



JOINT PRESS RELEASE

Bhutan Celebrates Global Tiger Day with the launch of innovative projects to promote human-tiger coexistence

29 July 2026, Trongsa: On the occasion of Global Tiger Day, observed annually on 29 July, Bhutan celebrates its significant conservation milestones by launching three pioneering projects aimed at fostering coexistence between tigers and local communities. With the national tiger population increasing by 27 percent between 2015 and 2022, Bhutan continues to demonstrate a deep commitment to forest health and wildlife protection.

The projects will be implemented in Nubi *gewog*, Trongsa, a human-tiger conflict hotspot, recognizing the daily realities and economic losses faced by communities living alongside the tiger. Two of the projects, namely, Tiger Impact Certificate and RiKhaNET are supported by WWF-Australia through the Global Tiger Innovation Fund (GTIF). The third project is a partnership between WWF-Bhutan and Yangphel Adventure Travel.

The GTIF was launched last year during the Global Tiger Day. The innovative fund is an outcome of the Sustainable Finance for Tiger Landscapes Conference, 2024, which aimed to catalyze USD 1 billion for global tiger conservation.

Nubi is also one of the six Nature-based and Wildlife Tourism project sites which is designed to integrate tourism enterprise development, conservation, and community-benefit-sharing. Nature-based and wildlife tourism is expected to contribute significantly to Bhutan's sustainable economic development, generating foreign exchange, creating jobs and income for communities, financing protected and non-protected landscapes, and helping offset the cost of human-wildlife conflict. Collectively, these benefits strengthen incentives for communities to act as long-term stewards of wildlife and their habitats.

Tiger Impact Certificate (TIC)

The Tiger Impact Certificate is a results-based conservation financing mechanism designed to reward communities for verified tiger conservation and human-tiger coexistence outcomes. Under this framework, when local communities successfully protect habitats and reduce conflict, these results are certified and can be purchased by responsible buyers. The revenue generated is then directed back into community benefits and local conservation actions, making tiger protection a sustainable and beneficial model for those on the front lines.

RiKhaNET

RiKhaNET is a technology-driven initiative led by Druk Holding and Investments Limited (DHI) in collaboration with the Department of Forests and Park Services (DoFPS) and WWF-Bhutan. The project is supported by WWF-Australia. This project aims to shift conflict management from a reactive response to proactive prevention. By integrating Artificial Intelligence (AI) and field sensors with existing ecological and Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool (SMART)-based field data, RiKhaNET generates risk heatmaps and geofencing alerts. These automated notifications will help rangers and community members anticipate high-risk areas and prevent incidents before they occur.

WWF-Bhutan and Yangphel Adventure Travels Partnership

Yangphel Adventure Travels is the first local private partner for WWF-Bhutan under its Private and Corporate Sector Engagement Project. Under this partnership, the 90 km ancient trail through 14 villages in Nubi will be revived. The initiative aims to promote nature-positive tourism that protects biodiversity while supporting the long-term resilience of natural ecosystems.

The event was graced by Lyonpo Gem Tshering, Minister for Energy and Natural Resources, Trongsa Dzongda Wangdi Gyeltshen, and attended by senior officials, local government representatives, students and community members. The primary objective of these launches is to strengthen coordination among stakeholders and introduce practical, relatable solutions that support human-tiger coexistence.

Quotes:

H.E. Lyonpo Gem Tshering, Minister for Energy and Natural Resources

The significance of celebrating Global Tiger Day here is therefore profound. It brings the national tiger conservation discussion directly to the people who share their land and livelihoods with this great predator. It reminds us that the success of tiger conservation cannot be measured only by an increase in tiger numbers. It must also be measured by whether communities living with tigers feel safe, respected, supported and fairly compensated for the costs they bear.

Mr. Ujjwal Deep Dahal, Chief Executive Officer, Druk Holding and Investments Limited

“RiKhaNET represents a shift from reacting to human-wildlife conflict to planning and preventing it. By harnessing technology, it seeks to protect both people and wildlife before conflict occurs. More importantly, it stands as a powerful example of what is possible when government, industry, researchers, and communities come together with a shared vision and a common purpose.”

Mr. Chimi Rinzin, Country Director, WWF-Bhutan

“Bhutan's biodiversity assets represent an underdeveloped economic sector. Besides supporting co-existence, these initiatives are aimed at advancing conservation from a focus on protecting natural assets to safeguard ecosystem services alone, towards a transformative approach that pivots nature and biodiversity as a key driver of local economic development.”

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