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**Bhutan Trust Fund**  
for Environmental Conservation

**STRATEGY PLAN III**

**2015 – 2020**

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## Executive Summary

The Bhutan's pristine environment is the legacy of our forefathers including our dynamic monarchs. The country is heaven for wide range of flora and fauna and therefore one of the priority regions in the world for biodiversity conservation.

With the population growth, rapid urbanization and infrastructure development, gradual change in government policies for economic development, rising economic expectations of the people and many more have exerted huge pressure on the country's fragile eco-system. If not managed carefully, degradation to the natural resources can happen sooner and at a faster rate. Such environmental disasters can create serious threat to the sustenance of a nature-based livelihoods of thousands of our people. Therefore, Bhutan's conservation requirements are rather necessary and immediate.

While there are efforts from the Royal Government and other agencies in addressing the diverse environmental issues in the country, the BTFEC in its last two decades have also substantially contributed for the cause of the environment.

Bhutan's conservation programs will benefit from the leadership of BTFEC. This responsibility requires changes in its Strategy approach and process for funding conservation projects. With the implementation of Strategy Plan III (2015 to 2020), BTFEC will be pro-active in the grant making approaches. This Strategy approach will allow BTFEC to maximize its impact on critical conservation problems. It will also develop the capacities of those implementing the programs at the local level, assisting them to become long-term stewards of the natural environment that is their birthright and the source of their livelihoods.

BTFEC will take the lead in identifying conservation challenges on which to focus its funding and related support. The goals of this approach are to fund solutions to several of Bhutan's most pressing environmental issues and to replicate them throughout the country. This more targeted approach will supplant the existing system of funding a large number of dispersed projects that are generally not designed to solve systemic environmental problems.

The Strategy Plan III also highlights an immediate and increased need for meaningful engagement in conservation by rural populations, civil societies, local government, academia and the private sectors. BTFEC also believes that the cooperation of other institutions working on the same or similar conservation challenges will magnify the impacts of BTFEC funding.

## About BTFEC

With the guidance of His Majesty the Fourth King, Jigme Singye Wangchuck, the Bhutan Trust Fund for Environmental Conservation was established in 1992 as a collaborative venture among the Royal Government of Bhutan, the United Nations Development Program, and the World Wildlife Fund. An endowment of US \$ 21 million was created to finance programs to protect and enhance the relatively intact natural environment of Bhutan and thus ensure the long term welfare of a rural, agrarian based society. Donors to the fund are the Global Environment Facility, UNDP, the World Wildlife Fund and the Governments of Bhutan, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Norway and Switzerland.

The Trust Fund was legally incorporated by means of a Royal Charter in 1996. By 2001, the Management Board of the fund was fully composed of Bhutanese citizens.

As the first and the only conservation grant making organization, BTFEC is mandated to support the Royal Government, Civil Society Organizations, Local Governments and the Bhutanese citizens at large in the conservation of the country's pristine but fragile natural environment.

### **Vision Statement:**

*“All citizens champion their natural heritage of healthy forests, clean waterways, diverse flora and fauna and intact eco-systems and takes personal responsibility for maintaining a green and healthy environment for themselves and future generations”.*

### **Mission Statement:**

*“To promote the socio-economic welfare of Bhutanese citizens by funding conservation of their flora, fauna, diverse eco-system and biodiversity; and addressing the adverse effects of development on Bhutan's natural environment”.*

### **Objectives:**

BTFEC will demonstrate its leadership role in environmental conservation by increasing measureable results of grant funding and capacity building. It will:

- *Set its Strategy priorities and target key issues for grant funding in line with the conservation priorities of the nation;*
- *Increase the conservation capacities of rural populations, civil societies and local governments;*
- *Expand the pool of grantees to non-governmental and rural sectors and provide greater assistance with proposal preparation;*

- *Proactively support grantees to produce replicable, demonstrated results;*
- *Provide monitoring and evaluation of all grants to ensure successful grant completion;*
- *Disseminate conservation achievements to encourage successful replication;*
- *Use all available financial resources annually to increase grant impacts and organization development;*
- *Increase name recognition and visibility of BTFEC activities.*

## **The Royal Charter**

The Royal Charter of the Trust Fund for Environmental Conservation, 1996 signed by His Majesty the Fourth King, Jigme Singye Wangchuck and issued on the 10<sup>th</sup> Day of the fourth month of the Fire Male Rat Year of the Bhutanese calendar corresponding to 27<sup>th</sup> May 1996.

The purpose of the Charter is to govern the management of the Trust Fund investments and field programs for the promotion of social welfare through environmental conservation of the forests, flora, fauna, wildlife, diverse ecosystems and biodiversity in Bhutan.

## Achievements of BTFEC

The Bhutan Trust Fund for Environmental Conservation (BTFEC) was the first such organization established to identify and conserve the natural resources, biodiversity and critical habitats of a whole country. It set an example for similar institutions in a variety of developing countries in Central and South America and throughout Africa.

BTFEC has evolved at many levels. It was initiated with an endowment of US\$21 million into a formidable principal of US\$52 million and funded more than \$15 million of projects. Its staff has grown three fold and many of them have received advanced degrees and relevant training through the capacity building budget of the BTFEC.

During its first decade, the Trust Fund concentrated its funding on supporting the RGOB's development of Bhutan's extensive protected area system, including capacity building for many engaged in decision-making and operations of the protected areas. In the second decade it expanded to fund a variety of proposals from relevant government ministries, indigenous, non-governmental conservation organizations (RSPN), academic institutions and private individuals engaged in conservation activities.

From April 2013 through December 2018, BTFEC implements the World Bank/Global Environment Facility project titled – “Sustainable Financing for Bio-diversity Conservation and Natural Resource Management” amounting to US Dollar 4.08 million. The three major components of the project were

- i. Enhancing the operational effectiveness and sustainability of BTFEC
- ii. Improving conservation management of the highlands altitude northern areas (HANAS) landscape in Bhutan
- iii. Capacity building for mainstreaming of conservation and sustainable forest and natural resource management approaches in national policies, strategies and plans

### Strategy Plan I and II

The first and second Strategy plans of BTFEC directed its activities. The first plan, prepared in 1997, had a broad objective of financing a national system of protected areas with fully developed and implemented management plans using personnel trained by the Fund. Additionally it planned to support other conservation organizations; to train professionals in relevant conservation sciences; and to survey Bhutan's biological resources and create an information database. The plan also called for designing integrated conservation and

development projects and for promoting education and public awareness campaigns to support environmental conservation.

The second Strategy plan, covering the period from 2010 to 2015, expanded BTFEC's objectives. While continuing to support the conservation goals embedded in the Charter, the plan acknowledged that accelerating changes in Bhutan society were negatively impacting the natural environment, both within and outside the protected areas. Impacts included those resulting from climate change, demand for roads and electricity, greater income disparity, increased waste contamination of water and soils, dam and mine construction, illegal logging and poaching and limited efforts to integrate development and environmental protection.

In order to manage, mitigate and minimize these impacts, BTFEC decided to increase its funding for a broader range of conservation activities. Strategy Plan II also envisioned greater involvement by impacted rural populations, a more accessible application process, strengthened monitoring and evaluation of funded projects and improved organizational effectiveness.

Several assessments analyze BTFEC's performance during the past five years on a number of criteria (a) including its success in implementing the goals of Strategy Plan II; (b) all suggested areas for improvement. Strategy Plan III builds on these recommendations on the assumption that all accepted recommendations would be enacted.

## The Conservation Issues in Bhutan

The following conservation issues were selected from among many suggestions from members of the Management Board, the Secretariat, the Advisory Committees and a wide range of subject experts in the RGOB and civil societies. Those outlined here all support the purpose and mission of this Strategy plan. Each is concerned with promoting human welfare by means of activities that conserve, improve or mitigate impacts to the natural environment.

### 1. BIODIVERSITY PROTECTION AND IMPROVED RURAL LIVELIHOODS

There are multiple threats to the interdependent goals of preserving biodiversity while improving rural livelihoods. These include human wildlife conflict; agriculture and grazing impacts on sensitive and/or protected ecosystems; and the impacts of development activities such as farm roads, transmission lines and dams on waterways, forests and sensitive habitat.

Efforts to accomplish the twin goals of protecting biodiversity and improving rural livelihoods should be substantially informed and implemented by rural populations. Farmers, park wardens and local authorities must share their experiences; actively participate in research and test experiments; participate in policy-making; and collaboratively implement and support best practices.

It will be important that these local institutions partner with research institutions public and private colleges and civil societies to collectively create solutions that work for the people and the environment.

#### ***A. Human Wildlife Conflict***

*“Ensuring a balance between our environmental aspirations and development needs are also increasingly challenging due to persistent human-wildlife conflict and the growing demand for natural resources. (RGoB 11<sup>th</sup> Five-Year Plan, P.7)*

Human wildlife conflict is not unique to Bhutan but is increasing here in terms of reported severity, combining a loss of income to farmers and a loss of important fauna to the country. Many ideas have been proposed over the years but few, if any, have been uniformly successful. If BTFEC were to fund a combination of good research, good science, good practices and innovative ideas, it could have a substantial impact on reducing this threat to conservation of some of Bhutan’s most important species, including elephants, tigers, and snow leopards.

Successful outcomes would also eventually help to stem the flow of all but the elderly poor from rural areas to towns and urban centers. And if human wildlife conflict is reduced in combination

with better techniques to bring agricultural products to markets in Bhutan and India, it will have a measurable impact on Bhutan's ability to achieve food sustainability.

### ***B. Agriculture and Animal Husbandry Impacts on Biodiversity***

The impacts of agricultural practices such as use of commercial fertilizers, pesticides, slash and burn land clearing, failure to protect soil from erosion and overutilization of the soil are major threats to the environment. Overgrazing and grazing in sensitive areas by sheep and cattle also threaten ecosystem integrity and biodiversity.

These agricultural and grazing practices, as well as use of forest resources, have negative impacts on forest understory, soil stability and water quality. The Trust Fund can help preserve biodiversity and improve soil and water quality by funding projects that support community forestry, organic farming, crop rotation, erosion control and other best practices. Improved grazing practices, stall-feeding, introduction of new animal food sources and other best practices in animal husbandry are all potential projects that benefit farmers and the environment.

There are many opportunities for innovation in all these areas. Cash crops such as nuts, fruits and vegetables, medicinal plants, and teas can improve rural incomes, add nutritional benefits to local diets and be grown in environment friendly ways. Pilot projects to raise both new and more productive animal species that have less impact on the environment are already being undertaken in Bhutan. Cash crops and animal species that are viable for expanded production in Bhutan are possible funding targets.

Carbon neutral and "green" technologies are used in some communities but greater support is needed at policy and funding levels to help Bhutan maintain its present position as a carbon negative country. Innovative technologies are being developed by young Bhutanese and throughout the world. The Trust Fund can support indigenous innovation and encourage utilization of green technology in every project it funds.

### ***C. Infrastructure Development in Sensitive Environments***

Farm roads through national parks and other sensitive habitats, planned dams for most large north-south rivers, and high voltage transmission towers across 50% and 60% slopes are the products of Bhutan's efforts to improve both the national and rural economies. However, they all have negative impacts on critical species and the ecosystems that support them.

BTSEC could fund efforts by local populations, the park system, NEC, GNHC and non-governmental entities to ensure that the long-term impacts of infrastructure construction are mitigated and controlled. Landslide barriers, replanting, and other erosion controls measures will help to minimize the impacts of these construction projects while allowing them to bring socio-economic benefits to rural populations.

## **2. SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT**

Regulated and unregulated logging; slash and burn farming; reduction of the forest understory by uncontrolled grazing; unregulated and illegal extraction of marketable vegetation; and the varying success of community forests are just a few of the issues affecting the health and long-term viability of Bhutan's much-heralded forest cover.

Here again, rural populations have the most to gain and lose from understanding and addressing all these interdependent issues. They are also involved in many of the best and worst practices related to keeping a healthy and intact tree canopy, as well as understory. A few of the outcomes from projects focused on sustainable forests and their understories could be 1) improved livelihoods in forested and adjacent agricultural areas; 2) preservation of cultural and spiritual icons; 3) more attractions for tourists; 4) increases in biodiversity; and (5) greater support for community forest activities.

## **3. SUSTAINABLE WATER SOURCES FOR AGRICULTURE & CONSUMPTION**

There is plenty of anecdotal evidence that the amount of water available in rural Bhutan for both agriculture and human use is decreasing. Various efforts are being made to measure rainfall, stream and spring flows, and monsoon changes. But few of these efforts are systematic and countrywide in scope. There is not enough data sharing to analyze the problem(s) in a comprehensive manner.

There are many hypotheses as to why the water supply is diminishing. They include such factors as timing and quantity of monsoon rains and tropical storms, population densities, per-person consumption, changing agricultural practices and groundcover removal. But standardized research and comprehensive analyses of existing and new data are needed to test these hypotheses. Then both practical and policy level solutions can be directed to reversing or mitigating any real loss of water availability.

This issue is particularly acute in many rural areas where the availability of sustainable, non-contaminated sources of water is important to stabilizing local populations and improving reliable agricultural yields. Science based research, innovative technologies, widespread rural participation in water management and courageous policy decisions could all result in major improvements to rural lifestyles and gains in biodiversity indicators, as well as preservation and enhancement of one of Bhutan's most precious natural resources.

If ground water is chosen as an area in which funding should be focused, it will be important to coordinate BTFEC's efforts with those of the Asian Development Bank and its project to develop a National Integrated Water Resource Management Plan in conjunction with the National Environment Commission.

#### **4. SOLID AND LIQUID WASTE & INDUSTRIAL POLLUTION**

These subjects are often considered urban issues in Bhutan. But they are also problems for rural populations in terms of the health of people and health of their environments. The goals of BTFEC funded grants would be development of sound science, regulation enforcement and best practices that balance the economic development benefits of polluting industries, small businesses such as farmers and tourism related enterprise with the needs of rural and urban populations.

All these groups will need to actively and equally participate in developing solutions. Better management of industrial, solid and liquid waste will reduce water and soil contamination and degradation; mitigate destruction of flora and fauna biodiversity; and generate long term improvements in people's health from cleaner air and water.

Possible projects for BTFEC funding include:

- scientific research;
- creation of a solid data set that can be used by others to influence changes in policies and regulation enforcement;
- education directed to changing individual and institutional behavior;
- improved water and waste management infrastructure to support behavior change.

## Challenges and Opportunities

BTFEC's Strategy Plan II was written only five years ago. In this short period of time, BTFEC has funded a substantial number of major conservation efforts, but critical environmental issues remain to be addressed. Some have been exacerbated by rapid change in the country. Other conservation challenges have arisen. Bhutan remains one of the bright spots on the world's environmental stage but neither the country nor its major indigenous source of conservation funding, i.e. BTFEC, can become complacent.

Government policies and programs promoting economic development, the growth of the private sector, rising economic expectations of rural people and related rural-urban migration issues are all increasing pressures on Bhutan's biodiversity. Exponential changes in the Asian Pacific climate and consequent adaptations by rural populations are stressing Bhutan's water resources. By many accounts, human wildlife conflicts are increasing to the detriment of both the humans and the wildlife. All these changes affect the environment both within and outside the protected areas.

Challenges to Bhutan's environment are well summarized in the 11<sup>th</sup> Five-Year Plan. "...population growth, urbanization, industrialization and infrastructure expansion are putting strong pressure on the environment - particularly in terms of the quality of air, water and solid waste management in urban areas and human-wildlife conflict in rural areas. Bhutan is also highly vulnerable to climate change related disasters such as Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOF), floods, landslides and drought. Furthermore, while Bhutan has abundant water resources, many of our urban centers and towns continue to face acute shortages of clean and reliable drinking water facilities, while climate change and lack of water management resources result in shortages in rural farms." *pp. 39-40*

These factors highlight an immediate and increased need for meaningful engagement in conservation by rural populations, civil societies, local government, academia and the private sector. They also require an expanded vision of what is possible with more diverse partnerships within the larger context of an evolving democratic society and government.

Strategy Plan III presents an opportunity for BTFEC to develop a clear and focused program to fund critical conservation challenges and engage additional partners in the effort. Other opportunities include full utilization of available funds for greater program impacts, increased staff and improved financial management.

## The Strategy Plan III (2015 – 2020)

Strategy Plan III for the period 2015 to 2020 presents an opportunity for BTFEC to develop a clear and focused program to fund critical conservation challenges and engage additional partners in the effort.

For next five years BTFEC would make available a total sum of Nu.450 million or Nu.90 million per annum calculated based on the existing spending rate in practice. However, depending on the investment portfolio performance, the resource availability will vary on annual basis. BTFEC is in the process of developing a fund raising strategy through the ongoing GEF-World Bank project. With the possible implementation of the fund raising strategy within the Strategy period, the fund availability may increase accordingly.

Given the sum available for the three Strategy priority areas, fund and percentage allocation is as follows:

<b>Strategy</b>		<b>Fund Allocated (Nu. Million)</b>	<b>Allocation (%)</b>
Strategy One	Fund a Few Core Conservation Threats	270	60%
Strategy Two	Support Populations Most Affected by Loss of Natural Resources and Biodiversity	135	30%
Strategy Three	Collaborate with Other Institutions to Maximize Conservation Benefits of BTFEC Funding	45	10%
<b>Total</b>		<b>450</b>	<b>100%</b>

Through the implementation of Strategy Plan III, BTFEC aspires to address critical environmental issues with effective utilization of resources. This new approach comes into effect from 1 July 2015 and through to 30 June 2020.

<b>Strategy One</b>	Fund a Few Core Conservation Threats (Nu. 270 million)
<b>Goal</b>	Comprehensively address a few complex and systemic conservation issues that threaten both the environment and human welfare
<b>Objectives</b>	<p><b>Over Five Years, Fund Projects with Measurable Effects on:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Human wildlife conflicts</i></li> <li>• <i>Waste management and prevention</i></li> <li>• <i>Sustainable forest management</i></li> <li>• <i>Protecting biodiversity while improving rural livelihoods</i></li> </ul>
<b>Outcomes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Greater recognition of BTFEC’s conservation leadership role</li> <li>❖ Successful projects attract other funding for replication</li> </ul>
<b>Rationale</b>	BTFEC does not have the resources to address all the threats to the environment at one time. The Fund will have greater impacts on preserving biodiversity, resource protection and related human welfare by concentrating available funding and staff support on the toughest problems.

<b>Strategy Two</b>	Support Populations Most Affected by Loss of Natural Resources and Biodiversity (Nu.135 million)
<b>Goal</b>	Fund sustainable conservation programs that also build the capacity of rural populations
<b>Objectives</b>	<p><b>Fund Projects for Rural People and Institutions to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Define the specifics of conservation issues</i></li> <li>• <i>Train to prepare proposals for project funding</i></li> <li>• <i>Include in project management and implementation</i></li> <li>• <i>Empower to sustain and improve conservation practices</i></li> </ul>
<b>Outcomes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Rural communities are more viable, slowing rural urban migration</li> <li>❖ Greater public commitment to biodiversity and resource protection</li> </ul>

<b>Rationale</b>	Farmers, park rangers, livestock herders and others who work in rural Bhutan are most directly affected by threats to the natural environment. Their native wisdom, best practices, and commitment are essential to the success of projects affecting their communities and livelihoods. Their involvement will advance the country’s conservation agenda in a more sustainable manner.
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<b>Strategy Three</b>	Collaborate with Other Institutions to Maximize Conservation Benefits of BTFEC Funding (Nu.45 million)
<b>Goal</b>	Initiate and lead collaborative activities that support mutual conservation goals.
<b>Objectives</b>	<p><b>Working Relationships Initiated with Institutions including:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conservation Initiatives</li> <li>• Research institutions</li> <li>• International aid organizations</li> <li>• Civil societies</li> <li>• Private industry</li> </ul>
<b>Outcomes</b>	<p>More efficient and effective use of conservation funds</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Improved platforms and protocols for sharing data</li> <li>❖ Stronger case for new donations to the Fund’s principal</li> </ul>
<b>Rationale</b>	The impact of BTFEC funding will be multiplied by systematic and innovative collaboration with credible institutions that also fund and engage in rural conservation activities. BTFEC routinely cooperates with the RGOB including many departments of the Ministry, Forests and Parks, the GNHC, and the NEC. This kind of collaboration will be extended to other relevant governmental and non-governmental institutions. Forms of collaboration may include sharing research data and methods, utilizing the expertise of other institutions, co-funding projects, and funding proposals in which such institutions are included.

## Implementation of Strategy Plan III

### OVERVIEW

The procedures by which Bhutan Trust Fund for Environmental Conservation (BTFEC) receives, approves and funds grant proposals are substantially redefined in Strategy Plan III. In the present system random proposals, which address one or more of the seven conservation issues targeted in the second Strategy Plan, are funded biannually after a vetting and approval process.

In the new approach, BTFEC will annually issue a new Request for Proposal (RFP) to address a specific conservation threat. The RFP will describe the threat based on research with subject experts, relevant stakeholders and interactions with target populations. It will include expected outcomes of project funding, total allocated budget and funding cycle, relevant resources, the proposal format, descriptions of the processes for assistance with proposal preparation, final proposal review and approval, and funding terms and expectations. BTFEC will advertise and distribute each RFP to interested and affected parties using a variety of media to reach beyond newspaper readers.

Non-governmental organizations, academic institutions, civil societies, rural communities and cooperatives, individuals and governmental entities, including those at the district and local levels, will be eligible to apply. Proposals that originate from and/or include local governments, civil societies, and affected populations will be given extra credit in the approval process. Projects that include collaboration and partnerships among several institutions for mutual benefit will be encouraged if such cooperation will likely increase the chance of successful implementation and outcomes. Innovative conservation methods and new technologies will also be encouraged.

Once grants are funded, BTFEC will offer proactive and continuous support to grantees to help build their respective capacities and enhance the chances that projects will be successful. An M&E Officer will conduct systematic and results based monitoring and evaluation. And a Project Support Officer will publicize, distribute, and share successful outcomes and lessons with all relevant stakeholders, conservation partners and grantees for replication and instruction to others facing the same or similar threats. Best practices, technological innovations and unique methods will be submitted for publication in relevant journals in and outside of Bhutan.

This revised approach to program operations is consistent with recommendations made by the World Bank Assessment, the Internal Audit and the Management Board of BTFEC. It enhances the prospects of successful funding outcomes and greater utilization of available funds.

## **STEPS**

### **A. SELECT AND RESEARCH A CONSERVATION THREAT**

#### **1. Annually choose an issue from the List of Conservation Threats on, which to focus.**

The cycle for funding project(s) to confront each threat may vary from one to five years. The duration of each cycle and an accompanying budget will be determined after the second step of research and analysis.

a) Board selects the issue based on the Secretariat's recommendation. Hereafter, the process for addressing the issue is the "program".

#### **2. Research the threat and other efforts to address it.**

a) Consult with experts from RGOB, academic institutions, international aid organizations and others concerned with the issue.

b) Review relevant studies, data and literature from Bhutan and other countries.

#### **3. Consult with rural communities, local governments and other relevant institutions.**

a) Staff and consultants meet with those most directly affected by the conservation issue in Strategy locations throughout Bhutan.

b) Use quantitative and qualitative methods to determine attitudes, experiences and effects of the threat on affected populations. Whenever possible create research instruments that can be used to compare attitudes, experiences and behavior before and after project interventions.

### **B. PREPARE PROGRAM PLAN TO ADDRESS THE THREAT**

#### **1. Write a Concept Paper that includes:**

- Description of the conservation threat based on research
- Aspects of the threat to be addressed
- Expected outcomes of project funding
- Characteristics of the geographic areas to focus funding, including criteria if proposals for multiple areas are being requested

#### **2. Establish a program time-line and budget:**

- a) Using data from the research and consultations, estimate the time-line and funds needed to maximize potential successful outcomes.
- b) Verify the estimates with others dealing with the issue
- c) Establish a total budget and funding period for the program. Multiple projects may be funded from the total budget for each program.

**3. Compile information on resources to support program implementation:**

- Relevant data sources
- Other projects addressing the threat
- Experts in the governmental, civil society and private sectors
- Consultants with relevant expertise/experience
- Other sources of funding

**4. Prepare a master schedule to implement funding the program. Include:**

- Advertising and outreach for proposals
- Deadlines for concept, draft and final proposals
- Proposal evaluation and approval
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Distribution of funds

**C. PREPARE AND DISTRIBUTE A REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL(S)**

1. Include in the RFP:

- The Concept Paper
- The funding period and budget
- List of available resources to support project implementation
- Deadlines for submittal
- Descriptions of the assistance BTFEC will offer in preparing proposals, including help with on-line submittal, and ongoing support to funded projects
- Description of the monitoring and evaluation process and its connection to phases of project funding
- The process, criteria and schedules for proposal approval and funding
- Answers to Frequently Asked Questions

2. Write the RFP in English and Dzongkha and distribute by mail and/or electronically to all relevant civil societies, academic institutions, Gups, RGOB Ministries, private businesses, international aid and development institutions, as well as appropriate individuals.

3. Advertise ways to obtain an RFP via all forms of media, including newspapers, television, radio and social media forums.

#### **D. APPROVE AND FUND PROJECTS TO ADDRESS THE CONSERVATION THREAT**

1. Focus on good ideas initially, not just good proposal-writing skills. Develop a process to receive and evaluate good project ideas without requiring a formal proposal. Reject poorly conceived ideas firmly but with explanations.
2. Encourage and assist entities submitting good ideas to form supportive partnerships with other institutions that add value through relevant experience, special expertise, co-funding opportunities and other skills. Encourage the use of innovative techniques and relevant technologies.
3. Revise the TAP evaluation system. (Give extra credit for proposals that include rural populations, institutions and/or local governments in leadership positions.)
4. Accept draft proposals for staff review and submit staff recommended applications to TAP for its evaluation;
5. Once TAP has made its first round of recommendations, notify selected applicants to submit final proposals and provide suggested and/or required improvements or additional information.
6. Provide proposal writing assistance to qualified candidates through independent consultants, who agree not to participate in a project if their fees are paid by BTFEC.
7. TAP meets a second time to consider final proposals and make its recommendations to the Management Board for final approval.
8. Respect the publicized schedule for proposal consideration and approvals. (Note: The process should not be dependent on variable timing of TAP and Board meetings. These meetings should be scheduled six months to a year in advance and if members cannot attend, they should be permitted to vote in absentia.)
9. Provide TAP and Management Board members with materials well in advance of meetings. Recommendations with explanations should be provided in writing to Management Board members.
10. Streamline the funding process with the assistance of the GNHC and the Finance Ministry.

#### **E. MONITOR AND EVALUATE FUNDED PROJECTS**

1. Establish a schedule for frequent monitoring and results based evaluation of each project funded within the program umbrella.
2. Provide grantees with clear criteria on which they will be evaluated.
3. At the time of grant contract, clearly tie release of fund increments to satisfactory formal evaluations.
4. Establish a clear process for withholding or denying funds until evaluations are satisfactory. If a project repeatedly misses report deadlines and field visits indicate serious problems with project implementation, offer support as required. If assistance is refused and problems continue, give notice of grant termination.

#### **F. PROVIDE PROJECT SUPPORT**

1. Based on information from the M&E Officer, direct contacts and other information sources, the Project Support Officer offers assistance to grantees who appear to be having problems with grant implementation.
2. This assistance can be provided in many forms including but not limited to:
  - Technical advice and problem solving
  - Introductions to supportive institutions
  - Instruction in community organizing methods
  - Conflict resolution
  - Introduction of new technologies and best practices
  - Help with the preparation of written documentation
  - Assistance with financial management and reporting requirements
3. Grant support shall be provided by staff with the appropriate qualifications, and/or consultants managed by the Project Support Officer.
4. The point of providing this assistance is to ensure successful implementation of solid ideas with good prospects for success if properly supported. It is not to shore up projects that are not working for lack of leadership and commitment on the part of the grantees.

## **G. PUBLICIZE PROJECT RESULTS**

1. Ensure that all grantees systematically document their projects and provide a thorough analysis of the results both positive and negative. As much can often be learned from failure as from success.
  2. Prepare a final report on each project in conjunction with the grantee.
  3. Prepare a final report on the whole conservation program, encompassing the results from each participating project.
  4. Publicize this report (or a synopsis of the findings) in all forms of Bhutanese media, and in relevant Bhutanese and international academic scientific and conservation publications.
  5. Initiate presentations to RGOB agencies, civil societies, international aid organizations and academic institutions that will implement or fund similar projects in other parts of Bhutan.
  6. Seek opportunities and mechanisms for getting successful project ideas and methods to any community or institution interested in replicating or adapting them to similar conservation threats.
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