

# Bhutan's story of 100% improved sanitation: insights from a decade of action

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SNV

Bhutan

**SNV**

**WATER  
&  
WASH** 2023  
FUTURES

Achieving SDG6 in a Changing Climate



#WaWF23

# On November 19<sup>th</sup> 2022, Bhutan declared ODF with access to improved sanitation







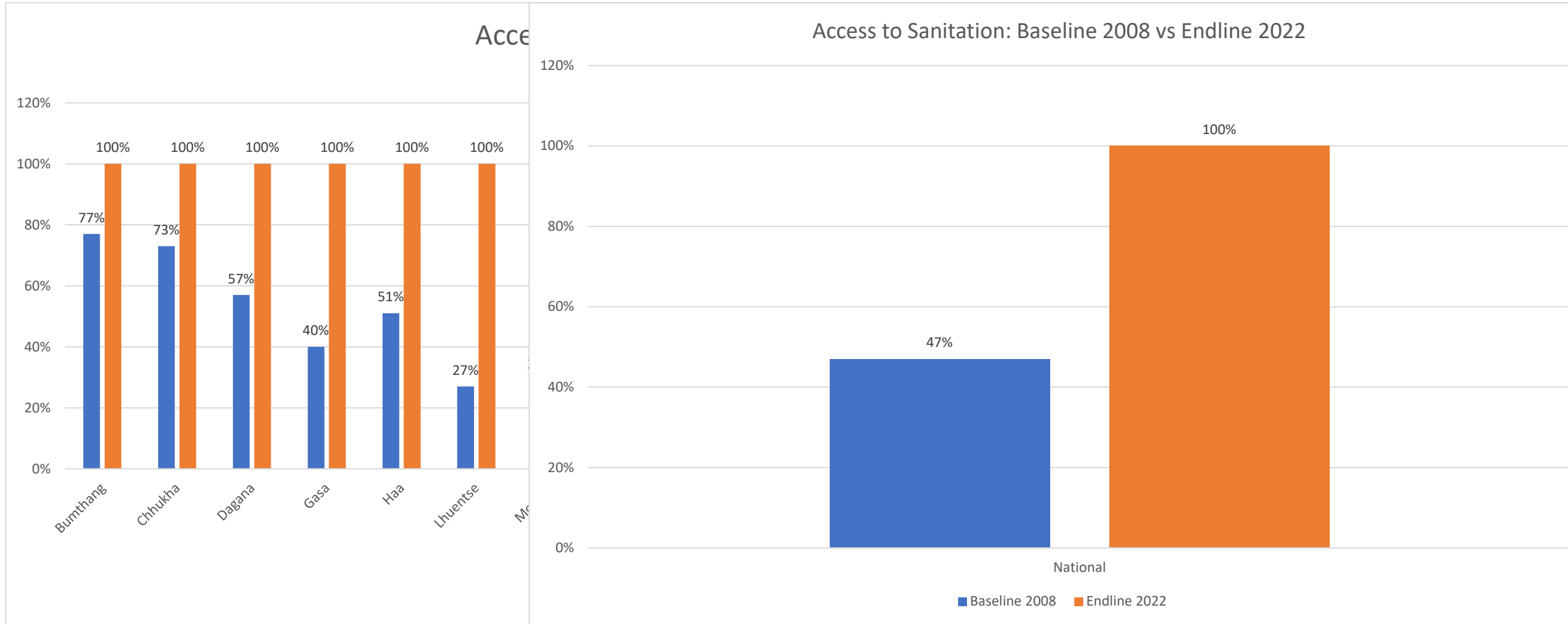
# Bhutan



Area : 38,394 km<sup>2</sup>

Total Population : 735,553

# Impact: access to improved sanitation, enhanced privacy and convenience\*





# Key milestones

SNV Beyond the Finish Line Project,  
Phase 1 (2014-18)

1992

Royal  
Kasho/  
Decree on  
Sanitation  
(4th King of  
Bhutan)

2008-09

SNV pilot in 4  
sub-districts;  
adapted CLTS  
to our own  
CDH

2010

Area:  
District-  
wide

2012

SSH4A: Subsidy-  
free & area-  
wide **approach**  
**endorsed by**  
**Bhutanese**  
**government**

2014-15

**Scaling up:**  
other  
partners,  
e.g.,  
UNICEF  
engage in  
the RSAHP

2017

1<sup>st</sup> district  
(Mongar) d  
eclared ODF  
with  
improved  
sanitation

# Key milestones *cont'd*

Phase 1 (2014-18)

SNV Beyond the Finish Line Project, Phase 2 (2018-22)

2017-2018

Local govts begin allocating budgets for sanitation and hygiene

2020

National Sanitation and Hygiene Policy (RSAHP) is endorsed

2020-21

RSAHP is rolled out in all 20 districts  
7 districts are declared ODF

2021

Focus on addressing last mile groups: Line listing and targeted interventions implemented  
Post-ODF activities

2022

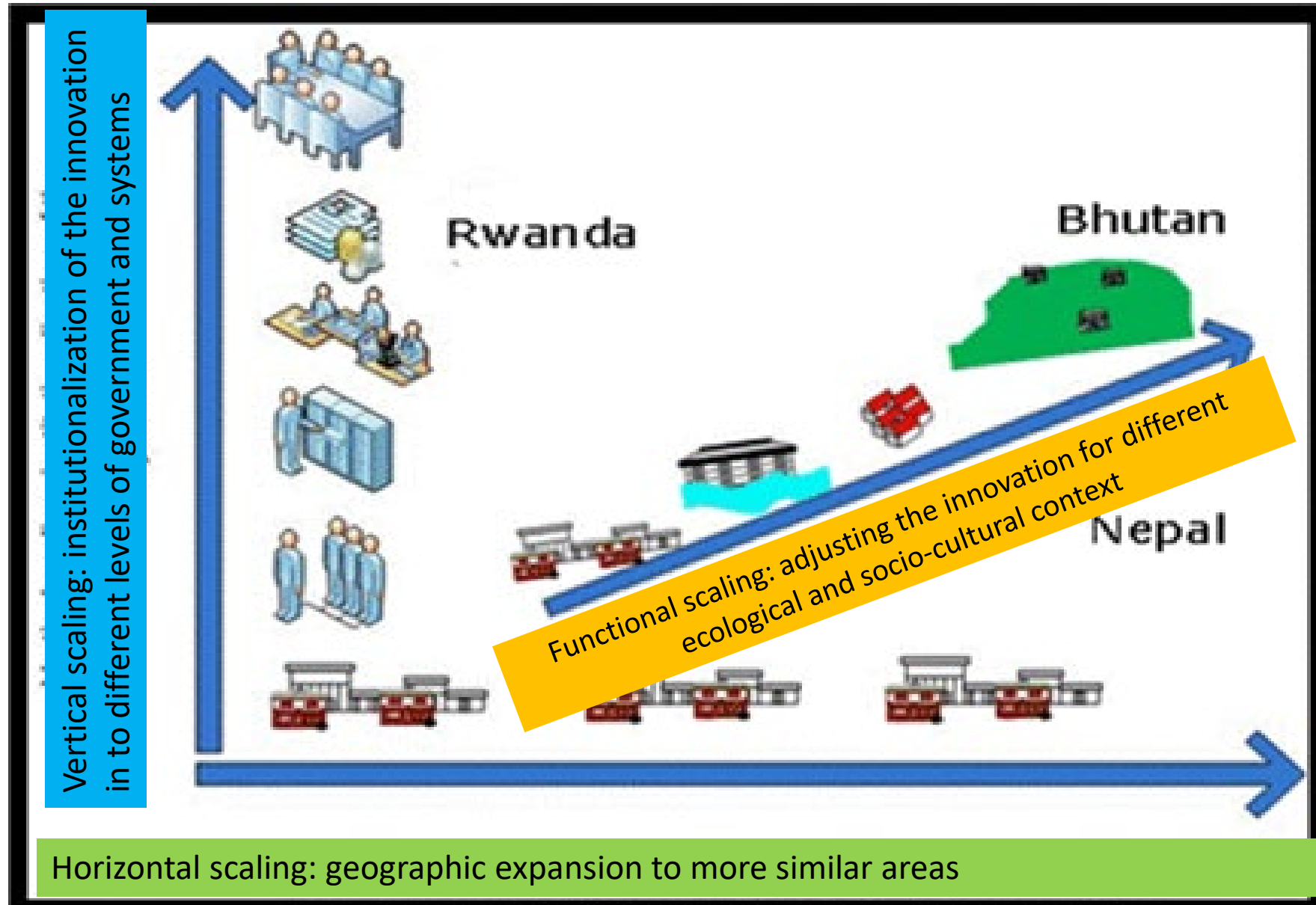
WTD 2022  
100% access to improved sanitation achieved (98% pour flush)

# Bhutan's journey to a national approach: RSAHP Approach





# Bhutan's journey to a national approach: RSAHP Approach





## Success factors

- ✓ Government leadership at all levels
- ✓ Long term multi year partnerships
- ✓ Scaling strategy that focused on embedding within systems along with replication
- ✓ Focus on people, process and practice
- ✓ Capacity building and mentoring
- ✓ GEDSI focus, particularly in the final years to ensure “Do No Harm”
- ✓ Teamwork
- ✓ Enabling environment



**SNV**

## Moving forward

Ensure inclusive water in the face of our changing climate with a focus on:

- ✓ Access
- ✓ Availability
- ✓ Reliability
- ✓ Quality

Post-ODF activities to:

- ✓ monitor possible slippage
- ✓ promote safely managed sanitation and hygiene through BCC



# Three key lessons

## PEOPLE

Leadership, long-term partnerships, and teamwork matter.

## PROCESS

Systems change requires stakeholders to engage in a harmonised approach that is designed based on research and evidence. Systems must be allowed to constantly adapt and evolve.

## PRACTICE

Social behaviour change happens when approaches are people-centered, participatory, and inclusive.

**“Nowadays, as we have a toilet inside our house, it is very convenient and safe. Before we had to go outside, especially at night, it was scary and risky”**

Aum Nima, Lobneykha village, Chhukha

<https://youtu.be/tMivRnX2Ai8?t=74>

**“One of the biggest achievements of this programme would be preventing diseases. To sustain the progress made so far, it is important for our people to understand the importance of sanitation and hygiene and continue to end open defecation, practice handwashing”**

Dasho Dechen Wangmo, Health Minister, Bhutan

<https://youtube.com/clip/UgkxY-CG0Itveb5M2uBFQZlgvcSFzkyBhtva>

Systemic change and institutionalisation process takes time, resources and effort, but with the right LEADERSHIP, PARTNERSHIPS, TEAM, PEOPLE-CENTRIC APPROACHES, and CONSISTENCY, systems change at scale can be achieved without compromising sustainability.

For more information and further details:

<https://snv.org/sector/water>

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