

STRATEGIC PLAN 2023-2027



Bring The Elephant Home Foundation

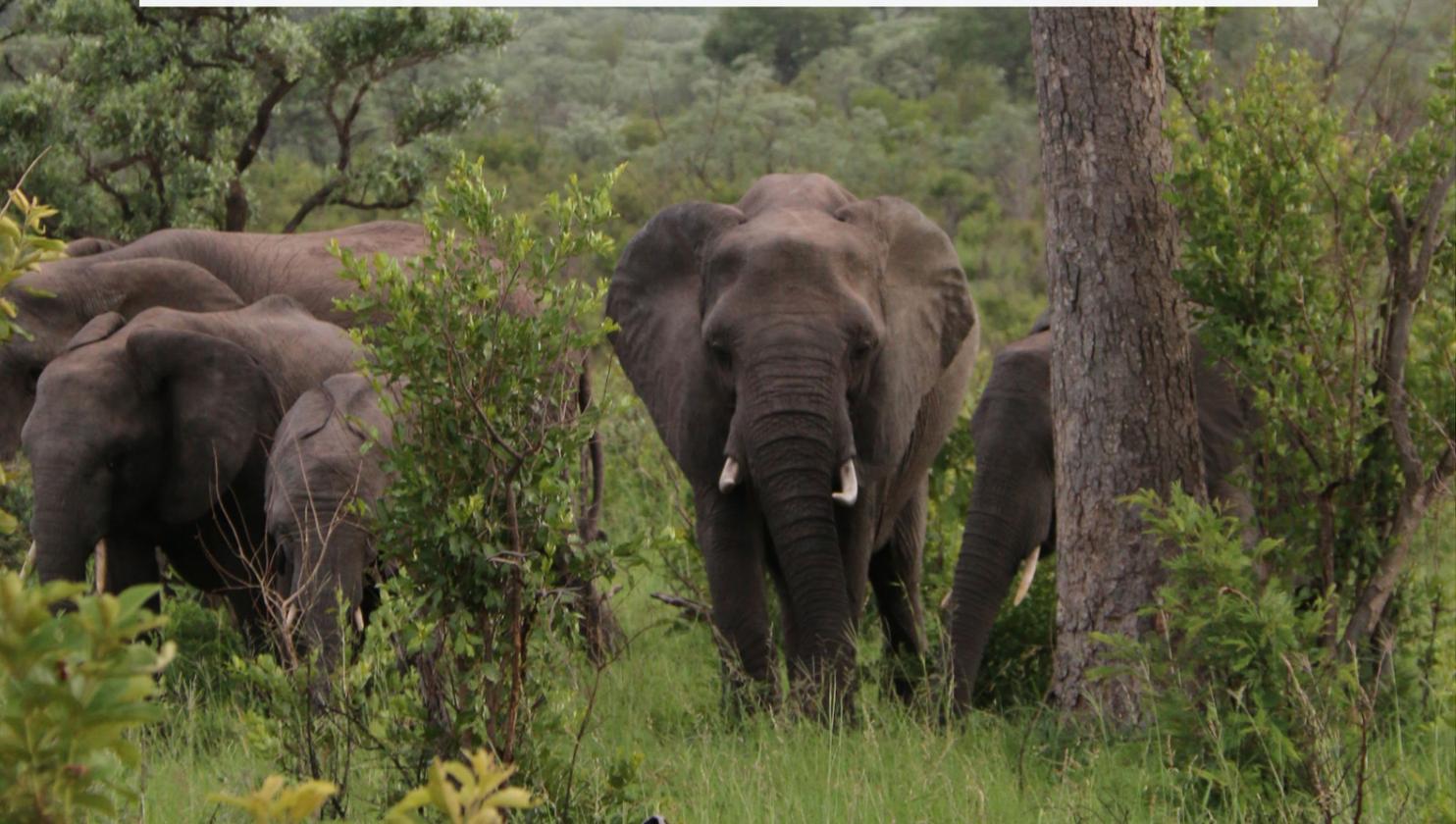
For a world where elephants and people can thrive

Strategic plan 2023-2027



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1. INTRODUCTION

Since its inception in 2004, Bring The Elephant Home (BTEH) has been determined in its mission to forge a bright future for elephants. Evolving from humble beginnings, BTEH has grown into a global organization that aims to conserve elephants and their habitat, foster human-elephant coexistence, and support the well-being of communities living alongside elephants. As a frontline organization, BTEH recognizes the threats facing elephants both in Asia and Africa. In Thailand, habitat loss, fragmentation, and degradation — a consequence of escalating human interventions like agriculture, infrastructural expansions and logging — deprive elephants of vital resources such as food and water. They interrupt their migratory trails and escalate the frequency of human-elephant encounters. In South Africa, African elephants are facing similar issues, with additional threats resulting from the commonly applied protectionist conservation approach, providing inadequate access and benefits for communities.

Over the years, BTEH has worked on various projects across Asia and Africa to safeguard elephants, while also enhancing the livelihoods of local communities. The underlying assumptions are that nature conservation should never be the cause of societal injustice and inequalities, while on the positive side a socially and economically just nature conservation will foster support and consensus. BTEH’s projects are rooted within local communities, and we strive to empower local people by encouraging community-led decision-making processes and fostering a sense of ownership over the projects. Guided by the principles of education, research, and conservation actions, BTEH promotes respect for elephants and underscores their crucial role within our global ecosystem. It champions the creation of regenerative systems that support the coexistence of all species, safeguarding the delicate balance of nature for the benefit of present and future generations.





In the span of our last strategic plan, BTEH experienced exponential organizational growth. As we transition into the new phase of our strategic plan, encompassing 2023 to 2027, we are channelling our focus and resources towards further advancing our internal structures, management protocols, and human resource systems. Driven by a commitment to adhere to regulations, increase transparency, and streamline efficiency, this will be a key step in our journey towards organizational excellence and growth. Equally important is our dedication to fostering a team culture imbued with collaboration, active learning, unity, and responsibility. We are committed to creating an environment where every team member feels appreciated and is propelled to actively contribute to the realization of our goals. As a learning organization, we aim to create a nurturing ground for learning and development, where missteps are not frowned upon but perceived as opportunities for growth. We encourage open dialogue, promoting a culture that stands as a pillar of support for each staff member's journey. We aim to be always ready to make, understand, and share new ideas and information. We use our experiences to improve and fine-tune our plans, including the fresh viewpoints we constantly pick up.

Bring The Elephant Home is active in several countries with a focus on Asian elephants in Thailand and African elephants in South Africa. We are firmly committed to building strong and meaningful partnerships with communities, funders and donors, NGOs, schools, and other groups. This united effort also includes identifying different ways to fund our projects, which strengthens our support system and positions us for long-term sustainability and meaningful results in the future. We actively involve stakeholders in policy formation and are open to ideas, comments and wishes from stakeholders and third parties.

2. SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

As we start planning our goals and strategy for 2023-2027, we first examine our current organizational state and evaluate the efficacy of our efforts to protect elephants and their habitat in meeting the expectations and needs of local communities, partners, and donors, ensuring we are making a positive and impactful contribution to elephant conservation and community well-being. To assess this, we use a SWOT analysis to identify and strategize around our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. This situational analysis will be the cornerstone of informed and strategic decision-making as we forge ahead.

Strengths

- Broad expertise and skills (e.g., community-based conservation, research into elephant behaviour, social science, regenerative agriculture, marketing) and dedication and passion concerning our vision, which allows us to successfully carry out projects.
- Our scientific approach demonstrates that our conservation efforts make a positive impact on the environment and on local communities while also identifying weaknesses and areas for improvement.
- Strong partnerships with local communities, NGOs, and universities.
- The diversity of projects creates opportunities to attract and communicate with a broad audience.
- The investment in professionalizing the organization provides clarity for BTEH's board members, management, and staff.
- By working in Asia and Africa, BTEH can diversify its strategies, learn from experiences and adapt approaches, have a greater global impact on elephant conservation, and reach more people.

Opportunities

- BTEH's network has expanded significantly in recent years, providing more opportunities for collaboration and funding.
- The scientific foundation of the projects enhances our trustworthiness in the eyes of larger funds while also expanding our network through academic collaboration.
- It becomes more attractive for talented and experienced people to be active for BTEH in any form.
- New funding sources, such as corporate social responsibility initiatives (Tom Yum project) or academic collaboration.
- Being active on two continents or in different regions creates opportunities for funding, collaboration, and knowledge and experience sharing.

Weaknesses

- Most of our funding is restricted to projects, limiting our potential to invest in organizational growth.
- The increasing scale of projects and the number of stakeholders involved bring more responsibilities, which pose challenges for governance and management (e.g. high workload, less frequent contact with team members), especially when high- as well as low-level tasks are constantly required.
- The current structure of our larger, remote-inclusive broader team can sometimes result in not having enough time for meetings, coaching, and providing support to each team member as needed. We have limited experience in ensuring robust leadership that fosters a nurturing space in which everyone can ask questions, make mistakes, and seek support freely, as well as fostering an environment in which continuous learning and mutual support are not only encouraged but are foundational.
- Lack of professionalism regarding organizational structure, accounting, and HR practices.
- Difficulty in engaging certain stakeholder groups, such as governmental organizations and policymakers in Thailand.
- Being active in two continents or in different regions can present logistical and financial challenges, and can spread resources too thin.

Threats

- Funding for organizational growth, equipment and overhead is limited.
- Focusing merely on big funding sources may neglect smaller-scale funding, posing a risk to our long-term sustainability and mission achievement.

3. STRATEGY 2023-2027

3.1 Vision, mission and values

Vision

Meaningful coexistence between elephants and people

Mission

To increase the chances of survival for elephants in the wild and strive towards a harmonious world where both humans and elephants can thrive, mutually benefiting from coexistence.

Values

Our values centre around fostering an inclusive environment, celebrating diversity, ensuring equity, embodying compassion, and facilitating empowerment in all parts of our work.

3.2 Impact goals

We emphasize that our aspiration is not merely focused on expansion, but rather on evolving

into a robust, professional organization where a balanced workload is the norm. Cultivating a rewarding work environment takes centre stage in our efforts.

BTEH initiates and supports projects that synergistically align with, and ideally enrich, the three pillars of our focus: elephants, people, and the environment. Through our commitment to the ‘One Well-Being’ approach, we foster interactions between these three pillars, thereby generating positive feedback loops, facilitating increased socio-ecological sustainability, and fostering a harmonious co-existence of people and elephants. By linking these three pillars, we ensure that both species are thriving and benefiting from each other’s existence. Through active collaboration with local communities and partners, our projects contribute to dignity and improved well-being of elephants, people, and the environment. We envision a world where elephants are protected from threats such as habitat loss, poaching, and human-wildlife conflict, where people are

empowered to live in harmony with elephants, in a way that ensures dignity and a good quality of life. Both in theory and practice, BTEH’s projects aim to continuously contribute to socio-ecological health, creating regenerative systems that support all species, for current and future generations. Through education, research, and conservation action, we foster appreciation for elephants, their role in our planet’s ecosystem, and all interconnections of life.

Elephants

Overall goal: Conserve elephants and improve their well-being by implementing sustainable solutions for habitat protection, restoration, and expansion, as well as human-elephant coexistence.

In the next five years, we aim to:

- a. gain knowledge about the elephant population in South Africa and Thailand through identification of elephants and observations of their behaviour.
- b. gather evidence as to what influences elephant well-being and translate this into policy recommendations.
- c. gain evidence of the effectiveness of BTEH’s project to support farmers in their transition to alternative crops (crops that do not attract elephants) through less frequently observed elephant encounters and more relaxed elephant behaviour in alternative crop fields in Ruam Thai (Thailand).
- d. rewild a small, breeding herd of a minimum of 4 Asian elephants and build evidence regarding the possibility of rewilding Asian elephants.
- e. estimate the total population and demographics of wild elephants and habitat suitability of potential rewilding areas, and develop partnerships with relevant stakeholders.
- f. gather evidence on the importance of range expansion for the well-being of African elephants.





People

Overall goal: Reduce the costs and increase the benefits of living with elephants through an empowering ‘living in harmony’ approach. Promote our vision and goals through educational and advocational initiatives, scientific publications, and political lobby.

In the next five years, we aim to:

- g. gather evidence on the importance and sustainability of bottom-up, inclusive, transformative conservation approaches.
- h. support farmers in Thailand in the transition to growing alternative crops and develop robust economic models to support this transition.
- i. develop a sustainable business model for elephant owners and communities involved in rewilding projects in Thailand and South Africa.
- j. Maintain the number of students we supervise and assist in their research, prioritizing students who are nationals of the country where the program is located; and establish long-term partnerships with organizations that have similar visions and objectives.

- k. expanding conservation expeditions at our field stations in South Africa and Thailand.

Environment

Overall goal: Restore, expand, and protect elephant habitat and promote elephant-friendly land use for ecological resilience and elephant survival.

In the next five years, we aim to:

- l. gather evidence on the environmental benefits of elephant habitat protection, restoration, and expansion.
- m. gather evidence on the environmental benefits of transitioning to alternative crops and regenerative farming practices.
- n. develop strong case studies to highlight the importance of habitat connectivity for the conservation of African elephants.

3.3 Internal Organizational Goals

Our Procedures

In the next five years, we aim to:

- 1. Refine our management and financial systems by integrating systems that facilitate seamless tracking of progress

and the generation of financial reports, thereby enhancing transparency and fostering informed, effective decision-making.

- 2. Establish a responsive human resource system that simplifies processes of payroll management, leave tracking, performance monitoring, and addressing other HR matters with efficiency and transparency.
- 3. In such a way that we are (and remain to be) compliant with regulations in the countries where we work, with principles for governance and transparency.

Our Team

In the next five years, we aim to:

- 4. We foster a culture rooted in collaboration and team spirit, by creating a space where each team member feels valued and motivated, facilitating active contributions towards our collective goals, promoting a sense of unity and shared success.
- 5. We create a supportive hub that embraces diversity and encourages team members to learn, explore, and innovate freely. We place a strong emphasis on open

communication and the sharing of fresh perspectives, nurturing a dynamic team ready to adapt and disseminate new insights, thus fostering a vibrant and forward-thinking organizational atmosphere.

- 6. Tasks and roles of each manager will be more clearly defined (e.g. dividing high and low-level tasks) to empower our Thailand team to handle the operations, finance and management of projects independently while having the support and guidance from the board, in order to foster self-reliance, responsibility and growth.

3.4 External Organizational Goals

Our Community

In the next five years, we aim to:

- 7. At BTEH, we not only advocate for but also embody ‘good governance,’ serving as a prime example through fostering local engagement, inclusive decision-making processes, and capacity building within communities. By aligning our projects harmoniously with the local context, we aim



to nurture a culture of sustainable development that resonates at the grassroots level.

8. We empower local leaders to be catalysts for positive change and steer community development initiatives firmly grounded in the realities and potentials of the local context.

Our Support

In the next five years, we aim to:

9. We establish durable alliances with funders, NGOs, universities, governmental organizations, and academic institutions that resonate with our values and vision, enhancing the impact and reach of our initiatives.
10. We broaden our funding base, ensuring a stable and diverse financial foundation, capable of sustaining our projects and initiatives in the long term. This includes diversifying our funding sources, increasing our ongoing unrestricted funds (e.g. through conservation events, increasing the number of donors and smaller-scale funds), and recruiting self-funded academic collaborations.
11. We increase the inclusion of costs of overhead and operation staff in funds and grants applications.



4. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

BTEH is not only committed to initiating and maintaining meaningful projects but also rigorously tracking progress and quantifying the impact of our work. Our approach is science-based, and our projects have key performance indicators and goals that are monitored and reported on. These indicators span various aspects such as biodiversity, community attitudes towards elephants, level of human-elephant conflicts, elephant-caused damage, elephant behaviour changes, and elephant population statistics.

Our evaluative process is dynamic, embodying adaptive management through a phased approach that keenly considers people's readiness for change. This proactive approach

allows us to continuously refine our strategies based on data and feedback. Furthermore, we prioritize sharing our accrued experiences through peer-reviewed scientific articles, presentations at conferences, community workshops, media pieces, and more, to foster a rich, collaborative knowledge base. This ensures that our initiatives effectively evolve to meet the changing needs and nuances of the communities, environments, and wildlife we serve, thereby championing a truly responsive and sustainable developmental pathway.

