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INTEGRATED

TOURISM ACTION PLAN

Samdrup Jongkhar



August, 2024



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For Samdrup Jongkhar and its people.



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INTRODUCTION

Samdrup Jongkhar, a hidden gem in Bhutan, offers a wealth of experiences that remain largely unexplored by both regional and international tourists. Those who do visit are rewarded with rich cultural and natural encounters. Attractions such as the Birab Kundra Mandir in Jomotsangkha, the Chokyi Gyatsho Institute in Dewathang, birdwatching and roadside amenities in Lamtsorong in Orong, and the Dzong and Dratsang provide unique experiences.

Currently, the majority of visitors are regional tourists, though there are accounts of international tourists as well. On average, visitors stay for a day and a night. Tourist arrivals in Samdrup Jongkhar saw an increase starting in 2018, (see appendix) but numbers declined from 2019 until 2022 due to the Pandemic. Recently, there has been a resurgence, with an average of 395 tourists visiting this May, 2024.

To enhance and promote tourism, Samdrup Jongkhar has launched the destination brand SAMJONG. This brand aims to showcase the unique tourism experiences available in the Dzongkhag. Under SAMJONG, a brochure has been published, the Dzongkhag website has been revamped, a collection of collateral has begun, and a Wikipedia page has been released.

To further boost tourist numbers, an action plan has been developed, which include;

Objective: To increase tourist arrivals by 20% over the next five years (by 2029) through the following actions:

1. Enhance the tourism experience in the Dzongkhag.
2. Develop new tourism products.
3. Enhance marketing and promotion strategies.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR

Five Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) have been identified to monitor and measure the progress of this tourism action plan from both an industry-wide and micro perspective. Each KPI is aligned with specific actions within the plan to ensure targeted and effective implementation.

Below are the key performance indicators for this plan.

Tourism Industry Perspective

- Revenue Growth of 50% or Higher
- Number of local businesses benefiting from tourism.

Micro Perspective

- Increase in tourist arrival by 20% over five years.
- Increased average length of stay by 3 days.
- Increased total night spent in the Dzongkhag by 3 nights.

The Tourism Action Plan will bring many benefits to Samdrup Jongkhar. The plan will help protect the area's natural beauty and cultural heritage while creating jobs and boosting the local economy. The plan also encourages community involvement in tourism, ensuring that everyone benefits.



Dzongkhag Administration, Samdrup Jongkhar



TOURISM ACTION PLAN

1. PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

Goal: Develop tourism products and services

Key Initiative	#	Actions	Responsible Partner	Time Frame	Action Measures
Develop Integrated Borvilla Park at Samdrup Jongkhar Thromde.	1.1	Conduct research and feasibility study at the site and plan the project proposal.	Dzongkhag Administration & Department of Tourism.	Ongoing	Research, feasibility study and master copy of the plan completed.
	1.2	Secure fund from the relevant agencies, phase wise in each fiscal year.	Dzongkhag Administration & Department of Tourism.	Short - term	Funds are secured from the relevant agencies.
	1.3	Award and construct the integrated park at the Borvilla (if possible, on cost sharing with the private tour and travel Agencies).	Dzongkhag Administration & Private Tour and Travel Agencies.	Long - Term	Integrated Park at Borvilla awarded and constructed.
Develop Tsho Duen Eco-tourism development at Samrang Gewog	1.4	Conduct research and feasibility study at the site and plan the master copy of the project.	Samrang Gewog Administration.	Ongoing	Research, feasibility study and master copy of the plan completed.
	1.5	Secure fund from the relevant agencies.	Dzongkhag Administration & Samrang Gewog Administration.	Short - term	Funds are secured from the relevant agencies.
	1.6	Award and commence the project.	Samrang Gewog Administration.	Short - Term	The project is awarded and commenced.
Develop Kalyoen Yongba Hiking Trail Development at Dewathang	1.7	Develop project proposal and secure fund from the Department of Tourism.	Dzongkhag Administration.	Ongoing	The Project proposal is developed and funds are secured for action.
	1.8	Award and execute the project.	Dzongkhag Administration.	Short - term	The project is awarded and executed.
Develop Homestay and Bird Watching at Morong	1.9	Develop project proposal and secure fund from the Department of Tourism.	Dzongkhag Administration.	Ongoing	The Project proposal is developed and funds are secured for action.



under Orong Gewog.	1.10	Award and execute the project.	Dzongkhag Administration.	Short - Term	The project is awarded and executed.
Develop Tourist Information Centre at the Farmer Sales outlet at SJ Thromde.	1.11	Ensure availability of tourist information centre in the Dzongkhag.	Dzongkhag Administration and Thromde Administration.	Short - Term	Tourism Information centre developed and availability ensured.
Develop tourist attraction products at the Dzongkhag Administration premises.	1.12	Develop a Cultural Heritage Photography Experience at the Dzongkhag Administration premises by engaging stakeholders, planning resources, preparing the site, training staff, and promoting the attraction to enhance tourism.	Dzongkhag Administration.	Short - Term	Cultural Heritage Photography Experience at the Dzongkhag Administration premises developed.
Develop packaged birding activity in the Dzongkhag.	1.13	Develop birding activity at Narphung -samdrup Jongkhar Highway including sighting area, cafes, capacity building and product development.	Dzongkhag Administration.	Short-Term	Birding activity at Narphung - samdrup Jongkhar Highway developed.
Develop tourist attractions in SJ Throm.	1.14	Develop Gyalchen Zhi (Four guardian Kings' statue) at Lab 1 in SJ throm.	Thromde Administration.	Short-Term	Gyalchen Zhi Statue developed.
	1.15	Develop eco park at Lab 2 in SJ Throm.	Thromde Administration.	Short-Term	Eco-Park Developed in SJ Throm.
	1.16	Establish water park at Lab 2 in SJ Throm.	Thromde Administration.	Short-Term	Water Park developed in SJ Throm.
	1.17	Facelift old bridge in the SJ Throm.	Thromde Administration.	Short-Term	The old bridge in the SJ Throm facelifted.
	1.18	Develop recreational park at Dewathang Throm.	Thromde Administration.	Short-Term	Recreational Park developed in Dewathang
	1.19	Develop riverfront in SJ Throm.	Thromde Administration.	Short-Term	Riverfront established in SJ Throm.



2. MARKETING AND PROMOTION

Goal: Increase awareness and attractiveness of the destination

Key Initiative	#	Actions	Responsible Partner	Time Frame	Action Measures
Prioritise clear and focused communication to effectively reach your target market and connect with your ideal customer	2.1	Improve photo and videos assets of key features of Dzongkhag for the use by the Department of Tourism, and Tour and Travel agencies	Dzongkhag Administration, Department of Tourism and tour and travel agencies.	Ongoing	New photo and video contents are created.
	2.2	Enhance Dzongkhag Website so that visitors get hands on information on the destination they would like to travel in the Dzongkhag	Dzongkhag Administration and ICT cluster, Samdrup Jongkhar.	Ongoing	Dzongkhag Website is developed and growth in the number of visitors on the Website.
	2.3	Create and promote destinations in the Dzongkhag on all the relevant social media platforms (Dzongkhag Facebook Page and Wikipedia, Brochure, and Factsheet)	Dzongkhag Administration.	Short-term	Engagements on the social media and visitors increased in the Dzongkhag.
	2.4	Support Hoteliers to optimize TripAdvisor listings.	Dzongkhag Administration.	Short - Term	Hoteliers supported to optimize TripAdvisor listings.
	2.5	Develop signage at key visitor hubs and welcome gates.	Dzongkhag Administration, Thromde Administration, and Department of Tourism.	Short-Term	New signage is created/Updated



Chökyi Gyatso Institute (CGI), Dewathang



3. TRAINING AND CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

Goal: Improve service quality through training and Capacity Building.

Key Initiative	#	Actions	Responsible Partner	Time Frame	Action Measures
Improve service quality through training and Capacity Building	3.1	Provide Hospitality Training for hoteliers and those in the tourism industry.	Bhutan Institute of Tourism and Hospitality, Department of Tourism and Dzongkhag Administration.	Short - term	Hospitality Training Programs rolled out and services improved.
	3.2	Organise workshops on customer service and cultural sensitivity.	Department of Tourism and Dzongkhag Administration.	Short Term	Workshops rolled out and services and experiences improved.
	3.3	Conduct digital marketing and promotion training for the those in the tourism industry.	Department of Tourism and Dzongkhag Administration.	Short term	Digital marketing and promotion training conducted and promotion on the social media increased.
	3.4	Conduct Photography and editing workshops for marketing and Promotion of destination in the Dzongkhag.	Dzongkhag Administration.	Short term	Photography and editing workshops conducted and New photo and video contents are created.



Budget Estimate

#	Tourism Action Plan	Specific Priority	Budget (M)	Total (M)
1	Product Development	Action Plan 1.1	15.29	93.29
		Action Plan 1.2		
		Action Plan 1.3		
		Action Plan 1.4	70	
		Action Plan 1.5		
		Action Plan 1.6		
		Action Plan 1.7	2	
		Action Plan 1.8		
		Action Plan 1.9	4	
		Action Plan 1.10		
		Action Plan 1.11	2	
		Action Plan 1.12	2	
		Action Plan 1.13	10	
		Action Plan 1.14	10	
		Action Plan 1.15	50	
		Action Plan 1.16	50	
		Action Plan 1.17	0.105	
		Action Plan 1.18	2	
2	Marketing and Promotion	Action Plan 2.4	0.215	0.415
		Action Plan 2.5	0.2	
3s	Training and Capacity Building	Action Plan 3.1	0.3	1.03
		Action Plan 3.2	0.215	
		Action Plan 3.3	0.215	
		Action Plan 3.4	0.3	
			Total budget	298.84



The Tourism Plan cannot be managed if it cannot be measured. As such, following Major Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) have been identified, and will be used to monitor and measure the progress of this Plan. Additionally, it highlights which Strategic Priority Areas (and their Initiatives + Actions) will assist to achieve each of the KPIs.

MONITORING

Perspective	Major Metric	Specific metric	Baseline	Target by 2029
Industry	Jobs	Number of people directly and indirectly employed in tourism in Samdrup Jongkhar	146	170
	Tourism Business	Number of Tourism related business in Samdrup Jongkhar	37	40
Micro	Visits	Total visits	525 tourists	4000 Tourists
	Nights	Total Nights	1 nights	3 nights
	Average length of stay	Average length of stay	1 day	3 days

EVALUTION

Perspective	#	Major KPI	Data Collection Method
Industry	1	Number of full-time employees in Samdrup Jongkhar	Dzongkhag/Thromde Administrative Data
	2	Number of Tourism Business based in Samdrup Jongkhar	Regional Office of Economic Affairs' and Dzongkhag/Thromde Administrative Data.
Micro	3	Total visits	ICP, Samdrup Jongkkhar, Immigration office and Dzongkhag/Thromde Administrative Data.
	4	Total Nights	ICP, Samdrup Jongkkhar, Immigration office and Dzongkhag/Thromde Administrative Data.
	5	Average length of stay	ICP, Samdrup Jongkkhar, Immigration office and Dzongkhag/Thromde Administrative Data.



Conclusion

To enhance tourism, the destination brand SAMJONG has been launched, promoting unique experiences through revamped marketing efforts. The action plan aims to increase tourist arrivals by 20% by 2029 through enhancing tourism experiences, developing new products, and improving marketing strategies. Progress will be monitored using five KPIs: job creation, revenue growth, local business benefits, increased tourist arrivals, and increased average length of stay. This plan will protect natural beauty and cultural heritage, create jobs, boost the local economy, and involve the community in tourism development.

TASHI DELEK!





Appendix

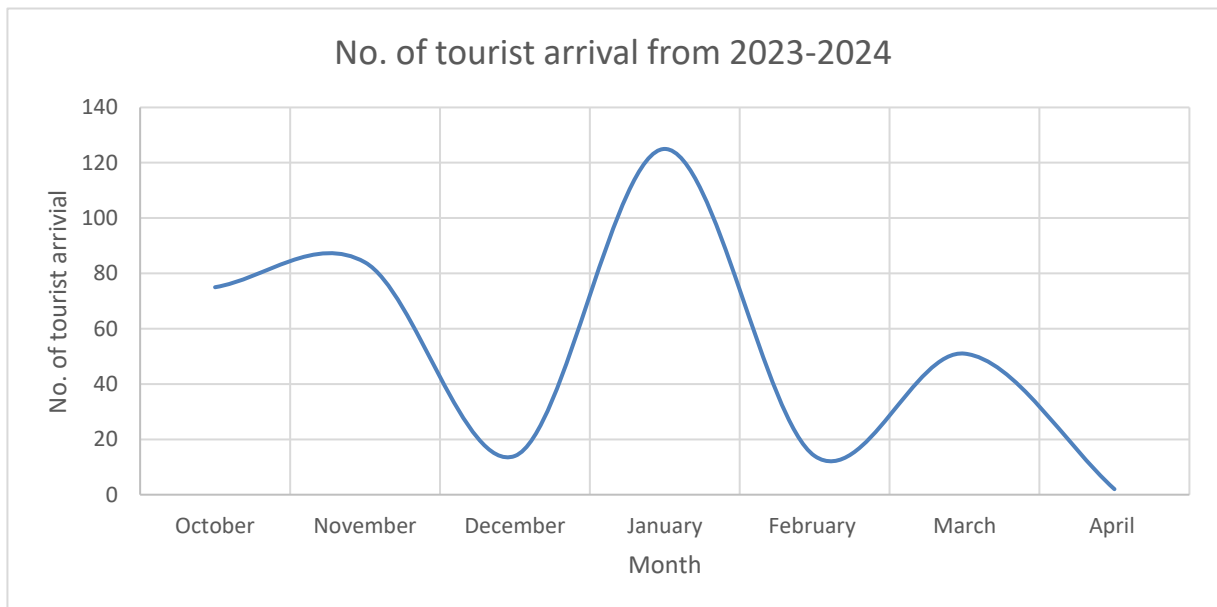
Number of Tourist Arrivals (2018- 2022)					
Details	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Tourist Arrivals	1937	1721	190	COVID	COVID

Source: Tourism Council of Bhutan & Regional Trade Office

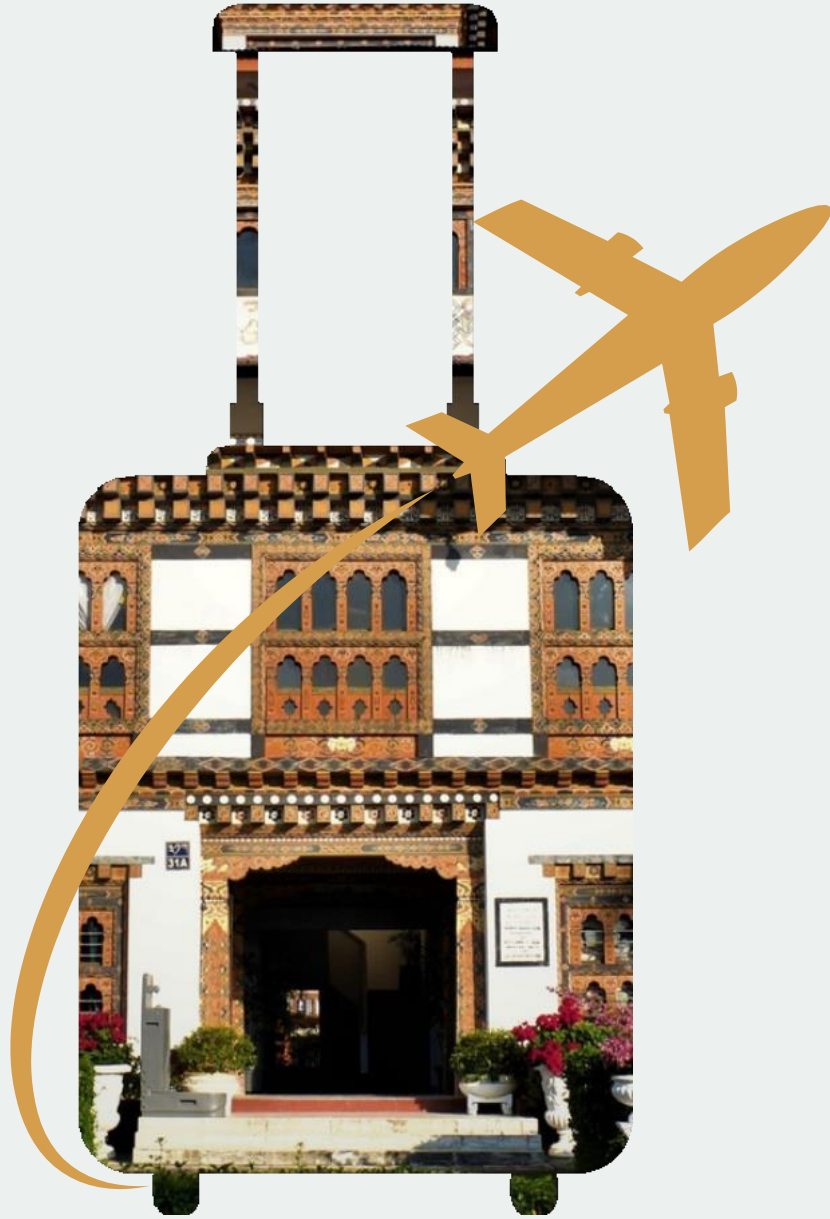
Number of casual visitors (2023-2024)

SN	Year	Entry	Exit
1	23/09/2022-31/12/2023	570604	570461
2	01/01/2024-29/05/2024	287771	287244

Source: ICP, Samdrup Jongkhar.



Source: Karma Dorji, Tourism Information Officer, Samdrup Jongkhar.



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