



# DIGO NEWSLETTER

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## NEWS INSIDE

1. Overview
2. Mapping visitor flow in Madi
3. Stakeholder consultation in Pokhara
4. Destinorama: Public validation
5. Partnerships for green skills and sustainable business model
6. What's next?

[Learn more about DIGO](#)

[Click here](#) 

## 1. OVERVIEW

The Developing Inclusive and Green Opportunities (DIGO) project is working to support the tourism sector in Pokhara Metropolitan City and Madi Rural Municipality to grow in a way that benefits the sector and the economy, while also creating positives for the environment. This edition shares DIGO's recent work on destination planning, stakeholder engagement, and green skills, with a focus on collaboration with communities, hotels, and tourism associations.

## 2. MAPPING VISITOR FLOW IN MADI

Madi Rural Municipality is emerging as a promising tourism destination, home to culturally rich places such as Yangjakot, Tangting, and Sikles. New economic opportunities are opening for homestays, local enterprises and communities with growing number of visitors. At the same time, this growth shows the need to plan tourism more carefully so it benefits people while protecting the local culture and nature.

With the vision of supporting Madi's transition towards a sustainable tourism destination, DIGO conducted Strategic Visitor Flow (SVF) workshops in Yangjakot and Sikles. The workshops brought together homestay owners, local government representatives, tour operators, and community leaders from all three villages – Yangjakot, Tangting, and Sikles - to jointly explore and plan for sustainable tourism models.

**SVF** is a participatory approach that helps tourism stakeholders understand who visitors are, why they visit, how they move around destinations, and what experiences they value. This can support the stakeholders to plan better tourism services, reduce pressure on busy areas, and make smarter decisions about future investments.



*SVF Workshop in Yangjakot, Madi*



## VOICES FROM MADI



*Our homestays are more than an income; they are our window to the world, a place where we share our culture, our food, and our way of life.*

*Through the SVF workshop, we learned how to better understand the different types of visitors who come here, and how to make their experiences more meaningful.*



*The SVF workshop helped us map and understand data about different types of visitors and their motivations. Now, we can make decisions based on evidence rather than assumptions.*

With these workshops in Madi, DIGO has now conducted four SVF workshops: two in Pokhara Metropolitan City and two in Madi Rural Municipality.



**Duja Maya Gurung**  
Owner, Duja Maya Homestay, Tanting



**Devi Jung Gurung**  
Ward Chairperson, Madi-1, Sikles

### 3. STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION IN POKHARA

DIGO is also working on integrating global knowledge and expertise into Pokhara's tourism ecosystem. Schweizerische Hotelfachschule Luzern SHL is a hotel management school in Switzerland which brings nearly a century of Swiss expertise in hospitality and management. On 9 December 2025, DIGO convened 20 senior hotel executives and representatives from the Hotel Association Pokhara, for a stakeholder consultation in Pokhara. The session was facilitated by Jordan Kestle, Head of International Projects at SHL.

With support from SHL, DIGO aims to identify skill gaps in the hospitality sector and develop practical training courses with local hospitality training service providers (TSPs) and academic institutions.

Before the consultation, the DIGO and SHL team visited hotels of different sizes and met with training providers and academic institutions to understand:

- Skills and leadership needs of hotel staff
- Capacity and readiness of training institutions

Building on these findings, the consultation focused on:

- What excellence and sustainability should look like in Pokhara's hospitality sector.
- The skills and leadership required to deliver high-quality, responsible services.
- How hotels, training providers, and DIGO can collaborate to drive systemic change.



*To enhance guest experiences and lead the shift toward sustainability, we must invest in staff training and maintain consistency in service quality. DIGO and SHL's support will be instrumental in this transition.*

DIGO will now develop separate training curricula for operational staff and senior management, to be rolled out in 2026.

**Kamal Prasad Dahal**  
Resident Manager, Barahi Sedi Ltd.



*Stakeholder consultation in Pokhara*



*SHL expert visiting TSPs and hotels in Pokhara with the DIGO team*

## 4. DESTINORAMA: PUBLIC VALIDATION

Destinorama was organised as a public event to review and validate visitor flow maps developed during earlier SVF workshops.

At the Destinorama, visitor flow maps were openly displayed for community members, tourism stakeholders such as hotel and homestay owners, and travel and tour operators to review, confirm, and enrich the findings. This step helps ensure the information is accurate and reflects local realities.



*This is not just a validation; it helped me understand why visitor flow matters.  
I really learned a lot from these maps.*

**Sushil Adhikari**  
Assistant Professor, Pokhara University

Destinorama reflects DIGO's approach of collecting data with communities, sharing findings back for validation, and using evidence to guide recommendations. This supports better destination planning aligned with local needs, capacities, and sustainability goals.



## 5. PARTNERSHIPS FOR GREEN SKILLS AND SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS MODEL

To support hospitality businesses, particularly hotels, in transitioning to sustainable practices, DIGO signed agreements with Hotel Association Pokhara, Nepal (HAPN) and two established properties in Pokhara: Temple Tree Resort and Spa, and Fishtail Lodge by Annapurna.



### Partnering with Hotel Association Pokhara Nepal (HAPN)

The collaboration supports capacity building, knowledge sharing, and joint activities to promote sustainable tourism, while helping hotels improve their operations and market presence. Through its partnership with HAPN, DIGO will support member hotels to develop green skills, adopt sustainable hospitality practices, and improve their sustainability performance.










## Partnering with the hotels

Through direct partnerships with Temple Tree Resort and Spa, and Fishtail Lodge by Annapurna, DIGO is supporting the development of sustainable transition plans (STPs) and implementation of environment-friendly, financially viable solutions. STP is a practical, hotel-specific business roadmap that helps hotels reduce operating costs and strengthen market position by integrating sustainability into everyday operations. The partnership aims to strengthen leadership capacity, train the staff on sustainable operations, enhance the branding of the hotels, and link them to local sustainable supply chains and global expertise.



## 6. WHAT'S NEXT?

In 2026, DIGO plans to:

-  Analyse visitor flows and derive actionable recommendations on sustainable tourism for the local governments of Pokhara and Madi.
-  Conduct SVF workshops to map and update visitor flows and information in both the destinations.
-  Build strategic partnerships with accommodation enterprises and tourism stakeholders to foster sustainable tourism and inclusive growth.
-  Develop curriculum and roll out upskilling training for leadership and operational staff in the hospitality sector.
-  Roll out of Community Coaching on Sustainability (COCOS) program in Tangting.

Learn more  
about COCOS  
[Click here](#)

## Let's collaborate to build sustainable tourism future together!

DIGO is part of Swisscontact's development programme, co-financed by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), FDFA, and partially funded by the Happel Foundation.

The project is implemented in Pokhara and Madi with the support of United Community Nepal (UniCoN).

*Stay connected with DIGO for more stories, insights, and updates.*

# We create opportunities

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