



**Royal Government of Bhutan**  
**Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources**  
**Department of Forests and Park Services**  
**Forest Monitoring and Information Division**



**National ZERO Poaching Strategy**  
**2025-2029**

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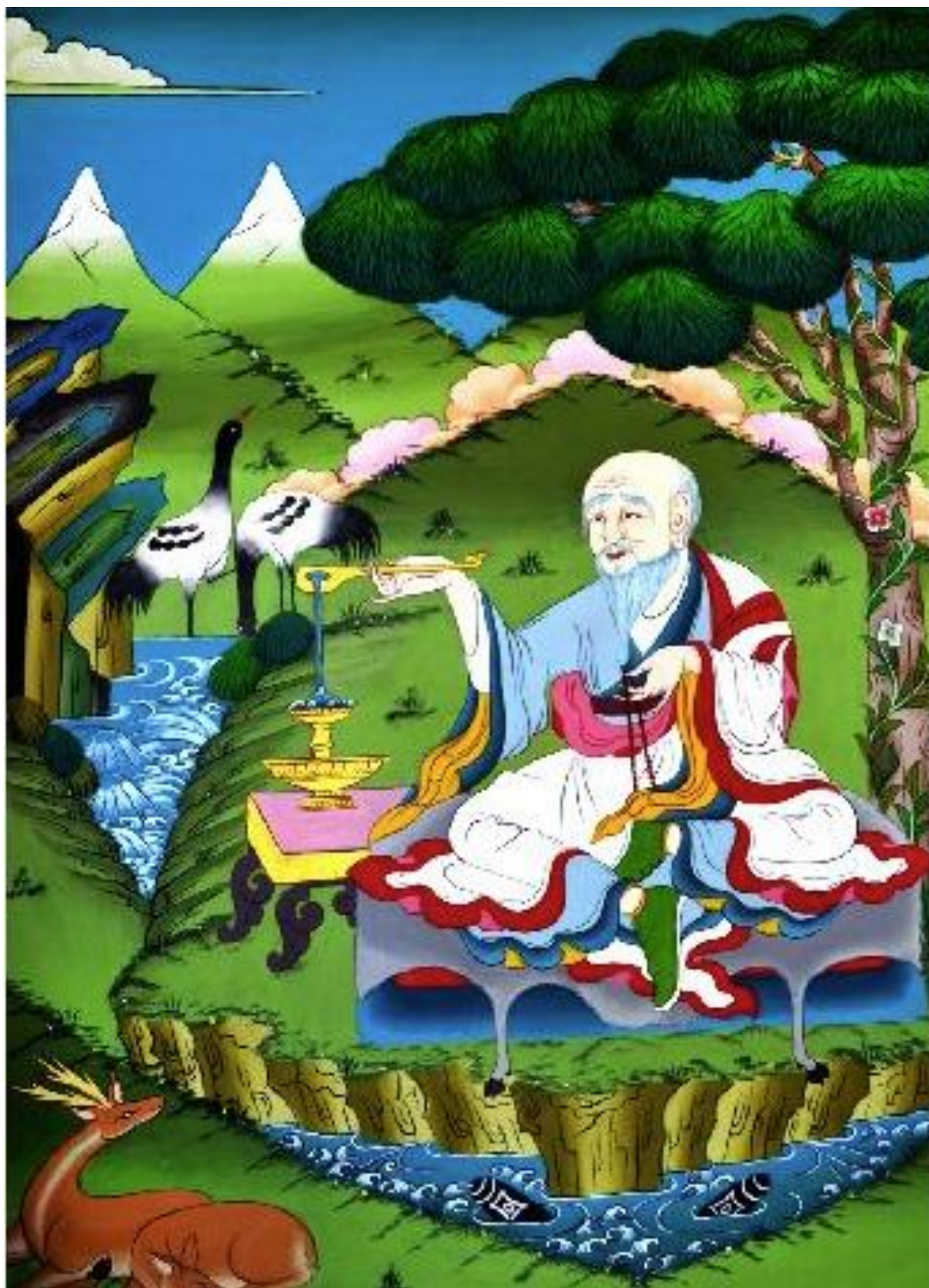
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Royal Government of Bhutan  
Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources

**BHUTAN**  
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**SECRETARY**

## FOREWORD

Illegal wildlife trade continued to be a significant global issue, with the Asian region being a hotspot for such activities. Global efforts in combating illegal wildlife trade through increased law enforcement, international collaboration, and awareness campaigns are crucial for preserving biodiversity, protecting endangered species, and fostering sustainable ecosystem for future generation. Organizations such as International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and South Asia Wildlife Enforcement Network (SAWEN) play crucial roles in coordinating these efforts.

In the Asian region, the challenges in curbing illegal wildlife trade are due to factors such as porous borders, corruption, and high demand for wildlife products in traditional medicine and luxury markets. Species like Rhinos, Elephants, Tigers, Musk Deer, Asiatic Black Bear and Pangolins are particularly targeted for their body parts, skins, and scales. Efforts were being made at both national and regional levels to strengthen legislation, improve enforcement, and raise public awareness. However, the illegal wildlife trade remained a complex issue, often linked to organized crime and posing threats to biodiversity, ecosystems, and global security.

Despite considerable investment in conservation, Bhutan still faces the challenges in protecting its endangered species, particularly from the recorded wildlife poaching incidents. The current trend indicates a need for intensified efforts to combat poaching and retaliatory killing, especially Tigers, Musk Deer and Asiatic Black Bear. Existing interventions are deemed insufficient, requiring stronger and robust measures to prevent species loss.

Addressing poaching is a top priority for the Ministry Energy and Natural Resources, particularly the Department of Forests and Park Services. The Department, has launched initiatives in 2016 to curb poaching and illegal wildlife trade through Zero-Poaching Strategy 2017-2021, which brings together various law enforcing agencies, including the Royal Bhutan Army, Royal Bhutan Police, Department of Revenue and Customs, Judiciary and the Office of Attorney General. This second edition of National Zero Poaching Strategy 2025-2029 aims to holistically address wildlife poaching and illegal wildlife trade based on the lessons learned from the earlier strategy, ultimately gearing towards the vision of "a world free of poaching".

Tashi Delek!

**SECRETARY**  
**Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources**



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ROYAL GOVERNMENT OF BHUTAN  
MINISTRY OF ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
DEPARTMENT OF FORESTS AND PARK SERVICES



**DIRECTOR**

## PREFACE

Illegal wildlife trade globally has been estimated between \$7 - \$23 billion per year, ranking as one of the most lucrative sources of illicit income alongside drug trafficking, arms trade, and human trafficking. Orchestrated by highly organized criminal groups, the wildlife trade poses significant challenges to control when law enforcement fails to acknowledge its complexities. In recent years, globally, there has been an unprecedented surge in illegal wildlife trade, particularly involving endangered species such as tigers, rhinos, and elephants.

Similarly, Bhutan has experienced an increase in wildlife poaching incidents and seizures of illegal wildlife contraband, specifically targeting endangered species like tigers, elephants, Asiatic black bears and musk deer. Bhutan has served either as a source of these wildlife products or as a safe transit point for illegal trade into neighbouring countries.

Acknowledging the sophisticated methods used by criminal syndicates in wildlife crimes, the Department of Forests and Park Services, as the custodian of wildlife, must implement robust strategies. Collaborative efforts with other enforcement agencies like the police, army, customs, regulatory authorities, and the judiciary are crucial to counter poaching and illegal wildlife trade. Recognizing the challenge of tackling this issue alone, the Department emphasizes collaboration with other enforcement agencies and local communities to contribute to the global vision of "*a world free of poaching*".

The Department would like to extend its appreciation to Forest Monitoring and Information Division in developing the "*Zero Poaching Strategy 2025-2029*" in collaboration with the functional and field offices to combat wildlife crime, safeguarding the survival of critically endangered wildlife. There is hope that Bhutan will eventually significantly contributing towards fulfilling the goals of the National Zero Poaching Strategy.

The DoFPS expresses its deepest gratitude to the Royal Government of Bhutan, the Bhutan for Life Project, WWF-Bhutan, and all development partners for their unwavering support in advancing the Department's mission to achieve zero poaching. A special acknowledgment goes to WWF-Bhutan for their critical role in the development and implementation of this strategy through the Countering Wildlife Trade Project, made possible by the generous funding from the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, U.S. Department of State. Their partnership has been indispensable in strengthening wildlife conservation efforts in Bhutan

Tashi Delek!

**DIRECTOR**

**Department of Forests and Park Services**



## **Executive Summary**

Bhutan continues to struggle to protect its endangered species in spite of substantial investments and efforts in conservation and wildlife management. Iconic species like tigers, rhinos, elephants, Asiatic black bears, and musk deer are under threat from poaching and retaliatory killing, which require robust measures to combat these threats.

Recognizing poaching as a significant menace, the Department of Forests and Park Services (DoFPS), Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources (MoENR), Bhutan has prioritized the curbing of poaching. Partnering with the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and 12 other Tiger Range Countries, Bhutan aims to eliminate poaching in specific locations for tigers, elephants, and rhinos by 2020. The initiation of this effort began with the Zero Poaching Symposium in 2016, leading to the development and approval of the Zero Poaching Strategy 2017–2021 by the government.

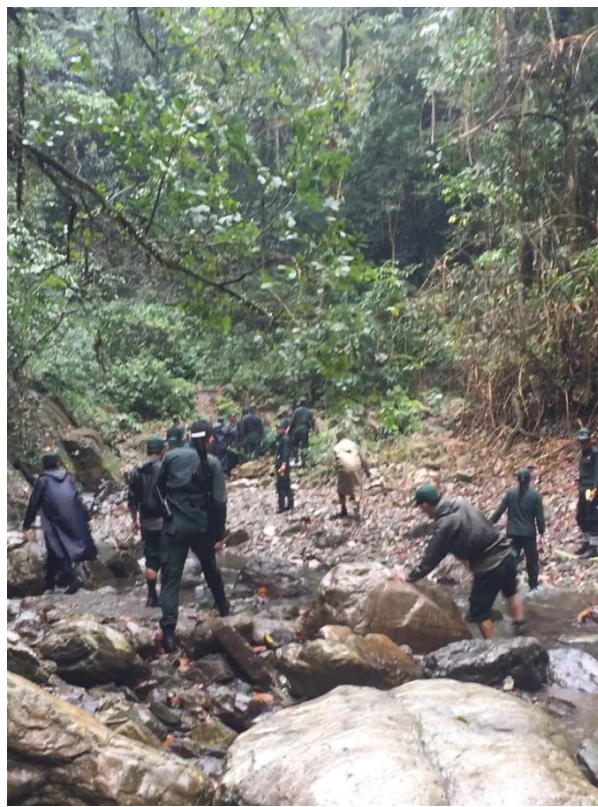
The revised National Zero Poaching Strategy (NZPS) 2025-2029, adopted by the DoFPS, outlines six pillars to address poaching and illegal wildlife trade comprehensively.

- i. Assess poaching trends and enforcement operations at site and national level;
- ii. Adopt new appropriate technology and up-scaling existing effective technologies;
- iii. Enhance institutional monitoring, surveillance and enforcement;
- iv. Strengthen community Engagement;
- v. Improve legal proceedings of Wildlife Offences; and
- vi. Strengthen local, regional and international partnerships and collaborations.

The strategy prioritizes Royal Bengal Tiger as the target species while also recognizing the importance of threatened species that are heavily poached or traded illegally. Implementation of the six pillars at local, district, and national level remains the primary objective. Through the establishment of a national wildlife crime control committee (NWCCC) and a working group within the DoFPS, Zero Poaching will be driven by strong collaboration with all relevant Government law enforcement agencies, development partners, conservation Non-Governmental Organization (NGOs), civil society, and local communities. All stakeholders must be committed to cooperating effectively, adhering to established procedures for sharing information, capacity building, and allocating fund, human resource and material resources if this multifaceted, holistic approach is to be sustained and successful.

At the national level, the strategy aims to enhance interagency partnerships, foster regional and international collaboration, align conservation laws, and promote intelligence-led wildlife protection. Community-level efforts will focus on engagement, participation, empowerment, reducing human-wildlife conflicts, benefit sharing, awareness, and environmental stewardship programs. Through these initiatives, Bhutan aims to address the complex challenges of wildlife conservation and protection, striving for a harmonious balance between human activities and the preservation of its rich biodiversity.





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**Glossary of Terms:**

BC	: Biological Corridor
BFL	: Bhutan for Life
C2C	: Conflict to Coexistence
CA/TS	: Conservation Assured Tiger Standards
CCPC	: Civil and Criminal Procedure Code (Amendment) Act of Bhutan
CFO	: Chief Forestry Officer
CITES	: Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
CNR	: College of Natural Resources
DFO	: Divisional Forest Office
DNA	: Deoxyribonucleic acid
DoFPS	: Department of Forests and Park Services
FAAA	: Fire arms and Ammunition Act of Bhutan
FIRMS	: Forest Information Reporting and Monitoring System
FMID	: Forest Monitoring and Information Division
FNCA	: Forest and Nature Conservation Act of Bhutan
FNCR	: Forest and Nature Conservation Rules and Regulations
FRPMD	: Forest Resources Planning and Management Division
GNH	: Gross National Happiness
HWC	: Human Wildlife Conflict
ICP	: Integrated Check Posts
ICCWC	: International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime
INTERPOL	: International Criminal Police Organization
JDNP	: Jigme Dorji National Park
JSWNP	: Jigme Singye Wangchuck National Park
LEA	: Law Enforcement Agencies
LSD	: Legal Service Division
M&E	: Monitoring and Evaluation
MoENR	: Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources
MSPCL	: Menjong Sorig Pharmaceuticals Corporation Ltd.
NCD	: Nature Conservation Division
NWCCC	: National Wildlife Crime Control Committee
NZPS	: National Zero Poaching Strategy
OAG	: Office of Attorney General
PA	: Protected Area
PCB	: Penal Code of Bhutan
QRT	: Quick Response Team
RBP	: Royal Bhutan Police



RGoB	: Royal Government of Bhutan
RMNP	: Royal Manas National Park
SAWEN	: South Asia Wildlife Enforcement Network
SMART	: Spatial Monitoring and Report Tool
SRCWP	: Strengthening Regional Cooperation for Wildlife Protection in Asia
STCEA	: Sales Tax, Customs and Excise Act of the Kingdom of Bhutan
ToT	: Training of Trainers
UAV	: Unmanned Aerial Vehicle
UNFCCC	: United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNODC	: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNTOC	: United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime
UWIFoRT	: Ugyen Wangchuck Institute for Forestry Research and Training
WWF	: World Wildlife Fund









## **1. Background and Context**

### **1.1. Introduction**

Across the globe, greed and desperation threaten the very fabric of the life. Wildlife crime, a multi-billion-dollar illegal industry, fuels the poaching of iconic species, pushing them towards the brink of extinction. From the majestic elephant to elusive musk deer, countless wild animals fall victim to this devastating practice, leaving behind gaping hole in ecosystem and communities. The illegal wildlife crime has globally escalated in recent years, leading to the endangerment and extinction of numerous species.

The value of illegal trade has been estimated between \$7 - \$23 billion per year, making wildlife crime one of the most lucrative illegal businesses, often run by sophisticated, international, and well-organized criminal networks seeking to exploit the high rewards and low risks of the trade. It is recognized that wildlife crime is of dynamic and multifaceted nature, necessitating a comprehensive and globally coordinated response to address its various dimensions and protect the planet's biodiversity (C4ADS, 2023). This global challenge requires a comprehensive and strategic response to curb the illegal exploitation of flora and fauna.

Responding to the global call in combating the illegal wildlife trade, Bhutan took significant step forward by developing the National Zero Poaching Strategy in 2017. Since then, Bhutan diligently implemented this strategy, marking a commendable effort in the preservation of its unique and diverse ecosystem. However, as we delve deeper into the complexity of wildlife crime, it has become apparent that the dynamic nature of illegal wildlife activities necessitates a continuous reassessment and revision of strategy.

In this context, the need for a revised strategy has become evident, one that not only builds upon the success of the past but also address the emerging challenges. The revised strategy considers the advancement in technology, changes in poaching methods and the socio-economic factors influencing the wildlife crime. By doing so, Bhutan gears towards enhancing its resilience against the ever-shifting landscape of illegal wildlife trade.

### **1.2. Global and Regional Scenario**

The 2024 World Wildlife Crime Report by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) highlights that despite two decades of efforts, wildlife trafficking remains a significant global issue, affecting over 4,000 species across 162 countries (UNODC, 2024). While there have been positive outcomes for some iconic species like elephants and rhinoceros, wildlife trafficking, overall, has not seen a substantial decrease. The report emphasizes the ecological and socioeconomic impacts of wildlife crime, including ecosystem disruptions and threats to livelihoods. It also notes the role of transnational organized crime and corruption in perpetuating these illegal activities.

Wildlife crime is a global phenomenon, organized transnational crime, and it is neither limited to certain countries or region not limited to megafauna or iconic species (Pan et al., 2015).

Poaching and illegal wildlife trade has become major area of activity for organized crime syndicates making the black market for the illegal wildlife products worth up to USD 20 billion per year (InterPol, 2018). Further, illegal wildlife trade is not only damaging the environment and pushing to the brink of extinction of certain species (UNODC, 2017), but hundreds of rangers get killed by the poachers annually while protecting the wildlife in their natural habitat (InterPol, 2018; UNODC, 2024). According to the World Wildlife Crime Report (WWCR) 2020, nearly 6000 species have been seized between 1999 and 2018. (Figure 1).

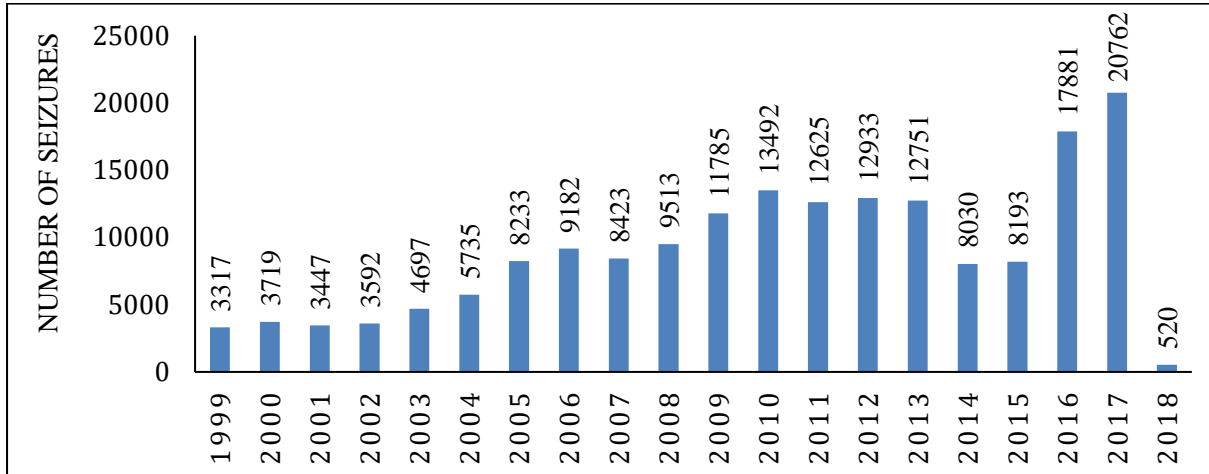


Figure 1: Number of seizures in World by year (UNODC database)

The quantification of illegal wildlife trade is often estimated based on the seizure data. The seizure aggregated data between 1999-2018 from the UNODC World Wide Database reveal that mammal is the highest taxon that is illegally traded followed by reptiles (Figure 2).

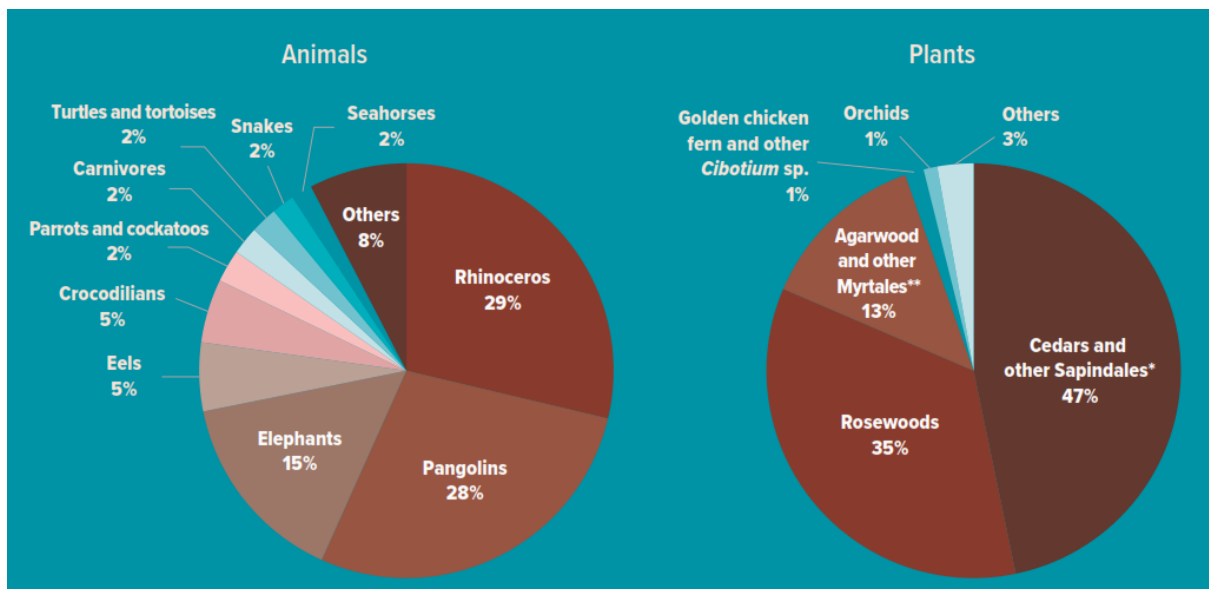


Figure 2: Illegal wildlife trade from 2015–2021 based on seizure index (WWCR, 2024)

An analysis of illegal wildlife markets reveals their complexity. A single species is exploited for diverse purposes, for example, pythons are used for live pets, skins, meat, and traditional medicine (WWCR, 2024). The dominance of illegal markets has seen changes between 2009



and 2018. The changes are influenced by geographical constraints and market share fluctuations over time. Despite the global economy reopening widely during and post COVID-19 pandemic, the total wildlife seizures recorded in 2022 (449) were 41 percent lower than the average number of seizures recorded between 2017 and 2019. This trend was not uniform across all countries, possibly due to different timelines of reopening. For instance, countries like Malaysia that reopened early in 2022 saw an increase in wildlife seizures. However, countries like China, which maintained strict lockdowns throughout 2022, continued to have low seizure counts (UNODC, 2020). Countries and territories with various modes of transport, particularly those utilizing sea routes, reported a higher number of seizures in the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) database (Figure 3).

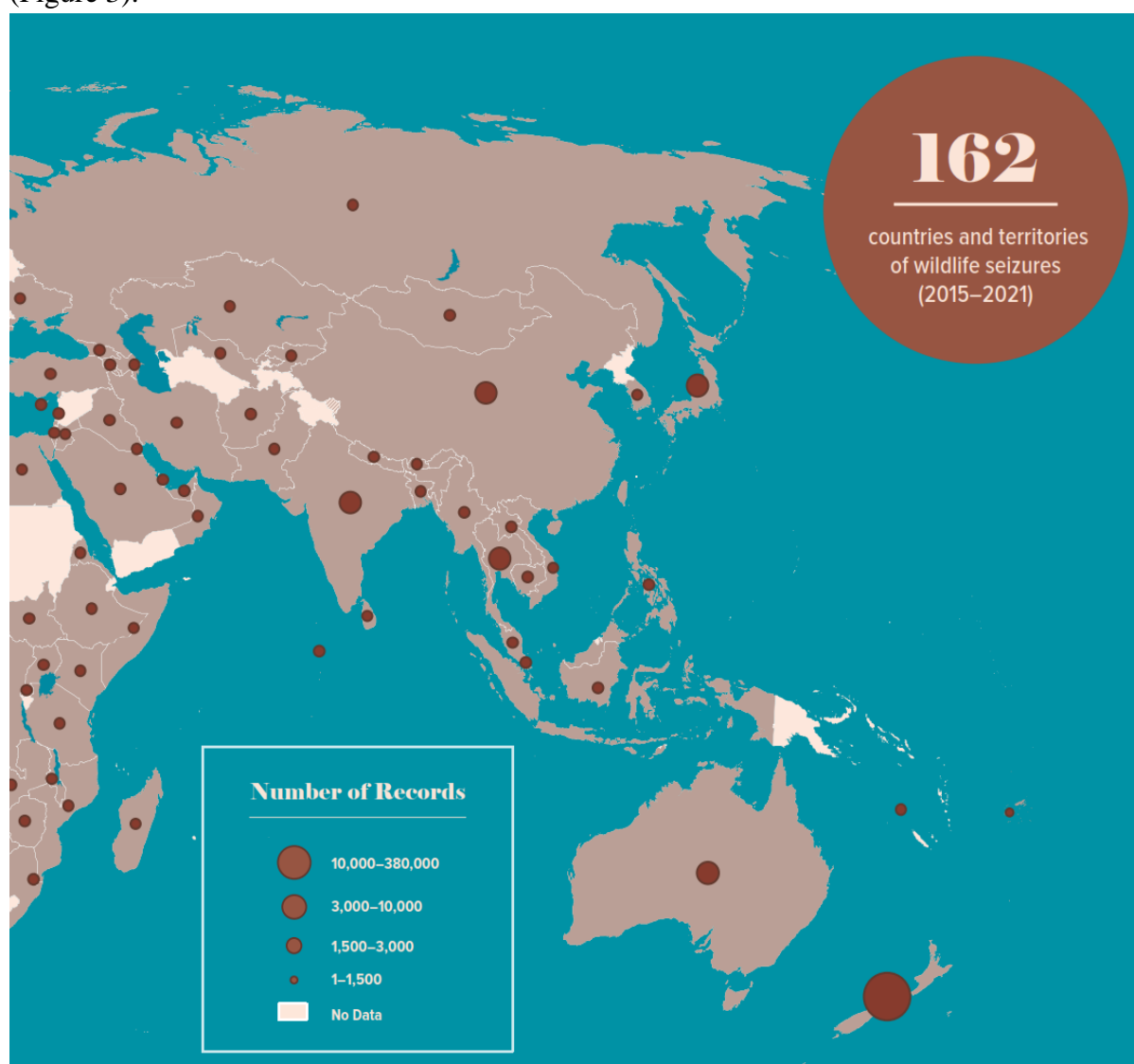


Figure 3: Wildlife contraband seizure by countries and territories (CITES database)



### 1.3. National Scenario

Bhutan has long been considered as a source and a transit point in the illegal trade for wildlife parts (WWF, 2018). Concerns are raised about the possible threat to Bhutan's endangered species due to the country's strategic location as a gateway to northeast India and China, which are considered to be used as smuggling routes (MoAF, 2016), as well as its close proximity to hotspots for the wildlife trade. The risk is increased by the accessibility to nations, which are popular travel destinations and hubs for wildlife products destined for other nations.

Though on a smaller scale, wildlife poaching and smuggling are geographically distributed throughout Bhutan, especially along porous international borders and ancient trade routes to Tibet, China (WWF, 2018), offenders and carriers have been apprehended in a variety of settings, including hotels, airports, high-altitude border areas, checkpoints, and sales negotiations. There are also reported case of illegal trade of species involved in retaliatory killings. In addition to transnational poaching, there are also evidence of domestic market for wildlife parts for traditional medicine and local healing, though the extent of their usage remains unclear. Furthermore, red sander, a prohibited wood species listed in the CITES, is often intercepted by Bhutanese authorities during cross-boundary smuggling patrols since 2013 (DoFPS, 2015) and increased patrols and surveillance efforts have been implemented to curb such illegal activities.

### 1.4. Poaching Trend and Hotspots

#### 1.4.1. Poaching Trend

From 2017-2022, the DoFPS has recorded various illegal activities viz., 246 poaching (56 cases involving schedule I species), 1443 illegal fishing, 2069 illegal harvesting of timber, and 456 NWFP/surface collection. Poaching of Musk Deer and Asiatic Black Bear are on the rise compared to other commonly poached species (Figure 4).

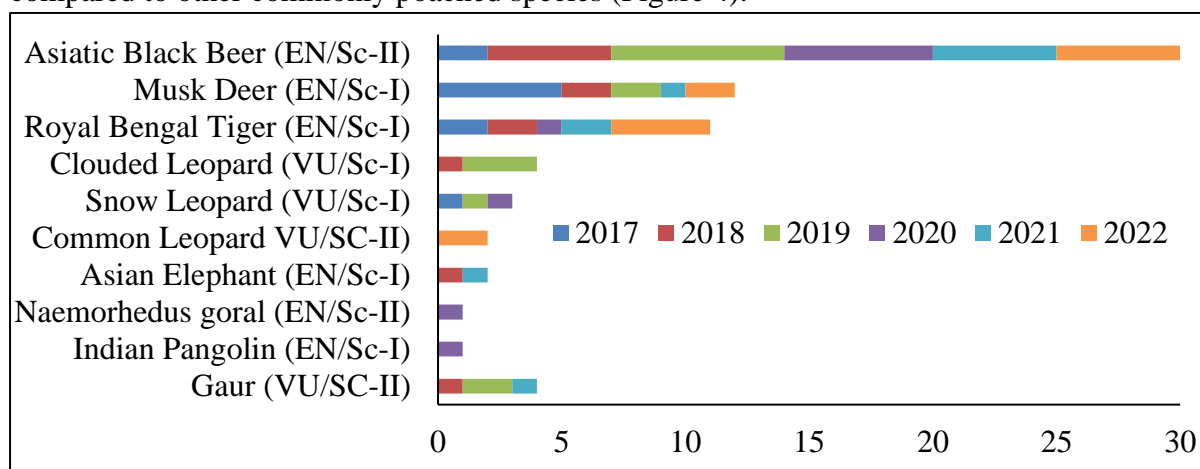


Figure 4: Threatened species poached from 2017-2022 (FIRMS, 2023 and SMART, 2023)

**Note: Conservation status of species:** EN: Endangered; VU: Vulnerable and Sc-I/II; Schedule as per FNCA 2023.



### 1.4.2. Poaching Hotspot

Wildlife poaching has been detected in all the Dzongkhags ranging from 1 to 37 incidences recorded per 25 km<sup>2</sup> in last three years (2020-2023) as per available spatial data collected through anti-poaching SMART patrol and verified from FIRMS (Figure 5 & 6). However, smugglings are more prominent in Thimphu, Sarpang, Chukha, Haa, Paro, Mongar, Samdrup Jongkhar and Trashigang Dzongkhags.

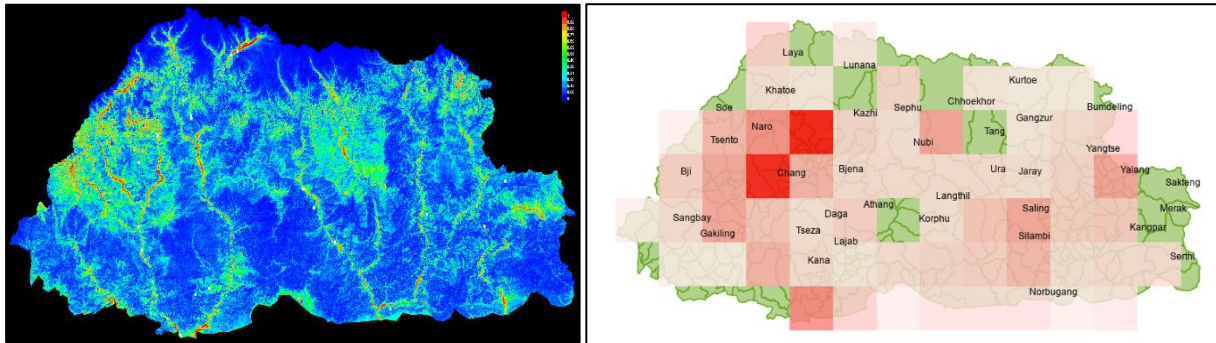


Figure 6: Mammals Poaching hotspots

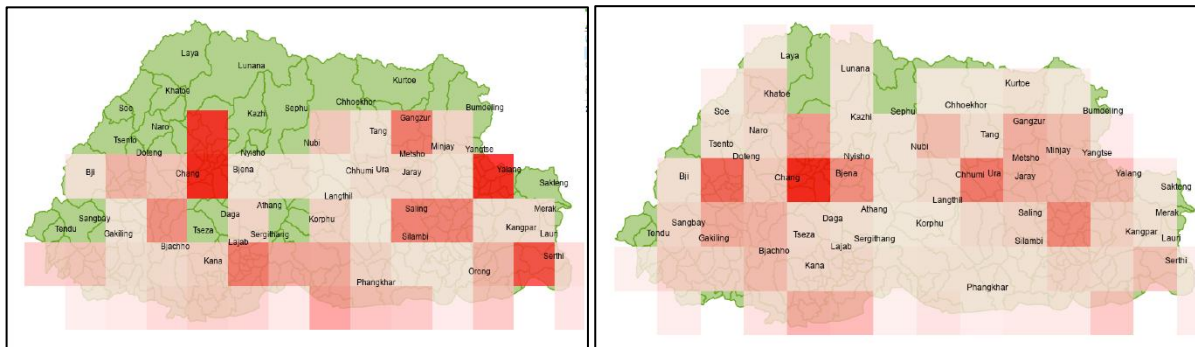


Figure 5: Illegal fishing and illegal logging intensity

Poaching incidences are recorded more outside the protected areas (PA), which may be linked to more human settlement residing outside PAs with better accessibility (Figure 7).

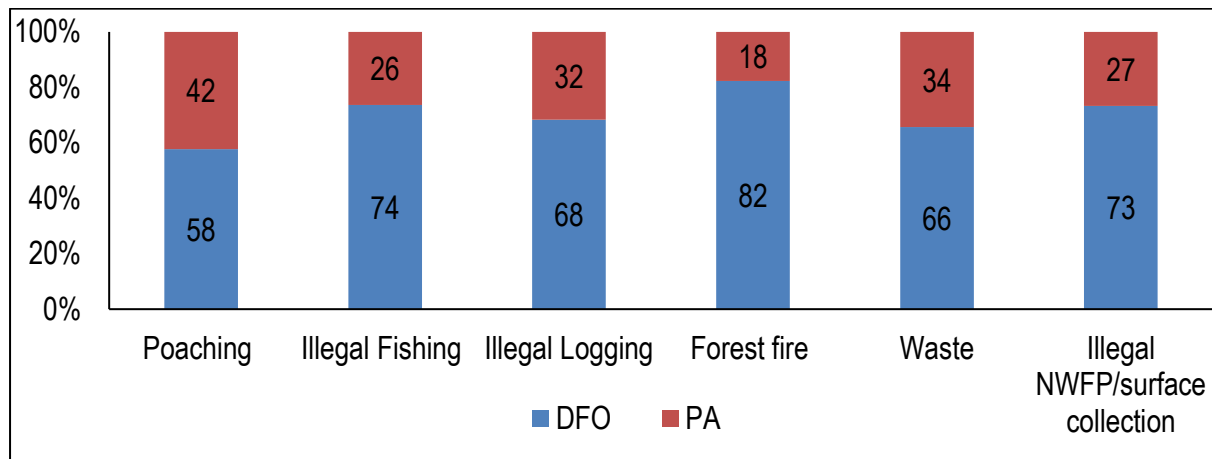


Figure 7: Proportion of illegal activities detection by management jurisdictions

## **1.5. Policy and Legal Framework**

The Thrimshung Chenmo was the first codified national law that prohibited hunting in 1953, followed by the Bhutan Forest Act of 1969. The law was further strengthened by enacting the Forest and Nature Conservation Act of Bhutan (FNCA) 1995 and 2023, supported by the Forest and Nature Conservation Rules and Regulations (FNCRR) 2003 (amendments 2006, 2017, 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023). The Plant Quarantine Act 1993, Environment Assessment Act 2000, Biosafety Act of Bhutan, 2015 and Biodiversity Act of Bhutan 2022, Tax, Customs and Excise Act of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2000, also has supporting provisions when dealing with illegal trade, import/export, utilization of biological resources, protection of plant varieties, access and benefit sharing or bio-prospecting.

While other relevant acts for enforcement and prosecution are the Fire arms and Ammunition Act of Bhutan (FAAA), 1990, the Royal Bhutan Police Act, 2009, the Penal Code of Bhutan (PCB) 2004 with its amendments, the Civil and Criminal Procedure Code (Amendment) Act of Bhutan (CCPC) 2021, and the Office of the Attorney General Act of Bhutan 2015.

### ***1.5.1. Protection***

The protection of wildlife is granted under Section 8 (1), 9 (2), 86, 87, 88 & 89 of the FNCA 2023, wherein the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources (MoENR) and the Department of Forests and Park Services (DoFPS) are authorized to formulate policies and adapt measures for protection of wildlife in addition to provisions on activities permitted, prohibited and restricted by the FNCA 2023.

As per Section 86 of the FNCA 2023, *“any wild flora and fauna in Bhutan are protected; killing, injuring, destroying, capturing, collecting, possessing, breeding, raising, cultivating, and trading of any wild flora and fauna specimen or product whether or not in State Reserved Forest Land is prohibited unless permitted by this Act”*.

Accordingly, all wild flora and fauna which warrants protection are listed under Schedule I, II & III of the FNCA 2023 while killing of schedule 1 fauna species is a third degree felony and any wild flora listed in Schedule I shall not be collected, possessed, or traded except, for scientific research and population management including conservation breeding or plantation on the recommendation of the Scientific Authority.

Further, the Sales Tax, Customs and Excise Act of the Kingdom of Bhutan (STCEA), 2000, restricts the import or export of animal and plants, including their parts and products classified as endangered species as well as any other goods which are prohibited by any laws or international conventions or treaties to which Bhutan is a signatory. Section 157-166 of the FNCA, 2023 purely deals with the trade and transport of wild flora and fauna.

Section 13-21 of the FNCA 2023 grants the forest official an autonomy to inspect, search, seize, settle, confiscate, detain offender with or without arrest/court warrant (RGoB, 2023). Similarly, under STCEA 2000, customs officers (not below the rank of Assistant Commissioner) are empowered to conduct search and seize the prohibited contraband.

### **1.5.2. Prosecution**

The PCB 2004 and the CCPC 2011 outlines the judicial procedures to be followed once a case is registered in the Royal Court of Justice. The prosecution trial takes place in the Dungkhag or Dzongkhag Court corresponding to the location where the crime was committed. Regardless of the offender's nationality, if the offence committed within the country, the offender will be prosecuted in accordance with the prevailing national laws.

The legal prosecution of wildlife crime in Bhutan especially Schedule I species and subsequent offence are prosecuted in the court by the Office of Attorney General (OAG) with the support from the Legal Service Division (LSD) of the MoENR. This concerted effort not only demonstrates the nation's commitment to preserving its rich biodiversity but also serves as a formidable deterrent against those intending to exploit and endanger its wildlife (Table 1). The collaboration with the OAG and Judiciary underscores the importance Bhutan places to address wildlife crimes, ensuring that perpetrators are held accountable under the law. Such resolute legal actions not only safeguard the country's unique ecosystems but also contribute to global conservation efforts.

Table 1: Prosecution of Schedule I species by OAG

Year	Crime/Offence	Charges	Conviction
2017	Tiger Bones	Section 490 of Penal Code: Risking of Protected Species	Offender 1 & 2: 3 years Offender 3: 1 year 6 months
2017	Tiger Skin & Bones		1 year 6 months (4 Offenders)
2018	Tiger Skin		6 months (5 Offenders)
2018	Musk Pod		3 years (1 Offender)
2018	Musk Pod		3 years (2 Offenders), 18 months (1 Offender)
2018	Tiger Bones		3 years
2019	Musk Pod		3 years 6 months (1 Offender)
2019	Tiger Skin and Bones		Offender 1: 5 years 2 Offenders: 3 years 3 Offenders: 1 year 6 months
2020	Laying snares for musk deer	Section 120 of Penal Code: Criminal attempt	1 year 6 months (1 Offender)
2021	Tiger Bones and Skin	Section 490 of Penal Code: Risking of Protected Species	5 Offenders
2021	Tiger Bones & Skin		11 Offenders
2023	Tiger bones and skin	Section 490 of Penal Code: Risking of Protected Species	8 offenders: 1-3 years
2023	Tiger bones and skin	Case under prosecution	4 offenders
2023	Tiger skin	Case under prosecution	3 offenders

## 1.6. International Treaties and Conventions

The CITES is the primary international regulating body against illegal trade in endangered species. In Bhutan, the Nature Conservation Division (NCD) under DoFPS served as the competent authority until June 2023 for implementing CITES regulations, acting as both the Management and Scientific Authority. However, with enactment of FNCA 2023 the Ugyen Wangchuck Institute for Forestry Research and Training (UWIFoRT) under DoFPS is designated as the scientific authority and the Head of the Department as the management authority. In addition, Bhutan is also signatory to the following international treaties and agreements (Table 2).

Table 2: Rectified treaties and agreements

<b>Treaties/Agreements</b>	<b>Year of Ratification</b>
International Plant Protection Convention	1994
UN Convention on Biological Diversity	1995
CITES	2002
South Asia Wildlife Enforcement Network (SAWEN)	2011 (pending statute rectification)
The Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits	2013
United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime and its Additional Protocol (UNTOC)	2023

## 2. Purpose and Scope

Bhutan's National Zero Poaching Strategy 2025-2029 serves a crucial purpose in enhancing the country's commitment to wildlife conservation. The scope of the revised National Zero Poaching Strategy extends beyond the traditional approach of law enforcement and protection measures. It encompasses a holistic framework that integrates community engagement, interagency collaboration, and education initiatives to create a comprehensive and resilient conservation strategy. It strives to strengthen partnerships with local communities, national law enforcement agencies, non-governmental organizations, and international collaborators, fostering a collective responsibility for wildlife protection.

The primary objective is to build upon the achievements and lessons learned from the National Zero Poaching Strategy 2017- 2021, ensuring that Bhutan remains at the forefront of global efforts to combat poaching and protect its rich biodiversity. By revisiting the strategy, Bhutan aims to align itself with emerging challenges and opportunities in the field of wildlife conservation, incorporating advancements in technology, scientific knowledge, and international best practices. This strategic revision seeks to address gaps identified during the implementation of the previous strategy, reinforcing Bhutan's dedication to achieving zero poaching and promoting coexistence between humans and wildlife.



Ultimately, the revised strategy aims not only to eliminate poaching but also to foster a harmonious relationship between people and its diverse wildlife, reflecting the nation's unwavering commitment to environmental stewardship.

### **3. Review of Bhutan National Zero Poaching Strategy (2017-2021)**

Bhutan's Zero Poaching Strategy 2017-2021, implemented from 2017 to 2023 through the joint support of the Royal Government of Bhutan (RGoB), : World Wildlife Fund (WWF) & Bhutan for Life (BFL) projects, marked a significant milestone in the nation's commitment to wildlife conservation. The strategy aimed to completely eliminate or reduce poaching of endangered/Schedule-I species within its borders, reflecting Bhutan's dedication to preserving its unique biodiversity. Key success was to initiate establishment of National Wildlife Crime Control Committee (NWCCC) and equipping the DoFPS with advanced capacity building in terms of both training and technology, enhancing the country's capacity to combat illegal activities related to wildlife. The strategy in a way built an institutional mechanism by enhancing collaboration among law enforcement agencies, local communities, national conservation NGOs and international partners in fostering a holistic approach to address the multifaceted challenges posed by wildlife crime.

Despite its successes, the Zero Poaching Strategy faced challenges that tested the resilience of Bhutan's conservation efforts. The remote and rugged terrain of Bhutan posed logistical challenges for law enforcement agencies. Patrolling vast and often difficult-to-access areas required substantial resources and manpower. Additionally, the increasing sophistication of wildlife criminal networks and the allure of profits from the illegal wildlife trade presented ongoing challenges along with inadequate interagency collaboration and technological adoption. The strategy recognized the need for continuous adaptation and improvement to stay ahead of evolving threats, calling for sustained commitment and investment in anti-poaching measures. In the face of these challenges, Bhutan's Zero Poaching Strategy demonstrated the importance of adaptability and collaboration. The nation's commitment to reviewing and updating its approach, integrating technological advancements, and collaborating with communities, national & international law enforcement agencies showcased a dynamic response to the ever-changing landscape of wildlife crime.

The Zero Poaching Strategy was crucial in institutionalization of the NWCCC and SMART, building investigative and protection capacity, enhancing collaboration and most importantly securing fund for carrying out activities related to anti-poaching and illegal wildlife trade. Therefore, it was felt crucial to revise the strategy to capitalize on the erstwhile success, adapt to changing circumstances and trends in wildlife trade, increased demand for wildlife products and emergence of new threats. Revision of the strategy shall address it in addition to recognition of the stronger partnership and more sustainable approaches including communities to ensure long-term effectiveness in combating illegal wildlife trade and trafficking.

#### **4. Current State of Wildlife Conservation in Bhutan**

Bhutan's successful preservation of its biological treasure into the 21<sup>st</sup> century is attributed to visionary leadership and a tradition of harmonious coexistence with nature. Since the inception of its first five-year development plan in the 1960s, Bhutan has consistently implemented conservation policies to safeguard its natural resources (Wangdi et al., 2013). In order to maintain the biological state of the country, overarching policies of Gross National Happiness (GNH) and the Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan reinforces the conservation efforts. Additionally, Bhutan is signatory to various international treaties and pledged to remain carbon-neutral since COP15. Currently, Bhutan's forest has carbon sequestration capacity is over 13 million tonnes CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent and emission stand at 4.5 million tons CO<sub>2</sub>e including forest and other land use as reported to United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 2022 (FMID, 2023b). FNCA 2023 and FNCR 2023 is the key legal framework for preserving natural landscapes, cultural heritage sites, and sustainable forest management as fundamental aspects of sustainable development, aligning with the GNH policy, the constitution and international treaties (RGoB, 2023).

Bhutan, situated in the Eastern Himalayas, is a remarkably biodiverse country within the Oriental Zoogeographic (Indomalayan) Realm. It is part of the Central Asian Flyway, shares realms with Palearctic and Indo-Malayan, and contributes to the Eastern Himalayan Biodiversity Hotspot (Myers et al. 2000). With 69.71% (2.68 million ha) of its 38,394 km<sup>2</sup> territory covered by forests (FMID, 2023a), Bhutan is predominantly characterized by diverse vegetation zones, starting from subtropical in the south to Alpine scrub in the north (FMID, 2022). Each zone features unique dominant plant and animal species, contributing to the country's rich biodiversity.

Bhutan's floral diversity includes over 5,600 seed plant species, with about 94% being native and 144 species endemics to Bhutan (Yangzom and Long 2015). Despite its small size, the country recorded close to 200 mammal species (Wangchuk et al. 2004), with 27 facing global threats (FRMD 2017) and 15 (9 mammals, 3 plants & 3 birds) strictly protected under FNCA 2023 (RGOB 2023). Bhutan is a haven for birdlife, with 747 recorded species, 31 of which are globally threatened (Birdlife International 2017). The country is also home to 18 of the 37 endemic bird species in the Eastern Himalayas, including the Bhutan Laughingthrush. In terms of aquatic diversity, Bhutan has recorded 125 fish species (Dorji et al. 2020). The nation is rich in herpetofauna, with 172 species, including 112 reptiles and 61 amphibians. Bhutan's insect diversity is noteworthy, with 3,511 species documented to date (DoFPS, 2020).

Unlike other nations, Bhutan faces a unique challenge, with only 8% of its land suitable for agriculture, making its population heavily dependent on natural resources like timber, grazing, non-timber forest products (MoAF, 2016) and people resorting to poaching and illegal wildlife trade, considering a lucrative and low risk income generating activity (Figure 7).

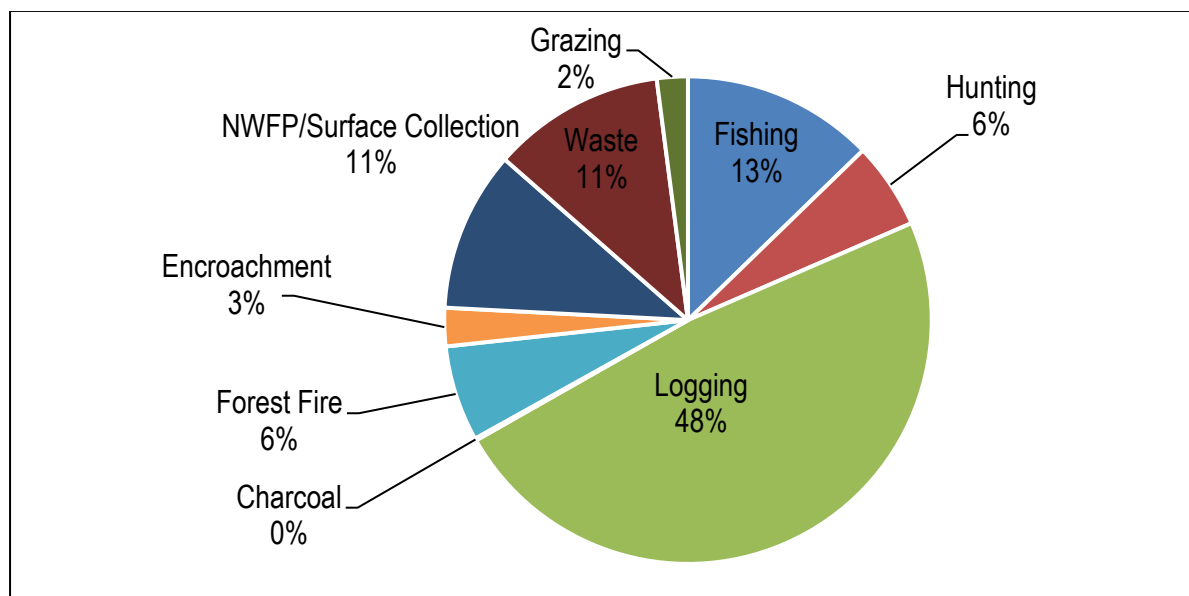


Figure 8: Threats to conservation of in Bhutan from 2020-2023(FIRMS & SMART, 2023)

## 5. Institutional Set-up

The MoENR is the central agency for the formulation and implementation of policies and legal frameworks related to biodiversity conservation in Bhutan. Protection of forest and its biodiversity is the mandate of the DoFPS. These mandates are implemented through four functional divisions under the DoFPS: Forest Monitoring and Information Division (FMID), Forest Resources Planning and Management Division (FRPMD), NCD and UWIFoRT. In the forefront, wildlife surveillance and protection are carried out by 14 Divisional Forest Office (DFO) and 10 Park Offices which are further supported by 75 Range offices, 99 beat offices and 44 forest check posts (DoFPS, 2020) (Figure 9). The Department currently has 1265 technical staff shouldering the conservation efforts.

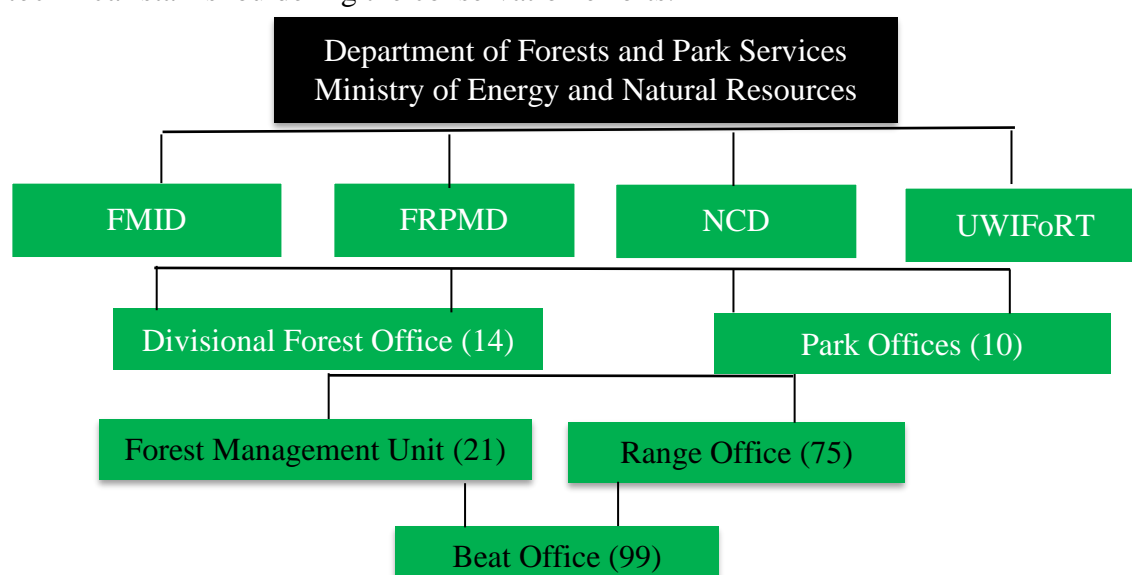


Figure 9: Organogram of DoFPS

The Royal Bhutan Police (RBP) manages 21 Integrated Check Posts (ICPs) facilitating the trade and transit of commercial goods, as well as the movement of forest and wildlife products. These ICPs, located at strategic points along the Indo-Bhutan border, serve as centralized hubs, bringing together the functions of RBP and the Revenue and Customs, Immigration, and Forest offices under one roof. This integrated approach ensures seamless enforcement, detection, and interception of wildlife offenses.

However, the wildlife offence or crime requires the collaboration of relevant law enforcement agencies, which is imperative for resolving persisting cross-cutting issues from detection to prosecution of wildlife offenses. Hence, the NWCCC has been constituted (Figure 10) by the MoENR in December 2023. The NWCCC will at least meet annually and report its status and progress to the Ministry.

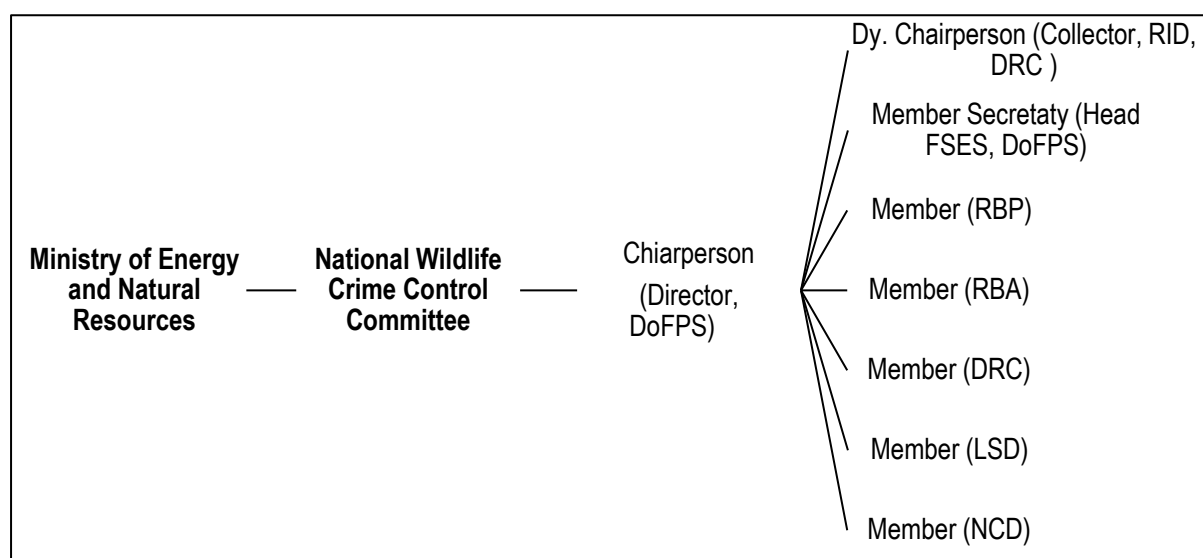


Figure 10: National Wildlife Crime Control Committee





## **6. Zero Poaching Strategy 2025-2029**

### **6.1. Concept of Zero Poaching**

The concept of a Zero poaching strategy globally, and particularly in Bhutan, revolves around the ambitious goal of eliminating poaching and illegal trade of wildlife. This approach emphasizes a comprehensive and collaborative effort involving governments, local communities, and international organizations to enforce stringent anti-poaching laws, enhance wildlife conservation measures, and promote sustainable practices. Bhutan, a country renowned for its commitment to environmental conservation, the zero poaching strategy aligns with its holistic approach to Gross National Happiness, ensuring the protection of diverse ecosystems and wildlife. By fostering awareness, deploying advanced monitoring technologies, and engaging local communities in conservation efforts, aims to eradicate poaching, safeguard biodiversity, and serve as a model for sustainable coexistence between humans and nature.

Zero Poaching is a goal for a world free of poaching and is defined as follows:

*“Zero poaching is achieved when there are no detectable traces of poaching activity in the landscape over a set time period and there is no discernible impact on a species to recover and sustain an increase in population” (WWF, 2015).*

### **6.2. Mission**

To reduce wildlife poaching in Bhutan through a collaborative effort of all relevant law enforcement agencies, conservation NGOs, civil societies, and local communities, supported by relevant international organizations for the benefit of humanity and biodiversity.

### **6.3. Goal**

Reduce poaching and illegal wildlife trade in Bhutan through implementation of six pillars of Zero Poaching:

1. Assess poaching trends and enforcement operations at site and national level;
2. Adopt new appropriate technology and up-scaling existing effective technologies;
3. Enhance institutional monitoring, surveillance and enforcement;
4. Strengthen community engagement;
5. Improve legal proceedings of Wildlife Offences; and
6. Strengthen local, regional and international partnerships and collaborations.

### **6.4. Pillar 1: Assess Poaching Trends and Enforcement Operations at Site and National Level**

Bhutan, a member of the Global Tiger Initiative, has pledged to boost tiger numbers by 2022. The third National Tiger Survey revealed population of 131 tigers, an increase by 27 % from 2015. Further, WWF's Conservation Assured Tiger Standards (CA|TS) accreditation certificate was also awarded to Royal Manas National Park (RMNP) and Jigme Singye Wangchuck National

Park (JSWNP) in 2019 (DoFPS, 2023) and Jigme Dorji National Park (JDNP) and DFO, Zhemgang in 2025. Measures such as Protection Audit in RMNP and the use of SMART as conservation law enforcement tools have been adopted by all 24 field offices including 14 DFOs and 10 Park Offices from March 2020. Additionally, METT+ tool was launched in all PA and biological corridor (BC) to evaluate current efforts, highlight shortcomings, and to reinforce effective practices.

Traditional detection methods have focused on proactive measures, but comprehending the demand, motivation, and trade dynamics is still inadequate, in the absence of comprehension of wildlife trade drivers, anti-poaching efforts may be ineffective. Over 300 herbs and 35 animal products are used in traditional medicine, with bear bile and deer musk persisting as informal remedies (WWF, 2018). A national assessment is needed to gauge illegal wildlife trade and domestic demand. Detection at airports and check posts is hindered by lack of enforcement expertise, emphasizing the importance of aligning enforcement practices with International Criminal Police Organization's (INTERPOL) standards for convictions and intelligence disruption (UNODC, 2012).

Comprehending the yearly trend of wildlife poaching and human-wildlife conflict (HWC) necessitates the analysis series of poaching and HWC data. Therefore, SMART will be used to record spatial data related to species monitoring, HWC, and anti-poaching efforts. Spatial data collected through SMART and other wildlife surveys will be utilized as an input for hotshot mapping, along with other spatial and non-spatial data produced by Forest Information Reporting and Monitoring System (FIRMS) (Table 3) to understand the location with high incidence of wildlife poaching and HWC. Strategic planning for anti-poaching and species monitoring can be implemented for long-term effectiveness following the creation of hotspot maps.

Table 3: Pillar 1 strategies and activities

Pillar	Strategy		Activity
Pillar1: Assess poaching trends and enforcement operations at site and at the national level	1.1	Document national baseline on availability and use of wildlife parts and products	Develop survey design and conduct survey to document the use of wildlife parts and products
	1.2	Strengthen monitoring and enforcement through hotspot analysis and mapping	Review and collate information on wildlife crimes, retaliatory killings and HWC Update poaching and HWC hotspot maps to identify vulnerable areas for mitigation and enforcement
	1.3	Standardize informant management system with other law enforcement agencies	Assess informant management system of other law enforcement agencies and adopt the best suited for DoFPS

## 6.5. Pillar 2: Adopt New Appropriate Technology and Up-Scaling Existing Effective Technologies



The evaluation of existing technologies used for wildlife enforcement reveals a deficiency, with a score below 10% during the inception of the first National Zero Poaching Strategy, indicating a need for a technology advancement. From the use of conventional tools for anti-poaching efforts, the DoFPS currently deploys Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) for monitoring and anti-poaching patrols. However, the use of thermal drone, thermal scope and night vision binoculars need to be enhanced to ease detection and safety during night time patrolling and surveillance (Table 4). Beside these, the use of new technologies such as Trail Guard, PoacherCams, GSM enabled CCTV, solar-powered power bank will be adopted.

Despite the detection and confiscation of illegal parts of flora and fauna through the collaborative effort, reliance on sending specimens abroad for forensic and Deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) analysis still persists due to limited resource and human capacity in the country, particularly for wildlife specimen. Therefore, the possibility of collaborating with RBP to explore and pilot the adoption of relevant Wildlife and Forest Crime Analytic Toolkit upon strengthening the forensic lab and Canin Unit of RBP.

Currently the data on the wildlife poaching, illegal trade and HWC are archived in FIRMS. FIRMS is an online database for storing and analysis the data pertaining to forest management and wildlife conservation. Further, collection of geospatial data on wildlife poaching and HWC is supplemented through SMART. Both FIRMS and SMART are based on independent database, therefore, connecting database for efficient information flow has become very important. Further, linking these databases to other crimes such as corruption, forgery, bribery, trafficking, money laundering, and contraband smuggling poses a challenge due to lack of criminal records and connections to past offenses. By embracing technology, institutions can stay ahead of sophisticated criminal tactics, streamline data collection, and strengthen overall response to wildlife crime.

Table 4: Pillar 2 strategies and activities

Pillar	Strategy	Activity
Pillar 2: Adopt new appropriate technology and up-scaling existing effective technologies	2.1	Enhance detection, species identification and enforcement through technology
		Procurement and distribution of technologies
	2.2	Review the <i>Wildlife and Forest Crime Analytic Toolkit</i> for relevance and adaption
		Assess relevance of relevant Wildlife and Forest Crime Analytic Toolkit

### 6.6.Pillar 3: Enhance Institutional Monitoring, Surveillance and Enforcement

To enhance institutional monitoring, surveillance, and enforcement in the fight against wildlife crime, a collaborative approach is imperative. Establishing strong partnerships with relevant stakeholders, including governmental bodies, NGOs, and international agencies, can

significantly bolster efforts. By pooling resources, information, and expertise, institutions can create a more robust network capable of addressing the multifaceted challenges posed by wildlife crime. This collaboration can extend to joint operations, intelligence sharing, and coordinated strategies to effectively monitor and combat illicit activities. The need to formalise NWCCC was strongly highlighted in the NZPS workshop conducted in September 2023 for consorted effort.

Based on the lesson learned from implementing first NZPS, capacity building is another key pillar identified in fortifying institutional capabilities. Investing in comprehensive training programs for field staff and law enforcement personnel can ensure that they are well-equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to tackle emerging threats. This includes training in modern surveillance techniques, data analysis, investigative skills, and legal framework related to prosecution of wildlife crime. The lack of legal background and limited legal training in the DoFPS impedes effective prosecution, resulting in occasional losing of court case, leading to boost the morale of offenders. Additionally, the conflicting roles of forestry official as informants, enforcers, and department representatives further complicates the situation. Thus, enhancing investigative, evidence collection, legal documentation, and case prosecution capacity is imperative (Table 5).

Other key challenge encountered during the implementation of the first NZPS was the identification of wildlife parts and products. The development of identification material (manual and app) and tools for easy and quick identification of wildlife parts and products will be helpful.

Table 5: Pillar 3 strategies and activities

Pillar	Strategy		Activity
Pillar 3: Enhance Institutional Monitoring, Surveillance and Enforcement	3.1	Enhance national, regional and international collaboration and linkages	Strengthening NWCCC and resolve cross cutting issues
			Attend/organize regional and international law enforcement meeting/workshop/training of NWCCC, SAWEN, INTERPOL, CITES
	3.2	Improve investigative skill, evidence collection, legal documentation and case prosecution capacity of forestry and other law enforcement agencies	Develop SOPs, manual, apps
			Strengthen wildlife protection and monitoring curriculum at UWIFoRT & College of Natural Resources (CNR)
	3.3	Increase interdiction by strategizing anti-poaching and monitoring patrols	Hotspot analysis & mapping training and conduct anti-poaching and species monitoring patrol
	3.4	Raise awareness among partner agencies and general public	Conduct awareness to a community, schools & colleges

			Prepare audio-visual materials on poaching and wildlife conservation for mass outreach
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### **6.7. Pillar 4: Strengthen Community Engagement**

Strengthening community participation is vital to achieving Zero poaching by reducing human-wildlife conflict and preventing retaliatory killings. Communities near wildlife habitats often bear the brunt of conflicts, disrupting their livelihoods and putting lives and property at risk. Engaging communities in conservation efforts fosters shared responsibility and encourages sustainable coexistence. Involving residents in developing and implementing mitigation strategies, such as community-based response groups and patrolling, increases the likelihood of success in reducing conflicts and preventing retaliatory killings. In addition, challenges in retaining informants persist due to the absence of standardized informant management guidelines across law enforcement agencies. This has particularly impacted DoFPS in information-sharing and intelligence gathering. Currently, the informants are managed on a personal relationship basis.

To achieve Zero poaching, addressing root causes of conflict and understanding socio-economic dynamics within communities is crucial. Conservation efforts should adopt a holistic approach, going beyond corrective measures and considering the needs of local residents. Implementing incentive-based programs, like livelihood opportunities tied to ecotourism or compensation schemes, serves as powerful motivators for community participation in conservation initiatives. Aligning conservation goals with the well-being of local residents turns Zero poaching into a collaborative effort, reinforcing the concept of humans and wildlife coexistence (Table 6).

Table 6: Pillar 4 strategies and activities

<b>Pillar</b>	<b>Strategy</b>		<b>Activity</b>
Pillar 4: Strengthen community Engagement	4.1	Promote human-wildlife coexistence and reduce retaliatory killing	Implement HWC C2C strategy in the conflict hotspot areas
	4.2	Strengthen community engagement in wildlife conservation	Enhance communities' engagement through citizen science initiative

### **6.8. Pillar 5: Improve Legal Proceedings of Wildlife Offences**

The changes in legal discourse, such as the Royal Bhutan Police Act 2009 and Supreme Court order in 2014, have deprived forest officers of their authority to prosecute cases under Section 32 of the FNCA 1995. Currently, forest officer is required to obtain court order for search, seizure, and arrests related to forest offenses, aligning with the Civil and Criminal Procedure Code of Bhutan, 2001 (amended 2021). The OAG Act, 2015, mandates the OAG to prosecute crimes above misdemeanours. Stringent amendments to wildlife crime laws, particularly

Section 490 of the PCB, 2004 (amendment 2011), have elevated offenses involving protected species from misdemeanours to felonies of the fourth degree. The FNCA 2023 classifies species into "*protected*" and "*other*" categories, making offenses related to protected species subject to fines, compensation, and imprisonment ranging from 3 to 5 years. However, the FNCA 2023 and FNCRR 2023 does not encompass species listed in the CITES appendices.

A comprehensive understanding of the complexities and implications of wildlife offenses by the judiciary is essential for ensuring uniform prosecution. Sensitizing the judiciary on the amended FNCA 2023, FNCRR 2023, obligations to CITES, and national environmental commitments becomes imperative. Therefore, providing training and supporting specialized training for lawyers in forestry cases could bolster law enforcement efforts (Table 7).

Table 7: Pillar 5 strategies and activities

Pillar	Strategy		Activity
Pillar 5: Improve prosecution of Wildlife Offence	5.1	Promote and instill culture of wildlife conservation through awareness	Develop behavioural change through advocacy and awareness on FNCA 2023 and FNCRR 2023
	5.2	Strengthen judicial and prosecution capacity	Training of the law enforcement agencies

## **6.9. Pillar 6: Strengthen Local, Regional and International Partnerships and Collaborations**

Strengthening local, regional, and international partnerships and collaboration is imperative in the collective effort to combat wildlife crime. At the local level, engaging communities and fostering collaboration with the national law enforcement agencies enhances the effectiveness of on-the-ground conservation efforts. Regionally, sharing intelligence, best practices, and resources among neighbouring countries can lead to robust and coordinated response to transboundary wildlife crimes.

Furthermore, international collaboration is crucial for addressing the global nature of wildlife trafficking, as criminal networks often operate across borders. Cooperation between nations can facilitate information exchange, harmonize legal frameworks, and bolster joint enforcement actions, thereby creating a unified front against the illicit wildlife trade. By enhancing partnerships at these different levels, the conservation community can better address the multifaceted challenges posed by wildlife crime and work towards preserving biodiversity on a global scale.

Bhutan, along with Nepal and Bangladesh, is part of the World Bank-funded Strengthening Regional Cooperation for Wildlife Protection in Asia (SRCWP) project since 2011 and the SAWEN. Various international and regional associations, such as ASEAN-WEN, TRAFFIC, UNODC, INTERPOL, International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICCWC), and the International Rangers Federation, can contribute to these efforts. Hence, its involvement in



regional initiatives, leveraging the expertise, tools, and financial resources provided by international organizations for mutual benefit be prioritized and strengthened (Table 8)

Table 8: Pillar 6 strategies and activities

Pillar	Strategy		Activity
Pillar 6: Strengthen local, regional and international partnerships and collaborations	6.1	Strengthen Interagency collaboration	Strengthen National Wildlife Crime Control Committee
	6.2	Strengthen regional and global collaboration	Expand and strengthen Transboundary collaboration
			Strengthen Implementation and awareness of CITES
			Fortify strategic partnerships and collaboration on transboundary wildlife crime



## 6.10. Implementation Arrangement

The implementation of the strategy will be spearheaded by the DoFPS. The NWCCC will provide guidance in policy, technical, legal, and strategic aspects, while members will collaborate to ensure an inclusive approach involving all partner agencies. A working group, comprising representatives from functional divisions and the LSD of the ministry, will oversee the implementation of activities, and the achievement of outcomes in collaboration with law enforcement agencies, non-governmental organizations, and local communities. Mid-term evaluation of the strategy is planned after 2-3 years of the implementation to incorporate lessons learned, followed by a final evaluation at the end of 5<sup>th</sup> year (Table 9).

Table 9: Logical framework of the NZPS

Pillar	Strategy	Activities	Sub-Activity	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5
Pillar1: Assess poaching trends and enforcement operations at site and at the national level	1.1	Understand possession and uses of wildlife parts and products in the country	Document national baseline on wildlife parts and products	Develop survey methodology in consultation with the relevant stakeholders				
				Training of Trainers (ToTs) & surveyors				
				Carrying out survey, certification of possession and publish report				
	1.2	Reduce poaching by incidence strengthening monitoring and enforcement operations	Review and collate information on wildlife crimes, retaliatory killings and HWC	Collect and cleanse wildlife crime and HWC data				
			Update poaching and HWC hotspot maps to identify vulnerable areas for mitigation and enforcement	Produce hotspot map at local and national level for decision support				
	1.3	Standardize informant management system with other law enforcement agencies	Assess informant management system of other law enforcement	Conduct in-house and stakeholder workshop with Law Enforcement Agencies (LEA) on informant networking system				

*National Zero Poaching Strategy 2025-2029*

Pillar	Strategy	Activities	Sub-Activity	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5
		agencies and adopt the best suited for DoFPS						
Pillar 2: Adopt new appropriate technology and up-scaling existing effective technologies	2.1	Enhance detection, species identification and enforcement through technology	Procurement distribution technologies and of	Purchase and install X-ray machine , TrailGuard , PoacherCams, CCTV, solar-powered power bank, etc				
				Procure surveillance thermal drones, poachers cam, night vision binoculars, etc.				
				Procurement of ICT equipment (high end laptop for raster data processing)				
				Provide metal detectors and train field staff removal of snares				
		Improve resource and capacity sharing mechanism to increase interdiction of illegal wildlife trade		Explore possible use of Forensics lab and Canin unit of RBP in detection of at point of entry/exit				
				Train dog handlers and develop protocol for detection and reporting of wildlife offence				
				Explore possible piloting of sniff dog for detection of wildlife parts and products at selected airport and ICPs				
				Explore possible use of Menjong Sorig Pharmaceuticals Corporation Ltd. lab for NWFP and timber species identification				
	2.2	Review the Wildlife and Forest Crime Analytic Toolkit for relevance and adaption	Review relevant Wildlife and Forest Crime Analytic Toolkit	Assess relevance of the Wildlife and Forest Crime Analytic Toolkit				
Pillar 3: Enhance institutional monitoring	3.1	Enhance national, regional and international	Strengthening National Wildlife Crime Control Committee and resolve cross cutting issues	Conduct regular meeting and resolve crosscutting enforcement issues				

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Pillar	Strategy	Activities	Sub-Activity	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5
and enforcement capacity	collaboration and linkages	Attend/organize regional and international law enforcement meeting/workshop/training of NWCCC, SAWEN, INTERPOL, CITES	Attend/organise NWCCC, SAWEN, INTERPOL, CITES, Ranger's Congress					
	3.2 Improve investigative skill, evidence collection, legal documentation and case prosecution capacity of forestry and other law enforcement agencies	Develop SOPs, manual, mobile app	Develop and implement Wildlife crime investigation and legal documentation manual					
			Develop wildlife contraband identification manual					
			Develop/adopt wildlife species identification Apps					
		Capacity building of forestry staff and other law enforcement agencies	SMART, SMART connect and Offender profiling					
			Training on monitoring & surveillance equipment handling (Drone, poachers cam, X-Ray, Metal detector, Sniff dog)					
			Training on forensic science (sample collection, storage and transport), digital forensic and cyber patrolling					
			Train law enforcement agencies staff in Crime scene investigation (CSI), evidence lifting, legal documentation and case prosecution					
			Training on data science (Threat analysis, hotspot mapping) for informed decision making					
			Wildlife contraband identification through parts, products and derivatives					
			Chemical immobilization and rehabilitation of wildlife					
			Survival skill training (first aid and jungle survival)					
			Consultation workshop to develop curriculum					



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Pillar	Strategy	Activities	Sub-Activity	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5
			Strengthen wildlife protection and monitoring curriculum at UWIFoRT& CNR					
	3.3	Strategize Anti-poaching and monitoring patrol	Strategizing staff deployment and conduct anti-poaching and species monitoring patrol					
			Intensify monitoring and surveillance patrol in hotspot areas (poaching and HWC)					
			Procurement of patrol gears					
	3.4	Raise awareness among partner agencies and general public	Conduct awareness to and by NWCCC to communities, schools & colleges					
Pillar 4: Strengthen community Engagement			Prepare Audio Visual materials on poaching and wildlife conservation for mass outreach					
			Develop and disseminate wildlife conservation and poaching trend Audio Visual material for mass outreach					
	4.1	Reduce HWC and retaliatory killing by promoting human-wildlife coexistence initiatives	Asses the existing C2C strategy and implement new in the conflict hotspot areas					
			Review the effectiveness of QRT and Community conservation group and upscaling					
			Supply QRT tools and equipment					
			Integrate religious discourse/teaching in conservation advocacy to discourage wildlife killing					
			Review/implementation of HWC strategy 2018-2028					
	4.2		Form community youth conservation group and develop conservation stewardship					
			Strengthen community engagement through citizen science initiative					
			Strengthen conservation awareness in schools and develop conservation stewardship					

**National Zero Poaching Strategy 2025-2029**

Pillar	Strategy	Activities	Sub-Activity	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5
Pillar 5: Improve prosecution of Wildlife Offence	5.1	Develop behavioural change through advocacy and awareness on FNCA 2023 and FNCRR 2023	Conduct public awareness on CCPC, ACAB, FNCA 2023 and Rules relating wildlife crime and species conservation					
	5.2	Strengthen judicial and prosecution capacity	Build capacity of other law enforcement agencies					
			Present issues of concern in the Judiciary forum through NWCCC for standard interpretation of forestry law					
			Compile and submit annual updated wildlife crime report and share information on past cases and convictions					
			Support judiciary in pursuing environmental and conservation related laws training					
Pillar 6: Strengthen local, regional and international partnerships and collaborations	6.1	Strengthen Interagency collaboration	Strengthen National Wildlife Crime Control Committee					
			Formalize NWCCC and develop ToT					
			Conduct annual NWCCC meeting to provide policy, legal and technical guidance					
	6.2	Strengthen regional and global collaboration	Build capacity of NWCCC on national and international laws					
			Exchange visit to countries with best enforcement and intelligence management practices/system					
			Ratification of SAWEN statute in accordance to National Law					
			Conduct/attend meetings with international organisation and countries					
			Develop CITES appendix species handbook					

*National Zero Poaching Strategy 2025-2029*

Pillar	Strategy		Activities	Sub-Activity	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5
			Strengthen Implementation and awareness of CITES	Conduct awareness on CITES convention, obligations and implementing mechanism					
				Ensure timely submission of CITES reports					
				Explore CITES e-permitting system					
			Fortify strategic partnerships and collaboration on transboundary wildlife crime	conduct meeting, joint monitoring and patrolling					
				Develop landscape-level proposal for implementation and partnerships					

## 6.11. Indicative Budget

In order to implement the National Zero Poaching Strategy 2025-2029, a tentative budget of Nu. 193.30 million spread over five years is proposed (Table 10). For this strategy period, DoFPS will be implementing key activities through the support of RGoB, Bhutan for Life (BFL) project and other donor, especially the WWF funded projects with DoFPS head office and independent projects with field offices. Additional funds not reflected need to be sourced out for the implementation of the strategy.

Table 10: Schedule of tentative budget

<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Y1</b>	<b>Y2</b>	<b>Y3</b>	<b>Y4</b>	<b>Y5</b>	<b>Total</b>
1.1 Understand possession and uses of wildlife parts and products in the country	3.20	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	3.20
1.2 Reduce poaching incidence by strengthening monitoring and enforcement operations	7.30	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.70	8.00
1.3 Standardize informant management system with other law enforcement agencies			0.55			0.55
2.1 Enhance detection, species identification and enforcement through technology	18.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	19.00
2.2 Review the Wildlife and Forest Crime Analytic Toolkit for relevance and adaption	1.50	0.00	1.55	0.00	0.00	3.05
3.1 Enhance national, regional and international collaboration and linkages	0.55	0.55	0.55	0.55	0.55	2.75
3.2 Improve investigative skill, evidence collection, legal documentation and case prosecution capacity of forestry and other law enforcement agencies	2.40	7.50	4.85	3.30	2.05	20.10
3.3 Strategize Anti-poaching and monitoring patrol	12.00	22.00	12.00	22.00	12.00	80.00
3.4 Raise awareness among partner agencies and general public	0.75	0.50	0.05	0.50	0.30	2.10
4.1 Reduce HWC and retaliatory killing by promoting human-wildlife coexistence initiatives	1.50	10.30	1.00	9.00	2.40	24.20
4.2 Strengthen informant network system	1.20					1.20
5.1 Strengthen judicial and prosecution capacity	2.90	3.70	2.70	0.70	3.70	13.70
6.1 Strengthen Interagency collaboration	1.45	0.20	1.20	0.20	0.45	3.50
6.2 Strengthen regional and global collaboration	4.55	1.60	2.10	1.60	2.10	11.95
<b>Total</b>	<b>57.30</b>	<b>47.35</b>	<b>26.55</b>	<b>37.85</b>	<b>24.25</b>	<b>193.30</b>



## 6.12. Monitoring and Evaluation

The monitoring and evaluation framework will facilitate the tracking of the strategy's advancement towards the Zero poaching goal. It will also help identify any issues, obstacles, or unintended outcomes, allowing for responsive measures and adjustments to the strategy based on lessons learned in response to changing circumstances. The annual monitoring will be carried out by implementing office, while mid-term and final evaluation will be carried out by DoFPS. This assessment aims to determine key outcomes and impacts, offering guidance to the Department and Ministry on future interventions (Table 11). Besides, it serves as a means of providing accountability to the government and donors.

Table 11: Monitoring and Evaluation framework

Strategy		Activities	Sub-Activity	Indicator	Means of Verification	Responsibility
Pillar1: Assess poaching trends and enforcement operations at site and at the national level						
1.1	Understand possession and uses of wildlife parts and products in the country	Document national baseline on wildlife parts and products	Develop survey methodology in consultation with the relevant stakeholders	Data collection methodology developed	Methodology manual	NCD/UWIFoRT
			Training of ToTs & surveyors	Training conducted	Training report	NCD/UWIFoRT
			Carrying out survey, certification of possession and publish report	Survey conducted and report published	Report	NCD/FMID
1.2	Reduce poaching incidence by strengthening monitoring and enforcement operations	Review and collate information on wildlife crimes, retaliatory killings and HWC	Collect and cleanse wildlife crime and HWC data	Data on wildlife crimes and retaliatory killing collected and report published	Report	FMID/NCD
		Update poaching and HWC hotspot maps to identify vulnerable areas for mitigation and enforcement	Produce hotspot map at local and national level for decision support	Hotspot map report published	Report and maps	FMID/NCD
1.3	Standardize informant management	Assess informant management system of other law enforcement	Conduct in-house and LEA stakeholder workshop on informant networking system	Informant network system assessed and recommended	Report	DoFPS

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Strategy		Activities	Sub-Activity	Indicator	Means Verification	of Responsibility
	system with other law enforcement agencies	agencies and adopt the best suited for DoFPS				
<b>Pillar 2: Adopt new appropriate technology and up-scaling existing effective technologies</b>						
2.1	Enhance detection, species identification and enforcement through technology	Procurement and distribution of technologies	Purchase and install X-ray machine, TrailGuard, PoacherCams, CCTV, solar-powered power bank, etc.	Equipment purchased	equipment	FMID
			Procure surveillance thermal drones, poachers cam, night vision binoculars, etc.	Technology implemented	Equipment	FMID
			Procurement of ICT equipment (high end laptop for raster data processing)	ICT equipment procured and distribution list	GIMS	FMID
			Provide metal detectors and train field staff removal of snares	Metal detector procured and distributed	Procurement list/equipment	FMID, Field Office
		Improve resource and capacity sharing mechanism to increase interdiction of illegal wildlife trade	Explore possible use of Forensics lab and Canin unit of RBP in detection of at point of entry/exit	MoU signed	Report on service use	FMID
			Train dog handlers and develop protocol for detection and reporting of wildlife offence	No. trained	Report	DoFPS & RBP
			Explore possible piloting of sniff dog for detection of wildlife parts and products at selected airport and ICPs	No. of meeting	No of sites piloted	DoFPS & RBP

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Strategy		Activities	Sub-Activity	Indicator	Means Verification of	Responsibility
			Explore possible use of Menjong Sorig Pharmaceuticals Corporation Ltd. lab for NWFP and timber species identification	MoU signed	Report on service use	DoFPS & MSPCL
2.2	Review the Wildlife and Forest Crime Analytic Toolkit for relevance and adaption	Review relevant Wildlife and Forest Crime Analytic Toolkit	Assess relevance of the Wildlife and Forest Crime Analytic Toolkit by piloting in few offices	Toolkit reviewed	Report	FMID
<b>Pillar 3: Enhance institutional monitoring and enforcement capacity</b>						
3.1	Enhance national, regional and international collaboration and linkages	Strengthening Wildlife Crime Control Committee and resolve cross cutting issues	Conduct regular meeting and resolve crosscutting enforcement issues	No. of meeting conducted	Reports/MoM	FMID, NWCCC
		Attend/organize regional and international law enforcement meeting/workshop/training of NWCCC, SAWEN, INTERPOL, CITES	Attend/organise NWCCC, SAWEN, INTERPOL, CITES, Rangers congress	No. of events attended	Events report	FMID, UWFoRT, NWCCC
3.2	Improve investigative skill, evidence collection, legal documentation and case prosecution	Develop SOPs, manual, mobile app	Develop Wildlife crime investigation and legal documentation manual	Manual development	Manual	FMID, NCD, UWIFoRT
			Develop wildlife contraband identification manual	No. of workshop conducted	Manual	
			Develop/adopt wildlife species identification Apps	Nos. of workshop conducted	App	

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Strategy		Activities	Sub-Activity	Indicator	Means Verification of	Responsibility
	capacity of forestry and other law enforcement agencies	Capacity building of forestry staff and other law enforcement agencies	SMART, SMART connect and Offender profiling	Staff trained	Training report, database & data used for DS	FMID, UWIFoRT, Field Office
			Training on monitoring & surveillance equipment handling (Drone, poachers cam, X-Ray, Metal detector, Sniff dog)	Increase in no. of detection	Report	FMID, NWCCC
			Training on forensic science (sample collection, storage and transport), digital forensic and cyber patrolling	Increase in no. of detection	Report	FMID, NWCCC
			Train law enforcement agencies staff in Crime scene investigation (CSI), evidence lifting, legal documentation and case prosecution	No. of staff trained	No. of case successfully prosecuted	DoFPS, NWCCC
			Training on data science (Threat analysis, hotspot mapping) for informed decision making	No. of staff trained	Hotspot maps used for decision support	FMID, NCD, UWIFoRT
			Wildlife contraband identification through parts, products and derivatives	No. of staff trained	Seizure reports	FMID, NCD, UWIFoRT
			Chemical immobilization and rehabilitation of wildlife	No. of staff trained	No. of animals rescued/released	NCD, UWIFoRT, Field Office
			Survival skill training (first aid and jungle survival)	No. Training	Training report	UWIFoRT, FMID,



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Strategy		Activities	Sub-Activity	Indicator	Means Verification of	Responsibility
		Strengthen wildlife protection and monitoring curriculum at UWIFoRT & CNR	Consultation workshop to develop curriculum	Curriculum developed	Curriculum integrated in teaching module	DoFPS, NWCCC,
			Review and incorporate protection and enforcement curriculum at UWIFoRT & CNR	Curriculum reviewed and updated	Curriculum updated in teaching module	FMID, UWIFoRT & NWCCC
3.3	Strategize Anti-poaching and monitoring patrol	Strategizing staff deployment and conduct anti-poaching and species monitoring patrol	Intensify monitoring and surveillance patrol in hotspot areas (poaching and HWC)	No. patrolled/offence detected	Patrol/offence reports	FMIS and Field Office
			Procurement of patrol gears	Patrol gear procured	Distribution list	FMIS
3.4	Raise awareness among partner agencies and general public	Conduct awareness to and by NWCCC to communities, schools & colleges		No. of Awareness program conducted	Report & feedback	DoFPS & NWCCC
		Prepare AV materials on poaching and wildlife conservation for mass outreach	Develop and air wildlife conservation and poaching trend AV material for mass out reach	No. of AV produced	AV broadcasted in the mass media	FMID, NCD, GoVTech
Pillar 4: Strengthen community Engagement						
4.1	Reduce HWC and retaliatory killing by promoting human-wildlife coexistence initiatives	Implement HWC C2C strategy in the conflict hotspot areas	Asses the existing C2C strategy and implement new in the conflict hotspot areas	No. of communities	Report and distribution list	NCD, Field Office
			Review the effectiveness of QRT and Community conservation group and upscaling	Effectiveness of QRT	Assessment report	FMID, NCD, Field Office
			Supply QRT tools and equipment	No. of Group	Report and distribution list	NCD, Field Office

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Strategy		Activities	Sub-Activity	Indicator	Means Verification of	Responsibility
			Integrate religious discourse/teaching in conservation advocacy to discourage wildlife killing	No. of Awareness	Awareness report	NCD, Field Office
			Review/implementation of HWC strategy 2018-2028	HWC strategy implementation	Report	NCD, Field Office
		Strengthen community engagement through citizen science initiative	From community youth conservation group and develop conservation stewardship	No. of Group formed	Report	NCD, Field Office
			Strengthen conservation awareness in schools and develop conservation stewardship	Meeting conducted	Training report	FMID, NCD, Field Office
Pillar 5: Improve prosecution of wildlife offence						
5.1	Strengthen judicial and prosecution capacity	Develop behavioural change through advocacy and awareness on FNCA 2023 and FNCRR 2023	Conduct public awareness on CCPC, ACAB, FNCA 2023 and Rules relating wildlife crime and species conservation	No. of awareness program conducted	Report	DoFPS (PAs and FDs)
			Present issues in the Judiciary forum through NWCCC for standard interpretation of forestry law	No. of conference attended/conducted	MoM	DoFPS
		Build capacity of other law enforcement agencies	Compile and submit annual updated wildlife crime report and share information on past cases and convictions	No. of report produced	Report	DoFPS, Judiciary
			Support judiciary in pursuing environmental and conservation related laws training	No. of trainings conducted	Training report	JSWLS/ DoFPS

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Strategy		Activities	Sub-Activity	Indicator	Means Verification of	Responsibility
			Update judiciary on criminal offence as per the Schedule list in FNCA, FNCRR 2023 and CITES Appendix and other international agreements	No. of Meeting	MoM	DoFPS, Judiciary
<b>Pillar 6: Strengthen local, regional and international partnerships and collaborations</b>						
6.1	Strengthen Interagency collaboration	Strengthen National Wildlife Crime Control Committee	Conduct annual NWCCC meeting to provide policy, legal and technical guidance	No. of meetings conducted	Minutes of meeting	DoFPS
			Build capacity of NWCCC on national and international laws	No. of members trained	Participant's list	DoFPS
6.2	Strengthen regional and global collaboration	Expand and strengthen Transboundary collaboration	Exchange visit to countries with best enforcement and intelligence management practices/system	No. of visits	Report	Field Offices
			Ratification of SAWEN statute in accordance to National Law	Statute rectified	Statute	DoFPS, Ministry & OAG
			Conduct/attend meetings with international organisation and countries	No. of meeting conducted	Minutes of meeting	DoFPS
		Strengthen Implementation and awareness of CITES	Develop CITES appendix species handbook	Handbook developed	Handbook	DoFPS
			Conduct awareness on CITES convention, obligations and implementing mechanism	No. of awareness conducted	Reports	UWIFoRT & NCD
			Ensure timely submission of CITES reports	No. of reports	Reports	UWIFoRT & NCD
			Explore CITES e-permitting system	e-system developed	Online system	DoFPS

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Strategy		Activities	Sub-Activity	Indicator	Means of Verification	Responsibility
		Fortify strategic partnerships and collaboration on transboundary wildlife crime	Ensure transboundary information sharing and conduct monitoring and patrolling	Transboundary collaboration	MoM & reports	DoFPS
			Develop a landscape-level proposal for implementation and partnerships	No. of proposals	Proposals	DoFPS

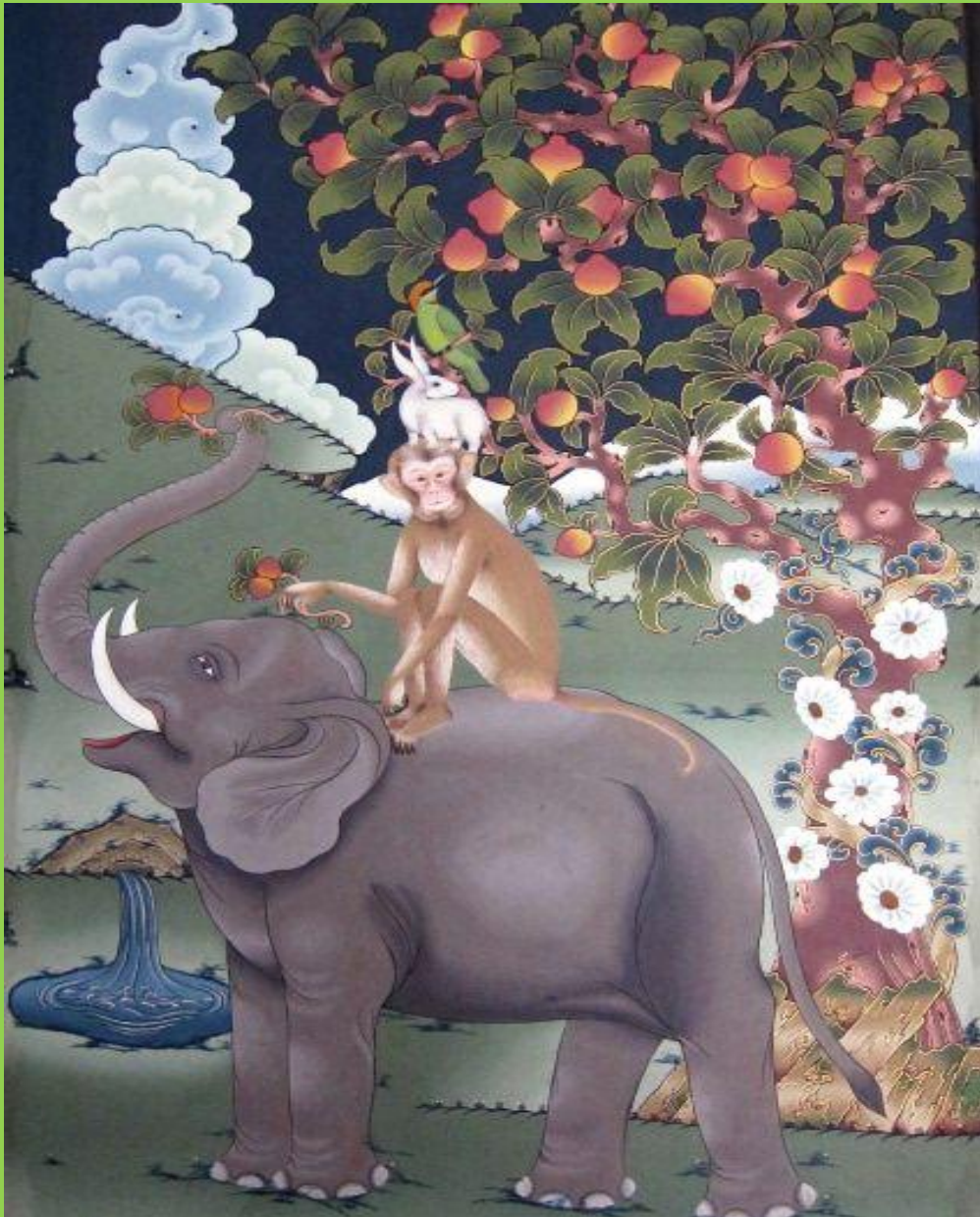


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**Annexure I: Zero Poaching Strategy Revision Workshop Participants**

<b>SL. No.</b>	<b>Participant's Name</b>	<b>Designation</b>	<b>Name of Office</b>
1	Kado Tshering	Specialist III	Ugyen Wangchuck Institute for Foresryt Research and Training
2	Arun Rai	Principal Forest Officer	Forest Monitoring and Information Division
3	Kinga Norbu	Sr. Forestry Officer	Forest Monitoring and Information Division
4	Tashi Dhendup	Sr. Forestry Officer	Nature Conservation Division
5	Tashi Dendup	Sr. Forest Ranger I	Divisional Forest Office, Bumthang
6	Dorji Thinley	Forestry Officer	Divisional Forest Office, Dagana
7	Rinzin Dorji	Dy. Chief Forestry Officer	Divisional Forest Office, Gedu
8	Norbu Wangchuk	Dy. Chief Forestry Officer	Divisional Forest Office, Mongar
9	Sonam Wangdi	Sr. Forest Ranger I	Divisional Forest office, Paro
10	Pema Tshering	Sr. Forest Ranger III	Divisional Forest Office, Pema Gatshel
11	Chhimi Dorji	Sr. Forest Ranger I	Divisional Forest Office, Samdrup Jongkhar
12	Lhonam Lepcha	Sr. Forester	Divisional Forest Office, Samtse
13	Nidup Gyeltshen	Forest Ranger II	Divisional Forest Office, Thimphu
14	Tshering Dorji	Sr. Forest Ranger II	Divisional Forest Office, Trashigang
15	Chhimi Dorji	Sr. Forestry Officer	Divisional Forest Office, Tsirang
16	Tenzin Dorji	Sr. Forest Ranger I	Divisional Forest Office, Wangdue
17	Phub Dorji	Sr. Forestry Officer	Divisional Forest Office, Zhemgang
18	Rinzin Wangchuk	Forest Ranger II	Divisional Forest OfficeSarpang
19	Kunzang Thinley	Sr. Forest Ranger	Bumdeling Wildlife Sanctuary
20	Wangchuk	Forestry Officer	Jigme Dorji National Park
21	Jamtsho	Sr. Forest Ranger I	Jigme Singye Wangchuck National Park
22	Tshewang Namgay	Forest Ranger I	Jigme Khesar Strict Nature Reserve
23	Tashi	Forest Ranger II	Jomotsangkha Wildlife Sanctuary
24	Kuenley Gyeltshen	Dy. Chief Forestry Officer	Phibsoo Wildife Sanctuary
25	Ugyen Lhendup	Sr. Forest Ranger I	Phrumsengla National Park
26	Tshering Dorji	Sr. Forestry Officer	Royal Manas National Park
27	Jambay Dhendrup	Sr. Forest Ranger II	Sakteng Wildlife Sanctuary
28	Tshering Dhendup	Chief Forestry Officer	Wangchuck Centennial National Park



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