

Digital Entrepreneur Lab (DEL)

Thakurbaba-9, Bardiya

Action Plan for Local Champion

Presented by Biruwa Advisors Pvt. Ltd.

Supported By



The Asia Foundation

Implemented By



accelerator
NEPAL

Tourism Ecology of Bardiya National Park (2026)

Study Period: January – March 2026 (3 months)

Local Focused Municipalities: Thakurbaba Municipality and Madhuwan Municipality

Main Objectives of the Study:

- Tourism Enterprise Profile: Understand hotel and homestay operations, ownership, employment, and income
- Tourism Demand and Behavior Analysis: Examine length of stay, expenditure, satisfaction, and travel planning
- Digital Ecology Assessment: Measure digital readiness, infrastructure, skills, and online presence
- Institutional Relationship Snapshot: Identify weaknesses in governance, business associations, value chains, and external support
- Evidence-Based Recommendations: For destination branding, digital capacity development, and inclusive growth

Types of Respondents & Number

- Hotel / Resort / Lodge Survey 26
- Homestay Survey 32
- Tourist Survey 28
- Key Informant Interviews (KII) 22
- Focus Group Discussions (FGD) 5

Key Findings (2026 Study)

- Main Attractions: Wildlife (tiger, rhino, dolphin), fresh greenery, and a peaceful jungle experience.
- Main Challenges: Fragmented infrastructure, weak digital presence, high seasonal fluctuations, and low tourist spending.
- Hotels and Homestays (two categories)
 - Hotels (formal, male-dominated, digital readiness 74%)
 - Homestays (female-led, community-based, digital readiness 24%)
- Tourist Profile
 - Domestic tourists: 2 days stay, total spending NPR 6,357
 - International tourists: 4 days stay, total spending NPR 45,000
- Seasonality: Peak season is about 70% (Chaitra–Baisakh), Low season is about 15% (Shrawan–Bhadra)
- Digital Gap
 - In homestays: 0% have their own website
 - Only about 53% of lodgings are listed online – this is a major barrier
- Review Analysis
 - Around 65% of tourists read online reviews, but rarely change accommodation choices based on them
 - Hotels actively manage reviews; homestays mostly do not
- Major Opportunities: Create a unified brand, develop a shared digital platform, and promote MICE tourism (meetings, incentives, conferences, exhibitions) and training programs.

Key Findings (2026 Study)

Dual Economy

- There is a large gap between hotels and homestays. Hotels are formal, male-led (88% male ownership), and have high digital readiness (74.5%).
- Homestays are female-led (49% female ownership) but have low digital readiness (34.5%).

Differences in Tourist Stay Duration and Spending

- Domestic tourists stay an average of **2 days** with total spending around **NPR 6,357**.
- International tourists stay an average of **4 days** with total spending around **NPR 45,000**.
- International tourists spend **31%** of their budget on activities and guides, whereas Nepali tourists only spend about **14%**.

High Seasonal Fluctuation

- Hotel occupancy reaches about **70% during peak season (Chaitra–Baisakh)** and drops to around **15% in off-season (Ashar–Shrawan)**.
- Homestays have a similar pattern.
- The average occupancy over **8 months (Jestha–Bhadra)** is less than **30%**.

Conclusion of the Study 2026



Lack of Reliable Travel Information for Tourists

- ▶ **40% of tourists** do not get reliable travel information.
- ▶ Information such as transport, park fees, and activity pricing is not easily accessible.
- ▶ **51% rely on word-of-mouth**, rather than online platforms.

Lack of Institutional Coordination

- ▶ There is no formal coordination between the municipality, park office, hotel association, homestay association, and guide association.
- ▶ This results in weak branding, promotion, and infrastructure investment.

Opportunity to Expand MICE Tourism (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, Exhibitions)

- ▶ **25% of tourists** visit for meetings, workshops, and training purposes.
- ▶ By targeting this segment and creating package offerings, hotel and homestay occupancy can be increased during low seasons.

About the Project

- The Digital Entrepreneurs Lab is an initiative under The Asia Foundation's Digital Samriddhi Project, designed to close Bardiya's tourism "digital invisibility" gap.
- Anchored at the gateway to Bardia National Park, the Lab equips local tourism micro- and small enterprises — homestays, hotels, nature guides, and transport operators — with the digital skills, tools, and market linkages they need to reach travelers online.
- The project is delivered by a three-partner consortium: **Biruwa Advisors** (strategic lead and overall program management), **Accelerator Nepal** (training and incubation delivery), and **NAGA — Nature Guide Association Bardia** (local ground anchor and permanent host of the Lab).

Champion Model



The DEL cannot personally train every tourism enterprise in Bardiya.



Instead, it invests deeply in a small cohort of sector-representative Local Champions who receive continuous handholding – then multiply that learning across their communities as trainers, mentors, and trusted local resources.



Champions co-facilitate peer sessions and eventually lead independent training



Champions become the Lab's long-term, locally-owned multiplier network

Understanding Champions Before Training (TNA)

- Before any curriculum is delivered, a rapid Training Needs Assessment (TNA) grounds the 3-day workshop in real digital gaps rather than a fixed blueprint.
- Current digital tool usage — which platforms, frequency, barriers
- Preferred learning formats — hands-on, peer learning, video tutorials
- Specific content needs — e.g. responding to reviews, linking eSewa to a website
- Findings directly reweight the 10-module curriculum before delivery

Six Thematic Training Modules (3-Day Foundational Training)

- **Tourism Value Chain Mapping** — Customer journey mapping & collaboration strategy
- **Brand Story & Identity** — Storytelling, visual identity, promotional concepts
- **Digital Presence Foundations** — Google/Meta profiles, payments & booking tools
- **Content Creation** — Mobile photo/video, editing, two-week content plan
- **Emerging Trends & Growth** — Cybersecurity, data privacy, AI tools for marketing
- **Customer Journey & Experience** — Digital journey mapping, FAQs, feedback tools

Action Plan

- Identify the potential entrepreneurs in the community who need support (a similar kind of support that they received here in the training)
- Conduct weekly Content Fridays where participants bring their phones and champions help take photos, edit videos, write captions, and update Google Maps or online travel agency listings.
- Based on the need, deliver the required digital training
 - Social media content creation
 - OTA registration platform
 - Fintech integration
 - Mapping in Google and integrating their business
- Bringing interested entrepreneurs into the lab space if they want to learn more

Action Plan

Activity	Expected Output	Success Indicator
Identify tourism entrepreneurs (homestays, guides, restaurants, local businesses) requiring digital support	List of entrepreneurs prepared	Minimum 10 entrepreneurs identified
Meet entrepreneurs and conduct a basic digital needs assessment	Individual support needs documented	Needs assessment completed for each entrepreneur
Organize Content Friday at the Digital Literacy Lab where entrepreneurs bring their phones for practical support	Weekly hands-on mentoring sessions	At least 5 entrepreneurs attend each session
Assist entrepreneurs to create photos, short videos and social media posts	New digital content published	Each entrepreneur publishes at least one post/week
Help entrepreneurs prepare captions, hashtags and posting schedules using AI tools	Ready-to-use content calendar	Weekly content plan developed
Support entrepreneurs in setting up or improving Facebook, Instagram and TikTok business accounts	Professional social media profiles	Business accounts optimized

Action Plan

Activity	Expected Output	Success Indicator
Deliver focused mini-training sessions on topics such as: • Social media content creation • Mobile photography & videography • Canva design • CapCut editing • AI (ChatGPT) for captions • Google Business Profile • Digital payments • OTA platforms	Practical training completed	Participants demonstrate skills independently
Connect interested entrepreneurs to the Digital Literacy Lab for additional support	Entrepreneurs continue learning	Increased utilization of Lab services
Monitor entrepreneurs' digital progress (posts, followers, reviews, Google Maps, inquiries)	Progress tracking report	Improvement observed across supported businesses
Share lessons learned and success stories with project team	Implementation report	Action plan completed

Specific (विशिष्ट):

वास्तवमा के परिवर्तन हुनेछ (what exactly will change)

Measurable (मापनयोग्य):

मैले के गणना वा अवलोकन गर्नेछु (what I will count or observe)

Achievable (प्राप्त गर्न सकिने):

मेरो समय र स्रोतसाधनलाई हेर्दा यो किन यथार्थपरक छ (why this is realistic)

Relevant (प्रासंगिक):

कुन उद्यम / समूहहरूले सबैभन्दा बढी लाभ उठाउँछन्, GEDSI सहित (which groups benefit, including GEDSI)

Time bound (समयसीमा):

यस चक्रको लागि मेरो समयसीमा (my deadline for this cycle)

Thank You



helping you manage,
helping you grow