



Towards Climate-Resilient Inclusive WASH Services in Rural Bhutan

Bhutan is the world's first carbon negative country and a global biodiversity hotspot, however its location in the fragile ecosystems of the Himalayas makes it highly vulnerable to monsoon rains, increased snow melt, landslides, glacial lake outburst floods, and changing patterns of river discharge and water availability.

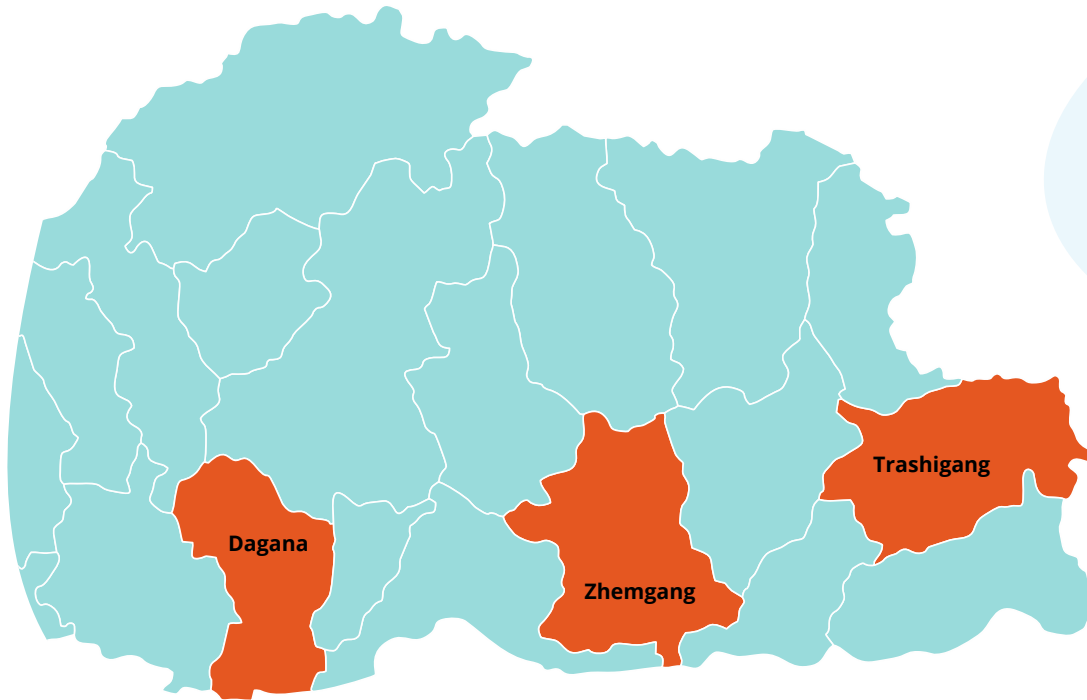
Some [35% of Bhutan's water sources](#) are reportedly drying up, and water security is considered the greatest concern of more than [30% of the population](#). However, [most rural water schemes](#) don't have water safety plans in place. This fact, combined with limited water management arrangements, increases water insecurity, and threatens to undermine and reverse gains of the past decade.

In rural Dagana, Zhemgang, and Trashigang, Water for Women partners, SNV and the University of Technology Sydney – Institute for Sustainable Futures (UTS-ISF), are engaging with communities, local and national governments, the National Centre for Hydrology and Meteorology, and water supply operators to strengthen adaptive capacities and integrate climate change resilience within area-wide rural water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services, systems, plans, and budgets.

Importantly, this work includes greater emphasis on addressing the increasing vulnerabilities of disadvantaged groups, and extends to supporting governments, private sector providers and consumer supply chains to provide affordable, climate-resilient, and inclusive WASH solutions.

SNV's [Climate Resilient Rural WASH Services](#) framework guides this work and strives to leave no-one behind, covering all households and public spaces, such as schools, healthcare facilities and transport hubs, and using scale to achieve financial sustainability. Systems strengthening strategies are embedded to bolster WASH governance, social supports, and regulation, improving the performance

Top: Access to improved water in rural Trashigang, Bhutan (SNV / Upasana Dahal, Oopz Productions)



of rural service providers, raising the quality of infrastructure construction and rehabilitation, implementing evidence-based behavioural change, and making consumer supply chains and financing more robust.

This year marks 22 years of diplomatic relations between Australia and Bhutan, 14 of which SNV has been a development partner. SNV has supported many significant milestones, including the realisation of [100 percent improved sanitation](#) coverage in 2022, which ended open defecation nationwide.

[Watch this video series to see how SNV and UTS-ISF support transformative WASH leadership in Bhutan and beyond](#)

Bhutan is one of the few countries on track to achieve [SDG 6 – Water and sanitation for all by 2030](#). Responding to emerging water governance and security challenges, including water-related risks of floods, dry spells, and landslides on sanitation and hygiene, SNV’s current Water for Women project is bridging the gap between rural WASH services, water security, and the national climate change agenda.

Learn more about SNV’s Water for Women projects in Bhutan:

- [Towards Climate-Resilient Inclusive WASH Services in Rural Bhutan](#)
- [Beyond the Finish Line – Sustainable Sanitation and Hygiene for All](#)
- [Supporting Communities in Bhutan with Inclusive WASH](#)
- [Transformative leadership for inclusive WASH in a post-COVID world](#)