

SUSTAINABLE WASTE MANAGEMENT FOR CLEAN HIMALAYA (SWACHYA SAGARMATHA PROJECT)

OVERVIEW

The project, “Sustainable Waste Management for Clean Himalaya” (Swachya* Sagarmatha in brief) aims to promote sustainable waste management practices, including responsible electronic waste handling, in support of a cleaner environment in the Khumbu region of Nepal. By addressing the region’s growing waste management crisis, the project seeks to safeguard its fragile mountain ecosystem and strengthen the tourism industry. This three-year project will be completed in December 2027. The project is funded by the Thomas L. Kempner, Jr., Foundation and implemented by WWF in partnership with the Sagarmatha Pollution Control Committee (SPCC) in close collaboration with the Khumbu Pasang Lhamu Rural Municipality and Sagarmatha National Park (SNP) and SNP Buffer Zone Management Committee.



© Steve Morgan/WWF

CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

SNP, home to Mt. Everest, is renowned for its rich biodiversity, vibrant indigenous heritage and unique socio-ecological systems. In recent years, the park has witnessed a dramatic surge in visitors. Annual visitors to the park have more than doubled from 20,014 in 1998 to 55,767 in 2024, boosting the local economy. To accommodate the growing number of visitors, businesses such as lodges, restaurants, and shops are increasing in the Khumbu region.

However, this influx has brought about some serious environmental challenges, in particular, waste management. While many households in Khumbu Region

continue to practice traditional methods to segregate biodegradable waste such as animal feed, these methods are no longer sufficient to handle the growing amount of waste.

Non-biodegradable waste such as paper, glass, cans, and tires is improperly disposed of in dumping pits due to inadequate waste management infrastructure. More recently, electronic waste (e-waste) has emerged as a growing concern.

Therefore, there is an urgent need to develop sustainable waste management practices for a cleaner environment and empower communities to safeguard SNP’s fragile mountain ecosystem with co-benefits for climate action, tourism and human health.

PROJECT AREA

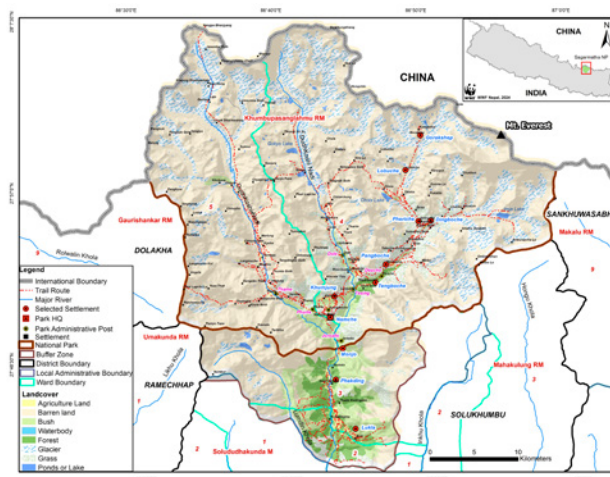
The project area is located in Sagarmatha National Park (1148 sq.km) and its buffer zone (275 sq. km), Solukhumbu district of Koshi Province. It focuses on Wards 2, 3, 4, and 5 of Khumbu Pasang Rural Municipality. Wards 4 and 5 lie within the core area of national park, while wards 2 and 3 lie in the buffer zone.

The project targets major settlements along the Everest Base Camp (EBC) trekking trail, from Lukla airstrip, passing through various settlements and ending at Gorakshep, which is the final settlement near Everest Base Camp (EBC). There are around 2,000 households along the EBC trail. These settlements are situated at altitudes ranging from 2,800 to 5,000 meters above sea level.

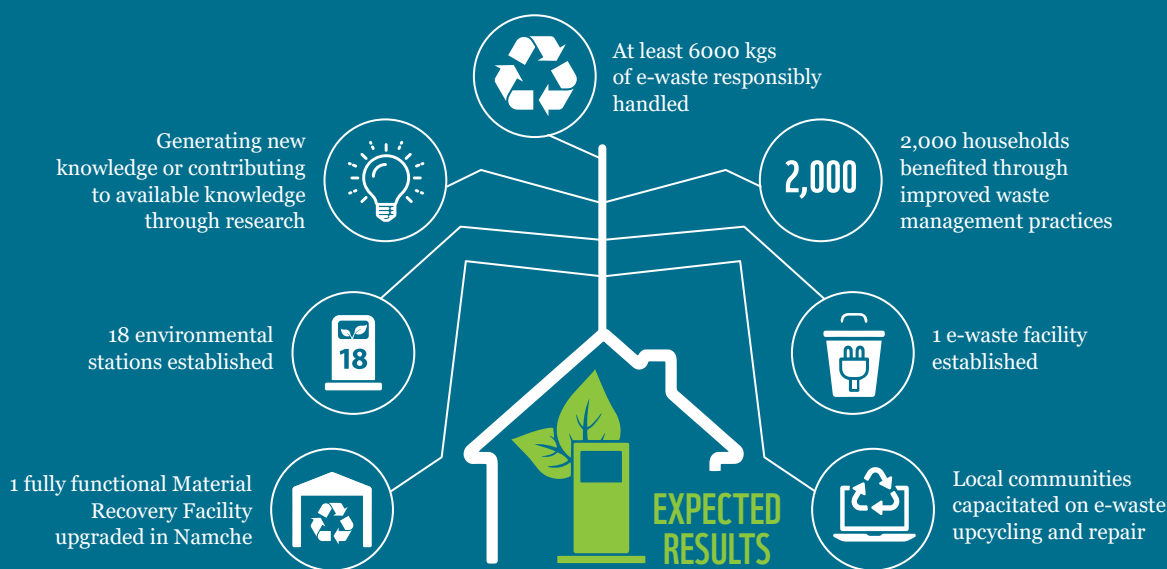
**In Nepali, स्वच्छ (Swachya) translates as “clean”; here Swachya implies clean environment through sustainable waste management. Mt. Everest is called Sagarmatha in Nepali and Jomolangma in local Sherpa language. Thus, Swachya Sagarmatha reflects cleaner environment in Everest region.*

PROJECT VISION AND ACTIVITIES

The project envisions improved and sustainable waste management through waste segregation, including e-waste, at the source, improved waste collection facilities, and recycling of e-waste. These efforts aim to promote a cleaner environment benefitting both local communities and the region's tourism industry. The project focuses on four key areas: infrastructure support, capacity building, raising awareness and research.



Map of the project area



ABOUT THE ORGANIZATIONS

WWF is the world's leading independent conservation organization, established in 1961 and currently operating in more than 100 countries.

WWF initiated work in Nepal with a rhino conservation program in 1967, with an office formally operational since 1993. Currently, WWF Nepal works in five thematic areas – Wildlife, Freshwater, Forests, Climate and Energy, and Governance.

Find more information about WWF: <https://www.worldwildlife.org/> (WWF US), <https://www.wwfnepal.org/> (WWF Nepal).

Sagarmatha Pollution Control Committee (SPCC) is a community-led non-profit organization dedicated to protecting the fragile ecosystem of Nepal's Everest Region. Founded in 1991 through the vision of the late Tengboche Rinpoche, SPCC leads sustainable waste management in the region, through the development of appropriate waste management practices, such as establishing a system for waste segregation, strengthening community involvement in waste management, educational and promotional campaigns for community awareness etc.

Find more information about the organization in <https://spcc.org.np/>

Supported by:



THOMAS L. KEMPNER, JR.,
FOUNDATION, INC.



For more information
about the project
info@wwfnepal.org