

Towards Developing the Brahmaputra-Salween Landscape Conservation and Development Initiative

Report on the Regional Strategic Meeting for
Developing Regional Cooperation Framework



Austrian
Development Agency



About ICIMOD

The International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development, ICIMOD, is a regional knowledge development and learning centre serving the eight regional member countries of the Hindu Kush Himalayas – Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Myanmar, Nepal, and Pakistan – and based in Kathmandu, Nepal. Globalisation and climate change have an increasing influence on the stability of fragile mountain ecosystems and the livelihoods of mountain people. ICIMOD aims to assist mountain people to understand these changes, adapt to them, and make the most of new opportunities, while addressing upstream-downstream issues. We support regional transboundary programmes through partnership with regional partner institutions, facilitate the exchange of experience, and serve as a regional knowledge hub. We strengthen networking among regional and global centres of excellence. Overall, we are working to develop an economically and environmentally sound mountain ecosystem to improve the living standards of mountain populations and to sustain vital ecosystem services for the billions of people living downstream – now, and for the future.



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Internal Report

Towards Developing the Brahmaputra-Salween Landscape Conservation and Development Initiative

Report on the Regional Strategic Meeting for Developing Regional
Cooperation Framework

26–27 June 2014, Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar

Organized by

International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) and the Forest Department,
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Foreword

The Regional Programme on Transboundary Landscapes at ICIMOD was conceived in 2008 following the publication of the 2007 report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the proceedings of the International Conference on Mountain Biodiversity in Kathmandu in 2008. This programme aims to address gaps in scientific data on the environmental and socioeconomic parameters in the Hindu Kush Himalayan (HKH) region and to use such information for conservation and sustainable use of natural resources. The transboundary landscape programme allows us to strengthen scientific collaboration among member countries, regional cooperation, and interdisciplinary research on environmental as well as socioeconomic aspects. Such a programme also helps in addressing the issues of national and regional concerns, strengthening upstream-downstream linkages and ecosystem management for better livelihoods, and ensuring continued ecosystem services. Following the participatory iterative process and with strong support from the member countries, this programme has made considerable progress within a short period of five years.

The Brahmaputra-Salween Landscape Conservation and Development Initiative (BSLCDI) is a collaborative programme between China, India, and Myanmar. The programme, which is being facilitated by ICIMOD, is in the start-up phase. During this phase the countries delineated the landscape boundaries and submitted the country-specific feasibility assessment reports. All the partners are now in the process of developing two technical documents: BSL Conservation and Development Strategy, and BSL Comprehensive Environmental and Socioeconomic Monitoring Strategy.

While these documents were under preparation, ICIMOD and the three partner countries initiated a parallel process of formulating the BSL Regional Cooperation Framework (BSL-RCF), involving the key strategic partners and senior officials from the three countries. A rigorous two-day consultation was organized for this purpose at Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar on 26–27 June 2014. This report presents the detailed proceedings of the consultation meeting. The major output of the meeting, i.e., the RCF document is being finalized and will be submitted to the respective countries for their endorsement.

It is hoped that the proceedings of the BSL-RCF meeting would serve as a valuable reference for programme development in the future. We are grateful for the help and cooperation extended by the Forest Department at the Ministry of Environmental Conservation and Forestry (MOECAF), Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar. We highly appreciate the active participation of all the partners including senior government officials from the three countries.

Eklabya Sharma, PhD

Director Programme Operations

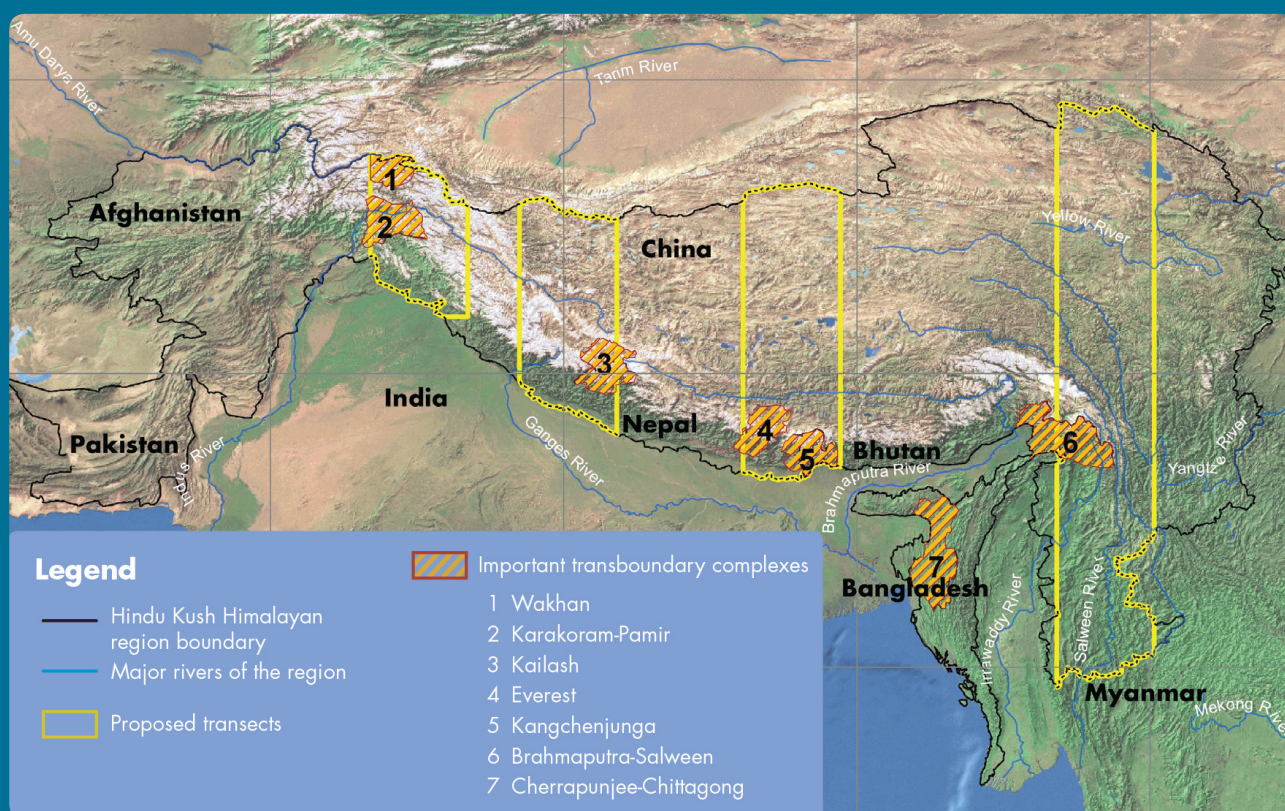
Background

General introduction

ICIMOD and its partners in the eight Regional Member Countries have identified seven transboundary landscapes for programmatic cooperation from west to east across the HKH region: Wakhan, Karakoram-Pamir, Kailash, Everest, Kangchenjunga, Brahmaputra-Salween, and Cherrapunjee-Chittagong (Figure 1). The Transboundary Landscapes regional programme is represented through 'Conservation and Development Initiatives' that contribute to the outcome whereby all identified ecologically and socio-culturally significant landscapes are better conserved and managed for sustaining ecosystem goods and services to improve lives and livelihoods of people.

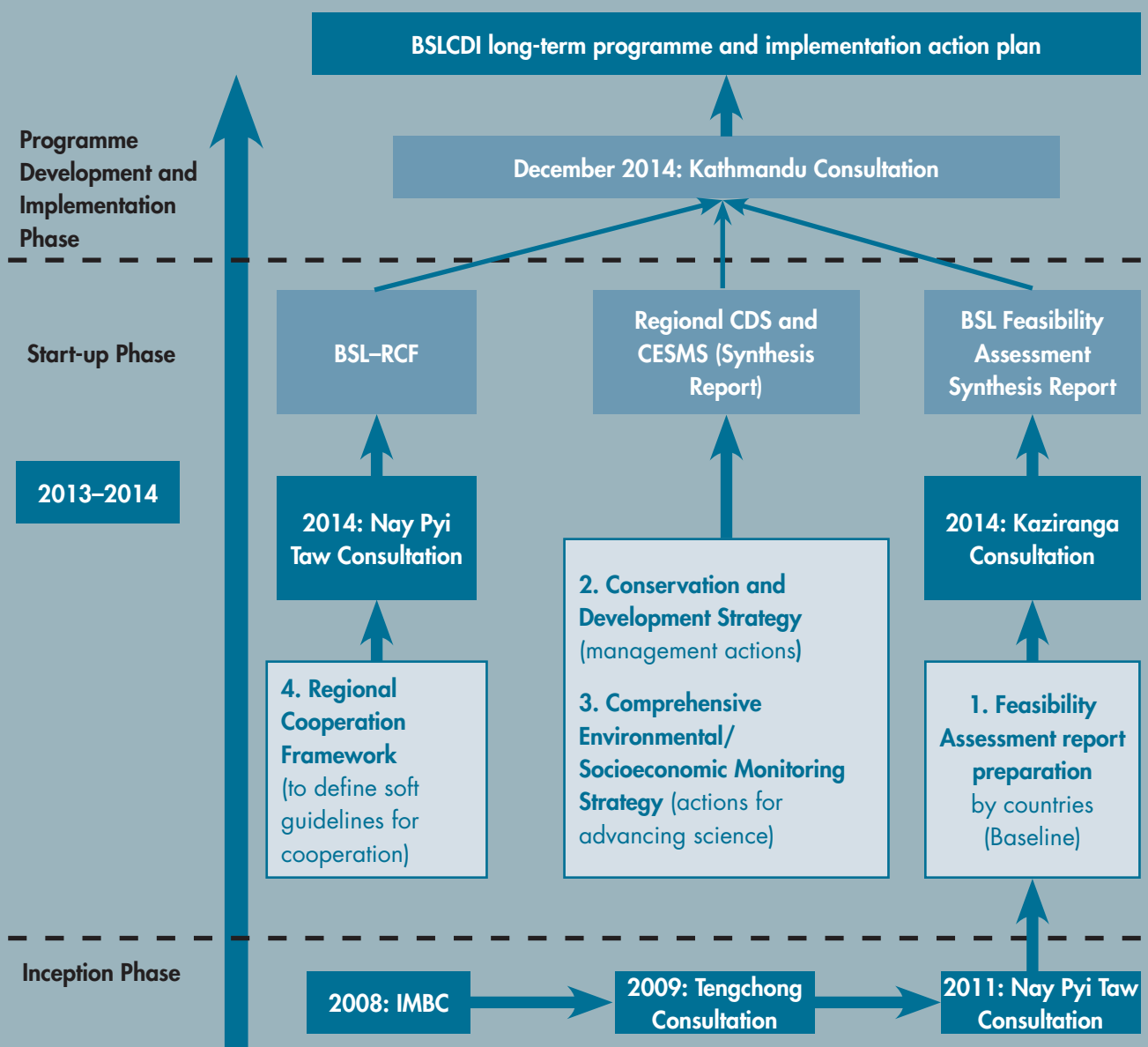
The Brahmaputra-Salween Landscape is among the seven transboundary landscapes (landscape number 6, Figure 1) in the Hindu Kush Himalayan region. It represents one of the most biodiversity and culturally rich transboundary landscapes, and is shared by three countries, namely, China, India and Myanmar. The landscape includes areas that are globally recognized as the 'Centre of Plant Diversity' and 'Eastern Asiatic Regional Centre for Endemism'. Located at the meeting point of three global 'Biodiversity Hotspots', namely, the Himalayas, the Indo-Burma, and the Mountains of Southwest China, and with elements of seven 'Global 200 Ecoregions', the landscape harbours biodiversity of global, regional and local value. The biodiversity in the Landscape not only forms the basis of livelihoods of people living in the landscape, but also has universal value in terms of evolution and diversification of species, and as genetic repositories of crop wild relatives. The conservation value of the landscape is well reflected by the establishment of the seven protected areas by the three countries, that cover most of the wilderness areas within the landscape. The four major protected areas: the Hkakaborazi National Park and Hukaung Valley Wildlife Sanctuary/Tiger Reserve of Myanmar, Namdapha National Park/Tiger Reserve of India, and the Gaoligangshan National Nature Reserve in Yunnan Province of China cover a contiguous stretch of landscape across the three countries.

Figure 1: Transboundary landscapes and transects of the Hindu Kush Himalayan region



Over the years, through several regional consultations facilitated by ICIMOD, the three BSL member countries have identified common conservation and development challenges and some transboundary issues; they discussed the prospects and opportunities of the transboundary landscape approach, and the need to collaborate for regional outcomes. The Brahmaputra-Salween Landscape Conservation and Development Initiative (BSLCDI) was developed with support from partners like MacArthur Foundation, BMZ/GIZ, and Austrian Development Agency (ADA). Since its 'inception during the 2008 International Mountain Biodiversity Conference (IMBC), following a series of consultations over the years, the boundary for the implementation of BSLCDI was finalized at the third regional consultation in Kaziranga, Assam, India on 22-25 January 2014. Prior to the Kaziranga meeting, the first and the second regional consultations held in Tengchong, Yunnan (2009) and Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar (2011) respectively set the stage for developing transboundary cooperation among the three BSL member countries. The focal institutes in the three countries were identified and pre-feasibility assessments were conducted to better understand the landscape characteristics and opportunities for regional cooperation. The country-led feasibility assessment formally started in 2013. The regional boundary for Brahmaputra-Salween Landscape was finalized after the completion of feasibility assessment reports from the countries.

Figure 2: Schematic diagram of the strategic development of BSLCDI



The Brahmaputra-Salween Landscape Conservation and Development Initiative (BSLCDI) is designed to enhance cooperation among the three BSL member countries (China, India and Myanmar) for scientific collaborations and regional knowledge development, and to promote effective conservation and development interventions building on regional learning and its wider application. The three BSL member countries, with facilitation support from ICIMOD, are in the process of preparing the country-wise Conservation and Development Strategy (CDS) and Comprehensive Environmental and Socioeconomic Monitoring Strategy (CESMS). These documents, together with the Feasibility Assessment (FA) Report, serve as the basis of long-term programme development for BSLCDI.

Objectives of the Regional Meeting

As a regional initiative, BSLCDI requires strong cooperation from the three BSL member countries. To ensure cooperation among the three countries and garner support for implementation within each country, a Regional Cooperation Framework (RCF) document was drafted. The BSL-RCF document will serve as a guiding framework for a common understanding and actions of the three BSL member countries. Such a framework will enhance regional cooperation for conservation and development in the Landscape.

The main objective of this Regional Strategic Meeting was to discuss and concretize different elements of the Regional Cooperation Framework and finalize the content of the draft document for agreement and endorsement by concerned strategic partners in the three BSL member countries.

Organization of the Meeting

The Regional Strategic Meeting was jointly organized by ICIMOD and Myanmar's Forest Department, Ministry of Environmental Conservation and Forestry (MOECAF) on 26–27 June 2014 at the Mount Pleasant Hotel in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar.

About 30 participants representing government organizations (departments within MOECAF, representatives from Kachin State and Sagaing region in Myanmar; G.B. Pant Institute of Himalayan Environment and Development (GBPIHED), an autonomous institute of the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MOEF), Government of India, and from state of Arunachal Pradesh in India; Baoshan and Nujiang Bureau in Yunnan, China; Chinese Academy of Sciences, and ICIMOD attended the regional meeting (see Annex 1: List of participants).

The meeting included an opening session, technical sessions and a concluding session (see Annex 2: Detailed Programme Structure). The programme structure was presented by U Win Naing Thaw, Director of Nature and Wildlife Conservation Division (NWCD) at the Forest Department, who is also the focal person for the BSLCDI in Myanmar.

The opening session was graced by the presence of His Excellency, U Win Tun, Union Minister, MOECAF. He discussed the significance of a regional approach and drew the attention of institutions and departments of other ministries in Myanmar towards collective efforts.

The technical sessions were devoted to further elaborating on the BSL elements, and Conservation and Development Initiative. The 'draft' regional framework was reviewed, discussed and agreed by the participants, including the institutional coordination mechanism for the implementation of BSLCDI. Presentations were made on some of the guiding principles of the preparation of CDS and CESMS and on the importance of the Impact Pathway. Participants were also able to watch a few documentaries on the biodiversity and sociocultural significance of the landscape.

The concluding session was attended by the deputy director general of the Forest Department. ICIMOD staff presented a synthesis of the discussions to indicate a way forward. Representatives of each country made closing remarks and the Director of NWCD delivered a vote of thanks.

The field trips to the National Landscape Museum, Zoological Park and Safari, and Uppatasanti Pagoda gave the participants an opportunity to see and appreciate the natural, economic, and cultural life of Myanmar. The trips were facilitated by colleagues from the Forest Department, MOECAF.

Opening Session

The opening session commenced formally with the address from His Excellency U Win Tun, Union Minister at the Ministry of Environmental Conservation and Forestry. He said that the meeting was important for bringing representatives from the three countries together to discuss the ways and means for regional cooperation. “Such strategic partnerships are important not just for sustainable management of resources but also for resolving differences in our understanding of conservation and development issues,” he said. Extending his warm greetings to all participants, he said that the meeting reflected the commitment and determination of countries to shape and strengthen conservation and development actions in the BSL. He also expressed appreciation for Myanmar’s two decades of relationship with ICIMOD, and said that ICIMOD’s mission ‘to enable sustainable and resilient mountain development for improved and equitable livelihoods through knowledge and regional cooperation’ is in line with the national policy related to forestry, conservation and environmental management. He also touched on the significance of BSL for Myanmar, and the importance of cooperation between the three countries. He added that the northern part of Myanmar is a global hotspot for plant and animal diversity. There are several protected areas that safeguard these valuable resources, but the area is also home to a number of ethnic groups who depend on these resources, and balancing their need and conserving the resources is a big challenge. His Excellency concluded his address by thanking ICIMOD and the representatives from the three countries.

Deputy ministers for MOECF, along with officials from other ministries and departments of the Myanmar government, were also present during the opening session.

Dr Eklabya Sharma, Director of Programme Operations at ICIMOD, made the opening address on behalf of ICIMOD. He mentioned that the framework reflects the three countries’ desire to capitalize on regional experience and expertise, and is meant to strengthen the regional efforts. He added that ICIMOD, as a regional knowledge centre, sees this cooperation as an opportunity to develop partnerships across boundaries for effective conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and other resources for the benefit of people in the landscape and beyond.

Dr Dong Qi, Bureau of International Cooperation at the Chinese Academy of Sciences gave the opening remarks on behalf of China. Dr Qi said that the Chinese Academy of Sciences encourages the exchange programme for researchers and visiting scholars, and that they look forward to working with Myanmar and India on transboundary biodiversity research and monitoring in the landscape.

Dr Pitamber P. Dhyani, Director of GBPIHED, said that Indian partners are keen to actively engage with and cooperate in the management of the Brahmaputra-Salween Landscape. Dr Dhyani added that India is already collaborating with China, Nepal, and Bhutan in other transboundary landscape initiatives such as Kailash and Kangchenjunga Conservation and Development Initiatives.

Press meet

A half-an-hour press meet was organized immediately after the opening session, where Myanmar National Television interviewed representatives from ICIMOD (Dr Eklabya Sharma), China (Dr Wu Ning), India (Dr Pitamber P. Dhyani and Mr Arun K. Wahal), and Myanmar (U Win Naing Thaw). A press brief note (Annex III) was shared with the media of the three countries prior to the meeting. Below are links to some of the media coverage of the meeting:

1. **China, India and Myanmar agree for regional cooperation on Trans boundary Landscape**
http://www.earthlanka.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1208%3Achina-india-and-myanmar-agree-on-framework-for-regional-cooperation-for-the-brahmaputra-salween-tra&catid=45%3Amedia-info&Itemid=65&lang=en Earthlanka, 28 June 2014
2. **New framework to conserve biodiversity hotspot**
<http://www.newindianexpress.com/cities/bangalore/New-Framework-to-Conserve-Biodiversity-Hotspot/2014/06/30/article2307435.ece>
The New Indian Express, 30 June 2014



3. **Tri-Nation Agreement**

<http://thestatesman.net/news/62533-tri-nation-agreement.html>

The Statesman, 29 June 2014

4. **China, India and Myanmar agree on framework for regional cooperation for the Brahmaputra-Salween Transboundary Landscape**

http://www.reviewnepal.com/full-story.php?news_id=570

Review Nepal, 28 June 2014

5. **Tri-Nation meet on BSL**

Shiba Nanda Basu, The Statesman Kolkata, 29 June 2014

6. **TV News coverage**

By MRTV, Nay Pyi Taw, 27 June

7. **India, China Myanmar to cooperate on conservation of transboundary landscape**

<http://epaper.telegraphindia.com/details/90442-131915875.html>

The Telegraph India, 27 June

Highlights of Technical Sessions

Technical Session I: Background and rationale for developing BSL Regional Cooperation Framework

The session started with a presentation by Mr Win Naing Thaw, Director at NWCD, Forest Department of Myanmar, who outlined the meeting's structure and objectives. Dr Eklabya Sharma elaborated on ICIMOD's regional programme on transboundary landscapes and the rationale for a Regional Cooperation Framework, and explained the process of regional cooperation framework development for Kailash Sacred Landscape Conservation and Development Initiative.

Brahmaputra-Salween Landscape: Highlights from the Regional Feasibility Assessment

The highlights from the BSL Regional Feasibility Report were presented by Ms Bandana Shakya, Associate Coordinator-BSLCDI at ICIMOD. Ms Shakya explained that the Brahmaputra-Salween Landscape is the easternmost of the seven transboundary landscapes in the Hindu Kush Himalayan region, and lies between two river systems, the Brahmaputra and the Salween. She said that the criteria for delineating the landscape was much more holistic than what was conceived earlier. As of 2014, the boundary of BSL includes 71,452 sq. km covering an area on the easternmost edge of the Himalayan range that is contiguous with the westernmost extension of the Hengduan Mountain Range in Yunnan, China. The protected areas, namely Namdapha National Park (Northeast India), Hkakaborazi National Park, Hponkarazi Wildlife Sanctuary (Northern Myanmar) and Gaoligongshan National Nature Reserve (Yunnan, China) forms the contiguous protected areas system in the north. These protected areas



and the adjoining mountainous areas also serve as the headwaters of the Ayeyawady River (Myanmar) and several sub water-basins of the Salween, Chindwin and Brahmaputra rivers. Ms Shakya also indicated that the BSL boundary is not a permanent boundary, and the countries can expand or include more areas within the landscape, if necessary. The national feasibility assessment report from India already mentions several options for expansion of the area, especially into those adjoining Myanmar.

Ms Shakya elaborated on the unique features of the landscape, its biological, and socioeconomic features, and said that the BSL not only has biodiversity of evolutionary significance but also has an interesting sociocultural history. The protected area coverage is as high as 50%; and there are several areas yet to be explored scientifically. She also pointed out the conservation and development challenges in the landscape including opportunities and prospects for regional cooperation, and stressed that the BSLCDI offers a good opportunity to capitalize on the network of regional partners for exchange of knowledge, expertise, innovations, technology and experiences. She presented some of the current information on conservation and development practices in the three countries, and existing bilateral works between the countries.

She also presented the outline of the BSL Feasibility Assessment Report- Regional Synthesis.

Long-term Monitoring and Ecosystem Management Framework

Dr Wu Ning, Theme Leader of Ecosystem Services at ICIMOD, explained the proposed Long-Term Environmental and Socioeconomic Monitoring Framework that had been discussed among experts in a meeting in Chengdu, China in May 2014. He said that the framework is meant to generate consistent and comparable data across the HKH region and promote research and periodic monitoring with adequate representation of latitudinal coverage. The purpose of the framework is to mainstream long-term environmental and socioeconomic monitoring in each of the transboundary landscapes that are being implemented at various levels. It will also help build and strengthen a free and open data platform for conservation and development practitioners, researchers and policymakers. One of the components of the framework is understanding the drivers of change and their impact on the environment so that the responses can be developed to improve the state of the environment. Dr Wu Ning also highlighted the fact that the framework should take the realistic approach of action research, link it to social and environmental security, and contribute to national, regional and global conservation and development agendas. He then explained the method of identifying the theme and key questions, determining the monitoring protocol, defining scale and indicators and analyzing the data in a way that aids decision making. He asked the participants to refer to the framework document for more information, saying that the framework will soon be shared with all country partners for their comments and review. He also thanked Dr Nakul Chettri for sharing the presentation.

Dr Gopal S. Rawat, Chief Scientist-Ecosystem Services and Coordinator for BSLCDI, presented the framework for ecosystem management in the Hindu Kush Himalayan region. He said that the integrated approach of ecosystem management is necessary when we are aiming to achieve the objectives of sustainable development. This approach is based on the science of ecosystem functions and services mapping, which is not a new concept. It is built within the framework of 'Ecosystem Approach' advocated by the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). The framework is directed towards making socioeconomic and cultural considerations while assessing ecosystem services so as to improve understanding of ecosystem functions and services and subsequently influence policy decisions to address major ecosystem management issues. Dr Rawat then presented the steps proposed in the Ecosystem Management Framework that included adaptive learning stages of programme initiation; understanding of the biophysical aspect, governance and the socioeconomic aspect; designing interventions; and implementation of plans. Dr Rawat suggested a few steps for mainstreaming the framework for BSL: first, identifying the pilot sites and coordinating agency; second, orienting the stakeholders on the assessment based on key principles of ecosystem management so that it ensures both livelihoods and conservation co-benefits.

Documentaries from the Landscape:

A documentary on the BSL (a work in progress) was shared to highlight the perceptions of the three BSL member country partners about the BSLCDI. The documentary features the objectives of BSLCDI, member country representatives' views on regional cooperation, expected outcomes of the initiative and ICIMOD's perspective and commitment to facilitating the process of regional cooperation and ensuring the landscape level outcomes for the environment and people in BSL.

The documentary from Gaoligongshan featured the landscape's rich biodiversity, ranging from different vegetation types to interesting mammal species.

The documentary from Hkakborazi National Park presented a bird's eye view of the unique and pristine landscape of northern Myanmar. It conveyed both the challenges and the need to venture into the landscape for its appropriate management, and to reach out to people living in the area.

The final documentary was on people's role in managing agrobiodiversity resources in the region. It featured some of the farming communities of Northeast India, and the views of experts on the importance of recognizing the contribution of local small-holder farmers for the conservation of crop genetic diversity, and for fulfilling the objectives of global food security.

Technical Session II: Elements of BSL Regional Cooperation Framework

This session was dedicated to discussing the elements of the BSL Regional Cooperation Framework. The idea was to thoroughly review the 'draft document', discuss regional institutional coordination mechanisms and understand the BSLCDI process by linking it with the Impact Pathway.

Review of BSL Regional Cooperation Framework 'Draft' Document

The three countries took turns facilitating the discussion on different chapters of the document. The discussion on the sections 'Preamble and Purpose' and 'the Regional Cooperation Framework Process' were facilitated by India; 'Principles, Work Boundary' and 'BSLCDI Objectives' were facilitated by China, and 'the BSL Programme Development Process



Framework’ was facilitated by Myanmar. Dr Eklabya Sharma, Director of Programme Operations at ICIMOD, congratulated the chairs of the sessions and thanked all the participants for the lively discussion before summarizing the discussions.

The main points of the discussions were as follows:

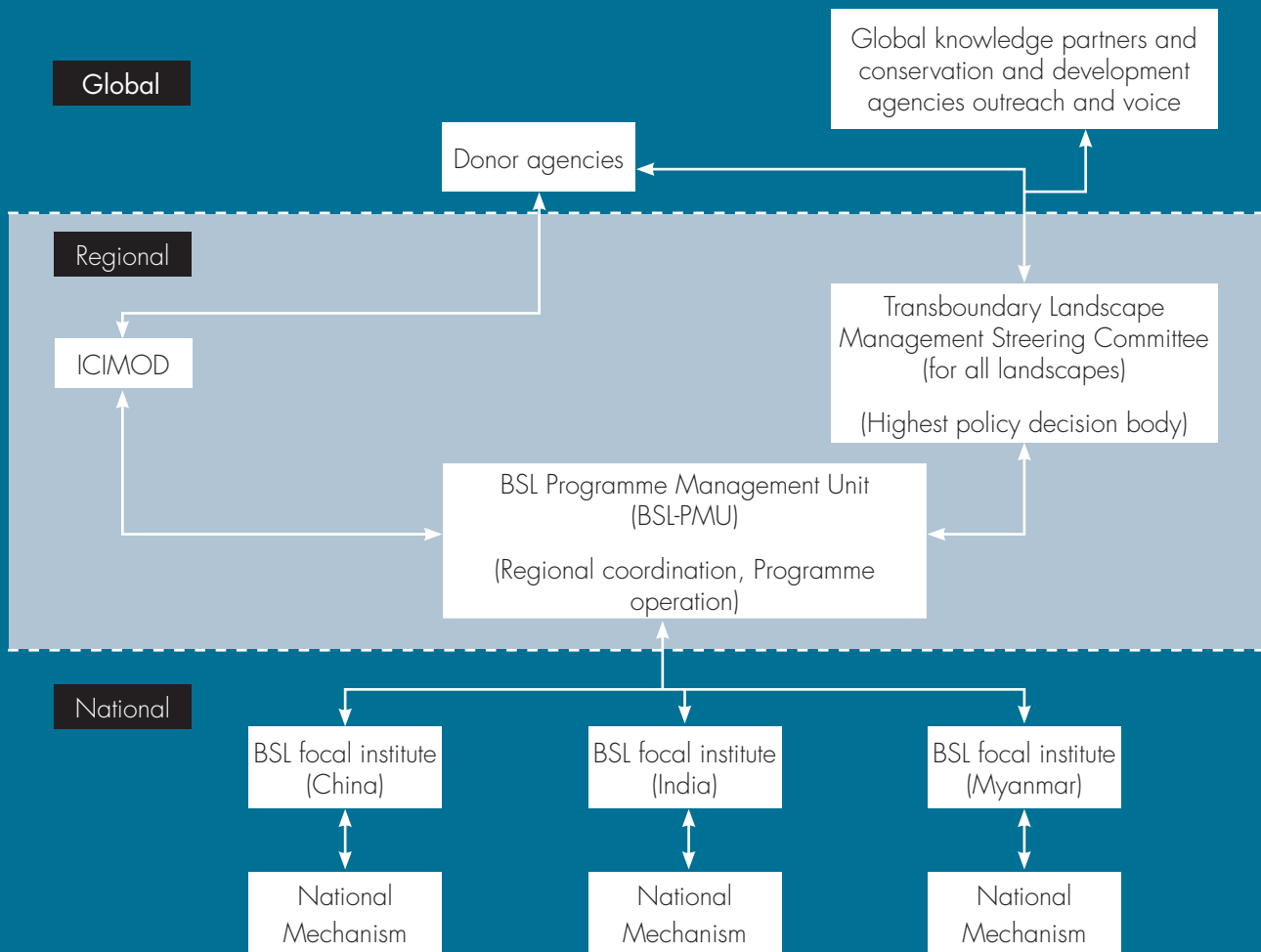
- Provide both the Chinese and Myanmar names of the Salween River (‘Nujiang’ and ‘Thanlwin’ respectively) in a footnote in all documents. However, for the convenience of the global audience, the name ‘Brahmaputra-Salween’ will be retained in all knowledge products and communications related to the BSL.
- Include the vision statement agreed on at the meeting in the BSL-RCF document: ‘A landscape with unique biodiversity and cultural heritage is maintained through a transboundary landscape conservation and development approach’,
- Shorten and sharpen the preamble to include only the background and link to international instruments; add Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing; avoid repetitive statements or merge statements that convey the same message, for example, para 5, 6 and 8 convey a similar message so can be combined into one.
- Make the ‘purpose’ section as crisp as possible, avoiding repetition and overlap of points from other sections.
- Mention the present ‘Regional Strategic Meeting’ in the process section of the RCF document.
- Consistently use the phrase ‘Conservation and Development’ instead of other phrases like biodiversity conservation, biodiversity management, etc.
- Avoid too much reference to Kailash Sacred Landscape Framework as it will draw attention away from the BSL framework.
- Be general about the geographic extent of the landscape and avoid giving details about the extent of coverage- this will give the countries flexibility to redefine the boundaries in the future. The proposal to ‘inform and share’ any changes in the geographic extent of the landscape was approved by all.
- RCF Principles are self-explanatory; hence, no need to define them.
- Reconstruct ‘BSLCDI process framework’, changing the title to ‘mechanism for implementation’. This section should highlight how RCF will be implemented and taken forward.
- Remove all annexes. All details would be in the supplementary documents.
- The content outline of the Framework shall be in this order: Preamble, Purpose, Process, Principles and Mechanisms for Implementation.
- Include all section-wise comments and changes in paragraphs in the revised BSL-RCF document.

Regional Institutional Coordination Mechanism

Dr Gopal S. Rawat made a brief presentation on the proposed framework of institutional coordination mechanism for BSL (Figure 3). The idea was to understand and clarify the roles of the nodal and other institutes in the three BSL member countries, as well as of ICIMOD in facilitating the regional level activities.



Figure 3: Schematic diagram of the proposed institutional coordination mechanisms for the implementation of BSLCDI



The discussion points were as follows:

- At the regional level, whether there will be one steering committee for all landscapes or a separate committee for each landscape
- ICIMOD will collaborate closely with focal institutes in each country for implementing the regional level activities.
- Each of the BSL member countries will have country specific institutional coordination mechanism for implementing actions at the national level.



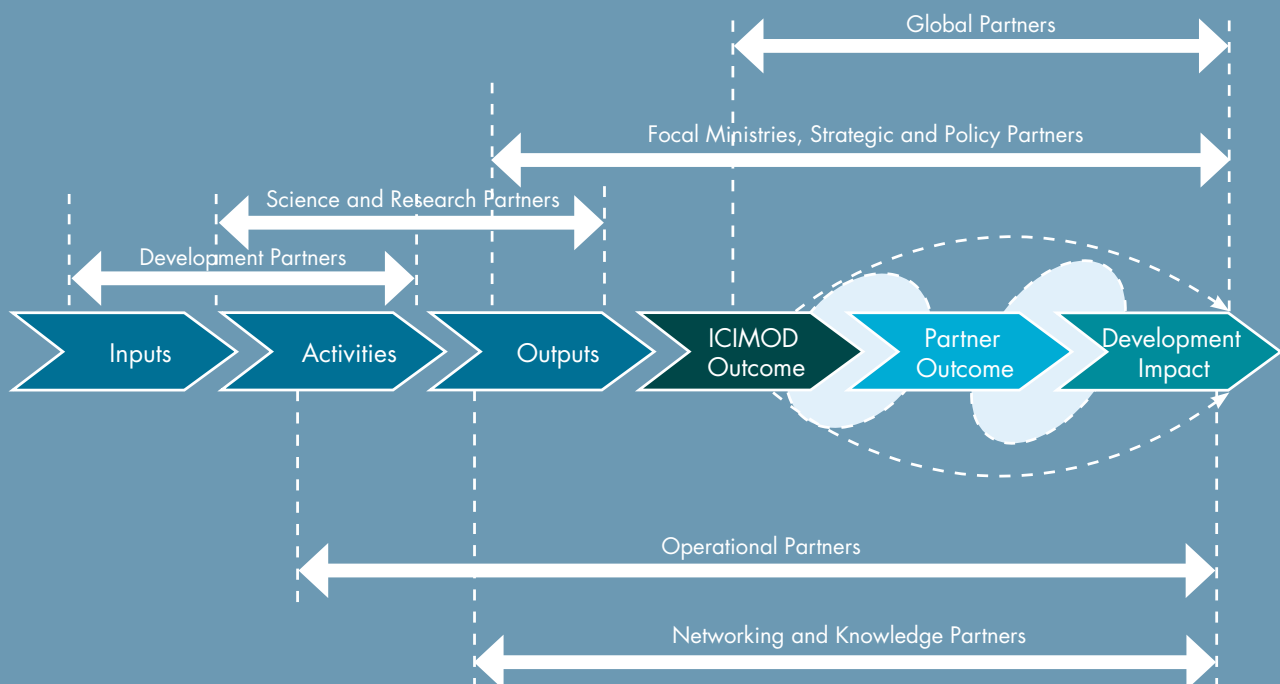
- The national coordination committee for BSL to play a strong role in bringing other national partners into the initiative.
- The regional steering committee will be basically to steer the initiative.
- National level mechanisms to be clearly outlined in the feasibility assessment reports.

The Impact Pathways for the BSL

The presentation was given by Dr Dhruvad Choudhury, Programme Manager-Regional Programme on Adaptation to Change at ICIMOD. The idea was to introduce the concept of why 'Impact Pathways' and the theory of change have to be considered while implementing the initiative such as BSLCDI where outcomes are influenced by the efforts of a large number of stakeholders, and various actions and strategies. Dr Choudhury explained that Impact Pathways are essential for linking research, science, policy-making processes, and this can be done by working with partners with different capacities and kinds of influence. It also helps us understand different levels of operations required to reach the expected outcomes, goal and links in the entire result chain as shown in figure 4.

If we consider the goal of the Regional Programme on Transboundary Landscapes – of ensuring that landscapes are better conserved and managed for sustaining ecosystem goods and services to improve ecological integrity and livelihoods of communities -- then the immediate question is: how are we going to achieve this? We will be requiring certain strategies, action plans and a cooperation framework, and at the same time we will need to measure the successes or the progress made. We can only achieve so much on our own. We also need to take into account the different roles and interests of other stakeholders, which can be a complex process. The Impact Pathway helps us understand the non-linear web of influences on the process of development and change. Dr Choudhury then briefed the participants on the steps involved in the Impact Pathway, where it will be crucial to understand the changes in the behaviour of actors, their knowledge, attitudes and skills (theory of change), and the extent of partnerships required (network mapping).

Figure 4: ICIMOD's result chain and types of partners (modified after ICIMOD's partnership strategies)



Concluding Session

Dr Eklabya Sharma, Director of Programme Operations at ICIMOD, elaborated on the actions that could lead the way forward:

- The draft BSL Regional Cooperation Framework document, which the participants put their effort to review and discuss during the two days, would be revised immediately and distributed among the focal institutions in the three BSL member countries for further inputs.
- Once the BSL-RCF document is ready, the nodal institutes in the three BSL member countries must share it with wider institutions for consensus building and facilitate the endorsement process.
- It is also to be kept in mind that the Regional Cooperation Framework is a soft guideline, and while the endorsement is in process, the countries can start their collaborative activities on the basis of existing bilateral cooperation and the understanding developed over the years for BSLCDI.
- The next step for the three countries is to quickly prepare the country documents on the Conservation and Development Strategy and the Comprehensive Environmental and Socioeconomic Monitoring Strategy. This will help us develop the long-term programme for BSLCDI and start actions on the ground. Dr Sharma also indicated that the UKAID and Austrian Development Agency are interested in long-term programme investments and that activities of the start-up phase should be completed as quickly as possible.
- A communication strategy for effective coordination of BSLCDI will also be required for successful implementation of BSLCDI.
- The fifth regional consultation will be held at ICIMOD tentatively in December 2014. There we will have to develop a long-term programme for BSLCDI, taking concrete ideas from the three foundational documents: Feasibility Assessment Report, Conservation and Development Strategy, and Comprehensive Environmental and Socioeconomic Monitoring Strategy.
- Update the BSLCDI web page and create a partners' page to reflect each country's contribution and the features of the landscape in that country.

Closing remarks

Dr Pitamber P. Dhyani, on behalf of the Indian delegation, congratulated the participants and ICIMOD for the successful meeting. Dr Dhyani, Director of GBPIHED (the focal institute for BSLCDI in India), reiterated their commitment to the initiative and assured that the Indian partners will work on the required documents in a timely manner following a thorough consultative process. He expressed his satisfaction over the discussion on BSL-RCF documents and thanked the Myanmar Forest Department colleagues for their hospitality and goodwill.

Dr Dong Qi, from the Chinese Academy of Sciences, Beijing gave the closing remarks on behalf of the Chinese delegation. He thanked ICIMOD for providing the opportunity to learn from each other and collectively discuss the regional cooperation framework. He expressed his sincere thanks to the organizers -- ICIMOD and the Forest Department, Ministry of Environmental Conservation and Forestry, Myanmar for organizing the meeting in such a timely and efficient manner. Dr Qi said that China partners look forward to working with the Myanmar and India country partners and strengthening collaboration for BSLCDI.

U Zaw Win-4, Deputy Director General at the Forest Department, delivered the closing address on behalf of the Ministry of Environmental Conservation and Forestry, Myanmar. He thanked all the participants for their deliberations and inputs. He said that the meeting was another milestone for BSLCDI, and that the development of the Regional Cooperation Framework has further strengthened the cooperation among the three BSL member countries. He reiterated that the BSLCDI's ultimate objective is to ensure the sustainability of ecosystems and promote equitable livelihoods, and expressed his hope that the agreement reached on the RCF document will help facilitate joint actions by countries and eventually achieve the goal envisaged for the landscape. He concluded his remarks by thanking the Government of China and the Government of India for their long-term partnerships and cooperation beyond the BSLCDI. He also expressed appreciation for the efforts of his colleagues from the Forest Department in making the meeting successful, and thanked ICIMOD for organizing the meeting in Nay Pyi Taw with the MOECF.

U Win Naing Thaw delivered a vote of thanks, acknowledging support from all. He thanked the participants from India and China for coming all the way to Nay Pyi Taw for the regional meeting, and expressed his regrets that some of the participants from India and China could not make it to the meeting. He thanked his colleagues from NWCD for their time and effort in successfully organizing the meeting. On behalf of all the participants, he thanked His Excellency, U Win Tun, the Union Minister, MOECF for gracing the opening session and for his encouraging remarks. The presence of Deputy Director General -Forest Department at the closing session was also acknowledged. He also extended his appreciation to the staff at the Mount Pleasant Hotel, National Landmark Museum, Zoological Garden and Safari Park. At the end, he thanked ICIMOD for organizing yet another successful joint venture.



Annex 1: List of Participants

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Annex 2: Detailed Programme

Day 1: Thursday, 26 June 2014

08:00–09:00	Registration	ICIMOD+Forest Department (FD)
OPENING SESSION:		
16:30–18:30	Welcome Remarks	U Win Tun, Union Minister, MOECA
9:10-9:20	Remarks by ICIMOD	Dr Eklabya Sharma, Director Programme Operations
9:20-9:30	Remarks by China	Dr Dong Qi, Director, CAS
9:30-9:40	Remarks by India	Dr Pitamber P. Dhyani, Director, GBPIHED
9:40 -10:00	Photo session and refreshments	
10:00 - 10:30	Press Meet	
TECHNICAL SESSION I: Background and rationale for developing 'BSLRegional Cooperation Framework'		
10:45-11:15	Presentation: Meeting structure and objectives	U Win Naing Thaw, Director-NWCD, FD
11:15- 11:45	Presentation: Overview of Regional Programme on Transboundary Landscapes including Regional Cooperation Framework building process from KSLCDI	Dr Eklabya Sharma, ICIMOD
11:45- 12:15	Presentation and Plenary Discussion: The Brahmaputra-Salween Landscape:	
12:15- 12:30	Video Documentary from GNNR, NNP, and HNP) to give the glimpse of actual landscape elements of BSL	
12:30-12:45	Presentation and Discussion: Sharing of proposed ITEM Framework	Dr Wu Ning, ICIMOD
12:45-13:00	Presentation and Discussion: Sharing of proposed EM Framework	Dr Gopal Rawat, ICIMOD
13:00-14:00	Lunch	
14:00-17:00	Safari ride and visit to National Landmark Museum	Facilitated by FD-Myanmar
18:00-20:00	Reception Dinner	

Day 2: Friday, 27 June 2014

TECHNICAL SESSION II: Discussion on 'BSL-Regional Cooperation Framework DRAFT document'		
9:00-10:10	Section: Preamble and Purpose, RCF process: Country-wise comments Chair/Facilitation: Mr A. K. Wahal, India	
10:10-11:20	Section: Principles, Work Boundary, BSLCDI objectives: Country-wise comments (Chair/Facilitation: Dr Wu Ning on behalf of China)	
11:20- 12:30	Section: BSL Programme Development Process Framework: Country-wise comments (Chair/Facilitation: U Win Naing Thaw, Myanmar)	
12:30- 13:00	Summary remarks and finalization of Outline of the content of the 'RCF document'	Dr Eklabya Sharma, ICIMOD
13:00- 14:00	Lunch	
14:00-15:00	Discussion: Regional Institutional Coordination Mechanism	Facilitation by Gopal S. Rawat, ICIMOD
15:00–15:30	Tea Break	

15:30–16:00	Presentation and Discussion: Impact pathway and partnership building for BSLCDI	Facilitation by Dhrupad Choudhury, ICIMOD
CONCLUDING SESSION		
16: 00–17:00	Way Forward	Eklabya Sharma, ICIMOD
	Remarks	Dr P. P. Dhyani, India
	Remarks	Dr Dong Qi, China
	Closing Remarks-Host county	U Zaw Win-4, Deputy Director General-Forest Department, MOECAAF
	Vote of thanks	U Win Naing Thaw, Myanmar
17: 00- 20:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visit to the Pagoda Dinner 	Facilitated by FD

Annex 3: Press brief note

China, India, and Myanmar adopt framework for regional cooperation to enhance conservation and development in the Brahmaputra-Salween landscape

Venue: Mount Pleasant Hotel, Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar

26-27 June 2014

Addressing environmental and development issues in a balanced way is a matter of common concern for all countries. Transboundary conservation and development initiatives across the globe look for solutions through building alliances and scientific collaboration beyond borders. ICIMOD and its member countries have identified seven transboundary landscapes across the Hindu Kush Himalayan region for regional cooperation to tackle environmental and development issues in a variety of ecosystems and cultures. The Brahmaputra-Salween Landscape is shared by China, India and Myanmar, and comprises parts of western Yunnan, north-east India and northern Myanmar.

The Brahmaputra-Salween Landscape is one of the richest landscapes in the Hindu Kush Himalayan region- both biologically and culturally. It has been recognized as a “centre” of plant diversity and endemism, and is located at the meeting point of three global biodiversity hotspots - the Himalayas, the Indo-Burma, and the Mountains of Southwest China. This landscape is interconnected through a network of eight protected areas including Namdapha National Park and Tiger Reserve in India, Hkakaborazi National Park in Myanmar and Gaoligangshan National Nature Reserve in China. These form the upper catchments of the Brahmaputra, Irrawadi and Salween rivers that are the lifelines of millions of people in the respective three countries.

Some of the conservation and development challenges relate to land use changes such as agricultural expansion, degradation of watersheds, etc. There are issues of poor institutional mechanisms for natural resource governance and paucity of financial and human resources, especially in some parts of Myanmar and India; and the opportunities for transboundary collaboration are yet to be capitalized on. Brahmaputra-Salween Landscape Conservation and Development Initiative (BSLCDI) is designed to enhance cooperation among the three countries to effectively address conservation and development challenges.

The initiative was conceptualized in 2008 at the International Mountain Biodiversity Conference, and developed over three regional consultations in Yunnan, China (2009) and Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar (2011) and Kaziranga, Assam, India (January 2014).

As a preparatory step towards realizing this transboundary landscape initiative, each member country has conducted a Feasibility Assessment. Based on the national reports, a regional feasibility report has been prepared. These documents reflect ample opportunities for cooperation among the governments and conservation agencies in the Brahmaputra-Salween Landscape to implement the decisions of the Convention on Biological Diversity; to enhance conservation, address poverty through sustainable use of resources; and to strengthen policy and institutions for which all the agencies involved in the programme will need a guiding instrument, i.e., Regional Cooperation Framework, endorsed by all the three governments.

This regional meeting is significant in terms of the development of the ‘Regional Cooperation Framework’ by the three countries. The Framework will act as a guiding document to strengthen collaboration among the three countries towards achieving the goals of the Initiative, and will add value to the individual country level efforts for enhancing ecological and livelihoods co-benefits.

This two-day regional strategic meeting is organized by the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) and the Forest Department, Ministry of Environmental Conservation and Forestry (MOECF), Government of the Union of Republic of Myanmar. The meeting invites participants from the Chinese Academy of Sciences, Government of India, and officials from the Government of Myanmar who will finalize the Regional Cooperation Framework document, and process it for endorsement by each country. The goal of the meeting is to affirm the collaboration between the three countries to jointly implement Brahmaputra-Salween Landscape Conservation and Development Initiative.

For further information

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Towards Developing the Brahmaputra-Salween Landscape Conservation and Development Initiative

Report on the Regional Strategic Meeting for Developing Regional Cooperation Framework





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