



DESTINATION HAA: TOURISM ACTION PLAN (2018-2023)



DZONGKHAG ADMINISTRATION, HAA



Destination Haa: Tourism Action Plan (2018-2023)

Dzongkhag Administration, Haa
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Foreword

Haa Dzongkhag, located in the western part of Bhutan, is a relatively small district endowed with rich natural and cultural assets. The north-south altitudinal variation enrich the Dzongkhag with diverse flora and fauna such as white poppy flower, takin, serow, red panda, Himalayan musk deer, Himalayan tahr, tiger, clouded leopard, the elusive snow leopard, and several species of birds.

Haa is a rural area where local people still follow old ways of life and have preserved their unique culture and traditions including the nomadic yak herding culture. People still celebrate age-old festivals in many of the ancient temples that dot the landscape; worship a pantheon of deities, especially the guardian deity Ap Chundu; and prepare unique local cuisines.

The natural and cultural heritage of Haa, along with its proximity to the international airport at Paro, Thimphu, the capital city, and Phuentsholing, the southern gateway, offer huge opportunities for tourism development in Haa. Further, as Haa opened to tourism fairly recently (in 2002), there is an added opportunity to define the type of tourism for the district within the overarching national tourism policy. Acknowledging the positive impacts of tourism, the Royal Government of Bhutan, in its 12th five-year plan (2018-2023), recognizes ecotourism as one of the flagship programmes with the potential to improve livelihoods, create youth employment and diversify the economy while contributing in preserving Bhutan's rich cultural and natural heritage.

It is within this context that the Dzongkhag Administration started developing 'Destination Haa - Tourism Action Plan (2018-2023)' to fulfill its vision for developing Haa as a unique tourism destination. The aim is to promote Haa as a unique tourism destination based on strong community engagement and participation. The approach is geared towards developing community-based ecotourism, which is also in line with putting the national development vision of Gross National Happiness into practice.

I thank the Nature Conservation Division, Department of Forest and Park services, and the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development for supporting Haa Dzongkhag to develop this plan by engaging Dr. Karma Tshering as a consultant. Representatives from the Tourism Council of Bhutan, Association of Bhutanese Tour Operators, Handicrafts Association of Bhutan, Royal Society for the Protection of Nature, and Japan International Development Agency have enriched this document by providing input during different stages of the consultation process.

Partnerships are critical for the success of tourism development; therefore I urge all the stakeholders, partners, well-wishers and development agencies to support in implementing this tourism action plan. Together we can showcase Haa as a model sustainable tourism destination and contribute to the national development vision of Gross National Happiness.

Kinzang Dorji

Dzongda

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Finally the acknowledgement goes to all the stakeholders who contributed through participation, inputs and discussions.

Summary

Situated along the western border of Bhutan, the Dzongkhag (District) of Haa has great potential for tourism development. Its unique culture, rich biodiversity, and proximity to Paro and the capital city of Thimphu makes this an ideal destination for tourists looking for a distinctive cultural and aesthetic experience. Recognizing this, the Royal Government of Bhutan officially opened Haa to tourism in 2002. However, very few tourists have been visiting this location, and even fewer staying overnight.

The dearth of tourists in Haa can be attributed to a number of factors, namely the lack of proper infrastructure, the absence of a brand image for this locale, the lack of an organized marketing strategy, and the general perception that Haa doesn't have much to offer to tourists. These are, however, merely challenges to the development of Haa as a tourist destination. With sound management and robust policies, it is not at all impossible to achieve this goal. The as-yet untapped tourism potential of Haa arises from its two most significant resources—its culture and the environment. Haa's unique cultural heritage, which includes fascinating myths and legends, and the local population's reverence for Ap Chundu, the guardian deity of the valley, can provide rare insights about this particular area of Bhutan. Haa's surrounding environment, on the other hand, provides visitors with the opportunity to witness a rich biodiversity hotspot, home to several species of flora, fauna and avifauna.

Another unique feature of Haa is the inextricable link between its culture and the environment. The ethnic people of Haa, or Haaps, believe that various deities and spirits inhabit the surrounding landscape. Thus they hold the landscape sacred. The Haaps are guided by conservationist beliefs, which could contribute in developing sustainable community-based tourism in this region. This was most clearly illustrated when the locals unanimously opposed a proposed mining project near Wangtse village, fearing that disrupting the environmental harmony in the area would anger the deities. As such, the local people of Haa have already internalized the conservationist ideals espoused by many proponents of sustainable eco-based tourism.

Considering the prospects of tourism development in Haa, the government and NGOs like the RSPN have initiated a few studies on the promotion of community-based ecotourism. This action plan takes stock of the past studies to present a clear road map for sustainable tourism development in Haa to stimulate socio-economic, cultural and environmental prosperity. The support and partnership of all stakeholders is imperative for successful implementation and management.

The plan is presented in three parts - Part 1 provides the rationale for developing an ecotourism plan for Haa; Part 2 introduces the concepts underlying sustainable tourism; and Part 3 discusses the implementation/ action plan.

Part I: The Context

1.1 Background to Tourism Development in Bhutan

Tourism contributes significantly to Bhutan's development, as it is the highest foreign exchange earner and second highest revenue generator after hydropower. Equally significant is its potential to boost the country's economy by providing direct employment opportunities besides other socio-economic and environmental benefits. Considering tourism's potential to boost the economy, it is regarded as the priority sector of the government to bring sustainable development in the country.

Bhutan opened its doors to international tourism in 1974 following the Royal Coronation of the Fourth King. Recognizing the benefits of tourism while also being apprehensive about its adverse impacts on the country's rich cultural and natural heritage, Bhutan has pursued a cautious approach towards tourism development. The visionary monarch laid the foundations for sustainable tourism by pursuing a tourism policy based on the principle of 'high value, low volume'. The success of such carefully controlled tourism led to significant growth in the number of tourist arrivals. Fearing the costs (environmental and socio-cultural impacts) of increased numbers of tourists, a precautionary policy of 'high value, low impact' was introduced. Considering the substantial contribution of tourism on the economy, and also taking into account that tourism has to be responsible (meaning, it should protect the environment, preserves the culture and bring equitable benefits to the people), the 12th Five-Year Plan places great emphasis on sustainable tourism development.

1.1.1 Tourism Development Approach

Since the inception of tourism industry in Bhutan in 1974, Bhutan has followed a very cautious path of tourism development. The country adopted a controlled tourism policy of 'high value, low volume' tourism. This was implemented by levying a tariff payment of USD 250 per person per night (March, April, May, September, October and

November) and USD 200 (January, February, June, July, August and December). Such minimum fixed pricing system is inclusive of a daily package that covers, i) a minimum of 3-star accommodation ii) all meals iii) a licensed Bhutanese tour guide for the duration of the tourist's stay iv) all internal transport (excluding internal flights) and camping equipment and haulage for trekking tours. USD 65 of the tariff goes to the government as a sustainable development fee.

This unique tariff system has generated the much-needed revenue while shielding the country from detrimental impacts by limiting visits to manageable numbers. However with the brand image of Bhutan as one of the top travel destinations in the world and the increase in disposable incomes of global citizens, there has been a surge in the number of visitors both from within the region¹ and beyond. The increased flow of visitors poses a challenge given the country's limited infrastructure, service and management capacity. Aware of the consequences of the rising number of tourists and cautious about negative impacts, Bhutan changed its tourism policy to 'high value, low impact'. The policy aims at creating an image of exclusivity and high yield for Bhutan.²

Considering the substantial contribution of tourism to the economy and the enchanting brand image of Bhutan, tourism development is expected to see unprecedented growth in the coming years. Due to its promising prospects, tourism features as one of the important programs in the five-year planning cycles of the country. The 12th Five-Year Plan starting from July 2018 places further emphasis on tourism as a means for economic diversification. Almost all the 20 districts of the country have acknowledged tourism as the most promising path towards improving people's livelihood. Likewise Haa with its unique culture and rich natural heritage is looking towards tourism development to diversify its economic growth.

1 Regional visitors include citizens of India, Bangladesh and Maldives who are exempt from paying the minimum tariff.

2 Tourism Council of Bhutan (2010)

1.1.2 Bhutan's Attractions

Bhutan, with its vibrant culture and rich natural heritage, has always captured the imagination of travellers. Its primary attractions are based on culture and nature. However it is the culture and traditions that constitute the major source of attraction, covering 48.2 percent of the visitors' interest in 2016. As shown in Figure 1, nature and environment covered 18 percent; spiritual and wellness activities 9.3 percent; the development philosophy of GNH 8.30 percent; business reasons 2.80 percent; and conferences/research/education 2.50 percent.

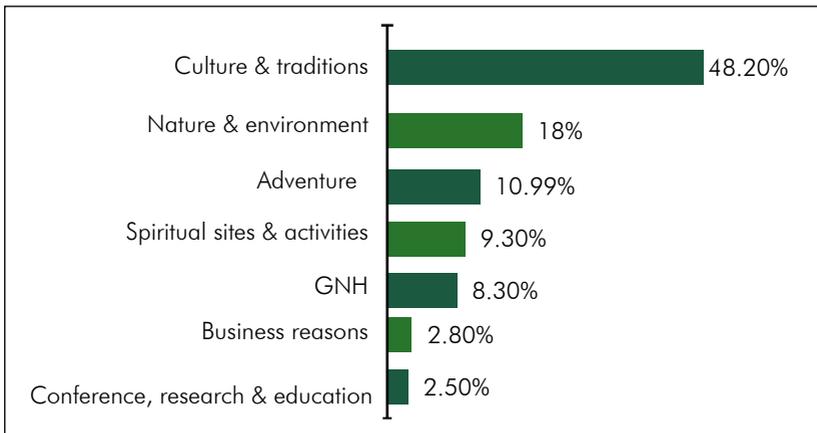


Figure 1: Tourists by primary purpose of visit to Bhutan

1.1.3 Bhutan's Tourism Market

Bhutan's self-imposed isolation over the past centuries and cautious tourism policies have contributed in making Bhutan one of the top global travel destinations. Tourism in Bhutan began in 1974 with Americans coming in as the first generation of tourists, and they continued to be the top arrivals for over three decades (Figure 2). Awareness about Bhutan and tourism promotions increased over the decades, and by 2016 Bhutan had attracted visitors from 118 countries. However, while the number of international visitors has grown steadily, it is the number of regional visitors (nationals of India, Bangladesh, Maldives) that has witnessed the biggest surge (Table 1). This increase in regional arrivals, which mainly consist of

Indians (%), 2016), can largely be attributed to the free access (Indians don't have to follow the minimum pricing system) and unregulated arrangement. The total number of arrivals for 2016 was 209,570, an increase of 35 percent compared to 2015.³ This includes the growth of international arrivals to 62,773, a 9.10 percent increase compared to 2015, while the proportion of regional visitors grew by 50 percent.



Figure 2: **Growth in International arrivals**
(* indicate regional arrivals)

In 2016 the major source markets were from the Asia Pacific region (56.1%) followed by Europe and America.

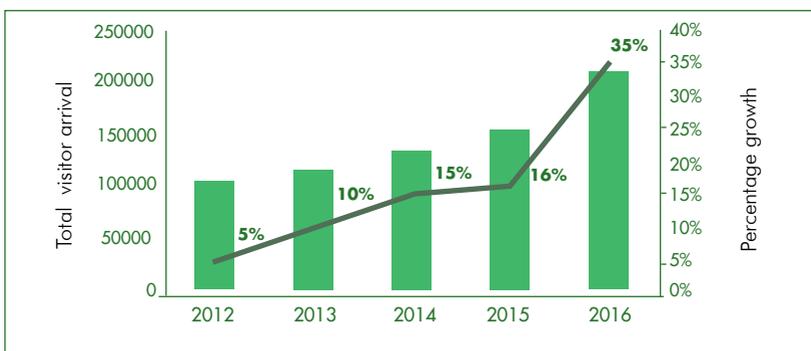


Figure 3: **Total visitor arrivals over the past five years**

3 TCB, Bhutan Tourism Monitor, 2016

Table 1: Top 20 market sources in 2016 based on total leisure travels.
(BTM 2016)

Sl. No	Country	Total visitors
1	India	114301
2	China	9208
3	Bangladesh	7753
4	USA	7292
5	Japan	4833
6	Thailand	4177
7	UK	3124
8	Singapore	3015
9	Germany	2297
10	Malaysia	1967
11	Australia	1818
12	Taiwan	1812
13	France	1501
14	Vietnam	1247
15	Canada	1110
16	Switzerland	1105
17	South Korea	1035
18	Italy	1024
19	Spain	787
20	Netherlands	641

The increasing arrivals clearly indicate a growing market demand for Bhutan. As the market looks promising it is imperative to focus on appropriate interventions to ensure sustainable growth and development of tourism.

1.2 Introduction - Haa

Haa, bordering Tibet to the northwest and Paro to the northeast, remains fairly isolated in spite of its close proximity to the capital city and the airport at Paro (Figure 4). It is divided into six gewogs— Bjee, Katsho, Eusu, Samar, Sangbaykha, and Gakiling— and has an area of 1,899.2 sq.km. As of 2015, the National Statistics Bureau puts the population of Haa at approximately 13, 499. The area is situated between 1000 and 5,600 metres above sea level.⁴



Figure 4: **Location of Haa**

In terms of infrastructure, Haa has 14 schools as of 2015, of which only two are higher secondary schools, and 12 institutions of non-formal education. It has 24 health care units, of which 5 are outreach clinics without sheds, and has two ambulance vehicles. Currently, the road connectivity is mainly focused in the northern regions of Eusu, Katsho, Bjee, and Samar, but the 10th Five-Year Plan includes road connectivity in Gakiling and Sangbaykha as an objective.⁵

4 National Statistics Bureau, Dzongkhag at a Glance – Haa, 2015.

5 National Statistics Bureau, 2015.

Table 2: Geographical size, household and population of the Gewogs of Haa

Gewog	Geographical Size (in Sq.kms)	No. of Households	Population		
			Male	Female	Total
Bjee	802.20	278	1468	1762	3230
Katsho	42.80	255	689	696	1385
Eusu	66.46	265	965	945	1910
Samar	361.70	306	1100	1400	2500
Gakiling	192.22	257	415	417	832
Sangbaykha	432.80	230	1195	1210	2405
Total	1898.18	1591	5832	6430	12,262

Source: Dzongkhag administration

Although Haa houses impressive biodiversity, its agricultural production is traditionally limited to bitter and sweet buckwheat, wheat, barley, turnips, and mustard. This is primarily due to the cold climate and shortage of arable land, neither of which are conducive to the diversification of crops. As a result, the Haaps have developed a tradition of animal herding, both highland yak and lowland cattle. In fact, the migratory nature of these animals has given rise to a semi-nomadic lifestyle among the herders, who often move to the Tibetan border in the north with their yaks and return home during winter.⁶

In addition to the semi-nomadic lifestyle of the herders, the challenges posed by the environment have also impacted the lifestyle of people in Haa. To tackle such challenges, the Haaps have built strong ties with the people of neighbouring Paro, and traditionally with the Tibetans across the border. These ties allow for the exchange of goods and commodities, namely rice and chili from the Parops, and yak cheese and meat from the Haaps.⁷ What began as a relationship of convenience has developed into very close ties, reinforced by marriages and familial ties between people from these two regions.

Haa is one of the least populated Dzongkhags in Bhutan. Despite its rich

⁶ Laura Cocora, Haa: An overview of Place Based Cultural Resources (RSPN, 2015).

⁷ Laura Cocora, 2015.

natural heritage and unique culture, many tour companies and tourists continue to overlook this area. Even those who visit rarely spend the night, leading to a loss of income-generating opportunities for the local people. The initiative to start a community-based ecotourism programme in Haa was inspired by the region's tourism potential and the local people's enthusiasm for its development.

1.3 Status of Tourism Development in Haa

In 2002, the people of Haa Valley approached the National Assembly and expressed their desire to introduce their community to the world of tourism. This marked the beginning of the government's efforts to make Haa into a tourist destination, but very few developments have been made in this regard—the number of visiting tourists remains small relative to the immense potential of Haa as a destination. The recognition of Haa as a getaway for tourists rests on three key features:

- Its strategic location and proximity to the capital city of Thimphu, Paro international airport, and the southern gateway town of Phuentsholing;
- Its rich natural heritage, home to several species of flora and fauna; and
- Its rich culture and traditions, which include fascinating myths and legends.

Recognizing the above features, the Royal Society for Protection of Nature (RSPN) has taken the responsibility of developing a community-based sustainable tourism (CBST) programme in Haa, in partnership with the Japan Environmental Education Forum (JEEF), with funding from the Japanese Technical Cooperation.⁸ The CBST programme in Haa seeks to guarantee conscientious management of the natural, cultural, and social resources of the region, ensuring, in the long run, that these resources are used sustainably and that the local community reaps the benefits.

According to the Tourism Council of Bhutan, the number of tourists visiting Haa in 2017 was 5,225. While this was an increase from the previous year, it is much lower than Haa's capacity to absorb tourists.

⁸ RSPN, Carrying Capacity Assessment Report for Haa and Phobjikha, 2017.

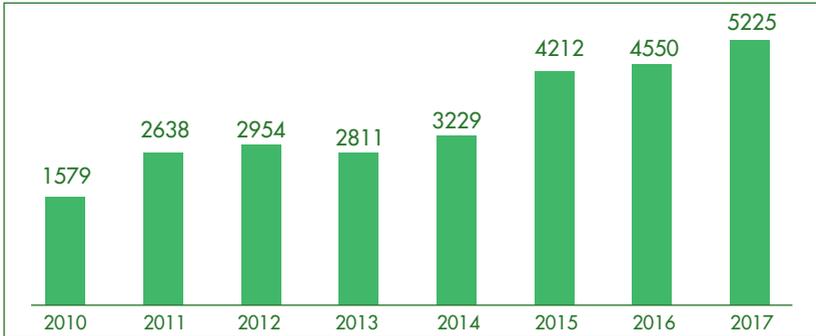


Figure 5: Annual tourist arrivals in Haa

Table 3: 2017 Visitor arrivals in Haa in comparison to the other Dzongkhags⁹

Dzongkhag	Arrivals	Bed nights	% of bed nights
Paro	61,523	140,571	34.5
Thimphu	59,164	106,271	26.1
Punakha	51,831	73,179	18.0
Bumthang	11,321	28,942	7.1
Wangdue phodrang	17,781	26,333	6.5
Haa	5,225	6,727	1.7
Trongsa	5,956	6,548	1.6
Chukha	3,276	3,605	0.9
Gasa	693	3,733	0.9
Mongar	2,036	3,124	0.8
Trashigang	1,886	3,408	0.8
Samdrup Jongkhar	1,682	1,840	0.5
Lhuentse	385	990	0.2
Zhemgang	259	702	0.2
Trashiyangtse	705	894	0.2
Sarpang	284	403	0.1
Pema Gatshel	71	199	0.0
Tsirang	27	33	0.0
Dagana	10	15	0.0
Total	224,115	407,517	100.0

9 TCB Bhutan Tourism Monitor (BTM) 2017

1.3.1 Haa’s Attractions

The sacred landscape and the rich cultural and natural heritage make Haa an extraordinary destination. The people of Haa worship local deities and supernatural forces. Ap Chundu is considered the protective deity and is highly revered by the local population.

The legend of Ap Chundu	Origin of the name Haa ¹⁰
<p>Before the eighth century, Haa Valley was controlled by Ap Chundu and other evil local deities who brought disaster and despondency upon the local people. In the eighth century Guru Rimpoche arrived in Haa Dzongkhag and performed the fifth series of Avalokitesvara’s abhisekha ceremony, brandishing the golden Vajra in space, at which all the evil spirits including Ap Chundu fell unconscious. When Ap Chundu came to sense, he found himself turned into a turquoise coloured boy wearing Vajratra and prostrating and taking oath before Guru Rimpoche. From then on he became a powerful protective deity of Haa Valley and the protector of the Buddhist doctrine. Even today Ap Chundu is revered as the most powerful protective deity by the Haaps, who worship him and celebrate his birthday in a majestic style in November. There are many stories about him which include Ap Chundu and Meri Puensum, Ap Chundu – the diety of Paro and the rice, Ap Chundu and the Tibetan Invasion, Ap Chundu – Ap Genyen and the name Thimphu, Ap chundu soekha, Ap Chundu and the due, Ap Chundu and Penlop Agay Haap, Ap Chundu and Yangthng tshogpa’s ancestor, etc.</p>	<p>According to one of the legends, the origin of the name Haa goes back to the time when Guru Rinpoche subdued the native Bon deity Chhundu, turning the valley into a “hidden country” (sbas yul) by uttering the mantra “Haa” (Francoise Pommaret). Another theory maintains that the name is a mispronunciation of the word hed, meaning “to rush,” and traces it back to the seventh century, when Buddhism was introduced in Bhutan, and the residents of the valley “rushed” to adopt Buddhism and build temples. This is also a story of origin of Haa’s two most sacred temples, Lhakhang Karpo (the White Temple) and Lhakhang Nagpo (the Black Temple). Yet, according to a third oral account, when the Samye Monastery was built in Tibet in the eighth century, a group of people appeared suddenly from the three mountains of Haa, Meri Puensum, and built temples that resembled those in Tibet. The name “Ha,” meaning “sudden appearance” would go back to this particular incident. A common thread linking these esoteric interpretations of the area’s name is that they all relate in one way or another to the historical moment when Buddhism gained predominance over the local Bon tradition.</p>

10 Laura Cocora. Haa: An overview of place-based cultural resources (RSPN 2015)

Table 4: **Attractions of Haa**

Cultural attractions	Natural Attractions	Auxiliary services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pantheon of deities with Ap Chundu as the protective deity of Haa • Many monasteries like lhakhang karmo, narpo, etc. unique to Haa • Rangtse ney - the sacred caves • Predominantly rural landscape • Many local festivals • Distinct local cuisines like hontey • Yak herding communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural landscape with an abundance of forest cover and presence of white poppy endemic to Haa • Unique Meri phunseum mountain • High mountain passes and lakes • Jigme Khesar Strict Nature Reserve 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easy access with good condition road network connecting to - Paro airport, Thimphu, Phuntsholing, Samchi • Village homestays and camping sites • Trekking and hiking trails

The sacred Meri Puensum (three sister hills of Haa) is a unique landmark of Haa. The three hills are of the same height and believed to be the embodiments of the Lords of the three families. On the left stands Jampelyang, which represents Manjushri; the central Chenrayzi represents Avalokiteshvara; and Chana Dorji on the right represents Vajrapani.

Meri Puensum range¹¹



11 JKSNR proposal on the development of cultural/eco trail along the Meri Puensum

Table 5: List of existing trek routes and their condition

Name of Trek	Days	Facilities	Trail condition
Nubtsonapata trek	4–8 days	Nil	Fair
Sagala Trek	1–2 days	Nil	Fair
Chelela Nature Trek	1–2 days	Nil	Good
Meri Phuensum trek	1–2 days	Few benches, Gazebos, resting shed, and trail maintenance	Good



Figure 6: Map of treks in Haa
(source: Adventure Trekking Bhutan 2018)

1.3.2 A SWOT analysis of tourism development in Haa

To provide an understanding of the tourism development situation in Haa, an analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats is presented in Figure 7 below.

	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
INTERNAL ATTRIBUTES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rich and unique cultural heritage showcased through traditional lifestyles, sacred sites/monasteries, age-old festivals, yak herding communities, traditional villages/settlements; • Rich natural attractions with pristine forests, beautiful mountains and lakes, diversity of flora/fauna and endemic plants; • The interest/motivation of the local people, especially the youth, for tourism development supported by the local authorities; • A good road network and proximity to Paro international airport, Thimphu capital city, Phuentsholing, and Samchi; • A peaceful, safe and clean Dzongkhag. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of/weak capacity and skills of the local people and authorities; • Perception of visitors that there is not much to do in Haa; • Poor quality accommodation and services; • Seasonality due to cold climatic conditions during winter; • Inadequate financial and technical support to develop tourism facilities and amenities e.g., trekking trails, camping sites, toilets, etc.; • Lack of systematic tourism management; • Lack of a proper tourism plan and guidelines for promoting sustainable tourism.
	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
EXTERNAL CONDITIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing interest and demand of international tourists to engage in authentic and immersive opportunities of travel; • Promotion of community-based ecotourism recognized as a priority for economic diversification in the 12th Five-Year Plan of the government; • Opportunity to promote only authentic local handicrafts in Haa and prevent the infiltration of imported handicrafts; • Good road connectivity; • The delayed opening of Haa to tourism development; • Location of Haa under the Kangchenjunga Landscape Conservation & Development Initiative (KLCDI) of ICIMOD; • Strong interest of donor and other agencies to support tourism development in Haa. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urbanization at the cost of losing cultural and natural heritage; • Youth migration to urban centres and emulation of western lifestyle; • Increasing volume of unregulated regional tourists; • Increasing demand for construction timber impacting the natural landscape; • Waste generation from increased arrivals of tourists.

Figure 7: SWOT analysis of tourism development in Haa

1.3.3 Challenges

Some of the challenges that need to be addressed to help develop tourism are:

- Dispelling the myth that Haa is a day trip destination: Though there is much to do in Haa, visitors' perception is that Haa is only worth a day's visit. This is because many of the tour operators are not aware of the products, activities and services available in Haa. This weakness in promotion and marketing has apparently created the impression that Haa is a day trip destination.
- Managing the impacts: Increasingly Haa is becoming known to many visitors and is on the itinerary of tour operators. The multiple access roads and Haa's close proximity to Paro international airport, Thimphu, the capital city, and Phuentsholing, the most popular southern gateway to Bhutan, make travelling to Haa convenient for tourists. These increased numbers of visits will have direct impact on the cultural and natural heritage of Haa. It is therefore important to ensure that there are plans to manage these negative impacts, especially increase in waste.
- Preserving the cultural heritage of Haa as economic development increases: Haa is rapidly developing. One of the consequences of development is that it puts the cultural heritage under threat. Traditional structures and ways of life are either completely lost or transformed and influenced by modern lifestyles. Cultural heritage is a critical resource for tourism development. Therefore Haa's development must be based on preserving its rich culture.
- Site and visitor management: Visits to Haa are expected to rise rapidly. Managing Haa tourist flow through visitor management will be critical for tourism sustainability. As Haa has a small local population and unique cultural and natural heritage, increased tourist arrivals and their demonstration effect can have negative impacts if they are not managed properly. Site management needs to be carried out in parallel with visitor management. Strategies for minimizing overcrowding at tourist sites and preventing inappropriate behaviours can help retain the positive

image of Haa. Understanding the limits of acceptable change and developing guidelines for a code of conduct are some of the ways to ensure that both the host and visitor have a positive experience.

- Waste management: Increased visits will lead to increased waste production. Currently even with a low volume of visitors there is weak management of waste. Besides harming the environment and the health of the people, unmanaged waste will also dilute the positive experience of visitors.
- Capacity for tourism management and provision of quality services: As a relatively new tourism destination, Haa lacks the awareness and understanding of tourism development. Building people's capacity both at the Dzongkhag and gewog level is critical for promoting sustainability, enhancing skills for providing quality services, and advocating good practices.
- Development of infrastructure in keeping with the cultural and natural landscape: It is a challenge to secure adequate investments – both financial and technical – for proper Infrastructure development like roads, trails, campsites, amenities, signages, accommodation facilities, etc. These facilities need to be environmentally friendly and culturally appropriate

Part 2: Framing Sustainable Tourism

2.1 Understanding sustainable tourism

The word ‘sustainability’ emerged in the development discourse in the 1980s when it became apparent that major environmental changes were occurring across the globe. Governments and agencies became concerned about reducing carbon footprints, and in the process sustainability was considered a priority in many development programmes. While tourism offers immense benefits, it is also a source of increasing stress on biological and cultural resources. The temptations to reap quick benefits are becoming more evident. Advocacy for sustainability in tourism has therefore gained huge support and momentum. Sustainable tourism needs to be pursued to prevent short-term benefits becoming an impediment to harvesting long-term opportunities. The aim of sustainable tourism development is to meet the needs of tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunities for the future.

Four key indicators for sustainable tourism are: environmentally friendly; economically viable; socially just, humane and based on the principle of gender equity; and culturally appropriate (Figure 8).

The World Tourism Organization defines sustainable tourism as “tourism which leads to



Figure 8: Sustainable Tourism Framework¹²

¹² JICA 2012. Making ecotourism work – a manual on establishing community-based ecotourism enterprise (CBEE) in the Philippines

Framework Indicators (Adapted from Zamora, et.al., 2002)

Environmentally sound.

Ecotourism should not lead to the degeneration of nature but instead enrich the natural resource base. It should value every living (biotic) and non-living (abiotic) component of nature.

Economically viable.

Ecotourism should be self-sustaining and provide long-term livelihood opportunities to the community.

Socially just and humane.

Ecotourism should value the dignity, rights, and inherent abilities of the local community. Local community, as the primary beneficiary of ecotourism, has the right to timely and accurate information, funds and other resources that can improve their lives.

Culturally appropriate.

Ecotourism activities should be respectful of local culture and indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) despite the availability of introduced technologies. Gender equality should be promoted in all activities related to ecotourism development.

management of all resources in such a way that economic, social and aesthetic needs can be filled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity and life support systems.”

Sustainable tourism development is committed to making low impact on the environment and local culture while helping to generate employment for the host local residents. Its development must ensure positive experience for the host community, visitors, and travel companies.

2.2 Sustainable tourism and its sustainability dimensions

The key pillars of sustainable tourism are economic, environmental and socio-cultural. This means sustainability must be ensured in all these areas for tourism to be considered sustainable. The principle of sustainability in tourism has led to the emergence of various types of tourism such as ecotourism, nature tourism, responsible tourism, green tourism, agrotourism, rural tourism, etc.

While developing tourism, assessing the risks and opportunity within the three key pillars ensures that tourism is on a sustainable path or on the road to sustainability. Table 6 below outlines some of the opportunities and risks associated with tourism development within the three dimensions of sustainability.

Table 6: **Tourism development – risks and opportunities for the three dimensions of sustainability**¹³

	Opportunities (+)	Risks (-)
Economic aspects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Poverty alleviation, local prosperity, economic development ● Development of infrastructure (roads, etc.) ● Economic stability, foreign currencies ● Tourism that makes use of products and services produced by the domestic economy has strong linkages to other sectors such as agriculture, fisheries, manufacturing and construction, which will strengthen those sectors and provide additional income. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Unequal distribution, local population does not benefit from tourism ● Injuring local economic structures, increase in food and housing prices ● Tourist activities without linkages to other sectors may lead to hidden costs for the country.
Ecological aspects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Support for the protection and conservation of biodiversity and landscapes ● Economic justification of the concept of protected areas ● Economic alternatives to the exploitation of wildlife resources for local people ● Efforts on international level, e.g., the convention of Biological Diversity (CBD) that has established guidelines for sustainable tourism in vulnerable terrestrial, marine and coastal ecosystems and habitats 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● With increasing air travel, CO2 emissions of the tourism industry will increase. ● Interaction with climate change: tourism is not only a contributor to climate change but will also suffer from its consequences. ● Pressure on land and natural landscapes to provide space for tourism may lead to deforestation and loss of wetlands. ● Landscapes damaged by mass tourism ● Tourism tends to be extremely water-intensive: pressure on freshwater and marine resources ● Increase of waste especially problematic waste disposal facilities are inadequate

<p>Social and Cultural aspects</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Labour-intensive industry: It provides job opportunities that demand a range of skills from low to high ● Employment opportunities for minority groups: Entry into the tourism workforce is comparatively easy for groups that are often not sought by other labour markets, like migrant workers, women and young people ● Employment conditions (health, safety, and security) improve with the increasing influence of developed countries and organizations like the International Labour Organization (ILO) and NGOs. ● Cultural exchange, respect for protection of historical sites, etc. ● Force for the conservation of historic and cultural heritage as well as traditional lifestyles that may serve as tourist attraction ● Stimulation of arts, crafts and other creative activities within communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Many jobs are just seasonal or part time and therefore do not provide stable incomes for employees ● Sometimes the share of unskilled and semi-skilled jobs is too high; and poor employment conditions ● Loss of cultural identity due to foreign influence ● Sex tourism ● Disrespectful behaviour, noise and littering ● Problems of water supply for the poor local communities in case of shortages
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13 INRATE, 2013. sustainability matters

Part 3: The Action Plan

3.1 Vision for Haa – towards sustainable tourism development

The global movement for recognizing sustainability emerged only in the 1980s. In this sense, Bhutan was ahead of its time as it had adopted sustainable tourism principles since tourism development began in the country in 1974. While this is a notable achievement, the bigger challenge lies in developing and implementing strategies on the ground that match the vision.

Recognizing the potential of tourism to support the economic, socio-cultural, and environmental aspirations of Haa Dzongkhag, a vision for its development and strategic goals was drafted in 2010 under the 10th Five-Year Plan. Although the vision holds true to this day, the strategy envisioned within the 10th Five-Year Plan did not capture the emerging reality and sustainable development needs. The vision, the revised tourism strategy and the logical process for community-based sustainable tourism development are outlined in Figures 9¹⁴ and 10

14 Adapted from Haa Dzongkhag 2010 Final Draft Dzongkhag Tourism Development Plan

VISION

To develop Haa as a unique tourism destination, harnessing its vast tourism potential in a sustainable manner

Strategic Goals					
To create a conducive policy environment to help stimulate private sector involvement/ investment and community-based tourism management	To maintain Haa's natural and cultural beauty while developing new infrastructures/ products, sustaining the special qualities that make Haa Dzongkhag a unique destination for nature, culture and rural lifestyles	To ensure that Haa Dzongkhag's environment is conserved and the traditional culture and social values are preserved and enhanced for the present and future	To extend the benefits to a wider population ensuring plough back mechanism and help improve the quality of life of the local communities	To enhance capacity and institutional strengthening for promoting quality services and know-how	To develop effective marketing and promotional plan to brand Haa as an exclusive destination for community-based sustainable tourism

Figure 9: Vision and strategy for community-based sustainable tourism in Haa

 <p>IDENTIFY (Explore opportunities for tourism)</p>	<p>What needs to be identified?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Areas for promoting tourism ✓ Suitable products and activities ✓ Required infrastructure and services ✓ Partners and stakeholders <hr/> <p>How?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaging with local communities and stakeholders through an integrated approach • Holding meetings and creating forums for awareness and understanding • Conducting field surveys • Resource inventory • Zonation for tourism development
 <p>DEVELOP (Destination development)</p>	<p>What needs to be developed?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Products and activities ✓ Infrastructure ✓ Capacity and skills ✓ Conducive policies and regulations ✓ Market <hr/> <p>How?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity building through trainings, and awareness programmes • Enable public-private partnerships to develop quality products, services, and infrastructure to ensure environmental and cultural integrity • Review and develop enabling policies • Prepare an appropriate marketing strategy
 <p>SUSTAIN (Destination management)</p>	<p>What needs to be sustained?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Tourist sites ✓ Cultural and natural heritage ✓ Host and guest expectations <hr/> <p>How?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop site management plans with guidelines to promote good practices • Develop a mechanism for managing impacts and benefit sharing • Institutionalize tourism management systems

Figure 10: **Logical process for tourism development**

3.2 Thematic areas

The action plan is developed within the scope of three thematic planning areas. These are Destination Development, Destination Marketing and Destination Management.



3.2.1 Destination Development

To develop the destination the first step is to identify available attractions. There is a need to explore and discover what Haa has to offer. Identify the products and activities. Tourism is a double-edged sword. While it has the potential to offer many benefits, it can also be detrimental. It should not be considered a panacea for all problems. There could be places and communities where its development may not be appropriate. The area for tourism opportunities should be selected through a bottom-up approach, which means the host local communities should be actively engaged in this process rather than just being informed on the plans. Haa has six gewogs and the process should be undertaken with the active participation of the respective communities of each of the gewogs. This should lead to the development of the overall Dzongkhag tourism plan. Activities and products within the gewogs should be integrated to complement each other's plans. Appropriate infrastructure and services

need to be developed to maintain cultural and natural integrity. Capacity building is also a critical component not only for delivering quality services but for overall understanding of sustainable utilization, protection, and management of valuable tourism resources.

3.2.2: Destination Marketing

Once products and activities are identified and developed, marketing is vital for visitors to be aware of what Haa has to offer. Why Haa? Its USPs (Unique Selling Propositions) should be promoted. Various methods of promotion and marketing need to be developed. Familiarization tours, news/story articles, television broadcast, special events, information booklets, websites, brochures, etc. are some of the means of promotion. One of the reasons why previous tourism-related initiatives in Haa seem to have failed is that they did not incorporate a proper marketing component.¹⁵ As Haa is easily accessible and close to major cities like Thimphu, Paro and Phuentsholing, it is in a position to benefit from a good marketing strategy. It should capture the interest of international, regional, expatriate, and domestic visitors.

3.2.3: Destination Management

Sustainability is key and should provide the basis for all planning and management of tourism activities. The tourism vision makes it explicit that tourism potential should be harnessed in a sustainable manner. Promoting the right products and activities, proper visitor management systems, managing impacts, developing environmental and socio-cultural safeguards, enhancing visitors' experience and meeting hosts' expectations are some of the important elements of sustainable tourism development. To achieve these, there should be a good management system in place, one that creates an enabling and conducive environment for enhancing good practices and promoting sustainability. An integrated management system with the active participation of the gewog, Dzongkhag representatives and external partners will also be required. This is illustrated in Figure 9 below.

¹⁵ Laura Cocora. Baseline survey of CBST development in Haa

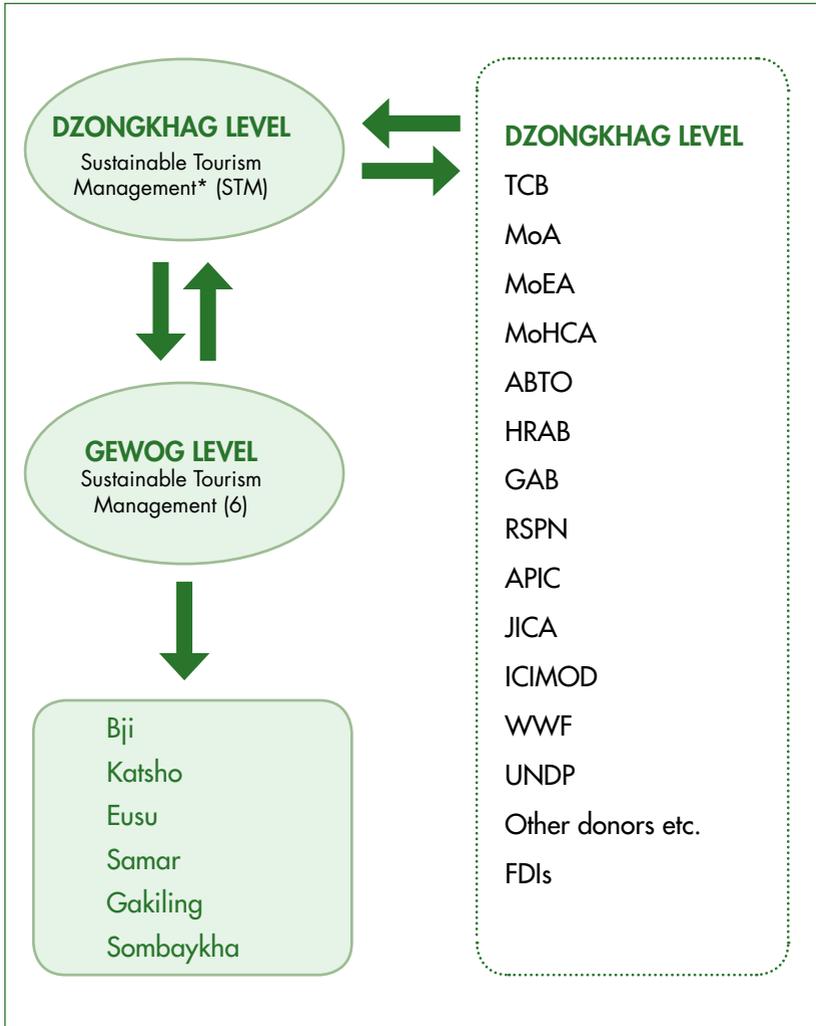


Figure 11: **Recommended tourism management structure**

*The idea is not to create any new committees for tourism but to institutionalize tourism within the existing committees.

Table 7: Recommended members for tourism representation
(within the existing committees)

Dzongkhag – STM members	Gewog – STM members (within each Gewog)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dzongdha • Trizin • Dzongkhag Planning Officer • Dzongkhag Livestock Officer • Dzongkhag Agriculture Officer • Dzongkhag Environment Officer • Dzongkhag Culture Officer • Chief Forest Officer – JKSNR • Forest Ranger, Forest Territorial Division • Program Director - NRCRLF • Manager - visitor centre • Representative - Hotel Association • Representative - homestays • Representative - business community • Representative - youth associations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gup of respective gewog • Dungpa (if applicable) • Youth representative • Women representative • Forestry/Park representative • Agriculture representative • School representative • Homestay representative • Business community representative

3.3 Implementation /activity plan

Destination development

Aim/Objective :Identify potential areas/sites for tourism development

Outcome :Tourism zonation completed for Haa

Haa, as a fairly new destination, needs to clearly define where and how it wants to promote tourism. Inventory has already been undertaken in the past and needs to be reviewed. Tourism should not be seen as a panacea for all problems but needs to be carefully considered. Some of the important elements to be considered while promoting tourism are – identification of appropriate sites and areas, susceptibility of the cultural and traditional values, environmental vulnerability, host community's interest, etc.

Action	Responsible stakeholders	Date for implementation	Estimated budget (USD)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct surveys to identify appropriate sites/areas • Zonation of areas for tourism and mapping • Consultation meetings with community and stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dzongkhag • Gewog/ Dungkhang • TCB, DoC, ABTO, MoAFs, etc. 	July 2018 – Dec 2019	0.050 m

Aim/Objective :Development of appropriate products/activities in keeping with promoting Haa as a unique destination

Outcome :Products/activities unique to Haa developed

Tourism products need to be carefully chosen to ensure that they contribute to the preservation of local culture and environment. It should not be solely focused on meeting the needs of the visitors but should also be acceptable to the local people. Economic interests should not take precedence over the socio-cultural and environmental considerations; rather they should all mutually support each other. The uniqueness of Haa lies in the inextricable link between its culture and natural environment, and this is also reflected in various myths and legends about Haa. Tourism development should help pass on these stories to promote Haa's traditions and cultural heritage. The unique selling proposition of Haa as a destination needs to be discovered and developed.

Action	Responsible stakeholders	Date for implementation	Estimated budget (USD)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the products unique to Haa including local cuisine. • Prepare an inventory of products and activities for development. • Conduct research on local stories and folklore. • Explore the natural heritage for tourism. • Explore the development of new activities like fly fishing, rafting, bird watching, botanical tours, mountain biking, horse/yak riding, day hikes, etc. • Promote the development of local farmers market to showcase handicrafts. • Development of Rangtse ney 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dzongkhag • Gewog/ Dungkhang • TCB, DoC, MoEA, MoAFs • RSPN, ABTO, HAB • Donor agencies, etc. 	July 2018 – Dec 2020	0.250 m

Aim/Objective :Development of conducive policies and regulations

Outcome :Enabling policies in place for tourism development

The tourism policies of the country need to be matched by conducive regulations on the ground to allow for sustainable tourism growth. There should be consistency in policies to avoid confusion and conflict between the central government, dzongkhag and gewog. Private sector engagement is very important for tourism development, especially for the provision of infrastructure and services. The relevant authorities must ensure that the rules and regulations encourage the private sector to give impetus for tourism growth.

Action	Responsible stakeholders	Date for implementation	*Estimated budget (USD)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of policies and consistency between central government, dzongkhag and gewog through meetings and workshops • Consultations with private sector and investors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dzongkhag, Gewog/ Dungkhag • TCB, Dol, MoAFs, MoEA • BCCI 	Oct 2018 – June 2019	0.020 m

Aim/Objective :Infrastructure development based on environmental/cultural considerations

Outcome :Environmentally friendly and culturally appropriate infrastructure developed

Infrastructure provision for tourism development is essential. Infrastructure must be environmentally friendly and culturally appropriate. Use of local materials, renewable energy, and natural colours must be encouraged. All infrastructures must blend with the cultural and natural landscape.

Action	Responsible stakeholders	Date for implementation	Estimated budget(USD)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct workshops and awareness raising to promote the development of environmentally/culturally friendly structures. • Trail development (need to prioritize) • Signages (directional and interpretative) • Develop other tourism amenities and facilities. • Promote the use of yak tents at campsites. • Provide support to homestays. • Develop a business plan for the visitor centre. • Implement concessions to promote private investments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dzongkhag • TCB, MoAFs, DoC, MoAFs • RSPN • Investors/ Concessionaires 	July 2018 – Dec 2020	0.530 m

*The budget is an estimate. It will depend on the scale of the works and the capacity of the funding source.

Aim/Objective :Capacity building, skills development, awareness and understanding to enhance tourism development

Outcome :Quality services and know-how enhanced for tourism development

The products must be delivered through good services. The quality of services will rely on the capacity, skills and knowledge of the people, especially the local communities involved in tourism. Therefore capacity building is very important for meeting visitors' expectations and ensuring sustainable utilization of resources.

Action	Responsible stakeholders	Date for implementation	Estimated budget (USD)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills development in hospitality, cooking, local arts/crafts production, guiding and interpretation • Tours and exposure trips for communities and other relevant partners • Support to the visitor centre as a hub for knowledge sharing, activity and networking centre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • - Dzongkhag • - Gewog/ Dungkhag • - TCB, MoEA • - HAB, RSPN • - Donor agencies 	July 2018 – Dec 2020	0.200m

Destination Marketing

Aim/Objective :Development of a Marketing plan

Outcome :Effective marketing and promotions of Haa as a tourist destination

Haa is a conveniently located destination. Its proximity to Paro international airport, Thimphu capital city, and Phuentsholing, the southern border gateway, make it easily accessible to diverse and a potentially high volume of visitors. Haa is well connected by roads to all these places and recently also to the two southern gewogs of Sombeykha and Gakiling, which further connect to the border towns of Samchi and Phuentsholing. The market consists of international dollar paying tourists, regional visitors mainly from India, expatriates working in Bhutan, most of whom are based in Thimphu, and domestic visitors. A good marketing plan can ensure viable tourism growth in Haa. Product development and marketing are correlated and inseparable, which means coordination between them is critical.

Action	Responsible stakeholders	Date for implementation	Estimated budget(USD)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating a captivating promotional brand for Haa • Developing a marketing plan • Conducting familiarization tours for tour operators • Creating a website with all necessary information on tourism in Haa • Producing audio-visual clips, brochures, information booklets, maps, travel articles and other materials for promotion • Use of the visitor centre for marketing and promotion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dzongkhag • TCB • RSPN, ABTO 	July 2018 – Dec 2019	0.100m

Destination Management

Aim/Objective :To have good management mechanisms in place to ensure sustainable tourism growth

Outcome :Sound management practices adopted

Good planning and management is the key to successful implementation of sustainable tourism. Sustainability in tourism can be difficult if the temptations of the short-term benefits take precedence over long-term benefits. Haa aspires to follow a sustainable tourism model. To make this happen, it is important to focus on several elements and enhance planning and management. One driving force is effective partnerships between the relevant stakeholders. Periodic monitoring will generate good information for planning and management. Impacts will need to be managed to minimize the environmental and socio-economic pitfalls while maximizing positive benefits. Sustainability should be based on an operative and measurable model. This requires the establishment of a system of indicators to monitor and uphold the principles of sustainable tourism development.

Action	Responsible stakeholders	Date for implementation	Estimated budget (USD)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formation of a tourism management committee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – consisting of relevant stakeholders – create platforms for periodic meetings and coordination • Develop a monitoring framework with indicators (refer to Appendix V as a guide) • Develop the following guidelines to promote responsible practices: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Code of conduct for guests and hosts – Environmental and socio-cultural safeguards – Village homestays • Develop and implement a waste management plan (objective to make Haa a zero waste) • Dzongkhag. Practice the principle of ‘garbage in, garbage out’) • Develop certification and awards programmes to promote healthy practices • Strengthen value chain linkages to increase local markets and benefits • Develop site management plans • Conduct periodic impact assessments • Promote private-public partnerships and enhance coordination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dzongkhag • Gewog • TCB • RSPN, ABTO 	July 2018 – June 2023	0.150m

Total Estimated budget = USD 1.30 m
(approximately Nu. 84.50 m @Nu.65/USD)

(Disclaimer Please note that the projected budget under each of the components is only an estimate and the actual fund requirement for each of the activities will need to be prioritized and budgeted accordingly)

Appendix I : List of festival dates for Haa¹⁶

Festival	Location/place	Bhutanese dates	Remarks
1 Haa Tsechu	Lhakhang Karpo, Uesu Gewog	8th-10th day of the 8th month	It's a three-day annual festival
2 Lomba	Celebrated throughout the valley in all the Gewogs	29th day of the 10th month till the 2nd of the 11th month	Haa Lomba celebrated throughout the valley; people prepare a special local delicacy called 'Hoentey', a dumpling made out of sweet buckwheat, flour and green turnip leaves. The celebration is followed by a community archery game.
3 Yongto Bongko, Kibri Bongko, Dumchu Bongko, Tshaphel Bongku and Kana Bongku	Yongto, Kibri, Dumchu, Tshaphel and Kana	Begins on the 17th day of the 11th month	The shaman festival is organized every three years by the communities.
4 Wangsa Goencham	Wangtsa Lhakhang, Katsho Gewog	1st day of the 11th month	Community festival
5 Tshenka Wango	Tshenka lhakhang, Jenkakha – Bjee Gewog	15th day of the 11th Month	Annual celebration in which people from Paro also participate

¹⁶ Updated version from the Dzongkhag Tourism Development Plan

Festival	Location/place	Bhutanese dates	Remarks
6	Denzhey Haa Gumpa, Uesu Gewog	11th day of the 12th month	Annual
7	Hunglatshen Lhasoel	14th-15th day of the 7th month	Communities gather to perform the shaman festival
8	Khando Soel Sichar Gomba, Sombaykha Gewog	1st day of the 11th month	Annual
9	Lochey All house in Gakiling	2nd day of the 11th month	Annual
10	Tshelutshokhar Lhabsoel Tshelutshokhar lake, Samar Gewog		Communities from different villages gather annually
11	Chundu Lhasoel Jenakha, Bjee Gewog	In November	Date and time as per the directives of the astrologer
12	Haa summer festival Haa town	Normally in the month of July every year	Festival initiated by TCB. Annual dates are released by TCB in consultation with Dzongkhag

Appendix II: **List of tourism facilities**

Facility	Name of Establishment	Service
Hotels (3)	Risum Resort	Food and lodge
	Tag Sing Chung Druk	
	Deki	
Heritage Farm Houses (2)	Lechuna Heritage Lodge	Food and lodge
	Soednamzingkha Heritage Lodge	Food, lodge, and hot stone bath
Village Home stays (24)	Pema Dema Home stay, Talung, Bjee	Hot stone bath
	Pema choden, Tshaphel, Uesu	
	Ugyen Chewang, Tshaphel, Uesu	
	Kinley Wangchuk, Dumcho, Uesu	Hot stone bath
	Sherab Wangchuk, Tshaphel, Uesu	
	Zangmo Home stay, Tshaphel	
	Tshering Yangzom, Wangtsa, Katsho	Hot stone bath
	Apu Lham, Yatam, Katsho	
	Sangay Dema, Yangthang, Bjee	
	Sonam Rinchen, Yangthang, Bjee	Hot stone bath
	Sonam Tshering, Dumcho, Uesu	
	Wangdi, Chumpa, Bjee	
	Lhaki, Talung, Bjee	Hot stone bath
	Kaka, Yangthang, Bjee	
	Sonam Wangmo, Yangthang	
	Phub Dem, Dumcho, Uesu	Hot stone bath
	Pema Choki, Dumcho	
	Gup Jochu, Yatam, Katsho	
Gaki, Yangthang, Bjee	Hot stone bath	
Jam Tshering, Talung		
Kezang Dawa, Namchu, Katsho		
Tshering Wangchu, Tokay, Bjee	Hot stone bath	
Ugyen , Dumcho, Haa		
Chimmi Home stay, Dumcho		

<p>Restaurants (12)</p>	<p>Palden Restaurant Tshering Zam Restaurant Ngaden Restaurant Tandin Hotel Sangay Restaurant Hapi Hontay Restaurant Chundu Restaurant Khandu Wangmo Restaurant Newlee Restaurant Lhamo Restaurant Sherpa Restaurant Dipa Restaurant</p>	<p>Only food and drinks</p>
<p>Visitor Center (1)</p>	<p>Dzongkhag Administration, Haa</p>	<p>Information services, resting place, hands-on activities, library, cafeteria, reservations/bookings, local souvenir and farm products.</p>

Appendix III : List of stakeholders: Summary of their roles and responsibilities

This list is provided here because understanding the roles and responsibilities of the stakeholders/partners can help in building partnerships and effectively working together rather than working in isolation.

S.No	Stakeholder/partner	Roles and Responsibilities
1.	Haa Dzongkhag administration	The apex body for the development in Haa. Responsible for planning and management to promote socio-economic, environmental, and socio-cultural development. The vision of the Dzongkhag is to develop a green Dzongkhag with a beautiful and productive community, promoting equitable and sustainable development in harmony with culture and tradition. Its mission is to provide public service delivery, develop quality infrastructure for socio-economic empowerment, ensure sustainable and responsible utilization of natural resources, and preserve and promote traditional culture and heritage.
2.	Tourism Council of Bhutan (TCB)	The apex decision-making body of the government responsible for tourism development; it is the main decision maker, regulator and coordinator of tourism growth. Considering the importance of tourism and the multiple sectors involved in it, the TCB has gained autonomy over the years by working independently and not being placed under any ministry. It is run by the secretariat under the authority and supervision of the council chaired by the prime minister.
3.	Gross National Happiness Commission (GNHC)	The apex policy and planning coordination body of the central government responsible for coordinating and spearheading policy formulation to ensure cohesion between sectoral policies and alignment with national development objectives and the Gross National Happiness (GNH). The GNHC's mission is to steer national development towards the promotion of happiness for all Bhutanese, guided by the philosophy of the GNH.
4.	Ministry of Agriculture and Forests (MoAF)	Aims to ensure sustainable social and economic well-being of the Bhutanese people through adequate access to food and natural resources. This is promoted through the Department of Agriculture, Department of Livestock, Department of Forestry and Parks, Department of Agricultural Marketing Cooperatives. Other non-department agencies within the ministry are Bhutan Agriculture & Food Regulatory Authority, National Biodiversity Centre, and Rural Development Training Centre.

S.No	Stakeholder/partner	Roles and Responsibilities
5.	Jigme Khesar Sirtic Nature Reserve (JKSNR) and Paro Territorial Division	JKSNR covering parts of Haa and Samchi is one of the ten protected areas in the country responsible for the conservation of biodiversity. Natural areas that do not fall in the reserve are managed by the Forest Territorial Division of the Paro Division.
6.	Nature Conservation Division (NCD)	This Division under the Department of Forests and Park Services is the fiscal agency for coordination and management of wildlife and the protected areas of Bhutan. This includes promoting ecotourism and recreation programmes in the PAs and forests of Bhutan.
7.	National Cold Water Fishery Centre (NCWFC)	Located in Haa, it is under the Department of Livestock and has the mandate to develop cold water fishery in the country. The main responsibility of the centre is to produce fish seed to assist in conservation as well as in the rehabilitation of fish in a great variety of cold water bodies.
8.	Ministry of Home and Cultural Affairs (MoHCA)	As one of the ten ministries in the government, MoHCA is mandated to preserve, promote, develop and protect the cultural heritage of the country besides ensuring law and order and providing immigration services. Within the MoHCA, the departments relevant to tourism are the Department of Culture (DoC), Department of Immigration (DoI), and the Department of Local Governance, which support, facilitate and strengthen the local governments.
9.	National Environment Commission (NEC)	NEC is the apex body in the government responsible for all matters related to the natural environment. It develops and reviews environmental policies and plans to promote environmental conservation, protection and sustainable utilization.
10.	Ministry of Economic Affairs (MoEA)	Responsible for promoting the country's economic growth, it aims to create an enabling environment, including institutions and infrastructure for the sustainable growth of the economy through public and private sector development. Among many of its departments, the ones pertinent to tourism development are: Department of Cottage and Small Industry (DCSI), which is responsible for creating an enabling environment to facilitate and support sustainable growth and development of cottage & small industries for equitable income distribution, employment generation and balanced regional development. The Department of Trade (DoT) and Department of Industry (DoI), which are responsible for promoting trade and industry growth.

S.No	Stakeholder/partner	Roles and Responsibilities
11.	Association of Bhutanese Tour Operators (ABTO)	Founded in the year 2000, it is the authorized representative of the tour operators of Bhutan, who constitute its primary membership. Besides providing help and support to its members, it develops and implements a wide range of measures aimed at making the tourism market more attractive and promoting sustainability in tourism.
12.	Handicrafts Association of Bhutan (HAB)	Established in 2005 it serves as a platform for the promotion of traditional handicrafts and preservation of culture, community and local environments. Thus it helps empower people by providing them opportunities.
13.	Agency for Promotion of Indigenous Crafts (APIC)	Established in 2011 under the Ministry of Economic Affairs, it is responsible for the promotion of equitable growth of handicrafts through the enhancement of skills and business knowledge of the craft community with an emphasis on innovation, and product development and marketing.
14.	Royal Society for the Protection of Nature (RSPN)	Established in 1987, it is the only local environmental NGO in Bhutan. Its role is to inspire personal responsibility and active engagement of the people of Bhutan in the conservation of the country's natural environment through education, research and sustainable livelihood opportunities. It supports the promotion and development of community-based ecotourism initiatives.
15.	Hotel and Restaurant Association of Bhutan (HRAB)	Established in 2007 with the mission to represent the interest of its members, it represents hotels and restaurants across the country. It aims to foster professional growth by raising the standards of hotels and contributing towards sustainable tourism development in the country.
16.	Guide Association of Bhutan (GAB)	Established in 2009 as the single collective voice of the local tour guides in the country with the mission to represent the guides and promote their professional growth.
17.	Private businesses	These include traders, shopkeepers, hoteliers, restaurants, etc. conducting business in Haa.
18.	Local community	These include the local host communities, especially the local youth that will directly or indirectly interact with the visitors.
19.	Donor and funding agencies	They are critical in providing financial and technical support.

Appendix IV : **Guidelines for achieving the pillars of sustainable tourism**

Various guidelines have been developed to help in achieving the pillars of sustainable tourism. Below is a summary referred from Dr. Bob Mc Kercher¹⁷

1. Economic sustainability - that is profitable in both the immediate and long term

- Form partnerships throughout the entire supply chain, from micro-sized local businesses to multinational organizations.
- Use internationally approved and reviewed guidelines for training and certification.
- Promote an ethical and environmentally conscious behaviour among clients.
- Diversify the products by developing a wide range of tourist activities.
- Contribute some of the income generated to assist in training, ethical marketing and product development.
- Provide financial incentives for businesses to adopt sustainability principles.

2. Ecological sustainability - development that is compatible with the maintenance of essential ecological processes, biological diversity and biological resources

- Codes of practice should be established for tourism at all levels.
- Guidelines for tourism operations, impact assessment and monitoring of cumulative impacts should be established.
- Formulate national, regional and local tourism policies and development strategies that are consistent with the overall objectives of sustainable development.

- Institute baseline environmental impact assessment studies.
- Ensure that the design, planning, development and operation of facilities incorporate sustainability principles.
- Ensure that tourism in protected areas, such as national parks, is incorporated into and subject to sound management plans.
- Monitor and conduct research on the actual impacts of tourism.
- Identify acceptable behaviour among tourists.
- Promote responsible tourism behaviour.

3. Cultural sustainability - increases people's control over their lives and is compatible with the culture and values of those affected and strengthens the community identity

- Tourism should be initiated with the help of broad-based community input.
- Education and training programmes to improve and manage cultural heritage and natural resources should be established.
- Conserve cultural diversity.
- Respect the land and property rights of traditional inhabitants.
- Guarantee the protection of nature, local and the indigenous cultures, especially traditional knowledge.
- Work actively with indigenous leaders and minority groups to ensure that indigenous cultures and communities are depicted accurately and respectfully.
- Strengthen, nurture and encourage the community's ability to maintain and use traditional skills.
- Educate tourists about desirable and acceptable behaviour.

- Educate the tourism industry about desirable and acceptable behaviour.

4. Local sustainability - that is designed to benefit local communities and generate/retain income in those communities

- The community should maintain control over tourism development.
- Tourism should provide quality employment to community residents.
- Encourage businesses to minimize negative effects on local communities and contribute positively to them.
- Ensure equitable distribution of financial benefits throughout the entire supply chain.
- Provide financial incentives for local businesses to enter tourism.
- Improve local human resource capacity.

Appendix V: **Monitoring Framework Guide**

Monitoring is an essential part of planning and management. Without monitoring an activity, it is possible to know neither its impact nor the progress it has made towards the objectives. As such it is imperative to develop and implement an effective monitoring system. Monitoring involves regularly observing and checking the progress of something over a period of time using indicators. Before examining the practical steps involved in setting up and running a monitoring programme, the main monitoring considerations need to be understood. A brief introduction to this is provided below¹⁸

Examining the rationale for monitoring: In general terms, establishing whether or not the project is living up to expectations,

¹⁸ SNV 2007. A toolkit for monitoring and managing community-based tourism

and in what areas it is performing better or worse than expected, helps engage stakeholders in the project, helps justify funding extensions, and helps to bring about productive change. Having access to up-to-date information enables project managers to adapt their management practices to suit changing circumstances, experiment with new approaches, and learn from the results. When things are going less well, monitoring can provide an early-warning system, enabling managers to take corrective action in particular areas before it is too late. Monitoring of CBT projects is therefore crucial for their long-term success.

Deciding who should monitor:

There are opportunities for stakeholder participation at each phase in the development and implementation of a monitoring cycle. The more diverse stakeholder involvement becomes, the greater the learning outcomes of the programme are likely to be. In the initial planning phase, key participants are likely to be local officials, planners, development consultants, and donor agencies working in close consultation with community groups. In the development phase, there are greater opportunities for wide community involvement as key issues are assessed and indicators selected. In the data collection phase community members and tourism industry representatives can be trained in the collection of data (such as the number and type of birds spotted on a trail and visitor satisfaction). In the implementation phase, the establishment of a small multi-stakeholder working group can be helpful for overseeing the monitoring and analysis of the results. This will provide a degree of independence from political leadership and help to avoid conflicts of interest and differing interpretations of results.

Discussing what to monitor:

It is not possible to monitor every part of a CBT project, and in some cases having too much information may be as bad as having no information at all. Working out what to monitor is therefore a crucial part of developing a monitoring programme. Two approaches are proposed. First is the “business performance approach”. It involves monitoring progress against established CBT business goals. These are the goals that will have been

developed at the outset of the project, such as to raise USD 5000 in revenue for a community project or to provide ten full-time jobs. The second is the “sustainable performance approach”. It involves monitoring progress in the context of key sustainable development or poverty-related issues facing the community. These may include increasing access to clean running water, increasing the proportion of households with one or more member in formal employment, or increasing the number of homes with garbage collection. The job of sustainable tourism indicators is to show the effect of tourism on the community’s sustainable development goals. Different organizations may prefer one approach to another. Project managers may prefer the business approach, to check how they are performing against their bottom line. NGOs may prefer the key issue approach, in order to gain a general understanding of the project’s contribution to sustainable development in the community. Both are essential to sustainability.

Thinking about the types of indicators to be used: There are three main types of indicators: qualitative, quantitative, and normative.

- * Qualitative indicators rely on value-based assessments (what people think) of the state of a particular issue such as residents’ views on tourists, tourists’ level of satisfaction, or experts’ descriptions of the state of a particular ecosystem.
- * Quantitative indicators are focused on specific, measurable facts. They involve the counting of specific events in a scientific fashion. These are normally expressed as percentages (20 percent of guides are certified), ratios (e.g., ratio of resident numbers compared to tourist numbers), or as raw data (e.g., 900 litres of water used per guest night).
- * Normative indicators measure the existence or non-existence of some element such as a tourism plan or an environmental policy. These are less useful in terms of sustainability unless they are linked to other indicators which measure how effective the plans or policies are.

In addition to these divisions, the UNWTO (2004) highlights the following types of indicators.

- Early-warning indicators (e.g., decline in the number of repeat visitors)
- Indicators of system stress (e.g., water shortages, crime incidents)
- Measures of the current state of the industry (e.g., occupancy rates, number of employees)
- Measures of the impact of tourism development on the biophysical and socioeconomic environment (e.g., levels of pollution, congestion, loss of cultural heritage, income for local communities)
- Measures of management response (e.g., number of tourism awareness programmes run, guides)

Reviewing the human and financial resources available:

Data collection can be costly and time consuming. Serious thought needs to be given to the availability of resources to carry out CBT monitoring prior to beginning the design process. This will help encourage practical and efficient monitoring solutions. It is important to note that indicators that are easy to measure may not always be those that contribute the greatest understanding. In each monitoring project, tradeoffs will need to be made between the need for high quality monitoring, the involvement of stakeholders, and the need to produce indicators that are cost-effective and available within a reasonable timeframe. The cost of a monitoring a project will be related to the size and scale of the project or the destination it is designed to monitor. An easy rule of thumb is that 2-3 percent of the project cost should be allocated for monitoring. The larger and more complex the tourism project, the more extensive and costly the monitoring process will be. A USD 100,000 programme should allocate about USD 2-3000 a year for monitoring activities. Often there is reluctance to spend money on monitoring, as it appears to be diverting money from programmes of action. This is an unhelpful attitude as monitoring has substantial value in terms of making actions effective. The human resources required for monitoring are dependent on the scale of the programme

and on the frequency of data collection. Establishing a monitoring programme is a relatively labour intensive process and may take two or more people several months, but once the programme is in place, one person should be able to collect data within a month once or twice a year.

Considering how to communicate monitoring results to stakeholders: Communication is frequently overlooked in monitoring programmes. To make a difference, indicator results need to be communicated to stakeholders in an easily understood and transparent manner. This process allows the community to learn from past experiences and to improve CBT tourism as a result. It also helps ensure that tourism generates benefits for the poor. Every monitoring programme must therefore have a clear plan for how to communicate results to stakeholders.



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