

ICIMOD

WORKSHOP

Advancing regenerative and climate-friendly tourism for sustainable transformation in the Hindu Kush Himalaya

SPEAKER PROFILE





Susanne Becken

Professor
Sustainable Tourism
Griffith University, Australia

Dr. Susanne Becken is a Professor of Sustainable Tourism at Griffith University in Australia where she focuses on research related to the science-policy-practice interface of transforming tourism. Susanne is a member of the Travallyst Independent Advisory Group, the EarthCheck Research Institute, the Te Araroa Trail Advisors, and the New Zealand Government Tourism Data Leadership Group. She is an elected Fellow of the International Academy of the Study of Tourism. In 2019, she was awarded the prestigious UNWTO Ulysses Award for her contribution to tourism knowledge.



ANM Mostadud Dastagir

General Manager
Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation
Bangladesh

ANM Mostadud Dastagir is an experienced professional currently serving as a General Manager in the Commercial Division at the Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation Head Office in Dhaka. Mr. Dastagir holds a Master of Science (M.Sc.) in Zoology (Fisheries) from the National University, Bangladesh. He has also pursued specialized international training relevant to his career, including:

- Tourism and Hospitality Management (THM) in Hyderabad, India.
- Planning and Management of Eco Tourism from the APO and Fiji National University.
- Integrated Sustainable Coastal Development (ISCD) from Gothenburg University, Sweden.



Rinzin Jamtsho

Chief Tourism Officer
Department of Tourism, Bhutan

Rinzin Jamtsho is the Chief of Department of Tourism, Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Employment. He is responsible for implementing tourism policies related to standardization and ensuring compliance within the industry. His works focuses on upholding service standards and improving customer satisfaction in line with sustainable and regenerative tourism under the “High Value, Low Volume” policy.



Indu Ghimire

Joint Secretary

Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation, Nepal

Indu Ghimire is a distinguished Joint Secretary at Nepal's Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Civil Aviation, bringing over two decades of extensive experience in Public Sector Management. A key strength lies in her deep knowledge of local dynamics, cultivated through roles as Chief District Officer and Local Development Officer in diverse districts in Nepal. Ghimire's professional journey reflects a rich progression from field-level operations to high-level policy formulation. Currently, she is actively engaged in the tourism sector, focusing particularly on policy design and formulation, coordination with government and private agencies for implementation, and collaboration with different levels of government to promote and create a conducive environment for tourism in Nepal. Ms. Ghimire is instrumental in key strategic initiatives, currently working on the development of the Nepal Tourism Decade, as well as a wellness and sustainable tourism strategy paper, in partnership with various agencies operating within Nepal.



Laxmi Kumari Neupane

Under Secretary
Ministry of Forest and Environment, Nepal

Laxmi Kumari Neupane is a seasoned forester and environmental professional with over 30 years of experience in sustainable forest management, climate adaptation, and natural resource governance. She currently serves as Under-Secretary (Technical) at the Ministry of Forests and Environment (MoFE), Government of Nepal. Ms. Neupane has worked across Nepal's diverse ecological zones from the lowlands of Kailali and Kapilvastu, to the mid-hills of Baglung, high mountains of Manang, and urban Bhaktapur. She has also contributed to the National Pasture and Forage Development Center and the National Natural Resource and Fiscal Commission, advancing forest policies, institutional frameworks, and resource governance. Her expertise spans participatory forest management, evidence-based environmental planning, and climate-resilient, inclusive development. She holds an MSc in Natural Resource Management, an MA in Sociology and Anthropology, and a Master's in Public Administration, blending environmental, social, and governance perspectives.



Adnan Dogar

Chairperson

Department of Tourism and Hospitality Management
Kohsar University Murree (Punjab), Pakistan

Dr. Adnan Ahmad Dogar is Associate Professor and Chairperson, Department of Tourism and Hospitality Management at Kohsar University Murree (KUM), Pakistan. He also leads the Kohsar Tourism Entrepreneurship Center, promoting innovation and sustainability in mountain destinations. With a Ph.D. in Environmental and Resource Economics from Ecole des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, Paris, and a Post-Doctorate in Environmental Governance from the Norwegian University of Life Sciences, Dr. Dogar's academic and professional focus lies in sustainable and regenerative tourism, cultural heritage management, and community-based development. He has led several research projects on mountain tourism and heritage management and contributed to provincial tourism policy formulation in Pakistan. A strong advocate of linking research with practice, he has organized numerous initiatives promoting responsible tourism and rural livelihoods in the Himalayan region.



Supawadee Photiyarach

Senior Specialist

Thailand Science, Research and Innovation
Thailand

Asst. Prof. Supawadee Photiyarach is a Senior Specialist at the Thailand Science Research and Innovation (TSRI), where she shapes research management in the tourism and creative economy sectors. She serves as Chairperson of the Tourism & Creative Economy Programme Board under the Program Management Unit for Competitiveness (PMUC), leading multi-institutional initiatives to advance sustainable tourism in Thailand. Her current work focuses on driving the country's transition towards carbon-neutral and net-zero tourism, collaborating with government, academia, and industry partners to develop certified low-carbon travel routes. Earlier, she published research on organisational commitment and empowerment in service-oriented industries, reflecting her expertise in human resource dynamics and sectoral innovation. Known for bridging research, policy, and practice, Supawadee brings strategic insight to the creative economy, tourism development, and climate-action agenda, making her a valued speaker and thought-leader in sustainable tourism.



Anu Kumari Lama

Tourism Specialist

Action area: Economies

Resilient economies and landscapes

Dr. Anu Kumari Lama is a Tourism Specialist at ICIMOD, leading the Sustainable Mountain Tourism Component (SMTTC). She works across Bhutan, India, Nepal, and Pakistan to develop research, policies, and pilot initiatives that promote sustainable, climate-resilient mountain tourism, heritage preservation, and community-based solutions.

With nearly two decades of experience, Anu has led projects such as Bangladesh's first community-based tourism village, Nepal's Tourovation Hub, and a network of community homestays in Bhutan, India, and Nepal. She has contributed to national tourism strategies and helped develop GreenHKH, a platform promoting Bhutan as a sustainable travel destination. Anu serves as a lead expert on the Tourism Panel on Climate Change (TPCC), an assessor for the Mountain Protection Award (UIAA), reviewer for *Current Research in Environmental Sustainability*, and faculty member of the Himalayan University Consortium's Working Group on Mountain Heritage and Tourism. She holds a PhD in Regional Geography from Germany and a master's in Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Management from New Zealand, with research experience at institutions including Lincoln University (NZ), IASS, PIK, and Universität Würzburg (Germany).



Sonam Gyaltsen

Chief Planning Officer

Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Employment, Bhutan

Sonam Gyaltsen is Chief Planning Officer and Head of the Policy and Planning Division at the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Employment, Royal Government of Bhutan. He leads policy formulation and strategic planning to promote industrial growth, trade, and employment in Bhutan. Born in 1974 in Pema Gatshel, Eastern Bhutan, he holds a Bachelor's in Commerce (Honours) from Sherubtse College, a Postgraduate Certificate in Financial Management from the Royal Institute of Management, a Master's in Public Finance from GRIPS, Japan, and a Diploma in Trade Policy from the WTO Secretariat. He is also an alumnus of the Netherlands Trainee Programme (WTO). Mr. Gyaltsen has over two decades of experience in public finance, trade policy, and economic planning, including roles in Bhutan's Department of Revenue and Customs, Chief of the Trade Negotiation Division, and Councilor (Trade) at Bhutan's Permanent Mission to the UN in Geneva. He has played a key role in Bhutan's trade negotiations and industrial development strategies through evidence-based policymaking and international collaboration.



Deepak Raj Joshi

CEO

Nepal Tourism Board

Deepak Raj Joshi is a Founding Executive Member of the World Tourism Network, a global platform spanning 133 countries for alternative voices in tourism. He served as Director General of the Confederation of Nepalese Industries (CNI) from 2022–2024, Nepal's apex body for large and medium industries. Mr. Joshi is CEO of the Nepal Tourism Board (NTB), serving 2016–2019 and reappointed for 2024–2028, leading the national tourism organization under a public-private partnership model. With over 20 years of experience in destination management and tourism promotion, he has collaborated with Nepalese professionals and top international partners. He has also served on the Executive Board of the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) and chaired its Destination Committee. His awards include the IIPT Champions in Challenge Award (2018), Best CEO in Asia (NTO category), and International Tourism Hero from the World Tourism Network. He holds an MBA, a Master's in Sociology, and has completed international courses on project development, destination management, and tourism promotion in Israel, China, and the Netherlands.



Aftab UR Rehman Rana

Managing Director

Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation, Pakistan

Aftab Ur Rehman Rana has over 38 years of experience in Pakistan's tourism industry and is the founder of the Sustainable Tourism Foundation Pakistan. A strong advocate for sustainable tourism, he has launched numerous community-based projects across the country. He holds an MBA in Tourism and Hotel Management, has completed international trainings in tourism management, ecotourism, adventure tourism, and sustainable development, and is a Fellow of LEAD International. Currently, he serves as Managing Director of the Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation, leading efforts to improve infrastructure, attract investment, and promote Pakistan as a premier tourist destination. He has also worked as a tourism consultant with USAID, ADB, the World Bank, and other organizations, contributing to projects and policy development in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab, Balochistan, and Gilgit-Baltistan. His work has been recognized with numerous awards, including the Commonwealth Asia Award for Excellence, Trainer of the Year (South Asia Tourism HRD Project), Better Pakistan-2010 Excellence Award, Pride of Mountains Award, and the National Tourism Excellence Award 2024 in Ecotourism.



Rigzin W Lachic

Founder

Dolkhar Resort, Leh, India

Rigzin Lachic, a Ladakhi entrepreneur, is redefining tourism in Ladakh by integrating sustainability with cultural preservation. After earning an engineering degree from NSIT Delhi, she worked in Japan and later contributed to a startup in Delhi before returning home to establish Dolkhar—a boutique stay that celebrates Ladakh's architecture, crafts, and local ingredients while prioritizing environmental responsibility. She also co-founded Hatti, a social enterprise supporting local artisans, serves as an advisor for sã Ladakh, and launched Tsas by Dolkhar, an initiative focused on sustainability in food and hospitality. As the first woman President of the All Ladakh Hotel and Guest House Association (ALHGHA), Lachic has been a key advocate for policies that balance tourism growth with ecological and cultural sensitivity. Her efforts have earned recognition from Condé Nast Traveler, TIME Magazine, and the SATTE Awards, among many others. A frequent speaker on sustainable tourism, she has contributed to discussions at the Serendipity Arts Festival, ET TravelWorld Conclave, and the "Asia Live Symposium - Regenerative Travel" in Singapore. Through her work, Lachic continues to shape a more thoughtful and regenerative future for tourism in Ladakh.



Vivek Pyakuryal

Founder/CEO

Nana Resort, Dhampus, Nepal

Vivek Pyakuryal is the Founder and CEO of Nana Hotels & Resorts, a hospitality group in Nepal recognized for pioneering sustainable tourism in rural and ecologically sensitive areas. He leads two flagship eco-properties: Nana Jungle Resort (Chitwan), at the buffer zone of Chitwan National Park, and Nana Mountain Resort (Dhampus, Kaski), along the Annapurna trekking route. His work emphasizes climate-resilient infrastructure, community-based experiences, waste and water management, and local economic empowerment. Under his leadership, Nana's properties have introduced initiatives such as eliminating single-use plastics, solar lighting, sustainable architecture, flood-mitigation planning, and sourcing over 70% of annual supplies directly from local farmers and artisans. Vivek has collaborated with ICIMOD, Swisscontact, and Impact Hub Kathmandu on sustainability projects. He brings an operational perspective to sustainable tourism, integrating environmental stewardship with business viability. He holds a Master's in International Relations from the University of Melbourne (Class of 2012).



Parichat Suntararak

Vice President

Thai Ecotourism and Adventure Travel Association
Thailand

Dr.Parichat Suntararak is Vice President of the Thai Ecotourism and Adventure Travel Association (TEATA), where she plays a key role in advancing sustainable and community-based tourism in Thailand. She also serves as Vice President of Kanzolve Co., Ltd. (Paree Travel), a Bangkok-based tour company promoting authentic cultural and eco-travel experiences. Parichat works closely with local communities and industry partners to strengthen responsible tourism standards, integrate Thai-wisdom tourism concepts, and support climate-conscious business models that benefit both people and nature.



John Hummel

Director

Applied Research and Innovation

Global Academy of Tourism and Hospitality Education
(GATE), Kathmandu, Nepal

John Hummel is passionate about regenerative living and working in mountain regions. He has designed and implemented integrated development and tourism initiatives in the Himalayas, combining expertise in sustainable livelihoods, conservation, climate resilience, and small enterprise development. With over 30 years of experience, he has strengthened capacities in inclusive value chains, public-private partnerships, multi-stakeholder collaboration, tourism planning, regional strategies, and impact assessment. John spent 15 years at SNV Netherlands Development Organization as knowledge network leader and senior advisor on pro-poor and sustainable tourism in Asia. He coordinated over 50 projects with the UNWTO's Sustainable Tourism-Eliminating Poverty (ST-EP) programme and has led consultancy teams in Asia and Africa on tourism impact assessments, strategic planning, conservation-tourism plans, disaster recovery, and Bhutan's tourism sector development. Eight years ago, he co-founded **Okharbot Organic Farm** near Kathmandu, a regenerative agriculture and hospitality centre that serves as a learning hub for students, businesses, NGOs, and universities. John also shares his knowledge in academic journals and teaches courses on sustainable tourism and mountain development in Europe and Asia.



Nischal Oli

Crafts and Heritage Expert
Story Cycle, Nepal

Nischal Oli is a culture and development expert based in Kathmandu, Nepal. He has dedicated over a decade working with multiple organizations and events to emphasize the role of the creative sectors in Nepal's sustainable development. Independently he has been supporting the capacities of cultural professionals to effectively manage their projects and impact. Before 2024 he was the Head of Arts at the British Council where he led the Road the COP project, connecting youth with experts and resources to develop creative and innovative climate action and communication. At the British Council, he was a key contributor to the Creative Green Economy framework which aims to align Nepal's green transition with a stronger focus on equity. He is currently working to build a network which can take up the framework in eastern Nepal's low carbon sectors (agriculture, culture, tourism). Nischal is associated with Story Cycle as an arts/culture expert and works with Virangana Collective to apply comics and sequential storytelling to enhance access to knowledge and narratives.



Roshis Shrestha

Assistant Professor

The Hongkong Polytechnic University, PRC

Dr. Roshis Krishna Shrestha is a Research Assistant Professor at the School of Hotel and Tourism Management, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University. With a PhD in Business and Economics from the Australian National University (2023), he specializes in Indigenous tourism, regenerative sustainability, and cultural heritage tourism, with a focus on Nepal. His research has been published in top-tier journals such as *Annals of Tourism Research*, *Tourism Management*, and *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*. As a Principal Investigator, Roshis leads several funded projects to explore the impact of climate change on mountain tourism.



Sangita Ojha

Executive Director

Nepal Academy of Tourism and Hospitality Management
Nepal

Sangita Ojha, Joint Secretary of the Government of Nepal, has served as Executive Director of the Nepal Academy of Tourism and Hotel Management (NATHM) since April 2024, overseeing operations and ensuring compliance with national hospitality standards under the Ministry of Culture, Tourism, and Civil Aviation. Previously, she was Joint Secretary at the Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers (2023–2024), managing social development programs, and held roles as Director General (2022–2023) and Deputy Director General (2022) at the Department of National Personnel Records. She also served as Joint Secretary at the Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration (2022) and Under Secretary at the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology (2015–2022). Earlier roles include Planning Officer at the National Planning Commission (2014–2015) and Administrative Officer at the Public Service Commission (2010–2014). Ms. Ojha holds a Master's in English and a Bachelor's in Law from Tribhuvan University. She has been recognized with the Civil Service Award (2018/19) and topped the Advanced Course on Management and Development (2019/20).



Tshering Choki

Director

Athang Training Academy, Bhutan

Tshering Choki is a Bhutanese professional specializing in sustainable tourism, community development, and vocational education. With an MBA from the University of Canberra, she has led initiatives in environmental conservation, community-based tourism, and youth capacity development in Bhutan. Tshering currently serves as Director of Athang Private Limited, a company dedicated to IT development and workforce capacity development aimed at enhancing youth employability and professional skills development in Bhutan. Tshering is also a board member of the Asian Ecotourism Network and an active member of the Bhutan Sustainable Tourism Society, championing regenerative tourism and sustainable livelihoods. Her expertise spans project design and management, stakeholder collaboration, and community empowerment.



Habib Ullah Arif

Director General

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Culture and Tourism Authority
Pakistan

Habib Ullah Arif is a distinguished member of the Provincial Management Service in Khyber Pukhtoonkhwa Province, Pakistan, where he has built a substantial career serving in different Management positions.

He currently holds the critical role of Director General for the Culture and Tourism Authority KP, leading the charge in Culture and Tourism Promotion, especially Sustainable Eco Tourism across the region. Mr. Arif holds a key position in both the policy making and its implementation within the province. His expertise is further enriched by extensive international travel for research.