

Promoting Innovative Livelihoods (Ecotourism and Value Chains) for Sustainable Landscape Management



Regional Training of Trainers



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.



Landscape Initiative for Far Eastern Himalayas (HI-LIFE)

The Landscape Initiative for Far Eastern Himalayas (HI-LIFE) is a collaborative effort of ICIMOD and the Governments of China, India, and Myanmar. The aim is to engage local, national, and regional stakeholders in efforts toward improved management of this globally significant, biodiversity rich landscape. The Initiative will develop a framework for cooperation and common understanding on transboundary landscape issues which will provide a basis for an integrated and participatory approach for conservation, adaptation, and sustainable development, within the context of global climate change. The process will be based upon the development of an improved regional knowledge base, information and experience sharing, capacity building, and promotion of stakeholder consultation and community participation.

The Initiative was preceded by an extensive consultation process, including two regional consultations in 2009 and 2011 and preliminary surveys in each country, which has helped in the identification of priority activities, including the restoration of highly degraded forest ecosystems and enhanced conservation awareness among local communities.

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Regional Training of Trainers

Promoting Innovative Livelihoods (Ecotourism and Value Chains) for Sustainable Landscape Management 18–25 September 2016

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The event was made successful by participants from all three member countries actively engaging with the programme, sharing experiences and learning from each other. Resource persons facilitating multiple thematic and practical sessions – Renzino Lepcha (Sikkim, India), Rajib Kumar Kalita (Rain Forest Research Institute, RFRI, Jorhat, India), Siddhartha Bajra Bajracharya (National Trust for Nature Conservation, NTNC, Nepal), Nripal Adhikari (Adobe and Bamboo Research Institute, ABARI, Nepal), Bipin Maharjan and Raj Gyawali (Social Tours, Nepal).

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

ACAP	Annapurna Conservation Area Project
ACA	Annapurna Conservation Area
FD	Forest Department
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
GAD	General Administration Department
GBPNIHESD	GB Pant National Institute of Himalayan Environment and Sustainable Development
HI-LIFE	Landscape Initiative for Far Eastern Himalaya
HKH	Hindu Kush Himalaya
ICIMOD	International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development
KIB	Kunming Institute of Botany
LTESM	Long-Term Environmental and Socio-Ecological Monitoring
MoEFCC	Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change
MOHT	Ministry of Hotels and Tourism
MONREC	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment Conservation
NGO	Non-Government Organization
NTR	Namdapha Tiger Reserve
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
RFRI	Rain Forest Research Institute
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SEACoW	Society of Environmental Awareness and Conservation of Wildlife
SWFU	Southwest Forestry University
SWOT	Strengths, Weakness, Opportunity, Threats
Sq km	Square kilometre
TOs	Tourism Operators
TOT	Training Of Trainers
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
VCs	Value Chains
WCS	Wildlife Conservation Society
WCMC	World Conservation Monitoring Centre
YIES	Yunnan Institute of Environmental Science



1 Introduction

The International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) is a regional intergovernmental learning and knowledge sharing centre. It serves eight regional member countries – Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Myanmar, Nepal and Pakistan – in the Hindu Kush Himalaya. ICIMOD helps mountain people understand changes and processes of change, adapt to change, and tap into opportunities while addressing upstream-downstream issues. The organization facilitates exchanges of experience, and is a regional knowledge hub for transboundary programmes implemented through partnerships with respective local institutions. Through one of its current regional programmes on transboundary landscapes, ICIMOD and its partners have identified six landscapes – Hindu Kush Karakoram-Pamir, Kailash, Everest, Kangchenjunga, Far-Eastern Himalayan, and Cherrapunjee-Chittagong, from west to east – for programmatic cooperation for transboundary conservation and development (Figure 1). The objective is to promote regional cooperation among the countries that share a given landscape for effective conservation and livelihood development through the promotion of ecological integrity, economic development, and socio-economic resilience to environmental changes.

The Landscape Initiative in the Far Eastern Himalayas (HI-LIFE) is a transboundary conservation and development initiative implemented in the Far Eastern Himalayan Landscape (FHL) that spans 71,452 sq km, across parts of Northern Myanmar (Namyun in the Sagaing Region, and Tanai, Sumprabum, Putao, Machanbaw, Nawngmun and Khaunglanphu in Kachin District); the Namdapha Tiger Reserve (NTR), including the Namdapha National Park (NNP) and adjoining buffer areas in Changlang District in India; and three Gaoligongshan National Nature Reserve segments, together with the intervening areas between them in Northwest Yunnan, China (Figure 2).

Figure 1: Transboundary landscape regional programmes

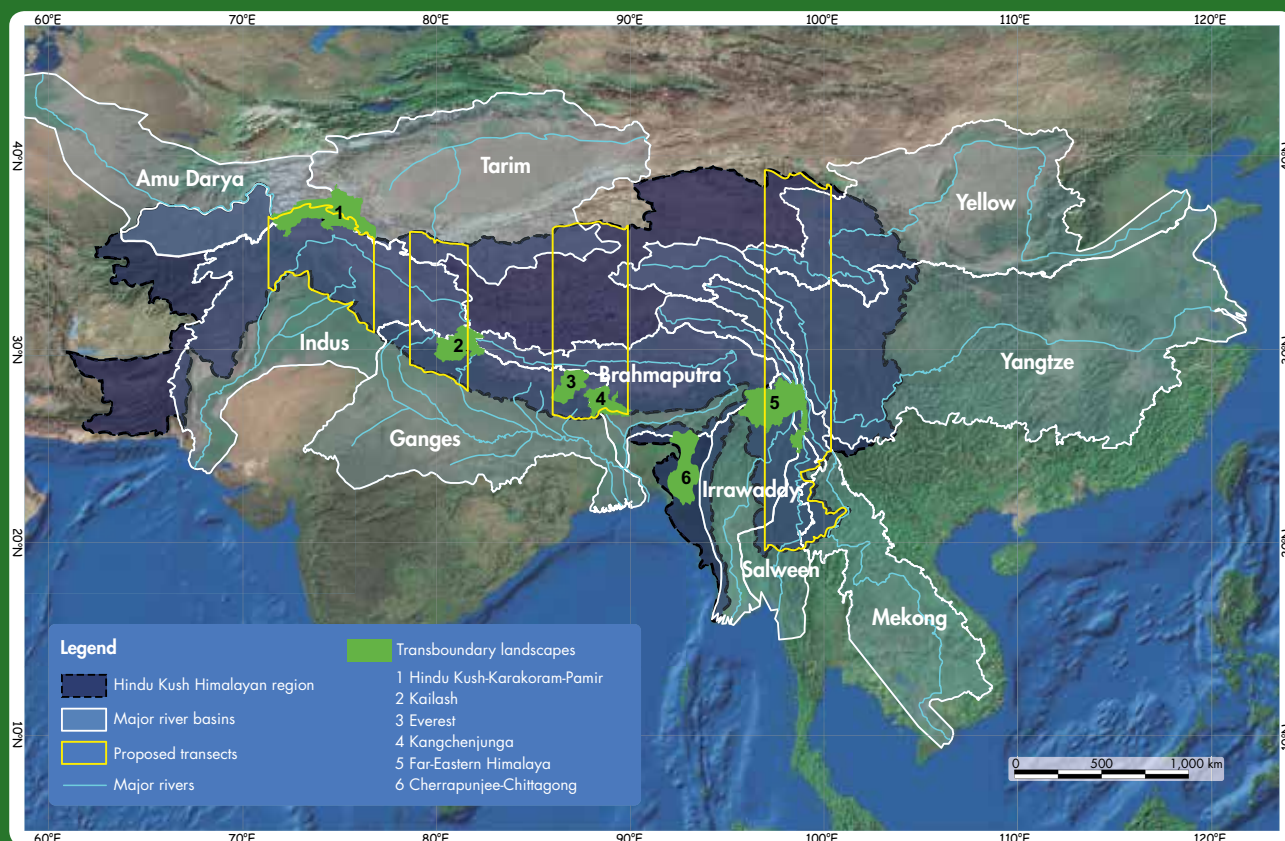
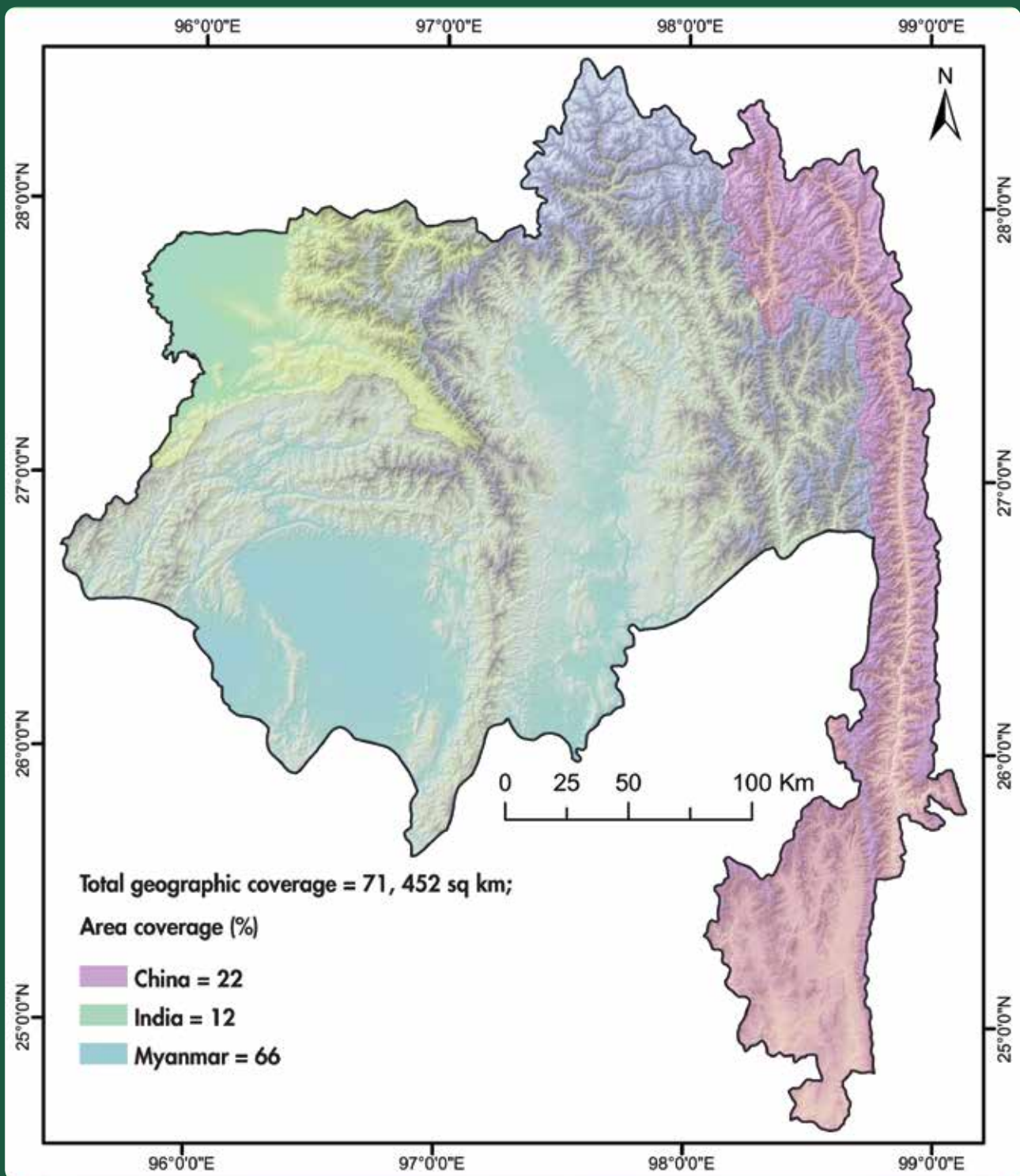


Figure 2: **Geographic mandate of HI-LIFE**



India (12%):
Namdapha National Park and Tiger Reserve, and some adjoining areas

Myanmar (66%):
Seven townships in Kachin State and Sagaing Region; five protected areas

China (22%):
Gaoligongshan range — North West Yunnan, three segments of GNNR and intermittent areas

The landscape, one of the most biodiversity rich in the region, is regarded as the “Centre of Plant Diversity”, “Eastern Asiatic Regional Centre for Endemism” and the converging ground for three global biodiversity hotspots: the Hindu Kush Himalaya, the Indo-Burma and the Mountains of Southwest China. Half of the landscape is under formal protection, supported by contiguous protected areas. The landscape includes one of the last remaining tracts of intact natural forest ecosystems in Southeast Asia large enough to maintain rich biodiversity. It is home to a number of ethnic communities and tribes who add to the region’s cultural and traditional diversity.

HI-LIFE focuses on strengthening regional cooperation between China, India and Myanmar for integrated landscape management. The partners have developed shared understanding of the landscape through a series of iterative consultative processes, affirmed their collaboration through a HI-LIFE Regional Cooperation Framework, and collectively developed conservation and development strategies. The management of biodiversity is a prime objective, and there is the realization that community involvement is key to the management of resources. Strengthening livelihoods, which are mostly natural resources dependent, is very important.

The need for a regional TOT was recognized over the course of multiple interactions between ICIMOD and HI-LIFE partners in all three countries, where linkages between ecosystems services and livelihood opportunities were discussed and potential livelihood options were mapped. Recommendations were validated through a Landscape Journey exercise in respective pilot sites in China, India and Myanmar. In all three sites, options for promoting innovative livelihoods through eco-tourism and other NTFPs based value chain development efforts were highlighted, and the need for capacity strengthening mentioned. The idea was to optimize the use of the landscape’s rich natural and socio-cultural assets, rich agrobiodiversity (indigenous plant, livestock, bees) and non-timber natural resources (bamboos, medicinal herbs etc.). The Landscape Journey also revealed that all three countries have national plans to support such conservation linked economic development. The need for practical skills related to operating eco-tourism and other high-value enterprises using value chain approaches, and adapting relevant land water management technologies among institutions and communities in the pilot areas was recognized. This set the stage for the Regional Training of Trainers (TOT) on innovative livelihoods.

2 Scope and Design of Regional TOT

A six-day regional training of trainers (TOT) titled ‘Promoting innovative livelihoods (ecotourism and value chains) for sustainable landscape management’ was organized through HI-LIFE.

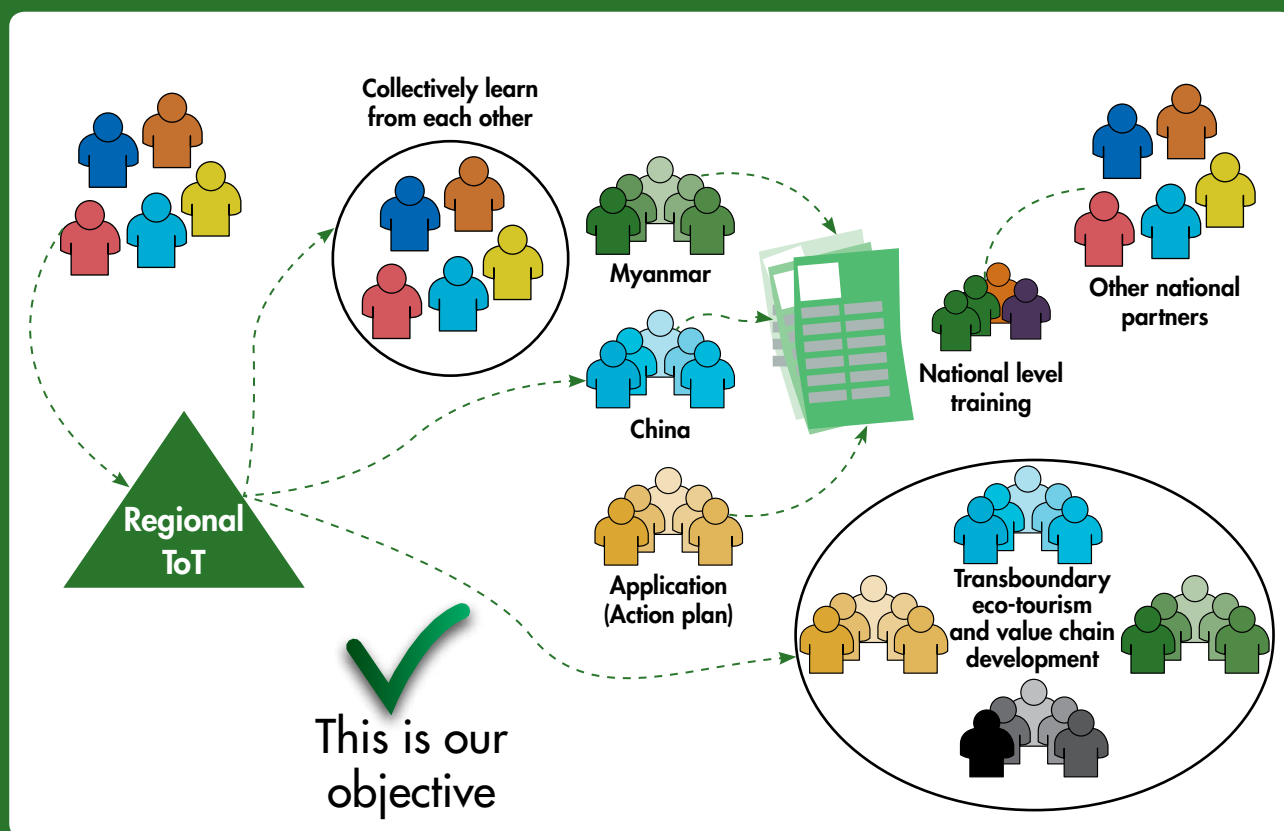
The TOT was meant for key implementing partners in China, India and Myanmar, and was designed to address capacity needs for innovative livelihoods to support both the conservation of rich biodiversity and the economic development of local communities, as was highlighted during the stakeholders’ consultation in the three countries.

The TOT design used the principle of adult learning and participatory approach. A combination of theoretical sessions and field experiences promoting practical observation and demonstration were included. Each session had scope for discussion, peer-learning and reflection. Several participatory tools and creative games were used to increase flow of information, analytic reflection and communication among participants. The TOT offered participants opportunities to trek along mountain landscapes, experience tourism infrastructure in remote villages and cultural sites, and understand the concepts of homestay and community-based ecotourism in protected areas.

The TOT aimed at:

- Enhancing participants’ understanding of concepts and practices related to value chain- and ecotourism- based enterprise development as effective tools for innovative livelihoods.
- Strengthening capacity of HI-LIFE partners for using relevant tools, processes, and resources to develop an effective and integrated training programme at the national level.
- Supporting countries to design national-level trainings as part of country-wise action plan development.
- Setting the context for implementing regional (transboundary) ecotourism and value chain development in the Far-eastern Himalayan Landscape through HI-LIFE.

Figure 3: Overall objective of TOT



The overall objective of the TOT is schematically represented in the diagram below:

The identification and adaptation of relevant technologies is essential to operating eco-tourism, and high value enterprises using value chain approaches. Key HI-LIFE pilot site implementers from China, India, and Myanmar were called upon to participate in the six-day regional TOT for this reason. The Annapurna Conservation Area (ACA) was chosen for the experience it could lend to the sensory modalities of the training.

The sharing of thoughts, ideas and learnings, and facilitation by resource persons and specialists gave participants useful insight and information to inform future endeavours. Using participatory tools, games, exercises, and reflection, participants' knowledge was enhanced over the course of several interaction, observation and questioning sessions. The trainers and resource persons were responsible for conducting national level training as immediate action so that other national partners would be aware of and well-informed at the local level. After various rounds of activities, participants collectively drew country-specific action plans, the way forward, and a potential regional ecotourism wheel for effective implementation of the innovative livelihoods intervention. A regional plan of action for future intervention for transboundary ecotourism and value chain development would be helpful.

The participants' handbook was used as an instructional guide for improving task performance. Different tools were used for the purpose, from 'catch the ball' introductions and icebreakers to daily reflections, further thinking, pre and post TOT assessments, a yak value chain picture series, dos and don'ts for the tourism value chain, the HI-LIFE Regional Ecotourism Wheel, the 10 as of ecotourism, and action plan development.

3 Opening Session

Golam Rasul, theme leader, livelihoods, at ICIMOD welcomed participants and briefed them on ICIMOD's regional programmes. He highlighted the organization's relevance to the mountain context, particularly in the Hindu Kush Himalaya. He talked about challenges such as food insecurity, poverty, malnutrition, and climate change, and identified opportunities such as ecotourism and non-consumptive resources in mountain communities. He stressed on harnessing resources to improve people's lives and livelihoods. He wished the TOT success and remarked upon its timeliness, urging participants to strengthen collaboration and knowledge for future livelihood and conservation interventions in the landscape.

Yi Shaoliang, programme coordinator, HI-LIFE, at ICIMOD introduced the regional programme on transboundary landscapes. He spoke of the importance of the HKH in providing ecosystem services to people both within the region and in downstream river basins. He highlighted the need for regional cooperation for biodiversity conservation, and for the sustenance of various ecosystem services benefitting people. He talked about the importance of research and long-term monitoring in filling data gaps in the region for regional knowledge development. He emphasized on the efforts made by ICIMOD in terms of generating relevant knowledge to influence policy and practice for improved mountain ecosystems. He informed the participants about the Regional Framework for Integrated Ecosystem Management and Operational Guidelines, and Long-Term Environmental and Socio-Ecological Monitoring (LTESM) in Transboundary Landscapes. Yi touched upon the importance of ICIMOD's work on mountain specific value chains, and principles of transboundary cooperation such as equity, transparency, mutual benefit and flexibility.

Bandana Shakya, associate programme coordinator, HI-LIFE, talked about the initiative, and provided an outline of its strategic development. She highlighted the ecological and socio-cultural significance of the landscape, and talked about the shared understanding that exists among partners in the three countries regarding the landscape. Pointing towards the need for capacity strengthening, and regional efforts to empower local communities to take stewardship in conserving biodiversity for livelihood co-benefits, she explained the purpose of the TOT, and its broader objectives. She linked the TOT with the long term goal of the initiative, and to specific way forward actions taken up by partners as indicated in the HI-LIFE regional implementation action plan. She urged the participants to use the TOT as a platform to share country specific contexts with each other, develop action plans, and discuss potential for the development of a transboundary ecotourism value chain.

Ghulam Ali, innovative livelihood specialist at ICIMOD, presented the specific objectives and structure of the TOT, and explained detailed plans for the TOT. He indicated that the theoretical sessions would provide the bases on which subsequent field visits and exposure trips would rest. He explained the use of the participant's handbook, and urged participants to be observant and inquisitive, and to discuss and ask questions as much as possible. Brief remarks from representatives from China, India, and Myanmar were then sought. On behalf of China, Wen Sihong, director of the Tourism Development Committee, Baoshan City, remarked that the theme of the TOT was interesting and helpful as it dealt with the important issue of alignment of livelihoods with biodiversity conservation and economic development. She said this would help strengthen actions for sustainable tourism development in areas in HI-LIFE China. She also briefed participants on China's five-year plan, "Poverty alleviation through ecotourism". Sihong said that team China hoped to get practical experiences, and learn effective methodologies for ecotourism from the TOT. On behalf of India, GN Sinha, principal chief conservator of forests (wildlife) and chief wildlife warden, Department of Environment and Forests, Arunachal Pradesh, commended ICIMOD's efforts in facilitating various levels of interactions and consultations in HI-LIFE India using the landscape journey tool. He appreciated the idea behind the regional TOT, and its role in integrating practical field based experience with thematic learning. Stressing on the need for regional cooperation between countries for achieving conservation and development in the HI-LIFE landscape, he said he hoped to learn from participants from other countries and explore how countries can enable regional partnerships for transboundary tourism. Representing Myanmar, Myint Myint Oo, technical coordinator, community and natural resource management at Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) said that the TOT would provide a relevant platform for learning, and sharing best practices and experiences related to landscape management. She said the TOT would help explore how innovative livelihoods can help communities living in and around protected areas, and ways in which they might be meaningfully engaged in conservation

activities and resource management. She indicated that the Myanmar team would take the learnings positively, and collectively strengthen the capacities of other national partners in HI-LIFE pilot areas, and help relevant institutions support the development of community livelihoods in HI-LIFE Myanmar.

4 Thematic Presentations

Thematic presentations covered topics related to conservation and development, and pointed out how the two are inevitable, and inalienable from each other. The importance of striking a balance between conservation and development, and finding linkages was emphasized on. Presentations on economic aspects, especially innovative livelihoods, touched upon the significance of integrated landscape management to sustain environmental resources and ecosystem services. Brief summaries of presentations by various resource persons are given below:

4.1 Sustainable Land and Water Management for Sustainable Value Chains

In his presentation, Sanjeev Bhuchar, senior watershed management specialist – Water and Air at ICIMOD, talked about the importance of integrated land and water management for the sustainable tourism value chain, and innovative livelihoods. Through interactive and participatory means, he demonstrated the usefulness of good land and water management options and practices. He said, “All systems in our landscape are interconnected,” iterating the interdependence of systems, and underlining the linkage between ecosystems and livelihoods. Bhuchar indicated the hidden environmental risks attributable to increase in tourism. He said that value chain actors need to comprehend potential environmental risks and design appropriate measures to control or manage them. He added that workloads for women and girls can be reduced using integrated sustainable water, soil, and energy options. He also discussed different enabling efforts at the national, intermediate, community, and household levels for achieving sustainable land and water management. The session concluded that integrating economic, ecological and social aims is very important for achieving sustainability of value chains and innovative livelihoods. The presentation showcased several low cost soil and water management technologies that communities can use to improve productivity of the land, and ecosystems.

4.2 Value Chain Development/Approach (VCD)

Tashi Dorji, senior livelihood specialist – Conservation and Development at ICIMOD presented the concept of value chains (VCs) using picture series tools. Tashi highlighted the importance of the value approach, particularly in the mountain context where accessibility, scale, and market become major challenges. He said, “Despite being surrounded by rich natural resources – beautiful nature, rich bio-resources, and niche natural mountain products – mountain people have not been able to fully their benefits.” Using the yak value chain picture series, Tashi explained that the VC approach allows understanding opportunities and challenges at various nodes of the VC. The yak VC, for example, follows a sequence – from fodder production, community mobilization, milk collection, transportation, value addition, branding, and market linkages. He stressed that across these nodes, there is the need to identify various actors and facilitators, and link each step to entrepreneurship development. He noted that the approach emphasizes on giving due importance to the sustainable management of a given resource base while deriving its economic benefits.

4.3 Enterprise Development

Ghulam Ali, innovative livelihoods specialist at ICIMOD, explained the various stages in the life cycle of enterprise, and the roles and characteristics of entrepreneurship in terms of establish and running enterprises profitably. He highlighted the importance of soft skills, and the risk taking abilities of entrepreneurs with respective to mountain livelihoods and value chains. He emphasized the importance and need of an entrepreneurial culture in adopting best practices, and nurturing micro and small enterprises.

4.4 Protected Areas and Community Involvement

Siddhartha Bajra Bajracharya, programme director – Mountain Environment, National Trust for Nature Conservation, Nepal, presented the success story of the Annapurna Conservation Area (ACA) Project. He shared information on how rich biodiversity, rich cultural heritage, and traditional settlements within ACA have been tapped for livelihood co-benefits for local communities through sound management plans. ACA’s integrated planning

approach, coordinated by NTC using a participatory approach with local communities and other stakeholders, has so far ensured optimal conservation of forest resources, enhancement of livelihood options, and development of local institutions.

4.5 Basic Concepts of Ecotourism

Renzino Lepcha, facilitator at Khamba Lee, Upper Sichey Busty, Gangtok, Sikkim, India, presented the basic concepts of and inter-linkages between ecotourism, services, attractions, and enabling environment. He explained the interconnected web of elements of attraction (nature and culture), services (accommodation, transport, tourist facilities and services, institutions, and organizations), and enabling environment (physical infrastructure, communication, policy, and quality of institutions). He explained the important and potential roles to be played by planners, various departments, development facilitators, and other stakeholders in promoting international and domestic tourists. He said, “Any tourism programme that is nature based and ecologically sustainable, has education and interpretation as major components, and is beneficial to local people is ecotourism.” Representing Bhutan with the motto “Low volume, high value tourist”, he suggested that the country’s ‘take only pictures, leaving footprints’ could be some a hallmark of ecotourism. The observation and appreciation of nature, differences between nature tourists and eco-tourists, the importance of education and interpretation, local NGO operators, minimal negative impacts on local people, culture, and support for the protection of natural areas were some of the key topics he discussed. Direct and indirect impacts of the ecotourism industry were also discussed. The presentation highlighted inter-linkages in the ecotourism sector. He emphasized on the range of stakeholders involved in this key enterprise, and why their participation and involvement was necessary for efficient ecotourism development.

4.6 Bamboo for Livelihood Generation for the People of North East India

Rajib Kr Kalita, scientist/head, Rain Forest Research Institute (RFRI), Assam, India, highlighted the significance of bamboo as a resource in terms of ecological, economic, food, and livelihood security. He said bamboo can be used for shelter belts and soil stabilization. The status of bamboo in India, bamboo diversity, bamboo applications showing varieties of crafts, agricultural and fishing implements, and traditional musical instruments were represented pictographically.

4.7 Essentials of Responsible Tourism

Bipin Maharjan, managing officer, Social Tours, introduced the essentials of Responsible Tourism. The briefing included a list of dos and don’ts – some of which are discussed below – that can be easily adapted for all tourism destinations.

Environment: Support conservation by not buying wildlife products. Shower and wash minimally to prevent freshwater pollution. Unwrap soaps and take bottles out of boxes before leaving home to lower pressure on waste disposal. Take environmentally friendly detergents and shampoos for minimal impact on nature. Bury your waste making sure it’s at least 30 m away from water sources. Never feed or touch wildlife to prevent poisoning or accidents.

Social: Learn basics of the local language to ensure easy communication and good rapport building. Take permission before taking photographs. Get advice from your guide on people begging, and decide responsibly. Don’t show off your valuables as that might lead to robbery.

Economic: Support the local economy by buying locally made crafts and local products. Always try local foods and cuisines to boost local farmers.

5 Country Presentations

Country presentations discussed specific contexts, knowledge and developments in China, India and Myanmar, with regard to natural resources management and livelihoods development. Key issues, challenges and prospects related to ecotourism development, and other resource based value chain development were highlighted. Brief summaries of the country presentations, as shared by representatives of the three countries, are given below:

5.1 Ecotourism Policy in China, and its Practice in Yunnan Province

Yang Shuo, ecological conservationist, Yunnan Institute of Environmental Sciences (YIES), talked about the Chinese government's three stages of ecotourism development – from 2004 till date. The first stage included ecological and environmental supervision, the second planning, and the third the stipulation of technical protocols and standards. She said that China is actively involved in ecotourism development in the Gaoligongshan mountain area, pilot site of HI-LIFE. She iterated the need for holistic and careful planning before infrastructural construction, and the opening up of landscapes to mass tourism.

5.2 A Case from HI-LIFE India

KS Kanwal, scientist, GB Pant National Institute of Himalayan Environment and Sustainable Development, India, highlighted the significance of the Namdapha National Park to HI-LIFE India. He indicated that forest and nature, agriculture-horticulture and livestock/animal husbandry are prioritized as sources of livelihood in the pilot sites. Tapping the area's rich biodiversity, and cultural and traditional heritage, eco-tourism has also been identified as a potential income intervention. He noted that the TOT had come at the right moment, and would provide a good learning platform for him and his colleagues from HI-LIFE India.

5.3 A case from HI-LIFE Myanmar

SB Chetry, manager, Putao Trekking House, shared details regarding tourism trails that connect eight villages (for trekking) in the HI-LIFE Myanmar pilot site. He presented a SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats) of the tourism in the landscape. While the area's unique and beautiful topography is considered its strength, weaknesses include seasonality, lack of trained human resources and poor accessibility. Ecotourism could be an alternative livelihood opportunity through homestays, guides, value chains and handicrafts. However, limited carrying capacity could be a threat.

6 Practical Session and Field Learning

The session highlighted the principle of “seeing is believing”. Participants were given first hand experiences and opportunities to see and explore various aspects of community based ecotourism. They were given a feel of opportunities and challenges related to promoting sustainable livelihoods, particularly in the mountain landscape. There were opportunities to debate conservation and sustainability, and the role of communities in the conservation of landscapes, and sustainable tourism. Participants were introduced to community based ecotourism implemented along the Annapurna Conservation Area in Nepal. Participants discussed and mapped various community enterprises, and their involvement in value chain and livelihood options and benefits. Participants also reflected on the potential of cultural tourism, adventure tourism, and the positive and negative impacts of tourism on communities. They explored roles of government – access, infrastructure, communication, and other stakeholders, as well as the role of communities in branding and marketing tourism.

6.1 Community Based Tourism

The triple bottom line – including environmental, economic and social dimensions – is the main concern for a sustainable ecotourism framework. The framework includes a destination that is unpolluted, has areas rich in floral and faunal biodiversity, offers opportunities for adventure sport, and offers possibilities for conserving environment and heritage. A small number of high spending tourists can support and complement a local economy, and the visits can be learning experiences for the tourists. The different elements, the 11 As of ecotourism were highlighted: Assets/attractions, attractions accessibilities, accommodations, amenities, abilities, activities, affinities, actors, acts, and administrations. The 11 As are being implemented on the ground (Ghalegaun, Bhujung and Bandipur).

Participants' reflections on the 11 As of Ecotourism, based on field visits to Ghalegaun, Bhujung and Bandipur:

11 As of ecotourism	Ghalegaun	Bhujung	Bandipur
Assets/Attractions	Entrance fees from visitors (NPR 400 for SAARC nationals, NPR 4,000 for other nationals); Gravelled roads; Bolero Camper vehicles	Entrance fees from visitors (NPR 200 for SAARC, NPR 2,000 for other nationals)	Pollution free area
Attractions	Cultural (traditional customs, lifestyle, age-old cultural dances of the Gurung people); Natural (conservation area, mountain environment, Mount Manaslu, Lamjung Himal, Bouddha Himal, Mount Annapurna, Mount Machhapuchhre, wild honey-hunting); Man-made (picturesque hamlet of Ghale and Gurung styled houses, friendly people, local Gurung museum set by villagers)	Cultural (traditional lifestyle, Bhujung tribe, cultural dance, annual festival, gumbas, heritage conservation); Natural (Kaiyo water fall, Lamjung Himal); Man-made (mountain agriculture, largest Gurung settlement in Nepal, botanical garden, friendly and hospitable people)	Cultural (Newari cultural heritage, historical architecture and monuments); Natural (beautiful environment, Marshyangdi river valley, Mount Dhaulagiri, Mount Annapurna, Mount Manaslu, Ganesh Himal, Siddha Cave), Man-made (quiet ambience, tourism facilities and attractions, goat research centre)
Accessibilities	Travel agent (social tours), six trekking routes through Ghalegaun	No road access; small footpaths inside village	No vehicles allowed to enter town
Accommodations	28 local homestays; local food prepared by local household residents; maximum amount of local resources used; good, acceptable facilities (clean toilets, bathrooms and solar lights)	60 local homestays – traditional Gurung houses offering local food and facilities	Old Newari houses turned into inns with modern facilities while retaining their Newari heritage. Good food and drinks for the discerning palettes of travellers
Amenities	Free WiFi; cleanliness programmes by District Development Committee (DDC); warm hospitality and welcome by tourism management committee; basic shops and local restaurants and bars	Bhujung micro-hydro; sub health post; rope way; telephone and post office services; veterinary service centre; affectionate hospitality	Public library; free WiFi; restaurants and bars; souvenir shops; handicrafts and local products; guide services
Abilities	Cookery, souvenirs, local tea production, guides, handicraft, restaurants and hotels; guide and transport services; carving and carpentry skills	Souvenirs; sheep rug production; local cooking and hospitality skills; bamboo weaving; carving and carpentry skills; wild honey bee hunting; wildlife viewing skills	Sericulture, souvenirs, handicraft, restaurants and hotels; guide and transport services; wildlife viewing skills
Activities	Ecotrekking; bird watching; nature photography; wildlife viewing	Hiking; nature photography; bird watching; wildlife viewing; wild honey hunting	Ecotrekking; strolling by hilltops and peaks; heritage photography
Affinities	Blessings by villagers; level of ownership is high; maintaining the cleanliness of the village; equitable sharing of benefits among the local community	Love and affection for national and international visitors; local people speaking in Gurung dialect; local architecture reflecting pride and ownership of the area; people with a close affinity to their surroundings and way of life	Maintaining the traditional Newari attributes of the architecture and ambience of the site; traditional Newari houses beautifully integrated with tourism demands and facilities
Actors	National Trust for Nature Conservation (NTNC); Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP); Tourism Development Committee; Creative Hands (NGO); native people and ecotourists; Village Development Committee (VDC)	National Trust for Nature Conservation (NTNC); Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP); youth club; mothers' group for waste management	Bandipur Eco Cultural Tourism Project; Tindhara Youth Cultural Group (social youth forum); Hoste-Haise Child Development Society
Acts	Local code of conduct for tourism management in the village; mothers' groups codes of conduct; Conservation Acts; local village norms	Local code of conduct for tourism management in the village; mothers' groups codes of conduct; Conservation Acts; local village norms	Local tourism code of conduct and management guidelines; cultural conservation norms and guidelines; safety and hospitality standards followed
Administrations	DDC; VDC; mothers' groups; Tourism Management Committee; Local Guides Association; forest users groups and conservation committees; transportation association	DDC; VDC; mothers' groups; Tourism Management Committee; Local Guides Association; forest user groups and conservation committees	DDC; VDC; Local Hotels and Restaurant Association; Tourism Management Committee; Local Guides Association

6.2 Homestays and Protected Areas

The visits to and stays in Bhujung Village and Ghalegaun respectively were undertaken for the experience of village tourism, and to see the involvement of communities in promoting it through activities such as managing homestays and other tourism amenities. The homestay experience organized to get participants to see how homestays link to various elements of ecotourism such as infrastructure, enabling environment, role of culture, role of community institutions, food and cuisine, accommodation, transportation, benefit sharing mechanisms, water, land, energy and waste management, and communications and interactions. Participants' observations and reflections on lesson learnt are given below:

Ghalegaun Homestay

- Thrilling experience.
- Located in a natural mountainous landscape against the backdrop of the majestic Annapurna range, Ghalegaun gave the local Gurung community the perfect opportunity to brand and set up their village as a "SAARC Model Village for Homestay".
- A well-planned and organized homestay strategy that uses traditions and culture as a business attraction for visitors.
- Household members who are well versed in the tourism business. An array of crafts and local products on sale: Souvenirs made of bamboo, and nettle fibre bags and scarfs.
- Smooth partnership among park management, local people and local institutions.
- Protected area governance where mother's groups have an active role in afforestation programmes.
- Government contributions to conservation of cultural services.
- Local people's need of understanding government regulations and following up on the Minimal Impact Code.
- Economic benefits and alternative livelihoods opportunities for the community along with conservation.
- Entrepreneurial attitude towards work.
- Levels of hygiene and sanitation in the local homestays have been maintained well and are acceptable to visitors.
- Organizational and institutional support for the tourism programme in the village is high. The local tourism management committee is doing an excellent job.
- Mother's groups play an important role in tourism management. This is well accepted by the local people.
- A rotation system for homestays to allow all homes to avail equal opportunities is in place and well managed by the tourism management committee.
- The pricing of the facilities and services is acceptable. Due to this, there is a large market for Nepali students from Kathmandu who visit this site.
- Local guides from the village are trained and used for the tourism services
- Local art and dance forms are promoted along with local cultural heritage – a local museum dedicated to this purpose is well established in the village.
- Local consumables products are used in the homestays for visitors, promoting local livelihoods and incomes.
- Local people have adequate skills and capacities to manage tourism activities effortlessly.



A family preparing dinner for the TOT participants staying at their homestay

Bhujung Experience

- Local product based value chain: sheep rugs, bamboo souvenirs, for example.
- Enterprise development.

- Displaying local culture and tradition for sustainable lifestyle and ecotourism.
- Successful community based tourism.
- Conservation of culture and heritage.
- Importance of development infrastructure for innovative livelihoods.
- Innovative methods for improving food security.
- Local capacity to serve visitors.
- There are tourism related activities for the visitors to be engaged in as tourists spend one day or more in the village.
- Local handcraft and weaving skills can be promoted so that souvenirs and local products are available for tourists to buy.
- The information available before entering the village is impressive and provides good information.
- Cleanliness and sanitation are good.
- Meals are basic, but very tasty and organic.



Local women weaving raw sheep wool cloth

Bandipur Experience

- Symbiotic relationship between ecotourism, and natural and manmade resource conservation.
- Using natural and man-made assets for ecotourism and maximizing economic benefits.
- Working jointly as a community to harness the full potential of tourism.
- The fortification of tangible and intangible services can be a driver of economic benefits.
- Enhancing local enterprise for cultural heritage tourism.
- Ways in which the political ecology (political, economic and social factors with environmental issues and change) can enhance the conservation and development of the area.
- The quiet serene site of Bandipur is maintained, and no loud pubs and bars were observed.
- The Newari style buildings and houses have been refabricated and integrated beautifully to meet the needs of the modern traveller.
- Tasty, modern continental food with professional services was observed.



Participants enjoying their stay in Bandipur

Journey to Tourism Destinations

The off-road mountain trail from Besisahar to Ghalegaun provided a breath of fresh air. Lush vegetation and gentle flowing streams dominate the landscape. Stunning views of Mount Annapurna, Mount Manaslu, and Ganesh Himal greeted the participants.

NTNC, a non-profit organization working in the community focuses on building local capacity at the institutional and individual levels while meeting locals' aspirations for conservation and development.

The main occupation of the people in Ghalegaun and Bhujung is agriculture. Livestock rearing and homestay operation are secondary. Road infrastructure and electricity are unavailable, affecting the economy and wellbeing of the area. The terrain is prone to landslides and landslides during the monsoon.

The stone-paved trail from Ghalegaun to Bhujung is 24 km long. Community based enterprise development and tourism, and local product based value chains support sustainable landscape management.

Lessons:

- Various uses of natural assets for adventure tourism product development.
- Standards for safety requirements of adventure tourism.
- Making optimal use of local resources and contributions to the local economy.
- Connection to the history and daily lives of communities.

6.3 Value Chain Development

Madan Puraskar Pustakalaya Observation

Nripal Adhikary from Adobe and Bamboo Research Institute (ABARI) spoke about its reasons for working with bamboo. He said the Nepali government has expressed an interest in using bamboo, especially after the 2015 earthquake. The Madan Puraskar Pustakalaya public library is being funded by the government as a model public building. He showed the demonstrative effects of technologies invented and used for the treatment, construction, grading and design of small and large scale bamboo buildings. He explained the costs and attributes, and the durability and effectiveness of using bamboos for construction. He also discussed various design innovations, especially related to the resilience of bamboo. Small scale producers, landowners, craftspeople, entrepreneurs and so on are actually contributing to it. Small producers, farmers and gatherers are the main producers, whereas indigenous and often



Nripal Adhikary presenting on ABARI's bamboo projects

marginalized groups like the Magar, Chepang, Tharu and Dalit communities are craftspeople for this industry. Participants were able to visit the library to see the use of bamboo in modern architectural construction. Since bamboo is an abundant resource in all three HI-LIFE country pilot sites, participants could see how interventions might be made to use bamboo in more creative and meaningful. Innovative uses of bamboo such as in the construction of eco-friendly houses and earthquake resistant building infrastructure were also explored.

Lessons:

- Using locally available, inexpensive material such as sand, soil, mud, and stone in contemporary design practices is an approach scalable to Nepal.
- Since the 2015 earthquake, the demand for such ecofriendly structures has increased in Nepal.
- The shelf lives of local bamboo can be increased through simple technological interventions, and access can be made easier through this organization.
- Use of local and natural materials to preserve history and grandeur.
- Bamboo can be a valuable resource and viable alternative to wood.
- Local, renewable and environmentally friendly constructions are necessary.

Kar.ma Coffee Experience

"Kar.ma Coffee" is a coffee boutique in Nepal's Lalitpur district. It is a well thought out enterprise which not only connects supplies and people, but also expands the horizons of innovation, value addition and entrepreneurship. Kar.ma Coffee focuses on developing markets for local food and handicrafts, and modernizing coffee and tea. Participants explored how conducive marketing environments can be created for niche mountain products during the visit. Value is added to coffee beans produced by women in several parts of in the form of products, and the creative appeal of these products attracts customers. The coffee boutique's drip system of brewing coffee, and

directly traded beans that support fair trade makes the café unique. Adding to a new concept of “pay what you like”, is a buyer centred economic strategy for the customer.

Participants regarded Kar.ma Coffee to be innovative, modern and responsible business. Some of their learnings are:

- Good example of best use of resources – innovation and entrepreneurship at work.
- Promoting environmental and social awareness with positive footprints in the community.
- Using an unconventional method without electricity, following the 3 Rs (Reduce, Reuse and Recycle), advancing ecofriendly interaction.
- Using local materials and upscaling them.
- Corporate social responsibility (CSR) ventures: training kids with disabilities on running a coffee business.
- Developing markets for local foods and handicrafts, and modernizing coffee and tea.
- Creating market conducive environments.
- Positive change, a win-win situation for all.
- Innovative approach to promoting coffee and its allied value chain products.
- Onus is upon the visitors to be sincere with themselves and pay for the service that is offered --- real responsible marketing strategy observed.
- Many products and byproducts show cased and exhibited. This makes the place very interesting.
- Live demo and interpretation in the coffee shop enhances engagement and the learning experience.



Products made of coffee beans and paper

6.4 Understanding Food and Other Service Enterprises

Participants were provided opportunities to visit several restaurants and traditional food outlets where they understood the importance of local cuisine, and the traditions and cultures associated with it. This plays an important role in promoting responsible tourism, and the engagement of a wide range of stakeholders. The idea was to expose participants to a number of products and services related to the tourism value chain along with enterprises/actors in the ecotourism value chain (transporter, food – including local cuisine, small vendors and others), and have them realize, appreciate and relate facilities/infrastructure (highways, communications, restrooms, waste management, health care, security and others) and investments to the ecotourism value chain.

Key observations and lessons from participants are as follows:

Bhojan Griha Experience

Bhojan Griha is a traditional Nepali restaurant housed in a historic building renovated to offer exquisite Nepali cuisine to visitors. The restaurant is known for its organic Nepali food with local folk song and dance performances. The place was selected for the reception dinner on day one. It offered a connection to and glimpse of Nepali culture, art, tradition, cuisine, and hospitality to the participants.

Bhojan Griha in Nepali means ‘house of food’. The renovated fort in Dillibazar, Kathmandu, serves authentic/organic Nepali delicacies. Popcorn, wood-fired potatoes, dumpling, and pots of Newari liquor are on the menu. Traditional Nepali cuisine is on the main course.

Lessons:

- Great combination of art, culture, people, traditions, built heritage and environment with organic food, amenable staff and responsible suppliers.
- Respect shown to environmental pledges: a no plastic philosophy, in-house biodegradable waste management, and sensitization of employees for environmental preservation.

- Offered a glimpse of cultural preservation, and the food value chain. Culture used positively in the entertainment value chain.
- Preservation of Nepali food heritage.

Newa Lahana Experience

Newa Lahana is a typical traditional place for good Newari food. The women in Newari dress specialize in cooking and presenting food in the traditional way. They served a variety of food on *Shorea robusta* (Sal tree) leaf plates to the participants. Lentil cakes, beaten rice, buffalo stew, beans, radish pickle relish, boiled egg, barbecued buffalo meat and spiced boiled potato and rice beer were on the menu.

Newa Lahana represents a community kitchen run by local women offering typical Newari cuisine in Kirtipur which is located in the southern belt of Kathmandu. Newa Lahana translates to 'Newari Civilization'. The restaurant served as an open museum illustrating the history, heritage and culture of the Newari community, an ethnic group indigenous to Kathmandu Valley.



Participants enjoying lunch

Lessons

- Women can demonstrate strong abilities: owners of business, keepers of open museum/heritage and cultural and traditional values, resource maximisers and environmental protectors.
- Long-term commitment to economic and environmental benefits to many stakeholders, including communities.
- A good place for selling food and displaying traditional items.
- Skilled interpretation and briefing to visitors.
- Accommodating hospitality skills.
- Serving only traditional meals in a local Newari kitchen.
- Live demonstration of preparation of local meat dumplings, open kitchen serving Newari dishes and offering traditional fermented drinks.
- Local ownership of the restaurant, and pride in local culture.
- Not serving conventional drinks and meals, sticking to authentic Newari cuisine and ambience.
- Traditional seating arrangement for meals, and traditional manner of serving.
- Authentic Newari experience of meals.

Hamlet Restaurant along the Highway

A fully commercial highway based hotel with a huge daily flow of tourists. It offered an extensive menu: a Nepali buffet with rice, dal, vegetable dishes, chicken curry and pickles, and fast foods to passers-by. The stop is a typical place which meets the basic needs of travellers. The site does not reflect any local architecture, neither do its services reflect local hospitality. However, the number of vehicles that stop here is high. This proves that a mid-way stoppage point does not demand local authenticity as visitors stop not more than 30 minutes en-route to their final destinations.

Lessons

- A good facility, and a viable business idea.
- Ideal fast food enterprise giving quick service to travellers along the busy highway.
- Hotel with a sizeable capacity for feeding tourists.
- Flow of benefits to many stakeholders – suppliers, employees.
- Basic facilities with clean and quick services is a hallmark of this place.
- Adequate parking space for cars and buses to stop and for passengers to get off.
- Open space and an erected platform for visitors to spread out.

Thakali Food at Thakali Sherchan

Thakali Sherchan in Mugling was established in 1926 AD. Thakali food is local to the Thak Khola Valley, which lies on an ancient trade route. The food is considered as transitional – somewhere between Himalayan and lowland cookery. A typical Thakali meal consists of rice, lentils, vegetables, pickles and meat (for non-vegetarians).

Lessons

- Family entrepreneurship.
- Use of authentic local Nepali food for sustenance.
- Benefits, incomes, and salaries earned by the business.
- Food value chain in small enterprise.
- Maintenance and continuation of reputation of Thakali food backed up by hygienic kitchens and good food.
- Traditional working methods for Thakali kitchen.
- WiFi services available.
- Food prepared over wooden stoves which impart an authentic kitchen flavour to the meals. Modern amenities such as gas stoves used for quicker service.
- Local Chepang staff involved in providing services.
- The old, traditional restaurant has been embellished with modern furnishing. However, the original flavours have been maintained by the Sherchan family which owns the business.



Hotel owner briefing about his restaurant

7 Exploring Transboundary Tourism Potential for HI-LIFE

The exposure visit to Ghalegaun, Bhujung and Bandipur revealed that sustainable support from the government is critical to the enhancement of facilities and experiences for visitors. Such support is also necessary for market promotion through profiling. The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Model Village for Homestay is an example. The development of infrastructure, particularly road and communication, is paramount to sustainable tourism development.

Connecting enterprise development, environment conservation and institutions, the Regional Ecotourism Wheel was mapped for China, India, and Myanmar. Force field analysis was discussed to elaborate on future vision and factors that either support or inhibit progress to a desired future pathway.

Environment Conservation (Natural and Cultural Assets): Despite several issues such as illegal trade and smuggling, human encroachment, human-wildlife conflict, excessive land use change leading to overuse of natural resources, and transboundary forest fire in all HI-LIFE sites, the opportunities offered by the landscape are enormous. There is some possibility for a regional ecotourism connection due to the richness and uniqueness of the landscape's biodiversity (hornbills, flying squirrels, wild cats, bears). The landscape HI-LIFE operates in has rich species diversity (rare and endemic flora and fauna) and ecosystem diversity, with abundant natural landscapes that are still intact. The prevalence of culture (food festivals and village festivals, ethnic diversity at the landscape level, world heritage sites in China and Myanmar of global values), and protected areas in the landscape offer opportunities for transboundary cooperation.

Enterprise (Economic Benefit): Country specific priorities and actions were discussed. In all countries, economic benefits can be gained through historic/cultural assets such as the anti-Japanese war museum in China, and transboundary cultural fares – including water fests and performances. Other economic activities could include homestays/resorts, and nature based activities (bird watching, hiking, and nature walk), markets for agroforestry products, bamboo crafts and traditional medicine. WiFi for communication outreach, transport (ancient Silk Road) and long-term research and interpretation are required the enhancement of the enterprise. Tourism planning based on carrying capacity, market linkages, enhancement of quality services (culinary arts), and value additions to local products and crafts could increase potential for regional cooperation.

A group of people, including men and women of various ages, are seated on the floor in a room with a wood-paneled wall. They are facing towards the right side of the frame, where a large green projector screen is visible. The screen displays text in English, including "Ecotourism and the Rural Landscape Management" and "November 2014, Kathmandu, Nepal". The room is decorated with framed photographs, posters, and vinyl records on the wall. Some participants are using laptops, and there are water bottles and bags on the floor in front of them. The atmosphere appears to be a formal yet relaxed educational or professional gathering.

China Action Plan: Details

Date	17-19 April 2017
Venue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Baihualing Village in Baoshan Municipality Liuku in Nujiang Prefecture Dulongjiang Township in Gongshan County
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To improve the knowledge and skills of different zones To develop a shared understanding of ecotourism among different stakeholders
Representatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governments of tourism forestry and nature reserve Village representatives and ecotourism businesspersons
Number of participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Baihualing in Baoshan: 200 Liuku: 30 Dulongjiang: 30 (50% male & 50% female)
Lead organizer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gaoligong Nature Reserve Management Bureau Baoshan Tourism Development Bureau Local government of Liuku, Dulongjiang county
Co-organizers	<p>Baoshan (Baihualing):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kunming Institute of Botany (KIB) Southwest Forestry University (SWFU) Tourism Bureau Nature Reserve Management Bureau Yunnan Institute of Environmental Science (YIES)
Resource persons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experts from SWFU and other relative universities, TOT Participants
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submission of proposal to local government (December 2016) Development of training materials and translation (January to February) Selection of participants (March) 3/4 day training delivery (incl. field trip)
Methodologies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Modifying TOT manual Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) tools facilitation translation in Chinese
Budget	USD 2,230 per training
Funding Source	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government and other possible donors
Role of ICIMOD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of training materials Resource persons
Expected outputs:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Application of knowledge in local ecotourism development Better coordination among different actors Development of good plan
Follow-up plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow-up by local governments Plan implemented Joint monitoring Review meeting

India Action Plan: Details

Date	18-20 January 2017
Venue	Pilot site of HI-LIFE India, i.e.: Miao, Changlang district, Arunachal Pradesh
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To develop innovative livelihoods with a focus on the responsible tourism value chain for local partners and community in the HI-LIFE pilot sites

Representatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forest officials • Line departments • People's representatives – local panchayats • Local administrative officer • NGO, self-help groups • Local tour operators • Academic/research institutions • Media • Village elders
Number of participants	• 60% male, 40% of female
Lead organizer	• GB Pant National Institute of Himalayan Environment and Sustainable Development (GBPNIHESD), North East India
Co-organizers	• Department of Environment and Forests, and Department of Tourism, Govt. of Arunachal Pradesh
Resource persons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experts from the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) • GBPNIHESD • FD • Tourism Department, Arunachal Pradesh • Rain Forest Research Institute (RFRI) • National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, Guwahati • ICIMOD • Society of Environmental Awareness and Conservation of Wildlife (SEACoW), Ecosystem – India
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial details with approval (30 October 2016) • Submission of training material by resource persons (30 November 2016) • Selection of and invitation to participants (30 October 2016)
Methodologies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problem tree • Force-field analysis • SWOT analysis • Training manual • Field visit • Audio-visual • Flip charts • White board • Feedback form
Budget	USD15,000
Funding source	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forest Department • Tourist Department • ICIMOD
Role of ICIMOD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitation and oversight of training workshop • Mentoring • Providing resource persons • Funding
Expected outputs:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness generation, capacity building and orientation for skill development • Benefits of value chain in ecotourism development • Necessity of action in the transboundary landscape
Follow-up plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formulation of project proposal on innovative livelihoods with a focus on the ecotourism value chain, and enterprise development in the project site • Dialogue with indigenous people • Helping indigenous people constitute self-governing committees for undertaking ecotourism

Myanmar Action Plan: Details

Date	First week of April 2017
Venue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Myitkyina (Opening session) Wansangdam (Ecotourism training)
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To raise awareness on HI-LIFE To improve livelihood opportunities and skills To support protected area management
Representatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chief Minister of Kachin State Different levels of stakeholders Government departments Parliament of Kachin Related government departments (administrative, land record, agricultural, fishery, livestock, and education) Tourism operators (Yangon, and Putao) Village levels Leaders of community, religion, and women
Number of participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Myitkyina: 100 Wasangdam: 50 (35 male + 15 female)
Lead organizer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MONREC (Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation)
Co-organizers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of Hotels and Tourism (MOHT) General Administration Department (GAD) Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) Forest Department (FD) Tourism Operators (TOs)
Resource persons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of Hotels and Tourism (MOHT) GAD FD WCS TOs
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WCS: Training logistics, training content, and manual development MONREC: Invitation to key state level participants GAD: Invitation to common stakeholders
Methodologies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adapting TOT manual Keynote address Power-point Plenary discussion Role play Demonstration Field exercise Photo/pictures Poster presentation Group and plenary discussion Outdoor trip
Budget	USD 11,980
Funding source	N/A
Role of ICIMOD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support for proposal development for fund-raising Technical support for moderating national level ecotourism training Technical advice Mentoring, hand-holding
Expected outputs:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sensitization of stakeholders on HI-LIFE activities Knowledge and skill development of community stakeholders –development of partners' training capacities Better coordination and networking among communities and other stakeholders
Follow-up plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MOHT - Support and develop ecotourism marketing and promotion TOs - Assessment and monitoring of ecotourism services provided WCS - Contact programme with trained ecotourism stakeholders MOHT and MONREC - Contact programme with trained ecotourism stakeholders

9 Closing Session and the Way Forward

Yi Shaoliang noted the successful conduction and completion of the TOT. He said the training had been a mutual learning process, and provided an experience sharing platform to partners. “The participants have developed realistic and practical action plan that can be implemented in the coming months,” he said. Shaoliang thanked the participants for their active participation, commitment, and support. He also reassured them of ICIMOD’s support, particularly in terms of capacity building and regional knowledge exchange.

Wen Sihong from China expressed gratitude to the organizers for bringing all partners together to attend the effective TOT event. Her team appreciated the eco-tourism model in Nepal as it brings economic, social, and environmental benefits to local people. She remarked that practical experience – learning by seeing, field observation, and interaction – was a very effective tool for achieving better understanding. She intends to lead the TOT event in HI-LIFE China using a similar approach.

GN Sinha from India also appreciated the TOT. He said that the event was well thought, well designed, well written and well presented, and provided the best of hospitality. He said, “All the participants were very eager to learn, and the event – a mix of classroom and field visits – provided excellent avenues for learning.” Sinha added that good facilitation by resource persons, and proactive contribution and input from participants had truly contributed to extensive learning.

Lynn Htut Oo, assistant director, Directorate of Hotels and Tourism, Myanmar, thanked ICIMOD for the successful TOT event. “We look forward to transboundary cooperation, and to achieving the Regional Ecotourism Wheel,” said Oo.

Rajan Kotru, regional programme manager, Transboundary Landscapes, ICIMOD, highlighted HI-LIFE as an important emerging transboundary programme. He reminded everyone that lessons can be learnt from ICIMOD’s ongoing Kailash Sacred Landscape Initiative. He said the landscape approach must be people-centered, and the issue of what is transboundaryness must be encapsulated from the very beginning. He noted how landscape management plans must be built on existing government schemes. “This could contribute to enriching local plans by filling gaps from holistic and integrated conservation and development perspectives,” he said. Kotru stressed on the need for multi-disciplinary engagement, including active participation of private sectors and civil societies. He emphasized that locals must be considered equal business partners, and that actors must find innovative ways for achieving successful public-private-community partnerships. Reflecting on the TOT, Kotru noted that eco-tourism definitely has high potential as a sustainable transboundary livelihood activity in HI-LIFE pilot sites. “The development model must benefit from various learnings and experiences from the region so that we do not re-invent the wheel,” he said.

Tashi Dorji presented the official vote of thanks. He thanked HI-LIFE country partner institutions, MONREC (Myanmar), GBPNIHESD (India) and KIB (China) for nominating relevant participants for the TOT. He acknowledged the high levels of understanding, compassion and patience in the participants. “Despite the difficult field trip, particularly en route to Ghalegaun, none of the participants complained, and instead considered the experience a good practical learning exercise,” he said. He also thanked colleagues who voluntarily assisted in the simultaneous translations of presentations and discussions into different dialects (China and Myanmar). Dorji also expressed gratitude to resource persons Renzino Lepcha, Rajib Kr Kalita and Nripal Adhikari for their skilful input.

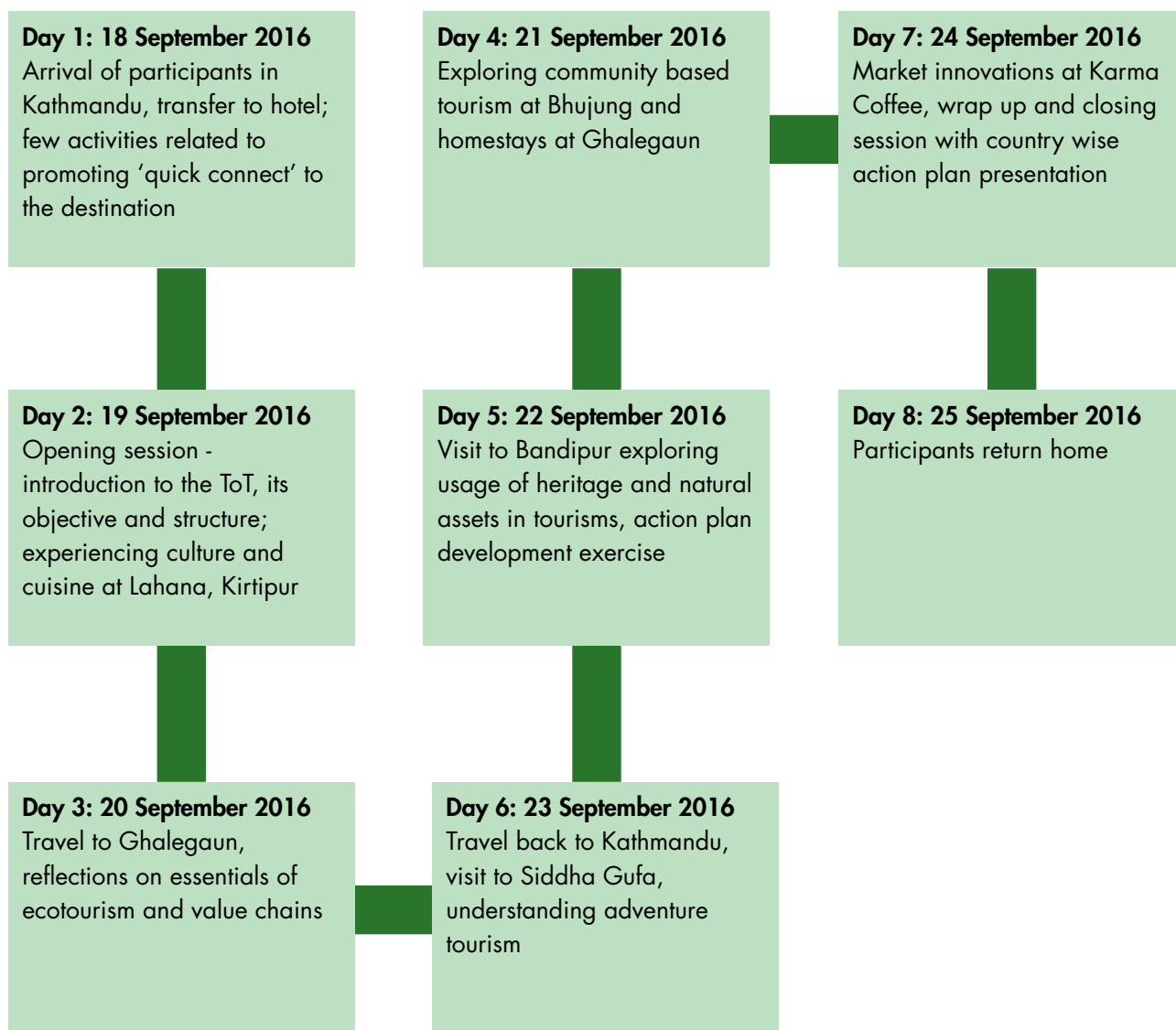
The Way Forward

The following action points were identified:

- Prepare maps for ecotourism assets/amenities/activities
- Understand different models of ecotourism from across the region
- Share the best practices in the region (bamboo and mithun – semi domestic bovine species, human/wildlife conflict management)
- Establish a joint monitoring mechanism for keystone species
- Jointly organize eco-cultural events (Manau festival and Pangsaupass winter fest)

- Support cross learning on best policy practices (tourism policy) and governance mechanisms (Gaoligongshan Farmers Biodiversity Conservation Association)
- Facilitate the private sectors to come together for business and immigration facilities
- Support the capacity building of local stakeholders
- Help regional information exchange to strengthen knowledge synthesis
- Conduct respective national level trainings in each HI-LIFE country

Annex I: Schematic Diagram of ToT Programme



Annex II: List of Participants

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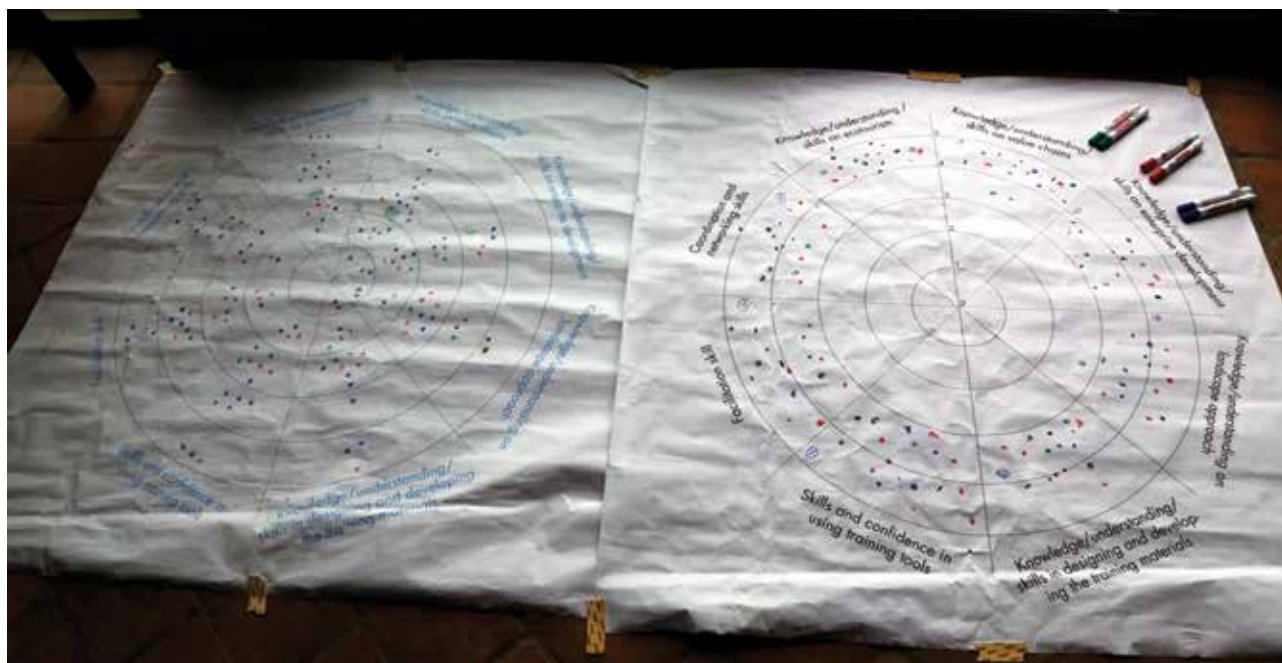
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Annex III: Pre- and Post-TOT Evaluations



The spider diagram tool was used for both pre and post evaluations of the training. It was a self-assessment measure to gauge whether perceived changes in understanding could be credited to the training. In order to verify whether the objectives of training were achieved, evaluation was conducted with structured questions.

The wheel diagram was marked with eight assessment parameters: Knowledge/understanding/skills on enterprise development; Landscape approach; Ecotourism; Value chains; Designing and developing training materials; Using training tools; Facilitation skills; and Coordinating and networking skills. China was provided red markers, India blue ones, and Myanmar green ones for clear results. By the end of the training, the chart revealed an increase of up to three points (from 1, to 3 or 4) for knowledge/understanding/skills on ecotourism. The points were similar for value chains, enterprise development, landscape approach, and designing and developing training materials. Thereafter, increasing skills and confidence in using training tools, facilitation skills, and coordination and networking skills, among others. Overall, the participants were able to accurately perceive details, and learn from the training. The pre to post scores increased from 1 to more than 3, 4, and 5, depending upon the parameters. Representatives from all the partner countries comprehended the training per the evaluation chart. Gender wise, participants were found to be highly receptive. The positive results can be later worked on to develop effective programmes regarding the types of interventions that work best.

Participants also responded to the three questions below as a part of the evaluation process:

Q1. What was good about the TOT?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning together while having fun • Homestay experience/management • Well managed and informative • Observation of terrace farming/agriculture • Field experience • Rich interaction sessions • Class room sessions • Diverse experience • Team work • Stimulating interactions with participants from other countries • Dynamicity of communities • Networking • Complementarity venues and objectives • Relevant participants • Accommodating nature • Innovative, and adding value – private sector partnership
Q2. What could be improved?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shorter trek • Shorter time allocation for activities, increasing discussion time • Briefing for the security of participants • No trek • More reflections and recap exercises • Need language interpreter • Limiting travel time – there could be more learning • Could visualize the broader objectives behind HI-LIFE • Time management • Contingency planning • Less home work • Bus journey could be more exciting • Hire experienced jeep drivers • More time with communities • Background briefing on sites before visits • Event management • More homework on choice of field visit
Q3. What is your personal commitment after the TOT?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will give time • Be a trainer and apply what has been learnt to pilot sites • More engagement with partners in other countries • Personally support the use of bamboo • Replicate/share/sensitize higher officials • More support from national government • Take back learning to own country • Volunteer to participate • Work more with communities • Share experiences with communities • Strategic support to HI-LIFE • Support objectives of HI-LIFE, ask students to work on related subjects and pilot sites • Endorsing enterprise • Would like to be partner based • Improve communication part with community • Support ICIMOD programmes like ecotourism

Annex IV: Regional TOT Summary in Pictures



Opening session



Tossing for future networking



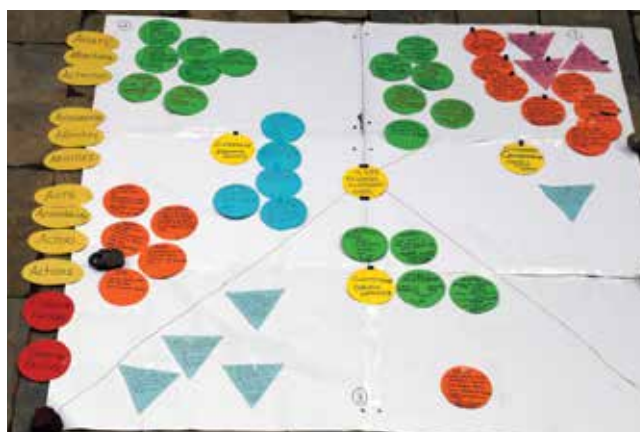
Developing the action plan



Thematic presentation



Farewell by houseowner



Mapped Regional Ecotourism Wheel for HI-LIFE pilot sites



Country representatives



Enjoying local food



Reflection session



Lunch setup at Newa Lahana



The way forward mapped out by participants



Participants filling the Post TOT Assessment Chart

Annex V: Group Photos





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