

Bringing government on board to catalyse trail planning and management in Nepal

Context

Samarth-NMDP, in its pursuit to increase the number of visitors in Nepal, has been working on trail management and planning to meet the international standard through its Tourism programme. Some of the major activities under trail development include: grading the trails on the degree of difficulty; infrastructure development such as bridges, tea houses, signage, drinking water facilities; Safety planning such as mountain hut and information systems.

Study Tour to New Zealand

In order to catalyse its initiatives, Samarth aimed to sensitize the decision makers from the government and other important stakeholders of the industry about trail management and planning through practical exposure to an international destination has addressed every aspect of trails and greenways.

Samarth-NMDP organised a 7-day training and capacity building tour for these stakeholder to New Zealand - a destination regarded as a leading country in innovative best practice in trails - to learn about the various aspects of trail management systems. The participants were from Ministry of Culture, Tourism & Civil Aviation (MoCTCA); Ministry of Forestry & Soil Conservation (MoFSC); National Trust for Nature Conservation (NTNC); Trekking Agencies' Association of Nepal (TAAN).

Key learnings and way forward

The visit stressed the importance of the requirement of formal standards for proper trail management; a strong need for an institutional back-up; and champion to forward it, if the trails in Nepal are to be developed sustainably.

With the key stakeholder convinced about the requirement of proper trail development, Samarth aims to work with MoCTCA to frame guidelines on trail planning and management in Nepal. Samarth is also currently planning on a GHT foundation - as an institutional back-up - which will give continuity to

The visit was very fruitful. We found the topography of the two countries very similar: New Zealand's longest trail (Te Araroa) is very similar to our GHT. The field level experience helped us learn the importance of public private partnership in trail management.

We shared the experience of the visit in the ministry, in the presence of the state minister. We are now forming a taskforce to develop a trekking trail manual based on the experience of the visit. We are also hoping to sign an MoU with Samarth-NMDP to assist us with the technical matters."

Sadhu Ram Sapkota,
Joint Secretary Ministry of Culture, Tourism & Civil Aviation (MoCTCA)

Samarth's initiative.



The participants getting a briefing from trail engineer Trevor Butler on engineering specifications of trail construction of the Te Araroa trail - New Zealand's longest trail



Dave Bamford - the facilitator of the study tour explaining about the signage of the New Zealand trails



Workshop on public private partnership on New Zealand's approach to tourism development