

Workshop Report

Understanding Interlinkages of Six Protected Areas in Transboundary Landscape of Hindu Kush Karakoram Pamir Landscape (HKPL)

13–14 July 2017, Lanzhou, China

Organised by

International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development,
(ICIMOD) Nepal and
Lanzhou University, China

ICIMOD

FOR MOUNTAINS AND PEOPLE



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 Himalaya – 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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Contents

Acronyms and Abbreviations	i
Executive Summary	ii
Background	1
Workshop Objectives and Expected Outputs	1
Day 1 Thursday, 13 July 2017	2
Opening Session	2
Technical Session 1	2
Day 2 Friday, 14 July 2017	9
Technical Session 2	9
Closing Session	10
Annex 1: Workshop Programme	11
Annex 1: List of Participants	12

Acronyms and Abbreviations

HKPL	Hindu Kush Karakoram Pamir Landscape
ICIMOD	International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development
ICOMOS	International Council on Monuments and Sites
IICC-X	ICOMOS International Conservation Center-Xi'an
PAs	protected areas

Executive Summary

International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) in collaboration with the Lanzhou University organized a two-day workshop to understand the interlinkages of six protected areas in the Hindu Kush Karakoram Pamir transboundary landscape (HKPL) shared between Afghanistan, China, Pakistan, and Tajikistan, which was held 13–14 July 2017. Thirty participants from different faculty of the university attended. The workshop objectives were to introduce HKPL to new partners/stakeholders and initiate collaborative research in HKPL and enhance communication, interaction, and data-sharing platforms.

Existing knowledge and scientific work from the region on biodiversity, cultural heritage, tourism, rangeland assessment, and protected areas was shared by the participants to prioritize activities that would be undertaken in the protected areas of Hindu Kush Karakoram Pamir Landscape. The session on day one led to a decision to adopt a fixed methodology to conduct socioeconomic survey and collect information on humanity, social sciences, natural resources, physical geography, and climate change. On day two, participants discussed methodology and a work plan for the scoping study.

Background

The International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) and Lanzhou University jointly organized a workshop on **Understanding Interlinkages of Six Protected Areas (PAs) in Transboundary Landscape of HKPL**, held 13–14 July 2017 at Lanzhou, China.

The Hindu Kush Karakoram Pamir Landscape (HKPL) lies at the convergence of several important biogeographical regions and possesses a unique and rich assemblage of floral and faunal diversity. It spreads over 67,506 square kilometres at a junction of the three highest mountain ranges of the world — the Karakoram, the Hindu Kush, and the Himalaya. The region is also the source or upstream area of many important rivers, including the Amu Darya, Tarim River, and Indus River, and therefore has great conservation value. It is a key link in the ancient Silk Road and an important corridor through which many influential ethnic groups migrated across Eurasia, resulting in an extremely diverse and brilliant cultural mix and regional history.

To conserve biological diversity, governments in the respective countries have established protected areas across the landscape. Many of these protected areas are in close proximity to each other, with common species and ecosystems. Six protected areas are physically connected: Wakhan National Park (Afghanistan); Broghil National Park, Qurumbar National Park, and Khunjerab National Park (Pakistan); Taxkorgan Nature Reserve (China); and Zorkul Nature Reserve (Tajikistan). The region's entire population lives below the poverty line. There is huge potential for developing a regional cooperation framework focusing on strengthening knowledge sharing and networking, synergizing development plans with common management objectives, establishing a common market for cross-border trade and tourism, strengthening capacity development for livelihood promotion, and adding value to local niche products. These opportunities offer significant scope to increase local incomes and sustainable development.

Based on the above understanding, the Lanzhou University set aside a fund of 1 million Chinese Yuan and organised a workshop to initiate work in the protected areas that fall under the HKPL region. An integrated team from the two organizations came together to plan and implement a scoping study from 2017 to 2018 in the protected areas where little or no field studies have been conducted.

Workshop Objectives and Expected Outputs

Objectives

The objective of this workshop was to introduce HKPL to new partners and stakeholders and initiate collaborative research in HKPL and enhance communication, interaction, and data-sharing platforms.

Specific objectives

- Knowledge and experience sharing on existing information and activities done from six protected areas with the new partners and stakeholders and seek opportunities for future collaboration and support in HKPL areas
- Design a methodology for scoping study in the PAs, which were not included in previous studies
- Initiate in-depth discussion and plan on the impact of Silk Road and CPEC on nature and culture of HKPL area
- Planning on roles, actions, and timeline for the next five years on concrete activities for the landscape

Expected outputs

- Standardized protocols and methodologies for scoping studies
- Action plan
- Workshop proceedings

Day 1: Thursday, 13 July 2017

Opening Session

Opening remarks, ICIMOD

In his opening remarks Prof Long Ruijun, HKPL Coordinator, ICIMOD, gave a warm welcome to all the participants of the workshop. He expressed that the meeting will provide different faculty members of the university an opportunity to initiate a scoping study in the landscape. He concluded with wishes for an effective workshop to bring the expected outputs.

Opening remarks, China

Ms An Xian, Deputy Director of Research Department, Lanzhou University, welcomed all participants on behalf of Lanzhou University. She stressed the Hindu Kush Karakoram Pamir Landscape is a core area of China's One Belt One Road initiative, which is a key working area of Lanzhou University. The university provides the fund to support the scoping study together with ICIMOD/HKPL on the six protected areas, for a better understanding of their interlinkages in terms of nature, culture, economy, and social aspect. Its achievements would greatly enhance conservation and development of the six protected areas. Lanzhou University will continue to support these co-activities in the HKPL areas. She concluded by wishing all participants a successful workshop.

Technical Session I

ICIMOD Transboundary Landscape Programme & HKPL PAs and Its Ecological Importance for the RMCs

Prof Long Ruijun

Introduced ICIMOD's work and thematic focus to the participants with special mention of the transboundary landscapes programme, giving an overview of HKPL. HKPL lies at the junction of the world's three highest mountain ranges — Karakoram, Pamir, and Hindu Kush — and covers an area of 67,506 square kilometres. The key livelihood challenges in the region are harsh environmental conditions, isolated areas, politically and economically marginalized, extreme poverty, disaster prone, resource conflicts, poor physical and social infrastructure, weak institutions, ethnic/religious diversity and tensions, and narcotics trade and use of opium.

There are potential opportunities that can be tapped into for developing the landscape, such as the One Belt One Road initiative and the China Pakistan Economic Corridor which passes through the landscape, and a joint collaborative project with the Aga Khan Foundation. Future work of HKPL will focus on working in the field of participatory and integrated ecosystem management and long-term environmental and socio-ecological monitoring at transboundary scale; water resources availability in the landscape, linking cryosphere and downstream land uses like rangelands; water security issues; strengthening community resilience and secure livelihoods: livelihood diversification through value addition; integrating culture and nature, to promote tourism value chain and mainstreaming it into development; and enhancing local, national, and regional scientific knowledge generation, dissemination, and sharing it in global platforms. Further, HKPL will focus on introducing new technologies and varieties for livelihood promotion such as products value chains, food/herbs processing, and storage; facility agriculture; farming/livestock management; cereal, fodder, livestock, fish, herbs, vegetable, and fruits; capacity building; market development: e-commerce; and alternative livelihood: tourism.

Introduction and Road Map of Scoping Study in the Six PAs

Prof Shang Zhanghuan

Presented on integrated scientific investigation for natural and cultural resources in the PAs of HKPL. The project is supported by the Fundamental Research Funds for the Central Universities. The goal of conducting the study is to deepen our understanding of ecology, biology, geography, climatology, ethnology, history, and humanities through this project based on the means of natural history and geography; to improve the relationship of technology between HKPL and China through this program, especially for the next generation of policy makers in this region; to obtain more information from this program for increased communication, development, and introduction of resources in order to provide genetic resources for agriculture and animals in the region of the One Belt One Road initiative; and to enrich the information database of Lanzhou University in the region of One Belt, One Road and promote the establishment of the international cooperation base. He highlighted seven project content areas which the study will focus on: i) wild animals and livestock, ii) wild plant/microbial, iii) new Palaeolithic environment and agriculture and animal husbandry, iv) ethnic society and anthropology, v) tourism resources and ecological economy, vi) traditional culture and history, and vii) glacier geology and climatic environment.

Figure 1: Road map

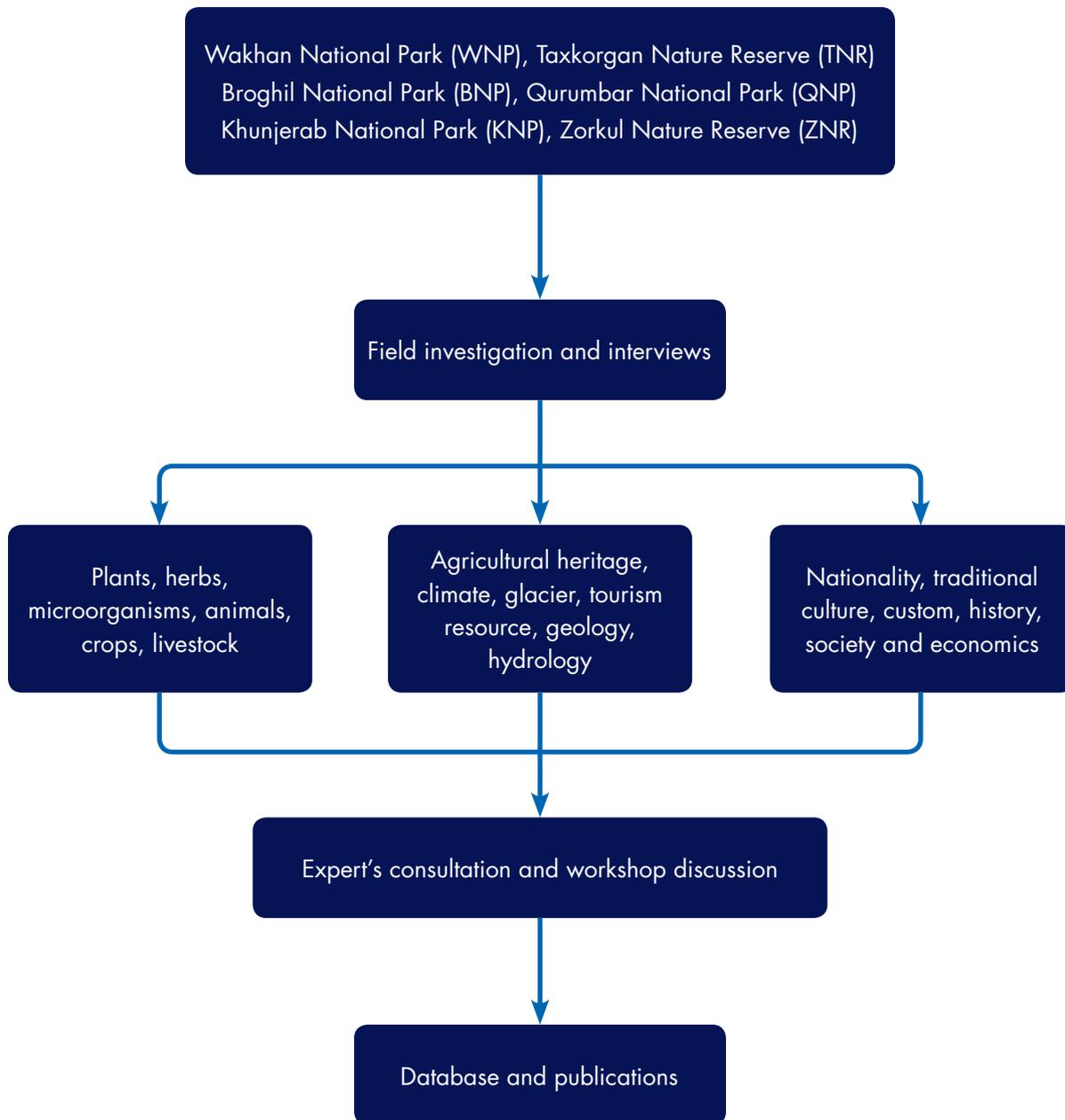
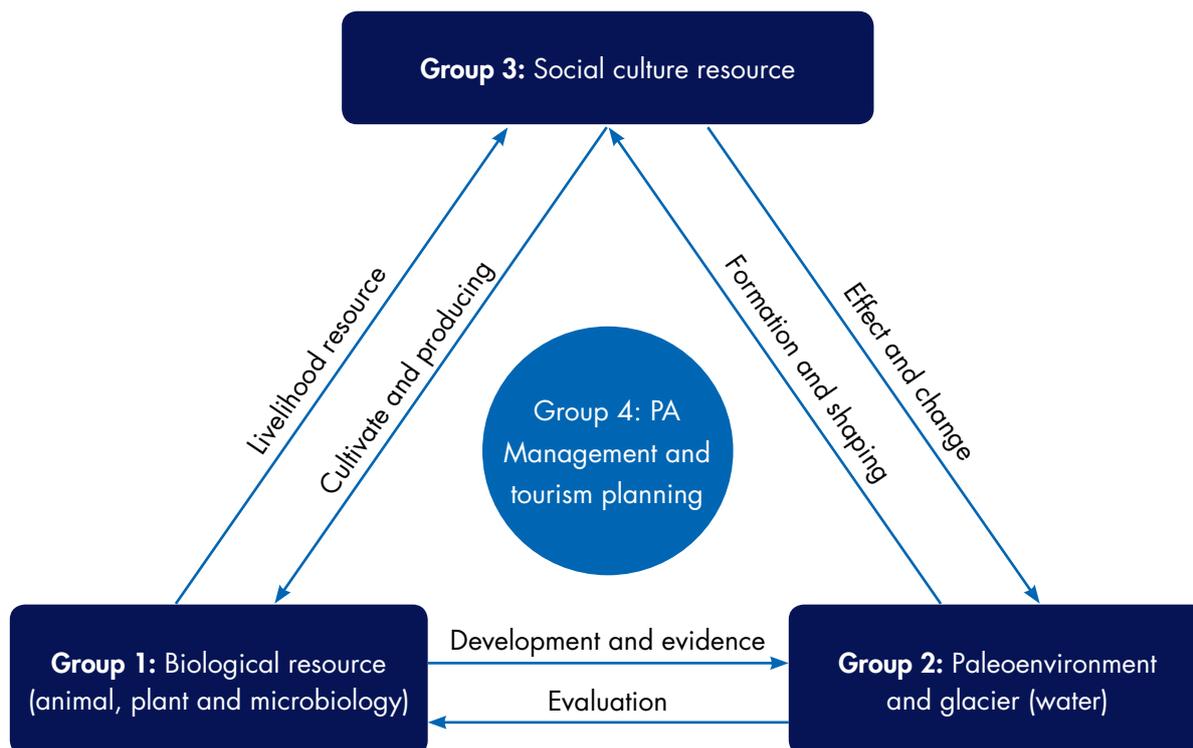


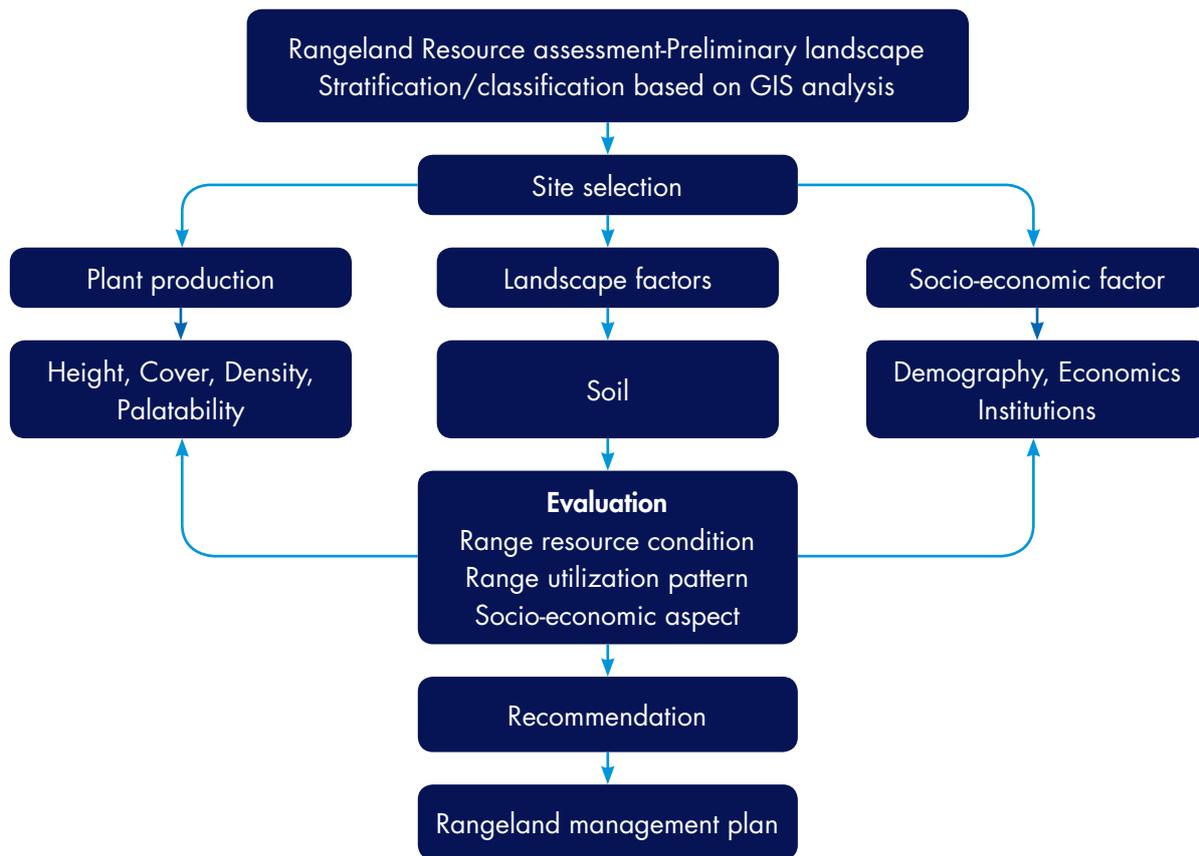
Figure 2: **Groups and connections**

Rangeland Resource Assessment in Five Protected Areas of HKPL

Dr Srijana Joshi

Highlighted the objective of the Rangeland Resource Assessment study which is to improve livelihoods of local communities and biodiversity conservation of the Hindu Kush Karakoram Pamir Landscape through science-based ecosystem management activities. Her presentation focused on three themes: i) rangeland resources and their trends which include total rangeland area in the HKPL working area; types of rangelands (by seasonal uses, vegetative types, and dominant species) and their respective area in the HKPL; productivity (total biomass and fodder productivity) of different rangeland types; key seasonal pastures of the communities in the HKPL; key areas with good fodder productivity and areas with severe degradation; trends of changes over the past three decades; and future scenarios; ii) rangeland utilization: key direct services and goods people get from rangelands; types of animals using the rangeland resources; seasonal pattern of pasture usage by domestic animals; grazing intensity/stocking rates on seasonal pastures; importance of pastoralism to households; pattern of seasonal use of rangeland resources by the wildlife; key areas (habitats and corridors) of importance for wildlife; conflicts between wildlife and domestic animals; trends of change in pasture uses over the years; and gaps and management recommendations; and iii) rangeland governance and institutions: what are the policies and statutory legal framework governing rangelands resources management in the respective area; what are the functioning customary institutions governing resources management at community level; and what are the key government programmes/strategies on rangeland management being implemented in the area. She further mentioned that the information on contribution of rangeland use to household economy will be collected through a case study using household interview. Data on major pastures and seasonal use of the pastures by local communities will be collected through participatory mapping and using geospatial technologies, group discussions, key informant interview, and field observation. Data and information on wildlife use of rangelands will be collected through participatory mapping, focused discussions, and key informant interview. She highlighted the progress that has been made so far in the rangeland studies, future plan, outputs, and outcomes.

Figure 3: **Framework for rangeland condition survey**



Biodiversity of Taxkorgan Nature Reserve

Dr Zhu Ping, on behalf of Kashgar University, Xinjiang

Highlighted the major biodiversity conservation activities and achievements in Taxkorgan Nature Reserve. For example, the dynamics of wildlife and the findings on systematic study on Marco Polo sheep which is the flagship species of the landscape. He also welcomed all the partners to visit his university and explore more potential collaborative opportunities among partners in Taxkorgan area.

Socioeconomic/Cultural Heritage Data of PAs

Mr Muhammad Ismail

A socioeconomic survey was conducted in the Broghil National Park, Chitral to assess the baseline conditions of the valley in terms of availability of resources, their present conditions, issues associated, and prospects of future sustainable use. The study used both secondary and primary data for establishing the socioeconomic situation of the Broghil National Park. Primary data was collected through household surveys, meetings, and focus group discussions. Preliminary observations from the study suggest that the watershed/natural environment in the area is degraded with a majority of the population dependent on natural resources for their livelihood and subsistence. The poverty rate in the area is very high and a large part of the population is addicted to opium. Overall the area remains unexplored in terms of natural resources and presents opportunities for research. Chitral is known for its rich diversity in culture, linguistics, and ethnicities. The region is popular for its traditional sports like yak polo, buzkashi, and horse polo.

Tourism and Its Importance in PAs and Case Study from Chitral

Ms Neha Bisht

Tourism can be a key option to sustain the fragile ecology of the HKPL and contribute to the livelihood of the impoverished communities, largely dependent on natural (land) resources in the absence of alternative sources of income and energy.

The aim is to integrate culture and nature in the HKPL region to promote local livelihoods. The region offers a wide range of possibilities for income diversification: direct provision services (homestay), employment in service industries (tourist guides), and production and trade (handicrafts). There is immense tourism potential in the areas of mountaineering, culture, religious heritage, landscape, and archaeological sites.

A case study was done in the Broghil National Park in the Chitral District of Pakistan to identify the gaps in the tourism value chain system and to provide recommendations to address them. Broghil Valley, –with its mountain peaks, meadows, high pastures, majestic lakes, and unique culture, has immense potential to attract tourists. Current contribution of tourism to the local economy is only 1.5 percent of the total, but it has a very high potential to flourish in the future.

This information was collected using key informant interviews, workshops, focus group discussions, and field work. Observations include:

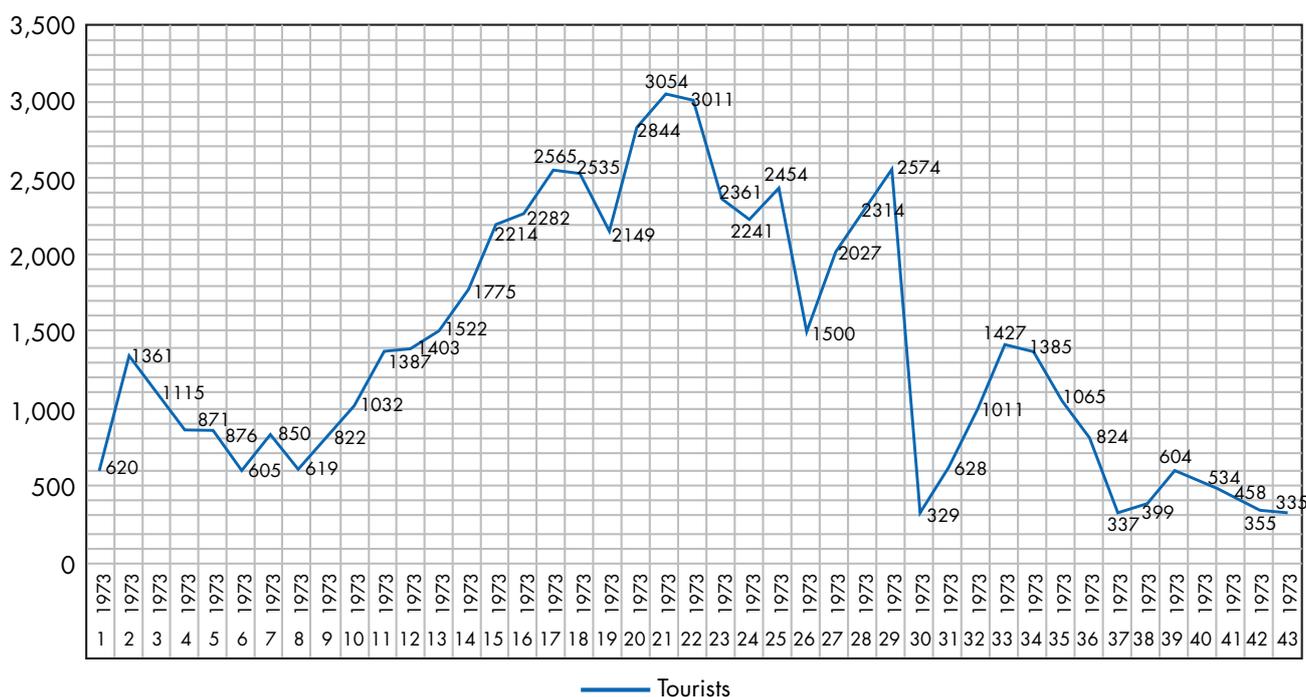
Impact on income

- July, August, and September: Maximum earnings from the tourism sector
- May, June, October, and November:- Low to moderate earnings

Types of tourism: Adventure tourism, cultural tourism, sports tourism, ecotourism

Flow of tourists from 1973 to 2015

Figure 4: **Declining trend in tourism has been observed due to radicalization of the society, Afghan war, and spread of terrorist activities in the bordering districts of Pakistan and Afghanistan**



Current challenges to the tourism industry are the lack of well-qualified tourism professionals, lack of awareness regarding the actual worth of tourism facilities, scarcity of seed money, low service quality, poor infrastructure — road networks, high travel costs, natural disasters, and security issues.

Based on the study it is recommended to map the cultural heritage sites within HKPL, create a database of the cultural and sacred natural sites, identify transboundary tourism destinations, have a long-term tourism master plan that is integrated and environment friendly, develop capacity of tourism service providers, educate and link the tourism enterprises to nature and cultural conservation, promote infrastructure development, solid waste management, and have a detailed analysis of the carrying capacity of the region.

Review of Cultural Heritage in Taxkorgan

Mr Li Tao

Taxkorgan is a unique geographic hub of Inner Asia, bordering Tajikistan, Afghanistan, and Kashmir. Geopolitically, Taxkorgan is shaped by Tsarist Russia, the British Raj, and the Qing Dynasty since the Great Game era. There are two river valleys, Taxkorgan River Valley and Yarkant River Valley. Taxkorgan offers three types of heritage: natural heritage, tangible cultural heritage, and intangible cultural heritage. In the Great Tang Records on the Western Regions, Xuanzang mentions the rise of the 1st kingdom of Taxkorgan-Khabandha. He remarks that the Sassanid king Shapur I tried to marry a woman from a Han ethnic warlord from western China, after he conquered Kashgar, which is mentioned in the Behitun Inscription, Iran. Taxkorgan is also the eastern entrance of Wakhan Corridor, archaeological settlement group of Kirzkurgan Fortification and Kirzkurgan Citadel. Cultural heritage conservation, restoration, and preservation can be shown in the Taxkorgan Fortification, which is the cultural landmark in the country.

Aim to World Heritage — Experience from Silk Roads Nomination for Taxkorgan

Mr Gong Tian

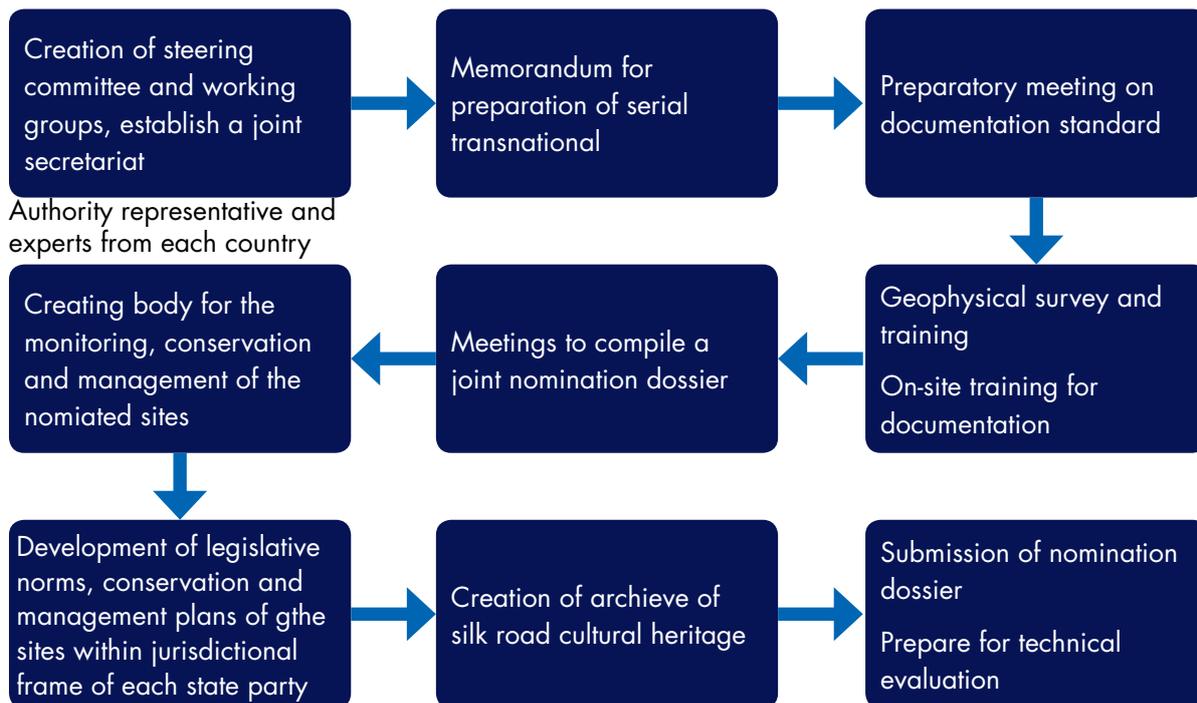
Presented in detail about the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and the establishment of the ICOMOS International Conservation Center-Xi'an (IICC-X) in 2006. In 2008, IICC-X was designated as the Secretariat and Documentation Centre for the Coordinating Committee on Serial Transnational Nomination of Silk Roads, which has 14 member states. To facilitate communication between experts and the public on Silk Roads world heritage, IICC-X has created an online interactive platform along with a digital database for the nomination of all 22 Silk Roads sites in China. Chang'an-Tianshan Corridor was inscribed on the World Heritage List, following which IICC-X has been working for nomination preparation of other Silk Roads Corridors.

He also elaborated on the Hindu Kush Karakoram Pamir Landscape World Heritage nomination for its cultural significance and its natural features. In order to nominate HKPL, there needs to be a joint agreement of the concerned state parties; all aspects of heritage management need to be prepared; cooperation amongst different departments and authorities of the national and local level; and effective management ensured by the authority. According to the requirements of a serial nomination the component parts should reflect cultural, social, or functional links over time that provide (where relevant) landscape, ecological, evolutionary, or habitat connectivity; each component should contribute to the Outstanding Universal Value of the property; and selection of components should be based on overall manageability and coherence of the property.

The criteria of the property for the assessment of Outstanding Universal Value includes the following: exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design; bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared; be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land use, or sea use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change; and be directly or tangibly associated with events of living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance.

Nature: contain superlative natural phenomena or areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance; be outstanding examples representing major stages of Earth's history, including the record of life, significant ongoing geological processes in the development of landforms, or significant geomorphic or physiographic features; be outstanding examples representing significant ongoing ecological and biological processes in the evolution and development of terrestrial, freshwater, coastal, marine ecosystems, and communities of plants and animals; and contain the most important and significant natural habitats for in situ conservation of biological diversity, including those containing threatened species of Outstanding Natural Value from the point of view of science or conservation.

Figure 5: Key steps – joint work to be carried out



Potential Taxkorgan National Archaeological Heritage Park

An opportunity exists for an archaeological heritage park based on the rich cultural and natural resources in Taxkorgan: property is protected at the national level; benefits to local economy and infrastructure construction; and the One Belt One Road flagship project is being implemented in the area. The requirements are that the property should already be inscribed on National Protection List; conservation plan already effective at the provincial level; archaeology research approved and under way; the National Archaeological Heritage Park Planning confirms to the conservation plan of the site; and specialized management institution as independent legal entity.

Development of an HKPL Museum Complex

Requirements of World Heritage Nomination and National Archaeological Heritage Park are: links the cultural and natural resources together; presenting the cultural and natural significance of the HKPL region, also a shelter for splendid local intangible heritage; potential support from the countries and international foundations; and providing infrastructure for research institutes and also a place for presenting their research outcomes.

Day 2: Friday, 14 July 2017

Technical Session II

Tourism Study: Case Study from Yanchiwan Reserve

Prof Xingpeng Chen, from Lanzhou University, highlighted combining ecology and culture and tourism plan innovation. He emphasized different aspects of tourism potential and culture: i) traditional tourism principle and context, ii) characteristics of ecology of tourism and problem of tourism plan, iii) characteristics of cultural tourism and innovation of ecological tourism, and iv) consumer characteristic and complex production: while combining ecology and culture. Based on the above principles he underlined a case study from the Yanchiwan Reserve of Gansu on tourism work. He provided information on innovation done to prepare a tourism plan in the reserve by combining ecology and culture through theory and practice.

Overview of the Taxkorgan Nature Reserve

Qiang Wang, Director, Taxkorgan Nature Reserve (TNR), gave an overview of the reserve and committed to support the implementation of ground activities inside the reserve. Xu Lin, Assistant Director, presented about the reserve. Established in 1984, TNR borders Tajikistan, Afghanistan, and Pakistan and has a high variability in life forms — ibex, blue sheep, and Marco Polo sheep. A survey was conducted in the protected area for vegetation types and mapping of wildlife. Since its establishment, conservation and management measures have been taken such as wildlife protection, wildlife rescue, administrative law enforcement, wild animal breeding and management, scientific and technological training, and epidemic disease surveillance. The wildlife population has increased significantly.

Group Work Discussion

All workshop participants were invited to have an open discussion regarding the methodology to be followed and the work plan for the scoping study. It was suggested to plan a field trip before initiating the scoping study to meet with relevant user groups and stakeholders from the local community, academia, and civil society, national, and international organizations that work in the landscape and to familiarize the team with the landscape. The participants agreed to collect information on humanity and social science, natural resources and physical geography, and climate change (Table 1). The scoping study will be carried out for at least three years. The following parameters were agreed upon under each theme for data collection and would be further refined during field testing of the questionnaire.

Table 1: Parameters for data collection from the field

Humanity and social science	Natural resources and physical geography	Climate change
Demography	Key ecosystems	Precipitation
Governance	Flora & fauna	Temperature
Occupation	Key species: Flagship species	Extreme weather events
Education and health	Key threats & stresses	Glaciers
Livelihood/farming system/crop/livestock/pastoralism	Further studies/action areas needed	
Food security, poverty	IUCN/CITES category	
Gender	Corridors	
Development programme and change agent	Forest	
Migration	Agriculture	
Ethnic diversity	Wetland	
Linguistic diversity	Rangelands	
Historical background	NTFPs and medicinal plants	
Geopolitics	Water	
Natural and cultural heritage	Minerals	
Tourism	Laws, regulations, and policies	
Religion	Land ownership system	
Customs	Government structure for NRM	
	Customary institutions	

Closing Session

Closing remarks, ICIMOD

Prof Long Ruijun thanked everyone for a fruitful and successful workshop on understanding interlinkages of six protected areas in the transboundary landscape of Hindu Kush Karakoram Pamir Landscape. He reiterated that the support received from Lanzhou University to initiate scoping studies in four HKPL countries will help to get baseline information. He concluded the workshop by thanking all partners and participants for their contributions.

Vote of thanks

Dr Han Jin thanked all the participants for their active participation and contributions in the workshop. She especially thanked faculty members from Lanzhou University, ICOMOS, North West University, Kashgar University, and the Director of Taxkorgan Nature Reserve for their support and contributions. Before closing, she thanked ICIMOD colleagues and all others who helped bring the meeting to a successful conclusion.

Annex 1: Workshop Programme

Day 1 (12 July, 2017) Arrival and Check in		
Day 2 (13 July, 2017)		
08:45 – 09:20	Registration of Participants	
09:30 – 10:30	Opening Session	Mr. Muhammad Ismail
09:30 – 09:35	Opening remark – China	Ms An Xian/Prof. Zhao Changming
09:35 – 09:40	Opening remark – ICIMOD	Prof. Long Ruijun
09:40 – 10:00	Introduction of Participants	
10:00 – 10:30	Tea break and group photo	
10:30 – 17:00	Technical Session I Presentation (15 minutes) + Questions (5minutes)	
10:30 – 11:00	ICIMOD Transboundary Landscape Program & HKPL PAs and its ecological importance for the RMCs	Prof. Long Ruijun
11:00 – 11:20	Introduction & road map of scoping study in the 6 PAs	Prof. Shang Zhanghai
11:20 – 11:40	Rangeland work in Five PAs	Dr. Srijana Joshi
11:40 – 12:00	Biodiversity of Taxkorgan Nature Reserve	Dr. Zhu Ping
12:00 – 12:20	Socio-economic/ Cultural heritage data of PAs	Mr. Muhammad Ismail
12:20 – 14:00	Lunch Break	
14:00 – 14:20	Tourism and Its Importance in PA s and case study from Chitral	Ms. Neha Bisht
14:20 – 14:40	Review of Cultural Heritage in Taxkorgan	Mr. Li Tao
14:40 – 15:00	Aim to world heritage –experience from Silk Roads Nomination for Taxkorgan	Mr. Gong Tian
15:00 – 15:20	Tea break and interacting	
15:20 – 15:40	Group work	
15:40 – 17:00	Discussion	
Reception dinner hosted by ICIMOD (18:00 onwards)		
Day 3 (14 July, 2017)		
09:00 – 09:10	Recap of first day	Srijana Joshi
09:10 – 09:30	Tourism Study –Case study from Yanchiwan Reserve	Xingpeng Chen
09:30 – 10:00	Overview of the Taxkorgan Nature Reserve	Qiang Peng
10:00 – 10:20	Tea break	
10:20 – 12:00	Group discussion on methodologies and road map for scoping study	Neha Bisht
12:00 – 14:00	Lunch Break	
14:00 – 15:00	Group work continued: Action plan for next five year	
15:00 – 16:00	Presentations about Action plan	
16:00 – 16:20	Tea break	
16:20 – 17:00	Closing Session	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Closing Remark – ICIMOD Partner remarks (China) Vote of thanks 	Prof Long Ruijun Gong Tian, Li Tao, Wang Peng Han Jin

Annex 2: List of Participants

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