

ALIGN Organizes National Dialogue on Green, Resilient, and Inclusive Infrastructure Development

WWF-Nepal, through the US Agency for International Development (USAID)-funded Asia's Linear Infrastructure safeGuarding Nature (ALIGN) Project, partnered with the Nepal PhD Association (NPA) to organize a national dialogue on green, resilient, and inclusive infrastructure development on December 12, 2024, in Kathmandu, Nepal. The event brought together key stakeholders, including government officials, conservation experts, academics, and private sector representatives, all emphasizing the importance of a balanced approach that integrates both development and conservation.

The chief guest for the opening session was the Hon. Minister Mr. Ain Bahadur Shahi Thakuri of Nepal's Ministry of Forests and Environment, and the President of NPA Dr. Sunil Babu Shrestha chaired the meeting. Other distinguished guests included the Hon. Member Dr. Ramesh Prasad Singh of National Planning Commission and WWF-Nepal's Country Representative Dr. Ghana Shyam Gurung. Addressing the event, Dr. Gurung shared, "Nepal has become a model in conservation, but we need to do more around development of wildlife-friendly infrastructure." Likewise, Hon. Minister Thakuri said that different sectors of the society such as the private sector, civil society, development organizations, academia, and

government agencies should come together to build an environment for developing sustainable and green infrastructure.



*Hon. Minister of Forests and Environment addressing the event
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Following the opening session, two presentations focused on infrastructure development, the protection of natural resources, and the associated legal provisions. Subsequently, panelists from various sectors, including the private sector, the Ministry of Forests and Environment, and the Ministry of Physical Infrastructure and Transport, emphasized the need for a balanced approach to infrastructure development,

ensuring that both conservation and development goals are achieved.



Participants of the national dialogue ©WWF-Nepal

An engaging Q&A session followed, where the audience actively participated, contributing to a

dynamic exchange of ideas. Several audience members remarked that the quantity of infrastructure does not equate to better development; rather, careful planning and a strong focus on sustainability are essential. The panelists also responded to questions from the audience, comprising scholars from diverse fields and members of NPA.

In conclusion, the national dialogue successfully highlighted the critical need for green, resilient, and inclusive infrastructure development in Nepal. This meeting is a crucial step toward creating a better understanding that fosters sustainable infrastructure while safeguarding Nepal's rich natural heritage. ■ *To learn more about the ALIGN Project, visit alignproject.org.*

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