

Managing Knowledge and Communicating

ICIMOD is positioning itself as a knowledge organisation by reaching out in as many ways as possible to raise awareness of findings, activities, issues, and solutions, as it advocates for the Mountain Agenda. Its knowledge programme provides framework support to capture and disseminate information in a coordinated way. ICIMOD's knowledge activities aim to stimulate people to be at the forefront of new ways of sharing knowledge.

Innovating knowledge and communication

In 2010, Knowledge Forums on mountain development were organised with distinguished speakers, including Jack Ives, David Malone, and Elinor Ostrom.

"Individuals have incomplete information but can learn and more effectively manage their resources. Learning is a core part of what we're doing, and how we enhance this learning to apply to grassroots conditions and develop community trust, are some of the important lessons that organisations like ICIMOD can apply," said Nobel Laureate Prof. Elinor Ostrom at the ICIMOD Knowledge Forum held in December.

ICIMOD is emphasising youth as a 'change agent' in sustainable mountain development and has initiated a number of activities to mobilise young people. The approach of reaching out to youth was reflected in several activities, including the GEOSS symposium, herbal garden competition, and climate champions activities. In collaboration with the British Council Nepal, ICIMOD conducted a successful Cafe Scientifique, to bridge science with a young audience. Over 75 young environmental professionals working at grass roots level in communities attended the event. These champions work on concrete climate awareness projects, which support ICIMOD's goals now and in the future. A five-day workshop was organised for climate champions from across the region to enhance their knowledge on climate change and share with them methodologies and tools to use in climate related activities.

Mainstreaming Earth information for the benefit of mountain communities

ICIMOD has formed partnerships with NASA to develop the SERVIR-Himalaya initiative, as well as with the Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS) and other regional and international agencies. These have helped the Centre to advance in providing access to and use of Earth observation data and information, and developing innovative applications for regional visualisation and decision support, including for climate change adaptation. The International Symposium on Earth Observation within the frame of GEOSS, and pre-and-post symposium events in connection with the launching of SERVIR-Himalaya, attracted high-level participation from the region and beyond.

Overheard at the coffee break

"The fact that the Indian Minister of Environment and Forestry inaugurated the Symposium is not only ground-breaking for ICIMOD but also for Nepal. It demonstrates the recognition of this partnership and issue to be of absolute relevance for the two countries. ICIMOD is being confirmed to be on the right track, where support from two important partners, the U.S. and India, will accompany and strengthen its work for the years to come."

Within the framework of the ICIMOD website, the Mountain GeoPortal has enhanced interactive mapping and database components and downloads of GIS datasets increased to over 2,500 over the year. ICIMOD's capacity to provide near real-time mapping support has been recognised internationally.

Facilitating external networks

In June 2010, ICIMOD was inaugurated as a knowledge hub of the Asia-Pacific Water Forum, an initiative of the Asian Development Bank, the Public Utility Board Singapore, and UNESCO-IHE to connect regional research institutes to strengthen regional collaboration and knowledge exchange on water related issues.



As part of its library modernisation programme, ICIMOD started digitising its library and information resources. A new online system, HIMALDOC, is being introduced to provide access to the library resources of ICIMOD and others, and provide a space for a repository of mountain relevant grey literature, especially theses. A workshop was organised for librarians from the Himalayan University Consortium to initiate the process of establishing regional connectivity between the library collections.



Communicating with stakeholders and the public

ICIMOD continued to provide general information about the Centre's activities through general publications like the Annual Report, periodical, calendar, and diverse flyers and posters for events, as well as a range of publications on programme activities and technical subjects, from information sheets to detailed reports. All publications are freely accessible in pdf format on the web site.

A coordinated communications and publications strategy supported the International Year of Biodiversity and COP 10 activities with posters, flyers, books, a website, and diverse announcements.

The newly integrated contacts database has more than 6,000 names of people and organisations, including a media database, tagged for specific types of communication, and is now used for all distribution and PR communications, including sending electronic newsletters, announcements, press releases, and others. Press coverage has greatly increased to more than 300 mentions of ICIMOD in 2010.



Information was provided to professionals and the general public through ICIMOD's Nepal Day and Open House and diverse activities to support celebrations of various UN Days. Requests for information and resources from journalists, film makers, professionals, and development workers have increased greatly, with more than 140 major requests addressed in 2010.

Launch of SERVIR-HIMALAYA for access to earth observation data

In October 2010, ICIMOD organised the international symposium **Benefiting from Earth Observation: Bridging the Data Gap for Adaptation to Climate Change in the Hindu Kush-Himalayas**.

More than 250 participants from 24 countries attended, including government officials, scientists, researchers, development practitioners, policy-makers, media representatives, and young people. Seven technical sessions covered the latest scientific knowledge on various applications of earth observation including remote sensing for monitoring snow and glaciers; air pollution; land cover change; spatial decision support systems for ecosystem management; and space-based information for disaster management.

The symposium was linked to the launching of the SERVIR-Himalaya node. Initiated by NASA and USAID, SERVIR is an earth observation, monitoring, and visualisation system that integrates satellite and other geospatial data to support decision-making. The programme is designed to build the capacity of countries to use earth observation and geospatial information technologies in different regions around the world. SERVIR-Himalaya is gradually being adapted to the specific needs and priorities of the Hindu-Kush Himalayan region and augments the capacity of ICIMOD to provide access to and use of earth observation for the benefit of mountain communities. The presence of the NASA Administrator and USAID Deputy Administrator during the launch showed the commitment and support of these agencies for the initiative.

The NASA Administrator, **Mr Charles F Bolden Jr**, remarked during the launch,

Basanta Shrestha, Charles F Bolden Jr, Michael Yates, and Andreas Schild at the launch of SERVIR-Himalaya



"It is indeed an honour to be here in Kathmandu for the inauguration of the SERVIR Himalaya Facility hosted by our newest partner, ICIMOD, and meet with the staff who work here from around the region. While it is USAID and NASA that provide the framework for the SERVIR project, it is ICIMOD on behalf of the regional member countries that will make this project a success... I encourage you to get connected with our team there as they are already doing outstanding work. We will only benefit from mutual cooperation.

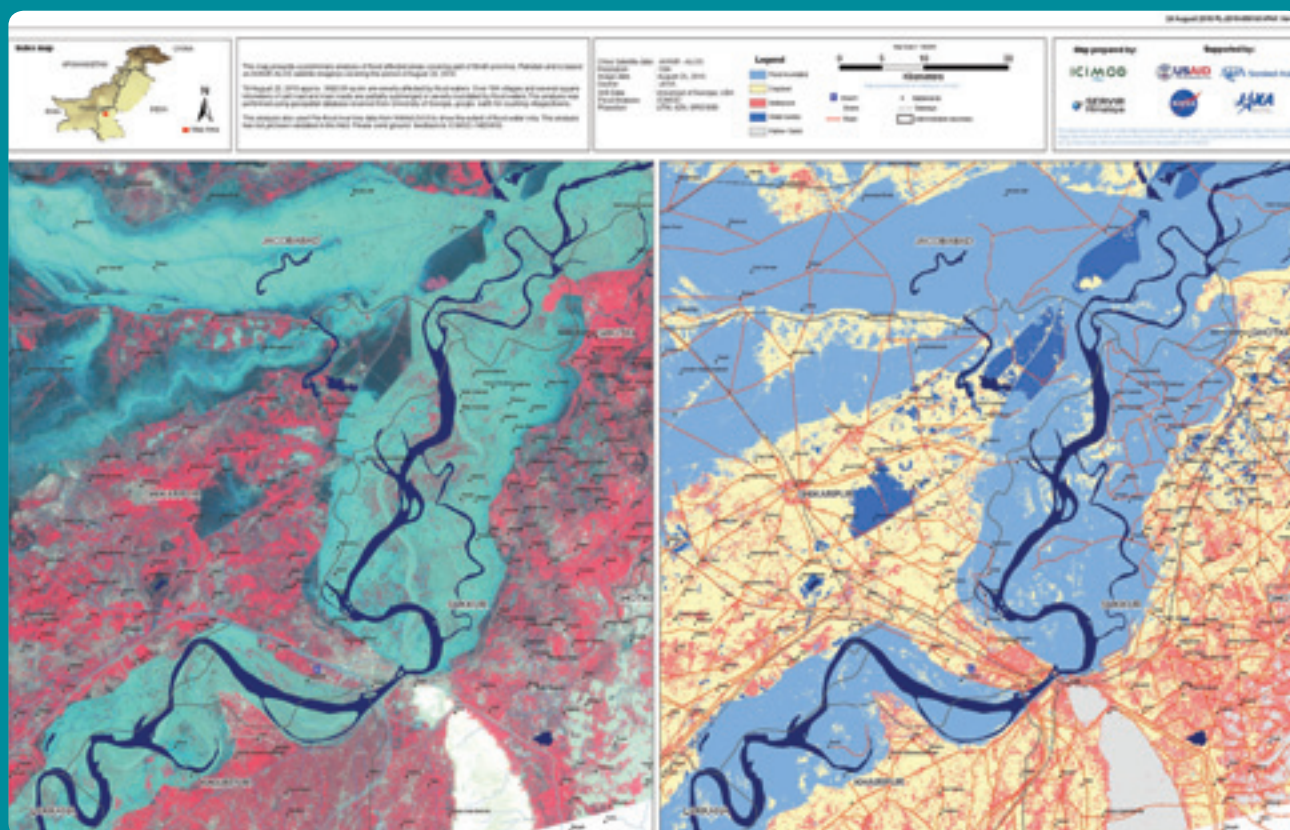
From space, this is a world without borders. Countries blend into one another and appear connected not divided. This breath-taking view makes it clear that we all have a responsibility to make our village, our country, our region, and our world better places in which to live. "

Rapid response mapping of the Pakistan floods

ICIMOD played an active role in providing space-based information to support decision-making during the severe flooding in Pakistan in August 2010. Heavy monsoon rains hit northwestern Pakistan in late July causing flooding in areas to the south that affected at least 14 million people. The floodwaters covered nearly one-fifth of Pakistan and made many areas of the country inaccessible. In coordination with Sentinel Asia, the International Disaster Charter, and SERVIR-Himalaya, ICIMOD helped generate a range of earth observation products on a daily basis to support teams involved in damage assessment and disaster management. The products were provided to regional and international aid organisations and disaster networks in close coordination with the Space and Upper Atmospheric Research Commission (SUPARCO) in Pakistan. Images and data from 15 satellites gave a range of data from high to coarse resolution. The coarse resolution data was used to map the daily extent of the floodwater, its direction, and movement, in order to prepare time-series maps. Medium resolution data was used to identify flood-inundated areas, affected infrastructure (settlements, roads), and affected crop areas. The high-resolution data offered detailed information for identifying damage to bridges, roads, settlements, and cropland, and to prepare detailed maps of flood affected blocks.

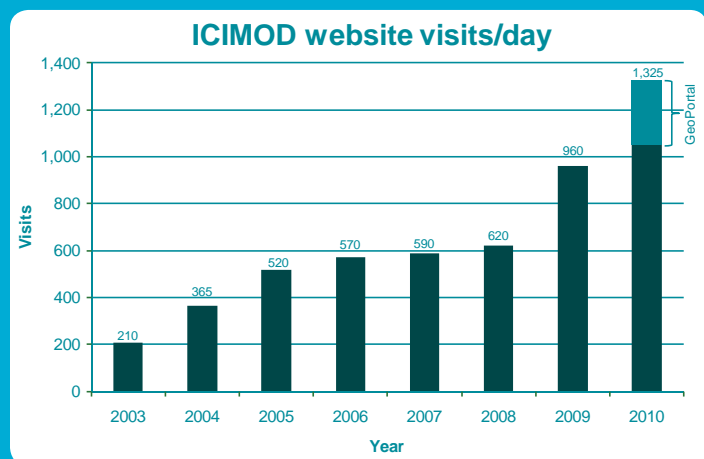
Mr Imran Iqbal, a Member of SUPARCO in Pakistan said, *"The Space and Upper Atmospheric Research Commission (SUPARCO) had a wonderful experience of working with the ICIMOD Headquarters and Country Office. During the unprecedented floods in 2010, ICIMOD worked closely with SUPARCO to provide updated maps of water movement and damage assessment. This information was extremely useful in planning for humanitarian assistance by the donor community, NGOs, and the Government of Pakistan. Enhanced regional information exchange is anticipated through ICIMOD's SERVIR project."*

Floods in Pakistan, map product from 24 August for damage assessment showing inundation relative to infrastructure



ICIMOD's Website – Double the hits

All of ICIMOD's communication, publicity, and dissemination systems have been redesigned since the introduction of the new brand in 2008. The redesign of the website has proven to be particularly effective, with a doubling of visits per day and more than doubling of



the number of publications downloaded. The website has become a consolidated platform with an integrated search function for all ICIMOD websites, including sites such as the GeoPortal and Disaster Risk Reduction sites, and activities such as the International Year of Biodiversity and the Mountain Initiative. All the activity-based websites have now been integrated into a single main site.

ICIMOD has made all its publications openly accessible through its website in the Books Online system. In 2010, ICIMOD set up Facebook and Twitter sites for newsfeeds that direct viewers to the website and established a YouTube site for uploading videos of selected lectures and presentations, documentary clips, and interviews.

Many appreciative emails are received from readers of publications and information mails, as well as users of the website. Comments included:

"Thank you for the timely and most useful comment from ICIMOD on the recent debate about the rate of retreat of glaciers in the Himalayas. This is a key role for ICIMOD to play in providing scientifically based and well-considered contributions to hotly contested topics within its competence." Canada

"Thank you very much really the publication is valuable information for all specialists in this sector." Afghanistan

"We all have to appreciate the efforts of ICIMOD to bring a separate portal on the eve of International Year of Biodiversity." India

"Your organisation is doing fantastic work and you are doing even a much better activity by sharing with the user community." India

Drying maize on the rooftops of traditional Tibetan houses, Jiagu Zangzhai, Sichuan, China

