

3 Evolution in ICIMOD's Programmes and Strategies

ICIMOD's evolution can be described in four stages.

The Early Years: 1983 to 1987

From 1983 to 1987, ICIMOD went through a formative stage during which the Centre had to find its footing, build its identity and niche, and establish a base of operations. The Centre started in 1984 with five programmes: Watershed Management, Off-farm Employment Generation, Rural Energy Planning, Engineering in Fragile Environments, and Information Systems for Mountain Development, together with a Documentation and Information Exchange service. Major activities were confined to holding seminars and workshops on key mountain issues; and these were, for the most part, determined annually based on staff expertise and the nature of the funding available.

The regional member countries also faced many uncertainties regarding cooperation in programme activities. There was a general lack of awareness of ICIMOD's role and mandate among regional member countries and ownership was limited as the potential partner institutions were not confident in the true potential of the regional set-up. The representation on the Board from the regional member countries was also largely symbolic.



Members of the first Board of Governors (**from left to right**): Dr. Narsingh Narayan Singh, Dr. Klaus J. Lampe, Dr. Li Wenhua, Dr. T.N. Khoshoo, Dr. Gisbert Glaser, Dr. Ratna S.J.B. Rana, Mr. Hasan Nawab, Prof. Dor Bahadur Bista, Mr. Peter Gueller (Regent), Dr. Rudolf Hoegger

Expanding Organisation and Programmes: 1987 to 1993

It was during this period that ICIMOD firmly developed the Mountain Perspective Framework.

Between 1987 and 1993 the programmes were converted into five divisions: Mountain Land Use, Mountain Farming Systems, Mountain Social and Economic Development, Mountain Infrastructure and Technology, and Mountain Development Documentation and Information Services. New projects were developed in the areas of risk engineering, rural energy, seabuckthorn (*Hippophae l.*) cultivation, mountain farming systems, and mountain biodiversity. During this time, the documentation and information exchange was strengthened and the geographical information system (GIS) facilities created. There was increased recruitment of professional staff and a higher level of involvement from the regional member countries. Activities, however, were mostly limited and focused on publications, seminars, training sessions, and study tours. It was during this period that ICIMOD was able to firmly develop the Mountain Perspective Framework. This phase ended with the celebration of the 10th Anniversary Symposium, at which time a site was generously donated by HMGN at Godavari for research and demonstration. While there was significant growth in the programme during this phase, the sources of funding were dwindling and the Centre was unable to mobilise adequate levels of funding other than from the traditional core donors. One of the major concerns at the start of the next phase was the financial viability of the Centre.



Jeanie Fleming

Mountain farming systems have always been an important component of ICIMOD's work.



Capacity building in geospatial technology for mountain development is much sought after by partners

Consolidation – RCP I and II: 1994 to 2002

After ICIMOD's 10th anniversary, considerable attention was paid to i) packaging programmes and projects, ii) increasing donor funding beyond conventional donors, and iii) strengthening partnerships. The Regional Collaborative Programme (RCP) Phase 1 (1995-98) was thus born and a document was developed which served as the basis for programming and budgeting. During RCP-I, ICIMOD was reorganised into three thematic divisions – Mountain Farming Systems, Mountain Natural Resources, and Mountain Enterprises and Infrastructure; and three service divisions/sections – Mountain Environment and Natural Resources Information; Documentation, Information, and Training; and Administration, Finance and Logistics. RCP-I identified a total of 25 outputs and 95 activities to be implemented over a four-year period in ICIMOD's regional member countries. Several new programmes and projects were initiated including the People and Resource Dynamics in Mountain Watersheds of the HKH Project (PARDYP); the Regional Rangeland programme; Beekeeping; Gender, Environment and Sustainable Livelihoods; and Capacity Building in Geographical Information Systems/Remote Sensing Technologies. The management took time to visit and sensitise the regional member countries and partner institutions on the new programmes and projects. As a result, there was increased awareness of ICIMOD and its potential role as well

By 2001, ICIMOD had carved a niche as a centre of excellence in mountain development.

as increased funding and ownership by the regional member countries. There was also considerable emphasis on capacity building of partner institutions and the number and range of publications increased many times. This was a big period of growth for ICIMOD.

A strategy for better aligning development interventions in the region was developed with regional partners.

The momentum gained during RCP-I was further strengthened and consolidated during RCP-II (1998-2002). RCP-II was developed to mainstream mountain development in the Hindu Kush-Himalayan region based on regional cooperation. By 2001, ICIMOD had truly carved a niche for itself and was acknowledged as a centre of excellence in mountain development. As a result, it played an important role in the celebration of the UN declared International Year of the Mountains, 2002. It organised and co-organised several national, regional, and global events including the Asia High Summit in Kathmandu, Nepal, Celebrating Mountain Women in Paro, Bhutan, and parts of the Global Mountain Summit in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. ICIMOD also played a lead role in forming the Global Mountain Partnership, which was launched at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, South Africa, in 2002, and was selected as the host of the Global Mountain Forum Secretariat.

Developing Regional Partnerships: 2003 to 2007

From 2002 onwards, the Centre started working on a new strategy and programme. An Overall Strategy and Medium Term Action Plan (MTAP 2003-2007) were developed which encapsulated a strategic approach for better aligning the opportunities for development interventions with the



Narendra Bajracharya

One of many meetings with partners at ICIMOD

physical, social, and economic vulnerability dimensions of the HKH region. Six integrated programmes were identified: Natural Resources Management (NRM); Agriculture and Rural Income Diversification (ARID); Water, Hazards and Environmental Management (WHEM); Culture, Equity, Gender and Governance (CEGG); Policy and Partnership Development (PPD); and Information and Knowledge Management (IKM).

These programmes evolved as a result of the need to consolidate the Centre's earlier work, and following the recommendations of the 3rd Quinquennial Review conducted in 2001, directives from the Board of Governors, and the needs of the regional member countries as expressed during consultations held with partner institutions. The strategy was designed to provide more focus and relevance to the needs of the targeted clients, that is both grassroots-based beneficiaries and decision makers in mountain areas. The document was first discussed at a special Board meeting in Berchtesgaden, Germany, and later finalised and endorsed at the 32nd Board Meeting in Kathmandu in December 2002. Progress was slow during the first year of operation, as a result of the uncertain status of continued core funding from some of the donors. However, by mid 2004, the Centre had received assurances of continued core funding from all its donors to implement its Medium Term Action Plan (2003-07).

The strategy was designed to provide more focus and relevance to the needs of both the grassroots and decision makers in mountain areas.



Zbigniew Mikolajuk

A grassroots women's gathering in Nepal

