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Under the Royal Patronage of Her Majesty Gyaltsuen Jetsun Pema Wangchuck

Inspiring personal responsibility and actively involving the people of Bhutan in  
Conservation of the Kingdom's Environment

## **Terms of Reference (ToR) to carry out Feasibility Study on Community-based Ecotourism**

**Project Title:** Developing Ecosystem-based Solutions for Managing Biodiversity Landscape in Bhutan

**Job Title:** To conduct community-based ecotourism feasibility study in Wangdue, Punakha, Trongsa, Zhemgang, Dagana and Tsirang Dzongkhags.

### **1. Background**

Tourism sector is recognized as a major contributor to the economic growth in Bhutan. The sector has contributed significantly to the national revenue, foreign reserve, employment generation and economic diversification. Tourism in Bhutan has adopted a unique approach of 'high-value, low volume' in line with the principle of Gross National Happiness in promoting people's wellbeing, conserving environment and preserving culture and tradition.

The overall goal of the project is to develop ecosystem-based solutions for managing biodiversity landscapes with a special focus on establishing approaches and tools for protecting and managing White-bellied Heron habitats along Punatsangchuu and Mangdechhu basin in Bhutan. The project also aims to design and apply community engagement strategies for WBH conservation through diversification of livelihood options and promotion of environmentally conducive livelihood approach, which will strengthen community's resilience to climate change in the long run.

Community-based ecotourism is one of the key livelihood programs that demonstrates the importance of conservation as a basis for sustained socio-economic well-being of the communities.

RSPN would like to hire external services from Bhutanese licensed consultancy firms or national ecotourism expert to conduct a community-based ecotourism feasibility study in Punakha, Dagana, Tsirang, Trongsa, Wangdue Phodrang and Zhemgang Dzongkhags. Through this feasibility study in the mentioned Dzongkhags, we look forward to contribute to the establishment of sites for community-based ecotourism destination expected to contribute towards the conservation of natural environment and culture and particularly, critically endangered White-bellied Heron, and at the same time contributes to socio-economic benefits of the local communities.



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## 2. Study Area+-

The study should cover following Dzongkhags

1. Punakha
2. Wangdue Phodrang
3. Trongsa
4. Zhemgang
5. Tsirang
6. Dagana

## 3. Purpose

Option 1: The main purpose of conducting the feasibility study on community-based ecotourism is to study the feasible tourism products and services, to assess the linkages with the livelihood of the local communities and its contribution to the conservation of environment and culture and also pattern of sustainability for economically viable. The feasibility study will be useful for planning and making corrective plans for future benefitting the communities as whole.

Option 2: The main purpose of the study is conducting a feasibility study on the nature of the tourism products and services in the 6 sites, and to identify its strengths and weaknesses relating to facilities, services, social, economic, cultural and communication infrastructures and considering the potentials of the project sites and long-term prospects of tourism development in 6 sites. A recommendation for improving the current situation and the future upgrades of the project site, short/medium-term and long-term goals, by providing comprehensive and systematic planning of tourism and investment incentives.

## 4. Objectives

The main objective of this study is to conduct market assessment and feasibility study to investigate and understand the most significant capabilities and opportunities as well as bottlenecks and threats to the region to achieve a specific pattern of ecotourism.

## 5. Methodology

The evaluation must provide evidence-based information that is credible, reliable and useful. Although a mixed method of quantitative and qualitative methods are recommended, the actual method shall be determined by the design matrix to be prepared by the consultant.



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## 6. Specific Tasks

- Community consultation (Focus group discussion)
- Community perception and willingness to support community-based ecotourism on economics, social and environmental factors.
- Opinion on tourism in that area by the stakeholders (TCB, ABTO, GAB, DoFPS, etc) on economy, social and environment
- Current status of tourism in that area and tourism resource inventory in 6 Dzongkhag
- Identification of potential camp site and homestay development and any other potential ecotourism related activities
- Sustainability mechanism
- Identification of government restricted areas for tourism development
- Information on hotels and resorts in the project areas, and areas of collaboration.
- SWOT and any other relevant analysis of tourism prospects in that area
- Baseline information on household income, saving, living standard, livelihood programs, self-help groups, waste, etc
- Develop process and step-by-step toolkit for developing CBT by using 5C approach (consider, conceive, craft, connect and conserve).

## 7. Approach

Overall approach is proposed as follows:

### 7.1 Submission of technical and financial proposal.

**7.2 Contract signing and kick off meetings:** The methodology, timeline, staffing, and any special conditions of the contract as required by RSPN (in line with the request for proposals), will be discussed and a contract will be signed between the RSPN and Consulting firm.

**7.3 Desk work:** The contract signing will be followed by a discussion of the assignment, providing the consultants with the relevant background documents of the assignment, discuss the implementation modalities and the expected deliverables from the study and provide contacts to institutions/stakeholders. During the desk work the consultants are recommended to work from the RSPN office, in close consultation with the Project Officers.

**7.4 Inception phase:** The inception report stating the design of the assessment including the detailed approach and methodology, sources of information, tools for data collection and analysis, work plan and time schedule will be drafted and submitted to the RSPN.

**7.5 Field assessment:** Develop forms for survey, carry field survey and collection of information.

**7.6 Draft report phase:** Analyse data and prepare report (inclusive of baseline information). The key findings and recommendations in line with the purpose, objective and scope of the consultancy will be submitted to RSPN for review and feedback.



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**7.7 Review phase:** The reports and preliminary conclusions of the draft report will be presented to the Sustainable Livelihood Division (SLD), RSPN along with relevant stakeholders for feedback/suggestion/changes.

**7.8 Final report phase:** The final feasibility study report on ecotourism will be submitted to SLD after incorporation of the comments to the SLD, RSPN.

### 8. Deliverable and Time frame

The total duration of the study starting from the date of signing of the contract to submission of the final study report will be for **120** days (including weekends and holidays). The deliverables and the timeframe of the study will be according to the following plan:

The study team is expected to deliver following outputs:

| Deliverable  | Content   | Submission/<br>Presentation<br>To:          | Timeframe<br>(Tentative)  | Completion<br>Date | Remarks |
|--|---|---|---|--------------------|---------|
| Draft Inception report (Preparation and Presentation)      | 1. Draft design of the study<br>2. Draft data collection instruments (eg. questionnaires)<br>3. Draft work plan.                                | RSPN team and relevant tourism stakeholders | 10 days (from the date of contract signing) *Contract signing: January 20, 2021 | January 31, 2022   |         |
| Submission of final Inception report                       | 1. Final design of the study<br>2. Data collection instruments (eg. questionnaires)<br>3. Work plan   | RSPN team and relevant tourism stakeholders | 1 week  | February 10, 2022  |         |
| Field survey, interviews, desk reviews and analysis        |   |   | 80 days (immediately after the endorsement of the Inception Report)             |                    |         |
| De-briefing of the initial findings of the study           | Initial findings of the study   |   | 1 day (immediately after completion of the activity above)                      |                    |         |
| Submission and Presentation of the draft study report      | Full report with annexes<br>The study report must be documented inclusive of specific task  |   | 3 days  |                    |         |
| Presentation of the draft study report to the stakeholders | Highlights of the draft report  | Highlights of the draft report              | 1 day   |                    |         |
| Final Study Report   | Full report with annexes<br>*Along with the final study report, submit administered questionnaires, raw and cleaned data and other related data |   | 19 days   | May 31, 2022       |         |



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## 9. Evaluation Approach

The technical and financial proposals will be evaluated by a team from RSPN and external expertise, and consultancy service will be awarded based on the results of technical and financial proposals.

## 10. Consultants Qualification and Expertise

A national consulting firm or experts shall be hired to conduct the feasibility study. The firm/expert is expected to have the following qualifications and expertise:

- A Team Leader must have a minimum of master degree in Social/Natural Sciences/Social Work/Rural/Urban Development, Tourism, Business Management or minimum of 10 years of professional work experience in eco-tourism.

### And the team members should have the following expertise/experiences:

- Knowledge, skills and experience in conducting community-based ecotourism studies including regional/international experience;
- A good understanding of the tourism sector including the legislative frameworks;
- Adequate exposure and understanding of the tourism and environment sector;
- Flexibility and ability to work under pressure and interact with a wide range of people
- A good understanding of the heritage sector;
- A good grasp of community dynamics;
- Ability and experience to lead multi-disciplinary teams, and deliver quality reports within the given time frame;
- A good conceptual and critical thinking; and
- Writing and communication will be in English, and must be excellent in English and communication skills.

### Note:

Kindly submit your proposal as per the ToR to RSPN Office, Thimphu on/before 4:00 pm, 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021.

For further information, kindly contact Adm/HRD at 02-326130 or Mrs. Khachi Wangmo at 17653505.