

Founding of ICIMOD

ICIMOD is the first and, so far, only international centre devoted to integrated mountain development. ICIMOD was founded out of widespread recognition of the alarming environmental degradation of mountain habitats and consequent increasing impoverishment of mountain communities in the Hindu Kush-Himalayan (HKH) Region.

This vast mountain region covers all or part of eight countries, i.e., Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Myanmar, Nepal, and Pakistan. It extends over 3,500 kilometres from east to west and contains a population of more than 120 million people in mountain farming communities. In addition, its ecological management affects the much larger population in the plains and river basins below. The Region is characterised by great variations in altitude, aspect, soil conditions, climate, water resources, and access, all inducing an immense variability upon agricultural technology and farming systems. A coordinated and systematic effort, on an international scale, was therefore deemed essential to design and implement more effective development responses to promote the sustained well-being of the fragile mountain environment and its inhabitants.

The establishment of ICIMOD was based upon an agreement between His Majesty's Government of Nepal and the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) signed in 1981. ICIMOD was inaugurated in December, 1983, and began operating in September 1984. Nepal, the Federal Republic of Germany, Switzerland, and UNESCO were the founding sponsors.

Participating Countries of the Hindu Kush-Himalayan Region

- **Afghanistan**
- **Bhutan**
- **India**
- **Nepal**
- **Bangladesh**
- **China**
- **Myanmar**
- **Pakistan**

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