

BHUTAN

Believe

NEW NATIONAL BRAND UNVEILED FOR FABLED HIMALAYAN KINGDOM

New brand and tourism strategy set to transform Bhutan's future

September 30, 2022: On September 23, 2022, Bhutan reopened its borders, welcoming guests back to the kingdom after more than two years. At the same time, the country has revealed a new national identity that demonstrates an evolution and a spirit of optimism, destined to inspire pride and spark the imaginations of citizens and visitors alike.

To mark the reopening of the kingdom and to look to the future, Bhutan created a whole new identity for the country to inspire a new vision of the future to its citizens. The result reflects Bhutan's character and landscapes, history and ambitions: bold, vivid, richly storied and utterly distinctive – rebranding it for a new future, both for its people and its guests who are seeking a different travel experience.

Bhutan is a Buddhist kingdom, perched high in the Himalayas and renowned for its mountains and monasteries, rich biodiversity, pristine forests, rivers, glacial lakes, waterfalls and striking natural beauty. Most importantly, it is loved by visitors for the welcome that its people extend to them. The only country in the world that uses the happiness of its people as a guiding principle that underpins everything, Bhutan may be one of the very few carbon-negative countries in the world (in 2021, Bhutan sequestered 9.4 million tonnes of carbon against its emission capacity of 3.8 million tonnes).

Few foreigners have experienced Bhutan's extraordinary nature and culture for themselves. This small nation of only 800,000 people has long practised a policy of 'high value, low volume' tourism to protect and preserve its peace, its sacred places and its wildernesses. Like many countries, Bhutan closed its borders in March 2020 in response to Covid. During this extended period of closure, the nation reconsidered its relationship with tourism, and developed new policies and plans for the country's advancement – in particular, for how it can invest in creating sustainable opportunities for its young people. As it reopens to embrace visitors once more, one of the notable changes is the increase in the Sustainable Development Fee (SDF), a daily contribution made by visitors towards Bhutan's development. The funds raised by the SDF will play an invaluable role in supporting a range of social, environmental and cultural initiatives, as well as Bhutan's wider aspirations.

It's these plans and programmes that Bhutan's brand – and new campaign – is built upon. It offers a rallying cry to *believe* - in the nation's capabilities, its values, its global contribution, its responsibilities, and its future.

To respond with sensitivity and substance to the brief, the team involved spoke to hundreds of people from Thimphu to Lunana, Punakha and Bumthang to Radi. Conveying the rich tapestry of Bhutan's living culture, which seamlessly weaves together the ancient, the contemporary, and the visionary, quickly became a priority for the new brand. In particular, the younger Bhutanese generation were centred within the brand's development, ensuring that the new identity reflects their role as key stakeholders in Bhutan's future.

A vital element of the strategy was to create a new graphic identity for Bhutan—a contemporary interpretation of the country's heritage that would offer a pathway towards the future. It draws on the Bhutanese flag's vibrant yellow and orange, with further colour palette inspiration from nature — the cypress green of the forests that cover 70% of the country, the blue of Bhutan's national flower, the Himalayan blue poppy, and a soft black referencing the natural soot from the fires burning in the country's hearths.

Using these colours, a completely new graphic identity system was created, which draws on traditional Bhutanese iconography such as hand-painted architectural decoration, mythical animals, folklore and symbolism – all reimagined with boldness, sharpness and dynamism. The vibrant brand identity has already been rolled out across the tourism sector to great acclaim. Soon it will also be seen across government organisations, official websites, National Day celebrations, and even a new postage stamp.

Bhutan's new tourism policy is part of a nationwide transformation, from the civil service to education and financial reforms. The changes are geared toward forging fresh pathways and creating long-term opportunity for forthcoming generations. The development of the new national brand goes beyond simply creating a new identity, but aims to leverage the power of branding to connect Bhutan, and the stories it wants to tell, with a global audience.

Julien Beaupre Ste-Marie, Managing Director, MMBP & Associates, the branding agency involved, says: "Working closely with the Kingdom of Bhutan to create its new national brand has been a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for me and for our team. We are one piece of the puzzle in a much larger era of transformation—it truly feels like history in the making. The learnings we made working alongside such an inspired group of Bhutanese people and international stakeholders will influence how we work for years to come. Similarly, as the world wakes up to the damaging effects of unrestricted mass tourism and tries to find ways to mitigate climate change, this small and mighty country has many lessons to share with the world. Our hope is that our work and this brand helps to carry this vision forward."

Dorji Dhradhul, the Director General of the Tourism Council of Bhutan, added: "We are so excited that our tourism reopening is timed together with the launch of the new Nation Brand. Inspired by our new brand, and with a renewed focus on our time-tested high value low volume approach to tourism, we aim to offer an elevated experience to all guests who visit Bhutan, while at the same time creating well-paying and professional jobs for our citizens. We like to believe that Bhutan can offer that space and place for guests to reconnect with themselves,

with Bhutanese people, and with the world at large. We are happy to welcome you to experience – Bhutan Believe!”

Carissa Nimah, Chief Marketing Officer, Tourism Council of Bhutan, concluded: "Bhutan is already an incredibly alluring destination, yet it has so many layers to be revealed and shared. It is a huge honour and a pleasure to be part of this transformation, and to help facilitate tourism as a strategic driver of positive change and growth across the country. The new Bhutan brand is exciting – it's so different from anything else. It's so vibrant and fun, yet also captures the inspiration, mystique, spirituality, adventure and energy of Bhutanese culture. I look forward to promoting the new brand and tourism strategy globally.”

- Ends -

Annex

ABOUT THE BRANDING:

Logotype:

Bold, Confident

Our distinct logotype is the manifestation of a bold and confident country, grounded in time-honoured traditions and a majestic landscape.

Contemporary, Clear

Clean lines create a contemporary feel, mirroring the nation's future-facing ethos. Our logotype's elegant and crisp expression conveys the elevated experience Bhutan offers its guests.

Traditional, Warm

With a gentle curve, our logotype alludes to the warm and grounded personality of the Bhutanese people. This timeless and organic form embodies the kingdom's earthy character.

Legible, Scalable

Our logotype must be easy to read at every size. Clarity makes for the most powerful impact.

Responsive, Functional

Our versatile logotype is optimised for use in many formats, proportions and media. Extra care has been invested in making it work well for digital use.

Tagline:

Believe

A sense of possibility greets you in Bhutan, a feeling that other ways of being in the world and experiencing life are within reach. Far from the humdrum and the hectic, removed from hollow luxury and high pressure, Bhutan is proof that happiness, connection, respite and revelation are our birthright. Restoring one's sense of belief is the kingdom's real gift to its visitors. The nation itself believes in a better future, led by wisdom from its past – a belief it is manifesting daily.

Graphic elements:

Ornaments

Hand-painted architectural decoration is one of the 13 crafts, or *zorig chosum*, that represent Bhutanese cultural identity. Traditional motifs have been reimagined with digital precision to create dynamic, new icons.

Auspicious Symbols

A series of auspicious symbols has been given a bold, graphic reworking in high-contrast hues, evoking Bhutan's dynamism and transformation, rooted in its vibrant heritage.

Mythical Animals

Four auspicious beasts from Buddhist mythology, carrying powerful symbolism, have been digitally redrawn. Imbued with all their traditional meaning – but presented with newly sharp definition and vivid colour – they invoke stories past, present and future.

Patterns:

Contemporary Constellations

"Contemporary constellations" draws on the traditional decorations of Bhutan, rearranging and reinterpreting them as a richly decorative pattern. The complete iteration seen here is primarily used on the inside of applications: hidden at first, but revealed when you take a closer look. We imagine it as an interpretation of the clear night sky, filled with mesmerising constellations.

Future Folk

Using an imagined telescope to gaze at our constellation, this extreme close-up creates an appealing abstraction that's thoroughly modern. A progressive reimagining of folkloric motifs in vivid, optimistic hues, this evolution plays with the contrasts alluded to in our brand narrative.

Colours:

Primary Colour

Our primary colour palette features five main shades that together express the brand's premium quality. The yellow and orange draw on the Bhutanese flag, symbolising the kingdom's civic and monastic traditions. On the ground, Bhutan's colours are those of its emerald-green mountains – covered in blue pine and cypress – and its national flower, the Himalayan blue poppy. A continuation of Bhutan's previous identity, our blue also references the clear azure sky above Bhutan's majestic mountains – mountains harbouring precious

glaciers in similar hues. Our soft black is inspired by the natural soot from the cheerful fires burning in the country's hearths.

Secondary Colour

Our secondary colour palette draws on the natural dyes used for traditional Bhutanese architectural ornamentation. From mineral vermilion and conch shell, to sandalwood and lotus pigment, these organic, earthy tones beautifully reveal the passing of time.

Tertiary Colour

As our primary and secondary colour palettes evoke the natural and the demure, our tertiary colour palette contrasts and complements these grounded tones. These vivid hues catapult our visual identity well beyond the present moment, giving it a truly dynamic and future-facing expression.

Campaign:

Heralding its reopening to international tourism, and a new era of transformation, Bhutan reintroduces itself to the world in an international campaign. This campaign takes the form of a manifesto: a bold statement encapsulating its pride, progress and plans. It will lead conscious travellers from their preconceptions of the nation as mystical and remote to new awareness of its progressiveness and ambitions. It will also be a rallying cry for the Bhutanese as we lead the country through the process of transformation. Inspired by Bhutan's colourful oral traditions, the campaign is worded to evoke the lyrical flow of *lozey* and *darshey*, giving the kingdom's rich heritage contemporary expression.

ABOUT THE TOURISM COUNCIL OF BHUTAN

<https://bhutan.travel/>

The Tourism Council of Bhutan is responsible for the development and promotion of sustainable tourism in Bhutan. It works to share the Kingdom's remarkable places, people and experiences with conscious travellers, guided by the principles of high value, low volume tourism.

For further information, images, and interview requests, please contact:

Carissa Nimah

Chief Marketing Officer

Tourism Promotion Division

Tourism Council of Bhutan

cnimah@tcb.gov.bt

