



**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.

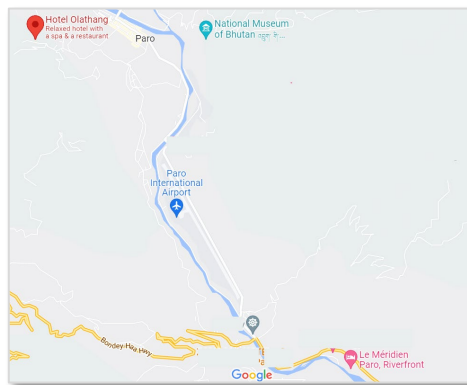
D. Hotel Accommodation

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

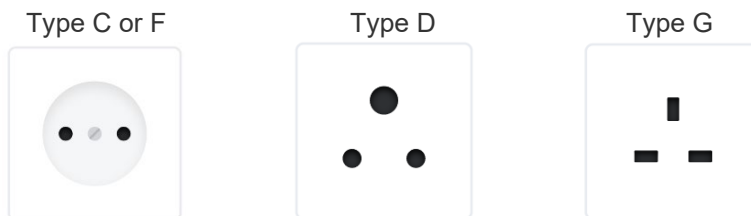
The currency of Bhutan is Ngultrum. As of 26 September 2022, the exchange rate is Ngultrum 81.25 = USD\$ 1. Exchange counters and ATMs are available both at the airport, and at the hotel lobby. International credit cards such as American Express, Master Card, and Visa are accepted in limited establishments.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