the volume of domestic and outbound tourism in the country and understand the profile of domestic and outbound visitors, TCB conducted the domestic and outbound tourism survey in 2020. The objective was also to develop baseline database on domestic and outbound tourism.

Food Map of Bhutan

The Food Map of Bhutan was launched on 17th December 2020 coinciding with 113th National Day celebrations. The map was developed following in-depth research and interviews with Royal Soelpons and elderly people. The food map consists of 102 traditional food and beverages of Bhutan.

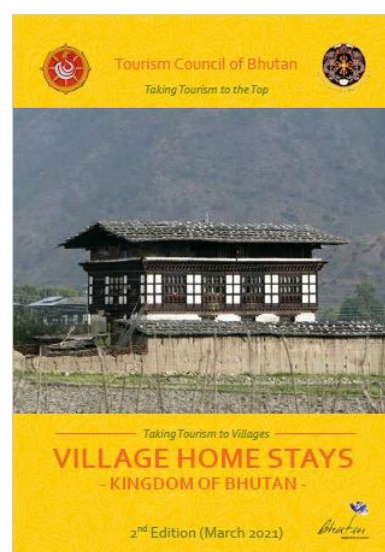
Feasibility studies

Feasibility study was carried out for the development of winter trek in Punakha, digitization and development of Ugyenphu Nye, and construction of resting shed at Buddha Point.

Digital booklet for village home stays

A digital booklet on the village home stays (VHS) was launched on 27th September 2020 coinciding with the World Tourism Day.

The booklet provides valuable information on the local attractions and services of VHS.





Partnerships and collaboration

Tourism is multi-sectorial in nature given the diversity of the stakeholders involved. Our success as a sector has been possible mainly because of the support and cooperation of our stakeholders. With COVID-19, it has become all the more important to increase engagement with the stakeholders and come together as one to overcome the challenges posed by the pandemic.

Realizing this, activities under the Economic Contingency Plan were executed in collaboration with the tourism sector associations to engage the tourism employees laid off by the pandemic. What's more, harnessing the power of technology, we stepped up our efforts to interact and work closely with the stakeholders at home and abroad through online meetings and virtual sessions. These include Council meetings, Tourism Technical Advisory Committee meetings, bilateral meetings and consultations with the ministries, autonomous agencies, NGOs and development partners, etc.

International Meetings & related events

In addition, we also participated in international webinars and related events as presented in the earlier sections

Awards and recognition

Bhutan received a number of international awards and accolades in recognition of our contribution for sustainable tourism. It is an outcome of our hard work and collective efforts guided by the farsighted policy and leadership of our monarchs with unrelenting support from the Royal Government of Bhutan.





Tourism Council of Bhutan

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