

bhutan+film trust

September 2013



bhutan+partners, the Netherlands

## The Fund

The Bhutan Film Trust is a trust fund that seeks to promote the development of film and contemporary culture in Bhutan.

The fund will facilitate research, productions, postproductions and distribution of high quality Bhutanese films and documentaries.

The fund will encourage and facilitate exposure of Bhutanese films at major international festivals and will host national and international film festivals in the country.

## Introduction

Bhutan has a vibrant film industry with over 200 actors, directors, producers and crewmembers. Over the past years annually over 30 productions were realised and screened in one of the film theatres in Bhutan.

The feature films are entertaining and annually viewed by 20% of the Bhutan population. The documentaries and “art house” films although lesser in production are of a good quality.

Bhutan possesses breath taking scenery and marvellous stories and myths that inspire a large international audience. The limited population of Bhutan (700.000 inhabitants) also confines the quality of the Bhutan film industry; the limited domestic audience generates insufficient revenues to invest in quality development of the productions.

On the other hand, the few Bhutan (co) productions that made it to international exposure like: *the Cup*, *Travellers and Magicians*, *School among Glaciers*, *The Other Final*, *86 centimetres* and *the Container* impressed the audience.

The growing interest for Bhutan and its Gross National Happiness philosophy, the quality of filmmakers, actors, technicians, the sceneries and stories justify a comprehensive support to the Bhutan film industry to make its productions available for the international audience.

It is expected that international exposure and exchange with global film industries will further develop the Bhutan Film Industry’s potentials and qualities.

For this matter the establishment of the Bhutan Film Trust is proposed as an outcome of the bhutan+partners study on the Bhutan film industry, published, December 2011<sup>1</sup>

## Findings of research on the Bhutan film industry 2011 – 2013:

1. Bhutan’s film industry stands at the threshold of its (inter-) national breakthrough.
2. The non-commercial sector (art films) is about to leave its *underground* status and may soon be ready to get a steady stage at international film festivals.
3. Bhutan’s main assets, next to passionate and talented film professionals, are the uniqueness of its scenery and original and traditional stories.
4. Bhutan is gaining international interest and popularity because of its brand (exclusive, authentic, Gross National Happiness), location/sceneries, stories and talented actors. Attracting foreign productions with *state of the art* facilities (studio, equipment, staff,

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.bhutanandpartners.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/Bhutan-Film-Industry-29-12-20111.pdf>

logistics) may generate inspiration and income for both the film industry and the Royal Government of Bhutan.

5. The Bhutan film community and its domestic market offer ample opportunities to develop into a professional and profitable industry. The increase of purchase power and the demand for class entertainment will encourage the introduction of fashionable film productions to Bhutan.
6. Catching up with the Western *multi media entertainment* industry (books, magazines internet, DVD/CD, web shops, shows, festivals) opens doors to integrate films into a broad supply of entertainment for a growing consumer market in Bhutan and beyond.
7. However, the film industry today is a low-end domestic market. The present quality of the (commercial) films may be satisfactory for the current (low income) domestic market segment; it is by far not enough to compete with international productions.
8. International films are not shown at the cinemas, which affects Bhutan's efforts to cope with international standards
9. The industry requires training and education on e.g. scriptwriting, acting, content, distribution, marketing and copyright.
10. Local investors will assumingly sign in when there is confidence in the underutilised market for quality productions.

## The Bhutan film trust

### Objectives

1. Quality improvement of the film productions in Bhutan (feature, art films and documentaries) through financial support and technical assistance
2. Increased international exposure of Bhutan productions at international film festivals
3. Enhanced interest for Bhutan through creative, entertaining and informative film productions

### Working areas

The Bhutan Film Trust will support innovative and potentially successful productions in four core areas:

- 1) *Financial support and investment* for talented upcoming professionals to develop new scripts/films and for films to reach the technical and artistic standards for international festivals and markets.
- 2) *Training* in all aspects of filmmaking for selected talented youth
- 3) *Master classes and festivals* – Master classes and production of short films and documentaries for a festival and film award competition
- 4) *Exposure of Bhutan film* at major international film festivals (categories: feature, short/long, documentaries, animation) and among European filmmakers and film markets.

### Activities

1. Annual competition for Bhutan script writers and film directors
2. Support to the editing and re-editing of Bhutan film productions for the international market.
3. Promotion of selected Bhutan films and documentaries at international film festivals and to international film networks, including distribution channels
4. Support to 2 annual Bhutan Film Festivals in Europe.

### Institutional arrangements

A board of 3 Bhutanese, 3 international members and one independent chairperson govern the Trust fund. The board members are highly respected persons in society with a combined knowledge of the film industry and the Bhutanese culture.

An international technical advisory committee of three members assesses and advises on the competition winners, the productions to be (re) edited, and the films to be promoted to the international market

The Trust Fund will be registered in the Netherlands and administrated according to Dutch legislation by bhutan+partners. After three years the Trust and its administration will be transferred to Bhutan. An Admin/Accounts Officer will handle day-to-day administration and accounts.

The Bhutan Film Trust will communicate through social media (website, face book, twitter), networks (present at important film festivals) and publications.

### Sustainability plan

- 1) The fund will generate income through contributions of a cine-theatre in Thimphu starting early 2014. The theatre will screen a mixture of foreign movies (Hollywood) and the best Bhutan productions. The theatre will host events and conferences and will be completed with restaurant facilities.
- 2) The Trust will receive dividends from the films it has invested in (from 2015)
- 3) The Trust will seek investors and philanthropists to further ensure the sustainability of the Fund

## Activities 2013-2014

The year 2013 and 2014 shall be the start-up phase for the Trust. Hence it seeks to raise financial support for:

### 2013

1. *Establishment of Trust office:* setting up of s small offices in the Netherlands and Bhutan and recruitment of part time staff for coordination, administration and accounting.
2. *Registration of the Trust Fund*

### 2014

1. *Film support*
  - a. 2 feature films to be re-edited for international markets and festivals
  - b. 2 short films to be re-edited for international markets and festivals
  - c. Development of 2 film scripts for production
  - d. Development of 1 documentary and seed grant for production
  - e. Film club, lectures and talks by visiting filmmakers
2. *Master class and festivals* – Master class and production of 2 short films
3. *Promotion of Bhutanese films* at 2 major international film festivals and among European filmmakers and film market.

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