

# Strengthening regional cooperation through tourism in the Kangchenjunga Landscape



A regional policy dialogue, 'Shared Natural and Cultural Heritage for Sustainable Tourism in the Kanchenjunga Transboundary Landscape', among high level delegates from the governments of Bhutan, India and Nepal emphasized the need for regional cooperation on strengthening the potential and benefits of tourism in the Kangchenjunga Landscape Conservation and Development Initiative (KLCDI), a transboundary initiative facilitated by the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD). The event was co-organized by the Department of Forest and Park Services, Ministry of Agriculture and Forest, Royal Government of Bhutan and ICIMOD from 1–4 May 2017 in Bhutan, with financial support from the Austrian Development Cooperation and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development.

In the inaugural remarks, Lyonpo Yeshey Dorji from the Ministry of Agriculture and Forest, Royal Government of Bhutan, highlighted the government's efforts on conservation and development, and the partnerships developed with KLCDI member countries—Bhutan, India, and Nepal. Similarly, Ms Amita Prasad, Additional

Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India and Mr Bala Ram Kandel, Under Secretary, Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation, Government of Nepal, highlighted the importance of nature- and culture-based tourism in Nepal and its regional potentials.

The event focused on sharing existing practices and improving the potential and future prospects of tourism as a major conservation and development tool for regional cooperation. The three countries discussed existing challenges and opportunities available for regional tourism. A roadmap with short-, medium-, and long-term action plans was prepared. The delegates committed to work on exploring the tourism potential in the landscape as means for fostering sustainable development, working towards enabling policy, products and markets, and strengthening shared natural and cultural heritage.

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