



# *DIGO* *NEWSLETTER*



*July 2026*  
*Edition 4*





## **What's inside this newsletter?**

Overview

Key Partnerships

April-June 2026 Highlights

Looking Ahead



Tourism is a key pillar of Nepal's economy, contributing an estimated 7-8% to the national GDP. Recognising the importance of tourism in job creation and contribution to the national economy, the government of Nepal has allocated Rs. 7.34 billion for culture and tourism for the current fiscal year 2083/84. With the rise of visitor demand for sustainability, the focus is slowly shifting from growth in volume to growth in quality. Swisscontact's development programme, **Developing Inclusive and Green Opportunities (DIGO)** is supporting the tourism destinations in Nepal to transition to sustainability.

## OVERVIEW

DIGO aims to create additional jobs and income in Nepal's tourism sector while generating positive environmental impacts. The project intends to achieve this by enhancing the sustainable tourism offer of tourism destinations and enterprises in Gandaki Province by guiding their transition towards responsible and sustainable tourism practices. This will be achieved by strengthening destination governance and planning capacities, improving tourism business models and practices, and building human resource skills and capabilities of public and private stakeholders.

## KEY PARTNERSHIPS

| Six                                                                                                                                                       | Five                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Accommodation Enterprises (AEs) partners onboarded.                                                                                                       | Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed.                                                                                                                                             |
| Temple Tree Resort and Spa, Fish Tail Lodge by Annapurna, Landmark Pokhara, Hotel Barahi, Temple Bell Boutique Hotel and Spa, and Pokhara Village Resort. | Hotel Association Pokhara Nepal (HAPN), eSewa, Homestay Federation of Nepal (HOFEN), Nepal Tourism and Hotel Management College (NTHMC), Nepal Tourism Board (NTB), Gandaki Province. |



Learn more  
about DIGO

Click here



# APRIL-JUNE 2026 HIGHLIGHTS

## STRENGTHENING SUSTAINABLE TOURISM PLANNING IN POKHARA AND MADI

DIGO has completed the Strategic Visitor Flow (SVF) analysis for Pokhara and Madi, translating visitor movement, experience, and destination sustainability challenges into practical suggestions for local action. The findings identify opportunities to strengthen destination competitiveness, improve visitor experiences, enhance the sustainable tourism offer, and reduce environmental pressures.

DIGO presented a report with findings and suggestions on advancing sustainable tourism to Pokhara Metropolitan City (PMC) and Madi Rural Municipality (Madi RM).



### Strategic Visitor Flow (SVF) Sharing Event at Provincial Level

Pokhara Metropolitan City took ownership of the process and organised a 'Strategic Visitor Flow (SVF) Sharing Event' with wider provincial stakeholders with support from Swisscontact's DIGO project. This made Pokhara the first city to apply SVF in its planning process and to share the tool and approach at the provincial level, reflecting the kind of institutional ownership DIGO hopes to see take root well beyond the project's lifetime.

The event brought together representatives from Nepal Tourism Board (NTB) Gandaki, the Office of Chief Minister and Council of Ministers, Hotel Association of Pokhara Nepal, Pokhara Tourism Council, and several academicians/researchers working in sustainable tourism.

The tool was presented by Mr. Manahar Kadariya, Head of the Economic Administration Division, Pokhara Metropolitan City, with support from Mr. Nabaraj Adhikari, CEO of the Business Promotion Centre. The active participation and discussion among stakeholders from government, the private sector, and academia reflected a shared interest in strengthening evidence-based and collaborative tourism planning.

### Next Step

Both of the local government entities: PMC and Madi RM are committed in incorporating the relevant suggestions in their annual planning and budgeting. DIGO will collaborate closely with the municipalities in implementing selected prioritised sustainable initiatives.

Learn more  
about SVF

Click here



## PARTNERING WITH SOME OF THE LEADING AEs IN POKHARA

Accommodation Enterprises (AEs) are among the most resource intensive and influential actors in the tourism value chain, shaping visitor experiences, employment practices, local supply linkages, and the environmental footprint of tourism. The need to transition to sustainable practices has become increasingly apparent, as doing so not only helps AEs conserve resources but also sends a positive message to the community and attracts quality visitors.

In this context, DIGO has already partnered with six of the leading AEs in Pokhara: Temple Tree Resort and Spa, Fish Tail Lodge by Annapurna, Landmark Pokhara, Hotel Barahi, Temple Bell Boutique Hotel and Spa, and Pokhara Village Resort.

One of the areas of collaboration between DIGO and these AEs is adoption of Sustainability Transition Plans (STPs).



*As DIGO approached us for developing Sustainability Transition Plan (STP), we realised that sustainability is not only beneficial for environment protection but also for the local communities and hospitality businesses like ours. This has encouraged us to integrate sustainability more deliberately into our operational priorities and business strategy.*

**Sumit Bhandari**

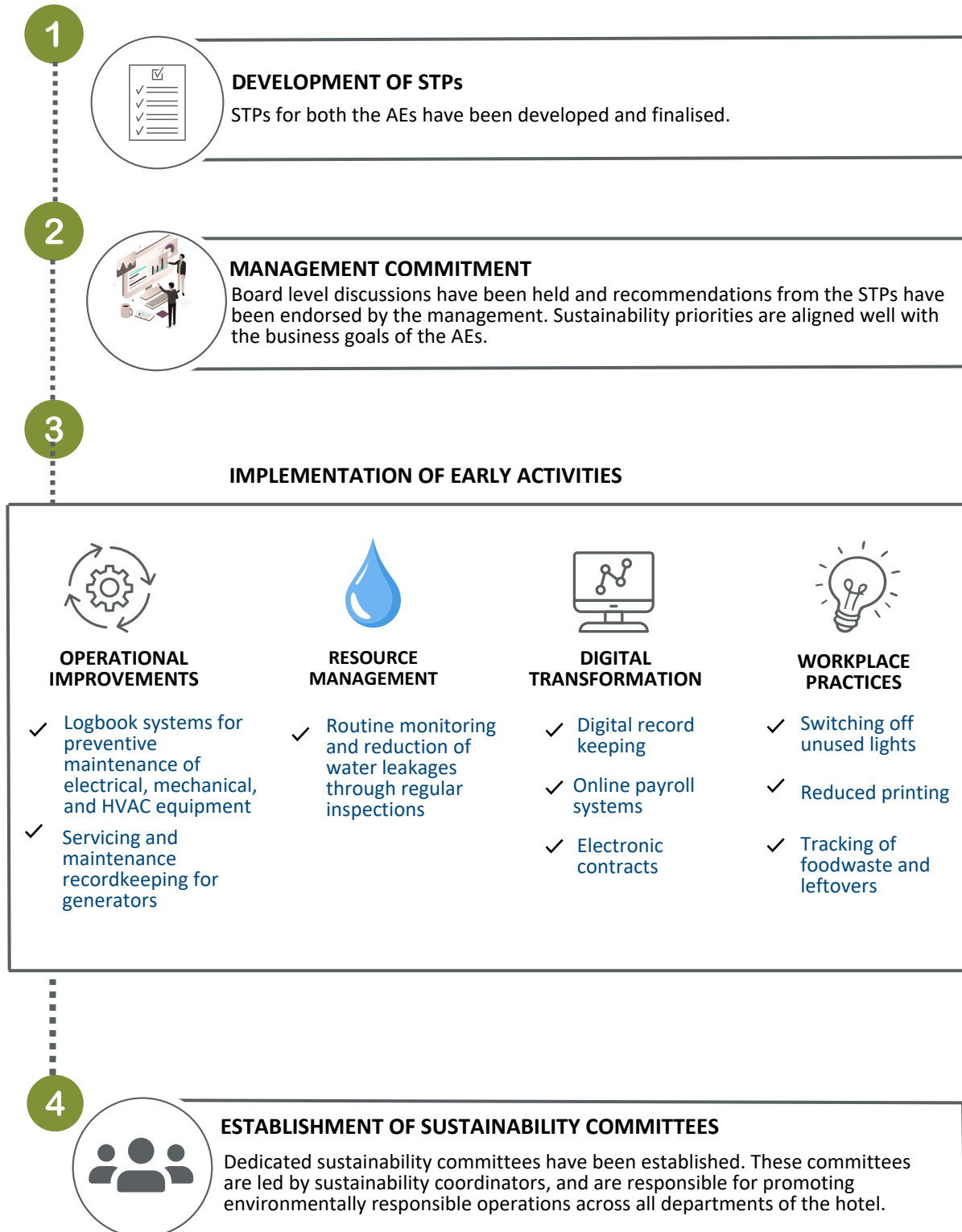
Operations Manager, Temple Tree Resort and Spa

Through DIGO, Swisscontact has been supporting Temple Tree Resort and Spa and Fish Tail Lodge by Annapurna to develop and implement STPs. STP is one of Swisscontact's flagship technical assistance product that is different from conventional sustainability audit or generic checklist of green practices. It is a structured, evidence-based, and institutionally anchored planning instrument that enables AEs to assess their current environmental, social, and governance performance, identify gaps and opportunities for improvement based on sustainability benchmarks, and prioritise actions that enhance operational efficiency and market positioning.



## FROM COMMITMENT TO ACTION: PILOT AEs BEGIN IMPLEMENTING SUSTAINABILITY PRIORITIES

The STP journey is helping the pilot AEs: Temple Tree Resort and Spa and Fish Tail Lodge by Annapurna move from planning and intention to adopt measurable actions in sustainability.





## BUILDING THE NETWORK: INSTITUTIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

Sustainable tourism cannot be scaled enterprise by enterprise. DIGO's institutional partnerships are building the systemic foundations and local capabilities needed to strengthen tourism skills, adapt international good practices, and scale successful approaches beyond individual enterprises and destinations.



**Homestay Federation of Nepal (HOFEN)**- the apex body representing over 5,000 homestays across 60+ districts in Nepal. HOFEN is a key strategic partner and is also selected as the national custodian for implementation and future scaling of **Community Coaching on Sustainability (COCOS)** program.



**Nepal Tourism and Hotel Management College (NTHMC)**, Pokhara, one of Nepal's pioneering institutions in hospitality and tourism education. The core ambitions of the partnership includes positioning NTHMC as a centre of excellence for hospitality education, industry responsive training, and innovation.



**Nepal Tourism Board (NTB), Gandaki Province Office**- to strengthen joint planning, stakeholder coordination, knowledge exchange, and the promotion of sustainable tourism practices across Gandaki Province.

Learn more  
about **COCOS**  
here



## LOCAL CULINARY MANAGEMENT IN TANGTING

### *From the Kitchen: Roots to Table*

As part of the Community Coaching on Sustainability (COCOS) program, a four-day culinary training was conducted in Tangting from April 26–29, 2026, facilitated by Chef Sandeep K.C. (Paak Maharshi). The training brought together 31 community members with a clear purpose: to strengthen local food skills and demonstrate that Tangting's indigenous ingredients hold real potential for sustainable culinary tourism.



Grounded in the "Roots to Kitchen" concept, the training challenged participants to look at familiar ingredients differently. Potato peels which is ordinarily discarded were fried into crispy chips, turning waste into a dish. Sisno (stinging nettle), long considered a wild plant rather than a culinary asset, was fermented into kimchi, introducing participants to preservation techniques rooted in zero-waste principles. Makai ko kure, a crispy corn preparation using locally grown maize, emerged as one of the highlights of the training and a strong candidate for a signature community snack product.

Across four structured days, participants prepared approximately 15 dishes, each drawing exclusively from local and indigenous ingredients. Alongside the cooking practice, the training incorporated food hygiene fundamentals, basic Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) knowledge, kitchen safety, and ground rules of professional kitchen management.

The training clearly demonstrated that Tangting's culinary identity does not need to look outward for inspiration. Its forests, fields, and fermentation traditions carry everything needed to offer guests a food experience that is authentic, distinctive, and entirely their own.



*We had attended similar trainings before, but they focused on making food items like pizza and burgers using ingredients bought from the market. The COCOS training showed us how to use local products, such as making Gurung bread from millet flour grown in our village. This helps preserve local traditions and keeps money within the community.*

**Ros Maya Gurung**

Homestay Operator at S&S Homestay, Tangting







## LAUNCH OF THE TRAIN THE TRAINER (TTT) PROGRAM FOR THE SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP (SBML) COURSE

DIGO launched the Train the Trainer (TTT) program for the Sustainable Business Management and Leadership (SBML) course in Pokhara. The TTT program was delivered in collaboration with SHL Schweizerische Hotelfachschule Luzern. With Nepal Tourism and Hotel Management College (NTHMC) being selected as the implementing/strategic partner, this initiative aims to strengthen local capacity in sustainable hospitality leadership and responsible tourism practices in Nepal.

Through the TTT, 15 trainers are being prepared to deliver the SBML course locally, creating a sustainable pool of trainers for future industry led delivery.



“

*The Swiss teaching approach is very much rooted in practical learning. We immediately apply what we learn instead of focusing only on theory. This is exactly the approach that Swisscontact has been working to bring to this training program and to the hospitality sector in Pokhara, Nepal.*

---

**Jordan Kestle**  
Head of International Projects at SHL Schweizerische Hotelfachschule Luzern  
Facilitator of the TTT for SBML Course

As visitor expectations continue shifting toward sustainability, destinations must go beyond natural beauty and invest in quality leadership, responsible business practices, and future-ready tourism professionals. Supported by Swiss expertise and local institutional collaboration, Swisscontact aims to foster long-term knowledge transfer, strengthen industry practices, and contribute toward a more inclusive, resilient, and green tourism future for Nepal.

# LOOKING AHEAD

On the SVF front, with PMC and Madi RM now carrying the findings and suggestions forward into their own planning and budgeting processes, we look forward to seeing these sustainable actions take shape and to seeing how this locally-owned process pans out.

Building on the foundations established this quarter, DIGO will move into the next phase of implementation by expanding enterprise support and strengthening locally anchored training delivery. DIGO now looks forward to:

- Launched the Train-the-Trainer (TTT) program for **Green Skills in Jobs in Hospitality (GSJH)** in collaboration with SHL to equip local trainers with the skills and knowledge needed to deliver customized training developed by SHL using Swiss hospitality standards using adult learning methodologies.
- Development of Sustainability Transition Plans (STPs) for AEs partnered in 2026 .
- Launch the first SBML cohort for senior managers, executives, and hotel owners.
- Under the COCOS program, DIGO will deliver comprehensive training and subsequent coaching sessions across five core thematic areas i.e. Organizational Financial Management, Tour Product Development and Trip Management, Strengthening the Skills of Tour Guides in Tourism Villages, Homestay Management and Souvenir Development.
- Co-design and finalise sustainable tourism products in collaboration with local stakeholders and tour operators.



Photo by [Abhay Rahul](#) on [Unsplash](#)



**Subscribe to receive quarterly updates from DIGO**

*Click here* 

## **We create opportunities**

### **Swisscontact in Nepal**

Kathmandu

Oasis Complex, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor

211 Madan Marg, Patan Dhoka, Lalitpur 44700

Tel: +977 1 5428508 / 5448830

Pokhara

Indrapuri Marga, Street No. 2, Pokhara

Gandaki Province

### **Photos**

Swisscontact/ Unspalsh

<https://www.facebook.com/swisscontactnepal>

[www.swisscontact.org](http://www.swisscontact.org)