



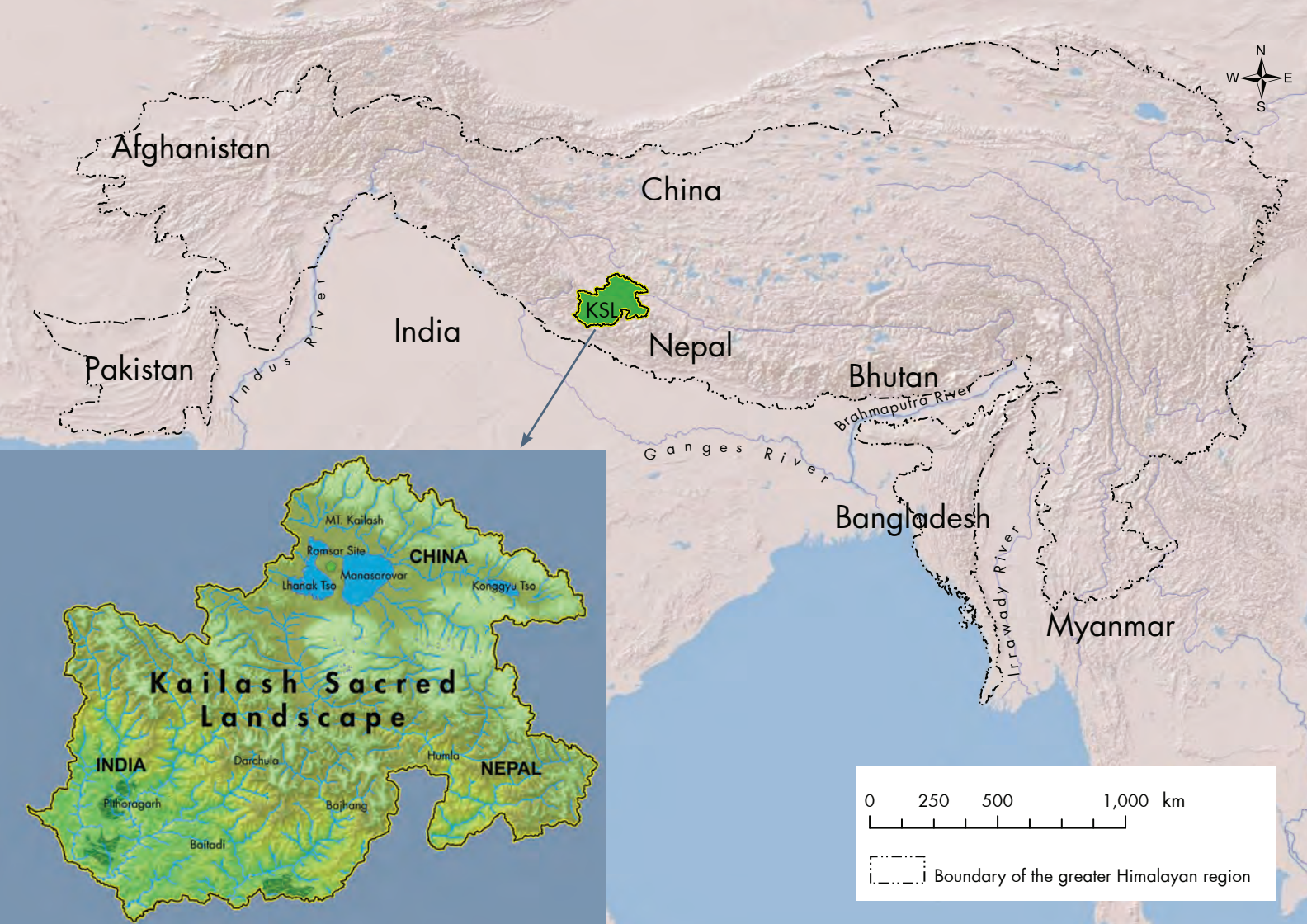
# Kailash Sacred Landscape Conservation and Development Initiative (KSLCDI)

## Transcending boundaries for conservation and development

**The Kailash Sacred Landscape (KSL)** is a culturally rich, ecologically diverse, and geologically fragile transboundary region encompassing over 31,000 km<sup>2</sup> in a remote southwestern portion of the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR) of China and adjacent areas in India and Nepal. Marked by the imposing Mount Kailash, the KSL is a sacred landscape revered by millions of people of various religions – including Buddhism, Hinduism, Bon, Jainism, and Sikhism; it is visited by thousands of religious and spiritual pilgrims each year. The region is also the source of four of Asia's major rivers – the Indus, Brahmaputra, Karnali and Sutlej – which provide water and ecosystem goods and services that are vital for the lives and livelihoods of millions of people in the greater Himalayan region. While the KSL includes several national protected areas (see Table), enhanced regional cooperation is crucial to ensure the long-term sustainable development and conservation of this important landscape and its communities.

### Geographical attributes of the Kailash Sacred Landscape

Landscape/ part of landscape	Total area (km <sup>2</sup> )	Elevation range (m asl)	Number and area of watersheds (km <sup>2</sup> )	Protected areas in or adjacent to the KSL	Ecologically and/or culturally significant lakes	Forest area (km <sup>2</sup> )	Rangelands (% of total land area)	Human population
Entire landscape	31, 252	390–7,694	14 total			8,489	27%	1,032,800
In China	10,843	3,641–7,694	2 total: Karnali, 3,062 Manasarovar, 7,781	Manasarovar Wetland Complex Changthang Nature Reserve	Lake Manasarovar Lake Rakshastal	<5	49%	8,800
In India	7,120	428–6,895	4 total: Panar-Saryu, 350 Saryu- Ramganga, 1,500 Gori, 2,750 Dhauli-Kali, 2,650	Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve Askot Wildlife Sanctuary	Parvati Tal Anchheri Tal Chhipla Kund	4,965	13%	460,000
In Nepal	13,289	390–7,336	8 total	Khaptad National Park Api-Nampa Conservation Area	Chhungsa Daha Chhyungar Daha Khaptad Daha	3,524	18%	564,000



### Kailash Sacred Landscape and its location in the greater Himalayas

The KSL contains a wide variety of globally significant biodiversity and a wealth of endemic flora and fauna. The landscape provides essential habitat for several endangered species, including snow leopard, blue sheep, and Himalayan musk deer, as well as several important resident and migratory birds. It is characterized by diverse habitats (as many as 22 forest types); varied agro-climatic zones (sub-tropical to alpine); extensive alpine habitats (both moist and dry); and a sizeable area under permanent ice (15%). These interlinked, transboundary ecosystems provide vital goods and services and rich biodiversity, including an array of medicinal plant resources, which are necessary for sustaining local livelihoods.

However, these resources are under increasing threat. Population growth, globalization, and pressures from infrastructure development activities are major drivers of environmental degradation and change

across the KSL. Warming temperatures and changes in weather patterns are also adversely affecting local communities and the ecosystems they depend on. As the climate changes and species' ranges shift across borders and outside established protected areas, biodiversity conservation efforts must be reexamined. The transboundary environmental and socio-cultural changes in the landscape have contributed to ecological fragility, deforestation, unsustainable use of natural resources, and poverty. The cumulative impact of these changes has resulted in accelerated loss of biodiversity and cultural heritage and has disrupted the supply of vital ecosystem goods and services, directly affecting the lives of local communities. Given the landscape's remote location, it has been difficult for local communities to adapt to change, and inadequate mainstreaming of conservation efforts in national planning processes has weakened the resilience of the landscape as a whole.

## Kailash Sacred Landscape Conservation and Development Initiative

Recognizing the global and regional significance of the KSL, the governments of China, India, and Nepal are working together for the conservation and development of the landscape and its communities. The Kailash Sacred Landscape Conservation and Development Initiative (KSLCDI) promotes collaboration among partner institutions in each country for the sustainable development of the KSL through the ecosystem management approach recommended by the Convention on Biological Diversity. Together, the participating countries have developed a Regional Cooperation Framework setting out the objectives and mechanisms of transboundary cooperation for the conservation and sustainable use of biological and cultural resources and associated indigenous knowledge, as well as for increasing the adaptive capacity and resilience of communities within the KSL. This approach builds on the strengths of the region while considering both the risks and opportunities created by various drivers of change.



### Key components and activities of the Kailash Sacred Landscape Conservation and Development Initiative

#### Ecosystem Management for Sustaining Services

- Participatory action research for evaluation of ecosystem services
- Capacity development of local institutions
- Supporting community-based resource management plans

#### Innovative Livelihood Approaches

- Niche products
- Heritage tourism
- Water resources and rural energy
- Climate change adaptation

#### Access and Benefit Sharing

- Protection of traditional knowledge systems
- Community rights and sharing on value chains
- Linking enterprises with conservation

#### Long-term Conservation and Monitoring

- Implementation of conservation strategy
- Establishing monitoring systems (implementation of comprehensive environmental monitoring plan)
- Capacity building of national and local institutions
- Data/information management

#### Regional Cooperation, Enabling Policies, and Knowledge Management

- Supporting national and local policy forums
- Regional platform and exchange
- Knowledge management and communication
- Programme monitoring, evaluation, and expert advice

## Partners

The KSLCDI is a collaborative effort of China, India, and Nepal and is facilitated by the International Centre of Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) with financial support from Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) and the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID) – UK Aid. The focal ministries are:

- the Chinese Academy of Sciences,
- the Ministry of Environment and Forests of the Government of India, and
- the Ministry of Forestry and Soil Conservation of the Government of Nepal.

Lead technical institutions in each of the countries will be responsible for coordinating the programme's implementation.



## For further information

Rajan Kotru  
Gopal Rawat

rkotru@icimod.org  
grawat@icimod.org

**Photo:** Gopal Rawat, Salley Walkerman, Robert Zomer, Rodney Jackson



© ICIMOD 2012

**International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development**

GPO Box 3226, Kathmandu, Nepal

**Tel** +977-1-5003222 **email** info@icimod.org **web** www.icimod.org

Prepared by ICIMOD Publications Unit, October 2012