

## INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTIVES

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### Background

Institutions govern resource management. An "institution" is understood to be a functional mechanism (formal or informal) whereby individuals and communities abide by a set of rules and conventions (written or unwritten) in return for resource utilisation benefits that accrue to them in ways that the beneficiaries consider fair. This definition makes it clear that sustained resource management must be supported by appropriate institutional mechanisms in order to achieve the goals of increased productivity, equity, and environmental soundness. At the conceptual level, there is now an increasing acceptance of this principle, although it has until recently been ignored or at best given lip service. At the operational level, many difficulties have been faced, even by those implementing agencies which are trying deliberately to include this aspect in their programmes. The issues related to institutional innovation, therefore, need to be examined carefully. This is of critical importance, particularly in light of the increasing degradation of the mountain resource base and the competing claims on scarce resources. The Workshop on "The Role of Institutions in Mountain Resource Management" was organised to address these primary concerns.

The Workshop is a concluding activity in conjunction with ICIMOD's Programme on Organisation and Management of Rural Development that was initiated in 1987. The Programme was preceded by other related activities, namely, the publication of ICIMOD Occasional Paper No. 3, *Sustaining Upland Resources: People's Participation in Watershed Management* (by Anis Dani and Gabriel Campbell) and the organisation of an *International Workshop on Institutional Development for Local Management of Rural Resources*. The main premise of the Programme was that most rural development or resource management projects, across the Hindu Kush-Himalayan mountains, are not paying adequate attention to organisational structures in the course of project implementation. Technical and financial constraints are well expressed, while laying out the macro-institutional and legal framework, but the sociocultural context of local communities has largely been ignored.

The past decade has seen a major emphasis by the Governments in the Region, on the need to involve local communities in rural resource management. This is manifested, for example, in the "Decentralisation Act" as well as the "Panchayat and Panchayat Protected Forest Regulations" of Nepal; the "Local Government Act" of Pakistan; and the "Contractual Responsibility System" in China. Maximum involvement of the local community in the development process has been, therefore, acknowledged as a highly desirable goal. The points that need to be examined are how people can be mobilized efficaciously and what constraints are being faced by implementing agencies in realising their goals.

As a part of the Programme, ICIMOD collaborated with professionals from various national institutions and completed six case studies in selected mountain locations in China, Nepal, and Pakistan. The studies were conducted in project areas where "institutional innovations" were being pursued by government agencies as well as non-governmental organisations. The emphasis was on the examination of indigenous resource management systems and also on how implementing agencies might try to replicate the kinds of relationships and styles that exist within their own operational structure. The objectives of such analyses were to examine the circumstances under which existing resource management systems undergo institutional innovations and to see what are the key elements that contribute to the success of the innovative operational styles adopted, by some agencies, under different ecological, social, and economic conditions. The case studies, have, therefore, produced careful analyses and assessments of:

- o development strategies and approaches by various implementing agencies;
- o operational management systems for various types of common property regime in different countries;
- o mediating structures that have evolved through interaction of mountain communities with development processes; and
- o the utility and effectiveness of alternative organisational structures for sustainable resource management.

It is with this background that ICIMOD organized the Workshop, in collaboration with the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme and the Pak-German Self-Help Project. The intention was to provide a forum for discussing the practical utility and wider applicability of research findings for more effective implementation of development programmes. Furthermore, the expectation was that it would facilitate interaction among ICIMOD's research collaborators towards an inter-country comparison of experiences and lessons and, at the same time, provide an opportunity for dialogues among researchers, development practitioners, and decision makers.

## **Objectives**

More specifically, the Workshop objectives were as follows:

- o to update and refine the ideas contained in the case studies that were prepared at different times prior to the Workshop;
- o to share the research findings and experiences, of ICIMOD professionals and national research collaborators, with development practitioners and decision makers, on the role of organisations and institutions in mountain resource management;



- o to discuss the implications of research findings, in terms of more effective implementation strategies, and formulate practical methods and approaches to include organisational and institutional perspectives in mountain resource management programmes; and
- o to develop a forward looking strategy for dissemination of the Workshop results and for continuation of supplementary efforts by concerned professionals and agencies.

### **Workshop Participants and the Programme**

The Workshop Programme is included in Annex 1 and the Participants' List in Annex 2.

Forty (40) participants took part in the Workshop. These included (i) research collaborators from China, Nepal, and Pakistan who were involved in conducting the case studies, (ii) development practitioners and decision-makers from the six project areas where the case studies were conducted, (iii) other researchers, development practitioners, and policy-makers from Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, Nepal, and Pakistan, (iv) selected participants from international agencies, (v) members of ICIMOD's Quinquennial Review Panel, and (vi) ICIMOD participants, including the Board Chairman, the Pakistani Board Member, the Director, and other professionals.

After the Opening Session, on the first day (May 1), two case studies from Pakistan were presented. These were followed, on the second day (May 2), by presentations of case studies from China and Nepal. All case study presentations were followed by commentaries from Project representatives from the areas where the studies took place. This provided an opportunity for interaction between researchers and implementors about their respective points of view. In addition, invited participants from Bangladesh and Bhutan gave their perspectives on institutions and mountain resource management, based on their experiences in the respective countries. The third day (May 3) was mainly devoted to group discussions. This was preceded by a summary presentation of the main issues that emerged during the first two days. Details of the discussions that took place in these sessions are presented in Chapter 2. The list of papers presented are included in Annex 3 and their summaries in Annex 4.

Following the Workshop, one team of participants left Quetta on May 4 to visit the project area of the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme. Another team visited the project area of the Pak-German Self Help Project. Observations from the field trips are contained in Chapter 3.

The principal issues and main conclusions that emerged from the Workshop are noted in Chapter 4.