



**Subregional Conference on
Gender Equality and Social Inclusion in South Asia:
Reflections and Way Forward**
4-7 October 2022; Paro, Bhutan
<https://events.development.asia/learning-events/subregional-conference-gender-equality-and-social-inclusion-south-asia-reflections>



INFORMATION NOTE

I. OVERVIEW

ADB's South Asia Department (SARD) has recently developed a gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) framework with accompanying guidance notes to assist SARD's GESI teams, sector divisions, resident missions, and project teams in fulfilling the GESI-related vision and operational priorities of ADB's Strategy 2030 in the context of South Asia.

Objectives

The subregional conference will serve as a forum for SARD to present its GESI framework and seek the guidance of ADB's partners in the six member countries in South Asia in ensuring the relevance and alignment of SARD's GESI framework with their GESI program priorities, and operationalizing the GESI framework with due consideration of the countries' contexts.

Target Participants

The target participants include: ADB's partner agencies in its operations in Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, and Sri Lanka such as executing and implementing agencies (EA/IAs) of ADB-financed projects, partner ministries, advocacy- and identity-based civil society organizations (CSOs), academic institutions, and international non-government organizations working with and for the socially excluded and vulnerable sectors. They will be joined by members of ADB's board of directors and staff from select thematic and regional departments.

II. EVENT SCHEDULE AND VENUES

The event schedules and venues are as follows:

Event	Dates/Time	Venues
➤ Welcome Cocktails	3 October 2022 17:00 – 18:30	▪ Le Meridien (LM) Paro Restaurant
➤ Day 1: Subregional Conference	4 October 2022	
• Lunch	12:00	▪ LM Paro Restaurant
• Core Sessions	13:00 – 17:00	▪ Tendrel Conference Hall
• Dinner	18:00	▪ LM Paro Restaurant
➤ Day 2: Subregional Conference	5 October 2022	
• Breakfast	07:00	▪ LM Paro Restaurant
• Core Sessions	09:00 – 12:00	▪ Tendrel Conference Hall
• Lunch	12:00	▪ LM Paro Restaurant
• Core Sessions	13:00 – 17:00	▪ Tendrel Conference Hall
• Dinner	18:00	▪ LM Paro Restaurant
➤ Day 3: Subregional Conference	6 October 2022	
• Breakfast	07:00	▪ LM Paro Restaurant
• Core Sessions	09:00 – 11:30	▪ Tendrel Conference Hall
• Lunch	11:30 – 12:00	▪ LM Paro Restaurant
• Tshechu Festival	12:15 – 17:00	▪ Thimphu, Bhutan
	17:00	▪ Taj Tashi Hotel, Thimphu

- Dinner

➤ Project Site Visits	7 October 2022	
• Breakfast	07:00	▪ LM Paro Restaurant
• Visit to <i>Technical Training Institute Khuruthang</i>	08:00 – 17:30	▪ Punakha
• Dinner	18:00	▪ LM Paro Restaurant

III. TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

A. COVID-19 Protocols

Please refer to the Notice from the Royal Government of Bhutan (Appendix 1).

B. Bhutan Visa

With the exception of nationals of Bangladesh, India and Maldives, all other visitors to Bhutan are required to secure a prior-approved visa by submitting a visa application form, clear copy of passport details, and a passport size digital photo to the Government of Bhutan through the Bhutan Resident Mission. While a prior-approved visa is not required for nationals from Bangladesh, India and Maldives, they must obtain an e-permit and carry a passport that must be valid for at least six months from the intended date of departure from Bhutan. No visa fee (gratis) will be paid upon entry.

C. Transit Visas

Transit visas must be applied by the participants, themselves, as needed. Please check requirements of the transit country.

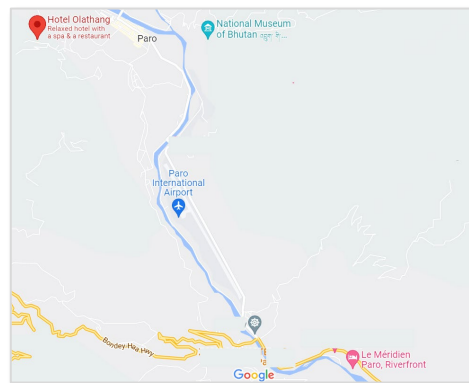
D. Hotel Accommodation

Due to the limited number of rooms at the hotel venue, participants will be staying at 2 different hotels. Please refer to the attached vicinity map for the hotels' locations:

Le Meridien Paro, Riverfront
P.O. Box No. 1265, Shaba, Paro, Bhutan
Tel.: +975 827 0300 / +975 827 1403

Hotel Olathang
P.O. Box No. 1214, Paro, Bhutan
Tel.: +975 827 1304

Hotel accommodation includes breakfast which opens at 7:00 am daily. Check-in is normally at 2:00 pm. Check-out is at 12:00 noon. Charges for late check out will apply: (i) half-day charge if between 12:00 and 4:00 p.m.; (ii) if beyond 4:00 p.m., the charge will be equivalent to a full-overnight rate.



E. Travel Allowances

ADB will provide the following for the ADB-funded participants:

1. A modest daily subsistence allowance to cover the cost of your meals and other incidental expenses during your stay in Bhutan for the duration of the Conference; and
2. A fixed lump sum miscellaneous travel allowance, to cover the cost of airport transfers from the city of origin, visa fees (if applicable), terminal fees, and other necessary travel expenses.

To process the disbursement of the allowances, each ADB-funded participant is requested to submit the following documents to the ADB Secretariat Desk.

- Photocopy of airline ticket
- Photocopy of passport details
- Original arrival boarding passes
- Original copy of the Official Receipt of Payment (*if the airline ticket has been purchased by the participant*).

*****Please put the following in one (1) envelope with your printed name, country, and organization. Complete documents are required for the release of the allowance. This is due to compliance of ADB internal accounting and auditing procedures.**

F. Incidentals

All incidental expenses (e.g., overseas telephone calls, laundry, drinks and snacks from the mini bar, use of business center, etc.) including extended stays, and additional breakfasts or beds will be on the personal account of the participant and should be settled upon check-out. Participants are required to pay charges with respect to rooms remaining vacant due to late arrival or early departure, or any changes in travel arrangements. To avoid these unnecessary charges, participant must advise proper ADB staff sufficient notice (3-days before any change in travel arrangements).

G. Airport Transfers

Upon arrival at the airport, participants are requested to approach the liaison officer of the hotel (for those staying at Le Meridien Paro) or the events management firm (for those staying at Hotel Olathang). Airport transfers have been arranged by the hotel and the events management firm. Contact details will be updated in the events page. Distance between the hotels and the airport are from 4 to 5 kilometers.

H. In-city transportation

It is safer to book a taxi through the hotel concierge. Transfers between Hotel Olathang and Le Meridien Paro will be provided.

I. Event Registration

Participants are requested to sign the daily attendance sheets at the Secretariat Desk located by the entrance of the Tendrel Conference Hall, LM Paro each day.

J. Hospitality Arrangements

The following meals will be provided during the Subregional Conference:

- 3 October – welcome evening cocktails at Le Meridien Paro
- 4 October – lunch; afternoon coffee/tea; and dinner at LM Paro
- 5 October – morning and afternoon coffee/tea; lunch; and dinner at LM Paro
- 6 October – morning coffee/tea and lunch at LM Paro; and dinner at Taj Tashi Thimphu

7 October – morning coffee/tea and lunch in Punakha; and dinner at LM Paro

Daily buffet breakfast is complimentary at the hotel with room occupancy.

K. Wi-Fi Access

Free wi-fi will be accessible to conference participants during the sessions.

L. About Bhutan

1. Time zone

Paro and Thimphu are 6 hours ahead of the Greenwich Mean Time (GMT+6).

2. Currency exchange and credit cards

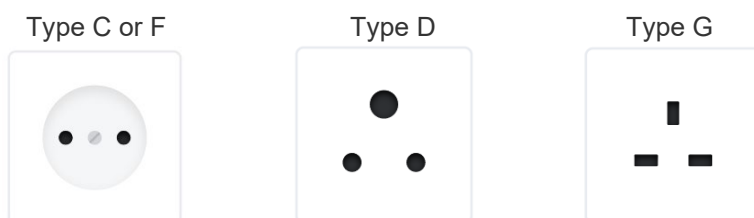
The currency of Bhutan is Ngultrum. As of 26 September 2022, the exchange rate is Ngultrum 81.25 = USD\$ 1. Exchange counters and ATMs are available both at the airport, and at the hotel lobby. International credit cards such as American Express, Master Card, and Visa are accepted in limited establishments. Participants are encouraged to possess local currency as needed.

3. Weather and ADB Indoor Temperature

In October, the temperature in Paro and Thimphu ranges between 8-20 degrees Celsius. Participants are highly encouraged to bring warm clothes as temperatures may drop significantly in the evening and in higher areas.

4. Electric current

Bhutan operates on a 230V supply voltage and 50Hz. Electrical sockets may be type C, D and G. For other types of plugs, you may wish to bring an adaptor.



5. International Direct Dialing (IDD)

The Bhutan code is +975.

6. Medical facilities

If you are taking medications for any medical condition, please bring these with you as we cannot ensure their availability in Bhutan. Basic first aid kits, if needed, are available from the hotel's information desk.

For urgent medical attention, you may contact the hotel's concierge for assistance in being transported to the nearest hospitals.

IV. CONTACTS

If you require additional information or assistance, please contact the Secretariat:

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NOTIFICATION from NC19TF**September 19, 2022**

Under the guidance of His Majesty The King, hard work and dedication of our frontliners, and support and cooperation of the people, we achieved significant milestones in our fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.

Six months after the relaxation of restrictions and adoption of the “Protection Strategy”, the overall pandemic situation in the country is under control. The evidence so far suggests that it is safe to consider further relaxations, while continuing vaccination and strengthening clinical care.

With low virulence of the virus and high vaccination coverage today, the end of the pandemic is in sight. However, until the pandemic is declared over, the Ministry of Health will continue to monitor and strengthen active surveillance for new variants to inform national COVID-19 policy.

Therefore, we would like to notify the general public and all implementing agencies at all formal points of entry of the following requirements for all incoming travelers with effect from September 23, 2022:

1. There will be **NO COVID-19 testing** requirement for inbound travelers. However, all individuals (12 years and above) entering Bhutan may be subjected to random RT-PCR testing at the formal points of entry or at the worksite to maintain COVID-19 surveillance for new variants. No fee shall be charged for the RT-PCR testing for surveillance;
2. The employers of the foreign workers and day workers shall ensure that their employees are fully vaccinated and in case of unvaccinated individuals, vaccines shall be provided by MOH through the health facility at a cost;
3. Full vaccination is defined as two doses of any vaccine with a two-dose schedule or a single dose of any vaccine with a single-dose schedule;
4. Individuals who test positive shall follow the five-day isolation protocol (without having to test at the end of the isolation period). In case of non-Bhutanese who test positive, they must pay for isolation and treatment, if needed; and
5. All escort services currently provided to travelers in the border areas shall be discontinued.

General public health measures:

- 1) All symptomatic individuals are encouraged to come forward for testing in the health facilities (or flu clinic) to enhance disease surveillance not just for COVID-19 but also for other respiratory diseases of concern;
- 2) The use of face masks is recommended for individuals having flu-like symptoms and people with comorbidities; and
- 3) Hand washing will be continuously advocated and recommended to prevent not only COVID-19 but other communicable diseases.

Prime Minister's Office - PMO, Bhutan



Monument and Sacred Sites Charging Entry Fees

Questions and Answers

National Monument Committee

1. List of monument and sacred sites charging entry fees from 23rd September 2022

Thimphu	Paro	Punakha	Chhukha/ Phuentsholing	Trongsa	Bumthang
Tashichho Dzong	Taktsang	Punakha Dzong	Rinchending Goempa	Trongsa Dzong	Jambay Lhakhang
Simtokha Dzong	Kyichu Lhakhang	Chhimi Lhakhang			Jakar Dzong
National Memorial Chorten	Rinpung Dzong				Kurje Lhakhang
Changangkha Lhakhang	Dobji Dzong				
Buddha Dordhenma					

*** Please note the changes to list of monument and sacred sites notified on 15th July 2022.

2. Visitors who should pay entry fees

All foreign visitors provided below, visiting the mentioned monument and sacred sites:

- Tourist;
- Foreign visitors visiting Bhutan for any purpose; and
- Foreigners working and residing in Bhutan.

3. Entry fee for the monuments and sacred sites

Taktsang

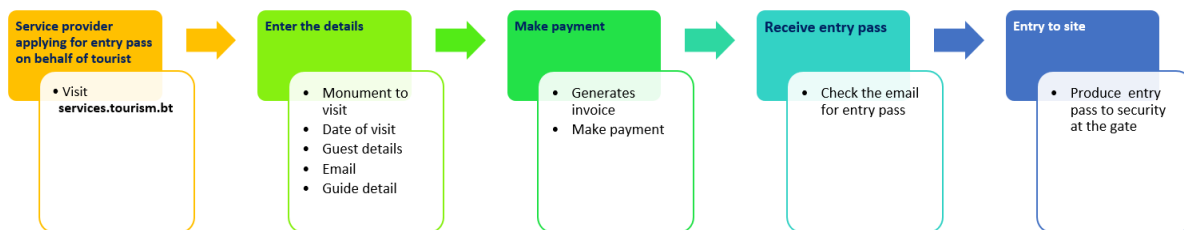
- Nu.2000 (Adult);
- Nu.1000 (Above 5 but below 18 years); and
- No charge (below 5 years).

Other monuments and sacred sites

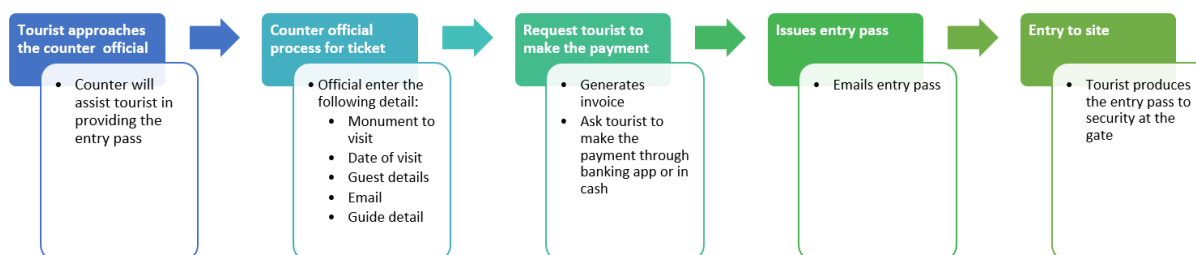
- Nu.1000 (Adult);
- Nu.500 (Above 5 but below 18 years); and
- No charge (Below 5 years).

4. Applying for entry pass

Please visit services.tourism.bt (which will be online from 23.09.2022) for the additional information related to the monuments and sacred sites. The website will also facilitate processing of entry pass in advance **in next few days**. The process for applying your entry pass will be as provided below:



However, entry pass will also be facilitated at the respective monument site as follows:



*** Note: Tourist mentioned in the above diagram shall also mean other foreign visitors

5. Information required to apply for entry pass

- Guide details in case of tourist;
- Detail of visitors;
- Date of visit;
- Monuments or sacred sites to visit; and
- Email id.

6. Payment mode when applying for entry pass

The payment at the site can done through mobile banking app as well as in cash.

7. Requirement of guide

Since the guides are not stationed at the monument sites, tourist visiting monument and sacred site must be accompanied by the guide and must arrange guide in advance. While the other visitors will be allowed to enter without guide, we strongly recommend all to arrange a guide for better visitor experience.

8. Whether entry pass is refundable

Please note that the entry pass is non-refundable.

9. Verification of entry pass

Entry pass will be verified by the security official at the gate and entry will be facilitated.

10. Entry fee for those tourists who have confirmed their tour on or before 20th June 2022 and validated by TCB

Those tourists are exempted from payment of an entry fee and the information note on exemption is provided on copy of their visa. Tourist must produce a copy of visa to the security official at the entry gate. No separate entry pass will be required. Check the sample:

Any offence of above mentioned shall be liable for fines as specified below:
Littering and urinating along road side: Nu.1,000/- as per waste prevention and management regulation, 2012;
Smoking in public places and other restricted area: Nu.500/- and shall produce proof of payment of import duty and tax;
Misuse of permit for other purposes: Nu. 3,300/- and subject to deportation as per IRR, 2015;
Purchase of restricted items: Seizure of goods and applicable fines and penalties as per Customs Rules;
Tobacco products beyond permissible quantity: Seizure of goods and applicable fines and penalties based on quantity as per BNC rules and regulation;

Any other offences not listed here, fines are applicable as per the existing law.



Note: The above guest are old bookings and they need not have to pay any monument entry fees.

11. Clearances already issued by TCB for those visiting after 23rd September 2022

For those visiting monument after 23rd September 2022 but who have already received a clearance letter from the Tourism Council of Bhutan can visit the monument with the same clearance letter.

12. Days foreign visitor will not be permitted

- 15th day of 1st month (Chotrul Düchen),
- 10th day of 3rd month (Zhabdrung Kuchoe),
- 15th day of 4th month (Saga Dawa Düchen/Lord Buddha Parinirvana),
- 4th day of 6th month (Chökhör Düchen / First sermon of Lord Buddha),
- 22nd day of 9th month (Lha Bab Düchen/Descending day of Lord Buddha), and
- 10th day of 5th Month (Birth Anniversary of Guru Rinpoche)

As of 22.09.2022

Information will be updated if required