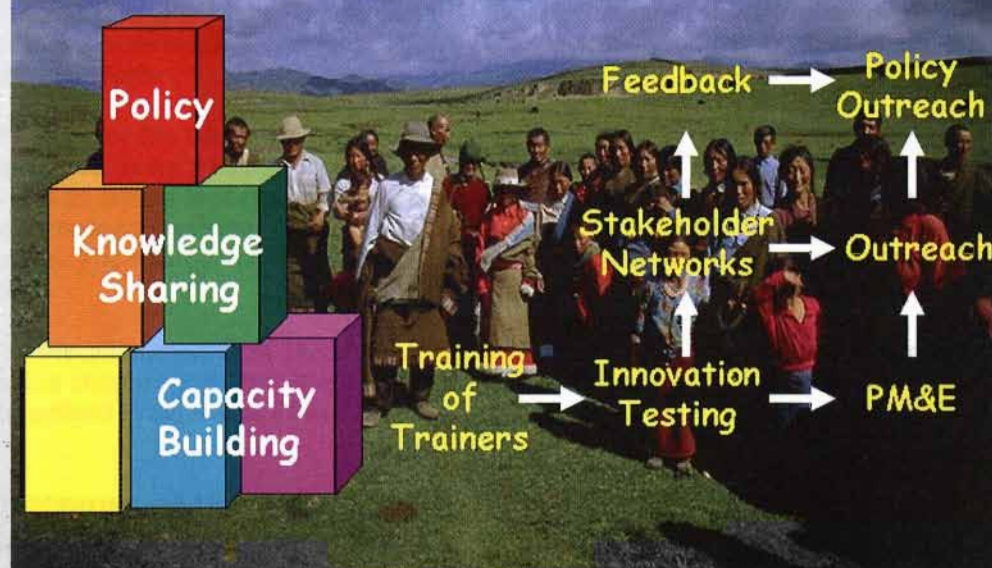


6 Strategic Innovations for Improving Pastoral Livelihoods in the Highlands of the Hindu Kush-Himalayas

Beyond 2002 - Continuation Of The Regional Rangeland Programme



Cover photo: Powerpoint slide from Camille Richard's introductory presentation
(background photo Daniel J. Miller)

6

Strategic Innovations for Improving Pastoral Livelihoods in the Highlands of the Hindu Kush-Himalayas

The workshop identified a number of issues and emerging themes related to the situation of the pastoral peoples of the highlands of the Hindu Kush-Himalayas and the rangelands on which they depend. These were further discussed at a round table session held at the Bishkek Global Mountain Summit Meeting, the wrap-up meeting of IYM 2002, held in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, from 29 October to 1 November 2002. Based on these, a series of recommendations were made for action at local, national, and regional levels.

The plan for the next phase of ICIMOD's Regional Rangeland Programme was developed using these findings and the lessons learnt and experience from the first phase to ensure that it would have a relevant, useful, and feasible approach that will contribute to providing strategic innovations for improving pastoral livelihoods in the region. The main emphasis is on the further development of a 'co-management' focus.

The overall outcomes of the Lhasa Workshop and Bishkek Round Table are presented in this chapter, together with a detailed summary of the plans for ICIMOD's Regional Rangeland Programme Phase II.

Outcomes of the Lhasa Workshop and Bishkek Global Mountain Summit

In general the meeting in Lhasa offered participants a unique opportunity to engage in scholarly exchange, stakeholder dialogue, and strategy formulation to address the important questions asked. Outcomes included the following:

- a broader scope of knowledge among a diverse audience (community to policy level),
- establishment of linkages across a common ecological and cultural landscape (such as a cultural fair for Ladakh, Mustang, and Bhutan; trade in livestock genetic material across closed borders; Iran-Pakistan-Afghanistan linkages; and Central Asian linkages),
- research collaborations forming across borders and among international organisations,
- initiation of a juniper restoration forum within the Asia Pacific Mountain Network located at <http://www.mtnforum.org/apmn/juniper_forum.htm>, and
- formulation of plans for follow-up policy-level meetings in India, Pakistan, and China to address collaborative management issues for rangelands in the HKH.

The following issues and themes emerged from the various presentations and discussions during the workshop, augmented by the discussions conducted during the roundtable at the Bishkek Global Mountain Summit. General strategies and actions are recommended and presented in Table 1 (shown after the issues) as a follow-up to the emerging themes.

Issues and emerging themes

- Changes in land use in many areas are reducing access to pastures and curtailing pastoral livelihood options. However, many examples of traditional pastoral production practices exist that still prove to be sustainable in practice, although they face a number of new challenges in a changing global environment.
- Extension and other social services, where they exist in pastoral areas, are often weak and inadequate and force nomadic communities to settle rather than provide mobile services. This has caused severe disruption of both livelihood systems and ecology. Research and extension organisations require reorientation and capacity building in appropriate participatory tools and techniques in order to effectively deliver services determined by local needs and mobility rather than by government mandates.
- Participatory approaches are proving successful at a number of sites, but there are no national strategies to scale up these approaches in the region. Often, government policies and approaches undermine such grassroots efforts.
- Technologies to improve pasture and livestock production have not been properly matched with local environmental, economic, and cultural realities. This can be corrected through local participatory action research initiatives using indigenous knowledge as the basis for new innovations.
- Pastoral development must be extended beyond livestock and forage management. Technical and social service sectors must be integrated to address complex issues of natural resource management, risk management, and marketing.
- Pasture and rangeland tenure is poorly defined, and a large gap exists between legal status (usually government owned) and customary practice. Usually, common property characteristics are not reflected in law. Communities need secure tenure, but tenure policies must help reduce economic and environmental risk in a highly variable environment.
- Rural land tenure policies that promote private access to pasture resources are often not appropriate for rangeland areas. These areas require policies that allow site-specific flexibility in implementation to allow combinations of collective and private pasture tenure and management arrangements, depending on local skills, financial capital, and cultural backgrounds. This requires a more integrated collaborative management approach, in which governments share decision-making authority with relevant stakeholders.
- Where flexible policies exist, they appear to be poorly understood by the local-level authorities mandated to implement them. This results in misinterpretation and ineffective implementation.
- Remote mountain pastoral communities cannot compete with the industrial livestock production of the lowlands and urban areas. Niche markets (such as organic yak meat, yak and pashmina fibre, medicinal plants, and tourism) prove to be the best options for enhancing the cash income of remote pastoral households. These require policies that support proper livestock off-take, marketing, value addition, and risk management.

- There is a need for more effective communication channels among those who develop policy, development workers, and researchers. This can be achieved through strengthening of networks and collaborative efforts among diverse stakeholder groups.
- Geo-political conflicts and policies often undermine pastoral movement across borders. Trans-boundary agreements should be promoted that preserve trade and livelihood enhancement and allow cross-border movement of livestock to relieve grazing pressure on rangelands.
- Greater attention should be given to the impacts of globalisation on pastoral communities, especially in countries such as China that have entered into membership with the World Trade Organization (WTO). WTO instruments should favour niche production and marketing in mountain rangeland areas.
- Pastoral regions are often strategic sites for conservation, and any policy for their development should integrate conservation initiatives with livelihood enhancement. In many sites, eco-tourism is proving to be a viable approach, but it must be seen as only part of a larger pastoral economy. Efforts also need to be strengthened to improve conservation awareness and anti-poaching campaigns to protect endangered wildlife and plants.
- As the headwaters of major river systems, mountain rangelands provide important ecosystem services. Given their conservation significance, compensation mechanisms should be in place to preserve ecosystem functions and pay for the cost of ecosystem reconstruction in degraded areas.

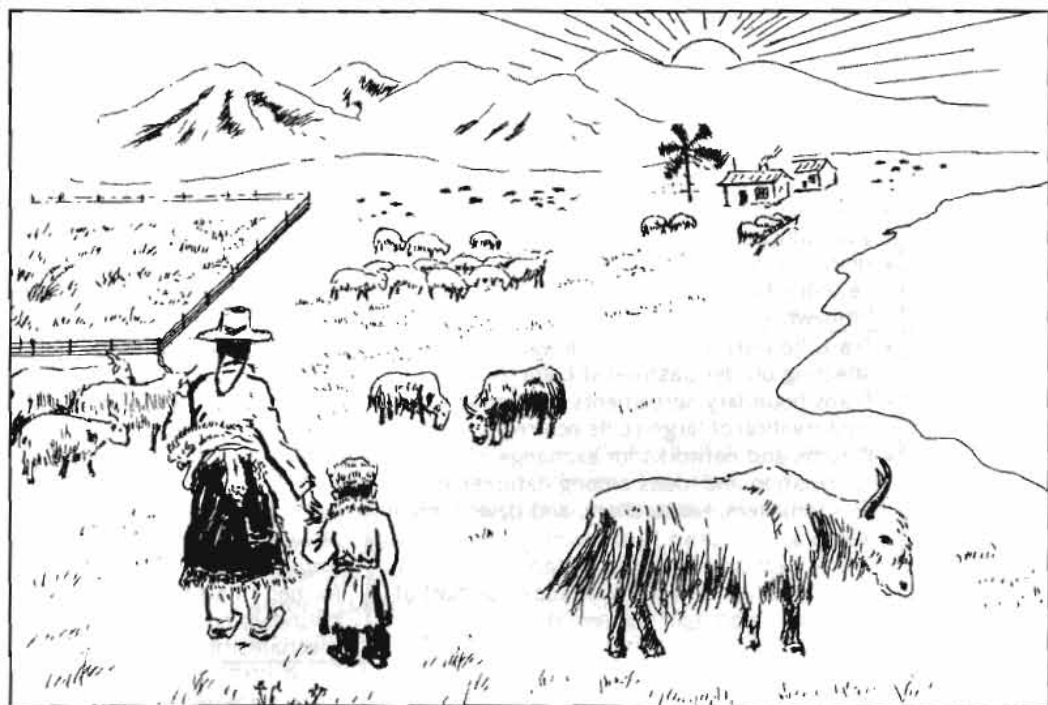


Illustration from 'The Living Plateau' (2001), editors Nico van Wagoningen and Sa Wenjun, published by ICIMOD, a book about the EU funded Qinghai Livestock Development Project implemented by Qinghai Province's Bureau of Animal Husbandry

Table 1: Key actions recommended to be taken at various levels of governance

| Level | Key actions | Support needed/actors |
|-----------------------------|---|---|
| Local/ community | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action research initiatives to test new institutional and technological innovations that address priority needs, diversify income, and are sustainable • Technical and managerial capacity building for local decision-makers and local extension staff • Established and functional information exchange mechanisms relevant to pastoral communities • Improved market access through linkage with the private sector • Improved social services at the local level through NGOs and line agencies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NGOs and line agencies able and willing to facilitate local participatory initiatives • Funding available for capacity and development works by national governments • Appropriate technologies and financial options provided by research and financial institutions to both households and user groups |
| National | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrated frameworks for rural development adapted to pastoral regions • Rural land contracting laws that favour tenurial flexibility for both household and common property arrangements (CPRs) • Policy instruments that support integration across government agencies through a cross-sectoral coordinating body • Restructuring and/or reorientation of line agencies in pastoral regions to address complex interdisciplinary issues • Restructuring of academic and technical curricula to instill participatory research skills • Greater national support for NGOs and advocacy networks • Highland-lowland compensation schemes developed as part of the larger mountain framework | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The political will to support decentralised, flexible, and participatory frameworks and programmes • Funding support from governments and donors • Technical training and reorientation through action research for research and policy-level personnel in collaborative/interdisciplinary management • Formation of an interdisciplinary coordinating body for mountain regions |
| Regional | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trans-boundary exchanges to address issues affecting border pastoralist communities • Trans-boundary agreements regarding conservation of large-scale eco-regions • Forums and networks for exchange of information and ideas among national-level policy-makers, researchers, and development workers • Trans-boundary highland-lowland compensation schemes developed as part of the larger mountain framework | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional funds provided by participating governments • Matching funds by regional donors • Technical support and facilitation provided by regional research and advocacy organisations • Regional coordinating body formed to oversee trans-boundary compensation mechanisms |

Beyond 2002 – ICIMOD's Regional Rangeland Programme Phase II: Further Development of a 'Co-management' Focus for Rangelands

Rationale, objectives and outcomes

Of growing importance in ICIMOD's work is the role of community-based institutions and the organisations that support them in the management of common pool resources. We propose to help strengthen these institutions through capacity building, knowledge generation, and policy advocacy in order to help pastoral communities and governments adjust to and take advantage of the regional and global opportunities that exist, finding solutions through partnership.

ICIMOD's mission for the RRP Phase II is to develop and support a process for community-based management of rangeland resources in the HKH, in cooperation with regional and international partners, which foster action and change for overcoming rangeland dependent mountain communities' economic, social, and physical vulnerability.

This will build on the experiences of the first phase of the RRP, especially considering the interdisciplinary nature of rangeland resources and their use. Our target group is the partner institutions who are mandated to work with pastoral communities and in rangeland conservation.

Short-term objectives

- 1) To strengthen the institutional capacity of partner institutions for collaborative rangeland management and pastoral development
- 2) To test, document, and promote ecologically appropriate, socially equitable, and gender sensitive innovations in rangeland management with a focus on vulnerable groups
- 3) To develop and support national and regional networks that promote free exchange of information pertinent to pastoral livelihoods, and provide these networks with the capacity to develop and support local community networking mechanisms
- 4) To identify and support policy strategies that support collaborative development processes in pastoral regions

Short-term outcomes

The specific programme components and activities supported under the RRP Phase II are expected to help achieve the following short-term outcomes.

- New and improved technical and institutional innovations identified and adopted that address complex rangeland management and pastoral development issues, incorporating biodiversity conservation values
- Increased skills among partner institutional staff working with pastoral people regarding multi-disciplinary, participatory approaches to rangeland management and pastoral development
- Increased capacity among various decision-making bodies to engage in collaborative management processes
- Increased participation in decision-making by vulnerable groups in pilot communities

- Improved organisational performance among partner institutions in delivering services and information to nomadic communities
- Improved networking among stakeholder groups at national and regional levels
- Improved capacity of partner institutions to develop and support local community networks and advocacy groups
- Policy implementation that accommodates and supports the complexity and flexibility needed for development and conservation in rangeland ecosystems, including effective tenure arrangements that favour collaborative management schemes

Overall, the implementation of our co-management strategy for the RRP will contribute to ICIMOD's strategic outcomes (ICIMOD's Strategic Plan 2003-7), which are as follow.

- Productive and sustainable community-based management of vulnerable mountain rangeland natural resources
- Greater voice and influence, dignity, security and social equality for rangeland dependent people
- Increased regional and local conservation of rangeland biological and pastoral cultural heritage
- Improved and diversified incomes for vulnerable rural and marginalised rangeland dependent people
- Decreased physical vulnerability within rangeland watersheds

Programme components and activities

ICIMOD proposes the following programme components to achieve the objectives stated above. These components are strongly inter-connected and meant to build upon one another, in the order presented. These components and yearly activities are presented in Table 2. Figure 1 illustrates how the components fit into ICIMOD's Strategic Plan.



Capacity Building

To build the capacity of partner institutions who are mandated to work in pastoral regions of the HKH to engage in a process of co-management of rangeland resources

Training of Trainers in Co-management of Rangelands – The first major activity is a Training of Trainers for the initiation of a co-management process (participatory assessment and planning). This will prepare trainees to train local extension staff and herders in basic participatory research techniques, using field-tested training modules developed during the RRP-I. Trainees will then train and conduct participatory trainings and assessments at the local level in selected pilot demonstration sites.

Follow-up Training of Trainers programmes are then provided to 1) maintain a co-management process (participatory monitoring and evaluation and organisational management), and 2) to disseminate a co-management approach (networking and advocacy). These training events directly support the subsequent programme components.

Table 2: Programme components, activities and yearly outputs for ICIMOD's RRP Phase II

| Programme Components | Broad Activities | | |
|--|--|---|---|
| | Year 1 (Apr 03 – Mar 04) <i>Co-Management Initiation</i> | Year 2 (Apr 04 – Mar 05) <i>Performance Management</i> | Year 3 (Apr 05 – Mar 06) <i>Dissemination of Co-Management Approach</i> |
| CAPACITY BUILDING  | Regional Training of Trainers in participatory assessment and planning for rangeland co-management Local pilot site training in participatory assessment and planning | Regional Training of Trainers in participatory monitoring and evaluation (PM&E) for rangeland co-management Plan for PM&E system developed for each pilot site | Regional Training of Trainers in networking and advocacy for rangeland co-management Local pilot site assessment to identify potential networks/cooperatives for institutional strengthening |
| KNOWLEDGE GENERATION AND SHARING  | Regional network and working groups established among direct partners (inception workshop) Pilot site planning and implementation | Pilot site PM&E system initiated Pilot site outcomes shared through regional network (internet based) Exchange visits | RRP regional partner forum to share outcomes of pilot site activities and prioritise next steps |
| POLICY ADVOCACY | Local policy forum at pilot sites to introduce project activities | Local level stakeholder forum to present outcomes of PM&E Policy advocacy strategy developed | Development of policy advocacy outreach materials based on outcomes from pilot sites Regional forum for national level policy makers (combined with partner forum) |
| Yearly Outputs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A cadre of trainers trained among partner institutions in participatory assessment and planning for collaborative rangeland management Pilot site demonstration plans developed, initiated and supported by local government Outreach materials developed from phase I for use in ToTs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A cadre of trainers trained among partner institutions in participatory monitoring and evaluation techniques and organisational analysis PM&E system developed and tested at pilot sites Professional networks established through national and regional forums for sharing outcomes from pilot demonstration areas | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A cadre of trainers trained among partner institutions in community networking and policy advocacy strategies Policy implementation guidelines developed and promoted for each participating country to support collaborative management of rangeland ecosystems |

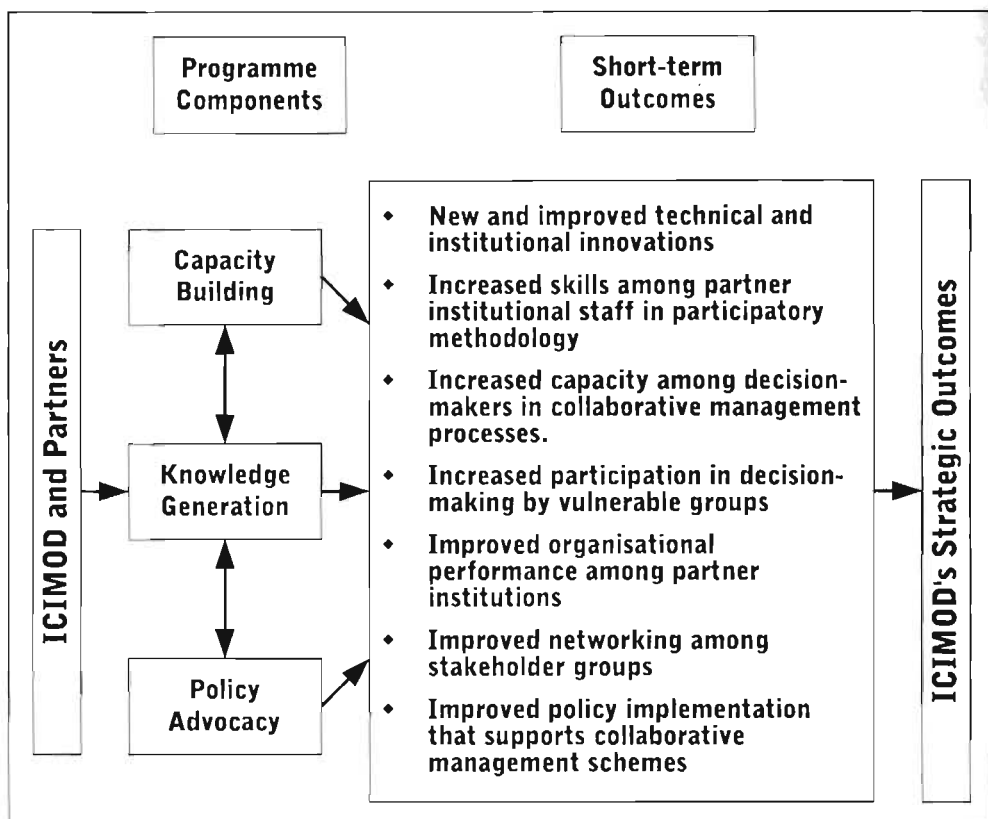


Figure 1: Programming Logic Model for RRP Phase II

Knowledge generation

To promote and support institutional and technical innovations through local partnership for improved rangeland management in pilot areas, using a co-management approach

Innovation Testing – The first Training of Trainers and follow-up field level trainings will culminate in action plans for innovations identified and implemented by local and national stakeholders within pilot pastoral communities, building on the outcomes of the RRP-I. Entry points for innovation will revolve around natural resource management but can include technical or institutional strategies other than traditional livestock and pasture development, such as ecotourism, marketing, or value addition, depending on what is identified in the assessment process.

Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation System Development – As the innovation process develops, indigenous indicators for success will be identified and incorporated into a systematic and internal monitoring and evaluation programme. This will include a series of reflection exercises designed to help organisations and pilot community groups identify constraints to and opportunities for improving service delivery to pastoral communities.

Policy advocacy

To enable policy dialogue and commitment to support co-management initiatives at a larger scale, building on the outcomes of the capacity building and innovation activities

Stakeholder Networks – Knowledge generated from the innovation and assessment process will be shared among stakeholder networks, identified and developed through participatory research at national and regional levels, using appropriate outreach mechanisms and through stakeholder exchanges across national borders. National and regional networks will be given training in how to develop and support local networking groups to ensure sustainability and relevance of information exchange at the local level.

Policy Dialogue – Continuous policy dialogue will be conducted to feed the results of stakeholder research and reflections to various levels of government and private sector bodies, including assessment of organisational readiness to 'scale-up' the developed methodologies and approaches beyond pilot sites. These forums will be conducted at both national and regional scales to address both country specific and transboundary issues, culminating in appropriate strategy frameworks and agreements to support collaborative efforts.

Assumptions and risks

Given the complexity of rangeland ecosystems in the region, a co-management approach is needed to work in these diverse cultural and ecological landscapes, an approach that embraces diversity and melding of knowledge systems to create sustainable and appropriate management models, and that promotes flexibility in programming. A long-term strategy has been proposed to improve the capabilities of relevant organisations to engage in a true process of collaboration, creating a supportive external environment that protects the rights of users, facilitates conflict resolution, and promotes timely financial and technical inputs in the face of uncertainty.

However, for this project to be successful in the long-term, local and national governments must support this process. Critical commitments on the part of collaborating organisations and those responsible for decision-making in pastoral regions are the following.

- 1) To support a cadre of professionals who understand and respect the fundamental nature and value of opportunism evident among pastoral people in response to variable and complex rangeland environments
- 2) To sustain the role of these 'change agents' and build their capacity to facilitate processes of change, among various governance levels and within their own organisations
- 3) To grant greater decision-making and legal authority to customary (or newly formed) pastoral institutions so that their adaptive mechanisms form the core of development and conservation initiatives
- 4) To promote technical approaches that match the environment in which they are tried through the process of action research
- 5) To support effective communication and network mechanisms to feed back results of action research to key decision-makers

- 6) To commit to a process of internal reflection and change if they are to effectively implement flexible and appropriate strategies and policies

From experience, ICIMOD has found that engaging policy-makers and researchers in local level action research initiatives has begun to bring about fundamental changes in attitudes and organisational performance, which is the foundation to developing supportive policies for decentralised decision-making. This is certainly a slow and painstaking process, but one which in the long-term will prove to be more cost effective and sustainable.